

Growing Up in Ireland Conference

The Value of Child Cohort Studies – Historical and International Perspectives

**Professor John Bynner, Centre for Longitudinal Studies,
Institute of Education, London**

7th December 2009, Dublin

Contents

1. Why longitudinal research
2. Longitudinal studies: time and place
3. The studies
4. Context of social change
5. Changing life course process
6. Trajectories of disadvantage and policy challenge

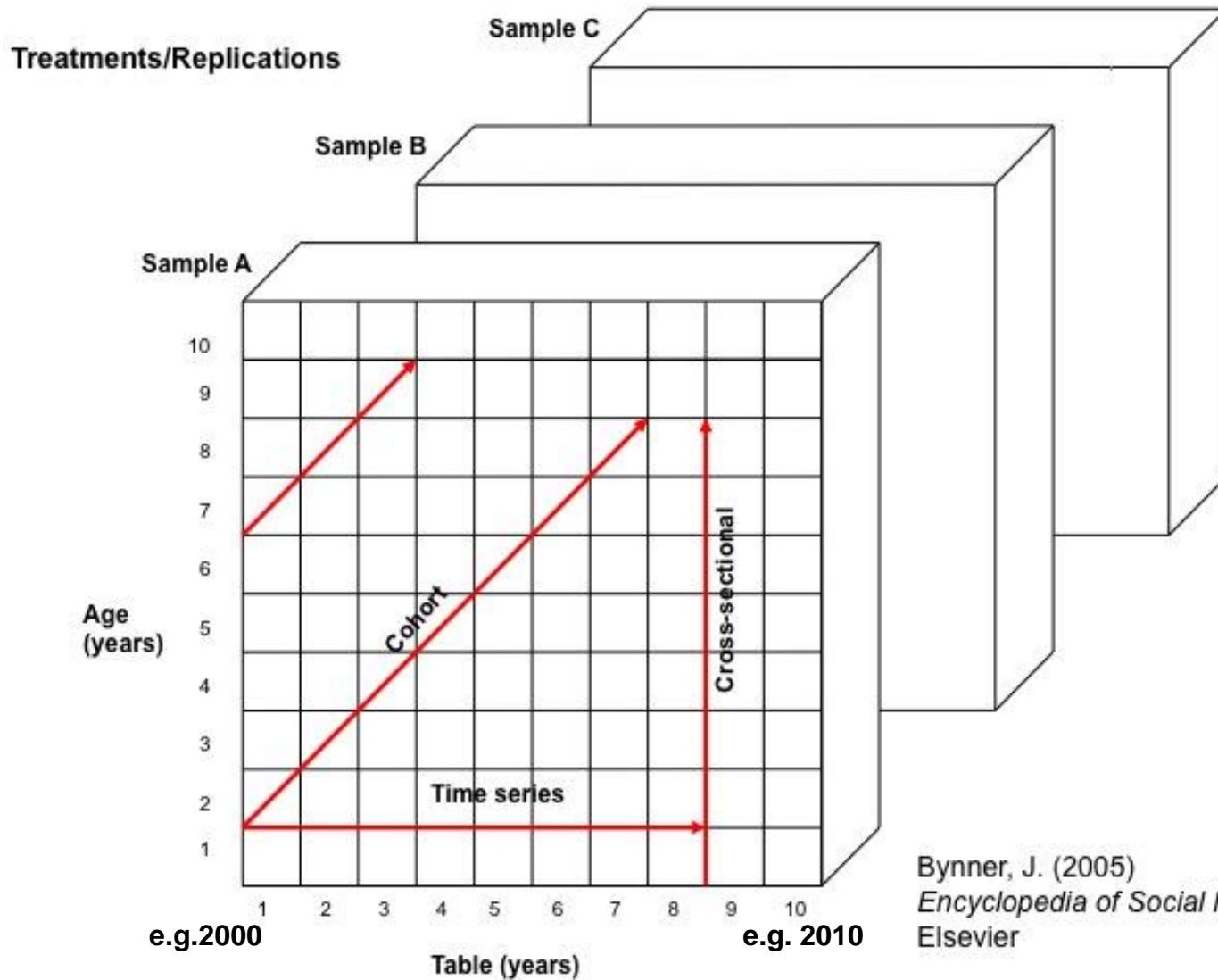
Value of longitudinal data

- Predicting consequences of early experience and circumstances – e.g. childhood disadvantage
- Explaining outcomes – e.g. Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)
- Estimating returns – e.g. to qualifications
- Identifying factors that override predictions – e.g. “escape from disadvantage”
- Life course dynamics – e.g. interactions between literacy proficiency, ICT competence, employment, family, health

Bynner et al 2009 *Use of Longitudinal Research in the evaluation of the Scottish Government's Strategic Outcomes* <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/11/25160140/0>

Bynner, J. & Joshi, H. (2007) 'Building the Evidence Base from Longitudinal Data'. *Innovation*, 20, 159-179

LONGITUDINAL SURVEY DESIGNS



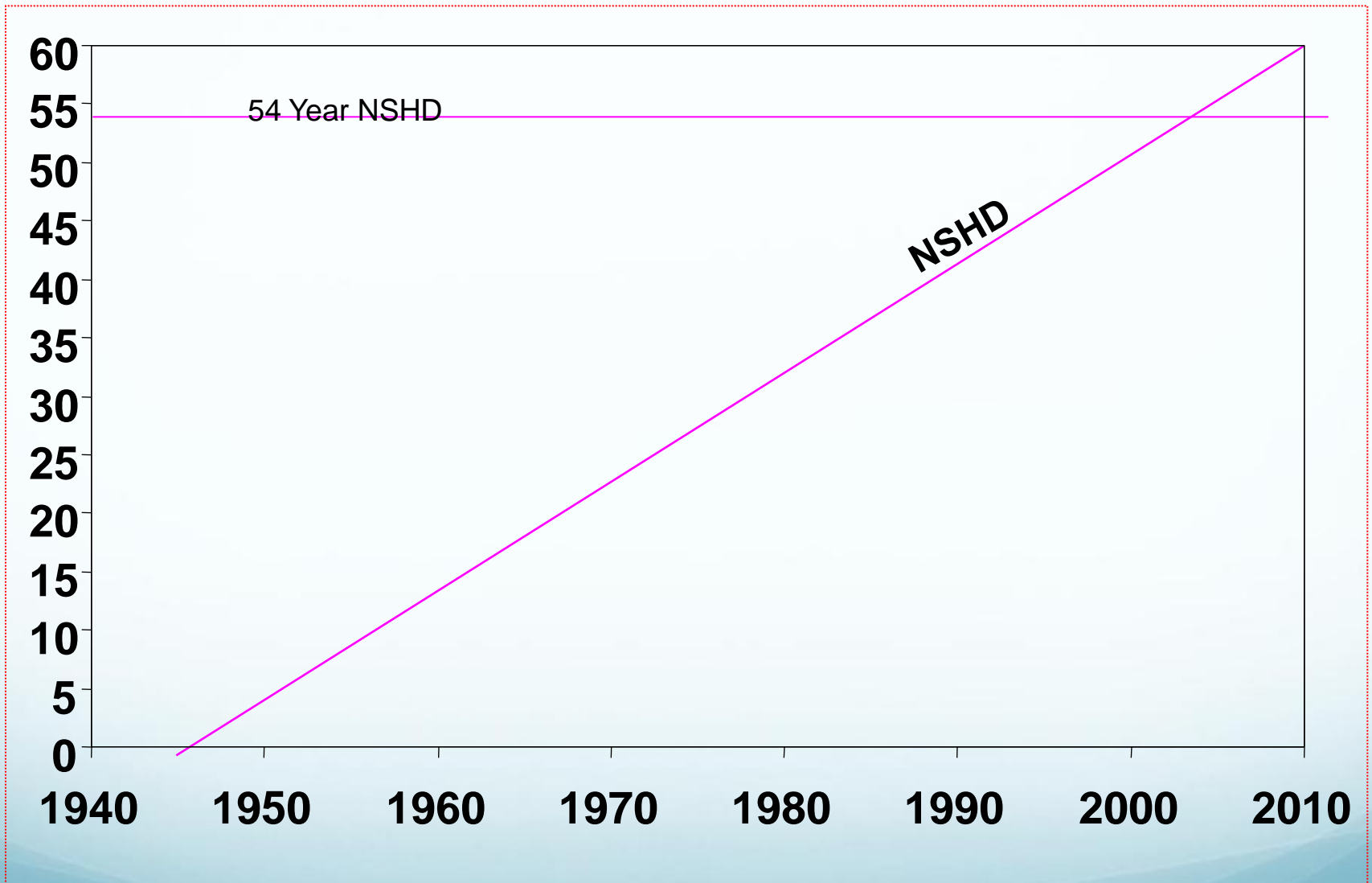
Bynner, J. (2005)
Encyclopedia of Social Measurement,
Elsevier

