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## **The Political Opinions of Swedish Social Scientists**

Niclas Berggren, Henrik Jordahl and  
Charlotta Stern

# The Political Opinions of Swedish Social Scientists\*

Niclas Berggren<sup>§</sup>, Henrik Jordahl<sup>#</sup>, and Charlotta Stern<sup>□</sup>

**Abstract.** We study the political opinions of Swedish social scientists in seven disciplines. A survey was sent to 4,301 academics at 25 colleges and universities, which makes the coverage of the disciplines included more or less comprehensive. When it comes to party sympathies there are 1.3 academics on the right for each academic on the left—a sharp contrast to the situation in the United States, where Democrats greatly dominate the social sciences. The corresponding ratio for Swedish citizens in general is 1.1. The most left-leaning disciplines are sociology and gender studies, the most right-leaning ones are business administration, economics, and law, with political science and economic history somewhere in between. The differences between the disciplines are smaller in Sweden than in the more polarized U.S. We also asked 14 policy questions. The replies largely confirm the pattern of a left-right divide – but overall the desire to change the status quo is tepid.

**Keywords.** Academics; social scientists; policy views; political opinions; party sympathies

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# 1. Introduction

An increasing number of studies investigate the political views of academics. We contribute to this literature with an analysis of Swedish social scientists in business administration, economic history, economics, gender studies, law, political science, and sociology. “All” (4,301) academics in these disciplines at 25 Swedish colleges and universities were invited to participate in a web survey with questions on party sympathies and policy views. In total, 1,512 replied, a response rate of 35.2 percent.

Our results indicate a general tendency to the right among the Swedish social scientists taking part in our survey.<sup>1</sup> When it comes to party sympathies, we find 1.3 sympathizers with the right bloc for each sympathizer with the left bloc. The corresponding ratio for Swedish citizens in general is 1.1. When it comes to policy issues, the general picture is that scholars in business administration, economics, and law tend to favor policies of the right whereas especially scholars in gender studies and sociology tend to favor policies of the left. But overall the desire to change the status quo is tepid in all disciplines.<sup>2</sup> When comparing these results to findings from the United States, two differences stand out. On the one hand it is clear that there is a more left-leaning tendency among American academics (where “left” should be interpreted *relative to the own political culture*), with a dominance of Democrats in all disciplines. On the other hand, there is greater polarization among American academics. For example, the dominance of Democrats seems to hold in every discipline in the U.S. (not the case for the right bloc in Sweden), this dominance is generally much larger than for the right bloc in Sweden, and the differences between the disciplines in terms of how dominant the largest party or bloc is are much larger in the U.S.

There are two dominant rationales for this line of inquiry. First, academics tend to be influential in any society. Their views are transmitted to students in particular, but also to journalists, politicians and the public. Both introspection and some harder evidence suggest that teachers and professors are able to exert influence of this kind over students.<sup>3</sup> The end

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<sup>1</sup> The terms left and right are used in accordance with standard usage in Swedish discourse, which is not automatically comparable to usage in other political cultures.

<sup>2</sup> Note that we neither try to *explain* these findings nor try to entangle their *consequences* – that is left for future work.

<sup>3</sup> Frank et al. (1993) and Frank and Schulze (2000), among others, claim that university teachers influence economics students by making them more selfish. This claim has been disputed by e.g. Frey and Meier (2005). Even if the latter are correct, it may of course be that other forms of influences prevail. E.g. Guimond (1997) finds

result could be changes in policies, with important social and economic consequences.<sup>4</sup> This view was forcefully argued by Keynes (1953: 383–384):

[T]he ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong, are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist. ... But, soon or late, it is ideas, not vested interests, which are dangerous for good or evil.

But it is only by knowing what academics actually believe and think that it is possible to critically discuss their influence. Such knowledge may focus on differences between academics and people in general, on differences between various groups of academics and on differences between academics in different countries.

Second, some consider heterogeneity, plurality and non-conformism central elements of an academic environment. If it is the case that a certain normative perspective dominates a discipline, this could be thought to be detrimental for an open inquiry into issues, especially into those with policy relevance. However, homogeneity could also be interpreted as consensus, i.e. as an indication that scholars have tried various ideas in open discourse and come, through careful analysis, to certain insights of high certainty. We do not evaluate these alternative interpretations in this study but leave for others to analyze and discuss the positive and negative effects of our findings.

Studying Sweden contributes to the literature in providing information, for the first time, on the policy views of social scientists in a Scandinavian country, a part of the world with extensive welfare-state arrangements and a socially progressive tradition. Policies seem to a dominant degree to have been shaped and characterized by social democratic values and persons, perhaps best personified in the couple Alva and Gunnar Myrdal. Policies also illustrate a related Swedish tradition of running politics according to rationalist and modernist precepts, which has given ample room for social scientists to affect policies in many direct ways (e.g. as politicians and advisors) and also in indirect ways (as teachers and

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that the main subject studied by students is a significant predictor of change in sociopolitical attitudes for college students. There are also indications that civic education under certain conditions affects teenagers towards greater acceptance of democracy and the market economy (Slomczynski and Shabad, 1998). And Banks and Roker (1994) find that girls from similar backgrounds have quite different political attitudes depending on whether they go to public or private schools, which again indicates a possibility for teaching to influence students.

<sup>4</sup> See Ladd and Lipset (1975: 306-311) and Blyth (2002).

in the media).<sup>5</sup> Our findings should be of interest to all scholars who have taken an interest in the Swedish model and also in Swedish academic life. How do the social scientists of Sweden themselves view policies related to the Swedish model that have inspired not least many American scholars?<sup>6</sup> The Swedish setting can furthermore be seen as advantageous compared to the U.S. setting in having a proportional electoral system with more parties to choose from, which creates a richer, more informative picture of political preferences.

Most previous studies have been conducted in the U.S. Early results indicated a left and Democratic (as opposed to Republican) inclination among U.S. academics (Spaulding and Turner 1968, Lipset and Ladd 1972, Ladd and Lipset 1975, Lipset 1982, Hamilton and Hargens 1993). This was especially the case for humanist and social-science faculty, whereas natural-science and business faculty tended to be less left-oriented. Also, there was a tendency for more prominent academics to be more leftist than less prominent ones. Later studies give a similar picture. Rothman et al. (2005) find that liberals and Democrats outnumber conservatives and Republicans by large margins, and the differences are not limited to elite universities or to the social sciences and humanities. They also find that conservatives and Republicans teach at lower quality schools than do liberals and Democrats. However, Ames et al. (2005) do not share the oft-stated view that this is a problem and suggest self-selection as a plausible explanation, a suggestion that Zywicki (2005) questions.

Klein and Stern (2004, 2005a,b, 2006a,b,c,d) find a dominance of Democrats among social scientists and, based on a survey of members of the scholarly associations in anthropology, economics, history, legal and political philosophy, political science, and sociology, that their policy preferences generally are such that partisan identification are in line with left/right ideal types. They also find that the inter-disciplinary diversity of policy views is greatest in economics and that those who deviate from left views are as likely to fit a libertarian profile as a conservative one.<sup>7</sup> Nakhaie and Brym (1999) report a similar pattern

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<sup>5</sup> See e.g. Myrdal (1960), Bergh and Erlingsson (2006) and Carlson and Jonung (2006). The latter provide examples of some leading Swedish economists around the turn of the last century who were liberal (in the European sense) rather than socialist and who also participated actively in public discourse.

<sup>6</sup> For a classic example, see Childs (1936). For a more recent example, see Lindert (2004a,b).

<sup>7</sup> Similar results are reported by Lee (1994), the Brookings Institution (2001), Lindholm et al. (2003) and Tobin and Weinberg (2006), and for psychologists in particular by Ray (1989) and Redding (2001). The results on party preferences are reinforced and to some extent validated by voter-registration studies (which unlike surveys do not suffer from low response rates) – see e.g. Horowitz and Lehrer (2002), Zinsmeister (2002), Klein and Western

for Canada. Academics in the humanities, social sciences, arts, and education there score consistently to the left of those in the natural sciences, business, and engineering.

However, Zipp and Fenwick (2006) dispute the claims of the previous literature and present results that indicate that “the American academy has not become a liberal hegemony; if anything, there has been a slight trend to moderation – from both ends of the political spectrum toward the center.” (p. 320) For a reply, see Klein and Stern (2006e).

A related line of research, initiated by Brittan (1973) and Kearl et al. (1979), is less focused on studying party sympathies or self-characterizations but rather highlights views on specific policy issues, and some investigate the extent to which academics (especially economists) are in agreement on various issues.<sup>8</sup> For instance, Fuller and Geide-Stevenson (2003), using three complementary measures, find a considerable amount of consensus, especially in the area of international economics and more so on micro- than on macroeconomic issues. An indication of no consensus was found for only four out of 44 propositions. Likewise, Whaples (2006) reports considerable consensus, not least in favor of free trade and educational vouchers. Two issues where there was disagreement were climate change and Social Security. There have also been such surveys of economists in countries other than the U.S. Generally, the studies report a high degree of consensus within countries, but there are, as shown by e.g. Frey et al. (1984), sometimes clear differences between economists in different countries.<sup>9</sup>

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(2005) and Cardiff and Klein (2006). The latter study e.g. finds an average Democrat-Republican ratio of 5:1 across universities and disciplines.

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. Alston et al. (1992), Whaples (1996, 1996, 2006), Fuchs (1996), Blendon et al. (1997), Fuchs et al. (1998), Moorhouse (1999), Fuller and Geide-Stevenson (2003), Heckelman and Whaples (2003, 2005) and Colander (2005).

<sup>9</sup> Also see e.g. Block and Walker (1988), Ricketts and Shoesmith (1990, 1992), Anderson and Blandy (1992) and Anderson et al. (1993).

## 2. The Survey

### 2.1. Invitees and Respondents

The basis for this study is a web-based survey that was conducted in December 2005–January 2006.<sup>10</sup> E-mail invitations were sent to 4,301 Swedish academics, which constitute “all” academics who are doctoral students and university employees with or without a doctoral degree doing research and/or teaching at 25 colleges and universities in the disciplines business administration, economic history, economics, gender studies, law, political science, and sociology.<sup>11</sup> The choice of colleges and universities was motivated by there being a presence of at least one department that clearly represented at least one of the seven disciplines.<sup>12</sup> As for the choice of disciplines, we restrict ourselves to the social sciences and do not include e.g. the natural sciences or the humanities.<sup>13</sup> The reason is that we are interested in disciplines that are relevant to policy-making, in the sense that they deal with socially relevant matters that can form the basis for political opinions and decisions. On the basis of this criterion of policy relevance, we also exclude some social sciences, most notably cultural geography, psychology, and social anthropology. When we speak of social scientists in our analysis, we refer to the disciplines included in this study.

The e-mail addresses were located from the web pages of the respective colleges and universities, and only the academics with listed e-mail addresses were contacted.<sup>14</sup> Two reminding e-mails were sent out in line with Schaefer and Dillman (1998), who find this to be a good way to increase the response rate. The number of replies was 1,512, which gives a

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<sup>10</sup> We offered all recipients of the e-mail the option to participate by printing the web survey, filling it out manually, and sending it to us by regular post. Five out of 1,512 chose to reply in this fashion.

<sup>11</sup> Note that we will use tests of statistical inference even though we invited the entire population – not a random sample – of academics in the seven disciplines. These tests could still be used for inference if all non-responses were randomly determined. Alternatively, they can be used to extrapolate to a larger universe of possible populations (Blalock, 1979).

