

The Challenge of Life Course Studies: Bringing Context to Human Development

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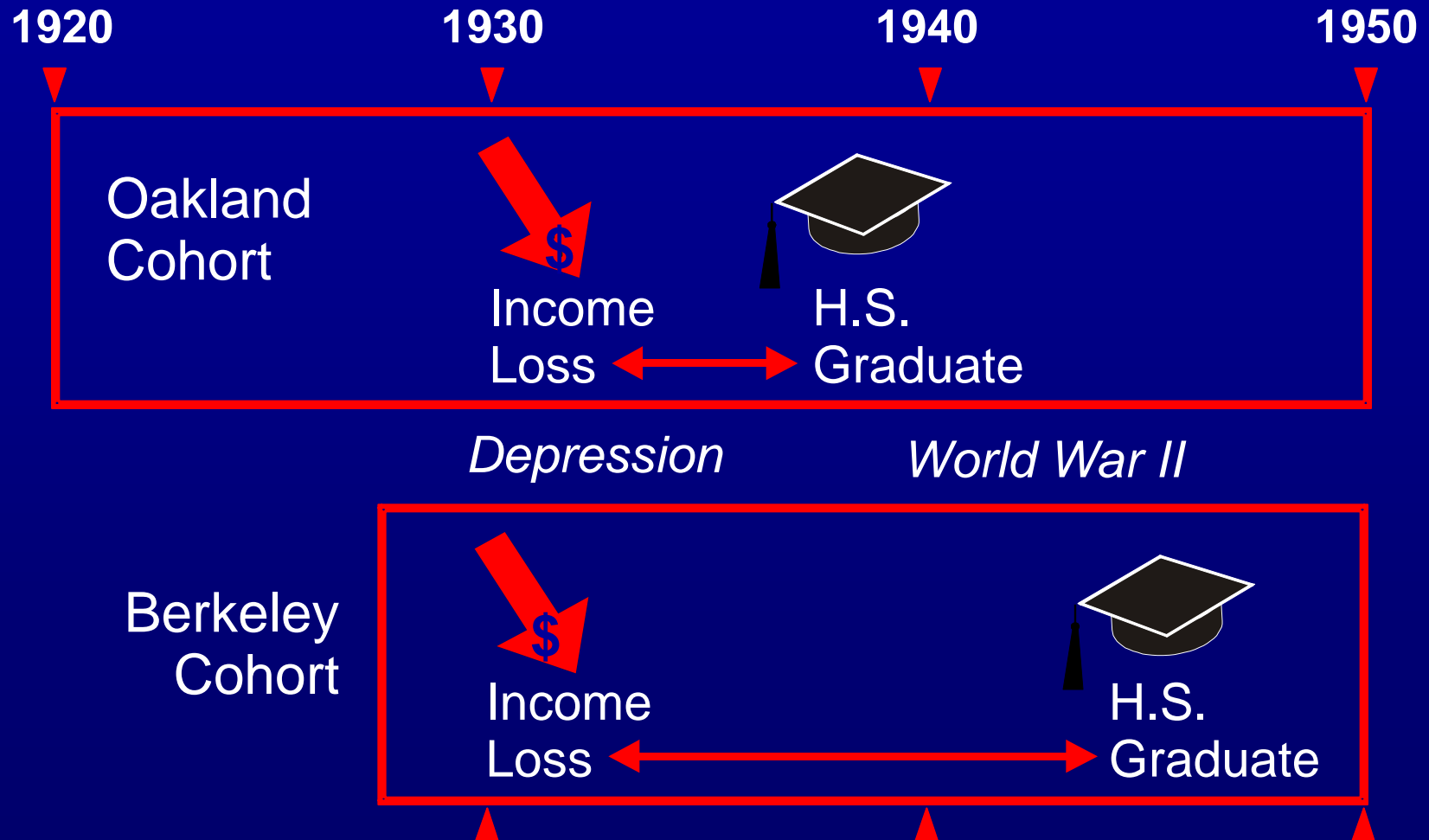
*Cornell University
Ithaca, New York*

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The Different Historical Times of the Oakland and Berkeley Cohorts



The Emergence of Life Course Theory: Research Traditions and Their Concepts

Life-span Concepts of Development

Psychosocial stage,
adult stages of development

Cumulative advantage,
disadvantage

Life review

Life Cycle and the Generations

Life cycle of social roles

Generational succession

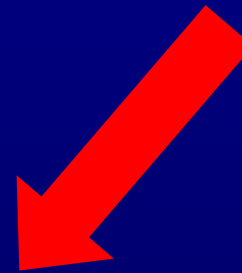
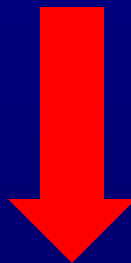
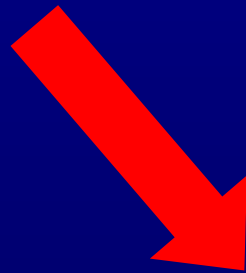
Role transitions and
sequences