Types of longitudinal cohort study

- **Birth cohort studies:** 1946, 1958, 1970, 1992 Avon Longitudinal Survey of Parents and Children (ALSPAC), 2000 Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)
2005 Growing Up in Scotland (GUS), 2008 Growing Up In Ireland (GUI), 2010 French Birth cohort study (ELFE), 2012 German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS contains one birth cohort out of multiple age cohorts), 2009 US National Children's Study (NCS)
- **Age cohort studies:** 2004 Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), 2005 Growing Up in Scotland (GUS), 2008 Growing Up in Ireland (GUI), 2012 *German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS)*
- **Sequential cohort studies:** UK Youth Cohort Study (YCS), Scottish School Leavers Survey (SLS), 2012 *German National Educational Panel Study (NEPS)*

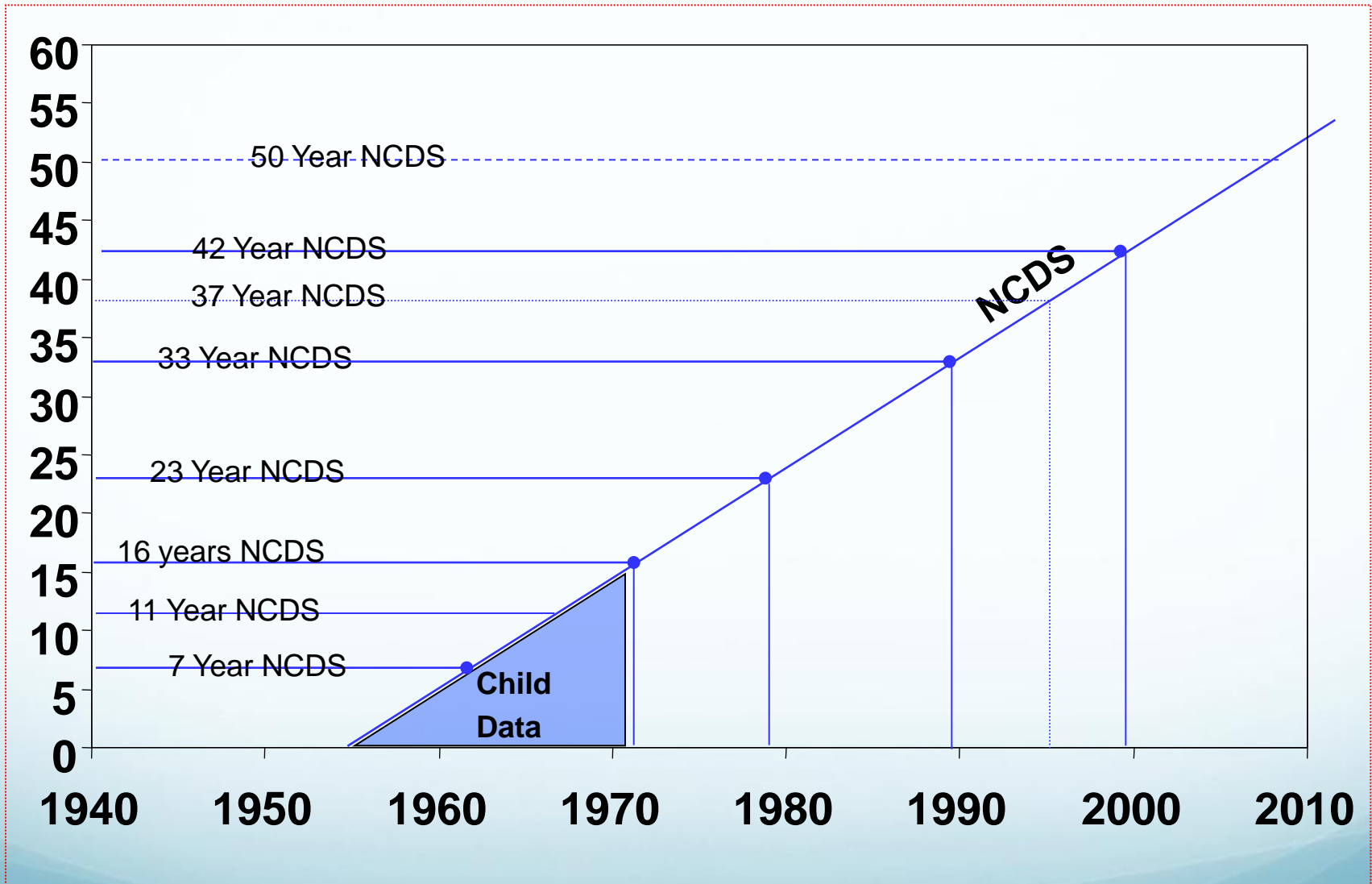
Martin, J. Bynner, J. Kalton, G. Boyle, P. Goldstein, H. Gayle, V. Parsons, S. Piesse (2006), A. Review of Panel and Cohort Studies. Bynner, J. Wadsworth, M Goldstein, H. Maughan, B. Purdon, S. Michael, R. (2007), Scientific Case for a New Birth Cohort Study. Bynner, J. Wadsworth, M Goldstein, H. Maughan, B. Lessof, C. Michael, R. (2009) Options for the design of the 2012 birth cohort study.
[www.Longviewuk.com](http://www.Longviewuk.com/pages/reportsnew.shtml) /pages/reportsnew.shtml

British Birth Cohort Studies



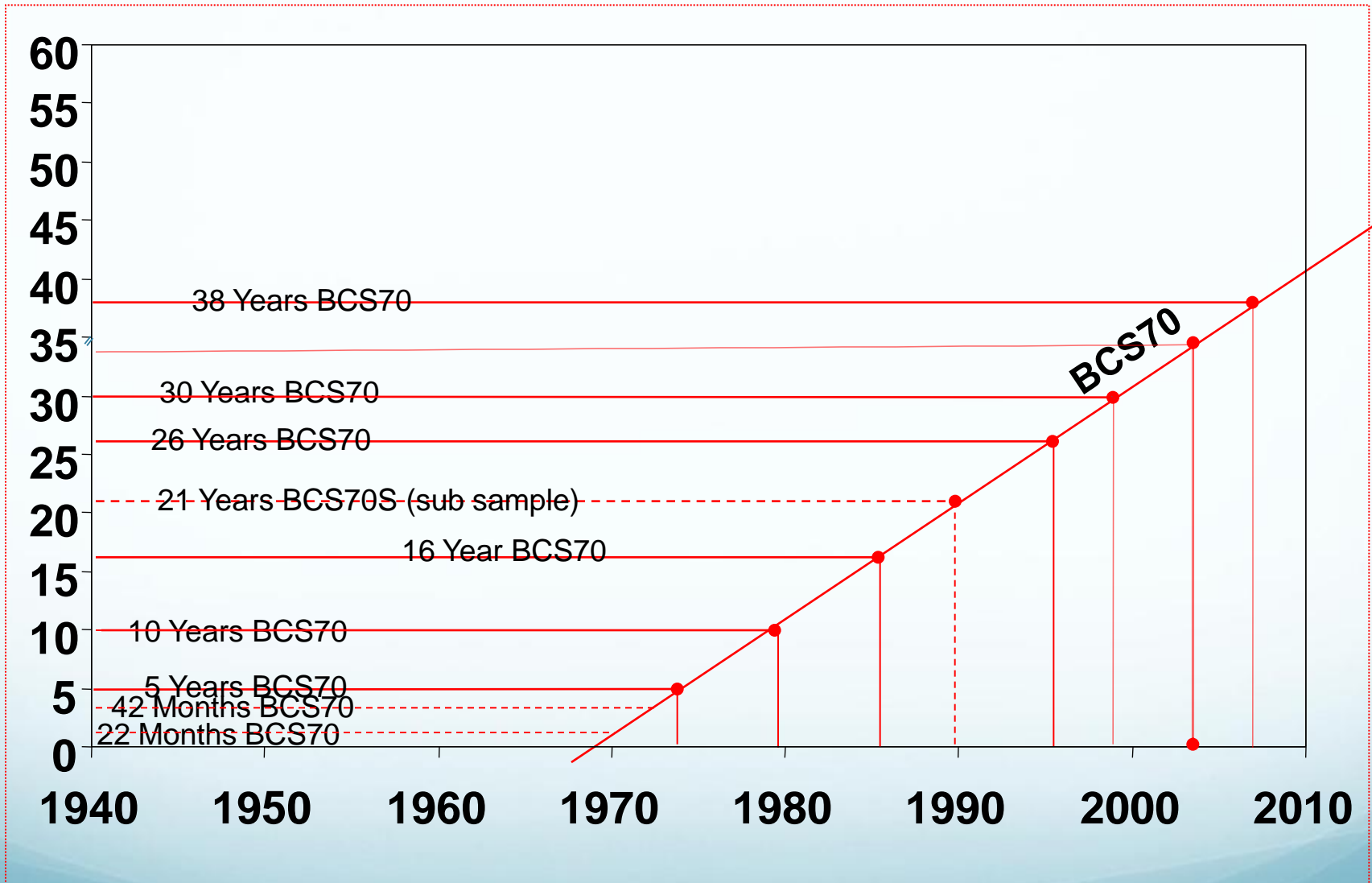
British Birth Cohort Studies

National Child Development Study (NCDS)



