



Family trajectories & children's well-being

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1. Introduction

- Divorce is process, that sets in motion other family transitions (Amato, 2000)
- Children can experience multiple family transitions in one childhood

→ What is the impact of family trajectories on childrens well-being?



1. Introduction

INSTABILITY HYPOTHESIS

= disruptions in family structures are as important (or even more important) than family structure itself (Fomby & Cherlin, 2007)

→ Disruption causes family imbalance & potentially stress, which leads to a lower well-being of parents & children



1. Introduction

PREVIOUS STUDIES

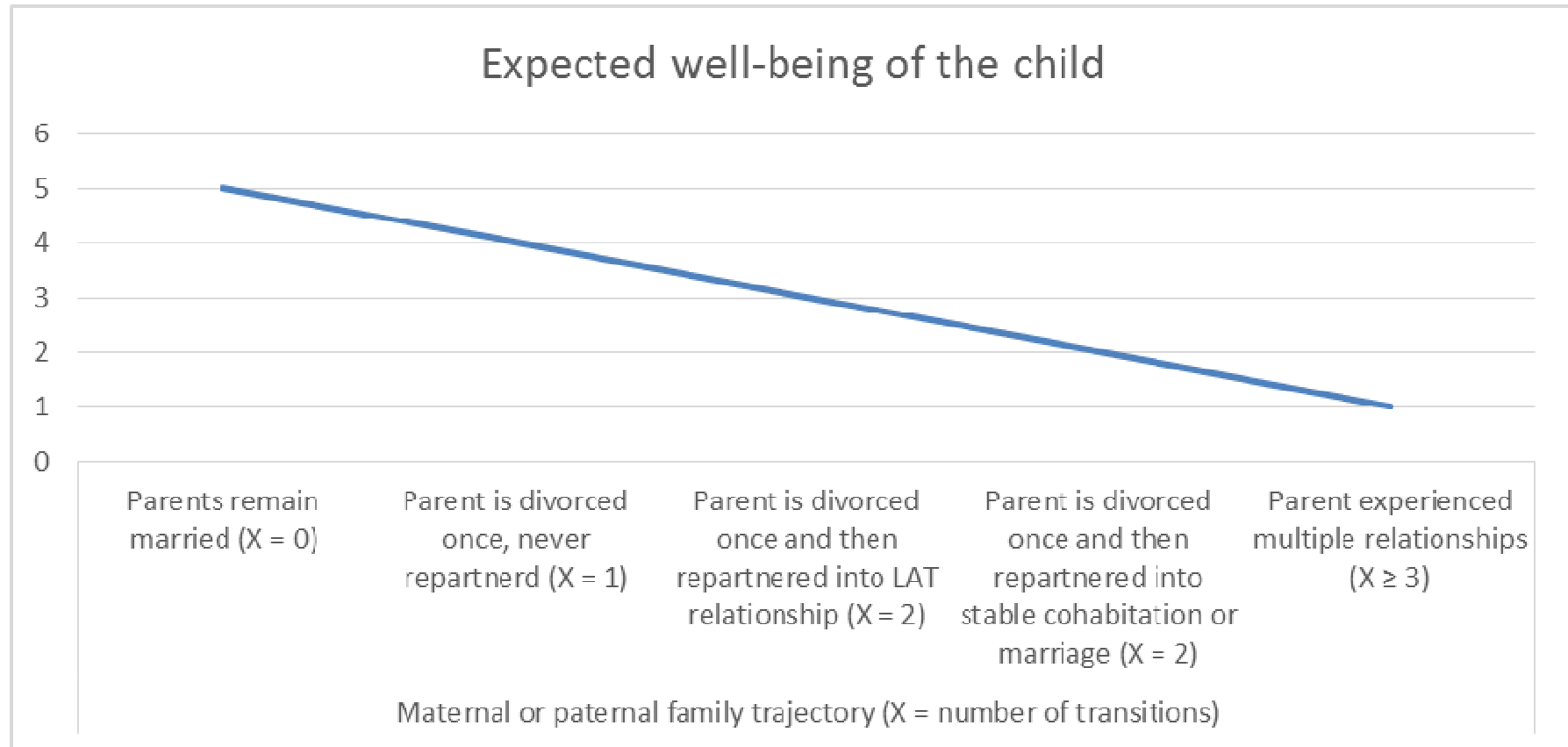
- Concentrate mainly on number of family transitions (e.g. Cavanagh & Huston, 2006, 2008; Milan et al, 2006; Lee et al, 2015)
→ results are in line with instability hypothesis
- Some include type of transition, which also affect children's WB (e.g. Magnuson & Berger, 2009; Robson, 2010)

