



The Relationship Between Feeling of Financial Insecurity and Nationalist Values

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Introduction

- Financial crises fuel a shift to authoritarian values within a society (Ballard-Rosa, et. al. 2021). Economic insecurity tends to benefit far-right parties that promote such values that include anti-immigrant sentiments and economic nationalism (Güner 2023).
- This drive is usually explained through psychological mechanisms such as frustration-aggression theory - individuals express aggression when they do not gain what they want (Ballard-Rosa, et. al. 2021) - and a desire to belong to a group during harsh times (Siltala, 2020).
- According to polls, though, mostly the financially secure population voted for Trump in 2016 (Elliot & Kalish 2016). The poll, though, measured financial insecurity by job loss, income reduction, or unemployment. It might be the case that the mere feeling of financial insecurity might matter more than economic factors, as this shift is explained through psychology.

Research Question

- Is the feeling of financial insecurity correlated with the shift towards nationalist values?
- Does a change in an individual's financial situation confound this relationship if there is any?

Methods

Sample

- The ANES includes 2 samples, the same participants were interviewed before and after the election date. Overall, there are 8,280 pre-election interviews and 7,449 post-election re-interviews. The study represents non-institutional U.S. citizens aged 18 or older living in the 50 US states or the District of Columbia.

Measures

- The measure of the feeling of financial insecurity was reported through the scale ranging from 0 (Not at all worried) to 4 (Extremely worried) ("How worried are you about your current financial situation?")
- The overall support for authoritarian values was assessed through numerous two-level questions that reflected the support or opposition towards anti-immigrant and protectionist policies.
- The sample was sorted by political views self-reported by the respondents (liberal and conservative)

Results

- As logistic regression has shown, regardless of worry, conservatives have not shown any clear pattern regarding the correlation between worry and authoritarian values.
- However, there is a pattern for liberals. The more liberals worry, the more likely they are to favor ending birthright citizenship (OR 1.213), isolationist foreign policies (OR 1.302), building a wall on the border with Mexico (OR 1.266), and new limits on imports (OR=1.163). When worried, they are also less likely to favor allowing refugees (OR 0.834), free trade (OR 0.833), and the increase of immigration level (OR 0.747)
- The ANOVA results have demonstrated that negative change in an individual's financial situation is strongly associated with their worry about their financial situation (F 1219.65)

