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Failure to Launch? Understanding Variations in Emerging Adult Flight Patterns

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Failure to Launch?
Understanding Variations in Emerging Adult Flight Patterns

Failure to Launch? Understanding Variations in Emerging Adult Flight Patterns

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Sociology

by

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ABSTRACT

What does the transition to adulthood look like for emerging adults? This study proposes that popular cultural ideas like “failure to launch” imply an oversimplified dichotomy that does not account for the multiple “flight patterns” into adulthood. Focusing on the narratives of six interview cases selected from the larger sample of interviewees from Wave 4 of the National Study of Youth and Religion and drawing on the quantitative data from the broader survey sample, this mixed-methods approach examines in-depth, narrative experiences and the ways structural barriers vary between upper-middle, lower-middle, and working class emerging adults. We find that emerging adulthood is not a purely middle class phenomenon but that varying flight patterns do emerge based on social class background, specifically in terms of access to economic and social resources. Results indicate that working class emerging adults often psychologically enter adulthood sooner than middle class emerging adults but struggle longer to achieve socioeconomic stability, while middle class emerging adults have access to socioeconomic resources but often spend longer periods without psychological clarity.

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INTRODUCTION

Times of transition are often marked by uncertainty and instability. For those in their late-teens and twenties, the transition time between adolescence and full adulthood has become increasingly extended and complex (Arnett 2007; Silva 2013). A number of macro-structural factors increasing social and economic volatility have caused changes to traditional social markers of stability, contributing to a lack of clear pathways into adulthood. The result is what Arnett ([2006] 2015) labels a new, distinct stage of life known as “emerging adulthood” that entails a renegotiation of norms and expectations regarding higher education, careers, marriage, children, and overall adulthood. While popular cultural ideas such as “failure to launch” (e.g. Dunn 2012) imply a rather simplistic dichotomy between those who successfully navigate paths to stable adulthood and those who do not, the complexity of this life stage suggests a more nuanced understanding of the pathways into adulthood is needed.

Emerging Adulthood as a New Life Stage

While early scholars of life stage theories (e.g. Erikson 1980) explored the life stages of adolescence and young adulthood and identified specific development tasks necessary to successfully accomplish each stage, significant social and economic changes have both complicated and lengthened the period of transition to adulthood. These changes include prolonged pursuits of higher education, widespread delay in marriage and parenthood, changing social roles for women, and job instability in the economy (Smith and Snell 2009). Updating life stage theory to the 21st century and building upon Erikson’s notion of an extended moratorium in the adolescent stage, Arnett (2000) finds that the lengthened transition has resulted in the new life stage of emerging adulthood, a time distinct from both adolescence and young adulthood. During this time, emerging adults are not firmly planted in either stage but instead experience

their own life stage marked by a transition between the two and an overall delay in establishing adult life trajectories (Smith and Snell 2009).

Psychological Studies of Emerging Adulthood

Despite the instability and in-between nature of emerging adulthood, the psychological characterization of emerging adulthood tends to focus on the vast *opportunities* for identity exploration and self-determination (Arnett [2006] 2015). Arnett (2015) refers to this stage of life as the “age of possibilities,” emphasizing that for many emerging adults the possibilities for life outcomes seem endless. Thus, this stage is generally characterized by a feeling of personal independence and the freedom to construct one’s life however one chooses. As a result, the psychological contributions to understanding emerging adulthood have been abundant, as on the surface emerging adulthood appears to be a time free of societal constraints, providing individuals with opportunities to construct their identities, intimacies, and broader selves in whatever ways they choose. However, these approaches tend not to include the insights of sociological research (e.g. Lareau 1987, 2003; MacLeod 1987; Massey 2007), which repeatedly evidence the numerous ways in which social forces pattern life chances across the life course.

Sociological Studies of Emerging Adulthood

The application of a sociological perspective to this life stage introduces the many *structural barriers* affecting emerging adult trajectories (e.g. Arum and Roksa 2010, 2014) and questions the individualistic assumptions of the psychological characterization by indicating that social forces still greatly impact emerging adult trajectories (e.g. Silva 2013). As argued in the pages to follow, a sociologically informed perspective on emerging adulthood may mean that social forces are even more influential during this life stage because of the powerful veneer of complete freedom and independence. The sociological characterization of emerging adulthood

suggests that this life stage does not always offer the freedom it appears to promise, with many emerging adults struggling to establish successful life trajectories (Smith et al. 2011).

Nonetheless, the sociological attention to emerging adulthood has only more recently developed (e.g. Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Arum and Roksa 2010, 2014; Smith and Snell 2009), and further studies are needed in order to consider the importance of social and cultural contexts in shaping life trajectories. Not only is there a need for an approach that takes seriously the recognition that a relatively new life stage with its own set of social and psychological tendencies has emerged, there is also a need to simultaneously account for the numerous ways in which emerging adult lives remain patterned by social forces, even in the midst of what feels like a time of freedom and endless possibility. Toward that end, this paper contributes to a greater sociological understanding of emerging adulthood by exploring understudied social factors.

BACKGROUND

De-institutionalized Pathways to Adulthood

Much of the complexity and ambiguity experienced during emerging adulthood is an outcome of the de-institutionalization of traditional markers of adulthood (Carnevale, Hanson, and Gulish 2013; Settersten and Ray 2010; Smith et al. 2011). While traditional paths to adulthood tended to follow the linear progression of dating leading to marriage and family, and education leading to career, research has shown the increased de-institutionalization of marriage and long-term romantic partnerships as the pathway toward family formation (Arnett 2006; Cherlin 2004; Edin and Kefalas [2005] 2011; Settersten and Ray 2010), and the renegotiation of the Bachelor's degree as the pathway to viable, long-term careers (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Arum and Roksa 2014; Bennett and Wilezol 2013; Carnevale et al. 2013; Mullen 2010; Selingo 2013), as well as the de-institutionalization of overall adulthood independence (Dunn

2012). It now takes longer for emerging adults to finish their education goals, launch their careers, become financially and residentially independent from their parents, and begin family formation (Dunn 2012; Settersten and Ray 2010; Smith et al. 2011). The changing social norms and expectations has increased the level of ambiguity around what it means to achieve each marker, making it difficult for emerging adults to know when they have arrived into adulthood (Carnevale et al. 2013).

The ambiguity of adulthood has increased both the perceived freedoms and the social risks placed on the individual, as the lack of social norms and expectations around the markers of adulthood leave individuals feeling free to determine their own life courses (Schwartz, Côté, and Arnett 2005). A lack of external support from social institutions has resulted in what Silva (2013) describes as the “privatization of risk.” Things like happiness, success, and life course are more a matter of self-reliance and individual plans for achieving desired outcomes (Silva 2013), meaning lack of immediate successful socioeconomic outcomes can only be characterized as “failure to launch” (e.g. Dunn 2012). While there are certainly benefits to be gained from slower and less institutionally constrained pathways to adulthood, Settersten and Ray (2010:6) liken the heightened reliance on individualism among emerging adults to being “lost without a compass” on the path to adulthood. They characterize emerging adults as either “swimmers” or “treaders” attempting not to drown in a sea of endless opportunity.

While sociologists take as their starting point that not all emerging adults fare the same in the midst of such unsettledness (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Arum and Roksa 2010; Settersten and Ray 2010; Silva 2013), the overly psychological literature on emerging adulthood tends to instead argue the exact opposite, that despite some clear influences of social forces, emerging adults are in general a homogenous cultural group (Arnett [2006] 2015) with the

primary task of developing psychological clarity in their adulthood identities (Schwartz et al. 2005). Sociologists instead find that divergent adulthood pathways emerge, as some emerging adults are able to establish long-term, even permanent life trajectories, while others are still in formation or even stalled well into their late 20s (Armstrong and Hamilton 2013; Settersten and Ray 2010; Herzog and Williams 2015). The existence of greater variation in emerging adulthood as to when and how young people are accomplishing each milestone means that there can be multiple pathways into adulthood and that the “norm” of pathways into adulthood is relatively “normless.”

Social Class and Emerging Adulthood

Since a sociologically-informed understanding of emerging adulthood recognizes many of the structural variations in adulthood trajectories that can be masked by messages of freedom and individualistic exploration, it is important to investigate the variance in life experiences and divergent pathways that emerging adults forge (Settersten and Ray 2010). Numerous sociological studies point to the importance of social class factors in shaping life chances and outcomes (e.g. Lareau 2003; MacLeod 1987; Massey 2007), and more recent studies have specifically begun exploring the ways that social class influences emerging adult life trajectories (Danziger 2010; Silva 2013).

Specifically, Silva (2013) argues that characterizing the period of emerging adulthood as full of possibilities and opportunities is a distinctly middle and upper class phenomenon that is not afforded to the working class because of structural disadvantages and constraints that do not allow the extended moratorium. Settersten and Ray (2010) assert that, without the resources needed to support this elongated period of transition, many working class young people can enter

adulthood too quickly, skipping over necessary steps that prepare them for the increasingly competitive and complex global marketplace.

While traditional pathways to adulthood for working class young adults did not necessitate postsecondary education, the disappearance of manufacturing labor and factory jobs has made higher education a crucial next step for all young people to participate in a knowledge-based, service economy (Settersten and Ray 2010). At the same time, the push for higher education has sent many working class emerging adults exploring pathways to adulthood that were rarely taken in the past (Silva 2013), resulting in increasing numbers of first generation college students (Hirudayaraj 2011). Research has shown the importance of cultural capital and parental feedback when making important education and career decisions, increasing the disadvantage and risk for first generation college students navigating the higher education system (Ishitani 2006; Lareau 1987). Similar structural disadvantage is also evidenced as working class emerging adults seek to obtain resources from government institutions and manage interactions with the legal system (Silva 2013). The result is a general struggle not just to achieve upward mobility but to even reproduce the socioeconomic status of their parents (Danziger 2010).

Overall, these scholars assert that the paths to adulthood are even less clear for the working class given the lack of familiarity with institutions that are primarily structured by and for the middle class, the lack of safety nets and resources, and the absence of cultural capital needed to achieve success (Lareau 2003; Silva 2013). From this perspective, emerging adulthood is not a homogenous life stage, experienced in the same ways by all young people. At the same time, it is also not a completely heterogeneous period in which people of a similar age and cohort share no discernable patterns. Rather, it is both. The combination of sociological and psychological studies highlight the importance of social class and other structural dynamics

involved in multiple pathways to adulthood, while also revealing the need to study the emergent life stage and young people within the broader structural and cultural changes surrounding adulthood. Thus, studies on emerging adulthood need to better understand the nuanced ways in which social class may impact experiences of emerging adults establishing adult life trajectories.

Research Questions

Building on existing literatures, this study investigates the gap between the psychological and sociological findings on emerging adulthood. Specifically, this study asked:

1. Is emerging adulthood a purely middle class phenomenon or are its cultural structures experienced across an array of social class backgrounds?
2. What role do social class backgrounds appear to play in explaining emerging adult life trajectories? Specifically, how does access to economic and social resources affect the transition to adulthood for emerging adults?

To answer these questions, this study focuses on an in-depth exploration of the potentially nuanced ways in which social class may affect emerging adult life experiences.

METHODOLOGY

Data Collection

The data utilized for this research draw from the National Study of Youth and Religion (NSYR). The NSYR is a mixed-methods study that collects nationally representative and longitudinal survey data on randomly sampled respondents as well as in-depth interviews with a subset of the survey respondents. The respondents began the study in 2001 as adolescents ages 13 to 17 years old (81 percent response rate), and the same panel of respondents has been resurveyed in a total of four waves of data collection, concluding most recently with Wave 4 in 2013 when respondents were ages 23 to 27 (n=2,144, 65 percent retention rate from Wave 1).

Diagnostic analyses comparing NSYR data with U.S. Census data on comparable households and with comparable adolescent surveys—such as Monitoring the Future, the National Household Education Survey, and the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health—confirm that the NSYR provides a nationally representative sample without any major identifiable sampling and nonresponse biases of U.S. teenagers ages 13 to 17 and their parents living in households. In addition, statistical weights adjust for all known remaining minor discrepancies, making the survey sample a nationally representative survey of American emerging adults.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with a stratified quota sample of survey respondents in each of the four waves. Most recently the fourth wave of data collection entailed in-depth interviews with 302 respondents (68 percent interviewed in Wave 1, 18 percent sampled for interviews in Wave 3 and re-interviewed in Wave 4, and 14 percent newly sampled in Wave 4). The interviews averaged four hours in length with most interviews being conducted on-site in coffee shops, libraries, restaurants, etc. near the interviewee residence. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed, and additionally, each interviewer recorded field notes on both the interview location and interviewee. This study focuses in particular on the transcribed interview files from Wave 4 collected during the summer of 2013 and also uses the quantitative data on the broader survey sample and linked to the interviewees.

Spotlight Sample Selection

This study focuses primarily on the narratives of six interview cases. These interviews serve as “spotlight” case studies to specifically examine in-depth, narrative experiences between upper-middle, lower-middle, and working class emerging adults. The case studies are drawn from a larger sample of interviewees, which are drawn from the nationally representative survey

sample. As a mixed-methods approach, this study has the relatively unique ability to link the interview data for each case back to the quantitative survey data and apply corresponding survey weights. This allows for an in-depth, case study approach to the spotlight case analyses that can still be generalized to the broader population of emerging adults. We thus draw primarily upon the strengths of qualitative analyses for theme development and theory construction in the present study, while also couching the findings in the strengths of quantitative data to be generalized across cases and be nationally representative

“Sorta” marker status. The first step in selecting the spotlight sample was to select cases that met the criteria for being in transition. The survey data were first analyzed to note the status attainment of four traditional markers of adulthood (i.e. achieving education and career goals, establishing long-term partnerships and beginning family formation, attaining residential and financial independence from parents, and considering oneself to be an adult) (Herzog and Williams 2015). We focus the spotlight case selection only on status for Markers 1 and 3 – i.e. the combination of education/career establishment with financial/residential parental independence.

Marker 1 was created using a combination of survey responses to questions assessing: educational attainment, plans to return to school, and future career plans at the age of 35. Marker 3 was created using a combination of survey responses to questions assessing: who they currently live with, whether parents help with a battery of financial and social needs, and the total amount of money estimated to receive from parents. A “yes-sorta-no” scale was used to categorize each marker as well as to assess an overall attainment status of adulthood. The category of “sorta” – akin to the “It’s complicated” relationship status on Facebook[®] – was included in the scale to represent the unsettled or in-between nature of emerging adulthood that

complicates dichotomous categorization of having reached each marker or not. “Sorta” for Marker 1 includes, for example, those emerging adults who have completed their education for now, but see themselves going back to school at some point, and who are working in a job that is not what they see themselves doing as their long-term career. “Sorta” for Marker 3 includes, for instance, those emerging adults who live away from their parents but receive significant or total financial support from parents to pay rent or mortgage, as well as those who live at home but who pay all their other bills. Table 1 displays a summary of emerging adult statuses on these two markers, individually and in combination.

[Table 1 Here]

The results from these data reveal that the vast majority of emerging adults are still in the “sorta” category for both Markers 1 and 3, as well as for the two combined (69.93 percent), reflecting that the mainstream emerging adult falls somewhere into this “murky middle” category (Herzog and Williams 2015). Therefore, for the purposes of this spotlight case selection, only those cases that reflected the mainstream emerging adults – i.e. those who were categorized as a “sorta” for establishing education and career goals and “sorta” for achieving independence from parents – were selected (bolded box in Table 1). This process removed the emerging adult outliers – i.e. those who had already passed all the markers of adulthood and those who had not yet passed any.

Average number of regroupings. Given that prior studies (e.g. Arnett [2006] 2015; Silva 2013; Smith and Snell 2009) have found that emerging adulthood is characterized by a number of what we call “regroupings,” we categorized interviews for whether respondents described having had significant experiences within the past five years that significantly altered their adult trajectories, at least temporarily (Herzog & Williams 2015). Events included having dropped out

of school, moved back home, had intense romantic break-ups from partners that were thought to have been long-term, and so forth. For the purposes of the spotlight case selection, we again focused on the mainstream experience and excluded from the sample outlier emerging adults who described having experienced no recent regroupings in establishing any of the four adulthood markers (33.07 percent of weighted interview sample). We also excluded from the sample emerging adults who had experienced a very high number of regroupings (five or more, 2.22 percent of weighted interview sample), knowing that these cases tend to be highly skewed toward economic deprivation and psychological depression (Smith et al. 2011). Thus, interview cases were selected for the spotlight subsample if they had experienced between one and five regroupings within the past five years – i.e. since the prior wave of the study (64.71 percent of weighted interview sample).

Optimistic personal outlook. In response to scholarship finding that one of the characteristic cultural structures of emerging adulthood is an optimistic personal outlook despite encountering structural barriers (e.g. Arnett [2006] 2015; Silva 2013; Smith and Snell 2009), we also based the sample selection on life expectations and outcomes, selecting those who were relatively optimistic about their present lives (91.40 percent of weighted interview sample) and who saw their lives as heading in a positive direction in the future (89.28 percent of weighted interview sample). The selected cases were those who expressed that their life outcomes thus far had not been worse than expected and that they liked where their lives were headed.

Parental social class. In order to more adequately assess the role of social class backgrounds, we constructed a measure based on data from the Wave 1 parental surveys, which took place when the respondents were 13-17 years old and still predominantly within their parents' households. The measures in the parental social class variable included: household

combined income, parental educational attainment (both mother's and father's and the highest attainment combined), assessment of parental debt to savings ratio, and parental homeownership status. By using the Wave 1 parental survey data, we were able to construct a measure that reflects multiple dimensions of parental social class background for each case, rather than limiting to a single dimension. This is a unique advantage of this study, as even the most recent studies on emerging adulthood have been limited on ways of measuring social class, with Arnett (2015) basing social class solely on the mother's educational attainment status at the time of the most current interviews, and Silva (2013) limiting the sample to only working class emerging adults. Thus, we extend prior literature on emerging adults by taking a more complex perspective of social class.

The parental social class measure was used to ensure the picture of emerging adulthood was not presented solely on the American middle class, as some critics have maintained (Côté and Bynner 2008). To construct a combined measure of parental social class that accounts for access to economic and educational capital as emerging adults embarked on their adulthood launchings, we defined "upper class" as emerging adults whose parental income was \$100,000 or more with any combined parental education or those whose parental income was \$50,000-100,000 with highest parental education being doctorate or professional degree. We first grouped into a broad "middle class" emerging adults whose parental income was \$50,000-100,000 with combined parental education as less than a doctorate or professional degree, or parental income between \$20,000-50,000 with education of Bachelor's degree or more, or income of less than \$20,000 combined with education being doctorate or professional degree. We defined "working class" as those emerging adults whose parents earned \$20,000-50,000 with parental education being Associate's degree or less, or those who earned less than \$20,000 with an Associate's

degree. Finally, we defined “lower class” as those emerging adults whose parents earned less than \$20,000 combined and whose educational attainment was some college or less.

This resulted in the breakdown by parental social class presented at the top of Table 2. As a way of ensuring that this measure of social class does comport with the expectations we have for debt-to-savings ratios and homeownership status, we show in the middle of Table 2 how the four social class groupings breakdown across both measures. This evidences that, as expected, upper class are significantly more likely to have some or a lot of savings (29.85 percent). In comparison, middle class are less likely to have a lot of savings (9.08 percent) and more likely to be just breaking even (22.79 compared to 9.62 percent of upper class). The working class are less likely to have some savings (23.56 percent compared to 48.47 percent of middle class), more likely to be breaking even (44.48 percent) and more likely to have debt (29.31 percent). Almost the entire lower class are within the debt or breaking even categories (36.56 and 52.9 percent respectively). Likewise, homeownership is nearly universal among the upper class (93.59 percent), slightly more dispersed among middle class (84.87 percent), still common but noticeably less so among working class (59.57), and rare among lower class (31.47 percent).

Considering the middle class is the broadest category of social classes in the U.S. (e.g. Rose 2015), we further nuanced this category to reflect the vulnerability of people who are technically in the middle class but are significantly more at risk of downward mobility. Drawing upon works such as Rose (2015), we conceive of homeownership status to be a key characteristic of middle class standing, and works such as Porter (2012) indicate that having significant debt is a key predictor of downward social mobility among the middle class. Thus, we bracket the middle class group into two subgroups: upper-middle and lower-middle class. Lower-middle class separates from the broader, upper-middle class grouping those cases who do not own their

home or who rate themselves as having more debt than savings or assets. Of the broader category of the full range of middle class (which represents 40.46 percent of the full survey sample), the upper-middle class respondents constitute 72.71 percent, and the lower-middle class 27.29 percent (displayed at the bottom of Table 2).

[Table 2 Here]

We then apply this categorization to the interview sample. Continuing the focus on “mainstream” Americans, we again focus the spotlight on the majority of cases, i.e. those fitting within working class, lower-middle class, and upper-middle class. While eventually it would be worthwhile to extend the study to include the lower class (8.58 percent) and upper class (23.66 percent), this study focuses on expanding the even more narrow emerging adulthood literature to: (a) account for interview cases from more than one social class (Silva 2013), and (b) provide a more nuanced understanding of social class groupings across a broader swath of emerging adults (Arnett 2015). The result is a focus on the 67.76 percent of American parents we categorize: upper-middle class, lower-middle class, and working class. When constraining the weighted interview sample to these social class criteria, the result is 193 cases (66.1 percent of weighted interviews).

Mainstream emerging adulthood. Though prior literature has discussed each of these structural and cultural characteristics as being the “norm” of the mostly “non-normed” emerging adulthood life stage, one of our early findings on this project is the relatively small proportion of cases who fit all these criteria simultaneously (Herzog and Williams 2015). Each categorization represents the majority of emerging adults when taken alone, but when combined only 20.89 percent of the interview sample fit all these criteria simultaneously. That alone is a finding worth further investigation. Nevertheless, we proceed here with investigating the prototypical emerging

adult, as depicted in prior studies, as well as following the typical mainstream sociological approach represented in regression analyses of studying the mean across factors held in tandem. Imposing the sampling criteria – of “sorta” on educational goals, career establishment, and parental independence, with an average number of “regroupings,” and having an optimistic personal orientation, combined with working and middle class parental background –the sample of interview cases narrowed from 302 to 61 cases (26 upper-middle, 12 lower-middle, and 23 working class).

“Similar” life experiences. The final step in the spotlight case selection was to use a qualitative process to select cases that had similar regrouping stories. In this initial exploration, we were interested in focusing on interviewees who, in many ways, presented as similar stories, i.e. a male who dropped out of school, moved back home, and reevaluated medical career pursuits, or a female who had an intense break-up from a long-term partner that caused a major reorientation in plans to move after school and establish careers together. These are cases that during interviews, or in the interviewer de-brief meetings afterward, interviewers discussed as having a great deal in common with their life stories but with some noticeable differences. We were curious in this study whether the differences in their stories had anything to do with social class, and if we compared emerging adults who are in relatively similar individual decision moments whether we would find any social patterning attributable to their differences in access to social or economic resources.

To qualitatively select cases with similar life experiences, we drew upon interviewer knowledge, field notes written by interviewers immediately after interview completion, and analysis of the opening sections of interviews (which focused on updates on significant events since the prior wave of the study, as well as current household arrangements). Combined, these

analyses led to the selection of six case studies, all of which share something in common with at least one of the other case studies, and all of which are also distinct in key ways. This spotlight case selection includes two from upper-middle class parental background, two from lower-middle class, and two from working class backgrounds.

“Controlling” for gender. To essentially “control” for gender, as is typically done in quantitative analyses, we include a comparison case across gender within each social class grouping, such that one of the cases in each social class is a female and one a male. We do this to assess first the patterns across the three social class backgrounds holding gender “constant” by comparing only female cases. We then review each of the social class categories again only for male cases to assess whether a similar social class picture appears to emerge “net” of gender. This acknowledges that gender differences are likely to exist and to intersect with social class in key ways, while also allowing for a comparison across social class differences that accounts for gender variations.

