What is it like to become an adult in twenty-first-century America?

While there are many answers to that question, one thing is certain. The journey to adulthood that today’s twentysomethings make is not the same as the one completed by their parents or grandparents. Becoming an adult in America in the immediate postwar period of the 1950s was envisioned as a remarkably uniform, swift, and unproblematic process: finish school, get a job and get married, set up an independent household, have kids, and settle into a career as a single-earner, two-parent family. But almost as soon as this “Leave It to Beaver” lifestyle became an ideal that young Americans aspired to, subsequent social and economic transformations made it more and more difficult to achieve.1 Indeed, scholars who study the life course have demonstrated that the transition from adolescence to adulthood has in recent years become more complicated, uncertain, and extended than ever before (Furstenberg et al. 2004; Settersten et al. 2005 [see, especially, chapters by Fussell and Furstenberg; Mouw; and Osgood et al.]). This is not only happening in the United States, but also characterizes other developed countries in Western Europe and Japan (Brinton 2011; Newman and Aptekar 2007).

The reasons for these changes are complicated—including changes in gender norms that have led women into the workforce in unprecedented numbers, growth in the numbers of people never marrying, and growth in the ability to postpone marriage and yet still have sexual relationships. There have also been increases in the amount of schooling...
many Americans achieve—with the growth of prolonged schooling, the entry into the labor force has been delayed. In addition, the rise of housing prices in many parts of the nation, along with rising educational expectations, means that many young people find it hard to live independently even if they would like to. So, too, the severe recession that began in 2008 has restricted work opportunities for young people, as well as their ability to live independently, exacerbating many of the long-term trends that had led to delays in independence for young adults. And the rise of nonmarital childbearing means that many young people become parents before marrying or even forming stable long-term relationships.

As the traditional markers of the transition to adulthood become decoupled from each other and the line between adolescence and full-fledged adulthood becomes less sharp, many young people face a period of prolonged transition—with marriage postponed, education prolonged, and full-time employment taking longer to attain. Without these extrinsic markers, how does a young person know when he/she is a grown-up? If norms about independence and the “right” age to leave home or achieve financial independence are changing, how do families know whether their children are “normal” or not? Today’s fretful parents of twentysomething offspring would be shocked to learn that half a century ago, experts feared young people were actually growing up too fast and losing out on the support and time they needed to acquire the sound psychological footing required for a healthy adulthood.

Indeed the image in popular culture of young adults is that they are a problem, that they refuse to grow up. A 2005 Time magazine cover story exhorted the nation to “Meet the Twixters,” twixter being the term they coined for the twentysomething who just can’t seem to grow up (Grossman 2005). The twixter is in her/his mid-20s, has finished college (not always in four years), and doesn’t yet have a distinguishable career. Usually, the twixter is living back at home with vexed upper-middle-class parents who had been expecting at this stage of their lives to preside over an empty nest. Other treatments in popular magazines and in the cinema have variously chronicled the new “adultolescent” stage of life where young people have not quite left adolescence behind nor yet fully attained adulthood, or lampooned people who just refuse to grow up and get on with their lives—such as the character played by Matthew McConaughey in the film Failure to Launch (Tyre 2002).

As the recognition that young adulthood is now different has seeped into popular consciousness, a mini-industry has arisen to troubleshoot the problems faced by young adults. For instance, the phrase “Thirty is
the new twenty” has been elevated to the popular zeitgeist courtesy of Dr. Melfi, Tony Soprano’s therapist on the HBO series The Sopranos, who used it to explain the difficulties that A.J., Tony’s ne’er-do-well son, was experiencing in becoming an adult. This new “problem” of twenty-somethings who aren’t grown up has spawned a number of self-help books with titles like The Quarter-Life Crisis, and Twenty-Something, Twenty-Everything. These books offer advice to young people overwhelmed by the freedom and self-exploration that define the postcollege experience.

There has also been an academic discovery of the stage of life known as “young adulthood” or “emerging adulthood.” Scholars have begun to ask whether this is a new stage of life, brought about by changes in the economy and social norms that create a long period of quasi-adulthood, and whether it represents a period of “exploration” of adult roles, or “drift.” While the full psychological and sociological implications of these changes remain to be fully understood, it is clear that young adults face a less scripted and more individualistic transition from teenager to full adult, and it is clear that many of our societal institutions are only beginning to catch up with these changes. For instance, most young people do not move directly from school into full-time employment at jobs that provide health insurance. Yet most insurance policies used to end when a young person finished school or turned 19, leaving young adults one of the groups in our society least likely to have health insurance. This was addressed with the 2010 Health Care Reform law, which allows young people to remain on their parents’ health insurance through age 25.

