

ED 027 837

By- Thayer, Jerome

American College Student Values: Their Relationship to Selected Philosophical and Sociological Variables.

Pub Date Feb 69

Note- 15p.

EDRS Price MF-\$0.25 HC-\$0.85

Descriptors-\*Beliefs, \*College Students, \*Higher Education, \*Values

In order to examine the relationship between the values of college students and related nonacademic variables, 4005 students were asked to express political, religious, and philosophic preferences and state their socioeconomic background. There were 5 available choices for each variable. These variables were then measured against the same students' answers to a 20-item questionnaire ranging from "purpose of science" to "man's responsibility." Data is presented on the significant differences within each variable for each polyphasic values inventory item and the significant differences from the norm group toward liberalism or conservatism for each of the groups (political, religious, philosophic or socioeconomic) on each polyphasic values inventory item. It was found that Republicans, Protestants and realists were the most conservative of all groups and on most items the conservative groups did not deviate from the norm nearly as much as groups which were more liberal than the norm. These groups were quite large in contrast to the liberal groups which were quite small. Three groups were very liberal compared to the norm: Socialists, existentialists and those with no religious preference. But an examination of the interrelationships among these 3 groups indicated that, for the most part, 1 group is not heavily composed of students from either of the other 2. Pragmatists, idealists and those in the "none of these" philosophic group showed no definite conservative or liberal pattern and were only significantly different from the norm on a few items. The 5 socioeconomic groups differed little from the norm. (JS)

ED 027 857

THAYER, JEROME

AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENT VALUES: THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL  
AND SOCIOLOGICAL VARIABLES Feb 1969

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE  
PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS  
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION  
POSITION OR POLICY.

4E 000 600

AMERICAN COLLEGE STUDENT VALUES: THEIR RELATIONSHIP  
TO SELECTED PHILOSOPHICAL AND SOCIOLOGICAL VARIABLES

Jerome Thayer  
Union College

The objective of this study was to examine the relationship between the values of American college students and related non-academic variables: political, religious, philosophic, and socio-economic. The related study by Dr. Steve Teglovic describes the rationale and procedures used in the larger study of which this is one part.

Description of the sample

Each student in the sample was asked to express his political, religious, and philosophic preferences, and to state the financial status of his childhood home. The available choices for each variable and the percentage of the total sample (N=4005) choosing each one are listed below.

<u>Political</u>		<u>Religious</u>		<u>Philosophic</u>		<u>Socio-economic</u>	
Democrat	32.8%	Catholic	25.0%	Realist	37.2%	Poor	2.9%
Republican	30.7%	Protestant	52.2%	Pragmatist	10.7%	Lower-middle	14.3%
Socialist	1.1%	Jewish	5.3%	Idealist	18.4%	Middle	54.1%
Other	4.6%	Other	5.1%	Existentialist	6.7%	Upper-middle	26.3%
None	30.7%	None	12.3%	None of these	27.0%	Well-to-do	2.3%

The sample was composed of approximately 30% each of Democrats, Republicans, and those with no preference. Very few students chose Socialist, or "other" political preference.

Slightly over half of the students were Protestants, and about one fourth were Catholics. Twelve percent claimed no religious preference and the remaining students were divided between Jewish and "other".

The realist philosophic preference was the one most frequently chosen with 37%. Eighteen percent chose idealist and 27% had no preference. The remainder were divided between pragmatist and existentialist.

Over half of the students claimed a middle-class background, and slightly over one fourth from upper-middle class and well-to-do homes and slightly under one fourth from lower middle or poor homes.

### General findings

The statistical technique used in the analysis of the data was the chi-square goodness of fit. There were 400 comparisons made between the norm group and each of the categories within each variable for the twenty items. Of the 400 comparisons, 214 were significant at the .01 level. The political and religious variables had the largest number of significant differences with 75 and 79 respectively. There were 42 significant differences for the philosophic groups and 18 for the categories of the socio-economic variable. Table 1 lists the number of significant differences within each of these variables for each item.

