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Personhood & Parenthood: An Experiential Account of Balance & Well-being

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**PERSONHOOD & PARENTHOOD: AN EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT OF
BALANCE & WELL-BEING**

A dissertation presented to the faculty of

ANTIOCH UNIVERSITY SANTA BARBARA

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY
in
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGY

By

Venice Bruno
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PERSONHOOD & PARENTHOOD: AN EXPERIENTIAL ACCOUNT OF BALANCE
& WELL-BEING

This dissertation, by Venice Bruno, has been approved by the committee members signed
below who recommend that it be accepted by the faculty of Antioch University Santa
Barbara in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract

Parents are constantly engaging in a balancing act, weighing their own needs with those of their children and family. Helping parents navigate the role of parenthood can promote optimal development in the child, parent, couple and family. Parents engage in various roles and responsibilities essential for family and individual well-being that require balance in order to be effective. Past research on balance has indicated that people are more satisfied with life when they are active in multiple life domains rather than in a single one. This study is interested in two specific life domains: personhood and parenthood, and how parents balance these two roles and identities. Balance between these two domains may operate to develop the individual and collective simultaneously, seeking to satisfy basic human needs. As a result, this fulfillment and balance may contribute to the experience of well-being. The focus of this study is on parents who believe that they have balance between personhood and parenthood. The mission is to bring awareness and understanding to the experiential part of parenting through a qualitative, phenomenological approach. This study explores parent's personal accounts, experiences and stories through a semi-structured face-to-face interview. Participants included seven American parents of a variety of ages but all of whom were age 26 years and older. The electronic version of this dissertation is accessible at the Ohiolink ETD center <http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd>.

DEDICATION

Family: You give me meaning. It is because of each of you and your enlightening perspectives about life, love, and purpose that has made any of this possible. It is our unit that makes me strong and provides me with the security and confidence to be bold and empowered.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive, and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor and some style.” – Maya Angelou

To all the individuals who have participated and supported this process and body of work, I thank you. My mission for this project and for my life has been inspired and energized by all of you and your unique ways of being and existing in the world. Thank you for accompanying me on this journey and making it entertaining. May the adventures continue and our experiences surprise us. Keep finding that wonder and curiosity in the world and making it beautiful.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

How do parents balance personhood and parenthood?

Phenomenon

The transition into parenthood is a major adult milestone. It is a time of uncertainty, excitement and transformation resulting in unique personal and lifestyle adjustments. This milestone inspires a transition from an individualistic position of personhood to a combination of personhood plus parenthood. The sense of self is transforming, adjusting to the inclusion of this new and lasting role that will be incorporated forever into the lifestyle and sense of self. But within the expansive experience of parenthood, how do parents balance personhood and parenthood?

Helping parents adjust to parenthood and its effects is an area of growing interest (Senior, 2014). It is a complex experience with intricate dynamics, factors, and influences, which not only affect the parent but the others in their environment. Parents are, therefore, constantly engaged in a balancing act, weighing their own needs with those of their children and family. “If parents possess knowledge, skills, and supports, if they have their own emotional and physical needs well met, they can parent their children positively and effectively” (Bornstein, 2001). Due to parents being in a position to have lasting, wide-ranging effects, it is critical that they recognize their needs in addition to the needs of their family. Efforts to support parents and families should include assisting parents in meeting their needs, as well as skills training and child development education. Helping to navigate the role of parenthood can promote optimal development in the child, parent, couple and family. Parents must be encouraged to develop a proactive stance and

a sense of empowerment in order to facilitate the healthy development of the entire family unit. Parents engage in various roles and responsibilities that are essential for family and individual well-being, requiring balance to be effective in these roles. Thus, parenthood cannot only be “child-centric” but “parent-centric” and “family-centric” as well, because of the critical role that parents play in the life of the developing family. If parents develop awareness about who they are and what they bring to the parental context, it can endorse the parent as being a resource of sufficiency and capability. This sense of competence can promote mental health and well-being, and lead to preventative measures for mental illness and dysfunction.

As cited by Nelson, Kushlev, & Lyubomirsky (2014), a common topic among sociologists, psychologists, economists, as well as the media and general public, is about balance and the association between parenthood and well-being. Balance is the ideal to be achieved in relationships, activities, and responsibilities. The hope is to avoid polarity and to achieve complementarity. Research on balance has indicated that people are more satisfied with life when the source of satisfaction is derived from multiple life domains rather than a single domain. In this way, enjoyment is derived through balancing the roles among these various life domains (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Furthermore, Campbell, Converse & Rodgers (1976) found that global well-being can be predicted from satisfaction within the various life domains including the domains of marriage, family life, health, neighborhood, work and housing (as cited in Novgorodoff, 1982). Bradburn (1969) documented that the best predictor of overall subjective well-being was the balance between the two affective dimensions of positive and negative affect in regards to life domains; the greater the positive affect relative to negative affect, the happier the

individual (as cited in Novgorodoff, 1982). Individuals who have more identities cope better with changes to their social identity (Iyer, Jetten & Tsivrikos, 2008). In a study on role accumulation by Thoits (1983), the more identities that an individual has, the greater the ameliorative effect of taking on a new identity is on well-being (as cited in Iyer et al., 2008). This may demonstrate and support the notion that maintaining the role of personhood as an additional identity to being a parent may help within the role of parenthood and achieving balance and a sense of well-being. This balance of roles and life domains can frequently be the main focus of therapy, helping individuals to widen their perspective and to initiate change in their cycles and routines. Therapy can help individuals to reintegrate and reorganize as well as to find a sense of balance within various aspects of their lives. A major related area of interest is the topic of work/life balance (Nelson et al., 2014; Holmes, Erickson, & Hill, 2012; Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Research in this area indicates that “family-work conflict occurs when one domain consumes resources needed for another domain” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009), creating an imbalance between the work and family roles. This is of importance to the current study because work and family roles are an important aspect of personhood and parenthood, especially related to achieving balance due to the amount of time that each role occupies. An imbalance in work/life has been associated with life dissatisfaction, low marital and family satisfaction and symptoms of low mental and physical well-being (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). In addition, employed mothers who felt their employment was detrimental to their child’s development reported higher levels of depression and parenting stress. However, mothers who did not miss dinner because of work demonstrated working longer hours without the same reported problems (Holmes, Erickson, & Hill, 2012). This further

demonstrates the importance of parents finding their unique system of balance and negotiation of life domains.

For these reasons, understanding and practicing balance in life has implications that extend systemically beyond the individual and family. Human beings are constantly and simultaneously operating as individuals with needs, as well as a part of a group with needs. Balancing the opposing forces between independence and dependence continues throughout an individual's life. Negotiating this type of balance is experienced by everyone and must be reevaluated at different life stages. Considerable growth occurs from striving to maintain equilibrium between the constantly changing dynamic. This is due to the necessity of maintaining a separate identity, as well as remaining a member of the social group. Frisch (2006) identifies 16 specific areas or domains that are part of life including: work, recreation, standard of living, physical health, self-esteem, philosophy of life, learning, creativity, helping activities, love relationships, friendships, relationships with children, relationships with relatives, home, neighborhood and community (See also: Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Each of these domains requires time and resources, which can result in competition between domains for domination and can lead to imbalance. Some parents strive for balance by learning to juggle many and/or all of these areas. A piece of this overall balance that parents strive for is between personhood and parenthood. These are two salient parts of a parent, who they are, their beliefs, lifestyle, and perspective. The manner in which a parent(s) can balance these two aspects of their life can be informative about topics of lifestyle wholeness, well-being, emotional health, and individual and family health. Having a better understanding of how individuals balance personhood with the role of parenthood (the multiple faces of themselves) can help both psychologists and

professionals to have an integrative, lifestyle perspective in the treatment and education of parents in diverse settings. This can also help to inform what parent educator curriculum should look like.

This study will explore the lived experience of how parents negotiate parenthood, through achieving a balance between the relationship and conflict of personhood and parenthood. With the focus on parents, the mission is to bring awareness and understanding to the experiential part of parenting; the practice of parenthood, being a person and a parent and how a balance is reached between these two identities. Several questions guide this exploration to understand how and if personhood is maintained or used during parenthood. The questions are as follows: Does personhood change in parenthood and/or how is it present in parenting? How is balance created and under what conditions does it exist? How do parents know when they have found that balance? Does the unique balance between personhood and parenthood contribute to individual, couple and familial well-being?

A visual aid, in the form of two Venn diagrams, is provided below (Figures 1 p. 14 and, Figure 2 p. 15) to assist in conceptualizing this study. Figure 1, illustrates the individual components, which include, Personhood, Parenthood, and Balance. Circle A represents Personhood; the parent outside and separate from parenthood, the individual. Circle B represents Parenthood; the parent within parenthood, parental and family responsibilities and roles. Circle C represents Balance; representing how a parent divides and manages their time, roles and activities of personhood and parenthood. Figure 2, illustrates the combination created by, or included in the components; Couple, Family, and Well-being. The Couple is represented in the shared section between Circles A and

B, demonstrating that the couple is comprised of both aspects of personhood and parenthood. The middle section of the three overlapping circles (Figure 2, p. 15) represents the Family, since the family consists of all components including personhood, parenthood, and balance. This middle section also represents Well-being, indicating that if parents find their unique balance in personhood and parenthood, they will have a greater sense or experience of well-being.

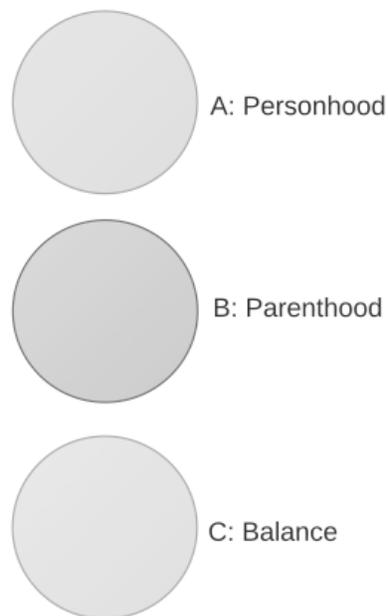


Figure 1: Venn Diagram Components

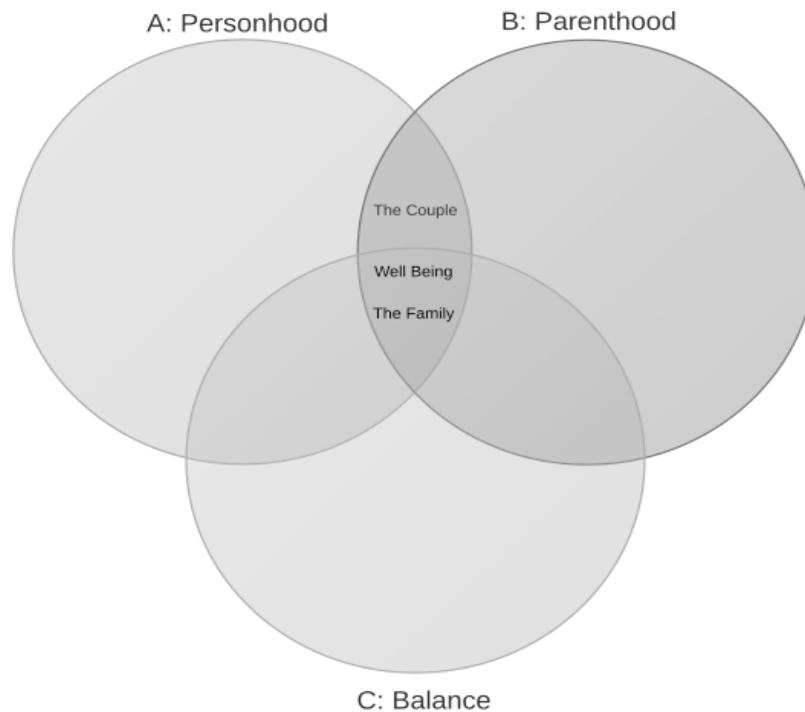


Figure 2: Venn Diagram Complete

It is important to note that well-being (defined later in this Chapter), as well as balance, is a subjective experience. Through a rich description of parents' personal experiences/stories, this study seeks to shed light on how well-being and balance between personhood and parenthood can be personally derived. This demonstrates one reason why a qualitative study is useful. Due to the subjective nature of the research question, parents will have certain parenting preferences and beliefs, personal styles and lifestyle approaches. These circles are not static in size, and may not be equal in size since the balance will shift relative to individual circumstances. These circles are likely to change and evolve throughout the life span. However, this study aims to elucidate themes of experience that comprise the essence of the parenthood/personhood experience.

Definition of Terms/ Operational Definitions

Before proceeding, it is useful to provide a definition of the terms used throughout this exploration. There are four terms that require definition for the clarity of this project. They include, *Parenthood*, *Personhood*, *Role Balance*, and *Well-being*.

Parenthood

For this project, parenthood is defined as the long-term responsibilities and roles required of an individual to provide a context for growth and development of the family. It is about developing and providing a safe, psychological, physical and financially supportive environment in which to raise a family. It involves providing a nurturing, motivating, educational and challenging environment to ensure healthy development. Parenthood includes anything that will afford the individual and family (the collective) a quality of life that they can build on (i.e. emotional, spiritual, financial, etc.). Parenthood is about more than the individual. It refers to the collective culture with which the individual is involved. It requires active involvement systemically with a collective mentality. “The collective self is defined in terms of qualities that characterize the person as a group member. These qualities are shared among members of the in-group and differentiate them from members of out-groups” (Sedikides, Wildschut, Gaertner, Routledge, & Arndt, 2008). The collective perspective represents the quality of dependence and the importance of working with the group for the overall good. The overall good includes the individual needs as part rather than as separate. Parenthood also encompasses the multiple roles that a parent holds – including mentor, guide, teacher (instilling values and habits), disciplinarian, playmate, friend, etc.

For this current investigation, parenthood is used interchangeably with the terms

collective and dependence. This is due to the interconnected nature of parenthood beyond the self. Parents are thinking about themselves and others focusing on the needs and well-being of the group, while in personhood the individual is primary.

It is also important to note that there are different types of parents and experiences of parenthood. This study will focus specifically on current parents who are birth parents, single parents, or stepparents.

Personhood

Personhood is defined as those aspects of life (roles and identities) that one considers affording them individually a quality of life (i.e. work, entertainment, hobbies, and relationships). Personhood is recognizing or being aware of anything that one personalizes as making their life more complete from the individual perspective. The individualistic perspective emphasizes individual needs as separate and distinct from the larger collective group, demonstrating that needs of personhood may be different than those of parenthood. The individualistic perspective also encourages independence, where the individual needs are the priority and differentiation from the group is valued. “The individual self is defined in terms of qualities that distinguish the person from other members of the in-group. These qualities render the person unique and set her or him apart from other in-group members” (Sedikides et al., 2008). For the current investigation, the use of the term independence references personhood and will be used interchangeably. This is because the individual is primary, being a separate and distinct entity from the group.

It is important to clarify for the purposes of this study, certain characteristics that are shared within the roles of personhood and parenthood but are being distinguished

intentionally as falling under one or the other rather than both. For example, collective contribution, the need for social relationships and belonging are all important aspects of both personhood and parenthood. Even though in personhood it is an individualistic mentality, the need for connection is still present and salient. However, the focus is on the need fulfillment of the individual. More specifically, work and meaningful contribution to the community may appear to be more personhood oriented. However, they may also be met in part through parenthood.

Role Balance

Role balance is defined as the ability to recognize and function within roles and identities with a balanced, distributed quality. It is about being able to merge and compliment the various aspects of one's life on both the individual and collective level, in a self-satisfying way, so that one does not feel overwhelmed by any specific role. "Balance means making choices" (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005) and exists when one role or aspect does not take up more time and resources but rather is delegated appropriately. Imbalance can exist when time and resources are dominated by one role, as well as when a new role is integrated into one's life. For the purposes of this study, role balance is about creating balance between the roles and identities of personhood and parenthood. As described by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) participants in their study considered how professional decisions would impact the balance they sought amongst the parts of their life. They were concerned with if certain career moves would prevent them from attaining a "coherent whole" (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Parents have found a way to recognize, merge and compliment the requirements between these two roles, demonstrating a sense of self-continuity and adaptation. Furthermore, "self-continuity

involves knowing and experiencing that we are, in a fundamental way, the same person over time” (Bluck & Alea, 2008). Therefore, if a person can connect and blend personhood and parenthood, they have true balance because there is no conflict between who they are and the other aspects of themselves. They draw from both to operate in the current moment. Personhood and parenthood are not separate entities. They are complimentary and balanced, not separate and conflictual. Throughout this exploration, role and identity are used interchangeably. Marks and MacDermid (1996) discuss in their article that past literature views the conceptualization of roles through an atomistic or holistic framework. The atomistic perspective views each role “as a thing in itself, separable from its embeddedness in an organized system of roles” (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). By comparison, holistic perspective views “roles functioning as a single pattern or system” (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Marks & MacDermid (1996) concluded that people achieve role balance by “finding ways to organize multiple tasks and activities in a balanced, nonhierarchical fashion (as cited in Nomaguchi & Bianchi, 2004).

When discussing balance it is important to reference the ecological models of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This study recognizes the multiple social structures that an individual is a part of and develops within. How a person operates, organizes, and balances their life is, in part, reflective of these implicit and explicit social contexts, the roles consciously and unconsciously adopted, and the resulting dynamics and interactions that follow. Bronfenbrenner’s (1994) model is discussed in Chapter 2: Review of the Literature, since his model demonstrates the systemic nature of people’s experience and how they view and integrate themselves and their roles.

Well-being

For this study, well-being is defined as the recognition and/or achievement of the three terms – parenthood, personhood and role balance – focusing on individual assessments of the quality of life experiences in relation to these three dimensions. Having an understanding and grasp on parenthood, personhood and balance will lead to an increased sense of well-being. It is important to note that the achievement of the three dimensions is understood to be a fluid rather than a static process. Well-being is achieved through the accumulation of knowledge and emotions derived from experiences that result in a positive outlook on one's life and situation. Specifically, a parent's sense of well-being may be increased through their perceived success in personhood, parenthood and in balancing these two roles.

In the literature, general consensus implies that psychological well-being is a global assessment made by an individual concerning the quality of his or her life (Novgorodoff, 1982; Campbell, Converse, & Rodgers, 1976; Bradburn, 1969). Novgorodoff (1982) finds that the term well-being has positive connotations, as evidenced by the synonyms that the thesaurus lists for well-being: pleasure, gratification, satisfaction, joy, happiness, prosperity and success. Bradburn (1969) defines psychological well-being as happiness, focusing on the affective experience, while Campbell et al. (1976) focuses on the cognitive experience of well-being, defining it as a perception of satisfaction, remarking that satisfaction implies a judgment or a cognitive experience (as cited in Novgorodoff, 1982). Furthermore, fulfillment has been conceptualized as a third element of well-being, since it implies that one has accomplished an important goal or in some way has now become a complete person

(Novgorodoff, 1982). Fulfillment appears to be the dimension that refers to a combination of affective and cognitive experience as related to well-being. Research has associated fulfillment with motherhood and as an important component in the positive mothering experience (Novgorodoff, 1982). Of relevance to the current study, Campbell et al. (1976) found that satisfaction with marriage and family life combined accounted for 44% of the variance in life well-being among participants (as cited in Novgorodoff, 1982). This suggests that one's assessment of their quality of life is contingent on satisfaction with family life, and thus the role of parenthood.

The current investigation is concerned with both the affective and cognitive experience of well-being, referring to parents' perceptions within the life domains of parenthood, personhood, and balance. In this context, well-being is viewed as existing when parents have a defined sense of their personhood and parenthood experience and have achieved a balance between these life aspects. This relates to their assessment of satisfaction, happiness and fulfillment within roles. It is through the roles and identities one assumes that a defined personhood and parenthood is developed. These roles are necessary to fulfill the needs required for individual and collective development, as stated previously. Once personhood and parenthood have been shaped and are reflective of how parents view themselves, they can then work to find balance among these aspects in whatever way suits their individual expectations, needs and desires. This results in a sense of balance and well-being.

