

Seeking Common Ground in a Divided Political Culture

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Brief Methodology - Appendix 1 at end

Political polarization is at one of its highest levels in our nation's history. This project explores this circumstance, with particular attention to how it affects Oregon politics and policy. Our objective is to better understand the policy issues that divide us, but more importantly, where we find unity and room for progress.

Pilot Project Research Questions:

- How politically polarized are we?
- How much common ground is there?

Following is a summary explanation of this stage of research.

Phase 1: To get at this topic, we began by asking 1103 registered voters a battery of 12 political ideology questions developed by Pew Research Center (Table 1):

Table 1. For each of the 12 pairs below, which statement, A or B, comes closest to your view even if you don't agree with it exactly?		
	A. [Liberal-leaning statement]	B. [Conservative-leaning statement]
1	Governmental regulation of business is necessary to protect public interest	Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good
2	Poor people have hard lives because gov. benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently	Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return
3	Immigrants today strengthen our county because of their hard work and talents	Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care
4	Business corporations make too much profit	Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit
5	Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost	Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy
6	Homosexuality should be accepted by society	Homosexuality should be discouraged by society
7	Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people	Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work hard
8	In foreign policy, the US should take into account the interests of it's allies even if it means making compromises	In foreign policy, the U.S. should follow its OWN national interests even when its allies strongly disagree
9	It is best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs	We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems here at home
10	Our country needs to continue making changes to give black people equal rights with whites	Our country has made the changes needed to give black people equal rights with whites
11	The economic system in this country unfairly favors powerful interests	The economic system in this country is generally fair to most Americans
12	There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men	The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone

Internet based respondents were asked to choose their statement preference out of each pair of statements using "feel strongly" or "lean towards" in an online survey. Statistical software was employed to analyze the answer choices of the 1103 registered voters, which disaggregated respondents into affinity clusters based on common answer tendencies, shown below in the Typology Scoring Table (Table 2). The liberal and conservative paired statements are displayed on the left (blue; liberal-leaning) and right (red; conservative-leaning) sides of the matrix table (Table 2). The colored cells within the twelve row by eight column matrix represent how strongly people are on a liberal - conservative spectrum; dark blue being the most liberal, light blue leaning liberal, light red leaning conservative, and darker red being the most conservative. Cell scoring is the average response (on a scale from -3 to +3) for each paired statement for each cell in the cluster, of which we have assigned archetype names (in diagonal yellow at the top). Beyond the 12 core typology questions, the survey also included 60 additional questions relating to social and demographic topics so we can gain a more detailed picture of who voters are and where their values reside. (see Appendix 1 for a visual interpretation of reading Tables 2 and 3).

Table 2. Oregon Political Culture 12 Item Typology Scoring Table

Liberal-leaning statements (-)		Cluster								Conservative-leaning statements (+)	
		1-Solid Liberals	2-Opportunity Democrats	3-Disaffected Democrats	4-Moderates	5-Devout & Diverse	6-New Era Entrepreneurs	7-Market Skeptic R-S./Country-first	8-Core Conservatives		
1	Governmental regulation of business is necessary to protect public interest.	-2.08	-1.20	-0.52	0.11	-1.19	1.16	0.89	1.31	-1.53	Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.
2	Poor people have hard lives because gov. benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently.	-2.40	-0.84	-1.34	0.34	0.48	1.44	1.36	1.92	0.96	Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return.
3	Immigrants today strengthen our county because of their hard work and talents.	-2.32	-2.06	-0.02	0.01	-1.04	0.05	2.12	1.52	-1.73	Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.
4	Business corporations make too much profit.	-2.43	-1.21	-1.86	-0.04	-0.88	1.21	-1.26	2.06	-4.42	Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit.
5	Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost.	-2.59	-2.07	-0.89	0.36	-0.21	0.12	1.45	2.15	-1.69	Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy.
6	Homosexuality should be accepted by society.	-2.87	-2.63	-1.42	-1.06	0.34	-1.28	0.70	1.64	-6.58	Homosexuality should be discouraged by society.
7	Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people.	-1.88	1.61	-1.08	0.91	1.60	2.06	1.36	2.36	6.94	Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work hard.
8	In foreign policy, the US should take into account the interests of its allies even if it means making compromises.	-2.08	-1.80	-0.08	-0.17	-1.49	0.08	1.66	1.40	-2.48	In foreign policy, the U.S. should follow its OWN national interests even when its allies strongly disagree.
9	It is best for our future of our country to be active in world affairs	-1.21	-2.07	0.47	0.13	-1.04	0.13	1.61	0.01	-1.96	We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems here at home.
10	Our country needs to continue making changes to give black people equal rights with whites.	-2.56	-1.58	0.43	-0.82	1.38	1.64	2.47	2.09	3.05	Our country has made the changes needed to give black people equal rights with whites.
11	The economic system in this country unfairly favors powerful interests.	-2.81	-2.12	-2.12	-1.25	-1.03	1.42	-1.93	1.31	-8.54	The economic system in this country is generally fair to most Americans.
12	There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than for men.	-2.64	-1.30	-1.06	-0.93	1.33	0.54	1.47	2.23	-0.36	The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone.
Cluster column score		-27.9	-17.3	-9.5	-2.4	-1.8	8.6	11.9	20.0	-18.3	
Cluster n count		227	158	144	160	118	112	90	94	1103	
Cluster % of total		21%	14%	13%	15%	11%	10%	8%	9%	100%	

