



The Relationship Between Political Views and Mental Well-being

Sophia Bourne, Applied Data Analysis, Wesleyan University



Introduction

- Regardless of political affiliation, research shows that extreme political views can worsen an individual's emotional well-being (Smith, Hibbing & Hibbing, 2019).
- Political awareness surrounding distressing political issues instills stress and anger in the everyday lives of American citizens (Smith, Hibbing & Hibbing, 2019).
- Some research suggests that there is no evidence that conservatives have better emotional well-being than liberals, despite the difference in their political rhetoric (Newman & Schwarz & Stone, 2018)
- Other research suggests that conservatives do have greater emotional well-being than liberals since liberal policies target issues like global warming, and identity politics, that threaten or exploit an individual's daily life (Yancey 2025).

Research Questions

- Are conservative Americans more likely to report better well-being than liberal Americans?
- Are Americans who report affiliation with extreme political views more likely to report worse well-being than Americans who report affiliation with moderate or partisan political ideals?

Methods

Sample

- The sample from the General Social Survey (GSS) represents the non-institutionalized, adult population of the United States. The sample included oversampling of Black, Hispanic, and Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander respondents. The GSS collected data through in person interviews, and an experimental digital survey. The final sample size included 3,309 adult participants.

Measures

- Participants rated their political belief on a scale of 1 (very liberal) to 7 (very conservative)
- Participants rated how happy they generally feel on a scale of 1 (very happy) to 3 (not too happy) Participants rated how exciting they find life on a scale of 1 (exciting) to 3 (dull)
- Participants rated how satisfied they are financially on a scale of 1 (pretty well satisfied) to 3 (not satisfied at all)

Results

- Participants rated how healthy they are on a scale from 1 (excellent) to 4 (poor)

Discussion

- Partisans are significantly more likely to report greater happiness than extremists, while there is no significant difference between moderate happiness and extremist happiness.
- Partisans own a specific ideology, belong to a clear group, and report being generally happy.
- Extremists and moderates do not differ significantly. Extremists and moderates push against the norm of belonging to a political group and possessing a clear political opinion.
- Psychologists should invest further research in the experience of alienation based on extreme or lack of political beliefs and loyal party affiliation. Extreme beliefs could be an indication that the individual needs more mental health support.

References

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Bivariate

- ANOVA analysis showed that political views were **not** significantly associated with summarized 2-level happiness ratings ($p = 0.124$).
- Logistic regression analyses showed that partisans were significantly more likely than extremists to be happy (OR 1.381, $p = 0.0353$).

