



Economic Enlightenment in Relation to College-going, Ideology, and Other Variables: A Zogby Survey of Americans

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ABSTRACT

We present results of a December 2008 Zogby International nationwide survey of American adults, with 4,835 respondents. We gauge economic enlightenment based on responses to eight economic questions. A number of controversial interpretive issues attend our measure, including: (1) our designation of enlightened answers; (2) an asymmetry in sometimes challenging leftist mentalities without ever specifically challenging conservative and libertarian mentalities; (3) our simple 8-question test is merely a baseline and does not gauge the heights of economic enlightenment; and (4) a concern about response bias—namely, that less intelligent people would be less likely to participate in the survey.

Even with the caveats in mind, however, the results are important. They indicate that, *for people inclined to take such a survey, basic economic enlightenment is not correlated with going to college*. We also show economic enlightenment by ideological groups—the “conservatives” and “libertarians” do significantly better than the “liberals,” “progressives,” and “moderates”—and we show that the finding about education holds up when we look within each ideological group (with perhaps the

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exception of the “conservative” group). We discuss possible explanations for the finding that economic enlightenment is not correlated with going to college.

We also report simple findings for the relation between economic enlightenment and each of the following variables: 2008 presidential vote, party affiliation, voting participation, race or ethnic group, urban vs. rural, religious affiliation, religious participation, union membership, marital status, membership in armed forces, NASCAR fandom, membership in the “investor class,” patronage at Wal-Mart, household income, and gender.

We have opted to keep the reporting direct and simple—we have not applied any weights to the data. We do not report any regression results. We make the data available online as a linked appendix and invite others to explore the data for findings beyond those reported here.

Origination of the Survey and the Present Paper

The survey was designed by the first author of this paper, Zeljka Buturovic, who holds a PhD in psychology from Columbia University and is currently a Research Associate at Zogby International.

Buturovic’s motivation in designing the survey grew out of her dissatisfaction with previous surveys treating economic understanding. She regarded many questions on previous surveys to be either too narrowly factual, too dry in a textbook way, and too removed from policy context, or, alternatively, too general in eliciting policy judgments apart from specific economic consequences. Either way, many questions on previous surveys were too antiseptic with respect to really knowing economics in relation to important issues. In designing the survey, she sought to formulate questions that would reflect enlightenment about economic facts or consequences, especially those in tension with established policy and popular political mentalities. To Buturovic, questions about unintended effects of a variety of economic policies, such as rent-control and mandatory licensing, seemed like a good start. Like all Zogby surveys, the questionnaire included standard demographic questions. The questionnaire instrument and all data are linked at the end of this paper.

The survey was administered by Zogby International by usual procedure. It was a nationwide survey of American adults, randomly selected from the Zogby International online panel routinely used in political and commercial research. On December 5, 2008, Zogby sent by email 63,986 invitations to the members of the panel. The invitation included a link that would take the respondents to the survey on Zogby’s own secure servers. The link expired after one use, which is one of several security measures Zogby takes to prevent answer duplication. Because

the panel is large it is difficult to maintain currency of all the email addresses in it. Zogby estimates that the number of invitations actually received to have been around 75%, or 47990. Of these, 6699 respondents started the survey and 4835 completed it by the close of the survey on December 8. This gives us a response rate of 14% and a completion rate of 10%.

Several months after the survey had been conducted, Buturovic issued a working paper based on the survey (Buturovic et al 2009), and she was subsequently contacted by this paper's second author, Daniel Klein. They then pursued the present paper and together decided which set of questions would constitute what is treated here as an 8-question test of basic economic enlightenment.

The Eight Questions We Use to Gauge Economic Enlightenment

The questionnaire contained 21 questions on economics, 16 of which were in the following format:

Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable.

1. Strongly Agree
2. Somewhat Agree
3. Somewhat Disagree
4. Strongly Disagree
5. Not sure

Of the 16 questions in that uniform format, this paper deals with only eight. We have omitted 8 of the economic questions in that format because they are not as useful in gauging economic enlightenment, either because the question is too vague or too narrowly factual, or because the enlightened answer is too uncertain or arguable. For example, the statement “economic development makes things more affordable” hinges greatly on the interpretation of “affordable”—maybe economic development makes “normal living” more expensive, but it also makes incomes higher. The statement “the more people there are, the more wealth there is” is uncertain in its context. The statements of the omitted questions are provided elsewhere.³

3. Among the omitted questions are the following eight of the same format as those used here: 1. Poverty causes crime. 2. Business contracts benefit all parties. 3. Private property protections primarily benefit the well-off. 4. More often than not, employers who discriminate in employee hiring will be punished by the market. 5. In the USA, more often than not, rich people were born rich. 6. Consumption grows the economy. 7. Economic development makes things more affordable. 8. Foreign aid helps economic growth of recipient countries. In addition, there were five other economic questions, but in a different format. These are given in the appendix.

