



User's Guide

This guide contains a comprehensive treatment of the facilities provided by the SPSS/M in the 'black box' mode. It also contains a general description of variables and parameters. Please see the *SPSS/M Introduction and Overview* for an introductory treatment of these topics



Statistics
Canada Statistique
Canada

Canada

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Parameters.....	1
Parameter Files.....	2
Control Parameter Files	2
Database Adjustment Parameter Files	2
Tax/Transfer Parameter Files.....	2
Types of Parameters.....	2
Strings	3
Scalars	3
Vectors	4
Look-up Tables	4
Arrays.....	5
Parameter Editing.....	5
Parameter Comments	6
Variables	6
Class versus Analysis.....	6
Family Level	7
Database versus Modeled	7
Variant versus Base.....	8
Variable Naming Conventions.....	8
Expressions	8
Constants.....	9
Variables	9
Operators.....	9
Family Level Specifiers	10
Variant-Base Difference Operator	10
Arithmetic Operators	11
Logical and Comparison Operators	11
Functions.....	11
Statements	11
Assignment Statements.....	11
Definitional Statements.....	11
Flow Control Statements.....	13
Descriptive Parameters	14
Database Files	14
Household/Individual File	14
Expenditure File.....	14
Weight File.....	14
Control of Weighting	14
Reference Value Facility.....	15
Creating user variables from a previous run	15
Modifying database variables	16
Database Adjustment	17
Imputation Control.....	17

Variant and Base	18
Variant Control	18
Base Control.....	19
Sub-sampling Facility	19
Selection Facility	20
Marginal Tax Rate Facility	22
User-defined Variable Facility.....	24
User Variable Facility	24
Text Output Facility	25
Built-in Tabulation Facility.....	28
X-tab Facility	30
Specification of User-defined Tabulations	31
Components of a Tabulation Request	31
The Tabulation Level of a Tabulation Request.....	31
Items Suitable for Tabulation.....	32
Expressions Involve Functions of Aggregated Variables.....	32
Imposing Qualifiers on Items Being Tabulated.....	32
Syntax for Qualifiers.....	33
Classificatory Levels.....	33
Creating an "All" Category Via the "+" Suffix.....	34
Ordering of Levels and Table Appearance	34
Creating a Multi-line Table Specification.....	34
Related Control Parameters	35
Level of Analysis Issues	35
Tabulations Depend on Selection Parameters.....	36
Distributional Analysis Facility	36
Measures of inequality and polarization of income distribution	39
Introduction to Inequality Measures	39
Scalar Inequality and Polarization Measures.....	41
Measure of polarization of income distribution.....	45
Activating the calculation of inequality and polarization measures	47
Turning Point Facility	48
Introduction.....	48
Turning Point Facility Operation	50
Example	53
Miscellaneous Facilities.....	55
Random number facility	55
Low-income line analysis	55
Social Assistance and Employment Insurance Adjustment.....	56
Social Assistance	56
Employment Insurance	57

Introduction

This document describes in detail how to use the SPSM in ‘black box’ mode. The reader is assumed to have read the *SPSD/M Introduction and Overview*, and to be familiar with the concepts introduced there. The use of the SPSM in ‘glass box’ mode is presented in the *Programmer’s Guide*.

The first sections of this guide contain the following:

- A description of the use of various types of parameters employed during an SPSM run.
- A description of variables which may contain information from the SPSS and results from the application of the tax/transfer model for individuals and families.
- A brief description of the types of database files supplied by Statistics Canada as input to the SPSM.
- A description of the process of database adjustment used by the model to allow the SPSS to represent different calendar years.
- An explanation of the specific features that allow the comparison of two scenarios by the SPSM.

Subsequent sections discuss, in turn, each of the major SPSM facilities. The order of their presentation in this guide follows the order in which the parameters that control them appear in the SPSM control parameter files.

For those users with a specific interest in the cross-tabulation facility, the section titled X-tab Facility provides a description of the SPSM cross-tabulation facility in a complete but highly concise manner. A more detailed explanation with worked examples can be found in the *XTab User’s Guide*.

Parameters

It is through parameters that the user controls all aspects of the SPSM. A parameter is a value specified prior to the actual running of the model that controls how the model executes. It is specified in one of three distinct kinds of parameter input files read by the SPSM. It is represented in these files as an uppercase symbol followed by a value. The three kinds of parameter files are discussed in the section of this guide titled Parameter Files.

Parameters can contain many different kinds of information, ranging from a simple numeric value to a complicated multi-line string used to specify a cross-tabulation request. The different forms of parameters are discussed in the section titled Types of Parameters. Parameters are modified directly in Visual SPSM to change the values in the appropriate parameter file. Alternatively, in Classic SPSM, parameter values can be modified interactively using the parameter editing facility, described in the section titled Parameter Editing Facility. The definitive source on each SPSM parameter is the *Parameter Guide*. This guide can be found online in two formats: alphabetically and by subject matter. To access the alphabetic description of parameters, double click on “Alphabetic Lists” then “Parameters.” To access a description of parameters organized by subject matter, double

click “Reference Manual” then “Parameter Guide.” A useful utility (compparm) which reports on differences between parameter files is documented in the *Tools User’s Guide*.

PARAMETER FILES

As mentioned earlier, the SPSM is driven by over 800 parameters divided into three groups, corresponding to three types of files that control three main processes. **Control parameters** specify input and output files for a specific model run and are used to activate model software facilities. **Database adjustment** parameters control the inflation of database money items. **Tax/transfer** parameters control the specific functioning of the tax and transfer programs. In the case of commodity taxes, a set of default parameters is supplied.

The parameters in a parameter file are ordered and formatted in a fixed way. Parameter files that do not follow these formatting conventions will be re-formatted to conform, if a new parameter file is output by SPSM.

Control Parameter Files

Each execution of the SPSM makes use of a single control parameter file. This file, which has the file extension `.cpr`, specifies the names of input and output files to be used in the run, and provides values that control all the SPSM facilities described in subsequent sections of this guide.

Some entries in the control parameter file are not used to communicate information to SPSM. Instead these ‘informational’ control parameters are used to indicate certain information about the run to the user. An example is the parameter `SAMPLE`, which shows the fraction of the SPSD that was actually read in the run.

Database Adjustment Parameter Files

Each execution of the SPSM makes use of a single database adjustment parameter file, which has the extension `.apr`. The primary function of this file is to specify parameters that ‘age’ the data to some subsequent year by providing SPSD variable-specific growth factors. The `.apr` file also includes parameters that specify structural features of the year in question, such as region-specific unemployment rates.

Tax/Transfer Parameter Files

Tax/transfer parameter files completely specify the operation of the tax/transfer algorithms. A particular execution of the SPSM can require 0, 1, or 2 tax/transfer parameter files. The number of tax/transfer parameter files depends on the values given to the `BASMETH` and `VARMETH` control parameters.

TYPES OF PARAMETERS

Parameters supply many different kinds of information to the SPSM. There are, accordingly, several different kinds of parameters, each suited to a particular kind of information. String parameters supply textual information to the SPSM. Textual information can be as simple as a label describing a parameter file, or as complicated as a user-supplied cross-tabulation request. Scalar parameters supply single numbers, such as the amount of Family Allowance

per child. Vector parameters supply a one-dimensional set of numbers. An example is the set of income break points used to define the columns of built-in Table 2. Look-up Table parameters provide information on piece-wise linear functions used in the tax/transfer system. An example is the federal tax table. Array parameters provide two-dimensional sets of numbers. An example is the set of provincial effective sales tax rates by expenditure category and province. Each of these types of parameters is discussed in the following sections.

Strings

String parameters are used to provide textual (as opposed to numeric) information to the SPSM. Each string parameter has a maximum admissible length. If the maximum length is exceeded, an appropriate error message is generated and the parameter value is truncated.

The following example is extracted from the supplied parameter file `\spsd\ba02.mpr`.

```
MPRDESCE      Current values for 2002
                # Source: Given as LABELE=...
                # Source : Donné comme LABELE=...
                # Update: Value=LABEL
```

In this example, the MPRDESCE parameter is providing an overall title to the set of tax/transfer parameters. The source and update lines are automatically generated by the SPSM to make the parameter file more comprehensible. The user should not attempt to insert their own comment on the same line as the parameter value, because the SPSM removes such comments and replaces them with parameter labels when the parameter file is written. Please see the section titled Parameter Comments for a discussion of user-supplied comments in parameter files.

The string parameter can be broken up over several lines if it is too long, or if the user wants a cleaner presentation. This is illustrated by the following example.

```
XTSPEC                # X-tab specification
IN: {immicons,
      imtxf:S=3,
      idise:S=3}
    * hdprov+;
IN: hdurb+ * {immicons, immicons/units:L="Average Consumable Income", imtxf:S=3,
             idise:S=3};
IN: hdprov+ * {immicons, imtxf:S=3, idise:S=3, scfrecs };
```

In this example, the XTSPEC parameter, which is used to generate user-defined cross tabulations, has been set to a string with seven lines. The first four lines belong to the same table request. The user aligned the variables so the file is easy to read and so the lines are easy to edit in the future. The last three lines show other acceptable ways of writing table requests. The last request can finish with either a semi-column or not; however, it is suggested to always use the semi-column in the last table request.

Scalars

Scalar parameters are used to provide single numeric values to the SPSM. They are given on the same line as the parameter value, as indicated in the following example.

```
STDFA          418.56      # Standard federal family allowance per child
```

In this example, taken from the tax/transfer parameter file `\spsd\ba92.mpr`, the amount of Family Allowance per child has been set to the amount indicated. Scalar values, like all numeric parameters, are re-formatted when the parameter file is written.

Vectors

Vector parameters are used to provide an ordered set of numeric values. The values of the parameter are indicated one per line. Users can add new dimensions to the parameter at the last line (beside the asterisk). The following example illustrates these points.

```
DISTP      13                # Breakpoints for histogram plot
  1
  5
 10
 20
 30
 40
 50
 60
 70
 80
 90
 95
 99
  *
```

The vector parameter DISTP is assigned a set of 13 values, ranging from 1 to 99. This parameter specifies the percentile break points that define the horizontal axis of the histogram plot produced by the distributional analysis facility (see the section titled Distributional Analysis Facility).

Look-up Tables

Look-up table parameters are used to provide information defining piecewise linear functions. Such a function is indicated in the SPSM by a set of ordered 3-tuples. Each 3-tuple corresponds to a particular ‘corner’ or turning point in the function. The number of 3-tuples is indicated on the same line as the parameter name, while the 3-tuples follow one per line on succeeding lines.

- The first number in each 3-tuple gives the X value for the function.
- The second number gives the corresponding Y value.
- The third number gives the slope of the line segment that starts at (X, Y).

There is some redundancy in this information. The Y values (except the first) can be derived from the slopes. Alternatively, the slopes can be derived from the X and Y values. These two forms of redundancy correspond to two types of look-up parameters, called ‘Point-Slope’ and ‘X-Y’ look-up table parameters. Both types have are implemented in SPSM, because particular look-up tables are more naturally represented in one form or the other

Consider the following example of a ‘Point-Slope’ look-up table :

```
FTX      4                # Federal tax table
      0      0      0.160
 31677 (5068)  0.220
 63354 (12037) 0.260
```

As the comment indicates, this is the federal tax table for 2002. The table has 4 distinct tax brackets, and the function is specified by supplying the X values and the corresponding tax rate (i.e., slope) for each bracket. The starting Y value (0 in this example) also must be indicated. The rest of the Y values are computed from the X values and the slopes, and are indicated inside brackets to emphasize their derived character. These derived Y values are computed by the SPSM and output when the parameter file is written. The user must supply a value for all three columns of a Point-Slope lookup parameter, but the Y values need not be accurate (except the first one), since they will be correctly computed by the SPSM when the parameter is read.

The following is an example of a 'X-Y' look-up table.

SPAT	3	# SPA take-up rate by benefit level	
0	0.550	(0.0001)	
3316	0.720	(0.0003)	
4270	1.000	(0.0003)	

The SPAT parameter gives the proportion of eligible persons who partake of the program, as a function of the level of benefit. For example, 72% of persons eligible for SPA will participate in the program if their benefit amount is \$3316. The third column gives the slope of the corresponding piece-wise linear function. The slope values are too small to be accurately represented in this example. In any case, the slope values are computed accurately by SPSM and are presented in the parameter file for informational purposes only.

Arrays

Arrays are two-dimensional sets of numbers. An example is the parameter PTF which is reproduced below.

PTF	9	# Low income cut-off			
16186	13883	13787	12829	11186	
20233	17354	17234	16036	13982	
25163	21583	21433	19943	17390	
30460	26126	25945	24142	21050	
34049	29205	29002	26986	23531	
37638	32284	32059	29830	26012	
41227	35363	35116	32674	28493	
41227	35363	35116	32674	28493	
41227	35363	35116	32674	28493	

The indexes used to determine a value in the table always start at zero The PTF parameter is a two dimensional array giving a user-supplied "income threshold" for families: the rows are the number of persons minus 1 – this sets the index to zero for a one person family - and the column the urban area (hdurb).

PARAMETER EDITING

Classic SPSM contains a parameter editing facility which provides a method for users to change the values of parameters in a parameter input file without using a text editor. In Visual SPSM, parameters can be opened and edited interactively.

Parameter Comments

Users can add their own comments to parameter files. This is generally done to help document the SPSM run. Comments can be written on multiple lines and must be preceded by a '#' on each line. In Classic SPSM, they must be entered directly into parameter files using a text editor. In Visual SPSM, parameter boxes can be opened and comments added directly in the box.

Variables

This section contains reference information on SPSD/M variables. A variable contains information on a particular household, individual, or family in SPSD/M. This is distinct from a parameter, which generally contains data used to specify the tax/transfer system used in a simulation. Definitive information on each of the SPSD/M variables can be found in the *Variable Guide* which can also be accessed in alphabetic order by double clicking on "Alphabetic Lists" and then on "Variables".

It is possible to use SPSD/M without referring to variables at all. For example, the parameters of a tax/transfer simulation could be inputted to SPSM, and standard built-in reports used to analyze results. However, many more powerful facilities of SPSD/M require the use of variables. These facilities, which are described in more detail elsewhere in this manual, include record selection, cross-tabulation, text output, case reporting, and distributional analysis. There is also a facility that allows the user to create new variables based on the values of existing variables.

Variables have several characteristics that must be understood for the discussions in the following sections to be comprehensible. These characteristics are described in the following sections.

CLASS VERSUS ANALYSIS

Variables in the SPSD/M can be grouped into two broad categories. Variables whose values denote membership in distinct categories are termed 'class' variables in this documentation. They are also referred to as categorical or classificatory variables. An example of a class variable is *idsex*, which records the sex of an individual. Variables whose values hold numeric values on which arithmetic operations can be meaningfully performed are termed 'analysis' variables. An example of an analysis variable is *idiemp*, which records the employment income of an individual.

The distinction between class and analysis variables is an important one. Certain of the SPSM facilities require that either a class variable or an analysis variable be specified in certain contexts. Class variables can be converted to analysis variables, or analysis variables to class variables, using the user-specified variable facilities.

One variable, *age*, is often required to be either a class or an analysis variable. Accordingly, two variables for *age* have been defined: *idage* is the 'class' version and *idnage* is the 'analysis' version. *idage* might be used to generate a report on the distribution by age of a

certain group of people, while idnage might be used to generate a report on the mean age of persons in various groups.

FAMILY LEVEL

The SPSD is organized hierarchically in the sense that individuals retain their family context. This means that the SPSD can be considered to be a file of individuals, a file of families (variously defined), or a file of households. Each SPSD/M variable is defined at a natural level in this family hierarchy. For example, the variable hdprov (province of residence) is defined at the level of household, whereas idiemp (employment income) is defined at the level of individual. The various SPSM reporting facilities allow the user to specify the family level of analysis desired for a particular output function. However, the user is not restricted to using variables whose natural level is the same as that specified. A number of rules serve to interpret the meaning of such 'cross-level' requests.

If the natural level of the variable is 'higher' than the level specified by the user, the value of the variable is the value found at that higher level. For example, a reference to hdprov when specifying the level of analysis as 'individual' simply refers to the province associated with the household containing the individual.

If the natural level of the variable is 'lower' than the level specified by the user, two cases arise, depending on whether the variable is an analysis variable or a class variable. If the variable is an analysis variable, then the value of the variable is the sum of the 'lower' level values contained in the family unit at the specified level. For example, a reference to idiemp when specifying the level of analysis as 'household' refers to the sum of employment income of all persons in the household. If the variable is a class variable, then the value of the variable is the value associated with the first contained unit (called the reference family or individual) at the variable's natural level. For example, a reference to idage when specifying the level of analysis as 'household' refers to the age of the first person in the household.

Using class variables in this way clearly requires knowledge of the order in which individuals and families are arranged. Individuals are arranged within families with the eldest spouse first, followed by the other spouse (if present), followed by children in order of increasing age. Families are arranged within households with the 'primary' family coming first. Boarders, for example, form 'secondary' families containing only a single individual.

