WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF INTENDED AND UNINTENDED BIRTHS

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A high proportion of U.S. pregnancies are undesirable, from the perspective of the mother.

“Intendedness” is the dominant framework used to differentiate desirable from undesirable

Intendedness is useful

... but doesn’t always “fit” due to:

- Ambivalence
- Indifference
- Unintended pregnancies that are very similar to intended

Happiness may be a valuable alternative or complement
Distribution of Happiness Scores for:

Intended Pregnancies:

Unintended Pregnancies:
Study 1: Sexual minority women and birth happiness

Comparison of 2 groups:

1. Heterosexual-identified **concordant** women
   - Identify as heterosexual, attracted only to men, only male sexual partners

2. Heterosexual-identified **discordant** women
   - Identify as heterosexual, but have at least some same-sex attraction and/or some female partners
     - Unhappier about their births
     - ...Partially due to differences in intention status
     - ...Partially due to differences in supportiveness of (male) partnerships
     - Part of the gap unexplained (gap is especially large for unwanted births)
Study 2: Race-ethnicity and birth happiness

- Latina women are happier about their unintended births than (non-Latina) White women (and Black women)
  - Not explained by differences in socioeconomic status
  - Not explained by differences in supportiveness of partnerships
  - Higher happiness mainly exists for Latina women who are both foreign-born and very religious
    - Follow-up research points to social pressure
Moving forward

- Pregnancy desirability scale
- Differentiating between “acceptable” and “unacceptable?”
- Multidimensionality of desirability: Difficult to implement but necessary
Thank you

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