

Unemployment, Conflicts and Partnership Stability: An Application of an Actor-Partner Interdependence Model (First Results)



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Overview

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Problem and Research Questions

- ❖ Unemployment indicates and causes problems at the macro- as well as micro-level.
- ❖ We are interested in micro-level effects, esp. family life and intimate partnerships:
 - ❖ Does unemployment affect relationship stability?
 - ❖ If it does, can we explain the mechanisms that link unemployment and relationship stability? Is it a direct (via external constraints/barriers) or an indirect effect (spillover effect)?
 - ❖ Does the link vary between:
 - ❖ different level of institutionalization (LAT, cohabiting and married couples)?
 - ❖ females and males?

Overview

2. Previous Research and Theoretical Background

Macro- and Micro-Level Findings

Macro-Level

- ❖ Negative (**bivariate**) association between unemployment rate and divorce in Europe; no longer statistically significant in multiple regression models (Kalmijn, 2007).
- ❖ Positive (**bivariate**) correlation between US states' unemployment rate and divorce rate, but turns negative when divided into time periods (Amato & Beattie, 2011).

Micro-Level

- ❖ Findings vary by sex, duration of partnership, and employment status of both partners (e.g., Jalovaara, 2003, 2002)
- ❖ Unemployment increases the risk of divorce (e.g., Hansen, 2005; Kraft, 2001)

Why Direct Effects of Unemployment on Separation?

- ❖ For marriages:
Divorce is expensive (as well as life after divorce).
- ❖ Unemployment decreases the chance of finding alternative partners.
- ❖ For females:
Due to lack of financial resources and her dependency on her husband/male partner.

Why Indirect Effects of Unemployment on Divorce?

Social and psychological stress

Aneshensel (1992)



conflicts (+) &
appropriate conflict behavior (-)



Lewis/Spanier (1979)

Gottman, (1993)

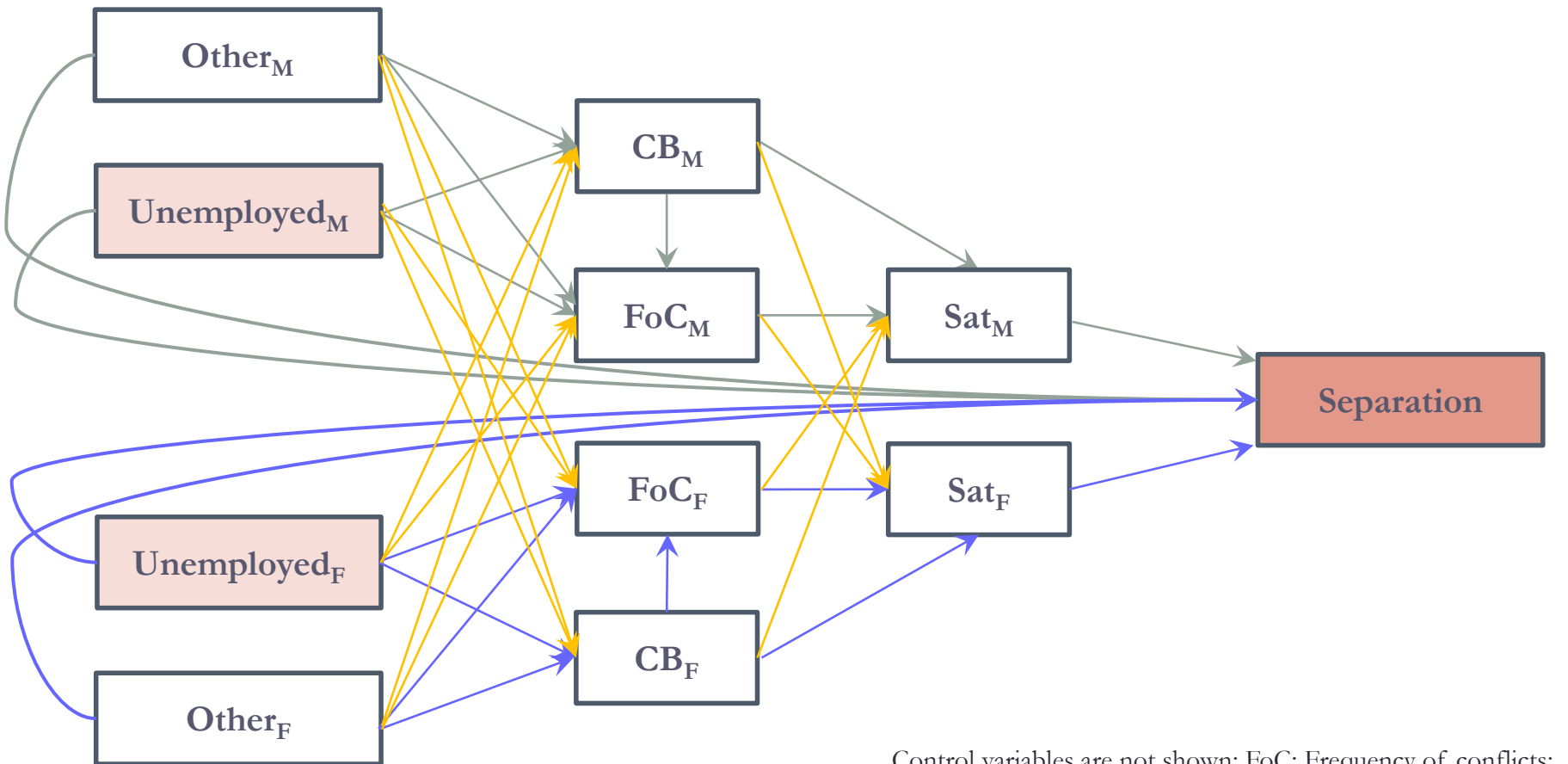
Karney/Bradbury (1995)

