

Professor Mel Bartley

**ESRC International Centre for Life Course
Studies in Society and Health (2008 – 2012)**

.....bridging biological and social sciences

www.ucl.ac.uk/icls

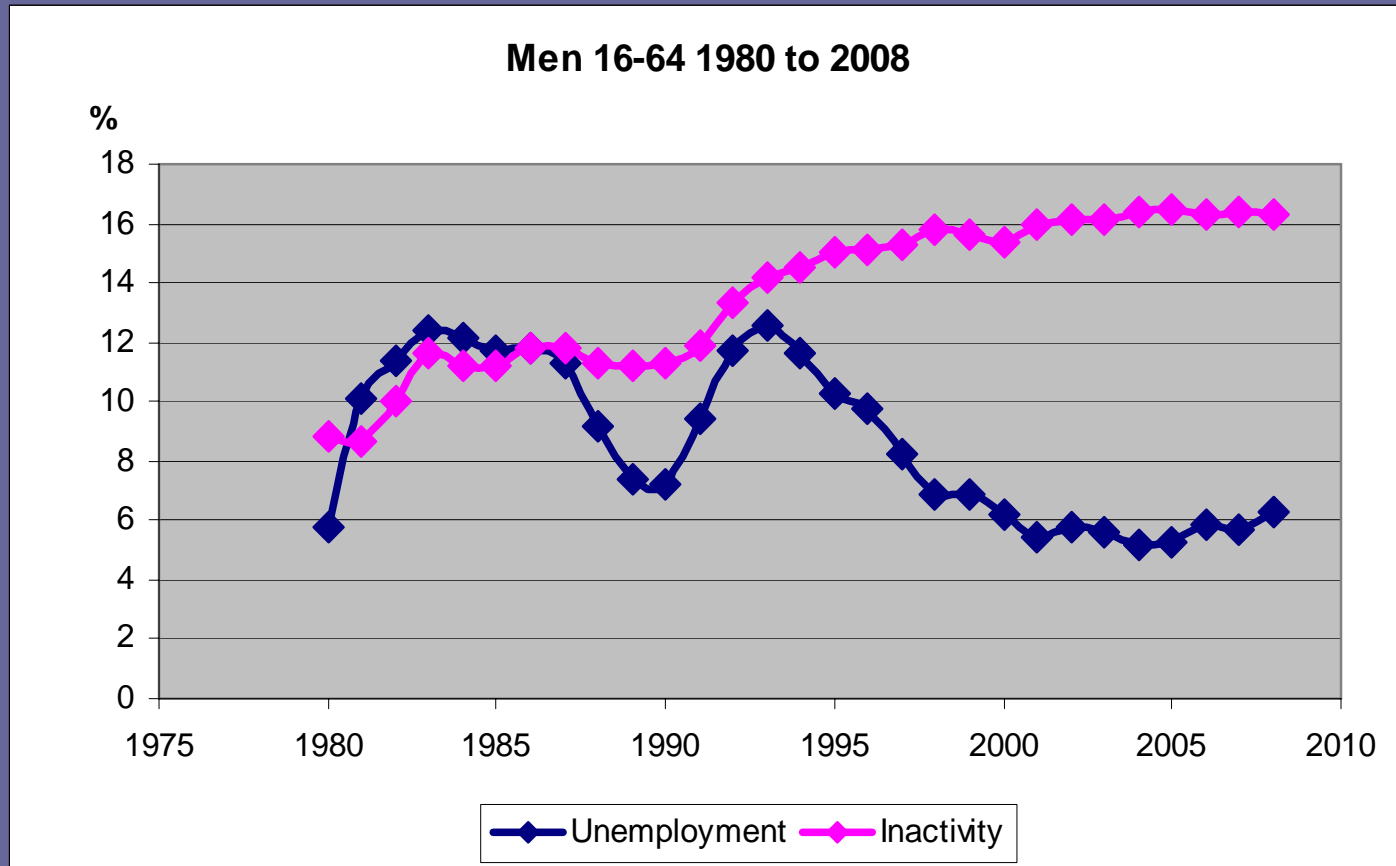
Imperial College
London

