Family Ideals Across Cultures

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Abstract

Taking stock of individuals' perceived family ideals in today's advanced industrial societies is particularly compelling given the dramatic diversification of household structures and changing patterns of family formation and dissolution in different cultural settings. Study participants in China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the United States, Italy, Spain, and Norway were asked to evaluate families through vignettes that describe families that vary on ten dimensions. In contrast to previous studies on perceived ideals for single dimensions, such as fertility or gender roles, this holistic vignette approach identifies the *relative* importance of each of these dimensions. Multilevel regression analysis reveals both expected and unexpected findings. Parenthood remains a positive ideal but the *number* of children do not matter once other dimensions of the family are considered, thereby questioning the traditional wisdom of the two-children ideal. When evaluating families with one or more children, respondents trend toward more traditional arrangements, including valuing marriage over cohabitation and divorce. Also, in addition to financial resources, good communication between immediate and extended family members, as well as maintaining respect in the larger community, are salient attributes of an ideal family. Notwithstanding some important cross-national differences, egalitarian gender roles and avoiding work-family conflict are also seen as important characteristics, though less than other dimensions. Overall, even as the study reveals important variations across societies, respondents in different countries identify similar components of an ideal family.

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1 Introduction and Rationale

Although the family continues to serve as a fundamental unit of social organization, family patterns have changed dramatically in advanced industrialized societies. This is commonly referred to in the literature as the Second Demographic Transition (SDT). Inspired by Inglehart (1977, 1990), Van de Kaa and Lesthaeghe (1986) argued that fundamental shifts in values and a new focus on self-realization have weakened the position of the traditional family in industrial societies. This ideational shift is empirically reflected in the growing popularity of cohabitation and single-person households, increased rates of divorce and re-partnering, a growing proportion of children born to non-married couples and single-parents, and declines in fertility more generally (Cherlin 2012; Lesthaeghe 2010; Surkyn and Lesthaeghe 2004; Van de Kaa 1987). But there are also important variations in these trends: cohabitation, births outside of marriage, and single-parenthood are conspicuous in Western contexts but less visible in East Asia. The pace of fertility decline also varies markedly, even between "lowest-low fertility" countries where the total fertility rate is below 1.3 children (Adserà 2005; Adserà 2011b; Billari and Kohler 2004; Morgan 2003; Rindfuss 2015). Given the posited role of ideational change in generating rapid and varied family change across industrial societies, this study examines perceptions of what constitutes an ideal family in multiple culturally diverse, low-fertility societies. Variation in family change across social and cultural contexts raises a set of pertinent questions. First, what are the perceived characteristics of an ideal family? Second, how can we incorporate multiple family characteristics into a unified conceptual framework to better understand the relative importance of different family attributes, including partnering, childbearing and childrearing, various material constraints, the division of domestic work, and family and career obligations? And finally, to what extent do perceptions of family ideals differ across societies that vary foundationally in cultural traditions, social and political institutions, and labor market structures? The central dif-

ficulty when conceptualizing an ideal family derives from its multidimensional nature. To illustrate the challenge, we can start from the established concept of fertility ideals. This concept is well known and has been empirically implemented in several comparative surveys, where individuals are asked about the number of children they consider ideal (Miller 2011; Sobotka and Beaujouan 2014; Testa 2011; Thomson 2002). But this traditional survey approach has three important limitations. Because it is not asked in direct relation to ideals on other dimensions of family life, the relative importance of fertility cannot be established. Second, the division of labor within the family, career aspirations, financial resources, and the possibility of extended family support will necessarily shape realistic expectations about the number of children a couple will have (Adserà 2006a; Beaujouan and Berghammer 2019; Hagewen and Morgan 2005; Morgan and Rackin 2010). With the rise of childlessness and broad fertility declines globally, the position and value of children in families today is no longer obvious and potential parents have to revise their fertility desires after considering other material and social constraints. Third, the traditional survey question fertility ideals forces respondents to choose one single number of children, which masks any nuances in the strength of such preferences. Relatedly, parental investment in children's success matters in important ways. Whether supporting children's educational opportunities or engaging in direct wealth transfers, parental resources are instrumental for children's economic and social advancement and subsequently, for the recreation of intergenerational inequality (Lundberg, Pollak, and Stearns 2016; McLanahan 2004; McLanahan and Jacobsen 2015). Significant material investment in children, however, influence a host of other choices parents make, including decisions about their own careers, reallocating resources away from their own individual pursuits, and choices about residing near extended family or in particular neighborhoods if school quality becomes a salient criterion. Although ideals on income and wealth matter generally, the specific ways that resources are preferred to be allocated are shaped by the expectations

of what this implies for achieving one's ideals in other family dimensions. The problem remains that we do not know the relative importance of the multiple components that together comprise an overall picture of an ideal family. There is, to the best of our knowledge, no systematic comparative analysis of the theoretical and empirical implications of considering idealized family attributes holistically. Instead, there are extensive studies of its specific elements, such as partnership arrangements (i.e. marriage, cohabitation, or divorce), gender roles and the division of labor, childbearing and fertility overall, and so on. There is, for example, a robust literature seeking to understand why individuals and families today are having fewer children than prior generations (e.g., Mason 1997). The same can be said about trends in union formation and dissolution (Haskey 1995; Jones 2005). These studies, however, are silent regarding the relative importance or value attached to fertility desires in relation to partnership arrangements, in addition to the constellation of other interrelated choices that families regularly make. A consideration of the possible tradeoffs families make is also important because it allows us to understand how the mechanisms governing micro-level family decisions scale up to partially explain macro-level trends in family patterns (e.g., national-level trends). A family may, for example, decide to invest more resources in fewer children, in order to maximize the impact of limited assets. Child advancement and the goal of intergenerational mobility would then help explaining the downward trends in fertility rates observed in advanced capitalist societies in which hyper-competitive educational systems and family resources profoundly shape children's outcomes (Raymo et al. 2015; Raymo, Park, and Yu 2023). Similarly, in societies where gender specialization remains a more prevalent ideal, beliefs about mothers' primary responsibility to ensure children's social and emotional development may very well justify the traditional division of labor within families, which in turn helps explaining relatively low levels of female labor force participation in these contexts (Brinton and Oh 2019; Ono 2003). Clearly, recognizing the multidimensionality of fam-

ily goals facilitates a more realistic understanding of the complexities inherent to family choices. Consequently, a multidimensional measure of an ideal family would improve the external validity of studies assessing family goals, strategies, and ultimately, behavioral trends. With this backdrop, this study explores the characteristics of an ideal family. We defined family ideals over ten factors, motivated by classical theories of family behavior, and conducted a factorial survey experiment (FSE) consisting of vignettes with samples taken in December 2021 from China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the United States, Italy, Spain, and Norway. These contexts were chosen to ensure institutional and cultural variation, as well as variation in low fertility (with Singapore and South Korea around or even below 1 child per woman, Italy, Spain and China just below or around the threshold of lowest-low fertility of 1.3, and United States and Norway above it). All respondents were exposed to six vignettes, each describing a different hetero-normative family characterized by random variations in the ten factors. Respondents were then asked whether the vignette described a family they considered to be successful, with ratings on a scale ranging from 0 (strongly disagree) to 10 (strongly agree). We ran two separate experiments because of the assumption that divorced couples who do not share children do not constitute a family unit and to ensure d-efficient unconfoundedness between dimensions (see Data and Methods for details). Experiment 1 included vignettes describing couples who were married or cohabiting, and who also did or did not have children. The vignettes in Experiment 2 were limited to families that had at least one child, but with the additional attribute of divorce and the additional dimensions of children's educational aspirations and financial support by their parents. Descriptions of all factors are reported in Table 1. As the six reported vignettes per respondent were nested within respondents, which in turn were nested within countries, we fit random intercept models with three levels to the data. We first report results from models based on pooled samples across all eight countries. We then report findings from parallel models constructed from country-specific

samples.

