

US birth rate hits record low—and that might be a good thing

The U.S. total fertility rate has dropped to below 1.73 births per woman, according to a new report from the National Center for Health Statistics. This record low edges out the previous U.S. fertility nadir of 1.74 births per woman back in 1976.

U.S. rates appear to be following the downward trend seen in other developed countries.

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Is this a bad thing? A newly popular argument is that “late capitalism” has made it too hard to balance life and work, which is causing women to have fewer [kids](#). In a New York Times op-ed, the writer Anna Louie Sussman blamed employers for failing to make parenting more compatible with having a career and argued that the government should intervene to make family creation easier.

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Modernity offers people a multitude of life options that compete with the bearing and rearing of children. Evidently, the trade-offs people make are reducing fertility. As with most things, it would be nice to have it all: 2.1 children, a great job, a big house, a short commute, the perfect school district, enough time and money for our favorite entertainment, and more. In lieu of utopia, however, we have the freedom to choose. That’s a good thing.

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