

GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON MISSISSIPPI'S TRADITIONALIST CULTURE

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BELIEVING IS MUCH EASIER
THAN THINKING...BUT NOT AS
MUCH FUN!



GEOGRAPHY PLAYS AN
IMPORTANT ROLE IN
INFLUENCING A SOCIETY'S
CHARACTER



MISSISSIPPI – LEAST LIVABLE STATE

1999 – 2005: 50th

1995 – 1998: 49th

1994: 46th

1993: 48th

1992: 50th

1991: 45th

MISSISSIPPI

Highest Rate of Teenage Pregnancy

Highest Sales Tax on Groceries

Highest % of Pop. Living Below Poverty Level

Lowest Per Capita Income

Lowest Average Household Income

Lowest Spending per Student K-12

Leads nation in amputations from Diabetes



OUTLINE

Critical Theory

Traditionalist Culture

Plantation Econo. Model/Mindset

Dominated by White Elite



CRITICAL THEORY

Social & cultural groups compete to legitimize their own versions of social reality



**STATE SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS ARE
USED BY THE DOMINANT CLASS
TO CREATE AND REPLICATE
CONDITIONS THAT SUSTAIN THEIR
FAVORED POSITIONS THROUGH
THE EXPLOITATION OF THE LOWER
CLASSES**



JAMES KIMBLE VARDAMAN

THE GREAT WHITE CHIEF

1861-1930

Mississippi

- Legislator
- Governor
- US Senator

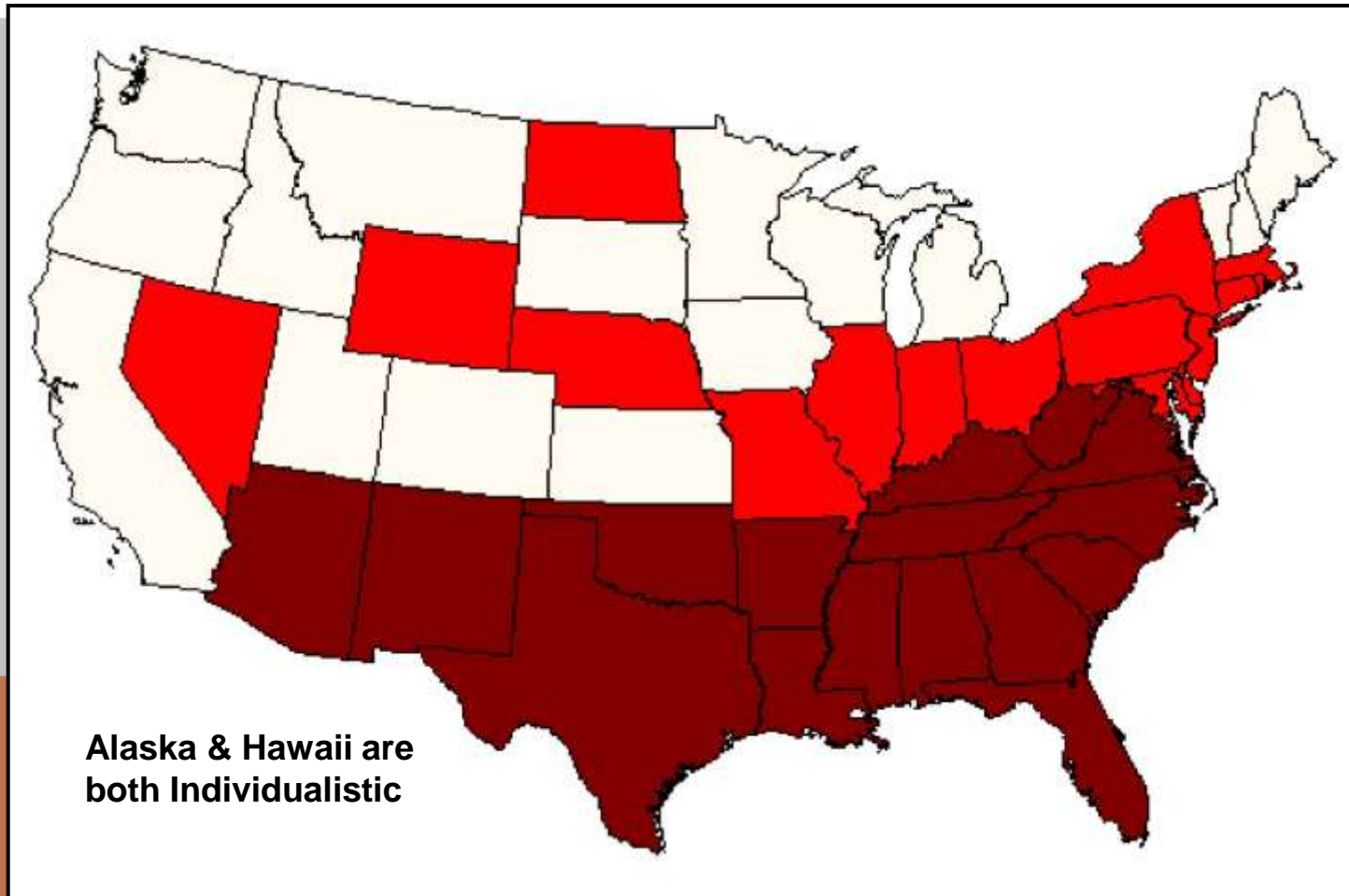
“Education only makes the Negro dissatisfied with his lowly position in society.”




