

Explaining Public Attitudes on State Legislative Professionalism

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Abstract

Scholars have long argued that state legislative professionalism, or the provision of staff, legislator salary, and session length, has behavioral incentives for legislators and implications for legislative capacity. Scant attention, however, has been devoted to public attitudes on the provision of these legislative resources. Using survey data on preferences for features associated with a citizen legislature versus a professional legislature, we examine the contours of public attitudes on professionalism and test models on the factors associated with these attitudes. Results suggest partisanship, trust, and approval of the local delegation matter, but the factors differ by the legislative professionalism of the respondent's state and for low versus high knowledge citizens.

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Introduction

One of the most oft-noted aspects of state legislatures is that they vary considerably in institutional design and the resources available to legislators. In particular, features associated with greater legislative professionalism, such as session length, legislator compensation, and a full-time professional staff, differ across the states. Often state constitutions expressly restrict these legislative features, and in other cases the constitution limits the legislature's ability to change legislative capacity on these dimensions. In addition, legislators may feel constrained by public opinion on government spending, ideological views on limiting government, and the saliency of scandals, perceived corruption, and perceptions of legislator greed.

Although there are a number of measures of legislative professionalism, they all attempt to discern "the enhancement of the capacity of the legislature to perform its role in the policymaking process with an expertise, seriousness, and effort comparable to that of other actors in the process" (Mooney 1994, 70-71). Grumm (1971), Morehouse (1983), the Citizens Conference on State Legislatures (1974), Bowman and Kearney (1988) and Squire (1992) have published the most widely cited and generally accepted professionalism measures (Mooney 1994), but others have developed alternatives (see Squire 2007 for a recent review). In general, the measures rely on session length, legislator compensation and staff resources to reflect the greater capacity of legislatures. In addition, the Squire (1992) measure incorporated the use of Congress as the anchor on the scale (ranging from zero to one), and states are measured in comparison to the value of one for the most professional legislature (Congress). Although scores for each state vary over time, Squire (2007) has shown stability in the rankings of states, especially those in the extremes of the measure. In addition, Mooney (1994) argues that the

choice of scale seems to matter little as the various indices correlate highly and thus appear to be measuring the same concept.

The state politics literature has devoted extensive study to measurement of state legislative professionalism, but the measures have also been used extensively as an independent variable. Studies have found that legislative professionalism has an impact on institutional operations, policy output, and incentives for legislator behavior, and we discuss these in more detail in the next section. In addition, there are a handful of studies that have examined the effect of legislative professionalism on public opinion about state government. For example, Squire (1993) has examined the relationship between legislative professionalism and public opinion on the performance of the state legislature. Similarly, Kelleher and Wolak (2007) demonstrate that legislative professionalism is negatively associated with public confidence in state legislatures.

Scant attention, however, has been devoted to public approval of legislative professionalism (or at least the features political scientists associate with the concept). This is an important hole in the literature because public preferences about the institutional arrangement of government may be related to their attitudes and beliefs about representation and their ideas about what is appropriate to expect out of government. In the context of state government, people's views about how state legislatures are organized may be related to their expectations about state government and to the behavior and performance of their own legislators.

We make several contributions to the literature on state legislatures. First, we develop survey items to measure public attitudes on legislative professionalism. In the survey, we asked respondents to assess their views on state legislative session length, state legislator salary, and state legislative staff resources. Second, after describing public attitudes on each of these features of legislative professionalism, we develop and test a series of hypotheses to explain

variation in these attitudes. Specifically, we argue that public preferences regarding legislative professionalism can be explained by an individual's partisan identification, general trust and trust in government, feelings of representation, and the type of legislature found in their state.

Regarding this final relationship, we argue that a state's legislative professionalism does not have the same effect on all citizens, rather that the impact of living in a state with a particular type of state legislature is conditional on party preferences and fundamentally different for individuals knowledgeable about party control of government.

The balance of the paper proceeds as follows. After a review of the literature and a brief description of the survey methods, we assess public opinion on three primary components of legislative professionalism. We then develop hypotheses to model attitudes about legislative professionalism, and then provide the results of our empirical tests. We conclude in the final section of the paper.

Legislative Professionalism

Much of the literature on legislative professionalism has focused on the measurement of the concept as well as the effects of professionalism for the institution and implications for the behavior of legislators (Squire 2007). In general, the least professionalized legislatures (often referred to as citizen legislatures) have fewer resources to research policy, hold hearings, focus on legislative details, deliberate, or compete with the other branches of state government.

Alternatively, the professional legislatures near the top of the scale have far greater capacity for legislative deliberation and policy formation, and the legislative role is a full time job with corresponding compensation. The legislators from the state legislatures in the middle range (hybrid or semiprofessional legislatures) face cross pressures in terms of time demands, a lack of staff resources, and often the need for other income opportunities.

