

Liberal Versus Conservative Stinks

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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 in *Academic Questions* 18(1): 40–52, 2005a; Klein and Western in *Academic Questions* 18(1): 53–65, 2005). Here, we analyze Zipp and Fenwick’s characterization of our research and find it faulty. We, then, turn to their self-identification “liberal vs. conservative” findings and show they concord with our analysis. If one feels that it is a problem that humanities and social science faculty at 4-year colleges and universities are vastly predominantly democratic voters, mostly with views that may called establishment-left, progressive, or status-quo oriented, then such concerns should not be allayed by Zipp and Fenwick’s article. We commence the article with a criticism of the “liberal versus conservative” framework because it is the source of much of the confusion surrounding controversies such as the one over the ideological profile of faculty.

Keywords Liberal · Conservative · Democratic · Republican · Humanities · Academia · Professors · Ideology

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Pluck is a silly man who believes that:

- A. Voting Democratic → self-identifying “liberal”
- B. Voting Republican → self-identifying “conservative”

If Pluck learns that among faculty in the social sciences and humanities, there is a ratio of seven Democrats to one Republican, then Pluck will believe that there is also a ratio of seven self-identified “liberals” to one self-identified “conservative.”

Pluck is wrong.

For example, a lot of Democratic-voting professors self-identify as “middle or center or moderate” or “moderately conservative,” as in “conservative Democrat.” For decades, critics have highlighted the preponderance of professors who vote Democratic and hold social-democratic views. Other scholars have straw-manned those voices as being like Pluck. In effect, they say: “The critics say liberals dominate academe, but, hey, look, the self-identification data show that reports of liberal hegemony are vastly exaggerated.”

Academically well-placed examples of this kind of response are the following four papers:

1. “The Myth of the Liberal Professor” by Michael A. Faia, *Sociology of Education*, 1974, 47: 171–202.
2. “The Politics of the Professors: Self-Identifications, 1969–1984” by Richard F. Hamilton and Lowell L. Hargens, *Social Forces*, 1993, 71(3): 603–27.
3. “Is the Academy a Liberal Hegemony? The Political Orientations and Educational Values of Professors,” by John F. Zipp and Rudy Fenwick, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2006, 70(3): 304–26.
4. “The Social and Political Views of American Professors” by Neil Gross and Solon Simmons, Harvard Working Paper, 2007.

Papers 2, 3, and 4 use political self-identification data to show that the liberals are less dominant than contended by “right-wing activists and scholars.” 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.

The upshot is that different voices use terms differently. For the label “liberal,” for example, an analyst may make that attribution to those on the following bases—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.

In this article, we respond to the Zipp and Fenwick article listed above. They straw-manned our work as being like Pluck. However, there is a much broader issue here. Political discourse has lost its way and is so often jejune *because of the liberal-versus-conservative framework*. The recurrent problems are symptomatic of that framework, and allegiance to that framework is “bipartisan.” We are classical liberals. If we had to identify ourselves as either “liberal” or “conservative,” we would choose “liberal.” Before getting into Zipp and Fenwick, we offer a brief disquisition on why liberal-versus-conservative stinks.

Liberal-versus-Conservative Stinks

One may reasonably ask the Thomas Sowell question: “Stinks *compared to what?*” Liberal-versus-conservative (abbreviated l-v-c) stinks compared to laissez-faire-versus-government intervention or activism—or liberty versus government control—applied on an issue-by-issue basis. Over the range of issues, the analyst can categorize respondents in ways that defy l-v-c. In particular, we need to accommodate the soul of western civilization, that important category, *classical liberal*.

We believe that l-v-c impoverishes, and we can give several reasons:

