2017 TRIP Survey of Policymakers: Topline Results

October 19, 2018

For the 2017 survey of Policymakers, we surveyed individuals who worked in the executive branch of the U.S. Government during the administrations of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, or Barack Obama. We used the Federal Yellow Book to identify individuals employed in one of several dozen offices or agencies with responsibility for creating and/or implementing U.S. trade, national security, or development policy at the level of "assistant director" or above. We mailed or emailed a recruitment letter, signed by a prominent former U.S. Government official (Robert Gates in security and Robert Zoellick for development and trade) to all individuals for which we could secure contact information. In all, this strategy yielded responses from 625 individuals. The survey was in the field November 20, 2017 to January 24, 2018.

1 Demographic Questions

Question 1: Age

	Age	n	Percentage
1	25-29	4	0.64
2	30-34	3	0.48
3	35-39	19	3.04
4	40-44	31	4.96
5	45-49	50	8.00
6	50-54	71	11.36
7	55-59	95	15.20
8	60-64	106	16.96
9	65-69	88	14.08
10	70-74	74	11.84
11	75-79	30	4.80
12	80-84	11	1.76
13	85-89	3	0.48

Question 2: Gender

	Gender	n	Percentage
1	Male	439	74.50
2	Female	150	25.50

Question 3: Rank in Gov

	Rank	n	Percentage
1	Senate confirmable policy or department/agency leader	169	27.04
2	Political appointee not-confirmable (DASD, office director, special assistant)	117	18.72
3	SES-level civil servant	135	21.60
4	Professional at the GS/GG 15/Band 5 level	80	12.80
5	Professional at the GS/GG 13/Band 4 level	5	0.80
6	Military officer	34	5.44
7	Other	48	7.68

Question 4: Followup for those that answered Military Officer: Rank in Military

	Military Rank	n	Percentage
1	O-10	12	1.92
2	O-9	4	0.64
3	O-7 or O-8	6	0.96
4	O-6	9	1.44
5	O-5	3	0.48

Question 5: Which of the following best describes your positions generally on economic issues? Social Issues?

Ideology	Economic Issues (Percentage)	Social Issues (Percentage)
Very conservative	2.7	2.3
Somewhat conservative	31.9	11.6
Middle of the road	30.7	17
Somewhat liberal	29.4	43.8
Very liberal	5.3	25.8

2 Social Science Usefulness

Question 6: How often do you, or did you, relate the arguments and evidence made in social science research to your work?

	Response option	n	Percentage
1	Daily	163	29.00
2	A few times a week	140	24.90
3	A few times a month	124	22.10
4	A few times a year	116	20.60
5	Never	19	3.40

Question 7: Which of the following best describes how you relate the arguments and evidence made in social science research to the your work?

	Response option	n	Percentage
1	Provides the intellectual background/framework of my work	361	68.10
2	Directly applies to specific components of my work	125	23.60
3	Helps to provide a common language that helps me work with others	44	8.30

Question 8: Based on your experience working in government, how important do you believe it is to seek out the results of academic research in each of the following situations?

Situation	Very Important(%)	Somewhat Important(%)	Not Very Important(%)	Not important at all (%)
To provide an outside perspective	51.5	38.9	8.2	1.4
To help solve a novel policy problem	47.2	37.6	12.5	2.7
To provide more technical expertise	40.3	40.1	16.4	3.2
To provide external support for policy	33.2	46.6	16.1	4.1
To evaluate the impact of policy	25.7	45.9	21.1	7.3

Question 9: For your colleagues in government service, how significant are the following potential obstacles to using academic knowledge in their work?

Obstacle	Very Significant(%)	Somewhat Significant(%)	Slightly Significant(%)	Not Significant at all (%)
Not enough time to follow academic work	56.10	33.20	8.70	2.00
Academic work is too abstract	45.40	41.20	10.70	2.70
Academic work is not timely	34.50	45.50	14.60	5.40
Academic work is mot readily available	14.10	35.10	28.0	22.80
Academic work is too jargony	17.30	35.20	30.90	16.60
Academic work is too quantitative	10.90	22.20	36.70	30.10
Academic work is too focused on internal debates	25.20	33.60	30.90	10.40

Question 10: How useful to policy makers are the following ways of conducting social science research?

