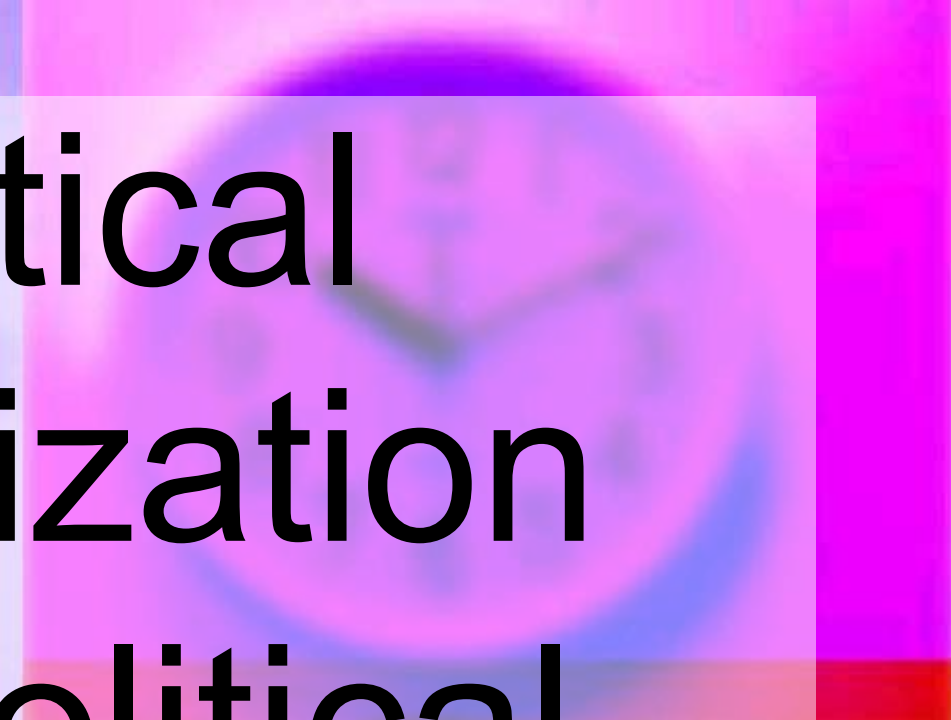


# Political Socialization and Political Culture





# Political Culture

- ***Political Culture*** - widely shared beliefs, values and norms concerning relationships of citizens to government and to one another

# Political Culture

- ***Important Elements of American Political Culture***
- *liberty* - preoccupation with rights
- *equality* - equal vote, equal opportunity, equality under the law, but not equal wealth
- *democracy* - politicians accountable to the people
- *civic duty* - serve community
- *individual responsibility* – barring some disability, individuals responsible for own actions and well being





# Political Socialization

- **Political Socialization** is the complex process by which people acquire their political values.
- **Agents of Early Socialization** include two fundamental principles that characterize early learning
  - **Primacy principle**—what is learned first is learned best
  - **Structuring principle**—what is learned first structures later learning. Agents that structure early socialization are the family, school and community and peers.

# Agents of Socialization

- The most important agents of early socialization are:
  - 1. **The family:** For example, children often adopt the party identification of their parents
  - 2. **Primary and secondary schools:**
    - a) Primary schools introduce authority figures outside the family and teach the importance of national slogans
    - b) Secondary schools often teach civic responsibility



# Political Socialization

- **Continuing Socialization** includes newspaper and television news for the older American's source of political news, while younger Americans are more likely to rely on radio, magazines or the Internet.
- The socialization process continues in later life through other agents, most notably through:
  - 1. College
  - 2. Coworkers, club members, friends, neighbors, and spouses
  - 3. Political leaders ,mass media
  - 4. Election campaigns ,voting
  - 5. The maturation process (government actions, such as taxing and regulation)





# Political Socialization

- 3. **The community and peers** (religious organizations, youth groups, civic activities):
  - a) A homogeneous community exerts strong pressure to conform.
  - b) Peer groups may offer protection against community pressures, allowing individuals to develop political attitudes that may be substantially different from their parents and other community authority figures.

