

Human Capital Research Collaborative

Early Influences on Human Capital Development and Socioeconomic Attainment: Findings from the Minnesota Youth Development Study

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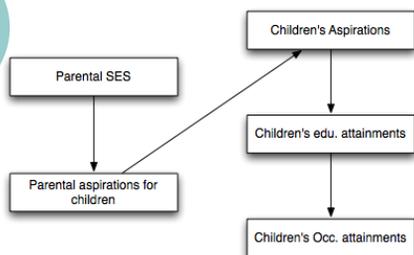
Overview

- Emergence and Evolution
 - Theoretical Context
 - Debate surrounding Adolescent Work
- YDS Contributions
 - Character of Adolescent Work
 - Outcomes during High School
 - Longer-Term Consequences
 - Evidence for Youth Agency
- Prospects
 - The Second Generation Study

Theoretical Context

- Wisconsin “status attainment” school
 - First job after leaving school as entry to socio-economic career;
 - Aspirations of primary importance (Sewell & Hauser 1975, 1976; Featherman 1980)
- YDS questions:
 - Do earlier jobs matter?
 - Do other psychological orientations, like occupational values or self-efficacy, also matter?

Status Attainment Path Model



Theoretical Context

- Agentic Action (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998)
- YDS Question:
 - Do adolescent orientations toward work and the future initiate agentic trajectories, including early work, that affect future attainments and well-being?

Debate about Adolescent Work

- Concern with “precocious maturity”
(Hall 1904; Greenberger and Steinberg, 1986)
- vs.
- Benefits of incorporation in adult workforce
(Elder, 1974; Coleman, 1974)

Case Against Adolescent Work

- Physical risk, stressors
- Older workers foster problem behavior
(alcohol, smoking, delinquency)
- Isolation from family
- Undermines educational investment
(Greenberger and Steinberg 1986; Steinberg & Dornbusch, 1991)

The Case for Adolescent Work

- Vocational exploration
 - Interests and identity
 - Occupational goals, work values, “planful competence”
- Confidence
- Interpersonal skills
- Responsibility
- Time management

YDS: designed to adjudicate this debate

YDS is the only longitudinal study, starting in adolescence, which monitors a wide range of occupational experiences and potential outcomes through the transition to adulthood.

Initial YDS Sample

- 1,010 randomly-chosen 9th graders typical of St. Paul public schools
 - 74% White
 - 10% African-American
 - 5% Hispanic-American
 - 4% Asian-American
- Median household income:
 - \$30,000-39,000
- College graduates
 - 27% of Fathers
 - 19% of Mothers

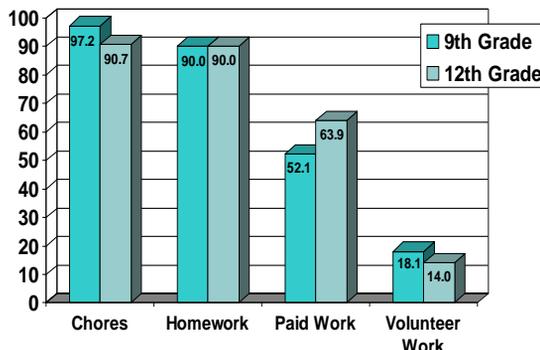
YDS Data Collection

- 19 surveys from W1 age 14-15 (1988) to W19 age 37-38 (Summer 2011)
 - W1-4 in classrooms
 - W5-19 by mail
 - Youth retention~67-75% in recent waves
- 2 surveys of parents: W1 (1988) and W4 (1991)
 - SES, attitudes toward children’s work and own work during adolescence

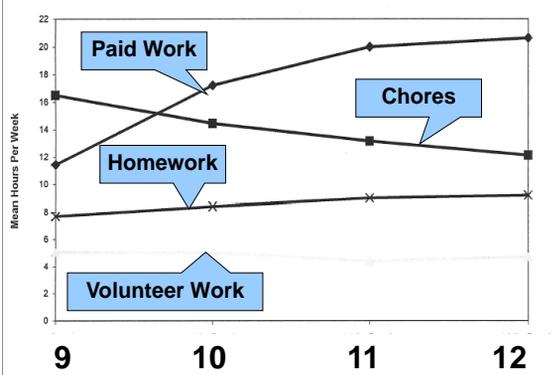
YDS Contributions: Nature & Prevalence of Teen Work