British Birth Cohort Studies

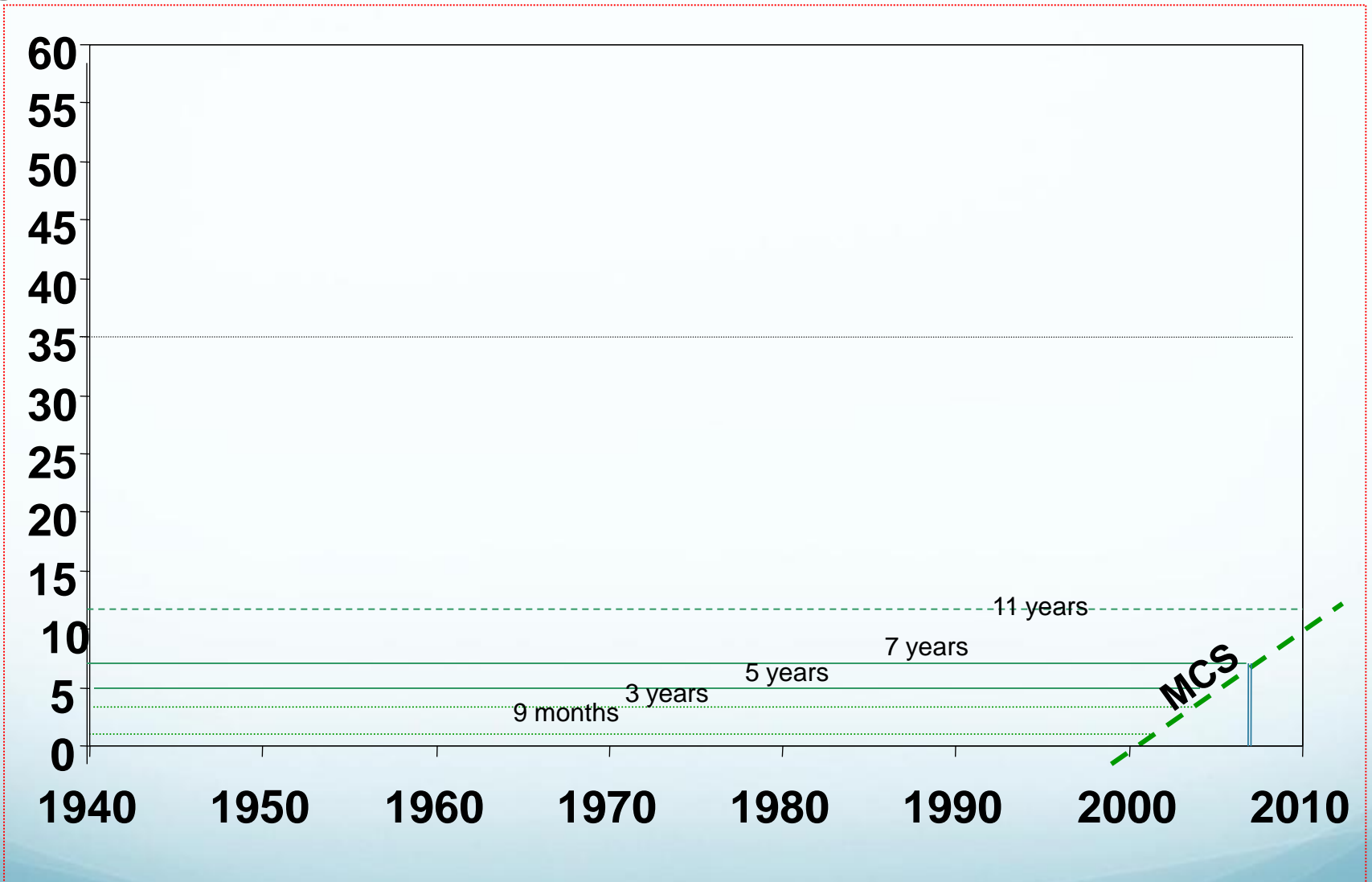
1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)



British Birth Cohort Studies

Millennium Cohort Study (MCS)

Age



The British Birth Cohort studies

Age

60
55
50
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0

1940

1950

1960

1970

1980

1990

2000

2010

Year

NSHD 1946 (n = 5,000)

NCDS 1958 (n = 17,000)

BCS70 1970 (n = 17,000)

ALSPAC 1992 (n = 15,000)

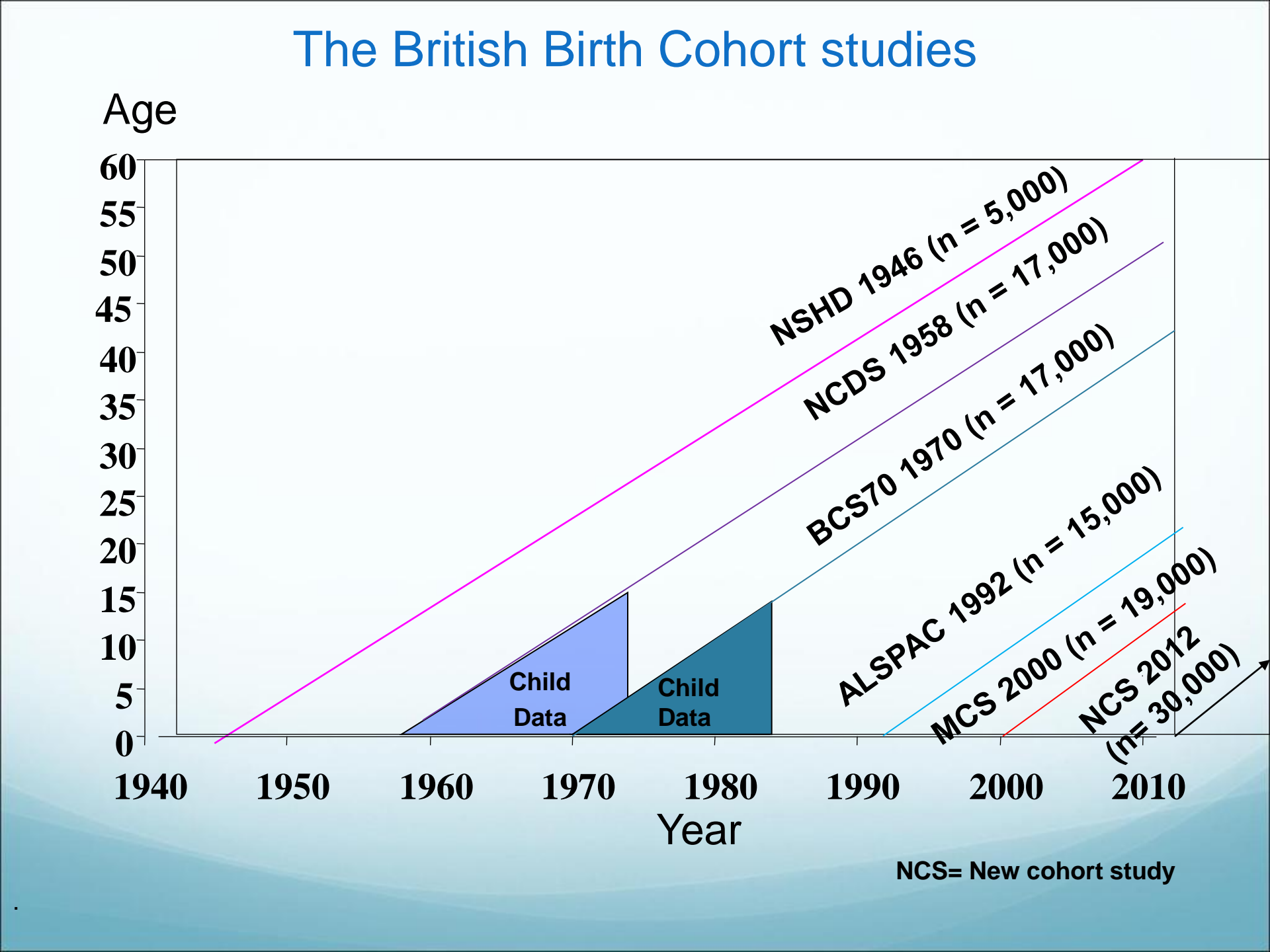
MCS 2000 (n = 19,000)

