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By the Numbers: The Ideological Profile of Professors

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There have been two peaks in interest about the ideology of professors, the first in the 1960's and 70's, the second in the beginning of the 21st century. In both periods the findings were challenged by scholars saying that professors are not as radical as the studies made out. But there is one difference between the periods: In the earlier period the critics were openly disappointed with the lack of radicalness, whereas in the later period the critics defensively argue that professors are more like ordinary people, more “moderate,” than the studies make out.

The change in attitude can partly be understood as due to attributes of the messenger; in the earlier period the studies were launched by prominent academics such as Ladd and Lipset² and openly left sympathizers such as Faia,³ whereas the later period the studies come conservative and classical liberal/libertarian voices. The change in attitude may also be an indication of the decline of professors with definite non-left views. This chapter summarizes the evidence and shows that there are few such professors in the social sciences and humanities today, and that there has been a decline in definite non-left views since the 1960s, indicated by Republican voting, self-identified conservative leanings, or policy views.

We focus on the humanities and social sciences because in those disciplines ideological sensibilities likely play a significant role and speak to students about political matters. Political views play a much smaller role in math or chemistry. (Throughout the paper, “humanities and social sciences” is abbreviated h/ss.)

Voter Registration Studies

Compared to survey methods, voter registration has the virtues of avoiding response bias and membership bias (that is, membership in associations or other sources of a sample). However, the approach is obviously limited by America's two-party system, the crudeness of

what can be inferred from support for either of those two parties, and the problem that a large percent of any faculty sample cannot be identified as being either Democratic or Republican.⁴ Of course, there is also the concern that the faculties investigated are not representative of academia in general.

Perhaps search costs or scruples about propriety deterred earlier researchers, as only recently have researchers investigated voter registration data. Table 1 provides a summary of voter registration studies since 2001.

Table 1: Democrat:Republican ratios found in voter registration studies⁵

	A	B	C
	Cardiff & Klein	5 misc. studies	CSPC
Anthropology	10.5	21*	
Economics	2.8	1.6	4.3
English	13.3	19.3	18.6
History	10.9	75	20.7
Philosophy	5.0	24	8.9
Political Sci.	6.5	7.9	7.9
Sociology	44.0	32*	30.4

Source: Cardiff and Klein⁶

The voter registration studies find that h/ss faculties are dominated registered Democrats. Cardiff and Klein⁷ also present information about other academic divisions of 11 California faculties, including Pepperdine and Claremont-McKenna, which are reputed to be relatively conservative. As can be seen in Table 2, there are significant variations across academic divisions when the 11 institutions are treated as a single pool.

Drawing on a variety of evidence, Klein and Stern⁸ suggested that the h/ss faculties in the United States, excluding two-year colleges⁹, have an overall D:R ratio (either in terms of usual voting behavior or voter registration) of **at least 7:1 and more likely about 8:1**. In this article we suggest that such estimates continue to appear sound.

Table 2: Democrat:Republican ratios in 11 California universities in 2004-5¹⁰

<i>Division</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Dem.</i>	<i>Rep.</i>	<i>Ds Per R</i>
Humanities	1153	600	60	10.0
Arts	313	151	20	7.6
Social Sciences	1039	529	78	6.8
Hard Sciences/Math	1635	792	126	6.3
Medicine/Nursing/Health	489	233	49	4.8
Social Professional	662	315	71	4.4
Engineering	700	213	85	2.5
Business	389	116	86	1.3
Military/Sports	69	11	15	0.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>6449</i>	<i>2960</i>	<i>590</i>	<i>5.0</i>

Source: Cardiff and Klein¹¹

Meanwhile, the Cardiff and Klein study shows that Democratic preponderance is not the case at every school. Among the 11 schools investigated, the faculty *overall* at Pepperdine had a D:R ratio of 0.9, Point Loma Nazarene 1.0, and Claremont McKenna 1.3. However, those schools were deliberately included in the investigation because they have reputations for being conservative.

Table 2 shows that the only category that favors Republicans is military/sports, which is the smallest. The surprise is not that military/sports is less Democratic than other divisions, but that it is not more Republican than it is. The same is true of Business, where the ratio of 1.3 Democrats per Republican indicates that the latter are not marginalized in business education, but that they are not dominant, either.

The high h/ss D:R ratios echo studies from the 1960s. Older studies (which relied on self-reported voting, not voter registration) often discussed an ideological divide in academia between h/ss and the “hard” sciences.¹² Voter registration studies do not find such divide. The hard sciences in these 11 California faculties are preponderantly Democratic.

Cardiff and Klein also examine gender. Women are generally found to have significantly higher D:R ratios, except at Caltech and the two Protestant schools (Pepperdine and PLNU).

Cardiff and Klein also slice the data by academic rank. Although the pattern is not uniform across the 11 schools, on the whole, the Republicans who can be found among the faculty are disproportionately full professors (as compared to the combined associate and assistant professor).¹³ Such is the case at all but two of the smaller schools, Pepperdine and Caltech, and dramatically so at Berkeley and Stanford. The implication is that, unless young Democratic professors occasionally mature into Republicans, in the future the D:R ratios are generally going to become more lopsided.

