

# **JOB STABILITY AND THE TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD**

by

**Taye Adeniyi, B.A**

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**Supervisor(s):** José F. Domene, Ph.D., Education

Michael Farnworth, Ph.D., Economics

**Examining Board:** Jeff Landine, PhD, Education

Chris McGibbon, PhD, Kinesiology

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## ABSTRACT

Adulthood has been traditionally viewed as a sequential acquisition of markers that signify maturity (Blatterer, 2007). A debate exists among researchers regarding the timing and significance of these markers of adulthood. Some researchers argue that young adults are choosing to delay entry into adulthood (Arnett, 2007), while others argue it is due to economic circumstances and the inability of young people to successfully transition into stable employment (Arnett, 2007). This research examined how job stability affects subsequent markers of adulthood, and provided information that will advance the debate regarding the nature of the transition to adulthood. Through secondary analysis of a U.S. based dataset, Add Health (the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health) this research utilized duration analysis to examine job stability among young people, and the relationship between job stability and marriage. The sample consisted of 6,504 participants ranging from age 25 to 34. The pattern of results that emerged in this study suggested that job stability among young people is a complex area of research that requires further exploration.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### Defining Adulthood

Historically, adulthood has been viewed as an ordered, sequential acquisition of roles that signify maturity (Blatterer, 2007). The life course perspective defines the transition to adulthood as normative, representing movement from economic dependence and participation in the family of origin to economic independence and establishment of one's own family (Cote, 2008). Five role transitions have traditionally indicated young people had achieved the status of adulthood: (a) leaving their family home and establishing their own; (b) completing education; (c) obtaining full-time employment; (d) entering into marriage; and (e) becoming parents (Arnett, 2001). The transition from school to work is arguably the most important transition in the individual's pathway to adulthood (Mortimer et. al., 2014). In North America and Europe, individuals are assumed to have acquired skills that enable them to meet the demands of society and secure a position in the labour market upon the completion of schooling (Settersten, 2007). Once they have completed schooling, they are situated to gain economic independence, and successfully transition into the roles of adulthood.

It is imperative to study the factors which influence how individuals obtain their first full-time employment after secondary school, as well as how they acquire job stability. Job stability is beneficial, as it is often a precursor for individuals to be able to afford to transition into other roles of adulthood (Danzinger & Ratiner, 2010). Research claims young people are intentionally delaying their transition to adulthood, and declining to take on the responsibilities of being an adult (Buhl & Lanz, 2007; Fussell, Gauthier, & Evans, 2007; Furstenberg, Rumbaut, & Settersten, 2005). Examining the

external factors that affect young people's ability to take on such responsibilities will provide an understanding of why young people are delaying role transitions.

### **Background of Study**

This research examined aspects of the transition from school to work; specifically the role of post-secondary education and background characteristics in predicting job stability, operationally defined as being in the same job for five or more years. This research utilized previously collected data from the United States of America. The United States was chosen due to its large and diverse population. The dynamics of social class are more pervasive in the United States than in Canada (Smeeding, 2006). In addition, the United States has approximately 7,253 post-secondary institutions, both private and publically funded (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Given the economic and socio-cultural interconnectedness between the United States and Canada, it was believed that exploring the complexity of the factors predicting job stability in the United States would provide post-secondary institutions and governments in both countries a deeper understanding of factors that contribute to successful transition into the labour force.

In recent years, a dominant theme of prolonged adolescence has emerged in the area of life course research. Evidence suggested that young people are taking longer to emerge into full functioning adults (Arnett, 2004). According to this pervading view, young people are delaying moving into transitions that once marked adulthood, and are instead prolonging the period of transition from adolescence into adulthood (Speder, Murinko, & Settersten, 2014).

## **Statement of Problem**

Research suggested that young people are taking longer to transition into roles of adulthood than previous generations (Arnett, 2004; Settersten, 2007). Researchers have postulated and debated the causes for the prolongation of the transition to adulthood. Although many researchers claim the delayed entry into adult roles is due to young people's desire to prolong their adolescence, or to devise alternative routes to obtain the status of adulthood, it appears the transition to adulthood is highly conditional on social and economic changes. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the stagnation in the labour market is a major contributor to the current situation young people are facing (Danziger & Ratner, 2010). As jobs that offer sufficient income, stability, and do not require some form of post-secondary education are dissipating, more individuals are opting to pursue higher education. Believing that their investment into education will produce long term benefits, young people are delaying their ability to obtain economic resources, and are thus having difficulty transitioning into roles indicative of adulthood (Shannahan, 2007).

## **Purpose of Research**

In recent years, many young people have become pessimistic about their likelihood of finding stable, full-time employment in the labour market (Silva, 2012). The rise in temporary and flexible work is indicative of a decrease in job stability (Muffels & Luijkx, 2008). Empirical evidence suggests that job stability is decreasing for young people, particularly males between the ages of 18-30 (Bernhart et. al., 1995). The current research was designed to examine how job stability affects subsequent roles of adulthood; postulating that majority of young people are taking longer to acquire other roles of

adulthood such as marriage, at least in part because of the uncertainty of the labour market.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions guided this research:

1. How does the transition to marriage predict job stability?
2. How do race, gender, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status predict job stability?
3. What is the relationship between marriage and job stability after controlling for gender, race, socioeconomic background and educational attainment?

Specifically, it was hypothesized that individuals who have already made transitions into marriage will be more likely to be in the same job for five or more years compared to those who have not yet transitioned into marriage. It was also hypothesized that males would be more likely to be in a stable job than females; Caucasians would be more likely to have obtained stable employment than African Americans; those who have graduated from high school and received further education would be more likely to have stable employment than those who did not receive their high school diploma; and those who come from a high socioeconomic background would be more likely to be in stable employment than those from a low socioeconomic background.

### **Summary of Chapter**

As the transition into adulthood continues to be an area of interest for social science researchers, it is vital to examine the economic factors that impact young people's transition to adulthood. Across disciplines, there have been many studies examining job stability; however, few studies have considered the effect of job

circumstances on the acquisition of the subsequent roles of adulthood. The present study was conducted to investigate job stability among young people and how it relates to transitions into roles that signify adulthood. The following chapter provides a review of the related literature.

## **Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature**

The following literature review will discuss the transition to adulthood from the life course perspective, including how the transition from secondary education to the workplace is imperative in the acquisition of other roles that signify adulthood. This chapter will also discuss how social and economic factors have constrained young people's employment prospects, specifically how increased participation in post-secondary education has delayed the length of time it takes for young people to acquire a stable job. Lastly this chapter will provide a discussion on how race, gender, and family socioeconomic status influence the length of time it takes for individuals to attain employment stability.

### **The Transition to Adulthood**

Children are dependent on external sources, such as family, for financial and emotional care. As they mature, they develop skills that prepare them to take responsibility for their actions, independent decision-making, and acquisition of financial resources (Settersten, 2007). The transition to adulthood is thought to be a transition from dependence on parents or guardians to one of independence, in which the individual is able to care for self and others (Arnett, 1998). The traditional pathway to adulthood encompasses employment transition, residential transition, and relationship transition (Arnett, 1998). Until the middle of the twentieth century, these transitions were closely linked and temporally sequenced for the majority of young people, with very few alternative paths to adulthood. Accomplishing these transitions became synonymous with achieving the status of an adult (Arnett, 2004; Cote, 2008).

The transition to employment is arguably one of the most important events in an individual's life. Obtaining full-time, long-term work allows for financial independence, and for the individual to take on more life responsibilities (Settersten, 2007). As the global economy is becoming increasingly dominated by knowledge-based occupations, post-secondary education is becoming more of a necessity to obtain employment that offers a salary above minimum wage (Leef, 2006). The increasing necessity for post-secondary education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century has led to a delay in role transitions that signify adulthood, specifically the transition into long-term, stable employment.

### **The role of work in the transition to adulthood.**

Job stability represents the balance between decisions made by the employee (whether to stay or leave place of employment) and decisions made by the employer (whether to terminate or continue offering employment). It has been predicted that job stability is the 'luxury of the past and the rarity of the future' (Neumark, 2002). Those asserting this perspective state that, due to globalization, market deregulation and increased employment flexibility, the normative employment experience for young people entering the North American labour market in the present day is one characterized by financial insecurity, job migration, temporary positions and low wages (Dasgupta, 2005).

From 1945 to the early 1970s, the transition to adulthood was homogeneous for the majority of North American young people. This was partly due to the nature of the work force and availability of jobs. Industrial manufacturing made well-paying, long-term jobs obtainable for those from various levels of social class and educational attainment. Post-secondary education was viewed as an asset or a luxury, not a necessity.

Governments, businesses, and unions centered their policies on long-term stability and economic growth (Courchene, 2001). Employers valued employee loyalty and the majority of young people were able to obtain secure career paths, and most remained in the same occupation for decades until retirement (Akerloff, et. al., 1988). The economic advantages created by this situation provided favorable conditions for an earlier transition into marriage, parenthood, home ownership and employment for the majority of the North American population.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Global markets have become more competitive and, as a result, neo-capitalism has replaced traditional capitalism. Although companies organized their workforce internally in the past, in today's labour market, employers have created new types of employment relationships that allow them to adapt more easily to market-related fluctuations. In effect, maintaining stable employment has been replaced in favour of increasing profit margins, which has resulted in companies seeking profit at the expense of employee and community well-being (Garhammer, 2001). Through outsourcing, businesses that once employed a majority of the North American population have shifted towards a more global orientation. As a result, individuals in North America are facing increased unemployment, a rise in low paying, temporary and precarious work, as well as fewer opportunities for positions that include health insurance or retirement benefits (Callero, 2009).

### **The demise of job stability?**

Social and economic changes in the past three decades have affected young people's entrance into the labour market. These changes include an increase in the wage gap between younger workers and older workers, earnings instability, more temporary

and part-time jobs, lower-quality jobs, fewer benefits, and more instability in employment (Danziger & Ratner, 2010). Presently, the strongest employment growth is in the service sector (U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2014). Although some service jobs can favour young people who have a sound general education and good computing and language skills, there are also many low skill, low wage jobs where overqualified young people are over-represented (Settersten, 2007).

Although research in the area of job stability has yielded conflicting results, researchers have reported that the demise of job stability is particularly evident in regard to young people aged 18-26 (Roksa, 2005; Statistics Canada, 2014). Some researchers report that the decrease in job stability is a result of choice. Proponents of this view argue that young people enjoy being flexible and exploring different jobs to build up their experience and assess different occupations. They also suggest that the decline in the number of young people in stable jobs reflects the freedom of young people in North American society to explore their options until they find the best fit (Krahn et. al., 2015).

In contrast, other researchers report that the nature of employment in North America is changing from long-term, full-time employment to short-term, casual work (Farber, 2008), and young people, aware that the current state of the economy does not provide many opportunities for stable employment, have been forced to adapt themselves to become the ideal employee of neoliberalism: mobile, flexible, and willing to accept lower wages (Matsudaira, 2007). Although high rates of job change may be a natural result of young people searching for a good job or a good match, recent trends have shown that higher rates of job stability existed in the 1970's and 80's than in the present (Farber, 2008). The nature of the present day labour market creates important constraints

on the lives of young people and, consequently, demands a shift in the way that roles such as marriage, home ownership, and having children are rationalized and acquired (Danziger & Ratner, 2010).

