

ATTITUDES TOWARD INEQUALITY AND REDISTRIBUTION IN CANADA:  
ANALYSIS OF A LIBERAL WELFARE REGIME

BY

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for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

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## ABSTRACT

Data provided by the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) was utilized for this project which compares attitudes toward inequality and redistribution between various groups, specifically gender, sector, and class, within Canada. The theoretical framework for this research rests on Esping-Andersen's welfare worlds typology, which maintains that, there is a relationship between the social divisions produced by particular welfare policies and public attitudes. Attitudinal cleavages were expected to emerge on all three variables. However, a MANOVA procedure only revealed a significant difference in the attitudes of Canadians belonging to different occupational classes. While research findings did not support the original hypotheses, the idea that policy regimes structure attitudes should not be dismissed. Indeed, the results of this analysis suggest that attitudinal cleavages may only be generated differently from what was originally suggested.

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## CHAPTER 1

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Economic Inequality

Income and wealth in advanced industrialized nations have always, to varying degrees, been distributed unequally. However, for a variety of reasons, disparities of this nature have been increasing in many countries over the past two decades, and this is having a deleterious effect, both socially and economically. An analysis of income distribution in Canada between the years 1951 and 1985 showed that, although real incomes more than doubled during this period, large inequalities in distribution were evident. That is, income earners in the bottom quintile never received more than 4.6% of the country's reported total income, while the top quintile never received less than 41.4% (Hunter 1988: 88). As well, according to Alfred Hunter (1988: 88), there has been a slight tendency for the top two quintiles to increase their hold upon the available income at the expense of the bottom three quintiles. Income distribution figures recorded during the same period for the United Kingdom and the United States, where the Census Bureau recorded the widest rich-poor gap since 1947, are just as striking as those reported in Canada (Bernstein, 1994; Hunter, 1988).

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that poverty levels have also risen in many countries in the last two decades. While the percentage of children living below the official

poverty level in the United States was significantly reduced in the 1960s, during the late 1970s it began to rise and, by 1991, it had reached 21.8% (Huston, McLoyd and Coll, 1994:75). Economic changes responsible for eliminating many well paying blue-collar jobs (half of the jobs created in the 1980s paid less than poverty income), an increase in the percentage of single-mother families and decreasing government benefits are primarily responsible for this trend (Huston, Mcloyd and Coll, 1994: 276). Poverty levels in the United States, which has the highest rate of poverty and the greatest degree of income inequality of all developed nations, are about twice as high as those recorded for Canada. However, Canadian levels of inequality and poverty remain critically high, especially when compared to European countries like Sweden, where the child poverty rate is only 2% (Huston, Mcloyd and Coll, 1994: 275).

While there are many arguments against equalizing income, the most prominent and widely held, and certainly the one adhered to by many conservative policy-makers, contends that income equality has a negative effect on economic efficiency. Economic prosperity, it is argued, is determined by the degree to which investors invest and workers work and greater equality is believed to reduce investment and work incentives. Despite this, research based on data from 17 advanced industrialized economies between 1974 and 1990 indicates that not only does greater equality have no adverse impact on investment or work effort, but that, to the contrary, higher

levels of equality are actually associated with stronger productivity growth and trade performance (Kenworthy, 1995: 225). Further, while traditional theories have commonly held that inequality is a result, not a cause, of slow growth, Christopher Jencks (quoted in Business Week, August 15, 1994: 79) points out that this position lost ground in the 1980s, when overall, Americans got richer, but those on the bottom of the income scale did not.

Despite the evidence which indicates that a country plagued by high levels of inequality will suffer socially and economically, Canada, like many other advanced industrialized nations, continues to pursue policies which fail to address this problem and, indeed, appear to be exacerbating it. Lars Osberg (1992) points out that, throughout the last decade, governmental promises to increase economic growth, reduce unemployment, raise average wages, eliminate poverty and improve the quality of life, have failed miserably. For example, although restrictions on social programs have been increased in order to reduce expenditures, Canada's failure to generate enough jobs continues to force increasing numbers of individuals to rely upon state programs, like unemployment insurance and social assistance (Osberg, 1992: 44).

As in other parts of the industrial world, the pursuit of equality has been de-emphasized in Canada. Social and economic policies strongly reflect this trend and the ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor irrefutably confirms it. Given

the evidence that greater levels of equality are compatible with and necessary for an efficient and successful economy, it is surprising that government redistributive efforts have often been opposed. Currently, emerging social pressures and the global economic crisis have brought redistributive efforts in Canada, particularly state welfare, into question, constricted further development and dramatically reduced expenditures. As a result, many Canadian social programs such as health-care, post-secondary education, family allowances and old age pensions have been eliminated or cut back by the government and there is speculation that individual responsibility for health care and retirement will increase as insured medical services and old age security benefits are reduced. While the entire population in countries experiencing welfare cutbacks will be affected by these changes, it will be society's most vulnerable groups - the very young, the very old, the poor, the sick and the unemployed - who will suffer the most.

#### Mass Attitudes & Social Inequality

Many theorists contend that, because mass attitudes have the capacity to shape various aspects of our objective social reality, there is an important link between them and the formulation and enactment of social policies (Coughlin, 1980: 2). Peter Taylor-Gooby (1991) emphasizes the important role that social attitudes play in influencing redistribution and, ultimately, trends in social inequality. In an international

study he found that, in response to pressures for higher spending and lower taxation, almost all advanced nations have opted for lower taxes. One reason for this may be that the large numbers of individuals forced to turn to private forms of welfare provision have become less willing to pay for core welfare services (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Taylor-Gooby, 1991). This does not bode well for Canada's ever-widening gap between the rich and the poor for, unless the majority of Canadian citizens are willing to support social redistribution, it seems unlikely that governments will be able to improve or sustain it. In light of the disturbing trend toward increasing inequality and decreasing redistribution, and the link that these may have with public opinion, it is crucial to know what Canadian attitudes toward them are.

The present research is primarily concerned with public attitudes toward inequality and redistribution measures, that is, government intervention to correct market outcomes. The link between inequality and attitudes toward redistribution is an important, if not obvious, one. For example, the public's interpretation of inequality may affect the level of support which exists for redistribution. If substantial differences in rewards are viewed as necessary for efficient functioning of the economy, market distributions may be viewed as legitimate and necessary. On the other hand, if differences in rewards are viewed as unnecessary, unethical, unfair, ineffective or harmful, this may propagate greater support for government

intervention and redistribution.

Mass Attitudes, Inequality & Redistribution

While the welfare state in most countries plays a major role in economic redistribution, research on public opinion in this area has produced a myriad of conflicting results. One view which currently predominates contends that redistribution via the welfare state is currently experiencing a crisis of legitimacy. Popular support for welfare has allegedly deteriorated and, for a variety of reasons, there is a general unwillingness among the public to continue financing social welfare programs. A recent Financial Post/Compas opinion poll (Financial Post, Oct 22-24, 1994) reported that there is massive public support for Lloyd Axworthy's social program reforms in Canada. Included among them is a two-tier Unemployment Insurance system which would require frequent users, such as seasonal workers, to take lower benefits. The poll also indicated that 74% of respondents supported a move away from programs based on universal access. Steve Kiar (Financial Post, Oct 22-24, 1994: 1) states that, "there is a huge consensus on some of the new ideas...Canadians think that money is being thrown away [and] want the government to take a stand."

However, a great deal of research in other nations suggests that this view may be incorrect. It indicates that, while public support may be somewhat reserved, it remains tilted heavily in favour of welfare spending. Furthermore,



researchers in this camp claim that a crisis of legitimacy has not been established empirically because inadequate research methods have produced evidence which is largely unreliable. Data of this nature are often based upon public opinion polls in which the definition of welfare has been left unclear. Consequently, when public attitudes toward fundamentally *different types* of social welfare programs are taken into account and examined separately, research findings indicate that there is less public support for some programs (unemployment insurance and means tested public assistance) but overwhelming public enthusiasm for universal types of welfare expenditures (public pensions and health) (Cook & Barrett, 1992; Coughlin, 1979, 1980; Marklund, 1988). Curiously, Haller, Höllinger & Raubal (1990:41) found that this was the case even in the United States, where, in spite of the fact that private insurance dominates health care, more than 80% of Americans still considered it to be a responsibility of the state.

Today, largely as a result of the financial and demographic crisis being experienced globally, redistributive policies may be needed more than ever. Paradoxically, governments have been less inclined to support redistribution measures during these difficult times, and their dismantling of welfare state programs is clear evidence of this. In fact, reductions in social welfare spending have become the dominant theme in the election platforms of many political parties.

Governments insist that popular support for welfare has deteriorated and that, because of this, cuts in social spending are sufficiently justified. That governments have reached this conclusion in spite of the fact that numerous studies suggest that citizens in all countries wish to maintain and, in many cases, increase those services offered by the public sector produces a multitude of concerns and questions (Hadenius, 1986: 84). Hence, although the notion that the public has become more opposed to redistribution is pervasive, it is not clear if this interpretation is accurate. Indeed, the true limits of this welfare backlash and atmosphere of opposition which currently appears to command public opinion are difficult to interpret because, as several theorists suggest, they have been obscured by governments that have fallaciously blamed the poor performance of the economy on welfare spending. In their study of the American welfare state, Cook and Barrett (1992: 20) point out that, despite the fact that there is very little evidence to support a link between social welfare expenditures and rates of economic growth in Western industrial nations, policy makers continue to use welfare cutbacks as a solution to dealing with poor economic conditions. This situation is clearly evident in Canada where, according to Frances Russell, while the federal government continues to blame social programs for the deficit crisis a "secret" Statistics Canada study - which apparently was not supposed to be made public - shows that 44% of

Canada's national debt is due to tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy while another 50% is caused by compounding interest payments (Mimoto & Cross, 1991; Winnipeg Free Press, March 1991). The attitudes and opinions that the public holds regarding inequality and redistribution may play a significant role in the destiny of the welfare state. Indeed, if public support is necessary for the maintenance of a viable social welfare system, as well as for its development and growth (and there is reason to believe that it is), the study of the relationship between social attitudes, inequality and redistribution may be crucial. In any event, if reductions in social welfare spending are going to continue in the public's name, a concerted effort to investigate the attitudes and opinions they actually hold toward inequality and redistribution must be made. In the following section of this paper, the primary components of the study being proposed will be situated amidst current theoretical frameworks. Previously established methods and findings will be discussed in order to provide some support for the foundation upon which the hypothesis and methods of research within this field can be built.

#### Classification of Welfare States

The theoretical foundations upon which the research presently being proposed is based, maintain that, welfare states differ significantly between countries, and that public attitudes toward inequality and redistribution are linked to

the type of welfare provided. Hence, those specific characteristics which make welfare states similar or different from one another and ultimately may be responsible for producing different attitudes must be classified. Gøsta Esping-Andersen's (1991) welfare worlds typology is currently accepted as the most comprehensive method for welfare state classification, and as such, will be utilized in the present study. A discussion of the basic tenets of this classification scheme will follow.

### Linear Forms of Welfare State Classification

Some commitment to welfare is virtually universal among modern industrialized countries. However, as the result of divergent economic, political and historical forces, the extent to and manner in which welfare resources are distributed and the degree of economic intervention undertaken by the state varies significantly from nation to nation (Coughlin, 1980; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Svallfors, 1991). Until recently, studies of the welfare state have relied predominately upon linear forms of classification. For the most part, these studies have ranked the similarities and differences between welfare states according to quantitative measures such as spending levels and coverage rates along continua (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Olsen, 1994a; Svallfors, 1991). Most theorists, however, now contend that the classification of welfare states based solely upon such types of criteria are inadequate and that over-reliance upon them

can actually produce misleading results. For example, in some cases, spending less on reactive and redistributive social programs may actually represent a more serious commitment to social welfare. Gregg Olsen (1994a:3) points out that Sweden, rather than relying on redistributive social transfer programs like unemployment insurance, has managed to maintain low levels of unemployment through the utilization of a variety of preventive and proactive labour-market policies. This contrasts sharply with countries like Canada and the United States that rely primarily upon reactive and passive programs like unemployment insurance.

Further, Esping-Andersen (1990:20) attests that levels of social expenditure can, in themselves, be misleading. This was the case in Britain, where social expenditures grew during the period that Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister. Unfortunately, this was not representative of a greater commitment to welfare spending, but rather was largely the result of the very high unemployment levels her Conservative government fostered (Esping-Andersen, 1990:20). Consequently, neither the existence of a social program nor levels of social expenditure alone are considered to accurately reflect a state's commitment to social welfare. A sole focus on these elements assumes that all spending counts equally and ignores important aspects of the welfare state which may actually play a more significant role in its classification (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Olsen, 1994a; Svallfors, 1991).

## The Welfare Worlds Approach

In response to the indisputable shortcomings of earlier efforts to categorize welfare states, Esping-Andersen (1990) proposes utilizing a broader system of classification which reflects the differences and similarities of welfare provision more accurately. He maintains that earlier systems of welfare state classification were deficient because they relied upon ambiguous definitions which failed to uncover the theoretical role of welfare policies (1990:18-19). Although these definitions lend themselves quite well to linear forms of classification, the true essence of welfare state identity is overlooked.

Esping-Andersen addresses these obvious failings by delineating a new set of criteria that cluster welfare states into three distinctive regime types. The elements he considers to be key are closely tied to the unique balance which exists in each nation between state, market and family. This balance has a significant influence on the development of social rights, particularly with respect to de-commodification and social stratification. Levels of de-commodification and social stratification reflect the type of welfare policies which predominate in various welfare states. When they are considered it becomes clear that welfare states are not necessarily linearly arranged, but rather fall into categorically different groups. Esping-Andersen (1990) identifies three distinct regime-types which vary

significantly with respect to these elements. They are labelled liberal, conservative-corporatist and social democratic. Because the present research will be focused on Canada, a country considered to belong to the liberal welfare world, the discussion will highlight characteristics of welfare policies representative of the liberal regime.

#### Social Welfare In Canada: A Liberal Welfare Regime?

According to Esping-Andersen's (1990) typology, in the liberal regime, private programs delivered via the market provide welfare benefits and services for all but the most desperate. State welfare here is meagre, stigmatizing and means-tested. Only those individuals with extremely low incomes and little chance to participate in the market are eligible for state social assistance programs. Indeed, inadequate benefits, provided sparingly by the state, and their stigmatizing nature serve to strengthen the market because they compel the majority of citizens to participate in it.

Such welfare policies encourage the liberal work ethic and hence the market by ensuring not only that all want to participate in it, but also that all but the most needy must participate in it. As a result, the de-commodification effect remains minimal, as most individuals remain dependent upon the market. In addition to this, a strong system of social stratification is erected as the poor, who are forced to rely upon state welfare, are alienated from a middle class that can

afford to purchase better welfare services and thus resent supporting a welfare system that offers them very little. Esping-Andersen (1990: 27) points out that welfare policies in this regime create a class-political dualism between welfare recipients and the majority who rely on the market. This differs from the situation in Sweden, where welfare policies fall into the social democratic regime. There, because the state provides benefits and services that are of the highest standard and designed to include the entire population - especially the middle class - a great deal of support for the welfare state is generated. In contrast to liberal welfare policies, such welfare policies create universal solidarity, because cleavages are averted between the poor and working classes, who are dependent upon welfare services, and those who are better off.

It is important to note that, although Canada and the United Kingdom have been situated, along with the United States, within the liberal regime, they fall farther from the ideal liberal policy type than the United States does. Gregg Olsen (1994a) points out that, "while classifying the welfare states of Canada and the United States as part of the liberal regime may be useful, the welfare worlds approach conceals significant differences between them" (Olsen, 1994a: 5). When social services such as health care systems are considered, it is clear that their welfare policies diverge distinctly along some dimensions. For example, the fact that Canada has a



universal, public national health service, while the United States does not, is an important distinction. Indeed, while some of Canada's social policies clearly belong to the liberal world, others are indicative of the social democratic world. Differences among the welfare policies of countries included within the liberal regime may be reflected in public attitudes. For example, public opinion in Canada may be more similar to that found in Sweden than to that found in the United States.

#### Attitudinal Cleavages & Policy Regimes

Research concerned specifically with inequality and redistribution and the relationship they have with public opinion has utilized various theories, definitions and methods. Some researchers maintain that individual attitudes actually grow from sources in the social structure (Coughlin, 1980; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Haller, Höllinger & Raubal, 1990; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991). Of interest here is the research of those who attempt to link public attitudes toward inequality and redistribution with the welfare state itself (Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991; Esping-Andersen, 1990; Coughlin, 1980). These individuals maintain that, because the welfare state is an important social institution with far-reaching effects, it plays a pivotal role in shaping the attitudes and opinions held by the public. According to this view, then, in addition to affecting our objective social reality, public attitudes will develop out of it as well.

Further, these theorists focus upon the disparate effects that qualitatively different types of welfare policies may have on public attitudes and opinions. They maintain that, as a result of historical variation, the kind of welfare provided in each advanced industrialized nation is qualitatively different from that found in any other. If welfare states do indeed help to form public opinions and attitudes, then qualitatively different welfare states should produce qualitatively different attitudes. Of concern here are the findings of those who follow the tenets of Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology (outlined above), which separates nations into three distinct clusters according to particular attributes of their social policies. Esping-Andersen (1991) maintains that welfare policies which predominate in different welfare regimes vary with respect to their ability to enhance or diminish existing status or class differences, and create dualism, individualism or broad social solidarity. Therefore, "not only do different policy regimes have different distributive effects," according to Esping-Andersen, "they also help to institute different interests and identities among the population" (quoted in Svallfors, 1991: 92).

Theorists who have adopted Esping-Andersen's welfare typology contend that the implications for attitudinal cleavages are twofold. First, attitudinal cleavages should be apparent between countries representing each of the three welfare policy regimes. In a cross-national study of public

opinions, Richard Coughlin (1980: xii) offers some support for this hypothesis. He found that, in eight industrialized nations, the majority of citizens expressed views that matched their government's behaviour in the realm of welfare spending. Although a pro-welfare state majority was evident in every country, that majority was the largest in those that spent and taxed highly to ensure a high minimum standard of living.

As noted earlier, the social democratic welfare regime is distinct from the liberal type. Sweden's welfare state is typified by high levels of state intervention to correct market outcomes and social policies based upon the principles of universalism and equal access to welfare. Therefore, regardless of need or ability to pay, most citizens are enveloped in the folds of Sweden's welfare state, which is organised to address not only the requirements of the poor, but those of the working and middle classes as well. One might deduce that the universal equality induced by social democratic welfare policies would not only strengthen the social cohesion within a population, but also create a positive view toward the public welfare system in general. In fact, Esping-Andersen (1990) maintains that, because the social democratic model incorporates everyone under one insurance system, a universal solidarity in favour of the welfare state has been forged. Certainly, many accounts within the literature support the idea of Swedish exceptionalism, noting that Sweden is characterized by an unusually high level

of support for redistribution. For example, in his study of the Nordic countries, Staffan Marklund found a higher degree of public support for universal programs than for those which were selective or means tested. Further, he (1988: 86) states that "a public welfare system that is predominately universal is less likely to suffer from legitimation problems than selective systems."

