



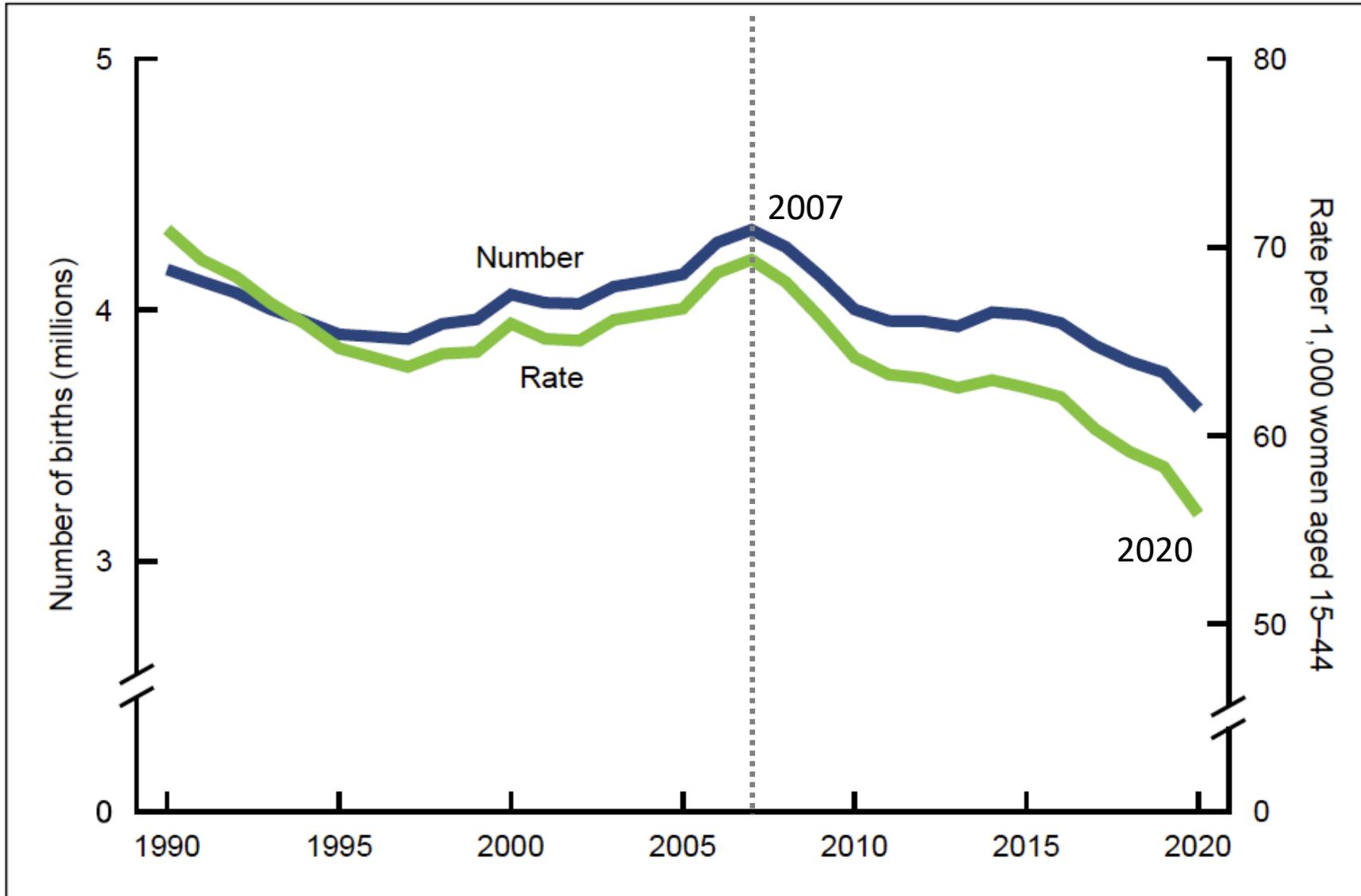
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COVID-19 and Fertility: What can we learn from recent trends in the US?

