

Learning Module: Views of Religious Leaders

How does the public view religious leaders? What role should religious authorities have in our society? The purpose of this learning module is to provide you with data on the public's opinion of religious authorities and their role in society. The Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA) allows you to find and analyze quantitative data from many sources concerning religion in the United States.

If you find yourself lost at any point, look to the instructions on the right.

Open your web browser and go to the homepage for the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA).

Let's begin by searching the ARDA's datasets to see if there are questions that might be of interest to our topic. In the upper right-hand corner of the homepage you will see a search box. Try searching for "**religious leaders.**" This will bring up several different types of search results. Look under the "Questions/Variables from Files in the Data Archive" section.

Although you may have found several questions of interest, let's start with a question named LDRPOLVW (although they may look strange, these are called *variable names* and researchers use them as short-cuts to refer to particular questions when they are doing analyses of data).

1. What is the question that is asked in LDRPOLVW?

It is always a good idea to find out some information about the data that this question comes from. Click on the "Religion and Politics, 2000" link next to the variable name. This will take you to information about the study that this question comes from.

Open your web browser.

Go to www.thearda.com

Type "religious leaders" into the search box at the top of the page.

Click "Search."

Either scroll down until you find this question, or hit CTRL+F and search for LDRPOLVW.

2. When was this data collected?

3. Who was the principal investigator that collected this data (although there are usually many people that work on collecting data, the principal investigator is the person who coordinates the research and often obtains funding for the study)?

Now that you have some information concerning how this dataset was collected, let's take a look at the question we found earlier. Hint: Instead of using the main search that you used previously, try clicking on the "Search" tab below the name of the file you are looking at to search only within the Religion and Politics, 2000 survey.

Once you find that question again, click on the name of the variable.

4. What **percent** of respondents stated that religious authorities "Should keep silent" concerning these issues?

Often responses will vary depending on some other variable like education, age, race, and so on. The ARDA automatically lets you compare responses among different categories of these common demographic variables. All you have to do is click on the "Analyze results" link below the question you are looking at. Go ahead and try this with the LDRPOLVW question.

Click on the "Search" tab.

Type in some words from the question in the search box. Click "Search."

Click on the name of the variable.

Click on "Analyze results" below the question.

5. How do responses vary by education? Fill in the table:

	No High School Degree	High School Degree	Technical Some College	College Degree	Post-Graduate Degree
Should Keep Silent (Percent)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Let's find another variable to explore. Use the main search box in the upper-right hand corner of the site to find the following question in the ARDA's data:

"Now I'm going to read some statements that some people have made about religion and the Catholic Church. Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with the statement: It bothers me when Church leaders use words like men and brothers to refer to both men and women."

6. What religious group was surveyed in the study that this question comes from? Hint: Click on the name of the survey that the question comes from.

7. What percent of respondents "Agree Strongly" with the statement?

8. How would you guess responses differ by the age of the respondent? Write your hypothesis below:

In the Search box at the top of the screen, type in some keywords from this question like "brothers," "men," "leaders," "women," and click Go.

If you find multiple questions, find the one that matches the wording exactly.

Find the question again by using the search feature within the file. Click on the name of the question or on the "Analyze results" link below it.

9. Fill in the following table:

	Born 1940 or earlier	Born 1941-1960	Born After 1960
Agree Strongly (%)	_____	_____	_____
Agree Somewhat (%)	_____	_____	_____
Add the Two %'s Above for TOTAL AGREEING	_____	_____	_____

10. Was your hypothesis confirmed or disconfirmed?

You should have a good idea of how to find variables of interest and to read the tables. Now it is your turn to do some exploring on your own. Keeping with the 'views of religious authorities' theme, find another question in the ARDA's data that you find interesting.

11. What is the question you found?

12. What is the name of the data file (i.e. study or survey) that you found this question in?

13. Do responses differ by age, race, education, or some other variable? Print out the table and attach it to the back of these papers. Describe what you found below:
