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Attitudes and the Welfare State:
Does Class Matter?

by
Peter Urmetzer

A Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

August 18, 1994

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ATTITUDES AND THE WELFARE STATE: DOES CLASS MATTER?

submitted by Peter Urmetzer, B.A.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

August 31, 1994

ABSTRACT

This thesis compares attitudes towards different components of the welfare state (assistance and security) between five countries: the United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, and West Germany. The objective is to determine whether people's attitudes matter in regard to the welfare state. The comparison focuses primarily on country and class, although other variables (sex, age, education, and employment status) are examined as well. Two sets of questions, one on the welfare state and a second concerning poverty, are provided by the 10 Nation Comparative Class Structure Survey. These questions are then interpreted within the context of a fourfold class typology: capitalist-executive, old middle, new middle, and working. The worker mobilization model, which states that the welfare state is better developed in countries where the working class is well organized, serves as a theoretical basis. Results for the first set of questions reveal that support for social spending is high in all the countries surveyed, this support being especially high in Sweden. Also apparent is that support is stronger among the employed classes (working and new middle) in comparison to the property classes (capitalist/executive and old middle). Results for the questions on poverty demonstrate that Americans are much more likely to blame individuals for poverty than Canadians, Australians, or West Germans. Overall, the results indicate that class patterns of support for the welfare state are very similar among the countries surveyed. However, the strength of this support between classes varies considerably, both within countries and internationally. Patterns of support indicate that the working class does indeed play a consequential role in regard to the welfare state.

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CHAPTER I

*Leadership involves finding a parade
and getting in front of it.*

John Nesbitt, 1982

INTRODUCTION

In Canada, like the rest of the advanced capitalist world, the welfare state underwent a period of impressive growth following the Second World War. The underlying cause, or causes, which promoted this development has been the basis of much speculation and spawned a wealth of research in the social sciences. The reason this topic has attracted so much attention, particularly in academia, is that it poses the perennial question as to what lies at the root of social change. These changes are usually ascribed to either structures, ideas, agency, or combinations thereof. The objective of this paper is to examine some of these theories in more detail, focusing on recent work that emphasizes the role of the working class. To be more specific, in the literature dealing with this topic a dearth of research exists regarding people's attitudes towards the welfare state, be it the population in general or classes in particular. Do people support it, reject it, or are they indifferent towards its existence? These are some of the questions that I will attempt to be answer in this paper.

Although it is not unusual for surveys of this type to

be conducted in individual countries, they seldom stretch beyond national borders. Since such questions often differ in content, international comparisons are usually difficult, if not impossible, to make. The survey used in this thesis avoids this problem by asking identical questions in a number of liberal democracies. These questions ask about welfare state policies, the results to which should provide me with some insight into whether support for the welfare state exists, and if so, how it varies among countries, classes, and other selected variables.

First and foremost, the purpose of this enquiry is to determine what kind of relationship, if any, exists between the quality of the welfare state and people's attitudes. An analysis of attitudes towards government spending, income inequality and, where available, poverty, will serve as a basis for this investigation. A further analysis of these attitudes by class should reveal what role the working class plays in comparison to other classes. In other words, the primary objective of this thesis is to determine whether people, as well as class, matter in explaining the quality of the welfare state.

A considerable portion of the recent literature on the welfare state and labour institutions has focused on the role of structures - for example, organizations such as unions, employers' associations, and work councils. Little of this literature, however, addresses the role of people's

attitudes in the establishment of these institutions. It is not the aim of this paper to dismiss the relevance of institutions nor, for that matter, to criticize the literature covering this topic. Rather, the goal is to investigate whether in the establishment of institutions people, other than the obvious political leaders and organizers, matter. This, then, serves as the primary question driving this investigation: do people's attitudes matter or do institutions operate independent of their endorsement?¹ Another question central to this thesis is whether members of different social classes diverge in their support of the welfare state. Here the point of the inquiry is to determine whether support for welfare institutions is randomly distributed throughout society, or whether it is divided along class lines, reflecting different class interests.

Although attitudinal data cannot directly be linked to the role of agency, such a connection will be argued in this particular case. This argument is premised on Marx's

¹Essentially any government, or for that matter any major social movement, has to have the support of the people. This rings more true for a democratic society than an undemocratic one (fascist etc.), yet even the latter cannot be sustained without at least a modicum of popular support. It is unlikely, if not impossible, to rule by force alone. To illustrate, the notion that the Holocaust was the work of one madman, Hitler, or even a few mad people is profoundly naive. Before the Second World War, anti-Semitism was not only common in Europe, but throughout the world, Canada included. The same is true for any major movement, as public support, or at least tacit approval, is needed.

contention that the working class, in its struggle to secure the means of production away from the capitalist class, needs to first develop a class consciousness. Along the same lines, a working class aware of its own class interests is better equipped to realize its fair share of resources than a working class that is less so. In the context of the welfare state, this means backing the establishment of social programs that shelter the worker from the market (e.g. social assistance, pensions), as well as programs that are universally accessible, and not only to those who have the financial means (e.g. health, education).

How various class occupants feel about welfare state issues can be measured by asking them questions. The underlying reasoning is that progressive values are more likely to be transformed into well developed social institutions, while regressive values are more likely to result in a weaker form, or even complete absence of these institutions. This hypothesis would have to be rejected if a highly developed welfare state existed in a country where the working class did not support social services. Such a finding would force one to conclude that the quality of the welfare state exists independently of class interests and, alternatively, would have to be linked to some other factor, such as culture or historical accident.

In a similar vein, if the data show that in a country where the welfare state is well developed, respondents from

the capitalist class are more progressive in their attitudes than the working class, a theory that emphasizes the role of the capitalist class would be more appropriate. Also, if attitudes are uniform between countries and classes, conclusions regarding a possible link between attitudes and structures would have to be rejected.

If, on the other hand, as is postulated in this paper, the population, in particular the working class, is relatively progressive in countries with well developed welfare states, it would lend credence to a theory that does take agency into account. The progressiveness of the working class is, of course, relative to both the working class in other countries and other classes² in the same country. It would be difficult to deny that the attitudes of the working class do not mean anything in respect to the welfare state if a correlation existed between the two. The transition from values to agency becomes clearer once it is realized that a progressive working class (aware of its interests) is more likely to organize than one that suffers from a false or no sense of class.

John Myles (1989a: 7), in a special issue on comparative political economy in the *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, writes that the whole point of a

²I am being deliberately careful by saying 'other classes' as class dynamics can include class coalitions such as, for example, between the working and new middle class. This will be examined closer once the data have been presented.

Canadian sociology is to "develop a social science that would allow Canadians to understand their own history and institutions so as to transform them." Positioned within the context of effecting change, my question is whether people in general, and the working classes in particular, do or can play an active role in regard to social policy. If the data show that support by the people is largely irrelevant, then resources, in terms of both time and money, would be better spent on influencing officials who write policy. If, on the other hand, public support does appear to be consequential, then resources would be well spent trying to make the public aware of political issues. As far as the welfare state is concerned, this would entail educating the working class through such organizations as unions and progressive political parties.

The approach in this paper is premised on two Marxist assumptions which can be used to illustrate the crux of the argument in another way. The first one is that in the development of history, people matter. As Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1970: 42) wrote in *The German Ideology*: "The first premise of all human history is, of course, the existence of living human beings." Another observation, this one being axiomatic to Marxism, is that the process by which resources are distributed throughout a capitalistic society is, for the most part, confrontational rather than cooperative (1986: 35). This second point, Marxists

contend, is an inherent characteristic of capitalism, for capitalist social relations tend to divide people, compelling the working class to fight for its fair share of wealth. According to this perspective, it is unlikely that the capitalist class provides these resources of its own free will, on the basis of humanitarian grounds. Also in line with Marx's observations, a working class cognizant of its interests is more likely to organize which, in turn, makes it a more powerful negotiator in the face of capital (ultimately overthrowing it, according to orthodox Marxists). Thus progressive attitudes (a high degree of class consciousness) are needed for workers to organize (e.g. unions, social democratic parties), which ultimately results in programs which benefit them (*i.e.* programs normally associated with the welfare state). Conversely, a regressive working class is less likely to organize, making it a less formidable opponent to capital, giving capital more leeway in pursuing its own interests, which in the end means a less developed welfare state. So rather than being the product of some overriding logic (industrialism or capitalism), welfare states are postulated to be a product of the actions of 'living human beings'.

My objective is, in very basic terms, to explore the extent to which people's attitudes play a role in reference to the welfare state, and furthermore, how these attitudes vary across classes. Since the approach used in

this paper hypothesizes the attitudes and actions of people to be meaningful, a theory which emphasizes the role of agency will serve as its basis.

The worker mobilization theory, or power resources model, best serves these purposes for, as Gregg Olsen (1994: 195) points out, it provides an explanation for the significant variations found in the quality of the welfare state found in advanced capitalist countries. This theory recognizes that a welfare state is likely to be better developed in a country where the working class is well organized, expressed in a high degree of unionization and control of government by parties linked to organized labour.

However, the power of labour alone does not adequately explain these developments (e.g. Esping-Andersen 1990: 16). In some countries, for example Sweden, the middle classes have been incorporated into the welfare state, giving it much needed support. Having the new middle class on its side has obvious benefits for the working class (especially given the alternative, a middle class that sees the working class as its rival). Writing on this topic, Esping-Andersen (1990: 31) contends that excluding the middle classes from the welfare state precipitates class dualism. He goes on to claim that since in Anglo Saxon countries the middle classes depend more on private insurance than in western European countries, they are less likely to support government backed social programs.

The above example indicates that representatives from all classes comprise and shape society, and that one is unlikely to get a comprehensive understanding of how society works by considering only one class or organization in isolation. For this reason, the approach used in this paper places emphasis on the dynamics that occur between classes and the institutions they create. Using survey data, I hope to get a better understanding of how these classes interact, both within a particular country and internationally.

Surveys

For evidence, I will use data from the 10 Nation Comparative Class Structure Survey (CCSS). These data partially limit the countries that I will be able to include in this project. Another obstacle is that some questions were asked in only selected countries. For example, questions regarding poverty were not included for the Scandinavian countries, as it was felt they had little resonance there.

The countries that I will be able to compare are the United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, and West Germany, with the amount of comparison, again, depending on which questions were asked where. Although not exhaustive, enough data are available in this survey to further investigate this project.

The questions included in this study, including for which countries they are available, will be divided into two

sets. The first set consists of the following questions:

- Q1 The next policy is government spending on services like education and health. Do you think that the government should be spending a great deal more on education and health, somewhat more, the present amount, somewhat less, or a great deal less?

United States, Canada, Sweden, West Germany

- Q2 Many people in Canada receive much less income than they deserve. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

United States, Canada, Australia, Sweden, West Germany

Attention should be paid to the fact that social spending, as well as income inequality, varies considerably among these countries. This will be discussed in more detail below. Because the dependent variable (amount of social spending and inequality) varies amongst the different countries surveyed, direct comparison of these results is not always appropriate. However, results should reveal to what degree, and by what classes, sex, etc. these policies are supported.

The results for question 1 will provide us with an indication of how much support present welfare spending has in each country. This is the only question that asks about the social security aspect of the welfare state and is central to the argument of this thesis. Put into the context of the hypothesis, the results to this question

should reveal whether the welfare state has the support of the majority of the people, as well as the class dynamics of this support.

The second question asks about perceived inequality of pay. If this question were purely objective, Americans would have to agree with this statement in larger numbers than those from other countries, given the disparity of wealth in that country. However, it is expected that this will not be the case, as the reason for income inequality in the United States is premised precisely on the fact that the working class in that country is more tolerant of this inequality, *i.e.* not class conscious and, consequently, disorganized. If this assumption turns out to be correct, working class Swedes (despite the fact that they already enjoy the best benefits of the countries in question) should be relatively progressive on this count. Class differences for this question should prove to be more diverse for this question than Q1 since different class occupants benefit in various degrees from pay differentials, whereas social programs (especially those which are universal, *e.g.* elementary school education) benefit people from all classes.

The second set of questions is concerned with the topic of poverty:

- Q3 One of the main reasons for poverty is that some people are not intelligent enough to compete in this modern world. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

United States, Canada, Australia

- Q4 One of the main reasons for poverty is that many poor people simply do not want to work. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

United States, Canada, Australia, West Germany

- Q5 One of the main reasons for poverty is lack of education and job opportunities for the poor. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

United States, Canada, Australia

- Q6 One of the main reasons for poverty is that the economy is based on private ownership and profits. Strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.

United States, Canada, Australia, West Germany

To most people, the term welfare conjures up images of people living in poverty, dependent on means-tested government transfers. Consequently, in some people's minds, the primary role of the welfare state is to ensure that everyone is provided with at least a subsistence level income.

The way in which poverty is perceived plays an obvious role in how the problem is confronted; if the problem is

reduced to the individual, then it is likely that little will be done to change matters, as any assistance will only be seen as a disincentive towards self-reliance. If, on the other hand, the problem is blamed on the system, social assistance is more likely to be supported.

In order to determine where respondents from the different countries are positioned on this issue, an index will be constructed in the data analysis section. This index will, in a comprehensive manner, make it easy to see where the fault is more likely to be placed - at the foot of either the individual or structures.

It is expected that Americans, given their individualistic ideology, are least progressive in their attitudes. Working class respondents, rather than sharing a sense of solidarity with other workers, tend to blame the unemployed for their own plight, as opposed to the system itself. Again, this lack of class consciousness is postulated to provide some explanation as to why poverty is pervasive in such a relatively wealthy country.

Canada and Australia should not differ to any great extent in their responses to these question, using income distribution data as a rough guideline (introduced shortly). Again, it is surmised that the way the poor are treated in an institutionalized manner is countenanced by the general public and, moreover, reflective of its attitudes.

An Overview

Over the years, many theories have been proffered attempting to explain the phenomenon of the welfare state. The most influential of these theories will be touched upon, with both merits and deficiencies addressed. The worker mobilization theory, it will be argued, provides the most plausible explanation for differences in the quality of the welfare state found among liberal democracies. With the curtailment of the welfare state in recent years, this theory has increasingly come under fire. These criticisms will be examined in some detail and discussed.

The meaning of some of the key concepts used in this thesis are often contested and therefore need to be explicated. First, how is class defined? And why is a class analysis appropriate in the first place? The operationalization of class will also be attended to in that section. Similar definitional problems arise with the concept of the welfare state. To begin with: what is a welfare state? Does a state that offers only a few meagre means-tested services to its citizens qualify as one? If so, the welfare state is likely to be with us for a long time. Alternatively, if a welfare state is defined as an institutional arrangement that provides services such as universally accessible health care and education in addition to social assistance, then concerns about the crises of the welfare state will have to be understood more broadly.