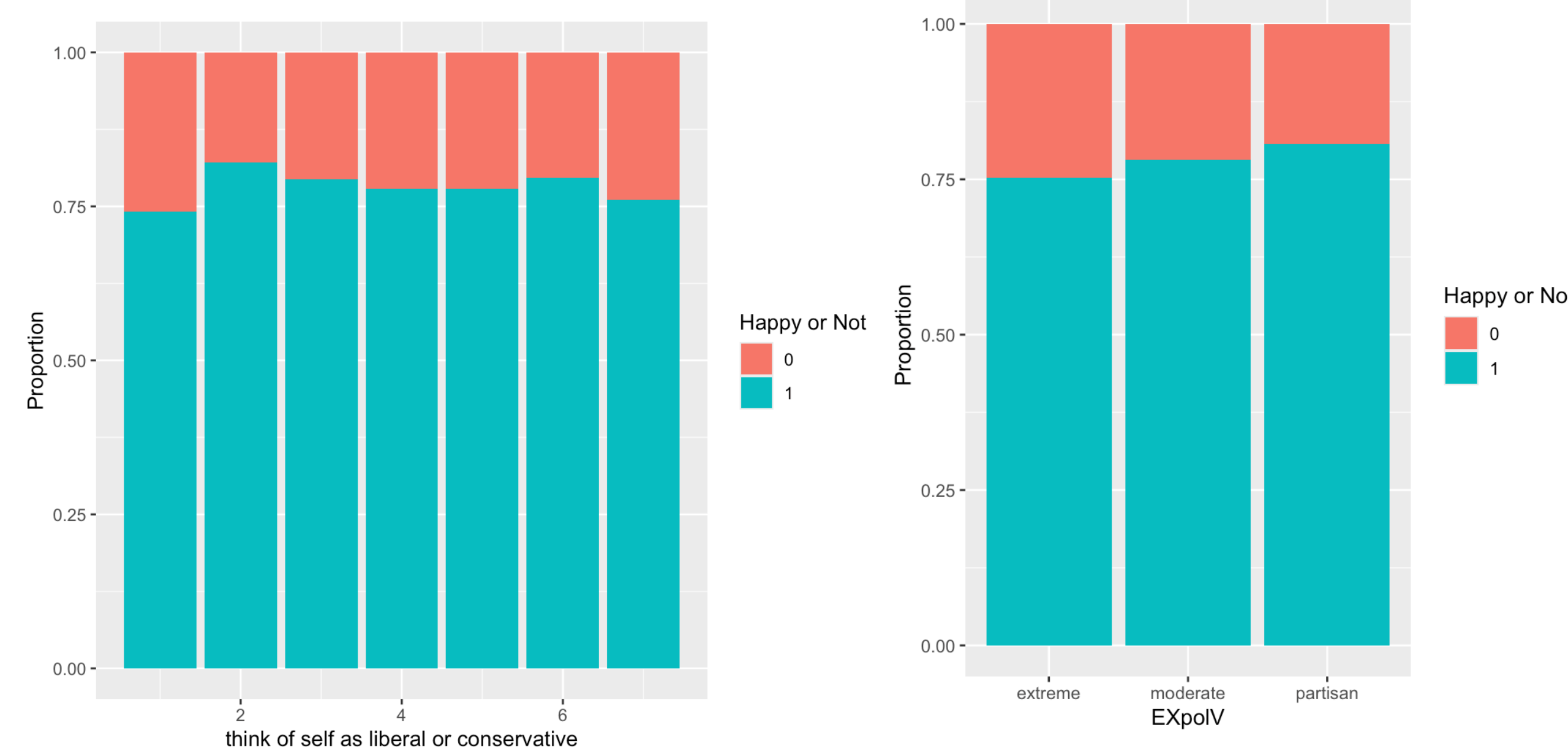


Figure 1: The Relationship Between Political Views and Happiness

Figure 2: The Relationship Between Extreme Political Views and Happiness

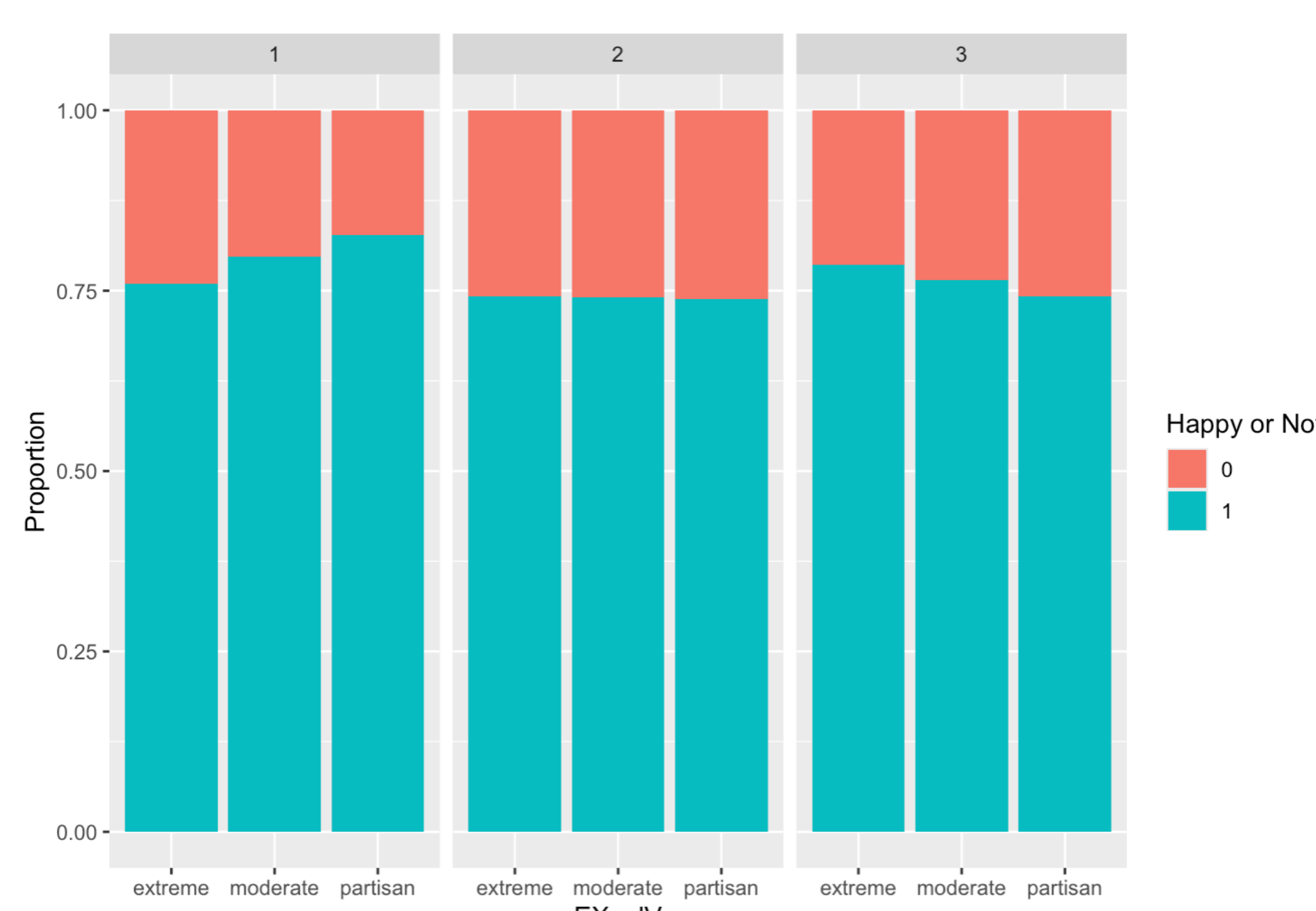


Figure 3: The Relationship Between Extreme Political Views and Happiness, Controlled by Race

Multivariate

- Racial group significantly confounds the relationship between extreme political views and happiness rating between extremists, moderates, and partisans (Fig. 3).
- While white partisans are more likely to report greater happiness than white extremists, black Americans are less likely to report being happy than White Americans, regardless of political beliefs (OR=.741, $p=0.003$)(Fig. 2).