

Implications of Developmental Science on Legal Issues affecting Youth in the Justice System in the United States

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**WORLD CONGRESS ON
JUSTICE FOR CHILDREN**

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STRENGTHENING JUSTICE SYSTEMS FOR CHILDREN

MacArthur Foundation Research Network

Research in United States, 1996-2006

- Competency to stand trial
- Culpability
- Pathways to Desistance

Roper v. Simmons (2005)

U.S. Supreme Court holding: Executing persons for crimes committed at age 16 or 17 is unconstitutional.

Court relied on MacArthur research:

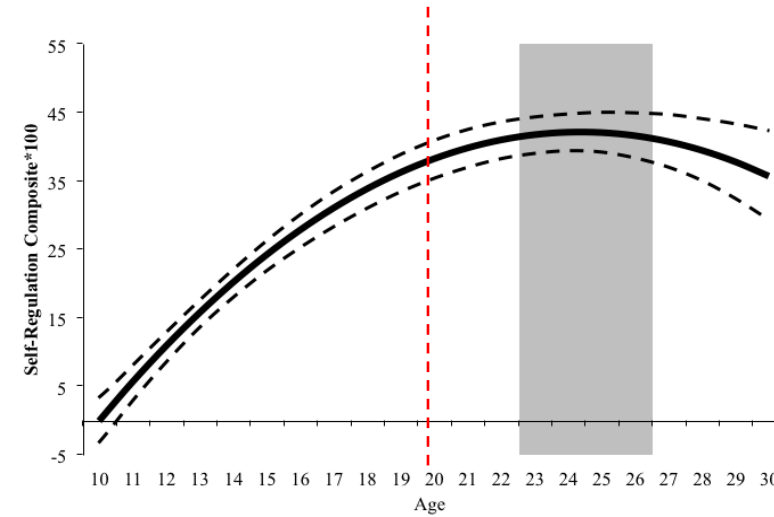
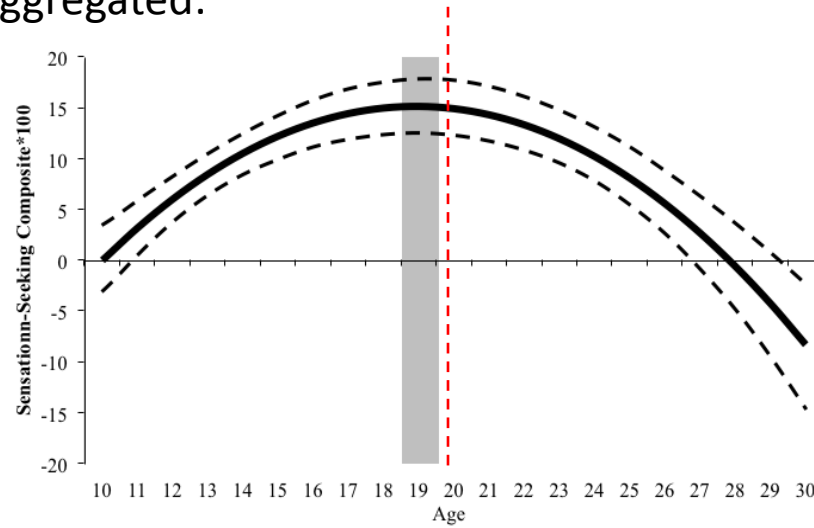
- Lack of maturity/sensation seeking/reckless behavior
- Susceptibility to peer pressure
- Adolescent character not well formed/traits are transitory