Although one might assume that anti-welfare sentiments would be strongest in those nations which spend the most on welfare measures, Esping-Andersen (1990: 33) contends that, largely as the result of class character, the opposite is actually true; anti-welfare sentiments have generally been weakest where welfare spending has been heaviest. This can be attributed to the idea that a welfare state which includes the middle class under its umbrella will sustain higher levels of support than liberal welfare states that must depend on the loyalties of the very poor who, in addition to being numerically weak, are essentially powerless. In an article in the Winnipeg Free Press, Gregg Olsen supports this view: "most Swedes strongly support their public-oriented system despite high taxes, because they feel their money is well spent" (Winnipeg Free Press, Sept 15, 1994b: A7). Research conducted in Sweden over the past decade on attitudes toward welfare policies also reflects this. That is, even during these difficult economic times, attitudes to welfare spending, state services and collective financing, on the whole, reveal a

strong level of support for welfare policies (Marklund, 1988; Svallfors, 1995b). Gregg Olsen (1994b) finds that this is a very different situation from that found in North America, where public sentiment toward increasing taxes is understandably less enthusiastic, as taxes keep increasing while government provisions continue to decrease. In light of this, Esping-Andersen (1990:33) asserts that class coalitions will undoubtedly have an important part to play in the future of welfare states.

#### Divergent Findings

Despite the apparent logic of the evidence presented above, it would nonetheless be imprudent to ignore the findings of conflicting research. Although the Swedish welfare state has been more successful in its attempts to correct the social inequality produced by the market, the manner in which this greater equality has affected the public's attitudes toward inequality or social redistribution has not been agreed upon. For example, in contrast to the theorists cited above, Jonas Pontusson maintains that this Swedish exceptionalism actually exists only on the surface of society (quoted in Svallfors, 1991: 91). That is, embedded values in Sweden are not qualitatively different from those that exist in the mass consumer cultures of other capitalist societies. He states that, "social democratic hegemony is exercised at the level of public policy debate...restricted to the social democratic success of determining the terms and limits of public debate

and to the close political cooperation between trade unions and the Social Democratic party" (quoted in Svallfors, 1991: 89).

In his study of policy regimes and attitudes to inequality, Svallfors (1991) found some support for this view. The evidence he uncovered did not portray Swedes as being any more "leftist" than individuals living within the liberal regime. However, as Svallfors notes, opinions about social policies in various nations are formed against different welfare levels and practices. Hence, questions about inequality and redistribution practices may not mean the same thing in Sweden as they do in Canada, the United States or the United Kingdom.

Second, these theorists contend that attitudinal cleavages should be apparent among strata within these countries as well. Public opinion varies within any society because individuals, characterized by unique life experiences can be divided into many groups. According to Esping-Andersen (1990), the attitudinal cleavages found in different welfare regimes can be attributed to the social divisions which are produced by their particular welfare policies. In view of this, some theorists have identified likely patterns for distinct attitudinal cleavages in different welfare states, particularly with respect to sector (public/private), gender and class (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991). Gender, sector and class are potentially

important social cleavages because they are directly linked to the institutionalization of welfare policies (Svallfors, 1995b). For example, women's unique experience with the welfare state, gendered labour market segmentation and the self interest of and unique socialization among public sector employees and employment classes, may be linked to redistribution policies in various ways.

With respect to inequality and redistribution, several predictions can be made concerning the type of attitudinal cleavages which might occur. For example, if beliefs about these concepts are based on self-interest, then individuals may support those programs from which they directly benefit. If this is the case, those worst off in society would be expected to exhibit greater support for equality and redistribution through welfare programs than those who have no real need for them. Svallfors hypothesizes that, because women and public sector employees are more dependent on the state, they may be more supportive of redistributive measures than men and private sector employees (1991: 112). Indeed, in a comparative study of attitudes to inequality, he found that, in Sweden, it was professional males in the private sector who diverged most sharply away from the social democratic ideology (1991: 117). Because much of the literature in this area suggests that the most obvious attitudinal cleavages will occur between gender, sector and class, the following discussion will address predictions and findings for each of

these in turn (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991).

Gender. Throughout the literature, the notion that gender plays a major role in shaping experiences and hence perceptions, ideas, opinions and attitudes is clearly evident (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Papadakis, 1993; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991). Consequently, many argue that a relationship between gender and attitudes toward various aspects of inequality and redistribution exists (Esping-Andersen, 1990; Papadakis, 1993; Svallfors, 1991; Taylor-Gooby, 1991). Their hypothesis, simply stated, is that because there is a significant difference in the role that each gender plays to achieve welfare goals, one's gender will influence how one will view inequality and redistribution. Women's experiences with the welfare state are expected to differ from those of men in three significant ways.

First, Elim Papadakis (1993: 345) suggests that the welfare state, rather than being a major achievement for all citizens, actually reinforces sexual divisions. Although benefit rules for women are essentially the same as those that apply to men, the question of equality needs to be addressed. For example, women are more likely to be poor than men and the rise in female-headed households has been linked to a broader phenomenon referred to as the feminization of poverty (Ehrenreich & Fox Piven, 1984). This, in no small way, can be linked to the fact that, although the number of women in paid



employment has risen substantially, they are more likely than men to be employed as unskilled workers and to have low status occupations (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1994; Papadakis, 1993). Further, they are more likely to earn low incomes, to have interrupted employment records and to work part-time so that their national insurance benefit entitlement is less secure than that of men and will produce earnings-related benefits of lower value (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1983; Taylor-Gooby, 1991: 30). Additionally, women are less likely to be covered by occupational pensions and sick pay schemes (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1983; Taylor-Gooby, 1991: 31). It is interesting to note that, in a study of public opinion and sexual difference, Papadakis (1993: 353) found that "males in all occupational groups, with different employment status and in all age cohorts were consistently more likely than females to be either satisfied or very satisfied with an employer's superannuation scheme." These results appear to be consistent with findings concerning the allocation of work benefits for men and women and suggests that women will be more dependent upon social welfare and, hence, more supportive of it.

Second, reductions in state welfare may have a negative effect on women because many women are employed by the welfare state itself. For example, Esping-Andersen (215: 1990) points out that "Swedish women have done exceedingly well, but at the price of an unusually strong sectoral-occupational segregation: essentially a heavily male private sector and a

female dominated public sector."

Third, assumptions about the role of women in social care also appears to influence the pattern of state provision. Irrespective of government advances in the provision of social welfare, women are still considered responsible for the care of children, parents and relatives. For example, Papadakis (347: 1993) found that, in Australia, participation by women in formal employment has not been matched by a sufficient increase in child care. Evandrou (quoted in Taylor-Gooby, 1991: 32) points out that women suffer discrimination not only as recipients of welfare, but as care-givers as well. He found that help for dependent elderly parents was more likely to be provided if the main care-giver was an employed son rather than an employed daughter. Additionally, women caring for disabled, elderly husbands were less likely to receive support than married men caring for disabled elderly wives. Hence, women's attitudes toward welfare cutbacks may be more negative because they are the ones who stand to lose the most support and are the predominant care-givers.

In general, then, it seems logical to assume that women will show stronger support for the welfare state than will men and that, because it is women who are most likely to be affected by reductions in social welfare, they will also hold more negative attitudes toward government cutbacks in this sphere. However, it should also be noted that Papadakis (1993) found that, when socio-economic factors like occupation

and employment status, as well as age were included in the analysis, differences among women in Australia were found to be as striking as the differences between men and women. For example, Papadakis found that, although more women than men were concerned about the need for improvement of government health services, the differences among women were also significant. Using the United States (another country allocated to the liberal regime) as an example, Esping-Andersen (cited in Svallfors 1991: 93) suggests that class differences will diminish between males and females, but increase within each gender. He (Esping-Andersen, 1990) points out that this may be due to the fact that, compared to Sweden (social democratic) and Germany (conservative-corporatist), the United States (liberal) is less gender-segregated with respect to traditional occupational structures. That is, women in the United States have been more successful in penetrating traditional (white) male employment niches and as a result, the share of women in privileged 'male' occupations in the United States is basically twice that of Germany and Sweden (Esping-Andersen, 1990).

Consequently, while women, on the whole may be more supportive of equality and redistribution than men, it seems likely that attitudinal cleavages among different classes of women will also emerge. Accordingly, this class bias in the attitudes of women may also have an effect on the attitudes held by women in different employment sectors. That is, women

in similar occupational classes may hold comparable attitudes toward inequality and redistribution, despite the sector in which they are employed.

Sector. Interestingly, although his predictions were to the contrary, Svallfors found evidence for attitudinal divergences between public and private sector employees in the United Kingdom. Specifically, public sector employees were more likely to take a 'leftist' stance on those statements measuring attitudes to inequality and redistribution. Svallfors suggests that this may be an effect of cutbacks in the public sector and of the ideological attack that has recently been directed against social welfare. It is interesting that, although Svallfors expected to find a similar cleavage between attitudes in the public and private sectors in Sweden, this hypothesis was not supported by the evidence. The broad level of unionization apparent in both the public and private sectors may have been the reason why cleavages of this nature were not uncovered there.

Class. Many theorists maintain that class is an important predictor of political attitudes among western industrialized nations (Hayes, 1995; Svallfors, 1995). It has been hypothesized that attitudes toward inequality and social redistribution may be influenced by perceptions of self-interest; those who are best off in the stratification system are more likely than those worse off to develop attitudes supporting inequality (Svallfors, 1991). The latter group

could also be expected to have more favourable attitudes toward redistributive measures to correct market outcomes (Svallfors, 1991). The results of some research point in this direction. In his study of 'Public Opinion, Sexual Difference and the Welfare State,' Papadakis (1993:) finds that, with respect to attitudes about the need for improvement of government health services in Australia, a major difference was found between the highest occupational group and the ones below it. He points out that one explanation for these differences is that people in the lowest group have the most to lose. This is a plausible argument since, of the respondents in the highest group, only 20% were not covered by private health insurance, in contrast with 46% of the lowest group. Additionally, Bernadette Hayes (1995) maintains that non-working class members are significantly less likely to approve of government intervention in the economy than their working-class colleagues.

Using the United States as an example of the liberal regime, Esping-Andersen and Taylor-Gooby postulate that, while attitudinal cleavages *between* sexes and races will decrease, the differences *within* them will continue to grow. They attribute this to the fact that, while minorities continue to be over-represented at the bottom of the socioeconomic scale, job distribution in the United States has become more equalized, both between the sexes and among races (Esping-Andersen, 1990). As minorities and women become integrated

into prevailing class structures, the likelihood is that class differences will emerge within various minority groups instead of between them. Esping-Andersen maintains (1990: 228-229) that "the minorities left behind in each group will experience much more keenly the phenomenon of relative deprivation." Hence, as alternative bases of stratification lose some of their importance, class conflicts are likely to emerge more clearly. Indeed, class emerged as the dominant axis of conflict in Svallfors's analysis of attitudes toward inequality in the United Kingdom (Svallfors, 1991).

#### Expected Attitudinal Cleavages In Canada

Findings from Svallfors's analysis of attitudes to inequality in the United Kingdom (liberal welfare regime) indicated that class was, when compared to sector and gender, the dominant conflict axis; however, to some extent conflicts emerged on all three axes. Upon examination of the literature, it is predicted that this will also prove to be the case in Canada. Predictions concerning the level and type of attitudinal cleavages which might occur across gender, sector and class within Canada will follow.

Gender. Although there is evidence that women in Canada have been successful in entering privileged 'male' jobs, such as management and the professions, they are still overwhelmingly concentrated in less desirable and more feminine jobs (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1994; Baxter & Kane, 1995; Esping-Andersen, 1991). For example, almost a third of

all women in Canada are employed in clerical occupations which are characterized by low wages, poor working conditions and limited advancement opportunities (Armstrong and Armstrong, 1994). Further, in a cross-national study of gender inequality Janeen Baxter and Emily Kane (1995) found that, for a variety of reasons, the potential for economic independence of women in Canada is relatively low. For example, the gender gap in wages for full-time workers is greater in Canada than in Sweden; in 1995 women's wages as a percentage of men's was 62% in Canada and approximately 75% in Sweden (Baxter & Kane, 1995).

Therefore, although Esping-Andersen predicts that attitudinal cleavages toward inequality and redistribution will decrease between men and women as they become more equal, it seems that, while there may be slight movement in this direction, women in Canada are still far from socially and economically independent. While social policies in Canada, or lack thereof, continue to induce the economic dependency of women, their dependence upon state welfare will continue. Therefore, Canadian women should hold more positive attitudes toward social equality and redistribution than men. However, attitudes between different groups of women should differ as well. That is, women of higher socio-economic status will be less supportive of equality and redistribution than those of lower socio-economic status and women employed in the public sector are expected to hold a more positive attitude toward

these concepts than those in the private sector.

Sector. It seems likely that, in contrast to the private sector, there will be more support for the welfare state within the public sector. Because public sector workers depend on the state for employment they may show more support for state programs, policies and spending than workers in the private sector. As discussed earlier, like the United Kingdom, Canada has been experiencing cutbacks and ideological attacks against social welfare since the early 1980s. Fear of wage and benefit reductions, as well as job loss, already being experienced within this sector may increase support for social equality and redistribution.

Additionally, not only is there currently a strong public sector in Canada, but it is dominated by some of the strongest and largest unions. This in itself may produce dissension between Canada's public and private sector workers. A mandate of the labour movement is to forge solidarity and create equality. Moreover, labour movements are often closely linked to labour or social democratic parties which are typically responsible for initiating and/or expanding welfare programs. Canada has a multi-party political system and, to some degree, the Social Democratic party (NDP), allied with blue collar trade unions, had a significant impact on postwar development. Hence, we would expect unionized workers to be more sympathetic to the welfare state than non-unionized workers.

Class. Based on evidence which suggests that class is an



important predictor of political attitudes among western industrialized nations (Hayes, 1995; Svallfors, 1995b), it is predicted that a relationship between class position and attitudes toward inequality and redistribution will emerge within Canada. Specifically, those who are best off in the stratification system are more likely than those worse off to develop attitudes supporting inequality (Svallfors, 1991). The latter group could also be expected to have more favourable attitudes toward redistributive measures (Svallfors, 1991). Because of the relationship which exists between labour market position and class position, occupation has been chosen to delineate class categories. Consequently, it is expected that those lower on the occupational scale will be more supportive of equality and redistribution than those higher on the occupational scale. The results of some research point in this direction. For example, in his study of 'Public Opinion, Sexual Difference and the Welfare State,' Papadakis (1993:) found that, in Australia, respondents in the lower occupational classes indicated more support for improving government health services than those in the higher classes.

Further, Esping-Andersen's (1990: 27) hypothesis that welfare policies particular to liberal welfare regimes create a class-political dualism between welfare recipients and the majority who rely on the market, specifically the middle classes may also prove true for Canada. Therefore, it is predicted that Canadian welfare policies which alienate the

poor, who are forced to rely upon state welfare, from a middle class who, because they can afford to purchase better welfare services, may resent supporting a welfare system that offers them very little, may result in an attitudinal cleavage between the middle and lower classes.

Finally, because of the relationship which exists between class position and the welfare state it seems likely that the social and economic conditions which currently prevail in Canada may exacerbate this cleavage. For example, evidence indicates that while the gap between the rich and poor is widening (Bernstein, 1994; Hunter, 1988) the existence of our universal social programs continue to be questioned and cut back in favour of private programs.

### Purposes of the Present Study

#### Primary Purpose

Accepting the main tenets of Esping-Andersen's welfare typology, the purpose of the present study is to analyze and compare patterns of attitudes to inequality and redistribution between various groups (gender, sector, class) within the Canadian population. While many of the theorists cited above examined all of the three welfare policy regimes originally described by Esping-Andersen (1990), Canada, a country representing the liberal regime, has been chosen for the present study. The key components of the proposed research will be outlined below.

Whereas empirical evidence arising from Svallfors's study

rarely supported the predictions made by Esping-Andersen and Taylor-Gooby, divergences in attitudes according to gender, sector and class, both within and across nations, were nevertheless significant. Svallfors (1991) points out that policy regimes may still structure conflicts, but in a different way from that suggested by Esping-Andersen or Taylor-Gooby. However, as Svallfors (1991) suggests, it may also be the case that differences in public attitudes may be mainly a matter of existing public policies on the surface, rather than deep, common understandings. That is, power struggles between various collective actors, like unions and political parties, may result in the most successful group's interests or beliefs dominating the public arena. Svallfors suggests that "it is not whether different populations regard inequality in a qualitatively different manner, but rather which interpretation of inequality will come to dominate public debate and structure actual policies" (1991: 122). If Svallfors is correct, then fairly similar attitudes may be mobilised in quite divergent directions, and the future of equality and social redistribution is more a matter of successful or failed political strategies than a case of differences in ideological commitments. Consequently, the views of society which take the main stage may reflect one of the most important ways in which various collective actors try to further their interests (Svallfors, 1990: 88). If those who are successful in having their views dominate are also the

most powerful and resource rich, and if the self-interest hypothesis is accurate, then the future of economic equality and state redistribution may be precarious. Indeed, Svallfors (1991) has produced evidence which suggests that it is essentially **private sector males** in Sweden (also the dominant power holders in Canada) who hold less with the social democratic ideology.

As mentioned earlier, while not the "purest" representative of the liberal regime for a variety of reasons, Canada provides an interesting case. Along with the United States and the United Kingdom, Canada has been situated within the liberal welfare policy regime. Although welfare policies in each of these countries have traits characteristic of the liberal policy regime, important differences in their welfare policies also are evident. Consequently, with respect to Gregg Olsen's (1994a) contention that Canada cannot really be categorized into either of the aforementioned types easily, the development of an alternative classification approach may be justified and facilitated by the results of this research. In fact, following their examination of redistributive policy instruments in Australia, Francis Castles and Deborah Mitchell (1992) developed a "Four Worlds" model of welfare state regimes.

#### Secondary Purpose

The theoretical foundation of this project is that welfare states of different countries are qualitatively

distinct and hence each has a unique influence on the kind of attitudes that the public holds toward inequality and redistribution. For the purpose of this research, the qualitative differences of welfare states have been categorized into three welfare regimes; social democratic, liberal and conservative-corporatist. Because only the welfare state of Canada which belongs to the liberal regime will be utilized in this analysis, inter-regime differences cannot be analyzed first-hand. However, it may be possible to draw some general comparative conclusions from a cursory comparison to the results obtained from Svallfors's (1991) original study of inequality which included a country from each welfare regime. By adding and comparing the analysis of Canadian attitudes to research previously conducted utilizing Esping-Andersen's welfare regime typology, further advances may be made in determining if and why differences and similarities occur across nations and in what ways these attitudes are related to the nature of social policies in different welfare regimes.

#### Hypotheses

In the present study, three independent variables - gender, sector and class - will be examined in relation to the dependent variable - public attitudes toward redistribution and inequality. Specific hypotheses related to each of the independent variables will be described in more detail below.

#### Primary Hypotheses

Attitudes toward redistribution and inequality will vary

among specific groups within Canada's liberal welfare regime. For a variety of reasons outlined earlier, the attitudes of individuals affiliated with various social groups should demonstrate different levels of support for these concepts.

1a) Considering women's unique experience with, and dependence upon, state welfare, it is expected that women will be more supportive of redistribution and equality than men.

