



Hipatia Press  
www.hipatiapress.com



Instructions for authors, subscriptions and further details:

<http://mcs.hipatiapress.com>

## **The “Mask of Masculinity”: Underreported Declines in Male Friendship and Happiness in the United States**

Jessie Klein<sup>1</sup>

1) Adelphi University, United States of America

Date of publication: February 21st, 2013

---

**To cite this article:** Klein, J. (2013). The “Mask of Masculinity”: Underreported Declines in Male Friendship and Happiness in the United States. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 2(1), 20-50. doi: 10.4471/MCS.2013.20

**To link this article:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.4471/MCS.2013.20>

---

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

The terms and conditions of use are related to the Open Journal System and to Creative Commons Non-Commercial and Non-Derivative License.

# The “Mask of Masculinity”: Underreported Declines in Male Friendship and Happiness in the United States

Jessie Klein

*Adelphi University*

## **Abstract**

---

Men suffer more as a result of contemporary social trends than is commonly known. A recent focus on women’s greater malaise may unnecessarily and inaccurately pathologize women’s emotional well-being. A widely cited study declares that women are less happy than they were thirty-five years ago and that their unhappiness is increasing at a faster rate than men’s. A closer examination of related research, however, indicates that men are faring at least as badly as women, especially due to trends in decreased social connections. In particular, the dissolution of marriage, one of the few institutions fostering social connections, may be particularly debilitating towards men. New technologies, increased pressures towards self-reliance, and extreme economic pressures are also linked to higher stress among men. This gender comparison, regarding whether men or women are less happy, occurs at a time when depression and anxiety are extremely high among American adults and youth; and happiness, according to several studies, is decreasing. In light of these concerns, future research must address these gaps in order to accurately assess men’s well-being and social ties; and social change regarding efforts to increase well-being and community must be sensitive to needs more commonly associated with men (as well as women).

---

**Keywords:** masculinities, friendship, well-being

# La "Máscara de la Masculinidad": La amistad y la Felicidad Masculina Como Asignatura Pendiente

Jessie Klein

*Adelphi University*

## Resumen

---

Los hombres sufren más, de lo que comúnmente se conoce, como consecuencia de las actuales tendencias sociales. Un enfoque reciente enfatiza la existencia de un mayor malestar de las mujeres que puede llegar a patologizar su bienestar emocional de forma innecesaria. Un estudio ampliamente citado declara que las mujeres son menos felices de lo que eran hace treinta y cinco años y que su infelicidad está aumentando a un ritmo más rápido que los hombres. Sin embargo, un examen más detallado de la investigación en este ámbito indica que los hombres están sufriendo por lo menos tanto como las mujeres, especialmente debido a las tendencias en la disminución de las relaciones sociales. En particular, la disolución del matrimonio, una de las pocas instituciones que fomentan las relaciones sociales, puede ser especialmente debilitante para los hombres. Las nuevas tecnologías, el aumento de las presiones hacia la autosuficiencia, y las extremas presiones económicas también son aspectos vinculados a un mayor estrés entre los hombres. Esta comparación entre ambos géneros, es decir referentes a si los hombres o las mujeres son menos felices, se produce en un momento en que la depresión y la ansiedad son muy altas entre los adultos estadounidenses y los jóvenes, mientras que la felicidad, según varios estudios, también está disminuyendo. A la luz de estas preocupaciones, las investigaciones futuras deben abordar estas lagunas a fin de evaluar con precisión el bienestar de los hombres, sus vínculos sociales, el cambio social y los esfuerzos para aumentar el bienestar. La comunidad debe ser sensible a las necesidades más comúnmente asociadas con los hombres (y también de las mujeres).

---

**Palabras clave:** masculinidades, amistad, bienestar

2013 Hipatia Press

ISSN 2014-3605

DOI: 10.4471/MCS.2013.20

**M**en suffer more as a result of recent social trends than is commonly known. This article examines signs of decreased well-being among men, discusses why it occurs, and suggests directions for future research and social change.

A current focus on women's greater malaise may unnecessarily and inaccurately pathologize women's emotional well-being. A widely cited study declares that women are less happy than they were thirty-five years ago and that their unhappiness is increasing at a faster rate than men's. A closer examination of related research, however, indicates that men are faring at least as badly as women, especially due to trends in decreased social connections. In particular, the dissolution of marriage, one of the few institutions fostering social connections, may be particularly debilitating towards men.

New technologies, increased pressures towards self-reliance, and extreme economic pressures are also linked to higher stress among men. This gender comparison, regarding whether men or women are less happy, occurs at a time when depression and anxiety are extremely high among American adults and youth; and relatedly, happiness, according to several studies, is decreasing. In light of these concerns, future research must address these gaps in order to accurately assess men's well-being and social ties; surveys need to also address the specific social pressures men from disparate ethnic and racial backgrounds may experience; and social change regarding efforts to increase well-being and community must be sensitive to needs more commonly associated with men.

Highly publicized research by Betsy Stevenson & Justin Wolfers conveys that women's reported happiness decreased at a faster rate than men's since the 1980s (2009); media reports of the study falsely suggested in turn that women are significantly and absolutely less happy than men. For instance a *New York Times* op-ed reported on the study—and stated: “In postfeminist America, men are happier than women” (Douthat, 2009). In fact the study conveys that men often indicate lower rates of satisfaction than women on such issues as marriage, work, and health (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009); even though men may be less likely to report their related loneliness and vulnerability.

What follows is a discussion of the role gender plays in decreased social connection and reported well-being for men in particular. The paper addresses four contemporary social trends and their impact on men—declines in marriage; hyper self-reliance values; new technologies; and increased economic pressures; these shifts have been considered culpable in the decline of social connection and happiness in the United States more generally—but have not been collectively examined adequately with regard to their impact on men, in particular.

Popularized research regarding women’s decline in well-being pathologizes women unnecessarily; since men tend to report their unhappiness in ways that typical surveys are likely to miss—men are at risk for having their malaise mis- or undiagnosed; and may then lose access to much needed support.

New surveys must become more sensitive to how men manifest and report their emotional challenges. Otherwise research results relating to gender disparities regarding well-being are necessarily problematic.

### **Overview**

Recent surveys of happiness, well-being, and social connection present a picture of growing malaise and isolation in the United States (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2001; McPherson et al., 2006; Olds & Schwartz, 2009; Twenge, 2006). Writing in 2001, D.G. Blanchflower and A.J. Oswald found that according to the General Social Survey, 34 percent of Americans in the 1970s described themselves as very happy, but by the late 1990s, the figure was 30 percent (5). The number of Americans who said there was no one with whom they discussed important matters nearly tripled since 1985; 25 percent of those surveyed in 2004 said they had no confidants whatsoever (McPherson et al., 2006, p. 353)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, the 2000 census reports that 26 percent of households consist of one person only, as compared with 16 percent in 1970 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2001, p. 5-1). There are more people living alone today than at any point in American history.

Much of the attention toward these trends focuses on women. In their much-cited article “The Paradox of Declining Happiness,” Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfers declare that despite apparent gains in

several objective areas, women are significantly less happy than they were thirty-five years ago (2009), and that their happiness is decreasing at a faster rate than men's. At the same time, popular and scholarly studies showing that women are at least twice as likely as men to suffer from depression have entered the public consciousness (Angold et al., 1999; Peterson et al., 1991; Pichardo, 2006; Silberg et al., 1999).

Other studies, however, highlight survey unreliability due to the socialization with which men contend. Men are often pressured to deny to themselves and others any vulnerability or weakness, and may be therefore less likely to report accurately on well-being assessments. A closer examination of related research indicates that men may be faring just as poorly as women, if not worse. In their book *The Lonely American* (2009), Jacqueline Olds and Barry Schwartz write that men tend to be affected more negatively than women by the American trend towards decreased social connections. Additionally, a flood of research about young boys and men reveals hidden trends toward male depression that do not necessarily get reported on typical assessment reports (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000; Diamond, 1998; Hart, 2001; Pollack, 1998a; Pollack, 1998b; Real, 1998; Rochlen et al., 2005).

These findings suggest that decreased well-being and social relationships is taking place for both men and women in the United States; that the average American is less happy, and lonelier, than in decades prior; that women may be pathologized more as a result of their (perhaps healthier) inclinations to express their feelings; and that men are experiencing unhappiness that may well be more formidable than is generally recognized.

### **Gender and Declines in Social Connection and Reported Well-Being**

The impact of decreased social connection and related unhappiness among both men and women extends to all areas of life. Medical research indicates that social connection has powerful effects on health. Socially connected people tend to live longer, respond better to stress, have more robust immune systems, and do better at fighting a variety of specific illnesses. Health and happiness are linked to social connections

(Olds & Schwartz, 2009) and physical health is in turn linked to increases in happiness (Siahpush et al., 2008). Increases in anxiety are also linked to a host of medical problems including asthma, coronary heart disease, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), ulcers, and inflammatory bowel disease. Anxiety is now more common than depression; and as anxiety increases, many of these physical ailments are expected to increase among Americans too, especially IBS (Twenge, 2000).

These adverse health effects may well impact men more than women, since research shows that men are less likely than women to report physical symptoms and are then more at-risk for developing more complicated conditions. One study suggests that men report physical symptoms 50 percent less often than women, and that men report emotional problems significantly less often than women as well, even when controlled for the fact that mental disorders are found to be more common among women (Kroenke & Spitzer, 1998). In fact, women might appear to have disproportionately higher mental disorders than men precisely because men have been so effectively conditioned to hide their feelings and difficulties from themselves and others.

While many social trends may have equal or greater negative impacts on men than on women, more attention is paid to women's unhappiness in popular and scholarly reports (Angold et al., 1999; Peterson et al., 1991; Pichardo, 2006; Silberg et al., 1999; Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009). This article seeks to elucidate the concomitant trend toward male unhappiness by using feminist masculinity theory to analyze a widely reported and recognized study on the trend toward female unhappiness. Pressures on men to deny their feelings may hurt men, but these expectations undermine women too who are often stigmatized with "emotional disorders" when compared with men --who may (falsely) appear less disturbed.

In their work, Stevenson and Wolfers write that women report decreased happiness during the same time they have gained so much in terms of equal rights and opportunities. The study covers the period 35 years prior to its 2009 publication; during this time, women's lives have improved according to several objective measures, including career and education opportunities and physical health, but their reported well-being decreased. According to Stevenson & Wolfers, in the 1970s,

women reported higher relative well-being to men. Today, however, women report that they are less happy “both absolutely and relative to men” (2009, p. 190).

What the study underemphasizes, however, is the still high rate of current dissatisfaction among men on a host of specific markers. The authors assessed satisfaction across a number of domains, including marriage, work, health, and finances. They found that women reported decreasing satisfaction in some areas, but that “typically men reported similar, or even more rapid, declines” (2009, p. 194). Yet men do not report a similar decline in overall well-being. Women reported less satisfaction than men both relatively and absolutely on only one barometer: They are less happy with their family’s financial situation (2009, p. 194). Stevenson and Wolfers ask, but do not pursue, an alternative research question: “Why has men’s reported happiness not declined in line with women’s happiness, given their observed decrease in well-being across a multitude of domains?” (2009, p. 221).

One explanation may well be that it tends to be more socially acceptable for men to report low levels of satisfaction in significant domains, which may indicate a level of indignation considered on some level “manly.” At the same time, it has been less normalized for men to report low levels of happiness, which might indicate vulnerability less associated with masculinity. Stevenson and Wolfers’ findings that men report decreased satisfaction in various areas, but not decreased overall well-being, may illustrate the findings by William Pollack and others that men’s depression and overall well-being is not accurately reported on typical surveys (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000; Diamond, 1998; Hart, 2001; Pollack, 1998a; Pollack, 1998b; Real, 1998; Rochlen et al., 2005).

There is no doubt, based on Stevenson and Wolfers’ study that women’s happiness levels have declined. What is less clear is whether men are any happier than women. Women report being less happy than they were in the 1970s, whereas men report being just as unhappy, if not more unhappy, than they were in the 1970s (2009, p. 196). According to Blanchflower and Oswald’s (2001) study, men in the 1970s reported being significantly less happy than women did (2001, p. 5-6). By the late 1990s, men still reported lower happiness scores overall when compared with women, though the disparity had decreased (2001, p. 5-

6; 19). Further, Stevenson and Wolfers' study does not make clear whether women's happiness has actually declined such that it is now lower than men's-only that it is has indeed decreased (absolutely) and that it has decreased at a rate that is faster (relatively) than that noted for men.

We may not yet know the extent to which men struggle with unhappiness, loneliness, and other emotional challenges. Masculinity theorists document the tendency for men to *not* report their more complex feelings on surveys or comparable inquiries. They learn early to develop what Pollack calls in his book *Real Boys* (1998b) a "mask of masculinity:" by acting tough and casual, young boys learn to hide their more vulnerable feelings (1998b, p. 11). On psychological studies or surveys, Pollack writes, they are less likely to report their pain. Because of pressure to appear masculine, they try to act tough and independent even when they are depressed. Pollack writes that advanced research tells us that boys are just as unhappy as girls, but they don't necessarily share their struggles with others (Klein & Chancer, 2000, p. 152). Instead of the range of feelings available to girls, boys are expected to express only anger; in schools boys are more likely to be teased and ridiculed if they show others that they are sad or reveal that they might have been crying. Boys are tutored instead to portray to the world a "calm and cool" front (Pollack, 1998b, p. 13).

Pollack further argues that adult men manifest depression through self-reports distinctly different from women and that "our diagnostic tools are too often blind to this gender disparity" (1998b, p. 160). Other studies also confirm that the high rate of men's depression is not accurately reported on typical surveys and that new diagnostic tools are necessary to learn the full extent of men's maladies (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000; Diamond, 1998; Hart, 2001; Pollack, 1998a; Pollack, 1998b; Real, 1998; Rochlen et al., 2005).