NCS 2012
(n = 30,000)

Child
Data

Child
Data

NCS= New cohort study



Theoretical perspective

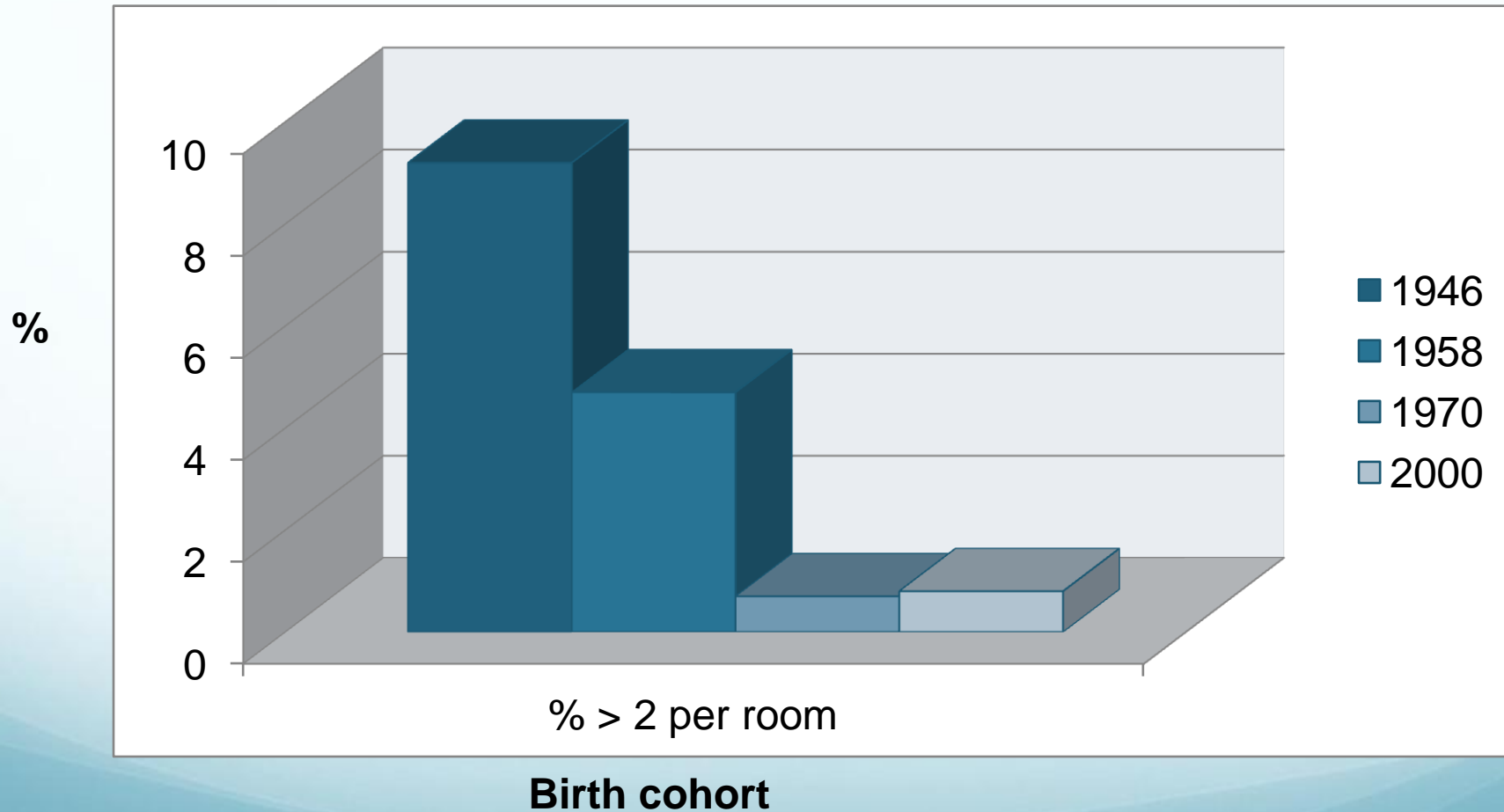
Distal and Proximal ecological factors in child development (Bronfenbrenner)

- Interactional contexts – *e.g. the family*
- Structural factors - *e.g. social class, locality*

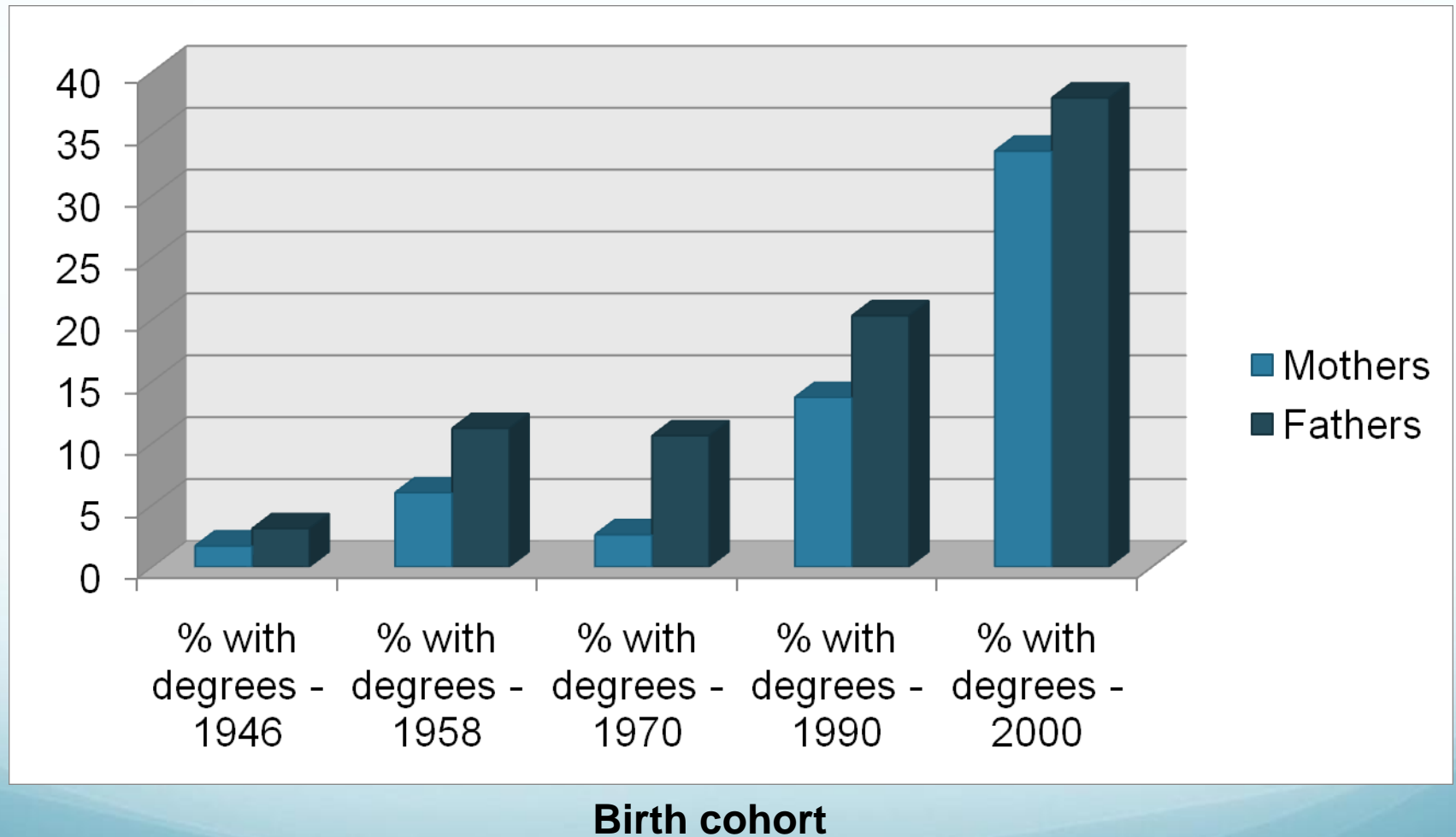
Life course trajectories (Elder, Heinz) shaped by :

