$3.50

Public Opinion

Published by the American Enterprise Institute

June/July 1982

Gross National Spirit Update page 21

Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?

With
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Public Opinion

Volume 5, Number 3 June/July 1982

PUBLIC OPINION, June/July 1982, Vol. 5, No. 3. Published bimonthly by the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research. Subscription rates: $18.00 for one year, $34.00 for two years. Individual copy: $3.50. Information on bulk orders or multiple subscriptions available on request. Editorial and business offices: c/o AEI, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Send changes of address and all subscription correspondence to Circulation Department, c/o AEI, same address. "American Enterprise Institute" and ® are registered service marks of the American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.

Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C.

ISSN 0149-9157

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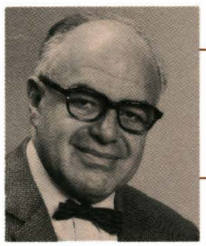


by Oscar Handlin

The Idea of Opportunity

Opportunity is the one prize a free society has to offer. It assures individuals the scope within which to make the most of their abilities, and it permits the community to profit from the appropriate use of talent where it is most advantageous. In that sense opportunity endows a society with justice. Everyone gains when the race for position goes to the swiftest, the winner from having ambition fulfilled, everyone else from having services performed by the best qualified.

Not by design, but by situation, America became the land of opportunity. The first settlers brought with them ideas inherited from the Old World; most of them attempted to build in the wilderness closed corporate communities approximating those they had left behind. They expected each person to occupy an ascribed place in an ordered society analogous to the one they had left across the ocean.

But unique conditions made a New World of the territory they settled. Arriving at an all but empty continent, they discovered an open country, perennially in need of labor. Here it was difficult to stay with old conventions. Here survival, growth, and expansion demanded the full use of everyone's labor; and opportunity transformed society. On the eve of the Revolution, the "American Farmer" J. H. S. Crèvecoeur asked what invisible power had transformed his countrymen from the ranks of the poor to those of citizens. He answered, "the laws, the indulgent laws, protect them as they arrive. . . . They receive ample rewards for their labors; those accumulated rewards procure them lands; those lands confer on them the title of freemen"; and to that benefit was affixed all the dignity that men could possibly require. By then the reputation of America was firmly fixed in the European imagination. A. R. J. Turgot, Louis XVI's minister of finance, exclaimed, "America is the hope of the human race, and can become its model." America, said Goethe in 1831, "You have it better than our continent, the old one." The same sentiment reverberated in the hearts of European immigrants in the nineteenth century. And it has continued to do so among their more recent successors from the oppressed countries of the Caribbean and Southeast Asia.

The Old World and the New

Americans, who take opportunity for granted, are less likely to reflect upon its meanings than are foreigners who are able to contrast it with their own lands where such chances in life are but distant goals. Less favored people recognize opportunity by its contrast with older societies that rest on establishment, privilege, and status. The absence of those features is a measure of opportunity.

In the Old World, institutions had hardened into an establishment in which numerous linkages firmly

supported the whole order. The state, the church, the schools, and the economy formed a mutually reinforcing pattern. The anointed king, the sworn parliament, and the church, all supported by power, resisted any competitive challenge and blocked off access to outsiders. But so too did degree-granting universities, chartered banks and trading corporations, and guilds of tradesmen. It was as unlikely that an intruder would break into the established crafts or business activities dominated by a guild as that he could challenge the authority of the church or the crown.

All these forms of establishment withered in the New World. True, formal loyalty to the king persisted until the Revolution. But by that time, as Thomas Paine put it, the faith of kings was no more. With it vanished any inclination to create titles of nobility. Vestiges of religious establishment persisted in some states into the nineteenth century, but the intimate connection of church and state vanished. It was significant that even before the Revolution, the Episcopal Church never ventured to ask for the appointment of a Bishop in the New World. In the mother country, Oxford and Cambridge jealously guarded their established positions; in the New World colleges sprouted without restraint.

It was the same with economic institutions. Nowhere did the guilds successfully take hold. Everywhere outsiders were free to come in and practice whatever trade they could; they had only to find customers. Youths were free to acquire whatever skills they wished through apprenticeship or schooling. Business corporations spread rapidly (perhaps too rapidly), and once freed from the influence of Britain, banks appeared as purely private ventures depending primarily upon the contractual relationship between borrowers and lenders, between those who emitted currency and those among whom it circulated. The resulting pluralism, which permitted anyone to found a business or a church, was stimulating, although sometimes costly. It was stimulating to the degree that it encouraged expansion and permitted a rapid turnover in places. It was costly to the degree that it provided few safeguards against error and failure.

The Demise of Privilege

The erosion of establishment made privilege meaningless. For a long time, the colonies had followed the time-honored practice of rewarding favorites and regulating the economy through privilege. The states attempted to continue the practice but failed. Privilege at first seemed an easy way to get a desirable function performed. When the government wished to expand settlement, it granted huge chunks of land to politically influential speculators. When it wished to improve transportation it set up monopolies that protected the profits of favored entrepreneurs. Or, the government used licenses to permit some indivduals to do that which others could not.

All these forms of privilege restricted opportunity. But, all quickly began to disappear, and their disappearance broadened opportunity substantially.

Privilege could not take hold in a Republic in which popular control limited what government could do. The great speculators sat on their worthless titles while the settlers either squatted or moved to where land was cheap. The states gave monopolies to canal and railroad companies, but competing routes drained away their value. Only in a very few professions—like medicine—did licenses narrow access to opportunity.

The Disappearance of Class

Finally the meaning of status changed. The world the Europeans left recognized stable social orders. It was not only that the nobility, the merchants, the landed gentry, the artisans, and the peasants had different rights in the eyes of the law; in addition, every aspect of behavior reflected those differences. In most parts of Europe, people spoke distinctive languages that revealed their status. The words employed, the syntax, and the pronunciation immediately gave away the class of the speaker. Styles of address differed—some were Sir; others Mister; others Goodman; others hailed by their given names. Custom, habit, and law imposed distinctive forms of behavior on all, and sumptuary legislation governed their very appearance and the clothes or adornments they could wear. When the English legal system called for judgment by peers, it meant precisely that—judgment by those within the same rank. All those distinctions survived well into the nineteenth century, in some places into the twentieth century.

They all vanished in the United States, some before the American Revolution, others shortly thereafter. Equality before the law meant the equality of every person without regard to distinctions of birth, class, or social affiliation. Each became what he or she was by merit.

In practical terms opportunity meant social mobility, the chance for individuals to rise uninhibited by the shackles of status. Some began life with advantages others lacked—inherited wealth, favored family connections, attractive appearance. At the other extreme, poverty, broken families, and isolation handicapped others. But neither advantages nor handicaps were decisive. Many a scion, born into a wealthy home, saw a fortune slip away. Many a lad from the slums advanced to a place of distinction in business or the professions.

More important than the number of rises and declines were the social forces that kept American society fluid, preventing the entrenchment of some and the exclusion of others. No hereditary aristocracy appeared in the United States; the effort in the 1890s of New York's self-constituted elite, the 400, to puff themselves up in that fashion proved a costly joke. In the end, no one cared whether Mrs. Astor received Mrs. Vanderbilt, and before long the wealth of new families outshone that of the old.

In a mobile country, status never hardened. Before

New York, Boston, and Philadelphia could relax, Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and San Francisco were on the scene, then Atlanta, Houston, and Los Angeles. Once it was shipping in which great fortunes were made, then textiles, then steel and autos, then chemicals and oil. Those who aspired to no more than enjoyment of what their ancestors had accumulated were doomed to disappointment, particularly after the law and tax system prevented the transmission, intact, of wealth from generation to generation.

Finally, education widened opportunity. In the middle of the twentieth century there remained significant inequalities in the availability of schooling—between one region of the country and another, between rural and urban areas, and between rich and poor families. But genuine as they were, those inequalities paled in significance against the way in which a complex, pluralistic system offered outlets to talents of every sort. The public schools and state universities, private colleges armed with scholarships, and parochial and denominational institutions opened numerous channels through which able persons could define and attain their desired life's goals.

Social mobility was therefore a more intricate process than the rags to riches myth portrayed. Andrew Carnegie did rise from bobbin-boy to multimillionaire; and he was not alone in that ascent. Far more important —and far more typical—was the rise one rung at a time up the social ladder. So the sons of farmers became lawyers; mill workers and day laborers saved to become property owners; shopkeepers sent their children to medical schools; and youths entered the clerical occupations with a reasonable hope of setting themselves up in business. As long as the chance existed, striving to put the best effort forward made sense. And the chance did exist, fully as much in the 1970s as in the 1870s or the 1770s.

A broad social consensus therefore affirmed the faith in equality of opportunity. Defenders of the status quo and also many progressive and socialist critics long looked toward the identical remedy for existing faults —increase in opportunity. "Not human equality, but equality of opportunity to prevent the creation of artificial inequalities by privilege is the essence of socialism," John Spargo, then a socialist himself, exclaimed in terms that Jefferson, Jackson, and Wilson would have accepted.

The Destruction of Equality?

It is true that large groups were long excluded from the full enjoyment of equality of opportunity. The foreign born, Catholics and Jews, blacks and other colored people, Indians, and, in some respects women, suffered from the effects of prejudice and discrimination that limited their access to the prizes of American life. These underprivileged minorities were not confined to caste-like inferiority; the achievements of exceptional individuals showed that some could indeed make their way upward. But opportunity limited to the extraordinary did not offset the deprivation of the great majority.

Americans slowly perceived the contradiction between the abstract belief in equal opportunity and the actualities of discrimination. Back in 1858 Abraham Lincoln had explained that the Negro was "entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence." In "the right to eat the bread, without leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, *he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas and the equal of every living man.*" It took almost a century to translate those sentiments into practice. Only after 1947, when President Truman clarified the implications of the Fair Deal for minorities, did a thirty-year struggle succeed in forbidding discrimination based on group characteristics in employment, housing, and education.

After 1965, the quest for equality entered a totally new stage, based at first upon the unsatisfied needs of black Americans. Equality ceased to refer to opportunity and came to refer to results. Government was not merely to eliminate prejudice and discrimination but also to assure to underprivileged groups a distribution of the desirable places in American society, proportionate to their numbers. Before long numerous claimants to underprivileged status joined the blacks. The Indians, Asians, and Hispanics found manifest advantages to identification as minorities, as did Italo-Americans and Polish-Americans. Women's voices rose in charges that sex was as often a source of deprivation as was ethnicity or color. And so, too, did those of the elderly and the handicapped. Elaborately calculated goals designed to meet competing claims—the euphemistic term for quotas—produced a situation in which inequality of access became a necessary condition of equal results.

The social effects are incalculable. They include at least the possibility that a vast deterioration of competence in tasks vital to all may follow from the assignment of places by criteria other than those of merit. They include also the danger of narrowing individual opportunity by the privileged status accorded favored groups. The attack on objective measurements of competence or aptitude reflected the insistence that goals or quotas supersede ability and may produce the ironic situation in which the offspring of three generations of well-to-do middle-class college graduates are regarded as black—as deprived on the application form as youths from the slums, while the children of migrants from Appalachia are white—as advantaged as any other Wasps.

A democratic society is given to extremes; and that may account for the swing from one form of discrimination to another. But in a pluralistic society self-correcting mechanisms also check the swings to the extremes. The tradition of America as the land of opportunity may remind the citizens of one source of past strength and liberty. Freedom, wrote Zechariah Chafee, the legal scholar, is not safety but opportunity. And whatever diminishes one threatens the other.

Is America Still the Land of Opportunity?

a conversation with Michael Novak and Robert Lekachman

Ben Wattenberg: *The question we are asking in this issue of* Public Opinion *is a simple one, "Is America still the land of opportunity?" Bob, your recent book,* Greed is Not Enough: Reaganomics, *would imply that insofar as we were the land of opportunity, things may be changing.*

Michael, your book, The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism, *would say that we were and we are.*

Robert Lekachman: Compared to most other countries, America is still a land of opportunity. The immigration statistics demonstrate that. But, by comparison with the American past, there is much less opportunity than there used to be.

The prospects of downward mobility are substantial. Many more Americans are going to have incomes smaller than their parents. They're going to live in houses with less space, or apartments instead of houses. They're going to drive smaller automobiles.

For those people adroit enough to clue themselves in to the new technologies, the opportunities are still substantial.

I teach at a largely working-class public institution. The clientele there is lower middle class. From the perspective of their family origins, upward mobility is a reality, but it's much less attractive than it was.

Wattenberg: *Do you attribute this to Ronald Reagan?*

Lekachman: I would like to blame Ronald Reagan for everything that's gone wrong, but that would be unfair. The appropriate percentage is about 70 percent. It's a continuation of a trend which has been perceptible for at least a decade.

Wattenberg: *Michael, is this still the land of opportunity?*

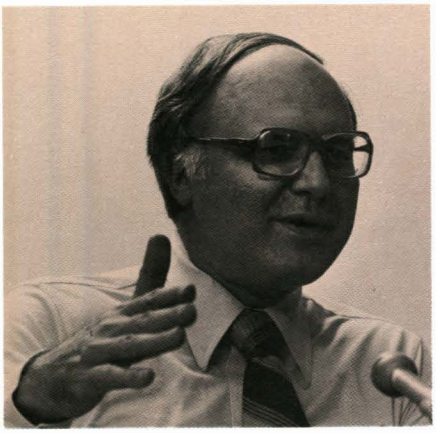
Michael Novak: I agree with Bob that you have to begin by saying, "Compared to what?" The sound of incoming feet is still heard on our shores and, because liberty is more scarce than oil, we're going to see larger and larger migrations in the future. For millions, the United States is still the land of opportunity.

Even within our own country, and compared to our own past, I see some unusually favorable chances of opportunity. More and more of our economy is in the service industries and these are often industries which require or put a premium on imagination, invention, and attitude, and require only modest amounts of technical knowledge.

Because it is the small business sector of our economy that has provided more than 80 percent of the new jobs over the last decade, the opportunities are very high.

Compared to the past, the percentage of those going on to higher education in this country is still remarkable. There are also many opportunities for those who don't go to college.

Finally, the demographic picture is a hopeful one in that the younger age



The Reagan administration has turned the country's attention to savings and investment, to tax policy, in a way unprecedented in my lifetime. . . . I see the end of this decade as being one of more opportunity than we've had in two or three decades.

NOVAK

cohorts are going to be fewer in number with each year that comes along. The economy won't have to absorb as many youngsters coming out of colleges as we did in the last decade.

One of the characteristics of upward mobility is the belief therein. The very belief in possibility is a first step to making the possible real. Today I see evidence of renewed belief in the capacity of Americans to invent, start their own businesses, and run their own lives.

The trend lines I've described were evident before the Reagan administration came into office. The emphasis the Reagan administration has given to invention and entrepreneurship is going to be helpful.

The Necessary Conditions

Karlyn Keene: *What are the necessary conditions for opportunity and what should government's role be in creating opportunity? Should there be a government role? Is government rigging the odds against opportunity?*

Lekachman: Our economy's expansion depends on human capital—on men and women rising into positions of independent activity. The education budget cuts make it harder for people from low and moderate income families to do this. Under current fiscal circumstances the state and local governments cannot replace the federal funds. The curtailment of these programs is hostile to the flowering of individual talent.

Novak: Human capital includes the spirit of entrepreneurship, of reliance on oneself, of imagining how one is going to be an economic activist, and not simply floating on the stream. It remains to be seen whether the Reagan program has stimulated many more youngsters to think more carefully about economic realities and to plan their own lives accordingly.

Economic activists don't have to have higher education or high technical skills. Human capital is a tricky business. I wouldn't argue that it's fostered only in the universities.

Lekachman: It sounds as though you're saying that energetic people without any particular skills except a desire for independence, self-improvement, and self-enrichment, can start a whole series of small enterprises and, in so doing, enrich themselves and advance economic progress. That sounds like a whole series of low-tech, miscellaneous retail establishments without any very sharp reason for existence. This is at variance with the vision of the pro-growth people, who foresee a shift toward fiber optics, semiconductors and robots.

I'm all for individual entrepreneurship, but the vision of it as participated in by comparatively uneducated and unskilled people does not strike me as a great opportunity for them or a great hope for the economy.

Novak: I agree. One new direction does require a high degree of technical skill. A lot more of that is often learned on the job than in the universities. But the universities play an important role.

I wanted to emphasize what's not emphasized often enough, and that is the enormous scope there is in building up businesses of many sorts. That doesn't go to the question of the high technology growth of the country, but so far as individual and familial opportunity goes, it's terribly important.

I'm struck by the fact that those who make the greatest fortunes in this country seem so often to do it by starting their own businesses. It's not working through the corporation that makes one rich.

A contractor in my hometown of Johnstown, Pennsylvania, recently gave $7 million to the University of Notre Dame. He didn't work for a large corporation. He started a construction firm without benefit of college education. The technologies you mentioned are booming. We need to stress other areas.

Lekachman: Many of the fortunes that have been made are in the mass marketing and service industries—the froth of the society. I'm not puritanical about this. I know that hordes of families have been solaced by taking the youngsters to the nearest McDonalds—now in its 13 billionth unit of low nutrition impact—to soothe the infant passions of their progeny. But those businesses don't contribute to the growth of the economy.

The entrepreneurial spirit has not contributed substantially to economic growth. There are exceptions like the semiconductor business. Much of our investment is diverted from basic research and development, out of which come inventions and their applications and, in turn, rising standards of living.

Novak: On this front President Reagan has done more to change the line of argument and action in our country than any recent administration in terms of trying to bring down inflation, to increase the rate of savings—which was up 17 percent as of last December—and the amount invested. If his program doesn't succeed, the Democrats are still going to have to achieve the same goals. We're on the right track.

A sign painted on the stone walls outside my hometown says, "Jesus Saves." Five hundred yards down the road there's another sign, "Shinto Invests." That difference in perception is widely shared now. The Reagan administration deserves credit for that. That change in perception will put American industry on a footing that it wasn't on

when the decade began.

Lekachman: The Reagan administration is a calamity. Corporate investment has declined and is continuing to decline. The surge of investment which was going to—if I may quote a name in bad repute, John Maynard Keynes—lift the animal spirits of investors has not occurred.

Wattenberg: *Do democratic socialists such as yourself believe in entrepreneurialism as a tool for upward mobility?*

Lekachman: To some extent. Any intelligent socialist has been compelled by experience to recognize the need for some kind of a private market. The state of the Russian economy is a testimonial to their refusal to accept the claims of the private market.

The Government's Role

Wattenberg: *Doesn't this argue Michael's case that the more entrepreneurialism you get, the healthier the society is?*

Lekachman: It depends on the kind of entrepreneurial activity. My variety of democratic socialism would have a substantial degree of social direction of investment and, within it, a large amount of entrepreneurial activity. When I sit at the left hand of some American Mitterrand in the future, I would allocate credit preferentially. I would give preference to community-based activities, cooperative activities, and labor union-supported activities.

Although I would support entrepreneurial activity, I would widen the ambit of it beyond the individual model we're familiar with. I would grant considerable scope to the individual model in the interest both of human freedom and the efficient allocation of resources.

Novak: Bob would probably prefer a CETA program for putting teen-agers to work whereas, on the record, Ray Kroc of McDonalds has probably put more teen-agers to work and also involved more families in owning their businesses. He has also started hundreds of businesses around McDonalds in every field of endeavor, in growing potatoes, in raising steers, and in packaging. That's a great, creative burst of activity.

I would worry about a democratic socialist program, a future American Mitterrand, who thinks that a roomful of ten people could discern more wisely than the marketplace what the fruitful inventions of the future are going to be and where credit should be allocated.

A nation with millions of people turning their minds to what needs doing without waiting for a board to give them approval, is much more likely to be successful.

The Mitterrand experiment and our own will be fascinating to watch over the next decade.

Lekachman: The success of American agriculture, to use one example, is attributable to a very substantial degree of government investment and government guidance in combination with individual entrepreneurship.

Novak: That's a perfect example of why I argue that ours is a democratic capitalist society. We do not have a laissez-faire society and we never have had one. We've long understood that it's an important function of government to promote the general welfare.

In agriculture, the task is too large for the economic system alone. It's very important that the political system be active in this and other areas. The trick is in government not trying to manage it all.

Lekachman: We've always tried to manage it all. Our ideology has departed from our practice, which is not unique in human societies. We have picked winners and subsidized them throughout our economic history. My selection and emphasis might be different from yours, but I'm not sure we differ.

Wattenberg: *You would allocate credit to farmers to grow potatoes, but make it difficult for retail outlets like McDonalds to sell french fries.*

Lekachman: Yes. We should openly concede that one of our public responsibilities is not only the fostering of individual enterprise, but the selective guidance of it. We've done this a long time.

Novak: That smacks too much of Mussolini's corporatism of the 1920s and 1930s in Italy. If we're talking about upward mobility and social mobility, we will be better off if we multiply the centers of economic activism and not be too puritanical about one planned order. Multiple decision makers produce an order much more creative and inventive than one established by only a few people.

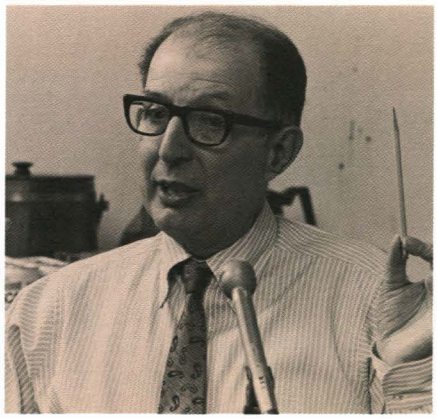
Lekachman: I admire your emphasis on individual and familial responsibilities and group responsibilities. But our economy is dominated by large, unwieldy private organizations as well as public bureaucracies.

When DuPont was busy acquiring Conoco it was able to get a tremendous line of credit from major banks. The credit allocations that go on untidily today are credit allocations in a direction I'm not sure you would approve. They're credit allocations toward unproductive mergers. When DuPont acquired Conoco it didn't add a container of paint or a gallon of oil to the capacity of the country. It was a purely financial maneuver.

Wattenberg: *What harm was done by it? The money went right back into the investment community.*

The Reagan administration is a calamity.... Fortunately, I think Reagan is a four-year phenomenon.

LEKACHMAN



Lekachman: Initially, funds were less available for the kind of small entrepreneurs Michael and I favor. If you're serious about the proliferation of entrepreneurial activity, you have to do something about large corporations and large banking institutions which exercise distorting effects upon free markets. They restrict freedom.

Novak: I resist the notion that the big corporations which hire about 15 million persons out of a workforce of 100 million dominate the environment.

Banking is still more diffuse here than it is in France where a government committee now makes all the credit decisions.

As one French writer pointed out, it's going to be impossible for any dissident to raise enough capital to launch a newspaper from a government which disapproves of him. Freedoms are going to be diminished enormously in France.

Planning diminishes both economic and political freedoms. It diminishes creativity because you have to rely on the bureaucratic instincts of those few making the decisions.

Lekachman: I can't help noting the realities of our own society. When Paul Volcker and his six clones on the Federal Reserve Board pursue a Milton Friedman monetarist policy, what they're doing is raising interest rates and allocating credit. They're allocating credit away from the housing industry, away from small businessmen, away from entrepreneurs in the direction of very large enterprises.

Novak: The credit crunch on the major corporations is also severe. Most are not about to invest money at current interest rates. But, as I understand it, the priority of the Federal Reserve Board is to reduce inflation and get the economy started on a much healthier basis than it's been on for a decade.

Lekachman: You can always reduce inflation by increasing unemployment. This is not a new experiment. The Reagan administration thought it would be possible simultaneously to reduce taxes, deregulate, increase military expenditures, and pursue a monetarist policy. The recession is a direct consequence of Reagan embracing four inconsistent objectives.

Novak: Carter started the last three. Reagan cut tax *rates*. It remains to be seen whether tax *revenues* are cut.

Wattenberg: *In recent history is there a model that demonstrates that more government planning yields more economic growth and more opportunity?*

Lekachman: No major economy, except for the Japanese, is in reasonably good condition today. The Japanese economy is a quasi-planned economy which selects winners, and channels funds preferentially to chosen instruments.

Novak: The relationship in Japanese society between the political system, the economic system, and the cultural system is very different from ours and probably would be intolerable to us.

Lekachman: Both the German and the Japanese economies are emphasizing in different ways a spirit of solidarity rather than the unbridled competition you believe to be an important value.

Novak: Both the Japanese and German cultures have long traditions of solidarity and corporatism of which I am skeptical. They do reap some advantages, but those economies also have been spared expenditures for their own defense. If we hadn't carried that burden for almost forty years, we would be virtually unsurpassable.

The Spirit Driving Capitalism

Keene: *Let's just shift the focus to a question about capitalism itself. Is the spirit behind capitalism altruism or greed?*

Lekachman: It's a combination of greed, curiosity, and sheer impulse toward considerable activity. Enterprise, acquisition, avarice, greed, are synonyms for what Alfred Marshall called the strongest human motive, self-interest.

We overreward our entrepreneurs. In 1980 the chairman of Datsun got $140,000 a year. The Ford and General Motors heads were getting about $800,000 a year. Datsun had a better year in terms of auto sales. When he was reproached because he was earning more than the president of the United States, Babe Ruth said he had had a better year. [Laughter.] The structure of inequality of compensation in our economy is repulsive on standard egalitarian assumptions, and it's probably not efficient. In Japan, the gap in income from top to bottom is much narrower than it is in this country.

Wattenberg: *Do you find it objectionable when a great violinist gets $10,000 or $20,000 for an evening's concert?*

Lekachman: No.

Wattenberg: *Yet he may be making on a yearly basis more than the president of General Motors.*

Lekachman: He deserves to, because his talent is much rarer. There are probably several thousand executives who can preside at the apex of General Motors.

Itzhak Perlman's playing has not fallen off. But the performance of our major corporations has. Yet the compensation which management awards itself has increased sharply. This inequity in the way we allocate rewards promotes social envy, and diminishes solidarity between workers and management. It is economically inefficient.

Novak: A fundamental flaw of socialism is its lack of esteem for managerial talent. This is its own punishment.

My variety of democratic socialism would have a substantial degree of social direction of investment and, within it, a large amount of entrepreneurial activity. When I sit at the left hand of some American Mitterrand in the future, I would allocate credit preferentially. . . .

LEKACHMAN

I thought you were playing on Max Weber in the title of your book because he pointed out that greed is not enough to explain the ethos of capitalism. He called that idea a kindergarten notion. He went on to say that greed was not invented by capitalism, and it isn't even especially manifest within capitalist societies as opposed to other societies.

Lekachman: My title was a specific attack on the Reagan administration's program, which is a direct appeal to greed.

Novak: I don't agree.

Economic activity is only part of the spirit of a democratic capitalist society. Political activity is another part. Moral and cultural activity is a third part. American economic activists and American economic elites have been remarkable in the world for their involvement in affairs of citizenship and their involvement in affairs of morals and of culture.

Oscar Handlin pointed out that the railroads built north and south in the nineteenth century in the United States all made money. The east-west railroads lost money. But it was the romance that drew the railroad men in. Four out of five new businesses fail in this country. Given these odds, one has to say that there is a desire here to create—to attempt things—that is quite remarkable. It has a lot more to do with the human spirit than with greed, acquisition, or avarice, which tend to make people small and petty.

Less than one percent of the population makes above $100,000 or $200,000 a year. Since you are willing to let violinists, basketball players, Dan Rather, and Paul Samuelson make these sums, I presume your only objection is to corporate managers.

I could live in a society quite comfortably which set a top limit on incomes of corporate management if you could show me that it would produce better work and would still bring talent to the top. I am hard-pressed to understand why social envy arises only with respect to managers of corporations.

Lekachman: I favor a very substantial revision of the tax system which would handle the Dan Rathers in a way approved of by John Stuart Mill. He argued against a progressive income tax on the grounds that it would diminish incentive. He favored heavy inheritance taxes on the grounds that heirs had done nothing to deserve that bequest and that it was bad for their character.

Novak: I'm willing to take that under advisement and come to a pragmatic arrangement. But one has to be awfully puritan to think that one can decide these things better than changing markets. If an inheritance is bad for an heir's character, the money will be gone in short order, and it usually is. Large fortunes take care of themselves in three generations. It's not easy to preserve a large fortune in this society.

Lekachman: Whether the Rockefeller family has been a benign or malignant influence, the family has shaped architecture, public finance and the political climate of a great state. I find this undemocratic.

Novak: Societies which have great fortunes are more beautiful than those which have only government gray. Large fortunes gave someone like Nelson Rockefeller leverage others didn't have, but nonetheless, it is highly useful to others that from time to time that possibility is present in our society.

Up and Down the Ladder

Keene: *How do you account for the varying degrees of mobility among groups? I am struck by the number of valedictorians at area high schools who are Vietnamese. These teen-agers probably did not speak English when they came here and yet in a very short period of time rose to the top of their classes. Groups in our society are continually going up and down. What accounts for that kind of mobility?*

Lekachman: There are differences in cultural and familial traditions which affect the educational and entrepreneurial ambition of different groups. A successful society does something to improve the cultural situation and therefore the educational achievements of the children of groups that lack these traditions. I believe in an arrangement of preferential subsidies and compensations for the disadvantaged, including open admissions policies.

Wattenberg: *By ethnic background or skin color or sex?*

Lekachman: No. The late Justice Douglas offered a dissent in the Defunis case in which the appellant, a Jew, alleged that he was denied admission to the University of Washington Law School while minorities with lower scores were admitted. Douglas argued that there was a constitutional case for giving special advantages to people who were disadvantaged, regardless of color, race, or so on.

His example was the child of a coal miner who had gone to a bad West Virginia school, scored poorly on the admissions test and had a poor grade point average but who, nevertheless, had done remarkably well, when compared to a Harvard College graduate from an upper middle class, professional family.

Novak: A society should do things for the poor. They should not be race-based, sex-based, or entitlement-based. You never know where brilliance or genius is.

I would worry about a future American Mitterrand who thinks that a roomful of ten people could discern more wisely than the marketplace what the fruitful inventions of the future are going to be and where credit should be allocated. A nation with millions of people turning their minds to what needs doing without waiting for a board to give them approval, is much more likely to be successful.

NOVAK

The Reagan Program

Novak: I would like to talk about opportunity in the context of the Reagan program. If the Reagan administration doesn't succeed in putting our economy in better shape going into this decade, the Democrats are going to have to do it. The program is going to have to include six things. It's going to have to reduce inflation and keep it low. Second, it is important to stimulate savings. The new IRA plans are an excellent step toward that. Third, we have to increase tax *revenues* which lowering rates may achieve. Fourth, we have to cut the rate of growth in public spending. This administration is spending more on social welfare programs than any administration in history—almost $50 billion more than Carter. But it has cut the rate of growth. Fifth, the economic program must raise the number of jobs. We are already employing a higher proportion of adults than any society in history, and the number of adults who want to work keeps increasing.

Keene: *Through private investment?*

Novak: Let me just say "investment." Finally, we must cut the rates of growth of public spending by cutting at the top and protecting people at the bottom. That's what Reagan has been doing. He has not been getting enough credit for it. He's been hurting his own constituencies. He's been cutting at the working poor level, at the tops—on food stamps, on education loans. That's where the cuts are coming. He's protecting the people at the bottom.

On all six of these points, Reagan has made some progress. One can argue about every one of them, but the Democratic party is going to have to do at least as well on each of them.

