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THE IDEOLOGICAL PROFILE OF FACULTY IN THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES: A REPLY TO ZIPP AND FENWICK

by

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ABSTRACT: In a recent *Public Opinion Quarterly* article “Is the Academy a Liberal Hegemony?,” John Zipp and Rudy Fenwick pit themselves against “right-wing activists and scholars,” citing our scholarship (Klein and Stern 2005a; Klein and Western 2005). Here we analyze Zipp and Fenwick’s characterization of our research and find it faulty in three important respects. We then turn to their “liberal v. conservative” findings and show they concord with our analysis. If one feels that it is a problem that humanities and social science faculty at four-year colleges and universities are vastly predominantly Democratic voters, mostly with what may called establishment-left or progressive views, then such concerns should not be allayed by Zipp and Fenwick’s article.

This Reply was submitted to *Public Opinion Quarterly* on October 16, 2006, except that the submission did not include the Summary and without Appendix 1 that appear here at the end of the paper.

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In the Fall 2006 issue of *Public Opinion Quarterly*, John F. Zipp and Rudy Fenwick, sociologists at the University of Akron in Ohio, published a paper asking “Is the Academy a Liberal Hegemony?” The article is openly framed as a reaction to “right-wing activists and scholars” (p. 304). The scholarship they cite is principally ours (Klein and Stern 2005a; Klein and Western 2005). They pit themselves against us and arrive at findings about ideological ratios said to be “far lower than the ratios found by Klein and [David Horowitz’s Center for the Study of Popular Culture]” (Zipp and Fenwick, p. 309).

The Zipp and Fenwick article is spirited, and we embrace scholarly debate over this important issue. The occasion is especially refreshing for the way that the disputants are open about their own ideological sensibilities. We have been open about our classical liberalism, and John Zipp openly characterizes himself as a liberal (Jaschik 2006).

Zipp and Fenwick’s primary discussion, which relates to our research, concerns the ideological orientation of faculty. Here we do not treat their secondary discussion, concerning educational values and the student interface.

Reading Zipp and Fenwick, a reader gets the following impression of our work:

1. That the ratio we estimate is that of liberals to conservatives.
2. That we draw the estimate from only the humanities and social sciences and then tout it as representative of faculty in all disciplines.
3. That we draw the estimate from only top schools and then tout it as representative of all colleges and universities, right down to the two-year community colleges.

Our main task here is to clear up the confusions and address the real issue, namely, the ideological profile of faculty in humanities and social sciences.

Here we make repeated use of two abbreviations:

h/ss = humanities and social sciences

ZF = Zipp and Fenwick.

What We Actually Said

Klein and Stern (2005a) reports on our survey of six scholarly associations.¹ The key question reads: “To which political party have the candidates you’ve voted for in the past ten years mostly belonged?,” offering responses Democratic, Green, Libertarian, and Republican, followed by a line for “other.” Drawing on the responses from members of the six associations—the Am. Anthropological A., the Am. Economic A., the Am. Historical A., the Am. Political Science A., the Am. Sociological A., and the Am. Society for Political and Legal Philosophy—and wider knowledge, we estimate the one-big-pool D:R ratio in the h/ss. What we actually said was: “Based on the investigations done here, we offer the following broad claim: *In discussing the one-big-pool D to R ratio for the social sciences and humanities, 7 to 1 is a safe lower bound estimate, and 8 to 1 or 9 to 1 are reasonable point estimates*” (Klein and Stern 2005a, 47, emphasis in the original).

How Zipp and Fenwick Represent Our Research

¹ At the survey homepage one can view the survey instrument and documents explaining the methods, independent control, and certification of the survey results:

<http://www.gmu.edu/departments/economics/klein/survey.htm>.

The survey used membership lists randomly generated and supplied by each association, was conducted April-May 2003, and the response rate was 31 percent. The exact wording of questions used here are supplied in Appendix 2.

