

Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2000

Technical Notes

Contact:
Paula Devine
Centre for Social Research
School of Sociology and Social Policy
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN
Tel: +44 (0) 28 9027 3034
Email: p.devine@qub.ac.uk

Contents

	Page
What is the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey?	1
Links with other surveys	1
Technical details of the 2000 survey	2
The overall design	2
Survey content	2
Fieldwork	2
Advance mailshot	3
Sampling design	3
Response rate	3
Sampling errors and confidence intervals	4
Identifying the young people's sample	5
Data preparation	5
Deriving social class variables	5
Getting the data	6
Using the data	6
Notes and errata	7
Comparison with other surveys	8
Contact information	10
Finding a module in the questionnaires	11
Other variables on the dataset.....	12

What is the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey?

The Northern Ireland Life and Times (NILT) Survey was launched in the autumn of 1998. Its mission is to monitor the attitudes and behaviour of people in Northern Ireland annually to provide a time-series and a public record of how our attitudes and behaviour develop on a wide range of social policy issues. The survey is run on a modular format and while two modules are repeated every year (*Political Attitudes* and *Community Relations*) the rest of the survey varies annually, with all the modules designed to be repeated in years to come.

The survey aims to provide:

- A local resource for use by the general public
- A data source for a more theoretical academic debate

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the funders for the 2000 survey who have been most supportive of the overall aims of the project. They include Community Relations Unit, Department for Social Development, Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster.

Links with other surveys

The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey is a direct descendent of the Northern Ireland Social Attitudes Survey (NISA) which ran from 1989 to 1996. NISA was a sister survey to the British Social Attitudes Survey (BSA), and, by running the same modules as BSA, it provided a time-series of social attitudes allowing comparisons with Britain. Against the background of the new political arrangements in Northern Ireland it was agreed that the new Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey would be better served by cutting its links with its British counterpart. NILT now carries on the tradition of a time-series of attitudes but has shifted the focus away from comparisons with Britain. It is largely Northern Ireland focused; it is social policy focused; and it is designed to be used by the wider public in Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, every year includes a substantial component which either continues an old NISA time-series, or replicates a BSA module.

Each year over 30 countries participate in the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) in which the same module of questions is asked cross-nationally. Northern Ireland has also taken part in this exercise (via NISA) since 1989. The 2000 module covered **Environment**. Full ISSP datasets can be obtained from the *ZentralArchiv* in Köln, Germany where the datasets from the member countries are assembled. Information on the ISSP can be found at their web site: <http://www.issp.org>, while the English version of the *ZentralArchiv* website is at <http://www.gesis.org/en/za/index.htm>.

Technical details of the 2000 survey

The overall design

The 2000 *Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey* involved 1800 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 or over. The main interview was carried out using computer assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) and the respondent was then asked to complete a self-completion form. The *Young Life and Times Survey*, which runs alongside the adult version, included interviews with 259 young people aged 12 to 17. This used a paper questionnaire containing a sub-set of questions from the adult survey, and one complete module which is of particular relevance to young people (in 2000 this was *Men's Life and Times*).

Not all modules are asked of the full 1800 adult sample. Where a smaller sample size is sufficient for a module, the sample is 'split', such that half the respondents are asked those questions. For example, the structure of the 2000 survey allowed half the sample to be asked the *Environment* module, while the other half were asked the *Work Orientations* module.

Survey content

Version A	Version B
Background Men's Life and Times Community Relations Political Attitudes Welfare Reform Environment	Background Men's Life and Times Community Relations Political Attitudes Welfare Reform Work Orientations

Fieldwork

All interviews were conducted during the period October to December 2000. Interviewing was carried out by social survey interviewers employed by Research and Evaluation Services (RES). All fieldworkers attended one of four briefing sessions conducted jointly by RES and members of the NILT project team. All interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes. Interviewers made up to a maximum of five calls before the person identified in the sample was deemed to be 'non-obtainable'. The self completion form was either completed and handed back to the interviewer at the time of the main interview, or the interviewer called back at a later stage to collect it.

