

### Selected results from the NORC general social survey and the German general social survey (ALLBUS) of 1982: a cross national comparison

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ALLGEMEINE BEVÖLKERUNGSUMFRAGE  
DER SOZIALWISSENSCHAFTEN  
- ALLBUS -

Werner Hagstotz, Cornelia Krauth, Rolf Porst:

Selected Results from the NORC General Social  
Surveys and the German General Social Survey  
(ALLBUS) of 1982. A Cross-National Comparison.

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Table 1: Study Description of the NORC General Social Surveys of 1976, 1977, 1980, and 1982, and of the German ALLBUS of 1982

	GSS 1976 <sup>1)</sup>	GSS 1977	GSS 1980	GSS 1980	ALLBUS 1982
1. Universe:	total noninstitutionalized English-speaking population of the continental United States, 18 years of age or older				noninstitutionalized individuals of German nationality living in the FRG or West Berlin, 18 years of age or older
2. Sample:					
Original:	1113	2317	2210	2221	4562
Net:	972	1999	1933	1942	4292
Completed cases:	735	1530	1468	1506	2994
3. Sampling design:	stratified, multistage area probability sample of clusters of households in the continental United States (further informations in the GSS Cumulative Codebooks)				random sample on the base of the multistage ADM-sample using voting districts or artificially created districts from 1978
4. Survey Period	March 1976	March 1977	March 1980	March 1982	Feb., 20th to March, 31st, and April, 19th to May, 31st, 1982

1) Probability sample only. Completed cases of both versions: 1499

B) Socio - demographic  
Characteristics

2. Sex of Persons Aged 18 Years and Older

	GSS 1976	GSS 1977	GSS 1980	GSS 1982	ALLBUS 1982
male	44.6	45.3	43.7	42.4	44.8
female	55.4	54.7	56.3	57.6	55.2
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	(N=1499)	(N=1530)	(N=1468)	(N=1506)	(N=2994)

Comment

The sex distribution is practically identical in the NORC samples and the ALLBUS sample. In the 1982 sample of the United States there are about 2.5% more females than in the German Sample.

In both samples, females are over-represented, reflecting the actual sex distribution.

	U.S.A. <sup>1)</sup>	FRG <sup>2)</sup>
male	47.5%	46.7%
female	52.5%	53.4%

1) only persons aged 20 years and older

2) only persons aged 18 years and older

Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch 1981 für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland.  
Data from 1979.

4. Labor Force Status

	GSS 1976	GSS 1977	GSS 1980	GSS 1982	ALLBUS 1982
Working full time.....	41.3	50.7	46.8	46.1	41.9
Working part time.....	8.7	7.0	9.3	10.1	6.1
With a job, but not at work.....	1.9	2.6	2.4	2.6	---
Unemployed, laid off....	4.2	2.4	2.7	4.4	2.1
Retired.....	11.7	9.9	10.2	11.5	20.9
In School...	3.1	2.5	2.7	2.2	5.6
Keeping house.....	28.5	23.5	24.3	21.0	19.5
work on the side.....	---	---	---	---	1.8
military or conscientious objector service.....	---	---	---	---	.1
other.....	.6	1.5	1.7	2.1	1.9
	<u>100.0</u> (N=1499)	<u>100.1</u> (N=1530)	<u>100.1</u> (N=1468)	<u>100.0</u> (N=1506)	<u>99.9</u> (N=2994)

Comment

There are remarkable differences in the labor force status of American and German respondents. The percentage of persons working full time of part time is clearly higher in the United States, but there are, also, about twice as many persons unemployed, laid off, and the like, in 1982.

On the other side, the percentage of retired persons is clearly higher in the German sample (recall the age distribution), and there are more respondents in school than in the United States.

Remarkable seems the decline of people keeping house in the United States from 1976 to 1982, as well as the decline of people working full time from 1977 to 1982. On the other hand, the percentage of people working part time is increasing from 1977 to 1982.

1. Importance of Domains of Life

	GSS 1982		ALLBUS 1982	
	mean	rank	mean	rank
A) One's own family and children	6.85	1.	6.08	1.
B) Career and work	5.73	4.	5.39	3.
C) Free time and relaxation	5.55	5.	5.59	2.
D) Friends and acquaintances	5.79	3.	5.36	4.
E) Relatives	5.92	2.	4.57	5.
F) Religion and church	5.49	6.	3.98	7.
G) Politics and public life	4.02	7.	4.16	6.

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1 = unimportant ..... 7 = important

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Comment

With respect to the importance attached to various life domains, the American sample differs clearly from the German sample.

Although, "one's own family and children" is in both the German and the American sample the most important life domain, the mean for the American sample is nearly one scale point higher than the mean for the German sample. Americans, also, value "career and work" and "friends and acquaintances" as more important than the Germans do, but most remarkable is the difference for the value attached to "relatives" and "religion and church". These life aspects are much more important for Americans than for Germans.