2 Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study consists of an online survey that included a factorial survey experiment (FSE) consisting of vignettes and was carried out in China, United States, Norway, Italy, Spain, South Korea, Japan and Singapore. Combining advantages of survey and experiments, FSE has been increasingly used to better understand the multi-dimensionality of individuals' values, goals and decision-making processes (Auspurg et al., 2017; Shi Wang, 2021). There are at least three advantages of using FSE to study family ideals in this study. First, in a vignette experiment where all respondent features are controlled for in the experimental design, the effect of family dimensions on individual ratings can be interpreted as causal effects. The complete control over vignettes' characteristics also ensures a higher level of internal validity compared to traditional survey methods. Second, respondents in FSE can be asked to evaluate vignettes that vary in multiple dimensions. This has the advantage of allowing us to test for various combinations, including some which occur only rarely in reality (Auspurg Hinz, 2014). Third, the multi-dimensionality of the FSE reduces the concern of respondents providing socially desirable answers because the simultaneously changing vignette dimensions make it difficult for them to know the study's purposes (McDonald, 2019).

2.2 Survey Design

The survey consists a population-based online study, which was conducted from December 2021 to February 2022 by Kantar (except Singapore where Toluna was used). Both are international leading survey companies in each of the countries and maintain a large

national online panel by employing various recruitment methods such as e-newsletter campaigns, opt-in email, co-registration, social media, as well as both internal and external affiliate networks to ensure the coverage of a diverse population. In this study, a stratified quota sampling based on age and gender was used for each country: one fourth of the sample is made by women aged 25-39, one fourth men of the same age, one fourth of women aged 40-50 and the last fourth by men of the same age. Next, the survey companies sent emails to invite selected respondents to complete an online survey. Participants started the questionnaire with demographic and socioeconomic information about themselves, then move on to review six vignettes, and finally answer questions about their partner, parents, and their children. By starting with more standard demographic and socioeconomic questions about oneself, we aim to warm up participants with survey taking, and yet not to prime them with information about their own family, nor to overload them with questions related to information processing and judgment.

We initially recruited 22224 participants, and to construct the analytical sample, 156 participants (4.8% of Chinese recruits) living in rural China and 109 participants (2.9% of Singaporian recruits) in Singapore that reported their ethnicity as "Other" are dropped. And we deleted 1818 respondents (8.27%) who gave identical responses to all six vignettes that they reviewed. The final analytic sample contains 20141 respondents and 120846 (20141×6) respondent-vignette observations. See Table S1 in supplementary information for detailed description of the retained sample. A pilot study was conducted and a series of quality checks (e.g., duplication of IP addresses, survey speedsters, honesty detector) were conducted to ensure the data quality. A post-stratification probability weight was constructed using the most recent census data in each country as benchmark data. This sampling weight is applied to all analyses in this paper. After weighting, the distributions of key variables in the sample such as gender, race, age groups and education levels align closely with the distributions in census data. This confirms that

our sample is generally representative of the corresponding population segments in each country, with the exception of urban population in China.

Below we briefly describe our sample. While age and gender composition are similar across countries, participants' other demographic characteristics vary. The overall average educational level is having a short-cycle tertiary education, 5.06 on the ISCED 1-8 scale. Specifically, 51.8% of the Japanese participants, 52.8% of the Singaporean participants, 66.7% of the Korean participants, 67.8% of the Chinese participants, 32.9% of the Norwegian participants, 43.4% of the Italian participants, 54.5% of the Spanish participants, and 33% of the American participants have an educational level of bachelor's degree or higher. Monthly household income was adjusted to a three-person household in euro value, and it varies between 2330 euro for Spain and 6826 euro for Singapore. For an average age between 37 and 39 years, 79% participants in China vs. 43% participants in Italy were married, and 75% participants in China vs. 35% participants in Italy have child(ren). For those participants that have at least one child, they on average have 1.22 (China) to 2.24 children in the US. Children ever born up to the survey in the sample varies between the average of 0.63 for Japan to 1.85 for the US. The link between marriage and having children is much stronger in the Asian countries: 88.2% (6.9%), 91% (4.1%), 92.6% (3.6%), and 96.8% (1.8%) of participants that have child(ren) in Japan, Singapore, Korea and China are married (or divorced in brackets), compared to 71.1% (5.4%), 68.2% (3%), 64.6% (7.8%), 51.1% (4.6%) in Spain, Italy, the US, and Norway.

2.3 Experimental Design

Within the online survey, we conducted a factorial vignette experiment (designed in Qualtrics) where each vignette (i.e., hypothetical family profile) comprises eight to ten randomly assigned factors. Each factorial vignette describes a hypothetical family profile. Respondents were randomly assigned to view a set of six vignettes and then asked

"Based on this description, to what extent do you agree or disgree "This describes a successful family" on a scale ranging from 0 (the least successful) to 10 (the most successful). Each hypothetical family profile is constructed by randomly combining a range of the following ten family characteristics: 1) the relative household income in the country, 2) union status, 3) fertility, 4) household income, 5) if the family is respected in the community, 6) gender division of labor, 5) work-family conflict, 7) communication in the nuclear family, 8) communication with extended family, 9) child(ren)'s expected educational attainment level, and 10) saving to support children (see Figure 1 for a vignette example). However, a vignette describing a family with no children, cannot have measures of children's outcomes. And we see the combination of divorced couple that had no children together an implausible scenario of being a family. We conduct two separate experiments. Experiment 1 describes only cohabiting and married couples with or without children (excluding divorced couple), whereas Experiment 2 describes family with children (including divorced couples), and therefore child outcomes. Examples of vignettes can be found in Appendix.

This means that the vignette in experiment 1 includes the first eight experimental variables and enables us to examine the extent to which whether or not having children is considered a successful family. The vignette in the second experiment consists of all ten experimental variables with all family profiles including couple being divorced and children related factors – namely, the expected educational attainment level of the children and whether families are saving for children's future, thereby allowing us to examine the effects of divorce and of child characteristics on family ideal. The vignette factors and their respective levels are described in Table 1.

In the vignette experiment 1, the full number of combinations crossing all vignette levels of the 8 factors is 2304 ($3 \times 2 \times 4 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3 \times 4$). In the vignette experiment 2, the full number of combinations crossing all vignette levels of the 10 factors

Table 1: Vignette factors and levels.

