

Parental Separation, Child Time Use and Life Course

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ESRI Seminars, April 2019



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I. GOALS

Project

1. How does parental divorce impact children's daily lives and their subsequent development?
2. Does parental divorce lead to changes in children's daily activities over time?

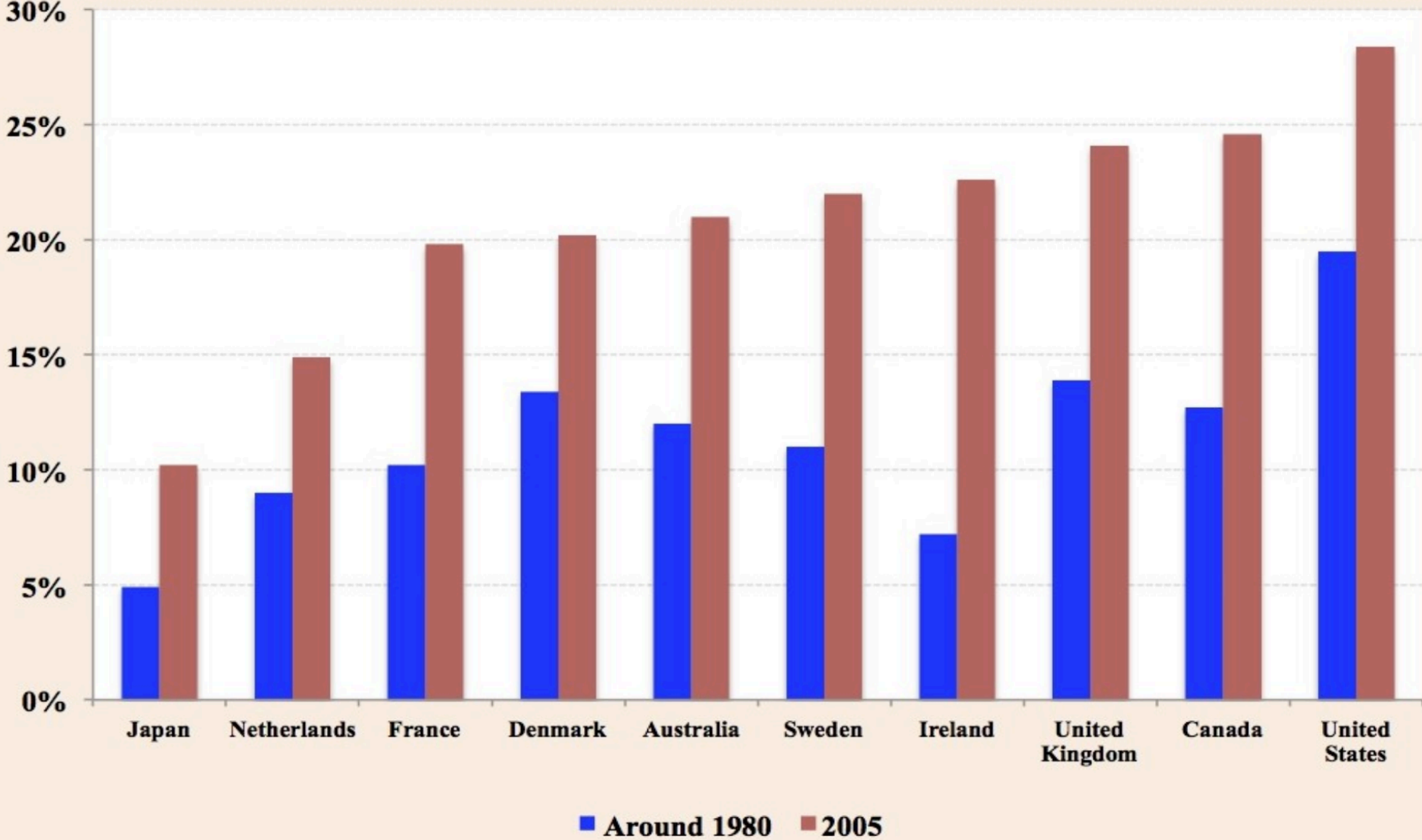