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May 11, 2021

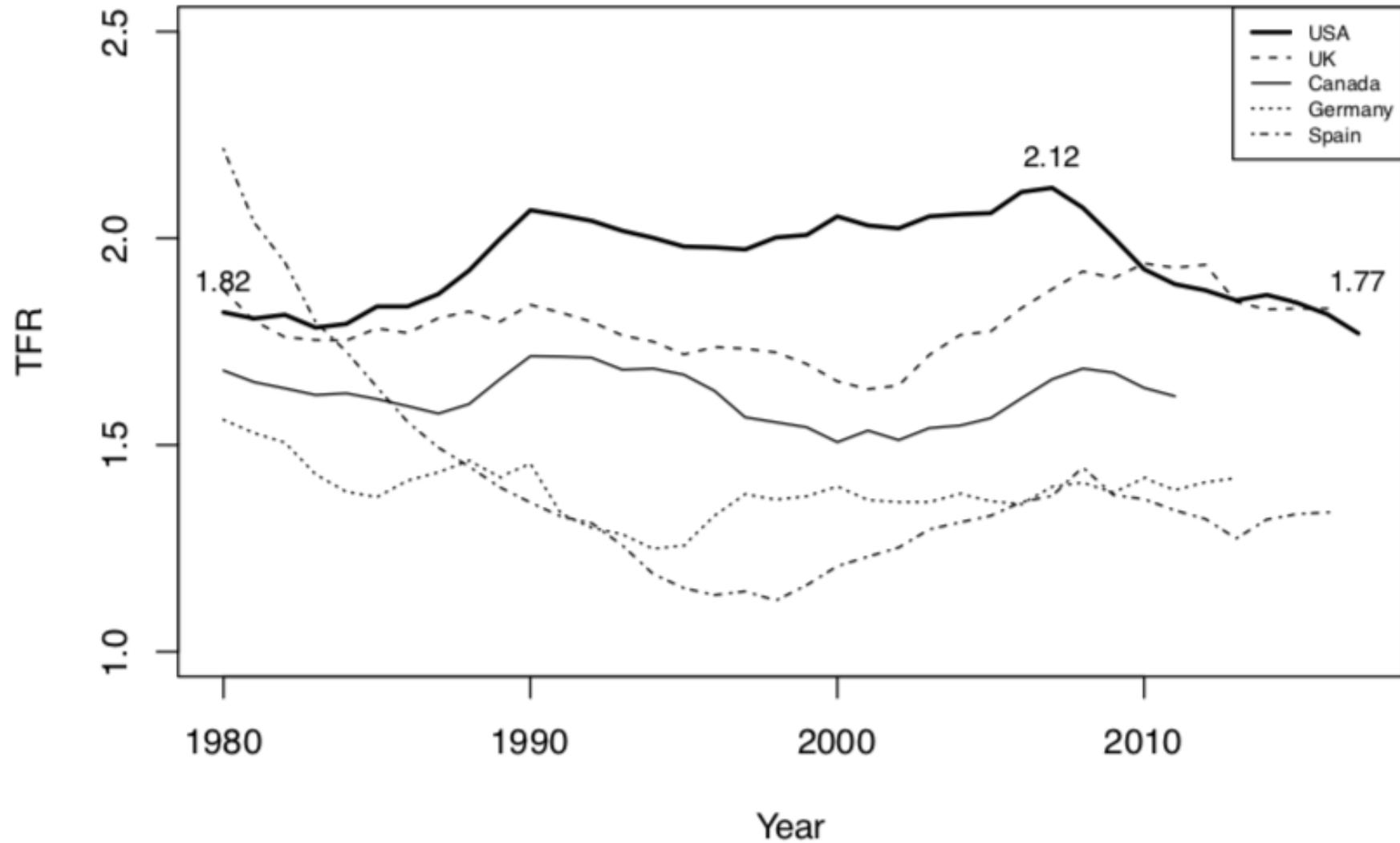
Figure 1. Number of live births and general fertility rates: United States, final 1990–2019 and provisional 2020



	2007	2020
Births	4.3m	3.6m
GFR	69.5	55.8
TFR	2.12	1.64

SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, National Vital Statistics System, Natality.

Figure 1. Total fertility rates (TFR) for selected countries, 1980-2017.



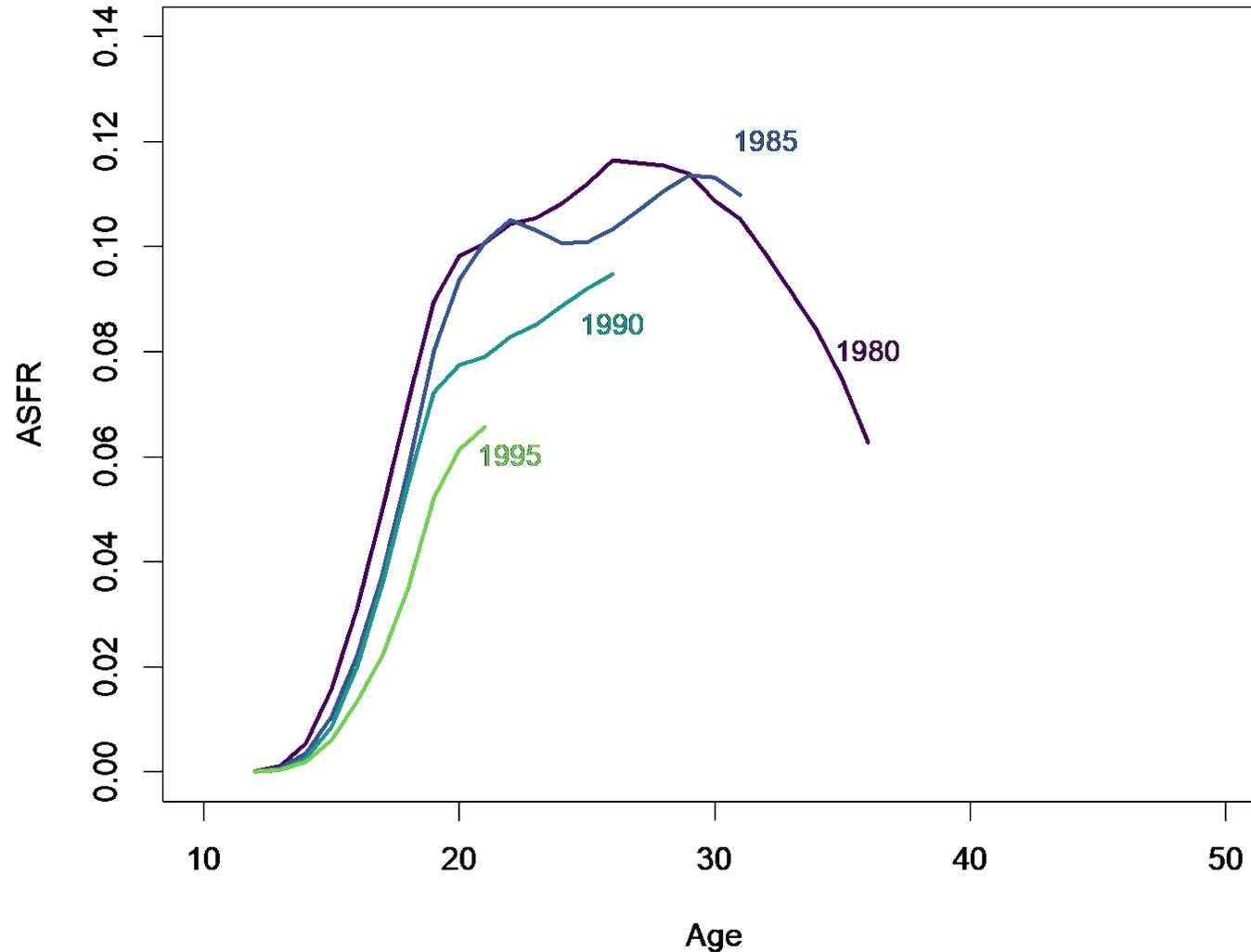
Source: Human Fertility Database.

