



Wisconsin Longitudinal Study

Center for the Demography of Health and Aging

University of Wisconsin-Madison

with support from the

National Institute on Aging since 1991

what the WLS offers

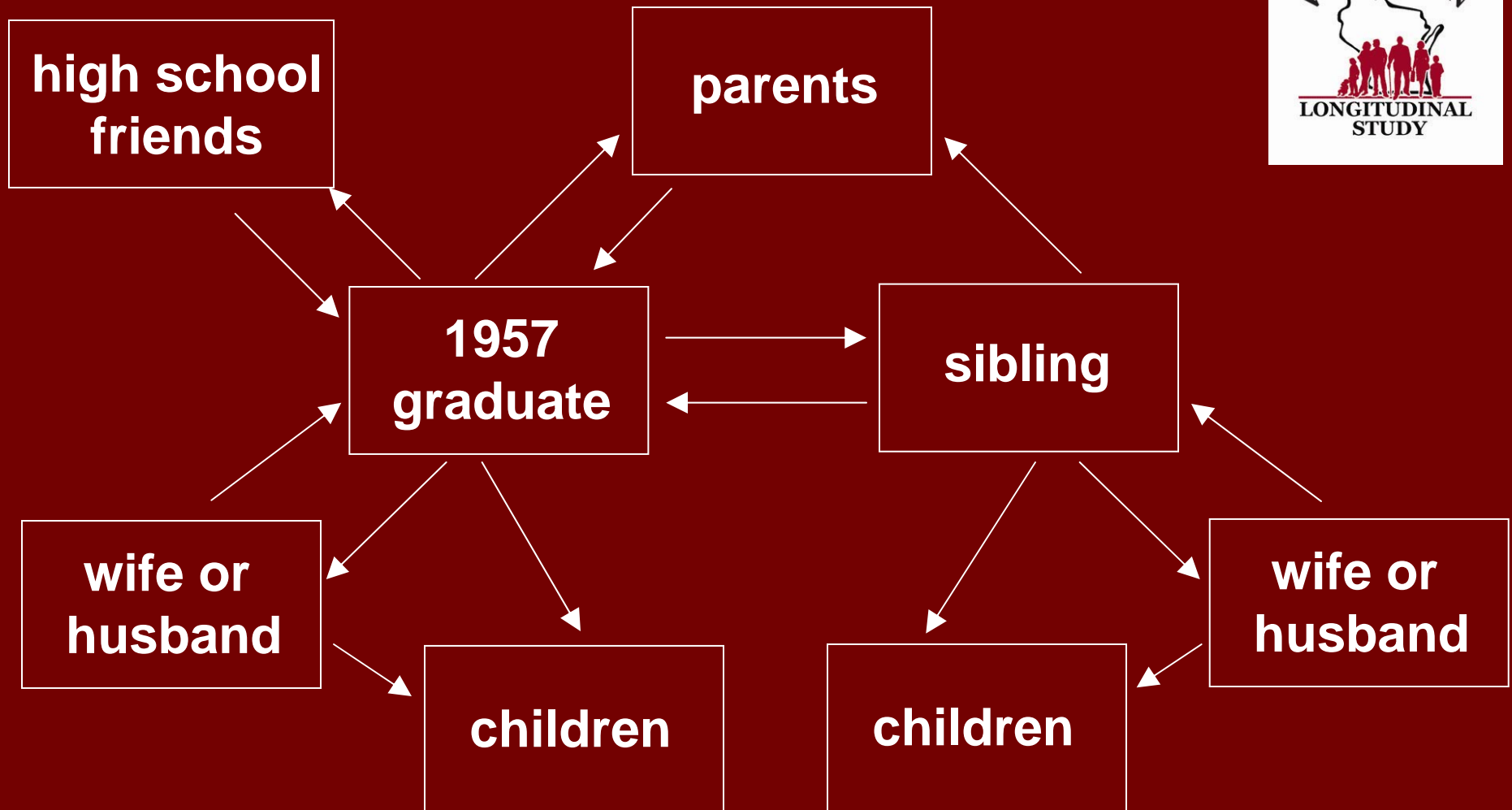


- **public** longitudinal survey data following a cohort of Wisconsin high school graduates from **ages ~18 to ~65** (and beyond)
- survey data from multiple respondents
- diverse administrative record data
- information about **many domains of respondent lives, and those of other family members**
- **high response rates**
- **small grants** for new research (wls@ssc.wisc.edu)
- however: WLS respondents are **all high school graduates and almost all whites** (rather like 2/3 of Americans of their cohort, but *not* like everyone)

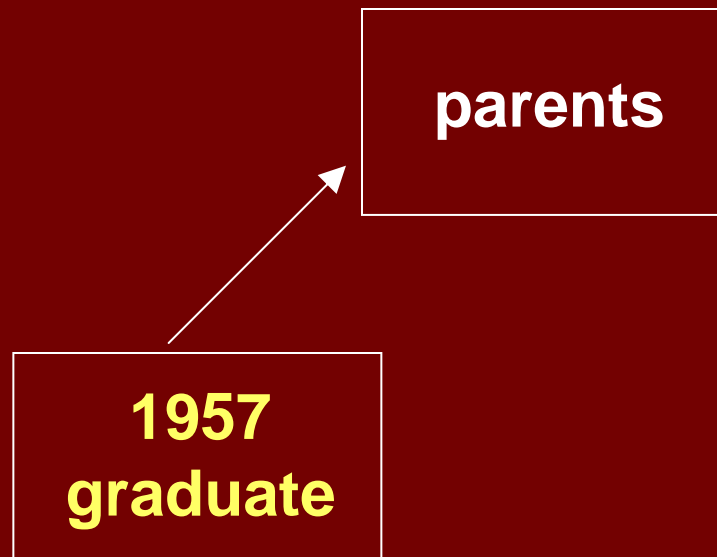
a who's who of the WLS



- J. Kenneth Little – led initial survey for the State of Wisconsin
- William H. Sewell – directed WLS from 1962 to 1980
- Robert M. Hauser – investigator/director, 1969-
- Tess Hauser – survey and data manager, 1970-
- Since 2001, Jeremy Freese, and a cast of dozens in sociology, demography, epidemiology, economics, social and cognitive psychology, industrial engineering, neuroscience, social work, psychiatry, law, nursing, and medicine



relational structure of data in the WLS

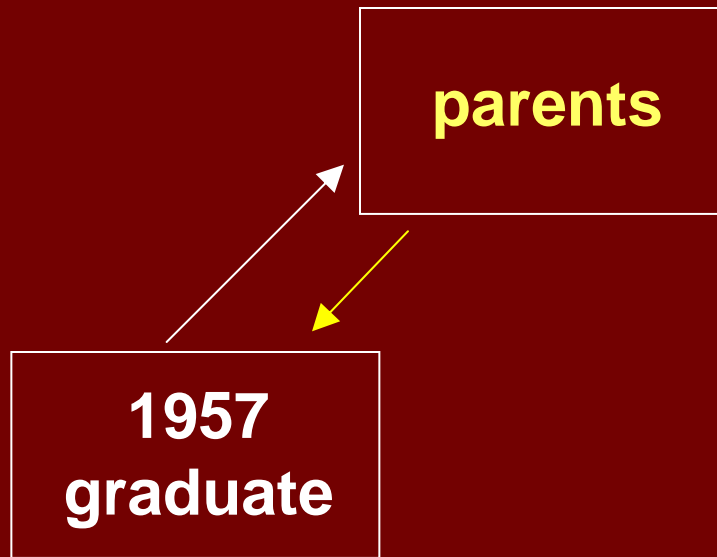


April 1957: in-school questionnaire of all Wisconsin seniors (1/3 become WLS sample, N=10,317)

the 1957 WLS survey



- social background
- courses taken in high school
- social influences (teachers, parents, peers)
- educational and occupational plans
- military and marriage plans
- parental support for college expenses