This book explores this new period of young adulthood, focusing on two important themes—the role of local context in shaping the transition to adulthood, and the subjective experience of young adults themselves as they experience this period of change, possibility, and uncertainty. The interplay between the structural changes in the economy, the housing market, and the educational system, and the cultural changes in norms and expectations about the “normal” course of behavior for young adults, lies at the heart of our analyses. This book reports on young adults we interviewed in four different sites in America—rural Iowa, Minneapolis, San Diego, and New York City. Young people age 18–34 were interviewed about their life histories, the choices they are making about education, work, and relationships, and their subjective understandings of where they are in the life course. In the portrait that emerges, huge regional differences are evident across sites—indeed, national averages obscure some of the ways in which local labor, housing, and education
opportunities structure people’s lives. The subjective experience of young adulthood is also highlighted here. Young people discuss how they make choices about big life transitions and how that makes them feel. We show in the pages that follow that norms about adulthood have changed—that young people are more aware of how their lives are less scheduled and scripted than their parents’ and grandparents’ were, and yet we show how young people still manage to make distinctions that mark their passage from child and teenager into full-fledged adults.

In addition to regional diversity, the portrait that emerges in the book also highlights class and ethnic diversity. Much of the popular discussion of the issues of young adulthood focuses on the problems of middle-class young adults. The popular press abounds with stories of people who graduate from college and move back home with mom and dad, sometimes for an indeterminate period of time, or young people who eschew adult responsibilities of job and family in order to travel or explore their artistic side. But the transition to adulthood has also changed for the poor and the working class. While some middle-class kids have the institutional support of residential colleges to support them in a supervised way as they learn to live without their parents, working-class and poor kids do not have those institutional supports. They often struggle to combine education, part-time work, and parenting while remaining in their parents’ home.

Because twentysomethings have vastly different resources in terms of human, social, economic, and cultural capital, it is hardly surprising that some young people face far more treacherous journeys than others during this critical time of life. Some young people neglect school to enter the labor force but find that, without training, their opportunities are severely curtailed in a high-tech global economy. A small number, less than 3 percent, will join the military (which provides some of those institutional supports that middle-class kids get from residential colleges), while others seem to drift along bouncing from job to job, school to school, aimlessly. Still others will opt out of school and work and start families during their twentysomething years.

Then there are the vulnerable and disconnected youth, who, some estimates suggest, account for about 14 percent of 18- to 24-year-olds. These youth face a truly “perilous passage” as they come of age (Hagan and McCarthy 2005). Many disconnected youth have aged out of the foster care system, have experienced bouts of homelessness, or have spent time in juvenile detention facilities, and these experiences leave them
marginalized and vulnerable. Many disconnected youth do not have high school diplomas, which restricts their employment and earning opportunities in the short and long term. Disconnected youth also disproportionately experience an array of other physical, psychological, and emotional problems, which further degrade their quality of life. Perhaps most disturbingly for a segment of Americans, prison is the site of their transition to adulthood. Sociologist Bruce Western documents that among young male dropouts, 5 percent of whites and of Hispanics are in prison. Among African American young male high school dropouts, 29 percent are in prison. By their mid-thirties, 6 percent of whites and 30 percent of black men who did not attend college will have a criminal record (Western et al. 2004). We interviewed some young men who had been in prison and note how profoundly it has affected their lives and will affect their life chances. To date, no one has studied the subjective experience of young adulthood in prisons in the United States, but the depressing statistics tell us that for far too many young men, it is the institutional context for their coming of age. By including a variety of young people with different socioeconomic and familial resources in this book, we hope to provide a corrective to the media stories of young adulthood, which tend to privilege the stories of the upper-middle class.

