

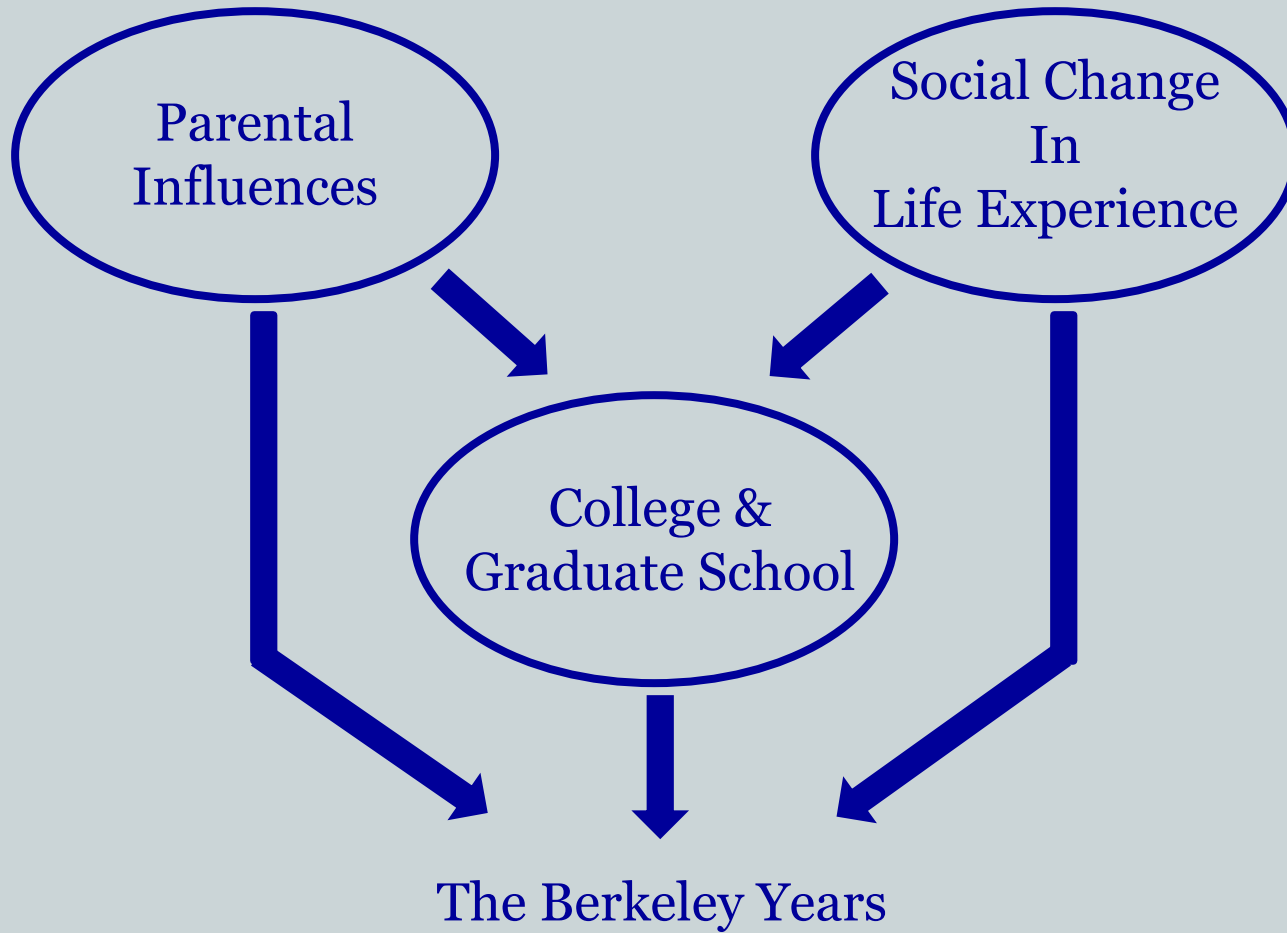
**STUDYING LIVES  
IN CHANGING TIMES:  
A LIFE-COURSE JOURNEY**

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# Formative Early Themes



# Mother's Life & Biographical Perspective

1905-1998 / Urban Child / Married in '32 / 2 sons

- Worklife – English literature teacher, H.S.; Girls' basketball coach
- Community – leadership in fine arts, church