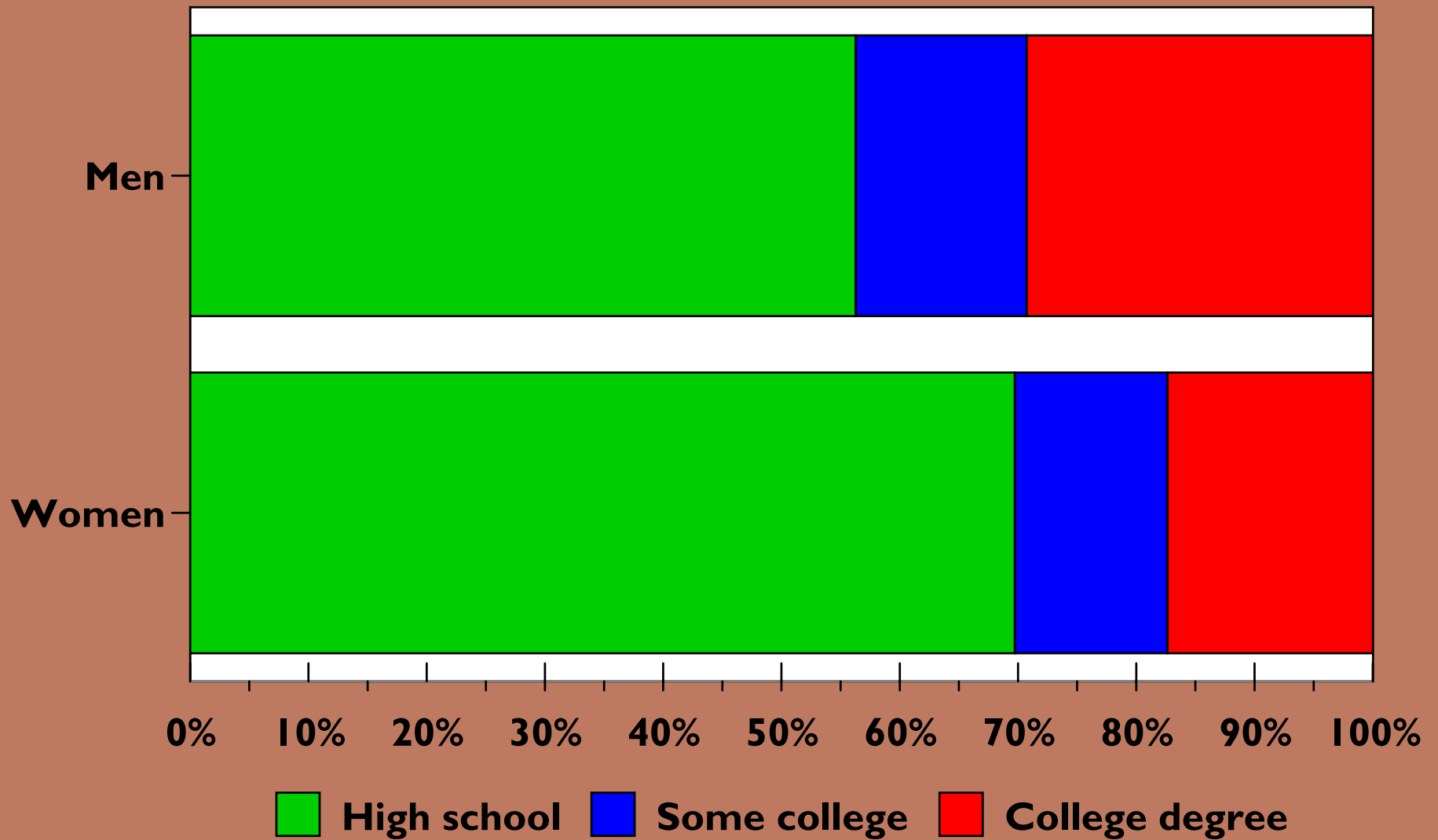
1964: short mail survey of parents, 87%

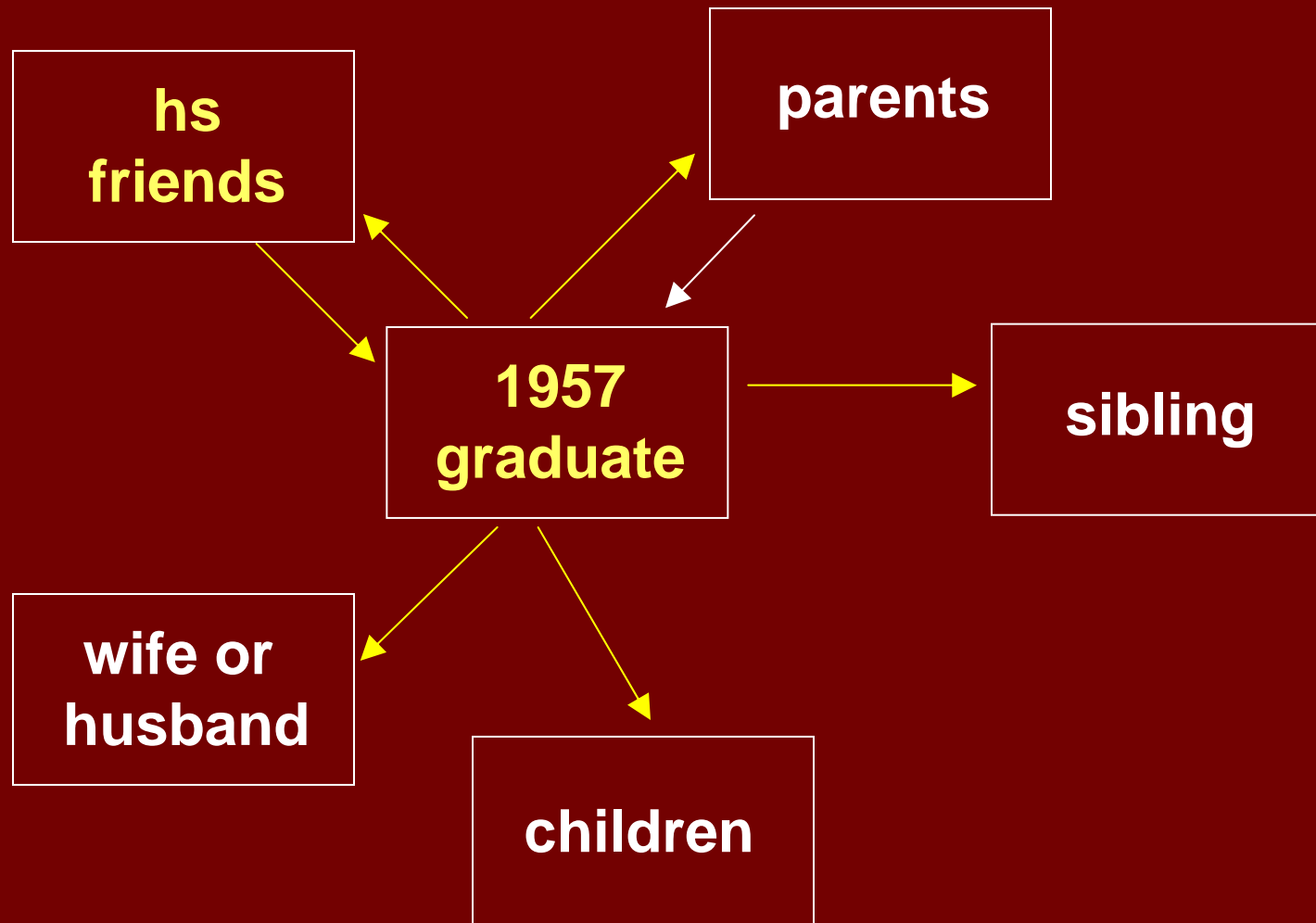
the 1964 WLS parent survey



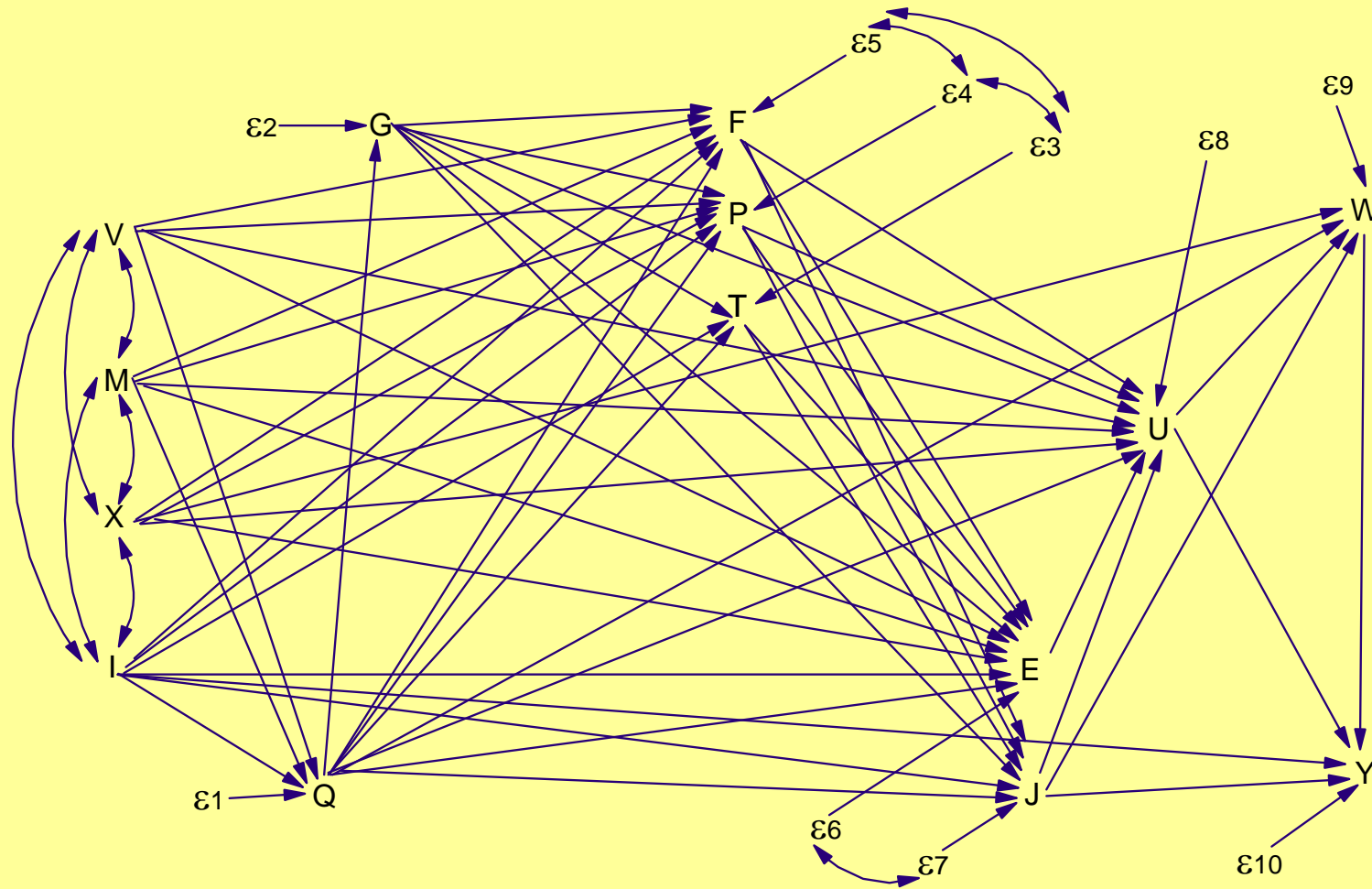
- education (college and vocational)
- military status in 1964
- 1964 occupation
- marital status in 1964
- women's husband's occupation in 1964

