

The ISSP Standard Background Variables (June 2001)

*(edited 2006-04-25, Markus Quandt:
removed a few formatting errors; adapted RINCOME/INCOME to the current country specific
definition of the Standard Setups since module 2006; added common missing value codes
for the country specific variables.)*

The paper sets out the ISSP core background variables agreed upon at the 2001 ISSP meeting in Umeå. The background variables are compulsory except of nat_ETHN. They should be used beginning with the ISSP module 2002 'Family III'.

The first part is the list of variables and gives an overview. The variable names in bold are the variable names also used in statistical packages (e.g. SPSS), the first line of text following the variable names are used as variable labels in statistical packages (e.g. SPSS).

List of variables:

SEX	Sex of respondent
AGE	Age of respondent
MARITAL	Marital status of respondent
COHAB	Do you live together with a partner?
EDUCYRS	Education I - years (of full time) schooling
DEGREE	Education II - highest education level / degree
nat_DEGR	Education II – country specific categories
WRKST	Current employment status, main source of living
WRKHRS	Working hours - number of hours (usually) worked weekly <u>(including regular overtime work)</u>
ISCO88	Occupation - four digit 1988 ISCO / ILO occupation code <u>(if R not working ask most recent job)</u>
WRKSUP	Supervises others at work - Do you supervise the work of any other people? <u>(if R not working ask most recent job)</u>
WRKTYPE	R: Working for private sector, public sector or self-employed <u>(if R not working ask most recent job)</u>
NEMPLOY	(If self employed) Do you have any employees? If so, how many? <u>(if R not working ask most recent job)</u>
UNION	Is respondent member of a trade union <u>(or was in the past)?</u>
SPWRKST	Spouse / partner: current employment status, main source of living
SPISCO88	Spouse / partner: occupation, four digit 1988 ISCO / ILO occupation code <u>(if R not working ask most recent job)</u>
SPWRKTYP	S-P: Working for private sector, public sector or self-employed

(if R not working ask most recent job)

INCOME	Family income
RINCOME	Respondent's earnings
HOMPOP	How many persons in household
HHCYCLE	Household composition: adults and children (less than 18 years)
PARTY_LR	Party affiliation - left-right <u>(Not asked but coded in a 5-point left - right scheme by data producers)</u>
nat_PRTY	Party affiliation - Country-specific
VOTE_LE	Vote last general election: Yes/no
ATTEND	Attendance of religious services
RELIG	Religious denomination <u>(asked country-specific but re-coded to standard)</u>
RELIGGRP	Religious main-group derived from RELIG
TOPBOT	10 point top-bottom scale
nat_REG	Region - Country-specific
nat_SIZE	Size of community - Country-specific
URBRURAL	Type of community: urban / rural – self-assessed
WEIGHT	Weighting factor
MODE	Administrative mode of data-collection
(Optional):	
nat_ETHN	Ethnic identity / family origin Country specific

Variables in detail:

SEX R: sex
Sex of respondent

1. Male
 2. Female
 9. No answer
-

AGE R: Age
Age of respondent

exact age
99. No answer

MARITAL R: Marital status
Marital status of respondent (legal status)

1. Married
2. Widowed
3. Divorced
4. Separated (married but separated / not living with legal spouse)
5. Single, never married
9. No answer

Comment: The aim of this variable is to measure the 'legal' status. Cohabitation should be asked separately

Further points to consider in this context are:

- The current procedure in some countries mixes legal status and cohabitation up
 - The category 'Single' should be 'NEVER married'. Is this always clear in the respective languages?
 - If the question just asks whether respondents are married, we still do not know if they are living with this partner. Do respondents then get asked whether they are or not?
 - Are respondents really followed through these questions considering the correct filter-instructions?
 - 'Married' should be 'married AND living together with spouse', otherwise 'separated' should be coded.
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COHAB R: Steady life-partner
(If not married and living together with spouse)
Do you live together with a partner?

1. Yes
2. No
9. No answer
0. NAP (living together with spouse - Code 1 in MARITAL)

Comment: This additional variable measures the dimension not included in the variable MARITAL: living together with a partner but not being married. It is still open whether what the ISSP wants is 'living together' or 'having a steady life-partner' or both. The life partner may not be someone you live with. This is one reason for the great variance in frequency-distributions for this variable. Another reason is how respondents are filtered. It must be clear that all respondents are asked this question who are not living together with their legal spouse i.e. code 1 in MARITAL.

EDUCYRS R: Education I: years in school
Education I - years (of full time) schooling including university but not vocational training

- 95. Still at school
- 96. Still at College/University
- 98. Don't know
- 99. No answer
- 0. No formal schooling

Comment: It should be documented clearly whether this variable has been asked directly to the respondent or whether it has been derived from the nat_DEGREE variable. If vocational training is a substantial part of the education with some kind of every-day schooling, it should be included whereas vocational training with only a few hours in school per week should not be counted.

