

# Encore Adulthood: Changing Life Courses in Tumultuous Times

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



# Overview

- Transformative, Tumultuous Times



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- Changing Life Courses



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- Ecology of “Fit:” Cycles of Control and Health



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- Living with – and Making -- Change



# Transformative, Tumultuous Times

- Intensifying Digitalization
  - Global Risk Economy
  - Climate Change
  - Intensifying Uncertainty
  - Unprecedented Population Aging
  - Ratcheting Inequality
- 
- Overlaid by Historic Public Health Crisis: COVID 19



# Multilayered Forces Increasing Risk, Uncertainty, but also Possibility

- **Digitalization**: A Second Machine Age of Globalization, Technological Advances
- **Increased Sense of Precarity**: The Demise of the Standard Employment Contract combined with a Shrinking Safety-Net, Climate Change
- **An Aging Population**: Longevity, Medical Advances, Lengthening Lives **and** Time Horizons
- **Increased Heterogeneity**: Within as well as across Social Categories, Increasing Recognition of Intersectional Identities
- COVID-19



# The Intersection of History and Biography

Timing: **WHEN** changes occur in  
people's lives





# **KEY: TIMES OF RAPID TRANSFORMATION ARE UNSETTLING, BUT OPEN UP**

- **New State and Corporate Arrangements, Norms, Policies, and Practices**
- **New Ways of Thinking**
- **New Adaptive Strategies**



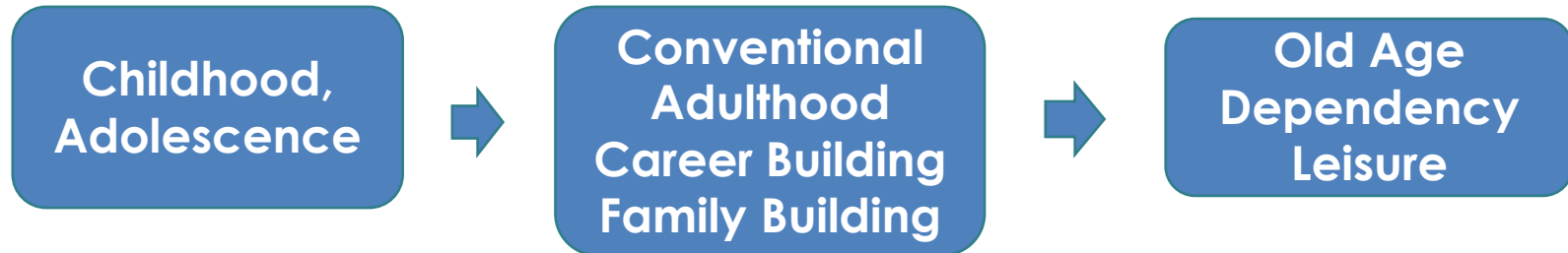
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# 20<sup>th</sup> Century Life Course Objective, Subjective, Symbolic, Legal

Shaped by Market Forces and Institutions: Education Policies, Welfare Policies, Employment/Retirement Policies, Regulations, Court Rulings



Subjectively Defined – on/off time, stressful/not  
voluntary/involuntary, valued/endured

# Women's Movement: Replaced Feminine Mystique Mindset with Career Mystique Mindset



Education  
(Preparation)

Continuous Paid Work,  
Seniority/Status Attainment

Retire or Die



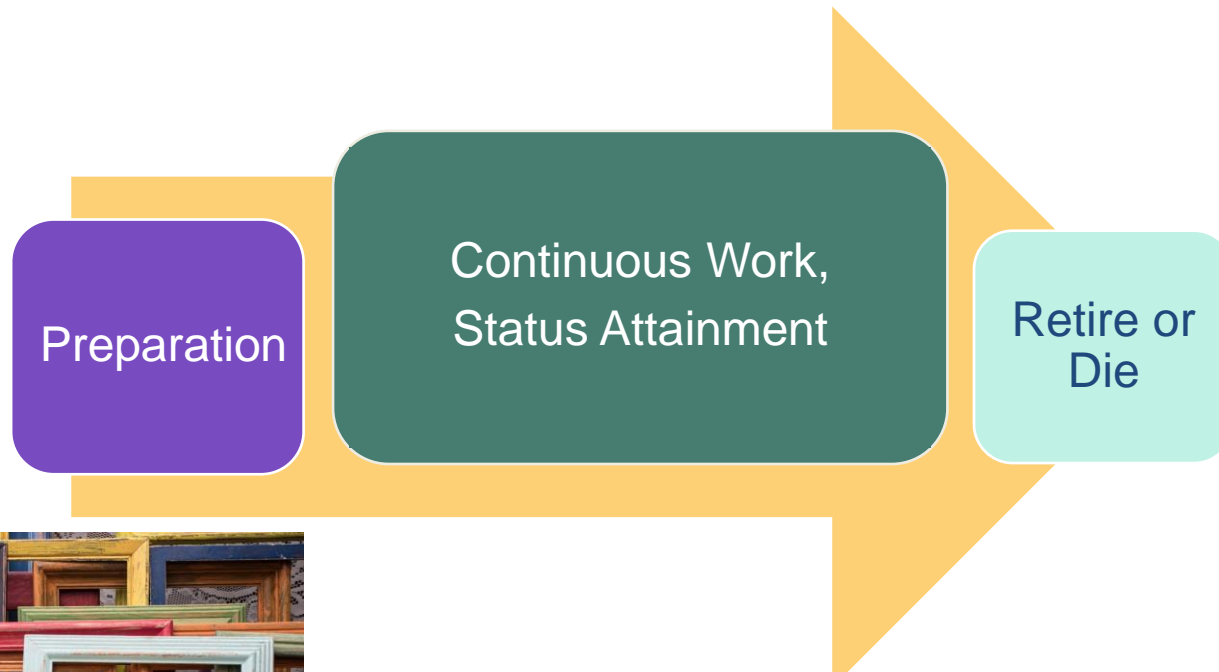
# With Women's Movement, Women Embraced the Career Mystique...

## Plus... Family Care



- Or else scaled back ....
- at Work
  - Part time
  - Part year
  - Less career focus
- at Home
  - Delay Marriage
  - Delay Motherhood
  - Divorce

# Lock-Step Life Course based on Standardized Employment Contract -- Perpetuates Disparities, but also Obsolete



Framed by middle-class & unionized  
blue-collar male models

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life Courses are More Ambiguous, Heterogeneous, and Disparate – With Lengthening Status Passages