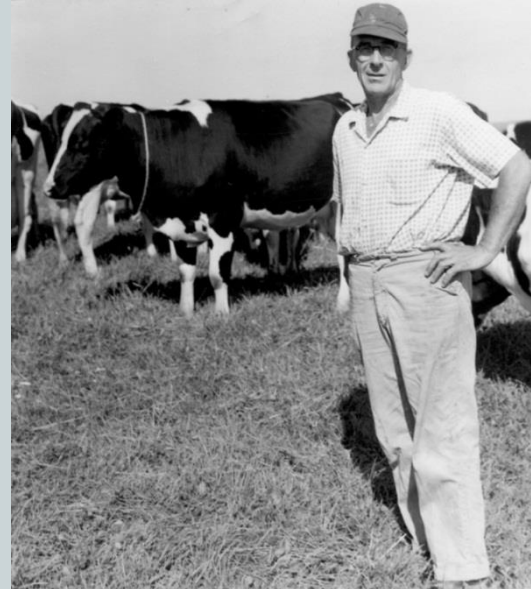


- Avid reader of historical biographies

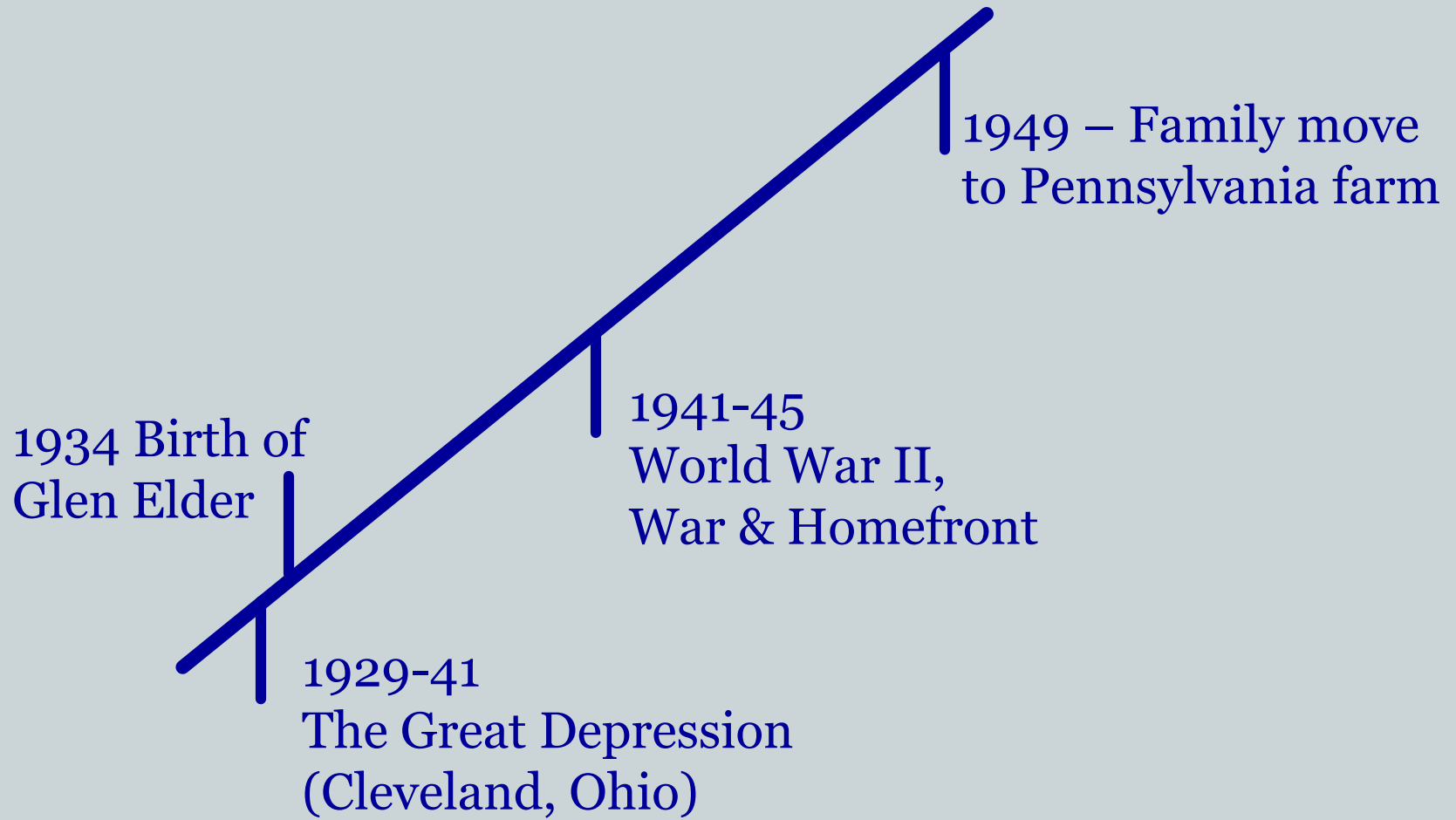
# Father's Influence: Doing Big Things

1901-63 / Farm Childhood / College graduate

- Career sequence:  
coach → medical career → farmer
- Thrived on doing  
“innovative things”
- Agentic role model



# Life-Shaping Changes



# Higher Education And Life Transitions

1. To Penn State – From Agriculture to Social Psychology (1952-57)
2. Dean of Men’s Staff, Kent State University (1957-58)
3. MA Thesis, Kent State – on “Transition to College.” Used “recalled events, influences.”



## **A Carolina Ph.D. and Serendipity**

- Thinking of “young lives” while using survey data.
- Exposure to developmental study monographs in UNC library.
- Meeting new Berkeley Institute Director John Clausen, who offered a job at Berkeley.

# Studying People Over Time – The Berkeley Experience

- Oakland Growth, Ss born 1920-21, N=185.  
Director, Harold Jones.
- Berkeley Study, Ss born 1928-29, N=212.
- Both studies were collecting data by 1930-31.



Main Gate – University of California-Berkeley



# Discovering the Oakland Archives

- Data collection – parent interviews, peer and staff observations, Ss reports.
- Serendipity again! Evidence of “ongoing family change” – from 1929 to 1933 income.
- Qualitative data materials. Enabled “recoding.” Can address new questions!