Democrat/Republican \neq Liberal/Conservative. Like Hamilton and Hargens (1993), Zipp and Fenwick make the issue out to be liberal-middle-conservative. That scheme of political polarity is quite limited and even clouds matters. Our reasons for saying this are relegated to Appendix 1.

We asked respondents about past voting and other specifics and never translate the findings into “liberal v. conservative” statements. (To check, one could access our papers online and search on “liberal” and “conservative.”) Yet, ZF write that our studies “treat party identification or voting behavior as equivalent to political ideology” (p. 306, see also 304, 316). They then take data on self-characterizations (liberal/conservative) to be refutations of our findings. They say we “ignored much better data and research” (p. 306), namely liberal v. conservative studies. They acknowledge that “liberal” \neq Democratic and “conservative” \neq Republican, but they imply that *we* hold that “liberal” = Democratic and “conservative” = Republican. Thus, they criticize a strawman who says that the *L:C* ratio is 7 to 1. ZF do not challenge what we actually said. Indeed, when they get around to addressing the *D:R* ratio in “an interesting aside” (p. 314), they themselves imply that our numbers agree with the data they provide.

Humanties and social sciences versus entire faculty. We said, “for the social sciences and humanities.” We never suggested that such estimates applied to the entire faculty. (As for the Klein and Western voter-registration study of Berkeley and Stanford, again all claims are duly confined.) ZF, after citing our papers, point to liberal/conservative research and triumphantly conclude: “Although there are more liberal than conservative faculty, there certainly are not seven to ten liberals for every conservative *on campus*” (p.

306, emphasis added), clearly alluding to our 7 to 1 estimate. The paper's title, introduction,² abstract, and conclusion suggest that we extrapolated to *the entire faculty*.

The ZF article gained notice as refutation of “right-wing” studies. In a published interview (Free Exchange on Campus 2006), when asked if studies have “overstated the case?,” ZF respond: “We believe so,” and speak of one study that “looked only at faculty in the humanities and social sciences,” surely meaning Klein and Stern (2005a), and continue, “they use very selective data that support their claims. . . . One may wonder if they have deliberately ‘cherry picked’ the data to get the results they wanted.” Again, they do not provide any evidence that we represented h/ss results as applying to the entire faculty. In fact, ZF never identify a single instance of overstatement on anyone's part.

Two-year colleges. Like Hamilton and Hargens (1993), ZF go all the way down through the two-year colleges. These are mostly community colleges offering associate of arts degrees, not bachelors. ZF (p. 311) note that in 1994, 42.3 percent of students attended two-year colleges. Their numbers for all schools (e.g., Table 1, p. 309) use weights reflecting the magnitudes of the various classification categories. Reasonable enough, but they really should note that the more prestigious schools have a vastly disproportional impact on the culture at large. Their cultural impact is highly leveraged; for example, in the h/ss fields, the top 25 U.S. departments produce most of the country's Ph.D.s gaining faculty jobs in the field's top 200 departments (Burris 2004; Klein 2005). In their abstract, ZF say that conservatives (which is supposed to include us) have made claims

² In the first sentence, ZF (p. 304) refer to the National Association of Scholars (NAS), and, based on the newspaper articles they cite, seem to be speaking of our *Academic Questions* articles (*AQ* being the journal of the NAS). Incidentally, it is odd that ZF reference our papers merely as working papers, rather than as *AQ* articles.

based on data from “unrepresentative institutions.” After speaking of our 7 to 1 estimate, they write: “These data are surely not representative of American colleges and universities. The voter registration analyses draw on some of the most selective institutions . . .” (p. 306).³

In our estimates of the h/ss D:R ratio, we did not specify the range of schools we had in mind. In hindsight, and really by virtue of ZF’s article, we feel that we were a bit remiss about the range of schools we were talking about. The context was the results of our surveys of association members. Membership in the Am. Anthropological Assoc., etc., is *not* confined to elite schools. In hindsight, we see that it probably would have been better to say that our estimates exclude the two-year colleges. Our remissness can perhaps be excused, as people do not seem to have community colleges in mind when they speak of “higher education.” But, as we will see, it appears that our 7 to 1 estimate was sufficiently conservative to be OK even when we include two-year colleges.