Democrat versus Republican by Self-Reporting

Another kind of “Democrat versus Republican” data comes from survey questions that ask the respondent to report own voting behavior, party identification, or party leanings. The phrasings of such questions differ, and the differences can be significant. For example, response might be sensitive to the moment or referent election (consider the 1964 Johnson landslide against Goldwater). Here we treat them as asking the same basic question. Such questions were asked by earlier researchers, so here we have comparison over decades.

The larger claim we wish to suggest is that in the period of “around 1970” **the D:R ratio in the h/ss was about 4:1** (excluding two-year colleges). Thus, roughly speaking, over the 35-year period of 1970 to 2005, the h/ss D:R ratio has probably about doubled. Here we review the survey-based D:R data, but space constraints require the omission of exact wording, sampling size and method, etc.

D:R during the earlier period

Table 3 presents an overview reported by Faia¹⁴ of results on faculty voting 1955 to 1972.

Table 3: Democrat:Republican ratios found in surveys of the entire faculty 1960 to 1972¹⁵

Source: Faia 1974, 174	Yee 1963	Joyner 1963	Eitzen and Maranell 1968 ¹⁶	Faia 1967	Ladd and Lipset 1973
Year of data	1960	1962	1962	1965	1972
	Faculty 3 state colleges, Wash.	Faculty U. of Arizona	Behavioral, Physical and Fine arts	Faculty of univ. and colleges in Calif.	Faculty, national sample
Average	2.04	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.6

Overall, the results suggest that across campus in those days there was a Democratic lead, ranging between 1.3 to 2.6. Nowadays, faculty surveys on voting report 4.5:1,¹⁷ 2.9:1,¹⁸ and 3.6:1.^{19,20}

Humanities and Social Sciences (h/ss)

In h/ss the Democratic lead has always been larger, as shown in Table 4, with earlier discipline surveys showing D:R ratios in the range of 2.3 to 7.5.

Additionally, in the 1955 survey of social scientists, Lazardfeld and Thielens (1958) found an overall ratio of 2.9.

Table 4: Democrat:Republican ratios found in surveys of certain disciplines in the Social Sciences and Humanities, 1959 to 1964²¹

Source:	Turner et. al. 1963a	Turner et al. 1963b	Spaulding and Turner 1968 ^{10a}	Eitzen and Maranell 1968 ²²	McClintock et al. 1965
Year	1959	1960	1959-64	1962	1962
History			2.6* (72 % D)		
Philosophy			3.8*		

			(79 % D)		
Pol. Science	4.5				
Psychology				2.3	3.4
Sociology		7.5			

Ladd and Lipset²³ present data on presidential voting by the entire “social science” and “humanities” categories, as shown in Table 5:

Table 5: Democrat:Republican voting in Presidential Elections, 1964, 1968, 1972

	1964 <i>Presidential Election</i>	1968 <i>Presidential Election</i>	1972 <i>Presidential Election</i>
Social Science	8.9	3.8	3.5
Humanities	6.6	3.1	2.4

Source: Ladd and Lipset²⁴

The smattering of data seem to sustain the conclusion that ca 1970 the overall D:R ratio in h/ss was probably somewhere between 3.5 and 4.

D:R Survey Data Nowadays

Surveys of recent years, shown in Table 6, indicate a substantial increase in D:R ratios. Further, Rothman et al.²⁵ find for the humanities as a whole a ratio of 10.3, and for the social sciences 7.9. Meanwhile, Tobin and Weinberg²⁶ report that in the 2004 election the ratio of Kerry to Bush voters was 5.4 in the humanities and 4.8 in the social sciences.²⁷

Table 6: Democrat:Republican ratios found in surveys of faculty in the Social Sciences and Humanities 1999 to 2003²⁸

Source:	Rothman et al. 2005	Brookings 2001, Light 2001	Klein & Stern 2005a	Gross & Simmons 2007 ⁺
Year	1999	2001	2003	2006
Economics	2.1	3.7	2.9	3.0
Phil	5.6		9.1	
History	17.5	4.1	8.5	18.9
Political science	7.3	4.8	5.6	18.8
Psychology	9			

Sociology	59	47	28*	19.5
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The survey results may be compared to voter registration results only for the recent period. The two methods generally line up and reinforce each other. Gross and Simmons²⁹ report that Humanities professors in 2004 voted 83.7 percent for Kerry, 15.0 percent for Bush, and Social Science professors 87.6 percent for Kerry and 6.2 for Bush. They write: “Averaging the figures for the social sciences and humanities generates a ratio of Democratic to Republican voters of 8.1 to 1.”

D:R by Cohorts

Another way to detect changes over time is by comparing cohorts at the same point in time. That younger faculty are usually somewhat more likely to vote Democratic (or “left” candidates) is a finding of long-standing—Ladd and Lipset³⁰ show it for voting in the 1948 presidential election. Klein and Stern³¹ find that in each of the six h/ss associations surveyed, on the whole, older respondents are more likely to vote Republican as opposed to Democratic. In multivariate regression analysis they also find an increase in the likelihood of voting Democratic with the year of one’s degree, a relation that holds statistically (at 0.01) even with a number of variable controls.³² The size of the effect is not big, but it is statistically strong. Gross and Simmons³³ also indicate that Republican voters are more common among full professors.

