




False Perceptions and Public Leadership

Public Opinion eLearning
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A small version of the Florida League of Cities, Inc. University logo is located in the bottom right corner of the slide.

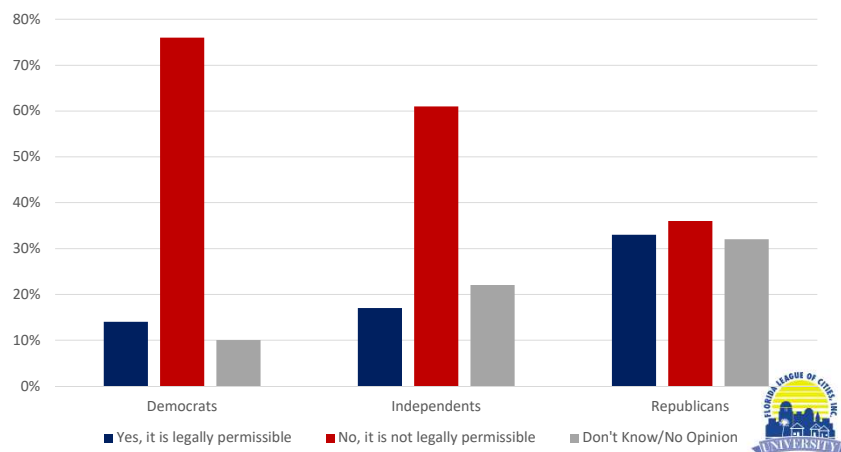
Divergent Beliefs about Reality



6/14/2018

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“Based on what you know, do you think it is legally permissible for the President of the United States to pardon themselves of a crime?”



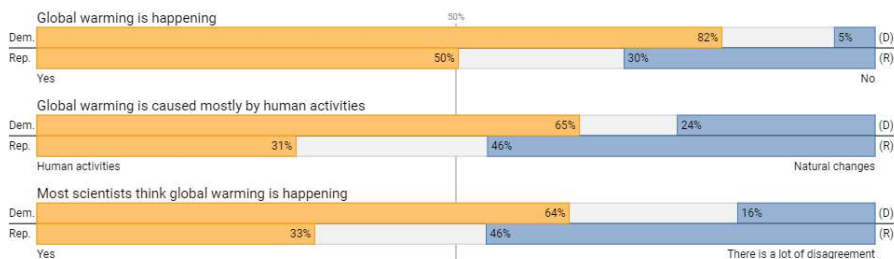
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[POLITICO/Morning Consult poll - June 7-10, 2018](#)

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Public Opinion Estimates, United States, 2016

BELIEFS



[Mildenberger, M., Marlon, J.R., Howe, P.D., and Leiserowitz, A. \(2015\) "The spatial distribution of Republican and Democratic climate opinions at state and local scales," *Climatic Change*.](#)



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Crime Show Viewing and Fear of Crime

“[R]egular viewers of crime drama are more likely to fear crime. Television portrayal of crime and justice is largely sensational, violent and fear producing. Viewers may receive a “distorted” image of the typical crime or criminal, which may produce fear or anxiety about criminal activity.”

Kenneth Dowler (2003) Media Consumption and Public Attitudes Toward Crime and Justice: The Relationship Between Fear of Crime, Punitive Attitudes, and Perceived Police Effectiveness. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10(2):117.



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<https://www.albany.edu/scj/jcipc/vol10is2/dowler.pdf>

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Cognitive Shortcuts and Biases



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Heuristics

“Heuristics are commonly defined as cognitive shortcuts or rules of thumb that simplify decisions. They represent a process of substituting a difficult question with an easier one”

<https://www.behavioraleconomics.com/mini-encyclopedia-of-be/heuristic/> citing Kahneman, D. (2003). Maps of bounded rationality: Psychology for behavioral economics. *The American Economic Review*, 93, 1449-1475.



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Familiar Heuristics - Folk Wisdom

Red sky in the morning, sailors take warning.
Red sky at night, sailor's delight.

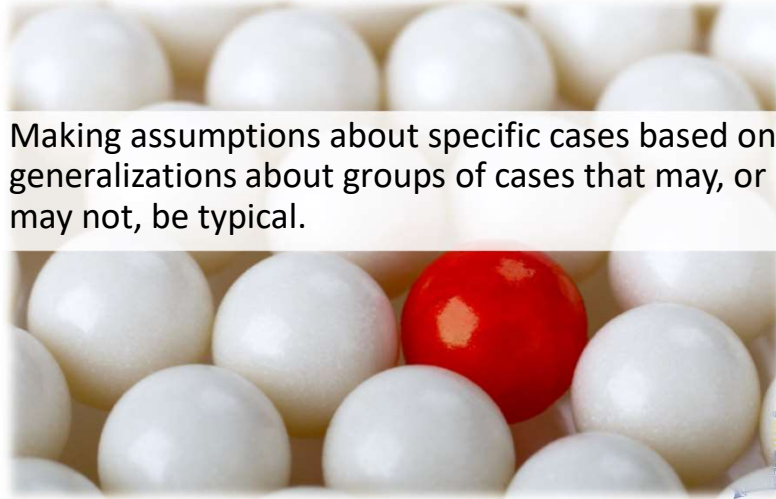
It's always cheaper to buy in bulk.



Availability Heuristic



Representativeness Heuristic



Making assumptions about specific cases based on generalizations about groups of cases that may, or may not, be typical.

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Conservative
Democrats
USA Patriot Act
Republicans
Liberal
Names and Labels
Can Trigger Heuristic Responses
Trump
ObamaCare
Clinton
Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017



Confirmation Bias

“the tendency to process information by looking for, or interpreting, information that is consistent with one’s existing beliefs. This biased approach to decision making is largely unintentional and often results in ignoring inconsistent information.”

<https://www.britannica.com/science/confirmation-bias>



Confirmation Bias

JURISPRUDENCE
Gay Americans Have Little to Fear From the Supreme Court’s Compromise in *Masterpiece Cakeshop*

By MARK JOSEPH STERN

JUNE 04, 2018 · 11:54 AM

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2018/06/the-supreme-courts-decision-in-masterpiece-cakeshop-is-a-kennedy-compromise.html>

OPINION · 3 days ago

Supreme Court’s same-sex wedding cake decision -- a significant victory for freedom

OPINION By Kristen Waggoner | Fox News



<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2018/06/04/supreme-courts-same-sex-wedding-cake-decision-significant-victory-for-freedom.html>



Correctives for Public Leaders



#1 Slow the Process Down



#2 Seek Diverse Perspectives



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#3 Challenge Assumptions



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#4 Acknowledge Uncertainty



#5 Act, Observe, Evaluate



#6 Practice Humility



*If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you;
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or, being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or, being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;
From *If* by Rudyard Kipling*



Questions???



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Thank you!



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