An added complication arises when selection has been activated using the SELFLAG, SELUNIT, and SELSPEC control parameters. Selection ultimately occurs at the level of the individual, so the following remarks apply to variables whose natural level is 'individual'. If such a variable is referenced when specifying a higher level of analysis, only selected individuals are processed. For example, if the selection facility has been set up in such a way as to select only persons whose age falls between 18 and 55, then a reference to idiemp when specifying the level of analysis as 'household' refers to the sum of employment income of all persons aged 18 to 55 in the household. Similarly, a reference to idage when specifying the level of analysis as 'household' refers to the age of the first person in the household whose age is between 18 and 55.

DATABASE VERSUS MODELED

SPSD/M variables can be divided into two groups based upon whether they are read (or directly derived) from the database, or whether they result from a modeling process. The first two letters of the variable's name will indicate whether the variable is modeled or not. As indicated in the section titled Variable Naming Conventions below, the prefixes im, ub, and ct indicate modeled variables. All other prefixes indicate database variables.

VARIANT VERSUS BASE

The SPSM allows access to two distinct sets of modeled variables, termed 'base' values and 'variant' values. If the user is performing a single simulation, variant values for all variables are defined. If the user is performing two simulations simultaneously, then values for all base variables are defined. If the user is reading in base values from a previously produced results file, then base values for the saved variables will be defined, and all other base variables will be set to the value 0.

To refer to a base variable, simply prefix the name of the corresponding variable with an underscore symbol. For example, `immicons` refers to variant consumable income, while `_immicons` refers to base consumable income.

VARIABLE NAMING CONVENTIONS

Unlike parameters, which are always represented in upper case, SPSD/M variables are always given in lower case. With only a few special exceptions, variables follow a naming convention in which the first two letters of the name (the prefix) indicate the basic family level of the variable, and whether it is read from the database or produced by the model. The remaining letters of the name (the stem) describe the variable itself. Unemployment Insurance claim variables have a numeric digit inserted between the prefix and the stem, indicating which claim the variable refers to. A table of valid prefixes and their meanings is given below.

hh	Household structure data
hd	Household characteristics
ef	Economic family characteristics
cf	Census family characteristics
nf	Nuclear family characteristics
id	Individual data, from database
im	Individual data, from model
uc	UI claim data, from database
ub	UI claim data, from model
fx	Expenditure pattern data, from database
ct	Commodity tax data, from model

EXPRESSIONS

The capabilities of SPSM expressions, which are used in a number of control parameters, have been considerably extended. Instead of describing the changes, the syntax of SPSM expressions is presented below in total.

Expressions are used in a number of SPSM facilities. Specifically, expressions can be found

in the parameters SELSPEC, MARSPEC, TPSPEC, UVAR, and XTSPEC. An SPSM expression is a syntactically valid sequence of constants, variables, operators, and functions that evaluate to a floating-point quantity. The syntax is similar to that used in the C programming language. As in C, comments (delimited by /* and */) can be inserted as desired, and the order of operations can be changed by using the bracket characters (and). Also as in C, a value of zero stands for the logical 'false' value, while any non-zero value represents the logical value 'true'. Logical operators return the value 1 to represent 'true'.

Constants

Constants are decimal numbers that can contain an optional fractional part. Exponential notation is not recognized. A number of constants that are commonly used in SPSM can be entered symbolically using the upper-case synonyms shown in the following table:

Mnemonic	Value	Meaning
NFLD	0	Province codes used in the hdprov variable.
PEI	1	
NS	2	
NB	3	
QUE	4	
ONT	5	
MAN	6	
SASK	7	
ALTA	8	
BC	9	Codes used in the idsex variable.
MALE	0	
FEMALE	1	Codes used in the idcfrh variable.
HEAD	0	
SPOUSE	1	
CHILD	2	

Variables

Variables consist of an optional underscore (_), followed by a lower case alphabetic character, followed optionally by additional lower case letters and numeric digits. Variables must be either SPSD database variables, SPSM modeled variables, or user variables created by the User Variable Facility. Variables are described in more detail in the [Variable Guide](#) or can also be accessed online by clicking on Indices and then on Variables.

Operators

Operators take one or two arguments, and use the following precedence hierarchy:

Operators	Description
IN: SP: NF:	family level specifiers
CF: EF: HH:	
- ! @	unary minus, logical negation, variant-base difference
**	Exponentiation
* /	multiplication, division
+ -	addition, subtraction
< <= > >=	numeric comparison
LT LE GT GE	
== !=	equality, inequality
EQ NE	
&&	logical conjunction
AND	
	logical disjunction
OR	

Family Level Specifiers

Expressions are evaluated at the level of the individual. Family level specifier operators allow referencing of variables pertaining to other family members. Family level specifiers immediately precede a variable or expression, referencing and cumulating the value of the variable or expression over the family unit containing the individual.

Specifier	Meaning
IN:	Current individual
SP:	Spouse of current individual
NF:	Nuclear family containing current individual
CF:	Census family containing current individual
EF:	Economic family containing current individual
HH:	Household containing current individual

A number of examples follow:

SP:idiemp	value of employment income of spouse
SP:(idage>70)	is 1 if spouse is over age 70 and 0 otherwise
CF:(idisa>0)	number of persons in census family receiving social assistance
CF:immicons/HH:immicons	proportion of household consumable income associated with census family containing current individual
CF:(idage>=3 && idage<=5)	number of persons in census family between the ages of 3 and 5 inclusive

Family level specifiers involving user variables require careful attention. The analyst must ensure that the user variable has been computed for all persons in the household before the family level specifier operator is applied either to it or to an expression containing it.

Variant-Base Difference Operator

The variant-base difference operator computes the difference between the variant and base values of a modeled variable. For example, the expression @immicons is synonymous with

immicons-_immicons and gives the change in consumable income from base to variant.

Arithmetic Operators

The conventional arithmetic operators +, -, *, / follow conventional precedence rules and require no explanation. The symbol ** stands for exponentiation and has a high level of precedence.

Logical and Comparison Operators

The logical operators operate in a conventional manner. SPSM allows synonyms for certain of the operators, as indicated in the above table. As mentioned, any non-zero value has the logical value 'true'. All of the logical and comparison operators use 1 to denote a 'true' value.

Functions

Functions are specified using the expected notation, and are listed in the following table.

Function	Description
abs(a)	absolute value
nneg(a)	non-negative: equivalent to max(0,a)
min(a,b)	minimum of two values
max(a,b)	maximum of two values
ln(a)	natural logarithm
exp(a)	Exponentiation
split(a,b1,b2,...)	determine which range value falls in
trunc(a)	integer part of value

The split function returns 0 if $a \leq b1$, 1 if $b1 < a \leq b2$, etc.

STATEMENTS

The user variable facility makes use of statements, which are similar to C-language statements. The syntax of these statements is described in this section. The main purpose of statements is to assign expression values to user variables.

Assignment Statements

Assignment is accomplished using the = symbol. SPSM is deliberately more restrictive than C in the syntax of this operator, thus preventing certain kinds of errors that are very easy to make in that language. The syntax is:

```
<user variable> = <expression> ;
```

The variable being assigned cannot be a database or modeled variable. If the user variable already has a value (created either by an earlier statement or through the Reference Value Facility), the value will be replaced. A special form allows assignment to the spouse of the current individual:

```
SP:<user variable> = <expression> ;
```

Definitional Statements

A user variable has a number of characteristics in addition to the value it holds for each

individual. It can have a label, and be either a classificatory or analysis type variable. If its type is analysis, it can have a fractional part, printed to a specified level of precision. If its type is classificatory, it has a fixed number of allowed levels, and each level can have an associated label used for printing. By default a user variable is an analysis variable with no fractional part (except if generated by the split function), but these characteristics can be changed using the following statements.

label statement

As its name suggests, the label statement is used to associate a textual label with a user variable. The syntax is as follows:

```
label(a) = "textual label" ;
```

In this example, the user variable a is given the indicated label. This label will be used by the various SPSM output facilities.

levels statement

The levels statement gives the number of levels for a user variable and provides a label for each level. It implicitly sets the user variable type to classificatory.

```
levels(a) = "level #0", "level #1", "level #3" ;
```

This example sets a to a classificatory variable with three levels labeled as indicated. As with all SPSM classificatory variables, the first level has the value 0, the second has the value 1, etc.

type statement

The type statement forces the type of the user variable to either classificatory or analysis. It is generally not needed because user variables get implicitly assigned a generally appropriate type.

```
type(a) = analysis ;  
type(b) = class ;
```

The preceding examples set the type of the user variable a to analysis, and b to classificatory.

precision statement

The precision statement indicates that the user variable has a fractional part, and indicates the number of digits to display to the right of the decimal point when printing values for the variable. Most SPSM variables, being dollar quantities, have no fractional part. This allows them to be stored efficiently in SPSM result files. The precision must be set to a non-zero value to preserve fractional parts in result files. This will store the variable as a single precision floating point quantity, with a total of about 6.5 digits of accuracy.

```
precision(a) = 3 ;
```

The precision of the analysis variable a has been set to 3. If a is printed, 3 digits to the right of the decimal point will be displayed.

When the precision statement is used (and is greater than 0), the variable will be stored in results files using double precision.

Assignment from split function

If a variable is assigned the result of the split function, a number of implicit declarations about the variable occur. Specifically, the variable will be a classificatory variable with the appropriate number of levels, and default level labels will be generated for the variable if possible.

```
b = split(idiemp, 1000, 2000, 3000) ;
```

The preceding example provides attributes to `b` equivalent the following statements:

```
label(b) = "Employment income Group" ;  
levels(b) = "Min-1000", "1001-2000", "2001-3000", "3001-Max" ;
```

If the first argument of `split` had been an expression, a label for `b` would not have been generated. If any of the subsequent arguments of `split` had been expressions, the level labels would not have been generated.

Flow Control Statements

There are three statements that are used to affect the flow of control of statement execution.

Statement group

A set of statements can be made to act as a group by surrounding the group with curly braces: { and }. This allows groups of statements to be conditionally executed using the `if` and `else` statements.

```
{ a=1; b=2; }
```

This example groups the two assignments into a single statement.

if statement

The `if` statement allows conditional execution of a statement (or statement group)

```
if (idcfrh==0 && idspoflg==0 && cfnkids>0 ) benefit = 1000;
```

This example assigns heads of single parent families a benefit of 1000 dollars. Note that parentheses surround the condition.

if else statement

The `if else` statement allows one of two statements to be executed depending on whether a condition is true or false.

```
if (imigist == 0) benefit = 500 ;  
else benefit = 100 ;
```

This example assigns a benefit of 500 dollars to persons without any GIS top-up and 100 dollars to all others. The `if else` statement can be used repeatedly to specify an action depending on one of a number of conditions, as in the following example:

```
if (idcfrh==0) {
```



```

if      (cfnkids==0) benefit = 0;
else if (cfnkids==1) benefit = 100;
else if (cfnkids==2) benefit = 300;
else if (cfnkids==3) benefit = 600;
else    benefit = 600 + 400 * (cfnkids-3);
}

```

This example assigns a benefit to the head of a census family depending on the number of kids in the family. The benefit per child increases with the parity of the child.

DESCRIPTIVE PARAMETERS

The CPRDESCE and CPRDESCF control parameters allow the user to provide a short general description of the purpose of a particular SPSM execution.

The control parameter ALGDESC is informational in nature. Its value is created by SPSM and included in the control parameter file for documentation purposes. It contains information about the standard and alternate algorithms available in the version of SPSM being executed. If the user follows the procedures given in the *Programmer's Guide* when using 'glass box' mode, appropriate descriptions of tax/transfer algorithms will appear in ALGDESC.

Database Files

The information in the SPSD is distributed over three distinct kinds of files. Please refer to the *SPSD/M Introduction and Overview* for a detailed list of SPSD/M files. The database files are all named by Statistics Canada and should not be changed. This section describes the contents of the different type of SPSD files and the corresponding control parameters.

HOUSEHOLD/INDIVIDUAL FILE

The INSPSD control parameter specifies the name of the main SPSD input file. Files of this type have an extension of .spd, and contain information on household and family structure, demography, and income.

EXPENDITURE FILE

The INPFXV control parameter specifies the name of the SPSD file that contains household expenditure data. Because not all users may be interested in this data (whose primary function is to allow the simulation of commodity taxes) this file does not necessarily need to be read. Deactivating the FXVFLAG control parameter disables reading of the expenditure data file.

WEIGHT FILE

The INPWGT control parameter specifies the name of the SPSD file containing household weights. A number of weight files have been supplied with the SPSD/M. These files have been constructed to reproduce the estimated or projected population of Canada by age, sex, and province for a number of years.

Control of Weighting

This WGTFLAG control parameter determines whether or not the database sample used will

be weighted. It is usually left activated, in which case weights are applied. If deactivated, the weight file specified in the parameter INPWGT (if any) will not be read, and all weights will instead be set to the value 1.0. This facility can be used to produce unweighted tabulations of SPSD, and is also useful if 'hypothetical households' generated using the bldspd utility (see the *Tool User's Guide*) are being used instead of the supplied SPSD.

REFERENCE VALUE FACILITY

Values of modeled variables produced in an SPSM run can be accessed in a subsequent run by using SPSM results files to create base modeled values, as described in the section Variant and Base (using OUTMRSFLAG, OUTMRSVARS, OUTVARMRS, and OUTMRSFRAC to create the results file and BASMETH and INPBASMRS to read the results file in a subsequent run). The Reference Value Facility allows a different form of access to variables created in a previous run. The main difference is that the variables produced by the Reference Value Facility can be either user variables or database variables, rather than base modeled variables.

Three control parameters are used by the Reference Value Facility. The facility is activated by turning on REFFLAG. INPREF must be set to the name of a previously produced results (.mrs) file. The REFVARS parameter lists the names of the variables that the user wishes to read from the results file, and can optionally be used to re-name these variables as well.

The different kinds of operations that the Reference Value Facility can perform are described in detail in the following sections.

Creating user variables from a previous run

Perhaps the most common use of the Reference Value Facility is to access user variables produced in a previous run. To do this, the user must first create a results file containing one or more user variables by setting control parameters in a manner similar to the following example.

```
UVARFLAG      1
UVAR
    etr = (CF:immtot - CF:immicons) / CF:immtot;
    label(etr) = "Effective tax rate";
    precision(etr) = 3;
OUTMRSFLAG    1
OUTMRSVARS    immtot immicons etr
OUTVARMRS     refvals.mrs
```

In this example, a user variable named etr is created. This variable contains the effective tax rate on Census Family income resulting from a particular SPSM run. This variable, as well as the modeled total and consumable income, is written to a results file named refvals.mrs. Since the precision statement was used, the variable etr will be saved in the results file using 3 decimal places.

To access the etr variable in a subsequent run, the following control parameters would be used:

```
REFFLAG      1
INPREF       refvals.mrs
REFVARS      etr
```

This causes the `etr` variable to be retrieved from the `refvals.mrs` file. The `etr` variable can then be used by any of the SPSM reporting or output facilities. The `etr` variable could be renamed to `refetr` by specifying instead:

```
REFFLAG      1
INPREF       refvals.mrs
REFVARS      refetr=etr
```

This would allow the effective tax rate for the second run to be created and named `etr` (using the `UVAR` parameter) without conflict. In the following example, the values of the modeled variables `immtot` and `immicons` in the `refvals.mrs` file are converted into user variables as well:

```
REFFLAG      1
INPREF       refvals.mrs
REFVARS      refetr=etr reftot=immtot refcons=immicons
```

Modeled variables must be renamed to user variables if they are mentioned in `REFVARS`, as illustrated in the previous example. It should also be noted that user variables created using the Reference Value Facility can be overwritten by the User Variable Facility.

Values of variables from any number of SPSM runs can be combined into a single results file by reading in variables using the Reference Value Facility, and then writing out these variables, together with new ones from the current run, to the `OUTVARMRS` results file. When using this technique, note that the `OUTVARMRS` file cannot be named identically to either `INPBASMRS` or `INPREF`.

Modifying database variables

The reference value facility can be used to replace the values of SPSD variables. This is illustrated by the following simplified hypothetical example, in which a user attempts to model a certain kind of behavioural response to a decrease in UI income. In the first run, base variables are assumed to exist, and variant values come from a scenario in which UI benefits have been affected by parameter changes. Assume the user wishes to perform a subsequent run in which persons respond to a shortfall of UI benefits by increasing their employment income. To do this, the user would produce a result file from the first run using the following parameters:

```
UVARFLAG     1
UVAR
  newemp = idiemp + nneg(_imiuib - imiuib);
  label(newemp) = "Employment income (after response)";
OUTMRSFLAG   1
OUTVARMRS    run1.mrs
OUTMRSVARS   newemp
```

The `newemp` variable contains the employment income after behavioural response (it has been assumed that an increase in UI benefits will not decrease employment income). In a subsequent run, the database value of employment income can be replaced by the employment income after behavioural response by using the following parameters:

```
REFFLAG      1
INPREF       run1.mrs
REFVARS      idiemp=newemp
```

Note that database adjustment occurs before the Reference Value Facility replaces any

database variables. In other words, replaced database variables are not grown after being read from the INPREF file.