The National Institute of Mental Health released its "Real Men. Real Depression (RMRD)" campaign in April 2003 specifically to address men's experience of depression. The NIMH noted that "men are less likely than women to recognize, acknowledge, and seek treatment for their depression" (NIMH, 2003). The U.S. Department of Defense used the RMRD campaign with service members as part of its training

curriculum (Rochlen, 2005).

These studies suggest that men may well misreport their less satisfied feelings--and that future surveys comparing happiness among men and women need to be replicated with this awareness. Stevenson and Wolfers' study did not discuss the different ways men tend to report challenges to their well-being and the impact of this difference on their research. Small discrepancies between male and female well-being rates may even indicate significantly higher unhappiness among men as a result of misreports.

Of great concern is also the higher rate of suicide among men. A recent book, *Men and Depression*, looks at the high suicide rates among men and the over-representation of men in every mental disorder other than those associated with mood; this work seeks to find the depression that remains hidden from common studies as well as from men themselves. The research also shows that pressures on men to hide their feelings from themselves and others mask the high rates of male depression on more common studies (Cohran & Rabinowitz, 2000).

The National Institute of Mental Health (2001) reports that females attempt suicide two to three times as often as men, but males are four times more likely than females to die by suicide. Girls and women may talk about their feelings more, and find other ways to express their emotional pain, but if boys and men were allowed the same socially sanctioned vehicles of self-expression, we might hear more about men's similar difficulties. Instead males are more likely to act on their despair.

NPR reported on the high number of suicides among men in the armed forces and the efforts being made towards suicide prevention there. Alarmingly, almost as many American troops at home and abroad committed suicide in 2010 as were killed in combat in Afghanistan. NPR reports that the toughest "challenge is changing a culture that is very much about 'manning up' when things get difficult" (Tarabay, 2010). Men in the army, even more than male civilians, are taught to project a tough exterior; signs of vulnerability or emotional or physical weakness are not just frowned upon, they are ridiculed, punished, and can cause a soldier to be discharged.

Col. Chris Philbrick, director of the Army's suicide prevention task force, said: "What did we do? What does the Army normally do when

there was soldiers with problems we didn't understand?"[We tell them:] 'Thank you for your service; go find someplace else to work'" (Tarabay, 2010). Former military psychiatrist Stephen Xenakis suggests that the army pay attention to issues that Pollack and others have identified as undiagnosed depression indicators among men, including alcoholism and driving while intoxicated; Xenakis also suggests that marital issues and discipline issues in the army are red flags (Tarabay, 2010).

Because males are less likely to recognize their own symptoms of depression, nor do they necessarily have the awareness, means, or in some cases emotional ability, to ask for help, predominantly male institutions, then, have that much more responsibility to raise awareness and provide proactive intervention and prevention services; but, they are often challenged by their own inability to recognize this need or figure out ways to help. In response to the differences between male and female manifestations of depression on both surveys and self-reports, Pollack (1998a) proposed a new category to address this phenomenon: "major depressive disorder—male type." Other researchers suggest other methods for observing and diagnosing depression among men. Rochlen et al. (2005) write that "behavioral and subjective indicators that have been empirically and theoretically linked to depression in men include substance abuse; somatic forms of distress like headaches, digestive disorders, and chronic pain; risk-taking behaviors; severe social isolation; aggression and violence; sexual misconduct and promiscuity; as well as overwork" (2005, p. 189).

The National Institute of Mental Health similarly found that males have difficulty acknowledging their feelings, asking for help, or seeking support—and that consequently many turn to substances like alcohol or drugs when they are depressed. Instead of experiencing sadness, they are more likely to become frustrated, angry, discouraged, irritable or even violent and abusive; they are likely to hide their depression from themselves, their family and friends. Men also are more likely to react to depression by working compulsively, engaging in reckless behavior, or by putting themselves in harm's way (2003). Interestingly, more men than women suffer from alcoholism, substance abuse, and other dependencies, as well as severe personality disorders—much of which is also associated with depression (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000).

In addition to the fact that men manifest depression differently than women, and that their depression is less likely to be revealed by typical assessment tools, some studies show that men's unhappiness is comparable to women's. Klerman and Weismman found that even on their more typical surveys, the risk for depression among young men was increasing so rapidly that the differential risk between men and women was quickly narrowing (1989, p. 2229).

Indeed, men report higher levels of unhappiness than their female cohorts in some recent research. Fathers are "more unhappy than mothers" writes Parker-Pope in the *New York Times* (2010), reporting on a study by the Families and Work Institute in New York which finds that fathers are as stressed, if not more stressed than mothers. According to the study, fathers in dual-earner families experienced a significant increase in work-life conflict: 59 percent, up from 35 percent in 1977. In more general terms, in 1977, the experience of work-life conflict for women and men was similar. Yet men's reported work-life conflict increased from 34 percent in 1977 to 45 percent in 2008. Women's work-life conflict increased, but less significantly, from 34 percent in 1977 to 39 percent in 2008 (Galinsky et al., 2008, p.18).

Based on this emerging research, Stevenson and Wolfers' findings on declining happiness may in fact convey something important about men's declining happiness, as well as women's. Given the lack of reliability of men's reports regarding depression and related issues on surveys—as well as the research that conveys that men tend to have less access to intimate relationships, fewer social venues for expressing their feelings, and fewer friendships—the vague discrepancy in well-being that women and men reported in the Stevenson and Wolfers's study instead may convey a general dissatisfaction among men and women alike; further, because the discrepancy between male and female well-being reports is so small, it may well indicate an even higher rate of unhappiness among men. In either case, understanding why unhappiness and social isolation in America is so high -in addition to whether a significant gender difference in these despair indicators persists-deserves more exploration.

The following section discusses four trends which have been cited as explanations for increased social isolation, depression, and anxiety in

the United States (declines in marriage; hyper self-reliance values; new technologies; and economic pressures); each are addressed with regard to their impact on men. Herein, emerges largely unrecognized explanations for declines in male friendship and well-being.

## **Explanations for Declines in Male Friendship and Well-Being**

### **The Decline of Marriage**

A number of studies suggest that marriage is one of the few institutions which provide a buffer against depression—perhaps because in an era of decreasing friendships and increasing social isolation, marriage, (and related forms of domestic partnerships) is now one of the only institutions where there is much intimacy experienced at all. The 2006 "Social isolation in America" study noted that most Americans have decreased their friendships by a third in the last twenty years; from an average of three confidants, to closer to two today. At the same time, for the first time married people are the minority in the United States; only 49 percent of all households contain married couples (McPherson et al., 2006; Coontz, 2006). Social isolation increased in the contemporary dearth of friendships and marriages—and men may have suffered most significantly as a result.

Blanchflower and Oswald write that factors that predict well-being include marriage (19) and that according to a separate literature, “marriage seems to provide protection against depression and mental ill-health (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2001, p. 12). Yet, since the 1970s the divorce rate has increased, marriage has decreased, and people who do marry, do so at later ages (Twenge, 2000, p. 1013). In the mid-1970s, 67 percent of adults were married, by the late 1990s only 48 percent were married -a low figure which has remained fairly constant since the turn to the twenty-first century (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2001, p. 7). Jean Twenge (2000) writes that these social disconnection trends predict the high anxiety levels that accompany them (2000, p. 1013). Reported well-being also tends to rise in a lasting marriage and declines in the midst of divorce (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2001, p.19; Olds & Schwartz, 2009, p. 130; Stevenson & Wolfers, 2009, p. 195-196). Thus

as marriage declines, and few institutions which might offer alternative venues for intimacy take its place, depression tends to rise.

