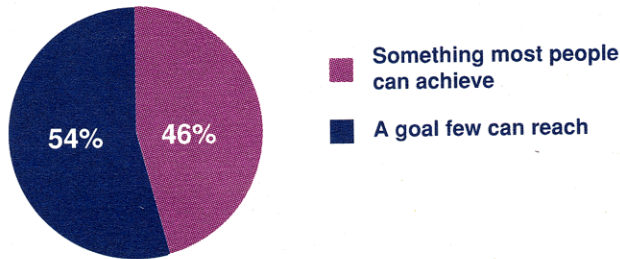


## American Ideas and Ideals

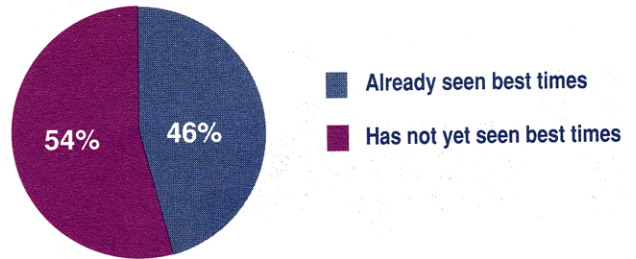
# How Fares the Experiment?

## Some Worries...

**Question:** Think for a moment about what the American dream means to you. Is this something you think most people today can realistically achieve, or is it a goal few Americans can reach?

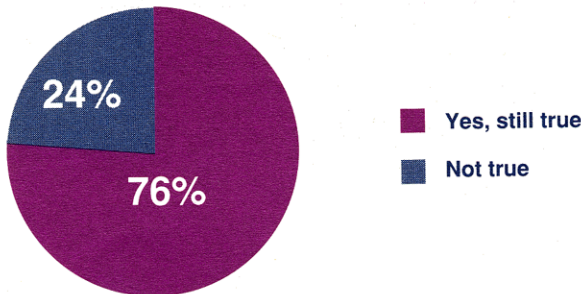


**Question:** Some people think that the U.S. will never again have it as good as we did in the past; others disagree. How about you? Do you think the country has already seen the best times we are going to, or not?

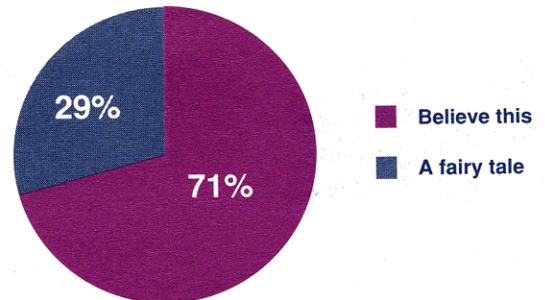


## But the Idea Continues to Draw Strong Affirmation...

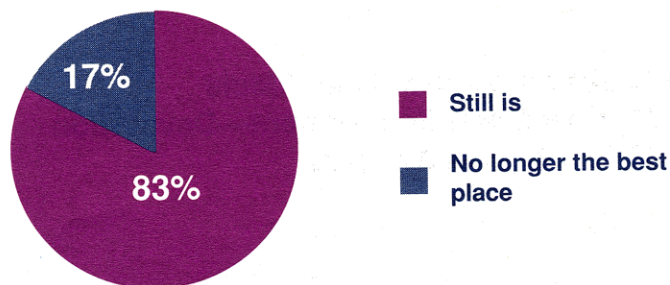
**Question:** A basic American belief has been that if you work hard you can get ahead—reach the goals you set and more. Does that still hold true?



**Question:** The Declaration of Independence proclaims that all people are created equal, 'endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.' Do you, yourself, really believe this, or is it just a fairy tale?



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

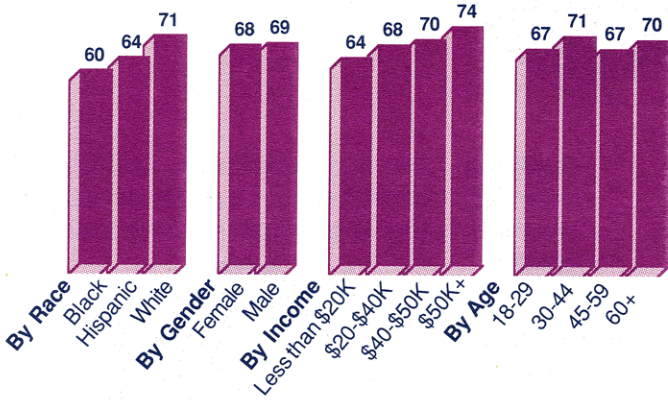


**Note:** Throughout this section, unless otherwise noted, the data shown are taken from a survey conducted by the Roper Center for *Reader's Digest*, August-September 1994.