The ideas in this example can be combined with the Text File Output Facility and the database build utilities to create modified SPSD database files. For example, a new user variable could be created based on SPSD/M variables using the User Variable Facility and output to a results file. This variable could be read in a subsequent run and assigned to the extra database variable `idext0` using `REFVARS`. The `/spsd/bldspd.cpi` and `/spsd/bldspd.api` files could be used to create an ASCII dump of the SPSD (including the new value in `idext0`) which would then be input to the `bldspd` utility to create a new `.spd` file which permanently incorporates `idext0`. Please see the [Tool User's Guide](#) for more information.

Database Adjustment

Database adjustment is a distinct phase of calculations in SPSM. It is a process through which SPSD variables can be modified to reflect changes that have occurred between the base year of the SPSD data and the year of interest for analysis purposes. The user may wish to modify SPSD variables for other purposes as well. The process of database adjustment is controlled by giving appropriate values to the parameters contained in the database adjustment parameter file (given in the control parameter `INPAPR`).

There are two distinct types of parameters in the database adjustment parameter file. The first type is structural parameters, which attempt to represent qualitative changes to specific variables. The second type are growth factors, which are used to scale up income variables to account for inflation and/or economic growth or to adjust for under-reporting of expenditure items. Please see the [Parameter Guide](#) for more information on database adjustment parameters.

IMPUTATION CONTROL

In order to correct for known under reporting problems on surveys, a series of variables have been added. The variables apply to Employment Insurance Benefits, Social Assistance Benefits, and CPP/QPP benefits. For each of these income items two possible variables are available:

1. No Conversion Use original SLID reported Values
2. Rank Conversion: Use Values Generated through rank conversion procedure

Please see the [Database Creation Guide](#) for more details on the actual conversion procedures. The user has control over the selection of variables through three database adjustment parameters (`.apr`). The parameters are listed below along with their default settings.

```
IMPUIBOPT                      2                      # Imputation method, UI
IMPSSAOPT                      2                      # Imputation method, SA
```

Variant and Base

In the terminology used in SPSM, 'variant' refers to the set of tax/transfer parameters, algorithms, and variables that corresponds to one of two possible simultaneous model calculations. The other possible set of calculations is described using the term 'base'. The results of primary interest to the user will normally be variant values. Base values are normally used only for comparative purposes. This section describes the control parameters used to specify how base and variant values are produced.

VARIANT CONTROL

The control parameter VARMETH provides information about the algorithm used to produce variant values for variables. Its values and their meanings are given in the table below.

VARMETH	Interpretation
0	No variant variable values.
1	Not used.
2	Variant variables produced using standard algorithm and tax/transfer parameter file INPVARMPR.
3	Variant variables produced using alternate algorithm and tax/transfer parameter file INPVARMPR.

The parameters used to generate variant values are given in a file whose name is provided in the control parameter INPVARMPR. The exact file location may be fully specified, such as `c:\spsd\ba02.mpr`, or the file can be assumed to exist in the current directory, e.g. `var1.mpr`. In the course of SPSM's interaction with the user, it is possible to change values of variant parameters. If such changes are made, SPSM will write out a parameter file containing the changes to the file whose name is specified in the control parameter OUTVARMPR. This allows one file (INPVARMPR) to be used as the starting point for variant parameter values, with another file (OUTVARMPR) containing the actual values that were used to produce variant variable values. When CREATEPARMFILES is turned on, a variant parameter file (OUTVARMPR) is always produced.

The VARALG control parameter is informational in nature. It gives the overall name of the algorithm (either standard or alternate as specified in VARMETH).

It is possible to preserve the variant variable results for use in future SPSM executions. This can result in substantial timesaving if the same results are used repeatedly in subsequent SPSM executions. Three control parameters must be specified to generate a results file. OUTMRSFLAG must be turned on to activate the facility for saving variant variables. OUTVARMRS must be set to the name of the file to contain the results (this file should have an extension of .mrs). Finally, the OUTMRSVARS control parameter must contain a list of variables to be output. The variable names in OUTMRSVARS are separated by spaces. User variables can be listed in OUTMRSVARS and will be output to the results file. These variables can then be retrieved in a subsequent run using the Reference Value Facility.

As with all string parameters, long values can be continued onto subsequent lines (See section titled Strings). Note also that if selection has been activated (see section titled Selection Facility), unselected households will have zero values for all variables in the results

file. The section titled Selection Facility describes how a results file can be used to supply base variable values in a subsequent SPSM execution.

By default, each of the variables in the results file will have its value rounded to the nearest integer before being written. If the precision statement was used when creating a user variable, that degree of precision will be kept in the result file. By activating OUTMRSFRAC, all variables will be saved in double precision. Though more precise, this also greatly increases the size of the files.

The bldmrs.exe utility can construct an SPSM results file from an ASCII file. This utility and a related new utility, spsdinfo, are described in the *Tools User's Guide*.

BASE CONTROL

The BASMETH control parameter determines which algorithm is used to generate base variable values. Note that unlike VARMETH, the value 1 allows the user to use a previously produced results file to generate base variable values. This process is described in more detail below. Valid values for BASMETH and their meanings are given in the table below.

BASMETH	Interpretation
0	No BASE variable values.
1	Base variables come from existing results file INPBASMRS.
2	Base variables produced using standard algorithm and tax/transfer parameter file INPBASMPR.
3	Base variables produced using alternate algorithm and tax/transfer parameter file INPBASMPR.

The BASALG parameter, like the VARALG parameter, is informational in nature. It contains a string describing the overall algorithm used to produce base variable values.

If BASMETH has been set to 1 then a value for INPBASMRS must be specified. INPBASMRS gives the name of the file containing values to be used for base variables. The informational control parameter INPMRSVARS will contain a list of the variables read from INPBASMRS. The base values of any other variables will have the value zero.

If BASMETH has been set to 2 or 3 then a value for INPBASMPR must be specified. INPBASMPR gives the name of the file containing the tax/transfer parameters to be used to generate base variable values. Classic SPSM does not provide a facility to modify these parameters interactively. If necessary, a text editor can be used for this purpose. In Visual SPSM, the parameters can be modified interactively.

Sub-sampling Facility

The SPSM runs quickly on modern computers, so subsampling is not usually necessary. However, it is still possible to run the SPSM with a partial sample.

In Visual SPSM, sub-sampling is controlled by setting a control parameter to the sub-sample

desired. SPSM will then read and process the SPSD until the desired sub-sample has been attained.

In Classic SPSM, sub-sampling can be controlled in two ways. In the first method, the user sets the control parameter `SAMPLEREQ` to the sub-sample desired. SPSM will then read and process the SPSD until the desired sub-sample has been attained. In the second method, the user presses `CTRL-C` to interrupt the run after some fraction of SPSD has been processed. In either case, the sub-sample actually obtained is recorded in the `SAMPLE` informational control parameter, and output tables are scaled by the reciprocal of this value.

Reading of the SPSD always proceeds sequentially, but a relatively unbiased sub-sample is nevertheless obtained because households in SPSD are by and large randomly ordered. The ordering is not completely random, however. In order to improve the accuracy of results obtained when using sub-sampling, SPSD has been arranged as a running stratified sample. The strata used are province and household income, and the sub-sampling stratification samples occur for `SAMPLE` values of 5%, 10%, and 25%. Samples of these sizes have been arranged to have representative provincial and household income distributions.

The sub-sampling facility operates independently of the selection facility (see section titled Selection Facility). This means that for a given value of `SAMPLE`, the same households are read and processed, irrespective of selection. If the user wishes to explicitly sample a particular group of interest, a random number stream can be activated and the corresponding random number can be used in the `SELSPEC` expression (see section titled Random Number Facility for more information on SPSM random numbers).

Selection Facility

The SPSM selection facility provides a means to restrict the set of individuals and families that are processed by the SPSM output and reporting facilities. Selection satisfies two distinct needs. Firstly, it allows the analyst to focus attention on a particular sub-group of interest. Secondly, it can allow SPSM to execute faster by restricting the number of households processed to those of interest.

The `SELFLAG` control parameter must be turned on to activate the selection facility. When the facility is deactivated but the other parameters that control the facility (`SELSPEC` and `SELUNIT`) contain values, they do retain their values. Thus by changing the value of `SELFLAG`, the user can temporarily turn off a complicated selection specification, and later re-activate it easily.

The parameter `SELSPEC` is a string containing an expression (see section titled Expressions for a description of SPSM expressions) which is evaluated for each individual in the household. If the result of the evaluation is non-zero, the individual is considered to be selected. If an individual is selected, then everyone in the same family unit (as indicated by `SELUNIT`) is also selected, irrespective of the value of `SELSPEC` for those other individuals. In other words, if one or more persons in the family unit (as indicated by `SELUNIT`) are selected, the entire family unit is selected. Note that if `SELUNIT` is 0 then each individual is

selected based on the value of SELSPEC for that individual. In this case no propagation to other family members occurs.

The values of SELUNIT and their meanings are given in the following table. SELUNIT controls the type of units that are to be selected, but does not influence the level of analysis used to calculate SELSPEC for each individual. The level of analysis of variables in the SELSPEC expression is always the level of the individual person. Note, however, that individual variables in the SELSPEC expression can be overridden to a higher level of analysis by using appropriate family level prefixes. For example, the variable `idiemp` in SELSPEC refers to the employment income of the individual, whereas `CF:idiemp` refers to the total employment income of the Census Family in which the individual is found.

SELUNIT	Level of selection propagation
0	Individual (no propagation)
1	Nuclear Family
2	Census Family
3	Economic Family
4	Household

Table 1: Interpretation of SELUNIT values

The combination of selection propagation using SELUNIT, general expressions using SELSPEC, and level of analysis prefixes within SELSPEC create a powerful and general selection facility. The following examples illustrate how these features operate.

Eg#	SELUNIT	SELSPEC	Explanation
1	0	<code>hdprov == 0</code>	Individuals in Newfoundland.
2	4	<code>hdprov == 0</code>	Households with individuals in Newfoundland (more efficient than previous example).
3	3	<code>idage >= 65</code>	Economic Families containing one or more elderly persons.
4	3	<code>idage >= 65 && idiemp > 0</code>	Economic Families containing elderly with employment income.
5	0	<code>idiemp > 10000</code>	Individuals with over \$10,000 in employment income.
6	2	<code>idiemp > 10000</code>	Census Families containing one or more individuals with over \$10,000 in employment income.
7	2	<code>CF:idiemp > 10000</code>	Census Families with over \$10,000 in employment income.
8	0	<code>imiuib > 0 && (EF:idiemp / efnpers) > 10000</code>	Individuals receiving UI in Economic Families whose employment income per person exceeds \$10,000.
9	2	<code>(immdisp - _immdisp) > 1000</code>	Census Families containing one or more individuals whose disposable income increased by \$1,000 or more between the base and variant.

Table 2: Selection Facility Examples

The selection facility operates essentially at the level of the individual. The end result of selection is that individuals within a household are marked as selected or not. However, the SPSM output and reporting facilities operate at user-specified family levels of analysis. The following rule indicates whether or not a family unit is considered to be an observation for reporting purposes. If any individual within a family unit is marked as selected, the family unit is considered to be an observation for reporting. Conversely, if no individual within a family unit is marked as selected, the family unit is not reported.

The user must be careful when SELUNIT is less than the level of analysis specified in one of the SPSM output or reporting facilities. In such a case the family units being reported can be partial units. For example, if ASCUNIT is set to 2, ASCVARS is set to idiemp, and the selection facility parameters are as indicated in example 5 in the above table, then each record in the resulting output file will correspond to a Census Family and will contain the employment income of all members of the Census Family whose employment income exceeded \$10,000.

To compute taxes and transfers correctly, SPSM always simulates entire households. Because of this, selection has no effect on the values of any variables, modeled or database, at the individual level. If, however, an examination of the database variables in the SELSPEC expression indicates that no individual in the household could possibly be selected, (irrespective of the values of any modeled variables in SELSPEC), then SPSM skips immediately to the next household. This can result in a considerable decrease in SPSM execution time. It is nevertheless necessary to compute any activated random number streams to assure that their values will be reproducible from run to run irrespective of selection.

The user may also want to limit the number of individuals or families selected. The parameter SELMAX defines the maximum number of individuals or families which are processed. This feature is particularly useful when using the text output facility or when using the turning point facility.

Marginal Tax Rate Facility

The marginal tax rate is defined as the proportion of an extra dollar of income that is taxed. It is a useful concept because it measures the extent to which incentives to obtain additional incomes are reduced by the tax/transfer system. SPSM provides a facility to compute marginal tax rates. When MARFLAG is turned on, the facility is activated and the tax/transfer system is applied twice to each household: once to the original incomes and once to the incremented incomes, and the resulting change in consumable income is noted.

The definition of marginal tax rate given above is not totally complete. To calculate a marginal tax rate, one must in addition specify the source of income being incremented, the amount of the increment to income, and which individuals are to receive the increment. The change in consumable income at the individual level can then be aggregated to produce marginal tax rates at different family levels of analysis. Each of these issues is discussed in

turn below.

Marginal tax rates vary by source of income because the tax/transfer system treats income differently by source. For example, an additional dollar of dividend income is taxed differently than an additional dollar of employment income. The MARVAR control parameter gives the name of the income database variable to be incremented to compute marginal tax rates. Continuing the example above, if MARVAR contains the value `idimp`, employment income is incremented, whereas if it contains the value `idivid`, dividend income is incremented.

If the amount of increment to income is made small, then an accurate measurement of the local slope of the tax/transfer function (equivalent to the marginal tax rate) can be made. This is not always desirable, however. The tax/transfer function may change rapidly over small ranges of income. For example, at the income at which the Guaranteed Income Supplement is reduced to zero (the break-even income), there is an instantaneous change in the marginal tax rate of 50%. Also, it is not clear that individuals have the ability (or the inclination) to change their incomes by small amounts in response to local fluctuations in the marginal tax rate. The parameter MARAMT controls the amount of the increment to income used to compute marginal tax rates.

When computing marginal tax rates for families, it is necessary to specify not only the source and amount of income to be incremented, but also which individuals have their income incremented. For example, when evaluating the marginal tax rate on employment income it would not be desirable to increment the employment income of non-employable individuals (e.g. children and elderly). The MARSPEC parameter identifies which individuals are to receive the increment. If the value of the MARSPEC expression is non-zero for an individual, then the individual receives an increment of MARAMT for the purposes of marginal tax rate calculation. In the above example, setting MARSPEC to `idage>17 && idage<65` would restrict the incrementing operation to the desired subset of individuals.

Marginal tax rates differ depending on the family level of analysis. Consider a married couple, where one person has zero income. If \$500 is given to the individual with no income, that person's marginal tax rate would be zero. The consumable income of the person's spouse would decrease however, due to a reduction in the married tax credit/deduction. Hence the marginal tax rate of the spouse would compute to an infinite value, since the spouse's taxes have increased, even though he/she received no additional income. Considered as a family, however, the marginal tax rate would evaluate to a reasonable value.

To allow the computation of marginal tax rates at different family levels of analysis, SPSM assigns values to the individual level variables `immaramt` and `immartax` when the marginal tax rate facility is activated. `immaramt` records the amount of income increment received by the individual. Its value is equal to MARAMT if MARSPEC evaluated to a non-zero value, otherwise its value is zero. `immartax` records the difference between `immaramt` and the change in the individual's consumable income as a result of income incrementation. It represents the amount of 'tax' collected from the individual as a result of income incrementation. Note that turning the tax/transfer parameter CTFLAG off deactivates the

calculation of commodity taxes, making the marginal tax rate calculations occur on disposable rather than consumable income.

Using `immartax` and `immaramt`, the user can calculate marginal tax rates at various family levels of analysis through the user-defined variable facility (see the section titled User-Defined Variable Facility). For example, the expression `immartax/immaramt` will calculate the marginal tax rate.

The `MARBASEFLAG` parameter allows the user to examine in greater detail which modelled variables changed and by how much as a result of the income increment. When this parameter is activated, all of the values of modelled variables associated with the perturbed income are saved using the variable names normally reserved for base run values (e.g. `_immdisp`).

User-defined Variable Facility

The SPSM has two distinct modes of use, termed ‘black box’ and ‘glass box’. The ‘glass box’ mode provides the user with considerable flexibility to design new algorithms and create new variables, but it can be somewhat complicated to use, and requires some knowledge of programming. The user-defined variable facility allows the user to create new reporting variables in ‘black box’ mode. It allows the user to perform many analyses that would otherwise require programming changes to SPSM. Below is a description of the User-defined Variable Facility.