As it happens, our main findings would not be affected by adding any of the omitted questions with enlightened answers plausibly ascribed, as one may confirm using the provided database. We choose to confine our report to the eight questions that most reliably gauge economic enlightenment.

The statements of the eight questions used are the following:

1. Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable.
 - Unenlightened: Disagree
2. Mandatory licensing of professional services increases the prices of those services.
 - Unenlightened: Disagree
3. Overall, the standard of living is higher today than it was 30 years ago.
 - Unenlightened: Disagree
4. Rent control leads to housing shortages.
 - Unenlightened: Disagree
5. A company with the largest market share is a monopoly.
 - Unenlightened: Agree
6. Third-world workers working for American companies overseas are being exploited.
 - Unenlightened: Agree
7. Free trade leads to unemployment.
 - Unenlightened: Agree
8. Minimum wage laws raise unemployment.
 - Unenlightened: Disagree

We think it is reasonable to maintain that if a respondent disagrees with the statement “Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable,” the respondent betrays a lack of economic enlightenment. Challengers might say something like: “Well, not *every* restriction on housing development makes housing less affordable,” but such a challenger would be tendentious and churlish. Unless a statement in a questionnaire explicitly makes it a matter of 100%, by using “every,” “all,” “always,” “none,” or “never,” it is natural to understand the statement as a by-and-large statement about overall consequences. Do restrictions on housing development, by and large, make housing less affordable? Yes they do. Does free trade lead, overall, to greater unemployment? No, it does not. For someone to say the contrary is economically unenlightened.

Caveat 1 of 4: Some will take exception to our take on the eight questions, particularly the one about minimum wage laws. We understand that the blackboard model is highly misleading—it eclipses non-wage job attributes, black markets, search intensity, future pay schedules, and so on. These surely mitigate the dis-

employment effect, but they do not eliminate it. Some will even say that, because of monoposony or coordination problems, minimum wages increase employment, but we judge such arguments to be of dubious plausibility and significance. We think that the basic logic asked by the question is revealed by carrying it to a minimum wage of, say, \$20. Unemployment would go up a lot. True, the moderate increases observed and usually discussed produce only small effects in overall unemployment, but they are increases. It still seems to be the case that most economists agree that “minimum wages increase unemployment among young and unskilled workers.”⁴ Moreover, our remarks arguably find indirect support by responses given by economists *who signed a “raise the minimum wage” petition*.⁵ But most importantly, take out the question and our results still hold up. Our basic results do not depend on including the minimum wage question.

Caveat 2 of 4: We acknowledge a shortcoming about the set of economic questions used here, and a corresponding reservation. None of the questions challenge the economic foibles specifically of “conservatives,” nor of “libertarians,” as compared to those of “liberals”/“progressives.” It would have been good, for example, if a question had asked about negative consequences of drug prohibition, or the positive consequences of increased immigration from Mexico. We doubt, however, that any partisan aspect of the questions much upsets our interpretations—for reasons to be discussed once the findings are laid out.

Caveat 3 of 4: Even if one accepts that our handling of each of the eight economic questions tracks economic enlightenment, the set represents a baseline rather than the heights of economic wisdom. In other words, the most economically enlightened mind would score no better than a solidly sensible mind on the eight questions, as they would both ace the 8-question exam. Yet presumably almost all of the most economically enlightened minds in the United States have all gone to college. In this respect our treatment fails to do justice to the relationship

4. In their 2000 survey of AEA members, Fuller and Geide-Stevenson (2003, 378) found that 45.6% agreed, 27.9% agreed with provisos, and 26.5% generally disagreed.

5. Klein and Dompe (2007) designed a questionnaire sent to the signatories (mostly economists) of a “raise the minimum wage” petition. Regarding mechanisms justifying their support for raising the minimum wage, of four mechanisms listed, the monoposony and coordination mechanism received significantly less endorsement than “equalizing an imbalance in bargaining skills” and “inducing a transfer from employers to workers” (142), indicating that their support was based more on the idea of redistributive transfer than employment effects. And in a question about possible negative consequences of raising the minimum wage, of six possible negative consequences, the one they were *most concerned with* was the disemployment effect. Of the 88 respondents who responded to the disemployment question, 24 (or 27%) denied the disemployment effect, while 54 (or 61%) acknowledged it as a “minor” negative consequence, and 10 (or 11%) acknowledged it as a “significant” negative consequence (149). Again, these economists had signed the “raise the minimum wage” petition. Meanwhile, Neumark and Wascher (2008) write: “the balance of the evidence indicates that, even if its aggregate effects are relatively small, a higher minimum wage will reduce job opportunities for the least-skilled workers most likely to be affected by the wage floor” (1316).

between the education variable and economic enlightenment. The reader should keep in mind that when we speak of “economic enlightenment,” we mean it in relation to performance on a very basic test, not an average over the entire range of economic enlightenment.