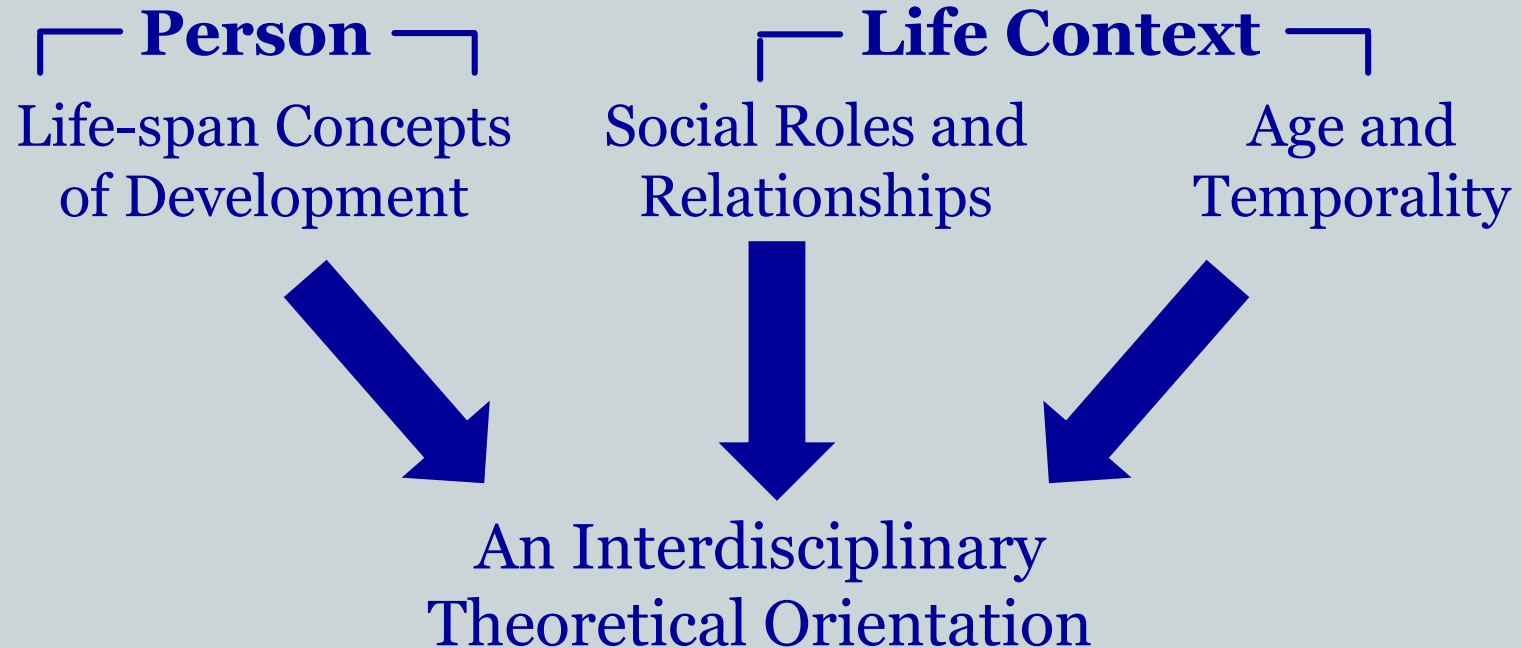


# Thinking About Lives

- Variation in timing and effect of life events and social roles – psychologist B. Neugarten, 1950s. Life cycle of generations and socialization.
- Birth cohorts as a population perspective on social change and life patterns – demographer Norm Ryder (1965).
- A survey codebook on pathways – through life, work, family, leisure. Saw how lives might be represented.