Source: Gemmill and Hartnett 2019

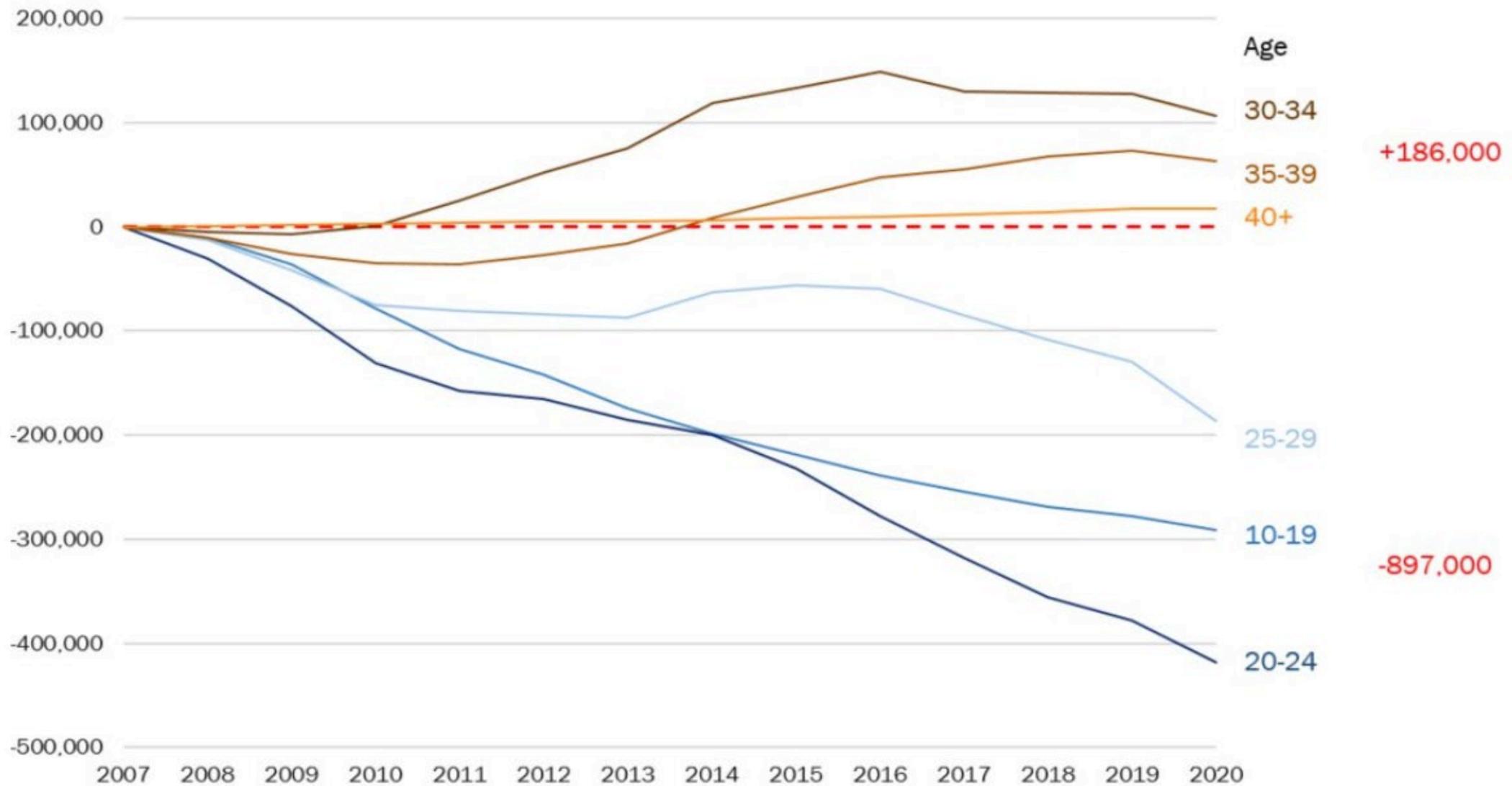
Pre-COVID factors to consider

- 1. Ongoing postponement transition
- 2. Changing migration patterns, Hispanic, and immigrant fertility
- 3. Declining intentions for children among young people
- 4. Reductions in unintended pregnancy

US in the midst of a postponement transition that was accelerated by Great Recession

