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What Is and What Ought to Be

Popular Beliefs About Distributive Justice in Thirteen Countries

Gordon Marshall, Adam Swift, David Routh and Carole Burgoyne

This paper tests two of the major theses in the literature on popular beliefs about distributive justice, using attitudinal data from linked sample surveys fielded in thirteen established Western-democratic and newly post-communist industrial nations. One is the speculation that levels of public support for distributions in accordance with desert-type criteria may be radically reduced in non-market societies. The other is the suggestion that beliefs about what is (cognition) are closely related to those about what ought to be (evaluation). Our results suggest important differences in the perception of how goods are actually distributed within the two regime types under scrutiny. However the degree of public support for principles of desert appears to be high in market and non-market societies alike. These findings seem to refute both theses.

Introduction

Burgeoning academic interest in questions of social (or distributive) justice has generated one of the fastest growing social-scientific literatures of the past decade. The topic has (since 1987) boasted its own international journal (*Social Justice Research*) and now supports a sizeable industry in textbooks and research monographs.¹

In a series of prominent contributions to this important field of study, the political theorist David Miller has argued that ‘much of the recent theorizing about justice appears to be out of step with popular opinion’ (Miller, 1991: 372); and, in particular, that normative philosophers of social justice have (following Rawls) paid insufficient heed to considerations of desert in formulating what they take to be the proper basis for a distributive order.²

This conclusion can be supported by reference to Miller’s own influential review of extant research into popular beliefs about distributive justice. The evidence cited therein appears to suggest that the general principle of ‘reward according to contribution’ enjoys considerable support, whether one looks at the experimental work (in which small groups

have to arrive at a just allocation of goods), or at wider surveys of attitudes towards fairness in the distribution of resources. In practice, for most ordinary people, the contribution rule means that there should be proportionality between contributions and rewards (or inputs and outputs) – and this is often synonymous, in popular terminology at least, with the everyday notion of desert (Miller, 1992: 558–567).

Because he is discussing a conceptually rather imprecise literature Miller takes a fairly broad view of ‘desert’ – one which includes, for example, the criteria of both proportionality and merit. This seems not unreasonable, partly because (as Miller’s review of the evidence demonstrates clearly) ordinary people sometimes conflate desert with other (in principle analytically distinct) criteria for distribution (such as that of equity), and partly because political theorists themselves cannot agree upon the content of the concept.³ However he also acknowledges that much of the material he summarizes has further obvious limitations. For example, laboratory studies tend to involve only a particular type of participant (college students), and to report upon artificial situations and tasks.

Surveys mainly tap broad beliefs, support for which may be arrived at via several distinct lines of reasoning, so that researchers usually cannot determine whether (say) assent to an item favouring the idea that ‘people with more ability should earn higher salaries’ indicates support for the principle of justice as desert or is merely a claim about the necessity of having incentives. Moreover, even where desert does seem to emerge unambiguously as a preferred criterion of fairness in either micro or macro studies, its precise basis tends to be unclear; for example, as between rewarding people according to ability, effort expended, or performance and achievement.

Despite the theoretical and methodological shortcomings of much of this research, Miller concludes that conventional desert claims enjoy widespread and substantial popular support.⁴ However, he closes his summary of the evidence with the further speculation that ‘the preeminence of desert criteria, which was a major theme running through our analysis of studies undertaken in Western societies, may be radically weakened if we look elsewhere’ (1992: 588). This last suggestion echoes Miller’s earlier claim that ‘substantive ideas of social justice – the principles used to assess the distribution of benefits and burdens among the members of society – take radically different forms in different types of society’ (1976: 253), but it is in fact no more than hinted at by the results actually cited in his review, and has yet to be tested systematically even today.⁵

The major constraint hindering the investigation of Miller’s speculation about cross-national differences in attitudes to distributive justice is that (as both he and many others have observed) appropriate and systematic comparative studies have hitherto been entirely wanting. A small number of *ad hoc* and limited inquiries have been completed, but many of these are simple two-country comparisons, and most are focused principally upon data gathered in the United States.⁶

In this article we therefore set ourselves the relatively straightforward task of pursuing Miller’s conjecture against data recently made available from the International Social Justice Project (ISJP), a truly comparative cross-national study of attitudes towards social justice. During 1991 and 1992, the Project fielded nationally representative sample surveys employing common methods of data collection

and (within the limits of translation) identical research instruments, in thirteen established Western-democratic and newly post-communist industrial nations.⁷ Of course, Miller has in mind a contrast between market and pre-market societies, whereas our data-set offers only the opportunity of comparing justice beliefs in market and (until recently) state socialist regimes. Nevertheless it is clearly instructive to pursue his speculation in this more generalized form. Does the evidence for the formerly communist states confirm or refute the hypothesis that societies in which market relationships do not occupy a central position differ significantly in their conceptions of social justice (Miller, 1992: 588)?

What Is and What Ought To Be

In fact our data permit us also to address a second – and perhaps more familiar – claim. Not only can we investigate cross-societal differences in public support for alternative conceptions of justice, but we can also explore the fundamental issue of the connection between cognition and evaluation; in other words, how beliefs about what is relate to those about what ought to be.

Much of the relevant literature assumes that the former corresponds closely to – or even determines – the latter. For example, in one of George Homans’s (1974: 249–250) classic early statements of exchange theory he observes that ‘the rule of distributive justice is a statement of what ought to be, and what people say ought to be is determined in the long run and with some lag by what they find in fact to be the case’. Similarly, although they are critical of the formulation of distributive justice proposed by exchange theorists, Joseph Berger and his colleagues (1972: 139) also insist that ‘as a consequence of beliefs about what is typically the case, expectations in local systems come to be formed about what one can legitimately claim ought to be the case’. More recently, Kahneman, Knetsch and Thaler (1986: 730–31) have expressed the same argument in somewhat different terms, suggesting that ‘any stable state of affairs tends to become accepted eventually, at least in the sense that alternatives to it no longer readily come to mind’ – or, more concisely still, that ‘people . . . adapt their views of fairness to the

norms of actual behavior? A similar idea is also at the heart of so-called just world theories, which suggest that ‘individuals have a need to believe that they live in a world where people generally get what they deserve’ (Lerner and Miller, 1978: 1030; see also Lerner, 1980). On this reasoning, we should expect to find, over time, a close association between people’s beliefs about how goods and services actually are distributed, on the one hand, and their beliefs about what distributive principles are requirements of social justice, on the other.

Unfortunately our data are cross-sectional. We are therefore unable empirically to pursue the temporal aspect of this proposition. What we can consider is the extent to which members of those Western-capitalist and newly post-communist states for which we have information match their aspirations for social justice to their assessments of the existing distributive order. This, together with the question of whether people living in different types of society endorse different distributive principles, will be the focus of the following analyses.

Beliefs About Inequality: Perceptions of the Status Quo

Most of the ISJP evidence about people’s perceptions of the distributive order comes in the form of responses to a series of short descriptive statements such as ‘In Britain people get rewarded for their effort’. The exact wording of the 30 attitudinal items with which we are here concerned is shown in Appendix 1. Respondents to the surveys indicated agreement or disagreement with this assessment of their society using a standard five-point (or very occasionally four-point) Likert scale, ranging (in this case) from ‘strongly agree’ and ‘somewhat agree’ to ‘somewhat disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’, with a neutral mid-point response of ‘neither agree nor disagree’ (and a residual ‘don’t know’ option).

Table 1 describes the results of this inquiry. For each of the relevant questionnaire items, the table shows the percentage of interviewees within each country who agreed (strongly or somewhat) with the proposition, minus the percentage who disagreed (strongly or somewhat). (The mnemonics associated with each variable are those used in the publicly-available data-set.) Because we are pursuing

the speculation that beliefs may differ systematically across societal types, we have also provided separate averages for the five democratic-capitalist and eight post-communist nations, together with (in the final column of the table) the resulting difference between the two.

