

Parenthood and Well-being

The Late Years

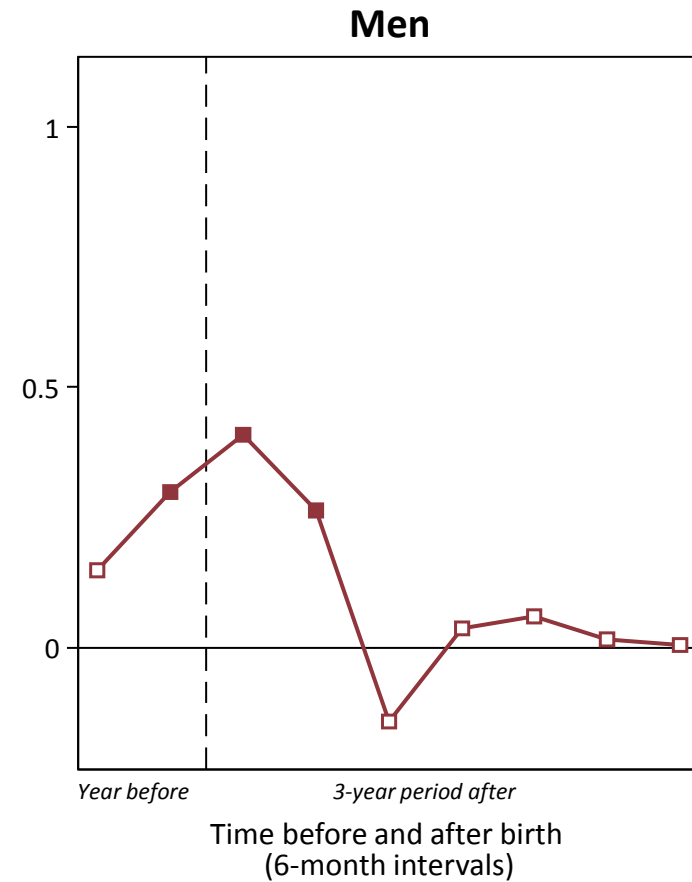
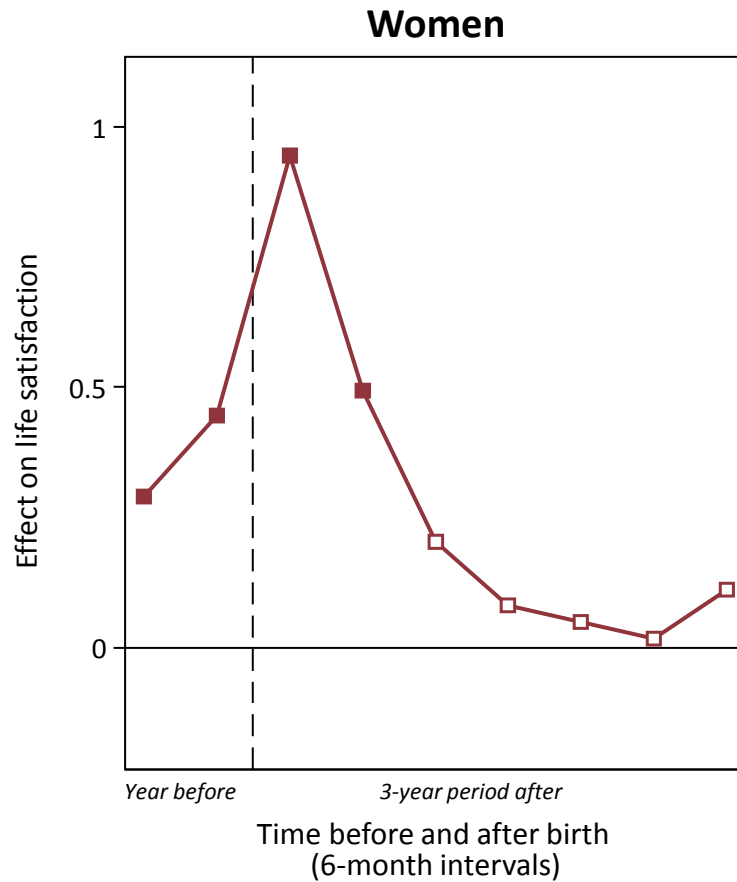
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- Common beliefs (Hansen 2012)
 - Parents are happier
 - Childless are lonely
 - Childless are hedonistic
- Previous research has produced competing results concerning the gap in well-being between parents and non-parents
 - Cross-sectional evidence: parental happiness gap
 - Longitudinal evidence: a short-term positive effect with a back-to-baseline adaptation or long-term negative effects



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 - Cross-sectional evidence: parental happiness gap
 - Longitudinal evidence: a short-term positive effect with a back-to-baseline adaptation or long-term negative effects
- **What happens in the long run?**
 - How do children affect parental well-being in older age?
 - Do children buffer negative life events?
- **Methodological issues**
 - Different well-being measures & dimensions
 - Selection into parenthood
 - Endogeneity of social support

- Value-of-Children (Hoffman & Hoffman 1973)
 - Love, meaning, fulfillment, excitement, happiness
 - and esp. in old age: companionship, support
 - “fear of loneliness and depression” (Hansen 2012)
- Changes in social networks across the life course, concentration on close relations (=family) in older age (Wrzus et al. 2013)
 - Socio-emotional selectivity: active selection due to changing needs (Carstensen 1992)
 - Convoy: passive process due to life events (Antonucci 2014)
- Investment in future well-being?
 - Life satisfaction effect of parenthood changes from negative to positive with higher age (Stanca 2009, Margolis 2010)