→ Family trajectories take into account both



1. Introduction

OUR HYPOTHESES

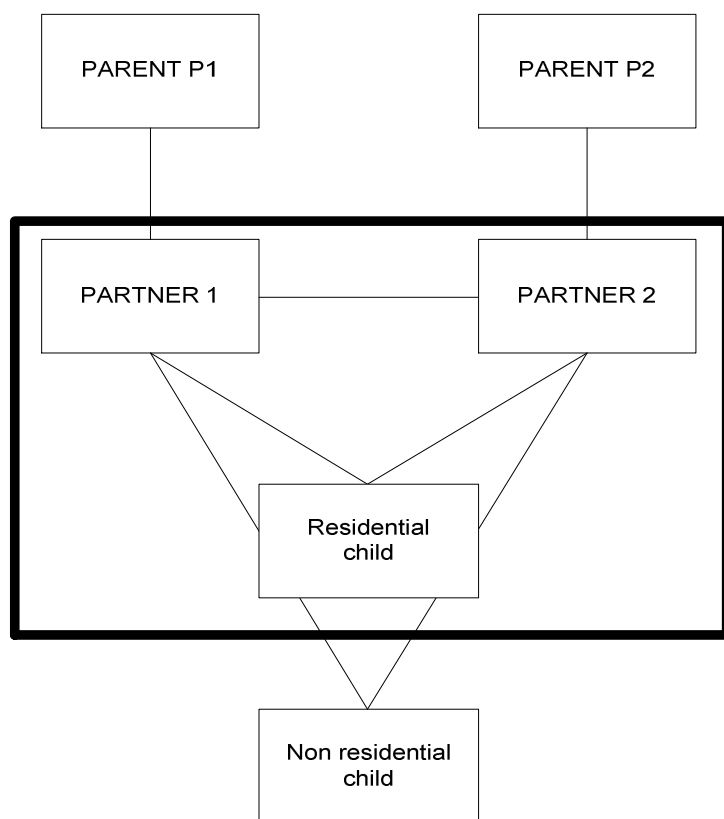




