

The Association Between Political Party and Feelings Towards the United States

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Introduction

- Political parties in general have been represented in American elections since the start of the founding of the United States. Previous research has shown that anger has an effect on the way that people vote in elections as well as how they feel about who would lead the country in the future (Phillips, J. B. & Plutzer, E., 2023, Conner, C. E., Sinclair, B., & Webster, W. S., 2022).
- While anger and worry may be experienced by individuals across the political spectrum, Conservatives report being happier than Liberals; however, these reported feelings can be attributed to different variables other than political party, such as neuroticism and having a president that is a part of their party (Murdock, Andy, 2016; Burton, C. M., Plaks, J. E., & Peterson, J. B., 2015).

Methods

Sample

- Adults (aged 18 and older) who reside within the 50 United States states and Washington D.C. (pre-election: n = 8,280, post-election: n = 7,449) were drawn from pre-election and post-election survey conducted by the American National Election Survey (ANES)
- ANES is a nationally representative sample of adults in the U.S.

Measures

- Political party was measured by participant's self-identification of whether they were a Democrat, Republican, Independent, or no political affiliation through the question asking for political party identification
- Feelings towards the United States was measured by participants answering the question of how hopeful, outraged, etc. that they felt towards the United States on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (extremely).
- Who participants voted for president was measured by the question who did you vote for president.

Research Questions

- Is there any association between political party and feelings towards the United States?
- Does the association between political party and feelings towards the United States affect who participants voted for president in the 2020 election?

Results

Univariate

- Republicans had the highest averages for positive feelings towards the United States (pride, right track, and hope).
- Democrats had the highest average for negative feelings towards the United States (outrage, worry).

Bivariate

- ANOVA analysis showed that political party is significantly associated with (1) feeling hope ($p < 0.001$), (2) feeling that the US is going on the right track ($p < 0.001$), (3) feeling outrage ($p < 0.001$), (4) feeling worried ($p < 0.001$), and (5) feeling proud ($p < 0.001$), and (6) feeling proud.
- Those who self-identified as Republican tended to have more positive feelings towards the United States compared to those who self-identified as Democrats.
- Those who self-identified as Independent or have not political party held more neutral positions when compared to self-identified Democrats and Republicans

Multivariate

- Logistic regression found that feelings towards the United States was significantly associated with political party, ($p < 0.001$) for hope, outrage, worry, whether the United States is on the right track, and pride.
- After taking into account how people voted for president, shows that different feelings show different rates of who participants voted for.

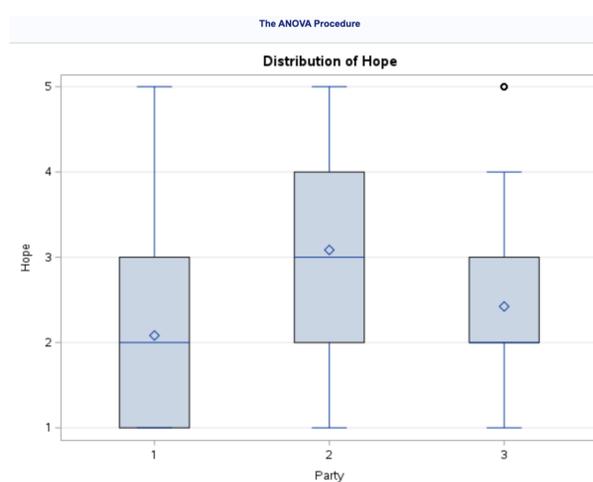


Figure 1. Graph of the means of Political Party and Hope

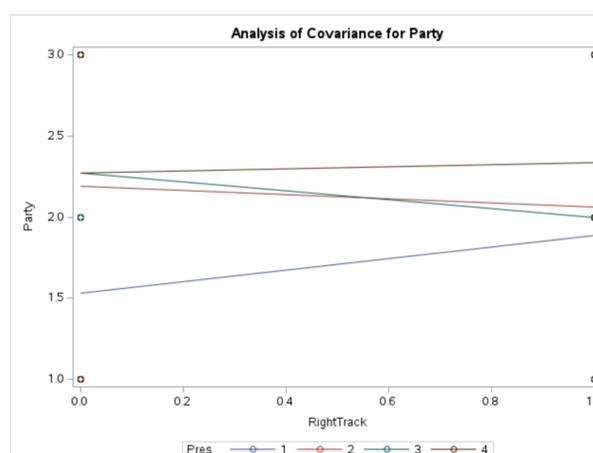


Figure 2: Analysis of Covariance between Political Party and whether or not United States is going on the Right Track

- This significance is not present when comparing individual presidents and feelings towards the United States ($p > 0.05$).
- These results are also true when comparing political party and how participants voted for president.

Discussion

- Political party is tied to how people feel about the United States as Republicans reported more positive feelings in comparison to Democrats, Independents, and no political party affiliation.
- However, feelings towards the United States does not affect who participants voted for president in the 2020 election. This is also true when looking at political party and president.
- The present findings are based 3 party levels and cannot be generalized across all people within the United States even though it suggests a possible association.
- Further research can be done on the reasoning behind why feelings towards the United States has associations with political party but does not effect how people vote for president.

Connor, C. E., Sinclair, B., & Webster, W. S. (2022). "The Social Consequences of Political Anger." *The Journal of Politics* 84(3). <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/718979>.

Murdock, Andy (2016). "Do your politics make you happy?" University of California. <https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/do-your-politics-make-you-happy>.

Phillips, J. B. & Plutzer, E. (2023). "Reassessing the Effects of Emotions on Turnout." *The Journal of Politics* 85(3). <https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/10.1086/723816>.