For the states in the hybrid and professional categories, most reforms occurred during the 1960s and 1970s with only incremental change since the 1980s (Squire and Hamm 2005). Explanations for why some states adopted professionalism reforms at a greater pace than others have varied. Mooney's (1995) study shows that population size, heterogeneity of the populace, the state economy, the size of the bureaucracy, the power of the governor, restrictions on session length, and the professionalism of surrounding states influenced a state's adoption of professionalism reform. King (2000) offers similar evidence with a panel design with more data. Malhotra's (2006) study also included state population and economic characteristics, but the key variable was change in state spending. Relying on Fiorina and Noll's (1978) theory that legislators seeking reelection focus on the ombudsman role for their constituents, Malhotra argues that legislators increased professionalism to enhance their ability to serve in this role and respond to greater state spending. Using data from five cross-sections from 1910 to 1999, Squire and Hamm (2005) show that state income is the only consistently significant and substantive factor explaining legislator pay and session length, and region, party, culture, and diversity measures are not consistent across time periods.

While attention has been focused on the measurement of legislative professionalism and explanations of changes in it across the states, a number of studies have also examined the impact of professionalism on the legislature. Professionalism has been used to explain a legislature's institutional development (Squire 1988, 1992), the committee structure (Freeman and Hedlund 1993), the use of logrolling (Reed and Schansberg 1996), increased legislative efficiency (Squire 1998) and to understand divided government (Fiorina 1994, 1997; Squire 1997). In addition, others point out that higher salaries allow legislators to focus on the job so that they are more informed and therefore effective (Squire 1988).

More professional legislatures spend more time in developing legislation, deliberating on policy, and interacting with other government branches on more equal footing (Thompson 1986; Rosenthal 1996). Further, legislators in professional chambers may enjoy more success in public policy implementation (Karnig and Sigelman 1975; Roeder 1979), and there may be greater congruence between public opinion and policy in more professional legislatures with opportunities for advancement to higher offices (Maestas 2000). Further, session length and the staff per legislator are significantly correlated with leadership turnover as is legislative professionalism on policy innovation and legislator “batting averages” in getting bills passed into law (Kousser 2005). As Squire and Hamm (2005) argue “the cumulative effects of professionalization on a particular legislature can be profound” (96).

Studies also suggest legislative professionalism creates incentives for individual legislator behavior. In general, more professional legislatures have a higher percentage of legislators identifying as full-time legislators (Squire and Hamm 2005). It has also been argued that professionalism affects legislators' attitudes towards career advancement, job satisfaction, turnover, and tenure (Squire 1988; Weber, Tucker, and Brace 1991; Moncrief, Thompson and Kurtz 1996; Berkman 1994; Rosenthal 1998) as well as the attitudes of both citizens and politicians (Squire 1993). Incumbents in professional legislatures appear to enjoy greater electoral safety (Berry, Berkman, and Schneiderman 2000), and it may be because professional legislatures attract more ambitious politicians who devote more attention to constituents (Maestas 2003).

In sum, scholars have demonstrated that legislative professionalism has important institutional implications and legislator behavioral effects. To the extent that the public cares about the performance and representation of their state legislative bodies, thus, we should

observe variation in their views about legislative professionalism. In the next section of the paper, we turn to the measurement of public opinion on legislative professionalism.

Assessing Public Opinion on Legislative Professionalism

To measure and explain public opinion on state legislative professionalism, we included several questions on the 2007 Cooperative Congressional Election Survey (CCES). To measure preferences on legislative professionalism, the survey instrument for this analysis focused on three elements of the legislative professionalism concept developed in the state politics literature: session length, legislator salary, and legislative staff. Specifically, respondents were asked the following:

Next, we would like to ask you a couple of questions about your state legislature. State legislatures vary in how often they meet, how much state legislators are paid, and how much staff legislators are provided. As you think about your state legislature, do you prefer: a short session length (couple of month a year) or a long session length (most of the year); a part-time legislative salary or a full-time legislative salary; a small, part-time staff or a large, full-time, professional staff.

Each of the three questions relied on a seven-point scale with a score of one for the legislative feature associated more with a citizen legislature and a score of seven for the more professional aspect of the institution.

The results in Figure 1a show that citizens are generally supportive of longer session lengths with almost half of respondents on the end of the scale favoring longer session length as opposed to about a third of the respondents who prefer shorter session lengths (mean=4.5, s.d.=1.7) . In comparison, Figure 1b shows a more evenly divided set of opinions on legislator salary. Despite the preference for longer session length, citizens are not as enthusiastic about paying legislators a salary consistent with a more full-time job (mean=4.0, s.d.=1.8). Further, the respondents are even less supportive of legislative staff (as shown in Figure 1c). A full third of

citizens indicated a neutral position, and lower scores outweighed the higher scores (mean=3.9, s.d.=1.6).

