A stylized, light-colored illustration of a plant with several leaves and a cluster of small, round buds or flowers, positioned on the left side of the slide against a dark blue background.

Barriers to social participation in later life – fear of crime and fear of young people

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Planned research

- Investigate the impact of ageing on social participation through the lens of crime
- Analyses of cross-sectional data over a 'long' period (1984 to date) of time plus analyses of datasets with reference to place, deprivation, health, and other socio-demographic factor may lead to new insights
- Potentially, analyses of other datasets available – e.g. ELSA (English Longitudinal Study of Ageing); European Social Survey 2008, included a special module on ageing

Feedback cycle

- Built-in feedback cycle for the research, which will start in 2017
- Presenting preliminary findings to relevant audiences to ensure that findings ‘make sense’ and resonate
- Relate statistical evidence to narratives that provide context to allow effective communication

Background

Some academic and policy literature on ageing and crime suggest:

- Fear of crime is a serious problem for the elderly (for a summary, see Ziegler & Mitchell, 2003)
- Intergenerational relationships are deteriorating causing an increase in stereotyping of young people and an increase in fear of crime among older people (Moore & Statham, 2006)

BUT significant progress in ageing research and research on fear of crime

Policy examples

- CPS Policy for Prosecuting Crimes against Older People – defined as 60+; specific reference is made to ‘the right to live free from the fear of crime’
- Specific community safety strategies for older people in Northern Ireland targeted at reducing fear of crime; Ireland – policing strategy to increase trust and confidence by lessening the fear of crime
- Opportunity Age Strategy (2005) – tackling fear of crime; Ageing Well programme (2010-2012) – intergenerational programmes

Understanding ageing better

- Increasingly, experiences of ageing are accepted as heterogeneous
- The life course has become less standardised
- Our understanding of the ageing process and the different stages of ageing have become more sophisticated and nuanced
- Key models of ageing – lifespan model and bio-medical model – and the notion of ageing as a process of decline leading to withdrawal from society; isolation; loneliness; ill-health; and poverty are being questioned

Evidence on fear of crime

- Fear of crime paradox – women and older people are more fearful of crime but less at risk of victimisation (e.g. Gilchrist, 1998, et al.)
- Distinction between anxiety about crime (more widespread) and everyday worry about crime (relatively rare) – anxiety may be linked to ‘lay diagnoses about neighbourhood breakdown and stability’ (Farrall, 2007, 23)
- Distinction between ‘feelings of safety’ and assessments of actual ‘risk of victimisation’