Looking at the rank order, in both the samples "own family and children" is the most important life domain, "religion and church" (though with a high mean in the American sample) and "politics and public life" are the least important domains. Remarkable are the different ranks of "free time and relaxation" (rank 2 in Germany, rank 5 in U.S.) and "relatives" (rank 5 in Germany, rank 2 in U.S.).



3. Educational Aims

Item		1 in %	2 in %	3 in %	4 in %	5 in %	Total N
1. that a child has good manners	USA	4.51	21.93	53.38	17.42	2.77	976
	FRG	3.77	18.60	56.81	17.64	3.27	1468
2. that a child tries hard to succeed	USA	4.30	13.22	61.48	18.57	3.38	976
	FRG	3.10	11.32	61.86	20.08	3.64	1484
3. that a child is honest	USA	36.58	28.69	33.50	.92	.30	976
	FRG	30.44	32.46	36.30	.67	.13	1485
4. that a child is neat and clean	USA	.31	5.74	54.92	24.90	14.14	976
	FRG	2.97	14.98	62.89	15.92	3.24	1482
5. that a child has good sense and sound judgement	USA	16.19	22.85	52.97	6.45	1.54	976
	FRG	27.29	19.20	45.28	6.74	1.48	1484
6. that a child has self-control	USA	2.77	11.58	73.16	10.66	1.84	976
	FRG	1.35	10.22	67.59	15.63	5.21	1478
7. that he acts like a boy or she acts like a girl	USA	.41	2.77	30.23	22.13	44.47	976
	FRG	.40	3.56	32.30	18.70	45.06	1487
8. that a child gets along well with other children	USA	1.84	11.37	71.11	13.52	2.15	976
	FRG	1.62	11.82	63.88	17.42	5.27	1481
9. that a child obeys his or her parents well	USA	14.34	15.88	63.11	5.23	1.43	976
	FRG	7.37	17.78	64.16	9.26	1.42	1479
10. that a child is responsible	USA	8.40	24.18	61.37	4.82	1.23	976
	FRG	11.78	32.53	48.89	5.59	1.21	1485
11. that a child is considerate of others	USA	5.94	21.82	65.26	5.94	1.02	976
	FRG	2.56	14.37	72.33	8.97	1.75	1482
12. that a child is interested in how and why things happen	USA	3.48	14.34	45.49	24.59	12.09	976
	FRG	1.08	8.64	50.0	26.38	13.90	1482
13. that a child is a good student	USA	.61	5.23	59.32	28.18	6.66	976
	FRG	1.35	5.48	57.74	28.74	6.69	1479

General Social Survey 1980

ALLBUS 1982

- 1 = one most desirable
- 2 = three most desirable
- 3 = not mentioned
- 4 = three least important
- 5 = least desirable

#### 4. Woman's Role

Item		1	2	3	4	Total	Total
		In %	In %	In %	In %	In %	N
A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.	USA	15.7	33.3	33.5	17.5	100.0	1505
	FRG	40.9	25.8	24.1	9.2	100.0	2922
It is more important for a wife to help her husband's career than to have one herself.	USA	13.9	43.2	36.3	6.6	100.0	1476
	FRG	22.1	29.9	28.9	19.1	100.0	2851
A preschool child is likely to suffer if his or her mother works.	USA	20.8	46.5	28.2	4.5	100.0	1498
	FRG	61.7	25.9	8.6	3.7	100.0	2934
It is much better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family.	USA	18.3	47.5	28.1	6.1	100.0	1503
	FRG	41.0	29.3	19.5	10.3	100.0	2913

General Social Survey 1977  
ALLBUS 1982

1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = disagree, 4 = strongly disagree

#### Comment

Comparing the U.S.-sample to the FRG-sample, there is, in both samples, similar overall agreement (strongly agree, and agree) of 66%/70% with the traditional view of the division of labor between man and woman (fourth item); a difference of 57% (US) to 52% (FRG) in the importance of a wife helping her husband's career rather having one herself (second item); a difference of 67% (US) to 88% (FRG) in the belief of a likely (according to the German word "sicherlich") suffering of a preschool child if his or her mother works (third item), and of 49% to 67% difference concerning the ability of a working mother to establish as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a non-working mother (first item).

The results suggest that the U.S. responses show a consistent pattern favouring traditional aspects of woman's role. The German respondents show about the same tendency to favour the traditional division of labor; attach somewhat less importance to a wife helping her husband's career; and show a much stronger tendency to agree with the suffering of a preschool child if her or his mother works. Yet by contrast they argue in about two thirds of the cases in favouring the ability of a working mother to establish as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a non-working mother.

6. Anomia

Item	ALLBUS 1982 (%)		GSS 1982/1976 <sup>1)</sup> (%)	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
In spite of what some people say, the lot (situation/condition) of the average man is getting worse, not better	62,4	37,6	68,1	31,9
It's hardly fair to bring a child into the world with the way things look for the future	42,5	57,5	35,4	64,6
Most public officials (people in public office) are not really interested in the problems of the average man	73,4	26,6	68,3	31,7
Most people don't really care what happens to the next fellow	74,0	26,0	59,3	40,7

1) last Item was only asked in 1976

Comment

If these four items really measure something like 'anomia', there is undoubtedly more anomia in the FRG than in the USA: three of four items show higher percentages of agreement in the German population.

