**The Reliability of Survey Measures**
RESULTS Series

# *QUESTION CONTENT AND RELIABILITY OF MEASUREMENT*


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In this document we summarize the results of our research concerning the content of survey questions and reliability of measurement. In this analysis, we distinguish between "content" and "topic," employing the former to refer to the *type of concept being assessed* (i.e., facts, beliefs, values, attitudes, self-assessments, self-perceptions, or expectations). We use the latter term, "topic," to refer to *what the question is about* (e.g., politics, employment, or religion). Hout and Hastings (2016, p. 978) focus on topic, rather than content, whereas we focus on both in the present discussion. As we will show in the following, there are few differences in reliability across topics of questions, whereas there are substantial differences in reliability across categories of content. We argue that what differences there are among topic categories are probably explainable by considering the content, context and form of the questions.

We focus first on the distinction between "facts" and "non-facts," the former referring to information that can be verified from some record source, and the latter referring to subjective content. Few survey questions are perfectly reliable—but, on average, respondent reports on the typical factual question are substantially more reliable than the typical non-factual one. This reinforces the commonly held view among survey researchers that questions about factual content are more dependable than those measuring nonfactual or subjective content, in part because of their greater clarity and specificity (see Kalton and Schuman, 1982; Alwin, 1989). Research confirms this belief, but it is important to note that most factual content is measured with some error, and the estimated reliabilities of factual and non-factual items exhibit considerable overlap.

Some factual questions produce highly reliable data, e.g. reports of hours worked in the past week, or reports by women of the number of children they have had, self-reports of age, or self-reports of weight. In such cases empirical estimates of reliability exhibit nearly perfect reliability (Alwin, 2007, p. 327). Still, even variables considered to be relatively "hard" social

indicators, such as level of education, occupational standing, and financial status, have far from perfect levels of reliability (see Alwin, 2007, pp. 302-304; Alwin, Zeiser, and Gensimore, 2014). Variables that involve subjective content have lower reliabilities, in part because it can be difficult for respondents to translate internal cues related to such content into the response framework offered by questions.

**Research results – Facts vs. Non-facts**

This report relies on *question content* as operationalized in terms of the following categories (adapted from Alwin, 2007, table 6.1):

1) Facts – Objective information regarding the respondent or members of the household, e.g., information on the respondent's characteristics, such as the date of birth, amount of schooling, amount of family income, and the timing, duration, and frequencies of certain behaviors. Normally, facts can be verified using available records.
2) Non-facts – Beliefs – Perceptions or subjective assessments of states and/or outcomes regarding the respondent or others, e.g., information on respondent's beliefs of how political parties stand on various issues, or information on religious beliefs, such as the inerrancy of the Bible.
3) Non-facts – Attitudes – Affective responses to specific objects, actors, groups, policies, etc., assumed to exist along a positive/negative continuum of acceptance, favorability, or agreement. Attitudes, for example, on policy issues or political issues are frequently used and measured along a dimension of approval or disapproval.

4) Non-facts – Values – Subjective evaluations of the importance of certain end-states of existence, or preferred modes or means of attaining them, e.g., what the government should do in certain circumstances to assist citizens.
5) Non-facts – Self-assessments – Evaluations of the state of the respondent in certain domains, e.g., job satisfaction, or health rating (excellent, very good, etc.).
6) Non-facts – Self-perceptions – Subjective perceptions of the self, i.e., a statement of "what is" about the self, without any obvious evaluative component, i.e. I am a ____. Examples of this include political party affiliation, e.g., "I'm a Republican," or religious affiliation, e.g., "I'm a Catholic."
7) Non-facts – Expectations – Subjective assessments of the likelihood that an event will happen in the future, e.g., the likelihood of job loss, or the likelihood of migration.

We begin with the analysis of differences in reliability between the factual vs. non-factual content of survey questions. Table 1 displays the comparison of average reliability estimates for facts and non-facts in the **ten panel studies** considered here (see related documents). There are some demonstrable differences here that coincide with previous results (Alwin, 2007, pp. 158-162). In assessing differences in the reliabilities associated with facts vs. non-facts, the GSS is no exception—there are important differences in average reliabilities—roughly .85 for the typical measures of facts and .67 for the typical measures of non-facts, a substantial difference. There are some differences in average reliability across types of non-factual content, which we explore with the GSS results presented below.

**Table 1. Reliability estimates for survey measures of facts and nonfacts in 10 panel studies**

| Panel | Nonfacts | Facts | F-ratio | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NES 50s | 0.610 | 0.887 | 30.270 | 0.000 |
| | (29) | (12) | | |
| NES 70s | 0.592 | 0.867 | 32.340 | 0.000 |
| | (87) | (10) | | |
| NES 90s | 0.651 | 0.831 | 12.530 | 0.001 |
| | (85) | (11) | | |
| ACL | 0.654 | 0.743 | 6.160 | 0.015 |
| | (57) | (29) | | |
| SAF (combined) | 0.656 | 0.804 | 7.900 | 0.006 |
| | (89) | (10) | | |
| HRS | 0.659 | 0.736 | 7.780 | 0.000 |
| | (91) | (51) | | |
| GSS 2006 | 0.672 | 0.841 | 43.620 | 0.000 |
| | (173) | (35) | | |
| GSS 2008 | 0.657 | 0.853 | 45.660 | 0.000 |
| | (171) | (30) | | |
| GSS 2010 | 0.678 | 0.861 | 40.400 | 0.000 |
| | (167) | (29) | | |