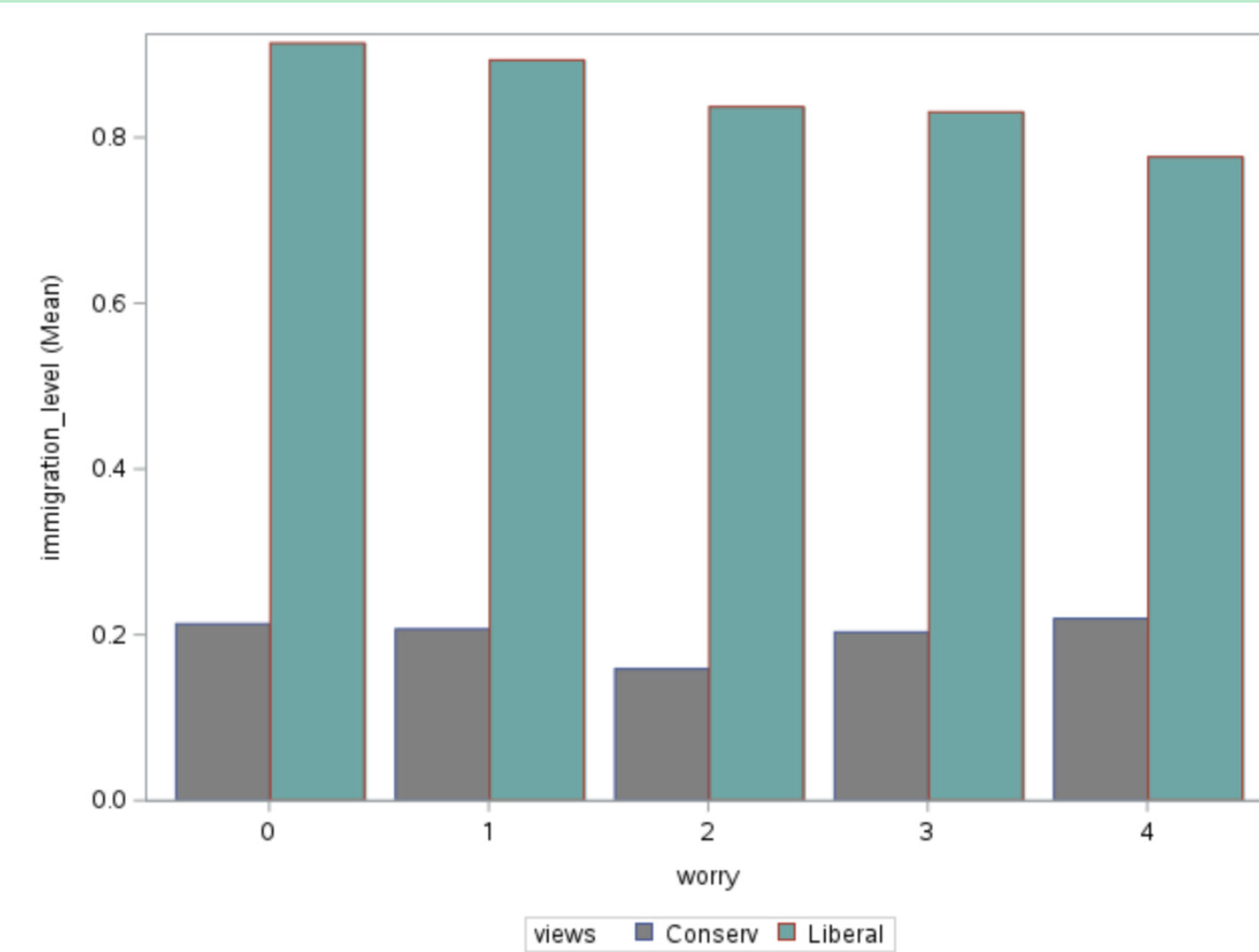


Figure 1: The Correlation between Worry about Financial situation and the Individual's likelihood to support the increase of immigration level sorted by political views

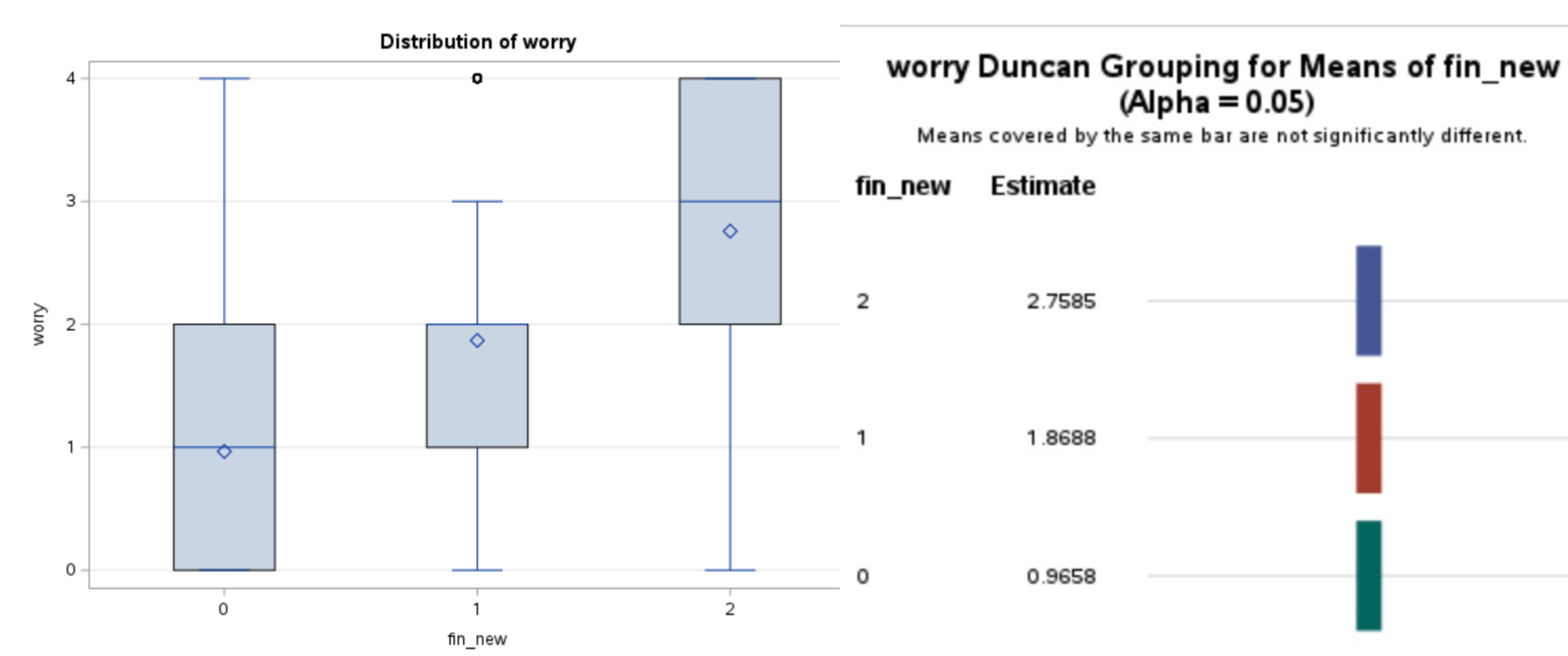


Figure 2: What drives worry about financial situation?

- Even after controlling for a negative change in financial situation in a new logistic regression, more worried liberals are still more likely to favor building a wall (OR 1.252), ending birthright citizenship (OR 1.246), isolationist foreign policies (OR 1.259), and new limits on imports (OR 1.136). They become less likely to favor providing a path to citizenship for unauthorized immigrants (OR 0.799).
- For some variables though the correlation ceases to be significant. There is no longer an association between worry and support for free trade, the increase of immigration level, and allowing refugees to come to the US.

- A new scale variable, describing a negative change in an individual's financial situation, was created based on their evaluation of their situation last year

Discussion

- The more individuals with liberal values worry about their financial situation, the more likely they are to shift to authoritarianism.
- Even though a change in an individual's financial situation is associated with their general worry, it is not the only factor that contributes to it. The study has shown that a change in financial situation is not a confounder in most of the cases. Therefore, worry itself accounts for the results and should be considered as the combination of factors, including change in financial situation.
- Further research is needed to determine other factors that contribute to the individual's worry to better predict their potential support for authoritarian values and correspondingly possible voting preferences.

References

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