education by gender





1975: telephone interview with graduates, 89%

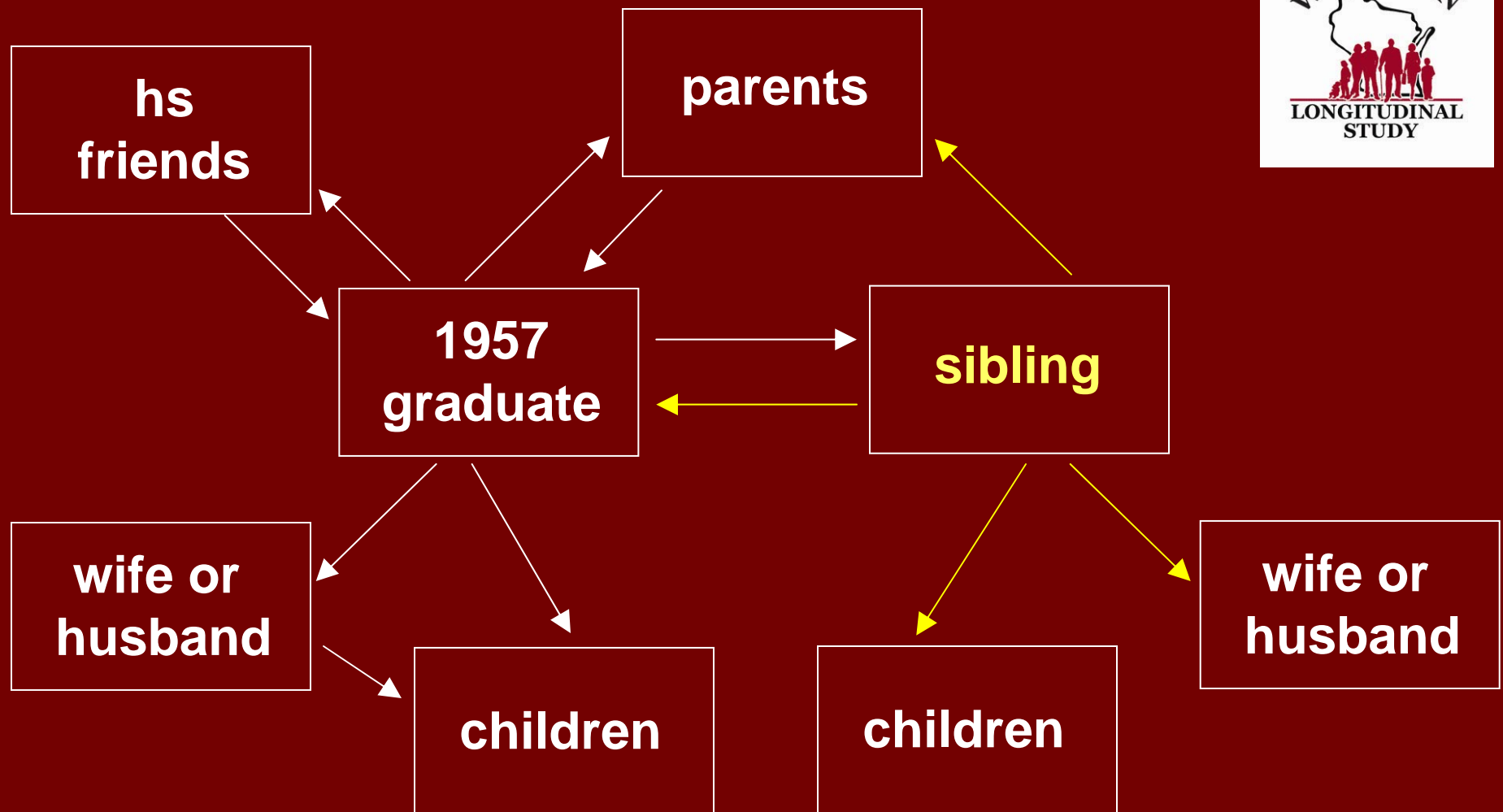


- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| V = Mother's educational attainment | G = Rank in high school class | E = College plans |
| M = Father's educational attainment | F = Friends' college plans | J = Occupational aspiration |
| X = Father's occupational status | P = Parents' encouragement to attend college | U = Educational attainment |
| I = Parents' average income | T = Teachers' encouragement to attend college | W = Status of first job |
| Q = Measured mental ability | | Y = Status of current job |

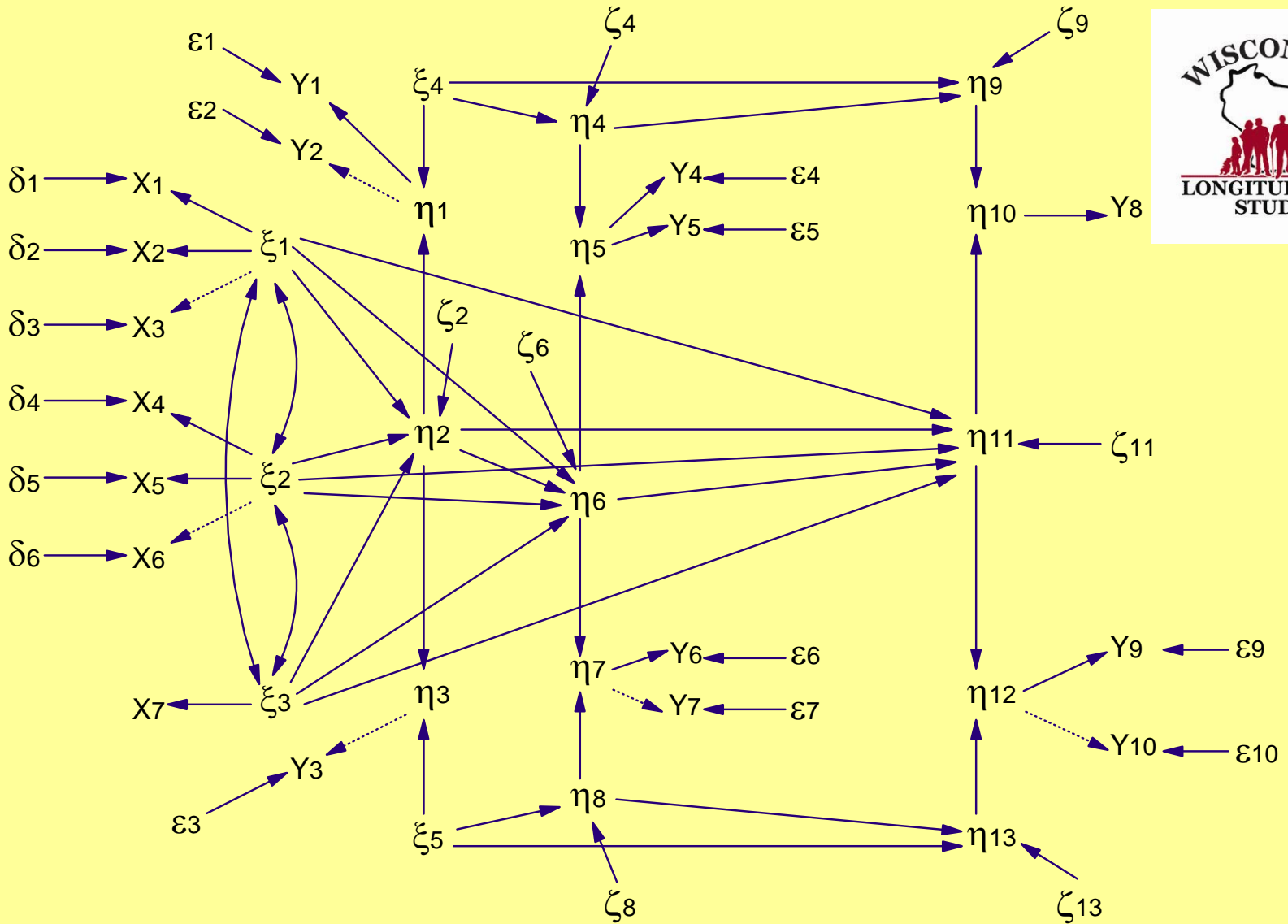
the 1975 WLS telephone survey



- social background
- education and training update
- military history
- job history and characteristics
- earnings
- marital and childbearing history
- sibling roster and characteristics
- religion and church attendance
- social participation

