

Social Inequality in Cross-National Perspective

Tom W. Smith

National Opinion Research Center
University of Chicago

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All industrialized nations are welfare states. Each country has adopted a series of governmental programs to protect its citizens from hardships resulting from illness, unemployment, old age, and other difficulties. Moreover this protection is considered to be a fundamental right of citizenship, as an entitlement that is owed to all by society. Yet nations differ greatly in the breath and generosity of their welfare programs¹ and in their structure and administration. To greatly simplify an exceedingly complex situation, we might think of three broad political models that characterize the industrial welfare states: 1) State Socialism or Communism, 2) Democratic Socialism, Mixed Economies, or Social Democracy; and 3) Liberal Democracy or Capitalist Democracy.

Communist countries exercise centralized, governmental control of the economy and most people are employed by state operated industries. Through direct governmental programs and benefits mandated by the public employers, Communist states have generally created a comprehensive welfare system which has technically eliminated unemployment and placed such services as health care and education entirely within the public sector. The mixed economies and social democracies of Western Europe also have wide ranging, cradle-to-grave welfare systems that cover many aspects of life although most employment remains in the private sector and the public sector does not monopolize all social services. Finally, in liberal/capitalist democracies

almost all industrial and commercial employment is in the private sector and the welfare of citizens is served by a combination of private and public programs (e.g. in the United States health and medical care for the poor is covered by Medicaid, for the elderly by Medicare, for most employed people by private care plans like HMOs and group insurance, and for some employed people no collective protection exists). While these different economic models have developed for a complex set of historical reasons (Flora and Heidenheimer, 1981; Mommsen, 1981; Tomasson, 1983; Jansson, 1988), today they in large part rest on differences in the policy preferences and ideologies of their citizens.²

Public Preferences for Social Welfare

Public demand for a range of welfare state benefits (income equalization, jobs for all, a decent standard of living for the unemployed, a basic minimum income for all, and no cuts in spending for the poor) is highest in Communist Hungary, followed closely by the social democracies and mixed economies of Italy, West Germany, Great Britain, and the Netherlands, with the liberal democracies of Australia and United States showing much less demand (Table 1 - For the detailed distributions and question wordings see Appendix 2: 1987 ISSP Social Inequality Module). The cross-national differences are greatest for the levelling items dealing with income redistribution and minimum incomes. For example, while 78% of Hungarians supported a minimum

income for all, this was favored by only 20% of Americans. Differences tend to be smaller for government action to help the needy and dependent. Spending cuts for the poor is opposed by 83% of Italians, while 38% of Americans disagree with such reductions.

Differences are smallest however on the related issue of governmental support for the poor attending college (Table 1). On this issue alone, a general consensus prevails across the seven industrial nation covered in this study (Haller, Moshamer, and Raubal, 1987). In addition even the usual ordering of countries breaks down on educational opportunity, with the United States in the middle and Hungary towards the lower end. Americans and Australian are more supportive of government action for educational opportunity than they are for any of the other welfare measures and by a wide margin (on average + 37% points in America and + 29% points in Australia). In none of the European nations does education outdistance the average of the other items by as much as 20% points, although all but Hungary do marginally rate it as the most supported program. The relative advantage that education has in the United States comes from the fact that educational programs are seen by Americans as promoting equality of opportunity rather than equality of condition (Rasinski, 1987) and the opportunity ideology apparently enjoys much greater support in the United States than in the other nations (Smith, 1987).

Differences toward government programs exist on the taxing

side as well as the benefits side. On average (Table 2), the percent of people saying that the taxes of those with high, middle, and low incomes are too high is about the same (except for Hungary where taxes are a fairly recent phenomena and still low by non-Communist standards). Likewise, none of the countries feel that the rich are paying too much in taxes, but only America thinks that those with middle incomes are worse off than those with low incomes. (Australia comes closest to sharing this belief.) America is not only more supportive of an opportunity ideology than other countries, but also more oriented towards the middle class.³

The only departure from this pattern is the high level of agreement that exists in all countries in favor of a progressive income tax (Table 3). In contrast to their much lower levels of support for income equalization (Reproduced in Table 3 from Table 1), the United States and Australia are only a little less supportive of a graduated tax than are the European welfare states. This suggests, as did the data in Table 2, that people in all countries believe that the rich can and should bear more taxes. Where the liberal democracies differ from their more socialist counterparts is apparently on the desirability of using taxes of the rich to explicitly redistribute income.

One of the reasons that people in America are less enamored with welfare programs is that they see current conditions as more equitable than do the citizens of other countries. While 56% of Americans agree that income differences are too large, this

belief is shared by 66-86% of those in the other countries (Table 4). In addition, Americans are a bit more inclined to rate themselves as near the top of the social structure. While 18% of Americans see themselves as in one of the top three ranks on a 10 rung ladder, only from 3 to 10% of people in the other countries rank themselves in a similar fashion (Table 4). In brief, Americans see the equalizing goals of welfare programs as generally less needed and less likely to help them personally.⁴

Similarly, Americans are more optimistic about their economic future than any other nationality. 71% of Americans agree that "people like me and my family have a good chance of improving our standard of living (Table 5)." Only Australians at 58% even approach the American figure, while the European states fall in the 23-43% range. This future optimism of Americans doesnot seem to be based on having experienced greater mobility in the past, since the percent of Americans reporting that their job is better than their father's job doesnot differ much from the other countries. Five of the seven countries report improvement rate of 37-47% with only the Hungarians at 57% and the West Germans at 29% deviating from the pack (Table 5). Earlier studies indicated however that Americans are less likely to see intergenerational mobility as tied to family background than are people in Great Britain, West Germany, Austria, or Italy. Americans may interpret their personal upward mobility as more indicative of the openness of their society than do people in the European nations who may see such achievement as the result of their

family background (Smith, 1987; Haller and Hoellinger, 1986).

