

The Equality-in-Society Perception Gap: Japanese Attitudes as Revealed in the ISSP International Comparative Study on Social Inequality

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The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) is an ongoing program of cross-national collaboration in which the Public Opinion Research Division of the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute has participated since 1993. The ISSP started in 1983, with Germany, the United States, Great Britain, and Australia as its founding members. Today, the group has expanded in scope, with participation by university research centers and social research organizations from 39 countries and regions.

At ISSP the same themes are repeatedly surveyed. In 1999, the third survey on social inequality was conducted, the first two having been done in 1987 and 1992. Japan was not a participating member in the first two surveys, and this is the first time that Japan has been included in a survey on this theme. The twenty-four countries for which findings are analyzed here include nations in western and northern Europe, former socialist states such as Russia, and North American and Asian countries. In Germany the survey was conducted separately for the former East Germany and West Germany, and in the United Kingdom separately for Northern Ireland and Great Britain. A summary of the surveys for all the participating countries and the distribution of characteristics are provided in figures 19 and 20.

The survey in Japan was carried out between November 26 (Friday) and December 6 (Monday), 1999, among 1,800 men and women aged 16 and over throughout the country. The questionnaires were distributed to respondents and later retrieved. A total of 1,325 valid questionnaires (valid response rate: 73.6 percent) were collected.

The survey covers mainly awareness levels and attitudes toward occupations, social class, inequality, and income disparities. This report analyzes how Japanese feel about inequality in Japanese society compared to findings for other countries, mainly regarding how people felt about income disparities and class structure in their society, and where they placed themselves in the social order.

ATTITUDES TOWARD SOCIETY TYPES AND INCOME DISPARITY

In this section we will look at what type of society people think their country is and how they think about income disparities.

What is the Type of Society?

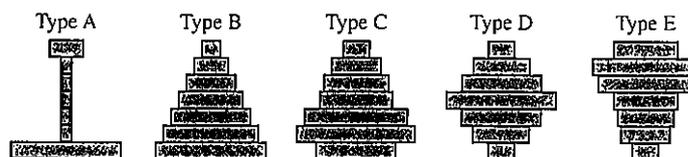
Respondents were asked about their image of their own country's social classes, based on distribution of class segments in their own society.

Respondents were shown diagrams of various types of societies and asked which was closest to their own country's society. Five types of society, A to E, were shown (fig. 1). In order of social inequality, the societies are: A – underclass/small elite; B – pyramid; C – modified pyramid; D – middle class-centric; and E – upper class-heavy. Figure 2 describes respondents' image of their own country.

In a separate question, respondents were asked the type of society they would like for their country. Between 60 to 90 percent chose society D or E, indicating that in every country people consider the ideal a society where most people are concentrated in the middle and upper classes.

Examining the degree to which the choice was selected out of similarity to the society type of the respondents' countries, three major groups emerged. One group, which included people from Norway, Cyprus, Austria, and Japan,

Figure 1. Types of Society



Type A: Elite vs. lowest class

A small elite at the top, very few people in the middle and the great mass of people at the bottom

Type B: Pyramid

A society like a pyramid with a small elite at the top, more people in the middle, and most at the bottom

Type C: Modified pyramid

A pyramid except that just a few people are at the very bottom

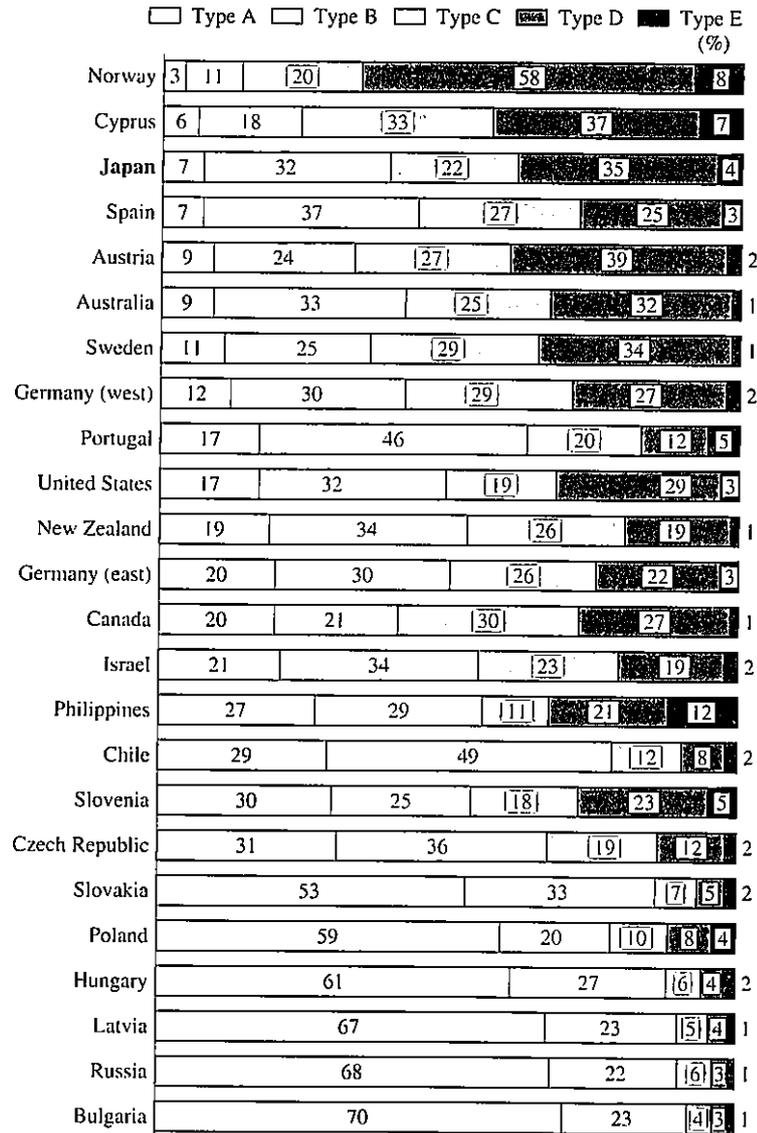
Type D: Middle-class-centric

A society with most people in the middle

Type E: Upper class-heavy

Many people near the top, and only a few near the bottom

Figure 2. What Type of Society Is Your Country Today?



Note: Question not asked in Great Britain and Northern Ireland

indicated few choices of A (underclass/small elite) and was distributed mainly among B, C, and D. In Norway, particularly, many people chose society D or E as the ideal.

The next group, where many people chose unequal societies A or B, which include large lower classes, consisted of people from Bulgaria, Russia, Latvia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and other countries of East Europe. The third group, in between the first two, included people from Canada and the United States, whose choices ranged from A to D, and where more people chose A compared to Japanese.

People's images of social classes thus reveal that a relatively small proportion of Japanese believe that Japan has an unequal society.

Are Income Disparities Large?

Next, let us examine people's attitudes toward income disparities. Figure 3 shows respondents' answers to whether they believe that "differences in income" in their own country are too large.

Most people in each country believe that differences in income are too large ("strongly agree" + "agree"). In particular, over 90 percent in Bulgaria, Latvia, Russia and other East European countries, as well as Portugal, Chile and so on, believe so.

Countries where a relatively small proportion of people feel that income disparities are too large include the Philippines, Cyprus, the United States, and Japan.

Although 70 percent of Japanese feel that income disparities are too large, they are less aware of income disparities compared to people in the other countries.

For the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, results of surveys conducted in 1987 and 1992 were available, allowing changes in attitudes toward income disparities in those countries to be tracked. In all cases, the proportion of people believing that income disparities are too large had increased compared to earlier years: Czech Republic 68% → 83% → 88%; Hungary 76% → 84% → 93%; Poland 82% → 86% → 89%. These changes show stronger feelings toward income disparities as a result of social changes in the aftermath of the collapse of communism.

Income Disparities, Society Type, and GDP

People from Eastern European countries, many of whom chose unequal society types, are very aware of income disparities, indicating a probable connection between their attitudes toward income disparities and image of society type.

