

Young People's career expectations -



and their impact on the transition to adulthood

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Teenage Career Expectations

- **Adolescence critical phase** (Erikson, 1968; Stettersten et al., 2005)
- **Decisions about future** (Gottfredson, 1981; Eccles et al., 1993; Nurmi, 2004)
 - Life planning
 - Direction for future transitions
 - Investments
- **Long term consequences**
 - Influencing consequent behaviour

Aspirations and Expectations

- Aspirations
 - strong hope or wish for achievement or success
 - Expectations
 - realistic evaluation and predictions
- Expectations better predictors of future accomplishments
- (Hanson, 1994; Marini, 1978; Schoon, 2006)

Teenage Life Plans

- Develop and change over time
 - circumscription and compromise (Gottfredson, 1981, 2006;)
- Are influenced by personal interests, values, self concepts, capabilities
- Are shaped by significant others (parents, peers, teachers, socio-cultural context)
- Depend on available opportunities

Theoretical Framework

- Developmental-contextual model of career planning (Gottfredson, 1981, 2005; Eccles et al., 1983; Elder, 1998; Vondrack, Lerner & Schulenberg, 1986; Schoon, 2007, 2012)
 - Multiple interacting influences
 - Importance of formative years
 - Plasticity of development
 - Human agency
 - Co-regulation
 - The relevance of a changing context

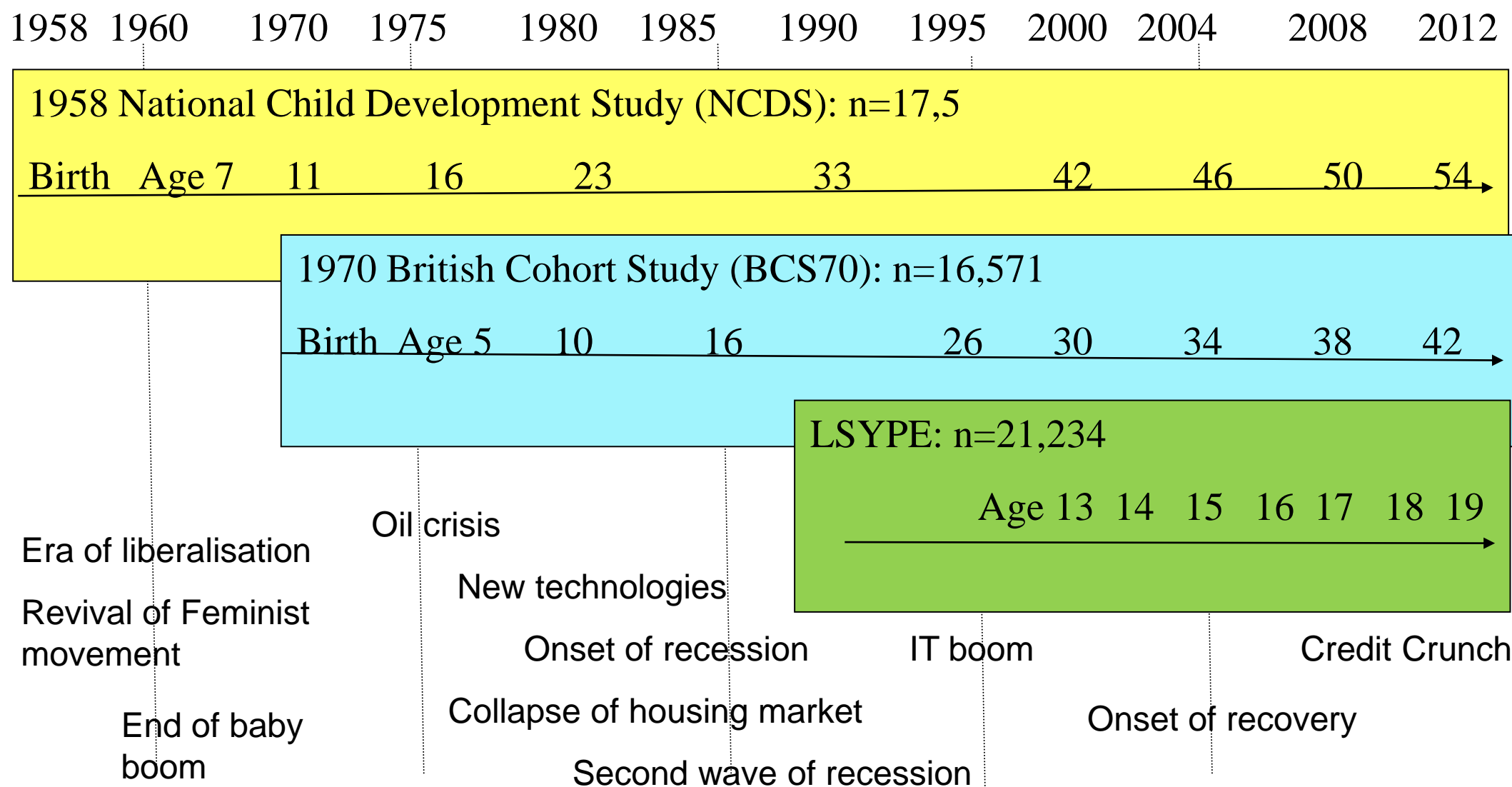
Aims of the Presentation

- What are the expectations young people have regarding their educational and occupational pathways?
- Have these aspirations changed over time?
- What are the predictors of teenage expectations
- What are the associated outcomes?