1b) Based on Papadakis's research in this area, gender is also expected to interact with other variables, including class and sector. It is predicted that women who hold lower socio-economic status will be more supportive of redistribution and equality than those with higher socio-economic status. Additionally, women employed in the public sector are expected to hold a more positive attitude toward these ideas than those in the private sector.

2) The attitudes that public sector employees hold toward redistribution and equality are expected to be more supportive than those of private sector employees. As discussed earlier, stronger support for redistribution and equality and a more negative attitude toward cutbacks among the public sector may be the result of self interest (i.e., fear of job loss) and/or strong union movements.

3) The attitudes that respondents belonging to different class categories have toward redistribution and inequality are expected to diverge. The class schema utilized for this analysis was devised by Goldthorpe and colleagues (1992), and

is based upon respondent occupation. According to Erikson and Goldthorpe (1992), class position is closely related to the work and market situation that various occupations entail. For example, Svallfors (1995a) points out that resources, such as money or qualifications and credentials, and risks for unemployment, sickness and poverty are systematically linked to position in the labour market. Because of the link between labour market position, class position and welfare policies, it is predicted that, generally, those worse off in the stratification system (presumably those lower down on the occupational class scale) will hold more positive attitudes toward social redistribution and equality than those who are best off (presumably those higher up on the occupational class scale).

#### Secondary Hypothesis

Attitudes toward redistribution and inequality will vary among different welfare states, according to the tenets of Esping-Andersen's welfare worlds typology which maintains that, welfare states of different countries are qualitatively distinct and, consequently, each has a unique influence on the kind of attitudes that the public holds.

Categorization of the qualitative differences which exist among various welfare states is based on the level of de-commodification and social stratification inherent in the type of welfare policies which predominate in a particular welfare state. Based on this, welfare states have been categorized

into three welfare regimes; social democratic, conservative-corporatist and liberal. Support for redistribution and equality is expected to be greatest in countries whose welfare policies are the most de-commodifying and egalitarian, lowest in countries whose welfare policies are the least de-commodifying and egalitarian and average in countries whose welfare policies are moderately de-commodifying and egalitarian. According to Esping Andersen (1990), welfare policies are the most de-commodifying and egalitarian in the social democratic regime, the least in the conservative corporatist regime, and moderate in the liberal regime. Consequently, when the analysis of public attitudes toward redistribution and inequality in Canada is compared to the results of the analysis which was conducted by Svallfors, it is expected that public support for redistribution will be found to vary across nations with Swedes (social democratic regime) most supportive, West Germans (conservative-corporatist) least supportive, and Canadians and the British (liberal) in the middle.

It is important to note that, because a statistical analysis will not be conducted for any other nation, this portion of the research cannot produce any conclusive results. However, a general comparative examination may provide the researcher and reader with ideas and directions that may prove fruitful for future research.



## CHAPTER 2

### METHOD

#### The Canadian Survey

Data provided by the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) will be utilized for this research project which examines and analyses the public's attitudes toward redistribution and inequality in Canada. The ISSP is a multinational co-operative research project and is composed of study teams in eleven nations, each of which undertakes an annual self-completion survey containing an agreed-upon set of questions. The data utilized were documented and made available by the Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung, Koeln (Cologne, Germany). The data in each country were collected by independent institutions. The Canadian survey was conducted in 1992 by Alan Frizzell, Carleton University, Ottawa.

#### Sample Selection

The Canadian survey was conducted using a self-completion survey containing a set of questions agreed upon by a voluntary grouping of study teams in eleven nations. These questions were administered to a probability-based, nation wide sample of adults. A stratified multi-stage sampling method was employed using as the primary strata the five main regions; Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario, Western Canada and British Columbia. Within these regions, major sub-areas were randomly selected from Federal Electoral Districts. Within

each of these districts, two Enumeration Areas were randomly selected. Using Census maps, the first two streets that began with the letters "G" and "S" and contained more than 50 residential units were then chosen resulting in a total of 64 sampling frames.

### Sample Characteristics

The universe includes a nation-wide sample of 1004 adults. The response rate was 73.9%. The sample sizes for the independent variables are relatively large and the distributions are representative and balanced (ISSP, 1992).

### Procedures

Interviewers distributed 1395 questionnaires and returned the next day to collect the completed questionnaires. The data were weighted for age, sex and province using the 1991 Statistics Canada Census parameters.

### Measures

#### Independent Variables

Gender, sector and class were the three independent variables included in this analysis. The response categories for sector were public and private, and indicated which area a respondent was currently employed. Only those respondents currently employed were included in the analysis; the self-employed and those outside the labour force were excluded. Following Svallfors's (1995a) studies of attitudes to inequality, occupational codings were chosen to delineate a respondents class membership. Recoding of class categories was

executed in two stages. First, Canadian occupations were coded according to ISCO (International Standard Classification Of Occupations - International Labour Office, Geneva 1968). Second, these occupational codings were recoded into a six-class version of the class schema devised by Goldthorpe and colleagues (1992). This occupational classification scheme is made up of six response categories; service class I (higher level controllers and administrators), service class II (lower level controllers and administrators), routine non-manual workers, skilled workers, unskilled workers, and the self-employed.

#### Dependent Variables

Measures for redistribution and inequality are items that were included on the Canadian ISSP surveys previously described. Variables were selected from the pool of questions used in the survey on the basis of their relevance to the two dimensions under study. These measures are analogous to those developed in previous research based on this data set (Svallfors, 1991). The Canadian public's attitudes toward redistribution were measured using the items:

- R1) It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes. (Item V57 in original questionnaire.)
- R2) The government should provide a job for everyone who wants one. (Item V59 in original questionnaire.)

R3) The government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income. (Item V62 in original questionnaire.)

These questions were selected from Svallfors's (1991) redistribution item battery. Agreement was indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Higher levels of agreement with these items would indicate higher levels of support for redistribution.

Canadian attitudes toward inequality were measured using the items:

I1) Large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity. (Item V23 in original questionnaire.)

I2) Allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living. (Item V24 in original questionnaire.)

These two items were taken from Svallfors's (1991) de/legitimation item battery. Agreement was indicated on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Higher levels of disagreement with these items would indicate higher levels of support for equality.

### Data Analysis

#### Primary Hypotheses

Due to the nature of the data utilized for this research and the specific hypotheses under study, the interrelationships among the five dependent variables (R1, R2,

R3, I1, I2) and the three independent variables (gender, sector, class) were analyzed in the following manner. First, descriptive statistics - frequencies, means, modes, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis - were examined. Second, because this research project included three factor variables and multiple response variables, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedure was chosen to examine the main effects of, and interactions among, the independent variables. This statistical test was selected because it reduces the Type I error rate in analyses of multiple dependent variables.

To increase the power of the analysis to detect differences among groups on ordinal level variables, the five original response variables were collapsed into two broader measures of attitudes toward redistribution and inequality (Leo Cheung, Statistical Advisory Services, personal communication, March 1996). These two measures are analogous to those developed in previous research based on this data set (Svallfors, 1991).

After combining these variables, the sample size was reduced from 1004 to 494, because it was necessary to select only those individuals who responded to all of the five original items. Although this procedure may have compromised randomization, it was decided that maintaining this assumption was less important than controlling for multiple testing effects and the increased possibility of Type I errors. Further, although the sample size was reduced, it remained

relatively large and representative of the original sample. Therefore, the interrelationships among the dependent and independent variables were analyzed using a 3-way (gender by sector by class) MANOVA, with redistribution and inequality as response variables.

Finally, to identify general trends and patterns, as well as to compare categories, bivariate crosstabulations and percentages were calculated for each combination of factor by response variable. In this way, a broad picture of Canadian attitudes toward redistribution and inequality was obtained.

#### Secondary Hypothesis

Inter-regime differences were not analyzed first-hand. However, in order to draw some general comparative conclusions, bivariate crosstabulations and percentages were examined for each combination of country by response variable.

## CHAPTER 3

### FINDINGS

#### Descriptive Statistics

##### Redistribution Variables

Normality estimates. Examination of the descriptive statistics showed that there were insignificant amounts of skewness across each of the redistribution variables (less than 1.0), and that the distribution on each of them was only slightly platykurtic or flat (about -1.0 in each case).

Measures of central tendency. The modal values for the items measuring attitudes toward redistribution (R1, R2, R3) on a scale of 1 to 5, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, were 2.0, 4.0 and 2.0, respectively. The largest proportion of respondents agreed that "it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes" (R1) and that "the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income" (R3). (See Table 1.) While half (46.8%) of the respondents agreed with variable R1, just less than a third (28.8%) disagreed. This pattern is similar for variable R3 where again half (47.8%) of the respondents agreed and only 37.8% disagreed.

While the largest proportion of respondents still agreed that "the government should provide a job for everyone who wants one" (R2), closer inspection of the data reveals that respondents were almost equally likely to disagree with the

Table 1. Attitudes to redistribution and inequality.  
 Percentage of Canadians agreeing with propositions.

Statement	Level of Agreement (N=494)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree/Dis	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<b>Redistribution Items</b>					
It is the responsibility of government to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes. (R1)	15.8%	31.0%	24.5%	20.9%	7.9%
46 The government should provide a job for everyone who wants one. (R2)	15.8%	25.7%	17.8%	30.8%	9.9%
The government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income. (R3)	17.4%	30.4%	14.4%	26.9%	10.9%
<b>Inequality Items</b>					
Large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity. (I1)	2.2%	11.7%	19.0%	44.9%	22.1%
Allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living. (I2)	6.7%	27.1%	27.9%	29.6%	8.7%



statement (40.7%) as they were to agree with it (41.5%). Variables R1, R2 and R3 have similar standard deviations of 1.2, 1.3 and 1.3, respectively.

### Inequality Variables

Normality estimates. For both of the inequality variables (I1 I2), the descriptive statistics indicated that the distributions were only slightly skewed ( $\sim 1$ ) and slightly platykurtic ( $< -1$ ).

Measures of central tendency. The modal response categories for items I1 and I2 were 2.0. This suggests that the largest proportion of respondents supported equality as they disagreed with the statements, "large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity" (I1) and "allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living" (I2). (See Table 1.) However, the total percentage of respondents who disagreed with statement I1 (67.0%) as opposed to agreed (13.9%) contrasts sharply with statement I2 where respondents were almost equally as likely to agree (33.8%) as disagree (38.3%) with the target statement. Variables I1 and I2 have similar standard deviations of approximately 1.0.

Upon examination of the means, modes, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis, it was determined that the distribution of each response variable met the basic assumptions of bivariate normality.

## Primary Hypotheses

### MANOVA Results

Gender. It was predicted that the responses of males and females would differ significantly on the dependent variables. However, a MANOVA procedure indicated that there were no differences between these two groups on either of the collapsed response variables (Redistribution  $F=.17789$ ,  $p>.05$ ; Inequality  $F=.02033$ ,  $p>.05$ ). The mean scores for males and females on each of the response variables are reported in Table 2.

Examination of the bivariate distributions on the redistribution items reveals that approximately 50% of females agreed with the statements "it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes" (R1), "the government should provide a job for everyone who wants one" (R2) and "the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income" (R3), and 40% of males agreed with these statements. Levels of agreement with the redistribution variables, by gender, are illustrated in Figures 1 to 3.

The highest level of support for either the redistribution or inequality items was displayed by both males and females in the case of variable I1. Approximately two thirds of each gender strongly disagreed with the statement that, "large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity" (I1). In contrast, just over one-third of both

Table 2. Mean Redistribution and Inequality Scores by Gender.

<u>Measure</u>	Gender		p
	Male (N=250)	Female (N=244)	
Redistribution	2.99 (1.11) <sup>1</sup>	2.67 (.95)	NS
Inequality	3.36 (.86)	3.43 (.88)	NS

<sup>1</sup> Figures in parenthesis are standard deviations.

Figure 1. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by gender.

50

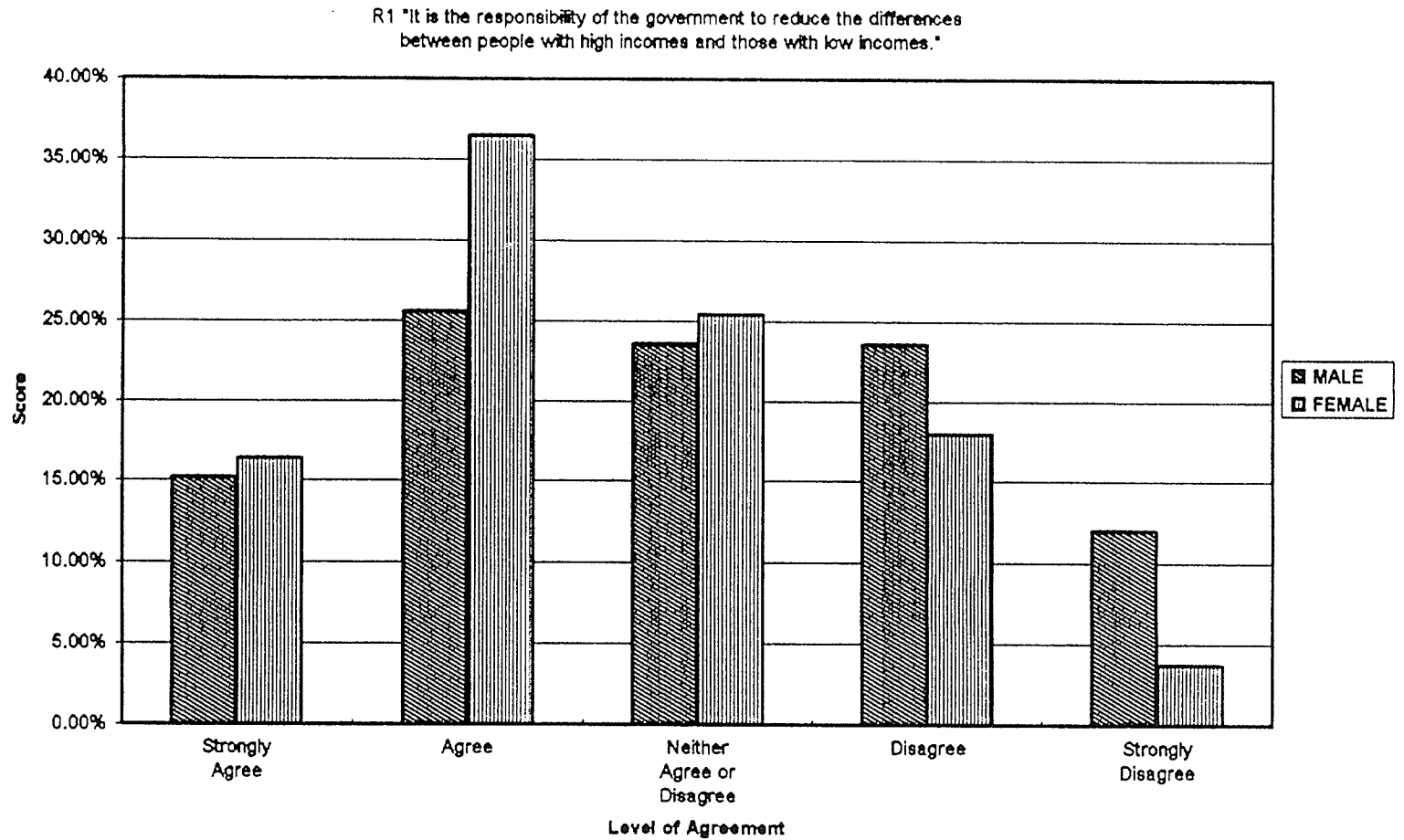


Figure 2. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by gender.

51

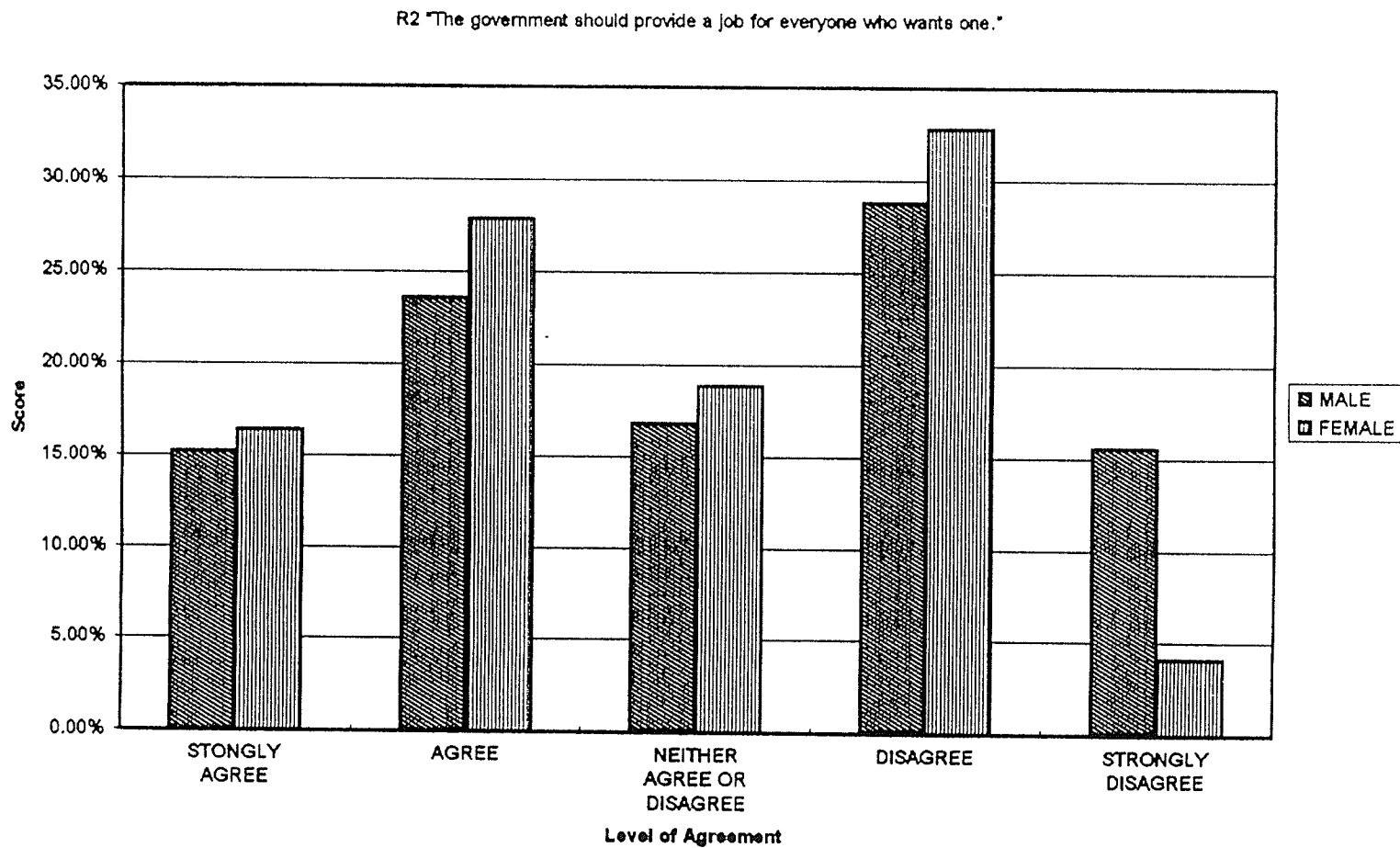
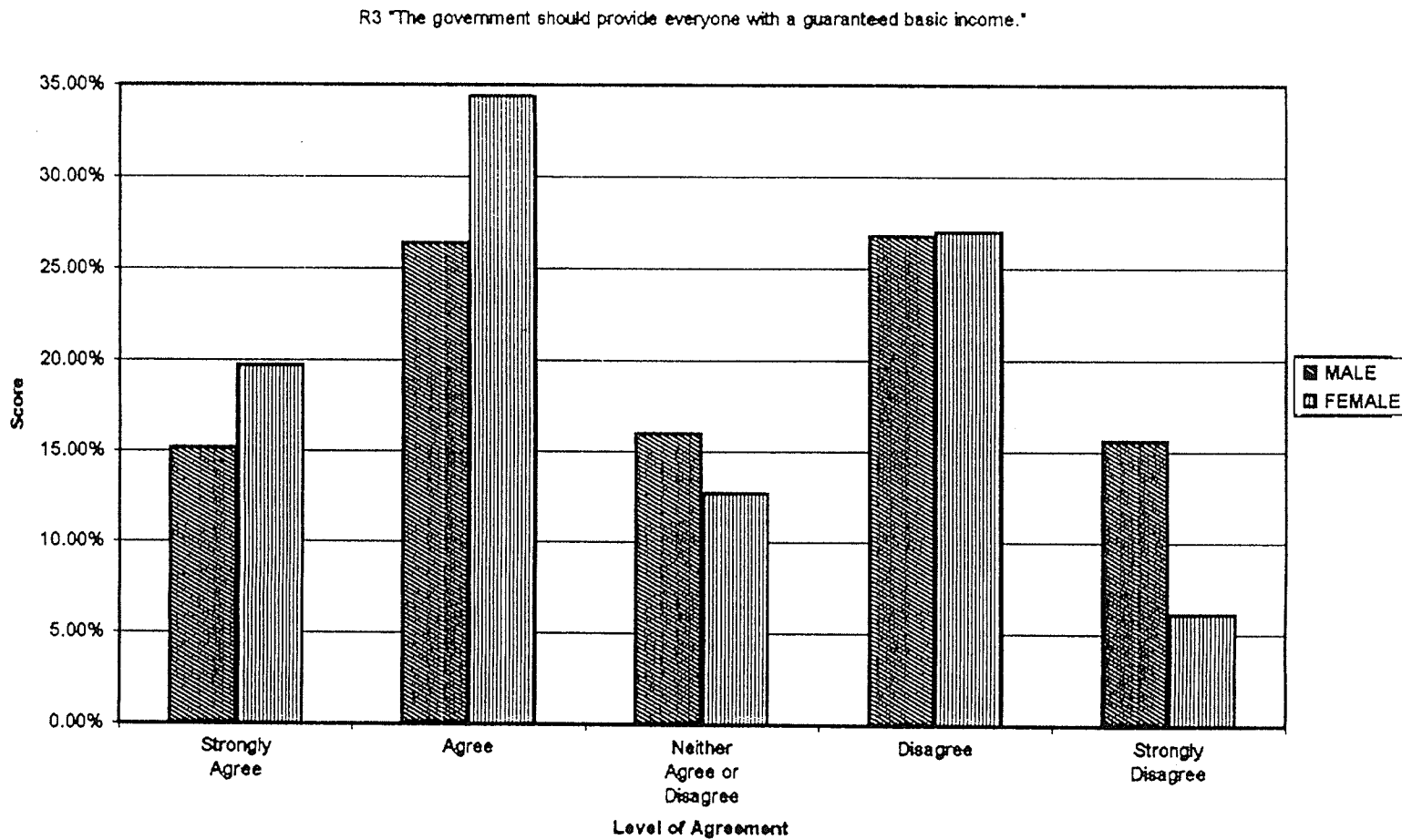