USER VARIABLE FACILITY

The User Variable Facility allows the creation of new user-defined variables, whose values are created through SPSM statements. User variables are defined at the individual level, although expressions can refer to constructs at higher levels of analysis. The `UVARFLAG` parameter must be turned on to activate the facility. The `UVAR` parameter contains a list of SPSM statements that create and assign the user variables. Up to 75 new user variables can be created. Note that assignments in `UVAR` can replace the values of identically named user variables created by the Reference Value Facility.

In the following example, the user wishes to create a new weight file in which the population of Newfoundland has been increased by 3% over its base value. Consider the following set of control parameters:

```
VARMETH      0
SEED         1
            42
UVARFLAG     1
UVAR
    if (hdprov==NFLD) {
        fltwgt = 1.03 * hdwgthh;
        intwgt = trunc(fltwgt);
        if (idrand0 < (fltwgt-intwgt)) intwgt = intwgt + 1;
    }
    else intwgt = hdwgthh;
ASCFLAG      1
ASCUNIT      4
```

```
ASCVARS      intwgt
ASCSTYLE     4
OUTASC       newwgts.prn
```

VARMETH has been set to zero to avoid unnecessary calculation of modeled variables. One of the random number streams has been activated, with an arbitrary initial seed value of 42. Since VARMETH has been set to zero, the fact that the random numbers in the model have been turned off will not have an impact on the results. A number of user variables are created in UVAR and one of them (intwgt) is output to a text file for subsequent input to the bldwgt utility (described in the *Tools User's Guide*).

The statements in UVAR are interpreted as follows. First of all, intwgt is set to hdwgtth if the province is not Newfoundland. If the province is Newfoundland, hdwgtth is scaled up by 3%, creating the variable fltwgt. This variable is not suitable for output as is, since it contains a fractional part, whereas SPSD weights must always be integers. The fractional part of fltwgt is therefore discarded to produce intwgt. The next line adds one to intwgt probabilistically depending on the size of the fractional part: the closer the fractional part is to 1, the likelier it is that intwgt will be incremented.

UVAR consists of a list of statements. Each statement is evaluated in turn for each household member before the next statement is evaluated. This means that examples such as the following will work as expected:

```
UVAR
  income = idiemp + idise;
  incrat = income / CF:income;
```

In this example, incrat is the individual's share of Census Family income. This works because the first statement is evaluated for all individuals before the second statement is evaluated. There is a computational cost associated with evaluating statements this way, because SPSM must pass through all household members for each statement in UVAR. This cost can be avoided by grouping statements in UVAR as shown in the following example:

```
UVAR
{
  income = idiemp + idise ;
  tax     = idftax ;
  taxrate = tax / income ;
}
rate = taxrate / (CF:tax / CF:income);
```

In this example, UVAR contains two statements, the first one being a compound statement. income, tax, and rate can be computed without reference to other family members, so they have been grouped for efficiency into a compound statement. The calculation of rate cannot be grouped with the preceding statements because it requires that tax and income be computed for all family members beforehand. rate is the ratio of the tax rate for an individual to the overall tax rate for the individual's family.

Text Output Facility

The SPSM text output facility creates a character file containing micro-data information. There are two classes of uses to which one can put such a file. One can either print or

observe it directly, or one can use it as input into some other computer package, such as a spreadsheet or database.

The facility is activated by turning on ASCFLAG and specifying the file name to be produced in OUTASC. As with the other parameters containing output file names, OUTASC will be generated automatically if not specified, based on the control parameter file name.

The variables whose values are to be displayed are indicated in ASCVARS. Each case that is output corresponds to the level of analysis given in ASCUNIT, as shown in the table below.

ASCUNIT	Case output family level
0	Individual
1	Nuclear Family
2	Census Family
3	Economic Family
4	Household

Table 3: Interpretation of ASCUNIT values

The number of digits of precision in the output file is controlled by the parameter ASCEXTPRC (Number of digits of extra precision). If ASCEXTPRC is left at zero, the text file output facility will output only the integer part of the variables. When ASCEXTPRC is set to a positive number, it adds the required number of decimals to numbers (not to integer variables). This extra precision is useful to accurately compute marginal tax rates when using the turning point facility. The user should be careful grouping integer and numbers variables in ASCVARS because it may have a serious visual impact on the output file.

A number of styles of output are supported. A particular style of output is requested by setting an appropriate value to the ASCSTYLE parameter. Five different output styles are supported, corresponding to ASCSTYLE values of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. The format of the output for each style is more easily illustrated than described verbally. The appearance of the output for ASCUNIT set to 0 (cases are individuals) and ASCVARS set to hdprov idage idsex idiemp is shown below for each style.

An ASCSTYLE value of 1 produces a report designed to be easily human-readable. One household is output per page, and one variable is output per line. Both the variable's name and label are printed, and values for each unit are shown in aligned columns. In this example units are individuals, because ASCUNIT was set to 0. Variables that exist at the household level are shown only in the first column, since their values are known to be identical for all units in the household. The selection facility (see the section titled Selection Facility) is generally used in conjunction with this style, since otherwise very large files could result.

As a special case applying to an ASCSTYLE value of 1, if a dash character ('-') is found in ASCVARS, a separator line is generated in the report. The file detsum.cpi in the /spsd directory illustrates this feature, and contains values for the text output facility parameters that create a useful set of variables for general use. It can be activated easily by using the Read Parameter File function.

```
hdseqhh  Household sequence number ..... 61
```

idseq	Economic family sub-sequence number	0	0	0
idcfseq	Census family sub-sequence number ..	0	0	0
hdprov	Province	6		
idage	Age	28	24	0
idsex	Sex	0	1	1
idcfrh	Relationship to census family head ..	0	1	2
immmkt	Market income	27953	17350	0
immtran	All transfer income	194	371	0
<page break>				
hdseqhh	Household sequence number	62		
idseq	Economic family sub-sequence number	0	0	0
idcfseq	Census family sub-sequence number ...	0	0	0
hdprov	Province	6		
idage	Age	53	50	18
idsex	Sex	0	1	0
idcfrh	Relationship to census family head .	0	1	2
immmkt	Market income	36457	3750	4274
immtran	All transfer income	0	1222	0

An ASCSTYLE value of 2 produces a report designed to be read using a spreadsheet import function. The layout is very similar to that for an ASCSTYLE value of 1, but variable labels and all superfluous spaces have been eliminated, and the printer page break character has been replaced by an empty literal string.

```

" "
"hdseqhh" 61
"idseq" 0 0 0
"idcfseq" 0 0 0
"hdprov" 6
"idage" 28 24 0
"idsex" 0 1 1
"idcfrh" 0 1 2
"immmkt" 27953 17350 0
"immtran" 194 371 0
" "
"hdseqhh" 62
"idseq" 0 0 0
"idcfseq" 0 0 0
"hdprov" 6
"idage" 53 50 18
"idsex" 0 1 0
"idcfrh" 0 1 2
"immmkt" 36457 3750 4274
"immtran" 0 1222 0

```

An ASCSTYLE value of 3 produces a report designed to be read using a spreadsheet or a database system. Each unit (in this example each individual) is recorded on a single line, with a single space between each variable value. The first line of the file contains a list of the variable names in the order in which they are written in each line.

```

"hdseqhh" "idseq" "idcfseq" "hdprov" "idage" "idsex" "idcfrh" "immmkt" "immtran"
61 0 0 6 28 0 0 27953 194
61 0 0 6 24 1 1 17350 371
61 0 0 6 0 1 2 0 0
62 0 0 6 53 0 0 36457 0
62 0 0 6 50 1 1 3750 1222
62 0 0 6 18 0 2 4274 0

```

An ASCSTYLE value of 4 produces a report identical to that for an ASCSTYLE value of 3, except that the first line (which might be excessively long or inappropriate for some purposes) is eliminated.

```

61 0 0 6 28 0 0 27953 194
61 0 0 6 24 1 1 17350 371
61 0 0 6 0 1 2 0 0
62 0 0 6 53 0 0 36457 0
62 0 0 6 50 1 1 3750 1222
62 0 0 6 18 0 2 4274 0

```

An ASCSTYLE value of 5 produces a report designed to be converted into a compressed format, which can be read by the SPSM. The output generated using this value is utilized by the utilities bldspd, bldfxv, and bldwgt. Please refer to the *Tool User's Guide* for more information.

Below is an example of ASCSTYLE=5 for one household (not all variables values are shown).

```

000001 47 217 2 1 2 1 3 4 1
0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 42 0 3 11 13 99 1 2 3 0 52 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 0 0 0 ...

```

ASCSTYLE=5 produces a fixed format which contains all requested variables, is blank delimited, and contains all records per case beginning with a household record which is followed by individual records.

Built-in Tabulation Facility

SPSM can generate a number of pre-defined tables that contain general information on the results of a simulation. The tables contain information on the demographic, income, tax, and transfer characteristics of family units.

They can be activated simply by turning on a flag parameter. In addition, auxiliary parameters control features of some of the tables. Because they are so easy to activate, and are designed to provide an overall picture of the tax/transfer system, they are often used as the initial output for an analysis. These tables are also used in the spreadsheet interface facility, described in the *Tools Users Guide*, which extends the utility of the built-in tables by allowing a wider range of run-comparison measures.

All of the built-in tables have an identical set of rows, most of which correspond to variables defined in the *Variable Guide*. Five different column formats are available, corresponding to table numbers 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4. Each of these tables has a separately-selectable auxiliary table, which contains the underlying count of non-zero observations for each cell of the original table. These auxiliary tables, (numbered 0A, 1A, 2A, 3A, and 4A) can be used to derive means or take-up proportions. The following table describes the features of each of the five table types.

Table	Column Dimension	Controlling Parameters
0	Canada total (one column)	T0FLAG, T0AFLAG to activate.
1	Provinces, total	T1FLAG, T1AFLAG to activate.
2	Income groups, total	T2FLAG, T2AFLAG to activate. INCVAR to specify income variable. INCGP to specify income groups.

- 3 Family type (6), total T3FLAG, T3AFLAG to activate.
- 4 Low income ratio groups PVRAT to specify low income ratio groups.
 INCVAR to specify income variable.
 PTF (structural parameter) to specify low income thresholds by family size and urbanization.

There are three other parameters that affect all activated built-in tables.

- OUTTBL contains the name of the file which will contain the generated tables. If OUTTBL is not specified, a file name based on the name of the control parameter file, but with an extension of .tbl, will be used.
- TABUNIT defines the family level of analysis to be used for all activated built-in tables, as indicated in the table below. If a TABUNIT value of 0 (individual level) is specified for tables 3 or 4, individuals are classified based on the type of their containing nuclear family.

TABUNIT	Built-in tables level of analysis
0	Individual
1	Nuclear Family
2	Census Family
3	Economic Family
4	Household

- TABDELTA defines the threshold unit consumable income used to define the winner or loser rows of the tables.

Table 5: Interpretation of TABUNIT values

The following chart uses built-in table 0 (activated by turning on TOFLAG) to document the meaning of each row of the built-in tables. Please refer to the [Variable Guide](#) for a description of the meaning of each variable.

Table 0: Results for Census Families

Variable (x1,000,000)	TOTAL	
Family Units (x1000)	11921.4	units
Persons (x1000)	27433.5	persons
SLID Survey Records	45371.6	sefrecs
SPSD Records	79764.0	spsdrecs
Income (Base)	359305.8	_immicons
Income (Variant)	359305.8	immicons
Change	0.0	(immicons-_immicons)
Number of Gainers (x1000)	0.0	
Number of Losers (x1000)	0.0	
No Change (x1000)	11921.4	
Gainer's Gain	0.0	
Loser's Loss	0.0	

Total Income		520266.3	immtot
Market Income		437703.4	immmkt
Wages and Salaries		341723.5	imiemp
Self-Employment Income		27159.4	imiself
Investment Income		41430.8	imminv
Other Income		27395.1	immoth
Transfer Income		82554.7	immtran
Total Tax		160955.0	immtax
Net Transfers		-78401.8	imnettr
Disposable Income		408230.1	immdisp
Consumable Income		359305.8	immicons
Federal Taxes		100153.4	imftax
Federal Income Tax		59603.5	imtxf
UIC Contributions		8173.4	imuic
UI Benefit Recovery		131.7	imuibr
CPP/QPP Contributions		6068.5	imcqqc
Other Recoveries		644.4	imothrep
Federal Commodity Taxes		25532.0	imtxfc
Federal Transfers		72064.5	imftran
Federal Family Allow.		2855.3	imffa
CTC / Child Benefits		2287.3	imctcben
OAS		14354.2	imioas
GIS		4318.9	imigis
SPA		565.3	imispa
UI Benefits		18789.6	imiuib
CAP (Federal Portion)		5014.2	imfsa
CPP/QPP Income		16493.3	imicqp
Other Federal Transfers		4697.3	imfothtr
Sales Tax Credit		2688.0	imfstc
Que. Tax Abatement ref.		0.7	imqtar
Federal Net Balance		28089.5	imfedbal
Provincial Taxes		60802.9	imptax
Provincial Income Tax		37415.1	imtxp
Provincial Commodity Tax		23388.2	imtxpc
Provincial Transfers		10490.9	imprtran
Family Programs		519.8	impfp
Elderly Programs		611.7	imigist
CAP (Provincial Portion)		7853.3	impsa
Tax Credits & oth Trans.		1506.2	impalltc
Provincial Net Balance		50312.3	imprvbal
+-----+-----+			
-			

X-tab Facility

The design of the SPSM recognizes that the built-in tables will not always meet the analyst's needs. Thus, it also provides a powerful facility that allows a user to request the specific tables desired. A separate auxiliary guide, the *XTab User's Guide*, presents detailed documentation on the X-tab facility in a comprehensive format that is also suited to those learning the X-tab facility. This section, in contrast, presents the key information in a more

concise format.

SPECIFICATION OF USER-DEFINED TABULATIONS

The user-defined tabulations are activated by turning on XTFLAG. The analyst specifies the desired tabulations via the XTSPEC element of the control parameter file. XTSPEC is one of the SPSM's string parameters. The parameter content consists of tabulation requests separated by semicolons. The following example contains two tabulation requests and would generate two tables.

```
XTSPEC
EF: hdprov * {units};
CF:cftype+*{immtot/units};
```

The first table would display the numbers of economic families by province. The second would tabulate the average total income per census family for several different categories of census family and also for all census families taken together.

The last line of the request now accepts the semi-column. Using the semi-colon is highly recommended.

COMPONENTS OF A TABULATION REQUEST

An individual tabulation request consists of multiple components. It typically begins with the specification of the relevant unit of analysis, i.e. individual (IN:), nuclear family (NF:), census family (CF:), economic family (EF:) or household (HH:). If the tabulation request does not include a unit specification, a default unit of individual (IN:) applies. The remainder of the tabulation request consists of one or more "levels" separated by asterisks. One of the levels, the tabulation level, indicates the item or items to be tabulated. Any remaining levels are classification levels. They specify the particular pattern of categorization desired in the table. Thus, in the first of the two tabulations requests shown above, the level of analysis is the economic family (EF:). Further, the quantity being tabulated is the number of such families (units), and the analyst wants to see these counts of families broken out by province (hdprov).

THE TABULATION LEVEL OF A TABULATION REQUEST

In any given tabulation request the SPSM identifies the unique tabulation level by its enclosure in braces, the { and } characters. A tabulation level may specify multiple items for tabulation in the same table. If multiple items are present in the tabulation level, they must be separated by commas. The following specification in XTSPEC would tabulate total income

```
CF:{immtot,
    units,
    immtot/units}
    *hdtenur+;
```

accruing to census families, the numbers of such families, and the average income per census family, all broken out by tenure categories (rented, owned with mortgage, etc.). The request can also be put on two lines, like the following, but we strongly suggest using the previous form in order to easily keep track of the variables and their output formats.

```
CF:{immtot,units,immtot/units}*hdtenur+;
```

ITEMS SUITABLE FOR TABULATION

Naturally, there are some restrictions on just what the X-tab facility can tabulate, but the design of the SPSM makes it quite flexible. For starters, the analyst can tabulate any analysis variable available in the SPSD or calculated in the (SPSM) model. Complete lists of these variables appear in the *Variable Guide*. Further, as illustrated in the preceding examples, the analyst can define "on the fly" the desired tabulation expressions, constructing them from any of the preceding types of variables and appropriate mathematical operators. The section titled Expressions of this guide contains a full discussion of the SPSM's use of expressions.

EXPRESSIONS INVOLVE FUNCTIONS OF AGGREGATED VARIABLES

When the X-tab facility tabulates an expression, it begins by creating an aggregate "sum" value for each variable in the expression. Only then, using the summed values, does it execute the operations (addition, multiplication, division, etc) in the expression. This is typically the analyst's precise intention. That is, an analyst tabulating {immtot/persons} wants to divide a sum of incomes by the relevant count of total persons. This result is exactly what the X-tab facility would provide.