	Experiment 1		Experiment 2	
Factors	#	Content	#	Content
Union status	2	– Cohabiting Married	3	Divorced Cohabiting Married
Fertility	4	No children 1 child 2 children 3 children	3	– 1 child 2 children 3 children
Household income	3	Below average Around average Above average	3	Below average Around average Above average
Community respect	2	Well-respected Not well-resp.	2	Well-respected Not well-resp.
Family communication	2	Open Not Open	2	Open Not Open
Contact to extended fam.	2	Frequently Not frequently	2	Frequently Not frequently
Gender roles	3	Traditional Commonplace Egalitarian	3	Traditional Commonplace Egalitarian
Work-family balance	4	Fem. not conflicted & male conflicted Fem. conflicted & male not conflicted Neither fem. nor male conflicted Both fem. & male conflicted	4	Fem. not conflicted & male conflicted Fem. conflicted & male not conflicted Neither fem. nor male conflicted Both fem. & male conflicted
Children's expected education	–	– – –	3	High school Bachelor's Postgraduate
Fin. supp. to children	–	– –	2	Saving for it Not saving for it

is 15552 ($3 \times 2 \times 3 \times 3 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 4 \times 3 \times 2$). Specifically, we used the D-efficiency fractional factorial design to draw a sample of 576 fromexperiment 1, and 864 from experiment 2. The D-efficiency at resolution V is 99.88 for experiment 1 and is 97.04 for experiment 2 where all main effects and two-way interactions are estimable independent of each other. This exceeds the commonly accepted D-efficiency value of 90, ensuring sufficient statistical power to obtain precise estimates (Auspurg Hinz, 2014). Among the 1440 (864 + 576) unique vignettes, 240 (144 + 96) decks (i.e., questionnaire versions) were randomly constructed with each containing 6 random vignettes. Pooling across 8 countries, each vignette was rated by 84.23 (SD = 5.11) respondents. For each country, each vignette was rated by 11.83 (SD = 3.03) respondents, which exceeds the common suggestion of 5 in the literature and thus ensures the robustness of the results (Auspurg Hinz, 2014). For more details about a description of experimental variables and statistics for both vignette experiments, see appendix. A key feature of FSE is randomization, which allows us to examine the causal effects and ensures high internal validity of the results. To test the randomization of our experimental design in both

vignette experiments, we first conducted balance check and find that the correlation coefficients between different experimental variables are very close to zero, indicating the different vignette dimensions are orthogonal (see Table S2 and S3). Similarly, we find that there are no correlations between experimental variables and respondents' demographic characteristics, indicating that respondents were randomly assigned to rather than self-selected into different vignettes.

2.4 Analytic Strategy

The data are hierarchically structured since vignettes are embedded within the respondents, who are embedded in each country. Treating the dependent variables as continuous, we proceed by estimating random intercept multilevel linear regression models. Due to the successful randomization in the experimental design, the assumption of exogeneity is satisfied. We adopt a multilevel model rather than a fixed-effects model in order to maximize statistical efficiency. The multilevel model can be expressed in the following equation: $Rating_{ijc} = \alpha_{jc} + \sum_{i=1} \beta_i \, VignetteFactor_{ijc} + e_c + u_{jc} + v_{ijc}$. $Rating_{ijc}$ is the dependent variable measuring the extent to which a respondent rates the specific family profile presented as "successful". $Vignette_Factorijc$ are explanatory variables measuring different family characteristics of the vignette i for respondent j in country c. In addition, α_{jc} is the random intercept; e_c is the country-level error term; u_{jk} is the respondent-level error term; and v_{ijc} is the vignette-level error term.

3 Results

3.1 Main Effects -– Pooled estimates of eight countries

We begin with the pooled analysis for the first experiment before considering how, in the second experiment, educational aspirations for children and the resources required

to support them potentially alter the relative importance of attributes related to an ideal family. Figure 1 demonstrates that married couples are valued more than those cohabiting. We also find that childless families are considered less ideal than families with at least one child. Importantly, however, we do not find a discernible gradient with respect to the number of children. That is, families with two or three children are not considered better than families with only one child. Also, perhaps predictably, household income matters, with families that have higher-than-average income score more highly. Individual arrangements within the family also matter, with respondents valuing egalitarian gender roles over the situation where women bear the double-burden of contributing to household income and domestic duties. Notably, respondents preferred families with traditional gender roles, where men work and women are responsible for the home, over families where women are double-burdened. Interestingly, avoidance of work-family conflict for men and women counts more strongly than the gender roles dimension. Relational aspects feature prominently in how individuals value a family: good communication among immediate family members turns out to be the most important attribute, but also frequent contact with grandparents, along with maintaining respect in one's community, are among the most highly valued features of an ideal family. With these findings in mind, we move on to explore the possibility that, in Experiment 2 (families of at least one child), educational aspirations for children and the related burden of financially supporting them change respondents' views regarding the traits of an ideal family. Figure 2 shows that divorce is a highly undesirable trait when children are present. Furthermore, although we are unable to formally compare coefficients across the two experiments, it is worth noting that the magnitude of the negative impact of cohabitation is larger in the second experiment (-0.188) compared to the first (-0.119). Respondents evidently tend to value traditional partnership arrangements more highly when a child(ren) is present. It is also worth recognizing, however, that as in the first experiment, the number of children does not

change the evaluation of an ideal family. The introduction of additional dimensions is bound to change the relative importance of other factors. Unsurprisingly, families that expect their children to obtain at least a bachelor's degree are rated higher than families that expect their children to graduate only from secondary school (Figure 2). Saving for children is also valued positively to the same extent as communication within the family, frequent contact with grandparents and being respected in one's community. Compared to Experiment 1, gender role arrangements where women carry the double-burden of work and domestic duties and situations where female feel conflicted between work-and family are considered less negatively. We speculate that when primed about the children's expected education and the responsibility to financially support them, respondents are less opposed to women disproportionally bearing more family responsibilities.

3.2 Effects by country

Figures 3 and 4 report estimates by country for Experiments 1 and 2, respectively. While, remarkably, results of the country-specific analysis mirror those of the pooled analysis for the most part, there are notable differences between the countries in the estimated coefficients for some factors. In the first experiment, cohabitation is penalized in most of the Asian countries (except for China), whereas there are no discernable differences between marriage and cohabitation in Europe and America. This pattern reflects the relative normalization of cohabitation in the West compared to Asia where cohabitation is commonly understood as a short-duration stepping-stone to marriage (Cherlin 2020; Lundberg and Pollak 2014; Jones 2018; Perelli-Harris et al. 2010; Raymo, Iwasawa, and Bumpass 2009; Raymo et al. 2015). Also, even as lower-than-average household income is universally regarded as undesirable, Figure 3 shows that the rating of families with higher-than-average income is higher in every context except in Europe (Italy, Norway, and Spain). The country-specific findings for Experiment 2 are generally similar, with

some notable differences in the variation across countries. When children are present, cohabitation is penalized now in all countries except for Spain, compared to Experiment 1 when cohabitation was viewed negatively mostly in Asian countries. Divorce, importantly, continues to be viewed negatively and with the highest relative importance in all countries. Notwithstanding these differences across countries, a remarkable finding is the overwhelming similarities across national samples. Overall, parenthood is a valued aspect of an ideal family, but the actual number of children does not matter. Also, relationship quality among immediate family members, frequent communication with grandparents, and respect in the community are among the most important attributes of an ideal family across countries. Finally,below average household income is not ideal in all contexts and, if families have at least one child, children's educational attainment and saving for children are universally valued traits.

