

Repeated Items in the General Social Survey

These notes outline the content of the “replicating core” of the General Social Survey (GSS). The survey emphasizes collection of data on social trends through exact replication of question wordings over time. That mission is pursued primarily through the replicating core items.

The “core” has changed over time. It consists of those items that a user can expect to find in any given GSS. Inclusion of most core items is supported by the National Science Foundation (NSF) grant that underpins the GSS. These items fall into two major categories below: socio-demographic/background measures (section A below), and replicated measurements on social and political attitudes and behaviors (section B below). Many of the latter items appear on three GSS “ballots”, each of which is administered to a random two-thirds of most GSS samples (this practice allows the GSS to measure more trends within the available interview time).

Other time series are produced as a part of NSF-supported International Social Survey Program (ISSP) modules. One or more such module has appeared in each GSS since 1985. Current ISSP practice is to re-administer modules covering a given topic (e.g. role of government, social inequality, religion) on a 10-year cycle. Two-thirds of the items in an ISSP module are to be replicated content. Section C below covers ISSP replications.

In addition, some repeated items that regularly appear in the GSS are funded by other grants, or by agencies other than NSF. The items on sexual behavior (section D) are the most notable of these.

During the course of the GSS project, there have been many changes in replicated items. These notes highlight such changes and the approximate dates on which they occurred. As well, they inventory series that were terminated at one point or another (section F), or that lasted for a short period of time only, across the span of the project.

Apart from the core items, GSSs contain substantial non-replicating content. Apart from newly introduced items in ISSP modules, since the early 1980s each GSS has included one or more “topical modules”; the length and design of these varies. Topical modules usually appear in the GSS on a one-time basis. From time to time items in topical modules are re-administered, but such replication is not planned. These notes mention many such trends (see sections E and F), but go into less detail for them than on the core items within the basic GSS vehicle.

The sections below summarize the topical areas and GSS mnemonics for replicating core and other trend items. The major sections defining the “core” are sections A and B. Section C refers to time series within ISSP modules. The sexual behavior items in section D are quasi-core. (Were funding to vanish for these items, the project would seek additional funds to maintain a GSS capacity to measure them.) Section E notes some time series produced through unplanned replications within topical modules. Section F takes note of some items that were once in the core, or that have been remeasured during

the course of the GSS project. Items listed in these sections are *not* currently part of the replicating core. Sections E and F may not be comprehensive; there may be additional items that fall into each of these categories.

A. Socio-demographic/Background measures

Demographic and life-course data

Age: AGE (recode of date of birth); ZODIAC (astrological sign)
Birth cohort: COHORT
Sex: SEX (interviewer coded)
Race: RACE (usually interviewer-coded until 1998 [self-identification only in event that interviewer could not code]; since 2002, self-identification following US census-like measurements in RACECEN1, RACECEN2, RACECEN3; value for RACE then imputed based on these and information on ethnic identification)
Ethnic origin/identification: ETHNIC, ETH1, ETH2, ETH3, ETHNUM
Hispanic origin: HISPANIC (began in 2000)
Number of siblings: SIBS
Marital status: MARITAL
Age at first marriage (until 1994, remeasured in 2006): AGEWED
Marriage cohort: MARCOHRT (until 1994)
Ever divorced, separated, widowed: WIDOWED, DIVORCE
Children ever born: CHILDS
Age at first child: AGEKDBRN (since 1994)
Region of residence: REGION
Size/type of place: XNORCSIZ, SRCBELT, SIZE
Education: EDUC (years), DEGREE (highest degree earned)
Family income: INCOME72 in 1972; INCOME (since 1973), INCOME77 (1977-1980), INCOME82 (1982-1985), INCOME86 (1986-1990), INCOME91 (1991-1996), INCOME98 (1998-2004), INCOME06 (2006-); differences in these measures reflect expansion of income ranges over time. Recodes REALINC and CONINC adjust family income to 1986 and 2000 constant dollars, respectively.
Political party identification: PARTYID
Religious affiliation: RELIG, DENOM (Protestant denomination), OTHER (other-specify on Protestant denomination), JEW (type of Judaism).
Recode: FUND (fundamentalist/moderate/liberal classification developed by Smith)

Work/employment data

Employment status: WRKSTAT, EVWORK, WRKSLF (self-employment)
Period of unemployment within past 10 years: UNEMP

Industry: INDUSTRY (until 1990), INDUS80 (since 1988). Changes reflect shift from use of 1970 to 1980 SIC classification.