On the other hand, people in all countries tend to agree to which factors are most important for "getting ahead in life." People in industrial nations tend to rank personal characteristics such as hard work, ambition, natural ability, and education as the most important (Table 6). Next, typically comes "Knowing the right people." This is usually followed by the parental characteristics of wealth and education. Bringing up the bottom are ascribed characteristics such as race, sex, religion, and region of origin and the political factors of political connections and beliefs. The Anglo nations (Great Britain, America, and Australia) are especially close in their ranking of achievement factors with only minor differences in both the ranking of factors and their absolute levels. The Germanic nations (Germany and the Netherlands) also closely resemble one another and differ from the Anglo pattern primarily in ranking one's education a little higher than personality attributes. Italy differs in giving more weight to connections in general (ranked #2) and to political connections (ranked #5) than any of the other nations, while the personal characteristics of hard work and ambition are seen as less important. Hungary is distinguished by the relatively low emphasis on education (Braun and Kolosi, 1987). It is the only country that ranks education as less important than the average of the two parental background variables. Likewise, while the relative rank of political connections and political beliefs is only a bit higher in

Hungary, their absolute levels are well above those of other nations. This would seem to reflect the pervasive role of the Communist party in social and economic life.

The industrial welfare states are even more similar on their explanations for inequality (Table 7). First, there is a widespread belief that social inequality is functional; that without rewards people would not either work so hard or acquire the skills and education needed for technical and professional occupations. Only the Netherlands is a notable outlier, being much less likely to believe that pay differentials are a necessary incentive. Second, the nations are less likely to credit class conflict as an explanation for social inequality. Hungarians see class conflict as less of an explanation than the other countries and Italians are more likely to express this belief. Third, people are even less likely to mention the promotion of general economic prosperity as a reason for social inequality. Consensus is once again high, with the exception of the Netherlands which again is less likely to mention this factor than the other nations. This may in part however come from language differences (See Appendix 1: Methodological Comments).

Finally, the industrial nations generally report similar levels of social conflict. Only West Germany perceives less conflict overall than the other nations. People across nations tend to see more conflict between economic groups than between "classes" or rural/urban groups. The conflict between either the poor and the rich or between management and workers is considered

the strongest, conflict between the unemployed and those with jobs ranks second or third, and class and rural/urban comes fourth or fifth. The greater difference of perceived conflict between wealth groups and work hierarchies than between classes is merely a function of the fact that the distance between the former two groups (rich vs. poor and managers vs. employees) is greater than the distance between the middle and working classes.

There seems to be no general pattern to explain the country-by-country differences in rankings. These differences are not great however and probably reflect particularistic socio-economic conditions such as the level of unemployment, the size and condition of the farm sector, and so forth.

Social Inequality and the Welfare State

Cross-national differences in popular preferences for welfare policies in general and levelling programs in particular are large. The public in the study's one Communist nation overwhelmingly favors the full gamut of welfare policies. Support in the social democracies and mixed economies of Western Europe is lower, but still high. In the liberal/capitalist democracies support is lower still with majorities failing to agree with these policies. In America the lower support for redistributive measures and the relatively strong support for opportunity measures suggests that an ideology of opportunity plays a key role. This orientation also appears to be shared (to a slightly smaller degree) in Australia. Given that both are pioneering and immigrant nations, one might wonder whether the experience of

nation building or the influx of immigrants in search of a better life might have helped to create an enduring opportunity ethos. In contrast people in Communist Hungary and the European social democracies are more supportive of an egalitarian ideology.

Despite these decidedly different preferences in welfare policies, the nations have a great deal of similarity in how they perceive social inequality. Personal characteristics rather than family position or ascribed attributes are widely seen as most important for personal advancement, although Hungary and Italy (the most pro-welfare of the social democracies) both give relatively higher weight to connections than do the other nations. Similarly, people in all countries offer similar explanations for social inequality. First, that incentives are needed to stimulate human capital development and personal productivity; second, that the haves try to maintain the differences that advantage them; and lastly, that economic prosperity rests on these differences. Finally, the perceived level of conflicts between groups is similar in most nations and while nation-specific, conflict orderings clearly exist, they do not follow the general Communist-Capitalist pattern shown on welfare policies. This suggests that industrialized nations share in common many beliefs about the nature of society and of human behavior and motives, but do differ on their valuation of opportunity and equality and how governments might best achieve these goals.

Table 1

Support for the Welfare State

(% Strongly Agreeing/Agreeing)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT	ALL
Reduce income differences	27.9	62.9	77.0	55.6	41.6	64.0	81.0	58.6
Jobs for all	43.8	57.8	89.9	73.7	37.9	73.9	81.8	65.5
Decent living for jobless	35.8	54.7	----	61.3	34.4	59.0	67.3	52.1
Basic income for all	20.3	59.4	77.8	50.7	36.3	47.7	66.7	51.3
Spend less for poor (disagree)	62.7	82.0	71.9	80.1	59.1	55.0	82.9	70.5
Average	38.1	63.4	79.2	64.3	41.9	59.9	75.9	
Help poor go to college	75.3	82.6	71.7	83.7	70.6	74.0	89.5	78.2