4 Discussion

Recognizing that expectations for family life taken for granted in previous generations have less sway over family choices today, this study assessed perceptions of the traits associated with an ideal family in multiple national contexts. Family decisions are always made in relation to multiple competing demands, goals, and constraints. Departing from the convention of analyzing a specific family dimension in isolation and typically confounding elicited ideals with implicit tradeoffs with other dimensions, the conjoint experimental design allows us to assess the relative importance of multiple family characteristics in relation to each other, while isolating ideals for each dimension from the otherwise implicit tradeoffs with others. Importantly, such a holistic approach to evaluating family ideals sheds light on long-standing discrepancies in the literature. A large body of scholarship has been concerned with understanding the gap between the ideal number of children and completed fertility (Adserà 2006a; Beaujouan and Berghammer

2019; Morgan and Rackin 2010). Our vignette study found that parenthood remains a valued family attribute. We did not, however, find that the number of children mattered for what constitutes an ideal family. This challenges the two-children ideal typically found in traditional survey questions and as a corollary, it challenges the notion that there is a gap between the ideal and realized fertility. In fact, what gets reported in our survey is consistent with the observed fertility trends, which are way lower than what the traditional two-children ideal would suggest. Even in Norway, known for strong family support and rather egalitarian gender roles, there is no discernable difference when it comes to the number of children, which is consistent with the recent fertility decline observed also there (the Norwegian total fertility rate in 2022 stood at 1.42).

Our findings support the SDT theory's idea of a dramatic ideational shift towards family values reflecting self-realization. When couples make decisions about childbearing, new competing demands do necessarily enter the equation: the importance of children and marriage in defining an ideal family have indeed become weaker. Again, parenthood matters, but it is not among the most important attributes and people are even indifferent between any number of children. Although studies have found that cohabitation and divorce are now normalized in Western societies, compared to East Asia where some stigma around non-marital coupling remains (Hiekel and Castro-Martín 2014; Nazio 2008; Perelli-Harris et al. 2010), we found that marriage matters for the rating of a family when children are present in all countries except for Spain. But while divorce is still highly penalized, the relative importance of marriage compared to cohabitation is small even when child attributes are made salient, especially in Western countries. Attributes considered by other theoretical frameworks are also confirmed to matter. In terms of income (ref: Becker), not falling below average has relatively high importance, while above-average income seems to not matter all that much. In terms of emerging values reflecting self-realization, we found that gender roles matter (Goldscheider et al.), however seemingly

less so than the work-life balance achieved in a certain arrangement of gender roles (Mencarini 2018). Strikingly, relational values on the family's respect in the community and the communication with extended and immediate family members are among the attributes with the highest relative importance, further confirming an SDT-type ideational shift, but perhaps also calling for another rethink about theoretical frameworks explaining family patterns in contemporary societies. Our findings are also in line with ideational shifts to having spread to all industrialized countries, although we find that country-contexts matter for some dimensions, most notably the evaluation of household income in Europe compared to the United States and East Asia. Even as lower-than-average household income is devalued across all cases, it is perhaps not surprising that families with higher-than-average incomes are not rated better among respondents in Italy, Norway, and Spain, given that welfare support is more extensive (REFERENCES). While we do see some cross-country differences, the overriding narrative that emerges from the country-specific analysis is widely shared valuation of family attributes. Again, in the context of lowest-low fertility, greater numbers of children do not seem to matter over having at least one child and divorce is widely devalued. In addition, the evaluations of relational qualities among the most important attributes were similar across all samples. Respondents in the US, Norway, Italy and Spain (representing the West) were similar to respondents in Japan, China, Singapore, and South Korea (representing the East) in their valuation of communication among immediate and extended family members, and the general respect that families command in the communities in which they reside.

Figure 1: Family ideals pooled sample – Experiment 1 (incl. "no children").

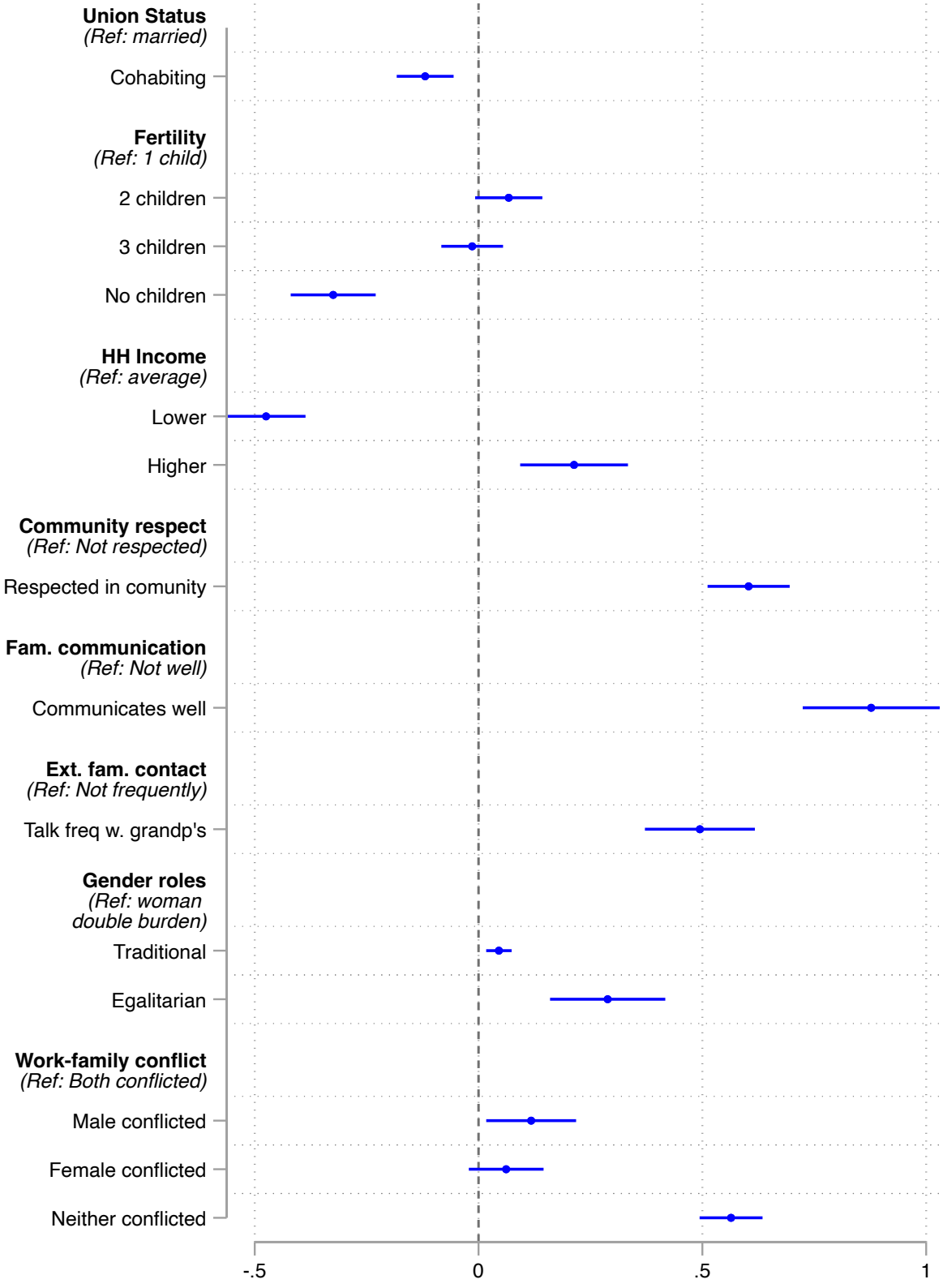


Figure 2: Family ideals pooled sample – Experiment 2 (excl. "no children").