Private or public sector employer: WRKGOVT

Labor supply: HRS1 (hours worked last week), HRS2 (hours worked in typical week), WEEKSWRK (weeks worked, since 1994), PARTFULL (part- or full-time when working, since 1994)

Occupation: OCC, ISCO68 (until 1990), OCC80, ISCO681, ISCO88 (since 1988); recodes PRESTIGE (until 1990), PRESTG80 (since 1988), SEI (since 1988), DOTDATA, DOTPEOP, DOTTHNG, DOTSV, DOTGED, DOTPRES, (until 1990). Changes reflect shift from use of 1970 to 1980 DOT classification of occupations.

Income from respondent's principal job: RINCOME (since 1974); RINCOM77 (1977-1980), RINCOM82 (1982-1985), RINCOM86 (1986-1990), RINCOM91 (1991-1996), RINCOM98 (1998-2004), RINCOM06 (2006-); differences in these measures reflect expansion of income ranges over time. Recodes REALRINC and CONRINC adjust respondent's income to 1986 and 2000 constant dollars, respectively.

Size of workplace: LOCALNUM (since 1991)

Superiors/subordinates in workplace: WKSUB, WKSUBS, WKSUP, WKSUPS

Respondent/spouse in labor union: UNION

Spousal data (proxy reports)

Education: SPEDUC (years), SPDEG (highest degree earned)

Employment status: SPWRKSTA, SPEVWORK, SPWRKSLF

Industry: SPIND (until 1990). SPIND80 (since 1988)

Labor supply: SPHRS1, SPHRS2

Occupation: SPOCC, SPISCO68 (until 1990), SPOCC80, SPISC681, SPISCO88 (since 1988); recodes SPPRES (until 1990), SPPRES80 (since 1988), SPSEI (since 1988), SPDOTDAT, SPDOTPEO, SPDOTTHN, SPDOTGED, SPDOTSVP, SPDOTPRE (until 1990)

Religious preference (1973-1994, removed after 1994, reinstated beginning 2004): SPREL, SPDEN, SPOTHER, SPJEW; recode SPFUND

Respondent/spouse in labor union: UNION

Parental/social origin data (many of these measures are proxy reports referring to time while respondent was growing up, or when respondent was age 16)

Birthplace: BORN

Family income (relative): INCOM16

Family type: FAMILY16; FAMDIF16 (reason not living with own mother/father)

Father's education: PAEDUC (years), PADEG (highest degree earned)

Father's industry: PAIND16 (until 1990), PAIND80 (since 1988)

Father's employment status: PAWRKSLF

Father's occupation: PAOCC16, PAISCO68 (until 1990), PAOCC80, PAISC681, PAISCO88 (since 1988) recodes PAPRES16 (until 1990), PAPRES80 (since 1988), PASEI (since 1988), PADOTDAT, PADOTPEO, PADOTTHN, PADOTGED, PADOTSVF, PADOTPRE (until 1990)
Mother's education: MAEDUC (years), MADEG (highest degree earned)
Mother's employment status: MAWRKSLF, MAWORK (until 1993), MAWKBABY (until 1983), MAWKBORN (1987-1994), MAWRKGRW (since 1994)
Mother's industry: MAIND80 (since 1994)
Mother's occupation: MAOCC80, MAISC681, MAISCO88 (since 1994), recodes MAPRES80 (since 1994), MASEI (since 1994)
Parental Birthplace: PARBORN
Grandparents' Birthplace: GRANBORN
Region of residence: REG16
Type of place: RES16
Geographic mobility since age 16: MOBILE16
Religion in which raised: RELIG16, DENOM16, OTH16, JEW16; recode FUND16