Adult Development & Parenthood

Balance may operate to develop the individual and the collective simultaneously, thus seeking to satisfy our needs as human beings. Self-determination theory posits that there are three basic human needs: “autonomy (a sense of control over one’s own choices), connectedness (feeling close and connected to others), and competence (feeling that one is effective and skilled)” (Nelson et al., 2014; Talley, Kocum, Schlegel, Molix, & Bettencourt, 2012; Milyavskaya, Gingras, Mageau, Koestner, Gagnon, Fang & Boiche, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is important to note, that some authors use the term connectedness, while others use relatedness to describe the same concept mentioned above. For this study, relatedness and connectedness will be used interchangeably to represent the basic human need for interpersonal closeness.

Each of these needs is connected to experiences in both personhood and parenthood and fulfilling these needs promotes well-being (Nelson et al., 2014). Thus, finding balance may increase one’s ability to adequately fulfill each need through the different aspects of experience. Research has begun to show support for these three needs (autonomy, connectedness, competence) in parents’ well-being (Nelson et al., 2014), as well as indicating that having balance in life contributes to subjective well-being because subjective well-being is achieved only when individuals have met both survival and growth needs (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Survival and growth needs are developmental needs that are met through the roles that individuals fulfill, the roles of personhood and parenthood that reflect or generate a sense of autonomy, connectedness and competence. Roles or identities of personhood and parenthood incorporate the self in the past and present. This is important because balancing the past self and the present self enables

self-continuity (Iyer et al., 2008). It has been suggested that individuals desire a sense of self-continuity over time, perceiving themselves to be the same regardless of changes that occur in their “environment or social relations” (Iyer et al., 2008). On the other hand, disruption in continuity has “negative implications for psychological well-being and functioning” (Iyer et al., 2008). Self-continuity provides an individual with a sense of foundation for who they are. They may seek to reconnect who they have been with their present self, in an effort to either balance those identities to coexist or to be used together. Being a parent has been “associated with a greater sense of purpose and meaning” (Nelson et al., 2014; M.P. White & Dolan, 2009), suggesting that “parenting enriches one’s identity” (Nelson et al., 2014). Understanding this enrichment of identity may provide insight about achieving well-being and the conditions under which the role of parenthood predicts well-being.

This notion of self-continuity impacting well-being and balance among roles is also reflected in the life course perspective. It is valuable to pull from this perspective because it is interested in continuity and change in well-being throughout the life span, suggesting “how parenthood and the “linked lives” of parents and children influence trajectories of change in well-being over time” (Milkie, Bierman & Schieman, 2008; as cited in Umberson, Pudrovsak, & Reczek, 2010). This represents how balance can be viewed as a dynamic process, as can change and continuity (Umberson et al., 2010). The life course perspective approaches the study of families diachronically, recognizing the inequality in individual experience, in that exposure to resources and stressors fluctuate for everyone, not remaining static throughout life (Umberson et al., 2010). Furthermore, this perspective sheds light on the concept of human agency and resilience; “individual

choice and a sense of personal control in making decisions about parenthood that may play an important role in shaping the effects of parenthood on well-being” (Umberson et al., 2010). This further illustrates the dynamic process in which balance and well-being are embedded. It is helpful to reference the circles of the Venn diagram (Figure 1 p. 12), since choice may influence how these circles are represented in an individual’s life, demonstrating that how balance is created and maintained is not static in nature and over the life course experiences ebbs and flows. These dynamic processes and concepts of agency, choice and personal control, exemplify the value of conducting a qualitative study with parents to explore their stories and understandings of continuity and change and the effect on balance and well-being over time.

As previously stated, throughout their lifespan, humans continually develop individually and collectively. The balance between these two realms is critical, since these two facets define much of humans’ existence. The combination of individual and collective experience fulfills needs, desires and nurtures development for thought, awareness and understanding. It also enhances one’s ability to regulate and care for the self and others. Finding balance within these vital aspects of the self is needed for ongoing growth, fulfillment and satisfaction. This is a systemic concept, in that the balance sought for between the individual and within the collective is experienced in all the multilayered systems that humans are involved in. The individual does this in all settings: familial, vocational, academic, etc., as represented in Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems theory there is “the natural order of individuals within systems” (Kazak, 2001). The balance between parenthood and personhood is but one context where the individual negotiates role demands and distinctions, providing a fruitful

example of the parental experience and that of continuity, change, balance and well-being.

The social ecological framework provides a valuable structure in which to view personhood and parenthood, since it highlights an individual focus with an emphasis on the family and systems in the family (Kazak, 2001). The family and community are an extension of the individual, and “parenting constitutes an all-encompassing ecology for development” (Bornstein, 2001). Therefore, establishing balance on the parent level can extend outward systemically. Bronfenbrenner’s approach has a strong developmental orientation and encourages a competency-based approach (Kazak, 2001), which is important when looking at the adult experience and how that changes when one enters and develops throughout parenthood. “It also serves as a reminder that individuals and systems change over time and negotiate expected and unexpected transitions” (Kazak, 2001), demonstrating how the balance between individual and collective is constantly being reworked and redefined. Promoting parental balance can have various important implications for parent, child and family development, as well as on a larger scale for prevention of systemic and mental health issues and early intervention for families and individuals therapeutically. It is ineffective to lose sight of parental needs and experience because if they aren’t understood, they can’t help in understanding those of their children.

Due to the many intricacies of being a parent, it is important to view the parent in their totality, from a holistic, systemic perspective. The balance dynamic is meaningful and necessary to consider in order to understand their experience. As Bronfenbrenner (1996) points out, the content and structure of the immediate environment (microsystem) is critical. How the parent interacts with their immediate environment provides valuable

insights into personalizing care for parents who need assistance throughout parenthood. Understanding the balance dynamic between personhood and parenthood can be demonstrative of parental capacities, mindsets, values and beliefs. This also sheds light on how to build on the strengths and resources of the parent, by supporting growth emotionally, psychologically, and relationally. It is important to highlight the reciprocal relationship that is being described here: the strengths and resources of the parent are influenced by their experiences with personhood, parenthood and the balance created between the two. The development and establishment of that balance is influenced by those strengths, resources and beliefs. This reciprocal nature demonstrates the numerous complexities involved in achieving balance and the value in exploring individual stories. A life course approach is helpful because it illustrates “the social creation of meanings attached to family roles and considers individuals as active agents in interaction with social contexts and structures” (Umberson et al., 2010). In addition, this perspective of parenthood “recognizes human agency and resilience, as well as heterogeneity in relationships and life course experiences” (Umberson et al., 2010).

In Chapter 2, a review of the literature is provided to further explore the concepts introduced in this chapter to investigate the experience of personhood and parenthood and the purpose of balance.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

“Although parenting is giving and responsibility, parenthood has its own intrinsic pleasures, privileges, and profits as well as frustrations, fears and failures. The transition to parenting is formidable; the intrinsic stages of parenthood are formative. Parenthood can enhance psychological development, self-confidence, and sense of well-being. Parenthood also affords opportunities to confront new challenges and to test and display diverse competencies. Parents can derive considerable and continuing pleasure in their relationships and activities with their children. But parenting is also fraught with small and large stresses and disappointments... risking much and exposing themselves broadly” (Bornstein, 2001).

The formative nature of parenthood parallels that of personhood, and both identity states continue to impact a person’s growth and development throughout one’s lifespan. This study looks into the experience of modern parenthood and the balancing act that parents routinely engage in to negotiate their roles and identities in modern adulthood. This balance means making choices (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). These choices involve and influence two essential, defining elements of who a parent is; their personhood and their parenthood. It is important to state that a parent in modern adulthood juggles their personal needs, children’s needs, family needs and the couple’s needs, in an effort to find balance for themselves and their family, emphasizing the experience within the individual’s microsystem. This study, however, acknowledges that the individual’s experience is on both an intimate and broad level, and balance is being sought within a multi-level system: micro, meso-, exo-, macro-, and chrono-systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994).

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) in their study titled, *Kaleidoscope careers: An alternate explanation for the “opt-out” revolution*, provide a beneficial metaphor and model to use in viewing this study’s concept of balance. They developed the ABC Kaleidoscope Career Model to study and describe women’s career choices, and “concerns for authenticity, balance and challenge” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) utilize a kaleidoscope to help demonstrate the multi-systemic view that women were taking to make work-life decisions. A kaleidoscope produces changing patterns when rotated, and the glass chips fall into new arrangements. This is a valuable instrument and insight because the glass chips can represent the multiple aspects of life and when one area is adjusted in some way, everything else in one’s life also shifts, creating a new experience. This idea can be used to describe the process of melding or blending the pieces of personhood and parenthood, creating various colors and patterns. Balance means arranging roles to create clear patterns, while imbalance may represent more of one color that dominates the pattern displayed, demonstrating that a rotation is needed for a new arrangement. This model will be further used and discussed throughout this chapter.

In adulthood, parents can derive well-being from a successful balance between personhood and parenthood. To understand this balance, we must examine why it is important to find balance and the implications that it has for well-being. It is of equal importance to recognize what interferes with obtaining such balance and how imbalance also affects parental well-being. Although balance is the focus of this study and not imbalance, it is still important to include because “lower parental well-being is related to more negative parenting behaviors” (Nelson et al., 2014), having implications not only on

the parent but for their children and family as well. Furthermore, “understanding the psychological processes associated with higher or lower parents’ well-being could elucidate ways that parents in specific circumstances can improve their well-being, for example, by seeking more social support” (Nelson et al., 2014). Understanding improvements may highlight the desire and ultimate need for balance and time to engage in additional or alternative roles and functions.

This chapter will look into five areas that relate to the importance of fulfilling the roles of personhood and parenthood and how finding balance benefits parents. These five areas are all interconnected, in that each relates to or has some impact on the other. These areas include:

- I. Multiple identities and social roles
- II. Important human needs
- III. Purpose and meaning
- IV. What interferes with achieving balance
- V. Beliefs, values, preferences and personal needs of parents

I. Multiple Identities & Social Roles

This study strives to focus on the parent's own perception of his or her roles during parenthood. It explores how roles and identities are incorporated and engaged on the individual and collective levels. It also recognizes how the presence or absence of balance impacts need satisfaction and whether it is derived or obstructed by such roles. A topic of interest is if certain roles enhance fulfillment as a result of balance, or lead to finding balance in order to include such roles for increased well-being.

Multiple Identities

One's personhood affects their understanding of parenthood and vice versa. Balancing these roles is critical to have an overall understanding of who one is, their identity, and if that identity is a coherent or fragmented sense of self. Iyer et al. (2008) argue that the meaning of identity can only be understood when it is a compilation of one's past and current identities, as well as the identities aspired for in the future. Identity development and maintenance is a lifelong process (La Guardia, 2009). "People acquire multiple identities across the lifespan, and life transitions demand that people take on new challenges, consider how to integrate new activities, roles, and relationships, and ultimately grapple with how they conceive themselves" (La Guardia, 2009). La Guardia (2009) states that how well one negotiates "these tasks has direct and deep impact on their sense of worth and personal well-being." This possibly indicate that one's ability to exercise balance reduces the strain imposed by new challenges and transitional times.

An individual's concept of self, and of their needs, is impacted by the social identities possessed that are both personal and group related. According to Self Determination Theory, if a person's identity is representative of their authentic and true

self, then their “goals, values and behaviors will be integrated into a coherent, organized self-structure that is in line with needs” (La Guardia, 2009). “Theory and research suggest that individuals are motivated to maintain a sense of self continuity over time, such that they view themselves as the same person, regardless of the changes in their lives or circumstances” (Iyer et al., 2008). This demonstrates that it is unlikely that one specific identity (such as, parenthood) exists or operates in isolation from other identities (personhood, ex: occupational identity). “Rather, individuals have a broad network of (interconnecting) social identities that represent group memberships that they currently possess or have possessed” (Iyer et al., 2008).

Group identity, such as being a parent, creates a sense of belonging and identification which can have a positive effect on long-term well-being, by offering an individual a tool for meaning making (Iyer et al., 2008). The meaning making that results from parenthood can provide a sense of purpose and definition, which generates an understanding of experience. Being a parent can enable one to have immediate inclusion that creates meaning of themselves, their environment and family. This inclusion also can provide a reflection of norms, standards and expectations that may confirm behaviors, beliefs and values. This tool provided by group membership can be “a lens through which to make sense of the world” (Iyer et al., 2008). Both personhood and parenthood provide lenses to view the world through, ideally over time becoming a combined lens. Thus, balance in these roles supports a healthy and critical perspective, inviting authenticity to what one perceives. “Well-being is evidenced as a function of more authentic action” (La Guardia, 2009). Iyer et al. (2008) propose, “that an individual’s network of past and existing identities serves as the foundation on which new identities are built. In addition,

the network also shapes the way that identities develop and transform.”

Individuals often hold multiple group memberships simultaneously. New identities that develop as a result of new roles or group affiliation are often extensions of previous identities that have taken on a different shape (Iyer et al., 2008). This expansive identity structure assists an individual in making meaning of their environment and social world, but also helps to maintain a sense of self-continuity over time and within novel situations. Iyer et al. (2008) postulates that there are several advantages to having multiple identities. They provide a buffer for negative and stressful events, as well as protect against the potential negative consequences that taking on a new identity can entail (Iyer et al., 2008). Multiple identities may also offer greater “existential security through having self-definitions that consist of more independent self–schema resulting in better mental health, as well as being protective through the availability of emotional and instrumental support” a large network of social identities can offer (Iyer et al., 2008).

Not only is the amount of one’s identity network important, but so is the organization and structure of the network, as well as the interrelationships between previous, existing and new identities (Iyer et al., 2008). The amount, organization, and interrelationships of one’s identity network is valuable and very relevant to this discussion on balance. It is also very relevant to how invested and satisfied one is with who they are, and how they view themselves and operate in their life. This reflects the status of identity formation, viewing identity achievement as having engaged in exploration and making a commitment to personal beliefs, values, roles and actions (La Guardia, 2009). This may be especially salient in regards to the couple, significant other, and/or parental unit. It is likely that the couple has been part of, and experienced each

other in both personhood and parenthood. This may help or hinder the experience of self-continuity. The couple, as a unit, has the ability to assist each other in balancing and integrating their identities of personhood and parenthood. They can support self-continuity through encouraging the existence and/or engagement of previous, current, and future identity and role choices. Alternatively, the couple can also require or initiate a ridding of certain identities that are not seen as favorable or valid for the individual or the relationship. When a new or previous identity is perceived to be incompatible with an existing identity network, an individual's sense of self-continuity is likely disrupted (Iyer et al., 2008). Identities experience times of "upheaval that challenge, stretch, and sometimes lead to dissolution of a once deeply rooted identity" (La Guardia, 2009). This incompatibility and disruption in self-continuity "has negative implications for psychological well-being and functioning" (Iyer et al., 2008). "Those who do not relinquish an old incompatible identity or who are not able to represent it in the new context, may find it especially hard to adjust to change" (Iyer et al., 2008). It is then possible that those parents struggling to find balance may have conflictual and/or incompatible role identities. This disruption in their sense of self may interfere with allowing these new role identities to form and become secure. Such role conflict may represent that these parents have not yet negotiated how to maintain or blend past and present identities, or how to disconnect from the old in order to find balance in the present. In addition, "the true self gives direction and meaning to action, essentially energizing human development" and creating space for balance achievement, while "alienation from the real self is viewed as the foundation of neurosis or ill-being" (La Guardia, 2009).

However, Iyer et al. (2008) suggest that old and new group memberships may be reconciled. One possibility is that individuals “focus on the past with nostalgia” which helps to align the current and past selves, reducing the discomfort of discontinuity (Iyer et al., 2008). Another option is that both identities independently “coexist without any impact on each other” (Iyer et al., 2008), which does not support or deny the experience of balance. However, it posits separation rather than blending and may not demonstrate compatibility in regards to the absence of conflict, which appears necessary for self-continuity. Alternatively, the various identities may be “easily re-categorized within a superordinate category when identities are compatible” (Iyer et al., 2008). This idea of re-categorization may support the kaleidoscope conceptualization proposed by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005). To establish or maintain balance, these parents shift or re-categorize the pattern of their lifestyle and identities by “rotating different aspects in their lives to arrange their roles and relationships in new ways” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). These studies are of relevance to the current study, since balance among a parent’s identities may require reorganization of the mosaic that represents their life. Delegating personhood and parenthood by molding these identities promotes continuity and a pattern of cohesiveness. This may be demonstrative of whether personhood changes in parenthood. This may explain under what conditions balance exists and how parents balance the energies of their personhood and parenthood.

Multiple Social Roles

“Social roles allow individuals to feel that they are acting on personal values and goals and, at the same time are sharing unique aspects of themselves with others. As a result of these feelings, individuals seem to endorse that they are more effective in their roles and subsequently may experience improved affect and motivation” (Talley, Kocum, Schlegal, Molix, & Bettencourt, 2012).

Sirgy & Wu (2009) assert that balance in life significantly contributes to subjective well-being, specifically because of the satisfaction limit derived from a single life domain. In order to satisfy the full spectrum of human developmental needs (survival and growth needs), individuals need to be active in multiple life domains. Balance among the multiple roles that one fulfills, enables more needs to be satisfied because different life domains focus on different human needs (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). More specifically, subjective well-being can only be attained when both survival (ex: safety and financial) and growth (ex: esteem and knowledge) needs are met, thus demonstrating the importance of balance (Sirgy & Wu, 2009).

In their article, Sirgy & Wu (2009) develop a conditional theory of the balanced life, by extending Martin Seligman’s (2002) theory of “authentic happiness.” Seligman (2002) posits that authentic happiness is achieved if people experience a pleasant life, engaged life, and meaningful life (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Sirgy & Wu (2009) argue that Seligman misses a critical, fourth component of happiness, that of achieving balance in life.

For clarification purposes, the *pleasant, engaged, and meaningful life* will be defined. A *pleasant life* is based on Hedonism Theory and includes experiencing pleasure

regularly (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). According to Seligman (2002), happiness is about “maximizing feelings of pleasure and minimizing feelings of pain” and “involves paying attention to bodily pleasures and enhancing these pleasures... through habituation, savoring and mindfulness” (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009). The *engaged life* incorporates Desire Theory, focusing on “gratification not pleasure and experiencing a high level of engagement in satisfying activities” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Desire Theory is about “getting what one wants” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009) and does not require the experience of bodily pleasures. It can “be in the form of wanting truth, illumination, and purity” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Desire Theory can be understood by “how well one is engaged/absorbed and how well one’s desires are satisfied” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Seligman advises that gratification can be enhanced “by engaging in activities that generate flow experience”, a concept proposed by Csikszentmihalyi (1999) (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009). It may be argued that flow experience and engagement are important and critical components of personhood. Participating in such activities may fulfill the personal needs of a parent and demonstrate the roles of personhood required for balance.

The *meaningful life* is based on the Objective List Theory, which emphasizes “experiencing a sense of connectedness to a greater whole” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). This concept of human connection is very important in regards to the context of multiple roles. The need for a supportive community is related to the roles that one chooses to play and the degree in which roles can be fulfilled and satisfaction derived from them. The level of connection functions in supporting parents within specific roles, as well as in overall role involvement. The more roles that one is engaged in, the more interpersonal connection one develops, which supports balance achievement and a sense of personal meaning and

value. “The Objective List Theory, maintains that happiness consists of a human life that achieves certain things from a list of worthwhile pursuits such as career accomplishments, friendship, freedom from disease and pain, material comforts, civic spirit, beauty, education, love, knowledge, and good conscience... Leading a meaningful life is at least objective, the person who lives a meaningful life is one that serves what is larger and more worthwhile than just the self’s pleasures and desires” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). The *balanced life* has been defined by Sirgy & Wu (2009) as “a state reflecting satisfaction or fulfillment in several important domains with little or no negative affect in other domains.” Specifically, they assert that need satisfaction limitations directly relate to how balance contributes to subjective well-being. Satisfaction derived from one domain has a cap; it can only provide a certain amount of “positive affect to subjective well-being” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). The need satisfaction approach maintains that there are a variety of developmental needs that humans work to fulfill. Developmental needs include both survival and growth needs such as, biological, safety, social, esteem, self-actualization, knowledge, and beauty-related needs (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Survival needs include biological, safety and economic needs, whereas growth needs include higher-order needs such as social, esteem, self-actualization, knowledge and aesthetics needs (Sirgy & Wu, 2009).

