

Adolescent-Parent “Shared” Time in the U.S.: Perceptual & Emotional Differences in Time Together

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Adolescent-Parent Shared Time

- Importance for well-being
- Quantity, quality of time is relevant
- Time diaries: “with whom” is key
- Teens’ vs. parents’ perspectives



Togetherness?

- Time diary as "gold standard"?
- Constructionist perspective
- Different vantage points on togetherness
 - Parents: see time together as beneficial
 - Teenagers: growing independence



Togetherness gap?

- “Divergent realities” of togetherness for parent vs. teen: different perceptions
- Constructionist view of “with”



Are gaps patterned?

- Social & economic characteristics: do they influence perceptions of time together?



Our Study

Research Questions

I. Is there a perceptual gap: between parents' reports of the *quantity* of time teens are with them – and teens' reports?

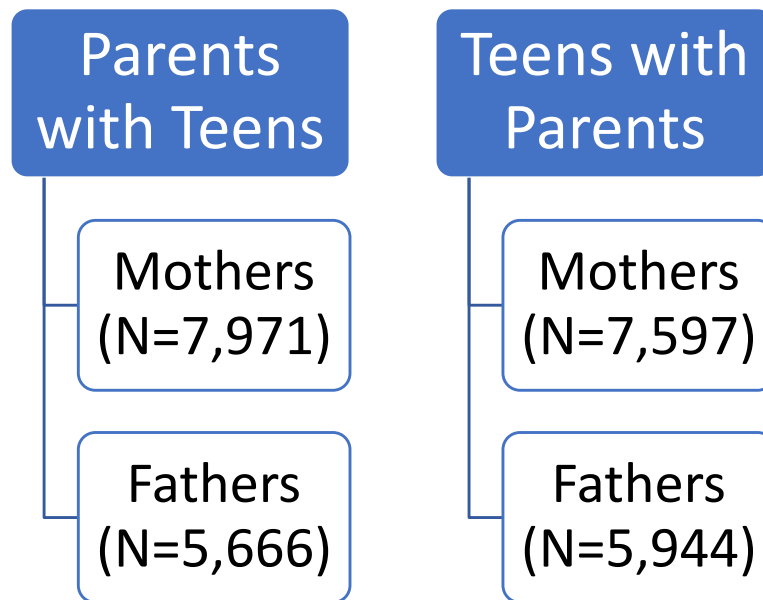
How large?

Are gaps socially patterned?

II. Is there an emotional gap: between parental & teen ratings of the *quality* of time – happiness & meaning -- in activities together?

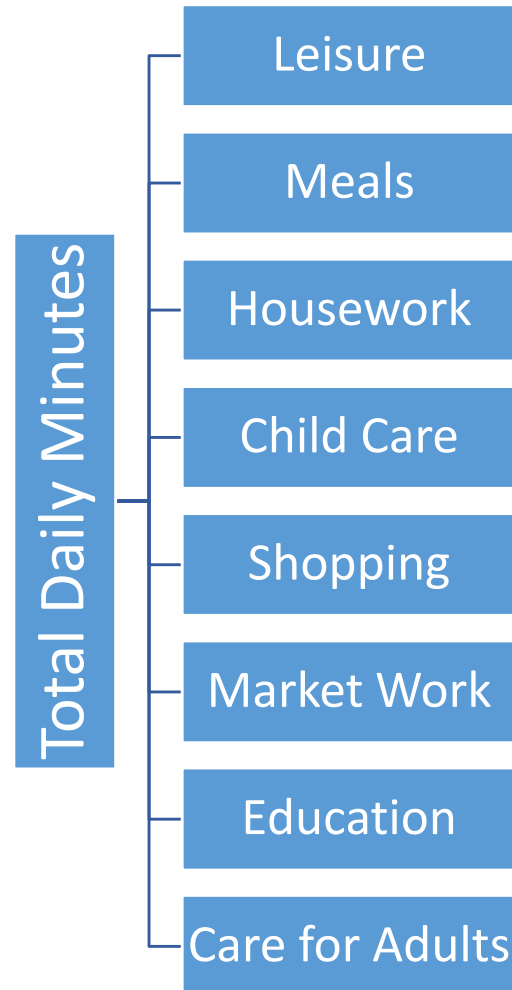
Data: ATUS

- 2003-2017 American Time Use Survey (ATUS), pooled sample
- Own household children, 15-17 years old
- At least one household parent, 30-64 years old
- Samples are not from same households