Results on Economic Enlightenment and Going to College

Previous Literature on College-Going and Economic Knowledge

College is called “higher education.” The 2008 report of Science and Technology Indicators finds that factual knowledge of science is “positively related to the level of formal schooling” (Chapter 7). A National Geographic (2006) survey of geographic literacy finds that knowledge of geographic facts, such as locating a country on a map, is significantly correlated with going to college (8, 11).

Some studies find that a college degree is correlated with one’s knowledge of facts related to economics. Blinder and Krueger (2004, 348) found modest relationship between knowledge of economic facts and going to college. The type of economic facts that they tested for consisted of items such as “what percent of income is paid in taxes?” and “what is the current minimum wage?”⁶ Caplan (2007, 164) finds that college degree makes one more likely to agree with professional economists on economic facts and mechanisms. Walstad and Rebeck (2002), in reviewing five studies conducted from 1991 through 1999, find a significant relationship between college and knowledge of economics. Knowledge tested on these five surveys ranged from asking about the most-widely used measure of inflation to simple textbook problems, such as “if the price of beef doubled and the price of poultry stayed the same, people would be most likely to buy” (answer: more poultry and less beef). The study from which the last example was taken was a multiple-choice survey performed by Harris Interactive multiple times for the National Council on Economic Education (NCEE). Those surveys generally found large coefficients for college-going on the kind of knowledge they tested. A subsequent NCEE/Harris survey (Markow 2005) likewise found, after weighting the data, that college graduates were four times as likely as adults with only a high school education to score “A” or “B” on their survey. Though the effects found in these studies were sometimes modest, they all appear to be pointing in the

6. Blinder and Krueger (2004) found that voters with college degrees were somewhat more likely to oppose raising the minimum wage than were those without college degree—an attitude that the authors speculated could have resulted from the college graduates’ understanding of the negative effects of minimum wage. As we will see, in our data such belief is not correlated with going to college.

same direction: that going to college is positively correlated with understanding of standard economic course material.

Meanwhile, Caplan and Miller (2006) use General Social Survey data including a ten-word vocabulary subtest, which the authors treat as a proxy for IQ, in addressing whether general-survey respondents “share the economic beliefs of the average economist.” They find that “the estimated effect of education sharply falls after controlling for IQ. In fact, education is driven down to second place, and IQ replaces it at the top of the list of variables that make people ‘think like economists.’”

A difference between our questions, which challenge establishment thinking, and those treated by Walsted and Rebeck may account for the considerable difference in answering correctly. The questions treated by Walsted and Rebeck were typically answered correctly by about 70 percent of the samples they examine. In our survey, respondents scored much less well. We think that, for many respondents, economic understanding takes a vacation when economic enlightenment conflicts with establishment political sensibilities.

Economic Enlightenment Was Not Correlated with Having a College Degree

The question on schooling ran as follows:

Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?

- Less than high school graduate
- High-school graduate
- Some college
- College degree or more
- (Refuse to answer)

Of those answering each of the following questions, we found:

- Gender: 61.1% male, 38.9% female
- Highest level of schooling: 0.4% hadn’t graduated high school, 6.5% were high school graduates, 27.5% had some college, 65.5% had a college degree or more.

Because the number of those without high-school degree is small (0.5% of the sample), we combined that category with the next, making a composite category: high school or less. So we work with three levels of schooling: (1) high school or less; (2) some college (but not a degree); (3) a college degree or more.

In our data, economic enlightenment is not correlated with going to college. To demonstrate the result, we have coded the economic responses in three different ways. In all three ways, the results are the same. The three ways we have coded the data are as follows:

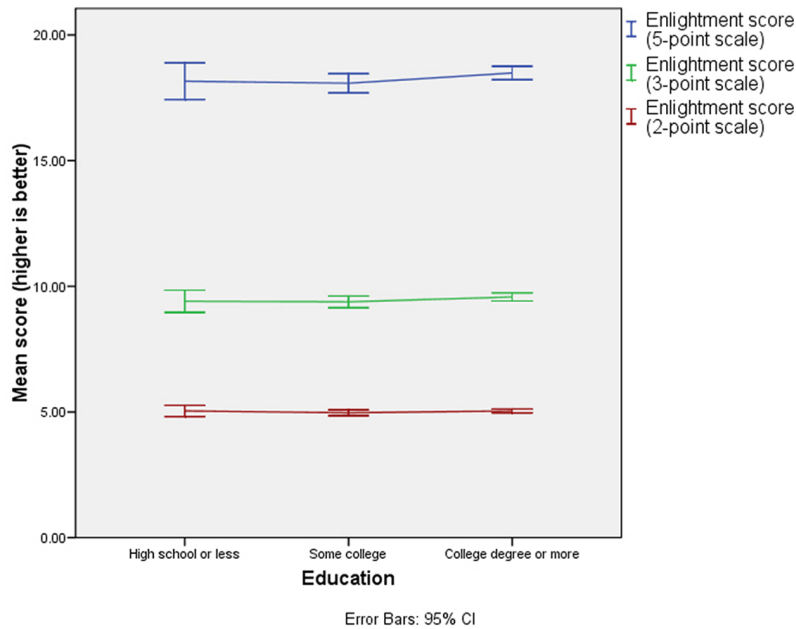
- On the original five point scale (with “not sure” responses coded as a middle point). Over the eight questions, this scale ranges from 0 to 32.

- Recoded into a three-point scale: (1) “strongly agree” or “somewhat agree,” (2) “not sure,” (3) “strongly disagree” or “somewhat disagree.” This scale ranges from 0 to 16.
- Recoded into a two-point scale where the middle “not sure” point of the three-point scale was recoded “enlightened.” Thus, answers were counted as incorrect only when a respondent explicitly endorsed an unenlightened view (either strongly or somewhat). Scores on this scale range from 0 to 8.

For each question, the points are awarded in accordance with economic enlightenment. In the five point scale, for example, “strongly agree” is scored as a 4 on the living-standards-higher-today question and as a 0 on the free-trade-causes-unemployment question.

The results are presented in Figure 1. The horizontal axis gives the three levels of education; the vertical axis gives a corresponding average score. Since, as described above, we scored our respondents in three different ways, there are three average scores for each type of respondent. The line that is highest on the graph presents an average score on a 5-point scale, and the middle line presents an average score on a 3-point scale, and the lowest line presents an average score on the 2-point scale. No matter, *all three lines are flat*. These results would seem to conflict with previous studies that find a positive correlation.

Figure 1. Mean economic enlightenment score (for 5, 3, and 2-point scales) by level of education.



Now we address the possibility of *response bias*. Is there any reason to suspect either that, among less schooled people, those more economically enlightened would be more likely to complete the survey, or that, among more schooled people, those less economically enlightened would be more likely to complete the survey?

Caveat 4 of 4: In commenting on this paper in draft, Bryan Caplan suggested that there is a strong reason to suspect that, among less schooled people, those more economically enlightened would be more likely to complete the survey. The survey was initiated by email, and taking the survey would require a certain level of curiosity, reading comprehension, and cognitive focus. The survey procedure tends to screen out those of low IQ. The conjecture is supported by the fact that among our respondents, only 7 percent had no college—a percentage far below that of the population. In our view, Caplan has a good point. Although we see no reason to suspect that, among more schooled people, those less economically enlightened would be more likely to complete the survey, we do think that the sort of effect suggested by Caplan is certainly operating to some extent. Meanwhile, as shown by Caplan and Miller (2006), IQ correlates with economic understanding. Thus, we can imagine how Figure 1 would look if somehow the sample were truly representative: The ends at the left would be *lower*, and so the lines would slope upward, indicating a positive correlation between economic enlightenment and education level.

But we have no simple way to determine, gauge, or confidently correct for any such response bias, so we just proceed to report the data such as they are.

We now turn to results by individual question. To make the presentation simple, we here work with the two-point scale. Thus, for “Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable,” we count as (equally) not incorrect “strongly agree,” “somewhat agree,” and “not sure;” we count as (equally) incorrect “somewhat disagree” and “strongly disagree.” (The results using the two-point scale are also found using the three or five point scale.)

In the tables that follow, using the two-point scale, we report on the percentage of response that are INCORRECT. Thus, in the tables that follow, *high numbers are bad*. We focus on incorrect responses to highlight the problem of “people knowing what ain’t so.” Table 1 again shows that, *for people inclined to participate in such a survey*, going to college is not correlated with economic enlightenment. With the large sample size, all but the smallest of differences are statistically significant at the 0.05 level. But the magnitudes are small. It is possible that college-goers would have made a better relative showing if some of the questions had challenged interventions that are relatively unpopular with the college crowd (such as drug prohibition).

