THE AMERICAN FAMILY SURVEY

Summary Report: Marriage and Family—Attitudes, Practices & Policy Opinions

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Between August 14 and 26, 2015, the Deseret News and The Center for the Study of Elections and Democracy at Brigham Young University fielded a survey on the family in America. This survey was administered by YouGov[2] to a sample of 3,000 adult respondents whose characteristics mirror those of the general population. This report details the raw results of that survey and some of the key demographic breakdowns. Download the survey report at http://national.deseretnews.com/american-family-survey.

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[1]We graciously thank the advisory committee, Karlyn Bowman (American Enterprise Institute), Sara McLanahan (Princeton University), Richard Reeves (The Brookings Institution), and Brad Wilcox (The University of Virginia). They provided substantial advice and comment that dramatically improved the survey and the report. Errors, of course, are our own.

[2]Please see section seven on methodology (below) for a statement about the specific protocols for this survey.

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1 Project Overview & Summary

The American Family Survey was designed to measure three key concepts:

Attitudes and practices about marriage and families;

Policy and political attitudes, mostly about family-related areas;

And, the stability and structure of respondent families.

The results suggest that people are quite happy with their own marriages and families, but that they have some concerns about marriages and families in general. This is not to say that people do not believe in marriage. In fact, there is widespread agreement that marriage is an important social good. And people believe families can protect children. Data below — both from experiments and simple survey responses — show that when people think about children, they are more likely to care about strong marriages and families. This sort of child-centric view of families is an area of broad policy agreement among liberals and conservatives.

Despite agreement about the goods of marriage, it is clear that the social meaning of marriage is understood differently by different groups. Conservatives, Republicans, and older Americans emphasize a more traditional view of what marriage should mean. In contrast, liberals, Democrats, and younger Americans tend to be much more open to alternative family arrangements, and they are less prone to see marriage as a central social institution. This does not mean that they are hostile to marriage — they are simply somewhat less committed to traditional arrangements than are those on the right. Moreover, we asked people to report on the basic activities of their marriage and family lives, and we find few differences in activity rates or patterns with respect to ideology, income, or other demographic characteristics. Whatever different meanings liberals and conservatives bestow on marriage, ideology does not determine the basic character of a person's marriage behavior and experiences.

Another point of agreement between liberals and conservatives is that families are under attack — that is, that families today face important challenges and are not thriving as well as they might. But there is less agreement between those two camps about the sources of attacks on the family. While liberals focus on economic challenges (the costs of raising children, the stress of heavy work demands, or the need for better jobs, for example), conservatives see cultural and structural problems (such as single-parent homes, sexual permissiveness, changing definitions of the family, divorce, etc.) as being most important. Both sides believe parental discipline and the creation of boundaries for media use are not being emphasized as strongly as they should.

While there are some predictable differences between liberals and conservatives when it comes to issues like same-sex marriage and other related political items, there is widespread and perhaps surprising agreement about the role of institutions and programs in supporting families and children. On average, most Americans see these programs as playing a positive or at worst neutral role for families. Personal experience with these programs is especially important for Republicans, who view government programs more favorably if they have directly benefitted from them.

This report describes these areas of agreement and disagreement in an effort to clarify public opinion on families. We believe the results can provide an important guidepost to areas of policy agreement and areas where additional dialogue and research remains necessary. What should encourage interested parties across the political spectrum is that there is much agreement and that common ground about possibilities for strengthening American families is possible.

1.1 Summary Findings

Our purpose in the main body of this report is to illustrate some of the key findings and results of the basic items. This review is not meant to be exhaustive or comprehensive. Rather, it is to illustrate some of the basic demographic patterns in the results of the key survey items. To keep the report to a manageable length, we have focused on providing the most interesting results about marriage, family and policy attitudes.[3] To the degree possible, we characterize the results using tables and figures, though we also point to noteworthy patterns in the text. For further inquiries about the data and its future availability, contact csed@byu.edu. The full dataset will be available next year.

The key findings of this summary report are as follows:

On balance, people are happy with their own marriages, but they are relatively unhappy with the state of marriage generally in the United States. Similarly, people report that their own families are getting stronger or at least holding steady, but most people feel that in general families are becoming weaker.

Overall, most Americans express positive sentiments about marriage, and they are especially supportive of the idea that marriage protects children. Indeed, when we prime people to think about children, their attitudes about the family change. We show this through an experiment that cues people to think about about children in consideration of divorce policy. When children are mentioned, Americans are more wary of divorce.

There are significant differences in how liberals and conservatives view the institution of marriage, but these differences largely have to do with the social meaning of marriage, not the lived practice of marriage and family. For instance, those on the right see marriage as vital for the raising of children, while those on the left are less likely to agree with that meaning of marriage.

Despite these differences, differences between liberals and conservatives in their personal marriage and family practices are smaller than might be expected. To be sure, there are some distinctions: on average, conservatives tend to have more children than liberals; conservatives are slightly more likely than liberals and moderates to report being married; and conservatives are slightly less likely to report living with a partner outside of marriage. But the magnitude of these differences is generally small, and other similarities between the relationship histories and family practices of liberals and conservatives are striking.

When it comes to the regular, day-to-day activities of family life, there are few differences at all between liberals and conservatives. We asked about a broad set of activities couples or families might do together, and with respect to this set of activities, liberals and conservatives tend to engage in the same activities at the same rates. With respect to the lived experience of marriage and family life, few differences exist across income or other demographic characteristics either.

Younger people and the unmarried (two groups that overlap) are systematically less likely to see marriage as a social good, though they still value it. People want to get married, though the age at which they believe marriage to be ideal depends, to some degree, on their personal circumstances. People wait for financial stability, particularly steady jobs before marrying.

Both liberals and conservatives view the family as being under attack, but view the sources of those attacks in very different lights. Conservatives believe that the family faces threats from cultural decay and changes in family structure and stability. Conservatives do not recognize economic factors as threatening the family nearly as often. Liberals discount culture and structure, instead favoring economics as the explanation for struggling families.

[3] Next year we plan to release a followup report that will detail the findings about family structure and stability, and how those concepts relate to the simple results discussed in this report.

As far as politics go, people on average have favorable (or at least neutral) views of most local institutions and their effect on families, with some exceptions. Political parties, the news media and (to a lesser degree) public schools are evaluated negatively. People tend to think these institutions are at least somewhat supportive of families. In addition, Black respondents to the survey were markedly less likely than other racial or ethnic groups to see the police as an institution that supports families.

There is some enthusiasm in the public for government policies (i.e., food stamps or the child tax credit) designed to help families. In the case of these programs, the key issue is whether or not people have experienced the program. The only group of people that is consistently less enthusiastic about these programs is Republicans who have not benefitted from the programs. They don't like such policies as much, but are not truly negative about them.

Across these (and several other issues) there is evidence that people's life experience — especially whether or not they have children in their home — is correlated with their attitudes about policy and politics (though the direction of causality is always difficult to be sure about). Republicans appear to condition their political beliefs based, at least in part, on such lived experience. More broadly, having children appears to make people more sympathetic to programs that benefit those with children. And having benefitted from a program appears to make people more sympathetic to that program.

Those broad points are supported in this report by a wide variety of statistics and data. It is best to begin by noting that more than nine out of ten married respondents say their marriage is the same or stronger than two years ago. By contrast, eight out of ten say that marriages generally have grown weaker or stayed the same, so we cannot be too optimistic about the state of marriage in society. However, because of familiarity bias, the notion that people evaluate more positively the things they know best, we should recognize that the public takes the most positive view of the relationships with which they are most familiar: their own family.

And the pessimism about families is not really pessimism about the concept. About six out of ten respondents believe that "marriage is needed to create strong families" or that "marriage makes families and kids better off financially." Just over half of respondents agreed that society is better off when more people are married" and almost seven out of ten respondents disagree that marriage is "more of a burden than a benefit," with even larger majorities rejecting the idea that marriage is "old fashioned and out of date." However one slices the data, there is broad acceptance of the importance of marriage. If we only look at people's beliefs about the potential of marriage, we find a very positive landscape indeed.

As we noted above, the social meaning of marriage does vary by ideology. Breaking down some of the statistics we just described, fewer than half of liberals agree that society is better off when more people are married, while about eight out of ten conservatives agree with that claim. Similar differences extend to other questions like the raising of children and other areas. Liberals see the expansion of marriage to include same-sex couples as something that will strengthen the idea of marriage, while conservatives see such changing definitions as a source of weakness. It would be natural to conclude that these divides lead to a kind of polarized family culture where there are "liberal" models for families and "conservative" models for families. And yet, with the exception of the fact that conservatives tend to have, on average, more children than liberals, we are unable to detect such behavioral patterns in the habits and practices of the families surveyed here. The difference in social meaning yields no such effect. Families of all stripes engage in most of the same activities and at comparable rates. We do not find conservative families going out, discussing finances or eating dinner together any more often than we find liberal families engaging in those practices (with the notable exception of prayer and worship).

Beyond ideology, age is important, and there are some generational patterns. Young people emphasize commitment over marital status, but they are not rejecting marriage as an obsolete practice or status. Compared to older Americans, young people do tend to have slightly different expectations about what

one must do before getting married. For instance, 21% of 18-19-year-olds say it is "very important" to live together with one's future spouse before marriage, compared with just 3% of those over 65.

There are also differences in how people see the sources of problems for families. Though most Americans are concerned with the cost of raising children — only one out of three believe that it is an affordable activity — the economic issues facing families are particularly important to liberals, who are much more likely to say that economic issues are a major drain on the family. In contrast, conservatives downplay those threats and emphasize cultural decay and shifting family structure and stability. Just as liberals and conservatives evaluate the social meaning of marriage differently, so too do they diagnose the problems facing families in different ways. Even here, though, we find at least one point of agreement: all respondents are worried about discipline. Over half believe it is sometimes necessary to spank children, and more than eight out of ten want parents setting boundaries for children's media consumption.

Despite these differences in outlook, there is clearly a child-centric ethic to how people think about families. For instance, 21% say divorce should be easier to obtain, but that number drops by half to 11% when people are asked whether it should be easier to obtain when children still live at home. This experimental result is buttressed by many other pieces of data that show people want institutions to favor families and support them. Despite the differences between liberals and conservatives, there is broad policy agreement that government policies to help families are either positive — or at worst neutral. Relatively few respondents actually rate institutions, government programs and policies as negative for families.

1.2 *Road Map to the Report*

In what follows, we begin by exploring attitudes and practices regarding marriage. Next we look beyond couple relationships to families more broadly, again exploring attitudes and practices. We then turn to Americans' views about the most important problems facing families. Finally, we explore the politics and policy of families, examining both opinion about whether key institutions support the family and attitudes about a variety of public policies that are relevant to family life.

2 Marriage: Attitudes and Practices

The survey included a variety of questions designed to explore how respondents feel about their own marriages or relationships and how they assess the health of the institution of marriage in the United States. In addition, we asked respondents to report how often they participated in a variety of activities that couples in a relationship might do together.

2.1 Your Marriage vs. Everyone Else's Marriage

One of the most striking findings to emerge from the survey is the difference between how people evaluate their own marriages, as compared to their assessments of marriages in the United States more generally. About half of the respondents in our sample reported being married – a percentage consistent with other national surveys, including the American Community Survey. When asked whether they think their marriage has gotten better or worse over the past two years, 43% of married respondents say stronger, 49% about the same, and only 6% weaker, with 1% reporting that they didn't know. (This question was asked only of those who have been married for at least two years.)

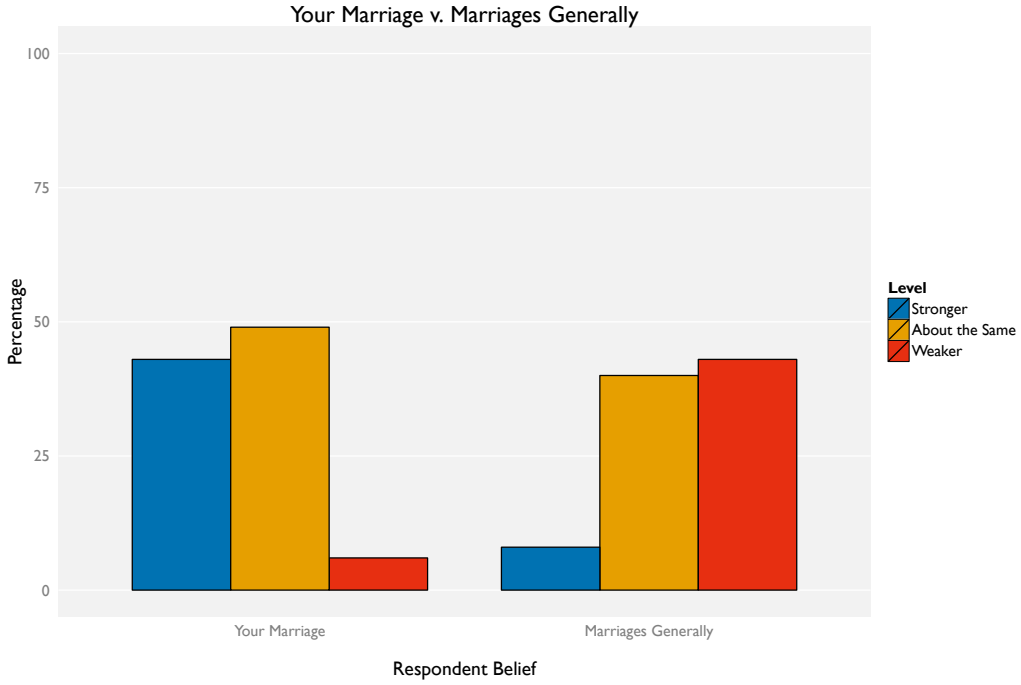

Figure 1: The figure displays married respondents' beliefs about whether their own marriages and marriages generally in the United States had grown stronger, weaker, or stayed about the same, compared to two years ago. Don't Know responses are not included in the figure.

We also asked respondents to gauge how marriages generally in the United States are doing compared to two years ago, but respondents answered this question very differently. The results nearly flip compared to the previous question: only 5% of respondents say marriages generally are getting stronger, 40% report that they remain about the same as two years ago, and 43% conclude that they are weaker, with 12% telling

us they don't know. These patterns are shown in Figure 1.[4] Effectively, respondents report relatively high levels of confidence in the strength of their own marriages, but do not extend that same confidence to marriages generally in the United States. This pattern is consistent with what social psychologists call "familiarity bias," where people rate things that are better known and closer to them more highly than things that are more distant and unfamiliar.

Similar patterns can be found when we ask those who are in a committed relationship or are living with a partner. These respondents, too, feel better about their own relationships than they do about the health of marriages generally. Notably, these unmarried respondents view the institution of marriage about the same as married respondents, with 7% saying marriages in the United States are growing stronger, 39% responding about the same, and 42% reporting that marriages are growing weaker (13% said they didn't know).

Positive views about the direction of one's own marriage are not a function of ideology, measured as respondents' self-reports of how liberal or conservative they are politically. About 46% of liberal respondents say their own marriages have become stronger over the last two years, but so, too, do 44% of conservative respondents. (These results combine both "very liberal" and "liberal" respondents together, and do the same for "very conservative" and "conservative" respondents.) Moderates are slightly less likely to say their marriages have become stronger, with 41% choosing that option, but overall, respondents across the political spectrum report similar levels of confidence that their marriage relationships are improving.

Political ideology does, however, play a much larger role in views about the institution of marriage, a pattern we see throughout the survey. Table 1 presents evaluations of the state of marriage generally, broken down by the respondent's self-reported ideology. (As before, we combine "very liberal" and "liberal" as well as "very conservative" and "conservative" respondents together, but the patterns are nearly identical if we analyze them separately.) More liberals see marriages generally as getting stronger than do conservatives (10%, compared to 4%), and many more conservatives see the institution of marriage as weakening than do liberals (54%, compared to 25%). Thus, conservatives and liberals respond similarly when asked to evaluate their own marriages, but their views of how the institution of marriage is faring today diverge substantially.[5] This finding implies that ideology plays an important role in how Americans view the state of the family. Conservatives focus considerable attention on the decline in marriage and the breakdown of the family. Liberals are less pessimistic about family decline. And, as we will detail below, when conservatives and liberals think about the challenges facing families, they also focus on very different sources of family problems.

Table 1: Evaluations of Marriages Generally by Ideology (All Respondents)

	Stronger	**About the Same**	**Weaker**	**Don't Know**
Liberal	10	49	25	16
Moderate	5	41	39	14
Conservative	4	34	54	8

Drilling deeper, we also find that the youngest as well as the most recently married are also the most optimistic about the trajectory of their marriages. Respondents who are older or who have been married the longest are less likely to feel that their marriages are improving, and middle-aged respondents are especially pessimistic relative to the other groups. Similarly, younger respondents and respondents who have been more recently married are also significantly more optimistic about marriage generally, though they are still more likely to feel that marriages are becoming weaker rather than stronger. Table 2 presents

[4] Supporting information for all figures in the report can be found in the Appendix.

[5] It is true that conservatives are likely to marry more often than are liberals who marry less. Still that fact does not contradict the point above: both groups like their own marriages.

the results by respondent age.

Table 2: Evaluations of Marriage by Respondent Age (Married Respondents Only)

	Stronger	**About the Same**	**Weaker**	**Don't Know**
Own Marriage				
18-29	63	31	2	4
30-44	51	39	9	1
45-54	33	54	13	0
55-64	42	53	5	1
65+	33	62	4	1
Marriages Generally				
18-29	10	44	32	13
30-44	10	42	34	15
45-54	3	33	53	11
55-64	3	39	45	13
65+	2	42	51	6

2.2 *Who Is Married?*

It is important to be clear about who is and is not married in society, as those differences should be kept in mind when interpreting public opinion about marriage and family. Not surprisingly, older Americans are much more likely to be married than are younger Americans, who are, in turn, more likely to say that they are not currently in a relationship. Table 3 presents the percentage of respondents in each relationship status, separated by age group.

Table 3: Relationship Status by Respondent Age

	Age of Respondent				
	18 - 29	**30-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Married	22	51	54	66	60
Living with Partner	15	16	13	5	5
In a Relationship	16	8	5	3	5
Not In a Relationship	48	26	28	27	30

Marriage and income are also correlated, and married respondents tend to have higher incomes than those who are not married. Figure 2 shows this relationship in greater detail. The likelihood of marriage peaks at an income of between $80,000 and $100,000. At levels above and below this income range, the chances of being married are somewhat lower.

Intriguingly, the chances of not being in a relationship of any kind are highest for the lowest income category, and lower for the other categories. Though these results say little about causality, they suggest that marriage is an institution intimately related to economic status.

Finally, liberals and conservatives also differ slightly in their likelihood of being married (Table 4). Approximately 41% of liberals (and 36% of very liberal respondents) are married, compared to 58% of conservatives (whether conservative or very conservative). Liberal respondents are also slightly more likely

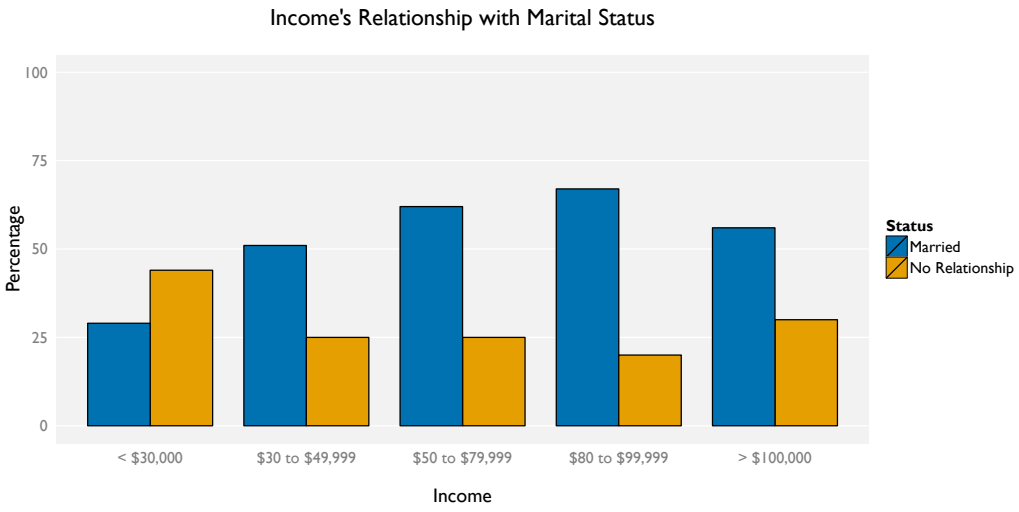

Figure 2: The figure displays respondent marital status by income category. The only two relationship status categories used are those married and living together compared with those not in any kind of relationship. Note, additional relationship statuses, such as committed relationships, etc. tend to fall between these two categories.

to live with a partner without being married than are conservatives, and very liberal respondents have the highest likelihood (16%). Compared to conservatives and moderates, liberals are somewhat less likely to embrace marriage as a personal choice, though this difference does not mean that liberals today reject marriage. Four in ten liberals in our sample are married, compared to just over one in ten who live with their romantic partners but are not married.

Table 4: Relationship Status by Respondent Ideology

	Liberal	**Moderate**	**Conservative**
Married	40	50	58
Living with Partner	13	11	7
In a Relationship	11	6	6
Not In a Relationship	36	33	28

We also explored how some basic facts about marriage, including average age at first marriage, number of previous marriages, number of cohabitations, and number of children, are correlated with ideology. These results can be seen in Table 5. Along a number of dimensions, liberals and conservatives do not differ substantially. The most liberal respondents tend to be slightly older at the time of their first marriage, but the differences across the other ideological categories are negligible. Similarly, liberals and conservatives do not differ in the number of previous marriages – on average, respondents to our survey have had about 1.5 total marriages. Liberal respondents report cohabiting slightly more frequently than conservative respondents, but even among conservatives, cohabiting is a relatively frequent choice.

The most significant difference between liberals and conservatives is in the average number of children the two groups report. Liberals report an average of about one child, while conservatives average about two children. We will return to differences between liberals and conservatives in their family practices below, but this difference in the number of children can have a profound effect on the lived experience of family life.

Table 5: Marriage and Family Trends, by Ideology

	Average age when first married	Number of previous marriages	Number of cohabitations	Number of children
Very Liberal	26.4	1.4	1.1	1.0
Liberal	24.3	1.4	1.0	1.3
Moderate	24.2	1.5	0.9	1.7
Conservative	23.3	1.4	0.7	1.9
Very Conservative	23.5	1.5	0.6	2.1
All Respondents	24.0	1.5	0.9	1.9

2.3 *Marriage and Life Satisfaction*

Not only do many married couples believe that their relationships are growing stronger, they also report higher levels of satisfaction with their lives than respondents who are not married. We asked respondents to report how satisfied they were with their lives on a five-point scale ranging from "completely satisfied" to "completely dissatisfied." Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents who told us they were "completely" or "somewhat" satisfied with their lives. The first panel presents the results by the respondent's family income level. The trend is clear: satisfaction increases with income, but only up to a point. About two-thirds of respondents making $30,000 a year or less say they are "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied," while close to 90% of respondents making between $80,000 and $100,000 are satisfied. Life satisfaction drops off again among the wealthiest respondents, however.

If satisfaction is related to income, so too is it connected to marriage, as can be seen in the second panel of Figure 3. Well over 80% of married couples who are living with their spouses express satisfaction with their lives. These high satisfaction levels are nearly equalled by by respondents who are in a committed relationship but are not living with their partners. Among that group, nearly 77% say they are satisfied. The two least satisfied groups, by contrast, are those who are living with a partner but are not married (57% satisfied) and those who are married but currently separated from their spouses (53% satisfied). Put differently, married couples who are still living together express the highest levels of contentment with their lives, while couples who are experiencing marital upheaval are the least content. This suggests that cohabitation is not a pure substitute for marriage. The results are more consistent with the argument that couples wait until having fulfilled certain prerequisites before plunging into marriage.