E · S · R · C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL



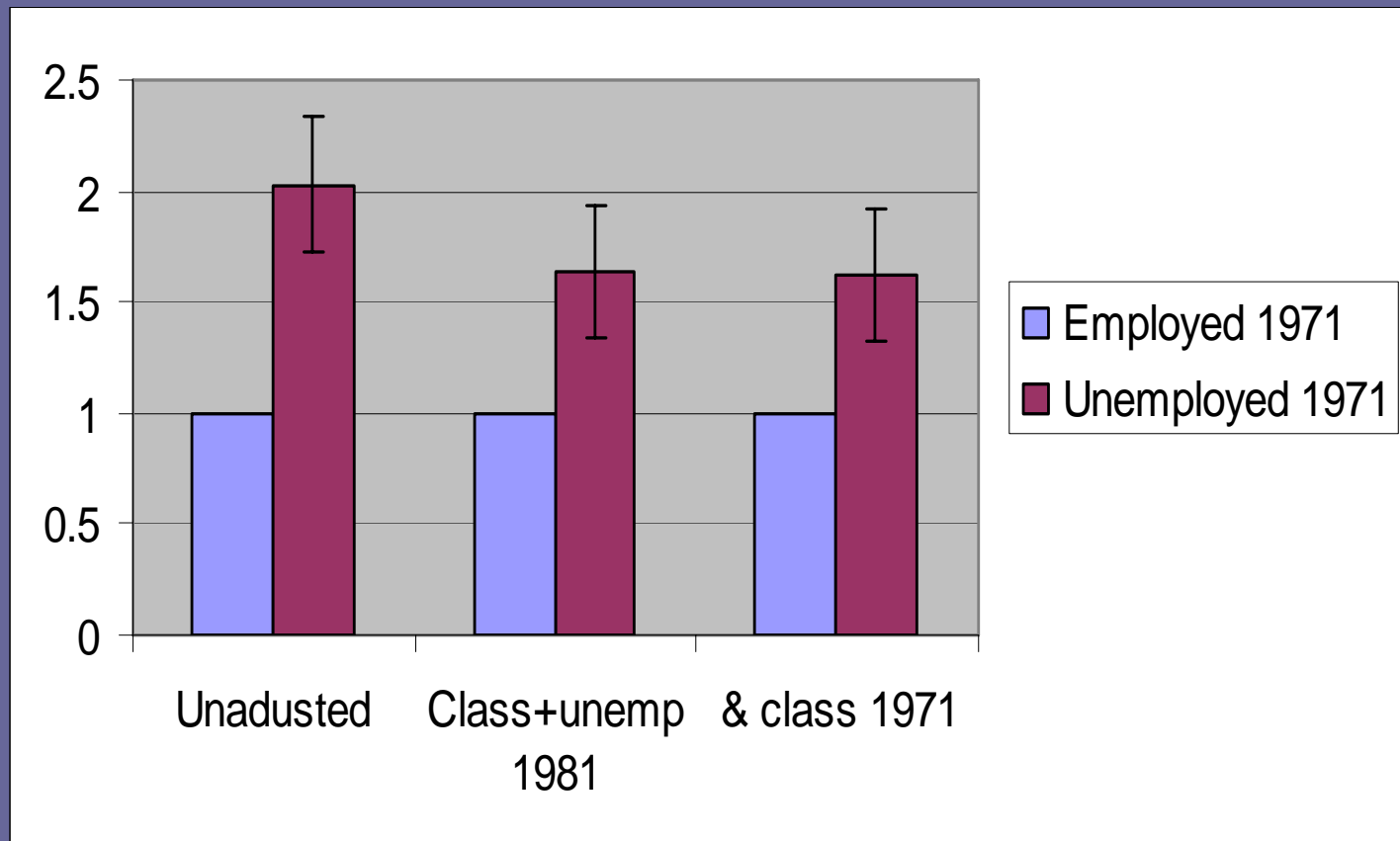
UCL

Unemployment and economic inactivity: diverging trends 1980-2008



Risk of limiting long term illness in 1991 by unemployment in 1971, allowing for subsequent labour market disadvantage