DATA

- 3 British Age Cohorts
 - 1958 National Child Development Study
 - 1970 Birth Cohort Study
 - 1989/90 Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE)

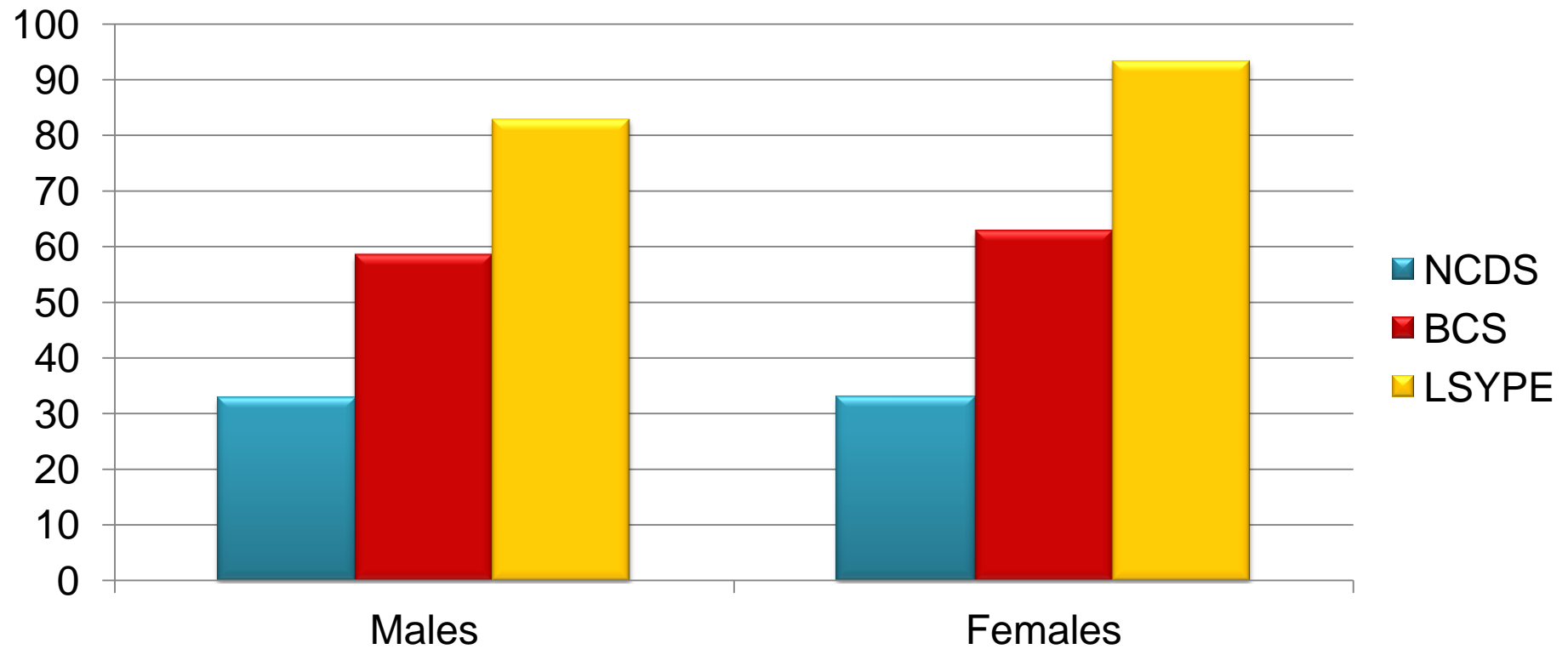
Three National Age Cohorts: Historical events