Keene: *A lot of political commentators are suggesting that what the Democrats will offer will not be significantly different from what Reagan has proposed. Has the political agenda changed fundamentally?*

Novak: The Democrats made the mistake of underestimating Reagan in the beginning and they are now making the mistake of waiting for him to collapse. They are not articulating alternatives.

Wattenberg: *We've heard one 1984 Democratic platform. Do you have your own?*

Lekachman: We're not in total disagreement. Let me start with the points of agreement. The Democrats are going to have to offer an alternative on the six items you identify. Gary Hart, Paul Tsongas, and others are groping for serious alternatives. The inflation "victory" may be temporary. There are many historical examples of bringing inflation rates down within the context of a serious recession. The Democrats have to come up with a credible anti-inflation strategy. The only answer I see is an incomes policy. Henry Reuss answered the President's economic report in February with a proposal for a social contract, German-Japanese style, between unions and management. Many economists would like a "tax-based incomes policy" which rewards corporations and unions which behave in non-inflationary ways, and penalizes them if they depart from suitable behavior.

Our savings rate must go up. But I would qualify that from my democratic socialist viewpoint. To shift a substantial amount of investment into the public sector you need to use the tax system.

On the matter of tax revenues, we have to address the issue of equity. Our tax system is wildly inequitable from the standpoint of vertical equity—that is that the rich may not pay enough—and of horizontal equity—that is, people with similar incomes are paying widely divergent taxes on those incomes.

Wattenberg: *Do you support flat-rate taxation?*

Lekachman: You can make a flat tax as progressive as your heart desires by indicating the sum you're exempting from taxation at the bottom. With that caveat, I wouldn't mind a flat tax system.

The increase in government spending has not been as alarming as Michael said. Spending as a proportion of GNP has risen only two or three points in the last decade. By comparison with other successful economies it is not high.

Wattenberg: *Aren't people objecting to the intrusiveness of government? It is not always the cost.*

Lekachman: Derek Bok at Harvard complains about the intrusiveness of government regulations there. I do, too. But the public is, as the shrinks say, deeply conflicted about government activities. They argue for less spending. Yet, you find majority support for programs.

It doesn't startle me that we're unhappy with the way government operates. We've always held government in low regard. If you hold government in low regard, the most talented people avoid government service. When you give mediocre people authority to intervene in various bureaucratic ways they're likely to do it clumsily.

Part of the intrusiveness the business community feels is their own fault. The business community has been so busy litigating against government regulations that reams and reams of red tape have resulted.

Americans have a peculiar attitude toward government. There is a mixture of reliance on and disdain for government. Business groups run to Washington when they're in trouble—everybody does. And yet we like to think of government as bumbling, incompetent, corrupt, and bureaucratic.

Novak: Government on a continental scale like ours is involved in inherent practical problems. The rules which apply to a state like New Jersey may be absurd in a state like Iowa. The problem of continental scale is something that's not taken into account in the animosity toward big government.

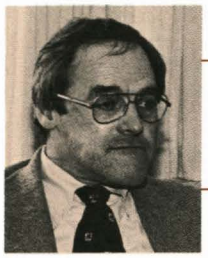
Our government is constituted to promote the general welfare. People take that literally. When people are in trouble, they try to promote the general welfare in their case. But they also lose some respect for the government which does it. John Dewey made the argument in the 1930s that we should stop regarding government as the enemy and regard it not only as a neutral force, but as a force for good. He carried classical liberalism from being anti-government to being pro-government. But like every argument, his now runs to the other extreme.

Wattenberg: *Has government stifled opportunity in this country in the last fifty years?*

Novak: Yes and no. The money spent on education, on college campuses, has benefited millions. Adam Smith was right about the source of wealth. The source of wealth is intellect. The land-grant colleges did something for agriculture in the United States which didn't happen in South America.

But on the other hand, government infatuated with its own ability to do good begins to become morally arrogant and offensive. The buzzing seat-belt interlock is an example. There has also been a vindictiveness in the use of government power to punish people

(Continued on page 52)



by James Davis

Up and Down Opportunity's Ladder

Mobility" is one of the few social science terms that means exactly what it says—movement of some kind. Geographic mobility is the clearest example (see Frank Bryan's "Rural Renaissance: Is America on the Move Again?" p. 16). If you are born in Mobile, Alabama and move away you are "mobile," but if you are born in Mobile and stay there until you die you are "immobile." Social mobility is a bit less obvious since it entails so many dimensions. Generally, sociologists define it as how far one has moved up or down life's ladder, and you don't have to be a sociologist to be aware of people who are "rising in the world," "on the skids," "going places," "drop outs," and so forth.

Defining that initial rung on the social mobility ladder is a bit tricky, because at birth we all are unemployed, illiterate, and broke. Such deprivation is universal, but if the baby's parents are "up there" we don't feel quite so sad, while if the baby's parents are clinging to a bottom rung, things don't look as promising. Thus, the convention has developed of assigning *parental* scores as starting values. If your dad was a bootblack and you are now a physician, sociology says you have experienced "upward intergenerational occupational mobility"—73 points worth, as we shall see.

Of the ladders available for objective research, occupation has received most scrutiny. When sociologists talk about "social mobility" they usually mean intergenerational occupational mobility. And they are, ahem, usually talking about males. We don't have good beginning rungs for women because so few *mothers* had jobs. In the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) General Social Surveys, a series of national samplings during the 1970s, just half (50.4 percent) of the respondents said "yes" to "Did your mother ever work for pay for as long as a year, after she was married?" Needless to say, current scholars are redressing this imbalance. The early results suggest the main themes of mobility research are androgynous, but in the first half of this report I will stick to the classic data and thus talk mostly about males.

Mobility research is not new. (Nor is mobility. See

Oscar Handlin's "The Idea of Opportunity," p. 2.) Pitirim Sorokin's 1927 volume, *Social Mobility*, is still worth reading, but the quantity and quality of mobility data changed enormously after World War II, when nationwide studies began. The landmark here is Peter Blau and Otis D. Duncan's 1967 book, *The American Occupational Structure*, a sophisticated and encyclopedic analysis of CPS (the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey) data from a probability sample of some twenty thousand U.S. men. The Blau-Duncan study is known as OCG-I for "Occupational Change in a Generation." A decade later in 1973, David Featherman and Robert Hauser gave us OCG-II, a thirty thousand case replication. Whether, like *Rocky* or *Superman*, we have further OCG treats in store is unknown, but a third data base has emerged on its own. Beginning in 1972, NORC began a series of samplings of American adults known as the General Social Survey (GSS). Most of the GSS questions are repeated word for word, year after year—not for lack of imagination but to catch social trends. One can pool GSSs to obtain a large sample —some 12,000 cases if one pools the eight surveys from 1972 through 1980. GSS 1982 is just completed, but we haven't seen any results yet.

After this brief introduction, let me turn to the daunting assignment of summarizing the findings of dozens of books and articles and analyzing the data. Necessarily painting with rather broad brush strokes, I say it looks like this:

1. Americans are frequent border-crossers
2. There is a lot more downward mobility than one might expect
3. But more of us move into the top levels than move out
4. Points 1, 2, and 3 shouldn't lead one to ignore the high amount of class continuity
5. Which is both promoted and mitigated by the "educational two-step."

Americans Are Frequent Border-Crossers

Comparing current situations with earlier ones, the General Social Survey and the Michigan election studies tell us:

- No more than 10 to 15 percent of those surveyed shift out of their original religion
- A bit less than 15 percent shift regions
- About 30 percent shift political party
- About a third have shifted from one state to another
- About a third cross the white collar v. blue collar/farm line, going one way or the other.

Occupational mobility is not rare. It is about as common as inter-state or inter-party mobility, and a lot more common than movement across the subcultural fault lines of religion and region.

Downward Mobility

Table 1 gives several examples of the classic way to examine mobility data, a nine-celled percentage table with fathers and sons each sorted into white collar, farm, and blue collar. For example, the fifth line of data says that in OCG-II, of 5,855 sons of farm fathers, 25.7 percent now have white collar jobs, 15 percent are still farming, and 59.3 percent have blue collar jobs.

Table 1

THE STANDARD BRAND, CONTEMPORARY U.S., FATHER-SON MOBILITY TABLE

	Son's Job					
Father's Job	White Collar	Farm	Blue Collar	Total	N	Origins
(A) OCG-I (1962)						
White Collar	69.8%	1.4%	28.8%	100%	4,290	24.4%
Farm	22.9	22.3	54.9	100	5,141	29.2
Blue Collar	36.5	1.7	61.9	100	8,180	46.4
					17,611	100.0
(B) OCG-II (1973)						
White Collar	66.1	.1	32.9	99	7,232	27.6
Farm	25.7	15.0	59.3	100	5,855	22.3
Blue Collar	38.1	1.1	60.9	100	13,148	50.1
					26,235	100.0
(C) GSS (1972-1976)*						
White Collar	66.5	.5	32.9	100	762	25.6
Farm	24.4	19.9	55.7	100	734	24.6
Blue Collar	35.4	.8	63.8	100	1,483	49.8
					2,974	100.0
(D) GSS (adjusted for education)						
White Collar	54.0	1.2	44.7	100	762	25.6
Farm	34.2	17.6	48.3	100	734	24.6
Blue Collar	37.7	.8	61.5	100	1,483	49.8
					2,979	100.0

*Calculated from tables in John W. Meyer, Nancy Brandon Tuma, and Krzystof Zagorski, "Educational and Occupational Mobility: A Comparison of Polish and American Men," *American Journal of Sociology* (1979), 84:978-986.

Sticking with nonfarm jobs for the moment and squinting just a bit, I say each study is consistent with this proposition: "About a third of the white collar sons move down to blue, and about a third of blue collar sons move up to white collar." The ascent of the blues is, of course, "The American Dream," but the descent of the white collars is seldom lauded in Labor Day speeches on our open society. Yet the probabilities are similar in either direction. Not all descents are sickening plummets, I grant you. Indeed, as we will see, the top of the blue collar group (Craftsmen) have occupational prestige scores on a par with the bottom of the white collar (Clerical and Sales). True enough, but most white collar fathers are among the more prestigious "Professional and Managerial" group and most blue collar fathers are within the less prestigious "Operatives, Service Workers, Laborers" group rather than Craftsmen. Taking the *top* of the whites and the *bottom* of the blues and combining OCG-I and OCG-II, 16 percent of the Professional and Managerial sons ended up in Operative-Service-Labor, while 22 percent of the Operative-Service-Labor sons ended up in Professional and Managerial. For nonfarm workers, the chances of downward mobility are about the same as the chances for upward mobility.

Moving into the Top Levels

If the white collars have about the same chance of moving down as the blue collars have of moving up, why do we hear only about upward mobility? Perhaps part of our sense of progress comes from the astounding increase in real incomes in this century. Contemporary blue collar workers live a lot better than pre-World War II white collar workers. But another part comes from a profound mathematical principle: if you apply the same percentage to a larger number you will get more cases than if you apply it to a smaller number. Look again at table 1. About half of us come from blue collar homes and only about a quarter from white collar homes. Most of this difference can be accounted for by occupational structure, but some of it is due to fertility. Blue collar families generate more sons for the tables than the same number of white collar families. Consequently, there are roughly twice as many sons who moved from blue to white as moved from white to blue.

And then there are the farm sons. If asked to nominate one single social trend to characterize America in the last century, I would opt for "Land Rush"—a rush of farmers and farm sons to get off the land. GSS data, for example, suggest that among Americans born around 1890, half had farmer fathers while among those in the birth cohort of 1955 (in their early twenties during the GSS years 1972-1980) the figure is down to 6 percent. Rural southern blacks, Yankee adolescents on stony hillsides, and Scandinavian lads from the endless prairies: all had this in common—as adults the vast majority were working in cities, most (about 55 percent in table 1) as blue collar workers, but a sizable minority (about 25 percent) as white collar. Farm sons were more likely to end up as white collar workers than as farmers! Since nobody (one percent or less) from nonfarm origins ends up working in agriculture, the land rush added considerably to the number of people crossing into white collar jobs. Averaging over the three studies and fudging a weensy bit to make things tidy:

- 50 percent stayed in their father's group (immobile)
- 25 percent moved from farm or blue collar into white (up)
- 10 percent moved from white collar to blue (down)
- 15 percent moved from farm to blue (down)

These four numbers can be combined and rearranged into several pretty patterns:

- (25% + 10% = 35%) i.e. the one-third crossing the white collar line one way or the other
- (25% + 10% + 15% = 50%) Half the sons are mobile if you use a three-way split
- (25% ÷ 10% = 2.5%) More than twice as many move into white collar as move out
- (15% − 10% = 5%) Most entrants into the blue collar stratum came from farm
- (15% + 10% = 25%) If you consider movement from farm to blue collar as downward mobility (more on this later), upward mobility (25% moving from farm or blue collar into white) and downward mobility are about equally common.

Assuming the rates stay the same, the *rate by origin* principle allows us to speculate about the future of mobility. Three predictions: (1) As white collar jobs increase vis-à-vis blue collar, downward mobility will increase and upward mobility decrease in absolute terms; (2) the evaporation of farm origins will reduce downward mobility more than it reduces upward; and (3) these two trends either will or won't cancel each other out and the rates may or may not stay the same.

While "just" half the sons remain in their paternal stratum, they are considerably more likely to end up there than sons from other strata. At the top, two-thirds of the white collar sons stay put, but that is a lot more than the one-third or less of blue collar or farm sons who scale those heights. And, of course, the opposite occurs for blue collar jobs, where blue collar sons end up with more than their fair share. In less technical language, "them as has, gets." The consequence is a perpetuation of family privilege and of family underprivilege.

Statistically, we are talking about a positive correlation between the prestige of father's and son's occupations. These correlations may well be the most studied statistic in sociology. I have seen dozens of them. The numbers vary with the sample and the particular statistics used, but they are always positive: in any community, region, ethnic group, or whatever in the United

States, it is safe to bet that the higher the prestige of the father, the higher the prestige of the son or daughter.

Whether this goes on more than two generations has not been well studied. My guess (drawing on unpublished research by Christopher Jencks and NORC) is that there is very little correlation between the prestige of grandfathers and grandsons, and what there is is explained by father's occupation. As the old American aphorism goes, "shirt sleeves to shirt sleeves in three generations." The American pattern seems to be one of moderate continuity but not of dynasties or a permanent underclass.

The "Educational Two-Step"

How do fathers pass on the occupational baton (or short end of the stick)? We know it isn't direct inheritance of jobs. If you remove the minority of cases where fathers and sons have exactly the same job titles, the patterns in table 1 change little. Instead, the key variable turns out to be schooling—the number of years of formal education.

When a third variable strongly influences a correlation, statistical rules say it must have an important association with both. Thus, the contribution of schooling to father-son occupational inheritance consists of two separate steps, a relation between father's occupation and education and a second relation between son's occupation and education.

Step one can be called the liberals' step, since it makes the United States look bad and would cost a lot of money to change. Table 2a uses GSS data to illustrate the strong differences in schooling still present in America:

- More than 60 percent of white collar sons have a year or more of college, in contrast to 32 percent of blue collar and 18 percent of farm sons.
- Almost 60 percent of farm sons failed to finish high school in contrast to 36 percent of blue collar and 15 percent of white collar.
- Most white collar sons have a year or more of college, most farm sons never finished high school, and blue collar sons are evenly split between college, high school, and less than high school.

Americans don't feel comfortable about discussing it, but we still have sharp class differences in schooling. As best we can tell, these differences are not going away. (Race differences in schooling are going away, but that's another matter.) Younger birth cohorts do have strikingly higher levels of education. For the birth cohorts of 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930, and 1940 the portions with 12 or more years of schooling are estimated as 23 percent, 36 percent, 50 percent, 58 percent, and 72 percent.

Step two of the educational two-step runs from education to occupation and it should please the conservatives since it suggests the system is working fairly and wonderfully and it would be a shame to monkey with it. More exactly, table 2b shows that when one looks at the occupational effects of education and father's stratum simultaneously, education is very important and class origins not very important:

- In each origin stratum, the proportion of white collar sons rises dramatically with education.
- In each educational level, the effects of father's stratum are moderate at best.
- A blue collar or farm son with a college degree has a better chance at a white collar job than a white collar son without a degree.

Liberals (rightly) decry the gross class differences in schooling, and conservatives (rightly) point with pride to the palpable meritocratic effects of schooling in

Table 2

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY (GSS)

(a) Father's Occupation and Son's Education

	Son's Education								
Father's Occupation	**0-8**	**9-11**	**12**	**13-15**	**16+**	**Total**	**0-11**	**13+**	**N**
White Collar	5.0%	9.7%	22.6%	28.3%	34.4%	100%	14.7%	62.7%	762
Blue Collar	15.7	20.3	32.0	18.3	13.8	100	36.0	32.1	1,483
Farm	41.0	17.8	23.0	8.6	9.5	100	58.8	18.1	734
									2,979

(b) Father's Occupation, Son's Education, and Son's Occupation
(Proportion of Sons in White Collar Jobs)

	Son's Education				
Father's Occupation	**0-8**	**9-11**	**12**	**13-15**	**16+**
White Collar	28.9% (38)*	33.8% (74)	51.2% (172)	67.1% (216)	90.8% (262)
Blue Collar	12.1 (232)	18.3 (301)	25.9 (474)	53.7 (272)	84.8 (204)
Farm	11.6 (301)	12.2 (131)	25.4 (169)	46.0 (63)	80.0 (70)

*Numbers in parentheses represent the total cases for the proportions above.

every origin stratum, but the sociologist is interested in how these two steps combine to influence father-son inheritance. Table 1d shows what happens to the data in table 1c after a little experiment. Let us give the sons in each paternal stratum of table 1c the same educational attainments—through a statistical procedure called "direct standardization," not, I hasten to say, through federal handouts. Then let's see what this does to inheritance. Comparing tables 1c and 1d we see the adjustment eliminates about half the inheritance. For example, in table 2c white collar sons have a 31.1% advantage in white collar jobs compared with sons of blue collar workers (66.5 − 35.4 = 31.1) but when class differences in education are eliminated statistically their advantage drops to 16.3% (54.0 − 37.7 = 16.3). Other statistics, other data sets, and other occupational measures give slightly different numbers, but one can routinely explain half or more of the father-son occupational prestige correlation by son's schooling.

The American system of education acts powerfully and simultaneously to:

—preserve class differences across generations because the well-born go much farther in school and schooling is crucial for good jobs;

—cancel out class differences across generations because not all well-born go far in school (a third of white collar sons have no college), a number of lower status sons get a lot of schooling (a third of blue collar sons have some college) and schooling is more important than class origins in getting good jobs.

These then are the main themes in mobility research: an impressive amount of intergenerational mobility in all directions, rates of downward mobility almost as large as rates of upward mobility, more movement into the very top than out of it because of origin distributions and the secular decline in farming, a persistent positive correlation between father's and son's occupational prestige, and the powerful effect of schooling both in transmitting status across generations and in promoting mobility.

Ethnic Group Mobility

When you jam thousands of people into nine little boxes like the mobility tables in table 1, their idiosyncrasies don't get much chance to shine through. Nevertheless, the data so far have been strictly about individual Americans, as have the vast number of sociological mobility studies. But sociologists are interested in groups too—in particular, ethnic groups such as southern blacks, Irish Catholics, or French-Canadians. Like feminine mobility, ethnic group mobility has not been thoroughly studied because of a shortage of data. The U.S. Census does not ask about religion—partly because Jews, among others, have found that having their religious preference on government lists is not always advantageous—so Census Bureau studies such as the OCGs do not include religion. GSS, however, includes detailed data on religion and nationality and its 12,000 cases enable us to study relatively small groups.

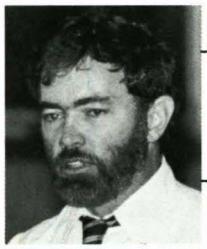
Ethnicity is like pornography in that, as Mr. Justice Stewart remarked, you can't define it but you know it when you see it. To see it you have to look at combinations of at least four variables: race, religion, region, and national origin. These variables are so intricately interwoven that many possible combinations sound facetious, for example, "Black, Southern, Swedish Catholics." Therefore I have used four variables to point out selected combinations that make sociological and statistical sense. Ethnic classification is not standard and other (well-meaning but misguided) sociologists might do it differently. Figure 1 shows my version.

Starting at the top of figure 1, we first divide the cases by race. For the 288 self-defined American Indians, that is that. They appear with their case count and abbreviation (AMERIN) in the upper left corner. Blacks are not sorted on religion because 83 percent were raised as Protestants, but they are divided on region. Blacks have experienced an epochal trek from the rural South to the urban North. Therefore, I divided them into three groups: those who grew up in and stayed in the South (642 cases), those born in the South and now living in the North (288) and those born in and living in the North (335). Northern born blacks returning to the South make excellent feature copy but are too few in number (1.7% of GSS blacks) to include. Whites (there were too few Orientals to consider) are divided first on religion ("In what religion were you raised?"). The 249 Jews are not further subdivided.

Roman Catholics are sorted by national origin ("From what countries or part of the world did your ancestors come?"). In order of size: Italy (450), Ireland (387), Germany (341), Poland (227), Mexico (166), Czechoslovakia (96), France (88), England (80), Puerto Rico (58), and French Canada (53). The Catholic groups are not subdivided on region because they are heavily northern (strictly speaking, non-southern). While about a third of the GSS population lives in the Census region South, for seven of ten Catholic groups the percentage is under 15, for Czechs and French the figure is a bit under the norm (24% and 31%) and only Mexicans (40%), with their southwestern concentration, are relatively southern.

Protestants are sorted into ten nationalities and in some cases by original region also. The regional pattern of Protestant (and Catholic) groups gives us an almost instant course in American history and geography, since even today their homes reflect time of immigration and historical patterns of agriculture and transportation. Scandinavian groups are emphatically non-southern (less than 15 percent for Danes, Finns, Norwegians, and Swedes, half or more of whom grew up in the Midwest); the Dutch and Germans are a bit "dis-southern" at 25 percent each, but the four old migration, large, Protestant groups (English, French,

(Continued on page 48)



by Frank Bryan

Rural Renaissance:

This land is your land
This land is my land
From California
To the New York Island
Woody Guthrie ©

There has always been in the United States a final option: moving on, snapping the bonds of inequality and the pain of promises unfulfilled through flight; going west, heading north, coming back, seeking out those faraway places that seem at least in fancy to offer the promise of new choices, new opportunities—a new life. Throughout two centuries, as a well-meaning people worked, however falteringly, to cut away the blockages to socioeconomic mobility associated with location, there has been a recurrent bottom line—"getting out."

Roger Williams fled to Providence. Ethan Allen adventured north to the banks of Vermont's Winooski River, Daniel Boone went to Kentucky, John Bozeman to Montana, John Sutter to California. The government sent Lewis and Clark to set the compass and George Custer to kill the Indians. It conquered Mexico and passed the Homestead Act; it helped build canals and drive the spikes for the railroads. Mostly, however, it simply established conditions and then watched as we oozed westward in giant kaleidoscopic arcs; up and over, down and across in what Daniel Elazar calls "geological strata" of population settlement, one overlapping the other until finally we had been everywhere at least once.

"Moving on" is a theme of the American experience that appears on every cultural horizon. We write it and paint it. We sing and recite it. We see it in the wild geese over our fall pastures; we hear it in the early morning rumblings of the eighteen wheelers. We smell it along our coasts, in the mud of the great Mississippi, over the wild prairie grasses of the Missouri breaks. We feel it in our bones and sense it in our roots. It is as generic to the concept of America as freedom itself. But, like freedom, "moving on" is multidimensional. Many of its properties are dark on the edges, as Mark Twain told us in *Huckleberry Finn*, the ultimate American tale of freedom through movement. It is clear, however, that the pattern that holds this incredibly complex quilt together is opportunity. Movement has been a great leveler in American political experience—often a more important influence than the political mechanisms that have been created on behalf of those seeking socioeconomic mobility and freedom of opportunity.

Whether or not geographical mobility consistently leads to opportunity is open to question. Those who moved on believed it did. Hamlin Garland remembers his father's rough-hewn lyrics in *Son of the Middle Border:*

Away to Colorado a journey I'll go
For to double my fortune as other men do
Oh wife, let us go, oh don't let us wait:
I long to be there and I long to be great
While you some fair lady and who knows but I
May be some rich governor long 'fore I die

The theme of this issue of *Public Opinion* is "America, the *land* of opportunity." There has always been plenty of land and there still is. But in what sense does it offer another chance or, in many cases, a first chance? In plain fact, it has the potential to play a more important role now in the quest for opportunity than it has for over a hundred years. This is because after a century of leaving the land, Americans are now returning to it. As we swing closed the door on the twentieth century, this simple fact is of vast importance in understanding American social dynamics.

There are few clear hinge decades in the history of American internal migration streams. The main currents have flowed in tandem, criss-crossed and overlapped, camouflaging shifts and playing havoc with attempts to generalize. In the nineteenth century, the westward movement and urbanization dominated. Ur-

Is America On the Move Again?

banism crested at century's turn, but the phenomenon continued until 1960. Westwardness (originally a rural-to-rural pattern) peaked earlier (1840-1860) but likewise has continued throughout our history. Even as late as the decade of the 1940s, over 80 percent of the Pacific Coast states' population increases came from migration from the East. "Go west young man" and "how you goin' to keep 'em down on the farm" have been enduring themes. Both are yoked to the notion of opportunity.

Urbanism started somewhat later, fed in the East by foreign immigration and in the West by rural dreams gone sour. The driving force behind it was economic opportunity, especially in the early days. In 1850 less than 15 percent of Americans lived in cities; by 1920 more than half did. Between 1880 and 1890, the population of Minneapolis jumped from 47,000 to 164,000; Omaha from 30,000 to 140,000; Spokane from 350 to 20,000; Denver from 35,000 to 95,000.

In the twentieth century, the magnetism of the city continued but was soon overlapped and overshadowed by the suburban impulse. Simply stated, urban dwellers began to demand land—not much land, but at least enough to care for, to mow and trim and tinker with. Technology (trollies, telephones, and automobiles) made it possible, and the government, especially in the later stages, helped with housing and highway policies. The process was accelerated after World War II by the baby boom. By mid-century we had reached what William Kowinski called in a recent *New York Times Magazine* feature, the "golden age" of suburbia. To label suburbanization a migratory pattern, however, is to create a mistaken image. It was a readjustment of the urban industrial revolution. Also, the move to the suburbs was more a manifestation of status achieved than opportunity sought.

This century did provide an important new regional twist—the South-to-North movement—which, except for a slowdown during the depression, was fairly steady through 1960. This trend, too, was heavily biased by the socioeconomic draw of the city. The first great wave of modern country music bewailed the loss of rural lifestyles amid the impersonality of the northern cities. Now widely popular, country music's historical roots remain geographically southern and thematically rural versus urban.

The twentieth century has exhibited little that is generically different from the two major migration patterns that have dominated our history almost from the beginning, the tendency to drift west and metro-magnetism. Until now.

Charting the Return to the Outback

Indeed, the 1970s seem to have composed one of those rare hinge decades when a fundamental shift came clear. Peter Morrison of the Rand Corporation calls it "one of the most significant turnabouts in migration in the nation's history." It, coupled with a concomitant reversal of South-to-North streams, may be the *first and only* significant turnabout since the urban explosion after the Civil War.

What are the statistical dimensions of this turnaround which has been called "remarkable," "pervasive," "astounding," and "unanticipated" by demographers and sociologists? They were outlined cautiously by Calvin Beale in 1975 in a paper entitled, "Where Are All the People Going?" delivered at the first National Conference on Rural America. Since that time Beale has become the most often footnoted scholar in the field. He made two points: (1) rural areas were growing faster than metropolitan areas for the first time since the early 1800s; (2) nonmetropolitan counties which were not adjacent to metropolitan counties were also making gains for the first time in over a century. A torrent of analysis followed, most of it with a wary eye cocked to the 1980 census.

The census data are now in and they confirm Beale's insights. Between 1960 and 1970, population in nonmetropolitan counties not adjacent to a metropolitan county *and* without a city of 10,000 population (in short, the "outback") registered a population change of —2.7 percent. In the ensuing decade they *gained* 13.6 percent! Metropolitan counties, on the other hand, gained only 9.8 percent in the 1970-1980 period (see table 1).

Table 1
PERCENTAGE CHANGE IN AMERICAN COUNTY TYPES

	1960-1970	1970-1980
Metropolitan counties	17.0%	9.8%
Nonmetropolitan counties adjacent to a metropolitan county	7.3	17.4
Nonmetropolitan, nonadjacent counties with a city of 10,000 or more population	7.0	14.5
Nonmetropolitan, nonadjacent counties without a city of 10,000 or more population	—2.7	13.6

Source: Economic Development Division, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

John Wardwell and Jack Gilchrist show in a recent article in *Demography* that "the phenomenon of large metropolitan deconcentration and nonmetropolitan growth is also characteristic of the locations of employment activities." During the 1970s, more than 40 percent of all new housing was constructed on rural land. Another factor emphasizing the tie between rural growth and new potential opportunity structure based on movement toward the land, is the heavy dependence of rural areas on immigration rather than natural growth. Natural decrease of population in any section of America is unusual. But, in some rural areas there were disproportionate numbers of older people (past child-rearing age) which, combined with social taboos against large families among young adults, caused a natural population decrease in more than 10 percent of all nonmetropolitan counties between 1965 and 1970. Yet these very counties (most of which had been long-term losers of population previously) actually gained population through immigration. Sociologists Kenneth Johnson and Ross Purdy called this "a pattern of population growth without precedent in recent U.S. demographic history."

There are some exceptions to the turnaround phenomenon. The South still demonstrated more urban than nonurban growth in the 1970s. The Northeast was the only area to show an actual decline in metropolitanism, a —1.8 percentage change. There has been a second reversal. The old South-to-North streams have begun flowing North-to-South. The South is now on the positive end of the migration pipeline and northern immigrants to Dixie are, like their southern counterparts of the 1940s, urban bound. The West and the South together accounted for 90 percent of national population growth in the 1980s.

Woodchucks, Flatlanders, and the Gangplank Syndrome

Like most social phenomena, the new rural migration is misunderstood. Professionals rarely agree on the wherefores and the whys of the modern urban exodus. One of the principal sources of contention is the question, "Why are people going to the country?" Some say they are going for traditional economic reasons, following footloose industries into the hinterland. There is much precedent for this economic "push-pull" theory. In Vermont, for example, the coming of a single large IBM plant in the 1960s triggered an economic expansion that profoundly affected the state's population growth. History also shows that the rural-to-urban movement slowed during economic hard times, when jobs were scarce.

Others claim that the new urban migrants to the country are different from their rural-to-urban counterparts of old in that they are moving primarily for "lifestyle" opportunities, not employment opportunities. They are said to want scenery, a slower pace of life, and neighbors—they want to "get back to the land." Who is to say that the contemporary fascination for tranquility and evening whip-poor-wills is more or less a matter of "lifestyle" than the call of the bright lights and honky-tonks that lured many a farm boy into the arms of the city in an earlier era? And who is to say that those who are presently heading for the outback will be less disillusioned, alienated and culture-shocked when they find the myth of rural virtue is as booby-trapped as the myth of city life was fifty years ago? Surely the urban sophisticate is no more familiar with the realities of "getting away from it all" in the country than the ruralites were with the realities of "excitement, challenge, and opportunity" in the city.