Research Question

1. How does parental divorce impact children's daily lives and their subsequent development?

2. Does parental divorce lead to changes in children's daily activities over time?

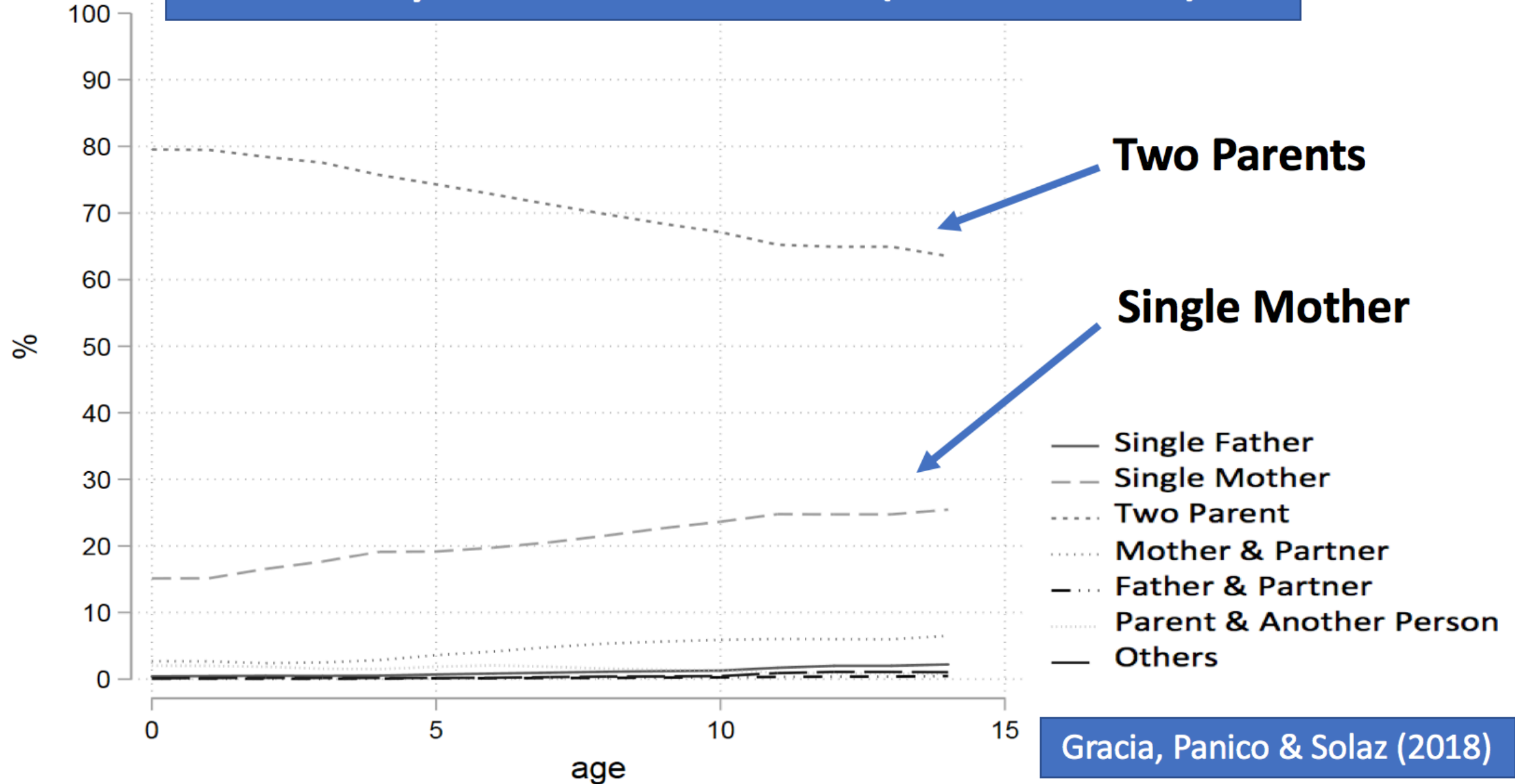
2. BACKGROUND

Figure 2. Percent Single-Parent Households: 1980 and 2005

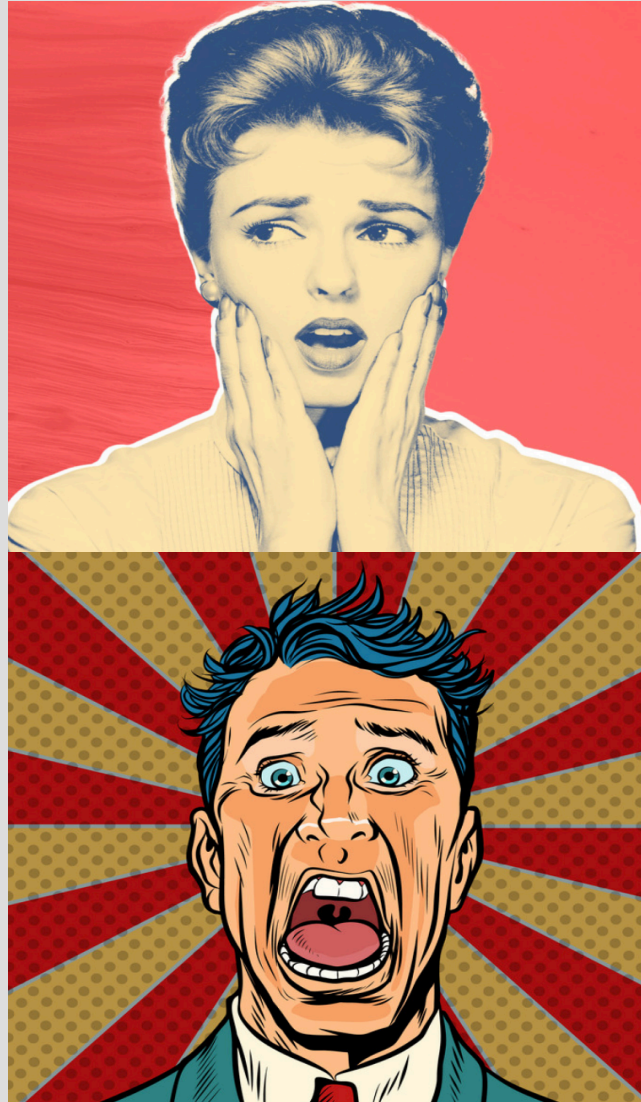


National Statistical Offices (1980-2005)