Every question had at least five groups differ significantly from the norm group. Only three of the items, the purpose of science, equality of men, and cheating on tests, had less than seven significant differences. There were eleven items which had twelve or more significant differences out of a possible twenty.

### Political variable

At least one of the political groups differed significantly from the norm group on every question except on the purpose of science.

TABLE 1

3

THE NUMBER OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES WITHIN  
EACH VARIABLE FOR EACH POLYPHASIC VALUES INVENTORY ITEM

Item	Political	Religious	Philosophic	Socio-economic
1--Purpose of science	0	2	3	1
2--Right to vote	4	3	0	1
3--Communism	4	4	4	1
4--War	5	5	3	2
5--Foreign policy	4	3	4	1
6--Free enterprise	4	4	2	0
7--Labor unions	4	3	0	3
8--Educational methods	4	3	1	1
9--School curriculum	4	3	2	0
10--Academic freedom	4	5	3	0
11--Equality of men	3	2	1	0
12--Race relations	4	5	2	2
13--Crime	4	4	3	1
14--Ethical authority	4	5	4	1
15--Cheating on tests	1	3	0	1
16--Sex relations	4	5	1	1
17--Alcoholic beverages	5	5	1	1
18--Nature of God	5	5	3	0
19--The Bible	4	5	2	1
20--Man's responsibility	4	5	3	0

TABLE 2

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM THE NORM GROUP TOWARDS LIBERALISM  
OR CONSERVATISM FOR EACH POLITICAL GROUP ON EACH  
POLYPHASIC VALUES INVENTORY ITEM

Item	Democrat	Republican	Socialist	Other	None
1--Purpose of science	-	-	-	-	-
2--Right to vote	L	C	L	L	-
3--Communism	-	C	L	L	L
4--War	C	C	L	L	L
5--Foreign policy	-	C	L	L	L
6--Free enterprise	L	C	L	L	-
7--Labor unions	L	C	L	L	-
8--Educational methods	-	C	L	L	L
9--School curriculum	-	C	L	L	L
10--Academic freedom	-	C	L	L	L
11--Equality of men	L	C	L	-	-
12--Race relations	-	C	L	L	L
13--Crime	-	C	L	L	L
14--Ethical authority	-	C	L	L	L
15--Cheating on tests	-	C	-	-	-
16--Sex relations	-	C	L	L	L
17--Alcoholic beverages	L	C	L	L	L
18--Nature of God	C	C	L	L	L
19--The Bible	-	C	L	L	L
20--Man's responsibility	-	C	L	L	L

Of the 75 significant differences, the Democrats were different from the norm on seven, Republicans on nineteen, Socialists on eighteen, "other" on seventeen, and "none" on fourteen. Table 2 summarizes the liberal and conservative significant differences on each item.

The Republicans were more conservative than the norm group on every question, with the item concerning the purpose of science the only one in which the difference was not statistically significant. Of the other four political groups, on only two items was there another group besides the Republicans more conservative than the norm group. This was on the items concerning war and the nature of God, where the Democrats were slightly conservative, although the Republicans were still the most conservative.

All of the other 54 differences were more liberal, homogeneous, and/or heterogeneous. The Democrats were conservative on the items related to war and the nature of God and were more liberal than the norm on five others, the items concerning the right to vote, free enterprise, labor unions, equality of men, and alcoholic beverages. On the remaining items, the Democrats were rather close to the norm group. On every item, the Democrats were more liberal than the Republicans, although no tests of significance were made to determine significant differences.

The Socialists were extremely liberal on almost every item. On eighteen of the items the difference was significant and on the remaining two items, the purpose of science and cheating on tests, they were also slightly more liberal than the norm. The Socialists had the largest percentage of number five responses of any of the twenty groups studied on all but three of the items, ethical authority, the nature of God, and man's responsibility. On these three items, they had the second highest percentage of five responses.

Students in the "other" political group were different from the norm group on seventeen of the twenty items. On all of these they were more liberal than the norm. They were not significantly different on the items related to the purpose of science, equality of men, and cheating on tests. There was a tendency on many of the questions for a slight heterogeneous tendency, although most of the time a larger proportion of the respondents who did not chose the middle responses chose a more liberal response.