Childhood  
Adolescence

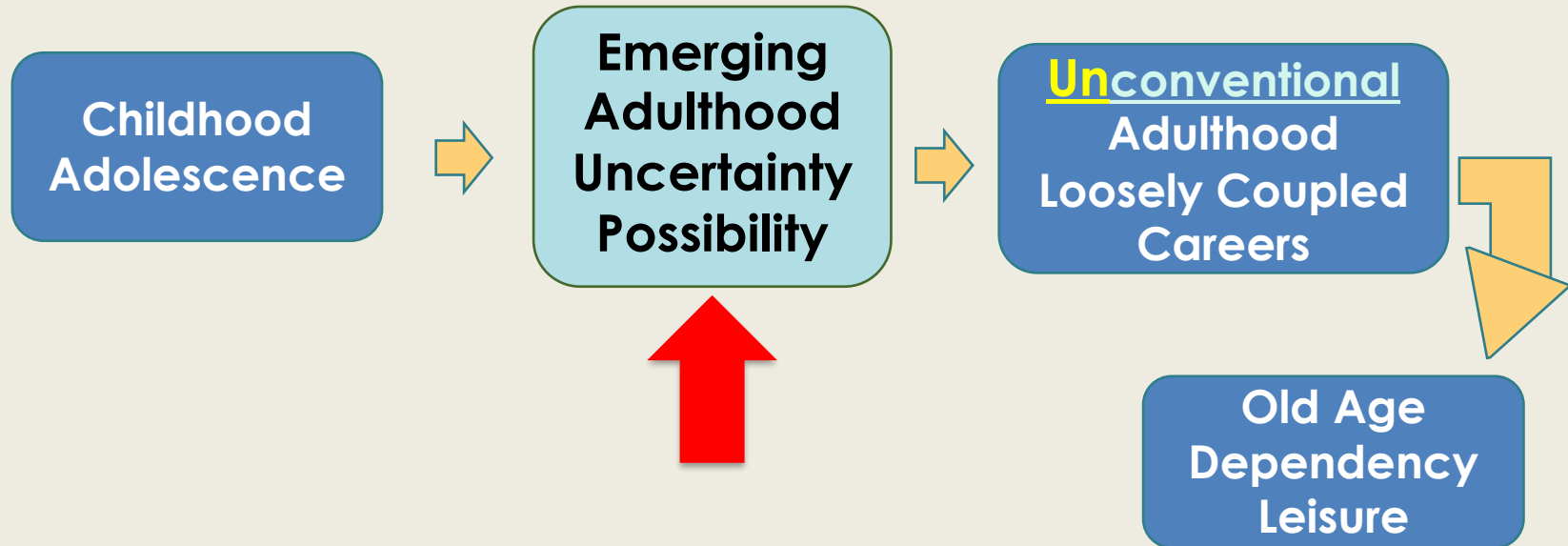


Unconventional  
Adulthood  
Loosely Coupled  
Careers



Old Age  
Dependency  
Leisure

# Ambiguous, Unequal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Earlier Life Courses Last Longer



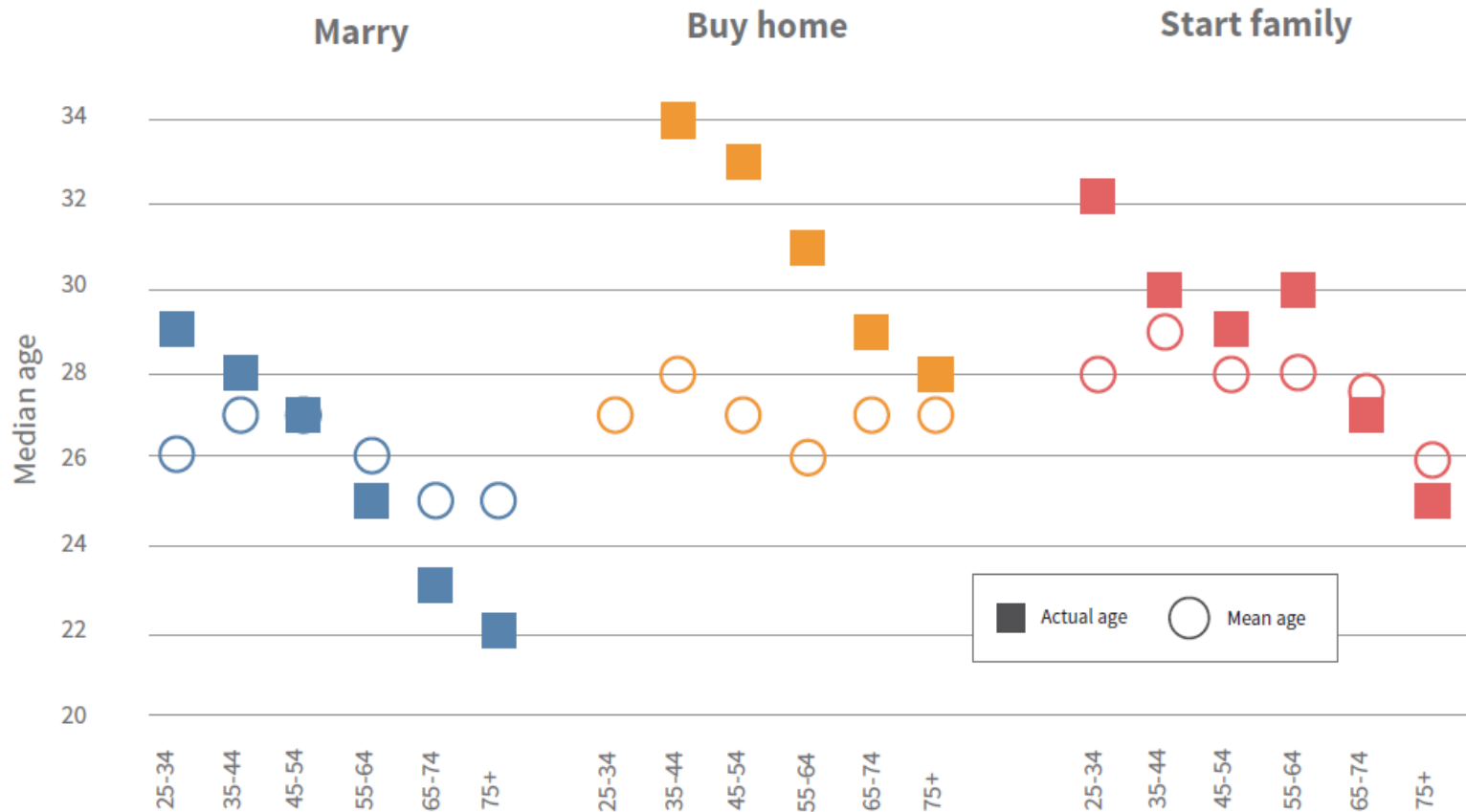


# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life Courses are More Ambiguous, Heterogeneous, and Disparate – With Lengthening Status Passages



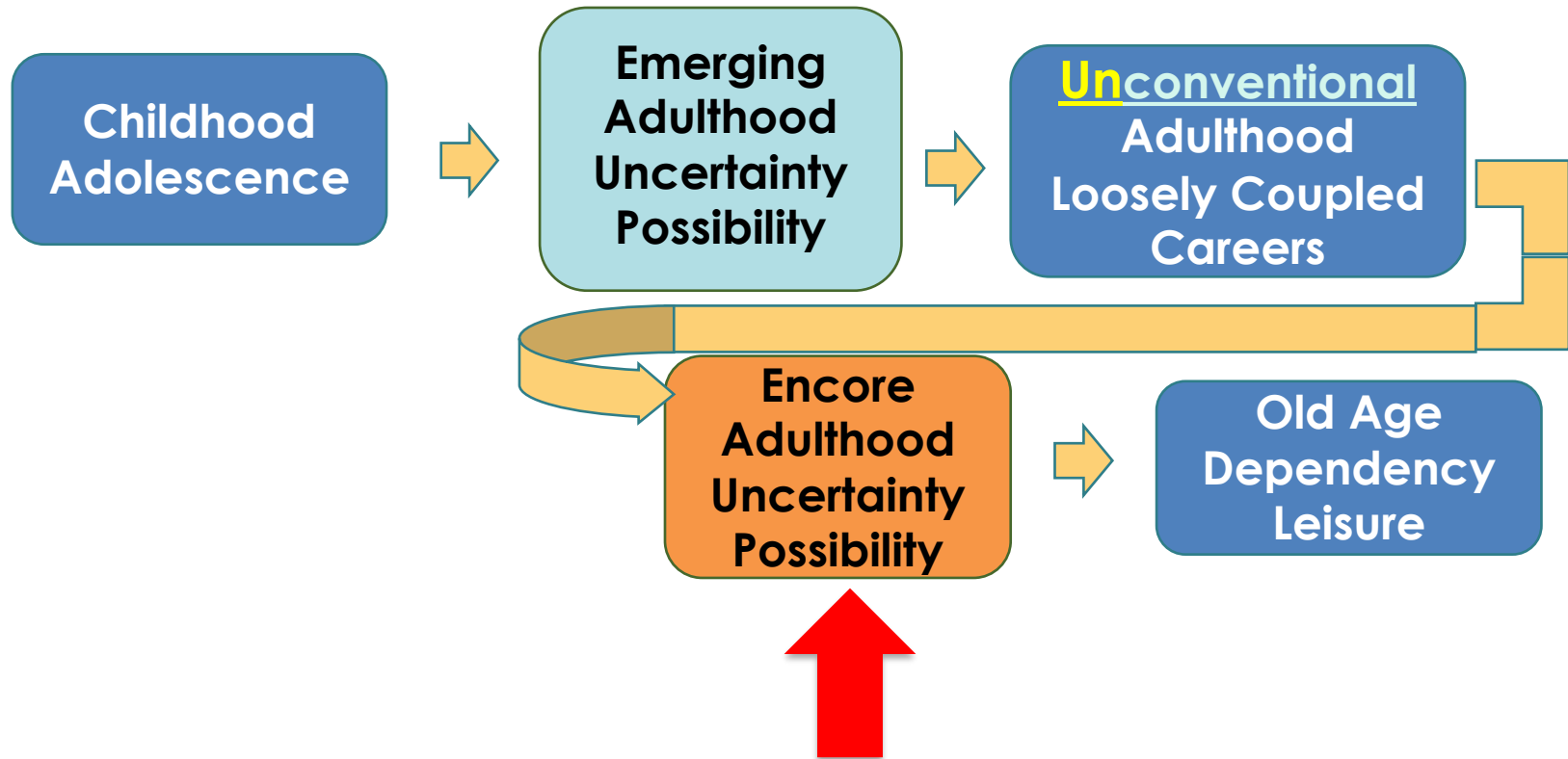
# RISK = GAP Ideal Vs. Actual Timing of Life Milestones, by Age