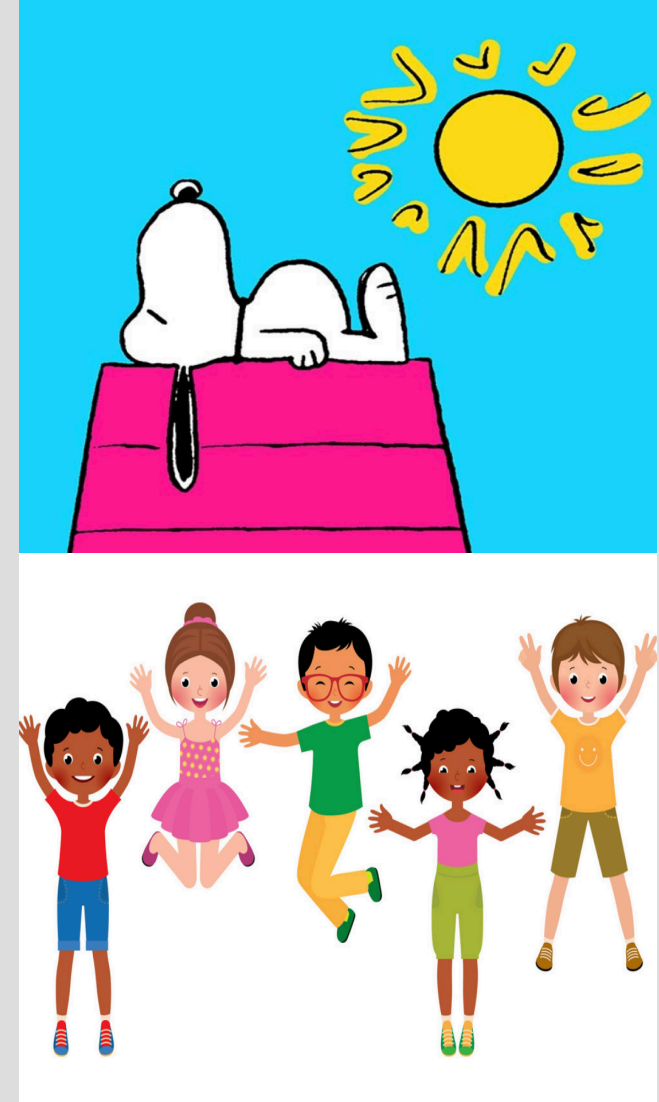
Family Structure in UK (2000-2014)



“Conservative” View: Moral Panic!



“Progressive” View: It’s ok!



Previous Studies

- Evidence shows a **complex relation between** divorce and child well-being (Amato, 2010).
- Yet, parental divorce has “**direct**” effects on child socio-emotional, cognitive or educational outcomes (McLanahan & Sandefur, 1994).
- Divorce has **heterogeneous effects** on child well-being across the population (Kalmijn, 2015).
- There are current debates on inequalities by **SES** and **child gender** (Amato, 2010; Harkonen et al., 2017).

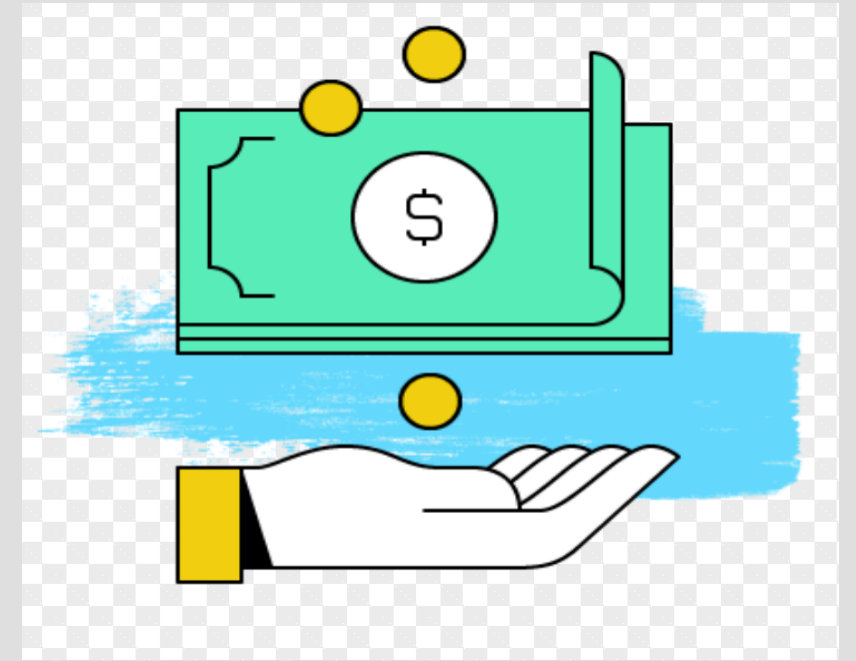
What factors explain the negative impact of parental separation on child well-being?



