Does political opinions distribution in Russia match with German, French and American ones?

E. Migol, T. Khavenson
Research goals

• Explore the relations between three groups of factors: political opinions*, country of residence, socio-professional strata
• Compare political opinions of different socio-professional strata within different countries
• Identify particular opinions that “pull” different social groups to one of the scale poles

* The regulation of the economic life
Research process

- 2006 ISSP data: wave focused on the Role of the Government
- Sample size: 6807 respondents. Russia – 2377, France – 1803, Western Germany – 1109, the USA - 1518
- Country choice:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime type</th>
<th>Form of government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developed democracy</td>
<td>Presidential republic, USA, France, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing democracy</td>
<td>Parliamentary republic, Russia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Political opinion measurements
Scale construction

**Step 1. Selection of 22 relevant items from ISSP questionnaire**

*Method – 5 expert interviews*

**Step 2. Attribution of reply options to the scale poles: “left – right political opinions”**

*Method – 5 expert interviews*

**Step 3. Scale quality assessment**

*Method – correlation coefficient; P-value less than 5%*

*Method – Crohnbach’s Alpha coefficient*

Total sample - 0.8; Germany - 0.8; USA - 0.8; France - 0.8; Russia - 0.7

**Results**

The scale “Role of Government: left – right poles”. The lowest value correspond to the left pole and the highest to the right pole.
Left – right poles in the political opinion scale

✓ Scale is based ONLY on the opinions towards the Role of the Government

**LEFT**
- In favor of government financing of projects to create new jobs
- Against of cuts in government spending
- In favor of government regulation of business
- One of the government’s responsibilities is to keep prices under control

**RIGHT**
- Against of reducing the working week to create new jobs
- Against of government support for declining industries to protect jobs
- G. should not be responsible for providing a job for everyone
- It is not government responsibility to provide industries with the help it needs to grow

G. should spend more on unemployment benefits
G. should reduce income differences between the rich and the poor
### G5. Here are some things the government might do for the economy. Please show which actions you are in favour of and which you are against.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>In favour</th>
<th>Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuts in government spending</td>
<td>Provide a job for everyone who wants one</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government financing of projects to create new jobs</td>
<td>Keep prices under control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less government regulation of business</td>
<td>Provide health care for the sick</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support for declining industries to protect jobs</td>
<td>Provide a decent standard of living for the old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing the working week to create more jobs</td>
<td>Provide a decent standard of living for the unemployed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### G7. On the whole, do you think it should or should not be the government's responsibility to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>In favour</th>
<th>Against</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce income differences between the rich and the poor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give financial help to university students from low-income families</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide decent housing for those who can't afford it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The police and law enforcement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The military and defence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old age pensions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment benefits</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and the arts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Higher Controllers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lower Controllers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a</td>
<td>Routine Nonmanual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b</td>
<td>Lower Sales-Service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4a</td>
<td>Selfempl with empl.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4b</td>
<td>Selfempl no empl.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Manual Supervisors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Skilled Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7a</td>
<td>Unskilled Worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7b</td>
<td>Farm Labor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Selfempl Farmer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Political opinions in different countries

ANNOVA: F-statistics - 546.5 p-value < 0.001.

Distribution of left and right pole opinions in Russia differs from 3 other countries.
Political opinions in different countries and socio-professional strata

- Russia happens to be the most left-oriented country.
- The structure of political opinions distribution between different social strata is similar in three countries, less in Russia.
- Professions with high level of autonomy (higher controllers, manual supervisors and self-employed farmers) – are the most right oriented strata.

![Graph showing the mean by scale “Role of Government” for different countries: Germany, Russia, USA, and France.](image)
Statistical model characteristics

- Logistic regression model:
  - Dependent variable – dichotomized political opinion items according to the results of expert interviews
  - Predictors – country of residence and socio-professional strata

- Selected questions:
  - Here are some facts the government might do for the economy. Please show which facts you are in favor of and which you are against
    - Support for declining industries to protect jobs
  - Listed below are various areas of government spending. Please show whether you would like to see more or less government spending in each area. Remember that if you say "much more", it might require a tax increase to pay for it
    - Old age pensions
    - Unemployment benefits
  - On the whole, do you think it should be or should not be government’s responsibility to...
    - ... provide a job for everyone who wants one
    - ... keep prices under control
    - ... reduce income differences between the rich and the poor
Political opinions and the country of residence

- Russia – is the country mostly aligned to the left pole (first requests of the society: keep prices under control and provide jobs to everyone)
- USA – obvious right-pole trend (do not need income difference reduction as well as jobs for everyone)
- France, Germany – the European mean. According to country’s own “fixed national effects” each country demonstrates the deviation towards either right or left pole

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question:</th>
<th>USA</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Russia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>...support for declining industries to protect jobs?</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...to spend more or not to spend more on unemployment benefits?</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...reduce income differences between the rich and the poor?</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...provide a job for everyone who wants one?</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...to keep prices under control?</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>...to spend more or not to spend more on old age pensions?</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To spend more or not to spend more on old age pensions
To spend more or not to spend on unemployment benefits

![Graph showing probability of spending on unemployment benefits across different schemes in Germany, Russia, USA, and France. The x-axis represents the EGP Scheme, and the y-axis represents the probability of spending, labeled as "1", in percentage. The graph includes lines for Total, Germany, Russia, USA, and France, each with distinct markers and colors.](image-url)
Provide a job for everyone who wants one.
To keep prices under control

Probability "1", %

EGP Scheme

Total
Russia
USA
France

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11)

EGP Scheme
Reduce income differences between the rich and the poor.

Probability "1", %

- Total
- Germany
- Russia
- USA
- France

EGP Sceme

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11)
Support for declining industries to protect jobs

Probability "1", %

EGP Scheme

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6) (7) (8) (9) (10) (11)

Total
Germany
Russia
USA
France
Conclusions

• Russia is strongly left-oriented country as opposed to the USA, Germany and France (e.g. the most right oriented Russian top-manage demonstrates more left orientation than American worker)

• German, French and American societies are more heterogeneous compared to the Russian one

• Political opinions’ distributions within social-professional strata are very similar for all four societies
Future research

• To expand a range of political opinions by constructing new scales using the same data
  – e.g. scale on protest behavior (in favor vs against)
  – scale on security (security vs personal freedom)
Thank you for your attention!