<sup>12</sup> There are, in total, 39 colleges and universities in Sweden.

<sup>13</sup> We include law, in spite of its sometimes not being considered part of social science proper. Among the colleges and universities in our study, law is a faculty of its own at Lund University, Stockholm University and Uppsala University. Law belongs to the Faculty of Social Sciences at Umeå University and belongs to a faculty or a department together with other social-science disciplines at most other universities and colleges.

<sup>14</sup> Temporarily hired academics and academics on long-term sick leave or parental leave were excluded.



total response rate of 35.2 percent.<sup>15</sup> The highest response rate by institution was 50.0 percent (West University College and Gotland University College), while the lowest was 26.3 percent (Royal Institute of Technology). The largest numbers of invitations were sent to Stockholm University (625), Lund University (535) and Uppsala University (533). Further details for each institution in the study are available in Table A1 in Appendix A.

Problems of non-response are dealt with in Appendix B where we investigate to what extent our respondents are representative of the whole population of academics in our seven disciplines. We find that they are, to a large extent, in terms of university or college affiliation, gender, academic position, and academic discipline (the variables with known values for the population). When it comes to variables with unknown values for the population we apply the “willingness-to-respond” approach and investigate whether early responses systematically differ from late responses that we received only after sending out one or two reminding emails (cf. Armstrong and Overton, 1977). As such differences are almost completely absent for the variables that we study (bloc preferences, policy views, self-reported left-right scale, and certain influential activities), we are reinforced in the belief that our respondents are representative of the population.

## 2.2. The Survey

When invitees visited the web page with the survey ([www.policystudy.se](http://www.policystudy.se), no longer operational) they first received information and instructions. Everything was in Swedish, so here we translate as necessary. After a specification of the purpose of the study, there followed a specification of the length of time it would take to complete it (about 15 minutes), a guarantee of anonymity, and information about the three investigators.

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<sup>15</sup> This is somewhat similar to response rates in preceding studies (which, however, usually begin with a random sample of invitees, whereas we invited “all” academics in the chosen disciplines in Sweden). For example, Fuller and Geide-Stevenson (2003) sent questionnaires to 1,000 randomly selected members of the American Economic Association and had a response rate of 30.8 percent. Heckelman and Whaples (2003) sent questionnaires to between 200 and 300 members, respectively, of the American Economic Association, the American Political Science Association, and the Public Choice Society and got response rates of 34.4 percent, 33.2 percent and 29.6 percent. Klein and Stern (2004, 2005a,b, 2006a,b,c,d) report a response rate of 30.9 percent, based on a random selection of 5,486 members of six professional associations. In contrast, Rothman et al. (2005) report a 72 percent response rate from 1,643 academics. Generally, web surveys seem to have lower response rates than mail surveys – around 20 percent compared to 40 percent (Sheehan and McMillan, 1999).

The set of questions contains several sections: one on academic discipline, position, and funding; one on personal background; one about the respondents' academic work and the respondents themselves; one on political opinions; one on views on different issues (relating to the economy, the judicial system, social issues, and gender equality); one on the respondents' views on society and the way it functions; and one on academic society and research. There were 73 questions in all. Here, we utilize only a subset, primarily relating to politics and policy views. The questions are specified below when the results are presented.<sup>16</sup>

The survey was constructed without any technically advanced features (as suggested by Liebing Madsen and Grønbaek, 2005) so as to enable those without broadband connections to participate. We did not make use of scrollbars for the reply options (in accordance with the advice of Dillman, 2006), but since all questions followed in one sequence, the scrollbar to the right continuously indicated how much was left of the survey (as suggested by Dillman et al., 1998). Some of the problems with web surveys are probably small when surveying academics. Most academics are familiar with computers and the Internet, and have functioning equipment and broadband at work.

### 3. Results and Analysis

#### 3.1. Preliminaries

Before presenting the results, we wish to clarify a few further matters.

First, some basic institutional facts. Sweden is a parliamentary democracy and a monarchy where the king has no formal power. The Parliament is called the *Riksdag* and has one chamber with 349 members who are elected at the same time every four years. The electoral system is proportional, except for a 4 percent threshold level for any party. The Government is led by the Prime Minister, who is elected by and accountable to the *Riksdag*. There are seven parties in the *Riksdag*: the Christian Democrats, the Moderate Party, the Center Party, and the Liberal Party form a right bloc (in Government from 2006), while the Social Democratic Party, the Left Party, and the Green Party form a left bloc (making up the

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<sup>16</sup> The full survey (in its original Swedish and in an English translation), covering 14 pages, is available at [www.sofi.su.se/~lst/](http://www.sofi.su.se/~lst/).

parliamentary opposition from 2006).<sup>17</sup> At the time when the survey was conducted, two challenging parties gained particular attention: the June List and the Feminist Initiative. Neither reached the 4 percent threshold in the September 2006 general election and hence do not hold seats in Parliament.<sup>18</sup>

Second, we make frequent use of the left-right terminology, both when discussing party sympathies, policy opinions and (naturally) self-identification on the left-right scale. This conforms to standard usage among political scientists and seems especially apt in a Swedish setting, where the scale is widely understood and used by voters to structure their political preferences.<sup>19</sup> The left-right dichotomy often refers to differences in views of government ownership, government intervention in the economy and the family, the role of the judiciary, and the scope of welfare programs and redistribution.<sup>20</sup> Of course, left-right terminology entails simplification, and it should in the Swedish context be pointed out that there are differences between the parties within each bloc and that some are quite centrist on the scale. Furthermore, the terms are to some extent understood differently in other political cultures.<sup>21</sup> Left in Sweden and left in the US may mean quite different things – and for this reason, comparisons of the shares of left- and right-sympathizers are generally most meaningful when made within a political culture. Lastly, not all issues are easily described by the left-right scale. There are many nuances to be made.

Third, when results are reported for the different disciplines, this everywhere refers to the disciplines where respondents are currently active.

### **3.2. Party Sympathies**

There are large differences between the disciplines when it comes to party sympathies, as revealed in Table 1. It is based on the following question:

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<sup>17</sup> The decision to include the Green Party in the left bloc has two bases: it has supported, together with the Left Party, Social Democratic governments since its entry into Parliament, and it is placed to the left by voters on the left-right scale (Grendstad, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> All parties are described briefly in Box A1 in the Appendix.

<sup>19</sup> See Klingemann (1995), Bobbio (1996), Oscarsson (1998) and Grendstad (2003).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Lijphart (1984) and Knutsen (1995).

<sup>21</sup> See e.g. Grendstad (2003) and Zechmeister (2006).

Even though one doesn't agree with a political party on each and every issue, one may have stronger sympathies for a certain party, compared to others. Which party do you have the strongest sympathies for?<sup>22</sup>

There is a clear left dominance in sociology – with about five times as many who sympathize with the left as with the right bloc – as well as in gender studies. There is a milder left character to political science and economic history. There are three disciplines with a right dominance: economics, law, and business administration. In the former two, there are about twice as many who sympathize with the right as with the left bloc. In business administration, the sympathy ratio rises to about three. The result for all disciplines is included for comparison. The right bloc attracts 1.3 times as many of our academics as the left.<sup>23</sup> We will return to these aggregate figures in more detail below.

Table 1. Bloc preferences of Swedish social scientists (percent)

	Left bloc	Right bloc	Ratio right bloc/left bloc
Business administration	19.8	60.8	3.1
Economics	26.8	52.5	2.0
Law	24.6	46.6	1.9
Economic history	40.6	31.2	0.8
Political science	45.1	29.4	0.7
Gender studies	23.1	10.2	0.4
Sociology	57.4	11.0	0.2
All	33.2	41.7	1.3

Note: The sum of the share that supports the right bloc and the share that supports the left bloc is not 100 percent since there are five reply alternatives that do not belong to any of these blocs: "Other", "None", "Do not know/Do not want to answer", the June List (Jl) and the Feminist Initiative (Fi), two parties that are not part of any of the blocs. The left bloc comprises the Social Democratic Party (S), the Left Party (V), and the Green Party (Mp). The right bloc comprises the Christian Democrats (Kd), the Moderate Party (M), the Center Party (C), and the Liberal Party (Fp).

One can relate these findings to the ratio between Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. in different disciplines. According to Klein and Stern (2005b), among sociologists and anthropologists, the ratio is 0.05 – that is, there are more than 20 times as many Democrats as Republicans. Among political scientists, it is 0.2 (more than five times as many Democrats);

<sup>22</sup> We also asked which party the respondents intended to vote for in the 2006 parliamentary election. As about 40 percent replied that they did not intend to vote for any party or that they did not know or did not want to answer the question, we do not include the results. They are available upon request.

<sup>23</sup> We have also calculated the bloc preferences if each discipline is given equal weight irrespective of its size. The ratio is then 0.93 (a mild left dominance).

and among economists, it is 0.3 (three times as many Democrats). For social-science and humanities faculty in all they estimate the ratio to be 0.12 (eight times as many Democrats). There definitely seems to be more of a one-sided dominance in the U.S. setting, and it is to the left compared to Sweden, where it is to the right – given the definition of these terms in each political culture. (Hence, these differences do not necessarily translate into actual differences in actual policy positions: an average Democrat is perhaps in agreement with an average right-bloc sympathizer in Sweden.)

Looking specifically at sympathies for the different parties in the various disciplines, Figures 1a and 1b reveal that the Liberal Party (Fp) is the largest party in business administration, economic history, economics, and law. This is noteworthy, since this party is relatively small in the electorate at large, where the Moderate Party (M) is since long the largest party in the right bloc. This finding indicates that the sympathies for the right bloc are relatively centrist among the academics in our study. The Social Democratic Party (S) is the largest among political scientists – the only discipline for which this holds, in spite of this party being the biggest in the electorate. The Left Party (V) is the largest among sociologists (rendering the left character of the discipline more distinct than if the Social Democrats had been the largest party); and the Feminist Initiative (Fi) greatly dominates gender studies.