As mentioned, following the Second World War the welfare state grew significantly in most western countries, a trend that was reversed in the mid-seventies. In order to better appreciate why these changes occurred, an understanding of material conditions (i.e. the global political economy and concomitant recession) is helpful and will be provided. The point will be made that a welfare state has an obviously better chance of survival in a growing economy than in a shrinking one.

Before the data can be examined, necessary details about the various samples will be given. Also, problems associated with survey data in general, and the questions used in this paper in particular, will be discussed.

The next section will be used to analyze the data. Besides disclosing the degree to which the welfare state is supported, the data will provide detailed information as to what particular components, and in what countries, this support lies.

In the conclusion a summary of the findings will be given. Issues will be raised concerning the shortcomings of the data and possible avenues for future research.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

As I have already mentioned briefly, a variety of theories have been offered over the years attempting to explain the growth of the welfare state. Of particular interest to this paper is the distinction between theories that view society as a self-regulating entity and focus on structure, and theories which emphasize the role of various actors, be they elites, classes, or great leaders. First, we shall review the theories that focus on structure.

Some authors see the development of the welfare state as necessary: needs are ascribed to either industry or capitalism. According to the *Logic of Industrialism*, a theory most often associated with Kerr et. al. (1962), a modern, industrial society needs an educated, healthy workforce, and consequently provides these services. Purportedly, this development occurs in order for society to ensure its continual existence. Social welfare is explained by the fact that industry weakens old forms of support such as family, and shifts this responsibility to the state. State support ostensibly exists because production needs a stable environment, as opposed to one that is plagued by high crime and social unrest.

A variant of this approach, the *Convergence Theory* envisions industrialism spreading around the world, eventually encompassing all societies, be they socialist or

capitalist. Central to this theory is the supposition that all societies will eventually reach an equivalent stage of development, driven by the ineluctable pull of technology. This latter stage is termed by Daniel Bell (1960) as the **End of Ideology**. The most damaging criticisms of these theories are that they are functional, something that will be explained in further detail shortly.

Neither are Marxists able to escape the functionalist trap. Some, such as the well known work of James O'Connor (1973), claim that the growth of the welfare state can be attributed to the **Logic of Capitalism**. A capitalist economy, it is said, requires that the state juggle a number of contradictory responsibilities, the most consequential being legitimation and accumulation. According to this theory, political actors such as unions, socialist parties, or humanitarians play an inconsequential role and are considered subordinate to the system's needs (Esping-Andersen 1990: 14). These theories have been criticized on the grounds that "any policy that is adopted [by the state] is functional, unless the system collapses" (Albo and Jenson 1989: 209 footnote 55).

The biggest drawback of functionalist theories is their weak explanatory power. These theories identify important components of modern life (e.g. education, health care), then deem them to be necessary for society's continued survival. This, in essence, amounts to no more than

description (Jary and Jary 1991: 246). To illustrate, education is seen as a product of technological society, and at the same time considered essential for its continuance (Kerr et. al. 1962: 36-37). The only proof provided is its existence.

In contrast to structural theories are those that focus on the role of agents. In 1971 (2nd edition 1993), Piven and Cloward published *Regulating the Poor*. Although taking into account historical conditions, the authors emphasize the role of agency, in particular that of the elites. Albeit, the motivations of the elites are, in general, evaluated to be somewhat self serving. The authors claim that welfare reforms are only brought about during periods of social unrest, and "abolished or contracted once political stability is restored" (1993: xv).

Piven and Cloward have been criticized for understanding power as something that occurs exclusively from the top down, while dismissing the role of the other classes (Myles 1989b: 98). Nevertheless, Piven and Cloward provide an analysis that underscores the importance of agency.³

³Although it is true that Piven and Cloward sometimes attribute too much importance to the role of the elites, their theory goes a long way in explaining current political developments in relation to class tensions. This holds especially true for recent attacks on the welfare state. According to their analysis, these attacks can be linked to very deliberate actions on the part of elites who have flexed their collective muscle (e.g. BCNI in Canada) as profits have been shrinking, and more often than not, have

David Cameron's work focuses on the role of another 'fundamental class' - the working class. He finds that a strong correlation exists between a well organized working class and the 'social wage' (pensions, sick-leave) (1985: 174). Myles's (1989b: 129) **Worker Mobilization** thesis, as outlined in *Old Age in the Welfare State: The Political Economy of Public Pensions*, is comparable to Cameron's approach, but as the title indicates, his primary concern is with pensions. Nevertheless, the crux of the two works is similar, since both find a correlation between a well organized working class and a well developed welfare state.

In the end, valid arguments may be made for welfare state development based on either a structural or agency approach and as any thorough investigation would no doubt reveal, both play an important role. This ambiguity between structure and agency is hinted at by various authors, including Marx, and elaborated on by Anthony Giddens. He contends that, "The study of class systems raises in acute form the question of the relation between agency and structure" (1991: 202). Throughout his writings, and most directly in *The Constitution of Society* (1984), he attempts to reconcile structural and agency based theories with what he calls **Structuration Theory**. Drawing on Marx's famous quote that "people make history, but not in circumstances of their own makings," Giddens (1984:25) stresses the

been successful in getting their way.

importance of taking into consideration the dialectic between the two: "The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality". Thus, the theoretical framework of this thesis takes into account both structure and agency.

The standpoint taken is that the power relationship between classes is fluid, and that this relationship is governed by material or historical conditions. Consequently, at certain times (such as when it is well organized and in times of economic growth) the working class has considerable input over how social policy is written, while at other times, this power balance is tipped in favour of capitalist classes.

It is important to note at this point that I am not dismissing the significance of structures and history. Rather, my aim is to complement the literature focusing on the roles of institutions. As Esping-Andersen (1990: 29) argues, in addition to class mobilization, and class coalition structures, the role of "the historical legacy of regime institutionalization" is paramount. Indeed, it would be difficult to ignore certain cooperative arrangements and practices that have been established in the past. To put it another way, when we study a society and attempt to investigate the causes of social change, we are not working with a *tabula rasa*, but with a script that is, to a large

extent, already written.

The debate over the role of the working class in the development of the welfare state has been the topic of much discussion lately. Much of this literature, as mentioned, has focused on the role of institutions. As this paper emphasizes the role of people, and the working class in particular, it is useful to examine the worker mobilization hypothesis in more detail.

Institutions, Classes, and the Welfare State

Critics of the power resources approach point to recent developments in the international economy, claiming that these events have put into question the salience of working class power. As evidence of its limitations, they point to countries, most often northern European in location, where despite the fact that the working class has achieved considerable power, the welfare state has come under attack. But these criticisms are, in my opinion, misguided. For one, to claim, as does Kathleen Thelen (n.d.: 1), that recent political events such as the downfall of corporatism in Sweden, show that "...some of labor's most stunning successes...were not, as we had thought, accomplished through the efforts of strong and self-conscious labor organization against employer resistance" is to confuse the issue by ignoring the element of time. The disintegration of the Swedish model does not necessarily negate the power

and efficacy of labour in the post-war years; it only means that this approach is no longer as effective as it once was.

The point is that, while certain labour tactics proved to be successful in one era, there is no guarantee that these same tactics will continue to be so in another. Within a context of growth, as was the case immediately following the Second World War, the labour movement followed a strategy that, over time, proved to be very effective. In the current political climate - a period of economic decline and high unemployment - other strategies are needed.

It is quite obvious that the working class has no control over such developments. Global restructuring has caught organized labour off guard and traditional tactics of resisting capital are becoming obsolete.⁴ Moreover, as Ahrne and Clement point out (1994: 231), these events have served to fragment labour while strengthening capital. Organized labour has not had sufficient time to organize properly in face of these changes. It is merely that old institutions are becoming outmoded, not that theories which stress the significance of labour in the past are mistaken.

Gains made by the working class in the post-war years were not a natural by-product of economic growth; they had

⁴Even in Sweden, where the working class has made some of its biggest gains, external pressures have begun to undermine the welfare state. This was brought on by a shift of emphasis in the economy from a primarily domestic market to an international one. This shift depreciated capital's dependence on labour cooperation and allowed it to challenge the Swedish model itself (Olsen 1994: 200).

to be fought for. This observation, one that is central to the labour mobilization theory, still rings true today: a well organized and class conscious working class is better equipped to confront capital than one that lacks those qualities.⁵ As capital is changing its strategy (which, one might add, is based on material conditions to begin with), traditional measures used by the working class are no longer efficacious. This does not mean that theories which stress the role of working class involvement are mistaken, only that the working class will have to alter its tactics in accordance with changes in the international economy.

The question that arises is whether the welfare state would have ever come into existence had the working class not fought for its fair share of resources. If this were the case, it would mean that capital provided these services on its own accord. From a theoretical standpoint, particularly a Marxist one, this is highly improbable. In addition, such reasoning does not explain why capital abandoned its commitment to the welfare state once it had the opportunity.

Alternatively, seen in the context of a class analysis,

⁵For an illustration of this, see Eric Tucker's (1994: 167-193) article in *Swedish Social Democracy: A Model in Transition*, in which he compares health and safety regulation in Sweden and Canada. He concludes that in order for labour legislation to work, it is not enough to introduce legislation, but support has to also come from below - the shop floor. Moreover, this underlines the importance of a class conscious working class.

recent events in the political economy have served to make capital less dependent on labour, conditions which have allowed capital to pursue other avenues for profit. Moreover, these events have occurred to the detriment of organized labour (this further demonstrates how capital acts according to its own interests and is unlikely to dispense benefits unless it is pressured to do so). As Giddens and his structuration theory reminds us, these events underscore the importance of taking into consideration both material conditions and agency.

Before we examine the data a number of key concepts need to be defined. First, why class, and on what basis are classes to be demarcated. Secondly, the welfare state is a contentious concept, often meaning different things to different people. For this reason, a comprehensive definition will be provided. Lastly, the concept of democracy, which has considerable relevance to the worker mobilization theory, will be discussed briefly.

CONCEPTS

Class

Class has had a long and contentious history in the social sciences and therefore warrants clarification. Since this paper uses a Marxist perspective, the concept of class is used in that sense, in contrast to the Weberian one. From an empirical standpoint, though, the two are, essentially,

quite similar (Clement and Myles 1994: 7). On a theoretical level the distinguishing characteristic between the two is that the Marxist approach almost exclusively emphasizes conflict between classes in terms of the relationship to the means of production, while the Weberian approach is more multifaceted, taking into consideration factors such as education, prestige, and status. Weber also does not see class as necessarily a cooperative concept. For example, he sees strife developing between workers based on a difference in skills.

On the highest level of abstraction, Marx's demarcation of class is very rudimentary and consists of only two fundamental classes: capital versus labour (Clement and Myles 1994: 7). This definition, unlike Weber's, depends almost exclusively on the economic. It also does not adequately capture the class dynamics of modern industrial society. This point has been made by a number of neo-Marxists theorists including Poulantzas (1975) Wright (1978; 1985) and Carchedi (1977). Although these theorists use different terminology (new middle class, new petty bourgeoisie) their critique of Marx's class typology is similar, for they all agree that class can no longer be solely defined by one's relationship to the means of production. This includes a category for workers who do not directly own capital, yet wield considerable power in terms of social control. Ralph Miliband (1987: 329) argues that

in order to ensure a smooth functioning elite, an alliance is usually forged between this (upper) managerial class and the owners of capital. Neither, he goes on to observe, could survive without the other. One group has the most immediate access to the means of production while the other is in control of its administration. Thus, while managers enjoy some of the same perquisites of the capitalists, they do not own productive property.

Erik Olin Wright (1978: 61-63) makes a similar point, arguing that tensions between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat have been obscured by 'contradictory class locations': those who do not own the means of production, nor are exploited in a way that can be likened to that of the proletariat. These include managers and supervisors, small employers, and semi-autonomous wage earners - a total of eight separate classes. As an example of a contradictory class location, Wright (1985: 52) relates the internally inconsistent roles a manager faces, as his or her interests lie solely with neither the bourgeois nor the proletarian class. The Class Structure Survey includes Wright's typology, but due to the small number of respondents in some of these categories, analysis becomes problematic - both statistically as well as conceptually.

For the purposes of this thesis I will use what Wallace Clement (1990: 466) describes as a minimalist class structure, which focuses on the role of the new middle

class. This formulation, according to Clement, places the capitalist and old middle class in opposition to the working and new middle classes. In short, then, the four class typology used on this paper is premised on ownership and control.

This typology, in turn, is based on the work of Carchedi (1977), who draws a distinction between those who own capital and those who have supervisory roles only. The latter, because of its mediating qualities, he calls the new middle class. In addition to owning capital, the primary criterion used in this typology is the "control and surveillance" over the labour power of others, as well as a limited degree of control of organizational (budgetary) assets.

According to this typology, the capitalist-executive class differs from both the old middle and new middle class in distinct ways. Between the old middle and capitalist-executive class this difference is basically quantitative; someone who employs three or more workers is categorized as a capitalist-executive, with those who employ a smaller number falling into the old middle class. The distinction between new middle and capitalist-executive is a bit more complex: while both may organize as well as discipline the work of others, the new middle class does not take part in policy setting in an organization. For example, a member of the new middle class can make decisions regarding firing and

hiring of workers and minor budget allocation decisions. However, and this is where the heart of the distinction lies, he or she cannot make decisions about major policy decisions such as products made, number of persons employed, and methods of production. These latter responsibilities fall into the exclusive hands of the capitalist-executive class.

Members of the working class neither own capital nor command labour power over others. It is worthwhile noting that although members of the working class can coordinate labour of others, they do not control it. The above distinctions are best illustrated in the following matrix:

		Command over Capital	
		Yes	No
Command over Labour of Others	Yes	Capitalist-Executive Class	New Middle Class
	No	Old Middle Class	Working Class

In short, and keeping in line with the ownership/control distinction, the capitalist-executive class has power over both capital and labour in contrast to the working class which controls neither. The distinction between the two middle classes is one of property ownership. The old middle class has power over their own capital, with

only limited power over labour (maximum two employees). This relationship is reversed for the new middle class, which commands labour over others, but does not own capital.

The variable was constructed in such a fashion as to categorize respondents according to the above criteria (number of employees and authority, channelling respondents into either the capitalist-executive, old or new middle class). Anyone who failed to meet any of the above specifications was automatically categorized as working class.⁶

Class and the Welfare State

Class is of considerable relevance to the welfare state. Claus Offe contends that while the welfare state may have mitigated the extremes of wealth and poverty produced by capitalism it has, by no means, changed its basic structure (1972: 481). As argued, the relationship between capitalist and worker has become increasingly complex over time. In prosperous times the antagonisms between classes have all but disappeared. In the decades immediately following the war, workers (this being true especially for industrial workers) in the advanced capitalist economies world enjoyed an unprecedented standard of living, and few had reason to complain. Despite this apparent calm, class tensions

⁶For a more extensive description of this operationalization of class see Clement (1990: 484-85) or Clement and Myles (1994: 257-58).

continue to exist, and have become increasingly visible again in recent years.

