

# Parenthood and life satisfaction. Russia in comparative perspective

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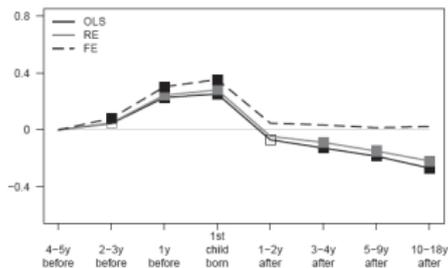
The 4th LCSR International Annual Research Conference

# Children = happiness?

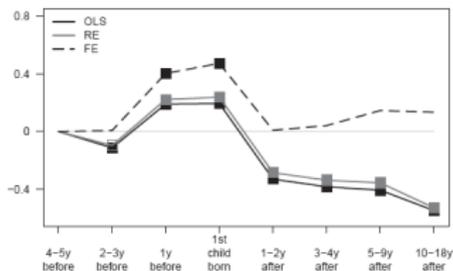


# Consistent picture for UK, DE, & CH

## German SOEP

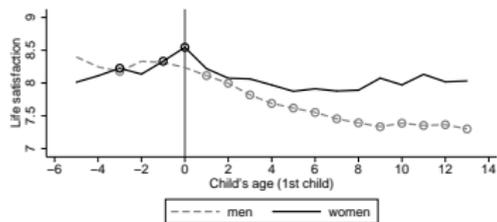


## British Household Panel Study



Source: Myrskylä & Margolis (2012)

## Swiss Household Panel



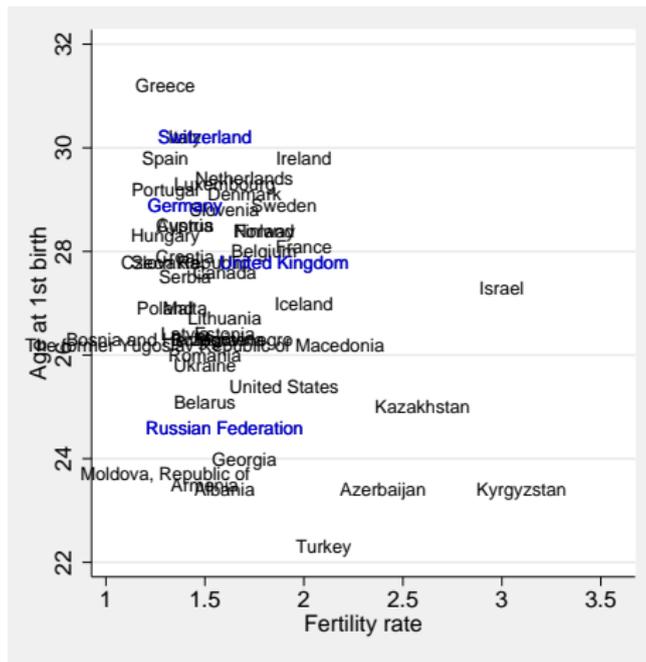
Source: Rizzi & Mikucka



# Problem?

Are we all really (like) Western Europeans?

# The case of Russia



young  
parenthood

low overall  
fertility combined  
with low  
childlessness

limited fertility at  
higher levels of  
parity

# Questions

How do children contribute to life  
satisfaction in Russia?

Anticipation effect?

Strong increase at 1st birth for women?

Subsequent decline?

Under which conditions?

More educated?

Older at birth?

In stable relationships?

Better off economically?