(Figure 1 about here)

A simple comparison suggests that opinions on these three legislative features vary systematically across the states. Dividing the respondents into three groups of “citizen,” “hybrid,” and “professional” legislatures (based on Squire and Hamm’s 2005 rankings of the state where the respondent lives), Figure 2 shows the percent of respondents from each type of state who support or strongly support each legislative feature, measured as points six and seven on the seven-point scale.¹ Two patterns emerge: 1) respondents from states with citizen legislatures appear to be less supportive of all three features than citizens from hybrid or especially professional legislature states, and 2) there is more support for longer session length than for legislator salaries and especially professional staff, but each feature receives stronger support from respondents in more professional legislative states. It is also important to point out that no feature ever approaches a majority of support for any of the three groups. Even if we include a score of five from the seven-point scale as evidence of support, the professional group on session length is the only one to surpass 50% in support. We revisit the possible relationship between attitudes toward legislative professionalism and the type of legislature in the state in which the respondent resides in the regression analyses that follow.

(Figure 2 about here)

Generally, measures of legislative professionalism combine the three elements (Mooney 1994; Squire and Hamm 2005; Squire 2007), but it is important to test whether public opinions on the three legislative features are strongly correlated to determine if they hang together as part of a single concept. The simple bivariate correlations show a range from .47 to .69 (with the

weakest relationship between session length and staff and the strongest between salary and staff), and the Cronbach's alpha on the combination of the three measures was 0.82. We also conducted a factor analysis on the three questions, and one dimension emerged with an eigenvalue of 1.7.

Because the tests suggest that the variables are strongly correlated, we created an additive scale of the three measures that ranges from 3 to 21 (descriptive statistics for this variable and all variables in this study are provided in Table 1). The distribution is roughly normal in shape with the mean, median, and mode at the value of 12 (where it could be a respondent with a score of four or neutral on all three measures) with another high point at 15 (likely indicating someone who scored all three features at a five or slightly positive to the more professional legislative perspective). This scale of the respondent's preference for legislative professionalism is our dependent variable in the analysis that follows.

(Table 1 About Here)

Factors Associated with Public Opinion on Legislative Professionalism

What explains public attitudes toward state legislative professionalism? Our hypotheses focus on the respondent's partisanship, approval of the local legislative delegation, trust, the level of professionalism in the state in which they reside, and an interaction effect between party and state professionalism. In addition, we control for standard demographic variables, such as age, minority, education, gender, and rural residence. We have no specific expectations for the demographic variables, but they have been shown to be significantly associated with related concepts, such as confidence in state government (Kelleher and Wolak 2007), support for term limits (Cain and Levin 1999), and attention to state legislatures and assessments of state legislative performance (Squire 1993).

Party identification serves as a filter or screening device for individual perceptions of a variety of political institutions. For example, partisanship influences approval of Congress (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 1998) and state legislatures (Squire 1993). In addition, several studies show that Republicans were more supportive of term limits in the states and for Congress (Donovan and Snipp 1994; Karp 1995; Southwell 1995). If the view of legislative professionalism is that it allows a legislature more time to develop laws and new programs, then it is likely that Republicans would favor the features more consistent with citizen legislatures.

The relationship between party identification and attitudes on legislative professionalism may depend on whether the respondent's party is currently in control of the state legislature. That is, while a respondent's party identification may provide an indication of their overall preferences for the institutional design of the legislature, it might also be the case that Democrats in states with Democratic control and Republicans in states with Republican control are more likely to favor providing capacity for the members of their legislature because it will better enable them to carry out policies consistent with their preferences. To examine this hypothesis, we include an indicator variable that is coded 1 if the respondent's party identification is the same as the party in control of the state legislature (unified control only), and zero otherwise.

Another factor potentially shaping a citizen's view on legislative professionalism is one's approval of the legislators representing the local community. If a citizen approves of his or her representatives, one may be more favorable toward allowing legislators greater resources. While this concept is fairly simple to test for a single member district system such as the U.S. House, it is more complex when assessing approval of state representation that can involve multiple member district systems in the lower or upper chamber. Therefore, the CCES survey included a more general question assessing the approval of "the job that the people who represent your

community are doing in the state legislature?” to avoid confusion and allow the respondent to give a general impression of their local legislators. The respondents were able to distinguish between approval of the community legislative delegation and the overall legislature as the correlation coefficient was only .46 for the two variables.

In a similar vein, it is likely that a citizen who trusts state government is more likely to support a greater allocation of professional resources for the legislature. Trust in government has been shown to be correlated with policy preferences on a wide variety of issues (Hetherington 2004), and cynicism and generic distrust have been linked to support for term limit measures (Southwell 1995; Karp 1995). Individuals with low trust may see resources such as salaries for legislators and staff as a waste of tax dollars or possibly feeding a sense of corruption so we expect a positive relationship between trust in state government and legislative professionalism.