Figure 1a. Party sympathies among Swedish social scientists per discipline (percent)

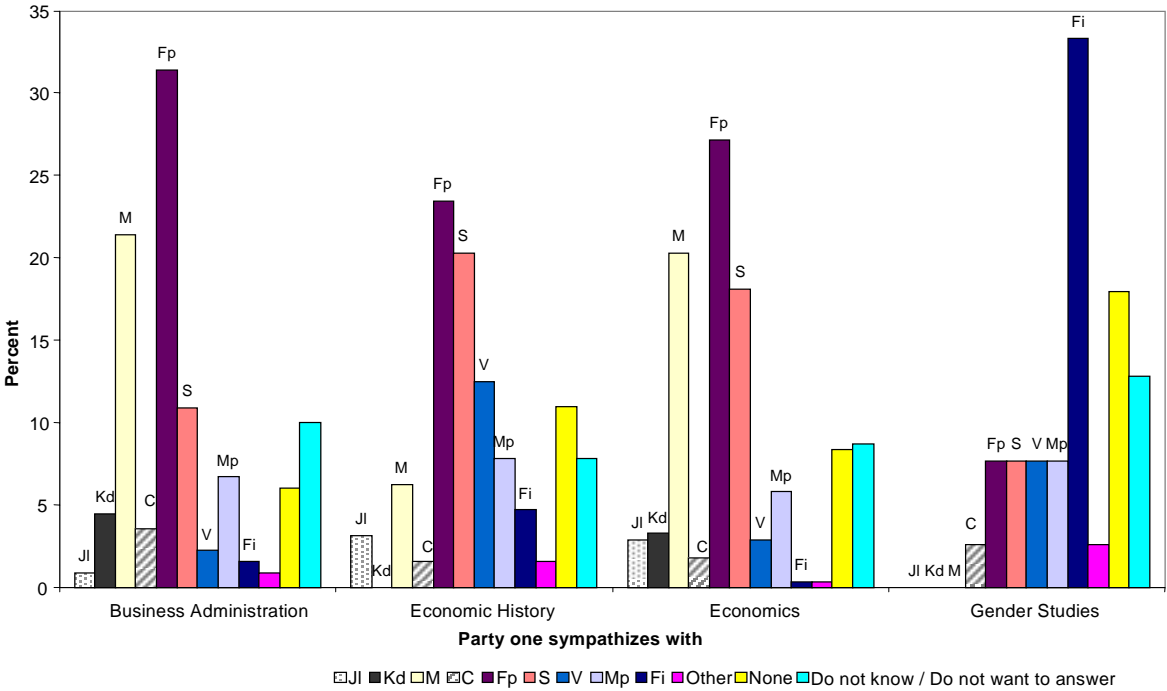
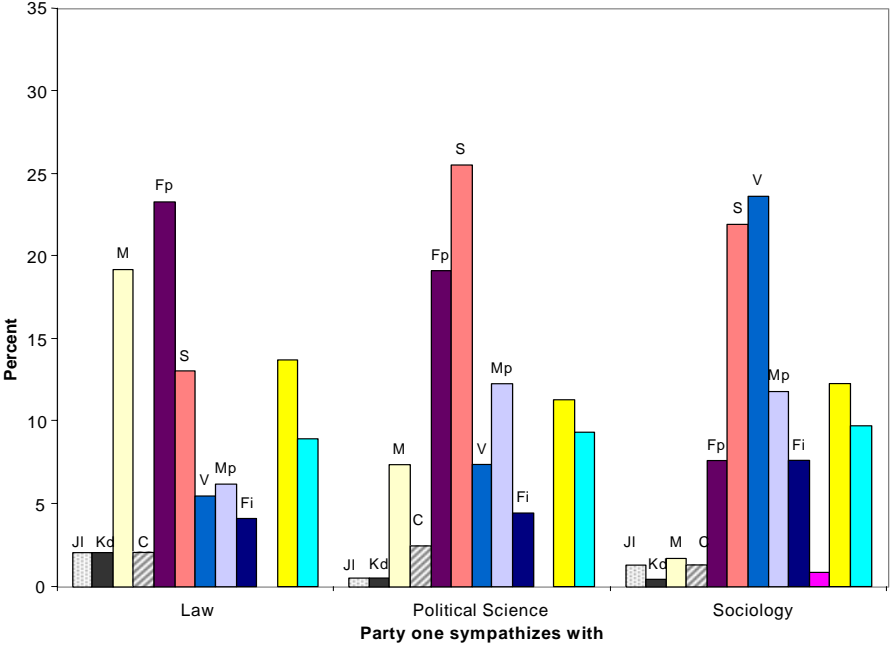


Figure 1b. Party sympathies among Swedish social scientists per discipline (percent)

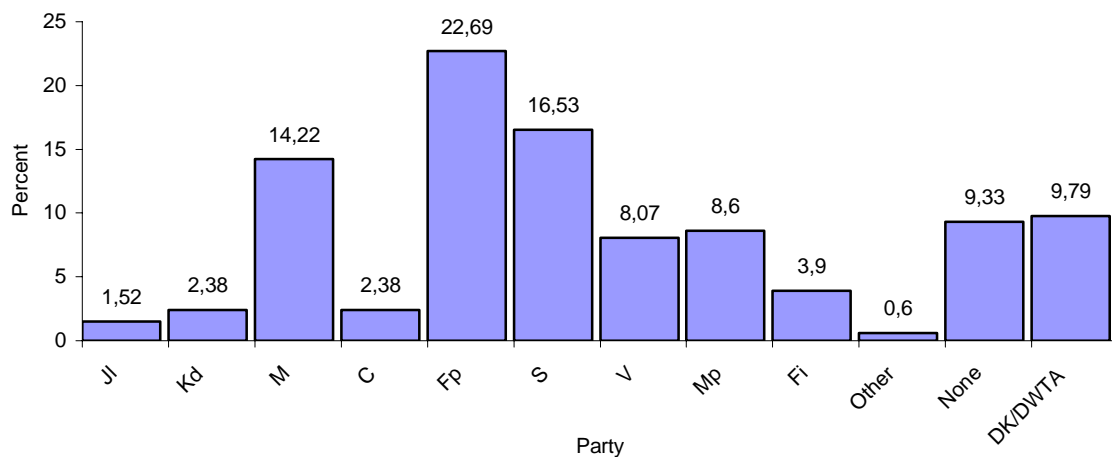


Note: The left bloc comprises the Social Democratic Party (S), the Left Party (V), and the Green Party (Mp). The right bloc comprises the Christian Democrats (Kd), the Moderate Party (M), the Center Party (C), and the Liberal Party (Fp). Brief party descriptions are available in Box A1 in Appendix A.

To see whether the differences in party sympathies observed across disciplines are due to compositional differences, we have regressed bloc sympathy on discipline, age, gender, and position in the academy. The logit results are available in Table C1 in Appendix C. They reveal that the bloc differences between the disciplines are in qualitative agreement with the findings presented above. Being a scholar in sociology is associated with a higher probability for supporting the left bloc, whereas being a scholar in business administration, economics, and law is associated with a higher probability for supporting the right bloc. These findings are robust to changing the set of control variables – from including age, gender and academic positions to including, in addition, family income, and academic affiliation.

In Figure 2, the aggregate party sympathies of all 1,512 respondents are presented.

Figure 2. The party sympathies of all respondents (percent)



Note: Jl = the June List, Kd = the Christian Democrats, M = the Moderate Party, C = the Center Party, Fp = the Liberal Party, S = the Social Democratic Party, V = the Left Party, Mp = the Green Party, Fi = the Feminist Initiative, and DK/KWTA = Do not know/Do not want to answer. The share that replies “None” or “DK/DWTA” is very similar to that found in the general opinion polls at the time (16.1 percent on average for six polls in December 2005 and January 2006 from the three leading opinion-poll institutes Temu, Sifo, and Demoskop).

The biggest party among our respondents is the Liberal Party (Fp), a center-right party in the right bloc, whereas the two traditionally dominant parties, the Moderate Party (M) and the Social Democratic Party (S), get relatively low figures. If one looks at the two political blocs, the right bloc gets 41.7 percent and the left bloc gets 33.2 percent, a clear dominance (of 1.3:1) of the right.

The party-sympathy figures for the Swedish social scientists participating in our survey can be compared to those of Swedes in general in December 2005–January 2006, as reported by three opinion-poll institutes. However, comparability is not straightforward. First of all, the opinion polls do not list the June List or the Feminist Initiative separately. By adding the two small parties to the “Other” category, comparability is facilitated. Second, the party-preference question of the opinion polls is different from ours:

Which party would you vote for if there was a parliamentary election today?

Keeping these differences in mind, Table 2 presents the figures for our social scientists (1), for Swedish citizens (2) and the discrepancy between them (3). A negative figure indicates that a party is underrepresented among our social scientists compared to citizens in general.

Clearly, there are great differences between the social scientists surveyed here and citizens in general.<sup>24</sup> The Social Democratic Party is extremely small among our social scientists compared to citizens in general – the discrepancy is 13.4 percentage points – but also the Moderate Party is substantially smaller. The party that is disproportionately large among our social scientists is the Liberal Party, with 14.5 percentage points higher support. Looking at the two blocs, the left bloc is underrepresented among our social scientists: it has 5.9 percentage points fewer sympathizers in this category of the electorate. The right bloc is also underrepresented, but only by 1.1 percentage points. For each left academic in our study, there are 1.3 right academics, whereas the corresponding figure for citizens in general is 1.1.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> We do not address the normative issue of whether this is problematic or not. Nor do we take a position on whether inter-disciplinary differences are problematic or not.

<sup>25</sup> Interestingly, a study by Asp (2006) indicates that among Swedish journalists (who, like academics, in many cases may be seen as potentially influential intellectuals), the share of support for the left bloc among those who support one of the seven main parties is 67 percent, whereas the corresponding share of support for the right bloc is 33 percent (in late 2005 and based on the question “Which party do you like best today?”). This is a major difference compared to the academics in our study, keeping in mind the slightly different party-sympathy question. With Asp’s way of counting, the share of support for the left bloc among those of our social scientists who support one of the seven main parties is 44 percent, whereas the corresponding share of support for the right bloc is 56 percent. Among journalists, the right/left ratio is 0.5, and among our social scientists, it is 1.3. But a similarity is that the two major parties in the electorate, the Moderate Party and the Social Democratic Party, are underrepresented, while the Green Party, the Left Party and the Liberal Party are greatly overrepresented. Among the right-bloc parties, as among our academics, the Liberal Party is the largest.



Table 2. Party preferences of Swedish social scientists and of Swedish citizens in general (percent)

	Swedish social scientists (1) (percent)	Swedish citizens (2) (percent)	Discrepancy (1)-(2) (percentage points)	
Christian Democrats	2.4	3.7	-1.3	} Right bloc
Moderate Party	14.2	26.0	-11.8	
Center Party	2.4	4.9	-2.5	
Liberal Party	22.7	8.2	14.5	
Social Democratic Party	16.5	29.9	-13.4	} Left bloc
Left Party	8.1	5.2	2.9	
Green Party	8.6	4.0	4.6	
Other	6.0	1.9	4.1	
None/Do not know/Do not want to answer	19.1	16.1	3.0	
Left bloc	33.2	39.1	-5.9	
Right bloc	41.7	42.8	-1.1	
Ratio right bloc/left bloc	1.3	1.1		

Note: Column (1) is based on responses to the question “Even though one doesn’t agree with a political party on each and every issue, one may have stronger sympathies for a certain party, compared to others. Which party do you have the strongest sympathies for?” from 1,512 academics, adding figures for the June List and the Feminist Initiative to the reply alternative “Other”.

Column (2) is the average of six opinion polls from December 2005 and January 2006, one for each month from three opinion-poll institutes (Temo, Sifo, and Demoskop), where the question asked was: “Which party would you vote for if there was a parliamentary election today?” The figures are somewhat different from those reported by the institutes, since they sum the party shares (including other parties) to 100 percent, whereas we include the “None/Do not know/Do not want to answer” category when summing to 100 percent.

The left bloc comprises the Social Democratic Party (S), the Left Party (V), and the Green Party (Mp). The right bloc comprises the Christian Democrats (Kd), the Moderate Party (M), the Center Party (C), and the Liberal Party (Fp).

### 3.3. Policy Views

In order to get a more granular picture of the political views of our Swedish social scientists, we asked them about their views on a number of proposed policy reforms. These questions were arranged in four groups under the rubrics: the economy, the judicial system, social issues, and gender equality. In each group the questions are supposed to capture “important” policy issues that have been publicly debated in Sweden and for which no apparent consensus exists. Each question had the following reply alternatives:

- Very bad proposal (1)
- Rather bad proposal (2)
- Neither a good nor a bad proposal (3)
- Rather good proposal (4)
- Very good proposal (5)
- Do not know/Do not want to answer.

(The numbers 1–5 did not appear.)

We had five economic questions in the survey:

What is your opinion of a proposal to raise or introduce tariffs on goods from non-EU countries in order to protect Swedish jobs?

