

# Political Science and Policy Making

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# Political Science and Policy-Makers: Common Interests

- Political science is the closest academic discipline to policy-making
- Many political scientists study policy processes and policy consequences
- Many political scientists speak to policy-makers, either directly or indirectly

# Who are political scientists?

- Academics, primarily, with academic incentive structures
  - Promotion
  - Publication rewards
  - Easily “bought” with modest status rewards
- Split into subfields, according to topics
  - “Comparative politics”
  - International Relations
  - Political Theory
  - Policy-making and policy studies

# Who are political scientists?

- Interested in a combination of pure and applied research



**Pure  
Research**

Examples:

- Theories of voting
- Models of party competition
- Explaining institutional change

Pure  
Research

Examples:

- Do photos on ballots affect voting?
- Will public accept electronic voting?
- What affects women's representation?

**Applied  
Research**

## Examples:

- Effects of campaign spending
- Determinants of turnout
- Party system consolidation in Eastern Europe



# Differences from Policy-Makers

	Political Scientist	Policy Maker
<i>Output Concern</i>	Publication	Public policy
<i>Target audience</i>	Peers	Governments, publics
<i>Time constraints</i>	(very?) loose	Firm
<i>Cost of "failure"</i>	Limited, buffered	Severe, often direct
<i>Preference toward parsimony</i>	Complexity preferred	Simplicity preferred

# How political scientists can contribute to policy-making

- Much “pure” research has spinoffs useful for policy-makers
- Expertise is frequently useful to inform decision-making
- Some political science research has direct policy implications

# Example 1: Electronic voting

- What is public legitimacy of EVMs?
- What effect will EVMs have on representation?
- What is the risk of fraud using EVMs?
- Neutrality of academic experts highly beneficial
- Depth of coverage also useful, even though findings are ultimately highly synthesized and summarized

## Example 2: Campaign spending

- What effect does spending have on electoral success?
- Does “spending” through incumbency perks unfairly advantage sitting TDs?
- What is a a fair level for spending limits?