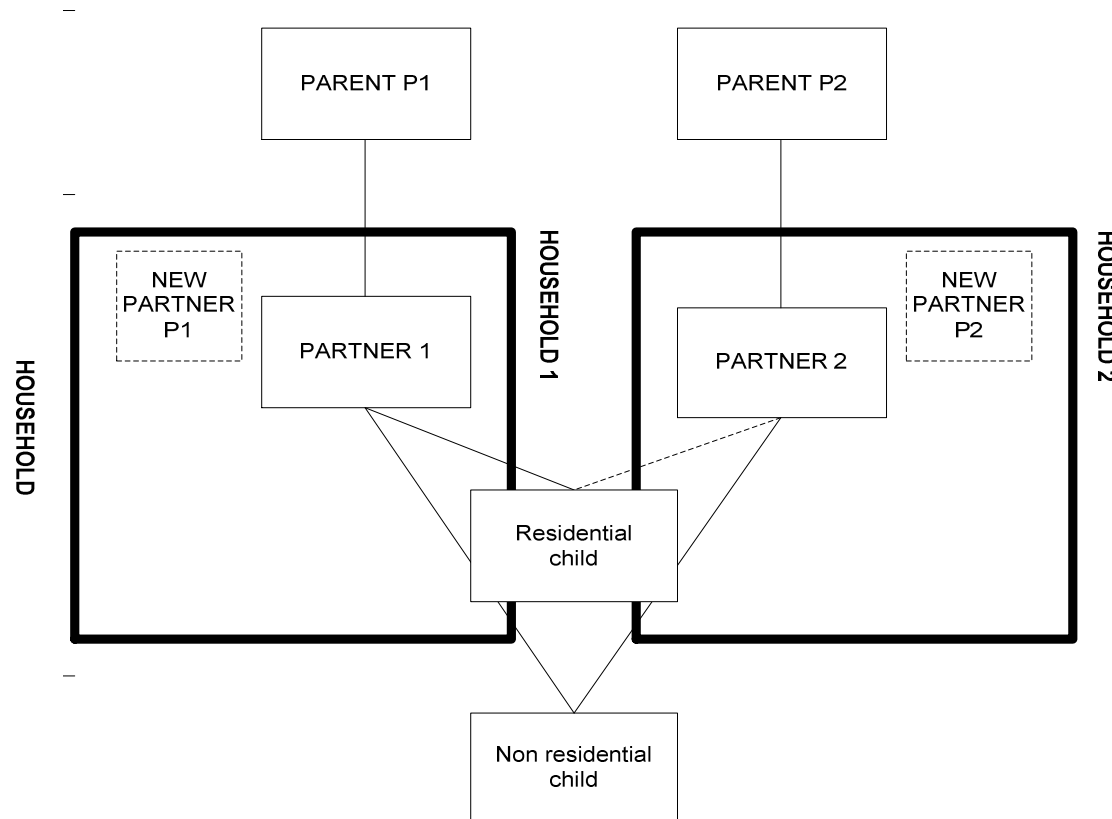
2. Data

Dataset "Divorce in Flanders"

