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Delayed Adulthood: A Critical Analysis of Terminology and the Classification of Young People

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DELAYED ADULTHOOD:
A Critical Analysis of Terminology and the Classification
of Young People

by

Céline Perron

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

through the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology

in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Arts

at the University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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March 14th, 2018

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ABSTRACT

This thesis focuses on conducting a Genealogy of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ from the Foucauldian understanding of the theory of genealogy. Considering how certain terms can hold their own meaning well before they are given proper labels, it is believed that understanding the origins of the classification of youth behavior could be a determinant in explaining the reasoning behind ‘Delayed Adulthood’.

As well, by applying two research syntheses to analyze the literature collected, understanding ‘Delayed Adulthood’ as well as the transgression of the way adults labelled youth behavior became more systematic and methodological. By understanding that ‘Delayed Adulthood’ can be presented within the literature by a variety of other terms, it is believed that a knowledge base can develop to aid in determining what such a term can mean for different people.

The research conducted took focus on the ways the term ‘Delayed Adulthood’ was being applied to youth behavior, especially when it came to millennials in the 21st century. Despite how the literature focuses on ‘Delayed Adulthood’ meaning a young person’s delay in transitioning into adulthood, it is believed that more can be understood by this. Considering the lack of an official definition, it is hypothesized that applying such a term could result in potentially negative effects in a young person’s development. Finally, the research presented was also applied to the field of criminology regarding the literature discussing the potential for a ‘delayed adult’ to commit delinquent behavior.

Keywords: Delayed Adulthood, Genealogy, Youth Behavior, Adolescent, Young People, and Criminology

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my dad Rhéal Perron (the other academic in the family). I cannot put into words how grateful I am to have had you as a father and for all the lessons you passed down in the short time we had together. You will forever remain one of my favorite teachers and one of the greatest men I have ever had the pleasure of knowing.

Je t'aime Papa, et merci.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Though considered to be a new term in the overall discussion of youth behavior, ‘Delayed Adulthood’ has proven useful in this discussion but less so for an overall understanding when it comes to contemporary literature; both academic and otherwise. Self-explanatory in the sense that this term refers to a delay in one’s attempt to reach adulthood; this can also be referred to as the delayed transition into adulthood (Amit, 2011; Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008; Lee, 2014; Foster, 2014). Though the term itself does not have an official definition in a dictionary as of yet, it has been applied to many instances of real cases of young people in the attempt to explain what is happening with youth behavior. More specifically, the term ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is being applied in an attempt to define the reasoning behind why youth are seemingly failing in their efforts to transition towards adulthood in a timely fashion according to older generations. As well, despite the more contemporary term ‘Delayed Adulthood’ given to this phenomenon of attempting to understand youth behavior, it is not, in fact, new. Literature, as far back as the Elizabethan era, have made reference to ‘adolescent’¹ behavior and the concerns regarding a lack of action when it came time to take on adult roles and responsibilities.

Such findings are seen particularly when youths are neglecting the key pillars of achievement that are presently used to establish when one has officially become an adult². Referred to as the ‘pillars of adulthood’, these goals have been classified by multiple pieces of literature, popular-culture, and non-academic sources, as necessary in

¹ A term which only became official after the turn of the century by G. Stanley Hall (Côté & Allahar, 1994).

² It is important to note the pillars of adulthood that will be examined later on are only the ones that were brought up most often in the literature. They do not cancel out any other pillar that could just as easily be used to define and determine an individual’s attainability of adulthood (i.e. getting their driver’s license).

achieving adulthood. Such pillars are identified as the following: owning one's own home, having children, getting a credible education, gaining a career worthy position, as well as getting married (Stafford, 2015; Gauthier, 2007; Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008; Furstenberg et al, 2004; Schwartz et al, 2005; Stillman, 2010; Oxford et al, 2010; Kremer, 2015). These pillars can occur in a variety of patterns and are no longer subject to a certain order. For instance, having children can occur either before or after one completes their education. Nonetheless, however, one is still expected to achieve these pillars to be classified as an adult in today's Western society³. According to the literature, failure to do so will result in the almost immediate questioning of one's capability to become an adult (Stafford, 2015; Gauthier, 2007; Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008; Furstenberg et al, 2004; Schwartz et al, 2005; Stillman, 2010; Oxford et al, 2010; Kremer, 2015).

Research going as far back as the 18th century has explored some of the ways youths have been regarded by the older generations. Despite the term 'adolescent' not likely used during this time, there were still many ways in which adults spoke of their concerns for the youth in the community. More specifically, generations who were expected to take on their place within society, only proved problematic if the younger generation failed to display any adult skills deeming them ready and able to take on new responsibilities; whether they be in the workplace or within the home. Regardless of the varying opinions voiced by older generations, there remains one standpoint: adolescence is a stage of development. Despite the nuisance young people have proven to be, youth is still a crucial stage of development for any individual. It is at this stage where young

³ Pillars of adulthood can vary from culture to culture, but in this case only Westernized cultures will be analyzed to maintain a level of clarity and organization.

people learn to make mistakes and hopefully how to rectify them, if not, then simply to accept the consequences of their actions (Bernstein, 2014; Arnett, 2006; Eliason et al, 2015; Hall, 1905).

Given the varying opinions and expectations youth have encountered within history, the application of a genealogy as a theory seems appropriate. More specifically, a genealogy from a Foucauldian perspective allows my research to approach ‘Delayed Adulthood’ in such a way to better analyze the varying ways youth have been characterized throughout history. However, for the sake of limiting research to a manageable period, the genealogy will begin with the 18th century and then continue into the 21st century. It is my hope that using such a theory helps to better understand the various ways older generations viewed and treated young people in their respective societies. Such an analysis could therefore be useful in understanding not only how ‘Delayed Adulthood’ came to be, but also in determining just how necessary a term like this can be when it comes to describing today’s youth and their transition into adulthood; more of which will be discussed in chapter 5.

A genealogy ultimately aids, in creating a timeline or analyzing someone’s family history. However, this theory focuses on a given historical aspect and its contingency but pays no attention to the outcomes as such⁴ (Gutting, 2003). This form of analysis is appropriate for the research conducted within this paper since it will analyze literature

⁴ For instance, a genealogy would only be interested in the analysis of what events lead to the creation of, say adolescence, but have no interest in how such a term is being used for today. Observing the impact of such a term would require a different form of analysis aside from a genealogy. Essentially, the purpose of a genealogy is to understand the background of a given subject – in this case a term – in order to learn more about its transition through time and the impact it has carried throughout history to understand why it still exists.

throughout history that, when formatted chronologically, can accurately dictate the development of what likely became known as ‘Delayed Adulthood’ today.

However, for the purpose of this research, a genealogical analysis will be conducted using a Foucauldian approach. Michael Foucault was very much fascinated by Nietzsche’s work but believed that it could be taken a step further by applying this analysis to research the historical background of other aspects, in this instance, words (Gutting, 2003). It is here that Foucault’s take on genealogy couples well with the research conducted for the purpose of this thesis because there will essentially be far more of a focus on the development of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ throughout history than any other historical aspect. It is believed that in order to accurately discuss the historical appearance of ‘Delayed Adulthood’, the research presented will be done in a chronological format. This will enable readers to effortlessly read through the data collected thereby concluding with where ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is found today. More will be discussed on the Foucauldian method and the use of a genealogy in chapter 2.

A debate in and of itself can occur on this topic alone, however, this research will focus on the ways ‘Delayed Adulthood’ plays a part in the overall understanding of youth behavior. The analyzed literature of the discourse demonstrates an array of different opinions from older generations academic researchers, concerned parents, as well, millennials. Millennials are classified as all individuals born between the years of 1977 and 1995⁵ and it is this generation that has drawn attention to a supposedly large-scale delay in the transition towards adulthood. Arguably, an individual taking the necessary

⁵ Individuals born between the years above are now, at most, in their early twenties, and are therefore old enough to begin taking on more adult responsibilities; by recommendation of older generations.

time to achieve one's education and then establishing a solid foundation to build a life consisting of homeownership as well as marriage and parenthood is expected to take a reasonable amount of time. However, the discourse here is the seemingly growing concern the older population has not on *when* millennials will transition into adulthood but *if*. Here, one can argue here that a generation's development should only be a concern that they themselves deal with; however, society does not work in such simplified ways; where one generation's actions do not affect them alone (O'Neil, 1994). This is due to the fact society is an ever-growing system that develops and builds upon every new generation where all individuals play a significant role in the continuous growth of the community.

It is here that a concern for today's older generations would feel a sense of unease at the prospect of never being able to retire. However, research has shown quite the opposite, proving that it will likely be millennials themselves who will face the challenge of never being able to retire from work (Pearl, 2016; Stoeffel, 2016). Recent studies also make reference to the life expectancy of elderly people when millennials themselves reach that stage of development; stating that millennials themselves will be one of the longest living generations in history (Cartensen, 2016).

Millennials are then suborned in the matter since they will also be affected by job security; therefore, their generation is anticipating a lengthier commitment than most (Carrick, 2016). Careers are now taking a more contemporary turn by focusing on areas such as engineering, programming, and development, versus desk or administrative jobs that were the norm some generations ago (Torres, 2017). Another perspective on the issue was brought forth by *The Globe and Mail* writer Rob Carrick (2016), stating that

millennials will not only live longer, but in fact will remain younger longer, thereby making an inference to the discussion that ‘Delayed Adulthood’ may simply be a product of this anticipated future⁶.

In addition to these adult concerns, trepidations put forth by millennials will also be considered in the discussion. For instance, though most have taken on one known pillar of adulthood – that of completing a degree at a recognized institution – many find themselves at a standstill, either because of student debt or a decrease in the job market, causing millennials to face difficulties that force them to alter their life plans (Amit, 2011). Therefore, taking on part-time positions to help pay off their debt or having to alter or even abandon their degree for the sake of taking on a career that is actually offering employment at the present time seems to be the popular choice of action (Carrick, 2016; Amit, 2011).

Research has also shown that any plans to accomplish the pillars of adulthood are halted (Amit, 2011; Gauthier, 2007; Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008; Furstenberg et al, 2004). Since most millennials must dedicate more time to paying off their student debt they cannot afford to accomplish other goals such as getting married or having children; both of which cost a considerable amount of money they do not have the luxury of spending at the present time (Carrick, 2016; Amit, 2011). The same reasons also apply for why millennials are putting off homeownership; they cannot afford it and therefore,

⁶ Therefore, ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is being addressed as the issue of numerous millennials diverting from adulthood and what comes of this; not the fact that it is a supposedly new problem.

the cost of living has proven to be an issue. This then results in either co-ownership or the most common solution: moving back into their parent's home⁷.

Though young people live their lives slightly differently in the 21st century compared to others, such as getting a degree or traveling the world, they are still expected to meet certain social constructs⁸ which portray what society deems necessary for them to become fully functioning adults. Research has shown that depending on the population within a given society certain constructs will be deemed more important than others (Amit, 2011; Côté & Allahar, 1994; Gunderson, 2017; Havighurst, 1960; Furstenberg et al, 2004). A construct can be understood, for example, as an individual becoming a parent or obtaining a form of stable employment which ultimately benefits the community as a whole (Amit, 2011). However, when it comes to pillars which can aid in one's transition into adulthood there can be varying opinions as to which can prove the most successful⁹.

It is here, at the turn of the century, where certain social constructs are found unnecessary, such as being expected to care for one's family instead of getting an education; suggesting that society does change over time along with its ideals. The present age makes reference to the challenges new generations face when competing with older expectations and traditions of what is expected of them, especially when they reach adulthood (Stafford, 2015; Pope-Chappell, 2016; Stillman, 2010; Kremer, 2015; Havinghurst, 1960; Furstenberg et al, 2004; Silva, 2012). Challenges aside, there are still

⁷ Statistics Canada 2016 Census stated that the number of young people moving back in with at least one parent rose with each census. Being at 30.6% in 2001, to rising at 34.7% in 2016 (StatsCan, 2017).

⁸ With respect to diversities that exist cross-culturally, only social constructs known to Western cultures will be discussed in order to maintain a consistent argument.

⁹ Certain societies may feel that contributing to the community financially is a greater aspiration than gaining a credited degree in a chosen field.

dominant cultural norms that resist change. Such aspects, as well as others, will be discussed further within this paper along with a more thorough understanding of 'Delayed Adulthood' and what young people can hope to encounter when they themselves reach the pivotal age where they will be judged and scrutinized as they attempt their own transition into adulthood. Once more, the discussion surrounding the ways in which such a term, when deployed towards young people, can in itself cause its own obstacles will also be discussed further along with the aid of Foucauldian theory and synthesized data research.

2. A FOUCAULDIAN THEORY

In this chapter I will discuss not only my choice of applying a Foucauldian method towards my research but also how such proves to be important to this research as a whole. I will be discussing the importance of Foucault's interpretation of a genealogy and its significance to my research, as well as how his theory of power and fear can be incorporated in the overall understanding of how impactful a term like 'Delayed Adulthood' can be (Foucault, 1994). I will also be including the work of Ian Hacking within my paper, specifically his work entitled *'Making Up People'* (2012) which proved to be very significant. Hacking's work discusses not only how society applies terms and labels towards others, but how those same terms and labels can be taken on by individuals in relation to creating their own identities (Hacking, 2012). Hacking's work focusing on dynamic nominalism will also be discussed as it presents a unique perspective into the way that labels are understood within society, instead of simply believing them to be static. Overall, the amalgamation of the works presented by Foucault and Hacking have proved instrumental in the development of my own argument discussing why the focus on 'Delayed Adulthood' is important as well as how the attempts to label millennials has produced some significant errors; which will be discussed further.

A genealogy is, in and of itself, a unique and expansive take on a common historical research however, it proves to be a much greater endeavor. Conducting a genealogy allows the researcher to not only to better understand the origins of their research topic, it also allows for a more in-depth approach as to the sociological aspects presented at the historical level (Baker, 2001). Being able to analyze a concept – in this

case ‘Delayed Adulthood’ – on a historical basis enables the reader to gain a better sense not only in how such a term was deployed but especially how the people of a given time period viewed young people.

When it comes to understanding the overall effect that a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ can possess when imposed upon an individual, it is also important to understand the impact such a term has, which is where Foucault’s work on *Power and Fear* becomes useful (Foucault, 1994). Hacking’s work becomes relevant in its own way especially given his perspective on not only how individuals impose labels and terms on others, but also how individuals take such labels and make them a part of their own identity (2012). This argument proves relevant to my research as it takes the discussion of terminology relating to its impact on a person to another level by illustrating how an individual can become so accustomed to a term that they apply it to their own identity.

On its face, a genealogy could appear to be like any other research conducted on a historical level, but that is not the case. When it comes to conducting a genealogy, especially from the perspective of Foucault, a researcher analyzes more than the time period presented. A genealogy enables a researcher to ask certain questions that would likely not be answered in a common historically based research. More specifically, questions pertaining to the ‘how’ factor; which, in an interview Foucault stated was the most pressing of questions (Foucault, 1994). *“In order to get a better understanding of what is [punishment] and why, I wanted to ask the question how does one [punish]?”* (Foucault, 1994). Indeed, the aforementioned quote pertains to Foucault’s study of prisons and the penal system, but the same aspects can still be applied in this case. Therefore, though he mentions focusing on the ‘how’, he was particularly interested in

‘why’ something came to be. Hence, Foucault’s work relates well to my own research as we both intend to understand how a term was constructed, which will enable us to find out the ‘why’.

When applied to my research on ‘Delayed Adulthood’ I intend to gain a better understanding of not only why such a term was constructed, but also, how it became important as well as deployed. By focusing on the work being done on a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ we can better understand the intentions behind it. Therefore, gaining a level of knowledge as to why a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ was created in the first place, could potentially shed some light on the more pressing matter at hand.

When it came to the application of a genealogy, especially in Foucault’s work ‘Genealogy of Morals’, he intended to learn more, not simply about moral techniques, but specifically as to why the matter was so important at all (Foucault, 1994). It is here that Foucault’s genealogy applies well to my own research; not only did he intend on delving into understanding a word or given term more precisely, but he also believed that by doing so one can determine the exact reasoning behind why certain questions are being asked. In relation to a term like ‘adolescence’, Foucault would have wondered about the need to create such a term and if it was truly needed in the grand scheme of things, where society was concerned. However, in retrospect, it is likely that there would have been a term like ‘adolescence’ created simply for the sake of having a specific term to define the period of development between that of childhood and adulthood; especially given how there have been and will be, individuals who are both too old to be a child, but too young to be an adult at least by social standards. Therefore, a term like ‘adolescence’ it has

proven its usefulness within society, but what about when it comes to a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’?

A quick glance at the literature focusing on ‘Delayed Adulthood’ would lead some to believe that the only cause for concern was giving a name to the recent delay in young people transitioning into adulthood. Though that may be the case in some instances, it is not believed to be the only reason behind such a term being given as much attention as it has; albeit even if it is not much to begin with. With my research, I plan to learn more when it comes to the true intentions behind ‘Delayed Adulthood’, believing that there is more to the discussion than meets the eye.

Foucault has actively expressed his own curiosity when it comes to a great number of his own research endeavors; and rightfully so (p. 223; Foucault, 1994). But what is interesting when it comes to his focus is that of the actual importance of the topic; essentially, why the matter itself is of such significance. One example being his focus on prisons and the penal system though the overall analysis of this topic was interesting, and even he admitted as much, his focus remained on the *why*; namely, how such divisions are affected (Foucault, 1994). Of course, even Foucault admitted that not every question could be answered by looking at the ‘why’ factor, he did believe that it could provide a sort of intelligibility that could be missed otherwise (Foucault, 1994). “[...] *rather than asking what, [...] I wanted to ask how these divisions are effected. It’s a method that seems to me to yield – I wouldn’t say the maximum of possible illumination – at least a fairly fruitful kind of intelligibility*” (Foucault, 1994).

Taking such a turn in direction allowed for a more unique and diverse look into answering some of the key questions that would have likely gone ignored had Foucault

chosen to construct his researching in a more basic and to-the-point manner. It can be compared to finding a solution outside of, say, structural determinacy; which points to specific structures, which have determined history, like prisons. Therefore, by taking the same route that Foucault did in his own research, I intend to uncover answers to questions I believe have not been asked yet; or at the very least, have not been considered as relevant at this time.

When it comes to Foucault, there were no distinct answers given similarly to those presented in, say, Marxism. For instance, ideologies and capitalism did not come together to make a concrete argument for Foucault the same way they did for other theorists. Instead, Foucault believed that there was no purpose supported by the aforementioned and instead looked into what the discourse made sense of. His explanation of what came to be had no need for a directing hand; crediting certain outcomes to events that came from a more contingent background (Foucault, 1994). This proved to be especially interesting since it focused on aspects that came to be all on their own and were not structured by a higher form of power that obliged them to follow as they entered adulthood.