Figure 3. Differences in Income Are Too Large

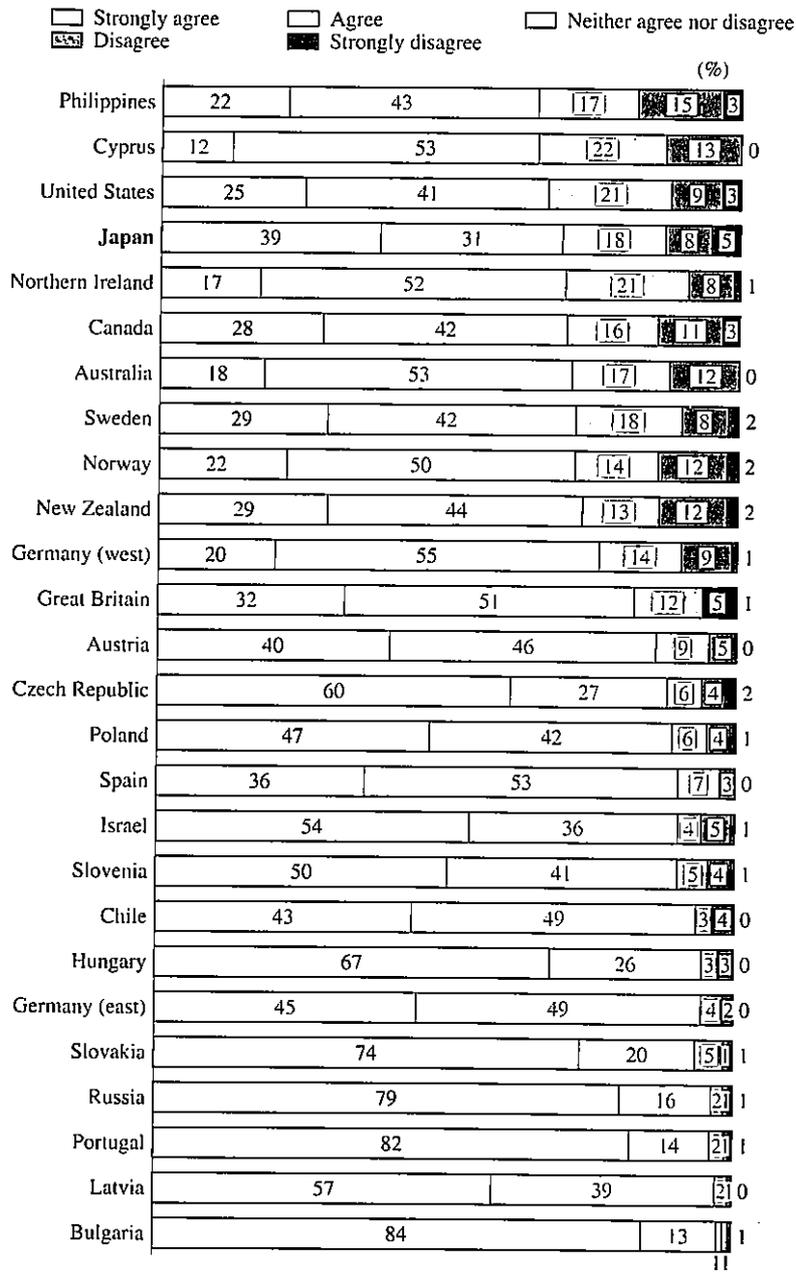


Figure 4 compares the percentage of those agreeing (+ strongly agreeing) that differences in income are too great and of those choosing A or B, models of highly unequal societies, in each country with that country's per capita gross domestic product (GDP), the measure of national wealth. The correlation coefficients in figure 5 indicate that there is a strong correlation between these elements.

In both cases, there is a strong negative correlation with GDP, meaning that

Figure 4. Attitudes Toward Income Disparities, Images of Type of Society and GDP

	Differences in income are too large	Type of society (A + B)	GDP
Philippines	65%	56%	894
Cyprus	66	23	11,631
United States	66	50	31,746
Japan	69	39	29,956
Northern Ireland	69	—	23,934
Canada	71	41	19,642
Australia	71	42	20,125
Sweden	71	36	26,790
Norway	72	14	33,203
New Zealand	73	53	13,985
Germany (west)	76	42	26,183
Great Britain	82	—	23,934
Austria	86	32	25,911
Czech Republic	88	67	5,486
Poland	89	79	4,096
Spain	89	45	14,690
Israel	90	55	17,041
Slovenia	91	55	9,798
Chile	92	78	4,921
Hungary	93	87	4,644
Germany (east)	94	50	26,183
Slovakia	94	86	3,787
Russia	95	90	1,936
Portugal	96	63	11,080
Latvia	97	90	2,638
Bulgaria	97	93	1,470

GDP = per capita gross domestic product, in U.S. dollars, 1998.

Source: United Nations, *Sekai tokei nenkan* 45 (1998) [Almanac of World Statistics 1998 (Vol. 45)], translated into Japanese in 2002, Hara Shobo, March 2002.

Figure 5. Correlation Coefficient for Income Disparities and Type of Society

	Differences in income are too large	Type of society (A + B)
Type of society (A + B)	0.73	1
GDP	-0.55	-0.80

the more affluent the country, the weaker attitudes toward income disparities and social inequality become. In particular, society type (A + B) has a stronger correlation with GDP. Thus, in more affluent countries people perceive that few people are in the lower classes.

Making the comparison between society type (A + B), attitude toward income disparities, and GDP reveals different trends in Norway and the United States, whose GDP is at similar levels. Many in Norway chose society type D or E as the ideal, and far fewer chose (A + B) compared to Americans. However, Norwegians are more strongly aware of income disparities than Americans. Sweden and Norway show similar tendencies. This probably reflects a difference in national attitudes, with Americans being very achievement-oriented and considering equality of opportunity important, whereas countries like Norway and Sweden with a strong social welfare orientation place importance on equality of result.

People in countries like Germany (east), Austria, Great Britain, Israel, Spain, and Portugal have strong awareness of income disparities relative to their high GDP.

On the other hand, in countries like Cyprus and the Philippines, awareness of income disparities is weak despite a low GDP. The Philippines, in particular, has the lowest GDP of all the countries included in the survey this time. Philippines respondents also demonstrated characteristic tendencies in response to other questions, so it may be that they have different attitudes toward equality and image of society type.

Japanese people, reflecting their country's large GDP, have weak attitudes toward income disparities and not many of them chose models of unequal societies.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

People in the United States and Norway have different images of society type and attitudes to income disparities, depending on whether they emphasize equality of opportunity or equality of result. The next survey item examined is attitudes toward equality of opportunity.

Are Wealth and Connections Influential?

Respondents were asked how important “coming from a wealthy family” and “knowing the right person” were in attaining wealth and social prominence. Figure 6 shows results for the “wealthy family” question. Many respondents from Eastern and Southern European countries answered that it was “essential” or “very important” to be from a well-off family. Percentages were especially high for respondents from Cyprus, Poland, Portugal, Bulgaria, Spain and others. On the other hand, the percentage was quite low in the Czech Republic, despite the fact that this is an Eastern European country.

Percentages were lowest for Japan, along with Norway and Canada.

Figure 7 shows results for the question relating to “the right person.” Overall, a higher percentage of respondents answered that knowing the right person is “essential” or “very important” compared to coming from a well-off family.

Ranking by country shows a high percentage of respondents from Cyprus and Poland, a trend similar to that for “wealthy family.”

Japan had the lowest percentage of respondents saying that knowing the right person is “essential” or “very important,” and the largest proportion of respondents, among all countries, for “not very important” or “not important at all.”

Japan was part of the group of countries where percentages for both “wealthy family” and “the right person” were especially low. In other words, not that many Japanese believe that social class determines wealth or position.

Are Effort and Ability Rewarded?

Respondents were asked how well they thought equality of opportunity worked in society.

In figure 8, which shows degree of agreement (“strongly agree” + “agree”) with the statement “People get rewarded for their effort,” the percentage tended to be high in industrialized countries and low in Eastern Europe.

The percentage was highest among American respondents, and over 50 percent of respondents in the Philippines, Australia, and Germany (west) also agreed that effort would be rewarded. Japan was part of the mid-range group.

On the other hand, the proportion was not that high in Scandinavian countries like Sweden and Norway, and in Great Britain. Among Eastern European countries, the highest was in Poland, which at less than 30 percent was not particularly high. In countries like Bulgaria, Slovakia, Russia and Hungary, fewer than 10 percent of respondents agreed with the statement.

In response to the statement “People get rewarded for their intelligence and skills” (“strongly agree” + “agree”) (fig. 9), answer trends were again similar,

Figure 6. How Important Is Coming from a Wealthy Family for Getting Ahead?

