Across the OECD, most people are concerned about inequality. However, such concern varies across countries. It is higher where people perceive wide economic disparities, low intergenerational mobility, and that working hard does not help to get ahead in life. Together with people’s views of the effectiveness of policies, these perceptions and beliefs shape people’s support for inequality-reducing reforms.

Are people concerned over income disparities?
In Australia, concern over income inequality has traditionally been lower than on the OECD average in the last decades. According to the latest data, slightly less than 70% of population agreed that income disparities are too large and close to 30% strongly agree. Despite being lower, concern increased significantly over time: the fraction of Australians that strongly agree that income differences are too large had doubled between the late 1980s and the global financial crisis (Figure 1) and remained at that higher level until today.

Figure 1. Australia: Concern over income disparities is low
Share who agree that income differences are too large

What drives concern?
The level of concern over income disparities is comparatively low although conventional indicators of income inequality and earnings mobility are more in line with the OECD average (Figure 2). Indeed, specific country factors reduce concerns:

- Perceptions of inequality: Australians actually perceive comparatively high levels of earnings disparities.
- Preferences over the level of disparities: Such high perceived level of earnings disparities is compensated by relatively high levels of preferred earnings disparities, thus explaining low concern.
- Perceptions of equality of opportunity: In countries where people perceive that disparities are caused by differences in effort, they are more willing to tolerate them. In Australia, the higher tolerance of economic disparities is likely shaped by one of the highest confidence among OECD countries in the importance of hard work to get ahead in life. Despite this confidence, Australians do not believe in strict equality of opportunities: in fact, their belief that having wealthy and educated parents is important to get ahead in life is in line with the OECD average.
- Perceptions and preferences dynamic: The preferred top-bottom earnings ratio has

Figure 2. Australia: The relatively high level of preferred disparities shapes low concern
Indicators and opinions about disparities

Note: The OECD averages refer countries available for each indicator. Conventional statistical indicators refer to the latest available year; all the other data refer to 2009, for which data are available for a wide set of countries.

increased in the last decades, from 3 to 5. However, the median perceived top-bottom earnings ratio rose even by more, from 4 in the late 1980s to 12 in the late 2010s, leading to the observed increase in concerns.

How divided is the public opinion?
People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. In fact, over time the dispersion of perceived disparities grew extensively across the Australian population, showing an increased division of the public opinion:

**Figure 3. Perceptions about earnings disparities became more dispersed in the last decades**

90th and 10th percentile of the perceived top-bottom earnings ratio (logarithmic scale)

Note: The lines represent the extent of the differences between the perceptions of the bottom 10% of respondents and the top 10%.

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.

- In 1987, 10% of Australian believed that the earnings of high paid jobs (doctors and chairmen of large national corporations) were 3 times, or less, of low paid jobs (unskilled workers in a factory). On the opposite, 10% believed that paid jobs gained 6 or more times low paid job (Figure 3).
- The distance between these two groups grew considerably in the last 3 decades, especially in the period leading to the Great Recession. The 10% that perceives low disparities did not change much its perception (up to 4 times, from 3 in 1987), while the 10% perceiving high disparities nowadays believe that high paid jobs earn 55 times or more low paid jobs.

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?
The lower level of concern translates into lower demand for redistribution in Australia. The share of Australians that agree it is the responsibility of the government to reduce income differences is lower than in most other OECD countries. Nevertheless, this share has increased in the last decades – up to 57% in 2019 (23% strongly agree) from 44% in 1987 (9% strongly agree) – reflecting the increase in perceptions of and concern over economic disparities.

**Figure 4. Demand for redistribution is relatively low**

Note: Data are for year 2017.
Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3.

How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?
Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

Better understanding of public support for reform: Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

Better understanding of the effectiveness of policies: People favour policies that they believe to be effective. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of inequality-reducing policies transparently and facilitate people’s understanding of their functioning.

Better information on inequality and equality of opportunities: Providing high-quality information about inequality can help providing common ground for public debate, addressing the division and polarization of public opinion.

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How do people perceive inequality in Canada?

In Canada, income inequality – as measured by the Gini index for disposable income – is slightly lower than on OECD average (Figure 1). Inequality of opportunity is also relatively lower, as shown by the intergenerational earnings persistence, which is slightly below the OECD average.

**Figure 1. Inequality and earnings persistence are relatively low**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators about economic disparities</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inequality in disposable income (Gini index)</td>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>OECD 37</td>
<td>Costa Rica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational earnings persistence</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 26</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data refer to the latest available year.
Source: OECD Income Distribution Database and OECD (2018);

Perceptions of economic disparities do not always mirror actual indicators. In Canada, people perceive relatively higher income inequality than what is recorded by conventional indicators (Figure 2):

- Perceptions of income disparities: Canadians perceive higher income inequality than on OECD average. According to the OECD Risks that Matter survey, on average they perceive that 56% of the national income goes to the richest 10% households, similarly to countries like Mexico and the United States, where inequality is considerably higher according to conventional indicators.

- Preferred income disparities: Higher perceptions of income inequality do not seem to be accompanied by a higher level of preferred inequality. The average Canadian user of the OECD Compare Your Income webtool reports that the share of income going to the top 10% richest should be around 30, in line with the OECD average of preferred income disparity.

- Perceptions of social mobility: Canada is characterised by a lower level of perceived intergenerational persistence than the OECD median country, in line with the picture described by conventional indicators.

**Figure 2. The perceived share of income that goes to the richest 10% households is relatively high**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators and opinions about disparities, year 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived richest 10%'s share of income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived bottom 10% intergenerational persistence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The OECD averages refer to countries available for each indicator.
How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. In Canada the public opinion is, instead, relatively cohesive around the perceptions of relatively high levels of economic inequality:

Figure 3. Perceptions are rather cohesive around a high level of income inequality

![Figure 3](image)

Note: The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present similar distributions of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions.

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.

- Around 1 out of 2 Canadians perceives the richest 10%’s share of income to be above 60, with 1 out of 3 perceiving it to be in the 61-80% interval (Figure 3).

- This cohesion around higher values of perceived inequality also translates into a stronger cohesion that the current level of disparities is larger than what it should be. 60% of Canadians believe that the current level of the richest 10%’s share of income is at least 20 percentage points more than it should be, as compared to 53% of the population on OECD average.

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

Coherently with the relatively lower level of inequality, people’s demand for policy intervention aimed to reduce economic disparities is slightly lower than on average of OECD countries (Figure 4). That said, demand for more progressive taxation is slightly higher, with 71% agreeing that the government should tax the rich more than currently done to support the poor (68% on OECD average), consistently with the widespread belief that a large fraction of national income goes to the richest 10%’s households.

Figure 4. Demand for more tax progressivity is slightly higher than on OECD average

![Figure 4](image)

Note: Data refer to year 2020.

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3.

How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

- Better understanding of public support for reform: Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

- Better understanding of the effectiveness of policies: People favour policies that they believe to be effective. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of inequality-reducing policies transparently and facilitate people’s understanding of their functioning.

- Better information on inequality and equality of opportunities: Providing high-quality information about inequality can help providing common ground for public debate, addressing the division and polarization of public opinion.

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How do people perceive inequality in Chile?

Chile is characterised by a high level of income inequality, with the second largest value of the Gini index for disposable income among OECD countries (Figure 1). Disparities are strong even in terms of opportunity, as measured by relatively high level of earnings persistence.

Figure 1. Inequality and earnings persistence are high

Indicators about economic disparities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inequality in disposable income (Gini index)</td>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>OECD 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational earnings persistence</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data refer to the latest available year.
Source: OECD Income Distribution Database and OECD (2018)

Perceptions of economic disparities do not always mirror actual indicators. This is not the case of Chile, where people perceive wide economic disparities and limited social mobility (Figure 2):

- **Perceptions of inequality**: The perceived level of inequality is in line with the high level of disparities. Both perceived earnings disparities and perceived richest 10%’s share of income are among the highest in the OECD.

- **Preferences over the level of disparities**: Tolerance of earnings disparities is also wider, and this is partially influenced by the very high level of disparities. Nevertheless, the gap between perceived and preferred disparities is among the highest across the OECD: the median respondent thinks that top paid jobs do earn as much as 23 times low paid jobs, but should earn at most 9 times (9 and 4, respectively, in the OECD average).

- **Perceptions of equality of opportunity**: Chile is also characterised by a higher level of perceived inequality of opportunity. Although beliefs about the importance of hard work to get ahead in life are aligned with the OECD average, respondents report widespread perceptions that children from poor families will remain poor once adult (bottom 10% intergenerational persistence). They also believe more strongly than in other OECD countries that having wealthy and well-educated parents is very important or essential to get ahead in life.

Figure 2. Perceived economic disparities and equality of opportunity are outstandingly high

Indicators and opinions about disparities

- Perceived earnings disparities
- Preferred earnings disparities
- Perceived richest 10%’s share of income
- Perceived bottom 10% intergenerational persistence
- Perceived importance of hard work
- Perceived importance of wealthy parents
- Perceived importance of educated parents

Note: The OECD averages refer countries available for each indicator. For perceived richest 10%’s share of income and intergenerational persistence to 2020; all the other data refer to 2009.
How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. In Chile there is a sizeable group that perceive high economic disparities, but this is opposed to a group who instead finds disparities to be relatively low:

- Around 1 out of 5 Chileans perceive the richest 10%’s share of income to be above 80%; at the other end, however, there are one out of six who believe this share to be below 20% (Figure 3).
- This contraposition between two groups with different opinions is also relevant when looking at the gap between perceived and preferred top 10% shares. 1 out of 4 Chilean users of the OECD Compare Your Income tool believes that the current level of the richest 10%’s share of income is acceptable, or even lower than what they would prefer. This is opposed to another fourth of respondents who believe that the richest 10’ share of income is 85% but should be 16%.

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

Coherently with the level of inequality, people’s demand for policy intervention aimed to reduce economic disparities is the highest among the OECD countries (Figure 4). Demand for more redistribution is pushed by perceived low social mobility and by the limited extent of current redistribution, as captured by the reduction in the Gini index after tax and transfers (5%, compared to 25% on OECD average). Demand for more progressive taxation is high, consistently with the widespread belief that a large fraction of national income goes to the richest 10’s households and that there are low chances for poor citizens to make it up to the top.