As mentioned, Foucault was particularly interested in the discourse surrounding the development and creation of a given apparatus. A more specific discourse was his focus on power and how this related to the outcomes and perceptions of societal standards (Foucault, 1994). Bearing this in mind, it proved fascinating in relation to 'Delayed Adulthood'. Not only was this term seemingly created from out of nowhere, but it holds a sort of influence over those being defined as such. Foucault's argument is invoked here by way of deconstructing the way a term like 'Delayed Adulthood' is being

deployed in relation to youth. Granted, when it comes to the aspect of ‘power’, and particularly that of influence, it can be understood and applied in a variety of ways. In relation to ‘Delayed Adulthood’, it is believed that power establishes itself in the way that the term is used, for instance, by parents who believe that being a delayed adult is a negative outcome and therefore apply this term as a way to deter such conclusions. Evidently, if ‘Delayed Adulthood’ was being used in a more constructive way, there would not be as much concern surrounding its application towards youth. For example, if there would be more acceptance to the fact that at times one can be either more adult than at other times, more delayed depending on the circumstances, matters would be different. Either way, a more constructive application of this term would prove less concerning when it comes to understanding young people. However, it does not come across as such in the literature surrounding ‘Delayed Adulthood’, which has instead taken on a more cynical tone while discussing the issue of youth delaying their transition into adulthood.

In relation to Foucault, he has focused on ‘power’ and the means that come of it. The same can also be said for the work presented by Hacking entitled *‘Making Up People’* (2012) which pays attention to the ways individuals not only take on labels but allow them to define others. Both Hacking and Foucault couple well with the discussion surrounding ‘Delayed Adulthood’ because not only is this term being related to a given individual, it is also being done in a way that can be understood as a ‘higher power’ since the majority of those labelling delayed adults are mostly parents and members of generations that came before millennials¹⁰. Foucault would agree with Hacking in how a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ presents a form of power over an individual; especially

¹⁰ That being said, the ‘higher power’ discussed still remains on a more social level seeing as it is not influenced by institutions such as governments.

when used to define them (Hacking, 2012; Foucault, 1994). A label such as this can be used to make an individual feel inferior or encouraged depending on the context; either way, it does affect the individual in some shape or form (Cartensen, 2016; Carrick, 2016; Stafford, 2015; Williams, 2017).

What is especially interesting in Hacking's work *'Making Up People'* (2012), is how he interprets dynamic nominalism. Dynamic nominalism refers to Hacking's way of understanding if there is, in fact, a general theory in place that can aid in the understanding of making up people (Hacking, 2012). Hacking believes, along with such a theory, we can better understand if there is, in fact, a system in place within society that directly relates to what it means to be an individual (2012)¹¹. It is here that his work 'dynamic nominalism' comes into play.

Dynamic nominalism can be best understood as a variant of the philosophical tradition that claims that something only exists once a name is given to it; for instance, a label (Hacking, 2012). For Hacking, people do not simply accept a label then act according to its prescription, but actively engage with the label thereby both undermining expert authority and redefining the label to reflect their own interpretations. Dynamic nominalism relates to the argument being made for 'Delayed Adulthood' since it speaks to the term's relatively unstable meaning within contemporary discourse¹² (Hacking, 2012). Hacking provides a unique perspective considering his opinions have a tendency

¹¹ It is also important to note that Hacking's work was purely philosophical as he was more interested in determining what people might become and less so on what people are collectively (Hacking, 2012).

¹² The discussion relating to dynamic nominalism is a complex one as it can take on many forms. For instance, from a realist point of view, dynamic nominalism refers to a given aspect, such as a term, as existing prior to its own existence, thereby claiming that the term came after the fact, not before. In the case of static nominalism, it can be argued that despite there being a term to begin with, it in fact, will never change over the course of time.

to change over time (Hacking, 2012). Despite this, Hacking is likely to agree that in the case of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ the term – despite its lack of an official definition – does draw attention to a ‘real’ event that is occurring. Also, given the fact that it applies to people Hacking would argue that it is less so static nominalism¹³ (Hacking, 2012).

Dynamic nominalism thereby relates to the argument of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ as it associates with how young people will change their own behaviors, ultimately changing the definition of the term over the course of time. Therefore, ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is not controlled by an outside source, for instance developmental psychology, and is instead in the hands of those being defined and labelled in the first place. Such relates to Foucault’s work as well as it speaks to his argument of power relations (Foucault, 1994). Foucault’s argument of power states that it is an emerging force which changes within the relationships it presents itself in (Foucault, 1994). In sum, it can then be stated, despite where ‘Delayed Adulthood’ first came from, once it is applied to a given group of individuals it thus belongs to them. These same individuals will thereby make the term their own by changing the rules when it comes to the definition of the term itself; it is here that we can see the shift and effect of power as discussed by Foucault. Therefore, the power is not in the term itself, but instead, given that it is a contested term it is not stable at all and is forever changing; ultimately, this is where the discourse in relation to ‘Delayed Adulthood’ becomes evident.

The discourse of fear applies well here since it pays attention to the need for a term to be applied to a given situation, in this case, ‘Delayed Adulthood’. Believing that

¹³ Another perspective can be that of developmental psychology which would argue a more realist point, particularly one in relation to Goffman’s labelling theory (1963). Thereby arguing that those labelled as ‘delayed adults’ would therefore shift their behaviors and ultimately change the definition altogether

the circumstances brought on by the delay is an aspect that must be labelled accordingly so that society understands the severity of it; but is it as big of a threat as it is presented to be? Labeling a given situation in the way acquired in the discourse of fear enables others to make the overall impact worse than it is by encouraging the fear that others have because of the unknown, this also encourages the fact that something is expected to be done to rectify the ‘problem’¹⁴.

Further along in this thesis I will also be incorporating John O’Neill’s work *The Missing Child in Liberal Theory* (1994) and his argument discussing the matter of collective responsibility. It is within O’Neill’s work particularly that of the ‘Covenant’ that he touches on the importance of the duty one generation holds when preparing the next generation (O’Neill, 1994). Such is especially interesting when related it back to Foucault’s focus on the discourse of fear. O’Neill’s work gives the potential for a solution to be made when we consider the importance of a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ in a grander sense than simply defining youth behavior¹⁵ (O’Neill, 1994; Foucault, 1994). Ultimately, the argument will prove more impactful over the course of my research, especially when it comes to the analysis portion of my thesis.

On the topic of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and the discourses pertaining to it, there is another discourse which has proven to be quite successful at demonstrating the impact that terminology can have when applied to young people in relation their concerns of transitioning into adulthood. Evidently, when it comes to terms applied to a given

¹⁴ This is an especially interesting since it suggests that remaining calm is not the primary course of action, believing that the more fear instilled, the more determined others are to find a solution; permanently (Altheide, 2006; Altheide, 2002).

¹⁵ Ultimately, the argument will prove more impactful over the course of my research, especially when it comes to the analysis portion of this thesis.

situation, it is believed that there is an underlying meaning behind the creation of such a term. When it comes to ‘Delayed Adulthood’, especially upon analyzing the literature focusing on this term, it seems that the phrase acts as more of an explanation to the problem, being that of youths taking too long to transition into adulthood. Thereby asserting that the term is being used as a way to define and label a supposed problem, but is it necessary? This is also, where the discourse of fear applies. ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is being used by way of definition, but there is little to no evidence that there is a solution coming to rectify this supposed ‘problem’ (Foucault, 1994; Altheide, 2006; Altheide, 2002). ‘Delayed Adulthood’, like so many other terms, could come across by a variety of means, both good and bad, therefore, why is there such a focus on the negative affiliation of this term when it comes to discussing young people?

In relation to his own work, Foucault would agree that there is a discourse of fear at work here. Concerning fear, it becomes more apparent as to why adults in today’s society feel the need to encourage a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ when it comes to discussing young people (Foucault, 1994). By having an albeit unofficial term applied to youth by way of defining their behavior it is likely that this created a moment of ease for the older generation. By giving such a development a title, it made it even more real and less of an unknown force attempting to alter the way of life for older generations. The discourse of fear pays attention to the ways that individuals rely on a given solution to solve their problems, regardless of the validity of said solution; it becomes accepted simply because it is the only answer provided, thereby making the whole ordeal less frightening (Foucault, 1994; Altheide, 2006; Altheide, 2002). This, however, can be a harmful outcome as whatever solution chosen to be applied could very well lead to more

complications. When it comes to ‘Delayed Adulthood’ it is believed that this is exactly what is occurring. Regardless of the good intentions put forth, a ‘solution’ can just as easily be short lived. ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is a probable solution provided in the discussion of what is occurring with young people and their delay in transitioning into adulthood, but this paper will look at the cost of this supposed solution in relation to a much greater concern.

Therefore, the target of my own research, along with applying a Foucauldian method to my analysis, is not only to uncover the origins of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ but also specifically to gain a better understanding of why such a term was deemed so imperative to begin with. Regardless of the potential variations a term like this has likely taken on over the years, the question remains the same: why is it so important to label youth behavior in this manner? One could simply argue that young people are growing up at their own pace, however that seems too modest of a solution. At the very least, it downplays the fact that ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is a broad ideological phenomenon (i.e. not pathology). Because of this, it is believed that in order to accurately uncover answers pertaining to this research question, as well as others, Foucault’s methodology proves to be an ideal strategy.

As well, a Foucauldian approach couples well when it comes to analyzing not only a term but the necessity for the terms’ creation in the first place. Therefore, this applies well to my own research when it comes to understanding not only the discourse of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ but why this term came to be in the first place. Furthermore, in relation to Hall’s work on adolescence (which will be discussed further in chapter 4), even Foucault would have questioned the necessity of applying so much attention on a

given term in order to define a young person's developmental stage between that of childhood and adulthood (Foucault, 1994; Hall, 1989).

To conclude, applying Foucauldian theory to my research enables me to incorporate a more grounded and well-constructed analysis of 'Delayed Adulthood', especially by way of conducting a genealogy. A Foucauldian approach will allow for the process of determining just how much influence a term could have in the grand scheme of things, especially when it comes to defining and labeling an individual. 'Delayed Adulthood' has been deployed as a way to define youth behavior especially when it comes to societal conceptualizations of social control. Therefore, the focus is less so on how it has come to be, which the genealogy will answer, and more so on how it has proven to be as important as indicated in the literature.

3. SYNTHESIZING THE RESEARCH

In order to actively analyze the literature in preparation for this paper, it was decided that two research syntheses would be conducted. A research synthesis is considered to be a large critical review of a body of literature dedicated to a given topic (Cooper, 2010). Due to the large amount of literature found on both ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and the historical research on the perceptions and attitudes regarding youth behavior over the past four centuries, these two frameworks would be applied separately.

Conducting a research synthesis differs from a systematic review in that the research synthesis selects and applies a previously determined framework to the literature so that only the material that is relevant is selected to fit the argument I aspire to make¹⁶.

A research synthesis focuses on empirical studies and seeks to summarize past research by drawing overall conclusions from many separate investigations that address related or identical hypothesis. The research synthesis’s goal is to present the state of knowledge concerning the relation(s) of interest and to highlight important issues that research has left unresolved (Cooper, 2010)

By first beginning with the formulation of my research question(s), I was able to organize, not only how the research would be presented, but also determine which pieces of literature would prove to be most relevant. Conducting a research synthesis required identifying theoretical frameworks and select research that done on my research topic. By locating enough literature, one can conclude that there is enough research conducted to

¹⁶ Appendices have also been made regarding the charts used during the research and writing process, as well as charts documenting the process of which works were kept and which were discarded overtime; as well as the reason for both.

not only make a research synthesis worthwhile but also to develop a well-developed paper.

3.1. Research Question and Hypothesis

For my initial research, I wanted to research ‘Delayed Adulthood’ in such a way that the term itself would be analyzed in a manner that was not being widely discussed within the literature. Before beginning my initial research, it was crucial to establish specific research questions in order to determine where I wanted the focus of the research to take. As well, this enabled me to organize my findings in such a way to determine how useful each piece of literature would be.

Firstly, I wanted to research how ‘Delayed Adulthood’ was being applied to young people today (21st century) and the outcomes of it. For instance, if adulthood was truly in jeopardy if young people did not transition as fast as expected by society.

Secondly, due to my thesis having a focus on criminology I wanted to research how ‘Delayed Adulthood’ had become associated with delinquency, and especially what this could mean for young people. It was my hypothesis, and a slight focus on Labeling theory, that given the assumptions and pressures put forth by older generations that youths would become that much more likely to fall into delinquency¹⁷.

Lastly, I wanted to analyze the impact ‘Delayed Adulthood’ presented overall when it came to young people and the older generations in the 21st century. By analyzing

¹⁷ It is also here that Psychology’s “Self-fulfilling prophecy” becomes relevant (Jones, 1977). Essentially, the theory focuses on how an individual will become more likely to assume expectations placed on them by society (i.e. parents) because they have been made to believe regardless of their actions they will assume the role they were assigned to be (Jones, 1977). In relation to my research, this applies to young people becoming involved in delinquent behavior because they were told that someone who presents themselves as a delayed adult will inevitably become delinquent. Such is also related to the work done by Ian Hacking entitled *Making Up People* (2012), which also argues the power of labels when applied and taken on by individuals.

this area of the research, I believe I can determine the importance of a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ being created in the first place, especially when it came to the reasoning behind its foundation.

3.2. *‘Delayed Adulthood’ in the Literature*

Quite early on in the research process I was able to locate quite a few pieces of literature that mentioned ‘Delayed Adulthood’, however, it was only while conducting a research synthesis that I was able to properly select from the literature as a whole. Regardless of the fact that numerous pieces actively mentioned ‘Delayed Adulthood’ a number of them proved to be completely unrelated to my research topic. For example, an article written by David Gundersen illustrating ‘6 ways to avoid ‘Delayed Adulthood’’ proved less than relevant to my own research regardless of the author’s intent to aid its readers since it focused on a more religious problem-solving technique and therefore may not apply to all audiences (Gundersen, 2017). The research synthesis focusing on ‘Delayed Adulthood’ not only comprised of academic literature but grey literature too; comprising of blogs and newspaper articles from various sources. Despite claims that these sources were not academic, I believed they would still play a vital role in my paper. Not only did these pieces of literature actually discuss ‘Delayed Adulthood’ in a matter befitting my research, but they also presented unique perspectives.

I wanted to incorporate varying opinions when it came to ‘Delayed Adulthood’ in order to get a better sense of what this term meant, not only in the academic world, but also in the social environment. Numerous sources coming from concerned parents to millennials therefore enabled me to gain a better understanding of what this term meant for them personally. Granted the academic literature enabled me to learn just how much

attention was being placed on ‘Delayed Adulthood’, the grey literature allowed me to view the overall effects of the term.

My research began in a very simple way, by typing in ‘Delayed Adulthood’ in a search engine and to see what came of it. Even though I had already conducted some research beforehand in order to establish that there was, in fact, a focus being placed on ‘Delayed Adulthood’, this is where the research truly began. I was able to locate numerous sources that both discussed the matter of ‘Delayed Adulthood’, but also focused on how it was affecting individuals within society; namely millennials.

I began my research synthesis by creating a chart that would be updated and revised as I went through the literature in order to analyze which works would prove most relevant to my overall research. The process of this chart was outlined and explained in Cooper’s book *Research Synthesis and Meta-Analysis: A Step-by-Step Approach* (2010). By having a better understanding of how to organize the literature found, I was able to approach this method confidently and effectively.

The chart (see Appendix 1) focuses on four corresponding categories to enable me to break down the research and organize which works were relevant and which were not. A grading scale was also applied to each piece of literature; such will be discussed further on in this chapter. The first category is ‘Identification’. It was here that every piece of literature which was relevant to my framework and research question collected up to that point was accounted for. I divided this section by the records identified through my database research as well as records identified through other sources; in this case physical books located at the University of Windsor Leddy Library. Comprising of a total of 30 pieces of literature, I had enough to begin my initial research on ‘Delayed Adulthood’.

Immediately following, I began the initial screening process of the literature I collected. The screening included analyzing the material contained in each piece of literature, and by utilizing a coding sheet from Cooper's book (p. 89, 2010). This coding sheet enabled me to create an organized report determining the appropriate identification for each piece of literature (see Appendix 2). Each document was rated on a scale which determined its validity to my research in a number of areas (rating scale from 1-5, 1 being the lowest score and 5 being the highest), as well, the literature was categorized in terms of which chapter it would be suited best for (chapters 1-8). Despite the fact the certain works have proved necessary in varying chapters, this method of coding allowed for a more organized practice specifically when writing my paper and being reminded of which documents were best suited to support the argument in a given chapter.

The coding method was also useful in determining which areas of my thesis required more research to be had. By applying a series of numbers to each document in order to classify which chapter they would be most suited for, it was more evident if there were too few works for a given chapter. The coding chart made for an invaluable visual which aided in determining the overall weak or strong points of my research given the literature gathered in the data collection process.

In sum, applying a research synthesis towards my main focus of research – 'Delayed Adulthood' – allowed for a more structured writing process when it came to my thesis. The charts and coding methods went far beyond simply applying a given scale of numbers to the literature gathered. Overall, I was able to determine not only which pieces of literature would prove more useful to my thesis, but especially how to classify the research in a methodological way.

3.3. *Genealogy in the Literature*

My second research synthesis was in many ways similar to the first, in that each document was categorized and ordered by a rating scale determining its validity to my overall argument (see Appendix 3). However, given that my genealogy would only comprise of a single chapter, each document was categorized in one of four groups: 18th century, 19th century, 20th century, and the 21st century (see Appendix 4). By organizing my research in such a manner, I was able to determine how the literature would be applied to each section. Similar to my first research synthesis, this also allowed me to determine which areas were in need of any further research if there was not enough documentation on a given time period.

As well, given how I conducted and classified my research on the abovementioned time periods (18th century – 21st century), I was also able to visually see which century focused more or less on the youth in their society, allowing for a more in-depth look into how youth were perceived at the time (18th century – 21st century) in order to determine if a term, similar to that of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ would have had an impact or not given how important the youths were classified.

It was also with the use of a research synthesis that I was able to narrow down which time periods to apply to my thesis. By analyzing the literature focusing on youth throughout history, it became evident that the focus presented itself around the 18th century; as well, this is also the time period when facts and research were being published and documented. The 18th century would also prove significant as it was during this time the period of enlightenment occurred. It was then hypothesized that due to the

modernization of technology of the time, it would serve as an excellent starting point when family dynamics would begin to change.

