



WHAT DO “PROGRESSIVES” BELIEVE?

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*A report for the Commonwealth Institute prepared by
Trounstine Research Associates*

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Executive Summary

Over the past 10 years the term “progressive” has been resurrected in political parlance. While the usage of the term has gained popularity in the media and among elites and voters, there is little consensus regarding the meaning of progressive identification. This report takes a step toward understanding modern progressives by analyzing the values, attitudes, and demographic traits of survey respondents who say that they consider themselves progressive and those who report a positive view of the term.

Seven unique sources of data useful for an analysis of progressive individuals were identified. The data come from Democracy Corps, Gallup, Harris Interactive, the Kaiser Foundation, Pew Research Center, Rasmussen Reports, and Zogby International. For comparison, data on liberal identifiers from the American National Election Survey was also analyzed.

The seven surveys identifying progressives used a variety of methods for self-identification. We found that these varying methods had strong effects on the poll results. In particular, when respondents were cued to think of progressive as a substitute for the term liberal, their views looked similar to those of liberals; when they were cued to think of progressive as a substitute for very liberal, their views were more consistently left or liberal. When respondents were asked whether or not they consider themselves progressive independent of other ideological options, their views were less cohesive, and more similar to moderate identifiers.

Our team found:

- Support for the term “progressive” has increased over time.
- Self-identified progressives are more supportive of government intervention in the economy, both in terms of regulating business and redistributing income, than the general public.
- Progressives are protective of civil liberties.
- When asked to choose between equality and freedom a majority of progressives say that equality is more important.
- Progressives tend to support government efforts to safeguard the environment.
- Progressives are less religious on average than other ideological groups.
- Progressives tend to be unwilling to tolerate government regulation of morality.
- Progressives tend to have positive views of immigrants.
- Progressives are committed to diplomacy as the cornerstone of foreign policy.
- Progressives tend to be better educated and to earn more money than the average respondent.
- Progressive identification is most popular with respondents under the age of 50 and men.
- Progressives pay a great deal of attention to politics.

Introduction

In recent years, politically engaged observers and participants have resurrected the term “progressive” from its relatively obscure position as an early 20th Century political movement and brought it into modern usage.¹ Today, there exist as many definitions of progressive as there are individuals and organizations invoking the expression. It is frequently associated with what we might call traditional liberal values and policy stances, but it has also been used more broadly.

Hillary Clinton recently described a progressive as “someone who believes strongly in individual rights and freedoms, who believes that we are better as a society when we’re working together,” (CNN/You Tube Debate). The description offered by Center for American Progress is more precise. Their website explains, “As progressives we believe that America should be a country of boundless opportunity—where all people can better themselves through education, hard work, and the freedom to pursue their dreams. We believe this will only be achieved with an open and effective government that champions the common good over narrow self-interest, harnesses the strength of our diversity, and secures the rights and safety of its people.”²

A different perspective is offered by the monthly magazine *The Progressive* which explains that since 1948 it has “steadfastly stood against militarism, the concentration of power in corporate hands, and the disenfranchisement of the citizenry. It has continued to champion peace, social and economic justice, civil rights, civil liberties, human rights, a preserved environment, and a reinvigorated democracy. Its bedrock values remain nonviolence and freedom of speech.”³

The Rockridge Institute explains that “key progressive values are empathy and responsibility which result in nurturance and protection of self and others; [and that] the purpose of government is to empower and protect its citizens...”⁴

While these varied definitions may reflect similar underlying themes, it is hard to say that as a political community we agree on the meaning of progressive or progressivism. Academic research on modern uses of these terms is virtually nonexistent. In an effort to better understand how non-elites are viewing and using the term, the Commonweal Institute charged our team with analyzing the individual attitudes, values, and demographic characteristics of people who self-identify as progressives.

We found that only a handful of surveys have asked individuals to identify as progressives, limiting our ability to have as complete a picture of progressive identity as scholars have for liberals and conservatives. We find that at the current time, self-identified progressives are virtually indistinguishable from self-identified liberals on many different measures. We also find that the degree to which progressives look different from liberals or conservatives is highly dependent on the method of identification that is used in the survey. We believe that this sensitivity to question wording is driven by weak familiarity with the term and the continued ambiguity of the meaning of progressive in elite and media usage.

Our analysis of the data suggests the following conclusions:

- Support for the term “progressive” has increased over time.

1. We use the terms “progressive,” “liberal,” and “conservative,” extensively throughout this report. Going forward we have chosen not to put quotation marks around the terms to increase the readability of the document.

2. <http://www.americanprogress.org/aboutus>, accessed January 30, 2008

3. <http://www.progressive.org/about>, accessed January 30, 2008

4. <http://www.rockridgeinstitute.org/aboutus>, accessed January 30, 2008

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- Progressives tend to have positive views of immigrants.
- Progressives are committed to diplomacy as the cornerstone of foreign policy.
- Progressives tend to be better educated and to earn more money than the average respondent.
- Progressive identification is most popular with respondents under the age of 50 and men.
- Progressives pay a great deal of attention to politics.

The remainder of this report presents these findings in detail. We begin by offering an overview of research on politically relevant values and ideologies. This section contains definitions of key terms and situates progressives among more commonly used expressions. Next we introduce our research on progressives by summarizing current usage of the term in the news media. This is followed by a discussion of the surveys we analyzed and the methodologies we used to reach our conclusions. We then present our results for national samples of self-identified progressives. Finally, we offer recommendations for future research.

Background

An enormous amount of scholarly work has been devoted to trying to understand why individuals make the political choices that they do, including (among other things) expressions of preferences in public opinion polls and vote choices. Our accumulated knowledge in this area suggests that there are many contributors to individual political attitudes and actions that range from truly random factors to those rooted in an individual's view of the world. It is helpful to organize these latter factors into several related categories: experiences, information, values, and ideology.

There is no universally accepted definition of ideology or values (see Gerring 1997). For the purposes of this report, we consider an ideology to be a general set of principles (or values) that connects political attitudes and guides preferences with regard to the role of government. Ideology also has a social component; ideologies are individual belief systems typically shared with others in the society. The most commonly referenced and studied ideological perspectives in the United States are liberal and conservative.

We think of values as a conception of the desirable. Values transcend particular objects and specific situations; they are relatively abstract and durable claims about what is good and right. They are motivating in that they lead individuals to take particular positions on issues and predispose individuals to accept or reject political claims and arguments (Zaller 1991). As such, values define the proper goals of society and how they ought to be achieved from a given individual's point of view. This means that values inform political views and actions like policy stances and support for candidates.

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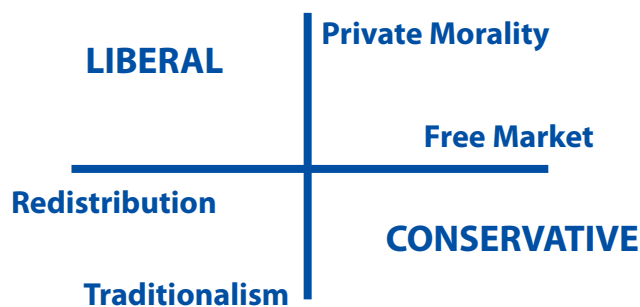
We do not, in this report, make any attempt to determine the source of individuals' values, so an in-depth discussion of value development is not relevant here. However, it is clear that an individual's life experiences, particularly those that socialize an individual politically, can shape how that individual views the proper goals of society and affect how he or she makes political choices. Contributing to political socialization are the groups or people an individual associates with and identifies with (or distinguishes himself or herself from), his or her socio-economic status, when he or she was born (e.g. generation), the level and type of education he or she has received, and his or her past interaction with politics and government.

Finally, political views and behaviors are affected by the level, quality, and source of information an individual has about a given subject or politics in general. The effect of the same piece of information can vary across individuals. For instance, people with moderate (as opposed to low or high) levels of political awareness are most likely to be affected by information disseminated in political campaigns (Converse 1962). This is because individuals with low levels of awareness are unlikely to receive information and those with high levels of awareness are likely to have more stable opinions.

There are a number of potential ways the term progressive fits into this understanding of the components of political attitudes and actions. On the one hand, progressive could be thought of as a value – i.e. an orientation toward change or action. On the other hand one might think of progressive as an ideological system that rivals (or replicates or replaces) other ideologies like liberal or conservative. It is clear from the phrasing of survey questions that some organizations view progressive as an ideology while others see it as a value. Furthermore some organizations appear to view progressive ideology as a substitute for extremely liberal while others see it as moderate to left-of-center. Given the relative newness of the term in current political parlance (as opposed to its historical context) it is likely that individual survey respondents do not distinguish between these various options when self-identifying as progressive. Thus, our analysis allows for both possibilities. We present the values and demographic traits that are associated with respondents who select progressive from a list of ideological options and those who say that the term progressive applies to them.

