

**Author(s):** Knight, Kathleen

**Title:** Comparisons of Liberal-Conservative Items in the ANES 1989 Pilot Study

**Date:** February 1, 1990

**Dataset(s):** 1988 Senate Study, 1989 Pilot Study

---

### **Abstract**

Knight finds that none of the experimental changes to the liberal-conservative identification items in the 1989 Pilot Study improves the measurement of the underlying liberal-conservative ideological continuum. Specifically, Knight makes two comparisons using data from the Pilot Study and the 1988 Senate Study: (1) telephone versus in-person administration of the seven-point scale, and (2) labeling the end points of the scale "very" versus "extremely." In the first instance, the telephone administration of the "imaginary ruler" does not depress the incidence of self-placement to any meaningful extent. Nor does the lack of an explicit label at the middle point reduce the respondents' tendency to bunch there. In the second case, there is no consistent evidence supporting the hypothesis that the use of the "extremely" label depresses the incidence of placement at the endpoints. In sum, the theoretical construct that is being measured with self-identification on a liberal-conservative continuum is impervious to the proposed variations. Finally, Knight shows that the liberal-conservative feeling thermometer difference can be used interchangeably with the seven-point liberal conservative scale.