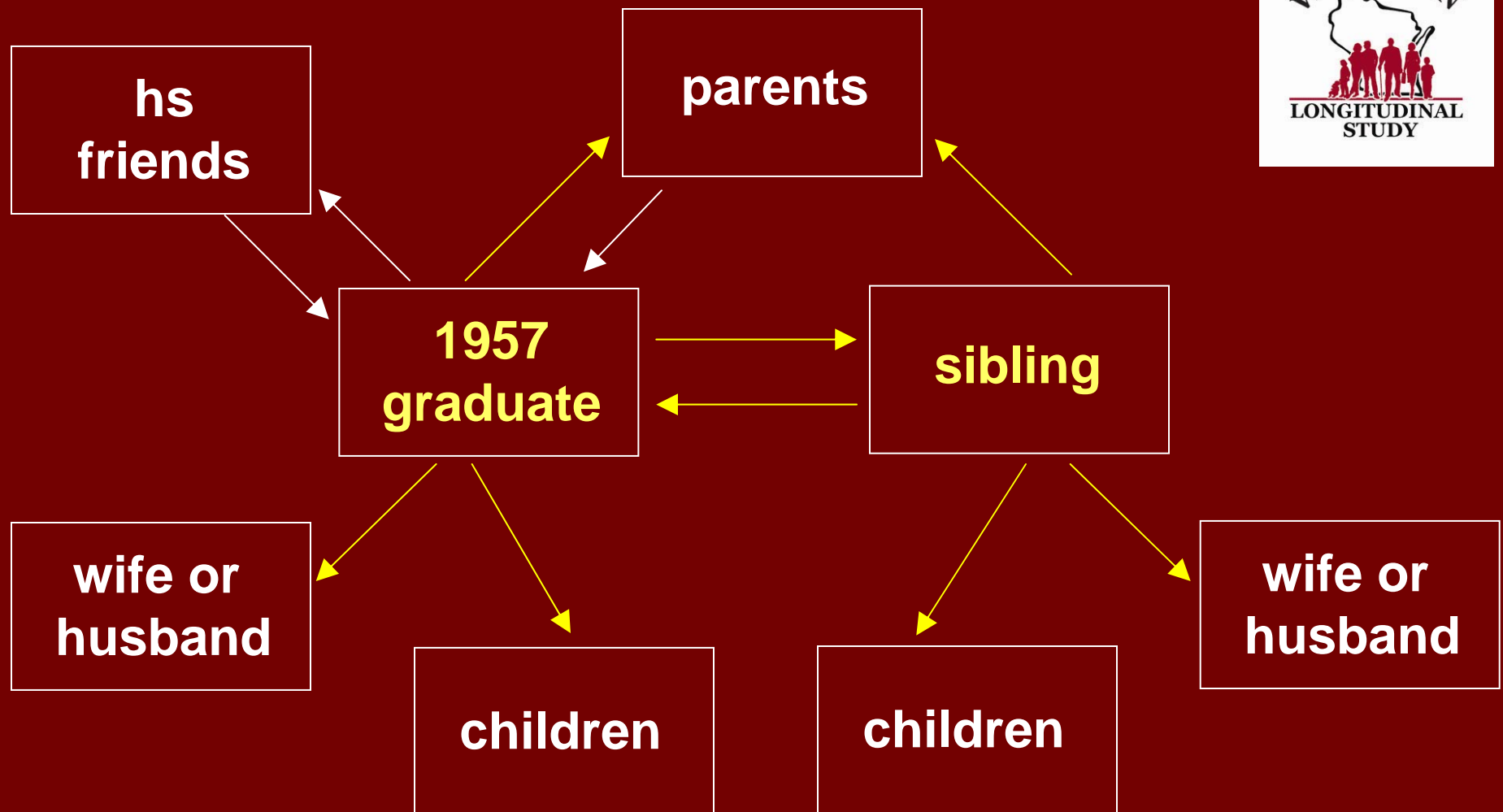


1977: subsample of 2000 randomly selected siblings surveyed by telephone, 80%



X_1, X_2, X_3 = Father's educational attainment
 X_4, X_5, X_6 = Father's occupational status
 X_7 = Number of siblings
 Y_1, Y_2 = Graduate's mental ability
 Y_3 = Sibling's mental ability

Y_4, Y_5 = Graduate's educational attainment
 Y_6, Y_7 = Sibling's educational attainment
 Y_8 = Graduate's occupational status
 Y_9, Y_{10} = Sibling's occupational status



1992-94: telephone and mail surveys of graduates (85%) and (more) siblings (80%)

the 1992-94 WLS telephone and mail surveys, 1



- social and economic variables
 - family variables and marital history
 - child roster (and selected child)
 - sibling roster (and selected sibling)
 - educational history
 - occupational history and job characteristics
 - wages, income, and assets
 - interhousehold transfers
 - insurance and pension coverage
 - retirement plans

the 1992-94 WLS telephone and mail surveys, 2



- early family relationships (abuse, encouragement)
- current social relationships
 - closeness
 - contact
 - comparison
 - caregiving
 - social exchange

the 1992-94 WLS telephone and mail surveys, 3



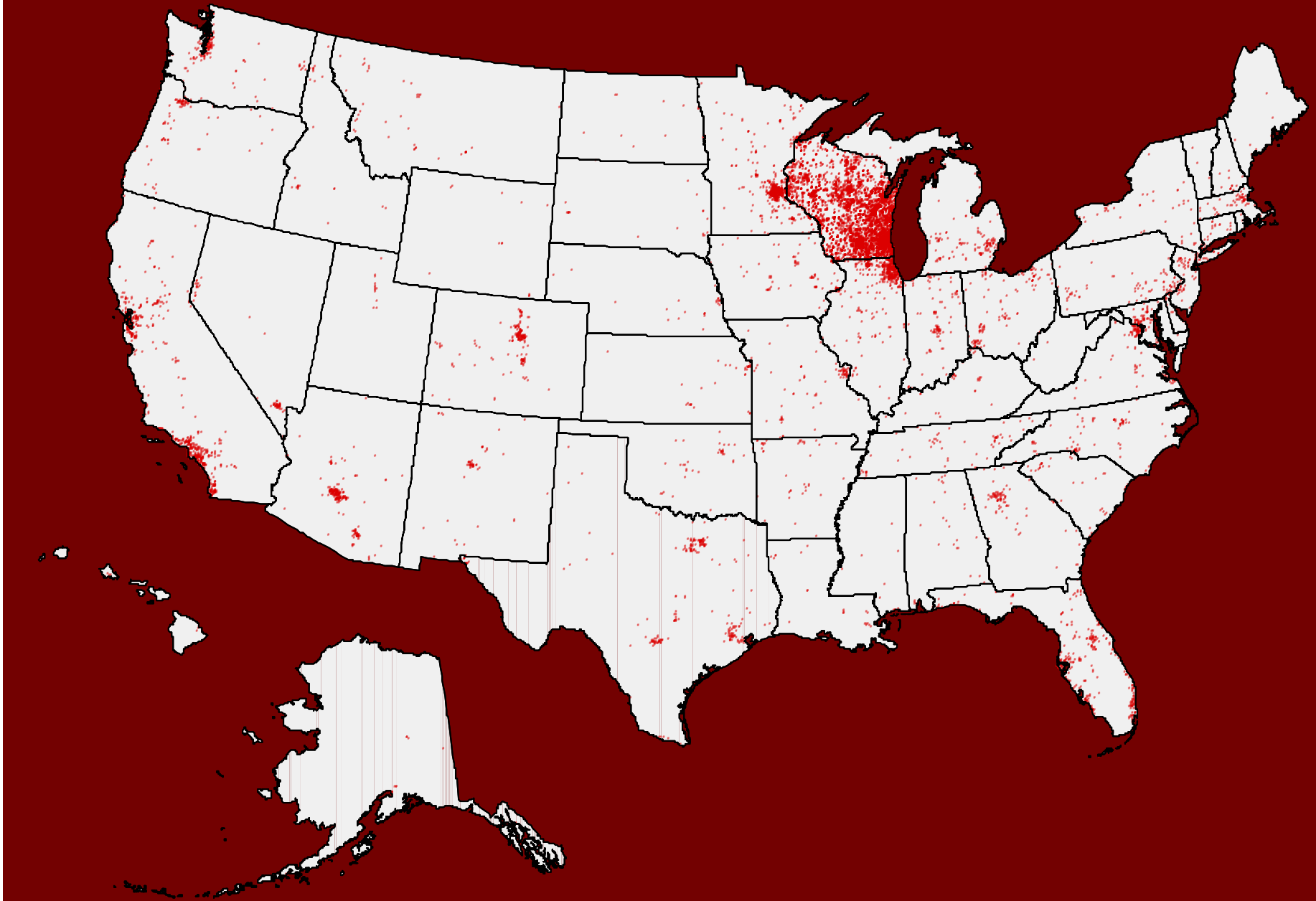
- psychological variables
 - basic personality variables (Big Five)
 - cognition (WAIS abstract reasoning)
 - depression (current and lifetime)
 - psychological well-being