Part of the difference in life satisfaction between married and unmarried respondents is itself related to income. On average, married couples in our sample have higher family incomes than those who are not married — a result that mirrors other national survey results. For example, in our sample about 60% of married respondents have incomes above $50,000, while only 40% of unmarried reach those same levels. Less than 20% of married respondents report a family income below $30,000, while more than 40% of unmarried respondents place themselves in this lowest income category. We return to a more complete exploration of the relationship between marriage and income below.

The effect of marital difficulties on life satisfaction is confirmed when we look more carefully at married couples, whether separated or not, who say they have experienced turmoil in their marriages. We asked respondents whether in the last two years they had ever felt that their marriage was in trouble. About 28% of married couples told us they had felt that way, while 72% expressed no recent concern about the status of their relationships. The presence or absence of relationship trouble is strongly associated with life satisfaction. Approximately 90% of respondents with no marital trouble say they are satisfied, while only 63% of those who worry about their relationship status claim to be content with their lives. Nearly half

(46%) of married respondents who report no marital trouble say they are "completely satisfied" with their lives, while only 17% of married respondents with relationship worries put themselves in the "completely satisfied" category. To be sure, most respondents, whether married or not, say they are at least somewhat satisfied with their lives, but as a group, married respondents who report strong relationships are the most satisfied.

Moreover, marriages and relationships are themselves very satisfying to our respondents. In addition to asking about life satisfaction, we also asked whether respondents were satisfied with their jobs, families, and marriages. About 40% say they are "somewhat" or "completely" satisfied with their jobs, with only 15% in the "completely satisfied" category. By contrast, overwhelming numbers of respondents report being satisfied with their marriages or relationships. (We asked married respondents whether they were satisfied with their marriages and unmarried respondents in a relationship of some sort whether they were satisfied with their relationships.) Nearly 85% say they are "somewhat" or "completely" satisfied. Married respondents are the most satisfied with their relationships. About 62% of married respondents say they are "completely satisfied" with their marriages. Among unmarried respondents, about 47% say they are "completely" content with the state of their relationships. Satisfaction with families is nearly as high, with 79% of all respondents telling us that they were at least "somewhat satisfied" with their families.

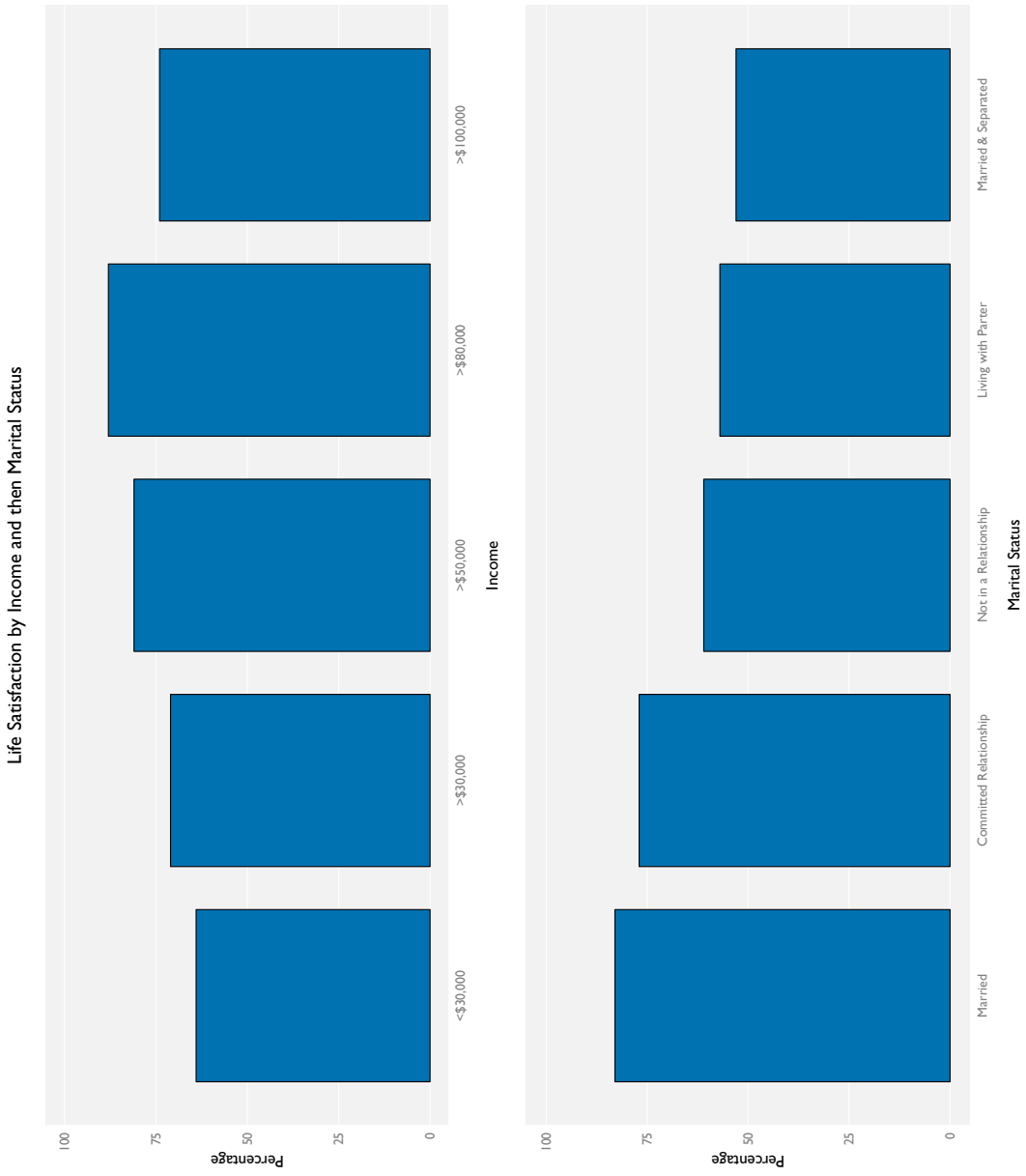

Figure 3: The figure displays the percent of respondents who reported being "completely satisfied" or "somewhat satisfied" with their lives, by income levels and relationship status.

2.4 *Attitudes about Marriage*

In addition to asking survey respondents for broad summary evaluations of their own marriages and the state of marriage generally, we also asked them to tell us how much they agreed or disagreed with several statements about marriage. Table 6 summarizes the results, collapsing a seven-point response scale into "agree," "disagree," and "neither." Majorities of our respondents regard marriage as a societal good, agreeing with positive statements about the effects of marriage and disagreeing with negative statements. For example, 62% agree that "marriage is needed to create strong families," 60% affirm that "marriage makes families and kids better off financially," and 52% of respondents believe that "society is better off when more people are married." Conversely, nearly two-thirds of respondents disagree that marriage is "more of a burden than a benefit," and 71% push back against the notion that marriage is "old fashioned and out of date." Opinion is divided, however, on whether personal commitment to one's partner is more important than "being legally married." About 47% of respondents say personal commitment is more important, while 37% tend to emphasize legal marriage over personal commitment.

Table 6: Attitudes about Marriage

	Agree	**Neither Agree nor Disagree**	**Disagree**
Marriage is needed to create strong families	62	16	22
Marriage makes families and kids better off financially	60	25	15
Society is better off when more people are married	52	33	15
Personal commitment to partner more important than marriage	47	16	37
Marriage is more of a burden than a benefit	13	22	65
Marriage is old-fashioned and out-of-date	12	17	71

Overall, we see these results as evidence of a pro-marriage sentiment in the American public, with especially high levels of agreement coming in response to questions that evoke families and children. In other words, most Americans see marriage as a social good, one that is important to the protection and welfare of children. This child-centric view of the value of marriage can be seen in other parts of the survey as well. Even if some of the responses to this battery of questions are a function of social desirability, these results would still reflect a widespread norm that largely works in favor of marriage. Very few Americans see marriage as a social ill.

Not surprisingly, support for marriage is highest among respondents who are themselves married. Table 7 shows the percentage of married and unmarried respondents who agree with each statement. In each case, married respondents express considerably more agreement with positive statements about marriage. Support for the notion that society is better off when more people are married, for example, differs by 20 percentage points based on marital status alone. Such differences do not mean that unmarried respondents see no value in marriage, of course. Majorities of those who are not married think marriage is needed to create strong families and that marriage improves the financial prospects of families and children — again, the child-centric view of marriage is compelling to many Americans. But support for those same ideas is considerably higher among those who are currently married.

Among married respondents, we also looked at those who had cohabited prior to marriage, compared to those who had not (see Table 8). In every case, respondents who had not cohabited prior to getting married report somewhat higher levels of support for marriage than those who had cohabited prior to getting married. Cohabiters are, for example, less likely to agree that marriage is needed for strong families and that marriage is more important than a personal commitment to the relationship.

We also find profound differences in attitudes toward marriage by ideology. Even after we account for

Table 7: Attitudes about Marriage: Unmarried vs. Married Respondents

	Agree *Married/Unmarried*	**Disagree** *Married/Unmarried*
Marriage is needed to create strong families	71/54	15/28
Marriage makes families and kids better off financially	67/53	13/17
Society is better off when more people are married	62/42	11/19
Personal commitment to spouse more important than marriage	38/55	46/28
Marriage is more of a burden than a benefit	9/17	76/55
Marriage is old-fashioned and out-of-date	9/15	78/65

Table 8: Marriage Attitudes among Married Respondents, by Cohabitation Prior to Marriage

	Agree *Cohabit/No Cohabit*	**Disagree** *Cohabit/No Cohabit*
Marriage is needed to create strong families	61/76	20/13
Marriage makes families and kids better off financially	62/69	15/11
Society is better off when more people are married	51/68	15/9
Personal commitment to spouse more important than marriage	47/33	35/52
Marriage is more of a burden than a benefit	13/6	69/79
Marriage is old-fashioned and out-of-date	10/8	73/82

the effect of marital status, liberal respondents tend to be less convinced of the societal value of marriage than are conservative respondents. Figure 4 highlights these relationships for one of the statements in our battery of questions: "When more people are married, society is better off." Across the ideological spectrum, married respondents are more supportive, and sometimes dramatically so, of the idea that society is improved when marriage is widespread than are unmarried respondents. Among married respondents, majorities of every group but the most liberal support the idea that society is improved by marriage. At the same time, ideology also shapes attitudes about the social value of marriage. Among both the married and the unmarried, support for the statement increases in a nearly linear fashion as we move from left to right on the ideological spectrum. Thus, almost 90% of married, very conservative respondents agree with the statement, but only 23% of unmarried, very liberal respondents do. The majority support for the notion that society is improved by marriage, as seen in Table 6, thus masks considerable variation in how both life experiences and ideological perspectives shape Americans' views of marriage.

Similar differences can be found with respect to age, as can be seen in Table 9, which shows the percentage of respondents who agree or disagree with the "society is better" statement. Older Americans express significantly more support than the young for the idea of marriage as a social good. Of course, younger Americans are more likely to be liberal than conservative, though not dramatically so. In our sample, about 30% of respondents age 18-29 say they are liberals and a little less than 20% say they are conservatives. The division between liberals and conservatives is somewhat more equal in other age categories.

Still, ideology does not explain everything, and age also has its own, independent influence on attitudes. It is not that most young people are actively hostile to marriage — even among the youngest respondents, more agree with the statement than disagree with it — but endorsement of the statement is far softer among the young than among older respondents. Better educated respondents also express increased support for marriage, though the differences between the most and least educated are somewhat smaller than the differences between older and younger respondents. Racial and gender differences in attitudes are smaller still, though to the extent that there are differences, male respondents and white respondents

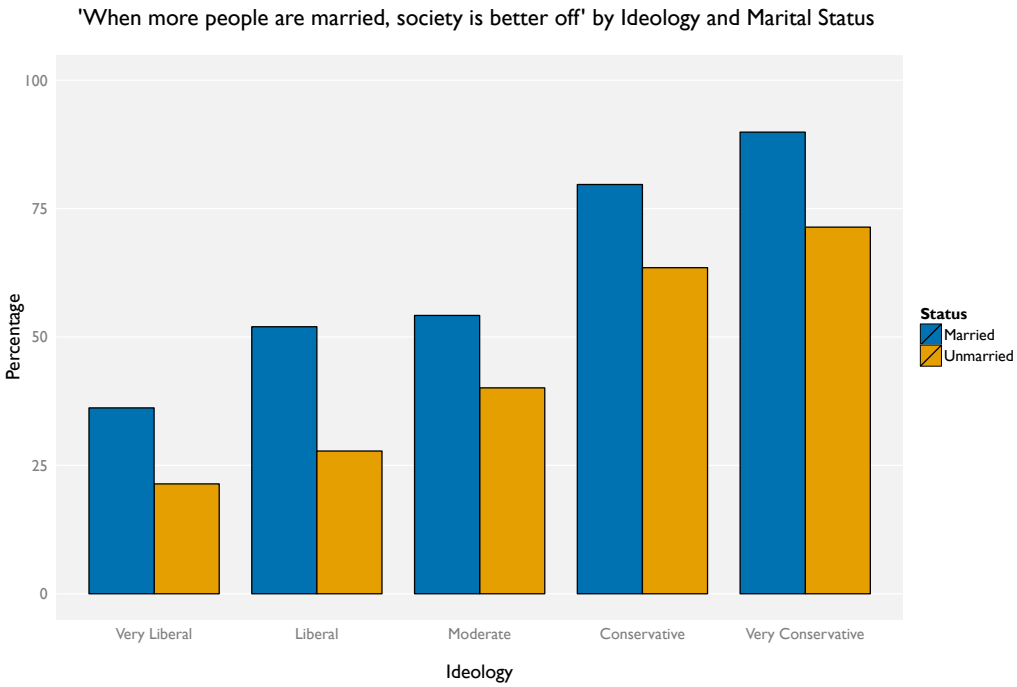

Figure 4: The figure displays the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement.

tend to be most supportive of the idea that marriage brings social benefits.

Table 9: "When More People Are Married, Society Is Better Off"

	Agree	Disagree
Age		
18-29	37	21
30-44	43	20
45-54	52	17
55-64	63	8
65+	71	9
Education		
No High School	43	18
High School Graduate	51	16
Some College	49	17
College Graduate	61	10
Post-Graduate Degree	60	11

Ideological differences in attitudes about marriage can also be found when we focus on the role of marriage in improving the lives of children. As shown in Table 6, more than 60% of our sample agrees with the notion that marriage enhances the economic prospects of families and children. We also asked whether "children are better off if they have two married parents." This question gets directly at whether Americans believe that one of the important purposes of marriage is to improve the lives of children, and across the sample as a whole, more than two-thirds of respondents agree (this percentage includes respondents

who "somewhat agree," "agree," or "strongly agree"). But as Figure 5 reveals, Americans with differing ideological views express quite different levels of support for the connection between marriage and children's welfare. Less than a majority of very liberal respondents and only a bare majority of liberal respondents say they agree, while approximately 85 to 90% of conservative or very conservative respondents do so. If we focus on the strongest levels of agreement only, nearly three-quarters of respondents who identify as very conservative "strongly agree" that children are better off with two married parents, but less than one-sixth of the most liberal respondents express such strong agreement.

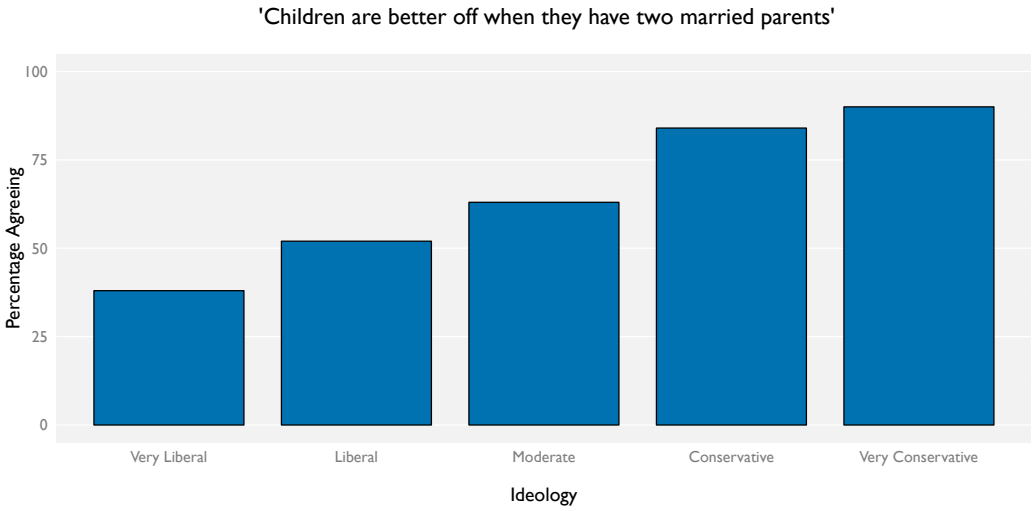

Figure 5: The figure displays the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement.

As with views about marriage as a social good, we also find meaningful differences across age groups in beliefs about the importance of marriage for children. Just over half of respondents age 18-29 believe that children are better off with two married parents, but more than 80% of respondents over age 65 say that they agree with the idea. Again, we do not find that young respondents are actively hostile to the notion that children are better off with married parents – only 22% express disagreement with the notion and only 6% strongly disagree – but they are far less actively supportive of the idea than are older respondents. In addition, we find smaller differences across education levels and gender, though better educated respondents and men are somewhat more likely to agree with the statement. There are few differences across racial or ethnic groups or income levels.

Thus, on the whole, most Americans agree that a key social function of marriage is to improve children's lot in life, but when we explore this finding in greater depth, we discover considerable variation in how Americans of different ideological leanings and life experiences understand the social values and meanings of marriage, including its role in protecting children.

When the question emphasizes gender — "children need both a male and a female role model in the home" — but does not specifically mention marriage, ideological differences become even more pronounced, as can be seen in Figure 6. The most liberal respondents do not support the notion that children need both a male and female influence in the home. Barely more than one-quarter of very liberal Americans said they agreed at least "somewhat." At the opposite end of the spectrum, nearly every very conservative respondent (94%) did so. We also see differences in responses to this question across generations, with 62% of respondents between 18 and 29 agreeing, compared to 80% of respondents over 65 years old. Still, these differences pale in comparison to the ideological divide.

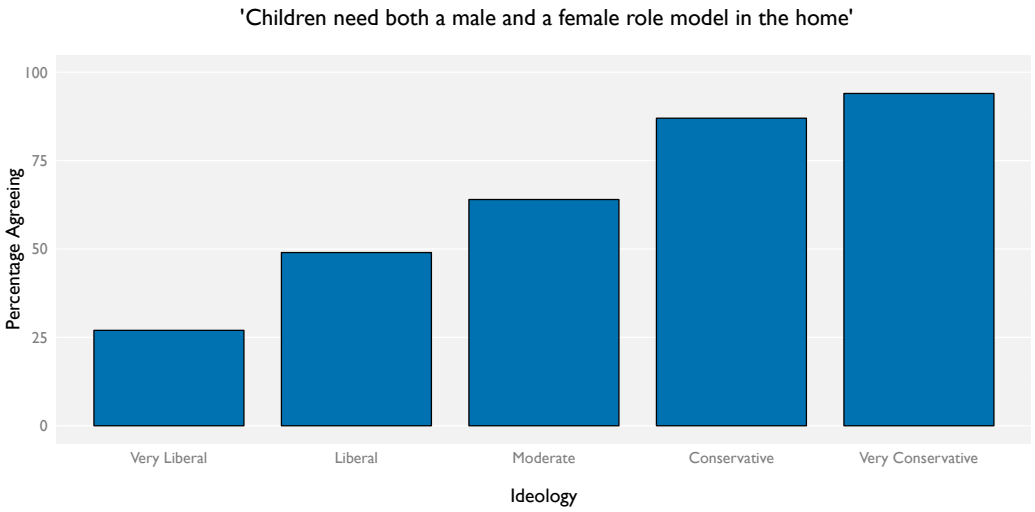

Figure 6: The figure displays the percentage of respondents agreeing with the statement.

Across many of our questions designed to explore attitudes about different facets of marriage, younger respondents and more liberal respondents express an openness to less traditional family structures. They are less likely to think that marriage offers wider social benefits, more likely to see marriage as a burden rather than a benefit, less likely to regard marriage is a necessary step in creating strong families, less likely to believe that marriage offers economic or other benefits to children, and less likely to hold to the notion that having both men and women in the home might be good for children. As we have emphasized, this does not mean that most younger Americans are openly hostile to marriage, but their levels of overt support are lower—perhaps in part because fewer of them are married and have had the experiences necessary to build an abiding belief in marriage and family. Older and more conservative Americans, on the other hand, feel very differently. Simply put, these respondents are much more likely to believe that marriage is a critical social institution.

2.5 Prerequisites for Marriage

Turning to the question of when people believe it is time to get married, Figure 7 displays the percentage who agreed (again collapsing a seven-point scale) that it was at least "somewhat important" for a person to have performed certain life activities before getting married (e.g., living with a future spouse, saving money, etc.). As can be seen in the figure, two of the items related to economic stability were ranked as far more important than any of the others. "Have a stable job" was at the top. In fact, 41% ranked it as "very important," with another 49% ranking it as at least somewhat important. Focusing on that response, breaking out responses by income differences made little difference while for race the only additional pattern was that Black and Hispanic respondents were slightly more likely to rank having a stable job as very important; between 51% and 53% of them ranked having a stable job as "very important," compared to 37% of white respondents. Notably, income was not strongly related to a belief in having a stable job before getting married: the percentage rating that as at least somewhat important varied between 89% and 93% across all categories.

The second most popular prerequisite for marriage was to "have some savings or be paying off debt, with nearly 81% who thought it was at least "somewhat important." Again there was a slight racial difference

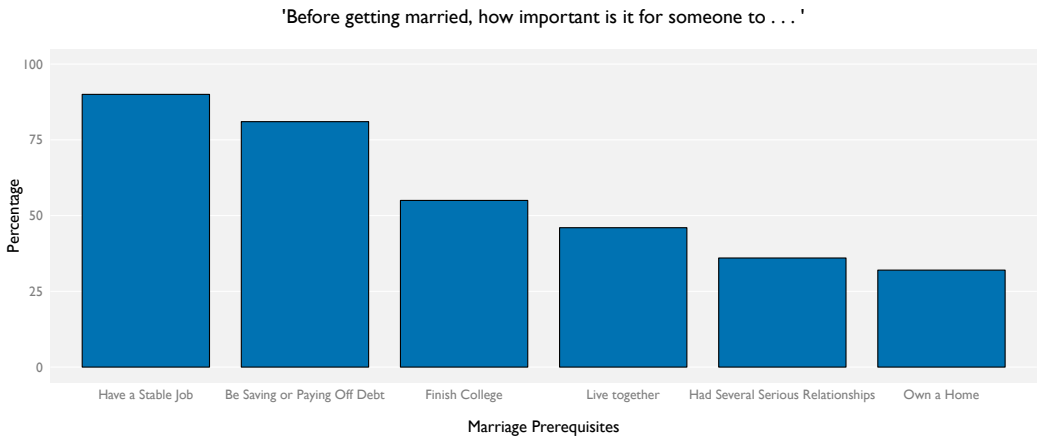

Figure 7: The figure displays respondent belief that it was at least somewhat important that people should do this before getting married.

as 41% of black respondents ranked it as "very important," compared to only 33% of Hispanic and 24% of whites. The aggregate measure of those who thought it was at least somewhat important was nearly identical between races, however.

