

Political Science 146: Mass Media and Public Opinion

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The Evolution Debate

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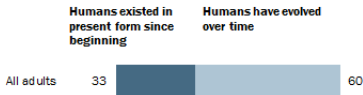
Public's Views on Human Evolution

According to a new Pew Research Center analysis, six-in-ten Americans (60%) say that “humans and other living things have evolved over time,” while a third (33%) reject the idea of evolution, saying that “humans and other living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time.” The

share of the general public that says that humans have evolved over time is about the same as it was in 2009, when Pew Research last asked the question.

Public Views About Human Evolution

% of U.S. adults saying that humans and other living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time, or humans and other living things have evolved over time



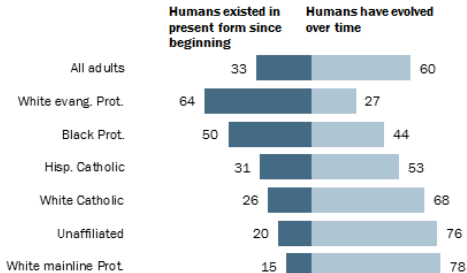
Source: Pew Research Center survey March 21-April 8, 2013. Q54. Those saying “don’t know” are not shown.

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The Evolution Debate

Views About Human Evolution, by Religion

% of U.S. adults saying that humans and other living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time, or humans and other living things have evolved over time



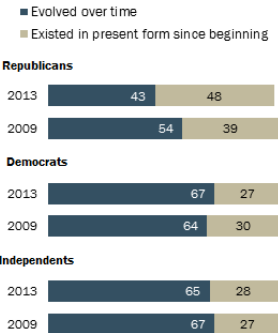
Source: Pew Research Center survey March 21-April 8, 2013. Q54. Those saying "don't know" are not shown. Whites and blacks are those who are non-Hispanic. Hispanics include those of any race.

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The Evolution Debate

Growing Partisan Differences in Beliefs About Evolution

% of U.S. adults in each group saying that humans and other living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time, or humans and other living things have evolved over time



Source: Pew Research Centers survey March 21-April 8, 2013. Q54, Q56. Those saying "don't know" are not shown.

The Evolution Debate

Beliefs About Evolution, by Demographic Group

% of U.S. adults in each group saying that (humans/animals) and other living things have existed in their present form since the beginning of time, or (humans/animals) and other living things have evolved over time

| | Humans have ... | | | | Animals have ... | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------|------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------|------|
| | Evolved over time | Existed in present form | Don't know | | Evolved over time | Existed in present form | Don't know | |
| All adults | 60 | 33 | 7 | =100 | 63 | 32 | 5 | =100 |
| Men | 65 | 28 | 7 | =100 | 66 | 29 | 5 | =100 |
| Women | 55 | 38 | 8 | =100 | 60 | 35 | 5 | =100 |
| 18-29 | 68 | 27 | 4 | =100 | 73 | 25 | 2 | =100 |
| 30-49 | 60 | 33 | 6 | =100 | 64 | 32 | 4 | =100 |
| 50-64 | 59 | 35 | 6 | =100 | 62 | 33 | 5 | =100 |
| 65 and older | 49 | 36 | 15 | =100 | 50 | 39 | 11 | =100 |
| College grad+ | 72 | 24 | 4 | =100 | 77 | 21 | 2 | =100 |
| Some college | 62 | 33 | 5 | =100 | 64 | 32 | 3 | =100 |
| H.S. grad or less | 51 | 38 | 11 | =100 | 52 | 39 | 8 | =100 |

Source: Pew Research Center survey March 21-April 8, 2013. Q54, Q56. Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

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- Instability emerges when issues are more remote

Attitude Instability

Table : Source: Converse: “The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics.” 1964. 1956-58-60 panel data.

| Attitude | Correlation | Pct. Same Attitude |
|-----------------------------|-------------|--------------------|
| Party identification | .73 | 85.7 |
| School desegregation | .43 | 57.5 |
| Employment discrimination | .41 | 60.0 |
| Guaranteed employment | .41 | 56.5 |
| Isolationism | .39 | 59.6 |
| Federal aid to education | .38 | 57.2 |
| Foreign economic aid | .34 | 48 |
| Foreign military aid | .32 | 56.7 |
| Federal housing | .29 | 40.7 |

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Non-attitudes

Table : “Some people say that the 1975 Public Affairs Act should be repealed. Do you agree or disagree with this idea?”

| Opinion | Percent |
|------------|---------|
| Opinion | 33 |
| No Opinion | 66 |

Non-attitudes

Table : “[President Clinton/The Republicans in Congress] said that the 1975 Public Affairs Act should be repealed. Do you agree or disagree?”

| Clinton Version | |
|---------------------------|---------|
| Party ID | Percent |
| Democrats | 36 |
| Republicans | 18 |
| Republican Version | |
| Democrats | 19 |
| Republicans | 36 |

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- Americans less informed today than in the 1950s (Changing media environments)

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 - More strength in dealing with Congress
 - Political capital, helps president pursue goals

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- Changes in pres. approval not random but reactions to political events and economic conditions

42.1

Approve

53.4

Disapprove