Examining the 1997 Carnegie Data on Political Orientation

So, ZF misrepresent us. Now, let’s look at the data they use to see whether it casts any doubt on what we said.

ZF use self-characterization data from Carnegie Foundation surveys of faculty in 1989 and 1997. Here we treat only the 1997 data, as the main issue is our 7-to-1 estimate, which was based on 2003 data.

³ About the Horowitz and Lehrer (2002) voter-registration study, ZF (p. 311) say that it “drew only from elite liberal arts colleges, colleges that we have shown are *the* most liberal institutions.” In fact, at least half the schools it drew from were not liberal arts colleges, but major research universities.

The 1997 Carnegie survey asked: “How would you characterize yourself politically at the present time?”, and offers five responses:

1. Liberal
2. Moderately Liberal
3. Middle of the road
4. Moderately conservative
5. Conservative.

Table 1 uses the same data and (simple) weights as used by ZF in their Table 2 (p. 310). The only differences are in presentation: ZF suppressed the missings and combined “Moderately conservative” and “Conservative” into a single response that they called “Conservative.”

Table 1. Self-characterized political orientation of humanities and social science faculty, all schools (including two-year colleges), from the 1997 Carnegie survey

	Political orientation					Missing	Total
	Liberal	Moderately Liberal	Middle of road	Moderately conservative	Conservative		
Humanities	308 38.5%	238 29.8%	118 14.8%	67 8.4%	23 2.9%	45 5.6%	799 100%
Social Sciences	167 34.1%	152 31.0%	64 13.1%	56 11.4%	28 5.7%	23 4.7%	490 100%

Note: Presumably due to weighting, we get slightly different results when cross-tabulating all departments with political orientation (the results shown here) than when cross-tabulating only the humanities and social sciences with political orientation.

Table 2 presents the same data but excludes the two-year colleges.

Table 2. Self-characterized political orientation of humanities and social science faculty, excluding two-year colleges, from the 1997 Carnegie survey

	Political orientation					Missing	Total
	Liberal	Moderately Liberal	Middle of road	Moderately conservative	Conservative		
Humanities	206 40.7%	172 34.0%	67 13.2%	26 5.1%	8 1.6%	27 5.3%	506 100%
Social	147	108	39	31	17	13	355

Sciences	41.4%	30.4%	11.0%	8.7%	4.8%	3.7%	100%

Now, are these results compatible with a 7 to 1 ratio for all h/ss faculty? Let's first make a quick comparison to the general population, using the General Social Survey 1989 through 2004,⁴ which uses a seven-point scale: extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate/middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative, and extremely conservative. To translate the GSS's seven into Carnegie's five, we generously map the GSS's "extremely liberal" and "liberal" into "liberal", the GSS's "slightly liberal" into "moderately liberal," and likewise for the conservative responses, and get Table 3 for the US population.

Table 3. Self-characterized political orientation of the general population, 1989 through 2004, GSS data, using a translation from the GSS's seven-point scale to Carnegie five-point scale

	Political orientation					Missing/NA	Total
	Liberal	Moderately Liberal	Middle of road	Moderately conservative	Conservative		
General population (GSS data)	13.55%	12.06%	36.25%	15.46	18.12%	4.57%	100%

Well, Table 3 looks quite different from the h/ss faculty, especially excluding the two-year colleges (Table 2).