The first fifteen statements deal broadly with issues of proportionality, contribution, and equity – although the particular quality attracting reward varies considerably across the items. Question 13, for example, suggests that ‘people get rewarded for their intelligence and skill’. Question 5 maintains that ‘hard work’ is very often the reason why people are rich. The idea that ‘ability and talent’ are very important to success is examined in question 14. This sort of proposition can be contrasted with a second group of fifteen items which suggest (in different ways) that distribution takes place according to some criterion regarded as external to the individual. For example, question 16 invites comment on the argument that people are often poor in Britain (or wherever) because of ‘prejudice and discrimination’ against certain segments of the population; item 24 supposes that having a particular social background is important for success; and question 22 hypothesizes that ‘being a man and not a woman’ is an important influence in determining levels of pay. In various ways, most of the items point to some aspect of structural advantage or disadvantage, although the final three speculate that success or failure in life is merely a matter of non-constitutive luck.⁸

So what do these data reveal about popular perceptions of the distributive order in the thirteen societies under consideration? Of course, the table contains much in the way of detailed information, some of which suggests interesting (and sometimes puzzling) differences across countries. For example, item 17 proposes that there are poor people in each nation because of ‘lack of equal opportunity’, and invites respondents to indicate how often they judge this to be the case. It is not clear to us why, among those who live in the former state-socialist societies, Bulgarians are much more likely to agree that this happens ‘very often’ or ‘often’ than are (say) Poles and Russians. Conversely, why is the shape of public opinion on this matter apparently so similar in Britain and the United States, given that the former is supposedly the archetype of a (relatively

Table 1. *Perceptions of the status quo*

Desert		Bul	Cza	Est	GDR	Hun	Pol	Rus	Slo	FRG	GBR	Hol	Jap	USA	AvS	AvC	DIFF
1	pability	-7	-1	-11	-18	20	11	-9	-9	0	11	9	-22	13	-3	2	5
2	pmorals	38	54	52	40	65	72	76	32	21	5	6	51	22	54	21	-33
3	peffort	28	7	17	-10	-3	27	10	2	10	15	18	53	36	10	26	16
4	wability	20	34	38	60	46	26	22	43	56	46	69	57	52	36	56	20
5	whdwork	32	0	-24	36	5	-3	-19	-3	38	51	54	28	60	3	46	43
6	apayeduc	20	-6	-1	61	32	2	-15	55	93	66	68	86	85	19	80	61
7	apaycond	-4	-13	-3	40	-28	-10	-2	-13	44	20	-43	25	22	-33	68	101
8	apayeff	-32	-20	-20	68	4	-15	-37	-28	88	47	4	30	78	-80	49	129
9	apayresp	-3	1	14	79	19	16	-8	18	90	74	19	64	89	17	67	50
10	apayresp	15	-7	1	21	5	21	7	14	61	37	5	70	80	10	51	41
11	eqopp	-55	-7	-48	-35	-45	-35	-45	-5	21	-6	9	10	37	-34	14	48
12	reweffrt	-62	-53	-43	1	-1	-51	-44	-3	56	10	22	25	49	-32	32	64
13	rewskill	-67	-49	-70	27	-38	-42	-49	-5	66	27	31	51	56	-37	46	83
14	socabil	73	86	72	98	81	56	54	84	94	80	93	91	89	76	89	13
15	soceffrt	74	77	51	81	73	10	42	61	75	81	90	87	93	59	85	26
Non-desert																	
16	pdiscrim	-33	-41	-39	15	-15	-54	-3	-34	11	9	4	-24	17	-26	3	29
17	poppor	60	17	38	28	39	33	26	46	18	15	9	-17	8	36	33	-3
18	pecons	81	30	85	18	65	68	90	68	-5	37	2	6	28	63	14	-49
19	wknow	85	71	80	65	65	71	87	60	72	75	71	34	72	73	65	-8
20	woppor	77	37	56	60	55	51	31	56	62	60	67	42	55	53	57	4
21	wecons	62	46	85	6	37	48	79	37	-12	32	15	45	17	52	19	-33
22	apaysex	-64	-22	-63	-10	-19	-58	-54	-50	45	10	-19	46	40	-43	24	67
23	getneed	-83	-68	-84	-3	-55	-70	-86	-16	23	-34	47	62	-10	-58	18	76
24	socbackg	-4	-16	21	44	-36	10	-14	44	57	45	61	57	49	6	54	48
25	socknow	55	35	76	77	37	79	78	76	84	64	80	15	68	64	63	-1
26	socsex	-59	-53	-76	17	-53	-63	-69	-17	2	-38	-4	-34	-5	-47	-16	31
27	socrace	-62	-59	-28	58	-55	-78	-74	-1	36	-34	24	*	-3	-37	6	43
28	pluck	-27	-26	-33	-37	-6	2	-19	-26	-13	-13	-41	-17	-33	-22	-23	-1
29	wluck	12	-15	-6	-9	17	12	0	-13	19	12	10	48	-12	-2	15	17
30	socluck	24	25	-13	41	8	26	12	29	46	15	72	31	-7	19	31	12

* = Missing Data

closed) class society whereas the American Dream has always depicted the latter country as an open society and land of (more or less equal) opportunity?

It is certainly possible to speculate about the significance of these and other particular similarities and differences revealed by the summary statistics shown in the table. It seems to us, however, that a number of perhaps more interesting generalizations would also seem to be warranted by these findings.

Consider, first of all, the criteria that are listed in the upper portion of the table. All of the questions have been scored in the same direction, so it is clear

from the proliferation of negative percentages on the left-hand side of the table that there is generally more scepticism about the operation of the contribution rule in the post-communist societies of Central and Eastern Europe, than in long-standing capitalist democracies such as Great Britain and the United States. For example, the pattern of responses to question 12 ('people get rewarded for their effort') reveals that in all but one of the former communist states (the German Democratic Republic) more people disagreed than agreed with this proposition, in most cases by a substantial margin (only Hungary

and Slovenia return small negative percentages). In the five Western-style capitalist nations, by comparison, there is in each case a clear majority who would endorse the view that effort is rewarded. That majority is largest in the former West Germany, slightly smaller in the USA, more modest in Holland and Japan, and smallest in Great Britain. Most of the items in the top half of the table display this same overall pattern of negative scores for the post-communist regimes (majority disagreement with the idea that rewards reflect contributions) and positive scores for the countries of the capitalist West (majority agreement with that idea).

Similarly, we might note that in almost every case, the average score for the capitalist West and Japan (considered together) is higher than that for the nations recently emerged from state socialism. For example, with regard to the item dealing with reward for effort (question 12), the data for the post-communist states yield an average net disagreement (minus 32 per cent) whereas those for the capitalist democracies show the same overall level of endorsement (at 32 per cent for the five nations taken together). The size of the gap that is commonly found between these averages is then revealed in the often substantial overall difference figures that are reported in the final column of the table. The single exception to this general pattern is question 2, which asserts that people are often poor because of their 'loose morals and drunkenness', an attribution for poverty which is much more commonly found in Central and Eastern Europe than in the established capitalist democracies. However, this item apart (which operationalizes what we might call 'the vodka theory of poverty'), the perception that distribution takes place in accordance with the principle of proportionality, broadly understood, is clearly more widespread in the established market societies than in recently communist Central and Eastern Europe. In some cases, indeed, there is very little (or almost no) overlap in the scores for nations representing these two broad types of socio-economic regime. Question 13 ('people get rewarded for their intelligence and skill') is a typical case in point.