This tension can be linked to the fact that the basic structure of capitalism, to which Offe alludes, has not been altered. This structure dictates that the employer maximizes profit (Phillips 1989: 87). Or, seen in another light, the primary purpose of class domination continues to be exploitation (Miliband 1987: 328). When profits decline, workers are the most likely to suffer by being forced to accept lower wages or, worse, lose their jobs altogether. The employer - and this is especially true for low-paying, unskilled labour - has little or no social responsibility for the workers' welfare. Consequently, those in the lower classes carry the bulk of the hardships experienced during economic downturns. Seen in this light, the welfare state acts as a buffer between worker and the market through such programs as social assistance, unemployment insurance, pensions etc. Alternately, this added security works to the disadvantage of capital, which sees the welfare state as compromising worker discipline.

Admittedly, this is somewhat oversimplifying the case. For one, it ignores the role of the middle classes. It also overlooks the very valid argument that on the whole the welfare state ensures the smooth functioning of capitalism. Still, as Offe and Phillips maintain, the basic structure of capitalism endures, and for that reason alone we should

expect to find differences in attitude towards the welfare state among classes.

Why Class?

The primary function of the welfare state is to redistribute resources on an equitable basis, that is, moderate the effects of class. A class analysis is therefore most appropriate, as it uses this very concept, class, to study the welfare state.

In this study, emphasis will be placed on how various class occupants perceive the role of the welfare state. No doubt, one's life experiences are determined by a variety of factors such as gender, race, class, family, lineages, and nations (as well as culture and religion, one might add), all of which exist and interact (Mann 1986: 55). As Miliband so aptly puts it, these variables provide us with a kind of social DNA. He goes on to stress, however, that it is "nevertheless class which suffuses and most deeply affects all other elements" (1987: 343). Miliband contends that other forms of domination, such as patriarchy, provide a wider focus to class analysis; at the same time, he states, this avoids the trap of being economically reductionist or deterministic. The main focus of this thesis, then, will be class, as this type of "analysis can provide a rational and coherent explanation of the general dynamic of social life" (Miliband 1987: 338). It should be

noted that by concentrating on class I will not be dismissing other variables that impinge on social life. Thus, the analysis will also include sex, region, age, and - this being a cross-national comparison - country.

The Welfare State

The welfare state, according to Esping-Andersen (1990: 5), is an institution associated primarily with post-war industrial society. This requires drawing the very important distinction between a welfare state and a welfare program. An example of the latter is the pension plan introduced by Bismarck in 1889. The welfare state, on the other hand, is qualitatively different since it is a comprehensive, inter-related set of social programs and policies designed to ensure that a minimum standard of living is met by all citizens. This would be characteristic of the welfare state found in most of today's liberal democracies.

The prime difference between the post-war welfare state and social programs that existed before that time is a matter of commitment - the difference between social assistance and social security (Myles 1994: 86). The former is designed to provide subsistence level assistance during times of need; benefits are kept deliberately low so as not to provide disincentives to work. This type of assistance perceives poverty as more of an individual than structural

problem, and therefore attempts to deal with this issue primarily on that level. This translates into providing the most meagre benefits possible. In the last century, this was referred to as 'less eligibility' (desirability), for programs were designed to ensure recipients received fewer benefits than the lowest paid wage earner could earn. Put another way, the programs were designed in such a way as not to interfere with the labour market. The underlying logic of this tactic was that a job, any job, would be better than being on public assistance. Additional motivation was provided by the fact that recipients were stigmatized, which further pressured people to get off the 'dole'.

In contrast, a social security welfare state identifies poverty as something structural. This shift of focus obviously requires different solutions. Keeping in mind this connection, governments have attempted to alleviate poverty by stabilizing the economy through such measures as increased spending during economic down swings. The logic of this approach entails that if citizens have sufficient income to survive these down-turns a depression is more likely to be averted than if those measures were not in place.

The modern welfare state also differs from previous institutions in that benefits are paid to everyone, regardless of income (the extent of this coverage, of course, varies widely among countries). A more

universalized welfare state also means that, with few exceptions such as social assistance payments, stigma is removed from receiving state benefits.

The difference, then, between a social assistance and social security (or pre- and post-war) welfare state can be seen as a matter of commitment. As Ramesh Mishra (1990: 18-19) argues, an 'ideal type' welfare state requires the realization by governments that they should and could provide a decent standard of living to all its citizens.⁷ This approach requires three inter-related responsibilities or commitments: 1) the regulation of the market economy in order to maintain a high and stable level of employment, 2) the provision of universal social services such as education, income security and medical services, and 3) a guaranteed minimum income for those in need. The first of these commitments - to further a full and stable employment environment - was also a cornerstone of Beveridge and Keynes' theories (Myles 1989b: 133). One of the most overt symptoms of the global recession has been wide-spread unemployment. The implications of this have had, and will continue to do so in the future, inevitable and negative consequences for the welfare state.

⁷This is primarily in contrast to a positivist approach which sees the welfare state as well entrenched and growing (Mishra 1990: 32). In Britain, for example, social expenditures have been growing although there has been a concerted and successful attack on the welfare state, the rise being due predominantly to high unemployment (Esping-Andersen 1990: 20).

Democracy

According to the more optimistic proponents of the power resources model, the working class will eventually win control over the means of production through the democratic process. As critical as some are of parliamentary democracy, particularly orthodox Marxists who believe in the need for revolution, it does incorporate some redeeming features. For one, the voting public has, at different times, had considerable input into setting social policy. As John Myles (1994: 141) states, "Winning and retaining office requires electoral majorities, and majorities are not easily formed around proposals to abolish programs that benefit wide sectors of the population and incorporate the middle class."

To this end, electoral politics have played a major role in regards to social programs in Canada. In 1985, the Mulroney administration attempted to cut Old Age Security (OAS) benefits, but backed down once a well organized grey lobby protested on Parliament Hill (Moscovitch 1986: 85). A similar event occurred in the United States (Piven and Cloward 1982: 7). Promise of the Canada Pension Plan in 1962 and Medicare in 1965 appear to have contributed to the Liberal Party's win in both these elections (Armitage 1988: 23). And public debate was so intense that Liberals blamed their near defeat in the 1972 election on another social policy issue: unemployment insurance (Banting 1982: 113).

Yet, at the same time, it would be ingenuous to overestimate the impact of democracy. It is particularly during the last decade that its limitations have once again come to light. For one, in today's society the electorate does not even decide which issues will be put forth (e.g. free trade, the national debt), it only decides who will make these decisions (Macpherson 1977: 78). And through skilful use of the media the public can easily be persuaded as to what issues should be considered important.⁶ Consequently, the limitations of democracy must be acknowledged.

Obviously, democracy plays an important role in today's liberal democracies as it pertains to the welfare state. By examining attitudes towards welfare state institutions I hope to show that public support for these programs is high and on the basis of this support political parties are forced to accommodate or risk not being elected. The data should also provide us with the information as to what programs are most likely to be supported. Also, it will be

⁶For example, in recent years the political and economic elites have wanted us to believe the debt is a problem, blaming rising expenditures on the welfare state. Consequently, social programs are being cut. This is regardless of whether the debt is, in fact, a problem that can be traced to profligate social programs. The reason that the debt even became an issue is because the elites have the "power to define reality" (Offe 1984: 151 *italics in original*). The ramifications of this socially constructed reality is that it can be, and is, used as a political tool to exact concessions from the population as a whole and the working class in particular.

argued that by being aware of how certain issues will affect it, a class conscious working class is better equipped to influence the political decision making-process than one that is less so.

The effectiveness of democracy has been undermined in recent years by changes in the international economy which have impinged on both capitalist and non-capitalist economies alike. How these circumstances have affected the commitment to the welfare state in the past two decades can best be illustrated by example. To this end, we will use the Canadian welfare state in the context of a changing international economy.

International Political Economy

Sometime in the mid-seventies, the 'Golden Age' of capitalism began to lose its sheen, a change commonly attributed to the effects of the 'globalization' or 'restructuring' of the world economy. The underlying reason for this decline is a curtailment in economic growth, which has manifested itself in decreased revenues and increased expenditures. On the basis of this governments found it increasingly difficult to support welfare state programs.

However weak the commitment to full employment was in Canada following the Second World War, it was an easy promise to keep as an abundance of jobs was a natural byproduct of a growing economy. When this economic growth

came to a gradual halt, and with it an increase in unemployment, the other commitments required to keep the welfare state viable became increasingly hard to keep. High unemployment meant an increased burden on the public purse: not only did more people collect unemployment benefits and welfare, but fewer revenues were raised to support these programs, which initiated a downward spiral that has not yet ended. As the recession lingered, the Canadian government has found it increasingly difficult to provide an adequate standard of living for all Canadians, thus placing the burden on the volunteer sector, which was forced to take up the slack in the form of food banks. This has meant the gradual attenuation of the two other commitments as outlined by Mishra: universal coverage and minimum income.

Consequently, the vision of the 'ideal type' welfare state has been abandoned in favour of an approach more reminiscent of a pre-war social assistance arrangement. Recent comments in the news which claim that unemployment insurance provides disincentives for workers are evidence of this change in attitude. Other, more concrete indications, are the de-universalization of social programs such as Children's Allowance and Old Age Security. As the rhetoric goes, resources are to be directed at those who really need them. At what precise moment this quantitative to qualitative transformation occurs (i.e. security to assistance welfare state) is difficult to pin-point. What

is clear, however, is that we are experiencing a change in direction. The targeting of social programs for the poor is key to this argument.

Political and economic circumstances obviously stand in the way of the continuing growth of the welfare state. Although a well organized working class cannot prevent these events from happening, it may mitigate the harshness of its consequences. In that way, the worker mobilization thesis can explain why cost cutting measures which seek to cut the welfare state are more successful in some countries than others. A working class that is supportive of social programs is less likely to countenance the cutting or de-universalization of these programs. Although Sweden has, like most countries, experienced high unemployment in the last few years, attacks on the welfare state have been less effective. A well organized working class is fundamental to understanding this difference.

Summary

Now, let us quickly recapitulate what exactly we should watch for in the upcoming data section. It is hypothesized that in addition (and in precedence) to institutions, people matter. Therefore, we should expect to find considerable support for welfare institutions in the countries surveyed. In other words, support for the welfare state is speculated to come from the people, i.e. associated programs are not

created independent of the will of the general population, be it by elites afraid of social unrest or the requirement of a system. Moreover, it is postulated that this support is strongest among the working class, for it is doubtful that programs which benefit the working classes are granted by the capitalist classes on a strictly humanitarian basis. Close attention should also be paid to the class coalitions and dualism in order to determine the role of the new middle class in regard to the welfare state.

We should also find noticeable differences of support between the sexes. For the same reason that working class members are expected to be more supportive of the welfare state (they are exploited by a capitalist system), women should be more supportive because they are exploited by a patriarchal system.

In addition, we will examine the effect that age, employment status, and education have on attitudes towards the welfare state. Unemployed workers experience directly some of the inadequacies of a capitalist system, which should have an effect on their class consciousness. For this reason, we would expect unemployed workers to be more supportive of the welfare state than employed ones.

The welfare state plays a vital role in today's industrial societies, the importance of which, we would expect, is more likely to be appreciated by those who are well-educated. Similarly, the educated are anticipated to

be more able to challenge common myths that surround poverty. Thus, education is expected to have an overall positive effect on people's attitudes towards the welfare state.

Since younger workers are more likely to be well-educated and, due to seniority clauses, insecure in their employment, we can also anticipate that younger respondents are more progressive in their attitudes towards the welfare state than their older counterparts.

CHAPTER III

THE RESULTS

Details about the Survey

The data used in this analysis are part of an international project known as the 10 Nation Comparative Class Structure Survey, or simply the CCSS. In the early 1980's, when the project was first started, five countries participated in the project, which was expanded to over ten countries as the decade progressed. For this reason, the surveys were conducted in different years. The surveys used in this paper, including the years they were administered, are as follows: the United States and Sweden (both in 1980), Canada (1982/83), West Germany (1985), and Australia (1986).

The analysis will proceed in two steps. The first section will examine questions that deal directly with the welfare state (social spending and inequality). The next section is concerned with a related issue - poverty.

All but one of the questions are of Likert scale construction, divided into four categories (strongly agree; agree; disagree; strongly disagree). The exception to this pattern is the first question, which asks about the status of social spending, and comprises five categories (a great deal more; more; the same; less; a great deal less). Rather than presenting the data in the original four or five category format, the results will be presented in the form of a 5 point scale (-2 to 2). This facilitates presentation

as it captures both number and intensity in one figure, which is in contrast to the more cumbersome method of utilizing the four or five categories intact. The results of the poverty questions will further be combined and presented in the form of indices.

Both scales and indices will go in the same direction, that is, no matter how the question is phrased, the higher number always reflects the more progressive attitude. Numbers displayed are the arithmetic mean of the combined responses of that particular group (e.g. Swedish women, Canadian working class males).

The figures for employment status and education are not broken down by class because of small samples that result due to overlap. For employment status, it is primarily working class respondents that fall into the unemployed category. In the case of education level, respondents from the working and middle classes are also divided along pre- and post-secondary lines. Although samples were sufficiently large in number of instances (e.g. unemployed/employed new middle and working class in Canada), differences did not diverge to any noticeable extent.

Significance Tests

Significance tests will not be used, as the accuracy of this technique is highly dubious for the type of data used here. Such tests make assumptions (e.g. normal distribution) about

the sample which are virtually never met by social science data, which is further aggravated when the sample is stratified, as it is here (Babbie 1989: 463). Since no statistical validation is feasible, ascertaining differences as meaningful is based on two considerations. First, the judgements below are in line with the observations of Myles and Clement (1994), who also used a 5 point scale. Secondly, when the data were analyzed in their original form, it was found that figures of approximately a .3 difference corresponded to approximately a 10 percent difference in percentage who agreed (the two 'agree' categories were collapsed). A gap of 5 to 10 percent is what Martin Seymour Lipset (1990: 212) finds to be a common difference in surveys comparing attitudes between the United States and Canada. Consequently, a score below .10 should not be considered substantive, while anything over .30 or more should be considered substantial. Scores between .11 and .30 may be considered meaningful, but should be viewed with caution, especially when they involve a small sample.

Standardization for Women

Sex is an important variable here, as men and women often differ in their opinion on most issues. This is no different for this survey. A problem that arises is that the labour participation of women varies significantly in the countries sampled (for 1989 this ranges from 55 percent

in West Germany to 83 percent in Sweden (OECD 1990b: 487-501)). Hence, the proportion of women in the workforce can invidiously influence the final tally. Since the primary focus of this paper is class, variability of the proportion of women in the workforce is controlled for. This is done by standardizing for sex, which assumes that the male/female composition of the workforce is 50/50 percent in all of the countries. This rids the data of any bias which may be introduced by the relative size of the women's workforce.'