But let's address the 7-to1 question more rigorously. First we will assume that the ideological profile of faculty did not much change between 1997 (the Carnegie data) and 2003 (the year of our survey). Second, we need to know something about the relation between self-characterized political orientation and party affiliation. Fortunately,

⁴ We use 1989 through 2004 just to cover the period investigated by ZF and to bring the data as forward as possible, as 2004 was the final year of data available for download at GSS.

the General Social Survey asks both types of questions. The party identification uses a seven point scale:

Strong Democrat
Not strong Democrat
Independent, near Democrat
Independent
Independent, near Republican
Not strong Republican
Strong Republican

And “Other party.” It is reasonable to take the first three party identifiers as “Democrats” and the last three as “Republicans.” How do each self-characterize?

Taking the GSS data 1989 through 2004, we find:

Democrats self-characterize as follows:

- Either “extremely liberal,” “liberal,” or “slightly liberal”: 37.76 percent
- “Moderate/middle of the road:” 37.87 percent
- “Slightly conservative,” “conservative” or “extremely conservative”: 20.95 percent.

(and 3.42 percent are missing or not applicable).

Republicans self-characterize as follows:

- “Extremely liberal,” “liberal,” or “slightly liberal”: 12.94 percent
- “Moderate/middle of the road”: 31.25 percent
- “Slightly conservative,” “conservative” or “extremely conservative”: 53.73 percent.

(and 2.08 percent are missing or not applicable).

As shown also by Harris Poll and Gallup Poll data, Democrats who call themselves “liberal” are much fewer than Republicans who call themselves “conservative,” and Democrats who call themselves “conservative” are more numerous than Republicans who call themselves “liberal.” Now, if we take these propensities in the general population to be the same in the h/ss professoriate—an assumption that is doubtful but a useful starting point⁵—and call the three bulleted categories above liberal, middle, and conservative, we can use these propensities to project:

How a population⁶ of 7 Democrats and 1 Republican would self-characterize:

- 34.66 percent as liberal = $(7*37.76 + 12.94)/800$
- 37.04 percent as middle of the road = $(7*37.87 + 31.25)/800$
- 25.05 percent as conservative = $(7*20.95 + 53.73)/800$

- And thus a L:C ratio of 1.38 (=34.66/25.05).

Comparing these with the 1997 Carnegie data used by ZF and provided above in Tables 1 and 2, we see that the actual liberal/conservative h/ss faculty data concord with our estimate of *at least* 7 Democrats to 1 Republican (making the obvious translation of Carnegie’s five-point scale into liberal, middle, and conservative). In fact, those data

⁵ We can see that the h/ss professoriate is much less prone to calling itself “middle of the road,” and that would suggest that their party identifications and self-characterizations are more reliably aligned.

⁶ For simplicity we are treating all academics as either voting mostly Democratic or mostly Republican. In our survey of the six associations, in fact raw responses showed those two groups totaling 88.3 percent, the other 11.7 percent being third-parties, multiple responses, missing answers, and so on.. How the various others might be assumed to characterize themselves obviously cannot affect the essential point, so here we just calculate as though there are no others.

would seem to suggest an h/ss D:R ratio of *greater than 7* to 1.⁷ This is especially so when we exclude the two-year colleges (in which case, for example, the humanities L:C ratio is 11.15)⁸. In terms of L:C ratios, these conclusions are not sensitive to exactly how you line up the GSS's seven-point scale to Carnegie's five-point scale. For example, if you instead count the two "slightlies" as middle of the road, the L:C ratio projection from the GSS data rises only to 1.54, which is still far below the L:C ratios in Table 1 and 2.

In fact, Democrats so readily self-characterize as "middle of the road" or some form of "conservative" that, under the assumption of same propensities in the general population and the h/ss professoriate, the 1997 liberal/conservative faculty data would actually sustain the conjecture that *every* h/ss faculty member was a Democrat! Under the assumption, ZF's data are consistent with a h/ss Democrat-to-Republican ratio of not merely 7-to-1, but 700-to-1.

