

Effects of collective marginalization experiences on right-wing political extremist attitudes: on the important role of negative emotions

Diego Farren, Katrin Brettfeld, Rebecca Endtricht, Jannik M.K. Fischer, Peter Wetzels
University of Hamburg

GEFÖRDERT VOM



EUROCRIM 2022
Málaga, 22. September 2022

Introduction

- **Monitoringsystem und Transferplattform Radikalisierung (MOTRA)**
“Monitoring System and Transfer Platform Radicalization” (MOTRA) is a research association funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research in Germany. The project was developed for the early detection, prevention and combating of extremism and terrorism over the course of five years (11/2019 - 10/2024).
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(<https://www.mid.uni-hamburg.de/en/startseite.html>)
- **Data source**
The data used for this presentation represents the first data collection of the MiD survey (N = 4 483; collected between 18. März and 10. Juni 2021; participation rate = 23.6).

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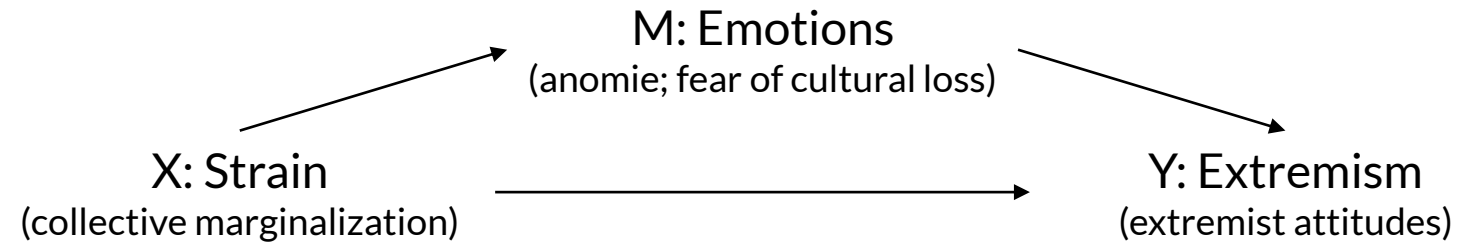
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Main idea:

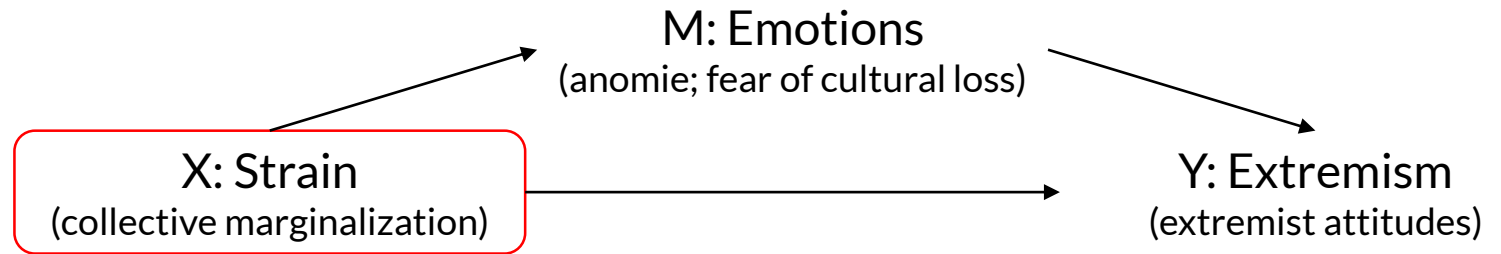
Strain theory



“[T]he GSTT [“general strain theory of terrorism”] states that terrorism is more likely when individuals experience “collective strains” [...]. These collective strains increase the likelihood of terrorism because they increase negative emotions [...].” (Agnew 2017, pp. 121–122)

Agnew, Robert (2017): General Strain Theory and Terrorism. In Gary LaFree, Joshua D. Freilich (Eds.): The handbook of the criminology of terrorism. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell (Wiley handbooks in criminology and criminal justice), pp. 121–132.

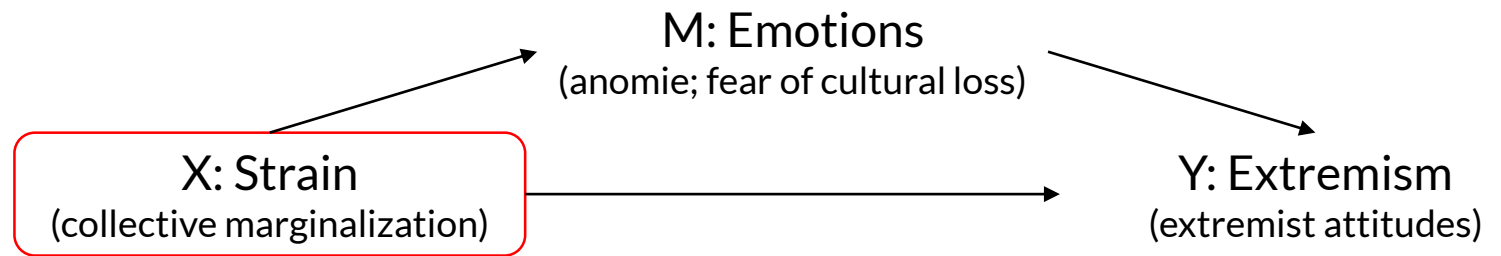
Operationalization: Strain



“These strains include absolute and relative material deprivation; [...] the problems encountered by certain immigrant groups, including Muslims in Western countries; [...] a range of human rights violations, including the denial of civil and political rights; [...] religious and ethnic discrimination; [...].”
(Agnew 2017, p. 124)

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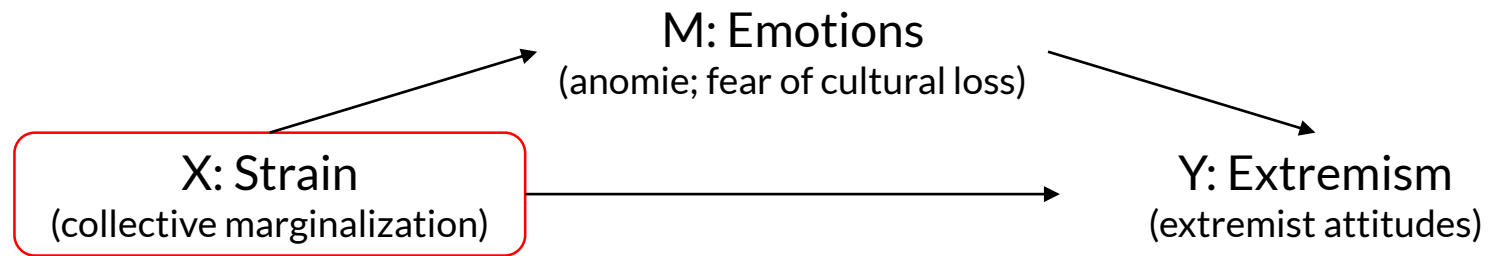
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Where we live, people like me are ...