The Samples

It should be noted that the samples in table 1 are comprised of the active workforce only. Unemployment was high in Canada around the time the data were gathered (1982-3: 11.5%), hence experienced unemployed workers were included in that survey. This was not necessary for the other countries, for when the data were collected unemployment in the United States was moderate (1980: 7.2%), as was the case in West Germany (1985: 7.1%) and Australia (1986: 8.0%). In Sweden, meanwhile, unemployment was almost non-existent (1980: 2.2%) (unemployment figures OECD World Economic

'Differences between standardized and non-standardized results do not vary much, with the exception of the old middle class in Sweden and Canada, and the capitalist-executive class in the United States and West Germany. For the age, employment status, and education tables differences are virtually non-existent.

Survey 90/91).

In addition to the samples displayed in table 1, the following subsamples are available and will be used in the analysis. Canada also surveyed the inexperienced unemployed (n=128), as well as housewives (n=330). The United States surveyed unemployed workers (n=101) and housewives (n=159). Germany's survey also included a subsample of unemployed workers (n=171). Sweden and Australia's samples consist of the working population only and, consequently, establishes the size of the universes (active labour force) used for the bulk of the analysis.

The Canadian, Swedish, and American surveys are weighted for sex, region, and age. The West German and Australian samples are not weighted. Age has been divided into the following three categories: below 34; 35 through to 49; over 50. For the sake of convenience, these age groups are referred to as 'young', 'middle', and 'old'. The West German survey includes only German speakers (*i.e.* it excludes Gastarbeiter who do not have sufficient command of the language) (Ilon et al. 1985:47).

Sample sizes and class compositions of the countries included in this analysis are presented in table 1. Even a cursory examination reveals that there are obvious differences in class size found among the five countries. The United States and Australia, in comparison to the other three countries, stand out on account of a large capitalist/

executive class. Sweden, and especially West Germany, have massive working classes, comprising over two-thirds of the labour force in each of these countries. The working class in Australia, on the other hand, at just over two-fifths of the workforce, is relatively small. As a matter of fact, Australia is the only country where the working class, on a percentage basis, does not constitute the majority of the working population, or even the largest class. Although not much larger than the working class, in Australia this distinction falls to the new middle class. In the other four countries the new middle class encompasses from just under one-fifth (West Germany 18.5%) (Sweden 19.3%) of the working population, to approximately a quarter (United States 28.3%; Canada 24.9%).

Table 1
Class by Country, Sample Size: Active Labour Force,
Percentage and Count (n)*

	U.S.A.	CANADA	AUSTRALIA	SWEDEN	W.GERMANY
CAP/ EXEC	10.2 (152)	6.2 (132)	9.5 (113)	6.6 (78)	5.4 (89)
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	7.8 (117)	11.3 (239)	8.3 (99)	6.2 (74)	6.3 (104)
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	28.3 (423)	24.9 (527)	41.3 (493)	19.1 (220)	18.5 (307)
WORKING CLASS	53.6 (801)	57.6 (1218)	40.9 (488)	68.1 (809)	69.9 (1163)
TOTAL	(1498)	(2115)	(1195)	(1185)	(1663)

*Missing numbers are 0 for Canada and W. Germany, 2 for Australia, and 4 for U.S.A. and Sweden. Totals for the United States and Canada are out by 1 because of weighting.

Class size has obvious ramification for class politics, as the power of any particular class, all other things being equal, depends on its size in relationship to the other classes. A well organized working class in Germany, being thirteen times as large as the capitalist-executive class, would likely be more effective than an equally well organized working class in Australia, where this relationship works out to approximately four to one.

Measuring the Quality of the Welfare State

The first set of question asks respondents about social spending and inequality in their respective homelands. The difficulty in comparing the results of these questions cross-nationally lies in the fact that social spending and inequality, vary dramatically among the countries surveyed. The United States, lacking nationalized health care in addition to having a large component of its education privatized, stands out in its paucity in regards to social service spending. Spending on a level similar to Sweden or (West) Germany would likely find little support in the United States. This difference must be kept in mind throughout the analysis.

Even objective indicators such as social spending, usually expressed as a percentage of GDP, can be misleading. For the most part, this incompatibility is based on the fact that these figures may not measure the same thing.

Circumstances such as high unemployment or a large aged population may translate into significant government expenditures, yet do not necessarily reflect egalitarian accessibility to social services such as health, education, and housing.

Despite these limitations it is possible to make some general comparative observations in regards to social spending. Table 2 illustrates that public expenditures (including pensions, unemployment insurance, education, health care, and family allowance) are comparatively higher, in general, for western European than non-European countries. Although it would be erroneous to interpret this ranking as precise, it is fair to say, in addition to what we know about these countries in general, that Sweden and West Germany (social spending over 30% of GDP) devote a considerably larger proportion of their GDP to social expenditures than the United States, Canada, and Australia, where such spending comprises approximately one-fifth of GDP.

Since the question asks specifically about education and health, table 3 provides details about these expenditures for the countries used in this thesis. All the countries in the sample maintain some form of health care and education for their citizens. The United States, however, lags far behind the others in that a considerably smaller share of their medical expenditures comes from

public funds, resulting in a relatively small share of the GDP (4.6 percent). This is in contrast to the other countries, most notably Sweden (8.2%), where almost twice the percentage of the GDP is spent on health.

Table 2
Social Expenditures by Country, as Percentage of GDP, 1981

Belgium	38.0	Norway	27.1
Netherlands	36.1	U.K.	24.9
Sweden	33.5	France	23.8
Germany	31.5	Canada	21.7
Italy	29.1	U.S.	21.0
Denmark	29.0	New Zealand	19.6
Austria	27.9	Australia	18.6
Ireland	27.1	Japan	17.5

Source: Armitage (1988: 22)

Table 3 also shows that Canada and Sweden spend the biggest share of their GDPs on education, while Australia and West Germany spend the least, with the United States falling somewhere in between.¹⁰

¹⁰Public expenditure figures on education are misleading for a number of reasons. For example, relatively few people in West Germany receive post-secondary education, while a considerable portion enter apprenticeship programs funded by the private sector.

Table 3
Health and Education Expenditures by Country

	U.S.A.	CANADA	AUSTRALIA	SWEDEN	W.GERMANY
<i>Public Health Expenditures as Percentage of GDP (1987)</i>	4.6	6.5	5.1	8.2	6.3
<i>Public Education Expenditures as Percentage of GDP (1991)</i>	5.5	6.7	4.7	6.5	4.0

Sources: Health OECD (1990a: 10); Education OECD (1993: 66).

Social Inequality

The social inequality question presents similar problems, as income disparity varies dramatically between countries.

Additionally, how this inequality is to be measured is fraught with problems: do you include only income, or also transfers such as pensions? If only income is measured, should pre- or post-tax figures be used?¹¹ Despite these

¹¹Even the two measurements used here, the quintile division of income and the Gini coefficient, rank the countries in different order. Using the former, Australia is demonstrated to be the least egalitarian, less so than even the United States. With the Gini coefficient, on the other hand, Australia's status changes to being almost identical to that of Canada, with both countries appearing to be more egalitarian than the United States.

Unfortunately, measuring indicators are riddled with potential errors. Oskar Morgenstern (1950: 7, and especially 73-85) estimates that national income of industries figures cannot be known outside of an error margin of ± 15 to ± 20 percent, because the collection of such data involves theoretical and conceptual preparation which greatly influences results. This becomes most problematic when comparing figures from different sources, as these can be subject to differences in classification, estimation, interpolating, and conceptualization (For example, between 1981 and 1986 the government of Britain made sixteen separate changes in how it collected figures on unemployment (Abercrombie et al. 1988: 257).

For individual incomes this becomes even more

shortcomings, as in the social spending question, some general conclusions may be drawn, such as that social inequality is more evident in the non-European than in the western European countries.

Table 4
Income Distribution based on Quintiles (1982-87), and
Adjusted Gini Coefficient Index (1982), by Country

	U.S.A. (1985)	CANADA 1987	AUSTRALIA 1985	SWEDEN 1981	W.GERMANY 1984
Lowest Quintile	4.7	5.7	4.4	8.0	6.8
Second Quintile	11.0	11.8	11.1	13.2	12.7
Third Quintile	17.4	17.7	17.5	17.4	17.8
Fourth Quintile	25.0	24.6	24.8	24.5	24.1
Highest Quintile	41.9	40.2	42.2	36.9	38.7
Adjusted Gini Coefficient	.315	.290	.292	.197	.249

Sources: Quintile Data (World Bank 1993: 297); Gini Coefficient is adjusted for family size (Osberg 1992: 46).

On the bottom of table 4 we find the Gini coefficient for the countries used in this analysis. This index, used to measure income inequality, incorporates a scale that ranges from the number 0 (total equality) to 1 (total inequality). The adjusted index uses post-transfer figures based on family size.

The figures show that social inequality is most overt

problematic. For example, for the figures on income distribution are benefits included, and to what extent (e.g. drug plan, use of a car, seeing a doctor, or receiving an education)?

in the United States, with Australia and Canada being somewhat more progressive on this count. As one would expect, Sweden is found on the other end of the extreme, displaying a relatively low degree of social inequality. West Germany falls somewhere in between the Anglo-Saxon group of countries and Sweden.

The quintile division of income (on which the Gini coefficient is based), tells a similar story: disparity of wealth is more pronounced in Anglo Saxon countries than either West Germany or Sweden. The share that the top and bottom twenty percent of the population receives more than adequately illustrates that distribution of wealth among countries varies considerably. The bottom fifth in Sweden receives almost twice the share of the national income compared to the poorest quintile in either the United States or Australia.

Although none of these measurements should be considered conclusive on the topic of social welfare, they do provide us with a good indication of where the various countries are placed in terms of quality of the welfare state. What must be kept in mind throughout the analysis is that social spending and inequality are relative. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as an adequate amount of social spending or equality which can be objectively understood to be the same by respondents from all countries. An American might well estimate that equality on a level

found in Canada or Sweden (which can to a certain extent be measured objectively) is an acceptable ideal, but there is no way of knowing this given that few respondents are familiar with social conditions found in other countries, which makes asking such questions futile.

Nevertheless, a careful reading of the upcoming data should provide us with the answer to the following questions: is the welfare state in any given country, in general, supported by its citizens, and to what extent? And, moreover, which class is most supportive of welfare state spending and most critical of social inequality? If, as expected, differences in attitudes are found, we should be able to get some understanding of how the various classes coalesce or differ on these issues or, in other words, to determine configurations of class support. This support will then be further analyzed by the variables of sex, age, education, employment status, and combinations thereof. This will be the task of the following section.

Social Spending Question

The first question asks respondents whether they support more or less government spending on social services. Table 5 presents these responses by class and sex. The results confirm one of the claims made in this paper, that the welfare state, specifically in regards to social spending,

is supported by the majority of the population in each of the countries surveyed. This support is highest in Sweden and lowest in Germany, both countries which, as seen above, bear relatively high social expenditures. Support for increased spending in the United States and Canada is virtually identical. International differences, however, are by no means dramatic (.3), indicating that the amount of social spending in the various countries is supported to approximately the same degree. Since spending in Sweden is at a level that is considerably higher than that found in the North American countries and roughly equivalent to that of West Germany, we would have expected that, overall, people in Sweden would be much more satisfied with present expenditures than in other countries. This makes the high numbers in Sweden even more compelling.

Table 5

Question: The next policy is government spending on services like education and health. Do you think that the government should be spending a great deal more on education and health, somewhat more, the present amount, somewhat less, or a great deal less?

5 point scale (-2 to +2) by Sex and Class*

Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
TOTAL	M		.20		.76		.92		.69
	F	.87	.94	.35	.94	1.09	1.25	.77	.84
CAP/ EXEC	M		.49		.32		.72		.27
	F	.78	1.06	.48	<u>.64</u>	.86	<u>1.00</u>	.48	<u>.69</u>
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		.55		.50		.59		.54
	F	.52	.47	.76	1.02	.90	<u>1.20</u>	.72	.89
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		.81		.88		.92		.64
	F	.88	1.00	.93	.97	1.06	1.19	.79	.94
WORKING CLASS	M		.92		.88		1.00		.78
	F	.94	.96	.91	.93	1.14	1.27	.81	.83
N		(1359)		(2096)		(1136)		(1655)	

*For more detailed information about sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.
Underlined figure indicates sample size is less than 30.

In every country support is higher among women than men, this difference being most pronounced in Sweden (+.33). These differences are as high as those found between countries. As a matter of fact, the female/male relationship holds true for every class in every country, with the exception of the old middle class in the United States. In all of the countries but Sweden there is a noticeable split of opinion on this issue between the

capitalist-executive and other classes. Comparatively, this class, in both Canada and West Germany, displays the lowest score of the classes surveyed.

For males, class patterns are different from those found for women. For the U.S., Canada, and Sweden there appears to be a split of opinion between the capitalist (capitalist-executive and old middle class) and employed classes (working and new middle class). A similar pattern is not found for women, as support by women is more consistent across classes. In some instances, as is the case in the U.S., women from the capitalist-executive class are even more progressive than females from either of the employed classes.

Another claim made, that support for the welfare state is highest amongst the working classes, is substantiated by the data. In every country it is the working class that provides the bulwark of support for social spending, with the exception of Canada, where new middle class support is slightly higher. This is not to say that working class support in Canada, nor that new middle class support elsewhere, is weak, as support by both these classes can be judged to be high in all countries surveyed. Differences between the working class and the new middle class ranges from .02 in Canada to .08 in Sweden. Thus, Esping-Andersen's (1990: 31) observation that the welfare state in Sweden depends on support from the inclusion of the new

middle class is a statement that rings equally true for the other countries included in this survey. Certainly, class dualism is no more apparent in the United States than it is in Sweden.

In the U.S., the old middle class shows the most opposition to increased spending, not the capitalist-executive class, which is the case in the other countries. As a matter of fact, in the United States, women who belong to the capitalist-executive class are the most progressive in that country.

The most progressive of the classes is the working class in Sweden, where females, as has already been pointed out, are considerably more progressive than men. This is closely followed by new middle class women. A reason for this might be that many women in Sweden are employed by the public sector and are therefore supportive of it.

On a relative basis, the most pronounced cleavages between the fundamental classes (capitalist-executive and working class) are found in Canada (+.43) and West Germany (+.33) and Sweden (+.28), a relationship that is found to be somewhat less strained in the United States (+.16). Thus in the country where social spending is relatively meagre, the United States, there is also the least amount of disagreement found regarding this very important aspect of the welfare state.

Given the quality of the welfare state in West Germany,

one would have expected more support for social spending in that country, especially from the working class. However, support is still high, being not much lower than in North American countries.

Support for increased social spending is equally high in the United States and Canada.¹² In the United States, this indicates that the public is likely to react favourably to increased spending for better services. The issue of health care, specifically referred to in the question, has been receiving wide-spread support from the American electorate in the past few years, to the point that it dominated the 1992 election.

