



The Association Between Political Affiliation and Optimism For the Future of the United States

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Introduction

- The maintenance of the public's view of the state and future of the United States is implicated by subjects' political and social attitudes.
- Cross-sectional and longitudinal research, in which political behavior is at the center of focus, suggests that an individual's political affiliation shapes their outlook on life and affects their beliefs surrounding the future of the US. (Pew Research Center. (2020, August 28). *Political Polarization and Personal Life*. Pew Research Center - U.S. Politics & Policy.)
- The goal of the present analysis is to establish the relationship between different demographics, such as political affiliation and race, and optimism about the future of the US.

Research Questions

- Are political affiliation and optimism about the future of the US associated?
- Does the association between political affiliation and optimism differ for individuals based on their race?

Methods

Sample

- The subjects were drawn from the Outlook On Life Survey, primarily consisting of black females and males, and some white and "other" race females and males, all at least 18 years or older.
- The study conducts two surveys by using a sample from an Internet panel: wave 1 samples 2,294 people, and wave 2 samples 1,601 people.

Measures

- Results were assessed using two main questions about the frequency, quantity and pattern of political and social attitudes:
 - Optimism: "And when you think about the future of the United States as a whole, are you generally optimistic, pessimistic, or neither optimistic nor pessimistic?". Possible responses ranged from not optimistic (0) to optimistic (1).
 - Political Affiliation: "Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as democrat, republican, independent, or something else?". Possible responses ranged from democratic, republican, and independent.

Results

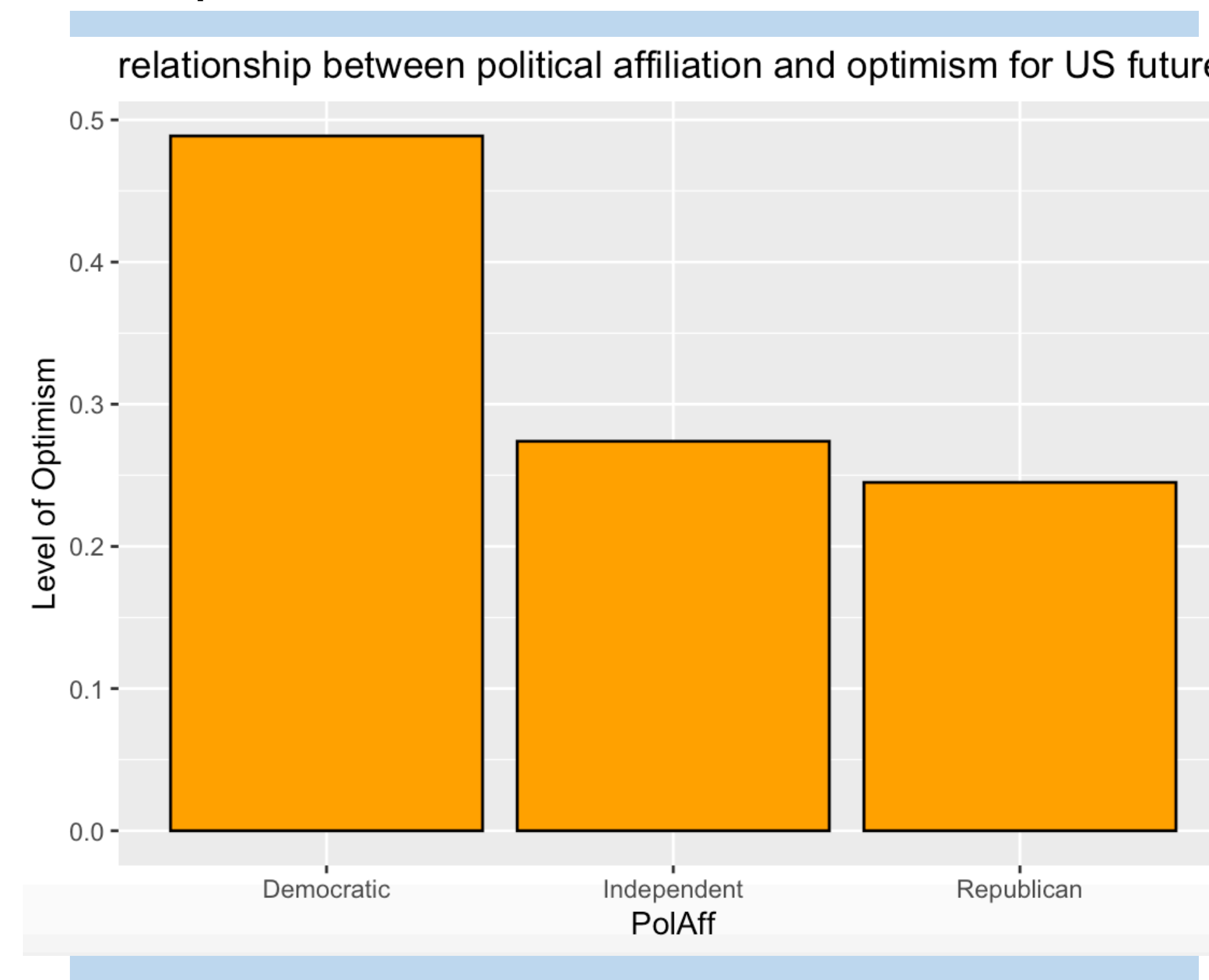
Univariate

- 60.79% of subjects indicated that they were not optimistic (answers categorized as "neither" or "pessimistic") about the future of the US.
- 57.31% of subjects are Democrats, 25.68% are Independents, and 17.01% are Republicans.