The more these needs are satisfied, the more an individual feels worthy and content about their life. “That is, those who are more successful in satisfying their developmental needs are likely to experience greater happiness and life satisfaction than those who are less successful. Those who are more successful do so because they are effective in organizing their lives in manageable domains (e.g., work life, family life,

leisure life, love life) and participate actively in these domains” (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Having a balance in all these domains, allows for satisfaction of human developmental needs through engaging in a variety of activities and roles. Valliant (1977) conducted a longitudinal study finding that participants who were most happy appeared to be satisfied with multiple life domains where each domain aided in the fulfillment of different developmental needs (as cited in Sirgy & Wu). Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) further support the importance of organizing life into manageable domains, through their use of the kaleidoscope, and attaining life arrangements that best fulfill needs and desires. Sirgy & Wu (2009) postulate that balance contributes to well-being because multiple domains are required to fulfill the human developmental needs of survival and growth. Well-being cannot be attained with the fulfillment of one or the other but requires that both survival and growth needs be addressed.

As related to personhood and parenthood, this research demonstrates that occupying and balancing multiple roles can meet a variety of human needs. The balance is key, since the multiple roles attributed to personhood and parenthood enable parents to not ignore or deny aspects of themselves that are defining and valuable. For instance, balancing roles is representative of specific roles within parenthood, i.e. mentor, disciplinarian, nurturer, as well as the roles of friend, mother, employee, wife, athlete, etc. By balancing multiple roles that reflect their personhood and parenthood, more human needs will ultimately be met. As a result, the individual will be more satisfied in their life. In order to exist within a *meaningful, engaged, pleasant and balanced life*, one must engage in roles defined by both personhood and parenthood. Operating in such a way, addresses the survival and growth needs that are necessary for balance.

Additional research supports the finding that individuals are more satisfied with life when satisfaction is obtained through multiple life domains that are balanced, versus one dominant life domain (Sirgy & Wu, 2009; Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Chen, 1996; Bhargava, 1995). Marks and MacDermid (1996) conducted two studies in which they hypothesized that individuals with more balance in their role systems will report experiencing less role strain, more role ease, well-being and positive role-specific experience than those with a less balanced role system. Their first study included a sample of 65 employed mothers and wives in the Midwest, who had at least one child aged 0-18 years living at home (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). In addition to their main hypothesis as stated above, they also tested the relationship between role balance and self-esteem, depression, mastery and innovativeness (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). They found that mothers who were more “role balanced” and enjoyed “every part of their life equally well” reported “less role overload, had higher self-esteem and lower depression levels” (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009). In their second study, Marks and MacDermid (1996) surveyed 303 college students from the University of Maine. The sample consisted of 179 men and 123 women, with the majority of participants being of traditional student age. Maintaining the same hypothesis, they expected students scoring higher on role balance would have less role overload, depression, and greater role ease and self-esteem compared to their less role balanced counterparts (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). The findings supported this, “role balanced students had significantly higher role ease and self-esteem and less role overload and depression,” as well as demonstrating other “indicators of enhanced functioning” (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Their findings suggest that role ease and strain “appear to be more a function of how people organized

their lives than of what (or how much) they do” (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Based on their results, Marks and MacDermid (1996) propose a theory of role balance that suggests individuals with well-balanced role systems and those experiencing “full engagement in and enjoyment of all roles, have higher levels of well-being” (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Bhargava’s (1995) study asked participants to comment on the life satisfaction of others, finding that participants tended to infer other’s life satisfaction based specifically on satisfaction in multiple domains (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009). As a result, happiness was measured by adding the satisfaction across domains, demonstrating that the more the positive affect across several domains, the higher the subjective well-being (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009). In addition, Chen (1996) provides further supporting evidence finding individuals who “believe they will achieve some of their goals (and receive satisfaction from multiple domains) report higher levels of life satisfaction than those who do not believe that they will achieve these goals” (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009).

“Research on aging and illness provides consonant evidence that social roles play a crucial function in psychological and physical health” (Talley et al., 2012) and holding multiple roles is advantageous (Nelson et al., 2014). This may be, in part, due to rewards or successes in one role potentially offsetting the stresses or disappointments in another role (Nelson et al., 2014). Sirgy & Wu (2009) postulate that this balance phenomenon implies “putting all your eggs in one basket” and is not effective in enhancing subjective well-being. One should not allow a single life domain to overwhelm their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with life. It is better to be invested in multiple domains. This enables one to compensate for any dissatisfaction of one domain with the satisfaction from other domains. Frisch (2006) recommends that therapists use the “happiness pie” technique

with clients, which is a way to identify areas dominating an individual's life. If a client has an imbalanced pie of one or two life domains, Frisch (2006) recommends that the therapist assist the client in developing a new pie that reflects new goals and priorities. This exercise is guided by the balance principle – the more balanced the pie is, the more likely that the client can experience life satisfaction and happiness. Niven (2000) a social psychologist and happiness researcher, further supports engagement in multiple life domains stating, “Your life is made up of many different facets. Don't focus on one aspect of your life so much that you can't experience pleasure if that one area is unsettled. It can become all you think about, and it can deaden your enjoyment of everything else things you would otherwise love” (as cited in Sirgy & Wu, 2009).

Talley et al. (2012) argues that social roles “are important mechanisms through which basic psychological needs can be satisfied, and as such, fulfilling social roles has the capacity to enhance psychological health.” Those who do not experience feelings of need fulfillment within their social roles are most at risk for poor psychological health (Talley et al., 2012). The present study will explore personal accounts of parent's experience of balance among their roles to understand the factors that supported their achievement of balance. Through fulfilling these roles and operating with balance, this study will further seek to understand if such an experience or rather lifestyle, enhances well-being and personal satisfaction, reflecting psychological health and/or adjustment.

Before concluding this section on multiple identities and social roles, it is important to mention and reference here Bronfenbrenner's (1994) Ecological Models of Human Development. Both personhood and parenthood are involved in a “set of nested structures, each inside the other, moving from the innermost level to the outside”

(Bronfenbrenner, 1994). As shown below in Figure 3, p. 43, these structures are systemically organized in levels: microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). This is related to balance in the context of this investigation because aspects of personhood and parenthood need to be delegated among these structures to reach balance within their roles. The interaction and influence between these various systems and a parent's identity is reciprocal. "We construct a sense of self through time that relies both on an evaluative perspective of our own personal history, as well as how our history fits into larger cultural and historical frameworks" (Fivush, Bohanek, & Duke, 2008). Our sense of self is reflective of our experiences and the stories we've been exposed to, and as such who we are and how we define ourselves is constructed by personal and generational history, as well as "the social cultural history in which our personal history is embedded" (Fivush et al., 2008). Balance also affects the roles of personhood and parenthood, how they are performed, their consistency and how these roles affect the ability to achieve and maintain balance. This study takes into account all of the levels provided below by Bronfenbrenner (1994). This is important to note, because parents' lifestyles and ability to balance their roles with satisfaction are influenced and apart of these overlapping social contexts.

Microsystems	“A pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. Examples include such settings as family, school, peer group, and workplace” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39).
Mesosystems	“The linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (e.g., the relations between home and school, school and workplace, etc.). In other words, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).
Exosystems	“The linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (e.g., for a child, the relation between the home and the parent’s workplace; for a parent, the relation between the school and the neighborhood peer group)” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).
Macrosystems	“Overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems. The macrosystem may be thought of as a society blue-print for a particular culture or subculture” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).
Chronosystems	“Encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives (e.g., changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life)” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).

Figure 3: Derived from Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Models of Human Development (1994)

II. Important Human Needs

Ryan and Deci (2000) define a basic need (physiological or psychological) as “an energizing state that, if satisfied, conduces toward health and well-being but, if not satisfied, contributes to pathology and ill-being.” To understand human motivation and development, Self-Determination Theory (SDT) recognizes “innate, universal, psychological needs” (Milyavskaya, Gingras, Mageau, Koestner, Gagnon, Fang & Boiche, 2009) that are required for psychological health and well-being (Talley et al., 2012; Milyavskaya et al., 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000). When satisfied, these needs can yield enhanced self-motivation and mental health, but when thwarted, can lead to diminished motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT is interested in

people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration, as well as for the conditions that foster those positive processes (Ryan & Deci, 2000). According to SDT, three psychological needs are seen as basic and essential: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Talley et al., 2012; Milyavskaya et al., 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is suggested that these three needs are "equivalent with regard to their importance for psychosocial functioning" (Talley et al., 2012). SDT is interested in the degree to which these needs are satisfied (Milyavskaya et al., 2009) and whether such satisfaction is "essential for ongoing psychological growth, integrity and well-being" (Talley et al., 2012; Deci & Ryan, 2000). The needs for competence, relatedness, and autonomy appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration both socially and personally (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, in a given context, these needs are important ingredients for promoting the integration of social norms and values of that context (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). These needs also must be satisfied across the life span for an individual to experience an ongoing sense of integrity and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT states that the "key to healthy development and adaptation in a given context is the amount of psychological need satisfaction one experiences in that context" (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Optimal functioning requires "all three needs be fulfilled overall, or in all important life contexts, as any social environment that thwarts needs is thought to lead to negative effects on well-being outcomes" (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). SDT research is interested in the environmental factors that "hinder or undermine self-motivation, social functioning and personal well-being" (Ryan & Deci, 2000). For example, a social environment that "affords competence but fails to nurture relatedness,

is expected to result in some impoverishment of well-being... social contexts that engender conflicts between basic needs set up the conditions for alienation and psychopathology” (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Research has begun to provide preliminary support for the role that the three needs (competence, relatedness, and autonomy) play on parents’ well-being (Nelson et al., 2014; Milyavskaya et al., 2009). What is interesting about these three needs is that they are fulfilled through aspects of both personhood and parenthood, as discussed previously in *Multiple Social Roles*. The likelihood of fulfilling these needs increases if the roles of both personhood and parenthood are contributing to that need. The benefits gained from each need affects the other. This demonstrates how balance can add to overall and specific need fulfillment and as a result also support an increased sense of well-being.

Competence

Competence is an important human need as individuals benefit from feeling able to do something successfully and efficiently. Feeling confident, proficient and, adept as a person, as well as a parent increases self-worth and esteem, ultimately impacting well-being. Competence relates to feelings of efficacy (Talley et al., 2012) and refers to feelings of “mastery over one’s environment and the ability to bring about desired outcomes” (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). “Parental confidence, a related construct, is linked to higher emotional well-being” (Nelson et al., 2014), and overall family efficacy and parental sense of competence significantly predicts greater satisfaction with family life (Nelson et al., 2014). Feeling a personal sense of competence is critical since it generates a sense of positive identity that then translates into self-worth. Part of this competence may relate to why individuals who perform and balance a variety of roles experience

greater well-being. Those who seek to feel competent may derive more satisfaction from various life domains, all while finding their own niche of expertise.

Talley et al. (2012) conducted two studies within the domain of social roles that examined the likelihood that competence serves as a mediator in the relation between autonomy and relatedness and psychological health. They sought to test whether the association between the satisfaction of autonomy and relatedness needs within particular social roles and psychological health, is achieved, at least in part, through the satisfaction of competence needs (Talley et al., 2012). Although social-determination theory identifies the three needs as equally important in regard to psychosocial functioning, work within social role domains has found evidence that certain need fulfillments may contribute differentially to functioning (Talley et al., 2012). Drawing from social cognitive theory, Talley et al. (2012) proposed that when considering need satisfaction within role domains, competence would be the most proximal contributor to individual psychological health and would mediate, in part, associations between autonomy and relatedness. Bandura (1989) theorized that competence (self-efficacy) functions as the primary “cognitive mediator” in determining motivation and subsequent psychological health (as cited in Talley et al., 2012). According to Bandura, “feelings of personal competence are related to self-perceptions of efficacy regarding one’s ability to deal effectively with distinct social domains and are seen as proximal and direct predictors of psychological motivation, affect and behaviors” (as cited in Talley et al., 2012). Talley et al. (2012) posit that within a given social role, individuals’ feelings of autonomy and relatedness may be used as information in determining perceptions of one’s competence within that role. A person’s ability to perform a role competently may be reflective of

how authentic he or she feels in that role (Talley et al., 2012). Previous research has shown that “participants assigned to roles that were congruent with self-characteristics were more satisfied with their role performances, as well as more likely to succeed in problem-solving tasks” (Talley et al., 2012). “Thus, social roles that are congruent with one’s authentic self are more likely to foster feelings of competence” (Talley et al., 2012). Individuals may also develop feelings of competence from social roles that stimulate feelings of relatedness, since social roles which derive feelings of connectedness should “evoke a greater sense of responsibility in role players and motivate stronger efforts that may translate into more successful role performance” (Talley et al., 2012). Others also tend to provide information about one’s effectiveness in social roles and positive feedback supports feelings of both competence and relatedness (Talley et al., 2012).

This research relates to the interests of the present study, since competence seems to be highly associated with balance. How efficient parents feel in their roles and in their ability to delegate responsibilities in such a manner that allows them to experience balance is very important. This study’s investigation may shed light on the question of whether parents generate a sense of competence from having balance and/or if balance contributes to the experience of competency as a parent and person. Specifically, does achieving balance alone promote competence or vice versa? A parent’s sense of competence may relate to questions of how balance is created and under what conditions it exists, and how parents know when they have found that balance between personhood and parenthood in such a way that generates satisfaction and well-being.

Relatedness

Human beings seek connection and require social interaction to survive and grow. Relatedness reflects feeling close and accepted by those individuals who are significant and important, (Milyavskaya et al., 2009) which involves a reciprocal connection with others around love and care (Talley et al., 2012). A sense of connectedness is generated through the various activities, functions, and roles that individuals engage in. The multiple identities held by an individual and the roles they engage in provide numerous avenues for connection and support. Social integration occurs through the realms of both personhood and parenthood, and having connections in both contexts is important. Balancing the roles of personhood and parenthood may increase one's sense of well-being in the context of connectedness. This is due to the implications of determining the type of social network that one has. The choice that balance invites satisfies the need for connectedness because it provides more opportunity to develop relationships. Involvement in more roles not only provides more opportunity for making relationships but also allows one to choose their social network. Having the ability to create a social network that encompasses and matches all of your needs and interests allows one to feel more supported and understood. Parenthood provides the opportunity for social connection through the context of the family and those affiliated and in contact with them. For example, parenthood connections may include but are not limited to relatives, other parents, teachers, coaches, friends, and neighbors. On the other hand, personhood can generate social connections through social institutions, hobbies, occupations, alumni activities, friends, volunteering, etc.

Bornstein (2001) discusses in his article that children's "constellation of caregivers

is rich and multifaceted,” and that “pluralistic caregiving is common and significant in the lives of children and at one or another time various people other than biological or adoptive parents assume responsibility for meeting children’s developmental needs” (Bornstein, 2001). Just as a child’s social constellation can be plush, a parents support network should be as well. Parenthood provides an opportunity for social integration in a variety of ways. For some, the connection to others can be indefinite, providing constant support. The family unit can serve as a continual source of love and closeness, which are two very important components of connectedness (Nelson et al., 2014). Parenthood may not only provide a connection to the family unit but may also provide an opportunity to develop relationships with extended family, friends, neighbors, and colleagues.

Nomaguchi & Melkie (2003) found that new parents showed a higher level of social integration with relatives, friends, and neighbors than nonparents (as cited in Nelson et al., 2014), and social support, affiliation and integration are important predictors of parental well-being (Nelson et al., 2014). Holmes, Erickson, and Hill (2012) found that social support was significantly associated with maternal depression. Mothers who perceived more social support on average were likely to report lower depressive symptoms. Perceived social support also significantly predicted parenting stress. Mothers who received more social support reported a reduction in parenting stress, as did mothers who received more social support than their personal average (Holmes et al., 2012).

Parents often rely on the support and connection of their friends and family, especially during times of change. The degree to which parents have supportive relationships can be an “important predictor for decreased parental depression and psychological adjustment” after the introduction of a child (Nelson et al., 2014).

Supportive relationships require nurturance and a decline in leisure time can cause parents to experience less support due to a decrease in their social networks. As a result, the reduction in social connection can cause parents to experience a decrease in well-being (Nelson et al., 2014). Consistent with the evolutionary perspective, parents have the basic need for affiliation and connectedness, and if parenting does not impede on this then being a parent is associated with higher well-being (Nelson et al., 2014). Social support “appears to promote well-being by increasing positive emotions and decreasing negative emotions associated with stress and strain and improving partner relationships” (Nelson et al., 2014).

Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the experience of choice and the personal endorsement of one’s activities and actions (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Parenthood may be a time where one may experience an increase in feelings of autonomy “because perhaps more than any other life passage, having a child heralds one’s debut into adulthood and signifies having control over one’s actions and outcomes. This, in turn, results in increases in autonomy that are likely to lead to improvements in well-being” (Nelson et al., 2014). Autonomy encourages a sense of personal control and individual choice which may be valuable in making decisions about parenthood and the resulting effects that parenthood have on one’s well-being (Keeton, Perry-Jenkins, & Sayer, 2008; as cited in Umberson et al., 2010). However, while parenthood may lead to increases in global autonomy, it may cause a reduction in daily autonomy (Nelson et al., 2014). The influence of parenthood on day-to-day autonomy results in parents having decreased leisure time. Such declines in leisure time have been associated with lower marital quality (Nelson et al., 2014).

Claxton and Perry-Jenkins (2008) suggest that leisure time is “integral to well-functioning marriages.” This may demonstrate that one’s sense of autonomy can greatly benefit by having balance. Balance can promote parenthood autonomy (global), and personhood autonomy through providing the opportunity for leisure time and activities for the individual and couple. Independent and shared leisure (couple time) is important for marital and individual health and satisfaction (Claxton & Perry-Jenkins, 2008). Balance can impact time allocation, how responsibilities are shared, and how schedules are organized, resulting in planned time for the parent and couple.

Part of autonomy may also be related to a sense of authenticity. Autonomy is concerned with feelings of volition and a desire for behavior to be “concordant with one’s integrated sense of self” (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Cited by Talley et al., 2012). Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) discuss the importance that authenticity plays in making choices with regards to lifestyle and career decisions, especially among women. Authenticity means still being one’s self (or true to oneself) despite all of the push and pull experienced by the various roles and responsibilities that one is engaged in. Can the individual be genuine in personhood and parenthood? Autonomy may allow for the expression of authenticity and vice versa, contributing to how one will exercise balance and integrate who they are and the roles they play. The notion of autonomy and authenticity is important in this discussion of balance because the more congruent one feels; the more likely they will experience well-being. Roles need to be congruent with personhood and parenthood, requiring balance so that one actively participates and engages in choice and ownership. Specifically, the need of autonomy relates to this study’s questions whether personhood changes in parenthood and/or how it is present in parenting. The sense of

authenticity related to the experience of autonomy may be salient in the exploration of one's lived experience when they transition from person to parent.

Interconnectedness of Personhood and Parenthood – For Need Fulfillment

Need fulfillment and well-being ensues when the benefits accumulated from and within a variety of roles address the full spectrum of the individual. Personhood and parenthood together satisfy psychological needs specifically and overall. Few studies to date have attempted to examine need satisfaction across multiple contexts and whether the balance of need satisfaction across contexts impacts psychological adjustment and optimal functioning (Milyavskaya et al., 2009).

Sheldon and Niemiec (2006) examined the role of balance in the amount of satisfaction among autonomy, competence and relatedness and hypothesized that those who experience a balanced level of satisfaction would exhibit greater psychological health than those who experience the same amount of need satisfaction distributed in an imbalanced manner (as cited in Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Sheldon and Niemiec (2006) found that balance between these three needs independently affects well-being and, balance impacted “concurrent subjective well-being and happiness as well as prospective well-being” (as cited in Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Milyavskaya et al. (2009) examined the balance of need satisfaction across distinct life contexts related to adolescents. They proposed that an individual can experience an imbalance in the amount of need satisfaction in various life domains, expecting variability across contexts to occur more often than variability across needs (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). This means that consistency and balance across important domains contributes to and benefits adjustment and well-being (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). After conducting three studies with more than

2,300 adolescent participants, across four countries, they found the balance of need satisfaction across life contexts significantly relates to well-being and adjustment.