# Social Groups and Political Values

- No two people are influenced by precisely the same socialization agents or in precisely the same way. People with similar backgrounds, however, do tend to develop similar political opinions





# Social Groups and Political Values

- Examples used to demonstrate this included abortion and guaranteed employment.
- Perspectives applied to these issues included education, income, region, race and ethnicity, religion and gender.



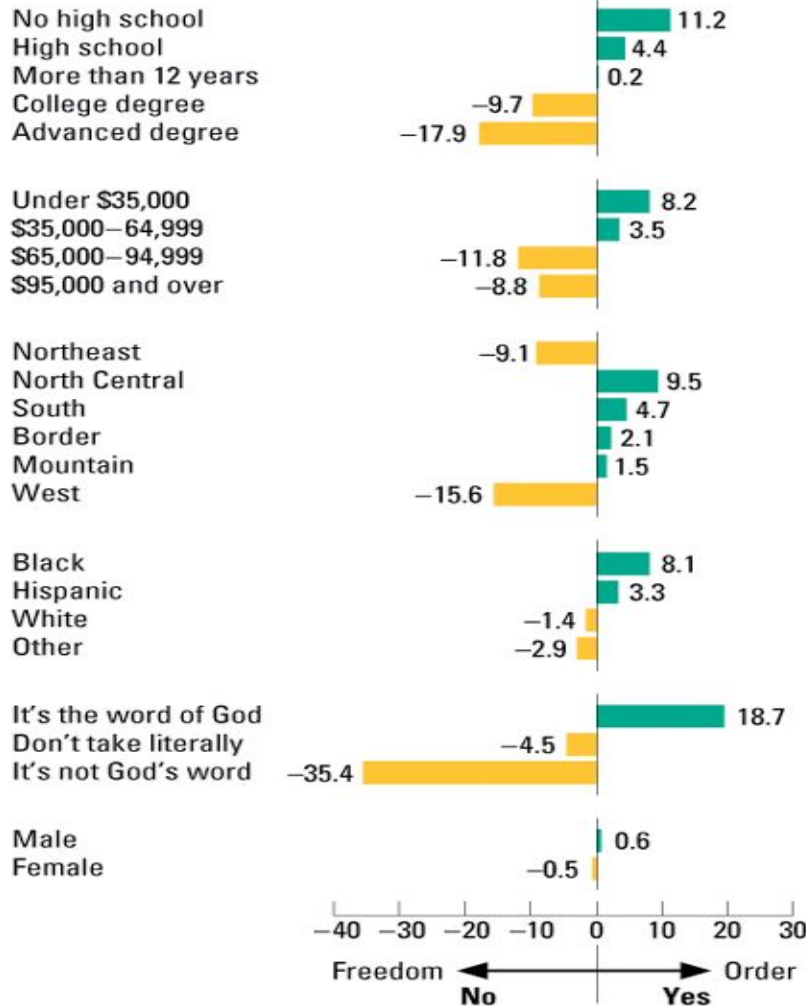
# Current Trends

- 1. People with high education choose freedom over both order and equality more often than those with low education.
- 2. People with high income are more opposed to government policies of income redistribution than are those with low income.
- 3. Regional differences
- 4. Old ethnicity (European nation of origin)
- 5. Race and ethnicity have emerged as a more critical variable
- 6. Religiosity has replaced religion as a strong predictor of political values
- 7. The gender factor has come to indicate the greater willingness of women to support social programs.