Spotlight Cases

The result of the spotlight case selection described above is a two (gender) by three (social class) table depicted in Figure 1. We assigned each of the selected cases a name to mask their identity and include their case identification code for other analyzers with confidentiality agreements with the National Study of Youth & Religion project to draw comparisons to other analyses. The comparisons within social class and across gender are summarized on the left side of the figure (i.e. dropped out or finished, reached some or sorta reached some), and the comparisons in marker status within gender and across social class are summarized on the top of the figure (i.e. long-term career versus student in-progress). Within each cell of Figure 1 is a capitalized letter that refers to their regrouping status, as depicted in Figure 2. Figure 2 represents

the full analytical possibilities in terms of regroupings across each of the three markers (M1=education/career, M2=romantic partner/children, M3=parental financial/residential independence). The lower case letter at the beginning of each string indicates the regrouping status for each marker (r=regroup, n=no regroup). For example, the upper left quadrant (A) represents having a regroup across all three markers (rM1, rM2, rM3), and the bottom right quadrant (H) represents having no regroups across any of the three markers (nM1, nM2, nM3). While Figure 2 represents the analytical full range of potential regrouping combinations, Figure 1 shows the letter of regrouping combinations that each spotlight case actually represents (C, D, F, and I).

[Figure 1 & 2 Here]

Data Analysis

After selecting the cases, we conducted in-depth coding on the full two-four hour verbatim interview transcripts (averaging 20-40 single-spaced pages). Specifically, we focused on examining the different ways emerging adults communicate their pathways to adulthood, the resources they have been able to draw upon, the types of feedback they receive from those around them, and the overall role of social class in explaining the variance. *A priori* codes were constructed based on the existing literature on emerging adulthood and the role of social class, and these codes were used to categorize responses to key interview questions throughout the transcripts. The *a priori* codebook and Atlas.ti code families, codebook, and quotations with emergent themes are provided in the appendices.

RESULTS

The analysis for this study focuses a “spotlight” on six cases selected for their similar life experiences during emerging adulthood, with two cases representing each social class

background (i.e. upper-middle class, lower-middle class, working class). Although there is much cultural homogeneity across the life stage of emerging adulthood as a whole, the six spotlight cases featured in this analysis help show the sometimes subtle but profound ways that structural issues associated with social class affect emerging adults in their ability to launch, navigate, and regroup during this stage of life. Both economic and social resources are taken into account when analyzing the patterns across social classes. While acknowledging that each emerging adult does make certain life choices, the cross comparison of emerging adults facing similar obstacles with varied outcomes across social class helps show how very similar life experiences with shared cultural orientations can become more or less realized given the range of supports and struggles emerging adults experience with their varying access to economic and social resources. As we show in the pages to follow, these resources become crucial for launching into adulthood. Drawing upon the airplane metaphor in the public understanding of adulthood as a simple dichotomy between successful launches and “failure to launch,” we show that while those with fewer resources can and do still launch, there are often varying “departure and arrival times,” responses to “turbulence,” “unexpected delays,” and even the need from time to time to temporarily “land” the plane for a periods of “refueling.”

Ambiguous Adulthood

We begin with Deja, a 27-year-old upper-middle class emerging adult. While Deja is the most settled of all the spotlight cases, a closer examination uncovers that there is still a degree of unsettledness in her life. This is evidenced primarily in the areas of education and career. While Deja has been able to build a strong career for herself in sales at a large technology company, she has yet to achieve her education goals and knows that career advancement in her field is closely tied to furthering her education. At the same time, it is clear that Deja is not notably fazed by the

incomplete status of her post-secondary schooling. She continues to speak confidently about her education, considering herself to have “the equivalent of an Associate’s [degree]” and saying, “even though I didn’t finish, I can always finish, you know.” She now looks to the tuition reimbursement program provided by her company as her ticket to completing her degree. The result is that in the past year Deja, at 27, has only recently begun to see herself as an adult, attributing this to the financial independence attained through establishment of her career.

Then there is Sara, a 26-year-old who represents a lower-middle class “flight pattern” on the path to adulthood. Despite finishing her education, Sara reflects a slightly less settled state as compared to Deja because of the lack of stability with her career. While Sara works for a museum, a dream job for her, she also reveals in her interview that she must hold a second job as a waitress to make ends meet financially. In addition, Sara has faced major “turbulence” in the area of romantic relationships, as she recently experienced not one, but two devastating, back-to-back break ups. Sara reflects the ambiguity she feels around how to engage in dating and establish a long-term partnership, saying, “I think that can be very difficult for people my age... just trying to kind of figure out where to go...it’s really hard today, to meet someone.” She sees dating as more complicated for her generation than for those in the past because of the barriers created by technology and the limited opportunities she feels she has to meet people.

The result of the instability and turbulence for Sara is psychological uncertainty as to whether or not she has reached adulthood. When asked if she considers herself to be an adult, she responds, “I don’t know...sometimes I do...I like to pretend I’m an adult sometimes.” Her unsure answer reflects the difficulty of matching one’s current life situation with the traditional expectations of becoming an adult. The reaction for emerging adults to this incongruence is often

a very unsettled view of the future and an increased importance placed on flexibility. Sara expresses her amenability to change when asked about future plans, saying:

Yea, I'm good for right now we'll see what happens in the future... 'Cause that may, I mean that may change in six months, that may change in a year and so like I'm ok with that changing... I think that's the most important part, is like the ability to kinda change with it. Change with kinda what's goin' on in the world.

Sara reflects the adjustments that emerging adults must make in order to navigate the lack of clearly defined pathways into adulthood.

Finally, there is a Jade, a working class emerging adult who represents a “flight pattern” that stands in contrast to both Deja and Sara. At the age of 24, Jade has already experienced multiple obstacles on her path to adulthood. Not only is Jade working to navigate education, career, and romantic relationships, she already has a child upon entering the life stage of emerging adulthood. Jade must balance the responsibilities of being a mother and the realities of fighting for child support from the biological father with the necessities of finishing her GED and maintaining her job at a salon. Compounding these struggles are the toxic relationship with her ex-boyfriend, her mother who begins a custody battle for her son, and the numerous health problems she constantly battles.

When comparing Jade’s life circumstances with those of Deja or Sara, it is important to point out that it would be incorrect to assume that the traditional markers for adulthood are a solely middle class aspiration. Despite the extreme external circumstances and structural instability, Jade still expresses aspirations that are in line with traditional markers of adulthood. When asked about how her life has gone based on her expectations, Jade explains that she had expected to be married, in college, and maybe expecting her first child. These are the same type of aspirations expressed by those in the upper- and lower-middle class, supporting the claim that there are features of emerging adulthood that make it a cultural homogeneous life stage.

At the same time, there is social class variance in the degree of ambiguity experienced around adulthood identities. When asked if she considers herself an adult, Jade unequivocally answers, “yeah,” explaining, “cause I’m on my own pretty much...I pay all my own bills, I don’t ask anybody for anything. Everything I have is mine...having [my son] made me grow up a lot too.” The responsibility and independence of adulthood is clear for Jade, reflecting less overall ambiguity in her view of her adulthood identity as compared to Deja or Sara.

Similar patterns are seen with the male cases across social class. Michael is a 24-year-old upper-middle class emerging adult who has experienced a great deal of unsettledness in the areas of education and career. While he has yet to complete his education, start his career, or establish a long-term partnership, it is important to point out that, like Jade, this is not because Michael does not aspire to achieve these markers. When asked what it would take for him to be truly happy with his life at age forty Michael replies, “Hm [pause]. I’m not sure. I mean I want to have kids by then, be married, and have a stable home, but. Be financially stable [pause], I don’t know.” These traditional aspirations reinforce the existence of a culturally homogeneous mindset during the life stage of emerging adulthood and yet an overall lack of clarity in how to achieve these aspirations. These are the effects of the de-institutionalization of higher education, career pathways, dating, marriage, and family that emerging adults must navigate. The result for Michael is the same type of ambiguity as expressed by Sara, saying that he feels like an adult “in some ways yes, in other ways no.”

Dan represents a lower-middle class case that specifically highlights struggles with achieving independence from parents. Dan, now 25, began college as a nursing major, but after struggling with grades and feeling like he did not fit in, he dropped out and moved back home to live with his mother. This act of “boomeranging” back home raises questions of what it means to

be independent while living under a parent's roof and receiving substantial financial assistance. The struggle is seen in Dan's relationship with his mother. Dan and his mother clashed when she tried to give him detailed, motherly advice about how to navigate the subway system, something that Dan had regularly done on his own before moving home. Dan snapped at her when she would not let up, hurting his mother's feelings and driving a wedge between them. They stopped speaking to each other for several months even as they continued to live under the same roof. Despite eventually getting back on speaking terms, real damage was done to their relationship. Dan's situation highlights the complexity for both emerging adults and their parents in navigating this marker of adulthood. The result for Dan is that he does not see himself as an adult, and when asked what it would take to become an adult, he says, "I guess once I have my job, my career going. And, uh, once I move out."

Finally, Tristan represents a working class case that follows a similar pattern to Jade. While Tristan expresses the same type of aspirations in terms of getting married, starting a family, obtaining a stable job, and eventually owning a home, he clearly faces more structural barriers than the middle class emerging adults. Not only is he working to figure out his own pathway to adulthood while mired in job struggles and legal troubles, he is also saddled with the expectation of caring for his grandmother and his parents. Like Jade, he has been forced to grow up quickly because of external circumstances. The result is that adulthood is actually less ambiguous for Tristan, and at 26 years old he definitely considers himself to be an adult.

The six spotlight cases in this study highlight patterns seen across the full sample of emerging adults. While there are features that support the argument that emerging adulthood is a cultural homogeneous life stage, there is also evidence showing there are distinct differences

across social classes that affect the ways emerging adults navigate the transition to adulthood. These social class differences are further unpacked in the next section.

Structural Barriers

In this section, we explore the advantages and disadvantages in navigating paths to adulthood based on social class, specifically in terms of access to economic and social resources. These resources can be viewed as the “fuel” necessary to keep the airplane in flight. Having assessed the full interview sample by social class, we found that emerging adults often experience “turbulence” in their launchings into adulthood, sometimes leading to “recalibrations” and even “forced landings” after initial launches. This section again focuses on the narratives of the spotlight case studies to show the ways in which structural barriers do vary across the different social class backgrounds of the upper-middle, lower-middle, and working class.

Deja’s story provides insight into the structural environment typically experienced by upper-middle class emerging adults. As may be expected, Deja has encountered relatively few structural barriers. She has had access to internships, resources to relocate for various jobs, and the support of her parents to briefly move back home to regroup after a difficult relationship break up. Deja explains that before she took her current job, “[I] went home to get my mind right. I’m like, okay I gotta go home, touch base, like, plug back in to my people, you know, and try to basically find myself again, cause I was that lost.” In addition to accessing her social safety net, relocating for her new job provided a path to both quickly move past the break up and further her career in sales. Her job now continues to provide both financial and social stability for her.

While her family is able to provide her with economic resources, the financial stability from her job has lifted Deja to a place where she does not need to lean on this safety net. The one major barrier for Deja is her substantial amount of student loan debt. However, the way Deja

describes her current life situation sheds light on the overall lack of structural barriers she has encountered. She says, “I think I’m doing better than what I thought I was gonna do. Um, I’m not gonna say I didn’t fathom doing well at [this company], but you know, it’s like the sky’s the limit at this point.” She believes she has already achieved a higher standard of living than her parents and is very aware that her life is going very smoothly. In fact, she says, “... judging up against other people in my same situation, I’m flying!” Ironically, this comment speaks directly to the metaphor we engage in this study in terms of “flying” with little turbulence.

While Sara’s story also illustrates much of the advantage afforded to the middle class, there are differences in the structural barriers she encounters on her path to adulthood. On the one hand, Sara’s college degree provides economic and social advantages that Deja does not currently have. On the other hand, being raised by a single, lower-middle class mother has given her a narrower safety net. Sara describes her upbringing as:

I was very lucky in the way that I grew up, in that- even though my- my mom is a teacher and even though it wasn't paying her a lot of money, she continued to do it. She was a single mom...so that really instilled in my sisters and I, you need to do what you wanna do and that you're good at, despite not having the finances to back it up.

This mentality is evident in Sara’s pursuit of her “dream job” at a museum. While she has a job she loves, the lack of financial stability in this job forces her to spend the majority of her time, almost forty hours a week, working a second job as a waitress and living paycheck to paycheck. However, even though Sara is less advantaged in her access to resources than Deja, it is clear that she does have a safety net in place and is still advantaged in her middle class position. When asked if her parents still help her financially, she replies:

Um, sometimes. It- it really depends on the situation. You know, on a day-to-day basis, no. But if, you know, if there’s something that I’m really struggling with, like if I’m struggling to make rent or...if I’m, you know, just kind of feeling a little down and out where I am paying rent but I’m, you know, have zero money extra then, you know, it’s like a hundred bucks here and there. Um, so, like, living here it’s on my own, and, so yea.

Like Deja, Sara has major debt from student loans, contributing to her financial instability, but it is also clear that there is a safety net in place for her to lean on if needed. Thus, while Sara shows fewer advantages than Deja, they both have certain middle class advantages.

Then there is Jade, a young woman who has faced numerous, compounding structural barriers over the course of her life. The safety net available to Deja and Sara was never constructed for Jade, and even the entrance into emerging adulthood was a struggle, as she had to navigate both education and single parenthood. She describes, “My mom was holdin’ [my son] while I was getting my diploma...It was, it was tough...I went ahead and done it though for [my son], myself, but for him more.” While Jade relocated to a small town with her mother and at one point relied on her for childcare, her mother does not provide much stability or economic support. Financially, not only has Jade had to provide for her son (with limited child support from the biological father), she also began a relationship with a man who got her addicted to prescription drugs, mooched off her financially, and created a hostile situation that lead Jade’s mother to begin a custody battle for her son. These circumstances resulted in Jade losing all remaining social support from her family. She describes the situation:

Jade: I felt like my whole family was kinda against me. Cause my grandparents they were the ones who paid for my mom’s lawyer. Most of it. Cause they’re very well off, they own businesses they uh, they have a six thousand square feet house it’s. They’re pretty well off, I’ve never asked them for nothing though.

Interviewer: Have they ever offered anything?

Jade: No. Nothing else from my family like. I don’t I don’t I don’t uh, depend on them I guess. I don’t, it, I don’t and if they do try, if they ever have tried I’m like no nu uh. Cause it’s kinda been like thrown in my face before if they have ever helped. I don’t like that. Like if you’re going to do something for me do it outta the kindness of your heart and not throw it back up in my face later. And that be your purpose, would be just to do that. That’s kinda how my mom is.

Despite eventually winning the custody battle, breaking off the romantic relationship, and ending her substance abuse addiction, she still resents her mother for putting her and her son through the stress and continues to live with the long-term ramifications of having less of a safety net.

In addition, her numerous health problems and lack of social support make the obstacles seem even more insurmountable. When asked about friends, Jade says, “I don’t really hang out with anybody here...I’ve probably gotten used to it I guess.” When asked what happiness would look like for her, Jade replies:

“Uh...I would like t—uh, to not have so many you know problems. And stressing problems that I’ve already had. I would just like it to be settled you know, like a like a normal person life [small laugh] cause I’ve never been never been able to call myself normal I guess. Or lived normal life.”

The lack of support is evident for Jade, and while she continues to maintain the same aspirations as Deja and Sara, it is clear that the structural barriers are more intense for Jade. She even references a “normal life,” i.e. one that better meets middle class standards, as having been out of reach. While Jade attempts to maintain the optimistic outlook that is so characteristic of emerging adulthood, she also recognizes her disadvantages by saying, “I got the short end of the stick. Nah I’m just kidding [laughs] Um, uh...probably sometimes I have felt that way.”

A look into the male cases only reinforces the social class differences. While some gender differences are detectable in the ways life experiences are expressed, it is also clear that similar social class dynamics are evident. Both Michael and Deja, the two upper-middle class cases, emphasize the importance of being thankful for the opportunities they have had, and while Michael describes the advantage some people have over others, his use of gratitude masks his acknowledgement of his own social class advantage. He explains:

I think we need to be grateful for all the small things, I mean [long pause]. I mean I understand people like aren’t born as well off as others, or they have bad situations, but I mean if they’re still alive, still able to feed themselves, I mean [pause]. I mean, I, could

be good, I don't know. I've never really been in a situation where I can't be grateful though.

Michael's advantage is also seen in his struggles with his education goals. Michael knows that finishing school is a major obstacle, but he feels confident that if he can finish then he will be able to achieve an even higher standard of living than his parents. Despite disappointing his parents when he dropped out of school, they continue to offer both their financial and social support. Michael describes, "They actually had me come up and withdraw from school and helped me moved out, so I mean it wasn't terrible, they're very accepting and loving parents, so. I mean, they understood. I had problems." Michael employs his economic and social safety net when he returns home, and while Michael is not currently flying as high or as smoothly as Deja, the resources afforded to him based on his upper-middle class background assure a steady flight plan into adulthood.

Similar to Michael, Dan also describes having a safety net available. Like Sara (the other lower-middle class case), Dan was raised by a single mother with limited resources. However, his father is a doctor, and they have begun to re-establish a relationship that has given Dan even greater access to economic and social resources than he once had. Dan currently lives with his mother in her apartment, and she pays for all the major bills and household items. His father pays for his cell phone bill and also paid for his entire education so that Dan would not have any debt. Dan's access to resources has allowed him to take his time regrouping after struggling in school. He eventually re-launched and completed his education and now sees a viable path toward achieving upward mobility and attaining a standard of living more reflective of his father. When asked about his life, Dan says, "I think I've pretty much lived a full life so far." Thus, even though Dan lives a modest life in his mother's apartment, we see the same type of access to many middle class advantages that we saw with Sara.

As with Deja and Sara, Michael and Dan show similarities in their middle class backgrounds. While there is some evidence of slight mobility upward and downward across the individual cases, overall the four middle class cases seem well poised to reproduce their middle class standing as they launch into adulthood. On the other hand, Tristan represents a case from a working class background that resembles Jade in terms of the confrontation with numerous structural barriers. Tristan's parents did not go to college, and while he sees that his parents' traditional working class pathways are not available for him, it has been difficult for him to finish his education and attempt to be upwardly mobile. Instead of receiving economic and social resources from his parents, he has often had to do the reverse and step in to provide for his family. He has spent time renovating a home to be more accessible for his grandparents and also agreed to become the primary caretaker for his grandmother. He reflects on this saying, "my family don't have much money to begin with, so we all have to work. You know." He has even stepped in for his girlfriend, having her move in with him to get her out of a bad situation even though he has strong moral convictions against cohabitation.

Tristan also experienced "turbulence" with a group of friends when they got busted for drug possession and were forced to spend a night in jail. Tristan describes this as a "slap in the face" that also rattled his relationship with his parents. This was a wakeup call for Tristan, and he intentionally distanced himself from that group of friends and refocused his attention on his family and job as a paramedic. Like Jade, Tristan displays optimism despite the obstacles he has encountered, diverting the attention away from his lack of economic resources and focusing on the importance of interpersonal relationships with his family. He says, "...as far as I deserve, I'm rich man. I got a family that loves me. I got people that- that wanna be around me." He continues, saying, "Some people, they don't have to have much money to be happy. Just like me,

I can be broke and be happy.” Thus, Tristan evidences some of the same structural barriers seen with Jade. Both cases encountered health, legal, or drug-related issues that have long-term impacts on their adulthood trajectories. They both desired to leave their hometowns and be upwardly mobile, and yet both have increasingly resigned that this may either not be possible or only possible in the distant future. As with nearly all emerging adults, they maintain the cultural value of optimism for their personal future, but given the difficulties they have already had to face, there is more of a sting in the way they recount their optimism.

In summary, the previous section on ambiguous adulthood provides support for emerging adulthood as a life stage, with enough similarities in experiences during the 20s to deserve the title of a life stage. At the same time, this section helps to highlight the real structural differences that result in distinct experiences of emerging adulthood. Because social class dynamics are often masked by the general ambiguity of adulthood, some scholars have concluded that social class is not a significant factor affecting this life stage and that the results are too varied to detect noticeable social class patterns. However, these spotlight cases show that there are in fact – sometimes subtle but nevertheless profound – differences by social class backgrounds. Working class emerging adults have less access to “fuel” to maintain long flight patterns or achieve upward trajectories into adulthood. At the same time, there seem to be some advantages for the working class to having less ambiguity around their adulthood identities during this life stage.

External Feedback

This next section explores the type of feedback that emerging adults receive as they navigate the path to adulthood. Following the plane metaphor, feedback can be viewed like the communication from air-traffic control during a flight. The feedback can reaffirm that the course is correct and the plane is headed in the right direction, or the feedback can note that an

adjustment is needed because the plane has gone off path or that bad weather is ahead. It is also possible to receive either unclear or no messages at all from air-traffic control. Mixed messages or the absence of feedback can make it difficult to navigate the storms and can even result in crash landings. This study finds that there are social class differences across external feedback, shaping both the identity and direction of emerging adults.

Deja's parents were very vocal with their feedback about her life trajectory, wanting her to stay in college and graduate with a degree. When asked if her parents are happy with her decisions she says:

They understand. I'm not gonna say, cause my mom's like a career student, and my dad's all about knowledge and things like that. I'm not gonna say they didn't want me to graduate...I'm sure they wanted me to graduate. But they realize that wasn't the way I would- decided to go...and I'm excelling without it. And I'm not saying I don't wanna go back, you know?

This quote shows how her parents provided feedback that education is important and that they wanted her to remain on course with pursuing a college degree. However, they also allowed her to make her own decisions when she chose a different path. The feedback from her parents then shifted to reinforcing her adult status. They emphasized that she is a grown up and can now make her own decisions and support herself financially.

While there was slight dissonance when Deja did not stay in school, her parents did provide consistent feedback that education is important and that she must always continue to learn, strive, and succeed. This is reflected in the ways Deja emphasizes the importance of on-the-job learning and her aspirations to eventually return to school.

Like Deja, Sara often received feedback from her mother. As described, the messages communicated to Sara throughout her life were to pursue her passions, and her job at the museum reflects this pursuit. At the same time, there was some dissonance as her mother was not

thrilled about her actually relocating for a dream. She wanted Sara to live at home and pay off her student loans first. Sara describes this as, “I ultimately think I made the right decision...My mom may not agree.” Even though there was some disagreement, Sara’s mother also allowed her to make her own decisions, feedback that lines up with broader cultural feedback that the ultimate goal is to become an independent adult. Sara takes responsibility for her decision to move saying:

I guess kind of having faith in myself that I could actually do it. So. 'Cause it's a, it's a pretty big step to move on your own, I knew one person moving down here. I didn't have a job when I moved down here, so. It was just having faith that I could find something that I wanted to do when I was here.

For Jade, there was primarily an absence of feedback, and when feedback was communicated, it was often confusing with mixed messages and inconsistent responses. Earlier when Jade was pregnant, her mother decided she should get an abortion, but this feedback came so late that Jade was too far along with her pregnancy to legally get an abortion. Jade also notes the confusion she experienced when her mom filed for custody of her son. She says:

She did not have to put [my son] through that. I would have rathered her put me in jail than take my kid from me you know, it was just like why? Why would you do this to me? It she knew how much I cared—she knows how much I care about my son. And I’ve always heard her compliment me on being such a good mom to other people.

While Jade thinks she is receiving feedback that she is a good mom, her mother’s legal actions do not support this feedback, resulting in very mixed messages to the extent that Jade jokes of the confusions by saying that her mother should “go to a doctor and get checked for bipolar.”