# Why bother?



effects on fertility

conditions for parenthood for  
specific groups



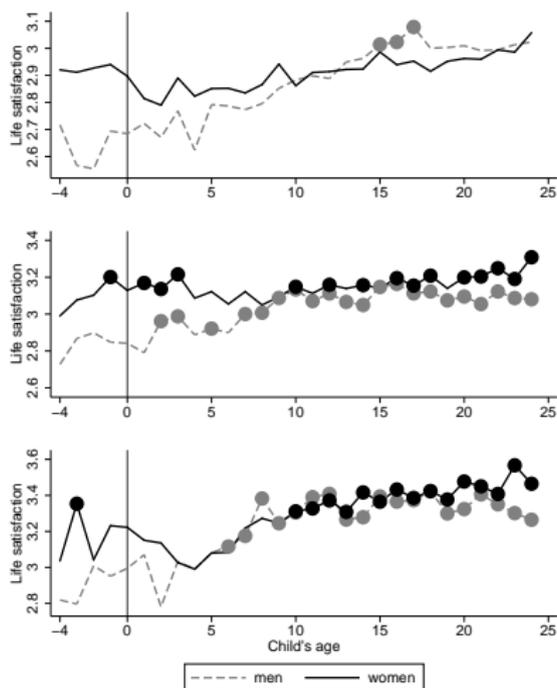
## RLMS-HSE

The Russia Longitudinal Monitoring Survey-Higher School of Economics

- ▶ 16 waves (II Stage of the program), initiated in 1994
- ▶ *To what extent are you satisfied with your life in general at the present time?*  
5 – fully satisfied, 1 – not at all satisfied
- ▶ fixed effect models comparing well-being of (prospective) parents over time (no comparison with non-parents)

Are Russians (like) Western Europeans?

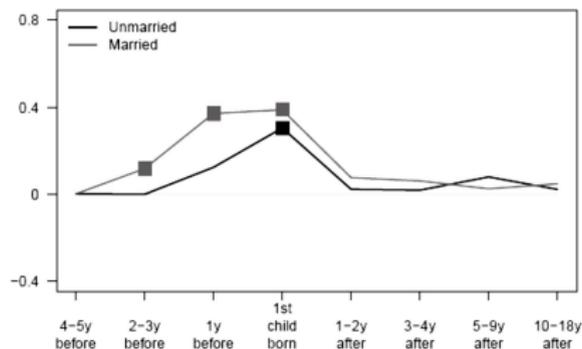
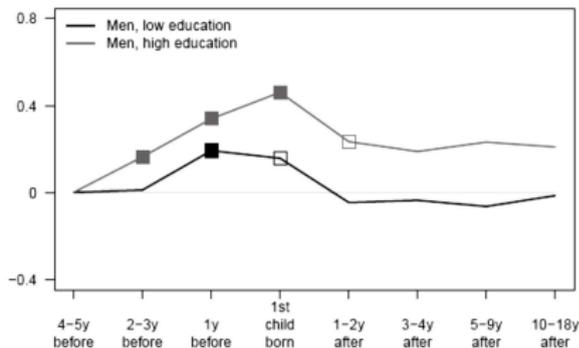
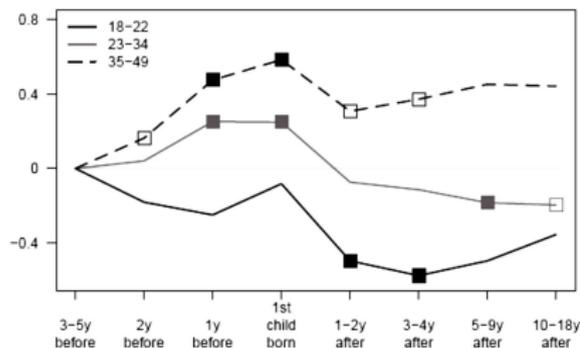
# Are Russians (like) Western Europeans?