Household variables (many from household enumeration form [HEF])

Household size and composition: HOMPOP; BABIES, PRETEEN, TEENS, ADULTS, UNRELAT (unrelated earners in household)
Age, gender, marital status, current residence, relation of each enumerated household member to head of household and to spouse: RELATE1-RELATE14, RELHHD1-RELHHD14, RELHH1-RELHH15, GENDER1-GENDER14, OLD1-OLD14, MAR1-MAR14, AWAY1-AWAY14, WHERE1-WHERE15, RELSP1-RELSP14 for as many as 14 household members
Household race: HHRACE
Household type: HHTYPE, HHTYPE1
Generations in household: FAMGEN
Respondent's relationship to head of household: RPLACE
Presence of visitors: VISITORS, RVISITOR
Earners (only with respondent's family) in household: EARNRS
Dwelling type: DWELLING (since 1982)
Home ownership: DWELOWN (since 1986)

Process and Other Technical Data

Respondent ID number: ID
Identifier for person # within household who provided HEF information: HEFINFO
Identifier for R within household roster: RESPNUM
Year of interview: YEAR

Date of interview: DATEINTV
Interviewer Hispanic origin: INTHISP
Interviewer race: INTRACE1, INTRACE2, INTRACE3
Version of quex: VERSION
Ballot of split ballot administered: BALLOT
Experimental form (standard versus experimental wording) used: FORM
Did R do ISSP: ISSP
Does R have telephone: PHONE
Weighting variables: FORMWT, OVERSAMP, WTSS, WTSSALL
Sampling procedure and frame: SAMPLE
Sampling unit from which R drawn: SAMPCODE
Phase in subsampling design: PHASE
Interview mode, in-person or telephone: MODE
Interviewer assessment of cooperativeness (COOP), comprehension (COMPRED)

(Additional process data to be made available beginning 2006)

B. Replicated Measurements on Social/Political Attitudes and Behaviors

Most, though not all, of these items are measured using the split-ballot structure. Hence they usually available for a randomly selected two-thirds of respondents.

Verbal ability

WORDA-WORDJ; WORDSUM (inadvertently omitted in 2002)

Subjective well being and social life orientations

General happiness: HAPPY
Marital happiness: HAPMAR
Social life feelings/Misanthropy: LIFE, HELPFUL, FAIR, TRUST
Subjective health assessment: HEALTH

Religious Attitudes and Behaviors

Attendance at religious services: ATTEND
Frequency of prayer: PRAY (since 1983)
Intensity of religious belief: RELITEN
Life after death: POSTLIFE
Papal authority on religious matters (Catholics only): POPESPKS (began 2004)
Feelings about the Bible: BIBLE (since 1984)
Opinion about prayer in public schools: PRAYER (since 1974)
Belief in God (1988-2000, 2006): GOD

Suicide

Physician-assisted suicide: LETDIE1
Right to commit suicide under different conditions: SUICIDE1, SUICIDE2,
SUICIDE3, SUICIDE4

Attitudes about family and children

Ideal number of children: CHLDIDEL
Parental consent to birth control for teenagers: PILLOK
Divorce too lenient or restrictive: DIVLAW
Approve of co-residence for aging parents and their grown children: AGED
Child qualities (since 1986): OBEY, POPULAR, THINKSELF, WORKHARD,
HELPOTH
Approval of spanking (since 1986): SPANKING
Gay marriage: MARHOMO (1988, 2004, 2006)

Attitudes involving sexual behavior and pornography

Sex education in public schools: SEXEDUC
Sexual attitudes: PREMARSX, TEENSEX, XMARSEX, HOMOSEX
Pornography laws: PORNLAW
See X-rated movies: XMOVIE