What is your opinion of a proposal to abolish the right of labor unions to instigate boycotts against companies that don't want to sign collective bargaining agreements?

What is your opinion of a proposal to cut taxes?

What is your opinion of a proposal to downsize the public sector?

What is your opinion of a proposal to reduce income differences in society?

The responses from the different disciplines are shown in Table 2. Here, we exclude the “Do not know/Do not want to answer” replies to enable a mean and standard-deviation comparison. Since the underlying answers are ordinal, the means have no exact interpretation and should only be seen as a pedagogical device that saves space and enables quick comparisons of the disciplines.

Table 3. Views on economic policy per discipline (means with standard deviations in parentheses)

	Business administration	Economic history	<b>Economics</b>	Gender studies	Law	Political science	Sociology	All
Raise tariffs	1.56** (0.73)	1.49** (0.59)	<b>1.27</b> <b>(0.55)</b>	1.66** (0.76)	1.66** (0.79)	1.52** (0.61)	1.77** (0.80)	1.55 (0.72)
Abolish union boycotts	3.03 (1.41)	2.46** (1.42)	<b>3.11</b> <b>(1.39)</b>	1.69** (1.01)	2.69** (1.46)	2.44** (1.26)	2.09** (1.29)	2.69 (1.42)
Undertake tax cuts	3.74 (1.13)	2.98** (1.23)	<b>3.66</b> <b>(1.03)</b>	2.11** (1.03)	3.53 (1.25)	2.82** (1.26)	2.21** (1.10)	3.23 (1.29)
Downsize public sector	3.40 (1.22)	2.66** (1.31)	<b>3.37</b> <b>(1.07)</b>	1.74** (0.83)	3.07* (1.27)	2.57** (1.20)	1.86** (0.96)	2.89 (1.29)
Reduce income differences	3.06 (1.15)	3.69** (1.21)	<b>3.08</b> <b>(1.15)</b>	4.39** (0.79)	3.34* (1.19)	3.78** (1.13)	4.27** (0.96)	3.48 (1.21)

Note: \*\* 0.01, \* 0.05 p-value using the Mann-Whitney test of equality of distribution across two independent samples using economics (the experts on these policy proposals) as the comparison group, which is why it is marked in bold. An OLS regression with a dummy-variable using economics as the reference category yields no differences in results.

The value 3 (the reply “Neither a good nor a bad proposal”) can be interpreted as a neutral or mixed view of the policy proposals, whereas 1 and 2 indicate various degrees of opposition and 4 and 5 various degrees of support. Overall it seems fair to conclude that Swedish social scientists are not supportive of policy reforms aimed at raising or introducing protective tariffs on goods from non-EU countries: all disciplines have mean responses well

below 3, with economists being most strongly opposed. Nor do they support abolishing union rights to boycott companies who do not want to sign collective bargaining agreements – weak resistance dominates, except in business administration and economics, where neutrality prevails. On the other proposals the pattern is more mixed. Academics in business administration and economics are more supportive of tax cuts and of downsizing the public sector than other social scientists. They are also more mixed than the others on reducing income inequality. The impression from the analysis of party sympathies recurs: Business administration, economics, and law lean more to the right, whereas economic history and political science are moderately on the left, and gender studies and sociology are more distinctly on the left.<sup>26</sup> But in no case is there a very strong desire to deviate from the status quo (except, perhaps, when it comes to reducing income inequality, which is strongly supported in gender studies and in sociology).

There are somewhat similar questions in the Swedish Election Study, the latest available version of which is from 2002. When it comes to undertaking tax cuts, the average position of Swedish citizens is 3.31; the average position of our respondents is 3.23. When it comes to downsizing the public sector, the average position of Swedish citizens is 2.50; the average position of our respondents is 2.89. When it comes to reducing income differences, the average score of Swedish citizens is 3.91; our respondents average 3.48. On economic issues our social scientists are to the right of Swedish citizens, but the difference is not that large.<sup>27</sup> When looking at the disciplines, there is at least one on each of the issues with a lower and at least one with a higher score than among Swedish citizens.

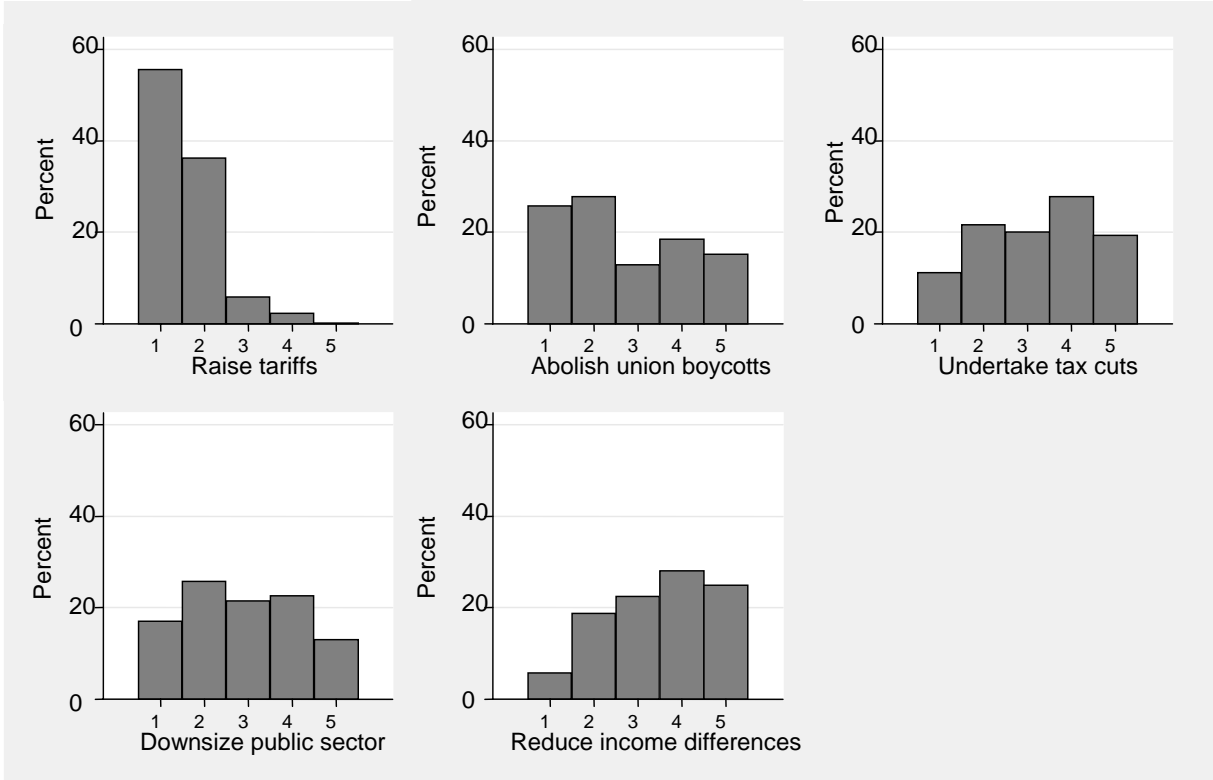
The responses from all respondents are shown in Figure 3.

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<sup>26</sup> When we use the terms left and right in this section, we rely on the most common positions of the two blocs. For example, cutting taxes is considered a right position since the parties of the right bloc advocate this to a larger degree, while reducing income differences is considered a left position for an analogous reason. Not all questions can be easily classified in this simple way, as noted below at times.

<sup>27</sup> All three differences between social scientists and the electorate at large are highly statistically significant according to t-tests.

Figure 3. Views on economic policy (percent)



Note: 1: Very bad proposal; 2: Rather bad proposal; 3: Neither a good nor a bad proposal; 4: Rather good proposal; 5: Very good proposal.

Only on the first question is there an overwhelming consensus. A large majority thinks that introducing or raising tariffs on goods from countries outside the EU in order to protect Swedish jobs is a rather or very bad proposal. When it comes to the other four economic-policy questions, there is no similarly obvious consensus among the respondents. Nevertheless, the proposal to abolish the right of labor unions to instigate boycotts against companies that don't want to sign collective bargaining agreements is more opposed than supported; the proposal to cut taxes receives modestly more support than opposition; the proposal to downsize the public sector is slightly more opposed than supported; and the proposal to reduce income differences in society receives some support on net. In traditional right-left terms, the picture that emerges is rather mixed. Clearly, there is no general support for radical policy change in either direction – only a weak overall desire to cut taxes and to reduce inequality can be detected.

We had three judicial questions:

What is your opinion of a proposal to the effect that the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court and the Supreme Administrative Court should not only be decided by the government but by some body that is broader and less politicized?

What is your opinion of a proposal to increase the severity of punishment for violent crimes?

What is your opinion of a proposal to set up a constitutional court in Sweden with powers to reject legislation that goes against the Swedish constitution?

When we divide the respondents according to academic discipline, as reported in Table 4, the overall pattern suggests that our respondents are likely to favor reforms in the judicial area. The exceptions are gender-studies and sociology scholars, who on average do not wish to increase punishment for violent crimes. A general centrist-“rightist” pattern is apparent.

Table 4. Views on the judicial system per discipline (means with standard deviations in parentheses)

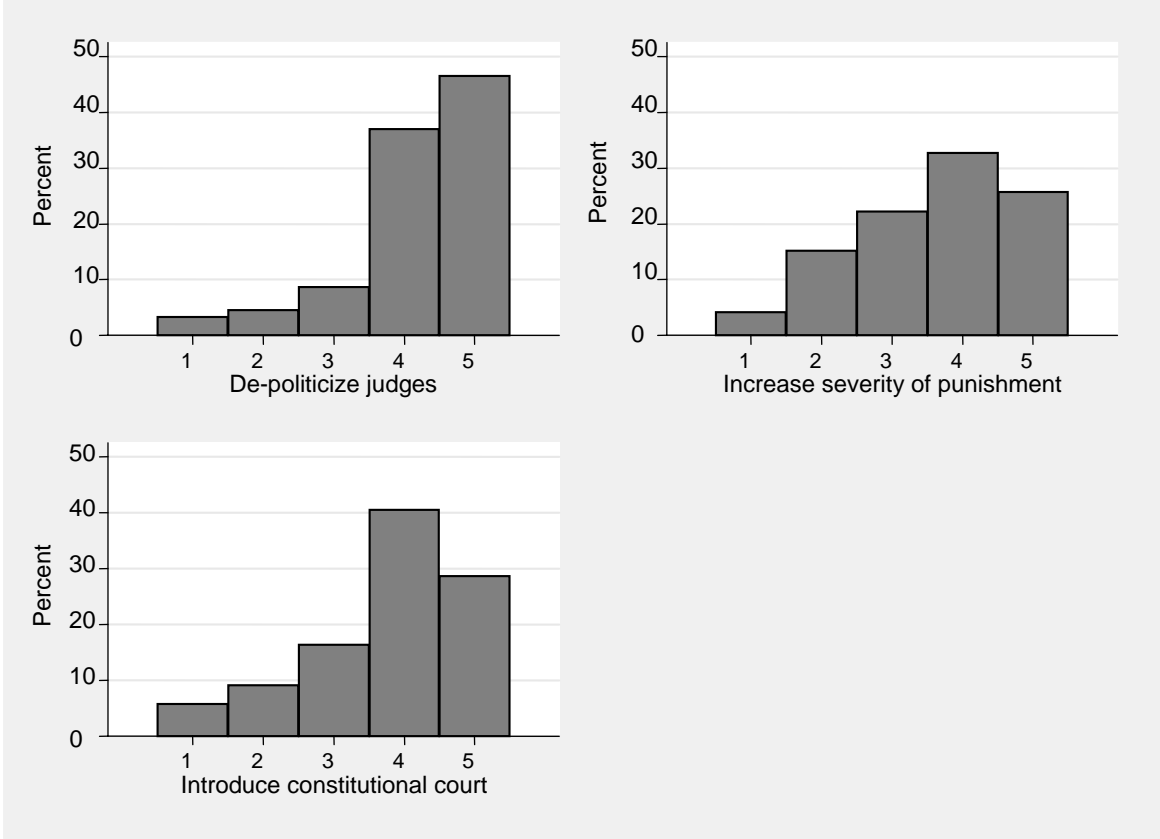
	Business administration	Economic history	Economics	Gender studies	Law	Political science	Sociology	All
De-politicize judges	4.32 (0.95)	4.09** (0.96)	4.23* (0.96)	3.94** (1.14)	<b>4.44</b> <b>(0.79)</b>	3.99** (1.09)	3.99** (1.04)	4.19 (1.00)
Increase severity of punishment	3.93** (1.00)	3.34 (1.23)	3.73 (1.07)	3.11+ (1.12)	<b>3.45</b> <b>(1.34)</b>	3.54 (1.10)	3.10** (1.16)	3.60 (1.15)
Introduce constitutional court	4.02 (1.03)	3.72 (1.18)	3.86 (1.04)	3.44* (0.96)	<b>3.86</b> <b>(1.25)</b>	3.36** (1.30)	3.53** (1.00)	3.77 (1.13)