the 1992-94 WLS telephone and mail surveys, 4

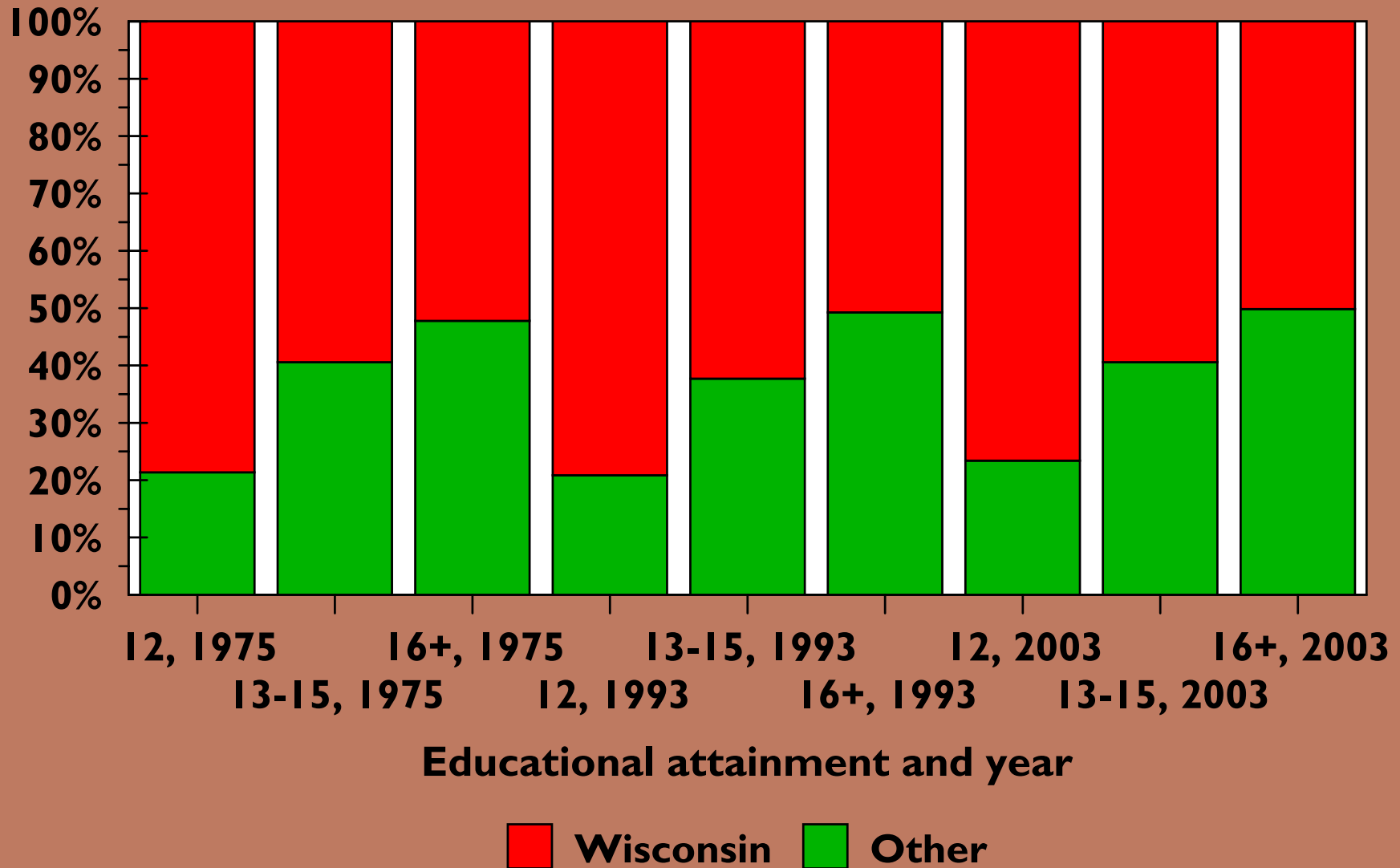


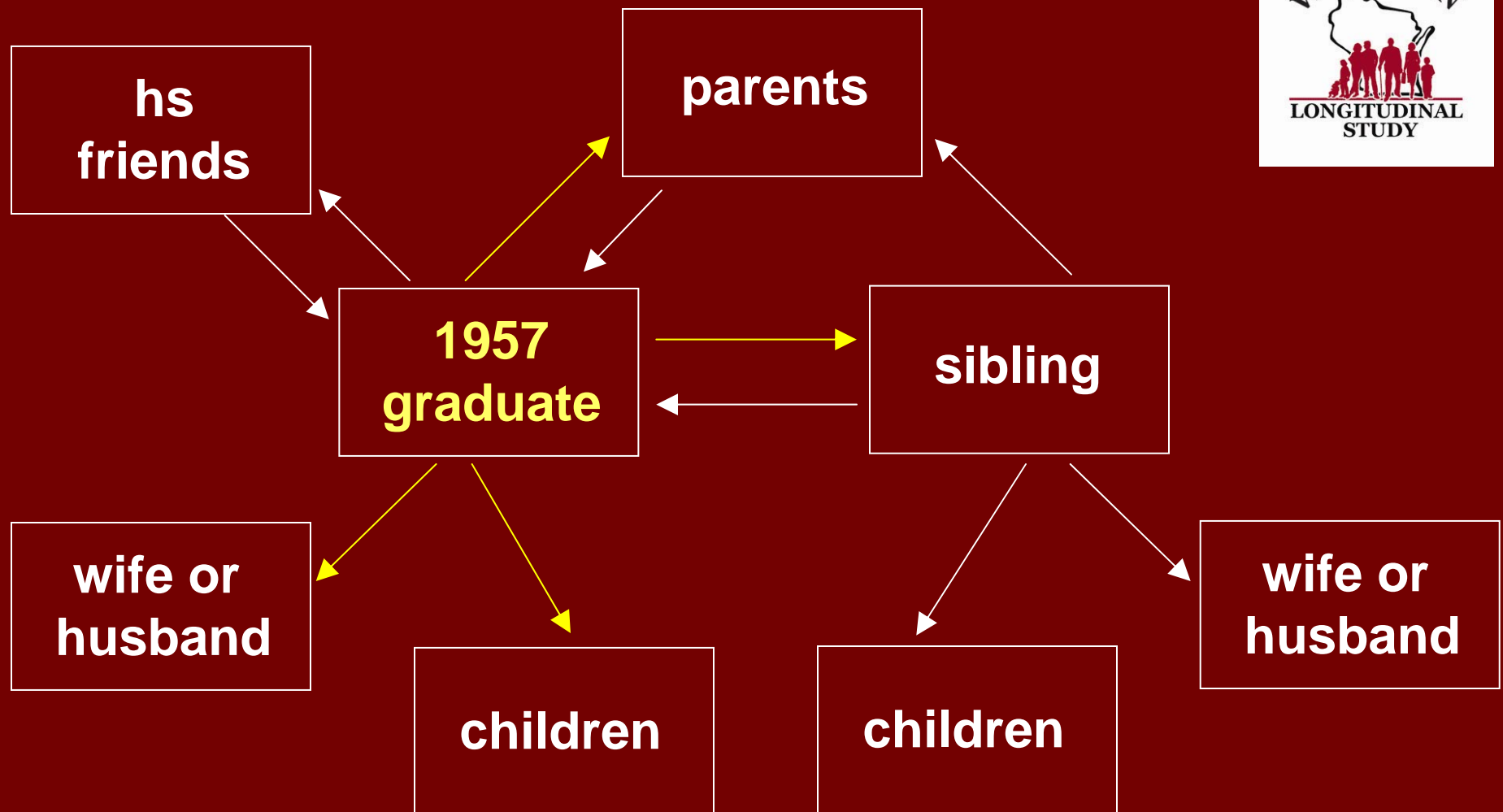
- health and health practices
 - general health
 - exercise and self-care
 - smoking and alcohol use
 - symptoms
 - medical conditions
 - menopausal experience
- social security numbers (graduates, selected siblings, [parents])

where were WLS graduates in 1992-93?