While there is a clear absence of coherent feedback for Jade, she has thus far avoided any crash landings on her path to adulthood. The stand out difference for her story is the presence of a “touchpoint,” that is, a significantly influential person whose presence provides important support and feedback. The “touchpoint” for Jade is her stepdad whom Jade actually set up with

her mother. Her stepdad acts as a father figure to her son, and Jade notes that she actually feels closer to him than to her mother. When asked if there is anyone she looks up to, she says:

Yeah um, that'd be my step dad a lot. Like my son does he looks up to him a lot, he calls him his super hero. Yeah he's like his knight in shining armor. But I know if I really needed somebody or somebody to at least talk to or something I could go to him. He's pretty trust worthy and uh I trust him with [my son]."

During the custody battle, Jade describes her stepdad as being influential to her, as she said he did not side with her mother and pretty much stayed out of the situation. Jade describes this as key to why she maintains a close relationship with him. The belief that she can trust him suggests consistent feedback, something rather lacking in Jade's life.

The feedback for the male cases reflects similar social class dynamics. While Michael's parents were disappointed when he dropped out of school, this feedback was consistent with the message that higher education is important. Their disappointment is quickly checked and funneled into messages communicating the need to regroup in order to eventually return to college. Michael describes this, "I think they're probably a little disappointed still but they're very understanding. I mean, they've accepted it and they, they're trying to help me as much as they can, in any way possible." Their continued financial and social support helps him eventually re-launch. While there was some dissonance when Michael did not follow the prescribed path to higher education, his parents continued to maintain their feedback and helped him correct course.

Dan received a great deal of feedback from both his mother and father when he got off course with his education and career goals. While his mother encouraged him to pursue nursing, he received negative feedback on this decision both from his failing grades and from his father who wanted him to be a doctor. The clashing feedback necessitated a regroup for Dan, and he moved back home with his mother. Now that he is living at home, the feedback from his mother has created enough dissonance that Dan does not feel he can consider himself an adult, and he

actually shifts to seeking feedback from his father instead. When an instructor at his community college urges him to consider pursuing biology, the feedback from his father reinforces that this is a viable path.

Despite some dissonance in the feedback Dan receives from influential adults, both of Dan's parents communicate a consistent message of support and the need for financial stability that continues to push Dan forward. Dan describes:

My mom, uh, she has been supportive, kinda no matter what. Like, whatever I do, as long as it leads to a job that makes money. I think it should be that *and* something I enjoy. We might have few diff[erences], you know, conflicting opinions about that. But I think she's become more supportive as well, like my dad.

For Tristan, the directional feedback is limited. While he has a close relationship with his parents, they do not provide much feedback in terms of his trajectory. After his arrest Tristan says, "I felt that I let them down tremendously. And I know I did. You know? Since then I haven't- I haven't and will not let that happen again." The only feedback that Tristan seems to receive is the disappointed reaction of his parents, and his response is to separate himself from his friends and recalibrate his identity so that he will not face this reaction again. In addition, there is no prescribed feedback for how to advance his education or career. Tristan is the one who realizes the traditional working class pathway that his parents took appears to be gone. While his parents are supportive, it is evident that they primarily support from the sidelines rather than actively direct the course he is on, perhaps not knowing what advice to give since the path of replication of their trajectories is absent. Tristan summarizes, "They're supportive of me. They know I wanna go to school. They know I wanna keep on with my career and further my education and they're real supportive and real happy about that." The course from there appears to be mostly up to him.

Tristan's interview also reflects a "touchpoint." Ironically, the officer that arrests Tristan

actually becomes a highly influential presence in his life. Tristan explains, “Him [the arresting officer] and I have become good friends, and I still talk to him.” It is clear that Tristan wants to receive positive feedback from this “touchpoint” as he says, “I think he’s gonna realize that yeah, I’ve- I’ve learned my lesson.” The officer is a resource outside of his immediate family, and Tristan seems determined to make sure the feedback is positive. While this “touchpoint” may have prevented a crash landing for Tristan, there is an overall absence of directive feedback for Tristan, resulting in a lack of clear course planning and direction for his path to adulthood.

In the midst of confusion and ambiguity, the need for directive feedback from air-traffic control is crucial. Even when there is some dissonance in the feedback, the communication can help emerging adults correct course and continue down a path to adulthood. However, when the feedback does not come, the navigation becomes difficult. For working class emerging adults like Jade and Tristan, the feedback can be confusing, making it even more difficult to navigate the path to adulthood. The importance of “touchpoints” becomes crucial for these working class emerging adults, providing at least some resources to keep them in flight.

In summary, the working class cases highlighted here – and the many interview cases they represent – typically experience more numerous and intense structural barriers than the middle class cases. At the same time, we find that working class emerging adults are more quickly able to see themselves as adults, a type of stability that in some ways can be an advantage because of the decreased ambiguity around adulthood identity, and yet, at the same time, can be a disadvantage affecting the launch duration and final socioeconomic trajectory. While middle class emerging adults tend to continue with the ambiguity of adulthood identity longer, the additional time appears to allow them to work toward more socioeconomic stability.

DISCUSSION

This study shows that emerging adulthood is indeed a time of instability and confusion. The analyses reveal the ambiguity stemming from the deinstitutionalization of traditional pathways to adulthood and the uncertainty that many emerging adults experience as they attempt to establish adult trajectories. This ambiguity is one of the defining aspects of emerging adulthood that is experienced ubiquitously and creates shared experiences across the entire life stage. At the same time, the sociological literature on emerging adults tends to focus on the variations in experiences of adulthood trajectories, highlighting the structural barriers across socioeconomic status, as well as other social statuses. As Arnett (2015) articulates, sociologists tend to be primarily focused on showing the ways that emerging adulthood is not a ubiquitous experience and rather that experiences with launching into adulthood tend to be varied by subgroups. Sociologists shed light on the ways that thinking of emerging adulthood as a near-universal life stage can mask the tremendous structural barriers encountered by some emerging adults or the structural advantages afforded to others. Indeed, this study has also shown a marked distinction in the way emerging adulthood is experienced by those with less access to economic and social resources and directive feedback. These distinctions highlight the socioeconomic instability of emerging adulthood.

While the instabilities faced by emerging adults have been discussed in prior literatures, what has not yet received adequate attention is that there appears to be a tradeoff between a disambiguated adulthood identity and socioeconomic stability. These spotlight cases, and the analyses of 302 in-person interviews that led to the case selection, show that working class emerging adults can “foreclose” on adulthood tracks earlier than their more structurally advantaged peers (Settersten and Ray 2010; Silva 2013). We argue that early foreclosure can be

viewed as an early landing of the plane, potentially due to a lack of “fuel” or to a lack of directive communication from air traffic control. An early landing can serve as a way to avoid the prolonged ambiguity around adulthood identity or can be a result of the lack of structural time needed to regroup when turbulence is experienced. As many sociologists want to highlight, there can be long-term socioeconomic costs of foreclosing on adulthood earlier, setting working class adults off on lower level flight patterns, when understood purely in structural, economic outcomes.

However, what have not received adequate attention in prior studies (e.g. Settersten & Ray 2010) are the ways many working class emerging adults seem to be more psychologically settled in their adulthood identities than their more structurally advantaged peers. Without an adequate understanding of this, the (middle class-biased) message can suggest that what would necessarily be better for all emerging adults is to conform to the mainstream, middle class approach of not settling on an adulthood track too early. Such a view can essentially see a typical working class approach as psychologically weaker (e.g. Settersten & Ray 2010), or advocating it as requiring more psychological endurance in order to reach the same threshold as the middle class emerging adult (e.g. Silva 2013). What is seen in the analysis is instead a tradeoff between an ambiguous adulthood identity and socioeconomic instability. The working class emerging adults in this study seem to, on the one hand, be experiencing more socioeconomic instability, while, on the other hand, seem to be more psychologically settled in their adulthood identities. Thinking about this in terms of the areas of their lives that need the most energy or attention, the working class emerging adults tend to be expending their energies on the structural instabilities they encounter.

The more advantaged middle class emerging adults, however, tend to be focused on the reverse. Without needing to expend the same degree of energy on navigating structural barriers, (though there is certainly still some attention to this), they seem more socioeconomically stable and instead encounter the instabilities of longer periods of psychological ambiguity with their adulthood identities. Perhaps they have more time to wonder about or be anxious about how their lives will turn out, or perhaps they have more to lose if the transition to adulthood does not go well. In either case, we see in this analysis that the middle class cases have structural benefits that can come with longer periods of ambiguity around adulthood identities. At the same time, the extended duration of psychological ambiguity around adulthood identities seems to be a necessary part of what it takes to gear up for a longer launch period aimed toward the highest socioeconomic flight patterns.

In other words, the cultural idea of “failure to launch” appears to have it exactly wrong. In our summation, we see instead that there are multiple “flight patterns” to emerge into adulthood, all with some gains and some losses. One flight pattern appears to be: “launch early, land early,” with less time in the air dealing with the risks of turbulence, but also less distance traveled to the final destination. Alternatively, there is: “delayed launch, long flight,” with extended periods waiting on the tarmac and periods of time once in the air when the flight is so high up that the ground cannot be seen. Some planes may encounter greater turbulence during the long flight and may even have to land at times to refuel or regroup because of bad weather. Others may receive directions from air traffic control to help avoid prolonged experiences of turbulence. While there is greater opportunity for turbulence over the longer flight duration, the risks are more manageable given the greater fuel source and consistent communication with air traffic control.

The launch early-land early is the pattern we see more among working class emerging adults, while the delayed launch-long flight is more common for middle class emerging adults. Within the delayed launch-long flight pattern, we see lower-middle class emerging adults experiencing more of the effects of turbulence and even going through short periods of refueling, and while the upper-middle class also experience turbulence during the flight, they tend to have the fuel and feedback available to “recalibrate” and reroute the plane if bad weather is ahead. Overall, the result for the middle class is something more akin to nausea en route to a long-distance, resort-like final destination.

However, unlike prior assessments of emerging adulthood, we do not view the emerging adulthood picture as all good or all bad, or even as bifurcated such that working class experience the bad and middle class the good (e.g. Silva 2013). Instead, we see a series of tradeoffs between psychological and socioeconomic costs and gains. There is some degree of upward and downward mobility in the flight patterns, and there is also an overall structure to them. Just as travelers must weigh their (limited set of) options when flights are delayed or unexpectedly grounded, emerging adults are also faced with tradeoffs. In many cases, working class emerging adults tend to forego the socioeconomic stability for the psychological clarity of a less ambiguous adulthood identity, and the middle class the reverse.

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Table 1. Emerging Adult Status of Adulthood Marker Completion			
Marker 1 - Completed Educational Goals & Launched Career			
No	4.28		
Sorta	93.96		
Yes	1.76		
Marker 3 - Residential & Financial Independence from Parents			
No	0.43		
Sorta	74.23		
Yes	25.34		
Marker 1 & Marker 3 Status Combined - Educ/Career & Parents	Marker 3 No	Marker 3 Sorta	Marker 3 Yes
Marker 1 No	0.00	3.30	1.00
Marker 1 Sorta	0.43	69.93	23.58
Marker 1 Yes	0.00	1.01	0.76
Source: National Study of Youth & Religion, Wave 4 (2013)			

Table 2. Parental Social Class, Income & Education with Debt-Savings

Upper Class	23.66				
Middle Class	40.46				
Working Class	27.3				
Lower Class	8.58				
	Debt	Just Breaking Even	Some Savings	A Lot of Savings	Don't Know/Refused
Upper Class	6.67	9.62	47.18	29.85	6.69
Middle Class	18.56	22.79	48.37	9.08	1.19
Working Class	29.31	44.48	23.56	2.01	0.63
Lower Class	36.56	52.9	5.99	0.28	4.26
	Own	Rent	Other	Don't Know	Refused
Upper Class	93.59	4.38	1.09	0.47	0.48
Middle Class	84.87	11.58	2.61	0.57	0.38
Working Class	59.57	33.08	3.91	2.06	1.39
Lower Class	31.47	63.23	2.98	1.71	0.61
Upper-Middle Class	72.71	*Owns home or has no debt			
Lower-Middle Class	27.29	*Rents home or has debt			

Source: National Study of Youth & Religion, Wave 1 Parental Survey (2001) and Wave 4 Survey (2013)

Figure 1. Spotlight Case Studies by Social Class, Gender, Markers & Regroupings

	Female Long-Term Career	Male Student In- Progress
Upper-Middle Dropped Out, Sorta Reached Markers	<u>Deja</u> (KE-06993) D*	<u>Michael</u> (W4-01036) C*
Lower-Middle Finished, Sorta Reached Markers	<u>Sara</u> (CS-08673) F*	<u>Dan</u> (DD-03181) D*
Working Class Dropped Out, Reached Some but Not Others	<u>Jade</u> (DP-11484) I*	<u>Tristan</u> (JB-06612) I*

***Note:** Letters within case study boxes represent quadrants in Figure 2 (below).

Figure 2. Marker Regrouping Combinations (r=regroup, n=no regroup)

	M1	M2	M3
M1	A rM1, rM2, rM3	B rM1, rM2, nM3	C rM1, nM2, nM3
M2	D rM1, nM2, rM3	I rMo*	E nM1, rM2, nM3
M3	F nM1, rM2, rM3	G nM1, nM2, rM3	H nM1, nM2, nM3

*Note: Regroup for Marker “Other” (rMo) refers to superseding regroupings (e.g. legal and health issues), which affect regroupings across all markers.

Appendix A. A Priori Codebook for Spotlight Cases

Ambiguous Adulthood – aka “Many Flight Patterns”	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>De-institutionalization of traditional markers of adulthood:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Education goals completed ○ Long-term career established ○ Family formed ○ Parental independence ○ Considers self adult 	<p><i>De-Institutionalization of Viable, Long-Term, Post-Secondary Career Pathways & Rise of Higher Education as Social Institutional Pathway Toward Career Launch</i></p> <p>“There was a time not so long ago when a popular high school graduation gift was a suitcase... Young adults once hit the road on a clearly marked path... Today, one-half of those between 18 and 24 have not left their childhood bedrooms, let alone landed a job, married, or had children of their own. This is a 37 percent increase over 1970.” – Settersten & Ray (HH, p. 1)</p> <p>“Failure to launch” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. i)</p> <p>“Structural shift and new lost generation” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. iii)</p> <p>“The on-ramp from education to full-time careers and family formation is delayed for many young adults. The age at which young workers reach the median wage has increased from 26 to 30.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 2)</p> <p>“The phases of education, work, and retirement are no longer linear: The system of education for youth and learning on-the-job has been replaced by an expectation of lifelong learning and continuous upgrading of skills required to adapt to new workplace technologies and evolving occupational structure.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 2)</p> <p>“Young people today change jobs more frequently between the ages of 18 and 25 and only one out of 10 describes his or her current job as a career.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 4)</p> <p>“Young adults, especially young men, are taking longer to launch their careers.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 11)</p> <p>“Young men’s delayed entrance to full-time careers and declining access to middle-wage, blue-collar occupations are a result of skill-biased technological change.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 12)</p> <p>“More young people are attending college, but not enough are graduating to keep up with the growing demand for skill, as evidenced by the growing wage premium for college-educated workers.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 12)</p>

“Relative to young men, young women have seen substantial growth in labor force attachment over the past three decades, coinciding with their enormous growth in postsecondary enrollment and educational attainment.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 13)

“Economic hardships have contributed to the delay in the transition from adolescence to full adulthood” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 17)

In 1960, three out of four women and two out of three men completed school, left home, achieved financial independence, were married and had children by age 30. In 2000, less than half of women and only one-third of men reached the same milestones by age 30.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 17)

De-Institutionalization of Traditional Pathways into Adulthood & Rise in Social Institution of Emerging Adulthood Life Stage Between Adolescence & Adulthood

“For today’s young people, the road to adulthood is a long one. They leave home at age 18 or 19, but most do not marry, become parents, and find a long-term job until at least their late twenties. From their late teens to their late twenties they explore the possibilities available to them in love and work, and move gradually toward making enduring choices.” –Arnett (2015, Ch1, HH, p. 1)

“The rise in the ages of entering marriage and parenthood, the lengthening of higher education, and prolonged job instability during the twenties reflect the development of a new period of life for young people in the United States and other industrialized societies, lasting from the late teens through the mid- to late twenties. This period is not simply an “extended adolescence,” because it is much different from adolescence, much freer from parental control, much more a period of independent exploration. Nor is it really “young adulthood,” since this term implies that an early stage of adulthood has been reached, whereas most young people in their twenties have not made the transitions historically associated with adult status—especially marriage and parenthood—and many of them feel they have not yet reached adulthood. It is a new and historically unprecedented period of the life course, so it requires a new term and a new way of thinking; I call it emerging adulthood.” –Arnett (2015, Ch1, HH, p. 1)

“What are the distinguishing features of emerging adulthood? There are five main features: 1. It is the age of identity explorations, of trying out various possibilities, especially in love and work. 2. It is the age of instability. 3. It is the most self-focused age of life. 4. It is the age of feeling in-between, in transition, neither adolescent nor adult. 5. It is the age of possibilities, when hopes flourish, when people have an unparalleled opportunity to transform their lives.” – Arnett (2015, Ch1, HH, p. 1-2)

“People consistently state the following as the top three criteria for adulthood: 1. Accept responsibility for yourself. 2. Make independent decisions. 3. Become financially independent. All three criteria are gradual, incremental, rather than all at once.” – Arnett (2015, Ch1, HH, p. 2)

“As interviews with these young men and women reveal, the standard life course has grown increasingly uncertain...unpredictable, and risky; as a result, they must themselves remain “flexible,” altering their life trajectories according to the constant fluctuations of the labor market (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995)” (p. 17 Herzog Highlights)

“For the vast majority, however, understandings of adulthood bore little resemblance to the normalized progression of leaving home, completing school, finding a steady job, getting married, and having children that so clearly demarcated the split between childhood and adulthood in the decades following World War II” (p. 20 Herzog Highlights)

“The performances once relied upon to construct an adult identity—to feel like an adult—have become structurally unavailable and sometimes undesirable. In such unsettled times, as Swidler (1986: 279) argues, people “reorganize taken-for-granted habits and modes of experience” into new rituals that better fit the changing ethos” (p. 20 Herzog Highlights)

“It is useful to consider the sociological observation that the array of life alternatives available to emerging adults (e.g., career paths, romantic attachments, and worldviews) has expanded, but that the collective support for identity formation has decreased (Côté & Levine, 2002).” - Schwartz et al. (2005, p. 202)

Subsequent De-Institutionalization of Higher Education Payoff & Rise in Social Institution of Corporate Model of Education & Cultural Critique

“One widely shared explanation for the contemporary state of

higher education, popularized by many institutional critics, depicts an organizational sector whose failings are a function of the creep of corporatization into academia's once-hallowed halls. This deepening corporatization is argued to have led to a decline in the role of faculty relative to school administrators, and a corresponding marginalization of academic pursuits and student learning.” – Arum (HH, p. 1)

“Growing concern that the US higher education system is failing to adequately develop generic collegiate skills in its graduates...’Woefully unprepared’ is how one employer described college graduates in a 2012 survey conducted by the Chronicle of Higher Education.”” – Arum (HH, p. 3)

Bennet’s Return on Investment: “If you don’t know why you’re going to college or if you’re going mainly because most everyone you know goes, don’t go...Half of all college graduates in 2010–11 were unemployed or dramatically underemployed...Upon graduation, a college degree today is more likely to guarantee you debt than a well-paying job. • In today’s colleges, much of what is taught in the humanities and social sciences is nonsense (or nonsense on stilts), politically tendentious, and worth little in the marketplace and for the enrichment of your mind or soul...Arguably the three most successful college attendees of our generation were dropouts—Steve Jobs, Bill Gates, and Mark Zuckerberg...By the year 2018, nearly fourteen million jobs will be available that will require more than a high school diploma but less than a BA...Most of higher education fails most students...College, as currently appraised, should not be a universal commodity.” – Bennet, (HH, p. 1)

Seligo, editor of Chronicle of Higher Education in College Unbound: “A Risk-Averse, Self-Satisfied Industry. American higher education is broken... Like another American icon—the auto industry in Detroit—the higher-education industry is beset by hubris, opposition to change, and resistance to accountability... Change comes very slowly to higher education... The massive run-up in student-loan debt has raised plenty of comparisons to the bubbles of the last fifteen years in tech stocks and housing prices. Could higher education be the next bubble to burst?... The result is that the US higher-education system is becoming less of a meritocracy. In the last decade, the percentage of students from families at the highest income levels who got a bachelor’s degree has grown to 82 percent, while for those at the bottom it has fallen to just 8 percent... The student-loan process is a complex maze confusing even to those of us who have covered the industry for years. I can’t imagine the plight of parents and students who are thrown into the labyrinth anew each year.”