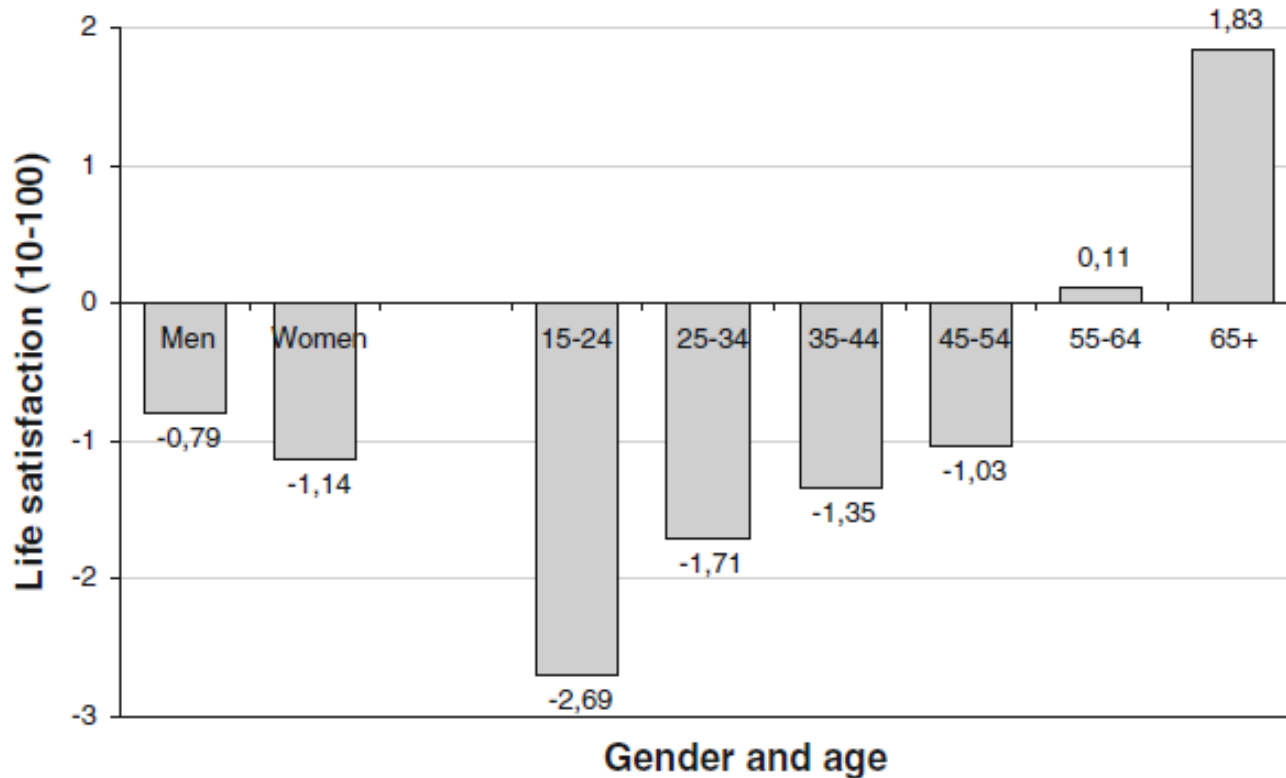
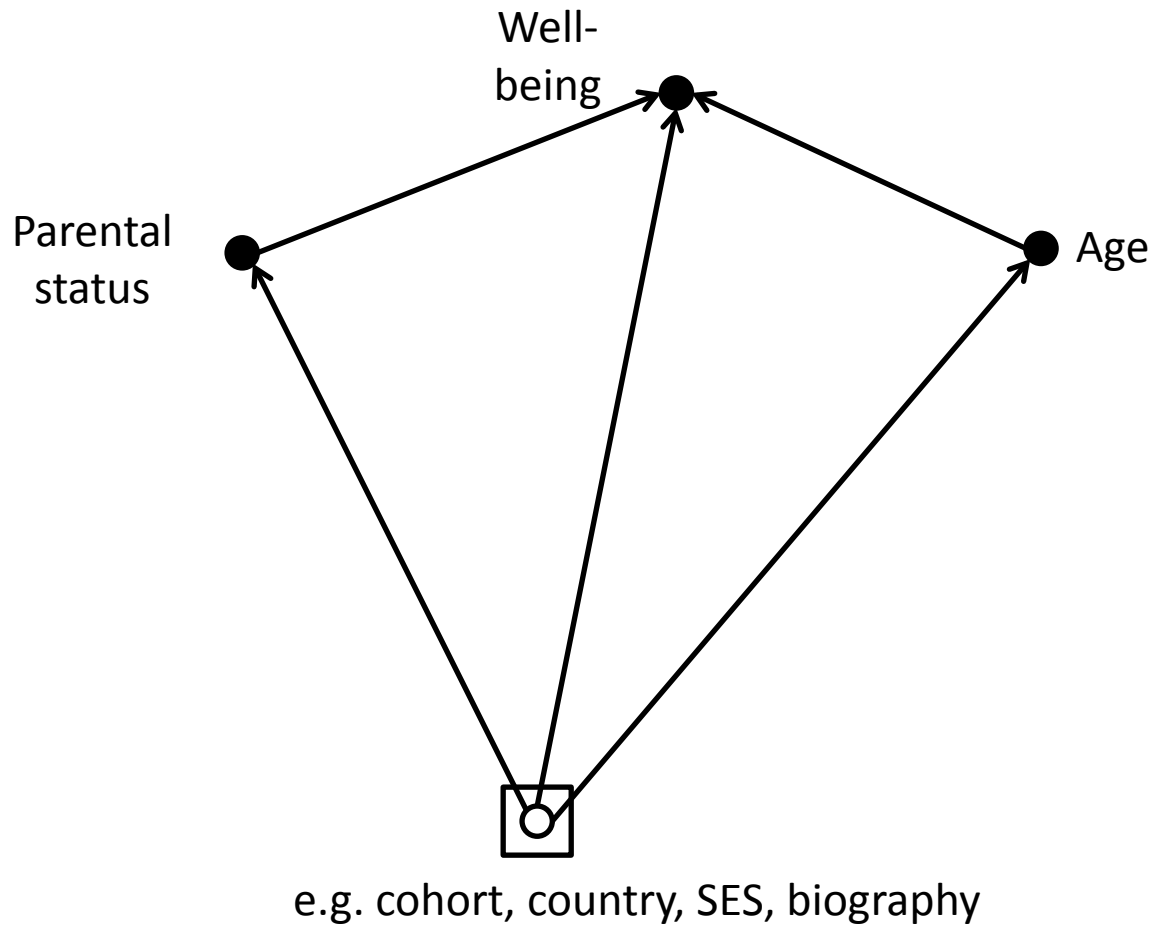
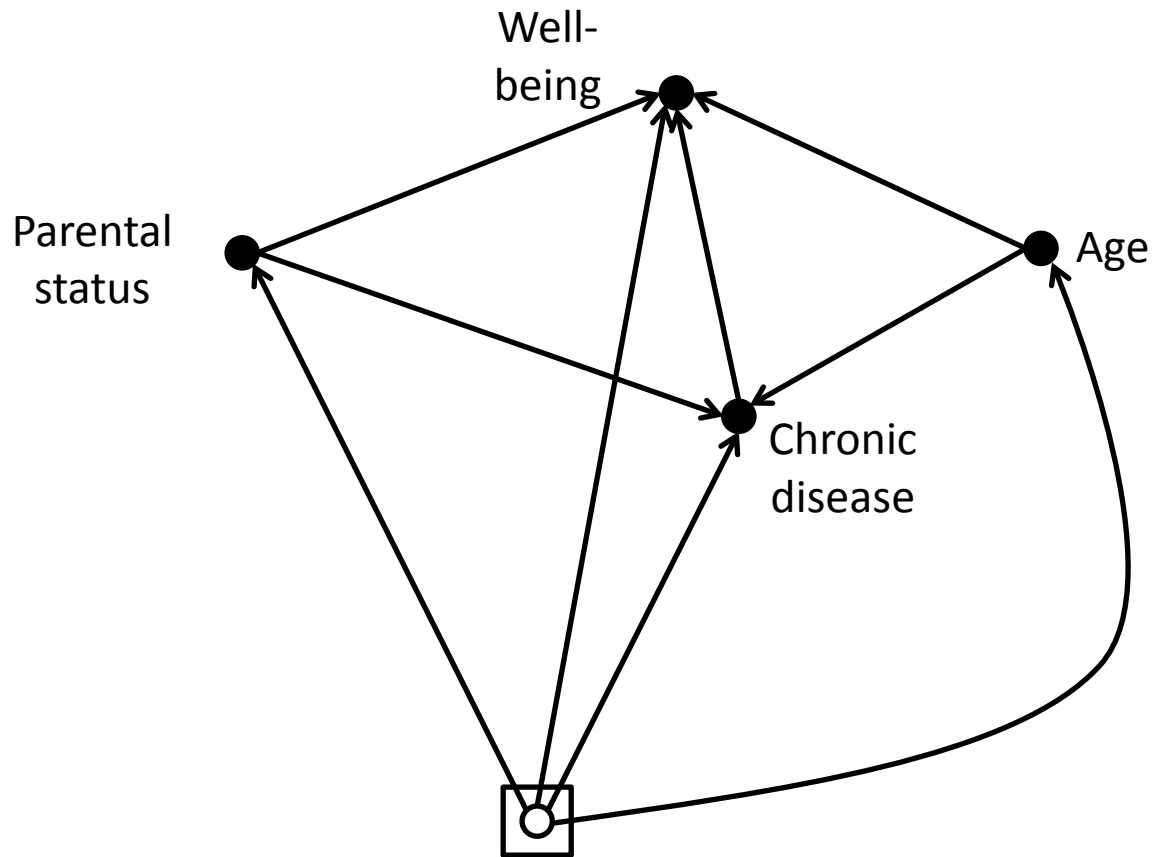