Naturally, it must also be conceded that there are substantial differences on individual items within the two societal types, and these can on occasion be as great as the differences between them. In part

(as in the case of question 13 itself) this is because the data for the German Democratic Republic reveal it to be an outlier among the formerly communist nations. Perhaps this is to be explained by the special circumstances of that particular country. At the time of the ISJP survey, East Germans had already experienced six months of formal reunification with the Federal Republic to the west, after the surprisingly rapid collapse of the old communist regime and peaceful transition to democracy. In some respects, therefore, the data for the GDR may reflect the acknowledged optimism of this 'honeymoon period', during which some aspects of public opinion in the East came quite quickly to resemble that in the West, as for example in the case of the belief that 'individual effort' exerts great influence on the level of pay received by an individual (question 8), a proposition which attracted strong support in both parts of the newly unified Germany.

The degree of similarity in popular perceptions of the criteria governing distributive inequality does seem, however, to be markedly greater among the fifteen structural or external items for which data are shown in the bottom half of this same table. Most obviously, the overall difference scores tend to be smaller, comparing the liberal-capitalist and post-communist regimes as broad categories. Indeed, the average score for regime types is almost identical in the case of four items; namely, those suggesting that people are poor because of 'lack of equal opportunity' or 'bad luck', are often rich because they 'have more opportunities to begin with', and are successful simply because they 'have the right connections'. Of course, at the other end of the spectrum there are relatively large average differences generated by the propositions that people (in each particular society) 'get what they need', and that being a man rather than a woman influences level of pay. (In both cases people living in the established market societies are much more likely to agree with these statements.) But between these two extremes there is considerable differentiation within the two sorts of regime and a good deal of overlap between them. This is readily illustrated by popular views about the role of good luck in achieving wealth or a high social standing (questions 29 and 30) and about the importance of 'having the right connections' as a means of becoming rich (question 19). Sometimes the overlap emerges from the fact that the German Democratic

Republic is again an outlier among the societies of Central and Eastern Europe (see, for example, the responses to questions 16, 26, and 27). In the main, however, the regime types can less clearly be differentiated here than in the upper portion of the table.

We are tempted by these findings provisionally to conclude that, in market societies, the rewards people receive are generally believed to reflect their contribution – whereas this is not the case in the countries comprising the former Soviet Empire. If we compare everyday perceptions of the sources of inequality across those liberal-capitalist and post-communist nations for which we have data, one observes: first, that there is less doubt about the efficacy of proportionality criteria in the former than in the latter; and, second, that a similar distinction by regime type is not obvious in beliefs that root distributive outcomes either in structural advantage and disadvantage or in the arbitrary whim of (non-constitutive) fortune.

Multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis (see Kruskal and Wish, 1978) confirms the soundness of our reading of the descriptive dominance scores shown in Table 1 for the fifteen desert items. This necessitated a certain amount of pre-processing of each country's profile of responses to these items, so that we could derive a relevant symmetric proximity matrix, containing Euclidean dissimilarity coefficients between each possible pair of countries.⁹ The SPSS implementation of the ALSCAL program (see Schiffman *et al.*, 1981) was used to obtain both two-dimensional and one-dimensional metric MDS solutions. These are portrayed in Figures 1 and 2. Respectively they explained 92 per cent and 81 per cent of the variance in the proximity matrix. (Classical metric rather than non-metric analysis was justified here since inspection revealed that a linear function provided a very good approximation to the relationship between the initial dissimilarities and the solution distances.)

In the case of the analysis of a single proximity matrix, it is important to remember that the location of the axes is relatively arbitrary, and they may be rotated if this facilitates interpretation. In the event, looking at Figure 1, we see that the ordering on the horizontal axis is consistent with the thesis that liberal-capitalist and former communist regimes might be distinctive in the degree to which public opinion perceives the contribution principle

to underlie the actual distribution of goods. With the (by now familiar) exception of East Germany, the thirteen nations are neatly arranged with the United States and other market societies being found towards one end of the continuum, and the various post-communist countries towards the other. But the meaning of the vertical axis is not at all apparent. Holland is at one extreme, followed by Hungary and then a clutch of both market and post-communist states, while both Japan and Poland are found at the other. Russia, Bulgaria, and the two Germanies occupy almost identical spaces in terms of this dimension, as indeed do both the United States and Slovenia. It is hard to attribute any meaningful sociological interpretation to such results.

Against these findings, the simpler one-dimensional solution reported in Figure 2 looks more interesting, at least from the point of view of our argument about cross-national differences and similarities in public beliefs about the bases of existing distributive orders. Naturally, this configuration has a reduced goodness-of-fit and explains less of the cross-national variance in our attitudinal items, although the stress statistic and R-squared are still satisfactory (and rather impressive for a one-dimensional scaling). In this case we see the nations arranged in the expected fashion, with the market societies (and East Germany) forming one identifiable grouping, and the post-communist states another. In general terms, public opinion in the former is much more likely to see distributive outcomes as proportional to individuals' contributions than is public opinion in the latter, with the United States, West Germany, and Japan topping this particular league. The British are the most sceptical of the capitalist nations for which we have data, while Estonians, Poles, and (especially) Russians are least likely to regard their societies as rewarding people in proportion to their contribution.¹⁰

Beliefs About Inequality: Normative Principles

Thus far, we have examined everyday beliefs about the factors that shape distributive outcomes in a number of industrialized societies throughout Europe, North America, and Asia. In other words, we report data concerning popular perceptions of the