- | |
|--|
| ... not acknowledged for what they achieve. |
| ... held back from getting on in life. |
| ... often not valued much by others. |
| ... portrayed incorrectly in the media. |
| ... disadvantaged regarding receiving social benefits. |
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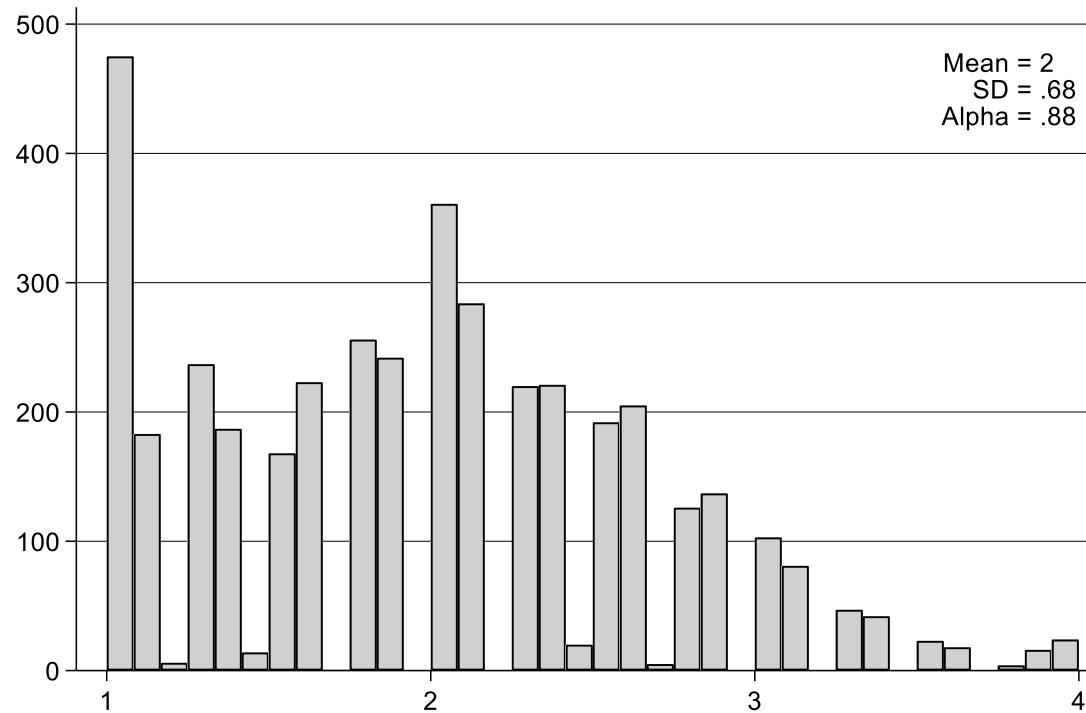
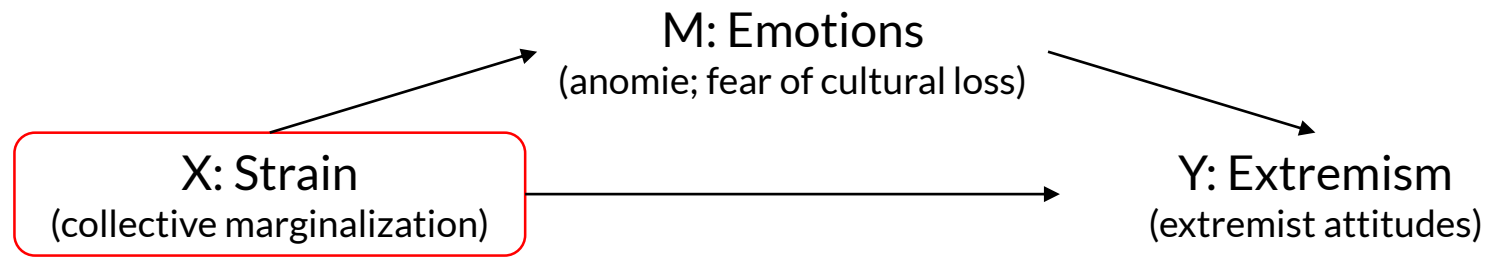
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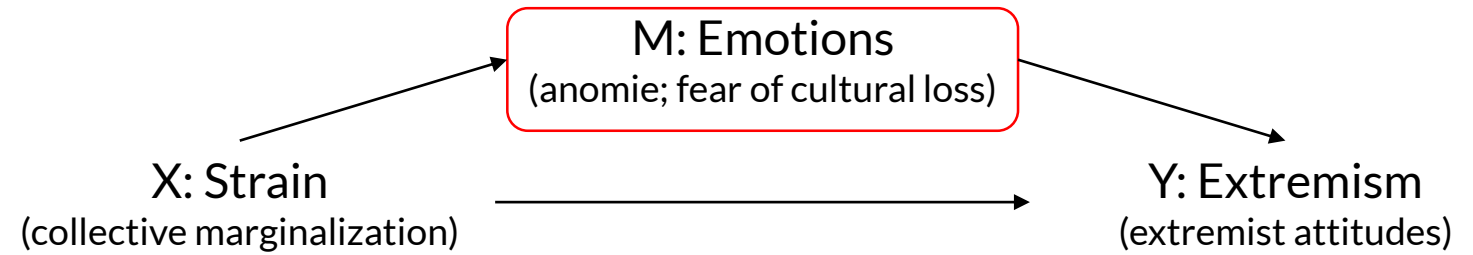
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Operationalization: Emotions

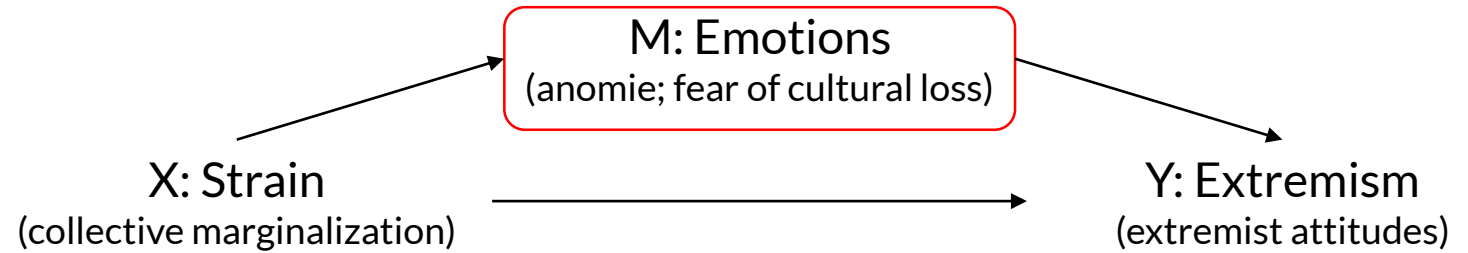


“These collective strains, [...] lead to strong negative emotions that are conducive to terrorism, including anger, frustration, envy, humiliation, and hopelessness.”
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Everything changes so fast these days that it is often hard to know what to abide by.

Looking at the events of the last few years makes you feel really insecure.

Things today have become so difficult. You don't know what is going on.

Nowadays you can't rely on anyone.

Traditions that are important to me are given no room in this society.

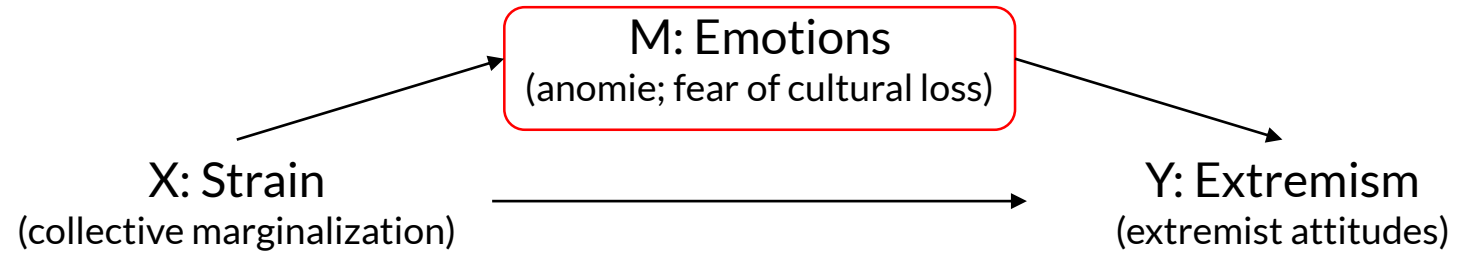
In this society, men are increasingly being denied the right to protect their families themselves.