Likewise, a citizen with a low level of interpersonal trust may not see much value in providing greater resources for state legislators. Scholars have noted a decline in levels of interpersonal trust over recent decades (Putnam 1995) with much of the decline occurring in younger cohorts (Rahn and Transue 1997). Further, Brehm and Rahn (1997) have argued that interpersonal trust and confidence in government are associated, and Inglehart (1990) has found evidence that interpersonal trust and support for democratic institutions are related. Therefore, we posit that people who generally fear being taken advantage of by others will not be as likely to trust state legislators with more resources. Similar to the wording in the General Social Survey, the CCES question asked the respondent “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?”

Another potentially relevant factor is whether citizens in states with more professional legislatures are more or less supportive of providing such resources. Living in a state with

greater legislative professionalism could influence opinions in either direction. If citizens observe positive legislative outputs from a professional legislature this could increase support for session length, legislator salary, and legislative staff. Alternatively, citizens could be dissatisfied with legislative actions and outputs and prefer an alternative legislative model. Inclusion of this variable in our models also captures other phenomenon in the state, because legislative professionalism has been shown to be associated with state income (Squire and Hamm 2005), state expenditures (Malhotra 2008), population size, heterogeneity of the populace, the state economy, and the size of the bureaucracy (Mooney 1995). The legislative professionalism measure is taken from the scores reported by Squire and Hamm (2005).

It is likely, however, that the state's legislative professionalism does not have an equal impact on all citizens. If citizens assess legislative output through the filter of partisan preferences, it is likely that Democrats will see the expanded possibilities of professional legislatures differently than Republicans. In particular, Democrats may be more willing to incur the costs of staff and legislative salary to have more informed legislators (Squire 1988), to achieve greater legislative efficiency and policy innovation (Kousser 2005), and to provide a counterweight to other branches (Rosenthal 1996). Republicans, on the other hand, may be less enthusiastic about legislative resources as careerism has been identified as a major contributor to pork barrel spending, excessive regulation, and inefficient bureaucratic practices at the federal level (Fiorina 1989), and legislative critics have argued that careerism contributes to the recruitment and retention of legislators committed to a larger, more activist government (Ehrenhalt 1991). To test for this effect, we construct an interaction variable between party and the state's legislative professionalism score, and we expect Democrats in more professional

states to be more supportive of legislative resources and Republicans in more professional states to be less supportive of legislative resources.

Results

To test our proposed explanations for attitudes on state legislative professionalism, we estimate a series of OLS regression models. The results from our initial models are presented in Table 2. The first set of estimates we present in column (1) are those from a baseline model that only includes the demographic control variables – age, minority, education, female, and rural residence.² None of these variables exhibit a statistical relationship with attitudes about state legislative professionalism, suggesting no meaningful differences in these attitudes across demographic and socioeconomic population groups. The absence of findings for the demographic variables holds when we include additional covariates as we describe below.

(Table 2 About Here)

The next set of results more directly tests our hypotheses. The estimates in column (2) show evidence consistent with many of our expectations. Respondent's approval of their community's legislative delegation is positively and significantly associated with approval of legislative professionalism. If a respondent is satisfied with his or her representatives in the state capitol, he or she is more willing to allow resources for the legislature. Likewise, respondents with greater trust in state government and greater interpersonal trust are significantly more likely to be supportive of state legislative professionalism. One interpretation of this result is that individuals with low levels of either kind of trust see more potential for waste, fraud or corruption and would therefore want to minimize the allocation of tax dollars to the legislature.

The results for party identification and the legislative professionalism score of the respondent's state of residence also are largely consistent with expectations. Democrats are

significantly more likely to be supportive of legislative professionalism compared to independents (the excluded category), accounting for about a one-point shift upward on the state legislative professionalism scale. Republicans, by contrast, are significantly less likely to support legislative professionalism than independents. We also find that residents of states with higher legislative professionalism are significantly more likely to support legislative professionalism. We do not, however, find that Democratic respondents in states with Democratic control and/or Republican respondents in states with Republican control favor professionalized legislatures.

The results presented in column (3) of Table 2 are from a similar model as just described, but one that introduces an interaction term between party and the state's legislative professionalism score. This new variable somewhat changes the picture. Compared to the previous model, the Democrat and the state professionalism score variables are no longer significant, and the professionalism score even changes signs (though it is not statistically different from zero). Further, the Republican variable retains statistical significance and the coefficient is a larger negative value. Republicans, all else equal, place themselves just short of two points lower on the state legislative professionalism score compared to independents.