“...an education will ruin a good field hand.”

Legacy

- Resident of Webster County, 2005
- “I’ll be damned if I’m going to pay more taxes just to help poor people.”

ELAZAR'S STATE CULTURE



- Moralistic** 
- Individualistic** 
- Traditionalistic** 

Alaska & Hawaii are both Individualistic

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

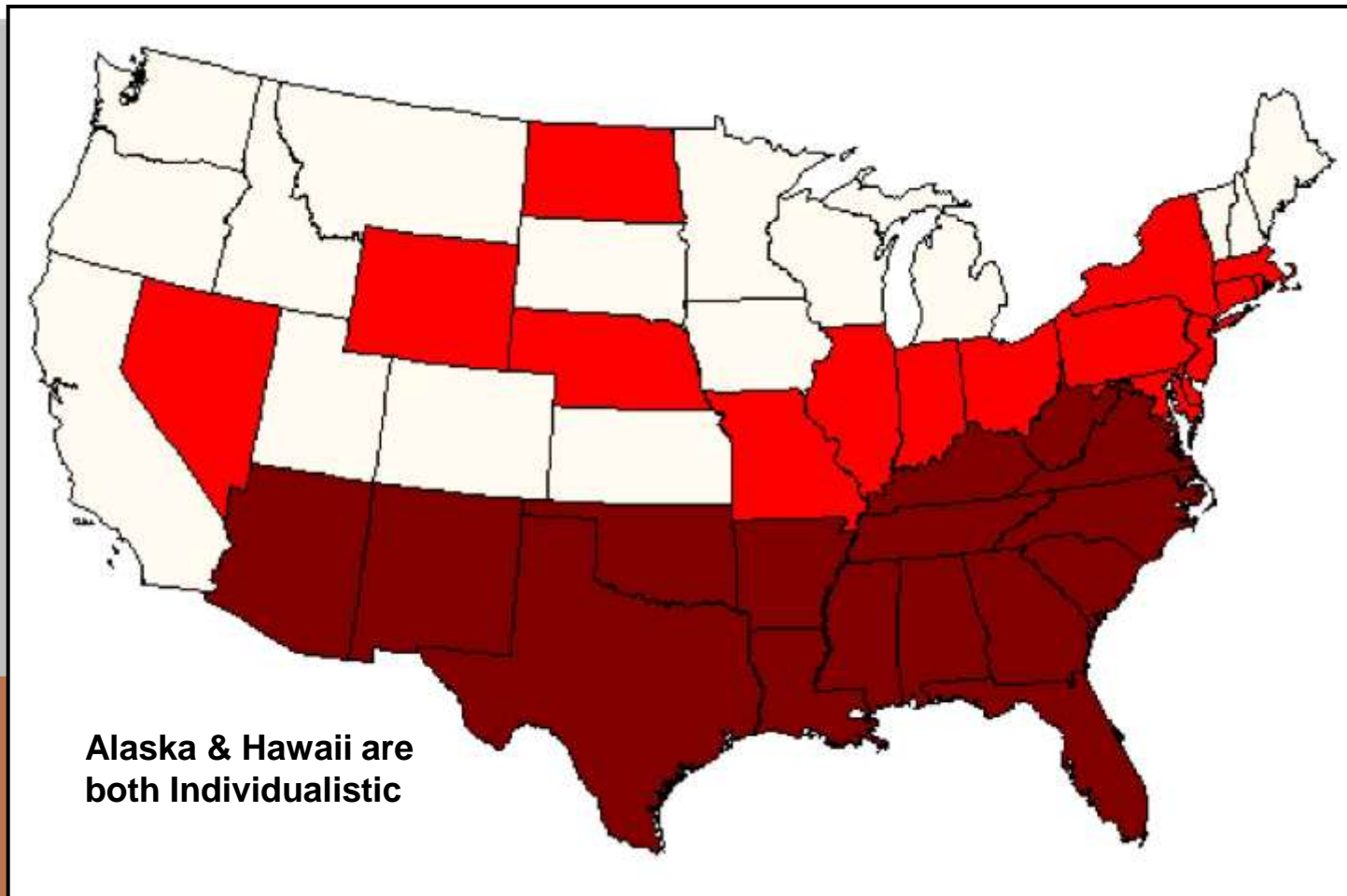
Paternalistic and Elitist

Accepts a substantially hierarchical society

Those at top of social structure

- Special & dominant role in government
- Maintain the existing order

ELAZAR'S STATE CULTURES



Moralistic



Individualistic



Traditionalistic



**Alaska & Hawaii are
both Individualistic**

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Leadership assumes problems of governing stem from outside exploitation

Mississippi Civil Rights Era

- “Outside agitators”



TRADITIONAL CULTURE

NEGRO REVOLUTION

Photographically reproduced in full from the Congressional Record, February 3, 1965, pages 1908-1918, and rearranged for space

Senators James O. Eastland and John Stennis of Mississippi expose Communist "attempt to take over the State of Mississippi"

From the
Congressional
Record, 1965

...and Communist to the Negro Revolution is not coming entirely from Communist and pro-Communist sources, it is being provided also by others, including both persons and organizations which are demonstrably not Communist, and which may not even know that they are serving the purposes of world communism and helping toward the achievement of a Communist objective.

For example, Communist support for and participation in the so-called Freedom Party and its activities is both direct and diffused. Communist infiltration of the so-called Freedom Party can be traced clearly and demonstrated readily.

But support for the so-called Freedom Party has come also from groups and individuals that are not Communist, and from others in which the Communist influence, if it exists, is not clearly evident or easily exposed.

The State of Mississippi has been sus-

On the contrary, the so-called Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party was sponsored by nonresidents of the State of Mississippi, organized by nonresidents of the State of Mississippi, and chiefly developed by nonresidents of the State of Mississippi. Its principal support and impetus come today from outside the State of Mississippi. It gets most of its financing from outside the State of Mississippi. This is a carpetbag outfit if there ever was one.