The mixing of so many people with different origins in Germany cannot work.

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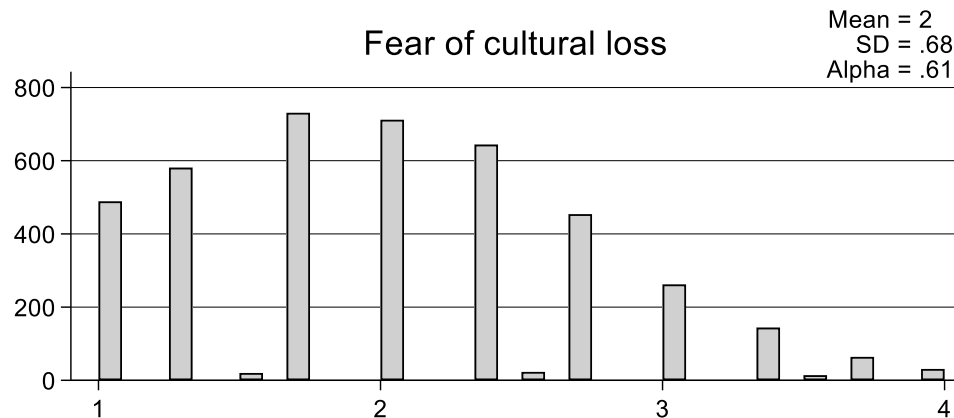
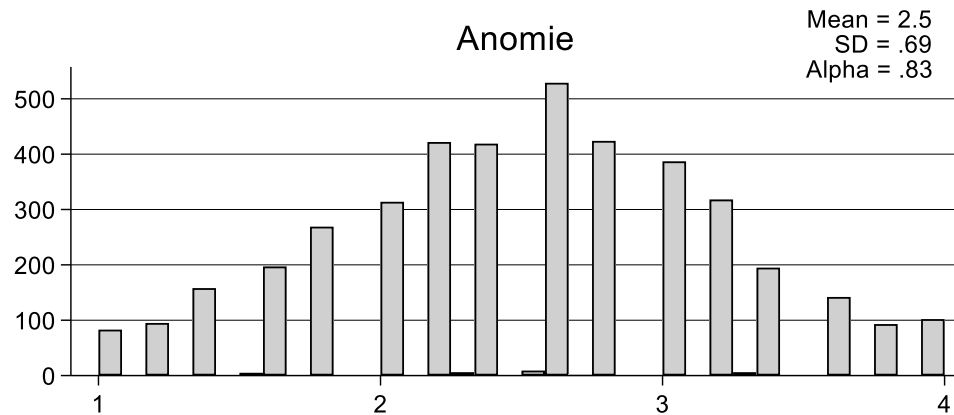
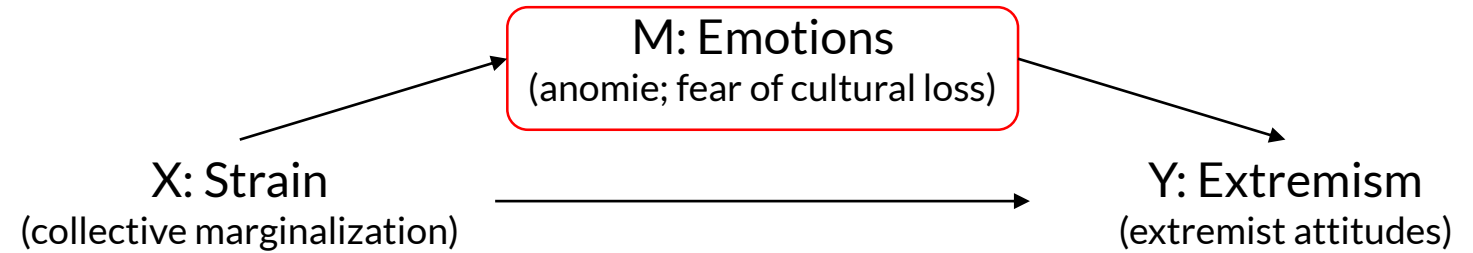
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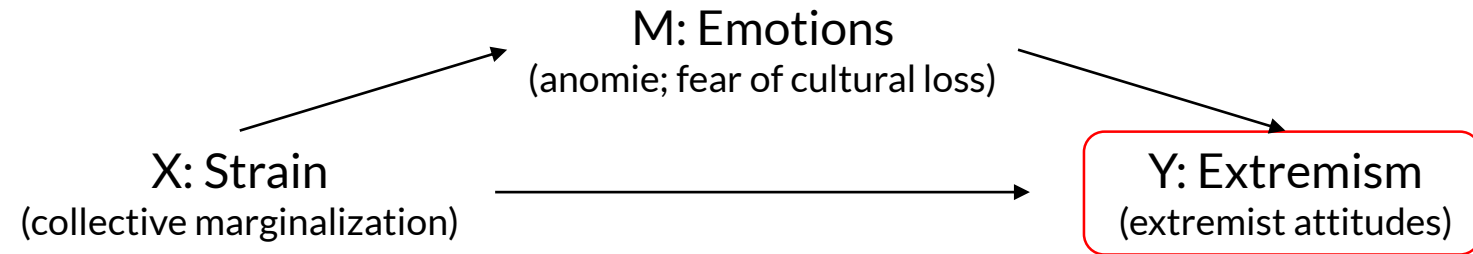
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Operationalization: Extremism

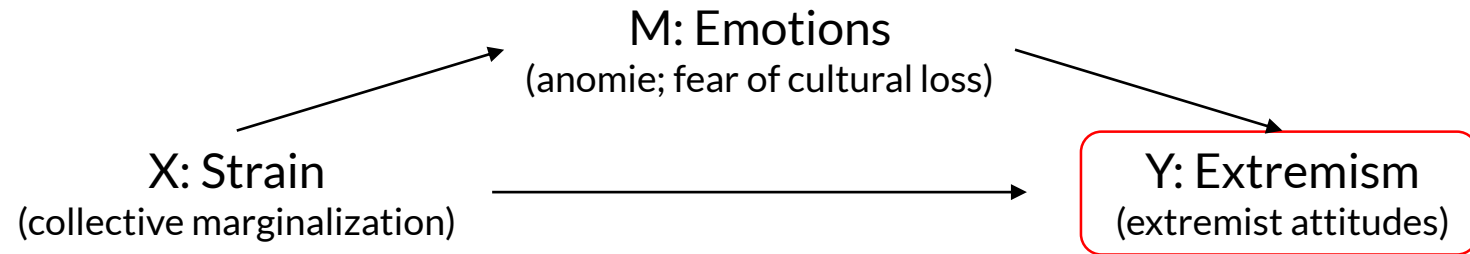


- Based on the „Konsens“ definition and operationalisation of right-wing extremist ideology (Decker et al. 2013)

Dimension	Item
Xenophobia	– There are too many foreigners in Germany.
Islamophobia	– If we are not careful, Germany will become an Islamic country.
Antisemitism	– Jews have too much influence in Germany. – You cannot trust Jews.
Chauvinism	– We should at long last have the courage to feel a strong sense of national identity again. – My people are superior to other peoples.
Social-Darwinism	– The strongest must prevail, otherwise progress is not possible. – There are worthwhile and also worthless forms of human life.
Supports right-wing dictatorship	– A state should have a leader who rules the country with a forceful hand for the good of everyone.
Trivialization of national socialism	– A lot of what has been said about the crimes committed by the national socialists is exaggerated.

