

Setting the Context: Time as a Building Block in Social and Demographic Statistics

Edward Morgan

Principal Statistician

Population Statistics Directorate

16 October 2024



Introduction

- Edward Morgan, Principal Statistician at ONS, UK.
- ONS's role in the UN Friends of the Chair Group (FoC) on Social and Demographic Statistics.
- Leading the development of the **Time Block** as part of the conceptual framework.

Purpose of the TIME building block

- Designed primarily for **designers of statistical systems** to provide consistent, high-quality social and demographic data.
- Balances **ideals with trade-offs**; provides a flexible, practical approach for NSOs.
- Ensures data reflects the **present** and **evolving state** of society.

The Major Themes in Today's Panel

Three major themes:

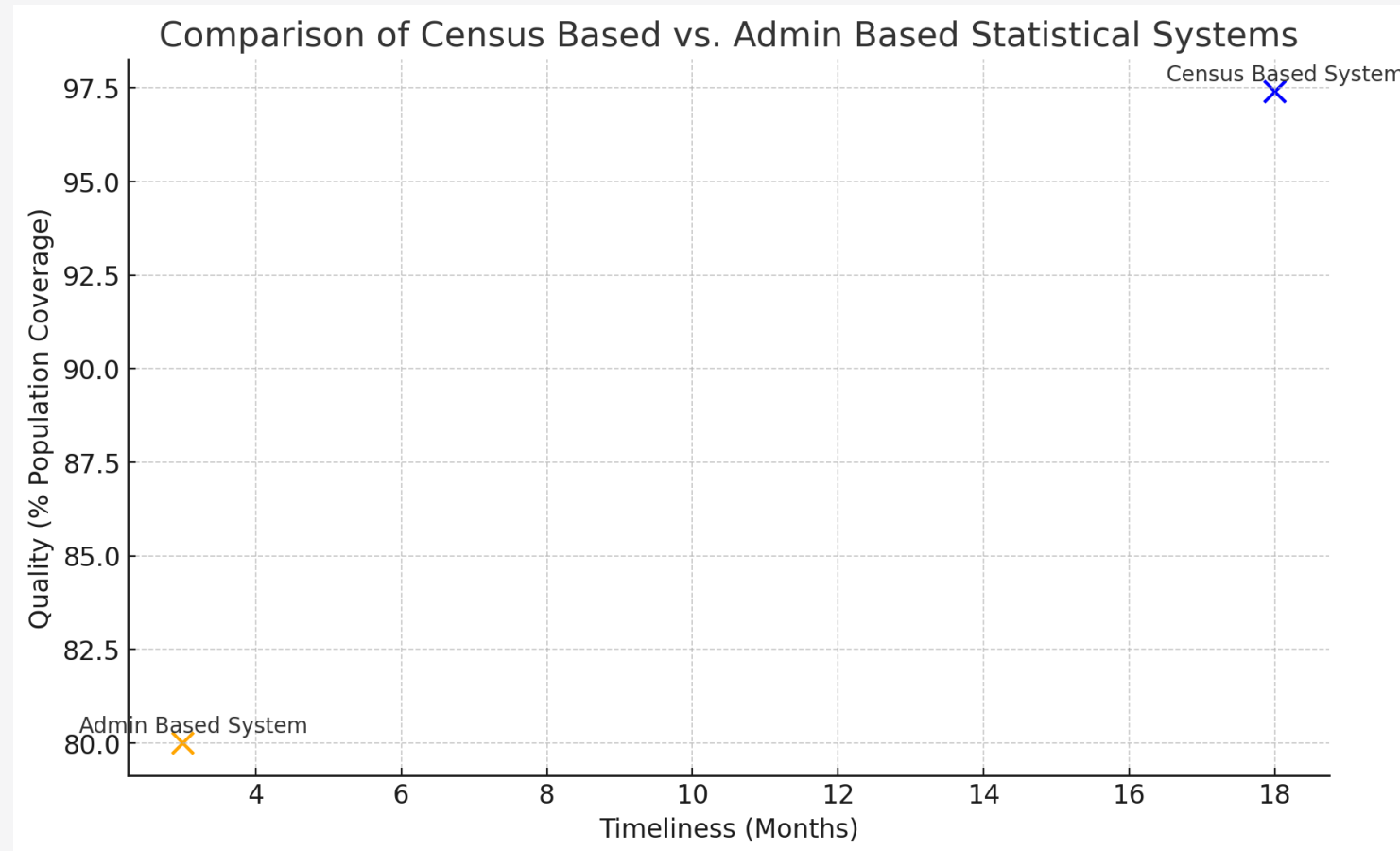
1. Agile and Flexible Statistical Systems
2. Longitudinal Data
3. Life Course Approaches

Focus on time beyond measurement — how it integrates into statistical systems.