Married couple



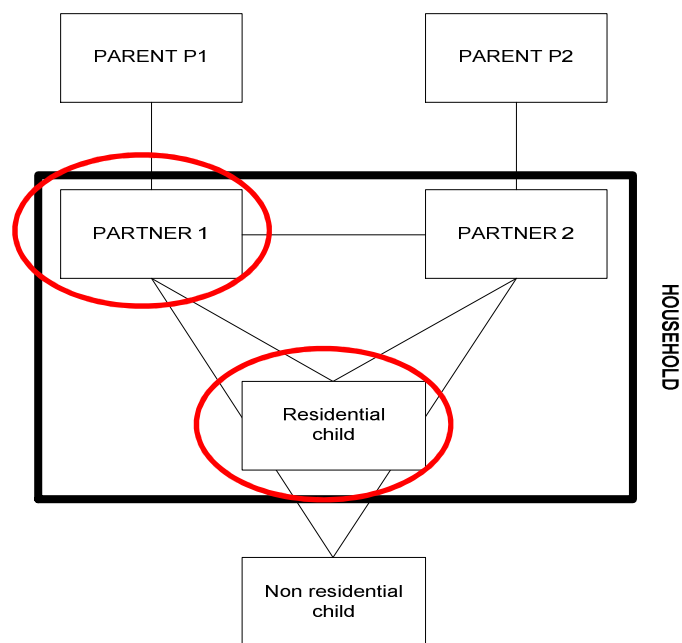
Divorced couple



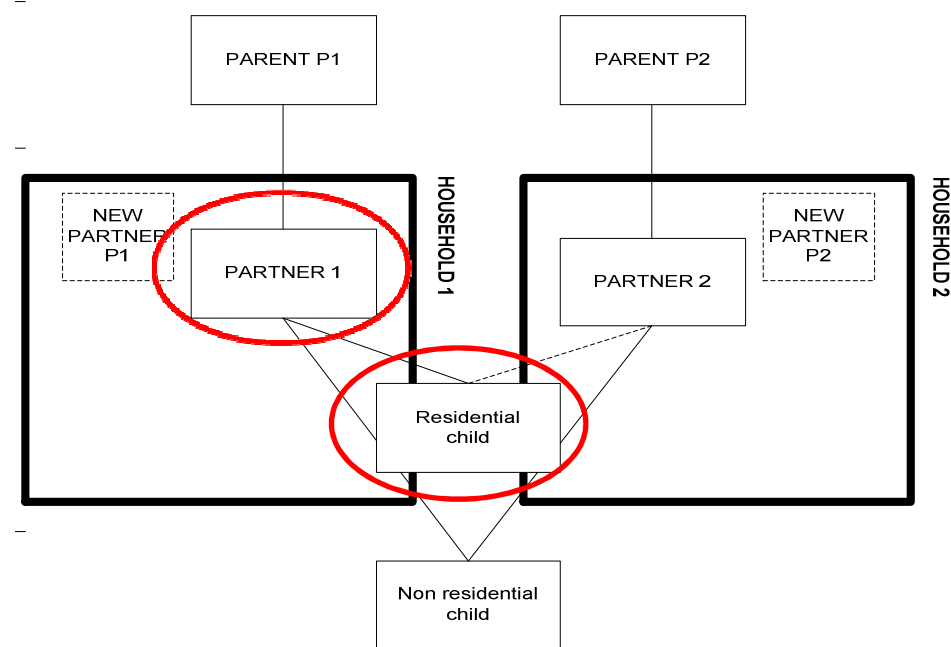


2. Data

Married couple



Divorced couple



2 subsamples: mother/father & 1 child (age 14-21 years)



2. Data

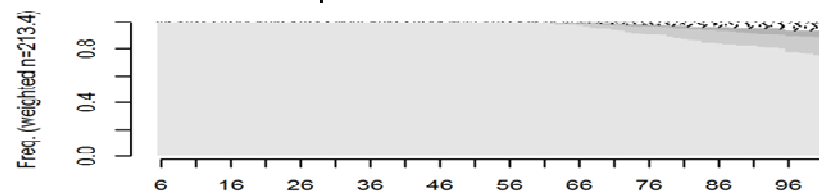
- **Family trajectories:** relationship history → sequence analysis
- **Children's well-being:** Cantrill's ladder of life satisfaction, CES-D8 to measure depressive feelings & the Rosenberg self-esteem scale
- **Background characteristics of children:** age & gender
- **Background characteristics of parents:** age & educational level



