Hovering or Grounded?: Exploring Helicopter Parenting as a Valid Construct

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What's The Big Deal?

- Is helicoptering parenting really a unique dimension that deserves further attention?
    - A consequence of media sensationalistic reporting?

- Helicopter parenting may not have negative outcomes; in fact, perhaps positive outcomes (Fingerman et al., 2012; Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012)

- Or maybe, there are consistent, long-term negative effects from helicopter parenting (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011; Padilla-Walker & Neslon, 2012)

- Why such varying differences in findings?
    - Media's negatively biased portrayal of parenting?
    - (In)validity of helicopter parenting as a construct?

Presence in the Media

- Extreme Cases:
  - **The Boston Globe**
    - BU
    - BC
    - Simmons
  - **NBC News**
    - Reed Family
  - **CNN**
    - Parental Interference with job interviews

Associated Negative Effects

- NBC News:
  - "Baby on Board" generation
  - Children's loss of competence
  - Contagious

- CNN
  - "my dad thinks"

Popular Media Portrayal

"Blackhawk," "Stealth Fighter," "Hovercrafts," "Hummingbirds," "Hovering," "Intrusive parenting," "Over-parenting," "Over-involved parenting," "Over Protective parenting," "Over-solicitous Parenting," "Intense Support"

Three Major Themes of Helicopter Parenting

- "Intrusiveness" "Hovering" contact and guidance in multiple areas (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012)

- "Over-" "Fighter" strong concern in future success in education & career (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012; LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011)

- "Support" "Protection" benevolent intentions NOT manipulation (Segrin, et al. 2012)

Operationalization Measures

- Parental Involvement in decision making (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012)

- Frequency of different forms of parental support (Fingerman et al. 2012)

- Children's perception of parental control (LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011)

- Parenting style, Family environment, Parent-child communication, etc. (Segrin, et al. 2012)

Outcome Measures

- (1) Sense of well-being (Fingerman et al. 2012 & LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011)

- (2) Sense of identity as adult (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012)
  - Developmental demands (Emerging adulthood)

- (3) Social relationships (Segrin, et al. 2012)

- (4) Academic & Career outcomes (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012 & LeMoyne & Buchanan, 2011)

Cultural or Maladaptive?

- ## Well-Being
  - Guided by cultural expectations
  - The root of childrearing practices

- ## Subjective
  - Varies across cultural beliefs

- ## Disparity
  - What is normative in one culture may be inappropriate in another.
  - Hence, "helicopter parenting" may be viewed differently in various cultural context

Parents' View

- **Cultural Norms & Experiences**
  - Cognitive Appraisals
  - Emotions
  - Relational Schemas   (Ingen, More & Fuemmeler, 2008)

- **Motivating Factors**
  - Parents desire for child to succeed   (Segrin et al, 2012)
  - Unique cultural cues that promise success

  For Example: Chinese Culture
  - Importance of education
  - Respect authority
  - Devotion to parents   (Campen & Russell, 2010)

Child's View

- **Perception of Parental Control**
  - Some aspects of "parental control" can only be evaluated by the **child's personal experience** (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2012)
    - Subjective experience
    - Cultural norms

For example: Chinese Culture

- Relationship with mother is based on respect and honor for elders and obligation to family

(Campen & Russell, 2010)

Questions to Consider

- Can we accurately define helicopter parenting?

- Is it universally applicable?
  - If "No," how to move forward/future considerations

- Does it even exist?
  - Conflicting research findings
    - Adaptive/Maladaptive
  - Rehashing of previous terms?
    - Authoritarian