## Ideal vs. Actual Timing of Life Milestones

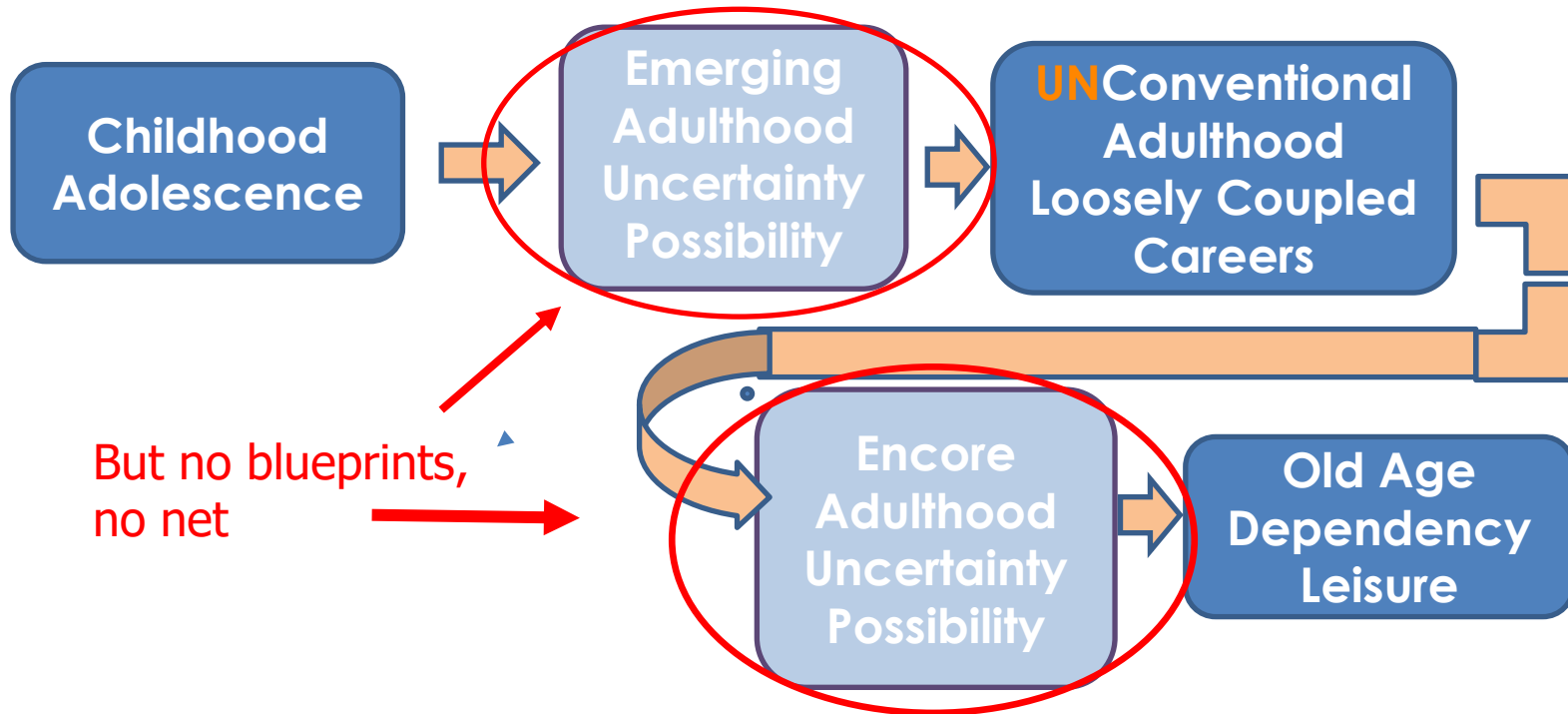


Source: Stanford Center on Longevity. (2017). *Shifting Life Milestones across Ages: a Matter of Preference or Circumstance?* (4). Retrieved February 8, 2018, from <http://longevity.stanford.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/MilestonesReport1.pdf>

# Ambiguous and Unequal 21<sup>st</sup> Century Later Life Courses Last Longer



# The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Life Course Feels Without a Net



# Challenges: The Disrupted Life Course as a Tool for Social Change toward Gender Equality?

- How to Remove Existing Time/Career Constraints and Innovate Options and Safety Nets for Women, Men, and Families at All Stages of the Evolving Life Course?
- How to Institutionalize Visions, Norms, Logics, and Language around Alternative Educational, Employment, Career, and Retirement Paths Promoting Healthy Work and Healthy Families
- How to Define, Value, and Reward Unpaid Family Care and Volunteer Community Work as “Work”?



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# An Ecology of the Life Course, Cycles of Control Model of Social Change

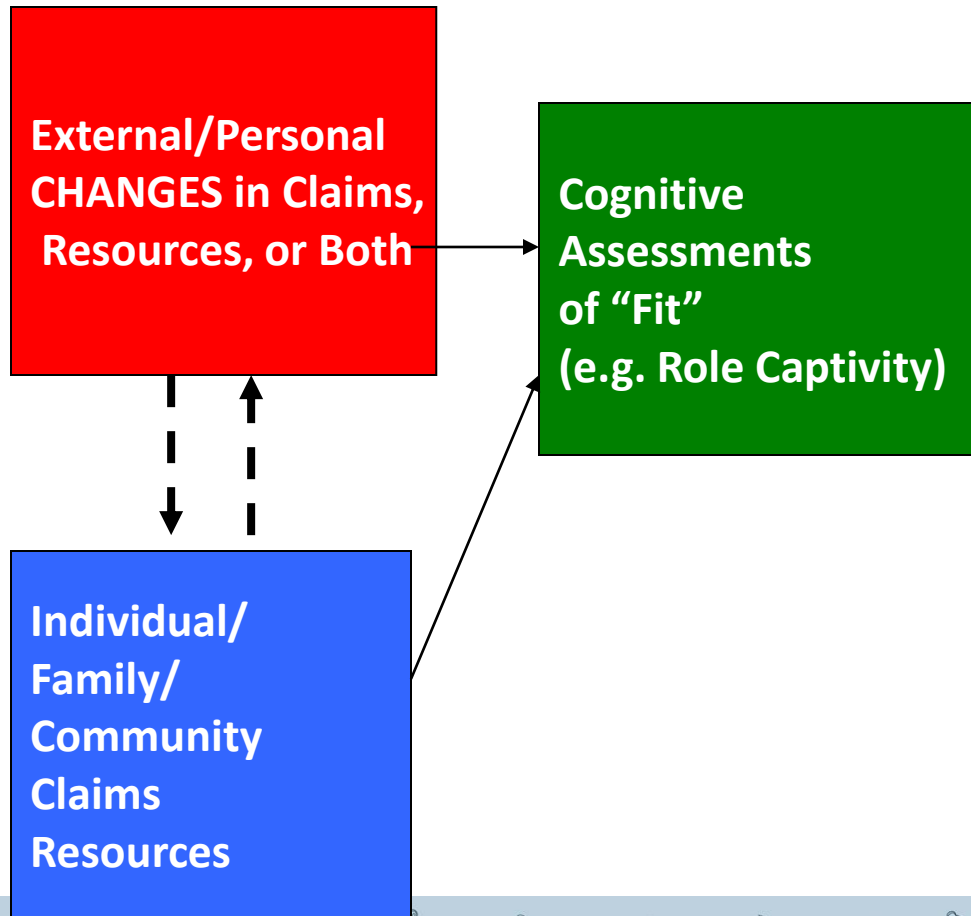
**External/Personal  
CHANGES in Claims,  
Resources, or Both**