Note: \*\* 0.01, \* 0.05, + 0.10 p-value using the Mann-Whitney test of equality of distribution across two independent samples using law (the experts on these policy proposals) as the comparison group, which is why it is marked in bold. Deviations using binary regression instead: Gender studies comes out as non-significant on increasing the severity of punishment and on introducing constitutional courts, economics comes out as significantly different on increasing the severity of punishment.

Comparing to the Swedish Election Study from 2002, there is a similar question to the one on increasing the severity of punishment for crime. The average position of Swedish citizens is 3.75, while our respondents’ average position is 3.60. Given the differences in the wording of the questions, the difference cannot be seen as substantial (although in statistical terms, it is significant).

The responses from all respondents are shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Views on the judicial system (percent)



Note: 1: Very bad proposal; 2: Rather bad proposal; 3: Neither a good nor a bad proposal; 4: Rather good proposal; 5: Very good proposal.

Unlike the replies to the economic questions, the replies to the judicial questions have a common pattern indicating fairly strong support for policy change. The first graph in Figure 4 shows respondents’ views on of the proposal to effectively de-politicize judge appointments to the Supreme Court. Over 80 percent of the respondents think that implementing such a proposal would be rather good or very good. More than 60 percents wish to increase the severity of the punishment for violent crimes; and about 70 percent think it is a rather good or very good proposal to set up a constitutional court in Sweden with powers to reject legislation that goes against the Swedish constitution. In all three cases, a majority takes a position that would traditionally be considered on the right.

*Social Issues*

We had three questions regarding social issues:

What is your opinion of a proposal to have more medical care/hospitals run by private companies?

What is your opinion of a proposal to accept fewer refugees in Sweden?

What is your opinion of a proposal to cut down on social welfare benefits?

In Table 5 we divide the respondents according to academic discipline.

Table 5. Views on social issues per discipline (means with standard deviations in parentheses)

	Business administration	Economic history	Economics	Gender studies	Law	Political science	<b>Sociology</b>	All
More private healthcare	3.66** (1.22)	2.95** (1.47)	3.62** (1.11)	2.26 (0.99)	3.40** (1.29)	3.03** (1.24)	<b>2.37</b> <b>(1.26)</b>	3.25 (1.32)
Fewer refugees	2.36** (1.18)	1.80 (1.05)	2.02** (1.10)	1.36* (0.63)	2.10** (1.15)	1.85+ (1.05)	<b>1.68</b> <b>(0.93)</b>	2.02 (1.12)
Cut welfare benefits	3.08** (1.12)	2.33** (1.27)	2.95** (1.08)	1.67 (0.79)	2.75** (1.31)	2.33** (1.11)	<b>1.83</b> <b>(0.99)</b>	2.61 (2.21)

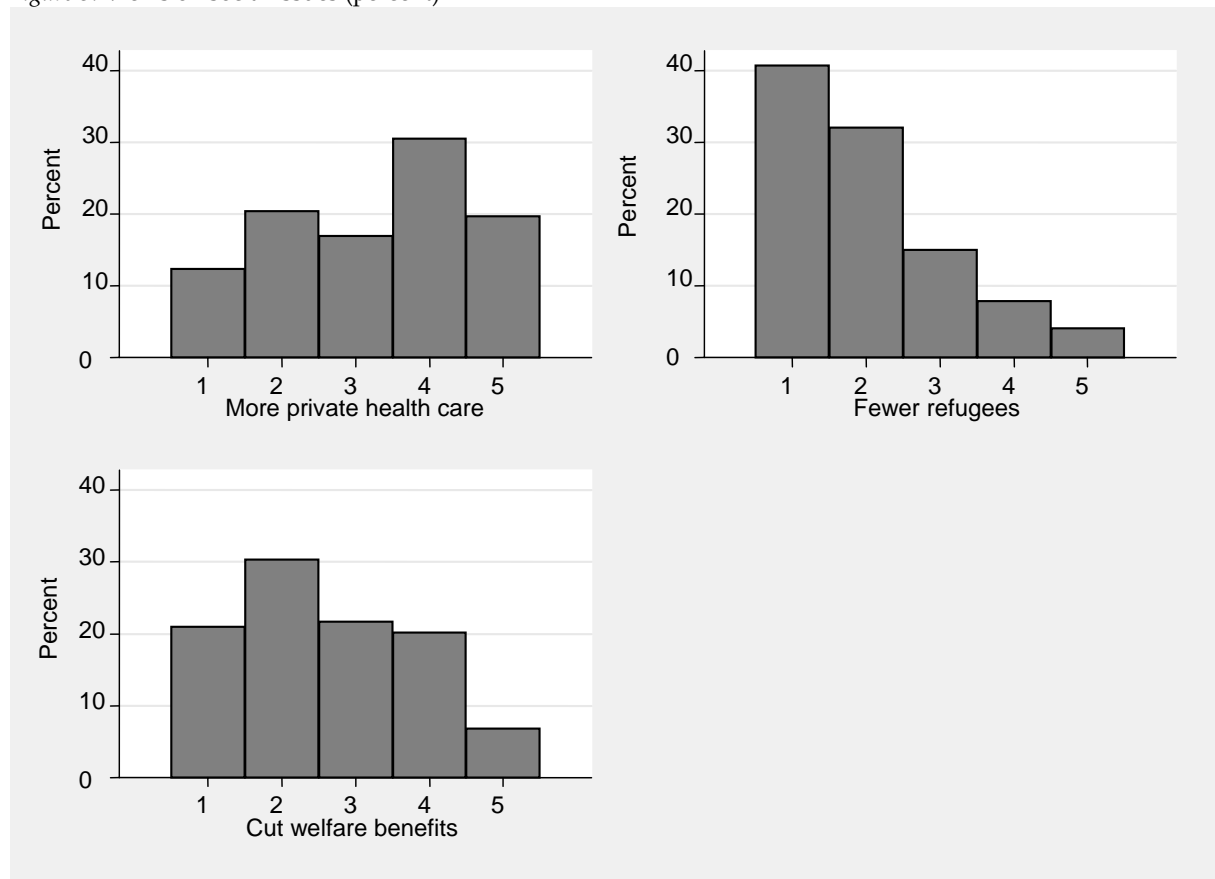
Note: \*\*0.01, \*0.05, +0.10 p-value using the Mann-Whitney test of equality of distribution across two independent samples using sociology (the experts on these policy proposals) as the comparison group, which is why it is marked in bold. There are no deviations using binary regression instead.

Scholars in business administration, economics, and law favor more private health care, whereas political scientists and economic historians are neutral. Scholars in sociology and gender studies oppose the proposition. When it comes to accepting fewer refugees, academics in all disciplines consider it a bad proposal, especially in gender studies, sociology, economic history, and political science. Cutting welfare benefits is not really supported in any discipline. Academics in business administration and economics are neutral, while academics in gender studies and sociology are quite strongly opposed to the proposal. Overall, business administration, economics, and law appear to be more on the right, but of the three issues, that is perhaps only displayed in the case of wanting more private health care. Otherwise, no radical policy changes are desired. Gender studies is most to the left on all three issues – in each case with the smallest standard deviation.

Comparing to the Swedish Election Study of 2002, where similar questions were asked about more private healthcare and about cutting welfare benefits, the positions of Swedish citizens are 2.70 and 2.86 respectively. The studied social scientists' overall positions are 3.25 and 2.61, which means that they are substantially more positive towards private healthcare and somewhat more opposed to cuts in welfare benefits compared with all citizens. But again, looking at the individual disciplines, they report scores on both sides of Swedish citizens on each of the issues.

The responses for all respondents taken together are summarized in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Views on social issues (percent)



Note: 1: Very bad proposal; 2: Rather bad proposal; 3: Neither a good nor a bad proposal; 4: Rather good proposal; 5: Very good proposal.

About 50 percent favor having more private health-care providers, whereas about 30 percent think that it is a rather bad or very bad policy proposal. Over 70 percent of our respondents opine that it is a rather bad or very bad proposal to accept fewer refugees; again an issue where our social scientists seem to have more or less a consensus view. About 50 percent do not want to cut down on social welfare benefits while a little more than 25 percent favor cuts. Overall, there is a right tendency for the first issue, whereas the position on the second could be termed liberal or a display of solidarity and hence fit into certain ideologies both on the left and the right. For the third issue, there is a left tendency of opposing welfare-benefit cuts.

### *Gender Equality*

Lastly, we had three questions on gender equality:

What is your opinion of a proposal to mandate the appointment of a certain fraction of women to different jobs/functions in the private sector?



What is your opinion of a proposal to change the parental insurance such that it is equally divided between the mother and the father, rather than being given for the parents to divide between themselves as they see fit?

What is your opinion of a proposal to distribute a great deal of the money that today goes to day-care centers to the parents instead such that they, for themselves, can choose whether to stay at home with the children, use any type of childminder, or use day-care centers?

Table 6 describes differences between the disciplines.