Decker, O., Hinz, A., Geißler, N. & Brähler, E. (2013). Fragebogen zur rechtsextremen Einstellung – Leipziger Form (FR-LF). In: O. Decker, J. Kiess & E. Brähler (Eds.). *Rechtsextremismus der Mitte. Eine sozialpsychologische Gegenwartsdiagnose*, (197-212). Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag.

Operationalization: Extremism

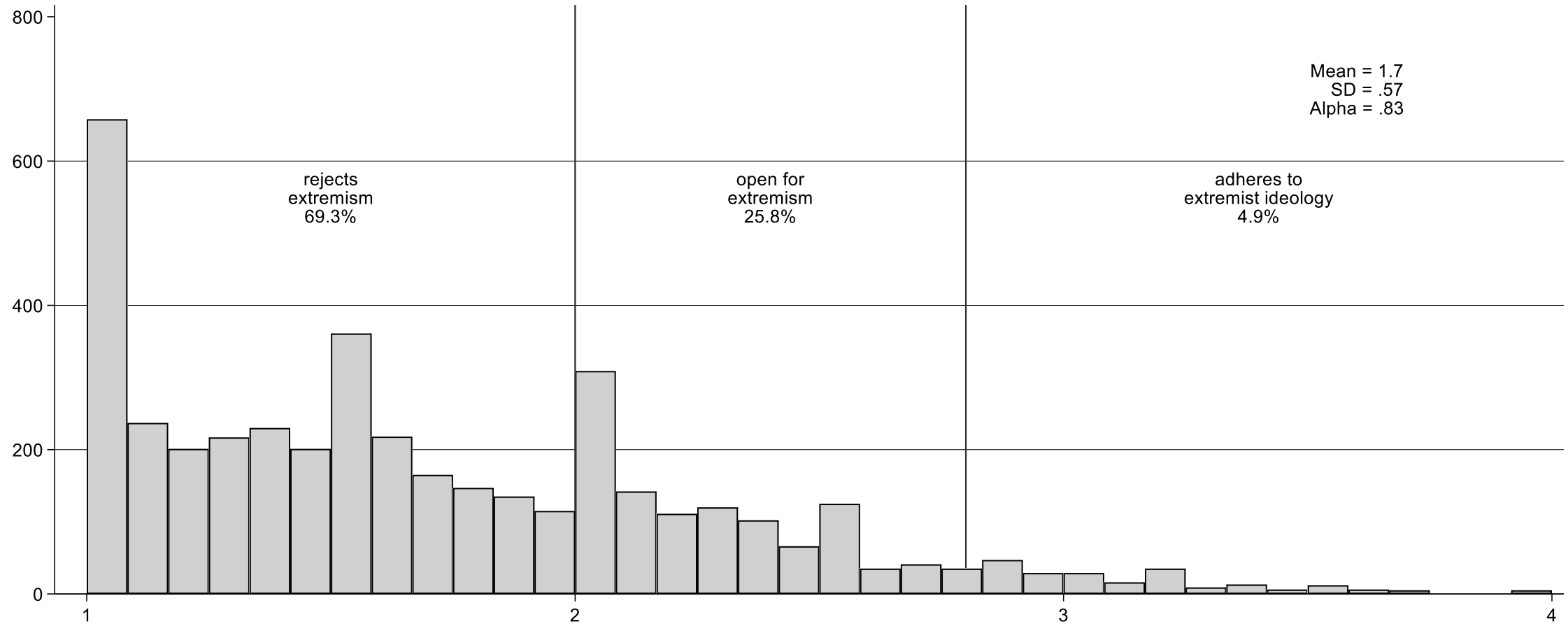
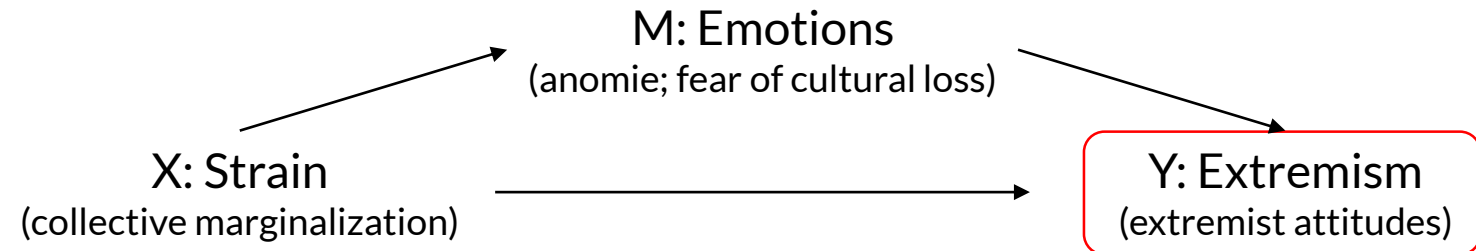


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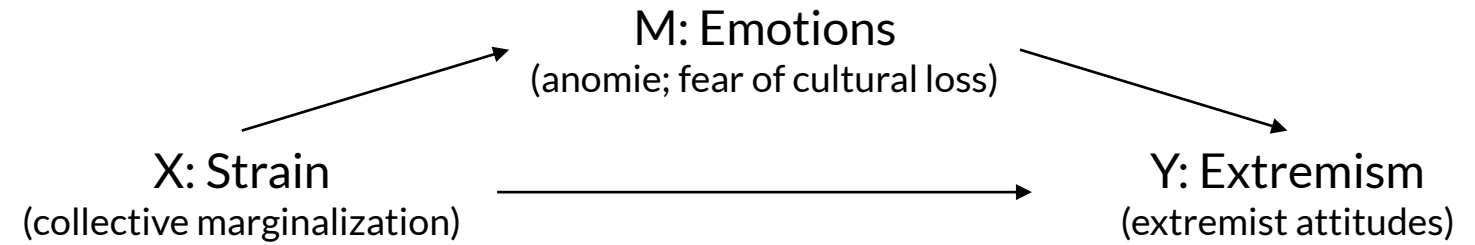
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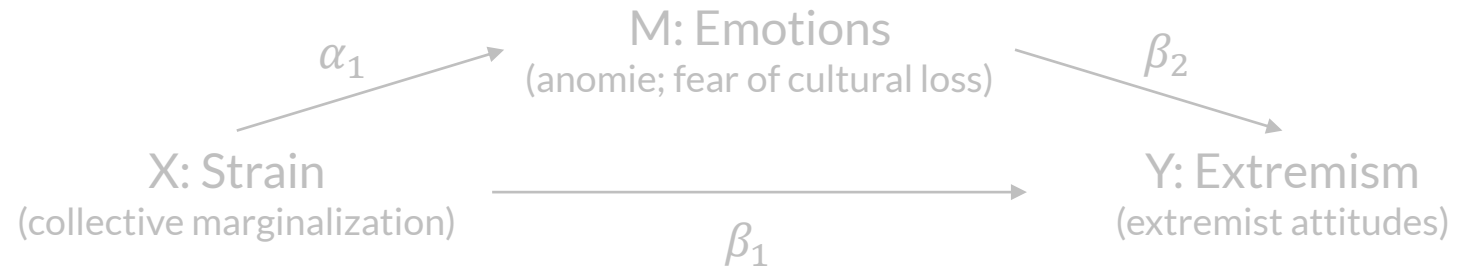
Hypotheses:



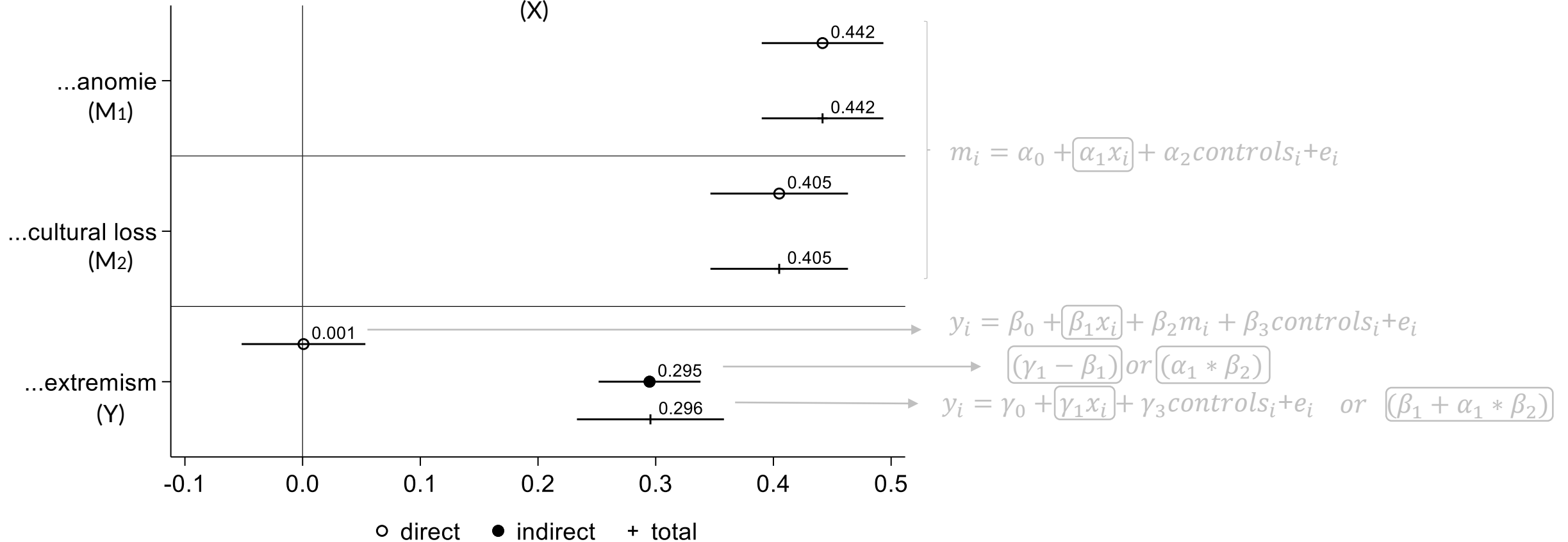
- H1: Strain (X) has an effect on emotions (M)
- H2: Strain (X) has an effect on extremism (Y)
- H3: The effect of strain (X) on extremism (Y), is at least partially mediated through emotions (M)

Results:

All respondents



Effect of collective marginalization on...
(X)



$$m_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 x_i + \alpha_2 controls_i + e_i$$

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_i + \beta_2 m_i + \beta_3 controls_i + e_i$$

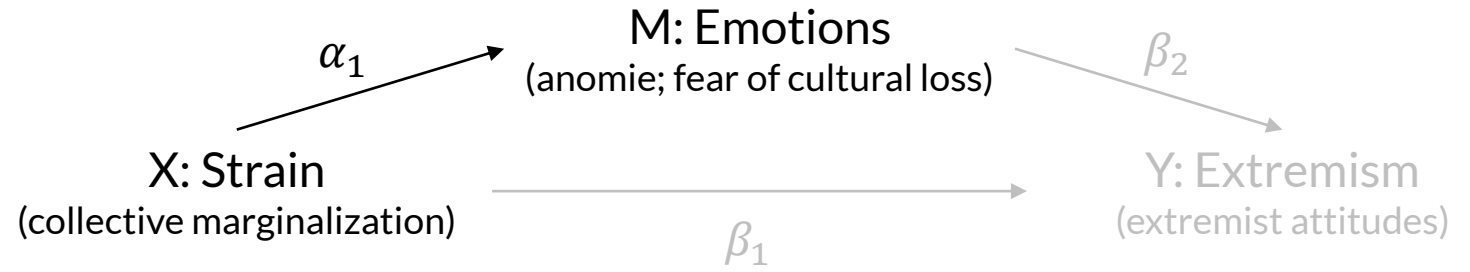
$$(\gamma_1 - \beta_1) \text{ or } (\alpha_1 * \beta_2)$$

