

# Beliefism and polarisation, health and happiness

Professor Paul Dolan, June 2024



# Context

- Ranked 22<sup>nd</sup> in efficiency by the WHO – above the US and Canada – and one place below the UK.
- BUT access issues in remote areas.
- Retirement age – 62 men and 57 women
- Life expectancy – 70 men and 77 women
- Fertility rate = 1.7 and falling PLUS negative net migration
- And yet... AIM to increase 8.1% health spend to ever-rising OECD average

**The perfect economic – and psychological - storm**



# EMBRACE

- E**nvironment      We need to emphasise situational factors
- M**istakes          We need be allowed to make mistakes, and to learn from them
- B**onding            We need to remember that we are similar in so many ways
- R**eason             We need better evidence and more coherent narratives
- A**ffect              We need to improve our emotional reactions towards people and perspectives
- C**ollection        We need a diversity of people & perspectives in decision-making
- E**xposure          We need to spend more time with people who disagree with us



# Would you choose to be happy? (2017)

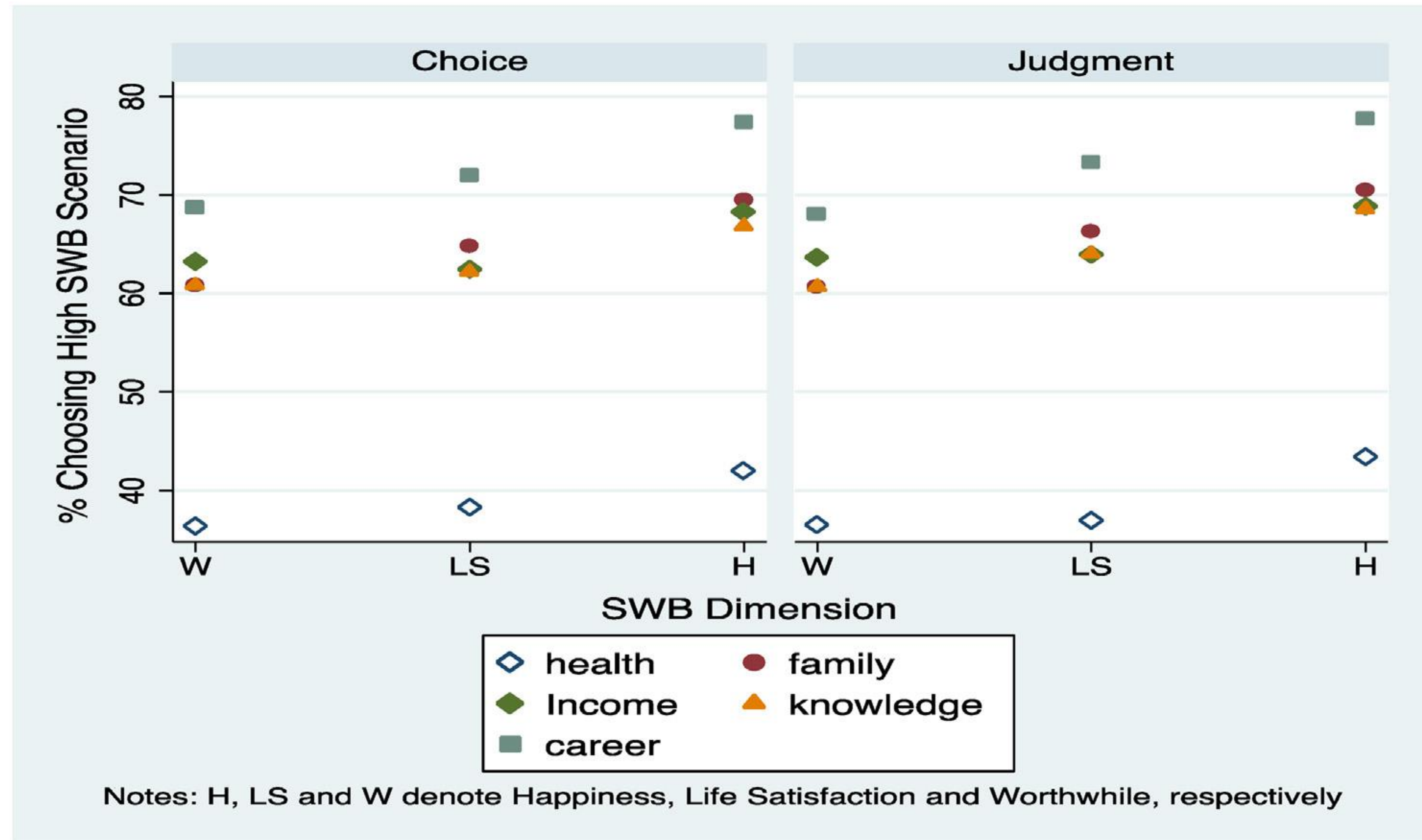
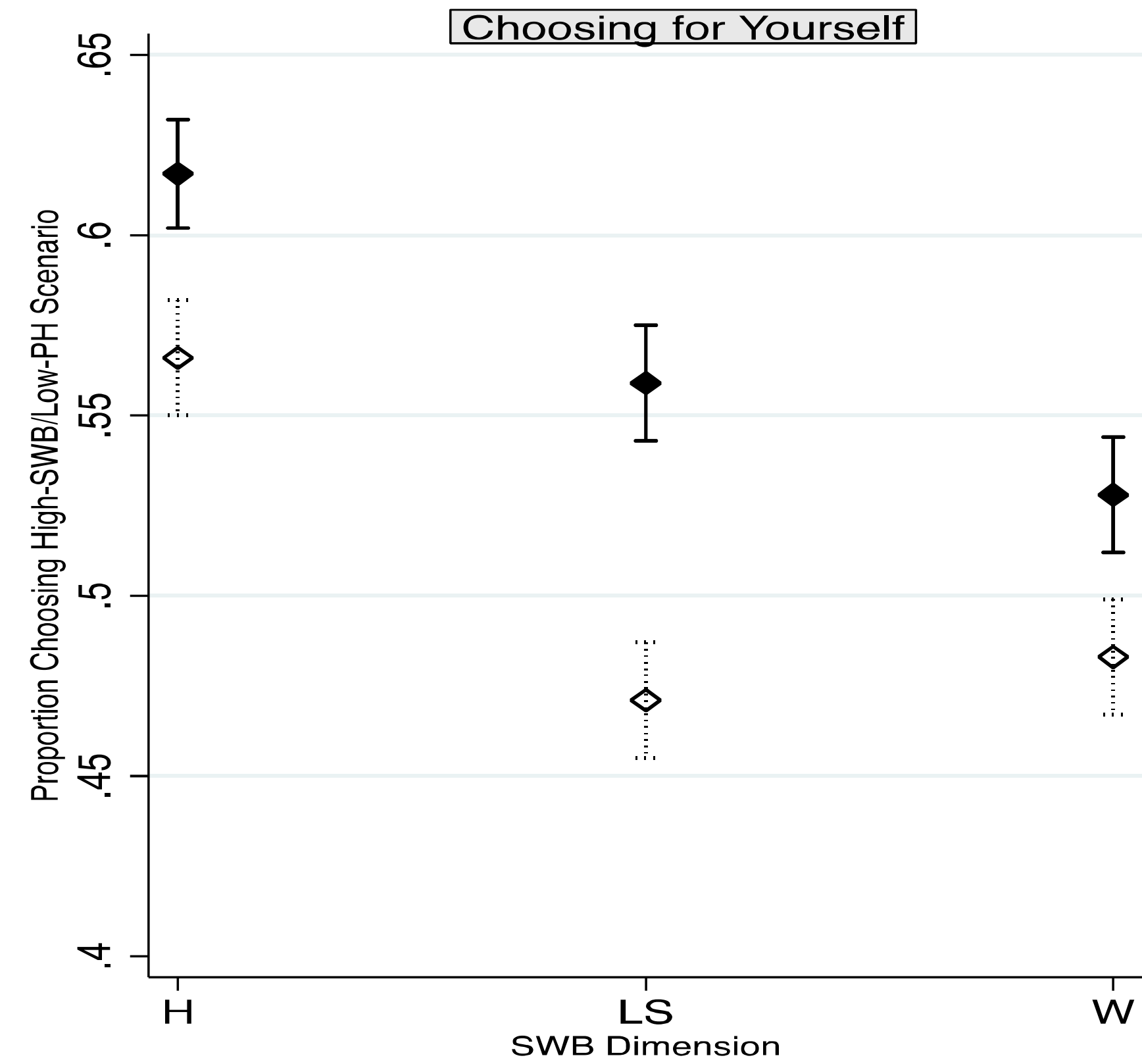