Consistent with the reality of unstable work opportunities, there has been a change in the attitude toward and value of job stability and security in young people: temporary and unstable occupations are experienced as an opportunity for identity exploration (Arnett, 2004; Cote, 2002). In contrast to those who entered the workforce in previous generations, young people now enter the workforce without expecting that the employment they first acquire will be a life-long position. Instead, the expectation is for career paths to include numerous occupational changes occurring over the life course. As a result, some young people now view employment as an opportunity for identity exploration and to discover more about what type of occupation they enjoy and what occupation they have no desire to pursue (Arnett 2004; Arnett 2007; Cote, 2008).

Employment stability is a necessity if young people are to successfully transition into subsequent roles of adulthood (Danziger & Ratner, 2010). Young people from all levels and types of education are experiencing job instability, spending long periods of time looking for work in their desired career path (Mortimer et. al., 2008). The timing of when young people obtain their first job has a powerful effect on their subsequent employment experiences and role transitions (Mortimer et. al., 2008). For example, Krahn et al. (2015) found that early employment instability was linked to lower income at age 32, and lower occupational status and job satisfaction for men. In contrast, higher educational attainment was found to be associated with a higher occupational status. The rest of this chapter will provide a review of the literature on the relationship between job

stability and other role transitions. The following section will present a discussion on the relationship between education and job stability, followed by a discussion on how demographic factors and marriage affect job stability.

**Education and job stability.** The pursuit of post-secondary education stems, in part, from the belief that education is necessary for young people to obtain their career aspirations and preferred life styles. However, the relationship between education and job stability during the transition into adulthood is multifaceted. For example, young people who engage in full-time work before graduating from high school are more likely to have long duration in their jobs, but less likely to pursue post-secondary education and less likely to see an increase in their income and wage over time (Mortimer, 2008).

Individuals who work part time, or do not work at all during high school are more likely to pursue post-secondary education and take longer to obtain their first full-time, stable job; however their wage and income will increase over time (Mortimer, 2008; Krahn et al., 2015). At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, there was a 25% decrease in jobs available in Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries for individuals with no more than a high school diploma. A majority of the jobs available required some form of post-secondary training (Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007). Currently, most jobs available to high school graduates are minimum wage positions in the service sector (Danziger & Ratner, 2010). The decrease in employment opportunities for high school graduates has resulted in educational institutions, governments, employers and individuals presenting the pursuit of education as the gateway to high-level careers, and a necessity in order to be a functional contributor to the workforce (Danziger & Ratner, 2010).

It has been demonstrated that individuals with post-secondary education earn 75% more than individuals with a high school diploma or less over a lifetime (College Board, 2004). These findings suggest that post-secondary education is essential in order to generate a high level of lifetime income. As a result of the perceived necessity of post-secondary education for a successful future, young people are currently spending thousands of dollars on what they believe to be an investment in their future. In North America, the rate of enrollment has increased by 47% since 1970 (Geiger & Heller, 2011) and more than half of individuals who graduate from high school are entering two and four year post-secondary institutions (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2014). Unfortunately many young people leave these institutions disillusioned, in debt and unable to find work that will enable them to pursue their career and family goals (Arnett, 2004).

Although economists have shown that education is essential in predicting lifetime earnings, little research has examined whether post-secondary education leads to job stability and job security. Research suggests that university graduates are more likely to keep their job in times of recession, if their jobs are white collar (Auer & Cazes, 2002). Krahn et al., (2015) report that as the level of education increases, occupational status increases. These findings appear to suggest post-secondary degrees are necessary to obtain job stability and higher occupational status. However, there is no indication that a post-secondary degree is sufficient for obtaining higher wage employment and job stability. Currently, the unemployment rate for individuals with university degrees in the United States is higher than it has ever been since 1979, according to comparable data (Kahn, 2009). Therefore, although post-secondary education may be necessary to gain

access to better careers and stable, high salary employment, it does not appear to be sufficient to guarantee job stability.

As more and more young people pursue post-secondary education, researchers must ask several difficult questions: Is a post-secondary degree or diploma losing its significance? Are we experiencing de-accreditation, in which degrees that once secured employment and job stability cannot guarantee a stable, high wage job for young people? Are young people able to find stable work after graduating from post-secondary education? Are individuals with post-secondary degrees more likely to work in long term stable work than those who received a high school diploma or less? As part of the effort to address these questions, this research examined the role of post-secondary education in predicting job stability.

**Socioeconomic Background and job stability.** From the time of conception to old age, social forces guide the timing and organization of human development. One of the most pervasive forces impacting the development of the individual is one's ascribed socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status (SES) is the social and economic position of an individual or family of origin (Brownell & Noralou et. al., 2006). Because SES is an abstract concept and not readily observable, social scientists utilize measurements of education, income, and occupation to assess SES (Brownell & Noralou et. al., 2006). These indicators of social position are positively correlated. Ensminger and Fothergill (2003), and Duncan and Magnuson (2003) suggested that each of these markers of social status demonstrates different levels of stability across time.

Socioeconomic status is partly determined by individuals' occupation (MacIntyre, 1997), which reflects their educational level, provides income, and signals

their social standing. Assessing occupation allows the researcher to assess the level of the individual's occupational prestige. Measuring income, researchers aim to capture the ability to purchase desired resources. Among the problems with income as an indicator of SES is the fact that some respondents are unwilling to reveal their actual income and those who do may misrepresent their income in one direction or another (Marks et. al., 2000). Educational attainment, another measurement of SES, is considered by many to be the canonical indicator of SES because of its influence on later income and occupation (Krieger, Williams, & Moss, 1997). It is relatively easy to measure and, unlike income, respondents are often willing to answer the questions truthfully. Researchers tend to measure educational attainment by either highest degree earned (e.g., High School, College) or number of years of education.

There have been three approaches to defining family SES. The traditional position is to use the father's education, occupation and income. Historically, it was the male who had participated the most in the labour force in the majority of households (Marks et al., 2000). In the current social context, with many single parent households, dual career households, and households where the female possesses higher occupation or educational backgrounds than the male, the traditional definition is no longer a good indicator. An alternative approach is to use both mother and father's SES background. The problem with this approach is that it is difficult to combine the two backgrounds into one variable, and difficult to perform multivariate analysis. A third approach is to define SES using separate indicator variables for each parent. This third method, makes no gender assumptions, and allows for a more straightforward measurement than the second method.

*Socioeconomic Background, Post-secondary Education and Occupational*

**Outcomes.** One's own educational attainment is arguably the most important factor in predicting one's SES. According to the Human Capital Model, the distribution of income is determined by the level and distribution of schooling across a population (Mincer, 1975). Therefore, level of education determines occupation and income, and plays a vital role in the growth and development of individuals (Benson & Scales, 2004; Dickson, 2013; OECD, 2008; Salazar-Xirinachs, 2012). One of the most pressing issues that education is believed to address is the problem of poverty. It is believed that education empowers individuals, equipping them with tools needed to break the cycle of poverty (Scales, Benson et. al., 2004; Dickson, 2013). The Human Capital Model postulates that social problems such as poverty, sexism, AIDS, social class inequality, environmental and economic issues can be resolved through higher education (OECD, 2008). Education is thus promoted as a potential route to social mobility and the entrance to, and maintenance of a lifestyle that enables material needs to be met and social problems to be overcome.

Education has particularly been proposed as a way to improve SES for those who come from poor or working class backgrounds (Kingston et. al., 2003). In most OECD countries, individuals are required to be in the school system from the ages of 4 to 16 or 18 (Quintini, Martin & Martin, 2007), and are permitted to seek further education or enter the workforce. In the past, SES background played a vital role in this choice and, as a result, individuals from low-income families felt the pressure to begin earning income immediately following secondary school. Instead of pursuing postsecondary education, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds entered the workforce out of secondary

school, and therefore remained in similar social standings as their parents. Over the last two decades, governments in North America have implemented funding programs and increased financial aid so that individuals from a low socioeconomic background can also pursue post-secondary education (Quintini, Martin & Martin, 2007).

Changes in the labour market, specifically the shift from an industrial, production-based economy to a service and information sector economy, have decreased the availability of occupations that require no training but provide livable wages. As a consequence, post-secondary credentials are increasingly required for individuals to improve their job prospects (Brown, Hesketh & Williams, 2003). Due to rapid changes in technology and the nature of “white collar” work, it is now believed that continual learning and the acquisition of post-secondary credentials is necessary in order to function in the present economic structure (Brown, Hesketh & Williams, 2003). Consequently, governments, educational institutions, and employers are postulating that post-secondary education is essential in order to find work in the current economy (e.g. Fasih, 2008; OECD, 2008).

Some research has examined whether educational attainment provides the same return for individuals from all levels of social class. It is suggested that the average student loan debt in the United States is \$29,000 (The Institute for College Access & Success, 2014). As income is a determinant of a family’s ability to save for their children’s education, individuals from a low socioeconomic background are less likely to have parents who saved money for their education. Individuals from low socioeconomic status are more likely to be in debt after post-secondary education, as they are more likely to seek financial aid and obtain loans to cover their postsecondary education (Houle,

2014). In 1999, less than one-fifth of American families with incomes of less than \$30,000 were saving for the post-secondary education of their children, while about two-thirds of those with incomes of more than \$80,000 were doing so (Houle, 2014). Less is understood about how socioeconomic background influences what kinds of post-secondary institutions are chosen by young people, what disciplines they choose, and whether or not they are able to access additional education such as professional programs. One exception is Looker and Lowe's (2001) study of young people's pursuit of postsecondary education. They found that parental SES was a significant predictor of educational plans. In comparison to lower SES families, children from higher SES household were more likely to (a) attend a post-secondary institution, (b) choose a university rather than a college, and (c) pursue graduate or professional study (Looker & Lowe, 2001).

In contrast to the existing body of literature describing how SES background influences young people's participation in educational institutions, little is known about how SES influences the transition to work. This gap in the literature is problematic, given the complexity of the effects of family SES on the future outcome of individuals. Researchers, governments, and educational institutions have long believed that the way to increase human capital is through education (Quintini, Martin & Martin, 2007). However, recent research suggests that many young people are graduating from post-secondary institutions with debt, are unable to find jobs that offer a secure salary and instead end up working in minimum wage jobs with little to no security or benefits, which they could have obtained without post-secondary education (Dickson, 2013).

Simply advising and funding young people to attend post-secondary education without providing career guidance may be detrimental to their career development, as many young people enter post-secondary institutions with little idea of what to do after completing their degree. In particular, research suggests that discussing and supporting academic pursuits are not valued in most poor and working class families (de Broucker & Mortiner, 2005). The present study argues that, because young people from various levels of socioeconomic background receive differing levels of support and guidance, what is essential is not merely guiding individuals into post-secondary education, but also enabling young people to complete programs of study that will lead to careers that provide job stability (Shaienks & Gluszynski, 2009). This view assumes that stable employment continues to be available in the present labour market, and that with education, as well as proper information and resources, young people from lower levels of socioeconomic background may have an equal opportunity as those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds to obtain such jobs (Shaienks & Gluszynski, 2009).

In summary, socioeconomic status is a vital indicator of the life course of an individual. Many believe that education provides an opportunity to overcome the restrictions that one's socioeconomic background may impose. The purpose of this research is to examine how family SES and other characteristics that are discussed in the next section influence job stability among young people.