It is interesting to note that class patterns in the United States and Canada are very similar, the only difference being that support for increased spending is substantially lower by the capitalist-executive class in Canada.

¹²A question similar to the 'social spending' question in the CCSS was asked in a Vector Research poll conducted in Canada in early 1994. Specifically, it asked whether respondents were willing to pay more taxes for a number of specific services listed. The results show that 63 percent of Canadians were willing to pay more taxes if funds were targeted towards educating young people. This, according to another Vector poll, is up from 52 percent in 1987. Numbers which asked the same question in respect to job creation increased by 15 percentage points (from 45 to 60 percent) between 1987 and 1994. For health care this figure stayed roughly about the same (52 to 51 percent).

Age

When the social spending figures are broken down by age a number of interesting observations may be made. Whereas support in Canada, West Germany, and most notably the United States, declines steadily with age this support is much more consistent across the various age groups in Sweden. With the exception of Sweden, then, the data show the hypothesis to be correct.

The very high support in the United States by the under 35 cohort is remarkable in itself, in contrast to older Americans, who are somewhat more conservative on this issue. While overall support for social spending is about equivalent in the United States and Canada, this support is considerable stronger among younger Americans than Canadians, at a level equivalent to that of Sweden.

Table 6
Social Spending Question by Country and Age*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

	USA	CAN	SWE	W.GERM
YOUNG	1.12	.98	1.14	.91
MIDDLE	.74	.78	1.04	.68
OLD	.52	.64	1.04	.69

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

Age by Class and Sex

Once age is further broken down by class and sex, more

interesting patterns start to emerge. The high support found for this question among the new middle classes in all countries is mostly due to very strong support on the part of women. This support is especially high among young new middle class women in the United States and Sweden. This group is more supportive of this issue than men in all cases, and more so than working class women (with the exception of the United States, where figures are identical).

This, however, does not necessarily hold true for the middle aged and older cohorts. In Sweden and the United States, figures for new middle class women decline to the point where they are surpassed by working class women, a trend that is most apparent in Sweden. While young Swedish new middle class women are, in comparison to their working class counterparts, considerably more progressive (+.29), this relationship flip-flops as we move into the older age categories, where we find that working class women are much more supportive of the issue (+.34; for a total change of .63).

Table 7
Social Spending Question by Country, Class, Age, and Sex*
 5 point scale (-2 to +2)
 Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
		NMC	WC	NMC	WC	NMC	WC	NMC	WC
Yng	M	.98	1.14	1.02	.95	.87	1.15	.91	.86
	F	1.12	1.20	1.04	1.00	1.11	1.10	1.08	.88
Mid	M	.71	.79	.76	.69	1.04	.87	.62	.79
	F	.77	.75	.88	.78	1.06	1.08	.58	.76
Old	M	.41	.56	.71	.82	.84	1.16	.44	.63
	F	.51	.60	.71	.70	.84	1.17	.51	.74
		.61	.64	.70	.58	<u>.83</u>	1.17	<u>1.13</u>	.84

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix I.
 Underlined figure indicates sample size is less than 30.

Figures for working class and new middle class men in Sweden do not follow a similar pattern, as support increases for the new middle class and declines slightly for working class in the middle age category.

In Canada, there is no substantive difference in attitude regarding this issue between the two employed classes (new middle class and working class). The only point of note, here, is the low support by older working class women. In West Germany, support declines much more rapidly for the new middle class than for the working class. In the United States, support plunges quite significantly for both the new middle class and working class. The only class for which support does not wane across age groups is the working class in Sweden.

Also of note is the very strong support shown by young working class members in the United States, support that is, relatively speaking, even higher than in Sweden. In an era where cuts to the welfare state are ubiquitous, the introduction of national health care insurance on the political agenda at this time is difficult to explain. These figures suggest that support for a national health care program is very high among both the working and new middle class in the United States, and that enlightened politicians, such as Clinton, are merely capitalizing on this support. This is in line with the claim made that welfare state institutions, such as the proposed national health care insurance plan, need the support of the population, and in particular that of the working class. Certainly, the figures indicate that support for such a move would have been less noticeable when the values of the older cohort predominated.

While there are considerable variations in support for this social spending by the mid and older categories, there is a convergence of opinion for the youngest cohort. With few exceptions, differences are below .1 indicating a convergence towards increased support for government spending in all countries.

Employment Status¹³

In every country for which data are available, the unemployed are more likely to support increased social spending than those who do work, which falls in line with the hypothesis. This effect is most pronounced in West Germany (.55), and least so in Canada (.24). In the United States, there appears to be no difference of opinion between unemployed and employed women, which cannot be said for their male counterparts (.51 difference). In West Germany, where support for increased spending was found to be only lukewarm, support among the unemployed is very high. For unemployed females that support is higher than for any other groups in this question. Unemployed American males are also very progressive in this regard. In all countries, employed males appear to be somewhat complacent about their position. This indicates that unemployment, a problem that has permeated western economies in recent years, paves the way

¹³For Canada, the samples are arranged slightly different for employment status tables. Here, the experienced unemployed are included in the 'unemployed' instead of employed (active labour force) category. For detail see sample tables in appendix 1.

for increased support for government services.

Table 8

Social Spending Question, by Employment Status, Country and Sex*

5 point scale (-2 to +2)

Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		W.GERMANY	
Employed	M		.80		.72		.69
	F	.87	.94	.82	.91	.77	.84
Unemployed	M		1.31		.99		1.23
	F	1.15	.99	1.06	1.13	1.32	1.40
Housewives		.84		.74		N.A.	

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

Housewives in both the United States and Canada are slightly less progressive than either their employed or unemployed counterparts, this difference being most dramatic between Canadian females who are unemployed and housewives (.39).

Education

For the United States, Canada, and Sweden, education is separated into three categories: those who have elementary school only or less (Pre-secondary), those who have some or finished secondary school (Secondary), and those who have some kind of post-secondary education (Post-Secondary). In the case of Australia and West Germany, those with an elementary

school education or less had to be grouped into the secondary category, as the number of respondents were too small (coincidentally $n=33$ for both countries).

For this question, education does not appear to have much of an effect (maximum .21 spread for Sweden), and in direct contradiction to hypothetical expectations, a downward trend can be observed as education increases. This is only generally speaking, though, as a slight increase occurs in Canada (+.13 from the pre- to post-secondary group). In the United States and West Germany, education has the obverse effect for men and women: women's attitudes become increasingly more progressive with education, a trend which is reversed for men. In Sweden, attitudes among women become slightly less progressive with more education. As has already been mentioned, however, these differences are by no means striking.

Table 9
Social Spending Question, by Education, Country and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
Pre-Secondary	M		.94		.62		.98	N.A.	
	F	.90	.85	.75	.88	1.15	1.32		
Secondary	M		.84		.84		1.01		.70
	F	.90	.96	.88	.92	1.12	1.22	.77	.84
Post-Secondary	M		.70		.70		.74		.65
	F	.82	.94	.83	.96	.95	1.16	.76	.87

*For more detailed information about sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

Social Inequality Question

The second question asks about income inequality. Here we find patterns similar to those found in the previous question, further corroborating the hypothesis that the strongest support for welfare state policies comes from the working class. Differences between countries are more apparent here than in the last question: an overall spread of 1.03 is found to exist, the two extremes being Australia (least progressive) and West Germany (most progressive). Australia, for which data were not available in the last question, stands out in its emphatic disagreement with this statement, being the only one where the score falls into the negative.

Again, it is the capitalist-executive class in West Germany and Canada, and this time also Australia, who are most conservative in regards to the status quo, that is, they are least willing to recognize present inequalities.

Similar to the patterns found in the last question, women are more progressive in regard to this issue than men. This ranges from a difference of .27 in the United States, to a low of .07 in the Australia. This relationship is found in the majority of cases, with notable exceptions being the working class in Sweden and Australia. As was stated in the theoretical section, one would have expected more disparity of opinion between the sexes on this issue than on the 'social spending' question since women get paid

less than men and are therefore doubly exploited in a capitalist system. This should have a consciousness raising effect which is not as apparent as one would have expected.

These results are especially curious for the working class in Sweden, as in the question on social spending Swedish women showed to be so much more progressive than men. The 'income inequality' question indicates that rather than being progressive on the account of being more gender conscious, Swedish women are very supportive of social spending perhaps because they are more likely to work in the public sector or benefit from it in another way.

Table 10

Question: Many people in the United States (Canada, Australia, Sweden, West Germany) receive much less income than they deserve.

5 point scale (-2 to +2) by Sex and Class*
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
TOTAL	M		.57		.42		-.05		.78		.77
	F	.71	.84	.53	.63	-.15	.02	.87	.95	.88	.98
CAP/ EXEC	M		.08		-.13		-.85		.26		-.17
	F	.50	.91	.15	<u>.43</u>	-.43	<u>.00</u>	.47	<u>.67</u>	.11	<u>.38</u>
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		.71		.30		-.03		.09		.36
	F	.60	.48	.40	.50	-.18	<u>-.33</u>	-.05	<u>-.18</u>	.63	.89
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		.54		.33		-.04		.56		.70
	F	.66	.78	.46	.59	-.05	-.06	.82	1.07	.82	.93
WORK ING CLASS	M		.70		.60		.31		1.06		.94
	F	.80	.90	.63	.66	.22	.13	1.02	.97	.98	1.01
N		(1374)		(2100)		(1042)		(1114)		(1649)	

*For more detailed information about sample size see corresponding table number in appendix I.

Underlined figure indicates sample size is less than 30.

Despite the fact that indicators of income inequality in Sweden and West Germany are the least pronounced of the countries surveyed, it is here that we find that the population, as a whole, is more likely to acknowledge such disparities. This suggests that in countries where the distribution of income is already relatively equitable, a more egalitarian society is more likely to be achieved than in countries where that level is more unequal to begin with. In other words, different trajectories are likely be followed.

As was expected, results for this question show a much wider gulf of opinion between the different classes than the social spending question, with the strongest support coming again from the working classes. This indicates that policies instituted to mitigate inequalities are more likely to be established because of pressures from the lower classes rather than from the good will of capitalist classes.

Again, it is in the United States where the smallest gap is found (.30) between the fundamental classes. This lack of diversity indicates that the views of capitalist-executive class are hegemonic in the United States, which may be interpreted to mean that change is less likely to occur there than in other countries. This is especially notable when compared to class differences in Australia and West Germany (.65 and .87 respectively). Australia's

situation is quite different, though, as support for the status quo is high there, which is not the case in West Germany. As noted, the working class in Australia is relatively small (41% of work force), especially when compared to West Germany (70%), a fact which does not bode well for those on the bottom of the socio-economic scale in Australia.

In Canada, class differences amount to .48, mostly on account of a very regressive capitalist-executive class, especially males. Comparatively speaking, this class is less progressive than its American counterpart, which is also true for the working classes. The reader should keep in mind that the degree of existing inequalities is different to begin with. What these data are saying is that progressive change, according to this question, is more likely to occur in the United States than in Canada.

There is also considerably less agreement on this issue by the working and new middle classes than in the social spending question. This gap is consistent for all countries ranging from a .14 difference in the U.S. to .27 in Australia, a gap which increases noticeably more so for males. Interestingly enough, for males, the biggest split between the new middle and working class is found in Sweden (.50), where the quality of the welfare state is, as we have seen, often attributed to support by the new middle class. Figures are, however, much closer for women.

With the exception of Sweden (where it is the old middle class), in all countries it is the capitalist-executive class that is the most regressive in this regard. Judging from these attitudes, it is in West Germany, Canada, and Australia in particular, that the capitalist-executive class is most likely to oppose measures which might allay existing income gaps.

Age

As in the question on social spending, some of the most dramatic differences of opinion are found between age cohorts.

Table 11
Inequality Question by Country and Age*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

	USA	CAN	AUS	SWE	W.GERM
YOUNG	.84	.55	.14	.85	1.15
MIDDLE	.48	.48	-.15	.73	.67
OLD	.54	.54	-.15	1.09	.81

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

In the United States, West Germany, and Australia awareness of this issue wanes significantly with age. In Sweden, though, precisely the opposite occurs, as older respondents are most progressive, while in Canada there

appears to be no substantive difference of opinion between the age groups. Australia shows to be especially conservative on this issue, especially for the middle and older generation. As in the last question, age does not play a consistent effect on attitudes for all the countries.

Age by Class by Sex

Again, a number of interesting stories unfold when age is further broken down by class and sex. In Sweden, the strongest support is found among older working class respondents of both sexes (as a matter of fact there was not one person who disagreed with this question). Support is equally high for middle aged and older new middle class females. In general, the weakest support in Sweden is found among middle aged and young new middle class males. It appears that the upcoming generation in Sweden, especially the new middle class, is not as supportive of redistributive measures as its predecessors. This, in part, might explain some of the wage drift that occurred in Sweden in the last decade. These data indicate that as the younger generation matures, egalitarian norms are less likely to find support in Sweden.

This does not hold true for the other countries, especially in West Germany, where the new middle class is considerably more progressive than older generations (a difference of +.54). A similar pattern is found for the new

middle class in the U.S., where support increases, particularly so for women (a difference of +.62). In Canada, age does not play that important a role for either class, differences being below .2 in all cases.

Table 12
Social Inequality Question by Country, Class, Age, and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		SWEDEN		WEST GERMANY	
		NMC	WC	NMC	WC	NMC	WC	NMC	WC	NMC	WC
Yng	M	.75	.85	.32	.59	-.02	.32	.63	1.03	1.21	1.12
	F	.86	.91	.46	.63	.05	.29	.77	.94	1.19	1.14
Mid	M	.22	.45	.29	.50	.04	.32	.35	.86	.49	.81
	F	.51	.66	.49	.55	-.16	.18	.82	.89	.50	.81
Old	M	.43	.62	.46	.72	-.29	.24	.71	1.38	.62	.84
	F	.39	.72	.46	.74	-.06	.08	.99	1.32	.65	.95
		.35	.81	.46	.75	.18	-.08	1.27	1.26	.88	1.06

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix I.
Underlined figure indicates sample size is less than 30.

Overall, it may be said that young West Germans and Americans are much more progressive in their attitudes regarding equality than the generation that is leaving the workforce. This is precisely the opposite to what is occurring in Sweden.

In Sweden, at a time when the economy is shrinking, egalitarian norms are more important than ever. The data indicate, however, that younger Swedes are less supportive of these norms than their older counterparts. This does not augur well for the labour movement in that country. The

recent wage drift has already caused cracks in the labour movement and an abandonment of egalitarian values will undoubtedly benefit capital more so than labour. Worker resistance, in the form of class consciousness and labour solidarity, is essential in this struggle. If bargaining continues to become more decentralized, it can only work to the advantage of capital.