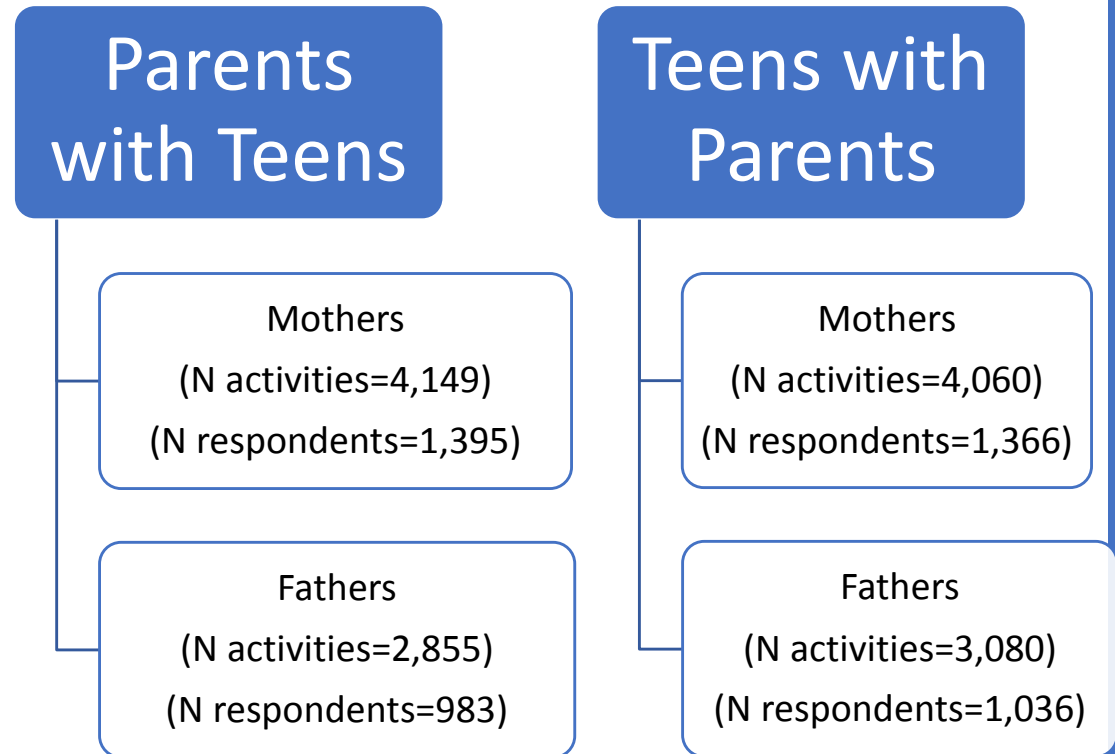
Dependent Measure: Time With

- Total daily minutes *with* the other generation
- “Who was in the room with you/who accompanied you?”
- Not exclusive time



Data: Well-Being Module

- 2010, 2012, 2013 ATUS
- 3 randomly selected activities
- Dependent measures: how happy did you feel during this time? How meaningful did you consider what you were doing?



Covariates

- Individual-level covariates (ATUS & Well-Being Module)
 - Parent's race, education, employment status, family structure, # of other children in household, # of activities on diary day, diary day is school day
- Activity-level covariates (Well-Being analysis)
 - Duration
 - Type
 - Location
 - Time of day
 - Other people present

Limitations

- Parent vs. Teen samples from different households
- Missing short exchanges
 - potentially meaningful moments

Analytic Strategy

1. Descriptive analyses

- Total daily minutes with other generation
- Daily minutes in specific activities

2. OLS regression: total time together

- Predicted total daily minutes with other generation
- by parent gender & race, education, employment

3. Random effects models: Well-Being analysis

- Measures: happiness, meaning
 - By parent gender & race, education, employment



Results

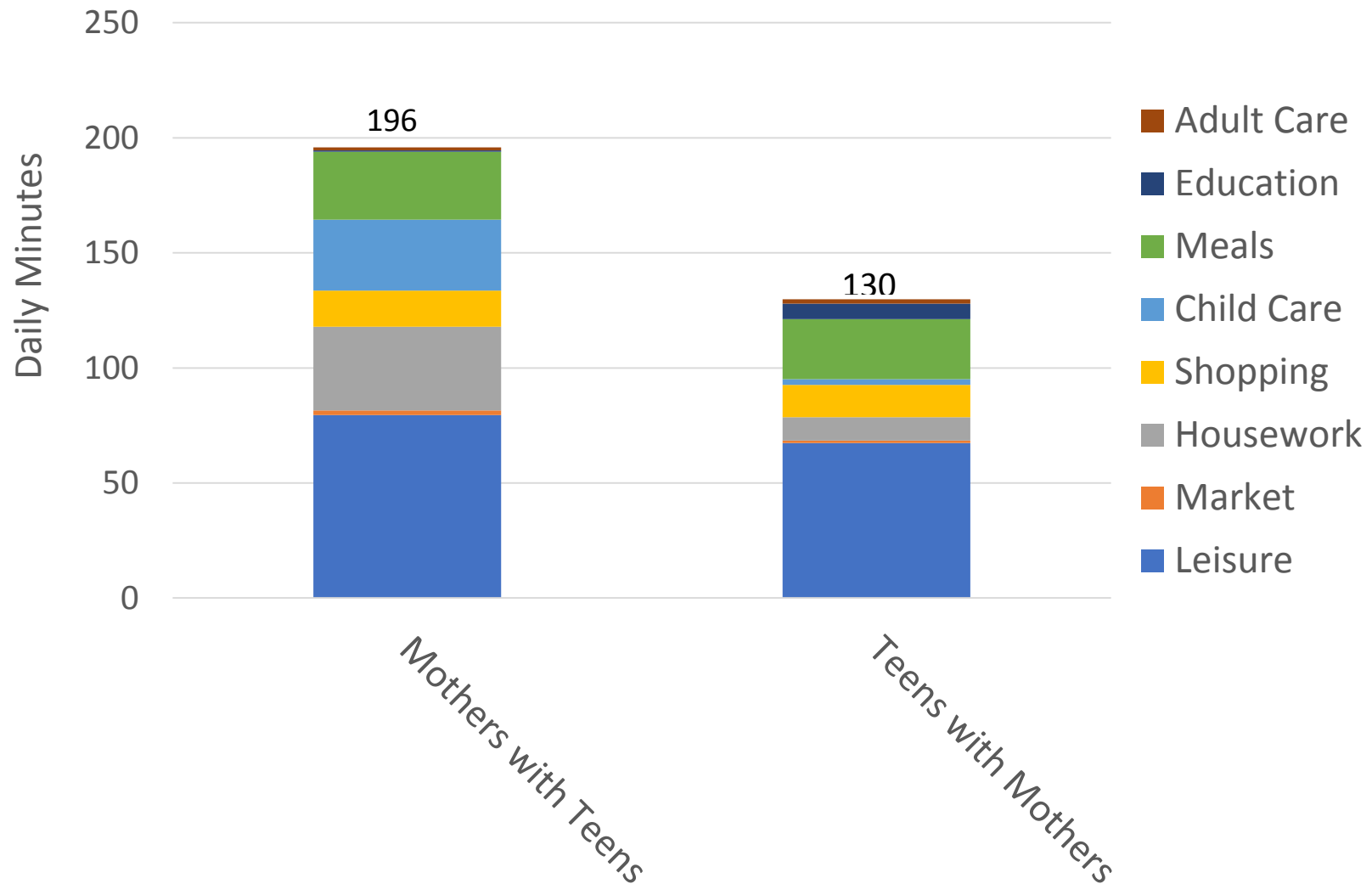
I. Is there a perceptual gap?

