

# EVALUATION OF THE CONSERVATISM SCALE: A REPLY TO RAY

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In the preceding paper Ray has convincingly argued that the results obtained by him do not support the validity of the Wilson-Patterson Conservatism Scale. However, his results are so aberrant that they cannot really be held to impugn it either. Anybody familiar with the items in the C-Scale would recognize that his correlation of  $+.288$  between the liberal and conservative halves of the questionnaire is patently absurd. All others who calculate this correlation (and there have been many) find it to be in the vicinity of  $-.7$ , which is consistent with what we know about the factor structure of the test. It is sometimes as low as  $-.6$ , but certainly never positive. Either Ray's computer must have blown a fuse during analysis or his subjects were distinctly odd people. Similarly, the reliability of  $.63$  that he reports for the scale is so much lower than that found by everybody else that I am more inclined to believe there is something wrong with Ray's study than with the scale; all the other researchers who have investigated the reliability of the C-Scale (with samples varying greatly in heterogeneity) have reported coefficients between  $.83$  and  $.96$ . There is a great deal of data to support the reliability and validity of the C-Scale to be found in *The Psychology of Conservatism*; Ray's rather peculiar results detract little from that general picture.

The main intent of Ray's critique seems to be to persuade prospective users of the Wilson-Patterson Scale that his own version is preferable. The reader is free to choose, but I doubt that Ray's own results are sufficient to establish the superiority of his modification. On the other hand, we accept that the items used in the 1968 version of the test are not perfect. For this reason we have prepared a revision (to be published by NFER within the next few weeks) based on several years of research with large samples drawn from around the world. Hopefully, future research will confirm that the changes made are actually for the better.

## REFERENCES

- Wilson, G. D. (Ed.) *The psychology of conservatism*. New York: Academic Press, 1973.
- Wilson, G. D. Manual for the Wilson-Patterson Attitude Inventory. Windsor: NFER Publishing Co., 1974.