

Household Employment Uncertainty and Child Early Skills Development Patterns and Mechanisms in France

Doctoral Student

Marta FACCHINI



PhD student in Sociology at OSC and INED, affiliated at LIEPP
PhD advisors: Carlo BARONE and Lidia PANICO

Education:

M.A. Sociology and Social Research, University of Trento
 B.A. Sociology, University of Salento

Research Interests:

I am interested in investigating the differentials in educational attainment based on family background, gender and ethnicity, the role of occupational instability in early skills development, the impact of educational tracking on the formation of inequalities in the life-course, labour market returns to education, causal inference and policy evaluation.



marta.facchini@sciencespo.fr

When children begin kindergarten, their performance is already influenced by family background, and early disadvantage has long-term consequences. In order to investigate the production of educational inequality, we analyse the role of growing turbulence in parental work trajectories, i.e. temporary work and unemployment spells, for child early skills development; and the mechanisms that account for it. In France the dual labor market allows for a more precise identification of household employment uncertainty (HEU), and the welfare state supports childbearing notwithstanding employment uncertainty. We use four waves of the nationally representative birth cohort ELFE, collected by INED starting in 2011. Using OLS with fixed effect at the hospital level, we find that the accumulation of employment uncertainty in the households and over time adds up to a decrease of 0,3 deviation standards in the cognitive skills of children aged 2 and 3,5 years old. Using SEM and regression with residuals, we show that persistent HEU has an indirect effect on cognitive outcomes via economic investment, and on difficult behavior via parental psychophysical health.

Motivation

- Explore the role of the growing turbulence in work trajectories for educational outcomes.
- Explore the influence of parental background before kindergarten. Early disadvantage has long-term consequences.
- Policy interventions at this stage can be highly beneficial and cost-effective.

Why France?

- The majority of the studies was carried out in high income English-speaking countries, which undermines the generalizability of the results.
- Higher protection in the job market and higher public support to fertility and early childhood.
- Employment uncertainty more identifiable in the dual labour market.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of household employment uncertainty (HEU) for early skills development?
2. Which mechanisms account for this relationship?

Theory

Family Investment Model & Family Stress Model

Data and Method

- Birth cohort ELFE, nationally representative, follows ~18,000 children born in 2011.
- 4 waves: the child is 2 months, 1, 2 and 3,5 years old.
- Patterns: OLS with fixed effects at the hospital level, weighted.
- Mediation: Generalized SEM and regression with residuals (package STATA "rwrmmed").e

Variables

Outcomes

COGNITIVE: Language skills (W3), Cognitive ability (W4)
 SOFT SKILLS: Conflict (W3), Difficult behavior (W4)