The Ingredients of Ideology

Although we commonly think of ideologies as arrayed along a single continuous dimension that runs from liberal to conservative, political scientists have determined, through factor analysis, that there are at least two underlying dimensions to citizens' attitudes (see Carmines and Ensley 2004, Keeter and Smith 2006). One dimension, the cultural or moral dimension, captures individuals' views with regard to the role the government should play in enforcing appropriate modes of conduct and encouraging diverse viewpoints and behaviors. The second dimension, the economic or social welfare dimension, reflects individuals' views regarding the role government should play in reducing inequality. The chart below provides a visual representation of these two dimensions and locates modern liberal and conservative



ideologies along the two spectrums. The constituent values of liberal and conservative ideologies have changed over time. Today, liberal ideology is defined by support for government redistribution of income (typically through progressive taxation), and an emphasis on equality of economic opportunities and outcomes. Liberal ideology falls toward the private-morality end of the cultural dimension such that government intervention is appropriate in protecting dissent and diversity. Liberals generally believe government should not play a role in the regulation of morality.

Over the last 20 years, political elites in the United States have become increasingly polarized.

Conservatism represents the inverse of these value sets. On the economic dimension the conservative view is that government should not be used to redistribute income, taxes should be minimal, and that market forces ought to be allowed to operate freely and competitively. A correlate to this preference for limited government is that individual effort (or lack thereof), rather than systemic factors, typically leads to economic success or failure. As a result, conservatives are more willing to tolerate, and at some level expect, differential economic outcomes. On the cultural dimension, conservatives generally support the use of government to enforce traditional standards and morals and to protect authority. Conservatism emphasizes order and stability.

Over the last 20 years, political elites in the United States have become increasingly polarized so that the two major political parties are more ideologically cohesive than ever (McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). Some scholars have argued that as result of this change individuals are better able to place themselves along a liberal/conservative ideological spectrum (Jost 2006) and to connect their ideology to their political preferences (Abramowitz and Saunders 2006, McCarty, Poole, and Rosenthal 2006). This claim is in marked contrast to an earlier large body of research initiated by Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes (1960) and furthered by Converse (1964), which found that individuals were frequently unable to correctly identify their ideology, unlikely to express an ideologically constrained set of political values, and unable to consistently use ideology to inform their political preferences in a coherent way.

Even with the changes in polarization and increasing use of ideological labels, recent research suggests that individual survey respondents do not fit neatly into liberal or conservative ideological categories. Work by Carmines and Ensley (2004) for instance, finds that about 19% of the population could be considered libertarians (conservative on the economic dimension and liberal on the cultural dimension) and about 15% could be considered populists (liberal on the economic dimension and conservative on the cultural dimension). Keeter and Smith (2006) find that a full 42% of their sample did not fit neatly into any ideological category (liberal, conservative, libertarian, or populist) because they offered ambivalent responses, refused to provide answers, or presented a mixture of views.

Thus, it makes sense from a research perspective to probe the meaning behind progressive self-identification by analyzing responses to particular survey questions with regard to individuals' values or principles. We can use answers to such questions to get a sense of how progressives are likely to interpret the political world around them and to make predictions regarding their specific attitudes and issue evaluations.

To do this we analyze five categories of values that have been shown by scholars to play a role in the development and expression of ideology, political attitudes, and political actions (see Kinder 1998). We evaluate progressives' views with regard to equality, individualism, big/limited government, traditionalism, and foreign policy. It should be noted that we do not consider these categories to be the only political relevant values that exist. However, they do represent beliefs that have been consistently measured in politically oriented surveys and which have been analyzed in a significant quantity of political science research. Readers

will note that these categories overlap and in some cases it is not clear where a given survey question ought to be classified.

While large majorities of Americans support guarantees of equal opportunity, a much smaller proportion supports guaranteed equal outcomes.

Equality

There are sharp distinctions among Americans with regard to the importance and meaning of equality. Americans have defended equality in principle but inequality in practice from the nation's founding (e.g. the Constitution declared all men created equal and at the same time protected slavery). Even today we continue to express a great deal of ambivalence and complexity in our attitudes toward equality. For example, the 2004 American National Election Survey (ANES) reported that 83% of respondents agreed that women and men should have equal roles in society but when asked what proportion of elected officials should be men, the average response was 60%.

Scholars (Verba and Orren 1985) have suggested that in order to understand American views regarding equality we need to distinguish among equality in different realms (political, social, and economic), and between equality of opportunities and equality of outcomes. While large majorities of Americans support guarantees of equal opportunity, a much smaller proportion supports guaranteed equal outcomes. Additionally, Americans are more likely to express norms of equality in the political realm and norms of differentiation in the economic realm. Views regarding equality shape individual preferences for government action in particular realms. For example, Americans are nearly unanimous in supporting government protections of the right to vote but tend to be less favorable toward government assurances of a good standard of living.

In the social realm Americans express strong support for gender equality and protection against discrimination, but the picture is complicated with regard to race. Whereas whites are likely to say that racial discrimination is no longer a problem (and to see continuing inequality is a result of individual choices or actions), blacks tend to view racial discrimination as ubiquitous (and inequality as a socially produced outcome). As a result, we can often see sharp divisions along racial lines with regard to the appropriateness of government intervention to address inequality.

Individualism

The view that we are each responsible for our own success is strongly ingrained among Americans. Large majorities believe that most people can get ahead in life if they work hard and that disadvantaged groups like African Americans should try harder to succeed. Idleness is seen as a moral defect and hard work a virtue. A strong adherence to individualism suggests for many that government should play no role in resolving economic hardship or inequality. However, a majority of Americans today also believes that the government should increase aid to the poor and supports certain economic safety nets (like Social Security and public schools). At the same time (and this is related to views on equality), most Americans do not think that the government should help everyone achieve the American Dream.

Big/Limited Government and Freedom

Many lines of debate in American politics are defined by disagreements over the size and scope of the government and the degree of freedom people ought to be afforded. A central theme in American political thought since the founding has been that the best government is that which governs least and that we ought to be suspicious of centralized power. Nevertheless, while majorities continue to view government as wasteful and inefficient, there is overwhelming evidence that Americans also support government activism and intervention on a wide variety of policies. At the same time, Americans tend to be fiercely protective of their civil liberties and individual freedoms.

Traditionalism

Americans tend to be fairly divided over the role that the government ought to play in enforcing appropriate modes of conduct, the degree to which ambiguity should be tolerated, and the degree to which order, stability, and tradition should be emphasized. Although a majority says that the government should not be doing more to protect morality, they worry that newer lifestyles are causing society to break down and agree that we ought to have more emphasis on family ties in today's society. On the whole, Americans view religion as an important part of their lives and say that they frequently attend church. However, they tend to be divided over the place of religion in schools and public life generally. Majorities of Americans continue to oppose gay marriage but feel that homosexuals should be protected against discrimination. Majorities support a woman's right to obtain an abortion and support the conduct of stem cell research, but do not support the use of government funds for abortion. There is less ambiguity among Americans with regard to their patriotism. A very high proportion of Americans (>80%) describes their love for their country as very strong.

We cannot know with much certainty what respondents were thinking when they agreed to call themselves progressive.

Foreign Policy

Americans' views regarding isolationism versus intervention in world affairs has varied widely over time as has support for various tactics. Today most Americans view diplomacy as the best route to peace but they tend to be conflicted over the degree to which America ought to intervene in world affairs. Americans tend not to be supportive of government spending on foreign aid and majorities seek to increase border security and decrease or maintain immigration levels. Americans believe that we need a strong military and tend to support maintaining or increasing the current level of defense spending.

Caveats

For the most part, the way that scholars have measured Americans' political values in these five categories is by analyzing responses to survey questions. There are a variety of challenges to reliance on this methodology. Modern survey analysis has revealed that Americans are ignorant of basic facts and that they are inattentive and uninterested in politics and voting. At the individual level, opinions are highly variable. When people are asked the same questions about public policy repeatedly, their answers vary in unpredictable ways suggesting that they may be responding randomly. People even offer opinions about completely fictitious issues and candidates. Perhaps even more troubling is the presence of "framing effects." Framing refers to the phenomenon where small changes in question wording that emphasize different aspects of an issue or policy, or invoke different underlying mental structures, produce large swings in opinions.

