

Volume
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1

VOX POP Newsletter

of Political Organizations and Parties

An official section of the American Political Science Association
Produced by the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron

*ISSUE THEME: SURVEY OF POP MEMBERS

INSIDE POP: A REPORT ON THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS AND PARTIES SECTION OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

In the fall of 1990, POP surveyed its membership on matters relevant to the section's present and future activities. What follows is a brief report of the survey findings, supplemented by data on the POP membership from the APSA.

The Survey

A short questionnaire was distributed in the fall 1990 edition of *Vox Pop* along with a business reply envelope. The original mailing list contained 489 individuals (the entire membership of POP) and 265 usable responses were obtained, for a return rate of 54 percent. A comparison of zip codes from returned questionnaires to the original mailing list suggests no serious response bias, although the complete anonymity of the questionnaire makes such an assessment difficult.

However, the *quality* of the questionnaires was a potential source of bias. A great many of the questionnaires were largely incomplete, containing few responses to the seven open-ended questions which constituted the bulk of the questionnaire. A great many of these respondents indicated a lack of knowledge about POP and its activities, and expressed a desire to know more about the section. At the other extreme, there were some 90 questionnaires that were filled out in great detail, and these provided much of the substance of this report. Although the two sets of questionnaires differed little on the responses of the two closed-ended questions, much of the data presented here reflect knowledge of and past participation in POP. Clearly, a substantial portion of the section's paying members are only modestly involved in the section or its activities.

A Profile of POP's Membership

Since the POP survey was designed to contain no demographic information, it is worth looking at general data on the characteristics of the section's members (Table 1). The membership of POP is largely male and caucasian, but includes a substantial minority of women and foreign nationals (about one-fifth each). And the section membership is relatively young: better than one-third of the members with Ph.D.s received them within the last 10 years, and in addition, another one-third received their degrees since 1971. These patterns are supported by data on the employment status of POP members. Almost one-quarter of the members claim to be students (n=110) and less than one percent are retired. *(continued on page 3)*

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Chair: Margaret Conway, University of Florida

Secretary-Treasurer: Charles Hadley, University of New Orleans

Program Chair: Ruth Jones, Arizona State University

VOX POP Editor: John Green, The University of Akron

Executive Council: William Keefe, University of Pittsburgh; Michael Malbin, SUNY-Albany; Marian Palley, University of Delaware; Richard Boyd, Wesleyan University; Anne Costain, University of Colorado; Diane Pinderhughes; University of Illinois; Gerald Pomper, Rutgers University; Charles Barrileaux, Florida State University; Joyce Gelb, City University of New York; Anne Hopkins, University of Minnesota; John S. Jackson III, Southern Illinois University

* FROM HEADQUARTERS

Dear Colleagues:

Our program chair, Ruth Jones, has organized a very interesting program for the APSA meeting. In addition to the usual panels at which research papers are presented, she has arranged for POP to sponsor several workshops. On Wednesday, August 28, from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m., a workshop on substantive issues and methodological problems in the study of local party organizations will be held. Two workshops on methods of studying party organizations will be held during regularly scheduled panel time on Thursday, August 29. In addition, a session with Federal Election Commission staff on gaining access to FEC data will be held on Saturday morning, August 31.

Program chairs for POP are elected for a two-year term. Under the rule of three used by the APSA in selecting official program committee section heads, each organized section must nominate three persons for chair of that section and the President Elect and Program Chair then select one person to chair the program section. In compliance with APSA rules, POP's nominating committee nominated three persons, one of whom was our elected program chair, Ruth Jones. The APSA president-elect and

program chair for 1992 selected Ruth to serve as the organizer of the parties and political organizations section for the 1992 program. Ruth would welcome your suggestions for panels and workshops for the 1992 meeting.

POP's business meeting and awards ceremony will be held on Friday, August 30, at 12:30. At that time new officers, including a chair and four council members, will be elected. The nominating committee's report can be found on this page. Three awards will also be presented at the meeting; the awards committee report is also contained in this newsletter.

As my term as chair of POP ends, my thanks to POP members who have served diligently on committees and to the council members, the program chairs, our treasurer, Charles Hadley, and our newsletter editor, John Green, for their work on behalf of POP.

