

Narratives about the Macroeconomy: Survey Instructions*

Peter Andre Ingar Haaland Christopher Roth Johannes Wohlfart

July 3, 2022

*Peter Andre, briq – Institute on Behavior & Inequality (e-mail: peter.andre@briq-institute.org); Ingar Haaland, University of Bergen and CESifo (e-mail: Ingar.Haaland@uib.no); Christopher Roth, University of Cologne and ECONtribute (email: roth@wiso.uni-koeln.de); Johannes Wohlfart, Department of Economics and CEBI, University of Copenhagen, CESifo, and Danish Finance Institute (e-mail: johannes.wohlfart@econ.ku.dk).

Contents

1 Household Survey: Descriptive Waves	1
2 Household Survey: Robustness waves	13
2.1 Household Survey: Robustness with structured measures (May 2022)	13
2.2 Test-Retest reliability	23
2.2.1 Wave 1	23
2.2.2 Wave 2	31
3 Household survey: Pent-up Demand and Energy Narrative Provision Experiment (April 2022)	35
3.1 Baseline Survey	35
3.2 Follow-up Survey	46
4 Household Survey: Monetary Policy Narrative Provision Experiment (June 2022)	51
4.1 Baseline Survey	51
4.2 Follow-up Survey	61
5 Household Survey: Priming Experiment (December 2021)	64
6 Household Survey: Experiment on Narratives and the Interpretation of Information (April 2022)	66
7 Household Survey: Media Experiment (February 2022)	82
7.1 Wave 1: Baseline	82
7.2 Wave 2: Treatment	90
7.3 Wave 3: Endline	94
8 Expert Survey (November 2021)	98

1 Household Survey: Descriptive Waves

We conducted descriptive surveys with representative household samples in November 2021, December 2021, January 2022, March 2022 and May 2022. The exact instructions vary somewhat across these waves, although the key elements are constant. Below, we post screenshots of the core part of the November 2021 survey, which is identical to the core part of the other surveys (with the exceptions of dates and inflation numbers).

What this study is about

This study is about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

The study begins with an informed consent form and a few introductory questions. Afterward, we will provide you with more details on your task in this study.



On which device are you taking this survey?

Mobile phone

Tablet

Computer (desktop or laptop)



Before you proceed to the study,
please complete the captcha
below.

I'm not a robot


reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms



The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies. To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both "Very strongly interested" and "Not at all interested" as your answer to the **below** question.

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

Very strongly interested

Very interested

A little bit interested

Not very interested

Not at all interested



Please explain: What is your opinion about the yearly switch to daylight saving time? Do you like or dislike it? Please use about 15-30 words.



What is your age?

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 or older

Which gender describes you most accurately?

Male

Female

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than primary school

Less than high school degree

High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)

Some college but no degree

Associate degree in college (2-year)

Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Professional degree (JD, MD)

What was your household income in 2020 in US dollars before taxes and deductions?

Less than 15,000

Between 15,000 and 25,000

Between 25,000 and 50,000

Between 50,000 and 75,000

Between 75,000 and 100,000

Between 100,000 and 150,000

Between 150,000 and 200,000

More than 200,000

Prefer not to say

In which region do you currently reside?

Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA)

Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)

South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)

West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

Which of these describes your current employment situation most accurately?

Employed full-time

Employed part-time

Self-employed

Unemployed and looking for a job

Unemployed but not looking for a job

Retired

Student

Other



About this study

This study is about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

People can have very different opinions and thoughts on these issues. Every opinion counts. Your opinion does, too! Your response is thus very valuable.

Please share with us what you think about the inflation rate.



What is the inflation rate?

On this page, we briefly explain in more detail what we mean when we refer to the inflation rate. Please read the definition carefully.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year.
It is defined as the **yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services**
(Consumer Price Index).

For instance, an inflation rate of 2% means that, on average, prices for goods and services rise by 2% over 12 months. That is, a typical bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 at the beginning of a year costs \$1,020 at the end of that year.