**Individual/  
Family/  
Community  
Claims  
Resources**



# An Ecology of the Life Course, Cycles of Control Model of Social Change





# Shifts Over Time

- Situational Exigencies
- External Forces (like COVID-19; Great Recession)
- Subjective Assessments



Figure 1: Spiraling Claims/Needs/Threats

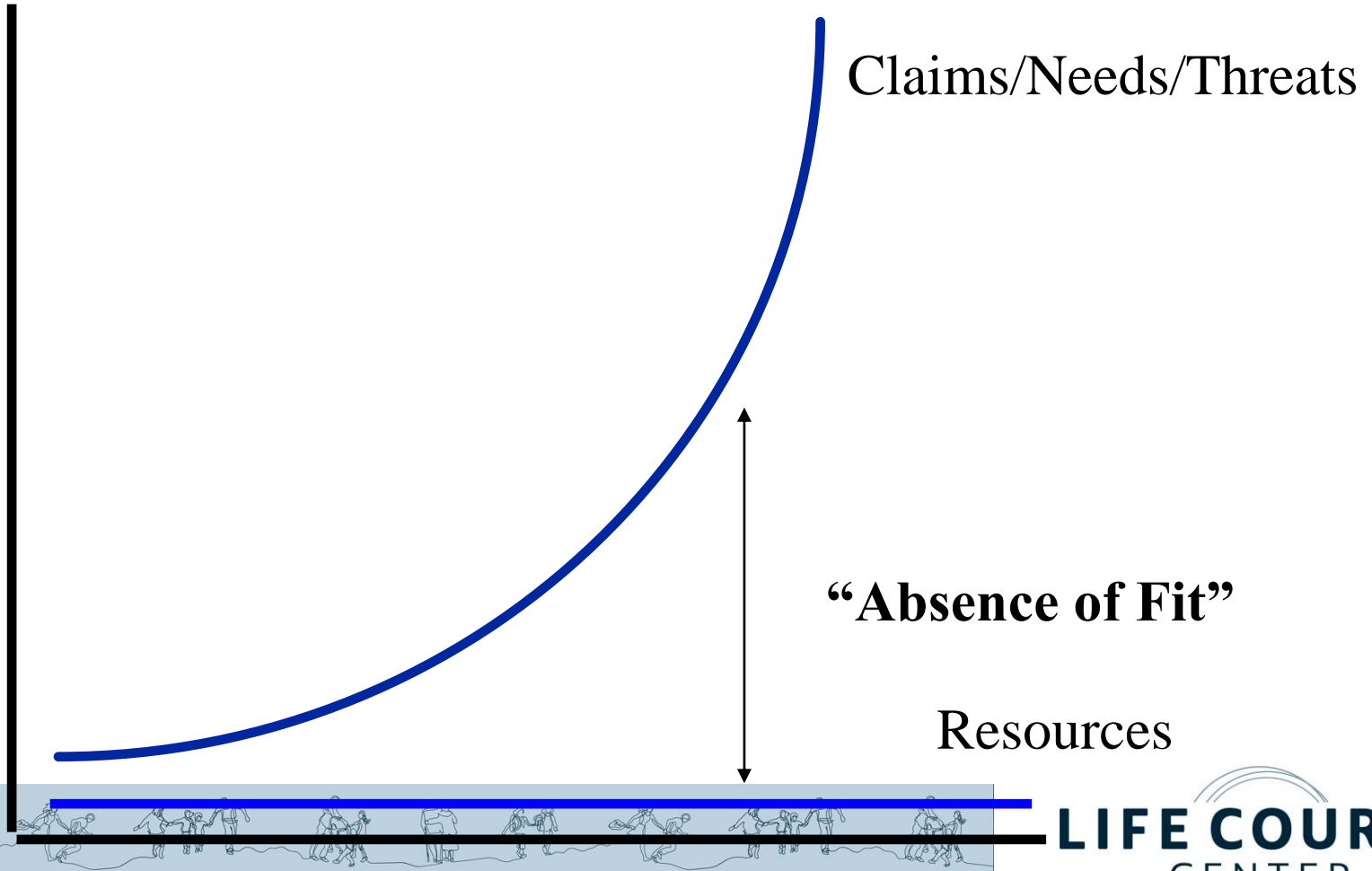
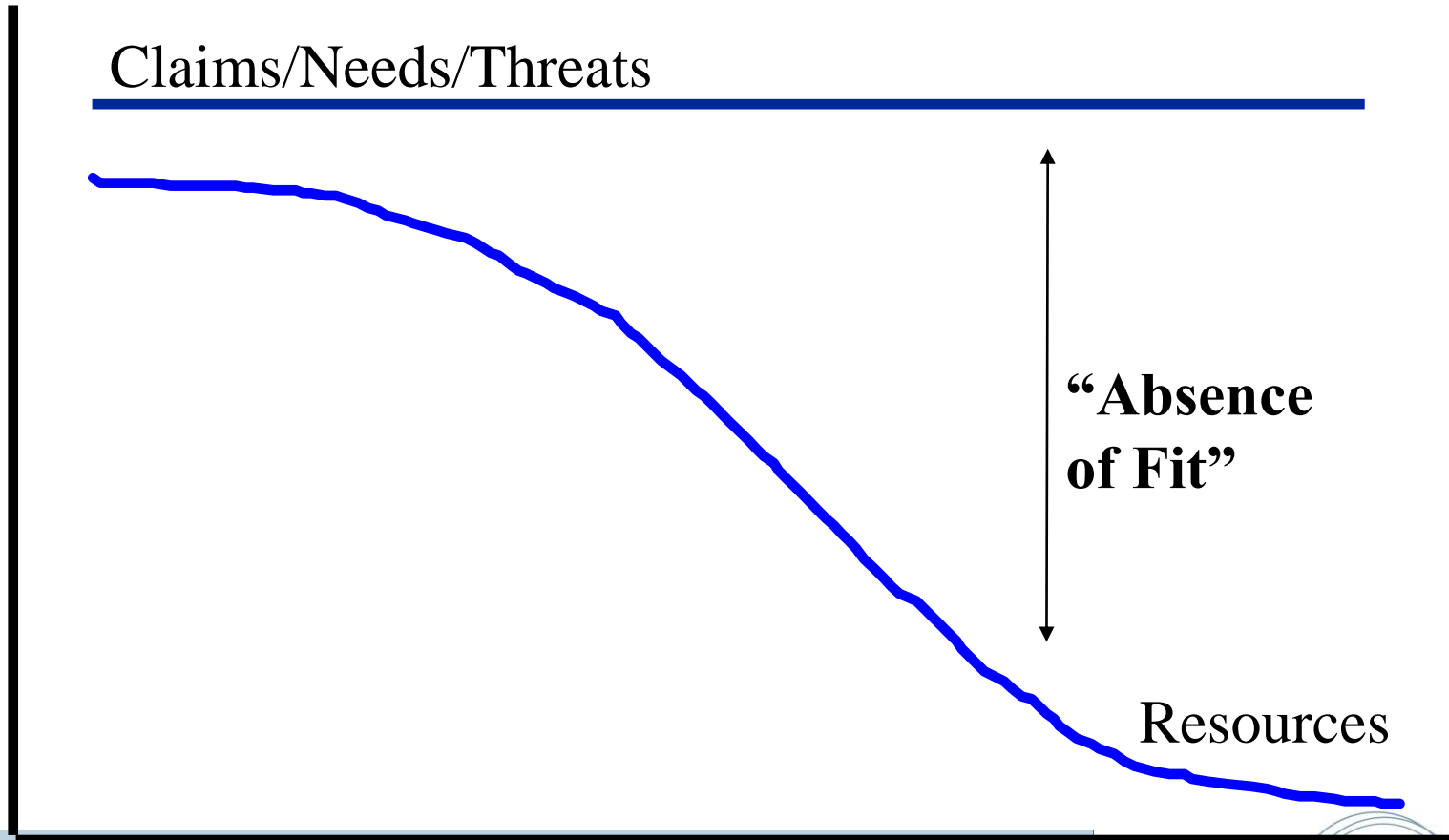