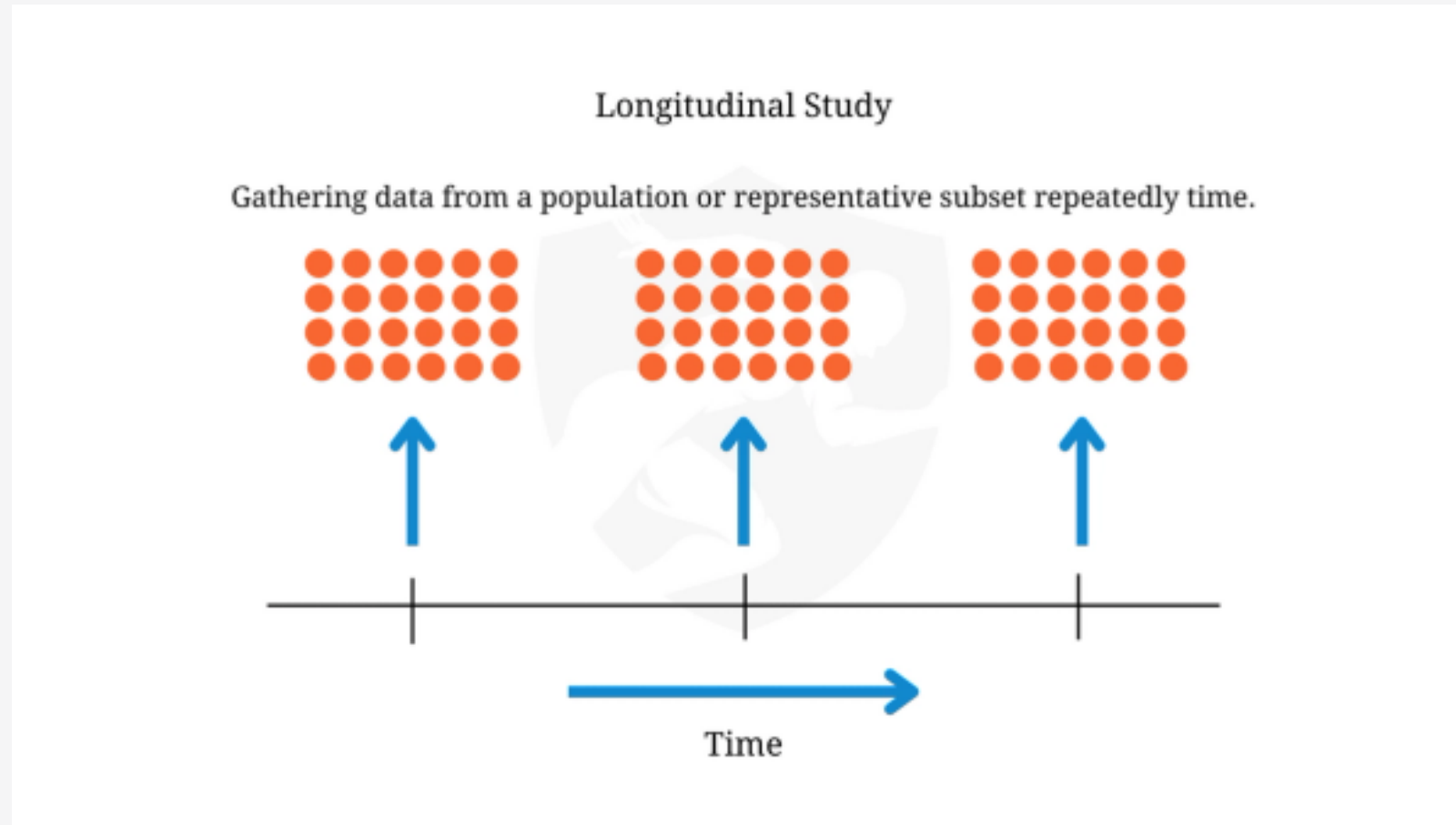
The Approach - Ideals vs. Trade-offs

- Framework balances a **vision** for a robust system with **practical constraints**.
- Ambitious targets like real-time data integration but with realistic solutions.
- Addresses resource limitations and public acceptability concerns.