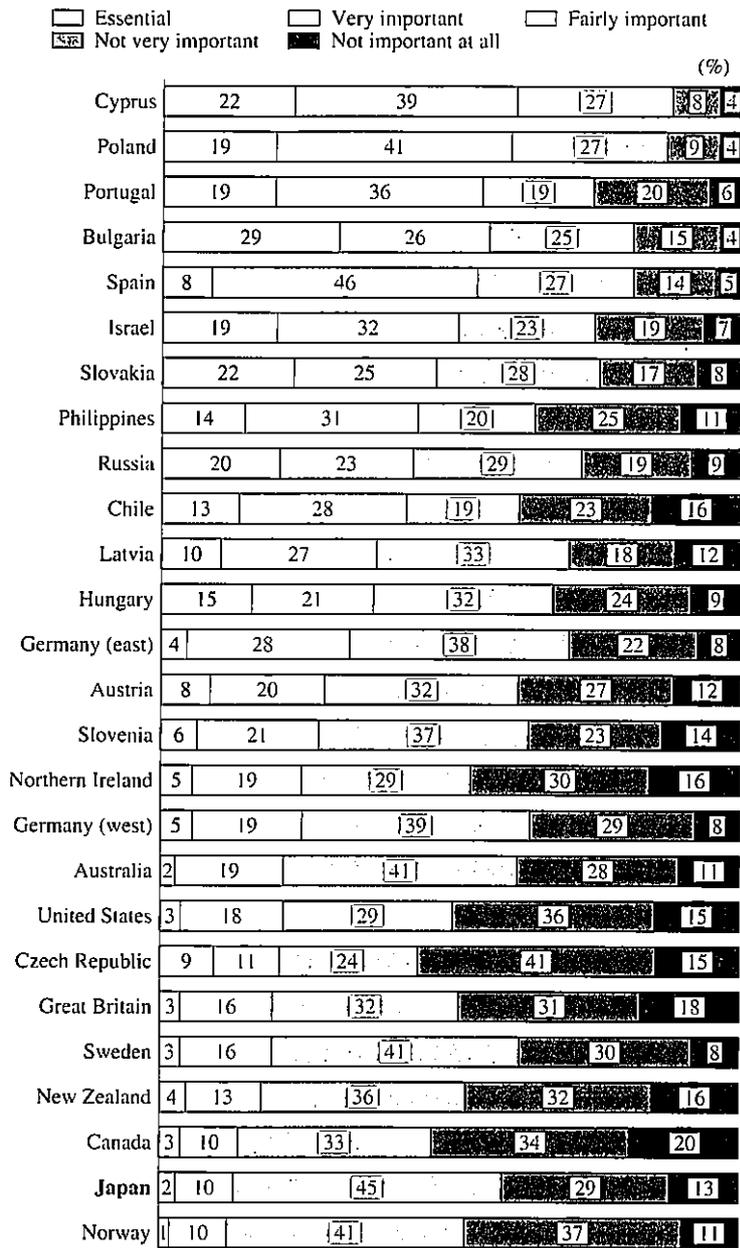


Figure 7. How Important Is Knowing the Right People for Getting Ahead?

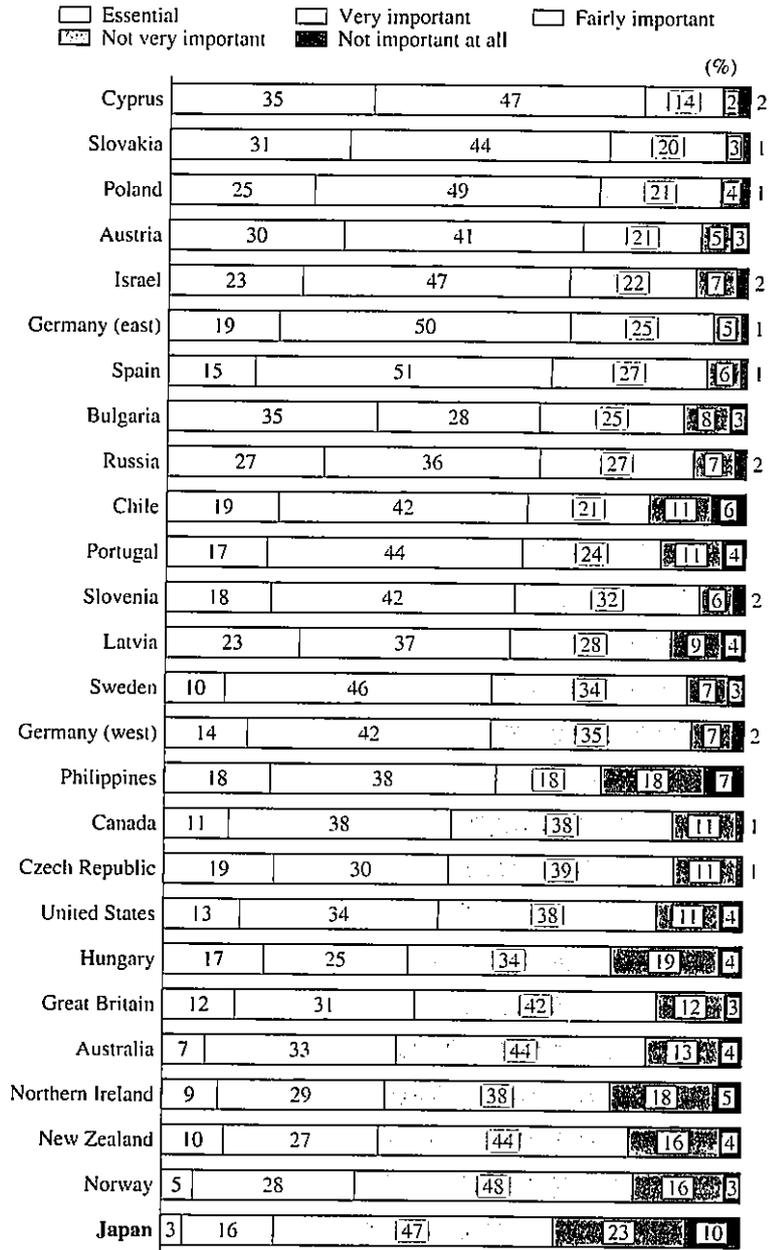


Figure 8. Those Who Make Efforts Will Be Rewarded

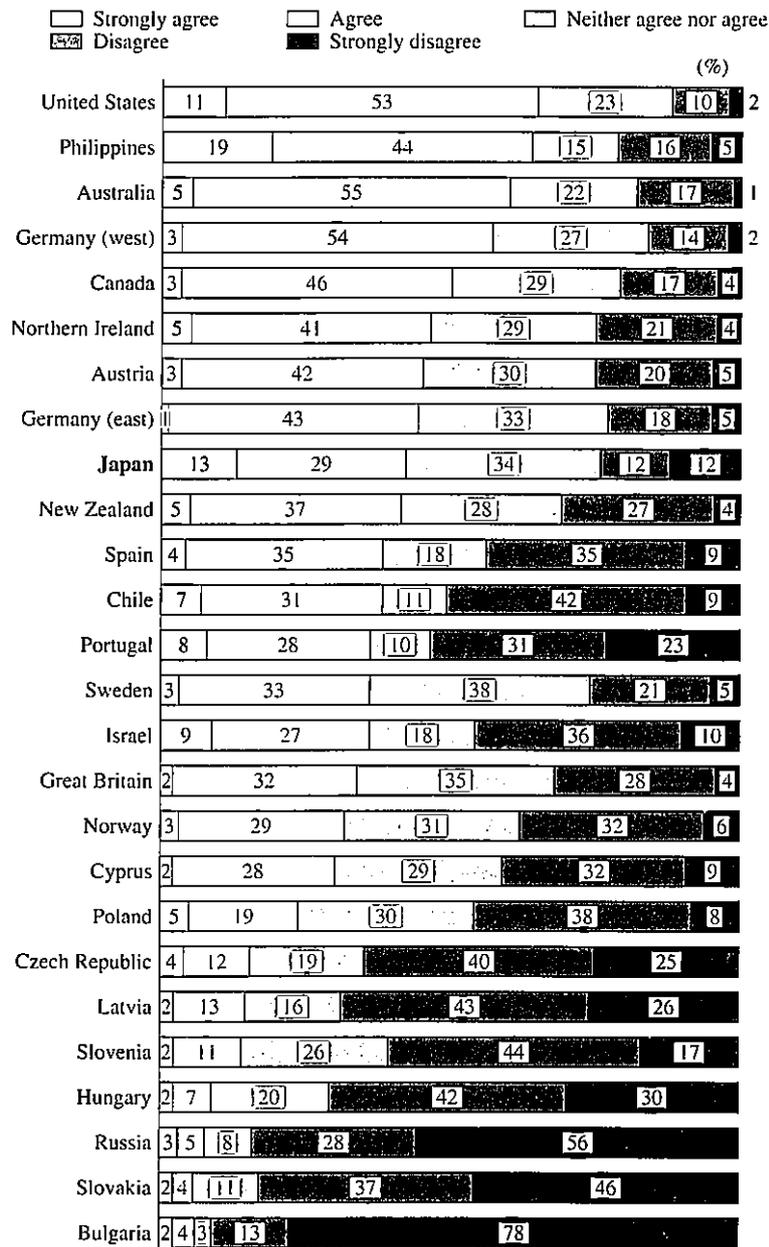
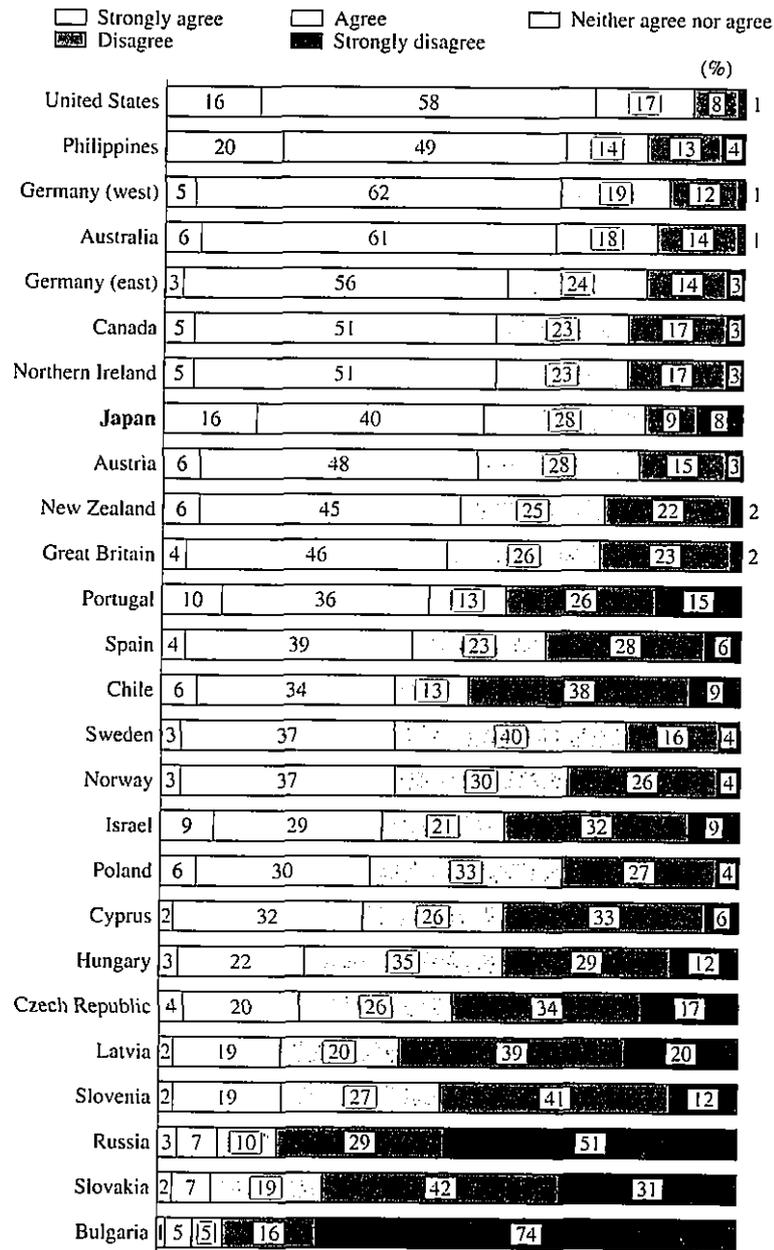