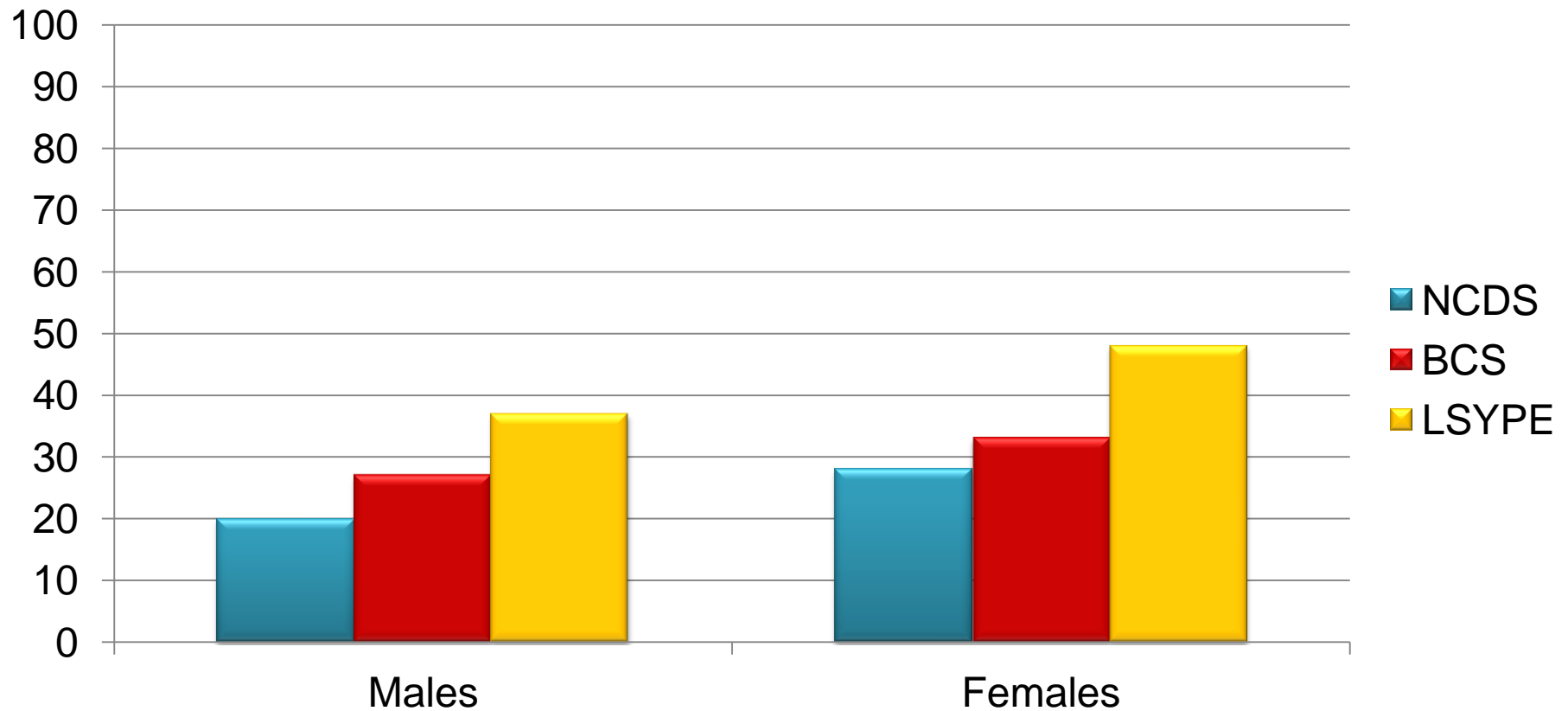
Changing Global Context

- Increasing education participation
 - Aspirations for college became increasingly the norm (Rosenbaum, 2001; Reynolds & Pemberton, 2001; Schneider & Stevenson, 1999; Schoon, 2010)
- Changing labour market:
 - Changing occupational opportunities
 - More complex and protracted career routes
- Changing economic climate

Educational expectations of young people: % expect further education



Occupational expectations of young people: % expect to enter a professional job



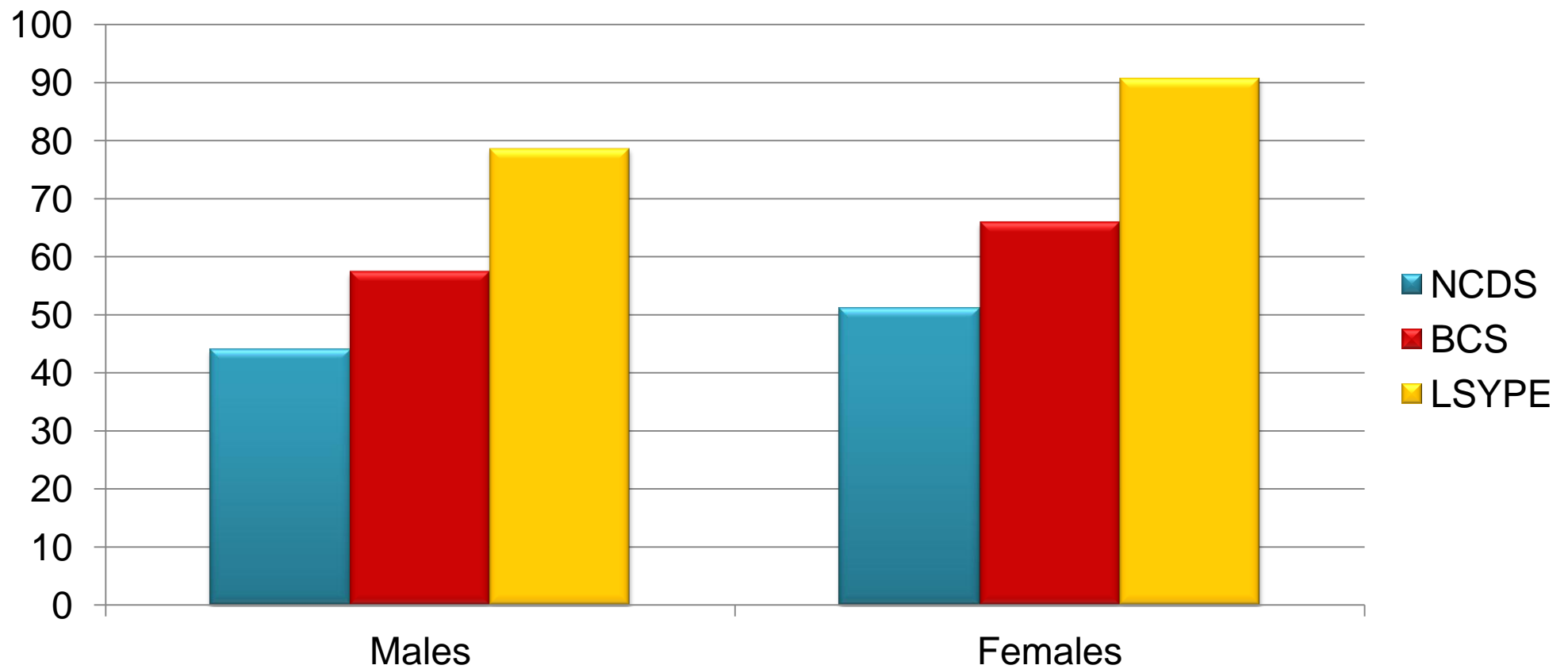
Aiming High: Why have expectations increased?