Of greatest interest, the Democrat/professionalism interaction term is significant and positive with a very large coefficient. Whereas Democrats in states with citizen legislatures are not much different than independents in their approval of legislative professionalism, Democrats in states with professional legislatures are significantly more supportive. Alternatively, Republicans tend to be more negative regardless of the professionalism score of their state of residence. The rest of the coefficients of interest retain the relationships with attitudes toward legislative professionalism previously discussed.

The above analysis rests on a strong assumption that citizens are aware of legislative outputs such that they could use partisan predispositions to evaluate the legislature and determine preferences for greater legislative resources. This assumption may be problematic in light of studies suggesting low levels of political knowledge in the citizenry (Neuman 1986; Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996; Kuklinski, Quirk, Jerit, and Rich 2001). It is likely that highly informed citizens could make such judgments, but it is unlikely that most citizens have the knowledge necessary to make the connections suggested by the party and professionalism interaction.

To test for the impact of citizen's political knowledge, we develop a measure based on whether a respondent is highly informed of the partisanship of key state officeholders. In particular, we labeled a respondent as highly informed if the respondent could identify the correct party in four out of five cases for Governor, both U.S. Senators, and the majority party controlling the lower and upper chambers in the state legislature.³ Overall, 573 out of the 1000 respondents were able to score at least a four out of five on the scale. We label these individuals as having high party knowledge, and label the rest of the respondents as having low party knowledge.⁴

To test for the impact of political knowledge on models explaining preferences for legislative professionalism, we re-estimated the regression model after splitting the sample into these low and high party knowledge groups to see if there are differential effects for the partisan/legislative professionalism interaction term. Our expectation is that the interaction variables will be significant for the high party knowledge respondents but not the others.

The results from these models are reported in Table 3. The Democrat/professionalism interaction term is significant for the high party knowledge sample but not the low political

knowledge sample. The magnitude of the coefficient is large, suggesting that politically-knowledgeable Democrats living in states with professional legislatures score nine points higher on the legislative professionalism scale compared to politically-knowledgeable Democrats living in states with more citizen legislatures. In addition, the Republican Party variable is significant for high party knowledge respondents but not low party knowledge respondents.

(Table 3 About Here)

Among the high political knowledge respondents, trust in state government is the only other substantive variable that reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. Alternatively, the model estimates do not suggest relationships between party identification and attitudes about legislative professionalism for low knowledge citizens. No partisan or party interaction variables were significant for low political knowledge citizens. Instead, for these respondents, preferences about the institutional design of their state legislature appear to be more related to trust and representation. The coefficients on the interpersonal trust and approval of the local party delegation are significant for the members of this subsample of respondents, and the coefficient on the trust in state government variable is significant at the 10% level ($p=.07$).

Overall, it appears that the factors correlated with support for legislative professionalism are quite different for these different groups. Opinions about state legislative professionalism were better predicted by political factors for high political knowledge respondents. In contrast, those with low political knowledge seem instead to rely on general feelings about trust and representation. That is, their attitudes are better explained by whether they have general confidence in state institutions and other people, and whether they feel their delegation of state legislators is doing a good job representing their interests.

Discussion

State legislatures differ in the provision of legislative staff, legislator salary, and session length, and scholars have argued that these features of legislative professionalism create incentives for individual behavior and influence institutional capacity. Although scholars have devoted considerable attention to the measurement of legislative professionalism, the historical factors contributing to differences in provision of resources across states, and the effects of legislative professionalism, scant attention has been focused on public attitudes about legislative professionalism.

In this study, we addressed this gap in the literature by developing a set of survey questions asking for the respondent's view of the appropriate provision of staff, salary and session length for the legislature in his or her state of residence, presenting the distribution of these attitudes, assessing the combination of these questions into a single scale measuring preferences for legislative professionalism, and developing and testing models of factors associated with these views. Our models included standard demographic variables, such as age, ethnic minority, gender, education, and rural status. To test for the impact of broader satisfaction with the political system, the models included measures of interpersonal trust, trust in state government, and approval of the community's legislative delegation. Further, state effects were included in two ways. The state legislative professionalism score of the respondent's state of residence was included, and because unobserved statewide factors could influence the results the standard errors were clustered by state.

The major effect associated with legislative professionalism, however, is partisanship, but it is not just a simple party effect. Partisanship is a filter through which citizens evaluate political institutions and outcomes so there could be direct effects and indirect effects. The direct

effects were measured as dummy variables for whether the respondent was a Democrat or Republican (including leaners) and whether the respondent's preferred party controlled both chambers of the state legislature. The indirect effect was measured through an interaction term of party with the state's legislative professionalism score. The results suggest that partisan control of the state legislature is not a significant factor, but Republicans are significantly less supportive of legislative professionalism. On the other hand, for Democrats their views of legislative professionalism are associated with the professionalism of their state legislature as the interaction term for Democrat and the state's score was significant, and the coefficient suggests a rather substantial difference in preferences. Overall, Republicans start at a lower level of support than independents and Democrats, and their views do not change much across different levels of state legislative professionalism, but Democrats are more supportive of legislative professionalism when they live in states with professional as opposed to citizen legislatures.