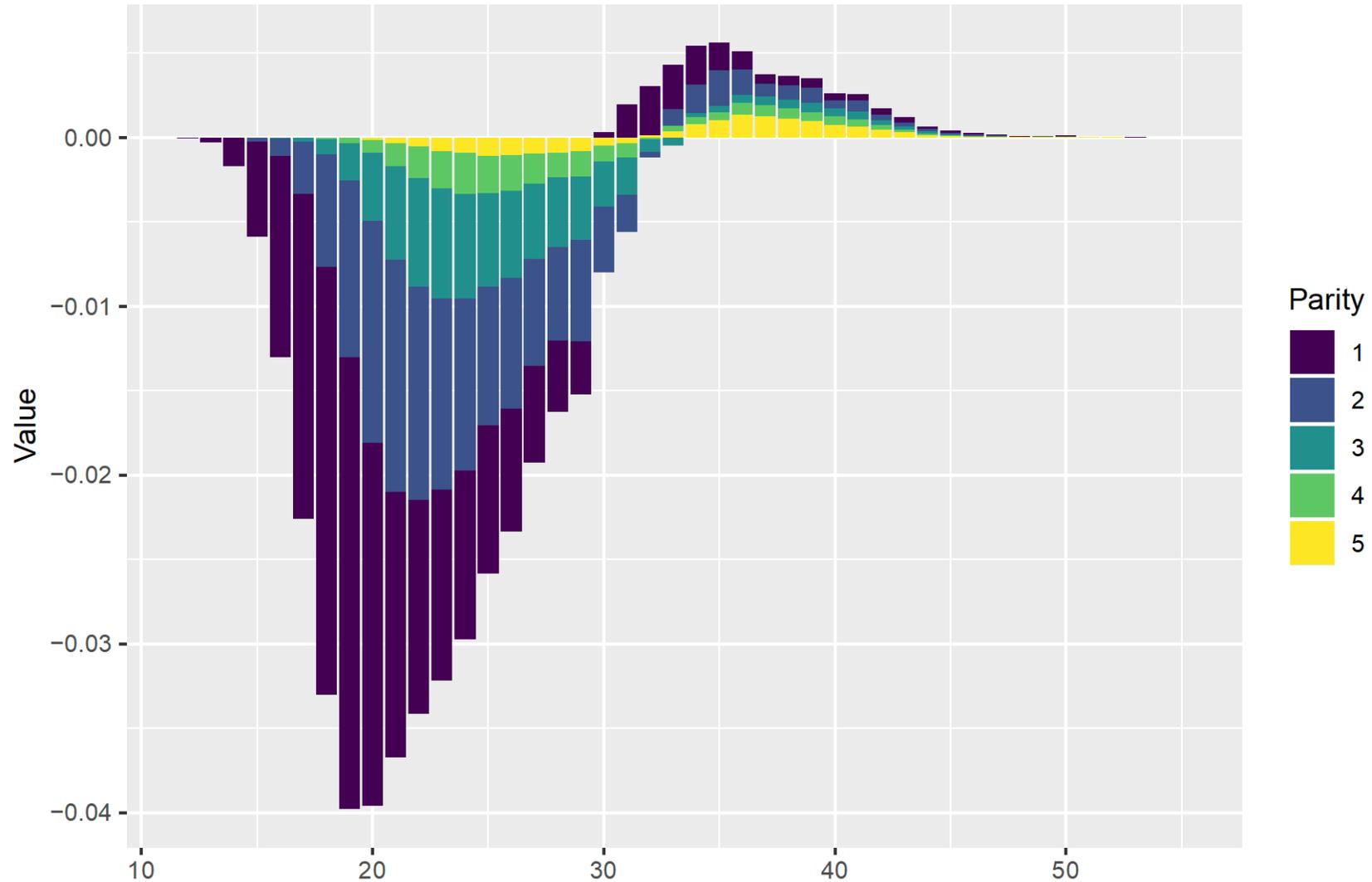


Change in the annual number of US births since 2007, by mother's age



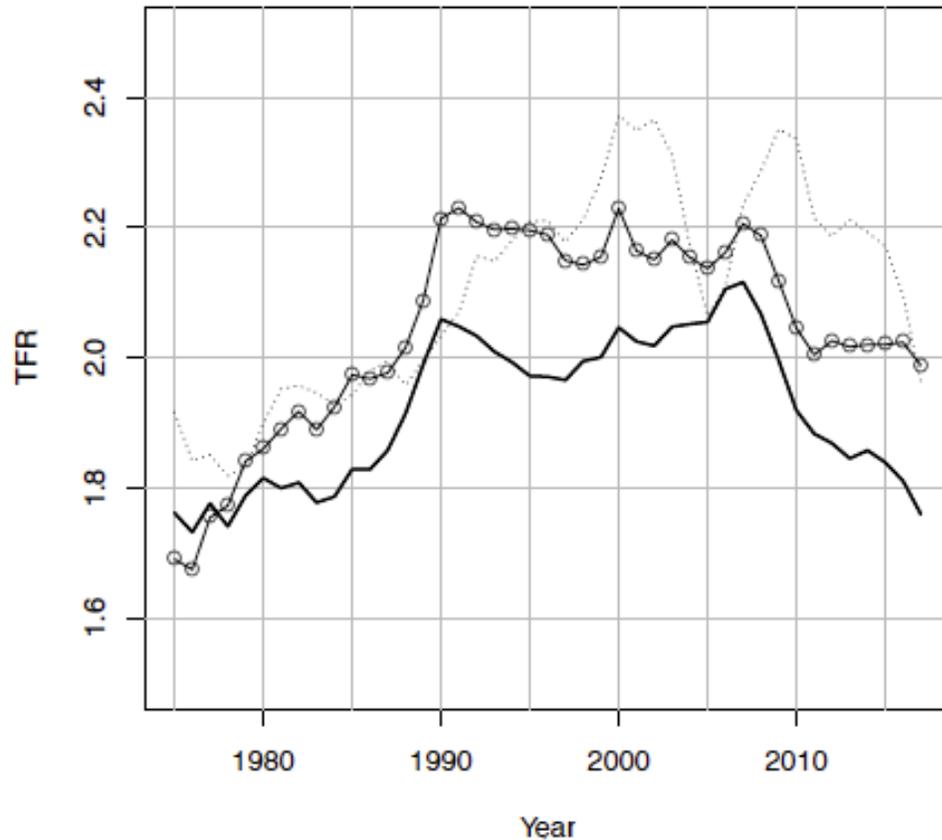
Decomposition by age and parity in period TFR