How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

- Better understanding of public support for reform: Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.
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En los países de la OCDE, la mayoría de las personas están preocupadas por la desigualdad. Sin embargo, esta preocupación varía de país a país. Cuando la gente percibe grandes disparidades económicas, baja movilidad intergeneracional y que el trabajo duro no alcanza para salir adelante en la vida, la preocupación es mayor. Estas percepciones y creencias, junto con las opiniones sobre la efectividad de las políticas, determinan los niveles de apoyo a las reformas para reducir la desigualdad.

¿Cómo percibe la gente la desigualdad en Chile?

Chile se caracteriza por un alto nivel de desigualdad de ingresos, con el segundo mayor valor del índice de Gini para la renta disponible entre los países de la OCDE (Figura 1). Las disparidades son fuertes incluso en términos de oportunidades, de acuerdo con el nivel relativamente alto de persistencia de los ingresos entre generaciones, lo que indica una baja movilidad social.

Figura 1. La desigualdad y la persistencia de los ingresos intergeneracionales son elevadas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicadores sobre las disparidades económicas</th>
<th>Mínimo</th>
<th>Medio</th>
<th>Máximo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Desigualdad en la renta disponible (Índice de Gini)</td>
<td>Repúbl. Eslovaca: OCDE 37</td>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>Costa Rica: OCDE 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistencia intergeneracional de ingresos</td>
<td>Dinamarca: OCDE 25</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


La percepción de las disparidades económicas no siempre refleja los indicadores reales. Este no es el caso de Chile, donde la gente percibe grandes disparidades económicas y una movilidad social limitada (Figura 2):

- Percepción de la desigualdad: El nivel de desigualdad percibido está en consonancia con el alto nivel de disparidades. Tanto la percepción de las disparidades de ingresos como la percepción de la participación del 10% más rico en los ingresos se encuentran entre las más altas de la OCDE.
  - Preferencias sobre el nivel de disparidades: La tolerancia a las disparidades salariales es también mayor, y en ello influye en parte el muy alto nivel de disparidades. No obstante, la diferencia entre las disparidades percibidas y las preferidas es una de las más altas de la OCDE: la mediana de los encuestados piensa que los empleos mejor pagados ganan hasta 23 veces más que los empleos peor pagados, pero deberían ganar como máximo 9 veces más (la media de la OCDE es de 9 y 4, respectivamente).
- Percepción de la igualdad de oportunidades: Chile también se caracteriza por un mayor nivel de percepción de la desigualdad de oportunidades. Aunque las creencias sobre la importancia del trabajo duro para salir adelante en la vida se alinean con la media de la OCDE, los encuestados confirman la percepción generalizada de que los hijos de familias pobres seguirán siendo pobres una vez que sean adultos (persistencia intergeneracional del 10% inferior).

Figura 2. La percepción de las disparidades económicas y de la igualdad de oportunidades es muy elevada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicadores y opiniones sobre las disparidades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Diferencias salariales percibidas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diferencias salariales preferidas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percepción de la participación del 10% más rico en los ingresos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percepción de la persistencia intergeneracional del 10% inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percepción de la importancia del trabajo duro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percepción de la importancia de tener padres ricos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percepción de la importancia de tener padres educados</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nota: Los promedios de la OCDE se refieren a los países disponibles para cada indicador. Los indicadores de desigualdad se refieren al último año disponible; en el caso de las percepción de la participación del 10% más rico en los ingresos y de la persistencia intergeneracional, a 2020; todos los demás datos se refieren a 2009.
¿Qué tan dividida está la opinión pública?
La gente suele estar en desacuerdo con la magnitud de las disparidades económicas. En Chile hay un grupo considerable que percibe altas disparidades económicas, pero también hay un grupo que, en cambio, considera que las disparidades son relativamente bajas:

- Alrededor de 1 de cada 5 chilenos percibe que la cuota de ingresos del 10% más rico es superior al 80%; en el otro extremo, sin embargo, hay uno de cada seis que cree que esta cuota es inferior al 20% (Figura 3).

Figura 3. Un gran grupo percibe una alta desigualdad frente a otro que percibe una baja desigualdad
Proporción de la población según la percepción de los 10 más ricos de la renta nacional, año 2020


- Esta contraposición entre dos grupos con opiniones diferentes también es relevante cuando se observa la diferencia entre las cuotas de ingresos percibidas y las preferidas del 10% más rico. 1 de cada 4 chilenos que respondieron a la herramienta de la OCDE “Compare Your Income” cree que el nivel actual de la participación del 10% más rico en los ingresos es aceptable, o incluso inferior a lo que ellos preferirían. Esto se opone a otra cuarta parte de los encuestados que creen que la participación de los 10 más ricos en los ingresos es del 85%, pero que debería ser del 16%.

¿Cuál es el nivel de apoyo a las políticas de reducción de la desigualdad?
En consonancia con el nivel de desigualdad, la demanda de los ciudadanos de una intervención política destinada a reducir las disparidades económicas es la más alta entre los países de la OCDE (Figura 4). La demanda de una mayor redistribución se ve impulsada por la percepción de una baja movilidad social y por el limitado alcance de la redistribución actual, tal y como refleja la reducción del índice de Gini después de impuestos y transferencias (5%, frente al 25% de la media de la OCDE). La demanda de una fiscalidad más progresiva es alta, en consonancia con la creencia generalizada de que un gran porcentaje de la renta nacional va a parar al 10% más rico de los hogares, y que hay bajas posibilidades de que los ciudadanos pobres lleguen a la cima.

Figura 4. La demanda de mayor progresividad fiscal es más fuerte que en la media de la OCDE


¿Cómo pueden las percepciones de la gente y su preocupación por la desigualdad informar las políticas?
Para que los ciudadanos y los gobiernos coincidan en las políticas de reducción de la desigualdad y de fomento de la movilidad social, es necesario comprender cómo la gente se forma sus percepciones y opiniones. Esto incluye:

Una mejor comprensión del apoyo público a las reformas: La desigualdad tanto de resultados como de oportunidades es importante para la gente, por lo que tener en cuenta ambos aspectos ayuda a obtener apoyo. No obstante, la gente puede favorecer combinaciones de políticas específicas, en función de sus creencias y preferencias.

Una mejor comprensión de la efectividad de las políticas: Los ciudadanos están a favor de las políticas que consideran eficaces. Es necesario evaluar el impacto de las políticas de reducción de la desigualdad de forma transparente y facilitar la comprensión de su funcionamiento por parte de los ciudadanos.

Mejor información sobre la desigualdad y la igualdad de oportunidades: Proporcionar información de calidad sobre la desigualdad puede ayudar a proporcionar un terreno común para el debate público, abordando la división y la polarización de la opinión pública.

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Does Inequality Matter?

HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE ECONOMIC DISPARITIES AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

How does DENMARK compare?

Across the OECD, most people are concerned about inequality. However, such concern varies across countries. It is higher where people perceive wide economic disparities, low intergenerational mobility, and that working hard does not help to get ahead in life. Together with people’s views of the effectiveness of policies, these perceptions and beliefs shape people’s support for inequality-reducing reforms.

Are people concerned over income disparities?

Concern over income inequality in Denmark is one of the lowest in the OECD countries. Less than 54% of population agree that income disparities are too large in their country (Figure 1), while the OECD average is almost 80%. The respondents that strongly agree are just 17%, which is the lowest value across OECD countries.

What drives concern?

The level of concern is in line with the low level of inequality as measured by the Gini index for disposable income (Figure 2). However, low concern is also driven by specific country factors:

- **Perception of inequality**: Perceived economic disparities are low both in terms of earnings and the share of national income accruing to the richest 10%, in line with the picture described by conventional estimates.

- **Preferences over the level of disparities**: Danish citizens not only perceive low earnings disparities, but also prefer low disparities compared to the average OECD country.

- **Perception of equality of opportunity**: Denmark has the highest level of intergenerational earnings mobility. This is reflected in people’s perceptions of a comparatively low level of intergenerational persistence at the bottom of the income distribution. Similarly, Danish people do not hold a strong belief that having wealthy and educated parents is very important to get ahead in life, although they also do not seem to attach a particularly strong importance to hard work either.

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**Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is low**

Share of population by agreement with the statement that income differences are too large, year 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DNK</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD 32</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 2. Confidence in equality of opportunity is strong**

Indicators and opinions about disparities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Median</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>OECD 26</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>OECD 28</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
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<td>OECD 28</td>
<td>Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived importance of hard work</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>OECD 25</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 30</td>
<td>United States</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The OECD averages refer countries available for each indicator. Conventional statistical indicators refer to the latest available year; for perceived intergenerational persistence to 2020; all the other data refer to 2009.

How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. In Denmark the public opinion is, instead, relatively cohesive around the perceptions of relatively lower levels of economic inequality:

- Perception over the richest 10%’s share of income is highly cohesive in Denmark, since 61% of respondents perceive the richest 10%’s share of income to be below 40%. (Figure 3). This is the highest level of cohesion within the group of countries were the public opinion is cohesive around low levels of perceived inequality.

**Figure 3. A highly cohesive group perceive low economic disparities**

![Chart showing share of population by perceived richest 10%’s share of national income, year 2020.

Note: The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present a similar distribution of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions.

*Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.*

- Danish respondents’ opinions are also less dispersed with regards to earnings disparities: less than 23% have extreme views regarding bottom earnings being far too low or top earnings being far too high, while they are on average 50% in the other OECD countries.

- Nevertheless, there is still disagreement on whether it is top earnings that are too high or bottom ones that are too low. More than 29% of the respondents is concerned that top earnings are too high but thinks that bottom earnings are fair or could even be lower, while the OECD average is less than 15%. On the opposite spectrum, almost 16% think that the issue pertains mostly to bottom earnings being too low (24% in the OECD average).

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

The already lower level of market inequality and the relatively stronger extent of current redistribution are reflected in people’s preferences for policy intervention. The demand for further redistribution or progressive taxation is indeed the lowest across OECD countries (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Demand for more redistribution and more tax progressivity is the lowest among the OECD countries**

![Chart showing demand for more redistribution and more tax progressivity across OECD countries.](chart)

*Note: Data refer to year 2020*

*Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3.*

How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

- Better understanding of public support for reform: Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

- Better understanding of the effectiveness of policies: People favour policies that they believe to be effective. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of inequality-reducing policies transparently and facilitate people’s understanding of their functioning.

