

GSS on the Web

Data and documentation on the GSS exist several places on the Internet. For a guide to these sites go to:

www.gss.norc.org

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2008 Data

The 2008 GSS is being collected.

It is expected that the new 1972-2008 cumulative data set will be ready for release in December 2008 or January, 2009.

The 2008 topical modules are on 1) self-employment 2) preparedness for terrorism, 3) global economics, 4) sexual orientation, 5) Jewish identity, 6) firearms, 7) clergy/congregant contacts, 8) knowledge about and attitudes towards science, 9) religious trends, repeating a number of items from earlier GSSs, 10) social inequality, and 11) sexual behavior (continuing the series started in 1988).

The International Social Survey Program (ISSP) modules are on religion and sports/leisure. The religion module builds on the ISSP studies on the same topic in 1991 and 1998. As is usual, about two-thirds of the items are replications and one-third new content. Topics include items on social issues such as sexual morality, abortion, institutional confidence, and interpersonal trust; questions on religion and science, politics, and tolerance; and extensive batteries of religious upbringing, behaviors, and beliefs. The sports/leisure module is a new topic for the ISSP. It contains measures on leisure time activities, self-actualization, preferred leisure activity, time pressures, favorite sport/physical activity to take part in, favorite non-sports game, evaluation of the value of sports, TV viewing of sports, and group memberships.

In addition to the continued support of the National Science Foundation (NSF) the 2008 GSS received funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Brandeis University, Baylor University, the University of California – Los Angeles, the Templeton Foundation, the Sloan Foundation, and the Joyce Foundation.

The latest GSS data, 1972-2006, are available from 1) the Roper Center, Box 440, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT, 06268.

Phone (860) 486-4882 Fax: (860) 486-4882, EMAIL: lois@ropercenter.uconn.edu; 2) the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR), Box 1248, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI, 48106. Phone (313) 763-5010. EMAIL: netmail@icpsr.umich.edu; 3) the Survey Documentation Archive at the University of California, Berkeley at <http://sda.berkeley.edu/archive.htm>; and 4) at GSS's own site at www.gss.norc.org.

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ISSP Data Available

The Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung at the University of Cologne has released a merged file for the 2005/06 Work Orientation III module. The next ISSP study to be released will be the Role of Government IV module. It should be available in the second half of 2008. See <http://www.gesis.org/issp> ■

At the annual meeting of the ISSP held in Chicago on April 27-30, 2008, the group finalized the content of the 2009 module on Social Inequality III, discussed the content of Environment III as the topic for 2010, and selected a new topic Health Policy for 2011. The Social Inequality drafting group is chaired by the Netherlands and has Australia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Taiwan, and the United States as members. The Environment drafting group is being chaired by the UK. Israel will chair the Health Policy drafting group. The 2009 ISSP meeting will be in Vienna. The 2010 meeting will be in Germany.

For the 2008 module on religion, support from the Templeton Foundation will allow the study to be carried out in five non-ISSP countries: India, Indonesia, Kenya, Sri Lanka, and Tanzania.

The ISSP now has 44 countries as members:

Argentina	Cyprus	Hungary	New Zealand	Spain
Australia	Czech Republic	Ireland	Norway	Sweden
Austria	Denmark	Israel	The Philippines	Switzerland
Belgium	Dominican Republic	Italy	Poland	Taiwan
Bulgaria	Finland	Japan	Portugal	Turkey
Canada	France	Korea (South)	Russia	The United States
Chile	Germany	Latvia	Slovakia	Ukraine
China	Great Britain	Mexico	Slovenia	Uruguay
Croatia		The Netherlands	South Africa	Venezuela

Over 3200 research uses have been documented using ISSP data. A copy of the bibliography is available by contacting the ISSP secretariat or from the ISSP Web site (see below).