Table 1. Percentage INCORRECT by Schooling (using two-point scale for question responses)

	High School or Less (n=335)	Some College (n=1327)	College or More (n=3156)	TOTAL* (n=4818)
Restrictions on housing developments make housing less affordable	37.0%	35.6%	39.3%	38.1%
Mandatory licensing of professional services increases the prices of those services	23.6%	29.5%	37.0%	34.0%
Overall, the standard of living is higher today than it was 30 years ago.	33.4%	34.0%	30.5%	31.7%
Rent control leads to housing shortages.	40.3%	42.7%	42.6%	42.4%
A company with the largest market share is a monopoly.	28.4%	27.0%	16.5%	20.2%
Third-world workers working for American companies overseas are being exploited.	51.9%	53.7%	49.2%	50.6%
Free trade leads to unemployment.	37.3%	37.7%	31.1%	33.3%
Minimum wage laws raise unemployment.	43.9%	43.1%	49.7%	47.5%
Average INCORRECT (out of 8 items)	2.96 (SE=0.11)	3.03 (SE=0.06)	2.96 (SE=0.04)	2.98 (SE=0.03)

* Total includes only those respondents represented in the preceding three columns; that is, it does not include respondents who did not answer both the education question and the policy question treated in the row.

Lack of Enlightenment by Self-Identified Ideology

A question about ideology ran as follows:⁷

Which description best represents your political ideology?

- Progressive/very liberal
- Liberal
- Moderate
- Conservative
- Very conservative
- Libertarian
- Not sure
- (Refuse to answer)

Table 2 gives results by ideology:

7. In addition, our survey asked respondents to rate themselves on a 9 point scale (1-extremely liberal to 9-extremely conservative), but in this paper we do not make use of the question.

Table 2. Percentage INCORRECT by Ideology (using two-point scale for question responses).

	Progressive (n=577)	Liberal (n=742)	Moderate (n=1086)	Conservative (n=1423)	Very Conservative (n=540)	Libertarian (n=369)	TOTAL* (n=4737)
Restrictions on housing development make housing less affordable.	67.6%	60.1%	45.9%	22.3%	17.6%	15.7%	38.1%
Mandatory licensing of professional services increases the prices of those services.	51.3%	50.0%	40.7%	25.6%	19.1%	12.7%	34.3%
Overall, the standard of living is higher today than it was 30 years ago.	61.0%	52.0%	36.9%	13.8%	12.0%	21.1%	31.2%
Rent control leads to housing shortages.	79.2%	70.9%	52.4%	23.0%	14.1%	15.7%	42.5%
A company with the largest market share is a monopoly.	30.8%	27.9%	26.0%	12.5%	13.5%	6.8%	19.9%
Third-world workers working for American companies overseas are being exploited.	83.0%	77.0%	60.7%	30.9%	25.9%	29.3%	50.6%
Free trade leads to unemployment.	60.8%	44.6%	40.0%	20.9%	16.1%	19.5%	33.2%
Minimum wage laws raise unemployment.	92.5%	86.3%	64.8%	17.5%	11.3%	17.6%	47.6%
INCORRECT (average)	5.26 (SE=0.07)	4.69 (SE=0.06)	3.67 (SE=0.06)	1.67 (SE=0.04)	1.30 (SE=0.06)	1.38 (SE=0.09)	2.98 (SE=0.03)

* Total includes only those respondents represented in the preceding six columns; that is, it does not include respondents who did not answer both the ideology question and the policy question treated in the row.

The line at the bottom reports for each ideological group the average number of incorrect answers. Adults self-identifying “very conservative” and “libertarian”

perform the best, followed closely by “conservative.” Trailing far behind are “moderate,” then with another step down to “liberal,” and a final step to “progressive,” who, on average, get wrong 5.26 questions out of eight.