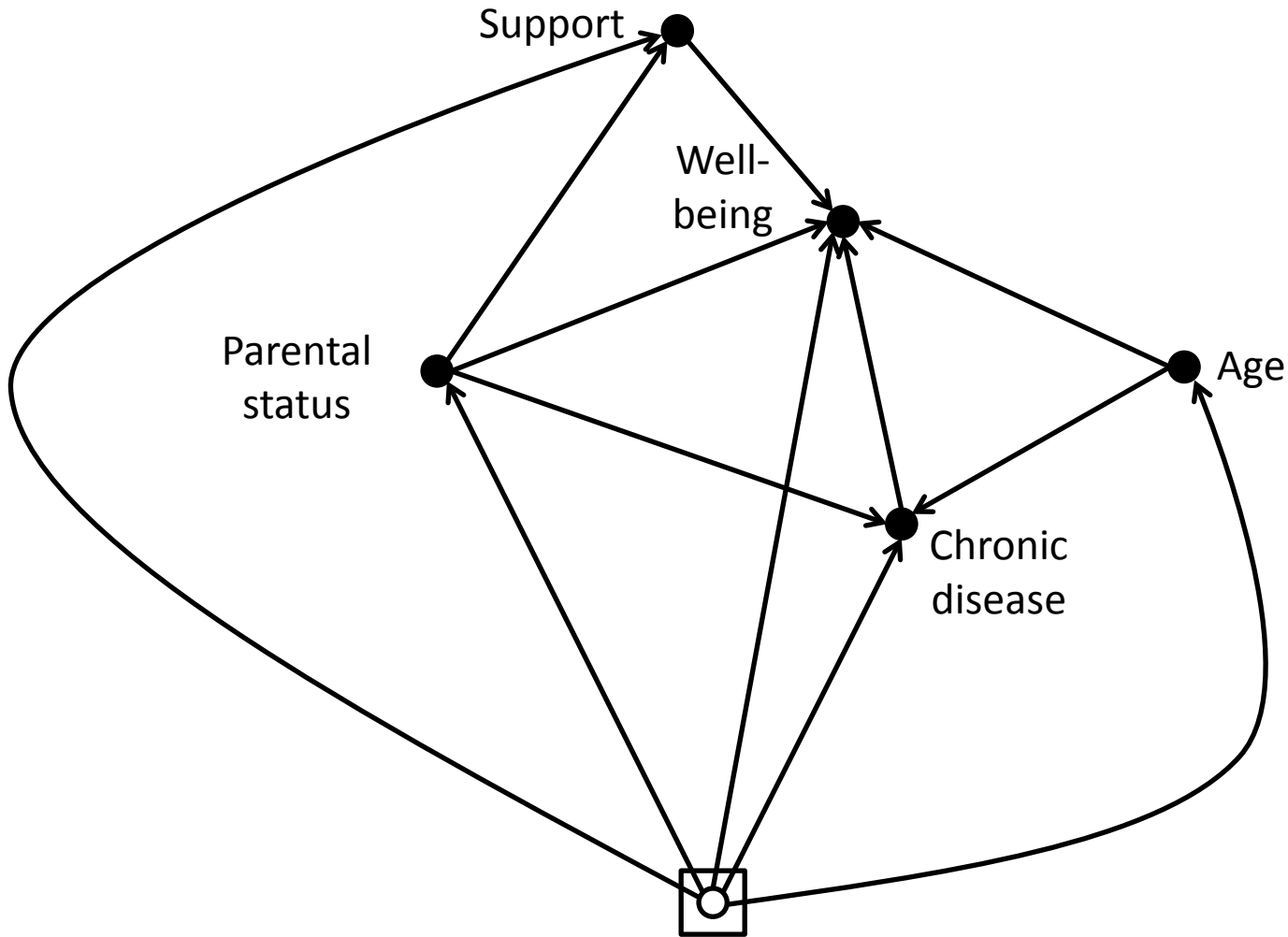
Fig. 1 The effect of parenthood on life satisfaction by gender and age (ceteris paribus) across 94 countries (WVS). All $p < .01$ except age 45–54 and age 55–65 ($p > .05$). *Source:* Stanca (2009, some ancillary analyses provided via personal communication)

