

REVIEW

REPORT ON THE THIRD ISSP USER CONFERENCE “CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SURVEY PROGRAMME”

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The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) Secretariat and the editors of the planned special issue of the *International Journal of Sociology* (IJS) organized an online conference on the anniversary edition of the *ISSP User Conference* on November 25, 2024. Stephanie Steinmetz opened the conference with a short welcome and introduction to the ISSP.

The ISSP was founded in 1984 and has 45 member countries; it is a collaborative cross-cultural social science survey research program. The ISSP is an annual survey (using representative probability samples of the adult population) and involves decentralized data collection according to ISSP standards. The ISSP comprises a monothematic module design (11 modules) and module repetition (10 years). The modules consist of two parts: substantive questions (harmonized input) and ISSP standard background variables (harmonized output).

The conference was organized in three sessions. The first set of presentations explored attitudes toward the family and changing gender roles, while the second session included presentations that explored the links between social networks, social capital, and inequality. In contrast, the third session studied health, environment, and social issues.

In the first session, the presentations focused on work and family conflict. Shih-Yi Chao's paper used data from the *ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles* module 2002 and 2012 and the *ISSP Work Orientation* module 2005 and 2015 to examine patterns in various work–family indicators, including time pressure, energy depletion, and blurring of boundaries. Results indicated that the level of conflict between work and family varies across welfare states. The leading welfare nations do not always have lower levels. The dual-earner model (social democrats) is associated with lower levels of work–family conflict and

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a significant decline over time. Latecomer welfare states, with higher levels of work–family conflict, experience larger declines and converge to the Forerunner countries.

The study by Harchand Ram discussed heterogeneity in family norms related to elderly caregiving and cost-bearing based on data from the *Family and Changing Gender Roles* module 2012 using key outcome variables, i.e., norms regarding elderly caregiving and cost-bearing. The findings of the study highlight the prevailing heterogeneity in elderly caregiving and related cost-bearing norms across 41 countries. Countries such as Bulgaria, France, Netherlands, and Belgium rely less on family members for elderly caregiving and cost-bearing than countries such as Poland, the Philippines, Argentina, China, Switzerland, and South Africa. Results indicate that more males perceive the family as an important source of caregiving and financial help for the elderly. Married individuals perceive the family as an important source, whereas separated and divorced individuals perceive that the government should help and bear the cost. The presentation concluded by presenting an understanding of pre-existing and prospective caregiving and financial dependencies and their underlying facets and mechanisms that will help design interventions to improve older persons' well-being by catering to societal and individual needs.

The study by Eun-jung Hwang examined the effectiveness of de/familialization complementary measures based on data from ISSP (2012). The universal caregiver societal transition requires cultural shifts in caregiving beyond institutionalization. The author highlighted that the labour market is key to de-familiarization in the universal caregiver society progression. Results showed that the continuous implementation of complementary measures is needed for the universal caregiver society transition, as it is not a short-term process.

The presentation of Harry B. G. Ganzeboom and Irma Mooi-Reci discussed intergenerational occupational status reproduction from a cross-national and historical perspective based on data from the 1998–2012 *Family* module. The study revealed that the number of mothers who are employed is on the rise around the world. Results indicated that intergenerational occupational transmission is decreasing over cohorts in terms of both mother's and father's occupations. Weak confirmation of the effects of institutional and normative context were presented. As more mothers are employed, the mother's occupation becomes relatively more important for both men and women. As gender role attitudes are more egalitarian, a mother's occupation becomes relatively more important for men in particular.

The second set of presentations explored the links between social networks, social capital, and inequality. The study by Yifei Lu explored social capital and gender income gaps using data from the 2017 ISSP; the final sample included

26,629 respondents from 30 societies. The findings revealed that social capital, particularly through strong ties, significantly enhances income for both genders, whereas weak-tie social capital primarily benefits male income. Moreover, gender income disparities are primarily driven by capital deficits, not return deficits, emphasizing unequal access to high-status and diverse networks for women. The study highlights that the differences in social capital endowments are most pronounced in developing societies and Eastern cultural contexts, where social networks play a significant role in shaping economic opportunities. The author draws attention to the following implications. Policies should focus on increasing women's access to influential networks, while strengthening formal institutions can mitigate the reliance on social networks in developing and Eastern societies.

The study provides cross-national evidence of social capital's role in gender income gaps and highlights capital deficits, not return deficits, as the key driver of disparities. Finally, it demonstrates the influence of cultural and economic contexts.

The study by Xiaoguang Li, Xiaoxian Guo, and Runqi Zhou analyzed how institutional forces shape individual social capital across 31 countries using data from the 2017 *ISSP Social Networks and Social Resources*. The research objective was to propose a theoretical framework to help explore how country-level institutional forces influence the construction of individual-level social capital. The authors highlight that integration and differentiation are foundational concepts in sociology, central to classical and postmodern sociological theories. The study explored social capital differences across countries and proposed a framework linking integration and differentiation dynamics to individual social capital. Findings highlighted that Israel, Iceland, and Slovakia have high social capital (network ceiling, heterogeneity, prestige), whereas Japan, Thailand, and China exhibit lower levels. The research proposed a mechanism for explaining international differences in social capital and focused on integration and differentiation as key societal forces.