Figure 2: Declining, Depleting Resources

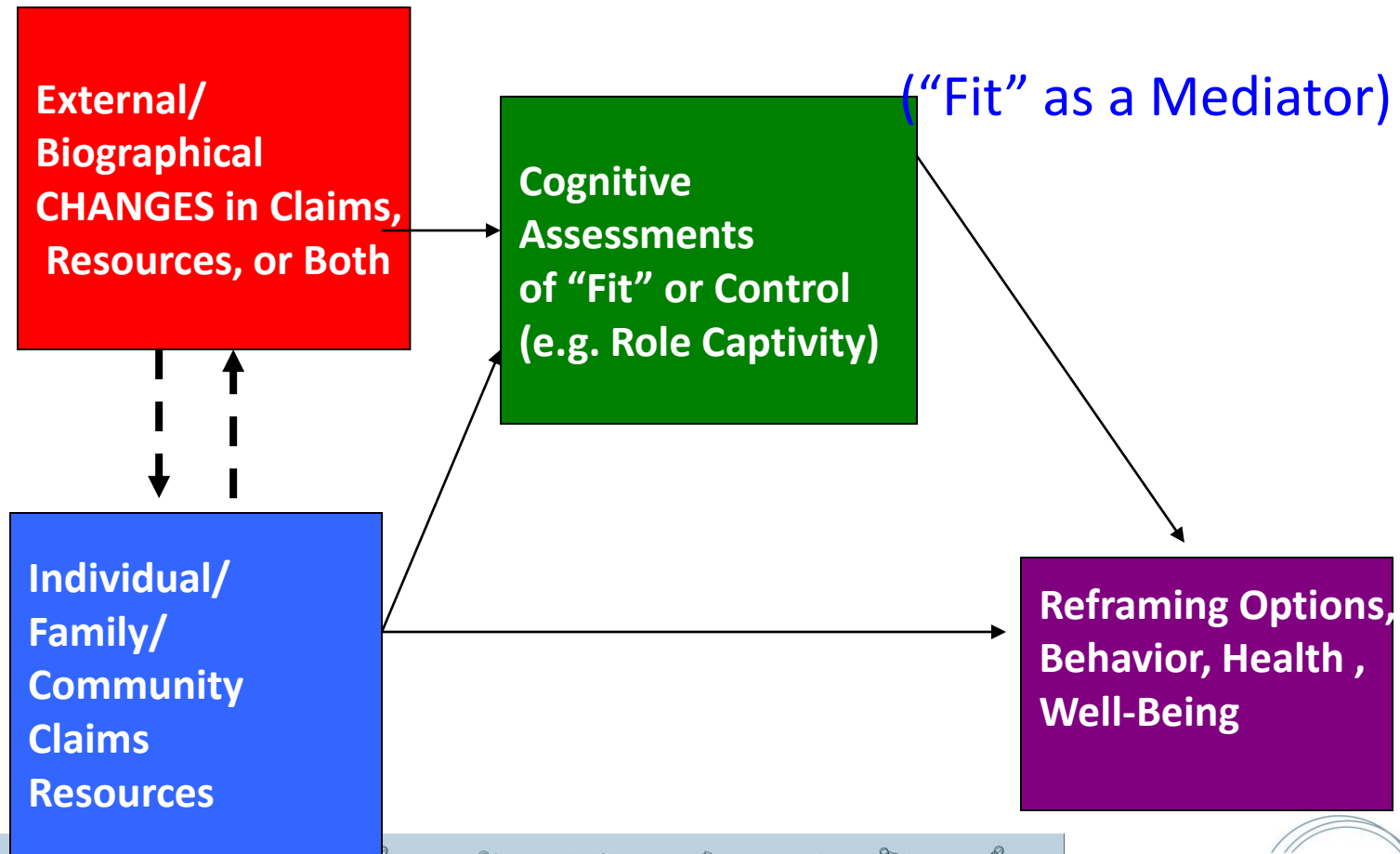


# “Fit” versus Role Captivity

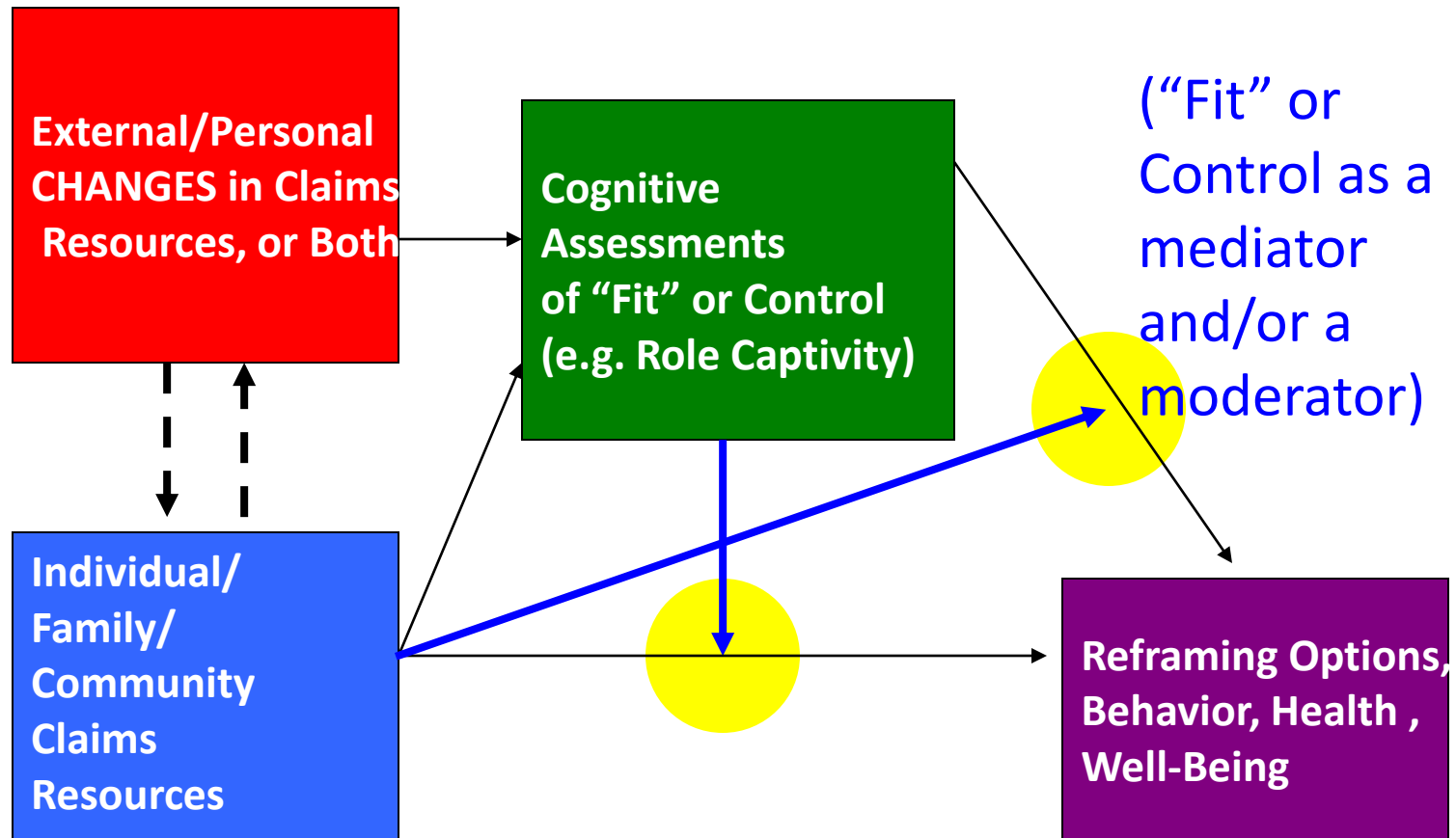
People’s cognitive appraisals of having sufficient resources to function effectively in their personal, work and family roles and relationships