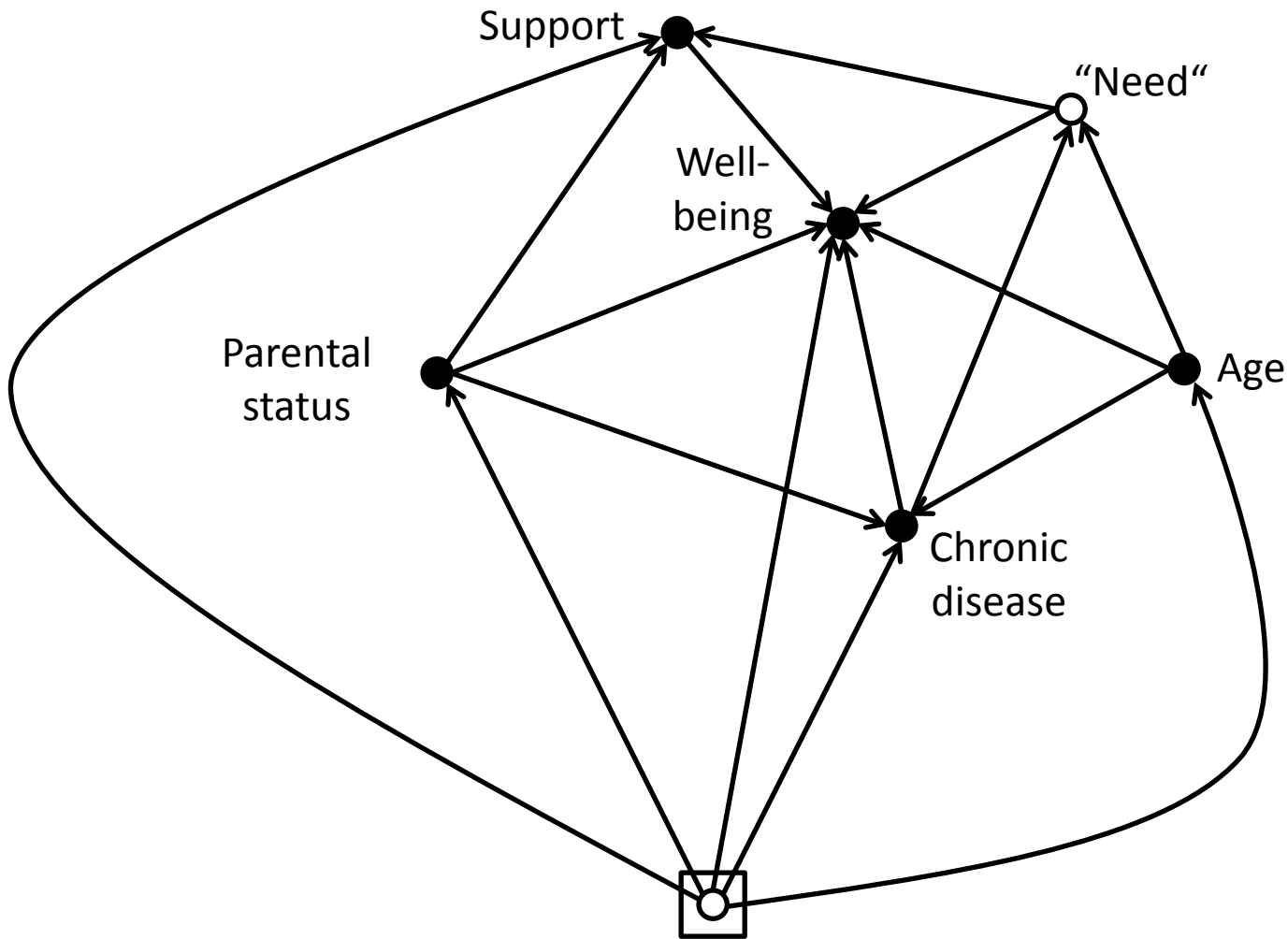
Source: Hansen (2012), p.36

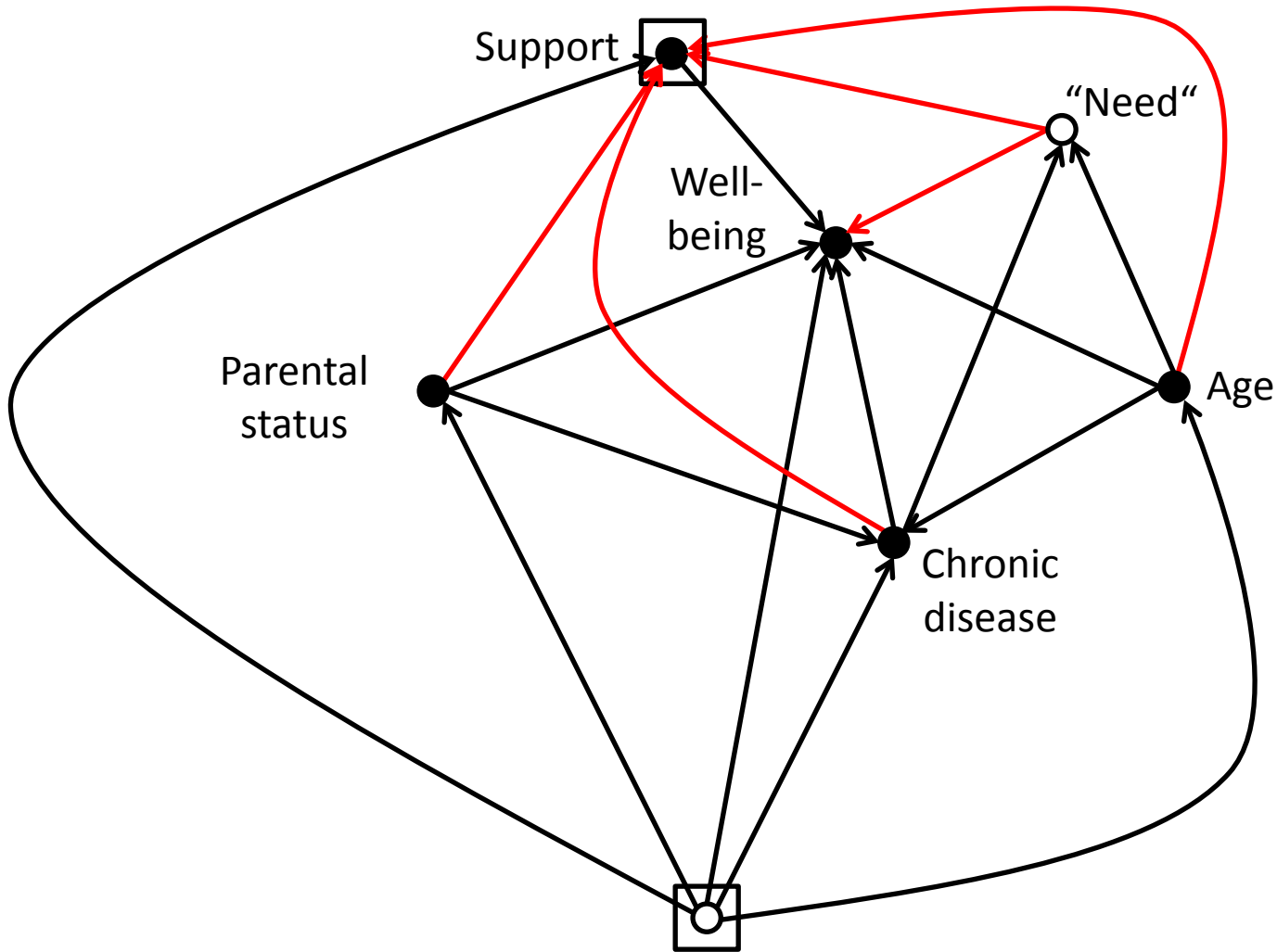
- How do different dimensions of well-being develop for parents and non-parents in later life?
 - Holistic view
- Do children “buffer” the effect of negative life events?
 - Transition-centered view
- Causal effect of children (as *potential* resources) vs. selection into parenthood



