



# Psychosocial variables in the Swiss Household Panel

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This document provides an overview of the references of the psychosocial variables. Please note that many of the psychological variables belong to a rotating module and are not measured in every wave. On [www.swisspanel.ch/documentation](http://www.swisspanel.ch/documentation) under Search Tools you find:

- an overview of all variables in all waves to see in which waves variables were measured (see Overview of variables by waves)
- the exact wording of the questions presented in this document (see Search for variables within questionnaires).

The following scales and indicators are covered:

1. Subjective well-being indicators and scales
2. Personality traits: Big Five Inventory
3. Sense of control
4. Worries and important things in life
5. Gender role attitudes
6. Psychological stress and aspirations
7. Identity, discrimination, and anomie
8. Additional scales in the SHP Covid-19 Study

## 1. Subjective well-being indicators and scales

The concept of subjective well-being (SWB) is composed of a cognitive and an affective dimension (e.g. Diener, 1984). The cognitive dimension refers to the evaluation of life in general, or of particular life domains. Table 1 lists all measures of the cognitive dimension.

Table 1 Cognitive dimension of subjective wellbeing

Variable	Label
<i>General measures of SWB</i>	
P\$\$C44	Satisfaction with life in general
P\$\$C100	LS: Life close to ideal
P\$\$C101	LS: Excellent life conditions
P\$\$C102	LS: Having gotten important things
P\$\$C103	LS: Not changing anything
<i>Satisfaction with health</i>	
P\$\$C02	Satisfaction with health status
<i>Satisfaction with the educational environment</i>	
P\$\$YTH01	Satisfaction with current studies
P\$\$YTH05	Satisfaction with things learned during studies
P\$\$YTH06	Satisfaction with relationship with the teaching staff
P\$\$YTH07	Satisfaction with atmosphere with fellow students
P\$\$YTH08	Satisfaction with the support from parents
<i>Satisfaction with financial situation</i>	
P\$\$W92	Satisfaction with income
P\$\$I01	Satisfaction with financial situation
<i>Satisfaction with working conditions</i>	
P\$\$W93	Satisfaction with working conditions
P\$\$W94	Satisfaction with working atmosphere
P\$\$W229	Satisfaction with the level of interest in tasks
P\$\$W230	Satisfaction with the amount of work
P\$\$W228	Satisfaction with job in general
P\$\$W615	Satisfaction: hierarchical superiors
P\$\$W616	Satisfaction: promotion
<i>Satisfaction with living arrangements and personal relationships</i>	
P\$\$F01	Satisfaction with living alone
P\$\$F02	Satisfaction with living together
P\$\$F04	Satisfaction with way housework is shared
P\$\$QL04	Satisfaction with personal relationships
P\$\$F54	Happy with the partner
P\$\$N69	Satisfaction with the relationship with the partner
P\$\$N72	Satisfaction with the children
P\$\$N81	Satisfaction with mother
P\$\$N90	Satisfaction with father
P\$\$N124	Satisfaction with siblings
P\$\$N100	Satisfaction with friend
<i>Satisfaction with leisure</i>	
P\$\$A05	Satisfaction with free time
P\$\$A06	Satisfaction with leisure activities
<i>Satisfaction with democracy</i>	
P\$\$P02	Satisfaction with democracy

The affective dimension considers positive and negative affect such as joy, hope, optimism, worries, anxiety, and anger (Diener 2000; Diener, Suh, Lucas, and Smith 1999). The affective dimension is generally conceptualized as two dimensions of mood (Watson, Clark, and Tellegen 1988): positive affect, which groups together emotions such as joy,

hope, or optimism, and negative affect, which groups together a set of negative emotions such as anxiety, irritation, or depression (Scherer, Wrantik, Sangsue, Tran, and Scherer 2004). Table 2 lists all variables measuring the affective dimension. It includes the frequency of four of the most important emotional traits (Scherer, Wrantik, Sangsue, Tran, and Scherer 2004).

Table 2 Affective dimension of subjective wellbeing

Variable	Label
P\$\$C17	Do you often have negative feelings such as having the blues, being desperate, suffering from anxiety or depression
P\$\$C18	Are you often full of strength, energy and optimism
	How frequently do you generally experience the following emotions
P\$\$C47	... joy
P\$\$C48	... anger
P\$\$C49	... sadness
P\$\$C50	... worry

## 2. Personality traits: Big Five Inventory

To provide information about the differences between individuals on five principal personality dimensions (Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Openness to Experience) two different personality traits scales have been used in the SHP\_I and the SHP\_II. Between 2009 (wave 11) and 2011 (wave 13), the Big Five Inventory ten (BFI-10; Rammstedt and John, 2007) was collected once, at the first interview in this period (so it was only asked in Wave 12 or 13 if the respondent did not participate in Wave 11). The BFI-10 was developed by Rammstedt and John (2007) and is an abbreviated version of the 44 items Big Five Inventory (BFI-44; John, and Srivastava, 1999). The BFI-10 includes two items per trait (Table 3).