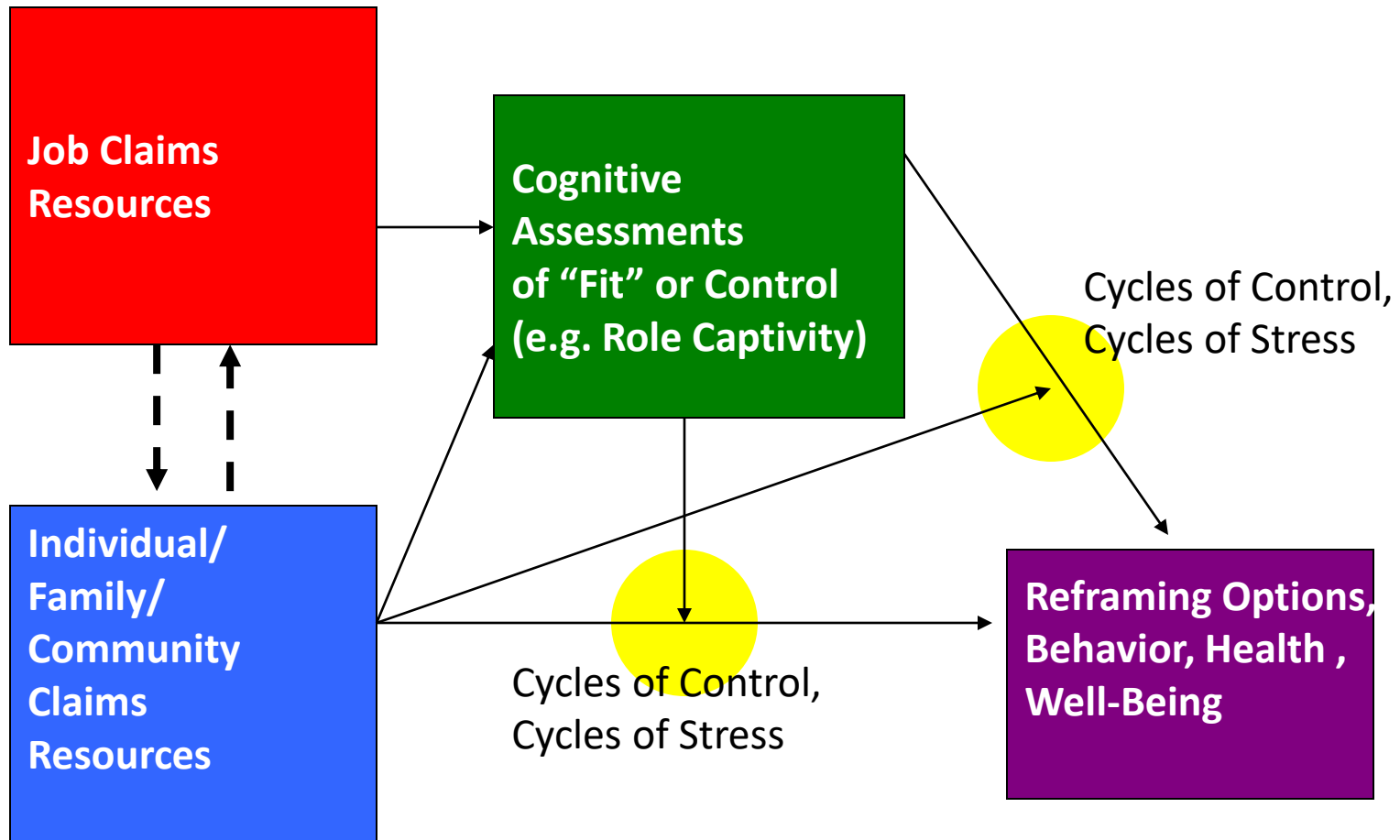
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# Cycles of Control

- People assess and reassess fit experiencing shifting *cycles of control* as their resources relative to demands/claims/needs shift.
- Subjective assessments of fit and role captivity
  - differ by age, gender, life stage
  - change over the life course
- People make **strategic adaptations**





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# Strategic Adaptations of Individuals and Families: Need to Reduce Demands or Increase Resources

- Change Situation
  - Change Definition of Situation
    - Change Relationships
- Try to Reduce Tensions and Strains



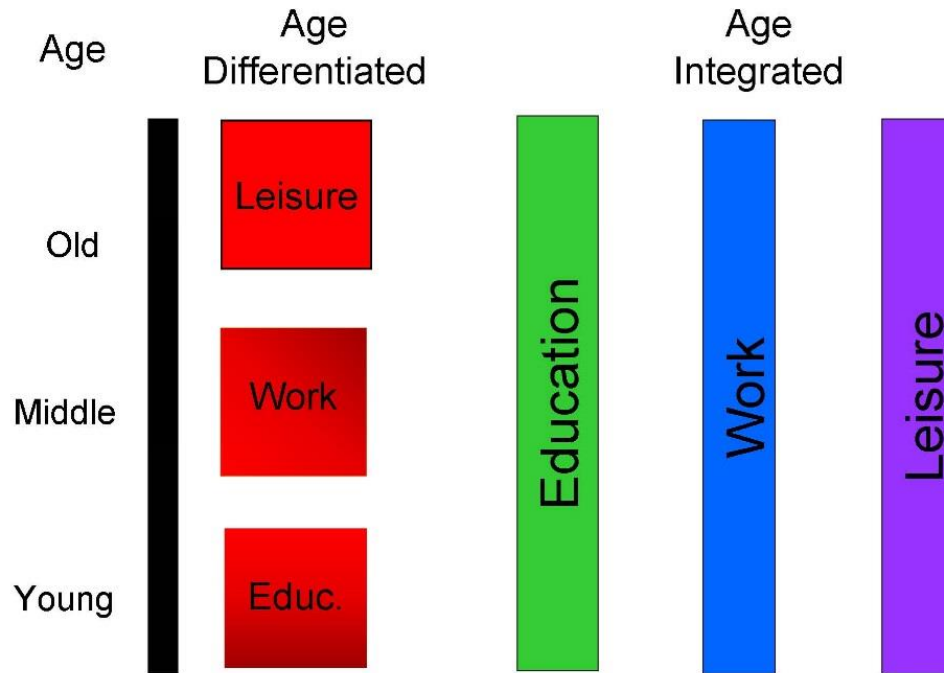
# Need to Reduce Demands or Increase Resources

CHANGE POLICIES and PRACTICES  
OPENING UP LIFE COURSE OPTIONS?

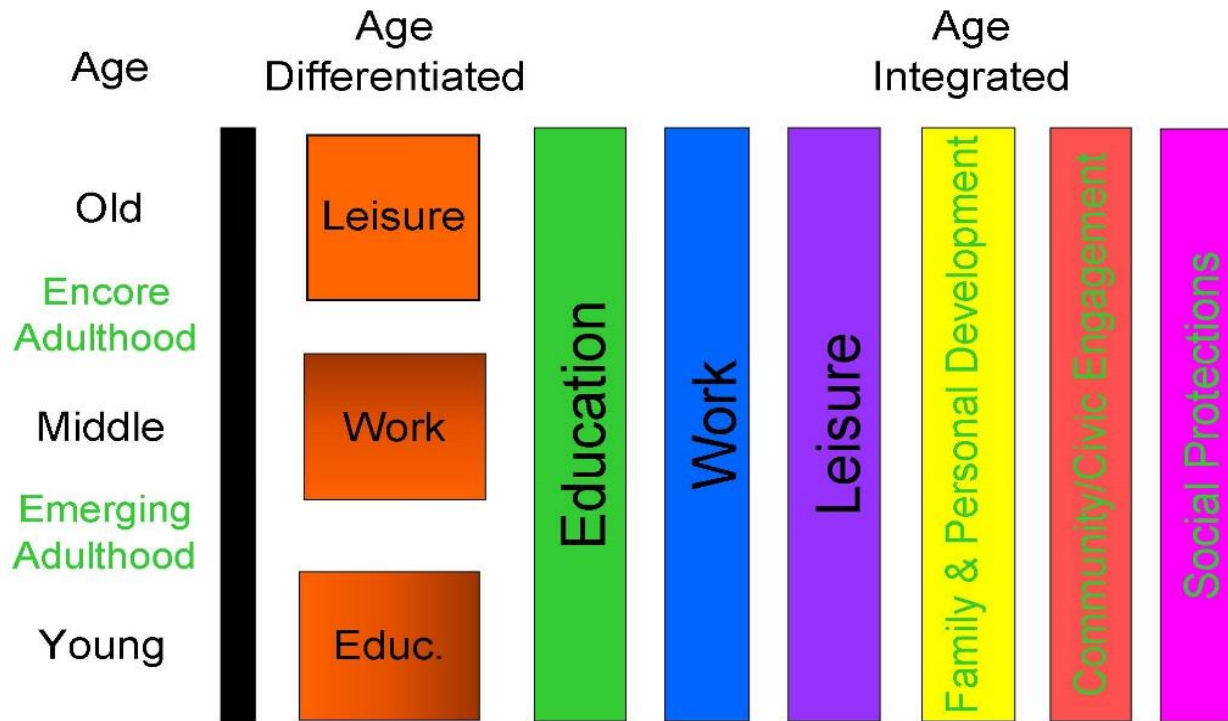


# Changing the Life Course by Changing Social Structures

(Matilda White Riley)