“Participants who experienced greater balance between important life domains reported being happier, were less likely to consider dropping out of high school, and were rated as better adjusted by their teachers” (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Their results suggest that contextual balance in the experience of autonomy, competence, and relatedness may significantly impact well-being and the pursuit of success (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Their results also indicated that need satisfaction in one context does not compensate for need satisfaction in other contexts (Milyavskaya et al., 2009), supporting self-determination theory’s notion that “needs are nutrients that people need consistently throughout all aspects of their lives” (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). These results highlight the importance for balance to exist between personhood and parenthood. This balance will promote and determine that a parents needs are fulfilled within and across contexts, demonstrating a more holistic rather than atomistic framework of balance.

Variability of need satisfaction across contexts may offer an alternative explanation for the negative effects experienced from work-family imbalance (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Literature on work-family imbalance has historically “focused on stress, time-based pressures, and role conflict as responsible for the imbalance and the ensuing negative effects” (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Prevention of the needs for autonomy, competence and relatedness either at work or home would produce an imbalance of need satisfaction across contexts, and is associated with diminished well-being (Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Senecal, Vallerand, and Guay (2001) conducted a study that examined work-family conflict using self-determination theory and found that “feeling valued by

one's partner and feeling that one's autonomy is supported by one's employer predicted autonomous motivation for family and for work, respectively, both of which then predicted lower levels of family alienation, work-family conflict, and emotional exhaustion" (as cited in Milyavskaya et al., 2009). This provides further evidence of the importance of balance across contexts (Milyavskaya et al., 2009), two contexts that can be defined as personhood and parenthood. "There is something fundamental about a balance in two important domains that can boost confidence in future pursuits" (Milyavskaya et al., 2009).

Work-family balance is a valuable example that explores the interconnectedness of personhood and parenthood roles and need satisfaction. Employment is one role and/or domain that impacts balance and the resulting experience of personhood and parenthood. An occupation can have both positive and negative effects on one's well-being, since it can play a prevalent life role, which highlights the importance of balance and how such balance can help fulfill the needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence. Employment status in relation to social roles has shown that "work-family interactions suggests that experiences in one role can enrich one's experiences in another role via gains in resources (skills, social support, self-esteem)" (Nelson et al., 2014). When looking at employment through the lens of personhood, it is a role that provides benefits such as "enriched identity, social support and increased income" (Nelson et al., 2014), which has simultaneous benefits for parenthood. Furthermore, Holmes et al. (2012) found that stay-at-home moms who desired to work had higher rates of depression than those mothers who either worked or stayed home but embraced their role. According to evolutionary theory, esteem is one of the basic human needs and employment can

contribute to well-being as long as it “enhances feelings of worth and provides a sense of fulfillment and enriched identity” (Nelson et al., 2014).

Nelson et al. (2014) proposes that parents who work experience enhanced well-being when the additional role “strengthens their identity and sense of worth, perhaps by allowing them to pursue valued goals and contribute materially to the household.”

However, parents experience a diminishment of well-being when employment creates more stress and conflict that result in feeling a reduction in worth and an increase in negative emotions (Nelson et al., 2014). This reflects the potential benefits gained from work-life balance, a related construct to personhood and parenthood balance. It also reflects the notion of the satisfaction limit previously discussed (Sirgy & Wu, 2009).

Employment represents one domain that can fulfill the three needs of autonomy, relatedness and competence simultaneously, but up to a point. Only a degree of fulfillment can be derived from one domain, demonstrating the necessity of balance. Balance within roles and among roles, is defined by personhood and parenthood. The benefits from all domains need to be pooled into one resource for well-being, balance and a cohesive identity network that incorporates the individual and the parent. Need fulfillment is valuable for this study’s exploration of the lived experience when a person becomes a parent and how that parent balances the energies of personhood and parenthood. Certain roles fulfill certain needs and learning about parental balance can help generate an understanding of what roles fulfill which needs or if needs are more satisfied across roles and contexts. Personal experiential accounts can articulate the unique balance between personhood and parenthood and how the interconnection of needs contributes to parental, couple and familial well-being.

III. Purpose & Meaning

When one has purpose in the things they do, it increases well-being, as well as the meanings that one has attached to activities (Umberson et al., 2010). Meaning and purpose can be derived from engaged activities, especially within the balanced realms of personhood and parenthood. Social roles may be particularly beneficial when one feels called to fulfill those roles. “A calling invokes themes of identity, passion, life purpose, meaningful contribution, and awareness of the role and parenting has been theorized as a role that most people naturally feel called to fulfill” (Nelson et al., 2014).

Being a parent can lead to an increased awareness of purpose and meaning, since parenting likely enhances one’s sense of identity (Nelson et al., 2014). According to the Prosocial Investment Hypothesis, investing financial and emotional resources in others is associated with greater happiness and well-being compared to only investing in oneself (Ashton-James, Kushlev, & Dunn, 2013). Research has long suggested the benefits of altruism; the more care and attention given to others, the more happiness and meaning one experiences. “Individuals who invest more personal resources in their relationships, report greater relationship satisfaction, and spending time volunteering or caring for others is linked to greater happiness and decreased mortality” (Ashton-James et al., 2013). These benefits may be magnified when one is giving to those they feel close to and care for (Ashton-James et al., 2013). Furthermore, Ashton-James et al. (2013) found a positive association between parents’ child-centrism and their experience of meaning and positive affect when caring for their children. Their results stand in contrast to the popular belief that child-centrism only has a negative impact on parents (Nelson et al., 2014; Ashton-James et al., 2013). The Ashton-James et al. (2013) results also suggest

that at least for some parents, putting one's child at the center of their life is associated with the actual enjoyment and meaning that parents derive from their children. The opposing view on child-centrism and parental well-being will be discussed further in the section below (IV. What Interferes with Achieving Balance).

In 2010, the American Time Use Survey (ATUS) added new measures to traditional time use questions due to an interest in the emotional state of respondents during various activities (Wang, 2013). ATUS found that American parents experience different activities as more meaningful, reporting that time with their children was significantly more meaningful and exhausting than time spent with paid work (Wang, 2013). The data was divided into four categories of time spent: childcare, leisure, housework, and paid work (Wang, 2013). The findings indicated that parents rated childcare as the most meaningful activity (62%), followed by leisure (59%), housework (43%) and paid work (36%) (Wang, 2013). Interestingly, while time spent with a child is considered most meaningful, parents rated happiness level as highest during their leisure time (Wang, 2013). These statistics resemble aspects of personhood (leisure time) and parenthood (childcare) showing that balance between these roles can likely impact a parent's level of happiness and meaning.

IV. What Interferes with Achieving Balance

Sirgy & Wu (2009) define imbalance as “a state reflecting satisfaction or fulfillment in a focused domain (e.g., work, family) that ultimately leads to a negative effect in other domains.” Being a parent means being on call 24/7, and caring for many simultaneous needs at once. Time for the self becomes limited compared to pre-parenthood and “U.S. adults tend to give priority to paid work and family responsibilities at the expense of time for leisure activities such as volunteer work, socializing, outdoor recreation, fitness and exercise, cultural events, and hobbies” (Nomaguchi & Bianchi, 2004). The traditional roles of mothers and fathers are converging, according to research on time use done by the Pew Research Center (Parker & Wang, 2013). Data findings show that “56% of working mothers and 50% of working fathers” find it challenging and stressful to balance responsibilities for work and family (Parker & Wang, 2013). Of those with children under age 18, 40% of working mothers and 34% of working fathers say they always feel rushed adding to the challenges of juggling responsibilities and finding balance between work and family (Parker & Wang, 2013).

There are many reasons why parents may not have balance or struggle to obtain it. It is important to take into account that individuals vary in their exposure to stressors and resources throughout life (Umberson, Pudrovska & Reczek, 2010). Differential exposure to environmental risks and resources around parenthood can produce increasing disadvantage for the well-being of some and increasing advantage for others (Kendig, Dykstra, van Gaalen, & Melkas, 2007; as cited in Umberson et al., 2010).

“Parenting constitutes an all-encompassing ecology for development” (Bornstein, 2001). Parenting style in terms of “intensive versus relaxed” style, in particular, might

relate to parental well-being (Nelson et al., 2014; Umberson et al., 2010). Parenthood shapes life experiences and has substantial consequences on psychological and physical well-being (Umberson et al., 2010). Societal norms can make parents feel compelled to “engage in labor-intensive hyper-parenting, involving an endless stream of child-enriching activities” (Nelson et al., 2014). It has been reported by American mothers that they feel required to focus on the needs of their children to “the near exclusion of everything else” (Nelson et al., 2014). This reflects imbalance in parenthood duties, commonly defined as child-centrism. Such child-centrism from an evolutionary perspective, may result in a decrease in parental well-being due to the child’s needs dominating and parents need being neglected (Nelson et al., 2014). Although some of a parents needs are fulfilled through caring for their child, other needs like affiliation can become compromised. This refers to the imbalance that can be created by certain perspectives of parenthood and styles of parenting.

Alternatively, only focusing on one’s needs and not on those of the family is also imbalanced. Parents of children under the age of 18 years report higher levels of stress (Umberson et al., 2010). This is due to increased exposure to “significant stressors, including daily demands and time constraints, increased strain between parents, and work-family conflict” (Umberson et al., 2010). Furthermore, the “time and labor-intensive demands of the parental role are taxing, and the problem of combining parenthood with other major social roles is acute” (Umberson et al., 2010). Such time strain frequently experienced by parents, as the result of fulfilling multiple roles, interferes with a parent’s ability to engage in activities of personhood. It also may cause parents to redefine certain roles to substitute in as a role that fulfills the needs of

personhood. Some examples would be: picking a profession that one is passionate about, engaging in family activities which integrate one's hobbies or interests, and socializing with other parents to make new social connections. Furthermore, when a parent engages in limited roles, with one or two life domains dominating their experience, balance is unlikely. On one end of the spectrum, parents feel drained and deprived finding no compromise in their routine for themselves. When one's duties as a parent overwhelm one's experience, there is a lack in opportunity for an emotional outlet and self-growth. One feels trapped which results in less well-being. On the other extreme, parents who put themselves and roles of personhood as the priority lack balance in that little time is spent operating in the parental role. Individuals at this end have schedules dominated by roles that benefit themselves and their families, but that don't allow them to experience the daily moments of family life. Many fathers have discussed this experience, specifically related to employment, which will be discussed in the following section (V. Beliefs, Values, and Personal Needs of Parents).

Holmes, Erickson and Hill (2012) studied work-family balance and the transformations mothers experience to their personal identities, as well as shifts in the priorities attributed to work during the early stages of motherhood. They found that early motherhood is an important period and balance is difficult to achieve. Holmes et al. (2012) discuss that women, in particular, experience strong pressures at the "macro and micro levels to conform to societal expectations for the 'good mother' or 'good worker' roles. Both ideologies suggest undivided loyalty to attain these ideals, increasing the difficulty of reaching high expectations in both roles," as well as in achieving balance among their roles. Mothers face several challenges as they attempt to enact choices

around work and family goals, which can negatively influence psychological well-being (Holmes et al., 2012). Employed mothers of young children face the dilemma of child development concerns and the “pursuit of individual and family interests and needs” (Holmes et al., 2012) wanting to adequately fulfill both roles of mother and individual/employee. Furthermore, according to the family economic stress model, “inability to enact choices believed important to their families, whether or not they were essential to survival, contributed to maternal stress and negatively impacted parenting” (Holmes et al., 2012). This notion of control or rather feeling a lack of control, affects one’s ability to find balance especially when employment is perceived to have negative consequences on their child’s development. Women who experience this, report greater role strain, as do women who experience discrepancies between what they think she should do for her family and what she is actually able to do (Holmes et al., 2012). However, mothers who reported more positive outcomes from maternal employment reported less parenting stress and role strain than those employed mothers who believed their employment might be detrimental for child development (Holmes et al., 2012). This may demonstrate that role strain is related to balance and balance reflects a sense of control, choice and ability to operate in a way that benefits the self and the family. This is of importance to the current study, since imbalance may create an experience of incongruence between wants, needs, desires and reality. By contrast, balance may promote alignment and encourage realistic expectations. Exploring the stories of individuals who have found balance can be beneficial, insightful and suggestive for others to learn from.

V. Beliefs, Values, & Personal Needs of Parents

This section will address several beliefs and themes, which appear frequently in the research on parental experience regarding personal beliefs, values, and needs. This section will also examine some of the gender differences that likely influence the experience of balance, as well as social and cultural determinants that deserve mentioning. This research focuses on the American culture and its social norms and standards regarding parental roles and needs. Parental and familial balance likely differs in other cultures and countries. However, due to the focus on American parents, these cultural differences will not be addressed.

The beliefs and values of parents, as well as their personal needs relate to the current study in a variety of ways. The generational and social trends that parents either incorporate in their lives or break free from, are important information for how balance is developed and viewed. Certain gender roles, beliefs and cultural traditions can imply directives and limits on how time is spent personally and as a family, as well as indicating what type of balance is necessary, possible and warranted. “Well-being that people derive from their daily activities is associated with their perceived fulfillment of cultural expectations and their behavioral consistency with prevailing social norms” (Ashton-James et al., 2013). How a parent chooses to incorporate or organize their beliefs and expectations impacts the family organization and how the family can operate influences the individual definition of balance. Much of the research found and reviewed in this section is geared toward mothers and the female experience. Not as much research about fathers was found, demonstrating what appears to be an unfortunate deficit in understanding the male role and experience. Father’s roles and experiences are also

changing in orientation with social trends, and their position effects balance acquisition. One possibility of what may emerge from this study is that fathers may prioritize the mother's need for role balance before their own, or choose to follow a more linear path based on societal expectations to fulfill a provider role.

The parents' experience of parenthood is directly influenced by beliefs and behaviors. Their experiences, roles, and decisions impact their perspective and development, as well as that of their children and family. A parent's relational network (significant other, family, local and larger community, and culture) combined with their beliefs and values, may "generate and shape parental behaviors, mediate the effectiveness of parenting, or help to organize parenting" (Bornstein, 2001). Personal resources may buffer parents from the effects of parenting stress (Umberson et al, 2010). This includes one's concept of self-efficacy.

One area of belief is the notion of control. "Personal beliefs about the inability to control one's environment and life circumstances have been linked to the likelihood of depression and parenting stress" (Holmes et al., 2012). "Parenthood provides costs and benefits for adults' well-being, and the balance of costs to benefits reflects structural demands, resources, and tensions that further depend on one's position in the life course" (Umberson et al., 2010). A parent's belief surrounding self-efficacy and family decisions, as well as their belief in how their time should be allocated is in part implicated by social and cultural influences. Each individual has their own terms for personhood and parenthood and how these roles are expressed and formulated. As a result, each parent has different expectations experientially. These expectations play a very critical and central role in how one perceives balance. Balance is as much a

reflection on how a parent was raised as it is the social trend of the present.

Holmes, Erickson, and Hill (2012) conducted a study guided by social cognitive theories of maternal well-being that link a mother's perceived ability to enact desired choices with her psychological well-being. Personal beliefs about the inability to control one's environment and life circumstances have been linked to the likelihood of depression and parenting stress (Holmes et al., 2012). They found that mothers' work and family preferences generally reflect polarization into three distinct groups: those giving priority to marriage and child-rearing as central life activity, those giving priority to market work or equivalent activities, and those characterized by women who want to combine work and family (Holmes et al., 2012). Preferences often become more complex as mothers make career adjustments to meet family goals. Mainiero and Sullivan's (2005) Kaleidoscope model illustrates how women alter career patterns by 'rotating different aspects in their lives to arrange their roles and relationships.' While women tend to factor in the needs of "children, spouses, aging parents, friends and even coworkers when making career decisions, men tended to keep work and non-work lives separate, orienting career decisions to individual goals" (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). While such polarities historically have existed, today both mothers' and fathers' work and family roles have shifted, demonstrating current social trends and changes in role definitions and expectations. How mothers and fathers are spending their time has changed over the past few decades (Parker & Wang, 2013). Parents' perspectives have changed, reflective of cultural and social shifts and circumstances. Fathers' work-related activities have decreased while mothers' hours have increased as compared to 1965. Today's fathers spend twice as much time engaged in household and family related activities than in

1960, while mothers are cutting back by almost half on their housework time (Parker & Wang, 2013). While there appears to be an equal amount of mothers and fathers who would like to be home raising children compared to working, fathers were more likely to want to work full time (Parker & Wang, 2013). However, the number of mothers with children under 18 years of age who prefer to work full time has increased from 20% in 2007 to 32% in 2012 (Parker & Wang, 2013).

Le and Miller (2013) were interested in satisfaction with time allocations within the family. Their results emphasize “the importance of expectations and benchmarks to a person’s satisfaction with the household division of labor” (Le & Miller, 2013). They suggest that time data can enhance “our understanding of the way decisions over time allocations are made within the family, and the roles that family type and children can have on this decision making” (Le & Miller, 2013). According to Pew Research Center’s analysis of government time use data, mothers and fathers appear to feel differently when engaged in the same activities and also spend their time differently (Wang, 2013). In 2010, fathers with children younger than 18 years old spent per week an average of 41 hours at paid work, 28 hours in leisure-related activities, 10 hours with household chores, and seven hours in child-care activities (Wang, 2013). This compares to mothers whose time was more evenly distributed, having a weekly average of 23 hours of paid work, 24 hours of leisure-related activities, 17 hours of housework and 14 hours of childcare (Wang, 2013). Mothers and fathers not only differ in the time allocation of household work and childcare but also in the types of activities they engage in (Wang, 2013). For instance, mothers tend to do more physical, managerial and educational activities with childcare than fathers, while fathers have the most involvement with recreational

activities (Wang, 2013). When it comes to household chores, mothers engage in more cleaning and cooking, while fathers are more responsible for household repairs and maintenance (Wang, 2013). In addition, how parents spend their leisure time differs, with fathers spending more time watching TV or playing sports and mothers engaging in more social activities (Wang, 2013). The ways in which time is allocated and responsibilities are delegated is valuable information regarding this study's interest in balance. It demonstrates that there are gender differences in the patterns and beliefs of balance including how time should be spent and on what.

Another area of belief is that women operate relationally in both work and non-work realms. Research demonstrates that women have a relational orientation from which they view their roles and decisions (Holmes et al., 2012; Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) examined the specific domains of work and family, positing that women's orientation toward roles and preferences change depending on life circumstances. This demonstrates that possibly for females', the balance of personhood and parenthood is continually being adapted. Women are being found to "blend" their work and non-work lives, integrating the multiple aspects of their lives to inform their decisions about career development. Furthermore, events that alter the life stage, such as birth of a child, trigger changes in a woman's orientation towards work and family roles. This indicates that a change in one context creates changing preferences across all contexts (Holmes et al, 2012). The men in Mainiero and Sullivan's (2005) study appeared to follow a "linear career path," tending to follow "traditional career paths associated with one industry." What appeared to be a main distinction between women and men was that the women were creating careers on their terms, "blending and integrating rather than

segregating the work and non-work facets of their lives, while striving to obtain greater job challenge and personal fulfillment” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). This relates to data provided by Pew Research Center that reported fathers valued high pay and mothers valued flexible scheduling in regards to job importance (Parker & Wang, 2013). This may possibly emphasize that balance is found when life facets are blended for overall fulfillment. It is important to note that the non-work needs identified by woman were not just childcare concerns but “encompassed many needs including the quest for spiritual fulfillment and the need to be true to oneself” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). As one female participant explained, she wanted to “accept the challenge of a new career but also wanted to put more of a balance in her life, with adding more time for family and friends” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). The goal is to attain personal fulfillment, balance and to nurture oneself. For women, the concept of career cannot be separated from the broader understanding of context, “in their model, family and context are more broadly defined as the set of connections representing individuals who deserve consideration as a weight in the decision, each with their own needs, wants, and desires that must be evaluated as parts of the whole” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

Mainiero and Sullivan’s (2005) research highlighted cultural standards regarding gender roles and the expectations of women and men. They discuss women’s relational orientation noting that women consider others within their decisions, caring for immediate and extended family (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Representing a caretaker role, which can cause interruptions in lifestyle, plans, career decisions and ability to achieve balance. Males on the other hand, have traditionally fulfilled the role of provider, which encourages a linear career path that emphasizes stability and security. This path

may be supported through the absence of disruptions that women commonly respond to and report having throughout the lifespan. As noted by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005), the men in their study tended to keep work and non-work realms separate and appeared able to do so because “the women in their lives managed the work and non-work issues” demonstrating culturally enforced gender responses and roles. Men’s careers commonly demonstrated an orderly theme of “challenges first, concerns about self, then a later focus on balance and others” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). Findings showed that the male participants came to value relationships more once they achieved professionally, making different sacrifices that meant having to pick and choose how to benefit the family system. One father recounted “I found... balance means making choices. So I picked a few things I would participate with (soccer, scouts, vacation)” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005). This straightforward orientation and purpose representative of men may be very instrumental in understanding personhood and parenthood from a more atomistic level rather than from a holistic level commonly found among women. This current study may find that fathers have specific purposes among their roles that may be interconnected but in a different way than how mothers view role integration in seeking balance. Even though this study is acting in a gender-neutral manner, what may become apparent is that fathers and mothers have opposite perspectives regarding balance and how personhood and parenthood are represented in one’s present. It is important to clarify that this study doesn’t differentiate by gender. However, as a researcher an open mind is being kept to the differing possibilities, as to not deny varying experiences. This study will help provide an understanding of whether gender is neutral or there are differences through investigating individual stories.