The final contribution of the paper was to assess whether political knowledge was a factor in shaping views of legislative professionalism. Using a measure of whether a respondent knew the correct party controlling at least four of five offices in the state (governor, both U.S. senators, the state house and the state senate), we tested the models separately for low and high knowledge citizens. Assuming that one would need some basic party knowledge to use party as a cue or filter for institutional preferences, we found that the partisan effects and interaction of party with the state's professionalism score were significant only for high knowledge citizens and not the low knowledge citizens. Further, while trust in state government was significant for high knowledge respondents, the two more general measures of satisfaction, interpersonal trust and approval of the community legislative delegation were not. Conversely, for low knowledge citizens only the broader satisfaction measures of interpersonal trust, trust in state government,

and approval of the community's legislative delegation were significant factors associated with attitudes on legislative professionalism.

In sum, support for the resource provision underlying legislative professionalism is largely driven by partisanship for those who know which party controls important political offices in the state. Further research is needed to know whether the underlying mechanism driving this result is because of cues taken from partisan leaders, partisan filtering of legislative outcomes or more complex assessments of partisan advantage associated with certain institutional arrangements, but it is clear that high party knowledge citizens are different than low party knowledge citizens in the factors associated with views of resource provision to state legislatures. For citizens less knowledgeable about partisan control in the state, it appears that views on legislative professionalism are driven by a broader sense of satisfaction and trust in the state's political system. This relationship could have potential long-term implications for institutional design in the states.

Endnotes

¹ In the Squire and Hamm (2005, 80) table of professionalization scores, the range is from .034 (New Hampshire) to .571 (California). Any categorization is somewhat arbitrary, but for Figure 2 we divided the states into groups such that the citizen legislatures had scores less than or equal to .117 (which included 19 states and about 19 percent of the survey respondents), the hybrid states scored between .127 and .198 (which included 18 states and about 28 percent of the survey respondents), and the professional legislatures had scores above .215 (which included 13 states and 52% of our respondents).

² We also estimated the models with a scale measure of income and as a set of dummy variables that included a variable for those refusing to provide an answer on the income question. Because the coefficient on the income variables never attained statistical significance, a large number of the survey respondents did not respond to the income question, and education and income are highly correlated, it is excluded from the final models we report.

³ As a check on the validity of our political knowledge measure, we examined the respective political behaviors of individuals we classify as having “high” or “low” political knowledge. We found that individuals with “high” political knowledge were significantly more likely to indicate that they voted in the 2006 elections (93% for high knowledge respondents versus 77% of low knowledge respondents), donated money to candidates (34% v. 14%), or tried to persuade someone else on voting (65% v. 46%).

⁴ We also examined more and less strict definitions of “high” political knowledge – scores of 5 and 3, respectively – with substantively similar results.

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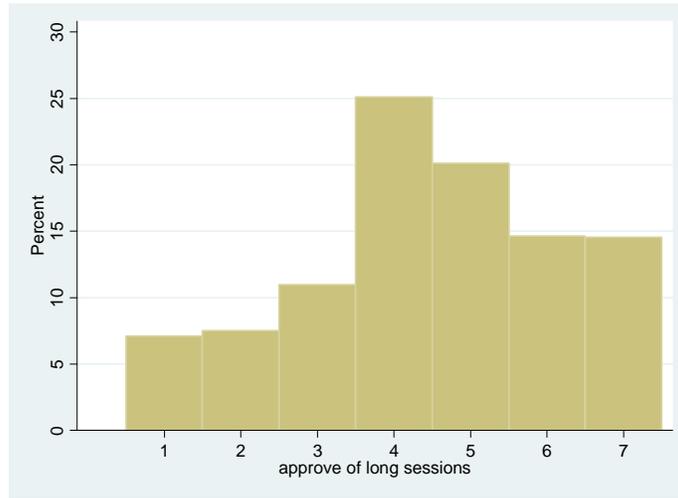
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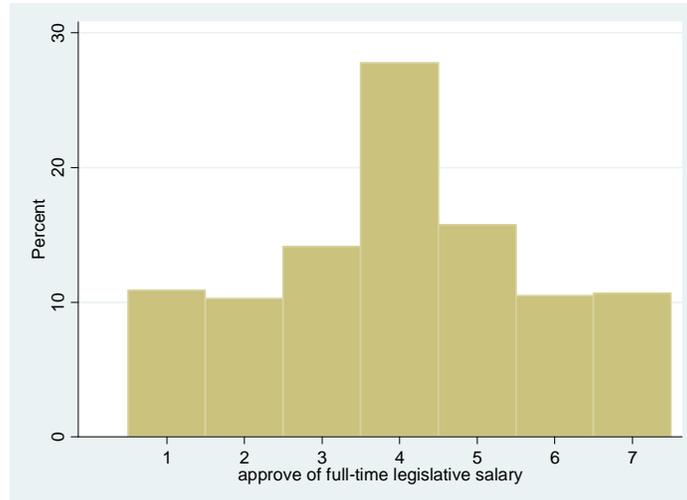
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Figure 1