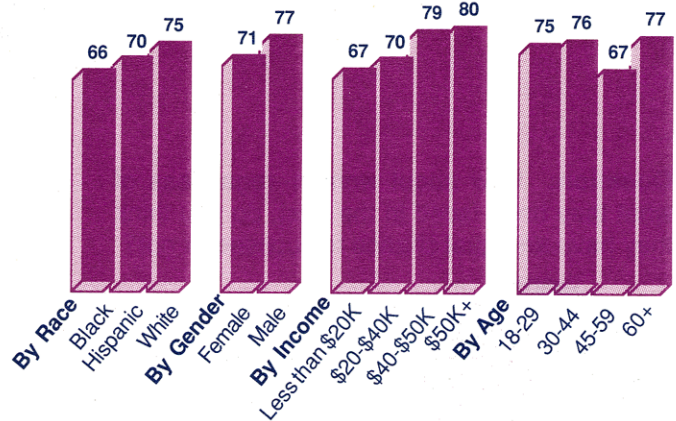
*American Ideas and Ideals*

**...And Strong Affirmation Across Group Lines**

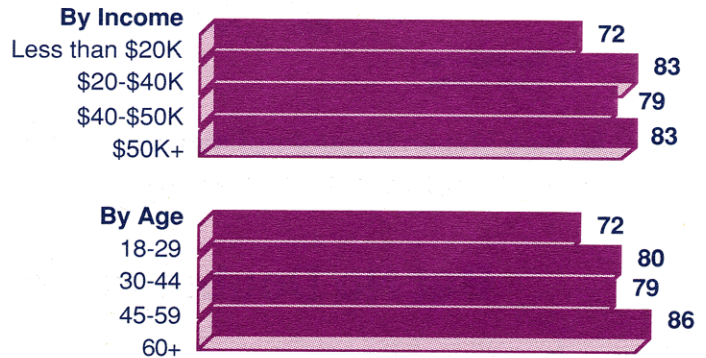
**Percent saying they personally believe in the Declaration's Proclamation of Equality**



**Percent saying they personally believe that hard work is in fact rewarded by success**

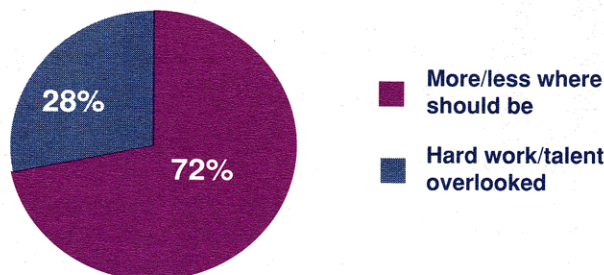


**Percent saying they believe the US is the best place in the world to live**



**And One's Own "Talents and Effort" are Recognized**

**Question:** Are you more or less where you should be in your job, given your talents and effort, or has your hard work been overlooked?

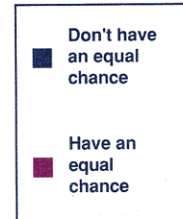
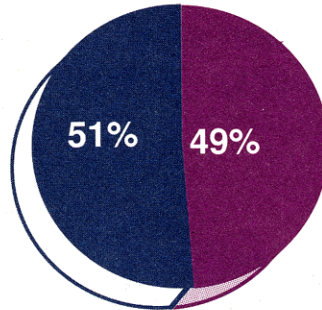


*American Ideas and Ideals*

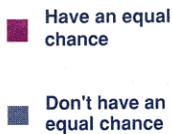
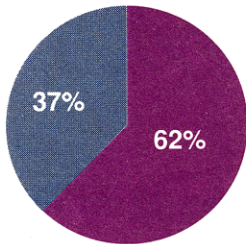
# The American Idea of Equality

## Again, Some Worries on How Well We're Doing

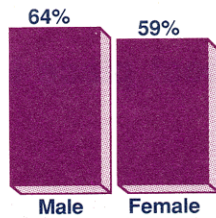
**Question:** Do most Americans today have an equal chance to succeed in life or not?



