

PAA Annual Conference 2025 – Washington DC

April 11, 2025

Neighborhood Disadvantage and Residential Mobility from Early Life into Adulthood: Impacts on Socio-Economic Outcomes

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Understanding spatial mobility
from early life into adulthood

**European Research Council
Consolidator Grant (CoG)**

Ref: 101043981

Period: Jan 2023 – Dec 2027



European Research Council
Established by the European Commission

Persistence and change in residential environment shape socio-economic outcomes

- Exposure to **disadvantaged neighborhoods** in childhood can lead to cumulative disadvantage and lower long-term attainment (Chetty et al., 2016; Brandén & Haandrikman, 2023)
- **Residential mobility** alters contextual exposure, potentially offering upward mobility—but frequent or forced moves can disrupt stability and reinforce disadvantage (South & Deane, 1993; Boyle et al., 2018).
- Selection into neighborhoods complicates causal inference, especially among those with residential choice (Oreopoulos, 2003; van Ham & Manley, 2010).

Despite the interrelatedness of residential contexts and mobility over the life course...

- The bulk of research still assesses **residential contexts and mobility separately**
- Research is **life stage specific**, despite socio-spatial dynamics in adulthood can amplify or mitigate earlier disadvantages

Assess neighborhood disadvantage and residential mobility since birth as interconnected socio-spatial processes shaping socio-economic outcomes in early midlife

1. Whether context disadvantage and residential mobility accumulates from birth and over the life course to collectively influence socio-economic attainment (**Long-term cumulative associations**)
2. Whether the effects of context disadvantage and mobility on socio-economic attainment vary by age at exposure (**Critical periods**)
3. Whether recent socio-spatial dynamics can mitigate the role of earlier socio-spatial disadvantages for socio-economic attainment (**Lifetime dynamics of persistence and change**)

Data come from Swedish linked registers available for scientific use

- Individuals born between 1990 and 1993 who remained in Sweden until 2022, though short gaps of up to one year were allowed (N=467,219)

