

3RD CONFERENCE ON EMERGING ADULTHOOD
Paper Symposium Abstracts

Salazar, Marcos

Friday, 11:15-12:45 (Canyon A)

An Ill-prepared Generation: Understanding the New Workforce Challenges Emerging Adults Are Facing in the Twenty-first Century

One of the most difficult challenges emerging adults are facing after college is the transition from the highly structured world of academia to today's rapidly changing, ultra-competitive working world. The world that today's emerging adults are entering is not the same one their parents transitioned into after college. What has emerged at the end of the twentieth century is a new economic reality that is making the advice used by previous generations inapplicable to the challenges that emerging adults are facing in today's global economy. This paper will provide an understanding of the workforce challenges that emerging adults are facing in the twenty-first century.

Sameroff, Arnold

Thursday, 9:50-11:20 (Sebena)

Longitudinal Predictors of Early Adult Relationship Characteristics

Forming a satisfying relationship is a positive hallmark of emerging adulthood and can be a marker of new adaptations or a manifestation of prior relationship experiences during childhood. Early adult relationship status, relationship satisfaction, relationship security and mental health were assessed in a longitudinal study where we also had information on parenting behavior during the participant's infancy. Results were that parent's attitudes and warmth as far back as the prenatal period and infancy were related to current relationship variables almost 29 years later. These longitudinal relations were somewhat mediated by adolescent mental health status.

Schindler, Ines

Friday, 8:00-9:30 (Ventana)

Life-path decision making in emerging adulthood: Selection of college majors and romantic partners as means of identity development

Employing the recently proposed concept of life-path decision making, this paper investigates how emerging adults select their college major and/or romantic partner. The study of life-path decision making provides for a fine-grained analysis of specific identity choices. The aim of this paper is to investigate how students' previously developed identity status influences their subsequent decision-making process and how this process, in turn, helps to further develop their identity. Data from an ongoing longitudinal study are presented, which includes repeated assessments of identity status, characteristics of major/partner choice, social involvement in making a choice, relevant decision criteria, and decision-making activities.

Schoon, Ingrid & Ross, A.

Friday, 11:15-12:45 (Sebena)

Diversity in the transition from youth to adulthood

The issue of polarisation has not been comprehensively addressed in the current debate on youth transitions, and will be the main focus of this paper. The paper reports a study based on two British Birth Cohorts, comparing the experiences of over 20,000 young people born in 1958 and 1970 respectively. Indicators of transition outcomes included five major role domains: partnership, children, tenancy, employment and qualifications of cohort members in their mid twenties and early 30's. Latent class analysis established five major types of transitions

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differentiating between entry into 'traditional families', 'disadvantaged families', 'career-orientation without children', and 'slow starters'. The findings suggest that there are persisting social and gender inequalities that determine these transitions. There are multiple transition pathways, forcing us to reconsider definitions of adaptive or successful transition strategies.

Seiffge-Krenke, Inge

Thursday, 3:25-4:55 (Canyon C)

Leaving home in emerging adulthood as an important developmental marker for changes in parent-child and romantic relationships

This study focus on links of different relationship types in a transgenerational perspective. The sample consisted of 93 young adults, aged 28 years, and their parents, which had been followed longitudinally since the child was 14 years. Family functioning, parent's marital quality, overall development and development with respect to romantic relations were assessed. An authoritative parenting style coupled with low and decreasing levels of parental support particularly facilitated the process of becoming autonomous and establishing romantic relationships. Participants still in the nest had a lower developmental progression overall and with respect to establishing romantic partnerships in particular.

Serido, Joyce & Borden, L.

Friday, 1:50-3:20 (Canyon B)

From Program Participant To Community Activist: A Developmental Journey

American youth who participate in both school based and community based programs during high school remain more civically engaged than their contemporaries throughout adulthood. However, few studies have examined the processes through which participation in a youth directed program promotes civic responsibility and contributes to positive development. In this qualitative study, 23 males and 9 females took part in one of five locally-held focus groups to talk about their experiences as a member of a youth empowerment center in the southwest. The results of the analysis reveal a three-phased process model: *participation, connection* and *expansion*.

Sirsch, Ulrike, Willinger, U., & Dreher, E.

Thursday, 1:35-3:05 (Canyon B)

Transition to adulthood – important criteria for reaching adulthood in Austria

Arnett (2000) proposed emerging adulthood as a distinct developmental period in life. The present study examined the conceptions of the transition to adulthood of Austrian participants from adolescence through midlife (replicating Arnett, 2001). In addition, the features of emerging adulthood (Reifman et al. 2003) were analyzed. The sample consisted of 784 subjects of different age. Results show the high importance of individualism, norm compliance and family capacities in Austrian participants. Several age group differences in the criteria of transition were found as well as differences with respect to the five features of emerging adulthood. Differences and similarities compared to Arnett (2001) will be discussed.

Slade, Eric & Wissow, L.

Friday, 8:00-9:30 (Canyon A)

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Does Need for Mental Health Treatment Influence Access to Primary Care in Early Adulthood?

This study characterizes how young adults' access to primary care services co-varies in relation to their level of need for mental health treatment. Using a rich database from a national sample of more than 13,000 young adults, aged 18 to 27 years old, several multivariable models of access to primary care services were estimated. Results showed substantial differences by gender in the relationship between mental health treatment need and access to primary care services, with stronger negative effects for young men. Sensitivity analyses using data from sibling pairs were consistent with the main findings.

