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# Tolerance of Free Speech in the United States and West Germany, 1970–79: An Analysis of Public Opinion Survey Data\*

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## ABSTRACT

*In previous research on political tolerance in West Germany I found that respondents' level of education had no statistically significant effect on a number of variables measuring tolerance. This result seemed to contradict standard findings for populations of democratic countries. Therefore, this article explicitly compares tolerance of free speech for nonconformists in America using replications of Samuel Stouffer's benchmark questions (National Opinion Research Center surveys in 1972 and 1977) with very similar—but not identical—questions asked in West German national surveys in 1970 and 1979. These questions concern tolerance for a communist, an atheist, and a neo-Nazi/militarist speaker. Using log-linear models to analyze scales of these questions and of the disaggregated tolerance items, the initial findings were confirmed: education has little effect on tolerance in West Germany, but considerable effect in the U.S. The influence of generational cohort, occupation, left–right ideological self-placement, party preference, country, and time are also tested. Semantic and historical explanations for the findings are briefly discussed.*

A thirty-year accumulation of empirical research in liberal democracies has impelled observers to the conclusion that higher levels of education are positively related to higher levels of liberalism—especially political and social tolerance. This relationship has often been interpreted as showing the influence of educational institutions in instilling the dominant (liberal) norms of the society. Although there are several other possible interpretations (which will be briefly discussed), this one provides a reasonable starting point for treating the phenomenon in a comparative and historical perspective, as will be done here.

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The seeming consistency of these findings in several Western countries, above all the United States, has led some to generalize this relationship. One of the clearest statements of this view is given by Lipset:

Data gathered by public opinion research agencies which have questioned people in different countries about their beliefs on tolerance for the opposition, their attitudes toward ethnic or racial minorities, and their feelings for multi-party as against one-party systems have showed that the most important single factor differentiating those giving democratic responses from the others has been education. The higher one's education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices (39-40).

And Lipset's view from twenty years ago is still widely held today. A recent study of tolerance in America in the 1970s cites this passage and concludes that "this assessment continues to describe research evidence accurately in 1977" (Nunn et al., 58).

To substantiate his claim, Lipset makes an explicit comparison between the U.S. and Germany. In his well-known (and still controversial) chapter on "Working-Class Authoritarianism" in *Political Man*, he cites evidence on tolerance for the rights of dissidents to speak publicly in the United States and evidence on support for a more-than-one party system in Germany to illustrate the theory that the better educated are more democratic, more liberal, or less authoritarian than the rest of the population (100-3, cf. Tables 3 and 4).

It is well known, however, that the use of different indicators to measure the same phenomenon across time or place is a tricky business. In this case, one could argue that these two items—dissidents' right of free speech and approval of multi-party systems—measure different things, acceptance of liberal values and support for democratic institutions. The distinction is not trivial, although it may not appear obvious from the perspective of a long-established liberal democracy. Especially in newer democracies, adherence to the regime form and its institutions may simply be part of an otherwise undemocratic citizen's loyalty to the state: liberal values like tolerance may not be part of this ideological package. Nor need this distinction necessarily be limited to new regimes which aspire to liberal democratic status. For example, it is theoretically possible to have an illiberal democracy of a Rousseauist or communist type—a danger clearly recognized by Tocqueville and J. S. Mill in their discussions of the "tyranny of the majority"—in which a majority allows no deviations or dissent from its decisions; and although we may feel that the definition of democracy is thereby stretched, balanced defenses of this distinction have also been made with reference to contemporary empirical cases (Lindblom).<sup>1</sup>

If this distinction is correct, then there need be no necessary correspondence in the pattern of association between democratic and liberal measures; and there is no necessary basis for concluding that if the better

educated in Germany support a more-than-one party system, they will also tend to be more tolerant of the speaking rights of dissidents. Indeed, Almond and Verba's 1959 multi-nation survey failed to find positive associations between higher education levels and certain deeper aspects of liberal democratic political culture in West Germany (105, 151–3); and Muller et al. found on the basis of a 1974 cross-national survey that West Germany deviated from several other Western democracies in its lack of association between level of education and support for the freedom of assembly (cf. Olsen and Baden). To my knowledge, no investigator has seen a consistent pattern of West German exceptionalism in these results or been prepared to offer more than a tentative explanation when the finding is noted in isolated cases. As I will suggest in the concluding discussion, however, there may be important historical reasons why better educated Germans are no more tolerant than worse educated Germans.

