

AP[®] EDITION

GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA

PEOPLE, POLITICS, AND POLICY



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Public Opinion and Political Action

11



Video: The Big Picture

11



http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ph/hss/SSA_SHARED_MEDIA_1/polisci/presidency/Edwards_Ch011_Public_Opinion_Seg1_v2.html

Learning Objectives

11

11.1

Identify demographic trends and their likely impact on American politics

11.2

Outline how various forms of socialization shape political opinions

Learning Objectives

11

11.3

Explain how polls are conducted and what can be learned from them about American public opinion

11.4

Assess the influence of political ideology on Americans' political thinking and behavior

Learning Objectives

11

11.5

Classify forms of political participation into two broad types

11.11

Analyze how public opinion about the scope of government guides political behavior

Video: The Basics

11



http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ph/hss/SSA_SHARED_MEDIA_1/polisci/presidency/Seg2_PoliticalOpinion_v2.html

The American People

- ▣ Immigrant Society
- ▣ American Melting Pot
- ▣ Regional Shift
- ▣ Graying of America

NASCAR and Census advertising

11.1



Immigrant Society

▣ A nation of nations

- 1 million legal immigrants/year
- 500,000 illegal immigrants/year
- 12% of residents foreign-born

▣ Waves of immigration

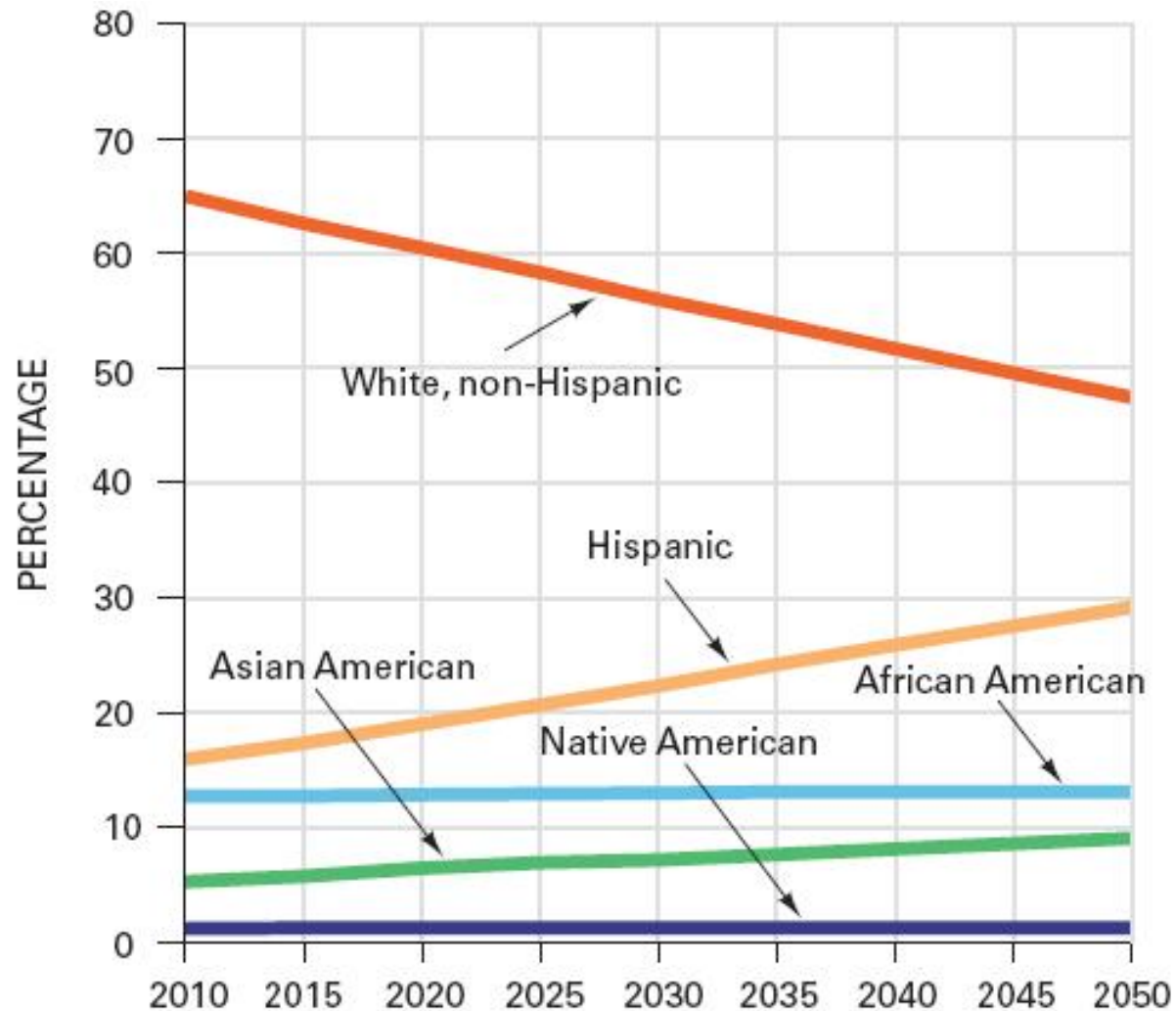
- Northwest Europe (English, Irish, Scottish, Germans, Scandinavians)
- Southern and Eastern Europe (Italians, Jews, Poles, Russians)
- Hispanics (Cuba, Central America, Mexico)
- Asians (Vietnam, Korea, Philippines, India)