Research Type	Very Useful(%)	Somewhat Useful(%)	Not very Useful(%)	Not Useful at all (%)
Theoretical Analysis	7.40	45.30	39.60	7.70
Quantitative Analysis	36.10	47.80	13.40	2.70
Policy Analysis	64.00	31.90	3.60	0.50
Area Studies/Ethnography	47.70	37.00	13.80	1.50
Historical Case Studies	40.10	49.00	10.70	0.20
Contemporary Case Studies	52.60	42.60	4.50	0.40
Formal Models	10.10	38.50	41.20	10.30
Interpretivist Analysis	9.60	40.90	35.20	14.30
Experiments	11.20	36.30	39.20	13.40
Survey Research	37.70	50.80	9.90	1.60

Question 11: How useful to policy makers are the arguments and evidence used in the following disciplines?

Discipline	Very Useful(%)	Somewhat Useful(%)	Not very Useful(%)	Not Useful at all (%)
Economics	47.00	47.00	6.00	0.00
Political Science	24.80	57.10	15.70	2.50
Sociology	11.70	52.70	31.70	3.80
Anthropology	8.90	37.50	45.10	8.90
Psychology	10.30	44.80	40.00	4.80
Public Policy	40.20	51.60	7.60	0.60
International Affairs	55.80	41.40	2.80	0.00
Area Studies	57.30	38.30	4.40	0.00
History	39.60	50.00	10.10	0.30
Law	28.30	52.40	18.10	1.30
Business	17.80	49.00	29.90	3.20
Hard Sciences	19.80	36.40	32.90	10.90

Question 12: How should scholars contribute to the policy-making process: Select all that apply.

	Response option	Percentage
1	As informal advisors	86.94
2	As creators of new information/knowledge for policy makers	84.26
3	As trainers of policy makers	55.81
4	As formal participants	45.80
5	Other	4.83
6	Should not be involved in policy-making process	1.61

Question 13: In the context of your job in the U.S. Government, how important are the following sources of information?

Source	Very Important(%)	Somewhat Important(%)	Not Very Important(%)	Not important at all (%)
Academic Books	7.20	42.10	41.90	8.80
Scholarly Journal Article	18.90	45.90	29.60	5.50
Policy journal article	35.50	54.10	8.40	2.00
Newspapers and magazines	62.90	29.50	6.20	1.40
Think Tank Reports	42.40	52.80	4.30	0.50
Blogs	11.30	43.00	37.40	8.30
Television/Radio	12.50	34.50	42.80	10.30
Classified reports	69.50	22.30	5.90	2.30
Social media	2.10	21.50	42.90	33.50

For this experiment, we randomly assigned three levels of scholarly support for a generic policy, 52%(Scholars split), 74%(scholars support), and 93% (Scholars strongly support). The higher the level of scholarly support presented the more likely policymakers were to answer that scholarly support would "make me more likely to support the policy".
The results broken down by treatment condition are presented below.

Question 14: If you learned that X percent of experts in International Relations have concluded that a particular policy would benefit the United States, would that fact make you more likely to support the policy, less likely to support the policy, or have no effect on your view?

	Treatment Condition	Response option	n	Percentage
1	Scholars split	It would make me more likely to support the policy	50	27
2	Scholars split	It would not influence my view	136	73
3	Scholars split	It would make me less likely to support the policy	0	0
4	Scholars support	It would make me more likely to support the policy	100	56
5	Scholars support	It would not influence my view	80	44
6	Scholars support	It would make me less likely to support the policy	0	0
7	Scholars strongly support	It would make me more likely to support the policy	146	77
8	Scholars strongly support	It would not influence my view	43	23
9	Scholars strongly support	It would make me less likely to support the policy	1	1

Question 15: How often did you visit new media or blogs authored by scholars of international relations?

	Response option	n	Percentage
1	Daily	70	11.20
2	A few times a week	119	19.04
3	A few times a month	134	21.44
4	A few times a year	128	20.48
5	Never	108	17.28

Question 16: Do you follow any scholars on social media platforms such as Twitter or Facebook?

	Response option	n	Percentage
1	No	426	68.16
2	Yes	130	20.80

Question 17: Are you familiar with the following:

	Academic Concept	Percentage answering "Yes"
1	Samuel Huntington's Clash of Civilization thesis	91.56
2	Theory of mutually assured destruction	99.06
3	Democratic peace thesis	67.50
4	Nuclear taboo thesis	55.31