

The Degree of Interest in Features of American Life  
Expressed by Possible Target Groups

Report No. C-9

Series No. 3

September 11, 1957

~~OFFICIAL USE ONLY~~

*Declassified by authority of Eric Felt  
Policy Officer, LSI/Boh, July 8, 1964*

RESEARCH STAFF

UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE

AMERICAN EMBASSY, GERMANY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No.</u>
INTRODUCTION .....	i
SUMMARY .....	ii
<u>Part I</u> - <u>Intensity of Overall Interest in</u> <u>Areas of American Life</u> .....	1 - 3
<u>Part II</u> - <u>Possible USIS Target Groups</u> <u>within the West German Population</u> .	4 - 11
<u>Part III</u> - <u>Impressions of and Interest in</u> <u>Areas of U.S. Life</u> .....	12 - 14

## I N T R O D U C T I O N

This report will attempt to furnish some information on the degree to which the West German population shows an interest in hearing and learning more about different areas of American life. The appeal and the final success of the various USIS activities in Germany will be determined largely by the intensity of interest that any given audience has in the facts of American life. One cannot hope to successfully bring across a certain message concerning one particular aspect of life if the audience generally feels apathetic or even antagonistic to this subject. On the other hand, an information program meets with the most promising conditions when an audience is favorably disposed toward the subject to be dealt with. Programming should be based on the knowledge of these varying dispositions of the German audience toward the different areas of American life.

In Part II of this report, the reader is directed to a chart showing the degrees of interest in various areas of American life expressed by the different sub-groups within the population. As an aid to programming, these groups are divided according to whether individuals in the group might be considered as "potential audience" (i.e. some effort would have to be made to get them to attend), or a "ready-made audience" (where the high degree of basic interest should pull them in).

However, there is as yet no information available on the role which these groups play in opinion formation in Germany. How do these groups utilize the information that is transmitted to them? Do they pass on their information or do they "sit on it"? To whom do they pass it on and how? The answers to these questions which could lay the groundwork for a plan of overall strategy to guide USIS in Germany would take a separate survey into an as yet uncharted region.

The basic material reported here was gathered during the period May 2 - 18, 1957 when a 1,200 case probability sample of West German adults (21 years and over) was interviewed as part of an international survey of West European opinion. Interviewing was conducted by DIVO, Marktforschung - Meinungsforschung - Sozialforschung, Frankfurt am Main - Bad Godesberg, a German survey organization.

## S U M M A R Y

An analysis of the interest the West German population claims to have in getting more information about the different areas of American Life reveals a diverse pattern of preference. The interest of a majority of the population is aroused by "Living Conditions" and "Family Life" in the U.S. At the bottom of the list such intellectual areas may be found as literature, architecture, art and music. But still a full quarter of the population appears to be interested in learning more about what is going on in these fields.

A further step in this reanalysis makes possible the identification of specific sub-groups of the population which appear to be particularly interested in these areas. Generally speaking, the higher educated, younger people, professionals and white-collar workers have the greatest interest in learning more about different areas of American life.

A comparison of interest in and impressions of areas of American life reveals that generally the level of (favorable) impression is equal to that of interest. There are some instances, however, where people have a very favorable attitude toward an area but feel considerably less interested in learning more about it. In one case even - the Negro problem - people show a relatively low interest in learning more, and an even lower opinion of the way it is handled in the U.S.

## Part I - Intensity of Overall Interest in Areas of American Life

The interest of the West German population in American affairs is not the same for all areas of U.S. life. It is focused with great intensity on some areas and with less intensity on others.

Living conditions in America, apparently, is a subject in which the German public is most interested. Fully 60 percent claim to be interested - 32 percent "very much" so - in getting more information on this subject.

Family life, a subject very similar in nature to the one just mentioned, meets with the second largest demand for information (54%).

"Now for a question about your interest in some features of life in the U.S. (SHOW CARD). Please use this card to tell me how interested you would be in getting more information about these areas of U.S. life - would you be very much interested, somewhat interested, or not particularly interested? How about ...?"