Quick-take findings from Table 2:

- The two ideologically consistent core liberal and conservative clusters represent only 30% of these registered voters
- The six middle political clusters, consisting of the remaining 70% of these registered voters, do not exhibit uniform ideology, but rather a checkerboard of conservative and liberal beliefs
- Issues that exhibit liberal leanings: corporate greed (row 4), acceptance of homosexuality (row 6), and unfair economic system (row 11)
- Issues that exhibit conservative leaning: resistance of support for the poor (row 2), value of hard work (row 7), and sufficiency of efforts to address black inequality (row 10)
- The "Cluster Column Score" confirms Oregon's politically left tilt with strongest -28 liberal and strongest 20 conservative scores

Phase 2: In addition to the findings from the 12 typology questions Pew tested, we ran sixty additional questions, some identical to Pew and some unique. Table 3 (below), which reads like Table 2, displays 13 additional typology questions for a total of 25 typology variables, as well as standard demographic questions.

Quick-take findings from Table 3 (next page):

- Additional issues that exhibit broad liberal characteristics: American consumption (row 13), gun regulations (row 17), campaign finance limits (row 18), tiny home building rules (row 24), opioid treatment (row 25)
- Additional issue that exhibit broad conservative characteristic: government inefficiency (row 23)

Note on reading Table 3: Table 3's initial 12 typology questions are identical to Table 2 although these 12 variables score differently than the Table 2 twelve items because the Table 3 cluster analysis draws from 25 variables instead of 12, creating different cluster compositions. The Table 2 assigned cluster names were faithful to Pew's eight cluster titles because of strong comparability to Pew scores but Table 3 cluster output was sufficiently different which required renaming several cluster titles. It is noteworthy that Table 2 "Solid Liberal" and "Core Conservative" clusters total 21% and 9% whereas Table 3 totals 17% and 17% respectively. Furthermore the liberal/conservative cluster respondent counts (n) in Table 2 is n = 227 and 94 respectively while Table 3 is n = 192 and 184 respectively. The comparatively close Table 3 Liberal-Conservative balance was unintentional although may suggest improved discriminate opportunity for considering ideological divisions. Nonetheless, the total cluster column mean score for the 25 variables on Solid Liberal and Core Conservative clusters is -53 and +31, affirming Oregon's political culture blue (liberal) slant.