**Question:** How about women--regardless of what they have faced in the past, do you think they have an equal chance to succeed or not?

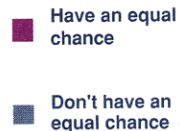
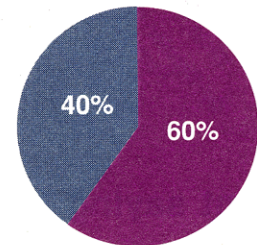
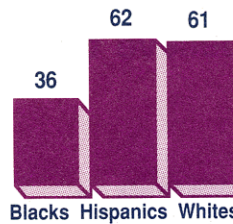


**Responses by Gender**



**Question:** And how about black Americans--regardless of what they have faced in the past, do you think they have an equal chance to succeed or not?

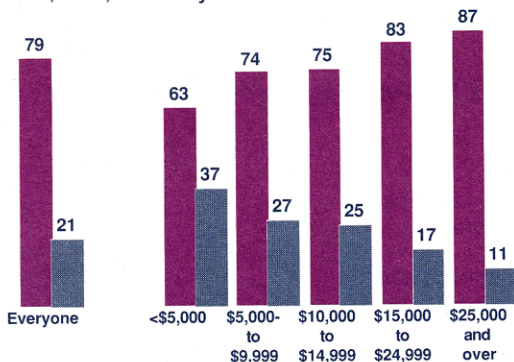
**Responses by Race**



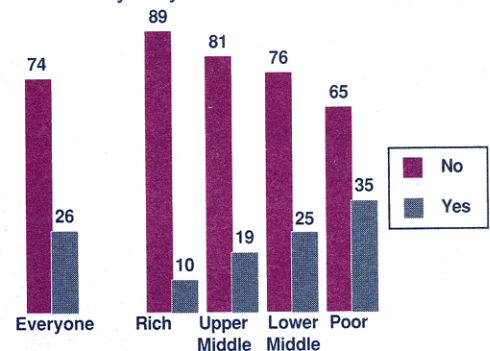
**Note:** All pies shown throughout this section are shown, for display purposes, with "don't know" responses calculated out; however, group responses shown are the actual percentages.

## But No Doubts on the Nature of the Goal

**Question:** [Do you agree or disagree...] There should be a top limit on incomes so that no one can earn more than \$100,000 a year?



**Question:** Do you think there should be a law limiting the amount of money any individual is allowed to earn in a year?



**Note:** The "economic status" categories are coded by the interviewers, and whites only were included in the sample.

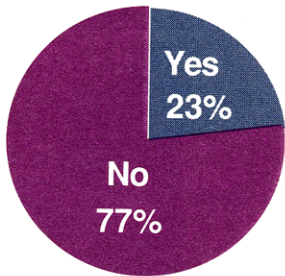
**Source:** Survey by Civic Service, Inc., March 1981.