**Race, gender and job stability.** Regardless of the social structures that exist to guide individuals along the lifespan, no two individuals undergo the transition to adulthood in an identical manner. Historically, an individual's life course was determined by the cultural and structural formation of society and constrained by physical

characteristics such as gender, race, and age (Graff, 1995; Hareven, 1982).

Discrimination based on these demographic factors was justified by those in power, who claimed that individuals with certain characteristics were mentally unfit to have the same rights and opportunities as the rest of society (Hall, 1994). Laws were enacted to ensure women and minorities were not given equal rights nor granted the opportunity to occupy positions of high prestige. Although no longer supported by legislation, race and gender continue to constrain the experiences of individuals, as few opportunities to achieve status, power and material resources exist for women and racial minorities. Research suggests that during the first five years in the labour market, young adults experience wide variations by race, family background, and gender (Fuller, 2008). Understanding how race, gender, and family background influence the transition from school to work will allow for a more precise depiction of the social contingencies that elicit variations in job stability.

***Race and job stability.*** Race may be the most potent form of stratification in the United States. It dictates where people live, their occupation, income, social networks, as well as their level of education and prestige of educational institutions attended (Mahaffy, 2002). It is difficult to assess the direct effect of race on the life course because of its complex relationship with economic resources and family formation. However, the consistent disparities in educational achievement and occupational status among individuals from different racial backgrounds indicate the need for further exploration of potential racial differences in the attainment of stable employment.

In North America, there is a prevailing belief that the sole requirement to reach high social standing is achievement through hard work, and that individuals who are

unable to improve their own social standing are hindered by personal limitations, not institutional structures (Hall, 1994). Contrary to this view, evidence suggests that disparities in academic achievement and occupational attainment among individuals from different racial backgrounds continue to persist. For example, among all racial groups, African Americans are the least likely to pursue post-secondary education and obtain a degree, and the most likely to drop out of high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Additionally, African Americans experience the most difficulty obtaining job stability. African Americans also have the most difficulty finding work and are the least likely racial groups to secure employment (Farber, 2008). In the United States, unemployment rates for African Americans are typically double those of Caucasians and Asians (Couch & Fairlie, 2010). African American men working full-time earn 76.3 percent of the average earnings of comparable Caucasian men (U.S Department of Labour, 2012). Differences also persist in socioeconomic background among racial groups. African American children are three times more likely than Caucasians to grow up in poverty and more likely than Caucasians to come from families of working class background (Shanahan, 2007). According to the United States Census Bureau (2011), African Americans are more likely than Caucasians to live in poverty (25.8 and 11.6 percent respectively).

***Gender and job stability.*** Although gender equality is generally promoted in North America, women continue to be socialized to accept gender-segregated labour (Lappegard, 2012). In the past century, the women's movement, women's pursuit of post-secondary education, the use of contraceptives, the acceptance of pre-marital sex, and the delay in marriage has expanded the role of women in North American society (Jacobsen

& Mather, 2010). Gender gaps in number of years of schooling and level of tertiary education and enrollment have been eliminated in many OECD countries, including Canada and the United States (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011). Indeed, in contemporary North American society, women are generally seeking more education than men (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011); however, gender differences exist in the choice of college major and subsequent occupation: Women continue to be under-represented in majors such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, which offer the most secure career paths (Quintini, Martin, & Martin, 2007).

Over the past 60 years, the trend lines for men and women on employment measures could hardly be more different. The employment rate for men ages 16 to 64 was nearly 90% at the beginning of the 1950s and has since dropped to 71% in 2010-11, its lowest rate in modern times (Boheim & Taylor, 2002). At the beginning of the 1950's, women's employment rate was 36% and has risen steadily for a half century until it peaked at 68% in 2000 (Boheim & Taylor, 2002). Since then it has dropped to 62%, as the recession took a heavy toll on workers of both genders (Boheim & Taylor, 2002). The decade from 2001 to 2011 was the first in the modern era when women ages 16 to 64 have not made gains in employment rates over the prior decade (Boheim & Taylor, 2002).

While women's employment rates have been rising, more women are found in flexible and/or part-time jobs, instead of long-term, full-time employment. Women's job stability is relatively low as they are more likely than men to move out of the labour force, less likely to make job to job transitions, and tend to be employed in low-paying jobs with relatively high turnover rates (Blossfeld & Huinink, 1991; Fudge, 2006). In

contrast, men are more likely to make job to job transitions and experience involuntary job loss (Boheim & Taylor, 2002). Some researchers postulate that women are more likely than men to work in jobs that offer flexible working arrangements (such as part-time or informal jobs) so that they can combine work with care responsibilities (Boheim & Taylor, 2002).

***Race and gender interactions: The situation of African American women.*** Little research has examined the relationship between race, gender, and job stability. Research in this area suggests that African American women's labour market experiences differ significantly from those of other race-gender groups (Bernhart, Morris, & Handcock 1995; King 1988). Historically, African American women, whether single or married, have had higher labour force participation rates than single or married Caucasian women. Differences also exist with respect to single motherhood. Although the overall percentage of single mothers of all race and ethnic groups has increased since 1970 among 20 to 25 year old women, the increase has been much greater among African American women (Arnett, 1998; Flanagan, 2006). By the mid-1980s, African American families maintained by single mothers were nearly as common as those maintained by two parents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011).

In one of the few recent studies on gender, race and earnings, Budig and England (2001) found that women who have children before the age of 30, especially outside of marriage, report lower earnings than women who had children after the age of 30. Research examining the effects of race and motherhood on earnings has revealed mixed results. Hill (1979) found racial discrepancies, and results showed that while motherhood decreased Caucasian women's earnings, it had no effect on African American women.

These findings could be the result of high concentration of African American women in low wage jobs (Burbridge 1994). In contrast, Goldin and Polachek (1987) found that being married and having children decreased earnings for both Caucasian and African American women. The reported findings need to be interpreted in light of the historical context in which the data were collected. Changes in the social context since the 1970s and 1980s when these studies were conducted, raises questions about whether the results are applicable to the current generation of individuals entering the labour market.

Research has not extensively examined the relationship between race, gender and job stability. However research consistently suggests that African American women continue to be concentrated in low-wage, semi-skilled or unskilled occupations, and are underrepresented in more lucrative white-collar employment (Burbridge 1994; Cunningham and Zalokar 1992). The strong positive relationship between occupation, earnings and job stability suggests the need to examine how gender and race influence job stability.

**Marriage and job stability.** Historically, marriage typically followed the completion of school, the obtainment of secure employment, and preceded childbearing and homeownership (Settersten, 2007). Many contemporary researchers are suggesting that young people are no longer following the sequential patterns that were followed by previous generations (Arnett, 2004; Settersten, 2007). This research argues that individuals who marry and remain married are those who are more likely to have secured a stable, full-time job; therefore, decline in marriage is not due to young people's disinterest in the institution of marriage but is due to their decision to delay marriage because of their inability to secure stable employment at a young age.

A majority of young people wish to make responsible decisions, and many view marriage without financial security as irresponsible (Arnett, 1998). Young people in the 21st century view job stability as integral in a successful transition to adulthood (Danzinger & Ratner, 2010). Arnett (2004) found that young people report financial independence as a primary indicator of adulthood. Financial independence requires secure employment. The relationship between marriage and job stability is multi-faceted, involving many factors. It is important to consider the effects of socioeconomic background, gender, and human choice, as well as other unobserved affects not easily accounted for in understanding the relationship between job stability and marriage.

Over the last century, the rates of marriage have fluctuated with economic changes, particularly employment rates. In North America, young adults from all socioeconomic backgrounds are postponing marriage until their late 20's and 30's, mainly due to economic reasons (Arnett, 2004). Jobs that can support the lifestyle that the current generation of emerging adults expect require extensive training and education; therefore young people are taking longer to finish education and find secure, long-term employment (Edin & Reed, 2005). This suggests that there is a relationship between marriage and job stability.

Currently, marriage occurs at different times during the life course. Some individuals marry close to the minimum age they are legally permitted to, while others marry later. Consequently the question arises, is the timing and length of marriage related to the timing and length of job stability, or has job instability led to a less normative pattern of marriage? Marriage rates are lower for people from low SES backgrounds (Edin & Reed, 2005). Individuals from low SES backgrounds associate marriage with

financial security and often report lack of financial stability as the primary reason for opting not to marry (Edin & Kefalas, 2001). Indeed, in a qualitative study on single mothers in low SES neighbourhoods, Edin and Kefalas reported that ‘getting finances together’ was a crucial prerequisite for marriage. They concluded that the majority of individuals from low socioeconomic families believe that the middle class lifestyle is the standard for marriage and, thus, believe that they must achieve economic goals before getting married. As a result, women in poverty are only about three quarters as likely to marry as women who have a higher SES (Schoen et. al., 2009).

The decline in marriage has occurred simultaneously with the increase in women’s education levels and labour force participation, and has also been attributed to factors such as the increase in birth control methods, the acceptance of premarital sex, and the increase in cohabitation (Aronson, 2008). Research suggests that job stability is not only a precursor to marriage but is also a pre-determinant to a successful marriage (Aronson, 2008). Therefore, it is necessary to explore the possibility that individuals who are married are more likely to have a stable job, as a way of assessing the role of marriage in job stability.

***The role of gender in the relationship between marriage and job stability.***

Historically, men and women pursued marriage at different stages in the life course: Men typically sought to marry after they had acquired enough schooling to obtain a full-time permanent job; in contrast, women began seeking marriage upon the completion of secondary school (Oppenheimer, 1988). Until the late 1970’s, women in the workforce was not the norm in North America; thus, at the forefront of their life goal was marriage (Pittman & Blanchard, 1996). In the past, postsecondary education and job stability were

not regarded as the norm before marriage for women, however today, more women are delaying marriage for the pursuit of education and employment (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001).

To consider the impact of gender on how marriage influences job stability, it is essential to consider the changing nature of work. In the past, workers who were willing to commit to long-term employment were valued by employers. Thus, employers preferred to hire married men who, as the main providers for their family, were viewed as responsible, stable and committed to long-term, full-time employment (Ahituv & Lerman, 2010). In contrast, women were expected to stop working after marriage. It was also believed that women's employment, especially in a high level job, was corrosive to marriage by creating competition rather than solidarity (Parsons, 1949).

In contemporary North American society, evidence suggests that the ideology of gender, marriage and job stability is changing. It is unclear whether there is a difference between employment rates of married versus single men. However, the increasing rate of unemployed and temporary workers under the age of 26, and the increasing delay in marriage suggests that single men continue to be less likely to find stable work than married men (Farber, 2008). A different story appears to have unfolded for women. Women are pursuing post-secondary education at higher rates than in the past and continue to wait until securing a job to enter into marriage. What has changed is that women remain in the job market and continue to play a dominant role in the workforce after becoming married (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). Evidence suggests the gender gap that once existed for married individuals is no longer present. Specifically, over two thirds of married women without children remain in full-time work after marriage (Cooke

& Gash, 2010). This indicates that the notion of husbands being the sole wage earner is no longer normative.

*The role of race in the relationship between marriage and job stability.* African Americans marry at lower rates than Caucasians. From 1950 to 1998, the percentage of African American women who were not married rose from 21% to 41%, while for Caucasian women, never-married rates rose from 20% to 22% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Some have attributed the low rates of marriage among African Americans to a lack of economic stability (Schneider, 2011; Teitler et. al., 2009), supporting the relationship between marriage and job stability. However, job stability cannot account for the entire difference in marriage rates. In the 1930s, marriage rates among African Americans were higher than among Caucasians despite the fact that African American men had higher rates of unemployment and poverty (Lerman, 2010).