The liberal/conservative data simply are not very illuminating, but once we start guessing at correlation between party and self-characterization (which we find to be 0.36 in the 1989-2004 GSS data⁹), we find that our original D:R estimates look fine.

What about Rothman, Lichter, and Nevitte?

Our survey asked various h/ss faculty about party but not about self-characterization.

The 1997 Carnegie survey asked about self-characterization but not party. To try to

⁷ In eyeballing the 1997 data in Tables 1 and 2 to size up the L:C ratios there, note that in forming a one-big-pool ratio for h/ss, we would give humanities greater weight reflecting its larger size, and the L:C ratios are higher in the humanities.

⁸ That is, $11.15 = (40.7 \text{ liberals} + 34.0 \text{ moderate liberals}) / (5.1 \text{ moderate conservatives} + 1.6 \text{ conservatives})$.

⁹ The correlation was calculated by treating the seven-point Democratic to Republican Party identifier and the seven-point liberal to conservative scale as continuous variables.

determine the connection between the two variables, in the previous section we worked through GSS evidence about the general population.

It would be a lot easier and more reliable if there were a faculty survey that asked both questions. Zipp and Fenwick (p. 305) imply that no such survey exists. However, in the early part of 2005, Stanley Rothman, Robert Lichter, and Neil Nevitte published an article based a large 1999 survey of college faculty initiated under the leadership of Seymour Martin Lipset, a survey that asked both questions (Rothman et al 2005a). The article appeared in the Berkeley Electronic Press journal *The Forum*, available free online, and immediately received wide attention. Since its appearance, it has held a central place as a critique of the ideological profile of professors, especially as it argues that academic institutions discriminate against conservatives and that “a sharp shift to the left has taken place among college faculty in recent years.” In the next issue of *The Forum*, there appeared a critique (Ames et al 2005) and a reply by Rothman, Lichter, and Nevitte (2005b). The research by Rothman et al is of primary importance and was well known, yet goes entirely unmentioned by ZF, even though ZF’s article appeared in September 2006 and cites sources published as late as November 25, 2005.

The Rothman et al study surveyed faculty at four-year colleges and graduate institutions, using stratified sampling according to the Carnegie classifications of those schools. Thus, they took the entire span of schools except that they excluded the two-year/associate-degree colleges. Here in Table 4 we reproduce exactly the first lines of a table in Rothman et al (2005a, their Table 2).

Table 4. Rothman, Lichter, and Nevitte’s findings on political identification of college professors (%)

Field of Study	Liberal*	Conservative*	Democrat ⁺	Republican ⁺	N
All Faculty	72%	15%	50%	11%	(1643)
Social Sciences	75	9	55	7	(289)
Humanities	81	9	62	6	(449)
Other	67	20	43	15	(905)

Notes: (1) * middle-of-the-road not shown; (2) ⁺third parties and independents not shown; (3) the political orientation question was a ten-point left-right scale, which Rothman et al translated into broad “liberal,” “middle-of-the-road,” and “conservative” categories; (4) the percentages are calculated with missings excluded from the analysis.

The appropriate 1997 Carnegie comparison would be to Table 2. We see that Rothman et al’s L:C numbers match Carnegie’s quite well. We also see that their Democratic-to-Republican ratios for the h/ss match ours quite well.¹⁰ Regarding the fact that L:C ratios < D:R ratios, Rothman et al present Harris Poll data showing the regularity in the U.S. public. The paper is highly germane to ZF’s claims about faculty ideological profile and trends, yet is ignored by them.

Are the Humanities and Social Sciences a Social-Democratic Hegemony?