The data on tolerance in America which Lipset cites, as do a great many other writers on the topic, derive from Samuel Stouffer's 1954 survey, *Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties*, perhaps the earliest such investigation whose results are still comparable to present investigations (cf. Adorno et al.). Stouffer's central conclusions have formed a benchmark from which to build our expectations about the structure of tolerance in a western population: "The data showed that the older generation was less tolerant of nonconformists than the younger generation; also, that within each group the less educated were less tolerant than the better educated" (107). And several independent American replications of all or part of Stouffer's surveys in the 1970s (Davis, a; Nunn et al.) have established that (1) Stouffer's findings about generation and education still hold true, and (2) there has been a considerable aggregate increase in levels of measured tolerance in the American population since the 1950s, partly due to the replacement of older, less tolerant generations by younger, more tolerant generations, who are also better educated and therefore more tolerant; and partly due to a residual historical change in popular attitudes which cannot be accounted for by generation replacement and/or higher levels of education.<sup>2</sup>

### The Data

Because there are indications that the results for West Germany may diverge in an important way from a well-established pattern for the United States and perhaps other Western democracies, it was considered worthwhile to attempt as exact a cross-national comparison as possible to see whether the difference is real or only apparent, and if real, what the probable causes of the divergence are. An extensive search of survey data for West Germany suggested that Stouffer's items had not yet been asked

there; a set of very similar items was found, however, which are almost exact translations of questions used in the Detroit Area Studies of 1958 and 1971 (Duncan et al.; Steiber). However, since the Detroit Area texts are substantively so close to the Stouffer items and since they are restricted in the U.S. to one northern urban area at one time point in the 1970s, the Stouffer items (which were also asked in U.S. national surveys in the 1970s) are compared here to the text available for West Germany.<sup>3</sup> Here are the exact texts of these questions.

TEXTS OF TOLERANCE QUESTIONS ASKED IN THE U.S. AND GERMANY

*Germany*

"In our country, the Basic Law—that is, the Constitution—guarantees the right of freedom of expression for everyone. I have a couple of questions about this. There are always these six answers possible:

*Yes, absolutely.*

*Yes, probably.*

*No, probably not.*

*Certainly not.*

*Undecided.*

*Don't know.*

". . . if someone publicly attacks religion or Christianity, does the right of freedom of expression permit this?

"And does the right of free expression of opinion permit somebody to advocate communism, to call for a communist world revolution?

"And if someone publicly advocates the founding of a new National Socialist [Nazi] party, does the right of free expression permit this?"

U.S.

*Asked in 1972 and 1977 (also 1954):*

"Now, I should like to ask you some questions about a man who admits he is a communist. Suppose this admitted communist wants to make a speech in your community. Should he be allowed to speak?

*Yes.*

*No.*

*Don't know.*

"There are always some people whose ideas are considered bad or dangerous by other people. For instance, somebody who is against all churches and religion. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your city (town, community) against churches and religion, should he be allowed to speak?

*Yes.*

*No.*

*Don't know.*

*Asked in 1977 only:*

“Consider a person who advocates doing away with elections and letting the military run the country. If such a person wanted to make a speech in your community, should he be allowed to speak?

*Yes.*

*No.*

*Don't know.*

Thus, in 1970 in Germany and in 1972 in the U.S. there are parallel questions about tolerance for the public speaking rights of an atheist and of an advocate of communism; and in 1979 in Germany and in 1977 in the U.S. these two questions were re-asked together with a question about tolerance for a neo-Nazi speaker in Germany and for a speaker who advocates banning elections and letting the military run the country in the U.S. These data thus allow us to compare tolerance in two countries at two times in the 1970s.

The surveys used in these analyses include a 1970 survey from the Institut für Demoskopie of Allensbach (survey number 2066) and the 1979 ZUMABUS survey conducted by Infratest of Munich for the Zentrum für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen of Mannheim (the questions were included for the present study), and also the 1972 and 1977 American General Social Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) of Chicago. The 1970 survey is a quota sample<sup>4</sup> of the German population (including West Berlin) aged 16 and older; and the 1972, 1977, and 1979 surveys are multistage probability samples of the German (without West Berlin) or American populations aged 18 and older. There are 1,662 cases in the 1970 survey, 1,613 cases in the 1972 survey, 1,530 cases in the 1977 survey, and 2,012 cases in the 1979 survey.

It was desired to test the effects on tolerance of generation, education, social class, and political orientation on tolerance. I define generations as birth cohorts, and for this analysis, four cohorts are used, those who reached age 21 (an arbitrary age of “political maturity”) before 1933, those who became 21 in 1933–48, those who became 21 in 1949–65, and those who have become 21 since 1965. Level of education was defined by comparable levels of certification—a middle level and a high level, yielding three groups—those with less than a *mittlere Reife*/high school diploma, those with this certificate but not an *Abitur* or college diploma, and those with an *Abitur*/college diploma or higher. Occupation of the head of household was used as a measure of social class, with manual workers representing the working class; professionals together with the self-employed (for Germany) or managers (for the U.S.) representing the old middle class; and other white-collar workers representing the new middle class; those in the agricultural sector were excluded from the analysis. Variables for party-political orientation were used for both countries—in the U.S. a party

identification question and for Germany a hypothetical vote intention if there were an election next Sunday. The right was represented by American Republicans and German Christian Democrats (CDU-CSU), the left by the Democrats in the U.S. and the Social Democrats in Germany, and the center or residual group by Independent identifiers in America and by FDP voters and those who chose no party in Germany; supporters of other parties in Germany (mainly radical and ecology parties; a very small percentage) were excluded from the analysis. Finally, the response categories for the German tolerance items were dichotomized to correspond to the American formulation (a tolerant and an intolerant response). The two items available at both times were combined to make a scale, and a tolerant response to *both* items was considered necessary to code a tolerant response; other responses were classified as less tolerant. A three-item scale was also tested for the late 1970s (for both countries) and a six-item Guttman scale was tested for Germany alone (for both time points), but the results were very similar to the two-item scales and will not be reported here. Those expressing no opinion on any tolerance item were excluded from the analyses. The sample distributions of the variables used here are shown in Table 1.