Contribution by age and parity to decline in TFR between 2007 and 2017

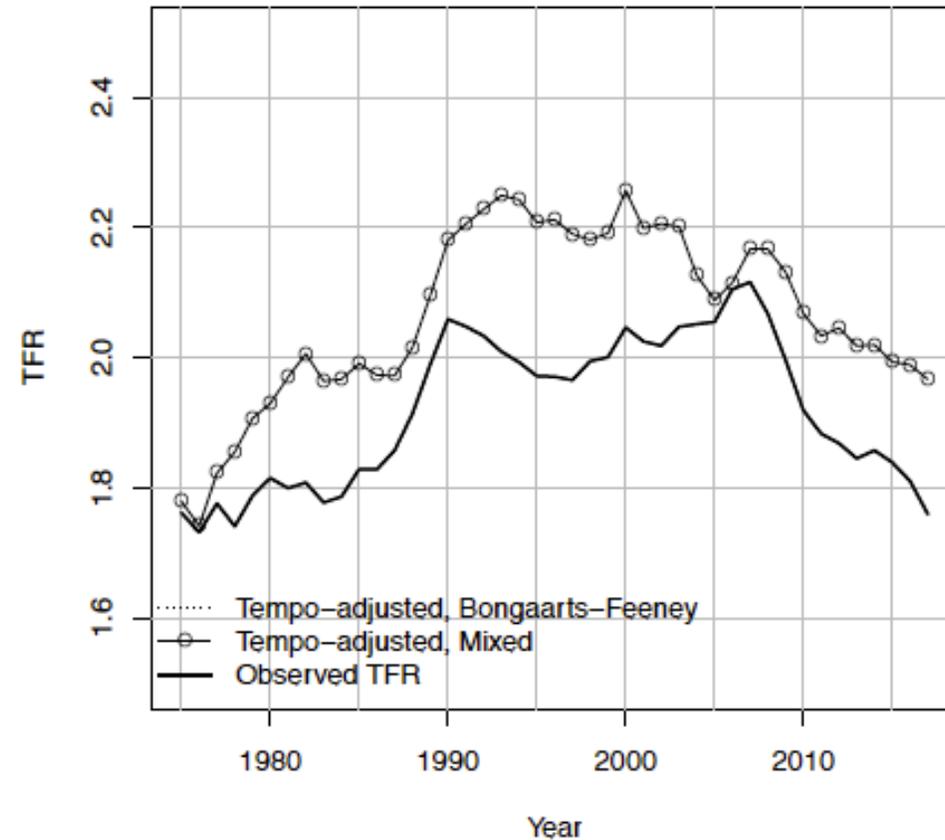


Tempo adjustments do not fully explain decline

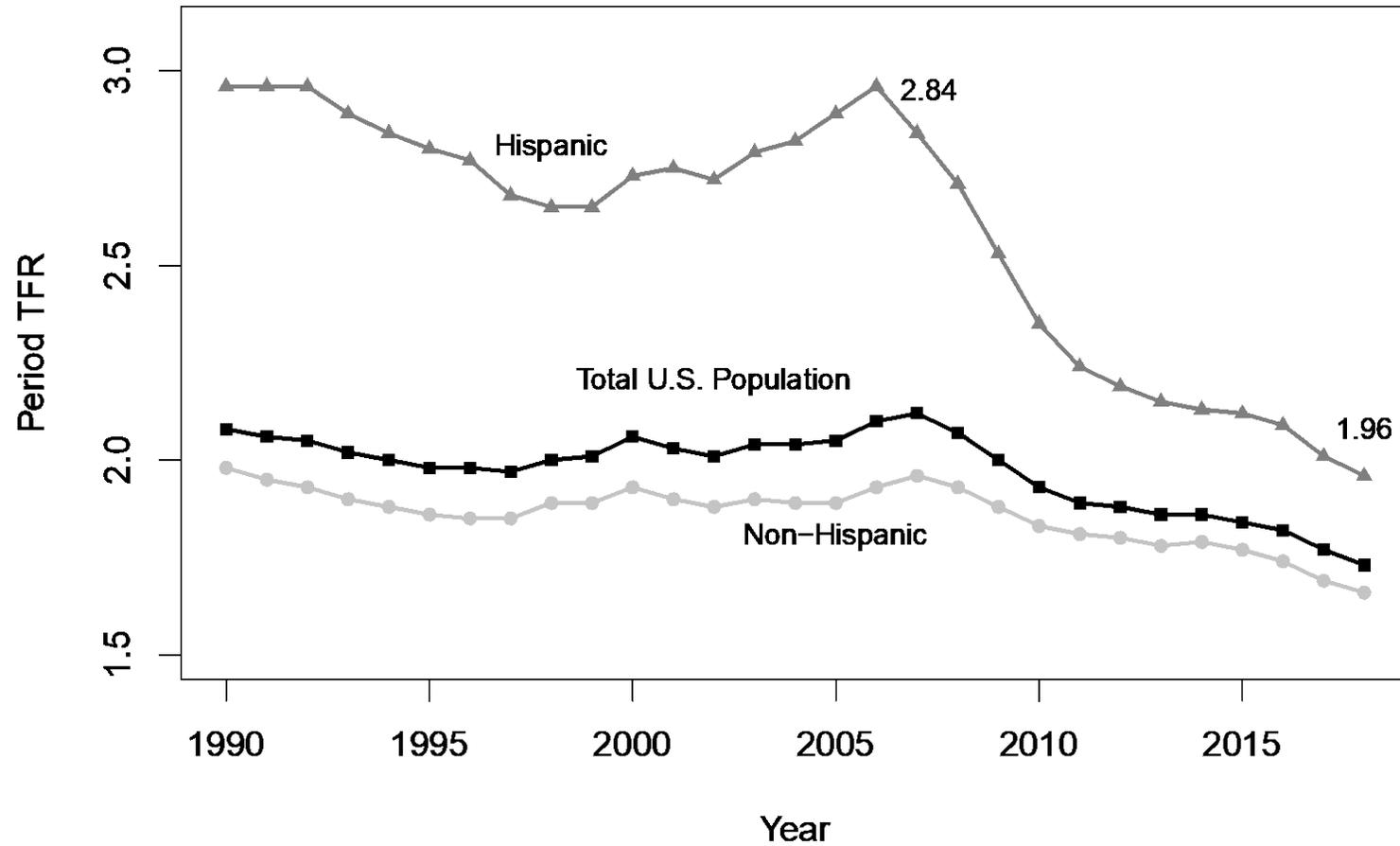
Estimated without parity



Estimated by parity, then combined

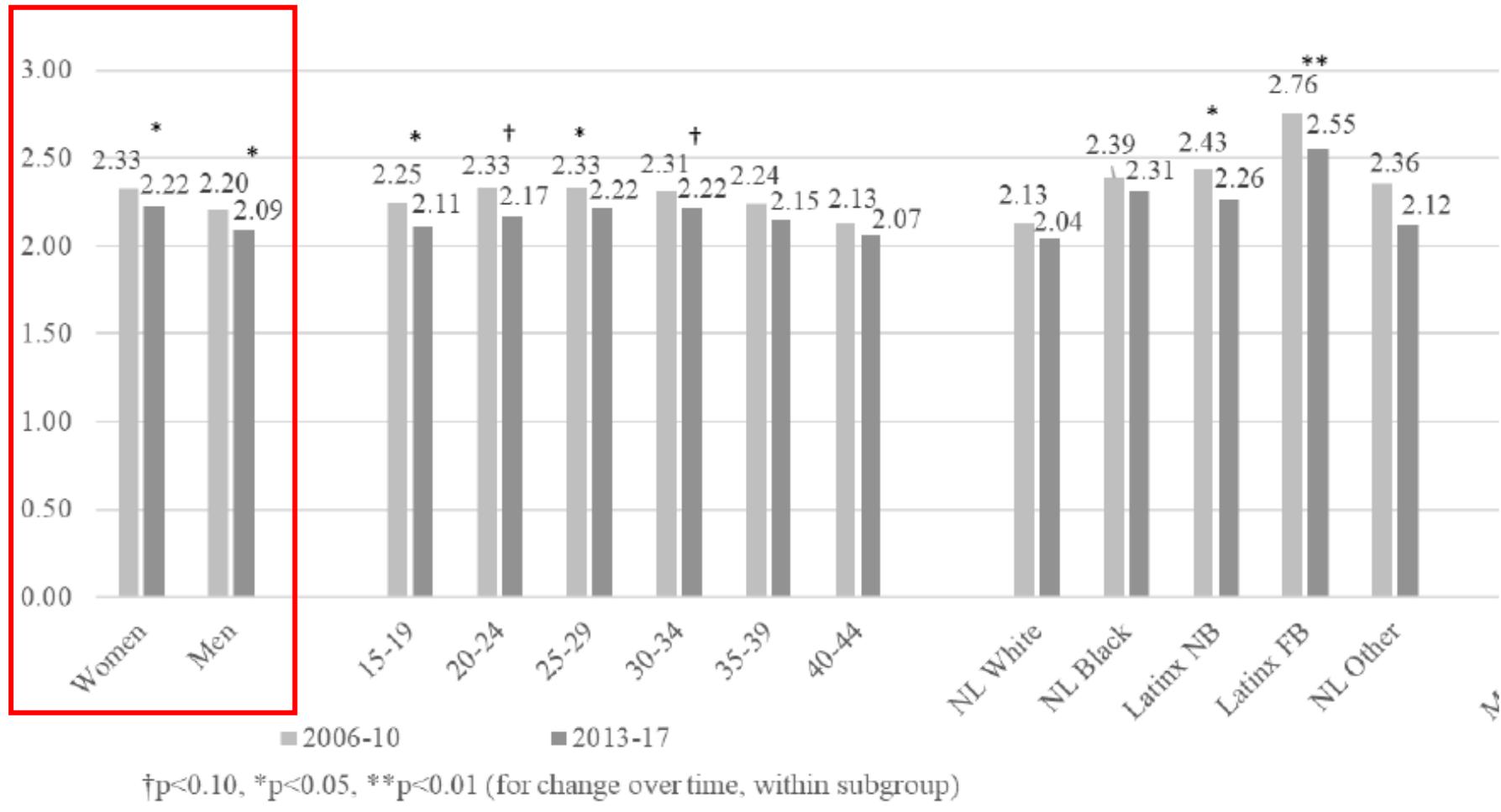


Changing Hispanic fertility



Changing intentions

Figure 1a. Total Intended Parity, By Characteristics. NSFG 2006-10 and 2013-17 (Weighted)



Total intended parity = Current parity + Additional children intended

