

Political Science 146: Mass Media and Public Opinion

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Ideological Innocence

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- Converse found very low attitude constraint across 4 domestic issues, and 3 foreign affairs issue. Belief constraint higher among elites

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- **Key Components of black political ideology: Radical egalitarianism; black nationalism; black feminism; black conservatism; disillusioned liberalism**

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 - Survey method itself not reflective of "real world"

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- Knowing a candidate's Party ID (Democrat, Republican) is a heuristic; knowing that Rush Limbaugh is a right-wing commentator is a heuristic

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- NPR most “unbiased” news source IMHO

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- Most common and most salient groups in American society are race/ethnic, age, gender

Ways of Analyzing Group Membership

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- Attitudes toward groups: Broad concept that includes citizens' prejudice toward and stereotypes about groups, as well as id with groups

Attitude Variation by Group

Table : Differences in White and Black Attitudes (Dawson et al, 2006)

Question	Black	White	Difference
Approve of decision to go to Iraq War	39	66	37
Protesting war is unpatriotic	17	45	28
Federal gov't should spend whatever's necessary to rebuild and restore people to their homes in Katrina's aftermath	79	33	36
Federal gov't response faster if victims had been white	84	20	64
Racial equality in U.S. never achieved or at least not in respondent's life	78	34	44
Federal gov't should apologize for slavery	79	17	62
Support reparations for slavery	71	3	68

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- Today, 90% of Americans oppose laws against racial intermarriage; whereas only 40% opposed such laws in 1964

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- White citizens with more racial resentment more opposed to race-targeted policies

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- Like racial resentment, publicly displayed racist attitudes are no longer acceptable, thus prejudice has gone underground

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- Relative to whites, blacks have been getting more than they deserve

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- Opposition to Obamacare more race-based than Hillarycare (Tessler 2012)

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- This is called the **black utility heuristic**: As long as race remains dominant in determining the lives of individuals blacks, it is 'rational' for blacks to follow group cues.

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- Lower level of linked fate among Asian Americans than blacks and Latinos (2008 data). Asian-Americans have significantly lower levels of party identification than other groups.

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- Ideology does not inform most peoples' political thinking
- Five factors might influence attitudes: Personality, self-interest, values, historical events, and group attitudes (Kinder)
- More positive view of the mass public: citizens capable of holding reasoned, complex opinions derived from meaningful political factors such as group identity and values

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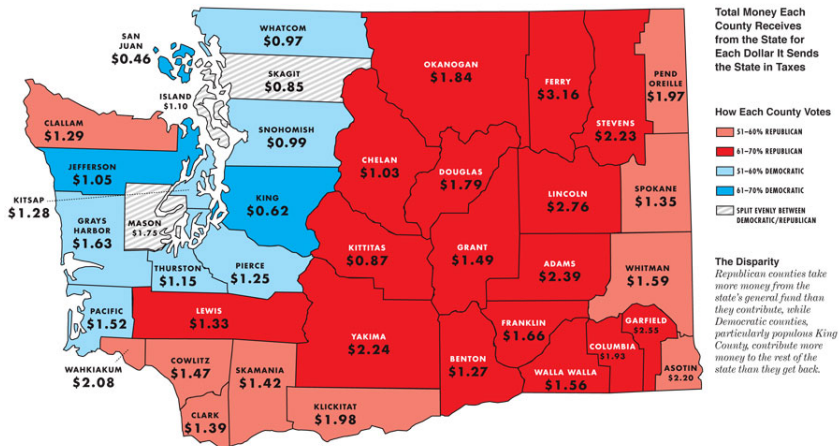
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- However, some issues matter for self-interest: Homeowners favor property tax cuts than non homeowners
- Smokers more oppose to cigarette taxes and bans on smoking than non smokers. And I'd wager to guess that pot-smokers more likely to support legalization of marijuana, but maybe not growers

Makers and Takers: Washington state



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- Moral traditionalism: Underlying predispositions on traditional family and social organization (mother does X, father does Y)