Table 2

Opposition to Taxes

(% Much too high+Too high)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Those with high incomes	17.2	24.2	16.9	11.8	34.0	24.8	17.9
Those with middle incomes	67.6	39.9	34.3	47.8	59.0	56.8	60.7
Those with low incomes	66.7	84.5	53.0	80.3	68.8	75.8	83.5
Average	50.5	49.5	34.7	46.6	53.9	52.5	54.0
Low - Middle	- 0.9	44.6	18.7	32.5	9.8	19.0	22.8

Table 3

Support for Income Equalizing Measures

(% Favoring Equalizing Measures)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Progressive income tax	63.9	74.8	68.6	72.9	62.6	70.2	77.2
Reduce income differences	27.9	62.9	77.0	55.6	41.6	64.0	81.0

Table 4

Subjective Position of Ten-Point Scale

(1= top; 10= bottom)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
1-3	17.6	7.7	2.5	9.8	10.4	3.2	9.9
4-7	72.2	75.2	74.0	80.9	83.8	59.8	83.6
8-10	10.1	17.1	23.5	9.2	5.8	37.1	6.6
1-4	34.3	19.7	8.1	23.7	35.4	11.1	25.9

Table 5

Comparative Standing and Opportunity

(% Optimistic; Better off)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Good chance of improving stan- dard of living	71.1	35.8	32.6	35.9	57.5	23.3	42.5
Better job than father	46.8	47.4	56.5	28.5	45.8	42.9	37.3

Table 6
 Factors Influencing "Getting Ahead in Life"
 (Rank)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Hard work	1	1	3	4	2	2	4
Ambition	2	3	1	2	1	3	6
Good education	3	2	5	1	3	1	1
Natural ability	4	4	2	5	4	4	3
Knowing right people	5	5	4	3	5	5	2
Well-educated parents	6	6	8	6	6	6	7
Wealthy family	7	7	6	7	7	7	8
Political connections	8	11	7	9	8	8	5
Race	9	8	-	8	9	9	13
Man/woman	10	9	10	10	10	11	11
Religion	11	12	11	12	11	10	10
Political beliefs	12	13	9	11	13	12	9
Part of the country	13	10	12	13	12	13	12

Table 7

Explanations for Income Differences

(% Strongly agree/Agree)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
A. Incentives							
Large pay differences needed for hard work	67.8	61.1	69.8	68.9	71.9	35.6	53.5
Take extra responsibility only if paid for it	69.7	81.7	60.2	64.4	82.3	63.5	76.9
Get skills/qualifications only if paid extra	67.1	69.3	60.9	73.7	81.1	43.3	73.1
Study for years to be lawyer/doctor only if earn more	67.9	69.2	55.1	84.9	80.8	41.7	67.0
Average	68.1	70.3	61.5	73.0	79.0	46.0	67.6
B. Class Conflict							
Benefits rich and powerful	46.4	59.3	36.0	63.1	55.3	57.7	73.5
Ordinary people not organized	42.0	39.5	28.0	40.1	31.6	45.1	60.7
Average	44.2	49.4	32.0	51.6	43.5	51.4	62.1
C. Macro Economic Good							
Needed for natl. prosperity	31.2	26.0	24.5	25.4	27.6	16.1	17.6
Good profits improve standard of living	47.3	53.4	53.7	39.5	53.3	31.3	57.2
Average	39.3	39.7	39.1	32.5	40.5	23.7	37.4

Table 8

Inter-Group Conflict

(% Very strong+Strong Conflicts)

	US	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Poor v. rich	58.9	51.5	53.8	35.9	43.0	77.4	58.8
Management v. workers	52.7	54.1	41.1	51.5	50.5	57.6	51.1
Unemployed v. people with jobs	45.9	38.8	----	36.2	45.7	48.2	57.2
Farmers v. city people	36.0	26.1	25.6	10.8	42.2	31.5	24.2
Working class v. middle class	20.4	24.5	37.3	12.9	17.6	21.9	45.2
Average	42.8	39.0	----	29.5	39.8	47.3	47.3
Average (exclud- ing unemployed)	42.0	39.1	39.5	27.8	38.3	47.1	44.8

Appendix 1: Methodological Comments

1. The Hungarians didnot ask questions about race and unemployment. We were informed that no Hungarian term closely matched the English concept of "race". Unemployment is considered to be non-existent in Hungary and the "unemployed" are not deemed to be a social category that can be meaningfully referred to.

2. The Hungarians added a second Can't Choose category to the tax burden question, Can't Choose, Not Working.

3. Both the German and Dutch translations of "good profits" connote large, great, or high profits, while the English phrase implies "healthy, but not excessive" profits. The Italian appears to follow the English meaning (at least literally). I have no idea on the Hungarian meaning.

4. While no nation ranks "hard work" lower than fourth among the factors affecting one's chances of getting ahead in life, it is ranked both relatively and absolutely higher in the three English-speaking nations. We wonder whether language factors might contribute to this result. First, in English the phrase "hard work" is closely associated with the concept of advancement. "Hard work" is the standard term to describe how one gets ahead through individual effort. It is a personal attribute that implies drive and diligence on the person's part. In other contexts it might however refer to either the labor or task itself (i.e. the task is difficult, physically and/or mentally demanding) rather than an attribute of the individual or to an individual making a strong effort to complete a task or do his/her job (e.g. he's working hard; she put in a hard day's work), but without referring to a general personal characteristics of the person. We wonder if the non-English languages capture the personal, achievement aspects of the English phrase or perhaps are closer to the task oriented English meanings.