How large?

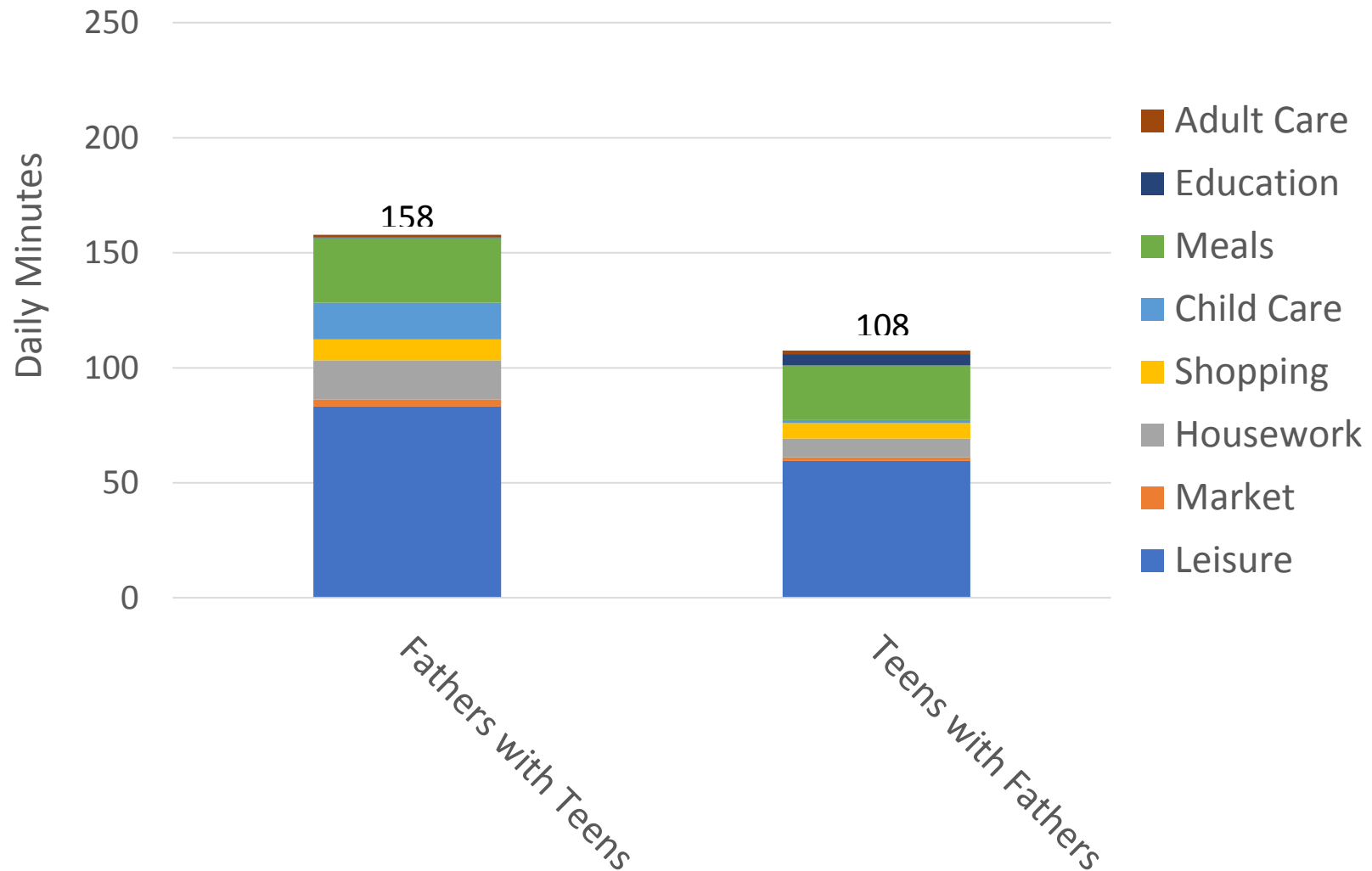
Is it patterned?