Table 3. Oregon Political Culture 25 Item Typology Scoring Table

	Liberal-leaning statements (-)	Oregon Political Culture Typology								var. low SUM	Conservative-leaning statements (+)
		1- Solid Liberals	2- Opportunity Dems	3- Disaffected Dems	4- Young Liberal Consumers (Boomers)	5- Apolitical Country First Libertarians	6- Market Skeptic Rs	7- New Era Entrepreneurs	8- Core Conservatives		
1	*Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest.	-2.24	-1.22	-1.01	-0.49	0.29	-0.40	0.08	1.49	-3.5	*Government regulation of business usually does more harm than good.
2	*Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently.	-2.49	-0.91	-1.15	-0.53	-0.65	0.92	1.01	1.88	-1.9	*Poor people today have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return.
3	*Immigrants today strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents.	-2.59	-1.73	-0.51	-0.60	0.28	-0.41	0.02	1.40	-4.1	*Immigrants today are a burden on our country because they take our jobs, housing and health care.
4	*Business corporations make too much profit.	-2.48	-1.14	-2.23	0.23	-1.30	-0.34	0.11	1.02	-6.1	*Most corporations make a fair and reasonable amount of profit.
5	*Stricter environmental laws and regulations are worth the cost.	-2.77	-1.92	-1.36	-0.07	-0.15	0.78	-0.62	1.78	-4.3	*Stricter environmental laws and regulations cost too many jobs and hurt the economy.
6	*Homosexuality should be accepted by society.	-2.93	-2.44	-2.09	-0.77	-0.71	0.29	-1.30	0.76	-9.2	*Homosexuality should be discouraged by society.
7	*Hard work and determination are no guarantee of success for most people.	-1.76	1.07	-0.47	1.18	-1.06	1.63	1.75	2.18	4.5	*Most people who want to get ahead can make it if they're willing to work hard.
8	*In foreign policy, the U.S. should take into account the interests of its allies even if it means making compromises with them.	-2.37	-1.83	-0.33	-0.51	0.36	-0.94	-0.29	1.36	-4.5	*In foreign policy, the U.S. should follow its OWN national interests even when its allies strongly disagree.
9	*It's best for the future of our country to be active in world affairs.	-1.47	-1.84	0.10	-0.75	0.87	-0.96	0.15	0.80	-3.1	*We should pay less attention to problems overseas and concentrate on problems here at home.
10	*Our country needs to continue making changes to give black people equal rights with whites.	-2.59	-1.61	-0.32	-1.51	0.67	1.16	1.06	2.35	-0.8	*Our country has made the changes needed to give black people equal rights with whites.
11	*The economic system in this country unfairly favors powerful interests.	-2.87	-2.11	-2.41	-1.02	-1.63	-0.86	-0.12	0.45	-10.6	*The economic system in this country is generally fair to most Americans.
12	*There are still significant obstacles that make it harder for women to get ahead than men.	-2.57	-1.68	-1.22	-0.56	-0.76	0.73	0.45	1.85	-3.8	*The obstacles that once made it harder for women than men to get ahead are now largely gone.
13	Our country would be better off if we all consumed less.	-1.96	-0.79	-1.11	1.12	-0.81	-0.83	-0.74	-0.02	-5.1	We need to buy and consume to support a strong economy.
14	*Society is just as well off if people have priorities other than marriage and children.	-2.33	-1.30	-1.43	0.69	-0.71	0.63	-0.64	0.83	-4.3	*Society is better off if people make marriage and having children a priority.
15	*Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside of our control.	-0.63	1.16	0.43	1.05	-0.04	0.18	1.69	2.13	6.0	*Everyone has it in their own power to succeed.
16	*People in this country should learn to live with less.	-1.17	0.22	-0.44	0.61	-0.90	0.72	-0.15	1.02	-0.1	*There are no real limits to growth in this country today.
17	Combat-style firearms should be illegal to buy or own by the general public.	-2.69	-2.43	-1.68	-1.09	0.68	-1.28	-0.87	1.84	-7.5	The U.S. constitution broadly protects gun ownership regardless of the type of firearm.
18	A federal constitutional amendment should be passed to regulate unlimited money in political campaigns.	-2.58	-1.01	-2.39	-0.29	0.37	-1.55	-0.23	-0.41	-8.1	Campaign spending should be constitutionally protected as freedom of speech.
19	It's high time that inappropriate or offensive sexual verbal or physical gestures become socially unacceptable.	-2.46	-2.39	-1.25	-0.63	0.05	-1.16	-1.09	0.69	-8.3	People have become far too sensitive about what is mostly harmless flirtation.
20	Toxic political discourse risks destroying our democracy.	-1.51	-2.06	-0.64	0.73	0.73	-1.92	0.89	1.03	-2.7	Our future demands tough talk and telling it the way we see it.
21	(Which you prefer:) Bigger government providing more services	-1.56	-0.71	0.16	-0.34	-0.24	1.44	0.50	2.28	1.5	Smaller government providing fewer services
22	*Racial discrimination is the main reason why many black people can't get ahead these days.	-2.38	-0.91	-0.29	-0.65	1.04	0.38	1.24	2.36	0.8	*Black people who can't get ahead in this country are mostly responsible for their own condition.
23	*Government often does a better job than people give it credit for.	-0.37	0.21	1.48	0.45	0.84	1.48	0.57	2.11	6.8	*Government is almost always wasteful and inefficient.
24	Building codes which discourage tiny homes should be reformed.	-2.01	-1.50	-1.38	-0.42	-0.55	-0.94	-0.60	-0.57	-8.0	Tiny homes promote second class citizens and slums.
25	The addictive drug and opioid epidemic in our country requires a broader understanding about root causes and treatment of addiction.	-2.70	-1.93	-2.14	-0.91	0.20	-0.90	-0.12	0.72	-7.8	Drug addiction is a symptom of an overly permissive society which requires greater discipline, penalties and confinement.
	Cluster column score	-53.48	-30.78	-23.67	-5.09	-3.17	-2.12	2.76	31.35	-84.2	
	Cluster n count	191	145	139	91	101	129	122	184	1103	
	Cluster % of total	17%	13%	13%	8%	9%	12%	11%	17%	100%	