Zipp and Fenwick title their article, “Is the Academy a Liberal Hegemony?” Again, we think that “liberal v. conservative” obscures more than illuminates. As for “the Academy,” although some studies provide a glimpse into the departments across campus (e.g., Rothman, Lichter, and Nevitte 2005a; Cardiff and Klein 2005), it is only in h/ss that we have much data about political and policy views. However, the issue of ideological hegemony is most important in h/ss. It probably matters little to students and the culture

¹⁰ In our survey, we identify a much higher percentage as either Democratic or Republican because the voting question asked “To which political party have the candidates you’ve voted for in the past ten years mostly belong?” This phrasing eliminates the “Independent” type of response.

at large if ideological groupthink prevails in chemistry or math. It matters much more for social work, sociology, history, English, etc., where professors teach knowledge, values, and attitudes about society. They interpret the moral and political world. Yet, just as ZF neglect the disproportionate importance of the high-rank schools, they never acknowledge the special importance of h/ss.

Are the humanities and social sciences a social-democratic hegemony? Our 56-question survey of the six scholarly associations included 18 specific policy questions, as well as a question about employment in or out of academia (Klein and Stern 2005b). The humanities and social sciences faculty are dominated by individuals with social-democratic views, highly favorable to redistribution, restrictions on discrimination, government schooling, restrictions on private enterprise, and gun control. The academic members of the Am. Economics Assoc. are measurably less interventionist than the academic members of the other associations, but not all that different. Admittedly, a basis of comparison to the general public is lacking, but one can draw comparisons within the sample. For example, compared to the Democratic voters, Republican voters are less interventionist on economic and welfare-state issues, and more interventionist on immigration, foreign policy, prostitution, and drugs. Also, one can draw a comparison with ideal types. For example, on the 18 policy questions, each specifying a government intervention, someone with real support of individual liberty and laissez-faire would have an index of at least 4.0 (oppose mildly), as the index ranges from 1.0 (support strongly) to 5.0 (oppose strongly), yet the mean index of respondents from the various associations ranged from 2.09 (the Am. Historical A.) to 2.65 (the Am. Economics A.). Our data show that individuals with scores above 4.0—classical liberals—are nil in the Am.

Anthropological A., the Am. Historical A., the Am. Political Science A., the Am. Sociological A., and the Am. Society for Legal and Political Philosophy. In the Am. Economics A. they are less than ten percent. Our cluster analysis based on policy-question responses finds that the vast majority of the respondents fit an ideological profile of either establishment-left or progressive (which are not much different), and that the conservative group and libertarian group are tiny and equal in size (p. 290). (Those labels are our designations for groups emerging from the cluster analysis, they are not self-characterizations.) Also, our results show that in terms of policy-views diversity the Democratic tent is considerably narrower than the Republican tent (pp. 271-274), and that Republican-voting scholars disproportionately land outside of academia, particularly in sociology,¹¹ history, and philosophy (p. 275), indicating ideological sorting as suggested by Rothman, Lichter, and Nevitte.

On the matter of trends, ZF (p. 314) conclude that between 1989 and 1997 there was “increased movement to the center, toward a more moderate faculty.” Our own conclusions about trends in h/ss are limited. We are quite certain that the D:R ratio has increased substantially since 1970, perhaps doubling from 4:1 to 8:1 (Klein and Stern 2005b, 264). As for policy views, there is no past survey from which to draw a good comparison. Our survey asked birthyear, so we have differences by age in the 2003 snapshot: Younger professors have a higher D:R ratio (pp. 265, 289), yet the policy index shows a slight *inverse* relation between age and interventionism (p. 276). However, these findings speak of trends only to the extent that there is no systematic drift in politics and policy views over the lifecycle. Similarly, the voter-registration snapshot of faculty at

¹¹ For further analysis of this field, see our “Sociology and Classical Liberalism” (2006).

eleven California schools (Cardiff and Klein 2005, 252) shows *D:R ratios by faculty rank* that suggest that, on the whole, the ratio is still on its way up.

Incidentally, the Klein and Stern (2005b) results were released as an academic product marked “To appear in *Critical Review*” in the working paper series of the Swedish Institute for Social Research at Stockholm University on October 21, 2005, and they immediately received wide attention. Here again, ZF omit mention of highly relevant research.