a. Approval of State Legislative Session Length with a 1=shorter and 7=longer



b. Approval of State Legislative Salary with a 1=part-time salary and 7=full-time salary



c. Approval of State Legislative Staff with a 1=smaller, part-time and 7=large, full-time

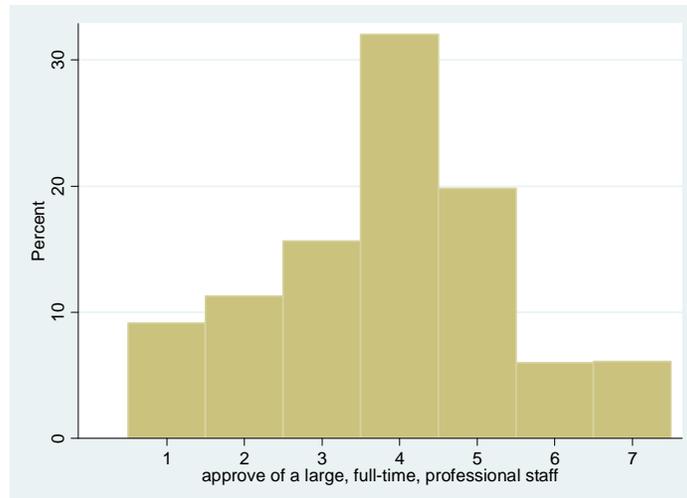


Figure 2

Positive Support for Session Length, Legislator Salary, and Legislative Staff by Legislative Professionalism Score of the Citizen's State