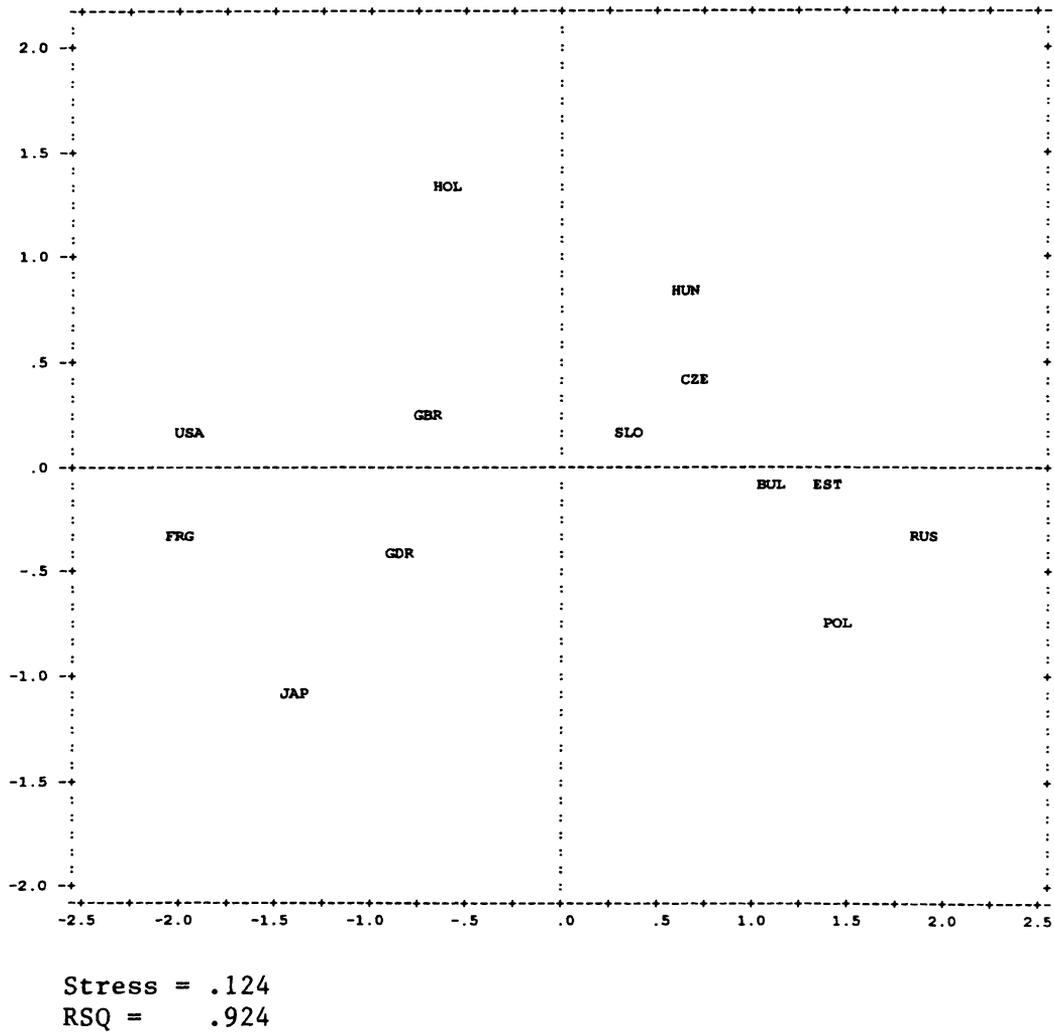


Figure 1. MDS, perceptions of status quo for desert items (two-dimensional scaling).

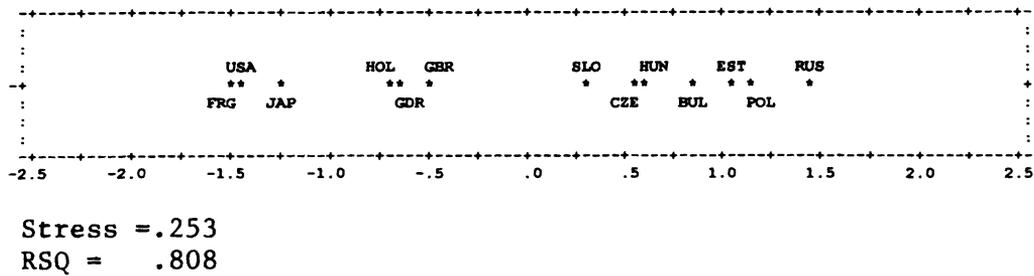


Figure 2. MDS, perceptions of status quo for desert items (one-dimensional scaling).

Table 2. *Support for normative principles*

	Bul	Cza	Est	GDR	Hun	Pol	Rus	Slo	FRG	GBR	Hol	Jap	USA	AvS	AvC	DIFF
Desert																
31 payresp	88	87	85	97	88	87	71	94	96	93	73	87	96	87	89	2
32 payeff	86	94	90	99	96	91	88	95	98	91	61	95	96	92	88	-4
33 paycon	92	85	87	93	90	81	85	96	91	83	57	77	79	87	77	-10
34 payeduc	63	78	85	92	79	79	73	82	83	56	26	5	74	79	49	-30
35 wkhard	97	88	96	96	97	87	93	87	90	93	84	86	89	93	88	-5
36 payleng	39	1	39	81	45	62	35	64	63	68	-34	60	88	46	49	3
37 luckiq	-29	-64	-5	-35	-51	-14	-58	-32	-27	-56	-41	-37	-66	-36	-45	-9
Equal outcome																
38 gvtlimit	-10	-30	-22	33	27	5	-25	27	-21	-16	-22	-5	-64	1	-26	-27
39 eqshare	-42	-50	-68	-42	-39	-51	-29	-31	-37	-32	-47	-39	-51	-44	-41	3
40 disadvtg	65	50	84	*	49	87	71	82	*	70	74	69	70	70	71	1
41 gvtzol	88	81	91	89	87	79	80	86	76	70	62	77	19	85	61	-24
Market entitlement																
42 keepearn	66	80	92	91	72	49	90	83	83	72	77	56	88	78	75	-3
43 wealthcq	68	54	47	70	58	50	70	69	72	71	61	40	74	61	64	3
44 bequest	95	86	99	65	97	97	98	98	63	94	90	76	97	92	84	-8
45 hospay	-92	-93	-82	-97	-93	-92	-77	-93	-95	-88	-84	-95	-89	-90	-90	0
46 edafford	39	-37	24	-17	22	52	46	80	19	22	-54	32	36	26	11	-15
Functional inequality																
47 inceffrt	50	52	39	42	-4	57	63	38	51	46	34	26	32	42	38	-4
48 profits	-12	32	-34	-13	-24	28	52	16	11	-5	7	32	8	6	11	5
49 paidresp	84	75	70	79	68	78	87	57	72	72	55	1	42	75	48	-27
50 hosusful	-36	-26	-39	-63	-59	-33	-34	-49	-80	-46	-69	-58	-42	-42	-59	-17
51 aptusful	22	60	29	45	8	51	38	24	-13	18	-20	-29	-17	35	-12	-47
Need																
52 aptfam	71	61	73	60	64	61	61	79	48	28	12	19	-2	66	21	45
53 aptinc	24	-8	-15	36	3	24	-38	41	33	12	2	18	-25	67	8	59
54 hosfam	33	35	65	34	27	40	40	44	15	5	-10	-43	-27	40	-12	-52
55 paysize	7	-19	18	21	27	17	11	27	47	-33	-60	38	-13	14	-21	-35
56 igetneed	-18	12	17	78	48	33	4	20	65	14	12	-5	-2	24	17	-7
Residual																
57 hosrules	-4	-18	-10	-12	30	-12	-3	12	-35	22	12	18	2	-2	4	6
58 paysex	-75	-83	-71	-73	-68	-75	-70	-76	-64	-69	-93	-31	-68	-74	-65	9
59 hoslott	-13	-10	5	-19	-19	26	-8	-23	10	-40	-2	23	16	-8	1	9
60 aptlott	3	-10	30	6	-2	32	-6	39	23	-6	39	84	-6	2	27	25

status quo, and in particular people's explanations for the unequal disposition of certain desirable goods and rewards. We now turn our attention from these predominantly cognitive beliefs to

those more evaluative judgements that were the focus of Miller's argument about desert.

As we have seen, there are important cross-national differences in the extent to which public

opinion supports the idea that distributive outcomes actually do follow the rule of contribution, with those who live in the former communist societies being less likely to explain inequalities in such terms. Do these same cross-national differences emerge if we focus instead upon people's beliefs about how justice requires that desirable goods and resources ought to be distributed? Is it true (as Miller suspects might be the case) that people in market societies are more supportive of what are conventionally regarded as desert-based allocations, than are those who live in non-market societies, such as those of Central and Eastern Europe?

The data reported in Table 2 suggest a preliminary answer to this question. The structure of this table is similar to that described earlier in relation to Table 1. Here too we are dealing with responses to a large number of discrete Likert-scaled attitudinal questions (the wording of which is shown in Appendix 2). These have been summarized by subtracting the percentage of respondents who disagreed with each proposition from that which offered endorsement. Cells containing negative values therefore indicate majority disagreement with the view being aired (net of those who offered no opinion or took a neutral stance).¹¹

The first group of seven items in the table are those most relevant to an assessment of Miller's claim. For example, question 34 suggests that the pay of employees should be influenced by their 'level of education', while item 35 proposes that 'people who work hard deserve to earn more than those who do not'. For the sake of completeness, we have also included results for a range of alternative distributive principles, grouped for convenience into several broad categories. The second group points to preferences for or against greater equality of outcome as a means of pursuing social justice; for example, as in the proposition that 'the fairest way of distributing wealth and income would be to give everyone equal shares', or in support for government action to guarantee a minimum standard of living and restrict the maximum amount of money any one person can make. The third group indicates support for, or opposition to, a clutch of propositions about entitlement and the market as a means of allocating particular goods and benefits. Specific items here maintain that people are entitled to keep what they have earned

(even if this means some people will be wealthier than others); that it is just for those who can afford it to buy better education for their children; and that justice would allow those who are better off to move to the head of any queue for scarce medical care or attention. The distributive principle of what we might call 'functional inequality' is represented by the fourth group of items, which solicit views on the need for incentives to encourage individual effort, and the acceptability of business making large profits because these eventually benefit everyone in society.¹² The penultimate group deals with the criterion of need, as for example in the case of paying the highest salaries to those employees who have the largest families, while the final four items in the table form a residual group indicating attitudes towards a distribution based on ascriptive criteria ('being a man and not a woman'), procedural justice ('following the rules of the hospital' when allocating medical care), and chance (allocation of scarce goods by means of a lottery).