	<p><i>De- Institutionalization of Long-Term Romantic Partner & Family Formation</i></p> <p>“Evolving social norms entangled with economic hardships have led young people to delay household and family formation. Two-thirds of young adults in their 20s cohabit; the average age of marriage increased from 21 to 26 for women and 23 to 28 for men between 1970 and 2006.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 17)</p> <p>“This article argues that marriage has undergone a process of deinstitutionalization—a weakening of the social norms that define partners’ behavior—over the past few decades.” – Cherlin, (2004, p. 848)</p> <p><i>De-Institutionalization of Parental Independence & Ongoing Parental Support</i></p> <p>“boomerang children”: Approximately 13% of adult children between 18 and 29 move back in with their parents after an attempt to live alone.” – Forbes (Dunn, p. 1)</p>
<p>Socioeconomic & Psychological Instability – aka “Turbulence, Recalibrations, & Forced Landings”</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Regroupings:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To markers ○ To identity 	<p>“Such freedom to explore different options is exciting, and this period is a time of high hopes and big dreams. However, it is also a time of anxiety and uncertainty, because the lives of young people are so unsettled... To be a young American today is to experience both excitement and uncertainty, wide-open possibility and confusion, new freedoms and new fears.” – Arnett (2015, Ch1, HH, p. 1)</p> <p>“If emerging adults are to make enduring life commitments (e.g., romantic commitments, career choices) by the end of their 20s, they must first undertake the psychological task of individually forming a stable and viable identity that can guide and sustain these commitments.” – Schwartz et al. (2005, p. 202)</p> <p>“These forces have shredded the old rule book... The new rule book, meanwhile, is still being written, leaving much ambiguity and uncertainty for young people and their families as they try to make their way.” - Settersen & Ray (HH, p. 1)</p>
<p>Structural Barriers/Supports – aka “Fuel Supply, Layovers, Delays, and Holding Patterns”</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Safety Nets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Financial resources ○ Debt • <i>Social Safety Nets:</i> 	<p><i>No/Limited Money</i></p> <p>“Young adults haven’t only experienced high unemployment; their labor force participation, earnings, access to full-time jobs, and wealth all have declined substantially.” – Carnevale, Hanson,</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Social support (social groups – family, friends, co-workers, etc.) ○ “Touchpoints” (profound influence of one or two key people, not group) 	<p>Gulish (2013, p. 6)</p> <p>“Economists have found negative long-term economic, social, and personal consequences for individuals who enter the labor market during bad economic times...leading to reduced earnings and less job stability up to 10 to 15 years later.” – Carnevale et al. (2013, p. 6)</p> <p>“Over the past three decades, young adults have lost ground in the labor market.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 9)</p> <p>-25% decline in emerging adult (male) earnings relative to all workers between 1980 and 2010– Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 9, Figure 1.2)</p> <p>“One out of four 18= to 34-year-olds takes an unpaid job merely to gain work experience.” – Carnevale, Hanson, Gulish (2013, p. 11)</p> <p>“The most common jobs for young adults (ages 18 to 29) – such as cooks, cashiers, and waitresses – are largely concentrated in low-wage occupations– Carnevale et al. (2013, p. 36)</p> <p>Divergent Pathways</p> <p>“One group of young adults is taking their time launching into adulthood, but doing so in a careful and calculated way. They are gaining a good education, getting the building blocks in place for a successful career, and putting off marriage and children until they get their lives in order. They may be doing a leisurely backstroke, but they are headed in the right direction. A second and much larger group is in a more worrisome position. This group of young adults is treading water instead of swimming because they have embraced the responsibilities of adulthood too quickly, without being adequately prepared for today’s competitive world. These treaders often skip or struggle with the most crucial step in the transition to adulthood: education. These young people may have tried to mimic their parents’ quick paths to adulthood, only to find that following these models today makes it much harder to get a secure start in life.” – Setterson & Ray (HH, p. 1-2) [SES-wise, not psychologically]</p> <p>“Partying appears to be among the most democratic of activities, and many college students party heavily at one time or another. Yet, for a fraction of the upper classes, socializing is the central point of college. These students associate with similarly privileged others, in exclusive contexts, and in ways that allow them to expand their circle of similarly privileged acquaintances. They accomplish “social closure” in the classic Weberian sense of the term by monopolizing access to valuable ties and the experiences that constitute them as of a certain class. Classes, grades, and professors</p>
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factor in out of necessity but are relegated to the background.³⁷ Key to this form of social reproduction is isolation from less privileged others during years in which cultural tastes, social styles, friendships, and marital relationships are formed and solidified. This is ensured in part by the sheer expense of the college social whirl—as it involves sorority and fraternity fees, late-model cars, booze, dining at restaurants, spring break vacations, study abroad, fashionable clothing and accessories, and the grooming necessary to achieve the right personal style. High levels of parental funding are required, as full immersion allows little time for paid employment.”
—Armstrong (HH, p. 4)

Saddled with Debt

Given the importance of higher education today to earning a living wage with benefits, it is surprising how unprepared many young people are for college and how unformed their plans really are... The attention given to the top-tier success stories of students with graduate or professional degrees masks a harsher reality. For the bulk of young adults, the story is vastly different. For all the hype, only 5 percent of young adults today earn graduate or professional degrees by age thirty-four... Pull themselves off academic probation or dig themselves out of “rookie mistakes,” like getting too involved in extracurricular activities or taking the wrong classes. Nor do they get over switching majors, or—even more disruptive—switching institutions. It is at times like these that parents’ advice clearly separates the swimmers from the treaders.” –
Setterson & Ray (HH, p. 2)

““Everyone says you should go to college, but college doesn’t help everybody. I know I should go to college, but I think for some people, college is not for them.’... Without some form of training, young people face a future of patching together strings of low-wage jobs, forever teetering on the brink of hardship in an unforgiving economy that rewards brains over brawn... This is why 70 percent of high school seniors plan to go to college and why three million students showed up for the first day of college last year... Where did these aspirations run into the hard wall of reality?” – Setterson & Ray (HH, p. 2)

New Working Class

“As Brandon and Diana underscore, experiences of powerlessness, confusion, and betrayal within the labor market, institutions such as education and the government, and the family teach young working-class men and women that they are completely alone, responsible for their own fates and dependent on outside help only

	<p>at their peril. They are learning the hard way that being an adult means trusting no one but yourself” – Silva (p. 4 Herzog Highlights).</p> <p>“Over and over again, the men and women I interviewed told me that growing up means learning not to expect anything from anyone (see Putnam et al. 2012). They told stories of investing their time and energy in relationships and institutions, only to find that their efforts were one-sided. I demonstrate how experiences of betrayal, within both the labor market and the institutions that frame their coming of age experiences, teach young working-class men and women that they are completely alone, responsible for their own fates and dependent on outside help only at their peril. They learn to approach others with suspicion and distrust. Many make a virtue out of necessity, equating self-reliance and atomic individualism with self-worth and dignity: if they had to survive on their own, then everyone else should too. In an era of short-term flexibility, constant flux, and hollow institutions, the transition to adulthood has been inverted; coming of age does not entail entry into social groups and institutions but rather the explicit rejection of them” – Silva (p. 15 Herzog Highlights)</p>
<p>External Feedback - aka “Weather Forecasts & Air-Traffic Control”</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Looking Glass Self” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Type, whom ○ Coherency ○ Dissonance 	<p>The Looking Glass Self</p> <p>“In a very large and interesting class of cases the social reference takes the form of a somewhat definite imagination of how one’s self—that is any idea he appropriates—appears in a particular mind, and the kind of self-feeling one has determined by the attitude toward this attributed to that other mind. A social self of this sort might be called the reflected or looking-glass self” –Cooley (183)</p> <p>“A self-idea of this sort seem to have three principal elements: the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of that appearance; and some sort of self-feeling, such as pride or mortification...the thing that moves us to pride or shame is not the mere mechanical reflection of ourselves, but an imputed sentiment, the imagined effect of this reflection upon another’s mind” –Cooley (184).</p> <p>The Presentation of Self</p> <p>“Everyone is always and everywhere, more of less consciously, playing a role...it is in these roles that we know ourselves” – Goffman (19)</p> <p>“We find that performers, audience, and outsiders all utilize</p>

techniques for saving the show, whether by avoiding likely disruptions or by correcting for unavoided ones, or by making it possible for others to do so” –Goffman (153)

“When an individual appears before others, he wittingly and unwittingly projects a definition of the situation, of which a conception of himself is an important part. When an event occurs which is expressively incompatible with this fostered impression, significant consequences are simultaneously felt in three levels of social reality, each of which involves a different point of reference and a different order of fact” –Goffman (155)

Appendix B. Classification of Spotlight Cases by Social Class and Gender



Families: List of PD Families and their Members

PD Family	PDs
Lower Middle Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5.Dan-DD-03181-4-25-B-W-NR-NA-TX.docx ● 2.Sara-CS-08673-4-26-G-W-ID-SP-LA.doc
Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6.Tristan-JB-06612-4-26-B-W-EP-RG-MS.docx ● 4.Michael-W4-01036-4-24-B-W-EP-SP-OK.docx ● 5.Dan-DD-03181-4-25-B-W-NR-NA-TX.docx
Upper Middle Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1.Deja-KE-06993-4-27-G-B-BEP-RG-TX.docx ● 4.Michael-W4-01036-4-24-B-W-EP-SP-OK.docx
Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3.Jade-DP-11484-4-24-G-W-EP-SP-GA.docx ● 1.Deja-KE-06993-4-27-G-B-BEP-RG-TX.docx ● 2.Sara-CS-08673-4-26-G-W-ID-SP-LA.doc
Working Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 3.Jade-DP-11484-4-24-G-W-EP-SP-GA.docx ● 6.Tristan-JB-06612-4-26-B-W-EP-RG-MS.docx

Appendix C. Codebook: List of Code Families and their Members



Families: List of Code Families and their Members

Code Family	Codes
1.DE-INSTITUTIONALIZED ADULTHOOD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● De-Institutionalization of Organized Religion/Social Tool ● De-Institutionalization of Parental Authority ● M3a-Pfin: Yes on own ● De-Institutionalization of Higher Ed Payoff ● M1b-Career: Not LT Career ● M1b-Career: Yes LT Career ● M3b-Plive: how ● M3b-Plive: Sorta on own ● M1a-Education: Sorta Done ● M2a-Partner: Not LT Partner ● R2: Partner Regroup ● De-Institutionalization of Viable Career Options ● M2b-KIDS: Sorta Kids ● M1b-Career: Sorta LT Career ● Ambiguous Adulthood ● M4-Adult: No ● M4-Adult: Sorta ● De-Institutionalization of Family ● M1a-Education: Not Done ● M2b-Kids: Yes Kids ● M2a-Partner: Sorta LT Partner ● M3a-Pfin: Not on own ● M2a-Partner: Yes LT Partner ● De-Institutionalization of American Dream ● M2b-KIDS: No Kids ● M3b-Plive: Yes on own ● R3: Parental Independence Regroup ● M4-Adult: Yes ● Mobility: Multiple Moves ● R1: Education and/or Career Regroup ● De-Institutionalization of Friendship/Community ● M1a-Education Yes Done ● De-Institutionalization of Dating

- De-Institutionalization of Marriage as Path to Family Formation
- M3a-Pfin: Sorta on own
- De-Institutionalization of Political Authority
- Ro: Regroup Other
- M3b-Plive: Not on own

2.STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

- Support: Parents - Closeness
- Touchpoints
- Resources - Financial: No Debt
- Support: Extended Family
- Support: Religious
- Support: Partner
- Support: Parents - Married Parents
- Support: Parents - Divorced Parents
- Support: Friends - Past
- Resources - Financial: Yes from Parents
- Mobility: Multiple Moves
- Resources - Fuel for Regroup
- Resources - Financial: Not from Parents
- Support: Co-Workers
- Support: Parents - Remarried Parents
- Support: Friends
- Resources - Financial: Has Debt

3.FEEDBACK

- Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from Parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Partner - No from parents
- Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from others - Coherent Message - Congruence
- Feedback: Adult - Yes from others - Coherent Message - Congruence
- Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from others - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Education/Career - No from others
- Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Partner - Yes from friends - Mixed Messages
- Feedback: Adult - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Education/Career - No from friends
- Feedback: Partner - Yes from parents - Mixed Messages
- Feedback: Partner - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Congruence

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from friends - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Partner - No from friends ● Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance ● Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Partner - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: No ● Feedback: Partner - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from parents - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Adult - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from Others - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Partner - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance ● Feedback: Education/Career - No from parents
Feedback: Mixed Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from parents - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from friends - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Partner - Yes from friends - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Adult - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Partner - Yes from parents - Mixed Messages ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from Others - Mixed Messages
Feedback: No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback: Education/Career - No from friends ● Feedback: No ● Feedback: Education/Career - No from others ● Feedback: Education/Career - No from parents ● Feedback: Partner - No from friends ● Feedback: Partner - No from parents
Feedback: Yes - Congruence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Feedback: Partner - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Partner - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from others - Coherent Message - Congruence ● Feedback: Adult - Yes from others - Coherent Message - Congruence

- Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Congruence

Feedback: Yes - Dissonance

- Feedback: Partner - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Partner - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Adult - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from others - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance
- Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from Parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance

Individualism: Self-Reliance

- M3a-Pfin: Yes on own
- M1b-Career: Not LT Career
- M1b-Career: Yes LT Career
- Future Expectations: Sorta Likes Where Headed
- M3b-Plive: how
- M3b-Plive: Sorta on own
- M1a-Education: Sorta Done
- M2a-Partner: Not LT Partner
- R2: Partner Regroup
- M2b-KIDS: Sorta Kids
- Future Expectations: Does NOT Like Where Headed
- M1b-Career: Sorta LT Career
- Present Assessment: In the Now
- Future Expectations: Yes Likes Where Headed
- How to decide
- M4-Adult: No
- M4-Adult: Sorta
- M1a-Education: Not Done
- M2b-Kids: Yes Kids
- M2a-Partner: Sorta LT Partner
- M3a-Pfin: Not on own
- M2a-Partner: Yes LT Partner
- Indiv-Self: Past regrouping
- M2b-KIDS: No Kids
- M3b-Plive: Yes on own

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● R3: Parental Independence Regroup ● M4-Adult: Yes ● Mobility: Multiple Moves ● R1: Education and/or Career Regroup ● Individualism ● M1a-Education Yes Done ● M3a-Pfin: Sorta on own ● Ro: Regroup Other ● M3b-Plive: Not on own
Regroups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ro: Regroup Other ● R3: Parental Independence Regroup ● R2: Partner Regroup ● R1: Education and/or Career Regroup
Resources-Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Resources - Financial: Not from Parents ● Resources - Fuel for Regroup ● Resources - Financial: Yes from Parents ● Resources - Financial: No Debt ● Resources - Financial: Has Debt
Social Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social Class: Upper Middle ● Social Class: Lower Middle ● Social Class: Working Class
Support - No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support: Partner - No ● Support: Religious - No ● Support: Parents - No ● Support: No
Support: All	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support: Parents - Closeness ● Touchpoints ● Support: Religious ● Support: Extended Family ● Support: Partner ● Support: Parents - Married Parents ● Resources - Fuel for Regroup ● Support: Parents - Divorced Parents ● Support: Friends - Past

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support: Parents - Remarried Parents● Support: Co-Workers● Support: Friends
Support: Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support: Friends - Past● Support: Friends
Support: Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Support: Parents - Divorced Parents● Support: Parents - Married Parents● Support: Parents - Remarried Parents● Support: Parents - Closeness

Appendix D. Quotations by Theme with Comments

1. AMBIGUOUS ADULTHOOD		COMMENT
DEJA		
<p>Quotation # 25 Source: DEJA</p>	<p>I: Now let's talk about school and education. What's the highest level of education you've completed so far? R: Uh, I would say I have the equivalent of an Associate's plus some credits. I: Okay, are you in school at all right now? R: Nope. I: Okay. Um, were you ever in school in the past five years? R: Past five years... yeah I was just finishing up my last couple of credits when I was 22, so yeah. I: And you said you didn't earn a degree at that point. R: I didn't. I: Okay. R: Nope. I: I think you already talked about that. Did you have a major? R: Yup, I was majoring in Spanish. I: Okay. R: Spanish, uh, communications. Which I learned a lot of Spanish, but I was already fluent, so... I was just getting that piece of paper, um... I: Why did you wanna major in that? R: So that I could just, uh, solidify something that I was interested in. I: Okay. R: Um, school became just like a means to an end, like okay, I'm just gonna get my degree cause that's what everybody does. But then when I really started thinking about it, I'm like, cause my- my major was originally music, and I'm like why am I getting a degree in music when I don't wanna teach? And that's really the only reason why you'd need a degree unless you wanna go sing opera at an opera house or something, but that</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Higher Ed Payoff Great quote to embody all the marker confusions and regroupings and moves — De-Institutionalization of Adulthood in a Nutshell!</p>

	<p>wasn't really what I was tryna do either, so then I'd be- I went to journalism for a little bit, then was like, okay... why do I need a degree to get in journalism, I probably don't, I could probably write my little letters, do whatever I wanna do without this, so then I was like let me just get Spanish, just to finish, since I already have all my credits pretty much for Spanish, I only need like thirty more credits, let me finish it. And then, uh, I tried to gain residency at [State University] and then you had to get out for a year in order to gain residency and you had to go work full time at a job.</p> <p>I: That's where you were, you were at [southern state]?</p> <p>R: Yeah, I was in [southern state] and so the rules were you had to go be out for a year, pay taxes in [southern state], then you are a resident. So I did that, but then I was in the workforce, and now I have bills, now I have an apartment. So now, I'm out of school and I'm still tryna, you know, go back and take classes and stuff but it's just not working. And then...</p> <p>I: So you do wanna go back at some point?</p> <p>R: Yeah, I want to use the tuition reimbursement piece so I can go ahead and finish through my job. Absolutely. And they will pay me to go to school and I could get international business emphasis on Spanish.</p> <p>I: That's what you're looking at?</p> <p>R: Yup. Cause our company is extremely worldly.</p> <p>I: Um...and what- what do you hope- you hope to use that in your job then?</p> <p>R: Yes, eventually I would like to liaison between, um, our sites overseas that are Spanish speaking. And I already do, in a capacity right now. Um, because, just the way God works and just puts you in situations. You know, when I first got to Dell it was always I wanna get overseas</p>	
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	<p>and work and live in Argentina or do projects in Argentina, just because that was the country that I knew was... you know, kind of European still, not too third world, and I was like, okay, I can handle that. And then, now my- my goal is Panama, because Panama's closer and we- I work with a team right now that's in Panama. So, it's like, you know, you kinda hone in on your goals based on what happens, so...</p> <p>I: So looking back, are you satisfied with your, uh, educational experiences?</p> <p>R: Yeah, I think I got out of it what I was supposed to, even though I didn't finish, and I can always finish, you know, I did internships, I moved around, you know, I feel like I did the experience and got the growth out of it.</p> <p>I: Right. But you didn't necessarily find a job in your field, though, right? Cause you were in Spanish and...</p> <p>R: I didn't find a job in my field, but...</p> <p>I: Were you looking for a job in your field?</p> <p>R: Exactly. What was my field? I don't really know. You know what I'm saying? So, in terms of that, I got into sales and I went to Orlando for the few months. I was doing the internship with Disney and then they changed my job and then I quit and moved in with some dude and he got me into sales basically, taught me everything, I started reading books, Zig Ziglar and everybody and I just honed in on my sales skills and when I got back to [southern city], it was like boom, I'm going into corporate. So... and I started working at [phone service company] and then I worked at another place and then... I was... I became a starving artist cause like, "oh I'm gonna get back into my music" and then I was a nanny and I was doing another part time job. And then I was like, no this sucks. And that's when me and my ex broke up and then I</p>	
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	<p>went home for ten days and it was like, okay I gotta get my bearings right. That was why I went home. And while I was home, [large technology company] called me-</p> <p>I: You went home for that specific purpose.</p> <p>R: Yeah I went home to get my mind right. I'm like, okay I gotta go home, touch base, like, plug back in to my people, you know, and try to basically find myself again, cause I was that lost. So... then I got back and, well actually before I got back, I got a call from [large technology company]. And... I had already interviewed at [large technology company] one time and they didn't hire me, back when I was working at [phone service company], but I had, like, no experience. So they found my resume online and sought me out and then I started working there and within nine months I was moving to Austin to further my career cause I had already got to the top where I was at.</p> <p>I: Um, and, you already talked about your student loan experience some, you did say you're not necessarily happy with that.</p> <p>R: Hooo, no. I am definitely not happy with that at all. At all. And the main reason why is cause I was in [southern state] and I was going to [university] and I'm not gonna blame it on them, but I didn't have a counselor. So I'm here, picking my classes and doing my loan paperwork on my own. And I had no idea- and I'm not gonna say that I didn't know that I was signing my life over, like my mom was telling me all along, don't sign these papers, and I'm like, but what am I gonna do? I'm down here by myself, y'all aren't helping me with school, so I gotta sign these papers, otherwise I gotta come home, and I woulda felt like a failure if I had a went</p>	
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	<p>home. Because there is nothing in Chicago for me because it's cold and it's a huge city with small jobs. You know? So I knew that Tennessee was a good place for me to start my career and get a job and it had low costs of living and so I'm like, I gotta stay down here. Even if it does mean I'll be in debt. So...</p>	
<p>Quotation # 57 Source: DEJA</p>	<p>have you ever lived with someone you were romantically involved with? R: Well right before I left I was living with my other- my ex-boyfriend, and it was only because I'd say about a year before we started living together, me and another girlfriend, we were roommates. And then she moved back to Chicago, and I was like, okay where am I gonna live? And then I tried rooming with one of my other friends and that didn't work out as well, so it was like, well why don't you just come move in with me? It was supposed to be temporary but then it became a little bit longer, and I realized, you don't wanna do that, basically. Before you get engaged, you definitely don't wanna do that. Makes things a lot more complicated before they really need to be. I: And when did you guys stop living together? When you moved here? R: Uh, when we broke up. I: You broke up, okay. R: So we broke up, like, a year before I left, um, so it was like we broke up and then I went home to Chicago for like ten days and then came back and then I started working at Dell. And then nine months later, I was in Austin. I: Did you guys ever- did you ever consider getting married, or...? R: Well I mean it was on the radar, but, um, there were some- there was just a lot of underlying stuff going on that didn't necessarily help our relationship, so... it kinda deteriorated, you know, in the midst of all of that. And just, I mean I</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Marriage as Path to Family Formation</p> <p>Job and relocation helped her recover from the M2 regroup</p>

	<p>was young and so was he, but I was younger in the mind, you know what I'm saying? It was a lotta different things I was doing that I wouldn't [phone vibrating] necessarily do now, knowing what I know. But, you know, hindsight's 20/20, and you just do better in the next one.</p> <p>I: Sure.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 95 Source: DEJA</p>	<p>My spirituality is very important to me, even though, you know, I'm not, you know, I'm not, you know I don't read the bible every single day or anything like that, but I just try to make sure that I'm living life in the right way, because, you know, like I said if you bless people, then blesses come back to you, so, you know, it's just- I dunno it just feels right.</p> <p>I: And what religion are you?</p> <p>R: I guess I'm Christian. That's the only way I really describe it cause I would say that I'm Baptist per se, but I go to a Baptist church, so...</p> <p>I: But you wouldn't consider yourself to be a Baptist?</p> <p>R: No, cause I don't really know what a Baptist is. You know, my definition of my- my religion has always been Christian.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Organized Religion/Social Tool</p> <p>De-identifying with particular religious org, just Christian</p>
<p>Quotation # 96 Source: DEJA</p>	<p>I mean most churches are- are decent, you know. I do believe that there is such a thing as false prophets, and I do believe that sometimes people don't have the best intentions, so I believe that, um, it's important to have your own thought process on things because otherwise you'll believe anything, you know, and I- I heard there was a place in Texas where this pastor took one passage outta the Bible and was preaching on that one passage all the time, and got these people to sell their houses and go be nomads, based on that one scripture. So it's like, you have to have some kinda substance in your mind in order to be able to understand religion and- and use it for its</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Organized Religion/Social Tool</p> <p>Even in this case of a highly religious EA who does personal practice and participates actively in organized religion, still see skepticism regarding the institution of religion necessarily being a good thing, something which needs to be cautiously allowed any influence over an individual, still up to the individual to figure it out well.</p>

	<p>true reasons.</p> <p>I: Do you consider yourself spiritual but not religious? Or, how do you think about that?</p> <p>R: I would say I'm both. Because I go to church every Sunday and I get into a routine, and that's part of the religion part. You know, but I'm also very spiritual to where, if I don't go to Church, I can still have my own relationship with God.</p>	
SARA		
<p>Quotation # 8 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And um, do your parents still help you financially at all or are you doin' your own...?</p> <p>R: Um, sometimes. It- it really depends on the situation. You know, on a day to day basis, no. But if, you know, if there's something that I'm really struggling with, like if I'm struggling to make rent or, um, or if I'm, you know, just kind of feeling a little down and out where I am paying rent but I'm, you know, have zero money extra then, you know, it's like a hundred bucks here and there. Um, so, like, living here it's on my own, and, so yea.</p> <p>I: So all of the bills are up to you?</p> <p>R: Yea, yup.</p>	<p>Great quote about difficulty making the call on when, in any particular moment, independence from parents has been established.</p> <p>Boomerang in terms of money support with a sense of movement toward less reliance, but still that safety net from time to time.</p>
<p>Quotation # 37 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: Alright, so do you consider yourself to be an adult?</p> <p>R: Um, I don't know. [laughs] I just got my very first business card and that made me feel grown up so [laughs] yea.</p> <p>I: [laughs]</p> <p>R: But sometimes I do. Um, when I'm at work definitely and then, you know, when I have to actually, you know, make decisions about life, not so much [laughs]. So, um, yea I like to pretend I'm an adult sometimes [laughs].</p> <p>I: So what do you think it would take for you to be fully an adult?</p> <p>R: Uh, I- I guess, I'm hoping when I turn 30 that's gonna happen [laughs]. But I still gotta couple more years. Um I don't-</p>	<p>Great quote for "pretending" to be an adult</p>

