

## The Third Annual Index of Family Belonging & Rejection

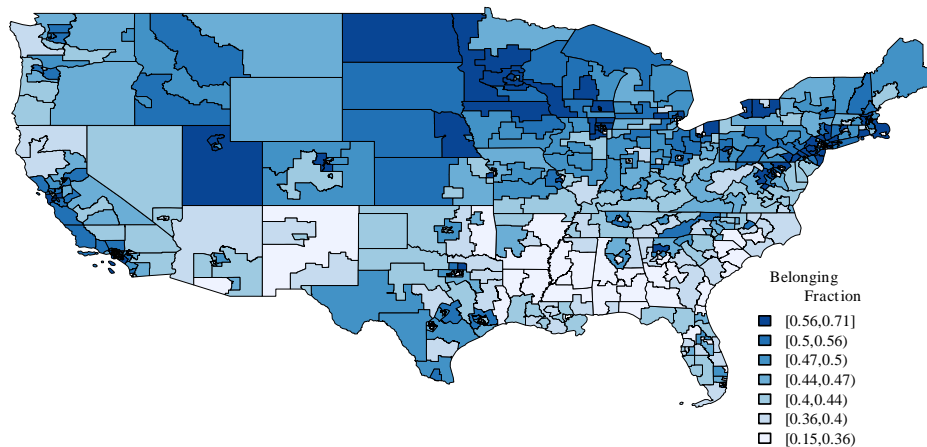
Patrick Fagan, Nicholas Zill\*

The Index of Family Belonging for the United States is now just above 45 percent,<sup>1</sup> which means that 45 percent of U.S. children on the cusp of adulthood have grown up in an intact married family. The mother and father of the remaining 55 percent of 17-year-olds have at some time rejected each other as husband and wife.

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Family Intactness across the Census Super Public Use Microdata Areas  
*Derived from the American Community Survey; Census Bureau*

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Even as our nation withdraws more and more from marriage, the case for intact marriage becomes ever more forceful, as our accompanying derivative report, *U.S. Social Policy Dependence on the Family*, makes plain, through

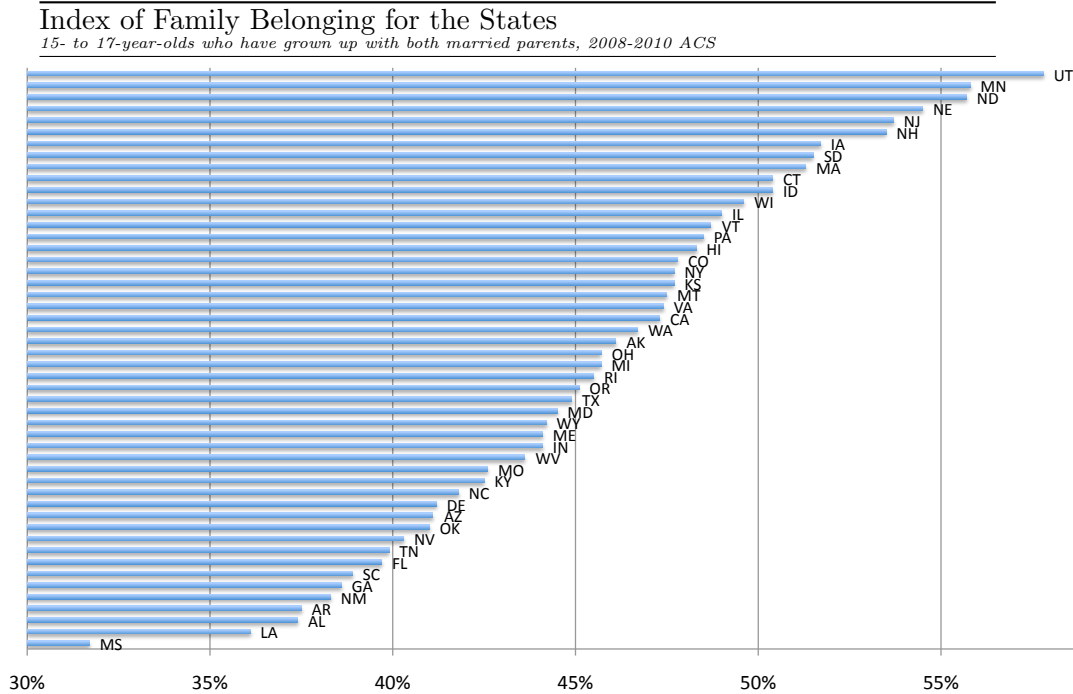
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<sup>1</sup>This statistic is derived from the American Community Survey of the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2008-2010.

an analysis of the well-being of our communities.<sup>2</sup> In what follows, we examine family intactness across the states and in the largest American cities.