The results agree with the voter registration data that generally found a lower D:R ratio among the full professors. Again, Republican representation will likely decline as the older professors pass from the scene.

“Liberal versus Conservative”

Analysis of D:R ratios has proceeded with only minor points of controversy: Are we excluding the two-year colleges? Are we talking about h/ss or the entire faculty? These points are readily resolved. Discussion of political or ideological views has been more troubled.

Some Conceptual Issues

Controversy surrounds the ways in which researchers “read” the data in terms of ideological attributions. Most scholars have employed America’s dominant one-dimensional framework, “liberal versus conservative” (sometimes with “left versus right”), which is often vague code for Democrat versus Republican. That framework has a number of problems.

There is a tendency to treat Democratic as identical to “liberal” and Republican as identical to “conservative.” One problem is that, third-parties etc. aside, voting behavior amounts to a binary variable with no in-between, but “liberal versus conservative” self-identification invariably allows for a substantial middle or center. The existence of a middle makes for confusion over the categorization of the middle.

Other problems with “liberal versus conservative” (and often “left versus right”) include: (1) “Middle of the road” as an option for self-identification is sensitive to “road” the respondent “lives on,” or his reference group; (2) Politics has more than one dimension (what exactly is being measured in the “liberal to conservative” dimension?); (3) The terms “liberal” and “conservative” have disparate connotations; (4) Liberalism originally suggested laissez-faire, and that classical meaning has been rejuvenated intellectually³⁴ and in popular discourse (“liberalization,” “liberal” drug or immigration policy, etc.); (5) Conservatism has traditionally meant establishment interests, but academe is one of the most established, caste-based domains of American society; also, extensive government interventions and welfare-state programs are

now pervasive and entrenched. So why shouldn't professors who support the status quo think of themselves as moderates or even conservatives?³⁵

If you stick your finger into a glass of water it appears bent. When light passes through a different medium it is refracted. Likewise, the problems listed above cause significant “refraction” from Democrat:Republican ratios to self-identified “liberal”:self-identified “conservative” ratios.

Those who highlight the preponderance of Democrats (as well as certain policy opinions) naturally impute ideological content to the findings. There has been a recurrent response by other scholars, who represent the highlighters as saying that there is a corresponding preponderance, more or less, of “liberals.” Academically well-placed examples of this kind of response are the following four papers:

1. “The Myth of the Liberal Professor” by Faia, *Sociology of Education*, 1974.
2. “The Politics of the Professors: Self-Identifications, 1969-1984” by Hamilton and Hargens, *Social Forces*, 1993.
3. “Is the Academy a Liberal Hegemony? The Political Orientations and Educational Values of Professors,” by Zipp and Fenwick, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2006.
4. “The Social and Political Views of American Professors” by Gross and Simmons, Harvard Working Paper, 2007.

Papers 2, 3, and 4 use political self-identification data to show that the liberals are less dominant than “right-wing activists and scholars”³⁶ suggest. One reason is that a lot of Democratic-voting professors self-identify as “middle/center” or “moderately conservative,” as in “conservative Democrat.” Another reason is that the authors include faculties of two-year colleges, weighted to represent their large numbers throughout the United States—a

controversial method, as clearly, beyond the classroom, faculty at two-year colleges have very little influence on research, scholarship, and public discourse. The first and second papers also include results of attitude questions about policy or university issues, and tend to show that only a minority of professors adopt the conspicuously “liberal” positions. Faia doubts whether self-identified “liberals” are really liberal.³⁷

The upshot is that different voices use terms differently. In making the “liberal” attribution, for example, there is a range *from widest to narrowest*:

- All professors who do not show themselves to be Republican or “real” conservatives or classical liberals.
- Professors who vote Democratic.
 - Professors who self-identify “liberal.”
 - Professors who take “liberal” positions on issues.

We should expect scholars of different perspectives to use terms differently, since ideological differences entail differences over the meaning of the most important words. If one wants to speak to ideological “others,” he should keep to relative concretes, such as reported voting and policy views. Nonetheless, we review the “liberal vs. conservative” findings here.

“Liberal versus Conservative”: Self-Identification

Survey research commonly asks about political views in terms of “liberal versus conservative.” One line of studies, shown in Table 7, is the Carnegie surveys of faculty, collecting data on academics in 1968, 1975, 1984, 1989, and 1997.³⁸

A similar approach has been undertaken at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) through surveys undertaken by the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI),³⁹ by the North American Academic Study Survey (NAASS) undertaken in 1999⁴⁰, and by the Institute

of Jewish Community Research (IJCR) undertaken in 2005.⁴¹ Results are summarized in Table 8.⁴²

Table 7: Liberal and Conservative percentages of all faculty, the Carnegie surveys over time, including two-year colleges

	1969	1975	1984		1989	1997
Left and Liberal	46	41	40	Liberal and moderately liberal	56	56
Middle of the road	27	28	27	Middle of the road	17	20
Moderately and strongly conservative	28	31	34	Moderately conservative and conservative	28	24