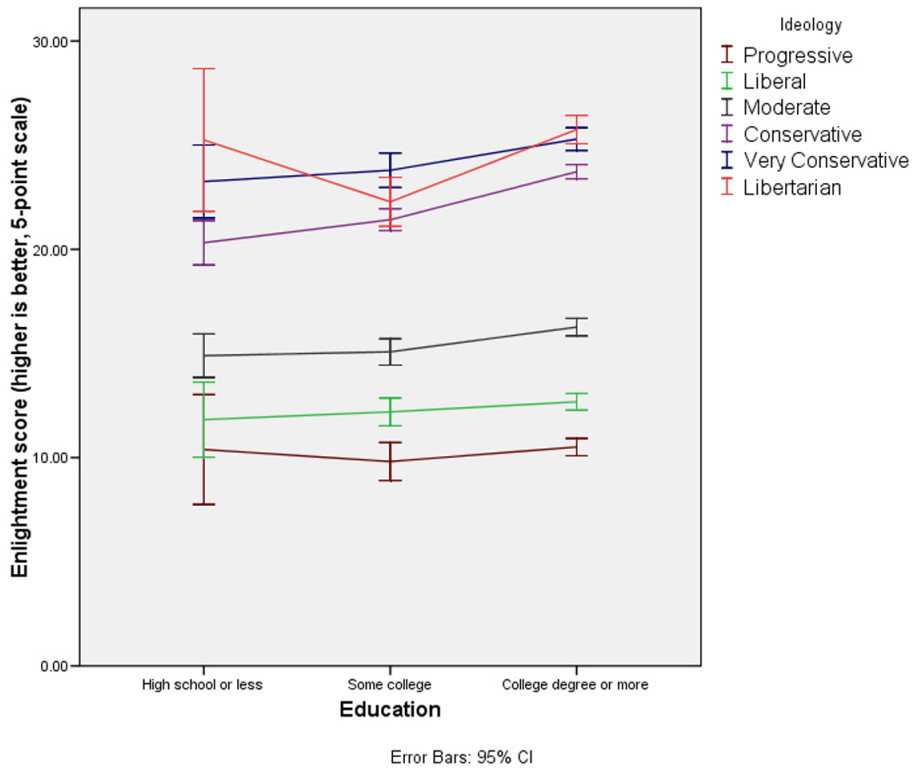
Here again we should acknowledge that none of the eight questions challenge typical conservative or libertarian policy positions, and that had some such questions been included, the measured economic-enlightenment means by ideological groups may well have been somewhat different.

Nonetheless, we think that the measurement as-is captures something real. At least since the days of Frédéric Bastiat, many have said that people of the left often trail behind in incorporating basic economic insight into their aesthetics, morals, and politics. We put much stock in Hayek’s theory (Hayek 1978, 1979, 1988) that the social-democratic ethos is an atavistic reassertion of the ethos and mentality of the primordial paleolithic band, a mentality resistant to ideas of spontaneous order and disjointed knowledge. Our findings support such a claim, all the caveats notwithstanding. Several of the questions would seem to be fairly neutral with respect to partisan politics, particularly the questions on licensing, the standard of living, monopoly, and free trade. None of those questions challenge policies that are particularly leftwing or rationalized on the basis of equity. Yet even on such neutral questions the “progressives” and “liberals” do much worse than the “conservatives” and “libertarians.”

Within Each Ideological Group

The reader might wonder whether the three variables—economic enlightenment, education, and ideology—interact in subtle ways. We avoid delving into these matters except to provide Figure 2, which, using the five-point enlightenment scale to open up the possible range (0-32), shows that within each ideological group, *for the sort of people who are likely to participate in such a survey*, there is still no substantial correlation between enlightenment and college, except perhaps for the “conservative” groups. But even there the effect of the education variable, though it might be called substantial, cannot be called large.

Figure 2. Economic enlightenment (using the five-point scale) by education and ideology.



Possible Explanations for the Lack of Correlation between Economic Enlightenment and Going to College

Our data indicate that Americans *of the sort to participate in such a survey*, those who are college-educated are no more economically enlightened than those who are not. Certain obvious factors would seem to tend towards a positive correlation between enlightenment and going to college. We figure that for the relationship to zero out into noncorrelation there must be some offsetting negative factors or mechanisms. Here we speculate on such negative factors.

We offer four possible explanations for the observed lack of correlation between economic enlightenment and going to college. The first two pertain to the

possibility that, in terms of becoming economically enlightened, going to college simply does not surpass not going to college. Explanations 1 and 2 are the two sides of such a comparison.

Explanation 1: The college professoriate is very preponderantly centrist, center-left, or left. Economic enlightenment tends to go with being classically liberal—perhaps “conservative” or “libertarian” in today’s parlance, and such types are rare among the professoriate.⁸ Once a person has been acculturated and committed to the pattern of social-democratic political aesthetics, she might become not only unreceptive to economic enlightenment, but actually unfriendly to it, especially where it upsets cherished beliefs and values. Our study might suggest that college does not do much to make students aware of the undesirable consequences of certain policies the desirability of which is often taken for granted among professors. Although research does not find faculty ideology to have large effects on student ideology (e.g., Mariani and Hewitt 2008 points one way and Hewitt and Mariani 2010 points the other way), the point here is that the professoriate might be doing little that would elevate economic enlightenment.

Explanation 2: If we think of the young adult years as especially formative, it may be that the non-college experience—notably, the workplace or just “living on one’s own”—tends to impart economic enlightenment better than does the college experience, and college goers simply miss the advantage of learning what they would have learned from the non-college experience.

The next two explanations have to do with sorting effects—screening by colleges and self-sorting by individuals.