	(1) Living Conditions in the U.S. (1200)	(2) Family Life in the U.S. (1200)
Very much interested	32% )	20% )
Somewhat interested	28 ) 60%	34 ) 54%
Not particularly interested	24	30
Don't know	16	16
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

Less than a majority of the population expressed an interest in receiving more information on all other areas of life about which questions were employed in this study. Ten areas (labor, economic system, leisure time activities, youth, science, education, business, politics, women's activities and farming) attract the interest of from 40 to 50 percent of the adults.

	(3) Labor in the U.S. (1200)	(4) U.S. economic system (1200)	(5) Leisure time activities in the U.S. (1200)	(6) Youth in the U.S. (1200)
Very much interested	23%)	22%)	19%)	19%)
Somewhat interested	25%) 48%	26%) 48%	26%) 45%	25%) 44%
Not particularly interested	32	33	34	35
Don't know	20	19	21	21
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(7) Science in the U.S. (1200)	(8) Education in the U.S. (1200)	(9) Business in the U.S. (1200)	(10) Politics in the U.S. (1200)
Very much interested	21%)	17%)	17%)	15%)
Somewhat interested	23%) 44%	26%) 43%	26%) 43%	27%) 42%
Not particularly interested	35	37	37	38
Don't know	21	20	20	20
	100%	100%	100%	100%
	(11) Women's activities in the U.S. (1200)	(12) Farming in the U.S. (1200)		
Very much interested	18%)	15%)		
Somewhat interested	22%) 40%	25%) 40%		
Not particularly interested	39	41		
Don't know	21	19		
	100%	100%		

Three areas (Negro problem, sports, religion) attracted from 30 to 39 percent.

	(13) Negro in the U.S. (1200)	(14) Sports in the U.S. (1200)	(15) Religion in the U.S. (1200)
Very much interested	19%) 39%	16%) 37%	13%) 31%
Somewhat interested	20 )	21 )	21 )
Not particularly interested	41	42	48
Don't know	20	21	21
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

It is interesting that those areas with a distinct high-brow appeal - literature, architecture, art and music - were selected by from 25 to 29 percent. It is noteworthy that in no instance is the level of interest below the 25 percent mark.

	(16) Literature in the U.S. (1200)	(17) Architecture in the U.S. (1200)	(18) Art in the U.S. (1200)	(19) Music in the U.S. (1200)
Very much interested	10%) 29%	9%) 26%	8%) 26%	7%) 25%
Somewhat interested	19 )	17 )	18 )	18 )
Not particularly interested	47	50	51	53
Don't know	24	24	23	22
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

It is noteworthy that were "order of disinterest" (i.e. the percentage of those saying they had no real interest) substituted for the above rank-order based on "interest" a perfect inverse correlation would be obtained.

## Part II - Possible USIS Target Groups within the West German Population

Just as the pattern of overall interest in the different areas of American life was a rather varied one, so a high degree of diversity may be found when the interest of the sub-groups of the population is under scrutiny.

In the subsequent list the demographic units of society are compiled according to the proportion which declared itself interested in learning more about one particular area of American life. Under the heading "Potential audience" are all those groups in which proportions expressing interest range from 40 to 59 percent. The column "Ready-made audience" lists those particular groups where 60% or more expressed interest in that phase of American life.

This list provides easy-to-read information on the degree to which the different population groups are interested in each of the areas. As one goes down the list, fewer and fewer groups appear as "ready-made audiences". For example, none of the groups is sufficiently interested in women's activities, in sports, architecture, art, and in music to qualify for such a classification. Considerably more groups meet the requirements for being listed as potential audience, but here also groups become increasingly scarce as one moves down the list.

In general, it should be noted that men profess a greater interest in learning about different areas of American life than do women, the higher educated are more interested than the less educated, professionals and white collar workers more than the other occupations, and younger people more than the older ones. The better educated, professionals and white-collar workers are the groups that appear almost consistently as the most interested. It is therefore safe to say that the U.S. information effort will meet with the best possible prospects in these groups. This must not be mistaken to mean, however, that these are the only groups that can be reached successfully by USIS. There are a number of other groups which might even be more worthy targets for USIS media when it comes to a particular subject. For the fact remains that the better educated, the professionals and the white-collar workers can always be counted among those with a relatively high interest in all areas of American life.