The study by Chin-Han Chan explored how income inequality shapes individual health and examined the role of weak-tie social capital in the cross-national context using data from the 2017 *ISSP Social Networks and Social Resources* module across 27 countries. The findings highlighted that income inequality is more likely to indirectly affect individual health through weak-tie social capital across 27 countries. The study indicated that the indirect effect is especially salient among people who earn below the median level of personal income in their country.

The study by Gonzalo Franetovic investigated the social networks and attitudes towards inequality and unraveled the influence of acquaintances'

socioeconomic diversity and status across contemporary societies using data from the 2017 *ISSP Social Networks* module across 31 countries. Using country-fixed linear regression models for each attitude towards inequality, the author found mixed effects of network diversity, which increase the perception of inequality, but reduce the preference for redistribution (high-SES effect). The findings also highlighted a persistent negative effect of network status: contact with higher-status individuals diminishes perceptions of inequality and reduces the willingness to address it. This presentation ratifies the importance of social relationships in shaping individuals' understanding of inequality.

The third group of presentations discussed issues related to health, environment, and social contexts. The presentation by Hana Trísková and Ivett Szalma aimed to compare attitudes towards the preferred length and division of paid leave in Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia using data derived from the ISSP module 2012 *Family and Changing Gender Roles IV* and module 2022 *Family and Changing Gender Roles V*. The study's analyses supported the authors' established hypotheses – accordingly, between 2012 and 2022, short periods of leave became the most preferred duration, replacing longer periods of leave. Findings revealed growing support for the gender-equal division of paid leave over the years. The study found that Poland is the most egalitarian, Slovakia is the most traditional, and Hungary has become more egalitarian over the years in this respect. The findings indicated that individuals with a personal interest in paid leave are more likely to prefer its longer form than those who do not bear responsibility for childcare-related tasks. Overall, the study showed that members of the youngest age group (18–44 years) and unmarried people are more likely to prefer a gender-equal division of leave than the 65+ category and unmarried people. The researchers also drew attention to the fact that a preference for the traditional family model means a preference for the traditional division of paid leave.

Another presentation that addressed the issue of fertility ideals and gender equality norms was given by Jonas Edlund and Ida Öun, who used *ISSP Family and Changing Gender Roles IV* module data from 2012 in 26 societies to examine the extent to which norms about gender equality in society have the power to dampen or even alter relationships and boost the overall fertility ideal rate in the population. The authors gave an overview of their results, which show that the stronger the norm of gender equality, the higher the ideal fertility rate. Furthermore, the three gender equality norm measures have similar effects, but there was some support for the assumption that the PLEX (parental leave equality index) and WCEX (work/care equality index) would be better indicators of gender equality than the traditional GIX (gender ideology index). The study also revealed that in societies with a weak gender equality

norm, the results conform to ideals associated with the first period of the gender revolution: women, the highly educated, the young, and the non-religious have comparatively lower ideal fertility rates. In societies with a strong gender equality norm, results better fit with the ideals associated with the second half of the gender revolution: the same key groups are associated with comparatively higher ideal fertility rates (except religiousness).

The study by Alena Auchynnikava, Nazim Habibov, and Yunhong Lyu examined how trust in healthcare and its predictors changed after the pandemic using data from the 2011 and 2021 ISSP's *Health and Healthcare* module. Results revealed that healthcare-related trust increased after the pandemic; the increase is probably attributable to the success of preventive measures to contain the virus, develop the vaccine, implement vaccination campaigns, and the "rally around the flag" phenomenon. The authors explained that the strongest determinants of trust in healthcare are those related to cognitive assessments of healthcare, such as overall satisfaction with healthcare, healthcare efficiency, and trust in healthcare personnel. The findings suggested that dispositional optimism is the fourth strongest predictor of trust in healthcare, and this witnessed the strongest increase over time among all tested predictors of trust in healthcare. One possible explanation is that healthcare trust is driven by factors directly related to the healthcare system. This explanation suggests that optimists systematically underestimate the propensity to become ill and the need for treatment and their effectiveness. However, an alternative explanation is that healthcare-related trust is driven by factors outside the healthcare system, such as confidence in other political institutions and general satisfaction with government performance.

The last conference presentation was given by Matthias Penker and Rebecca Wardana, who presented a longitudinal study on environmental change and national affluence in European societies using ISSP Data (1993–2020) in 24 countries. The authors examined to what extent environmental attitudes and behaviors have changed over the last 30 years and how national wealth has been related to environmental attitudes and behaviors between countries and longitudinally within countries over the same period. Their results show a downward trend from 1993 to 2010 and an upward trend from 2010 to 2020 for three of the four dimensions (climate change risk perception, willingness to pay for the environment, recycling, and public sphere behavior), except for recycling. Results also indicated that national affluence has a significant positive relationship with three out of four dimensions across countries and time (except for climate change risk perception).