Yet, even as remaining marriages are thought to be somewhat of a buffer against depression, anxiety, and social isolation, marriages provide even less comfort than they might have previously. Stevenson and Wolfers found that both men and women are less happy with their marriages than in decades past. They write: “On average, women are less happy with their marriage than men and women have become less happy with their marriage over time. However, men have also become less happy with their marriage over time and, thus, the gender gap in marital happiness has been largely stable over time” (2009, p. 217). Men and women’s disappointment with marriage is competitively high.

Marriage may not be providing the social support it once did. Sociologist Emile Durkheim, writing in 1897, said that marriage provides a regulatory force on otherwise limitless passions. Without this regulation, people may try to satisfy their random desires; and this can create a feeling of being unanchored, without intimate and fulfilling relationships. A marriage for Durkheim “completely regulates the life of passion, and monogamic marriage more strictly than any other” (Durkheim, 1897, p. 270).

Durkheim wrote that marriage tends also to decrease trends towards suicide. “Thus marriage may be said to reduce the danger of suicide by half,” Durkheim wrote (1897, p. 173). Durkheim found that men were particularly vulnerable when their marriages dissolved. He suggested that both unmarried men and divorced men were more prone to suicide than their female counterparts (Thompson, 1982, p. 112).

Analyzing this phenomenon today, Durkheim’s findings may still be related to the added pressure on men to prove masculinity through casual and often unfulfilling sexual conquests; Durkheim, and others, also wrote that there are few other alternative social institutions that bind men to social norms and goals. Today divorce is so common that the institution of marriage barely retains any of the social glue it once contained.

Thus the dissolution of marriage—our central, though withering institution for engaging intimacy—leads to excessive individuation, according to Durkheim. Marriage was meant to help people feel part of

a community and connected to larger social norms and conventions; its demise leaves people, especially men, adrift.

The 2006 study “Social Isolation in America,” which used data from the 2004 General Social Survey, found that marriage is the only relationship in contemporary times where people are more likely to discuss important matters with each other than they were two decades previously. In every other category, social connection has decreased and people speak less often with confidants (McPherson et. al., 2006, p. 358).

Yet Olds and Schwartz lament that this trend to confide more in spouses does little to decrease social isolation more generally. They discuss the tendency for married couples to “cocoon” which they write is another form of social isolation from others and tends to increase the fragility of marriage, the burdens placed upon marriage, and over time, the likelihood of divorce and loneliness (2009, p. 116). A marriage most likely to last and flourish, they write, “is woven into a larger tapestry that includes extended family, neighbors, and peers” (2009, p. 118). Prioritizing marriage and the nuclear family to the exclusion of commitments to neighbors, extended kin, and civic duty and religion has been found to be socially deleterious by many scholars (Coontz, 2006; Putnam, 2000). For Durkheim the decreased commitment to community that surrounds marriage and contemporary life more generally contributes to what he referred to as higher inclinations towards *egoistic* suicide; people are less integrated in their communities and less tied to social norms and conventions and therefore more likely to become depressed and even suicidal (Durkheim, 1897).

Durkheim’s nineteenth-century research on the particular challenges men experience in marriage is similar to Olds and Schwartz’s twenty-first century conclusions. Durkheim wrote that men are more challenged than women when they lose their marriage; Olds and Schwartz suggest that married men in particular, suffer as a result of the dissolution of social ties. McPherson et al.’s study may explain this further. In 1984, the probability that, for instance, a 25-year old affable married man would be a social isolate (having no confidants) was virtually zero; in 2004, such men have a 10% chance of being social isolates; and a 44-year old affable married man in 1984 would have been as unlikely to be without confidants in 1984 as a 25-year old; but in 2004 he has a 20%

chance of being a social isolate (McPherson et al., 2006, p. 370).

Men are generally given less support to find and sustain intimate and trusting relationships which can nurture them; then, they are more dependent on their marriage and made more vulnerable by its demise. People have become more adrift, and more depressed and lonely as community ties outside of marriage are deprioritized concurrently with the dissolution of marriage more generally.

Stephanie Coontz, author of *Marriage, a History: How Love Conquered Marriage*, writes that the modern tendency for married couples to ignore, or deprioritize their other relationships strains marriages with too-high expectations which they can never fully satisfy. As Coontz points out in a related article, this is a recent historical phenomenon:

Through most of history, it was considered dangerously antisocial to be too emotionally attached to one's spouse, because that diluted loyalties to family, neighbours, and society at large. Until the mid-19th-century, the word "love" was used more frequently to describe feelings for neighbours, relatives and fellow church members than spouses.

The emotional lives of Victorian middle-class women revolved around passionate female bonds that overshadowed the 'respectful affection' they felt for their husbands. Men, too, sought intimacy outside the family circle. A man could write a letter to his betrothed recounting his pleasure at falling asleep on the bosom of his best friend without fearing that she might think him gay. When couples first began to go on honeymoons in the 19th century they often took family and friends along for company (Coontz, 2006).

That women's relationships have decreased in importance is clearly problematic—but the decrease in importance of men's friendships raises another concern. While one can imagine a woman who values a female friend more than her husband (even as it is non as socially acceptable as it might have been in the mid-nineteenth century), it is near impossible to consider men "falling asleep on the bosom of his best friend without fearing that" someone might think he is gay. Men's friendships have

clearly lost both importance and affection; and with these new social prohibitions, men's loneliness has increased.

Olds & Schwartz further link the tendency to cocoon with a married partner -while distancing friendships- with another aspect of contemporary expectations toward extreme self-reliance. Families are made to believe that they need to handle everything on their own--and economically, of course, in the United States they *are* largely on their own. Thus marriages bear almost the entire burden for emotional intimacy as well as financial stability, childcare, elderly care, and healthcare. Neither friends nor government are situated to support families when they need help, and the pressure to rely on one's own resources without aid often tears down the very institution meant to provide this bedrock of support. Since men are still pressured to be primary breadwinners, even when their wives also work, the pressure to provide economically in an era of decreased social and economic supports, is likely to put more pressure and stress on men.

According to Olds and Schwartz, while both men and women have decreased their confidants significantly, men are more likely to lose touch with old friends as they take on the increasing responsibilities requisite to family life. But as women are more likely to make new friends, men are less inclined; once men lose old friends by falling out of contact, they are less likely to replace those confidant connections (Olds & Schwartz, 2009, pp. 116-117). This also suggests that men are as much if not more at risk for depression and social isolation.

