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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 5 Assessing the Trends: African-American Endeavors into the Medical Profession
 Karintha Holifield
- 35 FEATURE: YALE CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON INEQUALITIES AND THE LIFE COURSE (CIQLE)
- 43 In Search of an Aphrodisiac: Putting the Romance into Models of Marriage
 Averil Y. Clarke
- 73 Returns to Skills: Vocational Training in Germany 1935-2000
 Matthias Pollmann-Schult & Karl Ulrich Mayer
- 99 Increasing risks of stigmatization: Changes in school-to-work transitions of less-educated West Germans
 Heike Solga

YALE SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT

- 131 Faculty
- 137 Research Centers
- 139 Activities

Assessing the Trends: African-American Endeavors into the Medical Profession¹

Karintha Holifield

Abstract: My research investigates trends for African-Americans as they entered the medical profession. Specifically, I attempt to account for the size and distribution by specialty of African-American physicians over time. I conclude that while affirmative action programs have been influential in the growth of the African-American physicians, these programs are not sufficient. Rather, socioeconomic gains are integral to further increasing the black physician population. Gendered notions of proper medical specialties contribute to African-American specialty choice. African-Americans do not differ a great deal from the entire physician population in specialty choice. Socio-cultural factors may also explain increased African-American participation in certain specialties such as obstetrics-gynecology.

Many researchers have indicated that African-Americans continue to be underrepresented in the medical professions. The medical community has largely embraced such findings, as the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) has proclaimed its commitment to “increasing the number of minority physicians available to serve the nation's ever-growing minority population”². Despite still being underrepresented in medicine, African-American physician dynamics have changed significantly. For example, the African-American physician population has grown from 2.1 percent of the overall physician population in 1950 to 3.6 percent of the same population in 1990 (US Census 1990, Pinkney 2000).

¹ I dedicate this essay to my parents who make me feel like the luckiest daughter in the world and to the memory of my brother -Malik Gibson. This article was written as my undergraduate thesis. I would like to thank both, Andrew Shrank, my advisor, and Ivan Szelenyi, the DUS, for their help and guidance.

² <http://www.aamc.org/diversity/> . Accessed on 3/15/04.

While several changes within the African-American physician population have been observed over time, they have rarely been studied. Assessing what accounts for the size and distribution by specialty of African-American physicians can be particularly useful. To begin with, such data may be used to reflect the social mobility of African-Americans. A sizeable sociological tradition argues that occupational segregation serves as a mechanism in which disadvantaged groups are denied access to the most lucrative jobs and prestigious positions (Lewis 1985). As a result, inequality in the labor market occurs. Since medicine is among one of the most elite and lucrative professions, investigating participation in the field can indicate social and economic opportunity for African-Americans. Consequently, increased African-American participation in medicine demonstrates increased socioeconomic opportunity and vice versa.

In addition, racial diversity among physicians is believed to be associated with greater health care equality. The Institute of Medicine noted that, "racial and ethnic diversity among health professionals... is associated with improved access to care for racial and ethnic minority patients, greater patient choice and satisfaction, and better educational experiences for health professions students" (IOM 2004, p.1)³. As a consequence, the Institute of Medicine recommends greater recruitment of racial and ethnic minorities. Another report by the Institute of Medicine asserts, "the health-care workforce and its ability to deliver quality care for racial and ethnic minorities can be *improved substantially* by increasing the proportion of underrepresented U.S. racial and ethnic minorities among health professionals (IOM 2002, p.2)⁴."

While the overall trends in the numbers of African-American physicians are of great concern, so is the distribution by specialty. Again, recruitment of African-American physicians into their respective specialties can be analyzed in terms of occupational segregation and socioeconomic mobility. Medical specialties can be categorized according to their respective prestige and profitability. For example, the surgical professions are often perceived as an extremely prestigious and lucrative occupation. General practice, on the other hand, is professed as having lesser status and monetary rewards. Consequently, analysis of African-American physician

³ While a substantial body of literature supports this notion, the goal is not to test the validity of this conclusion. Rather, I am elucidating sociopolitical motivations involved in the investigation of my topic.

⁴ Note: I authored the use of italics in the phrase, not the Institute of Medicine

participation in specialties can be used as an indicator of socioeconomic mobility within the field of medicine. Accordingly, disproportionate African-American physician practice in specialties with smaller monetary rewards is associated with lower socioeconomic status and vice versa.

In terms of sociological implications, medical specialties that tend to attract more African-Americans may result in better health care for African-American patients. I would like to know what qualities attract these doctors to a particular field. As a result of increased African-American physician involvement in certain specialties, better research and care for African-American patients suffering from ailments within these fields may occur. In addition, a stronger lobbying power for African-American interests in a subspecialty may exist. However, the subspecialties not containing a great deal of African-Americans are equally, if not more important. These fields may suffer from a lack of research and care for African-American patients. The implications can be tremendous. African-Americans suffering from ailments would be less likely to have the proper care. In addition, insufficient research on diseases disproportionately affecting African-Americans may also result. These possibilities provide further motivation in investigating why African-American physicians choose to concentrate in certain specialties.

In the following section, I examine literature regarding African-Americans and the pursuit of medical occupations. Subsequently, analysis of quantitative data providing aggregate trends in medical school recruitment of African-Americans will be presented. Also included is a decomposition section that contains the breakdown of processes contributing to the aggregate data. A summarizing analysis of the quantitative information is then presented. Specialty and socioeconomic data and analysis will also be incorporated. Afterwards, results from the qualitative interviews will be used to account for trends in the quantitative section. The final section contains the assessment of general findings for the study. Of which, I conclude that despite the contributions of affirmative action, racialized class inequality poses a persistent barrier to occupational equity within the physician population.

Literature Review

Currently, only a small body of literature attempts to account for the dynamics and distribution by specialty of African-American physicians over time. Moreover, the research is often framed in terms of the larger debate whether affirmative action is an appropriate policy to be used by

colleges and universities. Nonetheless, the literature examining the impact of affirmative action policies on African-Americans in higher education can be particularly useful for my study. Such research provides a general background in which specific information regarding African-American physicians can be investigated.

In the affirmative-action debate, conservatives such as Stephan and Abigail Thernstrom argue that significant gains for African-Americans in academia were visible prior to the enactment of affirmative action policies (Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997). Additionally, they argue that implementation of affirmative action programs was not necessary because African-Americans were already making advances in higher education representation. Shelby Steele has also charged that affirmative action has been "largely ineffective" (Steele 1998, as quoted in Cross and Slater 1999, p.1). They both campaign for the removal of affirmative action as a policy used to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in colleges and universities.

The increasing pressure to remove affirmative action is opposed by an argument that praises affirmative action for increasing minority representation in higher education. Theodore Cross and Robert Slater claim that the significant growth in black enrollment in higher education is due to the onset of affirmative action. They argue that significant achievements for African-Americans will be eroded if such policies are removed (Cross and Slater 1999).

These binary arguments have often overshadowed a third perspective. This understated opinion claims that despite initial gains for African-American, the affirmative-action recruitment policies have not maintained the same degree of success. While decreased effectiveness in the 1980s and 1990s. Alphonso Pinkney claims that, "after rapid gains in the 1970s, little progress has been made" in minority medical school admissions (Pinkney 2000). Moreover, Pinkney believes that the gains made by African-Americans are largely myths. Although he recognizes the achievements of civil rights legislation in the 1960s, he maintains that during the late 1970s-1980s, "the way was paved for a reversal of the trend toward equality for America's black population" (Pinkney p.169 1984). Pinkney attributes the decline in African-American enrollment in medical schools to several reasons aside from decreased affirmative action effectiveness. These factors elucidated by Ready and Nickens include the declining numbers of applicants from all groups, declining popularity of undergraduate premed majors, declining numbers of blacks attending college, higher high school

dropout rates for blacks, especially males, increasing poverty among blacks, high indices of stress among black men (Ready and Nickins 1991).

With these hypotheses in mind, I conducted research in an attempt to determine what accounted for the size and distribution over time of African-American physicians. I determined that both Pinkney and Cross & Slater's conclusions are relevant factors affecting the African-American physician population. During the early-mid 1970s, African-American physicians significantly increased their representation, coinciding with the enactment of affirmative action policies. However, the rate of growth has not been sustained, and African-Americans continue to be underrepresented in medicine. Socioeconomic barriers in medical school admissions are also a likely contributing factor to such phenomena. Consequently, both affirmative action and socioeconomic background are involved in African-American admissions to medical school.

The Institute of Medicine's Committee on Increasing Minority Participation in the Health Professions has noted declining interest in providing primary, secondary, and post-graduate educational opportunities to minority students as one of the factors contributing to the stagnation (IOM 1994). Use of the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT), in which minorities tend to score lower has also been criticized. The committee urges that "a more systematic, strategic, and sustained effort" is needed to increase racial diversity in the health professions (IOM 1994). Some suggestions for increased minority recruitment include improved coordinated resources, evaluation and dissemination efforts, mentorship, commitment on excellence, and value on diversity (IOM 1994). A table summarizing possible recruitment hypotheses is included below.

While the overall trends in the numbers of African-American physicians are of great concern, so is the distribution by specialty. Pinkney claims that when considering possible specialties, African-American medical graduates "are more in keeping with the medical needs of black people and the poor than those of physicians in the general population" (Pinkney 2000, p.151). Consequently, African-Americans tend to specialize in primary medical care fields such as family medicine, obstetrics-gynecology, and general internal medicine. Pinkney also argues that African-American physicians are less likely to specialize in "glamorous and higher-paying areas" such as surgery (Pinkney 2000, p.151). Pinkney suggests that African-Americans' desire to serve black and poor people is responsible for this phenomenon. James L. Curtis argues a different factor is responsible for greater involvement of African American physicians in primary care:

RECRUITMENT HYPOTHESES

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
Affirmative action does not explain the growth of African-Americans in higher education (which can also be extended to medicine)	Stephen and Abigail Thernstrom, Shelby Steele	African-Americans were already making progress in representation in higher education. Affirmative action policies were largely ineffective.
Affirmative action policies were responsible for the increase of African-Americans in higher education (and thus in medicine)	Theodore Cross, Robert Slater	The increase of African-Americans in higher education coincides with the enactment and/or strengthening of affirmative action programs
Affirmative action was initially instrumental in the growth of African-American medical students, but a decrease in efficacy has resulted in the stagnation of African-American medical school graduates	Alphonso Pinkney	Stagnation of African-American physician representation coincides with the decreased investment in affirmative-action programs
Affirmative action programs are necessary but not sufficient. Socioeconomic gains are also integral to further increasing the black physician population.	Karintha Holifield	The majority of African-Americans accepted into medical school are middle to upper class. The increase in African-American physician representation seems to coincide with implementation/strengthening of affirmative action programs.

gender (2003). Curtis notes that minority women are distinguished by the frequency in which they enter into the collective fields of family practice, medicine, and especially pediatrics. As a result, as the African-American physician population becomes increasingly female, the proportion of pri-

mary care interns will also increase (Curtis 2003). Curtis also notes that minority women choose more programs in pediatrics and fewer programs in surgery as compared to minority men or non-minorities of either gender. Similarly, as the African-American physician population has become more female, the proportion of surgery interns will decrease.

Curtis also attempts to account for disproportionate African-American physician involvement in obstetrics-gynecology - a rate that is over twice that of other medical school graduates. He notes that previous theories claimed African-Americans chose obstetrics-gynecology because the field was no longer attractive to most medical school graduates and thus easier to enter. However, he rejects this reasoning, citing literature by Johnson, Smith, and Tarnoff that argued African-American applicants also expressed a same preference for obstetrics and gynecology (Johnson, Smith, and Tarnoff 1975). Curtis' argument follows:

Blacks are attracted to obstetrics and gynecology because in earlier decades this specialty above all others was plagued by blatant racial prejudice and practice. Black women in past decades were not admitted to most women's hospitals in this country, even if they were attended by a White physician. Black medical students or practicing physicians usually were not allowed to examine or treat women patients except in racially segregated hospitals. This created an early, strong, and separate market demand for Black physicians to provide this special medical care for their Black women patients (2003).

While Curtis' hypothesis provides a possible explanation of earlier motivations for African-American physicians pursuing obstetrics-gynecology, this trend continues to exist after desegregation. Persistence of these trends may be due to the larger presence of African-American obstetricians and gynecologists serving as role models for future African-American physicians. Curtis also cites higher rates of infant mortality, fertility, larger family size, more out-of-wedlock, teenage, or other problem pregnancies in the African-American community as motivating factors for African-American obstetricians and gynecologists (Curtis 2003). Dealing with problems with sexually transmitted diseases, disorders of sexual function, and infertility problems also are cited as sources of inspiration (Curtis 2003).

Though both Pinkney and Curtis pose intriguing hypotheses regarding the distribution of African-American physicians by specialty, my research has demonstrated support for Curtis' claims. Physician specialty is largely distributed according to gender. While African-Americans are more likely to be involved in certain specialties such as obstetrics and gynecology,

DISTRIBUTION HYPOTHESES

<i>Hypothesis</i>	<i>Author(s)</i>	<i>Evidence</i>
African-American physicians select specialties based on the needs of serving African-Americans and the poor	Alphonso Pinkney	African-Americans are likely to participate in primary care specialties.
African-American physicians select specialties based on gender differences. Segregation created the impetus for increased African-American participation in obstetrics-gynecology.	James L. Curtis	Chi square analysis indicates gender is the major determining factor for specialty choice. Historical data on the effects of racial segregation on obstetrics-gynecology.
Gendered notions of proper medical specialties contribute to African-American specialty choice.	Karintha Holifield	Analysis of AAMC data and results from qualitative interviews.
African-Americans do not differ a great deal from the entire physician population in specialty choice. Socio-cultural factors may also explain increased African-American participation in obstetrics-gynecology.		

most physician specialties do not vary according to race. I found no supporting evidence for Pinkney's claim that African-American physicians select their specialties based on the needs of the African-American community. Rather, African-American physicians are likely to serve the African-American community.

A table summarizing possible hypotheses that account for African-American physician distribution by specialty is included below.

Several competing theories exist regarding African-American representation in the medical fields since the 1970s. My investigation of the changing trends among black physicians since the 1970s will attempt to address this issue. Initially I present the broader trends regarding recruitment of African-American physicians in order to illustrate a general portrait for African-Americans in medicine. Subsequently, these basic trends are decomposed in order to determine what factors contribute to the overall distribution of African-American physicians. Finally, I include interviews with medical schools officials and African-American doctors, to qualitatively demonstrate how individual decisions are involved in the process of becoming a physician. This information then can be analyzed to establish what accounts for the size and distribution by specialty of African-American physicians over time.

Medical School Recruitment

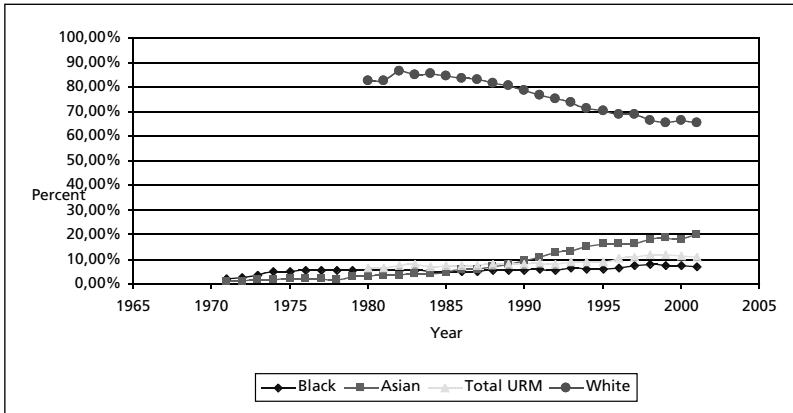
When accounting for the trends regarding recruitment of African-Americans into the medical profession, I initially analyzed aggregate trends of African-Americans in medical schools. Desired data was obtained from the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), which has extensive information on the racial and ethnic demographics of American medical schools. In order to determine the dynamics and distribution of African-American medical students, I then examined statistical data concerning African-American medical students and graduates supplied by the AAMC.

The AAMC publications, *Minority Graduates of U.S. Medical Schools: Trends, 1950-1998* and *Minority Students in Medical Education: Facts and Figures XII* which had extensive data supporting my research. The sources provided the percent of applicants, acceptances, acceptance rates, enrollments, total enrollments, and graduates in U.S. medical schools. This information was cross-categorized according to gender, which was also useful to my research.

Aggregate Data Analysis

Researching general trends of African-American physicians first entailed examining aggregate graduation rates in American medical schools by race and ethnicity. The graduation rates were used to track the African-American physician population, as those obtaining a medical degree are extremely likely to practice medicine. The following graph represents the graduation rates of American medical students by race and ethnicity.

FIGURE 1: PERCENT GRADUATES OF US MEDICAL SCHOOLS
BY RACE/ETHNICITY, 1971-2001

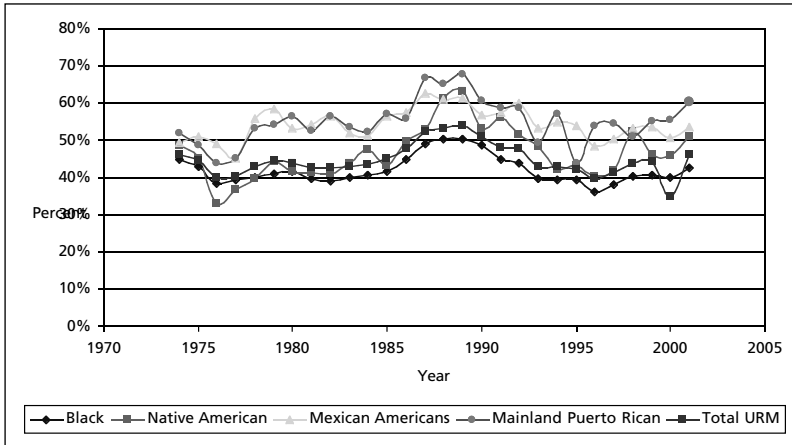


DATA: AAMC (2002, 2000)

The data indicates that Asians have made the most significant progress regarding minority representation as physicians and are currently over-represented as American medical school graduates. African-Americans continue to be under-represented as graduates of US medical schools. However, a tremendous increase has been noted in the representation of African-American medical school graduates between 1950 (2.40%) and 2001 (6.9%). The majority of this increase is observed between the years of 1972 and 1974. During this period, the percentage of African-American medical school graduates more than doubled from 2.40% to 5.00%. This substantial increase is also observed as affirmative action policies are being implemented in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Consequently, explosive growth of African-American physicians in the 1970s is most likely the result of affirmative action policies being implemented and enforced. Afterwards, representation remains fairly constant until a peak at 7.60% in 1998. After the peak, African-American graduates of medical schools have since declined to 6.90% in 2001.

While graduation rates reflect the overall distribution of physicians, acceptance rates to medical school are integral in determining the number of medical students that potentially are future physicians. Consequently, investigating African-American acceptance rates is useful in the assessment of aggregate trends of African-Americans in medical schools. The figure

FIGURE 2: ACCEPTANCE RATES OF URM MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS
1974-2001



DATA: AAMC (2002)

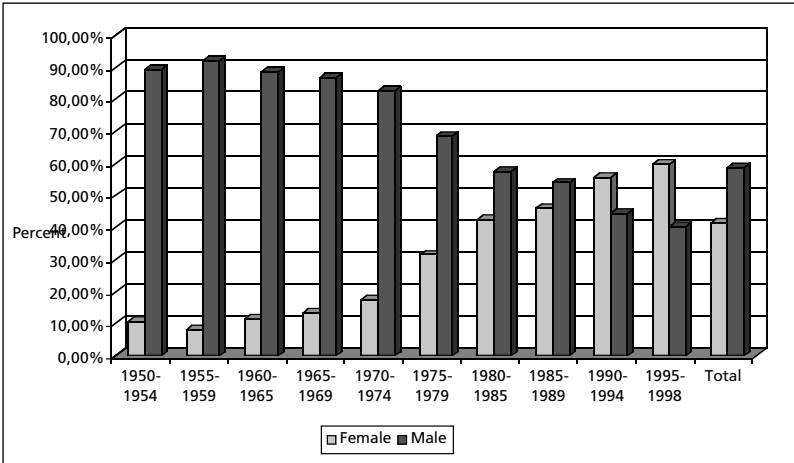
below illustrates the acceptance rates of under-represented minority medical school applicants.

With the exception of a peak in the late 1980s through early 1990s, the acceptance rate of African-Americans in U.S. medical schools has largely remained the same since the mid 1970s. In fact, the acceptance rate of 2001 (43%) was actually lower than the acceptance rate in 1974 (45%). This peak in acceptances during the late 1980s and early 1990s coincides with a similar increase in acceptance rates among all racial and ethnic groups. Nevertheless, the African-American acceptance rate is lower than all of the underrepresented minorities.

Gender is another major axis of social division. As a result, gender was also analyzed when examining the major trends of African-Americans in medical school. Information from such investigation demonstrates how gender functions within the overall population of African-American medical school graduates. The results are included in the following graph.

Though women of all racial and ethnic groups have increased their number in U.S. medical schools, African-American females continue have the highest percentage of entrants into these schools. The noted increase from 44.2% in 1980 to 65.0% in 2001 is almost a 50% increase. Consequently, while African-American female graduates have increased in per-

FIGURE 3: AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEDICAL SCHOOL GRADUATES BY SEX



DATA: AAMC (2000)

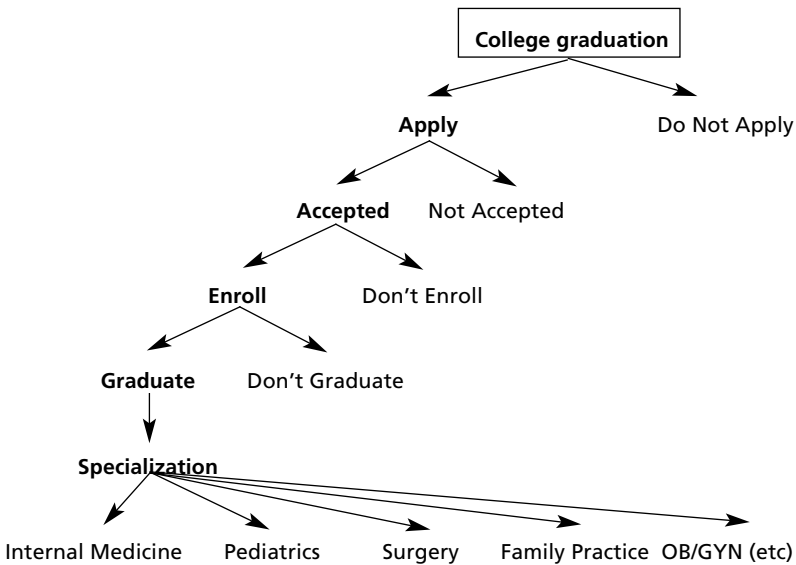
centage, the percent of African-American male graduates has decreased from 55.8% in 1980 to 35% in 2001. The years of 1990-1994 are the turning point when African-American females outnumbered males in percentage.

Decomposition Analysis

Four major processes must be accomplished in order to become a physician: application, acceptance, enrollment, and graduation. These processes can be mapped onto a decision tree to illustrate how trends for medical school application, acceptance, enrollment, and graduation contribute to the aggregate population of African-American physicians. Thus, I use the AAMC data to decompose the process of becoming a physician into several stages – application, acceptance, enrollment, and graduation – and ask how African-Americans are represented. The statistical data containing racial and ethnic demographics of medical schools are then analyzed in order to depict an appropriate picture of the level, distribution, and dynamics of the population of African-American physicians. The publications also document medical specialization by both race and gender. I use the specialization data to track disproportionalities by race and gender. The reports also contained profiles of accepted applicants according to race and ethnicity, which was also useful in my research.

I began by transferring the AAMC data into Microsoft Excel for analysis. This data was then analyzed to determine the size and distribution of the population of African-American physicians over time. First, I constructed indices of representation for several distinct stages in the medical recruitment process: application, acceptance, matriculation, and graduation. Each index is the dividend of a distinct fraction: the African-American percentage of the population undergoing the process (e.g., applying to medical school) divided by the percentage of the African-American population at risk of undergoing the process (e.g., the African-American population)⁵. Thus, an index of 1 demonstrates that adequate representation occurs, i.e., the African-American percentage of the population experiencing the outcome (i.e. acceptance) is equivalent to the African-American

FIGURE 4: THE PROCESS OF PHYSICIAN RECRUITMENT



⁵ Ideally the index of application would include the percentage of African-American college graduates as the population at risk. Since this data was not readily available, data on the African-American population was used instead. Therefore, the index of application measures African-American representation as a percentage of the total African-American population and tracks inequality in access to undergraduate education as well as inequality in the likelihood of applying to medical school once in college. This may exaggerate some of the biases in the first index.

percentage of the population at risk of the outcome (i.e. applying). An index greater than 1 indicates African-American overrepresentation, and an index less than 1 indicates African-American under-representation.

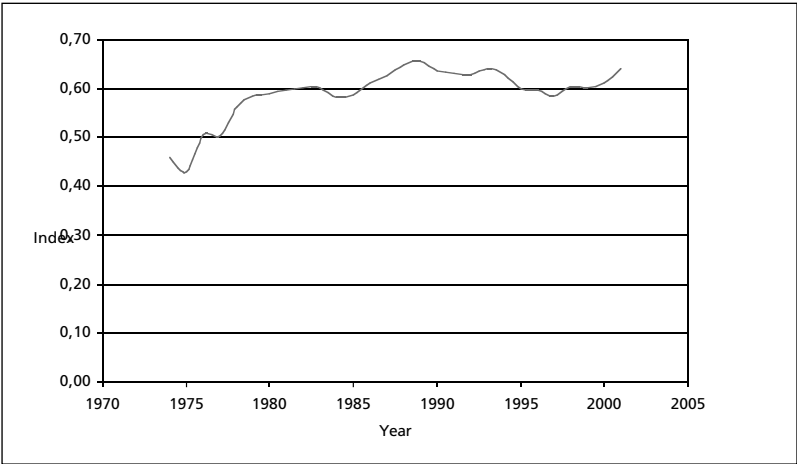
The indices of representation were used to determine at which stages of the recruitment process African-American under-representation and/or overrepresentation occur. The calculated indices of representation reflect a decision tree which tracks the process of becoming a physician. Starting with applicants, the decision tree was used to gauge representation and decision making in the process of becoming a doctor (see Figure 4).

African-American Applications

After fulfilling the necessary prerequisites for medical school admission, applying to medical school is the initial step taken towards becoming a medical doctor. An index of representation is constructed to indicate African-American involvement in the application process.