Table 6. Views on equality per discipline (means with standard deviations in parentheses)

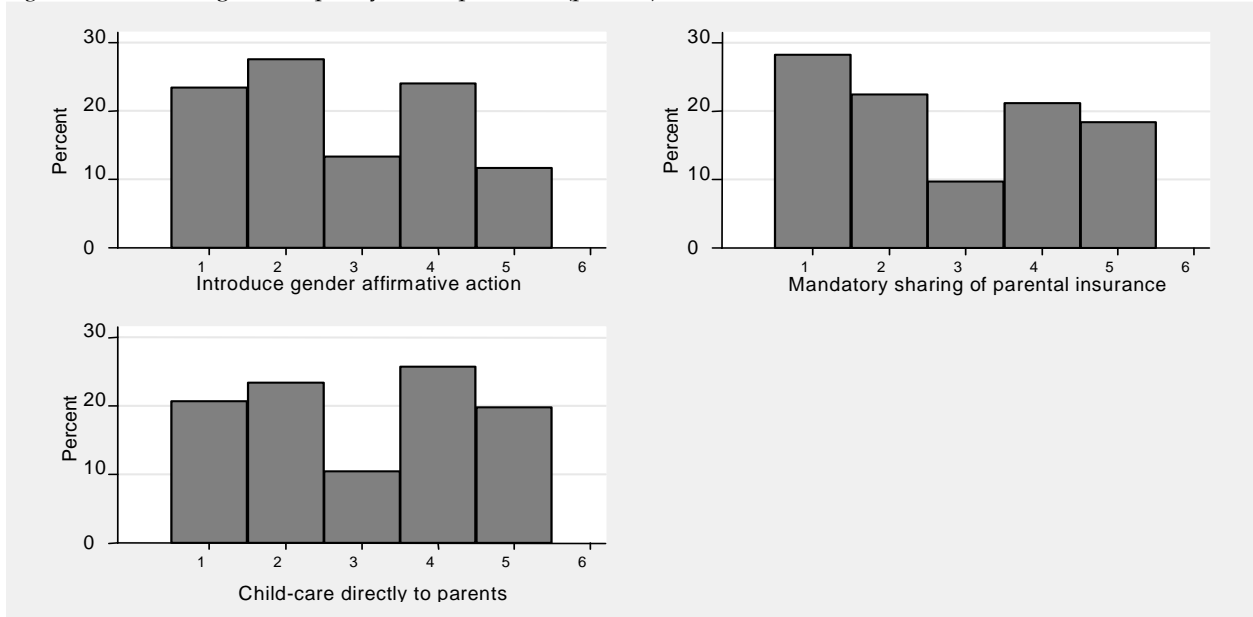
	Business administration	Economic history	Economics	Gender studies	Law	Political science	Sociology	All
Gender affirmative action	2.59** (1.32)	2.39** (1.20)	2.36** (1.27)	<b>3.97</b> <b>(1.12)</b>	2.50** (1.37)	2.95** (1.38)	3.18** (1.31)	2.73 (1.36)
Mandatory sharing of parental insurance	2.39** (1.44)	2.95** (1.54)	2.52** (1.43)	<b>3.81</b> <b>(1.20)</b>	2.72** (1.60)	3.15* (1.45)	3.39 (1.38)	2.79 (1.50)
Child-care money directly to parents	3.61** (1.32)	2.46** (1.29)	3.13** (1.41)	<b>1.79</b> <b>(0.91)</b>	3.17** (1.50)	2.67** (1.42)	2.30* (1.29)	3.01 (1.45)

Note: \*\* 0.01, \* 0.05, + 0.10 p-value using the Mann-Whitney test of equality of distribution across two independent samples using gender studies (the experts on these policy proposals) as the comparison group, which is why it is marked in bold. Six out of 39 respondents from gender studies were men. Using bivariate regression instead; political science comes out as significant on the 0.01 level and sociology comes out as significant on the 0.10 level on the mandatory sharing of parental insurance.

Scholars in gender studies are favorable to the proposal to mandate the appointment of a certain fraction of women in the private sector, with mild support being rendered also by sociologists. Mild opposition prevails in economics, economic history, business administration, and law. As for mandatory sharing of parental insurance between the mother and the father, the pattern is very similar. And as for giving child-care subsidies directly to the parents, scholars in business administration are quite positive, whereas scholars in economics and law are quite neutral. Scholars in gender studies are rather opposed to such a proposal and scholars in sociology, political science, and economic history are mildly opposed. Overall, sociology and particularly gender studies appear different, in a more left or regulatory direction, in this area compared to the other fields. And again, gender studies also has the smallest standard deviations.

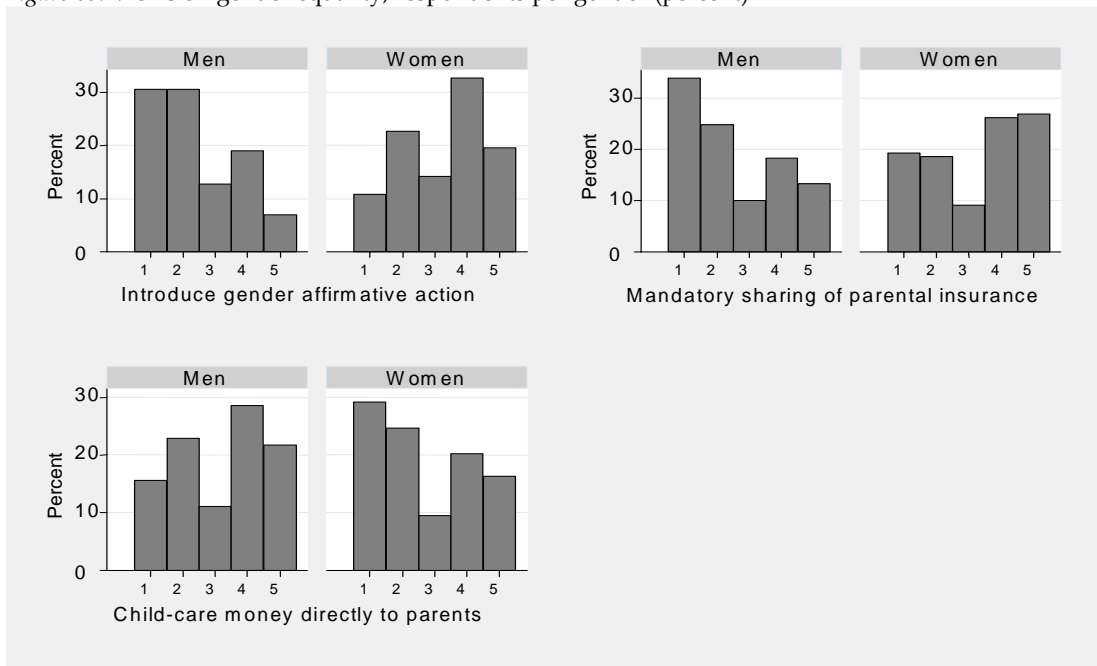
More detailed aggregate results are presented in Figures 6a-b, first shown for all respondents and then separately for men and women.

Figure 6a. Views on gender equality, all respondents (percent)



When it comes to the proposal to mandate the appointment of a certain fraction of women to different jobs/functions in the private sector, about 50 percent oppose it, while about 25 percent favor it. When it comes to mandatory sharing of parental insurance, again the opposition is stronger than the support (about 50 versus about 40 percent). And when it comes to giving child-care money directly to parents, a little more than 40 percent are in favor and about the same figure in opposition. As can be seen, there is polarization on all issues.

Figure 6b. Views on gender equality, respondents per gender (percent)



Note: 1: Very bad proposal; 2: Rather bad proposal; 3: Neither a good nor a bad proposal; 4: Rather good proposal; 5: Very good proposal.

It turns out that the polarization is largely due to gender differences. Women are in general much more positive towards introducing affirmative action based on gender and towards mandatory sharing of parental insurance, while they are more opposed to having child-care money go directly to the parents. Looking at the whole population of respondents, responses to the first and second issues are somewhat to the right, whereas on the third issue the two sides are more equal in size among respondents. Women are clearly more left-leaning (in the sense that they support regulatory policies) in this area.

### **3.4. Self-reported left-right scale**

We also asked the following question, with reply alternatives from 1 to 10 and with the option “Do not know/Do not want to answer”:

Where on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 equals the most left-wing member of the current parliament and 10 equals the most right-wing member of the current parliament, would you place yourself?

The differences between disciplines found for party sympathies and policy issues are confirmed by distinct differences between the disciplines when it comes to self-identification on the left-right scale. The averages are presented in Table 7. Again, three groups appear. Sociology and gender studies have a left orientation, economic history and political science are quite centrist (with a mild left orientation), whereas law, economics, and business administration have a right orientation.<sup>28</sup> In terms of standard deviations, law and economic history are the most heterogeneous whereas gender studies and sociology are the most homogeneous. Decomposing the overall standard error of 2.31, the (unweighted) between-disciplines component is 1.25 and the within-disciplines component 2.03. Differences between the seven disciplines account for a considerable share of the total variation in the left-right dimension.

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<sup>28</sup> The large difference in political opinions between economists and sociologists, the two groups to which we ourselves belong, is clear both from looking at party preferences, policy views and self-identification on a left-right scale. Udehn (1999) suggests that this reflects quite different philosophical traditions in the two disciplines.

Table 7. Left-right positioning in seven disciplines (means with standard deviations in parentheses)

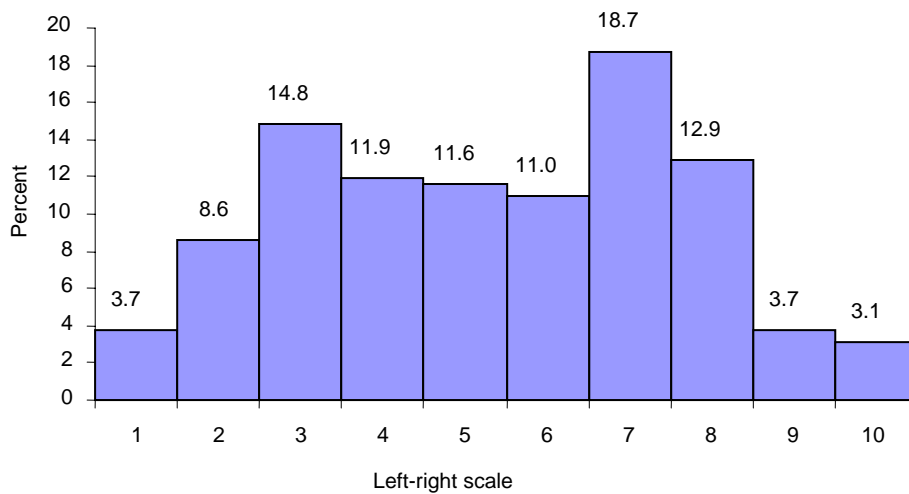
<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Left-right position</i>
Business administration	6.30** (2.01)
Economics	6.15** (1.95)
Law	5.83** (2.44)
<b>Economic history</b>	<b>4.75</b> <b>(2.39)</b>
Political science	4.82 (2.09)
Gender studies	3.19** (1.72)
Sociology	3.46** (1.79)
All	5.35 (2.31)

Note: \*\*0.01, \*0.05 p-value using the Mann-Whitney test of equality of distribution across two independent samples using economic history as the comparison group, which is why it is marked in bold.

The distribution of all responses is presented in Figure 7. The average is 5.4, and the median is 5. But the distribution is not quite as centrist as these figures imply – the two peaks are obtained by the 3 and the 7 bars, for example, and the 5 bar is lower than four of the nine other bars. A form of polarization is, in other words, observable here as well, as was the case for party sympathies.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> The Swedish Election Study from 2002 (the most recent one) uses a scale from 0 (indicated to be “far to the left”) to 10 (indicated to be “far to the right”) and do not use an anchor like we do, in the form of relating the reply to the members of the current parliament. With these differences noted, the Election Study reports an average value for Swedish citizens of 4.8. Unlike our respondents, Swedish citizens are on average positioned slightly to the left of the mid-point of the scale. Moreover, in the 2002 Swedish Election Study there is a spike with 21 percent of the respondents at the very midpoint of the left-right scale. Polarization is a characteristic that our respondents do not share with the Swedish electorate. However, skewness and kurtosis tests for normality indicate that the two distributions deviate from normality in the same way: they are both leptokurtic and approximately symmetric.