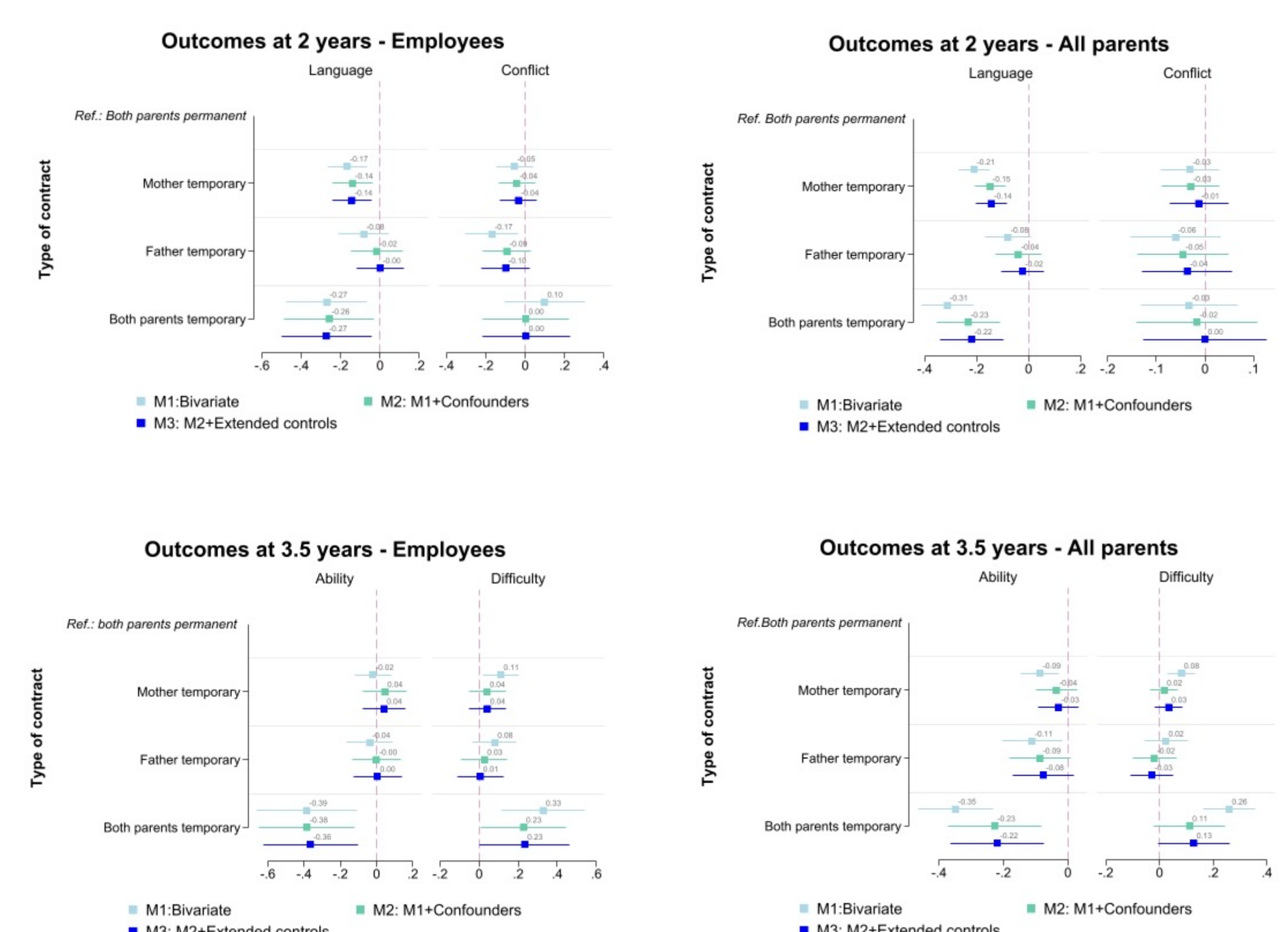
Independent variable

- HEU: type of contract of both parents
- Persistent HEU: years of employment uncertainty

Control variables

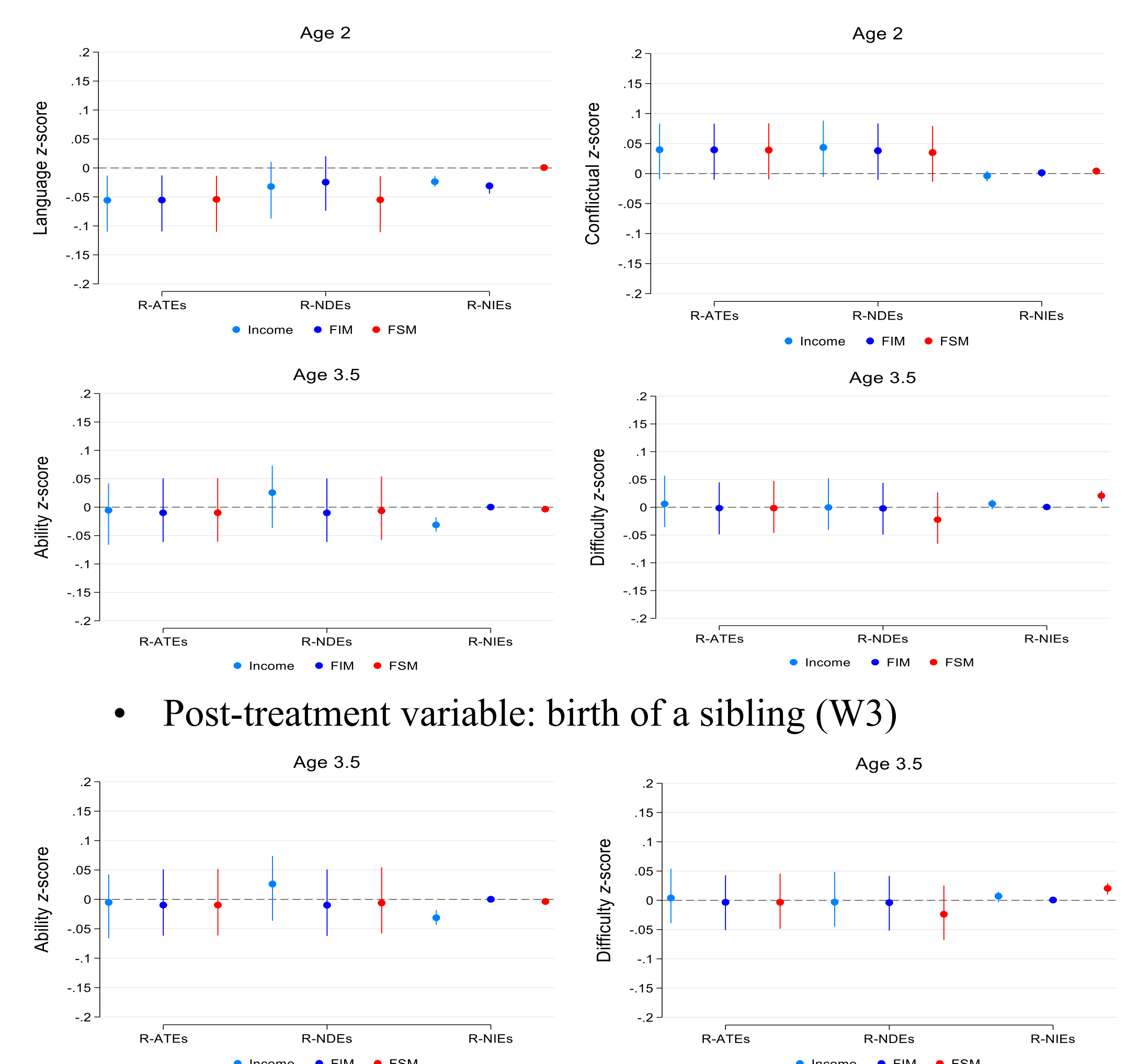
M2: parents' age and migration background, household level of education and social class.
 M3: gender of the child, birth order, twin sibling.

Patterns



Mediation

- Equivalized household income (W2/W3)
- FIM variables - pca index (W2/W3)
- FSM variables - pca index (W2/W3)
- Control variables (W1)



Conclusions

- Temporary contracts are associated with lower cognitive development.
- The accumulation of employment uncertainty in the households and over time adds up to a decrease of 0,3 deviation standards in early cognitive skills development.
- Persistent HEU has an indirect effect on cognitive outcomes via FIM variables, and on difficult behavior via FSM variables.