Michael Braun of ZUMA believes that the German phrase "hart zu arbeiten" (to work hard) captures less of the success and character implications than the English does, probably centering more on the English meaning of "an individual making a strong effort to complete a task or do his/her job."

5. There seems to be some notable house or possibly country differences on No Opinion levels. No Opinion in West Germany above those in the other nations and in at least a few instances are much higher (See note 6). For example, on the conflict questions the average No Opinion level was 8.1% in West Germany and from 3.4-5.5% in the other countries.

These differences may arise from several causes. First, differences in house styles are known to notably influence No Opinion levels (Smith, 1978; 1982). However, the self-administered format used in most countries should minimize such

house effects. Second, physical layout of response opinion can influence response distributions (e.g. see note 7). However, while there are notable differences across nations on these questions, there is nothing that suggests that the German layout would especially encourage No Opinion responses. Third, Germans may be either more ambivalent or less likely to form opinions on issues. We have no clear evidence from other sources in favor of such an interpretation however. Finally, the No Opinion option may be more attractive in German than in English or the other languages. The standard English phrase is "Can't choose", while the German is "Kann ich nicht sagen" (I can not say).

The countries tend to agree on the relative level of No Opinion across items however. When No Opinions are greater on a question in one nation, they tend to be higher in all nations. (Hungary, which is both socially and linguistically the most different nation, follows this pattern less well than the other countries however.) For example, the conflict items tend to generate more item non-response than other groups of questions (factors affecting opportunity, reasons for inequality, welfare programs, tax questions). It had the highest of these five groups in the US, Britain, West Germany, and Italy and was second in Hungary and the Netherlands. Similarly within the conflict group the rural/urban item led in No Opinion in all but two of the countries.

6. There is some suggestion that questions using the English phrase "standard of living" may create problems for German-speaking respondents. This phrase is used in three questions ("a good chance of improving our standard of living", "allowing...profits...improve(s) everyone's standard of living", and government should "provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed"). On the first the level on No Opinion is exceptionally high in West Germany. On the five groups of questions alluded to in note 5 the ratio of German No Opinion to Anglo-American No Opinion is from 1.6:1 to 2.75:1. For these three standard of living items the ratios are 2.6:1 for the unemployed, 3.8:1 for profits, and 4.4:1 for chances. Perhaps these issues are ones on which the Germans have more ambivalent feelings than the British and Americans, but the higher No Opinion may reflect some difficulty with the German translation of the phrase "standard of living".

Michael Braun reports however that the German phrase, "Lebensstandard", is a commonly used and readily understood word.

7. The Dutch are heavily over represented in the bottom three levels of the social standing scale (37.1% vs. 23.5% in Hungary and 17.1% in Britain, the closest two nations). This apparently occurred because they used a ladder with a widening bottom, clearly suggesting that more people were in the bottom rungs than in the rest of the scale. In the other countries it appears that the vertical scale was uniform throughout its length.

8. On the father-child occupational status comparison question, the Germans have a much higher level reporting no father/father did not have job. This apparently results from the fact that on the German survey people who responded to a prior question on father's occupation by saying that their father was dead, did not have a job, or was unknown were screened out of the subsequent intergenerational mobility question.

Endnotes

1. In 1977 the seven nations covered in this article devoted the following percentages of their gross domestic product to social welfare programs: The Netherlands (27.6), West Germany (23.4), Italy (22.8), Great Britain (17.3), Hungary (16.2), Australia (14.3), and the United States (13.7). With the exception Hungary support for welfare measures are directly associated by the extent of the welfare state as measured by the above percentages. We suspect that the accounting scheme employed does not adequately capture the central social welfare role of the state in Communist nations.
2. The connection between popular preferences and the extent of the welfare state is also supported by the fact that the comprehensiveness of the welfare state varies inversely with the electoral strength of right-wing parties (Hicks and Swank, 1984; Cameron, 1978).
3. For example Davis (1986) notes that while 70% of the public in Britain consider themselves as "working class" only 51% do so in the United States. Elsewhere he (Davis, 1987) describes the two countries as follows, "America is a pious middle class nation, while Britain is a secular working class one."
4. There appears to be little relationship between the concentration of wealth and either the perceived level of inequality or support for redistributive policies (Hicks and Swank, 1984; Cameron, 1978).

Appendix 2

1987 ISSP Social Inequality Module

Please show for each of these how important you think it is for getting ahead in life...

a. First, how important is coming from a wealthy family?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	3.9	4.2	15.9	6.7	4.3	0.6	6.3
Very important	16.0	16.5	17.8	17.1	13.7	10.0	33.9
Fairly important	28.3	33.5	26.7	31.9	29.5	27.3	24.3
Not very important	32.3	30.2	25.0	26.7	33.6	37.3	19.4
Not important at all	17.8	14.0	13.4	14.5	15.7	22.4	15.7
Can't choose	1.7	1.6	1.3	3.2	3.1	2.4	0.4

b. Having well educated parents?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	5.8	3.3	9.8	7.6	4.1	0.6	6.7
Very important	32.8	23.6	16.4	29.8	16.1	25.3	38.3
Fairly important	41.1	45.3	29.0	41.0	37.3	42.9	29.6
Not very important	14.5	19.6	31.1	13.9	27.6	23.4	18.7
Not important at all	5.0	7.3	12.1	5.8	11.8	6.9	6.0
Can't choose	0.8	0.9	1.6	1.9	3.0	0.9	0.7

