



The Association Between Well-Being and Opinion of American Politics

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Introduction

- Satisfaction with one's country's politics has been shown to be a strong positive predictor of individual-level life satisfaction (Morrison et. al, 2011), and subjective well-being has been positively associated with the perception of one's own country and its development (Moyano-Díaz. Palomo-Vélez, 2018).
- There are limited studies examining the association between personal life satisfaction and satisfaction with one's country within one nation, especially the United States; most research on the relationship involves a meta-analysis of multiple countries.
- There hasn't yet been a study that examines this association in the context of various national differences, specifically political groups.

Research Questions

- Is there a relationship between personal life satisfaction and satisfaction with the politics of the United States?
- How does this relationship differ by political party? Is it strongest for Democrats, Independents, or Republicans?

Methods

Sample

- The sample was drawn from the American National Election Studies, a national survey of voters (of all ages and races) in the United States conducted before and after every presidential election. The sample included 8,280 pre-election participants and 7,449 post-election participants, but the number of responses varied for each question.

Measures

- Personal life satisfaction, satisfaction with country, and political party were measured in this analysis. Personal life satisfaction, the explanatory variable and a categorical(ordinal) measure, was assessed on a Likert Scale with the question "How satisfied are you with your life?"—responses ranged from 1=extremely satisfied to 5=not satisfied at all. Country satisfaction, the response variable, was also measured on a Likert Scale with the question "How happy do you feel about how things are going in the country?"—responses ranged from 1=not at all happy to 5=extremely happy. Political party, a categorical variable, was assessed with the question "What political party do you consider yourself to be a part of?" with possible responses being 1=Democrat, 2=Republican, and 3=Independent.

Results

Bivariate

- Correlation analysis showed that well-being and satisfaction with American politics are significantly and positively associated ($r=.23$).
- In other words, the more satisfied Americans are with their personal lives, the more likely they are to be satisfied by how the country is being run.

Multivariate

- After running a linear regression analysis with my additional covariate of interest (political party), well-being was still significantly and positively associated with satisfaction with American politics (Beta=1.89) after controlling for political party. On average, someone with higher well-being will be 1.89 points more satisfied with American politics than someone with lower well-being.
- Political party is a significant moderator, and this relationship is strongest for Independents, second-strongest for Republicans, and weakest for Democrats.

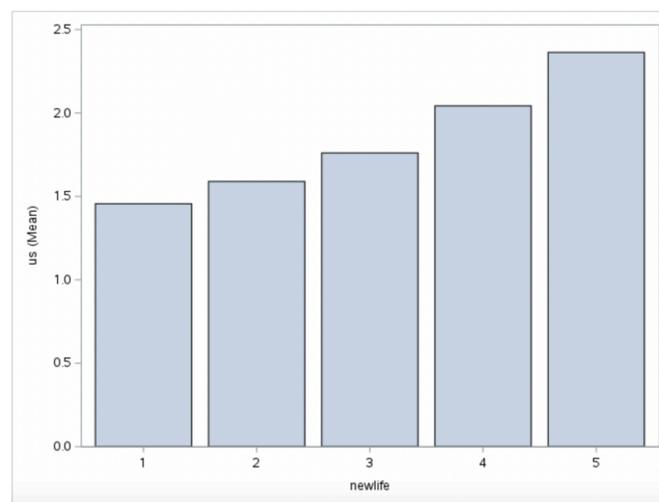


Figure 1: The Relationship Between Well-Being and Satisfaction with American Politics

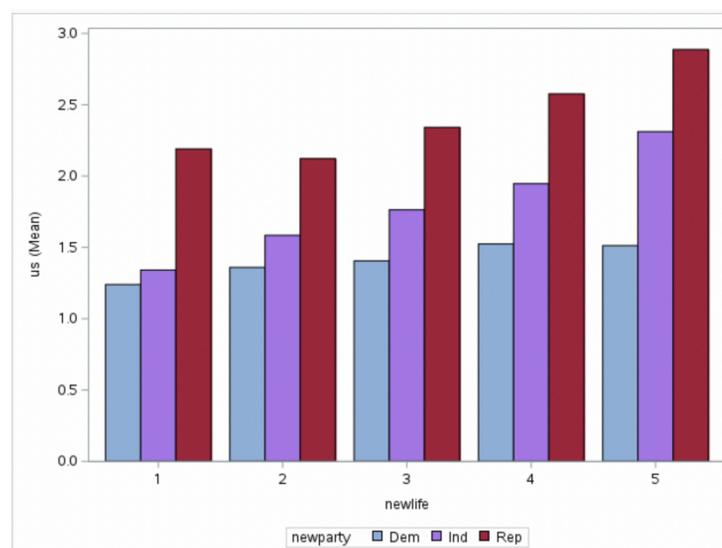


Figure 2: The Relationship Between Well-Being and Satisfaction with American Politics by Political Party

Discussion

- Well-being is significantly and positively associated with satisfaction with American politics, with this relationship being strongest for Independents and Republicans.
- These findings may provide valuable information regarding the role of politics in day-to-day American life and how this role varies based on party.
- Future research is needed to substantiate these findings as well as further investigate the level of engagement Americans have in their politics and government.

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