Ironically, one other major economic prerequisite we tested—owning a home—was not seen as being terribly important and ranked behind such things as having had previous relationships or living together. Finishing college was rated as important by many respondents: over half thought that finishing college before getting married was at least somewhat important.[6]

With respect to relationship experiences, less than half of respondents ranked living together or having had several serious relationships as being important, with relatively few racial or economic differences. However, age played a role in the attitudes. Twenty-one percent of 18-29 year-olds indicated that it was "very important" to live together before marriage, compared with only 16% of respondents between 30-44 years old, 8% of those aged 45-64, and just 3% of those over age sixty-five.

In general, ideology had little to do with the perceived importance of each of the marriage prerequisite questions. The lone exception concerns living with one's spouse prior to marriage (see Figure 8). Here liberals and moderates are much more likely to believe that this is important than are conservatives, who rate it as being relatively less important. Earlier, we noted that liberals appear to be much more open to relationships other than traditional marriage and much more hesitant about the positive value of marriage. Here, we see that liberals are also much more likely to embrace the idea that couples should cohabit prior to marrying. Still, it is important to recognize that among all types of conservatives, about three in ten respondents believed living together was of some importance. Even among conservatives a healthy percentage regard this as an important activity.

Age, however, does clearly affect people's attitudes about the prerequisites for marriage. Figure 9 plots three of the activities by age group and the patterns reveal that older respondents are less likely to believe that any particular activity is of primary importance. We note that the pattern does vary by activity. For instance younger generations believe that living with a spouse is really quite important—on par with finishing college. Older respondents disagreed with that claim. All respondents were less likely to believe that owning a home was of particular importance, but the age pattern still holds up slightly even in that category.

[6] It is useful to keep in mind the context that only about one out of three adults finish college.

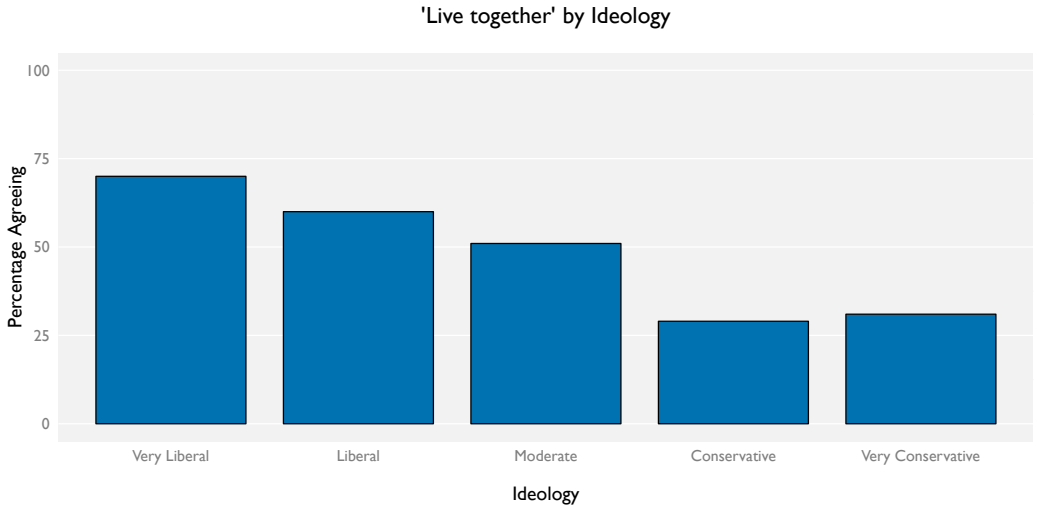

Figure 8: The figure displays the percentage who believe it is at least somewhat important that a couple live together before marrying, by ideology.

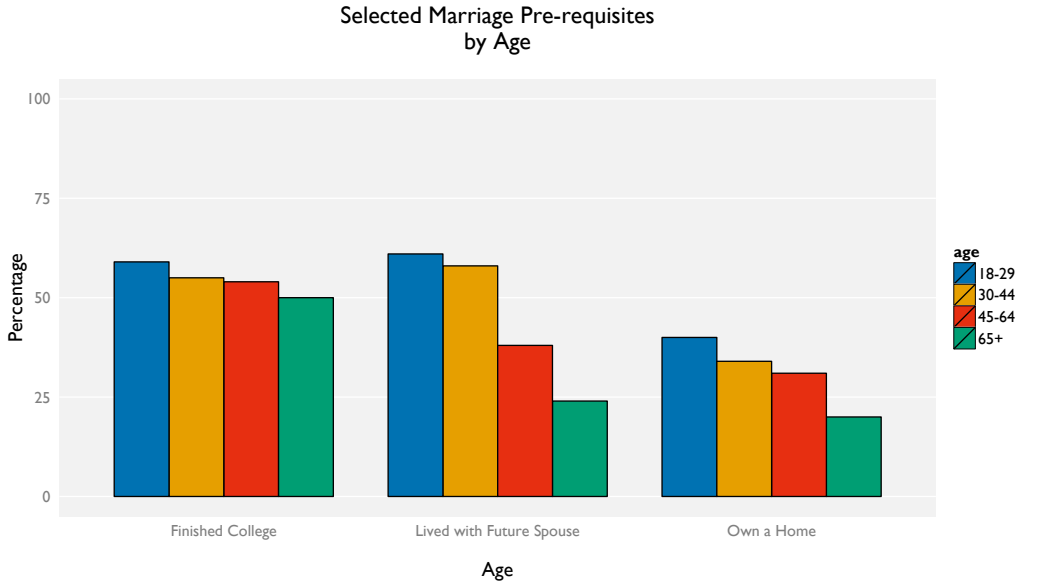

Figure 9: The figure displays the percentage who believe that a particular activity is important, by age.

Finally, we also asked about the ideal age of marriage for men and women. Figure 10 plots densities for each group (men in the top panel and women in the bottom). The dashed lines indicate the average ideal age for men and for women. The densities are wide, though the typical ages are between the early twenties and early thirties. The peaks are centered on twenty-five and thirty. Comparing the peaks at each of those ages shows why the mean is lower for women than it is for men. Many more people place the ideal age for a woman's marriage at twenty-five than they do at those higher ages. This gendered pattern was not deeply affected by respondent gender. Both men and women held broadly similar attitudes about the appropriate age for marriage.

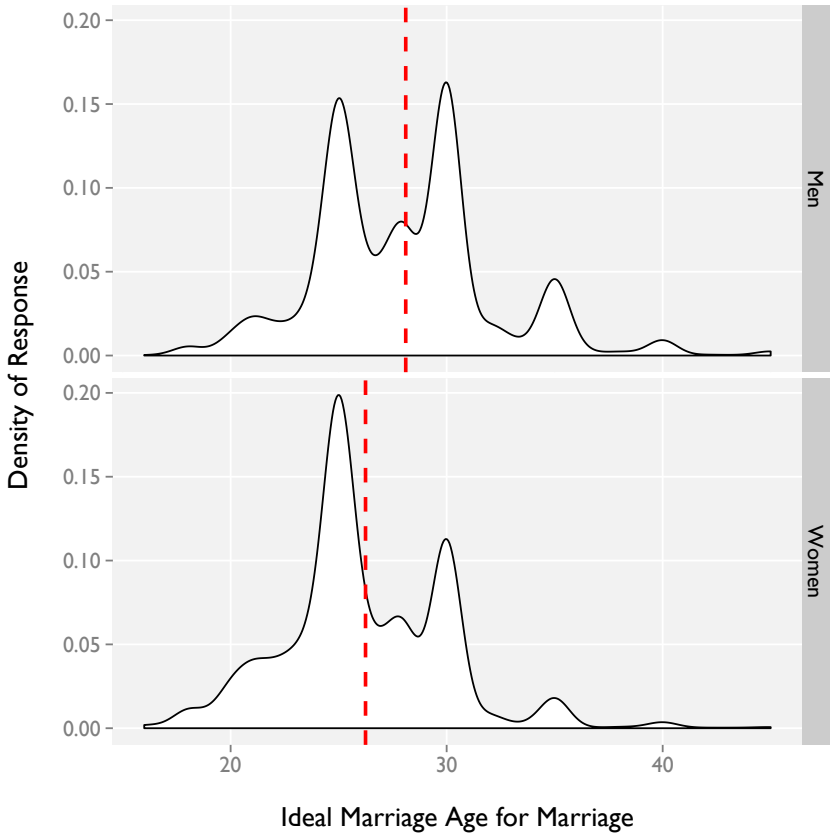

Figure 10: The figure displays densities of the ideal age of marriage for men (top panel) and women (bottom panel). The dashed lines indicate the average for each group: 28.1 for men and 26.2 for women.

Table 10 shows the question in tabular form. The pattern of preferring a younger age for women to marry is quite clear. It is also clear that the young(specifically those age eighteen to twenty-nine) prefer to marry before they are thirty. This is true for both genders, but the preference wanes a bit at higher ages. Those aged thirty to forty-four are more likely to select an age after thirty as the ideal age—especially for men. Although the preference for marrying young appears to reassert itself in older respondents.

Table 10: Ideal Age of Marriage for Men and Women, by Age

	Ideal Age for Men to Marry			**Ideal Age for Women to Marry**		
Age of Respondent	**18 - 29**	**30-44**	**45-50**	**18-29**	**30-44**	**45-50**
18-29	70	28	2	81	19	0
30-44	47	51	2	66	32	1
45-54	55	44	1	73	26	1
55-64	56	43	1	78	21	1
65+	72	27	1	86	13	0
All Respondents	59	39	1	75	23	1

Stepping back from the raw data, the broad pattern from all of these questions supports the earlier data on beliefs about the importance of marriage. Though it is true that people suggest waiting a bit before getting married, most people believe that by one's mid-twenties one should be ready for marriage, having started a career and achieved a certain amount of financial stability. This may or may not mean college and it may or may not mean having lived together—depending upon the respondent's age—but most people feel that Americans should be ready for marriage at this point.

2.6 Marriage Practices

In addition to asking respondents about their expectations about timing and other factors, we also asked those in a relationship to report some basic facts about their experiences with marriage. The table includes results from all respondents in a relationship, except for questions that applied only to married people and cohabiters (such as sleeping in different rooms). Couples engage in a wide array of activities, some more often than others, but a healthy proportion responded that they engage in these activities often. Table 11 reports the average rates of activities for couples. Some activities are quite common. For instance, couples often discuss family finances, their relationship and social and political issues with one another on a regular basis, along with going out together as a couple and engaging in sex. Serious arguments and hiding finances happen much less regularly. Prayer stands out as something that would be seen in a positive light by many (but certainly not all) couples. However, about half of couples never do it.

Table 11: Couple Activity Rates, Approximately in Order of Frequency

	Never	Yearly	A few times a year	About once a month	Weekly	A few times a week	Daily
Do nice things for each other, such as making coffee, putting gas in the car, etc.	3	1	4	7	18	25	42
Talk about political or social issues with each other	11	2	11	15	15	23	23
Have sex with each other	12	3	9	17	25	29	5
Discuss finances with each other	6	2	7	25	24	23	13
Go out together, just the two of you	6	4	16	25	27	17	6
Talk about your relationship with each other	13	4	17	20	17	19	12
Have a serious argument	19	15	34	18	7	5	3
Pray together as a couple, outside of meals	50	3	11	7	9	8	11
Hide finances or purchase from each other	71	7	10	6	2	2	2
Sleep in different rooms because you were upset with one another	73	8	10	5	1	1	3

There is not much difference across income categories for the activities we examined. For instance, about a quarter of all respondents "go out together, just the two of [them]" about once a month. By income categories this does not vary by more than three percentage points. All of the other activities tested show a similar pattern. Though the modal amount of time people spend on the activity varies, none of them are strongly connected to income. With the exception of prayer (which does correlate with conservatism) there are no patterns that are strongly connected to ideology, either. Figure 11 shows the total lack of a pattern by ideology for two of the key questions we tested. In general the pattern did not change no matter which set of questions we examined.

The way to think about all of these results is that with the exception of the number of children in the

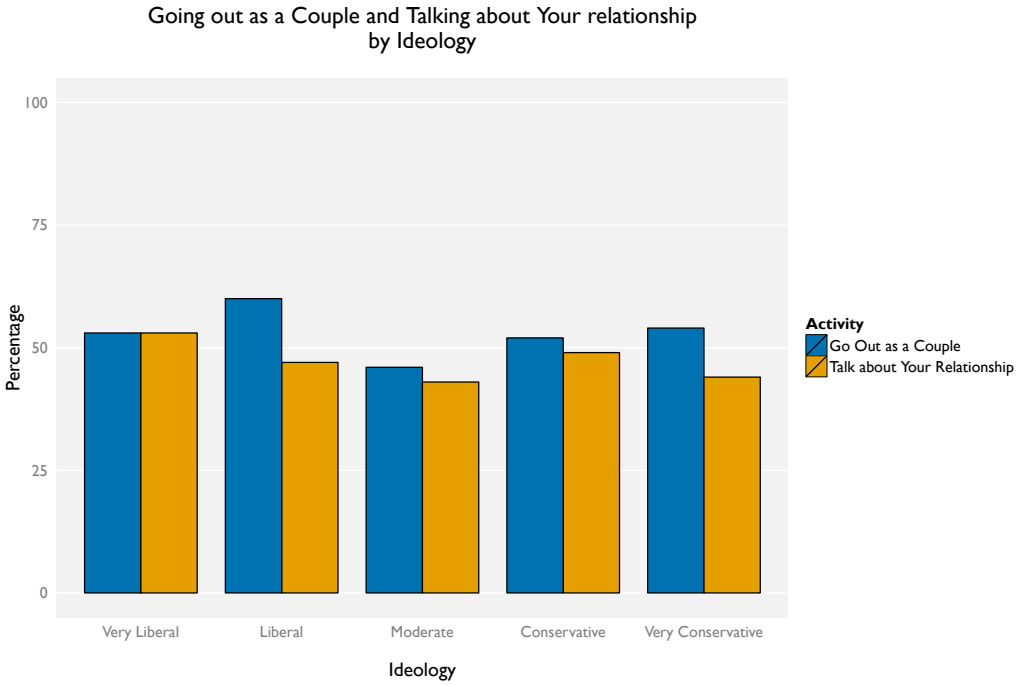

Figure 11: The figure displays the percentage agreeing with each statement divided by ideology

home, the lived experience of marriage is not terribly dependent upon income, ideology, or the other social categories we were able to examine. Though couples vary in the extent to which they participate in different activities, ideology and income do not determine the basic character of a person's marriage behavior and experiences. Other factors explain those differences. Thus, while liberals and conservatives view the social meaning of marriage differently and enter into marriage at different rates, the way liberals and conservatives actually experience marriage is quite similar.

3 Family: Attitudes and Practices

So far we have discussed attitudes about marriage and people's general marriage practices. In this section we explore beliefs about the family, beginning with questions about the general patterns and then turning to more specific family activities.

3.1 Your Family v. Everyone Else's Family

Just as we did with marriage and couple's relationships, we also asked respondents to evaluate the direction both their family and families in the United States more generally are headed, compared to two years ago. The results are very similar to the marriage question and are again consistent with the idea of "familiarity bias," as can be seen in Figure 12. Most respondents (about 53%) feel that their families are about the same as they were two years ago, but 33% tell us their family is stronger, and only 11% say that their families have become weaker (3% say they don't know). Attitudes about families generally are close to the reverse: only 9% of respondents say families have grown stronger, 43% say they've stayed the same, and more than 1/3 of respondents say families have grown weaker (12% say they don't know). As with marriages, Americans say their families have either stayed the same or grown stronger, while far fewer feel that families generally have grown stronger and far more believe that families are growing weaker.

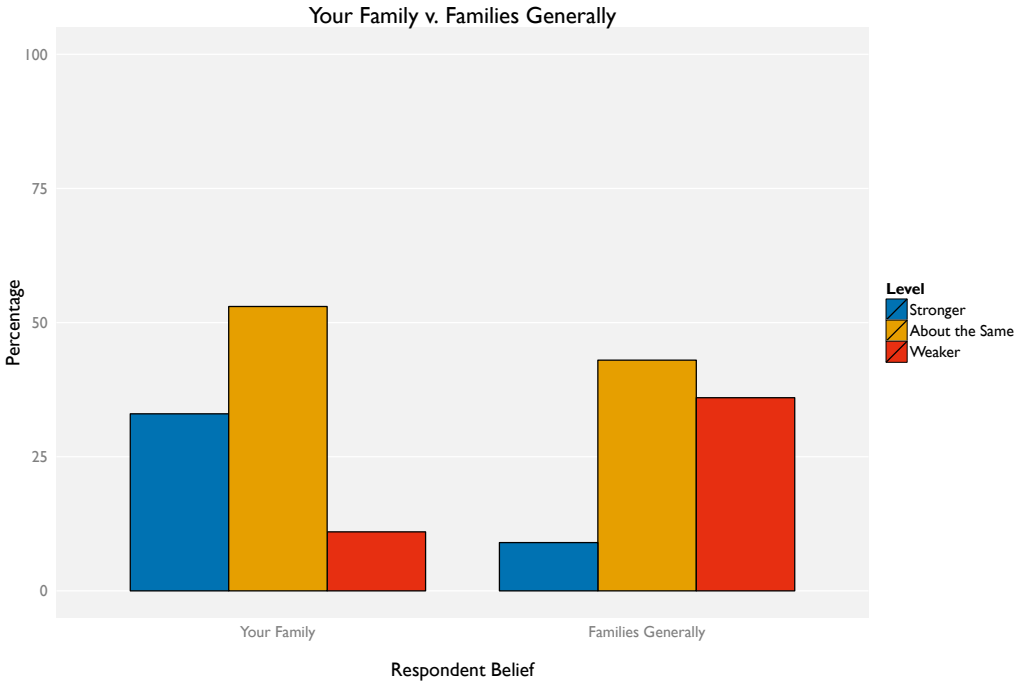

Figure 12: The figure displays respondents' beliefs about whether their own family and families generally in the United States had grown stronger, weaker, or stayed about the same, compared to two years ago. Don't Know responses are not included in the figure.

Similar to the patterns we saw with respect to marriages, there are few ideological differences in respondents' views about their own families, but more substantial differences in their opinions about the health of families generally. As shown in Table 12, few liberals, moderates, or conservatives believe that families

are growing stronger, but liberals tend to say that families are about the same as two years ago, while conservatives are more likely to respond that families are becoming weaker. Fully half of conservatives chose the "weaker" option, compared to a little less than a quarter of liberals.

Table 12: Evaluations of Families Generally by Ideology (All Respondents)

	Stronger	About the Same	Weaker	Don't Know
Liberal	9	53	23	16
Moderate	8	48	30	14
Conservative	9	34	50	7

3.2 *Attitudes about Parenting*

When it comes to their views of parenting, liberals and conservatives share the conclusion that children's consumption of media needs careful monitoring, but they disagree about other aspects of parenting. Table 13 presents the percentage of respondents who at least "somewhat agree" (collapsing a seven-point scale) with each parenting statement by ideology. Liberals are more likely than conservatives to believe that raising a child is unaffordable, and they are less likely than conservatives to feel that an important role for parents is to pass their political values on to their children. Conservatives are more likely to believe that physical discipline is sometimes necessary. These differences persist when we restrict the analysis to respondents who currently have children in their homes. By overwhelming margins, however, both liberals and conservatives believe that parents need to set limits on the media consumption of children, and these beliefs are shared by Americans of all ideological stripes regardless of whether they have children in the home or not.

Table 13: Parenting Attitudes by Respondent Ideology

	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Raising a child is affordable	17	27	40
Parents should pass on political values	25	27	46
Sometimes spanking is necessary	35	51	66
Boundaries for media consumption are necessary	84	84	88

We also asked people to report on their views about whether parenting is a satisfying responsibility — specifically, whether raising children counts as one of "life's greatest joys." Overall, about three-quarters of Americans agree with this statement. As Figure 13 shows, there are differences in agreement with this sentiment by ideology, though they are not as pronounced as the ideological divide in attitudes about marriage. The most liberal respondents are less likely than conservatives to report that parenting children is a source of great joy, but more than half of the most liberal respondents and 70% of liberal respondents still express agreement. When we focus on intensity of agreement with the question, a little less than one-quarter of the most liberal Americans "strongly agree," compared to about half of the most conservative respondents.

Part of the variation in responses comes from the experience of having children, as can be seen in Figure 14. Those who have had children are more likely to say they are a source of happiness, and respondents whose children are still at home are the most likely to agree. A little over half of respondents without children at least somewhat agree with the idea that raising children is one of life's greatest joys, while 85% or more of those who have children, whether those children still live at home or not, regard them

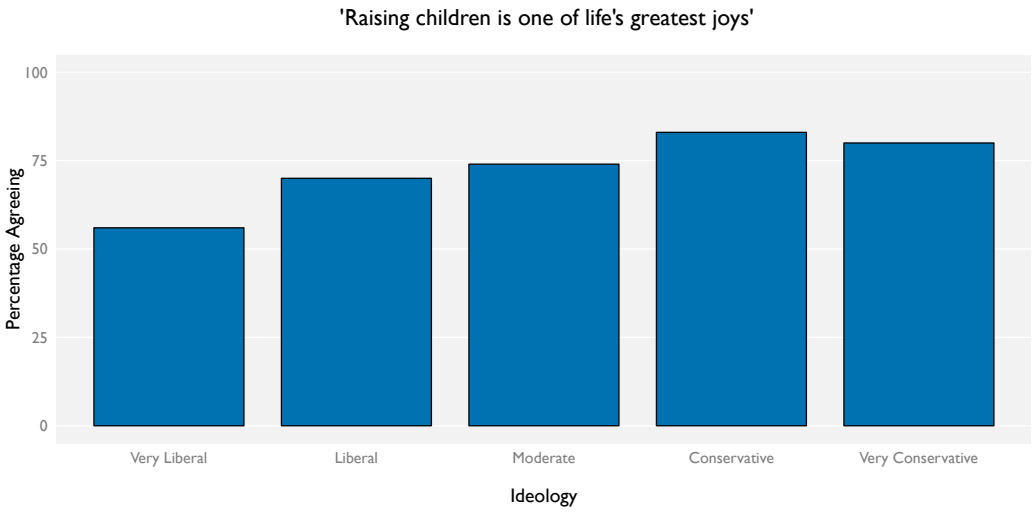

Figure 13: The figure displays the percentage of respondents who at least "somewhat agree" with the statement.

as a source of joy. These differences are even more pronounced when we focus on the strongest levels of agreement with the statement. Only 20% of people without children "strongly agree," compared to more than 40% of those with children.

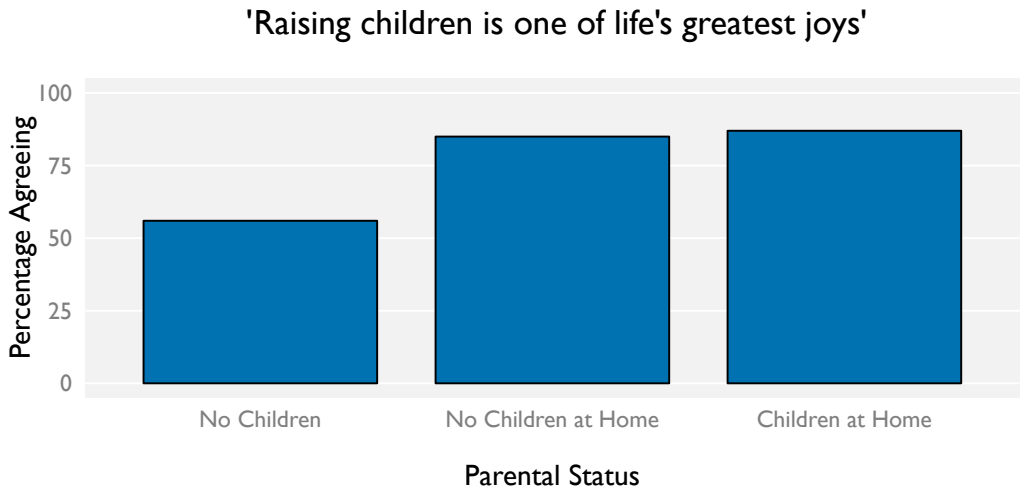

Figure 14: The figure displays the percentage of respondents who at least "somewhat agree" with the statement.