- Majority of youth work
- Wide range of work experiences
- Occasions for skill-building and vocational exploration

Percent Engaging in Activities



Mean Hours of Activities, 9-12 Grade



YDS: Patterns of Work Investment

Duration	Intensity	
	High	Low
High	Most Invested (26%)	Steady (25%)
Low	Sporadic (18%)	Occasional (24%)

Work Patterns & Time Investment

	Months*		Hours*	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Steady	22.0	22.0	1263	1328
Sporadic	10.4	11.8	1216	1376
Occasional	9.8	11.7	578	650
Most Invested	21.9	22.2	2678	2587
Not Working	0	0	0	0

*Cumulative, Grades 10-12

Work Patterns & Work Quality

- Compared to Occasional & Steady workers, Most Invested and Sporadic had:
 - more learning & advancement opportunities
 - more psychological engagement in work
 - longer hours
 - higher earnings
 - more work stressors
 - more “adult-like” work

Precursors to Work Investment

- 9th graders with low academic promise (low grades, aspirations, perceived ability, and engagement in school) pursued Most Invested or Sporadic work
- 9th graders with high academic promise pursued Steady or Occasional work

Outcomes during High School: Work Intensity

- No evidence that the intensity of work reduced grade point average or educational aspirations/plans

Mortimer, Finch, et al., *Child Development*, 1996

Outcomes: Teen Lifestyle

Work did not interfere with teens' well-rounded life styles (studying, socializing, and extracurricular activities) in comparison to non-working teens

Shanahan & Flaherty, *Child Development*, 2001

Outcomes

- Steady and Most Invested workers more confident about achieving economic goals
- More intensive work fostered problem behaviors and alcohol use

Cunnein, Martin, and Mortimer, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 2009

Staff & Uggen, *J of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 2003
McMorris & Uggen, *J of Health & Social Behavior*, 2003

Outcomes during High School: Work Quality Matters

- Learning opportunities on the job fostered crystallization of work values
- Mortimer, et al., *Social Forces*, 1996
- Affirmation of success in the work role enhanced efficacy
- Finch, et al., *American Sociological Review*, 1991
- Stressors heightened depressed mood and reduced self-esteem
- Shanahan, et al., *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 1991

Outcomes: Quality of Work Matters

- Adolescent work functions as an "arena of comfort" (Simmons, 2001)
- Good relationships with supervisors, absence of stressors, etc., alleviate distress when youth have problems in other domains
- (Call and Mortimer, *Arenas of Comfort in Adolescence*, 2001)

Stage-specific effects of work

- Adults: self-directed work has positive effects on psychological functioning

(Kohn and Schooler 1983)

- Adolescents: decision-making autonomy linked to distress and deviance in school, alcohol use, and arrest

(Shanahan, et al., *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 1991; Staff & Uggen, *J of Research in Crime & Delinquency*, 2003)

Longer-Term Consequences

- What are the longer-term consequences of teen work after high school?
- Few studies

Consequences for Mental Health

- Youth who experienced stressors in high school jobs were more resilient when faced with similar stressors four years after high school

(Mortimer & Staff, *Development & Psychopathology*, 2004)

Consequences of Eustress

- According to Shanahan and Mortimer's (1996) model of "eustress":
- Earlier stressful experiences heighten adaptive capacity;
- Mastery of difficult tasks promotes self-efficacy, motivation, and resilience in future similar situations

Consequences of Eustress

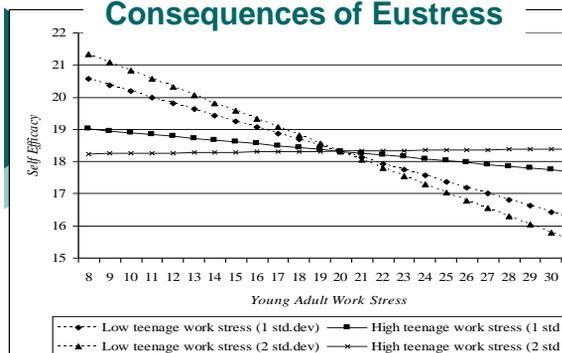


Figure 2. Self-Efficacy in Young Adulthood (Age 22) by Teenage and Young Adult Work Stress