# What Perspective?

## The Life Course Framework: Its Research Traditions, 1960s



# Linking Career to Emerging Field – Life Course Studies –

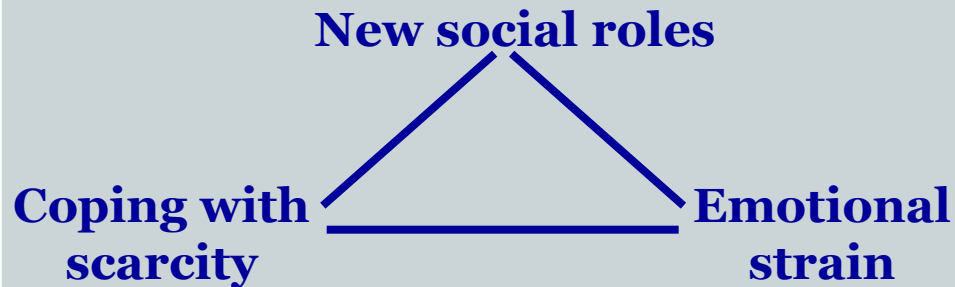
- Career – Studying Lives in Changing Times, 1962 - .
- 1<sup>st</sup> job at UC-Berkeley ('62) on studies of people over time.
- Emerging field of longitudinal and life course studies.

# Approach for Study – from *Children of the Great Depression*, 1974, 1999

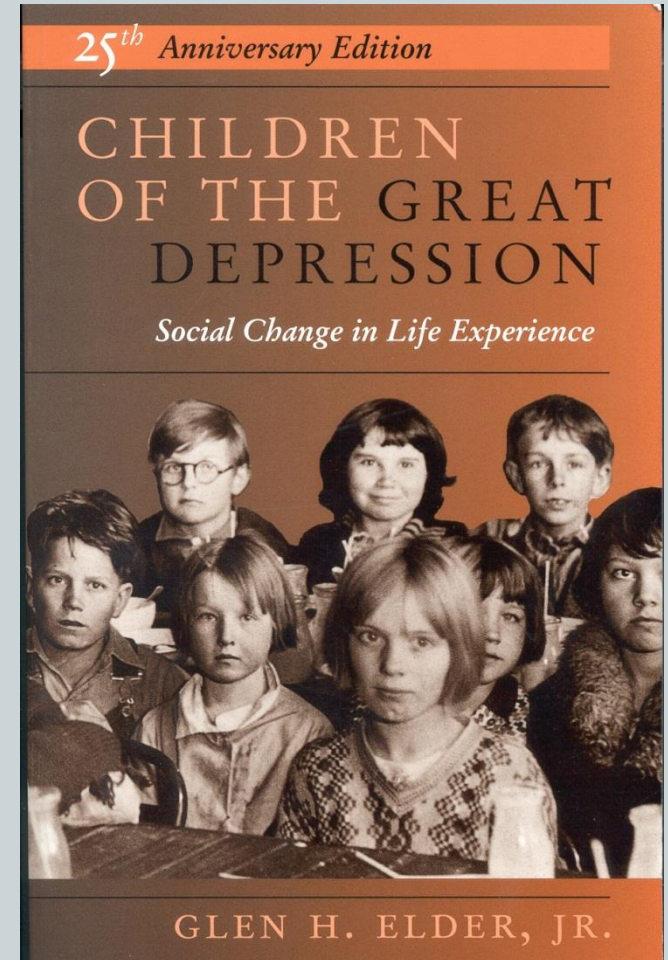
Economic collapse, followed by decline  
in MC and WC families, 1929-33



