

## The Structure of Social Attitudes

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A factor-analytic study is described of the relationships of 88 social attitude questions, social class, sex and age, for a random sample of the population ( $n = 368$ ). Ten meaningful correlated factors were extracted from the matrix of intercorrelations. The intercorrelations between these ten factors were in turn factor-analysed, and three second-order factors extracted. These were interpreted to represent (1) general conservative-radical ideology; (2) socio-economic conservatism *v.* socialism; (3) tough-mindedness *v.* tender-mindedness. These factors were almost completely orthogonal and independent of each other; thus there are clearly two kinds of 'conservatism', independent of each other, and related in different ways to social class. Middle-class people tend to be more *radical* with respect to general attitudes, but more *conservative* with respect to economic attitudes, than working-class people.

This study is a continuation of earlier work into the structure of social attitudes (Eysenck, 1947, 1954). In this set of investigations it was found that in our samples of students and generally middle-class people two major factors emerged which were called radicalism-conservatism (R) and tough-mindedness *v.* tender-mindedness (T). Voting for political parties and party membership were related to both factors, with Communists and Fascists being tough-minded, liberals tender-minded and the Conservative and Labour Party voters being intermediate. On the R scale the five parties appeared in the order expected. Later work (Eysenck, 1951, 1971) showed quite clearly that working-class and middle-class people differed profoundly in their positions in this two-dimensional framework; when equated for political party allegiance, middle-class people emerged as more radical and more tender-minded than working-class people. This presents us with a paradox: middle-class people hold radical opinions but vote Conservative, while working-class people hold conservative opinions but vote Labour (Eysenck, 1972). American work, reviewed by Eysenck (1972), shows precisely the same picture, with middle-class people holding more progressive, advanced views than working-class people on such issues as tolerance of ideas and groups different from oneself, international co-operation, aid to less privileged countries, free trade, freedom of expression and lack of racial prejudice. However, it was also found that when it comes to economic issues, i.e. questions involving social welfare, domestic expenditure and transfer of wealth from more to less prosperous citizens, middle-class people were more conservative than working-class people. These somewhat contradictory facts suggested that the discovery of only two factors as accounting for most of the intercorrelations between attitudes might have been due to the composition of the sample, and that a random sample of the population might give us three major factors: R and T, as previously found, and in addition a factor of socio-economic conservatism. The investigation here reported was set up in order to test this hypothesis.

The two (or three) major factors expected to emerge from the study are what are known as higher-order factors; they are based on the observed intercorrelations between lower-level primary factors. In our earlier work these smaller factors had been neglected, and it seemed wise to make good this deficiency (which arose from the lack of computing facilities at the time), and to determine at least the most important and clear-cut of these. This determination was a secondary aim of the present investigation.

## METHOD

### *Subjects*

The subjects of the investigation constitute a reasonably random sample of the urban population. They were collected by a commercial firm, following simple quota sampling procedures; only inhabitants of London are represented. It is not claimed that this is a truly random sample; such samples are probably unobtainable for investigations of this kind. However, there were few refusals, and we have found in the past that on personality inventories given to similar samples the means and variances were very similar to our population means and variances. The numbers involved are shown in Table 1; groups 1 and 2 are higher and lower middle class, group 3 is skilled working class, and groups 4 and 5 are working class. The classification was carried out according to the detailed instructions furnished by Research Services (1966), as outlined in their Field Manual. There are in all 368 subjects, 153 male and 215 female.

