Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey 2017

Technical Notes

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Contents

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/Good 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; and
- A data source for a more theoretical academic debate.

We would like to thank the funders for the 2017 survey who have been most supportive of the overall aims of the project, and in particular The Executive Office, Department of Justice, and Forces in Mind. We would also like to thank all the respondents to the survey.

<u>Links with other surveys</u>

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.

<u>Ethical approval</u>

The 2017 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 2017 survey

The overall design

The 2017 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey involved 1,203 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 iPad.
- CAPI method – the interviewer completed the self-completion on the iPad.
- 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 2017 survey are:

> Introductory questions
> Respect
> Minority ethnic people
> Good relations
> Ageing
> Political attitudes
> Attitudes to armed forces
> Community safety and perceptions of paramilitary influence
> Background

Pilot and mainstage fieldwork

All interviews were conducted by Perceptive Insight interviewers in the respondents' homes. Pilot interviews with 24 respondents were carried out during 18th– 28th August 2017. The main stage of the fieldwork was undertaken during the period 13th September 2017 to 6th February 2018. 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 iPad to enter answers by completing some example questions. If a respondent did not wish to complete the self-completion questionnaire on the iPad they were given the option to complete a paper version. The paper self-completion questionnaire was completed and handed back to the interviewer at the time of the main interview. If a respondent could not complete the self-completion questionnaire on the iPad or by paper, due to literacy or health issues, the interviewer completed the self-completion questionnaire on the iPad where consent was granted by the respondent.

Advance Letter

An advance letter was issued by Perceptive Insight 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 Perceptive Insight staff managing the project.

Sampling design

The sample for the 2017 survey consisted of a systematic random sample of addresses selected from the Postcode Address File (PAF) database of addresses. This is the most up-to-date and complete listing of addresses. Private business addresses were removed from the database prior to sample selection. A total of 2,350 addresses were selected for interview.

The Postcode Address File (PAF) 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 person to be interviewed was randomly selected using the 'next birthday' rule. The interviewer asked the householder to list the birthdays of all members of the household eligible for inclusion in the sample: that is, all persons aged 18 or over living at the address. The person with the next birthday, at the time of the call, was the person with whom the interview was to be conducted. Where the selected respondent was not available, an appointment was made to call back to interview them at a more suitable time.

Response rate

Table 1.1 shows the status of addresses, and the number of addresses in scope.
Table 1.2 shows the breakdown of response
Table 1.3 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
2,350	143	2,207

Table 1.2 Breakdown of response		
	Number	**Percent**
Total co-operating	1,203	55
Fully co-operating	1,203	55
Partially co-operating	0	0
Refusal to co-operate	630	29
Non-contact	374	17
Total	2,207	

Table 1.3 Completed self-completion questionnaires	
Number of main stage interviews	1,203
Number of self-completion achieved	1,203
% of self-completion achieved	100

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 + 2.8%.

Table 1.4 Sampling errors and confidence intervals for key variables (unweighted data)		%	Margin of Error	95% Confidence Limits
Age	18 – 24	7.7	1.51	6.2-9.2
	25 – 34	15.7	2.06	13.6-17.8
	35 – 44	15.7	2.06	13.6-17.8
	45 – 54	14.2	1.97	12.2-16.2
	55 – 64	17	2.12	14.9-19.1
	65 and over	29.2	2.57	26.6-31.8
Sex	Male	43.4	2.8	40.6-46.2
	Female	56.6	2.8	53.8-59.4
Marital Status	Single	31.2	2.62	28.6-33.8
	Married/Civil Partnership	42.8	2.8	40.0-45.6
	Separated	4.5	1.17	3.3-5.7
	Divorced	8.5	1.58	6.9-10.1
	Widowed	12.4	1.86	10.5-14.3
Religion	Catholic	37.1	2.73	34.3-39.8
	Protestant	38.3	2.75	35.6-41.1
	None	19.5	2.24	17.3-21.7
	Other	3	0.96	2.0-4.0
	Refused/Don't know	2.1	0.81	1.3-2.9

Data preparation

Main survey data was collected via a computer aided interviewing software package. This was converted to SPSS format prior to analysis. All paper based data (self-completion modules) were also entered via the snap 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) 2010. The SOC2010 information was also used to derive the National Statistics Socio-Economic (NS SEC) variable, which is contained in this data set for the respondent and their partner.