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Are people concerned over income disparities?
Concern over income inequality is quite low in Finland compared to the OECD average. 67% of population agree that income disparities are too large (Figure 1), while the OECD average is almost 80%. The respondents that strongly agree are less than 30%, which is one of the lowest values across the OECD countries.

Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is low
Share of population by agreement with the statement that income differences are too large, year 2017


What drives concern?
The level of concern is in line with the relatively low level of inequality as measured by the Gini index for disposable income (Figure 2). However, low concern is also driven by specific country factors:

- **Perception of inequality**: Perceived economic disparities are low in terms of earnings disparities. However, according to data from the OECD Risks that Matter survey, in 2020 the average Finnish citizen’s perception of the share of income going to the richest 10% of households (50%) is aligned with the OECD average (51%).

- **Preferences over the level of disparities**: Concerns might be low also when citizens are more willing to accept disparities. However, the level of preferred earnings disparities in Finland is relatively low compared to the other OECD countries.

- **Perception of equality of opportunity**: People are less concerned by disparities when they believe that there are equal opportunities to get ahead in life. The relatively high level of intergenerational earnings mobility is reflected in the fact that Finnish people hold the weakest belief that having wealthy and educated parents is important to get ahead in life. However, perceptions of chances to escape poverty are only slightly lower than the OECD average: Finnish citizens’ believe that 44 out of 100 poor children will make it out of poverty once adult, as compared to 47 in the OECD average.

Figure 2. Confidence in equality of opportunity is higher than on OECD average
Indicators and opinions about disparities

Note: The OECD averages refer countries available for each indicator. Conventional statistical indicators refer to the latest available year; for perceived income disparities and intergenerational persistence to 2020; all the other data refer to 2009.

How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities:

- In Finland, perceptions of top income inequality are quite dispersed over a large range of values (Figure 3), from very low to high inequality, indicating a substantial divide in public opinion.

**Figure 3. Perceptions about economic inequality are dispersed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share of population by perceived richest 10’s share of national income, year 2020</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cohesive perception of low inequality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81%-100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present a similar distribution of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions. Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.

- Finnish respondents’ opinions are more cohesive with regards to earnings disparities. In particular, compared to the average OECD country, there is a larger share of the population who thinks that top earnings are too high (74% as compared to an OECD average of 67%).

- Nevertheless, there are still disagreements on what is driving the overall earnings disparities. More than 35% of the respondents is concerned that top earnings are too high but thinks that bottom earnings are fair or could even be lower. On the opposite spectrum, there is a smaller but still sizeable group (13%) who think that the issue pertains mostly to bottom earnings being too low, while top earnings are fair.

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

The already lower level of market inequality and the relatively stronger extent of current redistribution are reflected in people’s preferences for policy intervention, which do not highlight a strong demand for further redistribution or progressive taxation (Figure 4). The demand for more redistribution and progressive taxation is however higher than in other Nordic countries with comparable levels of inequality (e.g. Denmark).

**Figure 4. Demand for more redistribution is weaker than in the OECD average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demand for more redistribution</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demand for more progressive taxation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Minimum</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

- **Better understanding of public support for reform:** Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence taking both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

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Are people concerned over income disparities?
Concern over income inequality is strong in France compared to the OECD average. About 84% of population agree that income disparities are too large (Figure 1) and almost 60% strongly agree, one of the highest values in the OECD countries.

Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is high
Share of population by agreement with the statement that income differences are too large, year 2017


What drives concern?
The level of concern over income disparities is high in France, although conventional indicators of income inequality – such as the Gini index for disposable income – are somewhat below the OECD average (Figure 2). Indeed, specific country factors heighten concerns:

- Perceptions of inequality: French perceptions of top income inequality is slightly lower in a comparative perspective: according to the OECD Risks that Matter 2020 survey, the average perceived share of income going to the richest 10% of households is 49%, vs 52% in the OECD average. Perceived earnings disparities are instead relatively high.
- Preferences over the level of disparities: The relatively high perceived levels of earnings disparities are however associated with higher-than-average levels of tolerance of earnings disparities, therefore reducing their impact on concern.
- Perceptions of equality of opportunity: Concerns are high in countries where people believe that chances to get ahead in life are unequal and are due to circumstance beyond people’s control. This is the case in France. The perceived importance of hard work to get ahead in life is low, while that of having well-educated parents is high. Also the perceived risk for poor children to remain poor is slightly higher in France than on OECD average (58% versus 56%; data from Risks that Matter 2020).

Figure 2. Confidence in equality of opportunity is low
Indicators and opinions about disparities

Note: The OECD averages refer countries available for each indicator. Conventional statistical indicators refer to the latest available year; for perceived intergenerational persistence to 2020; all the other data refer to 2009.
How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. In France, perceptions of inequality are more dispersed than in other countries:

- Perceptions of how much of the national income accrues to the richest 10%’s are strongly dispersed in France (Figure 3). There is an equal number of people that believe that the share is low – below 20% – and that it is high – between 60 and 80%. There is also a sizeable group that believes it is in between these values.

- People seem to be more in agreement with each other that bottom earnings are too low and top earnings are too high: more than 74% of respondents share this opinion, contrary to 52% on OECD average.

**Figure 3. Perceptions over the richest 10%’s income share are dispersed**

Share of population by perceived richest 10’s share of national income, year 2020

- Cohesive perception of low inequality
- Highly dispersed perceptions
- Cohesive perception of high inequality

**Note:** The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present similar distributions of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions.

*Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3.*

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

French citizens have lower demand for more redistribution than other OECD countries (Figure 4), with only 50% of respondents agreeing that the government should do more to reduce income differences by collecting taxes and providing benefits, compared to the OECD average of 66%. Also demand for increasing tax progressivity – through higher taxes on the rich – is somewhat lower than on OECD average (62% agree that taxes on the rich should be increased in order to support the poor).

Although the comparatively low demand for more inequality-reducing policies does not align with the high level of concern in France, it can be explained by the current level of redistribution through taxes and transfers, which is already one of the highest across the OECD.

**Figure 4. Demand for more redistribution is lower than in the OECD average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 25</td>
<td>Chile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demand for more redistribution</td>
<td>Demand for more progressive taxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3. Data refer to year 2020.*

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Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

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Dans l'ensemble de l'OCDE, la plupart des individus sont préoccupés par les inégalités. Toutefois, cette préoccupation varie selon les pays. Elle est plus forte lorsque les individus perçoivent de grandes disparités économiques, une faible mobilité intergénérationnelle et que le fait de travailler dur ne permet pas de progresser dans la vie. Conjuguées à l'opinion des gens sur l'efficacité des politiques, ces perceptions et croyances déterminent le soutien des individus aux réformes visant à réduire les inégalités.

Les gens sont-ils préoccupés par les disparités de revenu ?

Les préoccupations liées aux inégalités de revenu sont singulièrement marquées en France, par rapport à la moyenne des pays OCDE. Environ 84% de la population française est d'accord pour dire que les disparités de revenus sont trop importantes (Graphique 1) et près de 60% sont fortement d'accord, l'une des parts les plus élevées des pays de l'OCDE.

Quels sont les moteurs des préoccupations ?

Le niveau d’inquiétude concernant les disparités de revenus est élevé en France, bien que les indicateurs conventionnels d’inégalité de revenus - tels que l’indice de Gini pour le revenu disponible - soient légèrement inférieurs à la moyenne de l'OCDE (Graphique 2). En effet, des facteurs spécifiques au pays renforcent les préoccupations:

- **Perception des inégalités** : les français ont une perception relativement faible de la part des revenus captée par le haut de la distribution.

Graphique 1. Les préoccupations liées aux disparités de revenu sont fortes.

Part des répondants qui sont d’accord pour dire que les disparités de revenus sont trop importantes, 2017


En moyenne, d’après la dernière enquête *Risks that Matter, 2020*, les français percevaient que la part des revenus allant aux ménages les 10% les plus riches était de 49%, alors qu’en moyenne cette perception était de 52% dans l’OCDE. En revanche, les français perçoivent des disparités de rémunération, et non de revenu, relativement élevés.

Graphique 2. La confiance dans l’égalité des chances est faible

Indicateurs et opinions relatifs aux disparités économiques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inégalités - revenu disponible (Indice GINI)</td>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>OECD 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persistence intergénérationnelle des rémunérations</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disparités perçues des rémunérations</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>OECD 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disparités souhaitées des rémunérations</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>OECD 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance perçue du travail dur</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance perçue d’avoir des parents instruits</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>OECD 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Les moyennes de l’OCDE se réfèrent aux pays disponibles pour chaque indicateur. Les indicateurs statistiques conventionnels se réfèrent à la dernière année disponible ; pour les disparités de revenus perçues et la persistance intergénérationnelle, à 2020 ; toutes les autres données se réfèrent à 2009.

Source: OCDE - Base de données sur la distribution des revenus et OCDE (2018); Les inégalités comptent-elles ? Chapitre 2.
Préférences de niveau de disparités : les français perçoivent des niveaux élevés de disparités de rémunération mais ils sont toutefois plus tolérant de ces disparités qu’en moyenne dans l’OCDE, ce qui atténue leurs préoccupations.

Perception de l’égalité des chances : les préoccupations sont élevées dans les pays où les individus pensent que les chances de réussir dans la vie sont inégales et sont dues à des circonstances indépendantes de leur volonté. C’est le cas aussi en France. Les français donnent relativement peu d’importance au fait de travailler dur pour réussir dans la vie mais ils attribuent un rôle majeur au fait d’avoir des parents instruits. De même, les français perçoivent un risque élevé pour les enfants de milieu modeste de rester pauvre (58% contre 56% en moyenne dans l’OCDE).

À quel point l’opinion publique est-elle divisée ?

