

APPENDIX FOR:
VOTER IDEOLOGY: REGRESSION MEASUREMENT OF POSITION ON THE
LEFT-RIGHT SPECTRUM

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Abstract

For scholars who need a measure of political preferences, a person's position on the ideological spectrum provides a good start. Typically, scholars identify that position through factor analysis on survey questions. In effect, they assume that the calculated synthetic variable marks the person's location on the liberal-conservative spectrum. They then use that ideology variable either as the focus of a study on ideology, or as a control variable in other regressions. The leading attitudinal surveys— the GSS, the CCES, and the ANES— include a variable giving a respondent's self-identified ideology. Factor analysis assigns this variable no special prominence. To treat this self-identification appropriately, we urge scholars to instead measure ideology using the fitted value from a regression of self-identified ideology on other survey responses. In contrast to factor analysis, the regression approach assigns proper priority to self-identification; it lets us test whether voters identify their own ideology through identity-group variables; it avoids the bias introduced in choosing the issue variables to include in the factor analysis; and it identifies the issues that the average voter thinks best define “liberal” and “conservative.”

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APPENDIX A1—ISSUE VARIABLES

Issue	CCES code	Description
Iraq Mistake	cc305	Invading Iraq was a mistake.
Afghanistan mistake	cc306	Afghanistan— mistake
Gun Control	cc320	Gun laws should be stricter.
Global Warming	cc321	Global warming is not a problem.
Immig–legal	cc322.1	Immigration — Grant legal status
Immig–patrol	cc322.2	Immigration— Increase border patrol
Immig–police	cc322.3	Immigration — Allow police to question
Immig–business	cc322.4	Immigration— Fine US businesses
Immig–services	cc322.5	Immigration— Prohibit services
Immig–citizenship	cc322.6	Immigration — Deny automatic citizenship
Abortion	cc324	Abortion should be entirely legal.
Jobs v. Environment	cc325	Jobs-Environment
Gay Marriage	cc326	Gay marriage should be legal.
Affirmative Action	cc327	Affirmative action
Balanced budget	cc328	Balanced Budget Pref 1
Fiscal	cc329	Fiscal Preference— #2
Ryan budget	cc332a	Roll Call Votes - Ryan Budget Bill
Simpson budget	cc332b	Simpson-Bowles Budget Plan
Tax Cut	cc332c	Middle Class Tax Cut Act
Tax hike act	cc332d	Tax Hike Prevention Act
Mand. Brth Ctrl Ins.	cc332e	Birth Control Exemption
US Korea trade	cc332f	U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement
Repeal ACA	cc332g	Repeal Affordable Care Act
Keystone Pipeline	cc332h	Keystone Pipeline
ACA Health Plan	cc332i	Affordable Care Act of 2010
Gays in military	cc332j	End “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell”
Troops–oil	cc414.1	Approve troops to — Ensure the supply of oil
Troops–terrorist	cc414.2	Approve troops to — Destroy a terrorist camp
Troops–genocide	cc414.3	Approve troops to— Genocide or a civil war
Troops–democracy	cc414.4	Approve troops to — Assist democracy
Troops–allies	cc414.5	Approve troops to— Protect allies
Troops–UN	cc414.6	Approve troops to — Help UN
Troops–none	cc414.7	Approve troops to —None
Tax or Spend	cc415r	Spending cuts preferred to tax increases.
Income or Sales tax	cc416r	Income tax preferred to sales tax
Black Favors	cc422a	Blacks should not get special favors
Black Class	cc422b	Conditions hard for blacks to leave lower class

APPENDIX A2—IDENTITY VARIABLES

Issue	CCES name	Description
Hispanic	hispanic	Of hispanic descent
Registered to vote	votereg	Registered to vote
Birthyear	birthyr	Year of birth.
Female	gender	Female=2
Education	educ	6 choices for education level
Donated	cc417a_4	Made political donations
Union	unionhh=3	Household member a union member
Black	race=2	black
Govworker	employercat=3	Employed by a government
Married	marstat=1	Married
Divorcedsep	marstat=2,3	Divorced or separated
Religious	pew_religimp=1	Religion not important in your life.
Born Again	pew_bornagain	Born again Christian
Atheist or Agnostic	religpew=9, 11	Atheist or agnostic
Family Income	faminc	Family income
Not Military	milstat_5	No member of family in military
Has Child	child18	Has a child under 18

APPENDIX A3

THE PHRASING OF THE QUESTIONS IN *Conservative-10, Religious, Democrat, Republican, AND Republican7*

ISSUE VARIABLES

Global Warming (cc321). From what you know about global climate change or global warming, which one of the following statements comes closest to your opinion?