Figure 9. Those with Intellectual Ability and Skills Will Be Rewarded



with percentages high in industrialized countries and low in Eastern Europe. In most countries, respondents believed that "intelligence and skills" would be rewarded more than "effort."

Similarly to the case for "effort," a large proportion of respondents in the United States, the Philippines, Australia and Germany (west) agreed that "people get rewarded for their intelligence and skills." The fact that the awareness in the Philippines of income disparities is weak despite the country's low GDP may have something to do with many people there believing that effort and skills will be rewarded.

In Bulgaria, Slovakia and Russia, fewer than 10 percent believed that not only "effort" but also "intelligence and skills" would be rewarded. These are Eastern European countries where awareness of income disparities is particularly marked, and where many respondents chose highly unequal society types.

For Japan, the percentage of respondents who "strongly agree" and "agree" that people get rewarded for their intelligence and skills was slightly higher than mid-ranking countries, and when results for "agree" only are examined, it ranks next after the Philippines and even with the United States. This is similar to the trend for "effort."

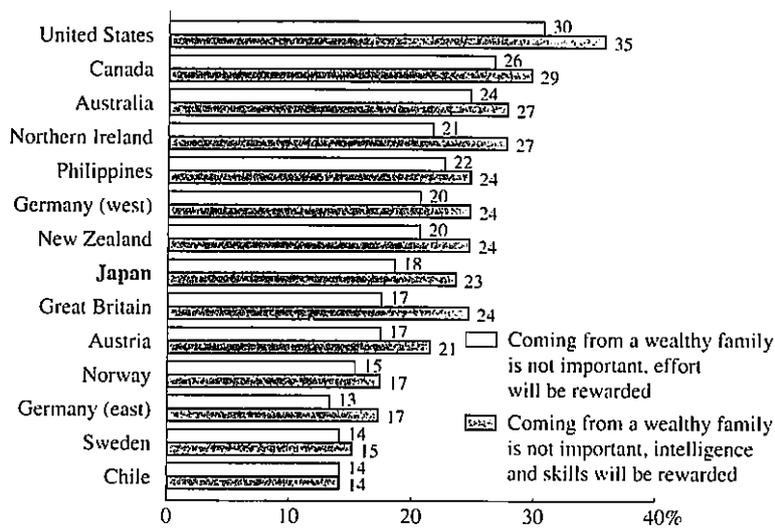
Origins and Effort/skills

Countries were grouped according to a combination of "wealthy family," "effort," and "intelligence and skills." The result showed a dichotomy in that over 10 percent in some countries believe that "coming from a wealthy family is not important, and effort and skills are rewarded" while in other countries, over 10 percent think that "coming from a wealthy family is important, and effort and skills are not rewarded" (figs. 10, 11; Chile included in both groups).

The United States leads the former, countries believing that their society offers equal opportunity, followed by Canada, Australia, and Northern Ireland. Japan occupies the middle rank among countries with equal opportunity.

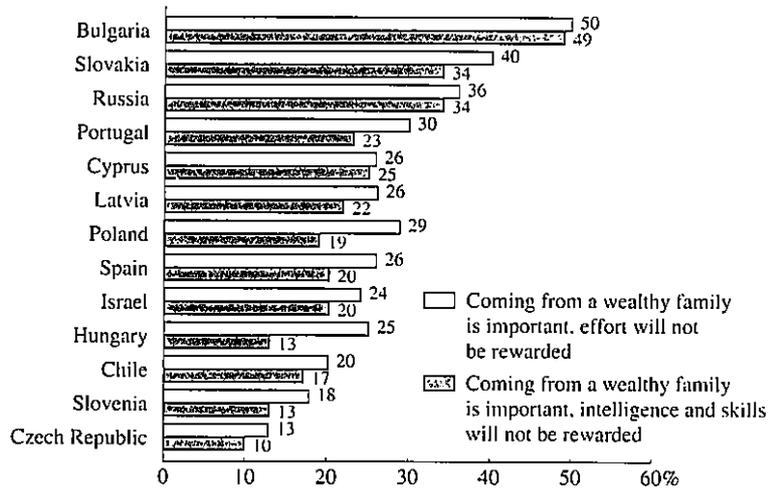
The latter are countries where people believe that their society does not offer equal opportunity but is influenced by social class instead, with Bulgaria, where awareness of income disparities is strongest, in the lead. Other countries in this group include Eastern and Southern European countries.

Figure 10. Countries Where Respondents Believe Equal Opportunity Exists



Note: Countries where 10% or more of respondents answered that "it is not important to be from a wealthy family" and "effort will be rewarded" or "intelligence and skills will be rewarded"

Figure 11. Countries Where Respondents Do Not Believe Equal Opportunity Exists



Note: Countries where 10% or more of respondents answered that "it is important to be from a wealthy family" and "effort will not be rewarded" or "intelligence and skills will not be rewarded"

SOCIAL POSITION

So far, we have examined respondents' ideas about what their own country is like. Next, we will look at which social class people perceive they belong to and how they believe their social class has changed.

Japanese Tend to Under-rank Themselves

First, respondents were asked which class they believe they belong to, on a 10-point scale ranging from 1, the highest, to 10, the lowest class (fig. 12).

In Norway, Australia, Sweden, and Austria, few people rank themselves as belonging to the highest (1 or 2) or lowest (9 or 10) classes; most people there rank themselves as belonging to classes 4 or 5. In the United States, slightly more people believe they belong to classes 1 or 2 than in other countries.

In Eastern European countries or countries with a low GDP, few people think they belong to the upper classes; many tend to rank themselves from the middle to the bottom rungs. This is especially so in Chile, Russia, Latvia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, where almost no one thinks they belong to classes 1-4.

In Japan, few rank themselves as belonging to classes 1-3; answers are distributed among classes 4-10. Compared to the United States or industrial nations of Western Europe, many Japanese view themselves as belonging to lower classes, which is a striking difference given Japan's high GDP.

