

11. Getting your dissertation done is extremely important. You're very unlikely to get a good job without a Ph.D. in hand. However, getting articles accepted for publication is also very important. Most of my colleagues advise you to convert the appropriate sections of your dissertation into articles only after the dissertation is finished. I think you should do so simultaneously, as you complete them. That way, not only do you get possible published articles but you also get valuable professional feedback.

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*... patience pays for an article that you really believe in.*

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12. The more people you show your work to, the more people there are who might read it. But all advice is not equal, and writing a thesis should not resemble a popularity/public opinion poll. Remember, it's your thesis.
13. Choose an advisor whom you respect both as an intellect and as a human being. (Not necessarily in that order.)
14. Before going on a job interview learn the names (and even read some of the articles) of the people who are going to interview you. There's nothing so embarrassing as being introduced to somebody with no idea who they are, when they think that everybody should know who they are and why they're "famous."
15. In going on a job interview, there is only one rule: Be yourself. When you are interviewing be warned, however, that many (if not most) of the faculty at the institution where you sent your vita and publications, didn't read them. Thus, reminding people of who you are and what you do can't hurt.

## Notes

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\*I am indebted to Jim Danziger for helpful comments, also the original idea for item #11 was his. Items #12 and #13 were added by Kristen Monroe as was a portion of item #15. However, the views expressed in this essay are solely the responsibility of the author.

## Congressional and Presidential Scholars: Some Basic Traits\*

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Christopher J. Bosso  
Northeastern University

### I. Introduction

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Accustomed as we students of American politics are to training our analytical tools on various segments of the national population, we rarely use them on ourselves. Perhaps we are not all that interested in knowing more about who we are, either as people or as scholars. Perhaps the academic reward system finds little worth in such studies. Perhaps we really do not want to know whether there exist any noticeable biases among those whose scholarship and teaching influence generations of students and politicians.

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*Respondents, however grouped, are overwhelmingly white and male, and also are largely Protestant in religious preference.*

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Whatever is the case, and it might well be a mixture of all three reasons, the purpose of this essay is to present summary data on some basic personal and professional traits of two scholarly cohorts within

## The Profession

the field of American national politics: members of either the Legislative Studies Section or the Presidency Research Group of the American Political Science Association. The data shown here were taken from a mail survey sent to approximately 700 members of either group in August 1987. The primary purpose of the survey was to assess scholarly views about Congress in light of the social, political, and institutional changes of the past generation, but the opportunity also was taken to query respondents on their personal traits, current professional status, political attachments, and broad attitudes on a select array of issues. Those polled comprised the entire membership of each section as represented by APSA mailing lists, and, of those to whom surveys were sent, 51% (361) completed and returned the questionnaire.

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*About 80% are below the age of fifty, and 66% currently are in their thirties or forties.*

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Any conclusions to be made about all congressional and presidential scholars—much less all American political scientists—must be tempered, of course, by the caveat that membership in either the LSS or PRG, and the decision to complete this survey, was entirely voluntary. Furthermore, members of either section are likely to be more established scholars in residence at more research-oriented departments than might be true for all political scientists who teach about Congress and the presidency. Nonetheless, the data shown here do give some greater insight into the characteristics of those who, because of their active research efforts and greater participation in APSA activities, arguably lead the way in influencing how this discipline portrays legislative and executive politics to both our students and the world at large.

## II. Who We Are

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Respondents, however grouped, are overwhelmingly white and male, and also are largely Protestant in religious preference. Whether the notably low percentage of female or nonwhite scholars shown here reflects the discipline as a whole is, of course, the compelling question. According to the data calculated from the APSA's 1986 *Guide to Graduate Study in Political Science*, for example, women accounted for approximately 28% of all students in doctoral programs at the time, while blacks represented about 6% of the total. Many of these no doubt were foreigners who accounted for approximately 26% of all doctoral students, and who are far less likely to be scholars of American politics anyway (pp. 395-98). Female and minority scholars as a whole also may be likelier to focus on the comparative or international relations fields. Whatever the case, female and minority representation among respondents is notably low, and the paucity of nonwhite respondents found here makes any further comparisons based on racial characteristics useless.