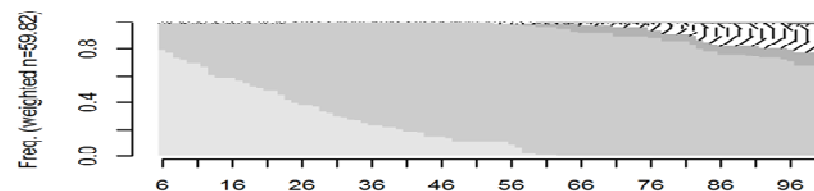
3. Results

FAMILY TRAJECTORIES

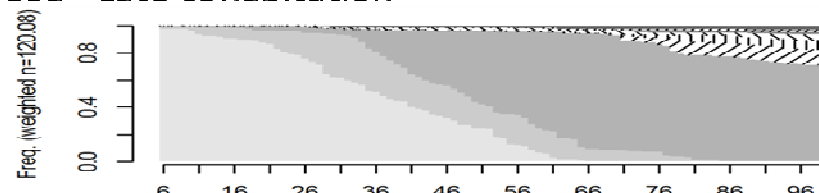
C1 - No relationship after divorce



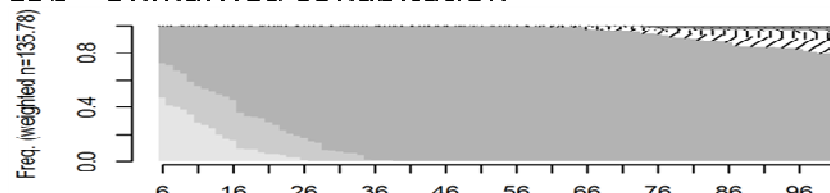
C2 - Committed LAT



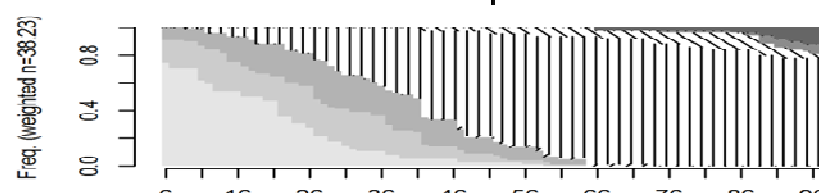
C3a - Late cohabitation



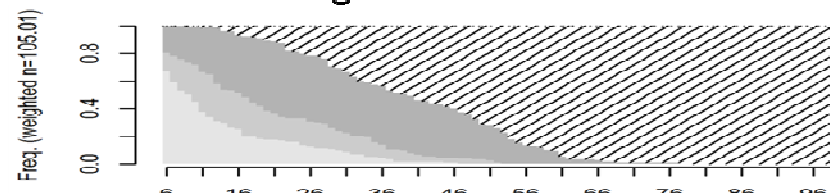
C3b - Unmarried cohabitation



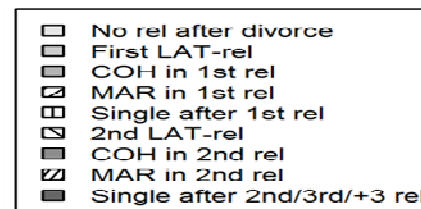
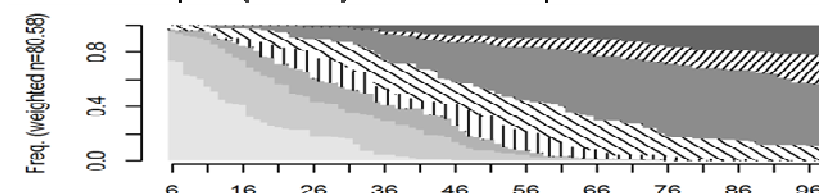
C4 - Short second relationship