3.3 *Family Activities*

We also asked everyone who was married, cohabiting, or who had children to report how often they took part in various activities families might do together. As can be seen in Table 14 the answers for the activities vary widely and are difficult to capture in a single descriptive sentence. About half of families eat dinner together daily. About a third attend the activities of a family member at least a few times a

year, with another four of ten respondents attending activities more often than that. More than a quarter do chores together weekly (with another one-third of the sample doing them together more often). Over half of respondents go to movies or other events a few times a year or about once a month. About a third of respondents argue a few times a year, with roughly the same proportions saying that they argue less or more than that.

Table 14: Family Activity Rates

	Never	Yearly	A few times a year	About once a month	Weekly	A few times a week	Daily
Eat dinner together	5	1	10	8	11	18	47
Attend the activities of a family member	18	7	32	18	15	6	3
Do household chores together	17	3	8	12	27	17	17
Go out to movies, museums sporting events, or parks together	14	8	28	26	17	4	2
Have an argument	19	13	32	18	9	6	3
Worship together	41	7	12	6	22	6	7

Similar to rates of prayer among couples, one activity that stands out slightly is worship. About four in ten families never worship together, though a slightly smaller proportion (35%) worship together at least weekly. This is the closest thing to a truly bi-modal distribution in the activities battery. It is also the only area where there is any pattern in activities associated with ideology. About 59% of very conservative respondents worship together weekly or more often. The corresponding figure for the very liberal was 13%. In every single other category the differences in practice between liberal and conservative respondents was negligible. This suggests that while the social meaning of marriage may be quite different for the political left and the political right, the actual lived experiences of marriage and family life are far less differentiated.[7]

Put differently, the evidence above strongly suggests that although liberals and conservatives may see the institution of marriage in different ways, they do not actually behave much differently within marriages or within families. The broad pattern appears to be that while there are ideology patterns in the social meaning of marriage (see above), ideology is not correlated with the actual activities of families.

Finally, with respect to family practices, Table 15 displays the average age at which respondents believe children *should* be permitted to engage in various activities. Though parents believe that children should wait to get a job or go on a date, activities like playing at a park, or having a comprehensive talk about sex can come as early as age 12. The second two columns in the table look at specific sub-groups—those without any children and those with children currently living at home. There are relatively few differences between those categories. The largest exception comes with dating, where those without any children see dating as something that can come much earlier than those with children living at home (or, indeed, the rest of the sample who view things similar to those with children at home). Most of the other differences are not large.

[7]There is one small, but predictable exception to this overall pattern. Respondents making less than $30,000 were somewhat less likely to engage in some of the activities, but even there the pattern is muted. While they may be more likely to say that they do not do chores together (25% compared with an average of 13% in the upper income categories), they are just as likely to say that they do the activity on a frequent basis such as daily or weekly. Overall, there were not wide discrepancies by income.

Table 15: Average Age When Child Activities Should Be Permitted

	Total	**No Children**	**Children Living at Home**
Get a job	15.7	15.7	15.8
Be allowed to go on a date	15.7	14.5	15.8
Be allowed to go out with friends without adult supervision	14.8	14.5	15.1
Get their own social media account	14.7	14.5	14.6
Be trusted to have their own cellphone	14.0	14.0	13.8
Be allowed to play at a park or walk home without adult supervision	12.9	12.7	13.1
Have a comprehensive talk about sex with their parent or guardian	12.4	12.4	12.5

4 Challenges Facing Families

In this section we turn to the question of perceived problems with the family. As noted above, one of the key findings is that while people may be satisfied with their own marriages and own families, they are concerned about other familial situations. What issues do they place as the most important? What patterns are there in the data with respect to their concerns about the family?

4.1 The Most Important Problem

Having established some of the baseline attitudes and practices of families, we now turn to the problems people see with marriage and family. In one question, respondents were asked to select what they considered the most important issue facing families today. They were given a list of twelve items[8] and were asked to select up to three items. The items were randomly displayed and were not grouped by topic as they are here. The answers (minus the "other" category) are displayed in Table 16.

Table 16: The Most Important Problems

	% selected as one of three items
Economics	
The costs associated with raising a family	26
High work demands and stress on parents	21
The lack of good jobs	19
Lack of government programs to support families	8
Culture	
The widespread availability and use of drugs and alcohol	27
Sexual permissiveness in our society	25
Decline in religious faith and church attendance	23
Crime and other threats to personal safety	19
Family Structure and Stability	
Parents not teaching or disciplining their children sufficiently	53
More children growing up in single-parent homes	25
Difficulty finding quality time with family in the digital age	21
Change in the definition of marriage and family	16

Note: Cell entries indicate the percentage of the sample selecting that item as one of the "most important issues facing families today."

Far and away the most popular problem selected was parents "not teaching or disciplining their children" sufficiently. Over 50% of respondents selected it as one of their three items, while no other item was selected more than 30% of the time. In fact, all demographic breakdowns suggest that every major demographic group selected discipline as the single most important problem. Essentially respondents appeared to be suggesting that problems with families are the fault of parents who do not take enough trouble to impose boundaries and limitations. After this belief that discipline is the most serious problem, respondents generally split across multiple categories, with no clear second place.

[8]They could also select an "other" box and fill in a text answer.

For purposes of better understanding the patterns, we have grouped each response into three categories: economics, culture, and family structure and stability. In the economic category, "the costs associated with raising a family" ranked highest, with 26% of respondents selecting that as one of their three items—though we found little to no evidence that a respondent's income correlated with whether or not they selected costs as being an important issue facing families. But, as detailed below, there was a clear pattern of liberals selecting economic issues the most often.

In the culture category, both "sexual permissiveness in our society" and "the widespread availability of drugs and alcohol" receive near equal marks from the sample as a whole. Women identified "sexual permissiveness" as a problem about thirty percent of the time, while men selected it only twenty percent of the time. There was also a slight ideological tilt as conservatives were more likely to select this than were liberals, especially extreme liberals (see Table 17). There was also a clear age tilt to the data, with older members of the sample being more likely to select sexual permissiveness as one of the most important problems.

Table 17: Percent selecting "Sexual permissiveness in our society" by ideology and age

Partisanship	**% Selected**	*Age*	**% Selected**
Very Liberal	10	18 - 29	22
Liberal	20	30 - 44	22
Moderate	20	45 - 54	26
Conservative	33	55 - 64	24
Very Conservative	34	65+	35

One other problem selected by a large number of respondents was "the widespread availability and use of drugs and alcohol." This option was more likely to be selected by respondents with lower levels of education — those with a high school diploma (32%) or less than a high school education (34%). People with higher levels of education were less likely to to indicate that this was a major problem—though typically about 20% to 25% of the sample selected that.

Finally, with respect to stability and structure, though most respondents selected discipline as the key issue, several respondents did rank "more children growing up in single-parent homes" as one of the most important issues. Table 18 breaks this out by some key demographics. Males are more concerned about this than are females. Conservatives are more concerned than are moderates and liberals. And older respondents are more concerned than younger respondents. The majority of single-parent homes in the sample are among the 30 - 44 year old age cohort. Perhaps because a greater proportion of 30-44 year-olds are raising children in that situation, they are less likely to see it as a concern. In the final column we examine a series of family statuses. Those most concerned about single-parenthood are those who are married, not in a relationship, or are already single parents. Respondents without children were somewhat less likely to select single-parenthood as a problem, while those living with a partner or in a relationship[9] were significantly less likely to select single-parenthood as a problem.

Figure 15 plots the percentage that selected at least one cultural or one economic issue by age groupings. Younger groups—those less than forty-five—typically perceived both culture and economics as equally problematic. However, older cohorts change their perceptions of the problems until, for those over age sixty-five, the group selecting at least one cultural response was approximately twice as large as the group selecting an economic response. Age correlates strongly with people's perceived problems with families in society.

Obviously, ideology may correlate with perceptions of problems. Keeping in mind the fact that discipline

[9]Note that this category does not include those that are cohabiting.

Table 18: Percent selecting "More children growing up in single-parent homes" by gender, age, education and family status

Gender	%	*Partisanship*	%	*Age*	%	*Family Status*	%
Male	30	Very Liberal	10	18 - 29	24	Married	29
Female	21	Liberal	14	30 - 44	17	Living with Partner	15
		Moderate	22	45 - 54	23	In a relationship	14
		Conservative	37	55 - 64	34	Not in a relationship	27
		Very Conservative	37	65+	30	Single-Parent	26
						No Children	22

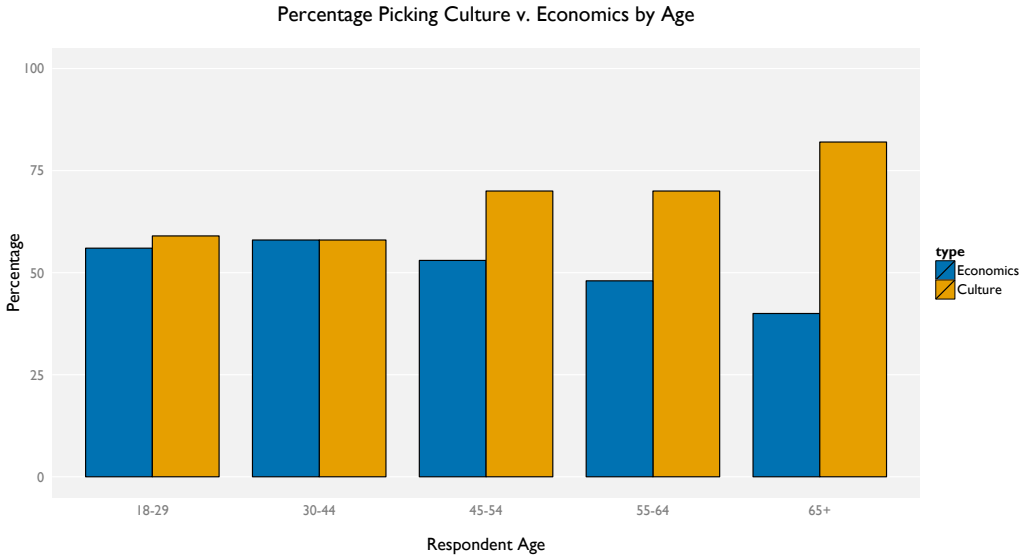

Figure 15: The figure categorizes the issues by culture and economics (see table 16) and plots them by age group. Bars reflect the percentage in each group that selected at least one problem from each of the respective categories.

was selected by wide margins as the most important issue facing families, the other responses (leaving out discipline) reflect a clear ideological tilt. As can be seen in Figure 16 the most liberal respondents tend to emphasize economic problems, as opposed to cultural problems. In contrast, the most conservative respondents were much more likely to select cultural and structural problems with the family.

For those labeling themselves "liberal" and those labeling themselves "conservative" there is a clear pattern of avoiding certain problems as responses. Liberals are not likely to offer up claims about family structure—and those in the "very liberal" category do not tend to select cultural responses either. In contrast the conservatives in the sample—at approximately equal rates—did not select economic issues as being problematic for families.

One concern we might have is that this ideological pattern simply reflects differences in income. However, Table 19 suggests that income levels select each of the categories at roughly similar levels. The differences within each income category are negligible, suggesting that income plays far less role in the perceptions of problems with the family than does ideology.

Public opinion data cannot settle questions of causality and which set of issues really are the most im-

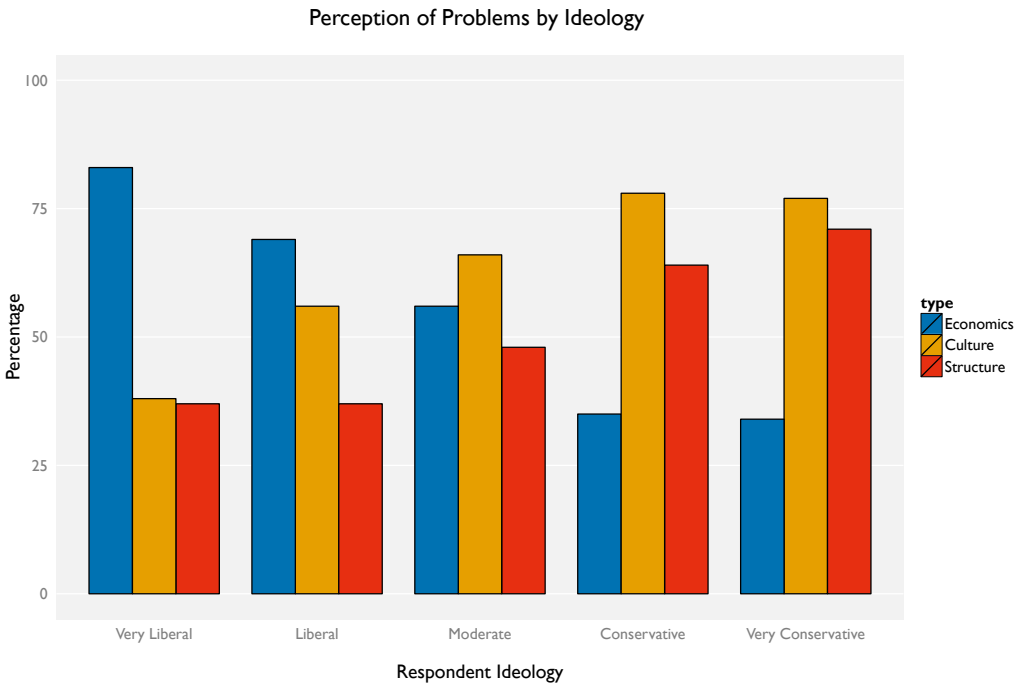

Figure 16: The figure categorizes the issues by economics, culture and family structure (see Table 16) and plots them by age group. Bars reflect the percentage in each group that selected at least one problem from each of the respective categories. Note that because of the overwhelming numbers who responded that discipline was a major problem, that response has been omitted from this graphic.

portant. However, it is clear from these data that liberal and conservative members of society place very different emphases on what problems are affecting families. Conservatives emphasize the cultural and structural problems facing those families, downplaying economic issues. Liberals tend to do the opposite, emphasizing economics over structure and culture—though they are clearly more open to cultural problems. There is strong variation across each category, so it would be too strong to say that these people live in different worlds, but it is obvious that they approach the family in very different ways.

Table 19: Percentage Indicating at least One Problem in Each Category

	Economics	Culture	Family Structure (Excluding Discipline)
<$30,000	52	70	50
$30 - $50,000	55	68	51
$50 - $80,000	48	69	58
$80 - $100,000	54	64	53
>$100,000	50	65	56

5 The Politics and Policy of Family

Having established some important facts about how Americans today feel about their family, families generally, and the challenges faced by families in contemporary society, we turn now to a set of questions about politics and policy. Specifically, we are interested in whether people think families are being well-served by important political and social institutions and what policies people believe help families thrive. Though we break things down by similar demographics as in earlier sections, we also include some evaluations by the partisanship of the respondents to our survey as fits with the political content of the questions.

5.1 Key Institutions and the Family

Table 20 lays out the results of a question where people were asked to evaluate how supportive institutions are of families. The left-hand column displays the average rating on a 0 - 100 scale, where higher values indicate a more positive evaluation. All other columns represent the percentage that fell into that category where negative indicate a rating lower than 50, positive indicates a rating above fifty and neutral is a truly neutral response or a non-response. The institutions are arrayed in order of the evaluations, with the highest evaluations being for churches (or places of worship), neighborhoods and the police. By and large, the institutions that are viewed positively are viewed that way across the board. The largest exception is among Blacks, only half of whom rate the police positively, with 45% rating the police negatively.[10]

Table 20: How Supportive Is the Respective Institution for Families (0-100)?

	Average Rating	Negative Rating	Neutral or Unrated	Positive Rating
Churches or Place of Worship	66	13	8	79
Neighborhoods	63	14	6	80
The Police	61	18	7	75
Employers	58	14	11	75
Public Schools	56	25	7	68
Republicans	48	37	7	56
Democrats	47	38	6	56
News Media	45	44	7	49

None of the institutions gets a really negative overall rating—in general people are pleased with the institutional support for families. However, there were a few institutions that did get an unusually high

[10]To illustrate a more graded scale we display the densities for each of these variables in figure 17. For purposes of this table, we collapse all positive and negative variables into a single category to capture the respondent's tendencies and leanings .

percentage of negative ratings: public schools (25%, see column two of the table), Republicans (37%), Democrats (38%) and the news media (44%).[11]

Figure 17 displays the densities for each of these distributions, with the more negatively evaluated organizations in the right-hand column. The bumps at the bottom of the scales in these right-hand panels indicate clusters of very negative responses for certain specific groups.

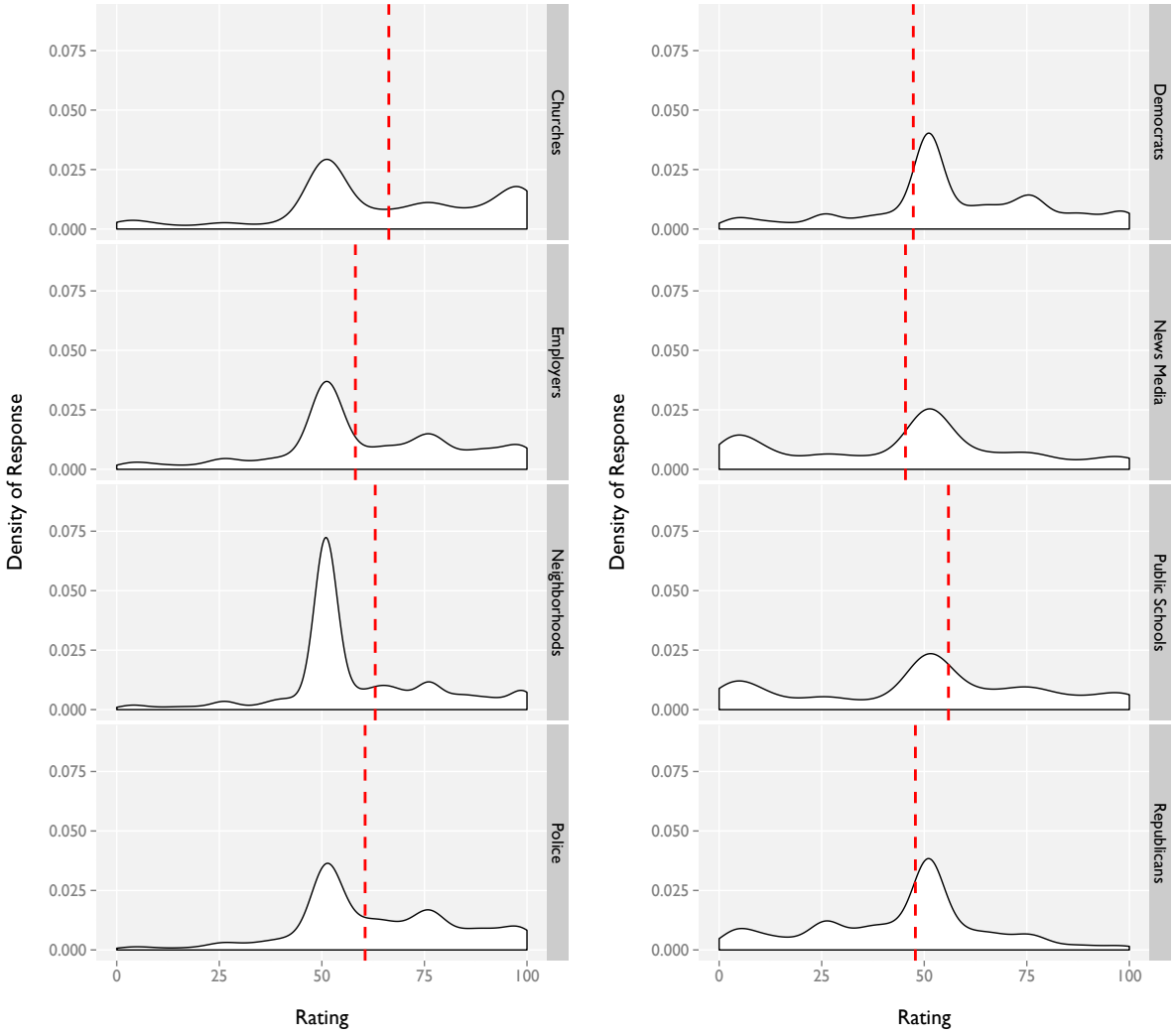

Figure 17: Evaluations of how supportive institutions are of families as a raw density. Left-hand column institutions were generally seen as more positive, while right-hand column institutions were seen as more negative. Red dashed lines indicate the average score for all respondents.

Take, for example, public schools. Though the typical respondent has neutral or positive views, there is a clear group of people who harbor very negative opinions. The groups most likely to have negative views are males (31% negative, compared with only 20% of females), Republicans, and independents (32% and 28% negative, as opposed to Democrats who were negative only 18% of the time). One group with decidedly positive views about public schools were Asians, where only one out of ten respondents

[11] Overall, more people see the news media in a positive than negative light, but only by a few percentage points.

offered a negative judgement. The news media is regarded negatively by many different groups, although Republicans are more negative than most and Asians are a bit less negative than most.

With respect to the parties, the clear pattern of negativity comes from opposite-partisans and consistent supporters of that party. So Democrats, Blacks, Hispanics and those with a post-graduate education are more likely to believe that Republicans are bad for families. Republicans, whites, males, older respondents and the wealthy tend to believe that Democrats are negative for families. But in all of these cases the average views are near neutrality. Only subsets of all of these groups hold extremely negative views of the parties.

One point that should be clear from the densities is that people hold widely varying views, no doubt based in part upon differing experiences with the institutions. And there is no consistent group of people always rating the institutions negatively or positively.[12] Finally, there is a strong pattern of neutrality on average. Some people have strongly positive or negative views, but they are the exception, not the norm.

5.2 *Key Policies and the Family*

We asked respondents to evaluate how supportive of families are seven programs: food stamps, housing assistance, Head Start, Medicaid (and other health insurance subsidies), the home mortgage tax deduction, the tax deduction for charitable giving and the child tax credit. Table 21 gives the raw evaluations for how supportive each of these programs is for families. Scores ranged from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating stronger support for families. In the table, programs are ordered from most supportive to least supportive. It is notable that, on average, none of the programs is seen as truly unsupportive. All are seen as having some value to families. However some programs, like the child tax credit, Head Start, and the mortgage tax deduction are evaluated more positively than others.

Table 21: How Supportive Is the Program of Families (0-100)?

	Average Score
Child Tax Credit	69.7
Head Start	64.4
Home Mortgage Tax Deduction	63.6
Medicaid and other health insurance subsidies	59.4
Food Stamps	58.7
Housing Assistance	57.4
Tax Deduction for Charitable Giving	56.9

The policy seen as least supportive of families was the tax deduction for charitable giving, which, admittedly, probably has the most tenuous connection specifically to families. In general, and in contrast to opinions about some institutions, people's attitudes about these programs—though variable as seen below—skew relatively positive. To get a better sense of the distributions of opinion, Figure 18 displays the densities of opinion for each of the programs or policies. Most programs are rated relatively highly, with the bulk of the distribution of opinion above the midpoint of the scale. There is, however, some significant difference of opinion. One source of this variation is fairly predictable—partisanship—but the major source of variation depends largely on one's experience with the programs.

