Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2009

Technical Notes

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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 2009 survey who have been most supportive of the overall aims of the project, in particular Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and the Office for Disability Issues.

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.

Technical details of the 2009 survey

The overall design

The 2009 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey involved 1228 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 years 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 questionnaire.

The self-completion questionnaire was completed using the following three methods:
- CASI method – the respondent completed the self completion on the computer.
- CAPI method – the interviewer completed the self completion on the computer.
- Traditional pen and paper method – the respondent completed the self completion on paper booklet.

In 1998, 1999 and 2000, the Young Life and Times Survey ran alongside the adult survey and interviewed young people aged 12 to 17. However, this methodology was reviewed in 2001. Leading on from this, the Young Life and Times restarted in 2003, but with a different methodology from before, and not linked to the adult survey. (Full details on the Young Life and Times Survey can be found at www.ark.ac.uk/ylt)

Survey content

The survey consists of a number of different modules, each based on a specific topic. The modules included in the 2009 survey are:

Background information on the respondents
Attitudes to disability
Community relations
Attitudes to minority ethnic people and migrant workers
Political attitudes
Leisure time and sport

Fieldwork

All interviews were conducted during the period 1st October 2009 to 19th December 2009 by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) interviewers. All interviews were conducted in the respondents' homes. The self completion questionnaire 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 Letter

An advance letter was issued by NISRA to all sampled addresses prior to the interviewer calling at each address. The letter explained the purpose and rationale for the survey as well as contact details for the NISRA staff managing the project.

Sampling design

The sample for the 2009 survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Land and Property Services Agency list of private addresses. This is the most up-to-date listing of private households and is made available to the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency for research purposes. People living in institutions (though not in private households in such institutions) are excluded. A total of 2,350 addresses were selected for interview.

The Land and Property Services Agency provides a good sampling frame of addresses, but contains no information about the number of people living at an address. Further selection stages were therefore required to convert the listing of addresses to a listing of individuals from which one person (the 'selected respondent') is chosen to complete the questionnaire.

The interviewers listed all members of the household eligible for inclusion in the sample: that is, all persons aged 18 or over living at the address. From this listing of eligible adults, the interviewer's computer randomly selected one adult. This person, the selected respondent, was then asked to complete the interview.

Response rate

Table 1.1 shows the status of addresses, and the number of addresses in scope.
Table 1.2 shows the response rate for the self completion questionnaires.

Table 1.1 Status of addresses		
Total addresses issued	Ineligible (eg vacant/derelict/commercial)	Total in scope
2350	310	2040

Table 1.2 Breakdown of response		
	Number	**Percent**
Total co-operating	1228	60
Fully co-operating	1218	60
Partially co-operating	10	1
Refusal to co-operate	647	32
Non-contact	162	8
Total	2040	

Table 1.3 Completed self completion questionnaires	
Number of main stage interviews	1228
Number of self-completion achieved	1095
% of self completion achieved	89

Sampling errors and confidence intervals

Table 1.4 sets out sampling errors and confidence intervals at the 95% confidence level relating to a Systematic Random Sample design as used in the survey. Note that the margin of error for all sample estimates is within the parameters of $\pm$ 2.8%.

Table 1.4 Sampling errors and confidence intervals for key variables (unweighted data)		%	Standard Error of p (%)	95% Confidence Limits
Age	18 – 24	8.0	0.8	6.5 – 9.5
	25 – 34	17.3	1.1	15.2 – 19.4
	35 – 44	18.9	1.1	16.7 – 21.1
	45 – 54	17.7	1.1	15.6 – 19.8
	55 – 64	15.8	1.0	13.7 – 17.8
	65 and over	22.3	1.2	19.9 – 24.6
Sex	Male	43.1	1.4	40.4 – 45.9
	Female	56.9	1.4	54.1 – 59.7
Marital Status	Single	28.0	1.3	25.5 – 30.5
	Married/Civil Partnership	49.8	1.4	47.0 – 52.6
	Separated	5.9	0.7	4.6 – 7.2
	Divorced	7.5	0.8	6.0 – 9.0
	Widowed	9.0	0.8	7.4 – 10.6
Religion	Catholic	41.0	1.4	38.2 – 43.8
	Protestant	44.5	1.4	41.7 – 47.3
	None	13.1	1.0	11.2 – 15.0
	Other	1.3	0.3	0.7 – 1.9

Data preparation

Main survey data was collected via the Blaise computer aided interviewing package. This was converted to SPSS format prior to analysis. All paper based data (self completion modules) were also entered via the blaise and again converted to SPSS. All data were subject to an extensive range of inter and intra variable logic checks.

Deriving social class variables

Occupational information was derived using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) 2000. The SOC2000 information was also used to derive the National Statistics Socio-Economic (NS SEC) and the ISCO 88 COM variables, both of which are contained in this data set.