The ambitious generation (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999; Reynolds & Pemberton, 2001; Rosenbaum, 2001; Goyette, 2008):

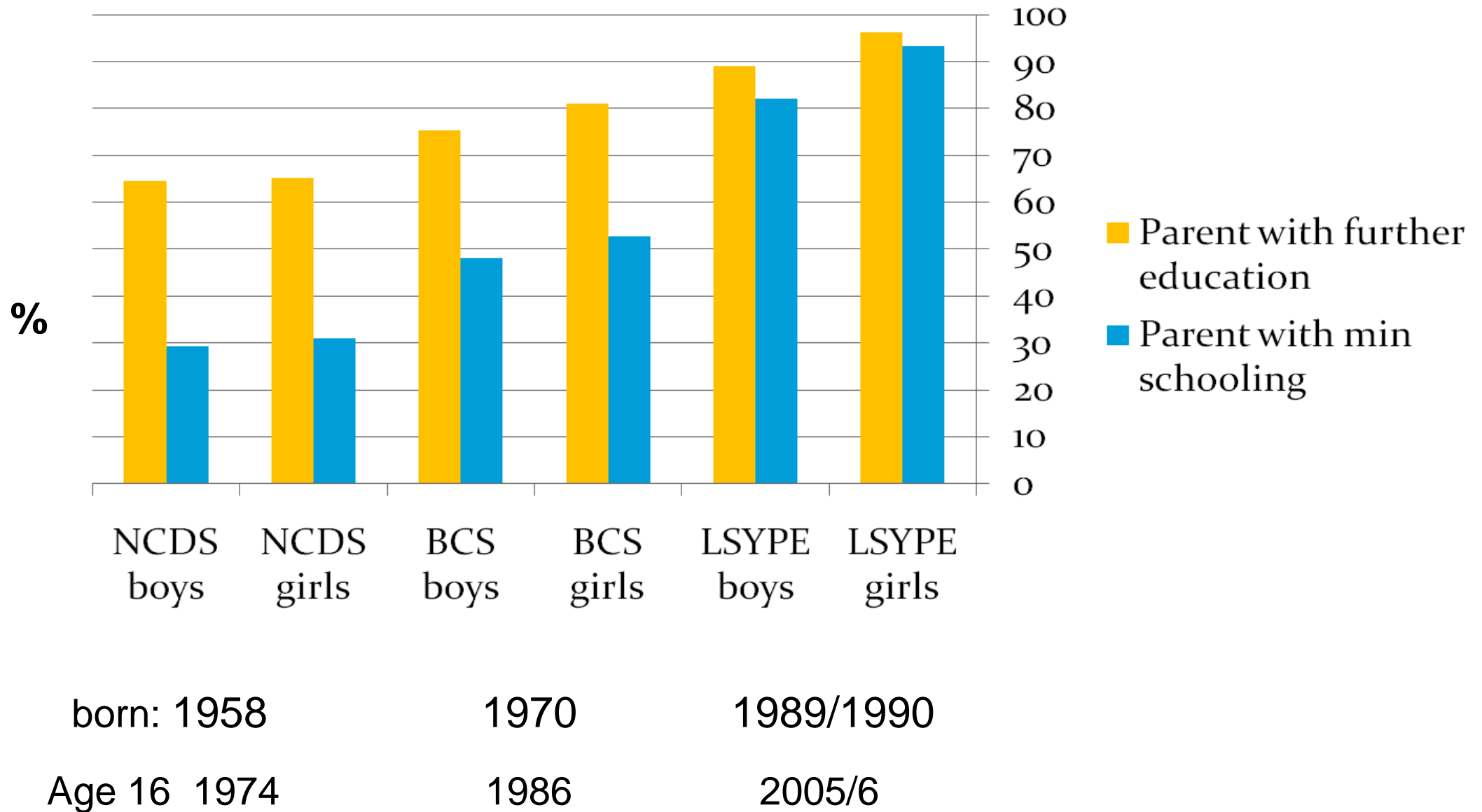
- A new norm: Further education for all?
- Changing social backgrounds
- Changing parental expectations for their children
- Increased gender equality
- Increasing investment in education (school engagement)
- Changing occupational structures