Possible USIS Target Groups

Area	Level of interest in the total population	Demo-graphic characteristic	Potential audience (40-59%)	Ready-made audience (60% and more)
Living conditions in the U.S.	60%	Sex	Women	Men
		Education	Elementary school	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Independent artisans, Farmers, farmhands	Professionals Businessmen White-collar workers Manual workers
		Age	65 years and over	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years
		Land	Lower Saxony Rhineland/Palatinate Baden/Wuerttemberg	Schleswig/Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Bavaria
Family life in the U.S.	54%	Sex	Men Women	
		Education	Elementary school	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen Independent artisans Manual workers	Professionals White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years 65 years and over	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen Lower Saxony North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Baden/Wuerttemberg	Bavaria

Area	Level of interest in the total population	Demo-graphic characteristic	Potential audience (40-59%)	Ready-made audience (60% and more)
Labor in the U.S.	48%	Sex		Men
		Education	Elementary school	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen Independent artisans Manual workers	Professionals White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen Lower Saxony North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Baden/Wuerttemberg Bavaria	
U.S. Economic system	48%	Sex	Women	Men
		Education	Elementary school	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Independent artisans Manual workers	Professionals Businessmen White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen Lower Saxony North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Baden/Wuerttemberg Bavaria	

Area	Level of interest in the total population	Demo-graphic characteristic	Potential audience (40-59%)	Ready-made audience (60% and more)
Leisure time activities in the U.S.	45%	Sex	Men Women	
		Education	Elementary school	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen Independent artisans Manual workers	Professionals White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen Lower Saxony North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Baden/Wuerttemberg Bavaria	
Youth in the U.S.	44%	Sex	Men Women	
		Education		Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen Independent artisans Manual workers	Professionals White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein, Hamburg, Bremen North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Baden/Wuerttemberg Bavaria	

Area	Level of interest in the total population	Demo-graphic characteristic	Potential audience (40-59%)	Ready-made audience (60% and more)
Science in the U.S.	44%	Sex	Men	
		Education		Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen Manual workers	Professionals White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen Lower Saxony North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Baden/Wuerttemberg Bavaria	
Education in the U.S.	43%	Sex	Men Women	
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur	Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen Manual workers	Professionals White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Bavaria	
Business in the U.S.	43%	Sex	Men	
		Education		Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Independent artisans Manual workers	Professionals Businessmen White-collar workers
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Bavaria	

Area	Level of interest in the total population	Demo-graphic characteristic	Potential audience (40-59%)	Ready-made audience (60% and more)
Politics in the U.S.	42%	Sex	Men	
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur	Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen White-collar workers Independent artisans	Professionals
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen Lower Saxony North Rhine/Westphalia Bavaria	
Women's activities in the U.S.	40%	Sex	Women	
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University	
		Occupation	Professionals White-collar workers Manual workers	
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse Bavaria	
Farming in the U.S.	40%	Sex	Men	
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University	
		Occupation	Professionals White-collar workers	Farmers, farmhands
		Age	21 to 29 years 30 to 64 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen Hesse Baden/Wuerttemberg Bavaria	

Area	Level of interest in the total population	Demo-graphic characteristic	Potential audience (40-59%)	Ready-made audience (60% and more)
Negro in the U.S.	39%	Sex	Men	
		Education		Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University
		Occupation	Businessmen White-collar workers Manual workers	Professionals
		Age	21 to 29 years	
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen North Rhine/Westphalia Hesse	
Sports in the U.S.	37%	Sex	Men	
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University	
		Occupation	Professionals Businessmen White-collar workers Manual workers	
		Age	21 to 29 years	
		Land	Schleswig-Holstein Hamburg, Bremen	
Religion in the U.S.	31%	Sex		
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University	
		Occupation	Professionals	
		Age		
		Land		
Literature in the U.S.	29%	Sex		
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur	Abitur, University
		Occupation	White-collar workers	Professionals
		Age		
		Land		

Area	Level of interest in the total population	Demo-graphic characteristics	Potential audience (40-59%)	Ready-made audience (60% and more)
Architecture in the U.S.	26%	Sex		
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University	
		Occupation	Professionals	
		Age		
		Land	Schleswig/Holstein Hamburg, Bremen	
Art in the U.S.	26%	Sex		
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University	
		Occupation	Professionals White-collar workers	
		Age		
		Land		
Music in the U.S.	25%	Sex		
		Education	Beyond elementary w/o abitur Abitur, University	
		Occupation	Professionals White-collar workers	
		Age		
		Land		