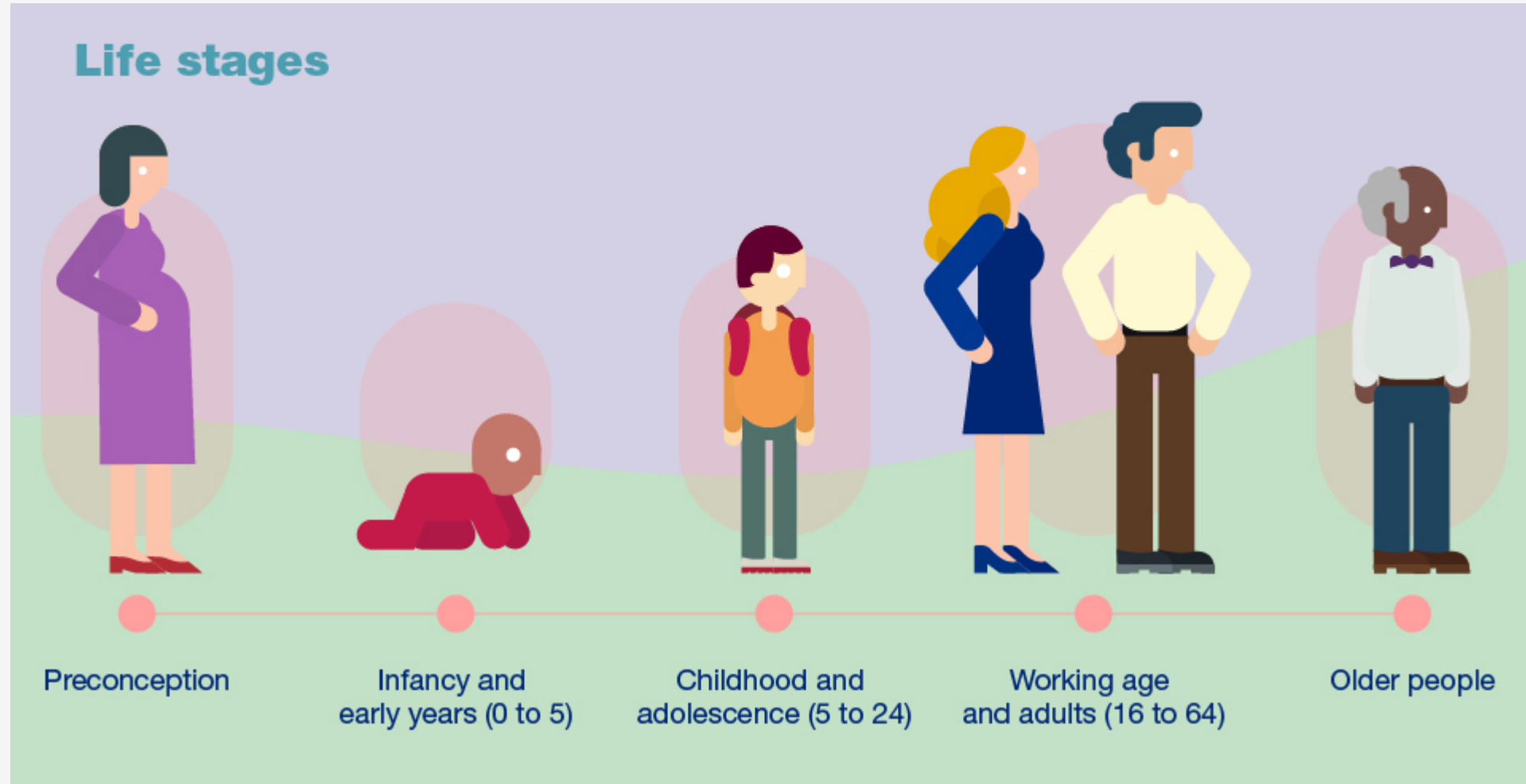
Theme 1 - Agile and Flexible Statistical Systems



Theme 2 - Longitudinal Data



Theme 3 - Life Course Approaches



The Three Main Trade-offs

Timeliness vs Quality: Increasing frequency may reduce data quality.

Richness vs Public Acceptability: Enhancing richness raises ethical/privacy concerns.

Responsiveness vs Historical Consistency: Adapting too quickly can affect comparability.

Thank you!

Edward Morgan

edward.l.morgan@ons.gov.uk