Figure 3. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by gender.



groups disagreed with the statement "allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living" (I2). (See Figures 4 and 5.)

Sector. The responses of public sector and private sector workers were expected to vary on each dependent variable. However, the results of a MANOVA procedure showed that there were no significant differences in the responses of public and private sector workers on either the redistribution or inequality variables (Redistribution  $F=.24943$ ,  $p>.05$ ; Inequality  $F=.14354$ ,  $p>.05$ ). As shown in Table 3, the mean scores for public sector and private sector workers on the redistribution variable were 2.7 and 2.9, respectively. In the case of the inequality variable, the mean score for public sector workers was 3.5, and 3.3 for private sector workers.

Examination of levels of agreement with the redistribution items, by sector, reveals that almost 50% of both public and private sector workers agreed with the statements, "it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes" (R1) and "the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income" (R3). While 48% of those employed in the public sector agreed that "the government should provide a job for everyone who wants one," (R2) 36% of those employed in the private sector agreed with this statement. (See Figures 6 to 8.)

Levels of agreement with the inequality items, by sector,

Figure 4. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by gender.

11 "Large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity."

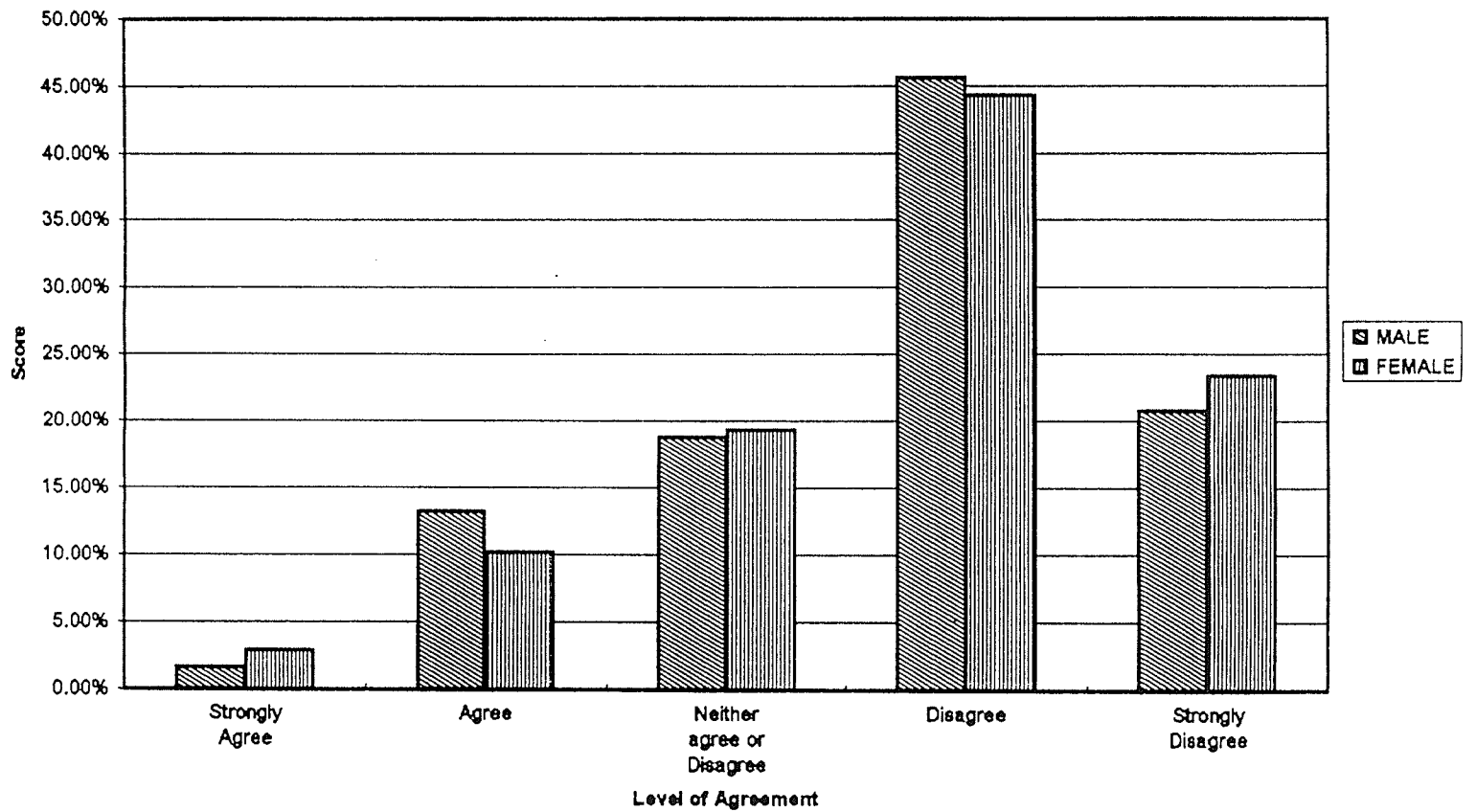




Figure 5. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by gender.

12 'Allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living.'

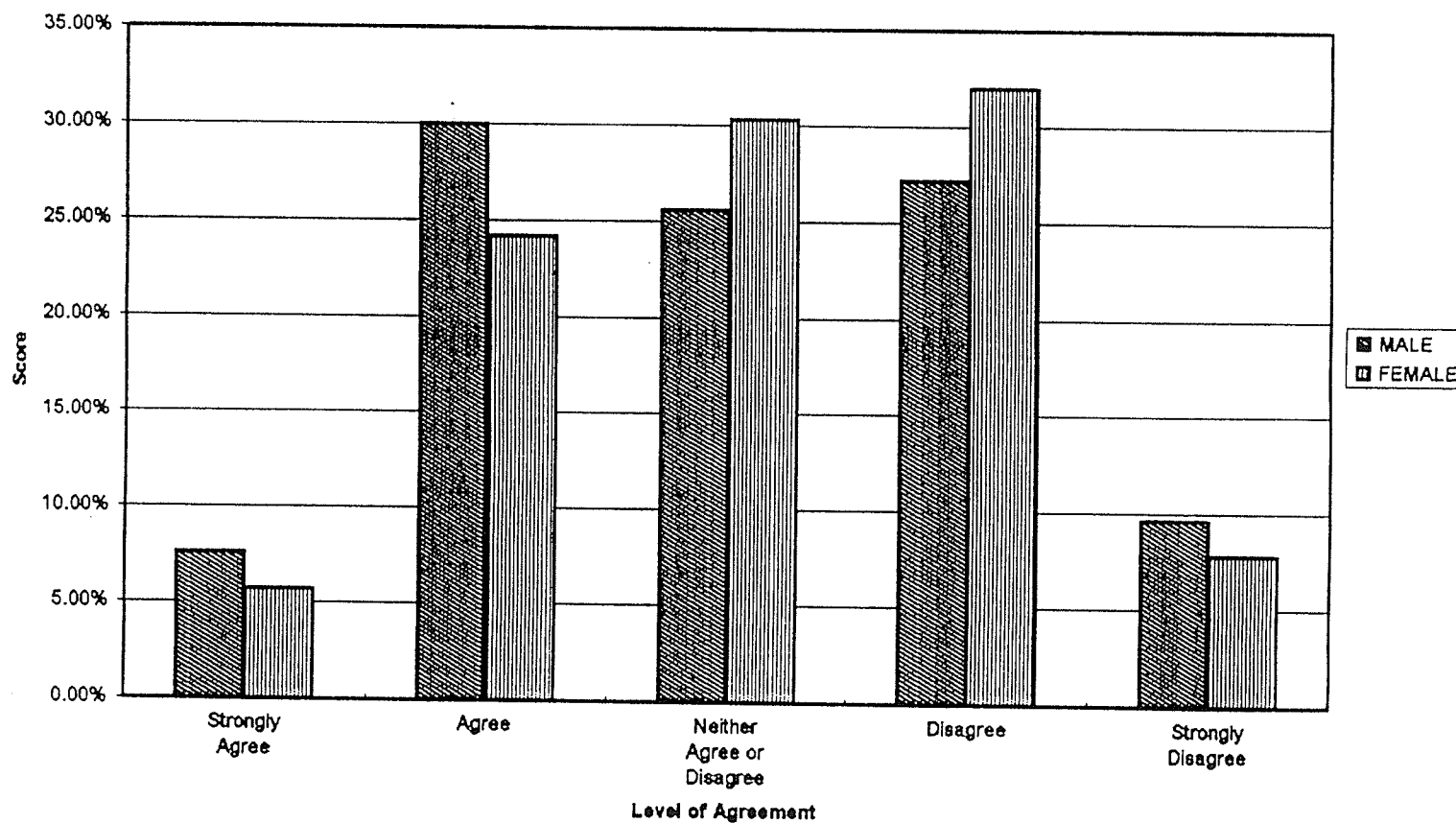


Table 3. Mean Redistribution and Inequality Scores by Sector.

<u>Measure</u>	<u>Sector</u>		<u>p</u>
	<u>Public</u> (N=229)	<u>Private</u> (N=265)	
Redistribution	2.715 (.99) <sup>1</sup>	2.942 (1.09)	NS
Inequality	3.47 (.84)	3.33 (.89)	NS

<sup>1</sup> Figures in parenthesis are standard deviations.

Figure 6. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by sector.

57

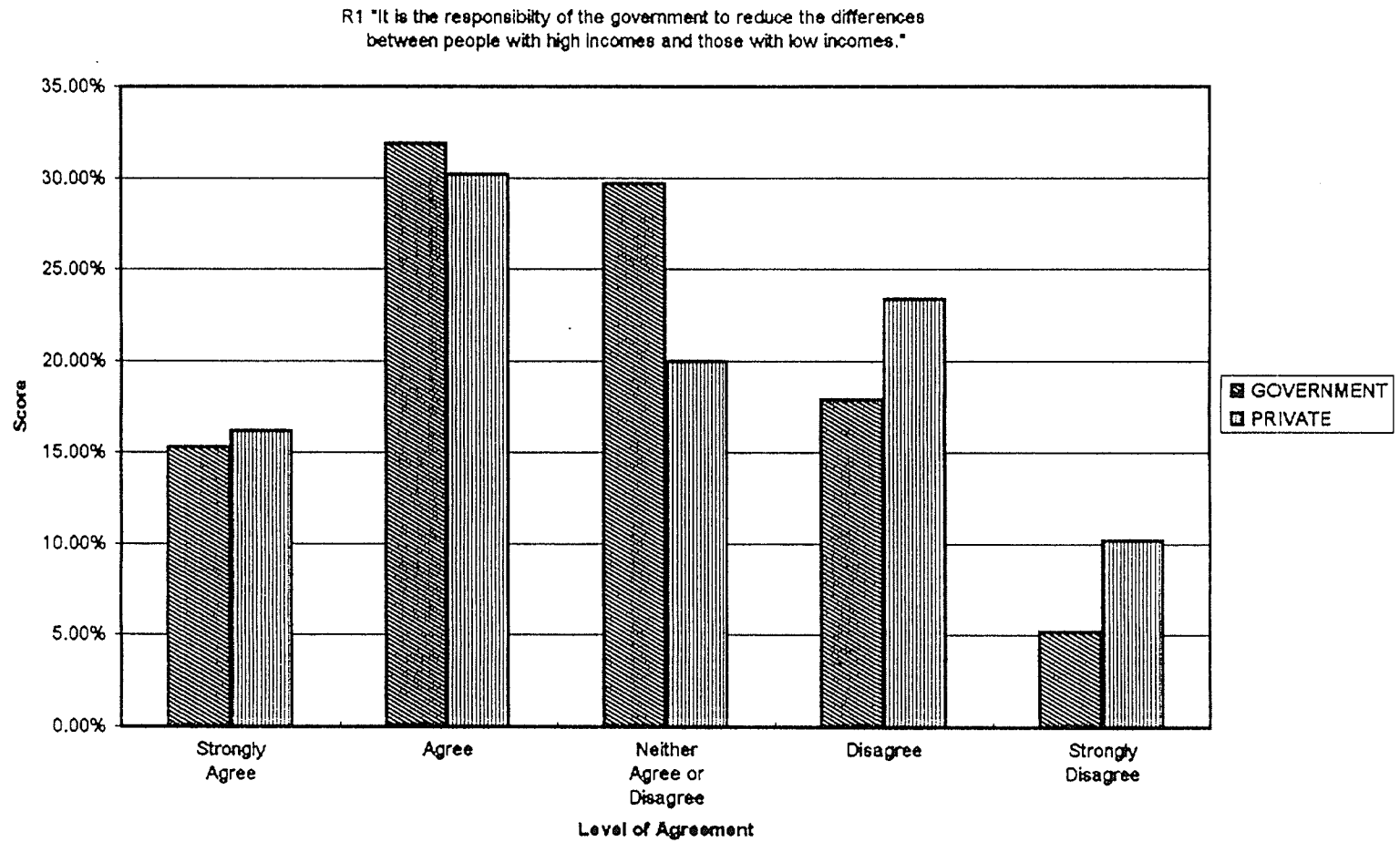


Figure 7. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by sector.