14764 1 Global climate change has been established as a serious problem, and immediate action is necessary.

16378 2 There is enough evidence that climate change is taking place and some action should be taken.

11461 3 We don't know enough about global climate change, and more research is necessary before we take any actions.

8693 4 Concern about global climate change is exaggerated. No action is necessary.

3075 5 Global climate change is not occurring; this is not a real issue.

Gay Marriage (cc326) . Do you favor or oppose allowing gays and lesbians to marry legally.

NO=0

YES=1

ACA Health Plan (cc332i). Congress has considered many specific bills this year. We'd like to know how you would have voted on [this bill].

Affordable Health Care for all Americans Act: Requires all Americans to obtain health insurance. Allows people to keep current provider. Sets up national health insurance option for those without coverage. Paid for with tax increases on those making more than \$500,000 a year."

NO=0

YES=1

Black Favors (cc422a). Do you agree or disagree with the following statement[s]?

"The Irish, Italians, Jews, and many other minorities overcame prejudice and worked their way up. Blacks should do the same without any special favors."

19422 1 Strongly agree

8829 2 Somewhat agree

8339 3 Neither agree nor disagree

4790 4 Somewhat disagree

3552 5 Strongly disagree

Abortion (cc324). Which one of the opinions on this page best agrees with your view on abortion?

5684 1 By law, abortion should never be permitted

14146 2 The law should permit abortion only in case of rape, incest or when the woman's life is in danger

7174 3 The law should permit abortion for reasons other than rape, incest, or danger to the woman's life, but only after the need for the abortion has been clearly established

27111 4 By law, a woman should always be able to obtain an abortion as a matter of personal choice

Tax or Spend (cc415r). If your state were to have a budget deficit this year it would have to raise taxes on income and sales or cut spending, such as on education, health care, welfare, and road construction. What would you prefer more, raising taxes or cutting spending? Choose a point along the scale from 100% tax increases (and no spending cuts) to 100% spending cuts (and no tax increases). The point in the middle means that the budget should be balanced with equal amounts of spending cuts and tax increases. If you are not sure, or don't know, please check the 'not sure' box.

Write a number from 0=All from tax increases to 100=All from spending cuts.

Mandatory Birth Control Insurance (cc332e). Congress has considered many specific bills over the past two years. For each of the following tell us whether you support or oppose the legislation in principle.

“Birth Control Exemption. A bill to let employers and insurers refuse to cover birth control and other health services that violate their religion beliefs.”

20915 1 Support

32425 2 Oppose

Iraq Mistake (cc305). “All things considered do you think it was a mistake to invade Iraq?”

NO=0

YES=1

Affirmative Action (cc327) “Affirmative action programs give preference to racial minorities in employment and college admissions in order to correct for past discrimination. Do you support or oppose affirmative action?”

Strongly support, Somewhat support, Somewhat oppose, Strongly oppose.

Border Patrol (cc322_2). What do you think the U.S. government should do about immigration? Select all that apply. [only one is given here] “Increase the number of border patrols on the US-Mexican border.”

NO=0

YES=1

IDENTITY VARIABLES:

Religious (pew_religimp) “How important is religion in your life?”

1=Very important, Somewhat important, Not too important, 4=Not at all important

Party variables:

Republican7 (pid7) Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or a not very strong Democrat? Would you call yourself a strong Republican or a not very strong Republican? Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic or the Republican Party?”

1= Strong Democrat (13,723), 2= Not very strong Democrat, 3=Leans Democrat, 4= Independent (6,205), 5 = Leans Republican, 6 = Not a very strong Republican, 7 = Strong Republican (9,640).

Republican, Democrat (pid3) Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a

1= Democrat, 2=Republican, 3= Independent, 4= Other (open textbox) (2,313), 5= Not sure.