1. L-v-c is, first and foremost, code for what-Democrats-think vs. 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% of the vote, with the result that both parties evolve as a cluster of interests and outlooks attracting approximately 50% of the votes. Thus, the crude machinations of a two-party polity, not meaningful ideological distinctions, are major determinants of what meaning “liberal” and “conservative” do have. Most notably, we must bear in mind that individuals tend to fit their thinking into whatever scheme is conventional in their society—the two-party scheme is as much a driver as a reflection of political opinion.
2. 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. Self-identification is sensitive to the “road” the respondent “lives on,” or his reference group. 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 extreme social democrats. Also, an individual’s answer depends on the context of the question, that is, that her response might change with implied reference group. Among her neighbors, she is a “liberal,” while among her colleagues she is a “conservative.”
3. One dimension impoverishes. So-called liberals today are more laissez-faire on some issues (such as immigration, drugs, prostitution, pornography, gay freedoms, Patriot Act, military action, abortion). We generally favor laissez-faire, and if we had to identify ourselves as either “liberal,” “moderate,” or “conservative,” we might say “moderate.” We, who favor a vast, even “radical”, reduction in the size and scope of government, are forced into “moderate.” *Ha, ha!!* It is impoverishing to confine the discussion to a single polarity. If surveys are to ask political orientation, they should offer a greater variety of responses (e.g., communitarian, neoconservative, classical liberal or 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.
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. The terms have vague and far-flung connotations.
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, 100 years since the “Progressive” era, nearly 100 years since the introduction of the federal income tax, 70 years since the New Deal, and 40 years since the Great Society. When any of those programs are under fire, it is the social democrats who are 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 Democrats predominate in our cultural institutions, notably academe, the k-12 teachers, and the media. Further, academe is one of the most established, static, caste-like realms of American society. In many respects, social democrats are conserving the establishment. In the academia debate, they are the ones in *reaction* mode.

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. The *laissez-faire* meaning was subverted but, even in the United States, never died, and it was rejuvenated by Ludwig von Mises, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and others, who described themselves as “liberal,” never “conservative.” Not only has “liberal” largely retained its meaning in Continental Europe (especially Central Europe) but today, in the United States, terms like “liberalization” and “liberal immigration or drug policy” rejuvenate the *laissez-faire* meaning. One reason Democrats might refrain from describing themselves as “liberal” is that they sense the *laissez-faire* meaning, and they do not fit the description.

For all these reasons, l-v-c usually obscures more than illuminates. In particular, it systematically obscures the key idea of *laissez-faire* versus intervention, which may be applied on an issue-by-issue basis, and it obscures *the third man*: the classical liberal. We ask those who call themselves “conservative”: Do you generally (not 100% of the time, but really quite generally) favor significantly *greater* (not necessarily absolute) liberty than currently prevails in the United States, across the range of policy issues? And, where you do not favor greater liberty, are you willing to say so *in those terms* and to assume the intellectual burden of proof for going against *a presumption of liberty*? In other words, *are you or are you not a classical liberal*? If so, then we are a “we.” If so, let us focus on original liberal semantics and the distinction between liberty and intervention.

Zipp and Fenwick Portray Us as Pluck

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” (2006, 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 2006, p. 309).

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 impression that the ratio we estimate is that of liberals to conservatives. That is, they represented us as Pluck. We feel they also misrepresented us in other ways.

Klein and Stern (2005a) reports on our survey of six scholarly associations. The key question reads: “To which political party have the candidates you have voted for in the past 10 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 humanities and social sciences. 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).

We never translate the findings into statements about self-identified “liberal” vs. self-identified “conservative.” Yet, ZF write that our studies “treat party identification or voting behavior as equivalent to political ideology” (Zipp and Fenwick 2006, p. 306, see also 304, 316). They then take data on self-characterizations (liberal or conservative) to be refutations of our findings. They say we “ignored much better data and research” (p. 306), namely self-identification studies, including Hamilton and Hargens (1993). 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. Our beef, then, is about characterizing us as Pluck, not ZF’s numbers *per se*.

In our large article in *Critical Review* (Klein and Stern 2005b, 269)—oddly, never cited by ZF 2006, though the academic working paper was available online—we do say, “Democrats and Republicans generally fit the ideal types of

liberals and conservatives.” In a subsequent rejoinder (Zipp and Fenwick 2007), ZF quote this sentence. Three points:

1. Notice that the quoted statement says “the ideal types.” Again, many of those ideal-typical “liberals” will self-identify as middle-of-the-road or moderately conservative.
2. ZF ignore the important qualifications we made to the quoted sentence, in particular how the fit is a matter of *relative* features. Nearby, we wrote: “Both Republican and Democratic respondents in our sample are quite interventionist in absolute terms, even when the ideological type suggests that they should be somewhat *laissez faire*” (2005b, 270).
3. ZF have zeroed in on a particular statement in a body of work that otherwise *diligently eschewed* l-v-c. ZF are chasing us to force us into a Pluck outfit.

