

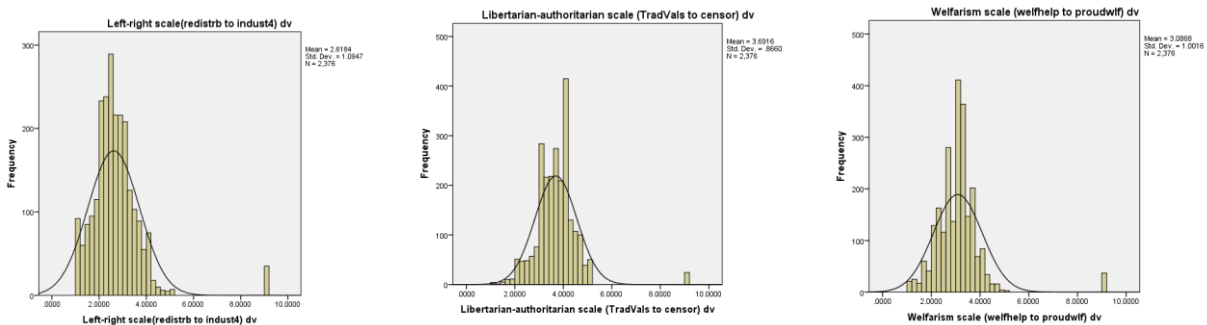
Cautionary tale for the unwary

UK Data Archive Study Number 7809 - [British Social Attitudes Survey, 2014](#)

Attitude scales¹ included in the SPSS file (see [User Guide](#) pp 19-21)

Welfarism scale (actually Anti-welfarism)	Self-completion questionnaire A: Q.41 (a) – (h)
Left-right scale	Self-completion questionnaire A: Q.42 (a) – (e)
Libertarian- authoritarian scale	Self-completion questionnaire A: Q.43 (a) – (f)

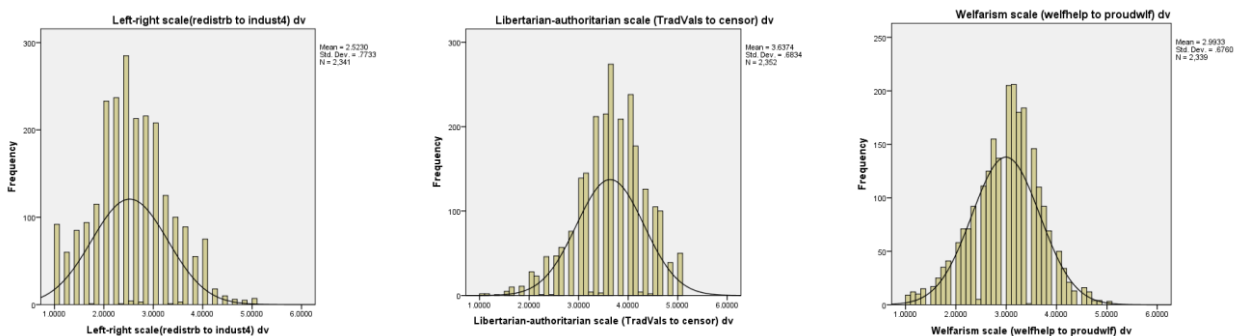
Three derived variables are calculated as the average score derived from summing (with reverse coding where necessary) associated sets of items in the range **1 – 5** for which **-1** (Skip: not returned) has been declared as a missing value. However, there is also a value **9** (Not answered) which has not been declared as missing. The results of the scale construction include the value **9** (clearly visible as outliers in the charts below) for scores which should range from **1 – 5**.



Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
leftrigh Left-right scale	2376	1.0000	9.0000	2.618441
libauth Libertarian-authoritarian scale	2376	1.0000	9.0000	3.691611
welfare2 Welfarism scale	2376	1.0000	9.0000	3.086846

Changing the missing values to include both **-1** and **9** produces correct results:



Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
leftrigh Left-right scale	2341	1.0000	5.0000	2.523031
libauth Libertarian-authoritarian scale	2352	1.0000	5.0000	3.637443
welfare2 Welfarism scale	2339	1.0000	5.0000	2.993307

¹ The questions are in this order in the questionnaire, but in the SPSS file the sequence of scales is **leftrigh**, **libauth** and **welfare2**. The wording in items used for leftrigh and libauth are all loaded towards “right-wing” and “authoritarian”; wording in items for (anti-)“welfareism” have mixed loadings, but the values for positive items in the SPSS file have been modified to indicate high anti-welfare attitudes. This could be confusing.