	I don't really know, um.	
Quotation # 24 Source: SARA	I: What things in the last five years have made you the most sad or depressed? R: Um, I think it was leaving college, kinda leaving that security, um, you know. Being in school, because I've been in school forever [laughs]. Um and then all of a sudden you're not in school, it's a little, it's a little weird. Um, so that first year out was a little rough. Um, and, you know and relationships ending and all that stuff, so.	Good quote on leaving the structural stability of college - "leaving that security" Lost friend support during most critical time of launching career and relationship regroup. Also mom moved away at this same time. All explanation for the "all on my own" mentality.
Quotation # 45 Source: SARA	R: Yea, so is it, I mean in that way I don't feel like a grown up [laughs] 'cause I'm not ready to take on a full apartment by myself.	Great quote about trouble wrestling out multiple markers of adulthood - feels like an adult (or at least pretends to) in LT career, but then going on post-college voluntourism in Europe, and not yet ready to live on own (though away from parents, but still with roommates). Ambiguous.
Quotation # 69 Source: SARA	I: [laughs] And for some people life works out pretty well, for others life is a real struggle. How do you personally make sense of how and why some people do better in life than others? R: Um [pause]. I don't know [laughs]. Um, I think a lotta times you're given, given a lotta tools that have um, whether it's, you know, emotional support form family or uh, stuff like that, so. That could be helpful um... but I don't, I don't, I really don't know. [laughs].	Waffle between individualism & emotional support from family - "I really don't know"
Quotation # 21 Source: SARA	She thinks it is very difficult for people her age to be able to date and meet people, since they are so separated through technology. But then on the complete opposite side, she also thinks the technology of online dating makes it odd how much someone can know about you before they even meet you in person.	From field notes
Quotation # 5 Source: SARA	I. Yea. Ok. What do you think are the most important challenges facing people	Great quote about the challenges of establishing

	<p>your age today? R: Um, kind of, um finances [laughs]. Um, it's doing what you wanna do and being able to, um... pay for, you know, what you wanna do. Um, you know, I'm- I was very lucky in the way that I grew up, in that- even though my- my mom is a teacher and even though it wasn't paying her a lot of money, she continued to do it. She was a single mom. And she just, and so that really instilled in my sisters and I, you need to do what you wanna do and that you're good at, despite not having the finances to back it up. It's- that's the most important part, so, we really grew up that way and I really appreciate that. Um, you know I have a friend, right now that's going through, um, paying for student loans both from grad and undergrad and not being able to, not feeling like she can use that mind that she worked towards, that she built up through these programs, um because she can't pay her student loans. So I think that's the, that's the biggest issue about kids my age.</p>	<p>adulthood with the ongoing investment in education - both in terms of her perspective as a lower middle class with some investment to follow aspirations and in comparison to a friend who is working class with less ability to do so.</p>
<p>Quotation # 89 Source: SARA</p>	<p>R: Um [pause] I don't know [laughs]. I think that sometimes I think it's really good [laughs]. Um, sometimes I think it's really terrible, and I- it really just depends on the day and kinda goin- what's going on around the world and um, I tend, I try to read the news, um, so it re- I: How do you feel about it today? R: Um, I don't know, I feel pretty good mostly 'cause I heard some music when I was in The Quarter this morning. [laughs] I: You what? R: Um, I heard- I heard music on The Quarter this morning.... I: Ohh... R: So I feel pretty good about society today. I: Oh yea, yea? That's a good day?</p>	<p>Great quote for everything out there is confusing, so hear some music and dance = living in the now</p>

	<p>R: Yea, yea. [laughs] I: Makes you celebrate. R: Yes.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 3 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: Ok. And how happy or unhappy are you with your life as it is right now? R: Pretty happy, yea. I: What would it, what would need to change for you to be even happier? R: Um [long pause]. I think ah, I don't know [laughs]. I have no idea... [33:40?] I: Or is it just good how is- it is? R: Yea, I'm good for right now we'll see what happens in the future [laughs]. I: Ok. Ok. R: 'Cause that may, I mean that may change in six months, that may change in a year and so like I'm ok with that changing. I think that's... I think that's the most important part, is like the ability to kinda change with it. Change with kinda what's goin on in the world [laughs]. So, yea.</p>	<p>Great quote for living in the now “may change in 6 months” mentality that results from instability in the market. EA cultural value of flexibility: “the ability to kinda change with it” as most important ideal, in order to “change with kinda what’s going on in the world. [Laughs]”</p>
<p>Quotation # 51 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And has your parent- is your relationship with them changed at all over the last five years? R: Yes, um with my mom we’ve gotten a lot closer. And part of it is that I’ve- I’ve graduated and I’ve, you know, grown up a little bit. I’m not a grown-up quite yet [laughs], but I’ve grown up a little bit [laughs]. Um, and, you know, I’m on my own and I’m, you know, taking care of myself so it’s, uh, and I can handle it [laughs] so yea. I: So does that make things easier with your mom? R: Yea, yep. Yep. And she’s, I mean after moving out west she’s happier and stuff like that, so it’s just a better situation for everybody.</p>	<p>Great quote to show the progression toward adulthood, a sense that something is different relative to before, but still not yet all the way to adult</p>
<p>Quotation # 11 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I think that can be very difficult for people my age. That, uh, you know, don't or really just trying to kind of figure out where to go. [Laughs] so yea. I: Yea, do you think that it's gotten harder than it was for previous generations...</p>	<p>Good quote on lack of direction and de-institutionalization of friendship / dating</p>

	<p>R: Yep. I: or same? R: And mostly because of technology. [laughs] Um, [mumbles] it's very hard, um you know, doing the bar scene is very hard today because everybody's so shy, uh and then you have like, things like online dating, which, um, even- even before you meet the person in-person you know so much about them, um so it's- it's really hard today, to meet someone.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 26 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And switch back to work a little, which we've covered a little bit, um, so you, do you currently work two jobs? R: Yep. I: Ok. And so, you were sayin' that the- the one museum is closed for three weeks. R: Yep. I: Are you taking off at the other one, or? R: Yea. Um, I'm actually taking off about six- six to seven weeks from there, just to kinda, when I get back give myself a little bit of time to regroup and reorganize and kinda get some things in order, uh and then start up again. So fall, winter and spring are the busy season in New Orleans so, uhm, you know I'm working about four shifts a week at t- at a restaurant, so about, um, typically about 20 hours a week and then doing 40 hours a week on my other job so, at my full time job so it's, I'm- I am very busy [laughs] during- during those, uh, times of year. So, yea. I: And do you enjoy what you do? R: I love it. I love it a lot. Yea. Uh. I: Both jobs or are you talking the museum? R: Um, the museum. [laughs]</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Higher Ed Payoff</p> <p>De-Institutionalization of Viable Career Options</p> <p>Planning for the regroup: "give myself a little bit of time to regroup, and reorganize, and kinda get some things in order, and then start up again" Loves career, and thinks \$50K in education in history was worth it, despite having to work 60 hrs a week and combining with waitressing to pull it off</p>
<p>Quotation # 89 Source: SARA</p>	<p>R: Um [pause] I don't know [laughs]. I think that sometimes I think it's really good [laughs]. Um, sometimes I think it's really terrible, and I- it really just depends on the day and kinda goin- what's going on around the world and</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Political Authority</p> <p>Great quote for everything out there is confusing, so hear some music and dance =</p>

	<p>um, I tend, I try to read the news, um, so it re-</p> <p>I: How do you feel about it today?</p> <p>R: Um, I don't know, I feel pretty good mostly 'cause I heard some music when I was in The Quarter this morning.</p> <p>[laughs]</p> <p>I: You what?</p> <p>R: Um, I heard- I heard music on The Quarter this morning....</p> <p>I: Ohh...</p> <p>R: So I feel pretty good about society today.</p> <p>I: Oh yea, yea? That's a good day?</p> <p>R: Yea, yea. [laughs]</p> <p>I: Makes you celebrate.</p> <p>R: Yes.</p>	<p>living in the now</p>
<p>Quotation # 86 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: So should religion have a role in public debates?</p> <p>R: No.</p> <p>I: Why not?</p> <p>R: Um because I don't think that's um, uh, I just- I don't think that's important for a public debate. Um, just like I don't talk about it, typically talk about it with my friends. I don't think that it's, should play a role in kind of what is dictated to everybody in- in society.</p> <p>I: Because it offends people or?</p> <p>R: Um, because not everybody believes the same thing, so um, it can offend people. Um, but it also can be super detrimental to people, um, to a- a huge group of people, or a very small group of people, but it just shouldn't, I dont, it just shouldn't play a role in policy, or.</p> <p>I: And do you feel that religious faiths, organizations, and trad- traditions are relevant for people your age?</p> <p>R: Yea, I think they can be, yea.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Organized Religion/Social Tool</p> <p>Great quote for de-emphasizing religion as response to religious diversity</p>
JADE		
<p>Quotation # 50 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: do you consider yourself to be like a real um full adult?</p> <p>R: Yeah.</p> <p>I: Yeah, okay [small laugh] what makes you say that?</p>	<p>(WC) Non-ambiguous adulthood. Is pretty clear that you're an adult when there is no one else to help, moved out of p's house when 19 to take</p>

	<p>R: Mm, cause I'm on my own pretty much.</p> <p>I: Yeah.</p> <p>R: I pay all my own bills, um, I don't ask anybody for anything. Everything I have is mine. Um, having [my son] made me grow up a lot so.</p>	<p>care of child w/o dad in picture.</p>
<p>Quotation # 22 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: How about this then. Um how would you say your life has gone in terms of what you were hoping or expecting?</p> <p>R: I didn't see myself being 24 and have a 6 year old.</p> <p>I: [laughs] Yeah</p> <p>R: Uh. I kinda see myself being this age, being probably married, being in college, bein' um maybe expecting soon. But not now. Uh, I wouldn't I wouldn't change it though for the world really. But when I was younger that was how I would see things, the little fairy tale I guess.</p> <p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: Story. I know nobody ever really gets that but—</p>	<p>Life has worked out different than expected (might say worse except does not want to sound like desires son not to exist)</p>
<p>Quotation # 89 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Um, so what sort of job do you think you'll have like ten years from now?</p> <p>R: What do I see myself doing in—</p> <p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: Uh, hopefully married and out of [county name].</p>	<p>Still the same middle class aspiration of upward mobility, leaving rural town, getting married, but sadly hard to see how this will happen given structural barriers</p>
<p>Quotation # 86 Source: JADE</p>	<p>what will count for you as having lived a good life at the end of it all?</p> <p>R: Um I would like to be the you know, be like cool to have the fairytale ending but. Um, you've seen "The Notebook" right?</p> <p>I: What's that? Fairytale-</p> <p>R: You've seen "The Notebook" right? The movie?</p> <p>I: Oh yeah oh yeah.</p> <p>R: Great movie. Um, [pause] that would make me feel you know, the to good to have that person there and then have your family at the same time. Um, be there for you I guess when you get older so that's</p>	<p>Great quote for same middle class desires - growing old with a life partner and raising kids together - but coupled with structural barriers, she describes it as a fairy tale</p>

	<p>another reason why I'm like yeah if I...not really if I-I cause I wanna help these people for sure, anybody who needs my help. Uh, I want to have somebody whose like when I get older and I need somebody it would be awesome just to have just one person you know. And I would like to see [my son] you know grow up and go to college and get a good education, be a family man. Um, have his own kids, watch him raise his kids, so.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 90 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: What do you think about the American Dream? R: It's for some people. I mean— I: Is it for you? R: I don't know. Uh. I: What makes you say that? R: Because I've already stepped out of boundaries. I mean I've. [short pause] But this is actually a religious opinion, too. I've already had a child out of wedlock uh stuff like that. So that's not really the American Dream you could say [laughs] Um.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of American Dream</p> <p>Dream does not apply</p>
<p>Quotation # 104 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: So how much would you say that religion is part of your everyday life? R: Uh, [laughs] as it doesn't uh...probably not like probably more decisions that would be more not on the everyday basis but like— I: When you're making big decisions? R: Not just big decisions but parenting and stuff like that. I try to be religious when it comes to that you know. [Pause as food arrives] I: Yeah. Um... [talk about drinks] so when you're making decisions about um, you know like forgiving your mom or even um, even when you like decided to like kick [ex-boyfriend] out like out of your life, did religion factor in then? R: Yeah I thought it was the right thing to do. I: Yeah. Um—</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Family</p> <p>Great (sad) quote for how de-inst of multiple social institutions play out together in this woman's life: her parental role reverses, such that she feels her mom is not able to be there for her or her sister, so she becomes mom to sister, also becomes a mom to son early, loses youth, at same time does draw upon some religious resources in terms of the psychological strength to forgive mom and be there for sister, but not an organized religious community that is providing any support beyond that, nor other family</p>

	<p>R: To kinda forgiver her you know. He told me to.</p> <p>I: God did?</p> <p>R: Yeah. Uh, that it was better than uh than having the animosity against her for a long time you know. We still have it a little bit but, I it's kinda hard not to you know?</p> <p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: A lot of people were also just like how'd you do that? I'm sure it was really hard. It was a hard thing to do.</p> <p>I: Yeah, I mean that sounds like I mean of all the things you've uh, that have happened in the past five years like that's probably the biggest one that like really impacted you?</p> <p>R: Yeah, it was.</p> <p>I: Yeah, okay.</p> <p>R: Especially with her being my mom, her being my caregiver all these years. And when she wasn't around so much I had I had to be the the main person you know that my sister looked up to and stuff cause I was always there. I made sure she got to school, made sure she ate dinner, made sure she got a bath at night, her homework got done stuff like that. I so it was really big for me to do that cause it was my mom you know.</p> <p>I: Yeah well especially [LOUD SOUNDS] [0:03:15??] in a lot of ways you had kind of been a mom for your sister for a long time. Even though I mean—</p> <p>R: Yeah she actually just now as we've gotten older, since I've had my own child she's looked at me as a sister than mom. That's wh—as she gets older and I've gotten older and have my own child and she now does look at me like sister, cause she's Aunt so.</p> <p>I: But when you guys were growing up, like—</p> <p>R: It was more like I was mom. Not—we didn't have that sisterly bond, it was like</p>	<p>members</p>
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	<p>I was her caregiver so she looked up to me and still does I guess, I hope. Um...yeah she done a school project one time and it they-they asked her what was her or who was the person she looked up to the most and who was her like hero I guess. And she she picked me. I: Wow. R: I was like why would you do that I'm so embarrassed. I: Were you um, were you like flattered or did it feel— R: Yeah really— I: It must've meant a lot to you, right? R: It did. Because we used to fight all the time cause I was around her so much and we're six years apart and that makes a big difference too. That we weren't close in age and uh, it was kinda hard for me growing up and being like a mom instead of a kid. You know I wanted to be a kid— I: And you never really got to be that. R: I kind of lost my youth in a way. Having a child early, and then taking care of [my sister]. I: Yeah. Um do you-do you regret that? R: I don't, no. I: Okay. Um, so how um— R: Maybe maybe my youth kind of being taken so early. And I see everybody else I went to school with they they got to do all these things and uh, it it was ah it was I could see my life so different from other people's and then I coul- I seen worse too so it was like, maybe this is this is what I'm supposed to do, maybe this is for me, this is my calling is to be a c- like a caregiver I guess you could say. I: Yeah, so in that sense you just kind of like started living in that role at a really young age. R: I guess so yeah. I'd take that and ran with it.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 2 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: I felt like my whole family was kinda against me. Cause my grandparents they</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Family</p>

	<p>were the ones who paid for my mom's lawyer. Most of it. Cause they're very well off, they own businesses they uh, they have a six thousand square foot house it's. They're pretty well off, I've never asked them for nothing though.</p> <p>I: Have they ever offered anything?</p> <p>R: No.</p> <p>I: Okay</p> <p>R: No. Um my dad sends like 25-50 bucks on our birthdays and Christmas and stuff like that, but—</p> <p>I: This is, yeah—</p> <p>R: Nothing else from my family like. I don't I don't I don't uh, depend on them I guess. I don't, it, I don't and if they do try, if they ever have tried I'm like no nu uh. Cause it's kinda been like thrown in my face before if they have ever helped. I don't like that. Like if you're going to do something for me do it outta the kindness of your heart and not throw it back up in my face later. And that be your purpose, would be just to do that. That's kinda how my mom is.</p>	<p>Great quote for having no one there to support her, coupled with previous quote, individualism is the understandable result, the cultural tool for psychological security in the face of social instability</p>
<p>Quotation # 13 Source: JADE</p>	<p>Who are your friends? What do they do?</p> <p>Um—</p> <p>R: I don't really hang out with anybody here.</p> <p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: There's not—the people I kind of got close to when I first moved here um, we kinda I guess we really can't trust anybody these days [small laugh] can't I dunno. Mmm...I guess...I talk to my neighbors and stuff like that but I don't really hang out with anybody, I'm stay at home mom, most of the time. I don't really have time for you know, drama and stuff like that. Cause that's mostly what it is here, drama.</p> <p>I: Okay. So you'd rather just stay out and stay above it. I get that.</p> <p>R: Yeah. It could be nice to probably hang out with people sometimes and kinda get away but or go out or whatever.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Friendship/Community</p> <p>Good quote about having no community</p>

	<p>I'm kinda done with those days. Um, I done it—</p> <p>I: Is it lonely though? Like to just—</p> <p>R: Well havin' havin' [my son] and [my boyfriend] around most of the time it's it's not that bad. I mean I've probably gotten used to it I guess.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 98 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: Oh well a lot of people here kind of look down on um divorce. Uh, I guessing being in a small town you would look at that kinda stuff if you're very religious or you know, Christian in like that manner but uh. A lot of people get looked on – looked down on for stuff like that around here uh.</p> <p>I: Do you think that's right or wrong?</p> <p>R: I think it's wrong.</p> <p>I: You think it's wrong, okay why?</p> <p>R: I really don't believe in divorce, but I think that everybody has their reason for everything. I think that if they got divorced then they they probably hopefully hopefully they needed to or it just had to happen. Um, I really don't believe in divorce especially when there's children involved uh, so I've always been like if I get married there's not gonna be a divorce so that other person needs to know that I don't believe in that. But um, I guess just how I was raised but.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Marriage as Path to Family Formation</p> <p>Great quote for the mixed messages in broader culture, and especially this religiously-infused community in the south: on the one hand divorce is wrong and to be judged, but on the other hand kids before marriage happens, and there is no community support for a pathway toward marriage, so better to make lots of mistakes pre-marriage that are not “divorce”</p>
<p>Quotation # 6 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: He's still in [southern city]. He has a wife and two kids that he takes care of every day.</p> <p>I: Oh, wow. Does he help you out at all?</p> <p>R: Uh, he has to pay child support.</p> <p>I: Oh he does. And does he do it?</p> <p>R: He does. It comes straight out of his check, so he can't—</p> <p>I: Oh [laughs] so there's no going between with that. That's smart.</p> <p>R: Oh no, he will lose—they'll suspend—I don't know if you know about any of that but they'll suspend their license if they don't pay and they go to jail for 21 days. In the state of [southern</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Marriage as Path to Family Formation</p> <p>Great quote about how the same de-inst. of marriage/family formation hits working class harder, esp. with kid first.</p>

	<p>state] they do. I: Oh, okay. R: I don't know about [southern state]'s uh, laws and regulations but it's 21 days in jail here [I: "Yeah"] and it's suspended license. I: Okay, so that pretty good incentive. R: And I'm sure he wants to go to work every day, [I: "Yeah, yeah"] so he pays the child support. I: Oh, my gosh. Wow. R: It's only 75 dollars a week. I: Oh, yeah R: Which is not much, but it's something. I: It is something, yeah. Um, so do you – is he, is he still involved in your son's life at all, or? R: Uh, he calls about twice a year. I: Okay R: Yeah I: Yeah, um R: His two let's see he just had a baby but he also has a three year old little girl and then like I said my little boy is almost 7. This Christmas he'll be 7. And so he was first.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 91 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Do you um, are you interested in being married someday? R: Of course. I: Do you think it do ya think it might happen soon or with [my boyfriend] or? R: Um, maybe not like soon soon but maybe in the next couple years yeah. I: Um— R: I don't wanna rush this one like I did the last one. I: Got it yeah. Um, and your relationship with him is going pretty well or? R: Mhmm, yeah.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Marriage as Path to Family Formation</p> <p>Still desires marriage, just seems unattainable or at least far off</p>
<p>Quotation # 103 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: Yeah everybody knows everybody's business. It's like, when you walk in the door you're like oh my gosh these people judging me now. Like when I walk in at church I'm like oh my gosh do they know me? Are they judging me already?</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Organized Religion/Social Tool</p> <p>Great quote for difference between secularization and</p>

	<p>It's just like I feel like an oddball.</p> <p>I: Do you think they do though? Like cause it sounds like you kinda—</p> <p>R: Most definitely.</p> <p>I: Oh they do? Okay, even though you kinda like stay out of it?</p> <p>R: I'm not like, gonna say every church is like that but there's definitely lot of people in this town not just this this town, there's a lot of small towns that are like that. Small town, everybody knows everybody and their business. Just like that. Or they're kin to everybody.</p> <p>[chuckles]</p> <p>I: [laughs] Yeah. Um, so would you consider yourself to be spiritual but not religious?</p> <p>R: Hmmm. [pause] Probably a little more spiritual than religious.</p> <p>I: Okay. Um, and so you tend so you attend services over in [southern town] like every couple—</p> <p>R: Once, once to twice a month on Fridays.</p> <p>I: Okay. And then the uh, tent revivals happen like once or twice a year. Um, are there other services that you you go to or try out?</p> <p>R: Uh besides like concerts and stuff, um, not really.</p> <p>I: How often do you go to concerts?</p> <p>R: Whenever they come around this area. Probably once, twice a year.</p> <p>I: Okay cool. Um...have you ever been on a religious retreat, a mission trip, service project, or like religious conference in the last five years?</p> <p>R: Nnn, I don't think so.</p> <p>I: Okay. Um...so how have your feelings about...um...about church changed in the past five years?</p> <p>R: Mmm, it hasn't. It hasn't, it's probably about the same.</p> <p>I: Okay. Um, do you pray?</p> <p>R: I do.</p> <p>I: You do?</p>	<p>de-inst. of religion: she is still religious by many definitions (prays regularly, reads Bible, attends services), but she also does not see the organized body of religion as having authority over her life, is skeptical of the judging from a religious community, has reverted to an individualized sense of "spiritual but not religious"</p>
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	<p>R: All the time.</p> <p>I: Okay. Where do y—what kinds of things do you pray about?</p> <p>R: Me and my son pray every night before his bedtime. Um, I pray ... usually before every meal me and him will. Um, it's a religious thing for us to always say prayers at bedtime though. Um, always try to make him say grace before he eats and uh...I usually do more than he does I'm sure. He's only 6 but, yeah. I-I do probably when my heat- my feet hit the floor in the mornings I'm already like just let this day go good, and you know</p> <p>I: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. Um...do you ever meditate?</p> <p>R: Nu uh [both laugh] no. I-I'm not against it. I just never tried it I guess.</p> <p>I: Yeah okay. Do you do you read the Bible?</p> <p>R: Mmhmm [yes]</p> <p>I: How often?</p> <p>R: Not often, I probably used to more often when I was younger.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 31 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Yeah. Um, how about things in the last five years that have made you the most sad or depressed?</p> <p>R: Probably the situation with my mom.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Parental Authority</p> <p>Good example of how for many WC EA's their parents are the dragging force that they think they need to let go of in order to improve their lot in life</p>
<p>Quotation # 16 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Yeah I was going to say what is your relationship like with her now?</p> <p>R: Everybody's like how did you do that?</p> <p>I: Yeah h-how did you do that? Like—</p> <p>R: We talk. But it's mostly just about [my son]. And uh I don't tell her any of my personal business. I don't talk to her as a friend anymore, I talk to her as her being my mother and her not living in the same vicinity as me. [small laugh]</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Parental Authority</p> <p>Good quote about why can no longer trust mother to make good decisions for her, decline of parental authority</p>