58

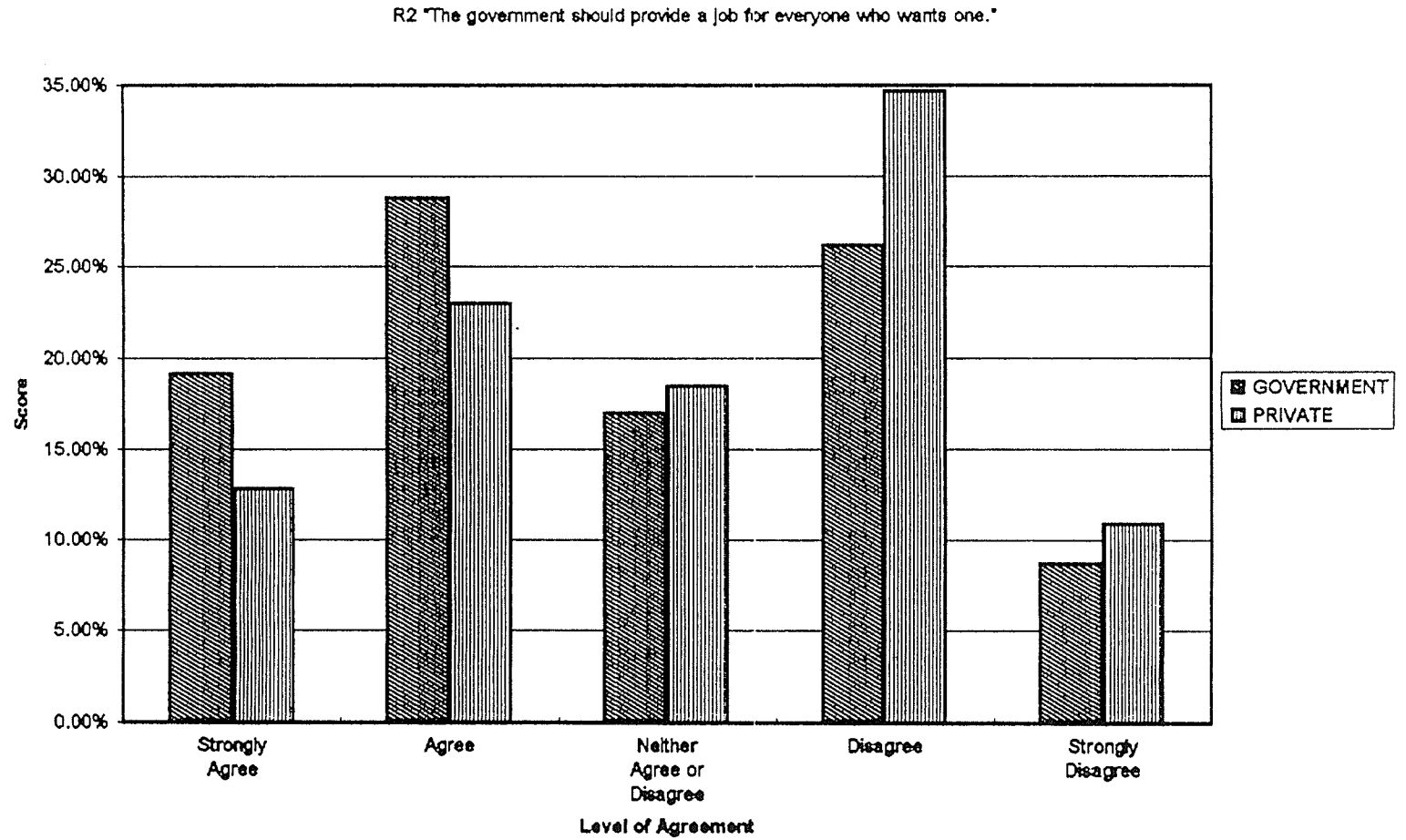
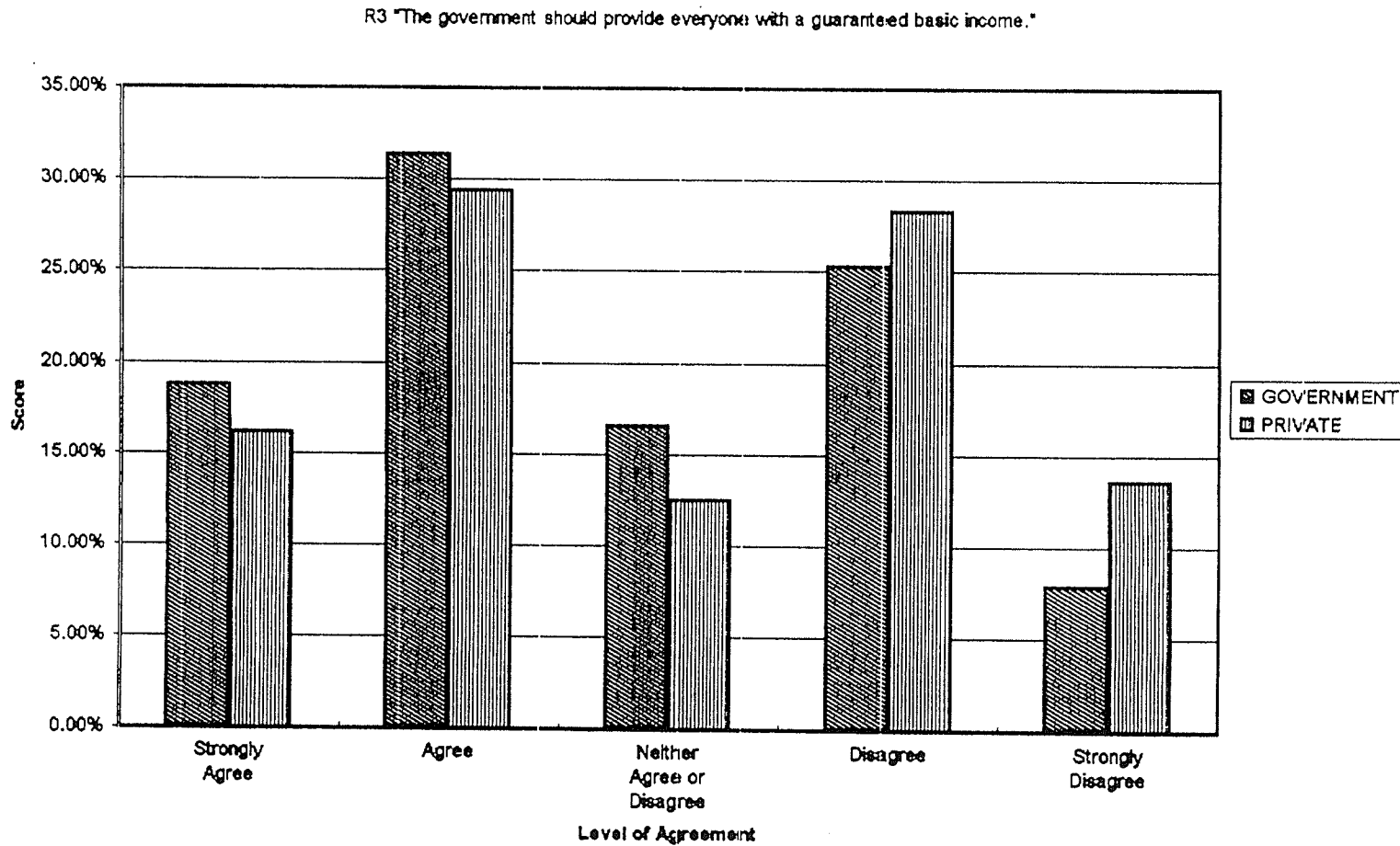


Figure 8. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by sector.



are presented in Figures 9 and 10. Approximately two-thirds of each group disagreed that "large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity" (I1). Less than half of the respondents in both the public (43.3%) and the private sector (34%) disagreed that "allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living."

Class. Canadians attitudes toward redistribution and inequality were expected to differ according to their social class membership. Although the results of a MANOVA procedure indicated that there were no significant differences among social classes on the inequality variable ( $F=1.29843$ ,  $p>.05$ ), a significant main effect was reported for the variable measuring redistribution ( $F=5.98252$ ,  $p<.05$ ). A multiple comparison test revealed that the mean score of the service I category was significantly higher than all but one of the remaining class categories (service II, routine non-manual, skilled and unskilled) ( $p<.05$ ), indicating that respondents in the lower class categories are more supportive of redistribution measures than those in the highest class category. The multiple comparison test did not reveal any significant difference between the service I and the self-employed class categories ( $p>.05$ ). Mean scores for each of the class categories on the redistribution and inequality variables are presented in Table 4.

Examination of the bivariate distributions on the individual redistribution items revealed that while

Figure 9. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by sector.

11 "Large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity."

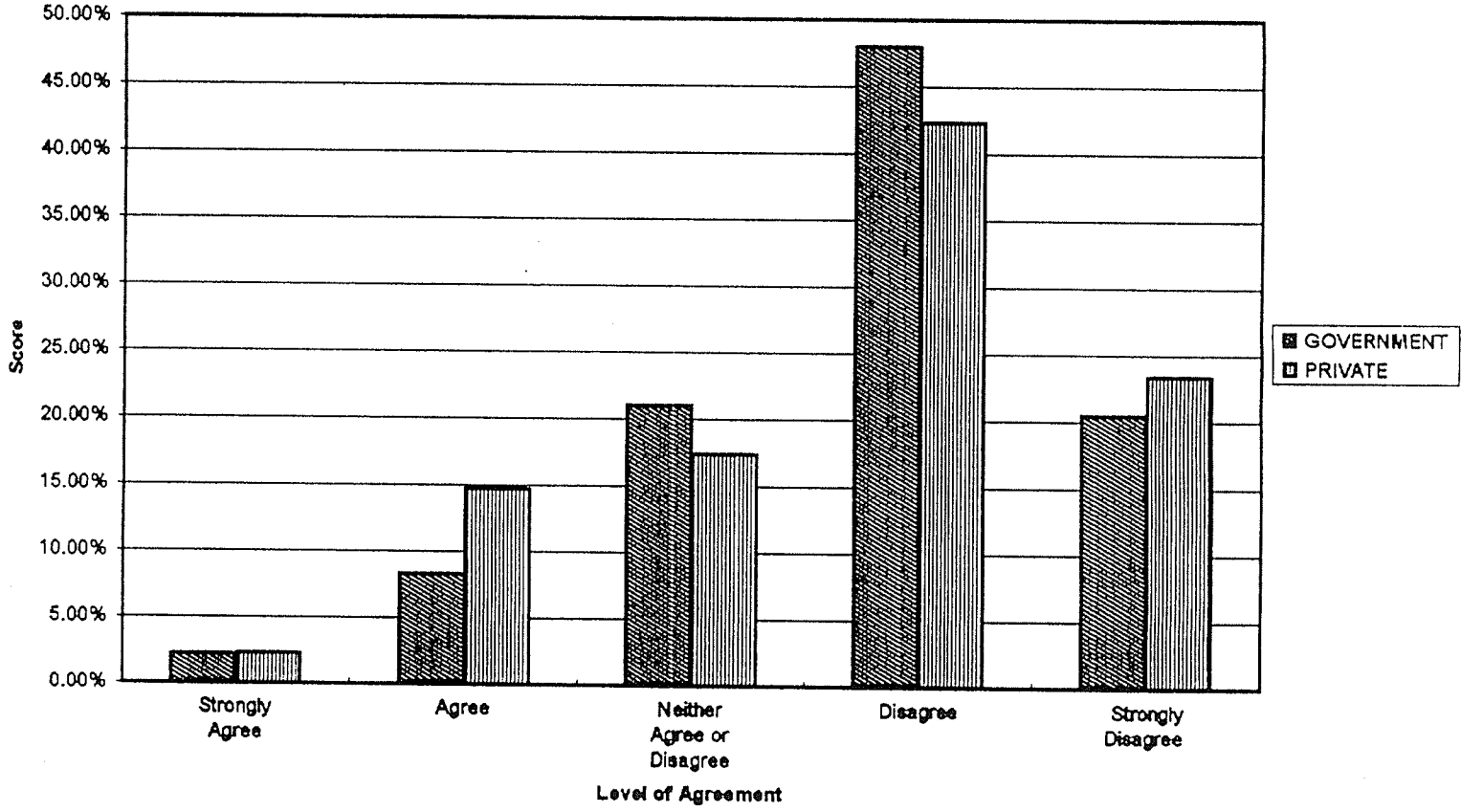


Figure 10. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by sector.

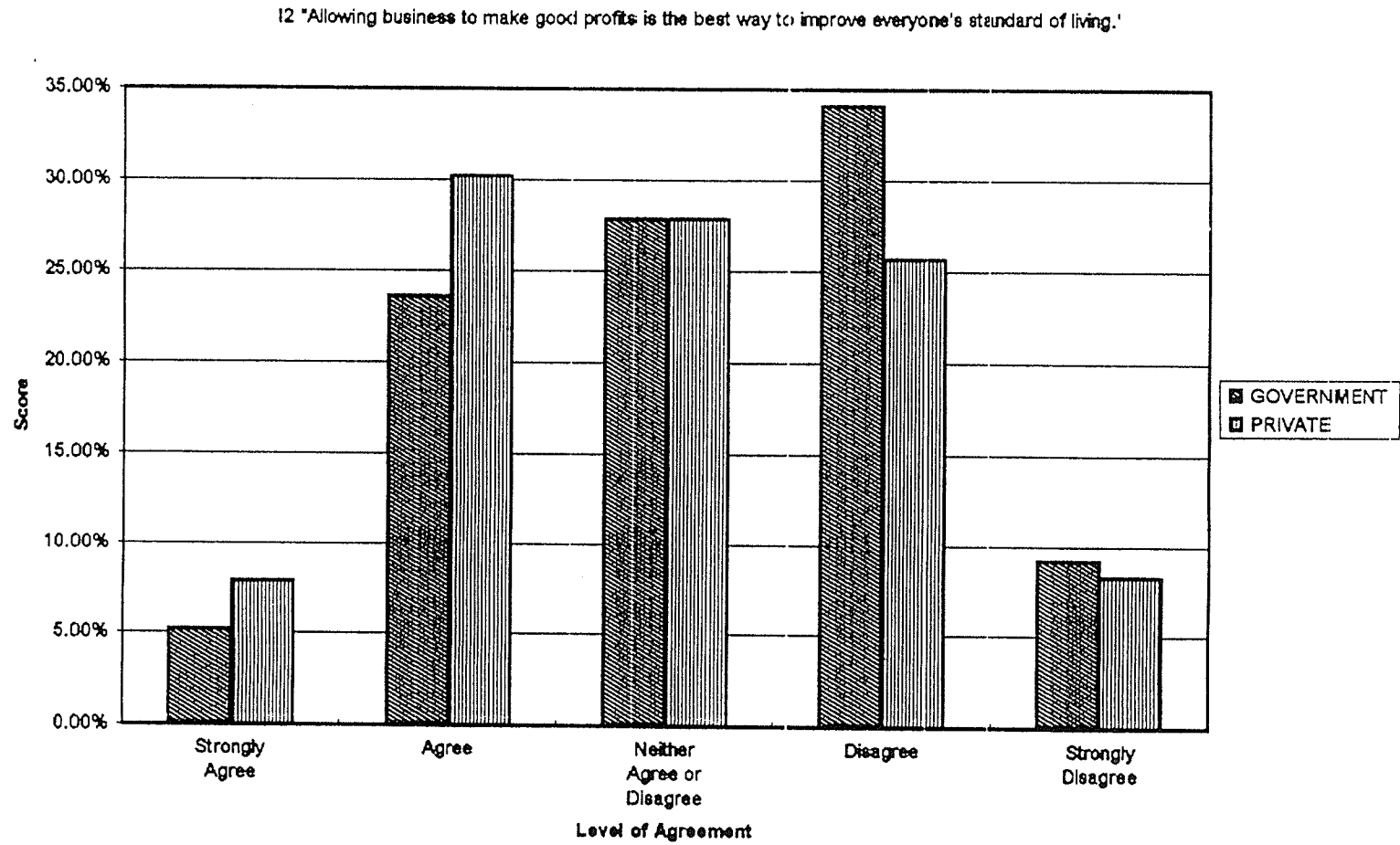




Table 4. Mean Redistribution and Inequality Scores by Class.

Measure	Class						p
	Service I (N=51)	Service II (N=199)	Routine N-M (N=140)	Skilled (N=44)	Unskilled (N=58)	Selfemp (N=2)	
Redistribution	3.44 <sup>a</sup> (1.09) <sup>1</sup>	2.87 <sup>b</sup> (1.03)	2.68 <sup>b</sup> (.95)	2.65 <sup>b</sup> (.92)	2.65 <sup>b</sup> (1.15)	4.83 <sup>b</sup> (.24)	p<.05
Inequality	3.42 (.88)	3.51 (.91)	3.31 (.83)	3.25 (.77)	3.33 (.86)	2.75 (.35)	NS

63

<sup>1</sup> Figures in parenthesis are standard deviations.

Means with the same letter are not significantly different.

approximately one-third of the service I respondents agreed that "it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes," (R1), approximately one-half of the respondents in each of the other class categories, except the self-employed, agreed with this statement. Similarly, while approximately one-fifth of service I respondents agreed that "the government should provide a job for everyone who wants one" (R2), with the exception of the self-employed, at least one third of the respondents in the other class categories, agreed with this statement. Finally, while only one-quarter of the respondents in the service I class agreed that "the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income" (R3), one-half of the respondents in each of the other class categories, except the self-employed, agreed with this statement. All of the respondents in the self-employed category disagreed with redistribution items R1, R2 and R3. (See Figures 11 to 13.)

With respect to inequality variable I1, disagreement across class categories ranged between 50% and 71%. No more than 21% of respondents in any of the class categories agreed with the statement, "large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity" (I1). Support for equality among class categories is greater for this variable than for any of the other items measuring attitudes toward redistribution and inequality.

Figure 11. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by class.

65

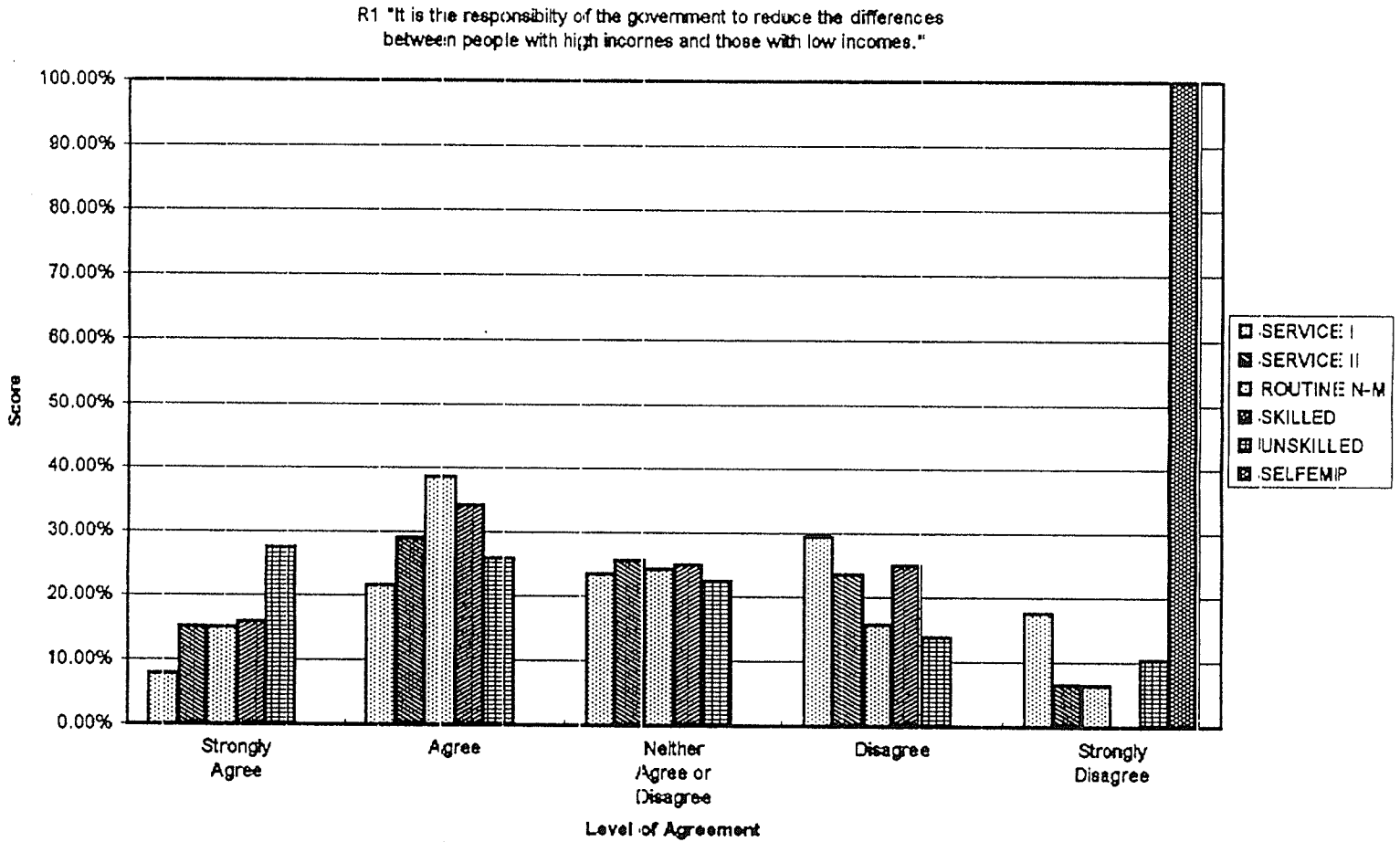


Figure 12. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by class.