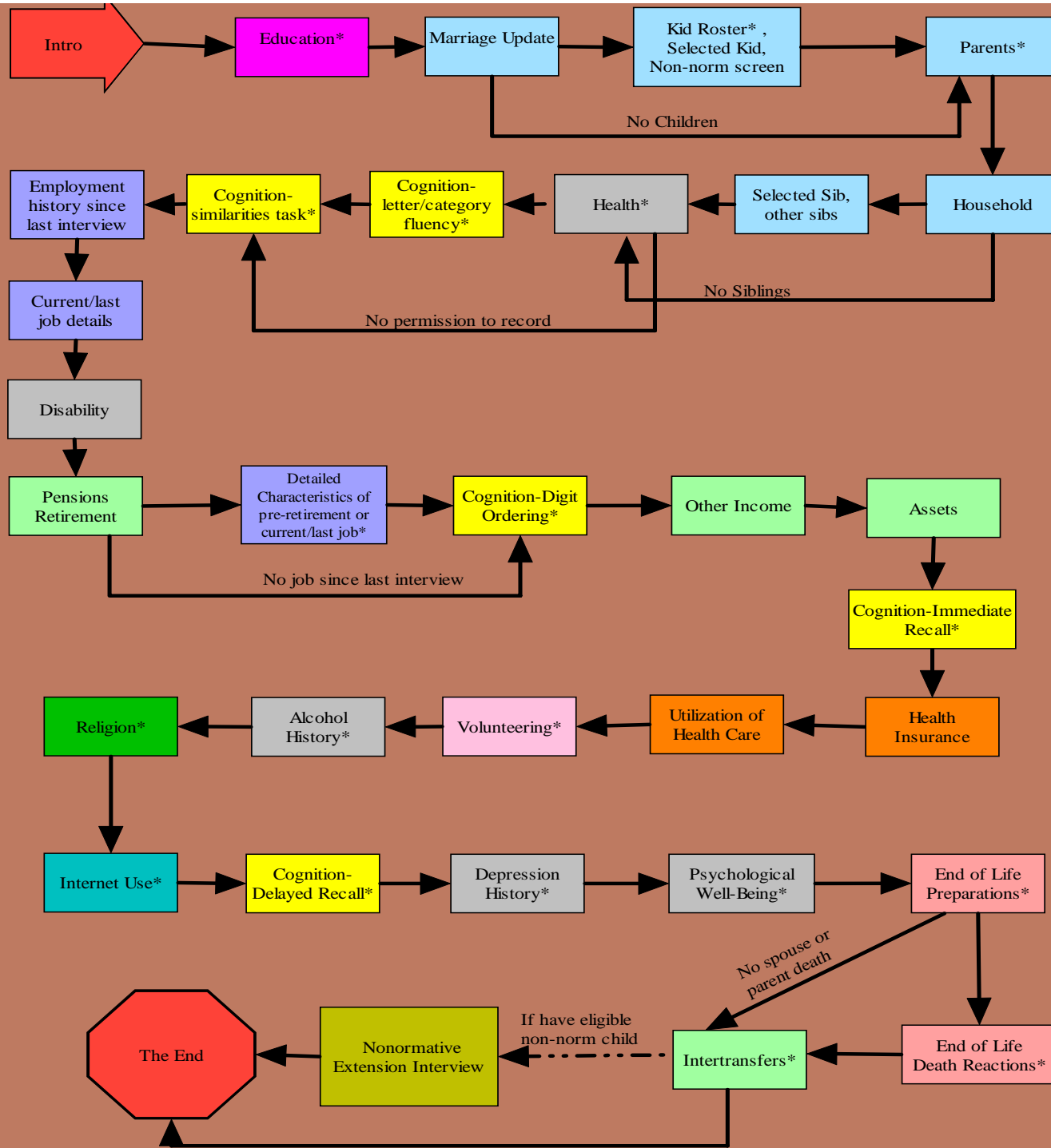


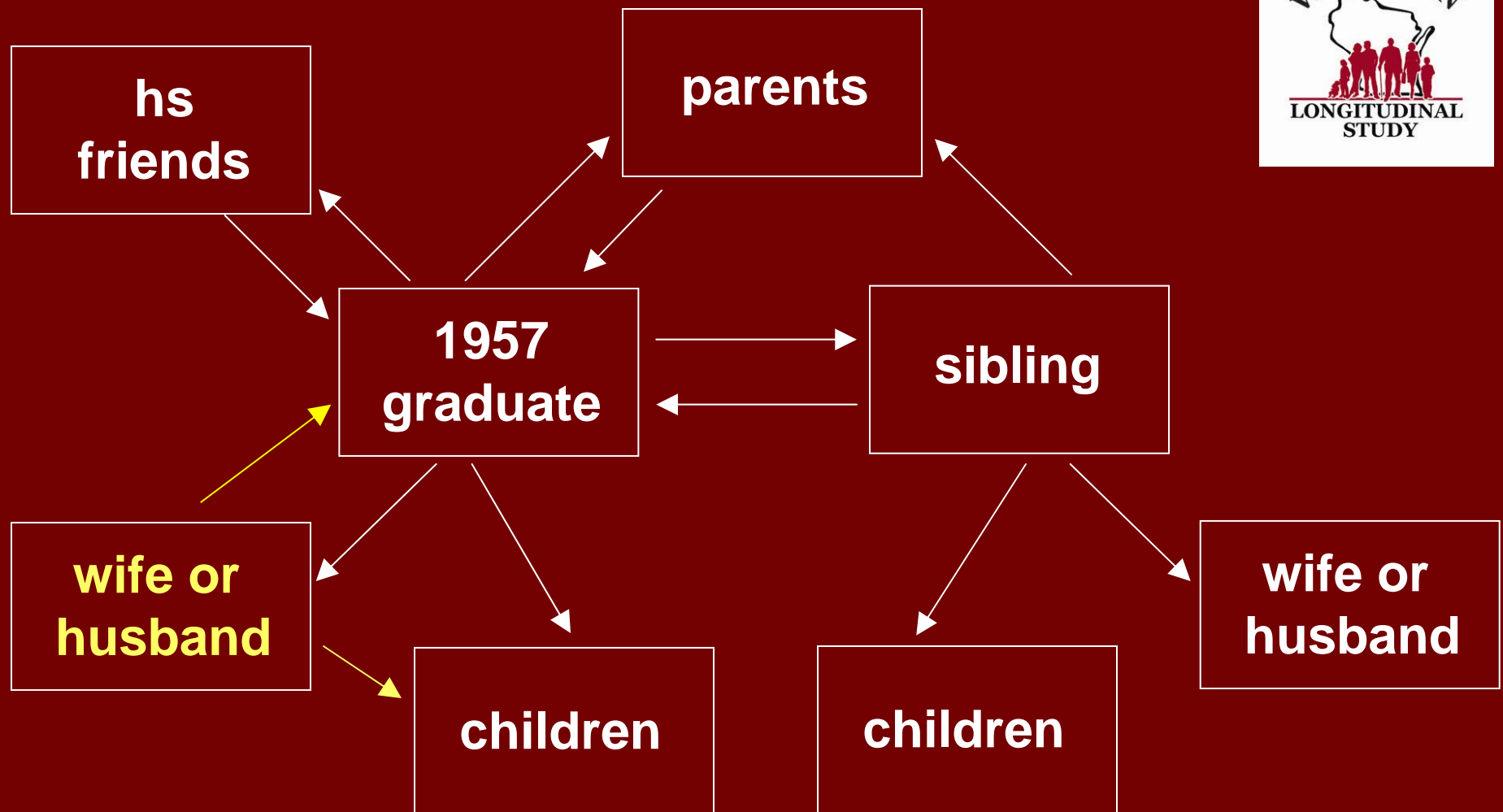
where do WLS graduates live?