Source: Hartnett and Gemmill 2020

Post-recessionary fertility decline largely driven by declines in unintended pregnancy

- 35% of the decline in fertility between 2007 and 2016 can be explained by declines in births that were likely unintended (Buckles et al. 2019)

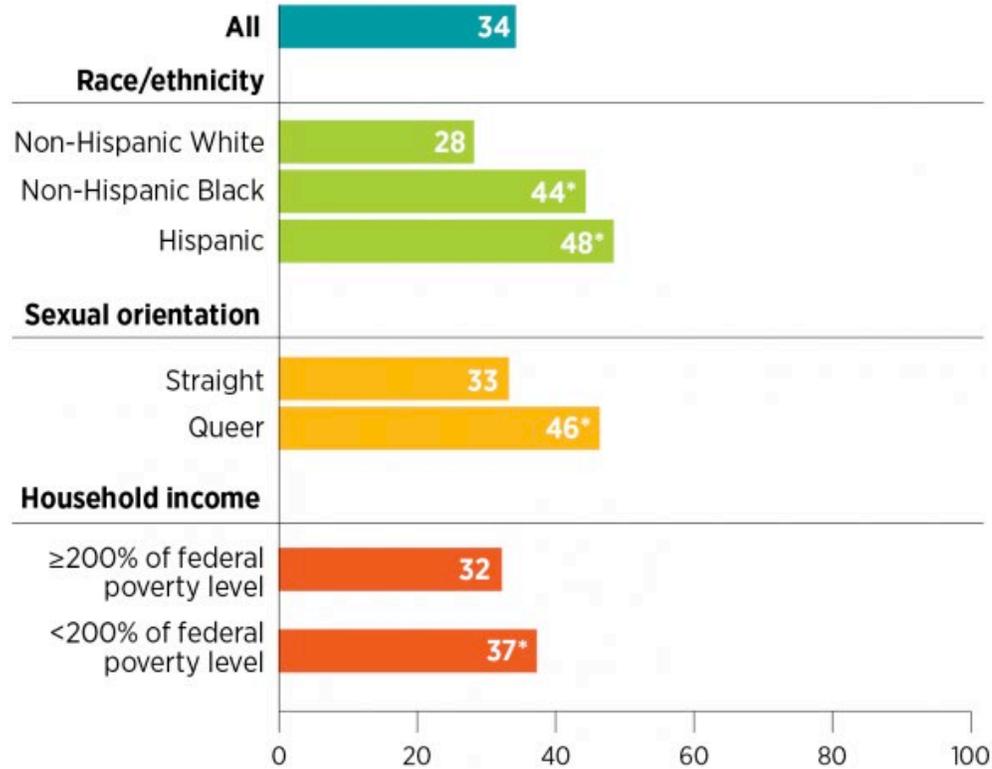
Figure 7: The Predicted Proportion of Births that Are Unintended, 1980-2016, Using 2002 NSFG Coefficients



COVID-19 and fertility in the US