*Note: Listwise estimates presented here.*
*Source: adapted from Alwin (2021).*

**Table 2. Comparison of reliability estimates for measures of facts and non-facts measured in three GSS panel studies—FIML/WLSMV estimates**

| Content | 2006 GSS Panel Measures | 2006 GSS Panel FIML/ WLSMV | 2008 GSS Panel Measures | 2008 GSS Panel FIML/ WLSMV | 2010 GSS Panel Measures | 2010 GSS Panel FIML/ WLSMV |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Facts | 35 | 0.845 | 31 | 0.852 | 31 | 0.860 |
| Non-facts | 173 | 0.662 | 171 | 0.651 | 168 | 0.667 |
| Beliefs | 64 | 0.643 | 63 | 0.624 | 60 | 0.662 |
| Values | 42 | 0.689 | 42 | 0.657 | 42 | 0.664 |
| Attitudes | 35 | 0.664 | 35 | 0.684 | 35 | 0.666 |
| Self-Assessments | 12 | 0.643 | 12 | 0.645 | 12 | 0.669 |
| Self-Perceptions | 14 | 0.732 | 13 | 0.741 | 13 | 0.756 |
| Expectations | 6 | 0.523 | 6 | 0.523 | 6 | 0.550 |
| Total | 208 | 0.692 | 202 | 0.682 | 199 | 0.697 |
| Comparisons | | | | | | |
| Facts vs. Non-facts | | | | | | |
| F-ratio | | 52.092 | | 51.281 | | 49.595 |
| p-value | | 0.000 | | 0.000 | | 0.000 |
| Within Non-facts | | | | | | |
| F-ratio | | 2.397 | | 2.725 | | 1.761 |
| p-value | | 0.039 | | 0.021 | | 0.124 |

*Source: adapted from Alwin (2021).*

Table 2 presents reliability estimates by question content (facts vs. non-facts) and within the realm of non-facts (specifically measures of beliefs, values, attitudes, self-assessments, self-perceptions, and expectations) for the three GSS panel studies. These results indicate there are some significant differences between content within the pool of non-factual content. Among non-facts, self-perceptions have the highest levels of reliability. Expectations about the likelihood of future events are measured least reliably. Many of these measures of expectations have reliabilities of less than .50, indicating that at least half of the variance in these questions is measurement error variance—not a positive outcome. These results are reinforced by findings from other studies (e.g. the Health & Retirement Study, see Alwin 2007, pages 234-236) that show generally low levels

of reliability for expectations measures. In any event, there are too few such measures (6 in all) in the GSS to analyze this content further, which mainly focus on expectations about jobs, but we should note that from the point of view of measurement in the GSS, perhaps further consideration should be given the importance of this content, given it is so difficult to measure.

**Topic – Results from the GSS**

Turning to the consideration of topic of questions and reliability, we focus on several topics that reflect focal interest in the GSS data. In this section we present estimates of reliability obtained from the GSS with estimates obtained from comparable surveys, beginning with estimates of reliability of measures of social standing and moving on to measures of self-assessments and self-perceptions. In virtually all cases, there is a high degree of cross-survey agreement, and GSS measures are perfectly in line with other comparison studies (see Table 3). For example, the estimate of reliability for the GSS measure of occupational standing (specifically the Duncan SEI score) is almost the same as an average over other studies -- .808. Similarly, reliability estimates for levels of education in the three GSS panels is .906, whereas the average from seven other studies is .912. The results for household income [GSS - .878 vs. 5 other studies - .840] and personal income [GSS - .774 vs. 4 other studies - .915] are somewhat more disparate, but the differences in the ways in which income is conceptualized can affect these results (see Alwin, Zeiser, and Gensimore, 2014).

**Table 3. Comparison of reliability estimates of socioeconomic measures from the present study with estimates from other large scale projects — Listwise estimates**

Education

| Panel study | Concept | Population | Survey | Design/Model | Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSS panel 2006-08-10 (EDUC) | Yrs. of Schooling | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2006 | Three-wave simplex | 0.893 |
| GSS panel 2008-10-12 (EDUC) | Yrs. of Schooling | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2008 | Three-wave simplex | 0.911 |
| GSS panel 2010-12-14 (EDUC) | Yrs. of Schooling | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2010 | Three-wave simplex | 0.915 |
| | | | | Average | 0.906 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| Siegel and Hodge (1968) | Yrs. of Schooling | Persons in U.S. Households | Census-PES | Test-retest | 0.933 |
| Bielby, Hauser & Featherman (1977) | Yrs. of Schooling | Nonblack males in U.S. Households | CPS-OCG | Test-retest | 0.840 |
| Hauser, Tsai & Sewell (1983) | Yrs. of Schooling | Wisconsin 1957 high school grads | WLS | Test-retest | 0.845 |
| Alwin (2007) | Yrs. of Schooling | Persons in U.S. Households | NES50 | Three-wave simplex | 0.909 |
| Alwin (2007) | Yrs. of Schooling | Persons in U.S. Households | NES70 | Three-wave simplex | 0.972 |
| Alwin (2007) | Yrs. of Schooling | Detroit families -- mothers | SAFMO | Three-wave simplex | 0.948 |
| Alwin (2007) | Yrs. of Schooling | Detroit families -- children | SAFCH | Three-wave simplex | 0.938 |
| | | | | Average | 0.912 |

Occupational Standing

| Study | Concept | Population | Survey | Design | Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSS panel 2006-08-10 (SEI) | Current job --SEI | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2006 | Three-wave simplex | 0.790 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| Siegel and Hodge (1968) | Current job --SEI | Persons in U.S. Households | Census-CPS | Test-retest | 0.873 |
| Bielby, Hauser & Featherman (1977) | First job -- SEI | Nonblack males in U.S. Households | CPS-OCG | Test-retest | 0.850 |
| Bielby, Hauser & Featherman (1977) | Current job --SEI | Nonblack males in U.S. Households | CPS-OCG | Test-retest | 0.800 |
| Hauser, Tsai & Sewell (1983) | Early job -- SEI | Wisconsin 1957 high school grads | WLS | Test-retest | 0.685 |
| Hauser, Tsai & Sewell (1983) | Current job --SEI | Wisconsin 1957 high school grads | WLS | Test-retest | 0.817 |
| Alwin (2007) | Current job --SEI | Persons in U.S. Households | NES70 | Three-wave simplex | 0.827 |
| Alwin (2007) | Current job --SEI | Persons in U.S. Households | NES90 | Three-wave simplex | 0.804 |
| | | | | Average | 0.808 |

**Table 3 (continued). Comparison of reliability estimates of socioeconomic measures from the present study with estimates from other large scale projects — Listwise estimates**

