# ISSP 2006 – Role of Government IV

# Basic Questionnaire

# 2006 ISSP MODULE ON
# ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

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# 2006 Role of Government questionnaire
# FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE
June 2005

**General notes to members**

1. All notes which are not part of the questionnaire and intended only for members (for example, translation notes) are enclosed in pointed, angle brackets <like these>.

2. All the elements in questions which require local adaptation are enclosed in square brackets. These instructions often relate to adding the name of the relevant country. For example, in Britain "Generally, how would you describe taxes in [Country] today?" would read "Generally, how would you describe taxes in Britain today?"

3. All the elements in questions which are optional are enclosed in double round brackets ((like these)).

4. Q-numbers in parentheses – for example **(Q1 1996)**: question numbers in 1996 questionnaire. For countries who participated in 1996, please use the **same wording** for these questions as you did then. **(N)** = new in 2006.

5. Translation and clarification notes are provided after the relevant question.

6. In general, if  translators have difficulty when translating answer codes, they should focus upon translating the **concepts** expressed by the codes rather than the precise **words** used.

7. In 1996 no general translation note was provided as to what we meant by 'government'. Unless there are very strong reasons not to, countries who participated in 1996 should use the same wording for 'government' as they did then. In general, by government we mean the central regime within a country (that is, *any* government that has been elected into power). In some countries the meaning of questions which refer to 'government' can be improved by adding 'of any party' after 'government' (to stress that it does not necessarily have to be the current government).

**(Q1 1996)**

1. In general, would you say that people should obey the law without exception, or are there exceptional occasions on which people should follow their consciences even if it means breaking the law?

(✓)

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

Obey the law without exception ☐

**OR**

Follow conscience on occasions ☐

Can't choose ☐

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**(Q2 1996)**

2. There are many ways people or organisations can protest against a government action they strongly oppose. Please show which you think should be allowed and which should not be allowed by ticking a box on each line.

**Should it be allowed?**

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE))*

| | Definitely | Probably | Probably not | Definitely not | Can't choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Organising public meetings to protest against the government | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. Organising protest marches and demonstrations | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. Organising a nationwide strike of all workers against the government | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

<Precode: the word 'allowed' has the same meaning as the word 'permitted'. The main issue is whether people should be free or have the right to show to varying degrees their discontent with a government.>
<In Q2a, a 'public meeting' refers to an assembly or gathering which everyone is allowed to attend. In the context of this particular question, the purpose of the meeting should be clear.>

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**(Q5 1996)**

3. There are some people whose views are considered extreme by the majority. Consider people who want to overthrow the government by revolution. Do you think such people should be allowed to ...

| ((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE))* | Definitely | Probably | Probably not | Definitely not | Can't choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. ... hold public meetings to express their views? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. ... publish books expressing their views? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

<In Q3b, 'publish books' can be translated as 'have their books published'.>

**(Q6 1996)**

4. All systems of justice make mistakes, but which
   do you think is worse ...                                          (✔)

   ((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY*))        ... to convict an innocent person, ☐

   **OR**

   to let a guilty person go free? ☐

   Can't choose ☐

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**(Q9c-h 1996)**

5. Here are some things the government might do for the
   economy.  Please show which actions you are in
   favour of and which you are against.

| ((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE*)) | Strongly in favour of | In favour of | Neither in favour of nor against | Against | Strongly against | Can't choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Cuts in government spending | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. Government financing of projects to create new jobs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. Less government regulation of business | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. Support for industry to develop new products and technology | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e. Support for declining industries to protect jobs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| f. Reducing the working week to create more jobs | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

<5d refers to funding (financial aid) from government.>
<5e refers not only to direct financial aid from government (government subsidies) but could also include,
for example, import restrictions imposed by government.>
<In 5f 'reducing the working week' refers to shortening the number of hours that employees are required
to work in a week.>

6. Listed below are various areas of government spending.
   Please show whether you would like to see <u>more</u> or <u>less</u>
   government spending in each area.
   Remember that if you say "much more", it might require
   a tax increase to pay for it.