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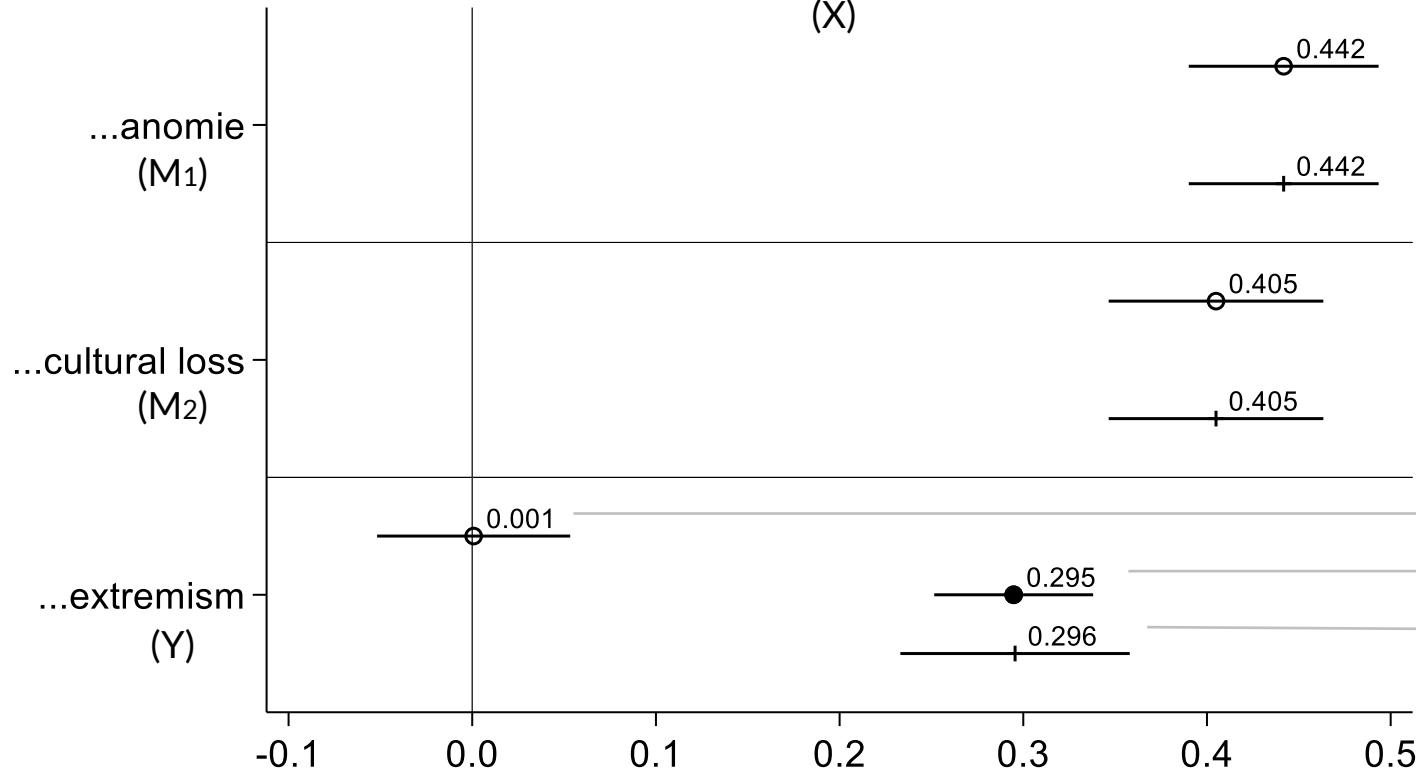
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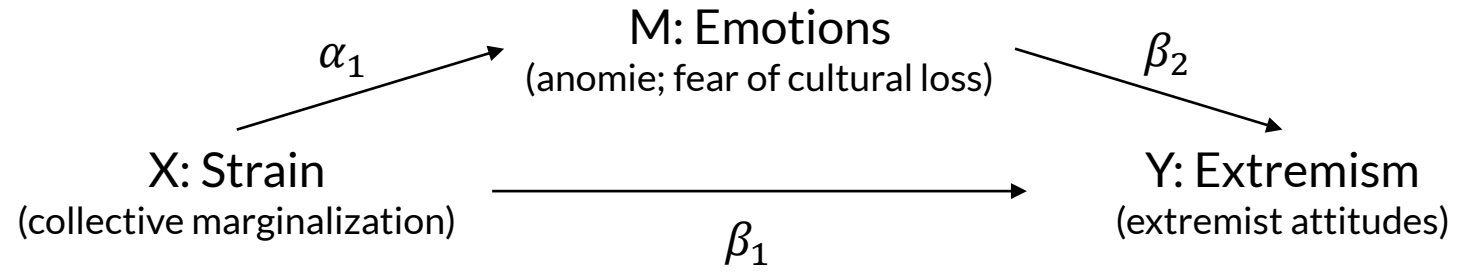
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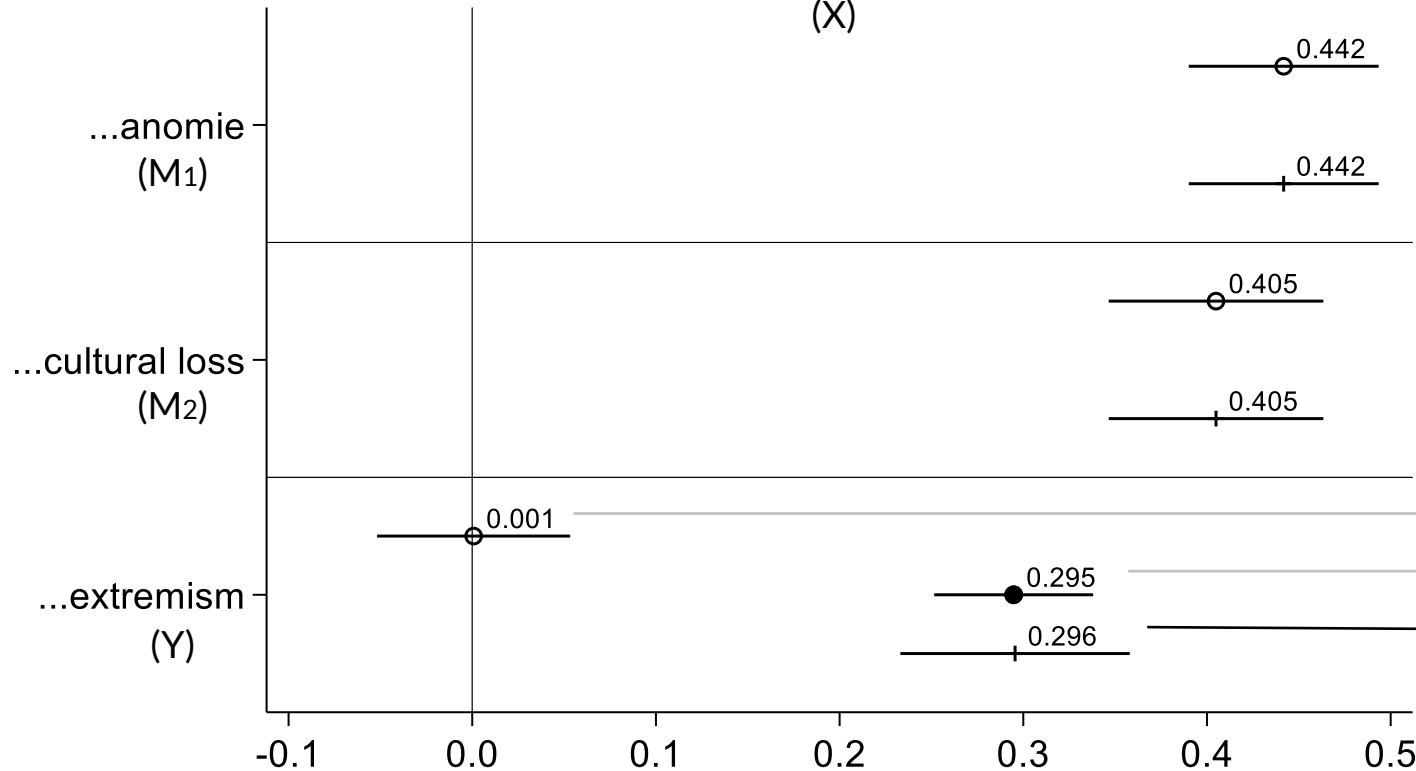
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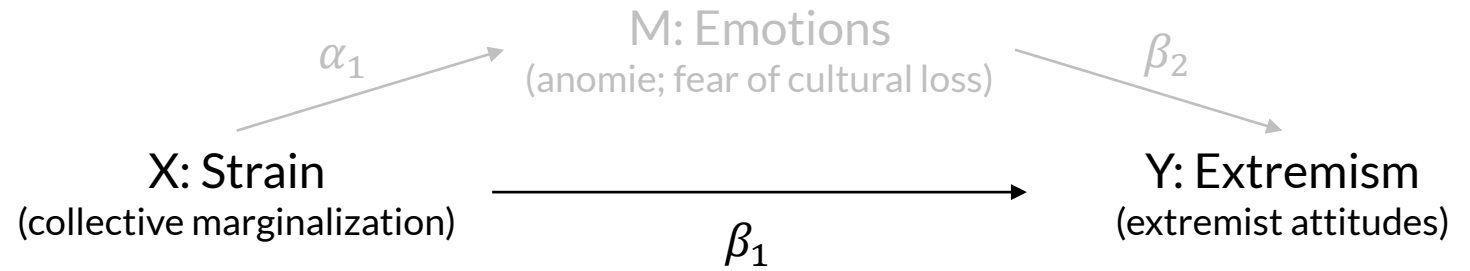