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*. . . much of what goes on in the discipline (or, at least, in these two organized sections), does not travel much to part-time faculty or those in the community colleges.*

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Respondents in both subsamples also are relatively young. About 80% are below the age of fifty, and 66% currently are in their thirties or forties. Female respondents as a whole are noticeably younger than their male counterparts,

probably reflecting the relatively recent influx of women (apparently on a modest scale) into these two subfields (see below). The age disparity between male and female respondents is most obvious among presidency scholars, though, to be clear about it, there were too few females in the PRG subsample to make conclusive judgments.

III. Professional Status

Almost 80% of those responding have earned a doctorate, a percentage that is pretty constant across subsamples. There are, however, obvious differences between males and females. For example, female respondents were, in percentage

Table I. Gender, Race, and Religious Preference (% and N)

	All		LSS		PRG	
Male	83.3%	299	81.7%	196	86.6%	103
Female	16.7%	60	18.3%	44	13.4%	16
Missing		2		1		1
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Race</i>						
Caucasian	93.8%	331	93.3%	222	94.8%	109
Black	0.8%	3	0.4%	1	1.7%	2
Hispanic	1.7%	6	2.1%	5	0.9%	1
Native	1.4%	5	1.3%	3	1.7%	2
Asian	0.3%	1	0.4%	1	0.0%	0
Other	2.0%	7	2.5%	6	0.9%	1
Missing		8		3		5
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Males</i>						
White	94.2%	275	93.8%	182	94.9%	93
Black	0.7%	2	0.0%	0	2.0%	2
Hispanic	1.7%	5	2.1%	4	1.0%	1
Native	1.4%	4	1.0%	2	2.0%	2
Asian	0.3%	1	0.5%	1	0.0%	0
Other	1.7%	5	2.6%	5	0.0%	0
Missing		7		2		5
Total	100.0%	299	100.0%	196	100.0%	103
<i>Females</i>						
White	91.7%	55	90.9%	40	93.8%	15
Black	1.7%	1	2.3%	1	0.0%	0
Hispanic	1.7%	1	2.3%	1	0.0%	0
Native	1.7%	1	2.3%	1	0.0%	0
Asian	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Other	3.3%	2	2.3%	1	6.3%	1
Missing		0		0		0
Total	100.0%	60	100.0%	44	100.0%	16
<i>Religious Preference</i>						
Protestant	47.3%	168	47.1%	112	47.9%	56
Jewish	13.2%	47	13.9%	33	12.0%	14
Catholic	14.6%	52	15.1%	36	13.7%	16
Other	3.9%	14	3.4%	8	5.1%	6
None	20.8%	74	20.6%	49	21.4%	25
No Answer		6		3		3
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120

**Table 2. Age (% and N)**

	All		LSS		PRG	
20 to 29 years	13.9%	49	15.3%	36	11.1%	13
30 to 39 years	32.0%	113	30.9%	73	34.2%	40
40 to 49 years	34.0%	120	37.7%	89	26.5%	31
50 to 59 years	15.6%	55	13.1%	31	20.5%	24
60+ years	4.5%	16	3.0%	7	7.7%	9
Missing		8		5		3
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Males</i>						
20 to 29 years	11.9%	35	12.4%	24	10.9%	11
30 to 39 years	30.5%	90	30.4%	59	30.7%	31
40 to 49 years	34.6%	102	38.1%	74	27.7%	28
50 to 59 years	18.3%	54	15.5%	30	23.8%	24
60+ years	4.7%	14	3.6%	7	6.9%	7
Missing		4		2		2
Total	100.0%	299	100.0%	196	100.0%	103
<i>Females</i>						
20 to 29 years	24.1%	14	28.6%	12	12.5%	2
30 to 39 years	39.7%	23	33.3%	14	56.3%	9
40 to 49 years	31.0%	18	35.7%	15	18.8%	3
50 to 59 years	1.7%	1	2.4%	1	0.0%	0
60+ years	3.4%	2	0.0%	0	12.5%	2
Missing		2		2		0
Total	100.0%	60	100.0%	44	100.0%	16

