



The Association between Income Level and Opinion on Abortion among Americans

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Introduction

- Abortion has been launched to the forefront of American minds, with 75% and 35% of Democrats and Republicans viewing the topic as the most important issue going into the 2022 midterm elections (Midterm Voting Intentions, 2022).
- Trends in abortion reception and availability have been changing in the U.S., with abortion incidence increasing by 8% between 2017 & 2020, while the number of abortion clinics has remained relatively stable (Jones et. al., 2020).
- Study has found that abortion rates increase as income level increases, but doesn't focus on abortion opinion in regards to income level (Bearak et. al., 2020)
- A poll conducted by Pew revealed that generally individuals in within the highest income group are more likely to support abortion in any instance, and vice versa for banning abortion (Religious Landscape Study, 2022). However, it only divides respondents into two groups high and low income, and doesn't place abortion into specific contexts.

Research Questions

- Is there an association between an individual's familial income level and their support for abortion in general and among specific contexts?
- Does placing abortion into specific contexts affect individuals' support for abortion across income levels?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=4032) were drawn from the 2022 General Social Cross-Section Survey (GSS), and represents adults, age 18 and over, living in the U.S. in non-institutional housing.

Measures

- Individual's abortion support score created by taking the sum of the number of contexts in which they support abortion
- Individual's income level was assessed through 5 categories (\$0-\$6,999, \$7,000-\$17,499, \$17,500-\$34,999, \$35,000-\$89,999, \$90,000-\$170,000+).
- Abortion opinion evaluated by asking whether respondent supported abortion for any reason and then in six different contexts (in the case of rape, birth defects, mother's health threatened, unable to afford the child, mother doesn't want to marry father, mother doesn't want more children)
- College education evaluated by merging those that had attended college for 1 or more years into an "attended college" and those that hadn't into a "didn't attend" group