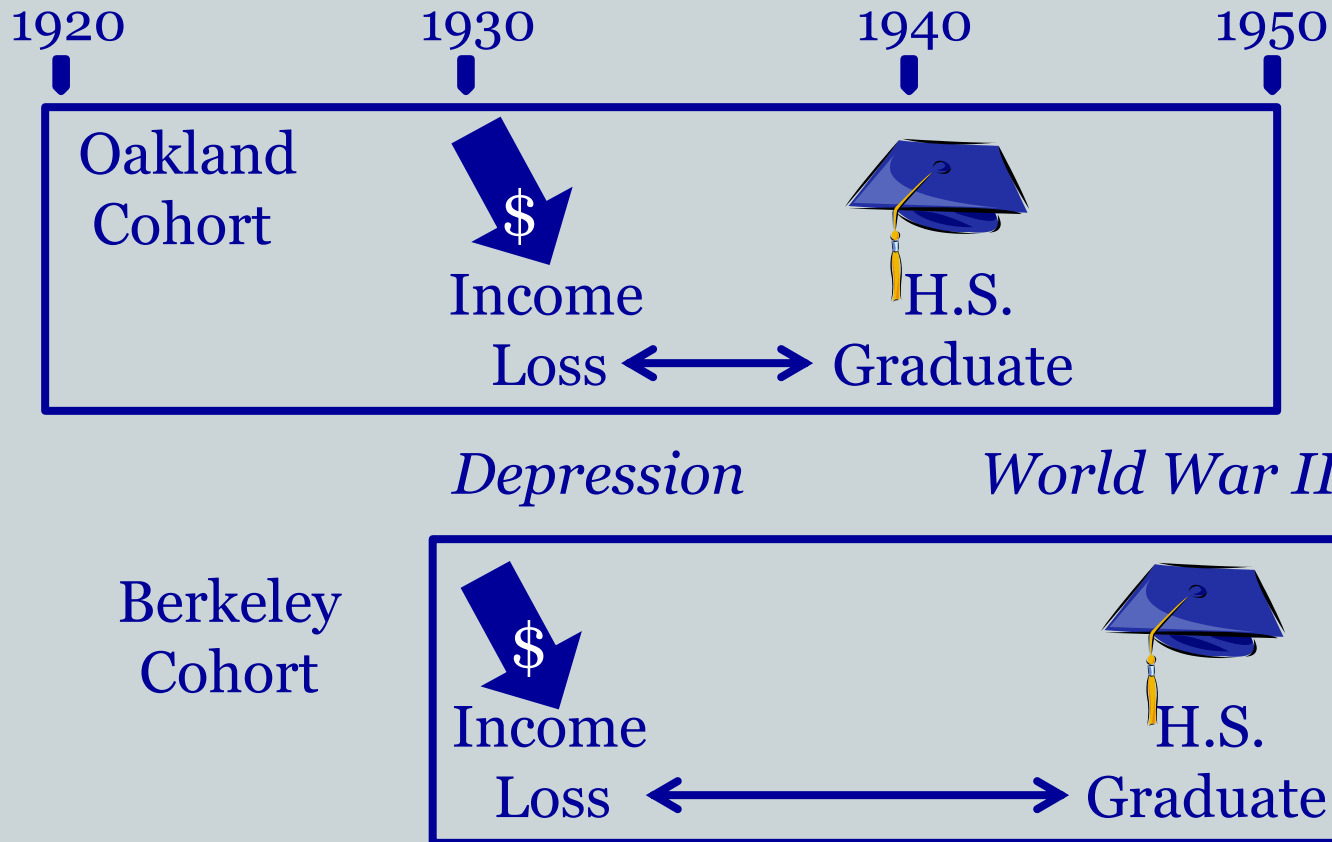
Family response to hardship



Influence on children and their adult lives



# Adding Another Cohort: Oakland & Berkeley



# **A Decade in the Making: “Children of the Great Depression”**

- 1964-65 Initial work – lengthy report to Institute Director
- 1966-67 First draft
- 1966-71 Research papers
- 1972 Used findings in draft 2
- 1972-73 1-yr. sabbatical at Institute to prepare data for cohort comparison
- 1974 Publication of book
- 1999 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary volume with cohort comparison

# What I Learned from “Children”

- A resilient generation – not a “lost generation.”

Explanations: Life stage and the “timely” Depression, military service, and postwar prosperity.

- Reinforced traditional gender roles.
- Values – importance of family, centrality of hard work, thrift.