c. Having a good education yourself?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	35.1	23.5	12.9	38.1	22.4	14.3	29.1
Very important	48.8	48.7	24.8	47.9	46.1	60.3	49.5
Fairly important	14.5	23.9	31.4	10.8	26.4	22.0	16.6
Not very important	1.3	2.8	22.9	2.1	1.6	2.4	3.2
Not important at all	0.1	0.7	6.9	0.4	0.7	0.8	1.0
Can't choose	0.2	0.5	1.1	0.7	2.8	0.4	0.7

d. Ambition? -- how important is that?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	42.1	37.8	27.9	19.7	40.3	19.6	16.6
Very important	45.4	42.0	43.8	47.3	43.6	47.3	31.0
Fairly important	10.5	16.9	22.2	25.5	13.0	25.4	27.4
Not very important	0.8	2.1	3.9	5.2	0.4	5.1	16.1
Not important at all	0.2	0.7	1.0	1.3	0.2	0.7	7.2
Can't choose	1.0	0.5	1.2	1.1	2.6	1.9	1.7

e. Natural ability? -- how important is that?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	12.7	14.4	27.5	16.3	18.8	7.4	25.5
Very important	46.0	42.7	41.6	41.2	47.9	43.5	48.8
Fairly important	36.1	37.4	25.5	34.0	27.8	35.3	20.0
Not very important	3.8	4.1	2.8	6.0	2.5	11.4	3.2
Not important at all	0.4	0.7	0.6	1.3	0.4	1.4	0.6
Can't choose	0.9	0.8	2.0	1.2	2.8	0.9	0.6

f. Hard work -- how important is that for getting ahead in life?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	37.4	35.8	25.0	19.6	32.7	18.4	17.7
Very important	52.0	47.9	35.6	39.1	48.5	48.9	38.7
Fairly important	8.9	13.8	24.7	31.4	14.8	27.5	24.3
Not very important	1.3	1.4	11.4	6.7	1.4	4.5	14.9
Not important at all	0.3	0.7	2.2	1.9	0.3	0.6	4.1
Can't choose	0.1	0.3	1.2	1.3	2.5	0.2	0.3

g. Knowing the right people?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	7.7	13.0	14.5	17.7	10.6	7.0	27.6
Very important	32.3	26.5	25.8	41.7	21.3	36.4	48.0
Fairly important	45.2	40.7	33.4	29.3	38.8	39.2	20.0
Not very important	12.6	16.9	19.0	7.7	20.6	14.4	3.2
Not important at all	1.8	2.7	4.9	2.7	5.8	2.2	0.6
Can't choose	0.4	0.2	2.4	0.9	2.8	0.8	0.6

h. Having political connections?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	2.6	2.1	11.5	5.8	5.4	1.4	21.8
Very important	12.9	4.8	17.4	15.9	8.5	5.4	32.6
Fairly important	30.1	13.7	28.4	26.3	21.8	13.4	20.4
Not very important	36.0	47.8	27.5	29.4	37.4	44.2	13.7
Not important at all	14.4	28.3	10.8	18.0	22.5	31.1	9.7
Can't choose	4.0	3.3	4.4	4.6	4.4	4.5	1.8

i. A person's race -- how important is that?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	2.0	2.6	nap	7.4	3.6	0.8	1.6
Very important	12.4	13.6	"	15.3	10.2	5.5	7.6
Fairly important	24.7	30.8	"	21.1	23.0	17.0	12.9
Not very important	34.8	31.3	"	21.4	32.1	36.6	23.9
Not important at all	23.0	18.2	"	29.9	27.3	35.0	51.5
Can't choose	3.2	3.4	"	4.9	3.8	5.1	2.5

j. A person's religion?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	3.9	1.9	1.7	3.8	1.9	0.8	2.9
Very important	10.3	3.4	2.7	7.2	2.9	3.0	11.2
Fairly important	13.9	8.5	5.6	12.2	10.0	6.8	17.5
Not very important	34.5	39.7	30.1	27.0	34.8	37.2	22.4
Not important at all	34.9	45.4	58.1	46.9	47.3	50.4	44.0
Can't choose	2.5	0.9	1.9	2.8	3.2	1.8	2.0

k. The part of the country a person comes from?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	1.2	1.0	1.4	2.4	1.3	0.3	1.6
Very important	5.9	6.3	2.4	4.7	3.5	1.6	10.4
Fairly important	14.7	20.6	8.5	12.6	13.1	8.7	19.2
Not very important	38.1	40.8	27.8	29.2	32.3	39.8	25.4
Not important at all	37.5	30.1	57.5	47.8	46.5	48.2	41.0
Can't choose	2.6	1.2	2.3	3.2	3.3	1.5	2.4

1. Being a man or a woman -- how important is that for getting ahead in life?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	2.8	1.8	4.0	6.2	1.8	0.3	1.8
Very important	11.5	9.6	7.6	14.7	6.5	3.3	11.9
Fairly important	23.1	21.6	22.1	23.2	15.8	12.8	20.5
Not very important	33.3	32.5	31.0	20.1	28.7	36.5	26.1
Not important at all	26.9	30.4	31.7	30.6	43.3	45.1	37.9
Can't choose	2.5	4.3	3.6	5.0	3.9	2.0	1.8

m. A person's political beliefs?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Essential	1.4	0.9	8.1	4.2	1.4	0.3	3.3
Very important	7.4	4.0	16.1	13.9	3.0	2.3	18.3
Fairly important	25.1	18.5	30.9	27.2	12.1	11.7	26.0
Not very important	37.9	47.8	22.7	24.7	31.7	40.1	25.5
Not important at all	24.8	26.4	17.4	25.5	47.8	41.3	22.8
Can't choose	3.4	2.5	4.7	4.5	3.9	4.2	4.1

The way things are in America, people like me and my family have a good chance of improving our standard of living -- do you agree or disagree?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	18.9	4.3	6.8	4.0	12.3	1.7	8.3
Agree	52.2	31.5	25.8	31.9	46.2	21.5	34.2
Neither agree or disag.	17.0	29.2	31.9	28.4	21.5	35.6	25.0
Disagree	8.8	26.7	23.4	17.5	13.3	24.6	18.0
Strongly disagree	1.5	5.0	9.6	7.8	1.8	7.2	10.6
Can't choose	1.6	3.2	2.6	10.5	4.9	9.3	3.9

Some people earn a lot of money while others do not earn very much at all...