Slominski, Lisa

Thursday, 9:50-11:20 (Sebena)

Personal & Family Predictors of Educational and Occupational Outcomes in Emerging Adulthood

Educational and occupational outcomes during emerging adulthood are influenced by earlier personal and family characteristics. We examined how school achievement, mental health, parental education, and parental occupation before 18 influenced emerging adults' attainments by age 30. As expected regression analyses revealed that all four earlier variables significantly predicted educational progress. In contrast, mental health, but not school achievement was the most significant predictor of occupational status, with parent education and occupation making smaller contributions. These results highlight significant differences in pathways between two highly related outcomes, and the importance of earlier mental health to functioning during emerging adulthood.

Smith, Tara

Friday, 8:00-9:30 (Ventana)

A Multi-leveled Feminist Examination of Gender Identity in Emerging Adult Women

This study examined the contribution of emerging adult women's personal, social, and structural conceptions of gender to their self-evaluated gender identity (i.e., gender typicality, gender contentedness) in 280 women college students. Regression analyses revealed that women's self-appraisal as gender typical was based on their self-perceived communal traits and identification with gender as a social identity. Conversely, contentedness with gender was predicted by endorsement of traditional gender attitudes. These findings suggest that emerging adult women's gender identities are complex and based not just on conformity to gender stereotypes, but on their analysis of gender as a social structure.

Soons, Judith, Liefbroer, A., & Kalmijn, M.

Thursday, 9:50-11:20 (Canyon C)

Will they live happily ever after? Relationship careers and well-being among young adults

The aim of this study is to explain the differences between relationship trajectories with respect to young adults' well-being over time. We expect that the transition into marriage and unmarried cohabitation enhances well-being, that separation decreases well-being and that these effects are related to a change in the level of resources. Further, we expect that a habituation process may lead to a gradual, partly return to the original level of well-being. These hypotheses are analyzed using a representative sample of Dutch young adults of the six waves of the Panel study on Social Integration (1987-2005).

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Staff, Jeremy

Friday, 3:40-5:10 (Madera)

Emerging Adulthood and Wage Attainments: Role Exploration versus Floundering during the Transition to Adulthood

This paper uses longitudinal data from the Youth Development Study (ages 18-31) to estimate relationships between hourly wages and roles signifying emerging adulthood (school attendance, cohabitation, residence with parents, career development, and childlessness) and young adulthood (non-student status, marriage, residential independence, career acquisition, and parenthood). Using within-individual regressions (to control stable individual characteristics) and time-varying indicators of emerging adult and young adult status, the analysis suggests that an extended period of role exploration benefits wage attainment only for high SES youth. For low SES youth, emerging adulthood instead appears to signify floundering during the early occupational career.

Steele, Jeanne & Christy, T.

Friday, 3:40-5:10 (Canyon B)

Young adults' smoking in context: A comparative study of sociocultural influences in two Midwestern communities

Young adults were the only age group to defy the downward trend in U.S. cigarette use seen in the 1980s and 1990s. To help explain this phenomenon, we conducted a multi-method, exploratory study to illuminate where smoking "fit" in the everyday lives of 18- to 24-year olds who lived in two distinctly different parts of Minnesota. A telephone survey of 995 randomly-selected young adults indicated that location, gender, and seeing smoking as socially useful increased the risk of smoking, while being a student was protective. Qualitative research findings suggest that developmental and sociocultural variables affect smoking attitudes and behaviors.

Stivens, Maila

Thursday, 3:25-4:55 (Sebena)

Extended Liminality? Emerging Adulthoods after Globalisation in Southeast Asia

This paper looks at emerging trends within Singapore and Malaysia of an extended, liminal early adulthood. The paper explores contests around social constructions and representations of these new, young, 'modern' selves in several Southeast Asian countries. A central focus is young women's placement as consumers and the intricate politics of play, agency, sexualisations, and searches for autonomy within these contests. The paper looks at a series of key arenas within which such contests are staged, including state, religion and the media, and the links within these contests to some key geopolitical themes: falling birthrates, ageing populations and racialised migration politics.

Swartz, Teresa Toguchi

Friday, 3:40-5:10 (Madera)

Family Capital and the Invisible Transfer of Privilege: Intergenerational Support and Social Class During the Transition to Adulthood

This study investigates the extent to which emerging adults receive financial and other instrumental support from their families, and the patterns that such support takes in economically and racially diverse contexts. It also explores how young adults understand such support in a culture that links financial independence to adult status. Data are drawn from 489 in-depth

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interviews conducted with young adults through the Research Network on the Transitions to Adulthood. The findings indicate that parents with more resources provide their adult children with more material assistance that scaffolds them into more advantageous positions in society. However, persistent individualist interpretations of success and failure continue to dominate young peoples' perceptions, despite vast differences in the assistance they receive.

Syed, Moin & Azmitia, M.

Friday, 8:00-9:30 (Ventana)

Ethnic Identity in Everyday Experiences: A Narrative Approach

The objective of this study was to understand ethnic identity development through emerging adults' narratives of everyday ethnicity-related experiences. Participants were 216 ethnically-diverse emerging adult college students who completed both quantitative and qualitative measures of ethnic identity. Coding is in progress, but focuses on identity construction through a narrated ethnicity-related event. In addition to the nature of the event, we are coding for how they responded to the experience, the emotional content, and what meaning they made. Overall, the findings from this study will contribute to our understanding of how emerging adults actively construct their ethnic identities from their everyday experiences.

Syvertsen, Amy & Wray, L.

Friday, 3:40-5:10 (Canyon C)

Unengaged and Untrusting? Time Trends in Emerging Adults' Civic and Political Engagement

According to generational replacement theory, a driving force behind social and political change is the replacement of older generations by younger ones as the latter move into adulthood. Time-series trends from Monitoring the Future, however, reveal that young adults' conventional and alternative participation in politics has declined, while involvement in community service has increased. This suggests that young adults are either not participating or are reinventing citizenship by practicing it in different ways than older generations. Further, trend comparisons reveal that distrust in government and pessimism for the future are inversely related to young adults' civic and political participation.