DEGREE R: Education II: categories
Education II - highest education level / degree

The DEGREE of education should be ASKED country-specific, NOT using the ISSP categories in the questions to the respondents. These ISSP categories should be computed from the country-specific degrees (nat_DEGREE)

- 0. No formal qualification
 - 1. Lowest formal qualification attainable
 - 2. Qualifications which are above the lowest qualification, but below the usual entry requirement for universities (intermediary secondary completed)
 - 3. (Usual) Entry requirement for universities (higher secondary completed: the German Abitur, the French Bac, English A-level, etc.)
 - 4. Qualifications which are above the higher secondary level, but below a full university degree
 - 5. University degree completed
 - 9. No answer
-

nat_DEGR Country-specific degrees of education
(Original categories should be translated into English)

- 0. not available
 - 9/99. No answer
-

WRKST R: Current employment status
Current employment status, current economic position, main source of living

SPWRKST S-P: Current employment status
Spouse / partner: current employment status, current economic position, main source of living

1. Employed - full time
2. Employed - part time
3. Employed - less than part time / temporarily out of work
4. Helping family member

Not in labour force

5. Unemployed
6. Student / in school / in vocational training
7. Retired
8. Housewife / home duties
9. Permanently disabled
10. Others not in labour force
99. No answer

only for SPWRKST:

00. INAP (no spouse, no partner - Code 2-9 in MARITAL or 2, 9 in COHAB)

ISCO88 R: Occupation ISCO 1988

SPISCO88 S-P: Occupation ISCO
Spouse / partner: occupation

Ask ISCO88, SPISCO88 of most recent job (if R or Spouse has no current job)

Occupation - four digit 1988 ISCO / ILO occupation code

99997. Refused
99998. Don't know, inadequately described
99999. No answer
00000. INAP (never had a job)

Only for SPISCO:

00000. INAP (no spouse, no partner - Code 2-9 in MARITAL or 2, 9 in COHAB)

WRKTYPE R: Working for private sector, public sector or self-employed

SPWRKTYP Spouse: Working for private sector, public sector or self-employed

Ask WRKTYPE, SPWRKTYP of most recent job (if R has no current job)

1. Works for government
 2. Works for publicly owned firm
 3. Does not work for government or publicly owned firm, and not self employed
 4. Self employed
9. No answer

0. INAP (Never had a job)

Only for SPWRKTYP:

0. Never had a job, INAP (no spouse, no partner - Code 2-9 in MARITAL or 2, 9 in COHAB)

NEMPLOY R: Self-employed: how many employees
(If self employed) Do you have any employees, how many?
(exact number of employees)

Ask NEMPLOY of most recent job (if R has no current job)

9999. No answer

0. INAP (Code 0, 1-3, 9 in WRKTYPE)

WRKHRS R: Hours worked weekly
Working hours - number of hours (usually) worked weekly

97. Refused

98. Don't know

99. No answer

00. INAP (currently not in labour force - Code 5-99 in WRKST)

WRKSUP R: Supervise
Supervises others at work
Do you supervise the work of any other people?

Proposal: ... supervise or are you held responsible ...

Ask WRKSUP of most recent job (if R has no current job)

1. Yes

2. No

7. Refused

8. Don't know

9. No answer

0. INAP (Never had a job)

nat_RINC R: Earnings – country specific
Respondent's earnings

nat_INC Family income – country specific
Family income

000000. No income, (some countries: not in paid work)

999997. Refused

999998. Don't know

999999. No answer

ATTEND R: Religious services - how often

Attendance of religious services

People with 'no religion' should not be excluded from this question.

1. Several times a week
2. Once a week
3. 2 or 3 times a month
4. Once a month
5. Several times a year
6. Once a year
7. Less frequently
8. Never
97. Refused
98. Don't know
99. No answer

(If codes '2' and '3' cannot be distinguished, '2' will be coded)

RELIG R: Religious denomination

Question:

What is your religious preference?

[Alternatively: To which religious denomination do you belong?]

[Also possible: Do you belong to a religious group or community, a denomination, or a church? - 1 Yes; 2 No; If yes: Which one is that?]

Coding scheme:

0	No religion
100	ROMAN CATHOLIC
200	PROTESTANT
210	Episcopalian, Anglican, Church of England, Church of Ireland
220	Baptists
230	Congregationalists
240	European Free Church (Anabaptists)
250	Lutheran
260	Methodist
270	Pentecostal
280	Presbyterian
290	Other Protestant (no specific religion mentioned)
300	ORTHODOX
310	Greek Orthodox
320	Russian Orthodox
390	Orthodox (no specific religion mentioned)
400	OTHER CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS
401-489	Specific Christian Groups
490	Unspecified Christian Religion
500	JEWISH
510	Orthodox
520	Conservative
530	Reformist

- 590 Jewish Religion general (no specific group mentioned)
- 600 ISLAM
- 610 Kharijism
- 620 Mu'tazilism
- 630 Sunni
- 640 Shi'ism
- 650 Isma'ilis
- 660-689 Other Muslim Religions
- 690 Muslim; Mohammedan; Islam (no specific religion mentioned)

- 700 BUDDHISM
- 701-789 Specific Buddhist Groups
- 790 Buddhism general (no specific group mentioned)