Stress

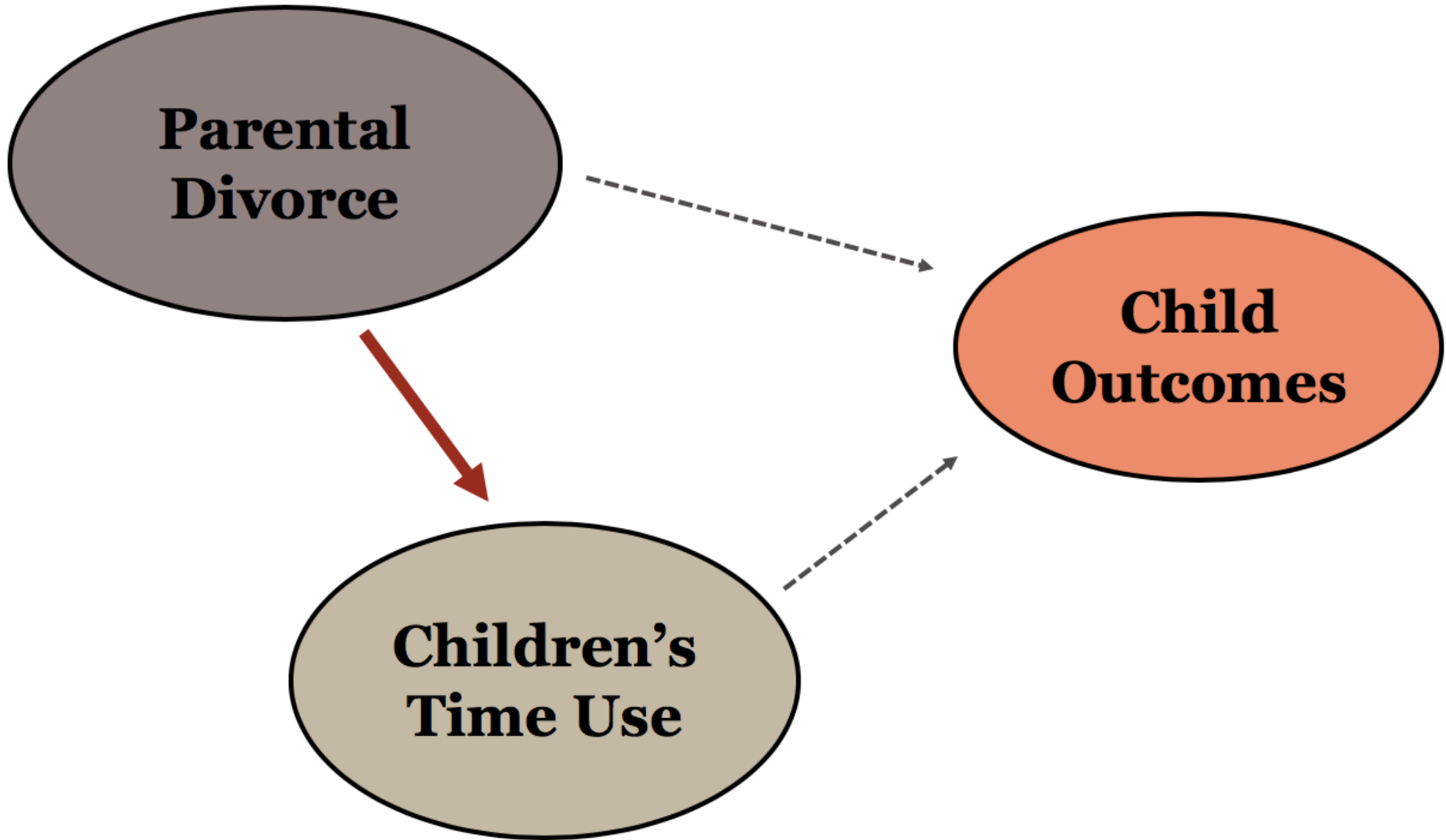


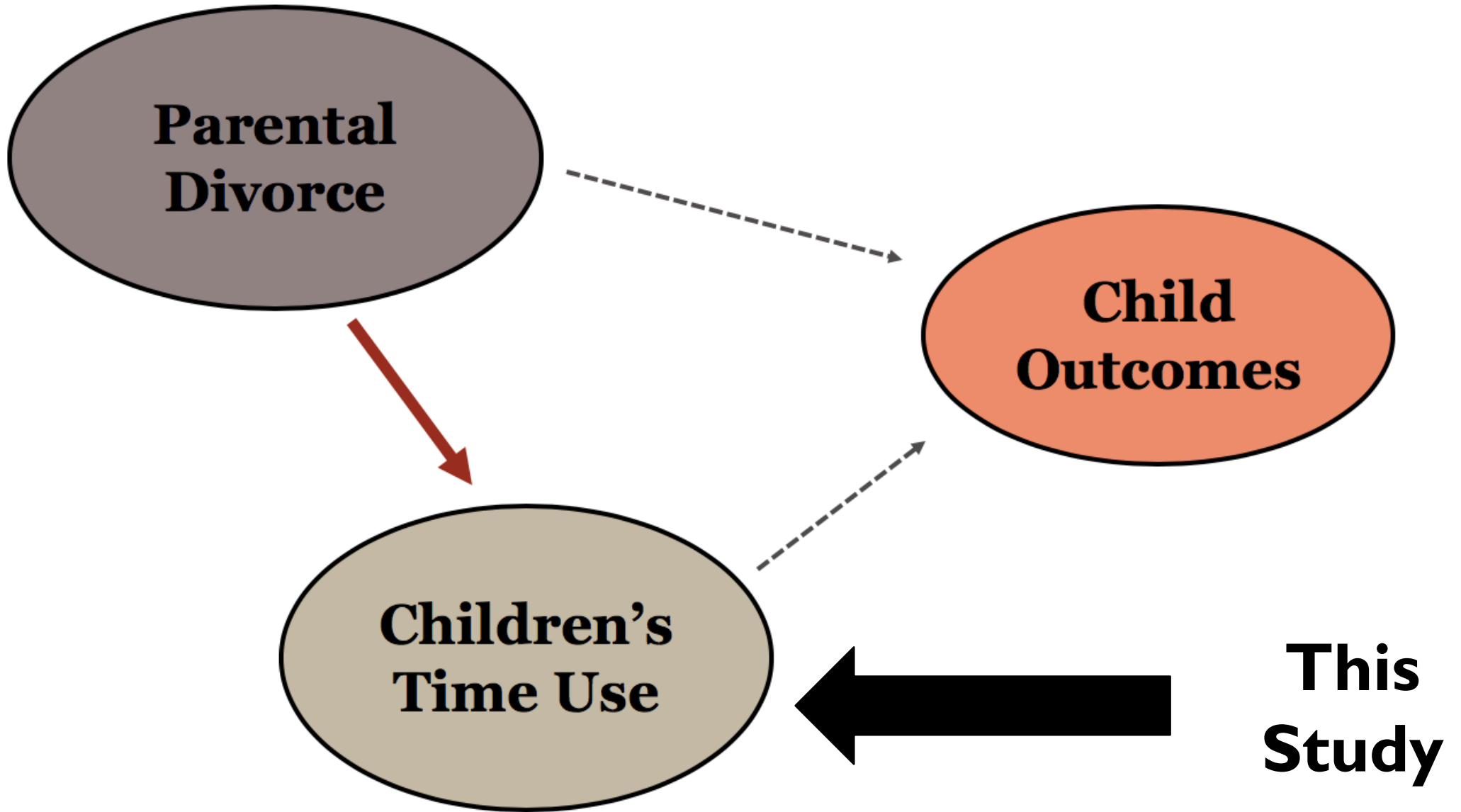
Conflict



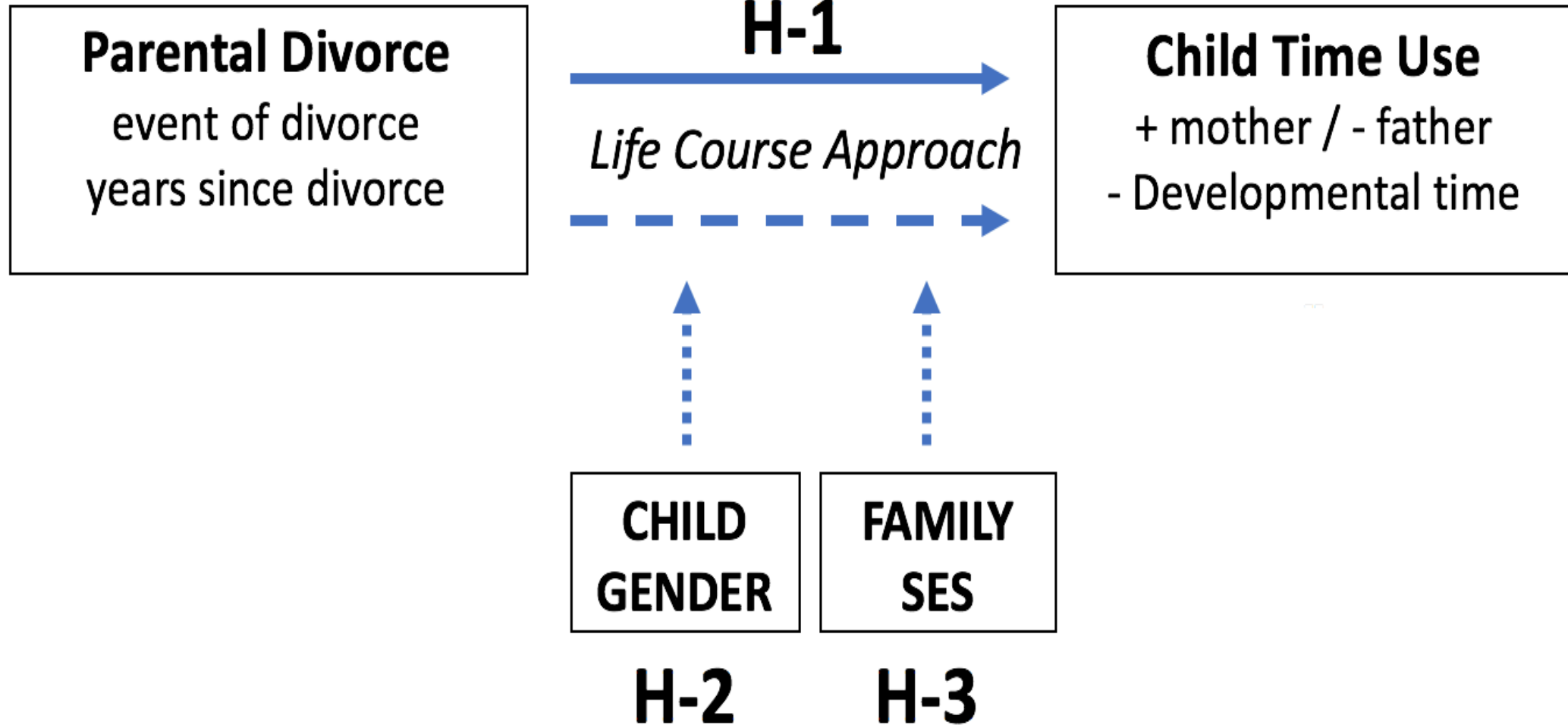
Income Loss

3. THEORIES





Hypotheses



4. DATA & METHOD

Data

- **Data:** *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* (waves 1-6; 2004-2014); Rich cohort longitudinal diary data from age 4 to 14.



EXAMPLE OF CHILD'S DIARY DATA COLLECTION

Time	What were you doing?	What else were you doing?	Where were you?	Were you with someone else?			
				(Parent)	(Minor Sibling)	(Older Sibling)	(Outside Home)
7:00 - 7:10	Sleeping		Home				
7:10 - 7:20	↓		↓				
7:20 - 7:30	↓		↓				
7:30 - 7:40	Personal Care		↓				
7:40 - 7:50	↓		↓				
7:50 - 8:00	↓		↓				
8:00 - 8:10	Breakfast	Watch TV	↓	Yes	Yes		
8:10 - 8:20	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓		
8:20 - 8:30	↓		↓				
8:30 - 8:40	↓		↓				
8:40 - 8:50	Walking	Talk to mum	↓				
8:50 - 9:00	↓	↓	↓				
9:00 - 9:10	Schooling		School				Yes
9:10 - 9:20	↓		↓				↓
9:20 - 9:30	↓		↓				
9:30 - 9:40	↓		↓				
9:40 - 9:50	↓		↓				
9:50 - 10:00	↓		↓				