Measures

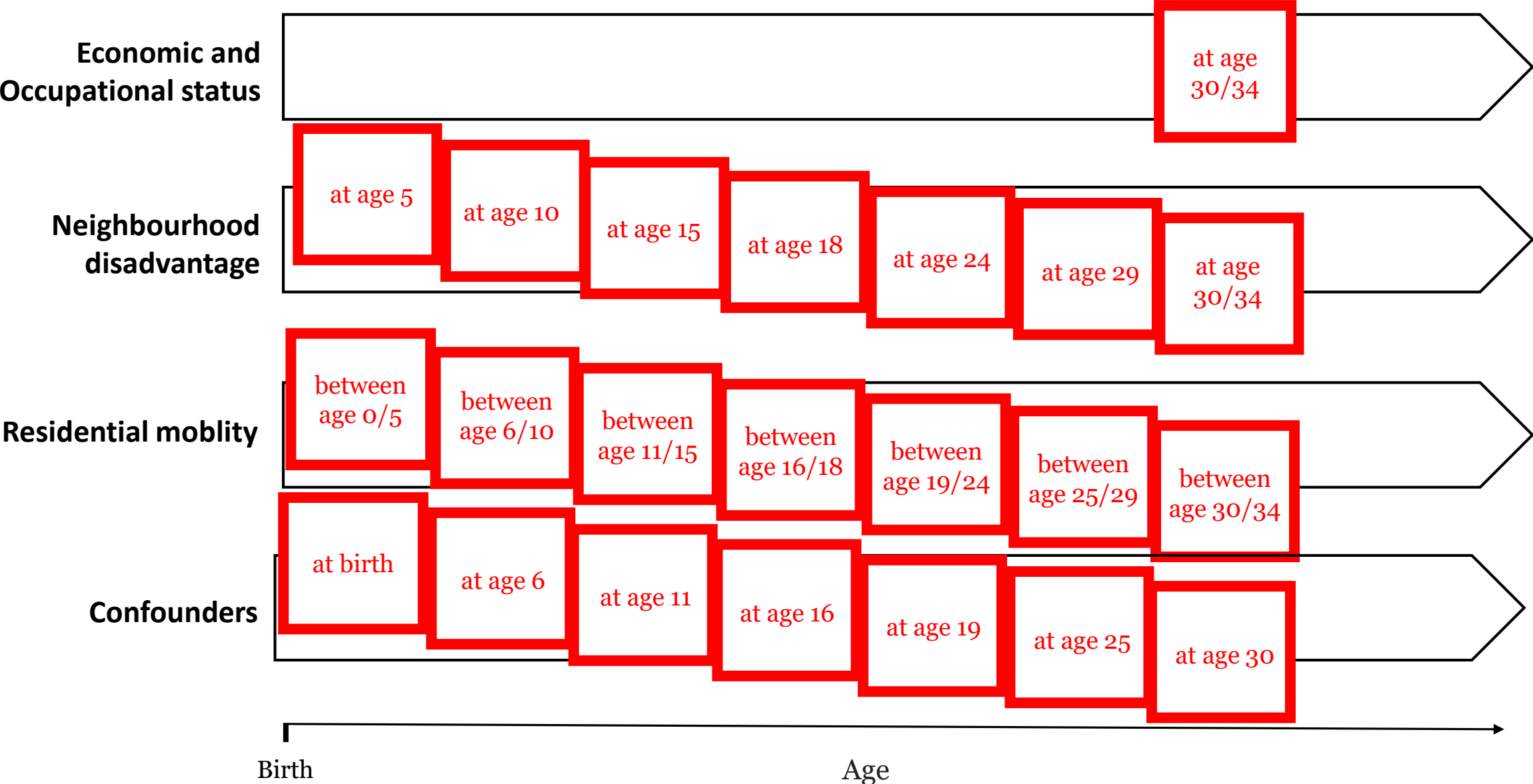
- **Socio-economic outcomes**

- (i) Economic: income higher than 8 IBA (advantage); in social welfare (disadvantage)
- (ii) Occupational: in an upper-class occupation (advantage); in working-class occupation (disadvantage)