Sincerely,

M. Margaret Conway

Report of the Nominating Committee

The nominating committee composed of Robert Harmel (Chair), Texas A&M University; Charles Barrileaux, Florida State University, and John S. Jackson III, Southern Illinois University, recommends the following slate of officers:

President (2-year term):

Gerald Pomper, Rutgers University

Secretary-Treasurer (1-year term):

Charles Hadley, New Orleans

Executive Council (2-year term):

David M. Olson, University of North Carolina-Greensboro

Cornelius Cotter, Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Frank Feigert, University of North Texas

Denise Baer, The University of Akron

Program Chair (2-year term):

Mark Wattier, Murray State University

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Harmel, Chair

THE 1991 POP AWARDS

WILLIAM J. CROTTY, Northwestern University, winner of the Samuel Eldersveld Award for a lifetime of distinguished scholarly and professional contributions to the field.

GARY C. JACOBSON, University of California-San Diego, winner of the Leon Epstein Award for a book that has made a distinguished contribution to the field (for *Money in Congressional Elections*)

MICHAEL T. HAYES, Colgate University, winner of the award for an article of unusual importance and significance to the field (for "The Semi-Sovereign Pressure Groups: A Critique of Current Theory and an Alternative Typology," 1978 *Journal of Politics* 44:134-161).

TABLE 1
A Statistical Profile of POP Members
 N=479

GENDER	%
Male	78
Female	22
ETHNICITY	%
Caucasian	68
Other*	20
African-American	5
Asian-American	4
Latino	2
American-Indian	1
*mostly foreign nationals	
DATE Ph.D. RECEIVED	%
1981 to 1991	36
1971 to 1980	34
1961 to 1970	21
Prior to 1961	9
PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT	%
College or University	59
Other/Retired	12
Student	23
Research/Consulting	3
Government/Business/Politics	3
REGION	%
Mid West	23
South	17
Mid Atlantic	15
West	15
Outside the U.S.	11
Border States	10
New England	9
ACADEMIC SPECIALIZATION†	%
Political Parties and Interest Groups	22
American Politics and Government	16
Electoral Behavior and Public Opinion	15
Comparative Politics/International Relations ..	11
Philosophy/Formal Theory/ Methodology/Pol Economy	10
Presidential/Legislative Politics	10
Public Policy/Public Public Administration	7
State, Local, Urban, Gender and Ethnic Politics	7
Other	2
†top three specializations counted together	

Source: Data was provided by the APSA as of 10/26/90 with special assistance from Michael Brintnall.

The POP survey suggests that many, if not most, of these students are Ph.D. students in political science studying political organizations or related topics. The APSA figures for student members are reasonably close to the estimates of new Ph.D.s generated from the POP survey. Taken together, the respondents' estimates suggest that some 200 new Ph.D.s will be produced in POP's subject areas over the next five years, or some 40 a year.

As might be expected, then, the great bulk of POP members teach at colleges or universities (59 percent) or aspire to do so, and only a few work outside of academia, such as in government and politics. The academic specialties of POP members come as no surprise either. Better than one-fifth of the section identifies political parties and interest groups as one of their three main areas of specialization. American politics and electoral behavior follow next with about one-sixth each. There is great overlap between these three areas and related fields such as presidential and legislative studies, and state and local politics, so that about one-third of the section lists two or more of these areas. Beyond this conjunction, the POP membership has very diverse interests, and approach the study of political organizations from many different perspectives.

Specialization within POP

The POP survey allowed for a further breakdown of the academic specialization within the section. The respondents were asked to indicate whether their scholarly interests were primarily in American national, American state and local, or comparative politics, and whether they specialized in parties, interest groups, or social movements (multiple answered were allowed). As Table 2 indicates, American national politics was listed most often, followed by American state and local, and then comparative. Parties were clearly the most popular subject, followed by interest groups, and then, social movements, except among comparativists, where social movements held second place. And Western Europe was by far the most popular area of study among comparativists.

Obviously, there was a great deal of overlap among these areas of specialization. Indeed, several respondents objected to what they viewed as an arbitrary distinctions between national and local politics or between interest groups and social movements. And it is clear that POP members did not divide themselves along the lines suggested by the question. In fact, the combinations of these nine categories revealed a large and diverse set of academic interests.