relationship satisfaction (-)



SEPARATION/DIVORCE

Conceptual Model



Overview

3. Data and Method

Data

- ❖ First four waves of the German Family Panel (pairfam), release 4.0 (Nauck, Brüderl, Huinink, & Walper, 2013). A detailed description of the study can be found in (Huinink et al., 2011).

- ❖ Here: 4,706 heterosexual dyads (and approx. 105,000 person-months)
 - ❖ marriageable age: one partner is 18+, the other partner is 16+ (at each wave)
 - ❖ age of consent: both partners were at least 14 at partnership begin

- ❖ At least one measurement per couple (w1, w2, w3 or w4)

- ❖ Left truncated and right censored panel data

Operationalization

- ❖ Relationship dissolution: 1: Yes, 0: No; between any two waves.
- ❖ Relationship satisfaction (TVC²): “Overall, how satisfied are you with your relationship?” (0: Very dissatisfied – 10: Very satisfied).
- ❖ Employment status (TVC; lagged by 3 months): 0: full/part time employed, 1: unemployed, 2: other (e.g., students, retired persons, housewife, etc.); starting with wave 1.
- ❖ Frequency of conflicts (TVC): “How often do you and [name partner] disagree and quarrel?”; “How often are you and [name partner] annoyed or angry with each other?” (1: never – 5: always).
- ❖ Aggressive conflict behavior (TVC): “And how often did you engage in any of these behaviors”: (1) “Insult or verbally abuse your partner”, (2) “Yell at your partner” (1: never/almost never – 5: very often).
- ❖ Control variables: Age when the relationship began (in years); relationship duration (TVC) in years; number of previous relationships; panel wave

Analyzing Dyadic Data with an Event Variable

- ❖ Dyadic data can be analyzed with the actor-partner interdependence model (APIM) (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006).
- ❖ The APIM is estimated using a path model approach.
- ❖ The central endogenous variable is an event (separation) and a discrete-time event history analysis (EHA) model is estimated; the unit of analysis are person-months (in a path model not statistically independent, clustered standard errors are estimated).
- ❖ Our model is a mixture of an APIM and an EHA model, first introduced by Arránz Becker and Lois (2012), Arránz Becker (2013), Lois (2013)³.

³We would like to thank Oliver Arránz-Becker and Daniel Lois who provided us with initial Mplus code.