Supplemental Survey Responses	% within cluster column membership							
26 Prefer Republican candidates (n=449; 41% of sample)	1%	11%	12%	54%	49%	70%	64%	98%
27 Very Dissatisfied with Trump (n=588; 53% of sample)	99%	87%	82%	47%	40%	26%	30%	2%
28 Unaffiliated or independent (n=310; 28% of sample)	23%	25%	36%	22%	41%	29%	33%	23%
29 % Male (n=483; 44% of sample)	40%	36%	39%	50%	35%	64%	34%	53%
30 18-34 (n=246; 22% of sample)	16%	19%	23%	34%	31%	24%	26%	16%
31 Age 65+ (n=275; 25% of sample)	24%	29%	18%	29%	19%	29%	26%	27%
32 % with at least a 4-year college degree (n=343; 31% of sample) - > 31% of Americans have 4-yr or higher (Census 2016)	42%	43%	22%	28%	20%	39%	24%	24%
33 Income in 2016 \$75,000 or more (n=343; 31% of sample)	21%	41%	24%	22%	30%	34%	35%	39%
34 Discuss politics nearly every day (n=278; 25% of sample)	46%	31%	18%	16%	5%	24%	16%	27%
35 Republican Party policy threatens nation's well-being (n=406; 37% of sample)	79%	62%	47%	30%	21%	20%	17%	2%
36 Democratic Party policy threatens nation's well-being (n=218; 20% of sample)	1%	1%	3%	25%	11%	26%	20%	64%
37 Both parties threaten the nation's well-being (n=298; 27% of sample) (yellow cells >10% above average)	18%	23%	37%	16%	46%	31%	28%	23%
38 Solid evidence, human-caused climate change (n=565; 51% of sample)	97%	83%	75%	30%	33%	25%	37%	9%
39 No gas tax revenue should be spent on reducing car travel (n=244; 22% of sample)	3%	8%	14%	10%	23%	30%	25%	58%
40 Join Quebec, California, and Ontario Strong + Lean Support (n=582; 53% of sample (26% undecided))	96%	83%	70%	41%	26%	31%	50%	10%

*Pulled from Pew Research political typology and ideology projects

Appendix 2

Methodology Summary:

1. Examined Pew Research's 2014 ($N=10,000$) and 2017 ($N=5000$) typology and ideology study reports^{1, 2}
2. Acquired raw data from Pew's 2014 and 2017 typology surveys and ran analyses to replicate methods and findings
3. Designed and ran a unique PI pilot survey using a select group of Pew and PI questions on a sample population of those living in states that are in line with the Oregon political culture of active voters (OR, WA, CA, CO; conducted December 2017)
4. Ran analyses on PI's pilot survey data ($N=1103$ registered voters) for comparisons to Pew and to explore the data for confirmatory or unique findings
5. Compiled results in a report for the purpose of sharing useful results to interested researchers and policymakers

Pew's A-B statement choices as true indicators of liberal-conservative attitudes are debatable, but because of Pew's large research team, reputation, and decades of experience, we accept them as a jumping off point for exploration. With survey results on the A-B choice questions set to a 4-point scale, we conducted a k-means cluster analysis using SPSS software to disaggregate respondents into discrete groupings based on similar response characteristics, much like how people who share commonalities might cluster together in a social setting. We examined groupings ranging from 3 to 9 clusters, looking for the least number of groupings which gave clear distinctions of useful categorization. We subjectively determined that six and eight cluster selections provided the best explanations, arriving at 8 clusters providing maximum explanatory power. Coincidentally, Pew Research also preferred eight clusters

This project surveyed 1200 registered voters from four states, which was reduced to a sample size of 1103 after we removed invalidated surveys. Of the 1103 respondents, 518 are registered to vote in Oregon. The four states, Oregon, Washington, California and Colorado, were mainly chosen to increase respondent numbers as well as to examine how Oregon might share political values with specific western states for collaborative purposes. This comports with political scientist Daniel Elazar's formulation of three U.S. political cultures³; Oregon groups with 17 other states that Elazar considers culturally "moralistic." We specifically selected CA, WA and CO because of shared policies such as vote-by-mail and the state constitutional limits of road fuel tax revenue allocation. This survey used two different internet audience suppliers: Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and Research Now SSI (RN), a major market research audience provider. Demographics were evaluated for representativeness to Oregon for age, race, gender, income, political identity and education. Of these, only education level was deemed deficient with a shortage of those without a college degree (as is common in most opinion surveying), resulting in a decision to weight education level to a representative proportion in line with census statistics.

We consider this survey and report a pilot project, meaning we intend to run a refined survey in the near future. Nonetheless the 1103 current respondents are real people and the study findings are valid as-is. We are accepting critique and suggestions going forward toward the next phase of this typology exploration for Oregon.

The complete unabridged survey questions and results are available on request at info@policyinteractive or at [http://www.policyinteractive.org/public/PI_Nov_Dec17TypoToplines7.12.28Final\(4\).pdf](http://www.policyinteractive.org/public/PI_Nov_Dec17TypoToplines7.12.28Final(4).pdf).

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¹ [Pew - Beyond Red and Blue 2014](#)

² [Pew - Deep Fissures Left and Right 2017](#)

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_J._Elazar