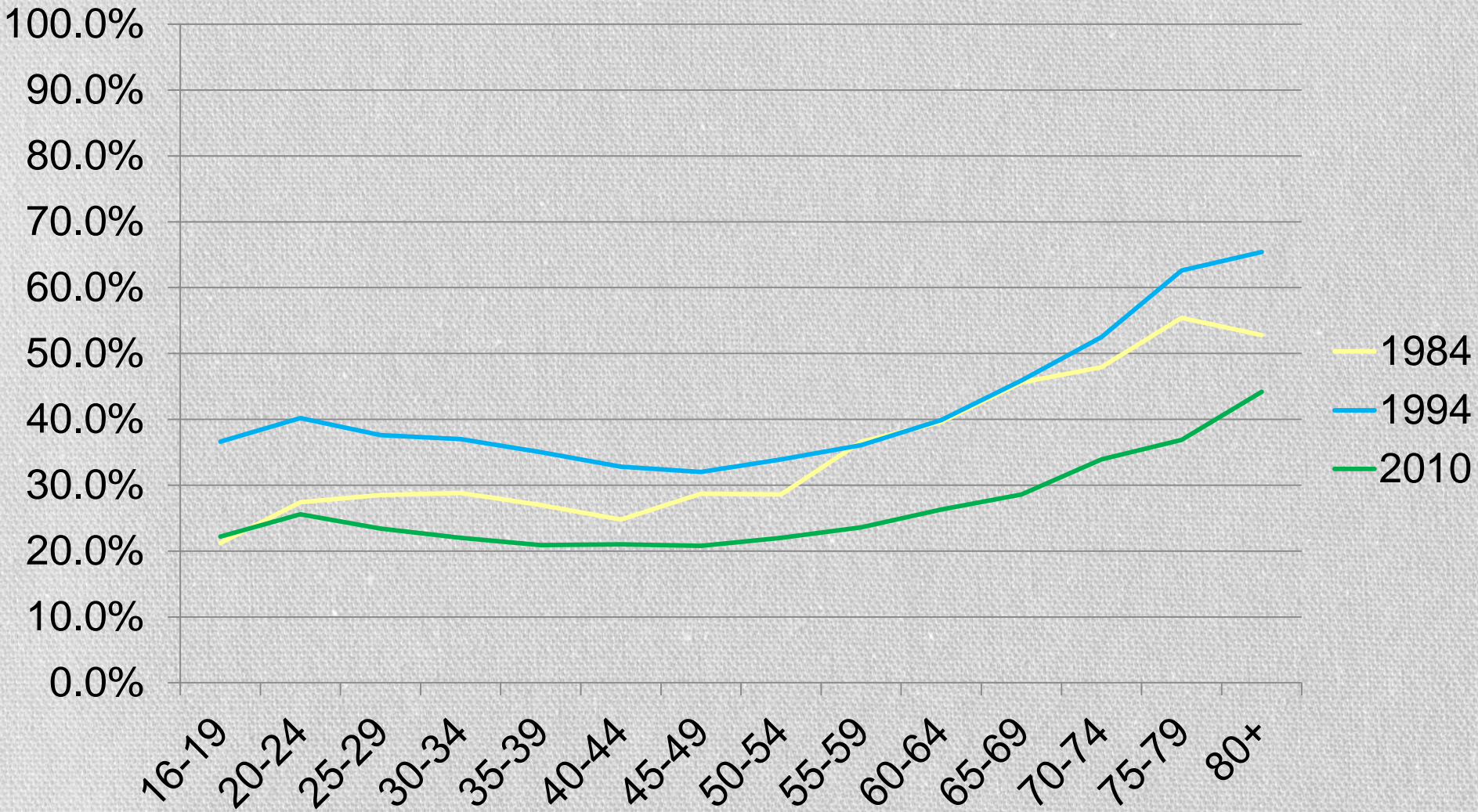
Evidence of link between fear of crime and ageing?

- Ferraro & LaGrange, 1992, 241-242: “older people are not more likely than younger people to be afraid of crime” – “growing older does not” ... “increase the likelihood of fear of crime”
- Moore, 2010, 22: “The fear of crime paradox... has been based on an over-simplistic analysis of the relationship of crime and age”

Exploratory secondary analyses

- Analyses of a selection of key variables by age across three sets of British Crime Survey (now Crime Survey for England and Wales) data
- Reconfiguration of data to explore cohort effects – the British Crime Survey is not a longitudinal but a cross-sectional survey

Percentage 'feeling unsafe walking in neighbourhood after dark' by BCS year and banded age



