

# The Radically Altered Landscape of Early Adulthood

(Session 1: Social Development)

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## A Radically Altered Transition to Adulthood

- Becoming an adult involves period of living independently before marriage (despite all of the worry about living at home).
- Early adult years involve pursuit of higher education (and decent standard of living today generally requires college education or professional degree)
- Regardless of college, takes longer to secure full-time job to live independently, let alone raise a family. Young people also have greater range of employment experiences getting there
- Marriage and parenting now come significantly later in the life course
- Young adults have very different options and experiences depending on family backgrounds and resources
- Young people today are more diverse than any other adult age groups

## Four Problematic Views of What's Going On in Early Adulthood Today

- It's about exploration and privilege
- It's about current economic recession
- What's "normal" is the middle of the last century
- It's the people in this period of life (vs. changes to the period of life itself)

## Where's the Most Important Action?

- Why dynamics related to families and parents are so important to the well-being of young people in the United States
- Why dynamics related to higher education are so important to the well-being of young people in the United States
- Many of the crisis stories of this period of life are about men
- Many of the crisis stories of this period of life are about inequality (and about cumulative advantage and disadvantage, both past and future)

# RESOURCES

## MacArthur Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood and Public Policy (2000-2010)

Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., Network Director, University of Pennsylvania

Gordon Berlin, MDRC

Mark Courtney, University of Chicago

Sheldon Danziger, University of Michigan

Connie A. Flanagan, University of Wisconsin

Vonnie C. McLoyd, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

D. Wayne Osgood, Pennsylvania State University

Jean E. Rhodes, University of Massachusetts

Cecilia E. Rouse, Princeton University

Rubén G. Rumbaut, University of California, Irvine

Richard A. Settersten, Jr., Oregon State University

Mary Waters, Harvard University

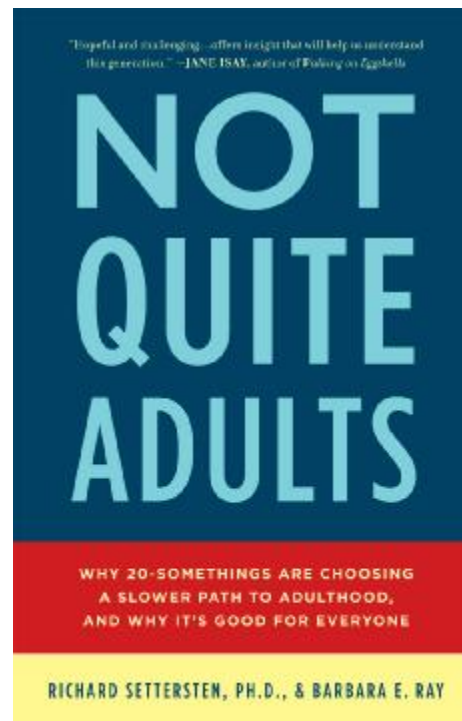
Patricia Miller, Network Administrator

Barbara Ray, Communications Director

# Not Quite Adults

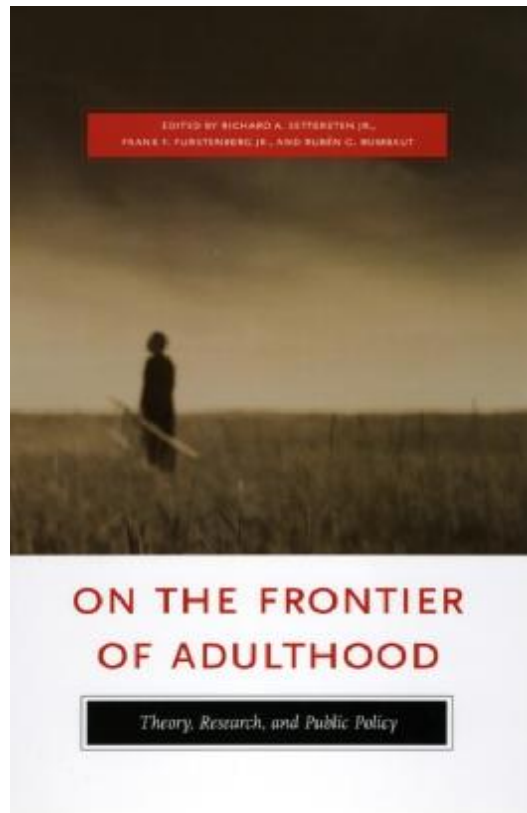
Settersten & Ray

Random House



# On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research, and Public Policy

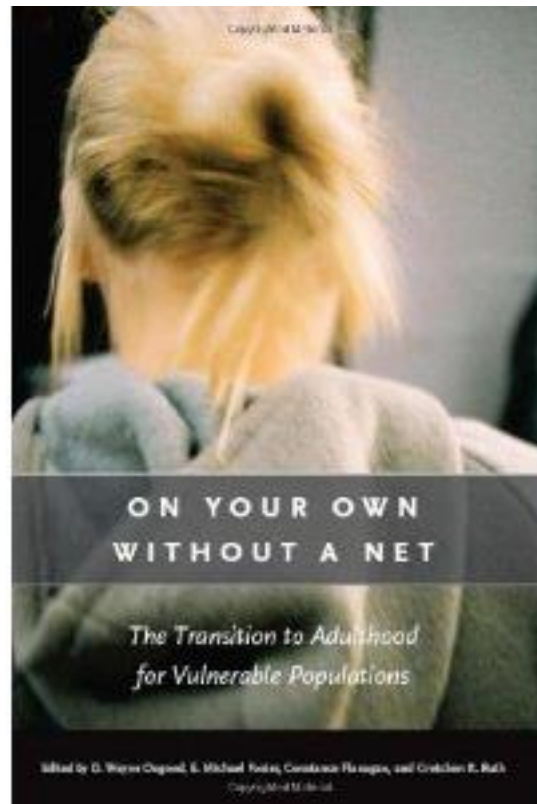
Settersten, Furstenberg, & Rumbaut, Eds.  
University of Chicago Press (2005)



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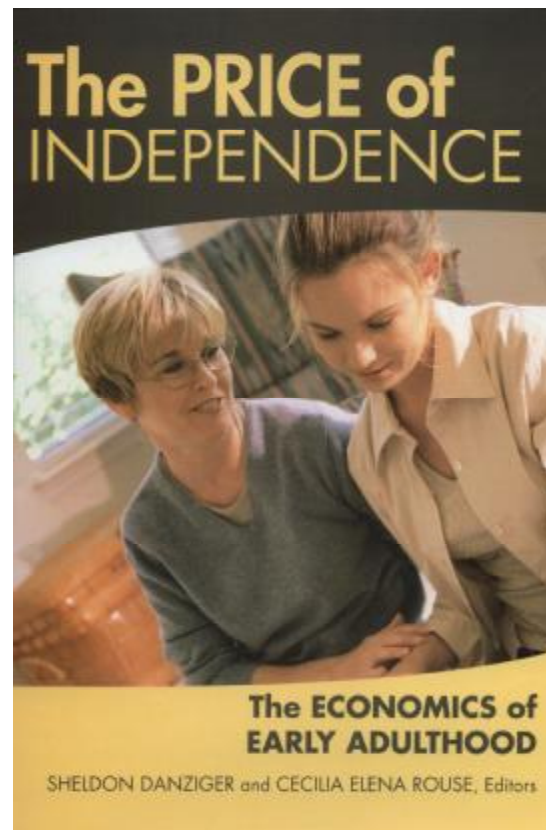


On Your Own Without a Net: The Transition to  
Adulthood for Vulnerable Populations  
Osgood, Foster, Flanagan, & Ruth, Eds.  
University of Chicago Press (2005)



# The Price of Independence: The Economics of Early Adulthood

Danziger & Rouse, Eds.  
Russell Sage (2007)



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Transitions to Adulthood  
Issue of the Journal *Future of Children*  
Berlin, Furstenberg, & Waters, Eds.  
(2010)



free online: [www.futureofchildren.org](http://www.futureofchildren.org)

**Coming of Age in America**  
Waters, Carr, Kefalas, & Holdaway, Eds.  
University of California Press (2011)