Household Income

| Study | Concept | Population | Survey | Design | Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSS panel 2006-08-10 (INCOME06) | Household income | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2006 | Three-wave simplex | 0.839 |
| GSS panel 2008-10-12 (INCOME06) | Household income | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2008 | Three-wave simplex | 0.879 |
| GSS panel 2010-12-14 (INCOME06) | Household income | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2010 | Three-wave simplex | 0.916 |
| | | | | Average | 0.878 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| Alwin (2007) | Family income | U.S. Households | ACL | Three-wave simplex | 0.882 |
| Alwin (2007) | Family income | U.S. Households | NES50 | Three-wave simplex | 0.895 |
| Alwin (2007) | Family income | U.S. Households | NES70 | Three-wave simplex | 0.869 |
| Alwin (2007) | Family income | Detroit families -- mothers | SAFMO | Three-wave simplex | 0.769 |
| Alwin, Zeiser & Gensimore (2014) | Household income | U.S. Households aged 55+ | HRS | Three-wave simplex | 0.785 |
| | | | | Average | 0.840 |

Personal Income

| Study | Concept | Population | Survey | Design | Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| GSS panel 2006-08-10 (RINCOM06) | Personal earnings | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2006 | Three-wave simplex | 0.774 |
| GSS panel 2008-10-12 (RINCOM06) | Personal earnings | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2008 | Three-wave simplex | 0.707 |
| GSS panel 2010-12-14 (RINCOM06) | Personal earnings | Persons in U.S. Households | GSS2010 | Three-wave simplex | 0.839 |
| | | | | Average | 0.774 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| Siegel and Hodge (1968) | Personal income | Persons in U.S. Households | Census-CPS | Test-retest | 0.847 |
| Bielby & Hauser (1977) | Earnings | Nonblack males in U.S. Households | CPS-OCG | Test-retest | 0.904 |
| Alwin (2007) | Job income | Persons in U.S. Households | ACL | Three-wave simplex | 0.955 |
| Alwin (2007) | Personal income | Persons in U.S. Households | NES90 | Three-wave simplex | 0.953 |
| | | | | Average | 0.915 |

**Table 4. Comparison of GSS reliabilities with other surveys—measures of identities and self-perceptions—listwise and FIML/WLSMV estimates**

| Topic/Panel | Triad | Description of question response categories | Ns | Reliability Estimates Listwise | FIML |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Self-rated Health | | | | | |
| GSS06 (HEALTH) | 20240 | 4-category self-rated health scale (excellent, good, fair, or poor) | 869 / 1358 | 0.788 | 0.762 |
| GSS08 (HEALTH) | 30240 | 4-category self-rated health scale (excellent, good, fair, or poor) | 869 / 1351 | 0.768 | 0.778 |
| GSS10 (HEALTH) | 40240 | 4-category self-rated health scale (excellent, good, fair, or poor) | 831 / 1281 | 0.788 | 0.800 |
| | | Average | | 0.781 | 0.780 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| HRS | 10003 | 5-category self-rated health scale (excellent, very good, good, fair, poor) | 15851 / 18607 | 0.779 | 0.782 |
| ACL | 115 | 5-category self-rated health scale (excellent, very good, good, fair, poor) | 2218 | 0.786 | --- |
| | | Average | | 0.783 | 0.782 |
| Political identities | | | | | |
| GSS06 (PARTYID) | 20928 | 7-category party identification scale (strong Republican to strong Democrat) | 1205 / 1983 | 0.929 | 0.929 |
| GSS08 (PARTYID) | 30928 | 7-category party identification scale (strong Republican to strong Democrat) | 1212 / 2010 | 0.905 | 0.897 |
| GSS10 (PARTYID) | 40928 | 7-category party identification scale (strong Republican to strong Democrat) | 1206 / 2023 | 0.902 | 0.895 |
| | | Average | | 0.912 | 0.907 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| NES 50s | 5021 | 7-category party identification scale (strong Republican to strong Democrat) | 1045 | 0.883 | --- |
| NES 70s | 7083 | 7-category party identification scale (strong Republican to strong Democrat) | 1237 | 0.837 | --- |
| NES 90s | 9078 | 7-category party identification scale (strong Republican to strong Democrat) | 584 | 0.889 | --- |
| | | Average | | 0.870 | |
| Political conservatism | | | | | |
| GSS06 (POLVIEWS) | 20558 | 7-category fully labelled liberal-conservatism scale | 1205 / 1971 | 0.676 | 0.662 |
| GSS08 (POLVIEWS) | 30558 | 7-category fully labelled liberal-conservatism scale | 1196 / 1987 | 0.695 | 0.667 |
| GSS10 (POLVIEWS) | 40558 | 7-category fully labelled liberal-conservatism scale | 1228 / 2012 | 0.699 | 0.681 |
| | | Average | | 0.690 | 0.670 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| NES70s | 7093 | 7-category fully labelled liberal-conservatism scale | 761 | 0.672 | --- |
| NES90s | 9062 | 7-category fully labelled liberal-conservatism scale | 407 | 0.796 | --- |
| | | Average | | 0.734 | |

**Table 4 (continued). Comparison of GSS reliabilities with other surveys—measures of identities and self-perceptions—listwise and FIML/WLSMV estimates**