Similarly, the analyst tabulating {immtot/persons} does not typically wish to sum, across units, the per capita income of those units, the result that would obtain if the X-tab facility evaluated the expression for each record instead of using the aggregate values. If the analyst really needs intra-record calculations prior to tabulation, then he or she would use a two step approach. First, a user variable, defined at the appropriate level of analysis, would execute the intra-record calculations. Second, that user variable would appear in the tabulation request.

IMPOSING QUALIFIERS ON ITEMS BEING TABULATED

In the absence of explicit instructions from the analyst, the X-tab facility makes informed choices as to labels, scaling, number of decimal places, etc. However, it also provides a mechanism for the analyst to exercise, when desirable, explicit control over these features. Specifically, the analyst can impose one or more qualifiers on any variable or expression being tabulated. The four available qualifiers, S, P, L, and M are discussed in turn below.

The S qualifier controls the scaling of the tabulated variable. Thus, for example, a qualifier of S=6 would yield a table entry denominated in millions. The X-tab facility would reflect this selection by including the string "(M)" in its labelling for the variable. The analyst should restrict S qualifiers to the range [-6, 9].

The P qualifier controls the number of decimal places displayed for a table entry. For example, a qualifier of P=2 would yield table entries that included decimal points followed by two digits. A qualifier of P=0 would yield table entries without decimal points. The analyst should restrict the value of P to the domain [0, 8].

The L qualifier permits the analyst to override the default labelling for table entries. The default labelling is already fairly sophisticated -- the X-tab facility uses a variable label when

it is available; in its absence the X-tab facility makes the label out of the name of the tabulated variable or the text of the tabulation expression. The text of the label supplied in an L qualifier replaces the X-tab facility's default label. Thus, for example, an analyst tabulating {scfrecs } might specify a label of "SLID Records" for improved readability. Just as the user would expect, the X-tab facility adds to the label all appropriate "suffixes," e.g. "(%)" for entries with a scaling factor of -2.

The M qualifier permits the analyst to request that a normalization be carried out along one of the table's margins. The most common application of this qualifier is the calculation of percentage distributions; indeed, use of the M marginal sets the default-scaling factor to -2. As an example, consider the tabulation request:

```
CF: {units:M=hdprov P=1} * cftype+ * hdprov+;
```

The request would yield a table showing the percentage distribution, across provinces, of numbers of census families broken out by census family type. The M=hdprov qualifier indicates that the normalization will occur over the province dimension. The qualifier P=1 ensures that the table entries will display results down to tenths of a percent.

SYNTAX FOR QUALIFIERS

The analyst indicates the presence of qualifiers by a colon after the tabulated variable or expression. The qualifiers then follow the colon and precede the next tabulation variable or the brace at the end of the tabulation level. A qualifier takes the form Q=C, where Q represents the qualifier character (S,P,L or M), and C represents the qualifier content (a number, label or variable name depending on the type of qualifier used). If there are multiple qualifiers, they are separated from each other by spaces. Within an individual qualifier, however, there should be no spaces on either side of the "equals" character (=). Note that each of the tabulation variables or expressions in the tabulation level of a table request may have its own set of qualifiers. The example tabulation request

```
EF: {units: S=6 P=1,  
      units :L="EF Distr." M=hdprov }  
      *hdprov+ * hdtenu+;
```

shows some of these possibilities. The resulting table would display the numbers of economic families by province and tenure, as well as their distribution across provinces.

CLASSIFICATORY LEVELS

A tabulation request typically includes one or more classificatory levels. A classificatory level consists of the name of a classificatory variable, i.e. an "integer" variable that classes the relevant unit into mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories. These levels are separated from the tabulation level, and each other, by asterisks. Functionally, a classificatory level specifies a dimension along which the X-tab facility is to break out the item(s) in the tabulation level. Thus, in the illustrative tabulation request

```
IN: {scfrecs: L="Records" P=0 S=0} * idsex * idmarst+;
```

the analyst is counting numbers of SLID records for individuals across sex and marital status.

Classificatory variables typically come from two sources: database classificatory variables or

model classificatory variables. Users can also define their own classificatory variables in the UVAR facility.

CREATING AN "ALL" CATEGORY VIA THE "+" SUFFIX

Used by itself as a classificatory level, a classificatory variable will generate a set of mutually exclusive categories in the table. However, the analyst will often wish to have supplementary "sum across categories" entries in the table. The + suffix provides this capacity. When the analyst includes a + suffix on a classificatory level's variable name, the X-tab facility generates a new "All" category equal to the sum across the variable's categories. The analyst can use the + suffix independently across classificatory levels in a tabulation request.

Thus, our previous example of

```
IN: {scfrecs: L="Records" P=0 S=0} * idsex * idmarst+;
```

will create an "All" category for the marital status dimension, but not the sex dimension.

ORDERING OF LEVELS AND TABLE APPEARANCE

The analyst's ordering of the tabulation and classificatory levels in tabulation request controls the appearance of the resulting table. Generally speaking, the further to the right a level is, the more frequently its categories cycle. Multiple tabulation items in a tabulation level are effectively treated as categories. Thus, the rightmost level in a request controls the column categories of the table. The next-to-last level controls the row categories, the "next-to-next-to-last" level controls the segment categories, etc. This convention gives the analyst good control over the appearance of the resulting table.

Continuing with the earlier example

```
IN: {scfrecs: L="Records" P=0 S=0} * idsex * idmarst+
```

we see that the resulting table will have marital status categories in its columns, and sex as the control variables for its segments.

An exception to the general rule arises when there is only a single item in the tabulation level. For this special case, the X-tab facility processes the tabulation request as if the tabulation level were the first in the request. This treatment prevents multi-segment tables that have only a single row or single column in its segments.

CREATING A MULTI-LINE TABLE SPECIFICATION

The XTSPEC parameter is one of the string parameters in an SPSM control parameter file. SPSM expects a request to be terminated by a semi-column. The request can be spread on as many lines as required to have an easily readable request. It is important to put a carriage return at the end of each line of the request. The following example shows a request of multiple variables output.

```
IN: imfiler+ *  
  {imitot:S=0,  
   imdedfn:S=0,  
   imdedft:S=0,
```

```
imitax:S=0,  
imbft:S=0,  
imfsur:S=0,  
imtxf:S=0,  
imqtaa:S=0,  
imtxp:S=0,  
units:S=0} * hdprov+;
```

RELATED CONTROL PARAMETERS

Of all the SPSM parameters controlling the production of tables, XTSPEC is the real workhorse. However, three other mandatory parameters have a direct effect on the generation of the tables.

The XTFLAG parameter is a flag that tells the SPSM whether or not to produce the tables specified by XTSPEC. The tables are produced only if XTFLAG is activated.

The XTLINES parameter tells the SPSM how many lines can be fit on a page. It helps the X-tab facility to avoid both splitting a given segment across multiple pages and wasting paper by beginning each new table or segment on a new page. XTLINES must take on a value in the range 0 to 32767. A typical value is the 66 lines that will fit on an eleven inch page at the standard six lines per inch.

The XTCOLS parameter affects the trade-off between having multiple lines in column headings and having wider tables. XTCOLS must take on a value in the range 80 to 32767. The general interpretation of the parameter's value is that of a desired maximum number of print columns for the output file. However, the specific algorithm by which XTCOLS affects the printed output is quite complex and cannot be conveniently summarized with accuracy. For users wishing to print their tables from classic SPSM, a typical value for XTCOLS is 132; this value corresponds to the maximum number of print positions available on many printers. Visual SPSM users may wish to set XTCOLS to a bigger value in order to avoid breaking up words.

LEVEL OF ANALYSIS ISSUES

The SPSD/M and its X-tab facility operate in a hierarchical context. Although five levels of unit of analysis are supported (IN, NF, CF, EF and HH), the underlying data exist only at the household and individual levels. Variables for intermediate levels must thus be defined by propagating household variables downward or rolling up variables defined at the individual level. Floating-point variables are fairly straightforward in this regard because they can be aggregated up from the individual level. For example, disposable income for an economic family is simply the sum of the disposable incomes of its members. However, using expenditure variables defined at the household level in a table of nuclear families requires some care in interpretation.

Classificatory variables, crucial for cross tabulations, are still more challenging. Although propagation downward, e.g. province of residence for a census family, presents no problems,

performing roll-ups can be tricky. For example, `idsex` is, mechanically, acceptable as a classificatory variable for a table defined at the census family level. What, though, does it represent? The analyst must be aware that the census family will be classified based on the sex of one representative individual member. Correspondingly, he or she should be aware of the rules by which the SPSM identifies such individuals.

In summary, even though the SPSM provides reasonable defaults for the typical things that an analyst will do, roll-up is a potentially complicated issue. The section titled Family Level of this User's Guide provides the authoritative discussion of roll-up issues throughout the SPSD/M.

TABULATIONS DEPEND ON SELECTION PARAMETERS

Because table entries depend on aggregates of relevant (weighted or unweighted) cases or variables in the SPSD, they necessarily depend on the criteria used to select those cases to be processed. In particular, the entries in a table, and the interpretation of those entries may depend critically on the selection criteria used for an SPSM run. Three control parameters are relevant. (1) The `SELFLAG` parameter determines whether any selection will take place. (2) The `SELUNIT` parameter controls the type of unit that is selected. (3) The `SELSPEC` parameter defines the condition that cases must pass to be included in the analysis; it includes the potential for specifying criteria that depend simultaneously on multiple levels of unit of analysis.

Problems of interpretation are especially likely to arise when the `SELUNIT` level refers to a subset of the level associated with a tabulation request. The difficulties arise because one might only be including subsets of a family in the resulting tables. The section titled Selection Facility of this User's Guide includes a more complete discussion of selection criteria and their impacts on SPSM outputs.

Distributional Analysis Facility

The primary function of the SPSM distributional analysis facility is to allow the analyst to gauge visually the statistical properties of an SPSD/M variable. A frequency histogram, using percentile cut-points provided by the analyst, and incorporating tail truncation if desired, is generated from a sample of observations of the variable. Because the observations are subject to selection (see the section titled Selection Facility) and the variable can be defined through the user-defined variable facility (see the section titled User-defined Variable Facility), the distributional analysis facility can be a powerful exploratory tool. The output from the distributional facility can be found under the **Tables** tab in Visual SPSM. In addition, all output from the distributional facility is written to the `.TBL` file for the program run.

An independent secondary function is to record extreme values of the requested variable for all observations, and identify the households in which these extremes occur. Using the resulting household identification numbers, the selection facility, and the case output facility (see the section titled Text Output Facility), the analyst can explore the properties of these households and understand what it is about them that results in an extreme value for the

variable in question.

The distributional analysis facility is activated by activating the DISTFLAG parameter. The variable to be analyzed is given in the DISTVAR string parameter, and observations are made at the DISTUNIT level of analysis, as indicated in the following table.

DISTUNIT	Distributional analysis family level
0	Individual
1	Nuclear Family
2	Census Family
3	Economic Family
4	Household

Table 6: Interpretation of DISTUNIT values

To generate the frequency histogram, up to DISTSAMP observations will be made, and observations with value zero are included if the DISTZERO flag is turned on. These observations, and their associated household weights, are kept in memory and sorted after SPSM has completed processing all households. Increasing DISTSAMP thus increases memory requirements.

The DISTP vector parameter contains the percentile cut-points to use in generating the frequency histogram. The first and last element of DISTP are interpreted as values to use to truncate the distribution below and above, respectively. If these values are set to 0 and 100, then the entire sample will be used to generate the histogram. It is often useful to have some tail truncation, however, since the inclusion of extreme values reduces the detail that can be shown for the bulk of the observations.

Two parameters remain to be described. DISTPWID is the number of print positions used to produce the histogram. A value of 79 is suitable for display on the screen of your PC, but a larger value may be given if the output is destined for a printer with a wider capacity. DISTPHGT gives the number of lines used to produce the histogram. A value of 20 is suitable for screen display.

The following example illustrates the above points. The distributional analysis facility is used, at the Census family level, to analyze the results. The relevant control parameters are as follows:

```
DISTFLAG          1
DISTUNIT          2
DISTVAR           ex0
DISTVSAMP         4000
DISTZERO          1
DISTP             13
                 1
                 5
                 10
                 20
                 30
                 40
                 50
                 60
                 70
```



```

      80
      90
      95
      99
DISTPWID          70
DISTPHGT          17

```

The output resulting from the distributional analysis facility appears as follows:

Distribution report: Average Tax Rate for Census Families

```

Total observations = 3278
Zero observations = 798
The following statistics are based on all 3278 observations.

```

Descriptive Statistics:

```

Sum of weights      = 10053381
Weighted Sum        = 1088932.76
Weighted Sum of Squares = 202166.59
Weighted Mean       = 0.11

```

Extreme Values (with associated household numbers):

Minima	hdseqhh	Maxima	hdseqhh
-0.00	2111	0.57	2354
0.00	1	0.57	1853
0.00	2	0.57	2113
0.00	3	0.57	2114
0.00	4	0.57	1034

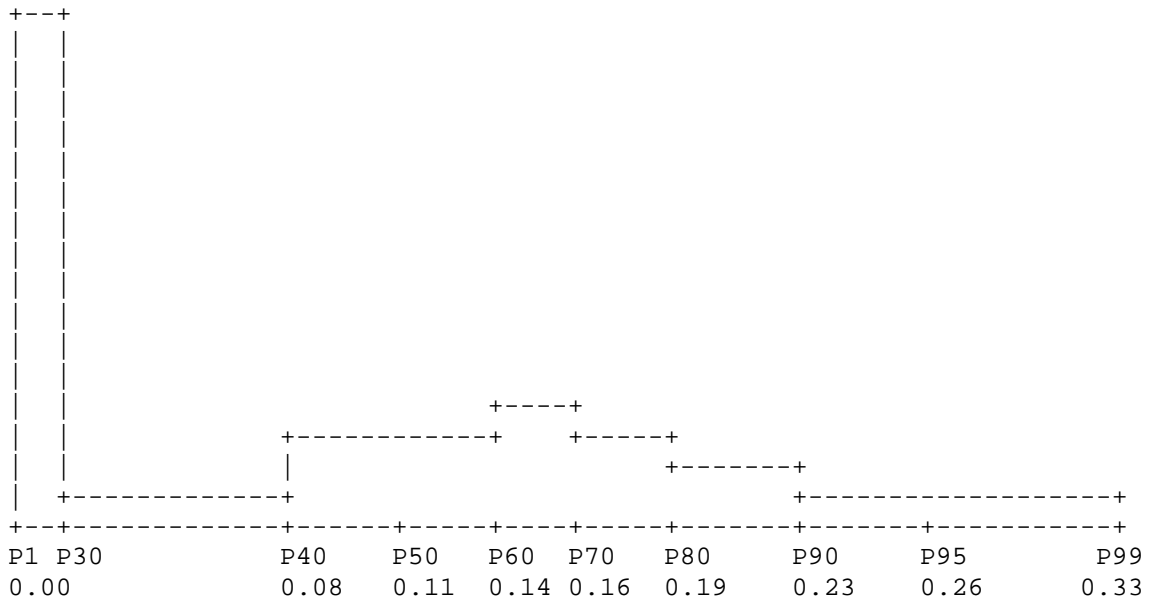
Selected Quantiles:

```

Q1 =0.00  P1=0.00  P90=0.23  P20=0.00  P60=0.14
Med=0.11  P2=0.00  P95=0.26  P30=0.01  P70=0.16
Q3 =0.18  P5=0.00  P98=0.30  P40=0.08  P80=0.19
          P10=0.00 P99=0.33

```

Histogram Plot:



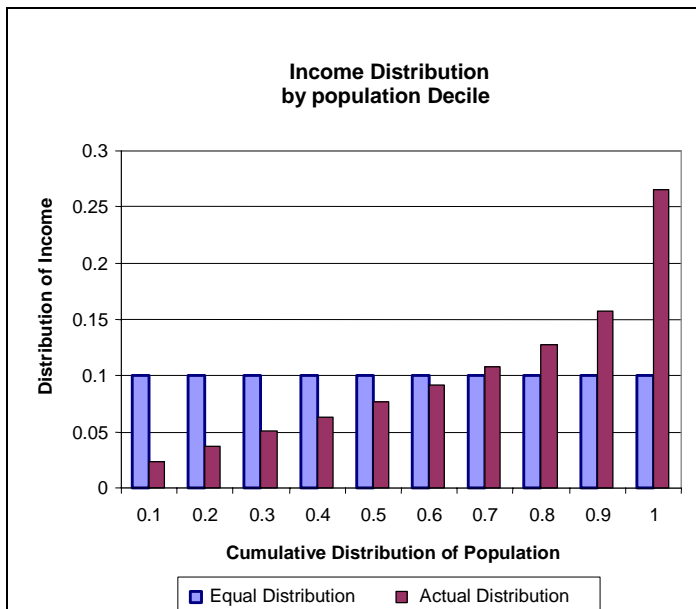
The first part of the report is based on all records (subject to selection if SELFLAG has been turned on). It includes a section on descriptive statistics on the requested variable, followed by a section that gives the five smallest and five largest observations, along with the sequence numbers (variable hdseqhh) of the households in which the extreme value was observed.