Table 1. *Number of subjects studied*

Social class	Male	Female	Total
1. Upper middle class	34	47	81
2. Lower middle class	34	44	78
3. Skilled working class	41	53	94
4. Semi-skilled working class	35	54	89
5. Unskilled working class	9	17	26
Total	153	215	368

### *Questionnaire*

All subjects were administered a questionnaire containing 88 questions covering a wide range of social, economic and political issues. The questions were taken, or adapted, from several dozen published studies concerned with conservative and liberal/radical dimensions of attitude; an attempt was made to avoid duplication of questions, but to cover all the regions shown to be in any way salient. In this way it was attempted to provide a random sample of questions from the whole universe of possible questions; undoubtedly this sample is even less random and representative than that of persons, but the attempt was probably worthwhile. The actual questionnaire used is not reproduced for reasons of space, but most of the questions included will be quoted when the different factors extracted are discussed. Each question was answered by one of five symbols, according to the following code, which was explained in the instructions preceding the questionnaire: ++, if you strongly agree with the statement; +, if you agree on the whole; 0, if you can't decide for or against, or if you think the question is worded in such a way that you can't give an answer; -, if you disagree on the whole; --, if you strongly disagree.

In addition to the 88 questions concerning attitudes, the sex and the age of each subject were determined and included in the analysis; social class was also included.

### *Analysis*

The 91 variables were intercorrelated by means of product-moment correlations, and the matrix of intercorrelations subjected to a principal components factor analysis. Fifteen factors were extracted, of which only 10 were interpretable after rotation; 29 factors had

eigenvalues above unity, but it did not seem sensible to rotate all of these. The 15 factors so extracted were rotated by Promax into oblique simple structure; only the results for the 10 meaningful factors are given below. From the intercorrelations of these factors higher-order factors were computed; these three factors constitute the evidence regarding our prime hypothesis.

## RESULTS

### *Primary factors*

Below are given the main ten primary factors; the names given these factors imply subjective interpretations, and are used only to identify the factors in discussion. Readers will be able to assess the degree to which they are willing to accept the nomenclature used by inspecting the actual items which make up each factor, and the loading of each item on that factor. Also given in each case are the numbers of the items in the questionnaire. Thus item 80, 'Permissiveness in our society has gone much too far', has a loading of  $-0.80$  for factor 1, which is interpreted as a factor of Permissiveness.

#### Factor 1. *Permissiveness*

- |     |         |   |
|-----|---------|---|
| 9.  | $-0.44$ | More severe punishment of criminals will reduce crime.  |
| 17. | $0.44$  | There is no harm in travelling occasionally without a ticket, if you can get away with it.                          |
| 28. | $0.74$  | The laws against 'soft' drugs like marijuana are too strict.  |
| 42. | $0.55$  | Modern students show unrest because the old ways have failed.   |
| 48. | $0.74$  | Men and women have the right to find out whether they are sexually suited before marriage (e.g. by trial marriage). |
| 67. | $-0.49$ | Children today need more discipline.  |
| 71. | $0.45$  | The 'new look' in drama and TV plays is an improvement on the old-fashioned type of entertainment.                  |
| 75. | $-0.65$ | Sexual immorality destroys the marriage relation, which is the basis of our civilization.                           |
| 76. | $-0.42$ | The 'free-and-easy' play-way of teaching youngsters results in poor reading and writing.                            |
| 80. | $-0.80$ | Permissiveness in our society has gone much too far.  |
| 87. | $-0.50$ | The sight of young men with beards and long hair is unpleasant.   |
| 91. | $-0.58$ | Age.  |

#### Factor 2. *Socialism*

- |     |        |  |
|-----|--------|--|
| 35. | $0.46$ | 'Free enterprise' is another way of saying 'exploitation of the workers'.                        |
| 44. | $0.48$ | Ultimately, private property should be abolished and complete socialism introduced.              |
| 54. | $0.68$ | Royalty and nobility encourage snobbishness in a country, and are not compatible with democracy. |
| 56. | $0.47$ | Our country is probably no better than many others.  |
| 58. | $0.59$ | Tradition has too big an influence in this country.  |
| 65. | $0.65$ | In the interests of peace, we must give up part of our national sovereignty.                     |

#### Factor 3. *Racism*

- |     |         |  |
|-----|---------|--|
| 5.  | $0.63$  | It would be best to keep coloured people in their own districts and schools, in order to prevent too much contact with whites. |
| 59. | $0.64$  | Coloured people are innately inferior to white people.   |
| 61. | $0.43$  | Improving slum areas is a waste of money.  |
| 68. | $-0.54$ | Jews are as valuable citizens as any other group.  |
| 77. | $0.66$  | It would be a mistake to have coloured people as foremen over whites.  |

Factor 4. *Laissez-faire*

20. 0·44 The government is gradually taking away our basic freedom.  
 51. 0·49 Production and trade should be free from government interference.  
 73. 0·44 Many politicians are bought off by some private interest.  
 81. 0·70 Most politicians don't seem to me to really mean what they say.  
 88. 0·40 The welfare state gives too much help to people who refuse to do a proper day's work.