Getting the data

Survey results are put on the Internet six months after the end of fieldwork (http://www.ark.ac.uk/nilt), with frequencies for every question and a breakdown by age, gender and religion on offer.

A 'query' service or helpline is run for those who need additional tables or have any query about the survey. Users can contact one of the Life and Times team directly (see Contact Information on page ix). 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 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 *WTFACTOR***. The only exceptions are the few household variables (for example, tenure and household income), which do not need to be weighted.**

Notes and Errata

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 original RELIGION variable has been removed from the dataset in order to protect anonymity of respondents.

The Protestant category within the RELIGCAT variable 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

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

The demographic and socio-economic questions asked in the 2009 NILT survey have been harmonised to match those used in large-scale government surveys. Whilst this means some variation from previous years of NILT, this harmonisation will increase comparability between NILT and other surveys.

Confidentiality
In order to maintain confidentiality, demographic variables relating to other people in the household are excluded from the dataset, as is the RACE2 variable. Variables relating to religion are also excluded, and are replaced by the following recoded versions of these variables:

Variable	Recoded version
RELIGION	RELIGCAT
FAMRELIG	FAMRCODE
PRTNRRLG	PRTRCODE

However, tables of results for these variables can be found on the NILT website (www.ark.ac.uk/nilt/2009)

Comparison with other surveys

Comparison of household characteristics

		NILT 2009*	CHS 2008/09	Northern Ireland Census 2001
Characteristics of sampled households			All households	
Tenure	Owned outright	35	36	29
	Owned with mortgage/co-ownership	34	33	39
	Rented Local Authority	12	14	30
	Rented other	16	16	
	Rent free	3	1	
Base=100%		1228	**2,474**	626718

*   Household characteristics are based on unweighted data from the NILT survey
***   'Rented' includes rented from a housing association and rented privately

Comparison of individual characteristics (weighted data)

		NILT 2009	CHS 2008/09	Northern Ireland Census 2001
			%	
Individual characteristics			18+	
Sex	Male	46	46	48
	Female	54	54	52
Age	18-24	11	12	13
	25-34	17	17	20
	35-44	18	20	20
	45-54	19	17	16
	55-64	16	15	13
	65 and over	20	20	18
Base=100%	n	1228	4,567	1233753
			18+	
Marital Status	Single	27	29	30*
	Married/Civil Partner	59	56	56
	Widowed	6	8	7
	Divorced/Separated	9	7	7
Base=100%	n	1228	4,563	1261257

Individual characteristics – NILT 2009 (weighted data)

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	97	52	19	8	7	27
Married/cohabiting	4	44	70	75	63	59
Divorced/separated/ widowed	0	3	11	17	31	14
Base=100%	135	205	217	431	240	1228*

*Number of valid cases (1228) differs from the total count in this weighted cross tabulation because the cell counts have been rounded

Individual characteristics – CHS 2008/09

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	96	57	22	12	9	31
Married/Civil Partner	4	43	78	85	58	61
Divorced/separated/ widowed	0	0	0	4	33	8
Base=100%	535	729	808	1,275	892	4,239

Stated religious denomination

	NILT 2009 (weighted)	**CHS 2008/09****	**Northern Ireland Census 2001**
	%		
Protestant	43	54	48
Catholic	44	40	38
Other or no religion	13	5	<1
Missing/refused	0	1	13*
Base=100%	1228	3,115	1233751

*   Include 'no religion' and religion not stated
**   Supplemented from household membership

Finding a module in the questionnaires

	Main questionnaire	**Self completion questionnaire**
Background	M1 - M4, M31 - M43	-
Attitudes to disability	M5 - M10	SC3 - SC4
Community relations	M11 - M19	SC2
Attitudes to minority ethnic people and migrant workers	M20 - M27	SC2 - SC3
Political attitudes	M28 - M30	-
Leisure time and sport	-	SC4 - SC11

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Other variables on the dataset

WTFACTOR	**Weighting variable**
RAGECAT	**Age of respondent (categorised)** 1 18-24 2 25-34 3 35-44 4 45-54 5 55-64 6 65+
RELIGCAT	**Religion of respondent (categorised**) 1 Catholic 2 Protestant 3 No religion
ANSSECA2 (Respondent) *ANSSECB2 (Partner)*	**National Statistics Socio Economic Classification (NS SEC)** 1 1.1 Large employers and higher managerial occupations 2 1.2 Higher professional occupations 3 2 Lower managerial and professional occupations 4 3 Intermediate occupations 5 4 Small employers and own account workers 6 5 Lower supervisory and technical occupations 7 6 Semi-routine occupations 8 7 Routine occupations 9 8 Never worked and long-term unemployed 10 9 Not classified