C5 - Second marriage



C6 - Multiple (short) relationships





3. Results

FAMILY TRAJECTORIES

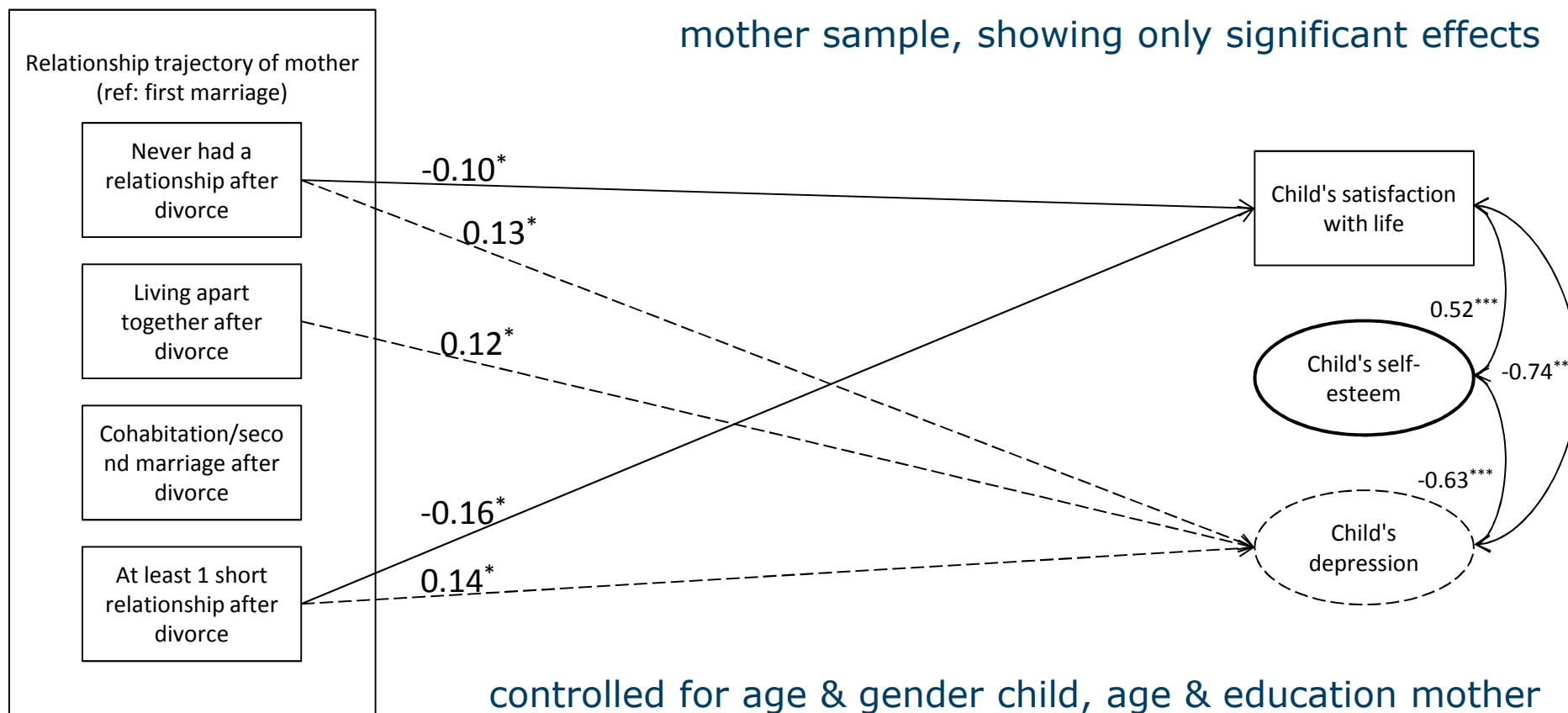
	Mothers		Fathers	
	N	%	N	%
Still in first marriage	197	38.2	175	48.0
Never had a relationship after divorce	115	22.3	66	18.1
In a committed LAT	68	18.2	42	11.5
Unmarried cohabitation shortly after divorce	55	10.7	34	9.3
Short second relationship	27	5.2	10	2.7
Second marriage	15	2.9	11	3.0
Multiple (short) relationships	16	3.1	9	2.5
Late cohabitation	22	4.3	18	4.9
	N = 515		N = 365	