# Changing Life Courses by Changing Social Structures



# The Intersection of History and Biography

Timing: **WHEN** changes occur in  
people's lives



# What are new Visions? New Values?

- Career or “day” jobs?  
Career as personal development, sense of meaning



# What are new Vision? New Values?

Career or “day” jobs vs. career as personal development

- Second, third, fourth careers/ protections





# What are new Visions? New Values?

- Career or “day” jobs and career/personal development
- Second, third, fourth careers
- **Schooling, sabbaticals and other “time outs”**

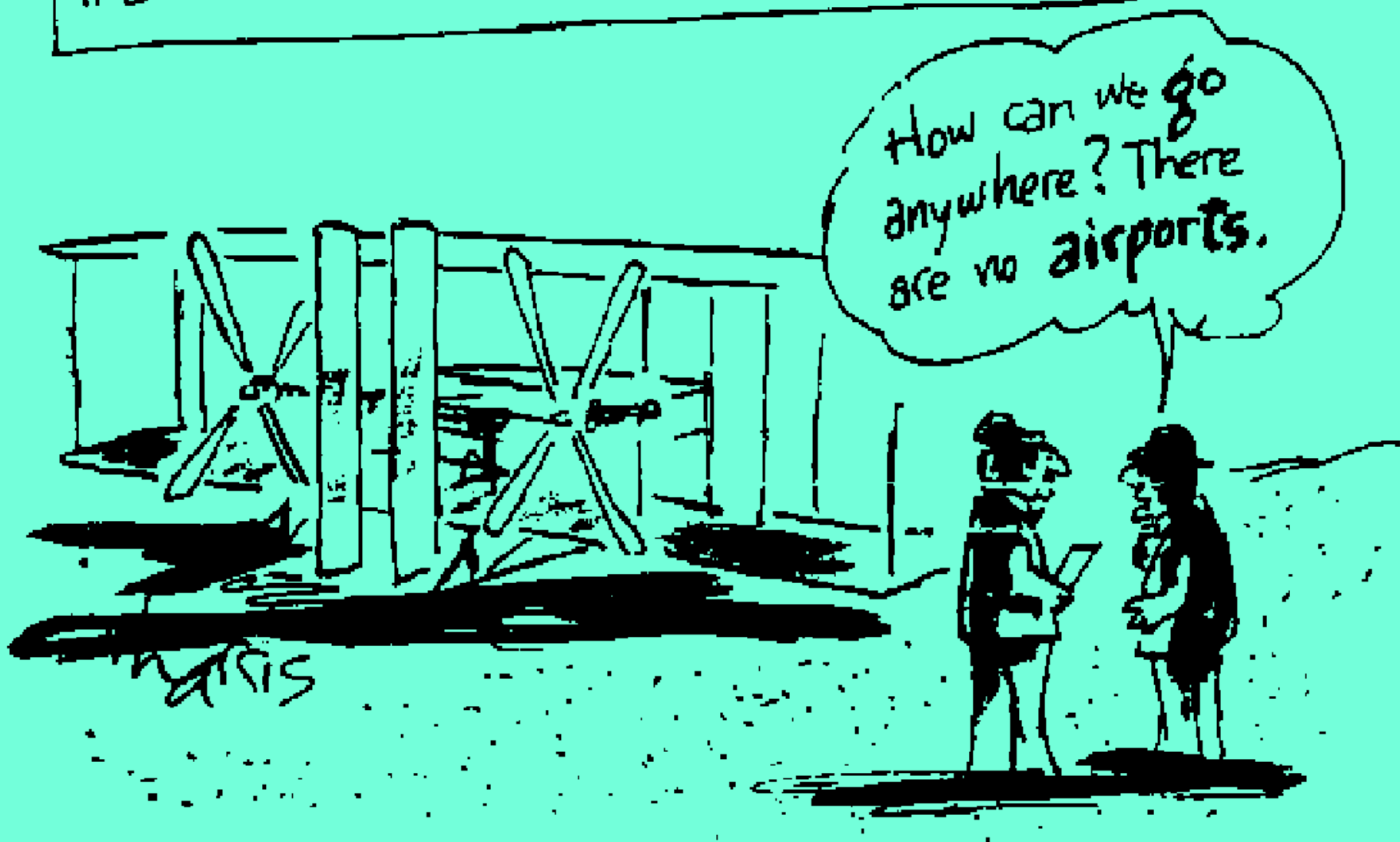


# What are New Visions? New Values?

- Career or “day” jobs and career/personal development
- Second, third, fourth careers/protectations
- Schooling, sabbaticals and other “time outs”
- **Families, friends, health, passions, civic engagement**



# THE WRIGHT BROTHERS IN THE FACE OF REALITY

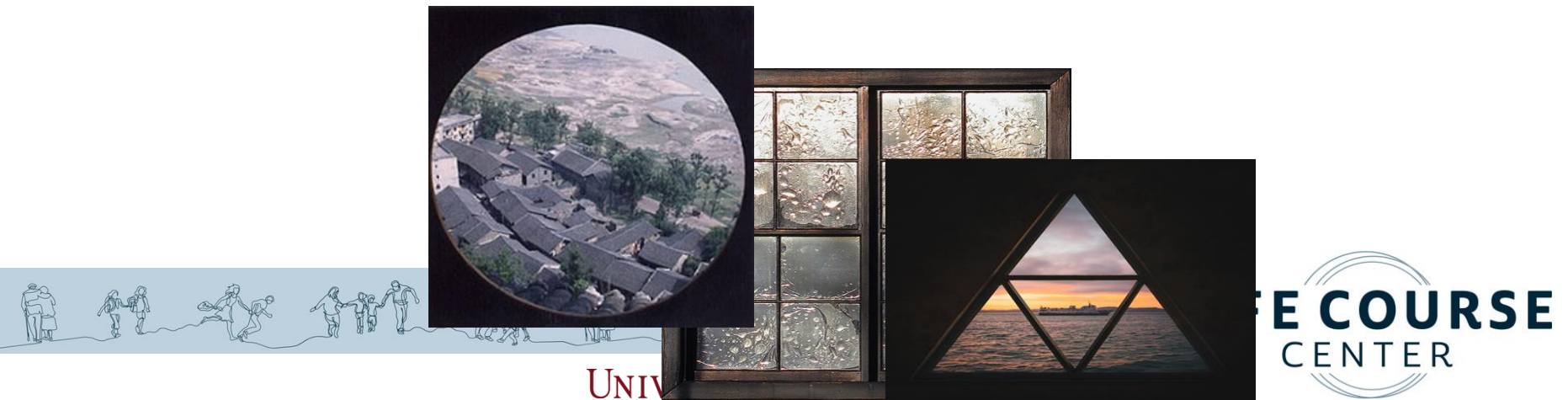


How can we go anywhere? There are no airports.