The students who had no political preference were significantly different on fourteen items, in envery case more liberal than the norm group. There were no significant differences on the purpose of science, right to vote, free enterprise, labor unions, equality of men, and cheating on tests.

#### Religious variable

There were more significant differences by the religious groups, 79, than any of the other variables. Of these differences, Catholics were different on thirteen, Protestants on nineteen, Jews on twelve, "other" on sixteen, and "none" on nineteen. There was a significant difference from the norm by at least one of the religious groups on every item. Table 3 summarizes the liberal and conservative differences for the religious groups on each item.

The Catholics were more conservative than the norm group on seven items, those relating to communism, war, academic freedom, sex relations, the nature of God, the Bible, and man's responsibility. They were more liberal on items concerning free enterprise, equality

TABLE 3

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM THE NORM GROUP TOWARDS LIBERALISM  
OR CONSERVATISM FOR EACH RELIGIOUS GROUP ON EACH  
POLYPHASIC VALUES INVENTORY ITEM

	Catholic	Protestant	Jewish	Other	None
1--Purpose of science	-	C	-	L	-
2--Right to vote	-	C	-	-	-
3--Communism	C	C	L	-	L
4--War	C	C	L	L	L
5--Foreign policy	-	C	-	L	L
6--Free enterprise	L	C	-	L	L
7--Labor unions	-	C	-	L	L
8--Educational methods	-	C	-	L	L
9--School curriculum	-	C	-	L	L
10--Academic freedom	C	C	L	L	L
11--Equality of men	L	-	-	-	-
12--Race relations	L	C	L	L	L
13--Crime	-	C	L	L	L
14--Ethical authority	-	C	L	L	L
15--Cheating on tests	-	C	L	-	L
16--Sex relations	C	C	L	L	L
17--Alcoholic beverages	L	C	L	L	L
18--Nature of God	C	C	L	L	L
19--The Bible	C	C	L	L	L
20--Man's responsibility	C	C	L	L	L

TABLE 4

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM THE NORM GROUP TOWARDS LIBERALISM  
OR CONSERVATISM FOR EACH PHILOSOPHIC GROUP ON EACH  
POLYPHASIC VALUES INVENTORY ITEM

	Realist	Pragmatist	Idealist	Existen.	None
1--Purpose of science	C	-	-	L	-
2--Right to vote	-	-	-	-	-
3--Communism	C	L	L	L	-
4--War	C	-	L	L	-
5--Foreign policy	C	-	L	L	L
6--Free enterprise	C	-	-	L	-
7--Labor unions	-	-	-	-	-
8--Educational methods	-	-	-	L	-
9--School curriculum	C	-	-	L	-
10--Academic freedom	C	-	-	L	L
11--Equality of men	-	-	-	-	-
12--Race relations	C	-	-	L	-
13--Crime	C	-	L	L	-
14--Ethical authority	C	-	-	L	-
15--Cheating on tests	-	-	-	-	-
16--Sex relations	-	-	-	L	-
17--Alcoholic beverages	-	-	-	-	-
18--Nature of God	C	-	-	L	L
19--The Bible	C	-	-	L	-
20--Man's responsibility	C	-	C	L	-

of men, race relations, and alcoholic beverages. On the right to vote they were slightly more moderate and on ethical conduct they were slightly more heterogeneous. Of the seven items in which Catholics were more conservative than the norm, four were in the personal-moral and religious category. Cheating on tests was the only personal-moral or religious item in which the Catholics did not show a significant difference from the norm. On sex relations and man's responsibility, the Catholics were the most conservative of all of the twenty groups studied.

The Protestants were more conservative than the norm group on every item, with the equality of men the only one with a non-significant difference. On many of the items, they were the most conservative group of all twenty. This was especially true in the personal-moral and religious questions from fourteen to twenty, with the exception of sex relations and man's responsibility in which the Catholics were slightly more conservative.

The Jewish group was more liberal than the norm on all twelve items on which they differed significantly. The items on which they did not differ were the purpose of science, the right to vote, foreign policy, free enterprise, labor unions, educational methods, school curriculum, and equality of men. On all of the personal-moral and religious questions they were more liberal than the norm.