Source: Hamilton and Hargens⁴³

Source: Zipp and Fenwick⁴⁴

Table 8: Liberal and Conservative percentages of all faculty, the HERI and NAASS surveys⁴⁵

	1989	2001	1999	2005	2006
	HERI 2002	HERI 2002	NAASS/Rothman et.al 2005	IJCR/Tobin & Weinberg 2005	Gross & Simmons 2007
Liberal, left	42	48	72	50	44.1
Moderate, middle	40	34		32.3	46.6
Conservative, right	18	18	15	17.7	9.2

A lot depends on wording and how the researchers bunch multi-point responses into three categories. Also, the Carnegie, HERI, and Gross & Simmons surveys include two-year colleges, while the NAASS and IJCR do not. Conservative self-identification is substantially higher at two-year colleges than any other category of higher education, followed by non-liberal arts BA

colleges.⁴⁶ The recent Grossman & Simmons study helps to support the conclusion that self-identified conservatives have been declining.

Humanities and Social Sciences

If we exclude the two-year colleges from the Carnegie 1997 data, the results line up quite well with the 1999 NAASS data on h/ss, as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. NAASS/Rothman et al and Carnegie 1997, excluding two-year colleges (%)⁴⁷

Field of Study	Carnegie 1997 excluding 2-yr colleges		NAASS/Rothman et al 1999	
	Liberal/Mod. Lib	Mod Cons/Conserv	Liberal*	Conservative*
Social Sciences	75.8	14.3	75	9
Humanities	77.6	7.0	81	9

Gross and Simmons⁴⁸ provide the most recent data (including two-year colleges): Humanities professors self-identify 52.2 percent liberal, 44.3 percent moderate, 3.6 percent conservative; Social science professors self-identify 58.2 percent liberal, 36.9 percent moderate, 4.9 percent conservative. Again, the recent study supports the conclusion that self-identified conservatives have been in decline.

The Refraction between D:R and L:C

Rothman et al present Harris Poll data showing patterns in the U.S. public. We have pursued the point using Harris and Gallup data 1989-2004 in a response to Zipp and Fenwick.⁴⁹

The results were that Democrats:

- were more likely than Republicans to call themselves middle/center;

- called themselves “liberal” less often than Republicans call themselves “conservative;”
- called themselves “conservative” more often than Republicans call themselves “liberal.”

Those are findings about the public at large, but presumably they carried over at least weakly to professors as well. The upshot would be that social refraction causes D:R ratios to be substantially higher than L:C self-identification ratios.⁵⁰

The refraction from D:R to L:C is reinforced by Tobin and Weinberg.⁵¹ They find that among faculty describing themselves as moderates, in the 2004 presidential election 68 percent voted for Kerry and 27 percent for Bush. Also, they found that only one percent of professors who self-identify as liberal/very liberal voted for Bush, while eight percent of professors who self-identify as conservative/very conservative voted for Kerry.⁵²

To summarize: (1) Self-identified “liberals” substantially outnumber “conservatives,” especially in h/ss and especially when two-year colleges are excluded.⁵³ (2) L:C ratios are much lower than D:R ratios. We would add that tracking “liberal versus conservative” through the years is fraught with problems, even when confined to self-identification data. Evidence from Gross and Simmons indicates that being “moderate” is on the rise.

An Aside on Marxism

Gross and Simmons included a question that gave respondents opportunity to characterize as “Marxist.” We were surprised how many did: 17.6 percent in the Social Sciences (including 25.5 percent of Sociologists), 5.0 percent in the Humanities, and 12.0 percent of all liberal-arts colleges’ faculty. Of the overall faculty of all kinds of schools, Marxists were 3.0 percent.⁵⁴

Surveys of policy views: Laissez-Faire vs. Intervention

Party affiliation and political labels are valuable only to the extent that they usefully summarize substantive views about policy and social affairs. The ambiguity and controversy surrounding labels speak for focusing on such views.

Through the years, surveys have asked professors about social issues of wide variety—not just issues of basic public policy, but also contemporary events (such as wars), morals and culture, and university affairs.

An individual “issue” question is of limited importance in isolation. Usually, researchers ask a set of questions. But a set will generate scattered confusion unless they impose *a conceptual scheme*.

Almost invariably, researchers have imposed “liberal versus conservative.” Because we think that scheme is impoverished and impoverishing,⁵⁵ we advance an alternative scheme for enduring questions of public policy: laissez-faire vs. government intervention/activism, on an issue by issue basis. Over the range of issues, researchers can then categorize respondents in ways that defy the “liberal vs. conservative” framework.

Policy Questions from Earlier Surveys

Earlier surveys included interesting policy questions. Unfortunately, the only reporting takes the minimal form of constructed index scores.

In surveys conducted between 1959 and 1964, Spaulding and Turner⁵⁶ asked 14 excellent policy questions, very much along a laissez-faire vs. intervention, and called being more laissez-faire “conservative.”⁵⁷ They find percentage “conservative” (based on a policy index cutpoint) being 9 in Philosophy, 10 in Political Science, 12 in Sociology, 17 in History, 26 in Psychologists, 51 in Botany, 54 in Math, 61 in Geology, and 66 in Engineering. Thus, in the early 1960s, the sciences and math were laissez-faire oriented to an extent that was very high

relative to the h/ss fields, and surely high relative to today.⁵⁸ Another survey conducted around 1963⁵⁹ is reported in summary fashion by Maranell and Eitzen,⁶⁰ and they also show science professors to be more “conservative.”