# Example 2: Campaign spending

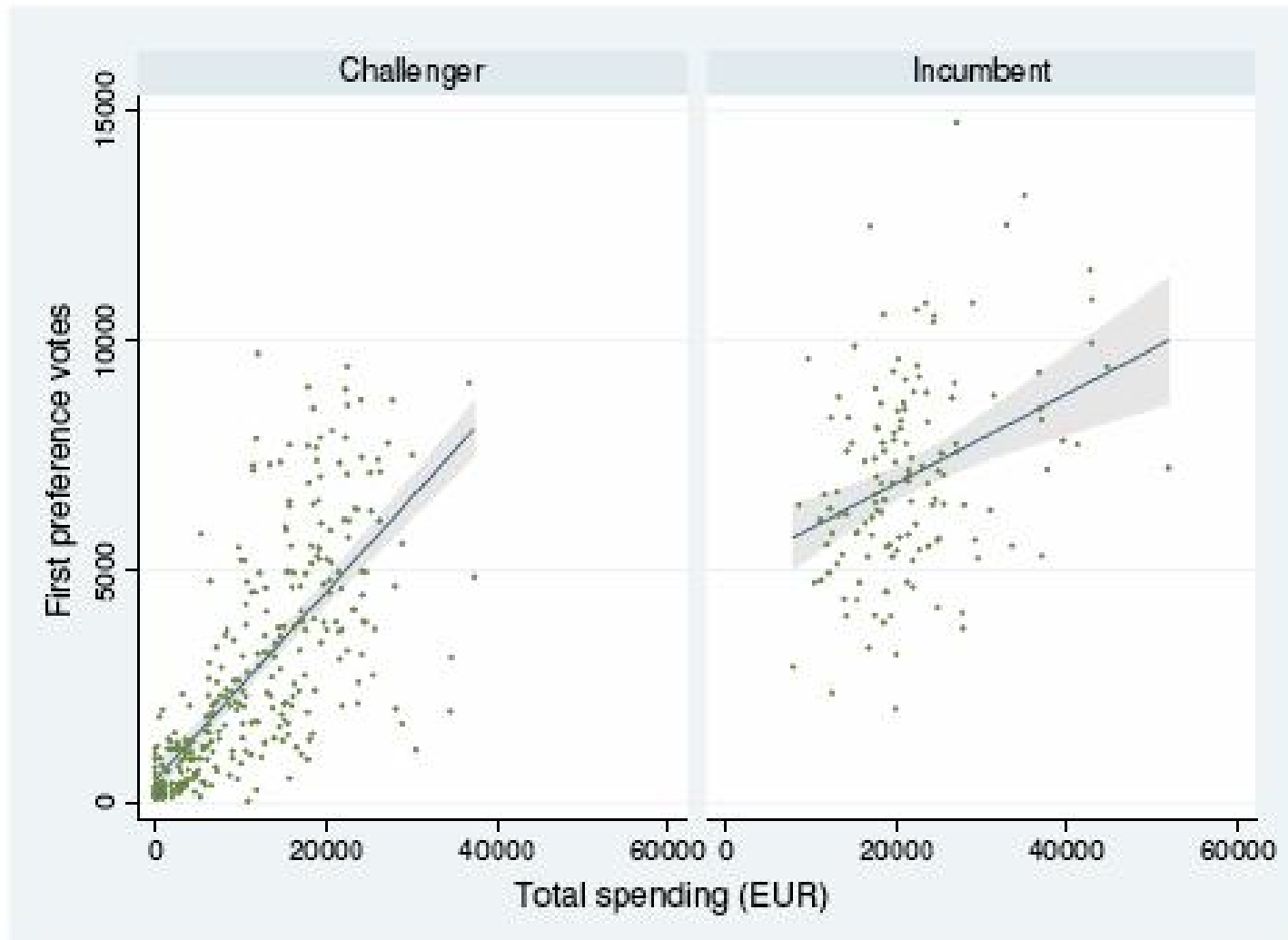