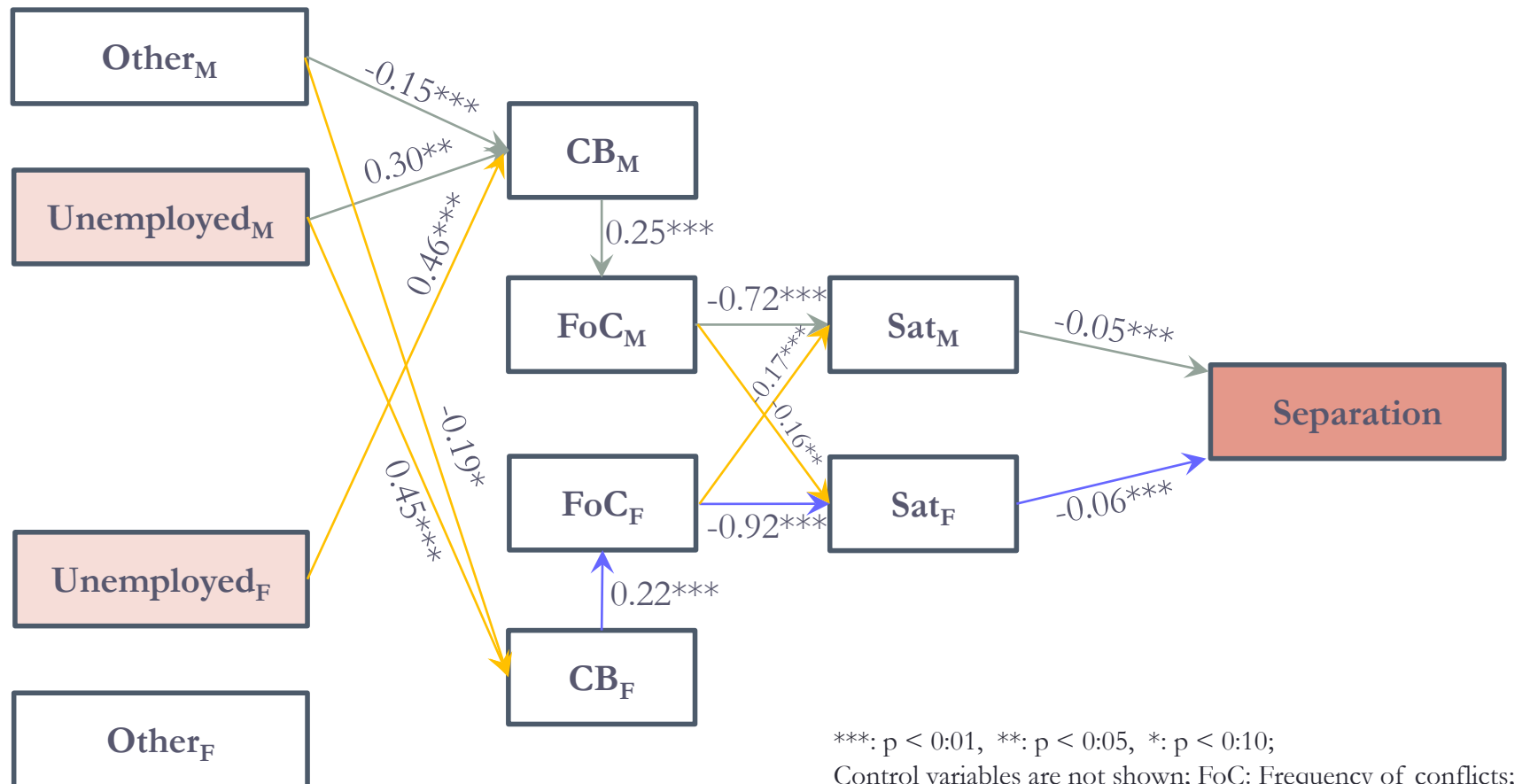
Overview

4. Results

Multi-group Path Model

- ❖ Mplus 6.11 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998) was used to fit a multi-group path model.
- ❖ Multiple imputed data sets ($m = 10$) were created with R's Amelia II package (Version 1.7.2, built: 2013-04-03); Honaker, King, & Blackwell, 2011).
- ❖ Some fit indices:
 - ❖ $\chi^2(36) = 97.15, p < 0.01$
 - ❖ RMSEA = 0.007
 - ❖ CFI = 0.993
 - ❖ TLI = 0.947