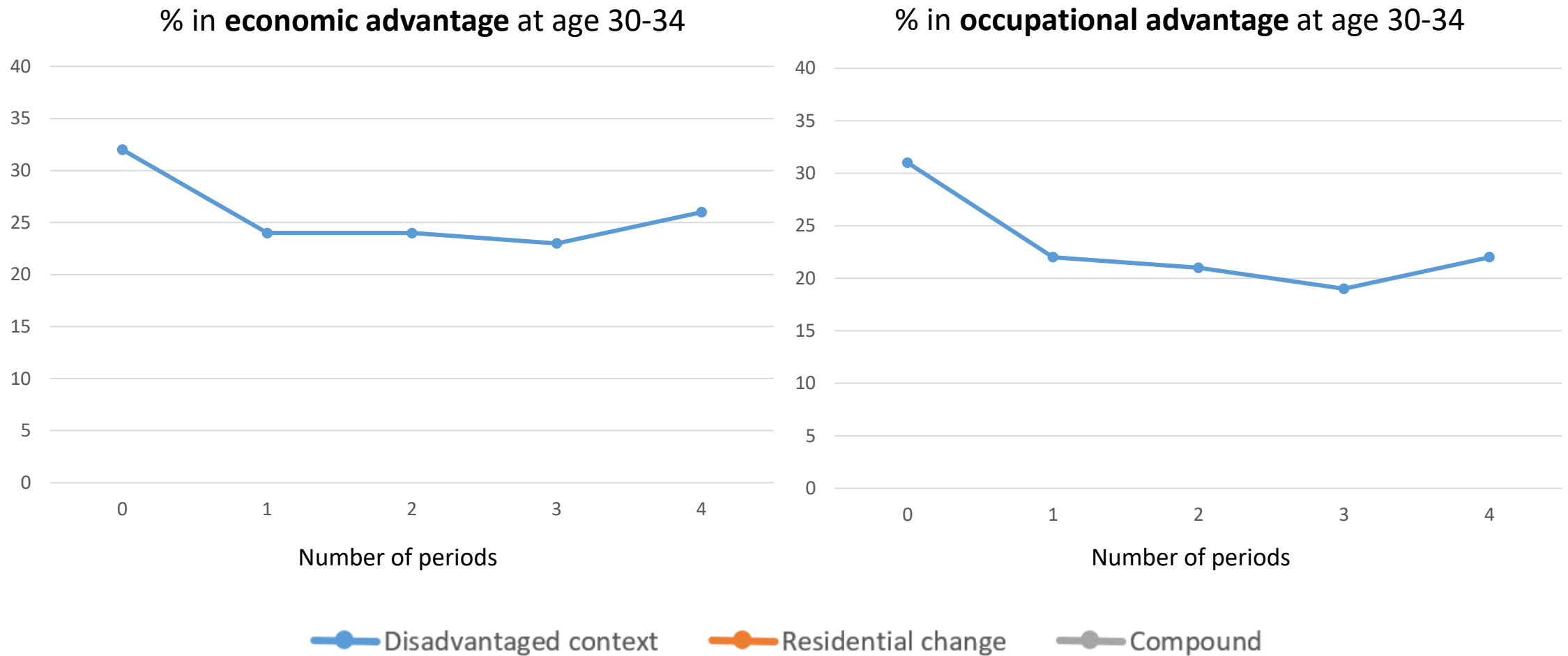
- **Socio-spatial dynamics**

- (i) Disadvantage context: residence in a DeSO area at the bottom quintile of an index of context advantage
- (ii) Residential mobility: Change in DeSO area (any type)

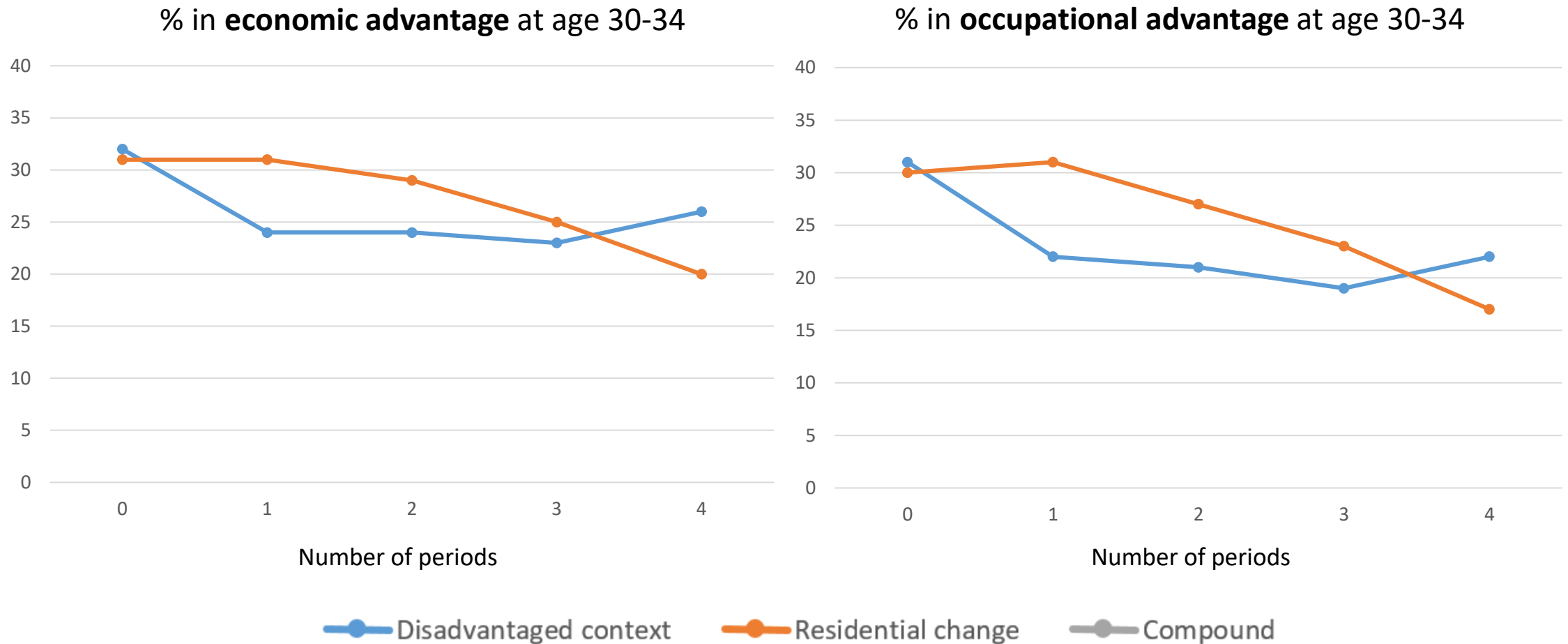
- **Confounders:** gender, birth cohort, migrant background, parental education, non-intact family, sibship size (in next iteration: educational attainment, employment status and family status)