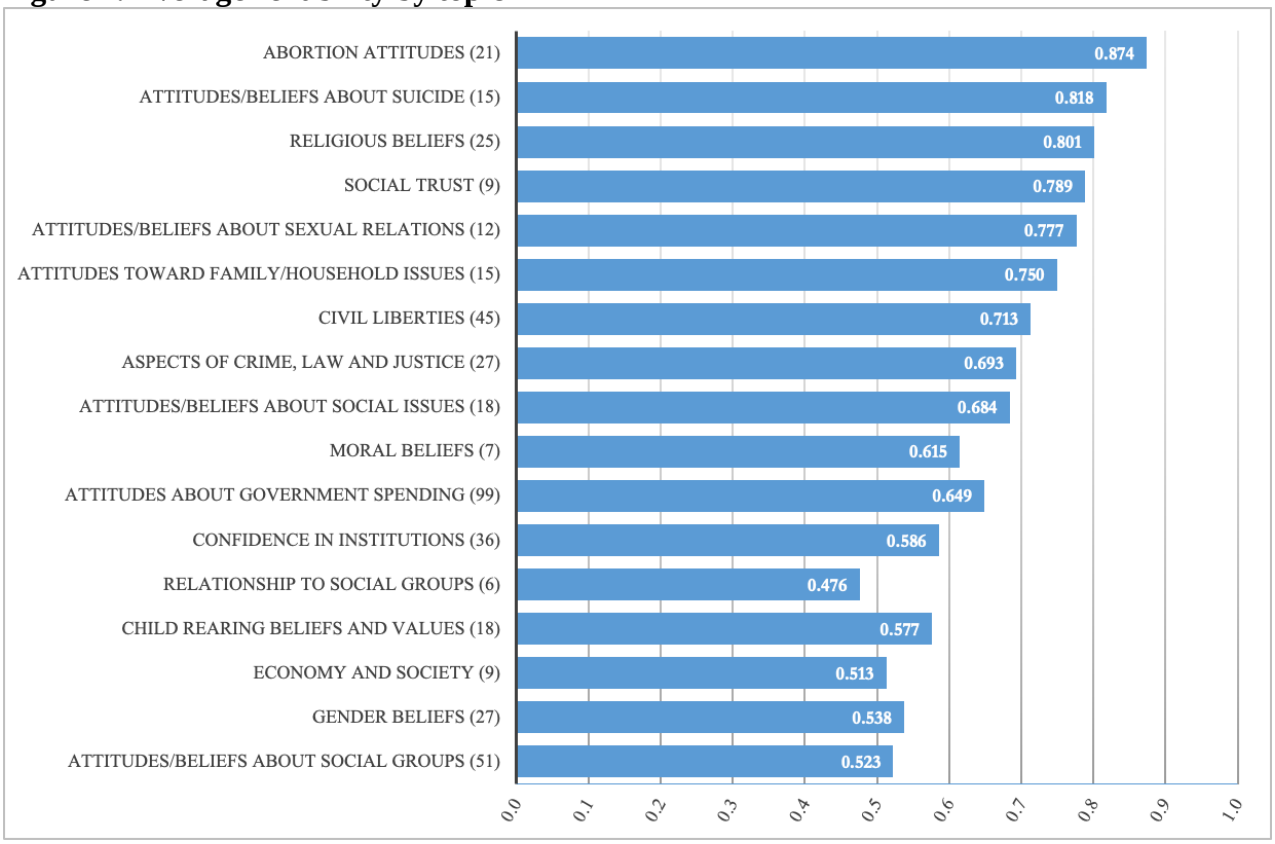
| Topic/Panel | Triad | Description of question response categories | Ns | Reliability Estimates | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Listwise | FIML |
| Religious identity | | | | | |
| GSS06 (RELPERSN) | 20619 | 4-category fully-lablelled religious scale (very religious to not religious at all) | 1249 / 1994 | 0.817 | 0.829 |
| GSS08 (RELPERSN) | 30619 | 4-category fully-lablelled religious scale (very religious to not religious at all) | 1263 / 2016 | 0.821 | 0.820 |
| GSS10 (RELPERSN) | 40619 | 4-category fully-lablelled religious scale (very religious to not religious at all) | 1285 / 2036 | 0.830 | 0.830 |
| GSS06 (SPRTPRSN) | 20731 | 4-category fully-lablelled spiritual scale (very spiritual to not spiritual at all) | 1236 / 1990 | 0.787 | 0.776 |
| GSS08 (SPRTPRSN) | 30731 | 4-category fully-lablelled spiritual scale (very spiritual to not spiritual at all) | 1259 / 2013 | 0.809 | 0.790 |
| GSS10 (SPRTPRSN) | 40731 | 4-category fully-lablelled spiritual scale (very spiritual to not spiritual at all) | 1270 / 2032 | 0.831 | 0.833 |
| | | Average | | 0.816 | 0.813 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| ACL | 202 | 4-category religious importance scale (very important to not at all important) | 2216 | 0.826 | --- |
| HRS | 15000 | 3-category religious importance scale (very important to not too important) | 18606 | 0.878 | 0.877 |
| | | Average | | 0.852 | 0.877 |
| Religious activity--church attendance | | | | | |
| GSS06 (ATTEND) | 20029 | 9-category church attendance scale (coded from open-ended question) | 1270 / 1996 | 0.855 | 0.855 |
| GSS08 (ATTEND) | 30029 | 9-category church attendance scale (coded from open-ended question) | 1281 / 2020 | 0.908 | 0.909 |
| GSS10 (ATTEND) | 40029 | 9-category church attendance scale (coded from open-ended question) | 1297 / 2039 | 0.847 | 0.838 |
| | | Average | | 0.870 | 0.867 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| ACL | 201 | 6-category church attendance scale (never … more than once a week) | 2217 | 0.839 | --- |
| NES50s | 5027 | 4-category church attendance scale (regularly, often, seldom or never) | 1045 | 0.701 | --- |
| NES70s | 7019 | 5-category church attendance scale (never … every week) | 1142 | 0.882 | --- |
| SAFCH | 8133 | 6-category church attendance scale (never … several times a week) | 865 | 0.736 | --- |
| SAFMO | 8035 | 6-category church attendance scale (never … several times a week) | 874 | 0.767 | --- |
| | | Average | | 0.785 | |

