What’s Going on with Fertility?

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[Links to articles about declining fertility rates]

The New York Times
U.S. Birthrate Drops 4th Year in a Row, Possibly Echoing the Great Recession

TRT World
Declining US fertility rates ‘a cause for alarm’

The Atlantic
The Misplaced Fears About the United States’ Declining Fertility Rate

TIME
It May Not Be a Bad Thing Fewer U.S. Babies Were Born in 2018 Than in Any Year Since 1986
Total Fertility Rate, by Race/Ethnicity All SCAG Counties

Source: Center for Diseases Control, National Vital Statistics, via RAND

Source: Center for Diseases Control, National Vital Statistics, via RAND
Total Fertility Rate, by Race/Ethnicity LA and San Bernardino, 2006 & 2016

Source: Center for Diseases Control, National Vital Statistics, via RAND

What are the explanations...?

- Recession/financial (in)security
- Mismatch of entry-level jobs and affordable housing
- More people seeking higher education
- Delayed marriage and childbearing
- Cost of living (and children!) is high
- Changes in cultural expectations of parenthood
- Lack of supportive workplace policy
- Lack of public policies
So what?

Positives:
• Older mothers have children with better socioeconomic outcomes
• Result of better birth control, fewer teen pregnancies & lower child mortality

Drawbacks:
• Shrinking future workforce combined with aging current workforce
• Delay could result in no children for some

What can be done?

• Child care subsidies +
• Baby bonus +
• Parental leave +
• Maternity leave only ?
• Part-time work +
• School schedules ?
• But…differences across socioeconomic background
In sum...

- Fertility declining across geography, race and age group
- Disagreement on whether declining fertility should be disconcerting
- BUT…if the reason women are not realizing desired fertility has to do with barriers to fertility, there may be some solutions