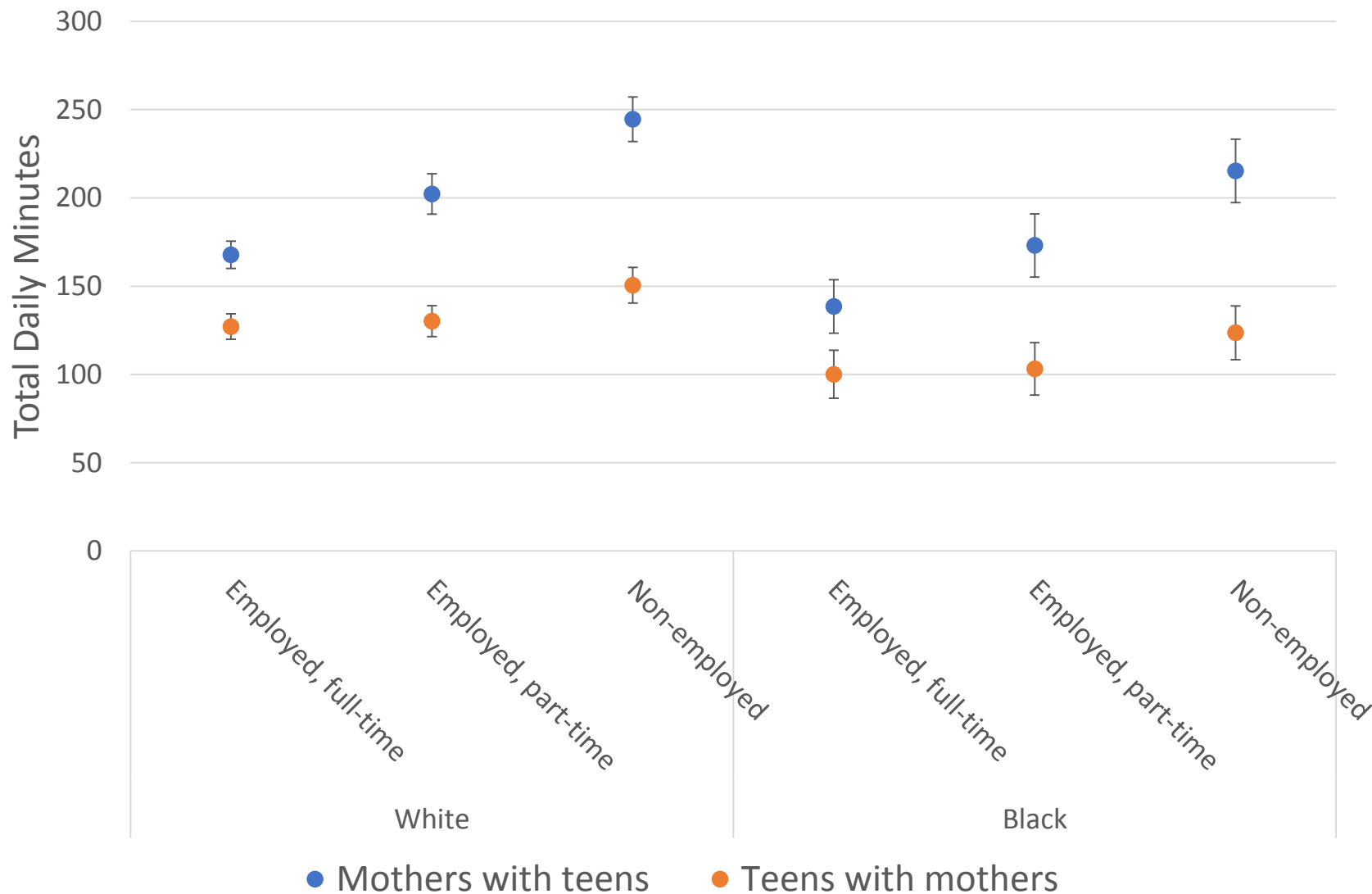
Mean Daily Minutes with the Other Generation, by Major Activity Category, Mother-Teen