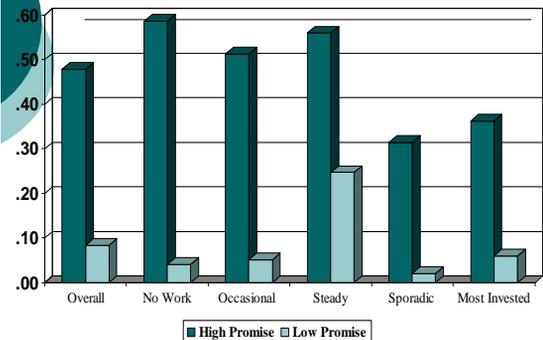
Consequences: Socioeconomic Attainment

- Do teenage jobs influence attainment?

Consequences: Educational Attainment

- Discrete-time logit model of time to the B.A.: Steady (high duration/low intensity) workers had the advantage
- Steady work particularly important for youth with low academic promise
(Staff & Mortimer, *Social Forces*, 2007)

Figure 3. Percentage Earning BA Degree or Higher (age 28-29) by High School Work and Educational Promise



Subjective “career” attainment

The Most Invested (high duration, high intensity) workers moved more rapidly to “careers.”

Mortimer, et al., *Work & Occupations*, 2008

Loss of Agency?

- Scholars question the capacity of youth to envision futures and move toward them in a rapidly changing society
 - Increased risks (Beck, 1992)
 - Rapid change in work (Heinz, 2003)
 - Lack of institutional bridges from school to work (Mortimer & Kruger, 2000)

Continuing Agency

- Despite changing historical context, adolescents in the YDS exercised agency through their pathways of school-to-work transition (STW)

1st Pathway of STW Transition

- High educational goals & academic promise
- Investment in school with steady or occasional work
- 4 year college admission
- Continued combination of part-time work and schooling
- Receipt of college degree

2nd Pathway of STW Transition

- Early disinterest in school
- Human capital development through “most invested” work
- Attend community college or vo-tech institute
- Rapid movement to self-identified “careers”

Work Pattern and Agency

- Socioeconomic career starts well *before* the first job after school completion
- Many teenagers act agentially:
- Steady and Most Invested Work Patterns move youth toward outcomes consistent with earlier goals and resources
- Sporadic Work Pattern is problematic: Youth do *not* acquire human capital through education or through work.

Adolescent Agency Matters

- Goals re: residence, marriage age, & education predict post high school outcomes
- Only 1 of 167 seniors who did *not* plan to graduate from college received a college degree by age 26-27

(Uno, et al. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development* 2010)

Adolescent values influence future outcomes

- Occupational values at age 21 and 22 precede acquisition of jobs offering intrinsic and extrinsic rewards a decade later.
- Intrinsic reward values yielded more positive outcomes
- Findings extend status attainment model beyond aspirations

(Johnson & Mortimer, *Social Forces*, 2011)

Early Economic Efficacy

- Promoted by high quality work
- Predict steps toward college
- Precede successful transitions to adulthood:
 - educational and income attainments,
 - financial independence,
 - avoidance of early child-bearing

(Lee & Mortimer, *Longitudinal & Life Course Research*, 2009)

Timing in Agentic Action

- Through vocational exploration, youth move toward jobs with increasingly good “fits” with goals, interests, and abilities.
- “Settling” on a career choice by age 23 or 24 linked to acquisition of college degrees and commitment to work

(Zimmer-Gembeck & Mortimer, *Advances in Life Course Research*, 2007)

Long-term benefits of agentic action in weathering the “Great Recession”

- Almost 1/5 YDS panel members unemployed between 2007 & 2009
- Multi-level latent class analysis revealed three agentic pathways of orientations and behaviors from age 18-30

(Vuolo, Staff, & Mortimer, *Developmental Psychology*, Forthcoming)

Agentic Trajectories

- **High agency:**
 - Maintain high educational aspirations (BA or +),
 - Maintain high certainty of attaining career goals,
 - Engage in multi-method job search
- **Low agency:**
 - Declining educational aspirations,
 - Declining certainty of attaining career goals,
 - Declining job search activities
- **Flexible agency:**
 - Changing educational aspirations
 - (shift from BA to Associates or Vo-tech degree)
 - Maintain high certainty of attaining career goals
 - Least job search as moved quickly into careers

Agentic Trajectories Matter

- When Great Recession hit (age 34-35), outcomes differed:
- **High Agency:** more likely to avoid unemployment & wage loss than **Low Agency.**
- **Flexible Agency:** same as **High Agency** on unemployment and wages

Agentic Trajectories Matter

- Agentic trajectories remained significant even when educational attainment and “career” establishment were controlled.