Low rates of marriage among African Americans have also been attributed to inadequate numbers of marriageable men in the African American community (Lichter et al., 1992). Specifically, a large percentage of African American men have been involved in the criminal justice system, earn low wages and/or are unemployed (Lichter et al., 1992). In March 2013, the unemployment rate for African Americans over the age of 20 (11.3 %) was nearly twice the rate for the United States (6.2 %) and twice the unemployment rate for Caucasians (5.3%) (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). In addition, approximately 55% of all African American men earn less than \$20,000 per year, and about 20% earn incomes below the official federal poverty threshold (U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2015). These findings indicate that social and economic forces are determinants of marriage among African American males and females.

Marriage has historically been considered to be one of the most important life events that signify adulthood. Evidence suggests that, prolonged education and reduced job stability gives rise to the delay in marriage in contemporary North American society. Research suggests that the relationship between marriage and job stability is multifaceted, and influenced by gender, racial and socioeconomic differences. In order to adequately understand why young people are delaying marriage, it is important to consider the role of job stability in their decision to marry.

### **Summary of Chapter**

The transition from school to work is arguably one of the most important markers of adulthood. In this chapter, a review of existing literature was presented to explore how the relationship between demographic factors such as race, gender, and socioeconomic status and the transition from singlehood into marriage to marriage. The following chapters will present the research method, as well as the analysis of data and discussion of results.

### **Chapter Three: Research Questions and Hypotheses**

The transition from school to work is arguably one of the most important transitions in becoming an adult in North America. It is imperative to study the factors that influence how individuals obtain their first full-time employment after completing their education, as well as how they attain job stability. It is evident from the literature that key factors influencing the transition from school to work in North America include marriage, education, race, gender, and socioeconomic status (Flanagan et. al., 2006; Furstenberg et. al., 2005; Fussell et. al., 2007). The present study involved empirically analyzing the role of these factors in predicting job stability, testing specific hypotheses about the relationships between job stability and race, gender, socioeconomic status, education, and marital status.

#### **Research Question One: How Do Demographic Characteristics Predict Job Stability?**

The first research question explored young people's participation in the labour market, specifically, how demographic characteristics and education predict job stability among young people. In the present study, this question was addressed using discrete duration analysis of data drawn from a large dataset from the United States.

**Post-secondary education.** According to existing literature, individuals who pursue post-secondary education take longer to settle into their career because of prolonged time in school, but are able to obtain better occupations and greater job stability than those who do not pursue post-secondary education (Cairo & Cajner, 2014; U.S Department Of Labour, 2011). Thus, it was hypothesized that young people who

pursue higher education obtained their first full-time job in later years, but also have longer periods of job stability than those who do not pursue higher education.

**Race.** Research suggests that individuals from African American backgrounds are less likely to have graduated from high school and enter post-secondary education than Caucasians (U.S. Department of Labor, 2011). They are also the least likely to be in the same job for five years or longer (McWhirter, 1997). Therefore, it was hypothesized that African Americans have lower levels of job stability than Caucasian Americans.

**Socioeconomic Background.** Research suggests that individuals who come from families with a low SES background are less likely to pursue post-secondary education and more likely to enter the workforce at an earlier age (Looker & Lowe, 2001).

Research also suggests that they are the least likely to work in stable, long-term positions (Benson & Scales, 2004). Thus, the present research hypothesized that individuals from a high SES background have a greater likelihood of being the same job for five years or more.

### **Research Question Two: How Does the Transition to Marriage Predict Job Stability?**

The second research question examined how marriage influences job stability among young people. Are individuals who are married more likely to be in stable work? Are there gender differences in the relationship between marriage and job stability?

**Marriage.** Research suggests that marriage positively influences the likelihood of being in a stable job for men, while marriage is not related to job stability for women (Ahituv & Lerman, 2010; Waite & Gallagher, 2000). Thus, it was hypothesized that men

who are married are more likely to be in stable jobs, while for women, there is no significant relationship between marital status and job stability.

**Research Question Three: What is the relationship between marriage and job stability after controlling for gender, race, socioeconomic background and educational attainment?**

Research question three examined the relationship between marriage and job stability after controlling for demographic factors. Specifically this research sought to examine how job stability predicted marriage, after controlling for gender, racial, economic and educational differences.

**Race, marriage and job stability.** Research suggests that Caucasians are more likely to be married than African Americans and are more likely to be in a stable job (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). Therefore, it was hypothesized that, compared to African Americans, more Caucasians report being married and report being in a stable job for a longer period of time.

**Socioeconomic background, marriage and job stability.** Research suggests that individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds are less likely to be married than those from higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Edin & Reed, 2005). In the present research, socioeconomic status was operationally defined in two ways: parental occupation and parental education. Thus, it was hypothesized that individuals with parents in white collar or professional jobs will be more likely to be married and subsequently more likely to be in a stable job than individuals with parents with a working class occupation. It was also hypothesized that individuals with parents with an education that is higher than high

school will be more likely to be married and remain in the same job than individuals whose parents have less than high school education.

**Educational attainment, marriage and job stability.** It was also hypothesized in the present research that individuals who graduated from high school are more likely to be married and in a stable job than individuals who did not complete high school. It was also hypothesized that individuals who have attended post-secondary education are more likely to be in stable jobs than those who have obtained only a high school education or less.

### **Summary of Chapter**

This chapter established three main research questions to better examine job stability among young adults. Three research questions were explored, as well as an examination of the role demographic factors play in job stability. For each research question, specific hypotheses were proposed and tested for each variable included in the analysis. The following chapter will discuss the research method, specifically the variables included in the analysis and the method of analysis.

## Chapter 4: Research Method

### Sample

This research drew on data from three cycles of the public dataset portion of the National Longitudinal study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health). Add Health, a longitudinal study conducted in the United States, was collected from 1994 to 2008. The public portion is a representative sub-sample consisting of between 5,114 students and 6,504 students. The purpose of Add Health is to assess young adolescents in their school setting until early adulthood, when the participants were between the ages of 25 to 34. Systematic sampling methods and implicit stratification utilized in Wave I ensured that the 80 high schools selected were representative of schools in the United States with respect to region of country, urbanicity, size, type, and ethnicity (Harris et. al., 2009). Add Health was selected as the dataset for this research primarily due to the age group of participants during the last cycle of data collection. While utilizing the Canadian equivalent to Add Health, the National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth (NLSCY) would have been favourable, because the NLSCY only observed participants until the age of 25, it was thought that this would not be an adequate depiction of job stability as majority of young people who pursued a four year post secondary degree would have only had three years of labour market experience. Add Health was chosen for the present research because it examines the life of young people from adolescence to adulthood. Add Health can be used to examine the number of years it takes for individuals to acquire job stability. Furthermore, Add Health combines individual, biological, behavioural, and personality factors and examines the social, economic,

psychological and physical wellbeing of individuals across the developmental period that was being studied (Harris et. al., 2009).

The Table below describes the age distribution of the participants in Wave IV of Add Health. The youngest participants were 25 years of age, while the oldest participants were 34 years of age. The average age of the participants was 29 years old. Forty six percent of the participants in the study were males, while 54% were females.

**Table 1.0 Age of Respondents**

<b>Age</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
25	13	0.25
26	459	8.98
27	725	14.18
28	887	17.34
29	903	17.66
30	889	17.38
31	876	17.13
32	308	6.02
33	47	0.92
34	7	0.14
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,114</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## **Variables**

The variables for this study were created using questions from Wave I, Wave III and Wave IV of the Add Health data set. Data for Wave I were collected in 1994-1995, when participants were in grades 7 to 12, while questions for Wave IV were collected in 2007-2008, when respondents were between the ages of 25 to 34. This age group was chosen because, historically, this is the age that individuals have completed post-secondary education and settled into a career. However, many are now experiencing a delay (Harris et al., 2009).

**Outcome Variable.** The outcome variable was binary, and coded as zero or one. Zero represents individuals who did not leave their jobs, while a value of one represents individuals who did experience the event of interest, who left their jobs. An observation was created for each individual, for each year they were in their jobs. A value of zero was given for each year, and for the a value of one, for the year they left their job. This variable was constructed in Stata with the following research questions: what year did your most recent job begin; what year did your most recent job end; and the year of the study. Eighty percent of the participants had been in their jobs for four years or less. Among 4,995 individuals examined, 909 individuals left their job. Four thousand and eighty six individuals did report leaving their jobs. These individuals were right censored.

**Race.** A dichotomous variable was created for race. Caucasian was coded as one, and African American as zero. Because of the small number of Asian/pacific islanders, Native Americans, and Hispanics in the Add Health sample, and due to unique racial group findings in the literature on job stability, these observations are omitted, therefore only the Caucasian and African American participants were included in the race variable.

Wave I reports the race each participant. Of the 6,504 participants, 3,744 (58.06%) were Caucasian and 1,528 (23.69%) were African American.

**Socioeconomic background.** Socioeconomic background was operationally defined in two ways. Parents' occupation was the first SES variable. Specifically, reported occupation was coded as: no job=0; other/not categorized=1; blue collar (manual labour or service sector) = 2; white collar (managerial or administrative work) = 3; professional 1 (e.g., manager, executive director) = 4; professional 2 (e.g., doctor, lawyer) = 5; no mother/unknown =6.

**Table 2.0: Socioeconomic Background: Mother's Occupation**

<b>Mom's Job</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No job	888	13.72
Other/Not Categorized	995	15.38
Blue Collar	960	14.84
White Collar	1,425	22.02
Professional 1	1,412	21.82
Professional 2	421	6.51
No Mother/Unknown	1,952	30.17
Total	6,471	100.00

**Table 3.0: Socioeconomic Background: Father's Occupation**

<b>Dad's Job</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No job	196	3.03
Other/Not Categorized	645	9.97

Blue Collar	1,070	16.54
White Collar	1,245	19.24
Professional 1	538	8.31
Professional 2	825	12.75
No Father/Unknown	1,952	30.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,471</b>	<b>100.00</b>

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Highest level of education completed by each parent was the second SES variable. It was coded as follows: less than high school diploma =0; high school diploma = 1; some postsecondary=2; bachelor or associate degree = 3; some graduate degree=4; graduate or professional degree = 5; no mother/unknown=6, as reported in Wave 1. Each variable was examined separately so that the effect of parents' occupation and education could be specifically identified. The reported responses of both parents were utilized.

**Table 4.0: Socioeconomic Background: Mother's Education**

<b>Mom's Education</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less Than High School	838	12.89
High school/ HS equivalence	2069	31.83
Vocational/ college didn't graduate	1196	18.40
Completed College	1241	19.09
Professional training	512	7.88

beyond college		
No Mother/Unknown	644	9.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,500</b>	<b>100.00</b>

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**Table 5.0: Socioeconomic Background: Father's Education**

<b>Dad's Education</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than High School	607	9.34
High school/ HS	1,459	22.46
equivalence		
Vocational/ college	766	11.79
didn't graduate		
Completed College	922	14.19
Professional training	535	8.24
beyond college		
No Father/Unknown	1,952	30.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,496</b>	<b>100.00</b>

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**Education.** The Level of Education variable was constructed from the question in the Add Health data set, “What is the highest level of education that you have achieved to date?” This question was found in Wave IV of Add Health. Amount of education that participants completed was represented as an ordinal variable with 8 levels: less than high school diploma = 0; high school diploma = 1; some college/vocational = 2; graduated from college= 3; professional training = 4; some graduate school= 5; completed graduate school= 6; beyond graduate school=7; doctoral degree and beyond= 8.