	<p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: So we just basically you know talk about [my son] and that's it</p>	
<p>Quotation # 7</p> <p>Source: JADE</p>	<p>I moved here with my mom.</p> <p>I: Oh, right.</p> <p>R: And she was havin' some financial problems in [southern city] [I: "Oh, okay, so she wanted to move back, huh?"] cause it is very expensive to move er to live in [southern city] [I: To live there, yeah"] it's very expensive. So she just couldn't afford it, she wanted to be closer to her parents too.</p> <p>I: Yeah, okay</p> <p>R: And um, I got the opportunity to get my cosmetology license, do my apprenticeship license first and work in the shop.</p> <p>I: Okay. Here in [southern city]?</p> <p>R 'Cause my gran—yeah my grandparents own a salon here.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Parental Authority</p> <p>Great example of working class lack of support from parents (economically and socially) to fuel regrouping, turning inward instead for psychological strength</p>
MICHAEL		
<p>Quotation # 28</p> <p>Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>What would it take for you to be truly happy with your life when you're forty?</p> <p>R: Hm [pause]. I'm not sure. I mean I want to have kids by then, be married, and have a stable home, but. Be financially stable [pause], I don't know.</p>	<p>Same aspirations. Unclear pathways.</p> <p>De-Institutionalization of American Dream</p>
<p>Quotation # 62</p> <p>Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>I: Ok. And do you want to get married someday?</p> <p>R: Someday.</p> <p>I: And how likely do you think it is that you'll get married?</p> <p>R: Uh, very likely.</p> <p>I: Ok. And what makes you want to get married?</p> <p>R: Cause I want to have a family I guess.</p> <p>I: And um, do you think that there's any particular age or, that's good to get married at?</p> <p>R: No. Not really, I mean any age.</p> <p>I: Anything that you think people should accomplish first?</p> <p>R: I think they should find out who they are first, but, I'm not sure, other than that.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Dating</p> <p>Marriage aspirations. Yet unclear how to form marriage or family, other than: "They should find out who they are first. But, I'm not sure, other than that."</p>

<p>Quotation # 67 Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>Religiously, he is another “semi-religious” case that grew up Baptist and regular attending but has now moved away from his religiosity. Not fully into the agnostic camp yet, but is not sure whether he believes any of it. Still attends when he visits his parents, in order to make them happy, and still has some religious friends, but most of them have moved away from their religiosity too. Now he’s not sure what he believes about any of it, including the purpose of life or his role in it. But he is just cruising along trying to be happy and not think about it all much.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Organized Religion/Social Tool</p> <p>From field notes</p>
<p>DAN</p>		
<p>Quotation # 93 Source: DAN</p>	<p>is there any particular age that you think it would be good at which to get married, or? R: Um, always told myself maybe when I turn around 30, maybe that, around that time. I think that would be an appropriate time for me. I: Okay. And why that age in particular? R: Um, just cause I’ll be down with my 20s. I feel like once I finish out to 30 I think I’ll have my career going on and then I could finally kinda settle down with somebody.</p>	<p>Great quote for still desire the same aspiration - marriage, settled down - but no clear pathway to date toward marriage</p> <p>De-Institutionalization of Dating</p>
<p>Quotation # 48 Source: DAN</p>	<p>I: Okay. So uh-are you interested in getting married? R: Uh, yeah, mi-when, when the time comes, yeah. I: Okay. And um, how likely do you think it is that you’ll get married? R: Oh, I don’t know, it’s, that’s totally unknown to me.</p>	<p>Great quote</p>
<p>Quotation # 42 Source: DAN</p>	<p>R: Once, I mean I haven’t had a job, like a career job, so. It’s hard to formulate an opinion. I: Remains to be seen, yeah. R: Yeah.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Viable Career Options</p> <p>Great quote</p>
<p>Quotation # 44 Source: DAN</p>	<p>I: So what is it like being a person your age in our culture and society today? [Laughs] R: Wow, uh, that is a loaded question</p>	<p>Great quote on regional variations in adulthood trajectories (younger settling in the south compared to</p>

	<p>there, I guess. I don't, I mean, well I guess not even loaded really, um.</p> <p>I: Just big.</p> <p>R: Just big. Um, [Pause]. For me, um, I guess I don't, I mean I don't feel like I am the, too much of a demographic of... my—cause I, I mean I feel like more people have kinda, most of my friends have kinda moved on. They've already graduated, and they already have families. Um, I would feel it even changes where I live, um. I know some people are a lot, some of my friends who live up, up north, they're a lot older, and uh, but they haven't gotten married yet, or about to get married, and they're much older than I am. And they have never been married at all, or anything like that, so um, but down here it feels like people are much younger, and it's just, I maybe it's just a southern kind of thing to me, I guess, I don't know.</p>	<p>north)</p>
<p>Quotation # 92 Source: DAN</p>	<p>some people talk about the American Dream. What does the American Dream mean to you?</p> <p>R: Uh... Going out an' succeeding with whatever you wanna do, um, in life. And... I guess that's, pretty much that sums it up, really.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of American Dream</p> <p>Great quote for belief in American Dream, but it involves not social institutions - just succeed at whatever you want.</p>
<p>Quotation # 67 Source: DAN</p>	<p>do you also have step parents?</p> <p>R: No, I don't. Um, my dad, he... he hasn't been really a big firm believer about marriage, but he does have a girlfriend. Um, and my mom's just been single, uh, since, uh, she'd, she was with my, uh, since my dad. So, she hasn't really, um, had any—</p> <p>I: Were your parents married?</p> <p>R: Uh, no they hadn't. They were, uh, they had dated for a while. Um, and then I was conceived, and I don't know too much about their past after that, but that</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Marriage as Path to Family Formation</p> <p>Parents were actually never married</p>

	was... um, pretty much it.	
Quotation # 26 Source: DAN	R: Yeah. And, uh, but like I said, my mom, uh, she is been supportive kinda no matter what, like whatever I do, as long as, as long as it leads to a job that makes money. I, I think it should be that and something I enjoy. We might have few diff--, you know, conflicting opinions about that but um, I think she's become more supportive as well, like my dad, so.	De-Institutionalization of Parental Authority Great quote for dissonance in parental feedback on educ/career
Quotation # 10 Source: DAN	I: And what was the, uh, focusing on the conflict that you had with your mom about New York, what was it in particular that she was trying to tell you? R: She was trying to tell me about how to work the subway system, and I was, had already done my research on it cause I just, before I even do a trip I always look it up, and, uh, she was trying tell me and I had already told her that I had already, you know, I had already looked up a lot of the information and I'd just gotten back home after, uh, doing some shopping, and then it was finals week as well, so I was really stressed out. And all I wanted do was just lay on my bed, I didn't want to talk to anybody. And then she kept talking to me about it, and I told her yes, I know I know, and then, you know, I just kinda raised my voice just a little bit, and told her I know, and then she just kinda walked out and then she was just really upset about how, you know, I was talking to her. She just, she's been s--, the sort of person who, um, just the little things get to her as well, and so it's really easy to agitate her and anger her, so. That's kinda how it, how it all happened, and then afterwards, just, um, just didn't really, she didn't really speak to me very much and I didn't speak to her very much, because I usually like to leave her alone if she's that angry. And um, just a few months or so and we started talking a little bit more. I'd have to drive her to places because she had to	De-Institutionalization of Parental Authority Great quote about the desire for increased independence in boomerang move back to parents that can cause a new "more adult" version of conflict with parents (Arnett discusses this in his book too)

	<p>have surgery on her foot, and I think that helped a little bit more, 'st 'se she had to rely on me. And then, um...</p> <p>I: Did you ever have a conversation about it?</p> <p>R: Uh, no I haven't really talked to her about it. Um, I don't think she would want to talk about it.</p> <p>I: Do you think she was nervous about you going to New York, or?</p> <p>R: She probably was, she probably was, she's always been a little bit more protective over me, so she makes, she wants to make sure that I know everything as much as she knows, and uh, any other day I probably would have listened, but that day I was just particularly a bad day for me, was right in the middle of finals week, like I said, really stressed about that, I had to, um, I was also looking out, uh, looking up for different schools in where I wanted to go to after college, cause I had to get ready for that.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 38 Source: DAN</p>	<p>It's just been the same since '08. Um, I guess, the only, the only big change was changing my major. I was doing nursing, um, in '08, and then I got into the nursing program in '09. Um, didn't really feel like I fit in, or I really didn't really adjust well with that major, and, um, it just didn't really fit for me. I didn't like it, and my grades reflected on that, and so I went back and, uh, tried to figure out what I wanted to do after that, and, um, took me about, about a year or so to figure out that it was biology, and, um, did much better with that major. So that was, I guess that's the only big, big change. So that, cause I had to move back, I was living in [southern town], which is three hours from here, and, uh, I was going to [university] at that time, uh, [university]. And then after that I changed over back home, tried to figure out what I wanted to do. Um, took a few</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Viable Career Options</p> <p>Great quote on M1 regroup, identity work, multiple moves, M3 regroup.</p>

	community college courses here, um, in [southern town], and then, uh, ended up at [university], which is just about thirty minutes from here, and... Now I'm finishing up a degree in there, and, uh, looking to get a job, and then, from there on then, my master's, and then.	
TRISTAN		
Quotation # 31 Source: TRISTAN	I'm not sure if society has actually changed for the worse of if these emerging adults are just more aware of how awful society is. I don't think they realize how much they contributed to that awfulness (in terms of partying, disrespecting authority) before they had their dramatic life change.	From field notes.
Quotation # 77 Source: TRISTAN	I: Okay okay. Um are there any things that you'd really like to be able to buy or own? R: Yeah I would like the ability to buy some land and build a house and own that house one day	De-Institutionalization of American Dream Again see same aspirations, no clear path
Quotation # 46 Source: TRISTAN	R: And we found this house and- and you know, we had to settle land that they owned to buy this house. I: Sure. R: And I would give up my huntin' rights to be closer to my family any day of the week. I: Hmm. R: And that's what I did. And we worked, oh man, we worked hard gettin' this house built to where it's- it's um, where it was uh, accessible for them. Where it was easier for them to get around here. I: Oh. Yeah. Yeah. R: And um, in the- in the mix of all that, my grandma asked me if I would- would mind movin' in because she- she would just want somebody just comin' in, comin' out. You know? I: Yeah. Yeah. R: But my mom and dad live about a mile and half from here.	De-Institutionalization of Family Another WC example of the EA taking on responsibility for caring for prior generations

	I: Okay.	
Quotation # 78 Source: TRISTAN	<p>I: Oh uh like when- when would you like to have kids if you could choose? You know like what uh, what age or stage in life?</p> <p>R: Age? I wouldn't really particularly care how old but I would like to be married first.</p> <p>I: Yeah okay. Sorta along those lines um, do you think there are certain things someone should accomplish before having kids?</p> <p>R: Yeah um, I think it goes along with being married. I think um, you have to have a good stable job and uh, and being married as well I think those- are you know, to support that family I think those would be the two things to have.</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Marriage as Path to Family Formation</p> <p>counter example</p>
Quotation # 72 Source: TRISTAN	<p>R: And I just quit going to church there. And of course, I go to church in [southern town]. Um, it's just right off the- you take the [southern town] exit and you run right into it. You know.</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>R: And you know, I haven't been going as much as I do- as much as I should.</p> <p>I: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>R: But I do a lot of bible studies. You know, myself.</p> <p>I: Mm-hmm.</p> <p>R: And which, that ain't as good as uh, as actually bein' there, but when you're workin' a Saturday-Sunday or a Sunday-Monday type deal...</p>	<p>De-Institutionalization of Organized Religion/Social Tool</p> <p>Another example (like Deja) of someone highly religious who does not participate much in organized/community version.</p>
2. STRUCTURAL BARRIERS/SOCIAL CLASS		COMMENT
DEJA – UPPER MIDDLE CLASS		
Quotation # 76 Source: DEJA	I think I'm doing better than what I thought I was gonna do. Um, I'm not gonna say I didn't fathom doing well at [large technology company], but you know, it's like the sky's the limit at this point	Great quote - "Sky's the limit."

<p>Quotation # 43 Source: DEJA</p>	<p>R: I'm extremely grateful. I'm extremely grateful. Every day I'm grateful for every piece of my life. Because I know it is not- it can be worse. It can always be worse. Even when I'm in the worst mood, it can always be worse. I: For some people, you know, life works out well. For some people life is a real struggle. How do you personally make sense of that? R: I feel like my life goes smooth-</p>	<p>Great quote "My life goes smooth"</p>
<p>Quotation # 18 Source: DEJA</p>	<p>I: Um, are you- would you say you're pretty happy with the person you are right now? R: Yeah, for sure. Especially at the level that I'm at, I feel like I'm 27 years old, and... I'm a lot further than I should be, but I feel like I'm always striving to be best, you know, my personal best. So, I definitely know that, you know, there are areas of improvement but I feel like judging up against other people in my same situation, I'm flying.</p>	<p>Great quote for social class - "I'm flying!"</p>
<p>Quotation # 8 Source: DEJA</p>	<p>I: In America, each generation has tried to enjoy a higher standard of living than their parents. Do you think you'll have a higher or lower standard of living than your parents? R: I guess I'll probably have a higher one. Cause I guess I'm a little further along and based on the things that they've taught me, I've been able to excel a little faster. I: Okay. How is your lifestyle similar or different from that of your parents? R: My lifestyle is very similar to how my parents' is right now-</p>	<p>Perfect quote of similar/upward social mobility for upper middle class.</p>
<p>SARA – LOWER MIDDLE CLASS</p>		
<p>Quotation # 8 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And um, do your parents still help you financially at all or are you doin' your own...? R: Um, sometimes. It- it really depends on the situation. You know, on a day to day basis, no. But if, you know, if there's something that I'm really struggling with, like if I'm struggling to</p>	<p>Resources - Financial: Yes from Parents</p> <p>Great quote about difficulty making the call on when, in any particular moment, independence from parents has been established. Boomerang</p>

	<p>make rent or, um, or if I'm, you know, just kind of feeling a little down and out where I am paying rent but I'm, you know, have zero money extra then, you know, it's like a hundred bucks here and there. Um, so, like, living here it's on my own, and, so yea.</p> <p>I: So all of the bills are up to you?</p> <p>R: Yea, yup.</p>	<p>in terms of money support with a sense of movement toward less reliance, but still that safety net from time to time.</p>
<p>Quotation # 43 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And you're about to leave for Europe?</p> <p>R: Yes.</p> <p>I: Are you moving there or?</p> <p>R: No. I'm- I'm working um for about a month. I'll be doing restoration work on a 13th century chateau, so, umm.</p> <p>I: Is that- so that's through the museum?</p> <p>R: Ah, kind of. It's um, we have, the museum's closed for three weeks and so um, I'm just taking an extra week and doing a volunteer vacation in, uh, [European city]. And um, but my work is paying for it [laughs]. So, it's- it's vacation time but it's still work time so [laughs] it's a little bit of both. [laughs]</p>	<p>Great quote for M2 regroup that builds career, evidences middle class.</p>
<p>Quotation # 90 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: Do you think there can be negative outcomes of having too many possessions?</p> <p>R: Um... [long pause]. Yea, 'cause I think you can lose the beauty in those possessions, um, and the beauty of hard work in getting those possessions. Because even though I live paycheck to paycheck and I definitely live outside my means, um, I still work very hard to get what I have, um, so I- I think if you, if you have, too- too many you can lose that kinda hard work behind it, so.</p> <p>I: And are thing- are there things that money can buy that you personally feel you have to have to be happy?</p> <p>R: I don't think so.</p>	<p>Great quote for structural barriers: "live paycheck to paycheck and I definitely live outside of my means." Also for lower middle class value of hard work: "Still work very hard to get what I have. So I think if you have too many [things], you can lose that kinda [value of the] hard work behind it."</p>
<p>Quotation # 26 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And switch back to work a little, which we've covered a little bit, um, so you, do you currently work two jobs?</p> <p>R: Yep.</p> <p>I: Ok. And so, you were sayin' that the-</p>	<p>Planning for the regroup: "give myself a little bit of time to regroup, and reorganize, and kinda get some things in order, and then start up again" Loves</p>

	<p>the one museum is closed for three weeks. R: Yep. I: Are you taking off at the other one, or? R: Yea. Um, I'm actually taking off about six- six to seven weeks from there, just to kinda, when I get back give myself a little bit of time to regroup and reorganize and kinda get some things in order, uh and then start up again. So fall, winter and spring are the busy season in New Orleans so, uhm, you know I'm working about four shifts a week at t- at a restaurant, so about, um, typically about 20 hours a week and then doing 40 hours a week on my other job so, at my full time job so it's, I'm- I am very busy [laughs] during- during those, uh, times of year. So, yea. I: And do you enjoy what you do? R: I love it. I love it a lot. Yea. Uh. I: Both jobs or are you talking the museum? R: Um, the museum. [laughs]</p>	<p>career, and thinks \$50K in education in history was worth it, despite having to work 60 hrs a week and combining with waitressing to pull it off</p>
<p>Quotation # 67 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I guess um, instill some of the same things that my mom taught me, you know but, kind of making sure that you, you're dos- you're doing something that you love, making sure that you help someone, making sure that you really get to know your community and so I think in that sense that you can really um... understand what's right and wrong in the world, so.</p>	<p>"Doing something you love"</p>
<p>Quotation # 2 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: Ok. And how would you say your life has gone in terms of what you were hoping or expecting? R: Um, I think it's, ah I think it's very different than what I was expecting. I: Yea. R: Um, I also think it's a lot better. 'Cause I don't think I woulda been happy, um, doing anything else. I: What do you think you were expecting?</p>	<p>Life is "very different than what I was expecting", mainly it seems in the M2 regroups and challenges in pursuing M1.</p>

	<p>R: Um, I was expecting to be in a very serious relationship, I was expecting to be married at 26 [laughs]. Um, I went to a very southern school, so you either walk outta there with a serious boyfriend or uh, engagement. Um, and so, um I'm very happy that that didn't happen for me. Um, now I'm, I'm also, um, I don't think I woulda be, would be doing the same things if I woulda stayed in [northeastern state]. Soo. So, yea. Pretty ok with the way things are goin' [laughs].</p>	
<p>Quotation # 14 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And did you take out loans for school or?</p> <p>R: Yea.</p> <p>I: So you're payin' on loans?</p> <p>R: Yep.</p> <p>I: About how much for four years?</p> <p>R: Ah, a lot, [laughs] way too much. Um, I think it's right around 50 thousand. It's a lot of money.</p> <p>I: And so do you feel like it' s worth it while you're payin' those back and?</p> <p>R: Um, sometimes, um, yea. I think it is.</p>	<p>Resources - Financial: HAS Debt</p> <p>\$50,000 in debt! (and working at a museum) - “sometimes” worth it</p>
<p>Quotation # 43 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And you’re about to leave for Europe?</p> <p>R: Yes.</p> <p>I: Are you moving there or?</p> <p>R: No. I’m- I’m working um for about a month. I’ll be doing restoration work on a 13th century chateau, so, umm.</p> <p>I: Is that- so that’s through the museum?</p> <p>R: Ah, kind of. It’s um, we have, the museum’s closed for three weeks and so</p>	<p>Resources - Financial: Yes from Job</p> <p>Great quote for M2 regroup that builds career, evidences middle class.</p>

	um, I'm just taking an extra week and doing a volunteer vacation in, uh, [European city]. And um, but my work is paying for it [laughs]. So, it's- it's vacation time but it's still work time so [laughs] it's a little bit of both. [laughs]	
Quotation # 24 Source: SARA	<p>I: What things in the last five years have made you the most sad or depressed?</p> <p>R: Um, I think it was leaving college, kinda leaving that security, um, you know. Being in school, because I've been in school forever [laughs]. Um and then all of a sudden you're not in school, it's a little, it's a little weird. Um, so that first year out was a little rough. Um, and, you know and relationships ending and all that stuff, so.</p>	<p>Support: Friends - Past</p> <p>Good quote on leaving the structural stability of college - "leaving that security" Lost friend support during most critical time of launching career and relationship regroup. Also mom moved away at this same time. All explanation for the "all on my own" mentality.</p>
Quotation # 67 Source: SARA	I guess um, instill some of the same things that my mom taught me, you know but, kind of making sure that you, you're dos- you're doing something that you love, making sure that you help someone, making sure that you really get to know your community and so I think in that sense that you can really um... understand what's right and wrong in the world, so.	<p>Support: Parents - Closeness</p> <p>"Doing something you love"</p>
Quotation # 51 Source: SARA	<p>I: And has your parent- is your relationship with them changed at all over the last five years?</p> <p>R: Yes, um with my mom we've gotten a lot closer. And part of it is that I've- I've graduated and I've, you know, grown up a little bit. I'm not a grown-up quite yet [laughs], but I've grown up a little bit [laughs]. Um, and, you know, I'm on my own and I'm, you know, taking care of myself so it's, uh, and I can handle it [laughs] so yea.</p> <p>I: So does that make things easier with</p>	<p>Support: Parents - Closeness</p> <p>Great quote to show the progression toward adulthood, a sense that something is different relative to before, but still not yet all the way to adult</p>

	<p>your mom?</p> <p>R: Yea, yep. Yep. And she's, I mean after moving out west she's happier and stuff like that, so it's just a better situation for everybody.</p>	
JADE – WORKING CLASS		
<p>Quotation # 57 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Yeah. Um...yeah so the, so you talked about um, you know like being addicted to oxycoton for like uh— R: About a year and a half. I: Year and a half, [R: “Yeah”] yeah. So how'd you um, how'd you get off of it? R: Overcome that? I: Yeah, that's a tough one to— R: It's the m-, it's the worst one to come off of. I: Yeah R: Uh it's a synthetic heroin. I: That's right, yeah. R: Oxycoton is synthetic heroin. It's just in a pill form. Um, it was rough. I I've experienced the withdrawals, the DT's, the— I: Did you have to, did you do it on your own? Did you just like-- R: I did cold turkey at first. I: Wow R: And then it was rough, I couldn't I couldn't do it cold turkey. [I: “Yeah”] Nobody can. [I: “No”] I mean you have to do something. So I went to a suboxone doctor I don't know if you've ever heard of that. I: To what? R: A suboxone doctor. It's actually an opiate blocker. I: Oh, I've heard of this yeah. R: It's actually. It's not methadone though. I: It's not what? R: It's not methadone. I: No, no, no. But it's like, it's what- R: It's an opiate blocker. I: Yeah. R: It's, uh, gets you [I: “It's like a</p>	<p>Fuel: Psychological strength in the face of multiple structural barriers</p>

	<p>prescription”] off of pain pills, pretty much.</p> <p>I: Yeah,</p> <p>R: So, that’s what it is.</p> <p>I: Mhmm.</p> <p>R: Um, a lot of people that usually get hooked on heroin and stuff they usually go to the methanol because it’s a lot stronger than suboxone.</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>R: So I didn’t wanna do that because it’s actually worse than pain killers to come off of.</p> <p>I: Oh.</p> <p>R: Why would you wanna go from pills to methanol [I: “Yeah”] and the withdrawals would be ten times worse.</p> <p>I: Yeah, that makes sense.</p> <p>R: It’d be so much harder to come off of. [I: “Yeah”] And I didn’t want that for myself again all over again. So—</p> <p>I: Oh, my gosh. No, no way.</p> <p>R: So I just didn’t wanna live that way anymore, um.</p> <p>I: What was the turning point?</p> <p>R: I actually had my ex clean for a year and a half, eighteen months I had him clean.</p> <p>I: Oh, wow.</p> <p>R: In that last year and a half of our relationship I had him clean.</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>R: And myself.</p> <p>I: Oh, my gosh.</p> <p>R: And um, we both quit the same day [I: “Okay”] and I was actually helping him stay clean by [I: “Yeah”] giving him my medicine at the same time, [I: “Yeah”] keeping myself clean. [I: “Yeah”] Um, trying not to think about it.</p> <p>I: Yeah.</p> <p>R: It was, it was hard, it was rough.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 95 Source: JADE</p>	<p>: Do you feel like your faith kinda took a hit with everything?</p> <p>R: A little bit.</p> <p>I: Okay—</p>	<p>Individualism is expressed across the social class spectrum, but for a WC EA whose encountered numerous</p>