| ((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE)) | Spend much more | Spend more | Spend the same as now | Spend less | Spend much less | Can't choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. The environment | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. Health | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. The police and law enforcement | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. Education | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e. The military and defence | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| f. Old age pensions | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| g. Unemployment benefits | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| h. Culture and the arts | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

<6g refers to unemployment benefits. If there are no such benefits within a country (this applied to the Philippines in 1996), the question should not be asked.>

7. On the whole, do you think it should or should not
   be the government's responsibility to ...

| ((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE)) | Definitely should be | Probably should be | Probably should not be | Definitely should not be | Can't choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. ... provide a job for everyone who wants one | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. ... keep prices under control | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. ... provide health care for the sick | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. ... provide a decent standard of living for the old | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e. ... provide industry with the help it needs to grow | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| f. ... provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| g. ... reduce income differences between the rich and the poor | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

h. ... give financial help to university students from low-income families

i. ... provide decent housing for those who can't afford it

j. ... impose strict laws to make industry do less damage to the environment

(1)    (2)    (3)    (4)    (8)

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**(N)**

8. How successful do you think the government in [Country] is nowadays in each of the following areas?

| ((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE)) | Very Successful | Quite successful | Neither successful nor unsuccessful | Quite un-successful | Very un-successful | Can't Choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Providing health care for the sick? | | | | | | |
| b. Providing a decent standard of living for the old? | | | | | | |
| c. Dealing with threats to [Country's] security? | | | | | | |
| d. Controlling crime? | | | | | | |
| e. Fighting unemployment? | | | | | | |
| f. Protecting the environment? | | | | | | |

<In 8c, by 'threats to [Country's] security' we mean security threats from within or outside the country in question. These threats might be posed by terrorist organisations, or organised crime (but only where this threatens national security) or by other countries. >

9.  Suppose the government suspected that a terrorist act was about to happen.  Do you think the authorities should have the right to…

| ((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE)*) | Definitely should have right | Probably should have right | Probably should not have right | Definitely should not have right | Can't choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a.  ... detain people for as long as they want without putting them on trial? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b.  ... tap people's telephone conversations? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c.  ... stop and search people in the street at random? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

<Question text: by 'terrorist act' we mean an action organised by a group that uses terror or violence as a weapon to achieve its aims. By 'authorities' we mean that group of public officials who are primarily involved in law enforcement.>

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((Now some questions about politics.))
10.  How interested would you say you personally are in politics?

(✓)

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY)*)

| | |
|---|---|
| Very interested | ☐ |
| Fairly interested | ☐ |
| Somewhat interested | ☐ |
| Not very interested | ☐ |
| Not at all interested | ☐ |
| Can't choose | ☐ |

11. Please tick one box on each line to show how much
    you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ON EACH LINE*))

|  | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Can't choose |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. People like me don't have any say about what the government does | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. The average citizen has considerable influence on politics | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. I think most people are better informed about politics and government than I am | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e. People we elect as MPs try to keep the promises they have made during the election | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| f. Most civil servants can be trusted to do what is best for the country | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

<In 11c, by 'pretty good' we mean "rather good" and not the negative reading "quite good".>
<If 11d, 'politics' should be understood as a general term to cover the political system, political affairs and political events and procedures.>
<In 11e, 'MPs' (Members of Parliament) are people elected for <u>national</u> parliament.
<In 11f, 'civil servants' are higher level non-political government paid officials. They are *not* elected to office – they applied for their posts and are senior public servants or government administrators.>

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12a. Generally, how would you describe taxes in [Country] today?
     ((We mean <u>all</u> taxes together, including [wage deductions],
     [income tax], [taxes on goods and services] and all the rest.))
     First, for those with <u>high</u> incomes, are taxes ...

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

(✓)

... much too high, ☐

too high, ☐

about right, ☐

too low, ☐

or, are they much too low? ☐

Can't choose ☐

b.  Next, for those with <u>middle</u> incomes, are taxes ...

