Are the Parents Alright?
Parenting and Well-Being in the U.S. Context

Ann Meier
University of Minnesota, USA

Collaborators: Kelly Musick, Sarah Flood, Rachel Dunifon, Jocelyn Fischer
Contemporary U.S. Parenting

- Time-intensive
- Child-centered
- Good for children
- Good for parents?
Of 22 OECD countries, largest "parenthood penalty" in the U.S. (Glass et al. 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Combined Happiness (1)</th>
<th>2006–7 Happiness (2)</th>
<th>2008 Happiness (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portugal (1)</td>
<td>.77***</td>
<td>.61***</td>
<td>1.01***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary (2)</td>
<td>.46***</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spain (3)</td>
<td>.31***</td>
<td>.27***</td>
<td>.65***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway (4)</td>
<td>.20***</td>
<td>.22***</td>
<td>.19***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (5)</td>
<td>.19***</td>
<td>.38***</td>
<td>.05***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland (6)</td>
<td>.15***</td>
<td>.15***</td>
<td>.15***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France (7)</td>
<td>.11***</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td>.07***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia (8)</td>
<td>.07***</td>
<td>−.22***</td>
<td>.31***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (9)</td>
<td>−.01***</td>
<td>−.02***</td>
<td>−.01***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (10)</td>
<td>−.06***</td>
<td>−.24***</td>
<td>−.34***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic (11)</td>
<td>−.09***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel (12)</td>
<td>−.12***</td>
<td></td>
<td>−.10***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands (13)</td>
<td>−.22***</td>
<td>−.25***</td>
<td>−.20***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark (14)</td>
<td>−.28***</td>
<td>−.41***</td>
<td>−.06***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia (15)</td>
<td>−.41***</td>
<td>−.35***</td>
<td>−.38***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland (16)</td>
<td>−.50***</td>
<td>−1.30</td>
<td>−.22***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland (17)</td>
<td>−.70***</td>
<td>−.49***</td>
<td>−.94***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand (18)</td>
<td>−.82***</td>
<td>−.77***</td>
<td>−.76***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom (19)</td>
<td>−.83***</td>
<td>−.57***</td>
<td>−1.05***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece (20)</td>
<td>−.87***</td>
<td>−.86***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland (21)</td>
<td>−1.00***</td>
<td>−.83***</td>
<td>−1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States (22)</td>
<td>−1.27</td>
<td>−1.21</td>
<td>−1.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glass, Andersson, and Simon (2016)
Figure 2.7: Ranking of Happiness 2016-2018

1. Finland (7.769)
2. Denmark (7.600)
3. Norway (7.554)
4. Iceland (7.494)
5. Netherlands (7.488)
6. Switzerland (7.480)
7. Sweden (7.343)
8. New Zealand (7.307)
9. Canada (7.278)
10. Austria (7.246)
11. Australia (7.228)
12. Costa Rica (7.167)
13. Israel (7.139)
14. Luxembourg (7.090)
15. United Kingdom (7.054)
16. Ireland (7.021)
17. Germany (6.985)
18. Belgium (6.923)
19. United States (6.892)
20. Czech Republic (6.852)
21. United Arab Emirates (6.825)
22. Malta (6.726)
23. Mexico (6.595)
24. France (6.592)
25. Taiwan Province of China (6.446)
26. Chile (6.444)
27. Guatemala (6.436)
28. Saudi Arabia (6.375)
29. Qatar (6.374)
30. Spain (6.354)
31. Panama (6.321)
32. Brazil (6.300)
33. Uruguay (6.293)
34. Singapore (6.282)
35. El Salvador (6.253)
36. Italy (5.223)
What we know about parental well-being

• Earlier: parents less happy than those without children.
• Recent: parenting a mixed bag of costs and rewards.
**How we know about parental well-being**

Compare well-being of parents:

1. to those without children.
2. before and after they have children.
How we know about parental well-being

“All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life?”

- General
- Uni-dimensional
- Parenthood versus parenting
- Does not account for disposition
How we know about parental well-being

Compare well-being of parents:

1. to those without children.

2. before and after they have children.