Figure 7. Left-right positioning for all respondents



### 3.5. Influential Activities

As has been argued above, a motivation for a study of this kind is the possible influence social scientists may exert over public discourse and politics. To see the extent to which our respondents have had such opportunities, we asked the following questions:

Have you participated in any SOU (Swedish government official report) or any other government commission?

How many articles, chapters or books that can be classified as student literature or popular science publications (publication that inform the public about research within your field) have you written?

Have you participated in any radio or TV programs where you discussed or related to your research in a popular science way?

Participation in government commissions is the most exclusive of these activities, 14 percent of the respondents have participated once and 13 percent have done so several times. Radio and television are less exclusive, 35 percent have appeared at least once on these mass media. Publications are more common: 70 percent have written at least one publication classified as teaching material or popular science. There are also differences between the subjects. Table 8 reveals that academics in political science are quite involved in all three activities. Academics in gender studies also appear rather active, especially in radio and television but not in government commissions (which may have to do with its being a young discipline). Business administration appears to be the least active subject in this regard.

Table 8. Influential activities (percent)

Activity	Level of participation	Business administration	Economic history	Economics	Gender studies	Law	Political science	<b>Sociology</b>	All
Government commissions	No	77.3*	79.7	65.2	76.9	68.5	60.3*	<b>70.0</b>	70.5
	Low	11.1*	10.9	14.1	12.8	16.4	19.1*	<b>15.2</b>	14.0
	High	8.2*	6.2	18.5	10.3	13.0	19.6*	<b>12.7</b>	13.0
Radio and television	No	64.6**	59.4*	60.5**	35.9	58.2*	35.3*	<b>44.3</b>	54.5
	Low	23.2**	26.6*	21.4**	25.6	22.6*	31.4*	<b>30.4</b>	25.1
	High	12.2**	12.5*	17.8**	38.5	19.2*	32.8*	<b>24.9</b>	20.0
Teaching material and popular science	No	29.0	23.4	38.0	12.8**	29.4	24.5	<b>25.3</b>	28.4
	Low	47.2	54.7	38.4	46.2**	47.3	51.5	<b>52.3</b>	47.2
	High	22.3	20.3	22.8	41.0**	23.3	22.1	<b>21.5</b>	23.2

Note: For government commissions a low (high) level of participation is defined as once (several times). For radio and television a low (high) level of participation is defined as between one and three times (more than three times). For teaching material and popular science a low (high) level of participation is defined as between one and five articles and books (more than five articles and books). The response category "Do not know / do not want to answer" is not reported in the table. \*\*0.01, \*0.05 p-value using the Mann-Whitney test of equality of distribution across two independent samples using sociology as the comparison group, which is why it is marked in bold. The response category "Do not know / Do not want to answer" is excluded when performing this test.

If we relate the mentioned activities to the ideological stance of the scholars, measured as their position on the left-right scale (described in section 3.4) we find no statistically significant differences between the most active and the most passive group when it comes to participation in government commissions or to publishing teaching material and popular science. For radio and television the mean left-right position is 4.98 for scholars who have appeared at least three times compared to 5.63 for those who have not appeared a single time.<sup>30</sup>

There is however a connection between active participation in government commissions and sympathies for the Social Democratic Party, the party forming the government 1994–2006. The Social Democratic Party is the most sympathized-with party among the most active scholars with sympathies being 13.3 percentage units higher than in the least active group. On the one hand it seems as if the Social Democratic government has not involved a representative sample of social scientists in government commissions when it comes to sympathies. On the other hand the overrepresentation of social scientists who support the Social Democrats makes the composition of government commissions more in line with the party sympathies of all Swedish citizens.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>30</sup> The distributions that generate this difference are statistically significant at the one percent level according to the Mann-Whitney test.

<sup>31</sup> There are of course many explanations for the degree of influence activities in the different disciplines, as well as for the ideological character of those who undertake them. Some explanations are demand- and others are

## 4. Concluding Remarks

Academics tend to be influential in any society, influencing decision-makers through lectures, various publications, the media, and in some cases directly as advisors. It is therefore of interest to study the political persuasions of academics. Although such persuasions do not necessarily color their work, Gunnar Myrdal and others have suggested ideological sensibilities run deeper than many scholars realize or may be willing to admit.

The Swedish setting has not, to our knowledge, been studied in this regard before, and the present study therefore complements previous, mainly American studies. Swedish academics may be of international interest as primary experts of the extensive Swedish welfare state, which is often seen as an intriguing model by social scientists and intellectuals in other countries. The political persuasions of Swedish scholars may affect this line of research – the questions that are asked, the methods that are used, the results that are highlighted.

We find that Swedish social scientists in seven disciplines can generally be classified as leaning slightly right on the whole. It turns out that 51.5 percent support the right bloc compared to 41.0 percent for the left bloc (a right-left ratio of 1.3), to be compared with 1.1 in the electorate in general. The most left-leaning discipline is sociology, where the left bloc not only achieves more than 5 times more support than the right bloc but where the Left Party is also the biggest party. The second most left-leaning discipline is gender studies. The most right-leaning discipline is business administration, where the right bloc achieves more than three times more support than the left bloc and where the Liberal Party is the most preferred. Economics and law are the second- and third-most right-leaning disciplines. When it comes to policy issues, the general picture – confirming the one stemming from party sympathies – is that scholars in business administration, economics, and law tend to favor reforms of the right whereas especially scholars in gender studies and sociology tend to favor reforms of the left – but the desire to change the status quo is weak overall. The most homogeneous discipline appears to be gender studies, with the lowest standard deviations on most policy issues.

Unlike U.S. academics, who have been shown to tend towards the left in their political culture, Swedish social scientists seem to tend more to the right overall. Thus, our findings

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supply-induced – probably, a mixture is the typical case. Of the three types of activity, the most demand-induced is probably the first. Writing a government report or being on a government commission is the result of being picked.

demonstrate that there is no universal law saying that academics are everywhere inclined to support the political left. However, this conclusion may need to be qualified.

First, even if the overall pattern in Sweden is more to the right, there are larger differences and greater polarization in the U.S. For example, the dominance of Democrats seems to hold in every discipline in the U.S. (not the case for the right bloc in Sweden), this dominance is generally much larger than for the right bloc in Sweden, and the differences between the disciplines (in terms of how dominant the largest party or bloc is) are larger in the U.S.

Second, when looking at party sympathies, the left-right dichotomy is not always very informative and in some cases misleading – not least when proffering international comparisons. An American academic to the left may, in actual views, be close to a Swedish academic to the right.<sup>32</sup> That is, if academics hold quite similar policy views in different countries they could be deemed left or right in relation to the general population in their respective countries without actually differing on the views as such. Such a similarity could either stem from a sense of community in-between academics belonging to the same discipline; or it could be that academics are influenced by other countries to a higher degree than people in general and therefore support parties and policies that are closer to the overall political stance in other countries.

Third, one can interpret our social scientists as being to the left at least if compared to the electorate. We find that among our academics the Liberal party is the preferred right-bloc party, in contrast to the Moderates that is the preferred right-bloc party in the electorate (and considered more “right” than the Liberals. Likewise, we see that the Left party is the preferred left party among our academics, in contrast to the Social democrats that is the preferred party in the electorate (and considered more “right” than the Left party).

Lastly, since education has traditionally been an issue of high priority for the Liberal Party there is also the possibility that academics support this party to further their group-interest, including for financial reasons.

In summing up our results, we do not claim that our findings necessarily indicate a problem. We do not say that a left dominance in sociology or a right dominance in business administration entail discrimination of colleagues in the minority position. Our study does not address such issues. However, we hope that the results can constitute an informed basis on which such issues can be addressed.

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<sup>32</sup> In this context, it should perhaps especially be stressed that the Liberal Party, the largest party among our respondents and part of the right bloc, is a non-socialist but quite centrist party.



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## Appendix A

Table A1. Response rates for each university and in total

Seat of learning	Invitations	Responses	Response rate (percent)
Stockholm University	625	196	31.4
Lund University	535	173	32.3
Uppsala University	533	179	33.6
Gothenburg University	524	147	28.1
Stockholm School of Economics	336	122	36.3
Umeå University	295	131	44.4
Örebro University	140	58	41.4
Växjö University	138	53	38.4
Linköping University	121	45	37.2
Södertörn University College	118	35	29.7
Karlstad University	108	47	43.5
Jönköping International Business School	94	33	35.1
Luleå University of Technology	89	35	38.9
Mälardalen University College	89	26	29.2
Gävle University College	82	27	32.9
Royal Institute of Technology	80	21	26.3
Chalmers University of Technology	75	29	38.7
Mid-Sweden University	70	27	38.6
Swedish University of Agricultural Science	56	17	30.4
Kalmar University College	51	20	39.2
Dalarna University College	43	18	41.9
West University College (Trollhättan/Uddevalla)	36	18	50.0
Kristianstad University College	34	14	41.2
Malmö University College	21	8	38.1
Gotland University College	8	4	50.0
“At the moment I am not active at any university/university college”	0	29	
Total	4,301	1,512	35.2

Box A1. The Swedish political parties in brief

*The Center Party* is a centrist party with agrarian and rural roots. It opposes nuclear power, although less rigidly so nowadays, and is in favor of decentralized political structure in Sweden and Europe. On economic issues, it advocates deregulation of the labor market.

*The Christian Democrats* is a christian democratic party with roots in the evangelical free churches. It argues for a grant to parents who stay at home with their children, for increased expenditures on care for the elderly, for a reduction in property taxation and against expanded rights for gays.

*The Feminist Initiative* is a new party focusing on feminist issues. On economic issues, it largely advocates a leftist policy, with high taxes and generous welfare programs. It did not get into Parliament in the 2006 election.

*The Green Party* is in favor of regulation and taxation to stimulate behavior that it deems beneficial for the environment. It wants to increase the gasoline tax and the cost of polluting. It opposes Swedish membership in the European Union. It supported the previous social democratic government.

*The June List* was founded as a party for the European Parliament but decided to run in the Swedish parliamentary election in 2006. It wants Sweden to disassociate from the European Union and to increase regional and local autonomy. It did not get into Parliament.

*The Left Party* is a former communist party that advocates increased taxation, especially on the wealthy and on high-income earners, and increased public expenditure, e.g. a large increase in the number of employees in the public sector. It also stresses feminist issues. It opposes Swedish membership in the European Union. It supported the previous social democratic government.

*The Liberal Party* is a social liberal party with roots in the temperance movement, some free churches and in an educated, big-city middle class stressing political rights, equality and a relatively ambitious welfare state. It stresses the importance of law and order and advocates a language test for new citizens.

*The Moderate Party* is a broad center-right party with a mixed conservative and market liberal program. It advocates tax cuts for income earners and businesses who employ new staff, while at the same time advocating reduced unemployment benefits.

*The Social Democratic Party* is the main party on the left, with a traditional pro-labor profile, lately expanded to include the middle class. It is a staunch defender of the welfare state, with high taxes and high welfare benefits, as well as a regulated labor market.

Note: For further information, see <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_political\\_parties\\_in\\_Sweden](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_political_parties_in_Sweden)>



## Appendix B. Analysis of Non-Response

When working with survey data the question arises to what extent the received responses are representative of the population under study. In order to investigate this, we have conducted an analysis in two parts. In the first part we look at variables that are observed both in our sample and in the population to see how all invitees compare to the respondents in certain ways that can be expected to influence the responses. In the second part we look at variables that are only observed in our sample. Here we investigate whether answers given after the first or the second reminding email are different from the answers that were given after the initial invitation. If differences appear, extrapolation methods can be used to correct for non-response bias (Armstrong and Overton, 1977). The first part, where we investigate observed variables, is in turn divided into four steps.