Bivariate

- Chi-Square analysis revealed that the way Democrats think about the future is significantly different than the way Independents and Republicans think about the future.
- Independents are less optimistic about the future of the US, and Republicans are the least optimistic about the future of the US. The difference between the level of optimism of Independents and the Republicans is small.

Figure 1. Relationship between subjects' political affiliation and their optimism towards the future state of the US

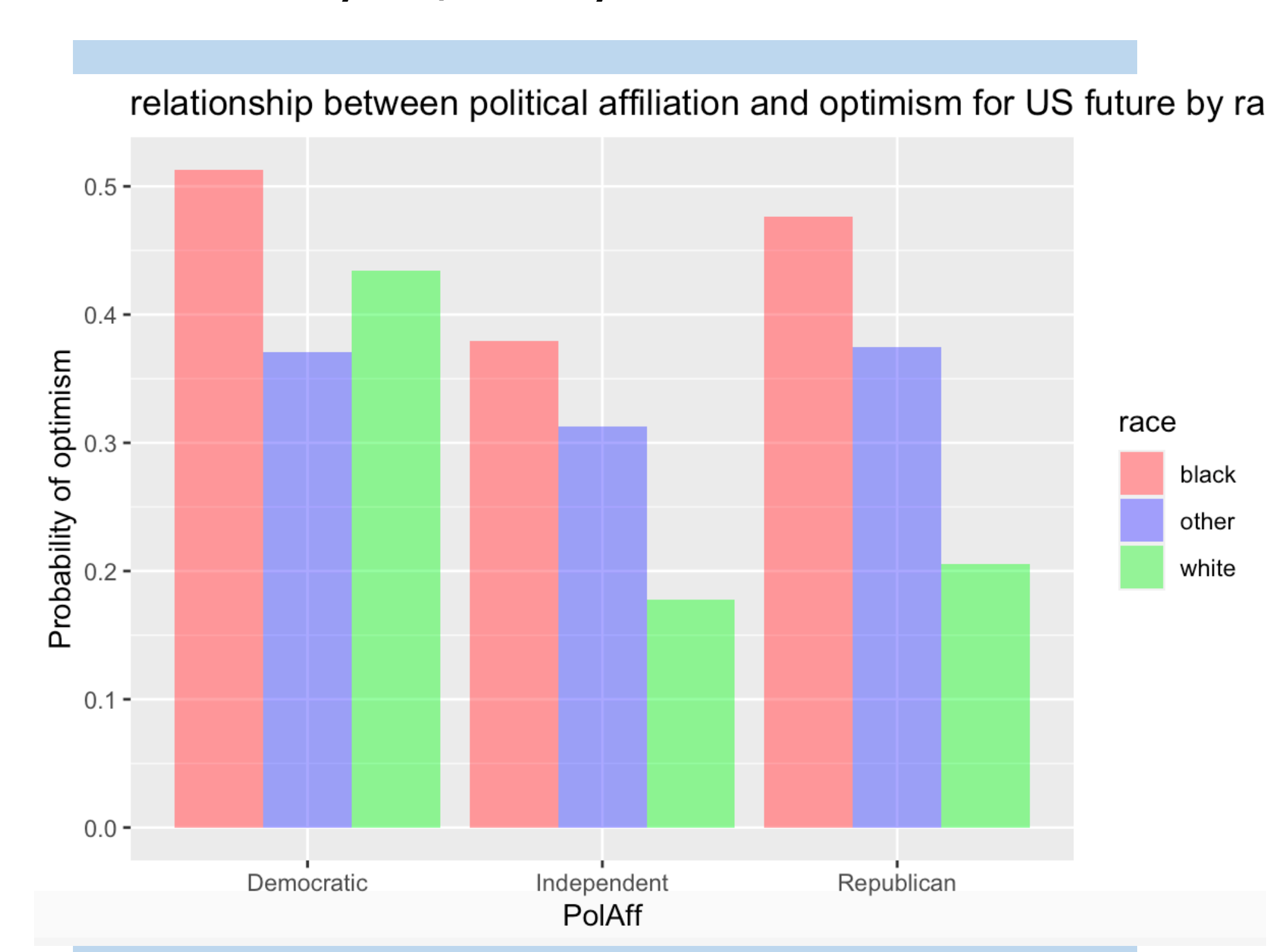


- Additionally, Democrats are more likely to be optimistic about the future state of the US because of the significant relationship between the two variables, as indicated by the low p-value (p-value = $2.2e-16$).

Multivariate

- Republicans and Independents are significantly less optimistic about the future of the US than Democrats are (Republicans p-value = $5.18e-12$; Independents p-value = $3.17e-11$).
- Black subjects are the most likely to be optimistic about the future, and subjects identifying as "other" are the least likely to be optimistic about the future of the US.

Figure 2. Relationship between subjects' political affiliation and their optimism towards the future state of the US as characterized by race/ ethnicity.



Discussion

- The way Democrats and blacks think about the future is significantly different than the way Independents, Republicans, whites, and subjects identifying as "other" think about the future.
- Researchers and political analysts might use this information to examine patterns of political polarization and public opinion among US citizens as ever increasingly monumental challenges alter economic, social, and political structures of the country.
- Further research is needed to examine the exact political events that have taken place and shaped subjects' political opinions and perspectives of the US.

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