Table 3 Big Five-10<sup>a</sup>

Variable	Personality trait Latent Variable	Label
		I see myself as someone who
P\$\$C60	Extraversion	... is reserved. <sup>b</sup>
P\$\$C61	Agreeableness	... is generally trusting.
P\$\$C62	Conscientiousness	... does a thorough job.
P\$\$C63	Neuroticism	... is relaxed, handles stress well. <sup>b</sup>
P\$\$C64	Openness	... has an active imagination.
P\$\$C65	Extraversion	... is outgoing, sociable.
P\$\$C66	Agreeableness	... tends to find fault with others. <sup>b</sup>
P\$\$C67	Conscientiousness	... tends to be lazy. <sup>b</sup>
P\$\$C68	Neuroticism	... gets nervous easily.
P\$\$C69	Openness	... has artistic interests

<sup>a</sup>) Scoring the BFI-10 scales: Each trait is measured with two items:

Extraversion: P\$\$C60 - P\$\$C65; Agreeableness: P\$\$C61 - P\$\$C66; Conscientiousness: P\$\$C62 - P\$\$C67; Neuroticism: P\$\$C63 - P\$\$C68; Openness: P\$\$C64 - P\$\$C69.

<sup>b</sup>) Items reversed in valence.

An alternative measure of the Big Five, the 15-item Big Five Inventory-Short Version (BFI-15; Gerlitz, and Schupp, 2005) consisting of 15 items was included in the SHP Wave 17 in 2015 (Table 4). This version of the Big Five includes three items per personality trait.

Table 4 Big Five-15

Variable	Personality trait Latent Variable	Label
		I see myself as someone who
P\$\$C140	Conscientiousness	... does a thorough job.
P\$\$C141	Extraversion	... is talkative
P\$\$C142	Agreeableness	... is sometimes rude to others. <sup>a</sup>
P\$\$C143	Openness	... is original, comes up with new idea
P\$\$C144	Neuroticism	... worries a lot
P\$\$C145	Agreeableness	... has a forgiving nature
P\$\$C146	Conscientiousness	... tends to be lazy. <sup>a</sup>
P\$\$C147	Extraversion	... is outgoing, sociable.
P\$\$C148	Openness	... values artistic, aesthetic experiences.
P\$\$C149	Neuroticism	... gets nervous easily.
P\$\$C150	Conscientiousness	... does thing efficiently
P\$\$C151	Extraversion	... is reserved. <sup>a</sup>
P\$\$C152	Agreeableness	... is considerate and kind to almost everyone
P\$\$C153	Openness	... has an active imagination.
P\$\$C154	Neuroticism	... remains calm in tense situations. <sup>a</sup>

Notes: <sup>a</sup>) Items reversed in valence.

Scoring the BFI-15 scales is similar to the BFI-10 but with three items per trait.

For additional information about the theoretical assumptions behind the personality traits taxonomy, John, Naumann and Soto (2008) give information about the history and the construction of the Big Five inventory taxonomy. For the general five factor theory see also McCrae and Costa (2003). Srivastava, Gosling and Potter (2003) provide information on the relative stability of personality traits during adulthood and put forward that not all the personality traits are equally stable. Several authors emphasise the importance to control for acquiescence bias while using big five short scales (e.g. Rammstedt, and Farmer; 2013; Danner, Aichholzer, and Rammstedt 2015).

### 3. Sense of control

The sense of control refers to whether lives outcomes are subjectively ascribed to an individual or to something external to the individual. In social sciences, the concept of sense of control is a cognitive attribute that is discussed in a variety of forms, such as perceived control, locus of control, self-efficacy, self-mastery, self-directedness, personal autonomy, helplessness for instance. Albeit these terms are often used interchangeably they present distinct features (Skinner, 1996).

Table 5 presents a composite set of items that assess two dimensions of sense of control: personal mastery i.e. what people feel they can control themselves and perceived constraints i.e. what people feel they cannot control (e.g. Lachman & Weaver, 1998).

Personal mastery is measured by four items, two come from Lachman and Weaver (1998), and two from Pearlin and Schooler (1978).

Perceived constraints is measured with eight items: one from Lachman and Weaver (1998), one from Pearlin and Schooler (1978), four questions are adapted from Strodbeck (1958) by Levy, Joye, Guye and Kaufmann (p. 510; 1997) and measure the perception of the level of self-mastery and self-efficacy toward the environment. The last two items come from the self-esteem scale by Rosenberg (1965) and reflect the appraisal of one's own worth. These two items might also be used separately as a self-esteem indicator.