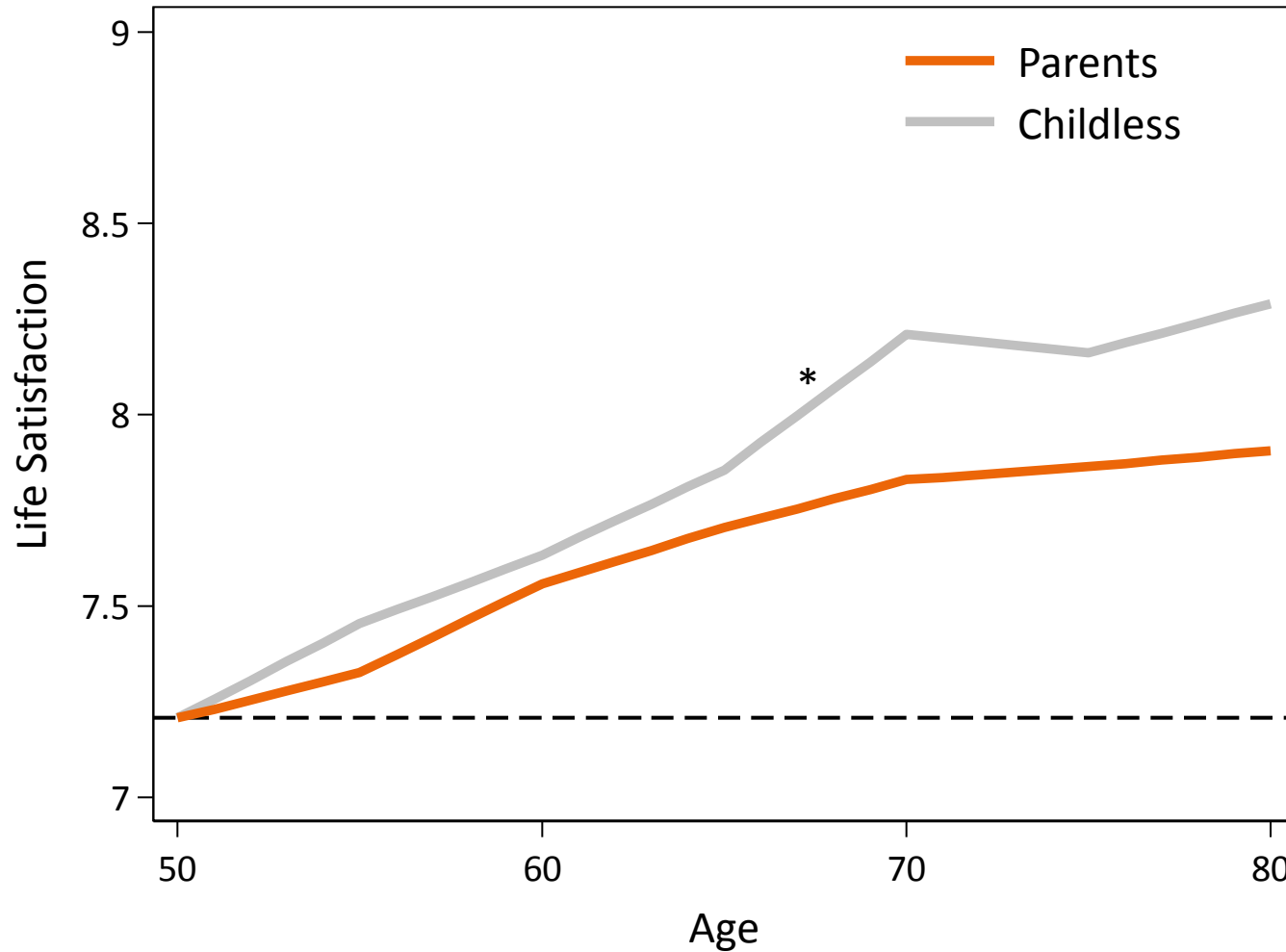


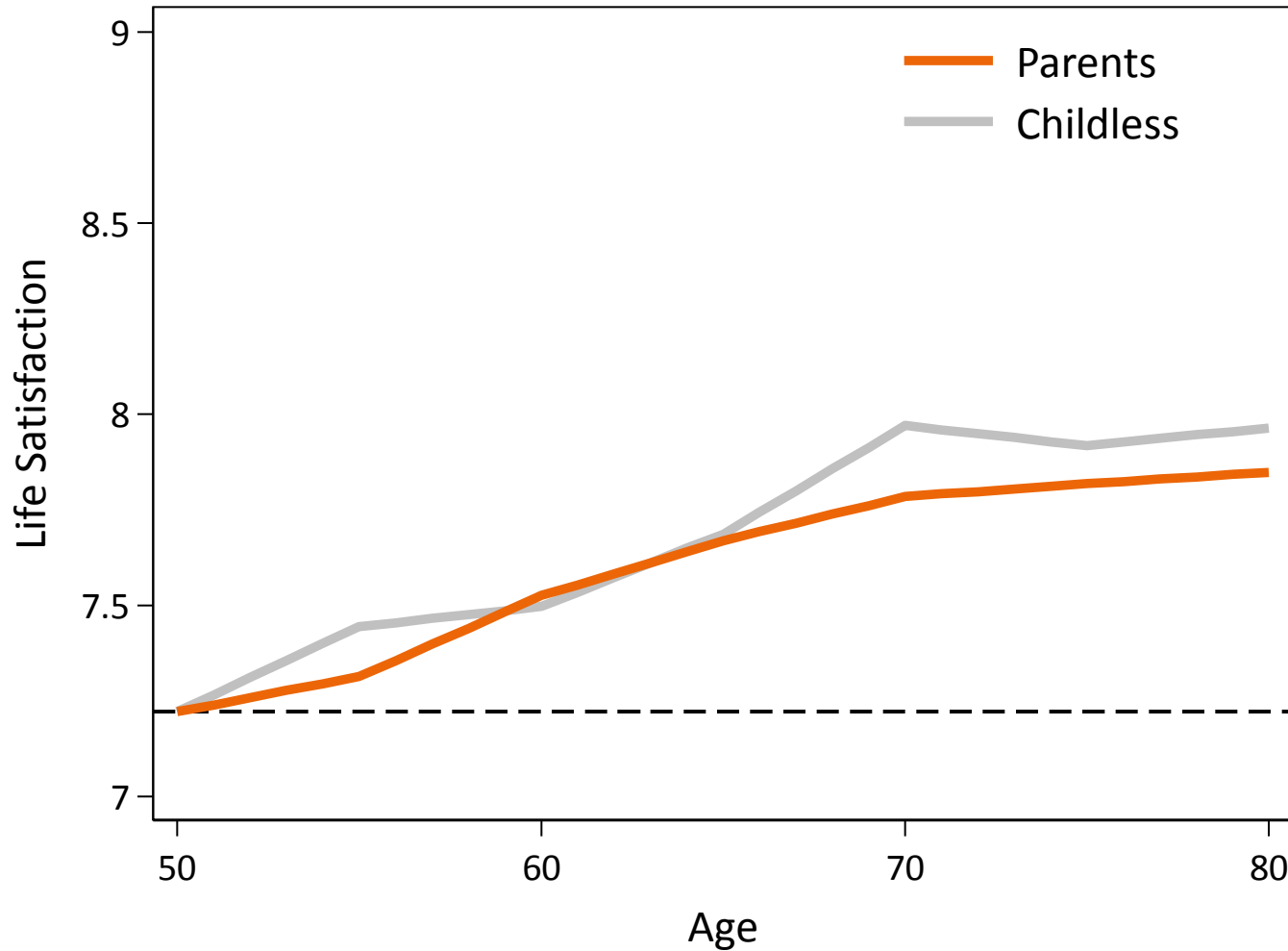


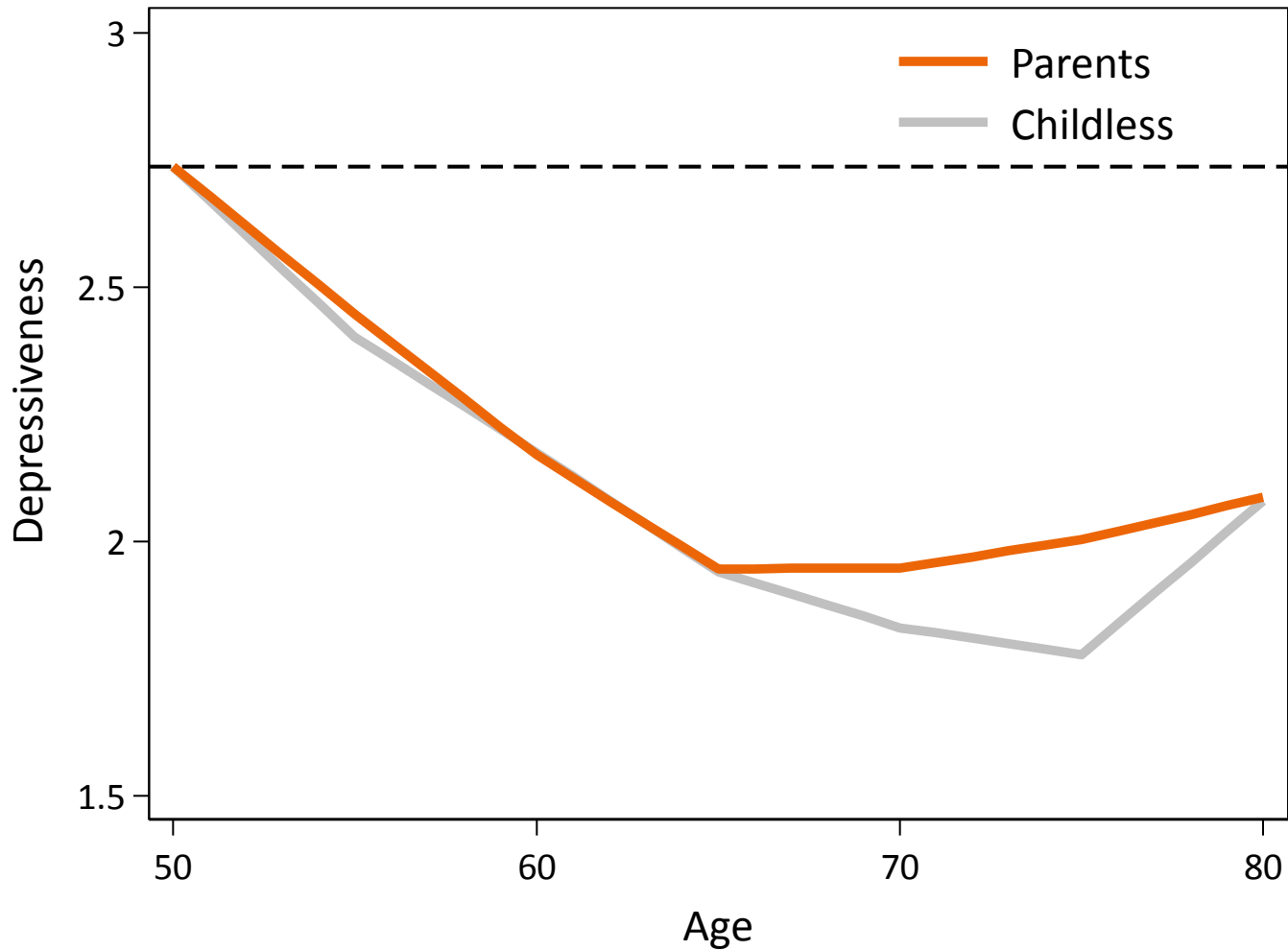


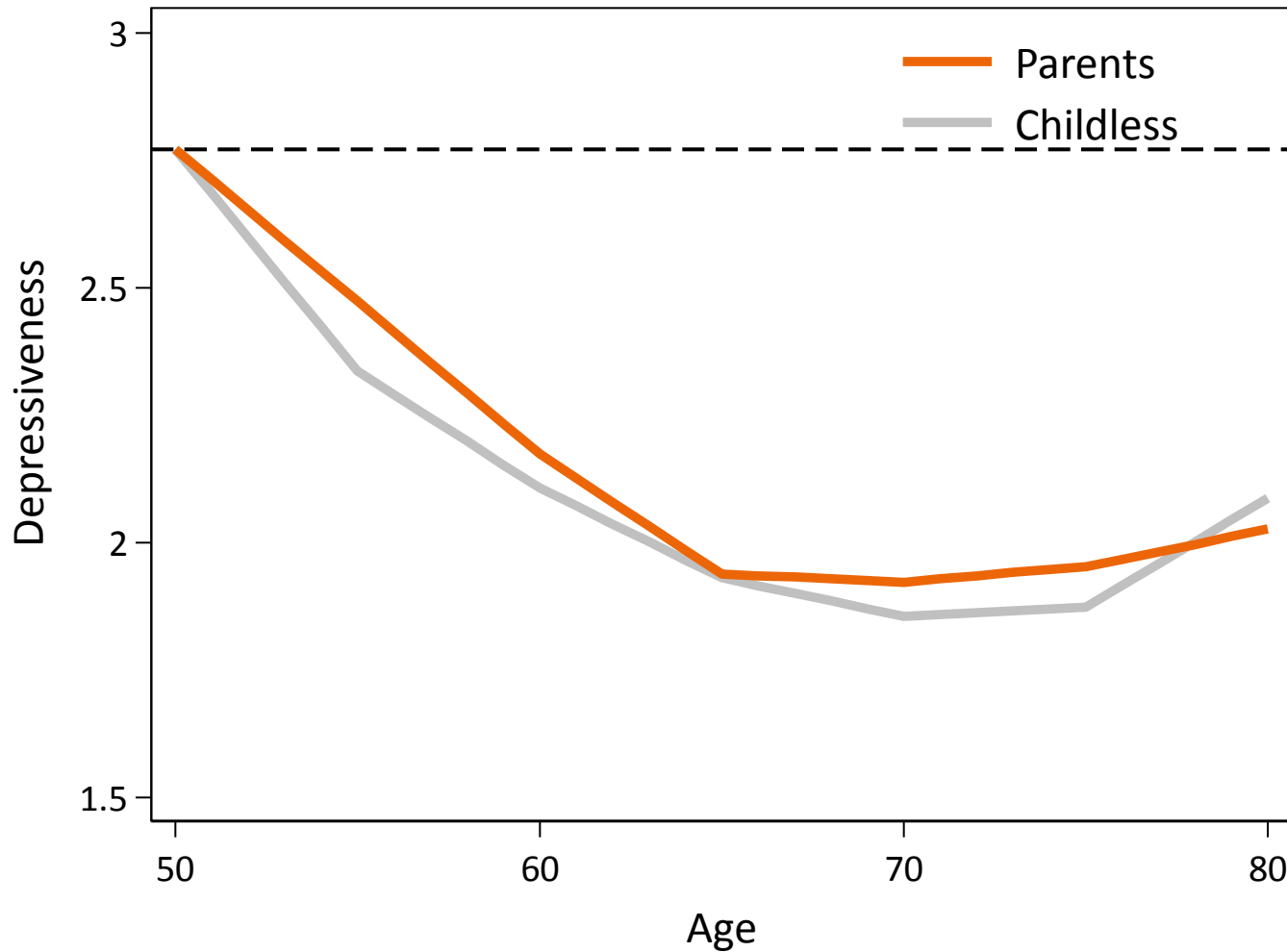


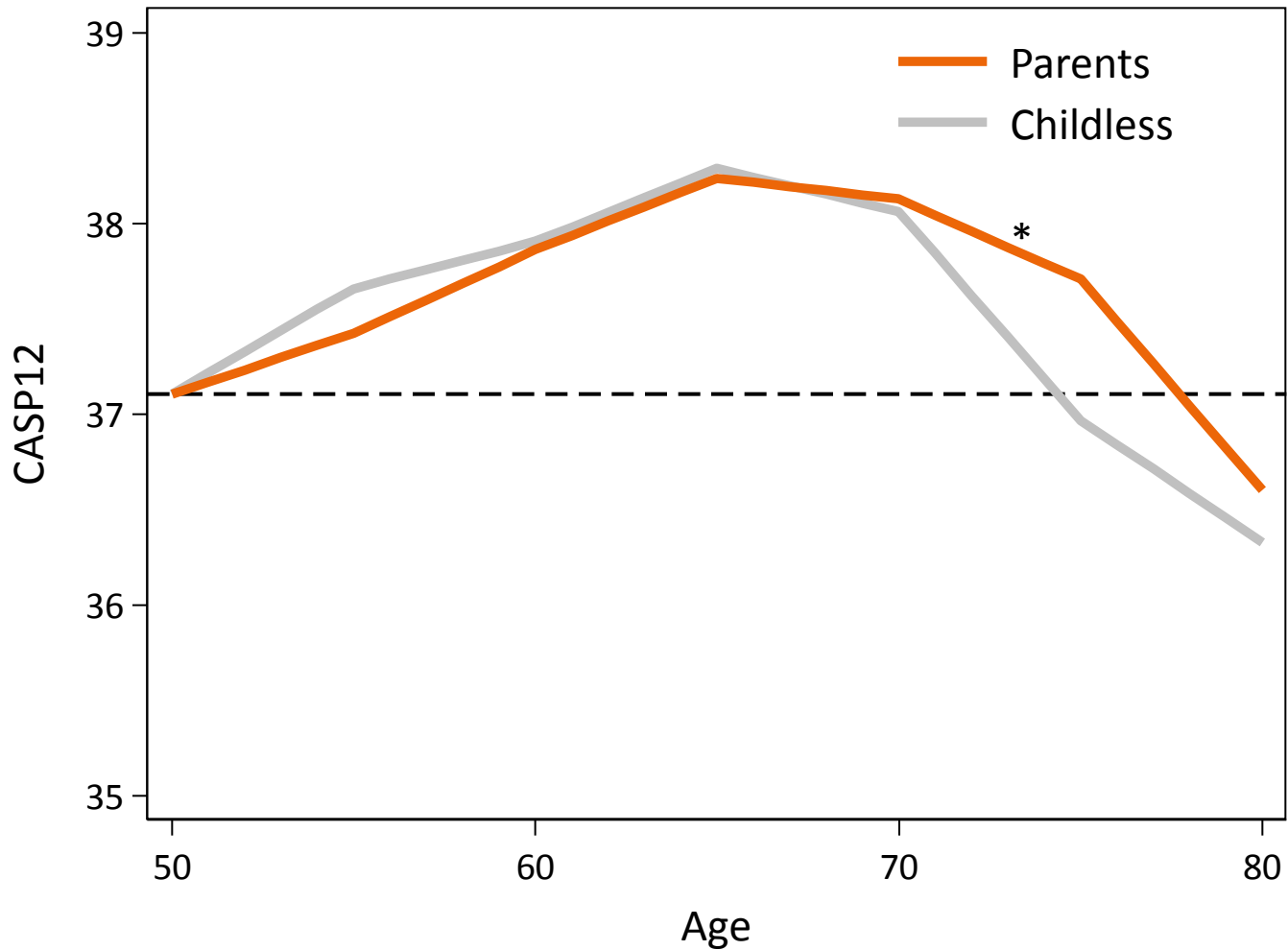
- SHARE W1-W6
- Well-being is a broad concept comprising emotional aspects as well as evaluations of one's satisfaction with life in general and in different domains (Diener et al. 1999)
 - General measure: life satisfaction (single item, 0-10)
 - Mental and emotional aspects: depressiveness (Euro-D, 12 items, 0-12)
 - Quality of life in older age (Hyde et al. 2003): control-autonomy-self-realization-pleasure (CASP, 12 items, 12-48)
- Life event: Onset of chronic disease
- Linear fixed effects models
- FE Growth Curve Model for age trajectories
- IPW