Students with "other" religious preferences were more liberal than the norm group on fifteen of the sixteen items in which they were significantly different. They were more conservative on the item

relating to school curriculum. The items on which there was no difference were the right to vote, communism, equality of men, and cheating on tests. On seven of the items showing a significant difference they also showed a more heterogeneous distribution: war, free enterprise, school curriculum, academic freedom, race relations, alcoholic beverages, and the Bible.

The students who expressed no religious preference were one of the most liberal groups studied. On seventeen of the items they expressed a significantly more liberal position than the norm group and on two items a more heterogeneous position. On most of these items they and the Socialists were the two most liberal groups. They did not differ from the norm on the purpose of science. On the right to vote and equality of men they were more heterogeneous than the norm group, about equally divided between the conservative and liberal extremes.

#### Philosophic variable

The five philosophic groups were significantly different from the norm group 42 times, 29 of which were by the realist and existentialist groups. The realists were different on fourteen items, pragmatists on two, idealists on six, existentialists on fifteen, and the "none of these" group on five. There were three questions on which there was no philosophic group different from the norm, the right to vote, labor unions, and cheating on tests. Table 4 summarizes the liberal and conservative significant differences for the philosophic groups on each item.

The realists were more conservative than the norm group on thirteen of the fourteen items on which they differed significantly. They did not differ from the norm on the right to vote, labor unions, educational methods, cheating on tests, sex relations, and alcoholic beverages. On the equality of men they were slightly more heterogeneous than the norm. They were the most conservative group of all twenty groups on the purpose of science.

The pragmatists were significantly different from the norm groups on only two items, communism and ethical authority. They were more liberal than the norm concerning communism and more homogeneous regarding ethical authority.

The idealist group was different from the norm group on six items. They were more conservative on man's responsibility, more homogeneous on the purpose of science, and more liberal than the norm on communism, war, foreign policy, and crime.

The existentialists were more liberal than the norm group on all of the fifteen items on which they differed significantly. The items on which they did not differ were the right to vote, labor unions, equality of men, cheating on tests, and alcoholic beverages. The existentialist group was the most liberal of all the philosophic groups.

The students in the "none of these" group were significantly different from the norm group on five items. They were more heterogeneous on ethical authority and alcoholic beverages, and more liberal on foreign policy, academic freedom, and the nature of God.

### Socio-economic variable

There were very few items on which the socio-economic groups were different from the norm group. Of the eighteen significant differences, the poor group was different on eight, the lower middle-class on four, the middle-class on one, the upper middle-class on one, and the well-to-do on four. There were only three items, war, labor unions, and race relations, which had more than one socio-economic group different from the norm. Table 5 summarizes the liberal and conservative significant differences for the socio-economic groups on each item.

The poor group was significantly different from the norm group on eight items. They were more conservative than the norm on the purpose of science and more liberal on war, labor unions, educational methods, crime, ethical authority, sex relations, and the Bible.

The lower middle-class was significantly different on only four items: communism, foreign policy, labor unions, and race relations. On all of these items they were more liberal than the norm.

The middle-class was more conservative than the norm group on the item concerning war, the only item on which they differed significantly from the norm.

The upper middle-class was only significantly different from the norm on the item relating to alcoholic beverages. On this item they were more liberal.

The well-to-do group was significantly different on four items. They were more liberal than the norm on cheating on tests ~~and more~~

and more conservative on the right to vote, labor unions, and race relations.

On many of the items there was a noticeable relationship between the various distributions of responses of the various socio-economic groups. Although there was no test of significance, it appeared that there was a tendency for the lower groups to generally have a more liberal position than the higher groups.