La perception des disparités économiques est souvent source de désaccords. En France, la perception des inégalités est davantage morcelée et éparse que dans la plupart des autres pays OCDE :

Graphique 3. Les perceptions relatives à la part du revenu national capté par les 10% les plus riches varient fortement

Pourcentage de la population française par intervalle du pourcentage perçu du revenu capté par les 10% les plus riches, 2020

Les perceptions de la part du revenu national revenant aux 10 % les plus riches varient très fortement en France (Graphique 3). La part des français percevant des inégalités élevées (entre 60% et 80% du revenu national capté par les 10% les plus riches) équivaut à la part de ceux qui perçoivent des inégalités faibles (en-deçà de 20% du revenu national). Une partie non-négligeable de français exprime également des perceptions se situant entre ces valeurs extrêmes.

Les opinions concordent plus ou moins autour de l’idée que les rémunérations les plus basses sont trop faibles et que les plus hautes rémunérations sont trop élevées. Plus de 74% des répondants partagent cette opinion ; ils ne sont que 52% en moyenne dans l’OCDE.

Les rémunérations les plus hautes sont-elles trop élevées ? Ou ce sont les rémunérations les plus basses qui sont trop faibles ? Des désaccords marqués subsistent tout de même quant à la direction des préoccupations, et les français expriment davantage de désaccords à ce sujet que dans la moyenne OCDE.

Environ 10% des français sont préoccupés par le niveau des rémunérations les plus élevées mais pensent aussi que les rémunérations les plus basses sont justes (et pourraient être même plus faibles). D’autre part, 15% des répondants trouvent que le problème se situe en réalité au niveau de la faiblesse des bas revenus.

Quelle place faite aux politiques visant à réduire les inégalités ?

Les citoyens français expriment une demande relativement faible en faveur de politiques redistributives (Graphique 4). Seulement 50% d’entre eux supportent davantage de politiques gouvernementales visant à réduire les différences de revenus à l’aide de l’impôt et de prestations sociales, ils sont 66% en moyenne dans l’OCDE.

De même, le soutien à davantage de progressivité fiscales au travers d’une augmentation des impôts des plus aisés est quelque peu inférieur à la moyenne OCDE (62% étant d’accord pour une augmentation de l’imposition des plus riches pour soutenir les plus démunis).

Le système fiscal et social français est relativement...
plus redistributif que dans des pays comparables. Cela explique certainement cette dichotomie entre des niveaux de préoccupations élevées et une demande faible pour davantage de progressivité.

Graphique 4. Le soutien à davantage de redistribution est inférieur à la moyenne OCDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Médiane</th>
<th>Moyenne</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Soutien à plus de redistribution</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Danemark</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grèce</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


Comment les perceptions et les préoccupations des individus en matière d'inégalité peuvent-elles informer les politiques publiques ?

Pour que les citoyens et les gouvernements soient sur la même longueur d'onde lorsqu'il s'agit de politiques visant à réduire les inégalités et à promouvoir la mobilité sociale, il convient de comprendre comment les individus forment leurs perceptions et leurs opinions. Cela implique de :

- Mieux comprendre les mécanismes de soutien aux réformes : les inégalités de revenu, aussi bien que l'inégalité des chances sont importantes aux yeux des citoyens. Le soutien au réforme passe donc par la prise en compte de ses deux facteurs. Toutefois, les individus sont amenés à soutenir des gammes de mesures bien précises selon leurs croyances et préférences.


- Améliorer la transmission d'information au sujet des inégalités de revenu et de chance : partager des informations de qualité sur les inégalités peut contribuer à construire un terrain d'entente pour le débat public, tout en luttant contre la division et la polarisation de l'opinion publique.

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Are people concerned over income disparities?
In 2017, the latest year for which data are available for a wide set of countries, four out of five Germans agreed that income disparities are too large and one third strongly agreed – figures in line with the OECD average. However, according to the very latest data (available only for a subset of OECD countries), by 2020 concern has increased considerably, with more than half of individuals strongly agreeing that income disparities are too large in Germany (Figure 1). This fraction had substantially increased between the late 1980s and the global financial crisis. It had then decreased until 2017, and it has rose again during the pandemic.

Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is high
Share who agree that income differences are too large

What drives concern?
The level of concern over income disparities is comparatively high in Germany although conventional indicators of income inequality – such as the Gini index for disposable income – are below the OECD average (Figure 2). Indeed, specific country factors heighten concerns:

- **Perceptions of inequality:** On average, Germans perceive 51% of income accruing to the richest 10%, in line with the OECD average (data from the OECD Risks that Matter survey 2020). However, perceived earnings disparities are larger and partially explain the high concern.

- **Preferences over the level of disparities:** Preferred earnings disparities are higher than on OECD average, therefore somewhat compensating the higher perceived level of disparities.

- **Perceptions of equality of opportunity:** Countries where people perceive that people do not have equal chances to get ahead in life, they are also more likely to be concerned with income inequality. Germans report widespread perceptions of persistent sticky floors across generations and believe that having well-educated parents is very important to get ahead in life. This helps explaining why concern over income disparities outstrip conventional indicators of income inequality in Germany.

Figure 2. Confidence in equality of opportunity is low
Indicators and opinions about disparities

Note: The OECD averages refer countries available for each indicator. Inequality indicators refer to the latest available year; for perceived intergenerational persistence to 2020; all the other data refer to 2009.
• Changes in perceptions and preferences: The preferred top-bottom earnings ratio has increased in the two decades up to the Great Recession. This is partially explained by an increase in meritocratic beliefs (i.e. the importance of hard work to get along). Yet, the growth in perceived disparities was much larger, causing the increase in concerns of Germans about high inequality after the late 1980s.

How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. Perceptions and opinions about economic inequality are more dispersed in Germany than elsewhere.

• The perceptions of how much of the national income goes to the richest 10%’s vary greatly,

![Figure 3. Perceptions and opinions about economic inequality are dispersed](image)

Note: The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present similar distributions of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions.

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

Despite of the high level of concern, demand for more government redistributive intervention through taxes and benefits is slightly lower in Germany than on OECD average (Figure 4). By 2020, demand for more progressive taxation – through higher taxes on the rich than the current level – is more aligned with the OECD average, with 71% of persons demanding more (OECD: 68%).

![Figure 4. Demand for redistribution is somewhat lower but stronger for more tax progressivity](image)

Note: Data refer to year 2020.

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3.

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Sind die Menschen besorgt über Einkommensunterschiede?


Was beeinflusst die Besorgnis?

Die Sorge um Einkommensunterschiede ist in Deutschland vergleichsweise hoch, obwohl herkömmliche Indikatoren der Einkommensungleichheit – wie der Gini-Index für das verfügbare Einkommen – unter dem OECD-Durchschnitt liegen (Abbildung 2). In der Tat verstärken länderspezifische Faktoren die Bedenken:

Abbildung 1. Besorgnis über Einkommensunterschiede ist groß

Anteil derjenigen, die zustimmen, dass die Einkommensunterschiede zu groß sind

Quelle: Does Inequality Matter? Kapitel 2

Abbildung 2. Das Vertrauen in die Chancengleichheit ist gering

Indikatoren und Meinungen zu Ungleichheiten

Anmerkung: Die OECD-Durchschnittswerte beziehen sich auf die für jeden Indikator verfügbaren Länder. Herkömmliche statistische Indikatoren beziehen sich auf das letzte verfügbare Jahr; für die wahrgenommenen Einkommensunterschiede und die intergenerationale Persistenz auf 2020; die anderen Daten beziehen sich auf 2009.

Quelle: OECD Income Distribution Database und OECD (2018); Does Inequality Matter? Kapitel 2
Die Wahrnehmung von Ungleichheit: Der Anteil der reichsten 10% am Gesamteinkommen wird von den Deutschen im Durchschnitt mit 51% geschätzt - dies entspricht dem OECD-Durchschnitt. Die wahrgenommenen Unterschiede für Arbeitseinkünfte sind jedoch größer und erklären teilweise die große Besorgnis.

Präferenzen hinsichtlich des Ausmaßes der Ungleichheit: Die für angemessen gehaltenen Verdienstunterschiede sind höher als im OECD-Durchschnitt, wodurch das höhere wahrgenommene Ausmaß der Ungleichheiten etwas ausgeglichen wird.

Wahrnehmung der Chancengleichheit: Menschen sind eher über Einkommensungleichheiten besorgt, wenn sie glauben, dass die Chancen, im Leben voranzukommen, ungleich verteilt sind und auf Umstände zurückzuführen sind, auf die die Menschen keinen Einfluss haben. In Deutschland ist die Auffassung weit verbreitet, dass über die Generationen hinweg hartnäckige Einkommensunterschiede weiterbestehen. Auch ist die Ansicht verbreitet, dass es sehr wichtig ist, gut ausgebildete Eltern zu haben, um im Leben voranzukommen. Dies trägt dazu bei, zu erklären, warum die Besorgnisse über Einkommensunterschiede die konventionellen Indikatoren für Einkommensungleichheit in Deutschland übertreffen.

Veränderungen in Wahrnehmung und Präferenzen: Das für angemessen gehaltene Verhältnis zwischen dem höchsten und dem niedrigsten Verdienst ist in den zwei Jahrzehnten vor der großen Finanzkrise gestiegen. Dies lässt sich teilweise durch eine Zunahme der Überzeugung erklären, dass Leistung etwas wert ist (d. h. dass harte Arbeit wichtig ist, um voranzukommen). Das Wachstum der wahrgenommenen Verdienstungleichheiten war jedoch viel größer, was die zunehmende Besorgnis der Deutschen über die hohe Ungleichheit nach den späten 1980er Jahren verursacht hat.

Wie gespalten ist die öffentliche Meinung?

Über das Ausmaß der wirtschaftlichen Unterschiede sind sich die Menschen oft nicht einig. Wahrnehmungen und Meinungen über wirtschaftliche Ungleichheit gehen in Deutschland stärker auseinander als anderswo.

Die Vorstellungen darüber, wie viel des Gesamteinkommens an die reichsten 10% geht, sind sehr unterschiedlich und reichen von einer relativ geringen wahrgenommenen Ungleichheit (weniger als 20%) bis zu einer relativ hohen (60-80%) (Abbildung 3), analog zu der Ländergruppe, die durch eine ähnlich stark gestreute Meinung gekennzeichnet ist.