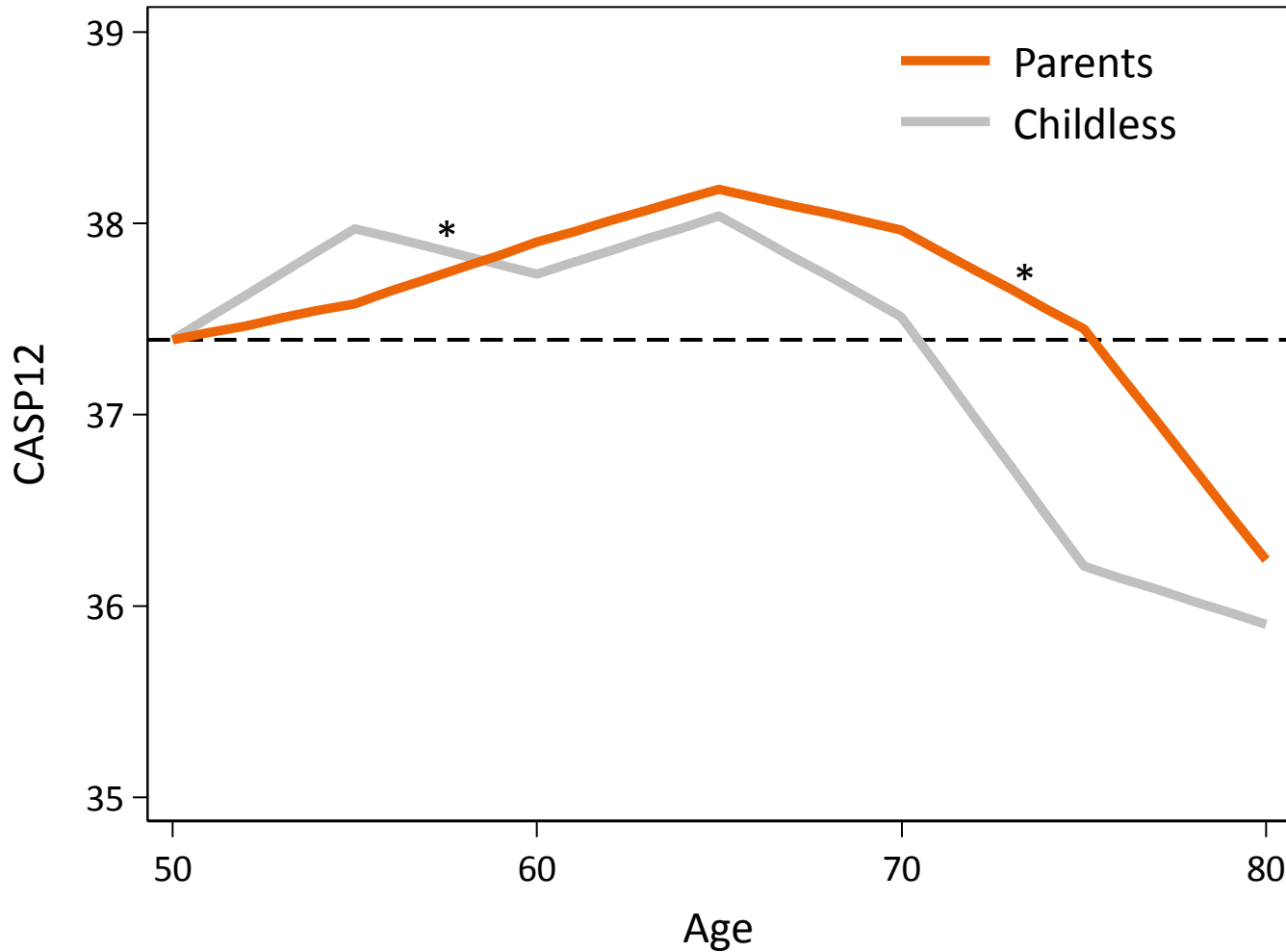




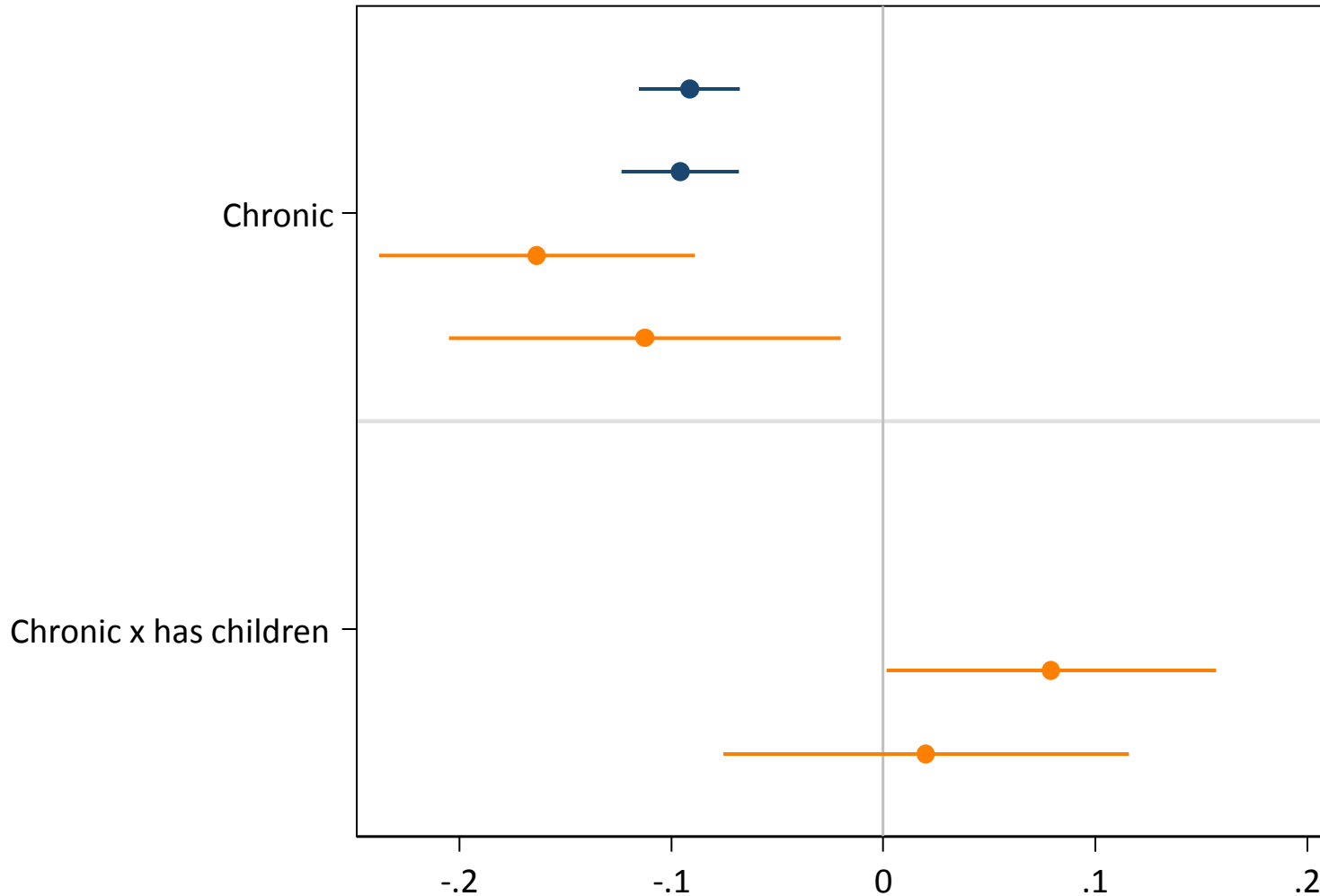




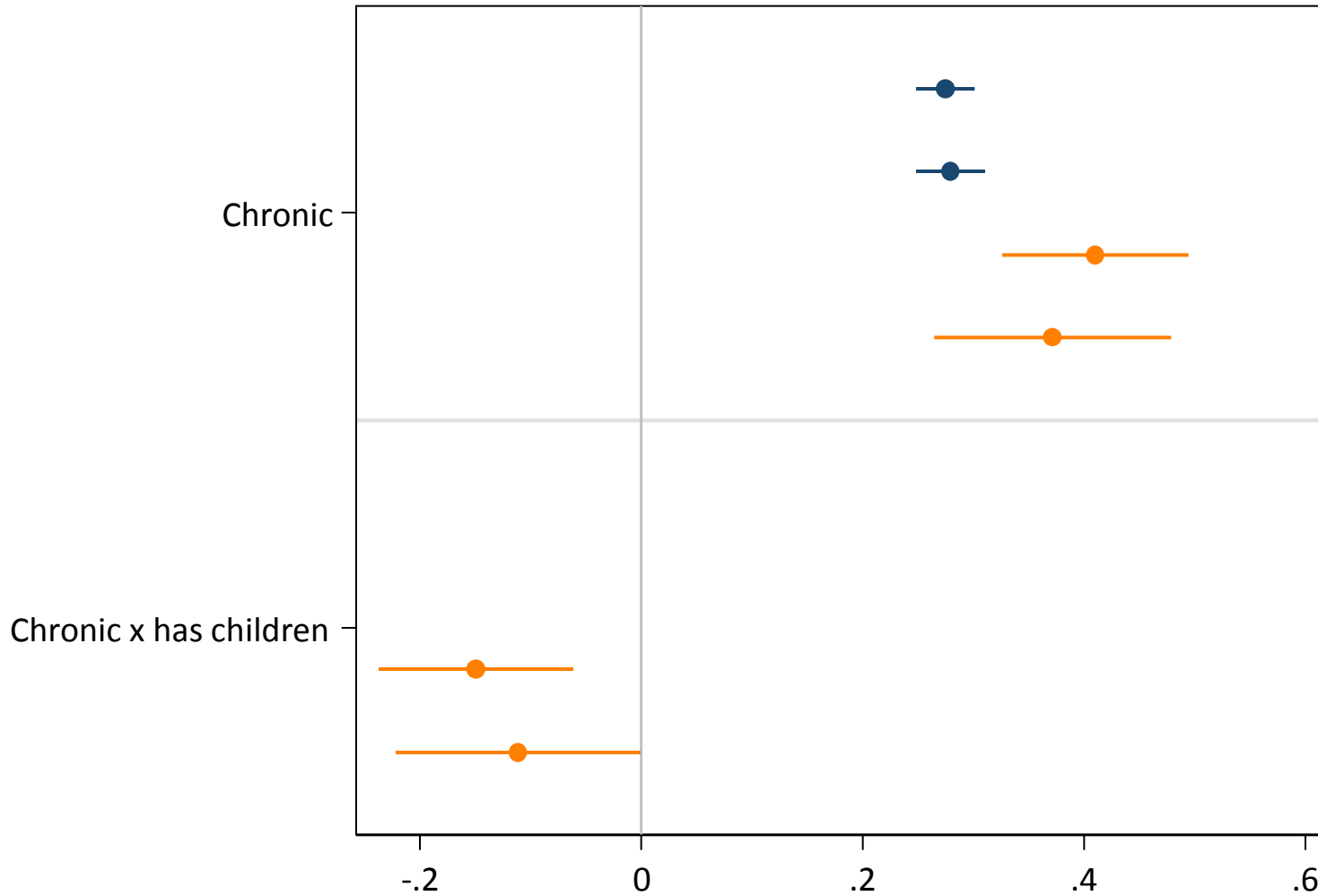




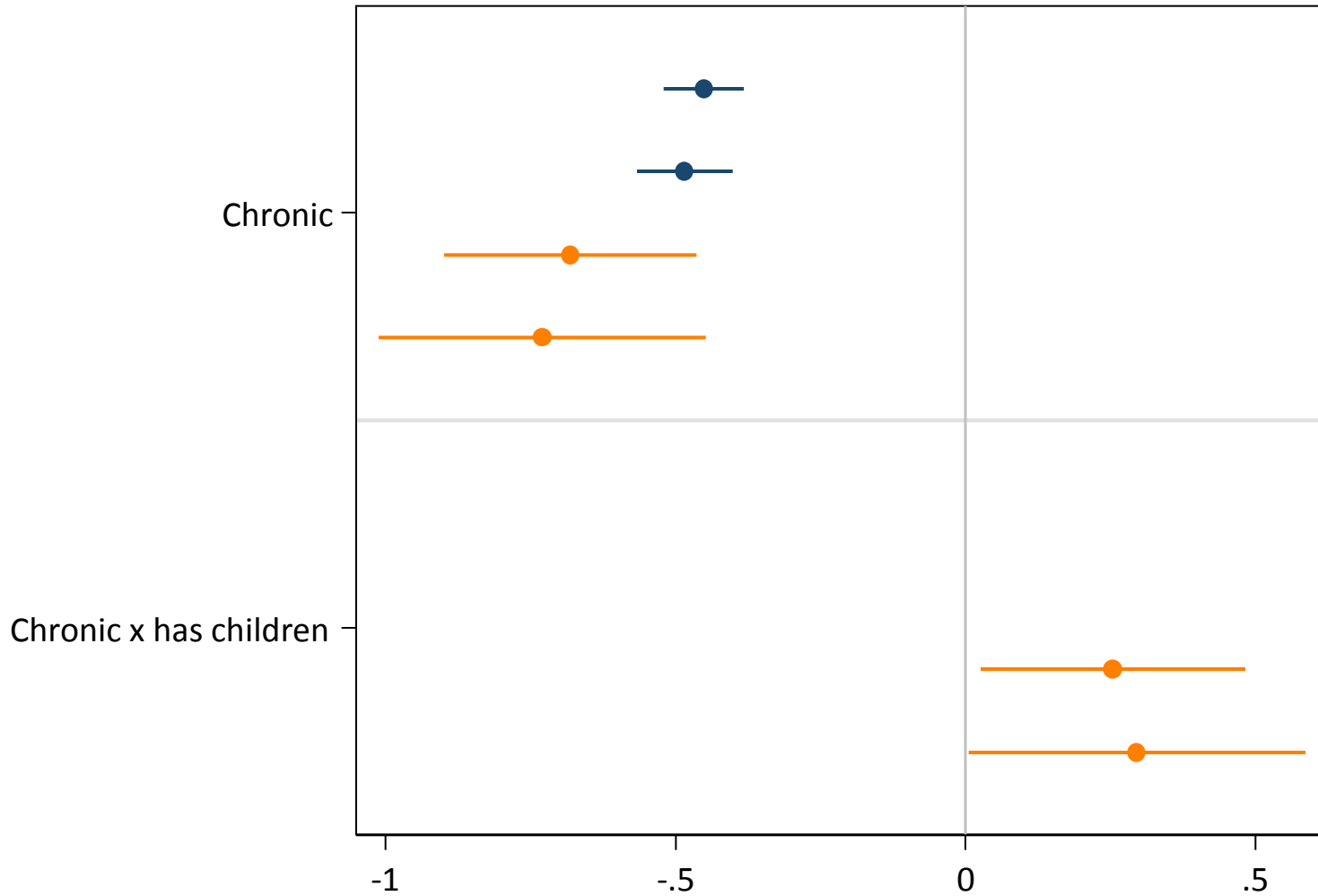
Life Satisfaction



Depressiveness



CASP12



- Age-related increase in life satisfaction, stronger for childless.
 - selection effect
- Age-related decline in CASP shifted to higher age for parents
- No difference in terms of depressive symptoms

- For all outcomes: health deterioration effect is less pronounced for parents
 - For life satisfaction, this is again due to a selection effect