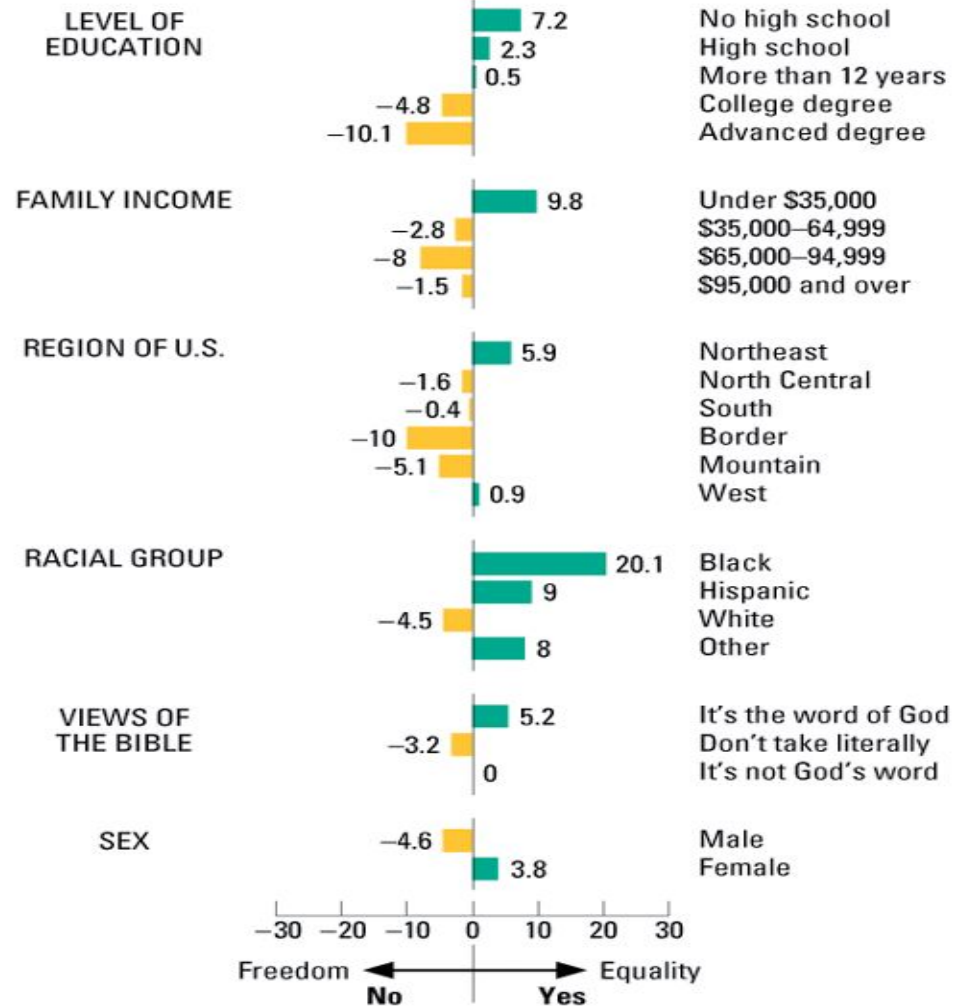


# Two Questions of Order and Equality

Should Government Limit Abortions?



Should Government Provide Jobs?





# From Values to Ideology

- Liberals are associated with change and Conservatives with tradition.
- Liberals support intervention to promote economic equality while Conservatives favor less government intervention and more individual freedom in economic activities.

# The Quality of Ideological Thinking in Public Opinion

- **Liberals** are people who believe that government should promote equality, even if some freedom is lost in the process, but who oppose surrendering freedom to government-imposed order.



# The Quality of Ideological Thinking in Public Opinion

- **Conservatives** are people who place a higher value on freedom than on equality when the two conflict. Will restrict freedom when threatened with the loss of order.