Analysis of the applicant index of representation indicates that African-Americans continue to be noticeably underrepresented as applicants to U.S. medical schools. Nonetheless, African-American applicants to U.S. medical schools have significantly increased their representation by 39%

FIGURE 5: INDEX OF REPRESENTATION FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN US MEDICAL SCHOOL APPLICANTS



DATA: AAMC (2002)

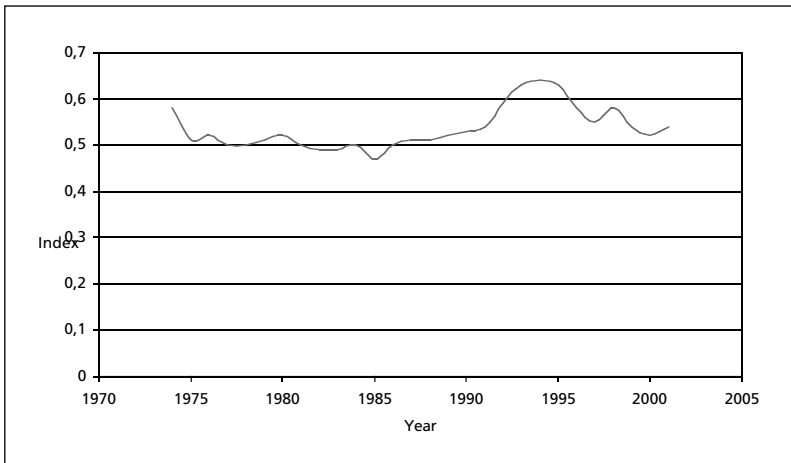
from 0.46 in 1974 to 0.64 in 2001. A great deal of this growth was observed through the late 1980s. Though African-American representation as applicants has not declined after the late 1980s, the same rate of growth is not observed. Rather, the applicant pool seems to have stabilized around 0.60.

African-American admissions

Acceptance into medical school constitutes the second process involved in the pursuit of a medical degree. Using the proportion of African-Americans accepted to medical school and the proportion of the entire African-American population, an index is constructed to indicate African-American representation as admittances to medical school.

Analysis demonstrates that African-Americans continue to be under-represented as acceptances to medical schools. After 1974, a decrease in representation was observed. During the years of 1975-1990, representation was fairly stable around 0.5. A peak in acceptance representation was noted in 1994 at .64. However, thereafter representation has decreased to .54 in 2001.

FIGURE 6: INDEX OF REPRESENTATION FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN ACCEPTANCES TO US MEDICAL SCHOOLS

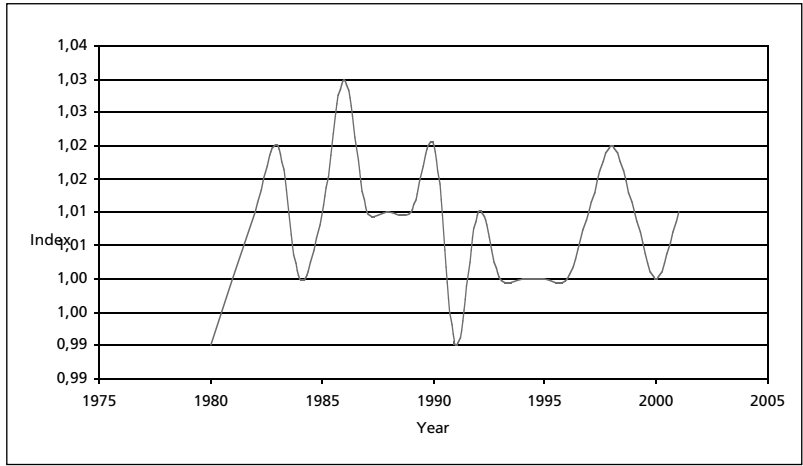


DATA: AAMC (2002)

African-American enrollment

After an acceptance is offered, the medical school applicant must decide whether to enroll in medical school. The index of representation is calculated by dividing the percentage of African-American acceptances by the percentage of African-Americans entering U.S. medical schools. The constructed index, then, indicates the likelihood that admitted African-Americans choose to enter medical school.

FIGURE 7: INDEX OF REPRESENTATION FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN ENTRANTS INTO US MEDICAL SCHOOLS



DATA: AAMC (2002)

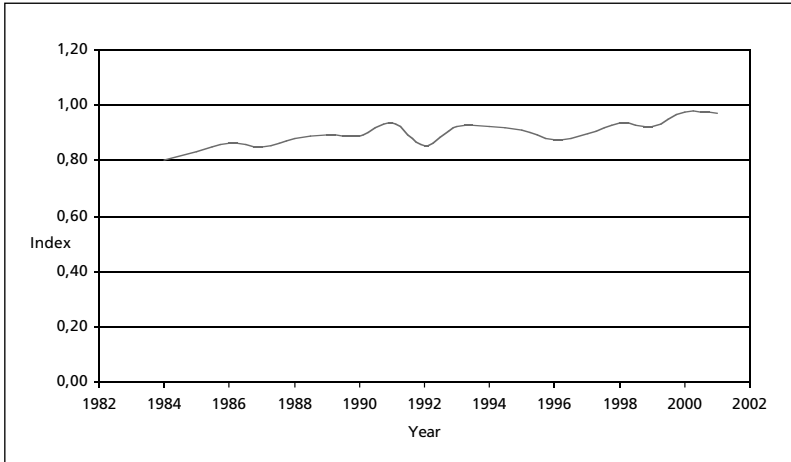
The graphed index remains fairly steady around 1. Such data demonstrates that when accepted, African-Americans choose to enroll in U.S. medical schools. At times, the index of representation is slightly larger than 1, suggesting that African-Americans may defer enrollment for at least one year. The enrollment process, then, is not contributing to African-American under-representation in U.S. medical schools.

African-American graduation

Successful completion of the required academic tasks is required to graduate from medical school. The medical school graduate is then considered a

physician. An index created from the proportion of African-American graduates and entrants is utilized to determine African-American representation as medical school graduates. A four-year lag period for African-American medical school entrants was used in the calculations, as matriculation occurs four years after enrollment in medical school.

FIGURE 8: GRADUATE INDEX OF REPRESENTATION (BASED ON ENTRANTS)



DATA: AAMC (2002)

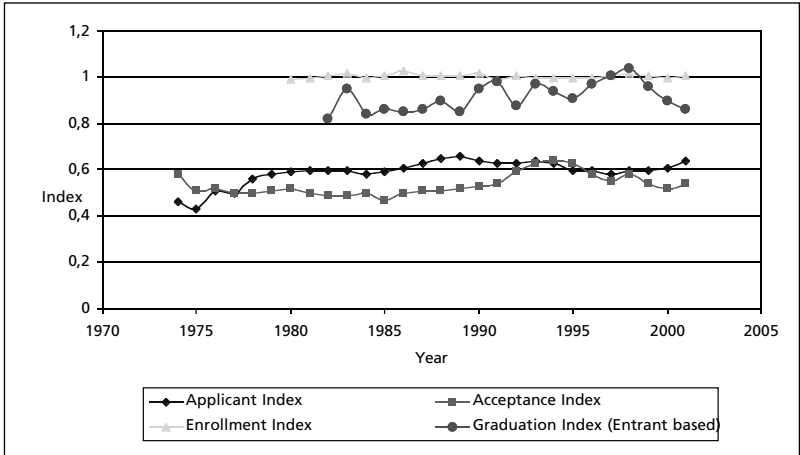
Analysis of the graphed index of representation illustrates that African-Americans are under-represented as graduates from U.S. medical schools. However, the index has increased steadily from 0.80 in 1984 to .98 in 2001, a growth of 22%. Currently then, African-Americans are more likely to matriculate after four years in medical than in previous years.

All Indices

The indices of representation for African-American applicants, acceptances, enrollments, and graduates of U.S. medical schools are all included in the following graph. Such is used to illustrate how various stages of the medical school process are reflected in African-Americans' pursuit of becoming a physician.

Analysis of data has indicated that African-Americans continue to be significantly underrepresented as applicants and admissions to U.S. medi-

FIGURE 9: INDICES OF REPRESENTATION FOR AFRICAN-AMERICANS INVOLVED IN THE US MEDICAL SCHOOL PROCESS



DATA: AAMC (2002)

cal schools. African-Americans accepted to medical schools choose to enroll. While African-Americans are under-represented as medical school graduates, graduation rates have increased significantly. To date, African-Americans are increasingly likely to graduate.

Summary of aggregate trends and decomposition analysis

Analysis of aggregate trends indicates that proportion of African-American medical school graduates has significantly increased. However, while rapid gains were made towards increasing African-American medical school graduates during the early 1970s, the same rate of growth has not been equaled since the 1972-1974 period. An increase in African-American graduates did occur in the 1990s, but not at the same rate. A great deal of under-representation still exists for African-American medical school graduates. This phenomenon is expected, as African-Americans are significantly under-represented as medical school applicants and admitted students. While African-Americans are significantly underrepresented as applicants and admitted students, those accepted choose to enroll in medical school. Though the graduation rate does not occur at full representation, enrolled African-American medical students are increasingly likely to graduate in four years. A great deal of African-American physician under-representa-

tion, then, is due to insufficient recruitment of African-American applicants into medical school. Medical schools are unable to accommodate for this phenomena by drastically altering their academic standards for acceptance. With regards to gender dynamics, African-American females graduates have surpassed males in American medical schools since the 1990-1994 period and continue to increase in number.

Medical Specialization

After medical school students graduate, they must enter and successfully complete a residency program. At this stage, physicians have selected a specialty and/or subspecialty of pursuit. Investigation of the leading specialties as categorized by race, ethnicity, and gender can provide useful information regarding the distribution of African-American physicians by specialty. The following tables contain such data.

Upon examination of the racial demographics of residency programs, African-American specialty choice does not differ dramatically from the entire physician population. Only one significant demographic variation occurs within the leading specialties of internal medicine, family practice, pediatrics, surgery, obstetrics-gynecology, and psychiatry: obstetrics-gynecology. In 1997, African-American residents were almost twice as likely to practice Obstetrics-Gynecology (10.1%) in comparison to all residents (5.6%). Though reduced in overall percentage, this statistic is roughly equal to aggregate data comparing African-American practice in obstetrics-gynecology (12.1%) to total physician participation in the specialty (6.0%).

LEADING PRACTICE SPECIALTIES OF RESIDENTS AND FELLOWS IN 1997:

Specialty	All Residents	Asian	Black	Hispanic	American Indian
Internal Medicine	25.9%	31.2%	21.5%	22.6%	17.1%
Family Practice	10.1%	6.8%	12.0%	11.3%	24.3%
Pediatrics	9.8%	8.8%	10.6%	10.4%	10.4%
Surgery	8.1%	10.5%	9.4%	9.6%	9.6%
OB-GYN	5.6%	5.6%	10.1%	6.7%	6.7%
Psychiatry	4.1%	2.3%	5.3%	4.9%	4.9%
Total Percent	63.6%	65.2%	68.9%	65.5%	73.0%

LEADING PRACTICE SPECIALTIES OF MALE PHYSICIANS IN 1997:

Specialty	All Men	Asian	Black	Hispanic	American Indian
Internal Medicine	23.9%	31.0%	25.5%	24.1%	17.5%
Family Practice	9.4%	7.1%	10.4%	12.6%	23.4%
Surgery	7.2%	9.1%	9.1%	7.7%	8.0%
Pediatrics	6.1%	5.5%	5.3%	6.9%	5.1%
Psychiatry	5.5%	2.4%	5.0%	4.8%	4.4%
Anesthesiology	5.3%	6.4%	5.6%	6.0%	4.5%
Total Percent	57.4%	61.5%	60.9%	62.1%	62.9%

LEADING PRACTICE SPECIALTIES OF FEMALE PHYSICIANS IN 1997:

Specialty	All Women	Asian	Black	Hispanic	American Indian
Internal Medicine	22.9%	29.6%	22.0%	21.5%	16.3%
Pediatrics	16.9%	15.9%	17.2%	20.3%	11.0%
Family Practice	10.8%	9.1%	13.2%	12.9%	27.1%
OB-GYN	8.3%	9.5%	14.1%	9.9%	9.5%
Psychiatry	7.2%	3.3%	7.2%	6.9%	7.5%
Anesthesiology	4.4%	4.1%	4.1%	3.2%	3.3%
Total Percent	70.5%	71.5%	77.8%	74.7%	74.7%

DATA: AAMC (2000)

Aggregate data also indicates that both African-American females (14.1%) and males (10.7%) specialize in obstetrics-gynecology at rates higher than the entire physician population.

The AAMC indicates that some less popular specialties exhibited significant demographic variations. In comparison to all physicians, African-Americans are twice as likely to specialize in preventative medicine (1.4% vs. 0.6%). African-Americans are half as likely to enter into neurology, (0.8 for African-Americans vs. 1.8% all physicians) radiology, (0.5% vs. 1.2%), colon and rectal surgery (0.1% vs. 0.2%), anatomic and clinical pathology (1.2% vs. 2.9%), allergy and immunology (0.2 vs. 0.6) and plastic surgery (0.4% vs. 0.9%).

Some gender differences are also noted in specialty. As of 1997, female physicians are more likely to practice in their leading practice specialties (70.5%) than males (57.4%). This statistic is even higher (77.8%) with respect to African-American females. African-American females are three times as likely to be in pediatrics (16.4%) than males (5.1%). However, this data is not unique to African-American females, as all females have two to three times higher participation in pediatrics. In contrast, male participation is higher in the surgical professions (7.2% vs. 2.5%). African-American females are twice as likely to specialize in dermatology (1.6%) than males (0.8%). African-American males are more likely to be in general practice (2.3%) than females (0.7%). Again, these disparities are more a function of general gender differences than racial/ethnic differences.

Specialization Summary

While African-American physicians largely do not differ from the entire physician population in specialty choice, African-American medical school graduates are over twice as likely to specialize in obstetrics-gynecology and preventative medicine. African-Americans are and half as likely to specialize in neurology and plastic surgery. Significant gender differences in specialization are observed, however.

Socioeconomic Profile of Accepted Medical School Applicants

Investigating trends regarding overall African-American participation in the medical fields can illustrate socioeconomic mobility of African-Americans in general. Similarly, exploration of the socioeconomic backgrounds African-Americans accepted to medical schools can elucidate socioeconomic mobility within the racial group. Using data provided by the AAMC in a profile of 2001 accepted applicants, the following table was constructed. Table 1 contains the parental income of accepted applicants, cross-categorized by race and ethnicity. Such information can be used to determine how one's socioeconomic background may be associated with acceptance to medical school. Table 2 is included to indicate the income of African-Americans in 2001. These two tables then can be compared to uncover how the class background of African-Americans maps on to the socioeconomic characteristics of African-Americans accepted to medical school.

TABLE 1: PROFILE OF 2001 ACCEPTED APPLICANTS

Parental Income	Black	Native American	Mexican American	Main-land Puerto Rican	White	Asian / Pacific Islander	C'wealth Puerto Rican	Other Hispanic
Median Parental Income	\$55,385	\$60,000	\$50,000	\$60,000	\$90,000	\$90,000	\$46,172	\$70,000
Less than \$10,000	4.60%	1.10%	4.20%	2.70%	0.60%	2.20%	6.40%	4.10%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	8.40%	6.70%	8.40%	6.80%	1.60%	3.80%	7.80%	7.60%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	9.00%	8.90%	12.20%	5.40%	2.90%	4.10%	14.90%	9.60%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	9.50%	8.90%	11.40%	10.80%	5.10%	5.60%	14.90%	7.60%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	11.30%	10.00%	12.20%	8.10%	7.30%	7.70%	9.20%	13.20%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	23.70%	25.60%	22.80%	32.40%	21.70%	21.50%	19.90%	13.70%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13.10%	13.30%	11.40%	17.60%	17.70%	14.00%	8.50%	17.80%
\$100,000 and higher	20.50%	25.60%	17.50%	16.20%	43.20%	41.20%	18.40%	26.40%

DATA: AAMC (2002)

Parental Income	Black
Median Parental Income	\$34,5192
Less than \$25,000	36.71 %
\$25,000 to \$49,999	34.04%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	13.63%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	7.67%
\$100,000 and higher	7.94%

Upon examination of the data, the majority of African-Americans accepted to medical school have median parental income of \$50,000 and higher (57.3%). This statistic roughly corresponds to the African-American middle and upper class. These trends do not differ from those observed in other racial groups, as middle and upper class applicants comprise the majority of students accepted. Nevertheless, when compared to European-Americans and Asian-Americans, a larger proportion of accepted African-American applicants have a median income less than \$50,000. Furthermore, only about 29% of all African-American families have incomes greater than \$50,000. Consequently, African-Americans accepted into medical school are extremely likely to come from a minority of African-Americans having a middle class to upper class background. Affirmative action, then, does not translate to a great deal of socioeconomic mobility for lower class African-Americans.

Evaluation of Hypotheses

Analysis of quantitative data associated with recruitment of African-Americans into the medical profession warrants the reevaluation of hypotheses regarding the distribution and dynamics of African-American physicians. Upon consideration of aggregate trends, the surge in the African-American physician population in the early 1970s is most likely due to implementation and/or strengthening of affirmative action programs in both undergraduate and medical school admissions, as argued by Cross and Slater. Though the profiles of accepted applicants are not available, I would not expect a drastic change in these profiles, as medical schools cannot drastically alter their academic standards for acceptance. Nevertheless, socioeconomic disparities are largely responsible for the trends of African-Americans in medical schools. The socioeconomic profile of African-Americans accepted to medical school illustrates this phenomenon, as the majority of those admitted are from middle to upper class backgrounds. In conclusion, while the enactment of affirmative action programs have been instrumental in increasing the numbers of African-American physicians, affirmative action has been unable to remedy the effect of socioeconomic background on medical school admission. Consequently, reducing socioeconomic disparities for African-Americans will result in the further increase of African-American physicians.

Qualitative Data

While statistical data was used to create a broad picture for African-Americans involved in medical school, qualitative interviews were integral in demonstrating how individuals made decisions that contributed to the statistical portrait observed. Consequently, I interviewed five African-American physicians using the snowball method in order to gain a broader understanding of the various motivations involved in choosing medicine as a profession. In addition, I investigated how the physicians selected their respective subspecialty fields. I also contacted and met with two officials at the office of minority affairs at several medical schools to gain their insights into the trends concerning African-American health care professionals. The knowledge obtained from this study could then be used to illustrate how and why various trends exist for African-American physicians.

The interviews with medical-school representatives were particularly informative regarding the various trends observed by African-Americans in medicine. The method of sampling for the surveyed population probably contributes to possible limitations in the accuracy of such research, however. All of the practicing physicians were located in Tallahassee, Florida. A more geographically diverse population may have yielded more generalizable data. In addition, the sample size was extremely small. Similar criticisms can be observed in the pool of medical representatives interviewed. Rather than being concentrated in the south, the small population resided in the northeast. Nonetheless, to the extent that all doctors make decisions that result in the medical practice in a particular specialty, such data could help elucidate factors involved in the decision-making process of becoming a physician.

When investigating the motivating factors involved in the pursuit of medicine, all respondents cited a strong general interest in the medical field. One physician noted, "medicine is a calling; if you have no interest in what you are doing, you will be very unhappy in medicine." In cultivating this attraction to the medical field, physicians cited the importance of exposure to medicine. This exposure often occurred during childhood. Consequently, childhood exposure to medicine was perceived as important in cultivating interest for one to possibly pursue medicine as a profession. The educational background of the participants' parents appeared to play a role in becoming a physician. The surveyed physicians indicated that the highest level of parental educational attainment was generally a college degree for at least one parent. Only one respondent indicated that both

parents had achieved high school degrees and no postsecondary education. As parental educational background is positively correlated with socioeconomic status, one can also conclude that the respondents' were not of a low socioeconomic status.

Medical school representatives reiterated the importance of education and socioeconomic status in producing physicians. When asked to account for the under-representation of African-Americans in medicine, one representative noted "education." Access to quality education and academic achievement significantly affects one's ability to successfully pursue the medical profession. Consequently, as African-Americans disproportionately experience poorer educational opportunities, African-Americans also are more likely to be unsuccessful in the pursuit of becoming a medical doctor. While another representative acknowledged the importance of education, he also noted that socioeconomic status is another integral structural factor affecting occupational achievement. He remarked, "you can work at the level of education, which is primarily what we would like to be talking about, but the problem clearly goes beyond education. It's not just that they [African-Americans] aren't being educated. They're not being fed, they don't have economic resources, social resources, [and] familial resources to be successful." Therefore, a positive relationship exists between one's socioeconomic status and the successful endeavor of becoming a physician.

As African-Americans continue to be under-represented in medicine, African-American males are becoming the disproportionately under-represented gender. One attributed this phenomenon to less support structures available for males. He argues that, "that [the] trend just reflects the very negative atmosphere that we have in this society as it reflects on the aspirations of young African-American males. They [African-American males] are more likely to be incarcerated, more likely to not do well in school, more likely not be supported by programs in the community...that are conducive to academic success." Conversely, women may have increased opportunities to pursue medicine and the medical sciences.

When investigating possible explanations for gender differences in medical specialties, one respondent noted, "Women in medicine definitely seek career pathways that are compatible with a good professional life as well as a good family life. Men always speak in those terms but they are more likely to when choices have to be made they are more likely...to make compromises that sacrifice family concerns... women are less likely to make those compromises." Such theories may explain why women are

more likely to choose some specialties that are on average less demanding of personal and/or time (more likely to work dermatology, less likely to specialize in surgery). However, women are more likely than males to specialize in obstetrics and gynecology, a profession demanding a great deal of time and flexibility. Instead, gendered notions of proper specialties for males and females in medicine most likely influence male and female specialty choice.

Respondents were often surprised when I mentioned that African-Americans are twice as likely to specialize in obstetrics-gynecology. They noted that malpractice insurance rates are extremely high for obstetrics-gynecology which subsequently resulted in diminished interest in the specialty. When asked to hypothesize reasons for such a phenomenon, some cited cultural differences as a possible explanation. One physician noted, "African-Americans are more likely to be opposed to abortion... perhaps they attach higher significance to the whole dynamic into what goes into being born." In addition, the higher infant mortality and HIV/AIDS rates of African-Americans may serve as a motivating force for those pursuing obstetrics-gynecology.

With regards to the future of African-Americans in medicine, it is predicted that the percent enrollment, acceptance, acceptance rate, and graduation will decline in the near future. This is largely attributed to the fallout from the Supreme Court decision on December 25, 2003. The decision allows race to be broadly considered as a factor in admissions, but race cannot be an overriding factor in these admissions. Such decisions make it more difficult to construct programs and policies tailored towards specific racial/ethnic groups. Medical schools themselves must decide how they will compose their classes. For example, a medical school in Appalachia may consider applicants from that region as being underrepresented, and thus recruit more Appalachian applicants.

The Supreme Court Decision also has ramifications for research. It is predicted that further research tracking racial/ethnic groups in medicine will cease, as the term underrepresented minority has no further use. Scholarships and specific pre-orientation programs tailored towards African-Americans and other underrepresented minorities (for medical students and those considering medicine) will have struggle to exist, and most likely decrease in number. These programs will come under fire if perceived as racially exclusive.

Qualitative Data Analysis

While African-American medical school graduates may consider several factors in selecting an appropriate specialty (and/or subspecialty) to pursue, interview respondents indicated that general interest is the most important concern. Other factors considered to varying degrees included lifestyle/work schedule, salary, mentor, and outreach to minorities (particularly African-Americans). When comparing gender differences, women are perceived as more likely to seriously consider lifestyle and work schedule in choosing a particular specialty to pursue. This occurs, as women oftentimes place more emphasis on anticipated family lifestyle when evaluating possible specialties.

The results from data collection and analysis have serious sociological and policy implications for African-American physicians. Affirmative-Action policies and programs have been an extremely integral tool for policymakers as they have attempted to increase African-Americans in medicine. Therefore, significant progress for increasing African-American acceptances, enrollment, and matriculation partially depends on the efficacy of Affirmative-Action programs.

Conclusion

While the American Association of Medical Colleges no longer uses the term "under-represented minority," African-Americans are still heavily under-represented as physicians. The rate of increase in the proportion of African-American physicians observed in 1970s has since stalled. Currently, African-American physician graduates are underrepresented by 50% (about 6.0% graduates, with 12% population). As African-American females have increased their representation in medicine African-American males have become the under-represented gender. Socioeconomic structures are cited as contributing factors to current racial disparities within physician representation. Statistical data supports this notion, as the majority of those accepted have a wealthier socioeconomic background.

Results from investigation of specialty differentiation suggest that Pinkney's claim that African-Americans that are disproportionately concentrated in specialties based on the specific needs of black people and the poor are largely unsubstantiated. With the exception of obstetrics-gynecology, African-Americans enter specialties at a roughly equal rate as the entire physician population. However, African-Americans do strongly cite a desire to serve their racial community once in practice. As gender does

influence specialty choice, the sexual composition of the African-American physician population will affect the proportion of observed physicians in certain medical fields. Predictions for the future African-Americans in medicine seem less optimistic. Affirmative-Action policies were designed and implemented to remedy the educational, socioeconomic, and societal obstacles that disproportionately affect African-Americans (as well as other minorities). However, insofar as these policies are curtailed, one would expect that fewer African-Americans attain a doctoral degree in medicine. Nevertheless, further research can only determine whether these anticipations come to fruition.

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CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON INEQUALITIES AND THE LIFE
COURSE (CIQLE)

Mission

The mission of the Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course is to support interdisciplinary training and empirical research on the processes that generate inequalities of social class, generations, gender and ethnicity across the life course of individuals and groups.

Substantively, we focus on human development and family formation, the transition to adulthood, educational trajectories, vocational training and skill formation, labor market entry, occupational careers and income trajectories, retirement and aging as well as corresponding social policies.

Theoretically, our main interest is to explain how individual level life course processes are influenced by meso-level contexts, such as households, organizations, and generations, as well as macro-level contexts such as societal institutions, policies and socio-economic conditions, which change over time and vary across societies.

Methodologically, we are eclectic and catholic, but a major focus is on the use of large scale complex longitudinal individual and household data: retrospective cohort studies like the German Life History Study, household panel studies like the Panel Study of Income Dynamics, the German Socio-Economic Panel or the British Household Panel Study, cohort panel studies like the National Longitudinal Study of Youth, The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health and the National Retirement Study. In regard to tools of analysis a major interest is in discrete event/continuous time models.

An important aspect of the work of the Center is comparative. Cross-national life course studies are uniquely suited to unravel the specific mechanisms by which national institutions and policies shape life courses and life chances. Historical and cohort comparative studies are crucial for assessing the effects of period conditions and macro-social and macro-economic change on patterns of life courses.