- Human agency – *development of the individual*
- Linked-lives – *social relations*
- Timing – *age, period, cohort*
- Location in time and space – *history and culture*

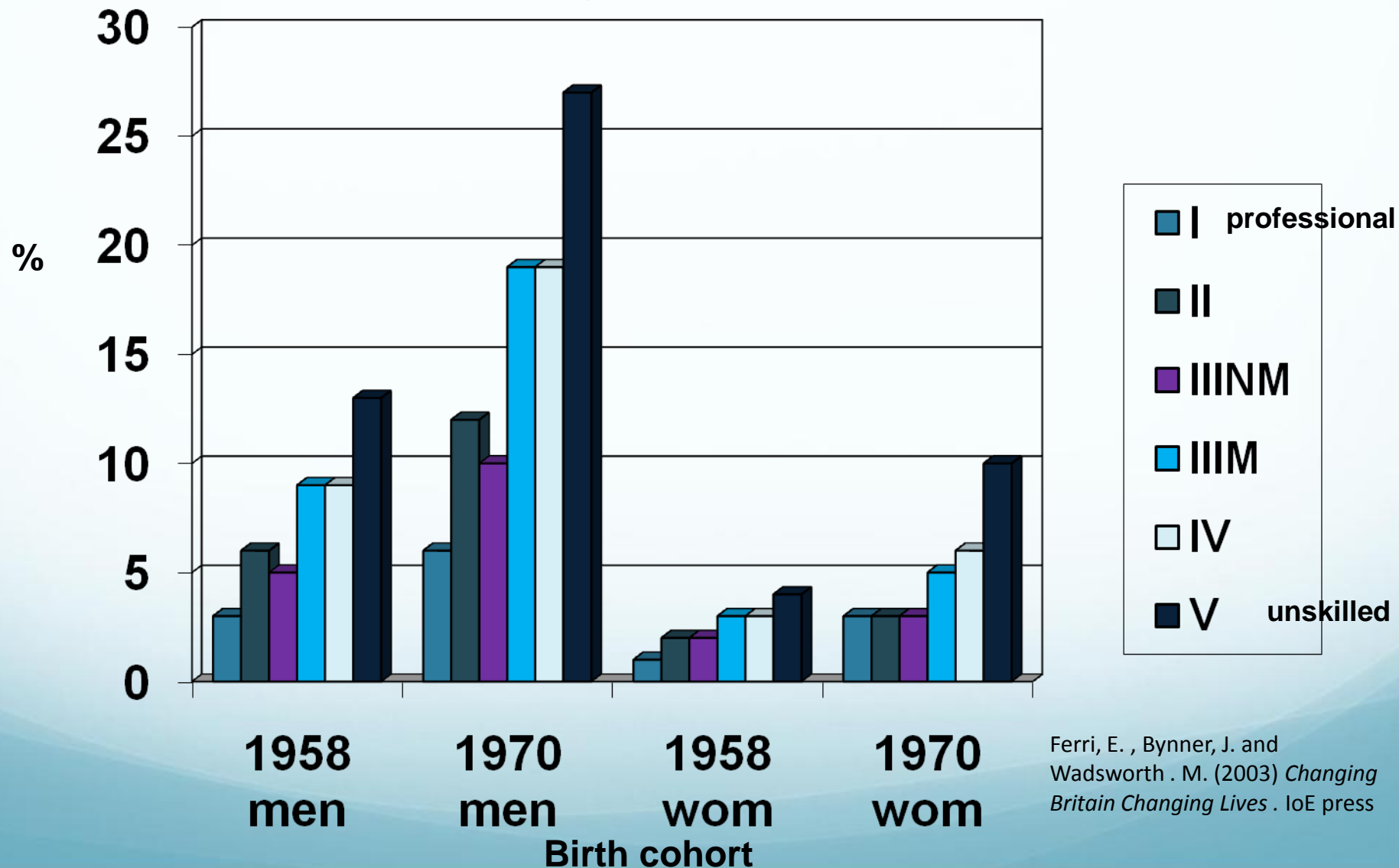
Housing space – people per room



Parents/carers with degrees

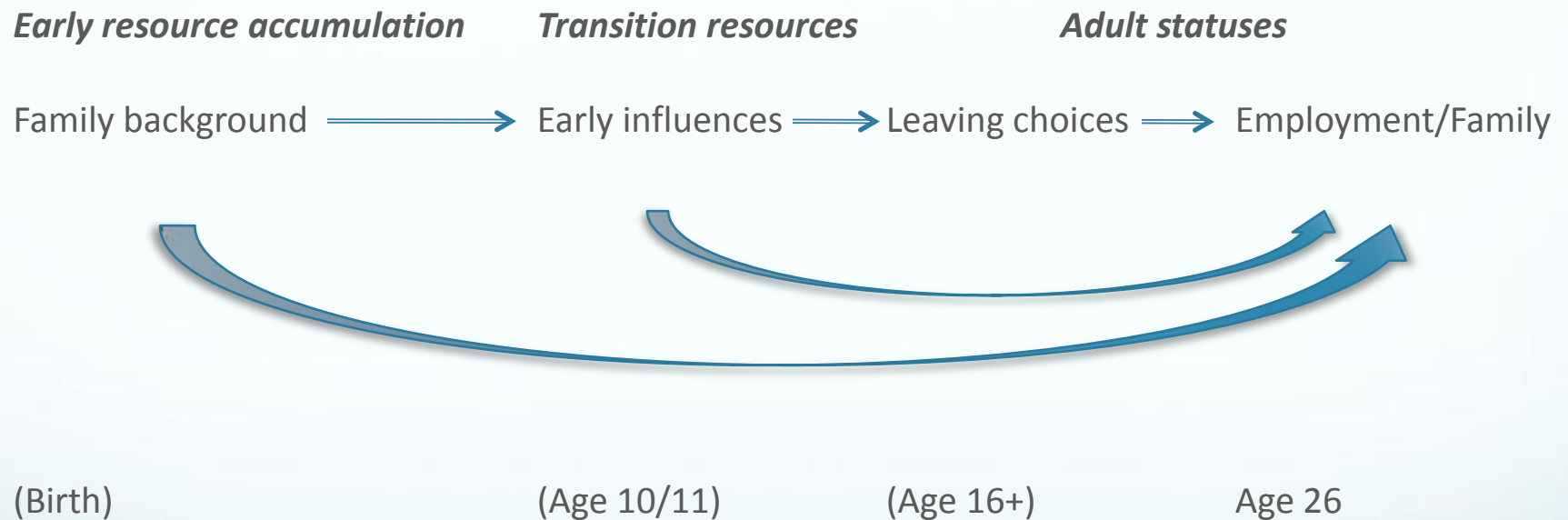


Experienced temporary suspension from school by family social class



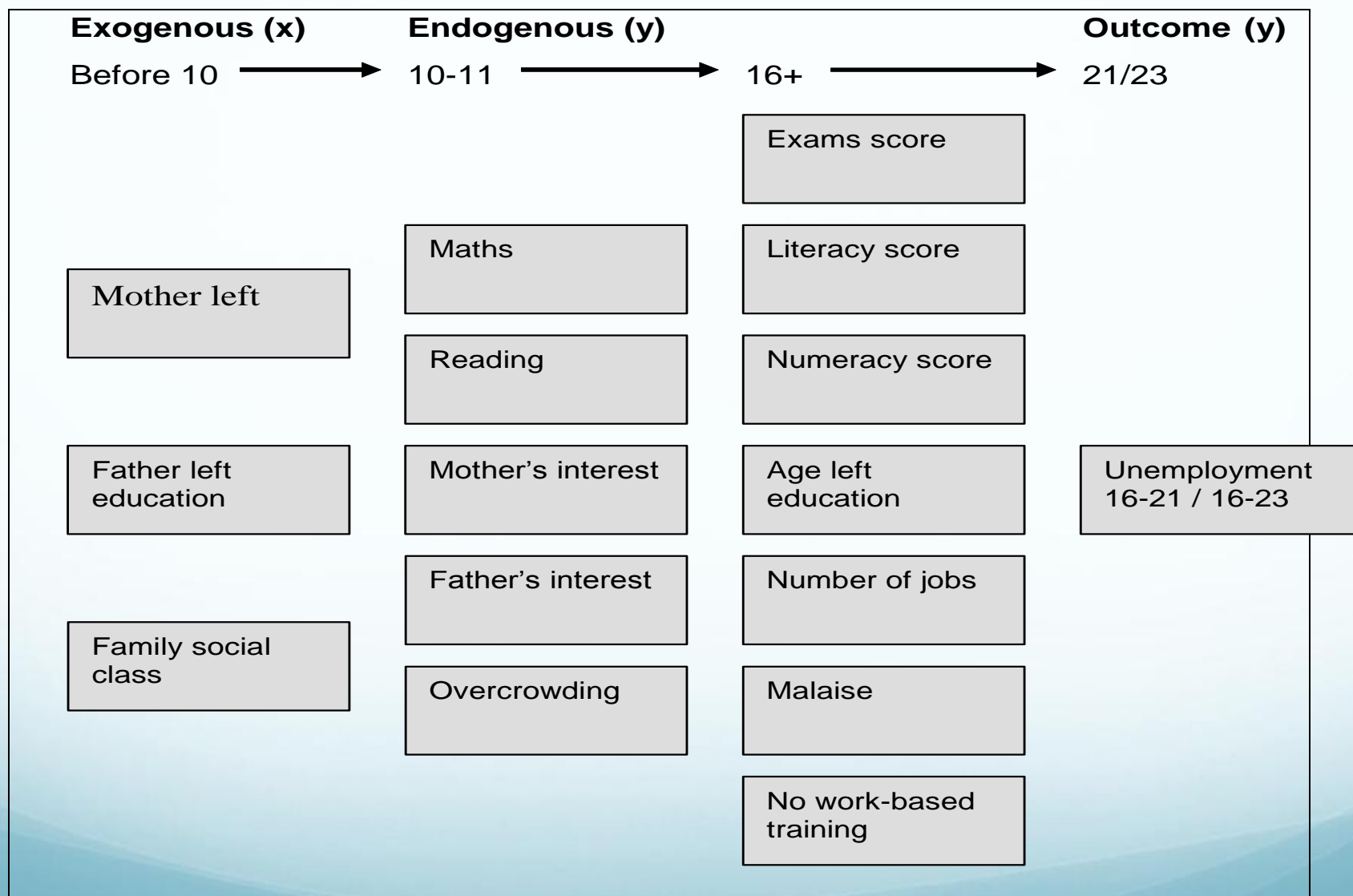
Ferri, E. , Bynner, J. and Wadsworth . M. (2003) *Changing Britain Changing Lives* . IoE press