Again the table reveals many potentially interesting points of similarity and difference between nations. For example, we might note that the degree of support for paying people according to their individual efforts (item 32) is noticeably (and curiously) lower in Holland than elsewhere, as is that for compensating those who labour in unpleasant working environments (question 33). Similarly, Hungarians are (by comparison with other nationalities) more inclined to disagree with the proposition that individuals will exert themselves only if income differences are large enough to provide a suitable incentive for doing so, while the Japanese take a similarly extreme position in relation to individual willingness to accept extra responsibility at work. (Compare the pattern of responses to questions 47 and 49.) Among the thirteen nationalities for which we have data, Americans are markedly less supportive than are all others of the idea that the government should guarantee a minimum standard of living (question 41), while Germans generally are least supportive of the principle of entitlement to transfer wealth intergenerationally (item 44).

These and other points of detailed comparison are, however, less obviously interesting, from our point of view, than is the overall pattern of the findings considered as a whole. For example, if we compare the average scores for the established

capitalist and former state-socialist countries with respect to support for a variety of broadly desert-based distributive principles, it is clear that the differences between the two forms of socio-economic regime are extremely modest. Most desert-type criteria attract majority support in both types of society. As a rule, there is fairly widespread enthusiasm for the principle of reward in proportion to contribution or achievement, be it effort expended, responsibility assumed, or skills acquired. Here we might note the high levels of support, in all nations, for the proposition that people who work hard are deserving of additional income (questions 33 and 35). Similarly, in every society for which we have data, many more people oppose than support the idea that skill or intelligence is simply a matter of luck and not therefore deserving of reward (question 37). In short, it is clear from the first seven items shown in the table that conventional desert claims command considerable popular support, across a broad sweep of industrialized societies.

Not surprisingly, therefore, equality of outcome or condition attracts almost correspondingly widespread opposition. A majority of people in every society are averse to the suggestion that justice demands equal sharing of income and wealth (item 39). Interestingly, however, this anti-egalitarianism is combined with majority support (in most countries at least) for a floor but no ceiling to the income distribution. The idea that governments should provide everyone with a minimum standard of living is widely endorsed in almost every established capitalist and former communist nation alike. (The United States provides the only partial exception to this rule.) There is a similar level of support for giving extra help to disadvantaged groups, again in the name of justice, so that they can have equal opportunities in life. However, only in a few of the post-communist regimes (notably East Germany, Hungary, and Slovenia) is public opinion in favour of placing an upper limit on earnings, with popular sentiment elsewhere tending to the view that justice demands no such constraint. Our American respondents, perhaps predictably, were by some way the most strongly opposed to this suggestion.

Another broad area of similarity across all the countries under review concerns the place of entitlement and the role of the market in producing justice in distributive outcomes. What is striking about the

pattern of responses to this third group of items in the table is the (perhaps surprising) degree of cross-national uniformity in the results. A majority (usually a large majority) in every society favour unequal riches (so long as these derive from an initial equality of opportunity) and favour entitlement to retain and transfer wealth intergenerationally (providing this has been earned legitimately in the first instance). On the other hand, although the market is seen as an ally of social justice in the acquisition and distribution of income, there is near universal opposition to the idea that hospital care should be available to the highest bidder. (Note the overwhelming resistance to the proposal that justice is served by allowing rich patients to jump the queue for urgent medical treatment.) There is support here for the well-known suggestion (see, for example, Walzer, 1983) that certain distributive mechanisms or principles are sphere-specific; that is, that justice requires that different goods be distributed in accordance with different criteria.

Our findings in relation to principles of what we have called 'functional inequality' serve to underline this observation. Note, for example, the contrasting pattern of responses in relation to questions 50 and 51. There is considerable opposition in all societies to the idea that scarce medical treatment should be distributed 'according to the usefulness of each patient for society at large'. However, only in (some of) the established Western-style democracies is this same opposition encountered in the sphere of housing, since a majority in each of the former communist states (and Great Britain) think that this functional criterion would provide for a just outcome in allocating an apartment for rent.

Cross-national patterns of support for the other items in this group tends to be more complex. A substantial majority in each society (with the single exception of the Japanese) are convinced that people would not want to take extra responsibility at work unless they were paid more in compensation. Only the Hungarians are, on balance, more suspicious than supportive of the idea that significant income differences are necessary to the creation of incentives for effort. It would be easy to read the effects of the life-long employment system into the otherwise puzzling result for Japan. We are not at all clear why Hungarians tend to be more sceptical about the need for monetary incentives than are other Eastern and

Central European respondents. Nor is there any obvious reason for the rather mixed cross-national pattern of responses to the suggestion that business profits are a good thing because everyone in society benefits in the end. This idea received more support than dissent in half of the former state-socialist regimes (Russia, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Slovenia) but more dissent than support in the others (Bulgaria, Estonia, East Germany, and Hungary). Public opinion in the established market societies likewise ranges from majority support (in Japan), via more or less equally divided opinion (in West Germany and the United States), to a situation of more widespread scepticism (in Great Britain).

By comparison, where the principle of need is articulated, the distinction between the former communist regimes and the Western-style democracies tends to be marked. As a rule, respondents in the new post-communist states of Central and Eastern Europe are more sympathetic to considerations of need when making justice judgements than are their counterparts in the capitalist West, although it is also true that (as it were) the margins are somewhat messy in the sense that there is some (but not much) overlap in the scores across the two regime types. However, their average scores do tend to be some considerable way apart, and to show much less enthusiasm for considerations of need among those living in the capitalist West – irrespective of whether one is allocating hospital care (item 54), scarce housing (question 52), or wealth (item 55).

Summarizing these findings as a whole, we might say that the principle of reward according to contribution – or the conventional notion of desert – receives widespread popular support, in East and West alike. Similarly, in most distributive spheres (health is an exception) market-based outcomes are generally endorsed, providing they are allied with equality of opportunity to earn unequal rewards. Although this is commonly combined with the idea that there should be a ‘safety-net’ in the form of a guaranteed minimum standard of living, there is uneven support for the principle of restricting wealth at the upper end, and for the notion that business profits will be generally beneficial through the effects of trickle-down. Public opinion in the established market societies is less sensitive than in the former state-socialist regimes to considerations of

need where justice is concerned. It is hard to find support for equality of outcome anywhere.

Does multidimensional scaling of these data confirm the evidence of the cross-tabulations? The answer is yes, at least for those conventional desert claims in which we are particularly interested, as will be evident from the plot shown in Figure 3. This figure shows the two-dimensional (ALSCAL) solution for distances between national patterns of responses to the seven desert-type items earlier reported for the thirteen nations under study (the first group of attitudinal responses shown in Table 2). It is not easy to read a coherent sociological story into the results. Even if we rotate the axes, such that one dimension runs from the bottom left-hand to the top right-hand corner of the configuration (remembering here that, in the analysis of a single proximity matrix such as this, the orientation of axes is arbitrary), we do not seem to get the strong ordering of capitalist and post-communist countries that was evident in the corresponding cognitive (‘What is?’) items. Leaving aside the somewhat extreme case of Holland, the remaining market societies are still found across the spectrum of positions, sometimes adjacent to formerly communist regimes with which they seem to have little else in common.