CIQLE is directed by Karl Ulrich Mayer with Hannah Brückner as associate director. Administrative coordinator for 2004/2005 will be Forrest Zhang, administrative assistant is Jerri Cummings (Tel. 436 4350). The Center is located in Williams Hall, 80 Sachem Street, New Haven.

The German Life History Study

The Center is the home of the data archive of the German Life History Study (GLHS) comprising more than 12,500 quantified life histories of East and West German women and men born between 1890 and 1971. Under the leadership of Karl Ulrich Mayer, this research program collected extremely detailed retrospective life course information for various birth cohorts of West German Nationals (overviews are given in Brückner & Mayer 1998, Wagner 1996, and Hillmert 2003). The samples for all parts of the GLHS were carefully evaluated against official statistics (census and micro-census) to ensure representativeness. From 1981 to 1983, 2171 life histories of a representative sample of people born in 1929-31, 1939-41 and 1949-51 were collected (Mayer & Brückner, 1989). In the years 1985-87, the cohort group 1919-1921 was added with 1412 cases, 407 of whom were collected via face-to-face interview, while the remaining 1005 were collected with a computer-assisted telephone interview (Brückner 1993). Data for the birth cohorts 1954-56 and 1959-61 were collected in 1989, resulting in 2008 computer-assisted telephone interviews (Brückner & Mayer 1995). In the East German Life History Study, 2,331 East German men and women (born between 1929-31, 1939-41, 1951-53 and 1959-61) were interviewed between September 1991 and October 1992 (Huinink et al. 1995). Additionally, 1265 persons of the initial sample participated in a follow-up survey in 1993. The East German respondents were re-interviewed in 1996 with a remaining sample size of $n=1407$. Finally, the birth cohorts 1964 and 1971 in West Germany were interviewed in 1998-99 with a sample size of 2909 respondents (Hillmert & Mayer 2004). For these cohorts, foreign nationals were included in the sample for the first time, reflecting the changing composition of the residential population at that age and time. A follow-up study with the 1971 cohort from both East and West Germany is currently underway at the Max Planck Institute of Human Development in Berlin. This most recent survey also includes a methodological component using instruments based on the psychology of autobiographical memory.

Student and Post-Doctoral Fellowships

The Center supports students, Post-docs and their training by providing office space, research assistantships, Post-doctoral stipends, computer facilities, data support, weekly research seminars as well as methods training

workshops. Current student fellows are: Ilker Carioglu, Aaron Johnston, Janette Kawachi, William Mangino, David Scales, Sebastian Schnettler, Jiangying Wang, Katarzina Wilk and Pan Zi. Current postdoctoral fellows are Matthias Pollmann-Schult, Forrest Chang and Christine Wimbauer (Emile-Noether-Fellowship of the German National Science Foundation). Silke Aisenbrey will join the Center in September 2004.

Faculty Affiliates

The Center brings together Yale faculty and visiting scientists from various departments who are actively engaged in empirical research in the areas of the Center in order to facilitate interdisciplinary exchange and research. Current Yale faculty affiliates are Hannah Brückner (Sociology), Averil Clarke (Sociology), Jacob Hacker (Political Science), Karl Ulrich Mayer (Sociology) and Frances Rosenbluth (Political Science). In 2003-04, Heike Solga (Max Planck Institute for Human Development Berlin) and Meir Yaish (University of Haifa) were Visiting Scientists of the Center.

Teaching

The Center conducts a weekly research seminar, The Comparative Research Workshop (Soc 560 a,b PLSC 734 a,b) jointly with the Center for Comparative Research. We also offer methodological training seminars and research conferences. The topic of the 2004 spring conference was "The Political Economy of Life Courses" and featured presentations by David Soskice (Duke University and Science Center Berlin), Torsten Ibersen (Harvard University), Frances Rosenbluth, Averil Clarke, Hannah Brückner, Thomas Diprete (Duke University), Christoph Scherrer (Kassel University), Dieter Plehwe (Science Center Berlin) and Karl Ulrich Mayer. The 2004 spring methods training workshop focused on topological modeling of social mobility processes and was conducted by Meir Yaish. For the academic year 2004-05 we plan workshops on multinomial modeling (fall) and on models for sample selectivity (spring).

Current projects

- Gender Inequality in the Life Course in the Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism (Brückner and Aisenbrey)
- Social Networks and Adolescent Risk Behavior (Brückner)

- Life Courses in the Transition from Communism in Poland and East Germany (Mayer, Mach and Wilk)
- Inequalities in Access to Higher Education and Institutional Differentiation (Mayer, Mueller and Pollak)
- Education and Labor Market Entry of German Women and Men born 1964 and 1971 (Mayer and Hillmert)
- Life Courses and Social Change in Germany, 1935 to 2000 (Mayer and Pollmann-Schult)
- 'Love', Work, and Recognition. Intimate Relationships and Societal Structures of Recognition (Wimbauer)
- Social Capital and Educational Attainment (Brückner and Mangino)
- Social desirability effects on the expression of biological concepts of race (Brückner, Nelson, Morning)
- Playing Safe: Religious Identity in the Performance of Health and Risk (Clarke)
- Child Sacrifice: Marriage, Meaning, and the Reproduction of Race and Class Inequality (Clarke)
- The Politics of Risk Privatization: U.S. Social Policy in Cross-National Perspective (Hacker)
- Subjective assessment of class mobility: Polish and East German comparative analysis in the life course perspective (Wilk)

Working papers

Pollmann-Schult, Matthias and Karl Ulrich Mayer (2004): "Returns to Skills: Vocational Training in Germany 1935-2000." Working Paper. Yale University, New Haven.

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In Search of an Aphrodisiac: Putting the Romance into Models of Marriage

Averil Y. Clarke

Abstract: This paper uses data from black women with college degrees to describe romantic relationship trajectories and the ways such trajectories lead or don't lead to marriage. The study attempts to address the inadequacy in existing theoretical models of marriage. Currently scholars focus on explaining why and how women and men in certain segments of the population are more or less likely to get married than women and men in other social groups. However most of these models discuss the importance of characteristics of individual men and women or of the environment that promote or frustrate marriage and they ignore the romantic relationship. Marriage becomes something that individuals can or can't acquire as opposed to something that develops in the context of some relationships and not in others. This investigation gives much needed attention to the task of describing and categorizing the types of romantic relationships of which individuals become a part. I report on the way these relationships begin and evolve, and I account for their progression to marriage or to an end that does not include marriage.

Introduction

The following paper uses data from black women with college degrees to describe romantic relationship trajectories and the ways such trajectories lead or don't lead to marriage. The study attempts to address the inadequacy in existing theoretical models of marriage. Currently scholars focus on explaining why and how women and men in certain segments of the population are more or less likely to get married than women and men in other social groups. However most of these models discuss the importance of characteristics of individual men and women or of the environment that promote or frustrate marriage and they ignore the romantic relationship. Marriage becomes something that individuals can or can't acquire as opposed to something that develops in the context of some relationships

and not in others. This investigation gives much needed attention to the task of describing and categorizing the types of romantic relationships of which individuals become a part. I report on the way these relationships begin and evolve, and I account for their progression to marriage or to an end that does not include marriage.

My analyses of qualitative data on degreed black women's romantic relationships identified five different types of relationship trajectories. Most prevalent among them was the test and evaluation relationship, typified by the fact that all interactions between the man and woman are romantic and by the slow progression of the relationship to the point of commitment. Much less prevalent was the concentrated progression relationship, which had a much faster progression to commitment and which also featured only romantic types of interactions. However, the study found that the 58 degreed black women spent a great portion of their time in relationships in which all the interactions were not romantic (i.e. delayed entry, in and out, and being relationships). The study also presents convincing evidence for the idea that a model that predicts the likelihood of marriage from individual and environmental factors can include a description of the types of relationships from which marriage develops. This is because certain structures of relationship that I identified appear to be more likely to lead to marriage than others. In particular, concentrated progression relationships, in which the marital bargain is struck early, and delayed entry relationships, in which women enter relationships with those men with whom they have already developed friendships, are highly likely to lead to marriage.

The paper begins with review of both theoretical literature and empirical reports on the way in which class and race variables influence degreed black women's marital behavior. Discussion of the methods employed in description and analysis of black women's relationships follows this review. After the methodological discussion, my analysis and results are presented in five sections that describe the types of relationship structures in which degreed black women were involved and the reasons why they are more or less likely to lead to marriage. The paper concludes with a summary of findings.

An Unlikely Partnership: Disadvantages Faced by College Educated Black Women in the Marriage and Relationship Market

Current models of the way in which women's educational and professional activities influence their relationship formation focus on the competing

investments idea: this idea suggests that women with greater educational and professional investments have less time for relationship building and childbearing in the context of relationships. They have less time because they begin later, and because the activities that caused them to begin later also keep them from engaging in relationship building and childbearing. More feminist models suggest that while these women may be interested in relationship formation, actual relationships do not provide them with the same kind of support they offer to men with higher educations and demanding careers. Furthermore, the expectations placed on the women in these relationships means that they quickly become involved in a second shift – working at the same rate in the office as men who are their professional counterparts but expected to support husbands and families at the same level as women who do not work outside of the home. [Hochschild, 1989]

While both of the aforementioned models see relationships as competing with professional life, alternative models argue that competition is not really the issue. Valerie Kincaid Oppenheimer's [Oppenheimer, 1988; Oppenheimer, Kalmijn, and Lim, 1997] understanding of marriage delay argues that men's economic resources are more important determinants of marriage timing for women and that delays in marriage timing are caused by men's personal or structural economic disadvantage. Furthermore she suggests that women under study here, by developing themselves professionally, give themselves greater marriage opportunity because their ability to financially contribute to a household acts as an economic resource for marriage: their professional status permits marriage at a point when economic downturn may make a marriage dependent solely on a man's income impossible and allows marriage to men who cannot financially manage marriage on their own. She argues further that educated women are more likely to meet educated men, and such men, because they have greater financial security will be more prepared to marry. Oppenheimer's theory mirrors discussions of such poverty scholars as William Julius Wilson [1990] who argue that blacks' lower marriage rates are located in black male poverty and in the decreased employment opportunities for young black men. In R. Kelly Raley's study of marital and cohabitation differences between blacks and whites, she found that racial differences in age at first union (i.e. including both marriage and cohabitation) were only half as large as those in age at first marriage, and that "the availability of employed men is an important factor in the observed Black-White differences in union formation" [Raley, 1996, p.980]. In both Oppenheimer's and Wilson's discussions, racial differences in marital behavior are essen-

tially class differences and class is primarily a proxy for the earning power of men.

Guttentag and Secord [2000] also maintain that competing investments is not at issue. Instead they point to the sex ratio of marriage communities and cultural beliefs about the value placed on women that is associated with such sex ratios. According to their theory, educated African American women are choosing their partners in a community where the sex ratio is low and where women are in relative abundance and therefore valued less. The lesser value placed on such women indicates that men will not need to make the level of commitment required by marriage in order to have female companionship and sexual availability. Under such circumstances, marriage bargains will be particularly difficult to strike for African American women and they will be expected to make great sacrifices to secure such bargains since they are understood to be negotiating at a disadvantage.

Gary Becker [1973, 1974] makes a similar argument to Guttentag and Secord [2000], about such women's likelihood of marrying, but with no reference to sex ratios. Instead, he points out that black women with and without degrees are less likely to marry because they look more like black men in their marriage pool than white women look like the men in the white women's pool of potential partners. Because black women have similar levels of education, labor market positions, and salaries to black men, they, unlike white women who are educationally and professionally at a disadvantage to their potential white male partners, perceive few if any gains as a result of marriage. Becker understands marriage in this social setting as a trade on specializations in which women traditionally specialize in childbearing, childrearing, and housework – which he refers to as household production – and in which men specialize in earning money. Black women professionals would have to rely on the unlikely possibility of finding a man who was willing to specialize in non-traditional personal support activities to make a marriage seem like it was worthwhile, and their potential partners (i.e. professional black men) would not see their focus on education, career, and human capital resources as particularly attractive in a marriage partner. What is particularly interesting about Becker's theory is that marital partners are dissimilar only in their "productive" aspects: in other ways (i.e. with respect to race, religion, education, class), because of their desire to rear children similar to themselves, they tend to be similar. Thus, it is not so much that black women with college degrees have too much education to marry similarly educated men but it is the direction of their educational pursuits toward specific kinds of formal economic market

activity that renders them too similar to their potential partners. Indeed it is not just college-educated black women but most black women who look too economically similar to similarly classed men in order to make marital bargains worthwhile. Furthermore, their racial dissimilarity from non-black men renders them unlikely marital partners to these men.

Thus few scholars argue that African American women with degrees are highly likely to marry. With the exception of Oppenheimer, both non-competitive models and competitive models of marriage argue for lower rates of marriage. In addition to the prediction that degreed black women have a relatively low likelihood of marrying, the above models of marriage have something else in common: none paints a realistic picture of the experience of spouse selection; all ignore the romantic relationship stage on which the spouse selection or rejection takes place. For example, Becker conceives of the husband and wife as consumers in a marriage market. As he explains that men and women are looking for people similar to themselves except in the area of economic production, one must rely on personal experience and the movies to get the idea that more than the acquisition and assessment of lists of characteristics is involved in the decision to marry. Social interactions and romantic relationships are reduced to information-gathering sessions much like the trips to an automobile dealership in search of a car. Relationships don't start and end or try and fail according to Becker's model. Instead people just have trouble finding the characteristics that they are looking for.

Similarly, in Oppenheimer's theory of marriage, the romantic relationship experience is absent. Women and men in her understanding are either ready or not ready to marry, and this readiness is largely a function of whether one is preoccupied with school and whether one has enough money to set up a household. There is little sense from her understanding that potential spouses have anything to work out together in order for a marriage to occur. Each person either has enough assets and time or does not have enough assets and/or time to marry.

By far, the sex ratio theory gives the most attention to the reality that marriages are outcomes of social relationships. In the view of Guttentag and Secord, the sex ratio determines the nature of these relationships and also their outcomes. However, even in their case, relationships do not evolve or develop: they seem predestined to the fate of marriage or of non-committal sex by conditions beyond the immediate control of either partner. Women in particular possess no power, as men are the ones that respond to the sex ratio with either committal or non-committal behavior.

Because this type of model has little room for variance in relationship outcomes (i.e. why a man in a low sex ratio society will marry one woman and not another) their attention to the relationship fails to adequately represent it as more than a description of the level of sexual opportunity available in a given environment.

The current study uses data from women on their romantic relationships to describe and discuss the trajectory of romantic relationships and to discuss the ways in which relationship trajectories lead to marriage and in which others end without marriage. Rather than predicting the likelihood of marriage from an individual person's characteristics or predicting an entire group's likelihood of marriage from a measure of their environment, this study focuses on summarizing and accounting for the variance in romantic relationship trajectories. It does so by identifying and evaluating the different types of relationship trajectories and the personal, interpersonal, and environmental factors which shape marital and nonmarital outcomes of these trajectories. I believe that this process is an important step to building a model of marriage that both represents it as an outcome of romantic relations between men and women and that explains its prevalence or absence among groups of women and/or men with specific social characteristics.

Describing and Analyzing Romantic Relationships: Data & Methods

Below I use data on 223 romantic relationships described by the 58 women in my sample. The data come from open-ended interviews with college-educated African American women that I identified by means of a snowball sample. I began with known women in two United States cities, and I asked them to participate in the study and to refer me to other women who were African American, who were between the ages of 21 and 50, and who had four-year college degrees. During the course of this process, only one woman that I contacted refused to participate.

The data cover the women's descriptions of their relationships with males that they considered important enough to mention and includes information about how they met and began dating, about the progression of the relationships and the relationship outcomes, as well as the reasoning women used for such outcomes and other decisions that they made in the context of the relationship. It is clear that there may be selection biases here because different subsets of women may choose to eliminate relationships

that they considered too short, too casual, or even too embarrassing, but such biases are not easily identifiable. I coded and organized the data, using one set of codes for descriptive information on the way in which relationships, began, ended, changed, and supported or rejected childbearing and marriage. Separation of relationships into marital and non-marital relationships and into childbearing and non-childbearing relationships allows the same relationship description codes and social influence codes to function as means of identifying the way in which particular relationship patterns and social variables lead to or frustrate marriage and childbearing.

Romance Patterns: Relationship Structures Experienced By College Educated Black Women

The sample of women described 223 relationships representing an average of about 3.8 relationships per woman. Although the average woman indicated by their reporting that they had experienced between three and four important or significant relationships, the range described went from zero to eight. Thus, one woman indicated that she had never dated or had a boyfriend by the time of interview when she was aged 32, while another woman reported at age 35 that she had experienced eight significant relationships. I created a typology to describe two basic dimensions of the 223 relationships described by these women. These dimensions include first of all the pace of progression to serious commitment and second, the existence or non-existence of other types of relationship besides the romantic one. Below I describe the five structural patterns of romantic relationships experienced by these women and the relative frequency with which I encountered them in my sample. Note that the relationship trajectories of the sampled women usually include more than one of the types described below.

Test & Evaluation Relationships

Over 40% of the relationships described by sampled women conformed to a type best referred to as “test & evaluation”. Essentially, these relationships are characterized by their relatively slow progression to the point of serious commitment and the existence of no other goals outside of the romantic ones for the relationship. In the first place, the slow progression to serious commitment is demonstrated by the recognition by the reporter that at some point after initial dating or romantic conversations the couple made a

decision to more seriously pursue the relationship. During the time prior to this decision, the interactions with the potential partner form a series of tests or opportunities to evaluate both the person with whom they are involved and the potential of the relationship for long-term and more serious commitment. Thus Brenda explained how she met one of her six boyfriends in college and had a good time with him but ultimately some of the positives of involvement with him were outweighed by the negative.

I dated him like after like uh 7 months maybe... He lived in Cleveland Heights, and he was – his major I think was physical therapy, and he was maybe a year older than me... And he was fun. I liked him 'cause we had fun together. 'Cause we used to both like “retro” clubs, and you know, I liked his friends, he liked my friends. But we wound up – Why did I break up with him? I don't know why I broke up with him – I jus' – I – I think I just stopped liking him. Oh I know what it was. It was 'um – Tara didn't like him. And um because of what she would always be sayin' about him and stuff, it started makin' me feel funny, so I just started... not to like him anymore. So me and him broke up... So again that was like a long distance relationship... 'Cause I used have to drive up to see him, and he would sometimes drive down to see me, and we would go home to see each other.

As the above quote indicates, Brenda became less interested in pursuing the relationship as time went on: as negative things, like her friend's dislike of her partner and the distance, began to outweigh positive things, like “retro clubs” and one another's friends, she made the decision to abandon the relationship.

Note that the evaluation process can result in more serious or less serious commitment or exit from the romantic relationship altogether.

In test and evaluation relationships, decisions to maintain commitment, to deepen commitment, or to exit the relationships seem to be based in one or more of five types of things. In first place, such decisions can be based on the involved persons' increasing knowledge of one another. New information about a counterpart in a romantic relationship can be evaluated negatively, positively, or neutrally by his or her partner, and these evaluations form the basis of decisions that create relationship outcomes.

A second basis for the decisions to stay or leave the relationship is the world of romantic opportunities outside of the relationship. Below, Aleah discusses the initiation of one relationship right after the completion of another one.

Then I went out with someone else, and I think I may of had sex with him maybe like five times. But he cheated on me so I had to leave him alone. I mean he went to A&T to this... program, during the summer, right after we graduated. I went to Bennett; he went to A&T. He was hanging around this little girlfriend. And one of the girls who was in the summer program lived down the street from North Carolina A&T. And on one of the weekends we went to her house, and I said that, "My boyfriend's right up the street. Let's go up there," you know, and caught him in a lotta nonsense, and that's another story in itself. But I caught him in a whole lotta nonsense and we broke up. But, you know, he was like, "Ok, I want you back." So I went back with him for a little while, but then because he was still up at A&T and I had come back to Bennett, it was like I don't know what he's doin' up there, and so we just kinda broke it off...

*{How come you broke up with the first guy? Do you remember?}
Because I think I just liked this other guy better.*

Aleah shows how both she and her partners would decrease their commitment to a current relationship during times when they saw other potential relationship opportunities available. It follows that when such opportunities are not available the likelihood of relationship maintenance increases.

Below, Francine gives an example of the third basis for decisions to deepen relationship commitment or for partners to distance themselves from one another. She indicates that she abandoned a relationship that she had taken from high school to college because she changed and her partner did not want to live under the new rules that those changes would imply.

{So what you are saying is that you decided that you wanted to be celibate?}

Yes. And he wasn't interested in that.

*{You mean, he did not want to continue the relationship without sex?}
He wasn't interested in coming along with me, so we separated.*

Thus Francine shows how the personal development of both or either partner may change the terms of evaluation. Her involvement in a religious organization she joined while in college gave her new standards with which to evaluate her partner. His willingness to adhere to the celibacy guidelines in which she now believed was a new test for her partner and for the relationship – a test both her partner and the relationship ultimately failed.

Internal development in the trajectory of the relationship is the fourth basis for decisions to continue or abandon the romantic relationship. For example, Eartha's sense of her relationship and its possibilities changed when she became pregnant. She did not like the way her boyfriend responded to the pregnancy and the relationship ended. The fifth and final basis for decisions to continue or abandon test and evaluation relationships are externally driven rather than internally led like Eartha's case above. Changes in the interaction of both parties with an ever-changing environment also support decisions to abandon the relationship. Thus when a woman or her partner's external opportunities change, demands and/or efforts they make in the context of the romantic relationship change the way in which each respective partner evaluates the current level of commitment and their respective desires for the future. Thus Chandra's ability to go to graduate school and her partner's ability to go to business school caused them both to further educational opportunities. Her sense that she did not require a connection to him to have status made her demand things from him that he was not prepared to give. See below:

Went to Harvard Business School. Finished his time there. All that... And actually, I think we did connect some emotionally. So it wasn't just a plastic shell – there was a real relationship there... You know, we had some difficulties getting along from time to time, and I think we connected intellectually. That was the strongest connection between us. Um he was definitely not emotionally available enough, and then of course it was a long distance relationship... He went to Harvard, and I went to Columbia... It's like, you know, you get several steps down there before you realize you're not feeling it because it's not there. You're not feeling it for whatever reason. Either that's not the relationship for you or, you know that's not the kind of relationship you need to be in. And I did realize over a period of time that I wasn't feeling what I needed to feel with him, and I withdrew. I know I was telling somebody about that recently. I think it took a lotta nerve: I think no one could understand how I could possibly have captured this black man who was... a Harvard man and let him go, but you know, he didn't – he didn't satisfy me emotionally, and what's the point of being in a relationship if you're not getting that. And because... I had my own status. You know, and I realize that as a woman, that I'm not supposed to think that I have my own status, and that it could be counted... but I was my own person, so I didn't need his status to have status. I know I really didn't.

Chandra's case shows how external opportunity can change the expectations and evaluations of the relationship. Rather than internally driven as

was the case with Eartha, changing expectations and evaluations and decisions to end the relationship were externally led.

I encountered the test and evaluation type of relationship most often in my qualitative analysis of the relationships. Because change is so often a reason for reevaluation, these test and evaluation relationships are ultimately more vulnerable to failure than some of the other structures of relationships described below. A chart at the end of this section summarizes the rates at which each relationship type progresses to marriage, and among other things, it shows that test and evaluation relationships are much less successful than other types of relationships. They have about 25% lower representation among marital relationships than among the total group of relationships.

Test and evaluation relationships are underrepresented among marital relationships for at least three reasons. In the first place, test and evaluation relationships do not begin with prior knowledge of partners the way that delayed entry relationships do. We would expect relationships that begin with less information on the part of either partner about the other to fail at a higher rate than those which begin with at least some prior knowledge and continued interest because of prior knowledge. For example, Shanequa and many other women report that some test and evaluation relationships end because of cheating; see below.

... I seem to have that sixth sense about picking somebody who couldn't make a commitment if – as I tell my friends – who think fidelity and commitment are backup singers for En Vogue [popular singing group].

While a woman who meets and begins to date someone immediately probably won't find out that the man is a cheater prior to actually dating him, someone who is in a position to observe him and interact with him without dating him may find this out beforehand and in most cases will probably avoid dating him in the first place. Thus test and evaluation relationships, having no such selection bias, are more likely to fail.

In the second place, as indicated earlier, test and evaluation relationships begin at an earlier point in the woman's life trajectory. Because the woman and her partners are still young and developing, and because their worlds of opportunity are still expanding, relationships beginning early in the life trajectory are subject to stringent tests. With respect to college-educated black women, this means that these relationships are more likely to compete directly with efforts to earn college and post-baccalaureate degrees

as well as to explore careers. They thus have a lower chance of success. Furthermore, even if such relationships begin later in the woman's life trajectory, the longer length of the duration to serious commitment which characterizes them means that there is greater potential for external environment or personal development to frustrate the process of developing more serious commitment.

In the third place, test and evaluation relationships that occur early in a woman's and her partner's life trajectory do not allow women or their partners to put their best feet forward as it were. A young man that is immature and/or lacks focus or direction because he is not yet mature may be rejected by a woman in a test and evaluation relationship for valid reasons. She has no way of knowing whether his behavior that she observes is simply immaturity, i.e. something that will go away in time, or reflects a character flaw or an unattractive personal characteristic. For example, Brenda explained to me that her boyfriend during her first year of college had by the time of interview (when he was 30 years old and she was 24) earned his undergraduate degree in international business and was living and working in Europe. To Brenda who was about to leave her customer service job and still struggling to find something rewarding to do with her bachelor's degree, things looked pretty good for him. However, this is who he was when he and Brenda were dating:

He was 24, and I was 18 – 17 or 18? So he was older than me. But he didn't – he didn't go to college. Like he had – he just graduated from high school. Um he was livin' with his mom; he wound up being kicked out while I was dating him. So he got on his own, with one of his friends.

{Why did she kick him out?}

'Cause um – I guess 'cause he was getting' too old and she always thought he was... like running the streets. I remember the night he got kicked out. 'Cause I was there. Like I was over the house. And she was just like, you know – He was gone, I guess, for two days or something and she didn't know where he was, and she was tired out. She was like, "You just need your own place." So, he had to get his stuff and leave... I used to like catch the bus like for the day, or he would come visit my school, and stay like the weekend or somethin', and I would see him during the winter 'cause he got me a job at a restaurant where he worked at, so I worked as a hostess at the same restaurant he used to wait tables... but yeah I thought, you know, we would like get married, have kids, you know, even though he – I didn't know what he – I didn't think about like as far as income, like what would he be doing... Yeah I thought I would be

doing something, but I never really thought of like oh well is he gon' be havin' any kind of income, 'cause he didn't go to college, and he worked as a waiter, and he used to like sell [drugs] sometimes... But the funny thing is, after we broke up, um he was trying to get back with me, and I used to just be like, "No, I don't wanna go back with you," and he went back to school. He went to Case Western, and actually he wound up graduating with a degree in international business.

