

Author(s): Sears, David O., Leonie Huddy, and Lynitta Schaffer
Title: NES Pilot Study of Values
Date: October, 1983
Dataset(s): 1983 Pilot Study

Abstract

Sears, Huddy, and Schaffer outline a method for measuring support for the values of individualism and equality in three contexts; at the abstract socio-political level and at the more specific levels of race and gender. The authors examine scales constructed from 1983 Pilot Study questions relating to egalitarianism and economic individualism in these different contexts. Sears et al. conclude that it is feasible to measure individualism and equality at different levels of abstraction with acceptable levels of consistency. The authors also find that neither demographic variables nor political predispositions are able to account for any of the variance in the value scales. This result indicates that the individualism and equality value scales are independent to liberal-conservative ideological dimensions. Finally, Sears, Huddy, and Schaffer undertake a regression analysis to gauge the effect of the value measures on policy preference in three specific areas: government aid for women, collective action by women, and racial issues. The authors conclude that while demographic variables are important determinants of preferences in these areas, value positions at both the general and specific level also play a role in establishing policy preferences.