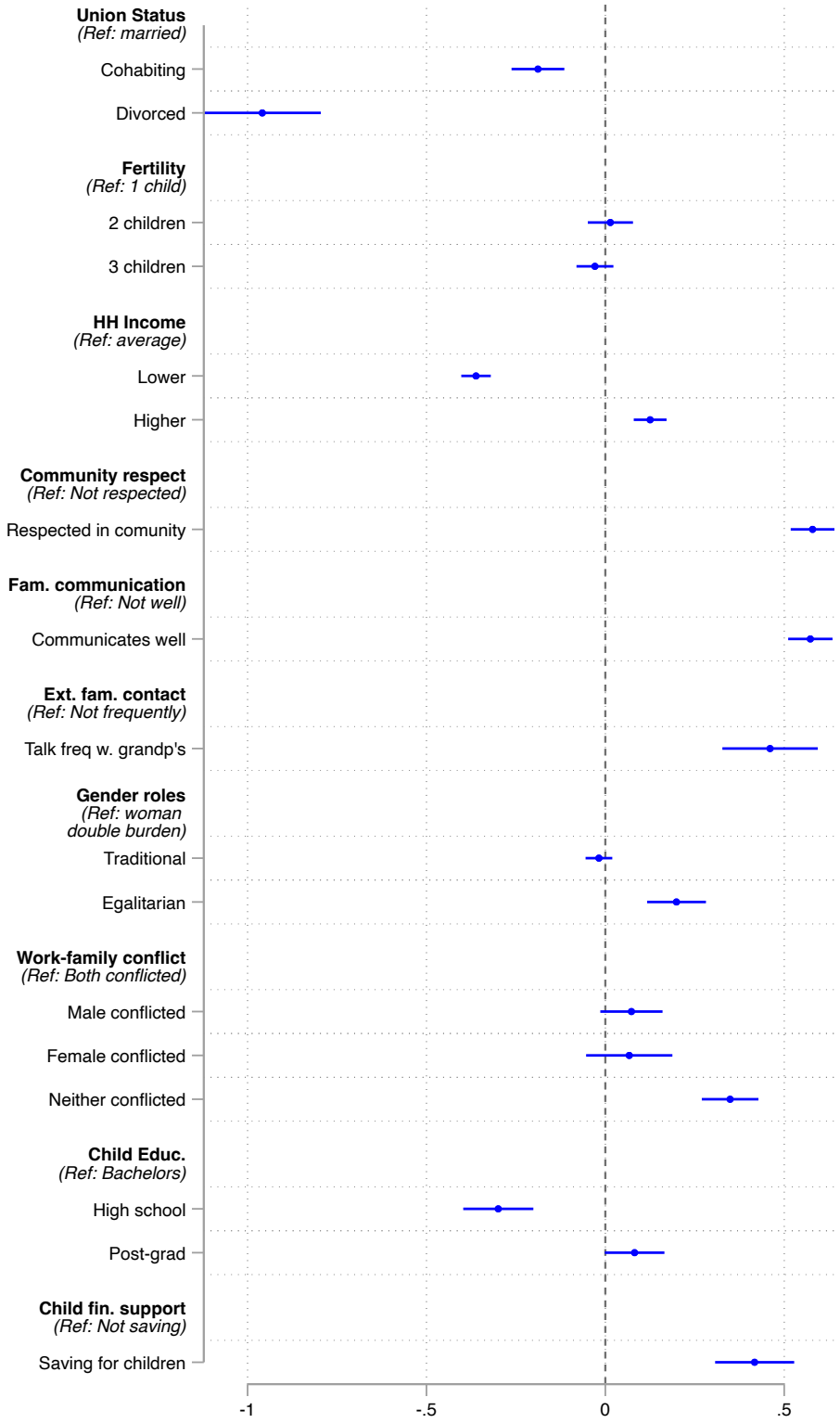


Figure 3: Family ideals by country – Experiment 1 (incl. "no children").