Odds ratio

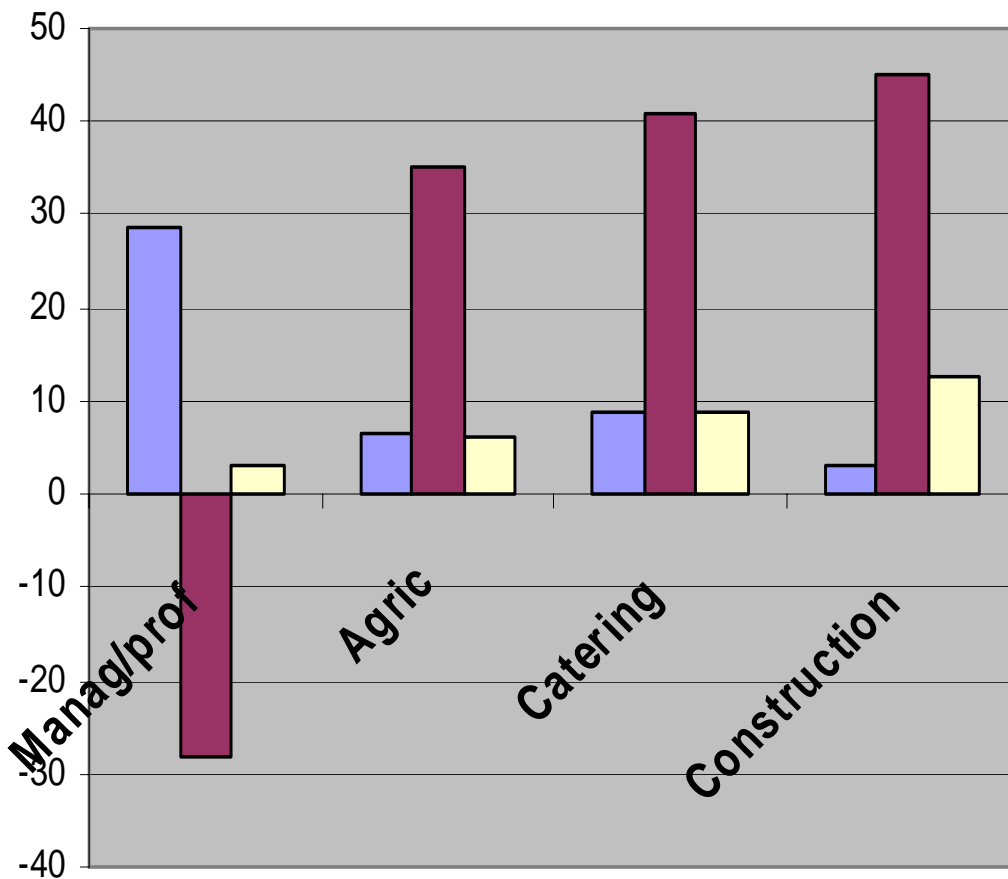


Unemployment in the life course

- *Health at any single time point is in part a result of social conditions before*
- *Low income, bad working conditions, and job insecurity tend to go together*