# Summing up (1/2)

- ▶ anticipation effect and peak at the first birth are missing
- ▶ some occur at the 2nd birth
  - is the second child the first child of choice in Russia?
- ▶ increase at older ages of the child

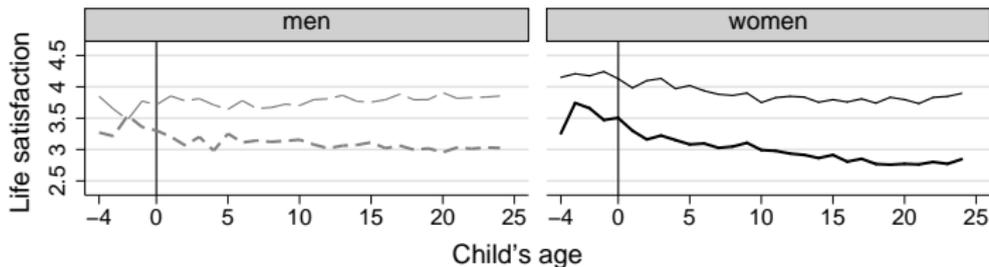
# Older, educated, married



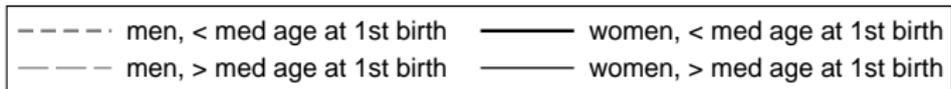
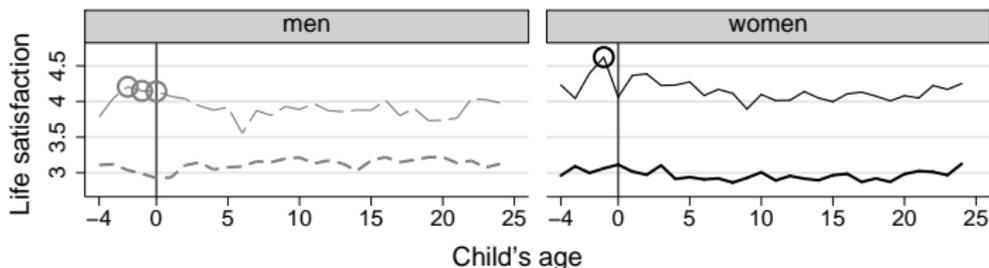
Source: Myrskylä & Margolis (2012)

# Older?

## First child:



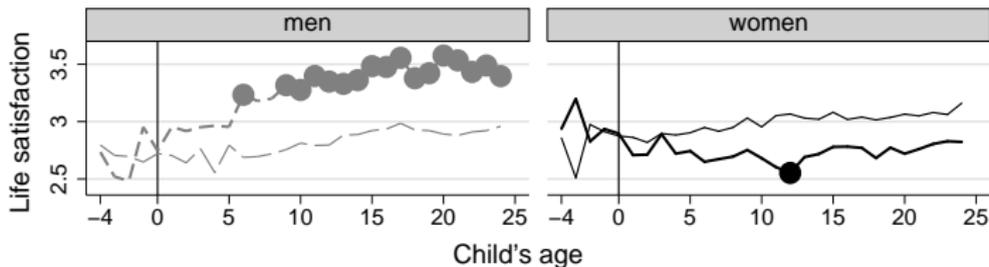
## Second child:



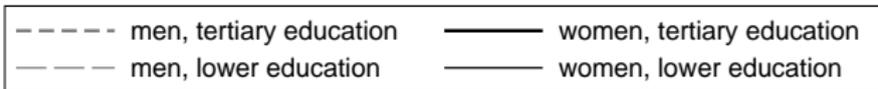
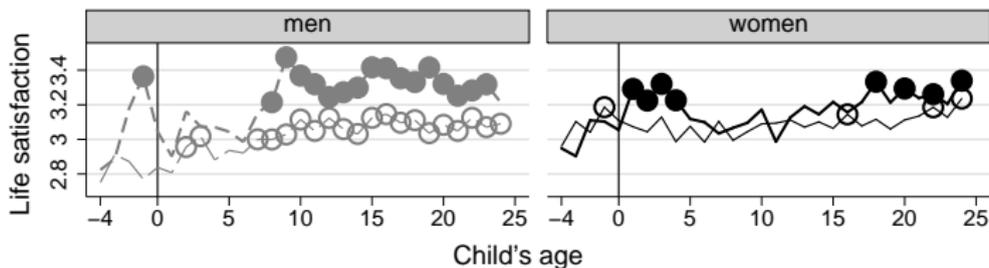
Graphs by group