As well, it was decided that my genealogy would end at the 21st century in order to accurately demonstrate to readers the process of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ forming itself within society throughout history. Such would also prove to be useful in demonstrating the escalation and participation of parental guidance in the lives of young people as they became closer to the age of adulthood; depending of course which age would constitute adulthood in a given time period. As well, readers would also be able to learn just how prominent children and youth were during the past four centuries, enabling me to argue why the focus has changed the way it has over the years¹⁸.

Ultimately, conducting a secondary research synthesis proved to be quite invaluable, regardless of the extra work it provided. In the end, it enabled me to organize as well as analyze the literature in such a way that allowed me to construct the strongest argument possible. When writing any paper, it can be easy to lose oneself in the literature collected. However, by applying a research method such as the research synthesis, I was able to make sense of the documentation collected and apply it to my thesis accordingly.

¹⁸ Research has shown little documentation on children and youth before the 18th century, thereby assuming that there was not as large of a focus on them compared to the 21st century (Côté & Allahaar, 1994; Cunningham, 2005).

4. DELAYED ADULTHOOD: A HISTORY

Understandably the term ‘Delayed Adulthood’ creates a range of interpretation when used within contemporary society. Contrary to today, ‘Delayed Adulthood’ has not always been used as a term to describe to the younger generation’s lack of drive in relation to taking on adult roles and responsibilities. It is hypothesized that in order to have an improved understanding of what is meant by ‘Delayed Adulthood’ as well as its potential impact on millennials today, we must first look at how young people have been understood in the past and the many variations in the implementation of this term; particularly when discussing youth (Côté & Allahaar, 1994). As well, there will be attention placed on both the work force and education as both were prominent areas where children were focused on throughout history between the 18th century and the 21st century¹⁹.

Research on communities dating back to the 16th century demonstrates the focus adults had in relation to the upbringing of youth well into the 19th century (Yarbrough, 1979). The use of apprenticeships was common during this time as children were given the opportunity to learn from a master craftsman with the expectation that they would later take on the work themselves; despite not being compensated in monetary value

¹⁹ Education was also regarded as a form of social control during the 18th century as it was used to control children, and, by association, their parents as well (Cheal & Albanese, 2014). It is also seen in Donzelot’s work *The Policing of Families* (1979), that the family dynamic was, in fact, changing from a private one to a very publicly discussed matter. More specifically, mothers were being considered agents of the state charged with the responsibility of properly and effectively raising their children and caring for their household in relation to standards now recognized in fields such as social work and mass education (Donzelot 1979).

during the apprenticeship²⁰²¹²². Apprentices were removed from their homes and made to live with their masters while working under them; this was a preferred alternative since twelve-year olds were typically asserting their independence in the household (Yarborough, 1979). It was common that young people would express a certain waywardness, typically by questioning adult authority. Nevertheless, by becoming an apprentice young people would develop appropriate skills deemed significant by society to help them grow into promising adults; such as social skills relating to patience, working with the public, and the importance of a work ethic (Yarbrough, 1979). Youths who moved out of their parents' home to become apprentices were seen as completing a rite of passage²³, thereby being that much closer to growing into promising adults.

Since children in the past were expected to take on positions similar to apprenticeships, their transition into adult roles was less uncertain and never really put into question like they are in the now²⁴. Nevertheless, research has also shown that no matter the time in history, adults have always seemed to express a sense of unease when

²⁰ Research also shows that at this time youth did not simply wander off in search of their own ambitions and goals. They instead remained at home to help their families and partake in the development of their community (Yarbrough, 1979; Côté & Allahar, 1994).

²¹ Apprentices were bound by their duties by contracts which would outline certain rules and responsibilities. A few examples were that most apprentices would begin their training around the age of twelve, their contracts would last between 7-8 years but working longer was not uncommon; spanning almost 20 years (Yarborough, 1979).

²² Young girls were also taken on as apprentices, however, their skills were directed more towards that of services; especially in the 17th century. For example, these girls were apprenticed in the art of homemaking (Crowston, 2008). For the most part, however, female apprentices were much rarer than males.

²³ Such can be defined as a task or goal that when achieved enables an individual to develop into a promising member of society for having accomplished such a task. For example, gaining a respectable form of employment demonstrates a person's willingness to engage with the community and to develop into an active member of society.

²⁴ It was around the 18th century that children were expected to begin taking on responsibilities and tasks to help their families as well as the community they lived in around the age of 10 (Côté & Allahar, 1994).

it came to youth. This was made especially relevant in Côté and Allahar's work *Generation On Hold* (1994), conveying multiple times in history when particular individuals commented on their impatience regarding the young who appeared to be wasting their youth.

It is hypothesized that, by researching multiple pieces of literature focusing on various periods of history, an analysis can be created regarding the impact that 'Delayed Adulthood', or any other varying term, can have when used to define youth behavior. By approaching the literature through conducting a Genealogy and analyzing how 'Delayed Adulthood' was constructed, I found that the research proved relevant in demonstrating how such a term was constructed, but especially why it proved important. By doing so, I was able to develop a knowledge base which enabled me to strengthen my argument by illustrating what 'Delayed Adulthood' meant to those applying it. Taking the time to view the development of 'Delayed Adulthood' also presents an opportunity to learn the historically varying terms applied to young people and the period as well as to learn more about the adult communities applying those terms. *"I took this discontinuity, this – in a sense – "phenomenal" set of mutations, as my starting point and tried, without eradicating it, to account for it. It was a matter of not digging down to a buried stratum of continuity, but of identifying the transformation that made this hurried transition possible"* (Foucault, 1994).

4.1. 18th Century: The Turn of Youths

Though there had always been a reference to youth and how adults felt about those who proved to be less than exemplary, 'adolescent' only became a specific focus of attention by the turn of the 20th century thanks to the work of G. Stanley Hall (1969).

Despite this, there has always been a noticeable difference between youths and adults especially when it came down to age and physical development, as found within the literature (Hall, 1969). Therefore, when it came to Hall's work, 'adolescent' was not as impactful as it may have seemed. Instead, what was interesting was the focus placed on labelling youth behavior when it seemingly fell short to societal expectations.

Furthermore, despite the fact that Hall's work drew attention to the term 'adolescent', Hall was not the original inventor of the term. In fact, 'adolescent' with regards to its recognized definition of children entering into maturity, first came about around the 18th century; more specifically, 1785 (Adolescent, adj.). Though Hall did not invent the term 'adolescent', his research focused on the developmental phase of adolescence in terms of what this meant for society when it came to understanding youth (Hall, 1969). It was because Hall believed that the key to understanding adolescents lied in their development that his work became so recognized. Regardless of the impact Hall's work had on the study of the developmental stage of adolescence, his work was only a portion of what is, to this day, a continuous attempt to gain more knowledge when it comes to understanding young people.

Hall's use of this distinction alone further distinguishes the gap between the two developmental ages of childhood and adulthood, as indicated by the different label being applied (Hall, 1969). The use of the term 'adolescent' reinforces the belief that simply being of a certain age was not enough to satisfy the general public in proving that an individual was, in fact, an adult. One must accomplish and achieve certain goals to prove that they have the caliber required to be a responsible adult.

Though times have changed since the 18th century, certain aspects were especially necessary for one to achieve in order to properly deem themselves an adult. For instance, it was common for children in this period to have a position in the workplace around the age of ten (Cunningham, 2005). They were expected to take on job positions, not for their own betterment, but to contribute to their household and to help their parents/guardians²⁵²⁶ (Cunningham, 2005).

In 18th century Europe, adults were primarily concerned with the issue of ‘idle children’, believing that the more occupied children were, the less chance they would have to get into any mischief (Cunningham, 2005). This statement furthers the belief that adults during this period were especially concerned with the development of youth, particularly in childhood, and how it would affect them. Unfortunately, the need to have children constantly occupied would result in them working long hours in factories which were never equipped for them to begin with, resulting in many workplace injuries²⁷ (Cunningham, 2005).

Given how most children were expected to help their families during the 18th century, not much focus was assigned on the conditions they were placed; it was simply the responsibility of the young people to pull their own weight. Nevertheless, it was

²⁵ It was well during the proto-industrialisation period that children were expected to help their families financially. As well, it was during the 18th century that many children were abandoned by their parents for the sake of financial hardship; this proved to be one of the largest childhood devastations of this time. When it came to gender, girls were abandoned more than boys in certain areas mostly because boys were believed to be more durable and hardworking than girls, thereby making them more useful (Cunningham, 2005; Hayes, 2001).

²⁶ The act of neutralizing childhood abandonment became a focus when it was later evident how much harm and abuse children would suffer because of it. When the rights of the child were addressed more carefully it was deemed that they too deserved to be brought up in a safe and nurturing environment (Boswell, 1990).

²⁷ However, with children having such small hands, they were seen as more useful to aid with mechanical issues in tight spaces.

known that regardless of their supposed responsibilities, the work conditions children, and particularly young boys, were placed in were especially treacherous. Boys were seen as more durable and hardworking than girls and would, therefore, be selected to work within factories to help their families (Panter-Brick & Smith, 2000). Regardless how 21st century factories were more regarded as unsafe environments for children, the same cannot be said for 18th century communities. Nevertheless, children were placed in factories for the simple reason that they were more physically able to help with mechanical issues given their small limbs and nimble fingers (Boswell, 1990).

Though the literature surrounding the 18th century does not suggest the specific use of a label when referring to children and youth, it indicates that children were an inconvenience to the older population and seen as troublesome; especially financially. With adults constantly putting pressure on children to remain occupied with their time and knowing the importance of contributing to the care of the household ²⁸. Unfortunately, it was believed that the financial hardship of a child would prove to be too much for a family, thereby resulting in children being abandoned by their families²⁹.

Nevertheless, there were foster agents³⁰ made available at this time which ended up being a refuge for many children who were abandoned or deemed too much of a burden by their families (Boswell, 1990; Hayes, 2001). Most children were then cared for by the foster system until they were old enough to care for themselves. Unfortunately,

²⁸ This evidently put pressure on children to work harder than they should be expected to; especially when compared to 20th century ideology.

²⁹ It was said at this time that if many of the children would have survived, given the sheer size of how many were abandoned, the system itself would have collapsed (Boswell, 1990).

³⁰ Foster agents applies to all those willing and able at that time to care for children who were not biologically their own. Such could be foster parents as well as the workers within a foster system who worked to place children in new home settings.

due to a lack of community-based foster care systems at this time, some children would end up relocated to new towns and cities. This would affect the workforce later on since it would result in employers having a smaller population of potential employees (Panter-Brick & Smith, 2000; Boswell, 1990; Hayes, 2001).

Evidently, certain conclusions were met when it came to the care provided, or lack thereof, by parents during the 18th century, which would also make way for the necessity of child labour laws³¹. Regardless of age differences, it would seem that simply being able-bodied was enough to deem one capable of handling adult-like responsibilities. Given the literature discussing this time period, it is hypothesized that one would not be considered an adult by way of age, but instead, by their physical and mental ability to contribute to the family home life. Evidently, there was little cause for concern at this time, demonstrating that children becoming adults was not as much of an issue as it would later turn out to be³².

Additionally, during the 18th century, children in Georgian England were regarded in a slightly different manner, one which paid a lot of focus on child murders (Kilday & Watson, 2005). Kilday and Watson's research examined acts committed against children during the 18th century, believing that it could shed more light onto society's attitudes and overall valuation of children during this time (2005). For example, society did not condemn a much older male having sexual relations with a young girl, especially if

³¹ It should also be mentioned here that it is likely that parents had little choice in the matter, putting their children to work was a common aspect during this time and therefore was not seen as an act of parental negligence in any sense.

³² Literature that focused on children in the 18th century pays little attention to the children themselves, giving rise to the belief that their growth was not a primary focus as it would later become. More so, the literature shows that the focus on children was merely placed upon their usefulness at that present time (i.e. working to help provide for their families) (Panter-Brick & Smith, 2000; Boswell, 1990; Hayes, 2001).

compared to such behavior being seen today in the 21st century. As well, during the 18th century, male patriarchs of the household would often exercise their authority by use of force, especially when it came to discipline of their children; an official judge ruling stated that discipline was encouraged as long as it was applied with a reasonable amount of force (Kilday & Watson, 2005). However, 18th century patriarchs were generally unconcerned with what constituted as a ‘reasonable amount of force’ in the justice system, thereby leaving them with an especially large window of potential ways they can ‘discipline’ their children (Kilday & Watson, 2005).

Nevertheless, when it came to the actual act of murdering a child, such crimes were regarded in a grayer area for it was not only strangers who committed such crimes but also parents themselves. As illustrated in the portrait ‘Gin Lane’ by William Hogarth (1751) mother Judith Defour was known to have murdered her own child simply so she could sell her clothes and buy gin for herself³³ (Kilday & Watson, 2005; Hogarth, 1751). Given the large population of abandoned children during this time, which was also experienced in England during the 18th century, the chances of children being maltreated was also a threat³⁴. It was then, in 1739, Thomas Coram opened what was referred to as ‘The Foundling Hospital’ where abandoned children could seek refuge when they were abused (Kilday & Watson, 2005; Lay, 2010).

The ‘Foundling Hospital’ became a sanctuary for many children during 1739, despite the fact that many were separated from their families’ due to circumstances such

³³ With such examples of child murder occurring at this time, it becomes more of a concern with how little rights children had during the 18th century; especially when such behavior would go unpunished.

³⁴ It was also during this time that children would at times even be murdered by their parents instead of abandoned because of poverty (Kilday & Watson, 2005).

as war and famine, the hospital enabled many children to succeed (Levene, 2007; Kilday & Watson, 2005; Lay, 2010). Though it was not the first orphanage in existence, the ‘Foundling Hospital’ was one of the larger establishments dedicated to the care and wellbeing of children who could not be looked after by their own families. Interestingly enough, despite the time the hospital was established (1739), it also provided a certain set of regulations when it came to taking in children (Levene, 2007). Parents and guardians who were unable to care for their children would undergo interviews in which they would be questioned about the child before the hospital would accept them (Levene, 2007; Kilday & Watson, 2005; Lay, 2010). As well, once a child would be placed in the care of an establishment like the ‘Foundling Hospital’ individuals would have faith in the fact that the children would turn out just fine (Levene, 2007).

Despite the safeguards put into place within society to care for abandoned or orphaned children, there were still instances when they were not so well protected. Evidently, when all was said and done, the concept of child murders was perceived as a threat to the social order, leaving many to question the society they lived in. One particular example is that of Elizabeth Brownrigg, a murderer hanged in September 1767 for the death of Mary Clifford (Bentley, 2009). Considering how few events were documented during the 18th century, there is not much information on the crime committed by Brownrigg. However, we do know that she was a mother who worked as a midwife (wet-nurse) who tortured and killed her then apprentice Mary Clifford (Bentley, 2009; Kromm, 2012). There was also speculation that Brownrigg was a notorious midwife (wet-nurse) who was said to have abused all of her female apprentices, but it was only when Mary Clifford died that attention was brought to Brownrigg and her

actions (Bentley, 2009). Brownrigg was an especially enlightening case since her crime would later change how women were perceived in Georgian Britain during the 18th century, displaying that women could, in fact, be capable of more than just housework (Bentley, 2009; Kilday & Watson, 2005).

It was also during this time in the 18th century that great thinkers like Rousseau and Locke were especially interested in delving further into the education of children (Rousseau & Foxley, 1930; Locke & Nidditch, 1975). Due to their philosophical musings, there was an especially larger focus placed on the necessity of education in childhood specifically when it came to identify the different forms of ‘child’ that came about during the enlightenment. It was with the work of Rousseau and Locke that children began to be analyzed in such a way that a psychology was beginning to form in regard to how children themselves developed and grew as individuals (Rousseau & Foxley, 1930; Locke & Nidditch, 1975). Rousseau’s work was focused primarily on the need to not direct children as society had a tendency to do, but instead to allow children to find their own way (Rousseau & Foxley, 1930). Locke’s work was also influential in his theory of a ‘blank slate’, but especially in how that related to the child persona when it came to how parents should raise their children, and especially in regard to how the child in question had yet to be corrupted by society (Locke & Nidditch, 1975). Rousseau and Locke were some of the more influential forerunners when it came to the study of children as they began to approach the study of children in a different way which would allow for a new perspective to be undertaken (Rousseau & Foxley, 1930; Locke & Nidditch, 1975).

Despite that, there was a definite lack in the rights that children had during the 18th century, such instances would ultimately begin to change the way society perceived children. The 18th century would also bring forth what was later known as the ‘period of enlightenment’, a time when great thinkers of this time would theorize, construct, and invent new and exciting advances that would forever change how many individuals would live; as seen with Rousseau and Locke’s work. With the technological age coming into effect at full force, it was believed, and perhaps even feared, how so many changes would come to affect the community overall. However, what is especially thought-provoking is what so many changes would mean for the children growing up in this period; moving from the 18th century into the 19th century. The research conducted thereby states the need for children to remain occupied in order to prevent negative attributes such as waywardness. However, this topic of discussion requires more attention with regards to further research; particularly as related to children helping their families during times of great poverty. Nevertheless, regardless of the ways in which children and youth were valuable, there was no escaping the downfall if they were found to be too much of a burden.

4.2. 19th Century: A Change of Focus

The 19th century brought on the period of industrialization and a new discourse of children and childhood. Given the way parents treated their children in the 18th century, it draws attention as to why there is now a focus on the neglect occurring in how children were being raised. As well, it was during the period of industrialization in the 19th century that women began to have a place within factory settings, and though this created an opportunity for them, it had a different effect on the mortality rate of children for this

time (Reynolds, 2011). Due to their new work positions, mothers were spending less time at home with their children; this would also give rise to the discussion of negligence taking place in the raising of children. Though some factory owners would set aside areas as make-shift play-rooms and nurseries in the factories, mothers would still be separated from their children while they had to work; likely for long periods of time (Reynolds, 2011).

Children at this time were either subjected to being looked after by workers in the factory or by wet nurses who themselves came with their own negative attributes, most of which deeming them unhealthy to the child's development (Reynolds, 2011). Ultimately, the issue here remained to be the lack of proper care and attention that children were receiving, most of which from their infancy on. In this sense, working mothers and factory owners were considered to be very selfish since they were placing profit at a higher importance than the well-being of children (Reynolds, 2011).