	<p>R: With all that happened. Um, I kinda was just like what why? Out of all people in the world just why me? Cause I see so I have seen so many and especially at that time cause I was kind of looking for it so many people that didn't need to have their children but I would never do that to them. You know like, I have I have seen kids being neglected and not taken care of at all, and I was like why me? I am takin' care of mine um, why me instead of the ones that really don't need children. Cause I do feel like there is some people that aren't meant to have kids. There is and there isn't, you know I I feel that way I I felt I was kinda looking for it whenever it was going on. I was like why not them and why me? But now I'm like well everything happens for a reason so. There was a reason why that happened I'm sure.</p> <p>I: Have you figured it out yet? R: Not yet but I: You will. R: I will.</p>	<p>structural barriers it leaves the only question to ask being: "Why me" To which the interviewer asks, "Have you figured it out yet?" And she says only: "Not yet but...I will."</p>
<p>Quotation # 83 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: For me? Uh...I got the short end of the stick. Nah I'm just kidding [laughs] Um, uh...I probably sometimes I have felt that way— I: Sure yeah R: Uh, just by all the stuff that's happened um. I wish my health would be a lot better than what it is.</p>	<p>Good quote - "I got the short end of the stick" — then follows up with a JK and laughs</p>
<p>Quotation # 26 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: I know I'm also here to help people too. Like that's a big thing for me. I: Say more about that. What do you mean by that? R: Uh just to like, I know that I wasn't called to be here to be in the medical field. I know that [I laughs] um I don't do all that stuff. But uh, to help people though, to be uh to speak to other people and to hear problems and stuff. So me— maybe like maybe kind of a— I: Especially as a cosmetologist I bet</p>	<p>Same aspirations as a middle class EA - medical field or therapist in order to help people - but diminished expectations for reality of those dreams is now seeing the ways cosmetology can be some of that</p>

	<p>[speaking over R] R: Well yeah I hear a lot of that but I hear a lot of problems, clients but uh...being from I guess all the stuff that I've already been through. Being a single, young mother, uh going through the drugs, the um...being sober now for three years it's... it's it's been a lot to endure. And um, I think if I can be like a speaker or something like that that would be awesome. To go around the world and speak to young mothers, or not really young mothers but young teens. Um, to just let them hear from a personal experience instead of like a TV or something. You know, so I I feel like I ha- I could be a therapist or something like that, just to help people you know?</p>	
<p>Quotation # 27 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Yeah. Um, what ultimately do you want to get out of life? R: Happiness of course. I: What does happiness look like for you? R: Uh...I would like t—uh, to not have so many you know problems. And stressing stressing problems that I've already had. I would just like it to be settled you know, like a like a normal person life [small laugh] cause I've never been never been able to call myself normal I guess. Or lived normal life. So it's always been kind str—I would like to be stress free really. I'm kinda- I know I know there's no such thing as worry-free but some people are, some people really don't worry about stuff. I w- I would like to be somewhere close to that you know? Not really not care about stuff, but not stress myself out about everything.</p>	<p>WC version of happiness: “Not to have so many, you know, problems.” Not a different aspiration, everyone wants happiness, but the color of happiness and the likelihood of achieving it are a significantly darker hue.</p>
<p>Quotation # 86 Source: JADE</p>	<p>what will count for you as having lived a good life at the end of it all? R: Um I would like to be the you know, be like cool to have the fairytale ending but. Um, you've seen “The Notebook” right?</p>	<p>Great quote for same middle class desires - growing old with a life partner and raising kids together - but coupled with structural barriers, she describes it as a fairy tale</p>

	<p>I: What's that? Fairytale-</p> <p>R: You've seen "The Notebook" right? The movie?</p> <p>I: Oh yeah oh yeah.</p> <p>R: Great movie. Um, [pause] that would make me feel you know, the to good to have that person there and then have your family at the same time. Um, be there for you I guess when you get older so that's another reason why I'm like yeah if I...not really if I-I cause I wanna help these people for sure, anybody who needs my help. Uh, I want to have somebody whose like when I get older and I need somebody it would be awesome just to have just one person you know. And I would like to see [my son] you know grow up and go to college and get a good education, be a family man. Um, have his own kids, watch him raise his kids, so.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 102 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Yeah no need for anything else, yeah. Uh, okay so some people tend to see the whole human race as one common family of people, and they believe that everyone is responsible to help take care of others. And then other people tend to more believe that each individual family's only responsible for themselves. How would you describe your thinking on this issue?</p> <p>R: Mmmm. Like in my religious in my religion and my family? Or ...</p> <p>I: Hm, not necessarily. Like um, like so whether like I guess like some um, some people we talk to they think about like all humans as being part of the same family and like we're obligated to take care of each other just because we're all humans or?</p> <p>R: I think I think that should be that way. I know it's not, um, these days but I wish it could be where we could all be one I guess, kinda like the Army. They're all one. Um, or even I guess kinda like the Marines, no man left</p>	<p>Great quote how structural barriers can prevent any other view than individualism</p>

	<p>behind. I: Right yeah.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 21 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Yeah. Um so... mm, do you like where your life has been headed over the last five years or not really? R: Probably yes and no. Um— I: Yeah, how so? R: I wish I wouldn't have really stayed here that long, or as long as I have. I wish I would've um, got away a little sooner I guess instead of kinda staying here and being more st—feeling stuck I guess you could say. Cause everybody that lives here kinda feels the same way, like feels stuck in this town. I: Yeah R: Um. I have a lot more goals and dreams than people around here I guess so. I wanna be somebody and be something and do something with myself, and I want [my son] to have more of an option and choices for schools and stuff like that, more I'm not gonna say higher education but, you know have a better education and more of a social life I guess? Cause I want him to be sucker—you know like, small town country boy. I'm not saying that's bad but— I: No no. R: Uh, I think I would like him to be more of have choices and stuff. There's not much here. I: Okay. Um, do you personally feel stuck here? R: Sometimes yeah.</p>	<p>Good quote for diminished optimism for future in the face of set backs and lack of opportunities in current city</p>
<p>Quotation # 2 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: I felt like my whole family was kinda against me. Cause my grandparents they were the ones who paid for my mom's lawyer. Most of it. Cause they're very well off, they own businesses they uh, they have a six thousand square feet house it's. They're pretty well off, I've never asked them for nothing though. I: Have they ever offered anything? R: No.</p>	<p>Great quote for having no one there to support her, coupled with previous quote, individualism is the understandable result, the cultural tool for psychological security in the face of social instability</p>

	<p>I: Okay</p> <p>R: No. Um my dad sends like 25-50 bucks on our birthdays and Christmas and stuff like that, but—</p> <p>I: This is, yeah—</p> <p>R: Nothing else from my family like. I don't I don't I don't uh, depend on them I guess. I don't, it, I don't and if they do try, if they ever have tried I'm like no nu uh. Cause it's kinda been like thrown in my face before if they have ever helped. I don't like that. Like if you're going to do something for me do it outta the kindness of your heart and not throw it back up in my face later. And that be your purpose, would be just to do that. That's kinda how my mom is.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 31 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: Yeah. Um, how about things in the last five years that have made you the most sad or depressed?</p> <p>R: Probably the situation with my mom.</p>	<p>Support: Parents - No</p> <p>Good example of how for many WC EA's their parents are the dragging force that they think they need to let go of in order to improve their lot in life</p>
<p>Quotation # 90 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I: What do you think about the American Dream?</p> <p>R: It's for some people. I mean—</p> <p>I: Is it for you?</p> <p>R: I don't know. Uh.</p> <p>I: What makes you say that?</p> <p>R: Because I've already stepped out of boundaries. I mean I've. [short pause] But this is actually a religious opinion, too. I've already had a child out of wedlock uh stuff like that. So that's not really the American Dream you could say [laughs] Um.</p>	<p>Dream does not apply</p>
<p>Quotation # 7 Source: JADE</p>	<p>I moved here with my mom.</p> <p>I: Oh, right.</p> <p>R: And she was havin' some financial problems in [southern city] [I: "Oh, okay, so she wanted to move back, huh?"] cause it is very expensive to</p>	<p>Resources - Financial: Not from Parents</p> <p>Great example of working class lack of support from parents (economically and socially) to fuel regrouping, turning inward instead for</p>

	<p>move er to live in [southern city] [I: To live there, yeah”] it’s very expensive. So she just couldn’t afford it, she wanted to be closer to her parents too.</p> <p>I: Yeah, okay</p> <p>R: And um, I got the opportunity to get my cosmetology license, do my apprenticeship license first and work in the shop.</p> <p>I: Okay. Here in [southern city]?</p> <p>R ‘Cause my gran—yeah my grandparents own a salon here.</p>	<p>psychological strength</p>
<p>Quotation # 36 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: I was fresh outta school so I was still kinda—it was still fresh in my head. So I wanted to go ahead and do it. And before [my son] come I went ahead and got the scoring away, like out of the way, and he was exactly a month old whenever I walked across the stage. And got my diploma so</p> <p>I: Oh my gosh [laughs]</p> <p>R: Yeah. My mom was holdin’ him while I was getting my diploma.</p> <p>I: Wow [laughs]</p> <p>R: It was, it was tough</p> <p>I: Yeah.</p> <p>R: I went ahead and done it though for him, myself, but for him more.</p>	<p>Resources - Fuel for Regroup</p> <p>Great quote about structural barriers - mom holding one month old baby so she could walk across stage to get cosmetology license</p>
<p>Quotation # 2 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: I felt like my whole family was kinda against me. Cause my grandparents they were the ones who paid for my mom’s lawyer. Most of it. Cause they’re very well off, they own businesses they uh, they have a six thousand square feet house it’s. They’re pretty well off, I’ve</p>	<p>Support: No</p> <p>Great quote for having no one there to support her, coupled with previous quote, individualism is the understandable result, the cultural tool for psychological</p>

	<p>never asked them for nothing though.</p> <p>I: Have they ever offered anything?</p> <p>R: No.</p> <p>I: Okay</p> <p>R: No. Um my dad sends like 25-50 bucks on our birthdays and Christmas and stuff like that, but—</p> <p>I: This is, yeah—</p> <p>R: Nothing else from my family like. I don't I don't I don't uh, depend on them I guess. I don't, it, I don't and if they do try, if they ever have tried I'm like no nu uh. Cause it's kinda been like thrown in my face before if they have ever helped. I don't like that. Like if you're going to do something for me do it outta the kindness of your heart and not throw it back up in my face later. And that be your purpose, would be just to do that. That's kinda how my mom is.</p>	<p>security in the face of social instability</p>
<p>Quotation # 13 Source: JADE</p>	<p>Who are your friends? What do they do? Um—</p> <p>R: I don't really hang out with anybody here.</p> <p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: There's not—the people I kind of got close to when I first moved here um, we kinda I guess we really can't trust anybody these days [small laugh] can't I dunno. Mmm...I guess...I talk to my neighbors and stuff like that but I don't really hang out with anybody, I'm stay at home mom, most of the time. I don't really have time for you know, drama and stuff like that. Cause that's mostly what it is here, drama.</p>	<p>Support: No</p> <p>Good quote about having no community</p>

	<p>I: Okay. So you'd rather just stay out and stay above it. I get that.</p> <p>R: Yeah. It could be nice to probably hang out with people sometimes and kinda get away but or go out or whatever. I'm kinda done with those days. Um, I done it—</p> <p>I: Is it lonely though? Like to just—</p> <p>R: Well havin' havin' [my son] and [my boyfriend] around most of the time it's it's not that bad. I mean I've probably gotten used to it I guess.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 87 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: A lot. I thought everybody was against me. And the time that mom was trying to take [my son] I did I was like very much on my own for a while during that. Until the end, until somebody was like actually willing to listen. I'm like this is all the stuff that's happened, this – they were like what? They never should've taken [my son] to begin with. It was illegal, it was um, they were only going by assumptions and heresay, and it was wrong. You should actually have proof you know? So. Yeah I for in a sense the whole beginning was like, oh my gosh this is I'm doing this all by myself.</p>	<p>Support: No</p> <p>“I’m doing this all by myself”</p>
<p>Quotation # 6 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: He's still in [southern city]. He has a wife and two kids that he takes care of every day.</p> <p>I: Oh, wow. Does he help you out at all?</p> <p>R: Uh, he has to pay child support.</p> <p>I: Oh he does. And does he do it?</p> <p>R: He does. It comes straight out of his check, so he can't—</p> <p>I: Oh [laughs] so there's no going</p>	<p>Support: No</p> <p>Great quote about how the same de-inst. of marriage/family formation hits working class harder, esp. with kid first.</p>

	<p>between with that. That's smart.</p> <p>R: Oh no, he will lose—they'll suspend—I don't know if you know about any of that but they'll suspend their license if they don't pay and they go to jail for 21 days. In the state of [southern state] they do.</p> <p>I: Oh, okay.</p> <p>R: I don't know about [southern state]'s uh, laws and regulations but it's 21 days in jail here [I: "Yeah"] and it's suspended license.</p> <p>I: Okay, so that pretty good incentive.</p> <p>R: And I'm sure he wants to go to work every day, [I: "Yeah, yeah"] so he pays the child support.</p> <p>I: Oh, my gosh. Wow.</p> <p>R: It's only 75 dollars a week.</p> <p>I: Oh, yeah</p> <p>R: Which is not much, but it's something.</p> <p>I: It is something, yeah. Um, so do you – is he, is he still involved in your son's life at all, or?</p> <p>R: Uh, he calls about twice a year.</p> <p>I: Okay</p> <p>R: Yeah</p> <p>I: Yeah, um</p> <p>R: His two let's see he just had a baby but he also has a three year old little girl and then like I said my little boy is</p>	
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	almost 7. This Christmas he'll be 7. And so he was first.	
Quotation # 16 Source: JADE	<p>I: Yeah I was going to say what is your relationship like with her now?</p> <p>R: Everybody's like how did you do that?</p> <p>I: Yeah h-how did you do that? Like—</p> <p>R: We talk. But it's mostly just about [my son]. And uh I don't tell her any of my personal business. I don't talk to her as a friend anymore, I talk to her as her being my mother and her not living in the same vicinity as me. [small laugh]</p> <p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: So we just basically you know talk about [my son] and that's it</p>	<p>Support: Parents - Not Close</p> <p>Good quote about why can no longer trust mother to make good decisions for her, decline of parental authority</p>
Quotation # 17 Source: JADE	<p>has a platonic sugar daddy (mentions this after the recorder stops), her son is doing well, she wants to share her story with people (specifically religious people) to let them know that they're not alone in their struggles. I have to admit, her resilience floored me-- it sounds like her life derailed in between interviews and is now being pieced back together.</p> <p>Her sugar daddy is a client with 5 kids and a wife, he wants to put her up in an apartment in a college town 90 miles down the road with some property for her to start a beauty shop. R showed me a bunch of photos of herself a few years ago and I agree with Kari, she did have a haggard look to her, but she seems to have recovered.</p>	<p>Touchpoints</p> <p>From field notes</p>
Quotation # 18 Source: JADE	<p>R: I have a stepdad. He's my son has a very good relationship with my stepdad so he has that father-male figure. Um, with my stepdad.</p>	<p>Touchpoints</p> <p>Stepdad as "super hero" and "knight in shining armor"</p>

	<p>I: And your stepdad is he...</p> <p>R: They've been married—He's been married to my mom about three years now. Three, three and a half years.</p> <p>I: Okay. Do you feel pretty close to him or not really?</p> <p>R: Yeah closer than my mom actually. We have a better relationship than me and my mom.</p>	
MICHAEL – UPPER MIDDLE CLASS		
<p>Quotation # 3 Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>I: And do you think you will have a higher or lower standard of living than your parents? R: Probably lower. I: And why do you think that? R: Just because I haven't finished school yet, I'm not sure, I mean if I could finish school I'll probably have higher but, I'm not really worried about that right now.</p>	<p>UPC case that may experience downward mobility b/c of incomplete M1; but he is "not really worried about that right now"</p>
<p>Quotation # 51 Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>R: Um, I think we need to be grateful for all the small things, I mean [long pause]. I mean I understand people like aren't born as well off as others, or they have bad situations, but I mean if they're still alive, still able to feed themselves, I mean [pause]. I mean, I, could be good, I don't know. I've never really been in a situation where I can't be grateful though, so.</p>	<p>Good quote for upper middle class; similar to UMC Deja who is very grateful for things too</p>
<p>Quotation # 65 Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>Not much to say on this one, as he did not have much to say. He's had some big transitions in the last few years – went to college, dropped out, moved back in with parents, moved out on own, lived with girlfriend, broke up with her, now has a roommate and a new girlfriend. However, he is not very reflective and described all of this as pretty matter-of-fact.</p>	<p>MOBILITY: MULTIPLE MOVES</p> <p>From field notes</p>
DAN – LOWER MIDDLE		
<p>Quotation # 92 Source: DAN</p>	<p>Some people talk about the American Dream. What does the American Dream mean to you?</p>	<p>Great quote for belief in American Dream, but it involves not social institutions</p>

	<p>R: Uh... Going out an' succeeding with whatever you wanna do, um, in life. And... I guess that's, pretty much that sums it up, really.</p>	<p>- just succeed at whatever you want.</p>
<p>Quotation # 94 Source: DAN</p>	<p>I: And how do you think your friends and family would describe to me the kind of person that you are? R: Um, I think the first thing they would probably think of is smart, although I don't really ever feel very smart, but they, they say that I'm pretty smart, I guess. Um, nice and I guess funny. Um, understanding. [Pause] I don't, I mean I, they don't talk about me very much, but that's some of the stuff I guess I hear from, what I get from them.</p>	<p>Great quote for looking glass self and rising to middle class label</p>
<p>Quotation # 2 Source: DAN</p>	<p>I: Okay. And um, who pays all the bills there? R: Um, she mostly pays for the rent, and, uh, for when I moved back in I decided to at least help around so I started paying the electric bill. I: Mhm. R: And, um, since I added, she didn't watch a lot of TV back then, um, or paid any cable or anything like that, um, I paid for the internet and TV, in a way, and so I pay for that as well, so that's just kinda the things I kinda help around. I: Mhm. R: With payment. I: What about groceries and st--? R: Um, I buy, she'll buy... uh... most of the groceries, but, um, if I want anything extra, I'll, like something that's not essential for everybody, I'll like treats or anything like that, or fruits or anything like that, um, that I like, I'll go buy it</p>	<p>Resources - Financial: Yes from Parents</p> <p>Great quote for cell phone dependence and complexity with financial independence in a shared family plan era.</p>

	<p>myself, so.</p> <p>I: Mhm, okay. And um, what about, er, like your cell phone and, is that something you cover, she?</p> <p>R: Um, my dad actually, um, well it wouldn't be really my dad, my, my uncle, uh, he owns a clinic business, and my dad, he's a doctor, he works in that clinic as well, and so the business, it's a business plan that they play for, for the phone, and so it's... several of us, um, several of my cousins, and my sister included, one of my sisters included, is under that bill. So they all pay it. Um, and that had just started when I went to carlid-college. They they said that they would pay for my phone, and so they've been paying it since then.</p> <p>I: Mhm. So it's just, uh, it's kind of a shared plan?</p> <p>R: It's a sh--, it's, it's something like that, it's, it's a little different since it's is a business plan, but yeah, it's, it's something like that.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 35 Source: DAN</p>	<p>R: Yeah the, yeah the school. Um, uh, well, once I started moving back home, um, you know, I started exercising a little bit more, um, just to keep my spirits high, um, just cause I just kind of felt really badly about how nursing school went. And so recently I've been able to, uh, make gains, cause I [00:06:18?] running now, and so now I've, I can do like four miles now, I did four miles about last year or so, six miles this year, and then completed two events that were twelve miles long. And, uh, they're, they were just obstacle events, they weren't like marathons or anything.</p>	<p>Resources - Fuel for Regroup</p> <p>Great quote about how having more stuff to do helps keep mind off things (which Dell career women also indicates) - a way of explaining the troubles of upper class with more structural availability for psychological distress</p>

	<p>I: Mhm.</p> <p>R: And I thought that was pretty significant to me, cause I've never been that really athletic in the past, and so, all this—</p> <p>I: Did you ever run before?</p> <p>R: No, I just, it just all started about two years ago, and it's just, it's just kinda like... exploded.</p> <p>I: Become a big passion.</p> <p>R: Yeah, big passion for me. So I've been doing that a lot more.</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>R: And it's kinda helped me like s-stress, myself de-stress myself out from school and work. And, uh, I guess that might be why I feel a little bit better about after [university] than I did when I was at [university].</p> <p>I: Mhm.</p> <p>R: Just feel like I have more stuff to do that I can keep my mind off of things. So.</p> <p>I: Mhm.</p> <p>R: But doing those events and, you know, making those goals, have been pretty big to me.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 62 Source: DAN</p>	<p>He seems pretty disconnected from people, despite saying he has a lot of friends, and it seems to me he may keep people emotionally distant so that they cannot leave him like his father did.</p>	<p>Support: No</p> <p>From Field Notes (Iver: PSH)</p>

Quotation # 63 Source: DAN	R has generally been close with his mom throughout his life, and has lived alone with her throughout his childhood and now again after returning to live with her while going to college these last few years.	Support: Parents - Closeness From Field Notes (Iver: PSH)
Quotation # 26 Source: DAN	R: Yeah. And, uh, but like I said, my mom, uh, she is been supportive kinda no matter what, like whatever I do, as long as, as long as it leads to a job that makes money. I, I think it should be that and something I enjoy. We might have few diff--, you know, conflicting opinions about that but um, I think she's become more supportive as well, like my dad, so.	Support: Parents - Closeness Great quote for dissonance in parental feedback on educ/career
Quotation # 17 Source: DAN	After coming back home to live with his mom and regroup, he took some community college classes and had an influential biology teacher who got him interested in pursuing a degree in science.	Touchpoints From Field Notes (Iver: PSH)
TRISTAN		
Quotation # 66 Source: TRISTAN	R: Um, I feel like I- I'm beyond normal. [Laughs] I: [laughs] R: I- I- I do. I: Yeah. R: But as far as I deserve, I'm rich man. I got a family that loves me. I got people that- that wanna be around me. I: Yeah. R: Money can't buy that.	Support: Parents - Closeness Success in life defined in beyond purely economic gain (perhaps in response to WC reality, or perhaps creating it)
Quotation # 7 Source: TRISTAN	R: [pause] financially speaking, that's- financially speaking why do some people seem to do better in life, um, I guess it's just because that uh, they... [sighs] [mumbles] They work to where they get. And- and some people, they don't have to have much money to be happy. Just like me, I can be broke and be happy.	"I can be broke and be happy."
Quotation # 39	R: Back when my mom and dad were	Good quote comparing his

Source: TRISTAN	<p>younger they're didn't have to go to college, you know. It just wasn't- the need for it wasn't there</p> <p>I: Yeah yeah</p> <p>R: But now it-it is and in order for me to get the job that I had I had to go back to school you know</p>	situation to parents situation (need to go to college)
Quotation # 48 Source: TRISTAN	<p>do you uh, like consider yourself to be an adult nowadays?</p> <p>R: Yeah. I- I- I do, um... I- I take on a lot more responsibility than I did. You know, I- I- since- since then you know, I've tried out for a fire department. And uh, I all but got it. It- politics messed me up with them-</p>	No ambiguity with adulthood among WC.
Quotation # 37 Source: TRISTAN	<p>R: Uh, I believe what I do now, working on an ambulance, I believe that's the callin' that uh, God wants me to do.</p> <p>I: Hmm.</p> <p>R: I'm a people person. I like helpin' people and, you know, I just hate I can't do as much as I can. I- I just- I wish the whole- I could get through what's- with uh, school faster than what I can now.</p> <p>I: Yeah.</p> <p>R: The whole, the- now I have a bunch of goals and kinda ambitions about getting there, pretty quick.</p>	As with Jade - same aspiration to help people - gets translated in WC to driving an ambulance vs. being a doctor
3. FEEDBACK		COMMENT
DEJA		
Quotation # 25 Source: DEJA	<p>I: Now let's talk about school and education. What's the highest level of education you've completed so far?</p> <p>R: Uh, I would say I have the equivalent of an Associate's plus some credits.</p> <p>I: Okay, are you in school at all right now?</p> <p>R: Nope.</p> <p>I: Okay. Um, were you ever in school in the past five years?</p> <p>R: Past five years... yeah I was just finishing up my last couple of credits when I was 22, so yeah.</p> <p>I: And you said you didn't earn a degree</p>	<p>Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance</p> <p>Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from Others - Mixed Messages</p> <p>Great quote to embody all the marker confusions and regroupings and moves — De-Institutionalization of</p>

	<p>at that point. R: I didn't. I: Okay. R: Nope. I: I think you already talked about that. Did you have a major? R: Yup, I was majoring in Spanish. I: Okay. R: Spanish, uh, communications. Which I learned a lot of Spanish, but I was already fluent, so...I was just getting that piece of paper, um... I: Why did you wanna major in that? R: So that I could just, uh, solidify something that I was interested in. I: Okay. R: Um, school became just like a means to an end, like okay, I'm just gonna get my degree cause that's what everybody does. But then when I really started thinking about it, I'm like, cause my- my major was originally music, and I'm like why am I getting a degree in music when I don't wanna teach? And that's really the only reason why you'd need a degree unless you wanna go sing opera at an opera house or something, but that wasn't really what I was tryna do either, so then I'd be- I went to journalism for a little bit, then was like, okay... why do I need a degree to get in journalism, I probly don't, I could probly write my little letters, do whatever I wanna do without this, so then I was like let me just get Spanish, just to finish, since I already have all my credits pretty much for Spanish, I only need like thirty more credits, let me finish it. And then, uh, I tried to gain residency at [university] and then you had to get out for a year in order to gain residency and you had to go work full time at a job. I: That's where you were, you were at [southern state]? R: Yeah, I was in [southern state] and so the rules were you had to go be out for a</p>	<p>Adulthood in a Nutshell!</p>
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	<p>year, pay taxes in [southern state], then you are a resident. So I did that, but then I was in the workforce, and now I have bills, now I have an apartment. So now, I'm out of school and I'm still tryna, you know, go back and take classes and stuff but it's just not working. And then...</p> <p>I: So you do wanna go back at some point?</p> <p>R: Yeah, I want to use the tuition reimbursement piece so I can go ahead and finish through my job. Absolutely. And they will pay me to go to school and I could get international business emphasis on Spanish.</p> <p>I: That's what you're looking at?</p> <p>R: Yup. Cause our company is extremely worldly.</p> <p>I: Um...and what- what do you hope- you hope to use that in your job then?</p> <p>R: Yes, eventually I would like to liaison between, um, our sites overseas that are Spanish speaking. And I already do, in a capacity right now. Um, because, just the way God works and just puts you in situations. You know, when I first got to Dell it was always I wanna get overseas and work and live in Argentina or do projects in Argentina, just because that was the country that I knew was... you know, kind of European still, not too third world, and I was like, okay, I can handle that. And then, now my- my goal is Panama, because Panama's closer and we- I work with a team right now that's in Panama. So, it's like, you know, you kinda hone in on your goals based on what happens, so...</p> <p>I: So looking back, are you satisfied with your, uh, educational experiences?</p> <p>R: Yeah, I think I got out of it what I was supposed to, even though I didn't finish, and I can always finish, you know, I did internships, I moved around, you know, I feel like I did the experience and got the growth out of it.</p>	
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I: Right. But you didn't necessarily find a job in your field, though, right? Cause you were in Spanish and...