What kind of reception will the new urban migrants receive when they get there? What do the natives ("woodchucks" as they are sometimes called in Vermont) think of the newcomers ("flatlanders" according to the woodchucks). Some feel the woodchucks will react hostilely to the flatlanders. Oregonians, fearing that their rural lifestyle would be ruined by urban migrants, openly campaigned against settlement (for example, telling California via bumper stickers "Don't Californicate Oregon"). Vermont, which long touted the state as "The Beckoning Country" seemed to want to slam the door when newly elected governor Tom Salmon cried "Vermont is not for sale" to a standing ovation from the legislature during his inaugural address in 1972. Others opt for the "gangplank" hypothesis which postulates that the last on board will be the most selfish residents of rural places, scampering to shut off settlement soon after their own arrival.

In gauging an answer to the question, several points should be kept in mind. First, rural people traditionally have been less protective of their environment than

urban people. Second, rural people have by and large supported economic development in direct proportion to the lack of it where they live. Third, there is evidence that the gangplank theory doesn't hold. In a study of residents of seventy-five high net immigration, nonmetropolitan counties in twelve states from North Dakota to Ohio, published recently in *Rural Sociology*, the following question was asked:

"Should elected officials try to attract new residents to their area?"

	Metropolitan-origin migrants n = 415	*Nonmetropolitan migrants n = 174*	*Rural residents n = 359*
Yes	*73%*	*77%*	*75%*
No	*27*	*23*	*25*

Source: Frederick C. Fliegal et al., "Population Growth in Rural Areas and Sentiments toward Future Growth," *Rural Sociology*, 46 (Fall, 1981) pp. 411-429.

Another study has shown that full-time farmers are more likely to be protectionist than are part-time farmers (who were more apt to be newcomers). City cousins with a hankerin' to get back to the soil, however, can take solace in remembering that there are precious few full-time farmers left. As far as the attitudes of rural residents are concerned, folks, there is good reason to believe the gangplank is still down—at least for some.

Computers in the Country: the Face of Modern Ruralism

One looks for meandering country roads and one finds straight, glossy ones built to federal specifications. One looks for pastured Jerseys and one finds Holsteins huddled in environmentally controlled "free" stalls. One looks for barefoot farm boys with fishing poles and finds none. One looks for boundaried villages, country stores, and neighbors. But the villages have been extended, the country stores have been gentrified, and the neighbors are gone. One thinks of a politics "close to the people" and finds instead highly centralized state governments dominated by their bureaucracies. One thinks "country" and finds . . . there is as yet no proper word for it. We will need one soon. This is not how rural America is now, totally. But this is the way it is fast becoming.

The early American agrarian republic was small farm, small town rural. The industrialized nation was metro-urban. It now appears that those rural areas of America which were ignored by the urban-industrial revolution are the most benign environments for the post-modern technostate. America's hinterland has long been shunned by the national consciousness. Now, unfettered by the paraphernalia of the most recent condition (urban industrialism), it is in a position to assume developmental precedence as our third century of natural life begins to unfold.

Neal Peirce, in a recent book on the South (*The Deep South States of America*, W. W. Norton, 1974), entitles a portion of his chapter on Mississippi, which is the most rural state in the region, "From Cotton to Computers." Well said. The huge majority of American scholars and opinion elites, who will be called upon to forecast the coming arrangement of people and land, are urbanists in disposition and culture. If there is one notion of which they must disabuse themselves, it is that rural areas are technologically retarded. The interstate highway system is to rural America what the trollies were to the suburbs of the past. The computer is the telephone. Life and business can now be conducted on the periphery—the extreme periphery.

Leading in the technocratization of rural areas has been the farmer. The statistics are mind boggling. Such a tiny fraction of our population is involved in actual farming, yet it feeds so many. The typical urbanite would be as amazed at the workings of the normal, computerized dairy herd as a North Dakota wheat farmer would be at the operation of Washington's new Metro system. The failure to come to grips with the pervasive impact technosystems have had on rural life girdles most attempts to understand modern ruralism. This failure may result from the amazing quickness of the rural transformation, which occurred in only two decades (1955-1975). Rural places are expected to be following, bringing up the rear, needing a helping hand from those who adjust the urban-industrial conditions to the new technocracy, but one finds precisely the opposite. They know what they are doing and, in many respects, because there are fewer monkey wrenches to be thrown into the workings from the urban-industrial period, they are forging ahead. I have dealt with the causative elements of this model in other writings. Let me summarize the political conditions that seem to exist in those American states where technology and low density living have been suddenly wedded.

- The old attitudinal dichotomy between rural and urban is disappearing. It still exists as an ideological construct in America, but size of place of residence no longer clearly locates it.
- Political systems are growing more centralized and bureaucratic. Local governments have less autonomy in rural states than in urban states.
- Citizen fatigue is prevalent. Even though the scope of governance is just as broad as in urban areas, there are fewer people to do the negotiating and this leaves the major interest groups and bureaucracies more fully in control.
- More and more rural people live in technological cocoons, protected from the natural harshness of rural life—television under Montana's lonely big sky, air conditioning for Mississippi's piney woods, four-wheel drive vehicles for Vermont's deep snowed winters. This estrangement from the land produces an artificiality in modern rural culture that affects political life.
- The concept of "neighbor" and neighborhood

suffers when a people's spatial distance (which defines "rural") reinforces the atomizing effect of technology itself. One's friends need not even be in the same town, to say nothing of next door. The same goes for one's co-workers. One may shop here, and politic there, join the jogging club here and send one's kids to school there. Rural people are more apt to be *both* spatially and technologically estranged from one another and are even less apt to be attached to a sense of "community" than urban people.

- The sense of political community is further threatened by functional fragmentation. The one-man, one-vote dictum laid down in *Baker* v. *Carr* (1962) means that rural legislative districts are twisted and reshaped every decade and seldom match the boundaries of local governments. In Montana a rancher may share a political relationship with one neighbor in a SID (special improvement district) for mosquitoes, with another neighbor in a SID for coyotes, and another with a third neighbor for water. The county plows the roads but the state representative is elected from a slice of the county combined with a census enumerator district or two from somewhere else.

April is the Cruelest Month: Opportunity for the Few

It could be a springtime for America—an opportunity to reexplore the outback, reset our roots and reestablish our presence on the land. But springtime, as T. S. Eliot has told us (*The Waste Land*, 1922) can be cruel, "stirring dull roots with spring rain." As a people, our roots were stirred in the 1970s by the longing for a largely mythical past, a green past of pastoral simplicity that promised, as Charles Reich suggested, a green future, a rural future.

It appears that we will have a rural future but it may not be the future of the dream; of farmsteads, slow living, human scale communities, understandable politics (close up and personal)—the simple life, the "good" life. If there is a certain cruelty in that, it was self-inflicted, for the dream itself was an indulgence, as Richard Hofstadter and so many others have warned.

The more important question is how many of us will be involved in the unfolding of this latest geographic revolution? In what sense is it an affirmation that America still is a *land* of opportunity? The fact is that this latest migration, like the suburban one before it, seems to be another example of a movement of those with one kind of status seeking another kind. There is a great turnstile at the border of rural America these days, and it is keyed by financial and professional status. The gangplank is still down, if you have the means to walk up it.

How is this so?

Protection and Projection

To partake of the new rural renaissance, one needs either the financial wherewithal (one must be able to purchase a tract of land) and/or (usually "and") a mind that understands and can manipulate the technosystem —that vast complexity of rules and regulations operating to protect the land from the existence of human life on it. There are two forces building the fences and, although they like to call each other names, they share a profoundly important common denominator—the status prerequisite. One is protectionist. The other is projectionist. One seeks to set the land completely aside, to be watched but not touched. The other seeks to use the land in a planned orderly fashion. *Neither* makes room for the status-deprived.

It is clear how the protectionist mentality works, for it does not discriminate against anyone. Its denial to the poor of a piece of rural America is an unfortunate spin-off from the greater priority—protecting the land from humans in general. The projectionists discriminate, not in a nasty way, mind you, but the result is the same. Planners, although they are loath to admit it, need to plan *for* something. That something is defined in terms of prevailing class values. The prevailing class in rural America is a technocratic (elsewhere I have called it "systems") elite.

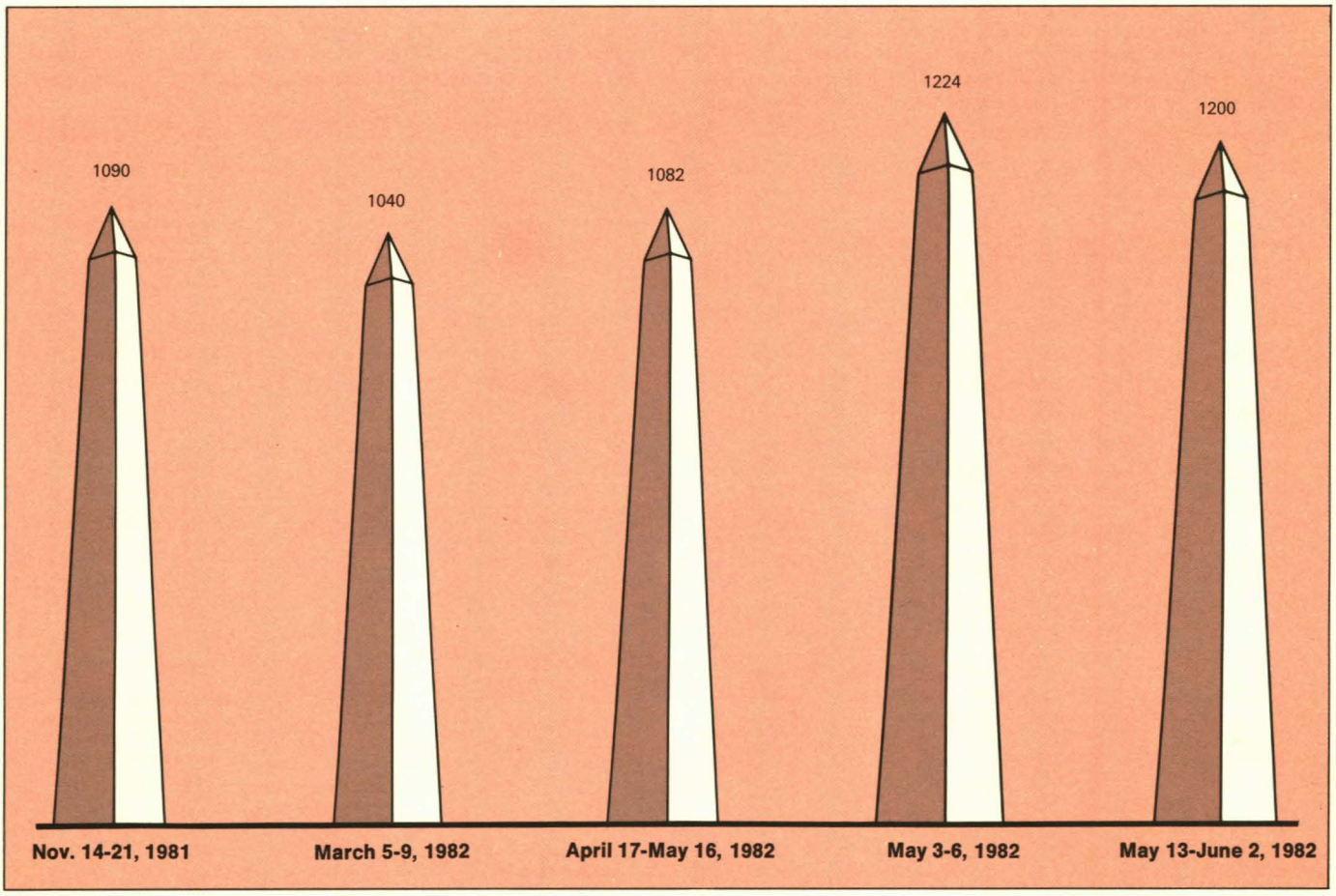
The systems elite values order, neatness, cleanliness, uncluttered landscapes and rational lifestyles—a planned rural romanticism. They fix up a covered bridge. They save a ghost town. They bring a small "clean" industry into the county and landscape it to fit the terrain. Most of all, they zone. Their power flows from a proposition that is as estranged from the prevailing view of ruralism as frost is from Biloxi: ruralites *like* zoning. Farmers *are* zoners. Those who deal with and understand nature, soon learn that one must plan in order to survive. Nature is the most efficient of systems. In rural America it is also the most visible. The new migrants bring a zoner's mentality with them and find it reinforced by the natural inclination of the population.

In concept, of course, zoning means selection and selection invites discrimination. Land-use plans which, on their face, simply promote orderly development are apt to turn the development process in particular directions. Vermont's "Act 250," for example, has a bias in favor of ten-acre lots, which, of course, are unaffordable for most. A ten-acre lot, a Morgan horse, and a four-wheel drive vehicle are the "unobstructive measures" with which one documents the prevailing lifestyle in the Green Mountain State. Rural ghettoization is a fact of life as the understatused huddle in their trailer parks, drive big, used, gas guzzlers and watch the fences appear around the land of their childhood.

There will be no "Homestead Act" for the second rural migration. Inasmuch as it is driven by an economic push-pull theory of employment opportunity, it is biased in favor of those with the professional skills of the tertiary class—knowledge managers and consultants. To the extent that it is driven by the push-pull of quality of life factors, one must remember that scenery does not put tuna fish in the lunch box.

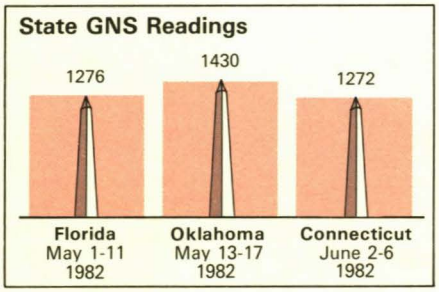
THE GROSS NATIONAL SPIRIT

In the June/July 1981 issue of *Public Opinion*, we introduced the Gross National Spirit Index. Respondents' answers to six questions were combined to provide a measure of how Americans think we as a nation are doing. To date, the questions have been asked on five national surveys and on numerous state surveys. The questions which compose the Index are shown on page 22.



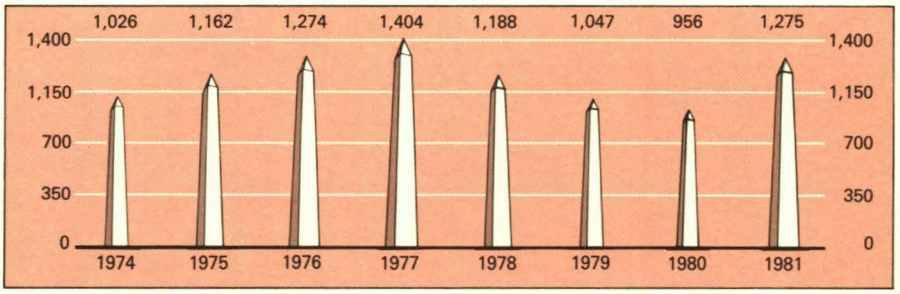
Note: The May 13-June 2 figures are preliminary findings from a national telephone survey by National Research (a division of William R. Hamilton and Staff) using random digit dialing designed to replicate the Yankelovich sample.

Source: Surveys by the Roper Organization/Roper Center for Public Opinion Research for the American Enterprise Institute, November 14-21, 1981; Civic Services, Incorporated, March 5-19, 1982; Yankelovich, Skelly and White for the American Council of Life Insurance, April 17-May 16, 1982; Audits and Surveys for The Merit Report, May 3-6, 1982; William R. Hamilton and Staff, Inc., for the American Council of Life Insurance, May 13-June 2, 1982.



Source: Surveys by MGT of America (Tallahasee, Florida), May 1-11, 1982; Opinion Research Associates (Tulsa, Oklahoma), May 13-17, 1982; Institute for Social Inquiry, University of Connecticut, June 2-6, 1982.

OLD GNS



Note: For explanation of the "Old" Gross National Spirit Index, see Public Opinion, June/July 1981, pp. 21-23.

METHODOLOGY

Respondents' answers to six questions were combined to create the GNS Index. Each item was weighted equally so a change in any individual item would produce the same change in the overall Index. If every respondent gave the most confident and approving answer to all six questions, the GNS Index would stand at 2400; if every respondent gave the least confident and least approving answer, the Index would have a value of 0.

Five of the questions we used had answers that fell very neatly into the categories "very positive," "less positive," and "negative or not at all positive." The presidential popularity question had only two categories which we treated as very positive and not at all positive.

For each question we assigned the most positive answer four points, the less positive answer (if there was one) two points, and the negative or not at all positive answer zero points. For question one asked by the Roper Organization, 7 percent said they were "very satisfied" ($7 \times 4 = 28$), 47 percent said they were "more or less satisfied" ($47 \times 2 = 94$) and 46 percent said they were "not satisfied at all" ($46 \times 0 = 0$). Question one asked by the Roper Organization has a value of 123 in the Index. Each individual item contributes between zero and 400 points for a total that ranges from zero to 2400 points.

1. In general, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in the United States today? Are you very satisfied, more or less satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

	Very satisfied	More or less satisfied	Not at all satisfied
Nov. 14-21	7%	47%	46%
Mar. 5-19	3	46	51
Apr. 17-May 16	5	47	48
May 3-6	7	51	42
May 13-June 2	6	52	42

The Roper Organization/ Roper Center for Public Opinion Research
Nov. 14-21, 1981

		+4	+2	0	
Q.	1	28	94	0	
	2	112	58	0	
	3	112	50	0	=1090
	4	220	—	0	
	5	128	98	0	
	6	96	94	0	

2. Over the next year or so, do you think things will go better for the United States, go worse, or stay about the same?

	Things will go better for U.S.	Stay about the same	Go worse
Nov. 14-21	28%	29%	43%
Mar. 5-9	29	36	35
April 17-May 16	27	39	34
May 3-6	36	34	30
May 13-June 2	37	33	30

Civic Services, Inc.
March 5-9, 1982

		+4	+2	0	
Q.	1	12	92	0	
	2	116	72	0	
	3	124	68	0	=1040
	4	184	—	0	
	5	92	102	0	
	6	80	98	0	

3. Over the next year or so, do you think the United States economy will get better, get worse, or stay about the same?

	Economy will get better	Stay about the same	Get worse
Nov. 14-21	28%	25%	46%
Mar. 5-9	31	34	35
April 17-May 16	30	32	38
May 3-6	39	32	29
May 13-June 2	37	31	32

Yankelovich, Skelly and White for the American Council of Life Insurance
April 17-May 16, 1982

		+4	+2	0	
Q.	1	20	94	0	
	2	108	78	0	
	3	120	64	0	=1082
	4	192	—	0	
	5	116	102	0	
	6	88	100	0	

4. Do you approve or disapprove of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as President?

	Approve of way Reagan handling job as President	Disapprove
Nov. 14-21	55%	45%
Mar. 5-9	46	54
April 17-May 16	48	52
May 3-6	53	47
May 13-June 2	53	47

Audits and Surveys for The Merit Report
May 3-6, 1982

		+4	+2	0	
Q.	1	28	102	0	
	2	144	68	0	
	3	156	64	0	=1224
	4	212	—	0	
	5	148	94	0	
	6	100	108	0	

5. How satisfied are you with the way things are going for you personally? Are you very satisfied, more or less satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

	Very satisfied	More or less satisfied	Not at all satisfied
Nov. 14-21	32%	49%	18%
Mar. 5-9	23	51	26
April 17-May 16	29	51	20
May 3-6	37	47	16
May 13-June 2	35	47	18

William R. Hamilton and Staff, Inc. for the American Council of Life Insurance
May 13-June 2, 1982

		+4	+2	0	
Q.	1	24	104	0	
	2	148	66	0	
	3	148	62	0	=1200
	4	212	—	0	
	5	140	94	0	
	6	100	102	0	

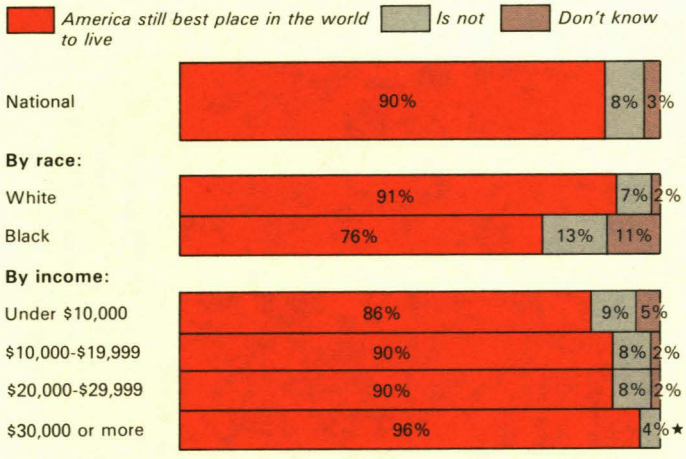
6. How satisfied are you with your family's financial situation? Are you very satisfied, more or less satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

	Very satisfied	More or less satisfied	Not at all satisfied
Nov. 14-21	24%	47%	30%
Mar. 5-9	20	49	32
April 17-May 16	22	50	28
May 3-6	25	54	22
May 13-June 2	25	51	24

AMERICANS ASSESS OPPORTUNITY

THE LAND OF PROMISE

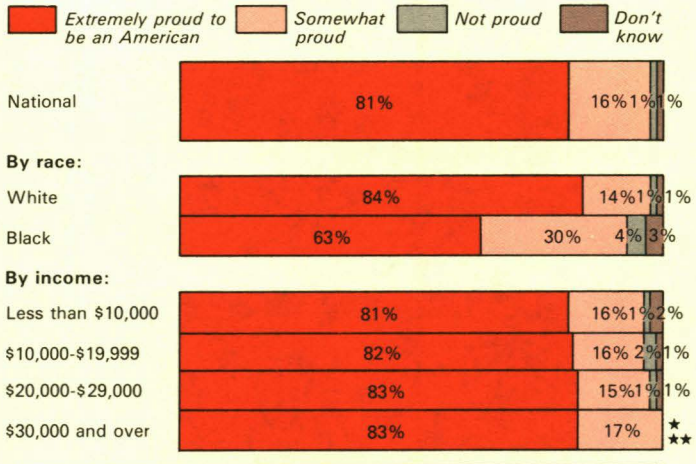
Question: Earlier on in American history, many people around the world thought the United States was the very best place in the world to live. Do you think it still is or not?



Note: *Don't know = less than .5%.

Source: Survey by Civic Services, Inc., March 5-18, 1981.

Question: How proud are you to be an American, are you extremely proud, somewhat proud, or not proud?

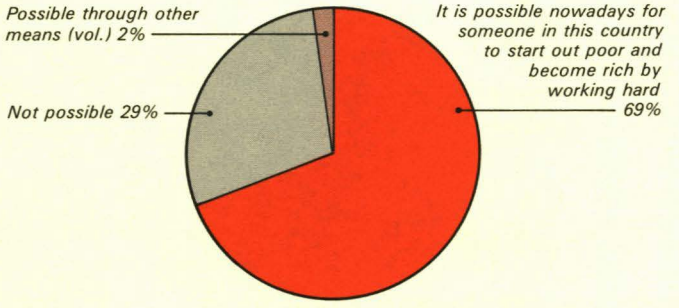


Note: *Not proud = 0.
**Don't know = 0.

Source: Survey by the Roper Organization and the Roper Center for the American Enterprise Institute, November 14-21, 1981.

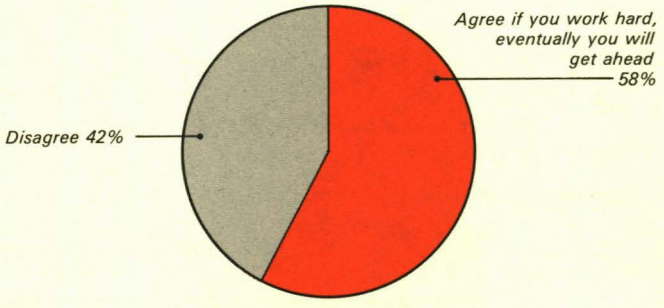
HARD WORK CAN TURN RAGS TO RICHES . . .

Question: Do you think it's possible nowadays for someone in this country to start out poor, and become rich by working hard?



Source: Survey by CBS News/*New York Times*, May 22-26, 1981.

Question: I'm going to read you a few statements. For each, please tell me if you tend to agree or disagree with it. . . . It is true in this country that if you work hard, eventually you will get ahead.

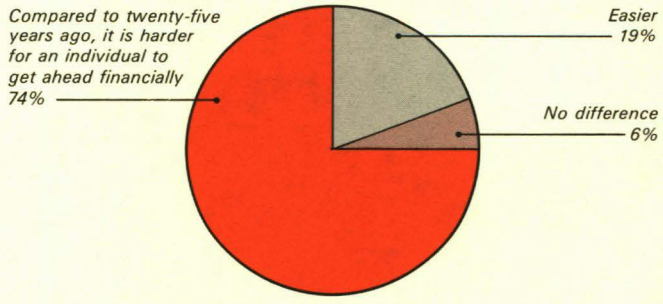


Note: In March 1981, 63% agreed to the ABC News/*Washington Post* question, 37% disagreed.

Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, January 22-30, 1982.

. . . BUT IT'S NOT EASY

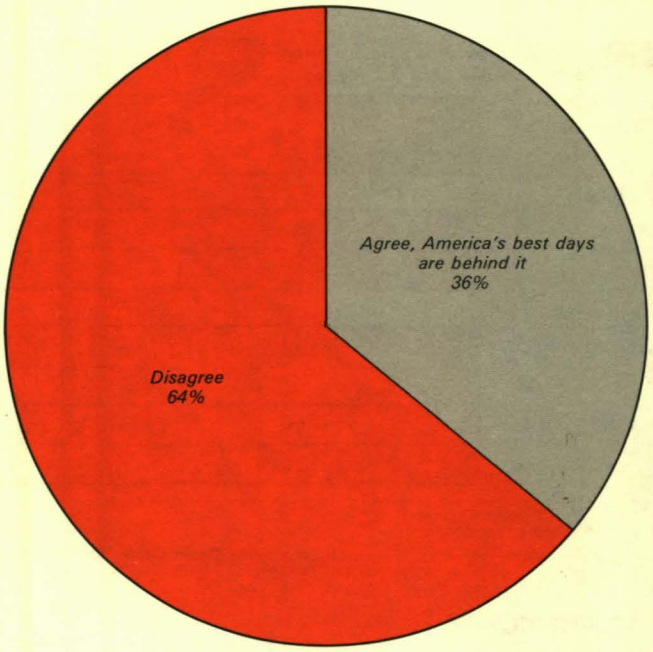
Question: Compared to twenty-five years ago in this country, do you think it is easier or harder for an individual to get ahead financially?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization and the Roper Center for the American Enterprise Institute, November 14-21, 1981.

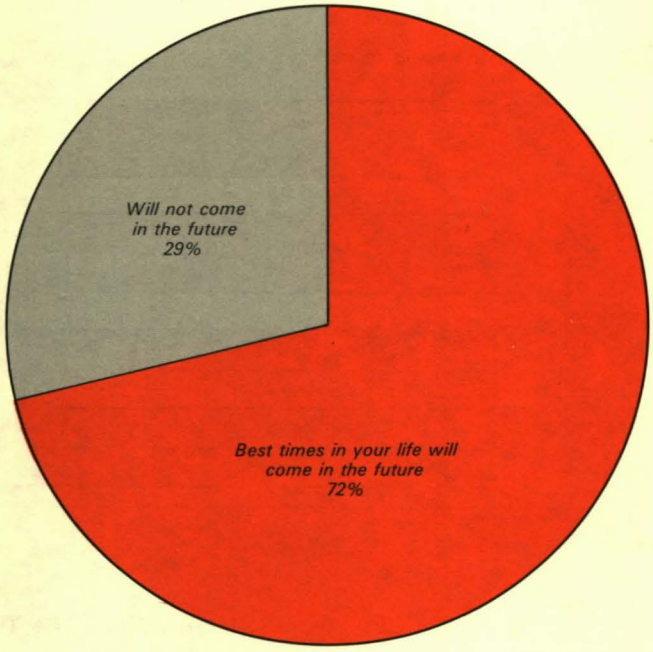
BEST TIMES AHEAD FOR SELF AND COUNTRY

Question: I am going to read you a few statements and after each I would like you to tell me whether you tend to agree or disagree with each . . . America's best days are behind it.



Note: Sample size = 597.
Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, January 27-30, 1982.

Question: Do you tend to feel the best times in your life will come in the future or not?

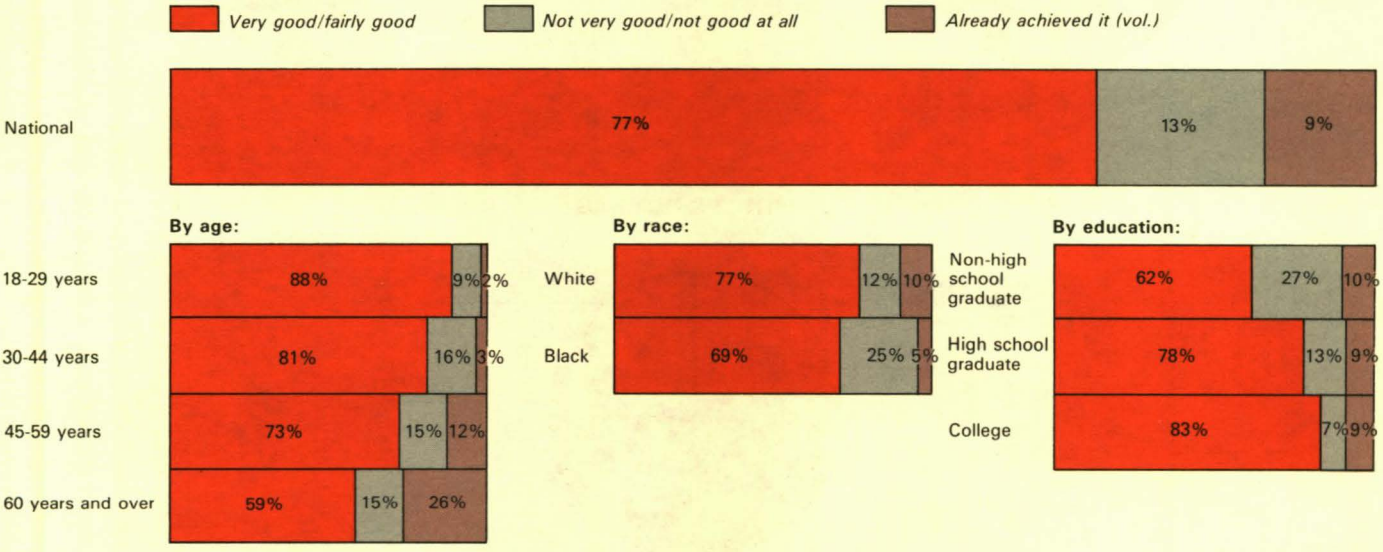


Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, March 3-8, 1982.

CHANCES OF ACHIEVING GOOD LIFE

Question: Thinking of your concept of the good life, how do you think your chances are of achieving it—very good, fairly good, not very good, or not good at all?

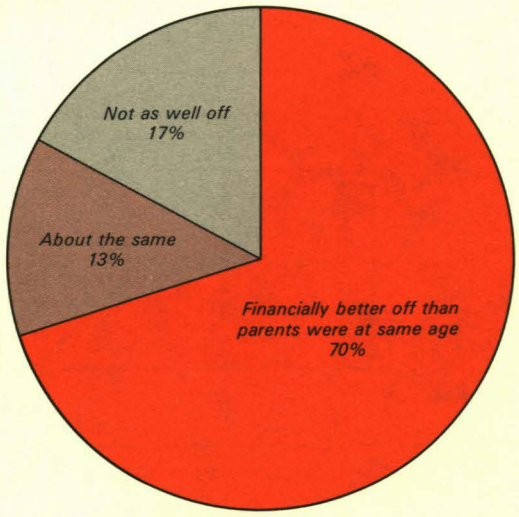
Chances of achieving the good life are:



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 82-1), December 5-12, 1981.