Parental educational expectations for their child

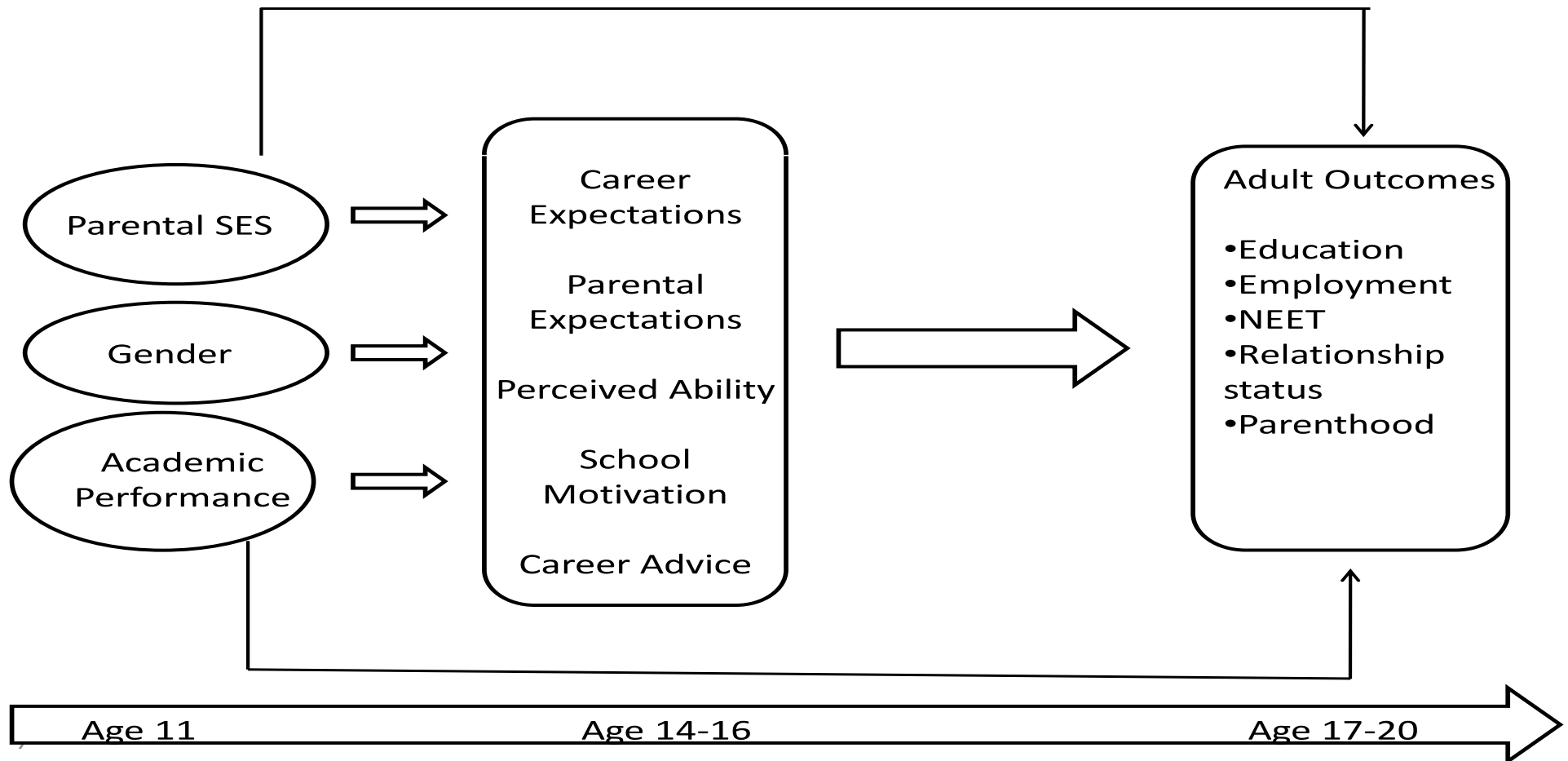
% expect further education



Teenage expectations for further education by gender and parental education.



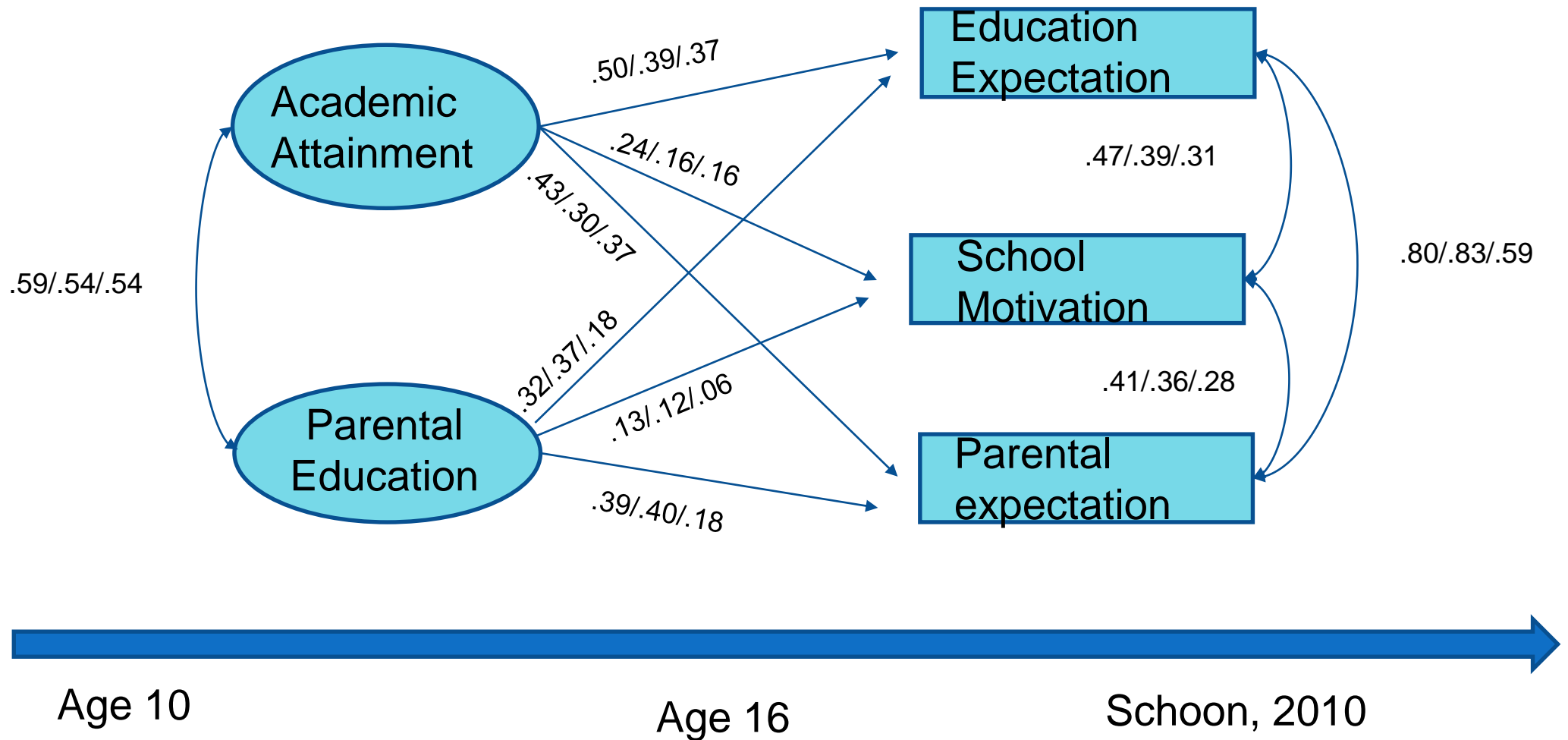
Developmental-contextual model of career development



(Schoon, 2013)

Pathway model predicting education expectations

Path coefficients for NCDS/BCS/LSYPE



Why have expectations increased?

