

# Understanding Political, Social and Welfare Attitudes

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# The Value of Values

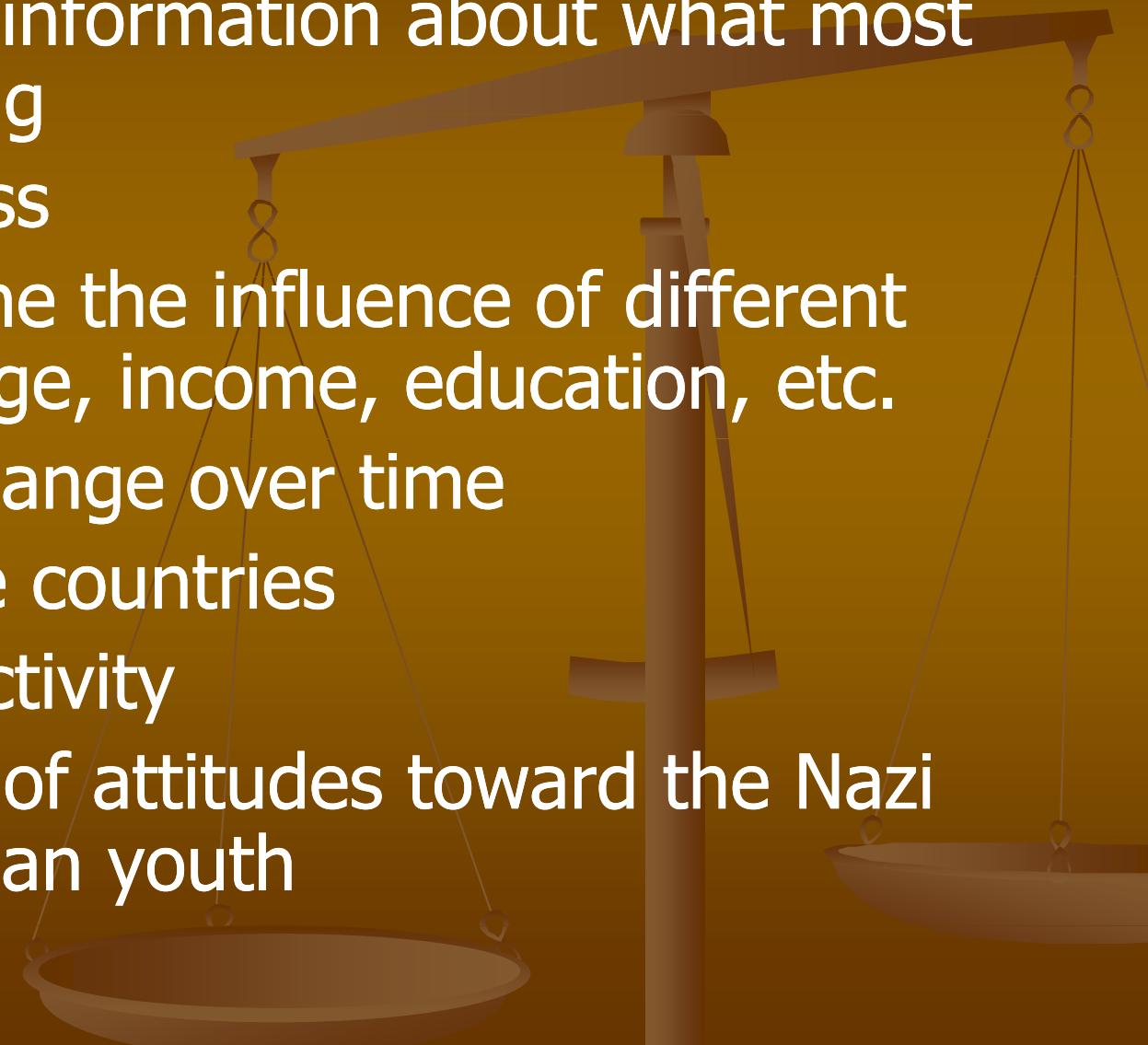
- Important to understand the interaction between what people think, how they behave, how they influence politic/policies and how politics/influences influence them
- What is the relationship between culture, institutions, economics and the development of society?
- Can policies influence attitudes?
- In a democracy can we force political change when our attitudes differ from politicians'?
- How are our values changing and what does this imply for society and policy-making?

# About the schedule

- Wednesday meeting cancelled
- Why had to change the schedule
- Not possible to have seminars

# The Importance of Statistics

- Ability to find out information about what most people are thinking
- Representativeness
- Ability to determine the influence of different factors, such as age, income, education, etc.
- Ability to study change over time
- Ability to compare countries
- Less risk of subjectivity
- Example: 4 types of attitudes toward the Nazi past among German youth



# Disadvantages with Statistics

- Difficult to understand the reasoning behind attitudes
- So not always easy to understand processes and underlying mechanisms
- Risk that people interpret questions differently
- Different types of questions lead to different answers
- Example: the American elections in 1948
- Less information per person, but more people

# Solutions?

- Ideally we should combine methods
- Often pilot studies done to see if there are problems in interpreting questions

# Reasons for having this course

- Building a tradition
- Showing practical usage of statistics
- Explaining the logic of research on attitudes without needing math
- Statistics as philosophy not math
- Overcoming one's fear of statistics
- My experiences in Sweden/Germany & USA
- Becoming better social scientists, who can use more methods and UNDERSTAND texts that use statistics
- Surviving statistics without having brain damage!

# This course plus workshop

- Spring workshop
- Again no math, just understanding statistics
- Work with databases (the same databases as most of the course literature!)
- Write your own articles
- Help with your MA theses

# Social Scientific Theme:

- The role of culture, institutions and economics for shaping society and politics
- Survey data allows us to understand culture better and investigate cultural trends, cultural differences and factors influencing culture
- So we can better participate in the discussions about the relative role of culture in explaining society

# Make up of the course

- 12 and 8 credits
- Did not expect so many students!
- Katerina Vrablikova will be assisting
- She will have the final lecture on Racism and grade the final papers, so send them to her!
- Had to cancel the seminars and change the room

# Final Papers

- At the end of the course, students will write a short paper where they reflect on the course literature and consider what the information on attitudes implies for policymaking. If they were leaders of a country what policies would they suggest given the attitudes that exist.
- Reflect and suggest, do NOT summarize!
- Do not write more than 4-5 pages!
- Students from SP&SW must write alone
- Other students must write in groups of three.
- Use internationally acceptable references and notes!!!