This generation of 18- to 34-year-olds is also remarkably ethnically diverse. The large wave of international migration that began in the 1960s and continues unabated adds a million or more immigrants to the United States each year, many of them concentrated in the young adult years. And many people in this age group are the young adult children of immigrants—the second generation. Of the 67.3 million (civilian, noninstitutionalized) young people born between 1971 and 1987, and age 18–34 in 2006, nearly one of every five is an immigrant, and another 10 percent are second generation. Rumbaut and Komaie (2007) report that non-Hispanic whites are only 61 percent of this age group, Hispanics are another 18 percent, blacks are 13 percent, and Asians, 5 percent. We explore how different ethnic groups navigate the transition to adulthood, and how different cultural values about gender roles, living apart from parents, and when to have children interact with local opportunity structures to shape the experience of young adulthood.

Thus, *Coming of Age in America* was written to add to the ongoing scholarship on the transition to adulthood, and to do so in a manner that takes into account the diverse experiences of young adults in America. In the pages that follow, we will take you on a tour of the United States
and introduce you to young people from a variety of walks of life. We will learn about their experiences as they run, walk, or crawl toward becoming an adult. What do they say about leaving home (or not); finishing school (or not); getting a job (or not); getting married and starting a family (or not)? And what people, institutions, or resources help or hinder them on their journey? To answer these questions we designed an in-depth interview study that asked youth about their experiences leaving home, in education, in family and relationships, and in work and employment. We talked with them about religion, what they do in their leisure time, their experiences with the criminal justice system, and their plans for the future and how they interpret the past. These broad-ranging interviews uncovered a treasure trove of life experiences. We learned of the problems and difficulties many young adults face as they struggle in school, in work, or in relationships. We also heard how young adults succeed and about the people and institutions that have helped them as they come of age. In the following chapters we chronicle the stops and starts and failures and successes that form young people’s varied experience of this time of life.

Below we briefly outline the study, and we discuss how the transition to adulthood has changed in the United States over the last several decades and what developments have shaped this change. We also describe in brief the characteristics of the population of young adults in the United States derived from the census and survey data, and we outline the organization of the book.

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is part of a larger effort to understand and map the transition to adulthood in early twenty-first-century America that was funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The MacArthur Foundation sponsored the formation of the Research Network on the Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy in 2000, and the goal of this research group, which was made up of scholars from a range of disciplines, was to identify, define, and understand the changing nature of early adulthood. Over the past decade the network completed a number of studies on the transition to adulthood. The studies, reported in three volumes titled On the Frontier of Adulthood, On Your Own Without a Net, and The Price of Independence, deal with the changes in the transition to adulthood over the past several decades, and the specific
difficulties and challenges that vulnerable populations, such as youth aging out of foster care, face as they negotiate this stage of life. These volumes primarily use existing data and examine the transition to adulthood in aggregate rather than individual terms, and, while the work serves a vital role in mapping this new phase in life, what is missing are the stories and voices of young adults in contemporary America. To remedy the lack of research about the twentysomething years, the network commissioned an original qualitative study to investigate what it is like to come of age in America today.

Our research took advantage of large surveys that had already been conducted with young adults in San Diego (the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study [CILS]), in New York (the New York Immigrant Second Generation Study), and in Minneapolis/Saint Paul (the Youth Development Study). A sample of young people who had been interviewed on the phone or by mail for these larger studies were contacted by researchers and interviewed in person in taped life-history conversations. In addition, the study sought to incorporate the experiences of young people who grew up in nonmetropolitan small-town America. To fill this gap, a new study was commissioned in the town of Ellis, Iowa—a small farming and factory town where young people face a very different environment than in large cities.

The overall aim of this study is to offer a subjective portrait of young adulthood in a diverse set of contexts, from small-town Middle America to large metropolitan cities and all shades in between. To that end, the study is not a representative sample of all young adults in America. In each site, research teams recruited and interviewed people representing a broad array of life experiences so as to illustrate the diversity in coming-of-age stories and in pathways taken through early adulthood. In all, 437 interviews were conducted, lasting between one and four hours. They were transcribed and analyzed and form the core of the stories and conclusions we present here.