- Reduced association with parental social status
- Association between academic attainment and education aspirations has also reduced
 - ➔ Findings suggest new norm for higher education, independent of social background and ability
- Association between school motivation, parental expectations and education expectations of young person has also reduced
 - ➔ Finding suggest that parent-child interactions are important, yet less so in later born cohort, and that young people expect to continue in school, even if they do not like school

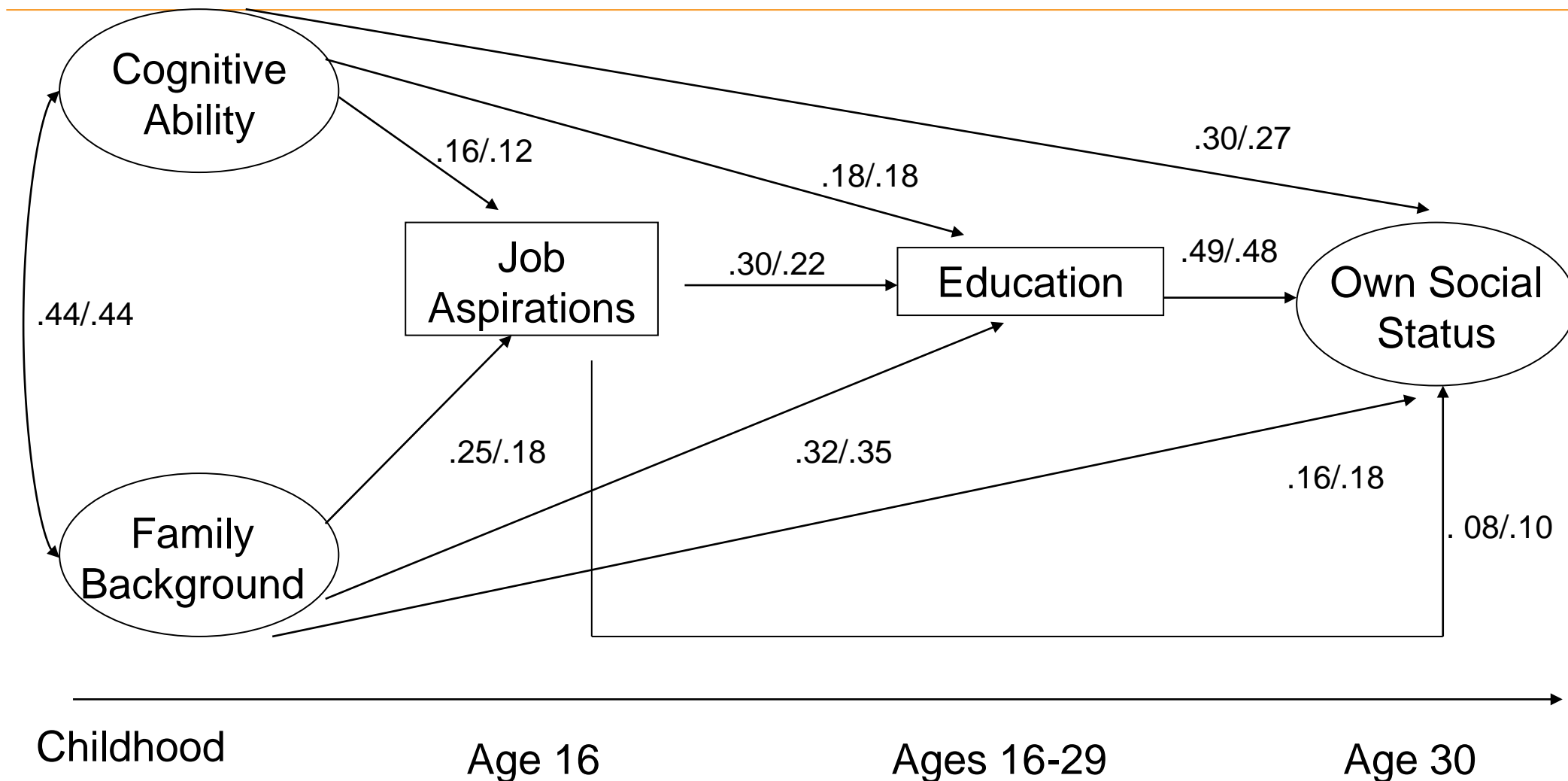
Predictors and correlates of career expectations

- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Parental social status
- Previous academic attainment
- Self concepts and values
- Significant others (parents, teachers, peers, mentors, role models, ...)
- Socio-cultural context
- Education and employment opportunities