Explanation 3: If being economically enlightened, or receptive to it, were to make it less likely that one would be admitted to college, that could help explain the findings, but we doubt that there is much to the idea. One small experimental study found that graduate programs in clinical psychology discriminate against social/religious conservatives (Gartner 1986). Is it possible that college admission criteria that stress social activism and community involvement or even party politics might be biased in favor of fledgling social democrats?

Explanation 4: It may be that, all else equal, being economically enlightened, or receptive to economic enlightenment, tends to make one less inclined to go to college, maybe because such bents make one more likely to enter the workplace or to forge ahead on one’s own, or maybe one perceives academia to be left-leaning and avoids it for that reason. Also, if someone suspects that admission might be biased against him, and applying is costly, that only would make one less likely to apply.⁹

8. Klein and Stern (2009) summarize the findings on the ideological profile of professors.

9. On college seniors deciding whether to go to graduate school see Woessner and Kelly-Woessner (2009).

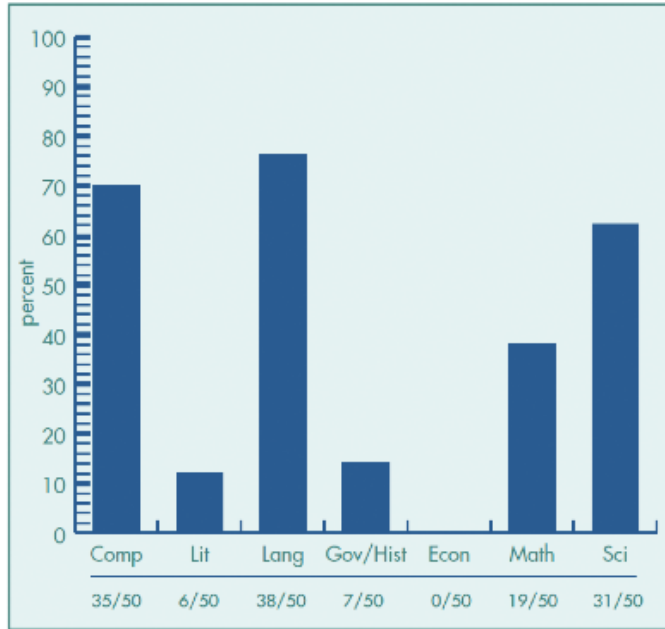
Conclusion: Remarks on Economics Instruction at Colleges and Universities

Although an additional section follows below, reporting other results, here we offer some remarks that conclude the foregoing discussion. In this paper we have striven to present our results simply and transparently. We have presented the raw data, excluding the veil of weights. We make the data and instrument publicly available. We have been candid and scrupulous about the four caveats we see as potentially clouding interpretations of the results. The caveat that we see as most significant as pertains to the education variable is that the survey procedure likely tended to discourage low-IQ individuals from participation, thus artificially raising the observed economic enlightenment scores of the less educated groups, and tending to flatten the relationship between economic enlightenment and education level. But with this point in mind, we may read the results as pertaining to *those who are likely to participate in such a survey*, and even on that reading the results are significant and disturbing.

A great deal of literature over many decades has discussed academe. A recent overview is offered by the American Enterprise Institute volume, *The Politically Correct University: Problems, Scope, and Reforms* (Maranto et al. 2009). Questions of the ideological profile of the professoriate pertain not merely to certain narrow concerns, but to grand struggles between conflicting worldviews, to the course of liberal civilization.

Our results raise questions about economics instruction on campuses. One issue is students' exposure to economics in the general curriculum. Research has found that economics instruction does affect political attitudes slightly, though it is hard to say whether it "sticks" (Scott and Rothman 1975; Whaples 1995). Yet a study conducted and published by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA) examined core requirements at 50 leading universities, including the "Big Ten, Big Eight, Ivy League and Seven Sisters" (Latzer 2004). Figure 3 reproduces the findings on subjects included in the core. None of the 50 schools requires a student to take economics. ACTA is continually expanding its coverage, and the latest finds that of 178 schools, coursework in economics is required at only four, Grambling State University, the United States Air Force Academy, the United States Military Academy (West Point), and University of Alaska-Fairbanks (see whatwilltheylearn.com). One angle for reform would be for trustees, administrators, and faculty to place more emphasis on economics instruction.

Figure 3: Percentage of 50 Surveyed Colleges and Universities Requiring Each Subject



Source: Latzer 2004, 24

Another issue is the kind of economics instruction that students receive when they do take economics courses. We advise students and parents to beware of economics-principles courses that either stress blackboard models divorced from judging important policy positions, or that are hostile to classical liberal thinking and values. Students and parents should understand that while academic economists are, relative to other faculty, more attuned to economic enlightened, a substantial majority vote Democratic and maintain an ideological character in line with that of most of the humanities and social-science faculty. In selecting schools and courses, students and parents need to drill down to the individual professor, and investigate his or her webpage and course syllabi.