Occupational conditions (men): Change during 1980s

%



Real earnings increase 1979-86

Serious injuries 1981-1985%

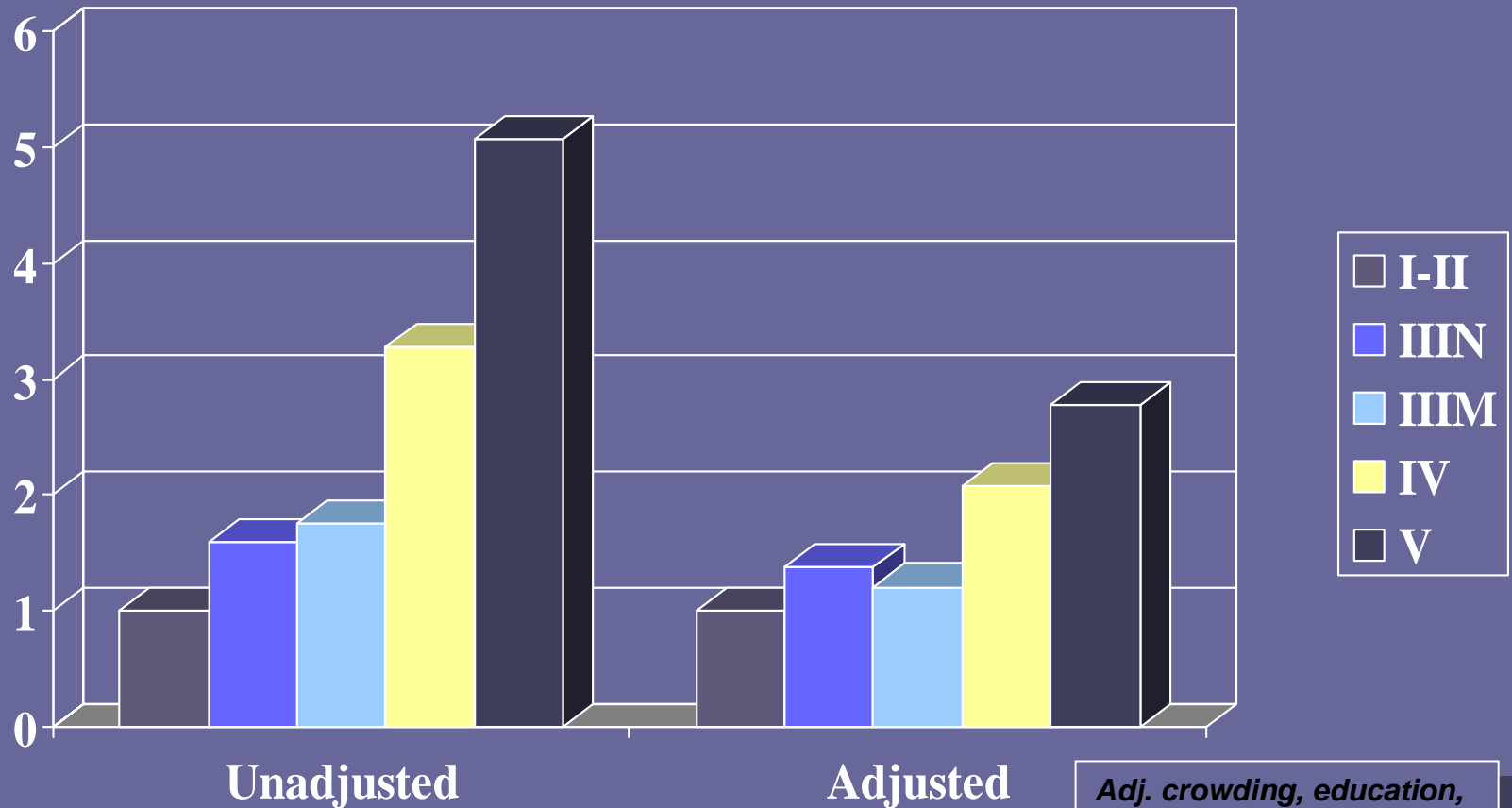
Unemployment % 1986

Unemployed people tend to have a *more disadvantaged life course*

- Poorer parents
- More crowded homes
- Have done less well at school
- More behavioural problems at school

Relationship of unemployment to father's social class at birth

Odds ratio



Adj. crowding, education, region, height at 7, BSAG, parents' heights

Independent role of unemployment in the life course process

- *Take groups of study participants classified according to earlier influences*
- *Examine 'effect' of unemployment 1974 (age 16) to 1985 (age 27) on social circumstances at age 33 (1991)*
- *Include only those in stable employment since 1985, so we are only looking at longer term processes.*