Figures 19 and 20 display the raw scores by partisanship (Republicans are presented first) and whether or

[12] The average correlation is around 0.2 and the highest is just barely over 0.4. This means there are relatively few people who are consistently simply giving the same kind of answer for all of these institutions.

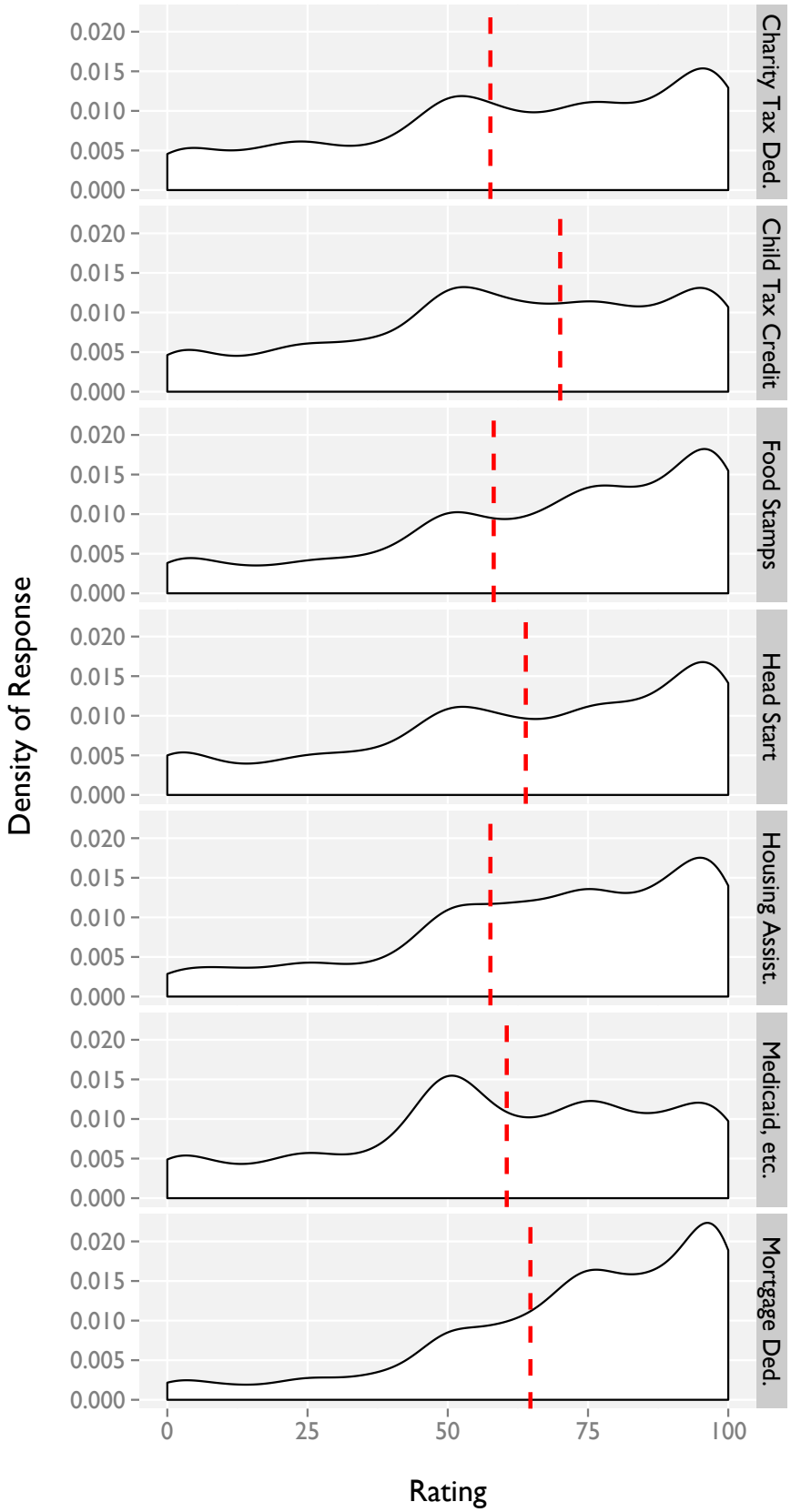

Figure 18: Evaluations of how supportive programs are for families as a density. Red dashed lines indicate average score for all respondents.

not one has benefitted from the program.[13] The results show several interesting patterns.

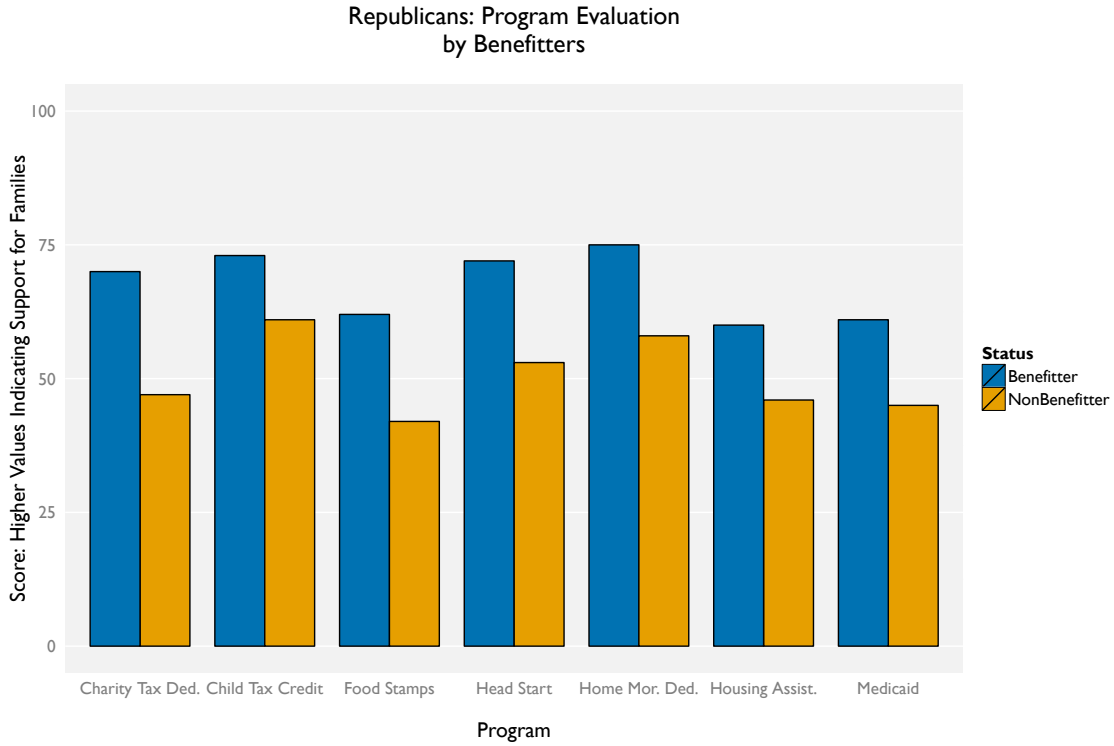

Figure 19: Raw scores of the program evaluation by beneficiary status. People who believe they have benefitted from the program rated it much higher. This graph is for Republicans.

Democrats tend to evaluate the programs a bit more positively with respect to families than do Republicans. It is important not to overstate this difference, though, because on average, Republicans also believe these programs help families. Still, there is clearly a sense in which Democrats have more positive feelings towards these programs and are more likely to believe they help families. And this appears to be true whether or not the Democrat has benefitted personally from the program or not (though the non-benefiters always evaluate the program a bit less positively).[14]

In contrast, among Republicans, those who benefitted from the program evaluated the program much more positively—on average, about ten to fifteen percentage points so. It is important to note that even the Republicans who have not benefitted from these programs tend to evaluate them as neutral for families. Food stamps and housing assistance do dip below fifty among that group, but even those programs have average ratings of 40 or above. The conclusion is that Republicans who have not benefitted from the programs are not enthusiastic about them, but are not deeply negative—at least as far as seeing the programs as benefitting families.

[13] Respondents were asked whether or not they or their family had personally benefitted from various programs. And it is important to note that we asked people about their beneficiary status after their evaluation so if there is a question order effect it is caused by their evaluation of the program and not vice versa.

[14] We note again that the correlations of these evaluations of programs are also rather low (around 0.3), meaning that respondents to the survey are not simply giving the same responses about all the programs. However, those correlations vary substantially: some of the programs (like the ones for food stamps and housing assistance) are very high, while others are essentially zero (like between the ones for food stamps and the deduction for charitable giving). The truth is people have rather variable, but not often negative, evaluations of most of these programs.

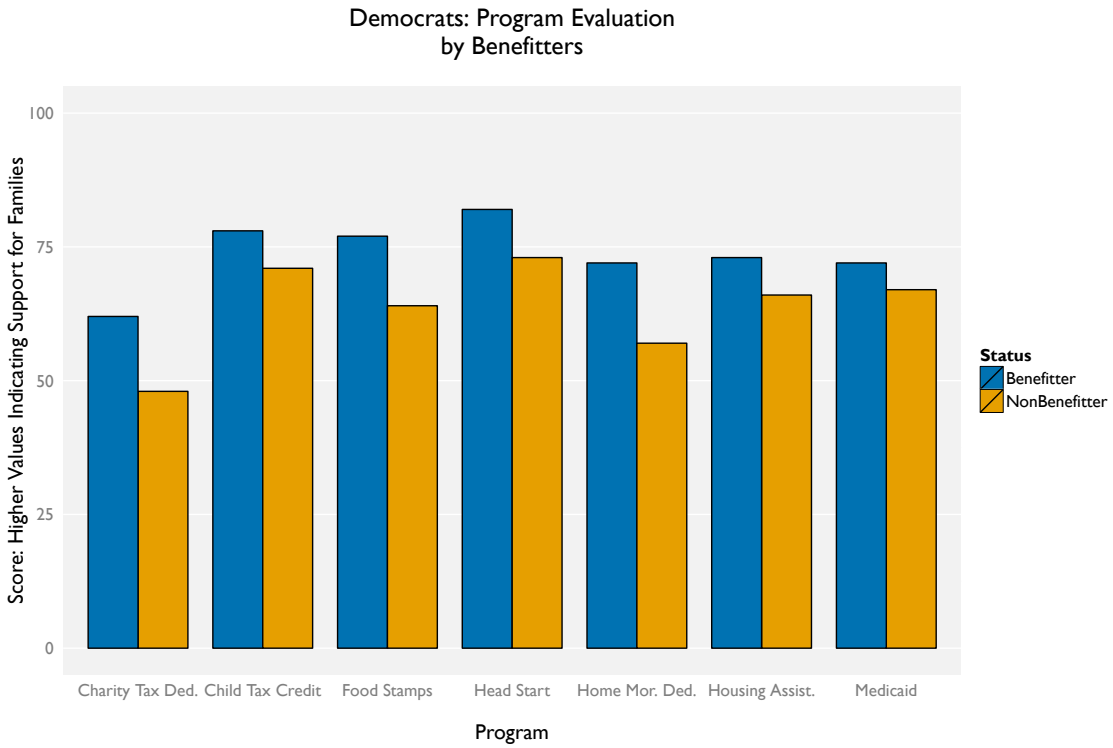

Figure 20: Raw scores of the program evaluation by beneficiary status. People who believe they have benefitted from the program rated it much higher. This graph is for Democrats.

We interpret this as a result driven by interests and experiences. Earlier we noted that people's lived experience within marriages and families did not vary much by ideology (something obviously correlated with partisanship). Here the pattern seems to be that lived experience makes a significant difference for people's evaluation of the programs—more so for Republicans rather than for Democrats. In general, the broad pattern of results suggest that lived experience, which does not vary much by ideology or partisanship, has a plausibly significant effect on how people evaluate politics and policy. People who have benefitted from these policies and programs believe them to be of significant value, and this is true regardless of ideological orientation. Perceived lack of benefit—perhaps driven by the absence of personal experience—dampens enthusiasm for these programs, especially among Republicans.

The results also suggest an asymmetry between the political parties. Democrats and liberals, regardless of experience, tend to be slightly more supportive of these programs and policies. Republican support is contingent on other factors. Republicans can be talked into a belief that these programs are valuable for families, but their experiences and interests make a significant difference in how likely they are to respond positively to that question.

One possible hypothesis people might have about government assistance programs is that they deter marriage, perhaps because the benefits are offered in a way that privileges the unmarried. To some degree, we found evidence of this effect in the survey. When we asked respondents whether or not people (or those in their family) chose *not* to get married because of fear of losing government benefits 32% responded that they did. This number is high enough that the hypothesis should be taken seriously; however, there is some evidence that people may be over-reporting their experiences. For instance the

most likely groups to respond "yes" are whites, Republicans, and the very conservative.[15] There were no significant differences across income and in other demographics the differences were muted. We conclude that the evidence for this sort of negative policy influence on marriage is real and so the effect probably does exist for some people, but how widespread it might be needs further study with different designs and question wording to nail down the precise degree of the effect.

We turn now to a series of questions—sometimes with embedded experiments—on specific policies on a number of issues: Pre-Kindergarten, taxes, immigration, divorce, maternity/paternity leave, same-sex marriage and abortion.

5.2.1 Government-Funded Pre-Kindergarten Programs

In addition to the programs described already, we also asked respondents their opinions about government-provided universal pre-kindergarten for children younger than five years old. This issue is likely to be the subject of political debate in the upcoming presidential campaign, and to further explore the contours of opinion about the issue, we implemented a simple question-wording experiment. Half of respondents were randomly assigned to a question about how much they agreed with the idea of government funding of pre-kindergarten programs for "needy" children under five, while the other half were asked about pre-K for "all" children under five.

Table 22: Support for Government-Funded Universal Pre-K for Children Under 5

	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree
Needy Children	52	21	27
All Children	45	22	33

Table 22 shows that while government funding for pre-K programs is relatively popular overall, more Americans support such programs when they are restricted based on need.[16] Additional analysis shows that the lower support for extending those programs to all children is correlated with the presence or absence of children in the home. For example, among those respondents randomly assigned to answer the question about "needy" children, half of those who have children at home agree with the idea of universal pre-K for needy children, and rates of agreement are similar among those who do not have children at home.[17] Among respondents randomly assigned to answer the question about "all" children, however, about 54% of respondents with children at home support the idea, while only 41% of those without children do so. In other words, respondents' current family status affects their willingness to extend universal pre-k to all children.

Not surprisingly, we find substantial partisan differences in support for government funding as well. Democrats are far more supportive than independents or Republicans, regardless of whether we asked about "all" children or "needy" children (see Figure 21). Nonetheless, both Democrats and Republicans are more likely to express support for government funding when randomly assigned to the question that asked about "needy" children. The increased support is similar for both parties: 8-9 percentage points. The distinction between "needy" and "all" children appears to matter less to independents, with about 40% expressing support regardless of the question wording. Further study is needed to understand better why need makes less of a difference for independents.

[15] Though it is suggestive that 33% of pure independents reported that they had observed people avoiding marriage.

[16] These results include the survey weights. Without the weights, the differences are slightly smaller, but still in the same direction.

[17] Compared to those with children, Americans without children at home are somewhat less likely to be neutral and more likely to disagree with the idea, however.

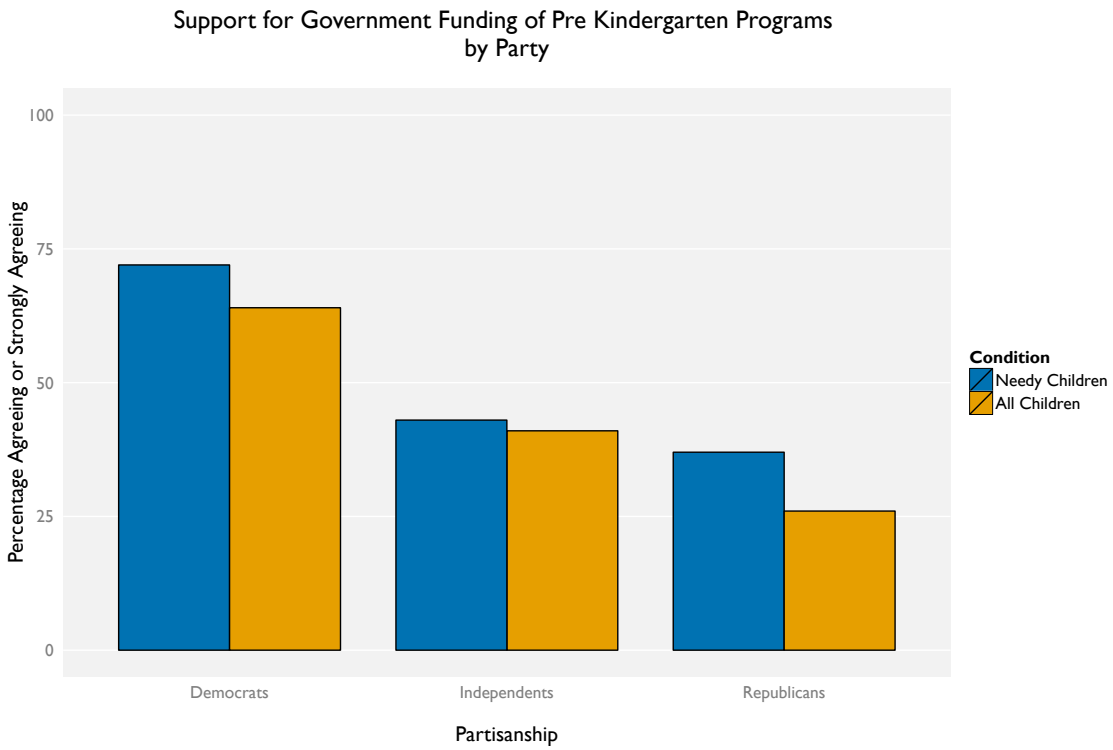

Figure 21: Percentage of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with government funding for pre-K programs by respondent partisanship.

5.2.2 Tax Relief for Families with Children

Another question we asked concerned people's attitudes about tax fairness. The text of the question read, "Some people believe families with children should receive special tax relief. Other people believe that all households should be taxed the same, whether they have children or not. Where do you stand on this issue?" The question was designed to probe questions of equity. One might believe that families, providing a special benefit to society of sheltering and raising the next generation, deserve some special consideration. An alternative belief might be that parents should be treated like all other citizens and given no special benefits in any way.

People could choose either the option of taxing all households at the same rate (at the low end of the scale) or providing special relief for households with children (at the high end of the scale)[18] In general, as can be seen in table 23 overall people lean in the direction of supporting families, slightly, but with some significant variation across groups.

One demographic group that particularly stands out is African-Americans. With an average score of 67.7 they take a particularly strong stance in a pro-family tax code direction, more so than any other demographic group we examined. There is also a clear difference by age. Older respondents sat almost exactly at neutrality while younger cohorts were more open to the idea of assisting families. Again, it is hard to escape the notion that interest and experience play a role here. Older cohorts are more likely to have dealt with the issue of raising their children and be facing retirement and personal finance issues.

[18]That orientation is purely for presentation purposes here. All respondents saw a randomized scale with the ends varying.

Table 23: Average score (where 100 = special treatment for families and 0 = neutrality with respect to families) by various demographics.

	Tax Relief Score
Overall	53.5
Male	51.5
Female	55.4
White	45.3
Black	67.7
Hispanic	57.3
18 - 29	57.7
30 - 44	57.5
45 - 64	50.0
65+	49.9

They are clearly less sympathetic to treating families with special consideration than are younger people still facing these issues more directly. Other factors like income, gender and race saw few if any differences.

How do political views affect these attitudes? Figure 22 plots the score by ideology and child status. As is clear in the figure, there is a fairly big effect from having children at home. In fact, the very conservative respondents with children at home hold essentially the same views as the very liberal respondents without children at home. A muted ideological effect is present in the data, but it is not as visible as the difference between those with and without children.

As was the case with evaluations of policies and programs the lived experience of respondents seem to make a difference. Just as before, where those who benefitted from the program were more likely to favor it, people with children are more sympathetic to targeted tax relief than are those without that experience. Ideology (or partisanship) make some difference but is not as important as experience is. Ideological differences flatten considerably among the set of respondents with children at home.

There is an interesting question about how this will play out in the presidential primaries where candidates have staked out different positions on the issue of tax relief. Table 24 displays the score for four groups defined by partisanship and child status. The table examines only those who said they always or typically vote in primary elections. Democrats and Republicans without children currently living at home are relatively far apart, with Democrats favoring tax breaks for families with children and Republicans preferring to treat all households the same. However, when one considers family status the story changes. Republicans with children currently living at home are more likely to favor special tax treatment more often, and Democrats who lack children at home are much less likely to favor such treatment than are their fellow-Democrats who have children.

Table 24: Ratings on the tax question of Republican and Democratic Primary Voters

	Democrat	**Republican**
Children at Home	67.2	54.8
No Children at Home	54.8	43.7

It sets up an interesting conundrum for primary candidates. The pull within the Democratic Party is to push for some degree of special tax status for parents. Among Republicans it is the opposite. Pushing for

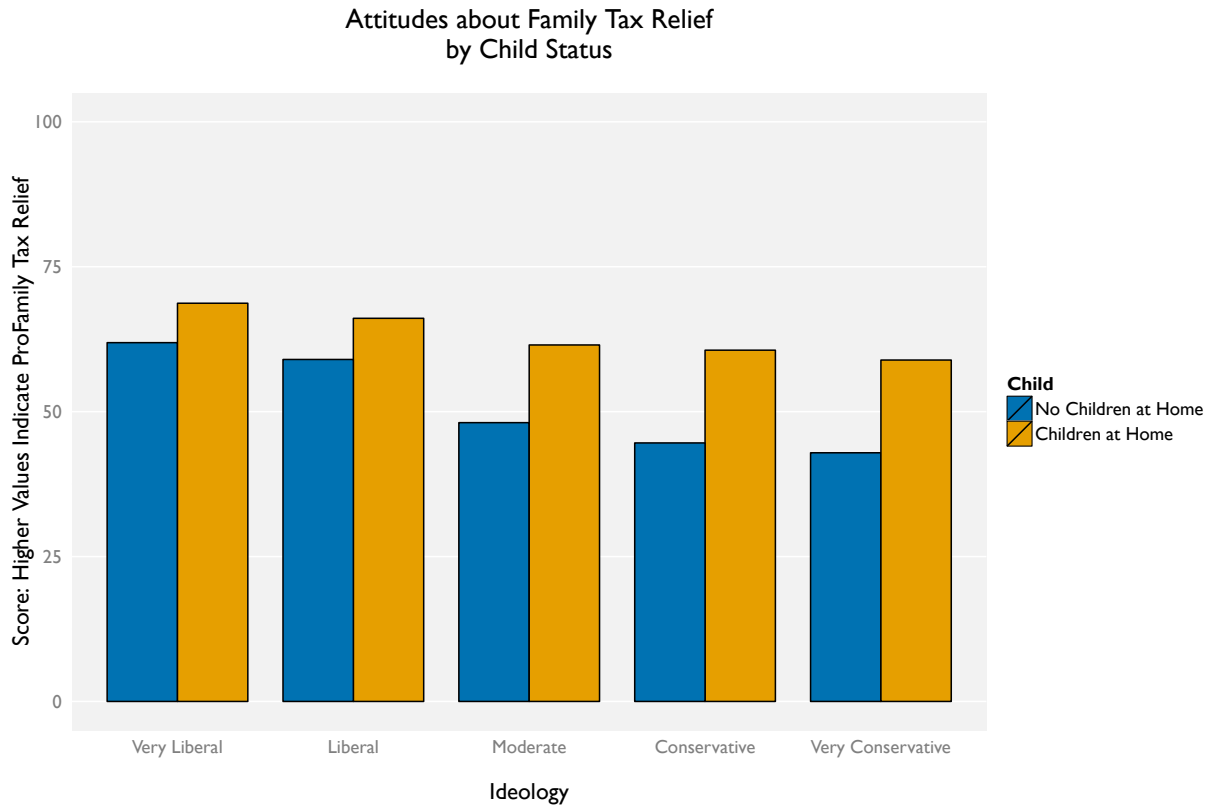

Figure 22: Preferences over tax policy by ideology and whether the respondent currently has children at home. Higher scores indicate a preference for helping families with special, targeted tax relief. Lower scores indicate a preference for taxing all households the same.

some kind of special tax status appears to be the position most likely to be favored in a general election as it would capture some support from the left and would peel off a significant chunk of Republicans (those with children at home). How it will play out in practice will be much more complicated than this, no doubt, but the broad patterns of how the public views tax fairness are captured in Table 24.