The Index of Family Belonging is a measure of the proportion of American adolescents who have enjoyed stable intact family lives – with both birth parents – throughout their childhoods. It is calculated from data provided by the American Community Survey of the U.S. Bureau of the Census and is strongly associated with measures of child well-being.

## Index of Family Belonging at the State Level



This 2013 Index uses the aggregated American Community Survey data for three years (2008 through 2010), and it thus gives us the most accurate measure to date of state levels of family intactness.

<sup>2</sup>The sister report may be obtained at <http://marri.us/policy-2013>.

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## Family Belonging in the 45 Largest U.S. Cities

The same aggregated data (2008 through 2010) from the Census Bureau also make it possible to derive Index of Family Belonging values for 45 of the largest U.S. cities.<sup>3</sup>

The data show the following:

- In the *average* large city, just over three in ten teenagers have grown up with both married parents (36 percent). The Family Belonging Index score of Louisville, Kentucky, was closest to the average large city score.
- This mean value was significantly lower than the average Family Belonging Index for the United States as a whole (45 percent).
- In the *typical (median)* large city, just under four in ten teenagers have grown up with both parents (40 percent). The Family Belonging Index score of Jacksonville, Florida, was at the median value for large cities.
- Only three of the 45 largest U.S. cities have an Index of Family Belonging greater than 50 percent: San Jose, California (56 percent); Seattle, Washington (54 percent); and San Francisco, California (53 percent).
- In the five cities scoring lowest on Family Belonging, fewer than two in ten teenagers have been raised by both married parents. These cities were Cleveland, Ohio (15 percent); Baltimore, Maryland (16 percent); Washington, DC (17 percent); Memphis, Tennessee (17 percent); and Detroit, Michigan (18 percent).

City life in the United States is not favorable to family or marriage.

### Difference between the ‘Index of Family Belonging’ and ‘Children in Married Families’

Reports on the percent of all children living in an married family can give a biased picture of the state of marriage, making it more positive than is

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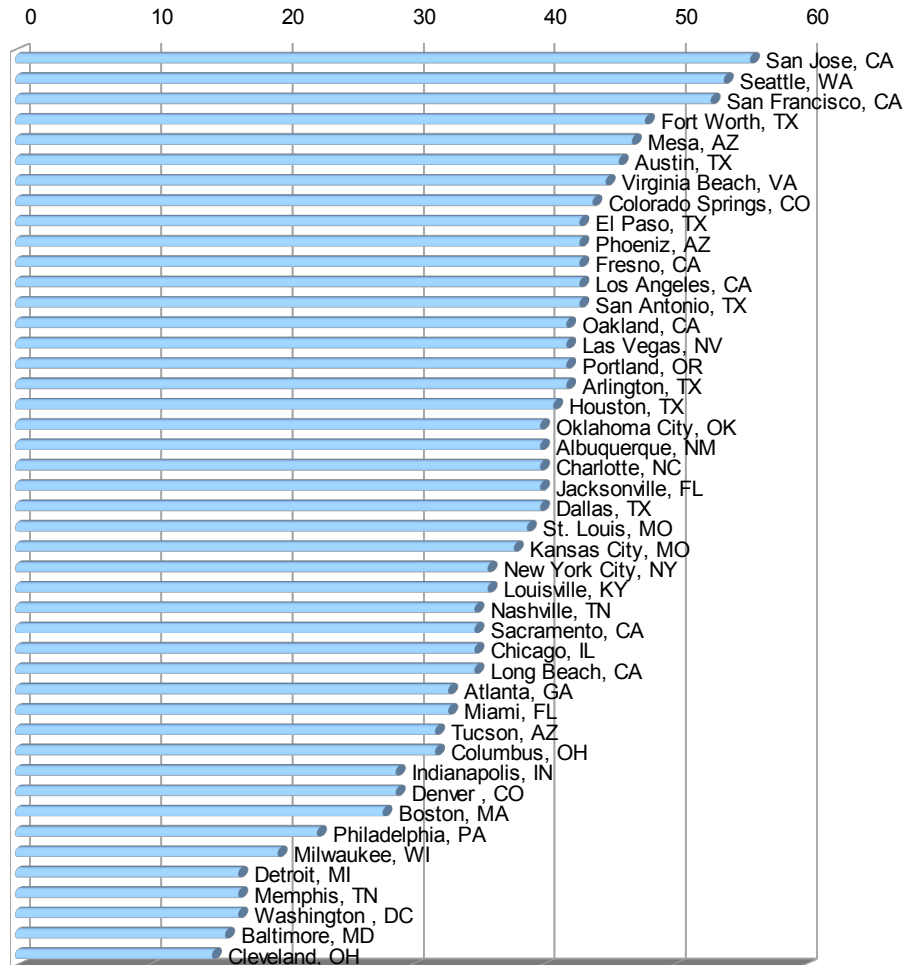
<sup>3</sup>The 45 cities for which Family Belonging values were calculated are the 45 largest cities in the U.S. according to 2010 Census counts, with two exceptions. Because accurate Index scores could not be derived for Omaha, Nebraska, and Raleigh, North Carolina, two smaller cities were substituted, namely, Arlington, Texas, and Oakland, California.

