

AMERICANS' ATTITUDES TOWARD EUTHANASIA  
AND SUICIDE IN THE LATE 1980s

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ABSTRACT

Based on 1988 and 1989 General Social Survey data (n=1994) through Logit Analysis, the study found that the following kinds of persons tend to oppose euthanasia: 1) persons with religious beliefs, 2) persons who go to church frequently, 3) persons who think that there is a life after death, 4) persons who are feeling unhappy or dissatisfied with their life or financial situation, and 5) persons who react conservatively toward the female role. Nevertheless, their attitude toward suicide is more conservative. Most Americans do not agree that a person has the right to commit suicide just because of being tired of life. Only persons who are not married, who are not Christians, who live alone, who rarely go to church, and who do not think that there is a life after death, tend to agree to this kind of suicide. However, when asked if a person with an incurable disease has the right to commit suicide, about 48% of the respondents answered "yes." Persons who receive higher education, who have no children, who hardly go to church and who are liberal with premarital sexual behavior, tend to agree that a person has the right to commit suicide for an incurable disease. Responses also differ between men and women as well as between blacks and nonblacks.