A significant debate exists in political science over the sources of this variability. Some scholars claim that the root of the problem is that people lack meaningful knowledge about politics (e.g. Bartels 2003) while others argue that the result is related to the way that we measure values and opinions (see Chong and Druckman 2007 for a review). Given the lack of resolution regarding the accuracy of public opinion polling, our analysis of progressive views is presented with the caveat that questions asking about progressive identification are new and understudied. We cannot know with much certainty what respondents were thinking when they agreed to call themselves progressive. These data do not allow us to determine which values are relevant in an individual's identification. Furthermore, question wording regarding value orientations differed markedly across surveys. Thus, the data we present are the values and demographic traits we found to be correlated with self-identification for each survey.

In the news media, the term progressive is pervasive but undefined.

Media Usage

In the news media, the term progressive is pervasive but undefined, with reporters and other writers using the term to suggest “forward-thinking” or “open to change” and applying it primarily to left-leaning Democrats but also, occasionally, to Republicans with culturally or economically liberal impulses.

The most famous recent elevation of the term arose during the CNN/YouTube debate in July 2007, when Sen. Hillary Clinton of New York was asked to define a liberal. “You know,” she said, “it is a word that originally meant that you were for freedom ... that you were willing to stand against big power and on behalf of the individual. Unfortunately, in the last 30, 40 years, it has been turned up on its head, and it’s been made to seem as though it is a word that describes big government, totally contrary to what its meaning was in the 19th and early 20th century.” “I prefer the word ‘progressive,’” Clinton continued, “which has a real American meaning, going back to the Progressive Era at the beginning of the 20th century. I consider myself a modern progressive.” In other words, Clinton suggested, the term progressive is a substitute for liberal but without the baggage some in the news media and many conservatives have use to demonize the term.

The shift in language has not gone unnoticed by the news media. Mark Leibovich of the New York Times, for example, described progressive as the “sleeker stage name many leftists are preferring these days.” But that didn’t stop another New York Times writer, Sam Roberts, from describing New York’s Republican mayor, Michael Bloomberg, as “a pragmatic, progressive centrist.”

The Washington Post and many other newspapers describe former North Carolina Senator John Edwards and Ohio Congressman Dennis Kucinich, both Democrats, as “progressive” and a number of writers and commentators have referred to former Arkansas Republican Governor Mike Huckabee’s “progressive” or “populist” views on the economy and former New York mayor Rudy Giuliani’s “progressive” views on social policy (on choice and gay rights, for example).

This has little to do with Wisconsin’s Robert “Fighting Bob” La Follette who, nearly a century ago, fought against railroad trusts, bossism, U.S. participation in World War I and the League of Nations as a congressman, senator, governor and (in 1924) a presidential candidate. It has nothing in common with Theodore Roosevelt who, in 1912, split from the Republican Party as a Progressive and drew enough votes to allow Woodrow Wilson to defeat William Howard Taft. Only the most erudite writers (like George Will) recognize the historic roots of the term progressive and its lack of connection to modern-day use of the term.

In short, while there is no clear definition for the term, the news media appear to apply progressive when a candidate or organization argues that government has a role to play in addressing social issues that conservatives argue are best left to the private sector – as in health care, education, income distribution, civil rights, etc.

Progressive, in the news media’s use of the term, appears to refer to those who prefer activist government to laissez faire, in most matters. As the conservative Washington Times noted: “Historically, ‘progressive’ has been defined as one believing in moderate political change and especially social improvement by governmental action. For the thousands of liberal activists who gathered in Washington this week and want to ‘Take Back America,’ the meaning of the word is that and more - it’s about taking action.”

Self-identification

Progressive identification/support has increased over time.

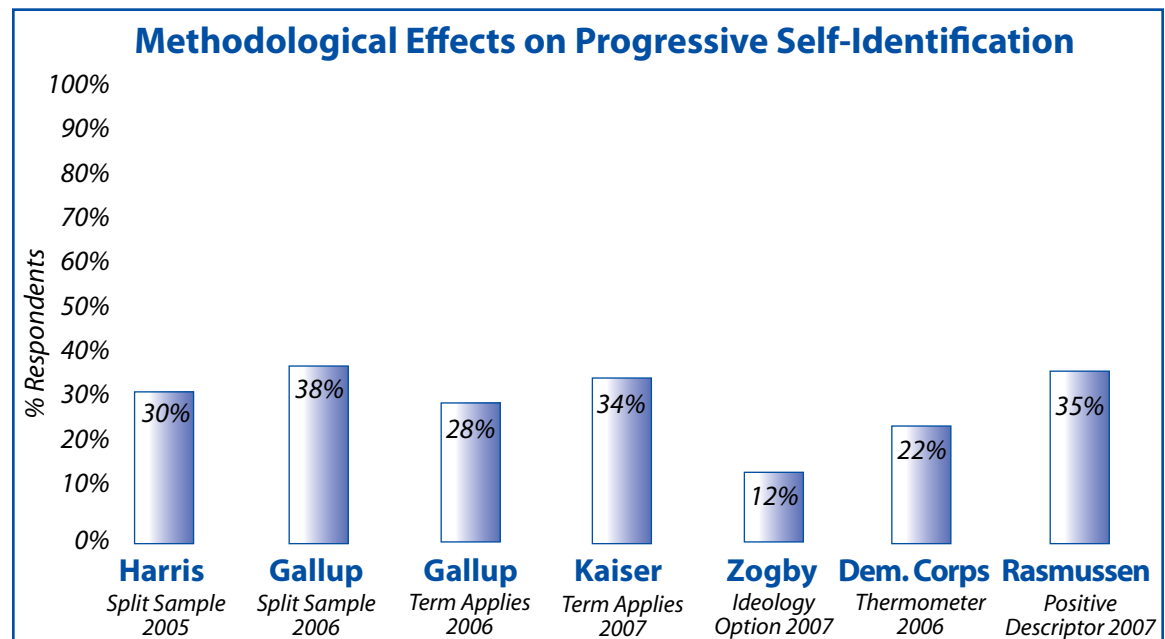
We analyzed several national surveys to determine whether or not the views of self-identified progressives reflect the news media's portrayal of progressives as people who support an activist government. This section explains the method of self-identification for each of the polls we analyzed and discusses the ways in which the various methods affect the results.

Although it is widely accepted practice among polling organizations to ask respondents whether they identify as liberal or conservative, few inquire about progressive identity. However, after exhaustively searching academic sources, the internet, and LexisNexis for polls conducted within the last 10 years that included a progressive self-identification question, we identified seven unique sources of data that would be useful for an analysis of progressive individuals.

We were able to obtain individual level data for two of these polls (Harris, Pew) and cross tabulations for five (Democracy Corps, Gallup, Kaiser, Rasmussen, Zogby). The data we collected from Democracy Corps, Gallup, and Rasmussen contained demographic information (and some data on political attitudes), but no questions on values.

These surveys used different methodologies to identify progressive. Zogby, Harris, and Gallup added the term progressive to a list of ideological options. Pew, Democracy Corps, Kaiser, and Rasmussen asked separate questions about identification with or support for the term. We found that the method by which the self-identification was determined had strong effects on the poll results. In particular, when respondents are cued to think of progressive as a substitute for the term liberal, their views look similar to those of liberals; when they are cued to think of progressive as a substitute for very liberal, their views appear more consistently liberal. When respondents are asked whether or not they consider themselves progressive independent of other ideological options, progressive identifiers have views that are less cohesive, and more similar to moderate identifiers.

The chart below summarizes the proportion of progressive self-identifiers/supporters located in each survey. In surveys using similar methodologies it appears that progressive identification/support has increased over time.



In addition, we present data from the 2004 and 2006 American National Election Surveys (ANES). The ANES is the primary data source used by political scientists to evaluate political values, attitudes, and preferences of the American public. Unfortunately, the ANES does not ask a question about progressive identification. However, given that we find a strong correlation between progressive and liberal views, we present findings from the ANES for respondents who self-identify as liberals for comparison.

Harris

Harris Interactive conducted a survey of 61,796 respondents between May and September of 2005. As is the case with all Harris surveys, this was a web-based survey and the respondents were drawn from the Harris Poll Online panel. We use the provided survey weights to ensure that the data are as similar as possible to a random sample of the adult population. Respondents in this sample were split into two equal groups (randomly assigned) so that one half was asked, "When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as a conservative or a progressive?" while the other half was asked, "When it comes to politics, would you describe yourself as a conservative or a liberal?"⁵ The effect of this procedure (we believe) is that respondents were cued to interpret the term progressive as a substitute for liberal. As a result, in this survey progressives appear nearly indistinguishable from liberals with regard to their values. Approximately the same proportion of respondents identify as progressive as do liberal – 30% of each half of the sample.