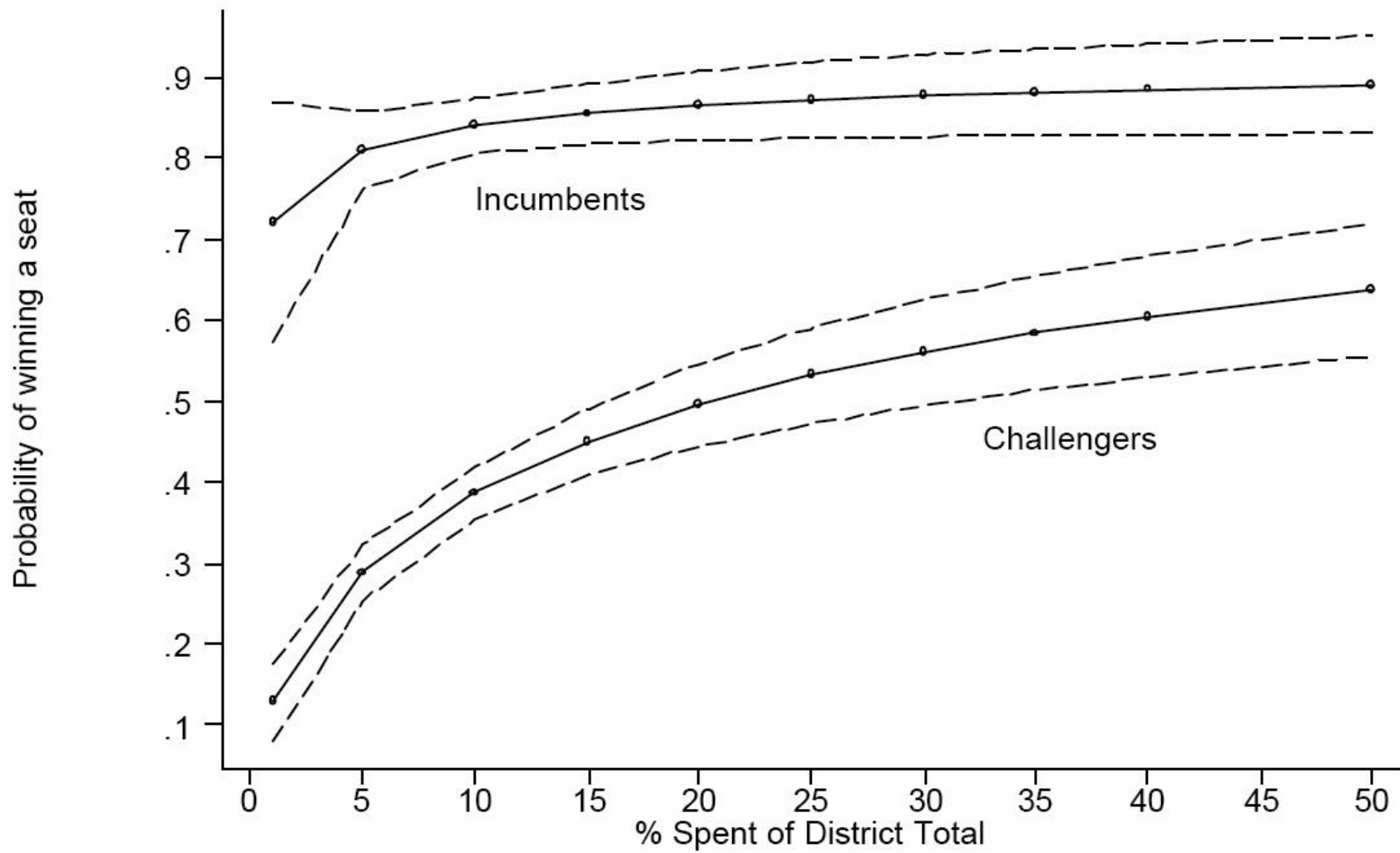