Factor 5. *Pacifism*

3. 0·69 War can never be justified even if it seems the only way to protect our national rights and honour.  
 22. 0·72 The evils of war are greater than any conceivable benefits.

Factor 6. *Capitalism*

15. 0·67 There is no such thing as a 'class struggle' in this country today.  
 16. 0·53 Too much is paid in tax by people with high incomes.  
 53. 0·41 Strikes should be made illegal.  
 69. 0·54 There exists a class of people whose family background and traditions make them most fitted to lead the country.  
 79. 0·44 Control of inflation is more important than a low rate of unemployment.

Factor 7. *Religion*

4. -0·61 There is no survival of any kind after death.  
 14. 0·56 The church should attempt to increase its influence on the life of the nation.  
 23. -0·53 Most religious people are hypocrites.  
 43. -0·64 Religious beliefs of all kinds are just superstitions.  
 50. 0·74 The universe was created by God.

Factor 8. *Reactionary individualism*

8. 0·49 It is only by returning to our glorious and forgotten past that real social progress can be made.  
 17. 0·40 There is no harm in travelling occasionally without a ticket, if you can get away with it.  
 20. 0·40 The government is gradually taking away our basic freedom.  
 32. 0·40 Life in the old days used to be much more pleasant than nowadays.  
 33. 0·42 The church is the main bulwark opposing the evil trends of modern society.  
 84. -0·69 We should recognize that we have duties to society, as well as rights.

Factor 9. *Human nature*

41. 0·74 A classless society is impossible.  
 62. 0·52 War is inherent in human nature.  
 86. 0·42 All social planning leads to human regimentation.

Factor 10. *Libertarianism*

11. 0·43 The minority should be free to criticize majority decisions.  
 18. 0·41 National minorities should have the right to govern themselves.  
 74. 0·66 It is wrong to punish a man who helps another country because he prefers it to his own.  
 78. 0·40 In this country it is big business that controls the state, not the people in general.

These factors all seem to make good sense, and to group together items which on *a priori* grounds one might have expected to go together. These factors are oblique; Table 2 gives the correlations between the factors, as well as the correlations of each factor with class (working class), sex (male) and age (old). It is the former set of correlations which gives us the basis for the extraction of higher-order factors. Clearly there are several groups of factors in this table. Thus there is a cluster grouping together capitalism, reactionary individualism, and human nature; there is another one grouping together socialism, pacifism and libertarianism. Before turning to this higher-order analysis, we may note that many of these factors have significant correlations with class, sex and age. Working-class people are more racist, less pacifist and oddly enough more in favour of reactionary individualism. Women are less permissive, more pacifist and more religious than men. Young people are much more permissive than old. There are some additional significant correlations in the table, but these are not large enough to justify taking very seriously.

### *Higher-order factors*

We must now turn to the 'superfactors' which emerge from the intercorrelations between the primaries. The first of these is clearly very similar to the conservative-radical (R) factor of our previous work. It can best be described in terms of the items which characterize it, i.e. which have loadings of above 0.40; these are listed below, in order of size of loading.