The interviewees were specifically chosen based on knowledge from the larger sample surveys about the various paths young people follow into adulthood. Though the subjects were chosen nonrandomly, each research team had a strategy to recruit people of young adult age in a number of different categories so as to maximize the diversity of life experiences and narratives in the study. So, for example, each research team interviewed people with a range of educational experiences; those who had completed a bachelor’s degree at a four-year college, those who
had dropped out of high school, or those who had gone to community college. Similarly, the research teams sought respondents who had a range of workforce experiences, from low-skill manufacturing and service jobs to those employed in professional occupations. In addition to this general approach to recruit people who represent different young adult experiences, each research team pursued a site-specific recruitment strategy. For example, the New York and San Diego sites interviewed people from many different racial and ethnic categories, as befits the burgeoning diversity of these sites. In the Minneapolis/St. Paul site, the research team recruited a subsample of Hmong to elucidate the experiences of this significant and culturally unique group. In Iowa, the research team interviewed a group of young adults who were currently serving or had formerly served in the military, as joining the armed forces seemed to be a much used and salient route out of Ellis for many young people.

One issue that arises in a qualitative study of this sort is the question of how the reader and the social scientist should interpret the narrative accounts provided by people in the interviews we conducted. We were interested in how young people themselves interpreted their own lives and gave meaning to the decisions and roles they adopted. Yet, we also know that people have a tendency to look back over their lives and see a narrative or story line that perhaps is clear in retrospect but was not there at the time of the lived experience. We also know that people will sometimes omit their own bad behaviors and ascribe good motives to themselves to think of themselves as good people and to present themselves that way to the world. Thus a period of unemployment, hard drinking, and living at home with mom and dad might be described to the interviewer as a time of “exploration of career options” rather than as a time of drift and clinical depression. At one level, there is not much we can do about this source of bias, as we do not have independent measures of young people’s behaviors apart from their own accounts. On the other hand, interviewers did their best to ask hard questions and listen sympathetically as young people described both the positive and negative aspects of the transition to adulthood. And there are some troubling stories in the pages that follow. In addition, the authors of each of the chapters point out when applicable the times in which interviewees are perhaps exaggerating the truth or oversimplifying more complex situations.

We provide further details on the sampling and the study itself, as well as quantitative portraits of the 437 young adults we surveyed, in the Methods appendix.
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE AN ADULT?

Maybe I’ll move back home and pay off my loans
Working nine to five, answering phones
Maybe I’ll just fall in love. That could solve it all
Philosophers say that’s enough
There surely must be more
Love ain’t the answer, nor is work
The truth eludes me so much it hurts
But I’m still having fun and I guess that’s the key
I’m a twentysomething and I’ll keep being me.

—Jaime Cullem, in his 2004 song “Twentysomething”

What does it mean to be an adult? In his misleadingly upbeat hit song “Twentysomething,” English singer-songwriter Jaime Cullem tries to figure out an answer, though, like many of his “generation next” peers, he seems overwhelmed by anxiety, indecision, and more than a little malaise. Now that adult status no longer seems to be conferred automatically at age 18 or 21, or even 25, many young people query what exactly it means to be an adult. Part of the answer is that what it means to be an adult varies greatly from society to society. In the United States, becoming an adult is achieved when a person takes on a set of socially valued roles associated with finishing schooling, leaving home, starting work, entering into serious relationships, and having children. In most accounts, it is this very accumulation of markers—a place of your own, a job, a relationship and children—that signals the assumption of the adult role. This is not to say that you are not an adult if you fulfill four out of the five conditions. Rather, the markers are indicative of the wider transition process that sees people leave adolescence behind and occupy positions with duties normally associated with adulthood.

The recent research on the transition to adulthood has uncovered important structural changes in American society that have, in turn, led to changes in norms, values and behaviors, and cultural understandings about adulthood. The interplay between structural changes in the American economy and institutional changes in the family and community have led to flux in the meaning of adulthood. The conversations we had with young people about becoming adults are a window into the process of cultural change in America. In the chapters in this book we present young people struggling to make sense of their own individual life trajectories in the midst of huge social changes they may not even be aware of.
Demographers, for example, have chronicled large changes in the timing and sequencing of the standard demographic markers of becoming adult. The extension of schooling beyond high school and the greater difficulty young people have in securing stable full-time employment after completing higher education mean that very few young people attain full economic and psychological independence at age 18 or 21.

