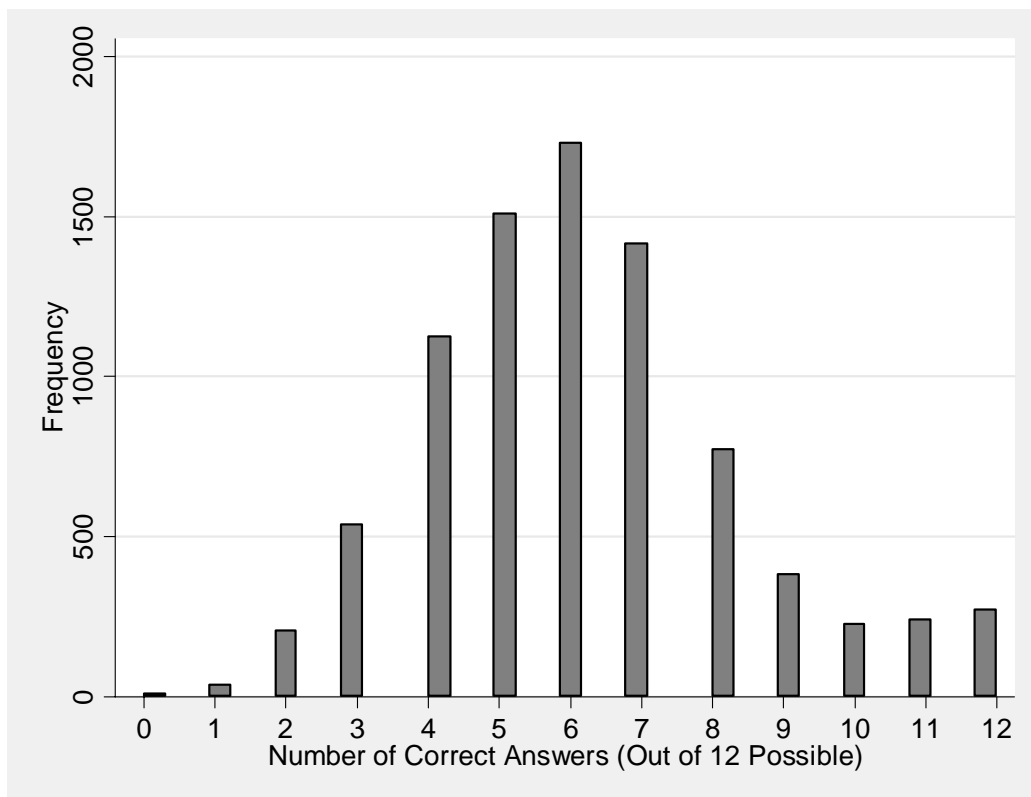


Inequality Quiz Results

Between 2001 and the summer of 2008, the CSI Inequality Quiz was taken more than 10,000 times. (These were genuine completed quiz attempts, not hits from internet bots.) As shown in the figure below, the most frequent result was 6 correct answers to the 12 questions posed.¹ We do not know who took the quiz, but inspection of the IP addresses in the data collection file indicates that many non-Cornell webpage readers took the quiz. Although the quiz was challenging, as the questions on the following pages reveal, CSI's existential justification appears secure: there remains a strong need for a center to help broadly educate the community on the nature and patterns of inequality as they exist across the world. A new inequality quiz has been written and is now ready to test your knowledge. Go to www.inequality.cornell.edu.



¹ The figure only tabulates results through 2006, after which the automatic data collection instrument failed in our html code. Thus, fewer than 10,000 results are presented in the figure. We assume in this brief analysis that those who took the quiz after 2006 performed about as well as those before 2006, the successes of our undergraduate of inequality minor notwithstanding!

Question 1:

Which of the following statements best describes trends in real wages for workers in the United States over the last quarter-century?

- (a) The rich have grown richer, the poor have grown poorer, and the middle classes have held their own.
- (b) The rich have grown richer, and everyone else has grown poorer.
- (c) The rich have grown poorer, the poor have grown richer, and the middle classes have held their own.

CORRECT ANSWER

(b) The rich have grown richer, and everyone else has grown poorer.

Between 1973 and 1997, only workers in the eighth and ninth wage deciles experienced gains in real wages, while all those in lower deciles experienced losses in real wages. In recent years, real wages for the lower and middle deciles began to increase again, but this recovery has been partial and, as of 1998, real wages for these deciles remained below what prevailed in 1973.

Pattern of responses:

27% answered (a)

69 % answered (b)

4% answered (c)

Question 2:

As of 1998, what percentage of the U.S. population indicated that they would oppose a family member or close relative marrying an African American?

