



In Brief

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Variation in fertility: Recession  
and heterogeneity  
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occurring Pain and Joy  
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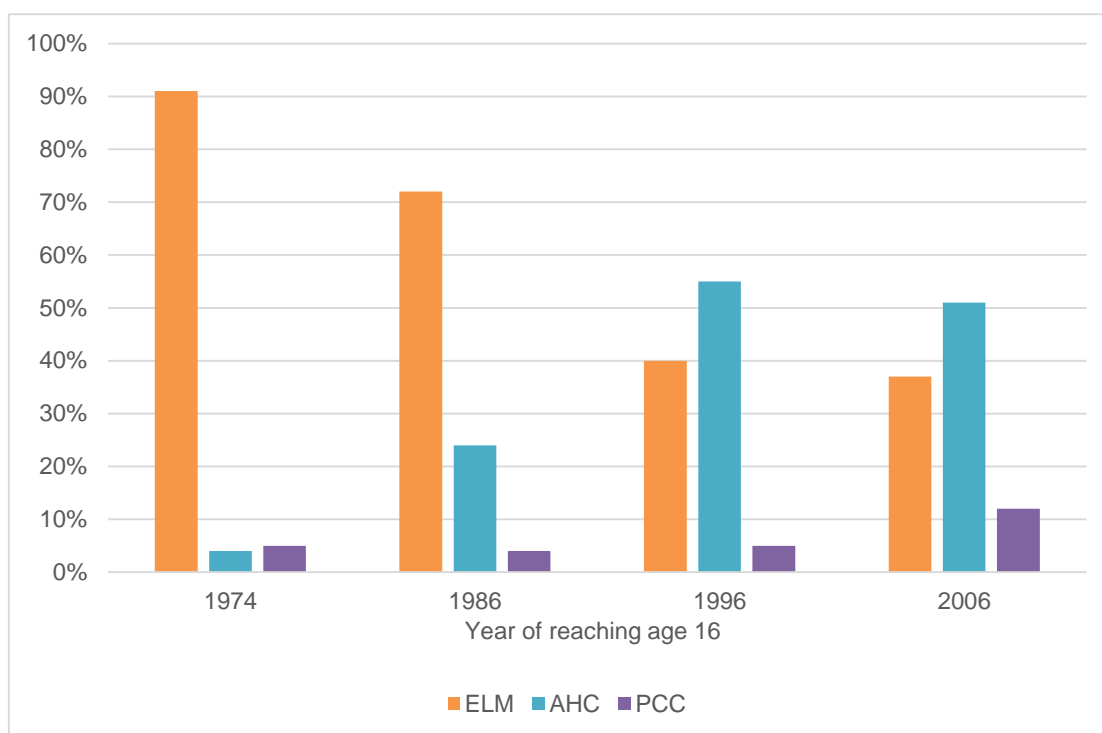
Society, comparing fertility transitions among women before and after the 2008 Great Recession. His findings suggest a counter-cyclical pattern among women born in 1980/4, i.e. increased fertility rates after the recession. For younger birth cohorts this effect was not significant. Furthermore, relative disadvantaged women, especially those with low levels of education and precarious employment have relative high fertility rates compared to their more privileged peers. However, this effect disappears after the recession, suggesting that lacking economic resources reduce fertility rates among disadvantaged women. Together these studies suggest that a changing socio-historical context impacts on the behaviours and experiences of young people.

This volume of the PATHFINDER also includes a report from Julia Moeller, who had been a PATHWAYS fellow between 2013 and 2015, working within a collaborative project linking the Universities of Helsinki and Michigan State. Within this project Julia studied student engagement in STEM fields and approaches to learning. Her research highlighted that positive and negative emotions often co-occur - a

Making a successful transition from education into the labour market is important for young people's economic success. We know, for instance, that periods of early unemployment may have scarring effects on later employment and earnings prospects (Gregg, 2001). Furthermore, there are reasons to suspect deep-rooted and structural problems are preventing some young people from achieving a successful transition. We see this from the fact that NEETs – young people not in education, employment or training – have been a fairly constant feature of the youth labour market in the UK for as long as records exist.

