

Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2010

Technical Notes

Contact:

Paula Devine

ARK

School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work

Queen's University Belfast

Belfast BT7 1NN

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 3034

Email: p.devine@qub.ac.uk

www.ark.ac.uk/nilt

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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 thank the funders for the 2010 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 Atlantic Philanthropies.

We would also like to gratefully acknowledge the input of Ann Marie Gray (ARK), Helen Ferguson (Carers NI), Maria McManus (Dementia Services Development Centre), Patricia McParland (School of Applied Social science, University of Stirling), and Robin Wilson.

Finally, we would particularly like to thank all the respondents to the survey.

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.

Ethical approval

The 2010 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast, where the survey coordinator is based.

Technical details of the 2010 survey

The overall design

The 2010 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey involved 1205 face-to-face interviews with adults aged 18 years or over. The number of respondents has been reduced from 1800 as in previous years due to problems in securing funding for the survey. 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 2010 survey are:

Background information on the respondents

Dementia

Community relations

Informal Carers

Social Care for Older People

Attitudes to minority ethnic people and migrant workers

Political attitudes

Pilot and mainstage Fieldwork

All interviews were conducted by Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) interviewers in the respondents' homes. Pilot interviews with 60 respondents were carried out during September 2010. The main stage of the fieldwork was carried out during the period 1st October 2010 to 18th December 2010. Respondents were asked to complete a CASI (Computer Assisted Self-Interviewing) questionnaire. On agreeing to complete the CASI questionnaire, the respondent was shown how to use the interviewer's computer to enter answers by completing some example questions. If a respondent did not wish to complete the self-completion questionnaire on the computer they were given the option to complete a paper version. The paper 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 2010 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	288	2062

Table 1.2 Breakdown of response		
	Number	Percent
Total co-operating	1205	58
Fully co-operating	1200	58
Partially co-operating	5	0
Refusal to co-operate	623	30
Non-contact	234	11
Total	2062	

Table 1.3 Completed self completion questionnaires	
Number of main stage interviews	1205
Number of self-completion achieved	1060
% of self completion achieved	88

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	7.6	0.8	6.1 – 9.1
	25 – 34	17.7	1.1	15.5 – 19.9
	35 – 44	19.9	1.2	17.6 – 22.2
	45 – 54	17.7	1.1	15.5 – 19.9
	55 – 64	16.4	1.1	14.3 – 18.5
	65 and over	20.7	1.2	18.4 – 23.0
Sex	Male	45.4	1.4	42.6 – 48.2
	Female	54.6	1.4	51.8 – 57.4
Marital Status	Single	30.0	1.3	27.4 – 32.6
	Married/Civil Partnership	50.0	1.4	47.2 – 52.8
	Separated	5.1	0.6	3.9 – 6.3
	Divorced	6.6	0.7	5.2 – 8.0
	Widowed	8.3	0.8	6.7 – 9.9
	Religion	Catholic	36.2	1.4
Protestant		47.6	1.4	44.8 – 50.4
None		13.1	1.0	11.2 – 15.0
Other		3.2	0.5	2.2 – 4.2

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 package 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 *WTFCTOR*. 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
- Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon)
- Other Protestant
- Other Christian
- 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.

From 2008, the demographic and socio-economic questions asked in the NILT survey have been harmonised to match those used in large-scale government surveys. Thus, some of these will be different to those asked in previous years of NILT. However, 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/2010)

Comparison with other surveys

Comparison of household characteristics

		NILT 2010*	CHS 2009/10	Northern Ireland Census 2001
<i>Characteristics of sampled households</i>			All households	
<i>Tenure</i>	Owned outright	35	36	29
	Owned with mortgage/co-ownership	34	34	39
	Rented Local Authority	11	13	30
	Rented other	18	16	
	Rent free	2	2	
Base=100%		1,205	2,761	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 2010	CHS 2009/10	Northern Ireland Census 2001
			%	
<i>Individual characteristics</i>			18+	
<i>Sex</i>	Male	48	47	48
	Female	52	53	52
<i>Age</i>	18-24	11	12	13
	25-34	17	16	20
	35-44	19	18	20
	45-54	19	18	16
	55-64	16	15	13
	65 and over	18	20	18
Base=100%	n	1,205	5,207	1,233,753
			18+	
<i>Marital Status</i>	Single	28	30	30*
	Married/Civil Partner	59	56	56
	Widowed	5	7	7
	Divorced/Separated	8	7	7
Base=100%	n	1,205	5,205	1,261,257

Individual characteristics – NILT 2010 (weighted data)

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	99	47	22	10	10	28
Married/Civil Partner	2	48	68	75	64	59
Divorced/separated/ widowed	0	5	10	15	27	13
Base=100%	130	207	231	423	214	1205

Individual characteristics – CHS 2009/10

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	98	52	20	10	9	30
Married/Civil Partner	2	44	70	73	58	56
Divorced/separated/ widowed	0	4	10	16	32	14
Base=100%	642	857	959	1,729	1,020	5,207

Stated religious denomination

	NILT 2010 (weighted)	CHS 2009/10**	Northern Ireland Census 2001
	%		
Protestant	47	54	48
Catholic	37	39	38
Other or no religion	16	6	<1
Missing/refused	1	1	13*
Base=100%	1205	3,516	1233751

* Include 'no religion' and religion not stated

** Supplemented from household membership

Finding a module in the questionnaires

	Main Questionnaire	Self completion questionnaire
Background	M2 – M4, M37 – M49	SC7
Attitudes to Dementia	M5 – M7	
Community relations	M8 – M16	SC2 – SC4
Attitudes to minority ethnic people and migrant workers	M17 – M23	SC4 – SC5
Informal carers	M24 – M27	
Social Care for older people	M28 – M33	
Political attitudes	M34 – M36	SC5 – SC6

Contact information

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School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work

Queen's University Belfast

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Tel: +44 (0) 28 9097 3034

Email: p.devine@qub.ac.uk

URL: www.ark.ac.uk/nilt

Other variables on the dataset

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