
Research Note: Political Scientists' Policy Views and Voting¹

Description of Survey and Data

In March and April 2003, 1000 U.S. members of the American Political Science Association were surveyed using a randomly generated list of members. The overall aim of the survey project is to study how the individual's political views change over time; the survey asks the respondent to report the policy views he had when he was 25 years old, and then asks his present views. A byproduct of the investigation, then, is information about respondents' present views. This paper simply summarizes the present public policy views of APSA members; we do not consider the "when 25" views here.² The survey controller received 309 nonblank anthropology surveys returned, a response rate of 31 percent (adjusting for PO Returns, etc.).

According to our investigations, little is known about the political views of political scientists. By contrast, the discipline of economics has a substantial tradition of surveying economists about their policy judgments, voting behavior, and political values.³ This presentation of the policy and voting questions, showing the political scientists' response frequencies and percentages, can be a starting point to stimulating a similar discussion and awareness.

Description of the Political Science Sample

1) Check the highest degree you hold (N=309)⁴

Ph.D	308	99.68 %
Non-response	1	0.32 %

The sample of political scientists mostly contains individuals with a Ph.D. And 98.05 percent (302 respondents) reported political science as the field in which they got the degree.

2) Check your primary employment (N=309)

Academic	267	86.4 %
Public sector	16	5.2 %
Private sector	13	4.2 %
Independent research	12	3.9 %
Non-response	1	0.3 %

Of those reporting Academic, we asked two follow-up questions:

3) What is the highest degree your department issues? (N=266)

Bachelors	74	27.7 %
Masters	44	16.5 %
Ph.D.	147	55.1 %
Non-response	2	0.8 %

4) Is your college/university public or private? (N=266)

Public	144	53.9 %
Private	115	43.1 %
Both	7	2.6 %
No response	1	0.4 %

Political scientists' views on the 18 public policy questions

The respondents were asked 18 questions about public policy issues. The following query about tariffs shows the format:

Tariffs on imported goods to protect American industries and jobs:

%	%	%	%	%	%
support	support	have mixed	oppose	oppose	have no
strongly	mildly	feelings	mildly	strongly	opinion
1	2	3	4	5	

The numbers 1-5 did not appear in the survey. They show how we weighted each response when creating an index (or mean response).

Here we present the results on the 18 policy questions in three groups: economic regulations, regulation of personal choices, and role of government.

TABLE 1
Political scientists' views on domestic economic regulations,
N=309, frequency (percent).

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>				
<i>Issue addressed</i>	<i>Support strongly</i>	<i>Support mildly</i>	<i>Have mixed feelings</i>	<i>Oppose mildly</i>	<i>Oppose strongly</i>	<i>Have no opinion</i>	<i>No response</i>	Mean value	(St.D)
Tariffs to protect American industries	16 (5.2)	28 (9.1)	70 ¹ (22.7)	81 (26.2)	108 (35.0)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.6)	3.78	(1.18)
Minimum wage laws	208 (67.3)	51 (16.5)	23 (7.4)	13 (4.2)	8 (2.6)	1 (0.3)	5 (1.6)	1.55	(0.99)
Occupational safety regs (OSHA)	232 (75.1)	44 (14.2)	17 (5.5)	9 (2.9)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	4 (1.3)	1.37	(0.78)
Pharmaceutical market reg (FDA)	242 (78.3)	39 (12.6)	13 (4.2)	5 (1.6)	4 (1.3)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.9)	1.32	(0.75)
Air and water regulation (EPA)	242 (78.3)	42 ² (13.6)	11 (3.6)	5 (1.6)	2 (0.7)	1 (0.3)	6 (1.9)	1.29	(0.68)
<i>Domestic Economic Regulation index, Mean (and St.D):</i>								1.87	(0.61)

Of all 18 issues, tariffs drew the greatest opposition from political scientists. But on all the other economic regulations, political scientists are generally supporters, mostly strong supporters.

TABLE 2
Political scientists' views on public policies concerning regulations of personal choices, N=309, frequency (percent).

	1	2	3	4	5			
<i>Issue addressed</i>	<i>Support strongly</i>	<i>Support mildly</i>	<i>Have mixed feelings</i>	<i>Oppose mildly</i>	<i>Oppose strongly</i>	<i>Have no opinion</i>	<i>No response</i>	Mean value (St.D)
Discrimination controls	238 (77.0)	36 (11.7)	21 (6.8)	4 (1.3)	6 (1.9)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.3)	1.37 (0.83)
Controls on "hard" drugs	142 (46.0)	59 (19.1)	51 (16.5)	28 (9.1)	21 (6.8)	2 (0.7)	6 (1.9)	2.09 (1.28)
Prostitution controls	46 (14.9)	67 (21.7)	84 (27.2)	64 (20.7)	38 (12.3)	6 (1.9)	4 (1.3)	2.94 (1.25)
Gambling restrictions	66 (21.4)	75 (24.3)	69 (22.3)	53 (17.2)	36 (11.7)	5 (1.6)	5 (1.6)	2.73 (1.31)
Gun control	226 (73.1)	31 (10.0)	16 (5.2)	16 (5.2)	15 (4.9)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.6)	1.56 (1.12)
								2.13 (0.72)

Regulation of Personal Choice Index, Mean (and St.D):

We see that political scientists are mostly strong supporters of government restrictions on discrimination and of gun control, less so on "hard" drugs, but are quite mixed on prostitution and gambling restrictions.