Methods

- **Data:** *Longitudinal Study of Australian Children (LSAC)* (waves 1-6; 2004-2014); Rich cohort longitudinal diary data from age 4 to 14.
- **Sample:** N = 1477 respondents of weekday diaries (married or cohabiting in T-0; various sample specifications).
- **Dependent Variables:** *Child Time Use* (alone / mother / father); *Specific Activities* (Educational Time, Screen Activities).
- **Explanatory Variables:** Divorce Experiences and Duration.
- **Controls:** Demographics and socioeconomic variables.
- **Empirical Strategy:** *Random Effects Models* (robustness checks with *Fixed Effects* and other model specifications).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Variables. Means and SD

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Daily Minutes with Father	45.37	108.34	0.00	1440.00
Daily Minutes with Mother	212.85	237.61	0.00	1440.00
Daily Minutes Alone	223.63	261.66	0.00	1065.00
Daily Minutes of Educational Time with Father	4.87	19.00	0.00	352.50
Daily Minutes of Educational Time with Mother	22.44	39.96	0.00	360.00
Daily Minutes of Educational Time Alone	22.10	52.95	0.00	597.00
Daily Minutes of Media Time with Father	9.31	31.58	0.00	427.50
Daily Minutes of Media Time with Mother	38.63	61.53	0.00	472.50
Daily Minutes of Media Time Alone	30.72	70.39	0.00	610.00
Daily Minutes of Structured Time with Father	2.58	19.18	0.00	487.50
Daily Minutes of Structured Time with Mother	8.29	25.46	0.00	225.00
Daily Minutes of Structured Time Alone	43.89	79.04	0.00	435.00
Parental Divorce Observation	0.30		0.00	1.00
Female	0.52		0.00	1.00
Speaking English at home	0.96		0.00	1.00
Respondent's Age in Months	106.44	40.61	51.00	188.00
1 or More Children in Household	0.46		0.00	1.00
State 1 == NSW	0.32		0.00	1.00
State 2 == VI	0.22		0.00	1.00
State 3 == QU	0.24		0.00	1.00
State 4 == SA	0.06		0.00	1.00
State 5 == WA	0.08		0.00	1.00
State 6 == TAS	0.03		0.00	1.00
State 7 == NT	0.02		0.00	1.00
State 8 == ACT	0.03		0.00	1.00
Father's College Degree	0.30		0.00	1.00
Mother's College Degree	0.32		0.00	1.00
Child Experienced Parental Re-partnering	0.08		0.00	1.00
Observations				1477