- How to get closer to mechanisms?
- There may be heterogeneity in levels of supportiveness
BUT: support is endogenous!

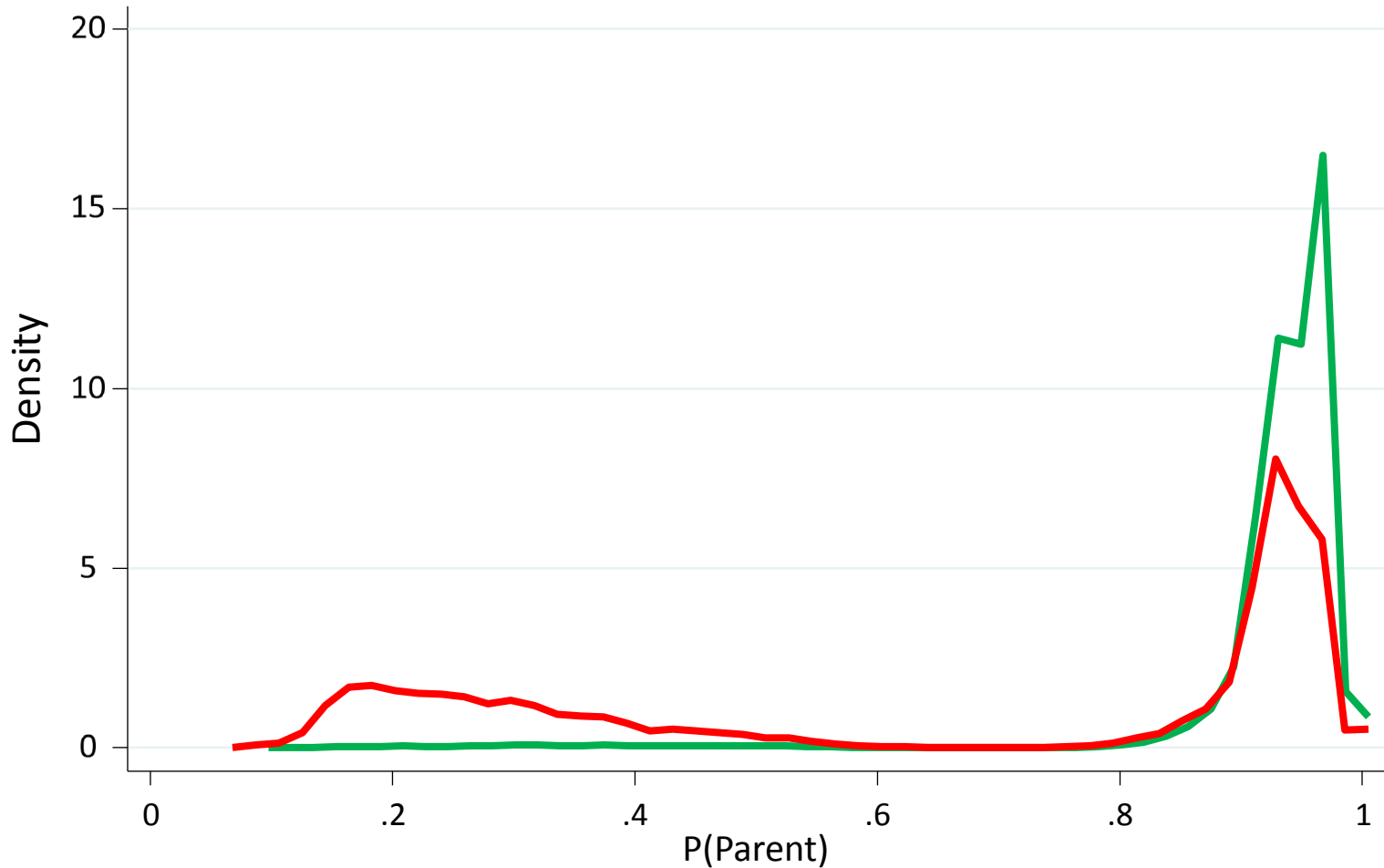
Next steps:

- Other life events, e.g. widowhood, unemployment (firm closure)
- Analyses by gender (of child) & welfare state type (degree of defamilization)
- Attrition

Thank You

Backup

Kernel Density Estimate



Prediction model includes: marital status, educational status, wealth, (log) income, chronic conditions, gender, cohort, country, age, (log); Pseudo-R²=.24

Prevalence of having a chronic disease