R: I didn't find a job in my field, but...

I: Were you looking for a job in your field?

R: Exactly. What was my field? I don't really know. You know what I'm saying? So, in terms of that, I got into sales and I went to Orlando for the few months. I was doing the internship with Disney and then they changed my job and then I quit and moved in with some dude and he got me into sales basically, taught me everything, I started reading books, Zig Ziglar and everybody and I just honed in on my sales skills and when I got back to [southern city], it was like boom, I'm going into corporate. So... and I started working at [phone service company] and then I worked at another place and then...

I was... I became a starving artist cause like, "oh I'm gonna get back into my music" and then I was a nanny and I was doing another part time job. And then I was like, no this sucks. And that's when me and my ex broke up and then I went home for ten days and it was like, okay I gotta get my bearings right. That was why I went home. And while I was home, [large technology company] called me-
I: You went home for that specific purpose.

R: Yeah I went home to get my mind right. I'm like, okay I gotta go home, touch base, like, plug back in to my people, you know, and try to basically find myself again, cause I was that lost. So... then I got back and, well actually before I got back, I got a call from [large technology company]. And... I had already interviewed at [large technology company] one time and they didn't hire me, back when I was working at [phone service company], but I had, like, no experience. So they found my resume

	<p>online and sought me out and then I started working there and within nine months I was moving to Austin to further my career cause I had already got to the top where I was at.</p> <p>I: Um, and, you already talked about your student loan experience some, you did say you're not necessarily happy with that.</p> <p>R: Hooo, no. I am definitely not happy with that at all. At all. And the main reason why is cause I was in [southern state] and I was going to [university] and I'm not gonna blame it on them, but I didn't have a counselor. So I'm here, picking my classes and doing my loan paperwork on my own. And I had no idea- and I'm not gonna say that I didn't know that I was signing my life over, like my mom was telling me all along, don't sign these papers, and I'm like, but what am I gonna do? I'm down here by myself, y'all aren't helping me with school, so I gotta sign these papers, otherwise I gotta come home, and I woulda felt like a failure if I had a went home. Because there is nothing in Chicago for me because it's cold and it's a huge city with small jobs. You know? So I knew that Tennessee was a good place for me to start my career and get a job and it had low costs of living and so I'm like, I gotta stay down here. Even if it does mean I'll be in debt. So...</p>	
SARA		
<p>Quotation # 15 Source: SARA</p>	<p>are there any kinds of people that you really look up to in that?</p> <p>R: Um, I, I definitely look up to more outgoing people than I am, um. I look up to, people that have a lot of confidence in life, 'cause I don't really have a lot of confidence. Um, yea, so. Really those people. [laughs]</p>	<p>Feedback: Adult - Yes from others - Coherent Message - Congruence</p> <p>Great quote for individualism! Feedback from friends/role models that it is all about having the confidence to do it on own</p>
<p>Quotation # 63 Source: SARA</p>	<p>how do you normally decide or know what is good or bad, right and wrong in</p>	<p>Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message -</p>

	<p>life? R: Um, I just, instinctual [laughs]. Um I think my mom taught me pretty well so, um, to decipher what's good and bad. So it's really just kind of what I feel is good and what is right and wrong, good and bad. So it seems to work out pretty well [laughs].</p>	<p>Congruence</p> <p>Morality = "instinctual", learn from external source, internalize, no more conscious thought needed</p>
<p>Quotation # 18 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: And can you tell me about a difficult or complicated decision, that you've had to make in the last five years? R: Um, moving down here. Um whether it was the right choice or if I should just move home and... live at home and work where I wanna work, but save money, um, to pay off my student loans. Um, so that was a pretty big decision. Um, I ultimately think I made the right decision. My mom may not agree with me sometimes [laughs]. I: [laughs] R: But. I: She wanted you to move back there or? R: Ah, just financially, yes. I: Yea. R: Yea. But that's, it's, that's the only reason, so, yea. I: And... can you tell me, um, what in particular was difficult about that struggle? R: Um, I don't know, [laughs]. I: [laughs along] R: Um, it was, I guess kind of having faith in myself that I could actually do it. So. 'Cause it's a, it's a pretty big step to move on your own, I knew one person moving down here. I didn't have a job when I moved down here, so. It was just having faith that I could find something that I wanted to do when I was here. So.</p>	<p>Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance</p> <p>Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from Parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance</p> <p>Good quote for dissonance with mom in feedback regarding establishing adulthood, launching career, from afar. "I ultimately think I made the right decision...My mom may not agree."</p>
<p>Quotation # 24 Source: SARA</p>	<p>I: What things in the last five years have made you the most sad or depressed? R: Um, I think it was leaving college, kinda leaving that security, um, you know. Being in school, because I've been in school forever [laughs]. Um and then</p>	<p>Feedback: Education/Career - No from friends</p> <p>Feedback: Partner - No from friends</p>

	<p>all of a sudden you're not in school, it's a little, it's a little weird. Um, so that first year out was a little rough. Um, and, you know and relationships ending and all that stuff, so.</p>	<p>Good quote on leaving the structural stability of college - "leaving that security" Lost friend support during most critical time of launching career and relationship regroup. Also mom moved away at this same time. All explanation for the "all on my own" mentality.</p>
JADE		
<p>Quotation # 56 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: Besides the four years of going through this literally hell. I: Yeah R: Um— I: Do you mind sharing what happened? R: I was introduced to a lot of things that I never really knew before. I: Okay R: When I—even when I lived in [southern city] I knew nothing about um, pills. I knew nothing about drugs. The only thing I ever heard about was marijuana in high school, [I: "Yeah," chuckles] that was just like you know all the kids were just trying it to experiment but I come here. And it's like small town. Nobody ha—nobody has anything to do here [I: "Right"] but either get in trouble or get on drugs [I: "Yeah"] or um, just go nowhere. Like nobody knows [I: "Yeah"] the people that are from here that I've actually talked to and gotten to know, they just like they have no clue what else is out there. They have – there's a big world out there [I: "Yeah"] and they just don't even know it. It's just. I: So, it sounds like— R: It's sad to me [I: "Yeah"] that people have never been out of [southern state]. Some people around here have never even been outta [southern city]. I: Wow R: And they're my age. I: Yeah R: So, I'm just like, wow you've never</p>	<p>Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance</p> <p>Great (by that, meaning awful) quote for cumulative disadvantage - so many layers</p>

been on a vacation or nothing? Never took a trip to [southern city] or nothing? [southern town]? They're like yeah well we've been to [southern town] once or twice but to eat or something but this is their just foundation, this is their, you know.

I: Wow

R: I would I would be very sad [laughs]

I: Yeah. Well, I mean I think it makes sense like why you know, why you would go stir crazy here.

R: But I got introduced to, from him, and he's two and a half years older than me, my ex is.

I: Yeah

R: I got introduced to pills, got um—

I: Like oxycoton and stuff?

R: Oxycoton, roxicotyn, pain pills, narcotics. It was—it was opiates pretty much.

I: Yeah

R: It was rough.

I: How did, did you like get like addicted, or?

R: I've been clean—oh yeah every day for a year and a half straight I was on pills with my ex. I knew nothing about oxycoton before he put it in my face.

I: Yeah, yeah

R: At all like I knew. Like this is just a little bit stronger than what you're taking now. I was only taking like non-narcotic pain pills.

I: Oh, okay.

R: 'Cause I have a lot, a lot of health problems. [I: "Yeah"] Um, I've had seven surgeries—

I: Oh my gosh. What for?

R: So that was like a big, that was a big ordeal that I've had in the past few years.

I: Yeah was that recent?

R: Um, my first one was ... I was two months pregnant when I was—with [my son] it was right before I moved to [southern city].

I: Okay

R: Um, I guess I found out pretty early when I was pregnant with [my son] I knew, I just pretty much knew I was about three, three weeks pregnant when I found out I was actually pregnant with him.

I: Wow. Were you surprised to be pregnant?

R: Yes. I did not know it was coming at all. Neither did my mom, she almost killed me [I laughs] the first three months I was pregnant with him she tried to get me to abort him.

I: Oh wow.

R: And I'm so against that kinda stuff. Like I don't believe in that. And –

I: That must been really difficult like standing against her.

R: I'm sure her being—it it was. And [my sons'] dad like he didn't want that, I didn't want that. So I said you know what I did this, and I'm gonna you know you play you pay, kinda thing. And I I don't believe in that kinda stuff, unless it's like something very serious has happened and it's just not. Everything happens for a reason I believe, so. Um, but that the first one, first surgery I had was on my left breast. And they claimed that my, I guess, milk glands got clogged up.

I: Oh, my gosh.

R: It was like an absess breast though, they drained 16 ounces of fluid—

I: Oh jeez.

R: Yeah it was—it was like I had a fake breast. It was awful. [both laugh] It was purple and blue and it was just awful, it was very bad. They can only put me under twilight, they cannot put me fully in sedation 'cause I was pregnant.

I: Oh oh my gosh so you were kinda awake for this.

R: I was half away for this surgery.

I: Oh, dear God [laughing]

R: It was awful. And I was pregnant—

	<p>I: That's terrible.</p> <p>R: and it was I'm like have a sheet over you know from here up, and the doctors up here talkin to me and I'm are you doing all this while I'm talking to you? And yeah we're almost finished. And I'm like oh my gosh please hope you numb me first. It was bad.</p> <p>[both laugh]</p> <p>I: Oh, no.</p> <p>R: So I had to pack my breast for six months after that with gauze and stuff. It was awful [laughs].</p> <p>I: That's terrible.</p> <p>R: That was my first surgery.</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>R: Um, I've had a couple female surgeries, like-</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>R: uh, taking my left ovary out, removing it. Um, I had surgery on my right ovary. Not too long ago probably about two years ago. That's been my last one lately, recently. About a year and a half two years.</p> <p>I: Those must've been really scary. To have to like –</p> <p>R: They had to take a couple of cysts off my right ovary.</p> <p>I: Okay.</p> <p>R: I had my gall bladder removed.</p> <p>I: Okay. [Chuckles]</p> <p>R: Uh—</p> <p>I: Oh my gosh.</p> <p>R: Yeah I've had—I got ran over.</p> <p>I: What?!</p> <p>R: Yeah, [I: "Wait"] when I first started dating my ex. I got ran over behind there was this little bar and grill in town that we actually did have that had a liquor license. It was weird.</p> <p>I: Yeah</p> <p>R: For a little while I worked there night, at night. It was only about two or three nights a week</p> <p>I: Okay</p>	
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R: But I was walking out the back and taking the garbage out, [I: “Yeah”] and I’m just waitressing. And um, there was a couple of guys back there just acting crazy, belligerent, drunk and they were also on a lot of other stuff.

I: Got it. Yeah.

R: This was like the first week I started dating my ex. So I knew nothing about anything then. I was eight—nineteen. I was about nineteen.

I: So you were like totally unaware as to what’s really going on.

R: Yeah I had no clue that these guys were messed up in a vehicle. I knew, I didn’t know that they were drunk, driving, nothing. So I’m just taking the garbage out.

I: Yeah

R: Well they start fighting stuff like that. I try to make them leave, I’m like I’m gonna call the cops just leave please. The guy uh, puts it in reverse slings the truck of the stairwell around and like catches my whole leg my left leg. So I had to have emergency surgery on my foot. That was awful. I have a nasty scar from that. Um, on my on my left top foot. I had pins in my toes and plate like metal plates, a cast for three months. I couldn’t work for about four months.

I: Oh my gosh. So you were like—

R: I was about nineteen. I think [my son] was about two. Um, he was with my mom, thank god.

I: Yeah

R: But uh, that was that was a a big ordeal. That was a big big thing, so I stayed with him four years after that um, he has no—

I: Wait, he wasn’t the guy that—

R: yeah he had nothing to do with the [I: “Got it”] in the back, the fight or anything.

I: Yeah.

R: Um, and then I’ve had like I said my

	<p>gall bladder removed since then. Um, my kidneys have almost shut down. I have [kidney disease]. It's very rare, and I'm developed e coli from it before which is more even more rare. So—</p> <p>I: To get that wow</p> <p>R: Yeah to actually get that e coli—I didn't know it was gonna be this loud sorry. [Talking about noise in restaurant]</p> <p>I: No, no no this is fine.</p> <p>R: Usually Tuesdays and Wednesdays are like, Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays are really slow.</p> <p>[Pause to talk about interview microphone placement]</p> <p>I: Okay so you were, wait sorry I blanked sorry. So what're you doing for your insurance is that?</p> <p>R: Well right now I don't have any insurance, health insurance but I'm working on that. They're, um, trying to get me something I think it's Medicaid.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 98 Source: JADE</p>	<p>R: Oh well a lot of people here kind of look down on um divorce. Uh, I guessing being in a small town you would look at that kinda stuff if you're very religious or you know, Christian in like that manner but uh. A lot of people get looked on – looked down on for stuff like that around here uh.</p> <p>I: Do you think that's right or wrong?</p> <p>R: I think it's wrong.</p> <p>I: You think it's wrong, okay why?</p> <p>R: I really don't believe in divorce, but I think that everybody has their reason for everything. I think that if they got divorced then they they probably hopefully hopefully they needed to or it just had to happen. Um, I really don't believe in divorce especially when there's children involved uh, so I've always been like if I get married there's not gonna be a divorce so that other person needs to know that I don't believe in that. But um, I guess just how I was raised but.</p>	<p>Feedback: Partner - Yes from others - Mixed message</p> <p>Great quote for the mixed messages in broader culture, and especially this religiously-infused community in the south: on the one hand divorce is wrong and to be judged, but on the other hand kids before marriage happens, and there is no community support for a pathway toward marriage, so better to make lots of mistakes pre-marriage that are not "divorce"</p>

MICHAEL		
<p>Quotation # 42 Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>I: And what was the part you lied to them, that you didn't tell them that you dropped out or?</p> <p>R: Yeah, I didn't tell them, uh, that I probably wasn't gonna pass all my classes.</p> <p>I: You- you told them you were going to pass?</p> <p>R: Yeah.</p> <p>I: Mm</p> <p>R: So, then when I told them I had to drop out it was kind of a shock, I mean cause, it was very sudden.</p> <p>I: And so what was the time difference there?</p> <p>R: Um, probably, I'm not sure. I mean it was like a couple months.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 7 Source: MICHAEL</p>	<p>I: Oh, I see, ok. And, um, what was it like when you moved back home? How'd that go?</p> <p>R: It was different, I mean [sighs], we weren't as close as we were before, cause I, kinda disappointed them, I mean I disappointed everyone, cause I dropped out of school, and they had high expectations which, rightly so I guess.</p>	
DAN		
<p>Quotation # 10 Source: DAN</p>	<p>I: And what was the, uh, focusing on the conflict that you had with your mom about New York, what was it in particular that she was trying to tell you?</p> <p>R: She was trying to tell me about how to work the subway system, and I was, had already done my research on it cause I just, before I even do a trip I always look it up, and, uh, she was trying tell me and I had already told her that I had already, you know, I had already looked up a lot</p>	<p>Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance</p> <p>Great quote about the desire for increased independence in boomerang move back to parents that can cause a new "more adult" version of conflict with parents (Arnett</p>

	<p>of the information and I'd just gotten back home after, uh, doing some shopping, and then it was finals week as well, so I was really stressed out. And all I wanted do was just lay on my bed, I didn't want to talk to anybody. And then she kept talking to me about it, and I told her yes, I know I know, and then, you know, I just kinda raised my voice just a little bit, and told her I know, and then she just kinda walked out and then she was just really upset about how, you know, I was talking to her. She just, she's been s--, the sort of person who, um, just the little things get to her as well, and so it's really easy to agitate her and anger her, so. That's kinda how it, how it all happened, and then afterwards, just, um, just didn't really, she didn't really speak to me very much and I didn't speak to her very much, because I usually like to leave her alone if she's that angry. And um, just a few months or so and we started talking a little bit more. I'd have to drive her to places because she had to have surgery on her foot, and I think that helped a little bit more, 'st 'se she had to rely on me. And then, um...</p> <p>I: Did you ever have a conversation about it?</p> <p>R: Uh, no I haven't really talked to her about it. Um, I don't think she would want to talk about it.</p> <p>I: Do you think she was nervous about you going to New York, or?</p> <p>R: She probably was, she probably was, she's always been a little bit more protective over me, so she makes, she wants to make sure that I know everything as much as she knows, and uh, any other day I probably would have listened, but that day I was just particularly a bad day for me, was right in the middle of finals week, like I said, really stressed about that, I had to, um, I was also looking out, uh, looking up for</p>	<p>discusses this in his book too)</p>
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	different schools in where I wanted to go to after college, cause I had to get ready for that.	
Quotation # 8 Source: DAN	He says they used to really get along until they had a big disagreement about a year ago over a trip he had planned to visit New York. Basically, it sounds like his mom was trying to be too involved and directive with him about it, and he (tired and stressed at the end of a semester) snapped at her and rejected her input. She apparently got pretty hurt about this, and they did not talk with each other at all (despite living together!) for at least a month, maybe more. Since then, their relationship seems somewhat distant, though it sounds like they got past being overtly angry with each other.	Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance From Field Notes (Iver: PSH)
Quotation # 9 Source: DAN	I: Okay. And, um, how, so how's it been going living with your mom these days? R: Um, for the most part we've been, up 'til I think this year we've been doing pretty okay. And then, um, at the end of this year we kinda had a, I wouldn't say it was a big argument, but it was, um, I guess it was kinda big to her, and we had bickered about something about m--, cause I was going to go to New York and she was trying to tell me something about it. And— I: For a trip or like? R: For a trip, yeah I was going to go on a trip to New York in Decemeber, and she, uh, she wanted to tell me something about it, and I had gotten back and I was really tired and stressed out and I didn't really want to listen to her at the time, just kinda, she was in my room, and I just kinda wanna be alone, and then it just got to me, and I just kinda snapped back at her. So she got really upset about that, and so. At first we weren't on talking terms for a while, and it was for a few months. I: Wow. R: Ah, yeah. It was, well it wasn't, it was	Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance

	<p>about maybe a month or so, but um—</p> <p>I: But you were living together?</p> <p>R: Yeah when we were living—And, uh, after a while it started getting a little bit better. Um, we still, we talked to l--, to, to each other a little bit more now. Um, but I think it's, I think it'll be much better once I move out. I think that's just the deal. Um, She's, I mean, I'm sure she doesn't have as much anger as she did before. But I think once I move out, I think it'll be all better. It's, that's just kinda how everything is right now, so. Um, we're doing okay, so. Much better than before.</p> <p>I: So you feel like you're both just sort of ready for you to move?</p> <p>R: Yeah, I think, think that's usua--, I think that's, that's what's gonna, that's what's gonna fix a lot of the stuff that's going on.</p>	
<p>Quotation # 94 Source: DAN</p>	<p>I: And how do you think your friends and family would describe to me the kind of person that you are?</p> <p>R: Um, I think the first thing they would probably think of is smart, although I don't really ever feel very smart, but they, they say that I'm pretty smart, I guess. Um, nice and I guess funny. Um, understanding. [Pause] I don't, I mean I, they don't talk about me very much, but that's some of the stuff I guess I hear from, what I get from them.</p>	<p>Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from friends - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance</p> <p>Great quote for looking glass self and rising to middle class label</p>
<p>Quotation # 26 Source: DAN</p>	<p>R: Yeah. And, uh, but like I said, my mom, uh, she is been supportive kinda no matter what, like whatever I do, as long as, as long as it leads to a job that makes money. I, I think it should be that and something I enjoy. We might have few diff--, you know, conflicting opinions about that but um, I think she's become more supportive as well, like my dad, so.</p>	<p>Feedback: Education/Career - Yes from Parents - Coherent Message - Slight Dissonance</p> <p>Great quote for dissonance in parental feedback on educ/career</p>
TRISTAN		
<p>Quotation # 29 Source: TRISTAN</p>	<p>Was into the wrong crowd and pot smoking until a few years ago, when he and his friends got busted at a road check.</p>	<p>Feedback: Adult - Yes from parents - Coherent Message -</p>

	<p>Spent the night in jail. That was a big "slap across the face." Had never seen parents so distressed. Decided to get serious about life, faith, work, relationships, etc. Now has a job as a basic responder on an ambulance.</p>	<p>Slight Dissonance</p> <p>From field notes</p>
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