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## Index of Family Belonging for 45 Largest Cities

*15- to 17-year-olds who have grown up with both married parents, 2008-2010 average*

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warranted. For instance, the data used to report the Index at the city level (see Table 1 in the appendix) gives San Jose the highest Index of Family Belonging (56 percent). Its score is 69 percent when using all households with children headed by married parents (see Table 2 in the appendix). The difference gives an indication, first, of the proportion of children who are living with stepparents, rather than with both biological parents. Second, it gives an indication of the proportion of younger children who are likely to experience the divorce of their parents before they reach age 18, the

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effects of which are numerous and long-lasting.<sup>4</sup> The children involved in the difference – those yet to experience their parents’ divorce – will be counted in the Index of Family Rejection rather than the Index of Family Belonging. Thus, the Index of Family Belonging is a more realistic instrument for the analysis of the family and its relationship to other social outcomes.

The *Index* is the basis of the analysis in the accompanying report on U.S. social policy’s dependence on the family. That analysis examines the empirical relationship between the variation in the outcomes of public policy interest and the variation of various demographic, education, and economic influences – including the Index itself. See the charts in the sister report for a mapping depiction of the variation of these outcomes across the United States.

Additional *state-by-state* charts, breaking out for *each* state the variation in the outcomes across census areas, are available as web resources:

<http://marri.us/index-2013/states>

## Conclusion

Federal social policy evaluations show myriad repeated failures to improve targeted outcomes. The accompanying derivative work, *U.S. Social Policy Dependence on the Family*,<sup>5</sup> based on the foundational work of this Index, breaks new pathways towards a reconceptualization of these failing social policies.

The state has hitherto ignored the importance of the intact married family in shaping the outcomes of its social policies. This neglect of marriage is an error of historical proportions.

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<sup>4</sup>See Patrick Fagan and Aaron Churchill, *The Effects of Divorce on Children*, available at <http://marri.us/effects-divorce-children> techreport (MARRI, 2012).

<sup>5</sup>The sister report may be obtained at <http://marri.us/policy-2013> .

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## Appendix: Ranking of Major U.S. Cities

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**Table 1** Index of Family Belonging for 45 Largest Cities

*15- to 17-year-olds who have grown up with both married parents, 2008-2010 ACS*

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Rank	City	State	% Belonging
1	San Jose	California	56
2	Seattle	Washington	54
3	San Francisco	California	53
4	Fort Worth	Texas	48
5	Mesa	Arizona	47
6	Austin	Texas	46
7	Virginia Beach	Virginia	45
8	Colorado Springs	Colorado	44
9	El Paso	Texas	43
10	Phoenix	Arizona	43
11	Fresno	California	43
12	Los Angeles	California	43
13	San Antonio	Texas	43
14	Oakland	California	42
15	Las Vegas	Nevada	42
16	Portland	Oregon	42
17	Arlington	Texas	42
18	Houston	Texas	41
19	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	40
20	Albuquerque	New Mexico	40
21	Charlotte	North Carolina	40
22	Jacksonville	Florida	40
23	Dallas	Texas	40
24	St. Louis	Missouri	39
25	Kansas City	Missouri	38

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**Table 1** Index of Family Belonging for 45 Largest Cities (cont'd)  
*15- to 17-year-olds who have grown up with both married parents, 2008-2010 ACS*