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

(✔)

... much too high, ☐

too high, ☐

about right, ☐

too low, ☐

or, are they much too low? ☐

Can't choose ☐

c.  Lastly, for those with <u>low</u> incomes, are taxes ...

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

(✔)

... much too high, ☐

too high, ☐

about right, ☐

too low, ☐

or, are they much too low? ☐

Can't choose ☐

**(N)**

13a) To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements.
"There are only a few people I can trust completely"

(✔)

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neither agree nor disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

Can't choose ☐

b) "If you are not careful, other people will take advantage of you"

(✔)

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

Strongly agree ☐

Agree ☐

Neither agree nor disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Strongly disagree ☐

Can't choose ☐

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**(N)**

14a. Some people because of their job, position in the community or contacts, are asked
by others to help influence important decisions in their favour. What about you? How often are you
asked to help influence important decisions in other people's favour?

((*PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

(✔)

Never ☐

Seldom ☐

Occasionally ☐

Often ☐

Can't choose ☐

b. And are there people you could ask to help influence important decisions in your favour?

*((PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*  (✓)

| | |
|---|---|
| No, nobody | ☐ |
| Yes, a few people | ☐ |
| Yes, some people | ☐ |
| Yes, a lot of people | ☐ |
| Can't choose | ☐ |

<Precode: if necessary, the difference between 'a few' and 'some' can be clarified by using a term such as 'only a few'.>

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**(N)**

15.  In your opinion, how often do public officials deal fairly with people like you?

*((PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*  (✓)

| | |
|---|---|
| Almost always | ☐ |
| Often | ☐ |
| Occasionally | ☐ |
| Seldom | ☐ |
| Almost never | ☐ |
| Can't choose | ☐ |

<Question text: by 'public officials' we mean both elected and non-elected public officials, and by 'fairly' we mean impartially, without any favouritism or prejudice. The phrase 'people like you' should be translated so as to refer to people with roughly similar characteristics to the respondent, but care should be taken not to use an expression that might offend.>

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**(N)**

16.  Do you think that the treatment people get from public officials in [Country] depends on who they know?

(✓)

*((PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*

| | |
|---|---|
| Definitely does | ☐ |
| Probably does | ☐ |
| Probably does not | ☐ |
| Definitely does not | ☐ |
| Can't choose | ☐ |

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17. In your opinion, about how many politicians in [Country] are involved in corruption?

   *((PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))* (✔)

   | | |
   |---|---|
   | Almost none | ☐ |
   | A few | ☐ |
   | Some | ☐ |
   | Quite a lot | ☐ |
   | Almost all | ☐ |
   | Can't choose | ☐ |

   <Precode: if necessary, the difference between 'a few' and 'some' can be clarified by using a term such as 'only a few'.>

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18. And in your opinion, about how many public officials in [Country] are involved in corruption?

   *((PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))* (✔)

   | | |
   |---|---|
   | Almost none | ☐ |
   | A few | ☐ |
   | Some | ☐ |
   | Quite a lot | ☐ |
   | Almost all | ☐ |
   | Can't choose | ☐ |

   <Precode: if necessary, the difference between 'a few' and 'some' can be clarified by using a term such as 'only a few'.>

19. In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favour in return for a service?

*((PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(✔)

Never ☐

Seldom ☐

Occasionally ☐

Quite often ☐

Very often ☐

Can't choose ☐

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**(N)**

20. On average, about how many people do you have contact with in a typical week day, including people you live with.
We are interested in contact on a one-to-one basis, including everyone with whom you chat, talk, or discuss matters. This can be face-to-face, by telephone, by mail, or on the internet. Please include only people you know.

Please select one from the following categories that best matches your estimate.

*((PLEASE TICK **ONE** BOX ONLY))*　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　(✔)

0-4 persons ☐

5-9 ☐

10-19 ☐

20-49 ☐

50 or more ☐

Can't choose ☐

<This final question is a compulsory background variable. It must be asked, but its position in the questionnaire is not fixed and can be decided by each ISSP country.>