

# Conservatism as a source of happiness

February 11 2013

---

(Medical Xpress)—Conservatives are happier than liberals because of their strong ties to a large network of social groups, according to a study from The University of Queensland.

A research team from UQ Psychology, conducted a study among 816 undergraduate students at the University to explore the link between [conservatism](#) and [happiness](#).

UQ [Psychology Professor](#) Jolanda Jetten said the findings indicated that conservatives were happier than liberals due to greater access to social capital, a great source of well-being.

"The difference in happiness between conservatives and liberals came to light in 2006, when the [Pew Research Center](#) found that Republicans were much more likely to report being "very happy" than Democrats," Professor Jetten said.

"However, it was unclear how to explain this difference.

"Why would conservatives be happier than liberals?

"In 2008, New York University psychologists Jaime Napier and John Jost were the first to attempt to explain this difference in happiness.

"In particular, they argued that conservative ideology has a palliative (system-justifying) function that protects conservatives' (but not liberals') happiness.

"Our study found no evidence that system-justifying ideology accounted for the relationship between conservatism and [life satisfaction](#).

"It appears that what makes conservatives happy is not conservative ideology but rather their social and material advantage – the same advantage that makes conservative ideology appealing in the first place."

Professor Alex Haslam said ideology was shaped by a person's position in the broader social system to understand how happiness was affected by ideology.

"To explain the relationship between conservatism and happiness properly, we need to bring the social system back into the analysis and examine the social structural and economic dimensions of conservatism," Professor Haslam said.

Fellow researcher Dr Fiona Kate Barlow said it was found that those with a higher social economic status have access to more group memberships and this created greater life satisfaction.

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Conservatism as a source of happiness (2013, February 11) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2013-02-conservatism-source-happiness.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--