

PATHFINDER



The Pathways to Adulthood Newsletter



Welcome

Capacity building and advancing the understanding of productive youth development in an international context are the objectives of the PATHWAYS Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme which is funded by the Jacobs Foundation since 2008. In our biannual issue of the PATHWAYS newsletter, the PATHFINDER, we report on research conducted by the PATHWAYS fellows and the PATHWAYS team. Issue number 8 gives a short description of the PATHWAYS that our alumni followed after completing their Fellowship.

The aims of the Jacobs Foundation Fellowship Programme are capacity building and advancing the frontiers of research on productive youth development. The programme has succeeded in providing an innovative and stimulating learning and research environment to the post-doctoral fellows and facilitated their career progression. For example, Angela Chow who originally was based at the University of Helsinki with Katariina Salmela-Aro has now moved to the University of Alberta, Canada and has been awarded a number of grants to continue her work on the development of motivation across educational transitions, including the Banting Post-doctoral Fellowship given by the Canadian government. Håkan Andersson has moved from a successful career in academia (under the mentorship of Lars Bergman) to a position with the Swedish Higher Education Authority where is now responsible for quality assurance in higher education. Lara Perez-Felkner, originally based at Michigan State

University with Barbara Schneider, has been appointed to a tenure track position as Assistant Professor in Higher Education and Sociology at Florida State University, where she continues to be engaged in comparative research, including research on gender in STEM occupations in Cambodia. Lara was also successful in obtaining a number of grants to support her work. Ming-Te Wang who was mentored by Jacquelynne Eccles at Michigan University has recently been promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at the Department of Psychology and School of Education at the University of Pittsburgh. Ming-Te has received a number of grants and awards for his work, including the American Education Research Association Career Research Award. Phil Parker moved from his PATHWAY fellowship at the University of Tübingen under the mentorship of Ullrich Trautwein to a tenured position at the Centre for Positive Psychology and Education at the University of Western Sydney. Phil has also been successful in obtaining a number of grants and awards for his work, including the prestigious Discovery Early Career Researcher Award from the Australian Research Council.

Key themes integrating the work of the PATHWAYS programme and the research endeavours of the fellows include a focus on the development of individual competences that enable young people to strive even in the face of adversity, and to what extent these skills can help them to negotiate the opportunities and challenges of contextual circumstances and constraints.

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Please visit our website to find out more about our work and the team:

pathwaystoadulthood.org

Alumni profile:

Angela Chow

Angela is a research associate at the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Alberta, Canada.

My research interests include students' motivational development across educational transitions, gender differences in educational and occupational aspirations, and the effects of educational experiences on mid-life outcomes. I have published papers in international journals such as *Developmental Psychology*, *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, and *Journal of Vocational Behavior*. My work is frequently cited, with a total number of citations of 224 and an H-index of 8. In 2011, I won a Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship given by the Canadian government, which is a highly prestigious international postdoctoral award. In the same year, I was also awarded a research grant from the Office of the Vice-President and another grant from the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta.

These achievements would not have been possible without the support from PATHWAYS. I was an associate fellow of PATHWAYS from August, 2009 to September, 2011. Being involved in PATHWAYS enabled me to work with a team of leading professors

and to establish a supportive network of researchers across the world. I have continued working with my PATHWAYS collaborators closely beyond the end of my fellowship. Together with my collaborators, I have just submitted two papers for journal article publication in the last two months. The first paper, which is a collaboration with Noona Kiuru, Philip Parker, Jacque Eccles and Katariina Salmela-Aro, compares peer effects on the development of students' task values across school subjects. The second paper, working with Ming-Te Wang, Tara Hofkens, and Katariina Salmela-Aro, I examined the developmental trajectories of school engagement of a sample of Finnish high school students.