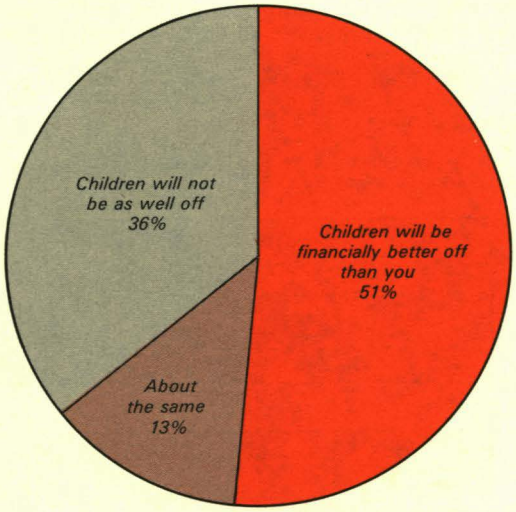
WE'RE BETTER OFF THAN OUR PARENTS

Question: Thinking now of your parents when they were your age, would you say you are better off financially than they were, not as well off as they were, or what?



Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, March 3-8, 1982.

OUR CHILDREN WILL OUTDO US

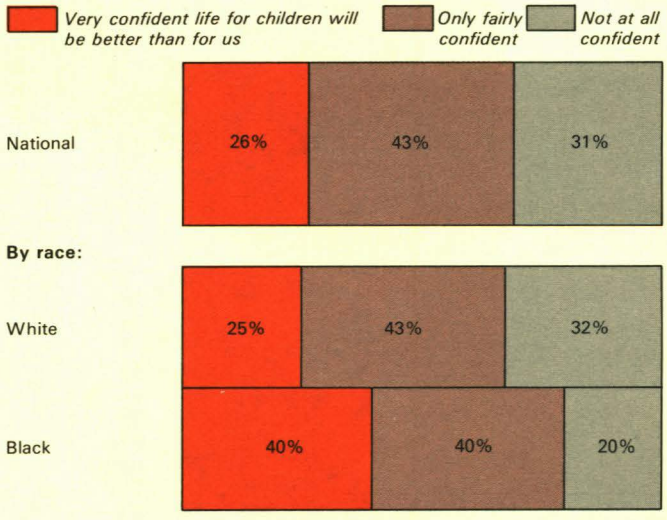


Question: Now, thinking of your children when they get to be your age. Would you say they will be better off financially than you are now, not as well off, or what?

Source: Survey by ABC News/*Washington Post*, March 3-8, 1982.

BLACKS SEE BRIGHTEST PROSPECTS

Question: Now, taking some specific aspects of our life, we'd like to know how confident you feel about them. First, do you feel very confident, only fairly confident, or not at all confident that: . . . Life for our children will be better than it has been for us.

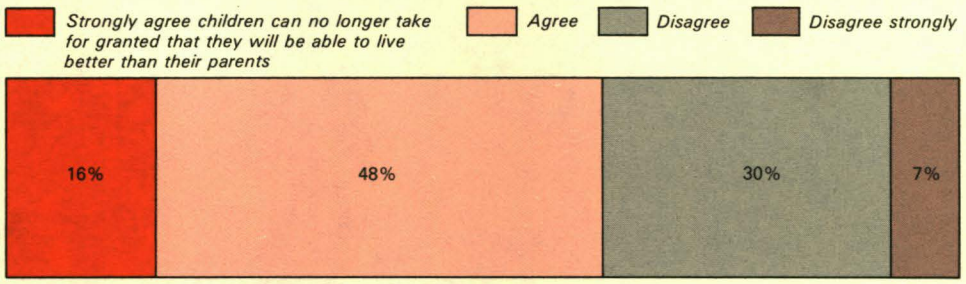


Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 79-9), September 22-29, 1979.

ADULT PESSIMISM

Question: Now I'm going to read you a list of statements, and for each one, I'd like you to tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. . . . Young people can no longer take for granted that they will be able to live better than their parents.

Registered voters

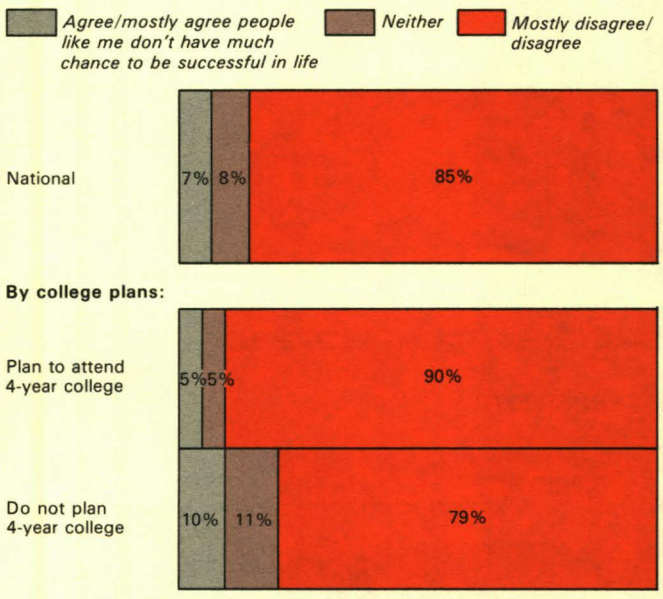


Note: Sample size = 1,221.
Source: Survey by *Time*/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, May 14-16, 1980.

YOUTHFUL OPTIMISM

Question: Do you agree or disagree with each of the following? . . . People like me don't have much of a chance to be successful in life.

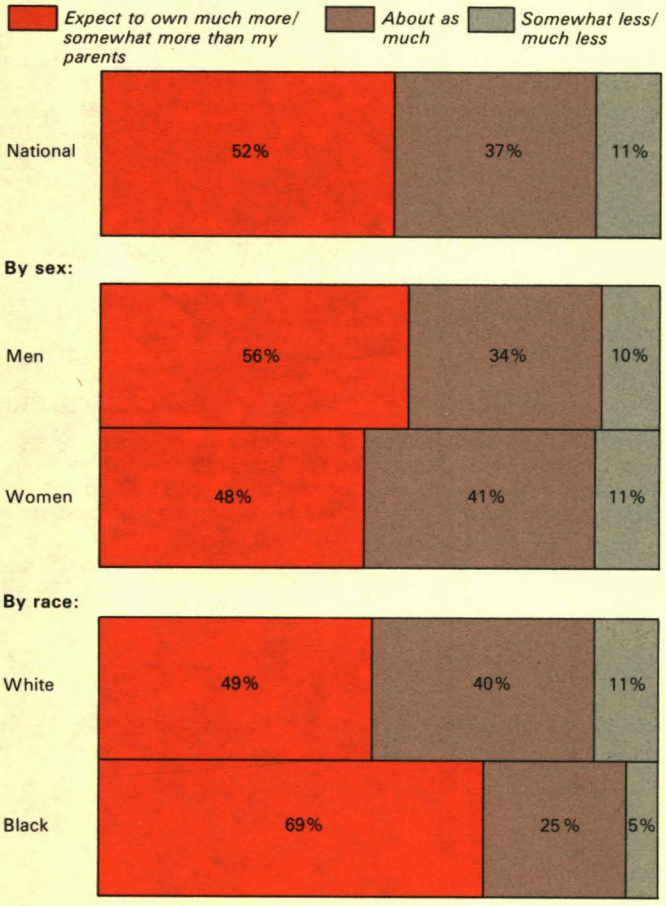
High school seniors



Source: Survey by the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1981.

Question: When you are older, do you expect to own more possessions than your parents do now, or about the same, or less?

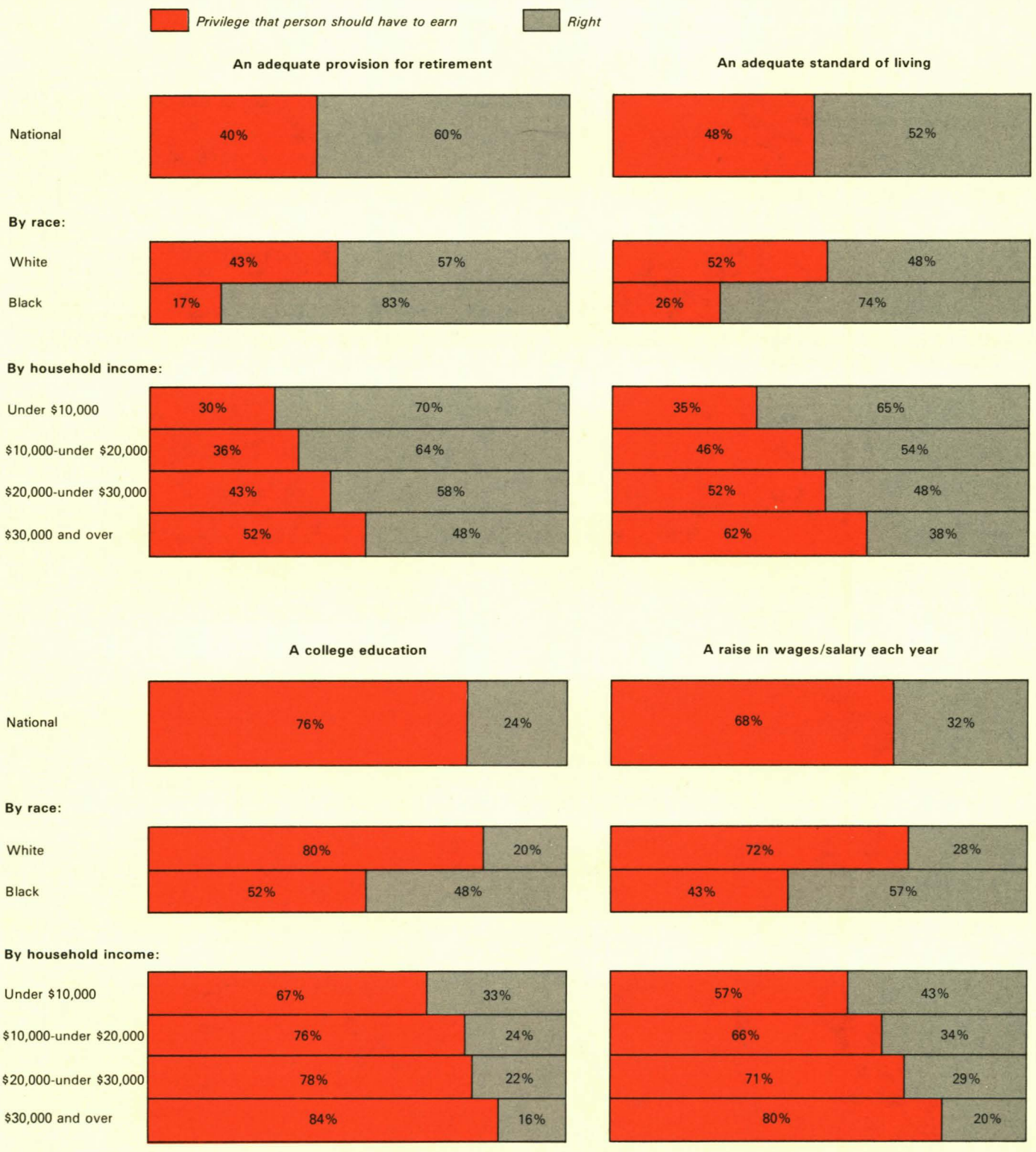
High school seniors



Source: Survey by the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, for the National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1981.

Notions of Rights and Privileges

Question: I'm going to read off a number of different things. For each would you tell me whether you think it is a privilege that a person should have to earn, or a *right* to which he is entitled as a citizen? First, a reasonable amount of leisure time. Is that a privilege, etc.?



Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 82-3), February 13-27, 1982.

RISING TIDES IN

EDUCATION: OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Median years of school completed for persons twenty-five and over

	White	Black and other
1940	8.7	5.7
1950	9.7	6.9
1960	10.8	8.2
1970	12.2	10.1
1975	12.4	11.4
1980	12.5	12.1
1981 (est.)	12.6	12.2

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

One year or more of college completed for persons aged twenty-five to twenty-nine

	Percent
1950	17.9
1957	20.7
1959	22.4
1962	25.4
1964	25.0
1965	25.0
1970	31.3
1975	41.6
1980	44.7

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Total number of college students enrolled (in thousands)

1910	355
1920	598
1930	1,101
1940	1,494
1950	2,281
1960	3,583
1970	7,920
1980	12,096
1981 (est.)	12,322

Source: National Center for Education Statistics.

UP THE OCCUPATIONAL LADDER

Percent of population who are:	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980
Professional/Technical and Managerial/Proprietors/Officials	10%	11%	12%	14%	15%	18%	22%	25%	27%

Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States, Part I* and *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1981).

MONEY WHISPERS

Median family income (1980 dollars)

	Total	White	Black
1950	$11,361	$11,792	$ 6,398
1955	13,596	14,196	7,829
1960	15,637	16,235	8,987
1965	18,169	18,937	10,428
1970	20,939	21,722	13,828
1975	21,004	21,845	14,271
1980	21,023	21,904	12,674

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Per capita family income (1980 dollars)

	Total	White	Black
1950	$3,689	—	—
1955	4,211	$4,442	$2,143
1960	4,721	4,915	2,455
1965	5,438	5,755	2,885
1970	6,583	6,930	3,987
1975	6,959	7,341	4,368
1979	7,674	8,130	4,772
1980	7,309	7,745	4,708

Source: United States Department of Commerce, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1981.

AMERICAN LIFE

UNCLE SAM'S SOCIAL SAFETY NET

	Unemployment insurance—benefits paid by federal government (millions $)
1940	519
1945	446
1950	1,373
1955	1,467
1960	2,867
1965	2,283
1970	4,158
1975	19,362
1980	18,411

Source: United States Department of Labor.

	Social security (OASDHI) benefits paid by federal government (millions $)
1940	16
1945	240
1950	727
1955	4,300
1960	10,800
1965	16,600
1970	29,100
1975	62,500
1980	115,500
1981	136,300

Note: Disability added in 1956.
Source: Social Security Administration.

	Food Stamps (millions $)
1961	.38
1965	32.
1970	551.
1975	4,386.
1980	8,700.
1981	10,600.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture.

AT HOME AND ABROAD

	Home ownership as a percentage of total housing
1900	47%
1910	46
1920	46
1930	48
1940	44
1950	55
1960	62
1970	63
1980	66

Source: For 1900-1970, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Part I;* for 1980 *Statistical Abstract of the United States* (1981).

Number of U.S. travelers overseas

	(thousands)
1920	302
1930	538
1940	156
1950	676
1960	1,634
1970	5,260
1980 (est.)	8,163

Source: For 1920-1970 *Historical Statistics of the United States, Part I;* for 1980, U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and U.S. Department of Transportation.

THE FRUITS OF OUR LABORS

	Americans owning automobiles Percent	. . . Owning two or more Percent
1952	60	4
1956	72	9
1960	77	15
1964	78	22
1968	79	26
1970	82	28
1977 (est.)	84	37

Source: For 1952-1970, *Historical Statistics of the United States;* for 1977, Motor Vehicle Manufacturers' Association.

	Americans owning clothes dryers Percent	. . . and washers Percent
1960	20	55
1965	26	57
1970	45	62
1975	58	70
1979	62	77

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* 1981.

Recreational boats owned

	Millions of units
1960	8
1965	8
1970	9
1975	10
1980	12

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* 1981.

Americans owning televisions

	Percent
1950	9
1955	65
1960	87
1965	93
1970	95
1975	97
1980	98

Source: For 1950-1970 *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* 1981; for 1980 A. C. Nielsen and Company.

Americans owning dishwashers

	Percent
1960	7
1965	14
1970	27
1975	38
1979	43

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States,* 1981.

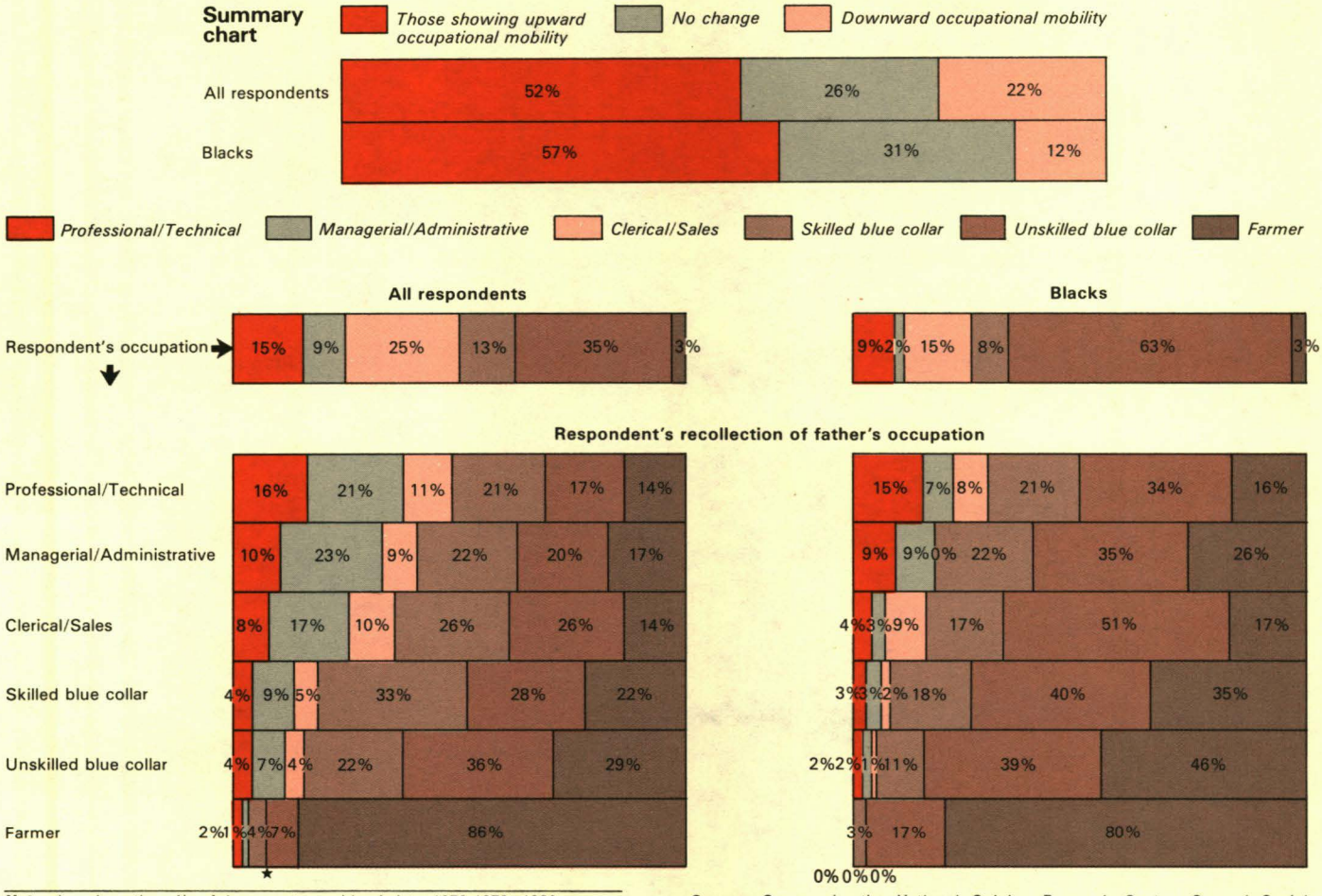
MOBILITY IN AMERICA

We present data here that, in a unique way, attempt to show American mobility over time. The data presented on pages 30-33 show how Americans compare their present occupational status and educational level with that of their fathers, and their current family income level, geographic situation, and religious preference with those when they were growing up. A summary chart of the direction of overall mobility, or highlights indicating mobility, is also provided. The single bar shows respondents' *current* status. The recollections of each such grouping of respondents is then presented—providing a measurement of mobility. For example, of the 15 percent of all respondents who classify their occupations as professional/technical, only 16 percent of their fathers were members of that high status professional/technical group. In addition 21 percent of their fathers were in high status managerial/administrative fields. The remaining 63 percent came from families where the father was in a lower status occupation—indicating substantial upward occupational mobility.

OCCUPATION: MORE THAN ONE-HALF ARE UPWARDLY MOBILE

Questions: (A) What kind of work (do you/did you) normally do? That is, what (is/was) your job called? Occupation: _____ (B) What (do/did) you actually do in that job? Tell me, what (are/were) some of your main duties? (C) What kind of place (do/did) you work for? Industry: _____ (D) What (do/did) they (make/do)? (E) (Are/Were) you self employed or (do/did) you work for someone else?

(A) What kind of work did your father (Father Substitute) normally do while you were growing up? That is, what was his job called? Occupation: _____ (B) What did he actually do in that job? Tell me, what were some of his main duties? (C) What kind of place did he work for? Industry: _____ (D) What did they (make/do)? (E) Was he self-employed; or did he work for someone else?



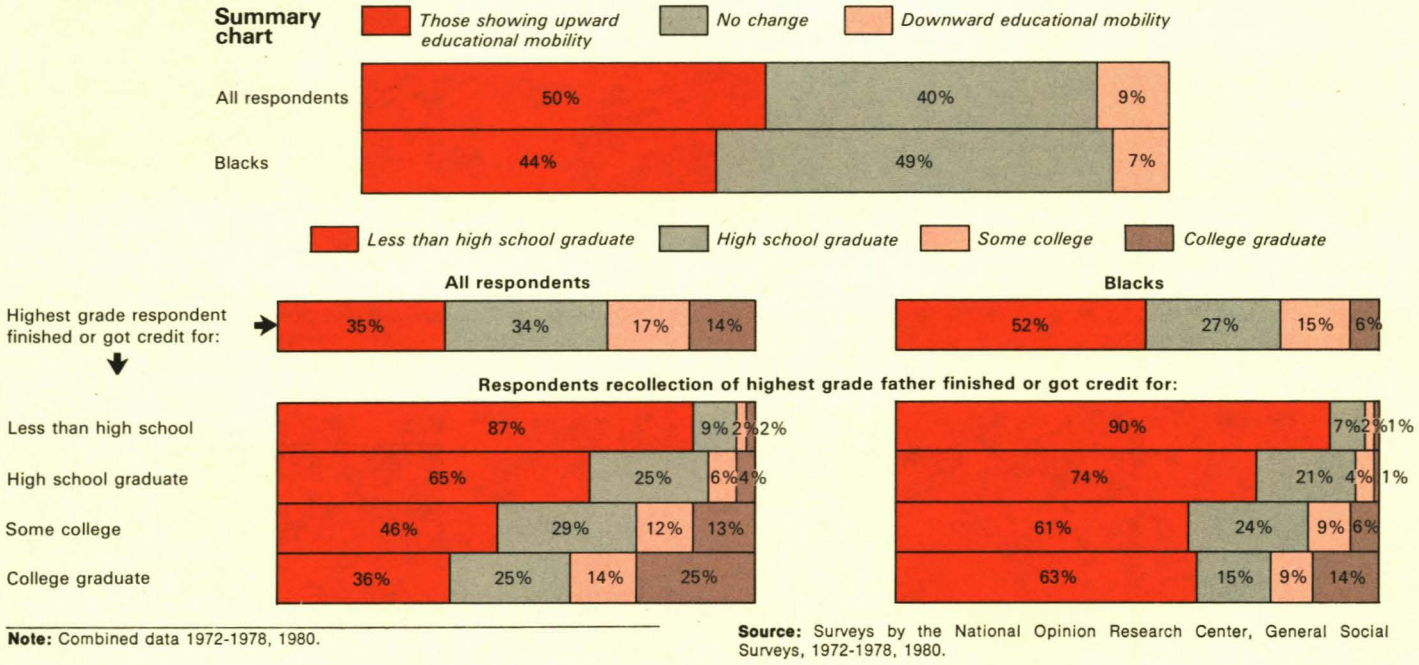
Note: * = less than ½ of 1 percent, combined data 1972-1978, 1980.

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972-1978, 1980.

WHAT THE POLLS SAY

EDUCATION: ONE-HALF ARE UPWARDLY MOBILE

Question: What is the highest grade in elementary school or high school that (you/your father) finished and got credit for? (If finished 9th-12th grade or don't know) Did (you/he) ever get a high school diploma or a GED certificate? Did (you/he) complete one or more years of college for credit—not including schooling such as business college, technical or vocational school. Do you (Does he) have any college degrees?



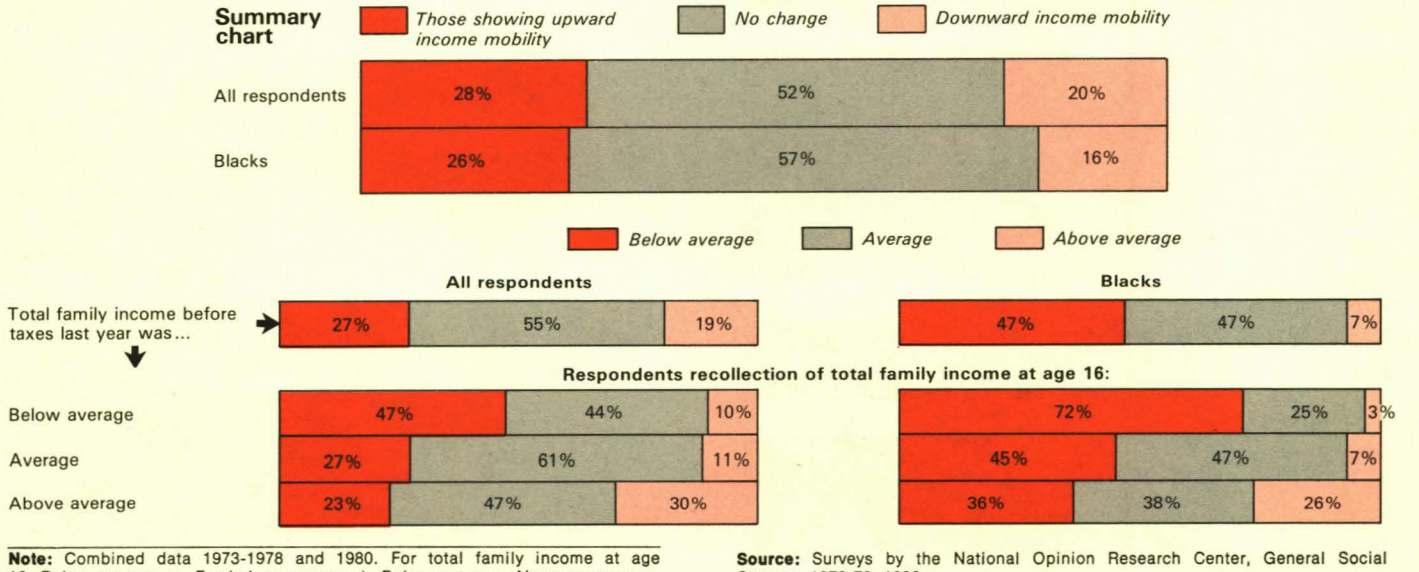
Note: Combined data 1972-1978, 1980.

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972-1978, 1980.

INCOME: MORE ARE UPWARDLY MOBILE

Question: In which of these groups did your total *family* income, from all sources, fall last year before taxes, that is?

Thinking about the time when you were 16 years old, compared with American families in general then, would you say your family income was—far below average, below average, average, above average, or far above average?

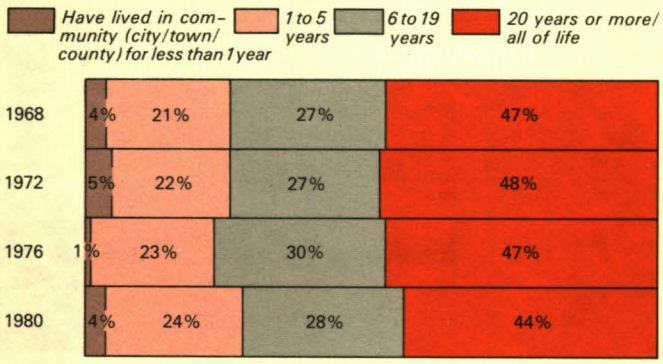


Note: Combined data 1973-1978 and 1980. For total family income at age 16, Below average = Far below average + Below average. Above average = Far above average + Above average.

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1973-78, 1980.

GEOGRAPHIC MOBILITY: STILL PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

Question: How long have you lived here in (name of community)? (1968) How long have you lived here in (city/town/county)? (1972, 1976, 1980)

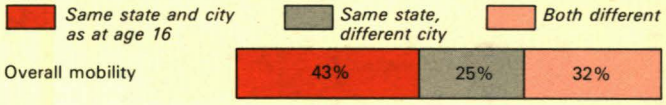


Note: For 1980, 10% one year or less; 10% 2-3 years; 12% 3-5 years; 10% 6-9 years; 18% 10-19 years; 44% 20 years or more.

Source: Surveys by the Center for Political Studies, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, Election Studies, latest that of 1980.

AMERICANS MOVING UP BUT NOT OUT

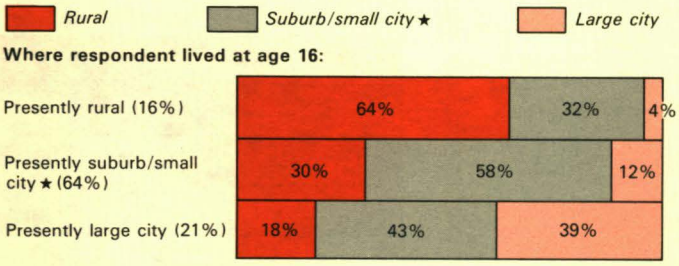
Question: In what state or foreign country were you living when you were 16 years old? (If state named is same state respondent lives in now, ask) When you were 16 years old, were you living in this same (city/town/county)?



Note: Combined data 1972-1978, 1980.
*Suburb/small city = Suburb/Town/Medium city/Small city.

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE, THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

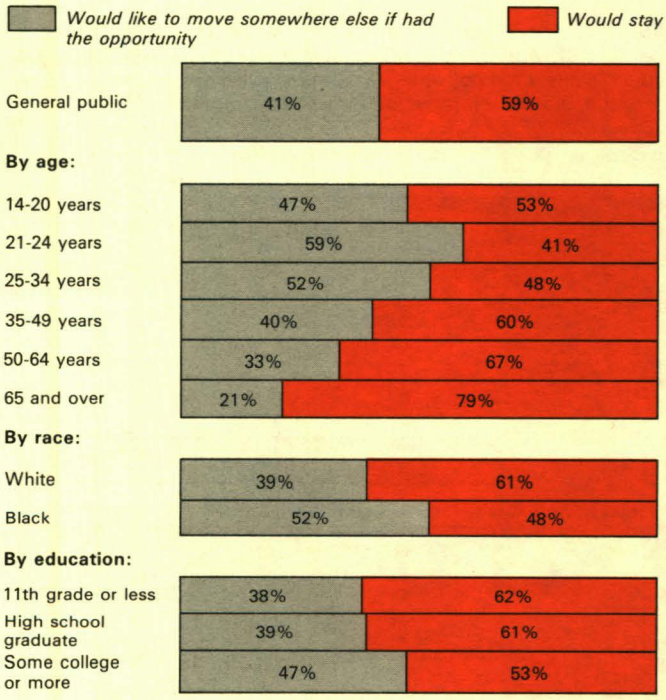
Question: Which of the categories on this card comes closest to the type of place you were living in when you were 16 years old? (Present "urbanness" derived from NORC size of place)



Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972-1978, 1980.