How Has Social Class Changed?

How do people view changes in their current social class compared to the past? Figure 13 compares the percentage of people ranking themselves in the top five classes "ten years ago" and "today."

In more than half the countries, many people view themselves as belonging to a higher social class today than ten years ago. Differences between today and ten years ago are especially large in Norway and Cyprus. Both these countries are characterized by many people as having images of a society with a large upper class, indicating a possible connection between awareness of upward mobility and images of type of society. A fairly large percentage in the United States also think they belong to a higher class today.

In Eastern European countries, on the other hand, considerably fewer people think they belong to a higher social class today than ten years ago. In Russia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic, in particular, where half or more indicate they belonged to a higher class ten years ago, only 20-40 percent said that this is the case today. Similar trends are evident in Hungary and Poland.

Figure 12. Where Would You Put Yourself on This Scale?

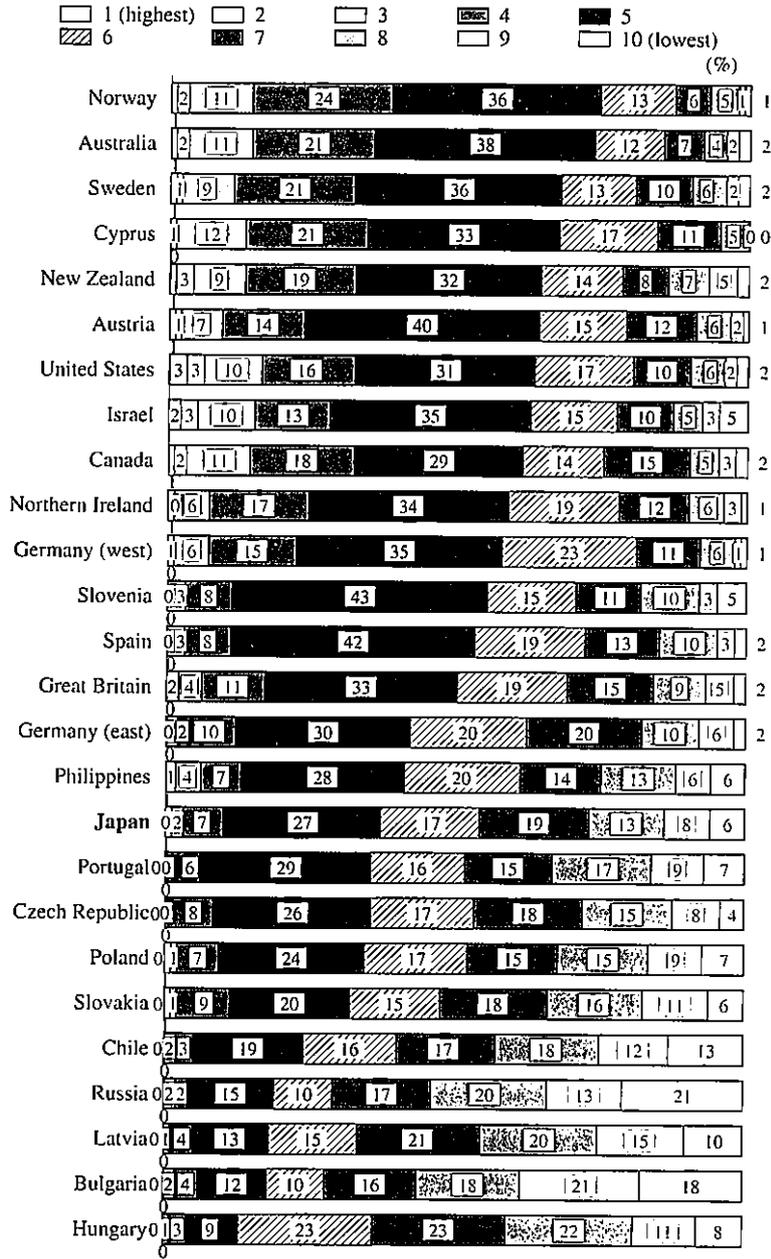


Figure 13. Social Position Today and Ten Years Ago, Top 5 Classes

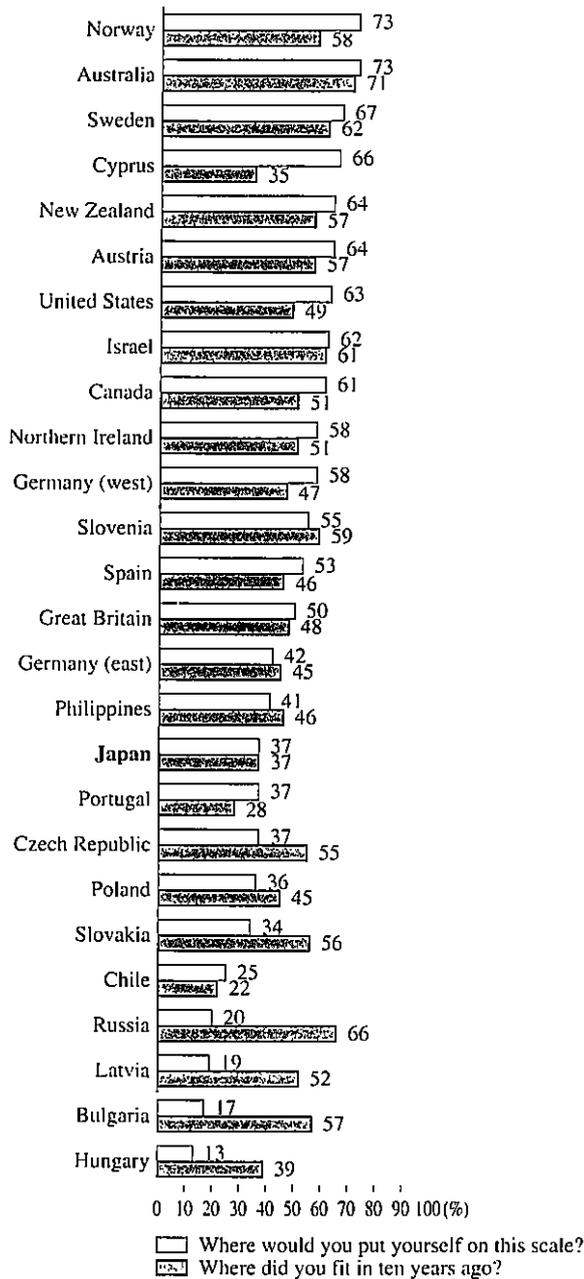
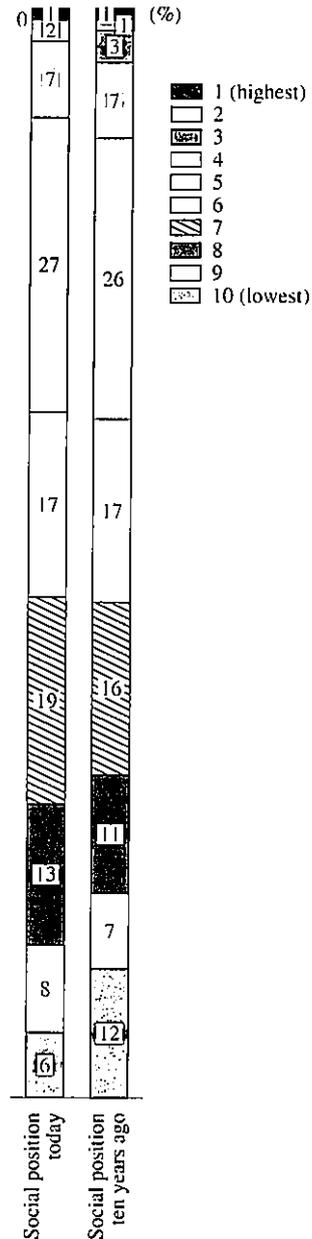


Figure 14. Social Position Today and Ten Years Ago, Japan



Examining the five upper classes in the case of Japan, the percentage of respondents saying they belonged to those classes ten years ago and today was identical. But as described in figure 14, overall composition shows that the 12 percent of respondents who said they belonged to lower classes ten years ago is much higher than the proportion who said they belong to that class today. In Japan, the tendency is for individuals to perceive that they belong to a lower class the younger they are. By age group, more respondents aged 16–29 and in their 30s said they belonged to the lowest social class ten years ago than today, whereas the percentage for the lowest class was unchanged in other age groups.

Another tendency shown by Japanese respondents was the smaller percentage of younger respondents ranking themselves as belonging to upper classes both ten years ago and today compared to older respondents, a trend that is probably influenced by the seniority-based pay scales prevalent in Japan.