Parallels Glen Elder’s findings during Great Depression

Outcomes of Economic Downturn

- Unemployment erodes efficacy and reduces evaluation of extrinsic rewards of work

(Mortimer & Kim, ISA 2010)
(Johnson & Sage, ASA, 2011)

Historical Specificity

- Coming-of-age differs across cohorts
- Increasingly prolonged and unpredictable transition to adulthood (Shanahan 2000)
- Changing opportunities for employment

YDS cohort

- Born 1973-74
- High school 1987-91
- Transition to Adulthood 1990's to early 2000's (age 30/31 in 2004)
- In early adulthood (age 34/35) experienced "Great Recession"

Figure 2. Adolescent volunteering, employment, and sports participation from 1991 to 2010
(MTF 8th and 10th graders; n = 647,031 - 655,951)

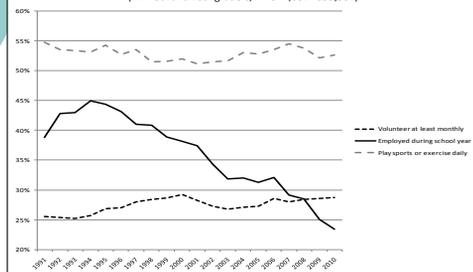
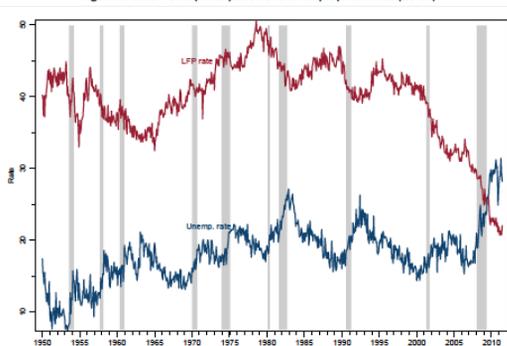


Figure 3: Labor force participation and unemployment rate (16-17)



See notes to figure 1. Data are for 16-17 year olds (male and female).

- Smith 2011 "Polarization, immigration, education: What's Behind the Dramatic Decline in Youth Employment?" Finance and Economics Discussion Series.

YDS Second Generation Study

- How do parental trajectories influence children's attitudes and behaviors?
- Elder's "Linked Lives" of intergenerational influence

YDS Second Generation Study

- Much research on how parenting influences child outcomes contemporaneously
- Parental experience rarely measured prospectively starting when parents were the *same* age as the child
- YDS can compare adult and child generations at the same age and examine the effects of parental trajectories on children

Recruitment of Child Sample

- Target: age 11-20
- 3 years of intensive recruitment yielded a 67% (277/415) parent consent rate and 444 consenting children (444/778=57%)
- Consenting and non-consenting parents differ

○ Hussemann, Mortimer, & Zhang, ASA 2011

Consenters

- Female
- Higher educational attainment
- More civic engagement
- Less deviant
- Better mental health

Are parent-child studies restricted to better adjusted families?

Table 2. Work and Volunteering

Variables	14-15 year olds (N=83)	9 th Grade Parents	16-17 year olds (N=76)	11 th Grade Parents
Any volunteer work	.33 **	.14	.40 ***	.12
Proportion employed	.07 ***	.54	.25 ***	.55

*** $p < .001$ $p < .01$ * $p < .05$ # $p < .10$ (two-tailed tests)

2nd Generation Study

- Too few employed youth to assess patterns & qualities of paid work
- Will unpaid work (volunteering) have the same consequences as paid work for this generation?

Preliminary Findings

- Volunteering positively affects children's self-esteem but has no effect on work values

Summary

- YDS has illuminated:
- Character of teen work and its consequences during adolescence & in the early socioeconomic career



Summary

- Shows salutary consequences of early agentic work investment, despite change in transition to adulthood and in labor force.
- Long term effects of agency in weathering the Great Recession



Invitation

- Data archive available to researchers through ICPSR
- E-codebook on Sociology Dept. web
Please join with me in the utilization of the vast YDS data archive.

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- Questions? Comments?