While Brenda's rejection of her boyfriend may be understandable in light of this description, it was certainly not the best moment to evaluate Cory's career. Because careers and relationships with the job market and financial stability usually increase after the teenaged and young adult years, test and evaluation relationships that occur early in the life trajectory are much more likely to involve both men and women who are at low points in their careers, who are less mature and focused, and whose day to day activities may have little to do with their life 5 years hence.

Concentrated Progression Relationships

14% of the relationships were what I refer to as concentrated progression types. As indicated by the name and the fact that it is the logical opposite of the test and evaluation cases, the progression toward serious commitment is very fast. When the women discussed these relationships, they talked a great deal about having an immediate attraction to the person, a sense that they had a future together or of love at first sight as it were. More importantly, they describe their early interactions as ones where marriage and childbearing and other future plans together were already being discussed. Danielle's discussion of her and her husband's courtship makes this clear: she maintained,

So I ran into John [her husband's friend] at a student mixer... And he was like, "Oh let me introduce you to a friend of mine... he introduced me to Jerome... A week later, um I was feeling really fidgety. I was home, I had eaten dinner, I was trying to do some work, and I decided I needed to get out. I decided "All right: I'll go to the weekend mixer. So I go... He's there. Now I was like, "You know, good to see you again. What'd you do this weekend?" "Oh I went to a prison ministries program in Atlanta." I was like "Oh wow! Wow! You know. That's nice"... And he was like, "... We should you know, get together sometime." And I was like, "Yeah, yeah, you know whatever."... On the way

home, I'm saying, "Now Lord, I need to get my life together so I can be with a man like this, not even this man, just a man like this." So I go home, you know, whatever, next week I go... to the gym. He's there. I'm like, "Why do I keep running in to this man?" So I was like, "Ok I have to give him my number. How do I give him my number? Don't want him to think I'm pushy." So... we say hi, and before he left I say, "Oh you know I'm putting together this panel for people interested in doing volunteer work in the community. Would you like to be on it...?" And he was like, "Oh yeah. I'll be on it." So I give him my email address. Five minutes later, he emails me... I'm thinking I gave him my email address at seven. He emails me at 7:05. Is this like psycho? What's going on? So um emailed and figured out we... had all these connections. Started dating back in October. End of October, we started dating. And then we started talking about getting married in December. Proposed to me in March. Married in August... I think um from about, after about two weeks of dating, we sort of knew, we knew that we were just meant to be together. You know, I mean we started talking about having kids and getting married and how we were gonna fix our house. I remember the first time – I think he said it the first time. Um, I was like, are we seriously talking about this? We've only been dating for like three weeks. Then it was like... if it feels right...

As Danielle indicates, she and her husband were a couple as soon as they started dating and they were engaged to be married 3 months into the relationship and married 10 months into the relationship. Both parties in the concentrated progression relationship seem to be in agreement that there is only one possible outcome to the relationship – that of marriage or pseudo-marital, life-long commitment, and this agreement is reached very soon after they begin interacting. This does not mean that all concentrated progression relationships end in marriage. Rather, it is that the experience of the relationship is such that both parties believe that they are proceeding toward a marriage and act with a certain kind of urgency and priority around this belief. At the point at which one or both of the parties no longer believes in or no longer organizes his activities around the marital end, the relationship is for all intents and purposes over.

Eartha explained that her relationship with Max was one in which they started making plans to marry during the first couple weeks of dating. When I asked how her relationship with him ended, she maintained,

I wish I knew. I don't know why we broke up. I broke up with him: I provoked the breakup because we would have these stupid fights over nothing.

And we would have them of course right around the time when we were talking about getting married, and then he came to meet my parents. He talked to my dad about marrying me um and next thing you know we were broken up. Um but yeah and then we would have these stupid fights and he would blame me for them. He would blame me for doing whatever caused the fight. He would blame me for fighting with him. And then – And he would also take no responsibility. So this last go-around, when I figured I was gonna be blamed for all these things, I provoked him to talk about it, and then knowing that I was gonna be blamed for it, I just said, Ok, well” – I knew we were getting to a point: I knew he was – wanted to break up with me since he thought I was responsible. And so I said, “Well I’m ready to break up too.” And ah usually I talk him out of breaking up with me and try to get him to see that this couldn’t possibly be my fault, but this time I just said, “Ok, let’s just break up.” But you know, of course that I wasn’t the real reason ‘cause the fight was always something stupid, but I got tired of being responsible for everything that went wrong in the relationship.

Eartha’s confusion over the way their relationship ended is not necessarily typical, but it is symbolic. Essentially, the confusion represents the understandable result of having one’s life plans and day to day activities being abruptly taken off course. When a concentrated progression relationship begins and ends, it has huge ripple effects and the women involved reported rearranging the way in which they organized their lives (including where they lived, worked, or went to school) and their long-term goals and priorities in a very short period of time.

Because concentrated progression relationships are characterized by a fast and intense journey from single life to life as a person seriously committed to a relationship with a particular man, they do not seem to be as vulnerable to failure. The women are “in deep” early on, and as such are quickly to the point in their relationship when rejection of the partner because of characteristics or behaviors that don’t seem so attractive or because of professional or other romantic opportunities is unlikely. They were less frequent in my sample than the test and evaluation type, but they had a marriage rate of 37.5% compared with 13% for the test and evaluation relationships.

My analysis yielded three explanations for the overrepresentation of concentrated progression relationships among marital relationships, which I discuss below. While sampled women involved in concentrated progression relationships discuss them as instances in which their emotional

attraction was so intense and powerful and blame the intense feelings for the quick marriage, I argue that there is less opportunity for the inevitable problems associated with relationships or deepening knowledge of one another or external factors to interfere with such relationships. The test period is either so short or is non-existent so that by the time doubts, problems, and external challenges begin to surface, often the line of marriage or childbearing has already been crossed. Once that line has been crossed, relationships are not tested in the same way; nor is evaluation as rigorous. Thus the first reason that concentrated progression relationships are more likely to end in marriage is that the short length of time preceding marriage leaves little opportunity for personal failings and individual development issues and opportunities to challenge or derail the relationship.

An examination of why the "test" period is so short in the concentrated progression relationships results in two additional reasons for their overrepresentation among marital relationships. Test periods are short and there isn't time for the inevitable problems and questions to surface in concentrated relationships because concentrated progression relationships appear to select out those women who are willing to subjugate or alter professional and educational goals or means of attaining these goals for the possibility of a seriously committed romantic relationship at an early part of the life trajectory. Furthermore, concentrated progression relationships also select out times in the life and educational and career trajectory when women perceive that they are able to pursue romance without threat to education or career opportunity. This would mean that such relationships are more likely to come later in the life trajectory.

The overrepresentation of concentrated progression relationships among marital relationships seems to be linked first of all to the speed of the progression to marriage and the consequent short duration of time when external opportunities and individual decisions and proclivities can surface and derail the relationship. Second, these relationships select out those women who are highly motivated to subjugate the goal of marriage and romance to everything else. Thus the group of women involved in concentrated progression relationships is more likely to include women whose individual goals, orientations and motivations are more focused on romance and less likely to include women have romance low on the life priority list. Finally, the group of women in concentrated progression relationships is more likely to include women who have reached a point in their career and educational trajectory when focus on marriage and family formation need not jeopardize initial investments in these areas. The third

relationship structure, described below, diverts from both test and evaluation and concentrated progression relationships with respect to their singular focus on romance, but it retains the slower progression to serious commitment associated with the test and evaluation relationship.

Delayed Entry Relationships

Delayed entry relationships do not begin with romantic interactions. In some cases, the woman and man first develop and maintain a platonic friendship, and in others they initially know one another as informal acquaintances who meet up with one another intermittently while pursuing their own personal goals. In either case, romance is something that they decide to pursue in what is best described as a second stage in their relationships. 16% of the relationships were delayed entry relationships, and they are characterized by the existence of phases of the relationship that are not romantic and by a relatively slow progression to long-term commitment.

There were two ways in which this delay in romantic involvement progressed. In one situation both relationship participants fail to consider romance, are disinterested in romance, or find it impossible to pursue romance at their initial meeting and during their initial interactions. The romantic relationship either begins when they make a formal decision to change directions and try out a romantic relationship or else it develops gradually with the interactions and efforts slowly changing directions to include romance. Jan and her husband were friends during the first 3 years of her college matriculation. During that time, Jan was involved with a couple of other men but was able to rely on his advice and counsel for these relationships. She explains,

... And then my sophomore year, I met this other guy who was in an English class with me. We ended up getting together, but he was very jealous. Very, very jealous. He would not want me to talk to other guys, and um just – I don't know if it was an insecurity on his part or if he just was just that protective. I don't know. But um Damon and I... majored in the same thing. So basically what happened was... we started having a platonic relationship. We were really good friends. We majored in the same thing so we had the same interests, and we talked about shop, I guess, a lot... I didn't see him like a boyfriend or anything like the first – like my sophomore year and my junior year. And then his senior year, which was like the summer – he graduated like

the summer of '85, and his senior year, I started looking at him differently like, he's kinda cute. And um and so it's so funny. I ended up breaking up with the guy that was jealous, but let me back track a little bit... I knew like Damon was like a really cool person. He would do stuff 'cause he knew my boyfriend was jealous, and um I would – like we would walk on campus and I was like, "Can you walk like five steps ahead of me so he can't see us together" 'cause he was really crazy, 'cause he was very abusive as well... Um so after I broke up with him, Damon and I just started hanging out together even more, and that's when I felt like I started looking at him like, you know he's kinda cute and everything... And ah basically [my girlfriend and I] planned this trip to Memphis... So I said... "Me and my girlfriend are going, and we would love for you to come hang out with us and stuff." And he was like, "Yeah." He was like, "I have family there, and I really wanna go and wash clothes and stuff. So I can go," and stuff. So we ended up going to Memphis and stuff for the weekend, and the next thing I knew, we were together. And from that point, we've been together ever since. We were married – it'll be 12 years this November.

Note that mutual availability (i.e. the fact that neither of them were involved in other romantic relationships) led to a decision by both of them to focus on developing a romantic relationship out of the friendship.

In the alternative scenario of delayed entry relationships, one party is interested while the other is not. In this case, the first stage of the relationship whether it be friendship or not is characterized by some level of pursuit: the interested party makes efforts to make him/herself available for a future romantic relationship or to directly or indirectly persuade the other person to consider such a relationship. The romantic stage (i.e. the second stage) begins when the formerly disinterested person develops a romantic interest, assuming the earlier interest of the person in pursuit has not waned or that their availability status for a romantic relationship has not changed.

The issue of availability is central to the conversion from first stage to second stage in the delayed entry relationship. In the first place, note that the couple, during the first stage of the relationship is not pursuing romance, and therefore they are each free to pursue romance with others. It is perhaps not surprising that the occasion for the conversion from friend or colleague or acquaintance to romantic partner is often marked by a breakup or abandonment of romance with someone else on the part of the woman or the man. It makes sense that something has to change in order to promote a decision to redirect the relationship. What seems to

change is one or both of these people's romantic status with another person outside of this dyad. The development of Jacquilyn's relationship with her husband is perhaps the best illustration of this.

Actually, we took a summer class... the summer before pharmacy school started. And he was in the class. And it was a class... to get minorities a head start for pharmacy school, and so he and I, obviously being minorities, took this class, and met. And then in pharmacy school you um you take all your classes with the same people for the first year, and you call it a section, and he happened to be in my section. So I saw him everyday for the first year of school... We were friends. We were friends all the way until the last semester of pharmacy school, and we were both saying, "Aaah if I could just find somebody like you," then you know... We had both been through very difficult heartbreaks, and we were both saying, "Gosh if I could find somebody like you," and he was saying, "If I could find somebody like you," and it was like, "Well dag, the folks we was with just dumped us," and uh we got together... We'd been friends for three years... Keith tells me, when he first met me that first day in our class, and just listening to me talk and my opinions and everything, he told me he wanted to marry me then. He just knew that we were compatible from our conversations. Our conversations and from my conversations with the professors and others in the class, that he knew that I was the type of woman he was looking for... Keith is a family man. Keith wants to have ten – If he could have ten children... I'd just be pregnant every year until my biological clock could take no more.... So that's what he wanted. And he told me that he [had] wanted to marry me then, but then he found out that I was engaged, and so he stepped back and we just became friends. So I think that from – that I fit whatever cast or mold or whatever Keith had in his mind for his wife.

Of course Jacquilyn's case also illustrates a second and related important issue with delayed entry relationships. The conversion to romance is predicated upon continual or intermittent contact during the first stage or else is dependent upon a chance second meeting between the two parties. The availability does not only presuppose lack of involvement with other partners: it also presupposes that both parties will be around one another when they are available. Jacquilyn and Keith's time in pharmacy school enabled them to monitor one another's availability; it also meant that once both of them were available (i.e. had gotten rid of their respective partners), they were still interacting with one another on a regular basis.

Like test and evaluation relationships, delayed entry relationships contain extended periods of time in which changes and problems in the life trajectory can frustrate the process leading to seriously committed relationships. The difference between the two is that the potential of the test and evaluation relationship is tested during all of these changes and problems while delayed entry relationships lay in wait during many such twists and turns. With respect to the sample of degreed African American women, this delay may mean that the relationship might be pursued at a point at which some of the challenges and changes associated with the degree-seeking process have ended. It also means that there are many delayed entry relationships that never happen. The challenges and changes may cause women to lose contact with many men with whom they may have pursued a relationship at a later date. This latter point probably accounts for their lower frequency in the sample.

Despite the fact that delayed entry relationships are infrequent in the sample of relationships in general, they are highly represented in the group of marital relationships. I offer four explanations for the overrepresentation of delayed entry relationships in the sample of married women. In the first place, delayed entry relationships proxy situations in which women maintained social or network stability over time. Stability means that the men that women meet and get to know remain in rather than disappear from their social networks. When women are interested in serious and committed relationships, these men may or may not be available, but they are present. On the other hand, women who are not geographically stable and who are changing institutions and networks of interaction over time may have no idea where to find most of the men that they have met and gotten to know over their history of moves and changes. Marie's delayed entry relationship that led to marriage began in her hometown, to which she returned after college. She kept contact with her husband for over 4 years as a friend before the two decided to pursue a romantic relationship. See below:

I met my husband while I was working on my master's. I was doing an internship at [the place] he was already working... We didn't really date seriously then... We met in 1976 but didn't marry until 1985... I remember telling him that high school educations come a dime a dozen. He had been in the service, and I told him to go back to school and get his degree, especially if Uncle Sam is paying... First he went to a two-year college... and I went to his graduation. Then he went to a 4 year college, and I attended that graduation too... Later on we started really dating.

Had Marie left town for graduate school or a job or to see a different part of the country, she may have lost contact with her husband-to-be. However her presence there meant that when both were ready for a romantic relationship, and as seems to be indicated by Marie's words above, when Marie felt like he had passed her test for a suitable romantic partner, they knew where to find one another.

The second reason that delayed entry relationships have a higher likelihood of leading to marriage is that these relationships are more likely to include among the partners women and men who are at the point in their life trajectory when some of the changes and challenges associated with career building are over and the environment is more hospitable for concentration on romance and family formation. And an added benefit of the time delay is the third way in which delayed entry relationships support marriage rates: the time delay not only gives some relationships a more hospitable environment for success; it also gives potential mates time to mature and to develop the types of resources and characteristics that would make them more attractive marriage partners. Marie's situation with her husband makes this absolutely clear. Had she entered a cross-class relationship with him at their initial meeting, she may have within a couple of months come to judge him to be an unsuitable man for marriage. However, he changed over the course of this time to more closely approximate a partner who she felt had the human capital resources to withstand the vicissitudes of the modern economy and labor market. The point here is that where test and evaluation relationships fail or have weaknesses in the process of progression to marriage, delayed entry relationships have their strength. Thus, where a test and evaluation relationship makes the relationship fall victim to tests such that it could only pass with great difficulty (i.e. staying together while both parties attend different colleges), delayed entry relationships do not undergo such tests since persons in the potential couple are stable before they consider romance. Furthermore, where test and evaluation relationships reject immature men who engage in hurtful practices toward girlfriends or men whose careers seem lackluster at best, delayed entry relationships watch and wait to see whether these men might mature and change and thus pursue relationships at a stage of life when those relationships have a better chance at success.

The fourth and final reason that the delayed entry relationships prove to be associated with a higher likelihood of marriage is that they are likely to be selected for success. Since many of the delayed entry relationships begin as friendships, women get to know the men before they decide on

romance. Those men that women get to know that do not demonstrate the kind of qualities that they find attractive are unlikely to have the opportunity to develop the friendship into a romance. On the other hand, men who demonstrate qualities that are highly attractive may become part of delayed entry relationships with these women. This selection process, based at times on greater knowledge on the part of the woman and the man creates a group of relationships which are more likely to end in commitment.

In and Out Relationships

Similar to the delayed entry relationships, but containing a lot more volatility are the in and out relationships. Sampled women described these relationships as ones in which they were moving in and out of romantic relationship with the same man. While the delayed entry relationships have two basic stages, in and out relationships potentially have an infinite number of stages. When the couple meets, they usually pursue a romantic relationship, but their goals change and they would typically move into a second stage characterized by platonic friendship, limited informal contact, or no contact or interaction at all. At some point, goals change again, and they resume romantic involvement. The romance is inevitably followed by another breakup, which is potentially followed by another period of romance, and so on, and so on.

This pattern of moving in and out of relationship means that despite their relatively low representation in the sample, the 11% of the relationships that were characterized by this pattern end up comprising many years of the respondents' life trajectory. Below Karie expresses some level of frustration with the time invested in such relationships. She said,

I met him high school. I was 14 years old when I met him. He was 17. We started dating. And dated on and off truly for 11 years, and just broke up for real in April... For real. I have to say that a certain way to get this point across... We should have done that a long time ago. Really. But we just kept holdin' on. We'd be apart for years – two years, three years – and get back together... I really felt strongly that after a certain age you don't date for fun. You do date for fun, but you're not dating just to have a good time. I'm dating 'cause I wanna spend time with you seriously. And I also don't spend my time with someone I couldn't live with. That's a waste a' my time. That's a waste of my dating time. You know what I mean? It is. If it don't work out that's fine. That's another issue. "Oh ok. That's cool." But it needs to be somebody I know

that I could at least up front, I feel like I could go somewhere with this. I knew I wadn't gonna marry him.

The frustration that Karie expresses is not simply due to the time invested. The women involved also experienced some problems around the apparent lack of resolution, and the way in which the long-term involvement in the relationship has failed to produce either a serious commitment or some definitive end to investment in romance.

In and out relationships presuppose a high level of availability to one another, such that it is more likely for women who maintain contact and interactions in the same locale over significant portions of the life trajectory. This means that they are more likely to be available to one another. They are characterized by a back and forth trajectory which normally fails to progress to long-term commitment and by the existence of other phases of relationship besides the romantic one. While in and out relationships proxy some level of stability in much the same way as delayed entry relationships, they do not share their high marriage rate. This is most likely due the fact that they also seem to proxy availability and incompatibility, two things which would seem to lead to lower rates of marriage. Below I discuss two reasons why none of the in and out relationships described by my respondents resulted in marriage.

In the first place, in and out relationships seem to be selected for lack of success, in much the same way that delayed entry relationships are selected for success. Keeping in mind that in and out relationships usually begin on an “in”, the knowledge the two people have of one another prior to the relationship is minimal. Relationship failure may suggest incompatibility or growing knowledge of a partner’s characteristics that one finds unattractive, as it often does in test and evaluation relationships. Above Karie explained how much time she had wasted on her in and out relationship. Here she talks about why she and her ex-boyfriend are incompatible:

We had too many issues. He was a smoker. That was the main issue. Major problem. He wasn't a Christian. He didn't profess to be... This is gonna sound silly: He didn't have any hobbies. He has nothing to do with his time. You know what I mean? Just nothin'. I was like, “Lord, I never thought that was important,” but it is. I need you to have something to do with your time. I don't need to be your hobby. You know what I'm sayin'? You need to have something fun in your life, somethin' that makes you you. And I think because I had all these opinions about the relationship, I wasn't good for him either.

You know, he didn't need to be with me, and I didn't need to be with him. 'Cause I don't think I could be a supportive half to him.

Involvement with a man already judged inadequate on that basis is unlikely to lead to interest in long-term commitment. Since persons involved in in and out relationships have already experienced relationship failure, they are likely to be characterized by high levels of incompatibility. This incompatibility between the partners is the first reason that such relationships do not lead to marriage.

In addition to indicating incompatibility, in and out relationships seem to also proxy a high degree of availability. As was pointed out in the description of delayed entry and in and out relationships, availability is an important determinant of the decision to pursue romantic involvement. Thus friends may be prompted to pursue a romantic relationship by the end of romantic relations with other people. However, the persistent availability of both partners in an in and out relationship seems to indicate that one or both of the following is operating: either they are not in a situation in which they meet other potential partners or they are unwilling to seriously consider romantic relationships with other partners. Both of these scenarios set them up for frequent returns to partners that are not ideal and that they are unlikely to marry.

Eartha's in and out relationship with Matthew reflects the latter situation – where women are unwilling to seriously consider relationships with anyone other than the object of their in and out obsession. Despite repeatedly breaking up with him for reasons such as repeated unfaithfulness, date-rape, and not believing her when she was pregnant, Eartha said the following to Carter, who she began dating subsequent to one such breakup.

Anyway, so, I told him at the time, so I said, "Look, you know, I like you and everything but I'm in love with someone else, and we have this very volatile relationship, you know, and I can't guarantee you that I'm never gon' get back together with his man. I have been doin' it for the last whatever five years, so..."

Even though she has experienced great cruelty at the hands of Matthew and even though there seem to be other men that she could pursue romance with, Eartha expresses an unwillingness to really let go of the relationship with Matthew in order to seriously commit to something else.

On the other hand, Kim's in and out relationship with Earl may have been supported by the lack of availability of other options. In the first

place, Kim herself indicates that dates declined after her initial months on campus “because there was no one left to date.” After time away from campus during which she did date one man, she returned to find a similar situation. Thus despite her frequent disappointments with Earl and breakups associated with these disappointments, she was still available to try again with him because she was not with anyone else. This ended after she got engaged. See below.

And so then he called me. Like we hadn't talked for like a year, maybe two years, and he calls me Thanksgiving, you know. And I was really happy to hear from him, whatever, and he was like, "Um you know, I'm going into the Navy, and I'm doing some positive stuff with my life whatever whatever whatever, and I wanna know would you marry me? And I was like, "I'm getting married in January. So I can't really marry you." You know, but that was like his image that he always just thought that I would just be there... for him... But I mean the strange thing I – I don't know – I really think had I not been already in a relationship that felt good, 'cause as sad as I was when I was with him, 'cause he would drive me crazy... I really enjoyed his personhood so much. Like I really, really did like him as a person. I wish that it could have worked out. So I guess had I not had another person I felt like that about, I probably would have waited around for him or just dropped whatever else I had. And that's why I think I was just dating people kind of indiscriminately 'cause it was like, well that's who I love, but I can't really have him right now, so I could spend time with other people.

Kim and Eartha then show how too much availability and/or an unwillingness to consider alternatives (which is essentially also too much availability) creates a situation where a relationship, even if it is weak and loaded with problems might be pursued even after several failures. The relationship's weak and problematic state does not prevent reunions, but it also does not support marriage.

Being Relationships

“Being” relationships are the final type of relationship trajectory observed. The 16% of relationships that typify this pattern are characterized by a lack of progression to serious romantic commitment. Furthermore, all relationship interactions are not necessarily romantic: in some cases the relationship participants are platonic friends most of the time, who have a series of

non-committal romantic interactions; alternatively, interactions may all be romantic, but just not the kind that are directed toward or lead to commitment. Below, Jane describes her relationship with her daughter's father. Note the limited number of romantic interactions, the lack of direction, and the incidental nature of romance in the interactions.

I met him through some mutual people – a couple of associates or acquaintances of mine um were his step-sisters. He was in the military, and we were pen-pals. And so we wrote for probably about six months, and then I went to visit him in San Diego, California, 'cause I was living in San Francisco. And got there and thought he was the most gorgeous man that I had ever seen or met. Um he – he looked the part. You know, he drove a really nice Beamer, um, you know, whole nine yards I thought. Yeah, but that was the extent of our friendship and our everything else. Um slept with him the very first time and conceived my daughter.

{And what has your relationship been since then?}

I haven't seen him since 1991... I haven't talked to him or seen him since we were in court... He got married when I was six months pregnant to somebody.

{Would you have considered marrying him?}

No.

Jane begins this relationship as a pen-pal. Unlike other relationships which begin when a friend introduces the woman to a male relative or friend of hers, the purpose of the introduction (i.e. the potential for romance) is missing. Furthermore, both before and after sexual intercourse and after the point at which Jane had become pregnant, they never thought of themselves as "together."

While the three of Jennifer's relationships that are characterized as being relationships seem to contain a greater number of romantic interactions than Jane's relationship described above, she never viewed these interactions as leading to anything either. What she and Jane share in the context of these relationships is a sense that there is a lack of opportunity to get anything more from these interactions than what they are being given. This sense that a directed trajectory is not available does not lead them to end or curtail the interactions, but rather to adjust their expectations. In Jennifer's case, this belief in the lack of possibility of other options for the relationship is based in her anger at men and belief that her mother's experience with her abusive step-father was representative of all men. See below,

I had problems with my initial relationships with men. I think for one, with my mom, I had the idea that men wanted one thing: they get between your legs and then just, “See ya.” You know what I mean? So I was really serious about that. I mean I kinda imagine my mother having all of those kids and not one man, you know what I mean? I mean it turns out we had all different fathers, so there’s six kids, six men. She tried some kinda logic to lumpin’ some of us together. Some of us, you know, took last names of the guys, and some of us took maiden names and weird stuff like that, but ah she’s never been able to inform us of who’s who. She don’t know. Um so um from that picture even though she didn’t say it to me, just from that picture, I just envisioned that men don’t hang around much.

On the other hand, some women felt that lack of future options in the being relationship were more specific to a particular man and a particular relationship.