Comparison with Respondents' Own Fathers

The next topic examined was change in social class compared to one's own father. In this study, respondents were asked if they think the level or status of their present job is higher or lower compared to the job their father had when the respondents were fifteen years old. Answers to this question also differed considerably depending on age group, especially in Japan, where age group differences have strong impact. Further, considering that this question is about the social standing of occupations, statistics from each country for fathers aged 40–54 with children aged 15 were extracted for comparison here (fig. 15).

Countries where many respondents (70 percent or more) answered that “the level or status” of their present job is higher than that of their fathers' were Portugal, Cyprus, Northern Ireland, Israel, and Spain. In the United States and Great Britain, around 50 percent answered similarly. The figure in Eastern European countries like Bulgaria and Hungary was also approximately 50 percent, the overall trend indicating that those who consider that their occupation has a higher social standing than their fathers' are not that numerous. The percentage of respondents believing their occupation has a higher status than their fathers' was lowest of all in Japan. In other countries, more people responded that the status of their occupation was higher than that of their fathers' than those who said it was lower, but in Japan roughly equal proportions said that their occupation's status was either high or low compared with that of their fathers'.

Figure 15. The Level or Status of Your Job Compared to Father's (males aged 40-54)

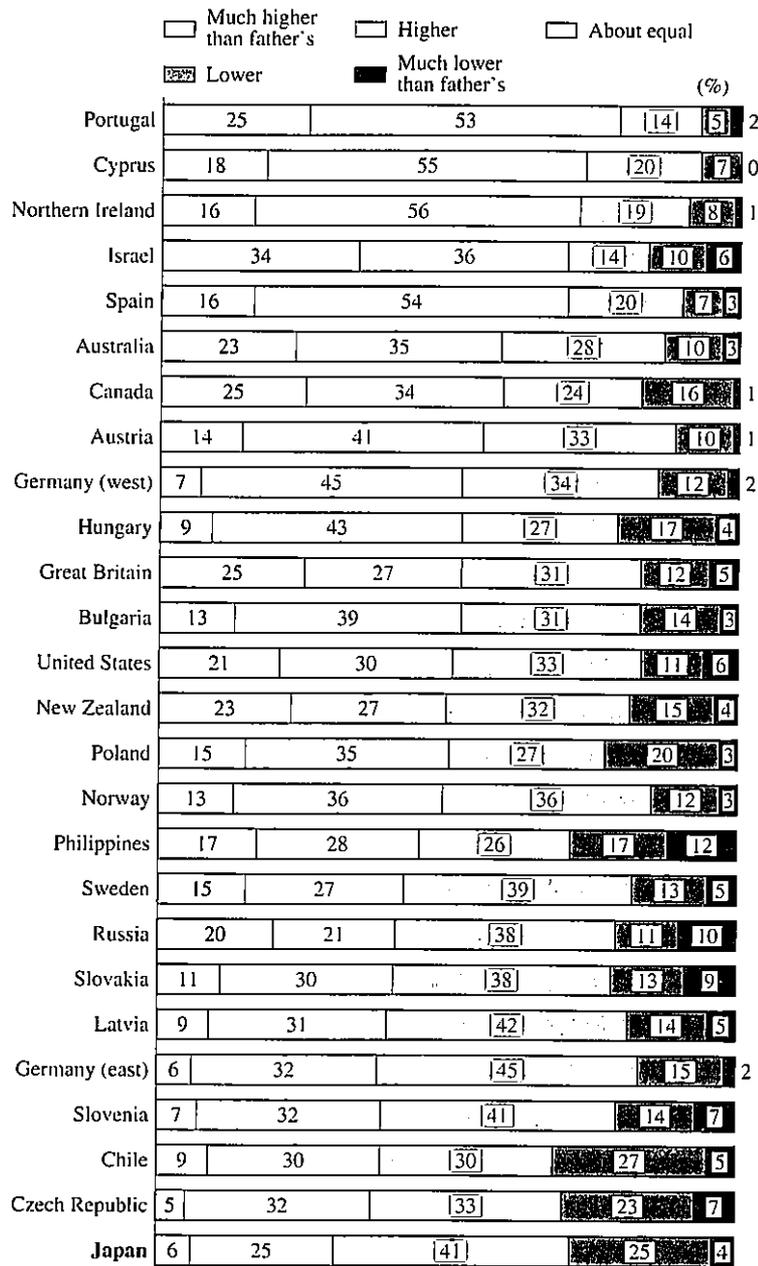
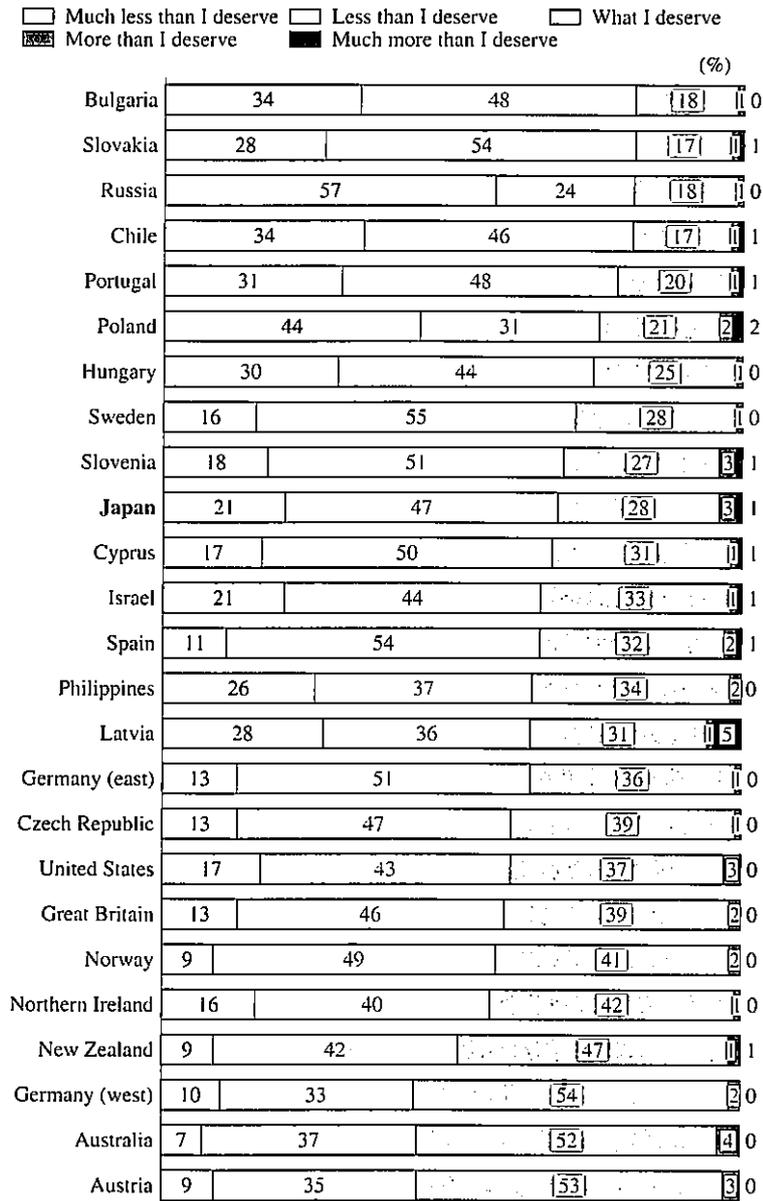


Figure 16. Is Your Pay What You Deserve?



Dissatisfaction with Income

Respondents were asked how they felt about their income, a factor related to social standing. Results are shown in figure 16.

In countries like Bulgaria, Slovakia, Russia, Chile, and others, many believe that their pay is less than they deserve. These are countries where a large number of people are very aware of differences in income and believe that their country does not offer equal opportunity.

Conversely, the number of people dissatisfied with their income is low in countries like Austria, Australia, and Germany (west).

Roughly 70 percent of Japanese believe their income is low, and although Japan is in a median position overall, many people are dissatisfied with their income compared to those in other industrial countries.

The correlation coefficient between current social position and dissatisfaction with income is -0.26 in Japan, indicating that those who view themselves as belonging to lower classes are more strongly dissatisfied with their income.

Examining results for Japan in terms of age groups, dissatisfaction is strong among younger age groups, which include many people who believe they belong to lower classes. Additionally, 80 percent of men in their 40s are dissatisfied with their income. Such strong dissatisfaction with income may be due, in Japan's case, to the protracted economic slump, and may also have caused people to view themselves as belonging to lower classes and believe that the social status of their occupation is lower than that of their fathers'.