Chapter III: Method

A phenomenological approach was used to investigate the phenomenon of balancing personhood and parenthood. A qualitative method has been selected because the focus of this study is to explore the unique perspectives and accounts of the lived experiences of parents. In trying to understand this balance, research has to be conducted in an exploratory way, in order to capture the essence that is felt and experienced by the individual. The aim is to “clarify situations that are lived through by persons in everyday life” (Smith, p. 27), and by demonstrating the journey and approach of parents in its raw form as it appears out in the world. First hand experiences were collected about how balance is created and under what conditions it exists. This is done by exploring how and if personhood is maintained in parenthood, does personhood change in parenthood and how a person balances the energies of personhood and parenthood. By taking this approach, “the subjective world of the participant” (Smith, p. 46) was experienced and connected to the similar encounters of others. These descriptions can possibly provide insight on how the unique balance between personhood and parenthood relates to individual and familial well-being.

As in all methods of inquiry, the phenomenological approach to research has its strengths and limitations. It is a holistic perspective, fueled with intentionality and curiosity. The “primary advantage is that it permits an explicit focus on the researcher’s personal experience combined with those of the interview partners. It focuses on the deep, lived meanings that events have for individuals, assuming that these meanings guide actions and interactions” (Marshall & Rossman, p. 148). It is a method that ties together the past and present to develop a cohesive story. The face-to-face interaction

between researcher and participant allows for verbal and nonverbal behavior to be communicated and for complex interactions to be articulated. The in-depth personal accounts expose insights and nuances relative to the essence of the phenomenon.

Phenomenological research can be limiting in that there is the potential for preconceptions on the part of the researcher. In this method of inquiry, it is important for the researcher to be self-aware and cognizant of their own experience in order to be completely open to new material without becoming fixated on specific details. This process also requires the cooperation, honesty and openness of everyone involved, with the need for a degree of commitment. The researcher also needs to be interpersonally skilled and able to facilitate a dialogue with the participant, as well as creating a comfortable interviewing atmosphere.

Research Focus

This study explored the topic of balance with parents, what it means to them and how they have found it. Parenthood is not gendered in that both mothers and fathers have this experience and are impacted by it. Both mothers and fathers experience transitions and effects in personhood and parenthood throughout their life cycle.

Participants

Participation was open to both mothers and fathers who reported that they found balance between personhood and parenthood and had an interest in the topic being researched. There were seven individuals in this study and the participants included mothers. No participants were screened out or dropped out of the study.

Inclusion Criteria

Participants were parents in American culture, who were 26 years or older. Participants were of varying ages, and parenting experience, but had been parents for a minimum of three years (or more) in order for them to have had enough time to deal with the parenthood, personhood, and balance issues. No specific age range was specified because “parenthood and parenting shape life experiences and have significant effects on psychological and physical well-being, over the life course” (Umberson et al., 2010). Umberson et al. (2010) discuss that focusing on a specific age group can restrict understanding “how parenthood shapes life trajectories in meaningful and lasting ways, as well as how certain key transitions and contexts may alter life trajectories” (Umberson et al., 2010). Exploring various age groups and considering the life course perspective is important because it “provides a way of thinking about and analyzing the impact of parenthood on well-being throughout adulthood, through the cumulative advantages and disadvantages” (Umberson et al., 2010).

Exclusion Criteria

Parents who fell in the transition aged youth range (18-24 years) were not included because research has shown early transition to parenthood, has been associated with factors that might undermine well-being in the short and long term (Umberson et al., 2010; Booth, Rustenback, & McHale, 2008). For instance, Hofferth, Reid, & Mott found truncated educational and work opportunities, as well as increased marital instability due to early parenthood (As cited by Umberson et al., 2010). Several studies found an increased risk for depression and activity limitation later in life (Umberson et al., 2010; Spence, 2008), and depression especially when it occurred prior to age 23 in both men

and women (Umberson et al., 2010; Mirowsky & Ross, 2002), and men experienced a monotonic increase in benefits the longer they delayed their first child, while women experienced increased benefits from age 23-30 (Umberson et al., 2010). Furthermore, “parenthood provides costs and benefits for adults’ well-being, and the balance of costs to benefits reflects structural demands, resources, and tensions that further depend on one’s position in the life course” (Umberson et al., 2010). Individuals in the Transitional Aged Youth range may or may not have fully established adult lives, since they are still in a stage of continued development for adulthood. Certain levels of individuation and steps to reaching adulthood are still in the process of being achieved and integrated.

Exclusion criteria also included individuals who have auditory or visual handicaps, had recently experienced a major life stressor (such as a divorce or death), are a part of a clinical population or being treated for a significant medical or psychiatric condition, parents of children with significant cognitive and physical disabilities, as well as anyone who expressed minimal interest in the topic being studied. These individuals were excluded for several reasons including: 1. Such life stressors will create confounding variables that may impact one’s current experience or perception and/or be generalized to one’s entire experience of parenthood rather than circumstantially, 2. The stressors may impact the recall and interpretation of past experiences, 3. They may make a participant more vulnerable to incur negative results from participation, and 4. These circumstances can impact one’s ability to achieve the type of balance being explored in this study. Furthermore, parents of children with disabilities are excluded due to the increased challenges that these parents incur on a daily basis, which are not the focus of this study.

Recruitment

Participants were recruited through various methods. One of the methods included distributing flyers (See Appendix A, Recruitment Flyer). Flyers were made available at yoga studios, small gyms, local bookstores, and libraries in Long Island, New York. Recruitment methods also included word of mouth and the snowball method. The snowball method utilizes interested participants' ability to recruit others' whom they think may be interested in participating in the study.

The flyers stated that a study was being conducted about balance and well-being in parenthood and how and if parents balance personhood and parenthood. Each ad included an email address to contact the researcher and explained they would receive a response within 24-48 hours of their inquiry.

Data Collection

Once individuals emailed their interest to participate, they received a confirmation email (See Appendix B: Email Notification of Participation) with the choice of various times for a phone screening. This email also informed participants that they would be forwarded a Description of the Study (See Appendix C), with an attached questionnaire to complete prior to the interview (See Appendix D, Informational/Demographic Questionnaire). The phone screening included the questions asked on the questionnaire to determine the participant's appropriateness of fit for the study. The Informational/Demographic Questionnaire asked about: age, gender, current location of residence, employment status, marital status, duration of parenting, age at first child, number of children they parent, whether they had incurred a recent loss or significant life stressor, any medical, psychiatric conditions or auditory, visual handicaps, and if their

children had any significant physical or mental disabilities.

Participants were also asked in this screen to comment on their level of interest to participate and contribute to the focus of this study, as well as for an initial reflection on their interests and hobbies, how they define themselves and what personhood and parenthood means to them (how they would define them). In addition, on the hard copy of the Informational/Demographic Questionnaire, participants were left a space to include anything else they wanted to mention. At the end of the screening, those participants who met the inclusion criteria and were an appropriate fit for the study were scheduled for a face-to-face interview. They were also encouraged to email any thoughts, questions or comments that they had prior to the interview.

The interview involved a brief introduction by both the interviewer and participant to build some rapport. It was vital that the participants felt comfortable, especially since emotions and memories were likely to be discussed. The participants were given an explanation about the duration of the study, how it would progress and were provided with an informed consent form to read and sign (See Appendix E). The informed consent form notified the participants that they could exit the study at any time. The interviewer made sure that the participants understood the conditions of the informed consent form and answered additional questions.

A semi-structured interview (including main and supplemental questions) was administered that took approximately 60-90 minutes. However, the participants and their experiences directed the shape of the interviews. A sample of the interview questions can be found in Appendix F. At the conclusion of the interview, a debriefing was conducted to inform participants that if they wanted they could review their information prior to the

final product. If a participant expressed interest in the results from the study, they were emailed a finished summary.

Data Analysis

During this stage of the study, the researcher found meaning units within each of the participants interviews. Themes were extracted that were present among all the participants' descriptions and experiences, and interrelating themes across interviews were identified (Creswell, 2009). Information that related to the main focus of the study was noted. For the purpose of clarity, an example of a meaning unit and of a theme that might be utilized in this study is provided. An example of a meaning unit could be "making time," "coordinating," "prioritizing." The corresponding theme to these meaning units could be "having a schedule," "engaging in shared activities" or "planning family nights and adult nights."

Ethics

Involvement in this study could have both potential benefits and risks to participants. Some benefits may include learning more about the role that balance plays in life and developing a new awareness about the experience of personhood and parenthood. Participants may have re-experienced wonderful memories which were associated with specific activities and uses of time. Participants may also have learned that they can use their roles and interests to enhance their parenting and self-care. The results of this study can provide benefits to our understanding of parental needs and the issues or challenges that parents experience which impede, disrupt, or restrict them from obtaining successful balance. Through learning and exploring how parents have achieved balance, themes can be identified for further investigation to provide more

generalizability, which can inform development of parental support and educational programs. The implications of this study can further enhance the abilities and understanding of those who work with parents. As a result, by better assisting parents and recognizing their needs, their families and children's needs can also be better served and addressed.

Some risks include provoking the memory of sad experiences and times of negative emotions. Certain memories or topics may have brought participants back to a time when they lost someone, were sick, angry, or hurt. They may have been reminded of periods of time when they experienced distress due to challenges in transition to parenthood or when balance was lacking in their lives. They may have remembered a part of themselves from the past that brings sadness. There is no guarantee what type of emotional experience the discussion brought up for someone, however, these risks were minimal and therapeutic referrals were available for individuals whom needed further assistance following participation to process their experience.

Research Summary & Questions

The perspective taken in this study, as previously mentioned, is that balance means one has integrated their roles and identities of personhood and parenthood. As a result, the individual does not feel conflicted in their roles, by operating as separate and distinct entities that pull in different directions. Rather, it is an integrated sense of self, operating in a complimentary and related fashion. Exploring this concept of balance, will hopefully demonstrate the choices that parents make and through making these choices they experience a greater sense of well-being. It results in defining the experience of being a parent in modern adulthood (or their experience of modern parenthood). Research

questions explored the lived experience of how parents allocate balance, and documented parent's unique stories of adaptability, creativity and flexibility. Several questions guided this exploration including:

- Does personhood change in parenthood and/or how is it present in parenting?
- How is balance created and under what conditions does it exist?
 - o Is it always present and consistent or intermittent and situational?
- Does the unique balance between personhood and parenthood contribute to individual, couple and familial well-being?
- Does personhood change parenthood?
- What is the lived experience when a person becomes a parent?
- How does a person balance the energies of personhood and parenthood?
- How do parents know when they have found that balance?
 - o Does your balance affect your partner's balance?
 - o How does having balance impact your relationship, the couple?

Chapter IV: Results

Demographics

Seven participants were included in this study. All were females, between 32-64 years old. Six participants were Caucasian and one participant was Asian. Six participants were employed and one was unemployed. Of the six employed, four participants were full-time and two were part-time. Six of the participants were married and one was divorced. The approximate duration of parenting was a mean of 19 years and the participant's age at birth of first child was a mean of 28.5 years. Cultural and religious background information was not included in the demographic information reported by participants.

Overview of Findings

The participants indicated that they all had considerable experience with finding balance between personhood and parenthood. They all worked to obtain this balance and all desired and valued having achieved balance between personhood and parenthood. Five major themes emerged from the data of how they balance personhood and parenthood in their lives. The following themes describe balance as a fluid state that requires interaction on the individual and collective levels. They also highlight the strong relationship between balance and well-being as highlighted by the participants. The five themes include: (a) support and resources; (b) maintaining personhood; (c) intermittent and situational; (d) awareness and desire; and (e) balance precedes well-being.

In addition to the themes, some general trends became apparent and are worth noting prior to describing the themes in detail.

General Trends

Several general trends were found. These include: participants' definitions of identified terms, self-definitions, hobbies and interests, and completion of a Venn diagram. Participants' were asked to define Personhood, Parenthood, Role Balance, and Well-being, in order to prevent any type of influence or biasing from occurring.

Commonalities were found in how participants view and understand these terms. This information can potentially be useful in developing standard definitions in the future.

Figure 4: Common Definitions as Described by Research Participants p.79, presents the combined version of the participants' definitions.

Term	Definitions
Personhood	Learning to be the best person you can be. Knowing yourself, who you are and how you see yourself. Being an individual with interests, values, and passions that sustain you and keeping those interests, keep yourself.
Parenthood	An important, "monumentous" role. Being the best parent you can be and being outside of yourself. Taking care, nurturing, and being responsible for others.
Role Balance	Not being totally immersed or consumed by any one thing. Recognizing and taking care of your needs and having time for yourself.
Well-being	A state of balance that reflects physical, emotional, and psychological health. It is accomplished by doing different things in your life, feeling whole and grounded.

Figure 4: Common Definitions as Described by Research Participants

Part of the demographic information obtained included how participants' define themselves and the hobbies and interests that they engage in. Several commonalities were present in their self-definitions. Participants highlighted that they defined themselves by their purpose and roles, such as family (mother, wife and friend),

profession, as well as by descriptive characteristics, such as being helpful, thoughtful, creative, and loyal.

It is also worth noting that participants' all have a variety and multiple of interests. These interests fell under categories of cultural, family, athletic, creative/artistic, and outdoor activities. Commonalities across participants included: five participants mentioned exercise/athletics; four participants described creative activities/projects; four participants reported traveling; and four participants reported spending time and doing activities with family. Other common hobbies were reading, music/concerts, home design/decorating, and gardening. What appears clear is that participants have many passions and interests.

Participants were asked to complete a Venn diagram at the end of their face-to-face interview. Several trends emerged in how participants conceptualized and completed the diagram. This information will be further reviewed in the Discussion section that follows but the Venn diagram given to participants is presented in Figure 5 p.82 below. This Venn diagram is the compiled version of all diagrams completed by participants. Overall, each of the seven participants believed that well-being, family, and the couple all belonged in the middle, overlapping section of the three circles. This indicates that these aspects are important to and involved in personhood, parenthood, and balance. There is also a reciprocal relationship between well-being, family, and the couple and the functioning of personhood, parenthood, and balance. Other common components that participants placed in the middle section included friendships/social support (4 out of 7), hobbies (2 out of 7), time (2 out of 7), and health (2 out of 7). Commonalities found in Circle A were: Personhood, included personal interests (i.e. creativity, volunteer and

exercise), career, and other family roles (i.e. daughter, sister and caretaker). No commonalities were found in Circle B: Parenthood, and in Circle C: Balance, commonalities included mindfulness, alone time, and self-care.

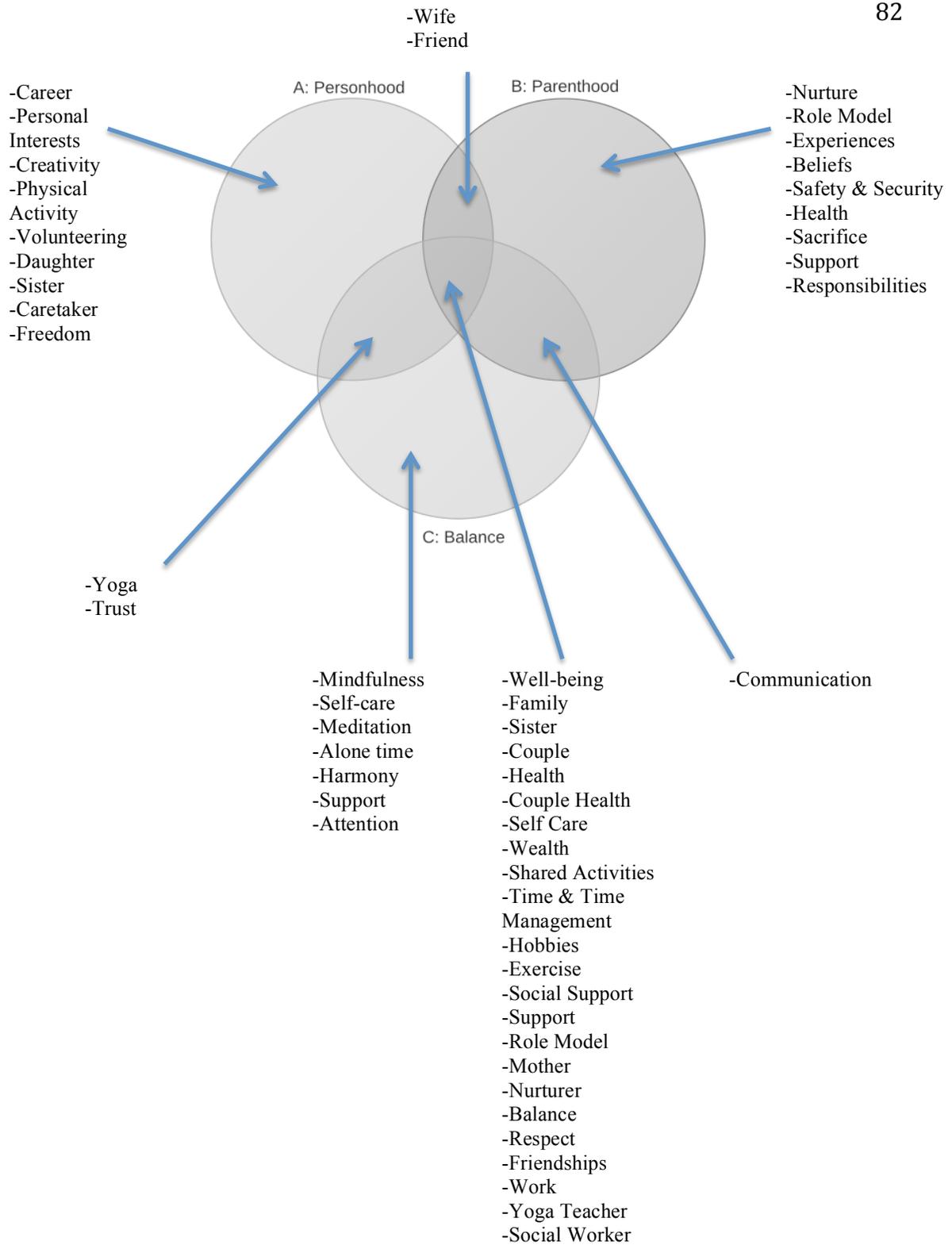


Figure 5: Venn Diagram Completed by Participants

Themes

Support & Resources

“A supportive husband, supportive children, but also good friends. Good friends are great for well-being, and family is a big thing... friends, family, my mother and my sisters, those are all things that help, definitely important to well-being.”

All seven participants supported and continually emphasized the first theme “support and resources” in their interviews. The results indicated the need for connectedness and how vital it is for both personhood and parenthood, as well as for obtaining balance between the two. Participants reflected on the need for connectedness through exploring their interpersonal supports and resources, as well as financial resources. Four types of support were found to be most important for achieving balance including, partner, family, social, and community support. The types of support varied in importance given each participants individual circumstances. However, support overall was critical for participants to have balance between personhood and parenthood.