Pew

In 2004 Pew Research Center for the People and the Press surveyed 11,568 active members of Howard Dean's presidential campaign. This was a web-based survey conducted between September and December in two waves. A subset (1,929) of the respondents was asked, "Do you think of yourself as a progressive?" About 90% of those polled answered yes to this question. Additionally, this survey asked other subsets of respondents questions about their values that were relevant to this report. Given the high proportion of respondents who identified as progressives, we interpreted the answers to these value questions to represent the views of what we call "activist progressives." Because the Dean survey does not include any non-activists we compared these responses to a separate Pew survey (the Typology Survey) conducted in December of 2004 that asked nearly identical questions about values. The Typology Survey interviewed a random sample of 2,000 adults by telephone. Although this survey did not include a question about progressive identification, it did include a liberal/conservative identification question which we use throughout the report for comparison. In general, we found that when compared to self-identified liberals, activist progressives were considerably more unified in support of traditional liberal values. This is undoubtedly the result of the type of person included in the Dean poll.

Zogby

On June 26–29, 2007, Zogby International conducted a telephone survey of a random sample of 3,939 adults that probed respondents' values and media consumption habits. As Zogby now does in many of their surveys, respondents were asked to describe their ideology as progressive, liberal, moderate, conservative, very conservative, or libertarian. Similar to what we found in the Pew survey, respondents who identify as progressives in this survey tend

5. Respondents were then asked the strength of their identification with the ideology that they selected. Respondents who selected neither label were asked whether they lean one way or the other. We recoded these responses so that leaners were coded with the base category. For comparison, in the cross tabulations that we have attached to this report, we present the data in which leaners are coded with the base categories and in which leaners are excluded.

to be more unified in support of traditional liberal values than the self-identified liberals in the survey. This could be because the order of these options may cue respondents to think of progressive as an alternative to "very liberal." In this poll approximately 12% of respondents selected the label progressive compared to 16% who selected the label liberal. Zogby provided us with cross-tabulations by ideology for all of the questions in their survey.

Kaiser

Partnering with the Washington Post and Harvard University, the Kaiser Foundation conducted an extensive survey focused on political independents in July, 2007. In addition to the standard liberal/conservative ideology question, respondents were asked, "In politics, do you think of yourself as progressive or not?" This is the only survey we found in which respondents were asked value questions *and* asked to identify as progressive independent of other ideological labels. As a result, compared to some of the other polls, a slightly larger proportion of respondents (34%) identify as progressives. Furthermore, the values of these self-identified progressives are much less cohesive than progressives in other surveys. On many of the questions, equal (or nearly equal) proportions of progressives agreed with a given value statement as disagreed with it.

Three additional surveys included no questions about respondents' values, but asked questions about progressive identification in additional useful ways. We draw heavily on these data to describe the demographic characteristics of people who self-identify as progressives in different contexts.

Gallup

In November, 2006, Gallup conducted a survey with the express purpose of learning about respondents' views of the term progressive relative to the term liberal. They interviewed 1,003 randomly selected adults by telephone for the survey. Similar to the methodology adopted by Harris, Gallup split the sample in half and asked one set of respondents whether they identify as liberal or conservative and the other half whether they identify as progressive or conservative. However, Gallup also asked a number of additional questions that are extremely useful for understanding views of progressives. Respondents were asked how familiar they were with the term progressive, and then asked whether or not the label progressive applies to them. Finally, respondents who identified themselves as liberal or progressive in the ideology question were asked which label they prefer. Gallup provided us with extensive cross-tabs of these questions. In the split sample set-up, approximately 38% of respondents identified as progressives compared to 41% of respondents who identified as liberal. Of those respondents who identified as liberal or progressive, 44% said they prefer the term progressive compared to 50% who prefer the term liberal; the remainder said that the label did not matter to them. Among all respondents, 28% said that the label progressive applied to them, 55% said it did not apply, and 17% were unfamiliar with the term.

Democracy Corps

Democracy Corps, in conjunction with the Campaign for America's Future, used Greenberg Quinlan and Rosner Research to conduct a random telephone survey of 2,020 voters in November, 2006. Respondents were asked to rate a number of different groups, including Progressives, on a thermometer scale. The question explained: "Now, I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to one hundred, the higher the number the more favorable your feelings are toward that person or organization. If you have no opinion or never heard of that person or organization, please say so." Democracy Corps

provided us with cross-tabs which divide respondents into those who give progressives a rating above 50, those who give progressives a neutral rating, those who give progressives a rating below 50, and those who said they were unfamiliar with the term. Approximately 22% of respondents rated progressives warmly, 25% rated progressives coolly, 20% rated progressives neutrally, and 32% said they were unfamiliar with the group/term.

Rasmussen

During July, 2007, Rasmussen Reports conducted a telephone survey of 1,000 randomly selected adults to test respondents' views of the term progressive relative to other terms. Along with basic demographic information, the survey asked, "Suppose a candidate was described to you as politically progressive. Would you consider that a positive description, a negative description, or somewhere in between?" Rasmussen provided us with these cross-tabs as well as tabulations for questions asking about liberals, conservatives, and moderate for comparison. Approximately 35% of respondents said they would view a progressive candidate positively, 18% said they would view the description negatively, and 39% said somewhere in between.

ANES

The American National Election Survey conducted face-to-face interviews of 1,212 respondents in September-December, 2004. Then ANES re-interviewed 675 of these respondents at the end of 2006. We draw on data from both the 2004 and 2006 surveys in our analysis of liberal values. The ideology question asked by the ANES is as follows: "We hear a lot of talk these days about liberals and conservatives. Here is a seven-point scale on which the political views that people might hold are arranged from extremely liberal to extremely conservative. Where would you place YOURSELF on this scale, or haven't you thought much about this?"⁶ About 26% of respondents identified as liberal, 44% identified as conservative, and 30% identified as moderate.

Methodology

Readers should note that, because of these varying methods to identify people who think of themselves as progressives, caution is advised in making direct comparisons. However, these differences offer added confidence in our findings when similar results are identified across multiple surveys. In order to analyze the data, we looked for cases in which 60% or more of self-identified progressives agreed with a given value statement. We selected this threshold as it indicates that a substantial majority of the group holds a particular viewpoint. Additionally, we assumed that higher proportions of the group in agreement reflected a more clearly identifiable progressive value. In our discussion of the results, we also explain the relationship between progressive values and the values of liberals, conservatives, or all survey respondents for illustration. In comparing proportions across groups we calculated statistical significance at the 95% confidence level based on the smallest subsample in use.⁷

The following section describes our findings. In all cases we cite the source of the data and discuss differences and similarities across sources.

6. The options were extremely liberal, liberal, slightly liberal, moderate/middle of the road, slightly conservative, conservative and extremely conservative. Respondents who selected moderate were then pushed to choose either liberal or conservative. Because none of our other surveys included this push question we disregarded these responses and coded only the initial question into three categories: liberal, moderate, or conservative. Using this methodology the proportions of respondents in each category are statistically similar across all surveys.

7. In most cases we calculated the margin of error ourselves because the survey organization did not provide it for the subset of respondents we analyze.



Values of Self-Identified Progressives

Political Equality

Questions regarding support for political equality are no longer frequently asked in surveys of the American public. In part this is because for the last 40 years national levels of support for political equality have been extremely high (Kernell and Jacobson 2006). So while we did find a handful of questions that were relevant to thinking about political equality, there were too few questions to have a complete sense of the values of self-identified progressives on this matter.

Zogby finds that 84% of progressives believe that politicians generally look out for special interests (as opposed to the community that they represent). This figure is slightly higher than the proportion of liberals who agree with the statement, but the difference is not statistically significant. According to Pew, activist progressives are more likely to think that politicians

Overall, progressives [have] a strong ideological commitment to economic equality.



don't care about what people like them think. Similarly, the ANES reports that compared to conservatives, liberals are significantly more likely to believe that people like them do not have a say in what government does and that the government does not pay much attention to what people think. When asked what proportion of elected officials should be men, on average liberals said 56% while conservatives said 63%.

Social Equality

There were few questions asked of self-identified progressives in this category as well. In the Zogby survey results, 82% of progressives agreed that affirmative action levels the playing field (instead of rewarding some groups at the expense of others). This figure was significantly higher than the proportion of liberals who agreed with the statement. Only about 5% of self-identified conservatives agreed with the statement. When asked whether freedom or equality was more important a slim majority of progressives (and liberals) chose equality, while conservatives overwhelmingly selected freedom as is shown in the chart below.