Age and Temporality

Age grades and expectations

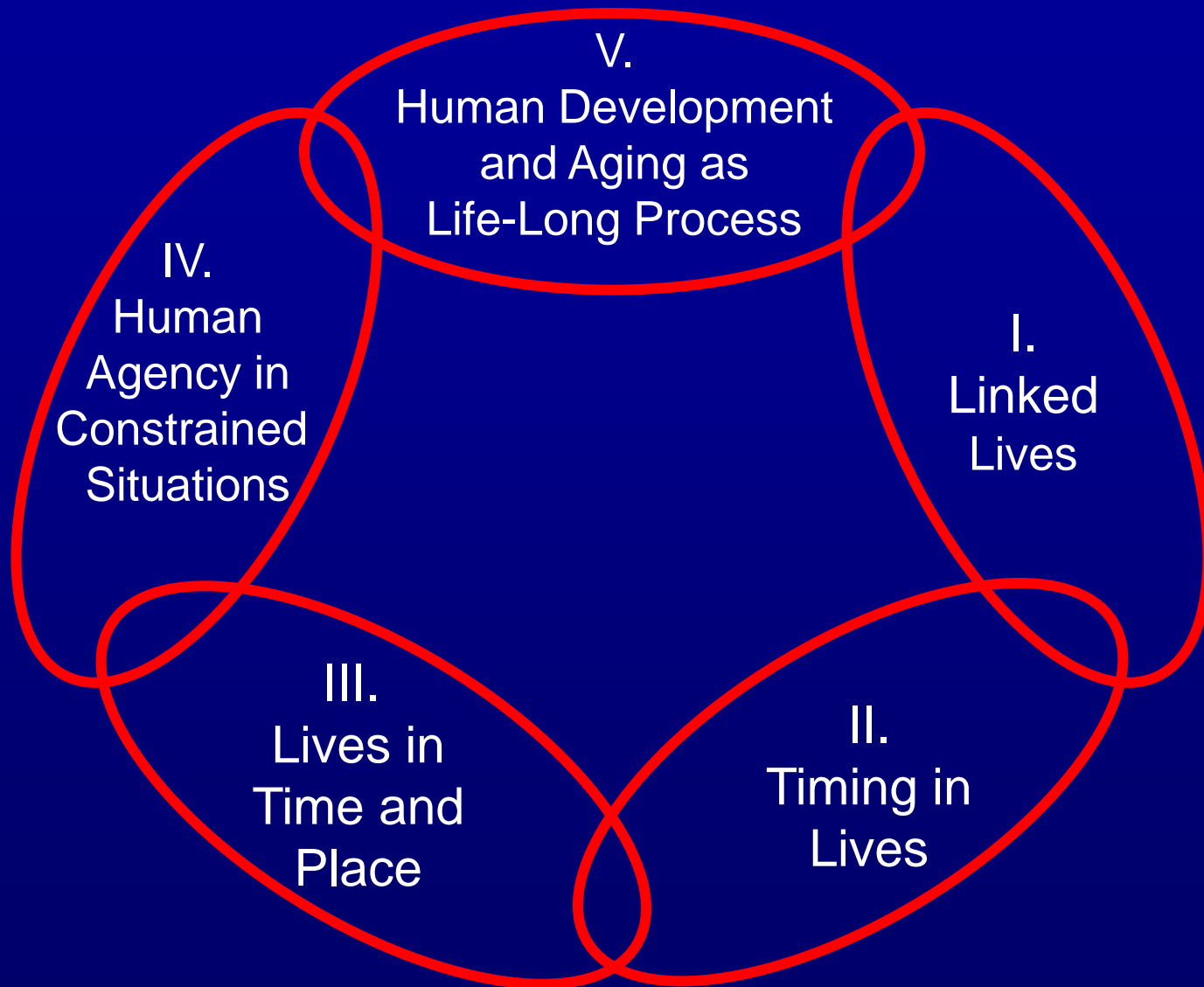
Cohorts - Birth cohorts
and social change

Transitions and trajectories



**Life Course Theory
1960s to present**

Principles of Life Course Theory



The Multi-Level Contexts of Human Development



- The daily routine of activities.
- Life course – the individual's life.
- Ecologies – schools, neighborhoods, workplaces, public places.
- Historical context – birth year defines cohort membership, influence on life chances.

The Social Embeddedness Of Lives



- Social ties to others – conveys impact of events
- Convoy of significant others – workers, friends, family
- Developmental dynamic of relationships

The Timing of Lives, Development



- Early, on-time and late events – at point across one's life course
- Synchrony and asynchrony of life courses – among family members, friends
- Life stage variations in social experience

The “Long” View of Individual Lives, Development, and Aging



- The “whole” life course perspective
– need for life-long studies
- Linking the early and the later years
- The cumulation of life events, stressful experiences

Some Unfinished Research



- Studying lives and development in a changing world
- The life course as a constituent of development
- Non-family mentors in lives









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