**Table 6.0: Level of Education**

<b>Level of Education</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than High School	399	7.80
High school/ HS equivalence	835	16.33
Vocational/ college didn't graduate	1884	36.85
Completed College	1339	26.19
Professional training beyond college	199	3.89
Some graduate school	256	5.01
Completed graduate school	59	1.15
Doctoral Degree and beyond	142	2.78
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,113</b>	<b>100.00</b>

**Marriage.** This variable categorized the respondents according to whether they have never been married, were currently married, or were previously but were no longer married. The question used to construct this variable is, “How many times have you been married?” This question was found in Wave IV of Add Health. The maximum number of times reported was three; a variable was constructed for each marriage number, from 0 to 3. Each variable indicated the months and the year marriage began as well whether or

not the marriage had ended and when it ended. The proportion of participants who were married was 18%.

**Table 7.0: Number of Times Married**

<b>Number of times married</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Never married	3,984	80.51
Is married	802	18.02
Was married, not currently	88	1.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,874</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### **Data Analysis Software**

Stata, a comprehensive software program for conducting statistical analysis, graphics and data management, was used in the present study. Stata is a program used by businesses and academic institutions for research, specifically in the fields of Economics, Sociology, Political Science, Biomedicine and Epidemiology. Stata meets the specialized data management and analysis procedures needed for organizing and summarizing discrete duration analysis (Jenkins, 2005).

### **Data**

This research examined probability of remaining in the same job for a year, given the reported covariates. The method utilized was discrete duration analysis. This method involves the examination of time until an outcome occurs for the first time. In particular, a logit specification was used to examine the log odds losing one's job within each year examined, given that it has not occurred yet. Specifically, duration analysis was used to examine how long individuals remain in their most recent job. Time is reported in discrete intervals (number of years) in Add Health, therefore discrete duration analysis

was applied. Under a logit specification, the odds of leaving one's job is equal to  $\exp(\beta_0 + \beta_1 * x_1 + \beta_2 * x_2 + \dots + \beta_k * x_k)$ . The logit specification implies that, when an explanatory variable ( $x_1$ ) marginally changes, the percentage change in odds is equal to  $\beta_1 * 100$ , and when an explanatory variable ( $x_1$ ) goes up by one unit, the odds ratio is equal to  $\exp(\beta_1)$ . Furthermore, if two covariates ( $x_1$  and  $x_2$ ) increase by one unit, the associated odds ratio is equal to  $\exp(\beta_1 + \beta_2)$ . With regard to any empirical investigation it is potentially informative to examine the effects of many covariates changing together.

A logit specification was estimated for each research question and each set of covariates examined is referred to as a model. The final model included all covariates. The parameter estimates were interpreted using odds ratios, a measure that represents the odds that an outcome will occur given a particular exposure, compared to the odds of the outcome occurring in the absence of that exposure. In addition, hypothesis about the following groups of parameters were tested for multi-collinearity: mother's education and mother's occupation, as well as between father's education and father's occupation. In particular for each set of covariates the hypothesis that each one is equal to zero is tested.

### **Summary of Chapter**

In this chapter, the data set used in the study, the variables that were included in the analyses, and the method of analysis were described. A description of the software utilized to analyze the data was also included. The next chapter will discuss the results of the analysis.

## Chapter Five: Results

This section provides a summary of the results from the discrete duration analyses conducted to address the three research questions presented in Chapter 3. Model I examined how demographic factors influence job stability. This model sought to delineate the role of gender, race, and family educational and occupational background in the likelihood of leaving one's job. Model II examined the relationship between marriage, years in one job, year job began, and job stability. The purpose of this model was to examine how these factors influence job stability in the absence of other demographic factors. Model III examined the relationship between marriage and job stability, after controlling for demographic factors (i.e., gender, race, family background). The final analysis, model IV, included all the covariates in one model in order to examine the likelihood of leaving one's job. For each model males and females were separately examined.

### **Question I: Demographic factors and job stability**

First, job stability among males was examined. Parameter estimates suggested that, among African American males who did not graduate from high school, whose parents have less than high school education, and who are unemployed, every 100 individuals who do not leave their job, it is expected to observe 3.8 individuals who do. Among females, parameter estimates suggested that, among African American females who did not graduate from high school, whose parents have less than high school education, and are unemployed, every 100 females who do not leave their job, it was expected to observe less than one individual who does. The duration analyses suggested that different demographic factors emerged as significant predictors of job stability for

males than for females. A summary of the results for males and males is presented in Table 8.0.

**Table 8.0: Odds of Leaving One's Job: Assessing the Role of Race, Education, and Family Socioeconomic Background**

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
<i>Mother's Education</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>
High school/ HS equivalence	1.02	0.09	1.18	.84
Vocational/ college didn't graduate	1.01	0.07	1.35	1.38
College	1.34	1.11	1.34	1.28
Professional training beyond college	1.34	0.91	1.64***	1.83
No Mother/ unknown	1.15	0.34	1.56	1.26
<i>Father's Education</i>				
High school/ HS equivalence	0.84	-0.72	1.00	0.01
Vocational/ some college didn't graduate	0.55**	-1.95	1.04	0.17
Completed College	1.11	-0.39	1.29	1.04
Professional training beyond college	1.25	0.68	0.83	-0.67
No Father/unknown	0.68	-0.82	1.14	0.34
<i>Mother's Occupation</i>				
Other/ Not Categorized	1.22	0.85	0.82	-1.08
Blue Collar	1.55***	1.85	0.95	-0.30
White Collar	1.03	0.16	0.87	-0.79

Professional	0.81	-0.89	0.72***	-1.74
Professional 2	1.03	0.11	0.92	-0.35
No Mother	1.33	0.60	0.75	-0.77
<i>Father's Occupation</i>				
Other/ Not Categorized	1.64	1.16	1.25	0.65
Blue Collar	1.31	0.63	1.17	0.47
White Collar	1.39	0.80	1.28	0.78
Professional	1.07	0.16	1.11	0.31
Professional 2	.82	-0.46	1.14	0.38
No Father	1.34	0.50	1.08	0.18
<i>Race</i>				
White/Caucasian	0.86	0.35	1.09	0.79
<i>Highest Education</i>				
Graduated high school	0.50*	-3.46	0.54*	-3.46
Some vocational/college	0.48*	-3.90	0.31*	-7.20
Completed college/vocational	0.32*	-5.38	0.21*	-8.82
Some graduate school	0.56***	-1.79	0.28*	-4.18
Completed Graduate school	0.16*	-3.01	0.21*	-5.79
Beyond graduate	0.89	-0.20	0.32*	-2.72
Doctoral degree	0.90	-0.29	0.39*	-3.10

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\*\*\*p<.10, \*\*p<.05, \*p<.01

Socioeconomic background appeared to have limited effects on men's job stability. Specifically, the analysis suggested that men whose fathers completed some college or vocational school were less likely to leave their jobs than men whose fathers did not complete high school. Results also suggested that men whose mother's were employed in 'blue collar' jobs were more likely to leave their jobs compared to men whose mothers were unemployed. No other significant differences emerged in terms of the influence of mothers' or fathers' education or occupation levels on men's job stability. Therefore, it appears that socioeconomic status has relatively little influence on job stability for young men.

In contrast to the non-significant effects of socioeconomic background, men's job stability appeared to be influenced by the level of education they attained for themselves. Specifically, in comparison to men who did not complete high school, the odds of leaving one's job decreased for men who had completed their high school education, who participated in some college or vocation school, who completed college, and who had some graduate schooling or completed graduate school. These results indicate that men who have not graduated from high school have lower job stability than men with higher levels of education.

Socioeconomic background appeared to have minimal affects on job stability for women. The results for mother's level of education suggested that significant effects only emerged for participants whose mother's completed professional training beyond college. Women whose mother completed professional training beyond college were more likely to leave their jobs than women whose mother did not complete their high school degree. There were no significant effects in terms of father's level of education. Results for

parental occupation suggested that women whose mothers who had a professional occupation were more likely to leave their job than those whose mother did not have a job. In contrast, no statistically significant differences were found for father's occupation. Together, the results suggested that, for women, it is their mother's education and their mother's occupation that appear to have an influence on job stability.

Significant results emerged for the effects of women's own level of education. Women who graduated from high school and who received some form of high school equivalence diploma were significantly less likely to leave their jobs than those who did not graduate from high school. Also, women who pursued a post-secondary degree were significantly less likely to leave their jobs than those who did not graduate from high school. It appeared that women who had not graduated from high school had less job stability than women with higher levels of education.

There appeared to be gender differences in terms of the influence of race on job stability. The results of the duration analysis suggested that Caucasian women were more likely to leave their jobs than African American women. However, the results indicated that Caucasian men were less likely to leave their jobs than their African American counterparts.

Overall, the answer to the question of how race, gender, socioeconomic background and educational attainment predict job stability may be similar for men and women. For women, the odds of leaving a job differed significantly according the participants' mother's education and occupation level, as well as participants' own educational attainment. For men, it appears that the odds of leaving one job may be

impacted by father's education and mother's occupation as well as the participants' own education level.

### **Question II: Examining the relationship between marriage and job stability**

Separate models for men and women were implemented to address the second research question, namely, how does job stability predict marriage? Before running the model with other covariates, a preliminary analysis was conducted with the outcome variable, and the variable for marriage as the only explanatory variable in the model. Separate models were analyzed for males and females. In both models being married did not appear to be a statistically significant predictor of the likelihood of leaving one's job. For the model that examined how marriage predicts job stability and included other covariates, among males, parameter estimates suggested that for African American males who are 25 years of age, have been in their job for one year, and have never been married, for every 100 hundred individuals who do not leave their job, it is expected to observe 115 individuals who do. For the model that examined how marriage predicts job stability among females, parameter estimates suggested that for African American females who are 25 years of age, have been in their job for one year, and have never been married, for every 100 hundred individuals who do not leave their job, it is expected to observe 105 individuals who do. The variables included in the models to address research question two consisted of number of years in the same job, age of participant, year job began, and marital status. The z-score and odds ratio for each of these variables are reported in Table 9.0.

**Table 9.0: Odds of Leaving One's Job: the role of marriage, number of years in job, and year job began**

Variables	Males		Females	
	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>
<b><i>Years in Job</i></b>				
Two	1.10	0.58	1.98*	5.51
Three	0.76	-1.41	1.11	0.65
Four	0.37*	-3.39	0.68	-1.88
Five	0.50**	-2.33	0.64	-1.90
Six	0.40**	-2.47	0.47**	-2.42
Seven	0.35**	-2.46	0.41**	-2.43
Eight	0.27**	-2.53	0.20*	-2.77
Nine	0.10**	-2.24	0.59	-1.21
Ten	0.58	-1.04	0.81	-0.45
<b><i>Year Job Began</i></b>				
1999	0.78	-0.45	1.46	0.58
2000	0.89	-0.24	1.45	0.64
2001	0.35***	-1.91	1.33	0.52
2002	0.92	-0.20	1.21	0.36
2003	0.58	-1.23	2.26***	1.65
2004	0.42***	-1.95	1.57	0.90
2005	0.44**	-1.99	1.78	1.19
2006	0.66	-0.11	1.96	1.42
2007	1.26	0.68	3.83*	2.89
2008	1.57	1.35	3.27*	2.54
<b><i>Age</i></b>	0.18***	-1.78	0.74	-0.35
<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>				
Married	0.91	-0.53	0.91	-0.67
Married before, no longer	1.54	0.93	1.05	0.11

\*\*\*p<.10, \*\*p<.05, \*p<.01

The results from research question two indicate that, conditional that the female participants had been at the same job for one year, the odds of leaving one's job at year

two is higher for women. After year three, the odds of leaving one's job, conditional that they had previously remained at the same job, decreased as years in the same job increased.