Using all 12 items in Table 5, a scale score of sense of control can be constructed by calculating the mean of the items keeping in mind that some items are reversed in valence. The psychometric properties of the 12 items in Wave 14 were acceptable with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.74. A score can also be calculated for each of the two dimensions or for three dimensions if the researchers choose to consider a self-esteem dimension.

Table 5 Sense of control

<b>Personal mastery</b>		
<i>Lachman and Weaver, 1998</i>		
P\$\$C104	I can do just about anything I really set my mind to	Sense of control: Doing everything set in my mind
P\$\$C105	When I really want to do something, I usually find a way to succeed at it	Sense of control: Find a way to succeed
<i>Pearlin and Schooler, 1978</i>		
P\$\$C106	Whether or not I am able to get what I want is in my own hands	Sense of control: What I want is in my hands
P\$\$C107	What happens to me in the future mostly depends on me	Sense of control: What will happen depends on me
<b>Perceived constraints</b>		
<i>Lachman and Weaver, 1998</i>		
P\$\$C108	Other people determine most of what I can and cannot do	Sense of control: Others determine what I can do
<i>Pearlin and Schooler, 1978</i>		
P\$\$C109	I sometimes feel I am being pushed around in my life	Sense of control: Feeling of being pushed in my life
<i>Levy, Joye, Guye and Kaufmann adapted from Strodbeck (1958)</i>		
P\$\$C70	Often it is not worth to make plans, because too much is unpredictable	Incapacity to make plans because of unpredictability
P\$\$C71	I feel like I have little influence on the events of my life	Little influence on life events
P\$\$C72	I am easily overcome unexpected problems	Capacity to overcome unexpected problems
P\$\$C73	In general, I have no difficulty choosing between two possibilities	Capacity to choose between two possibilities
<i>Rosenberg (1965)</i>		
P\$\$C74	Sometimes I feel useless	Feeling of uselessness
P\$\$C75	Finally, I am rather pleased with myself	Feeling of self-satisfaction

Note: Either (1) P\$\$C70, P\$\$C71, P\$\$C74, P\$\$C108, and P\$\$C109 or their complement (2) P\$\$C72, P\$\$C73, P\$\$C75, P\$\$C104, P\$\$C105, P\$\$C106, and P\$\$C107 should be reversed.

#### 4. Worries and important things in life

A worries scale adapted from Stöber and Joormann (2001) was included in the SHP in Wave 14. Psychometric properties of the “Worries scale” are excellent with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.91. Also, in Wave 14 the SHP included a list of important things in life. Cronbach’s alpha of the “Important things” dimension is 0.63. Table 6 shows all items on worries and important things in life.

Table 6 Worries and important things in life

Variable	Label
	<i>Worries</i>
P\$\$C110	Achieving my ambitions
P\$\$C111	Not keeping my workload up to date
P\$\$C112	Not being able to afford things
P\$\$C113	Feeling insecure
P\$\$C114	Cannot afford to pay bills
P\$\$C115	Leaving the work unfinished
P\$\$C116	Lacking confidence
P\$\$C117	Being unattractive
P\$\$C118	Losing close friends
P\$\$C119	Not having achieved much
	<i>Important things in life</i>
P\$\$C120	Buying things
P\$\$C121	Helping other people
P\$\$C122	Self-actualization
P\$\$C123	Success in job
P\$\$C124	Being owner of house or apartment
P\$\$C125	Good partnership
P\$\$C126	Having children
P\$\$C127	Social activities
P\$\$C128	Travelling

#### 5. Gender role attitudes

The SHP includes several items that measure gender role attitudes and perceived equality between men and women (Table 7). Three items measure the attitude toward traditional gender roles legitimacy in society (items P\$\$D91 to P\$\$D93). Two items are adapted from Roux (1999) and measure the perception of inequality at the societal and personal level (P\$\$P20 and P\$\$D21). This scale gives information whether it is the group and/or the individual that is perceived as a target for discrimination. Measuring attitudes toward measures promoting gender equality is another way to measure gender role attitudes. Such a scale provides an indirect measure of gender role attitudes (items P\$\$D22 and P\$\$D23). These items are inspired by the neo-sexism scale (Tougas, Brown, and Joly 1995). Such measures are supposed to be less threatening compared to direct measures and emphasizes attitudes that are generally hidden.