If the inflation rate is negative, it is referred to as **deflation**. This means that goods and services become less expensive from one year to the next.



A few opening questions

What do you think was the rate of inflation in the US over the last 12 months? Please respond in %.

 %

Do you think that the inflation rate over the last 12 months is higher, lower, or about the same as inflation one year ago (from 24 months to 12 months ago)?

Higher today

About the same

Lower today

Which response option describes best **how frequently you thought about inflation** in the last three months?

Never

Once a month

Once every other week

Once a week

Multiple times a week

Daily

Which response option describes best **how frequently you saw/read/heard news about inflation** in the last three months?

Never

Once a month

Once every other week

Once a week

Multiple times a week

Daily



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

From our experience, it can take about **2 minutes** to complete this question. Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,062 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the user to write their response to the question above.

Your forecasts for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%.

Do you think the higher inflation rate is temporary or persistent?

Temporary: 12 months from now, the inflation rate will be **3% or lower** again.

Persistent: 12 months from now, the inflation rate will still be **higher than 3%**.



Your forecasts for the future

In some of the following questions we will ask you about the percentage chance that a certain event will occur in the future. Your answers can range from 0 to 100, where 0 means an event is certain not to happen and 100 means an event is certain to happen.

For example:

- 2 or 5 percent mean that something "has a very low probability" of happening.
- 18 percent mean that something "has a low probability" of happening.
- 47 or 52 percent mean that something "has an even probability" to occur or not occur.
- 83 percent mean that something "has a high probability" of happening.
- 95 or 98 percent mean that something will "almost certainly" occur.



Your forecasts for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%.

Next, we would like you to think about the different things that may happen to inflation **over the next 12 months**. We realize that this question may take a little more time. **In your view, what would you say is the percent chance that, over the next 12 months...**

(Please note: The numbers need to add up to 100%).

The rate of inflation will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
Total	<input type="text"/> 0	%



Your forecasts for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%.

Now, we would like you to think about the different things that may happen to inflation over the time between **four and five years from now** (that is, between 49 and 60 months from now). **In your view, what is the percent chance that, over the time between 49 and 60 months from now...**

(Please note: The numbers need to add up to 100%).

The rate of inflation will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of inflation will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text"/> 0	%
Total	<input type="text"/> 0	%



Final questionnaire

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican or Democratic party?

Republican

Democratic

What was the highest level of any course in economics, finance or business you ever took?

I never took a course in economics, finance or business

High school level

College level

Graduate level

What is your year of birth?

Who among the members of your household is doing most of the grocery shopping in your household?

Myself

My partner

Someone else



2 Household Survey: Robustness waves

2.1 Household Survey: Robustness with structured measures (May 2022)

In May 2022, we conducted a survey with a household sample. We first ask our standard questions about demographics and knowledge of past inflation. We next elicit narratives with open-ended questions, confidence in their understanding of why inflation has increased, as well as structured questions about the importance of different factors for past and future inflation. We include the key screenshots below.

What this study is about

This study is about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

The study begins with an informed consent form and a few introductory questions. Afterward, we will provide you with more details on your task in this study.



On which device are you taking this survey?

Mobile phone

Tablet

Computer (desktop or laptop)



Before you proceed to the study,
please complete the captcha
below.

I'm not a robot


reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms



The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies. To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both “Very strongly interested” and “Not at all interested” as your answer to the **below** question.

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

Very strongly interested

Very interested

A little bit interested

Not very interested

Not at all interested



Please explain: What is your opinion about the yearly switch to daylight saving time? Do you like or dislike it? Please use about 15-30 words.



What is your age?

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 or older

Which gender describes you most accurately?

Male

Female

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than primary school

Less than high school degree

High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)

Some college but no degree

Associate degree in college (2-year)

Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Professional degree (JD, MD)

What was your household income in 2020 in US dollars before taxes and deductions?

