The Edmonton School-Work Transition (SWT) Study: From Youth to Midlife, 1985-2010

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Transitions into Adult Roles

- In 1985, virtually all participants lived with their parents, and almost none were parents.
- In 1989, 58% still lived with their parents, while 21% were married or co-habiting.
- Trends continued until 1999, when 74% were married or co-habiting (3% were divorced or separated), and half (51%) were parents.
- Twenty-five years after high school, three-quarters were married or co-habiting (10% were divorced or separated) and 78% were parents.

SWT (http://www.arts.ualberta.ca/transition/SWT_Overview.html)

1985 (Wave 1): 983 Edmonton 12th grade students (age 18) complete baseline survey of a planned two-year longitudinal study of causes and consequences of youth unemployment.

1986 & 1987 (Waves 2 & 3): Follow-ups reveal that many participants responded to difficult youth labour market by continuing education. Focus becomes school-work transitions, unemployment, and underemployment.

1989 & 1992 (Waves 4 & 5): By Wave 5 the transition from youth into adulthood becomes prominent theme.

1999 & 2010 (Waves 6 & 7): Resurveyed at ages 32 and 43. Wave 7 is 26th Anniversary Survey (SWT+29). Midlife issues (e.g., involvement in and satisfaction with work, family, and community) assessed.

Education & Employment

- 37% had university degree: equal proportions of women and men.
- Participants twice as likely to have degree if at least one parent had a degree.

Data Collection

The Population Research Laboratory (University of Alberta) coordinated data collection and processing for all waves.

From Youth to Midlife: Subjective Assessments

- Sense of control over their life was generally high, but highest between ages 20–25; higher for those with university degree.
- Respondents rated their physical and mental health quite positively although, by age 43, they were less positive about their physical health.

Note: Percentages at each wave are based on available data from the 2010 sample; N = 257 to 403.

PT and Temporary Employment (%), and Self-reported Over-qualification (%), 1989 - 2010

- Temporary employment fell from 23% to about 7% – national rates for adults age 25+ are about 8-10%, with no gender differences.

Note: N = 222 to 372 employed participants.

Self-assessment of Control Over Life by Degree (by 2010), 1985 - 2010

- Note: N = 296 to 483 participants.

Self-assessments of Physical and Mental Health, 1987-2010

- Note: N = 252 to 480 participants.