**Table 3. Current Educational Status**

	All		LSS		PRG	
<i>Degree Attained</i>						
Bachelors	5.9%	21	7.1%	17	3.4%	4
Masters	13.0%	46	13.0%	31	12.9%	15
Doctorate	78.8%	279	77.7%	185	81.0%	94
Other	2.3%	8	2.1%	5	2.6%	3
Missing		7		3		4
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Males</i>						
Bachelors	5.5%	16	6.2%	12	4.0%	4
Masters	11.3%	33	11.3%	22	11.1%	11
Doctorate	80.9%	237	79.9%	155	82.8%	82
Other	2.4%	7	2.6%	5	2.0%	2
Missing		6		2		4
Total	100.0%	299	100.0%	196	100.0%	103
<i>Females</i>						
Bachelors	8.3%	5	11.4%	5	0.0%	0
Masters	21.7%	13	20.5%	9	25.0%	4
Doctorate	68.3%	41	68.2%	30	68.8%	11
Other	1.7%	1	0.0%	0	6.3%	1
Missing		0		0		0
Total	100.0%	60	100.0%	44	100.0%	16

terms, more likely to have attained only as far as the M.A. degree, but, more than anything else, this probably is the result of their relative youth and current stage in the academic career path.

*Respondents largely are more liberal and aligned more with the Democratic party, tend to cast their votes along straight party lines, and voted overwhelmingly in 1984 for Walter Mondale.*

Most (86%) who earned the doctorate did so since 1965, with the peak reached during the 1970s. Female respondents accounted for only 10% of all who completed the Ph.D. prior to 1980. Since then, however, women have accounted for 30% of all doctorates earned, and almost 60% of all female respondents who completed the doctorate did so this decade, particularly during the past five years. This trend probably accounts for the far more junior academic status of women relative to their male counterparts (see below).

As Table 4 shows, the greatest number of doctorates were earned at the University of Wisconsin at Madison (15), followed closely by Yale (14), Michigan (11), and Cornell (11). For women, however, Minnesota, Florida State, and Johns Hopkins led the way (modestly). The latter two schools, which produced totals of seven and five doctorates respectively, do not appear among the top ten of all institutions mentioned.

The overwhelming majority of all respondents (87%) currently are affiliated with institutions of higher learning, while those not so linked typically cited service in government at some level as an occupation. Among those currently affiliated with

**Table 4. Top Ten Sources of Doctorates, 1950-1988**

	Males	Females
Wisconsin at Madison	14	1
Yale	14	0
Michigan	9	2
Cornell	9	2
Chicago	10	0
Harvard	9	0
Michigan State	8	0
Iowa	7	1
Minnesota	5	3
Syracuse	7	1

universities or colleges (not including graduate students), a majority reside in state schools, with private, non-sectarian institutions the second most common designation. This is constant across subsamples, but note also the differences between male and female respondents: women are more likely to be affiliated with private universities or colleges (either sectarian or non-sectarian) than with state schools.

Respondents of either gender—93% for males, 84% for females—are full-time faculty, and 96% of all respondents teach in four-year institutions. All of this leaves one to suspect that much of what goes on in the discipline (or, at least, in these two organized sections), does not travel much to part-time faculty or those in the community colleges.

More than half of all respondents teach in departments that offer the doctorate as the highest degree, but there seems to be a noticeable distinction between congressional and presidential scholars in this regard: more than half of respondents in the PRG subsample teach in nondoctoral programs. Female respondents, in percentage terms, are more likely than males to be part of doctoral programs, but whether this reflects strong affirmative action efforts by these departments or simply is an artifact of this sample is unknown.

As a group, respondents overwhelmingly are a more senior and tenured lot. Only 20% are in the assistant professor ranks, half of those who currently are full professors but almost equal in percentage terms to those in the associate ranks.