The 1969 Carnegie survey of professors included: “Marijuana should be legalized.”⁶¹ The “Strongly Agree” percentages by self-identified political view were Left 59, Liberal 17, Middle-of-the-road 5, Moderately Conservative 3, and Strongly Conservative 4. The left professors were the most laissez-faire on the issue, by far.

Some recent policy questions.

The 1999 NAASS survey⁶² included a few policy questions and reported for all faculty. “Agree” percentages are as follows⁶³: “Government should work to ensure that everyone has a job,” 66; “Government should work to reduce the income gap between rich and poor,” 72; “More environmental protection is needed, even if it raises prices or costs jobs,” 88; The questions are a bit ambiguous, but the results indicate that on those issues professors mostly support government intervention. The survey also asked: “It is a woman’s right to decide whether or not to have an abortion,” and agreement was 84 percent. On that issue there is special difficulty in applying a “laissez-faire vs. intervention” framework, but we see “pro-choice” as the laissez-faire position.

The 2001 survey of Economists, Historians, Political Scientists, and Sociologists sponsored by Brookings⁶⁴ asked, “Generally speaking, government programs should be” and offered a six-point range from “Cut back to reduce the power of government” to “Expanded to deal with important problems.” Even economists leaned toward “expanded,” the other strongly so—Sociologists, super strongly.

The IJCR survey of Tobin and Weinberg⁶⁵ specialized in foreign affairs, but also contained a few “laissez-faire” type questions. One asked whether the powers granted to the

government under the Patriot Act should be strengthened, reduced or left pretty much unchanged, and among all professors, Democrats responded “reduced” 83 percent and “strengthened” 1 percent, while Republicans responded 22 and 17. On that issue the Democrats are more laissez-faire. On other questions, Republicans can be imputed with stronger support for laissez-faire, namely, “People in developing countries benefit more than they lose from involvement of global corporations” (Democrats agree 27 percent, disagree 44; Republicans, 66, 16)⁶⁶; and, “Although capitalism helped bring prosperity to this country, it is not well-suited to accomplish the same thing today in most developing nations” (Democrats agree 43 percent, disagree 38; Republicans 17, 74).⁶⁷

Summary of the 2003 Policy Survey of Six Associations

We conclude with a summary of results from our 2003 survey.⁶⁸ We asked 18 policy questions, each positing an existing government intervention and providing a five-point scale (scored 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5) from “Support Strongly” to “Oppose Strongly.” The format was uniform throughout the 18 questions and lends itself to the construction of an index, with lower numbers being more interventionist, higher being more laissez-faire. The survey was sent to random samples of six scholarly associations. The lists of Anthropologists, Economists, Historians, Political Scientists, and Sociologists all came from the major “American” association. The Philosophers came from the American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy. We treated those employed in academia as professors, and restrict the results to that group (n = 1208). Please see Klein and Stern for details.⁶⁹

The 18 policy issues were tariffs, minimum wage, workplace safety regulation, FDA drug approval, air and water regulation by the EPA, discrimination by private parties, “hard” drugs,

prostitution, gambling, guns, government ownership of industry, redistribution, government schooling, monetary policy, fiscal policy, immigration, military aid or presence, and foreign aid.

The more important results are as follows:

- On 12 of the 18 policy issues, the Democrats were at least noticeably, often substantially, more interventionist than the Republicans.
- But Republicans were more interventionist on immigration, military action, prostitution restrictions, and drug prohibition.⁷⁰
- Generally, the Democrats and Republicans fit the stereotypes, except that neither group is very pro-laissez-faire on the issues they are supposedly more pro-laissez-faire on. The policy-index averages (which can range 1 to 5, with lower being more interventionist, higher more laissez-faire) were Democrats 2.12, Republicans 2.69.⁷¹ On the whole, Republicans gave laissez-faire supporters nothing to write home about, except perhaps their disappointment.
- The Democrats not only dominate, but they have a significantly narrower tent. Summing each group's 18 policy-response standard deviations yields the contrast: Democrats 17.1, Republicans 23.1. Thus, whereas the Republicans usually have diversity on a policy issue, the Democrats very often have a party line—with almost no support for laissez-faire. It is clear that there is significantly more diversity under the Republican tent.
- Economists are measurably less interventionists, but still on the whole leaning toward intervention; rumors of widespread laissez-faire support among economists are very wrong. Only in relative terms does Economics stand out.