Other children that were of interest during the 19th century was those of Native heritage, especially in the eyes of the Catholic church which encouraged the need for all children in the surrounding area to be raised in a Catholic setting in the hopes of being well versed in community beliefs (Reynolds, 2011; *The Survivors Speak*, 2014). Many native children were removed from their families and placed in residential schools where they would be educated in a Catholic institution run by nuns and priests (Reynolds, 2011; *The Survivors Speak*, 2014). However, it was only when the truth of residential schools would come out later on in the 20th century that individuals began to learn of the negative environments native children were living in at the time (Cassell, 2017).

With regards to education in the 19th century, most American societies believed

that education would act as a solution for disadvantaged children for them to attend an institution. However, keeping children occupied with education would prove to be more difficult than expected to solve such problems, as many believed that school was not the only solution that policymakers should be considering with regards to bettering the community (Vinovskis, 1992). Though schooling offers its own advantages, in the sense of building character and offering children an education, it was also believed that family dynamics were especially crucial in a child's development (Vinovskis, 1992). Despite controversial views, since the 19th century, parents have since become more accepting of their children not only attending school but also continuing their education³⁵ (Vinovskis, 1992).

Regardless of the good intentions that came with ensuring that children obtain the best care and attention from both family socialization as well as schooling, in the 19th-century inequalities still played a strong role, especially when it came to children. It was believed that the more care and attention a child had, especially in relation to how far they would succeed with their education, such accomplishments would provide them with a higher status, which would reflect well on their family (Vinovskis, 1992). This was an especially driving force when parents of a higher social status were less than adamant of the prospect of every child gaining the same advantages, no matter their social position.

The 19th century offers a newer form of socialization for children than previously. For instance, most children would remain at home with the expectation that they would help care for the household in the same that their parents did (Vinovskis, 1992).

However, when education became more of a mandatory obligation for children, they

³⁵ When it came to the American school system in the 19th century it first began in response to the period of industrialization, but also as a tool for protecting democracy (Vinovskis, 1992).

would soon gain an education as well as training from another source outside their family in the hopes of providing them with the proper tools to become independent adults.

Before schools became more universally constructed, education and training were expected to come from the parents during the 19th century, and more often than not, it was the mothers who would teach their children the same values and principles taught by the community church (Vinovskis, 1992).

Regardless of the type of schooling children received during the 19th century, be it grammar school or Sunday school, it would seem that education became a widely growing phenomenon that was expected of all children (Vinovskis, 1992; Stone, 2012). With this in mind, it appears that primary socialization,³⁶ which would have normally been made available to children from their home life, would soon grow to be obsolete since the school systems would deem themselves better equipped to educate and train the younger generations (Grusec, 1969; Stone, 2012). Children were then expected to attend school, for at the very least, until they have completed the minimum requirement; others were known to continue on to grammar school, and equivalent, if they proved proficient enough to be more educated (Vinovskis, 1992). Therefore, for the most part, education was slowly becoming an expectation for the youth of the community, believing that with education and proper training they would become model citizens within the community.

Expectations placed on children in the 18th century were slowly changing into ones geared towards the betterment of youths growing into promising adults, as we have seen with the research discussing the 19th century. An education soon began to be seen as

³⁶ In the field of Sociology, primary socialization has become synonymized with the family and what a child can learn from their parents, while secondary socialization has become synonymized with schooling and what a child can learn from their teachers and peers (Grusec, 1969).

a stepping stone to enable individuals in gaining better employment opportunities in the future³⁷. This shift in the community dynamics in the 19th century would later enable the younger generation to make way for more advancements in the job market as well as potential growth of society as a whole in the coming future³⁸.

When it came to young people and where they fit into the 19th century, G. Stanley Hall's work (1969) focused on adolescence beginning somewhere around the time that children were first introduced to schooling³⁹. Regardless of the fact that the term 'adolescence' was not common at this time⁴⁰ Hall believed it was necessary to establish an informal timeframe in order to determine when an age of development would begin and end. According to his research, adolescence would begin at the same time as schooling, and ultimately end once University education was completed⁴¹ (p. 310-321; Hall, 1969). Hall does mention that there is no fixed starting point for adolescence to officially begin, such as a specific age (despite his earlier claim), nonetheless, he did state that everything coming after adolescence would prove crucial in its own way; especially

³⁷ As well, regardless of status differences, children from impoverished families were also given opportunities to obtain an education (albeit different from the other high-status families), which enabled them to have access to more opportunities as well; as long as they were able and willing to put in the work, which at times could prove problematic for those in their situation. Children in such circumstances would also face challenges when it would come time to advance their education, having to prove that regardless of previous education they are in fact prepared and willing to continue learning (Vinovskis, 1992).

³⁸ It is also important to note here that even though education was considered mandatory and necessary for the development of children in the communities at this time, there were still families in the areas who did not follow this belief, which would result in many children missing the chance to have an experience they could have significantly benefited from (Vinovskis, 1992).

³⁹ Considering the earlier arguments, Hall's claims states that adolescence have always held a place within society and have not simply occurred at one point in time. This proves interesting in how young people have been treated around this time, especially when originally perceived as children.

⁴⁰ It would only become common around the turn of the century.

⁴¹ Hall believed that this was the time in which 'adolescents' were both developing and growing within society (Hall, 1969).

in the overall understanding of this stage of development (Hall, 1969). Nevertheless, Hall did present a statement which proved quite interesting when it came to his opinion of youth, *“They can neither apply themselves nor submit to rules”* (p. 330; Hall, 1969). The aforementioned quote states that Hall believed young people were, in a sense, wayward when it came to following rules and taking on responsibilities. This statement can present itself as quite common when looking at adult perspectives of youths, however, given the fact Hall’s work was published in 1904, it offers a sense of consideration into how similar the opinions of adults were during the 19th century when compared to the 21st century.

For educators in the 19th century, there was a particular focus on how they viewed their own students. More specifically, the analysis of how teachers would observe their students by way of educational psychology⁴², a concept which only became evident around the last two decades of the 19th century. Academics like G. Stanley Hall were also interested in the understanding of childhood mentality and the ways in which youths would analyze and interpret the world around them (Stone, 2012).

Education was understood as a concept that would only be achievable by a certain type of student, with educators believing that not all children would be capable of understanding the basic concepts of lessons and practices (Stone, 2012). In sum, if a student lacked the capability or the willingness to develop mental discipline in order to aid them in gathering and understanding new information, teachers would deem them unable to accomplish all tasks set out for them; especially when it came to apply such

⁴² Educational psychology is understood, essentially as the study of mind, mental ability, and learning objectives from the perspectives of educators when it comes to their own students (Stone, 2012; Lindsay, 2007; Diessner, 2001).

lessons outside of the classroom (Stone, 2012). Therefore, it was not enough for teachers to simply give a lesson in class, students were also expected to apply themselves within the classroom setting in general, thereby proving their own ability to learn and grow as individuals⁴³ (Stone, 2012). Such proves to be especially noteworthy since mass education was a new concept at the time, and yet such practices were still taken as seriously as they are today in the 21st century.

The expectations that came along with education for youth in the 19th century was not as new as they might have believed during the 1800s. For instance, the very belief that individuals – in this case students – could be individual thinkers and that intellectuality was a distinction all its own separate from the physical, dates back to the original thinkers such as Plato, Augustine, and Locke whose time periods spanned from 300 AD to the 18th century (Stone, 2012). Therefore, when it officially became mandatory for youth to attend schooling in the 19th century, there was already a set of values put into place of what was expected of young people as students. By taking all of this into account, it is no wonder how these same students would eventually be encouraged to continue on with their education.

As well, the 19th century saw many changes in the expectations of youths, especially when it came to their upbringing. However, it will only be around the turn of the century – the 20th century – that discussion would begin to surround the topic of youth and what they meant to the community itself. Young people would no longer be considered children solely expected to follow the examples set forth by their parents, but

⁴³ Regardless of the times, teachers of the 19th century were still expected to ‘wake the mind’ of their students by applying lessons and goals that would enable them to achieve and grow; essentially molding young minds (Stone, 2012).

instead, as an entirely new age of development expected to take on new roles and responsibilities set forth by society. This new age of development would find itself between the stages of childhood and adulthood, which would, in and of itself, present a new, and at times unsettling, change in how the community would treat and react towards youths.

4.3. 20th Century: *The Dawn of 'Adolescents'*

Regardless of young people always having a place within the community in some form or another, it was only at the beginning of the 20th century that they would begin to be associated with an official title: adolescent. Before the term of adolescence came to be a factor in how communities viewed youth, this section will discuss the ways in which youths were treated during this time and the expectations that befell them. To begin, it is still believed at this time that children and adults were on different enough levels to warrant separate labels; in this case, adolescence and adulthood (Lewis, 1963).

As mentioned in the previous subsection, when it came to 'adolescent', the term was only discussed at length by G. Stanley Hall (1969) a psychologist who specialized on the understanding of this specific age of development; again, he was not the original inventor of the term (1969). Though his explanations and conclusions remained clinical at best, there was still an air of focus placed on the very fact that there was a gap between the developmental stages of childhood and adulthood (Hall, 1969). Hall discussed the concern that others had on child growth and development, stating that there was, in fact, a genuine worry over whether or not a child was falling behind in their development and what that would ultimately mean for them as a whole (Hall, 1969).

When distinguishing exactly where adolescence would begin, Hall concluded puberty was, in fact, the only biological determinant; now this came after a long and grueling overview of the entire lifespan of the child up until they reached puberty (Hall, 1969). Considering Hall's clinical background, there was a heavy focus on anatomy growth and development of psychosis within young people, for instance, making reference to young people moving away from childhood diseases and developing into more adult-prone ones (Hall, 1969). *[...] the deepest and largest impressions are made during adolescence, which we know from other sources is most plastic and richest in memory pictures"* (p. 132; Hall, 1904) All things considered, Hall presented an interesting argument to distinguish the ways in which adolescence has always been a part of development, regardless if it has not been given a distinctive label up until the 20th century.

Furthermore, when it came to the overall understanding of adolescent behavior, there was a point in which Hall (1904) stated *[...] the growing recognition by psychology that, as the will is larger than the intellect, so the instinct and feelings are at the root of both reason and will; the new discovery of the profound meaning of adolescence; [...]"* (p. 138). This statement proved quite interesting in how it related well with what was previously said in both the 18th and 19th centuries and will connect well with literature found within the contemporary age. Such a statement all but bridged the gap between the centuries when it came the discussion of young people, replying that regardless of the passage of time, there has always been a time when older generations showed or expressed concern for the generations set to come after them (Hall, 1969; Côté & Allahaar, 1994; Cunningham, 2005).

As well during this time in the 20th century, other changes were seen occurring within society, particularly those within the home. Not only were generations changing in response to the turn of the century, but aspects like work as well as education were changing as well (Lewis, 1963; Côté & Allahaar, 1994). With so many changes occurring within society in the 20th century, it begs the question of what occurred with young people.

As the gap between childhood and adulthood became more focused by the differences between them, more attention was being placed on the household itself, more so on the ways in which it was changing from what it was before. However, such changes varied on an international level as not all households were the same culturally⁴⁴⁴⁵ (Carrà et al, 2014). The changes to the family household would prove to be more impactful than expected⁴⁶ (Cheal & Albanese, 2014). For instance, with there being a larger focus placed on education and social interaction for youths, children would be spending less time in the home and therefore not participating in the upkeep of the home as much as previous generations would have (Cheal & Albanese, 2014).

With regard to young people in the 20th century, there was a larger focus on their peer groups and, essentially, their overall subcultural experiences. Attention directed to such would only serve to prove as a unique opportunity to see into their personal lives

⁴⁴ Given the sheer volume of adults within a household, it is hypothesized that young people would have turned to their peer groups which would provide them with the freedom they were likely not finding within their households where they were under constant supervision.

⁴⁵ It is important to note that given the cross-cultural dynamics when it came to families, not all households would have experienced intergenerational dwellings in the same way. For example, Italian families would have been more likely to experience intergenerational dwellings given their cultural beliefs and practices relating to families, versus that of American households.

⁴⁶ Changes would not only be in the population of individuals residing in the home, but also the overall family dynamic. Multiple generations provide for a unique and expansive environment to raise younger generations.

and serve as a starting point to better understand the issues they are faced with (Côté & Allahar, 1994). It was well within the 20th century that media began to play a prominent role in the lives of adolescents, becoming more a part of their daily lives than ever before (Côté & Allahar, 1994). At this time one of the more prominent social media platforms was that of MSN Messenger, created in 1999, which allowed users to communicate through instant messages online (Li, 2014). Media and social media platforms enabled youths of the 20th century to be more outspoken about their opinions on various topics. Such development was especially useful in the understanding of youth culture as it enabled other members of society, both academic and otherwise, to have as close to a first-person account of what it was like to be a young person at that time; a luxury that youths in previous centuries did not have.

When it came to the expectations that young people would come into contact with in this century, it became evident that more often than not, such would be that of not only attending school, but also completing it (Côté & Allahar, 1994). With literature focusing on the rise and fall of dropouts during the 20th century, it became evident that such was a particular area of focus for society, as well; the same can also be said for the employment rates of the 20th century (Côté & Allahar, 1994). Therefore, there was a particular focus on, not only making oneself successfully educated, but also coming through and proving to be capable of supporting oneself as well (Côté & Allahar, 1994). The shift of responsibilities in the 20th century accurately demonstrated the ways in which young people were beginning to be challenged by the older generations. They were no longer being expected to remain within the home and help care for the rest of the family, but instead to make something of themselves on their own.

Such expectations for students in the 20th century would also lead to the beginning of pressures mounting to the point of young people either dropping out of school or becoming part of the unemployed population; which would also continue into the 21st century (Henderson, 2014; Furstenberg, 2004; Pope-Chappell, 2016; Havinghurst, 1960). For some individuals, particular goals aimed at developing them into adults would later prove more challenging than expected (Côté & Allahaar, 1994). Because of this, young people choosing to delay their transition into adult life becomes more common as the years went by from the 20th century into the 21st. However, the 21st century is also where the discussion of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ began unfolding and the overall concern for the development of the next generation was put into question; yet again (Côté & Allahaar, 1994).

4.4. 21st Century: Where We Find Ourselves

Though the period itself has changed since the 18th century, quite a few aspects have remained the same. For instance, society continues to be concerned with applying a specific term in order to better understand youth behavior especially when concerning youth delay into adulthood. G. Stanley Hall’s work (1969) organizes itself by going through each stage of life an individual will experience up until they reach adolescence. Such development demonstrates not only where adolescent becomes a part of an individual’s life course, but also how it can be understood as a significant stage of development (Hall, 1989). That being said, many specialists, such as Psychologists who have encountered young people, have taken it upon themselves to better understand this young generation as best they can. However, this has resulted in quite a few instances

where the conclusions drawn have only served to make matters worse⁴⁷ (Côté & Allahar, 1994). The field of psychology has produced many advances and accomplishments over recent years, such work has made admirable progressions in the way the world understands personalities as well as mental illnesses. However, in the past there was a time when not enough research was conducted when it came to analyzing youth behavior. Such limitations have led to complications in the ways that others understand young people⁴⁸ (Côté & Allahar, 1994).

Since the 18th century there has been a lot of focus placed on young people, particularly in terms of understanding them better. Since they were only referred to as either children or even adults depending on their status within the home or society itself, it was difficult to find sources referencing them specifically. This is also because it was not too long ago that individuals, be they children or young people, actually became a focus of interest within the literature since the 18th century. Instances such as child labor laws and rights movements drew attention to younger generations that were otherwise ignored for many years (Kilday & Watson, 2005; Hogarth, 1751; Lay, 2010; Reynolds, 2011).

With there still being little aid to offer in the understanding of young people certain researchers aimed for a more general approach (Côté & Allahar, 1994). However, regardless of how convenient a catch-all answer would be, there is, in fact, none that

⁴⁷ Specialists were under pressure by adults and parents alike to come up with a solution as how to better understand young people in society, but their conclusions left many questions unanswered. Assumptions and generalizations were applied to the understanding of young people in such a way that left it almost impossible to comprehend one given youth as not everyone fell within the same definition.

⁴⁸ Over the passage of time, the field of Psychology has continued its work to better its understanding of young people with regards to their behavior and personalities, such continues to aid in improving treatment and altogether involvement with young people today.

apply when dealing with human beings; especially young people. It would only be in D. W. Winnicott's work (1965) that anything close to an answer would come along (1965). In his work, Winnicott concluded that the best cure for adolescence would be maturity and the passage of time (Winnicott, 1965). Winnicott's work as a pediatrician was widely known in the field of psychoanalysis, his research began with an analysis into the changing state woman undergo when they enter motherhood and how the shift aids in the infants' overall development (Rutherford, 2014). However, this 'cure' that he spoke of would only be applicable to those who, not only are willing to mature, but have the intention to do it.

Essentially, when it comes to comprehending young people, one must first begin by establishing that not all youth are the same. Young people experience different life courses and circumstances which can alter their development as individuals. Most every adult in history has gone through the developmental stage of adolescence, and although their experience were slightly different than the young people of today, there still remains the fact that each of them were young once themselves; likely antagonizing the adults of their time too. That being said, regardless of the standpoint that many adults likely have when it comes to young people, youths are still being referred to as nuisances in certain instances. Despite times when psychiatry has attempted to label and define youths by way of diseases and mental illnesses, more appropriate conclusions have also been made. Such as, by doing away with generalizations society can begin to understand that all young people are different and should therefore not be labelled as similar to others within their age group.

Regardless of the many pieces of literature focusing on young people and the

ways we can better understand them there is still the question of how accurate such sources can be. Given the genealogy that was conducted for this paper, and its focus on education and the work force, there is little proof to determine if any of the research done at the expense of young people even helped the general public to better understand this age group on a more personal level⁴⁹. Though some pieces of literature have proven valuable in the understanding of certain challenges that young people undergo in the 21st century, such as mental illness and work struggles, but certain struggles can also come down to people who have made their conclusions with the use of generalizations, and the consequences thereof. Therefore, by looking past generalizations, it is believed that a better understanding of young people can develop if they are not being perceived as similar to one another when it comes to their personality. Consequently, specialists have also taken to justifying such conclusions which thereby led to the DSM-III including disorders such as ‘shyness’ and ‘adolescent adjustment’ (American Psychiatric Association, 1980). That being said, the field of Psychology has moved away from such classifications and have removed such disorders from the DSM model thereby demonstrating their improvement when analysis young people. As well, when historical aspects are also considered, the diagnoses being made in the 21st century are quite interesting, for instance, in the past, being ‘shy’ would likely have been considered as being ‘polite’ and therefore not a cause for concern. Ultimately, when it comes to the understanding of young people there must be a consideration put into place concerning the exact century being discussed; not only the generation.