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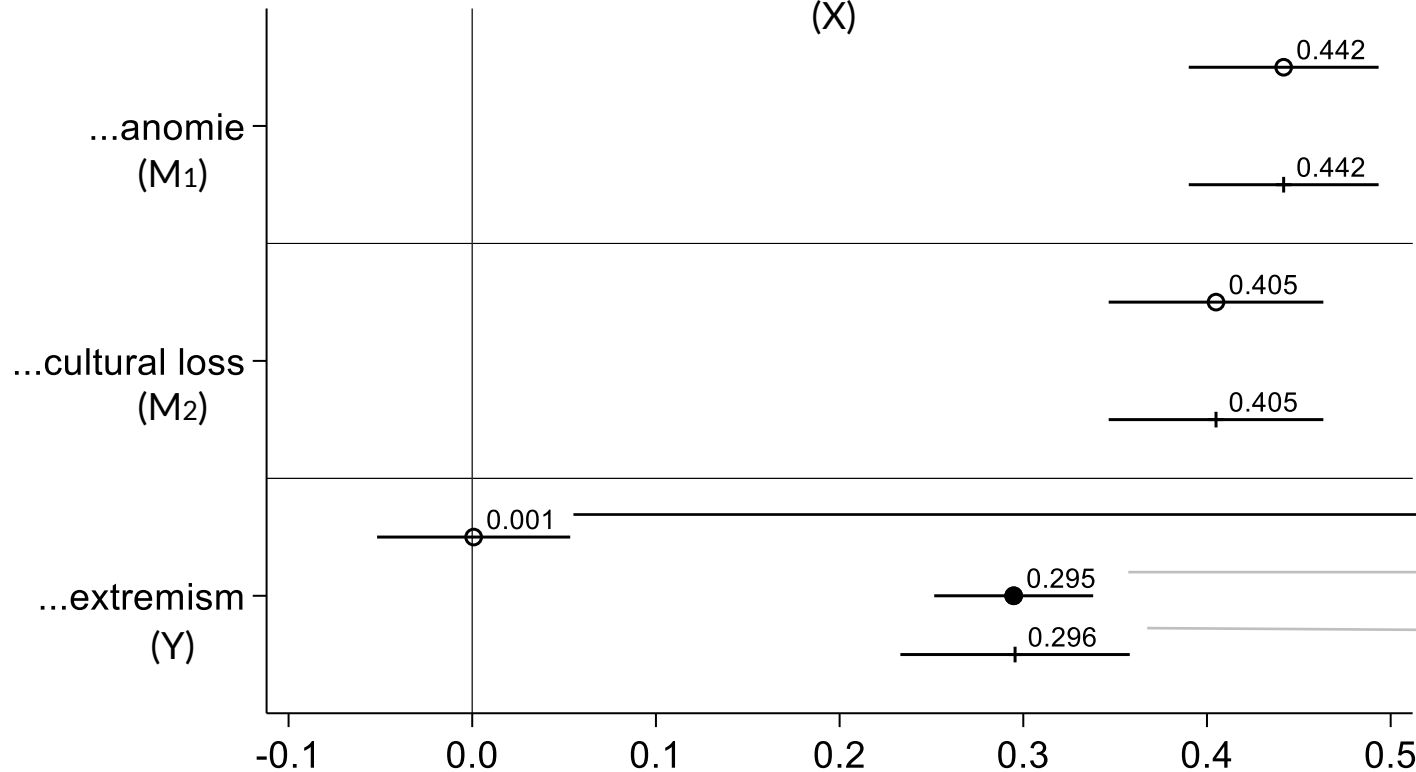
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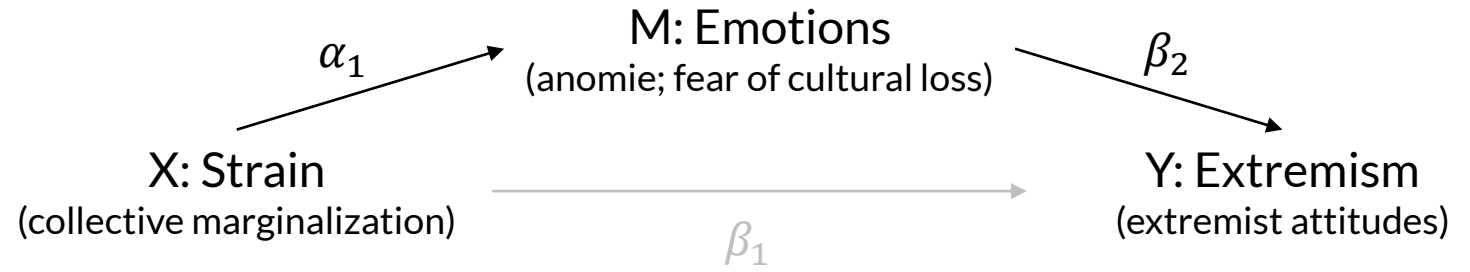
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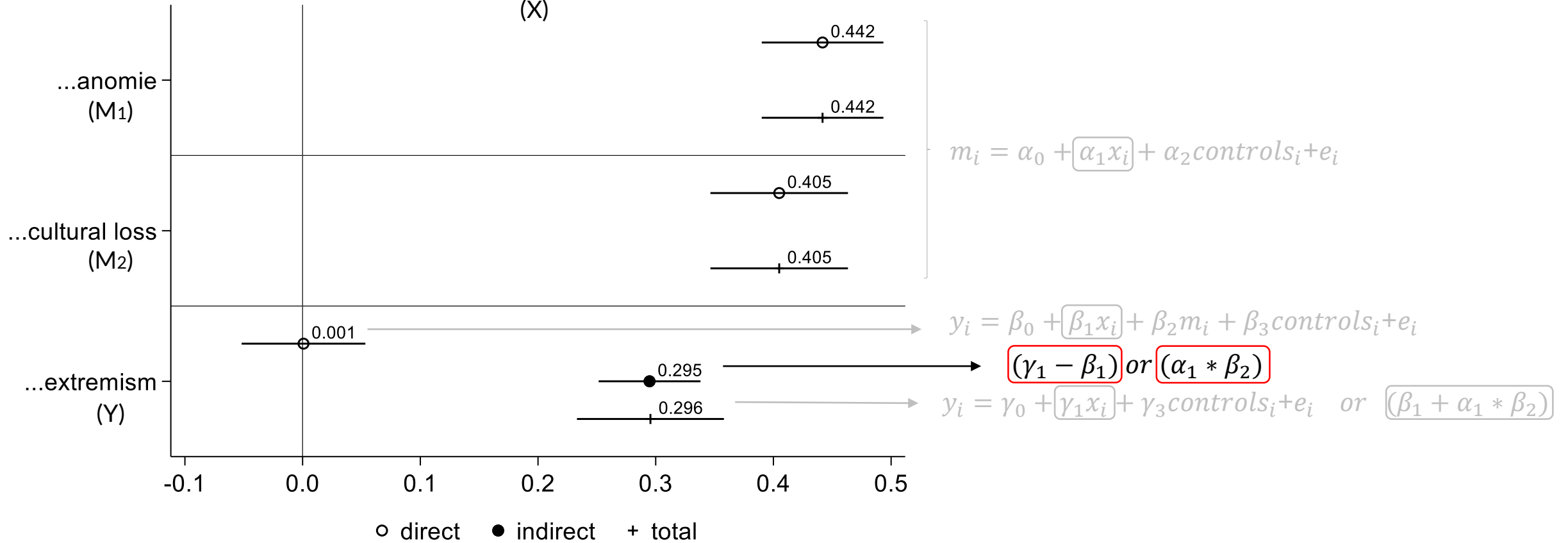
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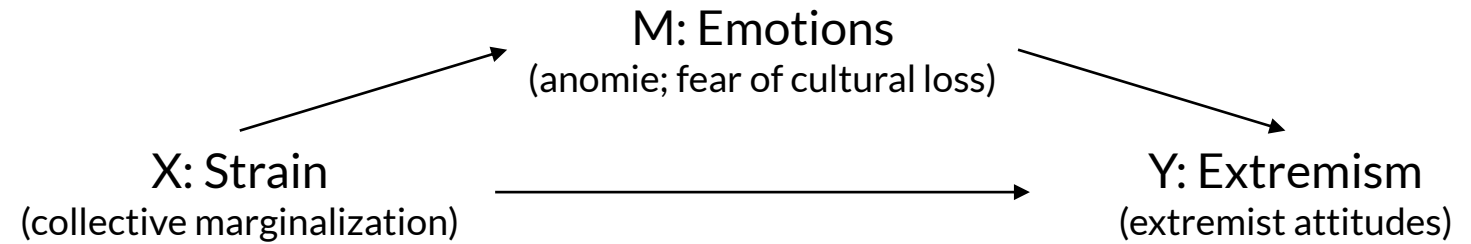
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Closure