Linking career expectations to adult outcomes

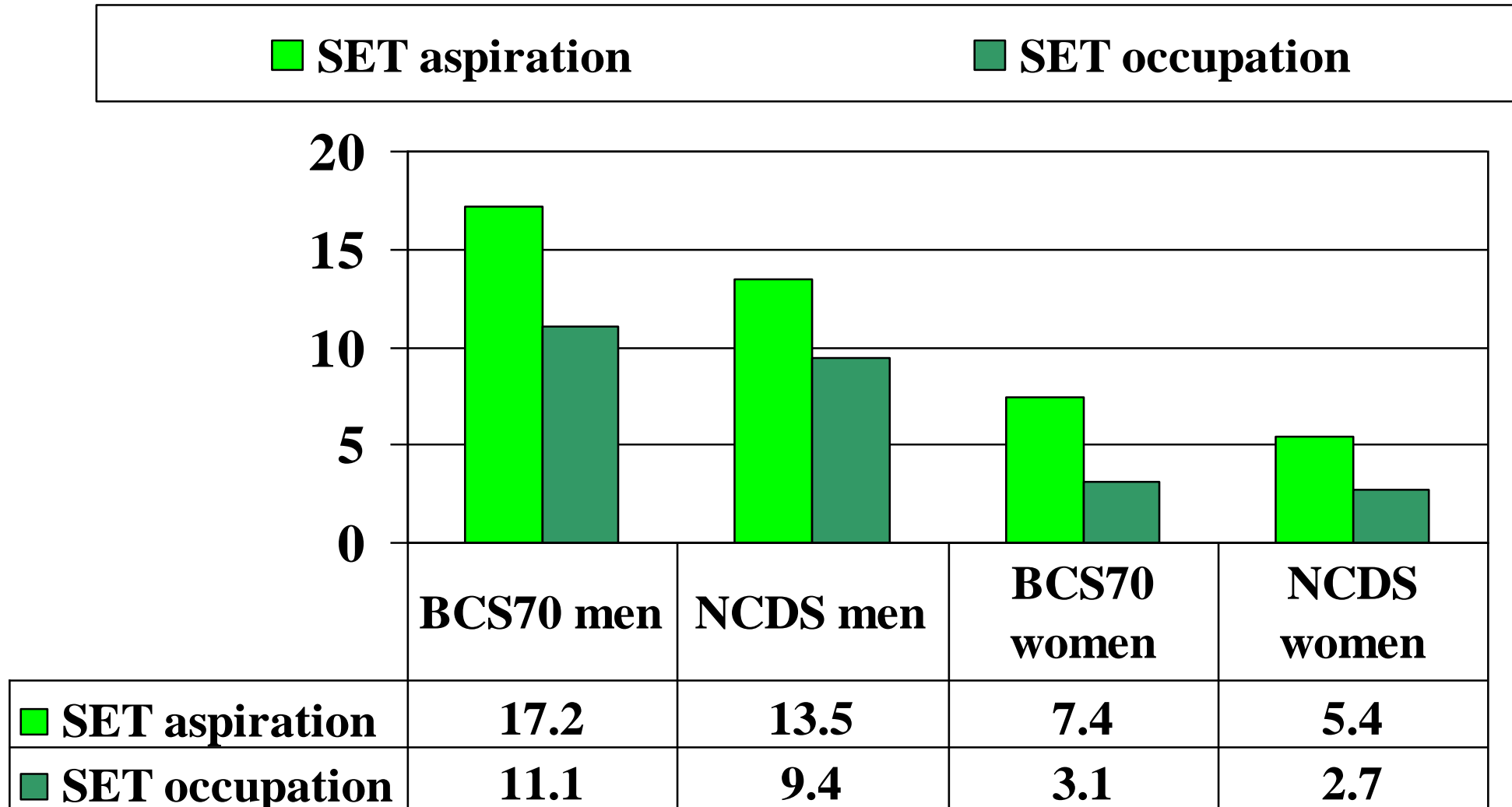
- High career expectations are associated with educational achievement, occupational prestige and wage attainments in adulthood (Clausen, 1993; Sewell & Hauser, 1975; Schoon & Parsons, 2002; Melo, 2008)
- Applies for both men and women, and after controlling for academic ability and family background
- Domain specific prediction: e.g. Pathways into science occupations; entrepreneurship

Pathway Model predicting occupational transitions (BCS70: Men/Women)