Currently, I am a research associate at the Department of Pediatrics, University of Alberta. My recent research focuses on task values and work values, and how these values shape developmental pathways from adolescence to young adulthood and midlife, with particular emphasis on outcomes related to education, career, and well-being. Also, to further expand my research scope, I am collaborating



with a team of pediatricians in Canada on a study which examines the associations between mother's mental health trajectories across the transition to motherhood and infant's physical, cognitive and social development.

Alumni profile:

Lara Perez Felkner

Lara is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education and Sociology in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Florida State University.

As an Assistant Professor in Higher Education and Sociology at Florida State University, my research focuses on how social contextual factors shape underrepresentation in higher educational access, major choice, and degree attainment. In particular, this work examines how malleable high school and college micro-environments (including peers and faculty) and broader macro-contexts (policy, urbanicity, and culture) can differentially facilitate the realization of young people's college and career ambitions, both in the U.S. and internationally. To examine these questions, I employ both secondary analysis of large-scale national longitudinal datasets as well as designing and analysing original research using participant observation, longitudinal surveys, and interview methodology. Both independently and with my colleagues and students, I have produced lines of papers in my primary focal areas of research: access to higher education and underrepresentation in specific STEM majors and careers. These lines are joined together by the shared focus in how intersecting factors can promote or inhibit opportunities for those students who have been underrepresented in higher education, whether this underrepresentation is attributable to social and structural resources, perceptions of opportunity and fit, or a combination of these issues. Moreover, they share an aim to identify mechanisms that could be addressed through policy and institutional interventions, to broaden the participation of women and men in higher education and scientific careers irrespective of their social background.

Thanks in part to outstanding support from the Pathways programme and the Jacobs Foundation, I am pleased to have had such an exciting period of research. With respect to publications, I had a solo-authored article accepted this spring in *Teachers College Record*: "Perceptions and Resilience in Underrepresented Students' Pathways to College." Another manuscript on

which I was first author was published in a pathways-to-careers-oriented special issue of *Developmental Psychology* in December 2012. Additionally, five solo-authored book chapters were accepted and either published or in press. One of these, a substantial chapter in the new *Handbook of Social Psychology* entitled "Socialization in Childhood and Adolescence," was published in print in May 2013 and has already been downloaded from my academia.edu and ResearchGate websites 473 times to date, from over a dozen countries. Two manuscripts were submitted to top-ranked journals this spring for the first time. One with inter-institutional colleagues was submitted to *Educational Researcher*. The other with a departmental colleague and graduate student was submitted to *Research in Higher Education*. Two additional manuscripts will be submitted this summer, one for *Sociology of Education* and another for *Journal of Higher Education*, each of which are co-authored with students. Moreover, I continue to present at national and international meetings, am increasingly being invited to give scholarly lectures, and actively promote my published research on my Wordpress website and academic social media to further extent and broaden the reach of my work. Notably, I delivered an invited lecture at the American Physical Society April 2014 meeting and at the Center for Khmer Studies Public Lecture Series.

I have been fortunate to win multiple research grants to support these endeavors. I am a co-PI on a major grant to the National Science Foundation Research #1232139 on Gender in Science and Engineering (GSE) program for \$523,000 to investigate this issue using secondary analyses of the Education Longitudinal Study and the Beginning Postsecondary Students study, as well as original data collected using smartphones from first year undergraduates at Michigan State University and the University of



Chicago. I was also granted a seed grant from the Center for Higher Education, Research, and Innovation (CHERTI) center in 2013, to support a graduate assistant for two years. Additionally, I applied for and won a first year professor award from Florida State University for \$20,000 to cover comparative research on STEM degrees in Cambodia during summer 2013, during which time I was a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Khmer Studies.

As a new tenure-track faculty member now entering my third year in the position, I have greatly enjoyed teaching and advising students. Over the past two years, I have taught four graduate courses, in Sociology of Education and Higher Education, Outcomes of Undergraduate Education, and Applied Regression. I have also supervised several students on both their own and collaborative research. Five of these students are co-authors on collaborative journal manuscripts.