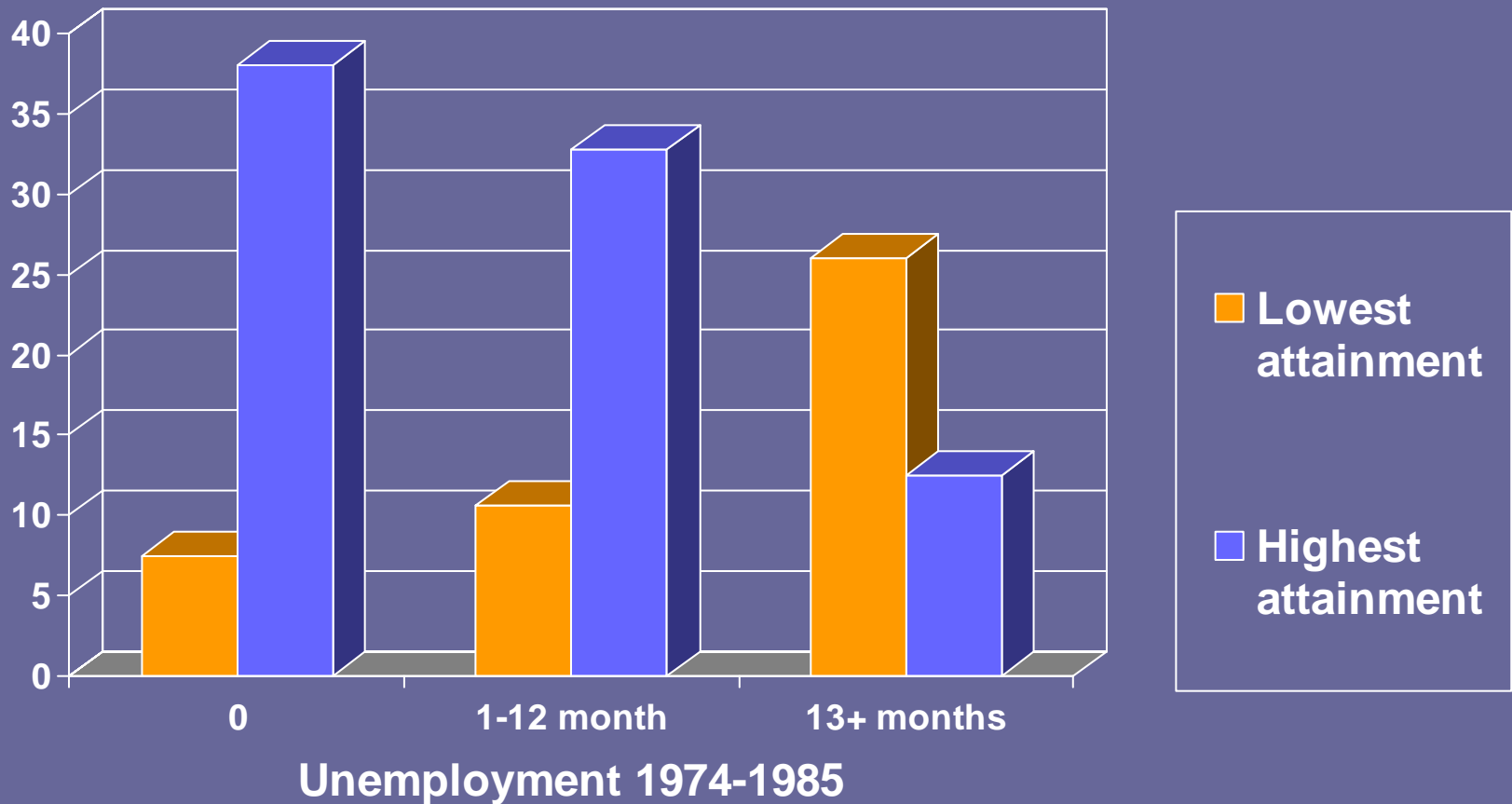
Unemployment lowers social and economic attainment regardless of early life factors

Measure of low socio-economic attainment at age 33

- ***Bottom 2/5 income distribution;***
- ***Not owning or buying own home at age 33.***
- ***Not in a 'career'-type job***

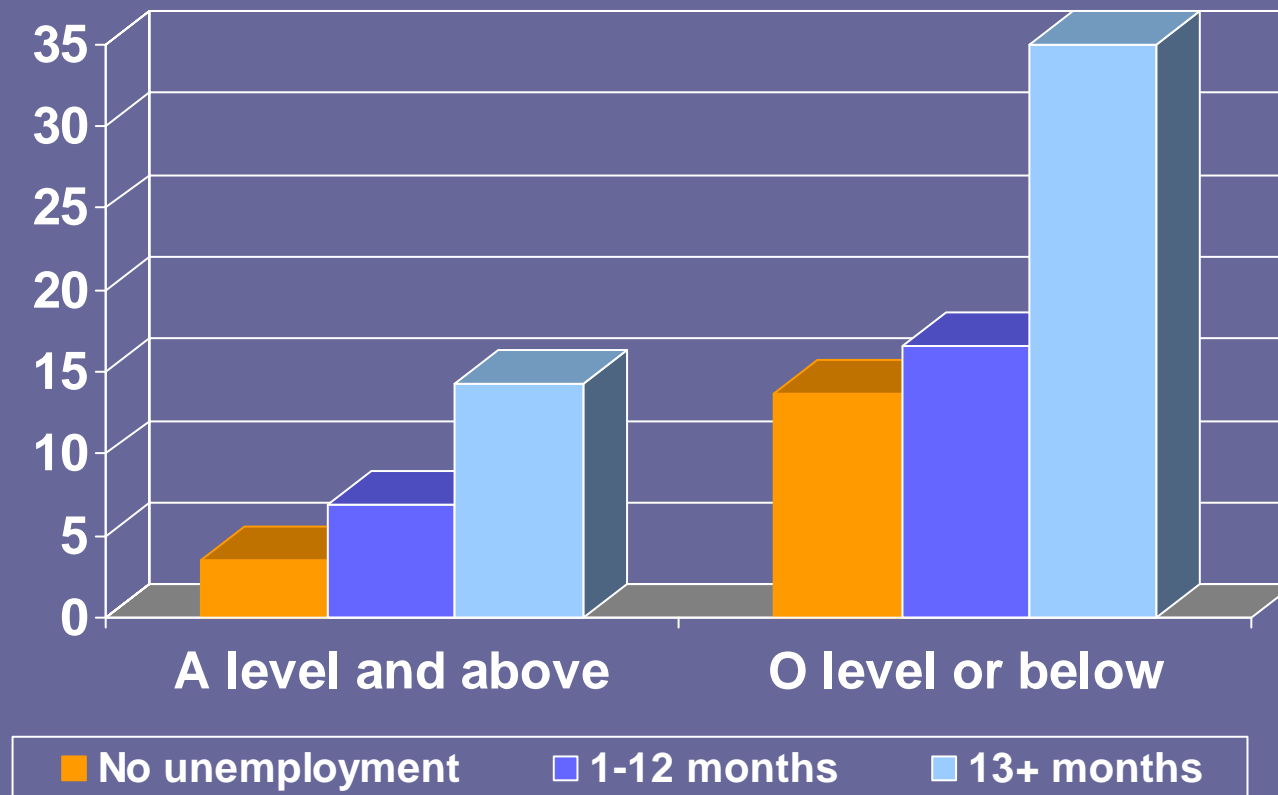
- ***TOTAL***
- ***"Socio-economic attainment score"***
- ***Scored 0 (low) to 3 (high).***