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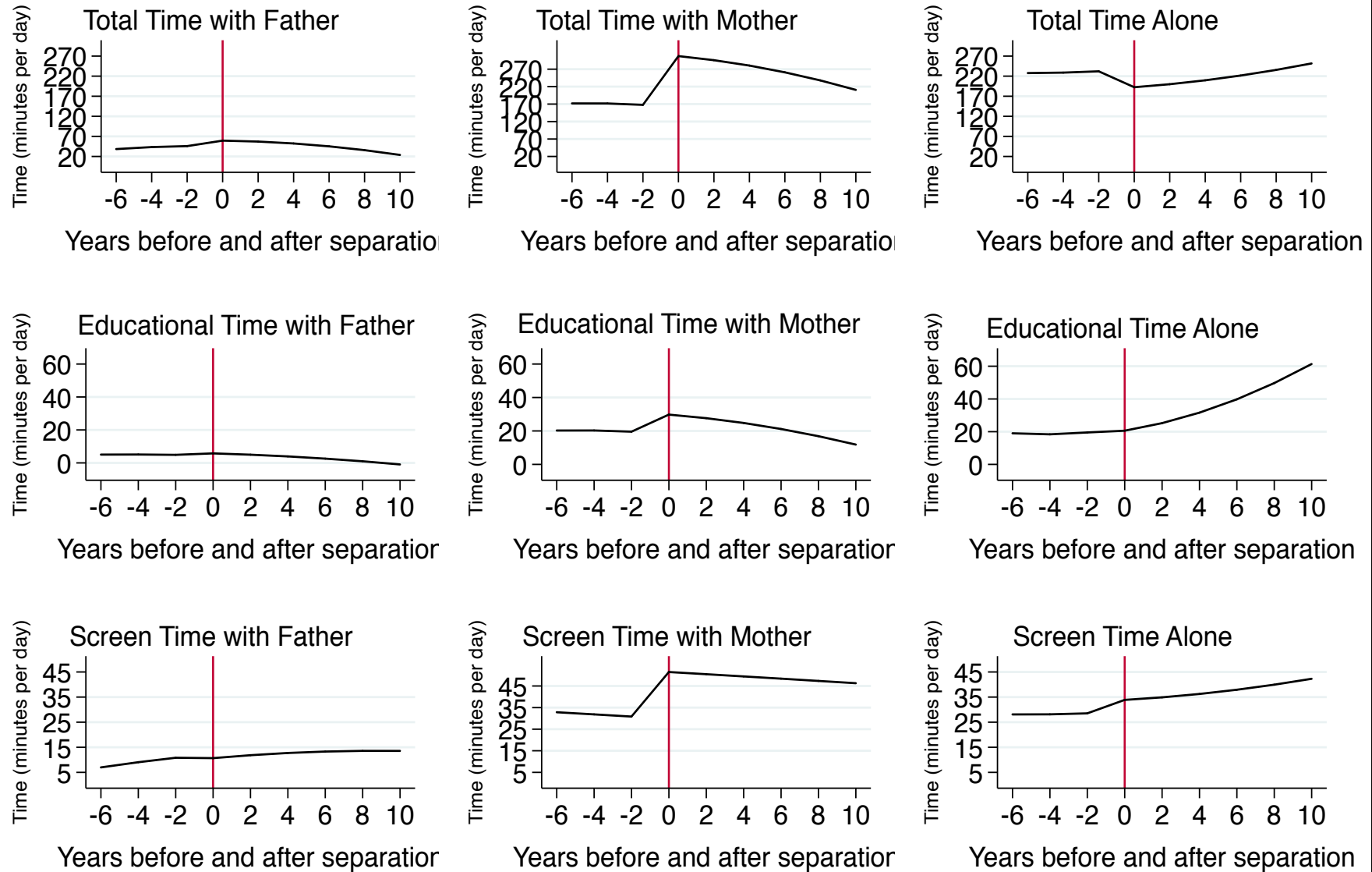
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5. RESULTS

RANDOM & FIXED EFFECT MODELS

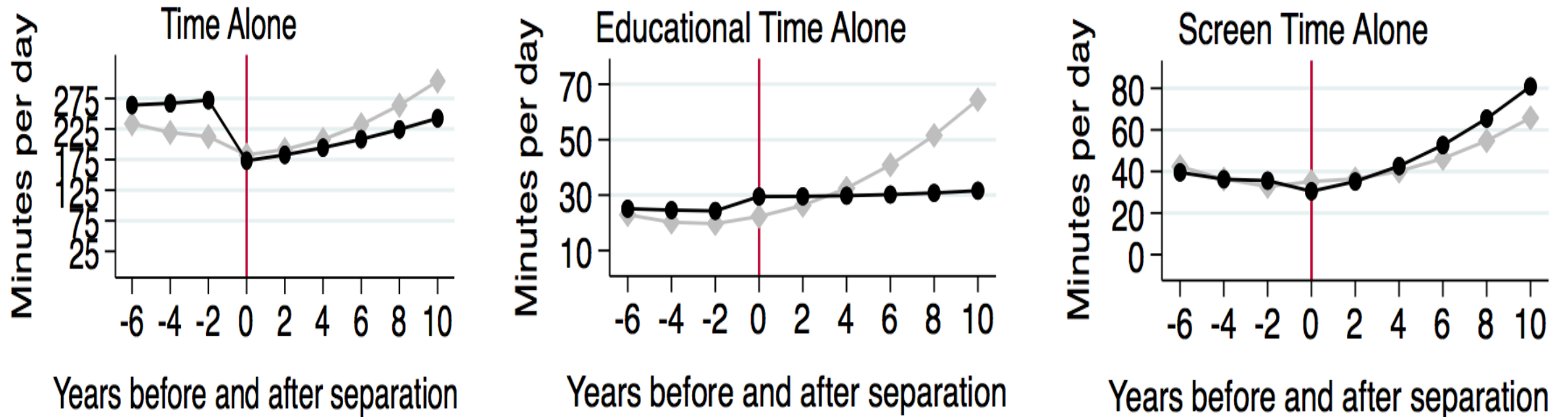
- We have run **various robustness checks** (including Hausman test).
- Results (not shown) are **similar** when comparing *Random Effects* and *Fixed Effects* models.
- We present **Random Effect Linear Models** including all covariates (e.g., gender, ethnicity).