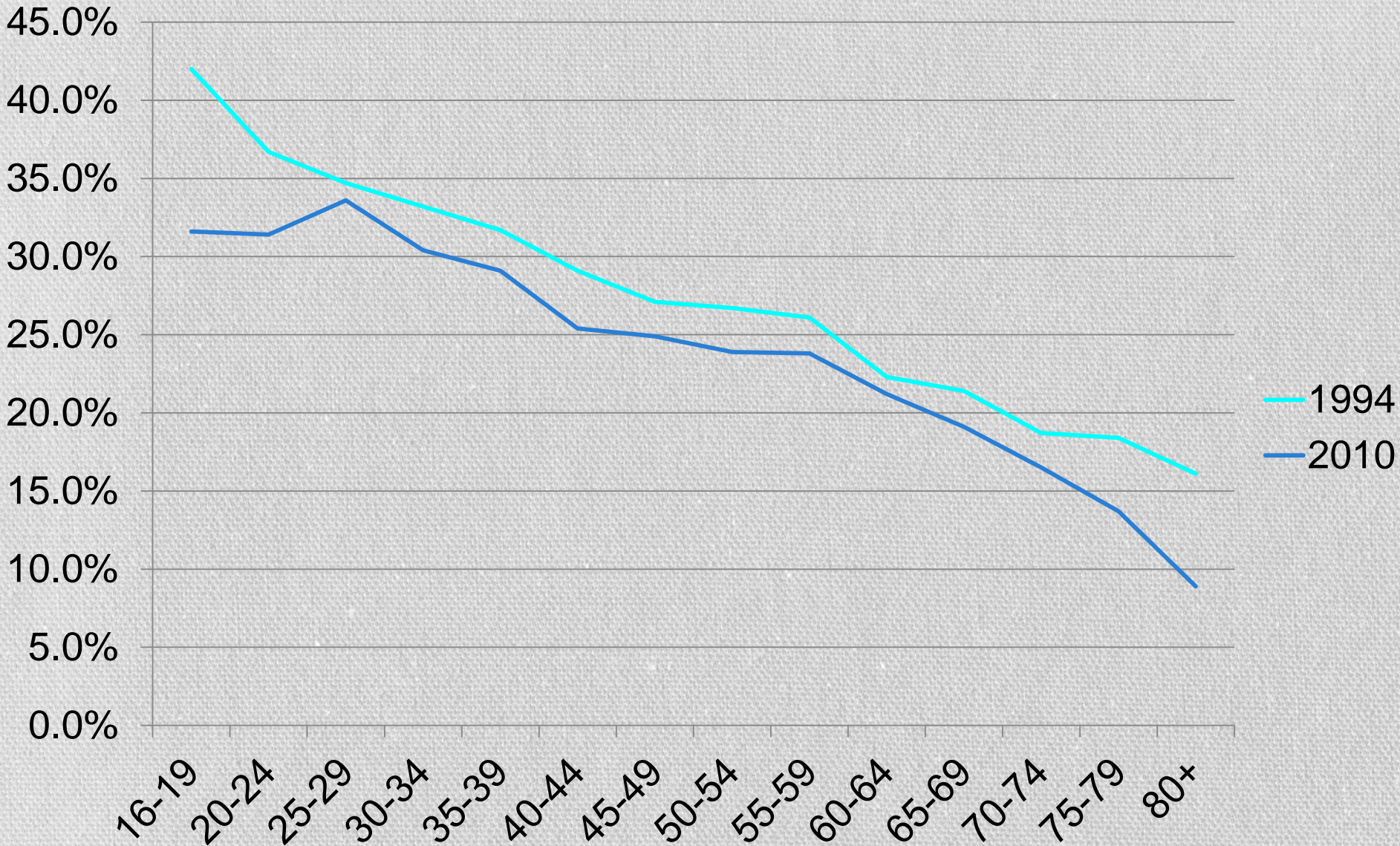
In contrast...

- Responses to questions asking about people's views as to the likelihood of experiencing personal victimisation suggest a decline in perceived likelihood of personal victimisation by age

