

Identities in American Politics

By Nathan Scott – Edited by Dr Peter Jepson.

Warning!


- ▶ The following examples offer only a tiny proportion of the different sections of US society. **DO NOT REGARD THIS LIST AS COMPLETE IN ANY SENSE.**

- ▶ Its purpose is to encourage you to develop your argument creation skills. You will be expected to justify your answers with reference to some of these characters. You can only truly understand another's view if you have to argue from their perspective.

▶

Unionised Blue Collar Workers

The power of the unions is considerably weaker in the US in comparison to other developed nations. However, large numbers of traditional industries, such as farming do still possess a unionised work force. The umbrella group for Trade Unions in the USA is call the AFL-CIO.



Unionised Blue Collar Workers

- ▶ Unions are, however, still one of the most important organised interests in American Politics. Especially now that the democrats control both Houses of Congress.
- ▶ Unionised workers may hold similar beliefs to some republicans over issues like social welfare and war.



Soccer/ Hockey 'Mom's

This term refers to middle- class married women with children. They are regarded as suburban and the term 'soccer' refers to their commitment to their children's extra curricula activities.



There is debate over the existence of soccer moms as a coherent group with deliberate voting patterns.



Soccer/ Hockey 'Mom's

- ▶ Traditionally women have voted for the democrat party. However, the right's attention to family values has meant that the Republican's have courted soccer moms. This was most notable in the selection of Sarah Palin as VP candidate for the Republicans in the 2008 Presidential election.

TABLE 3.5:
Poll results (Percent)

<i>Voter Type</i>	<i>Voting Republican</i>	<i>Voting Democratic</i>	<i>Still Undecided</i>
All Voters	38	42	20
Soccer Moms	24	22	54



The Religious Right

The Conservative Christian right has asserted itself more strongly in national politics since the 1980s. This has been in response to increasingly liberal standards set on Abortion, religious prayers and gay rights.



The Religious Right

- ▶ The south has always had a separate identity from the rest of the US and it would be remiss to ignore their contribution to the identity of the USA as a whole.
- ▶ The south has come to be associated with religious, conservative attitudes. White southerners were known to vote for the democrat party, but this changed after the civil rights movements in the 50's and 60's.



The New Liberals

Wide ranging group of minority groups and the young, who together make a group who voted for the first time in 2008.



In favour of Health care reform and may, as a result support larger government. Internet savvy. Largely supportive of the democrats. May also support greater gun control and be pro-choice and affirmative action.

The New Liberals

- ▶ While the southern wing of the democrat party is called the 'congressional wing' the northern (liberal) part is called the 'presidential wing'.
- ▶ Like new labour the democrats have sought to regain the centre ground in US politics. This is the new democratic coalition. Linked to the Clintons (and the DLC) as much as to Obama.
- ▶ Possibly too disparate to talk about as a single group. Only united by the call for change after the Bush years.



Neo-Cons

Likes include: strong foreign policy, veterans, low taxation and self government, democracy, business interests



Dislike include: high levels of public spending, welfare dependency, threats to the 'All-American' way of life. Declining moral values.



Neo-Cons

- ▶ Neo Cons see the world as black and white. They profess devotion to liberal democracy, which they regard as good. However at times, some have assailed "liberalism", or what they sometimes call with their Christian Right allies "secular humanism", whose relativism, in their view, can lead to "a culture of appeasement", nihilism or worse.

- ▶ Example: Karl Rove

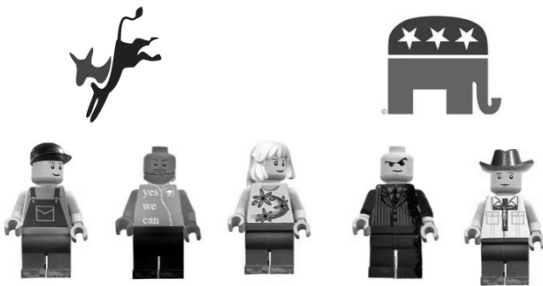


Question

▶ Where do we place these characters on the political spectrum?



Ideologically speaking



Final thought:

- ▶ How should you plan an American election.
- ▶ Karl Rove and 'mobilising the base'
- ▶ Verses
- ▶ Clinton and appealing to the middle.
- ▶ What factors are the most important? Does ideology play a role? Should the two parties act differently?