Table 5. Type of School

	All		LSS		PRG	
State	63.4%	196	63.9%	129	62.6%	67
Private—Sectarian	11.0%	34	8.9%	18	15.0%	16
Private—Non-Sectarian	23.3%	72	24.8%	50	20.6%	22
Municipal	1.0%	3	1.5%	3	0.0%	0
Military	1.3%	4	1.0%	2	1.9%	2
Other	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Missing		52		39		13
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Males</i>						
State	66.5%	173	66.1%	111	67.4%	62
Private—Sectarian	9.6%	25	8.3%	14	12.0%	11
Private—Non-Sectarian	21.5%	56	22.6%	38	19.6%	18
Municipal	1.2%	3	1.8%	3	1.1%	1
Military	1.2%	3	1.2%	2	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Missing		39		28		11
Total	100.0%	299	100.0%	196	100.0%	103
<i>Females</i>						
State	47.9%	23	52.9%	18	35.7%	5
Private—Sectarian	18.8%	9	11.8%	4	35.7%	5
Private—Non-Sectarian	31.3%	15	35.3%	12	21.4%	3
Municipal	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	7.1%	1
Military	2.1%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Other	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Missing		12		10		2
Total	100.0%	60	100.0%	44	100.0%	16

Table 6. Highest Degree Offered by Respondent's Department

	All		LSS		PRG	
Bachelors	24.8%	77	19.3%	39	35.2%	38
Masters	19.0%	59	19.3%	39	18.5%	20
Doctorate	54.5%	169	58.9%	119	46.3%	50
Other	1.6%	5	2.5%	5	0.0%	0
NA		51		39		12
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Males</i>						
Bachelors	23.6%	64	19.6%	33	30.1%	31
Masters	19.6%	53	20.2%	34	18.4%	19
Doctorate	51.3%	139	57.1%	96	41.7%	43
Other	5.5%	15	3.0%	5	9.7%	10
NA		28		28		0
Total	100.0%	299	100.0%	196	100.0%	103
<i>Females</i>						
Bachelors	27.1%	13	17.6%	6	50.0%	7
Masters	10.4%	5	14.7%	5	0.0%	0
Doctorate	62.5%	30	67.6%	23	50.0%	7
Other	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
NA		12		10		2
Total	100.0%	60	100.0%	44	100.0%	16

## Congressional and Presidential Scholars

**Table 7. Current Rank**

	All		LSS		PRG	
Instructor/Lecturer	4.9%	15	3.1%	6	8.3%	9
Assistant Professor	20.1%	61	20.4%	40	19.4%	21
Associate Professor	21.7%	66	23.0%	45	19.4%	21
Professor	40.1%	122	39.3%	77	41.7%	45
Graduate Student	10.5%	32	11.2%	22	9.3%	10
Fellow	1.0%	3	0.5%	1	1.9%	2
Administrator	1.6%	5	2.6%	5	0.0%	0
Missing		57		45		12
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>120</b>
<i>Males</i>						
Instructor/Lecturer	3.5%	9	2.4%	4	5.4%	5
Assistant Professor	17.1%	44	17.7%	29	16.1%	15
Associate Professor	23.3%	60	24.4%	40	21.5%	20
Professor	44.7%	115	43.9%	72	46.2%	43
Graduate Student	8.6%	22	8.5%	14	8.6%	8
Fellow	1.2%	3	0.6%	1	2.2%	2
Administrator	1.6%	4	2.4%	4	0.0%	0
Missing/NA		42		32		10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>103</b>
<i>Females</i>						
Instructor/Lecturer	13.0%	6	6.3%	2	28.6%	4
Assistant Professor	37.0%	17	34.4%	11	42.9%	6
Associate Professor	13.0%	6	15.6%	5	7.1%	1
Professor	13.0%	6	15.6%	5	7.1%	1
Graduate Student	21.7%	10	25.0%	8	14.3%	2
Fellow	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Administrator	2.2%	1	3.1%	1	0.0%	0
Missing/NA		14		12		2
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>16</b>