## Analyses

We can systematically investigate the relationships among the variables used here by making complete cross-tabulations of them for each period and for each country, combining the multivariate contingency tables and treating time and country each as variables, and analyzing the resulting contingency tables with a series of log-linear models. Models were thus fitted to two basic kinds of contingency tables, those with the tolerance items combined into scales, and those with each separate tolerance item included in the table. (Since these contingency tables are very large and virtually impossible to inspect visually, they will not be presented here.) The procedure was followed of first considering the ideology variable(s) as dependent with the contingency table collapsed over party preference, and then including party preference as the ultimate dependent variable. Thus, the model-building assumes a causal ordering of the variables and proceeds in a recursive fashion from the beginning to the end of the causal chain; but since we will not be concerned with the relationships among the predictor variables, we concentrate only on the last and next-to-last steps of the chain. Following Goodman's modified path analysis technique (ch. 11), the predictor variables are controlled by including an interaction term of all possible associations among them at each modeling step. Finally, although standard methods of hierarchical model-building are used (Fienberg, a; Goodman), two criteria are used to determine goodness of fit:

**Table 1.** POLITICAL TOLERANCE: THE UNITED STATES 1972-77 AND WEST GERMANY 1970-79  
SAMPLE FREQUENCIES OF VARIABLES USED IN ANALYSES

	<u>United States</u>		<u>West Germany</u>	
	1972	1977	1970	1979
<u>Percent Tolerant (incl. "Don't Knows")</u>				
Communist speaker	52%	55%	57%	69%
Atheist speaker	65	62	75	86
Neo-Nazi/militarist speaker	--	50	(46)	52
Scale score	40	42	41	45
<u>Cohort (year became age 21)</u>				
Post 1965	21	32	27	31
1949-65	35	34	28	28
1933-48	19	17	22	24
Pre 1933	25	17	23	17
<u>Education</u>				
Volksschule + grade school	40	35	77	65
Mittlere reife + high school	49	51	18	24
Abitur + univ. + college	11	14	5	11
<u>Occupation</u>				
Worker	56	58	51	37
Employee	16	14	38	54
Self-employed + professional	28	28	12	9
<u>Party Preference</u>				
CDU/CSU + GOP	23	22	34	38
SPD + Democrat	50	45	38	42
FDP + Independents	27	33	28	20

whether the model as a whole provides an adequate fit, and whether individual interaction terms are statistically significant (i.e., add significantly to the overall fit) when tested at the appropriate modeling stage. Since the  $X^2$  statistics have been divided by two to allow for clustering in the sample designs, the overall fit tends to yield overly parsimonious models when judged in relation to the test of significance of individual interaction terms, which in this case are probably more reliable (see Fienberg, b, 25). The processes of model fitting will not be shown in full here in order to save space, but the results are available from the author on request: although model fitting occupies the bulk of the methodological literature on log-linear models, the reader of substantive research is usually most interested in the final results, and that will be the focus here.

#### THE TOLERANCE SCALES

The effect parameters for the final fitted models for the contingency table using tolerance scales are shown in Table 2: the first column of Table 2

**Table 2.** POLITICAL TOLERANCE: THE UNITED STATES 1972-77 AND WEST GERMANY 1970-79  
SELECTED EFFECT PARAMETERS FROM FINAL LOG-LINEAR MODELS: TOLERANCE SCALES\*

	Germany 1970-79/ U.S. 1972-77	G-70	G-79	US-72	US-77
<u>Occupation</u>					
Worker	-.09	-.16	--	--	-.19
Employee	.03	.06	--	--	.09
Self-employed	.06	.10	--	--	.09
<u>Cohort</u>					
Post 1965	.28	.22	.26	.33	.33
1949-65	.12	.07	.18	.10	.11
1933-48	-.06	-.03	-.07	-.06	-.07
Pre 1933	-.34	-.27	-.37	-.37	-.37
<u>Education</u>					
Volksschule + grade	-.34	--	-.23	-.63	-.40
Mittlere reife + high school	-.03	--	-.02	-.04	-.05
Abitur + univ. + college	.37	--	.25	.67	.45
<u>Party</u>					
CDU/CSU + GOP	--	--	--	--	--
SPD + Democrat	--	--	--	--	--
FDP + Independents	--	--	--	--	--
<u>Country</u>					
Germany	.05				
U.S.	-.05				
<u>Year</u>					
1970 + 1972	--				
1979 + 1977	--				
<u>Country-Education</u>					
Germany					
Volksschule	.18				
Mittlere reife	.01				
Abitur + univ.	-.18				
U.S.					
Grade school	-.18				
High school	-.01				
College	.18				

\*Positive values indicate greater tolerance, as against lesser tolerance.