Immigrant Society

- Restrictions on immigration
 - Open door policy
 - Criminals, prostitutes, lunatics, diseased (1875)
 - Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)
 - Johnson-Reid Immigration Act (1924)
 - Hart-Celler Immigration and Nationality Act (19115)
 - Family integration – good or bad idea?

American Melting Pot

- ▣ Minority majority
 - Hispanic population growing rapidly

FIGURE 11.1: The coming minority majority

American Melting Pot

- ▣ Reluctant immigrants
 - 13% of population
 - 211% still live in poverty
 - Political power increasing

- ▣ Simpson-Mazzoli Act (1981)

Border fence

11.1



American Melting Pot

- ▣ Political culture and assimilation



Regional Shift

- ▣ Northeast most populous
- ▣ West and South growing since WWII
 - Sun Belt migration
 - Arizona, Texas, Florida
 - Political power of these areas increasing
- ▣ Reapportionment
 - Once each decade, after census

Graying of America

- ▣ Over-115 fastest growing age group
- ▣ People living longer
- ▣ Fertility rate lower
- ▣ Implications for Social Security
 - Ratio changing
 - Politically-sensitive

11.1 What kind of regional population shift is America experiencing?

- a. From Northeast to Southwest
- b. From Northwest to Southeast
- c. From Southwest to Northeast
- d. From Midwest to Northeast

11.1 What kind of regional population shift is America experiencing?

- a. From Northeast to Southwest
- b. From Northwest to Southeast
- c. From Southwest to Northeast
- d. From Midwest to Northeast

Video: In Context



http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ph/hss/SSA_SHARED_MEDIA_1/polisci/presidency/Seg3_PoliticalParticipation_v2.html