Feelings about the lack of opportunity for a future is one reason that women experienced being relationships. In other cases the decision to take

TABLE 1: DIMENSIONS OF COLLEGE-EDUCATED BLACK WOMEN’S RELATIONSHIP STRUCTURES

Pace & Shape of Progression to Long-Term Commitment	Types of Interactions Included in Relationship Trajectory		
	Romance & Acquaintance &/or, Friendship	Romance Only	Total
Fast →		concentrated progression 14%	14%
Slow →	delayed entry 16%	test and evaluation 40%	56%
Slow ↔	in & out 11%		11%
Not Applicable	being 16%		16%
Total	43%	54%	97%

part in a non-committal relationship is led by the inappropriateness of the partner. In these cases, the opportunity for commitment may be there but direction toward commitment is overtly rejected by the woman. Thus, being relationships are characterized by their complete lack of progression to serious commitment and the existence of other types relationship besides the romantic one.

Above I have attempted to describe the types of romantic relationship trajectories that the sampled women have experienced throughout their reproductive years. I have identified and described 5 structures of relationship, and I have given an indication of their frequency in my sample. As the chart below indicates, romantic relationship structures vary in terms of the pace and shape of progression to more serious commitment and in terms of the degree to which romantic interactions are the only types of interactions experienced during the relationship trajectory.

The relative frequency with which the particular structures occur across the sample, depicted in the chart above, indicate that college educated African American women spend a great deal of time in relationships where progression to long-term commitment is relatively slow or non-existent. With the exception of the concentrated progression relationship, most

TABLE 2: DISTRIBUTION OF RELATIONSHIPS BY TYPE

Relationship Types	Marital Relationships	All Relationships
Test & Evaluation	30.77 (12)	40.36 (90)
Concentrated Progression	30.77 (12)	14.35 (32)
Delayed Entry	30.77 (12)	16.14 (36)
In & Out	0 (0)	11.21 (25)
Being	7.33 (3)	16.59 (37)
Don't Know	0 (0)	1.35 (3)
Total	99.64 (39)	100 (223)

romantic relationship structures experienced by this sample included other types of interactions besides romantic ones and/or were arrested in their development to long-term serious commitment.

As depicted below, certain structures of romantic relationships appear to more readily lead to marriage than others. Of the five types of relationships presented here, both delayed entry and concentrated progression relationships are overrepresented in the group of marital relationships. Both have roughly twice the representation among marital relationships that they have among relationships in general. (Delayed entry relationships comprise about 16% of relationships in the general but are 31% of the marital relationships; concentrated progression relationships are 14% of all relationships and also 31% of marital relationships.) On the other hand, test and evaluation relationships, being relationships, and in and out relationships have lower representation in marital relationships than among relationships in general. See the chart below.

Conclusion

Above I have described and discussed the structures of romantic relationships that degreed African American women have been part of throughout their reproductive life course. These structures are related to the likelihood of relationship progression to more serious commitment and to marriage and marital childbearing: delayed entry relationships and concentrated progression relationships have much higher rates of success than the other types (test and evaluation, in and out, and being relationships). Indeed one could make the argument that social variables act through the structures of relationships to create the relationship outcomes: certain social experiences and interactions make it more likely that a woman will enter a particular structure of relationship, and that relationship structure can be either more or less likely to mature into marriage. For example, school attendance and career exploration that is associated with a high number of geographic moves and large distance from the community of upbringing would lower the likelihood of entering a delayed entry relationship. This is because women who put distance between themselves and the men that they get to know during the education and career-building segment of the life trajectory are lowering the likelihood that those men will be present and available to them when they are ready for family formation. Since delayed entry relationships have a higher likelihood of maturing to marriage, women who reduce their likelihood of entering such relationship structures, also reduce

their likelihood of entering a relationship that leads to marriage. Thus the paper presents evidence that relationship structures are associated with greater and lesser likelihoods of marriage and that the relationship structures are also connected to an individual's social statuses and his or her environment. It is therefore possible for theoretical models of marriage to both predict chances of marriage from individual and environmental characteristics and to relate marriage to the romantic relationships out of which they actually develop.

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Returns to Skills: Vocational Training in Germany 1935-2000

Matthias Pollmann-Schult & Karl Ulrich Mayer

Abstract: The purpose of this article is to assess if and to what extent trajectories into the labor market of vocationally trained youth in Germany have changed in the past decades. Using work-life history data from the German Life History Study (GLHS), we analyze three dimensions of transition outcomes – overeducation, occupational mismatch and occupational prestige – for eight birth cohorts born between 1919 and 1971. In contradiction to the widespread assumption of decreasing returns to skills, our empirical results do not show major changes of the transition regime into the labor market. However, separate analyses for men and women reveal that labor market outcomes somewhat deteriorated for men and improved for women.

Introduction

The U.S. labor market is characterized by rising wage inequality and declining labor market prospects for those without a college degree since the late 1980s (Nickel and Bell 1995). These trends prompted interests in implementing vocational training for non-college youth in order to ensure a certain vocational skill level. In this regard, the German system of vocational training, which has the reputation of being one of the most distinguished of its kind, served as a model for the United States (Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce 1990). However, due to technological change and other labor market developments, it may be questionable whether the German system of vocational training is still as effective as often presumed. The German system of vocational training is generally seen as an institution that provides specific and general skills which facilitate a smooth transition from school to work (Allmendinger 1989; Mayer and Konietzka 1998; Soskice 1994). A major indicator for the success of the vocational training system is the low youth unemployment rate. In 1999, the youth unemployment rate in Germany amounted to 8.5 percent and was slightly lower than

the overall unemployment rate of 8.7 percent, while in the United States the youth unemployment rate came to 9.9 percent, twice as much as the overall unemployment rate of 4.2 percent (OECD 2000). Another indicator of the efficiency of the German vocational training system is the finding that apprentice graduates experience a smoother transition and are less often unemployed than graduates with a higher education. According to Winkelmann (1996), between 1984 and 1990, upon leaving school, 14.5 percent of apprentice graduates and 32.5 percent of vocational school graduates, but 36.2 percent of university graduates were non-employed.

However, several studies have expressed concern about changes in the school-to-work transition of the vocationally trained. Two long-term macro-structural trends are expected to alter the traditional trajectories of entering the labor market and thus to deteriorate the labor market outcomes of vocationally trained people. First, due to educational expansion since the 1970s, it is expected that the relationship between an individual's level of education and his or her labor market position deteriorated. Specifically, it is presumed that due to an oversupply of Gymnasium and university graduates from higher education, vocationally trained workers got crowded out of the jobs they traditionally occupied. Second, in recent decades, job requirements are being constantly upgraded as a result of technological progress. Some observers have raised the question whether vocationally trained persons are capable of satisfying the new job requirements, and whether the German system of vocational training is capable of reacting quickly enough to adapt to the new skill standards. Both trends, educational expansion and the changing occupational structure, might influence labor market outcomes as the early careers traditional patterns of school-to-work transitions break down (an overview of these arguments is provided by Mayer 1996). Moreover, there are recent indications that firms might be less willing to invest in apprenticeship training. This has prompted government proposals to impose a levy on firms which do not engage in the training of apprentices.

Although it is often argued that the long-term educational returns of vocationally trained workers have deteriorated over time, there are only few empirical studies which focus explicitly on changing labor market outcomes of this group. Moreover, empirical studies on labor market entry show mixed results (c. f. Müller 1998). Blossfeld (1985) and Müller et al. (1998) find that the returns of vocational training slightly decreased in the last decades. In contrast, Konietzka (1999), Büchel (2002) and Steinmann (2000) do not find significant changes in the benefits due to training over time.

By analyzing the transition to the labor market for eight birth cohorts born between 1919 and 1971, in this paper we seek to examine early labor market outcomes over a broader range of time than has been studied before. During the total observation period of labor market entry, that is 1935 -1990, different trends of economic conditions prevailed (c. f. Mayer and Hillmert 2003). The period from 1935 to 1960 was characterized by life course interruptions due to the war, population migration, unstable economic conditions, high unemployment, and restricted educational opportunities. The subsequent period between 1960 and 1980 was characterized by economic growth, low unemployment figures, shortage of labor and a close match between the educational system and the labor market. The third period, starting in 1980, is marked by growing economic difficulties, increasing unemployment, a growing workforce due to increased labor market participation of females, and accelerated changes in the occupational structure. Hence, many observers expect that life-courses became more de-standardized and the school-work nexus became fuzzier since the 1980s (c. f. H. Brücker and Mayer 2004).

The paper is organized in three sections. The first provides a brief overview of the German system of vocational training. The second describes the dataset and the variables used. And the third and main section in the empirical analysis is devoted to the description of changes in the educational attainment that took place during the observation period where we examine the transition experiences of labor market entrants with regard to three dimensions of labor market returns to skills: overeducation, occupational mismatch, and occupational prestige.

The German system of vocational training

Vocational training in Germany is closely linked to the organization of schools in the secondary level educational system¹. At the age of 10, students are tracked into three different types of secondary schools². The lower and the intermediate secondary school (*Hauptschule* and *Realschule*, respectively) are completed at the age of 15 or 16. Both schools typically

¹ For an overview of the German vocational training system, see Hamilton (1990), Franz and Soskice (1995).

² However, in some *Bundesländer* (states), the transition from primary to secondary school takes place at the age of 12.

lead to a vocational training. The upper secondary school (*Gymnasium*), the equivalent of the British A-level and generally more advanced than the American high-school, is completed at age 19. Its graduates traditionally undertake university studies.

Higher education in Germany consists of universities and 4-year technical colleges (*Fachhochschulen*). The number of youth graduating from the *Gymnasium* has been growing steadily throughout the past decades. Moreover, in recent years, the number of *Gymnasium* graduates who decide not to go to university, but undertake a vocational training instead has increased as well. Generally, graduates from a *Realschule* or a *Gymnasium*, who decide to enter the vocational training system, are more likely to receive training in higher status white collar jobs than graduates from a *Hauptschule*, who often undergo apprenticeship training in the lower status craft sector.

The German system of vocational training consists of the so-called "dual system", which combines 3 to 4 years of part-time vocational schooling with an apprenticeship in a private or state owned enterprise, or 2 - 4-years full time vocational schools. The apprentice spends three to four days a week at the firm that trains him/her and one to two days at a vocational school. Full-time vocational schooling takes place in specialized vocational schools (*Berufsfachschulen*) and schools of allied health professions (*Schulen des Gesundheitswesens*). The vast majority of vocational training takes place in the dual system. In 1998, 1.6 million young persons were trained in the dual system, whereas only 150,000 were trained in full-time vocational schools and an additional 120,000 were trained in schools of allied health professions (BMBF 2000).

Full-time vocational schools as well as training in the context of the apprenticeship system results in universally recognized, portable skill credentials. Although it possesses a high degree of standardization compared to other countries, German vocational training still displays a great variation in the quality of training between different types of vocational training (Soskice 1994). Differences in the quality of training exist in particular between the craft sector on the one side and the industrial and commercial sector on the other. These differences are mainly explained by industry-specific training strategies. Because jobs in the industrial and service sector require a highly skilled and specialized workforce, companies from these sectors offer high quality training which is associated with high net costs borne by the employer (Neubäumer 1999). In contrast, job requirements in the craft sector are considerably lower. Consequently, companies within

the craft sector only provide basic training and apprentices often do much of the work of normal employees. As a result, the labor market outcomes of apprentices in the craft sector are generally lower than those of people trained in the industrial or commercial sector. Previous studies show that workers trained in the craft sector face a disproportionate risk of overeducation and unemployment (c. f. Pollmann-Schult and Büchel, in press).

The German vocational training system is highly gendered. Traditionally, women were sorted into commercial apprenticeships or full-time vocational training, which led to less prestigious jobs that provide fewer chances for wage advancement, whereas men were more likely to undertake craft and industrial apprenticeships. However, the labor market situation for women of younger cohorts may have become more favorable, since more women than men gained from the shift of the occupational structure towards commercial and service jobs (c. f. Konietzka 2003).

Data and variables

Our empirical analyses are based on the German Life History Study (GLHS) conducted under the direction of Karl Ulrich Mayer at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Berlin. This representative data set consists of several retrospective surveys providing detailed information on the education and work-life history of several birth cohorts. This data set includes life history data of more than 12,000 men and women in East and West Germany. Our analyses in this paper use the West German component of the German Life History Study which comprises of 8,500 respondents from West German cohorts born between 1919 and 1971 (for an overview, see E. Brückner and Mayer 1998). Life histories of people born in 1929-31, 1939-41, and 1949-51 were collected from 1981 to 1983 (Mayer and E. Brückner 1989). Between 1985 and 1987, life history data for people born 1919-21 were collected (E. Brückner 1993). The birth cohorts 1954-56, and 1959-61 were interviewed in 1989 (H. Brückner and Mayer 1995), and data for the cohorts 1964 and 1971 were collected in 1998/99 (Hillmert, Künster, Spengemann and Mayer 2004). The samples are restricted to individuals who lived at the time of the interview in West Germany and former West Germany, respectively, and to German citizens.

The German Life History Study, unlike other German data sets such as the German Socio-economic Panel (GSOEP), is very well suited for analyzing school-to-work transitions. The GLHS contains very detailed information on educational degrees obtained and on all jobs the respondents held

up to the time of the interview. Although the GLHS is based on representative samples drawn from the entire West German population, there is some evidence of selection bias. As Hillmert (2004) has shown for the members of the birth cohorts 1964 and 1971, respondents of the GLHS who did not complete higher education or vocational training are underrepresented in the sample. However, since we are primarily interested in changes over time and not so much in the educational distribution at a given point in time, the selection bias should not seriously distort our results.

The GLHS does not distinguish between apprenticeships undertaken in the craft and industrial sector. Following the approach used by Soskice (1994), Winkelmann (1996) and others, we will approximate this distinction by using information on the trained occupation and the firm size. Small firms are concentrated in the craft sector, whereas medium-sized and large firms are predominant in the industrial sector. In the end we distinguish between vocational training in the following sectors: industrial sector, craft sector (including apprenticeships in farming and in home economics), commercial sector and full-time school based vocational training (including training in allied health professions).

A crucial issue for analyzing school to work transitions is the measurement of the "success" and "failure" of this transition. Many studies tend to equate success with getting a "good" job or getting a job appropriate to one's education. Whereas other studies tend to see success in terms of getting a job at all or the duration of the transition from school to work (c. f. Mayer 1995), this study relies heavily on previous research by considering three typical indicators of the quality of the transition from school to work: 1) the risk of being overqualified vs. having a properly allocated job; 2) the risk of entering a job that matches the skill level, but does not fit the specific vocational training (occupational mismatch); 3) occupational prestige. The first job is defined as the first job held for a minimum of 3 months after completing vocational training. By doing so, we exclude initial short-term casual work.

Workers are generally considered to be overqualified if the qualification level they have acquired exceeds the qualification level required to perform the job. Hence, a vocationally trained worker is considered to be overqualified if he/she holds a low-skilled job, which does not need any kind of formal qualification. To identify whether over-education exists in a given case, the jobholder's level of formal education must be compared with the job requirement level. There are several methods for measuring the job requirement level, but two main approaches can be distinguished: the

objective and the subjective approach (for an overview, see Hartog 2000). In the objective approach, the required skill level for every type of occupation is evaluated by professional job analysts. Well known classification schemes detailing the required skill level of a broad range of jobs exist for the U.S. and for the Netherlands. The subjective approach is based on self-assessment of the required skill level. Here, the workers themselves report which qualification level is usually required to perform their jobs.

The data set utilized in this study does not contain self-reported information on the workers' job requirement level. For this reason, the job requirement level is determined by objective job characteristics, using a previously developed classification scheme for the German labor market. This classification scheme determines the job requirement level on the basis of information provided about the employment category and the job title (for a detailed description see Pollmann-Schult and Büchel 2002b). By applying this classification scheme, we are able to distinguish between three job levels: unskilled jobs which require no formal qualifications at all, moderately skilled jobs which require completed vocational training and highly skilled jobs which require an academic degree. Individuals with completed vocational training who work in low-skill jobs are categorized as overqualified.

The occupational match is measured by utilizing the 3-digit code of the 1968-version of the International Standard Classification of Occupations. An individual is considered to work in a job which matches his or her vocational training if the ISCO-Code of the vocational training and the first job is the same. In contrast, occupational mismatch means not having the same ISCO-Code for vocational training and first occupation. The analysis of occupational match is restricted to individuals who are not overqualified. In contrast to other studies such as Kalleberg and Witte (1995) or Solga and Konietzka (1999), we argue that overqualified persons always experience some degree of occupational mismatch. Therefore, there is no need to analyze the occupational match for those who are already experiencing overeducation. An example of occupational mismatch is a certified secretary working as a hairdresser or as a qualified salesperson, since all three occupations require completed vocational training.

The occupational prestige of the first job is indicated by the "International Socio-economic Index of Occupational Status (ISEI)" (c. f. Ganzeboom et al. 1992). The ISEI is constructed using data on education, occupation and income from 16 countries and indicates the socio-economic status of 271 occupations. Employing an optimal scaling procedure, status

scores ranging from 16 (lowest status) to 90 (highest status) are assigned to each of the 271 distinct occupations.

Empirical results

The following section depicts the process of educational expansion for the eight cohorts under examination (see also Cortina et.al. 2003). Thereafter, we describe the quality of the school-to-work transition in terms of overeducation, occupational mismatch and occupational status of the first job.

Educational expansion

Table 1 reveals two major trends that took place in the post-war time. First, the proportion of graduates who completed *Realschule* (intermediate secondary school) or *Gymnasium* (upper secondary school) has increased strongly. Second, the participation of women in upper secondary education rose to a greater extent than the participation of men. For the cohorts born after 1965, the share of women who completed upper secondary education exceeds those of men. Among those born around 1920, only 10 percent of the men and 7 percent of the women acquired an *Abitur*, compared to 33 percent of the men and 39 percent of the women born in 1971. By contrast, the proportion of men and woman who left school without a leaving certificate or who acquired merely a lower school degree decreased substantially. While 73 percent of the men and 69 percent of the women born around 1920 gained none or merely the lowest school leaving certificate, this is true for only about a third of the men and a fifth of the women born in 1971.

Due to educational expansion, the educational background of vocationally trained persons has become more heterogeneous over time. The share of vocationally trained men and women who hold an intermediate or higher school degree increased substantially in the observation period, while the share of vocationally trained persons who only completed compulsory schooling decreased (Table 1, lower panel). Furthermore, table 1 reveals that vocationally trained women of all cohorts held higher school degrees than men.

In the observation period, participation in secondary training and post-secondary schooling substantially increased as well (table 2). The share of persons without formal training has decreased rapidly: among men, the share of less educated individuals decreased from 26 percent to 4 percent.

TABLE 1: SCHOOL DEGREE, BY COHORT AND SEX

	Cohort							
	1920	1930	1940	1950	1955	1960	1964	1971
All								
Men								
No school degree	2.3	11.2	7.2	6.1	6.2	2.9	3.7	1.1
Lower school degree	70.4	70.3	71.1	54.8	44.5	40.7	39.7	31.2
Intermediate school degree	17.6	11.0	15.5	19.1	23.6	26.7	32.1	34.9
Higher school degree	9.7	7.5	6.1	19.9	25.7	29.7	24.5	32.8
Women								
No school degree	3.8	10.3	6.6	5.4	6.2	2.3	1.3	0.7
Lower school degree	65.4	70.3	66.4	60.9	44.4	30.3	28.5	19.8
Intermediate school degree	24.3	14.2	19.7	21.1	27.0	42.3	43.7	40.8
Higher school degree	6.5	5.3	7.4	12.5	22.4	25.2	26.5	38.7
Vocationally trained people only								
Men								
No school degree	2.1	10.4	5.8	6.1	5.7	3.2	3.2	0.9
Lower school degree	79.2	71.3	73.7	68.4	55.3	50.5	45.9	37.5
Intermediate school degree	16.1	13.8	18.4	22.8	30.9	34.9	39.6	43.3
Higher school degree	2.6	4.6	2.0	2.7	8.0	11.3	11.3	18.3
Women								
No school degree	3.7	6.3	3.0	3.9	4.6	1.8	0.2	0.2
Lower school degree	56.4	59.5	70.8	66.8	51.8	28.7	28.6	23.0
Intermediate school degree	35.7	27.9	23.2	26.2	35.0	52.9	49.6	48.4
Higher school degree	4.3	6.3	3.0	3.1	8.5	16.7	21.7	28.4

Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations.

Among women, the percentage of the less educated dropped from 57 percent to 7 percent.

Table 2 shows that the expansion in the educational structure was accompanied by changes in the composition of vocational training. The share of men with a craft apprenticeship declined to 29 percent in the 1971 cohort from 37 percent in the 1920 cohort, while the share of men with an industrial apprenticeship increased from 12 to around 28 percent between the 1920 and 1940 cohort and stayed stable until then. For women, the participation in commercial apprenticeship increased substantially. Thirty-six percent of the women born in 1971 completed a commercial apprenticeship, in contrast to 15 percent of those born between 1919 and 1921.

Overeducation in the first job

Contrary to public opinion and the belief of most social scientists, the overall share of overqualified workers did not increase trend like during the past decades (table 3). Rather, it appears that the variation between cohorts was affected by other factors such as the cohort size or the labor market situation at the time of the labor market entry. As previous research has shown, the quality of the labor market entry is strongly influenced by demographic conditions and the business cycle (Gangl 2002). The fact that the 1964 cohort was the biggest so far in post-war West Germany and that the members of this cohort faced a recession at the time of their labor market entry may have contributed to the high proportion of overeducation. The unemployment rate reached a 30-year high in 1983, when most people born in 1964 were employed for the first time. In contrast, the size of the 1971 cohort has been considerably smaller and the unemployment rate was quite low when the members of this cohort entered the labor market (c. f. Mayer and Hillmert 2004).

However, table 3 reveals substantial gender-specific trends. While the proportion of men who found themselves in jobs requiring less education than they had achieved increased for those who were born around 1940 or later, the respective figures for women dropped sharply. Among men, the share of those working in jobs which require no formal qualification rose to 9 percent in the 1971 cohort, up from 5 percent in the 1940 cohort. In the same time period, among women the share of overeducation dropped to 4 percent from 15 percent. Concerning the type of vocational training, the risk of being overqualified has clearly shifted. Whereas the risk of being overqualified increased substantially for people who completed an indus-

TABLE 2: QUALIFICATION LEVEL, BY COHORT AND SEX

	Cohort							
	1920	1930	1940	1950	1955	1960	1964	1971
Men								
No training	26.2	26.5	16.2	9.3	9.2	6.2	6.6	3.8
Craft apprenticeship	36.8	40.9	37.1	30.3	26.8	29.4	33.5	28.5
Industrial apprenticeship	12.3	16.3	28.6	27.0	24.2	24.3	25.8	28.9
Commercial apprenticeship	16.0	11.1	12.6	17.4	19.3	14.9	17.9	17.8
Full-time vocational training	3.7	1.2	1.1	1.5	5.1	5.4	3.9	4.0
University degree*	5.2	3.9	4.3	14.6	15.5	19.9	12.3	17.0
Women								
No training	57.4	66.4	47.7	28.4	17.8	16.3	12.3	7.2
Craft apprenticeship	9.0	11.2	10.3	10.5	10.6	11.3	11.3	12.6
Industrial apprenticeship	0.1	0.6	2.0	2.2	4.8	4.6	8.9	8.2
Commercial apprenticeship	15.1	11.8	25.1	37.5	33.5	32.5	34.5	35.9
Full-time vocational training	15.6	7.8	10.9	13.0	19.3	23.3	24.0	19.1
University degree*	2.7	2.3	4.0	8.6	14.0	12.1	9.0	17.0

*including people who were still attending college at age 27.

Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations.

trial apprenticeship, it has decreased for people with a commercial apprenticeship and those who completed full-time vocational schooling. This trend may reflect the shifting demand of labor from the secondary to the tertiary sector.

The first two columns in table 4 present the logistic regression results for the transition to overeducation after finishing vocational training for men and women. The reference group consists of individuals who hold a correctly allocated job when entering the labor market. The first column gives the results for a model that only controls for the birth cohorts. The

TABLE 3: OVEREDUCATION AT LABOR MARKET ENTRY, BY COHORT, SEX, AND TYPE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING (IN \$)

	Cohort							
	1920	1930	1940	1950	1955	1960	1964	1971
Men	7.4	10.4	5.2	6.1	6.5	5.0	11.0	8.6
Women	12.8	9.2	14.8	8.3	9.6	6.1	6.7	3.8
Craft apprenticeship	9.9	13.3	7.1	8.0	10.6	7.4	10.9	11.4
Industrial apprenticeship	5.6	4.7	3.8	4.3	3.6	4.3	15.4	10.1
Commercial apprenticeship	9.6	7.4	12.1	10.3	9.7	3.5	5.4	1.1
Full-time vocational schooling	12.4	8.7	16.1	14.6	5.6	7.9	4.7	3.4
Total	9.8	10.0	8.5	7.1	8.0	5.5	8.9	6.5

Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations.

omitted category is the 1940 birth cohort. This model essentially gives the development irrespective of the educational expansion that took place in the course of time. Since the participation in higher quality vocational training such as industrial and commercial apprenticeships increased over time (see table 2), one could assume that the overall quality of early career outcomes increased as well. To obtain the net effects for the birth cohorts, it seems crucial to take educational expansion into account by adding appropriate variables to the model. By doing so, we estimate the cohort effects *irrespective* of educational changes over time. Model II controls for school degree achieved, type of vocational training and if the vocational training took place in the public sector. The results displayed in the first column demonstrate that the risk of becoming overqualified did not change significantly over time. Even after controlling for the expansion of schooling and changes in the composition of vocational training, there is no evidence that the risk of becoming overqualified did increase systematically. Only individuals born in 1964 face a statistically significant higher risk of being overqualified than those born around 1940. Consistent with previous research, the results show that the school degree has a strong effect on overeducation, irrespective of the type of vocational training (c.f.

TABLE 4: DETERMINANTS OF OVEREDUCATION (LOGISTIC REGRESSION;
ODDS RATIOS)

	Men and Women		Men		Women	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Female	1.113 (0.112)	1.345* (0.135)	–	–	–	–
Cohort 1920	1.250 (0.243)	1.311 (0.245)	1.622 (0.378)	1.588 (0.380)	0.937 (0.322)	1.067 (0.331)
Cohort 1930	1.187 (0.284)	1.268 (0.286)	1.936+ (0.401)	2.034+ (0.403)	0.732 (0.436)	0.765 (0.447)
Cohort 1940 (reference group)	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Cohort 1950	0.795 (0.281)	0.853 (0.283)	1.188 (0.429)	1.258 (0.431)	0.515+ (0.378)	0.562 (0.384)
Cohort 1955	0.916 (0.247)	1.182 (0.250)	1.295 (0.386)	1.550 (0.390)	0.617 (0.326)	0.880 (0.334)
Cohort 1960	0.685 (0.260)	0.986 (0.264)	0.961 (0.407)	1.169 (0.411)	0.461* (0.341)	0.825 (0.356)
Cohort 1964	1.089 (0.225)	1.633* (0.231)	2.387* (0.343)	3.112** (0.348)	0.468* (0.310)	0.815 (0.326)
Cohort 1971	0.731 (0.242)	1.156 (0.249)	1.813+ (0.354)	2.441* (0.361)	0.234** (0.367)	0.418* (0.383)
Lower or no school degree (reference group)		1.000		1.000		1.000
Intermediate school degree		0.455** (0.143)		0.535** (0.203)		0.384** (0.199)
Upper school degree		0.169** (0.338)		0.235** (0.452)		0.115** (0.527)
Vocational training in the private sector (reference group)		1.000		1.000		1.000
Vocational training in the public sector		0.406** (0.281)		0.214** (0.468)		0.620 (0.360)
Craft apprenticeship		1.232 (0.158)		0.723 (0.242)		2.054** (0.199)
Industrial apprenticeship		1.105 (0.192)		0.785 (0.251)		0.870 (0.448)

TABLE 4 (CONT.)

