

Men's Differing Work Trajectories and Fatherhood

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In the paper we propose for the annual meeting of the Population Association of America in 2007, we shall continue our recent work examining the close nexus between men's work lives and their fatherhood status.

We propose to use latent class analysis to answer two research questions. The first question is: What are the trajectories of men's work lives over the course of the transition to adulthood and beyond? The second is: Are specific trajectories associated with specific patterns of fathering?

In the proposed analysis we will use data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, 1979 cohort (NLSY79). These data contain information on the number of hours worked in each week of each year the man was observed. In past research we have constructed "spell-files" in which the unit of observation is a person/unit of time (e.g. half-years, months). For each man/unit of time we can calculate the number of hours he worked for units of time ranging from weeks to years.

The method we will use is latent class analysis. This method is appropriate when one has data on a particular attribute measured at multiple points in time and when there is empirical or theoretical reason to believe that the outcome in question follows some regular trajectory that can be described. Most developmental processes (e.g. physical growth of children) fall in this category. Moreover, this method is appropriate if one has theoretical or empirical reason to believe that the population average trajectory in a given group is actually a weighted sum of a finite number of distinct trajectories that different sub-groups exhibit.

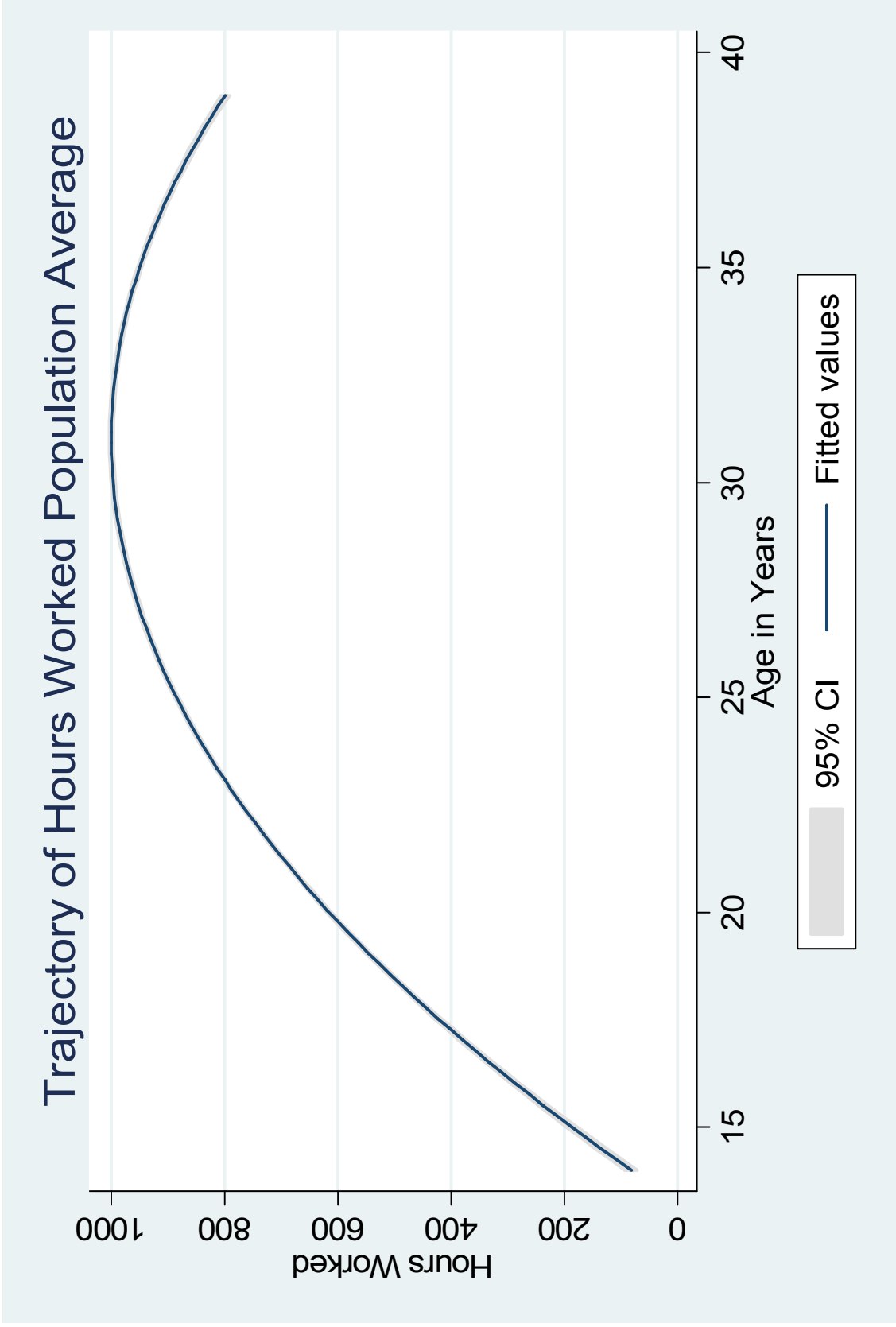
This method has been used, for example, by scholars who are interested in identifying the decline in cognitive functioning among the elderly that is part of normal

aging process and distinguishing it from a pathological pattern of decline that leads to dementia (Proust-Lima, Letenneur and Jacmin-Gadda forthcoming).

We propose to use latent class analysis to identify several distinct trajectories of work effort that men exhibit as they move through adolescence, young and middle adulthood. On the following page we present the work effort trajectory by age for 3003 men from the NLSY79; the unit of time is six months. We hypothesize that this population average trajectory masks distinct patterns from specific groups of men. Latent class analysis will enable us to identify these trajectories, controlling for various individual attributes (e.g. AFQT score).

After identifying a group of trajectories for sub-groups of men by means of model fit, we will then go on to assign each man to a specific group using probabilities generated by the model. It is then possible to describe the behavior of these distinct groups with respect to any variable. We are particularly interested in describing how fatherhood differs (if it does) for these different groups of men. For example, at what age do the different groups of men become fathers, how likely are they to co-reside with their children, etc.

In the full paper we shall draw on the labor economics literature, the life course perspective and empirical findings from studies of fatherhood and work to develop a conceptual model. From this model we will derive specific hypotheses both about the nature of the distinct trajectories men exhibit and how fathering will vary across these groups.



Abstract for PAA 2007
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Proust-Lima, Celile, Luc Letenneur, and Helene Jacmin-Gadda. forthcoming. "A non-linear latent class model for joint analysis of multivariate longitudinal data and a binary outcome." *Statistics in Medicine*.