Figure 2. First preference votes by total candidate spending.



## Example 3: Electoral System Design

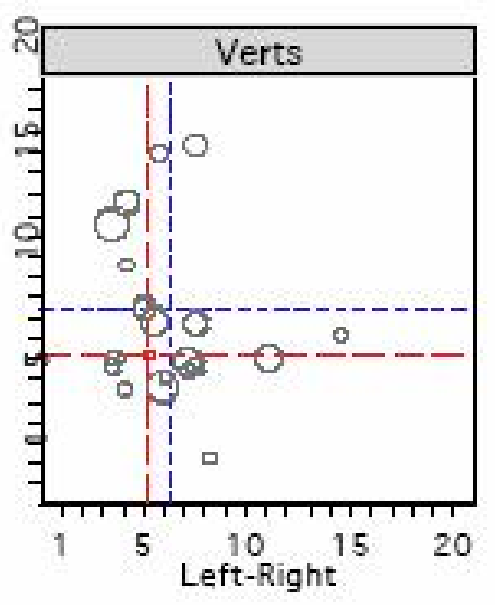
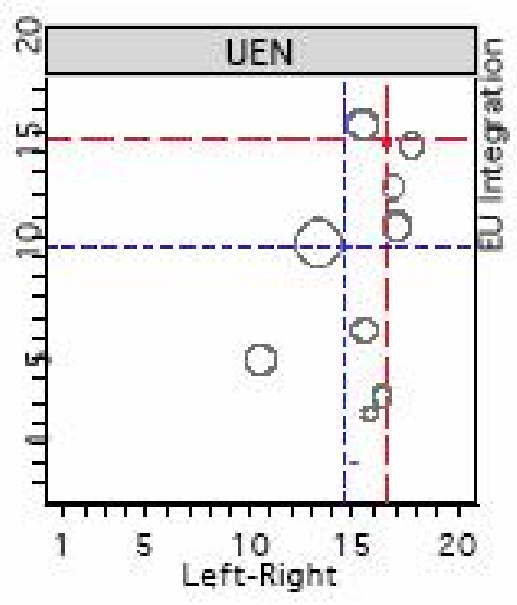
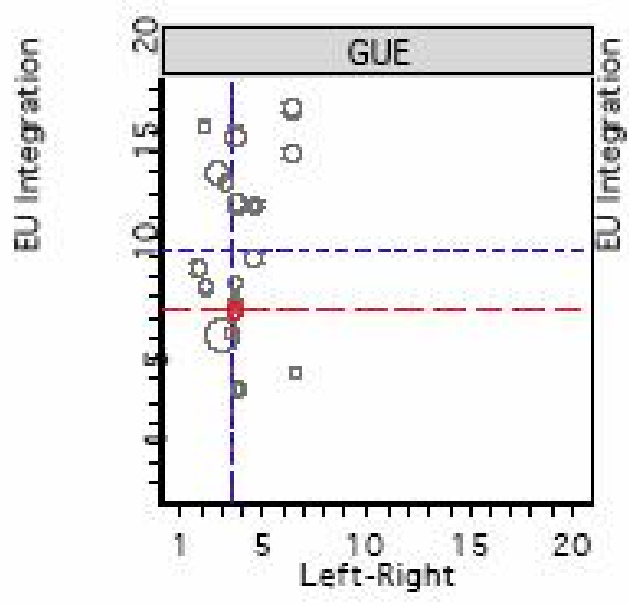
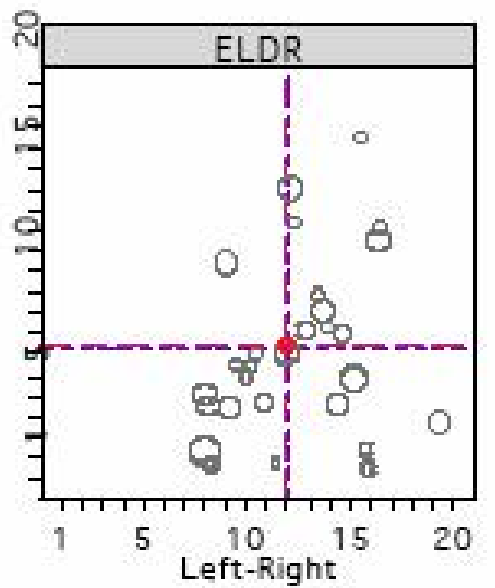