The so-called State convention of the so-called Freedom Democratic Party was attended by only some 400 representatives and these 400 came from only 40 of the 82 counties of Mississippi. More than half the counties of the State had no representation at all in this rump meeting.

The idea of a Freedom Democratic Party popped up after a planned meeting, scheduled to be held in Jackson, Miss., in early May of last year for the purpose of arranging participation, by stooges of the State group, in precinct meetings of the regular Democratic Party of Mississippi on June 16, 1964, turned out to be a complete fiasco. That meeting was arranged under the directions of David Dennis, Mississippi Director of CORE. When only 55 persons showed up at the meeting, representing only 4 Mississippi counties, it was decided to try to develop a new party. Dummy conventions were held in precincts in 40 counties, and then county conventions were held on August 1 and the statewide convention of the so-called Freedom Democratic Party came along on August 8.

where the fifth-floor private session had been set up by the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. The Mississippi group is acting under a law permitting contestants to take depositions against newly elected Members during the first 60 days of a new session of Congress.

Morton Stavis, a Newark lawyer who is national coordinator of the caravan, told the group that Mississippi was readmitted to representation in Congress in 1870 after the Civil War on a compact that its State constitution would never be changed to deprive any citizens of the right to vote if they were entitled to vote under the 1868 constitution.

The only qualifications then set were that the voters be male citizens at least 21 years old, who had lived 6 months in the State and 1 month in a county. But in 1890, he asserted, Mississippi repudiated this compact with a new constitution requiring voters to be able to give "a reasonable interpretation" of any section.

The current challenge, served December 1 on the four Democratic Representatives and one Republican elected last November, charges that Negroes have been "systematically excluded" from voting in Mississippi.

William M. Kvattler and Arthur M. Kinov, who with Benjamin E. Smith, of New Orleans, are general attorneys for the Freedom Democratic Party, said the effort would seek subpoenas for depositions throughout Mississippi's 82 counties.