How did ZF slip into misrepresenting us? We believe that the source of their error is l-v-c. ZF perceived the obvious, namely that we imputed ideological content to our results—particularly as our survey included 18 policy questions, giving us a good reading of policy views. ZF carelessly assumed that we were saying that “liberals” outnumber “conservatives” 8 to 1. No, that is not something we ever said or suggested. In fact, the cluster analysis in Klein and Stern 2005b shows four familiar ideological groups: progressive, establishment left, conservatives, and libertarians—names we gave based on each group’s policy-opinion profile.

Humanities and Social Sciences versus Entire Faculty

We said, “for the social sciences and humanities” (henceforth, we here abbreviate humanities and social sciences as “h/ss”). Klein and Stern never suggested that such estimates applied to the entire faculty. ZF, after citing our papers, point to self-identification research and 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. ZF’s title, introduction, 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 online interview in *Free Exchange on Campus*, 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 2006 never identified a single instance of overstatement on anyone’s part.

In their 2007 rejoinder, ZF can point to nothing in the work of Klein and Stern, but they do (accurately) quote Klein and Western (2005, 59) as follows: “Casual commentators sometimes suggest that lopsidedness is found only in the social sciences and humanities. The data indicate that the one-party character of academia is quite uniform across campus.”

OK, the last sentence is, we admit, regrettable, but its *gotcha!* value is small. It is a shame that we have to fend off *gotchas!*, but such is the case. Three points:

1. We say “slightly” because the “data” referred to is data from Stanford and Berkeley, where, in fact, the data does indicate that D/R lopsidedness is high all across campus. ZF take one sentence out of a discussion that is plainly speculative and tentative.
2. Remember that ZF attribute to us the claim that the 7D/1R ratio goes all across campus. They have ignored all the many times Klein and Stern clearly said “for the social sciences and humanities,” and subsequently identify, for the first time, one sentence in a different paper that does *slightly* support their representation.
3. All data do indicate that, over the population of four-year colleges and universities, D/R lopsidedness is found across campus, with the exception of some Business fields, Military Sciences, and Sports (Cardiff and Klein 2005).

Two-year Colleges

Like Hamilton and Hargens, ZF go all the way down through the 2-year colleges. These are mostly community colleges offering associate of arts degrees, not bachelors. ZF (p. 311) note that in 1994, 42.3% of students attended 2-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 US departments produce most of the country’s Ph.D.s gaining faculty jobs in the field’s top 200 departments. In their abstract, ZF say that conservatives (which is supposed to include us) have made claims 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

Table 1 Self-characterized political orientation of humanities and social science faculty, all schools (including 2-year colleges), from the 1997 Carnegie survey

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

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.

voter registration analyses draw on some of the most selective institutions...” (p. 306).

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 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. We see that it probably would have been better to say that our estimates exclude the 2-year colleges. Our remissness can perhaps be excused, as people do not seem to have community colleges in mind in debates about faculty ideology. But, as we will see, it appears that our 7 to 1 estimate was sufficiently conservative to be OK even when we include 2-year colleges.

In their 2007 rejoinder, ZF challenge the idea that the 2-year colleges have less cultural impact, and that the issue of political ideology is more in especially important in h/ss departments. We find their counter-arguments weak, and will not pursue those issues here.

Examining the 1997 Carnegie Data on Political Orientation

So, we feel that ZF misrepresent us on the primary matter (“Pluck”) and to a good extent on the other two matters, as well. It is a shame that discourse across ideological lines has had this “gotcha” flavor. Let us try to get beyond it!

Now, let us look at the data ZF use to see whether those data cast any doubt on what we really 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.

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

Now, are these results compatible with a 7 to 1 ratio for all h/ss faculty? Let us first make a quick comparison to the general population, using the General Social Survey 1989 through 2004, 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.