The largest difference between samples is in the last item: nearly three quarters of the German population consider most people not to take care of what happens to the next fellow, while only 59 % of the GSS-sample support this statement <sup>1)</sup>.

With respect to the rank order of items, there are even stronger differences. In the FRG items three and four receive especially strong support, while in the U.S. the first and the third statements are preferred.

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1) note that this is the only GSS-item which was not asked in 1982 so this result should not be over-estimated

7.B Job Orientations (Version Y: Seven-point-Scale)

Item	Country	Numbers on scale (%)				
		1,2	3	4	5	6,7
Job security	FRG	6,7	2,4	3,8	8,1	79,0
	USA	3,7	2,0	4,3	9,3	80,7
High income	FRG	4,8	4,8	12,0	29,0	49,4
	USA	3,6	1,8	8,2	25,2	61,2
Good opportunities for advancement	FRG	9,0	6,6	11,8	23,5	49,1
	USA	3,1	2,2	5,4	14,7	74,6
An occupation that is recognized and respected	FRG	7,8	5,1	11,9	19,4	55,9
	USA	3,1	2,6	9,7	17,5	67,1
An occupation that leaves one a lot of leisure	FRG	8,4	7,2	17,7	27,1	39,6
	USA	14,2	12,3	19,3	26,2	28,0
An interesting job	FRG	4,0	2,3	5,7	15,4	72,6
	USA	1,5	0,7	4,2	7,8	85,8
A job that allows one to work independently	FRG	3,4	2,7	7,7	15,9	70,3
	USA	3,3	2,0	7,2	20,9	66,6
Responsible job tasks	FRG	4,2	6,1	10,7	20,5	58,4
	USA	1,7	1,8	4,5	14,4	77,6
A lot of contact with other people	FRG	5,2	6,0	12,0	21,7	55,1
	USA	5,5	5,0	11,2	21,5	56,8
An occupation in which one can help others	FRG	7,0	9,2	17,0	21,7	45,2
	USA	3,2	3,4	5,6	12,0	75,8
A job that is useful to society	FRG	6,5	8,9	15,2	23,4	46,0
	USA	3,8	3,5	7,4	14,9	70,4
Gives a feeling of doing something meaningful	FRG	3,3	3,0	7,5	17,2	68,9
	USA	1,8	1,5	2,3	10,0	84,4
Safe and healthful working conditions	FRG	4,0	1,9	5,4	12,1	76,6
	USA	1,5	1,5	3,5	8,6	84,9

Comment

If job orientations are measured by a seven-point-scale, the results are nearly the same as when measured by rank ordering.

The data from both countries differ considerably, showing the above mentioned trend towards more 'post-materialistic' orientations in the U.S. and 'traditional' orientations in the FRG, in two ways:

first, the most important job characteristic in the German sample is 'Job security', whereas American people seem to prefer 'an interesting job'; second, the GSS-sample and the German sample show the largest difference on items which reflect the 'post-materialistic' orientation, such as 'an occupation in which one can help others', 'a job that is useful to society' and so on.

9. Fear Neighborhood

	yes, afraid (%)	no, not afraid (%)	Total (%)
ALLBUS 1982	38,5	61,5	100,0
GSS 1982	46,9	53,1	100,0

Comment

Questions like this concerning an important aspect of the quality of life have a longer tradition in the USA than in the FRG: for a long time German political institutions and even social researchers did not find it worth while to ask for this dimension of 'private' safety.

As our data show, fear walking alone at night is common in both countries; the idea of people feeling threatened by crime only in the U.S., but not in Germany, is no longer true.

It is remarkable to find between a third to half of the population in the USA and the FRG feeling this way. A glance at crime statistics for both countries shows that, in fact, the chance of becoming a victim of criminal violence is much smaller in Germany than in the U.S.

11. Government Spending

	ALLBUS 1982 (%)		GSS 1980 (%)	
	Self	Government.	Self	Government.
1 reduce spending	3	6	8	2
2	5	15	9	5
3	11	22	13	10
4	20	24	19	21
5	18	15	14	21
6	17	8	11	18
7 no reduction	20	4	18	17
8 haven't thought much	6	6	8	5

Comment

Concerning the issue 'Government Spending', differences between the two countries are not as large as concerning the issue 'Defense Spending', but they are still noticeable.

In both samples there are relatively more people willing to maintain government spending than to reduce it, but the trend towards maintaining government spending is much stronger in the FRG.

The responses regarding the evaluation of the government's position about this issue brings about another point: in the U.S. a majority (56 %) sees the government willing to continue social spending and only 17 % see the opposite, while the German sample considers the government to be on its way towards reducing spending (43 % against 27 % saying the opposite).