Modeling the routes to adult statuses

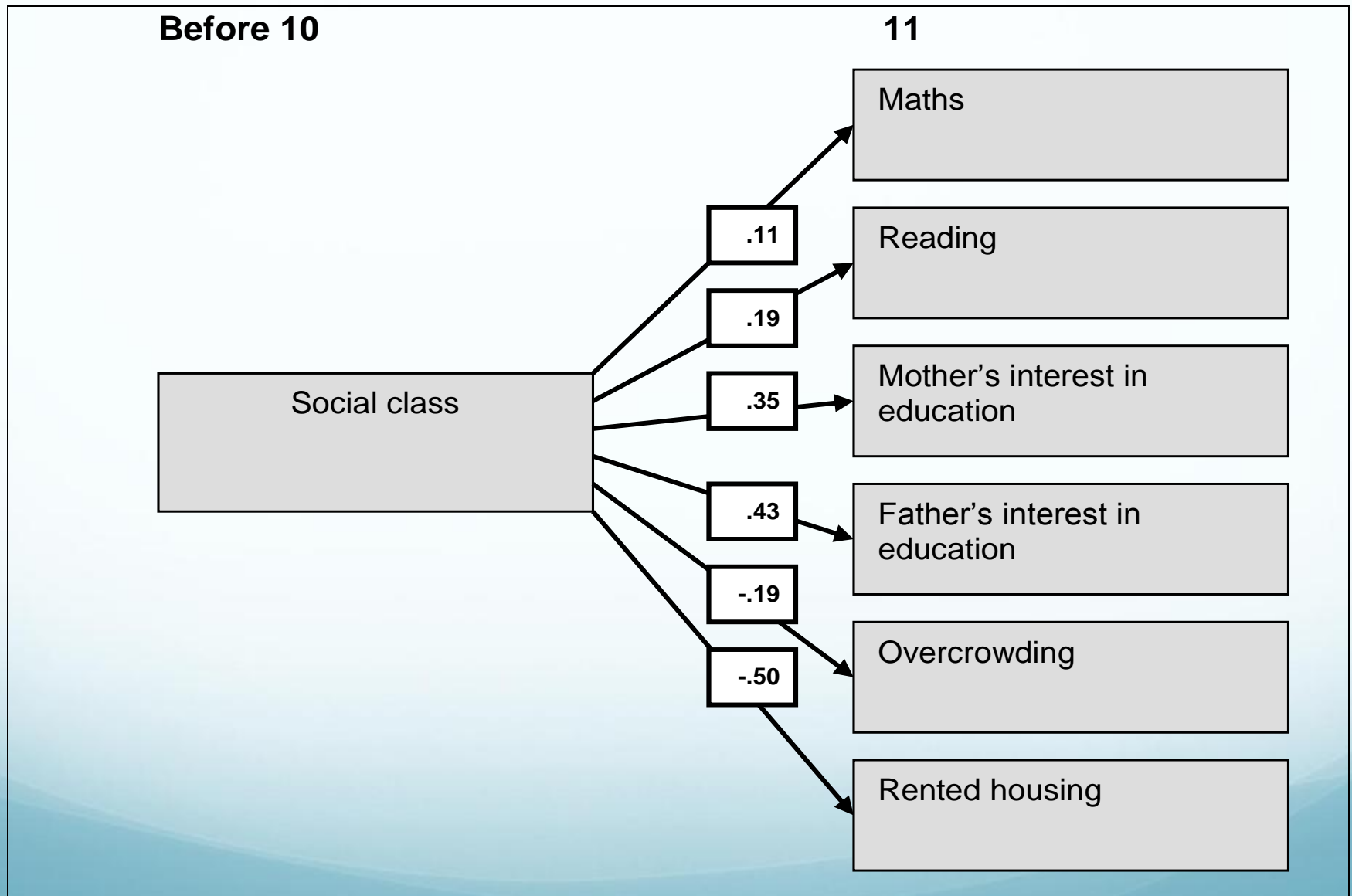


Rural vs urban area

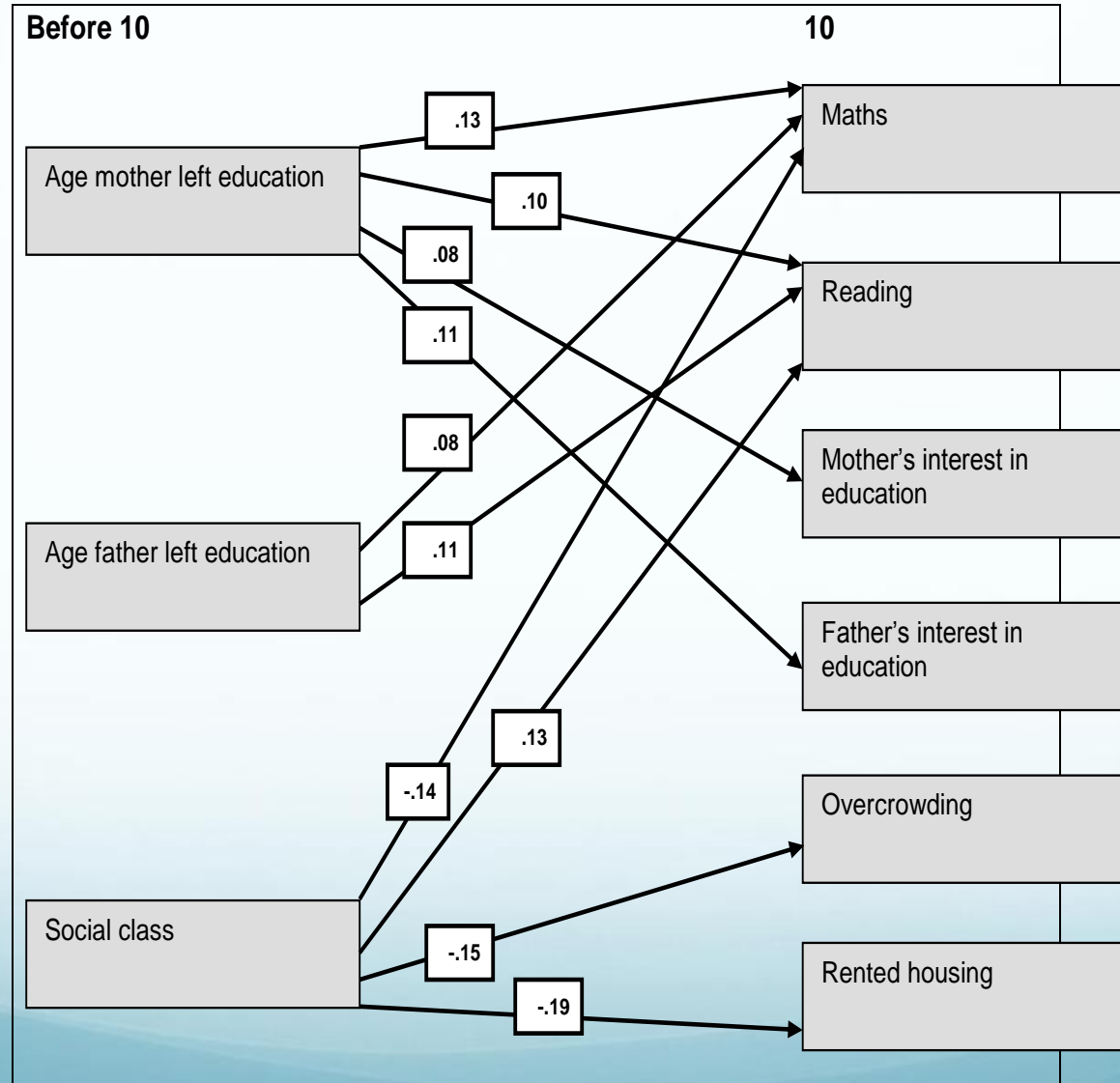
Structural equation model of education pathways to unemployment



