

Preview of “Are opinions constrained?”

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Overview for next week

Some Background

- Eagly and Chaiken talked about inter-attitudinal structure as an empirical question
- Political scientists often see inter-attitudinal structure as normatively important
- Is structure important? If so, why?
- What are the democratic implications of structured or unstructured attitudes?

Readings for Next Week

- Feldman – “Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion”
- Jost et al. – “Political Ideology”
- Smith et al. – “Biology, Ideology, and Epistemology”

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- Feldman – “Structure and Consistency in Public Opinion”

Feldman

- What are political values? Are they universal?
- Are values something different from attitudes or ideology?
- Feldman uses values to explain opinions and retrospective evaluations. If stable values explain retrospective evaluations of government, what implications are there for representation?

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- Jost et al. – “Political Ideology”

Jost et al.

- What is ideology? Is it important for citizens to be ideological?
- Where does ideology come from? From politics? From biology, socialization, or something else?
- How does ideology compare to opinions? Are they the same thing?

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Smith et al.

- There are two common approaches to studying the genetic basis of opinions. This article addresses one of them (twin studies) and we'll talk about the other technique (candidate genes studies) in class next week.
- How does a twin study work and how does it test whether opinions are genetic? Is this approach credible, why or why not?
- What implications for democracy (e.g., representation) are there if opinions are genetically transmitted? Are these implications different from or the same as those if opinions are socialized from parent to child?

Who will lead discussion next week?

