

ISSP Characteristics of National Population - USA

A Comparison of the 2006 Current Population Survey

to the 2006 General Social Survey

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In accordance with the documentation standards of the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), we compare in Table 1 the distributions for age, gender, years of schooling, and labor force participation from the 2006 General Social Survey (GSS) with the latest available Census estimates from the 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS).¹

First, the weighted and unweighted GSS distributions match the CPS figures about equally well overall (Table 2). The weighted figures are better on age, gender, and education, while the unweighted figures are closer for labor force participation. Second, the GSS-CPS matches are generally good. Age distributions correspond closely across most age groups, but the GSS underrepresents those under 25 and 65 and over and slightly overrepresents those from 35 to 54.

Third, women are slightly overrepresented on the GSS.² Considering that the overrepresentation of women is common to virtually all full probability, random respondent surveys in the United States, this difference appears to be relatively small.

Fourth, the GSS and CPS closely agree on education. Moreover, some of the small difference results from variations between the CPS and the GSS in how the item on education is asked and coded rather than because of sampling representation.

Finally, the GSS slightly overrepresents those currently employed and underrepresents those not in labor force.

¹The 2006 GSS fielded the Work Orientation and Role of Government modules.

²The CPS uses household informants rather than random respondents.

Table 1

A Detailed Comparison of the 2006 Current Population Survey (CPS)
and the Weighted and Unweighted 2006 General Social Survey (GSS)

A. Age, 18 years or older

	CPS	GSS Weighted ³	GSS Unweighted
18-24	12.7	9.3	7.2
25-29	9.1	8.5	8.4
30-34	8.7	9.4	9.4
35-39	9.4	10.3	10.5
40-44	10.0	11.7	11.2
45-49	10.3	13.1	12.2
50-54	9.3	10.1	9.9
55-59	8.2	8.0	8.0
60-64	6.1	6.5	7.0
65+	16.2	13.1	16.1
n		1515	1518

B. Gender, 18 years or older

Female	51.8	52.9	53.4
n		1515	1518

C. Years of Schooling, 25 years or older

0-8	6.3	6.4	6.5
9-11	8.5	9.9	11.1
12	32.2	30.2	29.3
13-15	25.4	26.0	24.3
16+	27.7	27.4	28.3
n		1374	1408

D. Labor Force Participation, 18 years or older

Employed	64.6	66.8	65.5
Unemployed	3.0	3.1	3.1
Not in Labor	32.6	30.1	31.4
n		1514	1516

³Weighted by number of eligible respondents (i.e. 18+) in the household.

Table 2

A Summary Comparison of the 2006 Current Population Survey
and the Weighted and Unweighted 2006 GSS

(GSS % - CPS %)

	Weighted	Unweighted
A. Age		
18-24	-3.4	-5.5
35-39	+0.9	+1.1
65+	-3.1	-0.1
B. Gender		
Female	+0.9	+1.6
C. Years of Schooling, 25+		
0-8	+0.1	+0.2
16+	-0.3	+0.6
D. Labor Force Participation		
Employed	+2.2	+0.9
Unemployed	+0.1	+0.1
Not in Labor Force	-2.5	-1.2