# Discovering the Life Course, 1970s: Demography, History, and Life-span Psychology

- Historical demography – The Cambridge Group, *Households and Family in Past Time*, 1972.
- Social historians of the life course – Tamara K. Hareven, *Transitions*, 1978.
- SSRC Committee (USA) – Life course and human development, 1977-1986 – Paul Baltes, Max Planck Institute, et al.

# Conceptual Advances – 1980s: The Long and Short View of Lives

## The Long View:

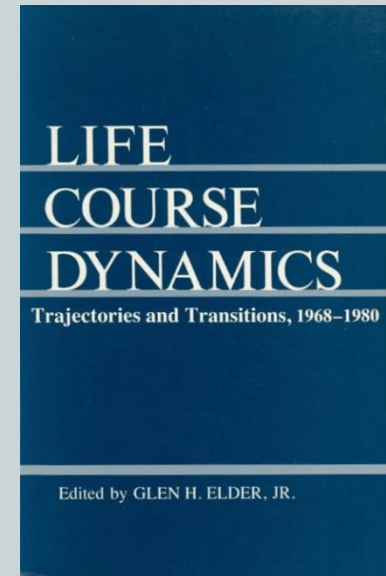
Social pathways

Trajectories, social and developmental

Turning point in a trajectory

## The Short View:

Social transitions and mechanisms – control cycles,  
situational imperatives, and accentuation dynamics

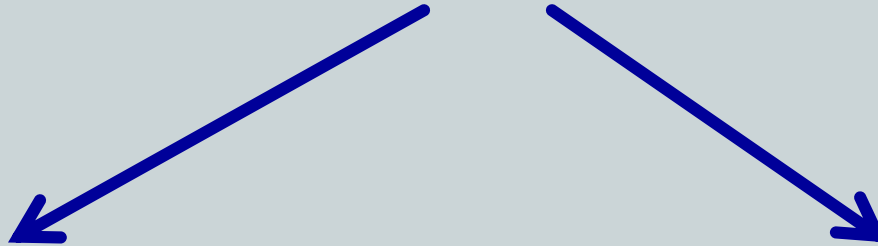


# The Perspective from: North America vs. Europe

- North America – focus on individual in context.
- Europe and an institutional perspective, welfare state.
  - Emerged later in the 1970s, 1980s.
- Converging perspectives – U.S. Manpower policy in WWII and its effects on men's lives.