Abbildung 3. Wahrnehmungen und Meinungen über wirtschaftliche Ungleichheit sind gespalten

Wahrgenommener Anteil der reichsten 10% am Gesamteinkommen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wahrgenommener Anteil der reichsten 10% am Gesamteinkommen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kohäsive Wahrnehmung geringer Ungleichheit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stark gestreute Wahrnehmungen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kohäsive Wahrnehmung von hoher Ungleichheit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Anmerkung: Die drei Balken beziehen sich auf die Durchschnitte von drei Ländergruppen, die eine ähnliche Verteilung der Wahrnehmungen aufweisen: kohäsive Wahrnehmungen von geringer oder hoher Ungleichheit und stark gestreute Wahrnehmungen.


Die Menschen scheinen sich etwas mehr darüber einig zu sein, wie die Verteilung aussehen sollte: Fast 54% der Deutschen glauben, dass die unteren Einkommen zu niedrig und die oberen Einkommen zu hoch sind.

Die Menschen sind sich jedoch uneinig darüber, ob die Spitzeneinkommen zu hoch oder die unteren Einkommen zu niedrig sind. Fast 20% der Befragten sind der Ansicht, dass die Spitzeneinkommen zu hoch sind, meinen aber, dass die unteren Einkommen angemessen sind oder sogar niedriger sein könnten. Auf der anderen Seite sind mehr als 15% der Meinung, dass das Problem vor allem bei den unteren Einkommen liegt, die zu niedrig sind.
Wie viel Unterstützung gibt es für Maßnahmen zur Verringerung der Ungleichheit?


Abbildung 4. Die Nachfrage nach Umverteilung ist etwas geringer, aber für mehr Steuerprogression etwas stärker als im OECD Schnitt

Wie kann die Wahrnehmung der Menschen und deren Besorgnis über Ungleichheit in die Politik einfließen?

Um Bürger und Regierungen auf eine gemeinsame Linie zu bringen, wenn es um Maßnahmen zur Verringerung von Ungleichheit und zur Förderung der sozialen Mobilität geht, muss man verstehen, wie die Menschen ihre Wahrnehmungen und Meinungen bilden. Dies beinhaltet:

**Ein besseres Verständnis der öffentlichen Unterstützung für Reformen:** Sowohl die Ungleichheit als auch die Chancengleichheit ist den Menschen wichtig, so dass die Berücksichtigung beider Aspekte dazu beiträgt, Unterstützung zu gewinnen. Nichtsdestotrotz können die Menschen je nach ihren Überzeugungen und Präferenzen bestimmte Kombinationen von Maßnahmen bevorzugen.

**Ein besseres Verständnis der Wirksamkeit von Maßnahmen:** Die Menschen wollen politische Maßnahmen, die sie für wirksam halten. Es ist notwendig, transparent zu evaluieren, wie sich Maßnahmen zur Verringerung der Ungleichheit auswirken, und den Menschen zu erklären, wie solche Maßnahmen funktionieren.

**Eine bessere Informationen über Ungleichheit und Chancengleichheit:** Die Bereitstellung qualitativ hochwertiger Informationen über Ungleichheit kann dazu beitragen, eine gemeinsame Grundlage für die öffentliche Debatte zu schaffen und die Spaltung und Polarisierung der öffentlichen Meinung zu überwinden.

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Across the OECD, most people are concerned about inequality. However, such concern varies across countries. It is higher where people perceive wide economic disparities, low intergenerational mobility, and that working hard does not help to get ahead in life. Together with people’s views of the effectiveness of policies, these perceptions and beliefs shape people’s support for inequality-reducing reforms.

Are people concerned over income disparities?

Concern over income inequality is high in Italy compared to the OECD average. In 2019, 93% of population agree that income disparities are too large (Figure 1) – the OECD average is 80% - and as many as 43% strongly agree. The fraction that strongly agree had reached a peak during the global financial crisis – when it was almost 70% – to then getting back to the relatively high levels observed in the late 1980s. Compared to the dynamic in the average OECD country, concern reached a significantly higher peak during the Great Recession.

Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is high and increasing

[Figure showing share who agree that income differences are too large, with data points for OECD and Italy over time]


What drives concern?

The level of concern over income disparities is in line with the fact that conventional indicators of income inequality – such as the Gini index for disposable income – are above the OECD average (Figure 2). However, specific country factors heighten concerns in Italy:

- **Perceptions of inequality**: Despite the relatively high level of inequality, Italy does actually not stand out in terms of perceived disparities. Both the perceived top-bottom earnings disparities and the perceived richest 10%’s share of income are higher than average, but not by a substantial amount.

- **Preferences over the level of disparities**: What stands out is the lower tolerance of disparities, as captured by the preferred top-bottom earnings disparities. Italian citizens tolerate only about half the level of disparities with respect to the OECD average.

- **Perceptions of equality of opportunity**: The lower tolerance of disparities is likely shaped by limited confidence in equality of opportunity. Despite a relatively low perceived level of intergenerational persistence at the bottom of the income distribution (according to the OECD Risks that Matter 2020 survey), Italians seem concerned by sticky ceilings. Compared to other countries, they believe more strongly that having wealthy parents is important to get ahead in life – more than having educated parents – while...
hard work is not. The limited confidence in equality of opportunity is in line with the picture described by statistical measures, such as the intergenerational earnings elasticity

How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. The level of disagreement, however, is relatively lower in Italy:

- Compared with the averages of OECD clusters of countries, in Italy there is actually a more cohesive group perceiving the richest 10%’s share of income to be moderately high (Figure 3).
- People also seem to be more in agreement with each other that bottom earnings are too low and top earnings are too high: almost 78% of Italians share this opinion, contrary to 52% on OECD average.

**Figure 3. Public opinion is rather cohesive around perceptions of high inequality**

Share of population by perceived richest 10’s share of national income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share of Population</th>
<th>Cohesive perception of low inequality</th>
<th>Highly dispersed perceptions</th>
<th>Cohesive perception of high inequality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0%-20%</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21%-40%</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image6" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41%-60%</td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image8" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image9" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61%-80%</td>
<td><img src="image10" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image11" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image12" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81%-100%</td>
<td><img src="image13" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image14" alt="" /></td>
<td><img src="image15" alt="" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present similar distributions of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions.*

*Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.*

How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

Better understanding of public support for reform: Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

Better understanding of the effectiveness of policies: People favour policies that they believe to be effective. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of inequality-reducing policies transparently and facilitate people’s understanding of their functioning.

Better information on inequality and equality of opportunities: Providing high-quality information about inequality can help providing common ground for public debate, addressing the division and polarization of public opinion.

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

Despite of the higher level of concern, demand for more government redistributive intervention through taxes and benefits is in line with the OECD average (Figure 4). Demand for more progressive taxation – through higher taxes on the rich – is somewhat stronger. This is in line with the fact that Italians are concerned by sticky ceilings and believe that success is due to circumstances beyond individual control, such as parental wealth. The stronger demand for progressive taxation might also be due to a stronger middle-class bias: according to data from users of the OECD Compare Your Income webtool, less high-income people than in other countries are aware of being in the top of the distribution.

**Figure 4. Demand for more redistribution is in line with the OECD average**

*Note: Data refer to year 2020*  
*Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3*

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Nell’area OCSE, la maggior parte delle persone è preoccupata per le disuguaglianze economiche. Tuttavia, tale preoccupazione varia da paese a paese e risulta più alta laddove le persone percepiscono ampie disparità economiche, bassa mobilità intergenerazionale e uno scarso ruolo del merito e dell’impegno personale nel determinare le prospettive di carriera. Insieme alle opinioni personali sull’efficacia delle politiche, tali percezioni e convinzioni determinano il sostegno pubblico alle riforme per la riduzione delle disuguaglianze.

Le persone sono preoccupate per le disparità di reddito?

In Italia, la preoccupazione per le disparità di reddito è superiore alla media OCSE. Il 93% della popolazione è d’accordo nell’affermare che le disparità di reddito sono troppo ampie (Figura 1, dati del 2019) – la media OCSE è 80% – e ben il 43% è fortemente d’accordo. La percentuale di coloro fortemente d’accordo ha raggiunto un picco durante la crisi finanziaria globale – arrivando a quasi il 70%, un livello ben più alto della media OCSE – per poi ritornare ai livelli relativamente alti già osservati alla fine degli anni ottanta.

Cosa determina tale preoccupazione?

Il livello di preoccupazione per le disparità di reddito è in linea con il fatto che gli indicatori convenzionali di disuguaglianza di reddito – come l’indice di Gini per il reddito disponibile – sono al di sopra della media OCSE (Figura 2). Tuttavia, fattori specifici al contesto italiano influenzano il livello di preoccupazione:

Percezioni di disuguaglianza: Nonostante il livello oggettivo relativamente alto di disuguaglianza di reddito, l’Italia in realtà non spicca in termini di disparità percepite. Sia le disparità percepite tra i redditi più alti e più bassi sia la quota percepita di reddito del 10% più ricco sono più elevate della media OCSE, ma non se ne discostano fortemente.

**Figura 1. La preoccupazione per le disparità di reddito è alta e in aumento**

**Figura 2. La fiducia nell’esistenza di pari opportunità è bassa**

**Indicatore e opinioni di disparità economiche**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inequality in disposable income (Gini index)</td>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>OECD 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational earnings persistence</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived earnings disparities</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>OECD 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred earnings disparities</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>OECD 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived richest 10%’s share of income</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived importance of hard work</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>OECD 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived importance of wealthy parents</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>OECD 30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nota: Le medie OCSE si riferiscono ai paesi disponibili per ogni indicatore. Gli indicatori di disuguaglianza si riferiscono all’ultimo anno disponibile; per la percezione deied 2009 per tutti gli altri dati.

*Fonte: Database OCSE sulla Distribuzione dei Redditi e OCSE (2018); Does Inequality Matter? Capitolo 2.*
• Preferenze rispetto alle disparità economiche: In Italia si rileva una minore tolleranza delle le disparità economiche, come catturato dalle preferenze per i divari retributivi tra salari alti e bassi. Gli italiani tollerano solo circa la metà del livello di disparità salariale rispetto alla media OCSE.