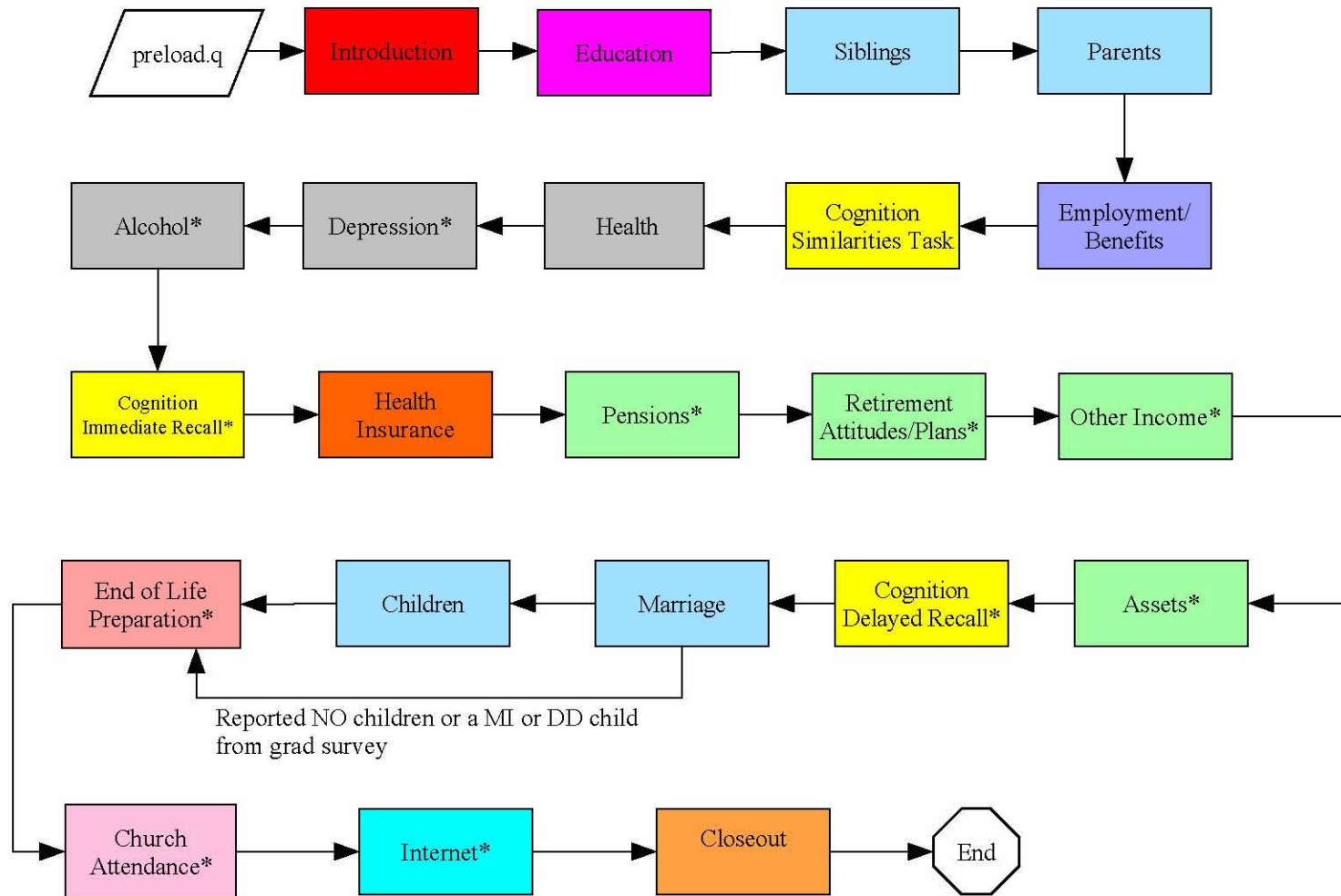


in the field: telephone (~83%) and 50+ pp. mail surveys (88%) of graduates,



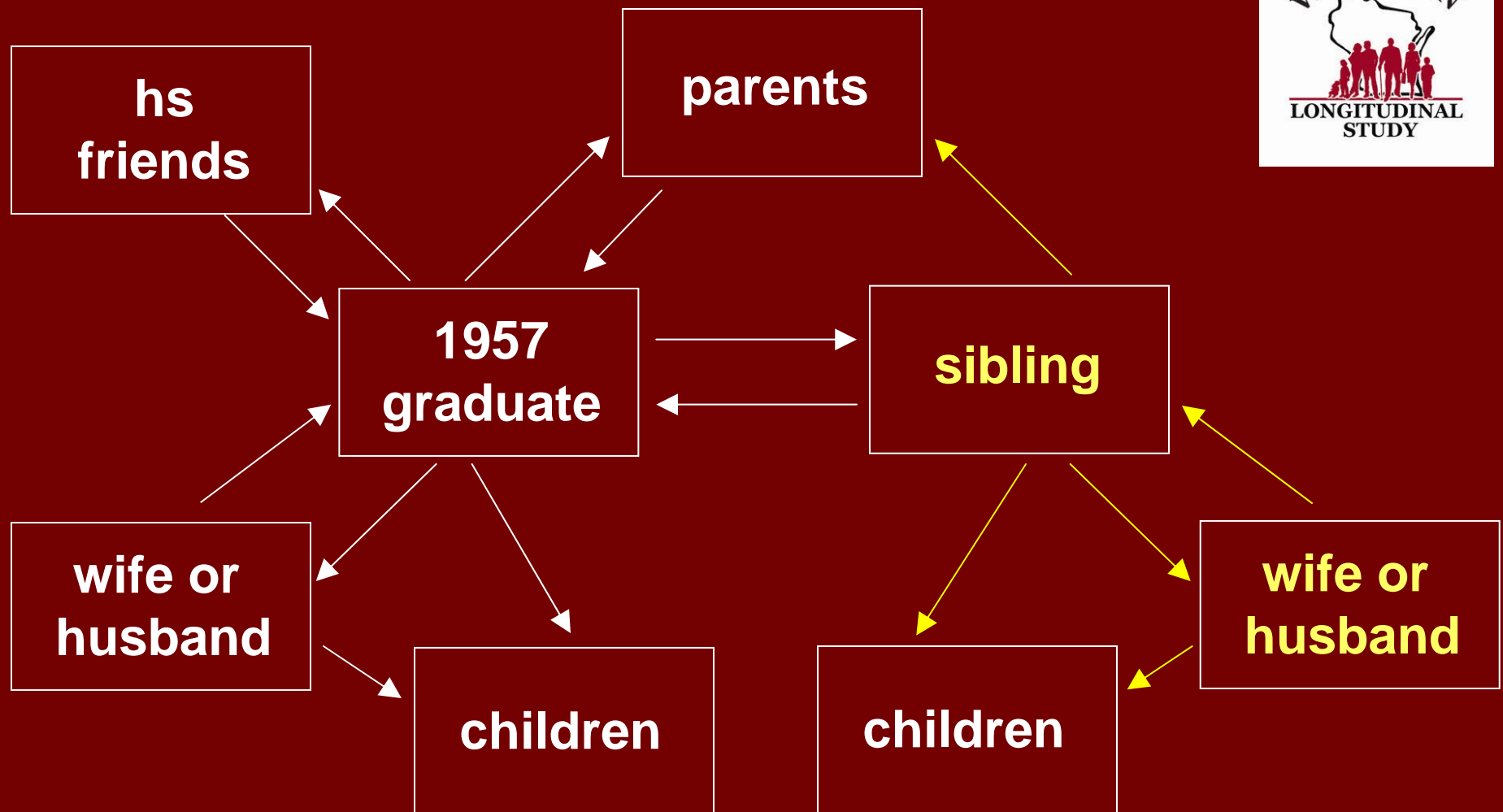


in the field: spouses (for the first time), ~70%+



*The module or some section of the module will be subsampled.

NOTE: Each box represents one Q-file and an associated audio recording.



starting shortly: surveys of siblings and their spouses

the 2003-2005 WLS telephone and mail surveys, 1



- education, employment and retirement, work activities and conditions, earnings, income, wealth, and economic transfer
- family structure, family relations, and stressful life events, coping behavior
- health, illness, psychological well-being, and mental disorder, health-related behaviors
- cognitive functioning
- circumstances of birth and upbringing

the 2003-2005 WLS telephone and mail surveys, 2



- social and civic participation and exchange relationships
- intellectual and social engagement and social isolation
- child disability, severe mental illness, and early death
- health insurance, access to health care, and pension coverage
- medical, legal, religious, and psychological preparation for the end of life

plus: much non-survey data:



- high school standardized test scores (Henmon-Nelson Test in freshman and junior years)
- high school class rank
- parents' occupation and income (tax records), 1957-60
- college and employer characteristics
- biomedical data for pilot sample
- social security earnings (men only, blind link)
- links to National Death Index
- geocodes of addresses
- high school resources (from state archives)
- high school yearbooks (for ~75% of Rs)