	Men and Women		Men		Women	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Commercial apprenticeship (reference group)		1.000		1.000		1.000
Full-time vocational schooling		1.284 (0.190)		1.057 (0.422)		1.463+ (0.219)
Constant	0.099**	0.112**	0.053**	0.078**	0.173**	-1.878**
-2 Log-likelihood	2,452	2,364	1,291	1,254	1,131	1,063
N	4,400		2,396		2,004	
Mean of dep. variable		0.081		0.078		0.084

Level of significance: ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$; + = $p < 0.1$.

Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations..

Büchel and Pollmann-Schult 2004). Persons with an intermediate or an upper school degree face a significantly lower risk of becoming overqualified than people who have achieved merely a lower school degree. Getting trained in the public sector relative to training in the private sector significantly increases one's risk of being overqualified. Also the finding of a lower risk of overeducation for people trained within the private sector is consistent with previous research (Pollmann-Schult and Büchel 2002a). It reflects the fact that the retention rate of apprentices in public institutions is higher than in private firms. In contrast to the descriptive analysis in table 3, the type of vocational training has no significant effect on the risk of being overqualified when controlling for other factors.

The models displayed in columns III and IV analyze the risk of being overqualified for men only. The results show that men in the 1964 and 1971 cohort faced a significantly higher risk of being overqualified in their first job than previous cohorts. This is more pronounced when controlling for the educational expansion and changes in the composition of vocational training (column IV). This model indicates that the odds for men in the 1964 cohort of being overqualified are 3 times higher as the odds for men born around 1940. For men born in 1971 the odds are 2 times higher. In contrast, the risk of being overqualified for women has decreased significantly over time (column V). However, when controlling for changes in the

educational composition, merely women born in 1971 face a lower risk of overeducation than those born around 1940 (column VI).

Occupational mismatch in the first job

Table 5 depicts the share of occupational mismatch for workers who are not overqualified. In the overall population, only insignificant changes in the proportion of workers with an occupational mismatch occur. However, if we distinguish between men and women, a different picture emerges: in the course of time the risk of being employed outside the occupational field they had been trained for decreased substantially for women and in the last cohorts markedly increased for men. Among women, the share of occupational mismatch dropped from 31 percent for those born around 1940 to 17 for those born in 1971. Among men, the share of occupational mismatch rose from 18 percent to 23 percent. Further, there are remarkable differences with regard to the type of vocational training. Whereas the risk of occupational mismatch increased for people who completed a craft or industrial apprenticeship, it dropped for those who had undertaken a commercial apprenticeship.

TABLE 5: OCCUPATIONAL MISMATCH IN THE FIRST JOB, BY COHORT, SEX, AND TYPE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING (IN %)

	Cohort							
	1920	1930	1940	1950	1955	1960	1964	1971
Men	17.2	13.4	17.7	20.2	17.7	20.4	24.7	23.1
Women	23.5	23.5	30.8	26.9	20.6	19.5	18.0	16.7
Craft apprenticeship	11.7	7.4	10.2	16.5	7.8	13.4	14.8	17.9
Industrial apprenticeship	9.4	23.9	17.9	15.1	11.6	20.0	27.0	28.7
Commercial apprenticeship	31.1	31.9	44.7	33.8	30.0	25.7	23.6	16.7
Full-time vocational schooling	29.6	22.7	18.5	19.4	22.8	15.5	22.7	22.6
Total	20.1	16.9	21.4	22.9	20.0	19.4	21.8	20.6

Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations.

TABLE 6: DETERMINANTS OF OCCUPATIONAL MISMATCH
(LOGISTIC REGRESSION; ODDS RATIOS)

	Men and Women		Men		Women	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Female	1.377 (0.081)	0.679** (0.099)	—	—	—	—
Cohort 1920	0.864 (0.182)	0.894 (0.186)	0.962 (0.246)	0.999 (0.252)	0.691 (0.275)	0.746 (0.280)
Cohort 1930	0.693 (0.226)	0.766 (0.230)	0.716 (0.298)	0.754 (0.303)	0.692 (0.356)	0.847 (0.363)
Cohort 1940 (reference group)	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Cohort 1950	1.064 (0.188)	1.023 (0.192)	1.176 (0.260)	1.098 (0.266)	0.829 (0.279)	0.841 (0.283)
Cohort 1955	0.825 (0.177)	0.744 (0.182)	0.997 (0.242)	0.814 (0.250)	0.585* (0.264)	0.617+ (0.270)
Cohort 1960	0.873 (0.175)	0.841 (0.181)	1.186 (0.236)	1.018 (0.244)	0.546* (0.262)	0.667 (0.275)
Cohort 1964	0.950 (0.163)	0.921 (0.170)	1.520+ (0.218)	1.277 (0.277)	0.493** (0.251)	0.599* (0.250)
Cohort 1971	0.880 (0.167)	0.844 (0.175)	1.390 (0.221)	1.101 (0.232)	0.452** (0.259)	0.573* (0.272)
Lower or no school degree (reference group)		1.000		1.000		1.000
Intermediate school degree		0.927 (0.099)		1.193 (0.137)		0.707* (0.142)
Upper school degree		0.851 (0.175)		1.312 (0.215)		0.568** (0.214)
Vocational training in the private sector (reference group)		1.000		1.000		1.000
Vocational training in the public sector		0.446** (0.157)		0.431** (0.204)		0.460** (0.255)
Craft apprenticeship		0.293** (0.125)		0.286** (0.163)		0.381** (0.205)
Industrial apprenticeship		0.541** (0.127)		0.556** (0.157)		0.547* (0.294)

TABLE 6 (CONT.)

	Men and Women		Men		Women	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Commercial apprenticeship (reference group)		1.000		1.000		1.000
Full-time vocational schooling		0.725** (0.125)		0.491* (0.277)		0.866 (0.135)
Constant	0.291	0.441**	0.216**	0.494**	0.444**	-0.624*
-2 Log-likelihood	3,898	3,777	2,121	2,030	1,751	1,710
N		3860		2128		1732
Mean of dep. variable		0.204		0.201		0.207

Level of significance: ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$; + = $p < 0.1$.

Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations.

The results of the logistic regression in Table 6 show that, also when controlling for educational expansion, the overall risk of occupational mismatch did not change significantly over time. However, separate analysis for males and females indicate that the risk of an occupational mismatch decreased substantially for women. Even when controlling for the educational expansion (column VI), women of the 1964 and 1971 birth cohorts faced a significantly smaller risk than the reference group, which consists of women born around 1940. The model indicates that for the 1964 and the 1971 birth cohorts, the odds of occupational mismatch are more than 40 percent lower than for those born around 1940. In contrast, the risk of occupational mismatch for men did not change significantly in the observation period (column IV).

Occupational prestige of the first job

Table 7 shows the mean occupational prestige for men and women and for different types of vocational training. It appears that women obtain more prestige-conferring jobs than men. This result is somewhat surprising and can be attributed to the fact that occupations in the female routine non-manual labor market are deemed more prestigious, though these jobs generate a lower wage, than occupations in the manual sector dominated

TABLE 7: MEAN OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE, BY COHORT, SEX AND TYPE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

	Cohort							
	1920	1930	1940	1950	1955	1960	1964	1971
Men	39.4	37.6	38.2	39.7	42.2	40.8	40.6	41.0
Women	45.1	43.7	45.0	47.7	49.5	47.9	48.8	50.7
Craft apprenticeship	35.8	34.8	35.7	35.4	36.2	35.9	35.7	37.3
Industrial apprenticeship	39.4	37.1	37.7	38.9	40.1	39.2	38.9	39.9
Commercial apprenticeship	47.5	49.6	46.8	49.5	50.8	50.5	51.5	54.0
Full-time vocational schooling	46.0	45.8	49.4	51.8	51.6	49.1	50.8	49.8
Total	42.1	39.6	40.7	43.5	45.7	44.3	44.6	45.4

Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations.

by men (c. f. Müller et al. 1998: 183). However, for the research question addressed in this paper, more important than the absolute level of occupational prestige are changes of occupational prestige over time. The gap between men and women is widened from 6 points for the 1920 cohort to 10 points for the 1971 cohort. The gender-difference may be attributed to gender-specific shifts in the participation of vocational training. Aside from prestige gains for women and for people who completed a commercial apprenticeship, there are only insignificant changes in the observation period.

Table 8 presents the regression results of the occupational prestige for labor market entrants. If schooling and vocational training is not controlled for (column I), more recent cohorts receive jobs with increasingly higher prestige. As can be seen in column II, education has a huge impact on the prestige of the first job. The type of school degree has a significant effect on the occupational status at labor market entry, irrespective of the type of vocational training. Further, if we control for education the differences between birth cohorts disappear. This is because younger cohorts receive higher education and could convert their educational investment in higher status jobs.

TABLE 8: DETERMINANTS OF OCCUPATIONAL PRESTIGE (OLS REGRESSION)

	Men and Women		Men		Women	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Female	7.372** (0.322)	2.264 (0.310)	–	–	–	–
Cohort 1920	0.514 (0.728)	-0.481 (0.614)	0.370 (0.925)	-0.723 (0.731)	1.025 (1.175)	0.034 (1.043)
Cohort 1930	-0.926 (0.895)	0.623 (0.753)	-1.114 (1.079)	-1.080 (0.849)	-0.850 (0.157)	-0.229 (0.1391)
Cohort 1940 (reference group)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cohort 1950	2.454** (0.812)	1.254+ (0.683)	1.521 (1.047)	0.071 (0.824)	3.869** (1.287)	2.947** (1.137)
Cohort 1955	4.732** (0.734)	1.607* (0.622)	4.113** (0.940)	-0.46 (0.747)	5.800** (1.176)	3.647** (1.045)
Cohort 1960	3.002** (0.733)	-0.531 (0.625)	2.605** (0.946)	-0.833 (0.751)	3.848** (0.167)	0.268 (1.045)
Cohort 1964	3.357** (0.682)	0.137 (0.586)	2.429** (0.871)	-1.081 (0.696)	4.732** (1.099)	1.832+ (1.000)
Cohort 1971	4.304** (0.696)	0.838 (0.602)	2.787** (0.884)	-1.070 (0.712)	6.349** (1.125)	3.402** (1.030)
Lower or no school degree (reference group)	–	–	–	–	–	–
Intermediate school degree		4.905** (0.322)		4.042** (0.421)		5.387** (0.495)
Upper school degree		9.529** (0.495)		11.023** (0.694)		8.020** (0.722)
Vocational training in the private sector (reference group)		–		–		–
Vocational training in the public sector		1.155* (0.462)		1.312* (0.577)		0.763 (0.742)
Craft apprenticeship		-11.125** (0.367)		-12.340** (0.503)		-10.353** (0.564)
Industrial apprenticeship		-8.718** (0.433)		-10.062 (0.524)		-5.829** (0.913)
Commercial apprenticeship (reference group)		–		–		–

TABLE 8 (CONT.)

	Men and Women		Men		Women	
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Full-time vocational schooling		-2.273** (0.423)		-2.825** (0.823)		-1.708** (0.252)
Constant	44.757**	47.300**	38.071**	47.107**	43.618**	45.365**
R square	0.124	0.382	0.018	0.396	0.034	0.251
N	4,843		2,572		2,271	

Level of significance: ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$; + = $p < 0.1$.
Source: West German Life Course Study, authors' calculations.

The separate models for men and women (column IV and VI, respectively) show that the occupational prestige for women has increased over time even then controlling for education. Women who entered the labor market before 1970 received considerably lower status jobs than women who entered the labor market after 1970 (c. f. Mayer 1991). However, this trend is not linear over time. Females in the 1950 cohort, 1955 cohort, and 1971 cohort yield an occupational prestige that is approximately 3 points higher than for those who where born around 1940. Women born around 1960 realize only smaller gains and females born in 1964 realize no significant gains at all. In contrast, the occupational status for men did not change over time when controlling for education (column IV).

Conclusions

The institutional setting of the German system of vocational training is supposed to offer young adults a smooth transition to the first job. However, many observers assume that the labor market outcome of vocationally trained youth deteriorated since the 1970s. The aim of this paper has been to investigate if and to what extent trajectories into the labor market have changed in the past decades. To this end, we analyzed three major dimensions of transition outcomes for eight birth cohorts born between 1919 and 1971. In a preliminary step, it was shown that the educational background of vocationally trained people has become more heterogeneous in the past decades. The majority of youth entering vocationally training after 1980 held an intermediate or upper secondary school leaving certificate. Young

people who completed upper secondary schooling increasingly take up a vocational training instead of going to college. Further, we observed a shift from apprenticeships in the low status craft sector to those in the commercial sector that comprises jobs of a higher status.

Our results regarding the transition outcomes contradict the widespread assumption of decreasing benefits from vocational training. It has been shown that the overall transition regime into the labor market of vocationally trained workers did not change substantially in terms of overeducation, occupational mismatch and occupational prestige. However, separate analyses for men and women revealed gender-specific trends after 1980. Labor market outcomes somewhat deteriorated for men and improved for women. Men who entered the labor market in the past two decades faced a significant higher risk of overeducation than previous cohorts, whereas women entering the labor market in the 1990 had better chances of securing a job that matches their qualification level. Moreover, since 1980 the risk of occupational mismatch dropped for female labor market entrants.

Although this is a truly remarkable story of the stability of institutional arrangements and their effects across a large span of time, we would be cautious in extrapolating this as a kind of ultra-stability into the future. In contrast, there are good reasons to assume that we deal here with a case of institutional and behavioral inertia and delayed adaptation. The expansion of secondary and higher education is still in a precarious disequilibrium with participation in vocational training and the adding on of apprenticeships to longer periods of general education appears neither to be efficient in the usage of life time nor an optimal way of skill formation. In addition, the new cost-consciousness of firms has put some strains on their willingness to invest in training. The very recent reaction of the government to threaten with a levy for firms which do not train might well produce the opposite effect of what is intended. It might act as an incentive for firms to buy themselves out of training obligations. Moreover, the fact that the dual system of vocational training has practically broken down in East Germany due to the lack of training firms might trigger changes in the direction of less firm and more school based provision of vocational skills. The jury on the viability of the German dual system of vocational training is still out.

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Increasing risks of stigmatization: Changes in school-to-work transitions of less-educated West Germans

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Abstract: The paper examines historical changes in the school-to-work transitions of young West Germans without a completed secondary school certificate. In doing so, it attempts to show that even today the normative power of the normal biography – the life course standardized by institutionally defined status passages – is unbroken. Deviations from the normative pattern of the modern life course are both definable and considerable in their consequences. Institutionally, the ubiquity of school experience, of vocational education, and of employment defines the norms to be fulfilled by all young people. The attempts by less-educated youths to participate – yet in separate programs – and the institutional risks of recurring educational failure caused, in fact contribute to an increase in their risk of marginalization and stigmatization. The analyses of their school trajectories, their opportunities to enter vocational education and training, and finally their early labor market careers, together exhibit the increased institutionalized transition risks and systemic dead-ends faced by less-educated youths. These analyses display the continuous (and institutionally reinforced) struggle of these youths to attaining a normal biography and the outcomes as well as consequences of those attempts.

1. Social pressure to attaining a normal biography and its embedded risk of recurring educational failure

Debates on the de-standardization of the modern life course, in general, and of educational and occupational biographies, in particular, are well established in today's sociological and popular discourses, especially in Germany (cf. Beck 1986; Beck-Gernsheim 1994; Berger 1990; Kohli 1985). Deviations from the so-called "normal biography" – the life course standardized by institutionally defined status passages (Levy 1977, 1996) – thus appear to have become, paradoxically, *normal*. Indicators used in favoring

the *individualization thesis* are: people stay longer in school and other educational institutions, more young people participate in more than one vocational or tertiary education program, or that the variation in the age at entry into the labor market, at first marriage and of first child have increased, and so forth. Yet, do they really reflect a de-standardization of the (normative) modern life course?

The paper studies the historical changes in the school-to-work transition of young people without a completed secondary school certificate. In doing so, it attempts to show that even today the normative power of the *normal biography* (i.e., the standard of a normatively 'right' time/age and sequence of life stages) is unbroken. Deviations from this normative pattern of the modern life course are both definable and considerable in their consequences. Moreover, attempts by 'deviant' groups to participate in the *normal biography's* institutions – such as in vocational education and labor markets – contribute in fact to an increase in their risk of marginalization and stigmatization. Their mostly 'unsuccessful' attempts at participation convey processes of (discrediting) labeling – both external and imposed by the less-educated youths themselves – and thus in fact facilitate the construction of their 'deviance' (see Goffman 1963). Externally, 'educational failure' translated into a categorical label makes "a difference, because once a label is applied, further information processing is guided by its connotation." (Jones et al. 1984: 6) ; and on the other hand, less-educated youth themselves as "markables often hold stereotypes of what other think or feel about them, and these stereotypes guide their behavior with nonmarkables." (Jones et al. 1984: 181)

Why, however, has 'low education' become such a crucial label in our societies? First of all, given increasing educational attainment in younger birth cohorts, *low education* has undergone a transformation from just 'not continuing schooling' to an individual's 'failure'. In today's birth cohorts, school attainment below a completed secondary school certificate falls below the 'accepted' minimum of educational qualification and, thus, has become an increasingly discrediting, if not stigmatizing, attribute of individuals (Parsons 1959: 117, Trow 1977: 112f.)

This attribution is particularly severe in Germany. The contemporary German school system has one of the lowest failure rates in the world – at least in terms of completed upper secondary education. By the mid-1990s, the proportion of 19-to-21-year-olds without completed upper secondary education was more than 25 percent in France and almost 20 percent in Great Britain. Only Sweden, with five percent, showed a significantly lower

percentage than Germany and the Netherlands, both at nine percent (Murray/Steedman 1998). Given this successful educational expansion, it may not be surprising that the social marginalization of young people who do not complete even lower secondary education has increased in Germany. These individuals' lack of a secondary school diploma is increasingly regarded as evidence of their 'inability' to meet the increased performance requirements at school, vocational education, and labor markets.

In the context of rising educational norms and job competition in many fields, these less-educated young people today more than ever before, are placed in a situation in which they must accept the available, though not necessarily desired or hoped-for, opportunities provided by vocational training or labor market (policy) institutions. This situational logic, however, impedes the pursuit of long-term goals and anticipatory life planning, one of the crucial features, indeed demands, of the modern life course. Today's less-educated youths are thus increasingly at risk of developing a mainly situational, externally determined coping strategy imposed on them by society's expectations that they should (at least) undertake serious efforts to 'normalize' their school-to-work transition (cf. Stauber/Walther 1999). This coping strategy itself, in turn, contributes to the odds of repeated failures and thereby to a perpetuation of their disadvantageous situation in the vocational training system and the labor market. It is this latter aspect of the institutional risks of stigmatization that I will empirically address in the paper.

Despite this rather situational coping strategy, these youths' educational histories do not lack other definitive characteristics of the modern life course such as linearity, continuity, or sequentiality (Kohli 1985, 1986; Mayer/Müller 1986). On the contrary, their increasingly uninterrupted life histories of 'failure' in the school system and nowadays also in the vocational training and employment system are linear and continuous. Despite being unsuccessful, they tend to follow the sequential pattern of schooling–training–labor market entry. However, because they do so, their biographies of failure – imposed by institutional pressure of 'normalization' – add to their risk of being discredited by employers and others, who take their frequently recurring educational failures as evidence that they lack motivation and work-orientation, and/or are that they are 'incapable', if not completely 'unemployable' (Kohli 1994: 229; Goffman 1963).¹

¹ This is corroborated by relevant research on intergroup relations – which has shown

These less-educated youths find themselves in latent and manifest crisis situations which in combination with negative identity constructions by themselves and by the 'others', embed a high risk of continuous marginalization. On the one hand, self-stigmatization may be touched off or learned by others' marginalization. On the other hand, these same youth may 'protect' themselves by using self-exclusion (e.g. dropping out of schools, educational programs, and labor markets) to avoid further stigmatization by others and subjective responsibility for their stigmatization (cf. Pfahl 2003). As a result, many of today's less-educated youth may give up any hope of an acknowledged career and 'disidentify' with educational and employment goals – in fear of the possible humiliation and further negative reaction (Jones et al. 1984: 111). This means that they may develop a personal identity which is not (or less) committed to academic and occupational achievement (cf. Goffman 1963): „This pattern of disengaging self-evaluations from feedback received in a domain, even while recognizing that domain as being important, makes sense if the domain is one that is highly valued in the larger society but that is subject of negative stereotypes” (Crocker et al. 1998: 530) – which is certainly true for education and educational failure in modern societies. The awareness of the negative connotations of their educational failure(s) in the eyes of others and the belief in the limitation of their personal efficacy are (likely to be) well established by adolescence, because (a) this limitation is part of legitimating their inferior position in school by teachers and peers, and (b) their educational failures occur before a sense of efficacy is firmly established (Crocker et al. 1998: 517; Bandura 1995: 3).

The analyses presented in the paper follow the 'normal' school-to-work transition pattern. In doing so, they display the continuous (and institutionally reinforced) struggle by less-educated youth to attain a *normal biography* and the consequences of those attempts. The analyses of these less-educated youths' school trajectories, their opportunities to enter vocational education and training, and finally their early labor market careers, together exhibit the increased institutional risks of less-educated youths' stigmatization. My main argument is that their increasingly reinforced participation in vocational education and labor markets (and their thereby reduced

that “failure and negative behavior exhibited by an outgroup member are more likely to be attributed to internal dispositional causes than is the same negative behavior by an ingroup member (in which case it is more likely to be attributed to external or situational causes)” (Brewer/Brown 1998: 560).

exclusion from these institutions) does not automatically or surely lead to inclusion; if this participation still takes place in separate (special) programs and trajectories – as it is the case in Germany –, instead of reducing or eliminating the official stigma of educational failure this participation rather entails the potential of continuous discrimination and a perpetuating negative self-schema by the less-educated youth themselves.²

2. German context and data

Four clarification and technical remarks are important at the outset. *First*, of course, the life histories of youths without a completed school certificate begin at birth – and as German empirical studies (Solga 2003a; Willand 1987) show – they tend to be born into comparatively unfavorable social settings. An over-proportionally large percentage of them live in single-parent families, relatively often they have unemployed fathers, and often their parents have only completed low (general and vocational) schooling. Their life circumstances are further aggravated by a large number of siblings and low household income.

Second, the German school system needs some clarification. It implements curricular tracking among different *school types* (streaming) beginning in 5th grade. Alongside the *Sonderschule*, the *Hauptschule* is the lowest (regular) secondary school type, providing a slower pace of instruction and reduced curricula in the main academic subjects. In the not too distant past, the majority of a birth cohort attended this school type; yet due to educational expansion its enrollment rate has declined sharply. In 1965, 60 percent of the 13-year-olds attended this school type, today the share is only one quarter. The *Realschule* provides academic education at a medium level, and the *Gymnasium* offers advanced academic education leading to the *Abitur*, which is the formal prerequisite for university enrollment. These latter school types have benefited most from educational expansion; their enrollments rates have increased from the 1960s until today from about 10 to 24 percent (*Realschule*) and from 13 to 30 percent (*Gymnasium*), respectively. Last but not least, the *Gesamtschule* – the German com-

² For example, treatment studies of people with mental illness have shown that “perceived stigma was associated with greater demoralization among treated groups compared to non-labeled [non-treated; H.S.] individuals (Link 1987)” (Rosenfield 1997: 662). In her own study, Rosenfield (1997: 665) found that the majority of mental patients felt “that their job application would be passed over by employers (77 percent).”

prehensive school type with a variety of within-school tracking systems – provides secondary education for students of all ability levels (Leschinsky/Mayer 1999). Yet this school type does not exist in all federal states (*Bundeslaender*) and has yet to achieve high enrollment rates throughout the country since its institutionalization in the late 1960s. Today it is attended by about nine percent of Germany's 13-year-olds.

Moreover, besides these different secondary school types, the German school system also provides different types of secondary *school diplomas*: a lower secondary school certificate (called *Hauptschulabschluss*), an intermediate secondary school certificate (called *Realschulabschluss* or *Mittlere Reife*), and an upper secondary school certificate (called *Abitur*). For clarification's sake, it is necessary to mention that the *Hauptschulabschluss* and *Realschulabschluss* are not exclusively connected to the school type with the same name. Both types of diplomas can be obtained at a *Sonderschule*, *Gymnasium* or a *Gesamtschule* in addition to the school types that share those labels. Their names refer to the level of secondary education completed, not always to the school type attended. Lastly, some school leavers do not obtain any of these school degrees, the group of interest in this analysis. In contrast to the U.S. school system, these youth do not drop out of school; they stay in school at least until the end of compulsory education (i.e. age 16). However, they do not demonstrate the performance necessary to receive even the lowest school degree (*Hauptschulabschluss*). In this sense, those German school leavers are comparable to U.S.-American 'age-outs' rather than to 'drop-outs,' as institutionally they both reflect the maximum age of required attendance.³

Third, research on less-educated youth has been hampered partly by small sample sizes, especially in the younger cohorts. Moreover, due to the formal requirement of most surveys that individuals (have to) live in a private household as well as the voluntary nature of participation, in population-representative surveys we only find a 'positive selection' of less-educated youths (for example, those who are homeless or in prison⁴ are usually excluded while those who are more willing to provide information about

³ One marked differences here is, however, that age-outs in the U.S. system may remain in school until age 20 or 21 (in some states).

