

Question in Project:

Left-Right Scale & Income Differences (PAWCER Project) (English Version)

Question Topic:

Politics/ Attitudes, appraisals, & ideologies

Construct:

Attitude to redistribution

General Information:

Note: The item was tested in German. This is an English translation of the original German wording.

Question Text:

Please look at this list now and tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statement.

The state should take measures to reduce income disparities.

[Bitte schauen Sie jetzt auf diese Liste und sagen Sie mir, wie sehr Sie der folgenden Aussage zustimmen oder wie sehr Sie diese ablehnen.

Der Staat sollte Maßnahmen ergreifen, um Einkommensunterschiede zu verringern.]

Answer Categories:

Strongly agree *[Stimme stark zu]*

Agree *[Stimme zu]*

Neither nor *[Weder noch]*

Disagree *[Lehne ab]*

Strongly disagree *[Lehne stark ab]*

Don't Know *[Weiß nicht]*

Refusal *[Keine Angabe]*

Cognitive Techniques:

General Probing, Specific Probing, Emergent Probing.

Findings for Question:

The majority of the test persons indicate that they strongly agree (TP 04, 07, 11) or disagree (TP 01, 02, 05, 08) with the statement. Two subjects disagree with the statement (TP 09, 12) and one subject strongly disagrees (TP 03). No test person chooses the answer "neither nor".

Test persons who (strongly) agree with the statement usually justify their answers by stating that in their opinion the differences in salaries between rich and poor should be reduced or that the state must ensure that all citizens have an adequate standard of living (TP 01, 02, 04, 07, 08, 09):

- *"For example, that the minimum wage is rising. That every household with or without children can survive in any occupation. That it doesn't get to the point where you do four or five jobs a day to make ends meet."* (TP 01)
- *"I think it's important that people with low incomes get support from the state. I am personally very well. My family is also very well. Fortunately, we don't need any support from the state. I think it is important that all people in Germany, we are all doing so well, that it should be possible that everyone is doing relatively well. And I also think we need more support that also supports families. Because if I see now, for example, that people who get Hartz IV and have two children get just as much money as people who go to work and have two children. [...] It can't be that people who work get less money than people who don't work."* (TP 02)
- *"That's when I remembered the social injustice. That it's getting bigger and bigger, the gap between rich and poor. ...including in terms of wages and income."* (TP 04)
- *"I strongly agree with this, as the gap between the poor and the rich is widening rather than narrowing and therefore something should be done about it."* (TP 07)
- *"Minimum wages, for example, that the state should put a stop to companies in a certain way, that when people work, they get enough money to live on the job."* (TP 08)
- *"For example, the pension, people are so dissatisfied."* (TP 11)

One test person, on the other hand, refers to gender differences in salaries: *"I do think that regarding women and men there should be some corrections. This is a sector in which the state should definitely intervene if there are disparities. But at the end of the day we have all that. I can see the biggest gap between women and men."* (TP 05).

Test persons, who (strongly) disagree with the statement, justify their answer either by stating that they are not in favor of state interference or by stating that this is also their own responsibility / the responsibility of the citizens:

- *"State intervention is in principle a very bad thing. The state only intervenes if there is a slip-up, at least that is what the inventors of the social market economy thought. If there is market failure. And income disparities, the state does not need to intervene."* (TP 03)
- *"Because I think, in terms of minimum wage, it's pretty much gone to shit. On the bottom line, companies pay minimum wage now and the state still has to pay it. Through Hartz IV. And I don't think that's the point, if the unions would enforce decent collective agreements and accordingly there would be more people in the union, then I think it would be much easier. And that then everyone could really live on his salary."* (TP 09)
- *"Well, I think that's a lot of things, it's at everyone's own discretion, I don't sit on the couch for the state to feed me. The state isn't there for everything, I have to stand up for myself and bear responsibility."*(TP 12)

When asked what would be appropriate measures to reduce income disparities, the test persons on the one hand name "*regulation through taxes (or salaries)*" (5 TPs), such as a "*wealth tax*" (TP 08, 11), "*tax relief for low income earners*" (TP 02), or the "*capping of rodent salaries*" (TP 04) or the "*increasing the minimum wage*" (TP 01). On the other hand, "*access to the labor market*" is considered a suitable measure (TP 4). This is to be realized by better education and training (TP 03, 12), but also by own further training (TP 12). Test person 04 also includes the idea that jobs should be kept in Germany and not relocated abroad, and TP 05, which was mainly concerned with income differences between women and men, considers the provision of more childcare places as a suitable measure so that women can continue to work even if they have children.

Test person 09 sees the responsibility at this point less with the state, but rather with the trade unions, which, by concluding "*decent collective agreements*", could ensure that people "*can really live on their salary*".

Subject 07, who "strongly agrees" with the statement in question 2, states that he is not aware of any measures that the state could take to reduce income disparities.

Finally, the test persons were asked whether they had poor or rich people in mind when they answered this question. A total of five test persons thought primarily of "*poor*" people (TP 01, 02, 08, 11, 12), one test person stated that he thought of "*rich*" people (TP 04), and one thought of "*both*" equally (TP 07). The other three test persons state that they have neither thought of "*poor*" nor "*rich*" people, but rather of "*the middle class*" (TP 09), "*women*" (TP 05) or "*people who are willing to perform. I have thought of people who are willing to work [...] and that should be rewarded.*" (TP 03).

Recommendations:

Since the pretest was only exploratory in nature, no recommendations were made.