Socio-economic attainment at age 33 (1991) by amount of unemployment 1974-1985



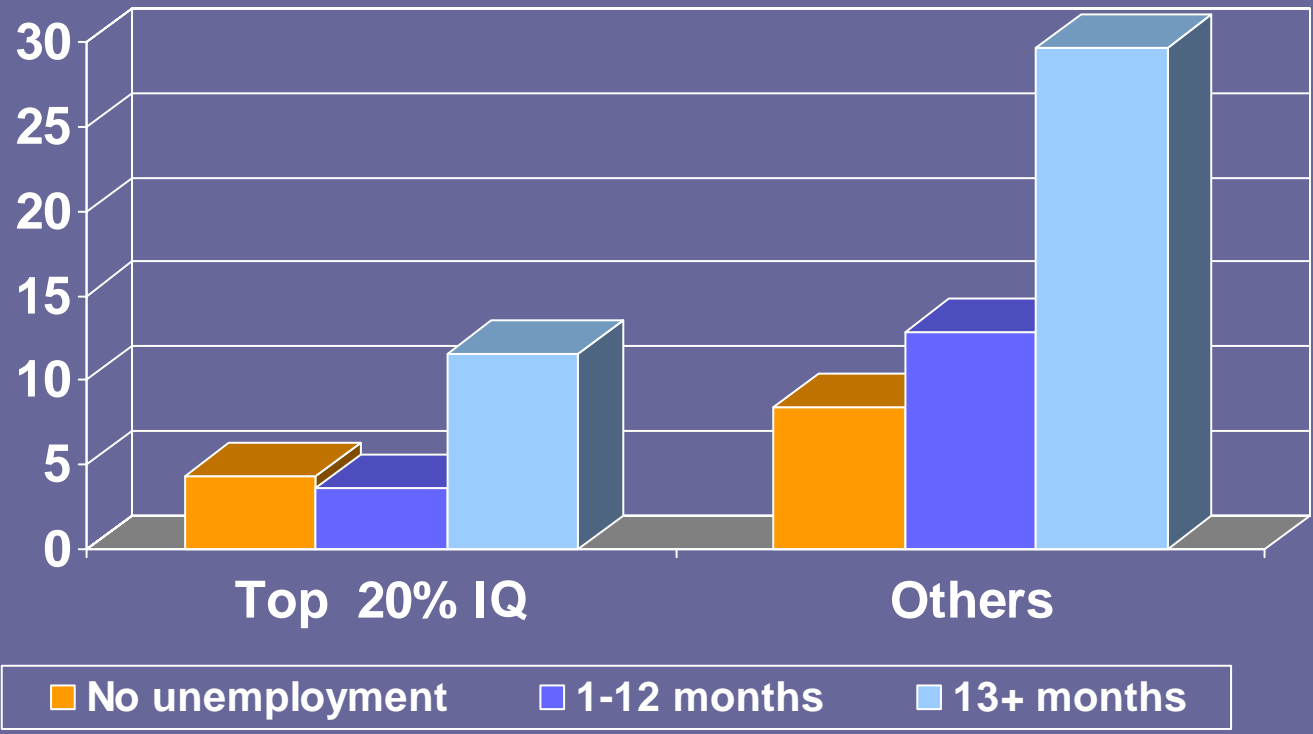
Effect of unemployment duration on relationship of educational qualifications to low socio-economic attainment at age 33