I could not have accumulated these achievements without excellent mentorship along the way. In particular, I am indebted to my postdoctoral mentor and collaborator Barbara Schneider. I have also greatly valued the wisdom, advice, and support of all of the Senior and Postdoctoral Fellows at the Pathways programme, especially Jacque Eccles, Ingrid Schoon, and Katariina Salmela-Aro. I hope to continue to stay in contact and collaboration with Pathways colleagues over the years as our studies on young people's pathways to education, career, and adulthood continue to advance.

Alumni profile:

Håkan Andersson

Håkan is an Analyst in the Department of Higher Education Analysis at the Swedish Higher Education Authority in Stockholm.



I defended my thesis in 2012 on the topic of the importance of childrens' ability for self-regulation for successful academic achievement and later occupational attainment. I received an award for best thesis in psychology at Stockholm University. After receiving my PhD I was invited to join the Pathways programme. This was a fantastic opportunity for me to broaden my research and to start new collaborations with young international researchers. Pathways provided a stimulating learning environment through mentorship and interaction with senior scholars.

During my time in Pathways I applied for grant money and additional post doc positions and was successful in getting a second post doc position at Stockholm University. During this time I also became interested in working outside the academia. One reason was the difficulty in Sweden to get a permanent position as there are very few available positions in psychology at universities. Another reason was that I thought it would be interesting to work closer to society with questions that interested me. This led me to apply for a job as an Analyst at the Swedish Higher Education Authority (Universitetskanslersämbetet). I got the job and after a lot of thinking, hesitation and rumination I turned down the post doc offer from Stockholm University and left the Pathways programme to start a new career.

The operations of Universitetskanslersämbetet comprise three main areas, namely (1) quality assurance of higher education and appraisal of the degree-awarding powers of public-sector higher education institutions, (2) legal supervision of higher education, and finally the area I work within (3) monitoring efficiency, follow-up and horizon scanning as well as responsibility for statistics in the higher education sector. This last task includes follow up and analyse the

operations of the higher education institutions, primarily to provide the Swedish Riksdag and Government with material on which to base decisions about higher education.

My work mainly consists of two tasks. One is analyzing different aspects of the higher education sector, such as the extent to which students obtain the credits for which they are registered (performance indicator), how that differs between various subject areas and types of programs and the reasons behind these differences. The other task is that I am responsible for certain key areas in which I must have deeper knowledge. These includes international statistics about higher education and the before mentioned performance indicator. I am also working in a project which aims to set up a platform for collaboration between us and researchers and to increase interest in doing research on higher education.

The most important skills from my training in research that I apply in my job are statistics and methods which include psychometric skills. Further, the contact with international research on higher education that I got via the Pathways programme has been very valuable in my understanding of international statistics. One major difference between my work now and my previous research is that now I am mainly working with population data instead of data from samples. This is a new world to me and I think many researchers would benefit from using population data to a greater extent when possible in their research. Sweden of course has very good official statistics on the Swedish population!

Another major difference between my work now and being a researcher is the closer connection between my work and the impact it has on policy and politics. But I think that this is the way it should be. Research is a much slower process and its impact on

society normally develops through the painstaking process of theory development and then into practical applications that may benefit the society. This may, of course, be a frustrating part of research. On the other hand, the extra time you as a researcher can put into your research are a luxury I as an analyst normally do not have.

The essence of the Pathway programme is to find ways to foster positive youth development. Being a part of this programme made me even more aware of the importance of good education and to provide children with good enough opportunities and conditions to make education available to them. The view that education is not just about educating people to be able to handle a job but also about growing as a person is something I have integrated in my work at Universitetskanslersämbetet.

