



WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF INTENDED AND UNINTENDED BIRTHS

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Conceiving American Families in the 21st Century

March 2, 2018

Austin, TX

- 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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