Socializing with personal contacts

SOCREL, SOCOMMUN, SOCFREND, SOCBAR

Media use/contact

NEWS, TVHOURS

Work Orientations

Job security: JOBLOSE, JOBFIND
Job satisfaction: SATJOB
Work as central life interest: RICHWORK

Class Identification and Economic Well-Being

Subjective social class placement: CLASS
Satisfaction with financial situation: SATFIN
Trend in financial situation: FINALTER
Subjective assessment of family income relative to average: FINRELA
Work versus breaks/help as basis of social mobility: GETAHEAD
Standard of living relative to parents (since 1994): PARSOL

Projected standard of living for children (since 1994): KIDSSOL
Prospects for future standard of living: GOODLIFE (since 1987)

Voting in Presidential elections

VOTE68, VOTE72, VOTE76, VOTE80, VOTE84, VOTE88, VOTE92, VOTE96,
VOTE00, VOTE04

Candidate preference in Presidential elections

PRES68/IF68WHO
PRES72/IF72WHO
PRES76/IF76WHO
PRES80/IF80WHO
PRES84/IF84WHO
PRES88/IF88WHO
PRES92/IF92WHO
PRES96/IF96WHO
PRES00/IF00WHO
PRES04/IF04WHO

Political views: POLVIEWS

Views about government intervention

to equalize incomes: EQWLTH (since 1980)
to improve living standards: HELPPOR (since 1975)
to solve national problems: HELPNOT (since 1975)
for health costs: HELPSICK (since 1975)
to help blacks: HELPBLK (since 1975)

Priorities for national spending

NATSPAC, NANENVIR, NATHEAL, NATCITY, NATCRIME, NATDRUG,
NATEDUC, NATRACE, NATARMS, NATAID, NATFARE (all since 1973),
NATROAD, NATSOC, NATMASS, NATPARK (since 1984), NATCHLD
(since 2000), NATSCI (since 2002). Alternate wording for many of these items
has appeared since 1984: NATSPACY, NATENVIY, NATHEALY,
NATCITYY, NATCRIMY, NATDRUGY, NATEDUCY, NATRACEY,
NATARMSY, NATAIDY, NATFAREY

Civil liberties (Stouffer) items about civil rights for various “nonconformists”: speaking
in public, teaching in a college, or having a book in a public library (Items about
militarists and racists first appeared in 1977. From 1972-1974, the GSS included
similar items about socialists.)

SPKATH, COLATH, LIBATH (atheists)
SPKRAC, COLRAC, LIBRAC (racists)
SPKCOM, COLCOM, LIBCOM (Communists)
SPKMIL, COLMIL, LIBMIL (militarists)
SPKHOMO, COLHOMO, LIBHOMO (homosexuals)

Confidence in institutions

CONFINAN, CONBUS, CONCLERG, CONEDUC, CONFED, CONLABOR,
CONPRESS, CONMEDIC, CONTV, CONJUDGE, CONSCI, CONLEGIS,
CONARMY

Attitudes and behaviors involving crime, punishment, and firearms

Approve of police striking a person under specified circumstances: POLHITOK
(adult male citizen), POLABUSE (using abusive language), POLMURDR
(murder suspect), POLESCAP (attempting escape), POLATTAK
(attacking policeman)
Fear walking at night near home: FEAR
Gun ownership: OWNGUN, PISTOL, SHOTGUN, RIFLE, ROWNGUN
Hunting: HUNT
Criminal courts: COURTS
Death penalty: CAPPUN
Gun control: GUNLAW
Legalization of marijuana: GRASS

Taxes appropriate: TAX (since 1977)

US involvement in future world war: USWARY (since 1976)