5.2.3 Immigration Policy and Families

We asked respondents two questions about families and immigration policy. The first question focused on whether they favored, opposed, or were neutral about the idea that the immigration system should give higher priority to reuniting families than to helping people who have job skills that are in demand. Most respondents, regardless of demographics, are neutral on this position (Table 25). Outright opposition to the idea of keeping families together is concentrated among Republicans and conservatives. Nearly half of Republicans oppose the idea the immigration policy should favor reuniting families over emphasizing job skills, while most independents and Democrats are neutral. Ideological differences mirror these partisan differences, with the most liberal respondents expressing the greatest levels of support (43% favoring and only 10% opposing) and the most conservative respondents expressing the greatest hostility (16% favoring and 55% opposing). Conservatives and Republicans are the only groups for which opposition is the modal category. In addition, younger respondents are more supportive of reuniting families than

older respondents. About one-third of respondents between the ages of 18-29 favor reuniting families, with only 17% opposing, while those numbers are nearly the reverse (18% favoring and 39% opposing) among Americans over the age of 65.

Table 25: Immigration Priorities: Favor Reuniting Families

	Favor	Neutral	Oppose
All Respondents	24	47	30
Republicans	15	37	48
Independents	21	52	27
Democrats	34	51	15
Children at Home	24	48	28
No Children at Home	21	42	38

As the bottom two rows of Table 25 show, respondents with children currently living at home were less likely to express outright opposition to the idea of reuniting families as an immigration priority (28% opposed, as compared to 38% of those who do not have children in the home). However, their lower levels of opposition did not necessarily mean substantially greater levels of overt support. Instead, those with children at home were more likely than those without children at home to be neutral.

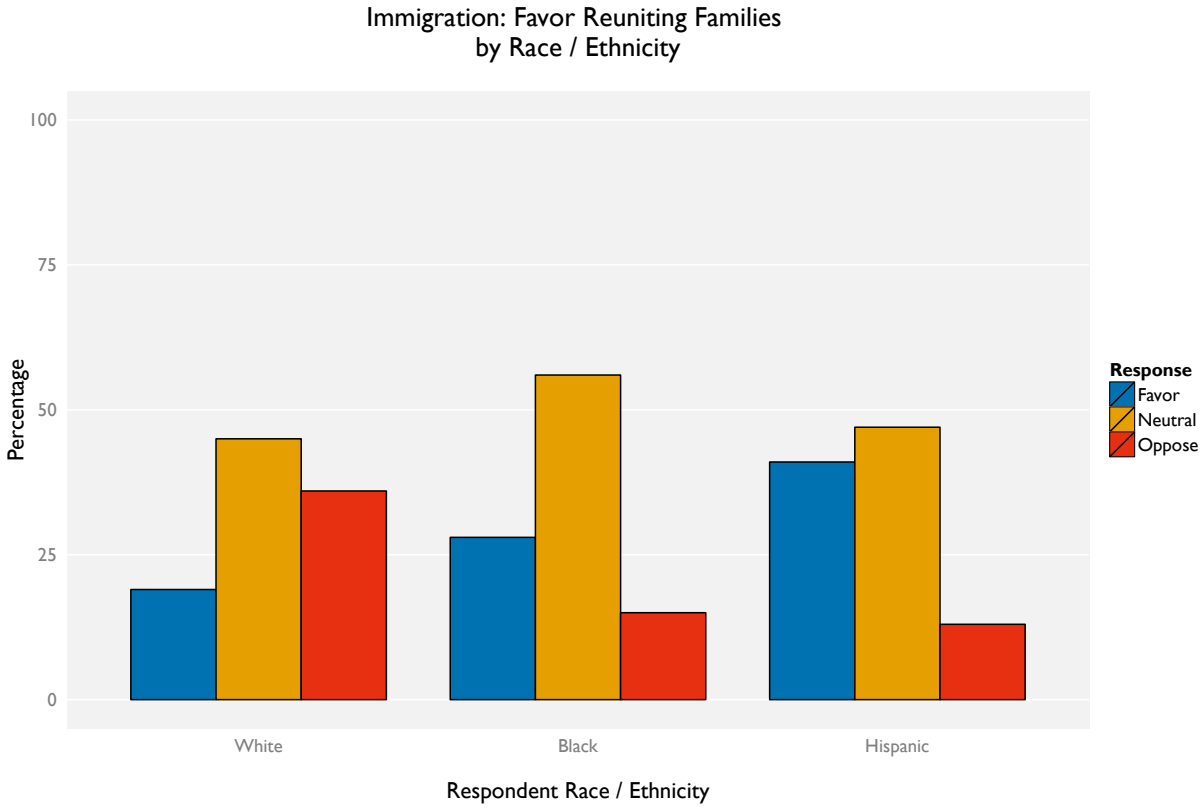

Figure 23: Immigration policy preference for giving priority to reuniting families over helping people with job skills.

Responses to the immigration question were also related to the respondent's racial or ethnic background (Figure 23). The modal response for all three racial/ethnic categories is neutrality, but White respondents are far more likely than Black or Hispanic respondents to oppose the idea of favoring families over job skills in immigration policy. As a group, Hispanics are the most positive about the importance of reuniting families, with 41% favoring and only 13% opposing.[19]

The second question regarding immigration asked respondents if they favored, opposed, or were neutral about the idea that we should deport undocumented immigrants even when it separates parents from children who are U.S. citizens. On this question, opinion was split relatively evenly, with about one-third of all respondents opposed to this policy, with one-third favoring the policy and the remaining third neutral. However, we again find significant partisan differences (Table 26). A majority of Republicans favor deporting undocumented residents, even if their children are natural-born citizens, while a majority of Democrats express the opposite view. Independents are divided on the topic, with the largest number choosing the neutral category. As with the first question, opinions are also highly polarized by respondent ideology, with only 10% of liberal respondents favoring deportation, compared to a majority of conservative respondents and two-thirds of those who self-identify as very conservative. Age is also correlated with opposition to deportation. The largest group of respondents between the ages of 18-29 oppose deportation (46%), while a similar number (44%) of those over 65 favor it. As Table 26 shows, opinions are roughly evenly distributed across the three response categories among those who have children at home, and those who do not have children at home are comparatively more likely to favor deportation.

Table 26: Immigration Priorities: Favor Deporting Immigrants with Citizen Children

	Favor	**Neutral**	**Oppose**
All Respondents	33	31	36
Republicans	54	30	15
Independents	29	39	32
Democrats	16	27	58
Children at Home	33	36	31
No Children at Home	42	23	35

The question of deportation has affected the Hispanic community disproportionately, and concern about this issue differs by the racial or ethnic background of our respondents (Figure 24). Only 9% of Hispanics favor a policy of deportation, and a solid majority of Hispanics opposes deportation. By contrast, a plurality of White respondents favor it, and only about one-third oppose the policy. Less than 20% of Blacks favor deportation of the parents of citizen children, with the remainder evenly divided between neutrality and opposition.

[19]The results for Asian respondents are similar, but because the sample includes less than 100 Asians, we are less confident about the robustness of those results.

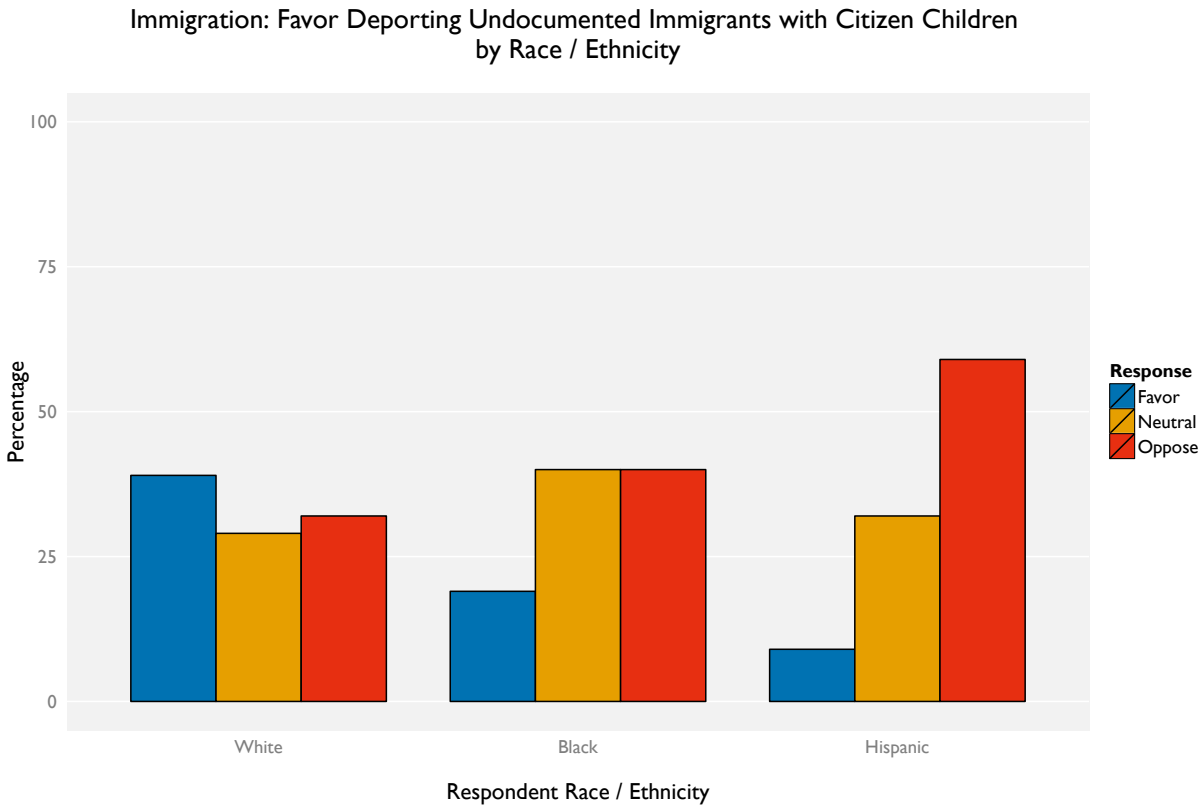

Figure 24: Preference for deporting undocumented immigrants with citizen children.

5.2.4 Divorce Experiment

As we discussed above, one of the key findings to emerge from the survey is that many people consider protecting children to be an important function of marriage. We explored the connection between children and public policies about how marriages end by conducting a simple experiment. Half of the respondents to the sample were randomly assigned to answer a commonly asked survey question about divorce policy: "Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain that it is now?" The other half of the sample was asked the same question, but this time with a reference to contexts in which children are in the home: "When children still live at home, should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain than it is now?"

Table 27 shows that few Americans believe that divorce should be made easier; most prefer that access to divorce remain the same or that it be made more difficult. When the question mentions children, however, support for making divorce easier further evaporates. Respondents assigned to the children question did not, however, become dramatically more supportive of the idea that divorce should be more difficult. Instead, their lower levels of agreement with the idea that divorce should be easier is accompanied by increased levels of uncertainty about their views.

Notably, the effect of drawing respondents' attention to children can be found across a variety of different subgroups. For example, as can be seen in Figure 25, people younger than age 44 tend to be most supportive of the idea that divorce should be easier to obtain — one quarter of those under age 30 prefer

Table 27: Difficulty of Divorce

	Easier	As Is	More Difficult	Don't Know
Control	21	36	26	17
Children Present	11	33	30	26

that divorce be made easier and that number rises to nearly one third among respondents between 30 and 44 years old. But even among those age groups, support for easier divorce plummets (to 16% and 11%, respectively) when children are involved. Older Americans are less supportive of divorce laws being made more lax even when children are not mentioned, but for these groups, too, support for easier divorce drops in contexts where children are still in the home. These lower levels of support for easier divorce do not, again, translate into substantially more support for making divorce more difficult. Rather, respondents at all ages are more likely to say that they "don't know" when asked about divorce when children are present. Similar patterns can be found when we explore effects by ideology. More liberal respondents are more likely than conservatives to favor more liberal divorce laws, but among all respondents, conservative and liberal, support for easier divorce declines when they are asked to consider the presence of children.

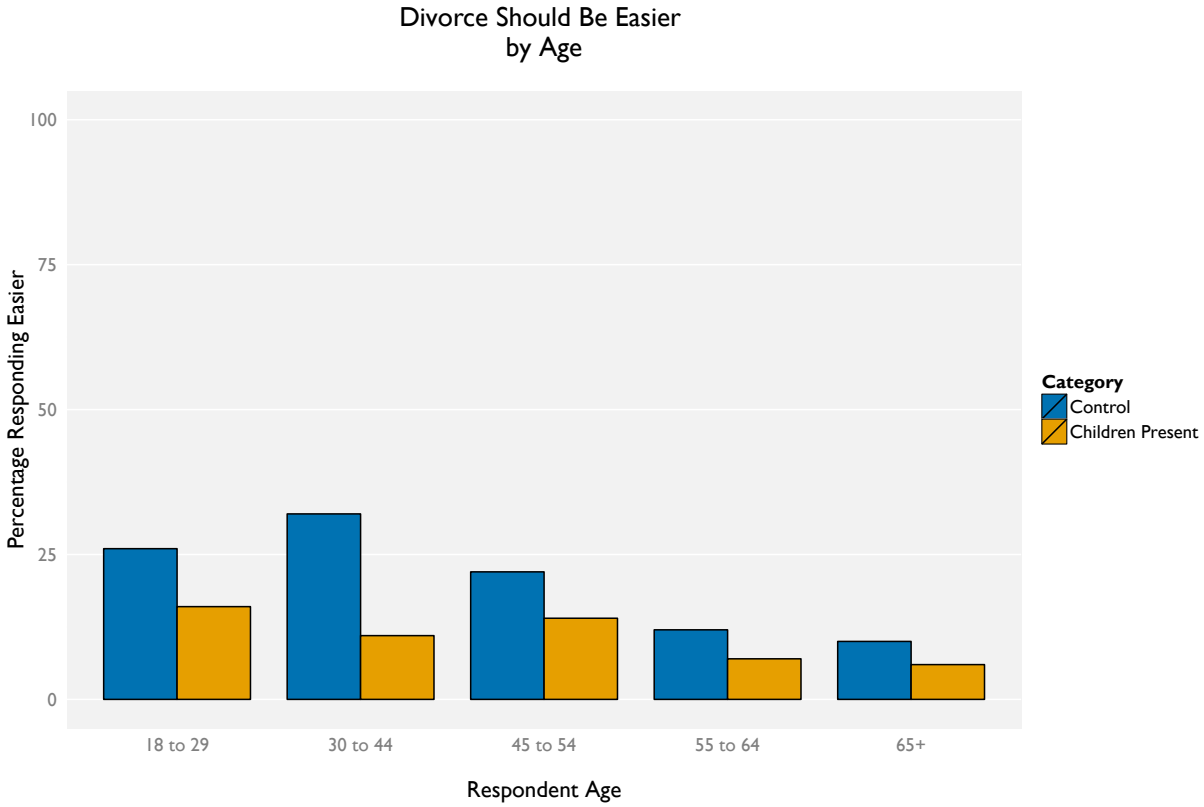

Figure 25: Percentage Stating Divorce Should Be Easier.

As can be seen in Table 28, support for easier access to divorce also varies with respondents' relationship and family status. Married people who are currently separated from their spouses, many of whom are presumably in the midst of the process of divorce, are substantially more likely than other groups to

advocate for easier divorces, but even their support for more liberal divorce laws is dramatically muted when the question focuses on families with young children. Only one group — respondents who are in a committed relationship but who are not living together or married — showed little sensitivity to the idea that children might make a difference in ease of access to divorce. Overall, our experiment confirms that Americans see the needs of children as an important consideration when evaluating divorce laws. Though they are not willing to make divorce more difficult for families with children, they are far less certain that divorce should be made easier when children are part of the equation.

Table 28: Percentage Responding that Divorce Should Be Easier, by Relationship and Parental Status

	Control	**Children Present**
Married	16	7
Married but Separated	50	27
Living Together	34	16
Committed Relationship	18	21
Not in a Relationship	24	12
Children at Home	24	12
No Children at Home	14	8

5.2.5 Maternity / Paternity Leave

Another subject that has been the focus of political debate and may continue to be part of the political agenda during the upcoming presidential election is family leave. For that reason, we presented respondents with an open-ended text box and asked how many months of maternity or paternity leave employers should be required by law to provide. We also approached this issue experimentally, by randomly assigning half of respondents to consider *paid* leave and the other half to think about *unpaid* leave. In addition, we randomized the order of the questions, with half of respondents answering the maternity leave question first and the other half considering paternity leave first.

Table 29: Average Months of Maternity and Paternity Leave

	Paid Leave		*Unpaid Leave*	
	Maternity	**Paternity**	**Maternity**	**Paternity**
Maternity Shown First	4.96	4.02	5.31	4.11
Paternity Shown First	4.31	3.72	5.08	4.61

Table 29 presents the average number of months of leave recommended by respondents in each of the experimental conditions. In every case, people prefer longer leave times for women than for men and slightly longer unpaid than paid leave times. However, question order did affect the difference between average maternity and paternity leaves.

Respondents asked to consider maternity leave first tended to prefer about five months of paid leave for women and about four months for men — a gender difference of about one month. These numbers increase slightly, but not substantially, for unpaid leave, and again, the difference in average maternity and paternity leave is about one month. However, those who were asked to consider paternity leave first

advocated 3.7 months of paid leave for men and about 4.3 months for women – a difference of just over half a month. In other words, the difference in average leave for men and women was much smaller when respondents were asked first about paternity leave than when they considered maternity leave first.[20] The key finding is that question order matters: the difference between average preferred maternity leave and average preferred paternity leave is larger when respondents consider maternity leave.

Perhaps surprisingly, we do not find consistent differences between men and women in preferences about maternity and paternity leave. Nor, too, do we find that respondents with children at home had a preference for dramatically longer leave times. If anything, respondents without children at home ended to advocate for longer unpaid leave than those with children. Less surprising is the fact that preferences for the length of leave differ by partisanship. As Figure 26 shows, partisans of all stripes tend to prefer longer leave times for women than for men and longer unpaid than paid leave, but Democrats support leaves that are at least one month and sometimes closer to two months longer than Republicans.[21] Independents split the difference between the partisans. Still, even Republicans support paid maternity leave of nearly four months, which is considerably more than the 12 weeks of unpaid leave currently mandated by the federal Family Medical Leave Act.

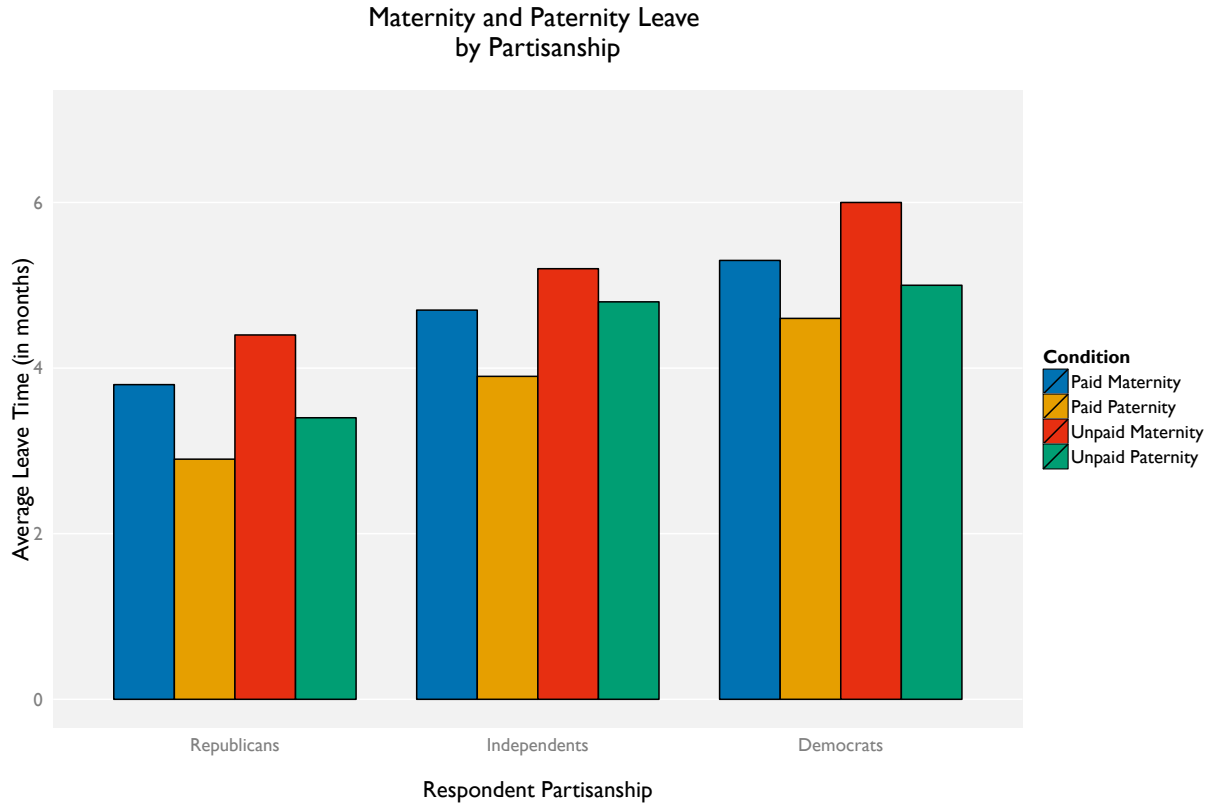

Figure 26: Average Length of Maternity and Paternity Leave.

[20]With respect to unpaid leave, too, the difference in the average leave granted to men and women is smaller, compared to respondents who considered maternity leave first. However, the average number of months of unpaid leave for men was higher among respondents who considered paternity leave policy first than among those who considered maternity leave first (4.61 months, compared to 4.11 months).

[21]These results are averages for all respondents, regardless of whether they considered maternity or paternity leave first. The basic patterns are nearly identical, with Democrats preferring longer leaves than Republicans, if we incorporate question ordering into the analysis.

5.2.6 Same-Sex Marriage

Toward the end of the survey, we also asked respondents to speculate about how marriage will be affected by the Supreme Court's recent decision about same-sex marriage. We reminded respondents that the Court had recently "decided that marriage rights should be extended to same-sex couples in all states." We then asked them to indicate whether this decision will "strengthen or weaken marriages in the United States" by placing themselves on a scale where one end was labeled "strengthen marriage" and the other "weaken marriage." Respondents could place themselves anywhere on the scale or could opt out by checking a box labeled "not sure." About 15% of respondents chose to opt out of the question. Of those who opted out, about 14% self-identified as liberal, 34% as conservative, and 52% as moderate.