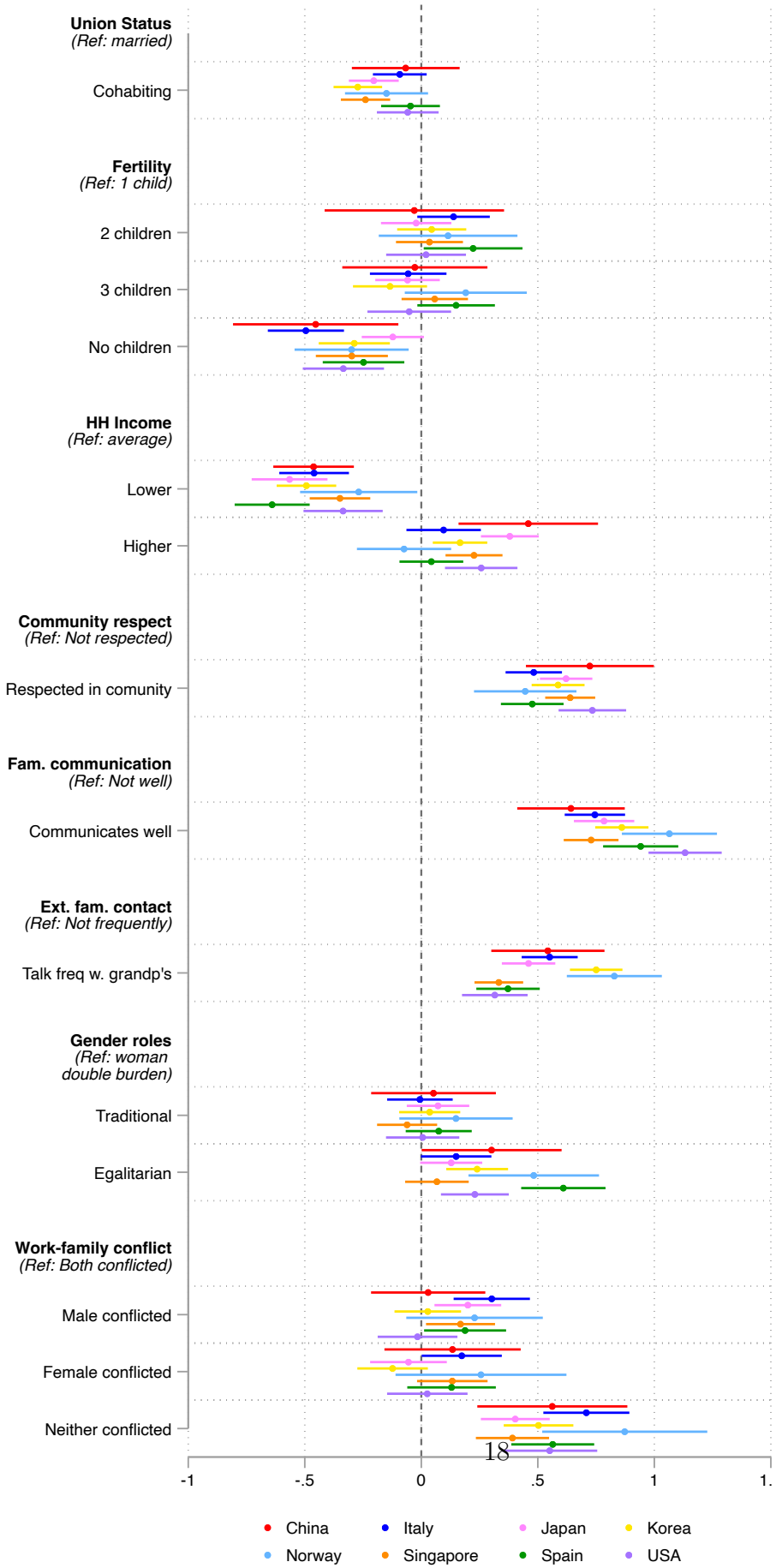
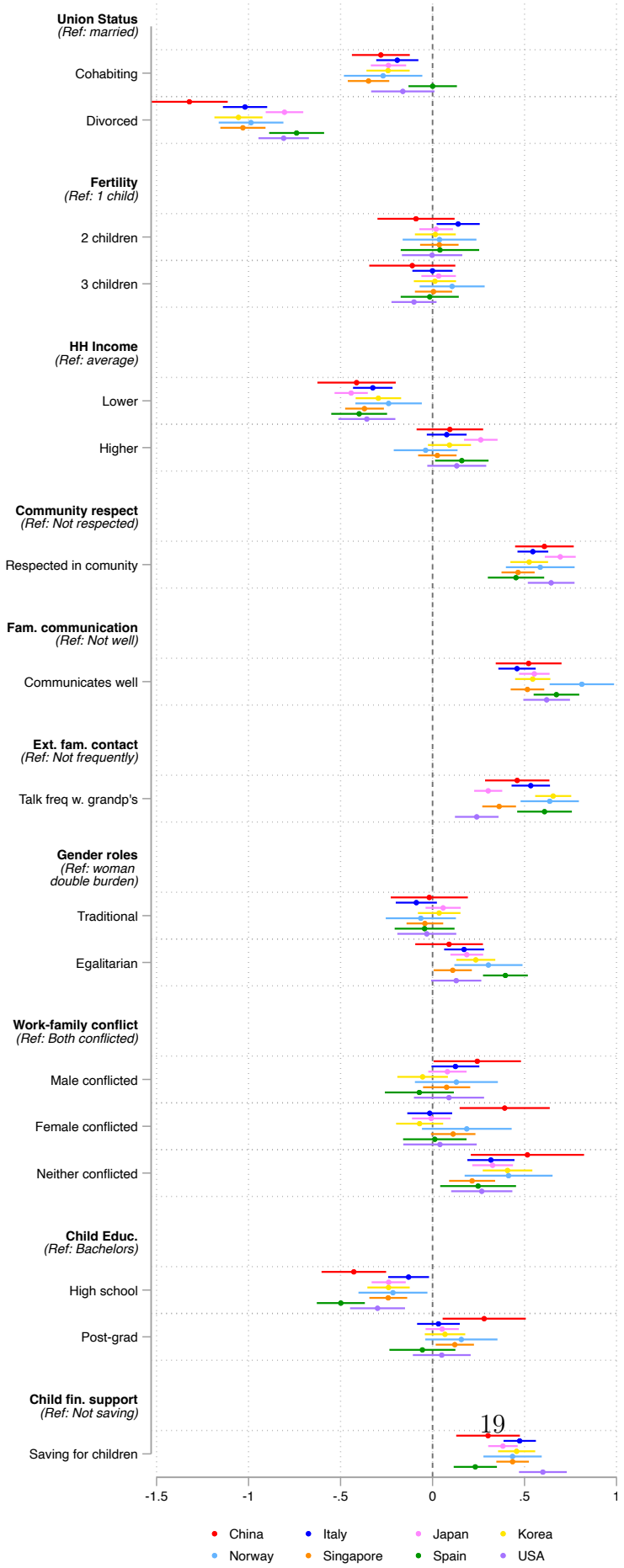


Figure 4: Family ideals by country – Experiment 2 (excl. "no children").



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Appendices

Jason does not feel conflicted between his career and the possibility to help out with family responsibilities, while Mary feels conflicted between her family responsibilities and her career.

Mary and Jason are married.

The family is not well respected in their community.

Mary, Jason and their child talk with both Mary's and Jason's parents frequently.

Mary and Jason have one child.

Mary and Jason's combined income is higher than the country average.

Both Mary and Jason work full-time. Mary takes care of most of the family and household responsibilities.

Mary, Jason, and their child discuss their daily life frequently and feel comfortable expressing their feelings and raising disagreements with each other.

Figure 5: Experiment 1: vignette example

Sarah and Robert talk with their respective parents frequently and their children talks with all grandparents frequently as well.

The highest level of education that Sarah and Robert's children are expected to complete is a postgraduate degree.

Sarah and Robert have three children.

Sarah and Robert's combined income is lower than the country average.

While Robert focuses on his career, Sarah focuses on taking care of the family and household responsibilities.

Both Robert and Sarah feel conflicted between their career and their family responsibilities.
Sarah and Robert are divorced.

The family is not well respected in their community.

Each parent and thechildren discuss their daily life frequently and feel comfortable expressing their feelings and raising disagreements with each other.

The highest level of education that Sarah and Robert's children are expected to complete is a postgraduate degree.

Sarah and Robert are saving money to support their children's transition to adulthood.

Figure 6: Experiment 2: vignette example

Table 2: Descriptive of the sample by country

	china	italy	japan	korea	norway	singapore	spain	usa	Total
age	37.50	39.00	39.66	39.00	39.39	37.03	38.78	38.86	38.51
	(7.06)	(7.10)	(6.80)	(7.01)	(6.98)	(7.06)	(7.05)	(6.60)	(7.00)
female	0.51	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.52	0.50	0.52	0.51
	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)
edu_self	5.55	4.58	4.93	5.46	4.55	4.94	5.12	4.99	5.06
	(1.10)	(1.94)	(1.42)	(1.21)	(1.76)	(1.84)	(1.77)	(1.64)	(1.63)
married	0.79	0.39	0.42	0.51	0.35	0.60	0.48	0.52	0.53
	(0.40)	(0.49)	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.48)	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.50)
haschild	0.76	0.44	0.35	0.47	0.58	0.47	0.56	0.71	0.55
	(0.43)	(0.50)	(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.49)	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.45)	(0.50)
nchildren	1.21	1.61	1.74	1.61	2.09	1.62	1.61	2.24	1.70
	(0.44)	(0.70)	(0.75)	(0.63)	(0.98)	(0.89)	(0.66)	(1.12)	(0.88)
fertility	0.92	0.78	0.62	0.73	1.31	0.82	0.87	1.85	1.01
	(0.66)	(0.95)	(0.94)	(0.92)	(1.32)	(1.11)	(0.93)	(1.47)	(1.14)
hhinc_adjusted	3389.67	2439.22	2982.92	4138.03	5535.92	6825.81	2329.68	4419.49	3986.86
	(3184.83)	(1825.15)	(6401.17)	(4853.36)	(4149.99)	(9434.17)	(1413.68)	(4361.14)	(5472.38)