American families are providing housing, economic, and psychological support for young people through their 20s and 30s. Because many people believe that most Americans do become independent at age 18, 21, or 25, many families believe they are exceptional in the aid they give to young adults. Recent estimates are that 40 percent of youth in their late teens or early twenties will move back in with their parents after a period of living apart from them—becoming “boomerang children” (Goldscheider and Goldscheider 1999). Yet most parents believe that this is an unusual event owing to some particular development in their own children’s experiences, often thinking they have done something wrong as parents in not preparing their children properly for independence. And while this period of quasi-independence is a strain on middle-class families, young adults from very poor families are further handicapped because they do not get this private assistance because their parents cannot afford to provide it or are no longer around to help out. For example, in many U.S. cities, young adults find it difficult to pay for housing straight out of school, and many are forced to return home to live with their parents while they save up enough money to move out (Holohan 2006). For some, parents help out with a deposit for rent or a down payment for a house, a practice known as “scaffolding,” but such assistance is normally the province of the middle class. At the other end of the class hierarchy, there are vulnerable youth for whom the transition to adulthood is particularly difficult. Young people aging out of the foster care system, or those who have experienced bouts of homelessness, usually do not have resources to draw on as they struggle to make ends meet; for example, many cannot find the three months rent usually needed to secure an apartment. Young adulthood can therefore be a period where inequality is reinforced and where the poor and the marginal have a much tougher time navigating this life-course period than their better-off counterparts.

Finally, many of our institutions and public policies are blind to these demographic and cultural changes and are still designed as if young people were fully independent at a much lower age than is actually the
case. Foster care ends abruptly at age 18 or 21 in many states, leading many young people who “age out” to become homeless. Colleges, both two-year and four-year, operate as if students were attending full-time and living at home or in a dorm. Yet only 27 percent of students in college in 1999–2000 were “traditional students,” defined as students who earned a high school degree and went immediately to a two- or four-year college where they attended full-time, with financial resources and support from parents and no work or only part-time work during the school year. Another 28 percent of students met the U.S. Department of Education’s definition of a nontraditional student, having four out of six of the following characteristics—receiving a GED instead of a high school diploma, delayed enrollment between high school and college, attending college part-time, working full-time while attending college, being financially independent from parents, or being a parent while attending college (Brock 2010).

Some institutions are beginning to change as the difference between the populations they serve and the populations they were designed to serve becomes clearer. Community colleges, which have always served more nontraditional students than four-year colleges do, have shifted classes to nighttime schedules to accommodate working students. They have added day care centers to the services they provide, recognizing that many of their students need that much more than a student recreation center designed for 18-year-olds with a lot of spare time. More and more four-year colleges are recognizing that their students take much longer than four years to graduate and have made sure that their academic requirements recognize this “long route” to the bachelor’s degree.

The military is an example of an institution that has been forced to change some of its practices and services as a result of the changing nature of young adulthood. The uniformed military service involves only 1 percent of the U.S. population, but it is the largest employer in the United States, larger even than Walmart. During the period of the draft before the advent of the all volunteer military in 1973, young people ordinarily spent the minimum amount of time in the military and quickly left after their tour of duty. Now young people are much more likely to see the military as their career and spend a great deal if not all of their young adulthood in uniform. The military has thus been at the forefront of developing programs to help personnel balance work and family life. The security of employment, the support of day care, and educational services and health care help to support earlier family formation.
among military personnel than among comparable natives. Military personnel marry earlier and have children earlier than civilians of the same backgrounds (Kelty et al. 2010).

A long historical view shows that the period of early and compact adulthood of 1950s America was, in many ways, unique. In the nineteenth century it was common to stay in your household of origin longer and delay marriage and having children compared to the early and middle parts of the twentieth century. The major societal transformation that led to these fundamental changes in how people live was the modernization of the economy that made it possible, especially for men, to find sustaining employment earlier in the life course and thus set up their own homes and families (Shanahan 2000). The average American in the early to middle part of the twentieth century completed the transition to adulthood by their early twenties in terms of achieving the markers of finishing school, leaving home, finding work, marrying, and having children. It is also worth noting that the long-term trend was for the transition events to become more “compact,” that is, the time between each event (moving away from home and marrying, for instance) was shortened, and it was taking less time overall to complete these transitions than for previous generations.