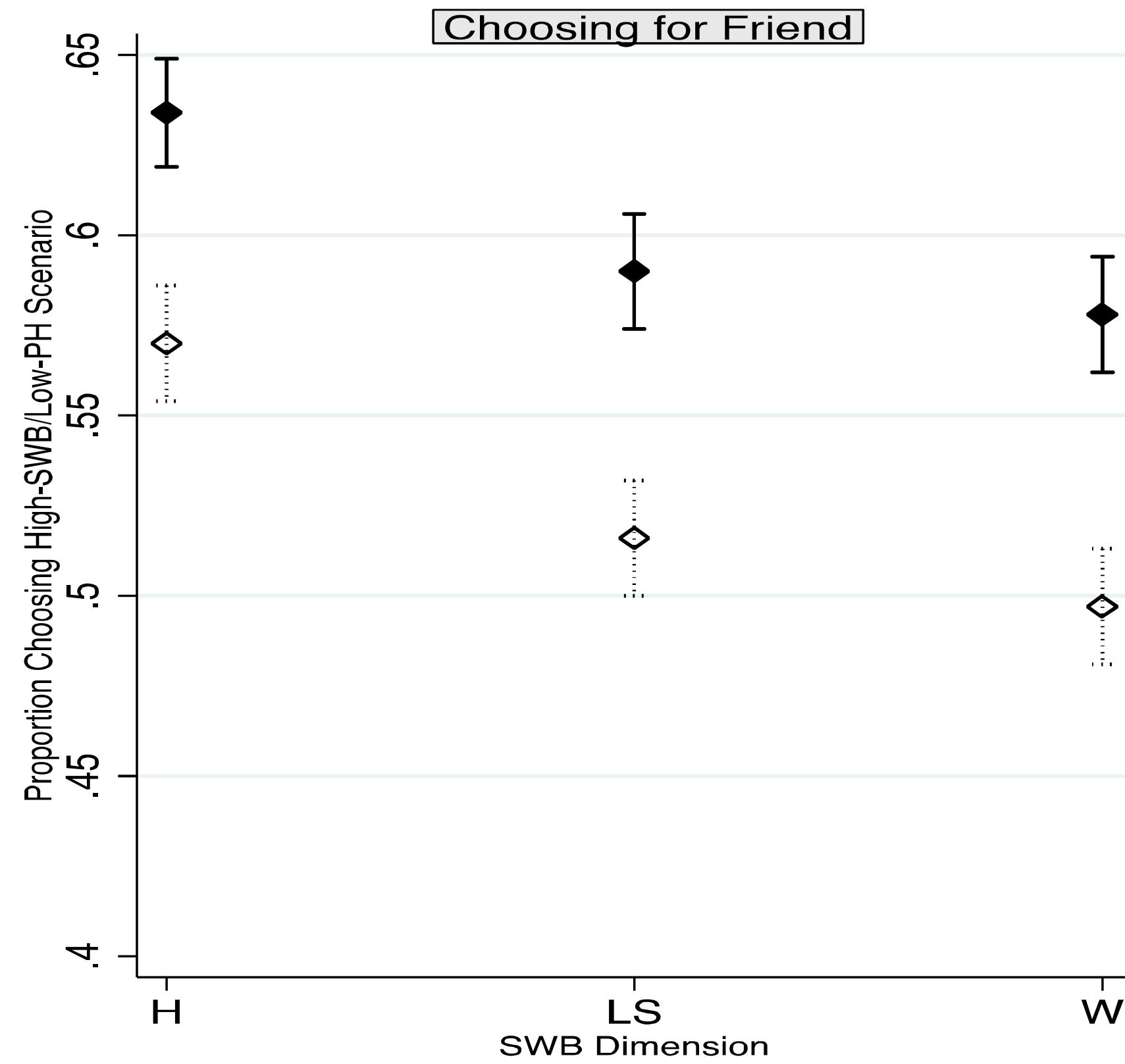
Fig. 2. US Brief Scenarios.



# Better the devil you know? (2022)



Note: H, LS, W denote Happiness, Life Satisfaction, Worthwhile, respectively.



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Fig. 4. Choice of high-SWB/low-PH scenario, US.



# Reason: what works?

- Reducing poverty
- Reducing loneliness and increasing connection
- Health services for disadvantaged communities
- Diet and exercise subject to preferences and constraints
- Improving mental health

**JOINED UP**