How Americans Learn About Politics: Political Socialization

- ▣ Process of Political Socialization
- ▣ Political Learning over a Lifetime

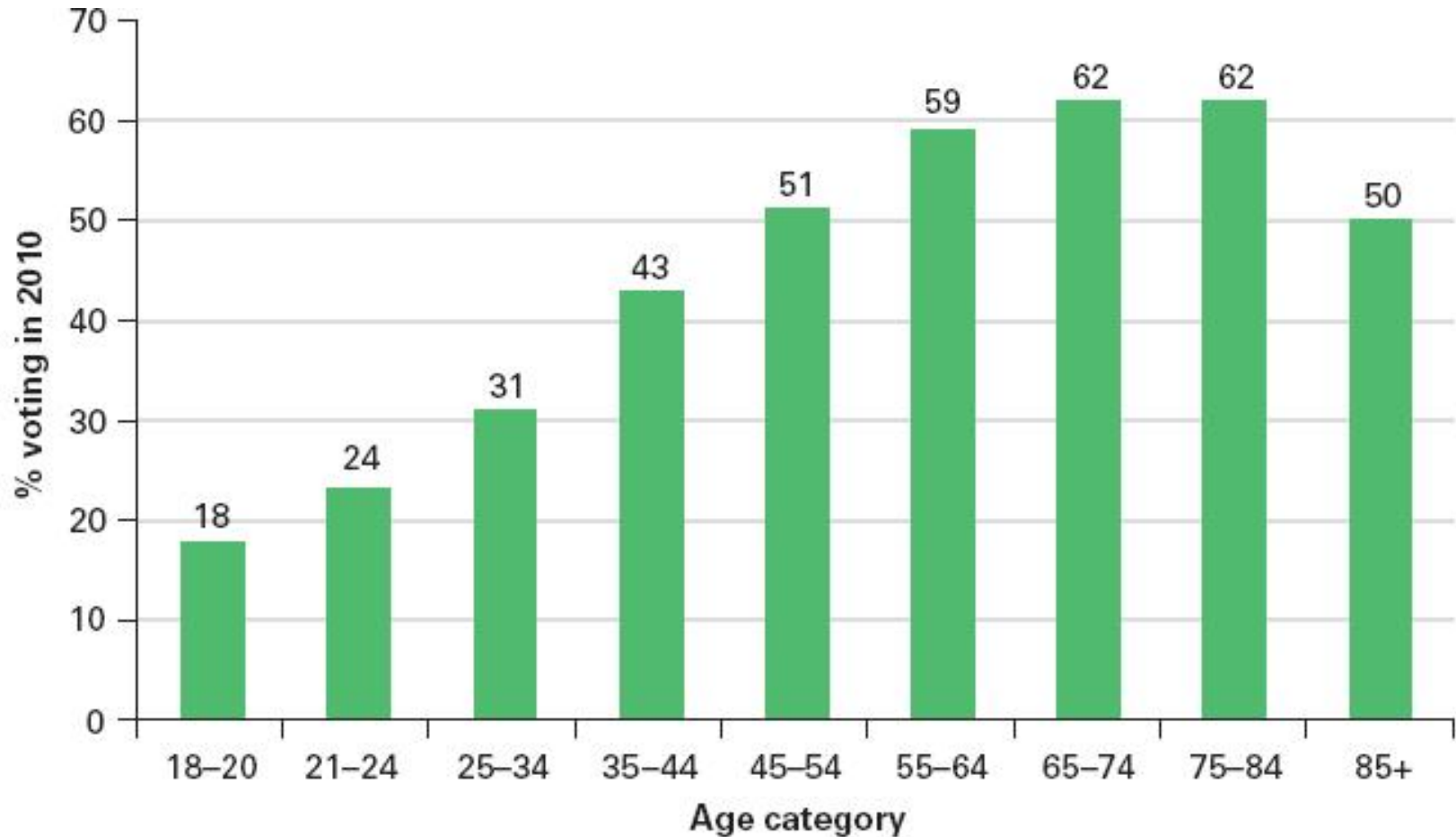
Process of Political Socialization

- ▣ Civics class tip of iceberg
- ▣ Family
 - Central role
 - Time and emotional commitment
- ▣ Mass media
 - The new parents (and teachers)
 - Age gap in following politics
- ▣ School
 - Forming civic virtue

Political Learning over a Lifetime

- ▣ Increasing participation with age
- ▣ Party identification strengthens
- ▣ Political behaviour is learned

FIGURE 11.2: Turnout increases with age



11.2 What is the most important agent of political socialization in the U.S.?

- a. Government
- b. Family
- c. School
- d. Profession

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Video: Thinking Like a Political Scientist



http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ph/hss/SSA_SHARED_MEDIA_1/polisci/presidency/Seg4_PublicOpinion_v2.html

Measuring Public Opinion and Political Information

- ▣ How Polls Are Conducted
- ▣ Role of Polls in American Democracy
- ▣ What Polls Reveal About Americans' Political Information
- ▣ Decline of Trust in Government

How Polls Are Conducted

- ▣ Sample
- ▣ Random sample
- ▣ Sampling error
- ▣ Random digit dialing
 - Cell phones
- ▣ Internet polling

Roll of Polls in American Democracy

- ▣ Polling as a tool for democracy: pros and cons
 - Gauge opinion between elections
 - Following rather than leading
 - Pandering or shaping?
 - Bandwagon effect
- ▣ Exit polls
 - Affect election results
- ▣ Question wording