Summary

Zipp and Fenwick make a contribution in bringing attention to the fact the ideological profile of low-ranked schools, particularly two-year colleges, is measurably less lopsided (relative to the general population) than that of the higher ranked schools. That aside, however, they bring only confusion. Like Hamilton and Hargens (1993), they attempt to allay concerns about the faculty ideological profile and trends with “liberal” and “conservative” statistics, without owning up to the nature and limitations of such data. They misrepresent our work in a number of ways. They also misrepresent other “right-wing” research, notably Horowitz and Lehrer (2002). They construct a strawman to shift from D:R in h/ss to L:C in the entire faculty, and then use empirics to attack the strawman. After refocusing the contention on all schools (even two-year colleges) and all departments, they never acknowledge the special importance of high-rank schools and of the h/ss. They omit mention of Rothman, Lichter, and Nevitte (2005) and Klein and

Stern (2005b), which shed light on their questions and which run counter to much of their analysis. In the end, the data that ZF bring to the table in fact support our claims.

The h/ss ideological profile (excluding two-year colleges) is vastly predominately Democratic, particularly of the establishment-left and progressive sorts. That ideological profile should be a matter of serious dissatisfaction to students, parents, donors, journalists, taxpayers and citizens who see trouble in a dominant establishment-left/progressive bent, and in particular to those who oppose the welfare state and favor free enterprise.

Appendix 1: The Poverty of “Liberal v. Conservative”

We regard the present controversy to be an instance of a more general problem of “liberal v. conservative” clouding thinking and obscuring important issues. This seems a good occasion to remark on the problems of “liberal v. conservative.”

1. In asking individuals to characterize their own political views according to “liberal, middle, conservative,” there is uncertainty about which road “middle of the road” refers to. It is possible that an individual thusly confined in a questionnaire would, without changing her views, in one reference group feel herself to be a liberal, in another, middle of the road, and in another, conservative. For example, a college professor who consistently votes Democratic might think herself middle of the road or even conservative because most of her colleagues are further to the left. The problem is avoided by analysis that focuses on concrete actions and attributes, such as one’s past voting and one’s views on

- specific policy issues. From such concrete attributes, a meaningful system of political designation may then be applied *by the analyst*.
2. The dimensions of politics may be broken down by sets of policies, by social goals, or by other schemes. No matter, we see that the dimensions are many. It is impoverishing to confine the discussion to a single polarity. If surveys are to ask political orientation, it would be an improvement if they offered a greater variety of responses (e.g., communitarian, neoconservative, libertarian, progressive, social democrat, etc., as well as liberal, conservative, left, and right), responses *not* presumed by the instrument to lie along a one-dimensional spectrum. If the analyst wishes to translate the responses into a one-dimensional system (however conceived), that is something she can do afterwards.
 3. The liberal-versus-conservative polarity is, first and foremost, code for what-Democrats-think v. what-Republicans-think. Surely, there are some substantive ideological contrasts there, but in the context of America's two-party system, each party strives to garner at least 51 percent of the vote, with the result that both parties evolve as a cluster of interests and outlooks representing approximately 50 percent of the votes. Thus, the crude machinations of a two-party polity, not meaningful ideological distinctions, are the determinants of what meaning "liberal" and "conservative" do have.
 4. "Liberal" and especially "conservative" are used to describe attitudes about religion, family, lifestyle, and the arts, attitudes that do not map neatly into political or policy views.