99

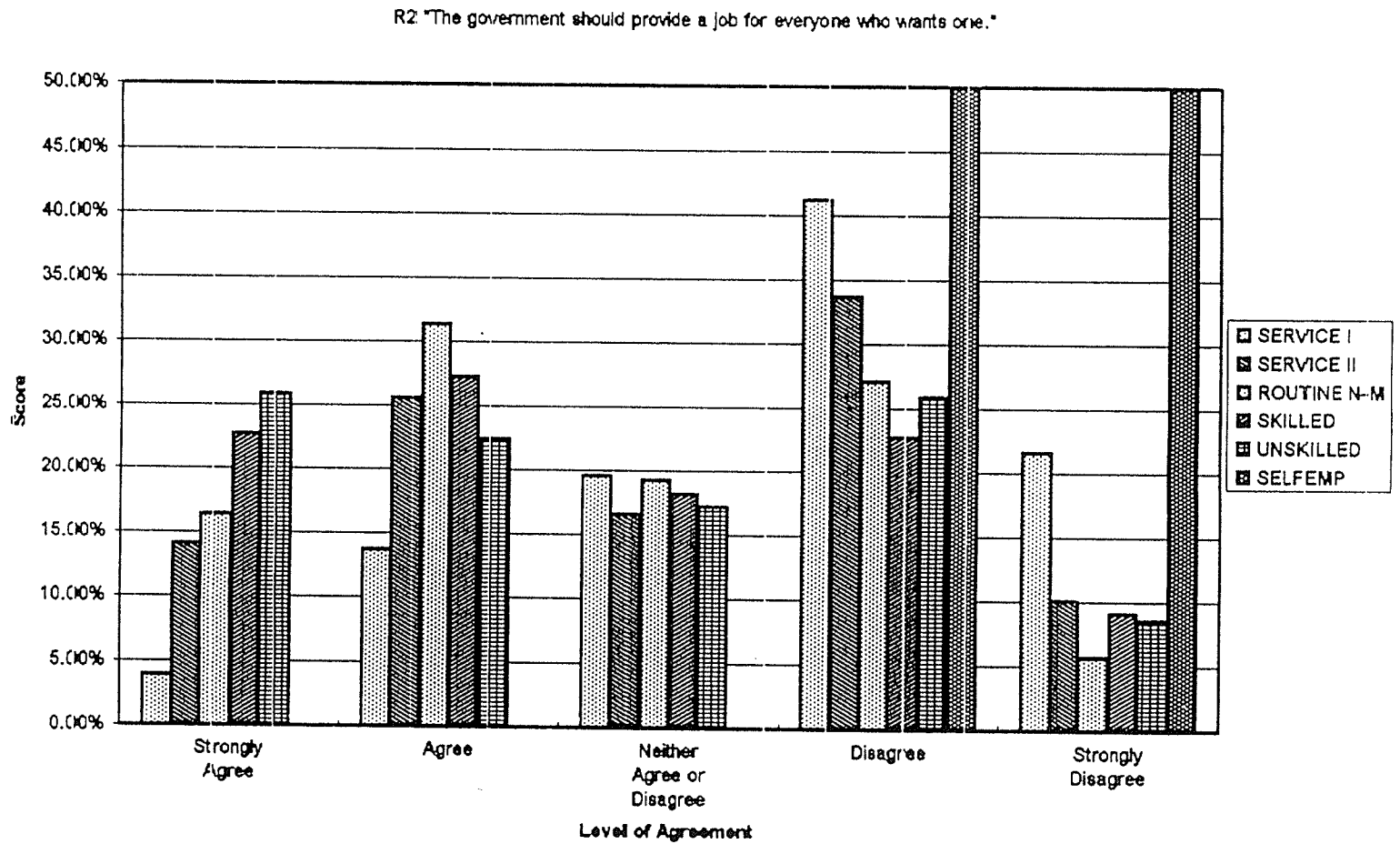
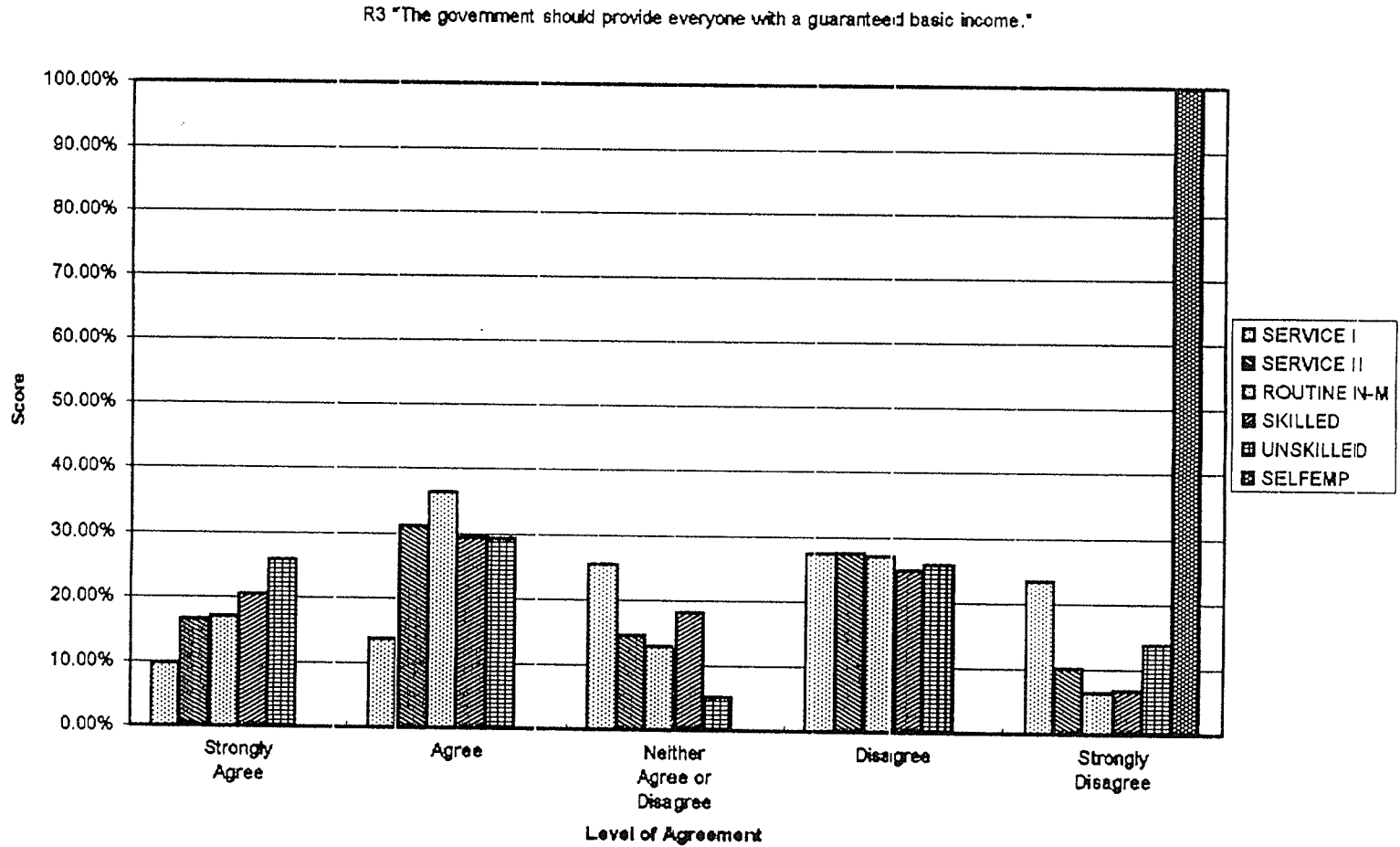


Figure 13. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by class.

67



While approximately one-third of respondents in the service I, routine non-manual, skilled and unskilled categories disagreed with the statement "allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standard of living," one-half of respondents in the service II class category disagree with this statement. None of the respondents in the self-employed category disagreed with item I2; 50% indicated that they neither agreed or disagreed and the other 50% indicated that they agreed. (See Figures 14 and 15.)

Interactions. No interaction effects were detected among any of the independent variables ( $p > .05$ ).

#### Secondary Hypothesis

Attitudes toward redistribution and inequality were expected to vary among qualitatively different welfare states. To examine this prediction, crosstabulations and percentages for each response variable were calculated for countries belonging to one of three welfare regimes - liberal (Canada, Britain), conservative-corporatist (West Germany) and social democratic (Sweden). As Figures 16 to 20 reveal, the percentage of respondents who indicate support for redistribution and equality may be related not only to the country in question, but to the response variable as well. With respect to the statement that "it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes," (R1) the

Figure 14. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by class.

69

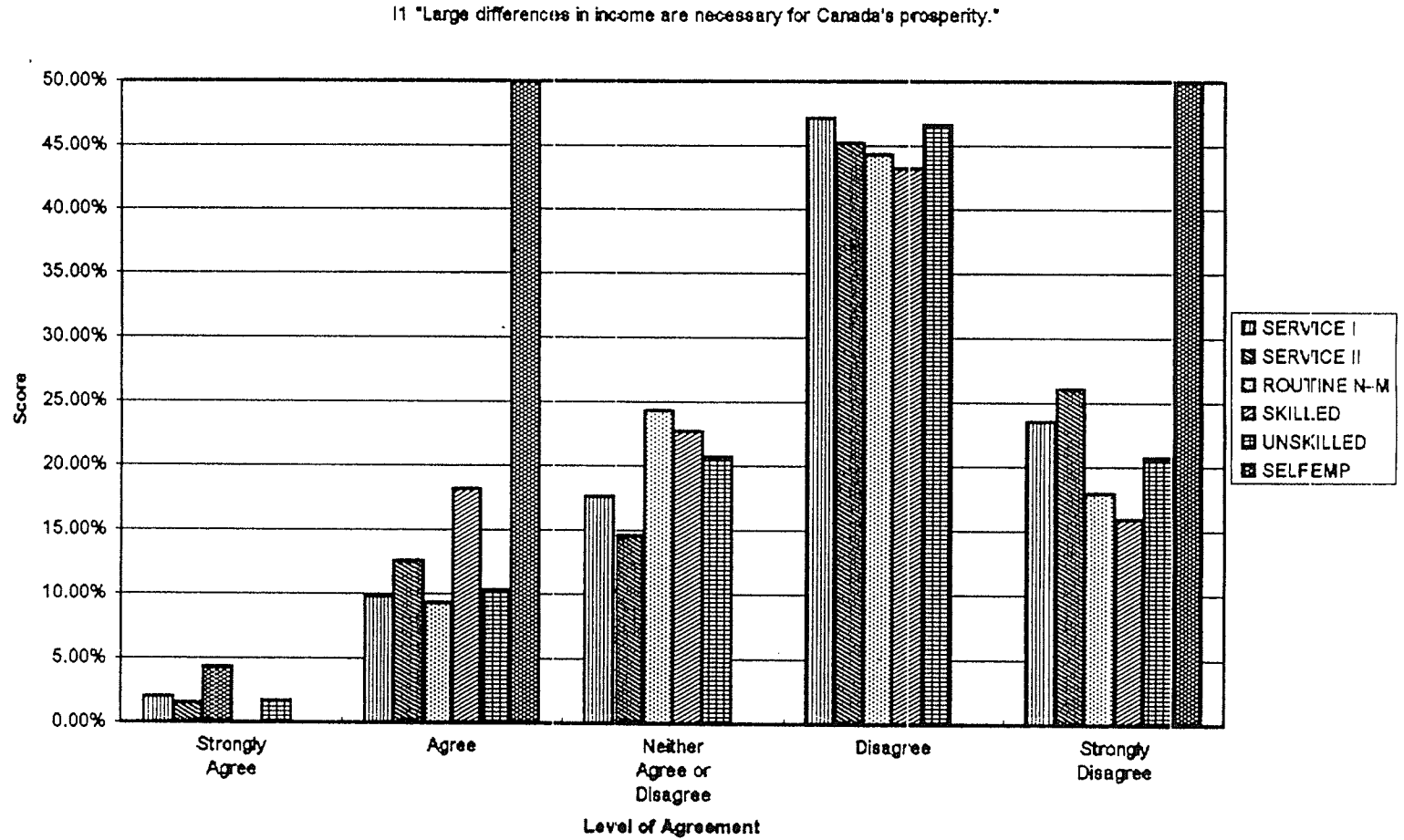


Figure 15. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by class.

70

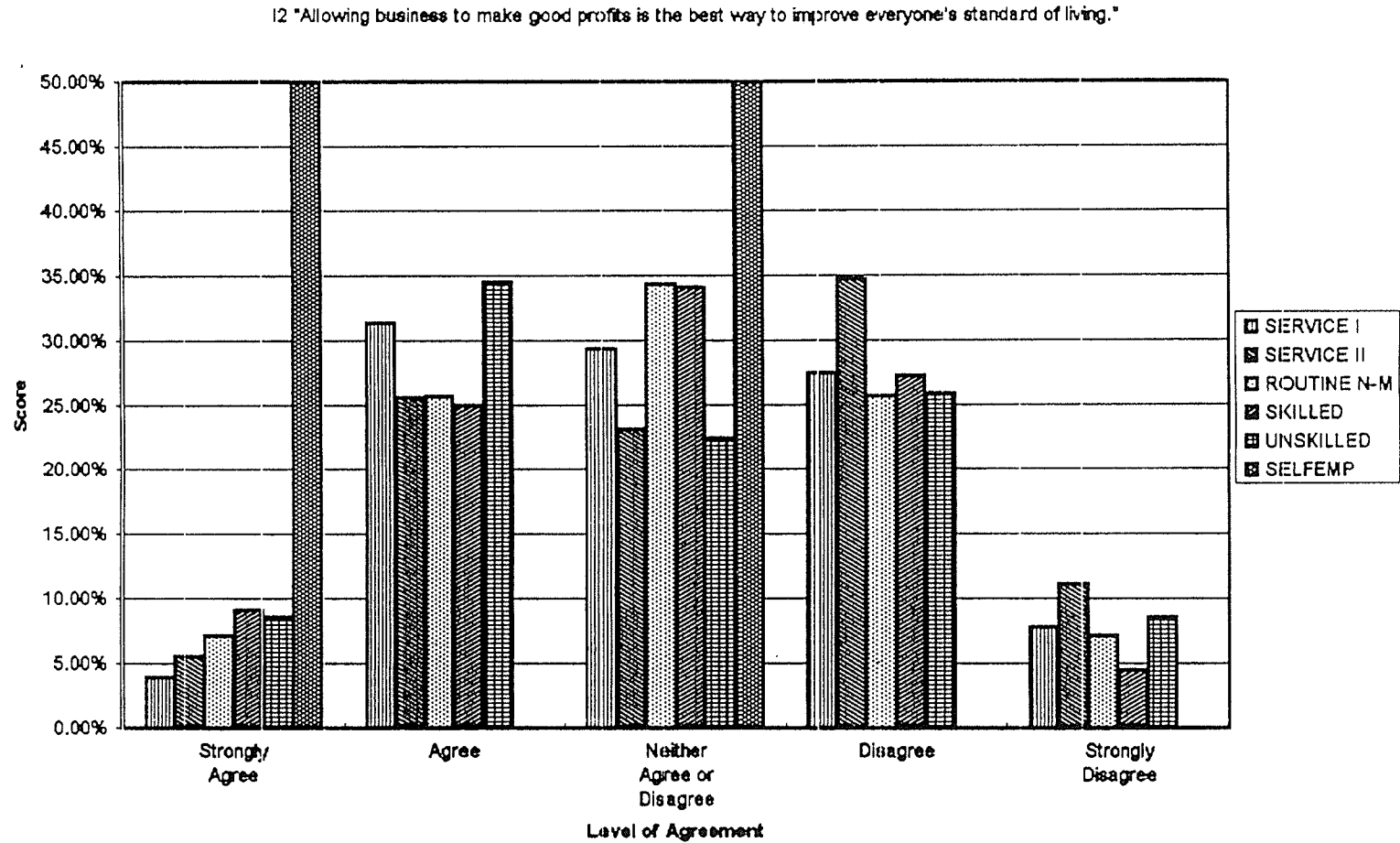




Figure 16. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by country.

71

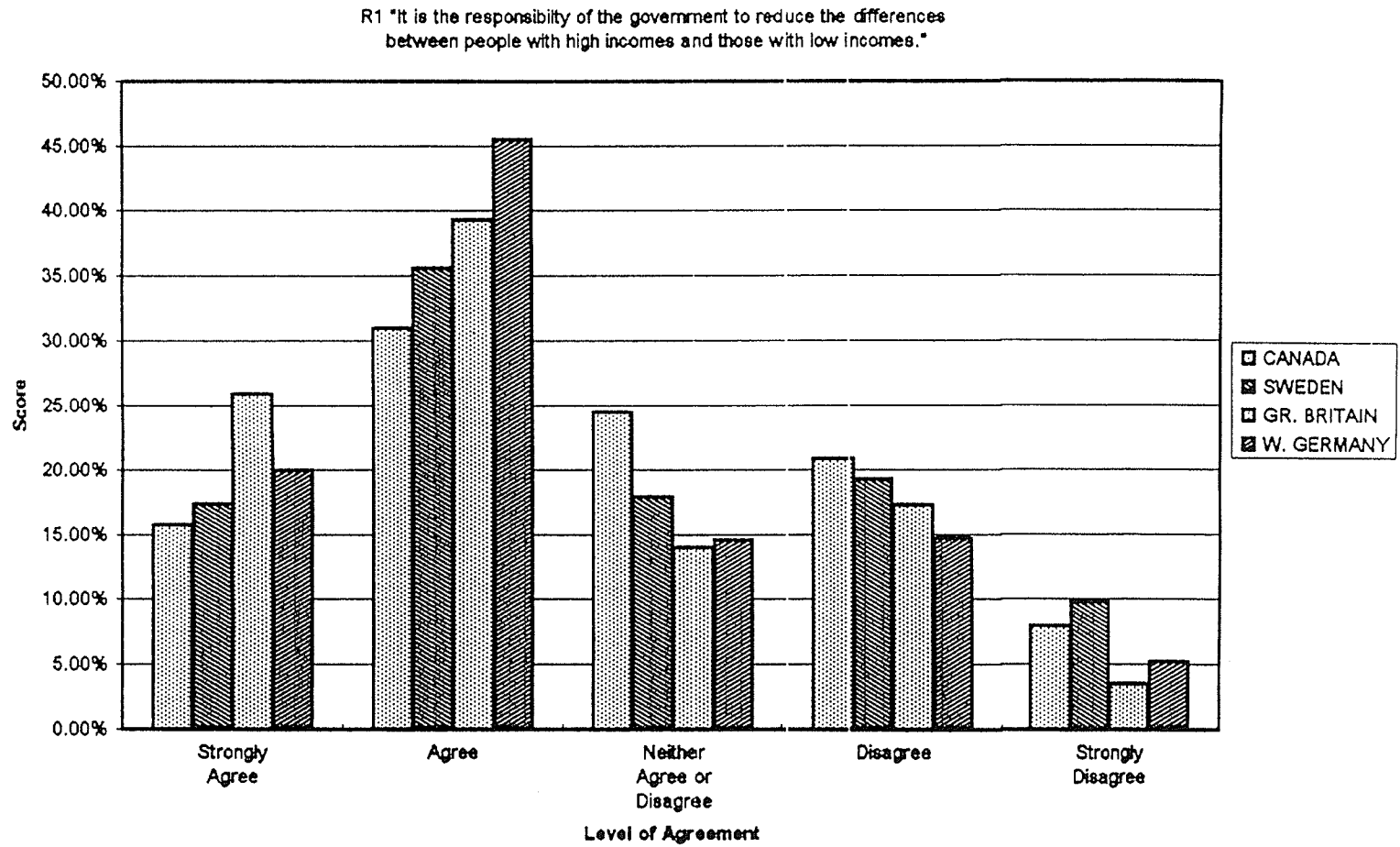


Figure 17. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by country.