Results

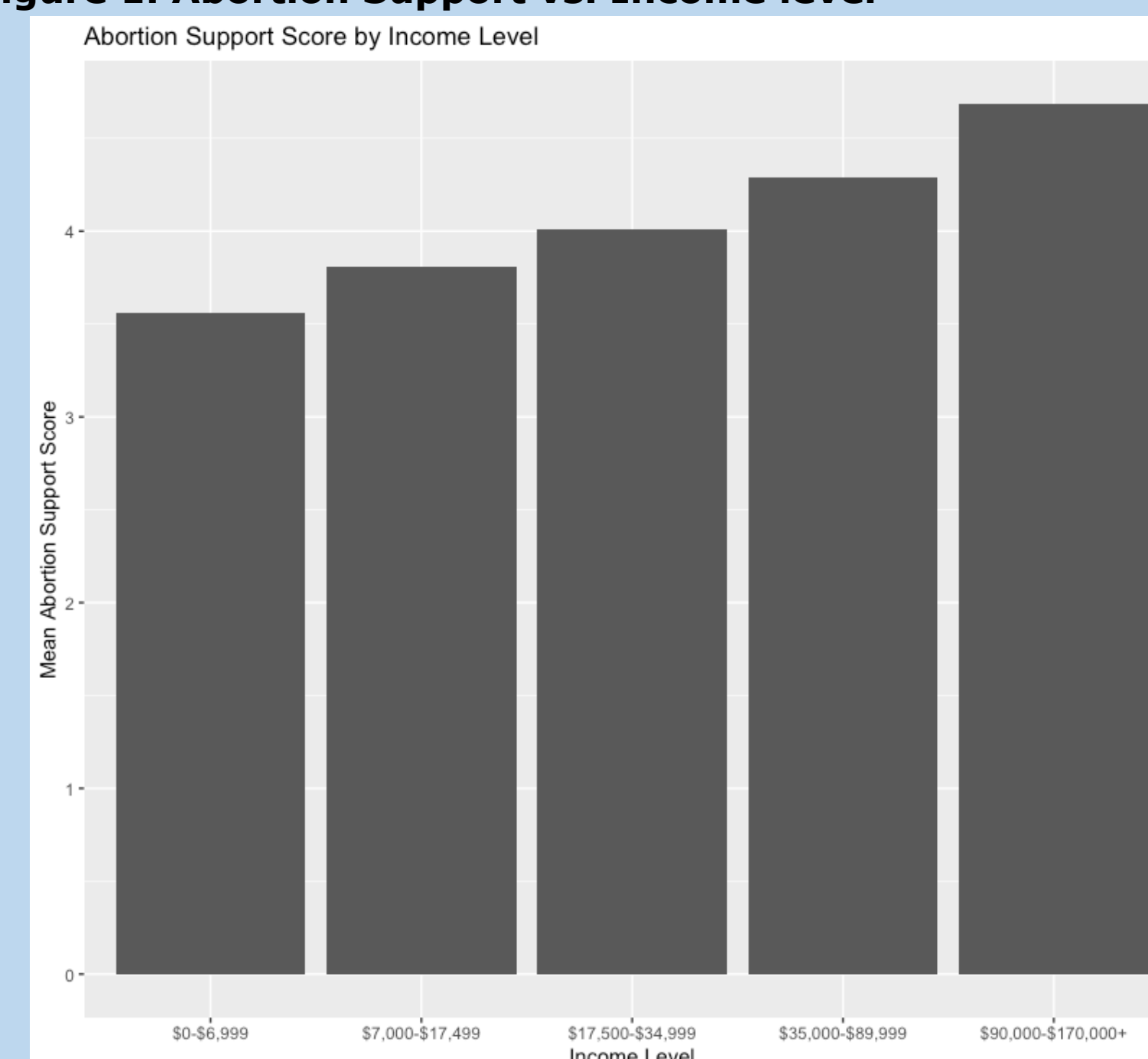
Univariate

- 4.93%, 8.92%, 14.28%, 38.07%, and 33.80% of respondents have an annual income of \$0-\$6,999, \$7,000-\$17,499, \$17,500-\$34,999, \$35,000-\$89,999, \$90,000-\$170,000+, respectively.
- 56.4% of respondents believe that a woman should be able to receive an abortion for any reason, while 43.6% do not.
- 7.3%, 6.5%, 7.9%, 14.9%, 5.9%, 5.2%, and 52.3% of respondents have an abortion support score of 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6, respectively.

Bivariate

- An analysis of variance (ANOVA) test revealed that the relationship between income group and abortion support score was statistically significant ($p = 1.56e-06$)

Figure 1. Abortion Support vs. Income level



- Furthermore, a post hoc test revealed that this significant relationship existed between the highest income group (\$90,000-\$170,000+) and all other groups. For all income groups, **respondents in the highest income group had a significantly higher mean abortion support score than those in lower groups**

Multivariate (support vs Income Lvl. by College Ed.)

- Linear regression revealed that when accounting college education the relationship between income level and abortion support score remained statistically significant.
- Multiple linear regression demonstrated a significant relationship for the two highest income groups compared to lowest income group ($B=.64, p=.026$; $B=.95, p=.001$).
- Those that didn't attend college were found to statistically be less likely to support abortion ($B=-.572, p=5.74e-05$)

Multivar. (Support vs Income Lvl. by Reason)

- Respondents were significantly more likely to support abortion when contextualized in the instance of pregnancy as a result of rape, severe health risk for the mother, and in the case of birth defects, compared to receiving an abortion for any reason
- Respondents were most likely to support abortion when contextualized in the instance of severe health risk for the mother ($B=2.04, p<2e-16$), second most in the case of rape ($B=1.47, p<2e-16$), third most in the case of birth defects ($B=1.05, p<2e-16$)