Activist progressives polled by Pew were vastly more likely to see racial discrimination as the cause of racial inequality than either liberals or conservatives. While 74% of progressives viewed inequality in this light, only 45% of liberals and 18% of conservatives agreed. The ANES poll provides strong evidence that on most measures at least 60% of liberals view equality (in terms of race, gender, religion, and sexuality) as an important societal goal. For instance, 74% of liberals disagree that it is better if the woman takes care of the home and the man is the achiever compared to 57% of moderates and 47% of conservatives who disagreed. Liberals are also more likely to see inequality as determined by structural or societal conditions rather than individual motivation. Almost 80% of liberals agreed that we would have many fewer problems if people were treated equally.

Economic Equality

Most of the polls that we identified asked questions relating to economic equality, so we have a solid sense of progressive views in this area. Overall, progressives can be categorized as having a strong ideological commitment to economic equality. According to the Zogby poll, large majorities of progressives agree that it is our duty to help the less fortunate (96%), that the government should help everyone achieve the American dream (83%), that corporations generally do not act in society's best interest (97%), and that reducing taxes isn't necessarily better for everyone (81%).

The Harris poll also finds 86% of progressives agree that the government should take care of its citizens and Pew reports that 93% of activist progressives think that poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough. However, the Kaiser poll finds that 52% of those who think of themselves as progressive would be unwilling to pay more (either through taxes or health insurance premiums) to increase the number of Americans with health insurance.⁸

Progressives are more divided over whether free trade and business taxes are good for society. For instance, Zogby finds that about 58% of progressives said that workers should be protected from free trade compared to 42% of progressives who said that Americans should embrace the new economics of free trade. Among activist progressives 59% said that free trade agreements are a bad thing. Fifty percent of liberals said that free trade agreements are a good thing. Harris reports that 43% of progressives disagreed with the statement that tax reductions for businesses help the economy grow while 30% agreed, and the remainder had no opinion. A large majority of activist progressives (78%) agreed that business corporations make too much profit.

8. Among people who do not consider themselves progressive, 61% would be unwilling to pay.

Progressives support government intervention to produce societal goals to which they subscribe

Progressives thought strict limits should be placed on government spending.

Among liberals, support for economic equality is fairly high. For instance Pew finds that 84% of liberals think that too much power is concentrated in the hands of large corporations. Data from the ANES shows that a large majority of liberals support increased government spending to provide more services (73%), social security (71%), public schools (88%), child care (75%), and on the poor (66%). Nearly every self-identified liberal surveyed (97%) agreed that the gap between the rich and the poor is a bad thing. About 54% of liberals said that the government should guarantee a job and a good standard of living (as opposed to letting each person get ahead on his or her own) compared to 18% of conservatives who agreed with this statement.

However, a minority (32%) of liberals thought spending on welfare should be increased and a minority (about 40%) approved of government assistance to blacks and Hispanics. Only a slim majority (51%) supported an increase in taxes to expand domestic programs; although 67% supported a graduated income tax. Liberals also agreed that protecting the environment was important, even at the expense of jobs (63% in ANES; 73% in Pew).

Limited Government/Freedom

A significant number of polling questions asked about respondents' views toward government activism and freedom. In general, progressives can be described as supporting government intervention to produce societal goals to which they subscribe. For the most part, progressives are statistically indistinguishable from liberals in this area except for activist progressives who tend to be more supportive of government than liberals. According to Zogby, progressives agree that government generally solves problems (73%), that government regulation of business is important (96%), that better education requires investment in public education (93%), that Social Security should not be privatized (90%), that the government should devote more resources to protecting the environment (98%), and that gun ownership ought to be regulated (83% in Zogby; 62% in Kaiser). However, progressives generally thought (71%) that strict limits should be placed on government spending.⁹

Progressives (and liberals) were nearly unified in agreement over inappropriate government intervention in promoting security at the expense of civil liberties. In the Zogby poll, 93% of progressives said liberties were more important than security, and the Kaiser poll found that 54% of progressives believed that the government is not doing enough to protect civil liberties compared to only 45% of non-progressives. These findings for progressives are similar to the results found for liberals, although activist progressives identified by Pew tended to be more supportive than liberals of efforts to protect the environment and of government generally.

Additionally, the ANES results show that liberals agreed (73%) that government has gotten bigger because the problems we face are bigger, that we need strong government rather than allowing the free market to handle complex economic problems (75%); and that there are more things the government should be doing (69%).

Traditionalism

Generally progressives tend to oppose government regulation of or intervention in morality or social conduct. Zogby finds that they agree that religion should play less of a role in public life (90%), that abortion is a private decision between a woman and her doctor (76%), that government is too involved in regulating morality (95%), that marriage should not be defined as only between a man and a woman (90%), that the Constitution should be liberally interpreted (76%), and that only evolution should be taught in science curriculum (82%). The views are basically opposite of the views expressed by conservatives in the same poll and

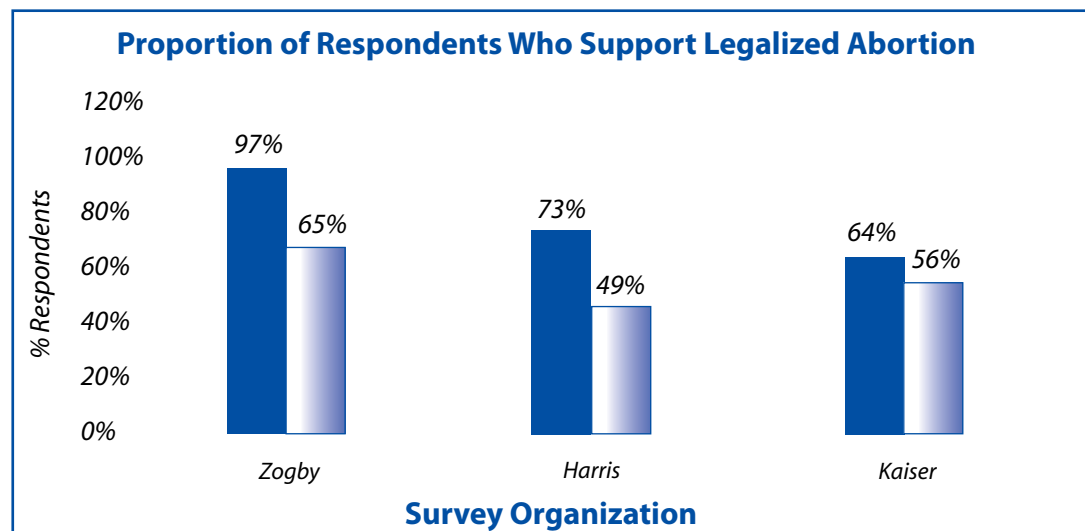
Self-identified progressives appear to have a strong commitment to diplomacy in international relations and are predisposed to think of immigrants in a positive light.

9. This proportion was lower than conservatives, 80% of whom agreed that spending limits were important.

similar to the views of liberals. Harris also finds that a majority (60%) of progressives think that schools should not teach religious values, and that abortion should be legal (73%). About 56% of progressives support the death penalty compared to 79% of conservatives.

Activist progressives identified by Pew are even more likely to oppose government intervention in moral issues. For instance, 98% agree that public schools should be allowed to carry any books they want even if they contain dangerous ideas, compared to 70% of liberals and 40% of conservatives who thought this way. Activist progressives were also unified (96%) in their belief that homosexuality is a way of life that should be accepted by society, compared to 76% of liberals and 32% of conservatives. Nearly the same proportion (91%) support the legalization of gay marriage compared to 64% of liberals and 16% of conservatives.

The survey conducted by the Kaiser Foundation found similar patterns, but with much lower proportions of self-identified progressives in agreement. About 44% said that religion should have less influence in public life, 64% think abortion should be legal, and 37% support gay marriage.¹⁰



Foreign Policy

Self-identified progressives appear to have a strong commitment to diplomacy in international relations and are predisposed to think of immigrants in a positive light. Zogby reports that 77% of progressives say that it is not America's job to promote its values around the world and 97% think that our efforts in the war on terror should focus on reducing anti-American sentiment rather than

on military force. Similarly, Harris finds that 76% of progressives agree that our government should focus on improving its relationships with other countries. In these two polls the proportions of progressives and liberals who share these views are similar, setting both groups apart from conservatives and moderates.