Less than 15,000

Between 15,000 and 25,000

Between 25,000 and 50,000

Between 50,000 and 75,000

Between 75,000 and 100,000

Between 100,000 and 150,000

Between 150,000 and 200,000

More than 200,000

Prefer not to say

In which region do you currently reside?

Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA)

Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)

South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)

West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

Which of these describes your current employment situation most accurately?

Employed full-time

Employed part-time

Self-employed

Unemployed and looking for a job

Unemployed but not looking for a job

Retired

Student

Other



About this study

This study is about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

People can have very different opinions and thoughts on these issues. Every opinion counts. Your opinion does, too! Your response is thus very valuable.

Please share with us what you think about the inflation rate.



What is the inflation rate?

On this page, we briefly explain in more detail what we mean when we refer to the inflation rate. Please read the definition carefully.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year.
It is defined as the **yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services**
(Consumer Price Index).

For instance, an inflation rate of 2% means that, on average, prices for goods and services rise by 2% over 12 months. That is, a typical bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 at the beginning of a year costs \$1,020 at the end of that year.

If the inflation rate is negative, it is referred to as **deflation**. This means that goods and services become less expensive from one year to the next.



A few opening questions

What do you think was the rate of inflation in the US over the last 12 months? Please respond in %.

 %

Do you think that the inflation rate over the last 12 months is higher, lower, or about the same as inflation one year ago (from 24 months to 12 months ago)?

Higher today

About the same

Lower today

Which response option describes best **how frequently you thought about inflation** in the last three months?

Never

Once a month

Once every other week

Once a week

Multiple times a week

Daily

Which response option describes best **how frequently you saw/read/heard news about inflation** in the last three months?

Never

Once a month

Once every other week

Once a week

Multiple times a week

Daily



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

From our experience, it can take about **2 minutes** to complete this question. Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,085 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



What contributed to the past rise of inflation?

Below, we show you a list of different economic or political factors. What do you think?
Which of these factors have contributed to the rise of US inflation to 8.5% over the last twelve months?

Please rate how important you think each of these factors has been for the rise of inflation to 8.5% over the last twelve months.

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
High levels of government debt.	<input type="radio"/>				
Expectations about high inflation in the coming years and pre-emptive price and wage increases.	<input type="radio"/>				
Businesses tried to increase their profits.	<input type="radio"/>				
The global energy crisis: high energy prices and shortages of oil and natural gas.	<input type="radio"/>				
A shortage of workers.	<input type="radio"/>				
	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Shifts in what people bought, especially a shift from services to durables.	<input type="radio"/>				
Tax increases.	<input type="radio"/>				
Disruptions of global supply chains.	<input type="radio"/>				
Base effect: a low inflation rate during the pandemic.	<input type="radio"/>				
The COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdowns, and other policy measures taken to contain the pandemic.	<input type="radio"/>				
	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
The Russian war against Ukraine and the international economic, political, and military response.	<input type="radio"/>				
Government mismanagement and bad political decisions by the government.	<input type="radio"/>				
After the lockdowns were lifted, people spent more money (e.g. due to pent-up savings from the pandemic and new spending opportunities).	<input type="radio"/>				
The Federal Reserve kept interest rates near zero.	<input type="radio"/>				
Increases in government spending, e.g. the stimulus payments.	<input type="radio"/>				



What will contribute to the future development of inflation?

Below, we show you a similar list of economic and political factors. The factors are presented in a different order. Now, your task is to think about the future. What do you think? **Which of these factors will contribute to the development of US inflation over the next twelve months?**

Please rate how important you think each of these factors will be for the development of inflation over the next twelve months.