Legalized abortion

ABDEFECT, ABNOMORE, ABHLTH, ABPOOR, ABRAPE, ABSINGLE,
ABANY

Gender role attitudes

FEPOL (Women not emotionally suited for politics, since 1974)
FECHLD (Working mothers can establish secure ties to children, since 1977)
FEPRESCH (Preschool child likely to suffer if mother works, since 1977)
FEFAM (Better if men work and women care for home, since 1977)
FEHIRE, FEJOBFAFF (affirmative action, since 1996)
DISCAFFM/DISCAFFW (affirmative action split-ballot, since 1996)
MEOVRWRK (family life suffers when men overwork; since 1994)

Racial attitudes

RACOPEN (open housing, 1972-1996, 2004)
RACLIVE (blacks in this neighborhood)
AFFRMACT (racial preference in employment, since 1994)
WRKWAYUP (blacks should work way up, since 1994)
BLKSIMP (conditions for blacks improved, since 1994)
closeness to blacks (CLOSEBLK, since 1998)
closeness to whites (CLOSEWHT, since 1998)
attributions of causes of racial inequality (RACDIF1, RACDIF2, RACDIF3, RACDIF4)
MARBLK (prospect of family member marrying a black, since 1991)
MARWHT (prospect of family member marrying a white, since 2000)
DISCAFF (reverse discrimination, since 1991)
LIVEBLKS (favor living in neighborhood that is half black, since 1990)
LIVEWHTS (favor living in neighborhood that is half white, since 2000)

Racial composition of workplace: RACWORK (since 1991)

Racial stereotypes

WLTHWHTS, WLTHBLKS (wealth, since 1991; measured for other groups in 1991, 1994, 2000)
WORKWHTS, WORKBLKS (hardworking/lazy, since 1991; measured for other groups in 1991, 1994, 2000)
INTLWHTS, INTLBLKS (intelligence, since 1991; measured for other groups in 1991, 2000)
Other stereotypes measured in 1991 and 2000.

Immigration

LETIN1: Should # of immigrants to US increase or decrease (since 1994)

C. Time-Series within ISSP modules

Many ISSP module items on

role of government (1985, 1990, 1996, 2006)
social networks (1986, 2002; few repetitions here)
marital status/partnership item (1986, 2000, 2004)
provision of social support (2002, 2004)
social inequality (1987, 1996, several in 2000 also)
family and gender roles (1988, 1994, 2002; a few items appeared in 1998 also)
work orientations (1989, 1998, 2006)
religion (1991, 1998; one item appeared in 2002 also)
environment (1993, 2000, one item appeared in 1998 also)

D. Non-NSF Repeating Core Items

Sexual behavior items (since 1988): PARTNERS, MATESEX, FRNDSEX, ACQNTSEX, PIKUPSEX, PAIDSEX, OTHERSEX, SEXSEX, SEXFREQ, NUMWOMEN, NUMMEN, PARTNRS5, SEXSEX5, EVPAIDSX, EVSTRAY.
Since 1996: CONDOM, RELATSEX.
Drugs by injection (since 2000): EVIDU, IDU30, EVCRAK, CRACK30
HIV testing (since 2006): HIVTEST, HIVTEST1, HIVTEST2

E. Other Repeated Items

Selected topical module items on

- military/national service/draft (early 1980s)
- social networks (1985, 1987, 2004)
- religion (1988, 1998, a few in 2004)
- intergroup relations (1991, 2000)
- genetics and genetic screening (1991, 1996, 2004)
- household problems, stressful events (1991, 2004)
- cultural attitudes and participation (1993, 1998, 2002)
- multiculturalism/immigration (1994, 2000)
- national security and conditions for security clearances (1994-2000)
- Internet (2000, 2002, 2004)
- quality of working life (2002, 2006)
- altruism (2002, 2004)