Dash (--) indicates interaction statistically insignificant (at .10): parameter set to zero. All other interactions significant at least at .05.

shows the parameters for the pooled contingency table, and the last four columns show the parameters for similar tables disaggregated by year and country (see Goodman, ch. 12, on this sort of disaggregation).

We are most interested to know whether there is a cross-national difference in the relation of education to tolerance, that is, whether a country-education-tolerance interaction is statistically significant. We directly test the null hypothesis that this interaction is *not* statistically significant by comparing appropriate "adjacent" models—which differ only

in that one includes and the other excludes this interaction—but tests show that it is highly significant ( $X^2 = 27.41$ , with 2 *df*) and that it explains at least an additional 6 percent of the variation relative to the baseline model (in which none of the predictor variables has an effect on tolerance). We therefore reject the null hypothesis and note that the relationship of education to tolerance differs between the two countries. We can investigate the *nature* of the education–tolerance variation by country by examining the directions and magnitudes of the significant interaction parameters, shown in Table 2. A glance at these results reinforces the conclusion that while the better educated in the United States are much more tolerant than the less well educated, virtually no such relationship exists in West Germany. This can be seen by adding the appropriate country component of the country–education–tolerance interaction term to the base education–tolerance effect parameter: for the U.S. this procedure yields a spread about zero above .50, while for Germany the spread is under .20; and by examining the education–tolerance interactions directly for each year and country in the last four columns: for the U.S. the figures remain about .50, but for Germany we again see that there is no significant association between education and tolerance in 1970, although a statistically significant interaction emerges in 1979 with a spread about zero of .25. A direct test of the hypothesis that the education–tolerance association is converging in the two countries over time in the 1970s, however, showed no statistically significant effect. On the other hand, tests I conducted on other dependent variables have also indicated the possible emergence of an education–tolerance association in Germany in the late 1970s (tests not shown here). Thus, we must perhaps modify the above conclusion because although educational level had virtually no effect on measured tolerance in Germany in the early 1970s, a small relationship appears to emerge in the late 1970s along the lines of the American pattern.

The results in Table 2 also indicate that the magnitude of the cohort effect on tolerance is roughly the same as that of education, but that there are no significant differences between the two countries nor changes during the 1970s. The younger generations are more tolerant than the older. Other testing, however (not shown), indicates that this generational effect has possibly become stronger in the United States since the 1950s. In a test using a similarly constructed scale of tolerance for the speaking rights of nonconformists (Stouffer data), the cohort–tolerance effect has a spread about zero of .20 in 1954 and about .40 in 1972–74; but since there is no significant year–cohort–tolerance interaction effect, this change is probably due to the historical entry of new generations with different levels of tolerance, rather than differential changes in the tolerance levels of the cohorts measured at both times. These findings parallel a number of my findings for Germany (not shown), where longer time series allowed me to investigate generational change in liberal attitudes since the early 1950s.<sup>5</sup> They

suggest that if a longer time series for the present tolerance items were available, we might also find an increase in generational correlations in Germany since the 1950s.

A few final features of Table 2 deserve mention. The first is that a small but statistically significant association appears between occupation and tolerance in the pooled table (first column), with the higher social class levels more tolerant than the workers, and this association also appears irregularly in the disaggregated tables (last four columns). We will later be able to locate the source of this association in one of the tolerance items in the scales; but for now we simply observe that this result is weakly at variance with a previous analysis of the German data alone (using a six-item scale; not shown) where no such significant association was found, but that it follows roughly the same pattern as in an analysis of the American data above for the period 1954 to 1972-74 (not shown). This result clearly supports Lipset's well-known theory of "working-class authoritarianism" (ch. 4), but when education and cohort are taken into account, it is also clear that social class (as measured by occupation) has only a weak residual relationship to tolerance. Under this test, working-class authoritarianism, while observable, is only a marginal phenomenon.<sup>6</sup>

Second, once all other factors in the table are taken into account, there are only very small differences in levels of measured tolerance between the two countries: the greatest part of the apparent difference between countries in the aggregate percentages in Table 1 can be accounted for by differential relationships of education to tolerance. That is, it would seem that Germans give more tolerant aggregate responses on the scale because the less well educated there respond about as tolerantly as do the better educated in both countries. Third, there is no significant change during the 1970s in the level of tolerance as measured by the scales: we find no evidence at this point of a posited rise in neoconservatism understood as a decline of liberal tolerance (cf. Davis, b). Finally, these tolerance scales are statistically unrelated to party preference. The effects of left-right or liberal-conservative self-identification were also tested (not shown; results available from the author), and although there was a tiny association, it did not appear to be ideological, for the centrists expressed least tolerance (cf. Sullivan et al., a).<sup>7</sup>