Alumni profile:

Ming-Te Wang

Ming-Te is Assistant Professor of Psychology and Education and Research Scientist of Learning Research & Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh

I received my doctorate in Human Development and Psychology from Harvard University in 2010, and held two positions prior to joining the University of Pittsburgh as a faculty member. These positions expanded and diversified my graduate training. I was a PATHWAYS Postdoctoral Research Fellow housed at the University of Michigan from 2010-2011, where I advanced my interests in cross-cultural studies, achievement motivation, and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) career development. From 2011-2012, I became a Research Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research. I joined the University of Pittsburgh as an Assistant Professor at Department of Psychology and School of Education and a Research Scientist at Learning Research and Development Center (LRDC) in 2012. In 2014 was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in the Department of Psychology and Education. Participation in the PATHWAYS programme facilitated the crucial transition from post-doctoral fellow to a tenured position.

Since obtaining my doctoral degree, I have achieved several awards: In 2012, I received the American Education Research

Association Early Career Research Award and American Psychological Association Early Career Outstanding Research Paper Award. These two nationally recognized awards are given to one junior scholar per year and attest to his promise as a scholar. I have published 24 articles in peer reviewed journals, including *Child Development*, *Developmental Psychology*, *Developmental Review*, *Psychological Science*, *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, and *American Educational Research Journal*. For 22 of these articles, I am the first author. In addition, I have served as the Principal Investigator or Co-Principal Investigator for 8 grants (6 federal grants and 2 foundation grants) that in total exceed \$3.5 million, including funding from the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health.

Since my graduate studies, my research interests have centered in the development and testing of broader theoretical and conceptual models of the relationship between contextual and psychological factors and developmental outcomes. In particular, my current research focuses on three domains: (1) the independent and conjoint effects of multiple ecological systems (e.g., family, school, peer, and neighborhood)



on adolescent motivational beliefs and engagement, (2) the impact of school climate and family socialization on the behavioral, social, and emotional development of youth from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, and (3) the impact of school-based interventions targeting children's academic skills and developmental problems. My work is noteworthy in that it emphasizes the interplay of developmental processes across both academic and social domains in adolescence, and situates these processes within school, family, peer, and community ecological contexts.

Alumni profile:

Philip Parker

Dr Philip Parker is currently an Australian Research Council DECRA funded research fellow at the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) at Australian Catholic University

My PATHWAYS to Adulthood postdoctoral fellowship was under the mentorship of Professors Ulrich Trautwein, but I also worked, and continue to work with, many PATHWAYS mentors, members, and alumni. Most of this research is on successful post high-school transitions for both general and disadvantaged groups using secondary databases from Australia, US, UK, Germany, and Finland. In this research, I use large longitudinal databases where I integrate sociological approaches to educational choices with developmental and education psychology approaches to this critical transition. My most significant contributions are in exploring the role of self-concept and other motivational processes in educational choices and transitions and in psychological adjustment during emerging adulthood. On the basis of this research I have been a semi-finalist for the National Academy of Education/Spencer Foundation international post-doctoral fellowship program. In 2012 I have also been awarded the prestigious Discovery Early Career Researcher Award from the Australian Research Council (ARC); an award that will cover my salary and research cost for the next three years. My experience and networks developed through the PATHWAYS program were very influential in the reviews I received for this award. I also currently hold another large scale ARC Discovery Award exploring task-value in math and English and Eccles' model of achievement related choices in relation to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics aspirations in middle school children. The grant again builds off the networks I developed during the PATHWAYS to adulthood program. Recently, I was a CI on two large-scale Australian Research Council linkage grants. In total, I have received over

\$1.5 million in competitive grant funding since the end of my PATHWAYS postdoctoral fellowship.

Following my postdoctoral fellowship with PATHWAYS program, I received a tenure position at the Centre for Positive Psychology and Education at the University of Western Sydney. I now currently hold a tenure research only position at the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education at the Australian Catholic University; an Institute that includes Professors Herbert Marsh, Richard Ryan, Robert Vallerand, and Ralf Schwarzer. I also serve on the editorial boards of leading educational psychology boards including the *Journal of Educational Psychology* and *Learning and Instruction*.