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Question: If you had the opportunity, would you like to move somewhere else, or would you stay here where you are?

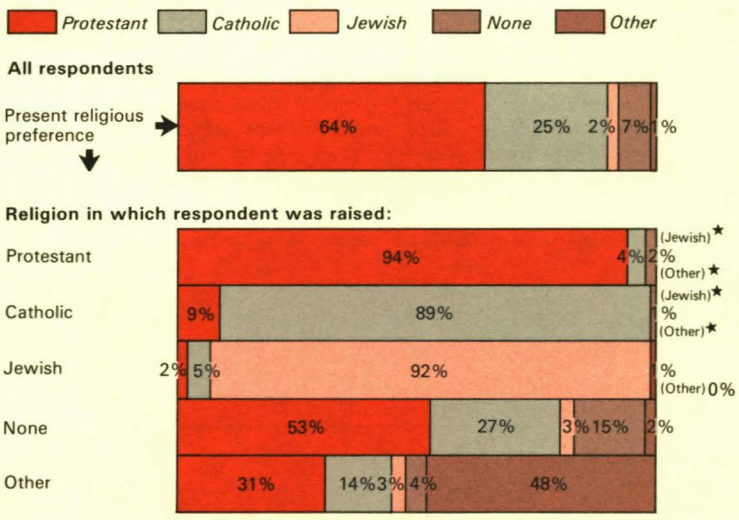


Note: In a December 5-12, 1981 survey by the Roper Organization, asking respondents to name those items on a list that they had done in the past year, 15% said they had moved their place of residence. The figure was 15% for men, women, and whites, and 13% for blacks; those aged 18-29 years, 30%; 30-44 years, 15%; 45-59 years, 6%; 60 and over, 4%; among non-high school graduates, 9%; High school graduates, 13%; College, 21%; those living in the Northeast, 10%; Midwest, 13%; South, 15%; West, 24%.

Source: Survey by Research and Forecasts, Inc. for Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Co., September 1-November 15, 1980.

RELIGION: THE APPLE DOESN'T FALL FAR FROM THE TREE

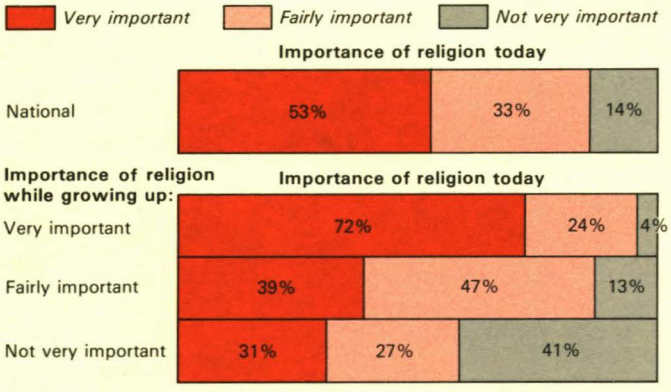
Question: What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, some other religion, or no religion? In what religion were you raised?



Note: For religion in which raised, data combined for 1973-1978, 1980. For present religious preference, data combined for 1972-1978, 1980. * = less than ½ of 1 percent.

Source: Surveys by the National Opinion Research Center, General Social Surveys, 1972-1978, 1980.

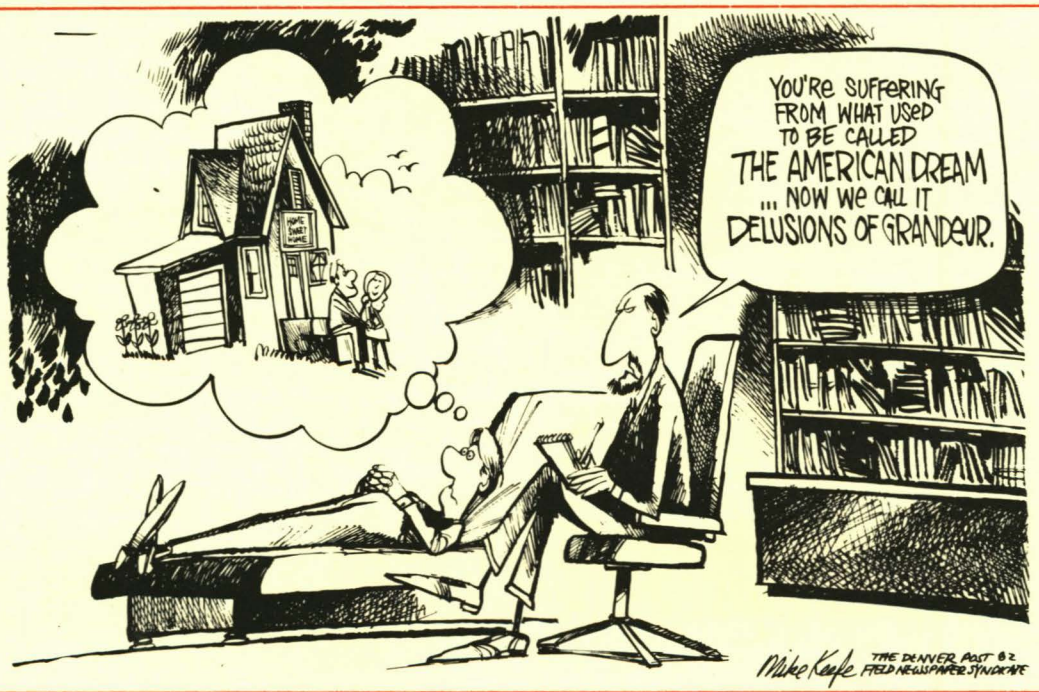
IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION TODAY DEPENDS ON ITS IMPORTANCE WHILE GROWING UP



Question: How important would you say religion is in your own life—would you say very important, fairly important or not very important?

When you were growing up, how important was religion to you—would you say very important, fairly important or not very important?

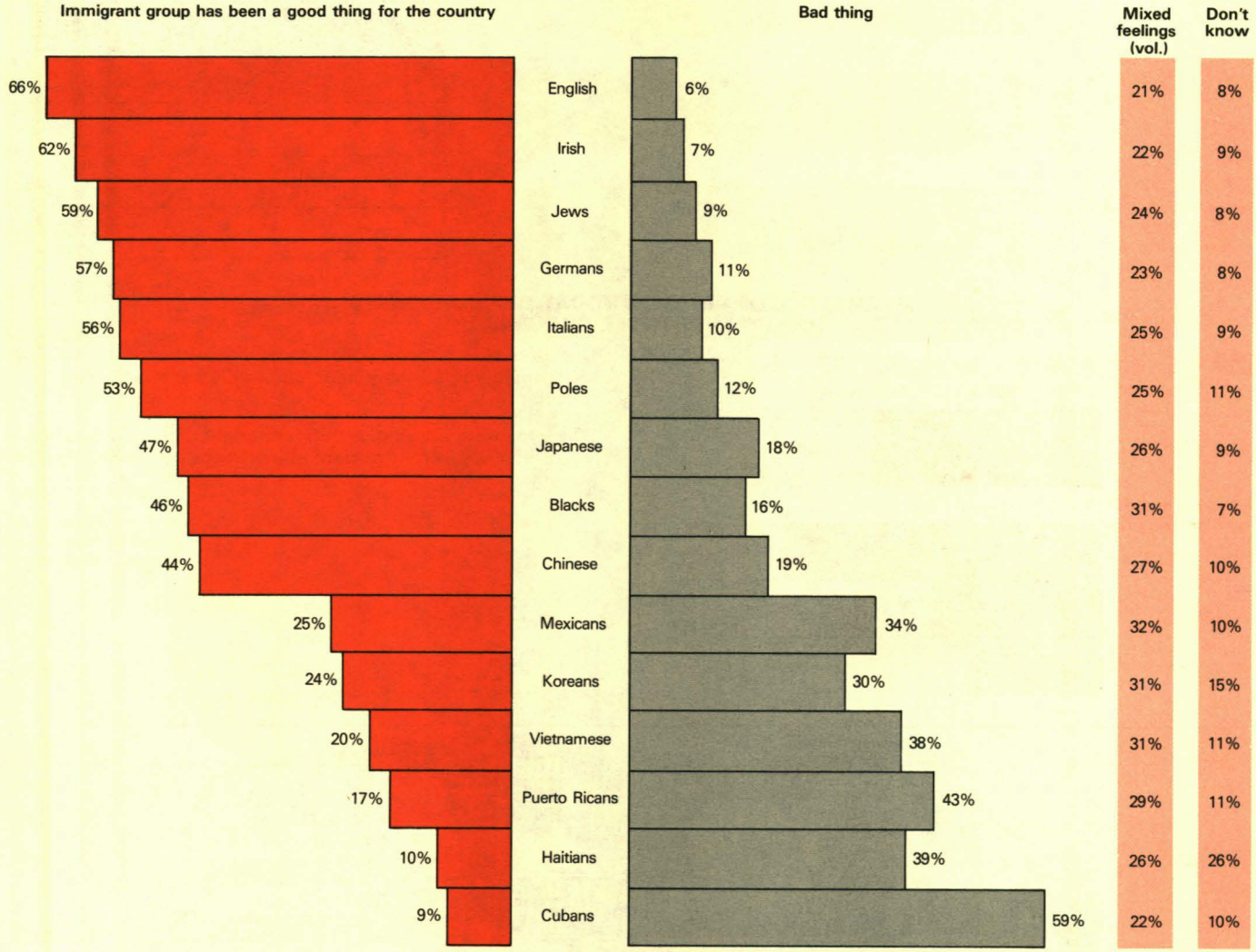
Source: Surveys by the Princeton Religion Research Center and the Gallup Organization, Inc., for the Religious Coalition, April 14-17, 1978.



A NATION OF IMMIGRANTS

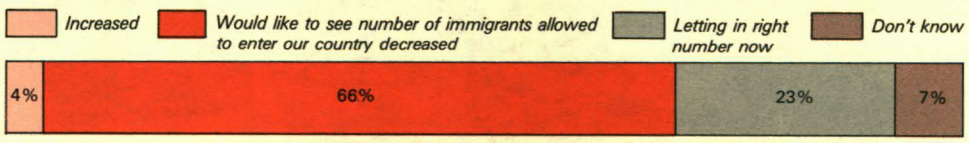
LATE ARRIVALS LESS DESIRABLE

Question: Since the beginning of our country people of many different religions, races, and nationalities have come here and settled. Here is a list of some different groups. (Card shown respondent) Would you read down that list, and thinking both of what they have contributed to this country and have gotten from this country, for each one tell me whether you think on balance, they've been a good thing or a bad thing for this country?



CLOSING THE OPEN DOOR

Question: In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion about the number of immigrants allowed into our country. On the whole, would you say that you would like to see the number of immigrants allowed to enter our country increased, or would like to see the number decreased, or do you think we are letting in about the right number now?

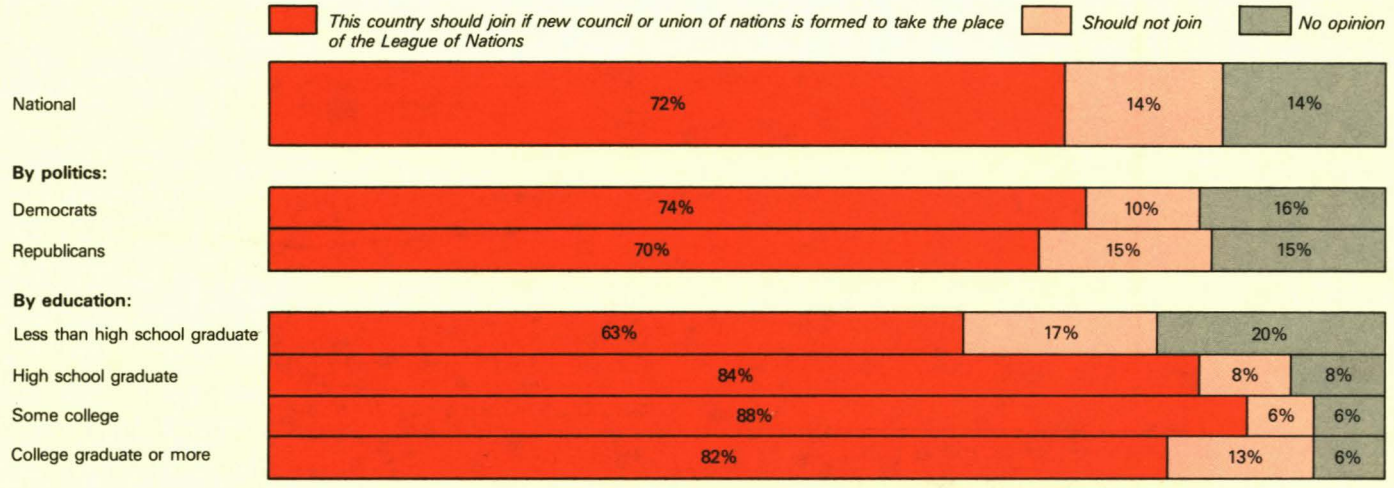


Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 82-4), March 20-27, 1982.

UNITED NATIONS EVALUATION

1944: GET THE US INTO THE UN

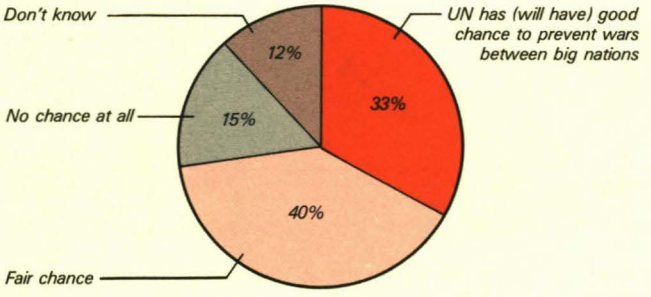
Question: If a new council or union of nations is formed after the war to take the place of the old League of Nations, should this country join?

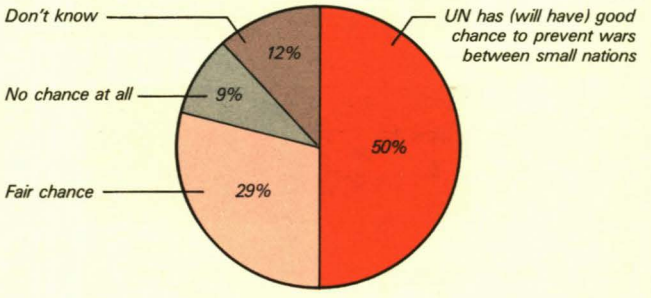


Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization, June 9-14, 1944.

UN GIVEN GOOD CHANCE IN SMALL SPATS

Question: In general, what chance do you think the United Nations organization has (will have) to prevent wars between (big nations) (small nations)—good, fair, or no chance at all?

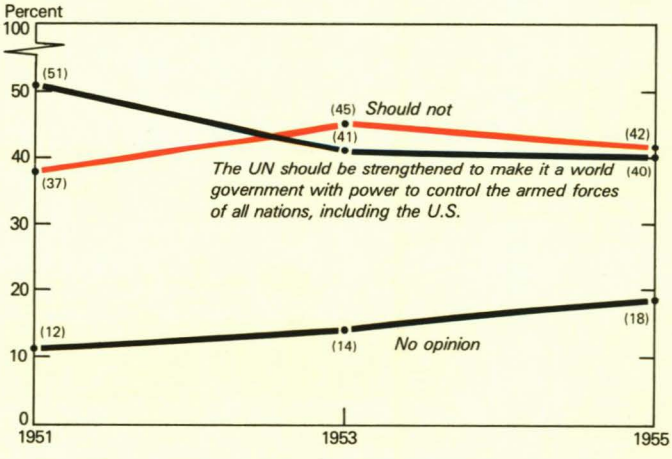




Source: Survey by National Opinion Research Center, May 1946.

THE EARLY 50's: ONE WORLD GOVERNMENT

Question: Do you think the United Nations should or should not be strengthened to make it a world government with power to control the armed forces of all nations, including the United States?



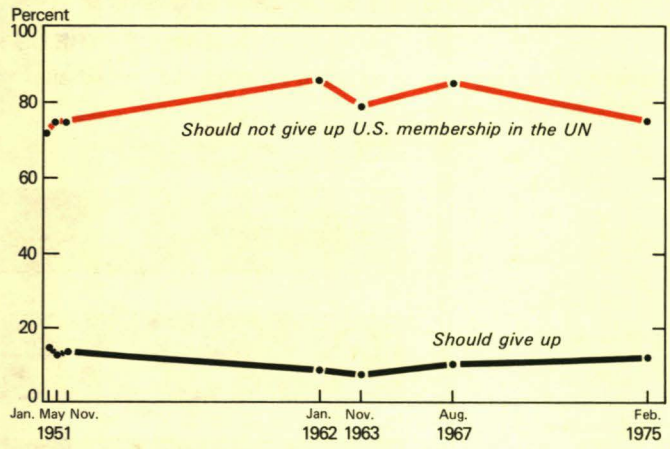
Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of March 24-29, 1955.

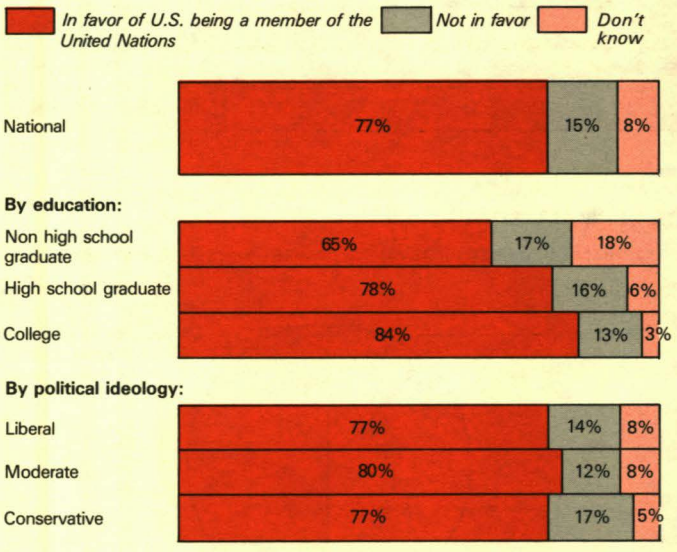
CONTINUED MEMBERSHIP FAVORED

Question: Do you think the United States should give up its membership in the United Nations, or not?

	U.S. should give up UN membership	Should not	No opinion
January 1951	14%	72%	14%
May	12	75	13
November	13	75	12
January 1962	9	86	5
November 1963	8	79	13
August 1967	10	85	5
February 1975	11	75	14

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of February 7-10, 1975.





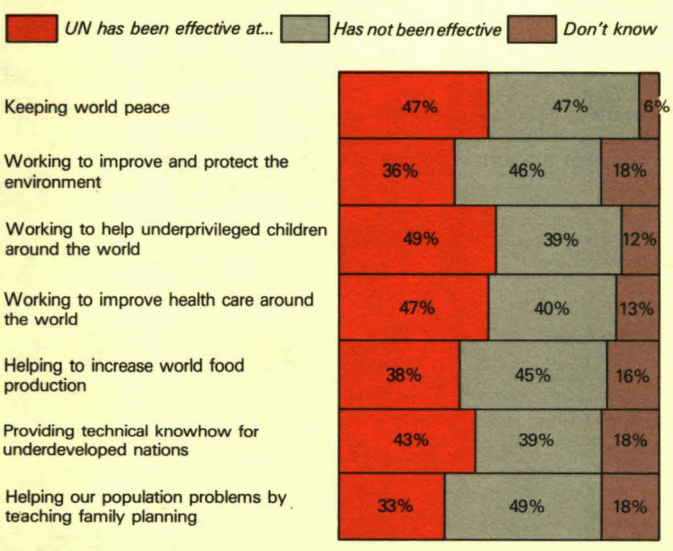
Question: How do you feel about the United States being a member of the United Nations—are you strongly in favor of the United States being a member of the United Nations, or moderately in favor of it, or not very much in favor of it, or not at all in favor of it?

Note: In favor = strongly in favor/moderately in favor; Not in favor = not very much in favor/not at all in favor.

Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 81-4), March 21-28, 1981.

But Mission UN-Accomplished

Question: Turning now to the United Nations, here is a list of some of the functions of the United Nations. (Hand respondent card) Would you go down that list, and for each one tell me whether you think the United Nations has been highly effective in that area, moderately effective, only somewhat effective or not at all effective? (Read item—ask about each)



Note: Effective = Highly effective/Moderately effective; Not effective = Only somewhat effective/Not at all effective.

Source: Survey by the Roper Organization (Roper Report 81-4), March 21-28, 1981.

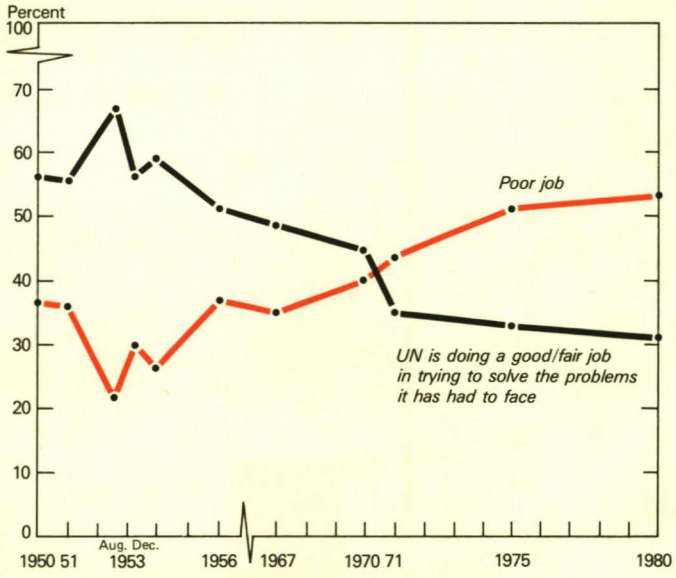
MORE EFFECTIVE IN THEORY THAN PRACTICE

Question: In general, do you think the United Nations is doing a good job or a poor job in trying to solve the problems it has had to face?

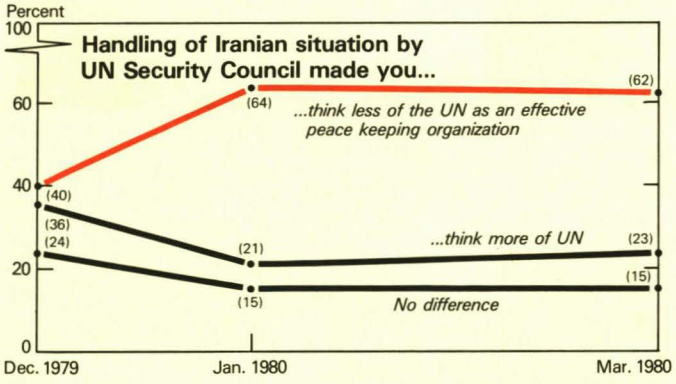
	UN is doing good/fair job	Poor	No opinion
1950	57%	37%	5%
1951	56	36	8
Aug. 1953	67	22	12
Dec.	57	30	13
1954	59	26	15
1956	51	37	12
1967	49	35	16
1970	44	40	16
1971	35	43	22
1975	33	51	16
Sept. 1980	31	53	16

Note: In the 1980 political ideology subgroups, the responses were: Left: Good/fair = 36%, Poor = 54%. Moderate: Good/fair = 35%, Poor = 51%. Right: Good/fair = 24%, Poor = 61%. "Good/fair" = "Good" + "Fair." The "Fair" category only existed in the 1950, 1951, and August 1953 surveys.

Source: Surveys by the Gallup Organization, latest that of September 12-15, 1980.



Question: Has the way the Security Council of the United Nations handled the Iranian situation made you think more or less of the United Nations as an effective peace keeping organization?



Note: Sample size = 1,041 (December 1979), 1,227 (January 1980), 1,221 (March 1980).
Samples = registered voters.

Source: Surveys by *Time*/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, latest that of March 19-20, 1980.

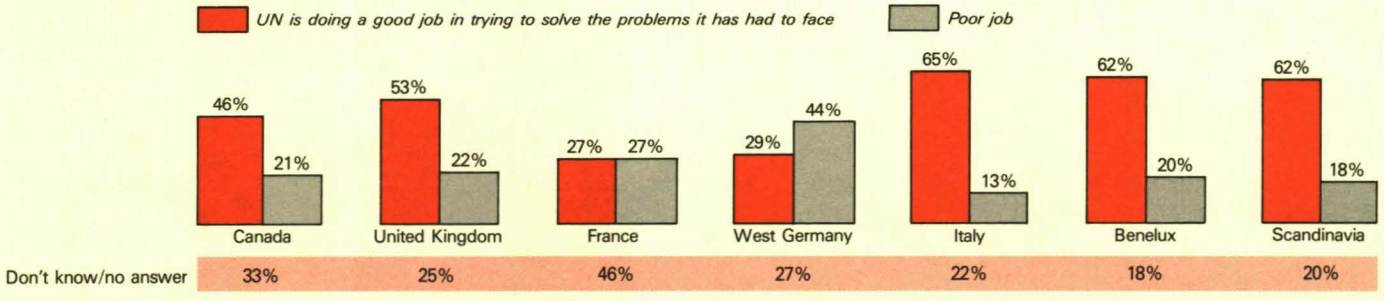
Question: Has the way the United Nations handled the Russian invasion of Afghanistan made you think more or less of the United Nations as an effective peace keeping organization?

Note: Sample size = 1,227 registered voters.

Source: Survey by *Time*/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, January 23-24, 1980.

UN ASSESSMENT ABROAD

Question: In general, do you feel the United Nations is doing a good job or a poor job in trying to solve the problems it has had to face?

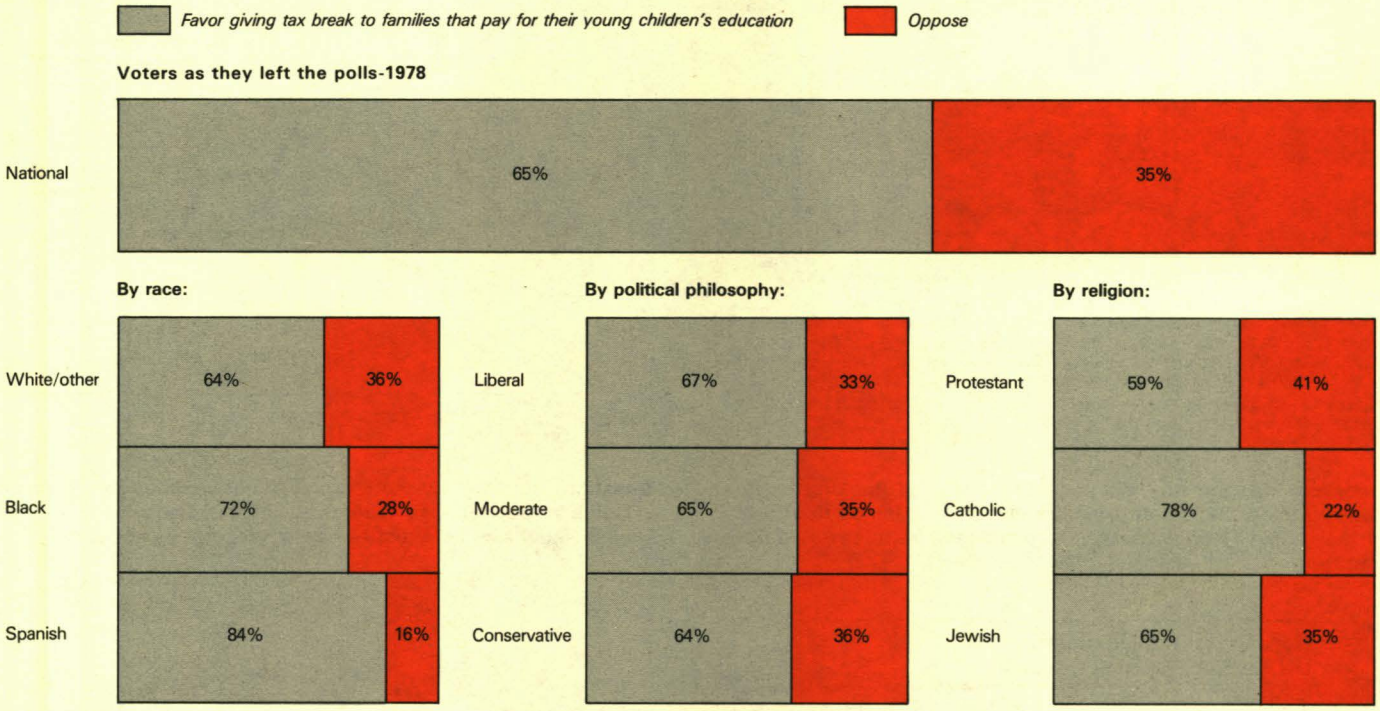


Source: Survey by Gallup International Research Institute for the Charles F. Kettering Foundation, fall and winter of 1974-1975 and spring 1976.

TUITION

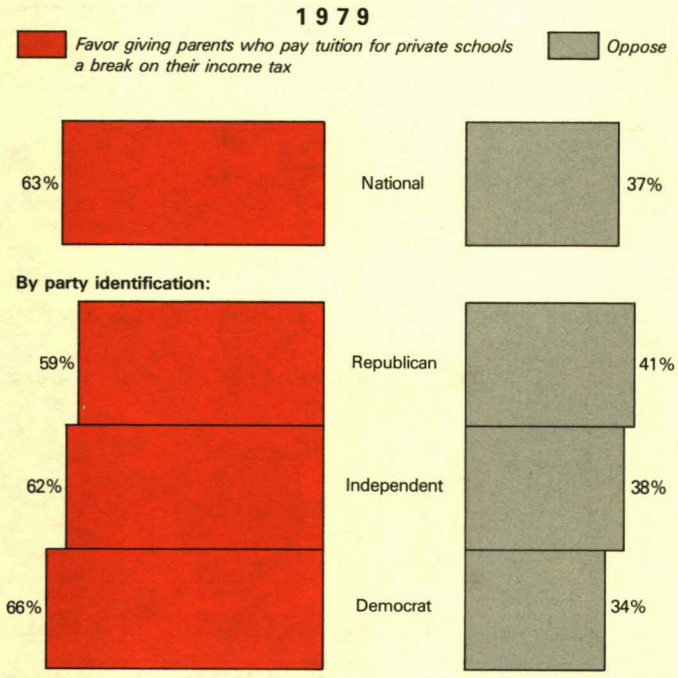
SUPPORT OUTWEIGHS OPPOSITION IN THE LATE SEVENTIES

Question: Would you favor or oppose giving a tax break to families that pay tuition for their young children's education? (Asked of voters as they left voting booths)



Note: "No opinion" calculated out, all were 10% or less, except the race category, "Black," which was 12%.
Source: Survey by CBS News, November 7, 1978.

Question: Private and parochial schools charge tuition. Would you favor or oppose giving parents who pay this tuition a break on their income tax?