In order to get people to work hard, do you think large differences in pay are...

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Absolutely necessary	17.7	13.5	30.6	16.1	13.6	7.9	16.7
Probably necessary	50.1	47.6	39.2	52.8	58.3	27.7	36.8
Probably not necessary	21.5	21.9	13.4	13.5	18.0	24.0	23.7
Definitely not necessary	5.7	12.4	11.3	6.9	4.4	35.6	18.8
Can't choose	5.1	4.3	5.5	10.7	5.7	4.8	4.0

Do you agree or disagree...

a. People would not want to take extra responsibility at work unless they were paid extra for it.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	17.5	23.0	20.4	16.5	17.8	8.9	29.9
Agree	52.2	58.7	39.8	47.9	64.5	54.6	47.0
Neither agree nor disag.	11.6	8.7	18.1	11.3	8.5	15.4	8.2
Disagree	15.9	8.8	15.3	16.7	5.8	16.9	10.1
Strongly disagree	1.7	0.5	2.7	3.2	0.5	2.4	3.7
Can't choose	1.1	0.3	3.8	4.5	2.8	1.8	1.1

b. Workers would not bother to get skills and qualifications unless they were paid extra for having them.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	13.4	18.7	19.2	22.6	18.0	4.8	24.2
Agree	43.7	50.6	41.7	51.1	63.1	38.5	48.9
Neither agree nor disag.	14.3	10.8	17.2	9.8	9.7	19.3	10.6
Disagree	23.4	17.8	15.6	11.4	6.3	32.3	12.6
Strongly disagree	3.2	1.8	2.6	1.9	0.8	3.7	2.3
Can't choose	1.9	0.3	3.7	4.1	2.8	1.5	1.6

c. Inequality continues to exist because it benefits the rich and powerful.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	13.0	22.9	12.1	24.1	15.5	14.8	26.9
Agree	33.4	36.4	23.9	39.0	39.8	42.9	46.6
Neither agree nor disag.	25.4	16.0	19.4	14.4	21.9	16.2	11.8
Disagree	18.0	16.7	28.7	11.4	14.9	18.3	10.6
Strongly disagree	4.0	2.5	9.4	3.7	3.8	5.4	2.3
Can't choose	6.1	5.4	6.6	7.5	4.0	2.4	1.7

d. No one would study for years to become a lawyer or doctor unless they expected to earn a lot more than ordinary workers.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	25.4	24.4	21.6	41.7	30.2	7.6	28.3
Agree	42.5	44.8	33.5	43.2	50.6	34.1	38.7
Neither agree nor disag.	11.2	9.4	16.6	6.1	6.7	20.7	11.0
Disagree	17.9	18.6	20.7	5.5	9.0	29.1	16.4
Strongly disagree	2.1	2.1	5.0	0.9	0.8	3.8	4.7
Can't choose	0.9	0.7	2.6	2.6	2.8	4.6	0.9

e. Large differences in income are necessary for America's prosperity.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	5.3	4.3	5.5	4.6	4.4	2.2	3.1
Agree	25.9	21.7	19.0	19.8	23.2	13.9	14.5
Neither agree nor disag.	28.1	24.1	17.1	22.9	31.1	20.0	16.3
Disagree	31.4	38.0	37.5	29.4	31.6	43.2	37.3
Strongly disagree	5.4	8.5	13.3	13.8	5.7	15.7	22.9
Can't choose	3.9	3.4	7.6	9.5	3.6	5.1	5.9

f. Allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	9.6	10.3	15.7	6.5	9.8	4.4	12.7
Agree	36.7	43.1	38.0	33.0	43.5	26.9	44.5
Neither agree nor disag.	23.4	19.3	19.8	21.4	24.1	23.3	18.5
Disagree	23.4	21.3	14.8	19.9	16.5	28.1	13.9
Strongly disagree	3.6	3.1	3.5	7.9	2.7	7.5	6.7
Can't choose	3.2	2.8	8.2	11.3	3.4	9.8	3.7

g. Inequality continues to exist because ordinary people don't join together to get rid of it.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	8.2	7.9	7.2	11.7	5.1	7.8	17.8
Agree	33.8	31.6	20.8	28.4	26.5	37.3	42.9
Neither agree nor disag.	26.5	20.9	18.5	20.3	32.7	20.6	13.8
Disagree	22.6	28.5	32.6	17.2	25.8	20.7	15.8
Strongly disagree	4.0	5.5	12.2	7.9	6.0	4.9	6.6
Can't choose	4.9	5.6	8.8	14.5	3.9	8.7	3.0

Do you agree or disagree...