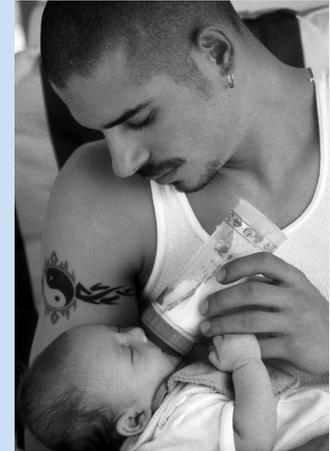
ISSP documentation and information can be obtained at the following Web sites:

<http://www.gesis.org/issp/>

<http://www.issp.org/>

Family Structure and Family Values

Family structure and family values have undergone tremendous changes over the last generation. The basic structure of the family has been reshaped and family values and related attitudes have also undergone paradigmatic shifts. Families are smaller and less stable, marriage is less central and cohabitation more common, the value of children and values for children have altered, and within marriages gender roles have become less traditional and more egalitarian in both word and practice. Collectively the alterations mark the replacement of traditional family types and family values with the emerging, modern family types and a new set of family values.



Moreover, as important as the changes in family structure and family values are on their own, they take on added significance because they are tied to political attitudes and behaviors. First, family structure relates to political participation. The married and the widowed, for example, are more likely to vote in presidential elections.

Second, those living in traditional families structures and those holding traditional family values are more likely to vote for Republican presidential candidates and to identify as Republican and conservative rather than Democratic and liberal. In general, the currently married and parents lean to the right and most non-married groups (the never married, separated, and divorced), those never having had children, and single parents tilt to the left.

The political role of family structure has increased over time in part because class and family type have come into closer alignment. Traditional family structure has become more associated with the middle class, while non-traditionally organized families have become more closely tied to the working class and poor.

For results relating to this see Tom W. Smith, "Changes in Family Structure, Family Values, and Politics, 1972-2006," GSS Social Change Report No. 53. Chicago: NORC, 2008.

Civil Liberties

Trends in tolerance (support for free expression) using the classic Stouffer items with targets--"Atheists," Communists, Homosexuals, Militarists, and Racists) show significant linear increases from the early 1970s to 2006, although the Racist increase is trivial. Methodological analyses did not support the claim that such measures are merely indirect measures of attitude to the target. Finer grain analysis revealed (1) a number of interaction effects suggesting that initially less tolerant groups showed a more rapid increase in tolerance and (2) probably as a consequence, the items "de-polarized". A second finer grain analysis suggested that, net of education and parental effects, PERIOD and COHORT effects (1) were quite non-linear (2) acted as suppressor variables for each other. Despite the steady across the board increase over time, the future may well show a halt or even reversal of the trends since (1) subgroup analyses suggest a "catch up" process rather than a general movement, (2) the long-term increase in schooling may have hit a plateau, and (3) cohort effects seem to have stalled or even reversed after those born in the early 1950s.

For the full report see, James A. Davis, "On the Seemingly Relentless Progress in Americans' Support for Free Expression, 1972-2006," GSS Social Change Report No. 52. Chicago: NORC. 2008.

Panel Component

The GSS is switching from a repeating, cross-section design to a combined repeating cross-section and panel-component design. The 2006 GSS is the base year for the first panel. A sub-sample of 2000 GSS cases from 2006 was selected for reinterview in 2008 and again in 2010 as part of the GSSs in those years. The 2008 GSS consists of a new cross-section of about 2000 plus the 2006 reinterviews. The 2010 GSS will consist of another new cross-section of about 2000, the second reinterview wave of the 2006 panel cases and the first reinterview wave of the 2008 panel cases. The 2010 GSS will be the first one to fully implement the new, combined design. In 2012 and later GSSs, there will likewise be a fresh cross-section, wave two panel cases from the immediately preceding GSS and wave three panel cases from the next earlier GSS. ■

Spanish

The 2006 GSS was the first having a Spanish version and using bilingual interviewers. For 2006 only the core content funded by the basic NSF grant was fielded in Spanish. Starting in 2008, all sections are translated and administrable in Spanish. For a discussion of the impact of adding Spanish language to the GSS see, Tom W. Smith, "An Evaluation of Spanish Questions on the 2006 General Social Survey," GSS Methodological Report No. 109. Chicago: NORC, 2007.

Also, this analysis identified several questions where the translations may not have achieved optimal, functional equivalence. For these questions, experiments are being carried out on the 2008 GSS with the original Spanish translations and the revised translations being administered to random sub-samples. Both will then be compared to each other and to the results among Hispanics doing the survey in English. ■

General Social Survey

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