

New University of Washington survey explores attitudes of tea party supporters

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(PhysOrg.com) -- The tea party movement has gotten much attention in recent months, but aside from decrying big government and excessive spending, who are the supporters and what else do they appear to believe?

A new University of Washington survey found that among whites, southerners are 12 percent more likely to support the tea party than whites in other parts of the U.S., and that conservatives are 28 percent more likely than liberals to support the group.

"The tea party is not just about politics and size of [government](#). The data suggests it may also be about race," said Christopher Parker, a UW assistant professor of political science who directed the survey.

It found that those who are racially resentful, who believe the U.S. government has done too much to support blacks, are 36 percent more likely to support the tea party than those who are not.

Indeed, strong support for the tea party movement results in a 45 percent decline in support for [health care reform](#) compared with those who oppose the tea party. "While it's clear that the tea party in one sense is about limited government, it's also clear from the data that people who want limited government don't want certain services for certain kinds of people. Those services include health care," Parker said.

He directed the Multi-State Survey of Race and Politics, a broad look at

race relations and politics in contemporary America. The survey reached 1,015 residents of Nevada, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio, North Carolina, Georgia and California. All were battleground states in the 2008 [presidential election](#) with the exception of California, which was included in the survey to represent the West Coast.

The survey found that 30 percent of respondents had never heard of the tea party, but among those who had, 32 percent strongly approved of it. In that group, 56 percent of Republicans strongly approved, 31 percent of independents strongly approved and 5 percent of Democrats strongly approved.

Among whites who approved, 35 percent said they believe blacks to be hardworking, 45 percent said they believe them intelligent and 41 percent said they believe them trustworthy.

Whites who disapprove of President Barack Obama, the survey found, are 55 percent more likely to support the tea party than those who say they approve of him.

"Are we in a post-racial society? Our survey indicates a resounding no," Parker said.

Conducted by telephone from Feb. 8 to March 15, the survey reached 494 whites, 380 blacks, 77 Latinos and 64 members of other races. The sampling error margin is plus or minus 3.1 percentage points. The Washington Institute for the Study of Ethnicity, Race and Sexuality and the UW Department of [Political Science](#) paid for the survey. It was conducted by the UW's Center for Survey Research.

Provided by University of Washington

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