I have continued the research program I started at PATHWAYS including ongoing work with Katariina Salmela-Aro and her colleagues which now includes two publications in international journals and a further two currently in revision. I have also continued my research program with Ingrid School, John Jerrim, and Kaytn Chmielewski which started with a publication in *Developmental Psychology* and now includes a publication in the *Journal of Sociology*, two papers currently in their second round of review in prestigious international journals, and several more papers in development. Since my time at PATHWAYS I have also published in the *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* (the second highest ranking journal in psychology; Scopus), *Child Development* (the highest ranking journal in educational psychology), *Learning and Instruction*, and a number of APA journals. I am also an editor on the upcoming book *International Advances in Education: Inclusive Education for Students with*



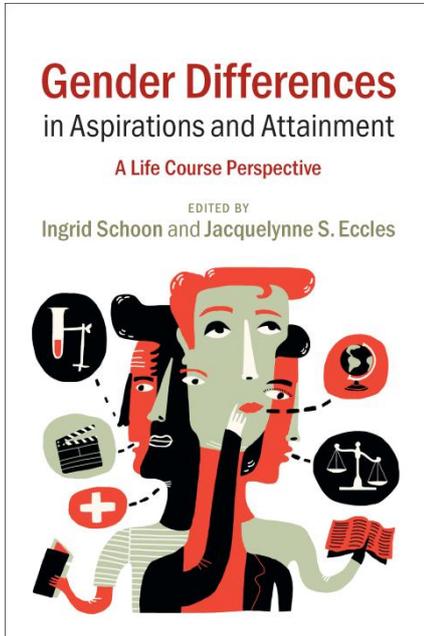
Intellectual Disabilities that has a strong focus on the transition to Adulthood of young people with an intellectual disability.

My PATHWAYS experience also provided me with a strong training in research methods and this is something that I have continued to develop. I now have several publications on research methods and statistical simulation studies, and have lead several research method symposia at international conferences. Recently, the British Psychological Society selected my paper on longitudinal models of change in the *British Journal of Educational Psychology* for a media press release.

My PATHWAYS experience has provided me with world-class research training, access to mentorship by the best researchers in the world, and an incredible network that includes both PATHWAYS mentors but also established research partnerships with members and alumni. The benefits of this experience have been immense and I continue to enjoy my connection with the program. In grant proposals and job interviews the PATHWAYS postdoctoral fellowship has repeatedly come up as a critical element in the evaluation of me as a researcher.

BOOK PUBLICATION

We are pleased to announce the publication of a new book that was the result of a PATHWAYS conference on Gender differences in aspirations and attainment that involved many of our fellows.



Gender Differences in Aspirations and Attainment: A Life Course Perspective.

Edited by Ingrid Schoon and Jacquelynne S. Eccles. Published by Cambridge University Press. ISBN 9781107645196

What are the role of parents, peers and teachers in shaping school experiences and informing the career choice of males and females? Does the school context matter, and to what extent do educational experiences influence young people's self-concept, values and their outlook to the future? Do teenage aspirations influence later outcomes regarding educational attainment and the assumption of work and family related roles? These questions and more are addressed in the chapters of this book, following lives over time and in context. The book is both innovative and timely, moving the discussion of gender inequalities forward, providing a dynamic and contextualized account of the way gendered lives evolve. Chapters address the role of institutional structures and the wider socio-historical context in helping young men and women to realize their ambitions. A unique feature is the longitudinal perspective, examining the role of multiple interlinked influences on individual life planning and attainment.