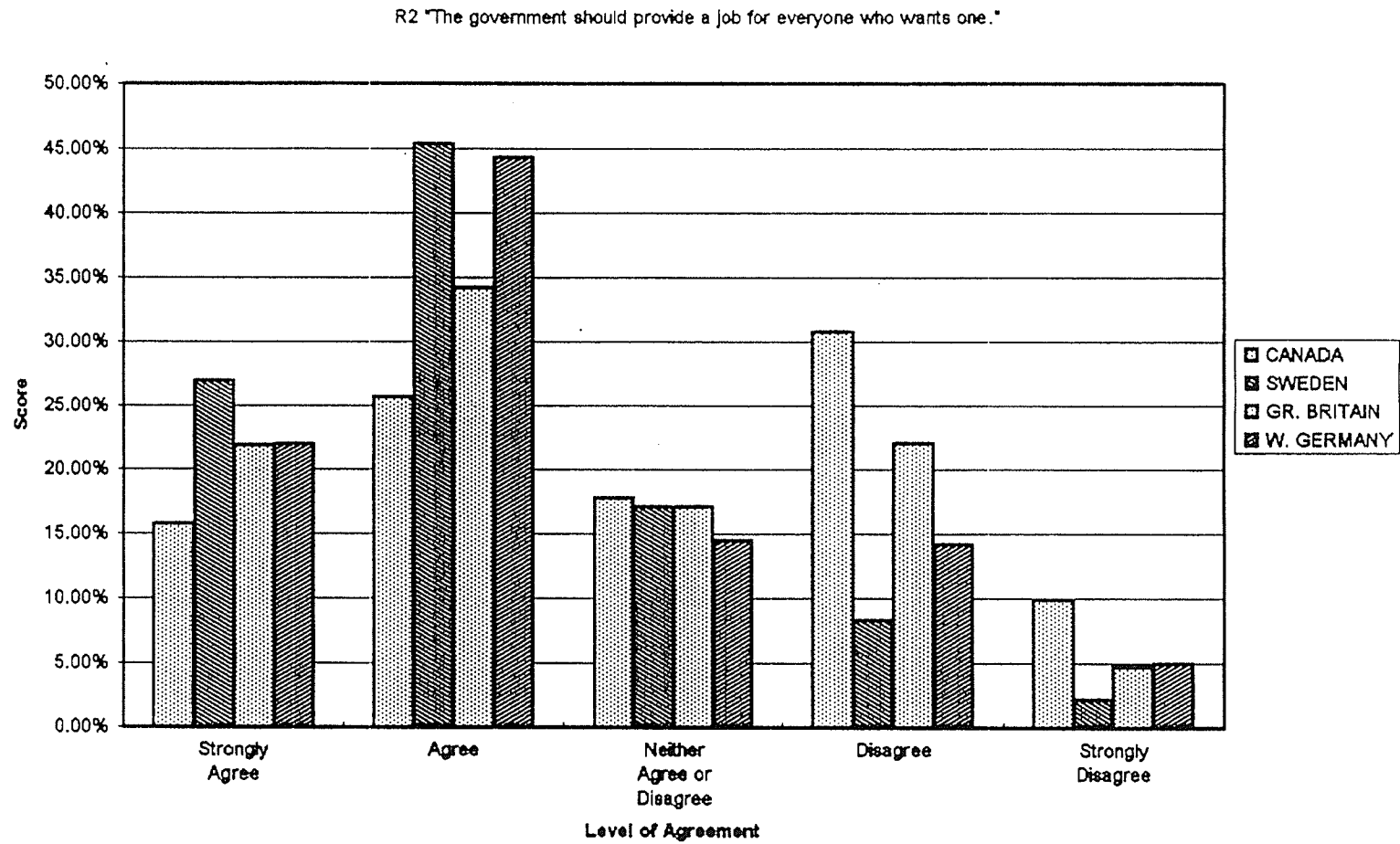


Figure 18. Attitudes to redistribution. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by country.

73

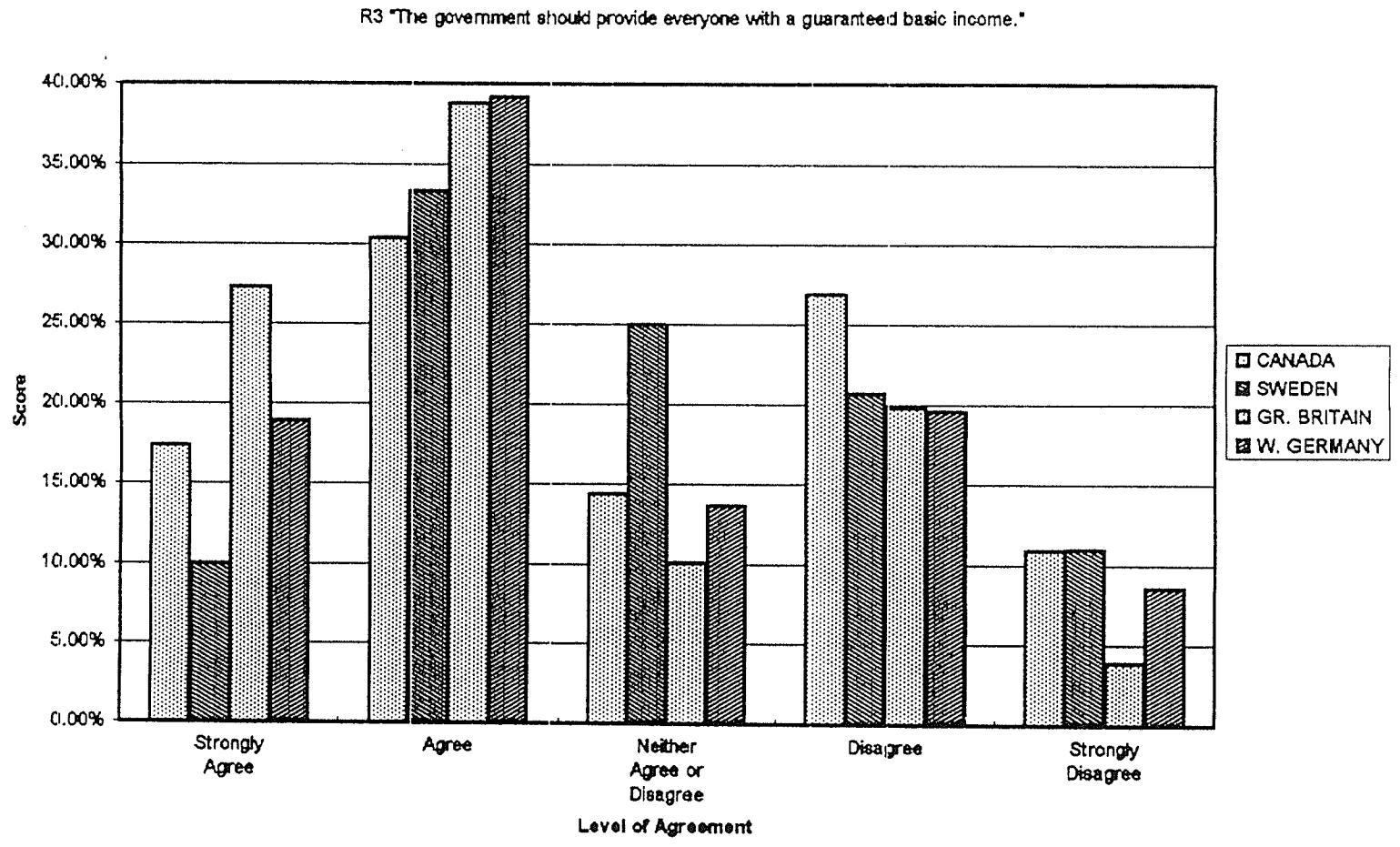


Figure 19. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by country.

11 "Large differences in income are necessary for Canada's prosperity."

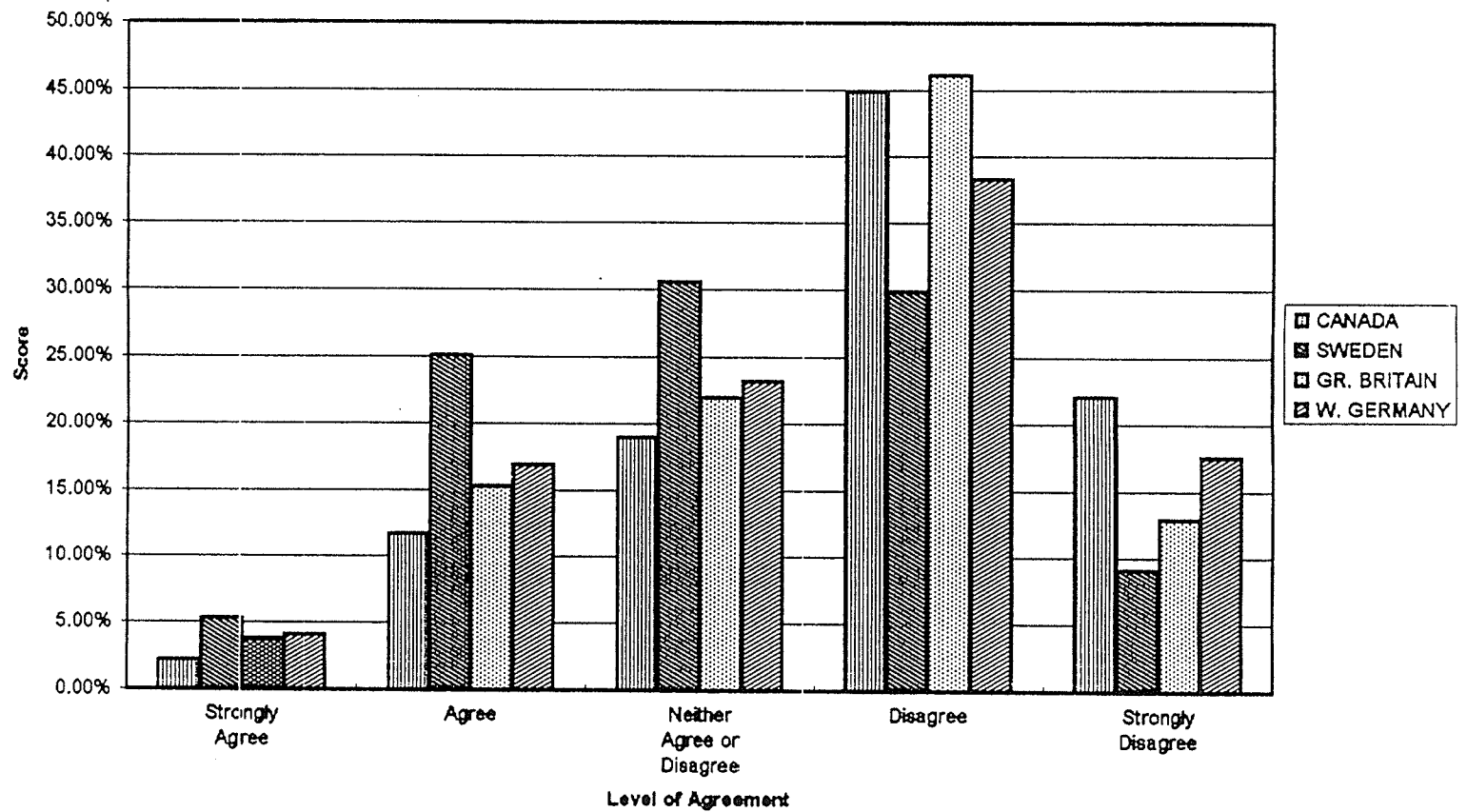
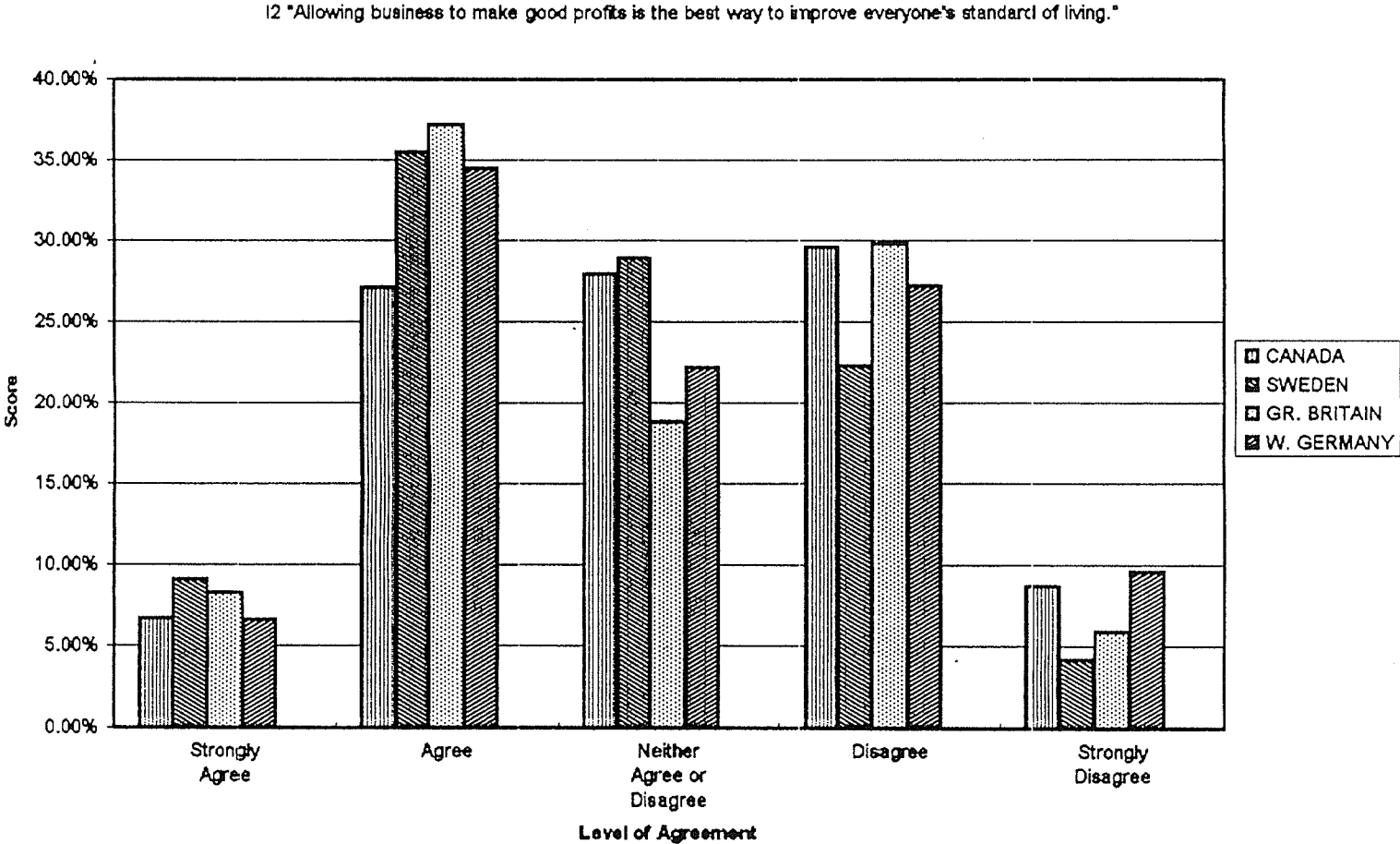


Figure 20. Attitudes to inequality. Percentage agreeing with certain propositions by country.

75



British and West Germans appear most supportive, as two-thirds of the sample in each of these countries (65% and 66%, respectively) agreed with the target statement. Canadians (48%) and Swedes (53%) appear to be somewhat less supportive, as only about half of the respondents agreed in each of these two countries.

With almost three-quarters of respondents agreeing, Swedes emerge as most supportive of the notion that "the government should provide a job for everyone who wants one" (R2). However, with two-thirds of the sample agreeing, a notable level of support is also demonstrated by West Germany. As Figure 17 indicates, Great Britain (56%) and Canada (40%) exhibit the least support.

The pattern of support among different countries changes again for the notion that "the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income" (R3). Here, Great Britain appears most supportive, with two-thirds of the sample agreeing. Surprisingly, West Germany again demonstrates a relatively high level of support, with 58% agreement. With less than half of the sample agreeing, Canada (48%) and Sweden (43%) again display the least support.

The idea that "large differences in income are necessary for a country's prosperity," (I1) is relatively unsupported in Canada, Great Britain, West Germany and Sweden (16%, 19%, 21% and 30% agreement, respectively). Although Swedes appear more supportive, the level of agreement in this country is still

relatively low.

On the whole, the majority of respondents in each country agreed with the statement that "allowing business to make good profits is the best way to improve everyone's standards of living" (I2). While levels of support for redistribution and equality came close to, or exceeded, 50% on the other response variables, levels of disagreement for I2 include only one-third of the sample in Canada (37%), Great Britain (36%) and West Germany (37%), and only one-quarter of the sample in Sweden (27%). Therefore, it does not appear that the idea of equality depicted by this variable was strongly supported in any of these countries.

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this research was to examine attitudes toward social redistribution and inequality in Canada. It was expected that attitudes would vary among different groups within Canadian society, specifically gender, sector and class. The secondary hypothesis, based upon Esping-Andersen's welfare worlds typology, predicted that attitudes of individuals living in countries belonging to different welfare regimes, liberal (Canada, Great Britain), conservative-corporatist (West Germany) and social democratic (Sweden), would also vary.

#### Summary of Findings

##### Primary Hypothesis

The results of the analysis indicated that there were no differences in the attitudes of any of the groups on the inequality variable. However, with respect to the redistribution variable, while no differences were detected in the attitudes that males and females, or public and private sector workers hold, a significant difference in the attitudes of Canadians belonging to different occupational classes was revealed. Specifically, respondents in the service I category, the highest occupational class in Canadian society, were less inclined to agree with redistribution measures than respondents in the service II, routine non-manual, skilled and unskilled categories, but their level of agreement did not



differ significantly from that of the self-employed category.

Clearly, the findings of this thesis only partially support the primary research hypothesis. First, because of the implication that those worse off in society are more reliant on welfare services, it was predicted that these individuals would hold more favourable attitudes toward social redistribution and equality. Alternatively, individuals better able to care for themselves through private insurance were expected to show less support for these social concepts, from which they themselves, have little to gain. In this vein, Esping-Andersen (1990) postulated that welfare policies in liberal regimes would create a class-political dualism between welfare recipients and the majority who rely on the market, particularly the middle classes. Thus, it was hypothesized that the middle classes would display less support for social redistribution measures than the lower classes. However, while respondents belonging to the service I class category were less supportive of redistribution than those in any of the other class categories, there was little variation or separation in the attitudes of respondents belonging to the middle or lower class categories. That is, the attitudes of the service II, routine non-manual, skilled and unskilled class categories were also, in addition to being more supportive of redistribution measures than the service I category, similar in their levels of support.