The second part of the report is based on the first DISTAMP observations. It contains estimates of selected quantiles of the distribution, and the frequency histogram. In interpreting the frequency histogram, note that area corresponds to the (weighted) number of observations. The percentiles requested in DISTP are printed immediately below the histogram, while the next line gives the values of the variable corresponding to the percentiles. If there is insufficient space, some of the labels are suppressed.

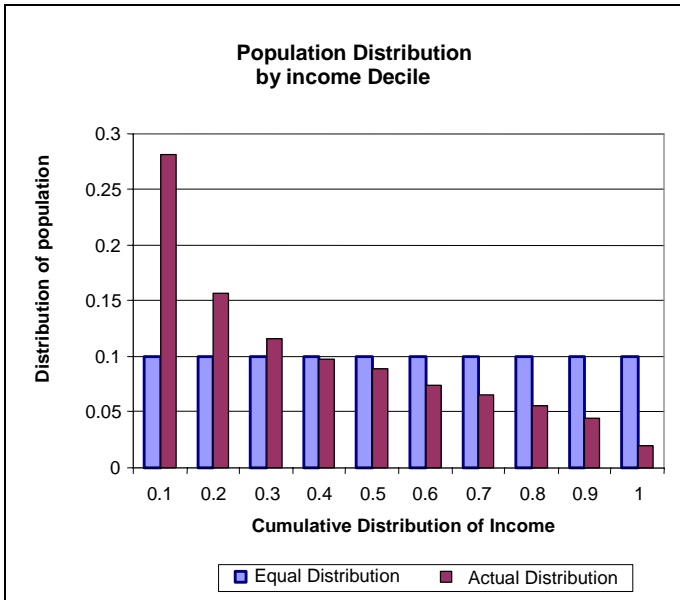
MEASURES OF INEQUALITY AND POLARIZATION OF INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Introduction to Inequality Measures

In many studies, inequality is described by examining the share of total income by income decile, as illustrated in the next Figure. In this Figure the poorest 10% of the population have 2% of total income while the richest 10% have 26% of total income. Of course, under an equal distribution each 10% of total population would hold 10% of total income. Due to its relative ease of calculation, some studies make use of the ratio of the deciles themselves (eg 9th decile/1st decile) as a scalar measure of inequality.

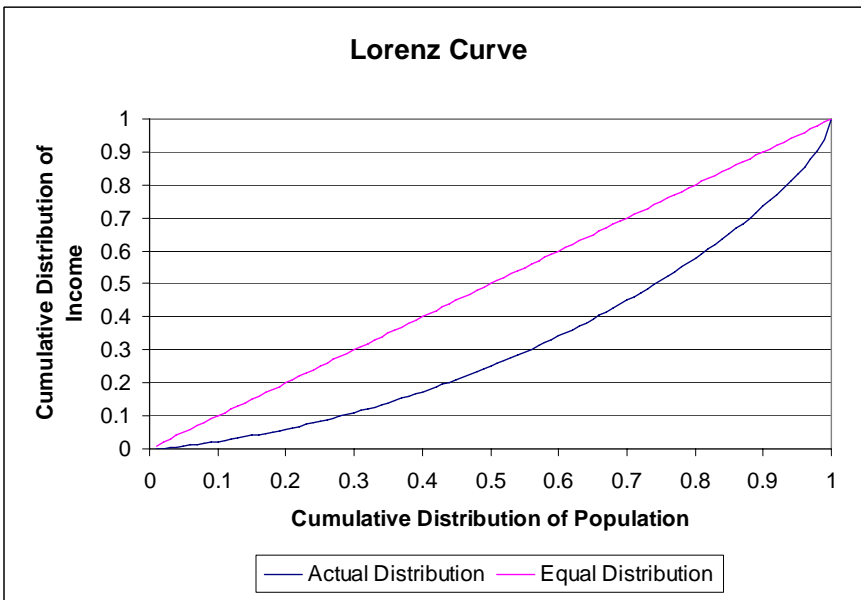


Another approach is to look at the share of population holding a given share of income, as in the next Figure. The left-most set of bars on this figure show that 10% of total income is shared between the poorest 27.5% of the population while the 10% of total income is shared by the richest 2%. This approach is used by many measures of polarization in income distributions. For example, Thurow in the emerging literature on disappearing middle class use the proportion of earners between 75 to 125 %, or 75% and 150% of median income; and Blackburn and Bloom used the 60% to 200%, or 60% to 225 % of median income.



Another related graphic representation of the relationship between the share of income held by a part of the population is the Lorenz curve. To produce the Lorenz curve individuals are sorted by their income and then the cumulative the individual's share of the total income is plotted against the cumulative share of the population.

In the next Figure, the diagonal represents a perfectly equal distribution where each individual unit in the total population holds the same share of total income. The actual distribution of income is the Lorenz curve where, for example, the first 0.3 (poorest 30%) of the population hold just over 0.1 (10%) of total income.



The measures of inequality and polarization calculated in the SPSM are Lorenz based estimates.

Scalar Inequality and Polarization Measures

The natural companion of the Lorenz curve is the class of inequality measures that are linear in incomes. The GINI, the S-GINI and the Generalized GINI are in this class. These measures can also be decomposed between contributing factors.

All the measures that are linear in incomes can be interpreted as a weighted estimation of the area between the equal distribution and the Lorenz curve. In the case of the GINI coefficient [C. Gini, *Variabilità e Mutabilità*, Studi Economico-giuridici, Università de Cagliari, 1912], the weight is equal to 2. This raises a geometric interpretation of the GINI: if A is the area between the equal distribution and the Lorenz curve, and B is the area below the Lorenz Curve then the GINI is the ratio $A/(A+B)$. The GINI coefficient varies between zero and one. The closer the GINI coefficient is to zero, the more equal is the income distribution. A GINI coefficient equal to one means that one individual holds all the income in the economy.

A measure of income polarization derived from the GINI coefficient is the Foster-Wolfson Polarization Index (FW). The FW Index measures the space between the tangent at the median of the population (orange line) and the Lorenz curve (in the next Figure it is the gray area) in proportion of the space between the equal distribution and the tangent. The FW Index is a transformation of the GINI coefficient as shown in the following relationship:

$$FW = 2 (2T - GINI) / mtan ,$$

where

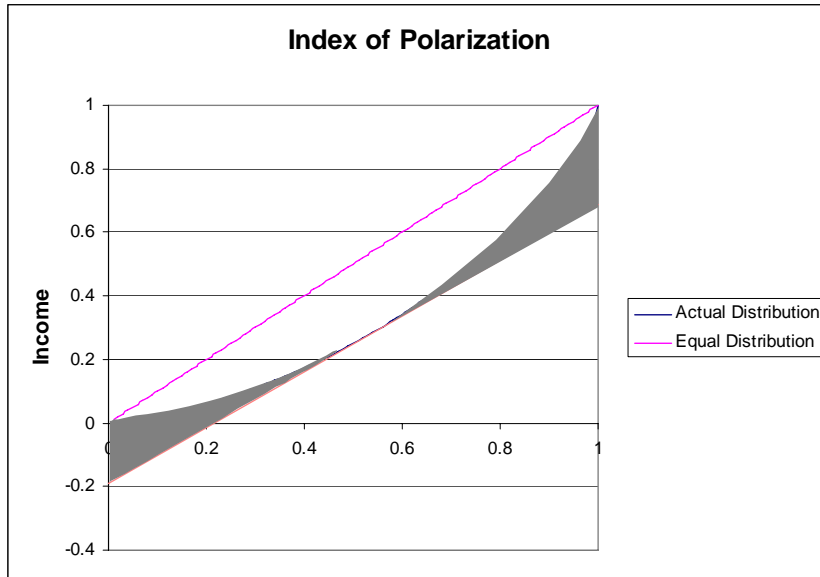
mtan is the slope of the tangent at the 50th population percentile or
mtan = median income/average income,

and

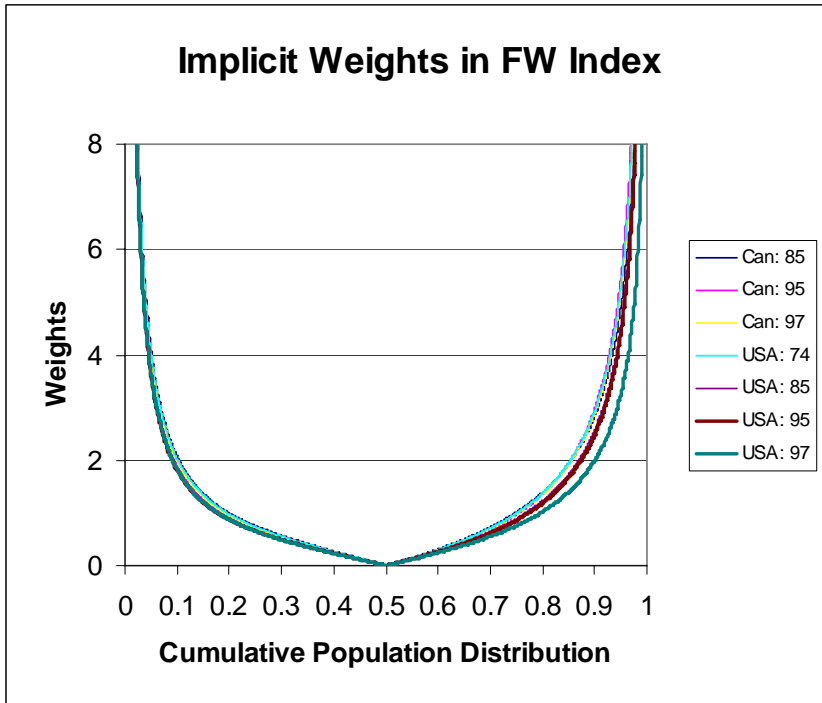
T is the area between the equal distribution and the tangent:

$T = 0.5 - \text{share of income at the } 50^{\text{th}} \text{ population percentile, } (L(.5)),$

$T = 0.5 - L(.5).$



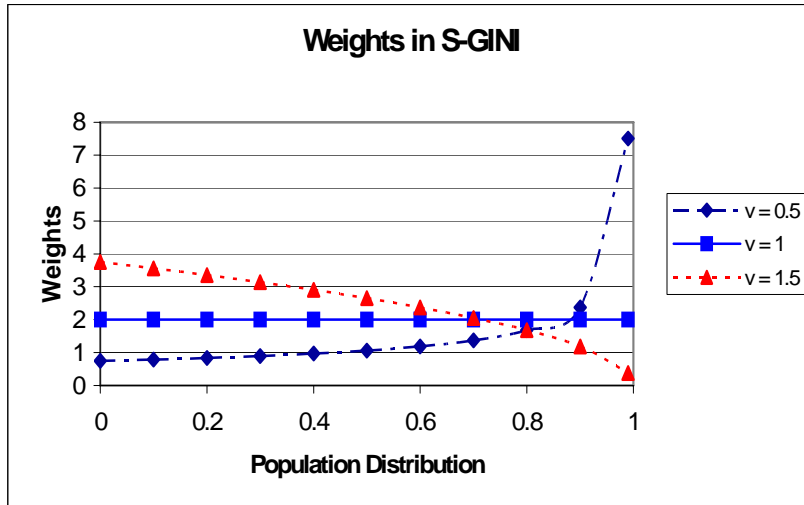
This measure is implicitly weighting the distance between the equal distribution and the Lorenz curve with a weight equal to zero at the median and progressively increasing the weights as we are moving to both ends of the income distribution, like a bowl with a relatively large quasi-flat bottom. This measure implicitly puts more weight on the low side of the income distribution than on the high-income side because the distance between the equal distribution (pink line) is smaller in the first centile than it is in the last centile. The next figure illustrates the kind of weights implicitly generated by the Index of polarization in seven income distribution studied in Wolfson, Michael and Brian Murphy, *New Views on Inequality Trends in Canada and the United States*, Monthly Review, April 1998. The Figure shows that implicit weights are at the minimum at the median of population distribution and growing slowly to very large weights at both ends of income distribution.



The S-GINI [Donaldson, D. and J. A. Weymark (1980), “A Single Parameter Generalization of the GINI Indices of Inequality”, *Journal of Economic Theory*, 22, pp 67-86, and Yitzhaki, S. (1983), “On an extension of the GINI Index”, *International Economic Review*, 24, pp.617-628] use a different set of weights that reflect social preferences. If v is the social preference, p the cumulative distribution of the population and $k(p)$ the weight associated to p then:

$$k(p) = v(v+1)(1-p)^{(v-1)}.$$

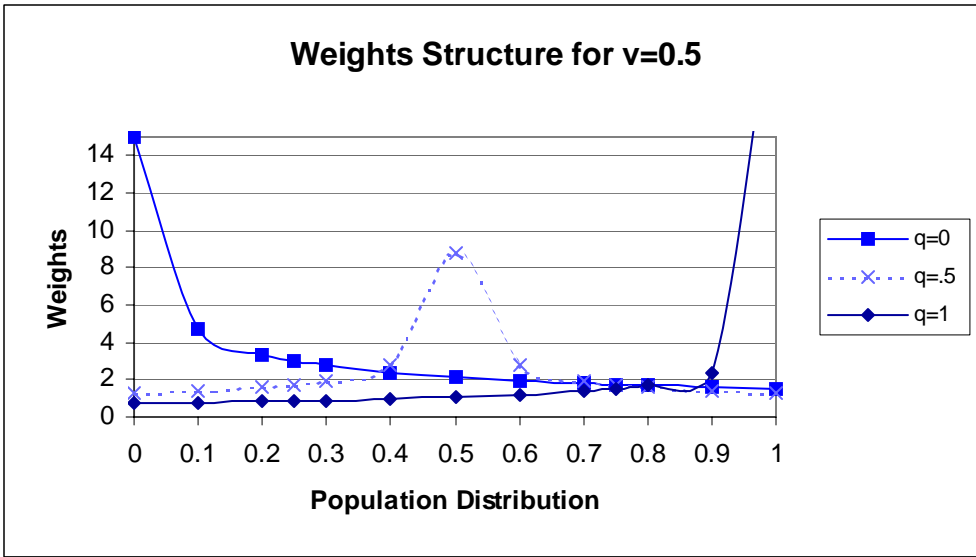
If $v=1$ then the weight associated to p is always 2 and the S-GINI is the GINI coefficient. When $v < 1$, more weights are put on the higher portion of the distribution, and when $v > 1$, more weights are put on the lower portion of the distribution as shown in the next figure for $v=.5, 1$, and 1.5 .



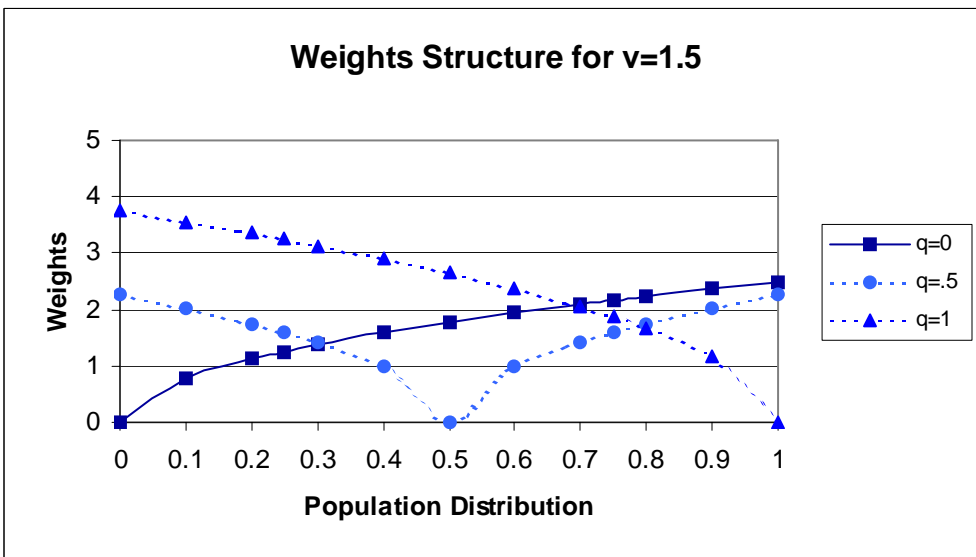
More recently, Duclos, Jean-Yves and Martin, Tabi (1996), “*Linear Inequality Measures and the Redistribution of Income*”, Cahier de recherche 96-08,CRÉFA, Université Laval, proposed a two parameter class of linear inequality measure, the Generalized GINI. If v is still the social preference and q produce symmetric weights around its value, for $0 < q < 1$ then the weights $k(p)$ are:

$$k(p) = \frac{v(v+1)|q-p|^{(v-1)}}{q^{(v+1)} + (v+q)(1-q)^v},$$

The interesting aspect of this measure is its ability to reproduce the S-GINI index when q is set to 1. All the weights are symmetric around q . When v is lower than one, more weights are put at the center of the weight distribution, q as illustrated in the next figure for $v=0.5$. It seems that $q=0$, .5, and 1 are the most interesting measures. When $q=0$, the most important weights are set for the lowest income and then the weights are decreasing, the other extreme is when $q=1$, which is the S-GINI. An interesting value is $q=0.5$, where the weights are symmetric around the population median. The use of those parameter values for the Generalized GINI (G-GINI) is more interesting than the use of descriptive statistics because it take into account all the income distribution and not just one segment.



