

# Political Science 146 – Public Opinion and Mass Media: Organization of Political Attitudes

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

## *Measuring Old-Fashioned Racism*

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- ▶ “In general, do you think that white people behave better than black people (1), black people behave better than white people (0), or that they are about the same (.5)?”
- ▶ “On the whole, do you think that white people are smarter than black people (1), black people smarter than white people (0), or that they are about the same (.5)?”



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- ▶ Thus, instead of blaming biological/genetic factors for black inferiority, racial resentment blames lack of work ethic for continued inequality between blacks and whites in society
- ▶ **White citizens with more racial resentment more opposed to race-targeted policies**

## *Race and Public Opinion: Symbolic Racism*

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



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- ▶ Blacks seek special favors rather than working to get ahead
- ▶ Relative to whites, blacks have been getting more than they deserve

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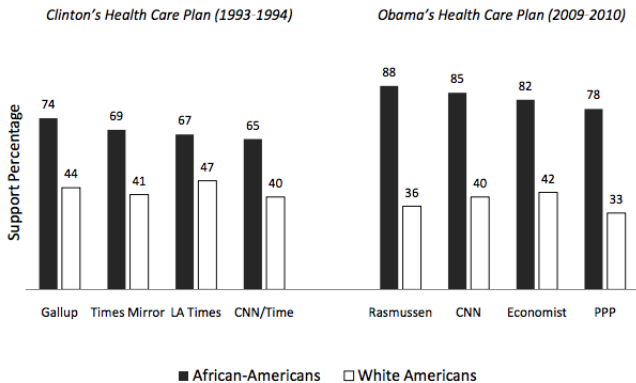
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- ▶ **Opposition to Obamacare more race-based than Hillarycare (Tessler 2012)**

# Views on Healthcare Reform

Figure 4: Support for Health Care Proposals by Presidential Sponsor and Respondents' Race



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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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- ▶ 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



## *Pluralistic Roots: Personality*

- ▶ **Authoritarian Personality:** Submissiveness to authority, desire for a strong leader, general hostility and cynicism toward people, adherence to convention, people should be punished for defying conventions. Developed shortly after WWII to explain anti-Semitism (Adorno 1950)

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- ▶ Best way to measure is to ask about child-rearing values

# *Authoritarianism (Stenner)*

**Table :** Authoritarian vs. Libertarian child-rearing measurement

Authoritarian child-rearing values	Libertarian child-rearing values
"That a child obeys his or her parents well"	"That a child is interested in how and why things happen"
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- ▶ Note, some of these findings vary by racial group

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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)