⁴⁹ Further research examining instances such as family dynamics more directly could prove resourceful in understanding more when it came to young people and how they were being understood.

Despite this perspective, when it came to the expectations that young people in the 21st century would encounter, it becomes quite evident that circumstances have indeed changed. For instance, young people are encouraged to attain an education, and especially that of post-secondary⁵⁰. As well, there is more focus now in the contemporary age for oneself to establish, not only a specific goal, but one that falls within the realm of adulthood. It is here that ‘Delayed Adulthood’ becomes a concern in its own right. Youths should not be considered as an epidemic of sorts which has no basis other than to cause chaos for the general public. Nevertheless, young people are encouraged to accomplish goals, for instance, gaining an education, in order to prove that they are well on their way of becoming adults. Such discussions will continue later on in this Thesis in chapter 5, which draws attention on the more common pillars that young people are encouraged to achieve in order to accurately define themselves as adults in this contemporary age; regardless of the challenges they will face along the way.

⁵⁰ Keeping in mind that such expectations are more common in Western cultures. Any other customs and traditions of other cultures, respectful in their own right, will not be mentioned for the sake of time and space limitations.

5. MILLENNIALS, ADULTS, AND THE 21ST CENTURY

As discussed in the previous chapter, there is much to consider in the way that society views and understands youth. Today's youth are referred to as 'Millennials', in other words, all those comprising of the generation born between the years of 1977 and 1995; and it is this particular generation that has received so much attention. The research demonstrates the continuation of expectations placed on the younger generations of each given time period, and though certain aspects have proven relevant, such as how to care for oneself independently, there are also ones which are equally harmful. Such can be seen with millennials in the 21st century who are under a near constant scrutiny to achieve all the required pillars of adulthood set by society to prove themselves as adults.

Today's contemporary age has drawn much attention to a specific set of pillars one must achieve in order to be officially classified as an adult⁵¹. It is also with millennials that we first begin, to see the term 'Delayed Adulthood' being applied. This term was first applied to this generation for the simple reason that they have proved themselves, countless times to some, that they are not concerned about transitioning into adulthood; at least, not at this present moment (Kremer, 2015; Henderson, 2014; Stafford, 2015). In all fairness, selected millennials have demonstrated a strong and driven incentive to not only enter adulthood but to achieve a number of set goals. Such expectations create a high level of stress and anxiety for millennials to achieve adulthood successfully and enhance the hazard if such is not achieved (Henderson, 2014; Stafford, 2015; Williams, 2017; Stanger-Ross et al, 2005; Furstenberg, 2004). Millennials who are

⁵¹ Keeping in mind that only Westernized sources were analyzed in the research discussing the pillars of adulthood. It is quite possible that the such pillars differ from culture to culture; and likely, in some areas, do not exist at all.

receiving the majority of the focus with regards to ‘Delayed Adulthood’ have been individuals expressing either a lack of interest or complete avoidance in transitioning into adulthood, thereby validating certain beliefs that youths lack the required skills to become adults.

There are several ways millennials can demonstrate their disinterest in becoming adults, but one of the main forms is through the nonfulfillment of the pillars⁵² (Henderson, 2014; Stafford, 2015; Williams, 2017; Stanger-Ross et al, 2005; Furstenberg, 2004). The literature on ‘Delayed Adulthood’ has placed a lot of focus on what is being referred to as the ‘pillars of adulthood’; which will be discussed at length later on in this chapter. Essentially these are specific goals that must be achieved by millennials in today’s society in order to unofficially classify them as adults (Pope-Chappell, 2016; Stillman, 2010; Henderson, 2014).

Millennials have been considered one of the idlest generations since they are taking so long to transition into adulthood (Henderson, 2014; Silva, 2012). However, given the literature discussed in the previous chapter, this opinion is not a new concept. Demonstrating a definite lack or utter disinterest to enter into the world of adult responsibilities has been expressed as one of the many reasons why adulthood is being avoided, if not altogether forgotten (Pope-Chappell, 2016; Amit, 2011). Compared to the literature analyzing the past four centuries (18th – 21st), the generation of millennials is speaking out on what they think of the opinions adults have on themselves and their potential, becoming more vocal in how they personally feel about the treatment they are

⁵² A pillar, more commonly known as a reference to a piece of concrete stone, is, in this case, used to define the achievement of a person who is being relied upon by others to complete a necessary task.

receiving because they are taking more time than expected to become adults (Hacking, 2012; Pope-Chappell, 2016; Amit, 2011). Given the rise in technology over the past few years, youth are now more capable than ever to express their own opinions through numerous social media platforms thereby making their voice more accessible and impactful⁵³⁵⁴ (Pope-Chappell, 2016; Amit, 2011; Gauthier, 2007).

That being said, not all millennials are choosing to avoid adulthood, instead, most are simply unable to achieve it (Amit, 2011). Since the 19th century, education has become a more recognized and respected goal to achieve, especially in Western cultures. More so, young people are encouraged to continue their education and attend post-secondary institutions in order to better prepare themselves for future career paths. However, regardless of how noble and accomplishing such a goal can be it also comes with its own drawbacks; one of the most common being that of student debt (Pope-Chappel, 2016). With regards to millennials, one of the major challenges they have faced, given the literature, is that of student debt; other challenges they experience are those such as a lack of job opportunities (Pope-Chappel, 2016).

It is with student debt that we notice one particular reason as to why millennials delay transitioning into adulthood. Since these millennials have little income at the time when they are expected to pay off their student fees they usually settle with any form of employment they can find to help them pay off the debt; and more often than not, that position usually ends up being far from their career path (Pope-Chappel, 2016). With

⁵³ Such is also an example of Hacking's work on dynamic nominalism; it also speaks to a location of power relation within the discourse.

⁵⁴ Despite this connection between young people and technology, there was no other distinct connections made within the literature focusing on technologies role in young people and their development within society in the 20th century and into the 21st century.

such an outcome, accomplishing other goals, such as the purchase of a home or starting a family will likely be put off for the sake of financial purposes.

University enrollment rates have risen within the last few years, demonstrating an increase of 50% from the year 1990 to 2012, however, tuition fees have also risen (Thompson, 2012). The fact of the matter is that student debt has almost doubled from 1996 to 2006 and given the incentive for millennials to enter into adulthood, it has also been advised at times that young people should forgo marriage when they have a debt of \$30,000 or more (Thompson, 2012). Indeed, times have changed, especially when we consider that back in 1993 80% of parents were confident their children would be off and on their own by age 22, and only twenty years later, young people are now expected to reach independence by age 25 or even later (Thompson, 2012). As such, it has also been estimated in 2016 that more than 70% of students were being affected by student debt, the median falling between \$20,000; with more than 13% of millennials claiming to have a debt of \$50,000 or more (Pope-Chappell, 2016).

Regardless of the many reasons millennials delay adulthood, there are also reasons behind adults who show most of the concern for this transition; or lack thereof. More will be discussed in the ways that adults perceive and understand 'Delayed Adulthood' in relation to millennials, but for now, it simply needs to be understood that one of the main reasons is, in part, selfishness. Adults have their own goals in mind, and one of which that directly involves millennials, at least at this time, is that of retirement. For example, retirement plans may be derailed if the worker who is supposed to take over

ends up being a millennial who had no interest in taking on such a position, ending in the postponement or termination retirement plans⁵⁵.

With the focus being placed on millennials and their capabilities of, or lack thereof, transitioning into adulthood, it begs the question of how much of an impact such opinions can have. For instance, if the judgments being made by adults are having more of a negative impact than a positive one, how useful can such a term be in the grand scheme of things? For the most part, some are already arguing the fact that adulthood in and of itself has come to an end where millennials are concerned (Henderson, 2014). Henderson's claims are quite interesting, but in some instances, valid, if not altogether cynical, as she discusses the many ways that millennials are, in a sense, 'changing the game' when it comes to adulthood (2014). Henderson's article (2014) touches on the many ways millennials are taking a more contemporary approach to adulthood as more young people are moving back to their parents' home and relying on their parents to care for them. Additionally, Henderson applies A. O. Scott's research on the death of adulthood in relation to popular culture when it comes to the glorification of permanent adolescence, which, in her opinion, results in a generation of individuals who will only ever seem to outgrow clothing, and not much else (Henderson, 2014). Such statements are only a few of which that place more pressure on millennials to either prove themselves to adults or simply achieve the pillars of adulthood that much sooner; regardless if they are ready (Furstenberg, 2004; Silva, 2012).

⁵⁵ Now this can be a statement that results from some instances relating to millennials, but nevertheless summarizes one of the many concerns that adults have when it comes to millennials and their delay in the transition to adulthood.

Literature has already focused on the repercussions of millennials who ‘grow up too fast’ and thereby end up in situations where they are either unprepared for or unhappy. Specific instances such as ‘guyland’ are an area of focus, especially since it touches on the young men who have declared in some form or another that they are unwilling or unprepared to take on adulthood for the sake of remaining in a stress-free environment (i.e. adolescence) (Newsweek, 2008). Essentially, the prospect of transitioning into adulthood is found to be too much of a task to take on and so there are individuals who deem it better to avoid it altogether.

Ultimately, with this fact in mind, it poses the question of how necessary can transitioning into adulthood be if what it appears to be accomplishing is the overall apprehension of millennials. Along with the stress brought on by the pillars of adulthood established within the literature, it seems that there are more aspects that need to be considered when discussing what it takes for an individual to become an adult. As well, when it comes to time constraints, it would perhaps be best to encourage millennials to go at their own pace in the hopes of making a more successful transition into adulthood; and perhaps a more lasting one.

A particularly fascinating development in the literature was found when the aspect of the pillars came to be. Not only was the transition into adulthood broken down into five strategic categories, but it appeared to be that without the overall completion of all five pillars an individual would thereby fail in the achievement of becoming an adult in the 21st century. It was especially interesting how no other goals were considered within the literature, for instance, the legal age of drinking or being able to vote, which in some circles can be considered a pivotal stage in which one becomes an adult.

Nevertheless, the literature boiled down to five distinctive goals: getting a degree, getting a job with that degree, owning a house, getting married, and finally, having children. All of these will be broken down individually in the following in order to not only discuss the importance placed on achieving each individual pillar, but also the issues that can arise with each of them in turn.

5.1. Getting a Degree

As previously discussed, for most millennials this pillar is where the attempt at transitioning into adulthood can begin, and subsequently, end. With the focus on education becoming more of a staple in society, more individuals are encouraged to pursue educational pathways that will ultimately, and hopefully, end in the achievement of a career. However, this outcome can be few and far between when aspects such as the job market and financial circumstances are taken into account.

Having the means to accomplish a goal such as an education can be very fulfilling in and of itself, making this particular pillar worthwhile in the 21st century. However, for many individuals, the enjoyment of receiving that very expensive piece of documentation is only the beginning. Once it has been made official that an individual now has a degree of their very own certain questions can begin to arise, most commonly, when they will begin working or at times if they will continue their education by attending graduate school for example (Pope-Chappell, 2016; Stafford, 2015). The discussion does not end there, especially given how before long the first demands to repay student fees begin to

arrive. For many students, the concept of gaining a degree can be a challenging goal especially when it comes to the cost of tuition⁵⁶ (Pope-Chappell, 2016; Thompson, 2012).

Furthermore, when it comes to the workforce there are a few key components which can derail an individual's plans to begin their chosen career. More specifically, that of not being able to gain a job in their field of choice due to many reasons, such as lack of open positions or simply being ill-qualified⁵⁷ (Thompson, 2012). With so much uncertainty when it comes to the workforce it stands to reason that certain individuals chose to either continue their education or simply take some time off to work in order to help pay off some of their student debt (Pope-Chappell, 2016; Thompson, 2012).

In the end, it comes as no surprise that for some individuals the path to adulthood is at a standstill when they either achieve their degree or when any aspect of their education becomes either threatened or put into question. Simply put, for many, it seems that there are more important obligations to consider before jumping into the workforce with both feet. Most of which can be harder to do when one can barely afford rent payments.

5.2. *Getting a Job*

One of the main goals for any individual living the life of independence requires a steady income in order to support themselves. However, when it comes to the pillars of adulthood as outlined in the literature discussing 'Delayed Adulthood' this aspect is a little more detailed. For one, it is expected that once an individual obtains a degree from a

⁵⁶ A recent survey conducted by StatsCanada indicated that tuition for a given undergraduate program can cost up to \$6,500 in tuition, whereas graduate studies comes down to be around \$6,900 (Statistics Canada, 2017).

⁵⁷ This is also one of the many reasons that students are continuing their education in order to be as qualified as possible for their career goal. However, this still does not guarantee them a position in their chosen career.

recognized institution, the next reasonable step would be to obtain a job in that degrees' corresponding field. However, as mentioned above, this is easier said than done as the job market can be an unforgiving place.

Evidently, it appears that when it comes to the pillars of adulthood, the ones pertaining to gaining a degree as well as getting a job go seemingly hand in hand for many individuals. This can also be due to the especially high level of stress both pillars can cause in an individual's life. That being said, it can be especially stressful for an individual to gain a degree and still be unable to obtain a job, making their efforts seem almost pointless. Needless to say, there are many factors that come into play when it comes to an individual and what it takes to achieve their desired career goals.

5.3. Owning a House

Owning a house is an especially large commitment in an individual's life. Not only will they be declaring their intentions to place down roots in a given location, but they are also making one of the largest purchases they will ever make in their lifetime (Thakor, 2010). What is more, as with the other pillars, there are specifics that are to be considered in order for this goal to be achieved accordingly. Most importantly, one must be the sole owner of the home, therefore renting and splitting the cost is no longer an option (Henderson, 2014; Goyder, 1988; Stafford, 2015). An individual must purchase a home in the most official manner possible, complete with their signature on the deed.

Moreover, there is more to be considered when a home is purchased. Not only will it state that the individual has gained a stable enough income, but it is one of the hallmark goals of adulthood; especially since it also declares that the individual will not be moving back home to live with their parents or guardian. The purchase of a home

comes with many responsibilities, such as paying bills and utilities and taking care of the home in a way that was usually left to the responsibility of parents and landlords⁵⁸ (Goyder, 1988; Newsweek, 2008; Kremer, 2015).

Evidently, the purchase of a home is a goal that is recognized in Western cultures as a staple indicator that one has made an adult choice in their life and is willing to take on all the responsibilities that come with it (Goyder, 1988; Newsweek, 2008; Kremer, 2015). Failing to complete this pillar more often than not would give rise to the matter that the individual in question was likely not prepared for such an endeavor. Homeownership also falls under one of the more recognized goals attained in adulthood which could affect an individual financially, especially when they are also paying off student debt (Kremer, 2015; Newsweek, 2008).

5.4. Getting Married

Marriage in and of itself is a fairly universal concept and is perceived and understood in many cultures very differently. With many traditions taking place within the ceremony the entire celebration means a great deal to countless people; particularly the bride and groom (in the instance of heterosexual relationships). When it comes to the westernized understanding of marriage there are some similarities. For instance, the traditions and overall objectives are to unite two people in what is commonly referred to as 'holy matrimony'. However, when it comes to the actual act of marriage itself and everything that comes along with it, there are quite a few aspects to consider, especially when it comes to young people in the 21st century.

⁵⁸ Westernized culture has seen instances proving that certain millennials are likely not prepared to take on such responsibilities as they never had experience with such.

As with the pillars previously discussed in this chapter, the one on marriage is another staple of adulthood that, though less encouraged today than education, is still one that reflects responsibility and ambition. Similarly, to the purchase of a home, getting married is another area where individuals are expected to take on specific responsibilities. One of the most pressing being the act of taking on the responsibility to care for another person. For millennials who have already been accused of not being able to care for themselves personally, marriage can seem too daunting a task.

Regardless of the rules and responsibilities that come along with getting married, there are quite a few drawbacks when it comes to millennials; especially those classified as being delayed adults. As with the aforementioned pillars of adulthood, marriage is another responsibility that millennials are expected to take on but can still be ill-prepared for. For millennials, goals such as marriage are one of the many ways one identifies themselves as an adult in society today. What is more, based on the literature focusing on 'Delayed Adulthood' as well with the pillars, there is a particular focus on the need for someone to be married in order to classify themselves as an adult (Amit, 2011).

However, as with the other pillars, the one focusing on marriage has its own shortcomings. With millennials getting married at a seemingly young age for these contemporary times – likely around their mid-20s – it creates the potential for them to become involved in circumstances for which they are not prepared for. However, the concept of being ready when it comes to aspects such as marriage, and say, having children, individuals have often found themselves unable to be fully prepared for such life changes. Regardless, the literature mentions the fear some millennials experience

believing that they are too young for marriage and other adult responsibilities which is why they chose to avoid them (Amit, 2011; Bambury, 2015; Newsweek, 2008).

Evidently, when it comes to marriage there are definitely certain aspects that are quite endearing, but only when the time is right. Individuals who become involved in the constitution of marriage at either too young of an age or at a time in their lives when they are not prepared for it simply increases the chances of a failed outcome. Marriage is a concept that should be considered when it is being taken seriously enough that both individuals involved understand the challenges they are taking on and not to simply assume that because older generations were getting married at their age that that makes them qualified to take on such a goal.

5.5. Having Children

Similar to the concept of marriage, having children is another construct put forth by society⁵⁹. As well, it is also a concept that, if taken on too soon, poses a potentially negative outcome. The concept of being fully prepared for children is not the issue here, but more so, young people having children before they have fully committed to the idea of wanting to start a family of their own. However, unlike the concept of marriage, this pillar is particularly sensitive. Not only is an individual accepting responsibility for another human life, but also to care for them and nurture them. In the grand scheme of things, this concept is rather straightforward, however, when aspects of it become challenging it is not only the individual who had the children are considered children themselves. Indeed, having children and nurturing the next generation is a noble and common outcome in the lives of adults. However, for those who take it upon themselves

⁵⁹ For the purpose of this paper, only western cultural beliefs will be examined in the present argument.

to have children at either too young of an age or simply at a time when they are not ready – be it financial or personal reasons – the outcome is anything but simple.

Common sense aside, when it comes to the expectations put forth by society, especially when it comes to the pillars of adulthood and what it takes to identify oneself as an adult, there is room for error. Millennials especially have a hard time adjusting to the fact that certain goals are simply not for them, or mainly, that they are just not ready for them. As mentioned there can be many reasons why an individual puts off having children, finances being one of them. Most pillars have some connections to the necessity for financial stability, therefore anyone who is not so can find themselves struggling to attain the aforementioned pillars. Personal reasons can also be a contributing factor, for instance, not feeling prepared enough to become a parent or an individual knowing that they have no interest in having children at all. Again, the argument being made is not that individuals who have children were fully prepared, as no one ever truly is, instead the focus here is young people not fully understanding the major ways having a child can impact their lives (Amit, 2011; Bambury, 2015; Newsweek, 2008).