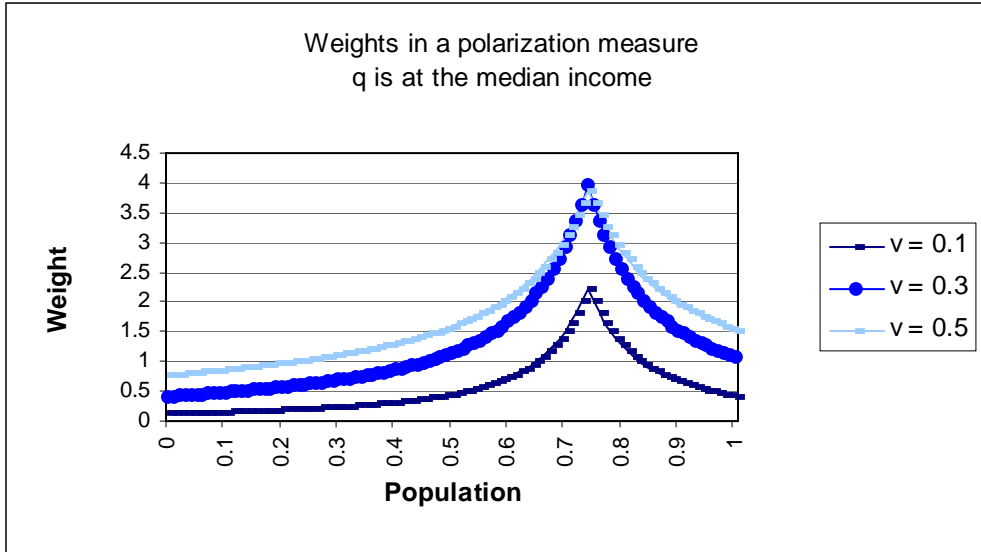
When $v > 1$, there is less variation in the weight structure and weights are still symmetric around q . In this case, more weights are put at both end of the population distribution and are decreasing to zero when $q = p$. When $q = 1$, the S-GINI index, the weights are more important at the lower end of the population distribution. When $q=0$, more weights are put at the higher end of the income distribution but the weights are increasing at a slower rate than when $v < 1$. When $q = .5$, the weights are decreasing to zero as they reach $p=0.5$. It seems that when $v > 1$, the most interesting value of q are 1.5, a value frequently used in S-GINI and 0.5 because of the V or U shape around the median of the population distribution, those shapes are interesting in the measure of polarization of income



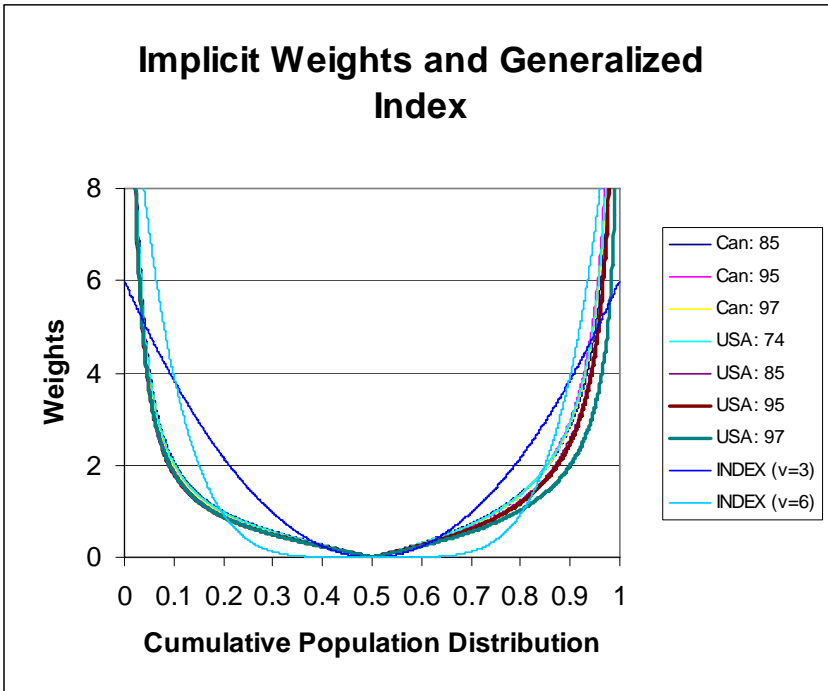
Measure of polarization of income distribution

The use of the G-GINI as an alternative measure requires q to be set at the median income,

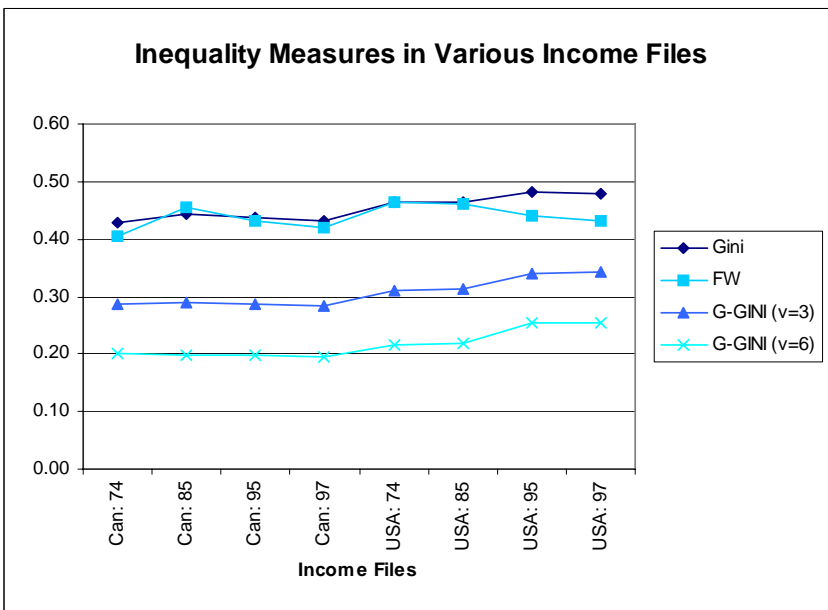
$q = .74$. Then the focus is not on the proportion of the population in an arbitrary interval around the median income but on the share of income held by the population around the median income. Weights to evaluate the G-GINI are decreasing on both side of q if $v < 0$. The usefulness of G-GINI is that it takes into account the whole income distribution and not just a small part of it. . Because the share of income held by the higher deciles are increasing, the choice of v is critical in evaluating the polarization at the median income. The next Figure represents the weights for q at the median income and for values of $v=0.05, 0.1$ and 0.3 .



The next Figure shows the implicit weights associated with the FW Polarization Index of seven income distribution studied in Wolfson, Michael and Brian Murphy, *New Views on Inequality Trends in Canada and the United States*, Monthly Review, April 1998. The G-GINI set at $v=3$ and center at the median population ($q=0.5$) can reproduce the central weights between 45% and 55% of the population distribution but the G-GINI put more weights on population between 5% and 45%, and 55% and 95% and less on the remaining 5% at both ends of the income distribution. If v is set to 6, then most of the weights between 35% and 65% of the population are set to close to zero and the weights outside that range are closer to observed implicit weights.



The next Figure shows the relationship between the FW Polarization Index and the G-GINI when v is set to 3 and 6. There is only a scaling factor between the G-GINI when $v=3$ and $v=6$. As the GINI decrease in USA between 1995 and 1997, and the FW decrease since 1985, the G-GINIs are both increasing in 1995 and 1997. This indicates that the inequality is increasing in those years in the population outside the median population interval implicitly defined by v .



Activating the calculation of inequality and polarization measures

When DISTFLAG is turned on, the calculation of measures of inequality is activated by

turning on the parameter INEQFLAG. In this calculation, negatives and zero values are eliminated.

As standard, the values of v and q set in INEQMEASURE will produce the GINI, the S-GINI with $v=0.5$, and the S-GINI with $v=1.5$. Up to 10 measures of income inequality could be set by the user in the INEQMEASURE parameter. When GINI is asked, the FW Polarization Index is automatically produced.

As a special feature, the user can ask to set q as the population share of the median income by setting q to 99.0. Usually q can take any value between 0 and 1, including those extreme values. When q is set to 1, it generates the S-GINI.

Turning Point Facility

INTRODUCTION

The SPSM Turning Point Facility provides a means to analyze the points at which an individual household's marginal tax rate changes as its income increases. The marginal tax rate is the proportion of tax paid on one additional dollar of income. The turning points represent changes in the slope of the entire tax/transfer function (the marginal tax rate). The facility computes the various income levels where an individual household, given its characteristics, would experience changes in its marginal tax rate and then outputs information on the current value of a number of variables at each of these levels of income.

The level of income where turning points will typically occur in an individual's tax/transfer function includes the income level where CPP contributions are first deducted, the income level where UIC contributions are first deducted, the level of income where federal income tax becomes payable, etc. For example, the actual 2006 tax/transfer function of a single resident of Nova Scotia, who worked full time for 52 weeks in 2006 and whose only source of income was from salaried employment, is presented in the following diagram. **Note that this simulation was created in a previous version of the SPSM and the chart was produced using other software using results from the SPSM.**

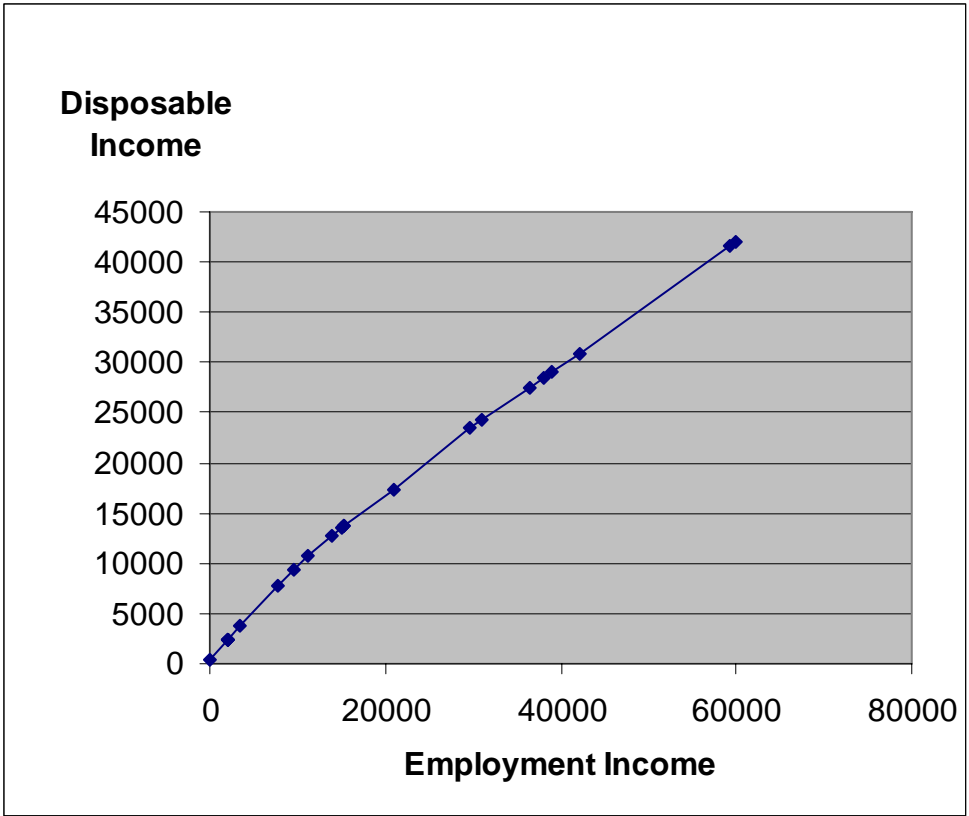


Figure 1. Tax Function for Household Head, Taxation Year 2006

The turning point facility identified the level of income at each point in this tax/transfer function where the slope of the tax function changed, i.e. the marginal tax rate changed. Each turning point is marked with a vertical line on the diagram above. From the output of the turning point facility for this individual, the marginal tax rates can be computed and are presented in the following diagram. The reason for each turning point is recorded in the notes following the diagram:

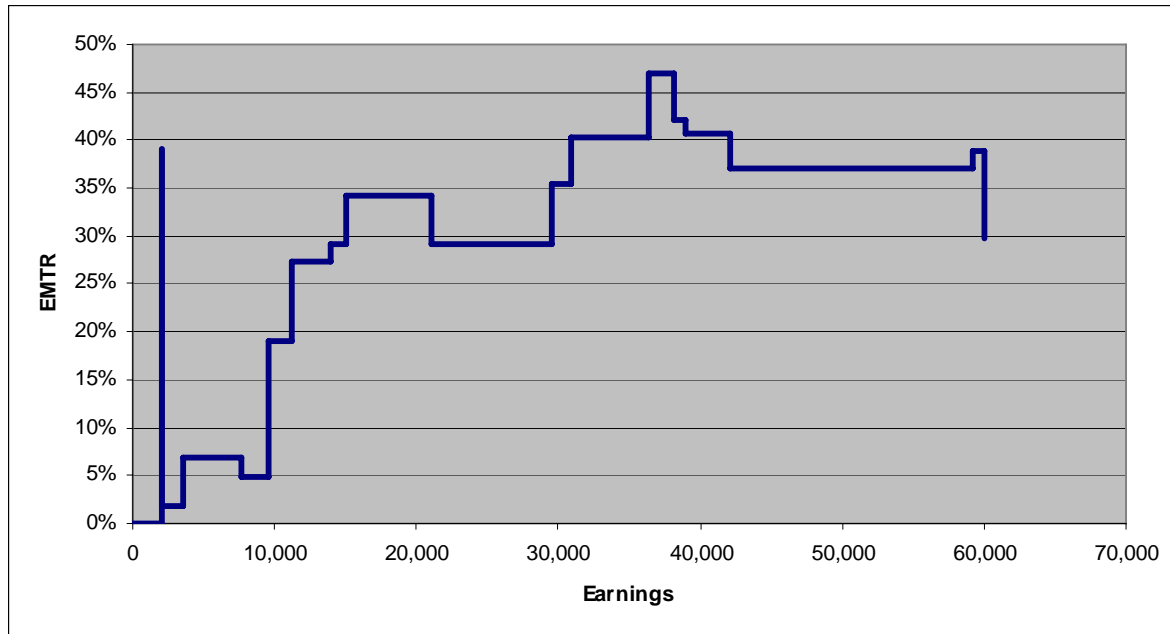


Figure 2. Turning Points For Household Head, Taxation Year 2006

Earnings	EMTR	Program affecting change
-	0	
2000	39.0%	Employment Insurance Contributions begin
2037	1.8%	Federal and Provincial Tax Credits begin
3500	6.8%	CPP/QPP contributions begin
7705	4.9%	GST additional credit starts
9568	19.1%	Federal Income Tax payable starts - 1st bracket
11237	27.3%	Provincial Income Tax payable starts - 1st bracket
13939	29.2%	GST credit at maximum
15000	34.2%	Provincial Tax reduction at maximum
15330	34.2%	Provincial relief for heating expenses fully recovered
21000	29.2%	Provincial Tax reduction fully recovered
29590	35.4%	Second Provincial tax rate begins
30936	40.3%	GST Credit clawback begins
36378	47.0%	Second Federal Income Tax bracket
38171	42.1%	GST Credit fully recovered
39000	40.7%	Maximum EI contributions
42100	36.9%	Maximum CPP/QPP contributions
59180	38.8%	Top provincial tax bracket starts

Note that the chart was produced with software using SPSPD/M output. The next section explains how to access the SPSPD/M turning point facility. Following this discussion, a worked example is presented which describes the control parameter file that produced the data represented in the above diagrams. An example of the text output of the turning point facility is also presented.

TURNING POINT FACILITY OPERATION

The SPSM turning point facility processes one household at a time. The facility identifies the various income levels, to the penny, at which the household would experience changes in its marginal tax rate, due to changes in the applicability of taxes or transfers, given each household member's original income tax return information as recorded in the database. [The turning point facility is not an optimizing model; therefore, it acts to maximize the level of household disposable income for each given income only. However, the SPSM model will optimize the values of several of the tax/transfer parameters; for example, child care expenses]. To activate the turning point facility the TPFLAG control parameter must be turned on.