It is important to note that participants discussed two components that are key in support being effective and helpful in contributing to balance. These are openness and communication. Participants discussed reaching out to others and knowing when to ask for help; being open about what’s going on and communicating what they need to operate at an optimal level. One participant noted, “The communication is key, of course. You can say that but sometimes it's really hard to do. Super hard, yeah. I could be feeling one way and not truly voice how it is but it boils over into how you're behaving. Just the look on your face, just anything and children are the most receptive beings and it boils over and they see it and feel it immediately.”

Partner support

“Couplehood contributes to the balance because it’s easier to balance your life if you have a partner in it with you.”

Participants continually identified that having a supportive partner was crucial. All seven participants highlighted the couple as a major component for balance between personhood and parenthood. Specifically, participants stated that maintaining the couple, sharing responsibilities, the length of the couple relationship, and the strength of the couple relationship appeared to contribute greatly to balance and well-being on the individual, couple, and family levels. Four participants also identified that it is important that their partners have their own personhood and individual interests, and this contributes to their balance. Individual and couple balance was related to maintaining the personhood within and of the couple. One participant shared:

“Having a good relationship, doing fun things together, enjoying one-another, enjoying the quiet moments, enjoying the vacations, enjoying the family. It's really important, I would say, for your well-being and parenthood, to have a good partner. It's like a soul mate, it's just somebody who is just like, you can say nothing, you can say a lot, you can just ... I mean we've been married 40 years, so he's like a part of me. We don't even have to say anything; we don't even have to talk for a week. It's just knowing someone. I think it's really important to well-being and parenthood both and balance. Also we don't put any demands on one another. We don't have to be together. He has his interests, I have my interests.”

Participants discussed the necessity of having a supportive partner. “My husband was such a great co-partner that he was always there, if something happened. If I got held up in traffic, I got stuck in a meeting or something like that, I always knew they were in the

best hands. I never had to worry.” A supportive partner was characterized as someone who divides the workload and shares responsibilities; someone they work together and problem solve with. Having a supportive partner allowed participants to have time for themselves and their personal needs and interests. As one participant reflected, “I think that's imperative to have a good partner. I think my husband was very good that way, to allow me to create balance. In fact, I went back to school recently and he was very instrumental in helping me with the kids and things, so I think that's very important, again, to have a partner that is helpful and who wouldn't expect me to do all the traditional roles.” Similarly, another participant discussed how a supportive partner encourages personal decision-making. Support generates a sense of freedom and respect to make individual choices. This participant highlighted that freedom and support to make decisions is an important part of personhood. She provided an example about changing careers, which was significant for her and her family. She explained having to factor everyone in but needed to make this decision for herself. “But I did, I totally felt supported...But that was really important. I think the freedom to make decisions and not feel like because I'm a parent or because I'm part of a couple, I can't make that decision.”

Another participant resonated, “I think the parents have to be really tight because that creates the harmony for the children. If we weren't as in love as we were and could trust and depend and be loyal for one another, then nothing else would ever survive.”

Similarly, another participant spoke to the importance of the parental unit, “Yes, as long as the parents are on the same page and everything is understood about, you really have to talk about the day before. I mean it's important to talk throughout the day.”

Couple-continuity and maintaining the couple was also identified as important, which six out of seven participants verbalized. “I think that the couple needs, we needed our downtime alone. You can’t ever forget your personhood within a couple for your parenthood. We had a responsibility to the personhood of our couplehood. That involved downtime alone, physical satisfaction and really intellectual discussion and fun. The personhood balance was very dependent on the couplehood for me, for us.” Participants acknowledged that sometimes the couple time was sacrificed or was the area that was most compromised. However, they identified that those times tended to be when balance was not functioning optimally. Specific to couple time, was having continuity and keeping interests that the couple had pre-parenthood. One participant stated “We make sure that we get a babysitter pretty often and go out. We make plans to go to concerts. We keep our life very much intact.” Another participant discussed how important it has been to reconnect with her husband, “for the first time like we’ve reconnected and found... we have so many similarities and hobbies together that we’ve been able to reconnect, especially with this house.”

Another aspect of partner support appears to be the length of the couple’s relationship. Six out of seven participants had been with their partners for a significant amount of time prior to becoming parents. This was discussed as important because it related to couple strength, confidence, trust, and understanding. The amount of time together helped to develop a good sense of well-being and balance as a couple, which impacted the balance on the individual level. “We have a pretty good sense of well-being as a couple. I think that’s something that time has brought. We’ve been together for a long time.” “We were really together as a couple for 10 years before we had a child.”

Family support

“Family is huge. Our family is all here and they’ve helped tremendously, so my in-laws or my mother. I don’t know how we would have done it without her.”

Participants identified that beyond a supportive partner, having a supportive family is crucial. Family support was indicated on the nuclear and extended family levels. Extended family support contributes to balance by assisting in time management. Having available family members to watch the children, gave participants personal time, as well as giving the couple time to do things outside of parenthood. Family support was also identified as important due to it providing another way of experiencing connectedness. Family provides an opportunity for learning, guidance, relating, and communicating. One participant discussed how valuable her mother’s support has been: “It’s the most important thing. I find that other women who don’t have that mother figure are kind of... there’s a loss of their sense of self. You can get lost so easily and without the mother figure being a very permanent part of your life, it’s very hard to go forward with having a family. My mother has been such a statue. She is right there every second.” Being open and communicating with family creates these benefits and the dialogue is essential in reducing misunderstandings. One participant mentioned that “being able to talk about things” with the family provides support and contributes to balance by creating a “big family bond.” Similarly, another participant discussed how having a lot of time and dialogue as a family allowed a bond to form, which created additional support and foundation. Furthermore, a third participant discussed how openness and communication with the nuclear and extended family “helps to maintain balance even when one of us is off.” It appears that clarity and understanding on the family level allows for more support

and balance, which is powerful because family strength and cohesion is a major building block for overall balance and well-being.

Social, community, and work support

“Outside support is so beneficial.”

The other major component of support addressed by all participants is social support, having relationships with others in the community whether it is with friends, neighbors, or at work. Participants identified the need to maintain friendships but also the need to socialize with those who have similar experiences as them, like other parents. By interacting with other parents, participants found that this contributed to balancing personhood and parenthood because it satisfied those needs on both ends. That type of socializing or social environment provided the connectedness that they need as individuals but in a way that involved parenthood and included their children. One participant described it as, “I have developed these relationships with these women and men over time, and for some of my friends, as my children have grown, so did theirs, so we all have more time... We all support each other. We'll watch each other's kids. You can have that kind of a thing.”

Another participant explained that when she became a parent, none of her friends had children. In order to fulfill her need to socialize, she made “mom friends” to satisfy the social aspect for both personhood and parenthood that contributes to balance. “She was older than me, but she was great. We had kids the same age and we had the best time together.” Similarly, another participant stated that, “I believe socialization is important and I've met other mothers through going out a lot. I met one of my best friends through going to the bookstore and her daughter being there and then our daughters talking and

then we did play dates. It was hand in hand.” Furthermore, five out of seven participants mentioned that creating balance was connecting with those who have similar interests, which allowed them to take care of themselves while also taking care of their children. This created an experience where they could attend to multiple needs simultaneously. Another participant identified how important it is to have a social group that is healthy and positive. She explained having to create new avenues for socializing due to her existing group becoming unhealthy. “You have to find a good group... you need a social outlet but you need a positive outlet... it’s been hard. That’s when I found what I really like to do. I’ve got a tennis group, I’m spinning... I take hot yoga... it’s just such a positive group of people to just be yourself and have fun in a social way. Doing something that’s beneficial for yourself.”

Participants also discussed the value of community support, which includes neighbors and the greater community. One participant stated, “If the woman, if the mother is not whole and caring for herself, the family falls apart.” She continued on to explain how community support in terms of school and camp programs was monumental because “it gave me space to reflect and think and understand what’s going on.” Three participants identified how childcare impacts balance in a positive way because it is a support and resource that enables time and freedom. Three participants also highlighted knowing when to ask for help and specifically when to seek professional help (i.e. psychologist). They explained how obtaining professional help was instrumental in their well-being and balance. One participant stated that “life is a learning process, it’s amazing but you just have to function through it” and explained how therapy was a support that helped her to find and reconnect with herself after having children. Another

participant mentioned that reaching out to others enabled her to learn from other's experiences, "I really benefited from her learning curve, and that was just such an amazingly helpful experience."

Participants also identified the importance of having a supportive work environment. Six out of seven participants reflected on the importance of flexible scheduling, and having an understanding boss. One participant described her work place as "an extremely supportive, family friendly agency," and as a result "considers work to be part of my balance. I love my work, and I feel very balanced." Similarly, another participant discussed that one of her conditions for balance is a flexible job, supportive work environment, and "a good boss, someone who is understanding if you have something at the school or something that you need to go to, a function." Both of these participants specifically felt that work support was so important because of the amount of time they spend at work, and their careers were identified as a big part of their self-definition. Another participant said that she was able to negotiate with her boss for a "four-day workweek as opposed to a five-day work week." She explained that she "did not want to work much more time than she was at home. It wasn't just for the well-being of my children, it was also for the well-being of myself." Having such supportive people and environments facilitates balance because there is space and opportunity for flexibility.

Participants indicated that additional support and resources include financial and economic status. Three out of seven of the participants specifically discussed the importance that wealth and financial stability play in supporting balance and well-being. Participants overall did not speak significantly to financial status and they were not asked

about their economic status in the interview. However, no participants identified finances as problematic or as an area of concern that was impeding their ability to achieve balance.

Maintaining Personhood

“I think some people totally overhaul their lives when they have kids and I definitely made it a point not to do that... and then I think she was an addition to me, it was a new me but it definitely kept my goals and priorities still going.”

The second theme is termed “maintaining personhood” because participants described that retaining the self and having self-continuity from pre-parenthood was vital for their balance. Across all seven participant accounts, they voiced the critical importance of having something separate from parenthood that was theirs. Whether it is interests, hobbies, goals, or employment, participants highlighted how important these additional activities are for balance and well-being. Activities engaged in include creative, physical, social, professional and intellectual endeavors that are separate from the parenthood role, which help to maintain the individual and to keep personhood present. These activities provided self-continuity from pre-parenthood and helped to prevent participants from neglecting themselves, keeping them aware of their needs. For instance, one participant stated, “You have to succeed on a personal level. You have to have goals for yourself and there’s goals for your family life.” Participants described needing to stimulate their minds outside of parenthood, and needing to be more than a parent, but a person with interests and goals. As one participant put it, “When I first had my children I didn't have my degree, and I felt horrible about it, very ashamed of it. I'm a parent, and I'm a parent without a degree.” Another participant stated, “There’s a need to succeed in life other than being the caretaker of just children... I think you can never lose sight of the personhood because in the end you’re by yourself... you have to define your

personhood. You have to have some agenda there. If you were just all about parenthood your entire life, what are you when your kids move across the country and have their own lives?”

Beneficial effects of healthy time apart

“Embrace it, you have to embrace your own time in order to better everybody else's lives.”

Maintaining personhood in parenthood is important because, as described by participants, they could view the self as separate from their children, which facilitates balance. One participant explained that “Yes, she's [my daughter] very important to me but she's not ... she understands that she's not the only person in my world. It's frightening some kids don't know that about their parents. They do think that they're the center of their parents' world. I talk to her [my daughter] a lot about it, about like, "You're a person and I'm a person and I'm happy to help you, and there are things that I'm responsible for but there are definitely things that you're responsible for, as well." Another participant explained “some parents they get so involved with the parenthood that they lose some of their interests and I think that’s important for your sanity in a way to still keep hobbies and passions...because I think part of having a fulfilling life is still having interests within yourself.”

It is important to note that employment and professional interests was an area valued by all seven participants. Employment was viewed and described as important and separate to personhood. However, participants identified that employment also can significantly impact parenthood. As a result, work is an area that was considered by participants as a role that is both separate and combined for balance in personhood and parenthood.

Having something separate from parenthood not only maintains personhood but it also provides the opportunity for breaks. Participants described that getting and taking breaks is healthy and prevents them from becoming consumed with any one role.

Participants explained that you cannot lose personhood because parenthood can be very consuming, and can easily overhaul your life. “Keep it mindful that you need to have balance in your life, because it can consume you, parenthood. Especially as they get a little older, there is a lot of activities and things and you’re doing a lot of juggling. You have to be mindful to keep balance in your life and keep doing things that interest you and keep your personhood.”

Participants also verbalized that having breaks from parenthood changed the purpose and meaning of their time with family. Breaks created a new perspective, which invited them to have more quality time with their families, because they weren’t “burnt out” or totally consumed. As a result, the time spent with their children was very focused and inclusive. They found themselves attentive and present, rather than distracted and drained. One participant described “my time changed and that when I came home from work, I dropped everything and was with my children from that minute on, didn’t even change my clothes until it was time for me to go to bed. When my children went to sleep is when I’d have to do my extra work and that went on for 23 years that way. But when they were awake, I was their mom. Work did not enter into it.” Participants highlighted that time together and apart for the family is necessary for balance. As stated by one participant, “I think time together and apart definitely creates balance. And then I always make sure that my time together with my child is quality time.” They considered time apart as necessary because it facilitated differentiation, and was seen as healthy for both

the parent and child because it created the opportunity for exposure on the part of the child to see their parent in a different way and as a role model. In addition, another participant described how having a career and separation created not only quality family time, but also changed the meaning of vacation. “When we went on a vacation with a couple, the woman’s a stay-at-home mom and she just wanted to put her kid in the child care thing and we were different, we’re like we want to spend the, we want to share the experience with our kids. Now this is a week where we have them and she was just so burnt out from being with them all day.”

Sharing personhood

“I had a voice and I think I gave my kids voices to stand up for themselves and to not be afraid to take risks and chances and when things are tough to go for it anyway.”

Maintaining personhood for balance was accomplished in part by participants sharing their personhood with their family. Sharing personhood not only created conditions for quality, shared time and activities as a family, but also was an opportunity to instill values, and ethics. For example, one participant explained, “I feel that I’m a very positive, energetic being and I love to always try new things, do new things and have my children explore, to learn and have them do hands on things on their own.”

Furthermore, participants indicated that sharing personhood provides exposure and experiences for their children. This contributes to participant balance because it creates a context where they can blend their roles of personhood and parenthood. During these times, participants can be a different role model, bringing what they have learned in personhood to parenthood, which provides an opportunity to connect and interact with their children in a different way. Six of the seven participants indicated that parenthood focuses on generating and developing personhood in their children. Having a personhood

that they could model and share enabled them to facilitate that process in their children. Participants indicated because they valued having a personhood for themselves, they also valued that for their children. “I think timing and time apart helps to create balance and I think it’s good for the kids also, because it helps them to develop their own independence and their own personhood. Like I’m not a person as a part of my parent, I’m a person on my own.” This participant further discussed that she balances the energies of personhood and parenthood by “I just do as much as I can. I always try and remember what’s important to me... I try to give [daughter] those experiences so that she can make her own road but also have the experience that I think are important.”

Participants found that developing a personhood in their children is done through exposure, experiences, role modeling, and instilling values. One participant discussed, “if you have your own identity as a personhood and you’re balanced within that and you know who you are, you’re not lost in somebody else’s idea of who you are, you have your own agenda as a person, then you’re a strong role model... I felt I was a strong role model. I had values and I had ethics... I feel that I could champion my kids’ causes and I could be respectful of them and supportive of them because my whole life wasn’t just my kids; I had my personhood.”

Another participant further supported this idea saying, “Your personhood is going to affect your parenthood. We’re open minded, so if there’s something that we’re not interested in and she is, of course we would encourage that for her to do... Definitely now they’re getting to be at the age that they’ll verbalize if they don’t like something. The best example would be when I was little, I took a lot of dance so, of course, I put my girls in dancing school right away. Getting them out a lot. I believe in experiences as far

as happiness, socializing, doing lots of things rather than sitting and watching TV. I'm more about going out and doing things.”

Participants also stated that part of sharing personhood and being a role model meant being flexible in their personhood without compromising their values. They indicated that you must maintain self-continuity while also engaging in continued personal growth.

“You have to, in the beginning it's like you acclimate to, who am I going to be as a parent and a person and so not as just a person. I don't think it changes your core values if you look at personhood, as like, this is who I am, I don't think that changes. I think just maybe the way you go about it is a little bit different.” All seven participants supported the notion of having a willingness to be open and to grow for themselves and their children. They all demonstrated a willingness to continue developing as a person and being capable of adapting given the situation to positively impact the entire family unit, which as a result affects balance. One participant stated, “I consider myself a very open person and I think as a parent you have to be very open. You have to be willing to change. You have to be open... I read every book I could and I went to classes and I had to really think about each situation. As each situation came along, I had to say, Okay, what are we going to do? How am I going to handle this? How do I have to change? I just don't think that you can be rigid.”

Another participant stated, “I think you go in with what you think, and then you have these children, and, to me, it's all about goodness of fit. I did not match with my son, and had to become in some ways a different person ... Not a different person, but I had to completely change my parenting style with him, and I had to ... That does have to do with personhood, because a lot of the time it went so against who I was and who my natural

inclination to be. It took an enormous amount of work for me to be able to be the best parent for him, because of his nature.”

A third participant explained that her personhood impacts her parenthood, “in the sense that my willingness and my consciousness to keep evolving myself as a person and keep maturing as a human being, not only I think elevates my ability to parent, but it also shows my kids that their parent is willing to do their own self inner work themselves. Not only does it benefit them because I try to come from a very calm, neutral place as I parent them. They see their parents working on themselves, working on trying to take care of themselves and also being there for their kids at the same time. Trying to find that balance I feel like it's intertwined... Personhood does affect parenthood from the side of me parenting and also how my kids see me as a parent.”

In addition, participants indicated that personhood becomes a defining aspect of parenting and their style and perspective in parenting. This happens as a result of sharing and exposing their personhood (i.e. interests, hobbies, values, lessons, etc.). But more than that, what emerged was that parenthood is part of personhood. One participant specifically stated this when asked to define parenthood, “part of personhood... ever evolving.” Six of the seven participants supported this concept, relaying through their descriptions that as a parent you fully bring personhood into parenthood or parenthood becomes an extension of personhood and part of this balance that is created is done through integrating roles. One participant specifically defined role balance as “combining personhood and parenthood, so that you’re not totally immersed in caring about your kids and give you yourself.” This participant went on to describe that balance, “I wouldn't say it's just time but also like creating an understanding with your kids, that we have time

together and we have time, like there are times where I say to [my daughter], why don't you take a book and read and I'm going to take out a book and read, and that's something that I value and it's something that I want her to value. Just having that understanding that we're going to share this time together but you're going to read and I'm going to read and that's going to be separate.”

Another participant explained that for her integrating roles were not only necessary but also fluid and fulfilling, “I think my children grew up with me in school, and then getting the first job. I liked that role, and I relished it. I loved in that role. The single mother working and going to school. It was a great role. I liked my kids being a part of it.” This participant went on to further highlight that “I think I'm a social worker wherever I am. I'm never not. I don't know if the job found me, or I found the job, it's who I am, more than my job.” She explained how who she is as a person, as a mother, and as a professional is very much an integrated way of being and how she naturally operates. What several participants indicated was that personhood is present in parenthood and both parenthood and personhood are present in profession-hood. Six participants described this concept of integrating person, parent, and professional.

One participant explained it as, “some of the roles that I perform are very much like parenthood on a professional level because there's not the love involved professionally but there's the role modeling and there's the ethics and values that I demand professionally as far as the loyalty goes and a level of education and a level of performance. I subtly demanded that from my children too, because I did have a schedule... There's the care taking and the love. There's the admiration and respect on both. There's always the positive reinforcement so it's very similar, the things that my

personhood wants to achieve and my parenthood wanted to achieve, only there's just so much more at stake with my parenthood... I never thought of it that way, but it's the way I work, is the way I try to be as a person in general. The ethics I try to work by and train people by are similar to the way I would've raised my kids. There are ethics and there's values." Similarly this participant is highlighting that her roles are very intertwined, and a natural way of being. Her demands and standards in personhood are the same for parenthood. She has expectations and, as a result, personhood and parenthood are in sync, wanting to achieve the same things.