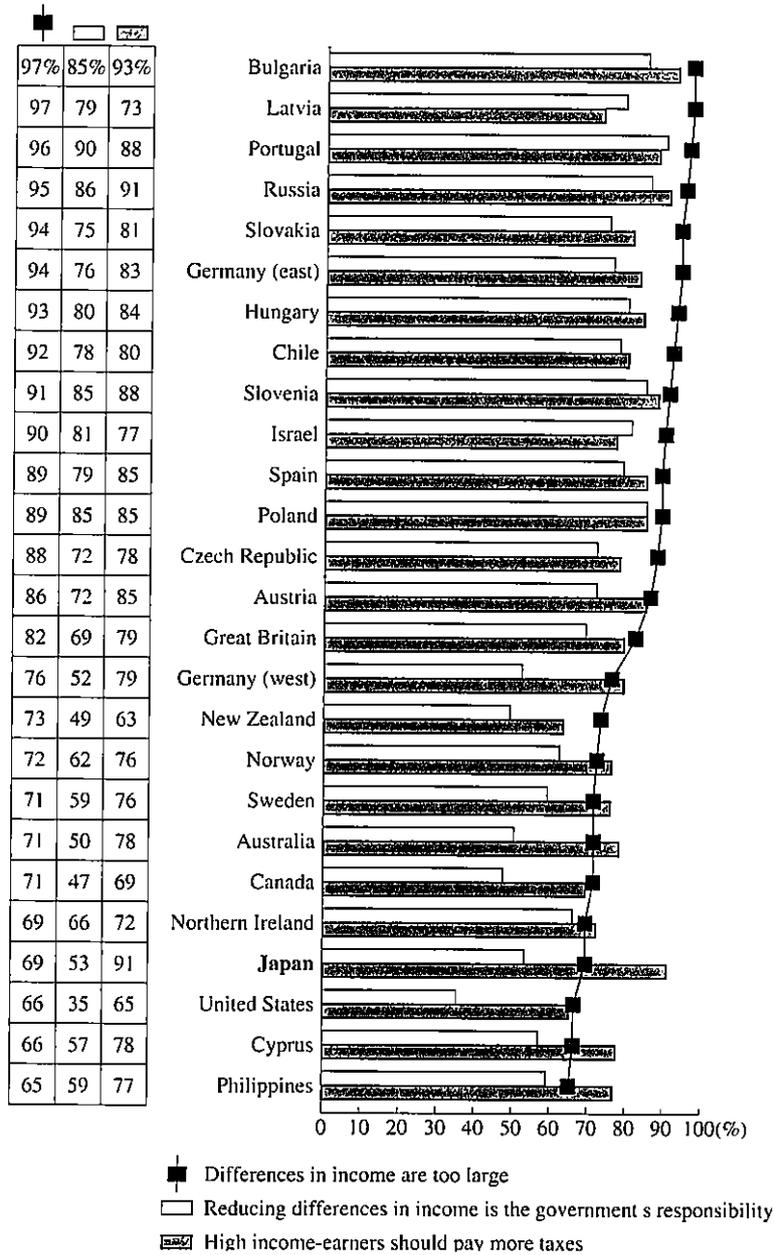
DEALING WITH DISPARITIES

So far, findings concerning awareness of income disparities, social position and dissatisfaction with income have been discussed. Next, we will look into what people feel should be done about income and class disparities, and whether they feel it is right for high income-earners to be favored.

Is the Government Responsible for Reducing Income Disparities?

Figure 17 shows the proportion in each country of people who believe that "differences in income are too large," "it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income" and "people with high income should pay a larger share of their income in taxes than those with low income." In eastern and southern European countries, and in countries like Chile and so on, where a large number of people believe that "differences in income are too large," there is a tendency for many people to also believe that it is the government's responsibility to reduce income disparities and that high

Figure 17. Government's Responsibility in Reducing Income Disparities



income-earners should pay more taxes. However, this is not a uniform trend, and variations exist depending on the country.

Many people in countries with a social welfare tradition, such as Great Britain, Northern Ireland, Norway, and Sweden believe it is the government's responsibility to reduce income disparities, compared to the United States, which has the lowest percentage believing so.

In Japan, about half believe it is up to the government to reduce income disparities, roughly the same percentage as in Germany (west), New Zealand, and Australia. This percentage is larger compared to the United States but smaller versus Scandinavian countries.

In response to whether high income-earners should pay more taxes, under 70 percent of people from New Zealand, the United States, and Canada believe so, a smaller percentage compared to other countries. In heavy-taxing welfare-state countries like Sweden and Norway, many believe that high-income earners should pay more in taxes.

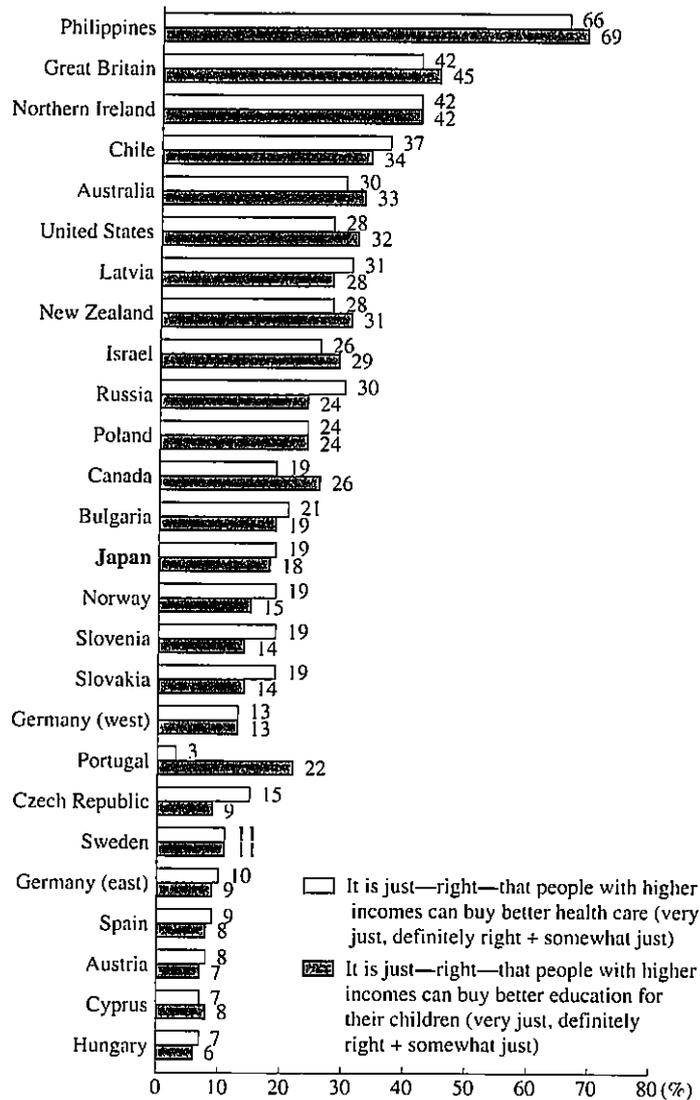
Over 90 percent of Japanese agree that high income-earners should pay more taxes, ranking Japan, along with Bulgaria and Russia, as one of the countries with the highest proportion of people thinking so. But whereas in other countries there is a strong correlation between awareness of income disparities and the feeling that high income-earners should pay more taxes, in Japan there is a stronger correlation with dissatisfaction with income rather than awareness of income disparities. Many Japanese believe they have low incomes, and since they do not view themselves as high income-earners, this is probably why they believe high income-earners should be taxed more heavily.

Is It Right for High Income-earners to Be Favored?

Income disparities manifest themselves in many aspects of daily life. Respondents were asked whether it was "just or unjust" that high income-earners can obtain better health care services or education. "Health care" and "education" have slightly different nuances. In the case of health care, which can be a matter of life or death depending on how much individuals can spend, the issue is one of inequality of result, whereas inequality of opportunity is at issue in the case of education, since individuals are in a more advantageous position if they can spend more on education allowing them to enter a more lucrative occupation.

Results indicate that there is a strong correlation between the two questions in almost all countries, and as figure 18 shows, in most countries there are few differences between the two. For example, in the United States, there are large differences in accessibility to health care insurance because this is in the hands of the private sector whereas the use of scholarships for obtaining an

Figure 18. Is It Just—Right—That People with Higher Incomes Can Buy Better Health Care or Education?



education is common, but the proportion in each case is around 30 percent. In Portugal, a markedly higher proportion believe it is just for high-income earners to have better access to education than to health care.

But the Philippines is the country with the highest proportion, nearly 70 percent for both health care and education, believing it is just for high-income earners to have better access to these services. This is followed by Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in the 40 percent range. The United States, where around 30 percent agree, is also in the high range. Countries where only around 10 percent believe this is just in both cases included Hungary, Cyprus, Austria, Spain, Germany (east), and Sweden.

Japan is about midway between the two extremes, with around 20 percent of respondents expressing agreement in both cases. Not that many Japanese agree that it is just for high-income earners to have better access to education and health care.

CONCLUSION

The characteristics of Japan compared to other countries are described below.