#### DISAGGREGATED TOLERANCE ITEMS

Up to this point we have analyzed a *scale* of tolerance items in order to summarize a larger body of information and also to tap an underlying dimension of tolerance, if possible, by referring to nonconformist speakers of varying ideologies. We now disaggregate this scale into its constituent parts to see whether any of the correlates of tolerance thus far determined can be localized within one or another subrealm. We thus compute and

analyze a second contingency table for both countries and for both time points with occupation, cohort, and education, items measuring tolerance for an atheist speaker and for a communist speaker, and in some tests, party preference as a dependent variable; and also a third contingency table for both countries, but only for the later 1970s, including occupation, cohort, and education, items measuring tolerance for an atheist speaker, for a communist speaker, *and* for a neo-Nazi speaker, and in some tests, left-right self-placement as an intervening variable. (Remember that these contingency tables are not shown here, as noted at the beginning of the "Analysis" section.) The effect parameters for the final fitted models are shown in Table 3. (The first six columns of the table refer to the second contingency table, and the last three columns of the table refer to the third contingency table.)

We again proceed thematically, examining the impact of each independent variable in turn. First, however, we should note that the separate dependent tolerance items are themselves highly related. In fact, the associations between them are the strongest observed: the association between the atheist and communist items in the second contingency table alone explains 47 percent of the variation relative to the base model, and the associations among the three tolerance items in the third contingency table explain about as much. There is also evidence that the association between the atheist and communist items is stronger in the U.S. than in Germany, but the effect is of small magnitude (.05) and it explains less than 1 percent additional variation relative to the base model. Second, we should also note that left-right self-placement is never importantly related to any of the tolerance items in the third contingency table: the strongest such association, with tolerance for a communist speaker, is only statistically significant at the .10 level. Since model fitting on this table used so much computer time, the table was collapsed over left-right self-placement in order to obtain a smaller less expensive table, and testing proceeded from the basis of the results obtained to this point. (This procedure is justified by the so-called collapsibility theorem, see Bishop et al., 47.)

Beginning again with the relationship between education and tolerance, we recall that although education had a large impact on the tolerance *scale* in the U.S. samples, it had virtually none in the 1970 German sample, but a small effect in the 1979 German sample did appear in the direction of the American results. A glance at the results for the scale *items* in Table 3, however, suggests that these relationships are unevenly distributed in the different realms of tolerance tested: tolerance in the religious realm differs somewhat from tolerance in the political realm, and these relationships vary from country to country. Since the results are fairly complex, we examine them item by item.

**Table 3.** POLITICAL TOLERANCE: THE UNITED STATES 1972-77 AND WEST GERMANY 1970-79  
SELECTED EFFECT PARAMETERS FROM FINAL LOG-LINEAR MODELS: TOLERANCE ITEMS\*

	G-70,79/US-72,77		G-70/US-72		G-79/US-77		G-79/US-77		
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(c)
<u>Occupation</u>									
Worker	-.11	--	-.13	--	-.14	--	-.13	--	--
Employee	-.01	--	-.02	--	.00	--	.01	--	--
Self-employed	.12	--	.15	--	.14	--	.12	--	--
<u>Cohort</u>									
Post 1965	.35	.13	.33	.12	.39	.11	.37	.07	.12
1949-65	.05	.08	.08	.03	.01	.14	.00	.10	.08
1933-48	-.07	-.03	-.07	-.00	-.08	-.05	-.07	-.02	-.05
Pre 1933	-.33	-.18	-.34	-.15	-.32	-.20	-.29	-.14	-.14
<u>Education</u>									
Volksschule + grade	-.18	-.28	-.26	-.25	--	-.30	--	-.23	-.13
Mittlere reife + high school	.02	-.04	.03	-.02	--	-.07	--	-.05	-.07
Abitur + univ. + college	.16	.32	.23	.27	--	.37	--	.28	.20
<u>Country</u>									
Germany	.20	.00	.16	-.06	.24	.07	.31	--	-.16
U.S.	-.20	.00	-.16	.06	-.24	-.07	-.31	--	.16
<u>Year</u>									
1970-72	.03	--							
1979-77	-.03	--							
<u>Atheist</u>									
More tolerant	x	.53	x	.50	x	.57	x	.49	.26
<u>Communist</u>									
More tolerant	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	.47
<u>Country-Education</u>									
Germany									
Volksschule	--	.14	--	.23	--	--	--	--	.15
Mittlere reife	--	.03	--	.05	--	--	--	--	.04
Abitur + univ.	--	-.17	--	-.28	--	--	--	--	-.19
U.S.									
Grade school	--	-.14	--	-.23	--	--	--	--	-.15
High school	--	-.03	--	-.05	--	--	--	--	-.04
College	--	.17	--	.28	--	--	--	--	.19
<u>Country-Atheist</u>									
Germany-More Tolerant	x	-.05	x	--	x	-.09	x	--	--
U.S.-More Tolerant	x	.05	x	--	x	.09	x	--	--
<u>Country-Year</u>									
Germany-1979	.07	--							
U.S.-1977	-.07	--							

\*Positive values indicate greater tolerance of (a) an Atheist, (b) a Communist, (c) a Neo-Nazi speaker, as against lesser tolerance.

Dash (--) indicates interaction statistically insignificant (at .10): parameter set to zero. All other interactions significant at least at .05.