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Rank	City	State	% Belonging
26	New York City	New York	36
27	Louisville	Kentucky	36
28	Nashville	Tennessee	35
29	Sacramento	California	35
30	Chicago	Illinois	35
31	Long Beach	California	35
32	Atlanta	Georgia	33
33	Miami	Florida	33
34	Tucson	Arizona	32
35	Columbus	Ohio	32
36	Indianapolis	Indiana	29
37	Denver	Colorado	29
38	Boston	Massachusetts	28
39	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	23
40	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	20
41	Detroit	Michigan	17
42	Memphis	Tennessee	17
43	Washington	District of Columbia	17
44	Baltimore	Maryland	16
45	Cleveland	Ohio	15

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**Table 2** 100 Largest Cities Ranked by % of All Households with Children with Married Family Heads

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Rank	City	State	% Parents Married
1	Plano	Texas	77
2	Seattle	Washington	70
3	Fargo	North Dakota	69
4	San Jose	California	69
5	Chandler	Arizona	68
6	Lincoln	Nebraska	68
7	San Francisco	California	66
8	Madison	Wisconsin	66
9	San Diego	California	65
10	Salt Lake City	Utah	64
11	Henderson	Nevada	64
12	Virginia Beach	Virginia	64
13	Mesa	Arizona	64
14	Anaheim	California	64
15	Colorado Springs	Colorado	63
16	Boise	Idaho	63
17	Riverside	California	63
18	Anchorage	Alaska	63
19	Billings	Montana	63
20	Sioux Falls	South Dakota	63
21	Honolulu	Hawaii	63
22	Chula Vista	California	62
23	Portland	Oregon	61
24	Lexington	Kentucky	61
25	Austin	Texas	61
26	Santa Ana	California	60
27	Bakersfield	California	60
28	Fort Worth	Texas	60
29	Arlington	Texas	60
30	Las Vegas	Nevada	59
31	Raleigh	North Carolina	58
32	Charleston	West Virginia	58
33	Denver	Colorado	58
34	Wichita	Kansas	58

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**Table 2** 100 Largest Cities Ranked by % of All Households with Children with Married Family Heads (cont'd)

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Rank	City	State	% Parents Married
35	Omaha	Nebraska	58
36	Phoenix	Arizona	58
37	Fort Wayne	Indiana	57
38	Oklahoma City	Oklahoma	57
39	Charlotte	North Carolina	57
40	Aurora	Colorado	57
41	Los Angeles	California	56
42	Laredo	Texas	56
43	Jacksonville	Florida	56
44	Burlington	Vermont	56
45	Cheyenne	Wyoming	56
46	Albuquerque	New Mexico	56
47	Portland	Maine	55
48	El Paso	Texas	55
49	Manchester	New Hampshire	55
50	San Antonio	Texas	55
51	Saint Paul	Minnesota	54
52	Houston	Texas	54
53	Des Moines	Iowa	54
54	Fresno	California	54
55	Long Beach	California	53
56	Sacramento	California	53
57	Dallas	Texas	53
58	Stockton	California	53
59	Tulsa	Oklahoma	52
60	Louisville	Kentucky	52
61	Tucson	Arizona	52
62	New York	New York	52
63	Corpus Christi	Texas	51
64	Nashville	Tennessee	51
65	Oakland	California	51
66	Greensboro	North Carolina	50
67	St. Petersburg	Florida	50
68	Columbus	Ohio	49

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**Table 2** 100 Largest Cities Ranked by % of All Households with Children with Married Family Heads (cont'd)

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Rank	City	State	% Parents Married
69	Kansas City	Missouri	49
70	Minneapolis	Minnesota	49
71	Chicago	Illinois	48
72	Indianapolis	Indiana	48
73	Little Rock	Arkansas	48
74	Columbia	South Carolina	48
75	Tampa	Florida	48
76	Jersey City	New Jersey	47
77	Orlando	Florida	46
78	Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	45
79	Norfolk	Virginia	44
80	Miami	Florida	44
81	Boston	Massachusetts	43
82	Bridgeport	Connecticut	43
83	Toledo	Ohio	42
84	Atlanta	Georgia	42
85	Providence	Rhode Island	40
86	New Orleans	Louisiana	40
87	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania	38
88	Milwaukee	Wisconsin	37
89	Washington	District of Columbia	36
90	Cincinnati	Ohio	35
91	Memphis	Tennessee	34
92	St. Louis	Missouri	34
93	Jackson	Mississippi	33
94	Buffalo	New York	32
95	Newark	New Jersey	31
96	Birmingham	Alabama	30
97	Baltimore	Maryland	30
98	Cleveland	Ohio	29
99	Wilmington	Delaware	28
100	Detroit	Michigan	27
	U.S.		62

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