### Part III - Impressions of and Interest in Areas of U.S. Life

In two previous surveys, conducted by the Research Staff in October, 1953, and in April, 1955, the impressions of the West German population toward various areas of American life\* were assessed in terms of basically positive or negative impressions or inclinations. A comparison of these findings with the data on interest in learning about these areas yields results which may contribute to a better understanding of West German receptivity towards the different topics around which USIS programs could be built.

There seems to be a general tendency that a favorable attitude towards any one of the areas is accompanied by an interest in getting further information about this particular area. This particularly applies to the topics of living conditions (way of life), family life, labor relations, education and politics. With regard to these topics, the relative size of those holding a favorable attitude is practically the same as for that claiming to be interested in learning more about the area.

Interest in  
information  
(May, 1957)  
(1200)

Impressions  
(April, 1955) (October, 1953)  
(957) (1269)

"Would you please point to the square which approximately indicates how favorable or unfavorable is your general impression or idea of the American..." \*\*\* (See next page)

#### Living Conditions

Interest**	60%
No interest	24
No opinion	16
	<u>100%</u>

#### Way of Life

Favorable	58%	65%
Unfavorable	8	9
No opinion	34	26
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

#### Family Life

Interest	54%
No interest	30
No opinion	16
	<u>100%</u>

Favorable	48%	--
Unfavorable	17	--
No opinion	35	--
	<u>100%</u>	

#### Labor

Interest	48%
No interest	32
No opinion	20
	<u>100%</u>

Favorable	45%	52%
Unfavorable	9	8
No opinion	46	40
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

\* Only a limited number of areas were tested in the previous surveys - thus restricting comparisons.

\*\* This category is a combination of those who said they either were "very much interested" or "somewhat interested".



Interest in  
information  
(May, 1957)  
(1200)

Impressions  
(April, 1955) (October, 1953)  
(957) (1269)

#### Education

Interest	43%	Favorable	42%	49%
No interest	37	Unfavorable	6	6
No opinion	20	No opinion	52	45
	<u>100%</u>		<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

#### Politics

Interest	42%	Favorable	45%	55%
No interest	38	Unfavorable	5	5
No opinion	20	No opinion	50	40
	<u>100%</u>		<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

However, there are two general exceptions to this rule: in one, there is a high level of positive feeling toward an area but a considerably lower level of interest in it. Examples of this type are: U.S. economic system, farming (agriculture) and religion.

Interest in  
information  
(May, 1957)  
(1200)

Impressions  
(April, 1955) (October, 1953)  
(957) (1269)

#### Economic system

Interest	48%	Favorable	75%	76%
No interest	33	Unfavorable	1	2
No opinion	19	No opinion	24	22
	<u>100%</u>		<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

#### Farming

Interest	40%
No interest	41
No opinion	19
	<u>100%</u>

#### Agriculture

Favorable	60%	68%
Unfavorable	4	2
No opinion	36	30
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

#### Religion

Interest	31%
No interest	48
No opinion	21
	<u>100%</u>

#### Religious and Church. life

Favorable	44%	51%
Unfavorable	14	10
No opinion	42	39
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>

\*\*\* A scalometer technique was used in securing these responses. The favorable category includes responses to all five of the favorable squares whereas the unfavorable category includes responses to any of the five unfavorable squares.

The second type is characterized by a low level of interest but an even lower level of impression. The leading example here is the area - the Negro problem (Social problems).

Interest in information (May, 1957) (1200)	Impressions	
	(April, 1955) (957)	(October, 1953) (1269)
<u>Negro</u>		
Interest	39%	
No interest	41	29%
No opinion	20	31
	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>
<u>Social Problems</u>		
	Favorable	26%
	Unfavorable	30
	No opinion	44
		<u>100%</u>

This finding poses the problem as to whether USIS should attempt to spread information concerning this aspect of American life in its activities or not. It points up the question of whether the relatively low interest in the Negro problem warrants any vigorous attempt to counteract the predominantly negative attitude of the population.