For women, the year they began their job was also a factor in their likelihood of remaining in their job. As the year the respondents began their first job approached the year of the data collection, the likelihood of leaving one's job increased. These results were statistically significant for three of the 11 years that were tested. Specifically, for women who began their jobs in 2003, 2007, or 2008, the odds of leaving their job given that they had remained in the same job until the previous year, was more than two times that of individuals who had begun their job in 1998. No significant age or marriage effects emerged in this analysis.

In contrast, the model with male participants suggested that age has a statistically significant effect on men's job stability. Specifically as age increases, the likelihood of leaving one's job decreases. Examining the number of years in one's job, the odds of leaving one's job, conditional that they had remained at the same job until the previous year, significantly decreased as years in the same job increased for years four through nine of the study. This can be interpreted as, for men who have been in their jobs for four or more years, the odds of leaving their current job decreases compared to men who have been in their current job for one year. In contrast for men, results indicated that with the exception of 2003, 2007, and 2008, males who began their job on or after 1999 were less likely to leave their jobs than males who began their job in 1998. These findings were not found to be statistically significant. Marital status also had no significant effect for men.

### Question III: Marriage, Demographic Factors and Job Stability

The third research question examined the effects of marriage on job stability, after controlling for demographic factors. To better assess gender differences, separate models were constructed for males and females. For the model that examined how marriage and demographic variables predict job stability in males, parameter estimates suggested that for African American males who did not graduate from high school and have never been married, and whose parents have less than high school education, and are unemployed, for every 100 hundred individuals who do not leave their job, it is expected to observe 5.3 individuals who do. For the female participants, parameter estimates suggested that among African American females who did not graduate from high school and have never been married, and whose parents have less than high school education, and are unemployed, for every 100 hundred individuals who do not leave their job, it is expected to observe 11.1 individuals who do. The z-score and odds ratio for each of the variables are reported in Table 10.0. Results suggested that for both men and women, individuals who were currently married or had previously been married were less likely to leave their jobs than individuals who were single. These findings were not statistically significant. These results suggested that, after controlling for background characteristics, marital status is not substantively related to job stability in the current generation of young men and women.

**Table 10.0: Odds of Leaving One's Job: Assessing the Role of Race, Education, Family Socioeconomic Background, and Marital Status**

Variables	Male		Female	
	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>
White/ Caucasian	0.82	-1.42	1.04	0.09

***Father's occupation***

Other/ Not Categorized	1.53	0.99	1.23	0.60
Blue Collar	1.06	0.15	1.13	0.38
White Collar	1.29	0.62	1.21	0.57
Professional	1.04	0.08	1.06	0.17
Professional 2	0.79	-0.53	1.10	0.28
No Father/unknown	1.33	0.47	.96	-0.10

***Father's Education***

High school/ HS equivalence	0.84	-0.69	1.01	0.05
Vocational/College didn't graduate		-1.82	1.08	0.30
College	1.12	0.42	1.30	1.02
Professional training beyond	1.25	0.65	0.78	-0.82
No Father/unknown	0.59	-1.05	1.18	0.43

***Mother's occupation***

Other/ Not Categorized	1.09	0.35	0.82	-0.98
Blue Collar	1.52***	1.71	0.94	-0.31
White Collar	1.01	0.04	0.88	-0.71
Professional	0.77	-1.08	0.71***	-1.76
Professional 2	1.07	0.22	0.87	-0.55
No mother/ unknown	1.18	0.35	0.65	-1.08

***Mother's Education***

High school/ HS equivalence	0.96	-0.15	1.22	0.94
Vocational/college didn't graduate	1.02	0.07		1.64
College	1.23	0.75	1.45	1.53
Professional training beyond	1.23	0.62		1.89

No Mother/ unknown	1.32	0.64	1.66	1.36
<i>Highest Education</i>				
High school	0.45*	-3.50	0.62*	-2.72
Some vocational /technical training	0.46*	-3.28	0.40*	-5.91
Completed college	0.32*	-4.28	0.30*	-7.48
Some graduate		-2.24	0.51*	-3.26
Graduate school	0.11*	-2.47	0.25*	-5.09
Beyond graduate	0.89	-0.74	0.66**	-2.31
Doctoral degree and beyond	0.94	0.60	0.47**	-2.48
<i>Marital Status</i>				
Married	0.78	-1.30	0.90	-0.73
Marriedbefore, no longer married	0.89	-0.25	1.35	0.70

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\*\*\*p<.10, \*\*p<.05, \*p<.01

Assessing job stability by race and marital status, the results suggested that for males, individuals who were white and married were less likely to leave their jobs than individuals who were black and not married. Additionally, single, Caucasian males were more likely to leave their job than African American males who were married. Assessing job stability by race and marital status among females, individuals who are white and married were less likely to leave their jobs than individuals who are black and not married. Additionally, Caucasian females who were not married were more likely to leave their job than African American females who were married. Lastly, job stability was examined by education and marriage. For this variable, the categories, some college/vocational schooling and completing college were chosen, as they were two categories with the highest number of participants. Results suggested that a married man

who has completed some college or vocational schooling is less likely to leave his job than a single male who did not complete high school. Married men who did not complete high school were more likely to leave their jobs than single men who had completed some college/vocational schooling. Estimates arrived at with the sample of females revealed the same pattern of results.

The final model included all the covariates examined in the previous logit models. In order to examine gender differences in detail, separate duration models were estimated for males and females. With the covariates included, the parameter estimates remained the same as in models one and three. Among African American males who are 25 years of age, have been in their job for one year, and have never been married, for every 100 hundred individuals who do not leave their job, it is expected to observe 113 individuals who leave their job. Among African American females who are 25 years of age, have been in their job for one year, and have never been married, for every 100 hundred individuals who do not leave their job, it is expected to observe 10 individuals who leave their job. No significant changes were observed when comparing this model to previous models, and the size of the effect remains modest. Since the parameter estimates may be statistically insignificant due to multi-collinearity the hypothesis that all of the mother's occupation and mother's education parameters are equal to zero was tested. Results revealed that under the hypothesis that all of these parameters are equal to zero, the likelihood of the parameters observed was greater than .10. This suggested that there is little evidence to reject the hypothesis that the mother's occupation parameters and mother's education parameters are all equal to zero. The same test was applied with regard to father's occupation and father's education. Under this hypothesis, the

probability of the father parameter estimates is greater than .10. This suggested that there was little evidence to reject the hypothesis that the father's occupation parameters and father's education parameters are equal to zero.

The z-score and odds ratio of each variable are reported in Table 11.0. When examining how gender and marriage together affect job stability, the results revealed married females were more likely to leave their job than single males. Additionally, results revealed that females who were single were less likely to leave their jobs than married men.

**Table 11.0 Odds of Leaving One's Job: Examining all variables**

Variables	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>Z-score</i>
<b><i>Years in Job</i></b>				
Two	1.09	0.70	2.09*	4.14
Three	0.77	-0.87	1.63**	2.28
Four	0.33*	-2.88	0.93	-0.28
Five	0.49**	-1.60	0.83	-0.57
Six	0.42**	-1.82	0.39**	-1.96
Seven	0.34**	-1.76	0.38**	-1.82
Eight	0.30**	-2.10	0.12**	-2.10
Nine	0.11**	-2.19	0.70	-0.66
Ten	0.49	-0.47	0.54	-0.83
<b><i>Year Job Began</i></b>				
1999	0.88	0.55	2.94	1.45
2000	0.83	0.48	2.68	1.40
2001		-0.45	2.34	1.25
2002	1.01	0.94	1.70	0.77
2003	0.66	0.83	4.15**	2.26
2004	0.48	-0.37	3.15***	1.81

2005	0.47	0.32	3.11***	1.82
2006	0.71	0.32	3.73**	2.15
2007	1.26	1.23	7.96*	3.45
2008	1.54	1.87	6.40*	3.08
<i>Age</i>		-2.37	0.95	-1.48
<i>Race</i>				
White/ Caucasian	0.82	-1.87	1.00	0.03
<i>Mother's Occupation</i>				
Other/Not Categorized	1.11	0.38	0.92	-0.36
Blue Collar	1.44	1.33	0.92	-0.39
White Collar	0.91	-0.34	0.96	-0.20
Professional	0.96	-0.15	0.64**	-2.07
Professional 2	1.15	0.40	0.79	-0.84
No mother/ unknown	1.99	1.10	0.59	-1.17
<i>Father's Occupation</i>				
Other/ Not Categorized	1.24	0.45	0.97	-0.08
Blue Collar	0.87	-0.29	0.87	-0.38
White Collar	1.12	0.25	0.92	-0.24
Professional	0.84	-0.35	0.89	-0.31
Professional 2	0.60	-1.03	0.84	-0.47
No father/unknown	1.02	0.03	0.60	-1.11
<i>Mother's Education</i>				
High school/ HS equivalence	0.96	-0.15	1.18	0.72
Vocational/ college didn't	0.93	-0.23	1.77	2.32**
College	0.92	-0.28	1.89**	2.42
Professional training beyond	1.14	0.36	1.74***	1.74
No mother/unknown	0.74	-0.53	1.69	1.30
<i>Father's Education</i>				
High school/ HS equivalence	0.86	-0.49	1.06	0.25
Vocational/ college didn't	0.55	-1.65	0.97	-0.12

College	1.30	0.81	1.19	0.62
Professional training beyond	1.27	0.61	0.88	-0.38
No father/ unknown	0.68	-0.70	1.19	0.43
<b><i>Education</i></b>				
High school	0.45*	-3.35	0.67***	-1.81
Some vocational/technical training	0.51*	-3.11	0.38*	-4.83
Completed college	0.35*	-4.29	0.24*	-6.57
Some graduate	0.56	-1.50	0.28*	-3.57
Graduate school	0.13*	-2.73	0.18*	-5.23
Beyond graduate	0.91	-0.16	0.30**	-2.43
Doctoral degree and beyond	0.98	-0.05	0.37*	-2.76
<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>				
Married	0.87	-0.71	1.02	0.16
Married before, no longer married	1.34	0.60	0.43	0.82

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\*\*\* $p < .10$ , \*\* $p < .05$ , \* $p < .01$

Table 12.0 reports the pseudo r squared (R2) for each model. This pseudo R2 compares the log-likelihood arrived at when just the intercept is estimated to the log-likelihood arrived at when all the covariates are included. A pseudo R2 that is close to zero implies that the log likelihood arrived at with just an intercept is relatively close to the log likelihood arrived at with the intercept as well as covariates. All reported pseudo R2's were relatively close to zero. This suggested that the log likelihood arrived at with the covariates in each model is relatively close to the log likelihood arrived at with just the intercept in each model. Results suggested that the last model(s), which included all variables, have the highest pseudo R2. The pseudo R2s for all four male and female models were similar. In model one and model four, the pseudo R2s arrived at in the model with the female sample were greater than the R2 arrived at with the male sample.