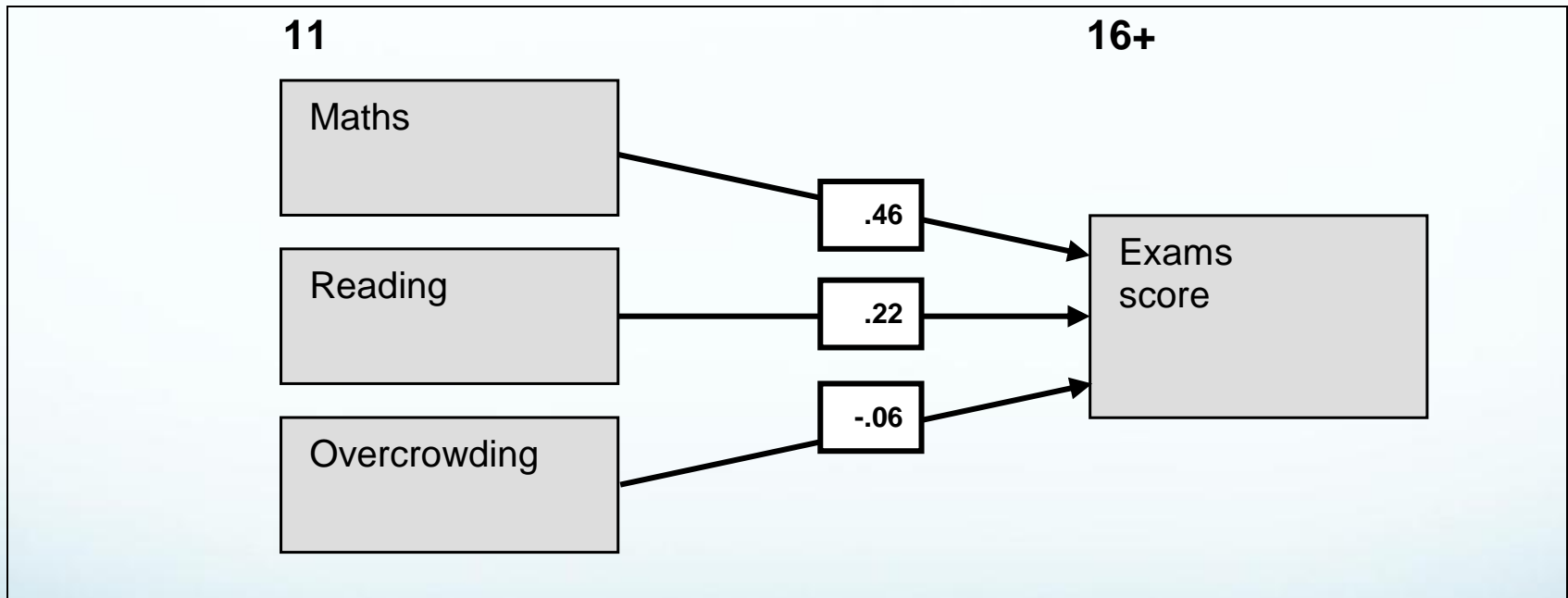
1958 cohort boys: impact of family background



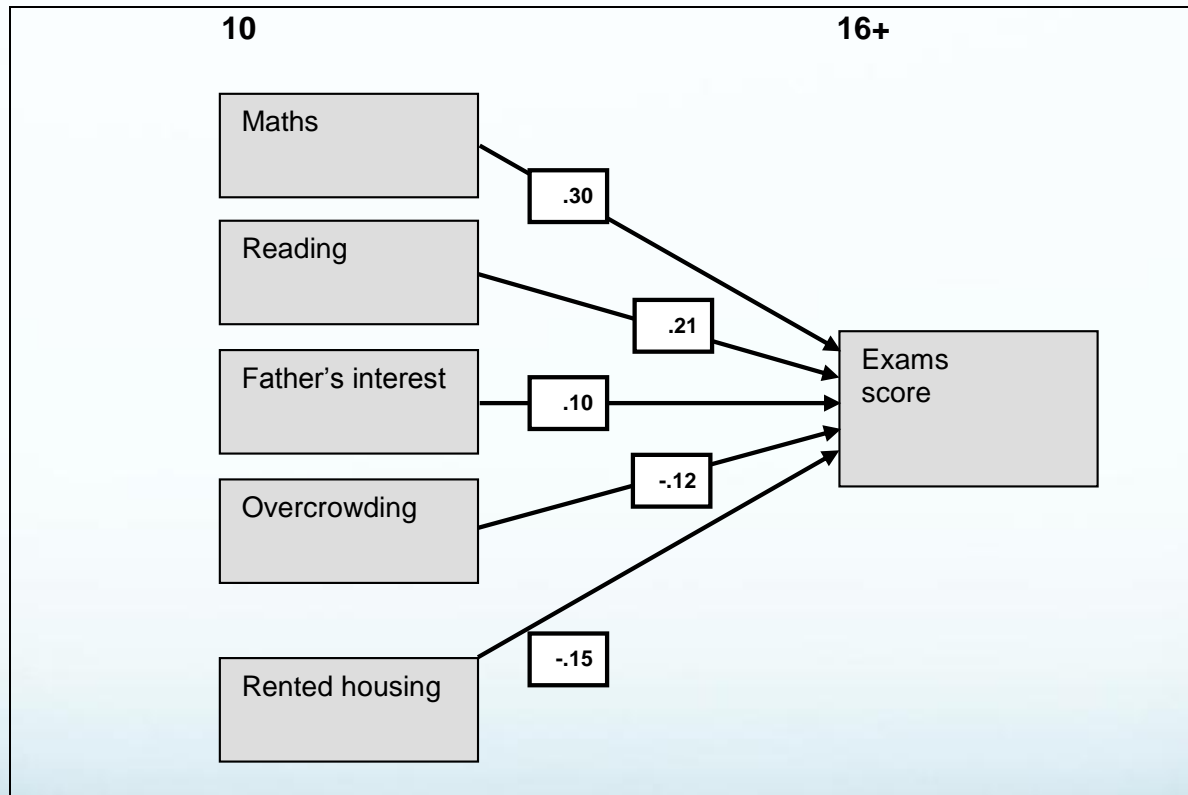
1970 cohort boys: impact of family background