Olds and Schwartz also note that as men get more involved in childrearing and both men and women try to keep up with increased hours and demands in the workplace, friendships are further demoted; it may often feel overwhelming to do all three roles well. Olds and Schwartz link the dissolution of marriage to married people's decreased support systems. Working too hard with less extended family to help with childrearing, and the added pressure to be all things to one another is often too much burden for the marriage to bear (Olds & Schwartz, 2009, p. 127). Men are more likely to lose touch with their friends when they get married; and thus more likely to suffer both when they lose their marriage and when they maintain it; social pressures to undervalue their social connections under both conditions (married or not married)

do men a significant disservice.

Thus the suggestion that women are less happy than men does men and women a disservice. It perpetuates the pathologizing of women as the historically “hysterical” gender; it prevents us from recognizing the various ways men manifest their unhappiness; and it prevents us from being effectively helpful to men and women by missing the larger issues involved.

The following section examines the extreme self-reliance values perpetuated today and the concurrent damage to the community both men and women surely need to become less isolated and depressed in the midst of twenty-first century indicators.

### **Extreme Self-Reliance**

Olds and Schwartz locate the source of increased social isolation in contemporary American values -hyper-individualism and self-reliance. People are reluctant to talk about their loneliness because they do not want to be seen as needy. They are concerned about the stigma towards interdependence which can appear “unmanly, unheroic, and un-American” (2009, p. 33). Connecting with others and sharing feelings and concerns has even been degraded in common parlance; rather than signify caring and bonding, such sharing is referred to today as “dumping,” “whining” or “being self-indulgent.” Someone who is willing to be open about their needs is considered pejoratively “high maintenance” or who focuses “too much” on their relationships-“co-dependent.” We have a host of words today that convey that depending on one another is either wrong or “sick”.

Further, while females are increasingly pressured to be more self-reliant than they were in previous generations, men are asked to be just as self-reliant if not more so, even as they are expected to juggle more roles and responsibilities. The workplace gives mothers little support to care for children even as most American families consist exclusively of a working parent (or working parents); and even less support is given to fathers who are increasingly involved in childcare.

Given the focus on self-reliance in the United States and the already minimal levels of support afforded parents to care for their children, men find that they still need to navigate a workplace that is “often

reluctant to give them time off for family reasons” (Parker-Poke, 2010). Even when there are benefits available, such as flexible schedules and family leave, American men are made to feel embarrassed about prioritizing their family’s needs and thus are less likely to utilize these already scarce resources.

The lack of care afforded parents, in particular financial support, in the United States sets us apart from many European countries; Norway and Sweden guarantee at least a year of family leave after the birth of a child at 80 to 100 percent of the caregivers’ pay; Finnish parents can take up to three years leave; and in some Scandinavian countries, paternity leave is mandatory or the time off is lost (Gornick & Meyers, 2007, p. 102). These countries want to make sure men as well as women are given the financial and emotional support they need to care for their children at home. U.S. men, on the other hand, tend to find themselves strangled by values relating to self-reliance; they are tutored not to request or rely on supports. Thus even when men “need to take their offspring to the doctor or pick them up from child care, they tended to do so in a ‘stealth’ fashion rather than ask for a formal flexible work arrangement” -reluctant to ask for help, wrote Parker-Pope. As a result, fathers are becoming just as stressed, if not more stressed than mothers (2010). For these and other reasons already discussed, men have become a particularly high-risk group for social isolation, and are increasingly subject to the high rates of depression and anxiety plaguing contemporary U.S. society.

Further, pressure to be self-reliant and satisfy all needs in the nuclear familial model, along with escalating demands for increased profit margins, result in men and women working more hours; this trend further stresses personal stability and marriage, as well as family life more generally. The Families and Work Life Institute 2008 report suggests that the factors that predict conflict among mothers and fathers include the total number of hours worked per week and the number of hours per week spent on the self -what they call “work-life centrism” and “job pressure.” Effectively, each additional hour of work increases the probability of experiencing some degree of work-life conflict. Each additional hour spent on oneself decreases the probability of work-life conflict. A balance is optimal according to the Institute. Fathers and

mothers who are focused on both work and family or mostly focused on the family are less likely to experience work-life conflict. Job satisfaction decreases the rate of conflict; and job pressure increases the probability of work-life conflict (Galinsky et al., 2008, p. 20).

Yet focus on family often gets short shrift today even when adults or children come home from work and school. Increasingly people first greet their computers, phones, or other technological devices (ipads; androids; kindles) before they connect face-to-face with anyone at home -if they talk to anyone in person at all. Too often families facebook and text one another from one room in the house to another; people in adjacent work stalls email rather than waste time visiting- and depression and anxiety loom in the decreasing intimacy exclusive to face-to-face interactions.

### **New Technologies**

Dependence on new technologies is also blamed for contemporary high rates of depression, anxiety, and social isolation in the United States. The results of several recent studies have many scholars and journalists concerned about the extent to which such trends are eroding capacities to create and foster face-to-face relationships (LaPorta, 2009; Franzen, 2010).

With new technologies, friendship on Facebook for instance, more often facilitates an awareness of the number of people an individual can “collect;” rather than fostering intimacy and connection; “friends” are perceived as objects that will increase or decrease one’s status as they are displayed on profiles for others to see and admire. Americans are increasingly sitting by themselves, while they engage in a virtual existence of adventures and relationships. Much of contemporary American life takes place in solitary confined spaces with a computer or phone -with only the illusion of an active social life. The phenomenon is so great that studies show that teens are increasingly retreating to cyberspace -often for the majority of their social interactions; and losing vital skills for developing face-to-face interactions (The Pew Research Center, 2010).

Indeed, one-third of Internet use by Americans takes place on social networking sites, and the amount of time Americans spend on sites like

Facebook and Twitter grows dramatically every day. Teenagers who are thought to be addicted to the internet are 2.5 times more likely to be depressed than those who engage in normal use (Hendrik, 2010); While the research is still inconclusive, males are perceived to be more at risk for internet addiction and related depression, replacing face-to-face intimacy and other relationships that would otherwise provide deeper and more fulfilling experiences (Young & Rogers, 2009; Kandell, 1998). Where trust and intimacy are still elusive for many men as a result of pressures to present a mask of masculinity that hides vulnerabilities, men may be more prone to finding some (inadequate) solace in the virtual connections accessible in cyberspace.

### **Economic Pressures**

Jean Twenge (2006) and Madeline Levine (2006) document high rates of depression among youth. Levine writes that over-valuing individualism and competition over community and compassion produces more miserable young people. Levine finds that teens are strangled by extreme pressures from parents and schools; adults (and often peers) are unwilling to accept young people unless they perform on a series of multi-faceted and complex barometers -including academics; extra-curricula; sports; and various other indicators of social success, like popularity. Young people are reared to be economically and otherwise successful- and any failures on this perceived path to success are often met with parental dread and/or scorn. Such pressures on children are particularly prevalent in wealthy families, according to Levine.

Levine also contributes an important insight to the literature on gender and youth despair. Working with an awareness of the impact of masculinity issues on reported well-being, Levine notes the different ways boys and girls manifest their depression. By the end of high school, 30 percent of girls from affluent families exhibit clinically significant symptoms of anxiety; boys have elevated rates of anxiety and depression, too, but their most significant problem appears in high rates of substance abuse used “to self-medicate their depression” (2006, p. 18). Thus again, the level of depression among young males, in this case, is masked by other symptoms; among boys it tends to manifest in

the abuse of substances. Without recognizing that male youth are communicating their depression in this way, statistics documenting female depression and anxiety may appear falsely higher.