**Source:** Survey by the Roper Organization, December 1939.

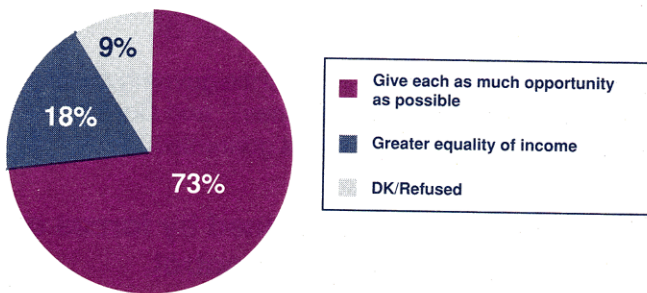
*American Ideas and Ideals*

# The Goal is Extending Opportunity, Not Equalizing Result

**Question:** Should there be a top limit on incomes so that no one can earn more than one million dollars a year?

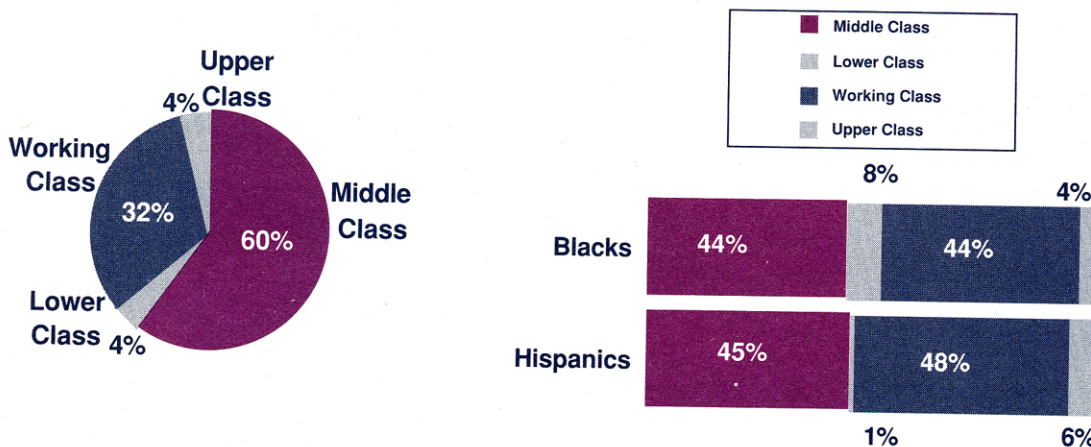


**Question:** Which is more important--insuring that each individual has as much opportunity as possible, even if that means some people enjoy far more success than others, or insuring greater equality of income, even if that limits individual opportunity?



	Yes	No	As much opportunity	Equality of income
<b>By Race</b>				
Black	32	67	65	23
Hispanic	25	68	67	25
White	21	75	75	16
<b>By Gender</b>				
Female	27	70	71	19
Male	16	79	76	17
<b>By Income</b>				
Less than \$20K	33	62	61	24
\$20-\$40K	26	70	74	19
\$40-\$50K	19	78	71	22
\$50K+	10	87	86	11
<b>By Age</b>				
18-29	19	80	75	20
30-44	20	76	73	21
45-59	23	73	76	18
60+	26	68	71	11
<b>By Party ID</b>				
Republican	15	80	82	15
Democrat	29	68	66	23
Independent	23	74	73	16

**Question:** If you were asked to use one of these four names for your social class, which would you say you belong to--the middle class, lower class, working class, or upper class?

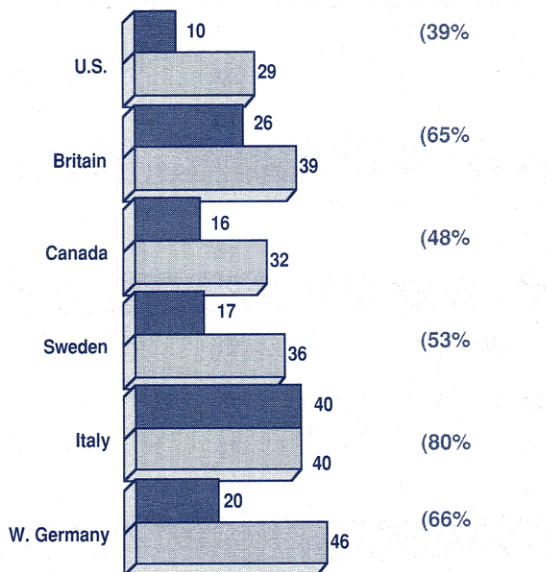


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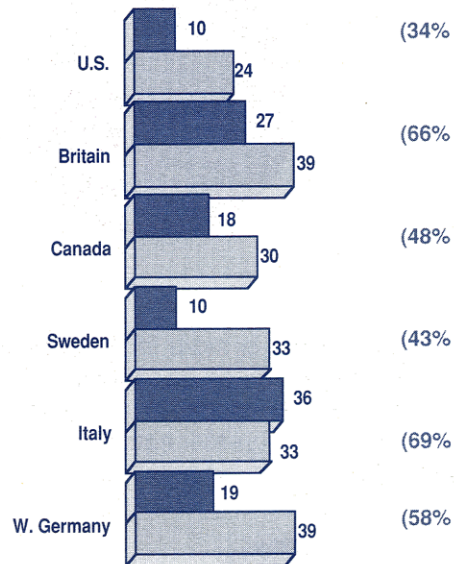
**THE US IN CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