some domains where WLS data are especially strong



social/family

background

educational history

employment history

job characteristics

marital history

children

physical/mental health

income and wealth

retirement and pensions

cognitive performance

leisure time activities

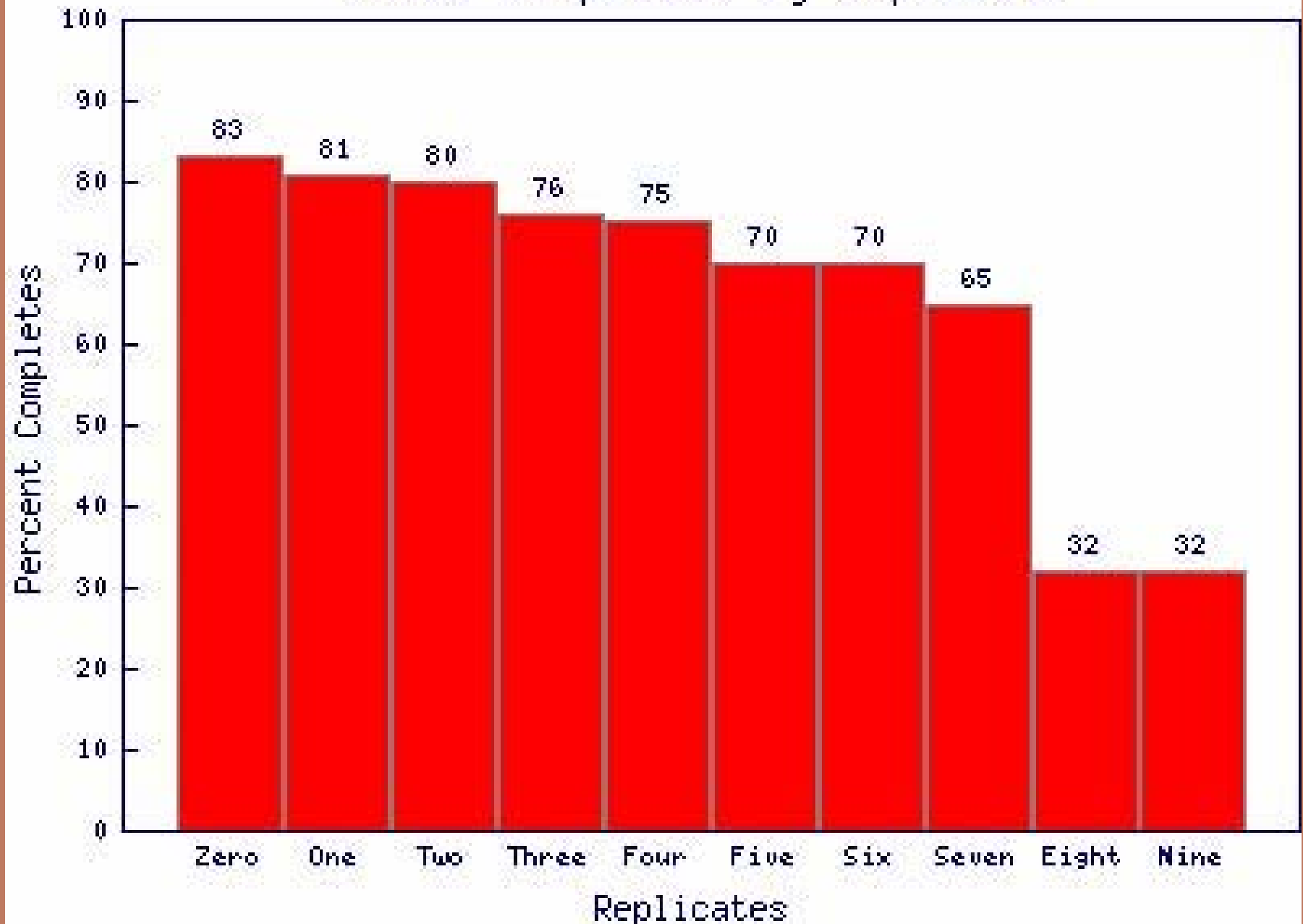
stressful life events

methodological features

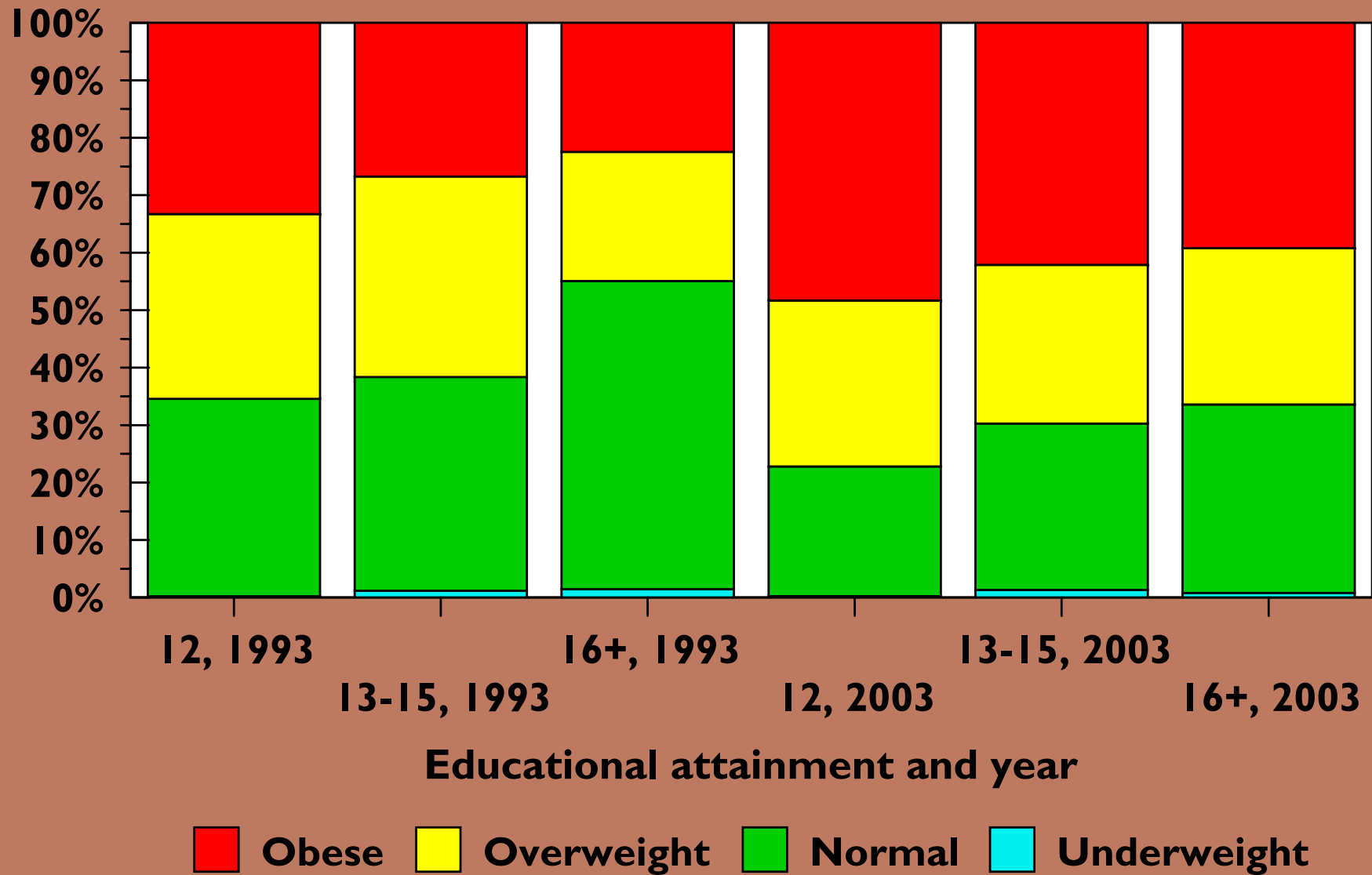


- interviews by random replicates
- bracketing amounts with random anchors
- selecting special children (supplemental interview and survey)
- cognitive measurement
- health vignettes (WHS)
- DRQ/ERM (Kahneman)
- recording interviews

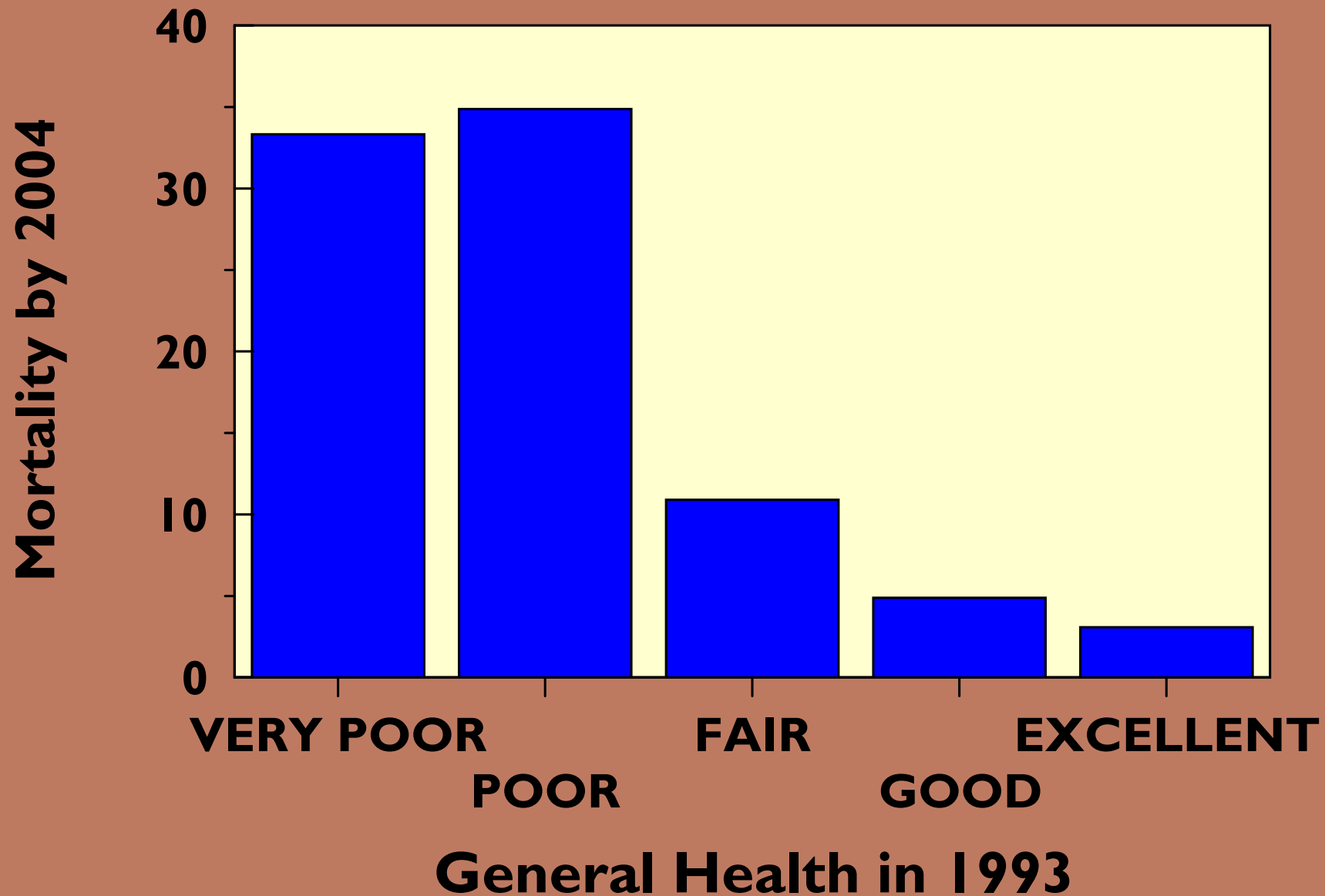
P9351 Completes by Replicate



women's obesity by education and year



Mortality by general health in 1993



availability/access of wls data



- commitment to easy public availability of all permissible data
- cross-reference tables on web to facilitate use of WLS codebooks
- longitudinal data with a large sampling fraction provides particular challenges for maintaining confidentiality
- CDHA at UW has and is continuing to develop a strong system for secure data analysis

levels of access to WLS data



outsiders investigators leaders

public (web)	X	X	X
private (UW SSC)		X	X
restricted (CDHA)	X	X	X
identifiers			X

WLS websites



- respondent web
 - <http://wisls.org>
- public data users
 - <http://dpls.dacc.wisc.edu/wls/index.html>
 - documentation
 - bibliography
 - variable search aids
 - downloadable data
- private web
 - [proposals, instruments, manuscripts](#)

WLS support



- Questions?
 - email wls@ssc.wisc.edu
- Wisconsin Longitudinal Study
University of Wisconsin-Madison
1180 Observatory Drive
Madison, Wisconsin 53706
- small grants program
 - short applications
 - two meetings in Madison (fall and summer)
 - modest honorarium

Telling the Story of Wisconsin's Class of 1957





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Currently funded by National Institute on Aging