Balance is Intermittent & Situational

"I think balance is created ... Especially when my children were younger, it was created on a day by day basis, and more a minute by minute basis, depending on what it was going on."

The third theme identified by all seven participants is that "balance is intermittent and situational." Participants described constantly negotiating balance and believing that balance is fluid. There appears to be many aspects and contingencies to balance and according to participants' experiences balance is easily influenced. One participant related it to the expression "you're only as happy as your unhappiest child." Participants specifically explored how balance is created, the conditions under which balance exists, and how they know when they've found balance.

Conditions that promote and create balance

"Balance is always something individuals have to strive for, you have to strive for balance emotionally, economically, and playfully, in work and home."

There are certain conditions under which balance exists and can be created, as reported by participants. General components commonly identified by participants

included: prioritizing, scheduling/planning, time, making choices, ages of children, flexibility, support system, and financial status. Each of the conditions that promote balance are very interrelated and reflect circumstances that encourage time for the self and allow the individual to nurture themselves in the roles they choose to fulfill and occupy.

“Sometimes literally when things would happen, I would have to go, okay, this is a priority. This isn't.” Every participant discussed having priorities; prioritizing what is important and prioritizing their time. One participant described it as “I had to cut out things in my life, I was cutting out the people in my life...I just realized I had to prioritize my time and the people I was with... I realized my job, my partnership and then my kids were the three things that I had to center on to create balance.” Participants highlighted having to schedule for themselves and their families, developing skills for planning and time management. Part of time management and prioritizing reflected being flexible. “For me it's a lot about constantly looking at my schedule, my kid's schedule, my family's schedule, what are the priorities... What are the things that we cannot change, that are musts. What are the things that are question marks, and what are the things that we definitely don't need.”

Participants also discussed that they prioritized to maintain their personhood. This was accomplished through combining tasks of parenthood and personhood. For example, one participant mentioned that she started to include her child in activities she engaged in for herself and for balance, like exercising. She discussed planning her daughter's naptime around her runs and would run with her daughter napping in the stroller. Time is also a condition for balance and having the time to do things for oneself. One participant

stated, “To get your hair done. To get your nails done and those things that fall on the wayside that make me feel good about myself, or going to the gym, or working out.” Another participant described maintaining herself as a condition for balance through, “If I’m working on myself as a person, like the ability to just again learn from my mistakes, be conscious, take the time, self-care, I feel like that energy, that’s exerted into that naturally and is going to float into the parenthood aspect of it.” Participants discussed having to make choices for themselves and their families to help achieve balance. Having a support system helps with this, as a sense of freedom is generated in feeling supported to make decisions and difficult choices that can impact the entire family.

As mentioned previously, participants highlighted how socializing with other parents is a condition for balance because it allows one to take care of themselves and their needs while also taking care of their children while having time together in a shared activity. Through merging roles, balance can be created. One participant explained that socializing with other women who have children allows you to “have a friendship with them while your kids are playing. I think it’s nice to do a lot of that as well, play dates and things. Now you’re creating balance that way. You are getting fulfillment out of socializing with other women and also women that have similar interests.”

Age of children was also identified as a component for creating balance. Participants recounted how different age groups and stages of development have unique benefits and challenges in regards to time and independence. Overall, participants agreed that as children age, the more independence and freedom the entire family experiences. Scheduling and time restraints change as children age and become involved in their own activities, which impacts flexibility. When children are younger, they are more dependent

and time consuming and as they age they become more independent and require more scheduling and planning around activities. Participants indicated that even with adolescence, the supervision doesn't change but the type of dependence does.

Sense of Balance

“Finding the balance is really about finding yourself and your needs and dedicating time, whatever it is to you.”

Participants reported that certain dynamics are indicative of balance and these are the times when they know they have achieved balance. Participants indicated that they experience balance when they are having fun and doing things and having time for themselves. The results appear to demonstrate that balance relates to when one is feeling good about themselves, paying attention to their needs and fulfilling them. One participant reflected on a time when she felt unbalanced stating, “It's a trial sometimes because I always felt so balanced but when there are all these distractions, it's very hard because you lose yourself. It is really tough to try and find yourself again. For me, I think it's for everybody, I felt I was just spilling myself over for everyone but myself. I was just selfless. I did nothing for me. I couldn't sleep and I didn't allow myself to sleep because I felt like there was always so much to do.”

Several participants addressed having balance as experiencing this overall sense of content; feeling at ease, relaxed and not flustered. One participant described having balance, as “you feel content for the most part, even if it's just in your personhood... I don't want to say happiness, because it's not. You're not always happy but it's a contentedness with yourself and who you are and where you're at and what you're doing and I think it's the same thing with parenthood. If you're happy with who you are as a parent. I think if you're generally happy with how you interact with your kids and content

with what you're giving them and the environment, then I think that's balance." Another participant described it as "when things are working... when you feel like you always have a communication... makes life a lot easier, it's just smoother having balance. You're in a good frame of mind... good head set, everything's doable and everything's approachable." Another participant explained that balance is a "state of well-being or happiness, you feel good and not overwhelmed or stressed, content." "When you feel happy with everything that you're doing." Not when you feel you're doing anything because "you feel you have to, or if you feel someone is forcing you to do it."

Awareness & Desire

Balance is "definitely created through an awareness that it needs to be created."

The fourth theme "awareness and desire" was chosen because it summarizes the participants' efforts to achieve balance through being aware and mindful of seeking balance in personhood and parenthood. This theme is comprised of several aspects including, acknowledging imbalance, recognizing personal needs, and the importance of occupying multiple roles.

As described previously, participants identified constantly negotiating balance. "You have to recognize that you need the balance and then you got to figure out how to get it in order to go forward and do it." Consciousness and wanting were additional conditions that participants identified as balance promoting. "You've got to want to be/feel balance... under that condition balance can happen. You have to want it, you have to be conscious of it." Participants reflected that an important part of wanting and being aware of balance is also recognizing when there is imbalance. "I feel like finding the

balance means that you got to first be able to look to see where the imbalances are... what's not working.”

Another part of the awareness described by participants was their cognizance of their own needs. Participants explained that when their needs were being met and attended to, they experienced balance. As one participant verbalized, “When I am at my best, it's much easier to be the parent that I want to be, and it actually rubs off on my kids.” Another participant discussed that for her, “a willingness to recognize that you need to take care of yourself before you take care of another” is role balance. She further provided an example that best highlighted what she believed stating, “on an airplane they tell you to put your oxygen mask on first before you put your child's on. It's the same thing as when you're caretaking as a parent.”

Participants overall demonstrated that in order to have balance you need to want it and if you want it then you must understand when you don't have balance. If you are aware of what you need and can satisfy those needs then you can begin to negotiate and work for balance.

Multiple roles

“I think you have to work to create balance. It doesn't come naturally.” “That's what I think is balance, when you can do things for yourself. To me it's not balance when everything is my family. Everything is focused on one thing. When I can do other things, that's to me balance and well-being.”

Being cognizant of personal needs and wanting to fulfill those needs was also reflected in the participants' descriptions of occupying multiple roles. Having multiple roles and not being consumed with one role was continually discussed as related to balance. By being aware of ones needs and meeting them to create balance was satisfied by having role involvement outside of being a parent. Participants acknowledged that

certain roles appear to fulfill certain needs, as well as certain roles are considered more for personhood than parenthood and vice versa. However, participants also highlighted that some roles fulfilled needs of both personhood and parenthood. Just as balance is viewed as fluid, it appears that the roles and needs they fulfill are also fluid to an extent. As a result, there appears to be a separating and blending of roles to fulfill needs as a person and/or as a parent. Experiencing such need fulfillment through having multiple roles is significant for balance as described by participants. One participant explained it, as “You have to realize that it's important for you, if it is important to you, to make time for those other things. I realized from my personhood, that it was important for me to do other things besides parenting...I needed something else to define me besides parenthood. Whether it was a job that I did or to do the volunteer work at the school. That was important for me to feel good about myself.”

Participants explained how any extreme is unhealthy, and the benefit of having multiple roles is that one doesn't get consumed in one role so that something else (usually the self) doesn't get neglected. “I think part of having a fulfilling life is still having interests within yourself. Whether it be working or just, whatever interests you had before you became a parent, it's important you have those... even working I think is good balance because then you're getting away from the parenthood and you're socializing with adults.” This participant further reflected on how having something separate was critical for her, “me going back to school that's going to give me more balance. I'm going to school, I'm sitting in a class, stimulating my mind rather than doing everything with the kids.”

In addition to occupying multiple roles, merging roles was also highlighted by participants as valuable for creating balance. One participant explained that merging roles means, “who I am is at one time a parent, a mom, a working mom.” Another participant discussed that while her career is for herself, it also fulfills parenthood in some regards because “it strengthened that role as well.” This participant explained how her career develops and stimulates her as a person but also teaches her things for parenthood. This idea of blending roles where one’s occupation is for personhood but also impacts the way one parents was described by six participants. One participant explained how multiple roles leads to balance and more enjoyment in her roles, “if you’re home with your kids all day, it can get draining, I think. Whereas when you’re working, you come home and you’re so happy to see your kids and you’re more enthusiastic to do different things with them. You know you’ll have a certain amount of time, so you’ll do things like more activities with them whereas if your home all day maybe your, I have so much time with them, I can’t...”

Balance Precedes Well-being

“I think well-being and balance go hand in hand. Just again, of doing all different things in your life. Balancing it out with work or your interests. Going out with your spouse. Socializing, with people.”

Theme five has been termed “balance precedes well-being” and was supported by all seven participants. Participants described the relationship between balance and well-being as going hand-in-hand. They indicated that you need balance in order to have well-being and when you have balance, than you have a greater sense of well-being. It was further indicated by participants that balance and well-being have wide reaching effects. They described that well-being tends to permeate the entire family.

One participant stated, “I think that if you're balanced, you have a better sense of well-being because you're healthier. You're not as stressed, you're more balanced, you're more at ease and you don't have those crazy knee-jerk reactions where everything seems like an ordeal or big deal. I feel like when you're balanced, your well-being is better. That would be the order because I feel like, if you had good well-being, if you're healthy, I think you would probably need the balance. Then you would be balanced too. I think you need to figure out where the balance is first, in my opinion, in order to have good well-being.”

Another participant explained, “I think you have to have balance to have well-being. Any extremes in any area is not good... in parenthood, specifically well-being and balance, again, it's definitely necessary not to just lose yourself in parenthood and not forget who you are and just get totally consumed by your kids... but as a couplehood as well. Go back to things that interest you before you were parents.”

Participants' described that their individual sense of balance and well-being impacts the families functioning and can generate more balance and well-being on the family level but also for each individual in the family. As described by one participant, “When everybody is balanced in the household, everybody is healthier, nobody is sick, or nobody is extra tired, or nobody is extra cranky... Because we're balanced, I feel like my kids are healthier, a better sense of well-being. If I'm feeling balance everybody else is feeling the same way then. Everybody else is feeling relaxed, and at ease and not flustered.”

Another participant explained that she believes there is a “huge connection” between individual and family well-being and balance. “If I'm not in a good place,

everybody knows, everybody knows. I really believe in taking full responsibility for whatever your stuff is, so you got to own that, and it's very annoying." Similarly, another participant stated, "It creates a better balance with everybody, a better connection. It's just a better sense of everybody and we're linked together to be able to sit and look at each other with no turmoil."

Another participant discussed that having multiple roles leads to more balance and fulfillment in her which in turn impacts her family's well-being, "It was more to, like even work, which is a balance if you have a career. You come home and you can talk about work you can talk about... it definitely impacts, I think you're happier and that's also going to affect kids."

Another participant described that when she experiences a state of harmony (i.e. creative harmony), this leads to an increased state of well-being. She also discusses that for her, health really impacts her ability to experience balance and well-being. "When I'm happy I feel I can juggle a lot of balance in my life. If I get a buzz from being creatively fulfilled or I feel the compassion from my partner on a daily basis, I know that I can create balance in any given situation if I'm feeling healthy. If I'm feeling sick, that's another story. I have to wait until that sickness is over and that's just a physical thing."

The in-depth personal accounts provided by the participants exposed insights and nuances relative to the essence of modern parenthood and obtaining balance. The findings that emerged represent the intricate and subjective nature of the parenting experience. As demonstrated in the five themes presented above, the experience of personhood, parenthood, balance and well-being is subjective. However, what is also

highlighted is that parents share commonalities among their experiences and require similar tools and conditions to benefit and thrive.

Chapter V: Discussion

“Balance is truly created from having a sense of balance within.”

Parents are constantly negotiating balance by considering and weighing their needs and those of others. This study sought to explore the lived experience of how parents negotiate parenthood, specifically how they balance personhood and parenthood. The intention is to bring awareness to the experiential part of parenting. In this study, five themes emerged from the participants’ exploration of how they balance personhood and parenthood: (a) support and resources; (b) maintaining personhood; (c) intermittent and situational; (d) awareness and desire; and (e) balance precedes well-being.

Venn Diagram & Term Definitions

As previously mentioned, participants completed a Venn diagram (see Figure 5, p.82) as part of the interview. Several points are worth noting in addition to the information provided in the Results section. The circles in the diagram are not meant to be static in size and also may not be equal in size since balance will shift relative to individual circumstances. These circles are also likely to change and develop throughout the life span. Participants supported both of these ideas, conceptualizing that each of the circles may be bigger or smaller at certain times or at a different stages of development. Participants reported that ideally the circles would be as is. However, in reality, the circles would not be equally distributed.

Three participants believed that balance would not be presented as a circle in this way. Two of these participants placed balance as an overall circle, which encompasses personhood and parenthood. What this means is that as a parent one needs personhood and parenthood to have balance and, in turn, balance is necessary for well-being in

personhood and parenthood. The third participant thought balance wouldn't have its own circle and believed that the third circle would be couplehood rather than balance. Balance for her would be placed in the middle overlapping section between personhood and parenthood. She also contemplated whether balance would also be the title of this Venn diagram. She explained that balance within these areas of personhood, parenthood and couplehood is what generates well-being for her.

Participants combined definitions of personhood, parenthood, role balance, and well-being previously noted in the Results section (see Figure 4, p. 79), that require further exploration. Participants individually function and adapt in their roles and experiences. However, the commonalities present among participants' definitions demonstrate a shared understanding and belief of what it means to be a parent and a person, and to have balance and well-being. Similarly, the researcher's understanding of these definitions, as stated in the Introduction (p.16-21), also shares commonalities with the participants' definitions. These shared conceptualizations provide valuable insights about how these experiences and roles are delegated and internalized, which can be useful in working with parents and families systemically.

Implications

This study has several implications. It appears that humans strive for a state of equilibrium naturally and obtain balance through significant effort and awareness. It is important to mention, that the individuals who participated in this study demonstrate personal strengths to be open and honest and have initiative for continual self-growth.

An important implication of these findings is that balance contributes to and is necessary for well-being. States of balance and well-being are closely related to one's

physical, emotional, and psychological health, which demonstrates that balance and well-being should be viewed through a holistic and multi-systemic perspective. This resembles the Kaleidoscope Model (Maniero & Sullivan, 2005), as well as Bronfenbrenner's (1994) social ecological framework. These perspectives posit the importance of understanding the human experience as integrating multiple components. They recognize the systemic nature of people's experience and how they view and integrate themselves and their roles.

Individuals require purpose and meaning, which is accomplished through engaging in multiple social roles. Involvement in various roles and positions, in turn, fulfills the important human needs of connectedness, competence, and autonomy. This cycle promotes balance and establishes the foundation for well-being. The current findings show that parenthood becomes one more role embedded in this sequence. Participants indicated that sustaining and further developing personhood in parenthood facilitates balance and ultimate well-being. As noted, parenthood may truly be an additional role to one's personhood, but due to its all-encompassing nature can inhibit the expression of one's personhood. Thus, self-continuity has been documented as important for balancing personhood and parenthood. Parents, specifically mothers from this study, appear to balance these two dominant roles through support, resources, awareness, desire, maintaining personal interests, and self-care. What also appears clear from participants' accounts is that finding a way to compliment and integrate the roles of personhood and parenthood contributes to balance because one's needs are met simultaneously.

The study findings suggest that there are many contingencies to balance and there are several conditions under which it exists. Balance appears to be an experience that one must desire and work for. It is fluid and as a result, it is intermittent and situational.

Overall, balance appears to depend on flexibility and adaptability on the part of the parent, which reflects a quality or characteristic of their personhood. Balance is also facilitated by establishing and utilizing support networks.

The findings of this study suggest that there are many elements involved in creating balance. The balance between personhood and parenthood at times requires the individual to integrate their roles and at other points find separation in their roles. These results support the Kaleidoscope Model's (Maniero & Sullivan, 2005) description of the multi-systemic view that women take to make work-life decisions. The participants in this study reflect that view, since balance means arranging roles to create clear patterns that support decision making for need fulfillment, self and couple continuity, and family cohesion. Being able to blend and separate roles may be indicative of complementarity and self-continuity, which demonstrates that no conflict exists between aspects of themselves. "Self-continuity involves knowing and experiencing that we are, in a fundamental way, the same person over time" (Bluck & Alea, 2008). In this context, participants are drawing from both personhood and parenthood to operate in the current moment. Having this sense of self, allows them to make decisions in such a way that their roles can be in sync. These findings illustrate that the self is pervasive among roles. Participants indicated that who they are as a person is present both in parenthood and professionally. What they bring to all three contexts is the same and as a result something learned in one role is brought into the other, enhancing their overall experience.

On the note of professional work, participants provided important and interesting insights. Participants overall appeared to value employment and vocalized the benefits and enjoyment derived from being working mothers. More specifically though,

participants indicated the value of workplace support and flexibility; identifying that it impacts functioning and the ability to experience balance and well-being. Participants highlighted that workplace support and flexibility included aspects such as being family friendly, and encouraging healthy lifestyles and habits. These indications demonstrate the responsibility of the workplace to respond to the needs of their employees and to provide an environment that facilitates the many roles that their employees fulfill. The workplace ideally needs to recognize that parents need support and accommodations to optimally manage and orchestrate their lives in order for balance and well-being to be experienced. These participants indicated that they enjoyed and respected their jobs possibly more so due to the support and flexibility they were given. These findings may be helpful for program development and employee assisted programs as well as for future research conducted in these areas.

In addition, these findings reflect that engaging in multiple social roles benefits the individual, which supports the previous literature. As indicated by Sirgy and Wu (2009), satisfaction is derived from engagement in multiple life domains and balancing multiple roles rather than a single domain. Frisch (2006) identified sixteen areas or life domains including: work, recreation, standard of living, physical health, self-esteem, philosophy of life, learning, creativity, helping activities, love relationships, friendships, relationships with children, relationships with relatives, home, neighborhood and community (See also: Sirgy & Wu, 2009). Participants in this study, at some point in their interview, identified or insinuated that all of these domains are part of and/or contribute to balance for personhood and parenthood. Marks and MacDermid (1996) highlight that “finding

ways to organize multiple tasks and activities in a balanced, nonhierarchical fashion” (as cited in Nomaguchi & Bianchi, 2004), is necessary for role balance.

Engaging in these multiple roles and domains is not only important for balance but also for well-being. As indicated by previous research, balance contributes to subjective well-being because it helps to fulfill both survival and growth needs (Sirgy & Wu, 2009). These developmental needs, as well as the needs of connectedness, autonomy, and competence were highlighted in participants’ accounts. Fulfilling these needs is necessary for balance and well-being in personhood and parenthood because it addresses the individual systemically – as separate and as a part of the whole. The individual and collective can become integrated. One participant stated, “Heal yourself, heal your child.” This statement is very demonstrative of the importance of connectedness, competence, and autonomy needs. Parents who care for themselves can identify, understand, and meet their personal needs. They are aware of and engaged in their own interests and individual growth, which creates a sense of competence and autonomy. This phrase also relates to a sense of connectedness in that caring for the self helps in caring for others, and being able to sufficiently develop interpersonal closeness.