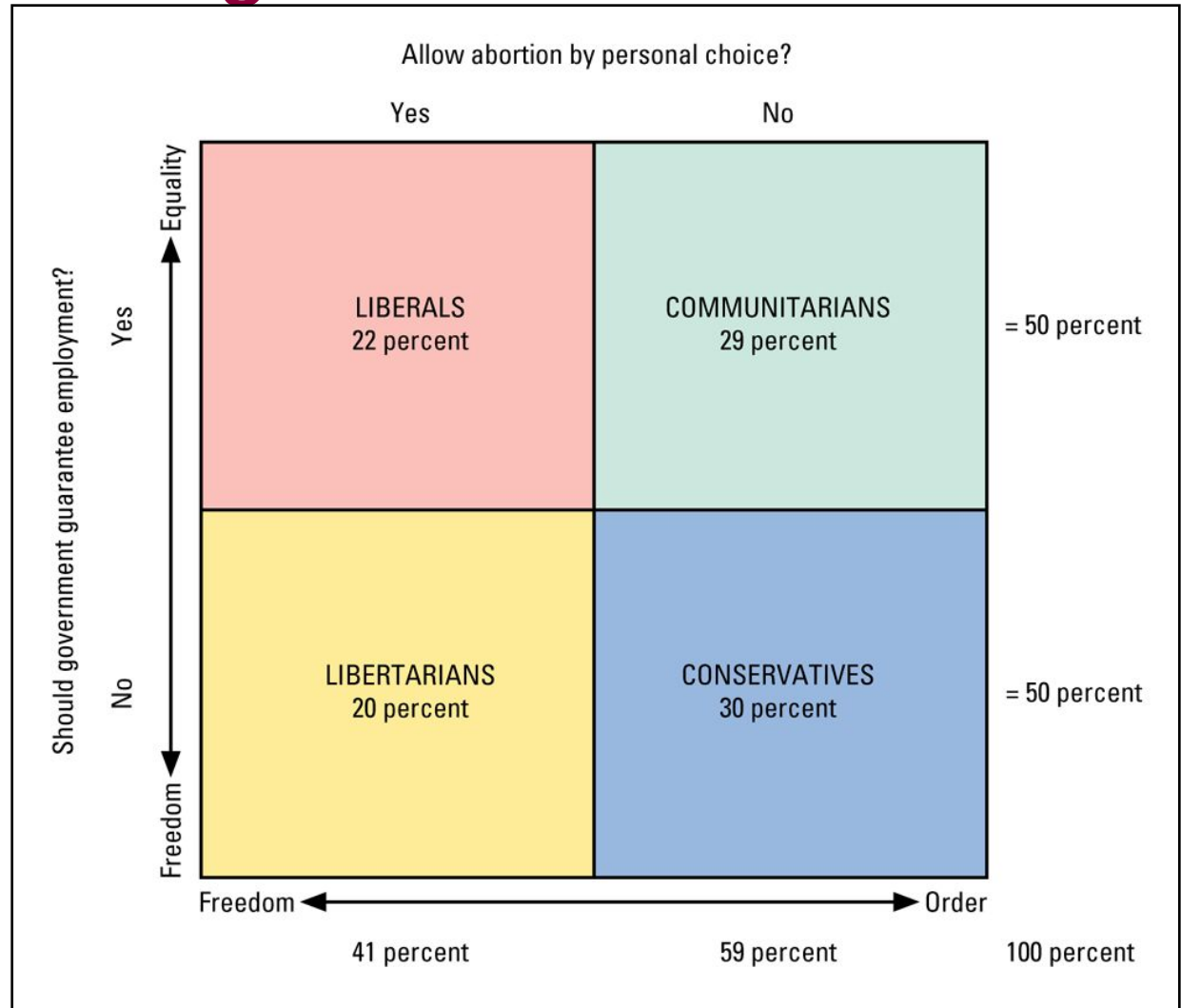




# The Quality of Ideological Thinking in Public Opinion

- Ideological Types in the United States also include:
  - **Libertarians:** People who favor freedom over both equality and order
  - **Communitarians:** People who favor equality and order over freedom

# Respondents Classified by Ideological Tendencies





# The Process of Forming Political Opinions

- Political knowledge is not randomly distributed within our society. People with equivalent knowledge of public affairs and levels of conceptualization are equally likely to call themselves liberals or conservatives.



# The Process of Forming Political Opinions

- The **self-interest principle**—the implication that people choose what benefits them personally—plays an obvious role in how people form opinions on government policies.





# The Process of Forming Political Opinions

- An **opinion schema** constitutes a network of organized knowledge and beliefs that guide a person's processing of information regarding a particular subject.

# The Process of Forming Political Opinions

- Public opinion on specific issues is molded by political leaders, journalists and policy experts.
- Politicians serve as cue-givers to members of the public.
- **Issue framing** is the manner in which a politician or interest group leader defines an issue when presenting it to others.