FIGURE 1. Many women report that their fertility preferences have shifted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

% of women reporting wanting to delay childbearing or have fewer children



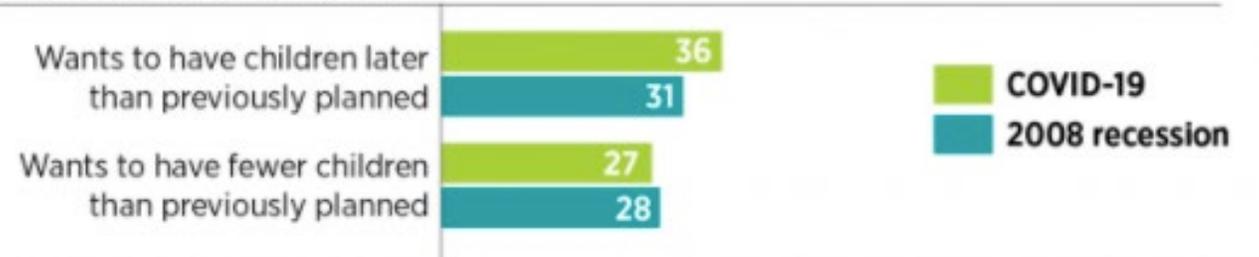
*Difference is statistically significant at $p < .05$. Note: Queer category includes responses of "gay or lesbian," "bisexual" and "other."

gutmacher.org

FIGURE 5. The initial SRH impact of the COVID-19 pandemic rivals the impact of the 2008 recession.

