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Abstract

Conover and Feldman examine two sets of questions contained in the 1987 Pilot Study -- those related to patriotism, and another measuring a sense of nationalism. The authors first evaluate scales constructed from these items. Conover and Feldman find that the patriotism scale is highly reliable, but is skewed toward patriotic responses and has a relatively low variance. The nationalism scale, on the other hand, is not skewed, has good variance, but is slightly less reliable than the patriotism scale. Correlating the two scales to various political orientations and background factors, the authors find that the nationalism scale taps a dimension that is more distinct from the background factors than the patriotism scale. Additional analyses undertaken by the authors, however, suggests that patriotism is the more powerful of the two measures. Patriotism continues to play a significant role in determining positions on a number of political issues, even when background factors and basic political orientations are controlled. In contrast, the potential of nationalism as a predictor fades once multivariate analyses are undertaken.