Although there is insufficient data in the survey to sort out these areas of interest in any detail, a rough clustering of these data is interesting (Table 2). The single

(continued on page 4)

TABLE 2
Specializations within POP
 N=265

<u>AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION*</u>	<u>%</u>
American National:	
Parties	65
Interest Groups	33
Social Movements	22
American State/Local:	
Parties	48
Interest Groups	17
Social Movements	11
Comparative:	
Parties	34
Interest Groups	10
Social Movements	15
Comparative Areas:	
Western Europe	65
Japan, Asia	13
Multiple areas	12
Third World	10
*multiple responses allowed	
<u>CLUSTERS OF SPECIALIZATION†</u>	<u>%</u>
"National Party Scholars"	33
"Interest Group Partisans"	13
"Complete Organizationalists"	12
"Comparativists"	12
"State and Localists"	10
"Interest Group Scholars"	8
"National Movement Scholars"	7
"Other Movement Scholars"	5

†see text for description of categories

Source: POP survey

Localists" (10 percent), and the "Interest Group Scholars" (8 percent), each of whom put strong emphasis on their own particular area of interest. Two final groups emphasize social movements, with the "National Movement Scholars" (7 percent) placing strong emphasis on American social movements and American national parties, and the "Other Movement Scholars" (5 percent) emphasizing movements in comparative perspective. Thus, although the differences are not always clear cut, there is a division in POP between students of American national parties and other kinds of political organizations.

The Boundary Issue

The issue of the scholarly boundaries of POP has been raised from time to time, and has generated heated discussions in the past. To explore opinion on this issue, the POP survey asked the following question: "Since its inception POP has been vexed with the issue of scholarly boundaries. Some members would like to define boundaries narrowly to exclude related fields such as voting behavior, and other members would like to extend the boundaries to include subjects such as voting behavior. How do you feel?"

- (a) Maintain narrow boundaries excluding voting behavior _____
- (b) Expand boundaries to include voting behavior _____
- (c) We would appreciate any additional comments you might have on the boundary issue _____

The general breakdown of the responses was as follows: 34 percent favored maintaining narrow boundaries, 51 percent favored expanding the boundaries to include voting behavior, and 15 percent expressed no preference. Of those who expressed an opinion, 40 percent favored maintaining narrow boundaries and 60 percent favored expanding the boundaries to include voting behavior.

This question provoked extensive commentary even among those who expressed no preference, and those who wished to maintain narrow boundaries excluding voting behavior had the most intense opinion. Those who favored expanding the boundaries to include voting behavior felt much less strongly about the matter. Indeed, many of proponents of boundary expansion were willing to settle for modest changes or simple tolerance of methodological differences. And many of these respondents admitted not fully understanding the issue. In contrast, those without preferences seemed to understand

largest group of POP members put a strong emphasis on the study of American national parties. These "Party Scholars" account for one-third of the sample. Two related groups might be called "Interest Group Partisans" (13 percent) and "Complete Organizationalists" (12 percent). Both share the party scholars' strong interest in American national parties, but the former give equal emphasis to interest groups, and the latter claim to be interested in nearly every kinds of political organization. Together these groups account for better than one-half of the section.

There are also sets of POP members who are much less interested in American national parties. These include the "Comparativists" (12 percent), the "State and

the controversy and regarded it as not worthy of attention.

A number of different arguments were advanced in defense of maintaining the present boundaries. Most of these respondents felt that voting behavior already had a privileged place in the profession, dominating the major conventions, journals, and university departments to the exclusion of studies of political organization. Several respondents identified themselves as “founding members” of POP and argued that the section was organized precisely because of the dominance of voting behavior. Some people advanced pragmatic arguments in defense of the status quo: voting studies are “too easy,” voting specialists are “too numerous,” and these scholars are “imperialistic and intolerant” of other kinds of studies. Other respondents made more ideological arguments: the “most important questions” could not be answered with public opinion data, voting behavior represented the “triumph of technique over common sense,” and these kinds of studies directed political science in the wrong direction. In sum, these members believed strongly that “limited bounds will help the section prosper.”