- Economists show the least consensus on policy issues. The differences between Democrats and Republicans are largest in economics, and the standard deviations are largest. A lack of consensus is a curious thing for the “queen of the social sciences.”
- Younger professors tend to be slightly less interventionist than older professors. This result suggests that, although h/ss has grown increasingly Democratic, it has not necessarily grown increasingly interventionist.
- The cluster analysis based on the policy questions sorted the respondents into five groups, four of which correspond to familiar ideological categories: establishment left (n = 470), progressive (n = 413), conservative (n = 35), and classical liberal/libertarian (n = 35).⁷² (These are labels we attribute to the groups; they are not self-identifications.)⁷³ *The cluster-analysis results suggest that people tend to cluster at certain ideological types, as opposed to being spread more or less uniformly between convex combinations of those types.*
- Of the 1000 academic respondents from the six associations with sufficient data to be included in the cluster analysis,⁷⁴ therefore, 35 can appropriately be called “real” conservatives and 35 can be called “real” libertarians, facts calling for two important remarks: (1) Conservatives and libertarians, so defined, are rare. Of those 70 professors, 48 (68.6 percent) were in either Economics or Political Science. In the other four fields surveyed, substantive conservatives and libertarians are close to absent. (2) Libertarians are as numerous as conservatives. In some ways, the h/ss fields are more congenial to libertarians, who tend to be culturally liberal and not religious.

- On immigration, drugs, prostitution, and military, the conservatives are the most interventionist of the four familiar groups.
- The policy-index averages were: establishment left 1.99, progressive 2.26, conservative 2.75, libertarian 4.12.⁷⁵ In other words, the people who often stand strongly opposed to status-quo interventions tend to be those whose views fit a libertarian pattern.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Highlights

Survey evidence and voter registration studies support the view that Democratic voters greatly outnumber Republican voters in academe. The estimate of 7 or 8:1 in the humanities and social sciences continues to hold up. There is evidence that the Democratic preponderance has increased greatly since around 1970, and is likely to continue to increase. In policy views, humanities and social science professors are mostly highly supportive of status quo interventions and lean “left” on issues on such issues as redistribution and discrimination controls. Indeed, Gross and Simmons find a surprisingly high percentage of Marxists. Professors who vote Republican or self-identify “conservative” seem to be in decline. Professors fitting a substantive conservative profile or a libertarian profile are very few in h/ss. One analysis suggests that the substantive conservatives and libertarians are about equal in number. Economics is exceptional among h/ss for having a small but non-miniscule number of definite non-left professors.

Final thoughts

Gross and Simmons report that “moderates” are on the rise and radicalism on the decline.⁷⁷ One may discount their report of moderateness on several ground.⁷⁸ Meanwhile,

however, Klein and Stern⁷⁹ found a slight slope that says that the younger the professor, the less he supports government intervention overall. Academe is a Democratic stronghold, but aggressive ideologies of state collectivism, such as socialism, continues to wane. Klein and Stern⁸⁰ found that about 70 percent of Democratic-voting humanities and social science professors do *not* support government ownership of industrial enterprises.

Increasingly, academe is best understood as an agglomeration of disciplinary tribes and subfields, each consisting of individuals primarily interested in making a career and enjoying personal comfort and security. The academic agglomeration is one of America's most established, static, and caste-based domains. Like pragmatic people in business careers, social-democratic academics need to be "moderate," and most of them seem to give the presumption to mainstream Democratic views. It is quite possible that fervent idealists for solidarity, equality, and social justice get disproportionate attention, and that even they are often unwilling to advocate radical reforms of greater government control.

Conservatives and libertarians have great reason to complain about the ideological climate of academe. But to conclude on a note of slight optimism: Perhaps a growing pragmatism among the professoriate will allow for better discourse about public policy and, in time, will yield people who favor individual liberty slightly more opportunity in the academic establishment.

¹ We thank Richard Redding for detailed feedback that significantly improved the paper.

² Ladd, Everett Carl, Jr. and Seymour Martin Lipset. 1975. *The Divided Academy: Professors & Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

³ Faia, Michael A. 1974. The Myth of the Liberal Professor. *Sociology of Education*. 47: 171-202.

⁴ In the Cardiff and Klein study, which achieved a high identification rate among voter registration studies of about 71 percent, the percentage identified as either D or R was 55 percent, the other 45 percent of the sample being Not Found (19 percent), Decline to State/nonpartisan (13 percent), Indeterminate because of multiple and conflicting listing of the name (10 percent), Green party (1 percent), and other third parties (1 percent). The Indeterminates are white noise, but Not Found and Decline to State/nonpartisans may invite speculation.

⁵ Column A: Cardiff and Klein 2005, based on 2004-05 data.

Column B: 2003-5 voter registration data pooled from separate investigations at Capital University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Ithaca College, and the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, detailed in “Other Schools” worksheet of the Excel file available at <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/economics/klein/Voter/FinalApril106Redacted.xls>.

Column C based on 2001-2002 voter registration data for 32 elite schools reported in Horowitz and Lehrer 2002 (Center for the Study of Popular Culture).

⁶ Cardiff, Christopher F. and Daniel B. Klein. 2005. Faculty partisan affiliation in all disciplines: a voter-registration study. *Critical Review*. 17 (3-4): 239.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Klein, Daniel B., and Charlotta Stern. 2005. [Political Diversity in Six Disciplines](#). *Academic Questions* 18(1), Winter: 40-52.

⁹ The exclusion of two-year colleges was not originally specified in Klein and Stern (2005b), and its specification here is qualification made thanks to criticism by Zipp and Fenwick (2006).