*Tolerance of an Atheist Speaker*

There are no significant differences between the countries here, although an examination of the *insignificant* interaction effects (not shown) suggests that the relationship between education and the atheist item is slightly stronger in the U.S. than in Germany. Likewise, in the second contingency

table there is no significant temporal change in this association in the final model, although it attains statistical significance at an earlier stage of model-fitting; more importantly, however, the results for the second contingency table disaggregated by year suggests that in the early 1970s the interaction had a spread about zero of .26, but by the late 1970s the interaction had become statistically insignificant (see the third and the fifth columns in Table 3). In the third contingency table for the late 1970s, the association between education and the atheist item is also statistically insignificant. Again, however, an examination of the insignificant interaction term (not shown) suggests that the association did not shrink so much in the U.S. as it did in Germany during the 1970s.

#### *Tolerance of a Communist Speaker*

Here we see a significant difference between the countries in the early 1970s but not in the late 1970s; that is, there is a process of *convergence* in the impact of education on tolerance of a communist speaker. By adding the appropriate effect parameters in Table 3, we find that this interaction has a spread about zero of .55 for the U.S. in 1972, .02 for Germany in 1970, and about .30 for both countries in the late 1970s: if we take the statistically insignificant interaction term (not shown) into account in the late 1970s, these figures would become about .45 for the U.S. in 1977 and about .20 for Germany in 1979.

#### *Tolerance for a Neo-Nazi Speaker*

This item is available for both countries only in the late 1970s. There is a statistically significant difference in the association with education between the two countries, and by performing the same sort of additions in Table 3, we find that the interaction has a magnitude of .39 for the U.S. in 1977 and .02 for Germany in 1979.

Thus, (1) the association between education and tolerance is somewhat stronger in the political than in the religious realm, (2) the associations remain fairly constant in the U.S. throughout the 1970s, and (3) the associations are rather low in Germany during the 1970s, but a relationship emerges with the communist item in 1979 which probably accounts for the small effect in the *scale* scores noted above. This latter finding has more than methodological significance, however: it suggests that if orthodox Western political culture is spreading in Germany, it is beginning with the extension of political tolerance among the better educated to left extremists. Tolerance of the speaking rights of right-wing extremists among the better educated may take longer because of still-unresolved problems in German political culture in dealing with the Nazi past.<sup>8</sup>

Examining generational effects next, we see that cohort has its greatest impact on tolerance for an atheist speaker, somewhat less impact on tolerance for a left or right radical political speaker, and that the young are

always more tolerant than the old; however, unlike the association with education, there are no cross-national differences in the relationship between cohort and tolerance. In the second contingency table, for instance, the interaction between cohort and the atheist item explains an additional 15 percent of the variation relative to the base model, while the interaction between cohort and the communist item only explains an additional 2 percent of this variation. In general, the effect parameters for the atheist item in Table 3 have a spread about zero of at least .35, while the parameters for the political items mostly remain under .15 in magnitude. It is, of course, usual to find that the effects of secularization appear strongly across generations, but on the basis of testing other variables (not shown), I rather expected an equally strong impact of cohort on political tolerance: perhaps generational effects on political tolerance emerge most clearly when the test is a more difficult one, like a scale which requires expressed tolerance of both ends of the political spectrum simultaneously.

A handful of observations remain to be made about the correlates of the tolerance items in the second and third contingency tables. The first is the association between occupation and tolerance. The disaggregation of the scales shows clearly that, at least in these data, any working-class intolerance is not political authoritarianism, but at most a kind of clericalism or fundamentalism, for there are only significant associations between class (occupation) and religious tolerance, none with political tolerance. Furthermore, these interactions for the tolerance items explain even less of the variations (1 or 2 percent) relative to their base models than did the interaction for the tolerance scale.

The second observation concerns party preference. In contrast to the tests of the tolerance scale, which found no significant association between tolerance and party preference, a very small but highly significant association was found for the communist item when the scale was disaggregated into its constituent parts (these effects not shown in Table 3). Social Democratic supporters in Germany and political Independents in the U.S. are somewhat more tolerant than average of a communist's right to speak publicly, but the whole interaction accounts for only 2 percent of the variation over the base model, and the effect parameters are tiny in magnitude. One should not make much of such a small association, but we might note that while there seems to be some partisan solidarity on the left in Germany, the higher levels of tolerance, or if one will, liberalism, appear among the Independents rather than the Democrats in the U.S. (For discussions of the neo-liberalism of Independents in American politics, see Burnham; Ladd and Hadley.) It would perhaps be better to ask why there is *no* association between Christian Democrats and (lack of) tolerance for an atheist speaker.