5. “Conservative” suggests conservation of the status quo, counter-poised to radicalism, but it has been more than 100 years since the establishment of government schooling, nearly 100 years since the introduction of the federal income tax, 70 years since the New Deal, and 40 years since the Great Society. Social democrats are now in conservation mode. As for radicalism (i.e., impetus for major reform aligned with primary ideas or principles), the left-wing variety has been declining and the libertarian variety has been rising. Conservatism is generally thought to be seated in *the establishment*, but in our cultural institutions, notably academe, the k-12 teachers, and the media, the establishment is predominately Democratic. In these respects, the Democrats are the party of conservatism.
6. The major ideological emergence from the Enlightenment, represented by such events as the American founding, the abolition of slavery, and significant reform in Britain and elsewhere during the 19th century, was a political sensibility called “liberalism,” well represented for generations by the Liberal Party in Britain, into the 1890s. That philosophy was basically libertarian, a fact still recognized in Continental usage of “liberal” and in discourse about “liberalization.” The older meaning of liberalism faded, but, even in the United States, has never died, and has even experienced a renaissance led by Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman, who have generally described themselves as “liberal,” and never as “conservative” (see Hayek 1960, “Why I Am Not a Conservative”). One reason Democrats might refrain from describing themselves as “liberal” is that

they sense this original and still lingering meaning of the term, and that they do not fit the description.

For all these reasons, “liberal v. conservative” often clouds issues more than illuminates them.

Appendix 2: Exact Wording of Questions

1997 National Survey of Faculty, sponsored Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Political Ideology ('97-q68)

“68. How would you characterize yourself politically at the present time? (*Please circle appropriate number*)

Liberal

Moderately liberal

Middle of the road

Moderately conservative

Conservative

1989-2004 General Social Survey, sponsored by the National Science Foundation, conducted by the National Opinion Research Center

Party identification

“Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Republican, Democrat, Independent, or what?”

Political Views

“We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. I’m going to show you a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal—point 1—to extremely conservative—point 7. Where would you place yourself on this scale?” The intervening response categories were liberal, slightly liberal, moderate, slightly conservative, and conservative.

2003 Santa Clara University Survey “How One’s Policy Views Evolve” (Klein survey). Sponsored by Santa Clara University funding sources. Administered and certified by Donna Perry, Assistant Dean of Administration/External Relations, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University. Survey homepage: <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/economics/klein/survey.htm>

The 18 policy questions (present views) (q19-q36)

All 18 questions had a uniform set of responses:

“support strongly
support mildly
have mixed feelings
oppose mildly
oppose strongly
Have no opinion
Other/clarification: _____”

The 18 policy questions:

- “19. Tariffs on imported goods to protect American industries and jobs:”
“20. Minimum wage laws:”
“21. Workplace safety regulation by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA):”
“22. Pharmaceutical market regulation by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA):”
“23. Air-quality and water-quality regulation by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):”
“24. Laws making it illegal for private parties to discriminate (on the basis of race, gender, age, ethnicity, religion or sexual-orientation) against other private parties, in employment or accommodations?”
“25. Laws restricting the use and exchange of “hard” drugs such as cocaine and heroin:”
“26. Laws restricting prostitution:”
“27. Laws restricting gambling:”
“28. Laws restricting gun ownership:”
“29. Government ownership of industrial enterprises:”
“30. Redistributive policies (transfer and aid programs and tax progressivity):”
“31. Government production of schooling (k through 12):”
“32. Using monetary policy to tune the economy:”
“33. Using fiscal policy to tune the economy:”
“34. Tighter rather than looser controls on immigration:”
“35. American military aid or presence abroad to promote democracy and the rule of law:”
“36. Foreign aid and assistance by such organizations as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and US AID:”

Employment

“43. Please check your primary employment (if retired, kindly answer retrospectively):
academic
public sector
private sector
independent research
other: _____”

Voting

“46. To which political party have the candidates you’ve voted for in the past ten years mostly belonged? (Again, skip any question you are not comfortable answering.)

Democratic

Green

Libertarian

Republican

other: _____”

1999 North American Study Survey of Students, Faculty and Administrators (Rothman et al survey)

Political Orientation

14.1b. "When it comes to political matters, how would you place your views on this scale, generally speaking -- where 1 means ‘very left’ and 10 means ‘very right’?"

Party Identification

14.3a. "Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or do you have some other political affiliation?"

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