¹⁰ The 11 schools are University of California-Berkeley, UC-Los Angeles, UC-San Diego, Stanford University, California Institute of Technology, Santa Clara University, University of San Diego, Claremont McKenna College, Pepperdine University, and Point Loma Nazarene University.

¹¹ Cardiff and Klein, op. cit., 246

¹² Ladd and Lipset, and Faia, op. cit.

¹³ Incidentally, we’d like to take this opportunity to note a minor error in Cardiff and Klein: In reporting data by rank, they transposed the data for assistant and associate professors at Stanford and Berkeley (p. 252, Table 6). The data came from Klein and Western (2004-05, 62) where the data are reported correctly.

¹⁴ Faia, op. cit., 174

¹⁵ Note: The overview only compares Democratic vs. Republican voters and excludes from the comparison other party identifications, independents, and the like.

¹⁶ Eitzen and Maranell (1968) found that in the “behavioral sciences” (sociologists and psychologists) the D:R ratio was about 2:1, in the “physical sciences” (chemists and physicists) and in the “fine arts” (art and music professors) there is no Democratic dominance.

¹⁷ Rothman, Stanley, S. Robert Lichter, and Neil Nevitte. 2005. Fundamentals and Fundamentalists: A Reply to Ames et al. *The Forum*. 3(2): xx-xx.

¹⁸ Tobin, Gary A. and Aryeh K. Weinberg. 2006. *A Profile of American College Faculty. Volume I: Political Beliefs and Behavior*. Institute of Jewish and Community Studies: CA, San Francisco.

¹⁹ Gross, Neil and Solon Simmons. 2007. The Social and Political Views of American Professors. Working paper, Harvard University.

²⁰ Incidentally, regarding voting in the 2004 presidential election, Gross and Simmons (p. 37) report a quite surprising finding: Among “Health sciences” faculty, 48.1 percent voted for Kerry, 51.9 percent for Bush. They say (p. 28) that “health sciences” “means mostly professors of nursing.”

²¹ Notes: * Spaulding and Turner (1968a, 253) reports only percent Democrat in their table. Here, the ratio is assuming that the remainder of the respondents reported voting Republican, which over-represents the number of Republicans as compared to numbers reported by Turner et al. in their discipline specific articles (Turner et al 1963a, 1963b).

^a The study also reports on Botanists (50 percent Democratic), Geologists (35), Mathematicians (29), Engineers (27).

²² Eitzen and Maranell (1968) lumps sociologists and psychologists together.

²³ Ladd and Lipset, op. cit.

²⁴ Id., at 62-64

²⁵ Rothman, Stanley, S. Robert Lichter, and Neil Nevitte. 2005. Politics and Professional Advancement Among College Faculty. *The Forum*. 3(1): Article 2.

²⁶ Tobin and Weinberg, op. cit., 24

²⁷ [We are surprised that the T&W Kerry: Bush numbers are not higher. We do not know the composition/sampling of their “humanities” and “social sciences.”]

²⁸ + We are using the information Gross & Simmons report on Kerry vs. Bush voting in 2004 (p. 37). Gross & Simmons (p. 34) report self-described party affiliation by departments, but only in a way such that 38.9 percent of faculty overall are Independents.

* The 28 figure shown here can be found in Klein and Stern 2006, which treats sociologists only. (In Klein and Stern 2005a, the sociologists were combined with anthropologists.)