# Educated?

## First child:



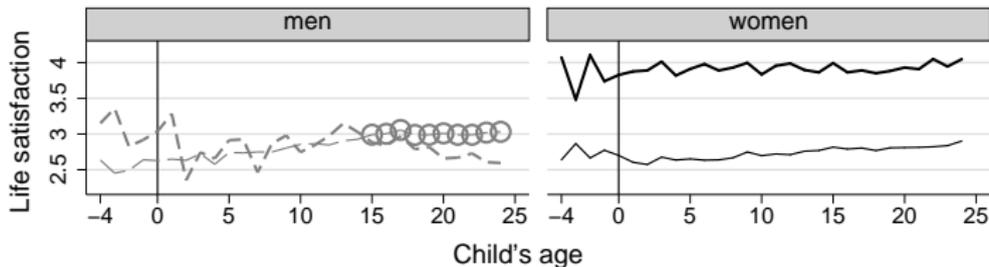
## Second child:



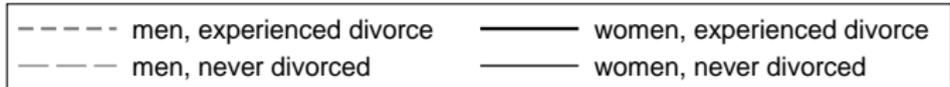
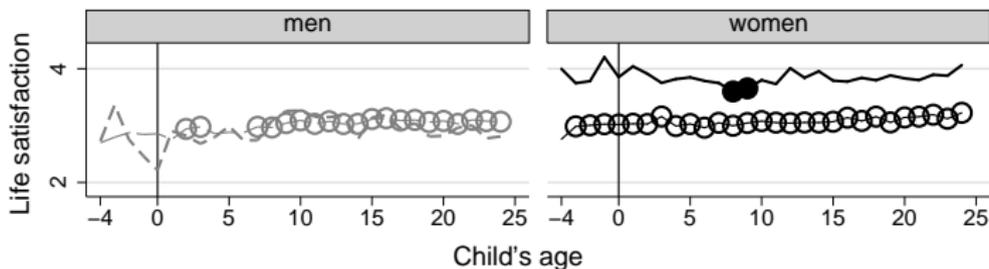
Graphs by group

# In stable relationship?

## First child:



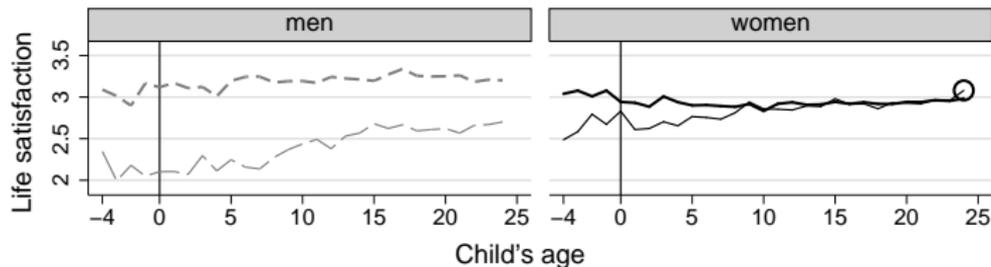
## Second child:



