

**Do Trends in Men's Fertility Intentions Help Explain
the Post-Recession Decline in the U.S. Fertility Rate?**

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ABSTRACT

The Total Fertility Rate in the U.S. has declined in the last decade, from 2.12 to 1.76. We use data from the 2006 to 2017 NSFG to examine two possibilities: whether men expect to have fewer children now than they did in the past (“declining expectations”), or if they expect to make up delayed births later (“postponement”). We find more evidence of declining expectations than postponement: In 2006-08 men expected to have a total of 2.30 births, and in 2015-17, that number had fallen to 2.15. This is due to the fact that current parity declined during this period with no compensating increase in additional births intended. Comparisons with women indicated that men’s total expected parity is consistently lower than women’s (likely due, in part, to under-reporting of existing births among men). However, the time trends in total expected parity are comparable for men and women: there was no significant interaction effect between time and gender.