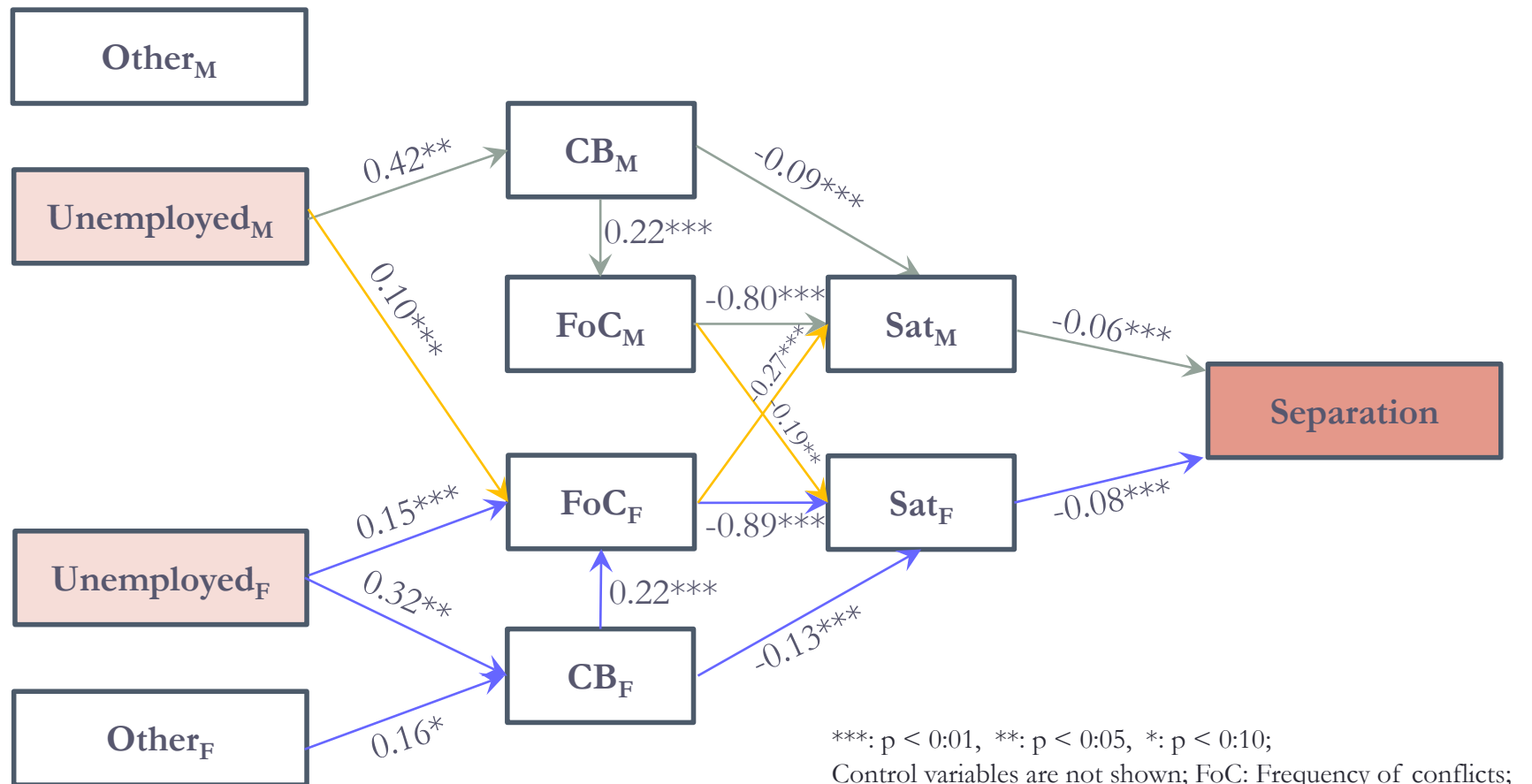
Path Model for Living-Apart-Together Couples



***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$;

Control variables are not shown; FoC: Frequency of conflicts;
CB: Aggressive conflict behavior; Sat: Relationship satisfaction;