Mean coefficients; SD in parentheses

Table 3: Balance check Experiment 1

	union	fertility	income	respect	famcom	extfamcom	genderrole	WLB
union	1							
fertility	0.00483	1						
income	-0.00279	0.00410	1					
respect	-0.00511	-0.00449	0.00320	1				
famcom	0.00847	-0.00181	0.00135	0.0131	1			
extfamcom	0.0108	0.00567	0.0111	0.0104	-0.00443	1		
genderrole	-0.00135	0.00125	-0.00250	0.00406	-0.00258	-0.0125	1	
WLB	0.0103	-0.00431	0.000103	0.00572	0.00721	-0.00365	0.00418	1

Table 4: Balance check Experiment 2

	union	fertility	income	respect	famcom	extfamcom	genderrole	WLB	childedu	finsuppo
union	1									
fertility	-0.00215	1								
income	-0.00981	0.00330	1							
respect	-0.00466	0.00874	-0.00340	1						
famcom	0.00655	-0.00649	-0.00548	-0.00265	1					
extfamcom	-0.00176	0.00211	-0.00334	-0.0115	-0.00355	1				
genderrole	-0.00316	0.00148	0.00366	0.00302	0.00186	0.00259	1			
WLB	-0.00348	0.00878	-0.00323	-0.00422	-0.00771	0.00123	-0.00556	1		
childedu	-0.00264	0.0112	-0.000995	0.000336	-0.00318	-0.00206	-0.00531	0.00472	1	
finsupport	0.00169	-0.00716	0.00693	0.00359	0.00602	-0.00304	-0.000278	0.00195	-0.00111	1

Table 5: Pooled Country Result - Successful Family

	(1) Experiment 1	(2) Experiment 2
Married	0	0
	(.)	(.)
Cohabiting	-0.119**	-0.188**
	(0.0324)	(0.0376)
Divorced		-0.959**
		(0.0835)
1 child	0	0
	(.)	(.)
2 children	0.0675	0.0141
	(0.0383)	(0.0322)
3 children	-0.0142	-0.0291
	(0.0352)	(0.0263)
No children	-0.325**	
	(0.0484)	
Lower	-0.475**	-0.361**
	(0.0449)	(0.0210)
Around	0	0
	(.)	(.)
Higher	0.213**	0.125**
	(0.0614)	(0.0234)
Respected in comunity	0.603**	0.579**
	(0.0468)	(0.0312)
NOT respected	0	0
	(.)	(.)
Communicates well	0.877**	0.573**
	(0.0781)	(0.0316)
Communicates NOT well	0	0
	(.)	(.)
Talk freq w. grandp's	0.494**	0.460**
	(0.0627)	(0.0680)
Talk NOT frequently	0	0
	(.)	(.)
Traditional	0.0455**	-0.0179
	(0.0145)	(0.0190)
Commonplace	0	0
	(.)	(.)
Egalitarian	0.288**	0.199**
	(0.0657)	(0.0420)
Male conflicted	0.118*	0.0729
	(0.0512)	(0.0444)
Female conflicted	0.0618	0.0668
	(0.0426)	(0.0615)
Neither conflicted	0.564**	0.349**
	(0.0359)	(0.0404)
Both conflicted	0	0
	(.)	(.)
High school		-0.299**
		(0.0500)
Bachelor		0
		(.)
Post-grad		0.0818
		(0.0425)
Saving for children		0.417**
		(0.0564)
NOT saving for children		0
		(.)
_cons	4.115**	4.329**
	(0.134)	(0.135)
var(country)	0.356**	0.365**
	(0.0812)	(0.0959)
var(person)	1.262**	1.307**
	(0.0518)	(0.0437)
var(Residual)	1.847**	1.839**
	(0.0672)	(0.0803)
Observations	47857	72843

Random intercept fixed slope mixed model with vignette responses nested in individual nested in country. Post-stratification weights are used.
Standard errors in parentheses
* p¡0.05, ** p¡0.01

Table 6: Experiment 1 Successful Family Mixed-effect Model

	(1) China	(2) Italy	(3) Japan	(4) Korea	(5) Norway	(6) Singapore	(7) Spain	(8) USA
Married	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Cohabiting	-0.0667	-0.0922	-0.204**	-0.272**	-0.149	-0.239**	-0.0462	-0.0581
	(0.118)	(0.0588)	(0.0546)	(0.0532)	(0.0909)	(0.0539)	(0.0643)	(0.0676)
1 child	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
2 children	-0.0298	0.138	-0.0220	0.0446	0.115	0.0350	0.222*	0.0205
	(0.196)	(0.0793)	(0.0770)	(0.0756)	(0.152)	(0.0733)	(0.108)	(0.0873)
3 children	-0.0276	-0.0562	-0.0591	-0.134	0.191	0.0578	0.149	-0.0518
	(0.159)	(0.0838)	(0.0706)	(0.0811)	(0.134)	(0.0727)	(0.0849)	(0.0916)
No children	-0.453*	-0.495**	-0.122	-0.287**	-0.299*	-0.298**	-0.248**	-0.334**
	(0.181)	(0.0833)	(0.0682)	(0.0779)	(0.125)	(0.0789)	(0.0893)	(0.0889)
Lower	-0.462**	-0.460**	-0.565**	-0.493**	-0.269*	-0.349**	-0.640**	-0.335**
	(0.0882)	(0.0762)	(0.0830)	(0.0652)	(0.128)	(0.0663)	(0.0821)	(0.0867)
Around	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Higher	0.459**	0.0959	0.380**	0.166**	-0.0741	0.226**	0.0433	0.257**
	(0.153)	(0.0815)	(0.0633)	(0.0596)	(0.103)	(0.0623)	(0.0698)	(0.0793)
Respected in community	0.723**	0.483**	0.621**	0.587**	0.446**	0.639**	0.476**	0.734**
	(0.140)	(0.0617)	(0.0574)	(0.0579)	(0.112)	(0.0547)	(0.0686)	(0.0740)
NOT respected	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Communicates well	0.642**	0.745**	0.784**	0.861**	1.065**	0.729**	0.941**	1.132**
	(0.118)	(0.0660)	(0.0661)	(0.0583)	(0.104)	(0.0600)	(0.0823)	(0.0801)
Communicates NOT well	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Talk freq w. grandp's	0.543**	0.551**	0.460**	0.751**	0.828**	0.333**	0.372**	0.316**
	(0.124)	(0.0613)	(0.0585)	(0.0575)	(0.104)	(0.0533)	(0.0694)	(0.0719)
Talk NOT frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Traditional	0.0525	-0.00587	0.0718	0.0361	0.149	-0.0608	0.0748	0.00582
	(0.137)	(0.0717)	(0.0684)	(0.0668)	(0.124)	(0.0658)	(0.0723)	(0.0802)
Commonplace	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Egalitarian	0.302*	0.150	0.128	0.240**	0.483**	0.0670	0.610**	0.230**
	(0.153)	(0.0771)	(0.0680)	(0.0676)	(0.143)	(0.0697)	(0.0923)	(0.0743)
Male conflicted	0.0295	0.303**	0.200**	0.0278	0.229	0.168*	0.188*	-0.0161
	(0.125)	(0.0835)	(0.0731)	(0.0729)	(0.149)	(0.0755)	(0.0897)	(0.0873)
Female conflicted	0.134	0.174*	-0.0550	-0.123	0.256	0.133	0.130	0.0258
	(0.149)	(0.0876)	(0.0840)	(0.0772)	(0.187)	(0.0772)	(0.0969)	(0.0881)
Neither conflicted	0.562**	0.708**	0.403**	0.503**	0.873**	0.391**	0.564**	0.551**
	(0.164)	(0.0942)	(0.0754)	(0.0762)	(0.181)	(0.0801)	(0.0907)	(0.104)
Both conflicted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
_cons	4.260**	3.879**	4.101**	3.844**	3.678**	4.861**	3.770**	4.752**
	(0.214)	(0.133)	(0.149)	(0.131)	(0.249)	(0.130)	(0.157)	(0.158)
var(country)	1.231**	1.410**	1.267**	1.164**	1.138	0.000201**	1.263**	1.403**
	(0.0447)	(0.0443)	(0.0443)	(0.0407)	(0.0814)	(0.00000133)	(0.0416)	(0.0396)
var(person)	1.822**	1.811**	1.516**	1.693**	1.767**	2.114**	1.849**	2.043**
	(0.0605)	(0.0416)	(0.0327)	(0.0336)	(0.0641)	(0.0308)	(0.0412)	(0.0366)
Observations	6977	5940	4797	5996	1812	7554	6223	8558