A household is selected for turning point modification through the selection facility (see the section Sub-sampling Facility). The parameter SELSPEC should contain an expression which defines the type of household the analyst wishes to examine, for example the household's province or number of children, etc. The parameter SELMAX, which defines the maximum number of households selected, should be set to one to select only one household for modification by the turning point facility. It is possible to select more than one household; however, the greater the number of households selected the longer the processing time will be. The first household examined by the SPSM which contains at least one member that meets the selection criteria will be chosen from the SPSD database. If no household within the database meets all of the selection criteria then no household will be chosen for turning points modification. Because the turning point facility computes turning points at the household level only, the parameter SELUNIT must be set to 4, the household level. If a lower level of analysis is chosen, the analyst may observe output containing "unexplainable" turning points, which result from changes in the tax/transfer parameters of other members of the household which have not been selected for output.

The analyst also must specify which household members' incomes will be incremented by the turning point facility. Household members not selected for the income increment will retain their original income values at each turning point. This selection is made with the parameter TPSPEC, a string containing an expression (see Section Variables for a description of SPSM expressions) which identifies whose income, within the chosen household, will be modified by the turning point facility. For example, the analyst could set TPSPEC to the expression `idcfrh==0` which would cause only the income of the census family head to be modified by the turning point facility. When this parameter is set to 1, all household members' incomes will be incremented. The analyst is cautioned that the number of turning points produced will increase substantially as the number of members with modified income increases.

The analyst must also identify which income source, or sources, will be incremented by the turning point facility. The TPVARS parameter specifies the selected income source or sources. The facility can modify any database analysis variable (i.e. containing the prefix id). If more than one variable is specified then each must be entered as a blank separated list of variables. Typically, the analyst will want to modify only a single source of income, such as `idiemp` (employment income), but his/her decision will depend on the income range selected and the results desired.

The income range, over which turning points will be calculated, must also be specified. The

analyst must set a lower and an upper limit for the income range, expressed as dollar values or expressed in relation to household's income, depending on the value of TPMETH. For example, the analyst can choose an income range between \$0.00 and \$80,000 of household income, or an income range between the current household income value and ten times the current household income value. To specify dollar value modification, the parameter TPMETH is set to 1. Scaling factor modification is activated when the parameter TPMETH is set to 2.

When dollar value modification is selected, the value of the control parameters TPLL, (turning points lower limit), and TPUL, (turning points upper limit), is set to a particular dollar value. For example, if TPLL is set to 0 and TPUL is set to 80000, then turning points which occur in the range of 0 to 80,000 dollars of income will be calculated. Selecting an upper limit that is greater than 80,000 dollars, for example, will not produce more turning points if there are no further changes in the marginal tax rate at a higher income value. When scaling factor modification is selected the value of TPUL becomes a scaling factor, for example setting TPUL to 10 would produce turning points up to 10 times the original household income value. In this case if the value of TPLL is set to 0 then scaling will begin from 0 dollars of income, if TPLL is set to 1 then scaling will begin at the original level of income, and if TPLL is set to 2 then scaling will begin at twice the original level of income. Scaling factor modification makes it possible to modify the incomes of more than one household member and observe the changes in their taxes and transfers as their incomes increase by a certain percentage. Remember to adjust the parameters TPLL and TPUL when changing from dollar value modification to scaling factor modification.

If more than one household member is identified for turning points modification and TPMETH=2 is selected then the relationship between the incomes of the selected household members is preserved throughout the analysis. If, for example, the income of the first selected member is twice as large as the income of the only other selected member then the first member will receive two thirds of every cent of income increment. Similarly, if more than one income source is selected for incrementation and TPMETH 2 is selected then the relationship between the two income sources is preserved. If the first income source is twice as large as the second income source then the first source will receive two thirds of every income increment. If TPMETH 1 is chosen then both selected household members and/or both selected income sources increase by exactly the same quantity at each turning point. Therefore, TPMETH 2 is the more appropriate method for estimating the turning points of more than one household member or more than one income source.

The form and content of the output of the turning point facility must also be specified. Results can be output using the text output facility. **A concise text output in a readable form is available to the user with the inclusion of /spsd/detsum.cpi in the control parameter file.** To increase the precision of the text output, the control parameter ASCEXTPRC could be set to 2 or more. Accurate computation of marginal tax rates can require this additional precision.

Note that before the turning point estimation is run, the control parameter ROUNDFLAG should be turned off. If the number rounding facility is not deactivated then many superfluous turning points will result. The model will automatically turn ROUNDFLAG off

if the analyst does not and a comment will appear in the log. The analyst should also deactivate the tax/transfer parameter CTFLAG. If the commodity tax calculation facility remains activated, then commodity taxes will be calculated based on a constant pattern of expenditures, regardless of the level of income. Therefore, the only effect of commodity taxes the model can produce is an increase in the marginal tax rate by a constant amount, at all income levels.

The effective marginal tax rate displayed in the previous diagrams was computed by the following formula:

$$MTR_{i(i+1)} = \frac{immicons_{i+1} - immicons_i}{idiemp_{i+1} - idiemp_i}$$

This formula represents the marginal tax rate in the interval between turning points i and $i+1$. The denominator of this function contains the variable specified by TPVARS.

EXAMPLE

In this example simulation, created in a previous version of the SPSM, the turning points facility was activated to modify the 2006 employment income of a single individual, who had the following specific characteristics:

Characteristics	SPSM expression
• person is the sole member of his/her household	hhnin==1
• person has some income	immtot>0
• person's only source of income is from employment	immtot==idiemp
• person is a full-time employee	idlyfp==1
• person worked at least 50 weeks during 2006	idlyww>=50
• person is a resident of Nova Scotia	hdprov==2

The relevant section of the control parameter file (.cpr) which selects an individual who meets the above specifications is presented below.

```
###
## 2.1.7 Record selection facility
###

SELFLAG      1  # Selection facility activation flag
SELUNIT      4  # Selection facility family level
SELSPEC      # Selection specification
hdprov==2 && hhnin==1 && idiemp>0 && idlyfp==1 && idlyww>=50
&& immtot==idiemp
SELMAX       1  # Selection facility maximum # of households

###
## 2.1.9 Turning Point facility
###

TPFLAG       1  # Turning point facility activation flag
TPSPEC       1  # Expression identifying individuals to Change
TPVARS       idiemp # Variables to modify
TPMETH       1  # Method for modifying variables
```


TPLL 0.00 # Lower limit for modified variables
 TPUL 60000.00 # Upper limit for modified variables

SELFLAG turns on the selection facility. SELUNIT is set to the household level. SELSPEC identifies the relevant households within the database. SELMAX = 1 indicates that turning points will be calculated for only the first household which matches the SELSPEC. TPFLAG activates the turning point facility. TPSPEC = 1 indicates that all household members incomes will be incremented; however, SELSPEC has restricted the number of household members to one. Dollar Value modification is chosen, TPMETH = 1; therefore, turning points will be calculated over the income range 0 to 60000 dollars of employment income. The control parameter ROUNDFLAG is also set to zero.

The text output facility is set for appropriate output. The settings used here are found in the file \spsd\detsum.cpi. Lastly the commodity tax model is turned off by setting CTFLAG = 0 in the appropriate .mpr file.

Users will notice that for the calculation of the MTR in the current example, total income is equal to employment income due to our selection criteria. Also, consumable income is equal to disposable income because the commodity tax model has been turned off.

The following is a listing of the text output facility output produced for the run. This edited list shows all relevant, non-zero variables for this individual's taxable position. The list is a subset of the list produced by the output facility settings contained in the file \spsd\detsum.cpi.

1	hdseqhh	Household sequence number	70707	70707	70707	70707	70707	70707	70707	70707
2	hdprov	Province	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
3	idage	Age	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
4	idsex	Sex	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	idmarst	Marital status	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
6	idlyww	Weeks worked	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
7	idiemp	Wages & salaries	0	2000	2037	3500	7705	9568	11237	13939
8	imictot	Total Income (line 150)	0	2000	2037	3500	7705	9568	11237	13939
9	imcqppc	CPP/QPP contributions	0	0	0	0	208	300	383	517
10	imuic	UIC contributions	0	0	38	65	144	179	210	261
11	imfstc	Federal sales tax credit	232	232	232	232	232	268	301	354
12	imtxf	Federal income tax payable	0	0	0	0	0	0	237	621
13	imtxp	Provincial income tax payable	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	221
14	imptr	Provincial tax reduction	0	0	0	0	11	163	300	300
15	impheatr	Provincial Home Heating Rebate	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
16	immdisp	Disposable income	332	2332	2331	3767	7685	9457	10808	12773

17	mtr	Marginal tax rate	0	39	2	7	5	19	27	29
----	-----	-------------------	---	----	---	---	---	----	----	----

Because TPLL was set to zero, the initial level of employment income is zero (column 1, row 7). The first turning point, employment income of \$2,000 (column 2, row 7), occurs because a one cent increase in income beyond \$2,000 results in the deduction of EI/UIC contributions (column 2, row 10). The second turning point, employment income of \$2,037, occurs because of the commencement of federal and provincial tax credits applied with relation to EI contributions. The third level of employment income, \$3,500, identifies the threshold level of income beyond which CPP contributions are deducted. The fourth level of employment income, \$7,705 results in an increase in the GST credit as this is the income level above which the additional amount for single persons starts. The fifth level of employment income, \$9,568, identifies the point where the individual's federal income tax payable equals his total non-refundable tax credits. After this point, he pays federal income tax. The sixth level of employment income, \$11,237, identifies the point where the individual's provincial income tax payable equals his provincial non-refundable tax credits and provincial income tax becomes payable. The seventh level of employment income, \$13,939, represents the income level at which the GST credit has reached its maximum. The remaining turning points in this individual's tax/transfer function are not presented here but were discussed earlier.

Miscellaneous Facilities

RANDOM NUMBER FACILITY

It is typically the case that a tax/transfer program, even though it may be targeted at a specific population, does not succeed in reaching that population. This 'take-up' phenomenon can be modeled using pseudo-random numbers, if a take-up probability is given. The SPSM provides up to 20 independent random number streams, which are controlled by the SEED vector parameter. The number of elements of SEED is the number of independent random numbers generated. Each element of SEED provides an integer used to start each random number generator. These elements are usually set to different values, in order to generate independent random numbers.

The random numbers are generated using a standard integral-congruential algorithm, are stored in the individual level variables idrand0 through idrand19 and take on values from 0.0 to 1.0 inclusive, with uniform probability. The random number facility has been implemented to operate reproducibly, independent of any record selection. In other words, for a given value of SEED, the random numbers idrand0 through idrand19 will have identical values for a specific individual in the database, independent of any selection that may have been requested.

It is best to always increment the SEED parameter (e.g. never make SEED have fewer rows than the default value for that version) as the SPSM executable makes use of some of the random number streams in the model code. When fewer random numbers are generated the model results will change.

LOW-INCOME LINE ANALYSIS

The SPSD/M facilitates low income analysis by providing the means to examine both before-tax and after-tax low income. This can be done either with a built-in table or by using UVAR user variables, or both.

Important note: In this version of SPSM, the variable for urbanization, `hdurb`, has been collapsed. This means that families in the collapsed regions may have inappropriate LICO's applied to them. Care should be taken when using the LICO's.

The Low Income thresholds provided with the SPSD/M are Statistics Canada's before-tax and after-tax LICOs – PTF and PTFAT respectively. They are considered database adjustment parameters. During the execution of the model the appropriate low-income threshold for a given family size and urbanization class is placed in the family level variables `efpvthr` (for before tax) and `efpvthat` (after tax).

Similarly a family's income that will be compared to these thresholds is cumulated and stored in the individual variables `impovinc` (total income for comparing to the before tax LICO) and `imatpinc` (total income for comparing to the after tax LICO). To avoid double counting, these variables contain economic family income, but only for the first person in the economic family. Note that the after tax value `imatpinc` is based on consummable income. Should a user wish to compare disposable income to the after-tax LICO they would have to disable the calculation of commodity taxes with the `CTFLAG` tax/transfer parameter.

These four variables are available for use in the user variable facility. An expression of the form `btppoor=EF:impovinc < efpvthr;` would identify individuals in families below the before-tax low income threshold. The expression `atppoor=EF:imatpinc < efpvthat;` would identify individuals in families below the after-tax low income threshold. Then an `XTSPEC` of `IN:{btppoor,atppoor}` would give a count of individuals below both the before and after tax LICOs. Alternately an expression of `EF:btppoor=EF:impovinc < efpvthr;` would flag the head of a low-income economic family and then an `XTSPEC` of `EF:{btppoor,btppoor/units};` would give a count and incidence of economic families below the LICO.

SPSD/M can also produce a 'built-in' table showing the distribution of many variables by a grouping of the ratio of a household's income to a specified LICO threshold. The table is requested with the `T4FLAG` and `T4AFLAG` control parameters. Additionally one must specify whether the Table 4 results are to be based on the before tax LICO or after-tax LICO. This is done with the `LICOOPT` control parameter.

Note that because the SPSD safeguards confidentiality and attempts to correct certain under-reporting problems present in its data sources, as well as the possible inclusion of commodity taxes in consideration of after-tax low-income, low-income counts and figures may differ from those published elsewhere.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ADJUSTMENT

Social Assistance

The standard algorithm gives the expected number of SA beneficiaries when `SAPFLAG` is turned off. When `SAPFLAG` is activated, the number of SA beneficiaries or total SA expenditures can be adjusted by following the next steps:

- Activate the SAPFLAG. The standard value for SATARGET[xx] (where xx stand for a province number) is set by the SPSD/M development team. To vary the total number of cases or total SA expenditures, SATARGET[xx] must be set between 0.01 and 0.99. This will allow approximately a $\pm 80\%$ variation in the number of cases in province xx.
- To reach a target value, the user should use the goal seeking facility (spsmiter) described in the Tool's User Guide. The adjustment parameter is SATARGET[xx]. In the following example we assume a 10% decrease in the number of SA beneficiaries in Ontario in 2002.

If the user is interested in various changes in SA by province, the previous steps should be applied to selected provinces one at a time.

Example

Let us assume a 10% decrease in SA beneficiaries in Ontario in 2002.

The first step is to figure out how many households are SA beneficiaries in Ontario. You can run the simulation saont in the spsm\example\sa_adjustment directory to create the output. In this simulation the total number of households receiving SA in Ontario in 2002 is 227,318. A 10% reduction means a target value of 204,586 households.

Run the goal seeking facility using this number of beneficiaries. Given the nature of the SATARGET, the binary method should be used. It's constrained between 0.01 and 0.5, since we are reducing the number of households. See the Tool's User Guide for information on how to use the goal seeking facility.

To run this example in Classic SPSM, you can copy the directory \\spsm\example\sa_adjustment into a working directory and run it with the bat program.

Employment Insurance

There are two ways of adjusting Employment insurance benefits. You can either change UIEITKP[xx] or UITARGET[xx] (where xx stands for a province). In the following examples, two scenarios are explored: a random reduction of UI beneficiaries and a reduction based on beneficiaries' characteristics. It is important to note that:

- target values could be \$ figures or number of beneficiaries;
- an implicit assumption is that the unemployment rate remains the same and program parameter changes are already implemented.

Random reduction

Let assume the number of EI beneficiaries is reduced by 5% in Nova Scotia, and the reduction is not related to any personal characteristic. The parameter UIEITKP should be used to reduce the number of beneficiaries. The steps to produce this result are:

The first step is to figure out the actual number of EI beneficiaries. You can run the simulation uirand found in the spsm\example\ui_random directory to create the output. In this simulation the total number of EI beneficiaries in 2002 in Nova Scotia is 114,751, so a 5% reduction would be 109,013.

Run the goal seeking facility using this number of beneficiaries. Given the nature of the UIEITKP, the binary method should be used. See the [Tool's User Guide](#) for information on how to use the goal seeking facility.

The following table shows the final target value, the result, and the resulting value for UIEITKP:

Province	Target	Result	UIEITKP
NS	109,013	109,016	0.0532227

To run this example in Classic SPSM, you should copy the directory [\\spsm\example\ui_random](#) into a working directory and run the bat file.

Systematic reduction

Let's assume the number of EI beneficiaries is reduced by 5% in Nova Scotia, and that this reduction is related to individual characteristics. In a reduction process, the individuals with the lowest probability of being an EI beneficiary are dropped first. The parameter UITARGET should be used to reduce the number of beneficiaries.

The first step is to figure out the actual number of EI beneficiaries. You can run the simulation uibehav found in the spsm\example\ui_behaviour directory to create the output. In this simulation the total number of EI beneficiaries in 2002 in Nova Scotia is 114,751, so a 5% reduction would be 109,013.

Run the goal seeking facility using this number of beneficiaries. Given the nature of the UITARGET[2], the binary method should be used. See the [Tool's User Guide](#) for information on how to use the goal seeking facility.

The following table shows the final target value, the result, and the resulting value for UITARGET:

Province	Target	Result	UITARGET
NS	109,013	109,020	0.469727

In this case, the random approach and the behavioural approach are producing the same number of EI beneficiaries in each province, given the iteration errors. The main difference

between the two scenarios is that the characteristics of the EI beneficiaries are not the same in both cases.

To run this example in Classic SPSM, you should copy the directory [\\spsm\example\ui_behaviour](#) into a working directory and run the bat file.