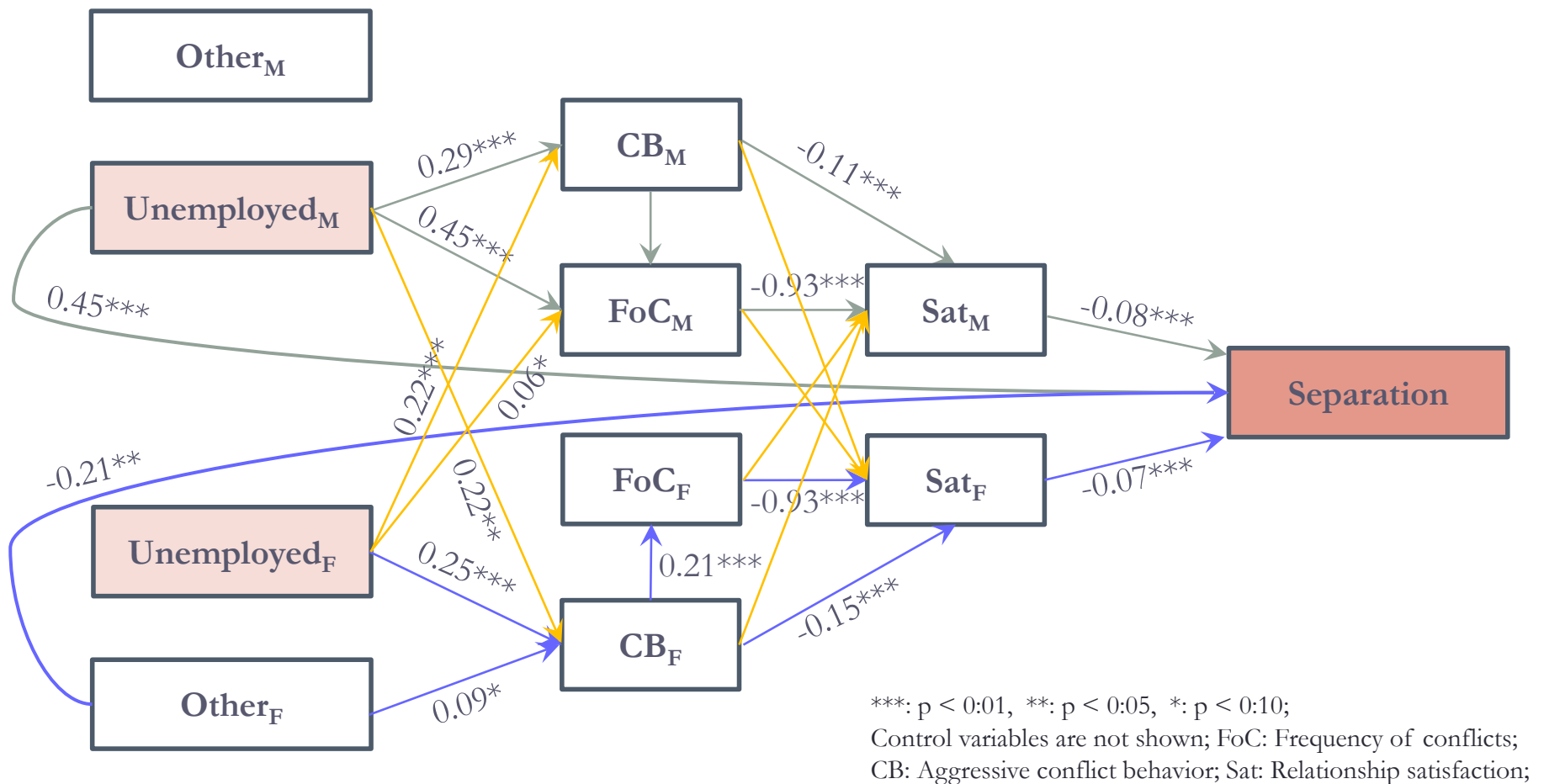
Path Model for Cohabiting Couples



***: $p < 0.01$, **: $p < 0.05$, *: $p < 0.10$;

Control variables are not shown; FoC: Frequency of conflicts;
CB: Aggressive conflict behavior; Sat: Relationship satisfaction;

Path Model for Married Couples



Overview

5. Conclusions

Summary

- ❖ Employment status affects the likelihood of partnership dissolution; a direct effect was found for married couples only:
 - ❖ For males: unemployed(MALE) -> (+) separation (“her divorce”, Kalmijn and Poortman (2006))
 - ❖ For females: others(FEMALE) -> (-) separation (barriers: financial dependence).
- ❖ For all couples: indirect effects of unemployment on relationship dissolution.
- ❖ The higher the level of institutionalization:
 - ❖ the higher the total indirect effect,
 - ❖ the more statistically significant actor and partner effects for communication variables and relationship satisfaction

Limitations (and Future Research)

- ❖ No discussion regarding reversed causality or spurious correlation (heterogeneity; Blekesaune (2008)).
- ❖ Selectivity issues.
- ❖ No control for the presence of children.
- ❖ No interaction between conflict behavior and frequency of conflicts on relationship satisfaction (Wagner & Weiß, 2005, 2010).
- ❖ ...

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