Fig 1. Predicted Time Use Before and After Divorce



Random Effects Models (full models). All controls included.

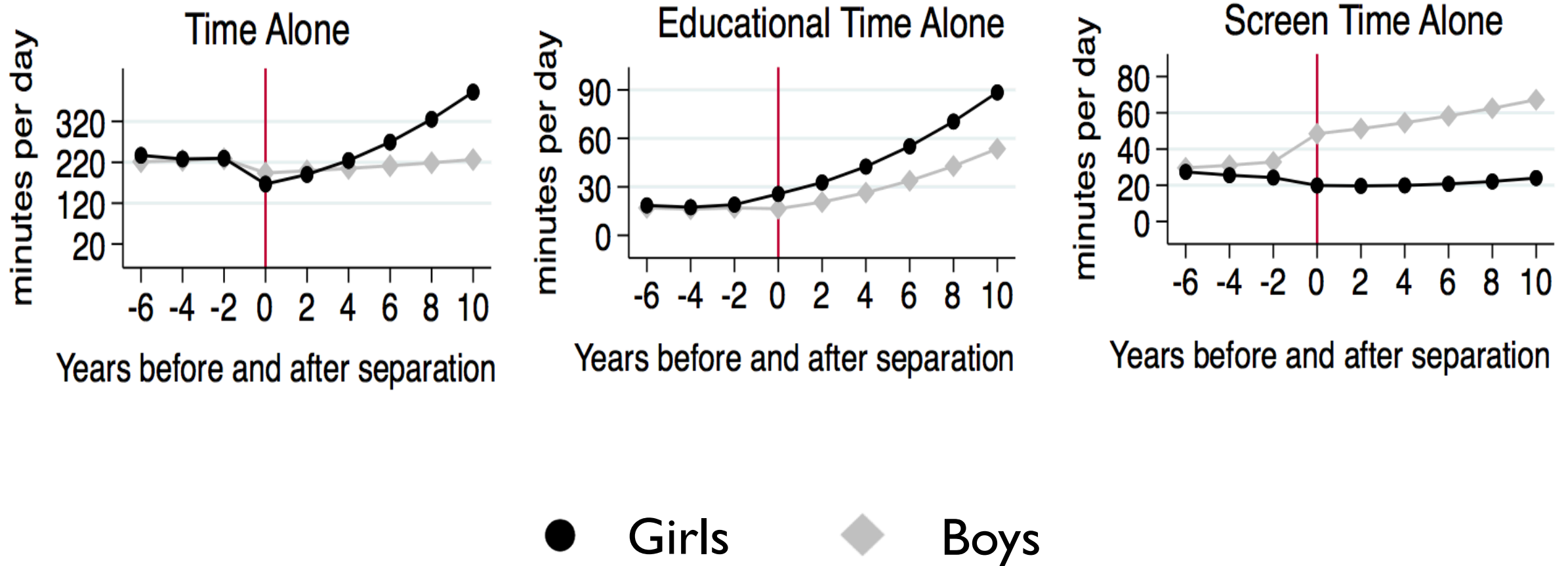
Fig 2. Predicted Child Time Use. Interaction Education and Divorce Duration



● Below College ◆ College Education

Random Effects Models (Interaction Parental Education * Divorce). All controls included.

Fig 3. Predicted Time Use Before and After Divorce by Child Gender



Random Effects Models (Interaction Child Gender * Divorce). All controls included

6. CONCLUSIONS

Summary (i)

- **Parental Separation – Mother / Father / Alone:**

- + Mother-child time (Sharp and later decrease).
- Father-child time (differences are not pronounced).
- Solo time / + solo time later (not pronounced).

- **Parental Separation – Specific Activities:**

- + Screen Time Alone
- + Educational Time Alone.

Summary II

- **Heterogeneity by Child Gender:** **Girls** increase *solo time* and *educational time* / **Boys** increase *screen time* (TV, mobile phone).
- **Educational Gradient:** High-educated children disproportionately increase time in **educational activities** (yet differences do not apply to other activities).
- **Implications:** Parental Divorce impacts child time use, but differently by **child gender** and **SES**; **Longitudinal data** allow us to address the impact of divorce on child time use.
- **Future Steps:** Is it mediating inequalities in child well-being?

Thanks!

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