Exit Polls



Video: In the Real World

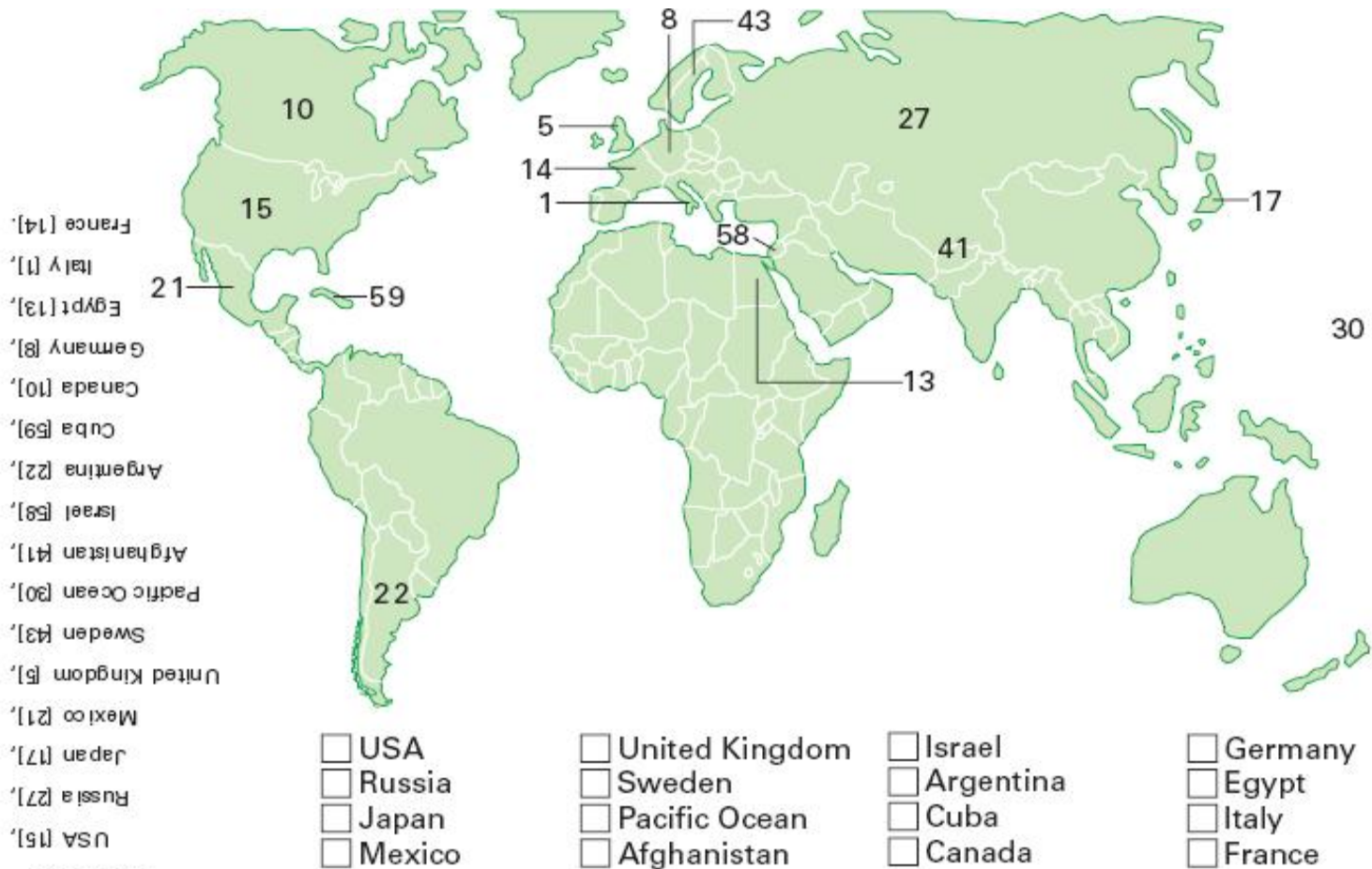


http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ph/hss/SSA_SHARED_MEDIA_1/polisci/presidency/Seg5_PublicOpinion_v2.html

What Polls Reveal About Americans' Political Information

- ▣ Americans are uninformed
 - Jeffersonian faith in wisdom of common people unfounded
 - Young people most uninformed
- ▣ Who is responsible for the ill-informed electorate?
 - Is it the schools' fault?
 - Is it the media's fault?
- ▣ Paradox of mass politics