TABLE 5

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES FROM THE NORM GROUP TOWARDS LIBERALISM  
OR CONSERVATISM FOR EACH SOCIO-ECONOMIC LEVEL ON EACH  
POLYPHASIC VALUES INVENTORY ITEM

Item	Poor	Lower-mid.	Middle	Upper-mid.	W.-to-do
1--Purpose of science	C	-	-	-	-
2--Right to vote	-	-	-	-	C
3--Communism	-	L	-	-	-
4--War	L	-	C	-	-
5--Foreign policy	-	L	-	-	-
6--Free enterprise	-	-	-	-	-
7--Labor unions	L	L	-	-	C
8--Educational methods	L	-	-	-	-
9--School curriculum	-	-	-	-	-
10--Academic freedom	-	-	-	-	-
11--Equality of men	-	-	-	-	-
12--Race relations	-	L	-	-	C
13--Crime	L	-	-	-	-
14--Ethical authority	L	-	-	-	-
15--Cheating on tests	-	-	-	-	L
16--Sex relations	L	-	-	-	-
17--Alcoholic beverages	-	-	-	L	-
18--Nature of God	-	-	-	-	-
19--The Bible	L	-	-	-	-
20--Man's responsibility	L	-	-	-	-

### Summary

The Republicans, Protestants, and realists were the most conservative of all the groups. On almost every item, these three groups were more conservative than the norm. Much of the similarity between the values of the Republicans and Protestants is probably due to the facts that 75.1% of the Republicans were Protestants and 44.2% of the Protestants were Republicans, a much larger proportion than any of the other religious groups. The conservatism of Republicans on religious items and the conservatism of Protestants on many politically related items might be due to these interrelationships. The realists did not appear to be very different from the norm group in their distribution on the political, religious, or socio-economic variables. They had approximately the same percentage of Republicans and Protestants as the norm. Students choosing the realist position appear to be a unique conservative group, differing from that of the Republicans and Protestants.

On most items the three conservative groups did not deviate from the norm nearly as much as the groups which were more liberal than the norm. All three groups were quite large; the Republicans were the smallest of the three with 30.7% of the total sample. The realist and Protestant groups were the largest of the philosophic and religious groups and the Republicans were very close to being the largest of the political groups, only 2.1% smaller than the Democrats. This is in contrast to the liberal groups, most of which were quite small.

There were seven groups who were consistently more liberal than the norm: the "other", "none", and Socialist political groups; the "other", "none", and Jewish religious groups; and the existentialist philosophic group. Three of these groups were very liberal compared to the norm on most items: the Socialists, existentialists and those with no religious preference. The remaining four groups were liberal on most items, but not as much as the three extreme groups.

In examining the interrelationships between the three most extreme liberal groups, Socialists, existentialists, and the "none" religious group, a pattern emerges. Of the five political groups, the Socialists had the largest proportion of existentialists (13.3%) and those with no religious preference (44.4%). Of the five religious groups, the "none" group had the largest percentage of Socialists (4.1%) and existentialists (15.0%). Of the five philosophic groups, the existentialists had the largest proportion of Socialists (2.2%) and those with no religious preference (27.7%). These figures suggest a tendency for the groups to be related, but except for a high proportion of Socialists who had no religious preference, the other figures suggest that for the most part one group is not heavily composed of students from any of the other two groups. Since there were many groups which showed a liberal difference from the norm, students with liberal views had varying combinations of religious, political, and philosophic preferences.

The two "other" groups, religious and political, besides being liberal on most items were also heterogeneous on many. Since

there was a larger proportion of both conservative and liberal responses than the norm for these groups, it appears that many of the students choosing these groups had values which were at one extreme or the other but did not find a religious or political choice listed that they would prefer. If the possible choices of preference would have been greater or more clearly defined, these students could possibly have been divided into separate liberal and conservative groups.

The remaining groups did not show consistent patterns in their responses to the twenty items. The Democrats and Catholics were about evenly divided between distributions of responses more liberal and more conservative than the norm. On many items their distributions were close to that of the norm group. They were, however, different from the other groups to which they were compared. On most items, both groups had a distribution of responses noticeably different from the other four political or religious categories.

The pragmatists, idealists and those in the "none of these" philosophic group did not show any definite conservative or liberal pattern and were only significantly different from the norm on a few items.

The five socio-economic groups had very small differences from the norm on most items. The only consistent pattern was that the poor and lower middle-class were slightly more liberal than the other classes on many of the items. There were very few significant differences between the norm group and any of the five socio-economic groups on the twenty items.