• Percezioni di uguaglianza delle opportunità: La bassa tolleranza delle disparità economiche è spiegabile dalla scarsa fiducia nell’esistenza di pari opportunità. Nonostante percepiscano un livello relativamente basso di persistenza intergenerazionale delle famiglie a basso reddito (secondo i dati dell’indagine Risks that Matter 2020), gli italiani ritengono che le famiglie ad alto reddito tendano a rimanere tali nel corso delle generazioni. Rispetto ad altri paesi, in Italia c’è una più forte percezione che avere genitori ricchi – ancor più che avere genitori istruiti – sia importante per avere successo nella vita, mentre l’impegno ed il merito non lo sono altrettanto. La limitata fiducia nell’esistenza di pari opportunità è in linea con il quadro descritto dalle misure statistiche, come l’elasticità intergenerazionale dei salari.

**Figura 3. Un’ampia parte dell’opinione pubblica percepisce alte disuguaglianze**

Percentuale della popolazione per quota di reddito percepita del 10% più ricco

Quanto è divisa l’opinione pubblica?

Rispetto alla media OCSE, in Italia il livello di disaccordo sull’entità delle disparità economiche è contenuto:

• Un ampio gruppo della popolazione percepisce la quota di reddito del 10% più ricco come moderatamente alta (Figura 3).

• C’è inoltre un largo consenso sul fatto che i salari nella parte inferiore della distribuzione sono troppo bassi e quelli nella parte superiore troppo alti: quasi il 78% degli italiani condivide questa opinione, contro il 52% della media OCSE.

• Il disaccordo rispetto all’opinione che siano i salari nella parte superiore della distribuzione ad essere troppo alti o che, al contrario, siano quelli nella parte inferiore della distribuzione ad essere troppo bassi è relativamente limitato. Solo l’8% degli intervistati ritiene che i salari superiori siano troppo alti e che al contempo i salari inferiori siano adeguati o perfino troppo alti, contro una media OCSE che è quasi del doppio. Al contrario, solo l’11% pensa che il problema riguardi soprattutto i salari inferiori troppo bassi, rispetto a più del doppio della media OCSE.

Le riforme per la riduzione delle disuguaglianze incontrano il sostegno pubblico?

Nonostante l’alto livello di preoccupazione per le disparità economiche, il sostegno ad un maggiore intervento redistributivo da parte del governo è in linea con la media OCSE (Figura 4). Il sostegno a un sistema di tassazione più progressivo – attraverso un aumento delle aliquote sui redditi più elevati – è invece maggiore. Ciò è in linea con il fatto che gli italiani ritengono che la ricchezza tenda a perpetuarsi fra generazioni e credono che il successo sia dovuto a circostanze fuori dal controllo individuale, come la condizione socio-economica dei genitori, anziché l’impegno individuale. Il maggior supporto per una tassazione più essere dovuto, inoltre, a un’incorretta percezione della propria posizione nella distribuzione dei redditi: secondo i dati dello strumento OCSE Compare...
*Your Income*, rispetto ad altri paesi relativamente meno utenti italiani ad alto reddito sono consapevoli di posizionarsi nella parte superiore della distribuzione.

**Figura 4. Il sostegno a politiche redistributive è in linea con la media OCSE**

Come possono le percezioni e le preoccupazioni delle persone influenzare le politiche a contrasto delle disuguaglianze?

Trovare un punto d’incontro tra i cittadini e i governi quando si tratta di politiche che riducono la disuguaglianza e promuovono la mobilità sociale richiede la comprensione di come le persone formano le proprie percezioni e opinioni. Questo richiede:

**Una migliore comprensione del sostegno pubblico alle riforme: Sia la parità di opportunità sia le disuguaglianze nei risultati sono importanti per le persone, quindi prendere in considerazione entrambi gli aspetti aiuta a creare sostegno pubblico. Tuttavia, le persone possono favorire determinate combinazioni di politiche, a seconda delle loro convinzioni e preferenze.**

**Una migliore comprensione dell’efficacia delle politiche: Le persone appoggiano le politiche che ritengono efficaci. È necessario valutare l’impatto delle politiche di riduzione delle disuguaglianze in modo trasparente e facilitare la comprensione del loro funzionamento da parte delle persone.**

**Una migliore informazione sulle disuguaglianze e sulle pari opportunità: Fornire informazioni accurate sulle disuguaglianze può aiutare a creare un terreno comune per il dibattito pubblico, affrontando così la divisione e la polarizzazione dell’opinione pubblica.**

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Does Inequality Matter?
HOW PEOPLE PERCEIVE ECONOMIC DISPARITIES AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

Across the OECD, most people are concerned about inequality. However, such concern varies across countries. It is higher where people perceive wide economic disparities, low intergenerational mobility, and that working hard does not help to get ahead in life. Together with people’s views of the effectiveness of policies, these perceptions and beliefs shape people’s support for inequality-reducing reforms.

Are people concerned over income disparities?
In Japan, concern over income inequality is slightly lower than on OECD average. In 2017, 72% of people agreed that income disparities are too large (Figure 1) – the OECD average was 78% – and around 34% strongly agreed. The share that agree had reached a peak during the global financial crisis and then decreased in the following decade, remaining though higher than in the late 1990s. The increase and then decrease during the last two decades have been more pronounced than in the average OECD country. The latest available data for year 2019 show a slightly higher level of concern (74% agree, with 37% strongly agree).

Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is high and increasing
Share who agree that income differences are too large

What drives concern?
Although income inequality is higher in Japan compared to the average OECD country, as recorded by a Gini index for disposable income of 0.334 (0.318 for OECD), concern over income disparities is actually slightly lower (Figure 2).

One key factor that likely lowers concern in Japan are stronger perceptions of equality of opportunity: where people perceive that hard work matters more than circumstances beyond people’s control (such as parental background) to succeed in life, they are also more tolerant of inequality.

Indeed, across OECD countries, Japanese citizens attribute one of the lowest level of importance to have wealthy or well-educated parents to get ahead in life. On the opposite, the share of Japanese citizens who believe that hard work is very important or essential to get ahead is closer to the OECD average. As a comparison, conventional indicators also suggest higher than average mobility (i.e. lower earnings intergenerational persistence), though not as much as perceptions.

There are signs, however, that this confidence has been eroding in the last decade: while the importance attributed to hard work has been decreasing, the one attributed to parental characteristics has slightly increased (Figure 3). A similar trend is observed in other OECD countries for which data are available between 2009 and 2019.

Note: The OECD averages refer to countries available for each indicator. Concern over income disparities is the share that strongly agree (the comparison is similar for those who agree or strongly agree) and refers to 2017, where data are available for more countries (value for Japan is similar to that in 2019). Inequality indicators refer to the latest available year; for perceived importance of hard work and wealthy parents to 2009.

Behind a lower level of support for a general government intervention to reduce income difference, however, lies a more heterogeneous level of support for different concrete policies. While the support for government-sponsored assistance to the unemployed is close to the OECD average, there is an ample consensus that individuals with high incomes should pay a more than proportional share of taxes. Such support for progressive taxation has remained stable over the last two decades, with a share of agreement remaining around 90%, while it is below 80% on OECD average.

### How much support there is for inequality reducing policies?

Compared to most other OECD countries, there is a lower share of Japanese citizens who think that it is the responsibility of the government to reduce differences in income between rich and poor people (56% as opposed to 66% in the OECD average, with a minimum of slightly more than 50% in New Zealand and Denmark and a maximum around 85% in Italy and Slovenia; Figure 4). This is not only explained by the lower level of concern with income differences, but also by a lower share, among those who are concerned, that believe it is the responsibility of the government to reduce the differences (in 2019 it was 66% in Japan vs 80% on the OECD average; the value was even lower in 2017: 59%).

This difference is not driven by a stronger preference for private companies, rather than the government, to shrink differences in pay among their employees. The share of Japanese citizens thinking that it is the responsibility of private companies to do so is lower than average among the 13 OECD countries covered by the latest ISSP survey.

### How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

**Better understanding of public support for reform:** Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence taking both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

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日本の不平等を比較すると？

OECD全体で、ほとんどの人が不平等を懸念していますが、懸念は国によって異なります。人々が経済格差が大きく世代間の流動性が低いと認識し、一生懸命働いても人生が好転しないと考えている場合、不平等はより大きくなります。政策の有効性に関する人々の見解とともに、こうした認識と信念が、不平等を減らす改革に対する人々の支持を形成しています。

人々は所得格差を懸念しているか？

日本では、所得の不平等に対する懸念はOECD平均よりもわずかに低くなっています。2017年に72%の人々が所得格差が大きすぎると考えており（図1）（OECD平均は78%）、約34%が非常にそう思うと回答しました。この所得格差が大きすぎると考える人の割合は、世界金融危機の際にピークに達し、その後10年間で減少しましたが、依然として1990年代後半よりも高い水準です。過去20年間の増加と減少の傾向は平均的なOECD諸国よりも顕著でした。2019年の最新データによると、懸念のレベルがわずかに高くなっています（74%が所得格差が大きすぎると思（図1）。

何が懸念を引き起こすのか？

日本の可処分所得のジニ係数が0.334（OECDで0.318）であることからわかるように、日本の所得不平等は平均的なOECD諸国より大きいが、所得格差に対する懸念は実際にはわずかに低くなっています（図2）。

日本で懸念を低下させていると考えられる重要な要因の1つは、機会均等に対する認識が強いことにある。日本では、人生で成功するためには自分で制御できない環境要因（親の出身など）よりも勤勉であることが重要だと認識されており、不平等に対しても比較的寛容です。実際OECD諸国と比較すると、日本人は裕福または十分な教育を受けた親を持つことを、人生を好転させる条件の中で最も重要度が低いと考えています。逆に、勤勉さが非常に重要または不可欠と信じている日本人の割合は、OECD平均に近くなっています。従来の指標によると、他国と比較して日本では人々が認識しているほどではありませんが、社会的流動性（世代間で所得の状態が続くこと）が平均よりも高いこともわかります。

しかしながら、過去10年間でこの信頼が失われつつあります。勤勉さの重要度が低下する一方で、親の特性に起因する重要性はわずかに上昇しています（図3）。同様の傾向は、2009年から2019年の間に観察された他のOECD諸国でも見られます。