Other historical events and trends have impacted how and when we become adults. The Great Depression and World War II were events that enticed a greater proportion of women to join the workforce and thus slowed briefly the trend to shorter and more compact transitions, because women in the workforce tend to delay marriage and child rearing. The postwar economic boom, which saw many women leave the workforce, and the attendant marriage and baby booms cemented the trend to short and compact transitions. Young adults could find stable and sustaining work courtesy of the expanding economy, and could afford a place to live and have the opportunity for higher education, because of the rapid expansion of opportunities sponsored by the GI Bill. It was easier to attain adulthood under these conditions. Many women opted out of the labor force to raise families, and it was possible for working- and middle-class families to exist in a halfway decent lifestyle on one salary. So people set up home, married, and had children by their early twenties in the 1950s. In many ways, then, it is fair to say that the 1950s was a period in American society, especially when viewed in terms of coming of age, that was the culmination of a trend that had existed for several decades, where becoming an adult was defined for
most people in terms of a sequence of events that occurred close together in the late teens and early twenties. The modal experience of young Americans was to do this quickly.

The pattern that had crystallized by the 1950s began to unravel and change in the 1960s and 1970s as several developments reshaped the terrain of young adulthood, especially for women. The women’s movement and the expansion of postsecondary education meant that for many women there were opportunities to stay in school and enter the workforce that had not existed previously. These were unlike those during World War II because in that case women were needed to fill jobs vacated by men or to furnish the war effort, and the expectation was that the stay at work would be temporary for many. In contrast, the women who went back into the labor force from the 1960s onward were mostly doing so to carve out a career for themselves and gain a measure of financial independence. The expansion in the worlds of work and school also came at a time when the American economy was undergoing a wholesale reorganization, shifting from a manufacturing-based economy to one where the bulk of jobs are in the technical or service sectors. This economic transformation, often called deindustrialization, has had a profound effect on the transition to adulthood because it was no longer the case that one could secure a job with little or no education or training, and accordingly, getting at least a high school degree and further education became a priority for many Americans. It was possible to stay in school longer because of the expansion of higher education, but increasingly it has become a necessity to do so, and this has the effect of lengthening the transition to adulthood.

The trend that began in the 1960s and has continued until now is for the transition to adulthood to further expand. Now, Americans stay in school longer and they marry and have children later than they did in the 1950s and 1960s. In addition, in an increasingly postindustrial economy it has become more difficult for many people to maintain their standard of living. Income inequality in the United States has risen sharply since the 1970s, and one of the trends that this has solidified is that of dual-income couples (Freeman 1999). Workers are putting in more hours on the job to make ends meet (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Another trend that has impacted the early adult years is the demand for technological skill in the workplace, which has affirmed both the importance and necessity of educational credentials and/or training. Some young adults find that they have to go back to school to get the requisite skills and training that their
jobs demand, and as a result many zigzag back and forth from employment to school or combine the two, which has the result of lengthening the time it takes to finish school.

Historical and economic developments and changes impact how young Americans come of age, and within this larger context, there is a certain amount of innovation and adaptation. It is not as if young people are swept along by these macrolevel social forces. On the contrary, young people exercise a great deal of agency as they adjust to modern life. Part of the contribution of this book is to showcase this young adult agency in the variety of contexts and circumstances young adult Americans find themselves in. Young adults innovate, they change, they retrain, they multitask, and they make their lives livable even in the most difficult of circumstances.

**Cultural Change**

People make different choices on such matters as the importance and timing of marriage, when to have children, whether to live in multigenerational families, what constitutes success, how important education is, and what should be expected of men and women. The patterned beliefs and behaviors around these issues can be thought of as the cultural dynamics of young adulthood. A dynamic view of culture recognizes that cultural differences are socially constructed and evolve in response to changing circumstances. The chapters that follow provide a window into that dynamic process.

Orlando Patterson (2000, 208) argues that culture can be defined as a “repertoire of socially transmitted and intragenerationally generated ideas about how to live and make judgments, both in general terms and in regard to specific domains of life.” People inherit these cultural dispositions from previous generations through socialization and intragenerational learning from peers and the media. Culture constantly interacts with social structure as conditions change and humans innovate in the face of new situations. Patterson rightly cautions that cultural and non-cultural factors can be both independent and dependent variables in explaining any social phenomena. Thus as we study young adulthood we can examine how cultural beliefs about maturity and age-related social norms cause young people to move out of their parents’ home, perhaps before they can fully afford to live independently. But we can also observe how, as more and more young people are forced by economic considerations to live at home with their parents into their 20s and 30s,