Among those to be served are Gov. Paul B. Johnson, Jr., Attorney General Joe T. Patterson, and Secretary of State Heber LeDner, as members of the State board of education. The procedure under title 3, chapter 7, of the United States Code, provides for subpoenas that may be issued by officials living within such congressional district, ranging from judges and mayors down to public notaries.

Among the volunteers here, Ernst Rosenberger, of 80 William Street, who is 28 years

A news story which moved on the Associated Press wire from New York and was published in the Washington Post & Times Herald on January 12, 1965, set forth that a group of 21 lawyers planned efforts in Mississippi to seek the ouster of that State's five Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Starting this had been announced at a press conference in New York, the AF story went on to say this group of lawyers is headed by one Morton Stavis who calls himself the national coordinator of deposition caravan. Morton told the Associated Press his group would seek depositions from citizens of Mississippi in an effort to prove that Mississippi has violated the conditions under which it was readmitted to representation in Congress in 1870.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of this Associated Press news story, and also the text of a story from the Worker of January 17, 1965, which I now send forward, may be printed at this point in the Record as a part of my remarks.

There being no objection, the articles were ordered to be printed in the Record, as follows:

[From the Washington (D.C.) Post, Jan. 12, 1965]

SEARCH OF TWO HUNDRED

A group of 21 lawyers yesterday planned efforts in Mississippi to help seek the ouster of that State's five Members of the U.S. House of Representatives. The move was announced at a New York news conference. They said they would go there to take depositions, starting this week, claiming that Negroes have been systematically excluded from voting in elections there.

TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Hurricane Camille, 1969

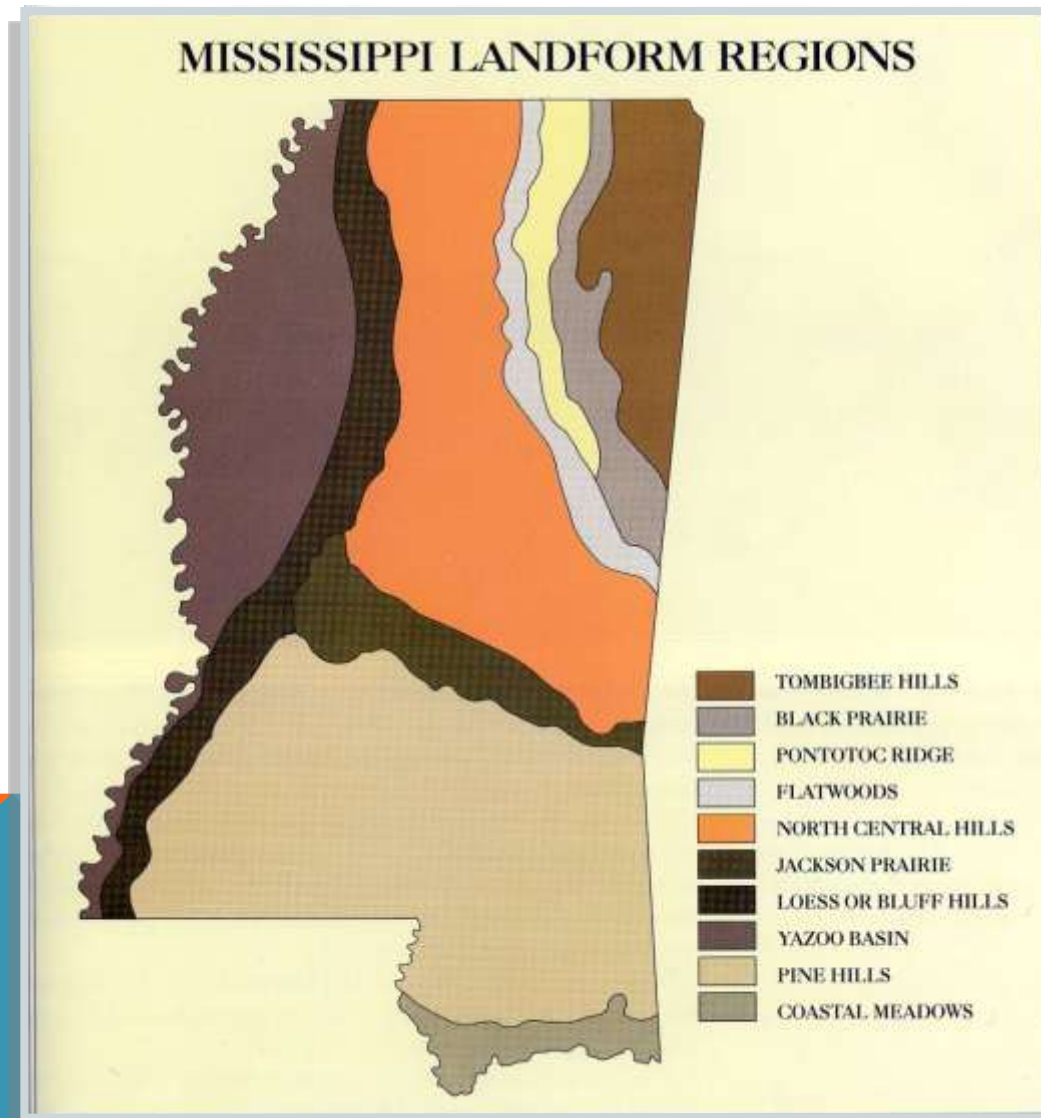
- Federal funds delayed until Mississippi schools were desegregated