More severe punishment of criminals will reduce crime; criminal violence should be punished more severely than just by imprisonment; compulsory military training in peace-time is essential for the survival of this country; the greatest threats to this country during the last 50 years have come from foreign ideas and agitators; strikes should be made illegal; the sight of young men with beards and long hair is unpleasant; it would be best to keep coloured people in their own districts and schools, in order to prevent too much contact with whites; it would be a mistake to have coloured people as foremen over whites; 'my country right or wrong' is a saying which expresses a fundamentally desirable attitude; children today need more discipline; it is better to stick by what you have than to be trying new things you don't really know about; life in the old days used to be much more pleasant than nowadays; coloured people are innately inferior to white people; permissiveness in our society has gone much too far; we spend too little on our armed forces; production and trade should be free from government interference; persons with serious hereditary defects and disorders should be compulsorily sterilized; it is only by returning to our glorious and forgotten past that real social progress can be made; the welfare state gives too much help to people who refuse to do a proper day's work; the government is spending too much money on social welfare and education; the 'free-and-easy' play-way of teaching youngsters results in poor reading and writing; and any formal international government is impossible. Older people are more conservative:  $r = 0.38$ .

Factor 2, equally clearly, is the tough-mindedness *v.* tender-mindedness factor (T); again the main items, with loadings above 0.40, are given below. Items are stated

Table 2. *Intercorrelations between 10 primary factors, and correlations of these with class, sex and age*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Working class	Male sex	Age
Permissiveness	1	0.09	-0.13*	-0.21**	0.05	-0.36**	-0.12*	-0.25**	-0.17**	0.31**	-0.12*	0.14**	-0.58**
Socialism	2	—	0.02	-0.05	0.18**	-0.15**	-0.03	-0.01	-0.09	0.27**	0.15**	0.12*	0.02
Racism	3	—	—	0.16**	0.03	0.10*	-0.16**	0.22**	0.11*	0.05	0.22**	-0.01	-0.10*
Laissez-faire	4	—	—	—	-0.15**	0.20**	-0.17**	0.14**	0.27**	-0.10*	-0.01	0.16**	0.03
Pacifism	5	—	—	—	—	-0.17**	0.11*	-0.04	-0.05	0.20**	-0.21**	-0.21**	0.12*
Capitalism	6	—	—	—	—	—	-0.04	0.16**	0.24**	-0.33**	0.09	-0.03	0.13**
Religion	7	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.05	-0.10*	0.03	0.02	-0.21**	-0.13**
Reactionary individualism	8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.08	-0.16**	0.22**	-0.05	-0.12*
Human nature	9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	-0.03	-0.13*	0.09	-0.06
Libertarianism	10	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.10*	-0.16**	-0.02

\*  $P < 0.05$ .\*\*  $P < 0.01$ .

in the tough-minded direction, except when the word 'reversed' is given after the item; this means that the item loading had a negative sign for tough-mindedness. The items are: men and women have the right to find out whether they are sexually suited before marriage (e.g. by trial marriage); the church should attempt to increase its influence on the life of the nation (reversed); the universe was created by God (reversed); most religious people are hypocrites; religious beliefs of all kinds are just superstitions; permissiveness in our society has gone much too far (reversed); the laws against 'soft' drugs like marijuana are too strict; there is no harm in travelling occasionally without a ticket, if you can get away with it; coloured people are innately inferior to white people; sexual immorality destroys the marriage relation, which is the basis of our civilization (reversed). To these may be added a few more items with loadings between 0.30 and 0.40, to round off the picture: There is no survival after death; pro-euthanasia; life is so short that a man is justified in enjoying himself as much as he can; divorce laws should be altered to make divorce easier; Jews are as valuable citizens as any other group (reversed); we should recognize that one has duties to society as well as rights. Age has a negative loading on this factor:  $r = -0.35$ ; in other words, older people are more tough-minded.

Factor 3 looks very much like the predicted one contrasting politico-economic conservatism with socialism. Items having loadings higher than 0.40 are the following, with socialist views having positive loading.