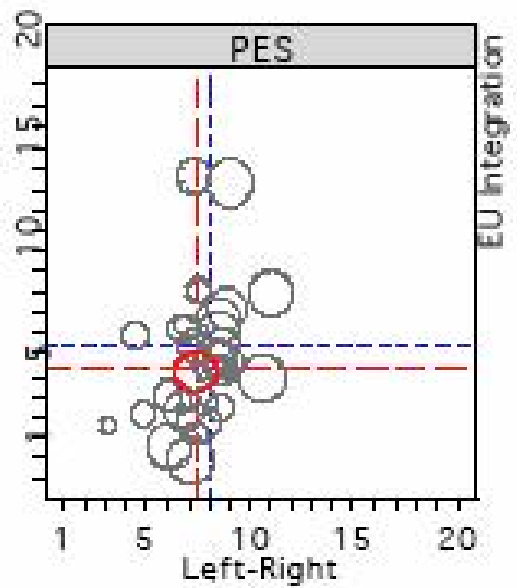
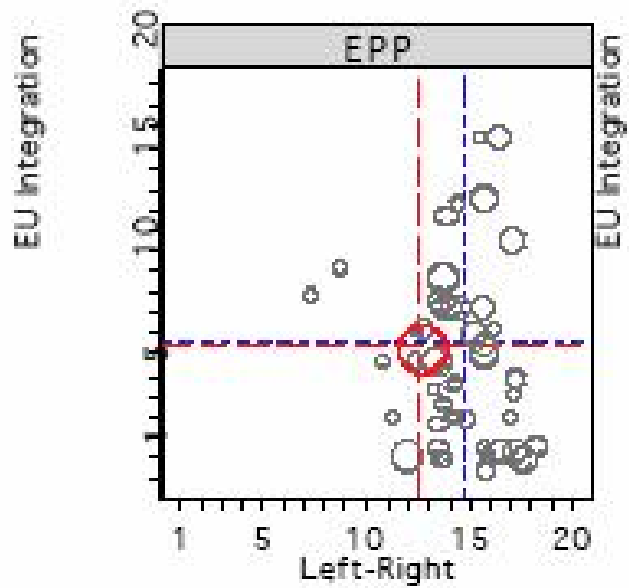
- Balancing representation with governance
- Adopting rules considered “legitimate”
- Adopting rules that will be stable and not subject to manipulation
- Consequences of redrawing constituency boundaries