FIGURE 11.3: Many Americans show little knowledge of world geography



ANSWERS:
 USA (15),
 Russia (27),
 Japan (17),
 Mexico (21),
 United Kingdom (5),
 Sweden (43),
 Pacific Ocean (30),
 Afghanistan (41),
 Israel (58),
 Argentina (22),
 Cuba (59),
 Canada (10),
 Germany (8),
 Egypt (13),
 Italy (14),
 France (14),
 USA (10)

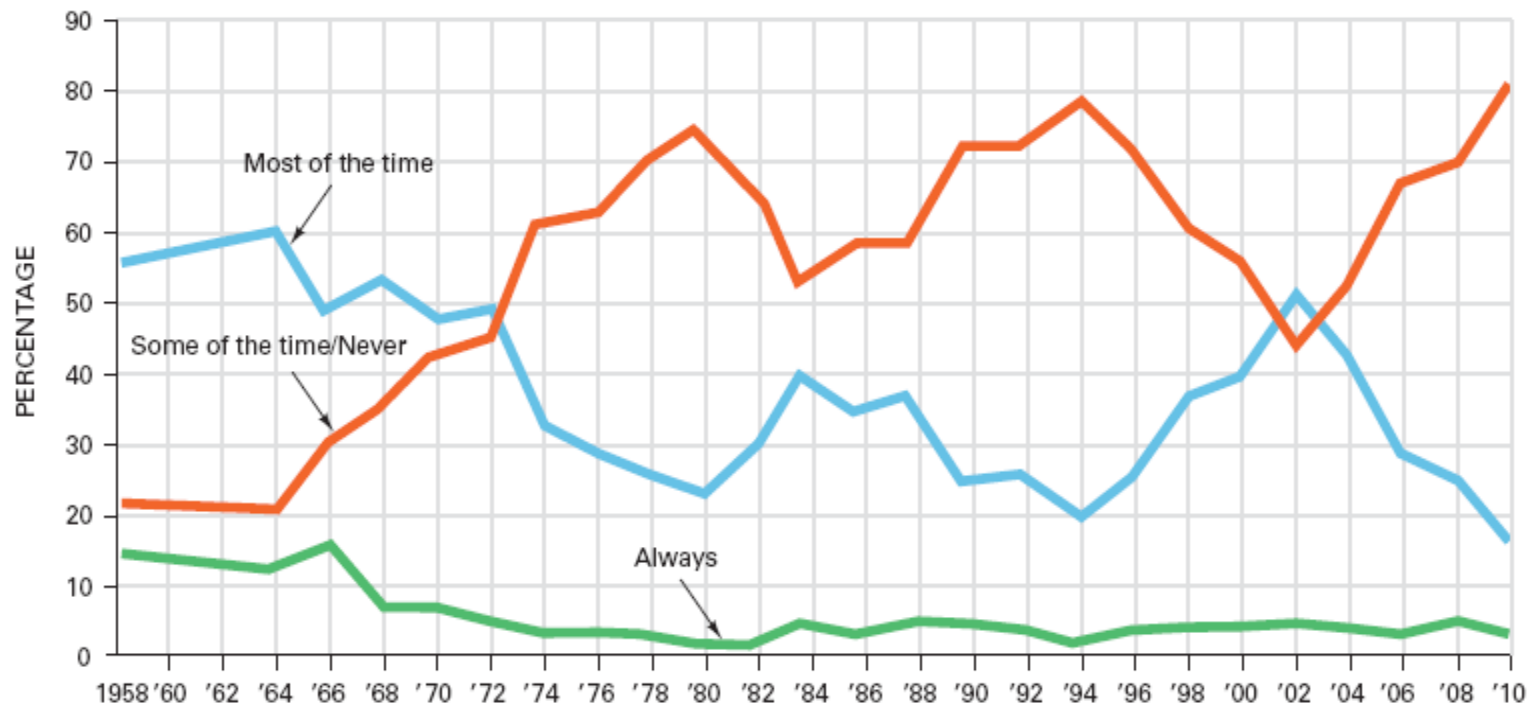
Correct answers are upside down at left.

