Parenthood and life satisfaction.
Russia in comparative perspective

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Children = happiness?

NOTE: Lines connect coefficients from regression models predicting happiness—measured on a linear scale from 1 (not at all happy) to 4 (very happy)—with number of children (0, 1, 2, 3, 4+), controlling for sex, socioeconomic status, income, marital status, country, and year.

■ p<.05  ● p<.10  ○ p≥.10


Source: Margolis & Myrskylä (2011)
Challenge
Parenthood paradox?
Focusing illusion?
Twins study, men and women 25-45 ys

Source: Kohler, Behrman, & Skytthe (2005)
Good news!

PARENTING

Who Says It Has To Be Difficult?
German SOEP

Source: Myrskylä & Margolis (2012)
Source: Myrskylä & Margolis (2012)
Swiss Household Panel

Women, 1 child

Men, 1 child

Source: Rizzi & Mikucka (forthcoming)
Older, educated, married

Source: Myrskylä & Margolis (2012)
2 conclusions

Panel data are more reliable source for analyzing the effects of parenthood on well-being (unobserved heterogeneity & self-selection)

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People may actually be happy to have children

More so if they are:

- women
- older, married, more educated or wealthy
The case of Russia

young parenthood

low childlessness

limited 2nd and 3rd births
Questions

Do children contribute to life satisfaction in Russia?
Is there the anticipation effect?
Is the strength of the effect comparable with the West?

Under which conditions?
Education & income?
Positive effect for younger ages?
Weaker effect of marriage?
Why bother?

effects on fertility

conditions for parenthood for specific groups
17 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

sample: persons who experienced their first child born during the panel

comparisons of parents and non-parents?
Thank you!