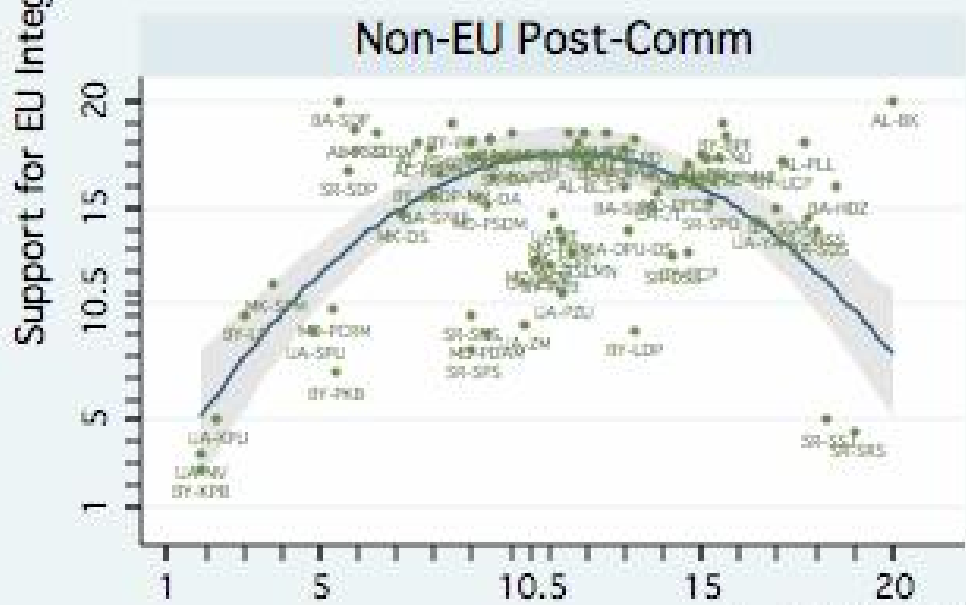
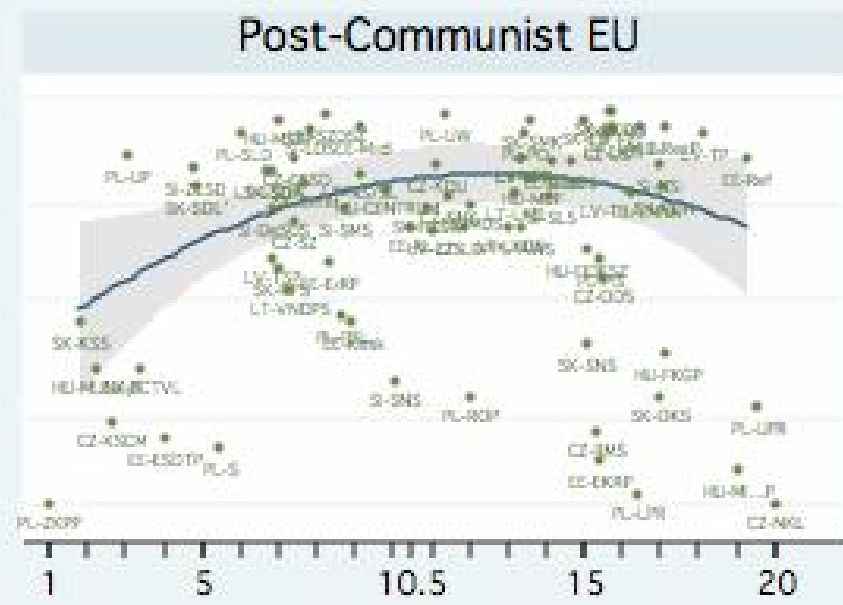
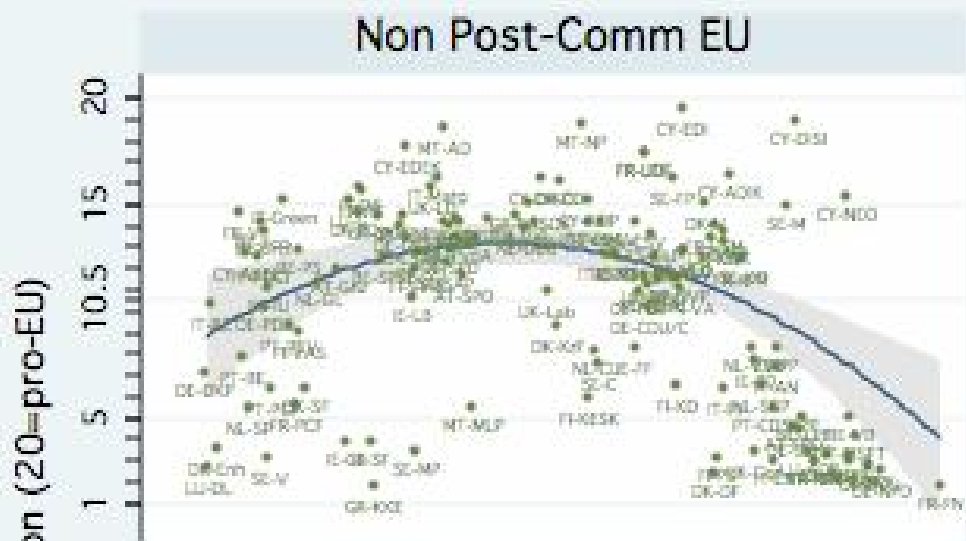
**Table 2** Comparing the proportionality of different electoral formulas<sup>a</sup>