All points aside, there needs to be a level of consideration in how millennials take on adult responsibilities, especially when they could potentially affect a life other than their own. With this in mind, it begs the question that there should be more leeway when it comes to society's expectations of millennials. Evidently, with what was learned in chapter 4, older generations are more used to having grown up in an environment where they themselves transitioned into adulthood at a seemingly younger age⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ More focus will be brought to the older generations and their opinions in a following chapter for the purpose of providing more of an insight into the point of view of the adults who deal with millennials.

In relation to ‘Delayed Adulthood’, the aforementioned pillars are some of the key components as to why society feels that certain millennials are not transitioning into adulthood properly. Because of this many feel that they need to accomplish the pillars of adulthood as fast as possible in the hopes of succeeding as adults in today’s society (Cartensen, 2016; Côté & Allahar, 1994; Eliason et al, 2015; Furstenberg et al, 2004; Gauthier, 2007). However, given the literature analyzed, it has been made evident that all generations over the years have tackled adult-like responsibilities differently regardless of the opinions made by older generations. This not only made more room for growth with the upcoming generations but also enabled others to take their time transitioning into their adult lives in such a way that they themselves were rendered capable of accomplishing the goals they set out to do. Therefore, even though the literature shows specific pillars being examined as the necessary goals to undertake in order to become a successful adult, not all adults have accomplished them, and interestingly enough, they are still considered adults.

When discussing the challenges millennials face in the 21st century, it is a wonder as to the events that lead to such struggles; one of the most common trial is that of obtaining employment. Now this can vary from a wide range of job positions, from that of customer service work to a career position as a professor, either way there is one specific hurdle millennials are faced with: baby-boomers. Given the rise in population during the famous baby boom, which occurred shortly after the second world war in 1945. The rise in birth rates was a phenomenon in itself, but the sheer volume of individuals born during this time have led to one of the reasons why millennials cannot find work in the 21st century. From taking positions in part-time work, to occupying a

placement in a given career field, millennials are forced to wait out baby-boomers who are currently holding the employment they seek. As a result, millennials are forced to find other means of work while they wait for baby-boomers to retire, and depending on an individual's old-age pension, the wait could be longer than expected (Canada, 2016).

5.6. Millennials: An Adult Perspective

Regardless of biological parentage, at some point there have been opinions made by adults in the 21st century that directly correlates to how they feel about millennials. Given the research conducted in chapter 4, the opinions of adults when it came to the analysis of youths has proven to be a valuable trait in the overall understanding of the environment young people grew up in. Because of this, adults are being examined to gain a better sense of their thoughts of millennials and their position on the discussion of 'Delayed Adulthood'.

When it comes to parents, there are varying opinions that arise when discussing the prospect of raising children (Hodkinson, 2013). Quite a few parents will apply their own techniques when it comes to how their children will be brought up in the world. For instance, some may focus on the way they themselves were raised, or considering a potentially negative childhood, some may avoid that pathway altogether. All in all, the basic consensus remains: parents will take it upon themselves to decide how their children will be raised⁶¹.

Regardless of the time and dedication put into raising the next generations, literature has shown that there is still room for apprehension when it comes to youths

⁶¹ The same can also be said when involving families containing fostered and adopted children, however for the sake of maintaining a clear argument only one example of a westernized family will be utilized.

(Hodkinson, 2013; Williams, 2017). Concerns continue to circulate the fact that youths are not developing into stable enough individuals who can take on the responsibilities of those who came before them (Szalai, 2017). It would seem that regardless of the century, there will always be individuals who believe that the next generation lacks what is necessary for them to properly and effectively transition into adulthood.

Interestingly, literature focusing on the aforementioned aspect tends to lean towards the prospect that adults have always stated an opinion of youths pertaining to that of apprehension (Hodkinson, 2013; Williams, 2017). Which presents a unique perspective into a potential cycle that seems to exist when generations state their opinions of each other, especially when it comes to adults and youths. For the most part, it appears that there are ways that youths underwhelm the older generations, but given the literature, this does not present itself as an entirely new prospect (Côté & Allahar, 1994; Cunningham, 2005; Arnett, 2007). Such a revelation then begs the question if there could even exist a society in which adults would not show concern over how youths are developing into adults; and rightfully so since it is their own future they are concerned about as well.

Nevertheless, adults have continued to show interest, or at the very least, apprehension when it comes to the next generation; regardless if it involves their own children (Hodkinson, 2013; Szalai, 2017). Which is where ‘Delayed Adulthood’ becomes a focus in the discussion of millennials and adults in the 21st century. Understandably, there are some excellent points made by older generations that give a focus on important issues pertaining to millennials and potential outcomes if they do not transition into adulthood; or at the very least take it seriously (Szalai, 2017; Henderson, 2014). Some

prime examples would be the worry that someone will not be prepared to take over the work when the older generation is ready to retire, as well as adults showing concern for who will be taking care of them in their old age (Henderson, 2014; Burnett, 2011; Silva, 2012; Bala & Faour, 2014; Bernstein, 2014; Gans et al, 2013).

However, the same can also be said for the arguments put forth by adults in previous centuries who deemed their opinions valid when it comes to determining the potential outcomes of the youth in their time if they did not interfere in some way (Byford, 2016; Côté & Allahaar, 1994; Cunningham, 2005; Jackson & Tein, 1998; Lewis, 1953). Proving that when it came to varying opinions of youths from adults each of them had their own basis, but in all actuality, this only presented itself as a necessity at a given time. For instance, in the 19th century, education became a more recognized institution for children, as was discussed in chapter 4, however, certain parents still believed that homeschooling their children was in the child's best interest (Vinovskis, 1992; Stone, 2012). All in all, adults have, and likely will continue to express their views on what is expected of youths for them to achieve their highest potential, but this does not necessarily mean that youths who do not follow this pathway will become unsuccessful.

The argument for 'Delayed Adulthood' fits in here because it is another, more contemporary example, of adults providing their own opinions of what is required of today's youths. Simply put, when it comes to millennials, if they do not transition into adulthood in an orderly fashion then that further proves they will likely fail at being adults (Henderson, 2014; Stafford, 2015; Williams, 2017; Hodkinson, 2013; Silva, 2012; Havinghurst, 1960; Arnett, 2007). This incentive could prove valuable to some adults as being a constructive way to illustrate the importance of growing up and taking

responsibility for oneself. However, for those who take such criticism as a vocalized statement to their personal failures, the outcome could be anything but positive.

Hacking's work (2012) proves relevant here as his argument centers around the potential outcomes and errors that can develop when an individual either takes on a given term or is assigned one; typically, by society. All in all, when it comes to adults speaking out about their opinions of today's youths, there should also be room for understanding when it comes down to the fact that not all youths are the same and most of them will likely transition into adulthood; but at their own pace of course. As well, there should also be a focus placed on the level of responsibility necessary when labelling an individual in such a way which could affect their well-being, applying an incorrect label to an individual could be detrimental to their development (Hacking, 2012).

The point is to ensure that millennials are given a decent chance to grow as individuals in today's contemporary society⁶². Adults most certainly have made excellent points when voicing their concerns for today's millennials, stating that waiting too long, or ignoring one's responsibilities altogether is not the best course of action. That being said, generalizations do nothing to support the argument on either side.

Evidently, when it comes to the discussion of millennials and the expectations placed on them, there are varying opinions as to what route will lead to a successful transition into adulthood. As well, when discussing the pillars of adulthood as mentioned above, it can be evident that not all those mentioned apply to every single millennial,

⁶² With new studies showing that millennials are not only going to be the first generation in history to live the longest, but also be the most educated, it should also be understood that they have enough time to properly transition into adulthood at their own pace in order to complete that stage of their life in the best possible way for themselves (Thompson, 2012; Stafford, 2015; Stillman, 2010).

namely speaking, there can be multiple instances when either, none, or an altogether new set of goals can sum the best transition into adulthood for an individual. That being said, there are also instances when the estimated time given to accomplish the abovementioned pillars takes a slightly longer time with each new generation.

The perspective on adults when it comes to millennials is a particularly important one to consider. As indicated by the literature covered in chapter 4, adults have always expressed their opinions of the younger generations, therefore there is no surprise that the same continues to be seen today. However, with the constant changing of times and generations, it would appear wise to consider that as the years change, so does society. Then again, this would likely be too simple of a task to take on for the majority of society, therefore, a suggestion to keep an open mind is a likelier outcome which could also prove the most rewarding for all involved.

6. DELAYED ADULTHOOD, INCREASED DELINQUENCY?

The juvenile system was first introduced in the 19th century as a way to draw attention to the delinquent youth in the community who were seen as vulnerable and, therefore, required the aid of adults to help guide them on the correct path (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009). At the time, it was believed at the time that adults were in the best position to choose what was best for young people in order for them to live a stable life (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009)⁶³. Regardless of the intentions of the courts in the 19th century, it soon became evident that there was no one solution to solve all the problems relating to young people. Aspects such as personality and upbringing would result in each youth being a special case which needed to be tried accordingly in order for any form of a solution to come about (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009).

As the juvenile system grew over time, there were some changes made to ensure the best choices were being made on the youth's behalf, despite young people becoming in contact with the justice system, steps were taken to ensure that their best interest was still kept in mind; such as focusing on education, legal rights, and privileges. There was a large focus on ensuring, regardless of their actions, youths would still have the opportunity to attend schooling and gain an education (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009). As well, the courts would also guarantee these young people would receive specific rights while attending court, such as being deemed fit to stand trial and, if needed, being transferred to criminal court depending on the severity of their crimes and/or actions (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009).

⁶³ This also led to the creation of *parens patriae*, a court enforced concept of removing children from their homes and placing them in 'Houses of Refuge' in order for them to learn the proper ways of middle-class morality (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009).

Evidently, regardless of the time (19th century), it was believed that delinquency was, in fact, a problem that required the action of older generations to ensure that young people would still stand a chance at living as a model citizen within society. This also aids in the overall understanding of why adults today are still concerned when a young person becomes involved in delinquent behavior of any kind, for fear of what it could mean for the youth's future. By establishing the need to get involved and take matters seriously, the justice system as well as society, has taken quite a few necessary, and at times successful, steps to guarantee that young people will not continue on a path towards criminality⁶⁴. That being said, there is still only so many legal systems and good intentions can do to rectify deviant youth. Outstanding factors such as upbringing, social status, mental health, and personality can all contribute to a young person's reluctance to be rehabilitated by any means (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009). Thus, there needs to be a focus placed on the 'case-by-case' basis that is required when dealing with cases involving young people. As the research states, there has not, and likely will not, be a sole solution to solve all matters regarding youths who become in contact with the justice system in their lifetime (Harvey & Kupchik, 2009).

Understandably, there are quite a few sources which draw attention to the potentially negative outcomes of youths who become involved in delinquent behavior (Shaefer & Uggen, 2009; Foster, 2014; Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008). However, what a number of them neglect to mention at times is that not all youth are susceptible to delinquent behavior simply because of their developmental stage (Hayford &

⁶⁴ Steps such as outreach programs that enable young people to become more involved with their community in order to not only engage with other citizens better but also to learn the severity of their actions should they continue to commit acts of delinquency.

Furstenberg, 2008; Foster, 2014; Shaefer & Uggen, 2009). Due to mitigating circumstances, such as upbringing, certain youths can become involved in delinquent behavior, but it does not indicate that every youth will follow this path.

The focus of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency stems from a realization that young people who have seemingly no interest in taking on adult responsibility will undoubtedly fall into risky and irresponsible behavior⁶⁵ (Kirk & Sampson, 2013). Despite the focus, adults have on delayed adults and their fears of what might come of the next generation, the discussion is not a new concept (Côté & Allahar, 1994; Lewis, 1963). As seen in chapter 4, especially in the 18th century, adults have already expressed concerns for the idleness exuded by the youths in the community believing that the less young people had to do the more likely they would become involved in reckless behavior. Therefore, the discussion in and of itself is not a particularly newsworthy discovery, but it does present an interesting turn of events.

Delinquency is more commonly known as a tamer version of criminal behavior, and to some, it is seen as a gateway from one to the other (Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008; Hall, 1989). Therefore, those who have committed delinquent acts are more likely than not to become involved in criminal behavior later on in life (Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008; Hall, 1989; Foster, 2014). Undeniably, the arguments put forth have presented quite a solid case regarding youth development when it comes to their behavior. As well, there are some instances where youths have proven these arguments to be true, but that

⁶⁵ Research has shown that young people who engage in risky behavior are that more likely to become involved in delinquent activities. As well, due to a seemingly lack of responsibility for their own actions, literature has labeled youth behavior as such and thereby requiring the aid of outside sources (i.e. parents or guardians to help guide them) (Kirk & Sampson, 2013).

should not reflect on every young person who goes through the stages of development as youth are not all the same.

Despite the good intentions and solid reasoning behind the creation of the juvenile system (known in Canada as the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*), what is important to discuss here is that regardless of the literature, not every youth demonstrating specific behavior will inevitably end up committing delinquent behavior. Based on the literature focusing on ‘Delayed Adulthood’ specifically, it is believed that once a young person has become involved in “[...] *crime, binge drinking, and drug use, and violent death*” they will undoubtedly become involved in the justice system in some shape or form (Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008). “*Crime and substance use are widely studied examples of deviant behaviors that peak in late adolescence*” (p. 289; Hayford and Furstenberg, 2008). Hayford and Furstenberg (2009) argue the connection between youth behavior and risk-taking by stating, “*The behaviors we study can all be interpreted as resulting from high levels of risk-taking behavior in the adolescent years*” (p. 289). Thereby arguing that when it comes to young people and the likelihood of them becoming involved in the justice system, such can be determined by the number of risk’ youths take. “[...] *social structures both allow risky behavior during adolescence and promote desistance as young people mature. Students of crime and deviant behavior have long identified risk-taking behavior as a product of low social regulation and control*” (p.289). However, Hayford and Furstenberg (2009) also state that maturity and social control exerted through strong bonds can reduce levels of deviant behavior as well as the decrease of risky behavior⁶⁶.

⁶⁶ The severity of social bonds is also argued by Kirk & Sampson (2013), implying that the weaker the bond, the greater the chance of young people becoming involved in aspects such as

Schaefer and Uggen (2009) argue that there are two types of juvenile offenders, however, the one labeled as the life-course-persistent offender relates more to the general understanding of what a delinquent is, as well as what older generations fear young people will become⁶⁷. The life-course-persistent offender will likely show behavior pertaining to neurological difficulties, cognitive delays, problems relating to school, and a lack of a solid parent-child relationships, there is also a large focus on anti-social behavior (Schaefer & Uggen, 2009). France (2009) also stresses the focus on anti-social behavior when it comes to determining problems regarding young people, arguing that anti-social behavior relates to youth relationships and the overall determinant of a young person's respect towards others – particularly the older generation – and their overall lack of interest in becoming a positive contributor to society. The pathologizing of youth has also become a field of interest within recent years, Sukarieh and Tannock's work (2011) is one example. More specifically, psychology is moving away from a century of pathologizing youth – which mostly resulted in viewing young people in a negative light – and moving into a spectrum where empowering young people is the initiative (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011). Pathologizing youth was seen as a major problem as it neglected the social, cultural, and political circumstances which can affect young people and lead them into a life-course which is less than wholesome, thereby resulting in social stigmas of wayward individuals (Sukarieh & Tannock, 2011).

truancy and dropping out of school. As well as voicing the importance of life-course theories since they could enable researchers to determine the potential markers for problem behaviors occurring in youths (Kirk & Sampson, 2013).

⁶⁷ Schaefer & Uggen (2009) also argue that most young people will deter from delinquent behavior over time. Typically, this is done as a result of three aspects: maturity, personal growth by way of cognitive transformation, and symbolic interaction (one's reaction to an event based on the overall cost of their actions (i.e. analyzing the consequences)), essentially when they become adults (Schaefer & Uggen, 2009; Blumer, 1969).

Based on the literature, it is understandable that individuals are searching for a way to determine when or if a youth will become involved in delinquent behavior; and subsequently criminal. However, such reasoning can be faulty as not one solution can properly be adapted to every youth. The field of criminology has already seen such conclusions made which have failed miserably. Lombroso, the author of *Criminal Man* (2006), was known for his theory that an individual could be a ‘born criminal’ and believed that there was a way to determine an individual’s criminality simply by observing their physical traits, such as the shape of their head, however, this logic proved faulty as criminal behavior cannot be determined by physical stature (Lombroso, 2006).

That being said, when conclusions are made regarding youth, believing that certain behaviors will ultimately prove their inevitable fall into delinquency, it begs the question of how valid such arguments can be since not all youths are the same. Therefore, regardless if a ‘catch-all’ solution was to be made to determine delinquency in young people, the chances of it applying to all youths are very slim. Such a solution would only be applicable if all youths were from the same social status, background, ethnicity, and culture, and even then, the argument proves faulty.

‘Delayed Adulthood’ is already a fairly new term being brought into the literature, therefore applying it to a larger argument, such as delinquency, and deeming it a potential risk for young people is cause for concern. Given what we know about ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and the way society developed over the years when it came to managing youths, it is understandable that older generations would express worry over potential outcomes regarding young people. However, as seen in chapter 4, there have been numerous times concerns expressed for young people were simply that: concern. It is

expected that adults would be worried about the next generation, especially given how harmful potentially negative outcomes can affect everyone as a whole (see chapter 6).

What is especially interesting is the gap within the literature connecting both ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency. As defined in the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* in Canada, a delinquent is anyone who commits delinquent behavior who is between the ages of 12-18 years (YCJA, n.d.). However, as the research shows, a ‘Delayed Adult’ has been defined as a millennial which indicates all individuals being born between the years of 1977 and 1995, therefore where millennials are concerned, they are already in their early to mid-twenties when the discussion of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ comes along. Hence, if millennials were to commit delinquent behavior in today’s society they would be tried as adults and not delinquents as the literature suggests (Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008). Considering the gap presented here in which the literature neglected to focus on the fact that both delinquency and ‘Delayed Adulthood’ apply to completely different age groups is enough to illustrate how there is a need to conduct more research before when arguing such a standpoint.