Results in a nutshell

- Perceived *collective marginalization* is a relevant predictor of *extremism*
- The effect of *collective marginalization* on *extremism* is completely mediated through *anomie and fear of cultural loss*
- The *strain theory* applies appropriately to the data at hand

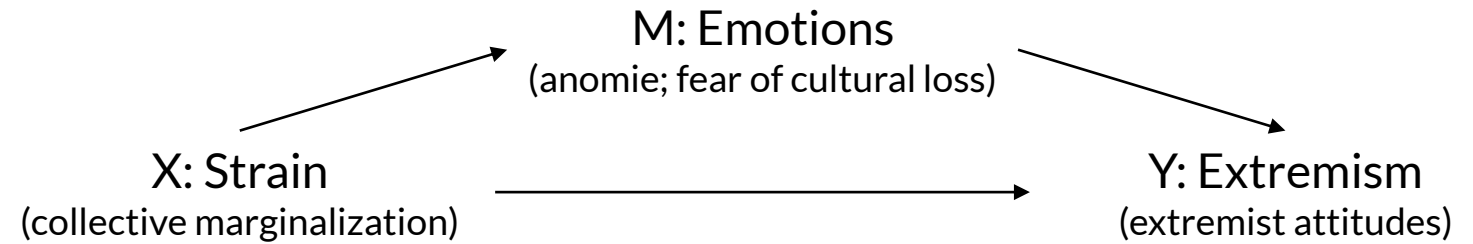
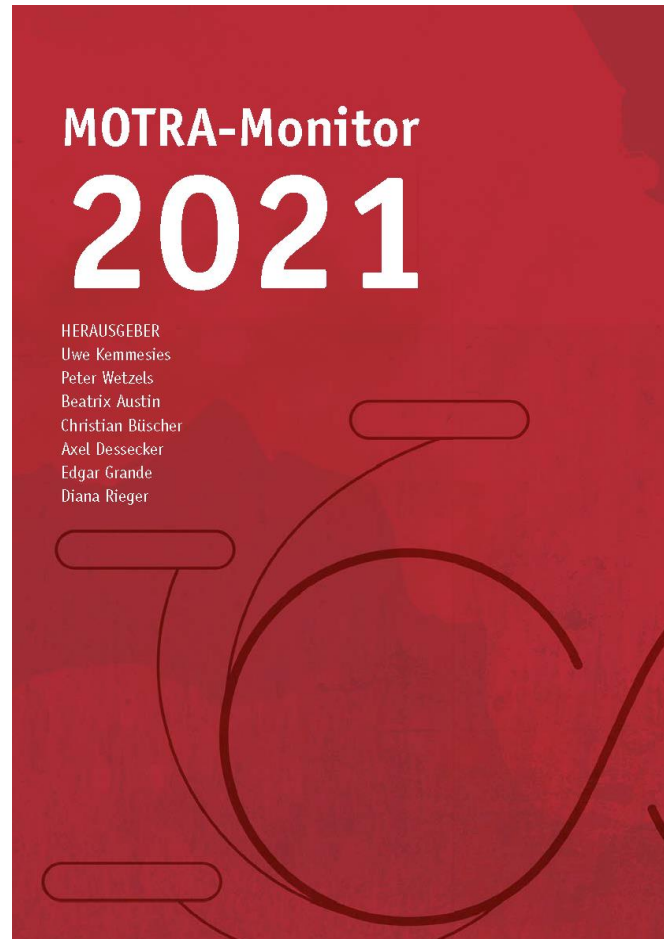
Limitations

- Cross-sectional data, i.e. no causal interpretation possible

Implications/Future

- Measures presented may be used as a barometer of conflict in time and space
- The importance of *collective marginalization* opens the door for a procedural justice perspective

Closure



Jannik M.K. Fischer, Rebecca Endtricht und Diego Farren

Die Bedeutung kollektiver Marginalisierung und negativer sozialer Emotionen für die Erklärung extremismusaffiner politischer Einstellungen: Eine empirische Untersuchung auf Basis der General Strain Theory

Zusammenfassung:

Die General Strain Theory nimmt an, dass Konfrontationen mit sozialen Belastungen vor allem dann zur Etablierung normabweichender Verhaltensweisen und Einstellungen führen, wenn diese Belastungen mit negativen Emotionen verbunden sind. Extremismusaffine politische Einstellungen können solche Formen normabweichender Haltungen darstellen. In der vorliegenden Studie wird, anschließend an diese theoretischen Überlegungen, untersucht, ob (1) das Erleben kollektiver Marginalisierung die Wahrscheinlichkeit der Befürwortung extremismusaffiner politischer Einstellungen steigert und (2) inwieweit dieser Effekt über die Wirkungen damit verbundener negativer sozialer Emotionen zu erklären ist. Die theoretischen Annahmen werden anhand von Daten einer für die deutsche Wohnbevölkerung ab 18 Jahren repräsentativen Befragung (n = 4.483) überprüft. Im Wege von Strukturgleichungsmodellen wird untersucht, ob negative soziale Emotionen, hier gemessen über kulturelle Verlustängste, den Zusammenhang zwischen der Wahrnehmung einer gesellschaftlichen Marginalisierung der Eigengruppe (kollektive Marginalisierung) einerseits und demokratiedistanter, extremismusaffiner Einstellungen andererseits vermitteln. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass ein Erleben kollektiver Marginalisierung wie erwartet mit einem signifikant erhöhten Risiko der Entwicklung demokratiedistanter, extremismusaffiner politischer Einstellungen einhergeht. Dieser Effekt wird vollständig durch mit kollektiver Marginalisierung assoziierten negativen sozialen Emotionen mediiert. Insoweit ist festzustellen, dass die Wahrnehmung einer gesellschaftlichen Ausgrenzung und Benachteiligung der Eigengruppe zwar ein wichtiger Faktor zur Erklärung der Entstehung politisch-extremistischer Einstellungen ist, dieser aber zentral über interindividuell variierende emotionale Prozesse vermittelt wird. Neben sozial dysfunktionalen gesellschaftlichen Zuständen sind dabei vor allem damit assoziierte negative Emotionen wie Ängste und Bedrohungserleben zentral zur Erklärung von politischen Extremismen, was auch für präventive Maßnahmen eine wichtige Feststellung bedeutet.

<https://www.motra.info/motra-monitor-2021/>

<https://doi.org/10.5771/2365-1083-2022-2-173>

Thank you!

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