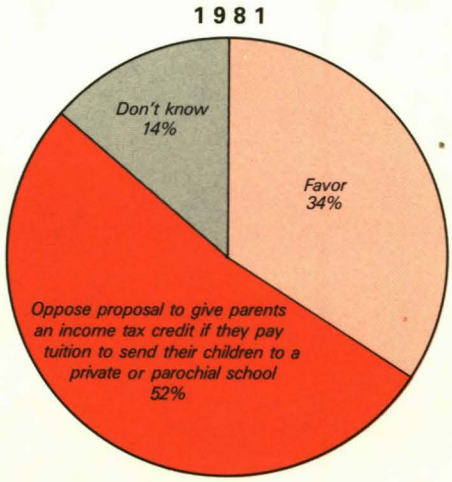


Note: 63% of whites and 65% of blacks favor giving parents who pay private or parochial school tuition a break on their income tax; 56% of Protestants and 74% of Catholics, 74% of non-high school graduates, 59% of high school graduates, 60% of those who have had some college, and 54% of college graduates are in favor.
Source: Survey by CBS News/*New York Times*, January 23-26, 1979.

TAX CREDITS

TODAY OPPOSITION OUTWEIGHS SUPPORT

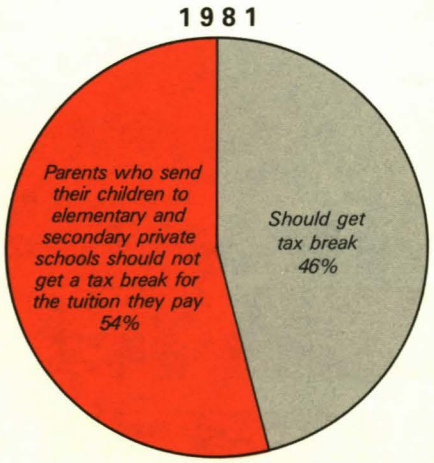
Question: Congress is considering a proposal that would give parents an income tax credit if they pay tuition to send their children to a private or parochial school. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?



Note: In the same survey, 24% of parents said they would be likely to send their child to a private or parochial school if they received a tax credit of between $250 and $500, 60% said not likely, and 17% said they already send their children to a private or parochial school.

Sample size is 520.

Source: Survey by the Gallup Organization for *Newsweek*, March 11-17, 1981.

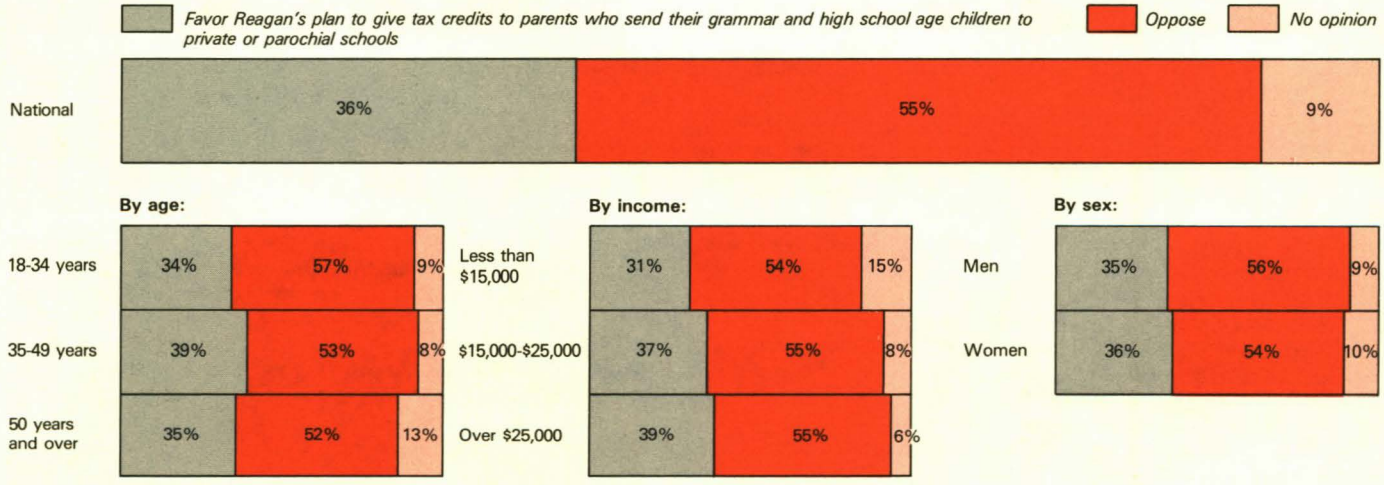


Question: Do you think parents who send their children to elementary and secondary private schools should get a tax break for the tuition they pay, or don't you think so?

Note: In the same survey, 30% of adults with school age children said they would be more likely to enroll their children in private schools if tuition tax credits were available, 64% said it would make no difference, and 7% said they would be less likely to do so.

Source: Survey by NBC News/Associated Press, October 25-26, 1981.

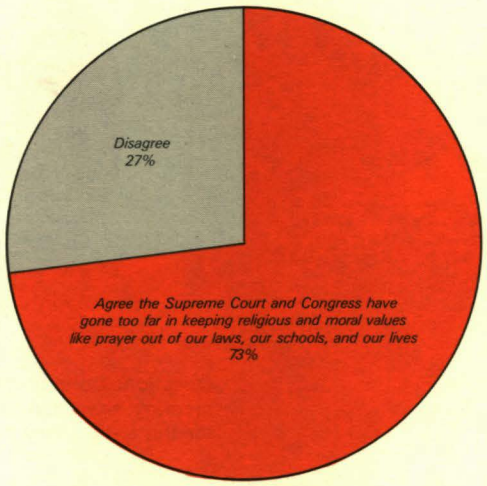
Question: Do you favor or oppose President Reagan's plan to give tax credits to parents who send their grammar and high school age children to private or parochial schools?



Source: Survey by Audits and Surveys for the Merit Report, April 19-22, 1982.

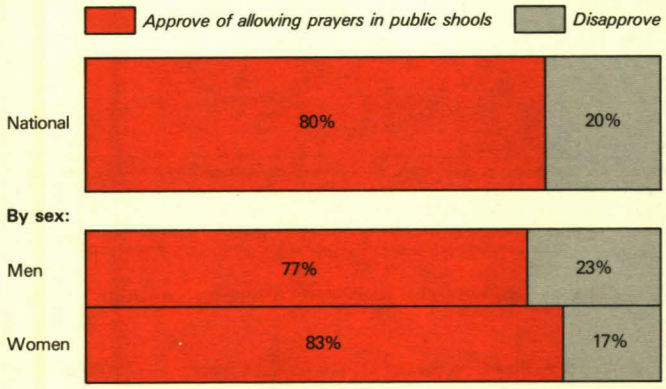
SCHOOL PRAYER: OVERWHELMING ENDORSEMENT

Question: A number of criticisms and suggestions are also being made these days. Will you tell me for each of the following whether you mostly agree or mostly disagree with each one. Let's start with (Read first statement on list) Do you mostly agree or disagree with this . . . the Supreme Court and Congress have gone too far in keeping religious and moral values like prayer out of our laws, our schools, and our lives?



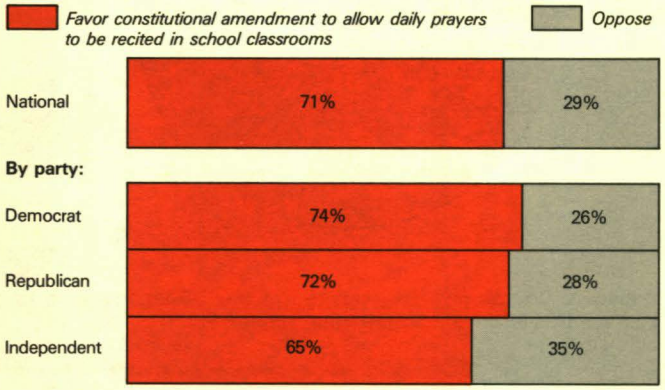
Source: Survey by *Time*/Yankelovich, Skelly and White, May 12-14, 1981.

Question: Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of allowing prayers in public schools?



Source: Survey by the *Los Angeles Times*, September 27-October 4, 1981.

Question: Do you favor or oppose a constitutional amendment to allow daily prayers to be recited in school classrooms?



Note: Sample size = 1253.
Source: Survey by Louis Harris and Associates, February 12-17, 1982.

ONE NATION UNDER GOD

Other recent questions on prayer in public schools are:

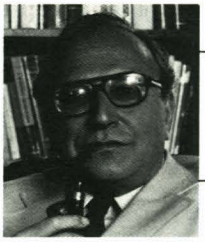
ABC News, September 14-20, 1981
"In your opinion, should school prayer be allowed in public high schools, or not?" (Asked of 287 parents with children in high school) Should = 77%, Should not = 23%

NBC/Associated Press, May 18-19, 1981
"Do you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution that would permit prayers to be said in public schools?" Favor = 78%, Oppose = 22%

NBC/Associated Press, January 27-28, 1982
"Do you believe that organized prayers should be allowed in public schools, or not?" Should = 72%, Should not = 28%

ABC News/Washington Post, March 3-8, 1982
"Now, just a few more questions about various subjects. On the subject of the reading of prayer in public schools, do you approve or disapprove of schools having a required time for the regular reading of prayer?" Approve = 71%, Disapprove = 29%

NBC/Associated Press, May 10-11, 1982
"Do you favor or oppose an amendment to the Constitution that would permit organized prayers in public schools?" Favor = 72%, Oppose = 28%



by Seymour Martin Lipset

Social Mobility in Industrial Societies

The period from the end of World War II to the mid-seventies has witnessed more upward mobility, that is, more persons improving their occupational and social position, than any other time in human history. Major structural changes in the economies of the industrialized world, both Communist and non-Communist, have resulted in an upgrading of occupations. The proportion of the work force employed in agriculture and in low-level unskilled manual positions has declined greatly. Conversely, the occupational shifts that have led many in the West to write about the emergence of a "postindustrial society" and in the East of a "scientific-technological revolution," involve a sharp increase in employment in areas that require high levels of education and skill—administration, technology, health, science, communications, culture, and government.

The shape of the occupational or class structure has been changing from a pyramid—with positions concentrated at the bottom—to an egg, with occupations concentrated more in the middle. Inherent in such shifts is an increase in the proportion of those who attain a higher position than their parents.

Changes in many less developed or Third World countries are as dramatic. These countries vary enormously in economic structure and level of income, and the shape of their occupational mix has also changed greatly. Their rate of growth has been more rapid than that of Europe or America during the nineteenth century. As a result, millions have moved from rural to urban occupations, many from lower- to middle-class positions. But since these societies remain primarily agrarian, most people in them remain in roughly the same position as their parents. Total mobility is increasing, but it remains at a lower rate than that presently occurring in the more developed nations.

Interest in social mobility dates back to the ancient Greeks, and empirical studies have been around for more than a century, but it is still difficult to be certain how much societies vary. The reasons for this are complex. Different countries define occupational classes differently. Estimates of mobility are affected by variations in the distribution of occupations among countries and over time. Even more important, it is possible to compare nations in at least three ways: first, with respect to total mobility, ignoring the shape of the occupational structure; second, controlling for the differing distributions of occupations; and third, controlling for structural changes in the economy between generations. All three are legitimate approaches.

Structural Forces

Postwar evidence gathered from national samples—from Japan, the United States, Australia, and a number of West European and Communist countries—indicates sizable increases in rates of total mobility. The movement toward more open societies is largely independent of differences in political systems or social values. Comparing the results of studies in western countries, Featherman, Jones, and Hauser emphasize that "in the final analysis, values may play a relatively minor role, relative to the impact of the economy, in shaping and sustaining the mobility processes. . . ." [1] M. N. Rutkevich, head of the Soviet Union's major sociological research institute, points out that increased rates of upward mobility are inherent in the general dynamic of modern societies, in which "progress of technology and culture demands an accelerated rise in the numbers of scientists, engineers, technicians, teachers, physicians, and other experts. . . ." [2] He emphasizes that these generalizations apply to western nations as well as to the Soviet Union.

Since the dynamic behind the large increase in upward movement is structural, changes in rates of exchange mobility—people moving into occupational positions lower than their parents', thus making room for others to move up—are not important in accounting for variations over time or among nations, although

such shifts account for much of the mobility within each country. Two recent analyses—the first for seventeen countries and the second for twenty-four—confirm this. Not surprisingly, structural changes apart, rates of immigration and social mobility correlate. Thus, immigrant-receiving countries like Israel, Australia, Canada, and the United States are among the most mobile when other factors are controlled.[3]

Movement Into Elites

Inheritance of high-status positions has declined, and the rate of movement to the top from socially inferior origins has increased. This refutes the belief that mature capitalist societies must inevitably become more immobile. John Goldthorpe and Catrina Llewellyn stress that "the claim by some [leftist] scholars that access to the higher levels of the . . . class structure is tightly controlled, thus creating at these levels a marked homogeneity of social origin, would seem open to serious doubt." [4] Their 1972 study of mobility in England, France, and Sweden found that entry into the managerial and administrative positions in public and private bureaucracies was by no means closed to sons of manual workers. Twenty-two to 25 percent of those in this upper-level group had fathers of similar background, but 44 to 55 percent were from a blue-collar family background.[5]

American research clearly indicates that elite positions have become much more open over time. On the basis of various national surveys, Hauser et al. report that opportunities "to enter high-status occupations appear to have improved in successive cohorts of U.S. men for at least the last forty years. . . ." [6] A 1964 *Scientific American* survey of the backgrounds of big business executives of the 600 largest corporations offers evidence on this point.

> Only 10.5 percent of the current generation of big business executives . . . are sons of wealthy families; as recently as 1950 the corresponding figure was 36.1 percent, and at the turn of the century, 45.6 percent . . . two-thirds of the 1900 generation had fathers who were heads of the same corporation or who were independent businessmen; less than half of the current generation had fathers so placed in American society. On the other hand, less than 10 percent of the 1900 generation had fathers who were employees; by 1964 this percentage had increased to nearly 30 percent.[7]

The *Scientific American* study finds that the post-World War II period saw the greatest increase in the proportion of those from economically "poor" backgrounds (from 12.1 percent in 1950 to 23.3 percent in 1964) who reached the top echelons of American business. There was a correspondingly sharp decline in the percentage of those at the top recruited from wealthy families (from 36.1 percent in 1950 to 10.5 percent in 1964).

Developments such as these, which are common to various western nations, reflect a number of structural changes: the replacement of the family-owned enterprise by the corporation; the bureaucratization of corporate life; the recruitment of management personnel from the ranks of college graduates; and the awarding of higher posts on the basis of a competitive-promotion process similar to that which operates in government bureaucracy. With the spread of higher education to the children of the working class, the ladder of bureaucratic success has become increasingly open to those from poorer circumstances. A privileged family background continues to be an advantage in the quest for elite positions, but training and talent can make up for it in an increasing number of cases.

Higher education is more widely available in the United States than in any other country, so it is not surprising that the proportion of Americans who move from lowly backgrounds into elite positions is greatest in this country. Peter Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, comparing data from the United States, Japan, and five West European countries, find that "upward mobility from the working class into the top occupational stratum of society is higher in the United States than in other countries. . . . The proportion of manual sons who achieve elite status is six-sevenths of that of all men occupying such status in the United States (.85) whereas this proportion is in no other country as great as two-thirds. . . . There is a grain of truth in the Horatio Alger myth." [8] But since the proportion in the elite stratum is small everywhere, only a minority can actually move into top positions.

Mass Mobility

Social mobility appears to be an extensive phenomenon in all industrialized or industrializing societies. The earliest effort at broad international comparisons, published in 1927 by the Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin, reported on literally hundreds of studies in many countries, some dating back to the late nineteenth century. The early investigations did not deal with national data, so their usefulness is limited. They do indicate that none of the societies could be described as "closed" or "non-mobile" systems. All the studies located substantial proportions who rose or fell in occupational status when contrasted with the position of their fathers.[9] The Austrian-American economist Joseph Schumpeter, also writing in 1927, concluded that "class barriers are always, without exception, surmountable, and are in fact surmounted. . . ." [10] He pointed out that "there is constant turnover" between social classes: "Entries and exits occur continually—the latter directed both upward and downward." And he suggested an image to illustrate the point, "each class resembles a hotel or an omnibus, always full, but always of different people." [11]

In 1959, Hans Zetterberg and I published a comprehensive analysis of surveys of social mobility based

on national samples of adult males in France, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States. In our discussion of movement between manual and nonmanual occupations across two generations, we reported as "our major finding . . . that the countries involved are comparable in their high amounts of vertical mobility." [12] About one-quarter to a third of the nonfarm population moved across the manual-nonmanual line. Comparing the results of a comprehensive 1962 American survey with those found elsewhere, Blau and Duncan confirmed this finding and concluded that there is "little difference among various industrialized nations in rates of occupational mobility between the blue-collar and white-collar class." [13]

Results from national surveys of mobility in six Communist countries (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia), compared with seven non-Communist ones (Australia, France, Italy, Norway, Sweden, the United States, and West Germany) reveal considerable similarities, once people of rural origin are set aside. "Blue-collar nonfarm sons (workers) are mobile into nonmanual jobs in 29.2 percent of the cases in the Socialist average, and 28.2 in the non-Socialist sample. . . ." The proportion moving downward from white-collar to manual occupations was also virtually identical.[14] Ignoring shifts from rural to urban occupations obviously distorts estimates of total movement. But it is often difficult to classify movement from heterogeneous and vaguely specified forms of farm employment to various urban positions as unambiguously upward or downward. It should be noted, however, that farmers' or peasants' sons are less likely to move into nonmanual positions than are the sons of manual workers in Communist countries and in the western societies—13.4 percent in the former and 18.4 percent in the latter. The difference between the rates for upward mobility from urban occupations relates to the fact that eastern bloc countries have a much larger rural sector than the more industrialized non-Communist nations.

Most of the national comparisons referred to above are based on movement among males between the working class and the middle class, that is, between manual and nonmanual positions. But movement up or down the occupational hierarchy is obviously more complex than this. Those who shift between farm and urban occupations, unskilled and skilled jobs, or from clerical to professional positions, also are socially mobile. The more occupational classifications differentiated in the analysis, the greater the proportion who may be classified as having changed position in the occupational hierarchy. This is reflected in a number of recent national surveys (conducted from 1962-1974) that report the total percentage of the male population that has moved up or down between generations. The surveys use five or more occupational classifications. These results from eight countries are, of course, not directly comparable, since they are based on studies in which the number of occupational categories varies from five to seventeen. The most significant finding among these results is that half or more of the adult males in eight countries were in an occupational stratum different from that of their fathers. (See table 1.)

Table 1
ESTIMATED TOTAL MOBILITY IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

	Country	Year of Survey	Number of Occupational Categories	Total Mobility for All Categories
1	U.S.A.	1962	5	67%
1a		1962	17	84
2	U.S.A.	1973	5	68
2a		1973	17	86
3	France	1964	8	63
4	France	1970	9	69
5	England	1972	9	68
6	Sweden	1974	9	75
7	Hungary	1973	12	73
8	Poland	1972	12	63
8a		1972	6	48
9	Finland	1972	6	49
10	Germany	1969	6	55
11	Germany	1974	6	52

Note: How to read this chart: When mobility is calculated among seventeen occupational classes, the percentage of males who are in a different class from their fathers is 84% in the U.S. When occupational classes are reduced to five, the proportion who are classified as mobile between generations is 67%.

Sources (in descending order of table):
1 and 1a David L. Featherman and Robert M. Hauser, *Opportunity and Change* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), p. 93.
2 and 2a Ibid.
3 Maurice Garnier and Lawrence E. Hazelrigg, "Father-to-Son Occupational Mobility in France: Evidence from the 1960s," *American Journal of Sociology* 80 (Spring 1974), p. 484.
4 Robert Erikson, John H. Goldthorpe, and Lucienne Portocarero, "Intergenerational Class Mobility in Three Western European Societies: England, France and Sweden," *British Journal of Sociology* 30 (December 1979), p. 425.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Rudolf Andorka and Krzysztof Zagorski, "Structural Factors of Social Mobility in Hungary and Poland," *The Polish Sociological Bulletin* (No 2, 1979), p. 129.
8 Ibid.
8a Michael Pohoski, Seppo Poetinen and Krzysztof Zagorski, "Social Mobility and Socio-Economic Achievement," in Erik Allardt and Wlodzimierz Wesolowski, eds., *Social Structure and Change: Finland and Poland Comparative Perspective* (Warsaw: Polish Scientific Publishers, 1978), p. 150. These data are from the same study as reported in Note 8.
9 Ibid.
10 Gerhard Von Kleining, "Soziale Mobilitat in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland II: Status- oder Prestige-Mobilitaet," *Koelner Soziologia und Sozial-Psychologie* 27 (August 1975), p. 287.
11 Ibid.

Much of the mobility reported in these studies is structural, a consequence of the upgrading of the urban occupations and the decline of the rural sector. These data therefore reveal more upward than downward movement. Thus, a 1964 French survey reports 40 percent moved up and 23 percent down,[15] while American research indicates corresponding figures of 49 percent upwardly mobile and 19 percent downwardly mobile for 1963, and 49 percent upwardly mobile and 17 percent downwardly mobile for 1962.[16]

Such studies also demonstrate that estimates of total mobility are affected by the classification systems employed by researchers. When English (1972), French (1970), Swedish (1974), and German (1974) results are

each collapsed into a trichotomous class structure—nonmanual, manual, and farm—the rates are much lower. Similarly, when the 1962 and 1973 American data are reduced from seventeen to five categories, and the 1972 Polish findings are merged from twelve to six categories, total mobility drops at least 15 percent. But whatever the virtues or limitations of using two, three, six, nine, or more categories to estimate mobility rates, it is evident that there is considerable movement in all these societies.

Political Consequences

Concern with social mobility reflects an interest in how near or distant given societies are from the ideal of equality of opportunity. The evidence indicates that no existing society comes close to allowing all people the same chance to achieve desired positions. In all societies, family class background has a large bearing on status placement of offspring. But at the same time, no industrialized society denies its male citizens the opportunity to rise. In each country for which data are available, a large proportion of the male population (the extent varying with the number of occupational categories employed) have moved up or down between generations. And given the continued strength of modern economies, opportunities to rise from lowly positions have been increasing. Contemporary industrialized nations are probably the most mobile ever.

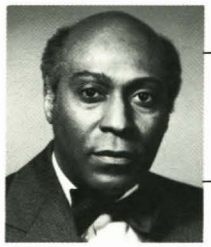
Interest in findings such as these is motivated partly by a desire to evaluate how much opportunity exists, and whether it is increasing or decreasing. Political analysts have assumed that varying rates of social mobility are related to the degree of class consciousness present in different countries. In this vein, it has been suggested that socialist and union movements have been weaker in the United States than in Europe, because America, originating as a frontier society without a history of fixed-status lines, has been much more "open" than European nations, whose class structures evolved from the more rigid emphasis on the estate categories of feudal societies. Writing about the United States, Karl Marx asserted: "Though classes, indeed, already exist, they have not become fixed, but continually change and interchange their elements in the constant state of flux." [17]

If, however, the United States has not differed significantly from other industrialized societies in the proportion of persons who are socially mobile between the working and middle classes, what explains the contrast in the political values and allegiances of American workers with those in other democratic nations? Why are people at the lower rungs of the social ladder in the United States less disposed than those in other western countries to give support to socialist movements and to join unions, and more inclined to believe that equality of opportunity exists here? The answer given by Reinhard Bendix and myself in *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* still seems to be valid.

> Data on social mobility—the bare facts and figures—cannot speak for themselves. Although continued social mobility in American society helps to sustain the belief in the "open" class system, it does not follow that in another society, a similar rate of social mobility would give rise to such a belief, or encourage it. The point is that in a society in which prevailing views emphasize class differences, even a high degree of social mobility may not suffice to undermine these views.[18]

In the United States, the evidence of a high degree of social mobility goes hand in hand with the traditional American commitment to the ideal of egalitarianism. Both influences combine to perpetuate the belief that even the most lowly can rise, that hard work, ambition, and intelligence pay off. In societies that were formerly aristocratic—in which class hierarchy and family inheritance were emphasized—even the existence of extensive mobility does not mitigate the belief of those in lowly positions that their situation is a result of a rigid class structure that deprives them of the opportunity to improve their position through individual action. The social, cultural, and political context of mobility, rather than the bare statistical facts about rates of movement, determine popular beliefs concerning opportunity in society. As Bendix and I stressed, "it is the American emphasis on equality as part of the democratic credo which differentiates American society from the more status-oriented cultures of Europe." [19]

1 David L. Featherman, F. Lancaster Jones, and Robert M. Hauser, "Assumptions of Social Mobility Research in the U.S.: The Case of Occupational Status," *Social Science Research* 4 (December 1975), p. 357.
2 M. N. Rutkevich, "Elimination of Class Differences and the Place of Non-Manual Workers in the Social Structure of Soviet Society," *Soviet Sociology* 3 (Fall 1964), pp. 4-5, 11.
3 Andrea Tyree, Moshe Semyonov, and Robert W. Hodge, "Gaps and Glissandos: Inequality, Economic Development, and Social Mobility in 24 Countries," *American Sociological Review* 44 (June 1979), p. 417.
4 John H. Goldthorpe and Catrina Llewellyn, "Class Mobility in Modern Britain," *Sociology* 11 (May 1977), p. 262.
5 Robert Erikson, John H. Goldthorpe, and Lucienne Portocarero, "Social Fluidity in Industrial Nations: England, France and Sweden," *British Journal of Sociology* 33 (March 1982), p. 5.
6 Robert M. Hauser et al., "Temporal Change in Occupational Mobility: Evidence for Men in the United States," *American Sociological Review*, 40 (June 1975), p. 280. The authors cite a number of studies to this effect.
7 *The Big Business Executive/1964: A Study of His Social and Educational Background* (a study sponsored by the *Scientific American*, conducted by Market Statistics, Inc., of New York City, in collaboration with Dr. Mabel Newcomer).
8 Peter Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, *American Occupational Structure* (New York: John Wiley, 1967), pp. 434-35.
9 Pitirim A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Mobility* (New York: Free Press, 1959).
10 Joseph Schumpeter, *Imperialism and Social Classes* (New York: Meridian Books, 1951), p. 124.
11 Ibid., p. 126.
12 S. M. Lipset and Hans Zetterberg, "Social Mobility in Industrial Societies," in S. M. Lipset and Reinhard Bendix, *Social Mobility in Industrial Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 27; see pp. 17-27 for the data. See also Raymond Boudon, *Education, Opportunity and Social Inequality* (New York: John Wiley, 1973), p. 185.
13 Blau and Duncan, *American Occupational Structure* p. 433. See also Maurice Garnier and Lawrence E. Hazelrigg, "Father-to-Son Occupational Mobility in France: Evidence from the 1960s," *American Journal of Sociology* 80 (September 1974), p. 481 for comparable documentation for Australia, France, Italy, and the United States.
14 Walter D. Connor, *Socialism, Politics, and Equality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), pp. 163-64.
15 Garnier and Hazelrigg, "Father-to-Son," p. 490.
16 David L. Featherman, "Opportunities Are Expanding," *Society* 16 (March/April 1979), pp. 7-8.
17 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (New York: International Publishers, 1963), p. 25.
18 Lipset and Bendix, *Social Mobility*, p. 81.
19 Ibid., p. 111.



by Charles V. Hamilton

Integrating the American Dream

In many ways the status of black Americans has been a major test of this country's commitment to its ideals and its ability and willingness to reconcile practices with those ideals. Long before Gunnar Myrdal articulated this point in his *An American Dilemma*,[1] we were accustomed to measuring what America said by what it did in respect to race, race relations, and black citizens, especially. This history is, or ought to be, reasonably well known to even the most casual observer of the American scene since its inception, and certainly since the Emancipation Proclamation and the subsequent Civil War amendments.

Much of this story has been told through the Supreme Court picking its way through a series of cases involving de jure segregation, voting rights, criminal justice (especially jury selection), teacher salary equalization, restrictive covenants, and, more recently, affirmative action in employment and higher education.

Looking at various aspects of this legal and political history, one must conclude that progress—in the sense of moving toward lowering racial barriers—has been made. What has been called the "civil rights movement" is, indeed, a protracted social struggle that has been more than moderately successful. Only the most cynical or uninformed would contend that little has changed for the better for black Americans, especially since the end of World War II. Inter- and intrastate travel is no longer segregated. No place of public accommodation can legally exclude a person for racial reasons. Black candidates can and do run for and win public offices in places where less than two decades before black citizens, through various subterfuges, could not even register to vote. Private businesses recruit black employees where once, as recent as the early 1960s, they openly advertised for "whites only."

All these developments, however, have been a consequence of arduous struggle and pressure. These changes were achieved through pain, turmoil, disagreement, and, for the most part, with forceful national government action—through troops on southern campuses or executive decrees or intensely contested legal action.

In 1982, the mere articulation of this progress raises additional questions. Some advocates argue that the civil rights movement has succeeded, and it no longer needs to be pursued, at least not with the same mass methods and legal and political actions. Others believe that the gains were only marginal and that the commitments made during the 1950s and 1960s are now being eroded by a steadily growing national conservative mood and stringent fiscal retrenchment. They point to a "gap" that persists between white and black median income, to the rising unemployment rates among blacks (especially teen-agers and females), to the continued hesitancy on the part of many employers (in the private and public sectors) to hire qualified blacks, to the persistent (albeit more covert) refusal to rent and to sell decent housing to blacks.

This is not an unfamiliar debate, and it is not likely to end anytime soon. We will continue to read and hear statements and statistics indicating how much more has

to be done, especially in the economic area. For example, Dr. Bernard E. Anderson wrote in a National Urban League report in 1982: "Because of recent shifts in economic policy, the current environment is less likely to be hospitable to further progress than at any time in the recent past. There is no assurance that the job creation that might emerge from current policies will help narrow the employment gap between black and other workers, but it is almost certain that broad budget cuts for social programs will greatly reduce the opportunities for the disadvantaged to become prepared to make a productive contribution to society." [2]

Professor William Julius Wilson, on the other hand, has suggested that

> at this point there is . . . reason to believe that trained and educated blacks, like trained and educated whites, will continue to enjoy the advantages and privileges of their class status. It appears that the powerful political and social movement against job discrimination will mitigate against any effective and systematic movement to exclude qualified blacks. . . . [T]he issue is whether the movement will come to grips with the plight of the black lower class and especially the very bottom, which I call the underclass. It cannot be overemphasized that liberal programs such as affirmative action, although effective in enhancing job opportunities for more privileged blacks, are not really designed to deal with barriers to desirable jobs that are the result of the use of increasing automation, the relocation of industries, the segmentation of the labor market, and the shift from goods-producing to service-producing industries.[3]

This brief article does not intend to join that debate. Rather, given this background, an important question is whether this country is perceived by black Americans as a land of opportunity. Given the progress as well as the persistent "gaps," to what extent is upward mobility perceived as possible by black citizens? We will look at a series of results from various surveys recently and over time. It is also useful to separate the responses into the three categories described by Professor Everett Ladd in a recent *Public Opinion* article: views of the nation; personal status; and opinion on current national performance.[4]

In University of Michigan surveys conducted from 1947 to 1976, Americans have been asked the following question: "Considering the country as a whole, do you think we will have good times or bad times or what during the next twelve months?" In 1976, 39.6 percent of blacks said "good." This represented a 26-point increase (from 13.9 percent) over 1975. Whenever the black response of "good" exceeded 40 percent, it coincided with years of Democratic presidential dominance,[5] except for 1955. The 43.8 percent response in 1955 might well have been, in part, an optimistic reaction to the 1954 Supreme Court desegregation decision.