Endorsements

"The value here is the diversity of perspectives—in terms of discipline, national context, life stage—that Schoon, Eccles, and their first-class team bring to the discussion of gender, school, and work. By delving into this diversity, readers will come to understand how a young woman or man makes life decisions." Robert Crosnoe, University of Texas at Austin

"Rich evidence from impressive datasets interrogates complex intersections of personal and contextual factors which shape persistently gendered pathways into adulthood. The structured sections provide an effective way to communicate findings concerning early family and school socialisation, teen aspirations, and institutional and cultural structures. The wealth of longitudinal findings presented across developmental stages and cultural settings makes this collection, edited by eminent researchers Ingrid Schoon and Jacquelynne Eccles, a must read." Helen Watt, Monash University

"This book demonstrates how gender differentials in educational and occupational aspirations and attainments emerge, and why they are so persistent. A particular strength of the contributions are the rich contextual assessments, the differentiated modeling of decision processes, the analysis of changing demands and needs across the life-span, and the prospective longitudinal studies. Schoon & Eccles have achieved the most comprehensive and objective assessment of what keeps unjust but also benign gender differentials alive, and why change requires a multi-faceted approach rather than one simple cure. This work is a must for everybody interested in gender differences in the world of education, training, and careers." Rainer Silbereisen, Friedrich Schiller *University, Jena*

"This book established a landmark in the study of changing gender differences over the life course and their determinants. It is a fascinating and very informative collection of analyses into why and how the gender gap in education is reversing. The book offers new theoretical perspectives and a rich set of empirical information on developments in different life phases, helping us to understand the new trends in gender inequality". Hans-Peter Blossfeld, European University Institute, Italy

PATHWAYS SYMPOSIUM

At the EARA conference held in Cesme, Turkey on 2-7 September 2014, PATHWAYS held an invited symposium on: Transition to Adulthood: The role of structure and agency. The discussant was Rainer Silbereisen and it was convened by Ingrid Schoon and Barbara Schneider. PATHWAYS Fellows Mark Lyons-Amos, Julia Dietrich and Håkan Andersson presented their research.

Although the present 'Great Recession' is worldwide in its scope, little is known about how it affects young people across national contexts. Recessionary times limit employment prospects, even in relative advantaged countries characterised by relative low youth unemployment rates - although responses could vary by national context. The symposium examined the question of how young people navigate the transition to independent adulthood during a major economic recession. Bringing together evidence from 4 different countries, the structural constraints and individual agency processes were examined that steer young people in one direction versus another. The studies are based on longitudinal survey data, following individuals over time and in context, focusing on young people between ages 15 to their early 20s.

Ingrid Schoon and Mark Lyons-Amos used evidence from UK panel data to examine employment transitions of different age cohorts coming of age before and during the Great Recession. They introduced a 'diverse pathways view' to conceptualise interactions between structure and agency in shaping transitions of young people, also taking into account the wider socio-historical context in which transitions take place. Marlis Buchman and Andrea Jaberg presented evidence from the Swiss COCON study to assess variations in the trajectories of young people completing vocational training and how these are linked to their social background, skills and competences as well as their values and aspirations. Katariina Salmela-Aro, Julia Dietrich and Hakan Andersson examined diversity in educational pathways and their association with career goals in a sample of Finnish students who were followed from age 16 to age 20. The paper by Barbara Schneider used evidence from the US and other countries to examine the impact of youth unemployment and its relationship to migration patterns world-wide. Attention was also paid to the implication of youth unemployment regarding political stability, societal health and well-being.

Each of the papers drew attention to the role of both structure and agency in shaping transitions to independent adulthood and facilitate comparisons of factors and processes that support or hinder a smooth transition and social integration.



- The major objective of the programme is to promote the next generation of researchers through funding, mentoring and collaboration
- The mission of this Collaborative Post-Doctoral Fellowship Programme is to stimulate innovative, interdisciplinary, and comparative research of productive youth development.
- Our programme brings together experts from the UK, Germany, Finland, Sweden and the US
- We engage with different stakeholders in how best to equip young people or mastering the challenges of growing up in a changing social context.

Principal Investigators and participating institutions

- Jacquelynne S. Eccles – University of Michigan
- Katariina Salmela-Aro – University of Helsinki
- Barbara Schneider – Michigan State University
- Ingrid Schoon – Institute of Education, University of London
- Rainer K. Silbereisen – University of Jena
- Ulrich Trautwein – University of Tübingen

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