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- ²⁹ Gross and Simons, op. cit., 37.
- ³⁰ Ladd and Lipset, op. cit., 193.
- ³¹ Klein, Daniel B. and Charlotta Stern. 2005. Professors and Their Politics: The Policy Views of Social Scientists. *Critical Review* 17(3-4): 257-303. Information from 265.
- ³² Id. at 288.
- ³³ Gross and Simons, op. cit., 33.
- ³⁴ The rejuvenation we speak of refers to the movement led by such figures as Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, and Milton Friedman, who called themselves “liberal” and never “conservative.” That movement is now often called “libertarian” in the United States, and “neo-liberal” in Europe. In Continental Europe, especially Eastern Europe, “liberal” usually still largely means what it originally did.
- ³⁵ For a more thorough criticism of liberal-versus-conservative, see Klein and Stern 2008.
- ³⁶ To quote Zipp and Fenwick, p. 304.
- ³⁷ Faia, op. cit., 171, 197.
- ³⁸ The data collected within the framework of the Carnegie surveys are available to scholars through the Roper Center (<http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/>).
- ³⁹ Data collected by the HERI-institute is also available for scholars, see (<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/heri>).
- ⁴⁰ Rothman et. al, op. cit (note 23).
- ⁴¹ Tobin and Weinberg, op. cit.
- ⁴² The 2001 Brookings-sponsored survey of political scientists, economists, historians, and sociologists found that 58 percent of each group on average self-identified very liberal/liberal while 8 percent on average self-identified very conservative/conservative (Light 2001).
- ⁴³ Hamilton, Richard F. and Lowell L. Hargens. 1993. The Politics of the Professors: Self-Identifications, 1969-1984. *Social Forces*. 71(3): 603-627.
- ⁴⁴ Zipp John F. and Rudy Fenwick. 2006. Is the Academy a Liberal Hegemony? The political orientations and educational values of professors. *Political Opinion Quarterly*. 70(3): 304-326.
- ⁴⁵ Note: Columns except NAASS sum to 100 percent: Missings, others, don’t knows, etc. have been suppressed. The NAASS column is incomplete because of insufficient reporting.
- ⁴⁶ Gross and Simmons, op. cit., 29.
- ⁴⁷ Notes: (1) middle-of-the-road not shown; (2) the percentages are calculated with missings excluded from the analysis.
- ⁴⁸ Gross and Simmons, op. cit., 28.
- ⁴⁹ Klein, Daniel B. and Charlotta Stern. 2008, forthcoming. Liberal-versus-Conservative Stinks: A Reply to Zipp and Fenwick on the Ideological Profile of Faculty *Academic Questions*, forthcoming.
- ⁵⁰ Gross and Simmons (p. 35) report findings at variance with the tendencies we find in the poll data. It should be noted, however, that Gross and Simmons asked questions and categorized data in ways that tend to swell the ranks of the “moderates” and “Independents,” and they have not as yet provided the more refined data, nor, it seems, have they reported what percent of “moderates” voted for Kerry in 2004.
- ⁵¹ Tobin and Weingerg, op. cit., 27.
- ⁵² Tobin and Weinberg also found that only one percent of professors who self-identify as Democrat voted for Bush, while 13 percent of the self-identified Republicans voted for Kerry. This remarkable asymmetry may say something about how professors self-identify political party, something about the 2004 contest between Kerry and Bush, or both.
- ⁵³ Nakhaie and Brym (1999) report similar findings in Canada.
- ⁵⁴ With each label, Gross and Simmons asked the respondent to indicate how well, on a seven-point scale ranging from not at all to extremely well, the label fit them. They reported Marxists were those who marked a score of 4 or higher.
- ⁵⁵ We see “liberal versus conservative” as a kind of societal-wide groupthink that encompasses and joins “liberals” and “conservatives.”
- ⁵⁶ Spaulding, Charles B. and Henry A. Turner. 1968. Political Orientation and Field of Specialization Among College Professors. *Sociology of Education*. 41(3): 247-62. Survey data found on 252 – 253.
- ⁵⁷ In those days, with the New Deal only a few decades old and the rejuvenation of classical liberalism just beginning, the “conservative” attribution made more sense than it does today.
- ⁵⁸ Spaulding and Turner (1968) attribute being more interventionist “liberal”. However, they never present “liberal vs. conservative” numbers.

⁵⁹ Neither Eitzen and Maranell (1968) nor Maranell and Eitzen (1970) specifies the year of the sampling, but the former paper (p. 147) notes that the sampling was based on college catalogues of 1962.

⁶⁰ Maranell, Gary M. and D. Stanely Eitzen. 1970. The Effect of Discipline, Region, and Rank on the Political Attitudes of College Professors. *The Sociological Quarterly*. 11(1): 112-118.

⁶¹ Reported in Faia 1974, 194.

⁶² Rothman et al, op. cit. (note 23).

⁶³ That is, answering either Strong Agree or Somewhat Agree.

⁶⁴ (Light 2001, 55) – Missing full citation.

⁶⁵ Tobin and Weinberg, op. cit., 35 – 39.

⁶⁶ On the net benefits of global corporations, only 21 percent of Humanities professors agreed, and only 38 percent of Social Science professors.

⁶⁷ Gross and Simmons (pp. 43-44) ask a few questions about government policy, but we omit them because they are more concerned with goals rather than specific policy measures. Also, in two cases, the “neither” response is so large as to make the results had to interpret.

⁶⁸ We say “our” survey, but Stern did not become involved until after the survey was conducted. Blame Klein for all survey-design flaws.

⁶⁹ Klein and Stern, op. cit. (see note 29).

⁷⁰ The two issues we are calling them about equal on are gambling and using monetary policy to fine tune the economy (which isn’t clearly a “laissez-faire” type issue, anyway).

⁷¹ The 20 respondents who reported voting mostly Green had an average policy-index score of 2.30, while the 13 who reported voting mostly Libertarian had 4.24.

⁷² The fifth group, n = 47, is odd: center-left on most issues, but rather permissive views on personal issues and somewhat hawkish.

⁷³ Of the 35 attributed libertarians, 14 (40 percent) vote Republican and 12 (34 percent) vote Libertarian. Of the 35 attributed conservatives, 23 (66 percent) vote Republican and zero vote Libertarian.

⁷⁴ It is just a coincidence that there were exactly 1000 individuals who had all data needed to not be omitted from the cluster analysis.

⁷⁵ The average for the other small group of 47 that did not fit a familiar ideological type was 2.53.

⁷⁶ In fact, the minimum of the sum of position dissimilarity on each issue between the libertarians and any other group is greater than the maximum of sums of dissimilarity between any pair of other groups.

⁷⁷ Gross and Simmons, op. cit., 40 – 41.

⁷⁸ Klein and Stern, op. cit. (note 49).

⁷⁹ Klein and Stern, op. cit. (note 29), 276.

⁸⁰ Id, at 268.