The Japanese image of the society they live in is one that comprises a large middle class and where income disparities are slight. More of them, compared to people in other countries, believe that their society rewards effort and hard work. As far as that is concerned, Japanese can be said to perceive that their society is fair and equal. But in their own personal situation they tend to feel that they belong to the lower classes of society and many are dissatisfied that their income is too low. They do not believe that they are benefiting from the fairness and equality of society.

Many people in Eastern Europe where the socialist system has collapsed, feel their societies are unequal, indicating dissatisfaction with the rapid social change that has taken place. In the United States, where the emphasis is on capabilities and equality of opportunity, and in welfare-oriented countries like Sweden where equality of result is considered important, survey findings reflect the national attitudes prevalent in the respective societies.

Among the twenty-four countries (regions) for which findings were analyzed in this survey, none showed trends similar to those of Japanese, who felt a gap between how they perceived their society's equality and what they experienced in personal terms. This tendency may be considered a trait typical of Japanese.

* * *

Survey Method Employed in Each Country

Figure 19 describes the outline of the survey method in each country. ISSP rules call for the survey to be carried out during a certain fiscal year; questionnaires, which are either distributed and retrieved by interviewers or

mailed, must be completed by respondents; the minimum sample size is one thousand individuals; and respondents must be selected at random. But actually, over half the countries where the survey was conducted used the face-to-face method rather than self-completion. The sampling method also lacks uniformity, since some countries adopt quota sampling rather than random or probability samplings.

The fact that survey and sampling methods are not uniform can have a major impact on findings. However, unlike Japan few other countries have name lists on which sampling frames are constructed. Those countries have various reasons for being unable to conduct the survey strictly in accordance with the rules and one must assume that each used the best methods available based on past experience. Study findings should be compared with reference to major trends rather than focusing on minor numerical differences.

Finally, due to an extremely low valid response rate (17.1 percent—only 1,889 individuals supplied valid responses out of 11,015 selected for the survey), findings from France were excluded from the analysis.

Distribution of Characteristics

Figure 20 lists the number of valid responses and breakdown by gender and age group for each country. In some countries, there were differences in age group distribution. For example, Japan had many older respondents, whereas in other countries there was a much larger percentage of younger respondents. The number of respondents from Germany (east) was insufficient for analyzing on an age group basis.

Tabulation

“DK (don’t know)” responses were excluded when answers were tabulated. Analysis of findings for Japan was carried out including “DK” answers but excluded them when making international comparisons, in order to clarify opinion trends in each country.

Weighted tabulation was also used. Weighting is not necessary in the case of Japan, since survey respondents were selected according to equal probability. But in other countries weighting is necessary to adjust differences in sampling probability when sampling individuals based on household or address, or to adjust distribution of characteristics in terms of gender, age groups or educational background with census data.

(Translated by Julie Kuma)

Figure 19. Summary of Survey

Country	Fieldwork year	Age range	No. of samples	Survey method	Sampling method	Sampling unit	Weighted tabulation
Japan	1999	16 and over	1,325	Distributed & retrieved	Stratified 2-stage random sampling	Individual (residents' register)	No
Philippines	1999	18 and over	1,200	Face-to-face interview	Multi-stage probability sampling	Area (random sampling)	Yes
Australia	1999/ 2000	17 and over	1,672	Mail (preliminary + 4 reminders)	Simple random sampling	Individual (voter lists)	No
New Zealand	1999	18 and over	1,108	Mail (2 reminders)	Random sampling	Individual (voter lists)	No
Canada	1999/ 2000	18 and over	974	Mail (2 reminders)	—	(Telephone directory)	Yes
United States	2000	18 and over	1,272	Questionnaire completed in presence of pollster	Multi-stage area probability sampling	—	No
Chile	2000	18 and over	1,503	Face-to-face interview	Stratified 3-stage random sampling	Area (random sampling)	Yes
Norway	1999	18–79	1,268	Mail (3 reminders)	Simple random sampling	Individual (central individual registry)	No
Sweden	1999	17–80	1,150	Mail (4 reminders, of which the 3rd was by telephone)	Sample representative of the Swedish population aged 17–80	Individual	No
Great Britain	1999	18 and over	804	Distributed & retrieved	Stratified random probability sampling	Postal roster addresses (Kish sample)	Yes
Northern Ireland	1999	18 and over	830	Distributed & retrieved	Stratified random probability sampling	Postal roster addresses (Kish sample)	Yes
Portugal	1999	18 and over	1,144	Face-to-face interview (casic)	Multi-stage random sampling	Area (random sampling)	Yes
Spain	1999	18 and over	1,211	Face-to-face interview	Sample representing population 18 years and over living in individual households	—	Yes
Germany	2000	18 and over	West 921/ East 511	Distributed & retrieved	Stratified 2-stage random sampling	Individual (municipal registries of residents)	No

Cyprus	1999	18 and over	1,000	Face-to-face interview	Stratified random sampling	Household (all individuals in the target age range interviewed)	No
Austria	2000	18 and over	1,016	Face-to-face interview	Stratified random cluster sampling	—	Yes
Poland	1999	18 and over	1,135	Distributed & retrieved	Multi-stage random sampling	Area (Kish sampling)	Yes
Czech Republic	1999	18 and over	1,834	Face-to-face interview	Stratified 3-stage random sampling	Households paying utility charges (random sampling)	No
Slovakia	2001	18 and over	1,082	Face-to-face interview	—	—	No
Hungary	1998	18 and over	1,208	Face-to-face interview	2-stage probability random sampling	Individual (central registry or electoral office address lists)	Yes
Slovenia	1998	19 and over	1,006	Face-to-face interview	Multi-stage random sampling	Individual	No
Bulgaria	1999	18 and over	1,102	Face-to-face interview	2-stage cluster sampling	—	No
Latvia	1999	18 and over	1,100	Face-to-face interview	Stratified multi-stage random sampling	—	No
Russia	1999	16 and over	1,705	Face-to-face interview	Stratified 3-stage sampling (random route method)	Area (quota sampling)	Yes
Israel	1999	18 and over	1,208	Face-to-face interview	Area probability sampling	—	No

Notes:

For Germany, West denotes former West Germany and East denotes former East Germany.

This table was created based on descriptions of survey methods prepared by ASEP (Spanish data archive), which assisted ISSP in collating survey data. Columns for which no information was provided were left blank.

Sampling units

Individual: individuals selected directly from name lists.

Household: households probably selected directly from name lists.

Area: scope of region, or streets or buildings selected first. Individuals selected after selecting households or addresses using the random route or other methods. The random route method is also known as the random walk method: starting from a predetermined address, street or house, interviewers count houses, according to a specified method, while walking and select each second or so house (household) to be interviewed.

Figure 20. Distribution of Characteristics

Country (region)	respondents (n)	Gender (%)			Age group (%)						
		Male	Female	No answer	Male			Female			No answer
					34 and under	35-54	55 and over	34 and under	35-54	55 and over	
Japan	1,325	48	52	—	15	18	15	15	18	19	—
Philippines	1,200	50	50	—	22	20	9	23	19	8	—
Australia	1,672	47	51	1	9	19	19	14	22	15	3
New Zealand	1,108	46	51	3	9	21	16	14	22	15	3
Canada	974	63	36	1	22	27	13	18	13	5	2
United States	1,272	43	57	—	13	18	12	17	24	15	0
Chile	1,503	44	56	—	16	16	12	18	22	16	—
Norway	1,268	50	50	—	17	20	13	17	19	13	—
Sweden	1,150	47	53	—	13	19	14	17	18	16	2
Great Britain	804	45	55	—	11	16	18	12	20	23	—
Northern Ireland	830	43	57	—	14	16	12	17	22	18	0
Portugal	1,144	47	53	—	13	19	14	14	20	19	—
Spain	1,211	49	51	—	18	15	16	18	15	18	—
Germany (west)	921	49	51	—	13	19	16	11	19	21	—
Germany (east)	511	49	51	—	12	18	18	12	21	19	—
Cyprus	1,000	50	50	—	17	23	10	19	22	10	—
Austria	1,016	42	58	—	8	16	18	12	23	24	—
Poland	1,135	42	58	—	12	18	12	16	21	21	—
Czech Republic	1,834	45	55	—	9	17	18	11	20	23	0
Slovakia	1,082	47	53	—	16	18	13	17	23	13	—
Hungary	1,208	43	57	—	12	15	16	15	19	23	—
Slovenia	1,006	49	51	—	15	20	14	15	19	17	—
Bulgaria	1,102	48	52	—	12	18	18	13	17	21	0
Latvia	1,100	45	55	—	16	18	11	18	23	15	0
Russia	1,705	46	54	—	16	18	12	16	20	19	—
Israel	1,208	47	53	0	21	16	9	23	20	9	1

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