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

But let us address the 7-to-1 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, 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

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

| | Political orientation | | | | | Missing | Total |
|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------------|---------|-------|
| | Liberal | Moderately liberal | Middle of road | Moderately conservative | Conservative | | |
| Humanities | 206 | 172 | 67 | 26 | 8 | 27 | 506 |
| Percentage (%) | 40.7 | 34.0 | 13.2 | 5.1 | 1.6 | 5.3 | 100 |
| Social Sciences | 147 | 108 | 39 | 31 | 17 | 13 | 355 |
| Percentage (%) | 41.4 | 30.4 | 11.0 | 8.7 | 4.8 | 3.7 | 100 |

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%
- “Moderate/middle of the road”—37.87%
- “Slightly conservative,” “conservative” or “extremely conservative”—20.95%.

(and 3.42% are missing or not applicable).

Republicans self-characterize as follows:

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

(and 2.08% 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 point—and call the three bulleted categories above liberal, middle, and conservative, we can use these propensities to project:

How a population of seven Democrats and one Republican would self-characterize:

- 34.66% as liberal = $(7 \times 37.76 + 12.94)/800$
- 37.04% as middle of the road = $(7 \times 37.87 + 31.25)/800$
- 25.05 percent as conservative = $(7 \times 20.95 + 53.73)/800$
- 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* seven Democrats to one Republican (making the obvious translation of Carnegie’s five-point scale into liberal, middle, and conservative). In fact, those data would seem to suggest an h/ss D/R ratio of *greater than* 7 to 1. (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.) This is especially so when we exclude the 2-year colleges (in which case, for example, the humanities L/C ratio is 11.15). 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 Tables 1 and 2.

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’s 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% |

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 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 data), we find that our original D/R estimates look fine.

A Brief on Gross and Simmons 2007

In October 2007, Neil Gross and Solon Simmons released a report, listed earlier, on an important new survey on faculty ideology. They report that “moderates” are on the rise and radicalism on the decline (pp. 40–41). As Stephen Balch described on the National Association of Scholars website, it does seem that their study and report were composed in ways that tend to inflate the portion of “moderates” in political views and “Independents” in voting. Gross and Simmons (p. 34) report self-described party affiliation by departments, but only in a way such that 38.9% of faculty overall are Independents. Gross and Simmons collected information on voting in the 2004 presidential election, but they do not report what percentage of “moderates” voted for Kerry in 2004, nor what percentage of “Independents” voted for Kerry. Meanwhile, Tobin and Weinberg (2006, 27) found that among faculty describing themselves as “moderates”, 68% voted for Kerry and 27% for Bush. Also, Tobin and Weinberg found that only 1% of professors who self-identify as liberal/very liberal voted for Bush, while 8% of professors who self-identify as conservative or very conservative voted for Kerry. Gross and Simmons (2007, 37) do report that Humanities professors in 2004 voted 83.7% for Kerry, 15.0% for Bush, and Social Science professors 87.6% 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.”

Hegemony?

Zipp and Fenwick title their article, “Is the Academy a Liberal Hegemony?” Again, we think that l-v-c obscures more than illuminates. As for “the Academy,” although some studies provide a glimpse into the departments across campus, 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.

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 Assoc.) to 2.65 (the Am. Economics Assoc.). Our data show that individuals with scores above 4.0—classical liberals—are nil in the Am. Anthropological Assoc., the Am. Historical Assoc., the Am. Political Science Assoc., the Am. Sociological Assoc., and the Am. Society for Legal and Political Philosophy. In the Am. Economics Assoc. they are less than 10%. 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, history, and philosophy (p. 275), indicating ideological sorting as suggested by Rothman et al. (2005).

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 certain that the D/R ratio has increased substantially since 1970, perhaps doubling from 4:1 to 8:1 (Klein and Stern 2005b,

264), and some evidence suggests that it is still on the way up (Klein and Stern 2005b, 265, 289; Cardiff and Klein 2005, 252). As for *policy views*, there is no past survey from which to draw a good comparison. However, our survey asked birthyear, so we have differences by age in the 2003 snapshot: the policy index shows a slight *inverse* relation between age and interventionism (p. 276). It is entirely possible that the h/ss professoriate, while more Democratic than in the past, is, on the whole, no more interventionist than in the past. It is probably a mistake to suppose that at any time during at least the past 50 years academe was significantly more supportive of liberty.

The h/ss ideological profile (excluding 2-year colleges) is vastly predominately Democratic, mainly with views that are a mixture of establishment-left, progressive, and simply a presumption of the status quo. 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 individual liberty and free enterprise.

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Further Reading

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