Advance mailshot

Households identified in the sample were sent an advance letter which explained the background to the survey, outlined the method by which an individual respondent would be selected from the household, and requested co-operation with the project. The letter provided households with contact details for the project team and RES, and also confirmed that a donation of £1 would be made to Action Cancer on behalf of each respondent.

Sampling design

The survey was designed to yield a representative sample of men and women aged 18 and over living in Northern Ireland. The Postal Address File (PAF) was used as the sampling frame for the survey and a simple random sample of addresses was obtained after stratification into three geographic regions (Belfast, East of the Bann and West of the Bann). This was done to ensure the adequate representation of areas of lower population density and is standard practice in Northern Ireland social surveys. At selected addresses, a Kish grid procedure was utilised to randomly select one individual to be the subject of the survey.

The sample selected was slightly larger than necessary in order to provide reserve addresses. Interviewers were instructed to make a total of five calls, or to have received a refusal or other information confirming that an interview would not be obtained, before being issued with reserve addresses. This was to ensure optimal response from the main sample.

Response rate

Table 1.1 shows the status of addresses, and the number of addresses in scope. **Table 1.2** shows the reason for non achievement of interviews with individuals drawn in the sample. **Table 1.3** shows the response rate for versions A and B of the main stage interviews, and the self completion questionnaires.

Total Addresses Issued	Vacant /Derelict /Commercial	Total in scope
2850	42	2808

	No.	%
Achieved	1800	64
Refused	428	15
Non-contact	554	20
Other	26	1
Total	2808	100

	Version A	Version B
Number of main stage interviews	895	905
Number of self completion achieved	745	726
% of self completion achieved	83	80

Sampling errors and confidence intervals

Table 1.4 sets out sampling errors and confidence intervals at the 95% confidence level relating to a Simple Random Sample design as used in the survey. Note that the margin of error for all sample estimates is within the parameters of $\pm 3\%$.

		% p	Standard Error of p (%)	95% Confidence limits
Age	18- 24	10	0.71	8.80-11.60
	25 - 44	37	1.14	34.87-39.33
	45 - 64	30	1.08	28.27-32.53
	65 - 74	12	0.77	10.59-13.61
	75+	10	0.71	8.71-11.49
Sex	Male	43	1.17	40.61-45.19
	Female	57	1.17	54.81-59.39
Marital status	Married/Cohabiting	48	1.18	45.79-50.41
	Single	26	1.03	23.49-27.51
	Widow/Div/Sep	26	1.04	24.27-28.33
Religion	Catholic	30	1.08	28.18-32.42
	Protestant	56	1.17	53.30-57.90
	None	11	0.72	9.08-11.92
	Other	3	0.38	1.86-3.34
	Refused	1	0.20	0.31-1.09

Identifying the young people's sample

The CAPI programme for the main adult interview collected information on the ages of young people normally resident in the adult participant's household. Where any young people in the 12-17 year age group were identified, their parent or guardian was asked for permission to interview him/her/them and could be shown a copy of the young person's questionnaire to demonstrate its content. The parent/guardian was asked to sign a formal consent form for the young person's interview to proceed. Where parental permission was obtained, all young people within the household were interviewed unless they were unavailable or unwilling to take part. Questionnaires were administered by the interviewer and took approximately 20 minutes to complete. Outcomes from this procedure are shown in **Table 1.5** and **Table 1.6** below.

Table 1.5 Young people identified in participating households (N=1800)	
1 Young person	189
2 Young people	84
3 Young people	17
4 Young people	3
Total number of young people identified	420

Table 1.6 Outcome of young people's main stage survey	
	No.
Total number of young people identified	420
Total number of young people interviewed	259
Response rate for Young Life & Times Survey (%)	62

Data preparation

Main survey data was collected via the 'Surveycraft' computer aided interviewing package. This was converted to SPSS format prior to analysis. All paper based data (self completion modules and the young person's survey) were entered via the SPSS data entry system. All data were merged and subject to an extensive range of inter and intra variable logic checks.