⁴ In Germany, more than 90 percent of the prisoners are male; among them are many who completed less than upper secondary education (Online: http://www.uni-konstanz.de/rtf/ki/Jugendkriminalitaet-2002-9.htm#_Toc20195568, Download: 3/11/2003; cf. also Oberwittler et al. 2001).

their work-/life are mainly those who have been more successful after leaving school). Thus, analyses on the consequences of low education using these surveys certainly do underestimate the true magnitude of their disadvantage(s). I will use data from the German Life History Studies of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development (MPIfB), employing the life history information of the birth cohorts 1929-31, 1939-41, 1949-51, 1954-56 und 1959-61 as well as of the cohorts 1964 und 1971. The latter were collected in cooperation with the Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research in Nuernberg (IAB) (for further information see Wagner 1996 and Hillmert/Kröhnert 2001). However, school leavers from *Sonderschulen*, schools for children with special educational needs are under-represented in these studies (Solga 2004). Furthermore, except for the cohorts 1964 and 1971, only native-born Germans have been interviewed, thus immigrant youths are not included in my analyses. In general, the data situation for immigrant youth (born inside or outside the country) is extremely poor in Germany. In my chapter in the new national education report (Solga 2003a) I have portrayed their situation based on available data. It is important to stress that immigrant youths constitute a significant share of less-educated youth in Germany; they are over-represented in both lowest school types, often considerably (cf. Powell/Wagner 2001). Their 'failure rate' in the school system, i.e. their share among the young adults who left school without a completed secondary school certificate is at 20 percent – which is more than twice as high as for native-German school leavers. On that score, however, analyses focusing on less-educated (West) *Germans* 'control' for institutional ethnic discrimination (cf. Gomolla/Radtke 2002) and thereby may enhance our general understanding of the increased risk of educational stigmatization due to institutionally constructed 'deviations' from the *normal biography*, by showing that it is not just a problem for minority youths.

Finally, the paper studies the historical changes (over the past 50 years) in the school-to-work transition of educationally disadvantaged West Germans only. Due to the separation of East and West Germany until 1989/90, the inclusion of East Germans would be of interest for a regime comparison on low education and its consequences; this is, however, beyond the scope of the present paper (cf. Maaz 2001).

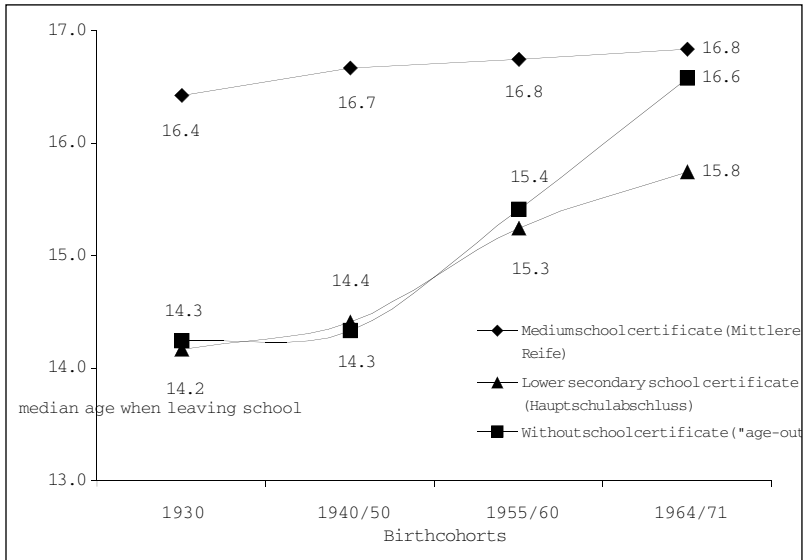
3. Start in life as a "twofold failure" in school

In 1965 about 20 percent of young people ended compulsory schooling without any type of completed secondary school certificate. Since the

beginning of the 1980s, only 10 percent of all students of both sexes have failed to complete a school certificate. For girls today, the share is seven percent and for boys, twelve percent. Today as in the past, the majority of these young West Germans without a completed school certificate have attended either a *Sonderschule* or a *Hauptschule*. Since the 1970s, approximately 40 percent of them have attended the former and about 50 percent the latter.

The chances of students of special schools, *Sonderschulen*, to (successfully) complete secondary education have not changed significantly over the years. In the 1970s, as today, approximately 80 percent of them do not graduate. Thus, from the moment they enter this type of school it is generally recognized that they will have a difficulties attaining even the lowest graduation certificate, a *Hauptschulabschluss* (cf. Powell 2004; Pfahl 2003). By contrast, the 'failure rate' at the *Hauptschule* had declined from 22 to 13 percent during the same time period. Nonetheless, due to the changed social meaning of attending a *Hauptschule* – signaled by the sharp decline in its enrollment rate reported above – its students also go through their first experience of unfavorable institutional segregation (Fend et al. 1976: 144; Friedeburg 1979: 105; Teichler 1985: 168). In addition, this decline has contributed to an unfavorable alteration in the social composition of its student body and thus to a loss of these schools' social capital (Leschinsky/Mayer 1999: 31; Solga/Wagner 2001). As a result of this decreasing social diversity of its student population, according to Coleman (1966) one would have expected an increase in the rate of non-graduation of *Hauptschule's* students. The fact that this is not the case, that we instead observe a decrease, eloquently expresses the power of institutional rules and procedures. The relatively negligible change in the rate of non-graduation in a population of students whose demographics altered dramatically over this period – in the *Hauptschule* due to the school's shrinkage and in the *Sonderschule* due to expansion and an increased immigrant youth population – points in the direction of institutional explanations. These unaltered 'outcomes', despite drastically altered 'inputs' (in terms of the social composition of the student bodies) show that the formal rules and procedures operate relatively independently of the concrete actors within the school context, i.e. the students and teachers (cf. Kerckhoff et al. 2001). Thus, especially these low-tracked students' school careers can be characterized as a process of status ascription rather than as one of status achievement (Mayer/Blossfeld 1990: 304).

FIGURE 1: MEDIAN AGE WHEN LEAVING SECONDARY SCHOOL
(Age in years; only native West Germans)



The median age for those who left school with an “Abitur” is not displayed on account of clarity.

Source: German Life History Studies (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Study of the cohorts 1964 and 1971 (Max Planck Institute and Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research).

Figure 1 presents the median age at the end of schooling for the different educational groups. These results reveal that for the school leavers without completed school certificate in particular, this process of status ascription lasts much longer today than it did in the past. In the birth cohorts 1929–1931 (the ‘1930-cohort’), 1939–41, and 1949–51 (the ‘1940/50-cohort’), 50 percent of students without a completed school certificate left school at the age of 14 years and four months. In the cohorts 1964/71, in contrast, 50 percent of these individuals attended school up to the age of 16 years and a half and older. Thus, over the birth cohorts the median age when leaving school for leavers without a certificate has risen by 26 months, or more than two years. In no other educational group has the age increase been as dramatic.

For students graduating with the *Abitur* (which usually takes 13 years of schooling), the increase was only three months, and for graduates who completed a *Realschulabschluss* (the medium secondary school certificate) it was about five months. For those students graduating with the lowest school secondary certificate, a *Hauptschulabschluss*, the age increase was about one year and a half. Thus, measured against the median, today students without a completed school certificate paradoxically spend almost exactly as much time in school as those with a medium certificate (a *Realschulabschluss*). They are in school ten months longer – i.e. one school year – than graduates with a lower secondary school certificate (a *Hauptschulabschluss*).⁵ Additionally, today the age variance is greatest for the group of school leavers without a completed school certificate. In the birth cohorts 1964/71, about 25 percent of them still attended school at the age of 17 years and a half and older.

There are (at least) three causes for the prolonged duration of their schooling: (1) the extension of the *Hauptschule*'s and *Sonderschule*'s curriculum by one year in the 1970s; (2) the raised educational standards in society at large which for them resulted in the 'duty' to make repeated attempts to graduate from secondary school, usually by repeating one or more classes; and (3) their low chances of 'winning' the competition for an apprenticeship or a (reasonably paid and/or secure) job in the labor market. This lack of viable alternatives urges them (as well) to stay in school longer – at least officially.⁶ This last reason is corroborated by a study carried out jointly by the Federal Employment Office and the Federal Institute for Vocational Training in 2001 (BA/BIBB 2002). It shows that 41 percent of individuals who had not (yet) graduated from secondary school, but

⁵ In this respect only school leavers with an *Abitur* constitute an exception: in all birth cohorts, their median age is about 19 and a half years and thereby higher than for those without a completed school certificate.

⁶ Truancy is rather high at the *Hauptschule* and *Sonderschule* compared to the *Realschule* or the *Gymnasium* (Schreiber-Kittl/Schröpfer 2002: 53). Among them are especially students who had to repeat one or more classes. Interviews with those students have shown that they perceive having to repeat a class as a social discrimination, as a signal of having 'failed.' Moreover, they pointed to other negative consequences of repeating classes, namely, that they had to leave their peer group, to accommodate to new learning groups in which many classmates were younger than they were (Schreiber-Kittl/Schröpfer 2002: 160). These German findings correspond to results of the TIMSS-study which shows that the poorer the performance of the individual students as well as the poorer the average performance of a school class is, the higher is the probability of truancy (OECD 2000: 239f.).

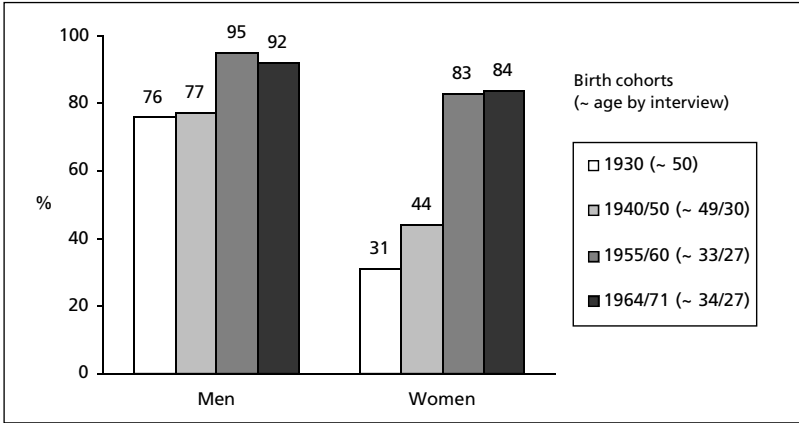
who were actively seeking an apprenticeship at the employment office eventually remained enrolled in general lower/medium secondary education. Only 10 percent of those with a completed *Hauptschulabschluss* or higher certificate who were similarly unsuccessful in finding an apprenticeship remained in school.

In sum, two characteristics define the initial ‘failure’ of school leavers without certification on the path away from (!) attaining a *normal biography*: the lack of completing a graduation diploma from secondary school and the significantly prolonged time spent in school. In contrast to the past, these school leavers not only fail to meet society’s educational standards. In addition, their significantly higher age upon leaving school (even relative to peers with a *Hauptschule* diploma) has increased the risk of developing negative self-conceptions as well as of intensified age-related processes of (external) labeling (Becker 1963) – along the lines of “s/he spent so long in school and still didn’t manage to graduate” or “apparently s/he didn’t use the time at school appropriately” (Kohli 1985: 15). The contradiction in modern societies posited by Kohli (1985: 19) between *age* as an ascribed characteristic and the meritocratic idea of allocation based on achieved rather than ascribed characteristics does not apply to today’s young adults who leave secondary school without certification. For them, *age* has become predominantly an ‘achieved’ characteristic – at least to the extent that it offers the opportunity for labeling processes and identity constructions related to *time wasting*, *inability* or at least *delay*.

4. Their ‘failures’ in the vocational education system – the newly institutionalized ‘segregated participation’ of less-educated youths

After leaving school, these young adults are expected to find their way, like their peers with a secondary school diploma, into permanent jobs in the regular labor market. The path to get there, however, has changed considerably over the last 50 years. With the transition towards an education- and knowledge-based society, it is deemed necessary for *all* young people to prepare themselves for a skilled/qualified worklife before entering into the labor market. In Germany, this has led to the ‘insertion’ of specific status passages for vocational preparation – between school and employment – for members of *all* educational groups. It used to be mainly young men and women with a completed intermediate degree (*Realschulabschluss*) or upper secondary degree (*Abitur*) as well as young men with a completed

FIGURE 2: PROPORTION OF LOW-EDUCATED YOUTHS WITH ENTRANCE INTO SOME SORT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION*
(In percent; 'low education' = those without a completed secondary school certificate; only native West Germans)



* This includes the German apprenticeship, full-time vocational schools (leading to a regular occupational degree) as well as all sorts of shorter and uncertified, but formalized (pre-)vocational education.

Source: German Life History Studies (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Study of the cohorts 1964 and 1971 (Max Planck Institute and Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research).

Hauptschulabschluss who entered the vocational training system. Today, however, some vocational education has become a *normality* even for those less-educated youths without a completed school certificate.

Figure 2 displays the percentage of less-educated youths (i.e. without a completed school degree) entering some sort of vocational education. It has increased remarkably over the birth cohorts: for low-educated women from 31 to 84 percent, and for less-educated men from 76 to 92 percent. In the birth cohorts 1964 and 1971, only 16 percent of the female school leavers without completed school certificate and eight percent of the male non-graduates have never set foot in the vocational training system (until time of interview). Moreover, analyses (not presented here) show that – when they eventually ‘decide’ to leave school – they make this transition into the vocational education system within two to three months (at the

end of summer vacation), like members of all the other educational groups. However, does their increased participation in the vocational education system mean that, after leaving school, they have eventually found their way into the *normal biography*? The answer is a threefold “no.”

First, in comparison to the other educational groups, their entry into the vocational education system seldom means that they enter into *regular* vocational training. Their lack of a secondary school diploma does not constitute a formal criterion of exclusion from regular vocational training, since there are no formal preconditions for entry with regard to prior schooling and also no objective measures for ‘vocational capabilities’. However, these less-educated youths carry the official label of possessing a ‘deficit’: they failed to graduate from secondary school and usually attended one of the lower school types – *Hauptschule* or *Sonderschule*. As a consequence, they have very low chances of success in the highly competitive vocational training market. If they ask for help of a career guidance office (one of the departments of the national employment offices), they are channeled into ‘labor policy measures.’ These in turn provide them with pre-vocational or training opportunities, but outside the regular training system. Young persons without completed school degrees have the highest rate of entry into these measures (which are regulated by German Social Code III). The objective of these ‘qualification measures’ is to (once again) prepare them for training and employment. These programs are supposed to compensate for what these youths missed or ‘failed’ in secondary school. Besides profiling these youth’s work aptitudes and occupational orientations, the measures focus on vocational preparation (e.g. as a *Berufsvorbereitungsjahr*, a year-long pre-vocational education, or as pre-vocational incentive measures offered by the employment office). They usually take place in a classroom setting – that means, in fact, in a setting which entails a high risk of renewed failure especially for these low-school achievers (who are ‘tired’ of *schooling*). Moreover, in order to be entitled to participate in such ‘qualification measures,’ they have to ‘prove’ their disadvantaged position in the competition for apprenticeships or jobs by using their missing school certificate as a “signal of inability” (Castel 2000: 411). In doing so, they (have to) expose themselves to a process of self-stigmatization.

What is the historical development of these ‘measures’ in terms of shaping the school-to-work transition of less-educated youths? With the 1955 cohort, who entered the system during or after the expansion of these vocational preparation measures in the early/mid-1970s, approximately 30 percent of the school leavers without completed school certifi-

cate who had entered the (pre)vocational education system, either initially or exclusively attended such incentive/pre-vocational measures or courses in lower-tier vocational schools (the latter mainly to finally attain a secondary school certificate). In contrast, only 10 to 15 percent of the graduates with a *Hauptschulabschluss* or an intermediate *Realschulabschluss* were channeled into such measures.⁷ As a consequence of these segregating and stratified gate-keeping processes, in 2000/2001, 69 percent of the participants in pre-vocational education measures did not hold a secondary school certificate.

This pattern of gate-keeping processes in the vocational education system has considerable and negative impacts on the learning environment and social perceptions of these less-educated youths, because it also means that these young adults once again were 'among themselves.' The social capital of their learning environment in these 'measures' was similar to their situation in school (*Hauptschule* or the *Sonderschule*). As in the lower school types, such programs are disadvantageous in terms of the social composition of peers/classmates, the academic and occupational aspirations as well as expectations in their environment (e.g. those held by teachers), the lack of positive role models, and the limited scope of occupational experiences by peers and the peers' parents. Furthermore, these young adults are expected to complete a secondary school diploma within a year – and that with the same contents and values taught in primary and secondary schooling that they had, in fact, 'failed' in the first place. In addition, these institutionally segregated pre-vocational measures do less to signal these students' trainability than they raise the danger of perpetuating the marking of their biographies as 'failures' and, hence, the risk of continuing stigmatization (Marquart 1975: 1).

The findings of Tilly Lex (1997: 232f.) strengthen this line of reasoning. In her study on the school-to-work transition patterns of 2,323 women and men between the ages of 18 and 25, she found that only 30 percent of young adults participating in such (pre)training and incentive 'measures' actually succeeded in entering into regular vocational training or jobs. Over half of them (55 percent) had gone through a series ('career') of three to six measures.⁸ For them, the meaning and purpose of these 'measures' had

⁷ Own calculations based on the German Life History Studies (Max Planck Institute for Human Development) and cohort study of the 1964 and 1971 (Max Planck Institute and Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research).

⁸ In the cohorts 1964 and 1971 (of the German Life History Studies at hand), almost 50

gotten lost; to them they looked like temporary ‘parking-lots’ and not like a ‘path’ for entering into a normal, regular training and work career (Preiß 2003: 61).

Similar outcomes are produced by the federal government’s Immediate Action Program against Youth Unemployment (JUMP) (Dietrich 2001: 18). After completing a ‘measure’ provided by JUMP, about one third of the participants between the ages of 16 and 18 had been transferred into another measure and more than 20 percent once again experienced an unemployment spell. Of the participants aged 24-25, more than 40 percent were again unemployed and another nearly 20 percent took part in a further measure.

Thus, today by age 25 many of these young adults find themselves more or less locked into a ‘career’ oscillating between unemployment, training and employment measures, and occasional or unskilled jobs. They find themselves shuffled along from one station to the next, and placed in one measure after the other, and at each of these ‘stations’, they more and more learn that one main purpose of these measures is to ‘park’ them outside the labor market (in order to reduce social conflicts, to avoid ‘asocial or criminal alternatives’, and to moderate youth unemployment statistics), rather than to help them succeed in embarking on a ‘normal’ life course (Braun 2002; Esping-Andersen 2001; Lex 1997).

These segregated training measures for less-educated youths follow the German principle of *normalization* (Waldschmidt 1998: 17). On the one hand, they aim to include *all* young people in education and vocational training. On the other hand, they *individualize* the responsibility for educational success, even if the new programs supposedly provide improved conditions. Individuals must fulfill their duties with respect to *normalization* through repeated attempts to correct for ‘educational failures’ and in order to equip themselves for the *normal biography*. These active labor policy and incentive measures follow an institutional logic of ‘separate, but equal’ and an *individualized* integration ideal. In doing so, however, they facilitate not only social integration and participation, but at the same time discrimination and exclusion. They entail the risk of a persistent channeling of less-educated youths beyond the *normal biography* rather than increased chances of attaining it (cf. Braun 2002: 768; Brewer/Brown 1998:

percent of the school leavers without a completed school certificate attended two or more vocational preparation or labor policy measures.

565; Stauber/Walther 2000: 9). As a result, these young people face the danger of becoming “excluded from within” (the vocational training system) or of becoming “internally excluded” – as formulated by Pierre Bourdieu and his colleagues (1997: 527).

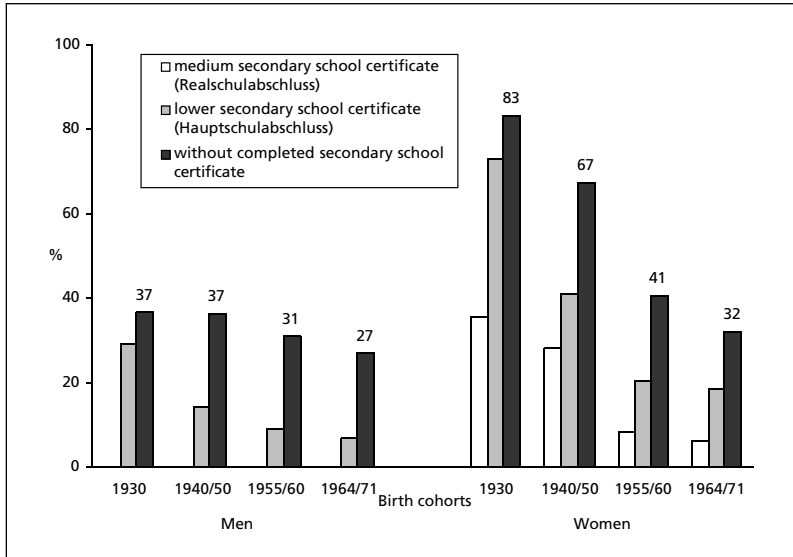
In many cases, this integration into a parallel system of (pre)vocational training for less-educated youths (Braun 2002: 768) leads to increased and recurring failures, which they themselves then tend to interpret and judge as *individual* failures, and which in turn leads to further processes of demotivation (Heinz 1995, 1996). Hence, it is not surprising that the significantly lower percentage of school leavers without a secondary school diploma in regular vocational training is not only the result of external selection but also of self-exclusion processes (withdrawals): “The marked person may still be able to improve his life in society by reducing the mark’s saliency (e.g., not applying for certain jobs [or apprenticeships, H.S.])” (Jones et al. 1984: 34). Of those non-graduated school leavers who had contacted a career guidance office in October 2001, 49 percent answered the question “Why are you not enrolled currently in an apprenticeship?” by saying that they did not – or not yet – have ‘appropriate’ schooling, and 14 percent answered that they did not apply because they believe that their chances for a successful application (i.e. for being hired) were very low, if not zero (BA/BIBB 2002). The averages for all youths without an apprenticeship or training place at that time (regardless of their school degree) were much lower, namely 16 percent (for ‘insufficient’ school degree) and 6 percent (for ‘no chances’).

Finally, those less-educated youths who, let’s say, could ‘nonetheless’ enter regular vocational training programs mostly did not participate in the *German Dual System* (the joint theoretical training in state-run vocational schools and practical in-firm training) or in regular full-time school training programs. Many of them attended state-funded joint-multi-firm training programs or training workshops outside firms.

This leads us to the *second* negative answer to the question whether the increased participation of school leavers without a completed secondary school degree in the vocational education system means that, after leaving school, they have eventually found their way into the *normal biography*. This second ‘no’ refers to their limited chances of success in completing a vocational certificate and, thus, their renewed failure in their vocational training participation.

Figure 3 shows the percentages of youths without completed regular vocational or academic education at the age of 25. It reveals that the per-

FIGURE 3: PROPORTION OF 25-YEAR-OLDS WITHOUT COMPLETED REGULAR VOCATIONAL CERTIFICATE – BY OBTAINED SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE AT THE END OF SCHOOLING
(In percent; only native West Germans)



* The percentages for men with completed medium secondary school certificate (*Realschulabschluss*) are not displayed on account of clarity. For women, the differences between those with a completed lower secondary school certificate and those without a completed school degree are rather small, thus the medium secondary school certificate seems to be the more appropriate standard of comparison.

Source: German Life History Studies (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Study of the cohorts 1964 and 1971 (Max Planck Institute and Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research).

centage of male school leavers without a completed school certificate who were also unable to obtain a vocational training certificate has decreased over the last 50 years. In the 1930-cohort, 37 percent of them did not complete vocational education, while in the cohorts 1964/71 about 27 percent did not do so. Despite this (absolute) increasing success in vocational education, the relative distance between them and male youths with a completed lower secondary school certificate has grown. In the 1930-cohort, the

risk of not completing vocational education of non-graduates was approximately 1.5-times higher than that of the latter. However, in the cohorts 1964/71, it was fully 5.5-times higher.

For women, we see a different picture, mainly caused by the considerable overall increase in female participation in general as well as vocational education. In absolute terms, the portion of women without a completed school certificate who also did not obtain a regular vocational training certificate dropped from more than 80 percent to about one third. In addition, the relative distance between them and women with a completed lower secondary school certificate rose, but insignificantly, from 1.8 to 2.1. The latter reflects the well-known fact that women holding only a lower secondary school certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*) have significantly poorer chances of entering training/apprenticeship than men holding the same school certificate. Thus, this stable discrepancy is not an expression of the success of less-educated women (i.e. of women without completed school certificate 'catching up'). This finding qualifies the statement by Hackett et al. (2001: 123) that "young people without a completed secondary school diploma do not always 'bring up the rear,' because their chances in training and their risks of unemployment do not differ significantly from those with a lower secondary school certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*).” This is true, but only for women.

Further analyses (with the life course data at hand) show that in the cohorts 1964/71, those school leavers without a completed school certificate who were channeled into vocational preparation measures described above obtained a regular vocational certificate (by age 25) to a much lower extent than did those who could directly enter into regular vocational education. About 40 percent of the former and less than 20 percent of the latter did not complete a regular vocational certificate by age 25. Thus, many of them – especially those who participated in 'measures' – did experience a continuing sequence of failure in both school and vocational education which they themselves and their environment frequently interpreted as a series of 'personal defeats': they seem to have had 'so many chances' and yet they missed or wasted them – an interpretation that risks becoming firmly fixed in these less-educated youths' self-conceptions (Heinz 1996: 152).

Finally, we come to the *third* negative answer to the question of whether the almost total participation of these low-school achievers in the vocational training system enabled them to eventually find their way into the *normal biography*. It refers to the occupations in which they were trained, if

they did enter regular training. Even those young people who succeeded in obtaining a regular vocational certificate – after having ‘failed’ in secondary school – face a significantly higher risk of unemployment in their future occupation than their trained cohort-contemporaries with a completed secondary school degree. The main reason for this is that the occupations, in which they could enter training, are the so-called ‘occupations suitable for disabled persons’ as well as lower-tier skilled trades or lower-tier skilled occupations in agriculture and domestic services. Yet in Germany today, these occupations constitute the most unstable economic sectors, and are the ones most heavily threatened by a shrinking labor demand, low(er) job security, and a high risk of dismissal/unemployment. Furthermore, while training in these occupations may be considered “regular”, they usually take place either outside firms or in small businesses, which may not at all or much less frequently offer a permanent job after completion of training than do most medium-sized and large firms. Ultimately, regardless of their successful completion of vocational training, these individuals nonetheless face a significantly higher risk of unemployment and, thus, of renewed failure as they transition into labor markets.