Furthermore, results of this study strongly illustrate the essentiality of the couple. Just as self-continuity is significant so is that of the couple. Participants, in their interviews, continually addressed couple continuity and strength, as well as partner support. It is clear that having relationships and support as well as feeling connected and aligned with others is fundamental for fulfillment, balance, and well-being.

The results from this study can be applicable and useful for programs that support parents. Such parent programs can strengthen the type of support and services provided

for parents to improve their well-being and that of the family. For example, programs may want to offer more education and guidance around personhood, and conditions for balance and well-being. Parents learning how to nurture and fulfill their own needs will only better prepare themselves to care for the needs of their children and family. The information derived from these results may be particularly beneficial for prenatal and pre-parenthood services.

Limitations & Recommendations

This study has both limitations and recommendations for future research and clinical practice. A limitation of this study is that it's inclusive. Participants included only females, since they were the interested individuals who responded during recruitment. Due to the participant population representing a specific demographic, these results cannot be generalized but appear to be unique to a population of educated, employed, married, Caucasian females. Restricted recruitment could also be seen as a limitation. The researcher's geographic location, as well as the recruitment sites used may have impacted access to potential participants. A final limitation is that participation in this study required time and effort. Participants demonstrated a level of commitment and interest. All participants, to some extent, had to be accommodating with their schedules.

It is also important to note that participants had optimal conditions and it is not known if balance could be achieved in less than optimal conditions. It is important for future research to address what other conditions are needed versus conditions that make obtaining balance challenging.

This research is a small, specific piece for additional research to build upon. Future research should focus on incorporating fathers and their first-hand accounts with

personhood and parenthood balance. This is significant given the implications provided from the current results, specifically around the couple. It would be valuable to see how fathers' lived experiences and perspectives compare to that of mothers'. These findings are important for future research conducted on parents and couples; the value of the couple relationship, continuity, and support, and how it is integrated in parenting. This study may have implications on how personhood and parenthood and the accomplishment of balance impact couples and as a result be predictive of divorce. This concept poses several questions: If a couple with children cannot achieve balance and as a result well-being, will the ultimate result be divorce? What are the effects of divorce on personhood and parenthood and how is balance reestablished for each party? If personhood is lost does this create an atmosphere of discontent and possibly depression and again result in the failure of couplehood and possibly parenthood? The overall implication of failure to achieve balance and well-being needs to be investigated.

An additional avenue that future research can take is how parental balance ultimately impacts children. Research can explore the long-term results of children from families that are balanced and whether there is an overall sense of well-being. Research can address how these children develop academically and emotionally and if they are more successful at each stage in their development. Longitudinal studies of balanced families should be undertaken.

Finally, studying the changing definition of balance and well-being in different cultures and societies may prove fruitful in a melting pot population such as the United States. Research can examine whether a culture or minority society within a larger society has different expectations of parenthood and what are the psychological and

sociological implications for that country. Further research should also explore if balance and well-being differ for parents and families of different socio-economic and racial backgrounds, as well as for those who have medical and/or mental health conditions.

This study can also be useful for current and future parents, in clinical practice, and for helping professionals who develop parent education and provide support services to parents. The findings indicate how necessary it is for the individual parent to fulfill and nurture their own needs. However, in order to do that, a parent must understand what their needs are and know how to address them. If a parent can do that, they can better fulfill and understand the needs of their children and family. Also relevant for parents and helping professionals, as highlighted by participants, is the essentiality of communication. Having effective and open communication is necessary for balance and well-being, especially with support systems including: couples, family (nuclear and extended), social, work, and community.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore parents' experience of balancing personhood and parenthood. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with seven participants who shared their personal accounts with parenthood and how they have facilitated and achieved balance within the different aspects and roles in their lives. Using a phenomenological approach, five themes emerged: (a) support and resources; (b) maintaining personhood; (c) intermittent and situational; (d) awareness and desire; and (e) balance precedes well-being. The implications of the findings have been discussed and connected to the impact for further research and clinical practice.

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Figures

Figure 1: Venn Diagram Components

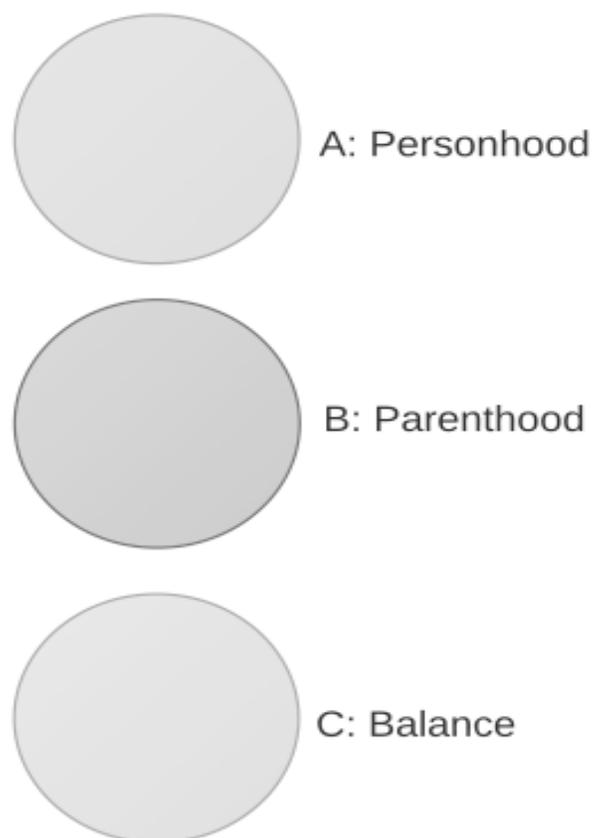


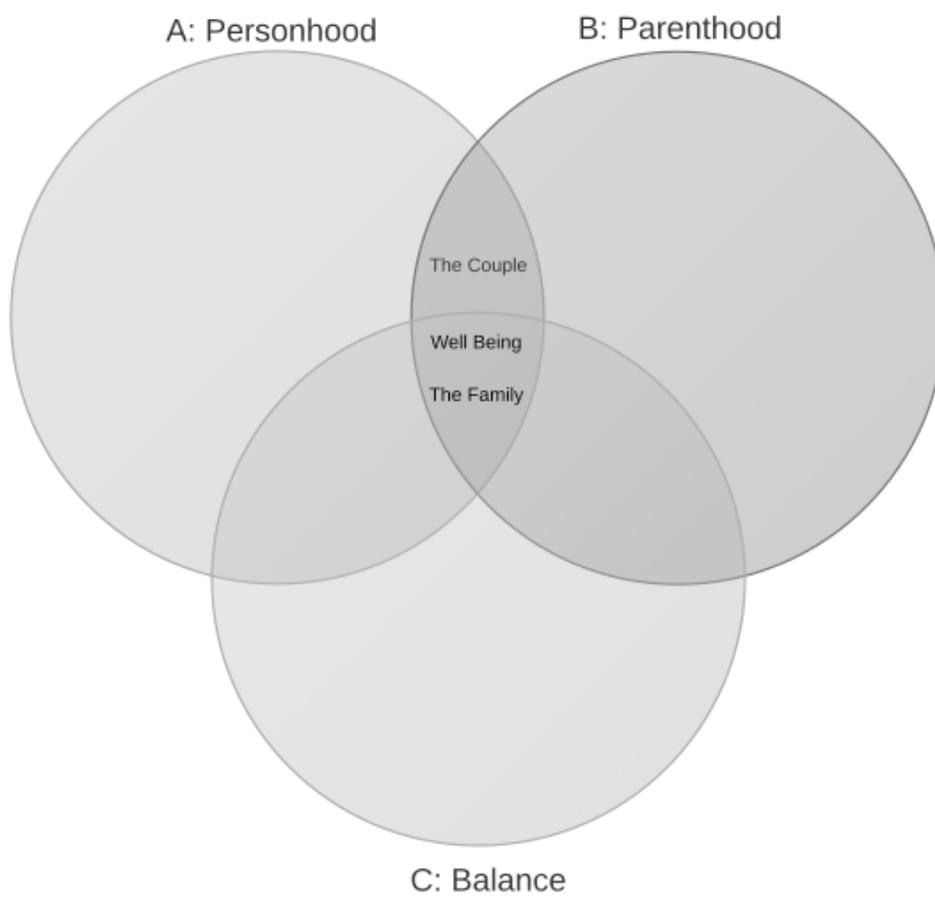
Figure 2 : Venn Diagram Complete

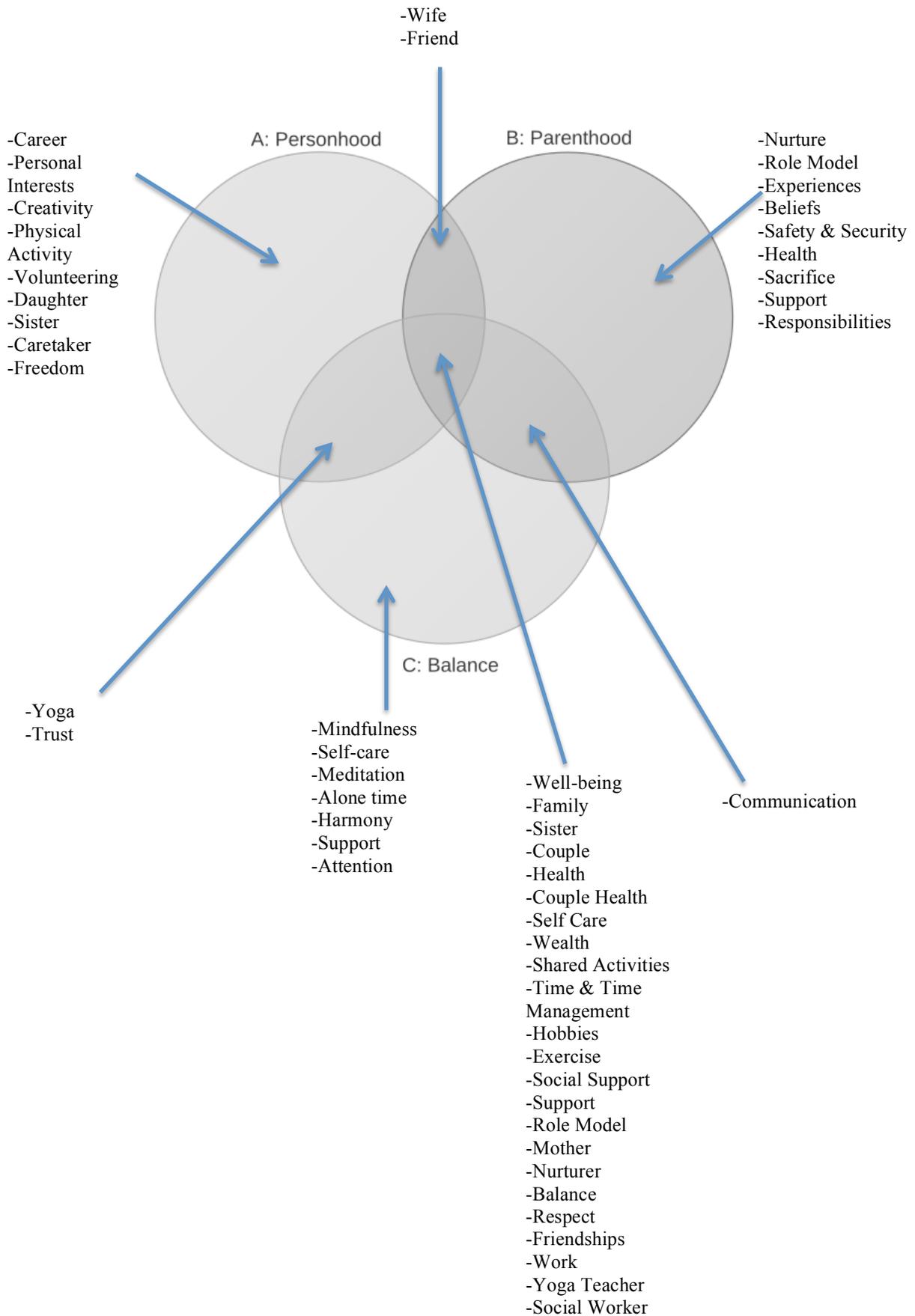
Figure 3 : Derived from Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Model of Human Development (1994)

Microsystems	“A pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical, social, and symbolic features that invite, permit, or inhibit engagement in sustained, progressively more complex interaction with, and activity in, the immediate environment. Examples include such settings as family, school, peer group, and workplace” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 39).
Mesosystems	“The linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person (e.g., the relations between home and school, school and workplace, etc.). In other words, a mesosystem is a system of microsystems” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).
Exosystems	“The linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not contain the developing person, but in which events occur that indirectly influence processes within the immediate setting in which the developing person lives (e.g., for a child, the relation between the home and the parent’s workplace; for a parent, the relation between the school and the neighborhood peer group)” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).
Macrosystems	“Overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture or subculture, with particular reference to the belief systems, bodies of knowledge, material resources, customs, life-styles, opportunity structures, hazards, and life course options that are embedded in each of these broader systems. The macrosystem may be thought of as a society blue-print for a particular culture or subculture” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).
Chronosystems	“Encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives (e.g., changes over the life course in family structure, socioeconomic status, employment, place of residence, or the degree of hecticness and ability in everyday life)” (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, p. 40).

Figure 4 : Common Definitions as Described by Research Participants

Term	Definitions
Personhood	Learning to be the best person you can be. Knowing yourself, who you are and how you see yourself. Being an individual with interests, values, and passions that sustain you and keeping those interests, keep yourself.
Parenthood	An important, “monumentous” role. Being the best parent you can be and being outside of yourself. Taking care, nurturing, and being responsible for others.
Role Balance	Not being totally immersed or consumed by any one thing. Recognizing and taking care of your needs and having time for yourself.
Well-being	A state of balance that reflects physical, emotional, and psychological health. It is accomplished by doing different things in your life, feeling whole and grounded.

Figure 5 : Venn Diagram Completed by Participants



Appendices



Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer

ATTENTION ALL PARENTS!

Are you 26 years of age or older?

Your Participation Is Needed!

I am a Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology at Antioch University Santa Barbara. I am seeking interested participants for my dissertation study.

I am conducting a study about parental balance and well-being in modern parenthood. This is an explorational pursuit of the parental experience with a specific focus on how parents balance personhood and parenthood.

Conditions for Participation:

You are a parent who is 26 years of age or older.

You have been a parent for a minimum of three years.

You believe you have found balance between personhood and parenthood.

You are interested in participating!

Please contact the researcher at the email provided below, and expect a response within 24-48 hours following your inquiry.

Thank you for your interest in participating!

Research Email: XXX



Appendix B: Email Notification of Participation

Thank you for your interest in participating!

Participation in this study requires you to complete two steps:

1. Phone Screening & Informational/Demographic Questionnaire (Duration: 30-60 minutes)
2. Face-to-face Interview (Duration: 60-90 minutes)

Below please choose from the various times provided to complete the phone screening. Please respond via email or by phone with your chosen time.

Date/Time

Date/Time

Date/Time

Prior to completing the phone screening you will receive a description of this study via email. Included in that email will also be an Informational/Demographic Questionnaire for you to complete prior to the phone screening, so it can be reviewed at that time. The purpose of this phone screening and review of Questionnaire is to determine level of interest and appropriateness of fit for participation. Dependent on the information obtained, at the end of the phone screening participants will be scheduled a face-to-face interview.

Thank you again for your interest in participating and for providing your time and effort. I look forward to speaking with you!

Venice Bruno, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate, Clinical Psychology
Antioch University, Santa Barbara



Appendix C: Description of Study

You are invited to participate in a research study on parental balance and well-being in modern parenthood. The focus is on how parents balance personhood, parent needs, and parenthood; exploring the personal experience of the parent. This information can be useful for current and future parents, and for helping professionals who develop parent education and support services to parents.

I am conducting this study as a Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology at Antioch University, Santa Barbara.

Your participation entails two steps:

1. Completing a phone screening with myself to determine level of interest and appropriateness of fit for participation. During the phone screening we will review the Informational/Demographic Questionnaire provided to you prior to the phone screening. This step will take approximately 15 minutes.
2. Face-to-face interview with myself. This includes a semi-structured interview that will approximately take 60-90 minutes.

Please feel free to email any questions or concerns that you have. These can also be addressed during the phone screening and throughout the course of your participation. I can be reached via email at XXX.



Appendix D: Information/Demographic Questionnaire

This Questionnaire is used to determine each participant's appropriateness of fit for this study. It is also to obtain general demographic information. Please complete the areas below.

Age:

Gender:

Current Location of Residence:

Employment Status:

Marital Status:

Duration of Parenting:

How old were you when your first child was born?

How many children do you have? How many children do you parent?

Have you incurred a recent loss or significant life stressor?

Do you have any medical, psychiatric conditions?

Do you have any auditory or visual handicaps?

Do any of your children have any significant physical or mental disabilities?

Please comment in the space provided below on your level of interest to participate and contribute to the focus of this study.

Please describe any hobbies and/or interests that you have.

How do you define yourself? What defines you?

What does personhood and parenthood mean to you? How would you define them?

Do you believe you have balance in life?

Please provide any additional comments, thoughts or questions you have.

Face-to-face Interview Appointment: Date/Time/Location

Please bring this hard copy to the face-to-face interview.

Thank you!

ID: _____
For Official Use Only



Appendix E: Informed Consent

You are invited to participate in a research study on parental balance between personhood and parenthood. This information can be useful for current and future parents, and for helping professionals who develop parent education and support services to parents. I am conducting this study as a student of Antioch University Santa Barbara.

Your participation entails two steps. First is completing a phone screening with myself, which will determine appropriateness of fit for participation in this study and participants level of interest. The phone screening will take approximately 30-60 minutes. Included in this first step will be completing an Informational/Demographic Questionnaire that will be provided via email prior to the phone screening. The second step is a face-to-face interview with myself. This includes a semi-structured interview that will approximately take 60-90 minutes.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time. Your responses and participation will not be disclosed to anyone outside of this study, and no identifying information will be included in the results. There is minimal risk anticipated in participating in this study.

It is important to note, as a Doctoral Candidate in Clinical Psychology, I am a mandated reporter. What this means is that there are several circumstances that would require me to break confidentiality. Such instances include occurrences of child, elder, and dependent adult abuse and/or neglect, as well as any communication of serious threat of physical violence against one's self or another.

Should you experience any discomfort or distress as a result of participation, need additional information, have any questions, or want to withdraw your responses, please contact me, Venice Bruno, M.A., at XXX / XXX or my advisor, Sharleen O'Brien, Psy.D., at Antioch University, Santa Barbara, 602 Anacapa St., Santa Barbara California, 93101, XXX.

If you agree to participate, and want to have your information included in this study, please sign in the space provided below that you understand your rights and agree to participate.

Signature of Participant

Date

***NOTE:** No reward or incentive is being offered or promised to participants of this study.*



Appendix F: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. Tell me about becoming a parent?
 - a. What is the lived experience when a person becomes a parent?
 - b. How did your time change?
 - c. Did your roles and/or identities change?
2. Define: Personhood, Parenthood, Role Balance, & Well-being
 - a. Participant may return to these definitions at any point during the interview to add or edit these responses/definitions.
3. Does personhood change in parenthood and/or how is it present in parenting?
 - a. What are your experiences or what have you experienced?
4. Tell me about creating balance?
 - a. How is balance created?
 - b. Under what conditions does it exist?
 - c. Is it always present and consistent or intermittent and situational?
5. Tell me about well-being and balance:
 - a. Individual
 - b. Couple
 - c. Familial
6. Does personhood change parenthood? Does personhood change:
 - a. Your style and/or perspective in parenthood?

- b. How you parent?
7. How does a person balance the energies of personhood and parenthood?
 8. Do certain roles fulfill certain needs?
 - a. Which roles do you consider personhood and/or parenthood?
 9. How do parents know when they have found that balance?
 - a. Does your balance affect your partner's balance?
 - b. How does having balance impact your relationship, the couple?
 - c. How does having balance impact the family, family relationships and dynamics?
 10. Please complete the Venn Diagram provided below, what would be included in each of the designated areas?
 - a. Would you have labeled the areas differently?
 - b. Where would you place the couple, family, and well-being?