In the third model, the pseudo R2s were similar for the male and female sample. The models which included the number of years in one's job and year job began (model two and four) are associated with a higher pseudo R2. The low pseudo R2's observed in the models may be due to factors that are unique to each individual and/or factors that are random and can affect any individual at any point in time at their job. These factors may include income, amount of debt that an individual does or does not acquire that would affect their decision to leave or remain in their job, and individual choice to leave this jobs, In the future it may be informative to see if similarly low R2's are arrived at when covariates such as income not reported in this sample are examined or when other functional forms are estimated. It is possible that the pseudo R2's may remain relatively close to zero. This may be indicative of the nature of job stability, in that while individuals may be leaving at high rates, the decision may be highly individualized.

**Table 12.0 Pseudo R squared**

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>
<b>Model 1</b>	.0261	.0300
<b>Model 2</b>	.0503	.0471
<b>Model 3</b>	.0291	.0279
<b>Model 4</b>	.0766	.0809

### **Summary of Results**

The duration analyses conducted in this study revealed mixed results. Overall, a higher likelihood was arrived at when the covariates, years in job, year job began, age as well as marital status were examined and in the final model, when all the covariates were

analyzed. These models included a continuous age variable, ten years at job indicator, number of years in job, and year job began. These results suggested that these covariates are significant predictors of the likelihood of leaving one's job, although it is also recognized that the models only accounted for relatively small amounts of the variance in the dependent variable. Overall, the results suggested that some demographic factors continue to play a role in young men's and women's job stability. The results also suggested that race plays a significant role in job stability for males, however does not have the same affect for females. Gender differences also appear when examining how socioeconomic background plays a role in young people's likelihood of being a stable job.

For males, both their father's occupation, as well as their mother's education played a significant role in their ability to remain in the same job. For females, however, it was only their mother's occupation and education that played a significant role. Higher educational attainment consistently decreased the likelihood of leaving one's job for both males and females (with the exception of males who pursued education beyond graduate school). When examining the role of gender, the results suggested that females were more likely to leave their job than males, however, single females were less likely to leave their jobs than married males. These findings suggested an intersection between marriage, gender, and race. Marriage decreased the likelihood of leaving one's job for Caucasian males, compared to single African American males. In addition, single Caucasian males were more likely to leave their jobs than married African American males. Results suggested that married Caucasian women were less likely to leave their jobs than their single African American female counterparts. The next chapter will

discuss the meaning and implications of the study, key limitations, and potential directions for further study.

## **Chapter Six: Discussion, Implication and Direction for Further Study**

The purpose of this research was to examine factors that influence job stability during the transition to adulthood. Specifically, duration analysis was used to examine the relationship between marriage and job stability, and how demographic factors affect this relationship. The results of the duration analysis revealed that the specific hypotheses outlined in Chapter 3 were only partially supported. The results suggested that differences among racial groups continue to exist and that, after controlling for gender, race, socioeconomic background and educational attainment, marriage did not play a statistically significant, unique role in the demise or the prevalence of job stability. What follows in this chapter is a detailed discussion of (a) the findings in relation to the existing literature, (b) the implications of these findings for policy and practice, (c) limitations that must be considered in understanding the findings, and (d) several directions for future research that stem from the present study.

### **Discussion of Findings**

#### **Job Stability**

Previous research in the area of job stability suggested that young people are taking longer to transition into full-time, stable work (Danziger & Ratner, 2010; Settersten, 2007). However, these studies did not examine the year at which individuals were most likely to leave their job. The present study contributed to knowledge about the transition to work by suggesting that, in emerging adulthood, individuals are most likely to leave their job during their second or third year of employment. However, once an individual has been in the job for more than three years, the likelihood of subsequently leaving their job decreases. The findings of this research also suggested that individuals

who began their jobs within two years prior to the collection of data were more likely to leave their jobs. This pattern of results is consistent with the idea that many young adults experience a period of insecure employment (i.e., working in temporary or short-term jobs) before they are able to establish themselves in a position that is more long-term. It could also be consistent with the idea that young adults may use employment as a means of career exploration, trying out various positions on a short-term basis until they find a job that is a good fit. A more in-depth exploration of why emerging adults tend to leave jobs in the first two years of work (e.g., Was the departure initiated by the employee or employer? Was the position temporary or permanent? Did they move from one job to another, or did they experience a period of unemployment after leaving the job?) is needed. It would be beneficial to distinguish between these possibilities.

**Marriage and job stability.** Are individuals who are married more likely to be in stable jobs than individuals who are not married? Contrary to what was hypothesized, this research did not find a significant relationship between marriage and job stability, after other background factors were controlled for. Compared to individuals who were not married, married individuals were somewhat less likely to leave their jobs, but the effects were not statistically significant. When accounting for gender, single females were less likely to leave their jobs than married men. These findings are contrary to research that suggested that married men are most likely to be in stable employment. This is also contrary to previous research that suggested males enter into marriage after obtaining a stable job (Ahituv & Lerman, 2010). This finding suggested that the transition to adulthood no longer occurs as a series of sequentially attained markers and, as such, supports Arnett's (1998, 2000, 2004) notion of emerging adulthood as an extended time

in which young people are exploring various life and identity roles. Although women continue to be more likely to leave their jobs after getting married, the results were not statistically significant, and may suggest that many women continue to work after marriage. While these results support the notion of the changing nature of family structures from the historical norm of 'male as breadwinner' to a situation where dual income families are more prevalent (Cooke & Gash, 2010; Goldstein & Kenny, 2001), they also suggest that there continues to be gender differences in the relationship between job stability and marriage. Contrary to the findings of historical research (Pittman & Blanchard, 1996; Parsons, 1949), the results of the present study indicate that marriage may no longer play as strong of role in women's exit from the workforce as it did in previous generations.

**Education.** It was hypothesized that individuals who pursued higher levels of education would be less likely to be in a stable job compared to individuals who did not pursue higher levels of education. Contrary to this hypothesis, results suggest that the odds of leaving one's job decreased for young people who completed their high school education and pursued further education, compared to individuals who did not graduate from high school. The findings from the analysis supports previous research, which reported that individuals who do not complete their high school education are less likely to find stable work, and more likely to go from one low paying job to the next (Farber, 2008). The only exception for males participants were those who had pursued a doctoral degree and higher. These males were more likely to leave their jobs than males who did not graduate from high school. However, this unexpected finding could be accounted for by the possibility that these individuals were either still pursuing education or only

recently graduated at the final data collection point, rather than reflecting the long term post-education trajectories of people who pursue doctoral studies or higher.

A possible explanation for the relationship between job stability and education is that, over the long term, the higher the level of education, the less likely individuals are to leave their job. This would be prevalent even for individuals who continue to pursue further education, although testing this possibility for individuals who pursued a doctoral degree or higher would require data to be collected from these participants into their late 30s, which is beyond the scope of the Add Health data set. This explanation supports what has been consistently reported in the literature. For example, Danziger and Ratner (2010) reported that individuals who did not receive more than a high school degree were less likely to be employed in a stable job. Quintini, Martin and Martin (2007), also report that individuals who left school without qualifications were less likely to be in a stable job than their educated counterparts.

### **Demographic Factors and Job Stability**

**Race.** The effects of race on the likelihood of leaving one's job suggested that the phenomenon is gendered in nature. The pattern of results that emerged provided partial support for the hypothesized relationship between job stability and race. Specifically, as was hypothesized, Caucasian men were less likely to leave their job than African American men. In contrast, the results revealed that Caucasian women were more likely to leave their jobs than African American women, although these findings were not statistically significant. The results for young males are consistent with previous research, which suggested that African American males are less likely to remain in a stable job as they are the group most likely to work low wage, low skilled jobs, and thus are most

likely to drift from one short-term job to the next (Edin & Reed, 2005). A possible reason for the difference that emerged in job stability between African American and Caucasian men can be found in data on post-secondary participation. Despite the increase of African American males and females in postsecondary education, their Caucasian counterparts continue to outnumber them in terms of presence in postsecondary institutions (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011). This suggested that African Americans are less likely than Caucasians to attend post-secondary institutions and are, thus, less eligible to obtain white collar or professional jobs. These findings are also indicative that future research in the area of job stability should continue to attend to race, but also examine potential interactions between race and gender, since different patterns emerged for race in the analysis for men than for women.

**Family background: Socioeconomic status.** The results of this study suggest that the effect of socioeconomic status was not as strong as hypothesized. It was hypothesized that, regardless of gender, the likelihood of leaving one's job would decrease as one's socioeconomic background increased. As explained previously, two indicators of socioeconomic status were used in the present study: parental occupational status, and parental education level.

This research did not suggest any significant relationship between socioeconomic background and job stability for emerging adult males. Results for the effects of mother's occupation and father's occupational status on job stability were not statistically significant. Parental education also did not have a significant effect on job stability. These findings were contrary to what was originally hypothesized and are inconsistent with the results that previous research has found. One possibility is that, for males, there

is no longer a difference in the rate of job stability based on their socioeconomic status. It is possible that, in the current generation, a higher socioeconomic status provides young men with the flexibility to explore a variety of career paths as part of the identity formation process that occurs during emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004), which can involve leaving jobs to pursue others that better suit their interests. In contrast, the equivalent level of job stability in young males from lower socioeconomic status may be due to an entirely different reason: an inability to find long-term, stable work. However, an entirely different possible explanation is that the non-significant results are due to an inadequate operational definition of socioeconomic status. In other words, perhaps in the current generation of young people, parental education and occupational status are not adequate indicators of socioeconomic status, at least in terms of exploring the links between socioeconomic status and job stability. Future research, using more direct measures of socioeconomic status (such as income), is necessary to clarify whether the possible absence of a link between socioeconomic status and job stability on males actually exists and, if so, whether there are different reasons behind why young people from different socioeconomic backgrounds tend to leave their jobs.

For female emerging adults in this sample, mother's socioeconomic background was a significant predictor of job stability, while father's socioeconomic background did not have any significant effects. This supports the gender-role socialization perspective, which stresses the importance of gender-specific role modelling and argues that females look to their mothers as they develop their educational and occupational aspirations (Powell & Downey, 1997). More specifically, in terms of the maternal education variable, young females whose mothers obtained a post-secondary degree or higher were

more likely to leave their jobs than females whose mothers did not graduate from high school. However, in terms of the maternal occupation variable, females whose mother's occupation was classified as professional (professional one and professional two) were significantly less likely to leave their jobs than females whose mother's reported having no job. These findings appear to contradict one another as previous research consistently suggested a strong positive correlation between education and occupation (Ensminger & Fothergill, 2003).

Speculating on why mother's education and occupation had differing effects on women's job stability in the present study, it is possible that mothers who pursued higher levels of education may not have gone on to pursue higher level occupations. Furthermore, mothers who did pursue higher levels of occupation may have had daughters who were more likely to leave their jobs in the pursuit of better, higher paying jobs similar to that of their mothers. Further study may explore why females are choosing to leave their jobs. Is it to pursue jobs with higher pay or are they leaving to have and raise children? That there were significant effects of socioeconomic background for females but not for males confirms previous research that proposes that socioeconomic background is a key factor in determining the quality of life women (Powell & Downey, 1997). However, it is evident that more work needs to be completed to fully understand the nature of the links between different indicators of socioeconomic status and job stability in young women, and to understand the reasons why females from different socioeconomic backgrounds leave their jobs in their 20s. Furthermore, the contradictory influences of mothers' education and mothers' occupation on females' job stability, combined with the previously discussed unexpected results for males, could also indicate

that there are problems with using parental education and occupation as a way to assess socioeconomic status when studying job stability in the current generation of young people. This is a measurement issue that needs to be explored in future research.