3. When with and away from children
Table 1. Mean affect by situation. Positive affect is the average of happy, warm/friendly, enjoying myself. Negative affect is the average of frustrated/annoyed, depressed/blue, hassled/pushed around, angry/hostile, worried/anxious, criticized/put down. For each situation, the table shows the mean ratings on affect descriptors, the average amount of time all respondents spent in the situation, and the proportion of respondents reporting at least one episode of that type. Episodes for which the respondent reported multiple activities or interaction partners were included in each of the corresponding computations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Mean affect rating</th>
<th>Mean hours/day</th>
<th>Proportion of sample reporting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Competent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimate relations</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>4.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socializing</td>
<td>4.59</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>4.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxing</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>4.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray/worship/meditate</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>4.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exercising</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>4.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watching TV</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>3.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopping</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>4.26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing food</td>
<td>3.93</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>4.20</td>
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<tr>
<td>On the phone</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>4.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napping</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking care of my children</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>4.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer/e-mail/Internet</td>
<td>3.81</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housework</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>4.57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>3.62</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>4.45</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commuting</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>4.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interaction partners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>4.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relatives</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spouse/SO</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>4.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>4.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clients/customers</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>4.65</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-workers</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>4.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration-weighted mean</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>4.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% time &gt; 0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“...what's truly amazing about Danny Kahneman's study is that when the women were answering this question, they didn't even realize they were ranking childcare so low. Daniel Kahneman did not design this study to determine how happy moms were. He simply wanted to know how happy people were during the day as they were going about doing their daily business. And only at the end ... when everything was all added up did he discover that parents would have preferred — yeah, napping, answering emails, shopping, watching TV ... housework, vacuuming clocked in higher which is amazing.”
How do parents experience parenting?

- Differences for mothers and fathers?
- Differences by the age of the child?

- How is parenting experienced for working mothers? Sole mothers?

• How do parents feel in activities with their children?

• Account for individual dispositions

• Multiple dimensions: happiness, meaning, sadness, stress & fatigue
Parental Well-Being: With and Not With Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Happiness</th>
<th>Sadness</th>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Fatigue</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mothers</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not with child</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With child</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mothers and Fathers' well-being with and without their child.
Why are fathers better off in parenting?

% Parenting Time by Activity Type

- Market work
- Care work
- Nonmarket work
- Leisure
- Solo parenting

Mothers vs. Fathers
Why Are Fathers Better Off? Detailed Activity Type

Childcare
- Basic
- Playing
- Teaching
- Management
- Cooking
- Cleaning
- Shopping
- Other

Nonmarket work
- TV watching
- Social, relaxing
- Educ, relig, civic
- Eating, drinking

Leisure

Mothers
Fathers
Parental Well-Being by Child Age
Parental Well-Being by Child Age and Parents' Gender

- Mothers' Happiness
- Fathers' Happiness
- Mothers' Meaning
- Fathers' Meaning

- Mothers' Stress
- Fathers' Stress
Changing motherhood:

• 70% of mothers employed.

• Mother is primary earner in 40% of homes with children.

• 30% of children live with a single parent.
Doubly Disadvantaged: Happiness

- Non-employed, single
- Employed, single
- Non-employed, partnered
- Employed, partnered
Conclusions

• Parents *better off when with their children.*

• Patterns *favor fathers.*

• *Adolescence is a low point* for parents.

• Non-employed, single mothers are *doubly disadvantaged.*
What can be done?

• Facilitate time with children.

• Improve gender equality in parenting tasks.

• Extend parenting support through adolescence.

• Support single mothers to find employment.
Thank you!
meierann@umn.edu
Are the Parents Alright?
Seminar remarks

Dr. Kate Prickett
Roy McKenzie Centre for the Study of Families and Children
School of Government, Victoria University

May 21st, 2019
New Zealand gender gap in child care time

Source: StatsNZ New Zealand Time Use Survey
New Zealand dads are doing the fun things

![Chart showing time use by men and women in 1998/99 and 2009/10]

- Physical care of children
- Teaching/helping child
- Playing/reading/talking with child
- Accompanying/supervising child
- Travel associated with childcare activities
- Other childcare activities

Source: StatsNZ New Zealand Time Use Survey
Work-family satisfaction

How satisfied are you with the balance between work and parenting in your life?

Gibb, Fergusson, and Boden, 2013.
Work-family satisfaction

To what extent has your involvement in parenting and childrearing been limited by your need to earn money through paid work?

A great deal
Somewhat
Not at all

Gibb, Fergusson, and Boden, 2013.
Work-family satisfaction

I would like to do a larger share of the child care

Gibb, Fergusson, and Boden, 2013.
Employment, parenting, and wellbeing

• Dads want more time with their children
  • How can work facilitate this in a way that allows both more time for dads and a greater balance in parenting activities?

• Work can promote parental wellbeing for single mothers
  • Work offers resources that can translate to parenting
  • Make work obligations *work*