From 1960 to 1969, when the combined responses of "good" and "good-qualified" are considered, some interesting results appear. Only twice (1961, 47.2 percent; 1967, 49.7 percent) did the responses dip below 50 percent. This was a decade of reasonable optimism for blacks, associated undoubtedly with the heightened activity of the civil rights movement, the passage of important legislation (Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965), and the beginning of the Great Society programs. In contrast, for the seven surveys reported from 1970 to 1976, the combined responses exceeded 31 percent only in 1976.

The question, "Will business conditions be better a year from now?" produces a similar response pattern. Data are available from 1954 to 1978. The response categories were: better, same, worse, don't know. In 1961, 50.3 percent of blacks responded "better." In 1976, 46.5 percent gave that answer. The 1960s (1960 to 1969) averaged 32.2 percent "better." The 1970s (1970 to 1978) averaged 23.5 percent.

These two sets of data appear to suggest that blacks are more hopeful about the country's immediate future at times when a Democrat occupies the White House. This is not surprising, given the electoral choices of black voters in national elections since 1936.

Notwithstanding these fluctuations, a substantial 76 percent of blacks stated in a late 1981 poll by the Roper Organization that they believed the United States was "the very best place in the world to live." Equally interesting, in another Roper survey in September 1979, 40 percent of blacks felt "very confident" that "life for our children will be better than it has been for us." Another 40 percent felt "only fairly confident," and 20 percent "not at all confident." In other words, 80 percent came down on the positive side. (Comparative response percentages for whites were: 25 percent, very confident; 43 percent, only fairly confident; 32 percent, not at all confident.)

Personal Status

When we look at a series of responses in the personal status category, we find similar quite high feelings. In December 1981, the Roper Organization posed the following question: "Thinking of your concept of the good life, how good do you think your chances are of achieving it—very good, fairly good, not very good, or not good at all?" Blacks responded with the following percentages respectively: 25, 44, 12, 13. Thus, 69 percent felt some degree of "good" about their life chances.

In 1978, however, only 25.2 percent of black respondents felt their families would be "better off" a year hence. (42.6 percent felt their financial situation would be the "same.") Responses to this question going back to 1953 peaked at 51.3 percent "better" in 1972, and at 49.2 percent "same" in 1963. Whereas there was a distinctive difference in blacks' views of the nation between the 1960s and the 1970s, this was not in evidence in the personal status category. Throughout the 1960s, the average black response of "better" in this University of Michigan series was 33.5 percent. In the

1970s, the average was 33.0 percent. Thus, the earlier conjecture relating political party control to attitudes toward the country generally does not seem to be relevant to attitudes toward personal advance.

It is interesting to note that throughout the twenty-five years from 1953 to 1978, there has never been a majority of black Americans who have felt their family would be "worse off" a year hence. The highest was 22.7 percent in 1974.

In 1981, when asked, "In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in your own personal life?" 63 percent of "nonwhites" responded that they were satisfied.

We are very aware of the rising unemployment rate among black teen-agers in recent years. If any group should feel particularly doubtful about its future, one would think this would be the group. But an interesting datum came from a national survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan in 1981. High school seniors were asked: "Do you agree or disagree with the following—'People like me don't have much of a chance to be successful in life.' " A striking 67 percent of black high school seniors disagreed, and an additional 15 percent "mostly disagreed." A surprisingly low 5 percent agreed with the statement, and only another 7 percent "mostly agreed."

These results are consistent with responses of black high school seniors to the following question in the same survey: "When you are older, do you expect to own more possessions than your parents do now, or about the same, or less?" Young blacks answered as follows: 32 percent, "much more than my parents"; 37 percent, "somewhat more than my parents"; 25 percent, "about as much as my parents"; 4 percent "somewhat less than my parents"; 1 percent "much less than my parents." (The combined 69 percent for "more" was 20 points above white high school senior responses; 13 percent "much more"; 36 percent "somewhat more.") Black high school seniors seem to have reasonably high expectations for their futures. This attitude of the youngsters coincides with that of black respondents generally in a 1980 survey conducted by Research and Forecasts for the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company. Seventy-three percent said "yes" when asked: "Do you believe that America offers an opportunity for financial security to all those willing to work hard?" (This was just 8 points less than the 81 percent white "yes" response.)

National Performance

One final item—the attitude toward current national performance—reveals a result quite opposite that of the other two categories. "Nonwhites" (like whites) were not, for the most part, satisfied "with the way things are going in the United States at this time." In a December 1981 Gallup survey, 82 percent said they were "dissatisfied," 18 percent satisfied. Another Gallup question asked in late April 1982 found that 62 percent of blacks compared to 47 percent of whites felt that the recession will "become worse during the next three months." Only 13 percent of blacks (34 percent of whites) felt the economy would begin to recover.

These sources suggest some tentative conclusions. Black Americans are quite optimistic about their personal chances for upward mobility, and this optimism is clearly evident among black high school seniors. There seems to be a reasonably strong attachment to the ethic of work and individual achievement. These results do not indicate a substantial majority of the group tending to give up, with no hope in their chances for future success. Given the history of the struggle of black Americans in this country, this should not be particularly surprising. From slavery into the twentieth century, that struggle has been characterized by persistent effort which, one might suggest, had to be bolstered by a sense of one's capacity to persevere and succeed. The results of these surveys simply confirm that attitude.

To be sure, blacks are clearly more sanguine about the future of the country generally when Democrats are in power. This is consistent with the voting record of a group that has been more identified with that party than any other "bloc" group over the last several decades. Notwithstanding, in late 1979, a striking 80 percent of blacks in a Roper Organization survey, felt some degree of confidence that their children's lives would be better than their own. Looking at the responses of the black high school seniors, the children seem to agree.

Many black Americans are not at all satisfied with current national conditions, but they continue to believe that they have a pretty good chance to improve their lives if they apply themselves. How this relates to the progress versus "gaps" debate is beyond the scope of these brief observations. But it is clear that there is a substantial segment of black Americans who have not given up—either on themselves or their country. In this sense, one is reminded of the comments of Professor Seymour Martin Lipset on legitimacy. He wrote:

> Legitimacy involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that the existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society. . . . Groups regard a political system as legitimate or illegitimate according to the way in which its values fit with theirs.[6]

Assessments are constantly being made. At this point, in regard to black Americans, one could conclude that the political system still has time. But one also has to conclude that feelings of legitimacy are hardly inexhaustible.

1. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1944).
2. Bernard E. Anderson, "Economic Patterns in Black America," in *The State of Black America 1982* (National Urban League, Inc., New York, January 14, 1982), pp. 25-26.
3. William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, Second Edition, 1980), pp. 178-179.
4. Everett Carll Ladd, "205 and Going Strong," *Public Opinion*, June/July 1981, p. 11.
5. (1960, 1964, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968).
6. Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man* (New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1963), p. 64.

(Continued from page 15)

Irish, and Scotch) have 40 to 50 percent born in the South. They are subdivided by region. All of which gives us a total of fourteen white Protestant groups, four subdivided by region and six intact but relatively "Northern."

The twenty-nine ethnic groups in figure 1 comprise 62 percent of all GSS respondents. Of the remainder some are members of small nationality groups (17 Belgians, 12 Chinese, 18 Romanians, etc.), a handful were raised as "Other" or "None" in religion, but the largest chunk, about a fifth of all the cases, were ineligible because they could not pick a single national origin. Of these, about half simply didn't know and half reported multiple origins with none dominant. We are all, as Franklin D. Roosevelt told the DAR, descendants of immigrants, but about a fifth of us have become ethnically pureed in the Cuisinart of American history.

While Americans seem inhibited about discussing social class, quite the opposite seems true for ethnicity. I suspect we all hold the following beliefs about our own group: (1) We started at the very bottom; (2) We are especially hard working and self-sacrificing; (3) We have come a long way but not as far as we deserve; and (4) Among us, unlike other groups, Mamma really runs the family. Similarly in the intellectual world much more is published than known about ethnicity and we do not have the classic data bases comparable to those in table 1. However, Andrew Greeley of NORC pioneered in studying ethnicity by pooling national surveys and unpublished results from the GSS, allowing us to follow his lead with more recent samples. Table 3 lays out the key facts.

Since the results here are in terms of "occupational prestige scales" rather than white-blue-farm, we must detour briefly to consider measurement. Tables like table 1 treat large occupational categories (collars) but one may also study mobility in terms of specific occupations (e.g. physicians or bootblacks). To do so, the jobs must be placed on a single scale of prestige or "social standing." This turns out to be much easier than one might think. One of the remarkable conclusions of modern sociological research is the high agreement on the prestige of occupations. When one asks the man or woman in the street to judge the social standing of specific jobs, one finds striking consensus across time (1925 to today), occupational strata, educational levels, regions, sexes, even nations of the world. Consequently, sociologists have developed prestige scales for occupations. The GSS uses the Hodge-Segal-Rossi scale, which runs from a low of 9 points (bootblacks) to a high of 82 (physicians).

The left-hand column of table 3 gives the average (mean) prestige score for fathers of the twenty-nine groups, that is, how they lined up at the starting gate. Since the mean age of the respondents is about forty-five and fathers average thirty years older than their children, the typical father in these data was born around the turn of the century and the typical respondent (we are dealing with both men and women in this section) was born just at the beginning of the Great Depression. The figures can thus be seen as a rough estimate of how the twenty-nine groups stood in occupational prestige in the first third of the 20th century. Top position went to the Jews with a mean of 45.3. The Poles' position, 34.3, is distinctly lower, and the anchor spot went to Mexican Catholics with a score of 30.5. The rankings, by and large, confirm our social stereotypes:

- Of the bottom eight positions all but two went to nonwhites (the three black groups and Indians) or Latins (Mexicans and Puerto Ricans.)
- While the Catholic group spans a larger range than the stereotype (from nine to thirty) none of the Catholic groups was in the top quarter.
- Of the top eight positions, five went to the older Protestant groups (Scotch, French, English), both northern and southern.

There are some surprises:

- Even a generation ago Jews had the highest prestige of any ethnic group.
- The Scandinavians showed a wide range in prestige origins from rank six (Swedes) to rank twenty-seven (Finns).
- The Protestant Irish, both northern and southern,

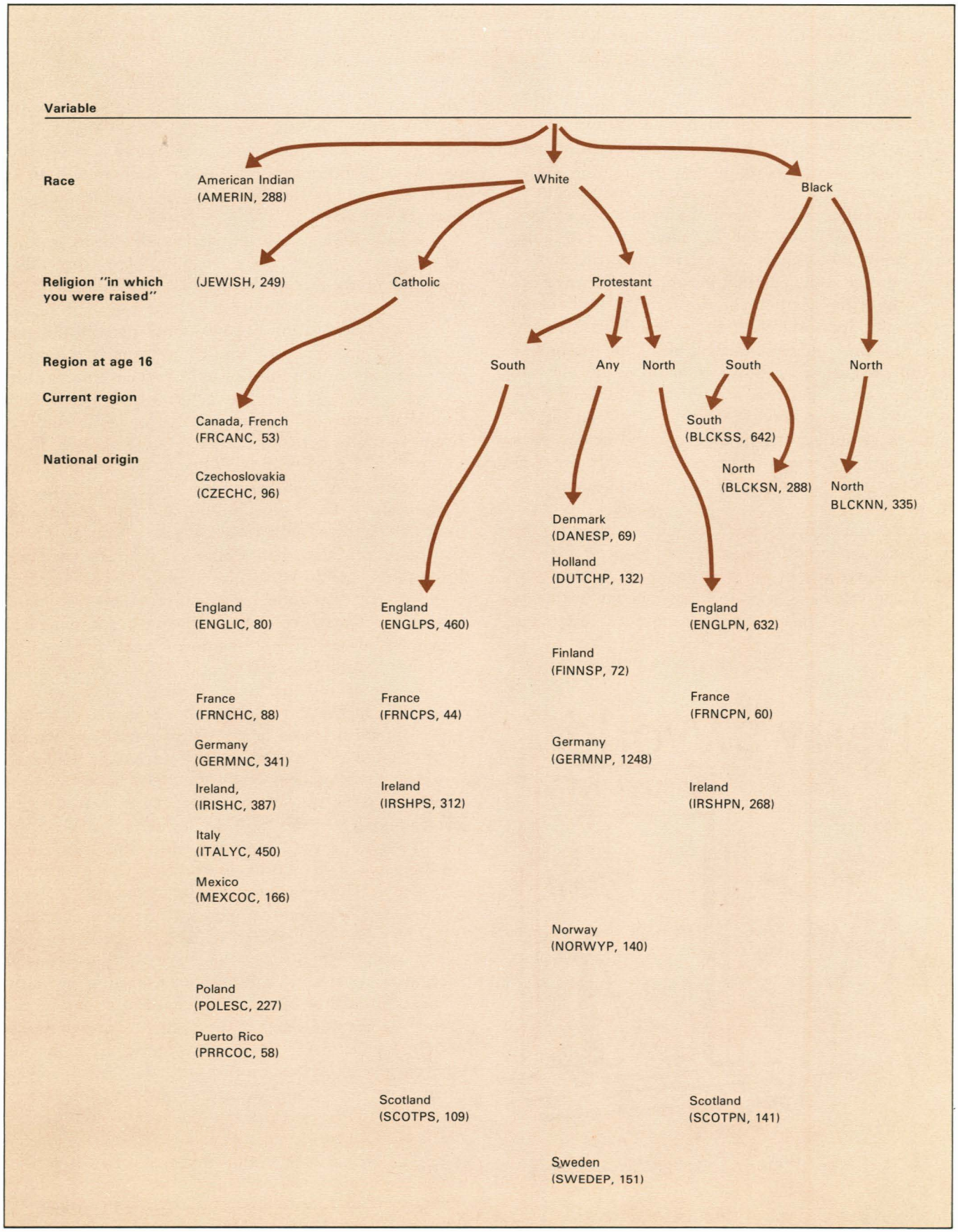
Table 3
OCCUPATIONAL AND EDUCATION SCORES OF ETHNIC GROUPS

Group	Occupational Prestige		Change in Rank	Schooling
	Father's	Own		
(1) Jewish	45.3	46.6	0	48.8
(2) ScotPN	45.1	46.1	0	35.0
(3) FrncPN	45.1	43.1	−4	32.2
(4) EnglPS	42.9	43.3	−2	21.0
(5) EnglPN	42.0	42.3	−5	23.3
(6) SwedeP	41.8	40.2	−6	8.6
(7) DanesP	41.8	42.7	−1	18.9
(8) FrncPS	41.3	45.1	+4	11.4
(9) IrishC	41.2	41.9	−2	22.8
(10) ScotPS	41.0	44.6	+5	19.2
(11) EngliC	40.8	46.0	+8	33.7
(12) NorwyP	40.3	42.6	+3	15.0
(13) GermnC	40.1	39.6	−2	0.9
(14) GermnP	40.1	39.8	+1	− 1.6
(15) FrnchC	40.0	39.6	−1	17.3
(16) IrshPN	39.8	39.1	−1	0.4
(17) IrshPS	39.4	39.1	−1	−21.1
(18) FrcanC	37.9	36.0	−5	−15.1
(19) DutchP	37.9	37.3	−2	−28.8
(20) CzechC	36.7	39.7	+6	− 2.1
(21) ItalyC	36.3	38.2	+2	− 7.1
(22) Amerin	35.8	34.2	−3	−23.3
(23) BlckSN	34.9	29.9	−5	−35.2
(24) PolesC	34.3	38.0	+4	−10.5
(25) PrrcoC	34.0	30.7	−2	−57.9
(26) BlckNN	32.9	35.4	+2	1.2
(27) FinnsP	32.6	36.2	+5	−19.5
(28) BlckSS	32.1	28.6	−1	−46.3
(29) MexcoC	30.5	32.1	+3	−31.9

Note: N = North, S = South, C = Catholic, P = Protestant.
See figure 1 for key to national origin abbreviations (e.g. Prrco = Puerto Rican).

Figure 1

ETHNIC GROUPS IN THE GSS



were distinctly farther down the ladder (ranks sixteen and eighteen) than the other old Protestant groups, these being the famous "Scotch-Irish" or less affectionately, "Hill Billies." They started—and remained—below the rank of the later arriving Irish Catholics.

While table 3 shows that Jews and Mexican Catholics started out 14.8 points apart, it is hard to say whether 14.8 is big or small. I think it is small—or at least smaller than most of us would expect.

One yardstick is the distribution of individuals. In the cumulative GSS, 25 percent of the individuals report father scores above 45 and 22 percent report father scores below 30.5. Thus, while Jews were the highest prestige group in the parental generation, their average score was at the "bottom of the top quarter" for all Americans. Comfortable, maybe, but hardly aristocratic. Similarly, almost a quarter of all Americans had paternal prestige scores lower than those of Mexican Catholics, whose position was uncomfortable, maybe, but hardly down and out. While the twenty-nine ethnic groups were spread out in their original scores, they were all spread through the middle of the U.S. distribution. None of them could be termed patricians and none pariahs.

If the first striking feature of the group data is the small range of the original status differences, the second is the large size of the inheritance or stability.

If one calculates a scale known in the sociology business as a "Pearson product moment correlation (r)" for father's and own jobs, one obtains an r of + .870, which is in two words, a whopper. Since a high correlation between origins and destinations means low mobility, the theme here is one of relative immobility. For example, if we simply subtract father's score from own job using the data in table 3 (e.g., for Jews 46.6 − 45.3 = + 1.3), the median change is ± 1.6. Thus, the typical movement of an ethnic group is up or down less than two points on another scale, the Hodge-Segal-Rossi scale. Only two groups shifted five or more points: English Catholics moved up from 40.8 to 46.0, while blacks who moved from South to North dropped from 34.9 to 29.9.

When talking about individuals, the theme was "a lot of continuity and a lot of mobility" but when talking about ethnic groups the theme seems to be "a lot of continuity and some mobility."

Even a correlation of .870 is not perfect and the groups did not cross the finish line in perfect follow-the-leader form. The third column in table 3 shows the change in *rank* for each group. For example, Mexican Catholics started at rank twenty-nine, ended up in rank twenty-six, and got a rank change score of + 3. Four groups increased their rank by five or more points (Finnish Protestants, Southern Scotch Protestants, Czech Catholics, and English Catholics), and four groups fell back five or more ranks (black migrants from South to North, French Canadian Catholics, English Northern Protestants, and Swedish Protestants).

How do you zoom past your competitors? Hard work? Tough mammas? Maybe, but again schooling has a definite impact. So we tune up for another two-step, this time at the group level.

Step one says the higher the paternal status of a group, the higher the education of its sons and daughters. The index I used is simply the percentage with a year or more of college minus the percentage with zero to eleven years of schooling. Thus, Jews have 62.3 percent with some college and 13.5 percent with zero to eleven giving an index of + 48.8. Puerto Ricans, at the other extreme, have 8.8 percent with some college and 66.7 percent with zero to eleven years giving an index of — 57.9. The other twenty-seven groups lie between these scores. The product moment correlation between "Fathers" and "Schooling" in table 3 equals + .837, which is substantial. You can reach the same conclusion without any calculations by inspecting the right hand column in table 3. With one exception, all the minus signs are lower than the positive scores—that is, except for German Protestants, children from the top sixteen groups were more likely to have some college than to be high school dropouts, while for the bottom thirteen groups "high school dropouts" outnumber those with a year or more of college.

The second half of the educational two-step (à la table 2b) requires us to demonstrate that the educational level of an ethnic group affects its occupational prestige, *controlling* for father's prestige.

"IT'S ABOUT THE AMERICAN DREAM ..."

The left hand column in table 4 rearranges the twenty-nine ethnic groups and the educational score

Table 4
EDUCATION AND MOBILITY

Ethnic Group	Schooling Net of Father's Job	Change in Rank
(26) BlckNN	32.73	+2
(11) EngliC	22.35	+8
(27) FinnsP	13.66	+5
(24) PolesC	13.43	+4
(1) Jewish	13.02	0
(29) MexcoC	12.66	+3
(15) FrnchC	10.29	−1
(9) IrishC	9.28	−2
(20) CzechC	8.81	+6
(10) ScotPS	6.77	+5
(12) NorwyP	6.37	+3
(21) ItalyC	5.98	+2
(5) EnglPN	5.44	−5
(7) DanesP	2.12	−1
(3) FrncPN	1.31	−1
(2) ScotPN	0.31	0
(4) EnglPS	−1.75	−2
(8) FrncPS	−2.66	+4
(16) IrshPN	−5.52	−1
(13) GermnC	−6.65	−2
(22) Amerin	−7.51	−3
(6) SwedeP	−8.18	−6
(14) GermnP	−9.15	+1
(28) BlckSS	−10.42	−1
(18) FrcanC	−10.71	−5
(23) BlckSN	−14.52	−5
(19) DutchP	−24.41	−2
(17) IrshPS	−24.85	−1
(25) PrrcoC	−32.34	−2

Note: N = North, S = South, C = Catholic, P = Protestant.
See figure 1 for key to national origin abbreviations (e.g. Prrco = Puerto Rican).

predicted by using father's job in a regression equation. High scores mean the group went a lot farther in school than one would predict from their fathers' jobs; negative scores mean the group did not obtain as much schooling as one would predict. The highest "overachievers" are northern-born, northern-living blacks. Their educational score is not smashing (a value of 1.2 and rank fourteen), but they got an awful lot of schooling considering their parental starting point at rank twenty-six. Other overachievers by ten or more points are English Catholics, Finnish Protestants, Polish Catholics, Jews, Mexican Catholics, and French Catholics. At the opposite end, southern-born blacks (migrant or not), French Canadian Catholics, Dutch Protestants, Southern Irish Protestants, and Puerto Rican Catholics all fell ten or more points short of their predicted scores.

Is there a pattern here? I find it interesting that seven of ten Catholic groups are overachievers, as are seven of fourteen Protestant groups and the one out of four nonwhite groups who didn't attend southern schools.

Intriguing, but the question is whether schooling-net-of-father's-occupation affects prestige. Look at the right hand column in table 4 where the change in rank data are repeated. Again, the plus signs are up toward the top and the minus signs toward the bottom. More exactly:

- Of the ten groups which moved up two or more ranks, nine are overachievers.
- Of the nine groups which moved zero, one, or two ranks, five are overachievers.
- Of the ten groups which moved down two or more ranks, two are overachievers.

As with individuals, schooling is simultaneously the key mobility mechanism (as shown by the strong association between "overachievement" and change in rank) and the key mechanism in maintaining the ethnic "peck order" (as shown by the reduction of the father-own correlation from + .870 to + .324 when education is controlled).

Education Begets Prestige

Some groups moved up, some groups moved down, some groups stayed put. How, overall, did the pattern change? If we think of the ranks in terms of a top quarter, a bottom quarter, and a large middle, I draw four conclusions:

- At the bottom, the four nonwhite and two Latin Catholic groups ended up about where they started, while the Poles and Finns moved up.
- At the top, Jews remained in the number one spot and the old Protestant groups, if anything, improved their standing as the southern Scotch and French moved into the top quarter while only the northern English moved down.
- Among the non-Latin Catholics, the English zoomed up into the top quarter, but the other groups mostly remained in the middle half.
- Among the Scandinavians and German Protestants, the trend was toward the middle half as the Swedes dropped from the top quarter and the Finns moved up toward the middle.

As in the case of individual mobility, the ethnic mobility results have something for every ideological taste. The highest prestige group is so far from the top and the lowest group so far from the bottom that ethnic differences in occupational prestige must be characterized as moderate. Schooling is the key to ethnic mobility: groups who get more schooling move up in the pack, groups who get less fall back—whatever their odd cooking habits and weird religions. Statistically, educational attainment is a much better predictor of a group's current prestige than is its original (father's) prestige.

All this is true and cheery, and yet, the amount of schooling a group gets is still powerfully influenced by the paternal occupational level. A generation of "rapid social change" still shows "old Protestants" (ScotPN, FrncPS, ScotPS, EnglPS, and FrncPN) in five of the seven top ranks and blacks, Latins, and American Indians in the bottom six positions. The issues and problems of "border crossing" for the contemporary United States are not limited to the Immigration Service. ☑

who won't cooperate.

Let me give you an example. I went briefly into business for myself when I hit 40. I wanted to work as a writer. I soon had to hire an accountant because I didn't know how to fill out all the papers. I spent ten days out of a year filling out papers. That's trivial, but you begin to realize how intrusive government is. For the first time I saw intrusiveness of government in everything I wanted to do, some for good, some for bad.

Lekachman: Government has increased opportunity by widening education opportunities. That's one of the reasons I'm so distressed about Reagan's cuts in education. He is narrowing these opportunities.

Wattenberg: *Do you agree with Mike's point that we're spending more money on social welfare programs in dollars than in previous years?*

Lekachman: This is true but misleading because the bulk of the money consists of increases in social security entitlements. This is a middle-class/upper-middle-class program.

Government has restricted opportunity in the last decade or so by doing *insufficient* good. The 1946 Employment Act has maximum employment as a national objective. The 1978 Humphrey-Hawkins Balanced Growth and Full Employment Act has a schedule of unemployment targets. Full employment creates more opportunity than anything else. High rates of unemployment narrow opportunities, particularly for the less advantaged.

Novak: The number of jobs created in the United States since 1970 is staggering. It's been a jagged but steady upturn. If our adult population wanted to work at the same proportions as earlier, we would have done brilliantly. But the beauty of it is more people want to work. That puts an extra burden on the system.

Lekachman: I wish I could be as happy about that phenomenon as you are. The increase in labor force participation is largely the consequence of increasing female representation. There has been no increase in the real incomes of average blue-collar, white-collar workers since about 1969. Families who wish to improve their situation have relied upon additional wage earners. The labor force participation rates are more the consequence of economic adversity than they are any great impulse on the part of women to work.

Novak: There's a much stronger case to show that income has gone up. But, even accepting your argument on income figures, it means that people want to live better. Most people in history have been quite content with where they are—"the sleeping masses of Asia," and "the sleeping masses of Africa."

The fact that families still want to keep doing better and will work more to do it is great.

Lekachman: I don't disagree, but it involves taking unpleasant jobs solely for the sake of the additional income, not for work satisfaction.

Novak: Poll figures show that about 80 percent of Americans express keen satisfaction with their jobs. If work is supposed to be "by the sweat of your brow," and if it's supposed to be more painful than leisure, it's astonishing how many people are satisfied.

Keene: *Is there merit to the theme of the recent* Newsweek *cover, "Reagan's America—And the Poor Get Poorer?"*

Lekachman: Insofar as the Reagan policies are concerned, *Newsweek* is correct. The combination of redistributive taxation from below to above, the restriction of social benefits to low-income people, and the high unemployment rate all hit heavily on the lower rung. All of these, and similar reductions and changes in state and local taxation and benefit reductions, move us to a society in which the rich are increasingly rich and the poor are increasingly poor.

Fortunately, I think Reagan is a four-year phenomenon.

Wattenberg: *Will Senator Kennedy prevail?*

Lekachman: Senator Kennedy is a flawed hero. But if it came to a choice between Kennedy and Reagan, I'd have no trouble voting for Teddy.

Wattenberg: *Do you stress "hero" over "flawed?"*

Lekachman: Hero, marginally, as we say in economics. [Laughter.]

Novak: The *Newsweek* story was an outrage. It twisted every fact it touched.

There's a very good chance that the wealthiest quintile of the population will pay a larger proportion of taxes in this year and in next year than ever before. That wealthiest quintile already pays 50 percent of all the taxes. They pay taxes not only for themselves but for the whole bottom 50 percent of the population, who pay about 6 percent of the income tax load.

Lekachman: That's highly arguable.

Novak: It's not arguable at all if you're talking about income taxes.

Lekachman: The Brookings Institution has concluded—in terms of total tax burden—the American tax system is roughly egalitarian from top to bottom, with two qualifications. If you're at the bottom of the income scale you pay a slightly higher percentage of all taxes, and, if you're at the top of the scale, you will also pay a slightly higher percentage.

Novak: That's irrelevant to the Reagan program. The Reagan program is only about income taxes. Your argument is correct if you add all taxes together. Many state and local taxes are regressive, so larger numbers of people pay larger proportions of taxes.

The *Newsweek* cover appeared before the program had been given a chance to work. It remains to be seen what will happen. There is a very good chance that the wealthiest one-fifth of the population is going to be paying a larger proportion of taxes and that a very substantial amount of the income that they have is going to be going into more savings and investment than before. That's what the program is about. That is likely to be good for the poorer people because that's the only source new investment in jobs is going to come from.

Therefore, I expect social mobility to open up, opportunity to open up, before the end of this decade. This is going to be very good. We've made a new beginning and must do better.

It may be that the Democrats will reap the first rewards. But the Reagan administration has turned the country's attention to savings and investment, to tax policy, in a way unprecedented in my lifetime. We've learned more about these things in the last year than ever before. Reagan's argument has been so persuasive that Democrats are mimicking it. They will add their own wrinkle to it, but the right problems have been identified and the country is tackling them. The most painful steps have been taken—the first ones.

I see the end of this decade as being one of more opportunity than we've had in two or three decades. The eighties are going to be one of the most prosperous decades that we've had in quite a long time.

by Robert Worcester and Simon Jenkins

Britain Rallies 'Round the Prime Minister

From the first news of the landing of Argentinian forces on the Falkland Islands on April 2, Market & Opinion Research International (MORI) has been polling the British public's reaction to the situation almost every week. Ten polls have been taken so far: a panel study of four waves for the *Economist* (and one wave for BBC's "Panorama"); two separate polls for the *Sunday Times*; two more for "Panorama" and one for the *Daily Star*. These followed the "base-line" survey which was in the field at the time of the initial landing.

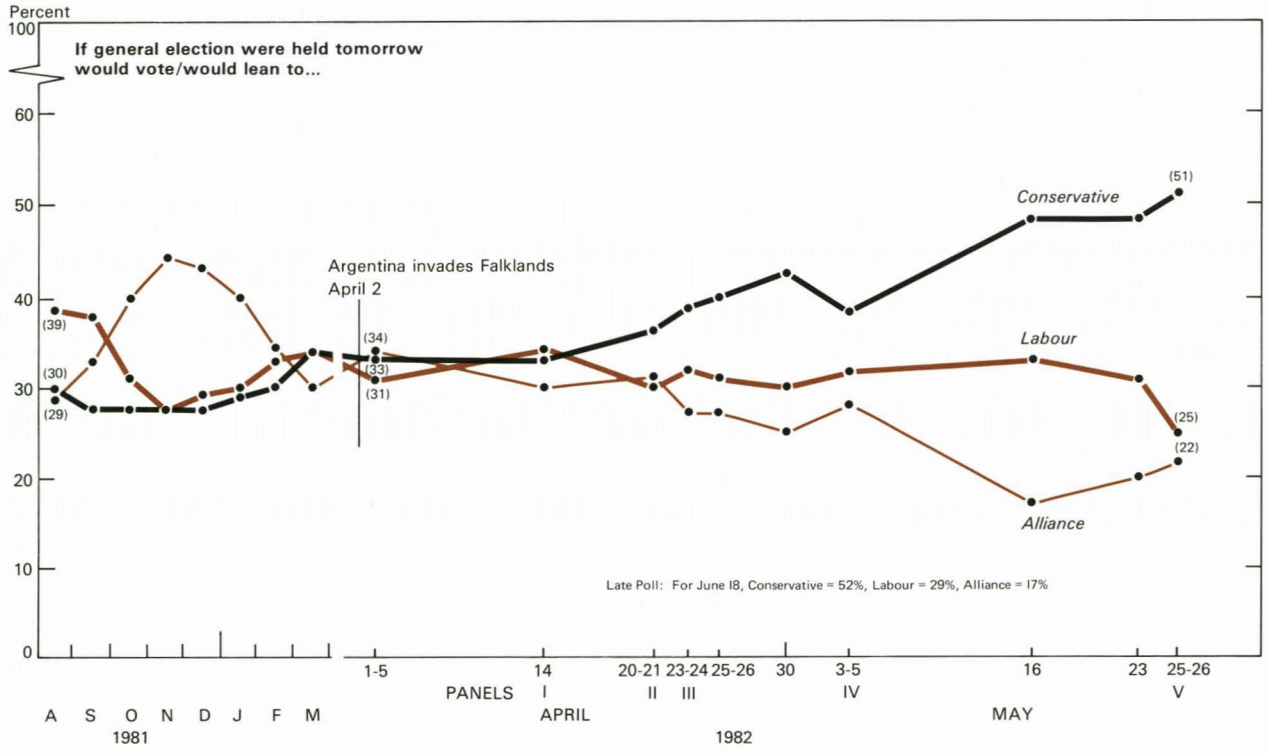
The Tories Rebound

The war in the Falklands has, for the time being, changed the face of British politics. The rise of the SDP/Liberal Alliance (see "What's Ahead for Britain's New Party?" *Public Opinion*, December/January 1982),

Figure 1

THE FALKLANDS AND VOTING INTENTION

Question: How would you vote if there were a general election tomorrow? (If undecided or refused, ask) Which party are you most inclined to support?