**Table 4 (continued). Comparison of GSS reliabilities with other surveys—measures of identities and self-perceptions—listwise and FIML/WLSMV estimates**

| Topic/Panel | Triad | Description of question response categories | Ns | Reliability Estimates Listwise | FIML |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Religious activity--prayer | | | | | |
| GSS06 (PRAY) | 20568 | 6-category frequency of prayer scale (several times a day … never) | 1253 / 1991 | 0.807 | 0.803 |
| GSS08 (PRAY) | 30568 | 6-category frequency of prayer scale (several times a day … never) | 1274 / 2017 | 0.873 | 0.869 |
| GSS10 (PRAY) | 40568 | 6-category frequency of prayer scale (several times a day … never) | 1287 / 2033 | 0.894 | 0.888 |
| | | Average | | 0.858 | 0.853 |
| Comparisons | | | | | |
| NES90s | 9101 | 5-category frequency of prayer scale (several times a day … never) | 587 | 0.835 | --- |
| NES90s | 9102 | 5-category frequency of reading Bible (several times a day … never) | 590 | 0.763 | --- |
| | | Average | | 0.799 | |

We noted that in the GSS, measures of self-perceptions have among the highest reliabilities among measures of non-factual content. We can add to this conclusion that results for self-perceptions and/or identities are also quite similar when we compare the GSS measures with identical measures from other studies (see Table 4). There is an amazing degree of convergence between the GSS and other studies in the many of the concepts used in social science studies, respectively: self-rated health (.781 vs. .783), political party identities (.870 vs. .912), political conservatism (.690 vs. 734), religious identity (.816 vs. .852), religious activity-church attendance (.870 vs. .785), and religious activity-prayer (.858 vs. 799). In all these comparisons, GSS compares highly favorably, either matching or exceeding reliability levels relative to other available estimates.

**Figure 1. Average reliability by topic**



We do not provide systematic comparisons with other studies for the GSS measures of attitudes, beliefs and values in the GSS because it is more difficult to find comparability across available studies. In Appendix A we list the reliabilities of questions dealing with subjective content concerning attitudes, beliefs and values, obtained from the GSS panels. Based on gross estimates (see Chart 1 and Appendix A), we conclude that there are some differences across topics covered by the GSS. As mentioned earlier, we argue, however, that the differences in the reliabilities by topic probably have little to do with the inherent nature of the topic, but rather more to do with the content involved (e.g., facts, attitudes, beliefs, etc.), as well as the form in which these questions were employed. For example, the areas of racial attitudes and/or perceptions of racial groups are relatively unreliable. Hout and Hastings, 2016, pp. 991-993, argue that it is the topic that contributes to unreliability, whereas we suspect this is because they were measured using lengthy unlabeled scales which are known to produce a deficit in reliable results, rather than due to the topic per se.

**Conclusions**

Consistent with prior research, our comparison of average reliability estimates for facts and non-facts in the ten panel studies considered in this study strongly supports the conclusion that measures involving non-facts, i.e., subjective content (including attitudes, beliefs, expectations, values, self-asssessments, and self-perceptions) have lower reliabilities relative to facts. This is in part, we suggest, because it can be difficult for respondents to retrieve this subjective information from internal cues, or because it is difficult to translate this information into the response framework offered by questions. In the case of facts there is much less ambiguity in the response categories provided, and in many cases factual information is obtained using open-ended questions. There are also some differences in average reliability across types of non-factual content, wherein self-assessments and self-perceptions have the highest levels of reliability (about .75), and expectations are measured with least reliability (about .55). These results square completely with prior research.

## Appendix A. Reliabilities averaged over panels for GSS measures of attitudes, beliefs, and values by topic--FIML estimates

| Topic | Mnemonic | Triad | Description of Question Content | Total N | Reliability Estimate | Nr. panels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abortion attitudes | | | | | | |
| 0101 | ABANY | 0001 | Abortion should be possible if the woman wants it for any reason | 1,316 | 0.852 | 3 |
| 0101 | ABDEFECT | 0002 | Abortion should be possible if the baby has a serious defect | 1,309 | 0.860 | 3 |
| 0101 | ABHLTH | 0003 | Abortion should be possible if the woman's health is in danger | 1,311 | 0.887 | 3 |
| 0101 | ABNOMORE | 0004 | Abortion should be possible if a woman is married and wants no more kids | 1,313 | 0.871 | 3 |
| 0101 | ABPOOR | 0005 | Abortion should be possible if the family can't afford more children | 1,314 | 0.881 | 3 |
| 0101 | ABRAPE | 0006 | Abortion should be possible if the woman is pregnant as a result of rape | 1,310 | 0.910 | 3 |
| 0101 | ABSINGLE | 0007 | Abortion should be possible if the woman is single and does not want to marry | 1,315 | 0.859 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,313 | 0.874 | |
| Aspects of crime, law and justice | | | | | | |
| 0104 | CAPPUN | 0057 | Does the respondent favor or oppose death penalty for murder | 1,976 | 0.886 | 3 |
| 0104 | COURTS2 | 0921 | How harshly do the courts deal with criminals (2 categories) | 1,768 | 0.861 | 3 |
| 0104 | FEAR | 0169 | Is the respondent afraid to walk alone at night in the neighborhood | 1,329 | 0.752 | 3 |
| 0104 | POLABUSE | 0536 | Approve of a policeman striking a citizen who said vulgar or obscene things | 1,346 | 0.588 | 3 |
| 0104 | POLATTAK | 0545 | Approve of a policeman striking a citizen attacking him with his fists | 1,351 | 0.546 | 3 |
| 0104 | POLESCAP | 0549 | Approve of a policeman striking a citizen attempting to escape custody | 1,337 | 0.609 | 3 |
| 0104 | POLHITOK | 0905 | Approve of a policeman ever striking a citizen | 1,284 | 0.760 | 3 |
| 0104 | POLMURDR | 0556 | Approve of a policeman striking a citizen questioned as a murder suspect | 1,343 | 0.606 | 3 |
| 0104 | PORNLAW | 0562 | Respondent's feeling about pornography laws | 1,353 | 0.630 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,454 | 0.693 | |
| Attitudes toward family/household issues | | | | | | |
| 0103 | AGED2 | 0920 | Should older people live with their grown children (2 categories) | 1,264 | 0.724 | 3 |
| 0103 | CHLDIDEL | 0063 | What is the ideal number of children for a family to have | 1,266 | 0.728 | 3 |
| 0103 | DIVLAW2 | 0922 | Should divorce be easier or more difficult to obtain (2 categories) | 1,163 | 0.844 | 3 |
| 0103 | MARHOMO | 0359 | Agree or disagree that homosexuals have the right to marry | 1,325 | 0.836 | 3 |
| 0103 | PILLOK | 0535 | Should birth control be available to teenagers 14-16 | 1,298 | 0.617 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,263 | 0.750 | |
| Child rearing beliefs and values | | | | | | |
| 0111 | HELPOTH | 0248 | Is it more important for a child to learn to help others | 1,294 | 0.449 | 3 |
| 0111 | OBEY | 0469 | Is it more important for a child to learn to obey | 1,294 | 0.664 | 3 |
| 0111 | POPULAR | 0561 | Is it more important for a child to learn to be well liked or popular | 1,294 | 0.608 | 3 |
| 0111 | SPANKING | 0714 | Agree or disagree that it is sometimes necessary to spank children | 1,351 | 0.700 | 3 |
| 0111 | THNKSELF | 0754 | Is it more important for a child to learn to think for oneself | 1,294 | 0.596 | 3 |
| 0111 | WORKHARD | 0831 | Is it more imoprtant for a child to learn to work hard | 1,294 | 0.441 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,304 | 0.576 | |