As mentioned, differences in equality are considerable between the countries surveyed. These data indicate, as did the results to previous question, that we can expect a diminution in those differences. In the United States, young new middle class respondents are more open to changes which attempt to reduce the present wage gap than their Swedish counterparts, while the working class in those countries are equally progressive in their support. In West Germany, young workers are even more favourably inclined towards a closing of the income gap. While table 9 shows that, overall, acknowledgement of inequality is higher in Sweden than in the United States, an age breakdown suggests that this gap is narrowing between the two countries (see table 10). The abandonment of egalitarian norms in Sweden and the gradual endorsement of the same in the United States, especially for the new middle class, suggests a convergence of values in regards to this issue (although, admittedly, this gap is sizable to begin with, and has a considerable way to go). However, there have been few

indications (other than discussion about national health care) that the United States has been heading into the direction of a more egalitarian society, their obdurate stance towards tax increases being the most contradictory tactic towards such ends.

Employment Status

Inequality, an issue which can be said to be more salient to women than men, is more readily identified by working females than males in all three societies. As in the social spending question, it is employed males who are the least progressive on this issue. Women are not more progressive than men in the unemployed category, with the exception of Canada.

Again, there is no substantive difference of opinion between working and unemployed women in the United States, but there is for males. Employed females and males differ considerably in their opinion, a divergence that all but disappears for unemployed respondents. This consolidation is more adequately explained by a rise in men's, rather than a decline in women's, consciousness. In Canada, this split in opinion between the sexes does not disappear between employed and unemployed interviewees.

Employed West Germans are very progressive in this regard compared to workers of other countries. Unemployed Germans of both sexes are even less tolerant of existing

inequalities in that society, substantially less so than the 93% of Germans who do hold jobs (a difference of .49).

Table 13
Social Inequality Question, by Employment Status, Country and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		W.GERMANY	
Employed	M		.57		.36		.77
	F	.71	.84	.47	.58	.88	.98
Unemployed	M		.88		.72		1.35
	F	.89	.89	.83	.94	1.37	1.38
Housewives		.65		.69		N.A.	

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix I.

As in the last question, housewives are the least progressive group of women in the United States. In Canada, women who are not employed outside of the home are slightly more sympathetic to the cause than women who do work, but less so than those who are unemployed.

Education

In direct contradiction to the expectations laid out in the beginning of this paper, more education has a negative effect on the degree of inequality countenanced. This pattern is consistent for all countries and both sexes, with the exception of males in the United States, where those with some or completed secondary education are slightly more

progressive than men with only an elementary education. Moving into the next educational category, however, a return to the overall pattern is re-established.

The dwindling of awareness is most substantial in Sweden (.55 difference between pre- and post secondary), Canada (.47 ditto), and Australia (.39 ditto). Once figures are divided according to sex, the drop for Canadian males is most dramatic (.63).

Education, then, might explain why younger Swedes are less supportive of egalitarian norms than older ones. As people receive more education they see themselves as distinct from uneducated workers and more deserving of a higher income, breaking with the sense of solidarity common to the older generation.

Table 14

Social Inequality Question, by Education, Country and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2) by Sex and Class
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
Pre-Secondary	M		.69		.75				1.01		
	F	.85	1.01	.76	.77	N.A.		1.09	1.16	N.A.	
Secondary	M		.87		.59		.23		.77		.78
	F	.87	.86	.69	.79	.18	.13	.88	.98	.89	1.00
Post-Secondary	M		.30		.12		-.30		.45		.74
	F	.55	.79	.29	.46	-.21	-.12	.54	.63	.76	.77

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

Poverty Questions

The next set of questions asks respondents what they believe lies at the root of poverty - individual behaviour or structural constraints. Compared to the previous set, these questions are less subjective in the sense that they do not refer to some standard that varies among countries. Poverty is germane to our topic because, historically speaking, one of the primary goals of the welfare state has been to combat it.

As we saw in table 4, the efficacy of redistributive mechanisms used in different countries varies considerably. This can, in part, be linked to the prevailing ideology, and the cause to which it attributes poverty. Obviously, different solutions are called for depending on whether individuals themselves are held responsible for their plight, or fault is placed at the feet of the system. In the United States, for example, an emphasis on individualism implies that 'giving' money to the poor is, in the long run, harmful rather than beneficial to recipients.

As we have seen, income inequality is most pronounced in the United States, more so than in Canada, Australia, and West Germany (see table 4). Consequently, in accordance with the claim made in this thesis, we would expect citizens to be less progressive in the United States than the other three countries.

Poverty Index

In order to make the presentation of the data more manageable a number of indices have been constructed. The score for these indices is calculated in such a way that the 5 point scale can be continued to be used (e.g. if four questions were included an individual question was scored a maximum of plus or minus .5 instead of 2).

As we shall see shortly, respondents might be very progressive in regard to 'personal' questions and conservative to 'structural' ones. Contradictory results such as these are difficult to interpret. The use of an index will offset any inconsistent information by placing a respondent's score on a continuum ranging from the most regressive (-2, fully blames individual) to most progressive (+2, fully blames structure). For the variable of education the index is further broken down into a personal (Q3 & Q4) and structural index (Q5 & Q6).

Here again are the four questions on poverty, divided into personal and structural categories:

Personal:

- Q3: One of the main reasons for poverty is that some people are not intelligent enough to compete in this modern world.
- Q4: One of the main reasons for poverty is that many poor people simply do not want to work.

Structura¹:

- Q5: One of the main reasons for poverty is lack of education and job opportunities for the poor.
- Q6: One of the main reasons for poverty is that the economy is based on private ownership and profits.

Questions 4 and 6 were asked in West Germany, the United States, Canada, Australia , while questions 3 and 5 were asked in the Anglo Saxon countries only. As has already been mentioned, these questions were not asked in Sweden. To analyze each of the four question individually as well as indices would be too space consuming. Therefore, the primary focus of this presentation is to point to anomalies. First, the two questions which include West Germany will be analyzed individually (by class and sex). Any unusual observations regarding the variables of education and employment status will be reported, although tables are not included. This will be followed by a three country (United States, Canada, and Australia) comparison, relying primarily on the poverty index (using all four questions).

Poor People do not want to work

This question asks participants whether poor people are to blame for their plight. For this question it is the United States (least progressive) and Australia (most progressive) that stand out (a difference of 1.12). This is the first

question where sizable negative scores are found, most notable in the United States. The tendency to blame the individual is not surprising, though, as one would expect such an attitude in a country where an ideology of rugged individualism prevails.

Another point worth noting is that interclass differences are not found to be very pronounced for this question, especially for the United States, where differences are virtually non-existent (.09). In the previous questions American women, even those who belong to the capitalist-executive class, were very progressive. The same cannot be said for this question. As a matter of fact, Americans from all classes and both sexes are united in their belief that the poor are responsible for their own plight. It should come as no surprise, then, that welfare benefits for the poor are as meagre as they are in that country. In line with the hypothesis, we would have expected Americans to be the least progressive on this issue, but given the data from the previous two questions, the lack of enlightenment on part of the new middle and working is somewhat surprising.

As anticipated, Canadians are less likely to blame individuals than Americans (+.41 difference overall). Additionally, class differences are evident here, as the working class is more progressive than the capitalist-executive class (+.28). Differences between the sexes are

also more pronounced (+.23 for females).

Table 15

Question: One of the main reasons for poverty is that many poor people simply do not want to work.
5 point scale (-2 to +2) by Sex and Class*
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		W.GERMANY	
TOTAL	M		-.69		-.32		.42		.34
	F	-.63	-.57	-.21	-.09	.49	.55	.35	.35
CAP/ EXEC	M		-.78		-.41		.53		.17
	F	-.69	-.60	-.45	<u>-.48</u>	.70	<u>.86</u>	-.03	<u>-.23</u>
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		-.68		-.26		.37		-.30
	F	-.65	-.62	-.11	.05	.23	<u>.08</u>	-.03	.24
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		-.84		-.69		.50		.37
	F	-.62	-.40	-.47	-.24	.51	.51	.47	.57
WORKING CLASS	M		-.56		-.23		.31		.39
	F	-.60	.63	-.17	-.11	.45	.59	.35	.31
N		(1364)		(2111)		(1046)		(1657)	

*For more detailed information about sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.
Underlined figure indicates sample size is less than 30.

West Germans are considerably more progressive than their North American counterparts (a difference of +.98 compared to the U.S.; +.56 to Canada). Here we find a .38 spread between the two fundamental classes, which increases to .50 when the new middle class is included. Overall, there is no significant difference of opinion between the sexes, although in the individual classes this is not the case.

Australia is, unexpectedly, even more progressive in

this regard than West Germany, and much more so than its Anglo Saxon counterparts. Given that the distribution of income in Australia is approximately the same as Canada's (see table 4), we would have expected the results to this question to be similar for the two countries. These data, then, are in direct contradiction to the hypothesis.

Another anomaly, and contrary to both patterns found so far as well as the hypothesis, is that the capitalist-executive class is the most progressive class in that country, substantially more so than even the working class (difference of $+.25$). Given these attitudes Australia should have very generous programs for the poor, which they do not. But let us set Australia aside for a moment and examine the other three countries.

The results for the United States, Canada, and West Germany do fit the hypothesis. Americans are extremely individualistic in regard to this issue, while Canadians are a little less so. While the working class in both Canada and West Germany exhibit a considerable degree of class consciousness, this characteristic is completely absent in case of the American working class. This could, in part, explain the more generous resources available to the poor in both in Canada and West Germany. Also worth noting is that the new middle class in West Germany is very progressive, in contrast to Canada where this class is rather conservative, lagging far behind the working class ($-.30$).

Private Property

For this question, which asks about private property, we find a smaller range between countries (.28) and bigger differences between classes (from .65 for West Germany to .97 in Canada for the fundamental classes). Australians, who were the most progressive for the last question, turn out to be the most conservative for this one. If we put aside Australia again, it is remarkable how similar the responses are in the three remaining countries (.15), which is particular true for the working classes (difference of .04).

A point to keep in mind is that this study is comprised of stable liberal democracies, a stability which suggests the capitalist system is supported, to a degree, by the bulk of the citizens in each country. A chasmal disagreement of opinion between classes would indicate that this stability is in danger, or even that capitalism itself is in peril. Given these figures, it is fair to say the private enterprise system is in no great danger of being overthrown in any these countries.

Table 16

Question: One of the main reasons for poverty is that the economy is based on private ownership and profits.
 5 point scale (-2 to +2) by Sex and Class
 Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		W.GERMANY	
TOTAL	M		-.28		.17		-.37		.03
	F	-.10	.08	-.05	.08	-.23	-.09	.05	.07
CAP/ EXEC	M		-1.09		-1.26		-1.05		-.71
	F	-.69	-.29	-.80	<u>-.34</u>	-.71	<u>-.36</u>	-.47	<u>-.23</u>
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		-.90		-.64		-.68		-.57
	F	-.38	.15	-.32	.00	-.68	<u>-.67</u>	-.40	-.22
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		-.34		-.21		-.35		-.23
	F	-.21	-.08	-.15	-.08	-.15	-.06	-.11	-.01
WORKING CLASS	M		.09		.18		-.08		.24
	F	.14	.18	.17	.16	-.05	-.02	.18	.11
N		(1349)		(2109)		(1046)		(1640)	

*For more detailed information about sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.
 Underlined figure indicates sample size is less than 30.

This time we find considerable disparity between classes (.83), and the sexes (.36 overall) in the United States. As mentioned, Canada and the United States are very similar here, with women in both countries exhibiting identical scores. Most notable is the unanimous reluctance to see private property in a negative light by males in Canada, United States, and Australia. Interestingly enough, females in the United States, Canada, and West Germany, score the same on this question, with any differences in scores being attributable entirely to a variation in the attitudes of males.

West Germany is the only country where the score registers into the positive, although it does not stand as far apart from the North American countries as we would have expected. What does set West Germany apart from these countries is its relatively progressive capitalist-executive class. There is no noticeable difference in attitude between the sexes in West Germany, which may not be said for the other countries.

Australia is the most conservative for this question which, again, is not what one would anticipate. Such extreme conservatism would have been expected in the United States, where private property rights are vigorously embraced. While opinions do not vary widely between the capitalist-executive or new middle classes in the three Anglo Saxon countries, we find that the old middle and working classes in Australia are considerably more supportive of the status quo than in the United State or Canada.

Whereas in the last question the Australian case exceeded theoretical expectations, for this question it fails to meet them. Closer examination shows that for both questions the working class is relatively conservative: for the 'not want to work' question this conservatism is in contrast to the capitalist-executive class, for the 'private property' question in comparison to the other working classes. In order to get a better understanding of the

Australian case the index, which calculates structural against personal score, will be utilized. But first, a more detailed look at West Germany.

West Germany

As mentioned, for this section tables are not included. In West Germany we again find that there is a huge split of opinion between the employed and unemployed populations (.98 for the 'not want to work' question). There is no divergence of opinion between the sexes, be they employed or unemployed, an observation which, as we will see, does not hold true for the other countries. Also, for the 'not want to work' question, a considerable difference is found between those who have no secondary education and those who do (+.57). This finding is all the more interesting since education appeared to play little or no effect for the other questions asked in that country.

Poverty Index

Here we find that once Australia's responses are combined, the extreme progressiveness on the personal issue and extreme conservatism on structural issue cancel one another, culminating in a score that shows Australians to be slightly more progressive than North Americans. This is more in line with theoretical expectations. Canadians are more progressive than Americans (+.16), with Australians even

more so (+.9 higher than Canada). Differences between the sexes are not as pronounced as those found for some of the other questions (United States +.15 women higher than men; Canada +.19; Australia +.14). Again, women are more progressive than men in almost every class, with the old middle class in Australia being the sole exception.

In the United States, interclass differences amount to .25 between the capitalist-executive and working class. New middle class women are the most progressive group, yet overall, they fail to stand out to the same degree as they did for the 'social spending' and 'income inequality' questions. The same is particularly true for capitalist-

Table 17
Poverty Index, Means by Country, Sex, and Class
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
TOTAL	M		-.01		.14		.26
	F	.07	.14	.24	.33	.33	.40
CAP/ EXEC	M		-.21		-.13		.01
	F	-.13	-.05	-.07	<u>-.01</u>	.29	<u>.57</u>
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		-.22		-.14		.05
	F	-.03	.16	.06	.26	-.03	<u>-.10</u>
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		-.08		.15		.27
	F	.07	.22	.24	.33	.35	.42
WORK ING CLASS	M		.12		.26		.27
	F	.12	.12	.31	.35	.34	.41

*For more detailed information about sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.
Underlined figure indicates sample size is less than 30.

executive women. With the exception of respondents who are working class, in the United States males are more likely to blame poverty on individual behaviour than the system.

Class patterns in the United States and Canada are similar, although Canadians are slightly more progressive than their southern neighbours. This difference is most apparent for the new middle (.17) and working classes (.19).