Our recent research, published as a LLAKES Research Paper (Anders and Dorsett, 2015), shows that transitions out of compulsory education have changed as the labour market around them has evolved. We analysed the experiences of four cohorts of young people; born in 1958, 1970





The proportion categorised as potential cause for concern (PCC) has risen from 4% in the earliest cohort to 12% in the most recent one. In the earlier cohorts, young women and those from non-white ethnic background are more likely than their male or white peers to be categorised as PCC. However, by the later cohorts, these positions have reversed, with young women and those from non-white ethnic background less likely to be in this group than their male or white peers.

By contrast, coming from an advantaged background has remained a strong predictor of avoiding the PCC route across all four cohorts. It seems likely that the changes described stem from the higher likelihood of staying in education for young women and those from non-white ethnic backgrounds, leaving them better-placed, on average, to avoid a difficult transition into the labour market.

Our research has highlighted fundamental changes over the past 30 years in the early experiences of young people beyond compulsory schooling. It suggests a clear need for policies to help smooth the school-to-work transition (Dorsett and Lucchino, 2014; Schoon, 2015). It does not appear to be the case that early difficulties will generally prove to be temporary. For our earliest two cohorts, we are able to examine this by considering also experiences up to age 24. We find that PCC status in the short run is strongly predictive of PCC status in the longer-run. Consequently, effective support at age 16 has the potential to bring lasting benefits.

#### References

Anders, J. and Dorsett, R. (2015). What do young English people do when they reach school





# Passion for Activities: Co-occurring Pain and Joy

## Of motivation and aversive experiences

Do you feel a passion for research or another activity? If you do, then you might know the odd combination of the urge to engage in this activity, the gratification and happy feelings related to it, and the occasional aversive feelings of frustration, anxiety, and anger, that sometimes occur when something is really important to us but does not go as planned.

This mixture of intrinsic motivation, negative emotions, and persistence in the face of obstacles is highly interesting to motivation researchers. Much of the previous research focuses on the beneficial outcomes of intrinsic motivation and the suboptimal and sometimes harmful consequences of extrinsic motivation. But what happens if a person experiences both? The research on passion helps understanding this riddle.

## How to define passion?

Passion describes the inclination of a person to an activity that the person likes, finds important, and invests time and energy in (Vallerand et al., 2003). Experiencing a passion implies being committed and intending to practice the activity regularly. Many passionate individuals identify with their passion, and develop long-term plans related to their passion. In addition to such rather stable aspects, passion also includes fluctuating emotional experiences and approach motivation (Moeller, 2014). Traditionally, the term passion referred to harmful and uncontrollable desires and suffering (Dixon, 2003). The current literature has seen many different definitions of passion (for an overview, see Moeller, 2014; and Moeller, Eccles, et al., 2015) and distinguishes between the beneficial harmonious passion, and the harmful obsessive passion.

## How to measure it?

Passion can be measured with self-report scales. In my dissertation, I developed the essential passion components as identified in the previous literature. This scale assesses stable aspects (identification, long-term goals) and more fluctuating components (action plans, desire). The scale was used to study relations between passion, personality traits and emotions in samples from Germany, Brazil, and the US (Moeller, 2014). Based on this scale, I also suggested a measure of situational passion to disentangle state and trait aspects of passion (Moeller, Dietrich, Eccles, & Schneider, under review).

## The bright and dark sides of passion

Previous studies found that harmonious passion (HP) correlated with intrinsic and desirable experiences while obsessive passion (OP) correlated with aversive and harmful experiences. Based on that it has been stated that individuals who experience obsessive passion terminate the relationship with the activity if they

decide it has become a negative factor in their lives (Vallerand, 2003, p. 3). However, I find myself in the position of experiencing an uncontrollable urge to partake in the activity (Vallerand, 2012, p. 3).

However, in my recent studies I found that such individuals do not terminate the relationship with the activity if they

## raw scores of passion scales