# Studies of Changing Times in Lives: Research Continuities

Great Depression Project: Oakland-Berkeley Samples



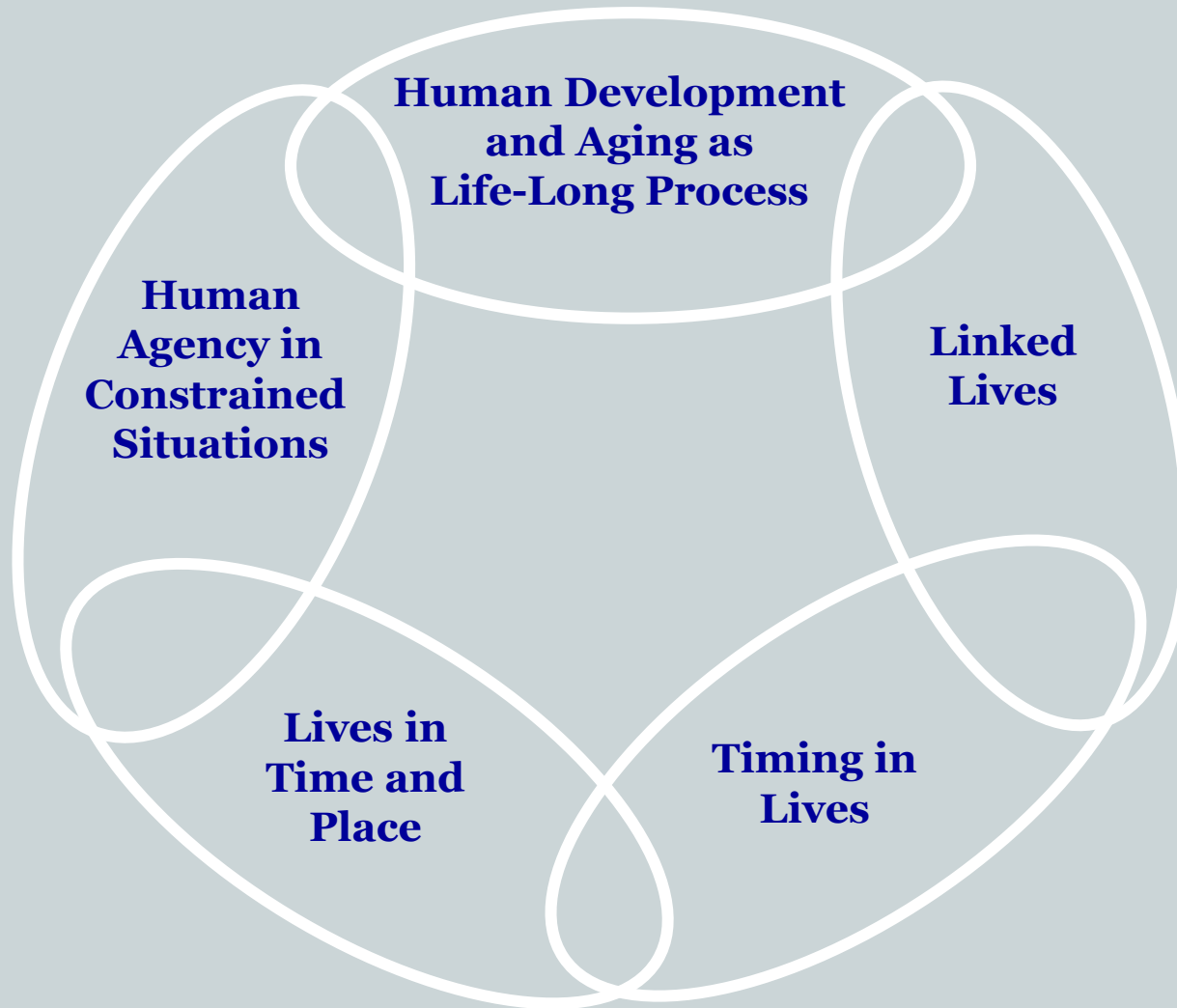
## Impact of WWII

- Stanford-Terman sample
- Oakland-Berkeley sample
- Harvard Graduate sample

## Impact of Rural-Urban Change

- Iowa Youth & Family Study
- Philadelphia Inner-City Study

# Mapping the Life Course: Paradigmatic Principles, 1993



# Life Course Paradigm from “Children”

- Age and time – historical, social, biological.
- Linkages – lives in context: crossing levels of analysis; families and relationships.
- “Recasting” longitudinal data to address new questions.

# **Ecological and Life Course Models**

- Bringing ecology to cohort analysis.
- Neighborhoods and their surround (Externality).
- The Life Course, role and residential sequences.