TABLE 3
Political scientists views on public issues concerning the role of government, N=350, frequency (percent).

	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>			
<i>Issue addressed</i>	<i>Support strongly</i>	<i>Support mildly</i>	<i>Have mixed feelings</i>	<i>Oppose mildly</i>	<i>Oppose strongly</i>	<i>Have no opinion</i>	<i>No response</i>	Mean value (St.D)
Government ownership of enterprise	20 (6.5)	50 (16.2)	66 (21.4)	64 (20.7)	101 (32.7)	2 (0.7)	6 (1.9)	3.58 (1.28)
Redistribution	203 (65.7)	57 (18.5)	21 (6.8)	11 (3.6)	13 (4.2)	2 (0.7)	2 (0.7)	1.60 (1.05)
Government production of schooling (k thru 12)	189 (61.2)	32 (10.4)	30 (9.7)	10 (3.2)	11 (3.6)	5 (1.6)	32 (10.4)	1.61 (1.08)
Tuning the economy by monetary policy	116 (37.5)	127 (41.1)	41 (13.3)	8 (2.6)	7 (2.3)	8 (2.6)	2 (0.7)	1.87 (0.91)
Tuning the economy by fiscal policy	147 (47.6)	94 (30.4)	46 (14.9)	7 (2.3)	7 (2.3)	6 (1.9)	2 (0.7)	1.78 (0.95)
Tighter controls on immigration	58 (18.8)	53 (17.2)	62 (20.1)	70 (22.7)	63 (20.4)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)	3.09 (1.41)
Military aid/presence abroad	54 (17.5)	74 (24.0)	88 (28.5)	32 (10.4)	51 (16.5)	0 (0.0)	10 (3.2)	2.84 (1.32)
Foreign aid (World Bk, IMF, USAID)	157 (50.8)	74 (24.0)	51 (16.5)	13 (4.2)	11 (3.6)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.0)	1.85 (1.07)
<i>Role of Government Index (includes the 8 issues above), Mean (and St.D.):</i>								2.29 (0.54)
<i>Public Policy Index (includes all 18 issues), Mean (and St.D.):</i>								2.12 (0.47)

Political scientists lean against government ownership of enterprises. They are rather centered on immigration and military action abroad. Lean in support of foreign aid, monetary policy, and fiscal policy. They generally support redistribution and the government production of schooling.

Political Scientists' Voting Behavior
TABLE 4
*To which political party have the candidates
you've voted for in the past ten years mostly belonged?*

	Frequency	Percent
Democratic	238	77.0
Republican	43	13.9
Green	2	0.7
Libertarian	4	1.3
Respondents checking more than one option		
Democratic/Republican	5	1.6
Diffuse (checked 3 or more)	6	1.9
Non-response	9	2.9
Cannot vote	2	0.7
Total	309	100

Political scientists preponderantly vote Democratic. The Democrat:Republican ratio is 5.5:1. A 2001 Brookings Institution survey of A.P.S.A. members with 160 respondents found a ratio of 4.8:1. Hence, they found a lower ratio. The Brookings study also surveyed economists, sociologists, and historians. For economists and sociologists, their ratios were higher than ours, and for historians it was lower.⁷ The differences might be partly accounted for by the fact that the Brookings survey selected academics with certain specialties.⁸

Voting Behavior from the Six Fields

TABLE 5

Voting behavior of the associations studied (N=1678)

	Dem (%)	Green (%)	Liber (%)	Repub (%)	Misc. (%)	No Resp. (%)	Total (100%)
Anthropology	295 (84.3)	6 (1.7)	1 (0.3)	19 (5.4)	20 (5.7)	9 (2.6)	350
Economics	152 (57.8)	2 (0.8)	7 (2.7)	61 (23.1)	18 (6.4)	24 (9.1)	264
History	231 (77.8)	2 (0.7)	0 (0.00)	38 (12.8)	17 (5.7)	9 (3.0)	297
Philosophy (Political and Legal)	82 (76.6)	2 (1.9)	4 (3.7)	11 (10.3)	4 (3.7)	4 (3.7)	107
Political Science	238 (77.0)	2 (0.6)	4 (1.3)	43 (13.9)	13 (4.2)	9 (2.9)	309
Sociology	288 (82.1)	8 (2.3)	0 (0.00)	18 (5.1)	19 (5.4)	18 (5.1)	351
Total	1286 (76.6)	22 (1.3)	16 (1.0)	190 (11.3)	91 (5.4)	73 (4.4)	1678

Of the six fields surveyed, voting Democratic is most preponderant among the anthropologists and sociologists, where the Democrat:Republican ratio is in each case more than 15:1. Again, for political scientists it is 5.5:1. The least preponderant is Economics, but even there the ratio is about 2.5:1.