a. Differences in income in America are too large.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	14.5	25.6	40.1	23.9	13.2	18.7	43.1
Agree	41.9	49.1	34.1	48.3	44.5	46.8	43.1
Neither agree nor disag.	21.8	12.4	11.9	12.4	18.2	12.8	6.7
Disagree	15.8	9.5	9.1	9.0	16.8	17.2	5.3
Strongly disagree	3.2	1.4	2.0	1.6	2.1	2.9	0.7
Can't choose	2.8	2.0	2.8	4.9	5.3	1.6	0.9

b. It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between the people with high incomes and those with low incomes.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	6.6	20.6	31.3	16.7	8.7	16.1	34.8
Agree	21.3	42.3	45.7	38.9	32.9	47.9	46.2
Neither agree nor disag.	23.5	12.4	11.1	14.5	20.3	10.9	8.7
Disagree	33.5	19.2	6.7	14.4	26.0	17.8	7.4
Strongly disagree	12.2	3.1	2.0	7.5	6.3	5.5	1.7
Can't choose	2.9	2.5	3.2	7.9	5.7	1.9	1.2

c. The government should provide more chances for children from poor families to go to college.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	23.0	31.2	27.7	32.7	17.5	26.7	46.5
Agree	52.3	51.4	44.0	51.0	53.1	57.3	43.0
Neither agree nor disag.	12.2	10.9	14.6	7.3	15.6	9.0	6.1
Disagree	10.1	5.3	9.2	3.7	8.0	5.2	3.0
Strongly disagree	1.7	0.5	1.5	1.7	1.1	1.1	0.8
Can't choose	0.7	0.7	3.0	3.7	4.7	0.8	0.6

d. The government should provide a job for everyone who wants one.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	14.2	23.3	44.5	34.7	9.5	23.0	44.0
Agree	29.6	34.5	45.4	39.0	28.4	50.9	37.8
Neither agree nor disag.	20.2	16.8	4.5	12.7	23.6	15.5	9.4
Disagree	25.3	19.5	3.0	5.6	27.3	8.0	6.8
Strongly disagree	9.3	3.2	0.8	3.4	6.3	1.4	1.4
Can't choose	1.4	2.6	1.7	4.5	5.0	1.2	0.6

e. The government should spend less on benefits for the poor.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	3.3	0.8	2.8	1.3	2.0	3.7	1.9
Agree	14.4	3.7	7.0	4.2	12.1	16.6	5.0
Neither agree nor disag.	22.4	12.2	15.3	10.9	21.9	21.5	6.2
Disagree	42.7	53.1	46.9	32.3	47.0	39.1	33.6
Strongly disagree	15.0	28.9	25.0	47.8	12.1	15.9	49.3
Can't choose	2.1	0.9	3.1	3.4	4.9	3.2	3.9

f. The government should provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	6.3	17.4	nap	15.5	4.8	9.9	21.5
Agree	29.5	47.3	"	46.8	29.6	49.1	45.8
Neither agree nor disag.	26.2	17.6	"	20.5	30.1	23.4	16.4
Disagree	29.7	12.7	"	8.0	25.2	12.9	11.4
Strongly disagree	5.8	3.3	"	3.6	5.1	2.2	3.4
Can't choose	2.5	1.7	"	5.5	5.4	2.4	1.5

g. The government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income.

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Strongly agree	5.5	19.8	39.3	16.2	6.8	9.6	25.7
Agree	14.8	39.6	38.5	34.5	29.5	38.1	41.0
Neither agree nor disag.	19.9	13.1	11.2	16.5	21.0	17.5	11.3
Disagree	39.8	21.8	6.8	15.1	29.5	23.0	13.0
Strongly disagree	17.1	3.8	2.1	9.1	8.3	7.7	7.5
Can't choose	3.0	2.0	2.0	8.5	5.0	4.1	1.5

Generally, how would you describe taxes in America today...
 We mean all taxes together, including social security, income taxes, sales tax, and all the rest.

a. First, for those with high incomes, are taxes...

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Much too high	5.9	7.2	4.2	3.1	8.9	4.7	5.9
Too high	11.3	17.0	12.7	8.7	25.1	20.1	12.0
About right	21.4	32.9	44.9	27.5	24.8	23.7	19.4
Too low	37.6	31.1	18.9	35.9	23.8	35.9	34.4
Much too low	18.0	9.0	3.8	17.1	9.0	9.3	24.4
Can't choose	5.7	2.7	6.6	7.8	8.3	6.2	3.8
Can't choose, not working	---	---	9.0	---	---	---	---

b. Next, for those with middle incomes, are taxes...

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Much too high	15.9	8.4	5.1	7.0	11.4	6.3	15.2
Too high	51.7	31.5	29.2	41.8	47.6	50.5	45.5
About right	26.5	52.8	51.1	42.2	30.6	35.9	33.2
Too low	2.1	4.9	1.5	3.2	2.4	2.0	3.3
Much too low	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.0	0.5
Can't choose	3.6	2.0	4.2	5.6	7.4	5.2	2.3
Can't choose, not working	---	---	8.6	---	---	---	---

c. Lastly, for those with low incomes, are taxes...