| Topic | Mnemonic | Triad | Description of Question Content | Total N | Reliability Estimate | Nr. panels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Civil liberties | | | | | | |
| 0105 | COLATH | 0071 | Should someone who is against religion be allowed to teach in a college, or not | 1,318 | 0.681 | 3 |
| 0105 | COLCOM | 0073 | Should a communist teaching in a college be fired, or not | 1,311 | 0.696 | 3 |
| 0105 | COLHOMO | 0075 | Should a homosexual be allowed to teach in a college, or not | 1,320 | 0.766 | 3 |
| 0105 | COLMIL | 0076 | Should one who is against democracy be allowed to teach in a college, or not | 1,318 | 0.672 | 3 |
| 0105 | COLRAC | 0078 | Should one who believes Blacks are inferior be allowed to teach in a college, or not | 1,320 | 0.622 | 3 |
| 0105 | LIBATH | 0335 | Should a book that is against religion be removed from the library, or not | 1,322 | 0.643 | 3 |
| 0105 | LIBCOM | 0336 | Should a book favoring communism be removed from the library, or not | 1,317 | 0.765 | 3 |
| 0105 | LIBHOMO | 0337 | Should a book favoring homosexuality be removed from the library, or not | 1,320 | 0.731 | 3 |
| 0105 | LIBMIL | 0338 | Should a book that is against democracy be removed from the library, or not | 1,319 | 0.700 | 3 |
| 0105 | LIBRAC | 0340 | Should a book suggesting Blacks are inferior be removed from the library, or not | 1,322 | 0.538 | 3 |
| 0105 | SPKATH | 0723 | Should one who is against religion be allowed to speak, or not | 1,325 | 0.795 | 3 |
| 0105 | SPKCOM | 0724 | Should one who admits to being a communist be allowed to speak, or not | 1,318 | 0.818 | 3 |
| 0105 | SPKHOMO | 0725 | Should one who admits to being a homosexual be allowed to speak, or not | 1,321 | 0.825 | 3 |
| 0105 | SPKMIL | 0727 | Should one who opposes elections be allowed to speak, or not | 1,321 | 0.696 | 3 |
| 0105 | SPKRAC | 0728 | Should one who thinks Blacks are inferior be allowed to speak, or not | 1,323 | 0.747 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,320 | 0.713 | |
| Confidence in Institutions | | | | | | |
| 0106 | CONARMY | 0086 | Confidence in the military | 1,350 | 0.614 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONBUS | 0087 | Confidence in major companies | 1,345 | 0.529 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONCLERG | 0089 | Confidence in organized religion | 1,345 | 0.644 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONEDUC | 0093 | Confidence in education | 1,354 | 0.480 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONFINAN | 0095 | Confidence in banks and financial institutions | 1,352 | 0.592 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONJUDGE | 0097 | Confidence in the United States Supreme Court | 1,343 | 0.605 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONLABOR | 0098 | Confidence in organized labor | 1,338 | 0.588 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONLEGIS | 0099 | Confidence in U.S. Congress | 1,345 | 0.593 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONMEDIC | 0100 | Confidence in medicine | 1,356 | 0.554 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONPRESS | 0101 | Confidence in the press | 1,353 | 0.629 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONSCI | 0102 | Confidence in the scientific community | 1,334 | 0.562 | 3 |
| 0106 | CONTV | 0105 | Confidence in television | 1,354 | 0.642 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,347 | 0.586 | |
| Economy and Society | | | | | | |
| 0110 | GOODLIFE | 0205 | Agree or disagree that people can improve their standard of living | 1354 | 0.524 | 3 |
| 0110 | INCGAP | 0315 | Agree or disagree that income differences in America are too large | 1,785 | 0.468 | 1 |
| 0110 | INEQUAL3 | 0322 | Agree or disagree that inequality exists because if benefits the rich and powerful | 1,761 | 0.440 | 1 |
| 0110 | INEQUAL5 | 0970 | Agree or disagree that large differences in income are necessary for American prosperity | 1,769 | 0.452 | 1 |
| 0110 | TAX | 0746 | Is federal income tax too high, about right, or too low | 1,317 | 0.680 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,597 | 0.513 | |