For purposes of analysis, we focus on the remaining 85% of respondents who placed themselves on the scale. We converted respondents' self-placement to a number between 0 and 100, with 0 indicating the "weaken marriage" pole and 100 indicating "strengthen marriage" end of the scale. Higher scores thus indicate more support for the notion that the Supreme Court's decision will strengthen the institution of marriage, and lower scores indicate comparatively less support. Respondents to the survey appear divided about the effects of the Court's decision: the median score on the scale is 48, and the mean is 44.

Not surprisingly, given the stark differences between liberal and conservative views about the social meaning of marriage that we have outlined above, views about the Court's decision are strongly correlated with ideology. Liberal respondents are far more likely to believe that the Supreme Court's decision will bolster marriage, while conservative respondents express far more concern about the effects of the Court's decision. These differences can be seen in Figure 27. The average support score among self-identified "very liberal" respondents is about 83, while the corresponding score among the most conservative respondents is 13. Moderates are exactly in the middle with an average score of 50. Similar, though not quite as stark, differences can be seen with respect to partisanship. The average score for Republicans is 25, for Democrats it is 61, and independents score at 43.

Young people are also somewhat more likely than older respondents to believe that the Court's decision will have a positive effect on marriage, though as with partisanship, age differences are much less profound than ideological differences. The average support score among 18-29 year-old respondents is 53, while the score among respondents over age 65 is 30. More educated respondents are also more supportive. The average support score among respondents with a graduate degree is 54, compared to 37 among those who did not graduate high school. Few differences are evident when we disaggregate by race or ethnicity, though black respondents are least supportive (with an average score of 38, and Asian respondents are most supportive, with an average score of 54). White and Hispanic respondents both average 44 on the scale. Support scores are nearly identical across income categories.

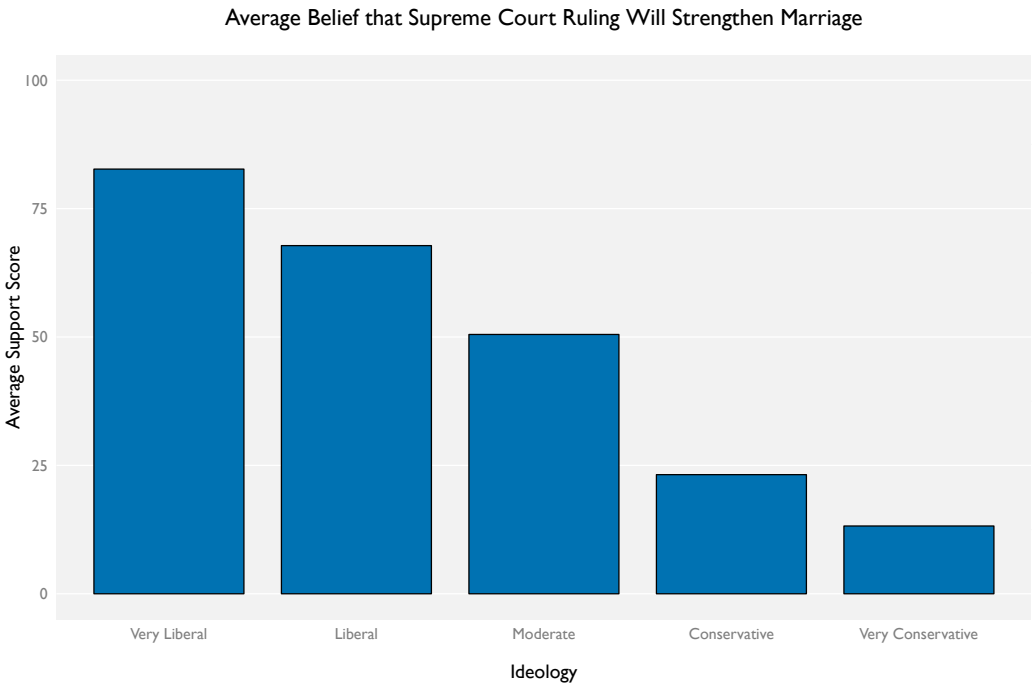

Figure 27: The figure displays the average support score by ideology.

5.2.7 Abortion

At the end of the survey, we also asked about attitudes regarding abortion, using a common survey question that explores public acceptance of abortion in different circumstances. As is evident from Table 30, Americans tend to agree on some reasons for abortions much more than others. For example, 73% of respondents in our survey agree that abortion should be allowed when a woman's health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy, and 68% agree that abortion should be an option when the woman is raped. On the other hand, only 22% think that a pregnant unmarried woman who does not want to marry the man should not be able to get an abortion, and just 25% favor abortion in the case of a married woman who does not want more children. Opinion is split about abortion when there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby.

Not surprisingly, we also find strong differences of opinions when comparing attitudes by the respondents' party attachments. Democrats tend to be substantially more supportive than Republicans of abortion, except in cases where a woman's health is endangered or where the pregnancy is a result of rape, conditions where large majorities all respondents, Republicans, independents, and Democrats, favor abortion as a possibility. Opinions are even more polarized when we focus on ideology (not shown in table). Liberals are the most supportive of abortion in every category, and the majority of liberals agree that abortion should be permitted in every instance. Conservative opinion runs in the opposite direction, only reaching a majority in the cases of rape and endangered health of the mother. These partisan and ideological differences tend to be larger than the effects of demographic characteristics, including age, income, gender, and whether children are in the home.

Our findings reflect slightly lower levels of support for abortion than has been seen in other surveys that ask a similar question, though the differences in support across the various contexts mirror the patterns

Table 30: Support for Abortion in Different Contexts

	All	Republicans	Independents	Democrats
If there is a strong chance of serious defect	54	45	47	66
If the woman is married and does not want more children	25	15	18	38
If the women's own health is seriously endangered	73	75	67	75
If the family cannot afford it	30	18	24	44
If the pregnancy is a result of rape	68	62	66	73
If a woman does not want to marry the man	22	13	15	36
If the woman wants it for any reason	31	17	26	45

other survey researchers have found. That is, the settings with the highest levels of support for abortion in our survey (cases when the pregnancy is a result of rape or when the woman's health is endangered) are the same settings for which other surveys also find the highest levels of support. One possible reason for differences between our findings and other results is that our questions about abortion came after a long battery of questions about families and children, while in other surveys, similar abortion questions often come after questions about women's rights and women's empowerment. The survey context could thus prime different considerations in the minds of respondents as they answer the questions. In addition, survey mode — with all questions on a single web page — could trigger different responses than a face-to-face interview. In any case, these differences and the reasons for them warrant further study.

6 Conclusion

The American Family Survey was designed to map the landscape of attitudes about marriage, family, and public policies relevant to marriage and family life. The terrain covered by the survey is diverse. On the one hand, Americans like their own marriages and families, feeling that their own families are getting stronger or at least holding steady in recent years. In addition, we find widespread agreement that marriage is generally a social good, especially for children — some might call this a child-centric view of the importance of marriage and family. Both observational and experimental data point to the idea that when people think about children, they bring a different set of considerations to their views of marriage and family, further underscoring the importance of strong marriages and families.

Even so, liberals and conservatives do seem to have a different understanding of the social meaning of marriage. Conservatives, Republicans, and older Americans tend to take a much more traditional view of what marriage should be and what it should mean to people. Liberals, Democrats, and younger Americans tend to be much more open to alternative family arrangements and are less prone to see marriage as a central social institution. This does not meant that they are hostile to marriage — they are simply somewhat less committed to traditional arrangements than are those on the right. And despite these differences in the social meaning of marriage, the actual practices and daily life of American marriages and families are quite similar across the ideological spectrum.

In the face of their relatively rosy views of their own relationships, Americans are generally pessimistic about the state of families today, though again, liberals and conservatives see families as being "under attack" in different ways. While liberals focus on economic challenges, conservatives see cultural and structural problems as being most important.

This does not mean that there are no areas of agreement. Both liberals and conservatives see parental discipline and the creation of boundaries for media use as current insufficient and in need of change. In

addition, while there are some predictable differences between liberals and conservatives when it comes to issues like same-sex marriage and other public policies, there is widespread and perhaps surprising agreement about the role of institutions and programs in supporting families and children. On average, most Americans see these programs as playing a positive or at worst neutral role for families. Personal experience with these programs is especially important for Republicans.

In all, we find that Americans are worried about the current state of the family, and they do not always diagnose the problem in the same way. But respondents to the American Family Survey also point the way to surprising areas of agreement, including about institutions and policies that might further support the family. These results thus hold open the promise of productive further dialogue aimed at strengthening families in the United States today.

7 Note on Methodology

YouGov interviewed 3099 respondents who were then matched down to a sample of 3000 to produce the final dataset. The respondents were matched to a sampling frame on gender, age, race, education, marital status, party identification, ideology, and political interest. The frame was constructed by stratified sampling from the full 2010 American Community Survey (ACS) sample with selection within strata by weighted sampling with replacements (using the person weights on the public use file). Data on voter registration status and turnout were matched to this frame using the November 2010 Current Population Survey. Data on interest in politics and party identification were then matched to this frame from the 2007 Pew Religious Life Survey. The matched cases were weighted to the sampling frame using propensity scores. The matched cases and the frame were combined and a logistic regression was estimated for inclusion in the frame. The propensity score function included age, gender, race/ethnicity, years of education, and ideology. The propensity scores were grouped into deciles of the estimated propensity score in the frame and post-stratified according to these deciles.

Last updated: November 16, 2015

http://national.deseretnews.com/american-family-survey

8 Appendix: Tables Supporting Statistics Used in Figures

Table A1: Your Marriage vs. Marriages Generally (Figure 1)

	Your Marriage	**Marriages Generally**
Stronger	43	5
About the Same	49	40
Weaker	6	43
Don't Know	1	12

Table A2: Income's Relationship with Marital Status (Figure 2)

	$0-$30,000	**$30,000-$50,000**	**$50,000-$80,000**	**$80,000-$100,000**	**$100,000+**
Married (living together)	29	51	62	67	56
Not currently in a relationship	44	25	25	20	30

Table A3: Life Satisfaction by Income and Marital Status (Figure 3)

	Completely Satisfied	**Somewhat Satisfied**	**Total**
<$30,000	23	41	64
30−50,000	28	43	71
50−80,000	33	48	81
80−100,000	34	53	88
>$100,000	34	13	74
Married	38	45	83
Committed Relationship	26	51	77
Not in a Relationship	22	39	61
Living with Partner	17	40	57
Married & Separated	16	40	53

Table A4: When More People Are Married, Society Is Better Off by Marital Status and Ideology (Figure 4)

	Married	Unmarried
Very Liberal	34	23
Liberal	53	29
Moderate	48	41
Conservative	78	59
Very Conservative	88	66

Table A5: Children Are Better Off When They Have Two Married Parents (Figure 5)

	Very Liberal	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very Conservative
Disagree	36	26	14	7	6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	25	23	23	9	4
Agree	38	52	63	84	90

Table A6: Children Need Both a Male and Female Role Model in the Home (Figure 6)

	Very Liberal	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very Conservative
Disagree	57	35	17	5	2
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16	16	19	8	4
Agree	27	49	64	87	94

Table A7: Marriage Prerequisites (Figure 7)

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Unimportant	Not at all important
Have a stable job	41	30	19	6	2	1	1
Have some savings or be paying off debt	28	28	25	12	3	2	3
Finish college	19	18	19	24	6	7	8
Live together with his or her future spouse	12	14	20	24	7	8	15
Have had several serious relationships	7	11	18	31	10	12	12
Own a home	7	9	15	33	11	13	11

Table A8: "Live Together" by Ideology (Figure 8)

	Very important	Important	Somewhat important	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Unimportant	Not at all important
Very liberal	25	25	20	16	6	3	6
Liberal	15	21	24	21	4	6	8
Moderate	12	15	23	26	7	7	10
Conservative	3	7	19	26	10	12	24
Very conservative	13	7	11	14	4	10	40
Not sure	28	21	15	22	6	3	

Table A9: Selected Marriage Prerequisites by Age (Figure 9)

Age of Respondent	**Very important**	**Important**	**Somewhat important**	**Neither important nor unimportant**	**Somewhat unimportant**	**Unimportant**	**Not at all important**
18-29	20	20	21	18	4	6	12
30-44	16	19	23	19	7	5	10
45-54	12	14	26	21	6	6	14
55-64	6	9	18	29	11	10	18
65+	3	6	15	32	7	13	

Table A10: Ideal Age for Marriage (Figure 10)

	Mean	**25th percentile**	**75th percentile**	**Standard Deviation**
Men	28.1	25	30	5
Women	26.2	24	28	25

Table A11: Going Out as a Couple and Talking about Relationship by Ideology (Figure 11)

	Very Liberal	**Liberal**	**Moderate**	**Conservative**	**Very Conservative**
Going out as a couple	53	60	47	51	54
Talking about your relationship	53	46	43	49	44

Table A12: Your Family vs Families Generally (Figure 12)

	Stronger	**About the Same**	**Weaker**
Your Family	33	53	11
Families Generally	9	43	36

Table A13: "Raising Children Is One of Life's Greatest Joys" by Ideology (Figure 13)

	Very Liberal	**Liberal**	**Moderate**	**Conservative**	**Very Conservative**
Disagree	15	10	8	6	6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	29	20	18	11	14
Agree	56	70	74	83	80

Table A14: "Raising Children Is One of Life's Greatest Joys" by Child Status (Figure 14)

	No Children	**No Children at Home**	**Children at Home**
Disagree	15	4	3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	11	9
Agree	57	85	88

Table A15: Most Important Problem: Economics and Culture (Figure 15)

	18-29	**30-44**	**45-54**	**55-64**	**65+**
Economy	57	59	55	47	39
Culture	60	62	70	71	81

Table A16: Most Important Problem: Economics, Culture, and Family Structure by ideology (Figure 16)

	Very Liberal	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very Conservative
Economics	83	72	58	34	29
Culture	38	54	66	78	72
Family Structure	37	49	47	64	73

Table A17: Evaluations of How Supportive Institutions Are of Families as Raw Density (Figure 17)

	Mean	25th percentile	75th percentile	Standard Deviation
Churches	70.3	51	89	65
Employers	60.3	50	69	48
Neighborhoods	66.4	51	77	59
Police	63.4	50	76	56
Democrats	52.0	26	66	72
News Media	49.4	31	55	65
Public Schools	58.3	49	73	53
Republicans	51.9	29	63	67

Table A18: Evaluations of How Supportive Programs Are for Families as a Density (Figure 18)

	Mean	25th percentile	75th percentile	Standard Deviation
Charity Tax Ded.	56.9	39	79	29
Child Tax Credit	69.7	54	91	25
Food Stamps	58.7	38	84	30
Head Start	64.4	47	88	28
Housing Assist.	57.4	38	80	28
Medicaid, etc.	59.4	38	87	30
Mortgage Ded.	63.6	49	87	53

Table A19: Republicans: Program Evaluation by Benefitters (Figure 19)

	Benefitter	Non-Benefitter
Charity Tax Ded.	70.4	47.2
Child Tax Credit	73.1	61.3
Food Stamps	61.9	41.7
Head Start	71.6	52.6
Housing Assist.	59.7	46.1
Medicaid, etc.	61.4	45.3
Mortgage Ded.	75.4	58.4

Table A20: Democrats: Program Evaluation by Benefitters (Figure 20)

	Benefitter	Non-Benefitter
Charity Tax Ded.	69.3	47.7
Child Tax Credit	74.3	71.4
Food Stamps	76.9	63.7
Head Start	82.1	73.1
Housing Assist.	72.7	66.2
Medicaid, etc.	72.1	66.8
Mortgage Ded.	72.5	57.4

Table A21: Support for Government Funding of Pre-Kindergarten Programs by Party (Figure 21)

	Republican	Independent	Democrat
Needy Children	72	43	37
All Children	64	41	26

Table A22: Attitudes about Family Tax Relief by Child Status (Figure 22)

	Very Liberal	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative	Very Conservative
No Children at Home	59	60	49	45	41
Children at Home	67	68	62	60	59

Table A23: Immigration: Reuniting Families by Race/Ethnicity (Figure 23)

	White	Black	Hispanic
Favor	19	25	44
Neutral	40	61	44
Oppose	42	14	11

Table A24: Immigration: Deporting Undocumented Immigrants with Citizen Children by Race/Ethnicity (Figure 24)

	White	Black	Hispanic
Favor	43	16	12
Neutral	25	33	28
Oppose	32	51	60

Table A25: Divorce Should be Easier by Age (Figure 25)

	18-29		*30-44*		*45-54*		*55-64*		*65+*	
	Control	**Children**	**Control**	**Children**	**Control**	**Children**	**Control**	**Children**	**Control**	**Children**
Easier	26	16	32	11	22	14	12	7	10	6
As Is	28	29	34	31	39	32	39	39	41	36
More Difficult	25	29	17	26	22	30	32	34	36	31
Don't Know	21	27	17	32	17	24	17	19	13	26

Table A26: Maternity and Paternity Leave by Partisanship (Figure 26)

	Paid Maternity	**Paid Paternity**	**Unpaid Maternity**	**Unpaid Paternity**
Republican	3.79	2.91	4.41	3.42
Independent	4.69	3.94	5.16	4.77
Democrat	5.29	4.61	5.97	4.97

Table A27: Same Sex Marriage (Figure 27)

	Very Liberal	**Liberal**	**Moderate**	**Conservative**	**Very Conservative**
Mean Support	83	71	52	23	13

2015 AMERICAN FAMILY SURVEY

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY & *THE DESERET NEWS*

SECTION 1 – MARITAL STATUS AND CHILDREN

Q1. Which best describes your current relationship status?

Married	48%
Married, but currently separated from spouse	1
Not married but living with partner	11
Currently in a committed relationship but not living with a partner	8
Not currently in a relationship	32
Total *N*	3,000

Q2. How long have you been in a relationship with your current spouse?
[Asked of all participants who selected either Married or Married, but currently separated form spouse in Q1. Asked in a dropdown showing values within the following ranges: 0-11 months, then 1-50 years, More than 50 years]

1 year or less	2%
1 to 5 years	11
5 to 10 years	14
10 to 15 years	12
15 to 20 years	10
20 to 30 years	16
30 to 40 years	16
40 to 50 years	13
More than 50 years	5[1]
Total *N*	1,490

Q3. How long have you been married to your current spouse?
[Asked of all participants who selected "Married" or "Married, but currently separated from spouse" in Q1. Asked in a dropdown showing values within the following ranges: 0-11 months, then 1-50 years, More than 50 years]

1 year or less	9%
1 to 5 years	13
5 to 10 years	13
10 to 15 years	11
15 to 20 years	8
20 to 30 years	16
30 to 40 years	15
40 to 50 years	11
More than 50 years	4
Total *N*	1,490

Q4. Have you ever been divorced or widowed? Check all that apply.
[Asked of all participants who selected "Married" or "Married, but currently separated from spouse" in Q1.]

Divorced	14%
Widowed	1
None of the above	33
Total *N*	1,466

Q5. How long have you been in a relationship with your current partner?
[Asked of all participants who selected "Not married but living with partner" in Q1. Asked in a dropdown showing values within the following ranges: 0-11 months, then 1-50 years, More than 50 years]

1 year or less	17%
1 to 5 years	35
5 to 10 years	18
10 to 15 years	12
15 to 20 years	6
20 to 30 years	8
30 to 40 years	2
40 to 50 years	-
More than 50 years	-
Total *N*	328

Q6. How long have you been living with your current partner?
[Asked of all participants who selected "Not married but living with partner" in Q1. Asked in a dropdown showing values within the following ranges: 0-11 months, then 1-50 years, More than 50 years]

1 year or less	27%
1 to 5 years	36
5 to 10 years	13
10 to 15 years	10
15 to 20 years	6
20 to 30 years	7
30 to 40 years	1
40 to 50 years	-
More than 50 years	-
Total *N*	328

Q7. Have you ever been divorced or widowed? Check all that apply.
[Asked of all participants who selected "Not married but living with partner" in Q1.]

Divorced	32%
Widowed	8
None of the above	63
Total *N*	338

Q8. How long have you been in a relationship with your current partner?
[Asked of all participants who selected "Currently in a committed relationship but not living with a partner" in Q1. Asked in a dropdown showing values within the following ranges: 0-11 months, then 1-50 years, More than 50 years]

1 year or less	41%
1 to 5 years	41
5 to 10 years	12
10 to 15 years	3
15 to 20 years	1
20 to 30 years	1
30 to 40 years	-
40 to 50 years	1
More than 50 years	1
Total *N*	231

Q9. Have you ever been divorced or widowed? Check all that apply.
[Asked of all participants who selected "Currently in a committed relationship but not living with a partner" in Q1.]

Divorced	21%
Widowed	8
None of the above	73
Total *N*	237

Q10. Have you ever been divorced or widowed? Check all that apply.
[Asked of all participants who selected "Not currently in a relationship" in Q1.]

Divorced	26%
Widowed	10
None of the above	65
Total *N*	896

Q11. How many times have you been married?
[Asked of all participants who selected "Married" or "Married, but currently separated form spouse in Q1", as well as of those who selected "Divorced" and/or "Widowed" in Q7, Q9, or Q10.]

Mean total	1
Total *N*	3,000

Q12. How old were you when you first married?
[Asked of all participants who selected "Married" or "Married, but currently separated form spouse in Q1", as well as of those who selected "Divorced" and/or "Widowed" in Q7, Q9, or Q10.]

Mean total	24
Total *N*	2,004

Q13. How many partners have you lived with outside of a marriage?

Mean total	1
Total *N*	3,000

Q14. How many children do you have (please include biological, adopted, or step-children)?

Mean total	2
Total *N*	3,000

Q15. Please tell us about each of your children. **[Number of children (reported from Q14); Age; Living in your home or not; Biological, step-child, or adopted]**
[Asked of all participants who reported having children in Q14.]

Number of children

0	37%
1	14
2	21
3	13
4	9
5	3
6	1
7	1
8+	1
Total *N*	3,000

Children in each age category

0-4 years old	7%
5-11 years old	12
12-17 years old	10
18+ years old	70
Total *N*	1,926

Children living at home

Living at home	32%
Not living at home	68
Total *N*	1,925

Children in each parental situation

Biological with current partner	44%
Biological with previous partner	34
Step-child	18
Adopted child	5
Total *N*	1,923

Q16. Do all of your biological children have the same two biological parents?
[Asked of all participants who reported having children in Q14.]

Yes	59%
No	41
Total *N*	553

SECTION 2 – MARRIAGE

Q17. How satisfied are you with your **[Job, Family, Marriage/Relationship, Life]**?
[Response options for "Marriage"/"Relationship" not shown for those who selected "Not currently in a relationship" in Q1. The category "Marriage" is shown if the participant is currently married, and the category "Relationship" is shown for those currently in a relationship but not married.]

	Job	**Family**	**Marriage/Relationship**	**Life**
Completely satisfied	15%	47%	58%	29%
Somewhat satisfied	24	32	27	43
Neutral/Don't know	12	9	6	11
Somewhat dissatisfied	9	7	6	11
Completely dissatisfied	4	3	3	5
Not applicable	36	2	0	1
Total *N*	2,996	3,000	2,043	2,994

Q18. How likely is it that you will [get married in the next two years/be married or still married two years from now]?
[First response option shown to those not currently in a relationship, second response option shown to those who are in a relationship or married.]

Very likely	44%
Likely	5
Somewhat likely	4
Neither likely or unlikely	7
Somewhat unlikely	4
Unlikely	5
Very unlikely	26
Don't know	5
Total *N*	3,000

Q19. How likely is it that you will still be in the same relationship two years from now?
[Asked of all participants who reported being in a relationship in Q1.]

