

Conservative Representation in Political Science Research

Researchers

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Summary

This project looks at whether conservative politicians tend to be underrepresented in Canadian political science research and academic events, and explores how scholars experience recruiting them for this kind of work. Political elites are a common focus of Canadian political science, but differences in participation across ideological lines have received little systematic attention. Most existing research concentrates on public opinion, party competition, or elite behaviour once in office, rather than on the research process itself and the conditions under which political actors choose to engage with academia and scholars.

Moreover, ongoing public discussions about “culture wars,” polarization within academia, and declining trust between universities and conservative political actors suggest that ideology may influence willingness to participate in academic research or academic events. Many scholars informally report difficulties recruiting conservative politicians, particularly in politically sensitive contexts or on university campuses, but these experiences have not been systematically examined.

We aim to address that gap by documenting scholars’ experiences and identifying patterns in recruitment challenges and strategies. In particular, we explore whether researchers experience different challenges when reaching out to conservative politicians, and what approaches seem to help encourage participation.

You will be asked to respond to a single open-ended question via email. The question will invite you to reflect on your professional experiences recruiting conservative politicians for academic research or events, and to offer general advice based on that experience.

- You may choose how much detail to provide and may decline to answer any part of the question by not responding or by limiting your response.
- The estimated time commitment for participation is minimal (approximately 5–10 minutes).

The researchers have no conflicts of interest to declare.

Data Management

The data collected will consist only of written, open-ended email responses to the study question. Responses will be kept confidential. Any identifying details will be removed before analysis, and results will be reported in aggregate or using anonymized quotations, unless written consent to associate names with information or a quotation is provided. You will not be asked to any demographic information, and responses will consist only of written answers to the open-ended question.

Email responses will be stored in a secure, password-protected electronic folder accessible only to the principal investigator. All electronic data will be stored on a secure, password-protected computer and/or institutional cloud storage compliant with university data security standards. Data will not be shared with third parties.

Upon receipt, responses will be assigned a numeric code, and any potentially identifying details contained within the text will be removed or generalized prior to analysis. No quotations will be attributed to specific individuals or universities without written consent.

Benefits

There are no direct personal benefits to taking part in this study. However, you may find it useful to reflect on your own experiences recruiting political elites for research or academic events. More broadly, the benefit of the study is to help researchers better understand whether some political perspectives are harder to include in academic research, and why that might be. The findings may also help improve future research practices and support more balanced participation across different political viewpoints in Canadian political science.

Risks

This study poses minimal risk. Participants may experience mild discomfort if their views are perceived as critical. Recipients of the email invitation(s) may decline with no consequences. Participants should be aware that responses might be accessible via the Acadia University's access to electronic data sent from the workplace, and that email communications are subject to interception. Data may be accessed by Acadia University tech staff as required to perform their duties. All data stored or sent online may be accessed by domestic or foreign authorities.

No Obligation to Participate

There is no obligation to participate in this research study. Withdrawal after email submission is possible for up to 30 days, without prejudice. Consent does not waive rights to legal recourse for harm.

Dissemination of Results

Aggregate results will be included in an academic paper, which will be submitted to an international peer-reviewed journal for publication consideration. The final journal article will be available to participants upon request. Results will not be commercialized.

Compensation

No compensation is offered for participation in this study.

Further Information

For additional information about this research, please contact Alex Marland, Professor, Department of Politics, Acadia University at alex.marland@acadiau.ca

Queries about the ethics of this research may also be directed to the Chair of the Research Ethics Board at Acadia University, Dr. Stephanie Jonesby email at stephanie.jones@acadiau.ca or telephone (902) 585-1495.