The proponents of expanding the boundaries offered more diffuse arguments. Many of these respondents believed that “boundaries should be set by the subject matter and not the methodology,” and that “methodological flexibility is essential.” Many felt that public opinion data was often necessary for studying political organizations, and such arguments were often buttressed with specific research concerns, such as the study of campaigns and the mobilization activities of social movements. And there was a pragmatic element to these arguments as well: there is “strength in numbers” and “inclusiveness” will expand the opportunities for the section. Some ideological arguments were made as well, such as the claim that those opposed to voting behavior are opposed to “scientific study.” However, support for expanding the boundaries came largely from people who saw little reason for the boundaries in the first place. In sum, these members tended to believe that “limited boundaries will limit POP.”

The present data made it difficult to assess the underlying causes of this division, but what evidence is available suggests that area of specialization may lie behind the disagreement. For instance, interest in American national parties is positively associated with expanding the boundaries ($r=27$), while interest in social movements and interest groups is negatively associated expanding the boundaries (-15 and -18 , respectively). And as Table 3 reveals, opposition to boundary expansion increases as one moves from the “Complete Organizationalists” to the “Interest Group Scholars.” While these data must be interpreted cautiously, one explanation suggests itself. Scholars whose research is enhanced by the study voting behavior, and who are most likely to use these methodologies, seem to be most amenable to expanding the boundaries of POP. On the other hand, scholars whose research is not en-

TABLE 3
Opposition to Expanding POP Boundaries
By Focus of Scholarly Interest†

OPPOSED	%
“Complete Organizationalists”	22
“National Party Scholars”	23
“Interest Group Partisans”	25
“Comparativists”	36
“National Movement Scholars”	37
“State and Localists”	40
“Other Movement Scholars”	60
“Interest Group Scholars”	86

†see text for explanation of categories

Source: POP survey

hanced by the study of voting behavior, and who are least likely to use these techniques, seem to be most opposed to expanding the boundaries.

Other Concerns

It would be a mistake to conclude that the boundary issue represents a deep and unbridgeable opinion cleavage among POP members. People on both sides of this issues displayed a great deal of agreement on other matters regarding the profession and the section. For example, the POP survey asked which journals and conferences respondents found most helpful and which scholars influenced them the most, and on these matters there was a general consensus. The major disciplinary journals, such as the *APSR*, *JOP* and *AJPS*, were widely regarded as very useful, as were the major national meetings, such as the *APSA*, *MWPSA*, and *SPSA*. There was some expected evidence of specialization, such as comparativists listing the *European Journal of Politics* and state and local scholars naming the *Comparative State Politics Newsletter*, but overall POP members read the same journals and attended the same meetings. And they also admired many of the same scholars. A total of 137 scholars were mentioned by the respondents as having a major influence on their research area, and 40 individuals were mentioned four or more times. These are listed in Table 4 in alphabetical order.

This agreement extends to a few basic research questions and practical problems as well. Although questions on research focus and problems generated a large number of highly specific answers, four problems stood out across the sample.

(continued on page 6)

TABLE 4

Scholars Named as "Influential"
By POP Members

INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED
FOUR OR MORE TIMES

Herbert E. Alexander	John S. Jackson
Jefferey M. Berry	Dwaine Marvick
John F. Bibby*	David R. Mayhew
Walter Dean Burnham	Herbert McClosky
Cornelius P. Cotter*	Terry M. Moe
William Crotty*	Mancur Olson
Robert A. Dahl	Samuel C. Patterson
Anthony Downs*	Gerald Pomper
Samuel J. Eldersveld*	Austin J. Ranney*
Leon D. Epstein*	Richard Rose
James L. Gibson*	Larry Sabato
Ralph M. Goldman	Robert H. Salisbury*
Robert J. Huckshorn*	Byron E. Shafer
Gary C. Jacobson*	E. E. Schattsneider
Malcolm E. Jewell	Joseph A. Schlesinger*
Ruth S. Jones	Frank J. Sorauf*
Richard Katz	James L. Sundquist
V. O. Key	David B. Truman*
Seymour Martin Lipset*	Jack Walker*
Theodore Lowi	James Q. Wilson

*Past or present recipient of POP award

Source: POP survey

(1) There was clear agreement on the need for new and innovative data collection. Scholars from across subfields argued that systematic data on political organizations was lacking. Several scholars compared the current problem to the situation for voting behavior specialists and quantitative historians before the advent of ICPSR.

