



# Conservatives Happier Than Liberals



Inequality takes a greater psychological toll on liberals than on conservatives.

Individuals with conservative ideologies are happier than liberal-leaning, and new research pinpoints the reason: Conservatives rationalize social and economic inequalities.

Regardless of marital status, income or church attendance, rightwing individuals reported greater life satisfaction and well-being than left-wingers, the new study found. Conservatives also scored highest on measures of rationalization, which gauge a person's tendency to justify, or explain away, inequalities, reported LiveScience.

The rationalization measure included statements such as: "It is not really that big a problem if some people have more of a chance in life than others," and "This country would be better off if we worried less about how equal people are."

To justify economic inequalities, a person could support the idea of meritocracy, in which people supposedly move up their economic status in society based on hard work and good performance. In that way, one's social class attainment, whether upper, middle or lower, would be perceived as totally fair and justified.

If your beliefs don't justify gaps in status, you could be left frustrated and disheartened, according to the researchers, Jaime Napier and John Jost of New York University. They conducted a US-centric survey and a more internationally focused one to arrive at the findings.

"Our research suggests that inequality takes a greater psychological toll on liberals than on conservatives," the researchers write in the June issue of the journal *Psychological Science*, "apparently because liberals lack ideological rationalizations that would help them frame inequality in a positive (or at least neutral) light."

The same rationalizing phenomena could apply to personal situations as well.

"There is no reason to think that the effects we have identified here are unique to economic forms of inequality," the researchers write. "Research suggests that highly egalitarian women are less happy in their marriages compared with their more traditional counterparts, apparently because they are more troubled by disparities in domestic labor."

## British Food Wastage at Record Levels

The amount of good food Britons throw away unnecessarily is at record levels, according to a study, costing the economy 10 billion pounds (\$19.53 billion) a year.

More than half of the 6.7 million tons of food that British households throw away annually is still edible, the study from the Waste and Resources Action Program (WRAP) revealed, reported Reuters Life.

About one billion pounds worth of wasted food is still "in date," the "The Food We Waste" report concluded, while about 6 billion pounds of food was bought but left untouched.

An average household discards about 420 pounds worth of unused food a year, the government-backed study said, while for families with more children that rises to over 600 pounds.

The overall impact on the British economy is over two billion pounds more than previously estimated, the researchers from the waste-fighting organization said.

They calculated that stopping good food waste could reduce annual carbon dioxide emissions by 18 million tons. This was same effect as taking one in five cars off British roads, it added.

In what the report's authors said was one of the most comprehensive studies of its kind undertaken in the world, almost 3,000 households were interviewed. The waste from more than 2,100 of those households was also analyzed.

The study revealed that every day about 1.3 million unopened yoghurt pots, 5,500 whole chickens and 440,000 ready meals are thrown away in the UK.

WRAP Chief Executive, Liz Goodwin, described the findings as shocking. "Food waste has a significant environmental impact," she said in a statement.

"What shocked me the most was the cost of our food waste at a time

of rising food bills, and generally a tighter pull on our purse strings."

Environment Minister, Joan Ruddock, added: "These findings are staggering in their own right, but at a time when global food shortages are in the headlines this kind of wastefulness becomes even more shocking."



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## News in Brief

### Firm Handshakes Help Land Jobs

Smartening up and smiling are key tactics for job-seekers, but a simple well-delivered handshake could trump them both, according to a new study.

Research by the University of Iowa found applicants with a firm handshake are far more likely to get the job than candidates with a limp grip, LiveScience reported.

A solid handshake was found to be more important than dress or physical appearance as it set off the interviewer's impression of that person.

"We found that the first impression begins with a handshake that sets the tone for the rest of the interview," said researcher George Stewart, associate professor of management and organizations in the Tippie College of Business, in a statement.

Stewart said this was the first study to quantify the importance of a good handshake in a job interview.

The interviewers graded each student's overall performance and hireability while five trained handshake raters also scored students on their handshake. The scores were then compared.

Stewart said the researchers found that those students who scored high with the handshake raters were also considered to be the most hireable by the interviewers and seen as having more extroverted personalities and greater social skills.

The students with wimpy handshakes were judged to have less gregarious personalities and were less impressive.

### Patients Prefer Polite Physicians

Doctors should try a new type of prescription—being a little more polite—if they want to connect with their patients, a US psychiatrist suggested.

"Patients may care less about whether their doctors are reflective and empathic than whether they are respectful and attentive," said Dr. Michael Kahn of Harvard Medical School in Boston, reported Reuters.

"I believe that medical education and postgraduate training should pay more emphasis on this aspect of the doctor-patient relationship—what I would call 'etiquette-based medicine,'" Kahn said in a telephone interview.

Writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Kahn said the simplest way to do that may be to show good manners, such as asking permission before entering a patient's room.

### Brazil, India Have 'Greenest' Consumers

Inhabitants of Brazil and India have the world's most environmentally-sustainable lifestyles and Americans have the least, according to a new study tracking global attitudes towards consumption and the environment.

The survey by the National Geographic Society establishes a "Greendex"—an index measuring the economic impact of consumer lifestyle choices—in four key areas: housing, transportation, food and goods, AFP reported.

Overall, the survey determined that inhabitants of developing countries are most concerned about the impacts of their lifestyle choices on the environment, and made consumption choices reflecting these concerns.

Consequently their lifestyles had fewer adverse effects on the environment than people in developed countries.

The highest scores—denoting the greatest environmental consciousness—were found in Brazil and India, each tied with 60 points.

They were followed by consumers in China (56.1), Mexico (54.3), Hungary (53.2) and Russia (52.4).

Researchers found that in general, people in developed countries tend to live in big homes, often with environmentally costly air-conditioning, own more cars, drive alone more often and use public transport only infrequently. They are least likely to buy environmentally-friendly products.

### Oil Wiping Out Key Orangutan Habitat

One of the biggest populations of wild orangutans on Borneo will be extinct in three years without drastic measures to stop the expansion of palm oil plantations, conservationists said.

"For Central Kalimantan, the species will be gone as soon as three years from now," Center for Orangutan Protection director Hardi Bhaktiantoro told a press conference, AFP reported.

More than 30,000 wild orangutans live in the forests of Indonesia's Central Kalimantan province, or more than half the entire orangutan population of Borneo island which is shared between Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

Experts believe the overall extinction rate of Borneo orangutans is 9 percent per year, but in Central Kalimantan they are disappearing even faster due to unchecked expansion of palm oil plantations.