In short, therefore, the latent structure of these data does not point to a distinction between market-capitalist and post-communist societies, at least in terms of the strength of popular support for distributive principles appealing to considerations of proportionality, contribution, or equity. More complex multidimensional (as well as the simple one-dimensional) solutions produced by further scaling of the evidence shed no further light on this finding.

Conclusion

In this paper we have examined justice beliefs in thirteen nations, starting from David Miller’s observation that the general principle of ‘reward according to contribution’ – or in broad terms the notion of ‘desert’ – seems to enjoy widespread support in Western-style capitalist countries, and pursuing his suggestion that popular enthusiasm for desert-type criteria may be substantially diminished in non-market societies. New survey data

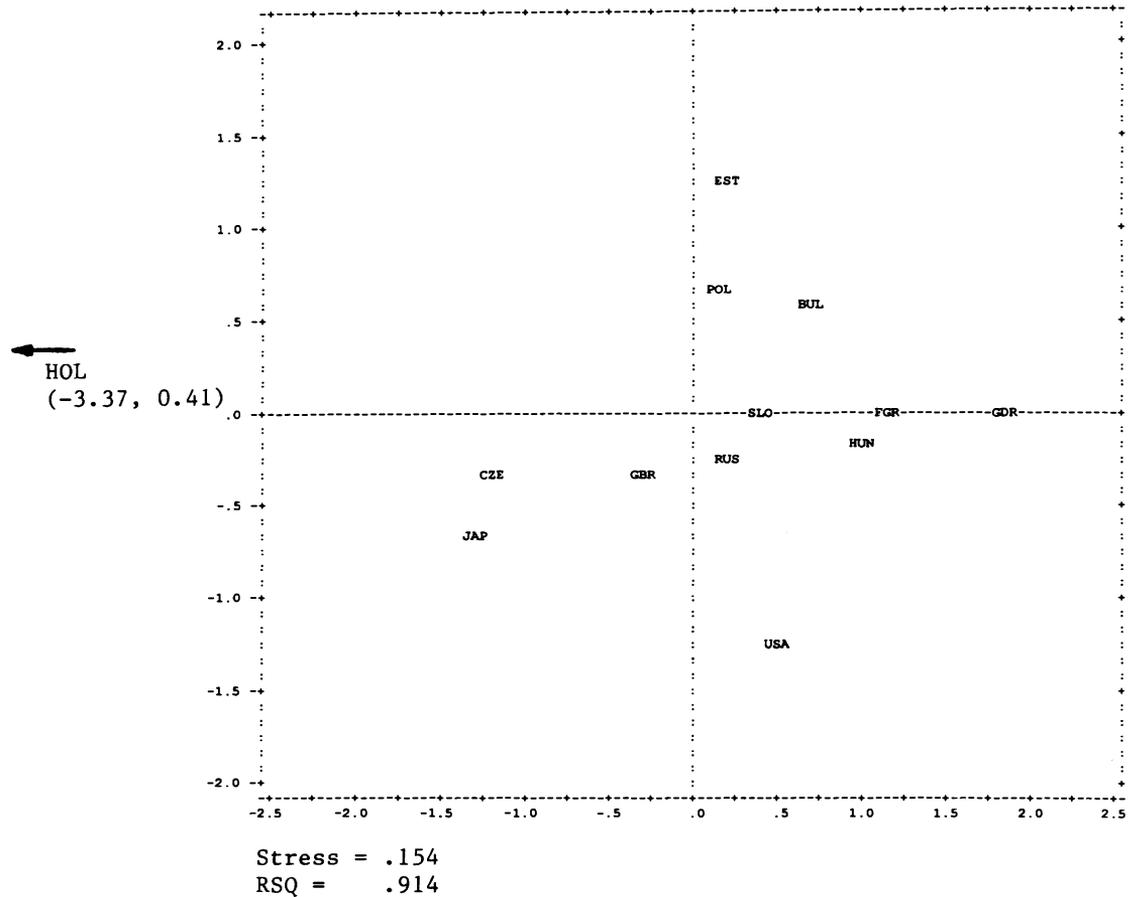


Figure 3. MDS, support for normative principles for desert items (two-dimensional scaling).

confirm that Miller's reading of earlier research in the West is accurate (considerations of desert are indeed given a high degree of public support where normative judgements about social justice are concerned), but reveal that the same measure of popular enthusiasm for desert-based distributions is also found in those countries emerging from Soviet-style state-socialism. Miller's supposition that the West may be distinctive in this regard is clearly mistaken; and, therefore, in a wider sense so is his belief that dissimilar types of society will foster and sustain distinctively different substantive ideals of social justice.

Also mistaken, if our data are to be believed, are the many previous commentators, from Homans onwards, who have argued that perceptions of

inequality (beliefs about the actual basis for distributive orders) will correspond to (or even shape) normative judgements about how distribution ought to be accomplished in the interests of social justice. Again it is our new data from the former state-socialist societies that do most damage to this proposition. Desert seems to enjoy the same measure of support across established capitalist and the emerging post-communist societies alike. However, when we turn from the realm of moral principles to that of beliefs about the extent to which the existing distribution of rewards is in accordance with those principles, differences between the two types of society become obvious – and are especially pronounced precisely in relation to desert-type criteria.

More specifically, we saw that each of the liberal-capitalist states was perceived by its citizens (at least in the main) to be structured broadly in accordance with the notion of desert, as this is popularly understood. By comparison, those living in the formerly communist countries were markedly more likely to characterize their societies as being ones in which people did not get rewarded for their efforts and talents, or for some similar reason failed to receive their due deserts. In other words, people's perceptions of the prevailing order are in this respect cross-nationally divergent, although the measure of public support for broadly desert-based principles of social justice is cross-nationally very similar. This suggests that there was no easy correspondence between the dominant cognitive and evaluative judgements about distributive issues in the new post-communist states of the early 1990s. People had not adapted their distributive ideals to fit their perceptions of the norms governing actual distributions. Aspirations for what ought to be did not, under these circumstances, correspond to perceptions of what was deemed to be the case.

These findings do not conclusively refute both of the influential theses at issue: namely, that support for desert-type distributive principles will be more pronounced in market-capitalist societies than in non-market systems, and that evaluative beliefs about distributive justice will fall neatly into line with perceptions of the criteria underlying actual distributions. Our data would seem to be fairly damaging to the former. The Miller hypothesis, if we may so describe it, does seem to be falsified by these results. Their implications for the latter issue are less clear-cut, however. Ours are cross-sectional data, and cannot therefore address claims about the causal processes by which cognitive and evaluative beliefs are brought into line, nor even settle the issue of whether such a correspondence is empirically likely to emerge over time. Moreover, they derive from societies obviously in a process of transformation, which makes their interpretation even more problematic. Finally, our questions explore only some aspects of distributive justice. They concern generalized goods to be distributed across whole populations, rather than the very specific goods that arise in face-to-face interactions, such as have preoccupied micro-sociologists or social psychologists. Where our questions refer to

individuals at all, these are 'abstract persons' rather than the respondents themselves, and certainly a long way from the real subjects of social psychological experiments and small-scale studies.

Such considerations point to some obvious ways in which the 'is becomes ought' thesis might be salvaged. Nonetheless, we have collected data carefully focused on principles of social justice, specifically organized around the 'cognitive versus evaluative' distinction, and for a much wider range of societies than has hitherto been considered. Our evidence does seem to show that substantial numbers of people in the emerging post-communist states both endorsed broadly desert-based distributive principles and believed that their societies failed to live up to those ideals. The onus would seem to be on defenders of the thesis either to explain away our findings or to explain why they are not relevant to its evaluation.

