

The International Social Survey Program

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The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) is a continuing, annual program of crossnational collaboration. It brings together pre-existing social science projects and coordinates research goals, thereby adding a crossnational perspective to the individual national studies.

ISSP evolved from a bilateral collaboration between the Allgemeinen Bevölkerungsumfragen der Sozialwissenschaften (ALLBUS) of the Zentrum fuer Umfragen, Methoden, und Analysen (ZUMA) in Mannheim, West Germany and the General Social Survey (GSS) of the National Opinion Research Center (NORC), University of Chicago. Both the ALLBUS and the GSS are replicating, time series studies. The ALLBUS has been conducted biennially since 1980 and the GSS annually (except for 1979 and 1981) since 1972. In 1982, ZUMA and the NORC devoted small segments of the ALLBUS and GSS to a common set of questions on job values, important areas of life, abortion, and feminism. (A merged data collection is available from ICPSR as **General Social Survey [United States] and German Social Survey (ALLBUS) Combined Files, 1982** [ICPSR 8365]). Again in 1984, the two surveys incorporated a common set of questions, this time on class differences, equality, and the welfare state.

Meanwhile, in late 1983, Social and Community Planning Research (SCPR), London, which was starting a social indicators series called the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA) similar to the ALLBUS and GSS, secured funds from

the Nuffield Foundation to hold meetings to further international collaboration. Representatives from ZUMA, NORC, SCPR, and the Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University, organized ISSP in 1984 and agreed to (1) jointly develop topical modules dealing with important areas of social science, (2) field the modules as a 15-minute supplement to the regular national surveys (or a special survey if necessary), (3) include an extensive common core of background variables, and (4) make the data available to the social science community as soon as possible.

Since 1984, ISSP has grown to 12 nations, the founding four—Germany, the United States, Great Britain, and Australia—plus Austria, Italy, Ireland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Israel, Norway, and the Philippines. The affiliated organizations are listed in Table 1. Several other nations (e.g., New Zealand, the Soviet Union, and Sweden) have discussed joining ISSP, and still other nations have replicated particular modules but have not joined ISSP.

Each research organization in ISSP funds all of its own costs. There are no central funds. The merging of the data into a crossnational dataset is performed by the Zentralarchiv fuer empirische Sozialforschung, University of Cologne.

The annual topics for ISSP are developed over several years by a subcommittee and pretested in various countries. The annual plenary meeting of ISSP then adopts the final questionnaire. The ISSP researchers especially concentrate on developing questions that are meaningful and relevant to all

countries and can be expressed in an equivalent manner in all relevant languages. The questionnaire is originally drafted in British English and then translated to other languages using standard back-translation procedures.

The themes covered in the ISSP module and the nations collecting data are listed in Table 1. The first theme on the role of government covered attitudes towards (a) civil liberties, (b) education and parenting, (c) welfare and social equality, and (d) the economy. The second theme was on social networks and support systems. This module contained detailed behavioral reports on contacts with various friends and relatives and then a series of questions about where one would turn for help when faced with various situations such as financial need, minor illness, career advice, and emotional distress. The third module, on social equality, concerned beliefs about what factors affect one's chances for social mobility (e.g., parental status, education, contacts, race, etc.), explanations for inequality, assessments of social conflicts, and related questions. Respondents were asked to estimate the average earnings of various occupations (e.g., farm laborer and doctor) and what the average earnings of these occupations should be. The fourth module covered the impact on the family of the changing labor force participation of women. It included attitudes on marriage and cohabitation, divorce, children, and child care as well as special demographics on labor force status, child care, and earnings of husband and wife. The fifth module on orientations towards work dealt with motivations to work, desired characteristics of a job, problems relat-

ing to unemployment, satisfaction with one's own job (if employed), and working conditions (if employed).

The sixth module in 1990 repeats the role of government theme. By replicating substantial parts of earlier modules, ISSP takes on a crosstemporal perspective in addition to its cross-national perspective. The data will enable researchers not only to compare nations and test whether similar social science models operate across societies, but also to determine whether similar international trends exist and whether parallel models of social change operate across nations.

In future years the modules will consist of a mixture of new themes and replications. For 1991, a new module on the impact of religious beliefs and behaviors on social, political, and moral attitudes is being designed. This will include questions on religious upbringing, current religious activities, traditional Christian beliefs, and existential beliefs. Non-religious items will include questions on personal morality, sex roles, crime and punish-

ment, and abortion. For 1992, tentative plans are for the replication of the 1987 social equality module.

ISSP marks several new departures in the area of crossnational research. First, the collaboration between organizations on this project is not special or intermittent, but routine and continual. Second, while necessarily more circumscribed than collaboration dedicated solely to crossnational research on a single topic, ISSP makes crossnational research a basic part of the national research agenda of each participating country. Third, by combining a crosstemporal with a crossnational perspective, ISSP offers two powerful research designs for the study of societal processes.

Data from the first three modules on role of government, social networks and support systems, and social equality are presently available from ICPSR under the titles **International Social Science Program: Role of Govern-**

ment, 1985-1986 (ICPSR 8909); **International Social Science Program: Social Networks and Support Systems, 1986** (ICPSR 9205); and **International Social Science Program: Social Inequality, 1987** (ICPSR 9383). The next module scheduled for release will concern the impact on the family of the increased labor force participation of women. Other modules will be released periodically as soon as the data can be processed.

Publications based on ISSP and the earlier bilateral NORC-ZUMA collaboration can be found in the *GSS Cross-National Reports* (available from NORC, 1155 East 60th St., Chicago, IL 60637) and Roger Jowell, Sharon Witherspoon, and Lindsay Brook, eds., *British Social Attitudes: Special International Report* (Aldershot: Gower, 1989).

For further details contact the ISSP secretariat, Roger Jowell, SCPR, 35 Northampton Square, London EC1V OAX, England. □

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Table 1: ISSP Modules

Organization	Country	Role of Government	Social Networks/Support Systems	Inequality	Family and Sex Roles	Work Orientation	Role of Government II
RSSS	Australia	Done 86	Done 87	Done 88	Planned	—	Planned
IS	Austria	Done 86	Done 86	Done 88	Done 88	Planned	Planned
ZUMA	Germany	Done 85	Done 86	Done 87	Done 88	Done 89	Planned
SCPR	Great Britain	Done 85	Done 86	Done 88	Done 88	Done 89	Planned
Eurisko	Italy	Done 85	Done 87	Done 87	Done 88	Done 89	Planned
Tarkai	Hungary	—	Done 86	Done 87	Done 88	Done 89	Planned
SSRC	Ireland	—	—	—	Done 88	Planned	Planned
TAU	Israel	—	—	—	—	Planned	Planned
SCP	Netherlands	—	—	Done 87	Done 88-89	Done 89	Planned
NSD	Norway	—	—	—	—	Done 89	Planned
NORC	United States	Done 85	Done 86	Done 87	Done 88	Done 89	In field 90
SI	Switzerland	—	—	Done 87	—	—	—

Eurisko Milan
 IS Institut fuer Soziologie, Graz University
 NORC University of Chicago
 NSD Norsk Samfunnsvitenskapelig Datatjeneste, Bergen
 RSSS Research School of Social Sciences, Australian National University
 SCP Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, Rijkswijk

SCPR Social and Community Planning Research, London
 SI Soziologisches Institut, University of Zuerich
 SSRC Social Science Research Center, University College, Dublin
 Tarkai Tarsadalomkutatasi Informatikai Tarsulas, Budapest
 TAU Tel Aviv University
 ZUMA Zentrum fuer Umfragen, Methoden, und Analysen, Mannheim