(2) There was also broad agreement that students of political organizations needed to concern themselves more with the impact of political organizations. There were extensive mentions of the need to study the effects of party, interest groups, and social movement organizations on their own members, the public, other organizations, and governments.

(3) There was also great concern raised about the need for better theory. Two specific problems were mentioned over and over. First, the integration of theories of different kinds of organizations into a grand formulation of

political organization was needed. Second, greater attention needed to be paid to theories concerning the internal structure and operation of political organizations.

(4) Finally, there was a wide spread concern with the role of cultural variables in studying political organizations. For example, many scholars mentioned the role of religion and religious organizations in parties and social movements around the world. Other respondents argued that the "economic model of politics" was too narrow and needed to be modified to give "values and value generating processes" a greater role in the study of political organizations.

Suggestions for POP

Finally, the respondents offered a number of suggestions for future directions for POP:

(1) The most common suggestion, offered by 10 percent of the sample, was that POP should sponsor a scholarly journal. It was argued that a special place is needed for articles on political organizations and related topics. Several people pointed to *Legislative Politics Quarterly* as a model. Others argued for a more limited effort, such as a yearbook.

(2) Several respondents suggested developing programs to involve political practitioners in the profession. For example, one suggestion was to sponsor a lecture series at a major meeting for prominent political operatives and activists. Another suggestion was to develop an exchange program between scholars and political practitioners, particularly party officials.

(3) Some respondents felt that POP might become involved in major research efforts, such as collecting data on party organizations on a broad scale over time. Others felt that POP should become involved in approaching ICPSR about collecting and storing data on political organizations. And still other felt that POP should become involved in lobbying for research funds from both public and private sources.

In conclusion, we would like to express our appreciation to the section members who participated in the survey.

—The Editor

**POP WORKSHOPS
1991 APSA ANNUAL MEETING**

**Machine Politics, Sound Bites and Nostalgia:
Substantive Issues and Methodological Problems in the
Study of Party Organizations**

Michael Margolis, Workshop Organizer

**Wednesday, August 28
1:30-5:30 p.m.**

Fees: Students, \$10; POP Members, \$25, Non-members, \$40
Fees must be received by July 31, 1991

Registration: Send registration fee to:
Michael Britnall
APSA
1527 New Hampshire Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20036

Inquiries: Ruth S. Jones
Department of Political Science
Arizona State University
Tempe, AZ 95287-2001

Studying Party Conventions Using Participant Observation Methods

David Bositis, Chair
Thursday, August 29, 8:45 to 10:45

Studying Organizational Leaders Using Interview Techniques

Ruth S. Jones, Chair
Thursday, August 29, 10:45 to 1:30

Accessing Federal Election Commission Data on Personal Computers

Federal Election Commission Staff
Saturday, August 31, 9 to 11:45
FEC Offices, 999 E Street, NW

Participants are limited to 18.

Interested members should reserve a slot by writing, calling or sending a BITNET message to:
Ruth S. Jones, Department of Political Science, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287-2001
Phone: (602) 965-6551 • BITNET: ATRSJ@ASUACAD

WANTED: ABSTRACTS, RESEARCH REPORTS, BOOK REVIEWS, RANDOM THOUGHTS

Just completed seminar research on parties or political organizations? Got a wild idea you would like to run by fellow scholars? Read any good (or bad) books lately? Need to get something off your chest? Feeling neglected?

WRITE SOMETHING FOR VOX POP!

Send you material to: John Green, Editor, *Vox Pop*, Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron, Akron, OH 44325-1904 [FAX: 216-374-8795; BITNET: RIJG1@AKRONVM]; or call 216-972-5182.

Conference on
GRASS ROOTS POLITICS AND PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

The Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron will sponsor a conference in Akron, Ohio, on **"Grass Roots Politics and Party Organizations: The Leadership Model of Ray C. Bliss"** on September 12-13, 1991. David Broder of *The Washington Post* will be the keynote speaker.

The following panels will be offered:

- Party Organizations at the Grass Roots
- Ray Bliss as a Party Leader
- Party Leadership at the National Level
- Contemporary Party Organizations
- Roundtable on Parties and Political Scientists

For further information on **"Grass Roots Politics and Party Organizations: The Leadership Model of Ray C. Bliss,"** contact: Holly Harris-Bane, Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics, The University of Akron, Akron, OH 44325-1904, (216) 972-5182.

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