Note: For Panels II-V, MORI reinterviewed by telephone the number of respondents indicated in the source below from a representative sample interviewed previously (Panel I) in face-to-face interviews in fifty-three constituencies throughout Great Britain. The data were weighted by sex, age, social class, and previous voting intention to be representative of the original face-to-face sample.

Source: Surveys by MORI for the *Daily Star* (August 1981-March 1982); *Daily Star*, April 1-5 (N = 1905); *Economist* (Panel I), April 14 (N = 1018); BBC's "Panorama" (Panel II), April 20-21 (N = 463); *Economist* (Panel III), April 23-24 (N = 447); BBC's "Panorama," April 25-26 (N = 1069); *London Sunday Times*, April 30 (N = 1178); *Economist* (Panel IV), May 3-5 (N = 526); BBC's "Panorama," May 16 (N = 1036); BBC's "Panorama," May 23 (N = 1091); *Economist* (Panel V), May 25-26 (N = 400), June 18 for the *Sunday Times*.

peaked at the time of the Crosby by-election on November 26, 1981 when Shirley Williams became the SDP's first elected Member of Parliament. Then the Alliance slide began. By early April the parties were just about even. Since then, the Tory share has soared to 52 percent on June 18 (see figure 1).

Opinion polls have not been the only measure of the political mood of the country. Just one month after the news of the Falklands invasion hit the headlines of British newspapers, local government elections took place in Britain. These elections are largely a referendum on the performance of the government of the day and customarily swing heavily against the party in power. In this instance, however, extrapolation of local government results to the national picture showed the Conservatives at 40 percent, Labour 31 percent, and the Alliance at 26 percent. Hundreds of seats that had been expected to go to the Alliance (especially in the south of England where the Conservatives have been running first, the Alliance second) and to Labour (especially in the north which is more urban and more pro-Labour) stayed Tory.

Two by-elections took place during the fighting. Both were expected to show Alliance strength. The Conservatives won them handily. The conclusion is unavoidable: so far, the conflict has been extremely good for the party in power.

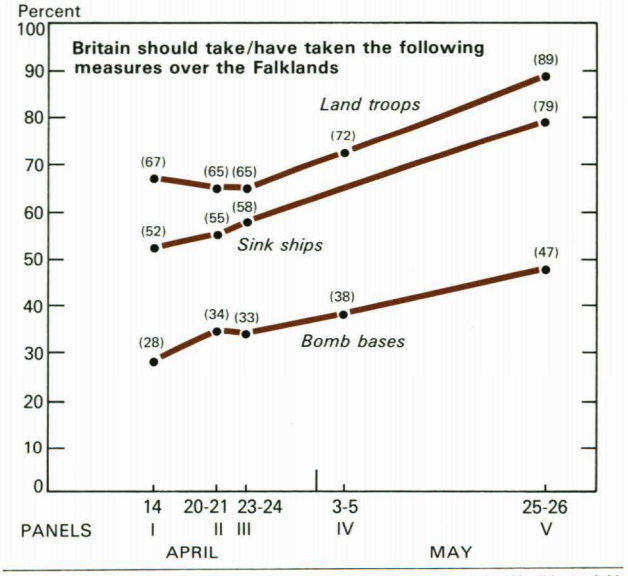
Handling the Situation

The public mood toward the handling of the Falklands issue—coming as it did totally out of the blue—was one of cautious, wait-and-see support for the government.

Figure 2

TRENDS ON BRITISH OPTIONS IN THE FALKLANDS

Question: Should Britain take/have taken the following measures over the Falkland Islands . . . land troops on the Falklands . . . sink Argentinian ships in Falkland waters . . . bomb Argentinian military and naval bases?



Source: Surveys by MORI for the *Economist* for Panels I, III, IV, and V; for the BBC's "Panorama" for Panel II.

The conflict started badly for the cabinet with the resignation of Foreign Secretary Carrington and two of his deputies. As the crisis developed, however, the level of satisfaction with the way the government has handled the situation has improved steadily—from 60 percent approval in early April to 84 percent in late May.

Public Opinion and the War

Much criticism of opinion polls is based on wisdom after the fact—it's often easier to know what questions *should have been* asked than to know which questions should be asked. The base-line questionnaire for the panel was developed while British ships were steaming toward the Falklands, before the precise nature of the conflict was clear. To cover any eventuality, a series of should/should not questions was devised on "whether Britain should take/have taken the following measures over the Falkland Islands situation." These ranged from measures taken immediately, such as severing diplomatic relations with Argentina (71 percent agreed), banning Argentinian imports into Britain (84 percent) and freezing Argentinian assets in British banks (82 percent), to the roughly one-in-four of the British public who were hawkish to the point of wishing to intern Argentinian citizens residing in Great Britain (24 percent), bomb Argentinian military and naval bases on the mainland (28 percent), land troops on the Argentinian mainland (21 percent), and the incredible one-in-twenty who believed that the situation called for the use of nuclear weapons against Argentina (see figure 2).

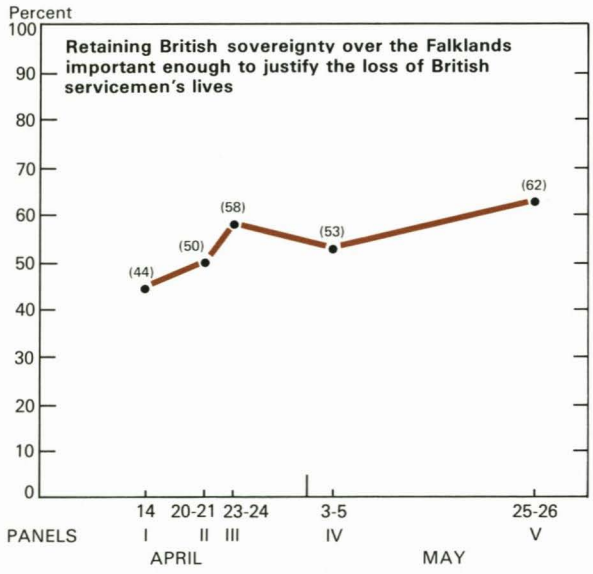
Initially, there was some doubt in the British public's mind about the importance of retaining British sovereignty over the Falklands if it resulted in the loss of British servicemen's lives (44 percent said it important enough, 49 percent disagreed). There was even less enthusiasm if carrying the war to the Falklands caused the loss of Falkland Islanders' lives (36 percent yes, 55 percent no). As the crisis developed and the island of South Georgia was taken without loss of life, the answers to the conditional question turned from negative to positive, with 51 percent in agreement that the loss of servicemen's lives could be justified in the April 20-21 survey to 58 percent in the April 23-24 survey, then down slightly to 53 percent early in May after the first loss of life, and finally to 62 percent at the end of May.

This slight hesitation occurred at the time of the sinking of the Argentinian warship *General Belgrano* on May 2 by a British submarine with a reported 1,000-plus men on board. On May 4, HMS *Sheffield* was sunk by an Argentinian Exocet missile and twenty British sailors lost their lives. Fieldwork was going on between the 3rd and the 5th of May. An examination of the findings shows that the downturn in confidence was occasioned by the sudden loss of life—i.e., with the sinking of the *General Belgrano*—rather than the loss of British lives specifically. With the death toll rising into the hundreds, the late May findings showed that although nearly two-thirds of those questioned believed

Figure 3

RETAINING SOVEREIGNTY AND LOSS OF LIFE TO BRITISH SERVICEMEN

Question: Do you think that retaining British sovereignty over the Falklands is important enough to justify the loss of British servicemen's lives?



Source: Surveys by MORI for the *Economist* for Panels I, III, IV, and V; for the BBC's "Panorama" for Panel II.

retaining sovereignty is justification enough for the loss of lives, 34 percent disagreed. This issue of "proportionality" has remained the hardest for polling questions to elucidate (see figure 3).

The most constant figure of all has been the level of concern about the issue of sovereignty. At the outset, just half (51 percent) of the British public said they "care very much" whether Britain regains sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. The "care very much" figure has remained at about that level through panel V.

Future of the Falklands

Throughout the conflict there have been a number of proposals for the solution of the Falkland Islands crisis. At the outset, one option—that the Falklands should become Argentinian territory but be leased back to the British government for administration—was favored by 26 percent and opposed by 63 percent. In May, the figures had hardly shifted—23 percent in favor and 64 percent opposed. Other proposals included a joint Argentinian/British civil administration with America as overseer and islanders involved. More people opposed than favored this proposal as well (49 percent to 39 percent). However, a majority (57 percent) in the early May panel felt it wrong "to go to war now if the government is willing to give up the Falkland Islands in the long term."

In a separate May 16 survey for the popular BBC television program "Panorama," MORI's sample felt that in any negotiation with Argentina over the Falkland Islands, the withdrawal of Argentinian troops should be insisted upon by the British government (90 percent); the Argentinian flag should be removed from the Falklands during negotiations (69 percent); full British administration of the islands should be restored immediately (70 percent); Argentina should recognize the British sovereignty of the Falklands pending a final agreement (75 percent); and the Falkland Islanders should have the final say in any settlement (62 percent). But, a narrow plurality felt that "it is not essential for Argentina to recognize full British sovereignty forever," and a plurality were also in agreement that it was acceptable for sovereignty to be transferred to a United Nations trusteeship (51 percent to 43 percent).

By mid-May, the patience of the British war cabinet with the drawn-out negotiations process had worn thin—and that of the public with it. Continued British attacks on the Port Stanley airfield, the failure of the Haig peace initiative, of the Peruvian plan and of the United Nations negotiations all led to a widespread acceptance of the inevitability of escalation of the conflict. When asked, "If negotiations do break down, which of the following options on this card would you favor?" 59 percent of the sample were by then for a full-scale invasion of the Falklands, and 34 percent even felt Britain should bomb military bases in Argentina.

During the time of the landing and as British losses mounted, some observers expected public support to begin to dwindle. In fact, the opposite occurred. By that time the *Sheffield* had been lost, Sea King helicopters had been ditched, Harriers had been shot down, the HMS *Antelope* was sinking and scores of lives lost, but 80 percent of those polled thought on the 23rd of May that the government was right to go ahead with the landing on the Falklands. By that time, a majority (54 percent) felt that Britain should retain the Falklands forever; but a majority was also in favor of handing the islands over to a United Nations trusteeship (51 percent favorable, 43 percent against by May 25-26). This overlap probably reflected a deep-seated conviction that victory was essential to restore British status and pride —yet a subsequent compromise was inevitable.

The picture of the Falklands conflict conveyed by the polling organizations is predictable from previous instances of democracies engaged in "just wars." As in the early stages of Suez and Vietnam (and this is not an attempt to draw either a political or a military parallel), domestic support for both the war and the government prosecuting it tends to be high. In the case of Suez, it should be said, although opinion was eventually equivocal on the merit of the expedition, support for the Eden government and even for Eden himself remained high throughout. Although he subsequently resigned (due to quite genuine ill-health) his Conservative party went on to win a resounding election victory two years later. Mrs. Thatcher's administration has two years to run.

by Barry Orton

Phony Polls: The Pollster's Nemesis

In October 28, 1980, ABC News provided its national audience with a glimpse into the electronic future of opinion polling. Immediately following the Reagan-Carter debate, ABC solicited viewer telephone calls to "900" exchange numbers to register opinions on who won. About 727,000 people called, and Ronald Reagan was about a two-to-one favorite. The television audience was delighted and intrigued, but professional pollsters were outraged, with many calling the process a "pseudo-poll," and the *New York Times* decrying the trend toward "voodoo polling." The "900" balloting system (called DIAL-IT by its originator, AT&T) is one of several new media-based opinion techniques that have recently been the focus of controversy.

Another widely publicized audience response technology is "Qube," Warner-Amex Corporation's two-way cable television system. Now available in Columbus, Cincinnati, Dallas, and Pittsburgh, Qube allows its audiences to send digital signals back to a central computer over the cable that carries the video program to the home. Tabulation time is less than ten seconds for each question. NBC News and Cable News Network have utilized Qube polls at various times in news programming.

Both Qube and DIAL-IT have drawn criticism because they violate an important precept of survey research—scientific sampling. Unlike samples chosen for the more orthodox surveys, Qube and DIAL-IT respondents are self-selected from an already unrepresentative television (or cable television) audience. As opinion research tools, Qube and DIAL-IT more closely resemble traditional newspaper straw polls than scientific surveys.

Straw polls have been with us in one form or another since the early nineteenth century. They were primarily the province of newspapers and magazines, and most often focused on presidential elections. The *New York Daily News* straw poll is one of the most famous, and has been an editorial feature for many years. Another, less political, long-running New York straw poll was the "Miss Rheingold" contest, which featured ballots in most metropolitan area taverns. Both of these traditions have given way to changing times: the *Daily News* now runs an "instant telephone poll," using call-counting equipment for tabulation; the "Miss Rheingold" competition and its namesake beer have fallen victim to competition from national brands.

These two New York polls aside, the 1936 *Literary Digest* fiasco (See *Public Opinion* February/March 1980) was the watershed event that destroyed the credibility of most magazine and newspaper straw polls. When the largely affluent *Literary Digest* readership overwhelmingly picked Alf Landon to beat Franklin Roosevelt for the presidency, a twenty-year *Literary Digest* tradition was undermined, as was the credibility of the *Digest* itself, which folded less than two years later. Subsequent publicity about the response bias of such straw polls further reduced media interest in their use, as did the development of systematic sampling methods and independent polling organizations.

Recently, however, there has been a revival of magazine and newspaper straw polling. Within the last several years, extensive audience surveys, most often detailing the sex lives and consumer preferences of readers, have become regular features in such magazines as *Glamour, Cosmopolitan, Psychology Today,* and *Penthouse.* The newspaper reader polls are most often printed as opinion/editorial page features, and use titles like "Tuesday Poll," "Voice of the Reader," and "Readers' Poll." Covering topics of general interest such as handgun control or abortion as well as traditional election preferences, these newspaper reader ballots are usually reported in terms of percentages responding to each option, with selected quotes from the open-ended portion of the ballot used as opinion/feature material. A recent example from the Ft. Lauderdale (Florida)

Sun-Sentinel "Tuesday Poll" asked readers: "Should the state conduct an experiment to ban trucks from the passing or median strip lane of I-95?" The Wisconsin *Capital Times* "Readers' Poll" currently asks the burning local question: "Are you satisfied with the job Elroy 'Crazylegs' Hirsch is doing as the University of Wisconsin's athletic director?"

The revival of newspaper straw polls has not replaced the reporting of sample surveys, however, and the results of reader polls are usually not advanced as representative of the greater population, as they were before the *Literary Digest* disaster. A major exception was an experimental newspaper ballot used by the Gallup organization as a supplement to their regular sample surveys. In 1949, Gallup administered an "Experiment in Democracy" in conjunction with the New Brunswick, New Jersey *Home News*, wherein newscarriers distributed and collected ballots in the central New Jersey region. The *Home News* ran material on the issues covered in a special "battle page" before each ballot. Some 25,000 ballots were distributed, and 7,232 were returned. Gallup repeated the test under the title "Public Opinion Referendum" in 1970, when the American Institute of Public Opinion funded a newscarrier and Boy Scout-delivered ballot in several selected "barometer" counties in Ohio. Participants watched a National Educational Television election-eve program, "Mandate for Tomorrow," and then voted on ten specific policy issues selected by N.E.T. and Gallup. The questions included whether U.S. troops should be withdrawn from Vietnam, whether the voting age should be lowered, and whether busing should be used to achieve racial balance in schools. The return rate averaged 55 percent, and Gallup later reported that the results closely matched those obtained in parallel national and regional sample surveys. In both the New Jersey and Ohio projects, newscarriers and Scouts took sworn oaths to help insure against ballot stuffing, another prime source of criticism of straw polls. In spite of the claimed success of both tests, Gallup has not repeated the experiment.

More recently, the media-based straw poll has been rediscovered by groups involved in regional goal-setting. Since 1973, over twenty-five major projects have sought to elicit citizen involvement in regional planning by combining a television and radio campaign with newspaper ballots. Modeled on the pioneering "Goals for Dallas" effort of the late 1960s, projects with titles such as "Choices for '76" (New York, 1973), "Tell Tucson Where To Go" (1973), "Alternatives for Washington" (State of Washington, 1976), "North Carolina Tomorrow" (1977), "Atlanta 2000" (1978), and "Goals for the Greater Milwaukee Region in 2000" (1982) took straw polls of their media audiences.

Primarily supported by local, state, and federal funds, these projects utilized a variety of ballot distribution and collection mechanisms ranging from coupons to direct mail to "ballot boxes" in public libraries and schools.

Most of these regional goals projects announced the results of the straw polls as representative of the general population, and dismissed criticism of the method. The tabulated results were usually analyzed and published with the conclusions and recommendations of the project. Whether many of these expensive planning and goal development efforts had any concrete public policy impact is hard to judge; for most, the straw poll served more as a public relations tool than as a significant source of public involvement in decisions about regional goals.

The tabulated ballots were compared to coincidental sample surveys in only five of these projects. Interestingly, all five samples generally agreed with the ballots; when demographic differences were eliminated, agreement was even closer. With the exception of the Gallup experiments in Ohio, no other comparisons of straw vote and sample survey results are available.

Electronic Pseudo-Polls

The electronic media, advanced telephone systems, and computers form the basis for the newest group of pseudo-polls. One of the earliest prototypes in this category was Stuart Umpleby's "PLATO" system, (1970) which allowed instant tabulation of "yes-no" responses from a small number of simple computer terminals. This primitive system was severely limited.

Amitai Etzioni's 1972 "MINERVA" system added voting capability to standard home telephones for conference calls of up to thirty people, with provisions for participants to "request the floor" electronically. Called an "electronic town hall," MINERVA was demonstrated in New York but was never applied to real situations, and was envisioned for use only by very small groups.

Several telephone-related opinion registration systems are now in widespread use, with the most common based on devices which simply count the volume of calls coming in on a single line. Local television news programs have used these mechanisms as an audience participation feature, and offer two numbers for viewers to call to register a "yes" or a "no."

Another new electronic system now being marketed to broadcasters is the "Telephone Poll," in which a computer-synthesized voice answers audience calls and reports tabulations for immediate broadcast. The system's inventor, the Florida-based M.A. Kempner firm, expects to sell the device for use by television news operations and radio talk show personalities, although they report significant interest from newspapers as well.

AT&T's 900 DIAL-IT system now allows these telephone straw polls to be taken on a national basis, as the ABC News presidential debate project demonstrated. Criticism focused on the sources of bias: Carter pollster Patrick Caddell argued that the late evening

timing of the balloting gave callers in the western time zones an advantage, thus weighting the results toward Reagan. Additionally, callers from congested urban telephone exchanges had more trouble getting through than those from rural areas, adding another source of possible bias. The possibility for organized multiple voting and the cost of participating (fifty cents) were also raised by Lou Harris and NBC's Richard Salant. The *New York Times* editorially called it "voodoo polling," "not responsible," and "... overwhelmingly meaningless, exploiting the credibility that legitimate polls have painfully established over the years."

DIAL-IT's second national test sparked much less controversy: viewers of the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl

Teledemocracy and Its Discontents

Professional survey researchers like to dismiss electronic straw polls as pseudo-scientific. They're right, of course, but that only begins to get at what's most troubling about this new phenomenon. The more basic issues have to do with the proper function of issue polling in a representative democracy, and the future possibilities for electronic initiatives and referendums. These issues would have to be addressed even if straw polls could be made every bit as accurate as polls using standard sampling techniques.

Let's consider electronic referendums first. It would be easy to imagine every person in the country, in a few years or decades, having access to a cable or other system that would record his opinions on issues. It also would be easy to imagine that the owners of the various systems, or the Federal Communications Commission, could devise a technology—national identity cards, fingerprint readers, or whatever—that would prevent double voting and limit participation to eligible or registered voters. Of course, there would be political resistance to the central management that would be required, but let's ignore this impediment for the moment. The point is that technologically, the country is on the threshold of an era in which frequent and direct participation of the people in their government will be possible.

Some of the new technology's supporters look forward to the coming era with unfettered enthusiasm. One such person is University of Hawaii political scientist Ted Becker, who refers to the phenomenon as "teledemocracy." In an article in the December issue of *The Futurist*, Becker eagerly anticipates the day when "with the help of teledemocratic processes, public opinion will become the law of the land, as in all places where referendums and initiatives are used." Becker notes that where Qube is in place, "folks truly enjoy using this teledemocratic system: they express avid interest in participating in feedback; they find the use of the system rewarding. And they are willing to pay for the service."

Becker surely seems right on one point: as more people experience the joys of electronic political self-expression, the pressure for turning such expressions into law will increase. The way of the future seems clear. At least, the way is clear if no convincing case can be mounted to show that it should not be.

Just such a case was mounted successfully almost two hundred years ago in *The Federalist Papers*. It would be worthwhile to think once again about what *The Federalist* had to say—not because the work is old and venerated, but because its arguments are still alive and can help clarify the problems of today.

Drawbacks of Direct Democracy

The first, and most important, thing to remember about the Constitution's framers is that democracy was less basic to them than liberty. They wanted to set up a democracy, to be sure, but it had to be one that worked toward securing the inalienable rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence. Every form of government poses some danger to those rights, they thought, but some government is necessary to secure them. The threat to rights peculiar to democracies, the Founders believed, was that posed by majority tyranny. The Constitution is the framers' attempt to minimize that danger in a manner consistent with democratic principles. Representation was a key part of that solution in at least two different ways.

First, the framers thought majority tyranny is most likely if the majority gets swept up by a single, common special interest or passion. Their solution called for a large, economically complex republic where no one interest would be likely to predominate. But large republics obviously have to be representative. Two hundred million people cannot fit into one room. And if they could, the result would not be democracy but mob rule, in which an oligarchy inevitably would rise to the top and control the proceedings.

What makes electronic initiatives and referendums so attractive is that they seem on the surface to overcome these traditional objections to

overwhelmingly voted "yes" to the question of whether there should be an NCAA college football playoff game. More recently, NBC's "Saturday Night Live" generated 466,000 calls in response to an appeal for votes on whether a live lobster named Larry should be boiled alive at the end of a restaurant comedy sketch. Larry the lobster was reprieved by a slim 12,000 vote margin.

The three major networks have not used DIAL-IT in a news program since the presidential debate, despite some trade reports that ABC News was considering making DIAL-IT a regular feature of its popular "Nightline" program.

NBC News did flirt with the similar Qube cable system, however. As early as 1971, studies speculated

by Michael Malbin

direct democracy. Through modern technology, people across a large republic can act in concert without taking on the characteristics of a mob. Technology, in other words, would seem to allow the country to enjoy the advantages of a large republic's diversity together with a small republic's direct participation.

Unrefined Opinions

The problem with this argument is that it fails to deal with the second, and more important, reason for having a system of representation. Representatives were expected to be accountable to public opinion, but they were not simply to reflect it as if they were mere physical surrogates for the people. The need to form majorities out of multiple factions was supposed to force representatives, in the words of *Federalist* No. 10, "to refine and enlarge the public views"—that is, to modify and compromise legislative proposals *before* adopting or rejecting them. The process, in other words, was supposed to force legislators to deliberate and to think of the needs of others.

Modern mass communications cannot overcome these objections to direct democracy for two reasons. First, initiatives, like polls, place unwarranted power in the hands of those who frame the questions. Second, even if direct democracy were limited to referendums on questions drawn up by the legislature, the answers given by citizens isolated in their homes would add nothing worthwhile to the deliberative process. Political deliberation is not a solitary activity. Opinions only become refined through the give-and-take of discussion with people whose backgrounds and opinions differ from one's own. And discussion presupposes reasonably well-informed discussants. A "discussion" between a well- and an ill-informed person is nothing more than an exhortation. This is all one can expect from a referendum campaign, however. Referendums may be useful in small countries, or on statewide constitutional issues, or in local areas in which citizens may know almost as much as their representatives about the issues. But on complicated national and statewide legislative matters, referendums merely give special interest groups an opportunity to use demagogic advertising appeals to frustrate the legislative will.

There is no conceivable way the public could "refine and enlarge" its own views in a manner that would be conducive to sound legislation. The public is, and necessarily will remain, poorly informed on most issues. Even members of Congress, who devote their lives to public affairs, have to depend on committee specialists for most of their information. Think of how much more difficult it would be for the average citizen, for whom politics is only a passing interest. For confirmation, look at the level of public confusion shown by issue polls in which slightly different questions produce contradictory results, or those on which follow-ups yield little but gaps or "don't knows."

This is not meant as a slap at the American people. The question is not so much the people's ability as how people choose to use their time. The purpose of the Republic, after all, is not to make every citizen a public figure. The United States is not and was not meant to be another Switzerland. Rather, the purpose of our government is to use public action to secure the private rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

If referendums and initiatives are dismissed, what about the increased use of issue polls for purely advisory purposes? I have no doubt that both electronic and non-electronic issue polling will continue their steady rate of growth. The problem with them is that the opinions they solicit are, in *The Federalist*'s terms, unrefined and unenlarged. They are raw pieces of data that deserve to be treated with extreme caution. Increasing the frequency of issue polling, through Qube or other systems, cannot make their results more refined, but it can add to the public pressure for taking unrefined results more seriously. It may become increasingly difficult for legislators to dismiss such polls without becoming labeled "enemies of democracy." Labeling of this sort should be resisted. Legislators who read issue polls with jaundiced eyes may be a democratic republic's best friends.

about the possibility of an "instant referendum" via cable television, even though no home response terminal was available. By 1977, the first operational two-way cable system was "energized" in Columbus, Ohio, by Warner-Amex Communications under the trademark "Qube." Each subscribing household uses a hand calculator-sized console to register "votes," buy special programming, play audience-participation games (such as an electronic local "Gong Show"), or order products from the televised gift catalog. Tabulation is done by computer within six seconds, and appears on home screens simultaneously.

While the bulk of the Qube system's two-way uses have been in the entertainment area, its opinion research applications have generated significant local and national interest, as well as considerable controversy. Columbus viewers have been given an opportunity to register preferences on topics as diverse as local government budget options, proposed U.S. Food and Drug Administration labeling policies, and President Carter's July 1979 energy message. The latter event, which was televised nationally on NBC's "Prime Time Sunday" program, asked Qube viewers to react to specifics in the speech in terms of their confidence in the President and his policies. Columbus Qube viewers expressed increased confidence and optimism after the speech by a 61 to 39 percent margin.

Albert Cantril, former president of the National Council on Public Polls, registered a strong protest against NBC's presentation of the Qube poll. Cantril argued that NBC conveyed "the impression that there were national implications" to the Qube results, despite the self-selected and geographically limited sample. Les Brown, longtime television critic and editor of *Channels of Communications*, called it a "show-biz gimmick," claiming that he had watched three-year-old children participating in Qube polls.

Fund-Raising Pseudo-Polls

Another type of pseudo-poll is based on familiar computer-assisted mail techniques, and is actually a variation on the traditional fund-raising letter. Sponsored by partisan groups from every part of the political spectrum, these mailings contain a rudimentary survey instrument coupled with an appeal for funds. Prominently headlined "Voter Survey," or "National Legislative Action Survey," these non-surveys are routinely sent in bulk to mailing lists in the same fashion as standard fund-raising appeals. Groups recently using this technique include the Republican National Committee, the National Republican Congressional Committee, the American Farmland Trust, and the League of Women Voters. Two prime examples of hard-hitting questions from such pseudo-polls come from the Republican National Committee's 1981 "National Legislative Action Survey": "Do you believe the Reagan Administration's economic plan to balance the federal budget and reduce taxes is the best way to increase productivity, create new jobs and raise the standard of living of every American?" "Do you agree that local and state governments should have more flexibility and control over federal grants thereby eliminating wasteful administrative overhead?"

Richard Richards, the Chairman of the Republican National Committee, strongly defended the "National Legislative Action Survey," taking exception to charges that it is a cover for fund raising, and that results are unrepresentative. Richards stated that "all responses are processed and given equal weight regardless of whether or not the respondee contributes," and that the survey was "mailed to over two million individuals, representing a wide spectrum of demographic and psychographic characteristics."

A variation is the use of magazine and newspaper advertisements offering a ballot on selected issues, and an opportunity to financially support the advertisement's sponsor. The Savings and Loan Foundation's 1981 campaign to promote its tax-free savings certificate plan used this technique in many national magazines and underwrote insertion of similar ads locally by its members. The campaign generated over 5 million ballots, and was largely responsible for the Reagan administration's adoption of the plan.

A Poll by Any Other Name

Despite the earnest wishes of some pollsters, pseudo-polls are not going to vanish from the public arena. On the contrary, we can expect to see many more uses of the basic forms outlined here, as well as further development of the electronic variations. In fact, General Electric has recently patented a wireless portable device that uses radio frequencies to register ballots: the perfect invention for those chaotic national political conventions where polling delegations demands both mathematical skill and the physical attributes of Mean Joe Green.

The use of media-based pseudo-polls, particularly in political and news incarnations, remains troubling. Concern has been raised about mislabeling of these straw polls and media ballots as "public opinion surveys" and "polls." A recent letter to the news media from the Census Bureau's Barbara Bailar, Chairwoman of the Standards Committee of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, asked that these terms be reserved for efforts using systematic survey sampling techniques. The AAPOR Standards Committee asks that the media use "straw vote," "call-in-vote," or "media-based balloting" when reporting pseudo-polls.

There is a ray of light for pollsters, however. Some find it interesting that significant numbers of Americans are willing to pay good money (fifty cents for DIAL-IT and $10 a month for Qube) to have their opinions registered. With the cost of completed surveys so high, why not try to get the respondent to pay to be interviewed? It works for the Republican National Committee and the League of Women Voters.

MEETING HUMAN NEEDS: Toward a New Public Philosophy

Edited by Jack A. Meyer

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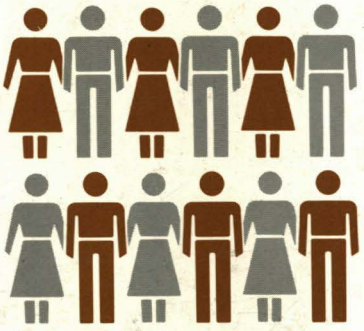

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