In the race to success, boys, like men, are pressured to appear tough and invulnerable in spite of the emotional challenges they are enduring. Men have only recently begun “coming out” as depressed, as more literature emerges about the prevalence of male depression (Cochran & Rabinowitz, 2000). Young boys, though, are still schooled in the old traditions of masculinity and are punished by peer groups if they appear vulnerable and are perceived to be emotional; and boys are similarly rewarded and revered if they posture as independent and tough and powerful (Klein, 2012). Thus the statistics showing that young people are more depressed and anxious at increasingly younger ages under-reports the extent to which young boys, in particular, are suffering these maladies.

Levine’s findings are also consistent with studies on adults that conclude that there is no correlation between higher earnings and reported well-being, but rather, often, an inverse relationship. Levine found that depression and anxiety are higher among wealthy youth than among their less privileged peers. Men, again, in these kinds of studies are likely to be more anxious and depressed when it comes to measuring oneself by one’s relative “worth,” since masculinity is still so intricately tied to economic security and success in this country.

In trying to explain the increasing plummet of female’s reported well-being, Stevenson and Wolfers contest what they refer to as “standard economic frameworks,” which equate financial gain in real wages with higher reports in well-being. They wonder why women’s economic advances, in particular, in recent decades have not manifested in increases in happiness. Arlie Hochschild and Anne Machung argue in their book, *The Second Shift* (1989) that women’s increased presence in the workforce and increased wages didn’t increase well-being among women because of the “second shift” women still do regarding housekeeping and other home production. Stevenson and Wolfers cite evidence that work hours have decreased among men and women -statistics sharply disputed in Juliet Schor’s meticulously documented *Overworked American* (1993)- and that men contribute more to

household tasks than they did in the past (more anecdotally contested); Schor finds that Americans are working significantly longer hours than their European counterparts, she refers to as the phenomenon of the “Overworked American;” this is thought to be a source of great stress for men as well as women today -though the most high-profile, and sometimes criminal reactions to increased stress and competition in today’s workforce is still mostly manifested by men.

David Callahan in *The Cheating Culture: Why More Americans Are Doing Wrong to Get Ahead* (2004) suggests that today’s hyper-pressure to succeed motivates Americans to cheat in almost every sphere of American life including -sports, law, finance, sales, and among students and teachers in education. Using Robert Reich’s term “the anxious class,” Callahan writes that people tend to cheat to get ahead; the related anxiety sometimes develops when choosing not to cut corners means getting left behind.

Much of Callahan’s work focuses on cheating among the very wealthy -men who use steroids and other illegal supplements in professional sports; mostly men who bill excessive hours in white shoe law firms; and mostly men who brought down the economy as executives in leading Wall Street firms. Many men pushed to risk everything for success and achieve at all costs, found themselves exposed and despairing when the economy crashed. The Greenspan’s Body Count blogosphere was named after the former Federal Reserve chief who has been blamed for the current economic crisis; it “offers a macabre tally of people who killed themselves or close family members allegedly due to economic pressures” (Newsweek, 2009). Women are less present in this list; they tend not to register in either high level financial positions nor related white collar crime (and subsequent depression) -since women are still largely barred from reaching corporate top tiers by the still present glass ceiling (Levi, 1995).

Thus men may be more likely to become depressed as a result of employment pressures. One study linking men’s unhappiness to work issues found that unemployed men’s depression scores were higher than those of employed men and that this inclination increased when unemployed men had less social contact with others in the month before losing their jobs. “Depression becomes likely when people lose a source

of social interaction that is important to their sense of worth, and have no alternative means of experiencing this worth in other relationships,” write Bolton and Oatley (2011). More than women, men are perceived to be identified with their work and tend to lose self-esteem and suffer from depression when their work status is threatened or otherwise perceived as tenuous. Thus when unemployment rates are high, men, in particular, are likely to suffer the worst emotional consequences. Men might also respond to these emotional challenges in different ways; workplace shootings, for instance, are triggered overwhelmingly by salary reductions, demotions, lay-offs, or harassment at work (Klein, 2012). Thus today’s high unemployment statistics, hovering around 10 percent, may well be a contributing factor to Americans’ plummeting level of well-being, for men in particular, as well as to increasing social isolation statistics, more generally.

Thus contemporary social trends including a hyper pressure towards increased self-reliance, the dissolution of marriage and face-to-face interactions, and the high unemployment rate may put more strain on men and contribute to extremely high depression rates among men that we are still largely ill-equipped to measure or even fully understand.

### **Conclusion**

This article examines Americans’ high rate of depression, anxiety, and social isolation as it relates to gender. It suggests that studies and popular notions emphasizing women’s growing unhappiness miss important data and analysis related to men. This lack of awareness falsely perpetuates the perception that women are more emotionally disturbed than men. It also prevents men from getting the help they need when they manifest their agony by abusing substances or through other more opaque manifestations. To understand how Americans generally, and men in particular, are faring regarding well-being, surveys must take account of the specific ways in which men identify their emotions. Without this discussion and understanding, reports in gender disparities around well-being are necessarily problematic. Social conditions today are tough on men and women, both; but men suffer in specific ways because they have not been given adequate avenues for expressing their pain.

An example of this occurs in the high violence perpetuated by men. Gender is the greatest predictor of crimes, writes J.W. Messerschmidt, because men are socialized to express their masculinity and related emotions through violence (2000). Thus, of 191 school shootings between 1979 and 2011, 95% of the perpetrators were male; and males, again, commit suicide at exponentially higher levels (Klein, 2012). If men were given social permission to express their vulnerabilities in schools and our larger society -as well as on surveys- we might see less violence and become more aware of the wider despair plaguing men as well as women throughout our country.

Like women, men are expected to do everything on their own, but unlike women, men are given few if any emotional venues to express their discomfort and needs. Men are discouraged from developing intimate friendships and tutored away from expressing their feelings.

Many of the social trends thought to contribute to today's high levels of depression, anxiety, and social isolation in the United States -the dissolution of marriage, new technologies replacing face-to-face interactions, hyper-self-reliance values, and economic pressures- are particularly deleterious towards men.

Further research that seeks to evaluate the differences between male and female well-being must take into account the various ways social trends affect men and women, as well as the ways male discontent may be overlooked on typical well-being surveys. Any study hoping to get an accurate account of male unhappiness must address the pressure on men to mask their emotions with a "tough" masculine front. Without this awareness, it may not be possible to accurately account for male malaise.

If women's happiness is decreasing at such a fast pace, it is likely that men are just as unhappy, if not more unhappy. Further research must locate the different ways men express their pain, and look more broadly at the reasons for the high despair indicators revealed by current social phenomena: In addition to *The Overworked American* (Schor, 1993), *The Overspent American* (Schor, 1998), *The Cheating Culture* (Callahan, 2004), and *The Lonely American* (Olds & Schwartz, 2009), we contend with "The Depressed and Anxious American" and another form of the disturbed American -as it relates to well-being reports-

“The Invisible Man.”