Random intercept fixed slope mixed model with vignette responses nested in individual nested. Post-stratification weights are used.
Standard errors in parentheses.
* pi0.05, ** pi0.01

Table 7: Experiment 2 Successful Family Mixed-effect Model

	(1) china	(2) italy	(3) japan	(4) korea	(5) norway	(6) singapore	(7) spain	(8) usa
Married	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Cohabiting	-0.281**	-0.192**	-0.239**	-0.242**	-0.269*	-0.348**	0.000818	-0.161
	(0.0803)	(0.0585)	(0.0490)	(0.0599)	(0.109)	(0.0576)	(0.0672)	(0.0878)
Divorced	-1.321**	-1.019**	-0.805**	-1.055**	-0.987**	-1.031**	-0.739**	-0.809**
	(0.106)	(0.0613)	(0.0521)	(0.0667)	(0.0897)	(0.0627)	(0.0762)	(0.0699)
1 child	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
2 children	-0.0898	0.139*	0.0195	0.0153	0.0381	0.0370	0.0404	-0.00254
	(0.107)	(0.0598)	(0.0467)	(0.0566)	(0.102)	(0.0533)	(0.109)	(0.0837)
3 children	-0.110	-0.000373	0.0332	0.0130	0.107	0.00528	-0.0153	-0.101
	(0.119)	(0.0558)	(0.0478)	(0.0585)	(0.0901)	(0.0516)	(0.0806)	(0.0625)
Lower	-0.413**	-0.325**	-0.442**	-0.294**	-0.239**	-0.370**	-0.399**	-0.357**
	(0.109)	(0.0548)	(0.0461)	(0.0631)	(0.0921)	(0.0537)	(0.0774)	(0.0791)
Around	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Higher	0.0941	0.0771	0.262**	0.0920	-0.0375	0.0261	0.159*	0.132
	(0.0923)	(0.0552)	(0.0465)	(0.0597)	(0.0885)	(0.0533)	(0.0741)	(0.0817)
Respected in community	0.608**	0.545**	0.694**	0.525**	0.586**	0.465**	0.454**	0.645**
	(0.0813)	(0.0427)	(0.0429)	(0.0523)	(0.0953)	(0.0460)	(0.0781)	(0.0648)
NOT respected	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Communicates well	0.522**	0.459**	0.553**	0.544**	0.812**	0.516**	0.673**	0.620**
	(0.0913)	(0.0517)	(0.0424)	(0.0489)	(0.0893)	(0.0466)	(0.0633)	(0.0647)
Communicates NOT well	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Talk freq w. grandp's	0.460**	0.534**	0.303**	0.656**	0.637**	0.362**	0.609**	0.240**
	(0.0892)	(0.0533)	(0.0389)	(0.0500)	(0.0808)	(0.0467)	(0.0758)	(0.0605)
Talk NOT frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Traditional	-0.0177	-0.0881	0.0575	0.0360	-0.0637	-0.0416	-0.0431	-0.0312
	(0.107)	(0.0571)	(0.0487)	(0.0590)	(0.0973)	(0.0508)	(0.0831)	(0.0817)
Commonplace	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Egalitarian	0.0900	0.172**	0.186**	0.235**	0.304**	0.110*	0.396**	0.129
	(0.0939)	(0.0553)	(0.0455)	(0.0540)	(0.0945)	(0.0530)	(0.0621)	(0.0695)
Male conflicted	0.243*	0.124	0.0808	-0.0540	0.130	0.0765	-0.0717	0.0895
	(0.121)	(0.0663)	(0.0531)	(0.0701)	(0.115)	(0.0654)	(0.0956)	(0.0972)
Female conflicted	0.392**	-0.0152	-0.00705	-0.0702	0.186	0.112	0.0123	0.0404
	(0.125)	(0.0623)	(0.0535)	(0.0652)	(0.124)	(0.0618)	(0.0880)	(0.102)
Neither conflicted	0.516**	0.317**	0.326**	0.408**	0.413**	0.215**	0.248*	0.268**
	(0.157)	(0.0653)	(0.0565)	(0.0688)	(0.122)	(0.0639)	(0.105)	(0.0848)
Both conflicted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
High school	-0.428**	-0.130*	-0.238**	-0.239**	-0.215*	-0.241**	-0.499**	-0.299**
	(0.0896)	(0.0566)	(0.0473)	(0.0587)	(0.0957)	(0.0525)	(0.0667)	(0.0761)
Bachelor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
Post-grad	0.281*	0.0320	0.0524	0.0677	0.157	0.121*	-0.0552	0.0501
	(0.115)	(0.0592)	(0.0461)	(0.0561)	(0.100)	(0.0531)	(0.0915)	(0.0802)
Saving for children	0.302**	0.474**	0.383**	0.457**	0.435**	0.435**	0.232**	0.600**
	(0.0883)	(0.0449)	(0.0409)	(0.0515)	(0.0808)	(0.0452)	(0.0600)	(0.0663)
NOT saving for children	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)	(.)
_cons	4.293**	4.043**	4.125**	3.855**	4.122**	4.804**	4.382**	5.053**
	(0.190)	(0.122)	(0.104)	(0.130)	(0.221)	(0.116)	(0.172)	(0.200)
var(country)	1.352**	1.375**	1.270**	1.229**	1.341**	0.000113	1.309**	1.444**
	(0.0380)	(0.0325)	(0.0343)	(0.0344)	(0.0614)	(87.46)	(0.0352)	(0.0333)
var(person)	1.857**	1.748**	1.537**	1.696**	1.657**	2.195**	1.790**	2.104**
	(0.0466)	(0.0277)	(0.0255)	(0.0312)	(0.0556)	(0.0613)	(0.0418)	(0.0377)
Observations	10484	9571	8319	8945	2693	11208	9029	12594

Random intercept fixed slope mixed model with vignette responses nested in individual nested. Post-stratification weights are used. Standard errors in parentheses

* p¡0.05, ** p¡0.01