Decline of Trust in Government

- ▣ The great slide
 - Vietnam War
 - Watergate
 - Economy/hostage crisis

- ▣ Is public cynicism good?
 - Negative effect on programs for poor

FIGURE 11.4: Decline of trust in government, 1958-2012



11.3 What is the problem with exit polls?

- a. They are usually inaccurate
- b. They don't poll every voter
- c. They influence election results
- d. None of the above

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Explore the Simulation: You Are a Polling Consultant

11.3

You Are a Polling Consultant Introduction

Public opinion polling is collecting the views and attitudes of people on a specific topic. Since it is too expensive to talk to everyone individually about how they feel about a specific topic, pollsters survey small portions of the population and accurately project the public's views at large. In this simulation, you will learn how to conduct an accurate and reliable poll. You are a polling consultant for A-1 Polling in Sacramento, California. Your client is U.S. Senator Christie Rich from California. Senator Rich wants to figure out how her constituents feel about recent federal efforts to regulate immigration into the

MyPoll SIM Lab

Popul

Self-s polls

Menu Audio Progress Map Previous 1 of 12 Next



http://media.pearsoncmg.com/long/long_longman_media_1/2013_mpsl_sim/simulation.html?simulaURL=11

What Americans Value: Political Ideologies

- ▣ Who Are the Liberals and Conservatives?
- ▣ Do People Think in Ideological Terms?

TABLE 11.1: How to tell a liberal from a conservative

	Liberals	Conservatives
Foreign Policy		
Military spending	Believe we should spend less	Believe we should maintain peace through strength
Use of force	Less willing to commit troops to action, such as the war in Iraq	More likely to support military intervention around the world
Social Policy		
Abortion	Support "freedom of choice"	Support "right to life"
Prayer in schools	Are opposed	Are supportive
Affirmative action	Favor	Oppose
Economic Policy		
Scope of government	View government as a regulator in the public interest	Favor free-market solutions
Taxes	Want to tax the rich more	Want to keep taxes low
Spending	Want to spend more on the poor	Want to keep spending low
Crime		
How to cut crime	Believe we should solve the problems that cause crime	Believe we should stop "coddling criminals"
Defendants' rights	Believe we should guard them carefully	Believe we should stop letting criminals hide behind laws

Who Are the Liberals and Conservatives?

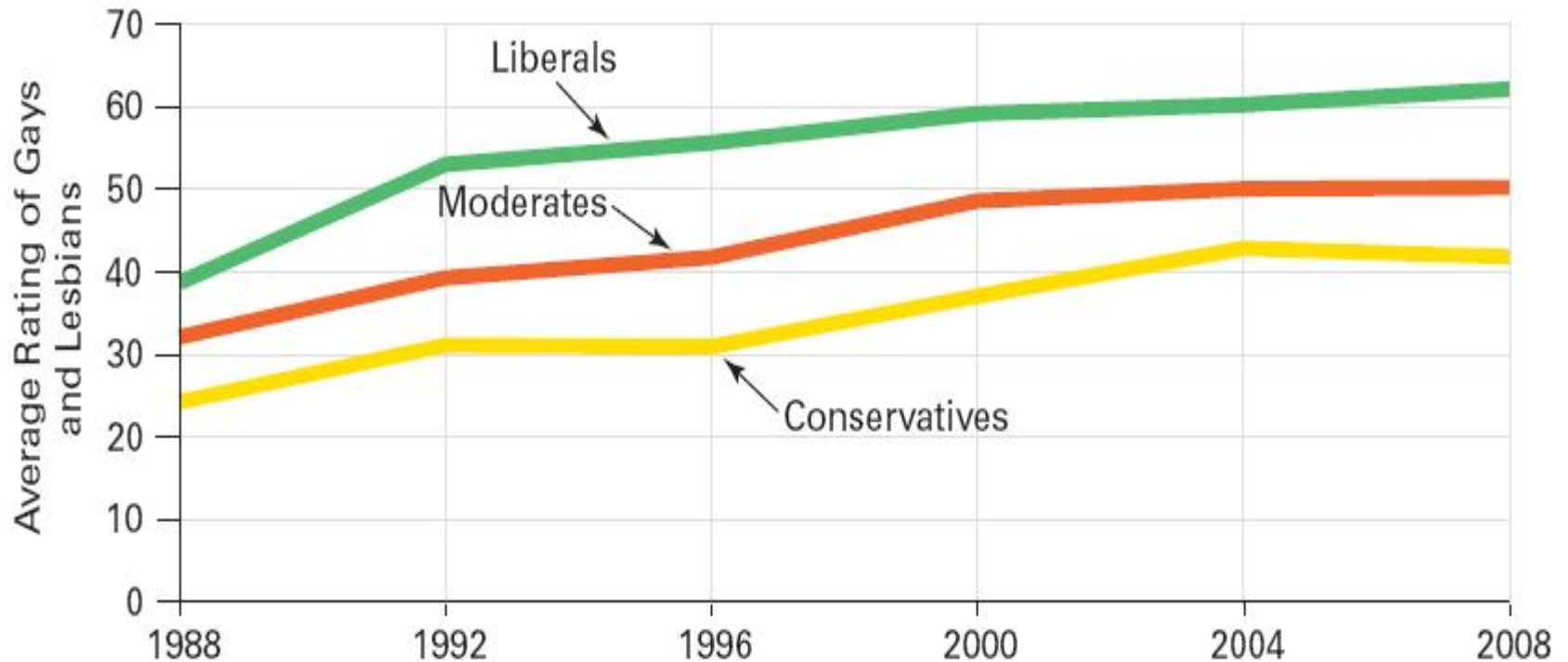
- Conservatives dominate
 - 41% conservative/21% liberal
 - Younger people less conservative
 - Minorities less conservative
 - Wealthy more conservative
 - Gender gap
 - Religious more conservative