<i>Formula</i>	<i>Combined regression coefficients</i>		<i>Lijphart (1986) ranking</i>	
	<i>Constant</i>	<i>log M</i>		
St.-Laguë HA	13.13	−6.526	Hare LR	<i>Most proportional</i>
Hare LR	13.43	−6.954	Droop LR	↑
Droop LR	13.68	−7.023	St.-Laguë HA	
Danish HA	14.28	−7.355		
Imperiali LR	14.86	−7.680	Imperiali LR	
Modified St.-Laguë HA	15.07	−7.828		
Hungarian St.-Laguë HA	15.99	−8.502		
d'Hondt HA	16.61	−8.293	d'Hondt HA	
Imperiali HA	24.16	−10.722	Imperiali HA	
Equal proportions HA	35.94	−21.029		
Adams HA	36.04	−20.961		↓
Plurality	50.44	—	Plurality	<i>Least proportional</i>

## Example 5: Globalization and Development

- What are the political consequences of globalization?
- What are the political causes and effects of underdevelopment?
- How can international integration processes be more effectively managed?

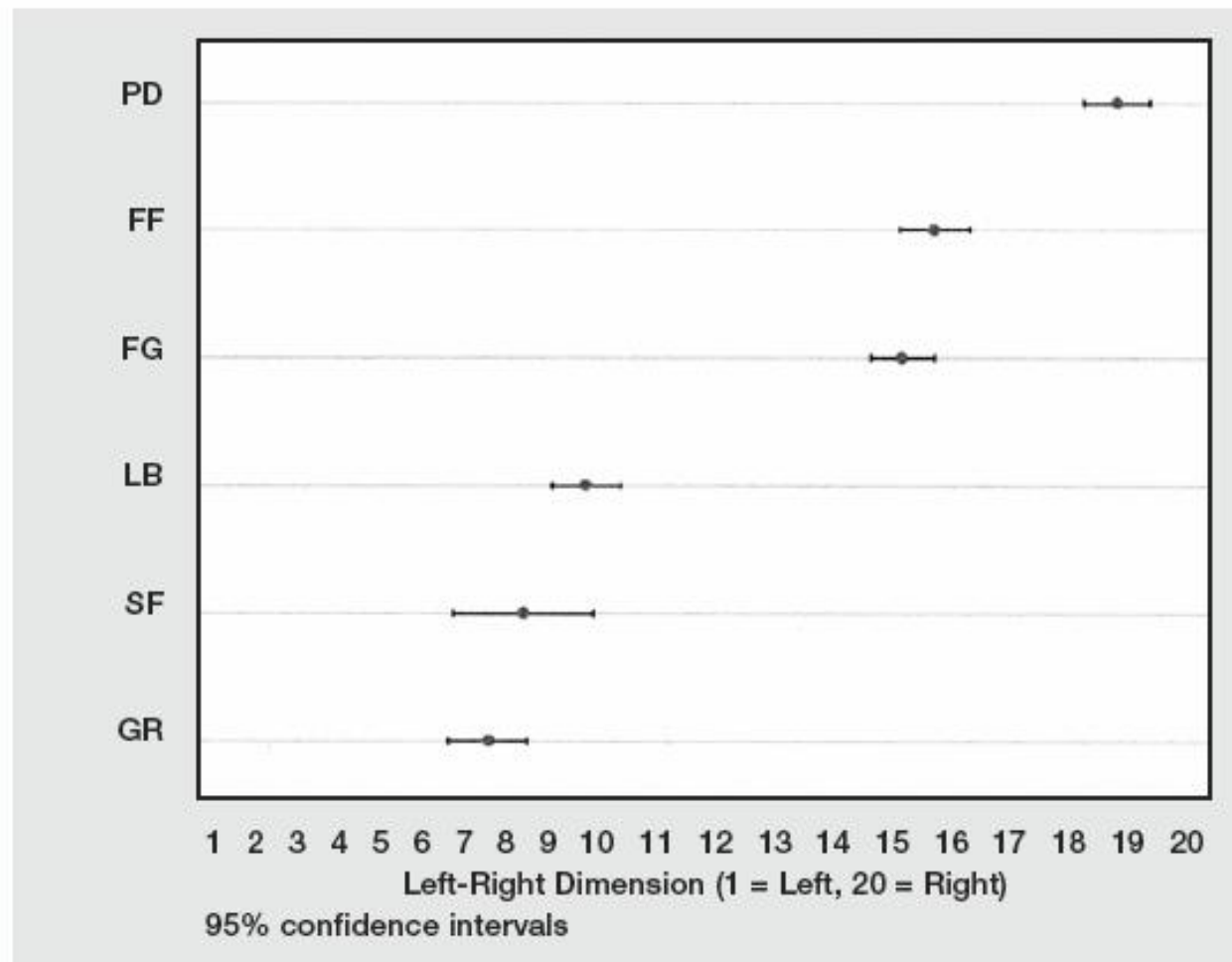




Left-Right Policy Position

# Example 6: Political parties and policy formulation

Figure 3: *Party Positions on the General Left-Right Dimension*



# Example 6: Political parties and policy formulation

Figure 6: *Irish Voters and Parties in Two-Dimensional Policy Space: Economic v. Northern Ireland*