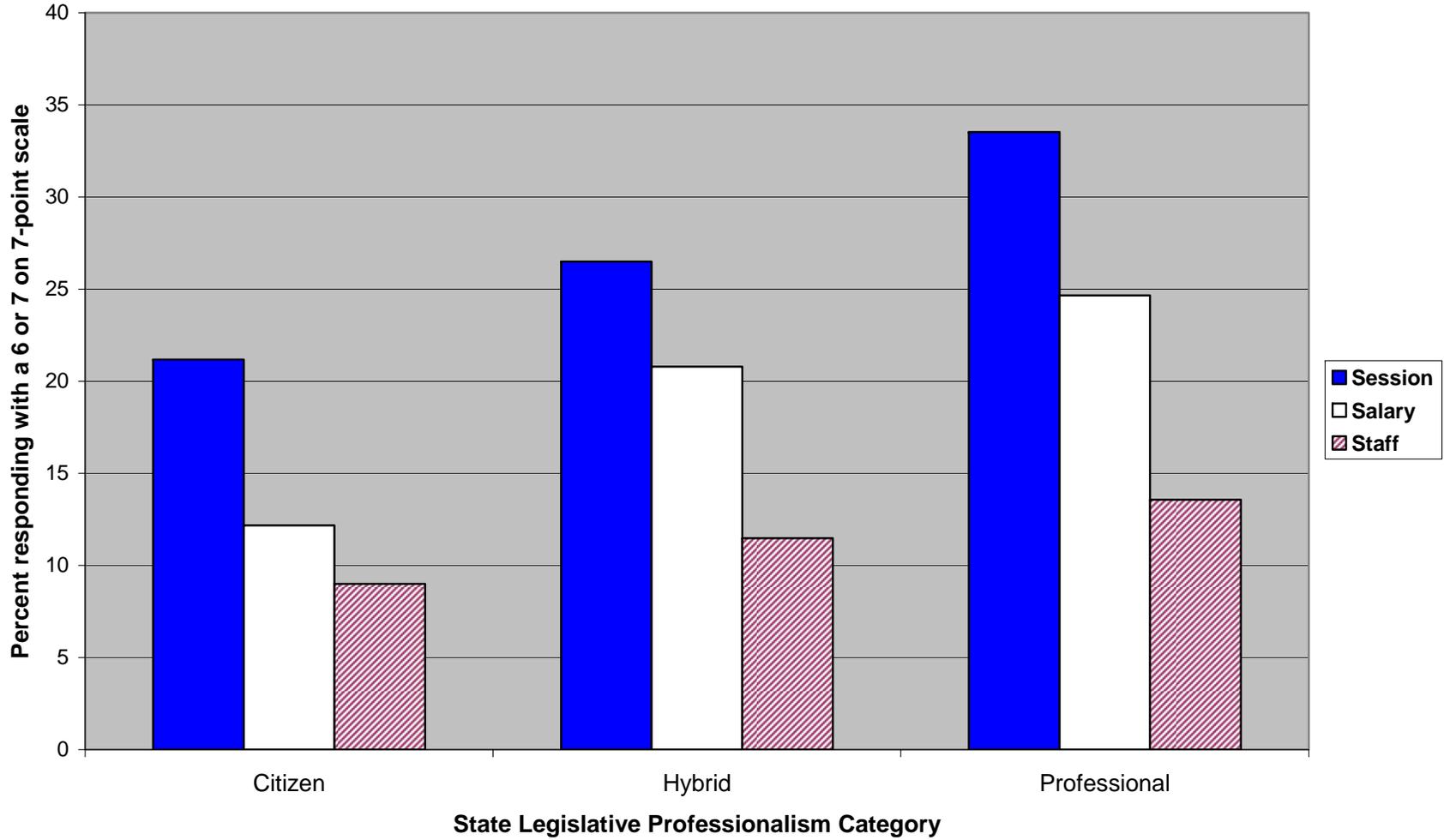


Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Legislative professionalism scale	3	21	12.31	4.30
Democrat/ Professionalism Score Interaction	0	.57	.12	.17
Republican/ Professionalism Score Interaction	0	.57	.11	.16
State Professionalism Score	.04	.57	.26	.16
Preferred Party Controlling State Legislature	0	1	.36	.48
Interpersonal Trust	1	7	4.27	1.47
Trust in State Government	0	3	.89	.72
Approve Community Legislative Delegation	1	5	3.12	.99
Democrat	0	1	.43	.50
Republican	0	1	.43	.50
Age	19	81	49.38	13.67
Minority	0	1	.15	.36
Education	1	6	3.70	1.49
Female	0	1	.53	.50
Rural	0	1	.17	.37
Party Knowledge Dummy	0	1	.57	.50

Table 2: Explaining Public Attitudes on State Legislative Professionalism

	<i>State Legislative Professionalism Scale</i>		
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Democrat/Professionalism Interaction		-	7.195** (2.049)
Republican/Professionalism Interaction		-	3.329 (2.350)
State Professionalism Score		2.926** (.981)	-1.853 (2.068)
Preferred Party Controlling State Legislature		.345 (.321)	0.289 (.292)
Democrat		1.086* (.418)	-.694 (.693)
Republican		-1.016** (.360)	-1.768* (.751)
Interpersonal Trust		.233* (.104)	.237* (.103)
Trust in State Government		.649** (.173)	.622** (.171)
Approve Community Legislative Delegation		.443* (.187)	.419* (.183)
Age	-.007 (.009)	-.006 (.011)	-.006 (.011)
Minority	.181 (.336)	-.531 (.339)	-.541 (.339)
Education	.122 (.117)	.064 (.085)	.057 (.083)
Female	.339 (.256)	.133 (.266)	.114 (.261)
Rural	-.470 (.408)	-.205 (.392)	-.202 (.383)
Constant	12.09** (.721)	8.580** (1.129)	9.858** (1.295)
Number of observations	983	943	943

Note: Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with state-clustered standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: * p<.05, ** p<.01.

Table 3: Differences in Attitudes on State Legislative Professionalism for High and Low Party Knowledge Respondents

	<i>State Legislative Professionalism Scale</i>	
	<i>High Party Knowledge Respondents</i>	<i>Low Party Knowledge Respondents</i>
	(1)	(2)
Democrat/Professionalism Interaction	9.664** (3.064)	3.529 (4.430)
Republican/Professionalism Interaction	4.232 (2.741)	1.907 (3.372)
State Professionalism Score	-2.958 (2.780)	-.712 (3.380)
Preferred Party Controlling State Legislature	.401 (.389)	-.006 (.429)
Democrat	-1.251 (.948)	.119 (1.138)
Republican	-2.397* (1.024)	-.731 (1.050)
Interpersonal Trust	.091 (.153)	.372** (.133)
Trust in State Government	.696** (.233)	.550 (.293)
Approve Community Legislative Delegation	.335 (.229)	.431* (.230)
Age	-.020 (.017)	.014 (.014)
Minority	-.677 (.367)	-.301 (.728)
Education	-.019 (.117)	.187 (.122)
Female	.506 (.380)	-.516 (.427)
Rural	-1.068* (.464)	.518 (.519)
Constant	11.84** (1.775)	7.792** (1.432)
Number of observations	557	386

Note: Cells contain OLS regression coefficients, with state-clustered standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: * p<.05, ** p<.01.