



# The Divorce Experiment: Do children matter?

Jenah House

Department of Political Science    Mentors: Chris Karpowitz & Jeremy Pope



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ELECTIONS AND DEMOCRACY

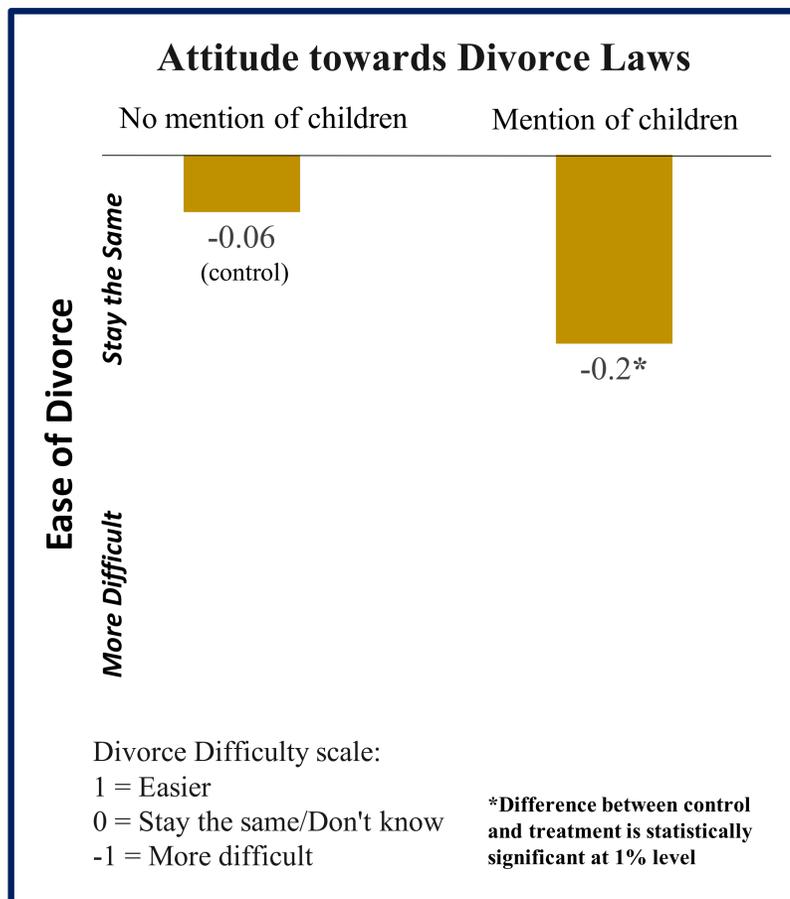
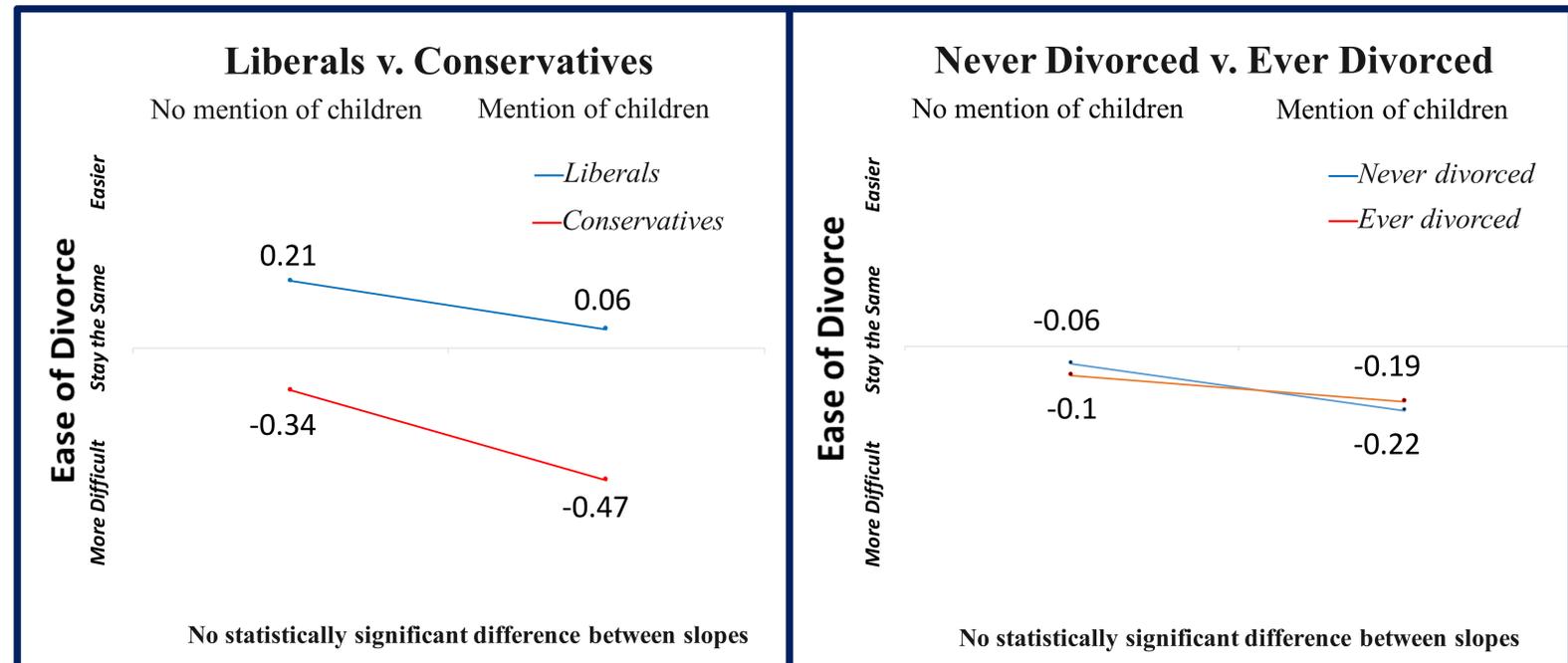
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

## BACKGROUND

- Some states currently have policies in place that make it slightly harder for parents with children at home to get a divorce
- Little is known about how public opinion on divorce policy changes when people are primed to think about children at home during divorce.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

**How does public opinion on divorce policy change when people are primed to think about children at home during divorce?**



## HYPOTHESES

- People will be more likely to think that divorce should be harder to obtain than it is now when they are primed to think about children.
- Liberals will be less inclined to make divorce more difficult when they are thinking about children in the home than conservatives will.

## METHODOLOGY

- A randomized experiment within the American Family Survey was conducted on a national level (3,000 respondents) in August 2015.
- Survey question: “[When children still live at home,] Should divorce be easier or more difficult to obtain than it is now?”

## RESULTS & GENERAL TRENDS

- When primed to think about children, people are more likely to respond that divorce should be more difficult to obtain than it is now.
- Priming people to think about children affects liberals and conservatives very similarly.
- The same conclusion applies regardless of divorce status.

## IMPLICATIONS

**This suggests that ideology is a negligent factor in measured reactions to proposed policy change regarding children and family structure.**