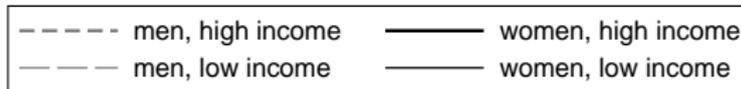
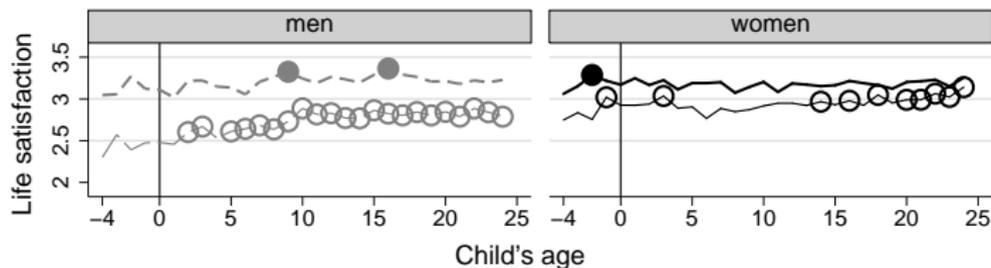
Graphs by group

# Wealthier?

## First child:



## Second child:



Graphs by group

# Summing up (2/2)

As expected:

- ▶ positive effect among parents older at 1st birth – BUT 2nd birth!
- ▶ more positive trajectory among higher educated men

Specific for Russia:

- ▶ significant increase of life satisfaction for those in stable marriages, poorer (also away from big cities)

Some similarities, but overall different pattern:

- ▶ the second child is the child of choice?
- ▶ 'traditional' parenthood pattern (child as an investment?) among the poorer, not divorcing residents of provincial Russia

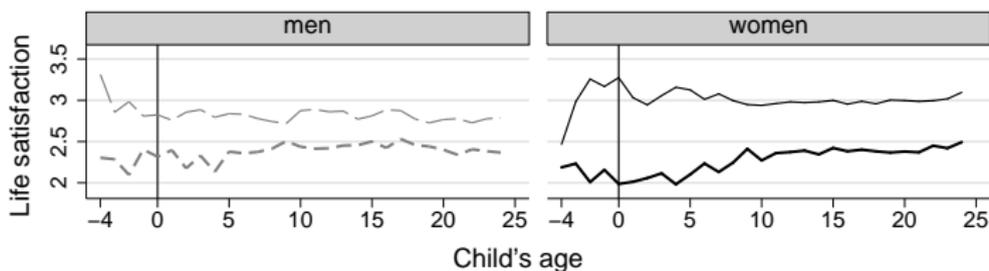
malgorzata.mikucka@uclouvain.be

Thank you!