Activist progressives identified by Pew are even more likely to be dovish in their approach to military affairs than liberals. For instance, 96% of activist progressives think that diplomacy is the best way to ensure peace compared to 76% of liberals. About 78% of activist progressives believe that the United States should take its allies' interests into account even if it means making compromises with them and 93% agreed that it is acceptable to refuse to fight in

10. An additional 29% support civil unions for gay couples.

a war one believes to be morally wrong. A smaller proportion (69%) of liberals agreed with each statement. Activist progressives overwhelmingly (99%) stated that the Iraq invasion was the wrong decision and 81% believe that it is never or rarely justified to use preemptive military strikes. Liberals were less cohesive with 71% agreeing that the invasion was the wrong decision and 61% opposing preemptive strikes. With regard to spending on the military, Harris reports progressives had mixed views, with 29% agreeing that spending should be increased versus 46% disagreeing.

Progressives polled by Zogby view immigrants as coming to the United States to work for a better life (97%) rather than seeking handouts. Kaiser found that 68% of progressives believe that illegal immigrants currently in the country should be offered a chance to keep their jobs and apply for citizenship. However, Harris revealed that only 30% of progressives (and liberals) agreed that legal immigrants are good for the country. Activist progressives had a very different view, with 87% agreeing that immigrants strengthen our country because of their hard work and talents. Among liberals beliefs about immigration were less positive. The ANES finds that 52% of liberals agreed that government spending on border security should be increased, 51% think that reducing illegal immigration should be an important foreign policy goal, and 47% stated that immigration levels should be decreased.

Individualism

In the polls that we identified there were no questions asked of progressives which directly and uniquely tapped respondents' views on individualism. Questions that relate to respondents' beliefs about individualism tend to overlap substantially with other value areas such as government intervention in the economy or the importance of promoting social equality. For instance, it is highly likely that one's views regarding individual versus collective responsibility for poverty predicts one's beliefs about the appropriateness of welfare spending. However, without more focused questions we cannot say for certain how progressives view individualism.

We did find a select number of questions in the Pew and ANES surveys that addressed individualism more precisely for liberals. For instance, Pew asked respondents whether they believe that most people can get ahead if they are willing to work hard. A slim majority (54%) of liberals agreed, compared to an overwhelming majority of conservatives (78%) who agreed. When asked whether or not everyone has it in their power to succeed or whether success is out of our control, most respondents (75% of liberals and 82% of conservatives) thought the first statement was more accurate.

The ANES finds that 47% of liberals agree that blacks should work their way up like other groups, compared to 82% of conservatives who believe this. Similarly, only 37% of liberals said that blacks should try harder to succeed compared with 63% of conservatives who said so. When asked whether they thought blacks should help themselves or the government should help blacks, 34% of liberals said that blacks should help themselves compared to 63% of conservatives. The figures are similar for Hispanics; 35% of liberals said that Hispanics should help themselves compared to 68% of conservatives.

Demographics of Self-Identified Progressives

In order to better understand the political predilections of self-identified progressives as well as to be able to define the characteristics of those who are most likely to identify versus those who are not, this section presents patterns in demographics. The discussion is organized by the methodology used to identify progressives.

Harris and Gallup Split Sample

The demographics of progressives are statistically indistinguishable (or so small as to be meaningless) from liberals on nearly all measures in the Harris survey. However, there were a few interesting exceptions. We found that progressives tended to be more supportive of George W. Bush as president with 15% considering him pretty good or excellent, versus only 12% of liberals who thought that way. This is likely the result of differences in partisan identification between liberals and progressives. We found that 14% of progressives identified themselves as Republican compared to only 9% of liberals. Similarly, while 75% of progressives identified as Democrats, 79% of liberals did so.¹¹ These results may indicate that the term progressive is more popular among Republicans than the term liberal.

A slightly larger proportion of progressives (32%) compared to liberals (29%) perceived themselves to have an income above average; this might be accurate, as progressives reported slightly higher incomes than liberals.¹² Men were more heavily represented among progressives than women (52% to 48%), while the reverse was true for liberals (47% to 53%). In this survey the most pronounced difference between progressives and liberals was their interest in political issues. Almost 50% of progressives stated that they like to learn a lot or as much as possible about political issues, compared to only 43% of liberals who agreed with those statements.

We found a few additional demographic differences among liberals and progressives in Gallup's split sample survey. Like Harris, Gallup asked half of their respondents an ideology question that offered them the options of conservative, moderate and progressive, while the other half were offered conservative, moderate, and liberal.¹³ Most of the differences between liberals and progressives failed to reach statistical significance; however, we did find a few places where the differences were large enough to warrant mention.

First, when presented the progressive option, men became less likely to identify as conservative (from 58% to 49%) and more likely to identify as progressive (from 35% to 45%). Women became more likely to identify as conservatives (from 52% to 62%) when given the progressive option.

The progressive option also encouraged more conservative identifiers among minorities. Blacks in particular were less likely to choose progressive (43%) than they were to choose liberal (56%). Young people, ages 18-29, were much more likely to choose progressive (61%) than liberal (45%). The progressive option had the opposite effect for people ages 30-49, with 44% identifying as liberal compared to 31% who identified as progressive.

According to Gallup, the progressive option increased conservative identification among people earning \$75,000/year or more (from 45% to 57%) and decreased conservative identification among people earning less than \$35,000/year (from 64% to 52%). Wealthy respondents were more likely to choose liberal (53%) than progressive (42%), while low-income respondents preferred progressive (43% compared to 33% choosing liberal).

11. These results are from a question that asks respondents to identify first as Democrats, Republicans, or neither, followed by questions probing the strength of the identity and encouraging respondents who selected "neither" to identify with a party.

12. Among progressives 16% had incomes below \$25,000 per year compared to 18% of liberals, while 36% of progressives reported incomes above \$75,000 compared to only 33% among liberals.

13. Respondents who selected moderate were pushed to choose one of the ideological options. Our analysis includes these pushed respondents with the base categories.

Pew

The activist progressives identified in Pew's survey of Dean Campaign members reveals a significantly different population of progressives. In order to see these differences, we compared the demographic profile of respondents in the Dean survey to self-identified liberals in a different Pew's Typology Survey from the same year. We find that activist progressives are more likely to be white, and less likely to be black or Hispanic, than liberals. They are less likely to be very young (aged 18-29) and much more likely to be over the age of 45 than liberals.

Activist progressives are nearly all (79%) college educated compared to only 32% of liberals and they are much more likely to be found at the top of the income distribution. About 66% of activist progressives earn more than \$50,000 per year compared to only 38% of liberals. As is true with progressives in all of the surveys we analyzed, activist progressives mostly identify as Democrats (69%) compared to 57% of liberals. They are much less likely than liberals to identify as independents and are more likely to be registered to vote. This is clearly an effect of the sample population that was polled in this survey – all respondents were active members of a Democrat's presidential campaign.

Finally, Pew reports that activist progressives are much more likely to say that they rarely or never go to church (59% compared to 41% of liberals). Only 7% of Christian progressives said that they are evangelical, compared to 24% of Christian liberals.

Democracy Corps and Rasmussen¹⁴

According to the Democracy Corps survey, liberals are much more likely than moderates or conservatives to view progressives warmly. The mean thermometer rating of progressives among liberals is 68, compared for 46 for moderates and 35 for conservatives. This means that only liberals view progressives more positively than negatively on average. Liberals are also more likely to be familiar with the term progressive, with 76% saying they recognize the term compared to 67% of moderates and 65% of conservatives. A similar pattern holds among Democrats relative to Independent and Republicans. The mean progressive thermometer score among Democrats is 52, for moderates it is 47, and for Republicans it is 39. Rasmussen also reports that Democrats have the most favorable view of the term with 42% saying that describing a candidate as politically progressive would be positive. This is compared to 26% of Republicans and 37% of other party identifiers who agreed.