| Topic | Mnemonic | Triad | Description of Question Content | Total N | Reliability Estimate | Nr. panels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender beliefs | | | | | | |
| 0107 | DISCAFFM | 0120 | Chances a man won't get a job or promotion but a woman will instead | 670 | 0.365 | 3 |
| 0107 | DISCAFFW | 0121 | Chances a woman won't get a job or promotion but a man will instead | 673 | 0.408 | 3 |
| 0107 | FECHLD | 0170 | Agree or disagree that working doesn't harm a mother-child relationship | 1,354 | 0.596 | 3 |
| 0107 | FEFAM | 0171 | Agree or disagree that it is better for a man to work and woman takes care of home | 1,351 | 0.651 | 3 |
| 0107 | FEHIRE | 0172 | Agree or disagree that employers should make an effort to hire and promote women | 677 | 0.454 | 3 |
| 0107 | FEJOBAFF | 0174 | Should women be given a preference in hiring and promotion | 668 | 0.636 | 3 |
| 0107 | FEPOL | 0176 | Agree or disagree men are better suited emotionally for politics | 1,326 | 0.696 | 3 |
| 0107 | FEPRESCH | 0178 | Agree or disagree that a preschool child will suffer if mother works | 1,350 | 0.569 | 3 |
| 0107 | MEOVRWRK | 0391 | Agree or disagree that family life suffers if men focus on work too much | 1,353 | 0.464 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,047 | 0.538 | |
| Attitudes/beliefs about social groups | | | | | | |
| 0102 | AFFRMACT | 0020 | Favor or oppose giving Blacks a preference I hiring and promotion | 1,333 | 0.646 | 3 |
| 0102 | DISCAFF | 0119 | Chances a white person will not get a job promotion, but a Black person will instead | 1,311 | 0.408 | 3 |
| 0102 | INTLBLKS | 0306 | Rating of Blacks on intelligence | 1,338 | 0.377 | 3 |
| 0102 | INTLWHTS | 0308 | Rating of Whites on intelligence | 1,339 | 0.307 | 3 |
| 0102 | MARASIAN | 0355 | Favor or oppose a close relative marrying an Asian American person | 1,352 | 0.535 | 3 |
| 0102 | MARBLK | 0901 | Favor or oppose a close relative marrying a Black person | 1,353 | 0.641 | 3 |
| 0102 | MARHISP | 0358 | Favor or oppose a close relative marrying a Hispanic or Latin American person | 1,352 | 0.546 | 3 |
| 0102 | MARWHT | 0361 | Favor or oppose a close relative marrying a white person | 1,353 | 0.416 | 3 |
| 0102 | RACDIF1 | 0583 | Black-white differences in jobs, income and housing are mainly due to discrimination | 1,334 | 0.718 | 3 |
| 0102 | RACDIF2 | 0584 | Black-white differences in jobs, income and housing are due to differences in ability | 1,343 | 0.679 | 3 |
| 0102 | RACDIF3 | 0585 | Black-white differences in jobs, income and housing are due to differences in education | 1,343 | 0.709 | 3 |
| 0102 | RACDIF4 | 0586 | Black-white differences in jobs, income and housing are due to differences in will power | 1,331 | 0.699 | 3 |
| 0102 | WLTHBLKS | 0810 | Rating of Blacks on being rich vs poor | 1,346 | 0.337 | 3 |
| 0102 | WLTHWHTS | 0811 | Rating of whites on being rich vs poor | 1,347 | 0.379 | 3 |
| 0102 | WORKBLKS | 0827 | Rating of Blacks on being hard working vs lazy | 1,341 | 0.365 | 3 |
| 0102 | WORKWHTS | 0833 | Rating of whites on being hard working vs lazy | 1,342 | 0.491 | 3 |
| 0102 | WRKWAYUP | 0841 | Agree or disagree that Blacks should work their way up without any special favors | 1,350 | 0.632 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,342 | 0.523 | |

| Topic | Mnemonic | Triad | Description of Question Content | Total N | Reliability Estimate | Nr. panels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attitudes/beliefs about social issues | | | | | | |
| 0109 | GETAHEAD | 0197 | Is it more important for getting ahead? Hard workor luck & help from others | 1,329 | 0.476 | 3 |
| 0109 | GRASS | 0213 | Should marijuana be made legal or not? | 1,324 | 0.911 | 3 |
| 0109 | GUNLAW | 0229 | Favor or oppose a law that requires gun permits | 1,326 | 0.676 | 3 |
| 0109 | LETIN1 | 0334 | Should the number of immigrants be increased or reduced | 1,344 | 0.557 | 3 |
| 0109 | RACOPEN2 | 0926 | Favor or oppose open housing law (2 categories) | 1,313 | 0.657 | 3 |
| 0109 | SEXEDUC | 0666 | Favor or oppose sex education in the public schools | 1,348 | 0.827 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,331 | 0.684 | |
| Relationship to social groups | | | | | | |
| 0601 | CLOSEBLK | 0068 | Rating of how close respondent feels to Blacks | 1,327 | 0.662 | 3 |
| 0601 | CLOSEWHT | 0069 | Rating of how close respondent feels to whites | 1,329 | 0.499 | 3 |
| 0403 | LIVEBLKS | 0344 | Favor or oppose living in a neighborhood with half the neighbors are Black | 1,350 | 0.414 | 3 |
| 0403 | LIVEWHTS | 0346 | Favor or oppose living in a neighborhood with half the neighbors are white | 1,351 | 0.328 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,339 | 0.476 | |
| Social trust | | | | | | |
| 0108 | FAIR2 | 0923 | People try to take advantage or should they try to be fair (2 categories) | 1,317 | 0.799 | 3 |
| 0108 | HELPFUL2 | 0925 | People try to be helpful or are just looking out for themselves (2 categories) | 1,322 | 0.736 | 3 |
| 0108 | TRUST2 | 0927 | People can be trusted or you can't be too careful (2 categories) | 1,511 | 0.831 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,383 | 0.789 | |
| Attitudes/beliefs about suicide | | | | | | |
| 0112 | LETDIE1 | 0333 | The law should allow doctors to end a patient's life if family requests it | 1,295 | 0.823 | 3 |
| 0112 | SUICIDE1 | 0740 | Person has the right to end his/her life if he/she has an incurable disease | 1,340 | 0.797 | 3 |
| 0112 | SUICIDE2 | 0741 | Person has the right to end his/her life if he/she has gone bankrupt | 1,353 | 0.846 | 3 |
| 0112 | SUICIDE3 | 0744 | Person has the right to end his/her life if he/she has dishonored their family | 1,351 | 0.818 | 3 |
| 0112 | SUICIDE4 | 0745 | Person has the right to end his/her life if he/she is tired of living and ready to die | 1,346 | 0.804 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,337 | 0.818 | |
| Attitudes about government spending | | | | | | |
| 0902 | NATAID | 0408 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on foreign aid | 987 | 0.673 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATAIDY | 0409 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on foreign aid | 1,008 | 0.665 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATARMS | 0410 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on national defense | 994 | 0.693 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATARMSY | 0411 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on national defense | 1,005 | 0.663 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATCHLD | 0412 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on assistance for childcare | 1,971 | 0.606 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATCITY | 0413 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on assistance to big cities | 970 | 0.472 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATCITYY | 0414 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on assistance to big cities | 965 | 0.495 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATCRIME | 0415 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on halting rising crime | 993 | 0.661 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATCRIMY | 0416 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on halting rising crime | 1,013 | 0.670 | 3 |