Table 7 Gender role attitudes

Variable	Label
P\$\$D91	Job preserves independence
P\$\$D92	Child suffers with working mother
P\$\$D93	A child develops equally well whether his/her parents are married or not.
P\$\$P20	Do you have the feeling that in Switzerland women are penalized compared with men in certain areas?
P\$\$P21	Do you, in your everyday life, feel penalized compared with the opposite sex?
P\$\$P22	Are you in favour of Switzerland taking more steps to ensure the promotion of women?
P\$\$P23	In your own relationships with the opposite sex, does it seem possible to you that something can be done to increase equality between men and women?

## 6. Psychological stress and aspirations

Psychological stress is assessed with a 4-item version of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS, Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983). However, due to time constraints we had to reduce the number of the items. We selected one single item in Wave 18. The item “nervous” has been asked in every wave since.

Since Wave 17, individuals aged 15 are asked (once) to assess their professional aspirations on a 4-item scale that has been adapted from the COCON study (<https://www.jacobscenter.uzh.ch/de/research/cocon.html>). Table 8 shows all items.

Table 8 Perceived stress and professional aspirations

Variable	Label	Question: How often have you felt...
<i>Perceived stress</i>		
P\$\$C180	Control	that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
P\$\$C181	Personal problems	confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
P\$\$C182	Going your way	that things were going your way?
P\$\$C183	Difficulties	difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?
P\$\$C184	Nervous	nervous and stressed?
<i>Aspiration</i>		
P\$\$YTH10	Aspirations: highest completed education	
P\$\$YTH11	Aspirations: probability to achieve the highest level of education	
P\$\$YTH12	Aspirations: desired occupation	
P\$\$YTH13	Aspirations: probability to enter into the desired occupation	

## 7. Identity, discrimination and anomie

The questionnaires of the SHP\_III, the SHP-Vaud and the LIVES-Cohort samples included scales on identification, discrimination and anomie. Table 9 lists all items of these scales.

Identification is measured by two sets of questions: one measuring the identification with regional categories, and one focused on social categories which taps into the extent to which different social categories are central to the definition of the self. Alongside identification, a battery of questions measures discrimination based on different social categories. Anomie, finally, is measured by means of a 7-item version of the McClosky and Schaar’s scale (1965), which captures a sense that current social changes are disruptive and that social ties are loose.

Table 9 Additional scales in the SHP\_III, SHP-Vaud and the LIVES-Cohort

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	<i>Regional identity<sup>a</sup></i>
P\$\$P81	Municipality
P\$\$P82	Canton
P\$\$P83	Linguistic region
P\$\$P84	Urban-rural
P\$\$P85	Switzerland
P\$\$P86	Outside Switzerland
	<i>Social category identification</i>
P\$\$C160	Being Swiss
P\$\$C161	Being a foreigner
P\$\$C162	Living in Switzerland
P\$\$C163	Being a man
P\$\$C164	Being a woman
P\$\$C165	Religion
P\$\$C166	Political opinions
P\$\$C167	Occupation-activity
P\$\$C168	Age
	<i>Discrimination</i>
P\$\$C169	Foreign origin
P\$\$C170	Being a man
P\$\$C171	Being a woman
P\$\$C172	Religion
P\$\$C173	Age
P\$\$C174	Disability
P\$\$C175	Mental illness
P\$\$C176	Physical illness
P\$\$C177	Other reason
	<i>Anomie</i>
P\$\$P87	Uncertainty
P\$\$P88	Friendship
P\$\$P89	Disorder
P\$\$P90	Change
P\$\$P91	Tradition
P\$\$P92	No belief
P\$\$P93	To know what to do

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<sup>a</sup> Included in SHP\_III, but not in LIVES Cohort or SHP Vaud.

## 8. Additional scales in the SHP Covid-19 Study

Table 10 lists the psychological scales that were included in the SHP Covid-19 Study but are not part of the annual SHP questionnaire.

The questionnaire contains one item from the Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7 (Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Löwe, 2006). It also contains one item adapted from the Impact of Event Scale-Revisited, a scale on posttraumatic stress symptoms (Weiss, 2007). Four items come from the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996).



Table 10 Additional scales in the SHP Covid-19 Study questionnaire

C20C16	Feeling nervous, anxious, on edge
C20C17	Posttraumatic stress: physical reactions
C20C18	Posttraumatic growth: new path for my life
C20C19	Posttraumatic growth: able to handle difficulties
C20C20	Posttraumatic growth: changed priorities
C20C21	Posttraumatic growth: stronger spirituality/faith

In addition to these established psychological items, the SHP Covid-19 Study also contained a number of items on worries related to the Covid-19 crisis. See for details the SHP Covid-19 Study User guide on SWISSUbase:

<https://www.swissubase.ch/en/catalogue/studies/6097/latest>

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