**On Equality: Still a Distinctively Individual-Centered Conception**

**It's gov't's responsibility to reduce income differences.**



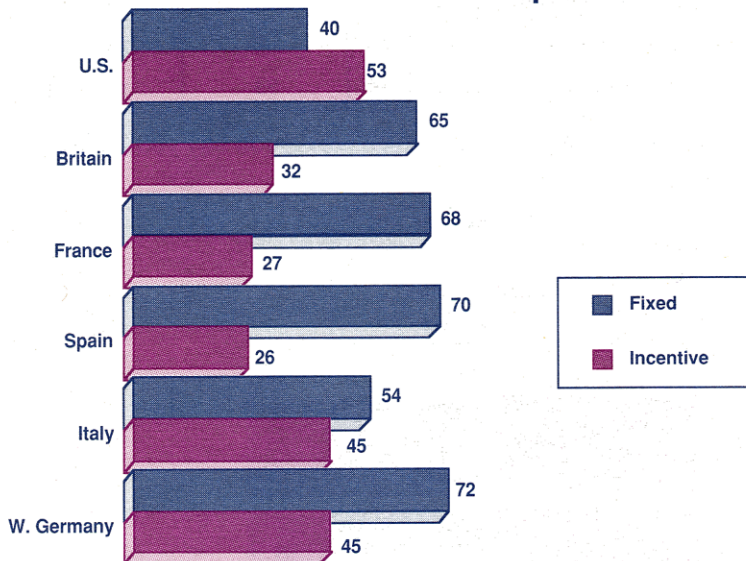
**It's gov't's responsibility to provide guaranteed income.**



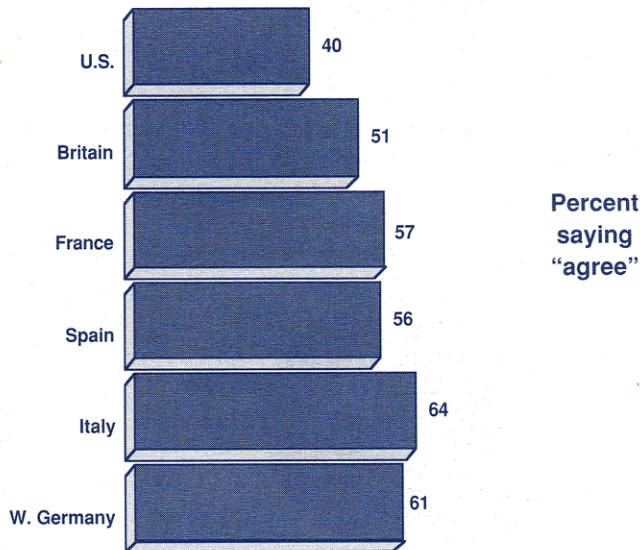
Legend:   
 Strongly Agree   
 Agree

**Questions:** Do you agree or disagree with the following statement...It is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences in income between people with high incomes and those with low incomes?; and Do you agree or disagree with the following statement....The government should provide everyone with a guaranteed basic income?  
**Source:** ISSP Surveys, 1992.

**How do you prefer to be paid: fixed salary or incentive basis tied to accomplishments.**



**Success is determined by forces outside our control.**



Percent saying "agree"

**Questions:** ...how would you most prefer to be paid—on a fixed salary basis, so that you always know how much you will earn—or mostly on an incentive basis which will allow you to earn more if you accomplish a lot, but may result in less earnings if you don't accomplish enough?; ...For each statement, please tell me whether you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it or completely disagree with it....Success in life is pretty much determined by forces outside our control? **Note:** Agree response shown is "completely agree" and "mostly agree" combined.  
**Source:** Times Mirror Surveys, 1991.

**THE US IN CROSS-NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE**

**In Group Participation:  
Still a Nation of Joiners**

Question: ...Which, if any [of these groups], do you belong to?

**Composite of Group Memberships**

	Percent belonging to no groups	Percent belonging to 1-3 groups	Percent belonging to 4-6 groups	Percent belonging to 7 or more groups
US	18	62	15	4
Canada	35	49	13	3
Mexico	64	32	3	1
France	61	35	3	1
Britain	46	45	7	2
W. Germany	33	60	7	1
Italy	59	37	4	*
Spain	70	28	2	*
Netherlands	15	54	25	6

**Percentage Claiming Membership, By Type of Association**

	US	Canada	Mexico	France	Britain	W. Germany	Italy	Spain	Netherlands
Professional Associations	15	16	3	5	11	9	6	3	13
Women's Groups	8	7	2	1	5	6	*	1	6
Environmental Groups	8	8	3	2	6	5	5	1	24
Education/Cultural Groups	20	18	12	9	10	12	7	5	35
Social welfare groups	9	8	5	7	7	7	5	3	15
Youth work groups	12	10	4	3	4	4	4	2	7
Religious organizations	47	25	14	6	16	16	10	5	35

Source: World Values Surveys, 1990-93.