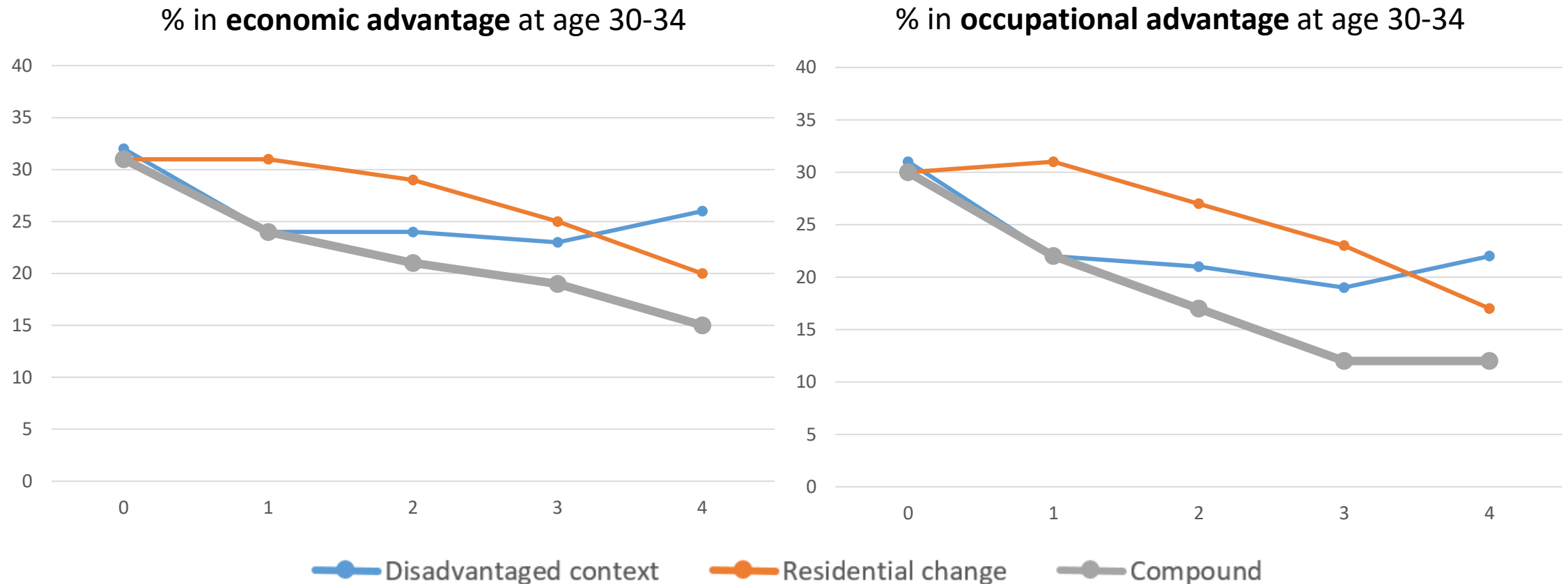
Cumulative exposures to residential context and mobility during childhood