Deriving social class variables

Occupational variables from the data set were derived using the 'Computer Assisted Standard Occupational Coding' (CASOC) software. This programme enables a match to be made between the text describing the respondent's occupation and the most similar occupational description taken from the Registrar General's Standard Classification of Occupations. When a match is made, the system automatically assigns the official three digit code from the 'Standard Classification of Occupations' to this case. This three digit code is the direct basis for the derivation of related information on a social class grouping.

Getting the data

Survey results are put on the Internet six months after the end of fieldwork (<http://www.qub.ac.uk/nilt>), with frequencies for every question and a breakdown by age, gender and religion on offer. However, there are no plans to put tables of results for questions on the topics of Social Capital (within the Community Relations module) and Welfare Reform on the web-site. The data for these sections are quite complicated, and so will also be omitted from the SPSS data file available for public downloading from the web-site. However, if you would like to obtain the raw data to analyse yourself, please contact a member of the NILT team (see Contact Information on page 10).

A 'query' service or helpline is run for those who need additional tables or have any query about the survey, and is based at the Centre for Social Research, Queen's University, Belfast (see Contact Information on page 10). A leaflet advertising the existence of the data and how to get hold of it is also sent to schools, voluntary groups, civil servants, journalists and assembly members. The funders of the survey receive the dataset somewhat earlier than the public (three months after the end of fieldwork). Nonetheless, one of the guiding principles of the survey is that the information is made available to all and that no one person or organisation has ownership of the results. The web-site also allows users to download the data in order to carry out their own particular statistical analyses.

Using the data

The documentation provided here is not a traditional 'technical report' and is designed to be easy to use rather than technically exhaustive. Users who intend to carry out sophisticated statistical analyses or to manipulate the data to investigate particular features (for example, to compare the answers of adults with young people in their households) may well want to come back to us for more precise details on the survey set-up.

The data have been tested extensively, but if you do find anything that looks like a mistake, please let us know as soon as you can.

Please note that all analyses of the adult data should be weighted in order to allow for disproportionate household size. The weighting variable is called *WTFACOR*. The only exceptions are the few household variables (for example, tenure and household income), which do not need to be weighted. The young person's sample does not need to be weighted.

Notes and Errata

Demographic characteristics

Analysis of the 2000 survey shows that the percentage of respondents who are Catholic is approximately 32%. This is smaller than for previous years, but looking at trends since 1989, this is within the bounds that can be expected. However, when doing comparisons of figures over different years, please analyse Protestants and Catholics separately.

Categorisation of Religion

At the back of this documentation is a list of other variables on the dataset. This includes the variable RELIGCAT, which categorises the variable RELIGION into 3 groups: Catholic, Protestant and No religion.

The Protestant category was created by grouping together the following denominations:

- Church of Ireland/Anglican/Episcopal
- Baptist
- Methodist
- Presbyterian
- Free Presbyterian
- Brethren
- United Reform Church (URC)/Congregational
- Pentecostal
- Church of Scotland
- Elim Pentecostal
- Reformed Presbyterian
- Non-subscribing Presbyterian
- Salvation Army
- Church of Nazarene
- Jehovah's Witness
- Mormon
- Evangelical
- Metropolitan
- Seventh Day Adventist
- Quaker
- Protestant – no denomination
- Christian – no denomination

However, users of the data may wish to create their own categories by recoding the RELIGION variable.

We have omitted other religious groups from the RELIGCAT variable as the numbers were too small to use for meaningful analysis.

Social Capital

Data from the Social Capital (within the Community Relations module) and from the Welfare Reform module have not been included in the SPSS file available from the website for downloading (see page vi). However, if you wish to analyse the data, please contact a member of the NILT team (see Contact Information on page 10).