In sum, the presented findings reveal that the almost complete (but in part undesired) ‘integration’ of low-school achievers into the vocational education system did not, indeed does not, lead to an equal participation. Aside from the 12 percent who never participated in (pre)vocational training at all, 7 percent only attended vocational preparation measures. About one quarter of them did participate in both measures and training, and 56 percent could enter regular vocational education in which some of them were successful, while others again failed. However, as we will see in the following, for many of them, neither their participation in ‘measures’ nor in regular training (in mostly inferior occupations) could pave the way into gainful and stable employment. This is true despite or, it would be more accurate to say, exactly because their ‘enforced’ and socially ‘expected’ vocational education participation entails the danger of once again demonstrating ‘failed’ attempts to attain qualifications. As a result, for the majority of them, the *normal biography* remains an unattained goal.

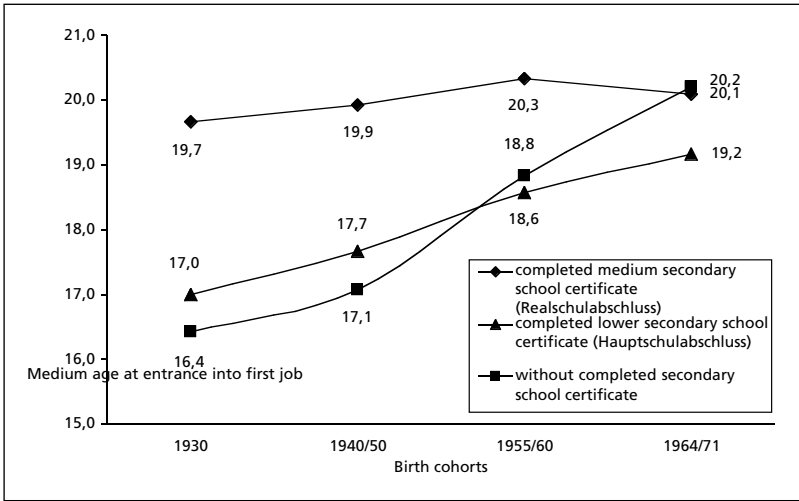
5. Their increasing ‘failure’ to enter into regular employment

Lastly, we address the question on the consequences of low general and vocational educational attainment in labor markets: What do the labor market entry and early employment biographies of these young people (up

to age 25) look like? Figure 4 shows the median age at entrance into the first job (lasting at least 6 months). The cohort comparison of this median age (by which 50 percent of the members of a given educational group had entered their first job) shows that in the younger cohorts, the labor market entry for school leavers without completed school certificate took place much later than it did in the older birth cohorts. While in the 1930-cohort their median age of labor market entry was about at the age of 16 years and five months, in the cohorts of 1964/71 it lasted until the age of 20 years and two months. Over the cohorts, the difference amounts to 45 months, or almost four years. (The corresponding inter-cohort difference in median ages at the end of schooling was 'only' 28 months.)

In comparison to those youths who finished school with the lowest secondary school degree (*Hauptschulabschluss*), in the younger cohorts (1964/71) the entry of the non-graduates to regular employment did not take place earlier, but indeed almost one year later, despite the fact that many more of the former also completed a regular training program (of

FIGURE 4: MEDIAN AGE WHEN ENTERING THE FIRST JOB (LASTING AT LEAST 6 MONTHS)
(Age in years; only native West Germans)



Source: German Life History Studies (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Study of the cohorts 1964 and 1971 (Max Planck Institute and Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research).

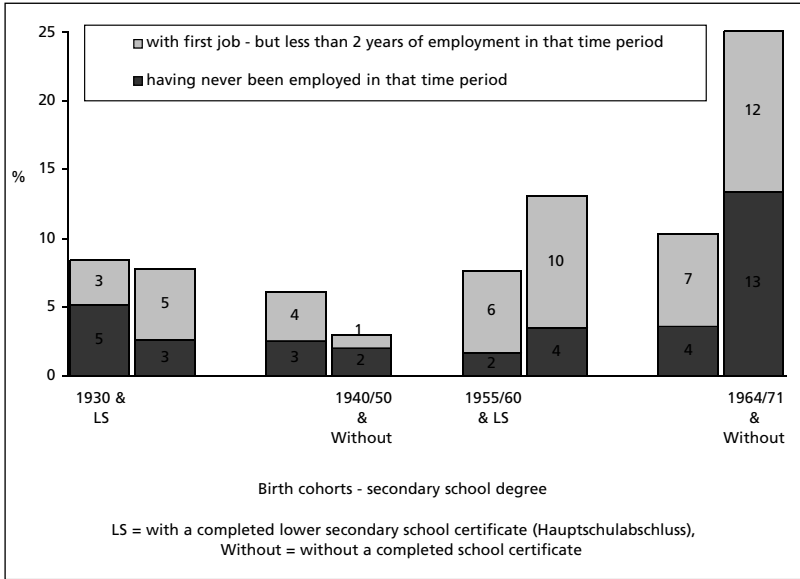
two years and a half or three years) before entering into employment. Instead of at the age of 20 years and two months for non-graduates, half of the youths with *Hauptschulabschluss* already had their first job at the age of 19 years and two months, or a year earlier. This difference exists only for the cohorts 1964 and 1971. In the 1930- and 1940/50-cohorts, their labor market entrances were still half a year before those with a lower secondary school certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*), and in the 1955/1960-cohort, labor market entry took place almost simultaneously for both groups. This development ‘matches’ the timing of the introduction of new labor policy/pre-vocational measures for less-educated youths as well as with the expansion of already existing measures. This indicates that the reversing of the median age pattern at entry into the labor market by school degree is, at least partly, related to these official training and employment measures. These programs seem to not only ‘delay’ youths’ labor market entrance, but also facilitate the interpretation of their unsuccessful participation in vocational education as further ‘evidence’ of lower trainability and thus, lower employability.

For the cohorts 1964/71, there was only a small difference between men and women in terms of median entry age (Figure on gender differences not presented here). First employment was usually six months earlier for men than for women. The differences *within* the gender groups between young people with and without a lower school certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss*) were much larger. Male school leavers with a *Hauptschulabschluss* entered employment one year earlier than men without a completed school certificate, and female school leavers with a *Hauptschulabschluss* entered employment even two years earlier than female non-graduates (because the former entered employment more frequently without vocational education than did male school leavers with a *Hauptschulabschluss*, see Figure 3).⁹

Given the participation in vocational preparation measures and other non-regular training programs by youths without a completed school certificate as well as their often considerably ‘delayed’ entry into employment, their early work histories display the following *cumulative picture*: In the cohorts 1964/71, 19 percent of these uncertified young men were unem-

⁹ It is to add that in Germany, the role of on-the-job training is lower than in many/most other countries. Moreover, related to the ubiquity and strength of vocational training, once persons have entered the labor market *without* completed vocational education it is unlikely that they will (re-)enter vocational training programs later in life (especially after age 25).

FIGURE 5: PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOL LEAVERS WITH AND WITHOUT A LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL CERTIFICATE WHO HAD BEEN EMPLOYED (IN TOTAL) FOR LESS THAN 2 YEARS BETWEEN THE END OF SCHOOLING AND AGE 25 (In percent; only naive West Germans)



Source: German Life History Studies (Max Planck Institute for Human Development), Study of the cohorts 1964 and 1971 (Max Planck Institute and Institute for Labor Market and Occupational Research).

ployed for more than 12 months between leaving school and the age of 25¹⁰ (during this time they were neither employed nor in school, in vocational preparation, in vocational training or serving in the military). This percentage has increased over the cohorts. In the cohorts 1940/50 and 1955/60, it was only six and 11 percent respectively (the 1930-cohort has been left aside here because of the tumultuous situation immediately following WWII). Moreover, today the risk of unemployment is significantly higher for men without a completed school certificate than for all other educa-

¹⁰ This is twice as high as for school leavers with a lower secondary school degree (Hauptschulabschluss). It should be noted that in Germany, even six months of unemployment are considered a critical duration for persons under the age of 25 (Karr 1999: 3).

tional groups. For women, unemployment experience (of 12 months between leaving school and age 25) has decreased over the cohorts, but for women without a completed school certificate, it has remained extremely high at 28 percent (again, women with the lowest secondary school certificate share the same fate as non-graduated women).

As a result, Figure 5 shows that in the youngest cohorts, about one quarter of the men and women without a completed school certificate were employed less than two years between leaving school and the age of 25 (which is usually a period of six to seven years!). This percentage has increased significantly over the cohorts (for men from five to 26 percent, and for women from 11 to 25 percent). Also in comparison to those who did only graduate with the lower secondary school certificate (a *Hauptschulabschluss*), it has increased exponentially.

In addition, the percentage of young non-graduates who had not even entered employment at the time of the interview (see details in Figure 2) also increased dramatically. In the cohorts 1964/71, both for men and for women without a secondary school certificate, about 13 percent had not (yet) been employed for at least a six-month period (for persons with a *Hauptschulabschluss*, it was only 4 percent). In the 1955/60-cohort (with a comparable age at the time of the interview), almost no men and only seven percent of women had not been employed for a six-month period after leaving school.

Their significantly lower rate of completing training and their relatively unstable employment situation in the occupations they were trained for – regardless of whether or not they completed regular vocational training – significantly raised their risks of having discontinuous employment histories consisting of low-skill jobs and recurring spells of unemployment, if not facing general exclusion from the labor market. And for many of them, the *normal biography* again remained an “unfulfilled duty” or an “open-ended transition history” (Tully/Wahler 1985).

6. Conclusion: The hopes and duties of attaining a normal biography

The findings presented here show that in Germany today, young adults without a completed school certificate increasingly participate in the highly regulated and strongly linearly conceptualized school-to-work trajectories. For many of them, however, this institutionalization of an extensive set of labor policy (pre-)vocational training measures hardly improves their competitiveness on the labor market: instead of offering real ‘alternative’

school-to-work transitions, they steer them away from the *normal biography* and contribute ultimately to their social marginalization. Furthermore, the participation in these special measures officially define these young people as 'non-trainable' or 'non-employable'. Because of their increasing yet partial integration into the diverse stages of the *normal biography* and the institutional risks of recurring educational failure caused, they increasingly face institutionalized transition risks and systemic dead-ends (Stauber/Walther 1999: 3, 56). These stages define for them new 'duties of normalization.' They are expected to fulfill them; the school systems and the pre-vocational education institutions, however, do not provide them with the resources necessary to do so.

Taking into account the labeling character of the institutionally defined category 'low education' (cf. also Allmendinger 1999; Allmendinger/Leibfried 2002; Solga 2003b), the 'normalization duties' attached to this expanded integration ultimately mark new points or stations of failure. Due to changed educational norms as well as – allegedly or actually – risen job requirements, they are expected to make continuously attempts to fulfill these 'normalization duties.' At the same time, they have decreasing chances of finding their way out of these pre-vocational/labor market incentive measures and into permanent gainful employment. Missed or failed opportunities and the concomitant processes of discreditory labeling, both external and self-imposed, increase the danger of 'institutional damages' to their social identity and self-schema – transforming low educational achievement into a social stigma in our 'educated societies' (Riesman 1967/1997: 266). In this sense, it is also questionable whether young people who have low vocational qualifications and have not embarked on the *normal biography* have been (or are being) imparted the capabilities that will open up to them degrees of freedom in leading an accepted and self-determined life (Sen 1995).

This rather pessimistic picture may be somewhat exaggerated in two respects. *First*, a significant number of these individuals, as presented above, actually did succeed in attaining eventually a *normal biography* – namely, those who could enter regular vocational training programs and on this basis eventually found their way into a steady working life. However, as far as attaining a *normal biography* can be indicated by their employment biographies up to the age of 25¹¹, in the birth cohorts 1964 and 1971

¹¹ The evaluation of 'successful' biographies is constructed by a simultaneous existence of

less than 40 percent of them could do so.¹² However, it is important to remember that only native West Germans were included in the analyses and that school leavers from a *Sonderschule* were significantly underrepresented. The well-known findings on the precarious transition patterns of youths from immigrant backgrounds and from special schools for disabled children strongly suggest that they have a much harder time than the individuals reported on here (cf. Solga 2003a). Therefore, conversely one could argue that the picture presented here actually understates the difficulties of young people leaving school without a completed school certificate.

Second, I have not considered these individuals' own 'contributions' to their non-attainment of a *normal biography* and their personal 'capacity to resist' the society's 'normalization duties' (Kohli 1985: 20). With respect to the paper's main question – to what degree the institutional risks of exclusion and related consequences of 'institutionally perpetrated identity damage' have become more severe – however, my analyses have shown that despite or because of the individuals' increasing educational efforts 'deviations' from the *normal biography* have become even more critical, not less. Furthermore, my analyses have demonstrated how these young people's deviations from the *normal biography* are produced by the very institutions designed to aid them in life planning and career promotion.

In concluding my theoretical line of argumentation and its empirical foundation with respect to the causal direction of explanation, I argue that the school-to-work biographies of these less-educated youths do not constitute explanatory (independent) variables, but rather the dependent variable in the equation of educational and life course inequalities. In terms of generalization, however, it is important to stress that these findings may be specific to (West) Germany and do not apply directly to other institutional contexts where vocational training does not constitute a 'normal' status passage in early adulthood (cf. Solga 2003b, chapter 11). That question could profitably be addressed by further research that would test its applicability in other countries.

three characteristics: (1) holding a completed regular occupational qualification at age 25, (2) having been employed for more than one year between leaving school and age 25, and (3) having been unemployed for less than 7 months in this time period.

¹² Among those who finished school with either a completed lower or a medium level secondary school certificate (*Hauptschulabschluss* or *Realschulabschluss*) about 70 percent entered a rather 'steady' worklife until age 25.

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Averil Clarke, Assistant Professor of Sociology, obtained her PhD from the University of Pennsylvania in 2002; her dissertation, entitled *I do if I could: marriage, meaning and the social reproduction of inequality* uses qualitative and quantitative sources and techniques to explore the relationship between family formation, race, class and gender stratification among African American women.

Deborah Davis, Professor of Sociology, is currently researching the new class structure of urban China and the social consequences of privatizing home ownership. Her primary teaching interests are comparative sociology, inequality, stratification, and contemporary Chinese society.

Ron Eyerman, Professor of Sociology, received his BA from the New School for Social Research, a Masters in Labor and Industrial Relations from the University of Oregon, and his Doctorate at the University of Lund, Sweden. He is the author of several recent books, including *Music and Social Movements* and *Cultural Trauma* both from Cambridge University Press. His interests include cultural and social movement theory, critical theory, cultural Studies and the sociology of the arts.

Paul Gilroy, Professor of Sociology and African American Studies. His research interests lie in three principal areas: political sociology and political philosophy in particular the relationship between multiculturalism, hierarchy, difference and democracy; the development of black vernacular and popular cultures, especially literature, music and the social relations that support it; and the formation and reproduction of ethnic and racialised identity.

Philip Gorski, Adjunct Professor of Sociology, works in historical and comparative sociology. His research is in early modern Europe, particularly in Germany and Holland, focusing on the interaction of religion and state building. His recent book, *The Disciplinary Revolution*, proposes a new theory of the emergence of the modern state. He has also developed a strong interest in contemporary religion.

Lawrence P. King, Associate Professor of Sociology, is a comparativist who studies the intersection of political processes, social structure and eco-

conomic institutions. He has conducted research on state terror in Uganda, and is currently researching the emergence and structure of three distinct types of capitalist systems within the postcommunist world.

Karl Ulrich Mayer, Professor of Sociology, works in the areas of stratification, education, labor markets, life course and aging. He has done empirical quantitative research on images of society, intergenerational social mobility, vocational training, higher education, job shifts and career mobility, labor market segmentation, and the transformation of East Germany.

Alondra Nelson, Assistant Professor of Sociology and African American Studies. Her research and teaching interests are in the areas of the sociology of health, illness and the body; the sociology of knowledge; social stratification (race, class, gender); social movements; and social and cultural theory.

Christopher Rhomberg, Associate Professor of Sociology, does research and teaches in the areas of political sociology and social movements, urban sociology, race and ethnicity, and historical methods. He is currently developing a project on alliances between labor unions and community organizations in selected U.S. cities. Other research interests include the labor of cultural workers, and collective action involving mass media organizations, in particular the 1995-2000 Detroit Newspaper Strike.

Andrew Schrank, Assistant Professor of Sociology, works on the sources and consequences of foreign investment, local entrepreneurship, and economic transformation in the Third World. He has undertaken fieldwork in the Dominican Republic and Mexico, and hopes to add more countries to the list in the near future. He is currently completing a book manuscript on the social foundations of economic diversification in the Caribbean Basin.

Rachel Sherman, Assistant Professor, obtained her PhD in 2003 from the University of California, Berkeley. Her dissertation, based primarily on ethnographic research, is entitled "Class Acts: Producing and Consuming Luxury Service in Hotels." The project, situated in the sociology of work, is mainly concerned with what luxury service is, how it is produced, and how workers and guests in luxury hotels negotiate the structural and interactive inequality between them. She has also researched the revitalization of the

contemporary labor movement in the U.S and on the Mexican state's responses to Mexican emigration in the 20th century.

Philip Smith, Assistant Professor of Sociology researches in the area of social and cultural theory, cultural sociology and criminology. Working mostly from a Durkheimian perspective, he is primarily concerned with the role of symbolic codes, narratives, classifications, morality and rituals in social life and the ways that these structure conflict, identity and action.

Peter Stamatov, Assistant Professor, does research on the sociology of culture, ethnicity and nationhood, social movements, and globalization in the context of modern Europe. His dissertation focused on the neglected moral aspects of globalization by examining the religious roots of practices and institutions concerned with the welfare of geographically distant strangers in nineteenth-century England. In another project, he investigates the political implications of musical theater in nineteenth-century Europe.

Ivan Szelenyi, the William Graham Sumner Professor of Sociology, works on social inequalities from a comparative and historical perspective. Recently he conducted large scale surveys on changing stratification system in European post-communist countries and currently he is working on poverty and ethnicity in transitional societies.

Vron Ware, Lecturer in Sociology and Women and Gender Studies, focuses on feminism and racism. She has contributed to transatlantic debates on gender and the social construction of whiteness. Her second area of research and teaching interests lies in Urban Studies, and particularly in the history of urban (and rural) landscapes, formations of identity and place, and urban cultures.

Emeriti Faculty

David E. Apter, Henry J. Heinz II Professor Emeritus of Comparative Political and Social Development, has worked in the areas of development, comparative politics and political violence. He is currently working on discursive analysis of politics.

Wendell Bell, is a Professor Emeritus of Sociology and Senior Research Scientist, Center for Comparative Research. His current research focuses on the study of the future, especially on the coming global society and global ethics, and the sociology of good and evil.

Kai Erikson, William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor Emeritus of Sociology and American Studies, is past president of the American Sociological Association. He is the author of *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* and of *Everything In Its Path*. His latest book is entitled *A New Species of Trouble: Explorations in Disaster, Trauma, and Community*. His research and teaching interests include American communities, human disasters, and ethnonational conflict.

Juan J. Linz, Sterling Professor Emeritus of Political and Social Science. His research interests are the comparative study of regimes, particularly authoritarian regimes, and transitions to democracy in Southern Europe and Latin America; the comparative study of parties, elections, elites and public opinion in Europe (mainly Spain, Italy, and Germany); religion, intellectuals and politics. He is working on Spanish politics in the transition from authoritarianism to democracy and presidentialism- parliamentarism, does it make a difference.

Charles B. Perrow, Professor Emeritus of Sociology, is an organizational theorist. His interests include the development of capitalism in the 19th Century; the radical movements of the 1960's; Marxian theories of industrialization and of contemporary crises; accidents in such high risk systems as nuclear plants, air transport, DNA research and chemical plants; and protecting the nation's critical infrastructure from natural, technological, and deliberate disasters.

Albert J. Reiss, Jr., William Graham Sumner Professor of Sociology Emeritus. His research and teaching interests are social organization, deviant behavior and social control, and methodology. He currently is co-director of a consortium project on Human Development and Criminal Behavior.

Immanuel Wallerstein, Senior Research Scholar, is the former President of the International Sociological Association (1994-1998), and chair of

the international Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences (1993-1995).. He writes in three domains of world-systems analysis: the historical development of the modern world-system; the contemporary crisis of the capitalist world-economy; the structures of knowledge. Books in each of these domains include respectively *The Modern World-System* (3 vol.); *Utopistics, or Historical Choices for the Twenty-first Century*; *Unthinking Social Science: The Limits of Nineteenth-Century Paradigms*.

Stanton Wheeler, Ford Foundation Professor of Law and the Social Sciences. His teaching and research interests include crime and the criminal justice system, with special attention to white collar crime, and socio-legal aspects of popular culture, including sports and music.

Research Centers

Center for Comparative Research

Director: Phil Gorski

The mission of the Center for Comparative Research is to promote theory-driven, empirically rigorous comparative research. The term "comparative" is broadly defined. Some of the research projects compare countries in different historical periods; other projects may aim at comparative studies of cultures, ethnic groups, organizations or public policies. However, the study of transitional societies, particularly the problem of transition from authoritarianism/ totalitarianism to democracy, and the transformation of command economies into market economies is of importance to many members of the Center. CCR's primary task is to develop a number of research programs, preferably of a collaborative nature, in which the faculty from various disciplines would participate. Examples of work which provide inspiration for our current effort include Almond and Verba's study of civic culture, the "transition to democracy" program by Philippe Schmitter and others, and the SSRC "state project" directed by Rueschemeyer, Skocpol, and Tilly. The CCR sponsors a weekly colloquium, workshops, an annual graduate student retreat, and post-doctoral research fellowships. Website: <http://www.yale.edu/ccr>

Center for Cultural Sociology

Directors: Jeffrey Alexander and Ron Eyerman

Associate Director: Philip Smith

The center for Cultural Sociology provides a focus for meaning-centered analysis in the social science tradition, with openings to normative themes such as democracy, justice, tolerance and civility. Drawing on classical and contemporary social and cultural theory, CCS students and researchers develop concepts and methods that illuminate the cultural texture of social life at both individual and collective levels. They apply these

to understanding the full range of activities and processes from local to global levels. Because culture is always closely intertwined with the patterning of social organization, the CCS is centrally concerned with institutional life and the intersection of culture with social structure. Its own institutional life is carried on through the ongoing Workshop, seminars and courses offered by CCS faculty and students, guest lectures from distinguished visiting scholars and occasional conferences. Through activities such as these, CCS also provides a meeting point for the humanities and social sciences, both at Yale and beyond. Website: <http://research.yale.edu/ccs/index.html>

Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course (CIQLE)

Director: Karl Ulrich Mayer

Associate Director: Hannah Brückner

The mission of the Center is to support empirical research on inequalities of social class, generation and gender and how they are brought about through processes across the life course. Substantively, our work focuses on human development and family formation, educational trajectories, vocational training, labor market entry, occupational careers and income trajectories, retirement and aging as well as corresponding social policies. Methodologically, the Center for Research on Inequalities and the Life Course concentrates on models and techniques for the analysis of longitudinal data. Theoretically, a main interest is to explain individual level life course processes through macro level contexts of societal institutions and socio-economic conditions changing across time and varying across societies. The Center is the home of the data archive of the German Life History Study (GLHS) comprising more than 12,500 life histories of West Germans and East Germans born between 1890 and 1971. Current projects cover the following areas: 1) Gender Inequalities in the Life Course: US and West German Men and Women Born in the Fifties; 2) Social Networks and Adolescent Risk Behavior; 3) Life Courses in the Transition from Communism in Poland and East Germany; 4) Inequalities in Access to Higher Education and Institutional Differentiation in a Cross-National Perspective; 5) Education and Labor Market Entry of German Women and Men born 1964 and 1971. 6) Life Courses in Advanced Political Economies (POLIS). Website: <http://www.yale.edu/socdept/CIQLE>

Yale Sociology Colloquia Series Fall and Spring 2004

January 15

Joel Podolny

(Harvard)

"Hedonic and Transcendental Conceptions of Value"

January 22

Marta Tienda

(Princeton)

"Lessons from Texas on Affirmative Action and Its Discontents"

January 29

Heike Solga

(Max Planck Institute for Human Development)

The Rise of Educational Disadvantage in Germany"

February 5

Ute Frevert

(Yale)

"Europeanizing Germany's 20th century"

February 12

Evelyn Nakano Glenn

(University of California, Berkeley)

"Unequal Freedom" on the history of unfree labor in Hawaii

February 19

Fuyuki Kurasawa

(New York University)

"Globalization and the Question of Human Solidarity"

March 4

Diane Vaughan

(Boston College)

"Distinction, Class, and the Construction of Occupational Boundaries:
The Case of Air Traffic Control"

Date, Time, and Venue Change

March 29 (MONDAY)

4:30 - 6:00, Room 102B Urban Hall, 140 Prospect Street

Rick Fantasia

(Smith College)

"'Who Killed Bernard Loiseau?' Uncovering the Symbolic Economy of
Fast Food in the World of Haute Cuisine"

April 1

Katherine Newman

(Harvard)

"The Social Roots of Rampage School Shootings"

April 8

Mary Jo Hatch

(UVA)

"The Hermeneutics of Corporate Branding"

April 15

Bruce Western

(Princeton)

"Did the New Inequality Cause the American Prison Boom?"

April 21

David Stark

(Columbia)

12:30 – 2:00

"The Social Times of Network Spaces: Sequence Analysis of Network
Formation and Foreign Investment in Hungary, 1987-2001 "

April 22

Tia DeNora

(Exeter)

"Towards a New Sociology of Music"

September 9

Juliet Schor

(Boston College)

"Is Consumer Culture Bad for Children? Empirical Evidence Meets Revisionist Theory"

September 23

Nilufer Gole

(EHESS, Paris)

"The Public Debate on the Islamic Headscarf in France and Turkey; an Intercultural Comparative Reading"

September 30

Phil Morgan

(Duke University)

"Revisiting the Link Between Sex of Children and Divorce"

October 7

Andy Bennett

(University of Surrey)

"Ageing Rockers and Die Hard Punks: When Youth Culture Meets Middle Age"

October 14

Jan Glete

(University of Stockholm)

"State Formation, Protection-selling and Political Entrepreneurship in Early Modern Europe"

October 21

John Torpey

(University of British Columbia)

"On Reparations Politics"

October 28

Francesca Polletta

(Columbia University)

"Is Telling Stories Good For Democracy?"

November 4

Steve Lopez

(Ohio State University)

"The Context of Social Movement Participation."

November 11

David Harvey

(CUNY Graduate Center)

"Neo-liberalism and the restoration of class power"

November 18

Leslie McCall

(Rutgers University)

"Do They Know and Do They Care? Americans' Awareness of Rising Inequality"

December 2

Mary Patillo

(Northwestern University)

"Black Gentrification: Lessons on Race, Class, and Politics"

December 9

Beverly Silver

(John Hopkins University)

"From Detroit to Shanghai? : Labor Militancy and Capital Relocation in the Automobile Industry Since the 1930s"

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