

# **Are opinions constrained?**

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# Constraint

- Opinions that go together should be related/correlated
- “Belief systems”
- Implies stability, coherence, and causal precedence

# Does constraint signify meaning?

- 1 Constraint means opinions are reasoned
- 2 Constraint means opinions are a symptom

# Types of constraint

- Ideology
- Values
- Socialization
- Biological
  - Evolved belief systems
  - Genetic transmission

# Ideology

- What is ideology?
- Is ideology different from opinions? If so, how?
- What are the benefits of ideology?
- What are the downsides of ideology?

# Values

- What are values?
- Are values different from opinions? If so, how?
- Where do values come from?
- Are values universal?

# Biological bases of opinions

- Response to study of socialization
- Something more fundamental to opinions

# Research approaches

- Evolved patterns of opinions
- Candidate genes
- Twin studies



# Evolutionary approaches

- Genes results from adaptations
- Much of human history was “small-group” scale
- Genetic fitness as root cause of everything
- Predictions about general principles of opinion

# Candidate genes

- Match genomic tests to survey results
- Correlate identifiable genes with opinions
- “Four Genes Predict Everything”

# Twin Studies

- Gather data on twins from registries/surveys
- Compare MZ to DZ twins
- Through math, partition variation:
  - **A**dditive genetics (Heritability)
  - **C**ommon/shared environment
  - **U**nique environment
- Gene-x-environment interactions

# Personality

- Big Five personality traits appear heritable
  - Openness
  - Conscientiousness
  - Extraversion
  - Agreeableness
  - Neuroticism
- Effect of genes may be mediated through personality

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- Does constraint make opinions more or less meaningful?
- Does constraint imply anything about 'knowing one's own interests'?
- Does constraint make representation easier or more difficult? Why?