

Comparative Adolescences: Adolescent's Demographic Statuses in Developing Countries

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Abstract

Adolescence is a period in the life course in which families and societies teach youth to become adults. Societies prepare youth for adulthood in ways that depend on the institutional resources and cultural practices of the society. Therefore, adolescents leave school, become employed, leave their parents' households and form new households, and enter into marriage and parenthood at different ages and at different rates. In this paper we use the entropy index of status combinations in synthetic cohorts to compare the structure of adolescence in Brazil, Chile, China, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, South Africa and Vietnam. Our findings show that adolescence varies in the ages at which it begins, ends and its duration, as well as the status combinations that constitute adolescence. In each country significant differences exist in the influence of each of the five statuses (student, worker, household relationship, marital and parental statuses) on shaping the transition to adulthood.

The extended abstract is not available because the first and primary author has been displaced from Tulane University because of Hurricane Katrina and is unable to access her files. This will not affect the completion of the paper since all the data are publicly available.