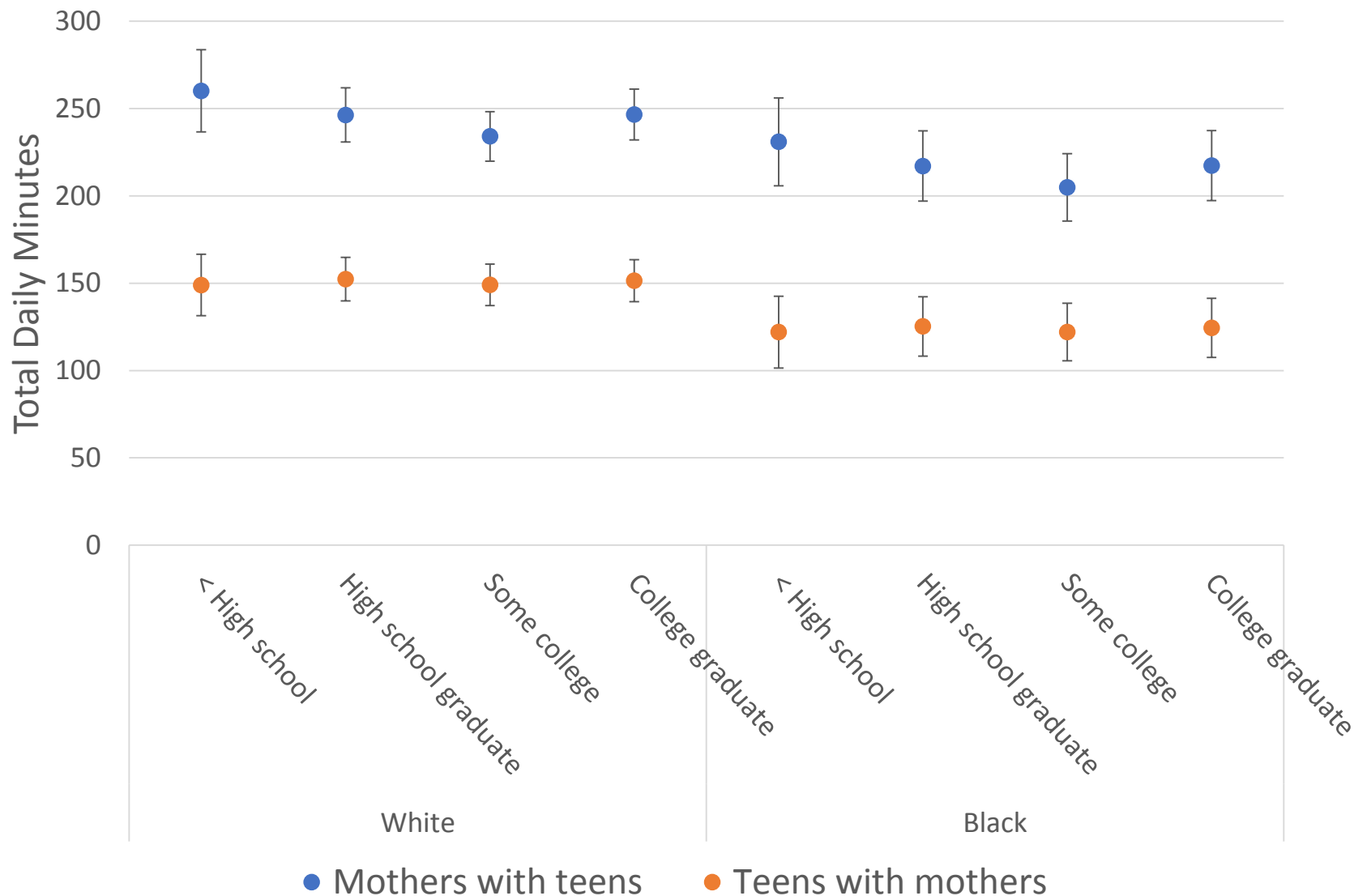
Mean Daily Minutes with the Other Generation, by Major Activity Category, Father-Teen



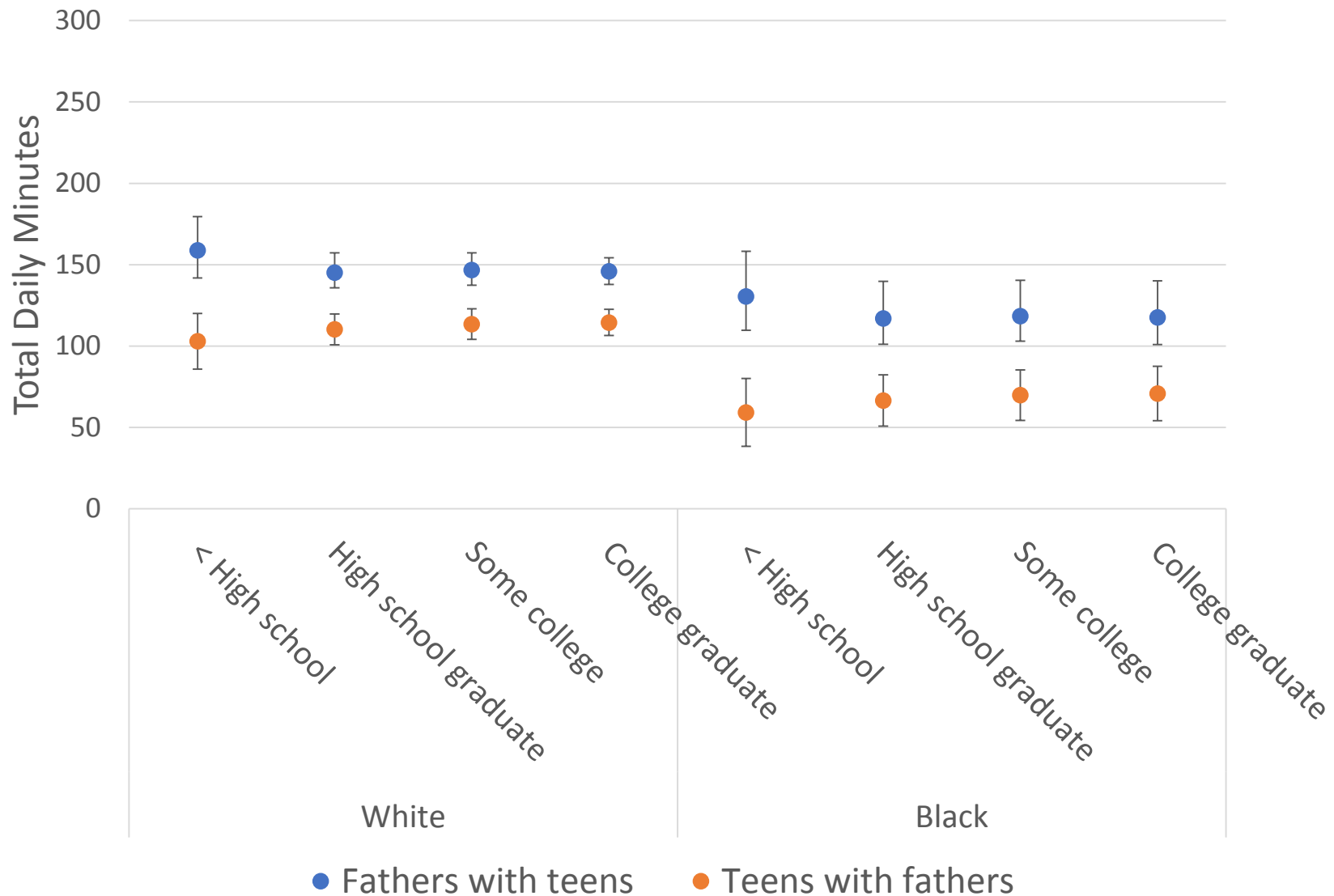
Predicted Total Daily Minutes for Mothers, by Employment Status and Race