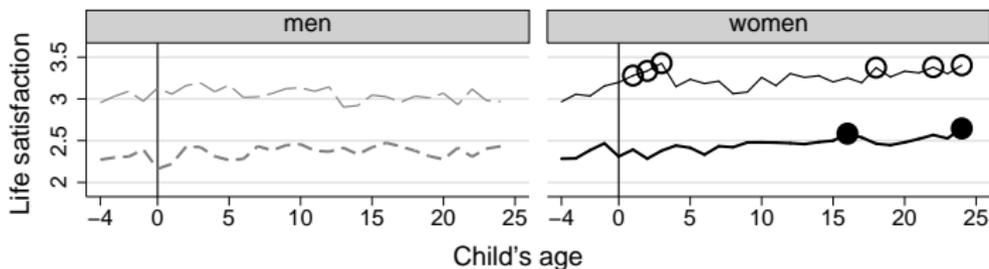


# Change over time

## First child:



## Second child:



----- men, waves 1994–2003

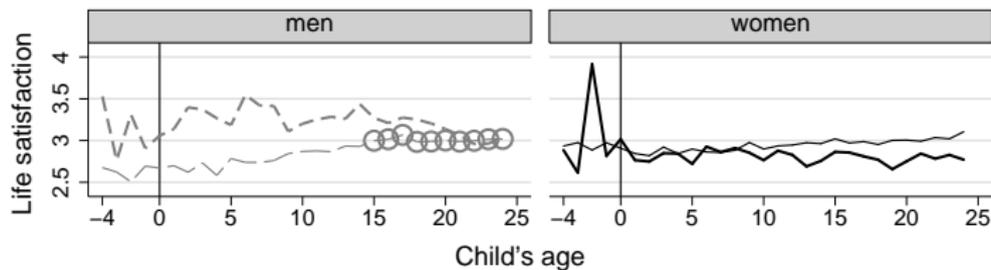
————— women, waves 1994–2003

----- men, waves 2004–2012

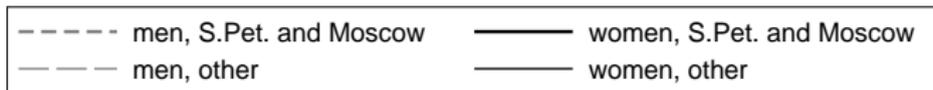
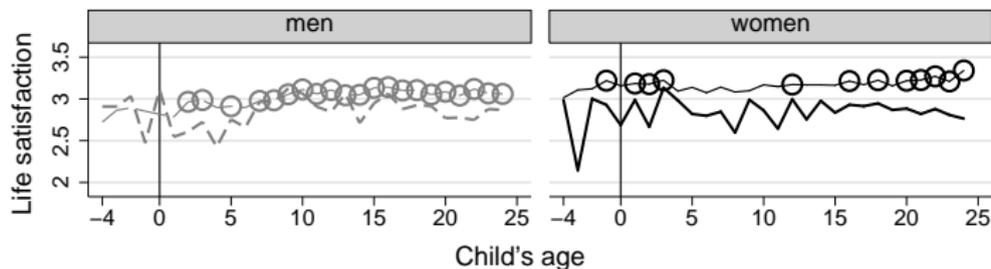
————— women, waves 2004–2012

Graphs by group

## First child:



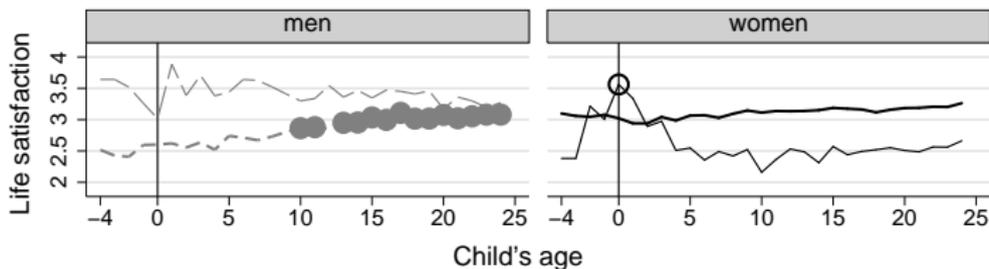
## Second child:



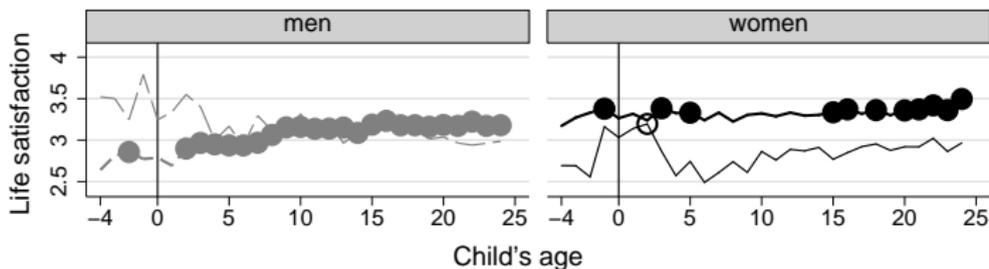
Graphs by group

# Ethnic differences

## First child:



## Second child:



--- men, ethnic Russians      — women, ethnic Russians  
- · - men, minorities      · · · women, minorities

Graphs by group