*Firstly*, we have compared each college's or university's share of invitations with its share of responses. With three exceptions, the share of responses from each college or university lies within one percentage point of the share of invitations to the same college or university, and the three exceptions (Göteborg University, Stockholm University, and Umeå University) deviate in the 1.6-2.5 percentage-unit range.

*Secondly*, we have compared the gender distribution. 63.2 percent of the invitations were sent to men and 36.8 percent to women. This is very close to the gender pattern among responses: 62.5 percent men and 36.6 percent women (0.9 percent abstained from reporting their gender). For all seats of learning with at least 40 responses, the difference between the share of female respondents and the share of invitations to women lies within 5 percentage points.

*Thirdly*, we have looked at the distribution of academic positions. As can be seen in Table B1, there are very small differences between the share of invitations and the share of responses for the three categories of social scientists.

Table B1. Positions among invitees and respondents

Position	No. of invitations	Share of invitations (percent)	No. of responses	Share of responses (percent)
Doctoral student	1,621	37.7	589	39.0
Researcher, lecturer	2,162	50.3	761	50.3
Professor	447	10.4	161	10.6
Not classified	71	1.6	1	0.0

*Note:* The group "Researcher, lecturer" consists of the following positions: teacher, postdoctoral fellow, researcher, and lecturer.

*Fourthly*, we have compared the distribution of disciplinary belonging. The results are presented in Table B2. The largest deviation is for business administration, 3.9 percentage points, but in general the shares of responses deviate very little from the shares of invitations.

Table B2. Disciplines among invitees and respondents

Subject	No. of invitations	Share of invitations (percent)	No. of responses	Share of responses (percent)
Economic history	225	5.2	64	4.3
Business administration	1,446	33.6	449	29.7
Gender studies	123	2.9	39	2.6
Law	506	11.8	146	9.7
Economics	790	18.4	276	18.3
Sociology	570	13.3	237	15.7
Political science	497	11.6	204	13.5
Other subject/not classified	144	3.3	97	6.4
Total	4,301	100	1,512	100

In conclusion, we think that the first part of the analysis supports the belief that the respondents in central dimensions are representative of the population.<sup>33</sup>

In the second part of the analysis we turn to the variables under study that are not observed in the population: bloc preferences, policy views, self-reported left-right scale, and "activities that may involve influence". Although our respondents appear to mirror the population in important observable dimensions there is always the risk that the answers that we focus on – and that are not observed in the population – give an unrepresentative picture of political opinions. By assuming that responses given after the first or the second

<sup>33</sup> The detailed numerical findings for each dimension of analysis are available upon request.

reminder are similar to the responses that were never received, we can investigate whether late and early responses differ systematically. If such differences are at hand, it is unlikely that the survey participants are representative of the population of Swedish social scientists in the seven disciplines.

Table B3. Bloc sympathies of Swedish social scientists (percent)

	No. responses	Left bloc	Right bloc	Ratio left bloc/right bloc
Responses after the initial invitation (and before the first reminder)	1,024	32.9	42.3	0.8
Responses after the first (and before the second) reminder	260	32.7	37.7	0.9
Responses after the second reminder	228	35.1	43.4	0.8

*Note:* The table is based on responses to the question “Even though one doesn’t agree with a political party on each and every issue, one may have stronger sympathies for a certain party, compared to others. Which party do you have the strongest sympathies for?” The left bloc comprises the Social Democratic Party (S), the Left Party (V), and the Green Party (Mp). The right bloc comprises the Christian Democrats (Kd), the Moderate Party (M), the Center Party (C), and the Liberal Party (Fp).

Based on Table B3, a two sample test of proportions fails to reject ( $p > 0.1$ ) that the proportion of right bloc sympathies in responses received after the initial invitation is different from this proportion in responses received after the first and the second reminder respectively. In doing this test we exclude the reply alternatives “None”, “Do not know / Do not want to answer”, and “Other” (here including the June List and the Feminist Initiative). Table B4 reports mean responses to the policy questions. As can be seen, they (as well as the standard deviations) are very similar for the three groups, and a Mann-Whitney test across two independent samples fails to reject equality of the distributions at the ten percent level.

*Table B4. Views on economic policy (means with standard deviations in parentheses)*

	Responses after the initial invitation (and before the first reminder)	Responses after the first (and before the second) reminder	Responses after the second reminder
Raise tariffs	1.56 (0.72)	1.52 (0.67)	1.56 (0.74)
Abolish union boycotts	2.71 (1.42)	2.63 (1.42)	2.68 (1.42)
Undertake tax cuts	3.21 (1.29)	3.26 (1.26)	3.27 (1.35)
Downsize public sector	2.90 (1.30)	2.83 (1.28)	2.91 (1.31)
Reduce income differences	3.46 (1.23)	3.50 (1.17)	3.50 (1.19)
De-politicize judges	4.13 (1.04)	4.32** (0.94)	4.28 (0.87)
Increase severity of punishment	3.60 (1.15)	3.58 (1.15)	3.66 (1.11)
Introduce constitutional court	3.77 (1.13)	3.78 (1.13)	3.78 (1.11)
Remove tax- funding of private schools	2.49 (1.23)	2.37 (1.25)	2.45 (1.24)
Introduce tuitions	2.13 (1.29)	2.00 (1.19)	2.21 (1.28)
Introduce ethnic affirmative action	2.43 (1.22)	2.47 (1.22)	2.45 (1.30)
More private health care	3.25 (1.32)	3.22 (1.32)	3.26 (1.30)
Fewer refugees	2.04 (1.12)	1.97 (1.11)	2.04 (1.09)
Cut welfare benefits	2.62 (1.23)	2.50 (1.12)	2.70 (1.23)
Introduce gender affirmative action	2.73 (1.36)	2.77 (1.33)	2.68 (1.37)
Mandatory sharing of parental insurance	2.78 (1.52)	2.87 (1.46)	2.72 (1.47)
Child-care money directly to parents	2.99 (1.45)	2.96 (1.43)	3.15 (1.50)

*Note:* \*\* 0.01 p-value using the Mann-Whitney test of equality of distribution across two independent samples using responses after the initial invitation as the comparison group.

Table B5. Left-right positioning (means with standard deviations in parentheses)

	No. responses	Left-right position
Responses after the initial invitation (and before the first reminder)	975	5.37 (2.29)
Responses after the first (and before the second) reminder	239	5.22 (2.29)
Responses after the second reminder	216	5.42 (2.42)

Based on Table B5, according to the Mann-Whitney test, the distributions of left-right positions in the first group of responses are not different from the distributions in the second and third group respectively.

Table B6. Influential activities (percent)

Activity	Level of participation	Responses after the initial invitation (and before the first reminder)	Responses after the first (and before the second) reminder	Responses after the second reminder
Government commissions	No participation	72.46	68.08	64.47
	Low level of participation	13.57	13.46	16.23
	High level of participation	11.13	16.54	17.54
Radio and television	No participation	56.15	51.54	50.44
	Low level of participation	25.10	25.00	25.44
	High level of participation	18.46	22.31	24.12
Teaching material and popular science	No participation	29.39	25.38	27.19
	Low level of participation	48.14	46.54	43.42
	High level of participation	21.39	26.54	27.63

Note: For government commissions a low (high) level of participation is defined as once (several times). For radio and television a low (high) level of participation is defined as between one and three times (more than three times). For teaching material and popular science a low (high) level of participation is defined as between one and five articles and books (more than five articles and books).

Only in one case in Table B6 does the Mann-Whitney test indicate a difference in the distribution of responses. This is the case for participation in government commissions where the responses after the second (but not after the first) reminder differ significantly from the responses after the initial invitation.

## Appendix C. Logit regression

Table C1. Bloc preference (1 equals the right bloc, 0 equals the left bloc)

	(1)	(2)	(3)
<i>Discipline where active</i>			
Business administration	1.309** (4.86)	1.270** (4.61)	1.374** (4.76)
Economic history	-0.044 (0.11)	-0.110 (0.28)	0.028 (0.07)
Economics	0.806** (2.88)	0.785** (2.76)	0.930** (3.09)
Gender studies	-0.551 (0.84)	-0.507 (0.76)	-0.338 (0.50)
Law	0.770* (2.43)	0.798* (2.46)	0.951** (2.77)
Political science	-0.253 (0.87)	-0.253 (0.86)	-0.101 (0.32)
Sociology	-1.511** (4.72)	-1.477** (4.55)	-1.359** (3.97)
<i>Age</i>			
Age<30	0.113 (0.49)	0.124 (0.52)	0.158 (0.64)
Age 31-50	0.440* (2.06)	0.382 (1.74)	0.403 (1.80)
<i>Gender</i>			
Woman	-0.200 (1.34)	-0.264 (1.70)	-0.259 (1.64)
<i>Position</i>			
Graduate student	0.396 (1.87)	0.542* (2.40)	0.610** (2.61)
Lecturer	0.296 (1.32)	0.185 (0.80)	0.284 (1.16)
Junior lecturer	0.161 (0.59)	0.222 (0.79)	0.329 (1.07)
Professor	0.765** (2.60)	0.367 (1.13)	0.407 (1.22)
<i>Monthly family income</i>			
0-20,000 SEK		-1.026** (2.95)	-0.977** (2.75)
20-30,000 SEK		-0.847** (2.90)	-0.820** (2.75)
30-40,000 SEK		-0.883** (3.26)	-0.843** (3.03)
40-50,000 SEK		-0.715** (2.70)	-0.654* (2.42)
50-60,000 SEK		-0.313 (1.18)	-0.326 (1.21)
60-70,000 SEK		-0.734** (2.70)	-0.727** (2.64)
<i>Academic affiliation</i>			
Gothenburg University			-0.242 (0.85)
Karlstad University			0.096 (0.22)
Linköping University			-0.403 (0.89)
Luleå University of Technology			0.820 (1.55)
Lund University			0.140 (0.49)
Mid-Sweden University			1.311*

			(2.26)
Örebro University			-0.068
			(0.17)
Royal Institute of Technology			0.439
			(0.62)
Stockholm School of Economics			0.185
			(0.54)
Stockholm University			-0.004
			(0.01)
Swedish University of Agricultural Science			-0.317
			(0.54)
Umeå University			-0.354
			(1.19)
Uppsala University			-0.100
			(0.36)
Växjö University			-0.687
			(1.67)
Not primarily active at an academic institution			0.787
			(1.50)
Constant	-0.688	-0.002	-0.221
	(1.95)	(0.00)	(0.49)
Observations	1,124	1,104	1,104
Pseudo-R <sup>2</sup>	0.14	0.15	0.17

*Note:* Reference discipline: Active in other discipline. Reference age: >50. Reference gender: Man or not disclosed. Reference position: Researcher, research fellow. Reference monthly income: 70,000 SEK and above. Reference academic affiliation: University colleges.

Absolute value of z statistics in parentheses. \* significant at 5%; \*\* significant at 1%

Pearson or Hosmer-Lemeshow goodness-of-fit test yields a Pearson chi-square of 929.23 ( $p=0.04$ ).

*Table C2.* The model's ability to classify bloc preferences correctly

	Truly right bloc	Truly left bloc	Total
Classified as right bloc	505	206	711
Classified as left bloc	110	283	393
Total	615	489	

*Note:* Classified as right bloc if predicted  $\Pr(\text{Truly right bloc}) \geq 0.5$ . Correctly classified: 71.4 percent.