| Topic | Mnemonic | Triad | Description of Question Content | Total N | Reliability Estimate | Nr. panels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0902 | NATDRUG | 0417 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on dealing with drugs | 991 | 0.472 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATDRUGY | 0418 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on dealing with drugs | 994 | 0.683 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATEDUC | 0419 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on improving education | 1,002 | 0.712 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATEDUCY | 0420 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on improving education | 1,017 | 0.766 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATENVIR | 0422 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on protecting the environment | 993 | 0.749 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATENVIY | 0423 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on protecting the environment | 1,007 | 0.746 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATFARE | 0424 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on welfare | 993 | 0.715 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATFAREY | 0425 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on welfare | 1,008 | 0.728 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATHEAL | 0426 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on protecting the nation's health | 996 | 0.656 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATHEALY | 0427 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on protecting the nation's health | 1,013 | 0.574 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATMASS | 0428 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on mass transportation | 1,980 | 0.605 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATPARK | 0429 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on parks and recreation | 2,008 | 0.510 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATRACE | 0430 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on improving the conditions of Blacks | 962 | 0.761 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATRACEY | 0431 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on improving the conditions of Blacks | 966 | 0.652 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATROAD | 0432 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on highways and bridges | 1,999 | 0.584 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATSCI | 0433 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on support for scientific research | 1,973 | 0.546 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATSOC | 0434 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on social security | 1,995 | 0.639 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATSPAC | 0435 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on space exploration | 980 | 0.734 | 3 |
| 0902 | NATSPACY | 0436 | Is the government spending too much/too little/right amount on space exploration | 997 | 0.735 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,206 | 0.649 | |
| Attitudes/beliefs about the role of government | | | | | | |
| 0901 | EQWLTH | 0146 | Should the federal government reduce income differences between rich and poor, or not | 1,488 | 0.633 | 3 |
| 0901 | HELPBLK | 0243 | Should the federal government help improve the living conditions of Blacks, or not | 1,344 | 0.627 | 3 |
| 0901 | HELPNOT | 0247 | Should the federal government do more to help solve our country's problems, or not | 1,339 | 0.509 | 3 |
| 0901 | HELPPOOR | 0250 | Should the federal government improve the standard of living of the poor, or not | 1,348 | 0.581 | 3 |
| 0901 | HELPSICK | 0251 | Should the federal government help people pay for medicatl expenses, or not | 1,347 | 0.627 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,373 | 0.595 | |
| Moral beliefs | | | | | | |
| 0401 | BLKWHITE | 0049 | Agree or disagree that right and wrong is not usually a matter of black and white | 1,990 | 0.654 | 1 |
| 0401 | PERMORAL | 0530 | Agree or disagree that morality is a personal matter and not just one standard | 1,986 | 0.411 | 1 |
| 0401 | PUNSIN | 0581 | Agree or disagree that those who violate God's rules must be punixhed | 1,971 | 0.631 | 1 |
| 0401 | ROTAPPLE | 0631 | Agree or disagree that one immoral person can corrupt socity | 1,988 | 0.521 | 1 |
| 0401 | XMOVIE | 0917 | Respondent has seen an x-rated movie in the last year | 1,354 | 0.857 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,858 | 0.615 | |

| Topic | Mnemonic | Triad | Description of Question Content | Total N | Reliability Estimate | Nr. panels |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attitudes/beliefs about sexual relations | | | | | | |
| 0402 | HOMOSEX | 0262 | Are sexual relations between same-sex adults wrong, or not | 1,309 | 0.904 | 3 |
| 0402 | PREMARSX | 0570 | Is having sexual relations with someone before marriage wrong, or not | 1,342 | 0.812 | 3 |
| 0402 | TEENSEX | 0751 | Is premarital sex among teenagers wrong, or not | 1,351 | 0.684 | 3 |
| 0402 | XMARSEX | 0916 | Is having sexual relations with someone other than partner wrong, or not | 1,326 | 0.706 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,332 | 0.777 | |
| Religious beliefs | | | | | | |
| 0304 | BIBLE | 0035 | Feelings about the Bible: word of God, inspired by God, book of fables | 2,008 | 0.781 | 3 |
| 0304 | FUND | 0187 | Fundamentalism code for denominational identity | 1,974 | 0.876 | 3 |
| 0304 | FUND16 | 0188 | Fundamentalism code for denominational identity at age 16 | 1,978 | 0.870 | 3 |
| 0304 | GOD | 0203 | Belief in God or higher power | 2,015 | 0.846 | 3 |
| 0304 | POPESPKS | 0559 | [for Catholics] fallibility of Pope on matters of faith and morals | 499 | 0.620 | 3 |
| 0304 | POSTLIFE | 0563 | Belief in life after death | 1,919 | 0.917 | 3 |
| 0304 | PRAYER | 0569 | Approve or disapprove of prayer in the public schools | 1,333 | 0.761 | 3 |
| 0304 | RELLIFE | 0617 | Agree or disagree that he/she tries hard to carry beliefs into other dealings in life | 1,991 | 0.683 | 1 |
| 0304 | SPFUND | 0719 | Fundamentalism code for spouse's denominational identiy | 1,010 | 0.855 | 3 |
| | | | Average | 1,636 | 0.801 | |

*Note: Redundant triads removed*

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