Model Fit: Men: CFI=0.984; rmsea=0.032 / Women: CFI=0.989; rmsea=0.024

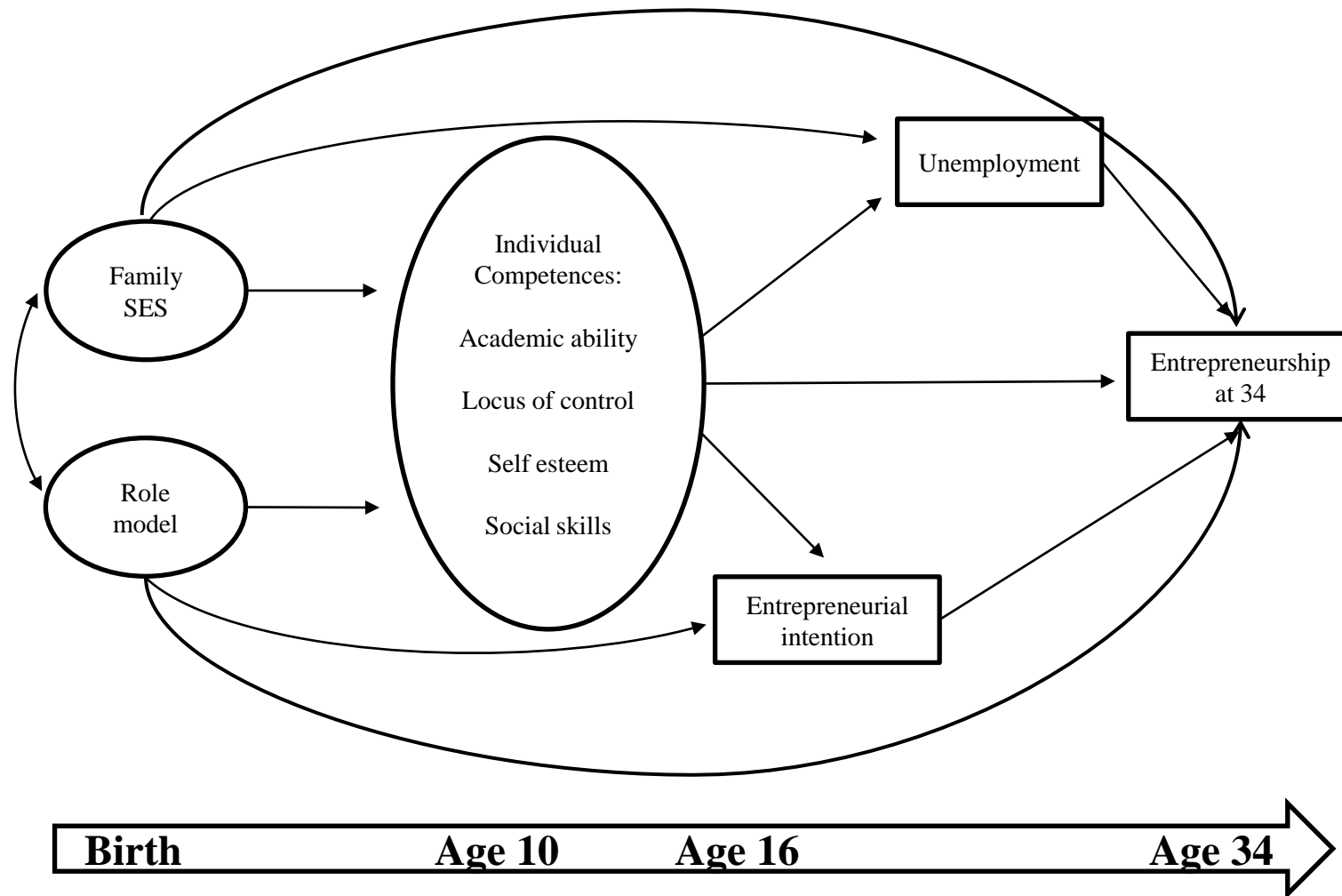
SET aspirations at age 16 and SET occupations in early 30's



Predicting SET careers by SET aspirations

- Odds Ratios:
 - NCDS men: 5.17
 - BCS70 men: 6.36
 - NCDS women: 17.59
 - BCS70 women: 19.70

Developmental-Contextual Model of Entrepreneurship:



Changing Global Context

- Changing labour market:
 - Increasing demand for highly skilled labour force
 - More complex and protracted career routes
 - Likely to generate uncertainties (Kalleberg et al., 2000; Blossfeld et al., 2005)
 - Unaligned ambitions (Schneider & Stevenson, 1999;)
- In liberal market economies (US, UK): absence of institutionalised connections between school and work

Uncertainty in career expectations

- Role of high aspirations as predictors of adult outcomes well documented
- Yet: relatively little knowledge about consequences of uncertainty in aspirations and expectations
- Uncertain aspirations: young people who do not know what they would like to do in the future regarding their education or career

Uncertainty in Aspirations at age 13/14 (in %)

	BCS70		LSYPE	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Uncertainty in Education Aspirations	23.1	20.0	6.4	4.7
Uncertainty in Career Aspirations	8.3	7.3	22.4	18.6

Predicting uncertainty in aspirations

Higher levels of uncertainty associated with:

Education aspirations

- gender (male)
- low social family status
- ethnicity (white)
- low academic attainment (reading [esp. for males])
- low academic self concept (math)
- low school motivation (esp. for males)
- low parental aspirations

Job aspirations

- gender (male)
- ethnicity (non-white)
- academic attainment (high math and low reading for females)
- low academic self concept (math and English)
- low school motivation
- high parental aspirations (esp. for males)
- not using career advise

Outcomes of uncertainty in aspirations

- Risk of floundering (Kerckhoff, 2004; Schneider & Stevenson, 1999; Yates et al., 2011; Staff et al., 2011; Sabates, 2012)
- Identity exploration a formative period for adolescence and young adults (Arnett, 2004)

Transitions by age 19/20

	Male	Female
Studying at University	40.7	46.8
In paid employment	34.5	34.4
NEET between 16-19	17.2	15.7
In a relationship	41.1	55.1
Has own child	3.3	5.9
N	4321	4361

Predicting Education/Employment Transitions

LSYPE (with controls)

Aspirations regarding	Studying at 20		Employed by 20		NEET (16-20)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Education (ref: stay on)						
Uncertain	.69	.75	1.24	1.42	1.84*	1.37
Leave	.50*	.40*	1.17	1.03	1.59*	1.44#
Career (ref: certain)						
Uncertain	1.59*	1.35#	.82	.71#	1.01	.92

Predicting Family Transitions by age 20 (with controls)

Aspiration regarding	In a relationship		Has a child by 20	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Education (ref: stay on)				
Uncertain	1.24	.80	.45	.86
Leave	.92	.67#	1.30	1.11
Career (ref: certain/high)				
Uncertain	1.20\$	1.40*	.60	.82

Summary

- Young people have become more ambitious in their career expectations
- Career expectations are shaped by multiple influences from the wider socio-cultural context
- Females generally more ambitious than males
- Teenage career expectations are linked to adult outcomes
- Current cohorts encounter a prolonged period of career exploration and increasing uncertainty
- Uncertainty not necessarily a bad thing

Conclusion

- Domain specific processes
 - Career routes – career choice takes place at later age and has potentially become more complex
 - Education participation and engagement during early adolescence vital for later attainment
 - Uncertain job aspirations can bring educational benefit, prevent foreclosure
- Important role for parents and educators to give advise, guidance, support
- Attention to cultural stereotypes: gender roles, ethnic identity, activity stereotypes

Thank you



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