PLANTATION ECONOMIC MODEL

Core criteria

- Single crop for export
 - Maximize profits
- Large labor demand at harvest
- Hierarchical social structure
 - Owner
 - Manager
 - Labor

PLANTATION SYSTEM AND MINDSET



PLANTATION MINDSET

more in common with “...the Caribbean and Central and South America than with the metropolitan United States”

- Charles S. Aiken, 1998, *The cotton plantation South since the Civil War*

Plantations and Leisure Industries

- Reliance on low-wage workers
 - Imported capital investment
 - Imported management
- 

EDUCATION AND WELFARE REFORM

Foucault: Dominant Culture

- has ultimate societal authority
- Designs educational infrastructure & curriculum to get subjugated peoples to engage in their own subjugation


Traditionalist Culture

- Skilled, yet compliant workforce

*Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity
Reconciliation Act, 1996*

EDUCATION AND WELFARE REFORM

1991

- Random drug testing
 - Rewards for recipients who marry
 - Mandatory birth control implants
 - Defeated in legislature
- 


EDUCATION AND WELFARE REFORM

1991

- Mississippi Department of Human Services
 - DHS
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
 - TANF

EDUCATION AND WELFARE REFORM

DHS identified needed job skills in Mississippi

- Mississippi
 - 50th in High School Graduation Rate
 - 1. Housekeeping staff for hotels of gaming industry
 - 2. Ground keeping for Mississippi's public universities
- 

EDUCATION AND WELFARE REFORM

Gaming Industry Management

- Legislative ban on teaching at Mississippi public universities
- Casinos = Colonial Plantations
 - Middle managers from outside
- DHS & Mississippi Legislature

THEREFORE



MISSISSIPPI CITIZENS IN
CASINO MANAGEMENT
BAD

MISSISSIPPI CITIZENS IN
CASINO HOTEL HOUSEKEEPING
GOOD



TAX STRUCTURE

“No new taxes”


Premise

- Mississippi taxes are too high
- Higher than people can afford to pay
- Not true

TAX STRUCTURE

Mississippi – 45th in total tax burden

Among lowest taxes in USA

- Individual income tax
 - Corporate income taxes
 - Gasoline tax
 - Property taxes
 - Cigarette taxes
- 

TAX STRUCTURE

Mississippi cigarette tax

- 18¢ per pack

Chicago

- \$2 per pack



TAX STRUCTURE


Average Tax Payer in Mississippi paid (2004)

