

Youth and Young Adulthood: Transitions in the 2nd and 3rd Decade of Life

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Emer Smyth (presenting), **Selina McCoy** & **Merike Darmody**

The Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin

School factors and the transition to higher education

This presentation draws on a mixed methods longitudinal study which followed young people from the first year of secondary education until three to four years after leaving school. The findings indicate very strong effects of school social mix on the likelihood of entering higher education. The presentation traces the origins of these effects, exploring the way in which experiences at school influence post-school outcomes. In particular, it focuses on the role played by ability grouping, school climate and educational success in lower secondary education in channelling young people towards higher education.

Emer Smyth is Research Professor, joint programme coordinator of Education Research at the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin, Ireland, and head of Social Research Division. Her areas of interest include education, school to work transitions, comparative methodology, and gender issues.

Selina McCoy is Associate Research Professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute and Adjunct Professor at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

Merike Darmody is a Research Officer at the Economic and Social Research Institute in Dublin, Ireland.