**Gender.** Although the present study was not focused on gender and no hypotheses were made regarding potential gender differences, separate models were constructed for men and women as a way to explore how the patterns of relationship between job stability and characteristics of emerging adults may vary by gender. As mentioned above, different patterns of results emerged in the male and female models, in terms of the influence of marriage, race, and socioeconomic status. The results suggest that women are more likely to leave their jobs than males. Although this research did not reveal a significant relationship between marriage and job stability, it remains possible that the distinguishing factor in the apparent gender differences in the area of marriage and job stability may be attributed not to marriage, but to childbearing. Childbearing plays a role in married women's exit from the workforce. For example, it is possible that married women are more likely to stay home after childbirth than unmarried women, thus resulting in a decrease in the participation of married women in the workforce (Goldstein & Kenney, 2001). It may be useful to conduct further research to explore the relationship between childbearing, marriage and job stability. The unexpected differences in the results of the models for male participants and female participants, which were not the focus of the present study, suggest that it will be important to attend to gender and the interactions between gender and other characteristics in future studies that explore young people's job stability.

## **Implications**

The pattern of results that emerged in this study suggested that job stability among young people is a complex area of research that requires further exploration. Why do young people choose to stay in their jobs? Why do they leave their jobs? Although this research was exploratory in nature and not all the hypotheses were supported, it has nonetheless paved the way to better understand how socioeconomic status, education levels, marriage and race continue to play a role in the likelihood of young people leaving their job.

This research suggested that individuals who graduate from high school and pursue any education level beyond high school are consistently less likely to leave their jobs than individuals who did not graduate from high school. While it may be suggested that implications of these results for social policy and employment services for young people are that young people should be encouraged to pursue postsecondary education, it is possible that higher level of education decreases one's likelihood of leaving one's job for other factors that may be related to the pursuit of higher education, such as student debt. The average student loan debt accrued by young people is 28,000 dollars. Young people in this position may choose to remain in their job due to their debt obligation, and therefore may not be an adequate depiction of job stability. Examining the effects of wages on job stability will help policy makers better understand the return of education in the work sector. It is important to distinguish between individuals who remain in their jobs out of necessity, and those who remain in their jobs because they feel the position is consistent with their career goals.

Another implication is that policy makers should pay attention to job stability trends among married women, to address the question: What is the role of married women in the workforce? Historically, women were expected to leave the workforce after marriage (Parsons, 1949). However, as more and more women are pursuing post-secondary education, an increasing number are faced with the question of whether they should pursue their occupation once they have entered into a marital union. Policy makers may consider that some women may continue working not because they choose to but because they are forced to due to financial reasons.

Race continues to play a vital role in obtaining stable work. African Americans, particularly African American men, continue to be the least likely racial group to be in stable work situations. Poverty persists in the absence of a stable source of income. Job stability and race continues to be a topic that must not only be explored, but also one where possible solutions could lead to the eradication of poverty in North America. Policy makers may also focus on encouraging job stability among African Americans, particularly among the males. Research has shown that the lack of stable work prevents African American men from entering marriage. African Americans should be encouraged to graduate from high school and to pursue further education in areas where they are able to secure work. Many of the problems that researchers have found within African American society may be solved through stable work (Swanson & Spencer, 1991). Service providers who are working to help young African American men to obtain stable work should establish and implement programs that ensure that young African American males are entering into full-time, stable work. Policies should also be implemented to eliminate racism and discrimination in the hiring process. Although this research did not

discuss the issue of racism and discrimination, it is possible that it is due to this reason that African American males were less able to retain stable work.

The effects of socioeconomic status on job stability among young people may be more complex than reported in previous research. Is it possible that trends in job stability for individuals from the lowest level of socioeconomic status and highest level of socioeconomic status are similar during young adulthood? It may be informative to explore motivations for job change. It is possible that, although rates of job stability may appear similar for individuals from very different socioeconomic backgrounds, the reasons and motivations behind leaving one's job may differ. It is also likely that the effects of father and mother's income and education was not as strong of a predictor on job stability as hypothesized and that access to education for one's self may have countered the effects of one's socioeconomic background. This finding also suggested some important implications for policies and services for emerging adults entering the workforce; specifically ensuring that the effects of one's socioeconomic background on job stability continues to be diminished. Primarily, if policy makers continue to ensure that education is accessible to individuals of all socioeconomic backgrounds, and provide more assistance in finding stable work for individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, it is possible socioeconomic background will have even less influence on one's likelihood of finding stable work in the future.

### **Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study was that the analyses did not include parental income or individual income variables. This was due to limitations in the Add Health public data set, but it does hinder the ability to effectively explore job stability among

young people. Specifically, income may be a better indicator of socioeconomic status than parental education and job status, and its absence may be one reason for the somewhat confusing pattern of results about the links between socioeconomic background and job stability. Furthermore, the inability to include income in this study makes it difficult to distinguish why individuals are leaving their jobs. This research was not able to examine the effects of wage and income on individuals' likelihood of leaving their jobs. Examining the role of income in job stability would have also allowed for a better understanding of the relationship between education and job stability by examining if and how income increases for young people as education level increases.

Another limitation is the timing of the data collection. Questionnaires were collected in 2008. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the employment sector is constantly changing, and this research only examines job stability from on cohort of young adults. Collecting data from a specific point and time may lead to cohort effects (Gilleard & Higgs, 2005). It is important to consider whether there are actual differences between this current cohort of young adults compared to young adults of previous generations and future generations. Examining whether any perceived difference is supported by research and whether these differences are large or small is necessary in order to adequately understand job stability among young adults.

One other limitation of this study is not being able to distinguish between full-time and part time work in the analyses. Previous research suggested that more women tend to work in part-time jobs than men (Quintini, Martin & Martin, 2007). Research also suggested that individuals who continue to pursue their education are more likely to work in part-time jobs as stepping stones into their career (Quintini, Martin & Martin, 2007).

Distinguishing between part-time and full-time work would have allowed for a better understanding of trends in the job market. Are individuals leaving part-time jobs as they pursue full-time work, or are they remaining in part-time work for a longer period of time? Differences in part-time and full-time work are aspects of job stability that should be further explored.

Another limitation of the research is that it only examined a small period of time in the life span of a person. This research only examined a maximum of 15 years in the workforce and the oldest participants were 34 years old. Furthermore, only about 7% of participants were 31 years and older. For younger participants, this research did not capture their full transition into the workforce, as it would have examined their trends in job stability from the time they were young teenagers. Consequently, this research does not provide an adequate understanding of the outcome of postsecondary education on job stability. Examining job trends beginning at age 18 for all participants until the age of 34 would have provided a better understanding of job stability among young adults.

Another limitation to this research was that an American dataset was utilized. Because the data was collected from U.S. participants, it is difficult to generalize to Canadian young adults. For example, one key distinction is the distribution of race in the two countries. While the percentage of young adults in both countries are comparable (Statistics Canada, 2014; US Census Bureau, 2011), differences occur when examining racial diversity. For example, African Americans make up 12.2 % of the American population, while individuals who identify themselves as being black or of African descent only represent 2.7% of the Canadian population (Statistics Canada, 2014; US Census Bureau, 2011).

One final limitation is that this research involved the analysis of secondary data. Utilizing secondary data analysis poses some inherent limitations, such as the inability to control the questions asked to the participants as well as how these questions were asked. As a result, variables that would have been beneficial to include in this research, such as income and full versus part-time work, could not be included. While every effort was made to properly clean the data, the way the variables were reconstructed may also have played a role in the results found. For example, the variable job stability was reconstructed so that survival analysis could be conducted. As a result, variables were transformed from the original to better suit the requirements of the analysis procedures, while this does not impact the validity of the measures; it is worth taking into account.

### **Directions for Future Research**

This research paves the way for further examination of job stability in emerging adulthood, including exploring why individuals are more likely to leave their jobs within their first three years of employment. This research suggested that individuals are most vulnerable within their first three years of employment. This is valuable information for employers as well as policy makers in the area of employment insurance, and should be further explored. More importantly, further research could explore whether job stability during the first three years of employment is indicative of job market trends in the future.

In the future it may be beneficial if research on job stability is conducted to examine the reasons for leaving work in emerging adulthood. Are individuals leaving jobs because they choose to, or because they are forced to? Why do they make the choice to leave their jobs? Are they leaving one job to enter another one, or are they experiencing unemployment after leaving a job? Is it to pursue one that offers higher

income, one that better suits their career goals, or aspirations, or because they have lost interest in the job? It is worthwhile to study potential socioeconomic differences in the reasons for leaving one's job. Furthermore, it may be informative to examine whether individuals from lower socioeconomic statuses are more likely to leave their job to enter a higher paying job, or a job with higher prestige or if they simply go from a job of similar or lower income and prestige to the next.

It may also be beneficial for further research in the area of race to address the question of why race only appears to be a significant factor for men's job stability but not for women's job stability. Specifically, it may be informative to develop a better understanding of why the job stability levels of Caucasian women and African American women appear to be approximately equal. Research should also explore why African American males are less likely than Caucasian males to be in stable work. Studies suggest that African Americans are less likely to attend post-secondary education than Caucasians (Constant, Tatsiramos, & Zimmermann, 2009); these results indicate that it is not merely post-secondary education that leads to job stability. African American males are more likely to be employed in blue-collar work (Constant, Tatsiramos, & Zimmermann, 2009; Farber, 2008); research should explore whether it is the African American work ethic, or if it is other factors, such as the types of jobs that young African American males are able to obtain, that influences job stability. Consequently, further research should examine the relationship between race and job type or occupational status (blue collar, white collar, professional).

## **Conclusion**

The present study sought to improve understanding of the role of job stability in the transition to adulthood. Specifically, this research explored the relationships between marriage, job stability, and a variety of demographic factors. Although the results confirm that pursuing post-high school education contributes to job stability, the findings also call for a change in understanding of the role of socioeconomic background in young people's acquisition of stable employment, and suggest a reduction of gender differences in job stability following marriage. African American males continue to have a more difficult time obtaining stable employment, and this research suggested that this is not merely due to racial differences in socioeconomic background. It will be beneficial that future research continues to examine the role of job stability in the transition adulthood.

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## Curriculum Vitae

**Taye O Adeniyi**  
**Masters of Interdisciplinary Candidate**

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### **Research Interests:**

- **Adolescent development; Transition to adulthood; School to work transitions; Identity development; Risk taking behaviour; civic engagement; Demographic factors that influence Human Development; Quantitative Research**

### **Education:**

- **Masters in Social Work Candidate, 2015-2017  
University of Toronto, Toronto**
- **Master of Interdisciplinary Candidate, 2016  
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton**
- **BA, honours in sociology with major in psychology. 2010  
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton**

### **Awards:**

- **Dr. Augustine & Mrs. Belle Chan Family Scholarship, 2016**
- **Graduate Bursary, 2012**
- **Graduate Research Assistantship, 2010-2011**
- **William and Lois Paine Founder's Scholarship, 2005-2006**
- **James Somerville Scholarship, 2005-2006**