- (a) 9 percent
- (b) 18 percent
- (c) 35 percent
- (d) 56 percent

CORRECT ANSWER

(c) 35 percent

As part of the 1998 General Social Survey, a random sample of U.S. residents was asked how they would feel about "having a close relative or family member marry a black person." In response to this question, 18 percent of the respondents were "very much opposed," 17 percent were "somewhat opposed," 13 percent were "in favor," 11 percent were "somewhat in favor," 39 percent were "neither in favor nor opposed," and one percent either did not answer the question or did not know their opinion. Although the level of opposition to interracial marriage may thus seem high, results from the Gallup Poll indicate that the percentage of U.S. residents who approve of interracial marriage nonetheless increased from approximately 5 percent in 1958 to 25 percent in 1972 and then to 70 percent in 1997.

Pattern of responses:

- 3% answered (a)
- 13% answered (b)
- 53% answered (c)
- 32% answered (d)

Question 3:

As women enter the formal labor force in unprecedented numbers, many scholars have asked whether unpaid household labor (i.e., childcare, housework) has become more equally divided. Do husbands now spend as much time on unpaid household labor as their wives? Or do wives continue to bear a disproportionate burden?

- (a) Women and men now spend approximately the same amount of time on unpaid household labor.
- (b) Women now spend twice as much time on unpaid household labor as men.
- (c) Women now spend four times as much time on unpaid household labor as men.

CORRECT ANSWER

(b) Women now spend twice as much time on unpaid household labor as men.

In the 1992-1994 National Survey of Families and Households, wives report an average of 30.5 hours of housework, while their husbands report an average of 15.3 hours of housework. The same ratio emerges from time diary data, although both sexes report hours of housework that are approximately 50 percent lower. Among dual-earner couples, the evidence suggests that women still dramatically outwork men, but the ratio is slightly lower (i.e., 1.7 or 1.8). The division of labor is nonetheless becoming more equal; that is, married women in 1965 spent seven times as many hours on household labor as married men, whereas married women in 1975 spent only four times as many hours on household labor as married men.

Pattern of responses:

- 10% answered (a)
- 72% answered (b)
- 8% answered (c)

Question 4:

At the beginning of the 19th century, the average income in the 10 richest nations was approximately 4 times greater than that in the 10 poorest nations. What is the corresponding ratio now?

- (a) Average incomes in the 10 richest nations are now 30 times greater than average incomes in the 10 poorest nations.
- (b) Average incomes in the 10 richest nations are now 15 times greater than average incomes in the 10 poorest nations.
- (c) Average incomes in the 10 richest nations are now 10 times greater than average incomes in the 10 poorest nations.

CORRECT ANSWER

(b) Average incomes in the 10 richest nations are now 15 times greater than average incomes in the 10 poorest nations.

In 1989, average incomes in the 10 richest nations were approximately \$18,000, whereas those in the 10 poorest nations were approximately \$600. (The 10 richest nations in 1989 were the U.S., Canada, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Hong Kong, Finland, and West Germany. The 10 poorest nations in 1989 were Chad, Zaire, Niger, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Burundi, Uganda, Mali, Comoros, and Central African Republic.) Although there has, then, been massive polarization over the long run of industrialization, the available evidence suggests a recent levelling-off in this trend.

Pattern of responses:

- 69% answered (a)
- 21% answered (b)
- 10% answered (c)

Question 5:

The United States is often described as a "land of opportunity" in which class origins (e.g., upper class, middle class, working class) at the point of birth do not strongly affect class destinations. Is it true that the United States is exceptionally "open" in the sense that children are less constrained by their social origins than in other European societies?

- (a) The United States is indeed more "open" than European societies.
- (b) The United States is less "open" than other European societies.
- (c) There is much similarity across all advanced industrial countries in the effects of class origins on class destinations.

CORRECT ANSWER

c) There is much similarity across all advanced industrial countries in the effects of class origins on class destinations.

In one of the classic hypotheses in sociology, David Featherman and his colleagues argued that the effects of social origins are much the same across all advanced industrial societies, including those of the putatively "open" new world (e.g., United States, Australia). Although there remains some controversy on the matter, the prevailing view is that this hypothesis is on the mark and that neither the United States nor other supposedly open societies (e.g., Australia) are in fact exceptional, no matter how distinctive their beliefs or values concerning mobility may be.

Pattern of responses:

- 19% answered (a)
- 29% answered (b)
- 52% answered (c)

Question 6:

What percentage of African Americans between the ages of 25 and 29 are in prison?

- (a) 1.7
- (b) 4.1
- (c) 13.1
- (d) 37.0

CORRECT ANSWER

(c) 13.1

As of June 30, 2000, 13.1 percent of African Americans between the ages of 25 and 29 were incarcerated in a federal prison, state prison, or local jail. Answers (a) and (b) are the corresponding percentages of Whites and Hispanics respectively.

