Who Had Pandemic Babies?
Exploring the Profiles of Mothers with a Recent Birth Using ACS Data

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BACKGROUND

Economic shocks tend to reduce fertility and marriage by making both events, and the prerequisites to those events, unaffordable.[1,2,3] Vital statistics data show that conceptions declined during the first few months of the pandemic but rebounded in the remaining months of 2020.[4,5,6]

Less is currently known about the characteristics of women who had a child during this unprecedented time, or the households in which they lived.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

RQ1: What are the socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of women with a recent birth in 2021? Do these characteristics vary across age groups?

RQ2: Were women with a recent birth in 2021 of higher socioeconomic status than women with a recent birth in 2019?

RQ3: Does the probability of having a recent birth change between 2019 and 2021 by age and socioeconomic status?

DATA & METHODS

The American Community Survey (ACS) 2019 and 2021 1-year data

Conceptions that occurred after COVID-19 was declared a national emergency (March 13, 2020) would result in births ~December 2020. The ACS asks all women aged 15-50 if they had a birth in the last 12 months, which could be January 2020-December 2021 in the 2021 data

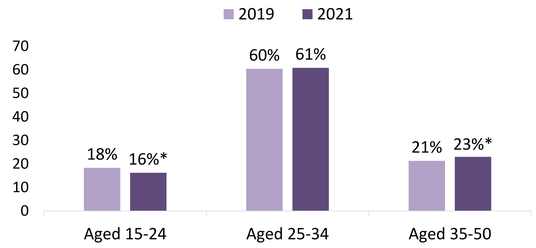
- Recent (post-pandemic[1]) birth in 2021 data: Women aged 15-50 with a birth in the last year who lived in a household with someone born in 2021 (likely conceived after March 2020)
  - Recent birth in 2019 data structured the same way for consistency and comparability across data years.
- Independent Variables: Age, education, household income
- Controls: Race/Hispanic origin, nativity, marital status, region

Descriptive statistics comparing women with a recent birth in 2019 and 2021. Logistic regression models of all women aged 15-50 with controls; Dependent variable = Recent birth, Interaction terms = Data year * Independent variables, Predicted probabilities

1. "Post-pandemic" refers to the time period after the declaration of COVID-19 as a national emergency.

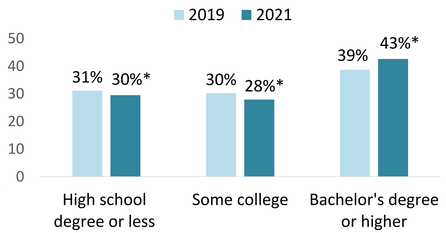
Among women with a recent birth…

Were women who gave birth in 2021 **older** than those who gave birth in 2019?



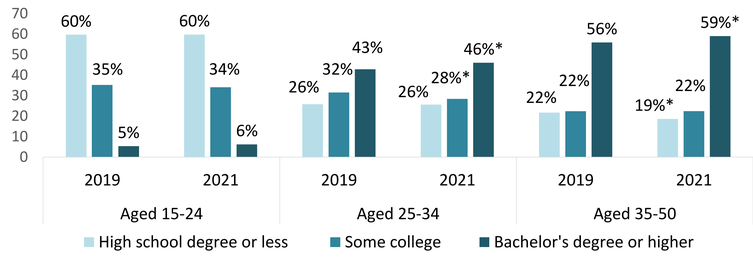
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 and 2021 1-year files.

Did women who gave birth in 2021 have higher **education** than those who gave birth in 2019?



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 and 2021 1-year files.

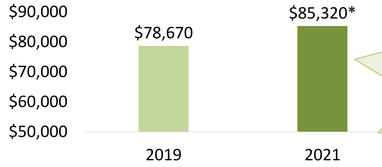
Does the **educational attainment** of women who gave birth in 2019 and 2021 differ by **age group**?



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 and 2021 1-year files.

Women who gave birth in 2021 were significantly more likely to be aged 35-50 and less likely to be aged 15-24 than women who gave birth in 2019.

Did women who gave birth in 2021 have higher **median household incomes** than those who gave birth in 2019?



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 and 2021 1-year files.

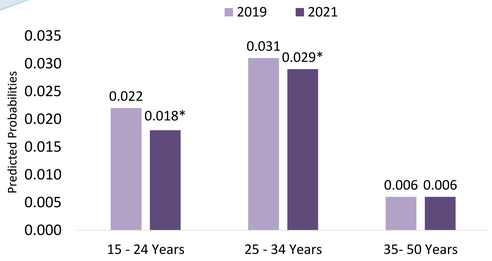
The median household income of someone with a birth in 2021 was $85,320.

Differences in educational attainment between women with a recent birth in 2019 and 2021 were concentrated among ages 25-34 and 35-50.

Among all women…

Does the probability of having a recent birth by **age** change between 2019 and 2021?

(Based on full regression model)

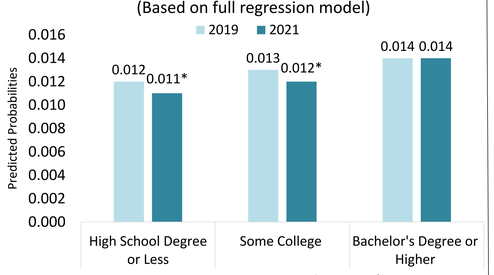


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 and 2021 1 year files.

Logistic regression models interacting Year and Age or Year and Education suggest that significant changes were seen among the younger age and lower education groups only.

Does the probability of having a recent birth by **education** change between 2019 and 2021?

(Based on full regression model)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2019 and 2021 1 year files.

KEY FINDINGS/RESULTS

RQ1 and RQ2: Women who had a child after the start of the pandemic (2021) were older, had higher median household incomes, and had higher educational attainment than the women with a recent birth in 2019.

When educational differences are broken down by age group, women in the 25-34 and 35-50 age groups saw the greatest change in education between the two years.

RQ3: The unique effects of age and education vary by year of recent birth. Accounting for controls, younger women and women with less education had lower probabilities of having a child after the start of the pandemic (2021) than in 2019.

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