Figure 2. Abortion Support vs Income Level by College Education

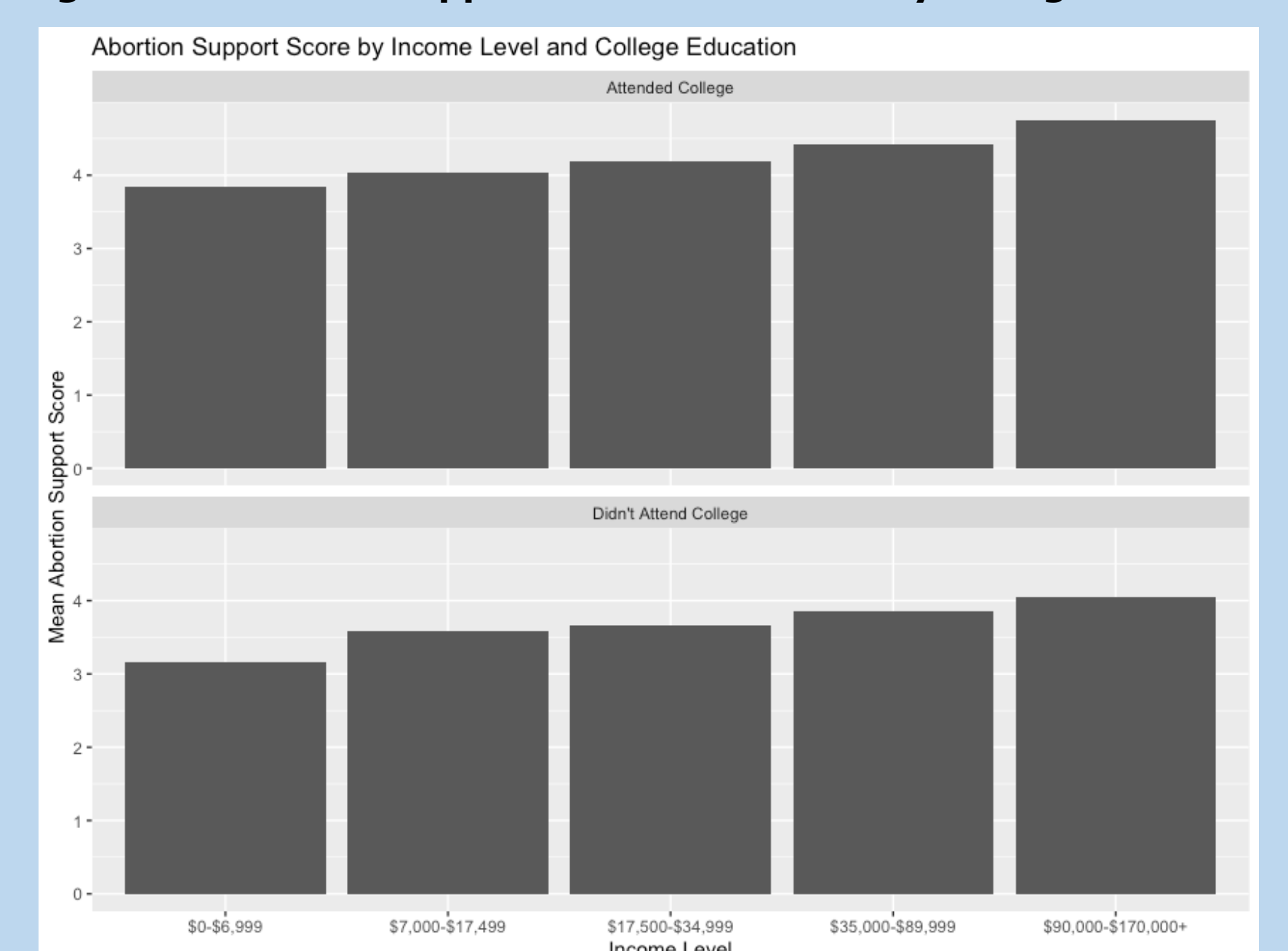
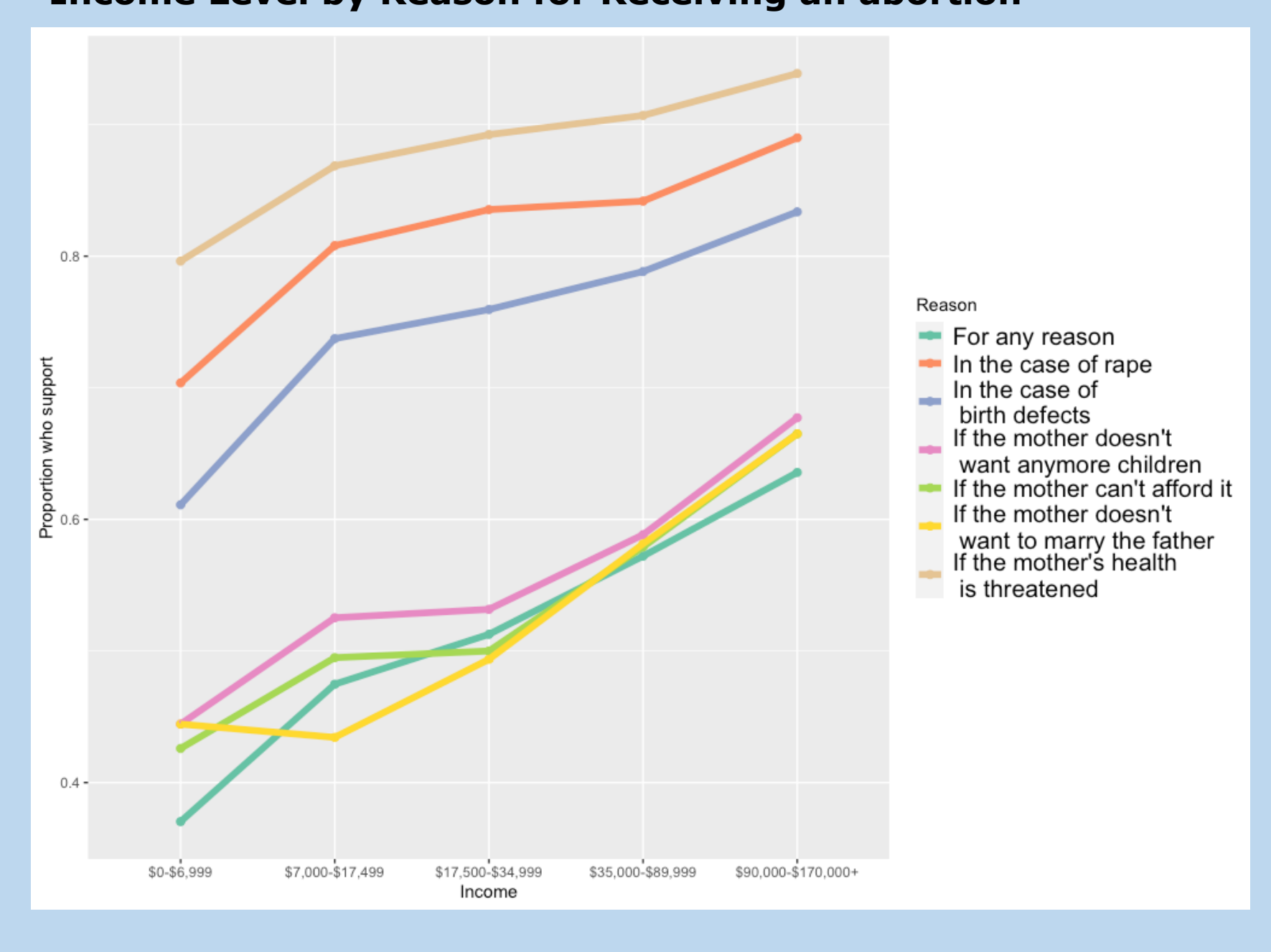


Figure 3. Proportion of those who support abortion vs Income Level by Reason for Receiving an abortion



Discussion

- An increase in an individual's familial income demonstrates a level of association with an increase in support of abortion, even when accounting for college education (although not attending college does make one less likely to support abortion across all income levels)
- Contextualizing abortion increases the probability that an individual supports abortion at all income levels, compared to asking if one should be able to receive an abortion for whatever reason, however this increase was only shown to happen in the contexts of rape, birth defects, and severe health risks for the mother
- Policy makers could use these findings to target certain demographics and to increase support for certain abortion policy
- Further research is needed to determine what other factors could possibly influence an individuals abortion support across income levels

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Bearak, J., Popinchalk, A., Ganatra, B., Moller, A.-B., Tunçalp, Ö., Beavin, C., Kwok, L., & Alkema, L. (2020). Unintended pregnancy and abortion by income, region, and the legal status of abortion: estimates from a comprehensive model for 1990–2019. *The Lancet Global Health*, 8(9), e1152–e1161.
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