International Replication of MacArthur Research

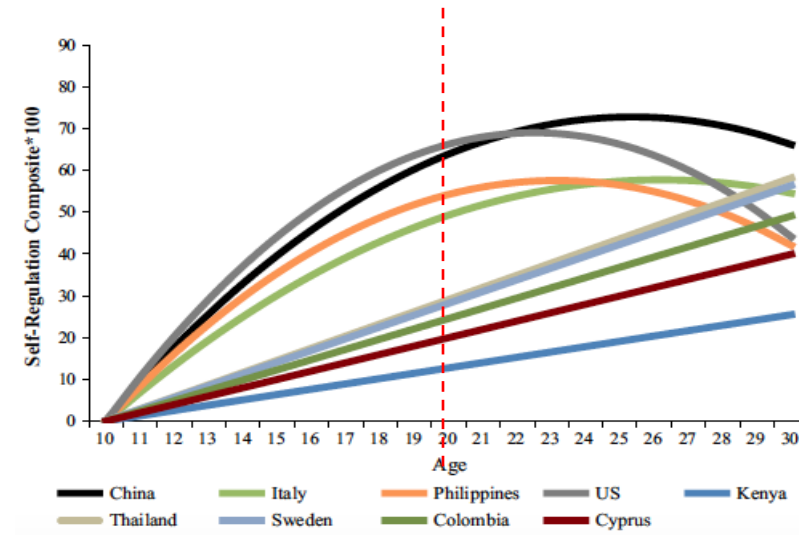
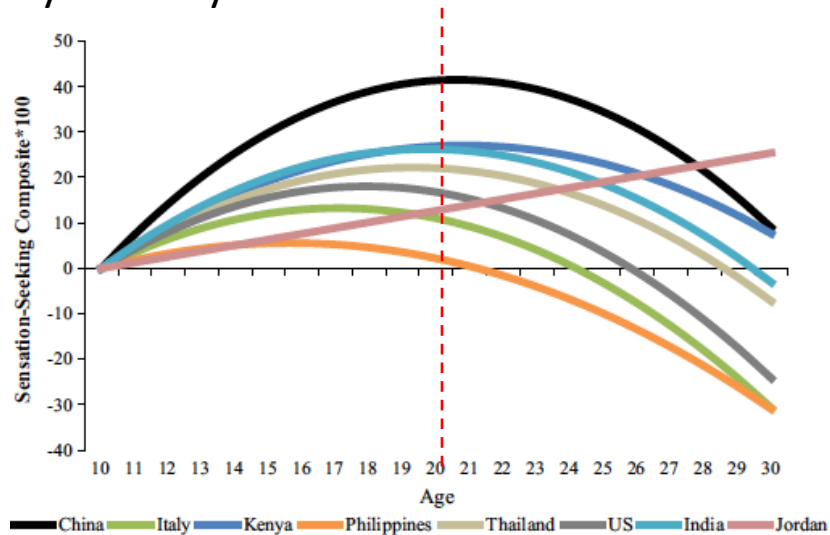
Studies in multiple countries, led by Dr. Laurence Steinberg, who led the MacArthur Foundation Research Network on Adolescent Development and Juvenile Justice

Age Patterns in Sensation Seeking (LEFT) and Self-Regulation (RIGHT) Around the World