Summary

The survey results indicate that political scientists on the whole are mostly "left-liberal." They favor economic regulations, gun control, anti-discrimination laws, public schooling, and redistribution, but are moderate or mixed on foreign aid, drugs, prostitution, gambling laws, tightening immigration, and military action abroad. They lean against tariffs and government ownership of enterprise. Preponderantly, they vote Democratic.

Further reading on the ideology of academia:

- Klein, Daniel B. and Andrew Western. 2005. *How Many Democrats per Republican at UC-Berkeley and Stanford? Voter Registration Data Across 23 Academic Departments*. *Academic Questions*, forthcoming. Online at http://www.ratio.se/pdf/wp/dk_aw_voter.pdf.
- Klein, Daniel B. and Charlotta Stern. 2005a. "Economists' Policy Views and Voting." *Public Choice*, forthcoming.
- Klein, Daniel B. and Charlotta Stern. 2005b. "Democrats and Republicans in Anthropology and Sociology: How Do They Differ on Public Policy Issues?" *The American Sociologist*, forthcoming.
- Klein, Daniel B. and Charlotta Stern. 2005c. "How Diverse are the Social Sciences and Humanities? Survey Evidence from Six Fields." *Academic Questions*, forthcoming.
- Ladd, Everett Carll, Jr. and Seymour Martin Lipset. 1975. *The Divided Academy: Professors & Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1982. "The Academic Mind at the Top: The Political Behavior and Values of Faculty Elites." *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 46 (2), Summer: 143-168.
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- Lipset, Seymour Martin. 1994. "The State of American Sociology." *Sociological Forum*, 9 (2), June: 199-220.
- Redding, Richard E. 2001. "Sociopolitical Diversity in Psychology: The Case for Pluralism." *American Psychologist* 56(3): 205-215.
- Rothman, Stanley, S., Robert Lichter, Neil Nevitte. 2005. "Politics and Professional Advancement Among College Faculty." *The Forum* 3(1), article 2.
- Spaulding, Charles B. and Henry A. Turner. 1968. "Political Orientation and Field of Specialization Among College Pro-

fessors.” *Sociology of Education* 41(3): 247-262.

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NOTES

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2. At the Survey Homepage one may view a sample survey and documents explaining the methods, independent control, and certification of the survey results. The Survey Homepage URL is <http://lsb.scu.edu/~dklein/survey/survey.htm>. For references to our other papers, see the Further Readings listed at the end of this paper.

3. There have been more than ten surveys asking economists their policy opinions. A few of the more prominent ones are reported by the following four papers: J. R. Kearl, Clayne L. Pope, Gordon C. Whiting, and Larry T. Wimmer, “A Confusion of Economists.” *American Economic Review, Papers and Proceedings* 69 May, 1979: 28-37; Richard M. Alson, James R. Kearl, and Michael B. Vaughan, “Is there a Consensus among Economists in the 1990s?” *American Economic Review, Papers and Proceedings* 82 May 1992: 203-09; Victor. R. Fuchs, Alan B. Krueger, and James M. Poterba, “Economists’ Views about Parameters, Values, and Policies: Survey Results in Labor and Public Economics.” *Journal of Economic Literature* 36 (3), 1998: 1387-425; Dan A. Fuller and D. Geide-Stevenson, “Consensus among Economists: Revisited.” *Journal of Economic Education* 34 (4), 2003: 369-387.

4. Two respondents (0.67%) had other degrees.

5. One respondent checked both “support strongly” and “oppose strongly;” counted as “have mixed feelings.”

6. One respondent checked both “support strongly” and “have mixed feelings;” counted as “support mildly.”

7. See “National Survey on Government Endeavors,” Prepared by Princeton Survey Research Associates for the Brookings Institution, dated November 9, 2001, page 54; online at: <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/reformwatch/rw04/surveydata.pdf>.

8. See Paul C. Light, “Government’s Greatest Priorities of the Next Half Century,” *Reform Watch*, No. 4, Brookings Institution, December 2001, p. 3; online at: <http://www.brookings.edu/dybdocroot/comm/reformwatch/rw04/rw4.pdf>.