Other Results

As noted, the survey contained a large number of social variables aside from school-level and ideology. Here we simply report mean INCORRECT over the eight economic questions, for each group for each such social variable. Again, “incorrect” is coded based on the two-point scale (with “not sure” treated as *not*

incorrect). The maximum number incorrect would be eight, the minimum would be zero. Again, *high numbers are bad*—the best possible score is 0 and the worst possible score is 8. (The questions have Zogby numbering—“2002” in the case of the one immediately following.)

2002. How likely are you to vote in national elections?

	Likelihood	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Very likely	2.97	.03
	Somewhat likely	3.19	.27
	Not likely	3.10	.28
	Not sure	3.13	.52

2003. In the 2008 presidential election, the candidates were Democrat Barack Obama, Republican John McCain, independent Ralph Nader, Libertarian Bob Barr and Green Cynthia McKinney. For whom did you vote?

	2008 Election	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Obama	4.61	.04
	McCain	1.60	.03
	Nader	4.92	.33
	Barr	1.56	.16
	McKinney	5.56	.46
	Someone else	2.63	.23
	Did not vote	2.98	.23
	Not sure	2.60	1.08

2004. In which party are you either registered to vote or do you consider yourself to be a member?

	Party	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Democratic	4.59	.04
	Republican	1.61	.04
	Independent/unenrolled/unaffiliated	3.03	.07
	Libertarian	1.26	.13
	Constitution	1.94	.30
	Green	5.88	.32
	Other	3.00	.41
	Not sure	3.20	.36

702. Which of the following best represents your race or ethnic group?

	Race	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	White	2.95	.03
	African American	4.26	.15
	Asian/Pacific	2.58	.31
	Arab American	3.09	.42
	Other	3.10	.17

703. Do you consider yourself Hispanic or Latino?

	Hispanic/Latino	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Yes	3.30	.17
	No/Not sure	2.98	.03

905. Which of the following best represents where you live?

	Live	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Large City	3.18	.06
	Small City	3.11	.07
	Suburbs	2.76	.06
	Rural	2.84	.07

907. Which of the following best represents your religious affiliation?

	Religion	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Catholic	2.69	.07
	Protestant/other non-denominational Christian	2.40	.05
	Jewish	3.5	.16
	Muslim	3.29	.46
	Atheist/realist/humanist	1.91	.25
	Other/no affiliation	4.04	.11

908. (Only if 907=2) Do you consider yourself to be a born-again, evangelical, or fundamentalist Christian?

	BornAgain	Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Yes	2.03	.07
	No/Not sure	2.72	.07

970. How often do you attend church, mosque, synagogue, or other place of worship?

Attend services		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	More than once a week	2.34	.10
	About once a week	2.36	.07
	Once or twice a month	2.70	.10
	Only on religious holidays	2.73	.12
	Rarely	3.15	.06
	Never	3.81	.07

909. Are you or is anyone in your household a member of a union?

Union		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Yes	3.58	.08
	No/Not sure	2.84	.04

914. Which of the following best describes your marital status

Status		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Married	2.72	.04
	Single	3.42	.09
	Divorced/widowed/separated	3.41	.08
	Civil union/domestic partnership	4.05	.15

926. Do you consider yourself to be mostly a resident of: your city or town, America, or planet earth

Residency		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	My city or town	2.87	.07
	America	2.24	.04
	The planet earth	4.59	.06
	NS/refused	3.15	.26

940. Are you or is any member of your family a member of the Armed Forces?

Armed Forces		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Yes	2.68	.07
	No/Not sure	3.06	.04

946. Do you consider yourself a NASCAR fan?

NASCAR fan		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Yes	2.43	.08
	No/Not sure	3.06	.04

972. Would you consider yourself a member of the “investor class”?

Investor Class		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Yes	2.38	.05
	No/Not sure	3.46	.04

757. How often do you shop at Wal-Mart?

Wal-Mart		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Every week	2.24	.07
	A few times a month	2.45	.06
	A couple of times a year	2.93	.06
	Never	4.24	.07
	Other	3.32	.25

921. Which of the following best represents your household income last year before taxes?

Income		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	< \$25K	3.68	.13
	\$25-35K	3.42	.12
	\$35-50K	3.22	.10
	\$50-75K	3.19	.07
	\$75-100K	2.93	.08
	\$100K+	2.63	.06

922. Gender

Gender		Mean	Std. Error
Total incorrect (0-8)	Male	2.60	.04
	Female	3.58	.05

Appendices

Appendix 1: The survey instrument: [Link](#).

Appendix 2: The data: [Link](#).

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