Predicted Total Daily Minutes for Non-Employed Mothers, by Education and Race



Predicted Total Daily Minutes for Full-Time Employed Fathers by Education and Race



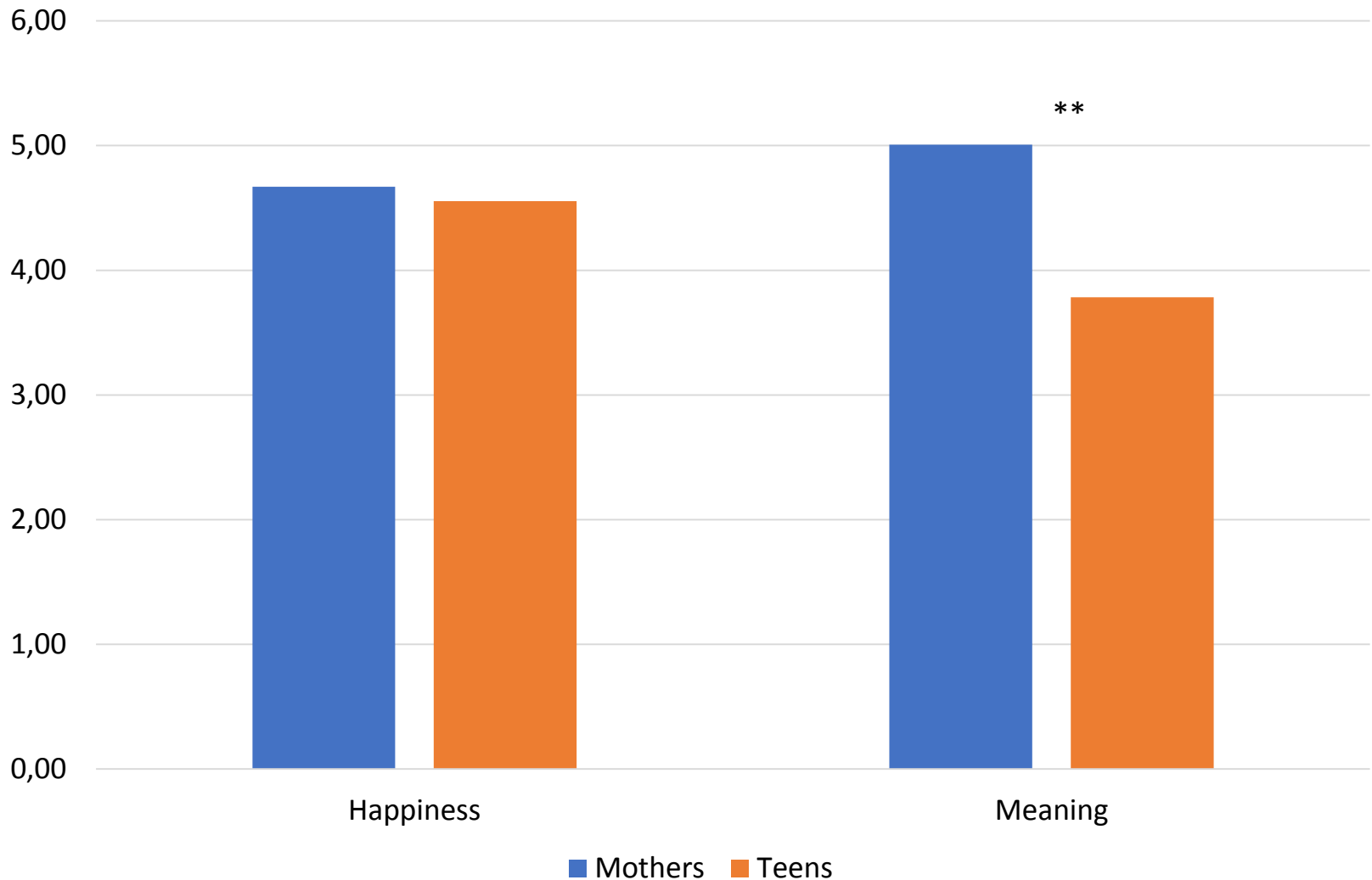
II. Is there an emotional gap?