- 800 HINDUISM
- 810-889 Specific Groups
- 890 Hinduism general (no specific group mentioned)

- 900 OTHER ASIAN RELIGION
- 901-949 Specific Groups (Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism)
- 950 Other East Asian Religion(no specific group mentioned)

- 960 OTHER RELIGIONS

- 998. Don't know
- 999. Not answered

RELIGGRP

Derived Variable from the coding scheme above

- 1. No religion
- 2. ROMAN CATHOLIC
- 3. PROTESTANT
- 4. CHRSTIAN ORTHODOX
- 5. JEWISH
- 6. ISLAM
- 7. BUDDHISM
- 8. HINDUISM
- 9. OTHER CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS
- 10. OTHER EASTERN RELIGIONS
- 11. OTHER RELIGIONS

- 98. Don't know
- 99. Not answered

TOPBOT R: Top-Bottom self-placement

- 1. Lowest
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
10. Highest

99. No answer

UNION R: Trade union membership
Is or was R member of a trade union?

1. Currently member
 2. Once member, not now
 3. Never member

 9. No answer
-

PARTY_LR R: party affiliation: left - right
Party affiliation – to be ASKED country-specific, NOT using the ISSP categories. These should be computed from the country-specific parties (nat_PRTY) into the scheme below by the data-producer.

1. Far left (communist etc.)
 2. Left / centre left
 3. Centre / liberal
 4. Right / conservative
 5. Far right (fascist etc.)
 6. Other
 7. No party, no preference
 8. Don't know
 9. No answer
-

nat_PRTY R: party affiliation – country-specific
National parties mentioned are coded country-specific. Names and abbreviations for parties should be supplied in original language and also in English. The position of Parties in the left-right-scheme should be supplied as well for the construction of PRTY_LR.

0. Not available
 - 9/99. No answer
-

VOTE_LE Did R vote in last general election?

1. Yes
 2. No

 9. No answer
-

HOMPOP How many persons in household

Number of people in household

- 01. One person
- 02. Two persons

...

- 99. No answer
-

HHCYCLE Household cycle

Household composition: adults and children (less than 18 years)

- 01. Single
 - 02. One adult and one child
 - 03. One adult and two children
 - 04. One adult and three or more children
 - 05. Two adults
 - 06. Two adults and one child
 - 07. Two adults and two children
 - 08. Two adults and three or more children
 - 09. Three adults
 - 10. Three adults with children
 - 11. Four adults
 - 12. Four adults with children
 - 13. Five adults
 - 14. Five adults with children
 - 15. Six adults
 - 16. Six adults with children
 - 17. Seven adults
 - 18. Seven adults with children
 - 19. Eight adults
 - 20. Eight adults with children
 - 21. Nine adults
 - 22. Nine adults with children
 - 23. Ten adults
 - 24. Ten adults with children
 - 25. Eleven adults
 - 26. Eleven adults with children
 - 27. Twelve adults
 - 28. Twelve adults with children
 - 95. Otherwise
 - 99. No answer
-

URBRURAL Urban - Rural

Type of community: urban / rural - self-assessed by R

- 1. a big city
 - 2. the suburbs or outskirts of a big city
 - 3. a town or a small city
 - 4. a country village
 - 5. a farm or home in the country
 - 9. No answer
-

nat_SIZE Size of community - country-specific

0. not available
9/99. No answer

nat_REG Region

0. not available
9/99. No answer

Country specific - codes should be supplied together with data and further documentation.

WEIGHT Weighting factor

1. No weighting

Comment: Details about construction of the weight are necessary

MODE Administrative mode of data-collection (OR data collection method)

The scheme developed in discussions between members of the, the modes demographics group, the archive and the secretariat covers both data collection methods permitted in the ISSP and methods not currently permitted.

If we keep the entire scheme we will therefore regularly have categories no one in the ISSP uses, nor is allowed to use. The methods permitted in the ISSP context run from numbers 1.0 to 3.4 below. Further data collection methods are described in 4.0 to 6.3.

We propose to drop those from 4.0 to 6.3 in the ISSP compulsory background variables set-up.

Notes should be attached as necessary to remind members what one or the other category actually refers to (e.g. 1.1 and 1.2 below).

10-19 Face-to-face, paper and pencil

10 No visuals

11 Visuals

12 Respondent reading questionnaire

13 Interpreter or translator - no visuals

14 Interpreter or translator – visuals

20-29 Face-to-face, computer-assisted

20 No visuals

21 Visuals

22 Respondent reading questionnaire (paper or on monitor)

23 Interpreter or translator - no visuals

24 Interpreter or translator – visuals

30-39 Self-completion, paper and pencil

- 30 Arrives with interviewer, interviewer attending
 - 31 Arrives with interviewer, drops-off, picks up later
 - 32 Arrives with interviewer, drops off, mailed back by R
 - 33 Mailed to, complete and hold for pick up
 - 34 Mailed to, mailed back by R
-

Optional variable:

nat_ETHN Origin country / ethnic group / ethnic identity / family origin

- 0. not available
- 9/99. No answer