Age

In table 18, we see that in all three countries older respondents are more conservative than younger ones. This difference is most apparent in the United States (-.36), and approximately equivalent for Canada (-.22) and Australia (-.21). This pattern is consistent with previous observations.

Table 18
Poverty Index, by Country, Class, Age, and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
Young	M		.13		.23		.26
	F	.23	.32	.32	.41	.38	.49
Middle	M		-.13		.04		.21
	F	-.05	.04	.18	.31	.27	.33
Old	M		-.18		.08		.11
	F	-.13	-.07	.12	.14	.17	.23

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

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PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

Younger women are more progressive than their male counterparts when compared to older respondents, a statement that holds true for all three countries. There is also a trend towards consensus between the United States and Canada as we move from the older into the younger age groups (a difference of .25, .23, and .09 respectively). Similar patterns were observed for the 'social spending' and 'inequality' question, although these findings were judged to be tentative because of the incomparability of the questions. The results for this set of questions corroborate this trend towards 'convergence'.

Employment Status

With the exception of Canadian women, employment status plays a significant role in a person's perception of why poverty exists. This difference is most pronounced in the case of American women. Between housewives and unemployed women this difference amounts to .62, and .47 between those who are employed and unemployed. Put another way, in the United States, housewives are relatively conservative in regard to this issue, while the opinions of housewives in Canada do not differ significantly from women who are actively involved in the workforce. This pattern is not consistent with patterns found in previous results, where employment status was found to have considerable impact on Canadian women.

Table 19

Poverty Index, by Employment Status, Country, and Sex*
 5 point scale (-2 to +2)
 Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA	
Employed	M		-.01		.10
	F	.07	.14	.22	.34
Unemployed	M		.30		.34
	F	.46	.61	.35	.36
Housewives		-.01		.26	

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

Education

As education plays contradictory roles for questions pertaining to a personal and structural nature, two corresponding indices were constructed.

For the personal poverty questions, in contrast to those which asked about social spending and inequality, education provides a continual positive effect, i.e. attitudes do not become more conservative for those in the post-secondary category. Education also has a more dramatic effect on the attitudes of women than on those of men in all three countries. This pattern is particularly noticeable in Canada: for the 'pre-secondary' category there is no noticeable difference in attitude found between the sexes, but increases to .27 and .61 for the other two education categories. Put another way, an increase in education only slightly changes attitudes in men (+.10), while its effects

are quite dramatic for women (+.71).

Table 20

Personal Poverty Index, by Education, Country and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
PRE-SECONDARY	M		-.52		-.28	N.A.	
	F	-.58	-.64	-.28	-.28		
SECONDARY	M		-.44		-.11	.29	.25
	F	-.44	-.43	.03	.16		.32
POST-SECONDARY	M		-.08		-.18	.61	.42
	F	-.03	.03	.13	.43		.80

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

This same pattern may be observed in the other countries. Education has a positive effect on men (+.44) and women (+.67) in the United States, as well as Australia (males +.17; females +.48).

Table 21

Structural Poverty Index, by Education, Country and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
PRE-SECONDARY	M		.49		.37	N.A.	
	F	.51	.53	.39	.41		
SECONDARY	M		.31		.41	.22	.19
	F	.48	.65	.45	.49		.25
POST-SECONDARY	M		.12		.12	.12	-.01
	F	.29	.46	.24	.35		.25

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix 1.

For the questions which implicate structures, education has, overall, the opposite effect. In the three countries used in this index, higher education contributes to a more conservative attitude towards the system. Once this is broken down by sex, we find that this downward trend is almost entirely caused by a drop in men's attitudes (U.S. - .37; Canada -.25; Australia -.20), while women's attitudes remain almost constant (U.S. -.07, Canada -.06, with a slight increase for the 'secondary' category in both countries). Also interesting to note is that for Canadian and American males with post-secondary education, there is no difference in attitudes, indicating that education might play a role in the observed trend towards convergence in attitudes between the United States and Canada.

Table 22

Poverty Index (tables 20 and 21 combined), by Education, Country and Sex*
5 point scale (-2 to +2)
Standardized for Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
PRE-SECONDARY	M		-.02		.04	N.A.	
	F	-.04	-.06	.05	.06		
SECONDARY	M		-.06		.15	.37	.21
	F	.09	.12	.24	.32		.53
POST-SECONDARY	M		.03		.15	.26	.23
	F	.14	.25	.27	.39		.29

*For sample size see corresponding table number in appendix I.

When the personal and structural indices are combined, we find that the contradictory effect education has on respondents is somewhat stabilized. Still, this effect is different for each of the three countries. In the United States and Canada, more education means respondents become more progressive (United States $+.18$; Canada $+.22$). Broken down by sex, we find that this effect on attitude is much more significant for women than men (United States: males $+.09$, females $+.31$; Canada: males $+.11$, females $+.33$).

No such patterns are found for Australia, where education has the opposite effect, causing respondents to be more conservative ($-.11$). For men, there is no noticeable effect; for women, it is considerable ($-.24$), but in the opposite direction than for American and Canadian women.

In summary, the data on poverty reveal that working class Americans lack class consciousness, that is, class appears to have no effect on attitudes towards poverty. This is not true for Canada, Australia, or West Germany. Among the Anglo Saxon countries, younger respondents are much more similar in their attitudes than older respondents. In contrast to the previous questions, education has an overall positive effect in the United States, Canada, and West Germany, but overall negative effect in Australia.

Respondents in Australia score relatively high on the personal index and low on the structural one. The same is true for an increase in education. What does this mean?

Given that actions require more political will than non-actions, chances are that little will be done in a situation where both factors, as they invariably do, play a role.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Some general Observations

Overall, the results do support the questions posed at the beginning of this paper. The welfare state does have the support of the majority of the people, that is, people do matter. Additionally, and again as was speculated, this support does diverge along class lines, and is most solid among the working class.

It is interesting to note how capitalism, as a structure, forges identical class patterns of support in all the countries surveyed. For the 'social spending' question this support is similarly high for the new middle and working class not only in Sweden as Esping Andersen suspects, but for all the countries surveyed. This new middle/working class coalition weakens substantially for the 'income inequality' question and, again, in all countries.

At first glance, this seems to weaken my argument considerably, for it appears there is, indeed, some logic which imposes these patterns. But these patterns only signify structural constraints, or as Marx would have it, material conditions. And, again as Marx stated and following him Giddens, people do create their own histories and have considerable freedom to act within these structures. Differences in the quality of the welfare state among liberal democracies are testament to that.

Furthermore, divergence of support between classes - both employer and employee - suggest that class dynamics and attitudes of the various class occupants do matter. These patterns of support do indicate the quality of the welfare state is not wholly dependent on institutional arrangements.

To what degree working class support is responsible for the quality of the welfare state in each of the countries is difficult to determine. For some of the questions, results are more obvious than others. The question that blames poverty on the individual, for example, shows that the working class in the United States lacks any sort of class consciousness, which makes labour mobilization doubtful; this might explain, in part, the meagre benefits paid to the poor in that country.

For the first set of questions, however, this observation cannot be made as easily. For the 'social spending' question, working class support is high in Sweden, yet the same can be said for the capitalist-executive class. As a matter of fact, for Sweden as a whole, support for social spending is very high. As a proportion, support by the capitalist-executive class in Sweden compared to the United States is not that much lower than (1.1:1) than the working classes (1.2:1). Whether the quality of the welfare state between Sweden and the United States is based on differences in culture or working class support cannot be answered conclusively given these small differences. Still,

as suspected, working class support in Sweden is both higher than its capitalist-executive class and than the working class in the Anglo Saxon countries, which substantiates the hypothesis that working class support is meaningful.

For the 'income inequality' question, differences between classes are a little more apparent. Since this question does not directly ask about social programs, we cannot draw conclusions in that regard. What these results do allow us to say is that egalitarian norms are more strongly embraced in western European than Anglo Saxon countries, which is especially true of the working classes. The fact that these norms are more readily espoused by the working class, which in turn might lead to more generous social programs, is certainly a plausible explanation.

The results to the poverty questions, in particular, demonstrate how strongly entrenched an ideology of individualism is in the United States. This is especially true for the question that imputes poverty on the unwillingness to work. According to the poverty index, individual country scores do fit the hypothesis, placing the United States, Canada, and Australia on a continuum from least to most progressive. This same pattern holds true for the working classes of these countries. While differences are by no means enormous they do conform to hypothetical expectations.

Writing on the future of the welfare state, John Myles

(1994: 151) observes that a distinguishing feature of the Anglo Saxon welfare state is one of dualism - that in order to enjoy the full benefits of the social security welfare state one has to be employed in the primary or core sector of the economy, where benefits are furnished by the employer. The data hint at another sort of dualism. While Americans are supportive of universal social programs (e.g. health care and education), an ideology that emphasizes the role of the individual curbs support for social assistance programs. The results of the poverty questions corroborate this lack of support. What this means is that while we might see some improvement in the health care system in the United States, little is likely to be done to improve the social assistance component of the welfare state. If such a divergence does occur, it will likely have public support.¹⁴ In Sweden, as well as Germany, this is less likely to happen as both social spending and, in particular, equality are solidly supported.

Employment Status

The inconsistent effect of employment status is worth noting. The impact unemployment has on the attitudes of

¹⁴The practicality of such a divergence is another matter. If people fail to have sufficient funds to support themselves properly, they will become sick more often, due to problems such as malnutrition. In the end, this might put too much pressure on the medical system to make such a two tiered system viable.

workers in Canada, United States, and West Germany differs considerably. Although it varies between questions, overall, employment status has a relatively modest effect on people's opinions in North America (average of all questions asked: United States .28; Canada .24) compared to West Germany (.61).

This can be interpreted to mean that unemployment has become part of the culture in these countries, for the unemployed do not perceive the world that differently from those who work. In West Germany, this is not the case, as unemployed workers have radically different perceptions regarding this issue, that is, they are considerably more progressive.

In North American countries, workers, especially males, appear to grow much less conscious of their role as workers, showing to be quite complacent in their attitudes. For this reason it is all the more interesting to note that Swedes are so progressive in their attitudes towards the welfare state. Unemployment in that country has risen dramatically since the survey was conducted (to 10% in the summer of 1993 (Clement and Mahon 1994: 7)). The question that arises is what kind of impact unemployment has on workers in Sweden: is its effect less dramatic as in North America, or more drastic as found in West Germany?

Other Variables

Employment status also plays a contradictory role in relation to women's attitudes. Compared to other employment statuses housewives are, in general, the most regressive. In comparison to other women, though, this is not always the case: in the United States housewives do not differ that much in their opinion from women who are part of the active labour force, an observation which is most evident for the 'social spending' question.

In Canada, and especially West Germany, employment status has much greater impact on women. The fact that women's consciousness is situational is reinforced by the fact that Swedish women are very progressive in regard to social spending, but less so for the 'income inequality' question. Most surprising is that an increase in education has a negative effect on women's attitudes towards inequality.

The negative effect of education is evident for both males and females on the first set of questions. Another pattern is apparent for the poverty questions, where a dramatic increase in progressiveness for the 'personal' questions is counteracted by an almost as large negative effect on the structural questions. Overall, though, education has a negative effect on attitudes, which is precisely the opposite of what was expected.

For the most part, and increase in age has a negative

effect as predicted, although this is not due to less education, as was postulated. A tendency for opinions of younger respondents from the different countries to converge is evident, most so for the 'social spending' and poverty questions.

In short, the variables of age, employment status, and age produce inconsistent patterns in the countries surveyed. This makes divisions and coalitions by class all the more compelling, as there are few, with the exception of Australia, anomalies to be found as the result of this variable. For all questions, the working and new middle class is more progressive than capitalist-executive and old middle class. It appears that the role of ownership does indeed play a salient role here. The same may be said for gender, as females are consistently more progressive than men.

To summarize, the answer to the question of whether the quality of the welfare state is dependent on working class mobilization cannot be answered with any certitude here, although the evidence does hint in that direction. Unfortunately, inexactness is not a problem exclusive to this study, but common to social science research in general, where very little, if anything, is ever certain. In the social world there are many variables at work, which means that the impact of a single factor often becomes so diluted that it becomes difficult to measure. For this

reason, we can only speak of tendencies and probabilities, which precludes drawing any definite conclusions. While the data have allowed us to observe some interesting trends, there are also some obvious deficiencies which plague this investigation. These will be discussed briefly in the following section.

Shortcomings

The primary shortcoming resulting from these data is a tendency to focus on the social assistance rather than security aspect of the welfare state. Unfortunately, I had no control over the questions included in this survey. This is a limitation inherent to secondary data analysis of which I was aware from the beginning, but a sacrifice I was willing to make, given the otherwise comprehensive nature of the data. The other alternative, to conduct a survey of this magnitude on my own, was plainly not feasible.

The Canadian survey (available for Canada only) avoids this problem by including several questions concerning the social security component. These questions ask about unemployment insurance, pensions, full employment policy, and day care. An international comparison of these questions would obviously allow a much richer analysis, and therefore a deeper understanding, of the topic in question.

As the survey is constructed now, the 'social spending' question is the only one that is directly concerned with the

social security dimension. This situation might (although this is by no means certain) mask problems that a more comprehensive probing would expose. For one, as Australia and the poverty questions demonstrate, a solitary question may not always provide a complete picture of a situation. This can only be achieved by contrasting it to alternatives. As we saw, while there is less of a tendency to blame poverty on the poor in Australia, there is also an extreme conservatism in regards to the system, making the possibility of significant change slight. Along the same line, it is easy to agree that increased social spending is a good thing, yet by leaving the source of such funds ambiguous, it is difficult to determine the fortitude of this commitment. A willingness to spend does not always mean a willingness to pay. Consequently, a question to complement the social spending question might expose inconsistencies. For example, the additional questions that were asked in Canada are prefaced with the condition that, "If necessary, taxes should be raised to provide adequate..." welfare benefits, pensions for the elderly, etc.

A recent Vector Research poll (1994) commissioned by the Canadian Labour Congress overcomes this problem in other ways. One set of question asks respondents to rank priorities (e.g. reducing unemployment, cutting taxes, or cutting deficit). Another set of questions, very similar to

the 'social spending' question used in this paper, asks about various programs (health care, job creation, retraining), and follows up these questions by inquiring whether respondents are willing to pay more taxes for the programs they support. Scrutinizing the willingness to pay is all the more important in the current political climate where the welfare state, in North America at least, is often pitted against government debts and deficits.

The 'inequality' question also presents a number of problems. The major concern here is that it asks specifically about income, which can be interpreted to mean earned income only. Thus, for example, while Americans are relatively progressive on this issue, we may only conclude that Americans are willing to countenance less of a wage gap. These results fail to reveal to what extent, if any, Americans are supportive of redistributive mechanisms that do not include earned wages. Precisely what respondents understand income to be (*i.e.* does it include a social wage) is difficult to ascertain. Furthermore, this is likely to vary from individual to individual.