Of course, if we assume that our results are indeed robust rather than in some way artefactual, the next obvious question is why do we observe this difference between the former state-socialist and long-established market societies? This is a complex issue – probably best reserved for a separate publication – but, by way of closing remarks, we can both suggest one possible explanation as well as cast doubt upon another.

As regards the latter, it seems unlikely that these between-country differences are due simply to the differential composition of national populations, as this is related to each country's general level of economic development. For example, it might be argued that members of the relatively advantaged (and larger) salariat classes of the established market societies are more likely to be satisfied with the system of distribution than are people located in the less advantaged (and proportionately smaller) working classes, and that this differential degree of satisfaction (combined with different relative class sizes) explains variations in support for existing distributive norms East and West. In other words, between-country differences in perceptions of inequality derive from differing class structures, and are therefore a straightforwardly 'demographic' phenomenon rather than a consequence of the contrasting economic and political systems here under scrutiny.

This explanation of our findings finds no support in our data. Elsewhere (see Marshall and Firth, 1999),

we report results from analyses of these same ISJP surveys, relating class location and social mobility to satisfaction and dissatisfaction with seven different domains of everyday life – including jobs, income, and ‘overall standard of living’. Analysis of variance and diagonal reference modelling of the average satisfaction scores by class within and across nations reveal that individuals who move from working-class origins to middle-class destinations are no more likely to be systematically satisfied or dissatisfied with these (and selected other) aspects of life than are the socially immobile or even those downwardly mobile from advantaged backgrounds into the working class. Indeed in all countries, the association between class mobility or immobility and life satisfaction is negligible, uneven across the different domains of everyday experience, and not systematically variable between distinctive Western capitalist and East European post-communist societal types.

A more plausible explanation of the findings reported above would build on the meritocratic critique of the soviet-type distributive order, as this has been developed by (for example) Wesolowski and Mach, in their case most fully in relation to communist Poland. Here, in the words of these authors, we observe ‘cumulative disorders evident in the spheres of training, allocation, promotion and remuneration’, which led to the condition wherein ‘mobility . . . ceased to be an attractive goal to be pursued by individuals and a desirable reward for the effort that individuals put into the system’ (Wesolowski and Mach, 1986: 177). Qualifications and professional competence were often ignored, and party membership or informal friendship networks given greater weight, when it came to filling the highest professional and managerial positions. The hierarchy of earnings was largely incomprehensible, and unstable over time, with no clear correspondence between pay and training. Education and qualification were undermined as the basis of rewards – with clear effects on individual motivation. It became increasingly difficult for people to adjust to a system that did not offer clear rules of the game to individuals willing to invest in obtaining specialized training or developing a career based on professional competence. The result was economic inefficiency and a situation in which individual mobility failed to realize what these authors refer to as its ‘economic-reformist legitimacy potential’.¹³

The gap between popular notions of desert and beliefs about state-socialist distributive practice was particularly salient because communist propaganda itself reinforced the principle of increasing equality of opportunity to earn rewards proportionate to merit. (On the ideology of ‘meritocratic socialism’ see Marshall *et al.*, 1997: 222–228.) Inequalities of outcome were accepted as a necessary feature of state socialism, which (according to the ruling authorities) nevertheless promoted distributive justice by giving people equal access to unequally rewarded positions, or at least more equal access than was to be found under the alternative of advanced capitalism. Such an ideology seems (as we have seen) to have reinforced popular support for broadly meritocratic principles, as applied to a competition in which all have equal opportunities for advancement, and so created expectations which were at odds with the reality of everyday life under actually existing socialism.

We would not wish to exaggerate the significance of this contradiction between distributive principle and practice from the point of view of effecting social change. It may well have been less influential, in this regard, than was the perceived political illegitimacy of the communist regimes. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly true that meritocratic aspirations will have been raised to a high level by the rhetoric of enhanced social fluidity under communism, at the same time as meritocratic principles were widely flouted – for example in policies enacting positive discrimination on behalf of workers and peasants. There was widespread public awareness of the covert and overt discrimination that was practised in favour of men, productive workers, and members of the Party. As Wesolowski and Mach (1986: 25) observe, it seems highly likely, therefore, that in the context of state socialism the perceived failure of the Party to deliver on its promise of creating an open society will have exacerbated the already considerable problems of regime legitimation, since it was the state itself that took responsibility for distributive outcomes and for effecting social change.

The meritocratic aspirations of West Germans, Americans, the Japanese, and British, and their perception of advanced capitalist nations as societies in which people (in broad terms) obtained their due deserts, are consistent with the earlier evidence

summarized by Miller. In these countries, the popular belief that inequality results from equal opportunities and reflects meritocratic reward serves to legitimate market outcomes, since success and failure are routinely attributed to individual talents and effort – or their absence (see for example the literature on attribution for poverty and wealth summarized in Kluegel and Smith, 1981).

However, under real socialism, the potential for legitimation inherent in the individualistic aspect of meritocratic beliefs was undermined by the supreme power claimed by (and attributed to) the state. Eastern Europeans seem to have endorsed meritocratic principles as strongly as those living in the West, the ideology of meritocratic socialism serving to reinforce these aspirations; but, at the same time, they expected more of government, the state's planning of the economy implying that it was responsible for delivering distributive justice (along with various other policy goals). When reality failed to live up to the officially endorsed and popularly accepted normative ideal, the state was the obvious culprit.

Notes

1. Useful overviews of the extensive literatures in sociology, philosophy, economics, psychology, political science, anthropology, and public policy, together with comprehensive bibliographies, will be found in the standard collections edited by Cohen (1986) and Scherer (2000).
2. See also Scheffler (1992) and Galston (1991: 159–162). For discussion of whether this discrepancy between lay beliefs and the views of political philosophers should trouble the latter see Swift *et al.* (1995) and Swift (2000).
3. For a range of different understandings of the notion of desert see Sadurski (1985), Sher (1987), Miller (1991), and Lamont (1994).
4. Philosophers and popular opinion agree that justice may consist in people getting what they deserve. What they disagree about is what properly counts as the basis of a desert claim. By 'conventional desert claims' we refer to claims, often disputed by philosophers, that people deserve to be rewarded in accordance with things like ability and contribution, irrespective of the extent to which they are responsible for their possession of ability, or for being able to make their contribution.
5. Of course, at this abstract level broadly the same claim about certain types of society fostering particular distributive values has also been made by other social theorists, including for example Barrington Moore (1978: 449–455).
6. See Miller (1992: 586). Soltan (1982: 679) makes a similar observation. See also the summary of (mainly social psychological) studies offered by Tornblom, who concludes that 'only relatively tentative conclusions can be made about the nature of national or cultural differences in conceptions of justice in resource allocation', because of 'the present scarcity of cross-national or cross-cultural studies' (1992: 211).
7. The countries involved were Bulgaria, (former) Czechoslovakia, Estonia, the Federal and Democratic Republics of Germany (initially as separate nations), Holland, Hungary, Japan, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, Great Britain, and the United States. Fieldwork was carried out largely in the summer of 1991 by established research organizations. Interviews were mainly face-to-face with adults (aged 18 and over), except in the Netherlands and United States, where they were respectively computer self-administered and conducted by telephone. Mean length of interview was 65 minutes. The surveys achieved an average sample size of approximately 1,400. Response rates were acceptable, being over 70% in all but one case, that of Japan. Samples were checked for reliability. There was extensive direct consultation between all the researchers involved in the project, before the core English-language version of the questionnaire was finalized, followed by an iterative and rigorous process of independent back-translation into local languages. Common coding protocols were also agreed and implemented. Full details of the methods of the ISJP, and additional technical information about the surveys, are readily available in (for example) Kluegel *et al.* (1995) and Marshall *et al.* (1997). For a concise description of the project, and an informative commentary on its significance for social justice research, see the recent review article by Jasso (1998).
8. By 'non-constitutive luck' we refer to luck of kinds other than that which makes someone the individual he or she is. A person's intelligence or ability is also a matter of luck, but such attributes – because constitutive of the individual – are conventionally treated as internal, rather than external, to him or her. The fact that 'being a man and not a woman' is something constitutive of the individual, yet is not conventionally regarded as providing an appropriate criterion for distributive justice, explains why we treat this item in the way that we do – and also testifies to the difficulty of relating philosophical distinctions to popular opinion.