% with lowest socio-economic attainment



Effect of unemployment duration on relationship of childhood IQ to low socio-economic attainment at age 33

% with low socio-economic attainment at age 33

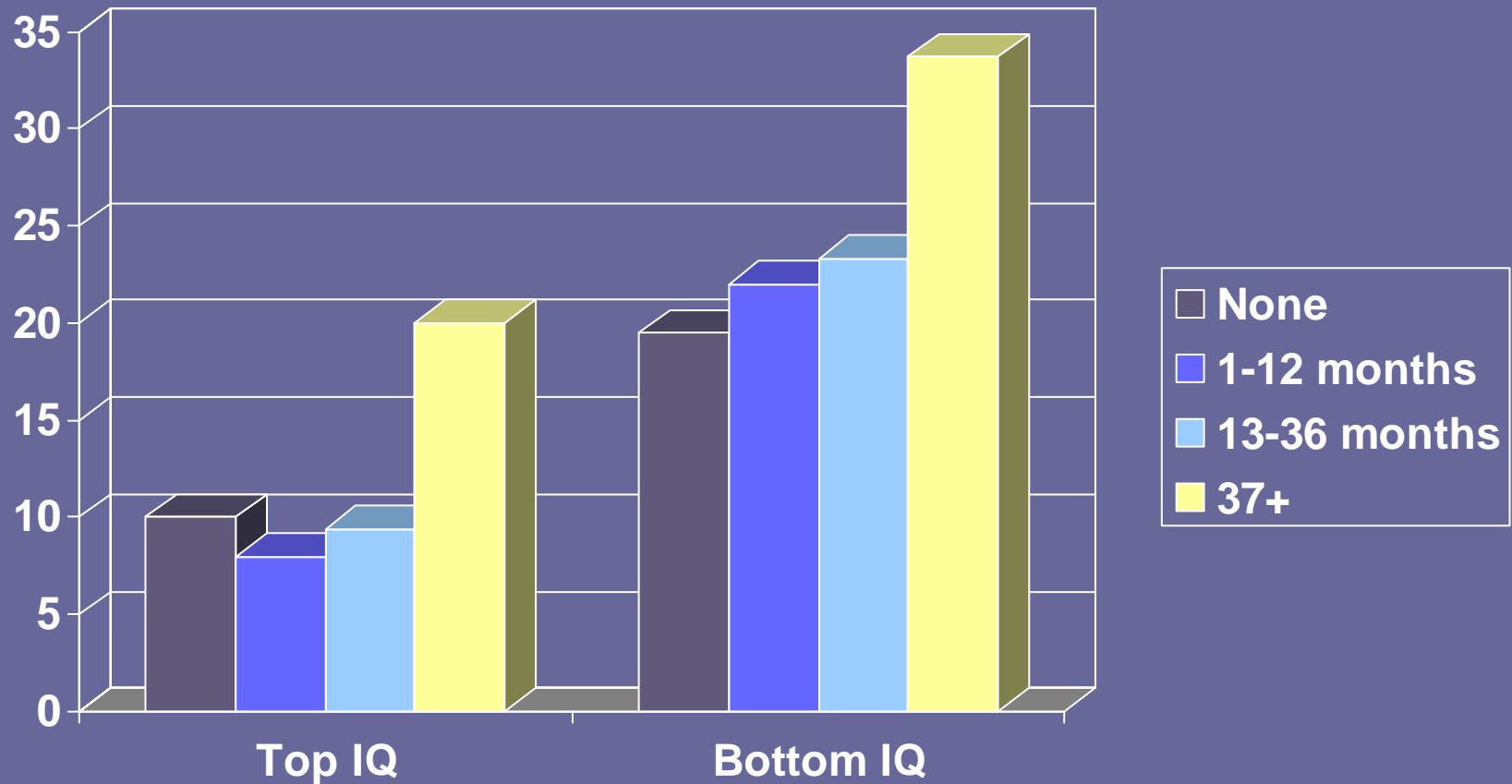


Health behaviour score at age 33

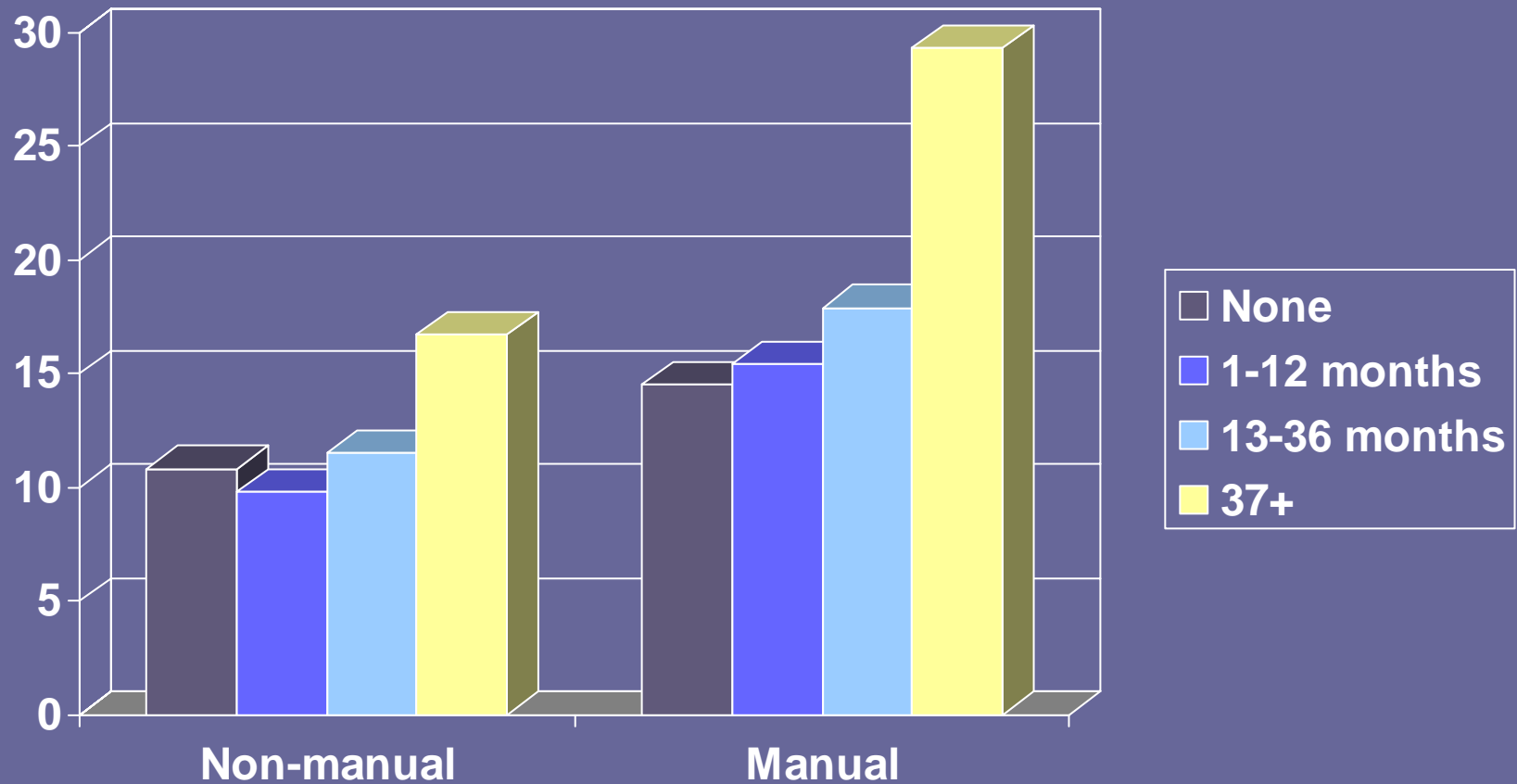
- Normal weight for height=1
- Vigorous exercise 1+x / week=1
- Fresh fruit more than 1x/ week=1
- Not smoking=1

- Range 0 – 3+4(grouped)
- 0 = riskiest; 3-4=most healthy

Proportion with riskiest health behaviours at age 33 by IQ at age 11 and amount of unemployment



Proportion with riskiest health behaviours at age 33 by father's social class at birth and amount of unemployment



Conclusions

- Larger amounts of unemployment during 1980-1985 had serious implications even for those with more favourable start in life
- Unemployment tends to cluster with other disadvantages
- It may tend to amplify the effects of other disadvantages
- 'Springboards' may be more effective than 'safety nets'

www.ucl.ac.uk/icls

- Ageing
- Education
- Childhood Wellbeing
- Employment
- Bridging biological and social sciences

Imperial College
London

E · S · R · C
ECONOMIC
& SOCIAL
RESEARCH
COUNCIL



UCL