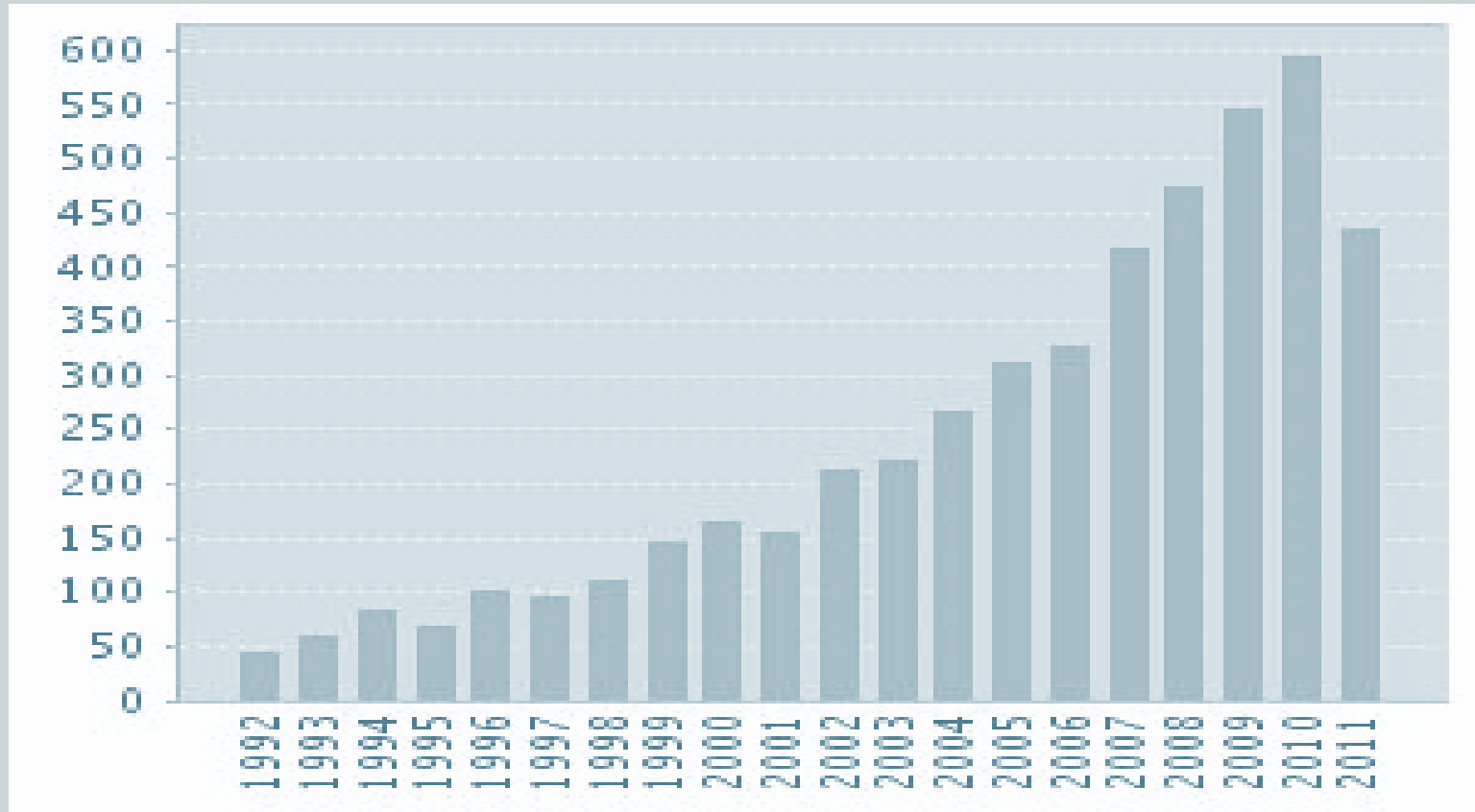
# Opportunities for the Future

- Taking advantage of comparable longitudinal data – Global options.
- Relating early experiences and late life.
- Investigating mechanisms.
- Integrating ecological and temporal perspectives.





# LIFE COURSE PUBLICATION TREND



Source: Web of Science Citation Report. September 19, 2011. N=5,023.

*Thank you*



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