Comparison with other surveys

Comparison of household characteristics

		NILT 2000*	CHS 1999/00	Northern Ireland Census 1991
<i>Characteristics of sampled households</i>				
<i>Tenure</i>	Owner occupied	64	74	62
	Rented, NIHE	26	18	29
	Rented, Other**	8	7	8
	Other (eg rent free)	1	1	1
Base=100%		1800	5766	530 369

* Household characteristics are based on unweighted data from the NILT survey

** 'Rented, Other' includes rented from a housing association and rented privately

Comparison of individual characteristics

		NILT 2000	CHS 1999/00	Northern Ireland Census 1991
%				
<i>Individual characteristics</i>				
<i>Sex</i>	Male	45	47	48
	Female	55	53	52
<i>Age</i>	18-24	13	12	16
	25-34	17	18	21
	35-44	19	20	18
	45-54	18	17	15
	55-59	9	7	6
	60-64	7	7	6
	65 and over	17	18	18
<i>Marital Status</i>	Single	26	27	28
	Married/Cohabiting	57	58	59
	Widowed	8	8	9
	Divorced/Separated	9	7	6
Base=100%	n	1800	5766	1 117 221
%				
<i>Economic activity</i>	Working	47	51	49*
	Unemployed	5	4	9
	Economically inactive	49	41	42
	Refused/missing	0	4	0
Base=100%		1800	5766	1 167 938

* Based on total population aged 16 and over

** Includes schemes and employment training etc

Individual characteristics - NILT 2000

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	87	37	10	11	14	26
Married/cohabiting	11	55	73	72	50	57
Divorced/separated/ widowed	2	8	17	17	36	17
Base=100%	183	322	343	545	398	1800

Individual characteristics - CHS 1999/00

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	96	41	16	9	11	27
Married/cohabiting	4	52	73	76	53	58
Divorced/separated/ widowed	1	7	12	15	37	15
Base=100%	703	1039	1146	1792	1086	5766

Stated religious denomination

	NILT 2000	CHS 1999/00	Northern Ireland Census 1991
	%		
Protestant	57	46	50
Catholic	32	31	38
Other religion	<1	<1	-
No religion	11	3	4
Unwilling to say/Don't know	1	20	7
Base=100%	1800	5766	1 577 836

Contact information

Paula Devine

Centre for Social Research
School of Sociology and Social Policy
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN
Tel: (028) 9027 3034
Email: p.devine@qub.ac.uk

Lizanne Dowds

Centre for Social Research
School of Sociology and Social Policy
Queen's University Belfast
Belfast BT7 1NN
Tel: (028) 9027 3034
Email: l.dowds@qub.ac.uk

Ann Marie Gray

School of Social and Community Sciences
University of Ulster at Jordanstown
Shore Road
Newtownabbey BT37 0QB
Tel: (028) 9036 6689
Email: am.gray@ulst.ac.uk

Gillian Robinson

University of Ulster
Aberfoyle House
Northland Road
Derry/Londonderry BT48 7JA
Tel: (028) 7137 5502
Email: gillian@incore.ulst.ac.uk

Finding a module in the questionnaires

	Main Questionnaire	Self Completion Version A	Self Completion Version B	Young Life and Times
	Cream	Green	Blue	Yellow
	Page numbers			
<i>Men's Life and Times</i>	4-7	13	12	2
<i>Community Relations</i>	8-15	16	15	3-4
<i>Political Attitudes</i>	16-23	14-16, 17	13-15, 16	3
<i>Welfare Reform</i>	24-36	N/A	N/A	4-7
<i>Work Orientations</i>	N/A	N/A	2-11	N/A
<i>ISSP: Environment</i>	N/A	2-12	N/A	N/A
<i>Background information</i>	2-3, 37-44	N/A	N/A	8-11