M. S. 15

# Engines of Change...Possibilities...

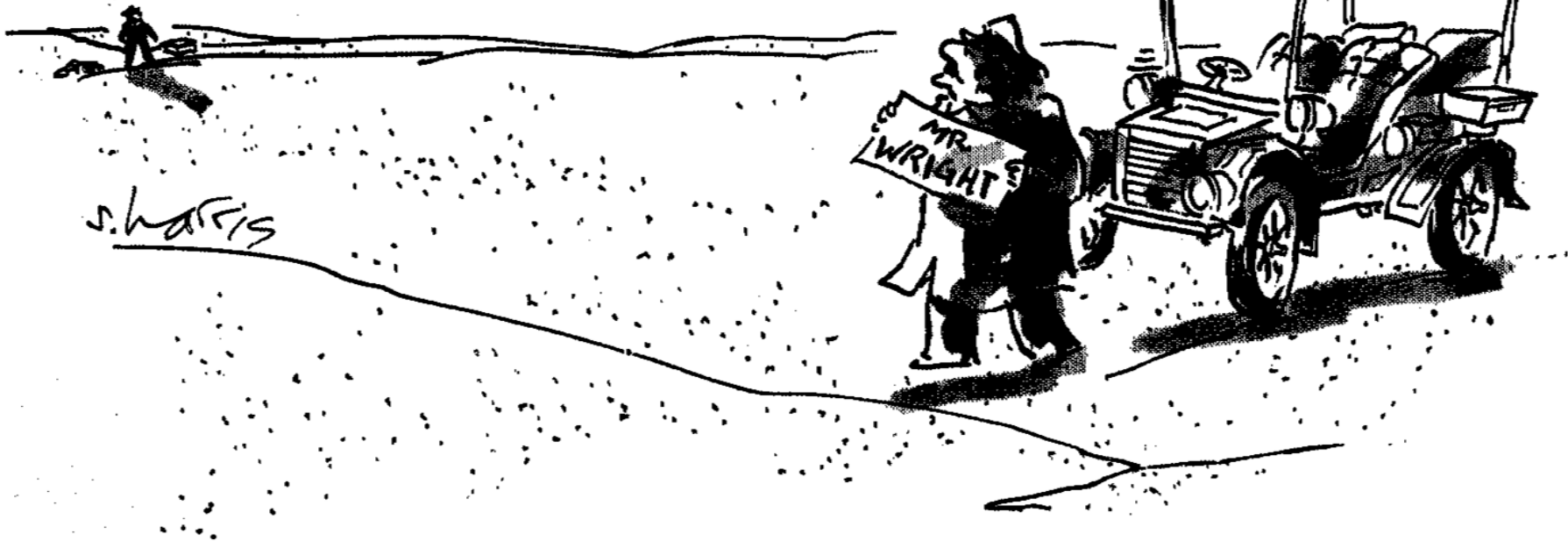
- **Key:** Times of Rapid Transformation Open Up New Ways of Questioning Outdated Templates, Reassessing and Reframing Stressful Circumstances, Resetting Roles and Relationships
- Needed are New Institutional and Community Arrangements and Policies, Social Inventions Supporting Alternative Yet Sustainable Life Course Paths, Practices, and Health for Men and Women of All Ages





“The best way to predict  
the future is to create it”

Peter Drucker





# University of Minnesota Advanced Careers Initiative (UMAC)



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



# Five Avenues for Change

- Reframing **expected durations, places, and timing** of workdays, workweeks, and work lives (“Not So Big Jobs”)
- Developing legitimated **flexibilities, retraining,** and **time outs** from work, at all life stages
- Reframing **care and community work** as work
- Possibilities for **second, or third, or fourth acts** – encores in schooling, civic engagement, and employment for Americans of all ages
- **Social insurance** and **skill upgrades, universal learning** for risks and transitions inherent in an automating global labor market

# The Toolkit: How to Be Resilient and Thrive in Times of Risk, Vulnerability, and Uncertainty?

## Three Protective Factors

1. Education and Learning
2. Social Engagement
  1. Relationships
  2. Paid or Volunteer Work, Leisure Activities
3. A Sense of Competency and Control





# The Idea:

## Precarity and Polarization require new designs

Universal learners for the 21<sup>st</sup> century means multigenerational hybrid education, serving an age-diverse community of learners who will be exploring jobs not yet invented, skill upgrades and retooling, and charting multiple paths to meaningful work and civic engagement.



University of Minnesota Advanced Careers (UMAC) is designed to address this specific need. UMAC is transforming how higher education serves our community.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA



# The Opportunity



We have before us a tremendous opportunity to redesign education and redeploy the skills and experience of encore adults for the greater good.

Colleges and universities can become hubs for intergenerational learning and catalysts for change



# How UMAC Works



UMAC combines coming back to school with hands-on community engagement and personal/career development in a multi-generational learning community.

With a two-semester approach, UMAC offers fellows the framework and guidance to explore what is next. Fellows contribute their talents in an applied learning experience.

UMAC encourages Fellows to explore options for paid or unpaid

work stage.



# Transformational Experience



UMAC fellows form a learning community, participating in seminars around society's grand challenges. They explore their interests and talents, moving from career to engagement identities.

# The UMAC Experience

*UMAC has been a transformational experience for me. I entered the program with the goal of exploring the “what’s next for my career” and the program has done that plus so much more. The unexpected bonus was the trusted support of my cohorts of fellows and the guidance and connection with Kate and Phyllis. Forever grateful for this experience.*

*~ Virginia Kafer, UMAC Fellow*



*UMAC is the best decision I have made in years! It has revitalized my life in numerous ways: developing friendships with Fellows while forging new meaning and purpose on my life’s journey. It is a privilege to be part of such an exciting, innovative educational experience. UMAC truly serves as an agent for positive, intergenerational change within our society. It boosts the potential for having the younger and older striving together for the common good. Life doesn’t get better than that!*

*~ Joan Halgren, UMAC Fellow*



# The UMAC Experience

*My UMAC experience has been exceptional! After spending the past 35 years in a narrowly focused industry, UMAC has given me insights into other career opportunities that I never would have considered at this stage of my life. The camaraderie among my Fellows and the steadfast support...has reminded me to be "fearless" in my pursuit of new endeavors. With renewed passion and experience, I am excited to begin a more fulfilling chapter in my career.*



*~ Michele Eggenberger, 2017-18 UMAC Fellow*



*The UMAC program has provided me with what was missing when I was doing this work on my own – both a structured framework and a supportive group to give valuable feedback for the work I am doing.*

*~ Julie Warner, 2017-18 UMAC Fellow*



# Rewriting Policy Templates

## Institutionalizing Alternative, Non-Gendered Life Course Paths

“Politics is almost always, in some measure, an argument about the future. And we cannot escape either the normative debates as to what kind of future we may want, or the empirical assessments as to the kinds of futures that may come.” p. 101 Daniel Bell (1997) pp 101 – 122 in *Sociological Visions*



# Possibilities

## Addressing Mismatches through:

- State-Level Institutional Change
  - Labor Market/Retirement Policies, Regulations
  - Policies defining Temporal and Spatial Organization of Work/Careers; **Flexicurity??**
  - Life-Long Training and Education
  - Age- and Gender-Discrimination
  - **Family Care Work and Community Service as “Work”?**
  - Health Care and Savings, New Safety-Nets, **Universal Basic Income?**





# Possibilities:

## Addressing Mismatches through:

- State-Level Institutional Changes

- Labor Market Policies, Regulations
- Policies defining Temporal Organization of Work/Careers; New Safety-Nets
- Life-Long Training and Education
- Age-, Gender-, Minority Discrimination
- Family Care Work
- Health Care and Savings

- Organizational-Level Institutional Change

- Lock-Step Occupational/Organizational Career Paths
- Rigid Job Routines, Clocks, and Calendars
- Inflexibility, Unsupportive Culture, Stereotypes, Discrimination
- Risks of Layoffs and Uncertainties across Gender and

Generation

Moen/Kelly  
Research

**LIFE COURSE**  
CENTER

# Possibilities

## Addressing Mismatches through:

- State-Level Institutional Change
  - Labor Market Policies, Regulations
  - Policies defining Temporal Organization of Work/Careers; New Safety-Nets
  - Life-Long Training and Education
  - Age- and Gender-Discrimination
  - Family Care Work as “Work”
  - Health Care and Savings
- Organizational-Level Gendered Institutional Change
  - Lock-Step Occupational/Organizational Career Paths
  - Rigid Job Routines, Clocks, and Calendars
  - Inflexibility, Unsupportive Culture, Stereotypes, Discrimination
  - Risks of Layoffs across Gender and Generation
- Changing Minds, Mindsets, Strategic Adaptations



# Changing Institutions

- New Customs and Expectations
- New Vocabulary
- New Policies and Practices