That Canada has been situated within the liberal welfare

regime along with the United States may explain why, contrary to the hypothesis, attitudes of the middle class toward redistribution measures appear to converge with those in the lower class. Gregg Olsen (1994a) points out that, while some of Canada's social policies clearly belong to the liberal welfare world (means tested social assistance), others are indicative of the social democratic world (universal public health service). These differences among welfare policies may, in turn, be reflected in public attitudes. For example, due to the existence of some universal programs, public opinion in Canada may be more similar to that found in Sweden than to that found in the United States. Sweden's welfare state is typified by social policies based upon universalism which address not only the needs of the poor, but those of the working and middle classes as well. Many researchers maintain that universal welfare state policies which serve the interests of all individuals in society will produce higher levels of support from all levels of the public (Esping-Andersen, 1992; Marklund, 1988; Svallfors, 1992). Because Canada's health care and pension systems are, like Sweden's, decidedly universal it is possible that Olsen's (1994a) assertions are supported by the research results.

Additionally, it was suggested that recent attacks upon Canada's universal social programs, including threats of elimination and cut backs, would sharpen attitudinal cleavages between the middle and lower classes. However, it may be

precisely the existence of and threat to Canada's universal welfare programs, particularly health care and pensions, which all Canadians utilize, that may have resulted in the convergence of opinion evident between the middle and lower classes. Consequently, the existence of Canada's universal social programs may explain why attitudinal cleavages between the middle and lower classes did not emerge in the analysis. This development is interesting and, in addition to providing some support for Olsen's (1994a) arguments concerning Esping-Andersen's welfare worlds typology, may prove fundamental to the preservation of social redistribution and the welfare state.

Although the research hypothesis predicted that attitudinal conflicts would emerge on all three variables, the predominance of class over gender or sector conflicts may not be surprising. For example, in his original analysis of attitudes to inequality, Svallfors (1991) found that in the United Kingdom, while conflicts were evident on all three variables, class was the dominant conflict axis.

An explanation for these findings may be provided by Esping-Andersen (1990) who predicted that liberal regime types were more likely to evolve in the direction of sharper class cleavages because alternative bases of stratification were becoming less significant. For example, using the United States as a model, he argued that while attitudinal cleavages should diminish between males and females, differences within

each gender will continue to grow. He points out that this may be due to the fact that while women continue to be over-represented at the bottom of the socio-economic scale, in the United States they have been more successful in penetrating traditional (white) male employment niches and, as a result, the share of women in privileged "male" occupations in the U.S. is basically twice that of Germany and Sweden (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Hence, as women become more integrated into prevailing class structures, the likelihood is that class differences will become more predominant among women than between women and men.

Papadakis's (1993) study of sex differences in public opinion toward the welfare state in Australia offers some support for this position. While he found that sex differences explain some variation in attitudes, factors other than sex were more likely to predict variation in perceptions about different aspects of the welfare state. For example, in several cases when socio-economic factors like occupations, employment and annual income were included in the analysis, differences among women were as striking and often more marked than the differences between men and women. Although it might be argued that the unique experiences of women render them a distinct group, it is important to keep in mind that they are also a very heterogenous group. Depending on the issues in question it remains to be seen which group identity will prevail. Considering the very different class positions among

women, it is unlikely that all of them will perceive their interests as being best defended by a universal and costly welfare state (Svallfors, 1995b).

Alternatively, while there is evidence that women in Canada have been somewhat successful in penetrating the privileged male job market, they remain overwhelmingly concentrated in less desirable jobs characterized by low wages, poor working conditions and limited advancement opportunities (Armstrong & Armstrong, 1994; Baxter & Kane, 1995; Esping-Andersen, 1991). In light of this, findings from Baxter and Kane's (1995) study of gender inequality and attitudes may actually provide a more plausible explanation for the lack of divergence in the attitudes of men and women in Canada. They argue that gender attitudes are affected by a woman's level of social, economic and interpersonal dependence on men. Specifically, women's dependence on men discourages them from developing gender attitudes that diverge from men's, because their interests are closely tied together. In fact, Baxter and Kane (1995) found that, in some countries characterized by a higher level of dependence for women, such as the United States and Canada, women's gender attitudes were closer to men's. Perhaps, as the current analysis suggests, this may also be true for attitudes toward redistribution and inequality.

Interestingly, in spite of his original predictions, Svallfors (1991) did not detect any pronounced gender

cleavages in West Germany. This may provide some support for Baxter and Kane's theory. He (1991) points out that welfare benefits in conservative-corporatist regimes, such as Germany, are typically distributed based on labour market performance and male dominance. Social policies are strongly committed to the preservation of traditional family-hood. Social insurance excludes non-working wives and family benefits encourage motherhood, as day care and similar family services are underdeveloped. These social policies connect a woman's well being to that of her husband, and this may discourage or prevent women from developing opinions contrary to those of their husbands.

The predominance of class as a factor in attitudinal cleavages may explain not only why no differences in the attitudes of men and women surfaced, but also why no differences in attitudes were detected between different employment sectors. For instance, the attitudes that individuals hold as a result of being employed within a particular sector may actually be overshadowed by their occupational position. That is, if attitudes toward social redistribution and inequality are influenced by perceptions of self-interest, then those who are best off in the stratification system, irrespective of employment sector, are less likely than those worse off to support these concepts. Svallfors (1995a) points out that class differences, which are determined by things like money, qualifications, credentials,

and risks for unemployment, sickness and poverty are linked to positions in the labour market. Regardless of sector, a weaker position in the labour market implies greater reliance on welfare policies. Accordingly, due to their position in the labour market, employees belonging to a particular occupational category within the public sector may hold similar views toward redistribution as those at a corresponding occupational level within the private sector.

Additionally, while it was hypothesized that public sector workers would be more supportive of redistribution measures because they depend upon the state for employment, levels of support may be equally high in both sectors, as a result of the rising need for state welfare programs themselves. While job loss, wage roll-backs and employee benefit reductions, tied to the economic uncertainties which currently prevail in Canada, are being experienced by workers in the public sector, these conditions may be having an even more profound effect in the private sector, where wage and benefit levels are often notably less.

Finally, strong labour movements, often closely linked to labour or social democratic parties, typically responsible for initiating and/or expanding welfare programs, were expected to have an effect on attitudes to state redistribution and equality. The assumption was that high levels of labour organization in the public sector would result in higher levels of support for the ideas of state redistribution and

equality. However, this result may have been mitigated by at least two factors. First, while the public sector is highly unionized, some areas of the private sector are also unionized. Therefore, egalitarian sentiments which labour movements are expected to perpetuate, may be evident in both sectors.

Second, in contrast to a country like Sweden, where 90% of the workforce is unionized and union membership transverses occupational classes, unionization in Canada lies at approximately 35%, and rarely includes high level supervisory or management positions. This factor could play an important role in the lack of separation between the attitudes of individuals in each employment sector. Because the egalitarian sentiments that union philosophies are expected to create do not reach the upper occupational categories, attitudes may be more strongly related to class than to union membership.

However, it is important to note that this analysis did not examine union membership as a separate variable. It was speculated that the level of unionization within the public sector may affect attitudes toward redistribution and equality within this sector. However, the present analysis did not permit an evaluation of the possible mediating role of unionization.

In sum, although many researchers (Beck, 1992; Clark & Lipset, 1991; Inglehart, 1990) claim that structural divisions, such as gender and sector have replaced the class



basis of attitudes, the results of this analysis support findings from Britain, Scandinavia, Australia and the United States which suggest that class association is still the most important factor in structuring attitudes toward redistribution and equality (Svallfors, 1995b).

### Secondary Hypothesis

When attitudes toward redistribution and inequality in different countries were examined, the tenets of Esping-Andersen's welfare worlds typology were not supported. However, conclusions drawn in this area are limited as they are based solely upon crosstabulations and percentages. Further research in this field would require more comprehensive statistical testing.

While the level of support for redistribution and equality varied across nations (Canada, Sweden, Great Britain and West Germany), the pattern of variation differed for each response variable. Esping-Andersen's welfare worlds typology postulates that levels of support for redistribution measures and equality will be greatest in the social democratic regime, weakest in the conservative-corporatist regime and moderate in the liberal regime. Therefore, levels of support should be highest in Sweden, lowest in West Germany and moderate for Great Britain and Canada. This pattern was never evident. In fact, the opposite was true in several cases. For example, while West Germans were predicted to be the least supportive of the notion that it is the responsibility of the government

to reduce the differences between people with high incomes and those with low incomes, they were actually the most supportive. West Germans did not have the lowest percentage of support for any of the variables in question.

Additionally, while Sweden was expected to have the highest percentage of support for redistribution and equality measures, this was only the case for the notion of universal job provision. Moreover, levels of support in Sweden were often the lowest of the four nations. Levels of support within the two members of the liberal regime, Canada and Great Britain, not only did not consistently fall between those of Sweden and West Germany, but were quite dissimilar. While Canadians showed the least support for the notion that it is the responsibility of the government to reduce income differences and provide jobs for everyone, they also provided the least support for the idea that large income differences were necessary. Great Britain, on the other hand, showed the most support for the notion of a guaranteed basic income.

In light of these findings, two issues must be addressed. First, in spite of the fact that each of the five variables was supposed to measure attitudes toward redistribution and inequality, two interconnected ideological phenomena, levels of agreement in each country differed depending on the proposition in question; consistent response patterns were nonexistent. These results suggest that perceptions of and attitudes toward redistribution and inequality may be

multidimensional. That is, it may not be the case that those who tend to agree with one proposition will necessarily agree with another. In fact, Svallfors (1991) determined that attitudes toward redistribution and inequality were not only ambivalent, but even contradictory in some cases.

Interpretation becomes quite complex in this case. For example, the actual level of support for redistribution in Sweden is hard to determine when 72% of Swedes agree that the government should provide a job for everyone while only 43% agree that the government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income. While interpretations of differences in answers to single questions should be made cautiously, these differences should also be examined closely. Although designed to measure the same phenomenon, each question captures a slightly different aspect of redistribution or inequality. Therefore, a complete understanding of attitudes toward social redistribution and inequality may require a closer analysis of their separate elements.

Second, the attitudinal patterns that Esping-Andersen predicted would surface among welfare regimes were never evident. The nature of comparative research may explain this lack of agreement between theory and findings. That is, the historical and current economic, social, political and cultural settings in nations make it difficult to determine whether seemingly identical questions will evoke the same response. For example, the greater equality and more extensive

state redistribution measures in Sweden may diminish the significance of questions concerning "more" or "less" of these things. Indeed, contrary to his original predictions, Svallfors (1990) found that despite greater equality and extensive state redistribution measures, Swedes' were no more "leftist" in their attitudes than respondents in other nations. In fact, they seemed less leftist than their counterparts on several points. Svallfors maintains that this does not necessarily mean that Esping-Andersen's prediction that Swedes will be more supportive of state redistribution than other nations is untrue. He reminds us that "fewer benefits for the poor" does not mean the same thing in Sweden as it does in Canada, as images of "increase" or "decrease" are formed against the background of actual levels and practices in each nation (Svallfors, 1991). Therefore, we cannot necessarily conclude that the underlying principle of Esping-Andersen's typology is incorrect. Social policy regimes may still influence attitudes; however they may do so in a way different from that predicted by Esping-Andersen.

That ideological questions of this nature may be interpreted differently as a result of particular conditions in each country is reflected by the findings of this research. For example, not only did Swedes indicate the least support for equality and redistribution on several points, but West Germany, the country actually expected to be the least supportive, was most supportive. These results seem to imply

that the relationship between redistribution/inequality and attitudes may be more complex than current theories suggest.

#### Methodological Limitations

The nature of the data and the particular research methods utilized for this project produced a number of methodological concerns. First, the five original response variables were collapsed into two broader measures of attitudes toward redistribution and inequality. While this procedure increased the power of the analysis to detect differences among the groups, it also may have hidden important differences among the response variables. In fact, bivariate crosstabulations indicated that responses to the five dependent variables were quite diverse, suggesting that each variable should also be analyzed separately. This, in addition to helping us understand why individual attitudes toward propositions measuring related phenomena diverge, may prove invaluable to maintaining and improving social redistribution measures. For example, research indicates that it is not the case that individuals are completely in favour of, or completely opposed to, state redistribution measures. Rather, levels of support vary according to the type of program and policy in question. Delineating which are supported by the public and which are not may be useful. Governments claim that their pursuance of cuts in all areas of social welfare spending, including health-care and pensions, is justified because the public's support for state

redistribution has deteriorated. That these cuts are taking place despite the fact that research indicates that overwhelming public support exists, especially for universal types of welfare programs, like health-care and pensions, remains unquestioned. Findings revealing the types of programs the public supports and why, may not only force the government to re-evaluate cutbacks in social spending, especially in these areas, but may also help to design better social programs in the future.

Second, while it was decided that maintaining the assumption of randomization was less important than controlling for multiple testing effects and the increased possibility of Type I errors, after combining these variables, the sample size was reduced from 1004 to 494. However, this problem may not have been serious, as the sample size remained relatively large and representative of the original group.

Third, the occupational classification scheme used to delineate class position for this particular analysis had an important weakness. Unfortunately, despite their unique position in the labour market, pensioners, the unemployed and people outside the labour force were classified according to their last occupation. In fact, considering the effect that unemployment may have on an individual in terms of economic security, classification on the basis of last occupation may produce confounding results. Despite the occupational position and attitudes that one may have held before becoming

unemployed, it is likely that joblessness may produce more supportive attitudes toward redistribution, as a result of increased dependence. In this respect, the length of forced unemployment may also play a part.

The final methodological concern, and perhaps the most intrinsic to social research, relates directly to the choice of measures. Social inequality is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and redistribution measures are varied and diverse. Can we be certain that the particular choice of measure is an accurate measure of the phenomenon we are trying to evaluate? Further, taking into account the diversity of human experience and environment, can we be sure that individuals belonging to different groups or nations understand the question in the same way?

#### Directions for Future Research

Social redistribution and inequality are multi-faceted and the findings of the present study suggest that attitudes toward them are diverse and complex. It does not appear to be the case that people are generally in favour of or opposed to redistribution or equality. Further study of the many facets of redistribution, inequality, and public opinion toward them will, no doubt, prove fruitful. Toward this aim, one may attempt to determine which aspects of redistribution or equality solicit support from the public and why. Such findings may not only help to preserve the state welfare system but, more specifically, indicate what areas need to be

addressed. This kind of information may help create a more effective framework upon which future welfare policies can be designed.

Second, because this research project did not focus on international comparisons, interpretations in this area utilized only the most basic statistical techniques. However, it should be noted that to fully understand attitudes toward social redistribution and inequality and their causes, it is not only important but necessary to conduct more comprehensive international comparisons. Certainly, a more thorough statistical analysis among countries is necessary. Additionally, analysis of a larger number and greater variety of countries may strengthen our understanding of how policy regimes are related to public attitudes.

Third, because gender, sector and class cleavages did not emerge as expected, alternative theories or explanations for structural cleavages need to be examined. For example, while occupational codings were used to delineate the class position of respondents, other factors related to class, such as household income and education, may also help structure attitudes to welfare policies. Analysis of alternative class measurements may produce interesting results. For example, Svallfors (1993) found that respondents with higher educations in Sweden and Great Britain were less inclined to accept arguments which implied that inequality was necessary to induce hard work.



Additionally, while Esping-Andersen suggests that attitudinal cleavages along the gender axis are decreasing within the liberal regime because women have been more successful in penetrating those job markets previously dominated by men, it is possible that this may actually have little effect on attitudinal patterns between the sexes. For example, the attitudes of women may always have been distributed across classes by virtue of their husband's occupations. Alternatively, it may be that attitudes of women are a function of their income-earning within classes. If this is the case, a comparison of the attitudes of employed and non-employed women, across classes and time may be more fruitful.

Age may also structure attitudes in a meaningful way. For example, due to their dependence, the young and old could be expected to show more support for redistribution measures than the middle aged. However, interactions with other attitudinal determinants may be evident. For example, because women live longer than men, elderly women are often single and less well off than elderly men. Therefore, elderly women may be more supportive of redistribution measures than men in the same age cohort.

Moreover, while it was speculated in the present study that higher levels of support for redistribution may be related to union membership, this variable was not analyzed and should be given more thorough consideration.

Finally, Gregg Olsen's (1994a) argument that a more comprehensive classification of social policies within Esping-Andersen's welfare worlds is needed, warrants further examination as important divergences in attitudes may result. Olsen suggests that while the welfare worlds approach categorizes the welfare policies of Canada as liberal, Canadian social policies also demonstrate characteristics of those in the social democratic world. For example, the existence of Canada's universal social programs may explain why, contrary to the hypothesis, attitudes toward redistribution were more similar to those predicted to surface in the social democratic regime than those expected to characterize the liberal regime. While it was hypothesized that the middle class categories within liberal regimes would show less support for a welfare system they gain little from, findings of this research indicated that the levels of support for the middle and lower class categories were similar. Consequently, higher levels of support from the middle class than were expected may have resulted because their interests are also served by universal welfare policies. Therefore, it is possible that the existence of some universal social programs in Canada may have produced attitudinal cleavages more similar to those found in Sweden, where social policies are primarily based upon universalism.

### Summary

Primarily, this analysis was expected to reveal attitudinal differences among Canadians on the redistribution and inequality variables across gender, sector and class. The results of the analysis did not uncover any differences in the attitudes of any of the groups on the inequality variable. Additionally, with respect to the redistribution variable, no differences were detected in the attitudes that males and females or public and private sector workers hold. However, a significant difference in the attitudes of Canadians belonging to different occupational classes was revealed on this variable. Specifically, respondents in the service I category, the highest occupational class in Canadian society, were less inclined to agree with redistribution measures than respondents in any of the other class categories, including service II, routine non-manual, skilled and unskilled. Moreover, the service II, routine non-manual, skilled and unskilled class categories were similar in their levels of support.

The secondary and lesser aim of this research was to compare attitudes toward redistribution and inequality in different countries. It was predicted that the attitudes of individuals living in countries belonging to different welfare regimes - liberal (Canada, Great Britain), conservative-corporatist (West Germany) and social democratic (Sweden) - would vary in the manner outlined by Esping-Andersen's welfare

worlds typology. However, although attitudes toward redistribution and inequality did vary among countries, the tenets of the welfare worlds typology were not supported in the way that Esping-Andersen originally suggested. Inspection of the response variables showed that not only did the level of support for redistribution and equality vary across nations (Canada, Sweden, Great Britain and West Germany), but the pattern of variation differed for each response variable.

While the findings of this research did not support the original hypotheses, the idea that policy regimes structure conflicts should not necessarily be dismissed. Indeed, the results of this analysis suggest that conflicts may be generated differently from what was originally suggested.

Perhaps the most interesting and important finding concerns the overall level of support demonstrated among groups and nations for redistribution and equality. Indeed, the total percentage of respondents who support redistribution and equality is generally higher than the percentage of non-supporters. In this respect, it is more the similarities than differences among groups and nations that is striking. These results suggest that the majority of Canadian citizens support social redistribution measures and equality. If this is true, then cuts in social spending deemed justifiable by governments who insist that popular support for welfare has deteriorated remain unfounded.

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