Regardless, taking a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and applying it to delinquency without further research on the validity of either, not only being attested but also connected indefinitely, will likely only result in panic for the older generations who are concerned for the outcome of today’s youth. Hacking’s work (2012) strengthens this point as he too argues the necessity in applying terms accordingly when such labels can have a lasting effect on the individual’s life as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that when it comes to making connections to a term, especially one as contemporary as ‘Delayed Adulthood’, the proper steps must be taken to avoid any

negative outcomes when analyzing the discourse. That is not to say that there could be a semblance of a connection between ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and that of delinquency when it comes to young people, but there would need to be more research done on this topic to ensure the most valid and unyielding argument possible is made.

Arguably, researchers have paid a reasonable amount of time arguing the supposed connection between ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquent behavior (Hayford & Furstenberg, 2008; Foster, 2014; Harvey & Kupchik, 2009; Kirk & Sampson, 2013; Shaefer & Uggen, 2009). However, due to a lack of research being done on this topic there is not enough to warrant a strong enough premise. Therefore, even if there are come ‘delayed adults’ who are showing delinquent behavior, it still remains to be seen as a concrete argument. Every individual who experiences a moment of delay in their attempts – or leniency – to transition into adulthood is not likely to become involved in delinquent – or criminal – behavior.

7. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

7.1. *'Delayed Adulthood' & the Inaccuracies Stemming from Terminology*

'Delayed Adulthood' has been both applied and discussed in a variety of ways in a variety of manners (see chapters 4 and 6). Regardless of the fact that it does not have an official definition as of yet, society has deployed 'Delayed Adulthood' as fact towards the behaviors expressed by young people today when it comes to their delay in transitioning into adulthood. However, the fact that there is no official definition of this term is not the only error that came from the implementation of 'Delayed Adulthood'.

More specifically, when it comes to 'Delayed Adulthood', the main problem is the way in which it has been applied to young people today by older generations. This has led to many assumptions and errors located within the discourse when discussing the overall potential youths today possess when it comes to taking on the roles and responsibilities of adults in the 21st century. Despite the fact that older generations had their own methods of becoming and establishing their development into adulthood over the years, millennials have not been given the same courtesy.

Millennials will soon grow into being the generation expected to take on the responsibilities of older generations and pass those along to the next. Be it as simple as taking on a position at work from a retiring patron or raising the next generation to come; either way, it is expected that such responsibilities will be passed along. Despite the fact that certain pieces of literature have discussed the more contemporary version of adulthood that millennials will transition into, the argument has remained the same (Amit, 2011; Carrick, 2016; Cartensen, 2016). Ultimately, that regardless of the generation, young people continue to be questioned by their abilities to enter adulthood

by the standards and expectations put forth by older generations. Therefore, it has been argued in this paper that such contemporary factors should be considered when the argument is made about whether or not millennials will be successful when they become adults; particularly in their own time.

‘Delayed Adulthood’ has been applied by a varying group of opinionated individuals; from academics to parents, and even millennials themselves. Individuals from all sides of the spectrum have had the chance to speak to their opinions as to what they think about ‘Delayed Adulthood’; especially when it came down to the responsibilities and expectations the next generation were supposedly leaving unfulfilled. This proved to be a compelling initiative in the many ways a term – again, with no official definition – has made an impact on so many lives.

An especially interesting objective learned is the way in which ‘Delayed Adulthood’ was being applied as a way to define the issue of young people not taking adulthood as seriously as they were expected to by older generations. This proved to be a concern for the older generations as it meant serious effects to their own lives, such as with their work and job security. Older generations presented an interesting argument, but it was still unable to prove that millennials would mean the end of adulthood as we know it (Henderson, 2014).

When it comes to ‘Delayed Adulthood’, evidently there are varying ways in which it can be discussed and argued – as presented in the literature – however it should not be taken as truth as it does not pertain to any level of accuracy when labeling youth behavior. ‘Delayed Adulthood’ should, therefore, be taken, as an opinion of the ways in which young people have chosen to delay their own entry into adulthood for the time

being; this could be understood by the many pressures and expectations they encounter in the 21st century. Pressures have shown themselves in a number of instances when it comes to millennials, from attaining a credible degree from a recognized institution to working in a career position; needless to say, the burdens placed on millennials have evolved compared to the challenges faced by older generations. Not too long ago, during the 20th century, an individual was expected to attain the minimum amount of school recommended at the time and would then begin to work within their community. However, applying the same beliefs to millennials today could prove challenging as they are not faced with the same struggles as the youths who came before them in previous generations. Therefore, it is recommended that such changes within society be considered when ‘Delayed Adulthood’ becomes a topic of discussion.

Therefore, it is argued here that when it comes to ‘Delayed Adulthood’, there needs to be an understanding of the actual circumstances of young people today and the challenges they face as individuals in the 21st century; and not as a direct comparison to the challenges faced by older generations. Understandably each generation underwent their own series of challenges when becoming adults, their life courses are unique in the sense that given their generation and the time in which they grew up in, such aspects and choices were fitting. However, if we were to apply the same choices exercised by older generations to the challenges that millennials face in the 21st century the success rate would be greatly affected. Therefore, it must be understood that the solutions applied fifty years ago by that generations youth population, would likely be unsuccessful today as times and circumstances have changed. An example of this can be seen in the genealogy conducted in this paper (see chapter 4), which discussed the varying ways in

which youths from the 18th century into the 20th century experienced varying instances when they themselves faced expectations put forth by older generations; such as education and family responsibilities.

It has been argued in this paper that when it has come to either adults' placing expectations on youths, or young people expressing displeasure over the responsibilities being placed upon them, there have been many instances when either group has shown disappointment or dislike; regardless of the time period. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that the same instances are still being seen today with older generations and young people in the 21st century. It then begs the question as to why it has become so important to address the supposed problem of 'Delayed Adulthood' when it is likely just a slight delay in the transition towards adulthood. It is here that the larger picture of the discussion comes into consideration, as the arguments put forth have only served to avoid it.

Regardless of the many ways in which 'Delayed Adulthood' has been applied towards young people, the topic of whether or not this is a suitable term to be applied has not been questioned as of yet. This then presents the importance of why my argument lends itself towards establishing just how necessary it is to analyze such a term, as well as its definitive effects on young people. Only when 'Delayed Adulthood' is better understood, both in meaning and application, that it can then begin to have a potentially stronger effect in relation to terminology when deployed in the understanding of young people and their behaviors.

7.2. Consequences Stemming from the 'Pillars of Adulthood'

The pillars of adulthood have been analyzed and discussed in this paper at length (see chapter 5). Both from identifying the ones which were most discussed within the literature as well as the ones most identified as being a primary indicator of an individual transitioning into adulthood in Western culture in the 21st century. The pillars were deemed necessary for an individual to successfully transition into adulthood by accomplishing five specific goals: getting a degree, getting a job, owning a house, getting married, and having children.

Though the pillars presented a normative perspective, especially when compared to other goals which could be argued as sufficient determinants that one has achieved adulthood; for example, getting a driver's license. The aforementioned pillars did not, however, focus on the challenges millennials would face when attempting to accomplish such goals; simply the importance of attaining them. As argued in this paper, there was a particular conflict when it came to the first pillar: getting a degree. Given recent history, education has changed drastically from the schoolhouse setting it once was in the 18th century. Now schools have become institutions of higher learning spanning varying educational phases. Such can be seen in areas of primary all the way to secondary education; each of which taking its own part in lengthening the educational career for a given student in Western culture. However, the most prominent of all institutions are those of either University or College. It is in either institution where an individual is expected gain a degree or a certificate in a recognized field of work or study where they are then presumed to gain employment once they complete their education.

Education has proven to be one of the more costlier goals within the pillars of adulthood since at times it has proven to be a long and winding process due to numerous

courses and required endeavors students are expected to accomplish. Millennials have especially experienced the challenges of requiring more than one degree or certification in order to be as experienced as possible for their career goals. This increase in the need for more degrees and certifications inevitably results in students paying for more tuition than previous generations, which of course leads to a greater amount of impending student debt.

As discussed in this thesis, when it came to the higher rate of student debt, it inevitably causes high stress in millennials, not only financially but also personally. Life goals would likely be put on hold for the sake of either completing their education or attaining temporary employment to help ease the financial burdens. For some millennials, this would prove to be too hard of an affliction and therefore results in either not completing their degree or certification or spending their time post-grad working any form of employment in order to help pay off their debt (Pope-Chappell, 2016).

Given the challenges that have arisen with young people working to gain a degree in the 21st century, it stands to reason why so many have put off completing the other pillars until they are better prepared; and financially stable. Such is why the pillars pertaining to owning a house, getting married, and having children are also put off at times given the higher financial burden these would cause. Nevertheless, society still imposes the expectations that by a given age young people are expected to become adults regardless of personal circumstances (Pope-Chappell, 2016; Williams, 2017). It is therefore argued in this paper that the imposing ‘timeframe’ society is placing on young people has become almost obsolete (Carrick, 2016). Compared to earlier years (18th-20th centuries), young people are developing in a time where their life expectancy is longer

than previous generations, thereby giving them not only more time to be young but also to transition into adulthood (Carrick, 2016).

Therefore, the argument being made in this paper is not whether there is a reason for the pillars of adulthood, but why there is so much pressure to accomplish them in a given timeframe?⁶⁸ Given the research conducted it has become evident that young people today are not facing the same lifespans of those of previous generations. Hence, taking more time to, say, get a degree (or two) and pay off student debt before accomplishing goals such as buying a house should be more accepted since young people today have the luxury of more time.

As well, given the focus placed on the ‘pillars of adulthood’ in this paper, I have come to the conclusion that regardless of the arguments pertaining to these five specific pillars (getting a degree, getting a job, owning a house, getting married, and having children), the argument, in fact, has no basis. Indeed, based on social constructs in Western culture it can be argued the importance of the abovementioned pillars, but they do not necessarily define what it means to be an adult. More specifically, there can be a variety of other goals a young person can accomplish which could thereby label them as an adult just as effectively. For example, getting their driver’s license, living on their own for the first time, or paying their own taxes to name a few. Therefore, the argument stating that a young person is required to complete the five pillars of adulthood, and those five alone, in order to become a successful adult is incomplete at best. Such statements would, therefore, suggest that every adult has successfully achieved a degree, gotten a job

⁶⁸ Such pressures became evident within the literature conducted as to what older generations were expecting from millennials to prove themselves as becoming adults. One way this was expected to occur was by accomplishing the pillars outlined within the literature.

corresponding with said degree, purchased their first home on their own, has gotten married and had children; which, evidently is not likely⁶⁹.

7.3. *'Delayed Adulthood' & Delinquency: A Deviated Argument*

One particular focus of this research was the claim that delayed adults would inevitably fall into delinquency. This is a compelling argument; however, such statements still require more research to be done before any form of conclusions can be made. Indeed, a young person displaying acts of rebellion and waywardness has the potential to commit delinquent behavior, but the two do not necessarily correlate with one another. The attention being placed on this potential outcome is more likely due to the fact that society, in general, is concerned as to what 'Delayed Adulthood' could mean for young people as they develop. Arguably the concerns presented can be seen as valid, but they do not justify the need to make bold statements which could be taken as fact.

By applying Foucault to this research, it has aided in establishing that when claims are made that delinquency and 'Delayed Adulthood' were inevitably connected, the underlying arguments were easier to decipher. Through Foucault's analysis of 'fear' and 'power', I argued that the core reasoning behind the aforementioned argument was likely made in reference to the apprehension relating to what negative effects may come of 'Delayed Adulthood' thereby reinforcing the belief that there is a problem. Essentially, since society is demonstrating concern for young people in relation to 'Delayed Adulthood', making claims that the worst possible outcome to be delinquency has a tendency to be assumed.

⁶⁹ The outcome for adults can also be varying, therefore the chances that some of them have not received a degree, gotten married, or even wanted children is the more likely outcome then arguing that every adult in Western society has successfully accomplished the five pillars of adulthood.

What is especially interesting is the understanding that there is a connection between ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency being made despite the fact that both refer to different age groups. ‘Delayed Adulthood’ has been classified as millennials who are not transitioning into adulthood as fast as expected, thus reaffirming that this is focusing on individuals who are at least in their early twenties when they are expected to get a degree and begin searching for employment. However, as stated within the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* in Canada, delinquents are comprised of individuals ranging from age 12-18 (YCJA, S.C. 2002, c. 1). Such presents an interesting conclusion when both instances involved individuals of completely different age groups. Once more, given the age groups, if millennials were indeed committing acts of delinquency, given their age, they would more likely be considered criminals rather than delinquents. The aforementioned soon became a particularly large focus for myself personally on just how deterred the discussion has become.

Considering the lack of evidence also presented in the arguments claiming the connection between ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency, it further demonstrates how unstable the claim being made actually is. Without concrete evidence that delayed adults are, in fact, committing acts of delinquency the argument becomes unrealistic. Therefore, arguing that only a few young people are committing acts of delinquency is not a large enough sample to suggest that the same outcome applies to every youth. That being said, there is the potential that the two could be connected, however, there is a definite need for more research before such claims can be made. It is suggested then that both aspects, ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency, should be approached separately in order to make a more compelling argument. Since ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is still a fairly new term to

come about within contemporary literature, it should be used cautiously when it comes to defining youth behavior. My argument aids in this instance as it reflects on how an undefined term can cause more confusion – and fear – than necessary⁷⁰.

‘Delayed Adulthood’ is, as mentioned, a term with no official definition, and it has been argued at length in this paper that when it comes to how this term is being deployed, there is no focus given on what the term actually means. Despite the terms attempt to label young people who have not transitioned into adulthood, it does not present itself in such a way that warrants any concern. When applying as new a term as ‘Delayed Adulthood’ towards one’s research, it should be understood that there is a level of responsibility that is required when developing one’s argument. Making bold statements that have not been properly researched could result in instilling fear and apprehension for those who read the literature; particularly when it discusses to the next generation.

As well, when applying Foucault’s work (1994) towards my own research, as well as that of Hacking (2012), it became clearer as to the potentially negative effects that can come when applying terms and labels upon others; or upon oneself. It stood to reason that even a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ which has no official definition, can be applied to a given individual and they will likely see this label as fact relating to who they are as individuals. The same can also be said for delinquency, a young person may believe that this is all they are capable of becoming if they are merely taking too long to become responsible for themselves and their actions. Therefore, the need to become more

⁷⁰ Delinquency should also be approached in a separate manner, such is indeed a serious discussion to be had but it should stand to reason that when discussing such a topic, the argument being made reflects on what the author truly means when they say ‘delinquent’; as argued, in Canada such an individual is said to be between the ages of 12-18 years (YCJA, S.C. 2002, c. 1).

responsible when giving terms as much attention as we have, the need to ensure that they are used accordingly to avoid a margin of error is of high importance. Such terms can be used to define a person and can ultimately have a large impact on who they develop into as an individual.

Hence, despite the compelling arguments that were made when attempting to connect both ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency, it stands to reason that more research is needed before such statements can be made effectively. Despite the fact that both refer to separate age groups, the argument that all those who express a delay in their transition into adulthood will commit acts of delinquency requires more investigation. Above all, the need to ensure that when applying labels and terms to individuals, in this case, young people, those in authority need to ensure that the argument clearly defines the term being used and the intentions behind the use of those terms.

7.4. The Discourse of Fear & Future Directions

When I first began my initial research, I was curious as to what my findings would lead to. Given the research I have done it became clear that not only was ‘Delayed Adulthood’ an underrated topic of discussion, but there was more to the argument than simply labeling youth behavior. As mentioned, applying Foucault to my paper allowed me to analyze the material in a more conceptualized way which enabled me to gain a more nuanced understanding on the topic rather than assuming that ‘Delayed Adulthood’ was enough to warrant meaning.

Therefore, along with the theory that I chose to apply to my research as well as the genealogy I conducted by way of understanding the development of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ over time, it became evident that a larger picture was being disregarded in the

literature. Believing that there was more to the discussion than merely labeling young people who have put off their transition into adulthood, I was able to approach the literature in a more purposeful way. It was here that I began looking deeper into the literature, contemplating documents which depicted varying opinions being made when discussing ‘Delayed Adulthood’. By analyzing works citing the varying opinions of millennials, academics, and members of the older generations, it became evident that the need to label youth behavior was a primary focus.

However, I found there to be a large focus on the negative outcomes that would potentially come of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ for all those involved. Millennials would seemingly not take adulthood responsibly, older generations would be unable to retire or have anyone willing to look after them in their old age, and some academics were focused on the relation between ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency. Needless to say, the question is not ‘what is the real question?’, but more so, ‘what is the real concern?’.

The discourse of fear was the closest explanation I came to when conducting my research. Each statement, question, and concern, in varying ways connected to fear of the potentially negative outcomes of ‘Delayed Adulthood’. Therefore, before long, the research began presenting itself by way of establishing the apprehension so many individuals projected, and ‘Delayed Adulthood’ soon became a ‘ground zero’ for all of these uncertainties; as well as the cause for all the problems they were facing.

In O’Neill’s work *The Missing Child in Liberal Theory* (1994), he argues the same concept. The focus is not, then, what the problem is, but, in fact, the reason there is a problem in the first place. O’Neill stresses the need for a change of focus in order for the real problem to be analyzed and discussed, claiming that this is the one way we can

hope to accomplish any form of resolution (1994). Though his book focuses mostly on capitalism and the stress encountered by the welfare and civic states, O’Neill makes a compelling argument when it comes to the importance of ‘collective responsibility’ (1994).

I argue the correlation between my research and that of O’Neill’s (1994) due to the connection made between current and older generations attempting to establish the route of a problem and whose responsibility it truly is to find a solution. This applies well to my overall argument since I am also making the point that when it comes to the fact of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ it is not because a given generation decided to become failures within the system. Instead, the focus should be placed on where the dispute originated in the first place, as well as why some clarification has not been established by this point within the discourse. I have argued the multiple perspectives presented when it has come to ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and what it means to young people as well as the older generations, and though this created a level of understanding, it also presented a clearer picture. It is my belief that older generations are putting the blame on millennials when it comes to ‘Delayed Adulthood’ believing that such matters and outcomes are all due to the idleness and laziness of the next generation. However, placing blame can only do so much, and one thing it is not doing is finding a solution to the problem.