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 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
Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormon)
Other Protestant
Other Christian
Protestant – no denomination
Christian – no denomination

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 ETHGROUP 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/2017) from mid-June 2018

Comparison of household characteristics

		NILT 2017*	**CHS 2016/17**	**Northern Ireland Census 2011**
Characteristics of sampled households			All households	
Tenure	Owned outright	35	39	32
	Owned with mortgage/co-ownership	22	27	35
	Rented Local Authority	-	13	12
	Rented other***	39	20	18
	Rent free	2	1	3
	Refused	1	-	-
Base=100%		*1,203*	*2,532*	*703,275*

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

Comparison of individual characteristics (weighted data)

		NILT 2017	**CHS 2016/17**	**Northern Ireland Census 2011**
			%	
Individual characteristics			18+	
Sex	Male	46	43	49
	Female	54	57	51
Age	18-24	9	5	13
	25-34	15	14	18
	35-44	16	16	18
	45-54	17	20	18
	55-64	18	17	14
	65 and over	25	27	19
Base=100%	n	*1,203*	*3,262*	*1,380,100**
			18+	
Marital Status	Single	28	26	36
	Married/Civil Partner	54	54	48
	Widowed	8	9	7
	Divorced/Separated	10	11	9
	Refused/ Don't know	-	-	-
Base=100%	n	*1,203*	*3,262*	*1,431,540**

*The bases for Census data are different due to age including those aged 18 and over, whereas, marital status includes those aged 16 and over.

Individual characteristics – NILT 2017 (weighted data)

	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	65 and over	All
	%					
Single	95	62	20	13	9	28
Married/Civil Partner	5	35	68	69	54	53
Divorced/separated/ widowed	0	3	12	18	37	18
Base=100%	*111*	*176*	*191*	*421*	*298*	*1,194*

Individual characteristics – CHS 2016/17

	18-24	**25-34**	**35-44**	**45-64**	**65 and over**	**All**
	%					
Single	93	56	30	15	8	26
Married/Civil Partner	5	42	58	63	56	54
Divorced/separated/ widowed	2	2	13	21	36	20
Base=100%	*164*	*460*	*525*	*1,201*	*865*	*3,262*

Stated religious denomination

	NILT 2017 (weighted)	**CHS 2016/17****	**Northern Ireland Census 2011**
	%		
Protestant	38	44	48
Catholic	38	44	45
Other or no religion*	21	11	6
Missing/refused	3	1	1
Base=100%	*1,203*	*6,059*	*1,108,630*

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

Finding a module in the questionnaires

	Main Questionnaire	Self-completion questionnaire
Introduction	M2-M4	
Respect	M5-M6	
Minority ethnic people	M7-M13	SC2-SC3
Good relations	M14-M23	SC3-SC4
Ageing and ageism	M24	
Political attitudes	M25-M27	
Attitudes to armed forces	M28-M31	SC7
Background	M32-43	SC8
Community safety and perceptions of paramilitary influence		SC4-SC6

Contact information

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Other variables on the dataset

WTFACTOR	**Weighting variable for number of adults aged 18 years or over in the household**
ADULT	**Number of adults aged 18 years or over in the household**
HOUSEHLD	**Number of people in each household**
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
NSSECRESP08 (Respondent) *NSSECPART08 (Partner)* *NSSECHHLD08 (Household)*	**National Statistics Socio Economic Classification (NS SEC)** 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
URBRUR	**Urban/rural status, based on NINIS data** 1 Rural 2 Urban