Very likely	47%
Likely	17
Somewhat likely	12
Neither likely or unlikely	6
Somewhat unlikely	4
Unlikely	1
Very unlikely	7
Don't know	6
Total	557

Q20. How likely is it that you will have the same job two years from now?

Very likely	19%
Likely	8
Somewhat likely	8
Neither likely or unlikely	6
Somewhat unlikely	4
Unlikely	4
Very unlikely	8
Don't know	5
Not currently employed	39
Total *N*	3,000

Q21. At any point in the last two years, have you thought that your marriage or relationship was in trouble?
[Asked of all participants but those who selected "Not currently in a relationship" in Q1.]

Yes	34%
No	66
Total *N*	2,045

Q22. Would you say that your marriage or relationship is stronger, weaker, or about the same as two years ago?
[Asked of all participants who responded with an answer of 2 years or higher to Q2, Q5, or Q8 (questions about length of current marriage/relationship).]

Stronger	45%
About the same	46
Weaker	7
Don't know	2
Total	1,933

Q23. Turning to marriage generally, do you feel that marriages in the United States are stronger, weaker, or about the same as two years ago?

Stronger	7%
About the same	39
Weaker	42
Don't know	13
Total	3,000

Q24. Before getting married, how important is it for someone to **[Own a home, Finish college, Have a stable job, Live together with his or her future spouse, Have had several serious relationships, Have some savings or be paying off debt]?**

	Own a home	**Finish college**	**Have a stable job**	**Live together**	**Have had several serious relationships**	**Have some savings or be paying off debt**
Very important	7%	19%	41%	12%	7%	28%
Important	9	18	30	14	11	28
Somewhat important	15	19	19	20	18	25
Neither important or unimportant	33	24	6	24	31	12
Somewhat unimportant	11	6	2	7	10	3
Unimportant	13	7	1	8	12	2
Not at all unimportant	11	8	1	15	12	3
Total *N*	2,942	2,931	2,943	2,952	2,942	2,950

Q25. What would you say is the ideal age for men to marry?

Mean	28.1
Total *N*	2,985

Q26. What would you say is the ideal age for women to marry?

Mean	26.2
Total *N*	2,984

Q27. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse or partner? [**Go out together, just the two of you]**

[Asked of all participants who selected that they were either married or in a relationship in Q1.]

Never	6%
Yearly	3
A few times a year	16
About once a month	24
Weekly	27
A few times a week	17
Daily	6
Total *N*	2,037

Q28. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse or partner? **[Have a serious argument]**

[Asked of all participants who selected that they were either married or in a relationship in Q1.]

Never	19%
Yearly	15
A few times a year	34
About once a month	18
Weekly	7
A few times a week	5
Daily	3
Total *N*	2,044

Q29. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse or partner? **[Talk about your relationship with each other[2]]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they were either married or in a relationship in Q1.]

Never	13%
Yearly	4
A few times a year	17
About once a month	20
Weekly	17
A few times a week	19
Daily	12
Total *N*	2,038

Q30. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse or partner? **[Discuss finances with each other]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they were either married or in a relationship in Q1.]

Never	6%
Yearly	2
A few times a year	7
About once a month	25
Weekly	24
A few times a week	22
Daily	13
Total *N*	2,034

Q31. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse or partner? **[Sleep in different rooms because you were upset with one another]**
[Asked of all participants who selected "Married", "Married, but currently separated from spouse", or "Not married, but living with partner" in Q1.]

Never	73%
Yearly	8
A few times a year	10
About once a month	5
Weekly	1
A few times a week	1
Daily	3
Total *N*	1,767

Q32. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse or partner? **[Talk about political or social issues with each other]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they were either married or in a relationship in Q1.]

Never	11%
Yearly	2
A few times a year	11
About once a month	15
Weekly	15
A few times a week	23
Daily	23
Total *N*	2,038

Q33. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse? **[Pray together as a couple, outside of meals]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they were either married or in a relationship in Q1.]

Never	50%
Yearly	3
A few times a year	11
About once a month	7
Weekly	9
A few times a week	8
Daily	11
Total *N*	2,034

Q34. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse? **[Have sex with each other]**
[Asked of all participants who selected "Married", "Married, but currently separated from spouse", or "Not married, but living with partner" in Q1.]

Never	12%
Yearly	3
A few times a year	8
About once a month	17
Weekly	25
A few times a week	28
Daily	5
Total *N*	2,023

Q35. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse? **[Do nice things for each other, such as making coffee, putting gas in the car, etc.]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they were either married or in a relationship in Q1.]

Never	3%
Yearly	1
A few times a year	4
About once a month	7
Weekly	18
A few times a week	25
Daily	42
Total *N*	2,034

Q36. How often do you do each of the following with your spouse? **[Hide finances or purchases from each other]**
[Asked of all participants who selected "Married", "Married, but currently separated from spouse", or "Not married, but living with partner" in Q1.]

Never	71%
Yearly	7
A few times a year	10
About once a month	6
Weekly	2
A few times a week	2
Daily	2
Total *N*	1,765

Q37. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[When more people are married, society is better off.]**

Strongly Disagree	4%
Disagree	6
Somewhat Disagree	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	33
Somewhat Agree	15
Agree	18
Strongly Agree	20
Total *N*	2,967

Q38. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Marriage is more of a burden than a benefit to couples.]**

Strongly Disagree	30%
Disagree	24
Somewhat Disagree	11
Neither Agree nor Disagree	22
Somewhat Agree	7
Agree	3
Strongly Agree	3
Total *N*	2,978

Q39. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Marriage is needed in order to create strong families.]**

Strongly Disagree	6%
Disagree	9
Somewhat Disagree	7
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16
Somewhat Agree	15
Agree	19
Strongly Agree	28
Total *N*	2,968

Q40. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Being legally married is not as important as having a personal sense of commitment to your partner.]**

Strongly Disagree	14%
Disagree	12
Somewhat Disagree	10
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16
Somewhat Agree	16
Agree	16
Strongly Agree	15
Total *N*	2,978

Q41. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Marriage is old-fashioned and out-of-date.]**

Strongly Disagree	39%
Disagree	21
Somewhat Disagree	10
Neither Agree nor Disagree	17
Somewhat Agree	7
Agree	3
Strongly Agree	2
Total *N*	2,974

Q42. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Marriage makes families and children better off financially.]**

Strongly Disagree	4%
Disagree	6
Somewhat Disagree	6
Neither Agree nor Disagree	25
Somewhat Agree	17
Agree	22
Strongly Agree	21
Total *N*	2,958

Q43. Would you say that your family relationships are stronger, weaker, or about the same as two years ago?

Stronger	33%
About the same	53
Weaker	11
Don’t know	3
Total	3,000

Q44. Turning to families generally, do you feel that family relationships in the United States are stronger, weaker, or about the same as two years ago?

Stronger	9%
About the same	43
Weaker	36
Don’t know	12
Total	3,000

SECTION 3 – PARENTING

Q45. What do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?

None	3%
1	3
2	51
3	25
4	10
5	2
6	1
7 or more	1
Other	5
Total *N*	2,999

Q46. How likely are you or your partner to give birth or adopt a child in the next two years?
[Asked of all participants under 50 who selected that they were either in a relationship or married in Q1.]

Very likely	9%
Likely	4
Somewhat likely	6
Neither likely or unlikely	7
Somewhat unlikely	3
Unlikely	8
Very unlikely	53
Don't know	9
Total *N*	1,630

Q47. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[The cost of raising a child/children is affordable for most people.]**

Strongly Disagree	13%
Disagree	16
Somewhat Disagree	22
Neither Agree nor Disagree	19
Somewhat Agree	14
Agree	12
Strongly Agree	4
Total *N*	2,981

Q48. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Children are better off if they have two married parents.]**

Strongly Disagree	4%
Disagree	6
Somewhat Disagree	5
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18
Somewhat Agree	14
Agree	18
Strongly Agree	35
Total *N*	2,963

Q49. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[It is sometimes necessary to discipline a child with a good, hard spanking.]**

Strongly Disagree	10%
Disagree	9
Somewhat Disagree	8
Neither Agree nor Disagree	18
Somewhat Agree	20
Agree	19
Strongly Agree	15
Total *N*	2,974

Q50. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[It is important for parents to pass on their political values to their children]**

Strongly Disagree	9%
Disagree	12
Somewhat Disagree	12
Neither Agree nor Disagree	34
Somewhat Agree	16
Agree	11
Strongly Agree	7
Total *N*	2,962

Q51. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Parents should set boundaries on media consumption for their children.]**

Strongly Disagree	2%
Disagree	1
Somewhat Disagree	3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	10
Somewhat Agree	17
Agree	32
Strongly Agree	36
Total *N*	2,971

Q52. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Children need both a male and female role model in the home.]**

Strongly Disagree	6%
Disagree	6
Somewhat Disagree	4
Neither Agree nor Disagree	14
Somewhat Agree	12
Agree	20
Strongly Agree	38
Total *N*	2,973

Q53. How much do you agree or disagree with the following: **[Raising children is one of life's greatest joys.]**

Strongly Disagree	3%
Disagree	2
Somewhat Disagree	3
Neither Agree nor Disagree	16
Somewhat Agree	15
Agree	26
Strongly Agree	35
Total *N*	2,976

Q54. How often does your family: **[Eat dinner together]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they had at least one child in Q14.]

Never	5%
Yearly	1
A few times a year	10
About once a month	8
Weekly	11
A few times a week	18
Daily	47
Total *N*	1,894

Q55. How often does your family: **[Attend the activities of a family member (recitals, sporting events, etc.]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they had at least one child in Q14.]

Never	18%
Yearly	7
A few times a year	32
About once a month	18
Weekly	15
A few times a week	6
Daily	3
Total *N*	1,892

Q56. How often does your family: **[Do household chores together]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they had at least one child in Q14.]

Never	17%
Yearly	3
A few times a year	8
About once a month	12
Weekly	27
A few times a week	17
Daily	17
Total *N*	1,894

Q57. How often does your family: **[Go out to movies, museums, sporting events, or parks together]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they had at least one child in Q14.]

Never	14%
Yearly	8
A few times a year	28
About once a month	26
Weekly	17
A few times a week	4
Daily	2
Total *N*	1,894

Q58. How often does your family: **[Worship together]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they had at least one child in Q14.]

Never	41%
Yearly	7
A few times a year	12
About once a month	6
Weekly	22
A few times a week	6
Daily	7
Total *N*	1,892

Q59. How often does your family: **[Have an argument]**
[Asked of all participants who selected that they had at least one child in Q14.]

Never	19%
Yearly	13
A few times a year	32
About once a month	18
Weekly	9
A few times a week	6
Daily	3
Total *N*	1,894

Q60. At what age should children: **[Get a job]**

Mean	15.7
Total *N*	2,986

Q61. At what age should children: **[Be allowed to go out with friends without adult supervision]**

Mean	14.8
Total *N*	2,987

Q62. At what age should children: **[Be trusted to have their own cellphone]**

Mean	14.0
Total *N*	2,984

Q63. At what age should children: **[Be allowed to go on a date]**

Mean	15.7
Total *N*	2,984

Q64. At what age should children: **[Get their own social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, etc.]**

Mean	14.8
Total *N*	2,982

Q65. At what age should children: **[Have a comprehensive talk about sex with their parents or guardian]**

Mean	12.4
Total *N*	2,987

Q66. At what age should children: **[Be allowed to play at a park or walk home without adult supervision]**

Mean	12.9
Total *N*	2,987

Q67. What are the most important issues facing families today? Pick **up to three** items.

High work demands and stress on parents	21%
Lack of government programs to support families	8
The costs associated with raising a family	26
The lack of good jobs	19
Decline in religious faith and church attendance	23
Sexual permissiveness in our society	25
The widespread availability and use of drugs and alcohol	27
Crime and other threats to personal safety	19
Change in the definition of marriage and family	16
Parents not teaching or disciplining their children sufficiently	53
More children growing up in single-parent homes	25
Difficulty finding quality time with family in the digital age	21
Other	2
Total *N*	2,999

Q68. Generally speaking, do you think now is [a good time or a bad time/a bad time or a good time] for children to be growing up in your community?
[Question wording order randomized.]

Good time	32%
Bad time	34
Don't know	35
Total	2,993

Q69. How do the decisions or activities of the following institutions affect your family?
[Respondent placed item on scale from 0- "Negatively" to 100- "Positively", with 50- "Neutral/Not at all". Order randomized.]

	Churches or houses of worship	Public Schools	The Police	Your employer
Mean	66	56	61	58
Total *N*	2,986	2,990	2,990	2,993

	The Republican Party	The Democratic Party	Your neighborhood	News media
Mean	48	47	63	45
Total *N*	2,979	2,986	2,993	2,990

SECTION 4 – POLICY

Q70. [When children still live at home,] Should divorce in this country be easier or more difficult to obtain that it is now?
[Approximately half of all respondents saw the bolded phrase at the beginning of this question, and the other half did not.]

	Control	Children Present
Easier	21%	11%
More difficult	26	30
Stay as is	36	33
Don't know	17	26
Total *N*	1,498	1,502

Q71. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement: **Parents in your neighborhood have good options for the education of their children.**

Strongly Disagree	6%
Disagree	6
Somewhat Disagree	10
Neither Agree nor Disagree	26
Somewhat Agree	20
Agree	22
Strongly Agree	10
Total *N*	2,976

Q72. How would you rate each of the following government programs?: **[Food stamps, Housing assistance, Head Start, Medicaid and other health insurance subsidies, Home mortage tax deduction, Tax deduction for charitable giving, Child tax credit.]**
[Respondent placed item on scale from 0- "Negatively" to 100- "Positively", with 50- "Neutral/Not at all". "Not sure" option included below scale. Order randomized.]

	Food stamps	**Housing assistance**	**Head Start**	**Medicaid and other health insurance subsidies**
Mean	58.7	57.4	64.4	59.4
Total *N*	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000

	Home mortgage tax deduction	**Tax deduction for charitable giving**	**Child tax credit**
Mean	63.6	56.9	69.7
Total *N*	3,000	3,000	3,000

Q73. Have you or your family ever **directly benefitted** from the following programs? **[Food stamps]**
[Response option order randomized.]

Yes	34%
No	60
Don't Know	6
Total *N*	2,997

Q74. Have you or your family ever **directly benefitted** from the following programs? **[Housing assistance]**
[Response option order randomized.]

Yes	14%
No	79
Don't Know	7
Total *N*	2,995

Q75. Have you or your family ever **directly benefitted** from the following programs? **[Head Start]**
[Response option order randomized.]

Yes	16%
No	75
Don't Know	9
Total *N*	2,993

Q76. Have you or your family ever **directly benefitted** from the following programs? **[Medicaid and other health insurance subsidies]**
[Response option order randomized.]

Yes	39%
No	55
Don't Know	6
Total *N*	2,996

Q77. Have you or your family ever **directly benefitted** from the following programs? **[Home mortgage tax deduction]**
[Response option order randomized.]

Yes	40%
No	49
Don't Know	11
Total *N*	2,996

Q78. Have you or your family ever **directly benefitted** from the following programs? **[Tax deduction for charitable giving]**
[Response option order randomized.]

Yes	42%
No	49
Don't Know	9
Total *N*	2,997

Q79. Have you or your family ever **directly benefitted** from the following programs? **[Child tax credit]**
[Response option order randomized.]

Yes	43%
No	47
Don't Know	10
Total *N*	2,998

Q80. How many months of **[paid maternity/unpaid maternity]** leave should employers be required by law to offer?
[Approximately half of all respondents saw "paid maternity", and the other half saw "unpaid maternity". Those who saw "paid maternity" on Q80 saw "paid paternity" on Q81, and those who saw "unpaid maternity" on Q80 saw "unpaid paternity" on Q81. Note that the question order of Q80 and Q81 was randomized.]

	Paid maternity	**Unpaid maternity**
Mean	4.6	4.8
Total *N*	1,514	1,486

Q81. How many months of **[paid paternity/unpaid paternity]** leave should employers be required by law to offer?
[Approximately half of all respondents saw "paid maternity", and the other half saw "unpaid maternity". Those who saw "paid maternity" on Q80 saw "paid paternity" on Q81, and those who saw "unpaid maternity" on Q80 saw "unpaid paternity" on Q81. Note that the question order of Q80 and Q81 was randomized.]

	Paid paternity	**Unpaid paternity**
Mean	3.9	4.0
Total *N*	1,514	1,486

Q82. Some people believe families with children should receive special tax relief. Other people believe that all households should be taxed the same, whether they have children or not. Which comes closer to your opinion?
[Respondent selected spot on scale from 0- "Special tax relief for households with children" to 100- "Tax all households the same". "Not sure" option included below scale.]

Mean	46.5
Total *N*	3,000

Q83. Some politicians are proposing that the government pay for universal pre-kindergarten for **[needy children/all children]** younger than 5. Do you agree or disagree with these proposals?
[Approximately half of all respondents saw "needy children", and the other half saw "all children".]

	Needy children	All children
Strongly agree	29%	23%
Somewhat agree	23	22
Neither agree nor disagree	21	22
Somewhat disagree	12	13
Strongly disagree	14	21
Total *N*	1,505	1,495

Q84. Recently the Supreme Court decided that marriage rights should be extended to same-sex couples. Where do you stand? Will this decision strengthen or weaken marriages in the United State?
[Respondent selected spot on scale from 0- "Strengthen marriage" to 100- "Weaken marriage". "Not sure" option included below scale.]

Mean	56.4
Total *N*	3,000

Q85. Do you personally know of anyone who has chosen **not** to get married for fear of losing welfare benefits, Medicaid, food stamps, or other government benefits?

Yes	31%
No	69
Total *N*	2,998

Q86. Do you think it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if: [check all that apply]

	Yes
There is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby?	54%
If she is married and does not want any more children?	25
If the woman's own health is seriously endangered by the pregnancy?	73
If the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children?	30
If she became pregnant as a result of rape?	68
If she is not married and does not want to marry the man?	22
If the woman wants it for any reason?	31
Total *N*	3,000

Q87. Do you favor or oppose the following statements about immigration? **[The immigration system should give a higher priority to reuniting families than to helping people who have job skills that are in demand.]**

Favor	24%
Neutral	47
Oppose	30
Total *N*	2,995

Q88. Do you favor or oppose the following statements about immigration? **[We should deport illegal immigrants even when it separates parents from children who are natural-born citizens.]**

Favor	33%
Neutral	31
Oppose	36
Total *N*	2,993

Q89. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **[We should repeal the Affordable Care Act.]**

Favor	42%
Neutral	32
Oppose	27
Total *N*	2,995

Q90. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? **[We should cut taxes on people making less than $200,000 per year.]**

Favor	56%
Neutral	30
Oppose	14
Total *N*	2,998

Q91. Would you increase, decrease, or keep spending the same for each of the following programs? **[Aid to world's needy]**

Increase	17%
Keep spending the same	40
Decrease	43
Total *N*	2,994

Q92. Would you increase, decrease, or keep spending the same for each of the following programs? **[Aid to world's needy]**

Increase	17%
Keep spending the same	40
Decrease	43
Total *N*	2,994

Q93. Would you increase, decrease, or keep spending the same for each of the following programs? **[Military defense]**

Increase	41%
Keep spending the same	35
Decrease	24
Total *N*	2,993

Q94. Would you increase, decrease, or keep spending the same for each of the following programs? **[Environmental protection]**

Increase	36%
Keep spending the same	41
Decrease	24
Total *N*	2,992

Q95. Would you increase, decrease, or keep spending the same for each of the following programs? **[Combatting crime]**

Increase	47%
Keep spending the same	45
Decrease	8
Total *N*	2,992

Q96. Would you increase, decrease, or keep spending the same for each of the following programs? **[Social security]**

Increase	54%
Keep spending the same	39
Decrease	6
Total *N*	2,993

Q97. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view? **[The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt.; Neutral; The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy.]**

The government should do more to help needy Americans, even if it means going deeper into debt.	32%
Neutral	35
The government today can't afford to do much more to help the needy.	33
Total *N*	2,974

Q98. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view? **[Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest.; Neutral; Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.]**

Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest.	34%
Neutral	28
Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.	38
Total *N*	2,382

Q98. Which of the following statements comes closer to your view? **[Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient.; Neutral; Government often does a better job than people give it credit for.]**

Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient.	54%
Neutral	26
Government often does a better job than people give it credit for.	20
Total *N*	2,890

SECTION 5 – DEMOGRAPHICS

Q99. Is your spouse or partner a man or woman?
[Asked of all participants who selected that they were married in Q1.]

Man	53%
Woman	47
Total *N*	2,103

Q100. Other than a spouse or your own children, what other relatives currently live with you? Mark all that apply.

Grandparent	2%
Parent	14
Sibling	9
Niece/ nephew	3
Son or daughter in law	3
Other [text box]	5
None of the above	74
Total *N*	3,000

Q101. What is your current employment status?

Self-employed	9%
Employed by someone else	38
Unemployed	12
Homemaker	10
Retired	23
Student	8
Total *N*	2,998

Q102. What is your spouse's current employment status?

Self-employed	9%
Employed by someone else	50
Unemployed	8
Homemaker	8
Retired	22
Student	4
Total *N*	2,102

Q103. How long have you worked at your current job? If you have more than one job, respond for the job that is most important to you.

Mean	6 years
Total *N*	1,442

Q104. How many jobs have you held in the past two years?

Mean	1.0
Total *N*	2,996

Q105. How many hours per week do you typically work?

Mean	37.8
Total *N*	1,442

Q106. Which of the following best describes your work schedule?
[Only shown to those who are employed and work more than 0 hours per week]

Work time and/or days change from week to week	38%
Regular work schedule that does not change much from week to week	62
Total *N*	1,431

Q107. How many hours per week does your spouse or partner typically work?
[Only shown to those who are in a relationship or married]

Mean	39.7
Total *N*	1,274

Q108. Which of the following best describes your spouse or partner's work schedule?
[Only shown to those who's spouse or partner is employed and works more than 0 hours per week]

Work time and/or days change from week to week	32%
Regular work schedule that does not change much from week to week	68
Total *N*	1,257

Q109. Have you been unemployed in the past 2 years?

Yes	48%
No	52
Total *N*	2,999

Q110. Has your spouse or partner been unemployed in the past 2 years?

Yes	39%
No	61
Total *N*	2,102

Q111. Do you have access to the following benefits through your place of employment?
[Only shown to currently employed]

	Yes	No
Health insurance provided by employer	60%	40%
Child care provided by employer	8	92
Total *N*	1,444	1,443

Q112. How many sexual partners have you had in the previous two years?
[Only shown to those who are in a relationship or married]

Mean	1.3
Total *N*	2,991

SECTION 6 – POLITICAL VIEWS

Q113. Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Republican	25%
Democrat	33
Independent	37
Other: [text box]	4
Total *N*	2,999

Q114. Would you call yourself a strong [Republican/Democrat] or a not very strong [Republican/Democrat]?
[Only shown to those who considered themselves a Republican or Democrat]

Strong	55%
Not very strong	45
Total *N*	1,918

Q115. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or the Democratic Party?
[Only shown to those who considered themselves an Independent]

Republican Party	25%
Democratic Party	16
Neither	59
Total *N*	975

Q116. Does your spouse or partner support the same political party you do?
[Only shown to those who in a relationship or married]

Yes	68%
No	14
Unsure	18
Total *N*	2,104

[1]Percentages totals that do not equal 100 can be accounted to rounding error
[2]The original wording displayed in the survey was, "Talk about your relationship with each another." However, it appears that this minor typographical error had no effect on responses, and was treated as such.