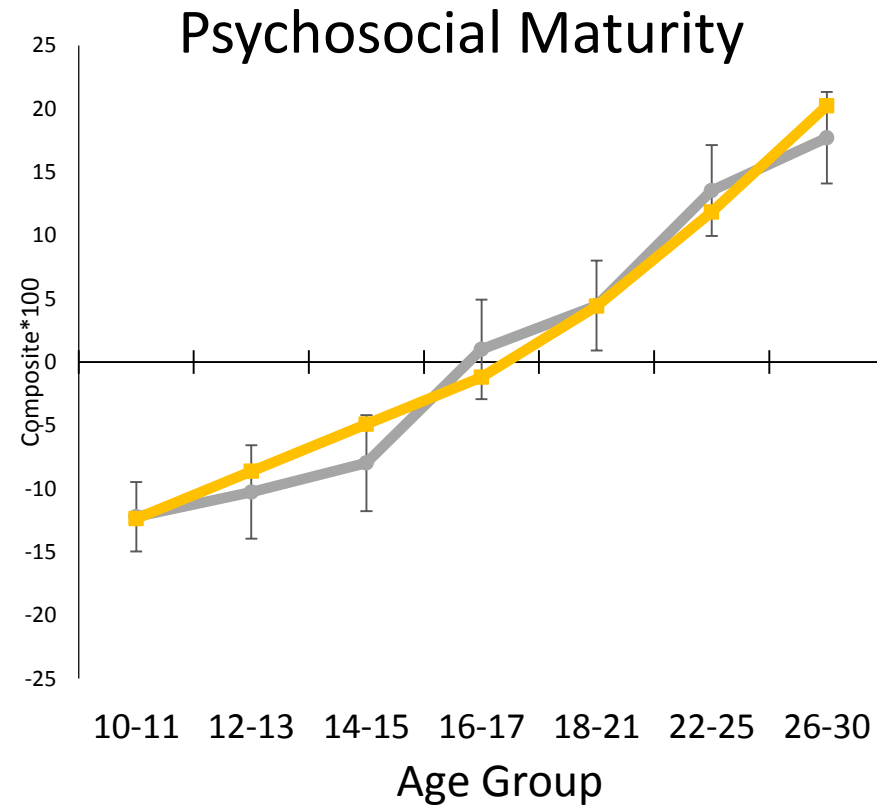
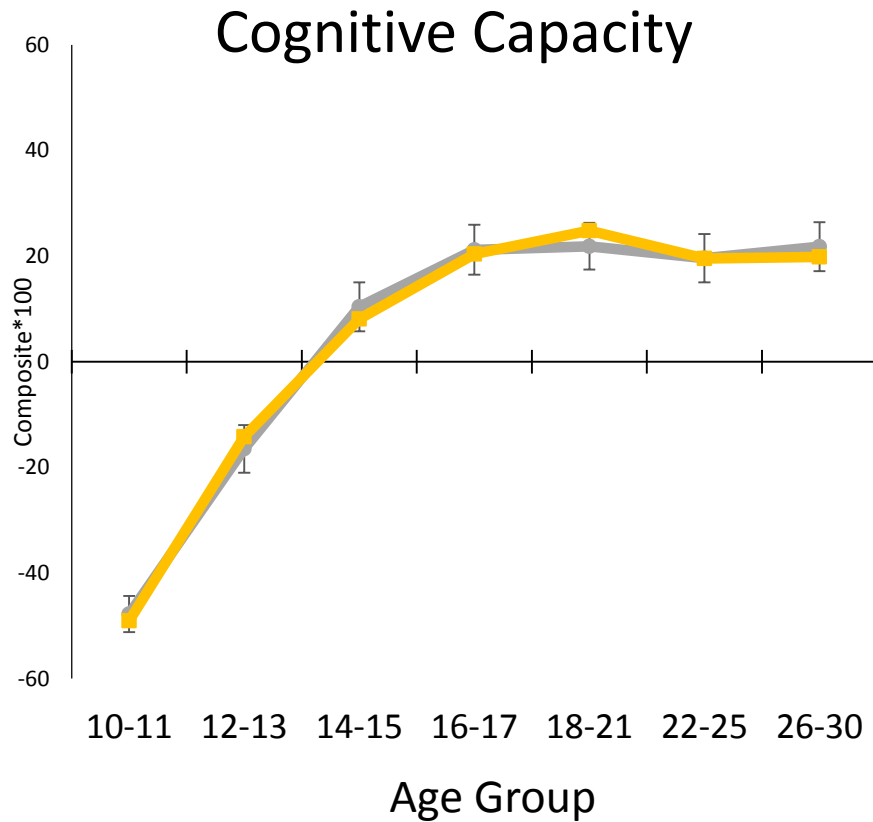
Aggregated:



By Country:



Age Patterns of Cognitive Capacity and Psychosocial Maturity



Purple = Estimated Regression Values

Green = Estimated Marginal Means

Affected areas of U.S. Law

- Death penalty
 - Juvenile
 - Young adult
- Term of years sentences = life sentences
- Felony Murder
- Sex offenses
- Confessions