Ultimately, private property should be abolished and complete socialism introduced; 'free enterprise' is another way of saying 'exploitation of the workers'; speculators and financiers have been responsible very largely for our economic difficulties; royalty and nobility encourage snobbishness in a country, and are not compatible with democracy; no one should be allowed to buy privileges in education or medical care for his family; it is clearly unfair that many people should acquire large incomes, not through work but through inheritance; tradition has too big an influence in this country; in strikes and disputes between workers and employers I usually side with the workers; true democracy is limited in this country because of the special privileges enjoyed by business and industry; capitalism has worked well in this country and should not be changed (reversed item).

Socio-economic conservatism correlates as expected with social class, but only to the extent of  $-0.20$ ; this is perhaps less than one might have expected. The R factor has only insignificant correlation with social class, in the sense that middle-class people are more radical. Working-class people are significantly more tough-minded ( $r = 0.13$ ) and men are more tough-minded than women ( $r = 0.17$ ).

These three factors are oblique, but correlations between them are very small. The conservative-radical (R) factor correlates with politico-economic conservatism only 0.07, which is quite insignificant. These two factors correlate with T  $-0.16$  and  $-0.07$ ; both are negligible, although the former is significant statistically.

The analysis was repeated on sub-samples of the population. It was thought that there might be differences in attitude structure between middle-class and working-class samples which would not become apparent in an overall analysis using all our subjects. Accordingly, matrices of intercorrelations were prepared

for the middle-class groups (1 and 2) and the working-class groups (4 and 5) separately, and factor analyses were performed in exactly the same manner as on the combined groups. The factors which emerged were very similar to those already discussed, and to each other; similarly, the intercorrelations between the factors were very similar. Another analysis was made in which only the first three principal components factors were taken, and then rotated into oblique simple structure; this type of analysis usually gives similar results to that outlined above (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1969). It did so again on this occasion; the correlation between the two conservatism factors was reduced to  $-0.01$ . In all material aspects these reanalyses gave results similar to those of the main analysis.

#### DISCUSSION

The discussion of the results can be kept short as the data speak for themselves. The investigation was designed to find answers to two main questions: (1) What are the main primary factors in a well-selected set of attitude questions and (2) Is there a factor of socio-economic conservatism independent of the radical-conservative factor previously discovered? The answer to the first question is that we have found ten meaningful primary factors which may serve to clarify the structure of social attitudes at that level. The answer to the second question is that there are indeed two conservatism factors, the first of which, similar to the original R factor, is a kind of philosophical conservatism characterized by anti-progressive attitudes which look back to the past; the other conservatism is characterized by class-conscious attitudes aimed at increasing the financial and other rewards expected by the middle-class. Middle-class people are marginally more radical on the first of these factors, less radical (insignificantly) on the second, as compared with working-class people. This finding agrees well with the results of single-question surveys, broken down by social class, which have been briefly summarized in the first paragraph of this paper.

It was suggested at the beginning of this article that the failure of our first studies to find three major higher-order factors might have been due to the fact that only middle-class people made up the sample investigated. In the light of the present findings this does not seem a likely explanation; class-linked attitudes were again found, but the relationships were not strong enough to give rise to the discrepancies in factorial solution found. It seems more likely that these differences were caused by the small number of questions in the original questionnaire relating to politico-economic conservatism; a factor can only be isolated if there are sufficient items relating to that factor in the inventory. The early work was done before the days of computers, and utmost economy in the number of items analysed was essential. With present-day facilities, such economy is no longer necessary, and hence a better coverage of the area can be accomplished. This seems a more likely explanation of the original failure to find this 'third dimension'.

It seems clear that the structure of social attitudes is somewhat more complex than outlined in *The Psychology of Politics*. We are dealing with a hierarchical structure, at the bottom of which are innumerable opinion statements with which

individuals can agree or disagree. These are organized into primary attitudes, of which we have here isolated 10, but of which there must be assumed to be many more. These in turn are organized into (at least) three superfactors which cover a large amount of ground; for a parsimonious description of a particular person's social attitudes, a figure giving his score on these three factors would be quite acceptable. Future research might be concerned with the causation of differences on these three dimensions, and in particular the determination of such differences by social class, by sex and by age. In addition, parental influence would seem to suggest itself as an area of interest in this connexion.

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