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Much too high	28.1	37.4	19.2	33.8	23.5	25.1	45.0
Too high	38.6	47.1	33.8	46.5	45.3	50.7	38.5
About right	25.8	12.3	34.4	14.2	21.2	18.3	12.6
Too low	2.6	0.6	0.6	0.4	1.5	0.9	0.8
Much too low	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.9
Can't choose	4.4	1.9	3.7	5.0	8.2	4.9	2.3
Can't choose, not working	---	---	8.1	---	---	---	---

Do you think people with high incomes should pay a larger share of their income in taxes than those with low incomes, the same share, or a smaller share?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Much larger share	20.9	19.4	13.7	24.2	14.1	12.0	27.5
Larger	43.0	55.4	54.9	48.7	48.5	58.2	49.7
The same share	29.0	20.8	19.8	17.2	28.5	21.4	18.1
Smaller	1.5	1.4	3.3	0.9	1.3	3.5	1.3
Much smaller share	0.5	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.8	0.1
Can't choose	5.2	3.0	8.2	8.7	7.1	4.0	2.4

In all countries there are differences or even conflicts between different social groups. In your opinion, in America how much conflict is there between...

a. Poor people and rich people?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Very strong conflicts	15.0	13.3	17.6	8.4	8.4	28.9	23.6
Strong conflicts	43.9	38.2	36.2	27.5	34.6	48.5	35.2
Not very strong confl.	33.0	39.7	32.6	44.2	46.5	20.1	29.6
There are no conflicts	3.3	5.2	10.0	11.4	5.9	0.6	9.3
Can't choose	4.8	3.6	3.6	8.4	4.5	2.0	2.3

b. The working class and the middle class?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Very strong conflicts	2.8	3.6	6.4	1.1	1.0	1.3	12.3
Strong conflicts	17.6	15.9	30.9	11.8	16.6	20.6	32.9
Not very strong confl.	63.0	63.8	44.3	51.7	63.4	71.3	37.2
There are no conflicts	11.9	13.4	14.0	27.3	14.7	4.2	12.3
Can't choose	4.6	3.3	4.4	8.0	4.2	2.7	5.4

c. The unemployed and people with jobs?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Very strong conflicts	9.1	8.5	nap	5.5	9.0	7.6	22.5
Strong conflicts	36.8	30.3	"	30.7	36.7	40.6	34.7
Not very strong confl.	42.2	44.5	"	41.2	41.6	45.0	25.2
There are no conflicts	7.6	12.6	"	14.9	7.9	3.6	15.0
Can't choose	4.4	4.2	"	7.7	4.8	3.3	2.5

d. Management and Workers?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Very strong conflicts	9.2	9.5	8.8	10.3	7.2	16.6	16.5
Strong conflicts	43.5	44.6	32.3	41.2	43.3	51.0	34.6
Not very strong confl.	39.2	38.4	43.6	33.3	42.2	27.2	37.5
There are no conflicts	3.3	4.0	10.3	7.9	2.7	0.6	8.1
Can't choose	4.7	3.6	5.0	7.3	4.7	4.6	3.3

e. Farmers and city people?

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Very strong conflicts	7.9	4.4	5.3	1.4	7.6	4.5	6.8
Strong conflicts	28.1	21.7	20.3	9.4	34.6	27.0	17.4
Not very strong confl.	46.6	46.2	43.5	39.8	43.3	55.8	33.6
There are no conflicts	12.0	21.7	26.8	40.5	10.1	7.7	38.9
Can't choose	5.4	6.1	4.2	8.9	4.4	4.9	3.3

In our society there are groups which tend to be towards the top and those towards the bottom. Here we have a scale that runs from top to bottom. Where would you put yourself on this scale? Please mark box below.

		USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Top -	1	2.4	0.9	0.3	0.7	1.0	0.6	0.6
	2	2.7	1.7	0.2	1.8	1.1	0.6	1.1
	3	12.5	5.1	2.0	7.3	8.3	2.0	8.2
	4	16.7	12.0	5.6	13.9	19.2	7.9	16.0
	5	31.9	30.7	30.1	36.8	43.5	14.9	36.6
	6	15.0	19.3	22.3	18.2	13.5	19.6	18.7
	7	8.6	13.2	16.0	12.0	7.6	17.4	12.3
	8	5.9	10.1	12.4	5.1	3.7	15.8	4.0
	9	1.8	3.4	4.9	2.6	0.9	10.9	1.8
Bottom -	10	2.4	3.6	6.2	1.5	1.2	10.4	0.8

Please think of your present job (or your last one if you don't have one now). If you compare this job with the job your father had when you were 16, would you say that the level or status of your job is (or was)...

	USA	UK	HUN	WG	AUS	NL	IT
Much higher than your father's	19.5	16.9	30.8	4.4	14.5	7.2	10.1
Higher	27.3	30.5	25.7	20.8	31.3	35.7	27.2
About equal	23.4	26.7	20.2	38.5	31.8	29.5	25.1
Lower	14.8	17.2	8.5	11.8	14.2	13.9	9.3
Much lower than your father's	7.7	4.4	5.0	1.8	4.1	3.2	2.4
I never had a job	2.6	2.4	5.4	11.2	2.3	7.9	21.8
Did not have father/ father never had job	4.6	2.5	6.9	11.6	1.9	2.7	4.2

Survey Information

<u>Country</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Field Dates</u>	<u>Sample Procedure</u>	<u>Response Rate</u> ¹	<u>Sample Size</u>	<u>Method</u>
USA	NORC	2-4/87	FP	66%	1285	Sup.
UK	SCPR	3-6/87	FP	57%	1181	Sup.
Hungary	Tarki	5/87	FP	87%	2606	Per.
Germany	ZUMA	7-8/87	FP	54%	1397	Sup.
Nether-lands	SCP	9-12/86	FP	66%	1623	Sup.
Italy	Eurisko	11/86	PQ	nap	1027	Per.
Australia	RSSS	11/87 ²	FP	---	1547	Mail

nap=not applicable; question does not appear on survey
PQ=probability with quotas
FP=full probability
Sup.=supplement
Per.=personal interview

Notes

1. For supplements the response rates reported here are the response rate to the main survey times the response rate for the supplement.
2. Survey still being processed; based on nearly final returns.

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