The last observation concerns the effects of time and place. While changes over time in the levels of tolerance, net of changes in related

variables, are either entirely insignificant or near zero, the two countries differ from each other in levels of tolerance in a most interesting way. First, there is much less tolerance of an atheist speaker in the U.S. than in Germany, and the gap actually widened through the 1970s: this difference fully supports the view that secularism is more widespread in Germany (and perhaps in Europe) than in the U.S. (cf. *Public Opinion*, 38–9) and that there has been a revival of religiosity in the U.S. in the last decade, but none comparable in Germany (as yet) (but cf. Gallup and Poling, Appendix). Second, there is considerably more tolerance for a neo-Nazi (actually, militarist/antidemocrat) speaker in the U.S. than in Germany: this difference gives no support to the view that the Germans still have protofascist leanings compared to the Americans, but it does suggest that they may be exceedingly cautious due to their recent history. (One should, of course, note that this item may have caused some confusion in Germany simply because the German constitution not only guarantees rights of free speech [Art. 5], but also prohibits advocacy of anti-democratic doctrines [Art. 18]. Compare the exact question texts used here.) Third, there are *no* significant differences between the two countries in tolerance for a communist speaker, net of the effects of the other variables: this lack of difference contradicts any simple theory of a prolonged cold-war atmosphere in Germany relative to the U.S. or of an increased repressive potential, aimed primarily at the left, since the early 1970s, said to manifest itself especially in discriminatory hiring practices for public service employment (*Berufsverbot*; see the 1978 Russell Tribunal) or perhaps, in some of the measures taken against terrorist activity.

## Summary

Some analyses of West German data suggested that this country deviated from the standard patterns found in the literature on liberal democratic values, especially in the U.S. A more systematic comparison of very similar, but not identical, tolerance data for the two countries in the 1970s has substantially confirmed this impression and raised several questions, which will be addressed in the next section. The basic findings are these:

### *Education*

Education is very strongly related to tolerance in the U.S., with the better educated more tolerant. This relationship holds uniformly true for each of the items of the tolerance scale, but the associations are stronger for the political than for the religious items. In contrast, there are virtually no such associations in the German data, although there is some evidence that they may have slightly emerged in the latest survey. However, this lack of association is differentially distributed among the items tested: the pattern of

tolerance for an atheist speaker most resembles the American, while education has only questionable impact on tolerance of a communist speaker and none on tolerance of a neo-Nazi speaker.

### *Generation*

The young are more tolerant than the old in both countries, but there is somewhat less evidence of true political tolerance than of secularization. Direct evidence for the U.S. and parallel evidence for Germany also suggest that the entry of new generations into the polity has been the main cause of a substantial strengthening of this association since the 1950s, and it was speculated that the greatest change probably came in the late 1960s.

### *Historical Change and Cross-National Differences*

Although we know that there has been a major increase in measured tolerance in the U.S. since the 1950s, there is no direct indication whether there has been any change in Germany in this period; however, there were no important historical changes in either country during the 1970s, despite widespread popular perceptions of rising neo-conservatism. The two countries do not differ in net level of tolerance (once the effects of other variables are taken into account) as measured by the scales; but more sensitive analysis did *not* support the impression gained from aggregate frequencies that the German samples displayed more net tolerance on all separate items than the American samples. Controlling for occupation, education, and generation, Germans are more tolerant than Americans of atheists, equally tolerant of communists, and less tolerant of neo-Nazis. Considering the pattern of associations found, the higher levels of aggregate tolerance in Germany are probably due to the fact that levels of tolerance among the less educated Germans resemble levels of tolerance among the better educated in both Germany and the U.S. Especially on the communist item, the worse educated in America probably bring the aggregate U.S. level below the aggregate German level.

### **Discussion**

It will be difficult to construct a reasonable explanation for these unusual findings without going considerably beyond the data presented here. And while my other analyses do shed some light on the present findings, they cannot be presented adequately in the space available here; instead, two plausible answers will be suggested and briefly commented upon.

The first possibility is that the present results are simply an artifact of differences in question formulation. For instance, the German question text may tap only a cognitive response in Germany while the Stouffer text taps a genuine opinion in America: perhaps, as has sometimes been found

(Almond and Verba), German respondents of all educational levels are comparatively well informed about their political system.<sup>9</sup> This explanation is questionable on a number of counts—although a strict replication of the text is the only definitive way to get an answer (although, again, no future replication will allow us to re-survey a historical population). In the first place as we noted above, the text used in the German samples has, in fact, been used in the United States (Duncan et al.; Steiber), and although I am not aware of publications in which the effect of education is measured, the variable seems to behave normally as an *attitudinal* measure—at least in America—over time and when the influence of several independent factors is tested (e.g., age, race, and religious denomination and activity). Second, the present results for Germany are in line with the results of my analyses of certain other tolerance variables for that country: education has little effect, and cohort has a considerable effect (also see Muller et al.). As one moves from measures of liberal democratic values which are legitimized by the West German regime to those which are not (e.g., from opposition to fascism and support for a multiparty system to tolerance for certain non-conformists and support for civil liberties of suspected radical applicants for public employment), one finds that education has a declining impact—although there are some signs that an effect may be emerging in the late 1970s, as we have seen here.