Finally, political activists and others seeking social change must be sensitive to needs more often associated with men. The marriage rate remains low at the same time as research reveals that marriage is one of the few buffers against depression. Such unions may indeed increase as same-sex marriage gains legitimacy and legality on the state and federal level. Yet other avenues for developing intimate and supportive relationships need to be fostered. Decreased community involvement and other forms of civic engagement are also associated with increased isolation and lower well-being. Indeed increased social activism, in and of itself, may help increase well-being among men as well as women.

Further, men’s needs for intimacy and support, whether directly or implicitly communicated must be registered, addressed, and validated. Minimally surveys need to more accurately assess men’s well-being -and seek sensitivity to the specific experiences of men from disparate ethnic and racial backgrounds. Further research must also focus on creating community and other forms of social support in ways that are cognizant of men’s needs (as well as women’s).

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Sociologist Claude S. Fischer from the University of California, Berkeley, casts doubt on the McPherson team’s statistics—calling them “highly implausible based on the immense scale of the reported change, anomalies in the GSS data and contrary results in data on other types of network ties” (*American Sociological Association, 2009*). The McPherson team countered that the burden of proof lies with Fischer and suggested that the anomalies to which Fischer refers are from such a small part of the sample as to be insignificant. The McPherson team did acknowledge that the media had over-simplified their reports—and that their complex statistical models paint a more complicated picture. In the abstract of the McPherson study, the team states, “Some changes reflect the changing demographics of the U.S. population. Educational heterogeneity of social ties has decreased, racial heterogeneity has increased. The data may overestimate the number of social isolates, but these shrinking networks reflect an important social change in America (McPherson et al., 2006, Abstract). Ultimately, the McPherson team stands by their findings—suggesting that social isolation has indeed increased markedly, regarding friends and community ties; though some greater intimacy is noted with spouses and parents. They write: “Both kin and non-kin confidants were lost in the past two decades, but the greater decrease of non-kin ties leads to more confidant networks centered on spouses and parents, with fewer contacts through voluntary associations and neighborhoods (*Ibid.*).

## References

- American Sociological Association. (2009, August 4). Debate continues over isolation in America. *Science Codex*. Retrieved March, 10, 2012, from [www.sciencecodex.com/debate\\_continues\\_over\\_social\\_isolation\\_in\\_america](http://www.sciencecodex.com/debate_continues_over_social_isolation_in_america)
- Angold, A., Erkanli, E. J., & Worthman, C. M. (1999). Pubertal changes in hormone levels and depression in girls. *Psychological Medicine*, 29, 1043-1053. doi: 10.1017/S0033291799008946
- Associated Press. (2005, April 18). In Americans are over-medicated, experts say. *Fox News*. Retrieved March 10, 2012, from [www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,153758,00.html#ixzz1ZjlUEXt9](http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,153758,00.html#ixzz1ZjlUEXt9)
- Barber, C. (2008). *Comfortably Numb: How Psychiatry Is Medicating a Nation*. New York: Vintage.
- BBC News. (2004, August 3). In *Teen depression on the increase*. Retrieved March 10, 2012 from [www.news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/3532572.stm](http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/health/3532572.stm)
- Blanchflower, D. G., and Oswald, A.J. (2001). Well-being over time in Britain and the USA. *Journal of public economics*, 88(7-8), 1359-1386. doi: 10.1016/S0047-2727(02)00168-8
- Bolton, W & Oatley, K. (1987). A longitudinal study of social support and depression in unemployed men. *Psychological medicine*, 17, 453-460. doi: 10.1017/S0033291700025010.
- Callahan, D. (2004). *The cheating culture: Why more Americans are doing wrong to get ahead*. New York: Harcourt.
- Cochran, S. V., & Rabinowitz, F. E (2000). *Men and depression: Clinical and empirical perspectives*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Coontz, S. (2006, Nov 30). How to Stay Married. *Stephaniecoontz.com*. Retrieved March 10, 2012 from [www.stephaniecoontz.com/articles/article34.htm](http://www.stephaniecoontz.com/articles/article34.htm)
- Currie, E. (2004). *The road to whatever: Middle-class culture and the crisis of adolescence*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Diamond, J. (1998). *Male menopause*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.

- Douthat, R. (2009, May 25). Liberated and Unhappy. *New York Times*. Retrieved March 10, 2012 from [www.nytimes.com/2009/05/26/opinion/26douthat.html?scp=2&sq=paradox+of+declining+happiness&st=nyt](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/26/opinion/26douthat.html?scp=2&sq=paradox+of+declining+happiness&st=nyt)
- Durkheim, E. (1897). *Suicide: A study in sociology*. New York: Free Press.
- Franzen, C. (2010, April 25). OMG! Teens Now Text More Than Talk Face to Face. *Aol News*. Retrieved April 25, 2010 from [www.aolnews.com/tech/article/pew-study-texting-is-now-teens-top-way-to-communicate/19447380](http://www.aolnews.com/tech/article/pew-study-texting-is-now-teens-top-way-to-communicate/19447380)
- Galinsky, E., Aumann, K., & Bond, J.T. (2008). Times are changing: Gender and generation at work and at home. *Families and Work Life Institute. 2008 National Study of the Changing Workforce*. Retrieved March 10, 2012 from [http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times\\_Are\\_Changing.pdf](http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times_Are_Changing.pdf)
- Gornick, J.C. & Meyers, M.K. (2007). Support for working families: What the United States can learn from Europe (4th ed.,). In D.S. Eitzen (Ed), *Solutions to social problems: Lessons from other societies* (4th ed.) (pp. 99-107). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Gillan, A. (2005). Living apart together: the cautious approach. *Guardian.co.uk*. Retrieved March 10, 2011 from [www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/dec/16/audreygillan.uknews2](http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/dec/16/audreygillan.uknews2)
- Hart, A. D. (2001). *Unmasking male depression*. New York: Word Publishing.
- Hendrik, B. (2011, October 3). Internet overuse may cause depression study: Teens who pathologically use Internet may be about 2.5 times more likely to become depressed. *WebMD Health News*. Retrieved October 12, 2011 from [www.webmd.com/depression/news/20100802/internet-overuse-may-cause-depression](http://www.webmd.com/depression/news/20100802/internet-overuse-may-cause-depression)
- Hoschild, A., & Machung, A. (1989). *The second shift: Working parents and the revolution at home*. New York, USA: Viking.
- Kandell, J.J. (1998, spring). CyberPsychology & behavior Internet addiction on campus: The vulnerability of college students. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 1(1), 11-17. doi:10.1089/cpb.1998.1.11