Is time “together” equally
happy & meaningful?

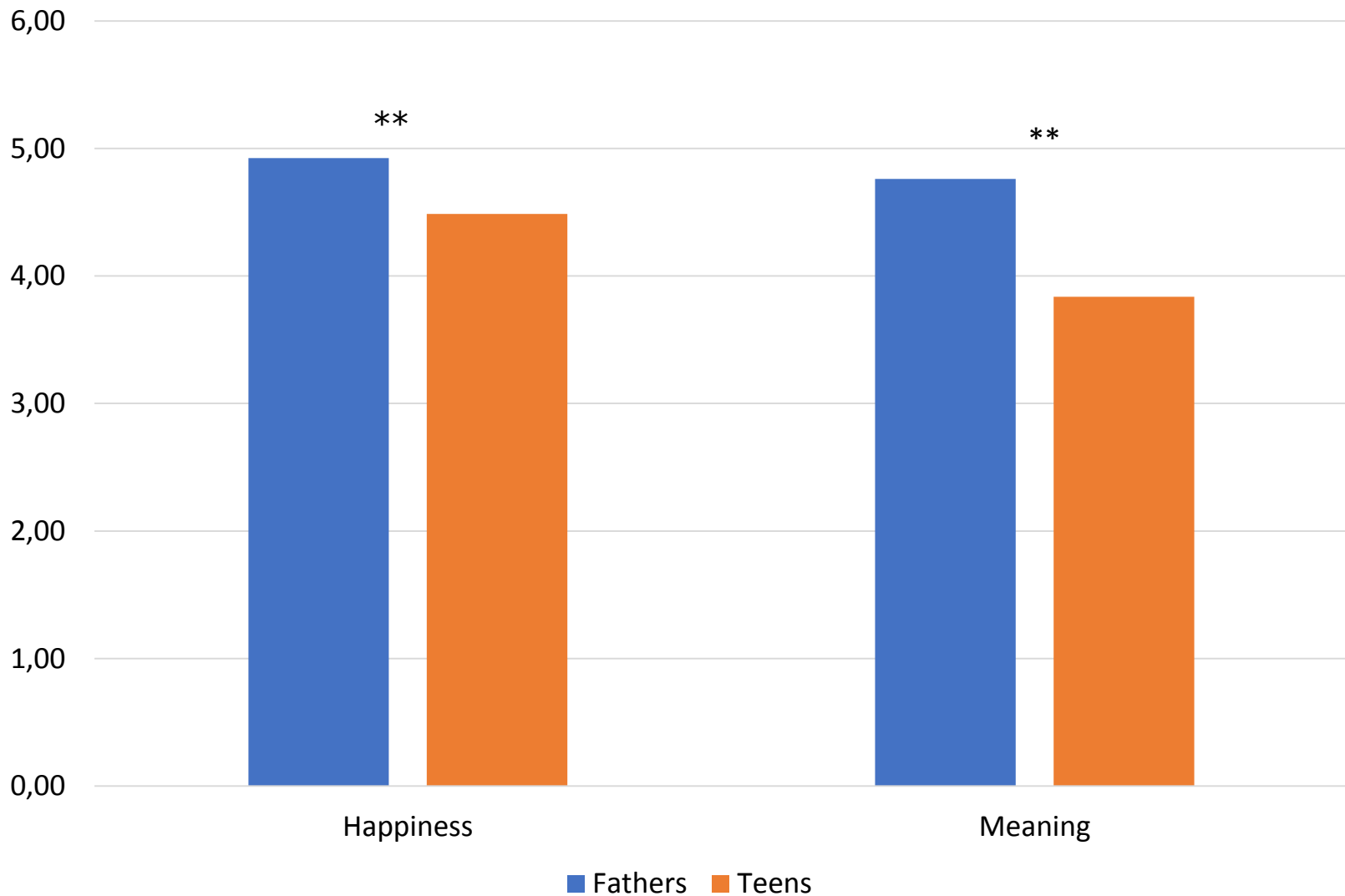
why?



