

# MEASUREMENT OF OCCUPATION IN ESS

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## Conclusions & Recommendations

1. Measurement of occupations in ESS is on the right track: parallel measurement via a pair of precoded & open questions (but now for father & mother only).
2. This system of parallel measurement is currently not applied to respondents and spouses. It should be in the next round.
3. The current format of the precoded question is totally inadequate, but it can simply be improved using a tested question format [ISSP87].
4. Precoded questions have slightly better measurement quality than open questions; however, the real boost comes from asking and using them both.
5. The verbatim information (answers to open questions) is in horribly bad shape (and only provided for the parents); fortunately, this can be improved without excessive effort. To start with, the available information can be coded; it should be provided for respondents and spouses.

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## Present situation Resp / Spouse

- Information collected on current/last occupation.
- It is left to national traditions how (with what and how many questions) this information is collected.
- The information is coded into ISCO-88 (COM).
- Users have access to ISCO codes, not the verbatim information.
- There is no information on the quality of the coding process.

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## Present situation Father / Mother

- Information is collected on occupation when resp was age 14.
- First question uses ESS showcard.
- In addition, information is collected using an open question(s).
- The open information is not coded (in most countries), but made accessible in verbatim form via de ESS website. However, reading this information is complicated.

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## ESS showcard

1. Traditional professionals
2. Modern professionals
3. Clerical and intermediate
4. Senior manager and administrator
5. Technical and craft
6. Semi-routine manual and service
7. Routine manual and service
8. Middle and junior managers

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## What is wrong / right with this?

### Wrong

- Incomprehensible: modern professional?
- Blurs manual / non-manual divide
- Does not distinguish farmers

### Right:

- Parallel measurement
- Conveys the idea of an occupation to respondent and interviewer

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## The ‘experiment’ in ESS3\_NL

- Draws upon earlier work in ISSP [1987], analyzed by Ganzeboom (2005).
- Uses a different ‘show-card’ in the write-in questionnaire – inspired on ISSP 1987. Asks the respondents to report again on the occupations (first, current/last, father, mother) in a write-in format.

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## ISSP 1987 showcard

1. Professional and technical (for example: doctor, teacher, engineer, artist, accountant)
2. Higher administrator (for example: banker, executive in big business, high government official, union official)
3. Clerical (for example: secretary, clerk, office manager, civil servant, bookkeeper)
4. Sales (for example: sales manager, shop owner, shop assistant, insurance agent, buyer)
5. Service (for example: restaurant owner, police officer, waiter, barber, caretaker)
6. Skilled worker (for example: foreman, motor mechanic, printer, tool and die maker, electrician)
7. Semi-skilled worker (for example: bricklayer, bus driver, tannery worker, carpenter, sheet metal worker, baker)
8. Unskilled worker (for example: labourer, porter, unskilled factory worker)
9. Farm (for example: farmer, farm labourer, tractor driver)

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## Methodology

- All answers to open questions are double coded, by research agency and NC.
- All information is transferred into the International Socio-Economic Index of occupational status [ISEI].
- Effectively, this is a multiple-indicator model, even a MTMM model for occupations.

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	FEDUC	FISEI	FISEI1	WISEI1	FISEI2	EDUC	ISEI	RISEI1	ISEI2	HINC
FEDUC	1.000	0.660	0.522	0.605	0.681	0.432	0.315	0.325	0.335	0.220
FISEI	0.660	1.000	0.554	0.815	0.779	0.416	0.311	0.326	0.345	0.184
FISEI1	0.522	0.554	1.000	0.556	0.580	0.332	0.258	0.288	0.278	0.159
WISEI1	0.605	0.815	0.556	1.000	0.764	0.416	0.314	0.339	0.353	0.190
FISEI2	0.681	0.779	0.580	0.764	1.000	0.429	0.336	0.361	0.402	0.208
EDUC	0.432	0.416	0.332	0.416	0.429	1.000	0.620	0.610	0.674	0.389
ISEI	0.315	0.311	0.258	0.314	0.336	0.620	1.000	0.825	0.708	0.338
RISEI1	0.325	0.326	0.288	0.339	0.361	0.610	0.825	1.000	0.726	0.331
ISEI2	0.335	0.345	0.278	0.353	0.402	0.674	0.708	0.726	1.000	0.372
HINC	0.220	0.184	0.159	0.190	0.208	0.389	0.338	0.331	0.372	1.000

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## Results: bivariate (1)

- Detailed1 – detailed2: 0.81 0.82
- Detailed1 – ESS 0.55 --
- Detailed1 – ISSP 0.77 0.83
- Detailed2 – ESS 0.54 --
- Detailed2 – ISSP 0.77 0.73

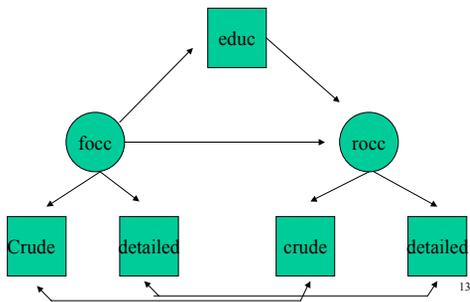
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## Results: bivariate (2)

- FISEI – ESS precoded:  $r = 0.55$ .
- FISEI – ISSP precoded:  $r = 0.77$ .
- FISEI – ISEI detailed1:  $r = 0.30$
- FISEI – ISEI detailed2:  $r = 0.33$
- FISEI – ISEI ESS precoded:  $r = 0.26$
- FISEI – ISEI ISSP precoded:  $r = 0.37$

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## MTMM -- structure



## Measurement relations in MTMM

### FATHER

- Jo: 0.90
- Harry: 0.89
- ISSP: 0.85
- ESS: 0.64

### RESPONDENT

- Jo: 0.90
- Harry: 0.89
- ISSP: 0.86
- ESS: ---

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## MTMM - conclusions

- Crude questions [ISSP] are slightly worse measures of occupational status than detailed information.
- Method effects are small.
- Crude measures are not more prone to education bias.
- Combining crude and detailed in one model provides a much more plausible status attainment model than either one separately.
- Independent coding of parallel questions helps 10%.
- Current ESS crude question is inadequate.

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## How to code occupations in ISCO

- Step 1: Buy and read the ISCO manual
- Step 2: Translate ISCO into local language and match with existing occupational title base.
- Step 3: transfer all verbatim information into SPSS strings. Stack all the information in a 'long' file.
- Step 4: match information with existing database.
- Step 5: have information double coded by 2-3 coders who work independently. When you train them, concentrate on ISCO, not on the occupations.

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