- \$795 state income tax
- \$811 annual sales taxes

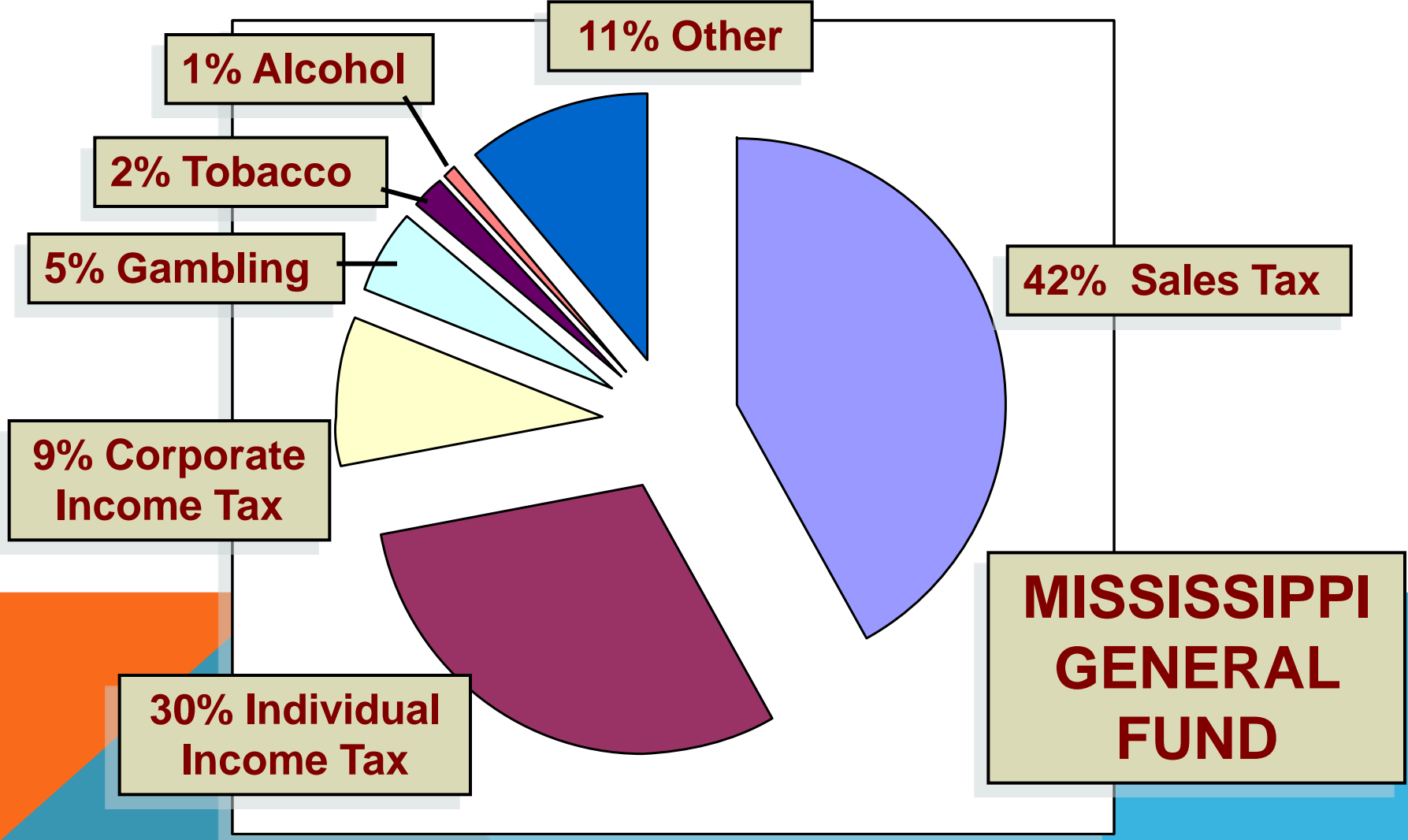
Mississippi – 40th lowest in per capita property tax (2000)

- \$515

MISSISSIPPI RECEIVES FROM FEDERAL SPENDING
\$1.89
FOR EVERY \$1.00 PAID IN FEDERAL INCOME TAX
4TH BEST IN USA



TAX STRUCTURE



TAX STRUCTURE

High state sales tax

- Charged on all groceries
- Regressive tax
- Hits poor the hardest
 - 20% below the poverty level
 - Highest in USA

TAX STRUCTURE

No support for Property Tax increases

- Demand state budget supply citizens' wants
- Fix schools in Mississippi
- Refuses modest property tax increases

Low property taxes benefit dominant class



TAX STRUCTURE & CRITICAL THEORY

Dominant culture uses state intuitions to sustain their favorable status

Mississippi suffering from collective
“Stockholm Syndrome”

- Hostage exhibits loyalty to hostage taker

CONCLUSION



IF YOU WANT TO
UNDERSTAND THE
WORLD,
UNDERSTAND
MISSISSIPPI



TRANSLATION



EVERY STICK HAS TWO ENDS



OUR SOUTHERN RENAISSANCE



FASTEST GROWING REGION IN THE U.S.

38% OF U. S. POPULATION RESIDE THERE

UNIVERSITIES ARE COMMITTED TO GLOBALIZATION

R&D PARKS ARE LOCATING THERE

WARM CLIMATE

INTERNATIONAL BUSINESSES LOCATING THERE



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Top producer of faculty Fulbright scholars

High research classification

Hosts 1,000 internationals from 75 nations

Leading undergraduate research institution

Very strong agricultural/aquaculture college

World recognized engineering college