These findings provide the starting point for another possible explanation, which must remain speculative for the present. It has been suggested (Selznick and Steinberg) that the liberalizing effects of education in America are due more to education's function as an institution of socialization in a well-established liberal democratic political culture than to its role in building up personal confidence and security (but cf. Plant for another explanation);<sup>10</sup> however, in Germany from Imperial times through the Nazi period, the traditional institutions of socialization—including education—tended to be reactionary (Dahrendorf). Most observers agree that there has been a decisive break with the traditional reactionary patterns of socialization in West Germany since World War II (Conradt; Lepsius), but educational institutions were still seen as quite conservative at least through the mid or late 1960s. It could be argued that education has so little effect on certain measures of non-legitimized tolerance in West Germany because the historical introduction of liberal norms into educational socialization has only reached a certain limited point. In fact, it could be argued further that the emergence of small associations between education and tolerance in the 1979 West German survey is partly traceable to the educational reforms of the 1970s there—above all, stemming from a reduction of hierarchy and an expansion of the social base of students in the universities. This possible explanation obviously cannot be demonstrated here. But if it were supported in other analyses, it would have important implications for our understanding of democratization and liberalization in

new liberal democracies and of the role of education in ideology formation in a comparative context.

### Notes

1. Lipset himself makes a theoretical distinction between two elements of Western political culture, egalitarianism and political liberty, which he calls "economic liberalism" and "non-economic" or "social liberalism"; and he later develops this distinction in a similar context and calls the respective elements the "democratic impulse" and "democratic restraint" (103; cf. Lipset and Raab, 432-3). Thus, he uses both the words democratic and liberal, with appropriate modifiers, to describe both elements of political culture; but although his latter discussion comes closer to the distinction I am trying to make, I would suggest that it is not wholly developed in this direction.
2. Sullivan et al. (b) have shown, however, that with a more fully specified model and an improved measure of tolerance, the impact of age and education on tolerance can be accounted for by intervening factors. Sullivan et al. (a) also claim, less convincingly, that tolerance may not have increased in the U.S. since the 1950s. Unfortunately, their articles appeared too late for their results to be incorporated more systematically into the analyses presented here, but see note 7 for another remark on their work.
3. One methodologically rigorous reviewer noted that since the use of different indicators to measure the same phenomenon is indeed tricky (see above), and since I did in fact have a hand in collecting some of the data used here (see below), I might have asked the Stouffer questions in Germany or used the Detroit Area Study and restricted the German sample to urban areas. However, my primary aim in the survey I influenced was to test temporal change in West Germany with strictly replicated items: since the present study is a lateral outgrowth of this research, strict *cross-national* comparability had to take a lower priority. Urban samples could indeed have been used for *one* time point, but important (probably more traditional and less tolerant) sectors of the populations would have been lost, as would the time variable: the reader will have to judge whether the substantive gains balance the methodological losses. Finally, the findings presented here are partially meant to be suggestive and to stimulate further, more rigorous investigation (see also the concluding discussion), and I am now preparing such investigations myself.
4. The quotas are based on region, size of place, sex, age, and occupation. See Fienberg (a, 15-6, 26-8, 60-1) on the use of various sampling models with the sort of data analyses used here.
5. Included in the tests were measures of attitudes on banning the Communist party, on demonstrations, and on the idea of a grand coalition government.
6. The theory should be given slightly greater credence for Germany in these tests than for the U.S., for in the former country education and occupation may serve as functional equivalents for each other: either one, but not both, are significantly related to tolerance in both years; in each year I have simply used the stronger association in the final models shown.
7. Sullivan et al. (a) point out, quite correctly, that one can only tolerate what one opposes, that is, that tolerance is defined as the acceptance of what one dislikes (see Crick; King; cf. Mitscherlich). They therefore ask respondents, first, what they do not like and, second, whether they tolerate it. They also validate their tolerance measures by showing that the objects of tolerance are related to respondents' ideology. The Sullivan et al. (a) measure of tolerance, however, is fairly complex and difficult to compare over time or country. A simpler solution to this problem might be to ask a respondent to tolerate *both* ends of a relevant spectrum simultaneously; and while the scale used here does not meet this requirement rigorously, scales testing simultaneous tolerance of communists and Nazis/militarists give very similar results. (Since the present tolerance scales are unrelated, or only weakly related, to partisanship and ideology, we can have slightly greater confidence that they do measure tolerance rightly understood.) Clearly, better and simpler scales are needed—although in studying historical questions, one is obliged to use existing measures in surveys of past populations, whether they seem fully satisfactory or not. I am now developing measures along the lines outlined above and will report the results when they become available.
8. Strictly speaking, of course, this finding could indicate that the better educated in Germany

have come to *like* the extreme left during the course of the 1970s (see note 7). Similar provisos must be observed, especially, for all the disaggregated items.

9. Professor Thomas Pettigrew emphasized this possibility to me at a presentation of an earlier draft of this article at the 1980 American Sociological Association meetings. Stanley Presser has also brought another aspect of this problem to my attention (see Schuman and Presser).

10. Professor Milton Rokeach kindly brought this study to my attention. He interprets the results to mean that *propensity to seek* higher education underlies the observed effect which education sometimes has on attitudes like tolerance: that is, those who would be most tolerant anyway seek further education.

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