

# Family Size and Subjective Well-being in Europe: Do More Children Make Us (Un)Happy?<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

We estimate the causal relationship between the number of children and parental subjective well-being using the 2013 wave of SILC data and relying on multiple births as the source of exogenous variation. The major value added of our study is estimating this effect by children's age. We show that parents of larger families experience the same or higher levels of well-being than parents of smaller families. The positive effect is mainly driven by parents of teenage children. Among parents of pre-school children we mainly estimate a negative effect of an additional (twin) child. We further show that the negative relationship between the number of children and parental well-being at young child ages is mainly driven by dissatisfaction with accommodation and by increased frequency of feeling nervous. The positive effect at higher child ages is driven by satisfaction with financial situation only for fathers, while for mothers it is mainly driven by lower frequency of experiencing negative feelings. We conclude that higher fertility levels might be reached if parents receive more help during the early years of their children and if the positive future effects of having large families are publicized.

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