% of study participants reporting SRH effects from pandemic or recession

Changes in fertility preferences



Fertility intentions during pandemic

- Convenience sample of Facebook users in US recruited with targeted ads
- 2 surveys: first in July 2020 and second in January 2021
- How have your feelings about having or not having a child been affected by the pandemic?
 - The pandemic has **not changed** how I think about having/not having a child
 - The pandemic has **increased** my desire to have a/another child
 - The pandemic has **decreased** my desire to have a/another child
 - The pandemic has made me want to **delay** having another child
 - Other

Have fertility intentions changed?

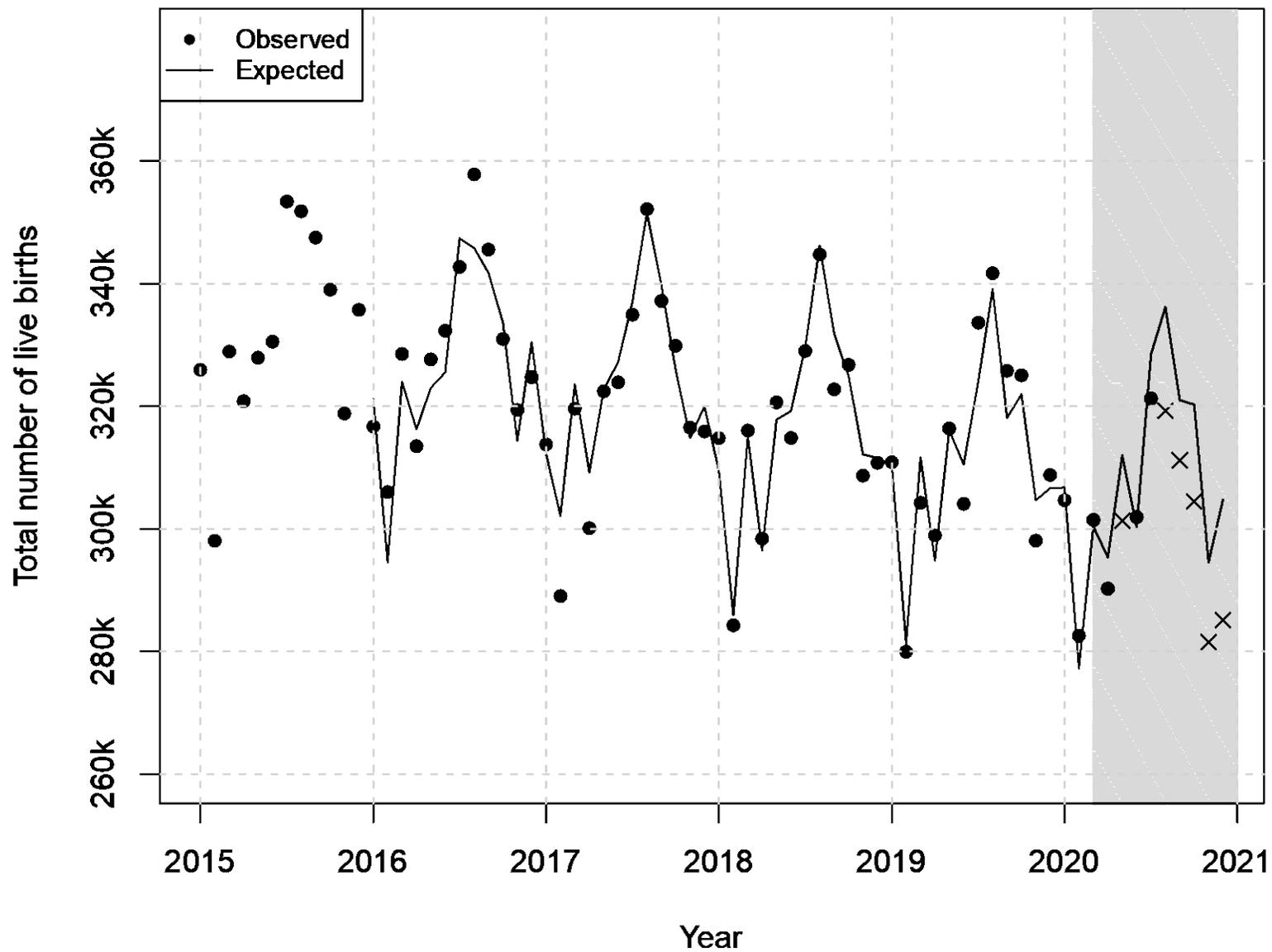
	JULY 2020	JANUARY 2021
Not changed	44.2	45.2
Increased	5.4	9.0
Decreased	22.0	22.9
Delay	25.5	19.8
Other	2.9	3.2

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Open-ended responses

- Delay:
 - *“Still want a child but not in this situation.”*
 - *“It’s too scary to bring a child into the world right now”*
- No change, but increased fear:
 - *“I have fears and concerns about having a child during this time but still want to very much.”*
- Reinforcement:
 - *“The pandemic has made me sure that I am done having children.”*
 - *“I’m 40. The pandemic reaffirmed my desire for my toddler to have a sibling and I have no time to wait.”*



Relative change between 2019-2020

	EXPECTED	OBSERVED
January	-1.4	-2.0
February	-1.9	+0.9
March	-1.5	-0.9
April	-1.5	-2.9
May	-0.6	-4.8
June	-1.1	-0.7
July	-2.3	-3.7
August	-3.3	-6.5
September	-1.5	-4.5
October	-2.2	-6.3
November	-2.6	-5.5
December	-2.6	-7.7