**Table 8. Current Tenure Status**

	All		LSS		PRG	
Non-Tenure Track	11.1%	30	11.0%	19	11.1%	11
Tenure Track	20.3%	55	20.9%	36	19.2%	19
Tenured	68.6%	186	68.0%	117	69.7%	69
NA/Missing		90		69		21
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>361</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>120</b>
<i>Males</i>						
Non-Tenure Track	9.4%	22	10.7%	16	7.0%	6
Tenure Track	17.0%	40	17.4%	26	16.3%	14
Tenured	73.6%	173	71.8%	107	76.7%	66
NA/Missing		64		47		17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>103</b>
<i>Females</i>						
Non-Tenure Track	22.9%	8	13.0%	3	41.7%	5
Tenure Track	42.9%	15	43.5%	10	41.7%	5
Tenured	34.3%	12	43.5%	10	16.7%	2
NA/Missing		25		21		4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>16</b>

## The Profession

There is a clear difference between males and females in this regard, with women at present more likely to populate the assistant professor and instructor/lecturer ranks. This is reflected again in Table 8, where women currently are both far less tenured and likelier to hold non-tenure track positions. The differences are most

acute for women members of the PRG, but, again, the small subsample size offers no definitive statements.

The relative seniority of respondents in either subsample is reflected in approximate university salaries, which are skewed heavily toward the higher end of the scale. Male respondents are more highly paid

**Table 9. Current University Salary**

	All		LSS		PRG	
<\$20,000	6.3%	17	4.1%	7	10.2%	10
\$20-29,999	21.5%	58	21.5%	37	21.4%	21
\$30-39,999	27.8%	75	27.3%	47	28.6%	28
>\$40,000	44.4%	120	47.1%	81	39.8%	39
NA/Missing		91		69		22
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Males</i>						
<\$20,000	5.1%	12	4.0%	6	7.1%	6
\$20-29,999	18.4%	43	18.1%	27	18.8%	16
\$30-39,999	27.8%	65	26.8%	40	29.4%	25
>\$40,000	48.7%	114	51.0%	76	44.7%	38
NA/Missing		65		47		18
Total	100.0%	299	100.0%	196	100.0%	103
<i>Females</i>						
<\$20,000	14.3%	5	4.3%	1	33.3%	4
\$20-29,999	42.9%	15	43.5%	10	41.7%	5
\$30-39,999	25.7%	9	30.4%	7	16.7%	2
>\$40,000	17.1%	6	21.7%	5	8.3%	1
NA/Missing		25		21		4
Total	100.0%	60	100.0%	44	100.0%	16

### Salary by Rank

	< \$20,000		\$20-29,999		\$30-39,999		> \$40,000	
<i>Males</i>								
Instructor/Lecturer	54.5%	6	4.6%	2	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Assistant Professor	9.1%	1	69.8%	30	15.7%	10	2.6%	3
Associate Professor	0.0%	0	16.3%	7	64.0%	41	9.6%	11
Professor	27.3%	3	7.0%	3	20.3%	13	83.3%	95
Fellow	9.1%	1	2.3%	1	0.0%	0	0.9%	1
Administrator	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	3.5%	4
Total	100.0%	11	100.0%	43	100.0%	65	100.0%	114
<i>Females</i>								
Instructor/Lecturer	100.0%	5	6.7%	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Assistant Professor	0.0%	0	86.7%	13	44.4%	4	0.0%	0
Associate Professor	0.0%	0	6.7%	1	44.4%	4	0.0%	0
Professor	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	11.1%	1	83.3%	5
Fellow	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0
Administrator	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	16.7%	1
Total	100.0%	5	100.0%	15	100.0%	9	100.0%	6

than their female colleagues, but this disparity apparently is not due to any systematic gender bias. Relative rank and tenure determines salary levels, for, as Table 9 shows, 83% of those of either gender earning more than \$40,000 held a tenured professor rank. Overall, for both males and females, the correlation between rank and salary is stronger than any other, even tenure. The possible exception to be seen here lies in the associate ranks, but the numbers here are too small to make any conclusive statements about gender bias in remuneration.

**IV. Partisanship, Ideology and Voting Habits**

Respondents also were asked about

their self-professed ideological leanings, partisan attachments, and voting records. Respondents largely are more liberal and aligned more with the Democratic party, tend to cast their votes along straight party lines, and voted overwhelmingly in 1984 for Walter Mondale. There is no great difference in ideological leanings between the subsamples, though one can discern a slightly more liberal and Democratic cast among those who are members of the Legislative Studies Section.