O’Neill argues that there is an almost desperate need for collective responsibility in order to find anything close to a solution to the problem (1994). That being said, it would take both millennials and older generations to admit that when it comes to aspects such as ‘Delayed Adulthood’ the blame does not fall on one group. Keeping in mind this has much less to do with when millennials will transition into adulthood, and everything

to do with the world in which millennials are struggling to transition into. O’Neill quotes Thompson’s work in his book stating,

Those who were young workers in the 1950s and 1960s, for example, lived in a society which was investing heavily in the future, was relatively free of debt and was promising that the powers of the state would be used to advance their interests. Their successors, already collecting substantially lower real incomes at the same stage of life, face much more severely constrained ‘future prospects’. The income they can expect for the rest of their lives must be limited by the under-investment and debt accumulation of the last 20 or so years. Moreover, they face governments which, through actions and now words, are telling them repeatedly that they are not intent upon protecting, let alone advancing, their interests (p. 119-20; Thompson, 1991; p. 104, O’Neill, 1994)

Again, this quote is discussing the welfare state and the struggles young people face in the Canadian economy. However, the discussion still applied to the ways in which young people today are struggling to grow in a society which has been passed down to them.

Thompson’s quote in O’Neill’s book argues that generations that came before the young people of today have failed to provide and prepare for the next generations as they were, thereby when the structure was passed down, young people were expected to handle an already broken system (1994). This has led to young people having to grow into a society in desperate need for resolutions and an older generation with the belief that the system has now become the responsibility of today’s youth.

Additionally, when it comes to the discussion of society and the roles all individuals play in the development of that society, O’Neill focuses specifically on his

theory of the ‘Covenant’. The covenant that O’Neill argues is one that focuses on a collective responsibility when it comes to the topic of preparing society for when it comes to passing it down to the next generation (O’Neill, 1994). Such ideas refer to all doctrines of society, for instance, economic, educational, as well as political sectors whose development and amendments will surely have a lasting effect on the new generations to come. O’Neill hypothesizes that it falls to the previous generation to ensure that when such doctrines are passed down, that they are structured to withstand the passage of time in order better care for the new generation up until they are ready to take their place in ensuring that the system they were given is prepared for the next generation to come after them; and so forth (O’Neill, 1994).

Ultimately, when it comes to the need for a collective responsibility in today’s society, it stems from O’Neill’s argument that the focus should be less on ‘whose problem is it now’ and more so on how the problem can reach a solution. Both young and old generations are needed to work together for there to be any chance at a resolution. If not, O’Neill argues that the same broken system will only continue to be passed down from generation to generation until it can be fixed accordingly (1994).

O’Neill’s argument (1994) proves relevant in the discourse of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ as he argues the need for a collective responsibility when it comes to establishing a solution to the debate as to who is more responsible. A problem that affects all of society is not one which can be caused by one generation alone, and therefore requires the attention and responsibility of society as a whole. ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is not about transitioning into adulthood, but more so what is to come of the next generation given what young people are challenged with. It is, therefore, a smaller scale of the

bigger picture. Young people are expected to grow and develop in a society which has failed them from the start because the outcomes of which were not protected by the previous generations (O’Neill, 1994). *“O’Neill proposes that we question prevailing assumptions of personhood. Children are born into the social membership of families and nations, whose traditions and commitments shape their life prospects. Children inherit the conditions of their sustenance and in turn are expected as adults to guard and enhance the bestowal of legacies to succeeding generations”* (Foreword by M. Novick, 1994; O’Neill, 1994).

As well, if the concept of collective responsibility is not taken, as O’Neill describes it, the problem will continue to occur (O’Neill, 1994). That is to say that if the current generation of millennials refuses to learn from the mistakes of previous generations, then they are likely to pass along, what O’Neill would define as *“severely constrained ‘future prospects’”*, if a solution is not considered (p. 119-20; Thompson, 1991; p. 104, O’Neill, 1994). Ultimately, it comes down to which generation will see the error stemming from the mistakes made by previous ones and take the initiative to change matters because as with older generations millennials also have an obligation to pass along their own *‘legacies’* to future generations (p. 119-20; Thompson, 1991; p. 104, O’Neill, 1994).

Therefore, when it comes to the basis of not only my research but what is to come of the focus on ‘Delayed Adulthood’, there is an almost desperate need to focus on the larger picture. Society will continue to develop and change over time, however, the problem here is that each new generation is somehow expected to be prepared to face, and particularly fix, the mistakes of previous generations. The literature thus far has only

focused on either how millennials become delayed adults, or what negative effects can come of ‘Delayed Adulthood’. By arguing the discourse of fear, as well as O’Neill’s argument, we can begin to see the apprehension society feels regarding the next generation if millennials do not become adults and take over after them. *“The collective futures are as imperiled as those of unemployed youth, since they all face a future in which the foundation of our civic institutions will be eroded, with even greater burdens placed upon their market achievements”* (p. 104; O’Neill, 1994).

By taking a look at the pillars of adulthood discussed within the literature, the focus can shift when applying a larger emphasis. Society wants the generation of millennials to be educated, working in a career position, contributing to the housing market, building relationships, and to contribute to the growth and development of the next generation. That being said, the pillars present themselves to be what society deems most important for the continued development of said society, and less so on what is required for an individual to become an adult⁷¹.

Ultimately, the argument being made here regarding the findings of the literature as well as the research conducted in this paper, is that ‘Delayed Adulthood’ is only part of the discussion. There is more to the conversation to be had in order for the root of the problem to finally be analyzed and considered. Now, it is also important to note here that there is still a need for more research to be done on this aspect of the discussion in order to gain a better understanding of what is occurring within society when it comes to multiple generations. However, it is also being stressed that there is a potentially larger

⁷¹ Especially since it was argued in this paper that not all individuals – past or present – have completed the pillars of adulthood and can still receive the title of ‘adult’ by accomplishing many other goals (such as a driver’s license or taking on the responsibility of living on their own).

prospect that is being ignored when discussing aspects such as ‘Delayed Adulthood’.

Therefore, the argument being made here is to place the necessary attention on the potentially larger focus when discussing matters such as young people and their development in today’s society.

8. CONCLUSION

‘Delayed Adulthood’ has proven to be a compelling research endeavor. By analyzing it in a new way by applying Foucauldian theory as well as multiple research synthesizes, it became clear that the term was not being discussed as usefully as it could be. That being said, the literature presented a large variety of unique perspectives on the ways ‘Delayed Adulthood’ has impacted the lives of young people and older generations. As well, by conducting a genealogy of the term I was able to learn more about the ways in which young people have been treated across the span of four centuries. This allowed me to gain a level of knowledge I had not possessed previously, as well as understanding in the varying ways social expectations impacted young lives. Such allowed for a more in-debt consideration of what could be learned by the attention being placed on ‘Delayed Adulthood’.

Though my research enabled me to answer a few questions, it also raised a few more. I believe that more can be learned by furthering the research focusing on aspects of ‘Delayed Adulthood’, especially when concerning where the main focus of the argument truly lies. By realizing that there is a potentially larger discussion when analyzing a term such as ‘Delayed Adulthood’ it draws attention to what could be learned if such matters receive more research. One major finding within the research was the deviation between the argument being made that there was a correlation between ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and delinquency. Having argued that such reasoning requires more research it stands to reason that there should be a larger focus placed on developing a better understanding of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ before it becomes interconnected with other arguments focusing on youth behavior.

With regards to further research ‘Delayed Adulthood’ can be approached in numerous ways. Though I approached the topic by way of qualitative methodology as well as applying a Foucauldian method, other methods and theories can prove themselves to be just as beneficial to the argument. Mixed methods can be applied to ‘Delayed Adulthood’, for instance, qualitative and quantitative, either together or separate in order to approach the discussion in a more profound way. For example, approaching ‘Delayed Adulthood’ from a quantitative method standpoint and determining if there is, in fact, a large enough population of young people delaying their transition into adulthood and the impact of this on society. It would be very interesting to see how the discussion of ‘Delayed Adulthood’ advances once my own research is complete. Academia and the numerous fields of research made available offer countless possibilities as to how ‘Delayed Adulthood’ can be approached; for instance, how such an argument presents itself in the field of Psychology, History, Education, or even cross-cultural discourses in relation to Indigenous studies or Geographical analysis.

It is believed then that more research focusing on ‘Delayed Adulthood’ as a term, and especially the application of said term, would prove instrumental. Such is true if this term continues to be deployed towards the understanding of youth behavior. As well, I argue the need to develop more research on this particular area especially given the ways a term like ‘Delayed Adulthood’ can impact an individual’s life. Such is especially concerning when the term itself has yet to be given an official term.

Overall, ‘Delayed Adulthood’ has been given some attention within the literature, but it has not been approached in a way that directly critiques its authenticity as a term adequate enough to define young people today. Given the attention placed on looking for

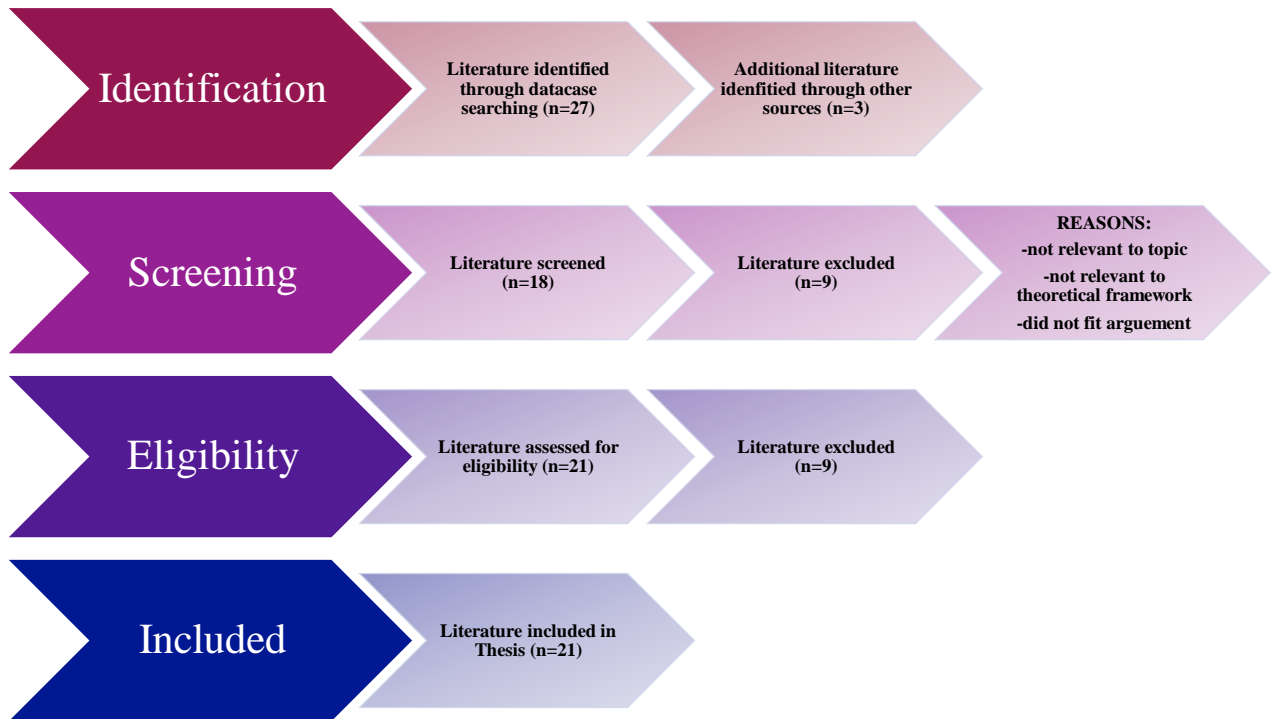
a term to accurately define young people who have not transitioned into adulthood as of yet, it stands to reason that attention should be placed on acquiring an adequate definition. As well, if the focus truly is not on whether or not young people transition into adulthood at a given time but more so on a larger picture altogether, then such should also warrant attention as it could determine a more impactful discussion that we are ignoring at this present time. Hence, the topic of discussion concerning ‘Delayed Adulthood’ requires more attention than simply labeling a problem and instead to approach it as an issue which requires the collective responsibility of all generations; not just millennials. The problem that continues to be an issue here is not that of millennials delaying their transition into adulthood; at least not entirely. The real cause for concern may be why millennials are hesitant to transition into a new stage of life which is supposedly ready to accept them without fail. Especially, since the very fear that society anticipates when they assume the level of chaos these supposed wayward individuals will cause is one that cannot, and will not, go unnoticed.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Research Synthesis: Flow Chart

Process of Selecting and Eliminating Source(s) for Research
'Delayed Adulthood' and Other Corresponding Reference(s) Proving Relevant



Appendix 2

Research Synthesis: Coding Sheet

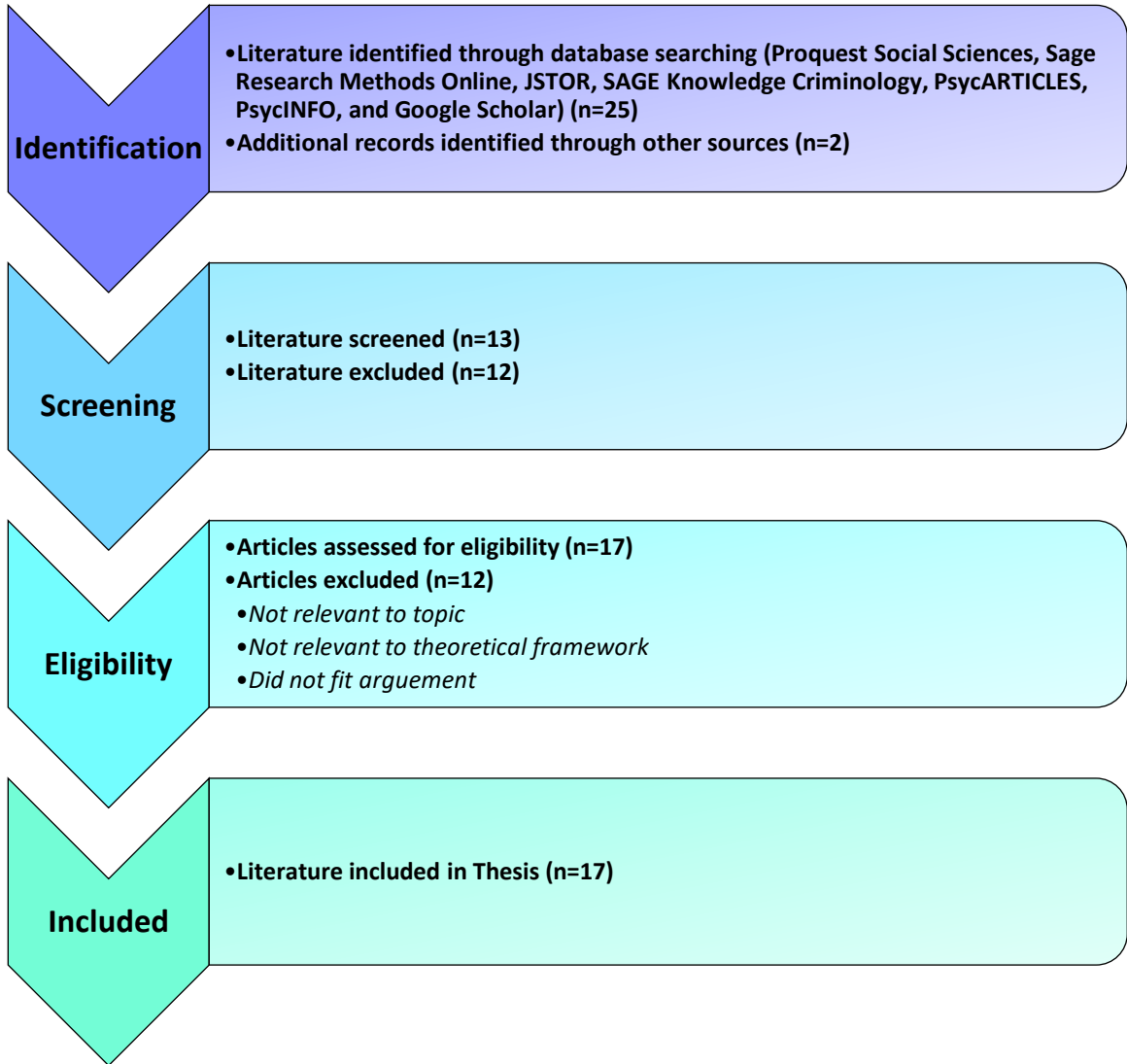
Process of Selecting and Eliminating Source(s) for Research
 ‘Delayed Adulthood’ and Other Corresponding Reference(s) Proving Relevant

<i>Report Characteristics</i>	<i>Article Title</i>
R. 1. What is the Report ID Number?	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
R. 2. What was the Author’s First & Last Name?	_____
R. 3. What was the year of publication?	- - - -
R. 4. What type of document was this? - Journal Article - Book or book chapter - Dissertation - MA Thesis - Private Report - Government report - Conference paper - Other (specify) - Can’t tell	_____
R. 5. What this a peer reviewed document? - Not peer reviewed - Peer reviewed - Can’t tell	_____
R. 6. What type of organization produced the document? - University - Government - Contract research - Other (specify) - Can’t tell	_____
R. 7. Section Application # 1. Introduction 2. Foucault 3. Genealogy 4. Millennials, Adults and Pillars 5. Delinquency 6. Research Synthesis 7. Analysis 8. Conclusion	_____

Appendix 3

Research Synthesis: Flow Chart

Process of Selecting and Eliminating Source(s) for Research
'Genealogy' and Other Corresponding Reference(s) Proving Relevant



Appendix 4

Research Synthesis: Coding Sheet

Process of Selecting and Eliminating Source(s) for Research
 ‘Genealogy’ and Other Corresponding Reference(s) Proving Relevant

<i>Report Characteristics</i>	<i>Article Title</i>
R. 1. What is the Report ID Number?	1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
R. 2. What was the Author’s First & Last Name?	_____
R. 3. What was the year of publication?	- - - -
R. 4. What type of document was this? - Journal Article - Book or book chapter - Dissertation - MA Thesis - Private Report - Government report - Conference paper - Other (specify) - Can’t tell	_____
R. 5. What this a peer reviewed document? - Not peer reviewed - Peer reviewed - Can’t tell	_____
R. 6. What type of organization produced the document? - University - Government - Contract research - Other (specify) - Can’t tell	_____
R. 7. Section Application # 1. 18 th century 2. 19 th century 3. 20 th century 4. 21 st century	_____

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VITA AUCTORIS

Céline Perron was born April 1993 in Sturgeon Falls, Ontario. She graduated from *École Secondaire Catholique Franco-Cité* in 2012. From there, Céline went on to Algoma University where she obtained a B.A.[H] in Law & Justice in 2016. During this time Céline also completed a minor in Psychology. Céline continued her studies at the graduate level at the University of Windsor where she obtained a M.A. in Criminology in 2018. Beginning the summer of 2018 Céline will move to Ottawa, Ontario where she will begin the course of working towards her career. Céline has aspirations to enter the field of law enforcement as an investigator.