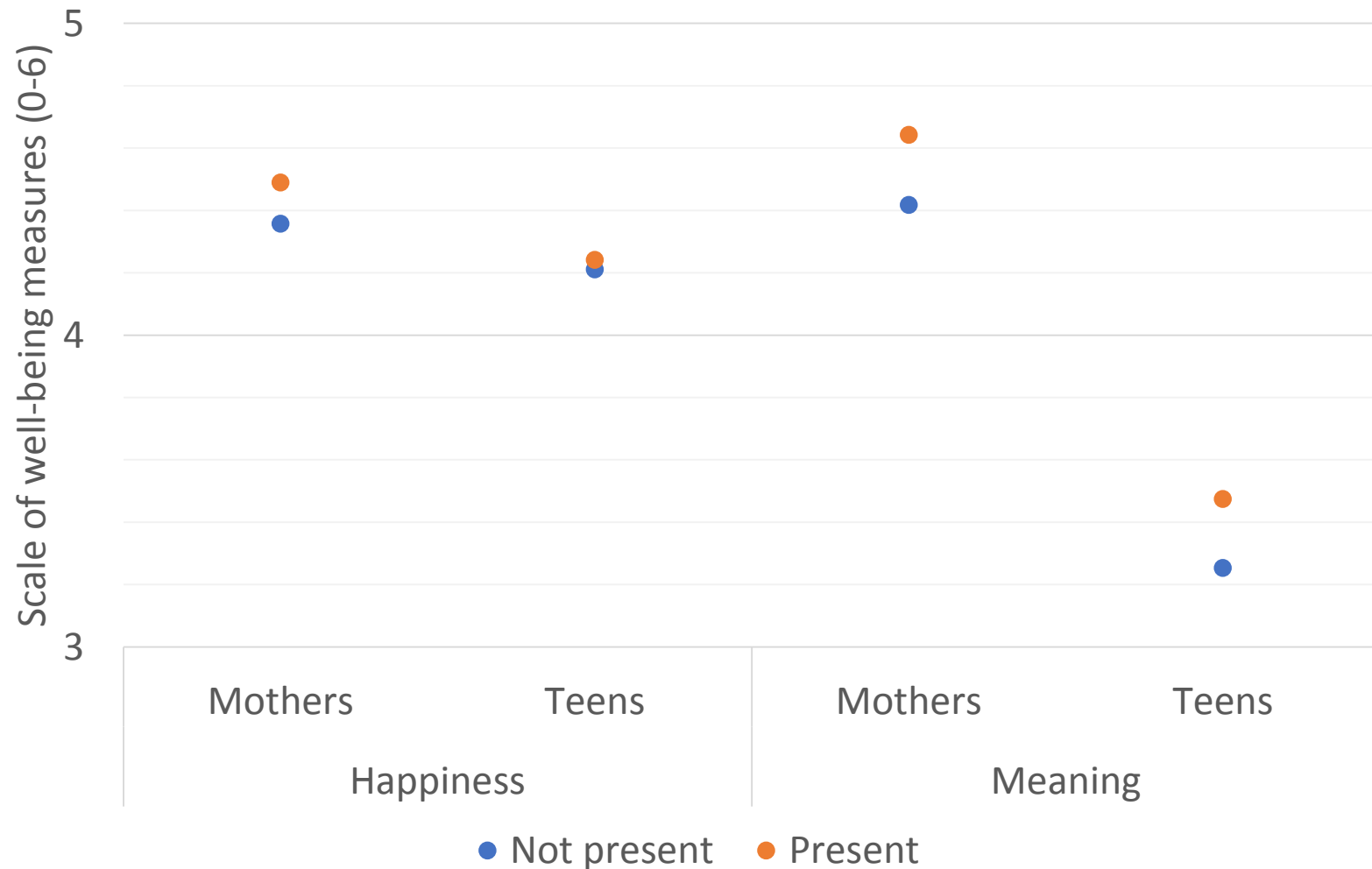
Mean Well-Being Scores for Mothers and Teens with Other Generation Present



Mean Well-Being Scores for Fathers and Teens with Other Generation Present



Predicted Well-Being Scores for Mothers and Teens with Mothers



Summary



Sum: Quant Discrepancy = big

- Reported quantity of total contact time is discrepant across generations
- 1/3 of parents' reported time with teen is "missed" by teens
- **Roughly 7 hours/week** = an entire school day each week in discrepant time
 - measure = "in the room with/accompanied you"

Sum: Discrepancy is patterned

- **Gender** differences
 - Mothers report larger, more varied gaps w/ teens than fathers
- Among mother, gaps vary by **employment status**
 - homemakers = greatest gaps w/teens
- Gaps vary by **socioeconomic status**, especially for mothers
 - Each end of spectrum = greater gaps

Sum: Quality=high & shared

- **Increased well-being** in activities w/other generation for both teens & parents
 - more happiness/meaning than if **not** together
 - especially when:
 - Social context: other family members are there
 - Activity type: Meals & leisure together
- **Caveat:** capturing a different slice for each generation
 - **when teen actually says parent is there, higher quality.

Constuctionist Perspective on Togetherness

- Role expectation shapes reported reality: Different perception of time “with” for parents vs. teens
- Under-reporting or over-reporting?





Conclusions & Implications

Theoretical Contributions

- Constructionists extend demographers work on family time
- “ambiguous togetherness” concept
 - Pushes for more nuance -- esp. for assessing mothers’ time w/ children & adolescents
 - Parents as “audience”







Implications for Time Research

- Suggests partnered data collections, more precise measures
 - In room vs. in home vs. in vicinity
 - Connection with others through phone apps
- Patterned discrepancies call into question what we (think we) know about social groups & time



Thank you!