図1.所得格差への懸念が高まっている
所得格差が大きすぎると考える人の割合


図2.所得格差への懸念はやや低い
格差に関する指標と意見

注：OECD平均は、各指標のデータが利用可能な国々の平均である。所得格差への懸念は、所得格差が大きいと強く思う人の割合（そう思うと言えた人と強くそう思うと言えた人）で表され、参照年は比較的多くの国のデータがある2017年のものである（日本の場合は2019年の値と同程度です）。従来の統計指標については、人々の認識に関するデータが利用可能な国のみが含まれています。不平等指標は、利用可能な最新のデータを示す。勤勉さと裕福な親を持つことの重要性に対する認識は2009年。
図3.機会均等への信頼は過去10年間で低下
それぞれの要素が人生を好転させる上で非常に重要または不可欠と考える人の割合、日本

出典：ISSP2019に基づいてOECDが算出。

不平等削減政策にはどのくらいの支援があるか？
他のほとんどのOECD諸国と比較して、富裕層と貧困層の所得格差を縮小するのは政府の責任だと考える日本人の割合は低くなっています（OECD平均の66%に対して56%。最も低いのはニュージーランドとデンマークで50%強、最も高いのはイタリアとスロベニアで約85%：図4）。これは、所得格差に対する懸念が低いことと併せて、差を縮小するのは政府の責任だと考えている人の割合が所得格差を懸念している人の間でも小さいことを表しています（2019年には日本では66%だったのに対して、OECD平均は80%：この値は2017年はさらに低く59%）。

この差が生じるのは、政府ではなく民間企業が雇用者間の賃金格差を縮小させることを強く望んでいるからではありません。それが民間企業の責任であると考える日本人の割合は、最新のISSP調査の対象となったOECD13カ国の平均よりも低くなっています。

しかし、所得格差を縮小するための一般的な政府介入に対する支持が比較的低いことの背景には、様々な具体的政策に対する支持がより多様であるためです。一方で、政府の失業者支援に対する市民の支持はOECDの平均に近いですが、他方で、高所得者はその所得に比例した配分以上の税金を支払うべきであるという分野からの支持があります。

日本では、累進課税に対するこうした支持が過去20年間安定して約90%を維持していますが、OECD平均は80%を下回っています。

図4.累進課税を求める声はOECD平均よりも強い
各意見に同意する人の割合…2019年

出典：ISSP2019に基づいてOECDが算出。

不平等に対する人々の認識と懸念をどのように政策に生かせるか？
不平等を減らし社会的流動性を促進する政策に関して、市民と政府が共通の理解を持つには、人々がどのように認識と意見を形成しているかを理解する必要があります。その中には次のような理解が含まれます：

改革に対する公的支援への理解を深める：結果と機会双方の不平等は人々にとって大きな問題であるため、その両面を取り入れることで支持を得られます。しかし、自分の信念や好みに応じて、特定の複合政策を支持する人がいるかもしれません。

政策の有効性への理解を深める：人々は、効果があると思える政策を支持します。不平等を減らす政策の影響を透過的に評価し、その機能に対する人々の理解を深める必要があります。

機会の平等、不平等に関するより良い情報を提供する：不平等に関する良質な情報を提供することは、公的議論の共通基盤を提供し、世論の分裂と二極化に対処するのに有益です。

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詳細は下記ウェブサイトをご覧ください。http://oe.cd/does-inequality-matter
Across the OECD, most people are concerned about inequality. However, such concern varies across countries. It is higher where people perceive wide economic disparities, low intergenerational mobility, and that working hard does not help to get ahead in life. Together with people’s views of the effectiveness of policies, these perceptions and beliefs shape people’s support for inequality-reducing reforms.

Are people concerned over income disparities?

In Mexico, the average level of concern over income inequality is lower than on OECD average. Roughly 72% of population agree that income disparities are too large (Figure 1), compared to the OECD average of 80%. However, the public opinion is rather divided. While the fraction that strongly agree that income differences are too large is aligned with the OECD average (37% versus 39%), Mexico has one of the highest shares of people that disagree that income disparities are too large (17%).

What drives concern?

Across the OECD, Mexico ranks among the top 4 countries in terms of conventional indicators of income inequality (Figure 2), both in terms of the Gini index for disposable income (0.42 versus 0.32 on OECD average) and in terms of the share of income going to the richest 10%’s households (32% vs 25%). Although Mexicans perceive high level of inequality and low social mobility, their perceptions are still lower than in countries with similarly high levels of inequality, and this may explain the comparatively low levels of concern:

- **Perceptions of inequality**: Mexicans, on average, perceive that 55% of the national income goes to the richest 10% households. This is higher than the OECD average (52%), but lower than in countries such as Turkey (with an average perception of 67%) or Greece (63%).

- **Perceptions of equality of opportunity**: Mexicans are relatively less confident in equality of opportunity. The average Mexican perceives that 60 out of 100 poor children will remain poor once adult, as compared to 55 in the OECD average.

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**Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is comparatively low, but two groups with opposite views emerge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share who agree that income differences are too large, year 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Figure 2. Confidence in equality of opportunity is low**

Indicators and opinions about disparities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inequality in disposable income (Gini index)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived richest 10%’s share of income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived bottom 10% intergenerational persistence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The OECD averages refer countries available for each indicator. Inequality indicators refer to the latest available year; for perceived income disparities and intergenerational persistence to 2020.

How divided is the public opinion?

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. Perceptions about earning disparities appear to be polarised in Mexico, reflecting the large division observed for concern with income disparities:

- Compared with the averages of OECD clusters of countries with similar distribution of perceptions, there is a large share of respondents – almost 1 out of 5 – who believe that the fraction of national income going to the 10% richest households is above 80% (Figure 3).

Figure 3. A large group perceives wide economic disparities, but many believe the opposite

Share of population by perceived richest 10’s share of national income, year 2020

![Bar chart showing the share of population by perceived richest 10's share of national income.](chart)

Note: The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present similar distributions of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions.

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.

How much support there is for inequality-reducing policies?

Notwithstanding the polarised public opinion, as captured by both divided perceptions and concerns, on average people’s demand for policy intervention to reduce economic disparities is one of the highest among the OECD countries (Figure 4): 86% think the government should do more to reduce income difference by collecting taxes and providing social benefits (the OECD average is 66%). Such demand is driven chiefly by those who perceive very high levels of income inequality and limited social mobility.

Demand for more progressive taxation is more aligned with the OECD average: 68% believe that the government should tax the rich more than they currently do in order to support the poor. The relatively lower demand for progressive taxation suggests that the high support for inequality-reducing policies is more focused towards raising bottom incomes. This can be explained by the low confidence in the chances for poor children to escape poverty once adult.

Figure 4. Demand for more redistribution is one of the highest among the OECD countries

![Chart showing demand for more redistribution.](chart)


How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

- Better understanding of public support for reform: Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

- Better understanding of the effectiveness of policies: People favour policies that they believe to be effective. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of inequality-reducing policies transparently and facilitate people’s understanding of their functioning.

- Better information on inequality and equality of opportunities: Providing high-quality information about inequality can help providing common ground for public debate, addressing the division and polarization of public opinion.

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¿Le preocupa a la gente la desigualdad de ingresos?

En México, el nivel medio de preocupación por la desigualdad de ingresos es inferior a la media de la OCDE. Aproximadamente el 72% de la población está de acuerdo con que las disparidades de ingresos son demasiado grandes (Figura 1), en comparación con el promedio de la OCDE del 80%. Sin embargo, la opinión pública está bastante dividida. Mientras que el porcentaje que está muy de acuerdo con que las diferencias de ingresos son demasiado grandes se alinea con la media de la OCDE (37% frente al 39%), México tiene uno de los porcentajes más altos de personas que no están de acuerdo con que las disparidades de ingresos sean demasiado grandes (17%).

¿Qué es lo que preocupa?

En el conjunto de la OCDE, México se encuentra entre los 4 primeros países en cuanto a indicadores convencionales de desigualdad de ingresos (Figura 2), tanto en términos del índice de Gini para la renta disponible (0,42 frente a 0,32 de media de la OCDE) como en términos de la proporción de ingresos que va al 10% más rico de los hogares (32% frente a 25%). Aunque los mexicanos perciben un alto nivel de desigualdad y una baja movilidad social, sus percepciones siguen siendo inferiores a las de países con niveles de desigualdad igualmente elevados, lo que puede explicar los niveles comparativamente bajos de preocupación:

- **Percepción de la desigualdad**: Los mexicanos, en promedio, perciben que el 55% del ingreso nacional va al 10% de hogares más ricos. Esta cifra es superior a la media de la OCDE (52%), pero inferior a la de países como Turquía (con una percepción media del 67%) o Grecia (63%).

- **Percepción de la igualdad de oportunidades**: Los mexicanos confían relativamente menos en la igualdad de oportunidades. El mexicano medio percibe que 60 de cada 100 niños pobres seguirán siendo pobres una vez que sean adultos, frente a los 55 de media de la OCDE.

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**Figura 1. La preocupación por las disparidades de ingresos es comparativamente baja, pero hay dos grupos con opiniones opuestas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Porcentaje que está de acuerdo con que las diferencias de ingresos son demasiado grandes, año 2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muy de acuerdo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fuente: *Does Inequality Matter?* Capítulo 2.

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**Figura 2. La confianza en la igualdad de oportunidades es baja**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicadores y opiniones sobre las disparidades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desigualdad en la renta disponible (Índice de Gini)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percepción de la cuota de ingresos del 10% superior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percepción de la persistencia intergeneracional del 10% inferior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nota: Los promedios de la OCDE se refieren a los países disponibles para cada indicador. Los indicadores de desigualdad se refieren al último año disponible; para la percepción de la cuota de ingresos del 10% superior y de la persistencia intergeneracional, a 2020.

¿Qué tan dividida está la opinión pública?

Las personas suelen discrepar entre sí en cuanto a la magnitud de las disparidades económicas. Las percepciones sobre las disparidades de ingresos parecen estar polarizadas en México, lo que refleja la gran división observada en cuanto a la preocupación por las disparidades de ingresos:

- En comparación con los promedios de los grupos de países de la OCDE con una distribución similar de percepciones, hay una gran proporción de encuestados -casi 1 de cada 5- que creen que el porcentaje de la renta nacional que va al 10% de los hogares más ricos es superior al 80% (Figura 3).