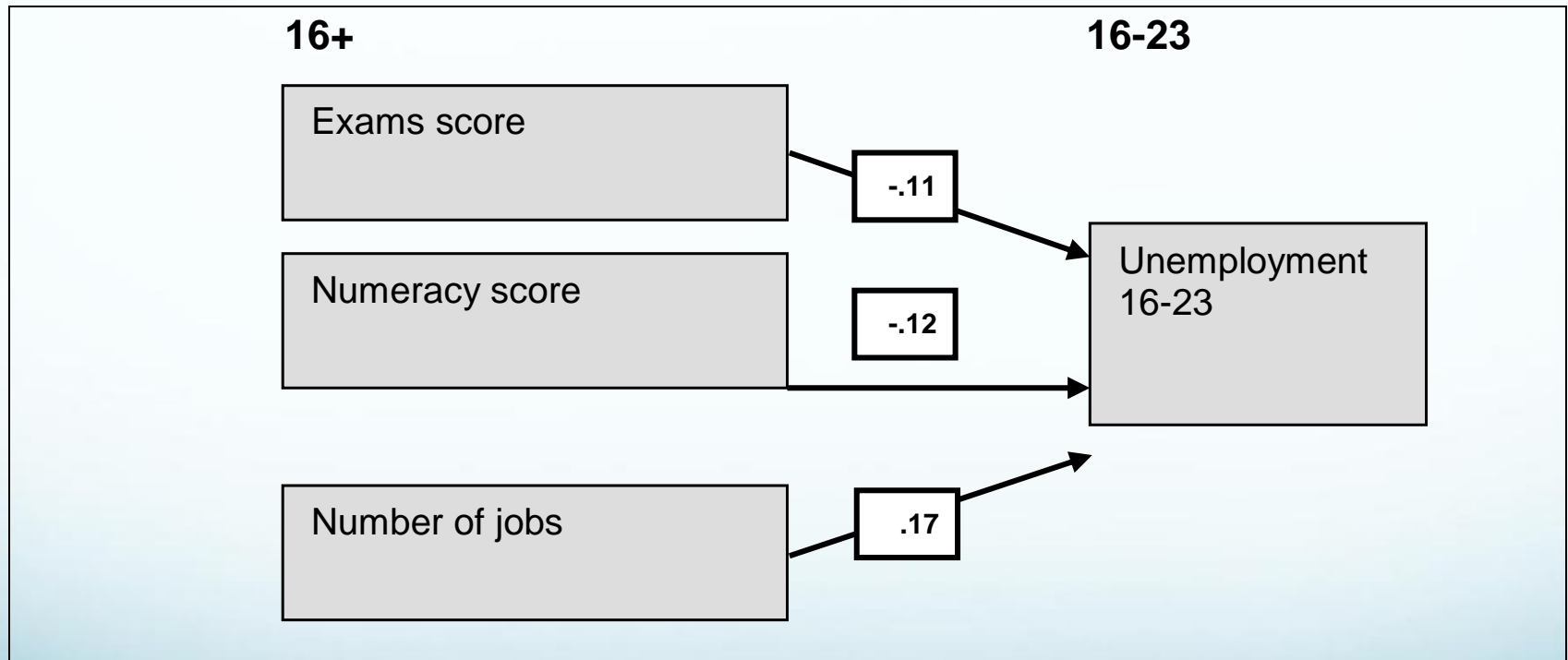
1958 cohort boys: influences on school leaving exam scores



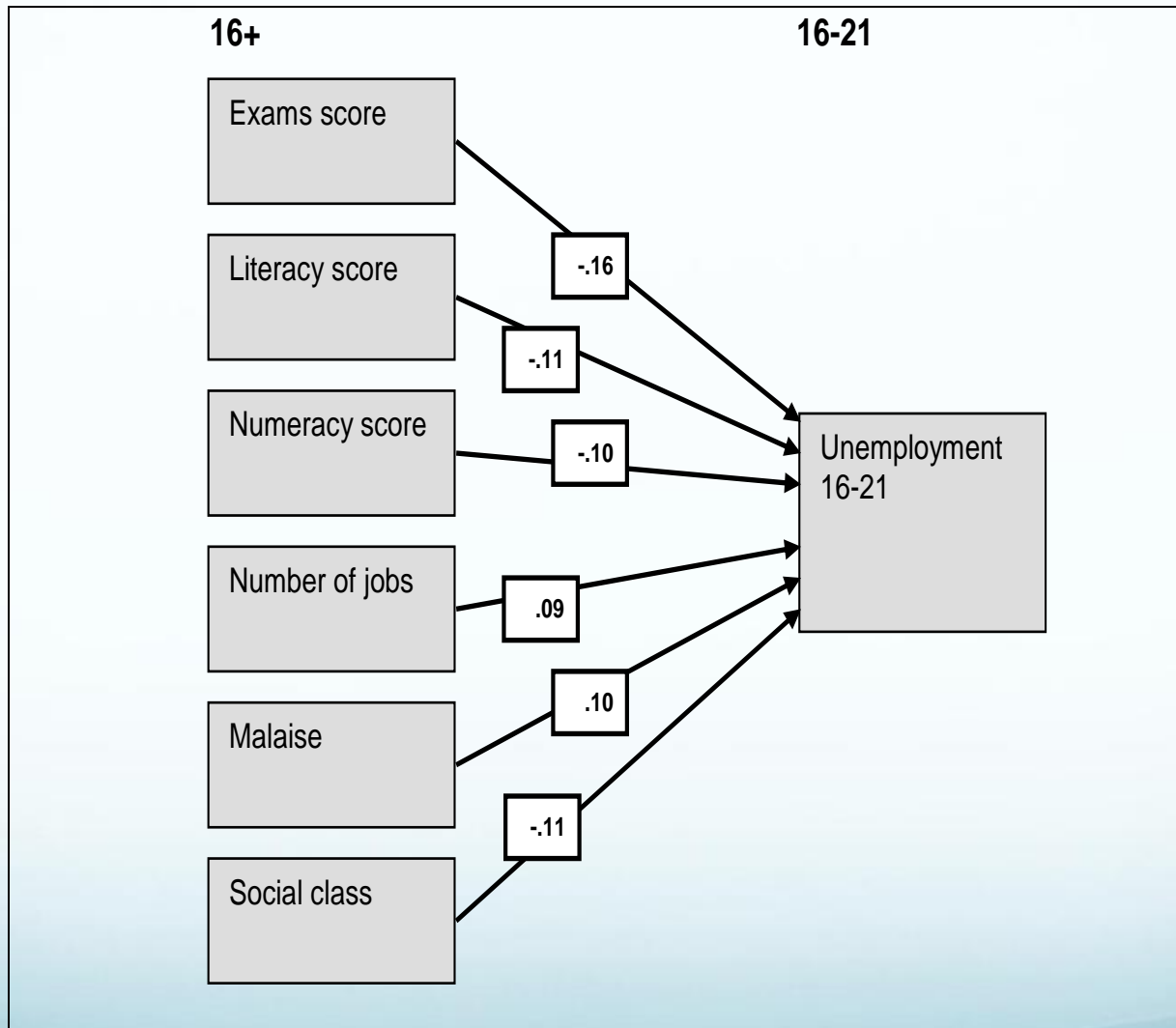
1970 cohort boys: influences on school leaving exam scores



1958 cohort boys: influences on unemployment



1970 cohort boys: influences on unemployment



Trajectory of disadvantage

Age	Disadvantage	Education outcome	Intervention
0-13	Unskilled family, Overcrowded, rented home Free school meals Workless family Lack of parental interest in child's education	Poor pre school cognitive skills Literacy and numeracy development slow Falling behind at school	Every Child Matters Sure Start
14-22	Casual unskilled work NEET	Poor literacy and numeracy No qualifications Leave school early	Educational maintenance allowances Connexions Extend education inside and outside institutions School age 18 graduation
25+	Out of labour market/ early parenthood (Women) Unemployment/ delayed partnership (Men)	No employer-based training Prospects poor	Skills for Life Provision matched to situation and needs Embedded curriculum,
0-13	Disadvantaged circumstances	Cycle repeated	Break the cycle Stage-based provision

Conclusions

1. Collection and use of longitudinal data in accordance with the life course perspective is increasingly recognized as a key tool for science and policy - hence the widening investment in longitudinal research resources across the world.
2. Such multi-disciplinary enquiry enables identification of the key features of changing social, economic, political and environmental contexts impacting on child development and to chart their long term effects.
3. GUI's potential value will be enhanced by the growing comparative opportunities for identifying the key formative influences on development to which policy can be directed across the life course in Ireland.