Finally, to add a bit of whimsy to the whole thing, those surveyed in August 1987 were asked, in an open-ended question, to predict the 1988 Democratic and Republican nominees for president, as well as which candidate was likeliest to win the White House that year. Given the

**Table 10. Ideology, Partisanship, and Vote Preferences**

	All		LSS		PRG	
<i>Ideological Preference</i>						
Very Conservative	0.6%	2	0.8%	2	0.0%	0
Somewhat Conservative	14.2%	50	12.3%	29	17.9%	21
Middle	17.8%	63	16.1%	38	21.4%	25
Somewhat Liberal	46.5%	164	46.6%	110	46.2%	54
Very Liberal	17.3%	61	19.9%	47	12.0%	14
Other	3.7%	13	4.2%	10	2.6%	3
NA		8		5		3
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Partisanship</i>						
Republican	16.1%	57	14.4%	34	19.5%	23
Democrat	69.5%	246	72.5%	171	63.6%	75
Independent	13.8%	49	12.7%	30	16.1%	19
Other	0.6%	2	0.4%	1	0.8%	1
NA		7		5		2
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>Voting Tendencies</i>						
Straight Republican	8.2%	29	7.3%	17	10.2%	12
Straight Democrat	52.3%	184	55.1%	129	46.6%	55
Split Ticket	36.6%	129	35.0%	82	39.8%	47
No Vote	2.8%	10	2.6%	6	3.4%	4
NA		9		7		2
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120
<i>1984 Vote</i>						
Reagan	19.8%	70	17.8%	42	23.9%	28
Mondale	72.5%	256	75.0%	177	67.5%	79
Other	1.7%	6	0.4%	1	4.3%	5
No Vote	5.9%	21	6.8%	16	4.3%	5
NA		8		5		3
Total	100.0%	361	100.0%	241	100.0%	120

## The Profession

sample's overwhelming support for President Mondale, any predictions made by those brave enough to venture a guess were taken with the appropriate grains of salt.

On reflection, perhaps these results should have been released much earlier, if only to save the nation a lot of time and money. Respondents selected George Bush and Michael Dukakis as their respective party nominees. While Bush was mentioned most frequently for the Republican nomination (for a 49% plurality), members of the Legislative Studies Section actually sided with Robert Dole over the former vice president by a slim margin. Dukakis, meanwhile, won a plurality of votes (32%) among nine Democrats mentioned, followed not all that closely by Mario Cuomo, apparently despite his protestations to noncandidacy.

When all was said and done, respondents tagged George Bush as the eventual winner, with Dole mentioned next most frequently as the probable 41st president. Dukakis came in a distant third. So much for all that talk about a repeat of the election of 1960.

## About the Author

Christopher J. Bosso is assistant professor of political science at Northeastern University. He is author of *Pesticides and Politics: The Life Cycle of a Public Issue* (1987).

## Note

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## Studying Latino Politics: The Development of the Latino National Political Survey

F. Chris Garcia  
University of New Mexico

John A. Garcia  
University of Arizona

Angelo Falcon  
Institute for Puerto Rican Policy, Inc.  
and

Rodolfo O. de la Garza  
University of Texas, Austin

As the 1980s, the proclaimed "decade of the Hispanic," draw to a close, marking roughly three decades of research on Latino politics, political scientists are making major strides in refining methodologies appropriate to the exploration of Latino political values and behavior. A major step has been the development of the Latino National Political Survey (LNPS), the first national opinion survey research project focusing on Latino politics in the continental United States. In addition to providing basic baseline information on the content of Latino political values, attitudes, and behavior, major advances also will have been made through the development of the LNPS in improving the methodology of scientifically surveying this increasingly important but underresearched population group.

## Background

In the spring of 1984, a group of four political scientists, the authors of this article, began to explore the possibility of conducting the first truly national political opinion study of Latinos. Initially they envisioned collaborating with one of the major national polling organizations to piggyback a Latino sample onto some of the organization's on-going national surveys. However, as this possibility was examined