- Klein, J. & Chancer, L. (2000). Masculinity matters: The role of gender in high-profile school violence cases. In S. Spina (Ed.). *Smoke and mirrors: The hidden context of violence in schools and society*. (pp.129-162). New York: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Klein, J. (2012) *The bully society: Shootings and the crisis of bullying in America's schools*. New York: NYU Press.
- Klerman, G.L. & Weissman, M.M. (1989). Increasing Rates of Depression. *Journal of American Medical Association JAMA*. 261(15), 2229-2235. doi:10.1001/jama.1989.03420150079041
- Kroenke, K & Spitzer, RL. (1998). Gender differences in the reporting of physical and somatoform symptoms. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. 60(2), 2150-155. Retrieved from <http://www.psychosomaticmedicine.org/content/60/2/150.short>
- Laporta, L.D. (2009, November). Twitter and YouTube: Unexpected consequences of the self-esteem movement? *Psychiatric Times*, 26(11)1-4.
- Lenhart, A. (2010, April 20). *Teens, cell phones and texting: Text messaging becomes centerpiece communication*. Pew Internet & American Life Project.
- Levi, M. (1995). Masculinities and white-collar crime. In T. Newburn, T. and E.A. Stanko, (Eds.). *Just boys doing business? Men, masculinities, and crime*. (pp.234-252). New York: Routledge.
- Levine, M. (2006). *The price of privilege: How parental pressure and material advantage are creating a generation of disconnected and unhappy kids*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Lewis, M. (2005). *Unilever Family Report: Home Alone?* Unilever and The Institute for Public Policy Research.
- McPherson, M., Smith-Lovin, L., & Brashears, M.E. (2006, June). Social isolation in America: Changes in core discussion networks over two decades. *American Sociological Review*, 71(3), 353-375. doi: 10.1177/000312240607100301
- Messerschmidt, J.W. (2000). *Nine Lives: Adolescent Masculinities, the Body, and Violence*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2001, January). *Women hold up half the sky: Women and mental health research*, NIH Publication No. 01-4607. Retrieved March 10, 2002 from

- [www.wvdhhr.org/bhhf/scienceonourminds/nimh%20pdfs/18%20women.pdf](http://www.wvdhhr.org/bhhf/scienceonourminds/nimh%20pdfs/18%20women.pdf)
- National Institute of Mental Health. (2003). *Men and depression*. Washington, D.C.
- Newsweek Education site (2009, Jan 14). Killer economy? The deepening recession may lead to growth in suicide rates. *Newsweek.com*. Retrieved February 10, 2010 from <http://www.newsweek.com/2009/01/14/killer-economy.html>
- Olds, J. & Schwartz, R.S. (2009). *The Lonely American: Drifting Apart in the Twenty-first Century*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Parker-Pope. T. (2010, June 18). Now, dad feels as stressed as mom. *Nytimes.com*. Retrieved June 20, 2010 from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/20/weekinreview/20parkerpop.html?adxnnl=1&pagewanted=print&adxnnlx=1277492407-8mwtlmycEhoqPmbVFyPUTA>
- Peterson, A.C., Sarigiani, P.A., & Kennedy, R.E. (1991). Adolescent depression: Why more girls? *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 20(2), 247-271. doi: 10.1007/BF01537611
- Pew Research Center Publications. (2010, April 20). *Teens, cell phones and texting*. Retrieved from [pewresearch.org/pubs/1572/teens-cell-phones-text-messages](http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1572/teens-cell-phones-text-messages)
- Pichardo, J. (2006, Oct 12). Depression in teenagers: How to recognize the symptoms and steps toward changing. *Hearts and minds-information for change*. Retrieved October 30 2006 from [www.heartsandminds.org/self/depression.htm](http://www.heartsandminds.org/self/depression.htm)
- Pollack, W. R. (1998a). Mourning, melancholia, and masculinity: Recognizing and treating depression in men. In W. Pollack & R. Levant (Eds.), *New psychotherapy for men*. (pp. 147–166). New York: Wiley.
- Pollack, W. R. (1998b.) *Real boys: Rescuing our sons from the myths of boyhood*. New York: Random House.
- Putnam, R.D. (2000). *Bowling alone: The collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Real, T. (1998). *I don't want to talk about it: Overcoming the secret legacy of male depression*. New York: Scribner.

- Rochlen, A.B., Whilde, M.R. & Hoyer, W.D. (2005). The real men real depression Campaign: Overview, copy theoretical implications, and research considerations. *Psychology of Men & Masculinities*, 6 (3), 186–194. doi: 10.1037/1524-9220.6.3.186
- Russell, J. (2007, Sept. 28). What you need to know about alcohol and depression: Depression often goes hand-in-hand with alcohol use. *About.com*. Retrieved September 30 2007 from [www.depression.about.com/od/drugsalcohol/a/alcoholanddep.htm](http://www.depression.about.com/od/drugsalcohol/a/alcoholanddep.htm)
- Schor, J. (1993). *The overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schor, J. (1998). *The overspent American: Upscaling, downshifting, and the new consumer*. New York: Basic Books.
- Schor, J. (2004). *Born to Buy: the commercialized child and the new consumer*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Siahpush, M, Spittal, M, & Singh, G.K. (2008). Happiness and life-satisfaction prospectively predict self-rated health, physical health, and the p-presence of limiting, long-term health conditions. *American Journal of Health Promotion*, 23(1),18-26. doi: 10.4278/ajhp.061023137
- Silberg, J. L., Pickles, A., Rutter, M., Hewitt, J., Simonoff, E., Maes, H., Carbonneau, R., Murrelle, L., Foley, D., & Eaves, L. (1999, March). The influence of genetic factors and life stress on depression among adolescent girls. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 56(3), 225-232. doi:10.1001/archpsyc.56.3.225
- Stevenson, B. & Wolfers, J. (2009). The paradox of declining female happiness. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 1(2), 190–225. Retrieved from <http://www.nber.org/papers/w14969>
- Tarabay, J. (2010, June 17). Suicide rivals the battlefield in toll on U.S. military. *NPR*. Retrieved June 30, 2010 from [www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127860466](http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=127860466)
- Thompson, K. (1982). *Emile Durkheim*. (Revised Edition), New York: Routledge.
- Trzesniewski, K. H., Donnellan, M. B., & Robins, R. W. (2008). Do today's young people really think they are so extraordinary? An examination of secular changes in narcissism and self-enhancement. *Psychological Science*, 19, 181–188. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02065.x

- Twenge, J. M. (2000). The age of anxiety? Birth cohort change in anxiety and neuroticism, 1952-1993. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(6), 1007-1021. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.79.6.1007
- Twenge, J. M. (2006). *The Me Generation: Why Today's Young Americans are More Confident, Assertive, Entitled—and More Miserable than Ever Before*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2001). *Population Profile of the United States: 2000 (Internet Release)*. Retrieved from [www.census.gov/population/www/pop-profile/files/2000/chap05.pdf](http://www.census.gov/population/www/pop-profile/files/2000/chap05.pdf)
- Young, K.S. & Rogers, R.C. (2009). The relationship between depression and internet addiction, *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 1(1), 25-28. doi:10.1089/cpb.1998.1.25

**Jessie Klein** is Assistant Professor of sociology and criminal justice at Adelphi University, United States of America.

**Contact Address:** Adelphi University, Anthropology and Sociology, Blodgett Hall, Room 105A, New York, United States.  
Email: [jklein9797@gmail.com](mailto:jklein9797@gmail.com)