The questions regarding poverty, due to the number of questions involved, allow for the most comprehensive comparisons. These comparisons are further enhanced by the fact that these questions do not depend on a standard that varies among countries, as do the other set of questions. Still, this set of questions manifests some major

shortcomings. As mentioned, these questions are more concerned with the social assistance component of the welfare state. As well, the set is not complete for West Germany and missing for Sweden altogether. The reason given for the exclusion of Sweden was that poverty has been virtually eradicated there and would therefore fail to have meaning to interviewees. This problem could easily be overcome by rephrasing the questions slightly, while keeping the ideological element intact.¹⁵

Future Research

The most obvious avenue for further research is to replicate this study in the future.¹⁶ This is critical in all analysis that seeks to understand social change. No doubt, an abundance of valuable information would be provided by such an undertaking. First, we would be able to determine how the recession, and the concomitant opposition to the

¹⁵For example, the questions could ask whether people who earn less are not as intelligent, or are less willing to work hard, than people who earn more. This could be contrasted to questions that blame the system, which could be rephrased to ask whether respondents think the profit motive generates too much inequality, instead of unemployment, as was asked. The important point is to keep the integrity of the individual versus system dichotomy intact, something that would not be that difficult to do.

¹⁶The survey has already been duplicated in the United States, although only in major cities. A replication is also under way for the Baltic region, including Sweden, Finland, and Norway, as well as the addition of Latvia. A similar survey is scheduled to be conducted in Russia and Hungary.

welfare state, has altered people's opinions on this topic. Clearly, these issues cannot be taken out of the current economic and political context and, undoubtedly, these events have influenced attitudes. As was noted earlier, since the early 1980s, when the survey was first conducted, a change has occurred in the world economy. An emphasis on international competitiveness has meant a shift in priorities from a domestic distribution to an international one. This, one would suspect, has impacted on people's perceptions of the role of the welfare state in modern industrial society. A longitudinal study would allow to us to understand to what extent people's attitudes have changed along those lines.

Furthermore, it would be worthwhile to note where these changes have been most apparent. Of the countries used in this comparison, the attack on the welfare state has been most concerted in the United States. The question is, are these attacks reflected in (or maybe based on) public opinion? Are international differences widening or converging? And what is the effect of such factors as more women entering the workforce, higher education, and increased unemployment?

Another research strategy, this one not involving quantitative data analysis, would be to recount the development of the labour movement in Canada since the beginning of the recession. There is some excellent

literature available which traces the mobilization of capital on both an international (Marchak 1991), and domestic level (e.g. Langille 1987). Lowell Turner (1991) does an exemplary job of following the development of the labour movement in West Germany, Sweden, Japan, Britain, and the United States. He only cursorily covers Canada, though, as he finds it difficult to explain a rise in union membership here. This increase, he admits, fails to conform to his theoretical framework (1991: 234-235). Thorough as it is, Turner's analysis depends almost exclusively on the role of institutions, which is done at the expense of workers's actions. One possibility is that Canadian workers have been successful at organizing, despite institutional limitations, by taking a very pro-active approach, an aspect that Lowells's approach ignores. Obviously, there is an opportunity to do some interesting work there.

Some Concluding Remarks

As we have seen, support for social programs is high, even in North America. Based on this support, politicians have found it politically unwise to initiate cuts, all for fear of electoral defeat. This is in direct contradiction to pressures brought on by an ongoing recession, responsible for a drop in revenues, which, in turn, has jeopardized the financial foundation required to keep these very services viable. The result of this has been political deadlock, a

situation that John Myles (1994: 135-166) has characterized as the 'impasse' of the welfare state. Michael Mendelson, deputy minister of community services for the Manitoba New Democratic Party in the mid-eighties, makes a similar observation, speculating that social policy is ill-equipped to resolve this stalemate, causing him to wonder whether social policy is, in effect, dead (Panitch 1994: 36).

Certainly, there is some truth to the observation that we are experiencing a political standoff. As accounts in the media inform us on a daily basis, pressures to cut social programs collide with equally forceful pressures to expand them. Although it is seldom stated that way in the mainstream media, the underlying reason for this disagreement is the fact that capital and labour have fundamentally different objectives and, consequently, different visions of what the welfare state should ultimately look like. Institutional arrangements have set the stage for how scenarios will unfold in different countries. Still, actors will have considerable impact on that outcome. For this reason, the resolution of this impasse will depend on the extent to which capital and labour are able to mobilize their respective resources. For capital, and even more so for labour, class consciousness, solidarity, and knowledge of the subject are vital.

Leo Panitch (1994: 36-43) argues quite convincingly that a break to this deadlock has to come from below,

generated by workers' desire to democratize the welfare state and, furthermore, to transform institutions that block this democratization. A rudimentary change in direction of social policy is fundamental to such a development, one that focuses on participation rather than dependence. The key to this, he concludes, is mobilization.

As we have seen, the degree to which the working class is able to mobilize varies substantially in different countries. This depends - among other things - on relative class size, class consciousness, opposition by capital, and material conditions. Still, support from below is essential. The data showed that nowhere is the capitalist class more progressive in regard to welfare state policies than the working class. Theoretically, this is not surprising, for opposing class interests are precisely what distinguishes capitalism from socialism or communism. This structural requirement makes it highly improbable that the capitalist class is going to voluntarily relinquish any of its power. To this end, education and class consciousness on the part of the working class are essential. Leo Panitch realizes this. So did C.B. Macpherson (1977: 109), who also envisioned a society that is guided from below. Given the state of the global economy, this might sound somewhat idealistic. But given the alternative - to stand by idly and do nothing - it is good advice.

Friedrich Engels (1935: 125) defined freedom as the

ability to make decisions with real knowledge of the subject at hand. He goes on to explain that such knowledge is essential in working towards one's objective. Seen from this perspective, this study has attempted to understand the class dynamics behind the welfare state, and tried to determine what role, if any, working class support plays. The data show that this support is important.

In this period of economic decline, the question is not whether we are going to have to live with less, but how the remaining resources are going to be distributed. And here labour solidarity will be more important than ever. If workers are misinformed about issues, it will be easier to persuade them to relinquish benefits fought for in the past. On the other hand, workers who have a strong sense of class consciousness and are well informed are less likely to make such concessions.

This approach is not in accordance with conventional means of solving political crises, which primarily understands power to work from the top down. In recent years this has been all the more apparent. As we find ourselves living in a political climate of apparent powerlessness, a tendency to blame forces from above has become only too commonplace - individuals blame governments, governments blame international forces. Countless arguments have been made attempting to convince us that globalization is inevitable and that even governments will find themselves

impotent in their efforts to stop it. This has resulted in a fatalistic attitude, with everyone bending like reeds in the wind. On the surface such logic looks only too logical, as the changes that have gripped our society in recent years do indeed seem too overwhelming to contain. In the long run, however, such an attitude is corrosive to political action, eventually turning into a self-fulfilling prophecy. To recognize that there is room for political action is critical, this action being precariously undermined by any sort of fatalism. In the beginning of this thesis I quoted John Myles, who stated that one of the reasons for a Canadian sociology is to understand and transform our society. In order to effect this change, it is essential to know whether power from below can play a role in shaping the society of tomorrow. The data presented in this paper indicate that this is so. The task that lies before us now is to nurture it.

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APPENDIX 1 SAMPLE SIZES

Since a "don't know" category was not offered, only a few responses fell into the "don't know" category (making a difference of less than half a percent for each of the questions). There were also very few respondents who refused to answer, constituting less than one-tenth of a percent. Since the impact of these 'missing' categories is minimal - as well as taking into consideration that they would make the presentation of these data more cumbersome - they have not been included in the analysis.

Additionally, and this applies only to the United States, over ten percent of responses for the attitude questions are missing. These questions were accidentally not included (this occurred when the survey was bound), making this problem one of collection rather than reluctance of respondents to participate. These 'missing' answers should therefore be treated as though they had never been asked in the first place and have not been included in the calculations. Regardless, distribution of these 'skipped' responses was examined and found to be random. Consequently, they cannot be said introduce any bias to the sample.

N.B. Male and female sample sizes do not always add up to total sample size because of weighting.

Table 5

Question: The next policy is government spending on services like education and health. Do you think that the government should be spending a great deal more on education and health, somewhat more, the present amount, somewhat less, or a great deal less?
By Country, Class, and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		SWEDEN		W.GERM	
CAP/ EXEC	M		100		107		64		76
	F	134	34	131	23	76	12	89	13
OMC	M		59		194		58		67
	F	107	48	237	43	69	11	104	37
NMC	M		236		310		141		237
	F	389	154	520	209	222	81	305	68
WC	M		351		617		381		676
	F	729	378	1208	591	769	388	1157	481
TOTAL		1359		2096		1136		1655	

Table 6
Social Spending Question by Country and Age

	USA	CAN	SWE	W.GERM
YOUNG	667	1054	473	611
MID	370	596	395	640
OLD	325	446	271	404
Total	1362	2096	1139	1655

Table 7
Social Spending Question by Country, Class, Age, and Sex

		U.S.A.				CANADA				SWEDEN				W.GERMANY			
		NMC		WC		NMC		WC		NMC		WC		NMC		WC	
Yng	M		128		188		154		327		54		184		58		270
	F	206		370		255		663		99		343		96		480	
Mid	M		69		79		104		145		49		113		108		245
	F	108		185		169		304		72		250		130		417	
Old	M		39		83		52		144		38		84		71		16
	F	75		173		95		240		51		175		79		260	
Total		389		728		519		1207		222		768		305		1157	

Table 8
Social Spending Question, by Employment Status, Country and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		W.GERMANY	
Employed	M		750		1012		1056
	F	1363	613	1745	733	1655	599
Unemployed	M		49		271		97
	F	92	43	477	206	170	73
Housewives		141		325			

Table 9
Social Spending Question, by Education, Country and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
Pre-Secondary	M		127		152		231	N.A.	
	F	226	99	220	68	426	195		
Secondary	M		297		582		204	1382	868
	F	531	234	966	385	338	134		514
Post-Secondary	M		318		494		192	227	157
	F	588	271	909	415	336	144		70
Total			1345		2095		1100		1609

Table 10
Question: Many people in the United States (Canada, Australia, Sweden, West Germany) receive much less income than they deserve. By Class and Sex.

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
CAP/EXEC	M		102		109		74		63		76
	F	140	38	132	23	103	29	75	12	89	13
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		55		194		64		57		66
	F	103	48	238	44	88	24	69	12	102	36
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		238		310		247		140		236
	F	393	155	522	212	437	190	221	81	304	68
WORKING CLASS	M		354		614		210		368		671
	F	738	383	1208	594	414	204	749	381	1154	483
TOTAL			1374		2100		1042		1114		1649

Table 11
Inequality Question by Country and Age

	USA	CAN	AUS	SWE	W.GERM
YOUNG	673	1057	480	464	611
MID	369	599	411	393	635
OLD	336	444	152	261	403
Total	1378	2100	1043	1118	1649

Table 12
Social Inequality Question by Country, Class, Age, and Sex

		U.S.A.				CANADA				AUSTRALIA				SWEDEN				WEST GERMANY			
		NMC		WC		NMC		WC		NMC		WC		NMC		WC		NMC		WC	
Yng	M		129		190		156		328		102		115		54		175		58		269
	F	208	79	372	182	258	102	664	336	202	100	219	104	100	46	332	157	96	38	480	211
Mid	M		69		78		104		141		104		66		48		109		107		241
	F	109	40	183	105	171	68	302	161	177	73	142	76	71	23	246	137	129	22	414	173
Old	M		40		87		51		145		41		29		38		84		71		161
	F	76	36	183	96	93	42	242	97	58	17	53	24	50	12	170	86	79	8	260	99
Total		393		738		522		1 208		437		414		221		748		304		1 154	

Table 13
Social Inequality Question, by Employment Status, Country and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		W.GERMANY	
Employed	M		753		1008		1049
	F	1377	624	1744	735	1649	600
Unemployed	M		49		273		96
	F	93	44	484	211	169	73
Housewives		142		329		N.A.	

Table 14
Social Inequality Question, by Education, Country and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		SWEDEN		W.GERMANY	
Pre-Secondary	M		132		153				225		
	F	237	105	221	68	N.A.		415	190	N.A.	
Secondary	M		293		581		310		203		862
	F	537	243	969	387	515	205	337	134	1376	514
Post-Secondary	M		319		492		286		184		156
	F	592	273	910	418	528	242	328	144	226	70
Total		1366		2001		1043		1080		1602	

Table 15

Question: One of the main reasons for poverty is that many poor people simply do not want to work. By class and country.

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		W.GERMANY	
CAP/ EXEC	M		103		109		74		75
	F	140	38	132	23	103	29	88	13
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		62		194		65		67
	F	108	46	238	44	89	24	104	37
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		235		312		246		237
	F	388	154	526	214	437	191	306	69
WORK ING CLASS	M		348		620		212		676
	F	726	378	1215	594	417	205	1159	483
TOTAL		1364		2111		1046		1657	

Table 16

Question: One of the main reasons for poverty is that the economy is based on private ownership and profits.
By Country, Class, and Sex.

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA		W.GERMANY	
CAP/ EXEC	M		102		109		74		75
	F	140	38	132	23	102	28	88	13
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		61		194		65		67
	F	106	45	238	44	89	24	103	36
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		235		312		248		235
	F	388	154	526	214	439	191	304	69
WORK ING CLASS	M		341		621		212		666
	F	715	374	1213	592	416	204	1145	479
TOTAL		1349		2109		1046		1640	

Table 17
Poverty Index, Means by Country, Sex, and Class

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
CAP/ EXEC	M		94		109		73
	F	128	34	132	23	101	28
OLD MIDDLE CLASS	M		60		194		65
	F	101	41	237	44	89	24
NEW MIDDLE CLASS	M		232		312		246
	F	384	152	526	214	435	189
WORK ING CLASS	M		340		621		209
	F	708	368	1212	591	411	202
TOTAL		1326		2108		1036	

Table 18
Poverty Index, by Country, Class, Age, and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
Young	M		362		593		254
	F	640	278	1059	469	476	222
Middle	M		197		351		239
	F	359	162	602	251	409	170
Old	M		172		290		101
	F	327	155	446	156	152	51
Total		1326		2107		1037	

Table 19
Poverty Index, by Employment Status, Country and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA	
Employed	M		732		1016
	F	1326	594	1751	735
Unemployed	M		52		271
	F	94	42	483	212
Housewives		140		328	

Table 20, 21, 22
Personal, Structural, and Combined Poverty Index, by
Education, Country and Sex

		U.S.A.		CANADA		AUSTRALIA	
Pre- Second ary	M		127		155		
	F	217	90	222	67	N.A.	
Second ary	M		280		584		308
	F	510	230	971	387	510	202
Post- Second ary	M		298		495		286
	F	549	251	915	419	527	241
Total		1276		2108		1037	

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