Pattern of responses:

- 3% answered (a)
- 13% answered (b)
- 58% answered (c)
- 26% answered (d)

Question 7:

It has long been argued that poverty is a "trap" and that a large permanently dependent underclass can be found in the United States. This imagery of persistent poverty can be evaluated by considering the median amount of time that individuals remain in poverty after first becoming poor. How long is the median poverty spell in the United States?

- (a) 7.1 years
- (b) 2.5 years
- (c) 4.5 months

CORRECT ANSWER

- (c) 4.5 months

Based on data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), the median poverty spell for the full population was 4.5 months in 1993. However, African Americans had a median poverty spell of 6.8 months, compared to 5.0 months for Hispanics and 4.2 months for Whites. It is not yet clear whether such spells will become even smaller with welfare reform.

Pattern of responses
42% answered (a)
36% answered (b)
22% answered (c)

Question 8:

How large is the gender gap in median earnings among adult full-time workers in the United States?

- (a) Women earn 52 percent less than men.
- (b) Women earn 29 percent less than men.
- (c) Women earn 14 percent less than men.
- (d) Women earn 7 percent less than men.

CORRECT ANSWER

- (b) Women earn 29 percent less than men.

The 1999 Current Population Survey indicates that the median annual earnings for full-time, year-round working women aged 25 and older was \$27,137, whereas the comparable figure for men was \$38,398, a gap of 29 percent.

Pattern of responses:

- 8% answered (a)
- 57% answered (b)
- 27% answered (c)
- 8% answered (d)

Question 9:

Some scholars have suggested that the gender gap in earnings is attributable, in large part, to the tendency of men to work in occupations and establishments that pay better than those in which women typically work. For workers in the same occupation and establishment, how large is the gender gap in pay?

- (a) Less than 5 percent
- (b) Approximately 15 percent
- (c) Approximately 30 percent

CORRECT ANSWER

- (a) Less than 5 percent

In the professional and managerial sector (of the United States), men earn three percent more than women working in the same detailed occupation and establishment. The corresponding figure for the clerical and manufacturing sector is two percent. Based on these figures, Trond Petersen and Laurie Morgan conclude that "occupation-establishment segregation, not within-job wage discrimination [is] the driving force for observed wage differences."

Pattern of Responses:

- 21% answered (a)
- 63% answered (b)
- 16% answered (c)

Question 10:

Between January and July of 2001, the unemployment rate among Whites in the United States fluctuated between 3.6 and 4.0 percent of the civilian labor force. Over the same time period, how high was the unemployment rate for African Americans?

- (a) About the same
- (b) One and a half times as high
- (c) Twice as high
- (d) Three times as high

CORRECT ANSWER

(c) Twice as high

Over the past 30 years, the unemployment rate for African Americans has consistently been at least twice as high as the unemployment rate for Whites.

Pattern of responses:

- 3% answered (a)
- 15% answered (b)
- 57% answered (c)
- 25% answered (d)

Question 11:

There is much debate about the role of schooling in accounting for the relatively low earnings of African Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics. Does the earnings gap between whites and these other ethnic and racial groups shrink substantially among workers with the same years of schooling?

- (a) The earnings gap effectively disappears among workers with the same years of schooling.
- (b) The earnings gap remains large even among workers with the same years of schooling.

CORRECT ANSWER

(b) The earnings gap remains large even among workers with the same years of schooling.

The available evidence suggests that only 25 to 33 percent of the gap between the earnings of whites and those of African Americans, American Indians, and Hispanics can be explained by educational differences between these groups. However, when explaining the smaller (and sometimes reverse-signed) gap between whites and Asian ethnic groups, differential investments in education appear to play a somewhat more important role.

Pattern of responses:

34% answered (a)

66% answered (b)

Question 12:

Although rates of female labor force participation have increased in advanced industrial countries, it is well-known that women and men still end up in very different occupations. In which advanced industrial nation is this "sex segregation" of occupations especially extreme?

- (a) Sweden
- (b) West Germany
- (c) Portugal
- (d) United States

CORRECT ANSWER

- (a) Sweden

Using 64-category data from the 1990s, David Grusky and Maria Charles found that women (or men) in Sweden are over-represented in the average occupation by a factor of 5.4, compared to 4.4 in the United States, 4.5 in West Germany, and 5.3 in Portugal. Although the rank order of the latter three countries depends on how many occupations are represented and which segregation measure is used, Sweden consistently shows high levels of segregation regardless of methods of measurement. This result is sometimes regarded as surprising in light of Sweden's family-friendly institutional practices.

Pattern of responses:

- 21% answered (a)
- 16% answered (b)
- 27% answered (c)
- 36% answered (d)