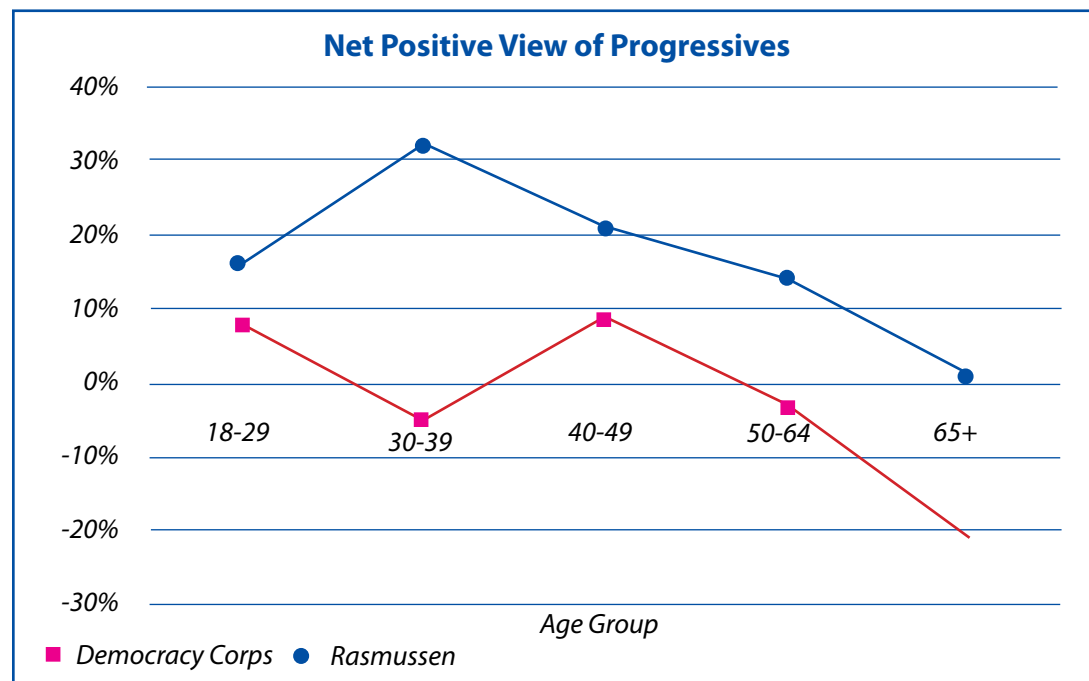
Men think more positively of progressives than women, with a mean thermometer rating of 48 for men and 45 for women. This is the inverse of the thermometer scores for liberals; the mean score among men is 38 compared to 41 for women. Women are also less familiar with the term progressive, with 38% not identifying the term compared to 26% of men. Rasmussen finds that men view the term more positively, but also more negatively than women. Approximately 38% of men and 33% of women said that politically progressive is a positive description while 23% of men and 14% of women said they consider it negative. The lukewarm rating of progressive is driven (in this survey) by women over the age of 40.

There is a mild relationship between age and views of progressives. Generally speaking a smaller proportion of older groups tended to rate progressives positively while a larger proportion rated progressives negatively. The chart below shows the net positive rating (the percent of respondents considering progressives in a negative light subtracted from

14. Readers should note that the subpopulation sample sizes are small in these surveys (total sample was only 1,011 in Democracy Corps, 1,000 in Rasmussen), so many of the differences discussed in this section are not statistically significant.

the percent considering progressives in a positive light) for both the Democracy Corps and Rasmussen surveys.

Progressive identification is most popular with those under age 50 and men.



The large difference in the age group of 30-39 year olds is interesting. This could be an effect of timing. The Democracy Corps survey was conducted in 2006 while Rasmussen's was conducted in 2007. So it is possible that over the course of the year respondents in this age cohort grew more favorable toward progressives. It could also be a function of the way respondents were asked to rate progressives. The thermometer scale that Democracy Corps uses includes many people who feel lukewarm toward the term progressives in both the negative and positive proportions. Rasmussen offers a separate response category, "somewhere in between," that is excluded from this graph. In fact, a look at the raw data suggests that this may be the reason. A large proportion of respondents age 30-39 (46%) said they would consider a description of politically progressive as somewhere in between positive and negative.

Progressives tend to be better educated and to earn more money than the average respondent.

Compared to black respondents, white and Hispanic respondents are more favorable toward progressives, although no racial group rates progressives positively overall in either the Democracy Corps or Rasmussen survey. Democracy Corps reports that the mean thermometer rating among blacks is 40, among whites is it 47, and among Hispanics it is 49. Rasmussen finds that only 28% of blacks consider politically progressive to be a positive description compared to 36% of whites and 38% of other racial/ethnic groups. This suggests that in these surveys, race does not divide progressive supporters from their detractors. However, education does play this role according to Democracy Corps. College educated respondents have a more positive view of progressives with a mean thermometer rating of 51 compared to a mean rating of about 42 for those with no college degree.

Respondents with a union member in their household are also more favorable, with a mean thermometer rating of 50 compared to 42 for non-union respondents. Democracy Corps's results reveal that only the wealthiest respondents view progressives more warmly than coolly. The mean thermometer score for individuals with an annual income higher than \$75,000 is 53, while it averages between 42 and 43 for all other income groups. Rasmussen reports no clear

relationship between income and views of progressives; strong positive ratings were offered by those in the lowest, upper-middle and highest income categories.

Single men are the only group defined by marital status to give progressives a positive rating in the Democracy Corps survey. Catholics and Christians generally view progressives negatively while respondents who claim other or no religious affiliation have a mean thermometer rating of 52. Evangelical Christians are particularly likely to view progressives negatively with a mean thermometer score of 36. Geographically speaking, progressive supporters are most likely to be found in the Northeast and the West, with mean thermometer ratings of 50 and 51 respectively. All other regions collectively view progressives negatively on average.

Gallup and Kaiser

The surveys conducted by Gallup and Kaiser offered us a number of different question regarding respondents' views of the term progressive and their inclination to identify as progressive. Unfortunately, the margin of error on the subsample of respondents identifying as progressive is large (between +/-5.8 and +/- 7.5). In the following discussion we note substantive differences even though many are not statistically significant.

Gallup asked all respondents whether they are familiar with the term progressive and then whether or not it applies to them. In general the population of people unfamiliar with the term (17% of the total) was fairly evenly spread among different demographic groups. However, we found some interesting demographic differences between those who said it applies versus those who said it does not. Men were more likely to say the term applies to them than women; women were less familiar with the term. Whites make up the largest proportion of self-identified progressives (69%), but a larger proportion of blacks (36%) say the term applies to them than whites (26%) and other non-white respondents (34%). Compared to other age groups, respondents aged 18-29 had the largest proportion of progressive identifiers (38%) and the smallest proportion unfamiliar with the term (13%). However respondents aged 30-49 represented the largest share (40%) of the total group of progressive identifiers. Fully 61% of identifiers were under the age of 50. Respondents over 65 had the smallest proportion of identifiers (21%) and the largest proportion unfamiliar with the term (23%).

Urbanites appear slightly more likely to identify as progressives (31%) compared to about 27% of respondents who live outside of cities. About 36% of progressive identifiers have college degrees compared to only 25% of non-identifiers. The proportions are similar in the Kaiser data; 30% of progressives are college educated compared to 23% of non-identifiers. Gallup finds that among those who were unfamiliar with the term, a substantial majority (58%) had a high school diploma or less education. Kaiser also reports interesting differences between progressive identifiers and non-progressives with regard to attention paid to politics. Whereas 55% of progressives said they pay a lot of attention to politics, only 39% of non-progressives said so. The same proportion of progressives and non-progressives get their political information from television news (86%). However, progressives were more likely to say that they also get a lot of political information from the radio (24%) and from newspapers (27%) compared to non-progressives (16% and 27% respectively).

As we found in other surveys, wealthy respondents, those earning more than \$75,000/year, are both more likely to say the term applies to them (38%) and represent the largest proportion of identifiers (31%).¹⁵ Also similar to other surveys, nonreligious respondents were most likely to

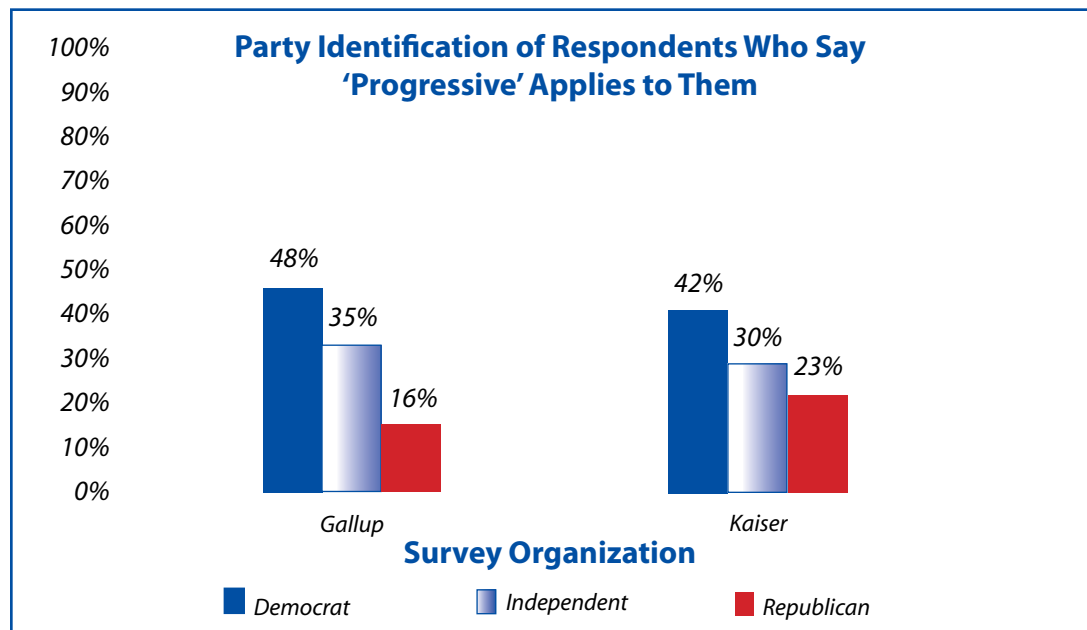
Typically the media use the term progressive to describe a person who supports government intervention in the economy, but the greater distinction is with regard to social issues.