9. In constructing a table showing the mean (valid) response to each question across countries we faced two difficulties. First, in a few instances, certain countries had used a different number of response categories to the others for particular questions. Second, the number of response categories varied between 4 and 5, depending on the question being asked. To deal with the first problem, either we aggregated two adjacent categories (where this preserved the meaning of responses), or (where aggregation was not appropriate) we calculated implied means on a four-point scale using the transformation 'new mean = $0.25 + 0.75 \times 12$ old mean'. In the case of the second problem, we converted the means to z-scores on a question-by-question basis, before calculating a Euclidean dissimilarity coefficient between the relevant profiles associated with each possible pair of countries. (Certain other defensible approaches were explored but they made little if any difference to the structure of the MDS configurations obtained.)
10. Results for the fifteen attitudinal items shown in the lower portion of Table 1 were also submitted to multi-dimensional scaling, although neither the two-dimensional nor the one-dimensional (or for that matter the three-dimensional) solutions shed any useful light on cross-national similarities and differences.
11. In some cases, respondents were asked to state 'how much' influence a particular factor should have in determining an outcome, or 'how just' they felt a decision to be (rather than simply whether or not they 'agreed' or 'disagreed' with a specific proposition). For these questions, the proportion who responded 'not much' or 'no influence' was subtracted from that who supported 'a great deal' or 'some', and (similarly) those who felt a decision or outcome to be 'somewhat unjust' or 'very unjust' were subtracted from those who judged it to be 'somewhat just' or 'very just'.
12. Strictly speaking, some of these statements are empirical claims, rather than normative ones – for example, the suggestion that 'people would not want to take extra responsibility at work unless they were paid extra for it'. In treating propositions of this kind as 'ought' beliefs we are assuming (as have earlier survey researchers) that respondents regard them as providing part of a justification for inequality.
13. See also Koralewicz-Zebik (1984: 225), who concludes that 'changes in the perception of inequalities in Poland . . . show that . . . greatest frustration was due to a decomposition of the system of meritocratic justice, accepted by the majority of

Poles, combined with the expansion of other, unaccepted, criteria for rewards. Thus the growth of increasing inequalities was accompanied by a total withdrawal of the legitimization of inequalities.'

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Appendix 1: Beliefs About Inequality: Perceptions of the Status Quo

1. In your view, how often is each of the following factors a reason why there are poor people in [country] today? . . . Lack of ability or talent.
2. . . . Loose morals and drunkenness.
3. . . . Lack of effort by the poor themselves.
4. In your view, how often is each of the following factors a reason why there are rich people in this country today? . . . Ability or talent.
5. . . . Hard work.
6. In [country] today, how much influence do you think these factors actually have in determining levels of pay? . . . The employee's level of education.
7. . . . Unpleasant working conditions, such as dirty, noisy, or strenuous work.
8. . . . The employee's individual effort.
9. . . . The responsibility held by the employee on the job.
10. . . . The length of service with employer.
11. In [country] people have equal opportunities to get ahead.
12. In [country] people get rewarded for their effort.
13. In [country] people get rewarded for their intelligence and skill.
14. Here are some factors which are sometimes considered important for having a high social standing. Please tell me how important you think each is for success in our society. . . . Ability and talent.
15. . . . Hard work and effort.
16. In your view, how often is each of the following factors a reason why there are poor people in [country] today? . . . Prejudice and discrimination against certain groups in [country].
17. . . . Lack of equal opportunity.
18. . . . Failure of the economic system.

19. In your view, how often is each of the following factors a reason why there are rich people in this country today? . . . Having the right connections.
20. More opportunities to begin with.
21. The economic system allows them to take unfair advantage.
22. In [country] today, how much influence do you think these factors actually have in determining levels of pay? . . . Being a man and not a woman.
23. In [country] people get what they need.
24. Here are some factors which are sometimes considered important for having a high social standing. Please tell me how important you think each is for success in our society. . . Social background.
25. . . . Having the right connections.
26. . . . One's sex.
27. . . . Belonging to a particular racial or ethnic group.
28. In your view, how often is each of the following factors a reason why there are poor people in [country] today? . . . Just bad luck.
29. In your view, how often is each of the following factors a reason why there are rich people in this country today? . . . Good luck.
30. Here are some factors which are sometimes considered important for having a high social standing. Please tell me how important you think each is for success in our society. . . Good luck.
40. It is just that disadvantaged groups are given extra help so that they can have equal opportunities in life.
41. The government should guarantee everyone a minimum standard of living.
42. People are entitled to keep what they have earned – even if this means some people will be wealthier than others.
43. It's fair if people have more money or wealth, but only if there are equal opportunities.
44. People are entitled to pass on their wealth to their children.
45. I am going to describe a situation in a hospital and then ask you for your opinion about it. Three patients are admitted to a hospital at the same time, all suffering from a form of heart disease requiring surgery. However, the limited resources of the hospital allow only one heart operation each month. All three cases are equally urgent. The patient who is treated first will have a better chance of survival. What would be your view if . . . The patient who can afford to pay most is treated first?
46. It is just that those who can afford it obtain better education for their children.
47. There is an incentive for individual effort only if differences in income are large enough.
48. It is all right if businessmen make good profits because everyone benefits in the end.
49. People would not want to take extra responsibility at work unless they were paid extra for it.
50. [hospital vignette] . . . The decision is made by judging the usefulness of each patient for society at large?

Appendix 2: Beliefs About Inequality: Normative Principles

31. Please tell me how much influence each of these factors should have in determining the level of pay for an employee . . . The responsibility held by the employee on the job.
32. . . . The employee's individual effort.
33. . . . Unpleasant working conditions, such as dirty, noisy, or strenuous work.
34. . . . The employee's level of education.
35. People who work hard deserve to earn more than those who do not.
36. Please tell me how much influence each of these factors should have in determining the level of pay for an employee. . . The length of service with employer.
37. It is just luck if some people are more intelligent or skilful than others, so they don't deserve to earn more money.
38. The government should place an upper limit on the amount of money any one person can make.
39. The fairest way of distributing wealth and income would be to give everyone equal shares.
51. I will describe another situation and then ask you to tell me your views about the justice of each of the decisions. A small firm has an apartment to rent. Three of its employees want the apartment. A selection has to be made. What would be your view if . . . The decision is made by judging the usefulness of each employee to the firm?
52. [apartment vignette] . . . The employee supporting the largest family gets the apartment?
53. [apartment vignette] . . . The employee with the lowest income gets the apartment?
54. [hospital vignette] . . . The patient supporting the largest family is treated first?
55. Please tell me how much influence each of these factors should have in determining the level of pay for an employee . . . The size of the family the employee supports.
56. The most important thing is that people get what they need, even if this means allocating money from those who have earned more than they need.

57. [hospital vignette] . . . The decision is made by following the rules of the hospital, whatever they may be?
58. Please tell me how much influence each of these factors should have in determining the level of pay for an employee . . . Being a man and not a woman.
59. [hospital vignette] . . . The decision about which patient goes first is made by a lottery?
60. [apartment vignette] . . . The decision about who gets the apartment is made by a lottery?

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