**Figura 3. Un gran grupo percibe grandes disparidades económicas, pero muchos creen lo contrario**

![Gráfico de dispersion de percepciones sobre la renta del 10% más rico.](image)

Nota: Las tres barras se refieren a la media de tres grupos de países que presentan distribuciones similares de percepciones: percepciones cohesionadas de baja desigualdad, percepciones muy dispersas y percepciones cohesionadas de alta desigualdad.


- Sin embargo, este grupo se opone a otro gran grupo - también alrededor de 1/5 de los encuestados - que percibe valores mucho más bajos (por debajo del 20%) de la parte de la renta del 10% más rico.

¿Cuál es el nivel de apoyo a las políticas de reducción de la desigualdad?

A pesar de la polarización de la opinión pública, reflejada tanto en las percepciones como en las preocupaciones divididas, en promedio la demanda de los ciudadanos de una intervención política para reducir las disparidades económicas es una de las más altas entre los países de la OCDE (Figura 4): el 86% piensa que el gobierno debería hacer más para reducir la diferencia de ingresos mediante la recaudación de impuestos y la concesión de prestaciones sociales (la media de la OCDE es del 66%). Esta demanda está impulsada principalmente por quienes perciben niveles muy altos de desigualdad de ingresos y una movilidad social limitada.

La demanda de una fiscalidad más progresiva está más alineada con la media de la OCDE: El 68% cree que el gobierno debería gravar a los ricos más de lo que lo hace actualmente para apoyar a los pobres. La demanda relativamente menor de una fiscalidad progresiva sugiere que el elevado apoyo a las políticas de reducción de la desigualdad se centra más en el aumento de las rentas más bajas. Esto puede explicarse por la escasa confianza en las posibilidades de los niños pobres de salir de la pobreza una vez que sean adultos.

**Figura 4. La demanda de mayor redistribución es una de las más altas entre los países de la OCDE**

![Gráfico de demanda de mayor redistribución.](image)


¿Cómo pueden las percepciones de la gente y su preocupación por la desigualdad informar las políticas?

Para que los ciudadanos y los gobiernos coincidan en las políticas de reducción de la desigualdad y de fomento de la movilidad social, es necesario comprender cómo la gente se forma sus percepciones y opiniones. Esto incluye:

- Una mejor comprensión del apoyo público a las reformas: La desigualdad tanto de resultados como de oportunidades es importante para la gente, por lo que tener en cuenta ambos aspectos ayuda a obtener apoyo. No obstante, la gente puede favorecer combinaciones de políticas específicas, en función de sus creencias y preferencias.

- Una mejor comprensión de la efectividad de las políticas: Los ciudadanos están a favor de las políticas que consideran eficaces. Es necesario evaluar el impacto de las políticas de reducción de la desigualdad de forma transparente y facilitar la comprensión de su funcionamiento por parte de los ciudadanos.

- Mejor información sobre la desigualdad y la igualdad de oportunidades: Proporcionar información de calidad sobre la desigualdad puede ayudar a proporcionar un terreno común para el debate público, abordando la división y la polarización de la opinión pública.

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Are people concerned over income disparities?
Concern over income inequality in the United Kingdom is lower than on the OECD average. At the latest data, 76% of the population agree that income disparities are too large in the UK and 34% strongly agree, as compared to 80% and 39%, respectively, on OECD average. The fraction that strongly agrees has been increasing in the last decades, up to 37% in 2019 from 26% in 1987, filling up the gap with the OECD average.

Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is relatively low

What drives concern?
The level of concern over income disparities is comparatively low, considering that conventional indicators of income inequality – such as the Gini index for disposable income – are above the OECD average (Figure 2). Indeed, specific country factors impact on the level of concerns in the UK:

- **Perceptions of inequality**: Lower concern does not seem due to low levels of perceived inequality: perceived earnings disparities are actually higher than on the OECD average.
- **Preferences over the level of disparities**: The low level of concern is rather due to higher tolerance of inequality, as highlighted by a comparatively high level of preferred earnings disparities.
- **Perceptions of equality of opportunity**: Where people have more confidence that there are equal opportunity to get ahead in life, they are also more likely to tolerate high disparities. Indeed, UK citizens display a higher confidence in the importance of hard work to get ahead in life, and more generally in equality of opportunity; compared to the OECD average, they do not...
hold a strong belief that having wealthy or educated parents is very important to get ahead in life.

**How divided is the public opinion?**

People often disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. Such disagreement, however, in the UK is in line with the OECD average:

![Figure 3. Perceptions about earnings disparities became more dispersed in the last decades](image)

Note: The lines represent the extent of the differences between the perceptions of the bottom 10% of respondents and the top 10%.

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.

- In 2019, 10% of Britons believed that the earnings of high paid jobs (doctors and chairmen of large national corporations) were 3 times, or less, those of low paid jobs (unskilled workers in a factory). By contrast, 10% believed that paid jobs gained 43 or more times low paid job (Figure 3). Such large level of disagreement is aligned with the OECD average.

- The distance between the group perceiving wide disparities and the one perceiving narrow disparities grew in the last 3 decades. The growing distance is due to the sharp increase in the perceptions of the first group (from 19 times in 1987 to 43 in 2019), while the perceptions of the other group remain on the same levels (around 3). The increased disagreement is in line with what is observed in other OECD countries for which data are available.

**How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?**

Despite the high level of market income inequality and relatively lower level of current redistribution, people’s demand for policy intervention aimed to reduce economic disparities is lower than in most other OECD countries, as captured by the share of people who believe it is responsibility of the government to reduce income differences (Figure 4). This is driven by the lower levels of concern and by the higher confidence in equality of opportunity.

![Figure 4. Demand for redistribution is lower than on OECD average](image)

Note: Data are for year 2017

Source: Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3.

**How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?**

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

**Better understanding of public support for reform:** Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

**Better understanding of the effectiveness of policies:** People favour policies that they believe to be effective. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of inequality-reducing policies transparently and facilitate people’s understanding of their functioning.

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Are people concerned over income disparities?
Concern over income inequality is substantially lower in the United States compared to the OECD average. In 2017, roughly 63% of population agree – and less than half of these strongly agree – that income disparities are too large (Figure 1), while the OECD average is 80%. However, the fraction that strongly agrees had almost doubled between the late 1980s and the Great Recession, and have continued to increase up to now.

Figure 1. Concern over income disparities is low
Share who agree that income differences are too large

What drives concern?
The level of concern over income disparities is low, although conventional indicators of income inequality – such as the Gini index for disposable income – are significantly above the OECD average (Figure 2). Indeed, specific country factors influence concerns in the United States:

- Perceptions of inequality: Low concern does not seem due to low levels of perceived inequality: perceived earnings disparities and richest 10%’s income shares are relatively larger than the OECD average.
- Preferences over the level of disparities: The low level of concern is rather due to higher preferred levels of earnings disparities.
- Perceptions of equality of opportunity: The large preferred level of earnings disparities is likely shaped by the highest confidence – among the OECD countries – in the importance of hard work to get ahead in life. There is also a relatively low level of perceived sticky floors: people believe that 52 out of 100 poor children will remain poor once adult (56 on OECD average; year 2020). This is lower than in countries with similar levels of intergenerational persistence according to conventional indicators, e.g. Korea, and also of countries with lower persistence, e.g. Canada. This, however, does not mean that people believe in strict equality of opportunities: in fact, they still believe that having wealthy and educated parents is important to get ahead in life, even in comparison with other countries.
• Changes of perceptions and preferences: The preferred top-bottom earnings ratio has increased in the two decades up to the Great Recession. This may be partially explained by an increase in meritocratic beliefs (i.e. the importance of hard work). Yet, the growth in perceived disparities was much larger, causing the increase in concerns.

How divided is the public opinion?

People disagree with each other as to the extent of economic disparities. Perceptions and opinions about economic inequality are largely dispersed in the USA.

**Figure 3. Perceptions and opinions about economic inequality are largely dispersed**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived richest 10's share of income</th>
<th>Cohesive perception of low inequality</th>
<th>Highly dispersed perceptions</th>
<th>Cohesive perception of high inequality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Share of population (%)</td>
<td>0%-20%</td>
<td>21%-40%</td>
<td>41%-60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61%-80%</td>
<td>81%-100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The three bars refer to the average across three groups of countries that present similar distributions of perceptions: cohesive perceptions of low or of high inequality, and highly dispersed perceptions.

**Source:** Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 4.

• In the US there is a clear contraposition between a group that perceives the richest 10%’s share of income to be relatively low (below 20%) and a group which believes it to be between 60 and 80% (Figure 3).

• People also disagree as to whether it is top earnings that are too high or bottom earnings that are too low. More than 26% is concerned that top earnings are too high but thinks that bottom earnings are fair or could even be lower, while the OECD average is less than 15%. On the opposite, 17% think the issue mostly pertains to bottom earnings being too low (24% in OECD average).

How much support is there for inequality-reducing policies?

Despite low levels of current redistribution but in accordance with the low level of concern, demand for more government redistributive intervention through taxes and benefits is comparatively low (Figure 4). Differently, demand for more progressive taxation – through higher taxes on the rich – is closer to the OECD average. One explanation is that the strong belief in the importance of hard work and in the possibility of escaping poverty lowers the demand for redistribution through benefits. However, the rising distance between top and bottom earners, coupled with the belief that having wealthy and highly educated parents matter for success, leads to a relatively stronger support for increasing taxes on richer people.

**Figure 4. Demand for more redistribution is low**

**Note:** Data refer to year 2020.

**Source:** Does Inequality Matter? Chapter 3.

How can people’s perceptions of and concern over inequality inform policy?

Getting citizens and governments on the same page when it comes to policies reducing inequality and promote social mobility requires understanding how people form their perceptions and opinion. This includes:

**Better understanding of public support for reform:** Inequality of both outcomes and opportunities matter to people, hence tackling both aspects helps gain support. Nonetheless, people may favour specific policy mixes, depending on their beliefs and preferences.

**Better understanding of the effectiveness of policies:** People favour policies that they believe to be effective. It is necessary to evaluate the impact of inequality-reducing policies transparently and facilitate people’s understanding of their functioning.

**Better information on inequality and equality of opportunities:** Providing high-quality information about inequality can help providing common ground for public debate, addressing the division and polarization of public opinion.

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For more information, access the complete report at: http://oe.cd/does-inequality-matter