Do People Think in Ideological Terms?

- ▣ Types of voters
 - Ideologues
 - Group benefits
 - Nature of the times
 - No issue content

- ▣ Ideology of limited importance
 - Seen as threat to family

FIGURE 11.5: Changing attitudes toward gays and lesbians



11.4 Americans identify most with which political ideology?

- a. Moderate
- b. Liberal
- c. Democrat
- d. Conservative

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- a. Moderate
- b. Liberal
- c. Democrat
- d. Conservative

How Americans Participate in Politics

- ▣ Conventional Participation
- ▣ Protest as Participation
- ▣ Class, Inequality, and Participation

Conventional Participation

▣ Conventional participation

- Voting
- Running for office
- Collecting signatures for a petition

▣ Unconventional participation

- Protesting
- Civil disobedience
- Violence

Protest as Participation

- ▣ Drawing attention
 - Protests attract the media
 - Rare
- ▣ Civil disobedience
 - Breaking unjust laws

Lunch counter sit-in

11.5



Protest as Participation

- ▣ Violence

Kent State

11.5



Class, Inequality, and Participation

- Higher socio-economic status = higher participation rates
 - Minorities vote at nearly equal levels
- What are the policy implications of lower political participation?

11.5 What is the most common form of political participation?

- a. Voting
- b. Writing to elected officials
- c. Working on campaigns
- d. Protesting

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Explore Public Opinion: How Are People Involved in Politics?

Political Participation

How Are People Involved In Politics?



http://media.pearsoncmg.com/long/long_edwards_mpslgia_111/pex/pex11.html

Understanding Public Opinion and Political Action

- ▣ Public Attitudes Toward the Scope of Government
- ▣ Democracy, Public Opinion, and Political Action

Public Attitudes Toward the Scope of Government

- ▣ Should government do more or less?
 - In peacetime, most Americans say “less”
- ▣ But public opinion is complex and inconsistent
 - Ideological conservatives
 - Operational liberals
 - Policy gridlock

Democracy, Public Opinion, and Political Action

- ▣ Representative democracy
 - Decide who governs
- ▣ Is public fit to choose its leaders?
 - Yes and no

11.11 Do a majority of Americans favor more or less government?

- a. More
- b. Less
- c. About the same as we have currently
- d. It is unclear what the public wants

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Discussion Question

11

Why do we say that Americans are ideological conservatives but operational liberals? What role does political ideology play in public opinion? Would it be better or worse for the public interest if Americans were more ideologically consistent?

Video: So What?



http://media.pearsoncmg.com/ph/hss/SSA_SHARED_MEDIA_1/polisci/presidency/Edwards_Ch011_Public_Opinion_Seg11_v2.html

Further Review: On MyPoliSciLab

- ▣ Listen to the Chapter
- ▣ Study and Review the Flashcards
- ▣ Study and Review the Practice Tests