F. Series that were discontinued at one point or another

Spouse's ethnic origin/identification: SPETHNIC, SPETH1, SPETH2, SPETH3, SPETHNUM (1986-1994)
Military service: VETYEARS (until 1994)
Approval of wiretapping: WIRTAP (1974-1994)
Communism as a form of government: COMMUN (1973-1994)
Sentiments toward countries (1974-1994, some series ended 1985): RUSSIA, JAPAN, ENGLAND, CANADA, BRAZIL, CHINA, ISRAEL, EGYPT)
US active participant in world affairs: USINTL (1973-1994)
US involvement in future war: USWAR (1973-1986)
US membership in United Nations: USUN (1973-1994)
Images of life after death (1986-1989): LIKEDIFF, MINDBODY, PALEFULL
Images of God (1985-1998): MAPA, MASTERSP, JUDGELUV, FRNDKING
Spouse's religion while growing up (1973-1994): SPREL16, SPDEN16, SPOTH16, SPJEW16, SPFUND16
Contributions to religion: TITHING (1987-1989)
Images of the world and human nature: WORLD1 (1987-2002), WORLD4 (1987-1998)

Racial attitudes: intermarriage, since 1972 RACMAR (1972-2004); object if family member brought black friend to dinner: RACDIN (1972-1985); Blacks shouldn't push (RACPUSH, 1972-2002), Whites should be able to keep blacks out (RACSEG, 1982-1996), blacks living close to you (RACCLOS, until 1994), distance to closest blacks (RACDIS, until 1994), integrated neighborhood (RACINTEG, until 1994), experience with black at dinner in home (RACHOME, until 1996), segregated schools (RACSCHOL, 1972-1985), object to school with a few of other race (RACFEW, until 1996), object to school with half of other race (RACHAF, until 1996), object to school with most of other race (RACMOST, until 1996), school busing (BUSING, until 1996), vote for qualified black for President (RACPRES, until 1996), opposite race at your church (RACCHURH, until 1994), social club excluding other race (RACCHNG, 1978-1994)

Gender role attitudes: FEHOME (until 1998), FEWORK (until 1998), FEPRES (until 1998), FEHELP (until 1998)

Satisfaction with domains of life (1973-1994): SATCITY, SATHOBBY, SATFAMILY, SATFRND, SATHEALT

Child qualities (1973-1983): MANNERS, SUCCESS, HONEST, CLEAN, JUDGMENT, CONTROL, ROLE, AMICABLE, OBEYS, RESPONSI, CONSIDER, INTEREST, STUDIOUS; experimental Y forms of these items used 1980-1986

Socializing with relatives (until 1994): SOCPARS, SOCSIBS

Alcohol use (until 1994): DRINK, DRUNK

Smoking (until 1994): SMOKE, QUITSMK, EVSMOKE

Anomia scale (until 1994): ANOMIA5, ANOMIA6, ANOMIA7

Job values (until 1994, remeasured once in 2006): JOBINC, JOBSEC, JOBHOUR, JOBPROMO, JOBMEANS

Fertility intentions (until 1994): CHLDMORE, CHLDNUM

Birth control information (until 1983): PILL, TEENPILL

Effects of pornography (until 1994): PORNINF, PORNMORL, PORNRAPE, PORNOUT

Victimization (until 1994): HIT, HITAGE, GUN, GUNAGE, BURGLR, ROBBRY

Approval of violence by others (until 1994): HITOK, HITMARCH, HITDRUNK, HITCHLD, HITBEATR, HITROBBR

Traffic ticket, or arrested (until 1984): TICKET, ARREST

Media contact: RADIOHRS (1978-1983)

Stressful life events (until 1994): UNEMP5, HOSDIS5, DEATH5, DEATH16, PADEATH, MADEATH, CHLDDTH, SIBDEATH, SPDEATH; recodes TRAUMA1, TRAUMA5

Pressed for time: RUSHED (1982, 1996, 2004)

Membership in voluntary groups (1974-1994, remeasured in 2004): MEMFRAT, MEMSERV, MEMVET, MEMPOLIT, MEMUNION, MEMSPORT, MEMYOUTH, MEMSCHL, MEMHOBBY, MEMGREEK, MEMNAT, MEMFARM, MEMLIT, MEMPROF, MEMCHURH, MEMOTHER; recode MEMNUM

Interviewer evaluations of dwelling unit (1982-1986): DWELNGH, DWELCITY