3. Results

FAMILY TRAJECTORIES & CHILD WELL-BEING

mother sample, showing only significant effects

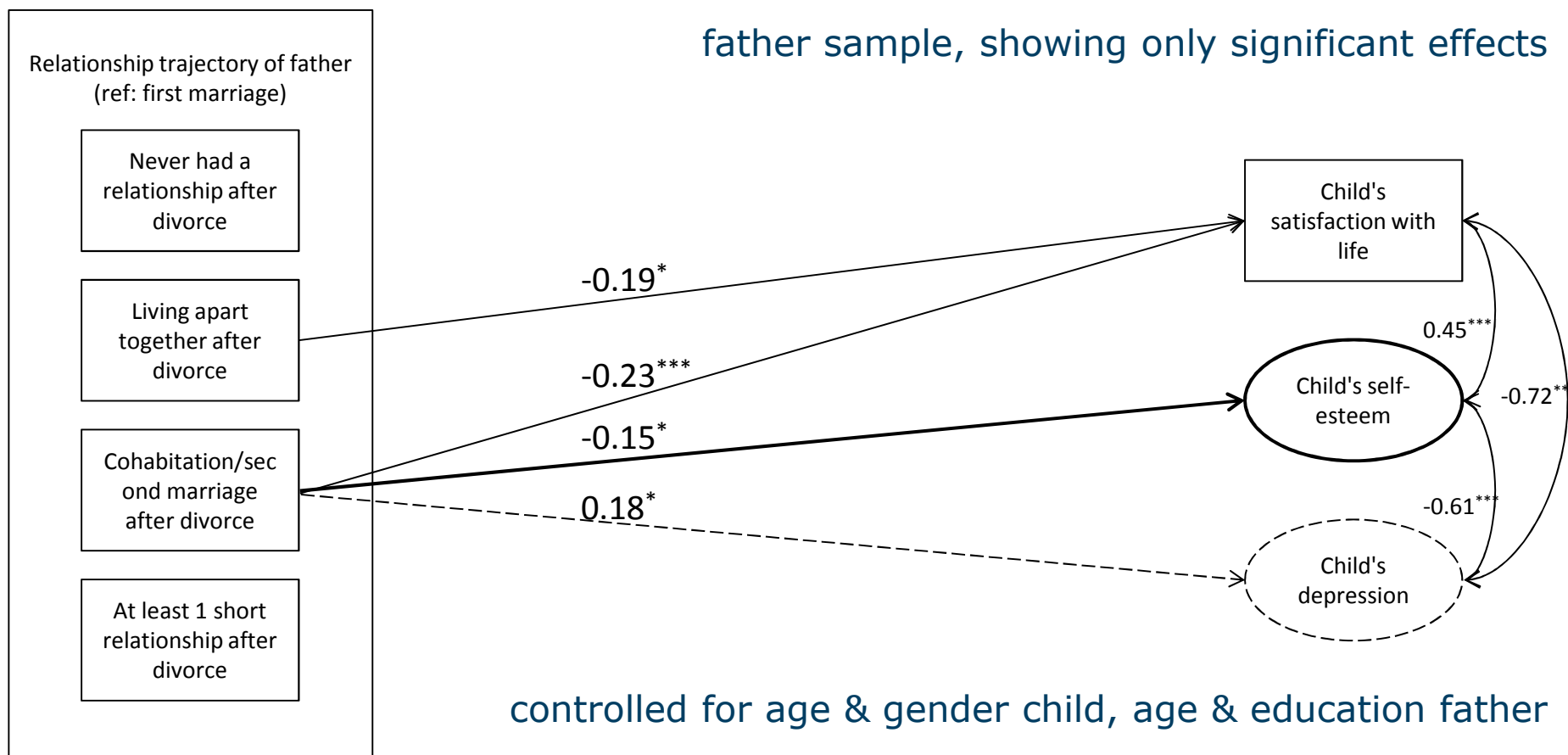




3. Results

FAMILY TRAJECTORIES & CHILD WELL-BEING

father sample, showing only significant effects





4. Conclusion

MATERNAL TRAJECTORIES

- In line with instability hypothesis: growing up in less stable families affect children's WB
- But also: growing up in a single mother family (no new partner or LAT relationship) affects children's WB
→ *due to less family resources?*



4. Conclusion

PATERNAL TRAJECTORIES

- Partially in line with instability hypothesis:
growing up in stepfamily affect children's WB
- *Due to changes in family constellations?*
- *Or rather complex family relationships e.g.
rivalry between biological & stepmother for
mother role?*



4. Conclusion

- Number of transitions is important but type of transition as well
 - *need for a life course perspective in future research!*
- Maternal and paternal families in which children grow up, affect them very differently
 - *attention for both mother & father perspective!*



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