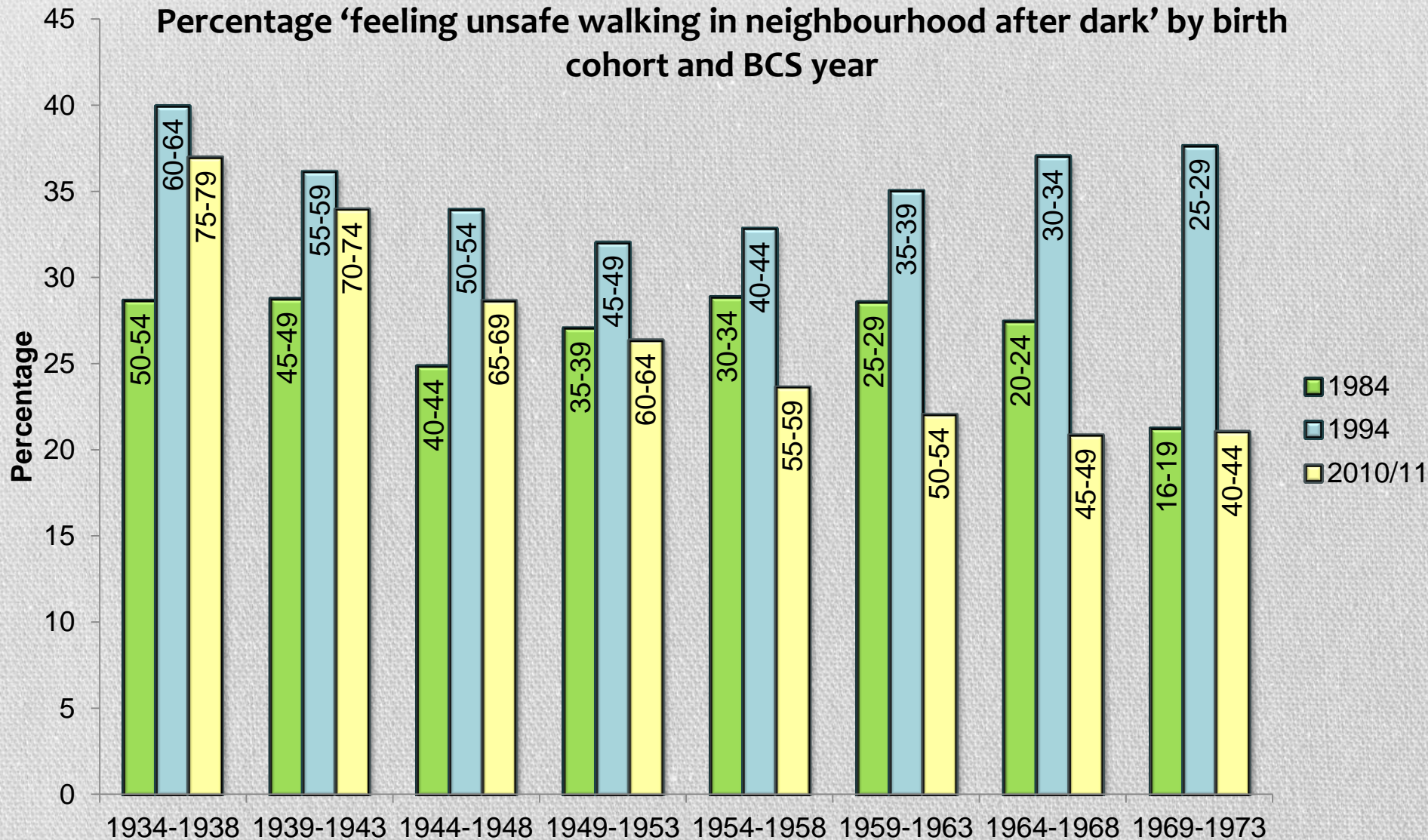
Additionally,

- there is a significant difference in levels of anxiety (feeling unsafe walking in neighbourhood after dark) between men and women across all ages

Percentage 'teenagers are a big problem' by BCS year and age



Percentage 'feeling unsafe walking in neighbourhood after dark' by birth cohort and BCS year



Preliminary analyses

- Clear indication in the data that by lumping people together as 'older', and dependent on where the cut-off is, significant differences in perceptions of safety are hidden from view
- Distinct differences between levels of anxiety expressed by year of measure – time of measure may have a bigger impact on levels of anxiety than age
- Even simple analyses question the perceived age – fear of crime/fear of young people link

Discussion

- Ageing and increases in fear of crime or 'fear' of young people do not seem to be intrinsically linked – links are dependent on the measure used
- Need for a more systematic understanding how different socio-economic factors, especially, place, health, deprivation, affect intergenerational contact and conflict, as well as fear of crime
- Need for an increased understanding of whether crime patterns (based on BCS/CSEW data) affect levels of anxiety among the population and are possibly felt among some groups more than others



**Your thoughts and comments on any aspects of the
research are greatly appreciated!**

References

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