Cumulative exposures to residential context and mobility during childhood

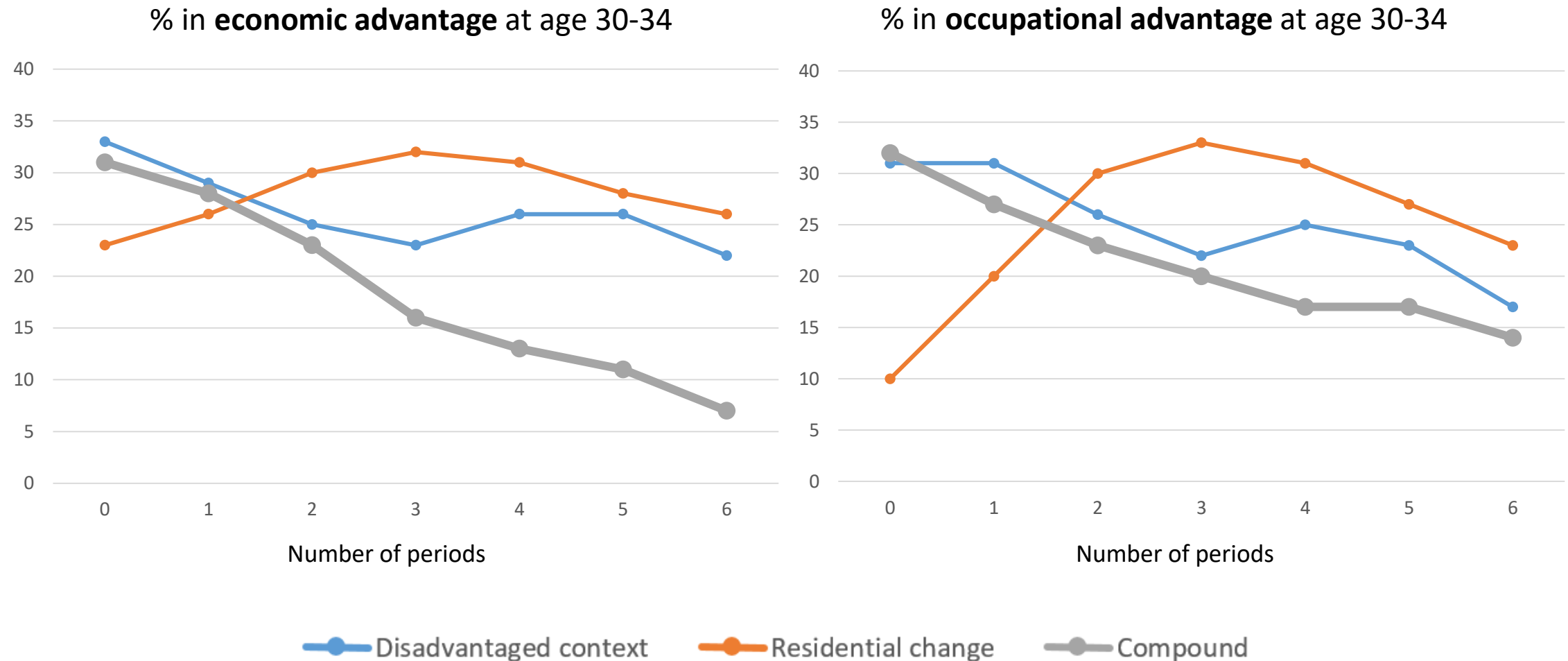


Cumulative exposures to residential context and mobility during childhood



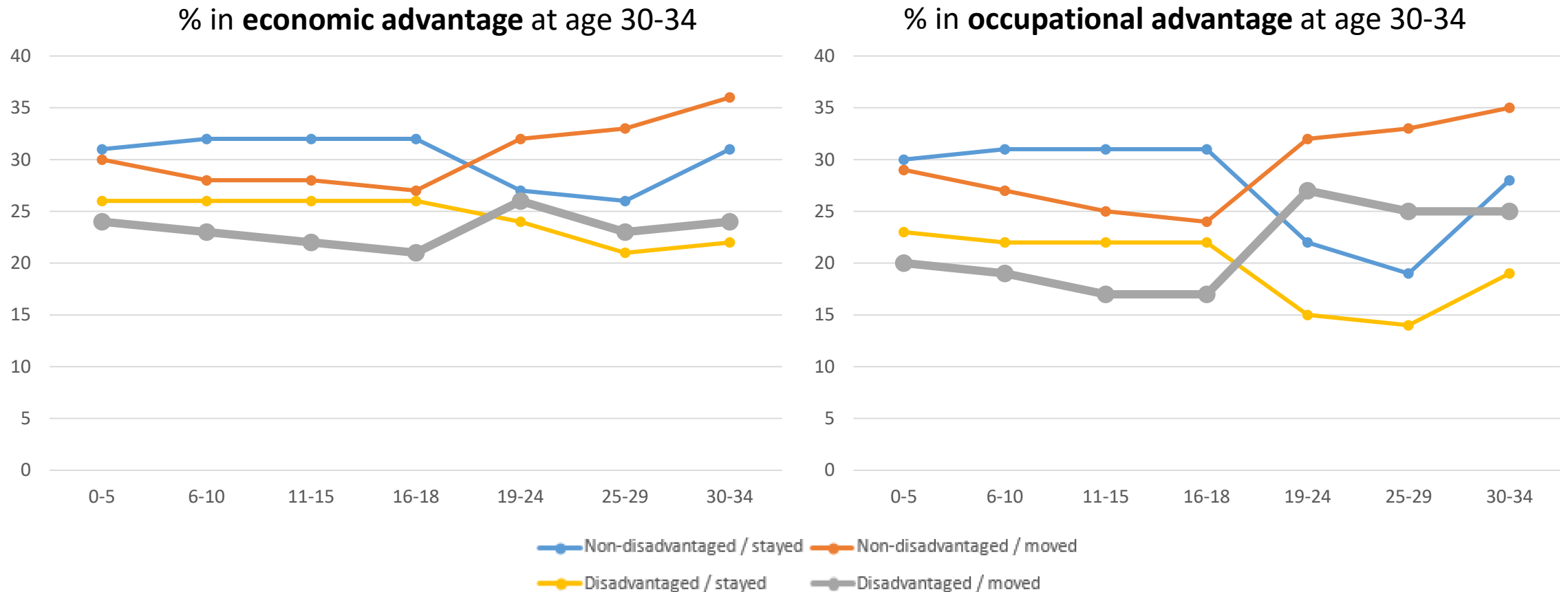
Socio-economic advantage decreases as cumulative exposure to **contextual disadvantage** and **residential mobility** increases throughout childhood.

Cumulative exposures to residential context and mobility in childhood and early adulthood



The cumulative pattern of combined exposure intensifies in adulthood.

Age-specific exposures to residential context and mobility



Context disadvantage combined with residential mobility (within or into such context)
is most detrimental in childhood

Cumulative effects of residential context and mobility on socio-economic outcomes

- Prolonged exposures to disadvantaged neighborhoods are more harmful when combined with (frequent) **residential mobility** (within or into such contexts)
- Among those who persist in disadvantaged contexts, **residential stability** acts as a buffer

Residential mobility (cumulative)

Age-specific effects of residential context and mobility on socio-economic outcomes

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- The combination of residential mobility and neighbourhood disadvantage is particularly harmful when experienced **in more recent periods in adult ages** than in earlier periods

Age 30-34

-0.134***

-0.090***

Lifetime dynamics of persistence and change in residential context and mobility on socio-economic outcomes

Economic

Occupational

- Socio-spatial dynamics in adult ages, if any, **amplify rather than mitigate** the negative impacts of socio-spatial disadvantage experienced in childhood.

E.g. Limited role of residence in non-disadvantaged areas and mobility in adulthood, among individuals exposed to context disadvantage in childhood

Child & adult mobility
Child context disadvantage only*
Child mobility only

0.017

0.022

Takeaway – Neighbourhood disadvantage and residential mobility are interrelated processes, and need to be collectively considered to improve our understanding of the reproduction of socio-economic inequality over the life course.

Next steps

- Further unpacking the interrelatedness, e.g. moves into/within/out of disadvantaged contexts
- Adjust for life course factors, assessing the role of time-varying confounders in the context of repeated treatments



Special Issue initiated by the IUSSP Panel Lifetime Migration

We invite submissions of papers that

- Recognize the heterogeneity of migration behaviors in individual lives
- Integrate research on internal and international migration
- Establish how migration trajectories underlie individual and societal wellbeing

Check out the website

<https://www.iussp.org/en/panel/lifetime-migration>



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Thank you!

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