15. Kaiser reports no significant differences on income among progressive identifiers and non-identifiers.

say that the term progressive applies to them (48%), compared to 30% of Catholics, and 24% of Protestants and other Christians.

About 48% of progressive identifiers in the Gallup survey say they affiliate with the Democratic Party.¹⁶ This was similar to the proportion which identified as Democrats by Kaiser. Kaiser found that among those who identify as progressives, 42% are Democrats, 23% are Republicans, and 30% are Independents. Among non-progressives, 32% identify as Democrats, 29% as Republicans, and 30% as Independents. When pushed to identify with a party, 48% of Independents who self-identified as progressive chose the Democrats compared to only 33% of non-identifiers. Among party identifiers, 49% of progressives said that they sometimes think of themselves as an independent compared to only 40% of non-identifiers. Nearly all (94%) of the progressives who identified as independents said that they do so because they vote on the issues, not on a party line. The proportion was about ten percentage points lower for non-identifiers.

Blacks show strong preference for the term liberal over progressive, while other minorities prefer the term progressive.



As might be expected given the party identification of self-identified progressives, Gallup and Kaiser find that most progressive identifiers consider themselves moderate or liberal (80% for Gallup, 69% for Kaiser). According to Kaiser, a much higher proportion describes their political ideology as somewhat or very liberal (39%) compared to non-identifiers (22%). The largest difference between progressive identifiers and non-identifiers is with regard to their ideology on social issues. About 46% of progressives said that they are somewhat or very liberal on social issues compared to 24% of non-progressives. The difference is much less pronounced when asked about their ideology on economic issues. About 24% of progressives said that their views are somewhat or very liberal on fiscal issues compared to 13% of non-identifiers. This result is instructive when compared to the use of the term progressive in the media. Typically the media use the term to describe a person who supports government intervention in the economy, but according to Kaiser the greater distinction between those who identify as progressives and those who do not is with regard to social issues.

16. When moderate respondents are pushed to select a party the proportion of Democrats rises to 75%.

Gallup Preference

Gallup also asked respondents who identified as liberal or progressive in the ideology question, which label they prefer. The data show that 52% of women prefer the term liberal compared to 41% who prefer the term progressive (the remainder have no preference). Men were more ambivalent with 48% selecting liberal and 47% selecting progressive. This is interesting when contrasted with the results from the split samples showing men more favorable toward the term. The reason for this difference is the methodology employed. Men who are willing to identify as liberal or progressive have no preference for the term. But when men are presented with progressive instead of liberal as an ideological option, they are more willing to take it and less likely to identify as conservatives or moderates.

A different effect occurs among blacks. As mentioned above, blacks are more likely than other groups to say that the term progressive applies to them, but when offered the progressive ideological option became more likely to choose conservative or moderate. This is reflected in blacks' overwhelming preference for the term liberal over progressive (76%). Comparatively, other minorities preferred the progressive label (61%).¹⁷

Respondents from the West represent the single largest proportion of those who prefer the progressive label (32%). Other regions represent between 22% and 25% of the total. The data indicate the urbanites are more likely to prefer the term liberal, while suburbanites have a slight preference for the term progressive. Respondents with college degrees make up a slightly larger proportion of the group which prefers the term progressive (36%) than the group which prefers the term liberal (30%).

Although these results are too close to reach statistical significance, it is worth noting that liberals who identify as Republicans have a slight preference for the term progressive while Democratic identifiers prefer the term liberal. Independents say they have no preference between the two labels. A slim majority of Protestants (53%), Evangelicals (53%), and other non-Christians (53%) prefer the liberal label while Catholics (51%) prefer the label progressive. Nonreligious respondents are slightly more likely to select the progressive label.

The data suggest that only respondents who said that they are "very familiar" with the term progressive are likely to prefer the term progressive over liberal. This suggests that increasing recognition of the term among people who share progressive/liberal views may go a long way toward increasing the propensity to self-identify.

Zogby

The data that we obtained from Zogby did not contain demographic information, but it did include a detailed analysis of television watching habits among progressives. For instance, majorities of self-identified progressives say they watch Comedy Central (50%), NBC (54%), and PBS (54%) at least once a week, while 80% say they never watch FOX News and 54% say they never watch HBO. When asked what television and film genres they most prefer, progressives give their highest ratings to arts, comedy, documentary, drama, educational, mystery/thriller, and science/nature. A majority give low ratings to business programming, children, daytime, reality, and talk shows. Progressives also give low ratings to sports programming but about 53% say that they enjoy watching or reading about baseball and football, and about 58% say that they attend a sporting event at least once every few months. A higher proportion (73%) says they attend live theater at least once every few months. Most (83%) of progressives say they watch the news at least once a week, but this is a slightly smaller proportion than all survey respondents (88%) who say they do.

17. Only about 30 respondents are included in these racial categories, so these results should be taken as suggestive not dispositive.

Clarification of progressive values and political goals is a matter of strategic importance.

The five most popular television shows among progressives are CSI, 60 Minutes, Grey's Anatomy, House, and Law and Order: SVU. Between 18% and 20% of progressives report that they regularly watch these shows. About 42% of progressives say that they don't watch reality shows. When asked about their preference for late night talk shows, a majority (55%) selected the Daily Show and about 78% say that they are very drawn to entertainment with political content. Progressives like a range of music types, with majorities saying that they enjoy blues, classical, folk/traditional, jazz, and rock.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This is a time of flux with regard to modern progressivism and the evolution of a progressive "brand." There is increasing familiarity with and acceptance of the term "progressive." However, the media use conflicting definitions of progressive, which are not fully aligned with those who self-identify as progressive. Further, as shown in this report, political pollsters also appear to have conflicting views of what constitutes a progressive—whether this term is simply a point on the traditional liberal – conservative continuum, or whether it represents an alternative to politics as usual. The differing survey methods used leave a number of questions unresolved, but there are suggestions that the proportion of the adult population who self-identify as progressive is increasing, and that younger adults may be more favorably inclined toward the progressive label. Additionally, progressives have higher average education and income levels and are reported to pay a great deal of attention to politics.

The results from Gallup, Democracy Corps, and Rasmussen suggest that among some (although not all) groups candidates would be aided by selecting the label progressive instead of liberal. Similarly, work by Lake Research Partners¹⁸ finds that "progressive candidate" is rated more favorably than "liberal candidate" or "left-wing candidate," and that Democrats, persuadable voters, and Republicans all show a similar preference for the progressive label.

Since 2000, an increasing number of voices are speaking of a progressive movement, and new organizations and publications are expressing this identity. Multiple groups of self-identified progressives have set forth statements of values, operating principles, personal qualities, and policy positions that they believe represent the essentials of modern progressivism. However, the values of progressives are not yet well defined. The few surveys that have addressed this topic have used different terms and have defined the progressive population differently. Clarification of progressive values and political goals is a matter of strategic importance as the progressive movement grows—what will it be and whom will it attract? How will it best be able to address its concerns? More research needs to be done to learn how best to penetrate and shift individuals' political knowledge and identification, and increase their constructive engagement in the political process.

All of these factors suggest the importance of continuing to track the evolution of the progressive label, its adherents, and the implications of what is becoming a significant factor in the political arena.

18. Lake, Celinda, presentation at Take Back America conference, Washington, DC, March 18, 2008, which included findings from a Lake Research Partners November 9-15, 2006, poll of 800 registered likely voters nationwide.

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