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
After the lockdowns are lifted, people spend more money (e.g. due to pent-up savings from the pandemic and new spending opportunities).	<input type="radio"/>				
Government spending, e.g. stimulus payments.	<input type="radio"/>				
The Russian war against Ukraine and the international economic, political, and military response.	<input type="radio"/>				
The COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdowns, and other policy measures taken to contain the pandemic.	<input type="radio"/>				
Tax increases.	<input type="radio"/>				
	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Shifts in what people buy, especially a shift from services to durables.	<input type="radio"/>				
Disruptions of global supply chains.	<input type="radio"/>				
A shortage of workers.	<input type="radio"/>				
The global energy crisis: high energy prices and shortages of oil and natural gas.	<input type="radio"/>				
High levels of government debt.	<input type="radio"/>				
	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Low interest rates of the Federal Reserve.	<input type="radio"/>				
Base effect: a low inflation rate during the pandemic.	<input type="radio"/>				
Expectations about high inflation in the coming years and pre-emptive price and wage increases.	<input type="radio"/>				
Government mismanagement and bad political decisions by the government.	<input type="radio"/>				
Businesses trying to increase their profits.	<input type="radio"/>				



2.2 Test-Retest reliability

In May 2022, we conducted a baseline survey with a household sample. We first ask our standard questions about demographics and knowledge of past inflation. We next elicit narratives with open-ended questions, confidence in their understanding of why inflation has increased. We then re-invited participants from this survey to a follow-up survey 3 days later. The baseline survey took place one day before the announcement of the latest inflation numbers, while the follow-up took place 2 days after the announcement. This follow-up survey is virtually identical to the baseline survey (with the exception of the layout and the current inflation rate provided to participants).

2.2.1 Wave 1

What this study is about

This study is about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

The study begins with an informed consent form and a few introductory questions. Afterward, we will provide you with more details on your task in this study.



On which device are you taking this survey?

Mobile phone

Tablet

Computer (desktop or laptop)



Before you proceed to the study,
please complete the captcha
below.

I'm not a robot


reCAPTCHA
Privacy - Terms



The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies. To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both “Very strongly interested” and “Not at all interested” as your answer to the **below** question.

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

Very strongly interested

Very interested

A little bit interested

Not very interested

Not at all interested



Please explain: What is your opinion about the yearly switch to daylight saving time? Do you like or dislike it? Please use about 15-30 words.



What is your age?

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 or older

Which gender describes you most accurately?

Male

Female

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than primary school

Less than high school degree

High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)

Some college but no degree

Associate degree in college (2-year)

Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Professional degree (JD, MD)

What was your household income in 2020 in US dollars before taxes and deductions?

Less than 15,000

Between 15,000 and 25,000

Between 25,000 and 50,000

Between 50,000 and 75,000

Between 75,000 and 100,000

Between 100,000 and 150,000

Between 150,000 and 200,000

More than 200,000

Prefer not to say

In which region do you currently reside?

Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA)

Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)

South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)

West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

Which of these describes your current employment situation most accurately?

Employed full-time

Employed part-time

Self-employed

Unemployed and looking for a job

Unemployed but not looking for a job

Retired

Student

Other



About this study

This study is about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

People can have very different opinions and thoughts on these issues. Every opinion counts. Your opinion does, too! Your response is thus very valuable.

Please share with us what you think about the inflation rate.



What is the inflation rate?

On this page, we briefly explain in more detail what we mean when we refer to the inflation rate. Please read the definition carefully.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year.
It is defined as the **yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services**
(Consumer Price Index).

For instance, an inflation rate of 2% means that, on average, prices for goods and services rise by 2% over 12 months. That is, a typical bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 at the beginning of a year costs \$1,020 at the end of that year.

If the inflation rate is negative, it is referred to as **deflation**. This means that goods and services become less expensive from one year to the next.



A few opening questions

What do you think was the rate of inflation in the US over the last 12 months? Please respond in %.

 %

Do you think that the inflation rate over the last 12 months is higher, lower, or about the same as inflation one year ago (from 24 months to 12 months ago)?

Higher today

About the same

Lower today

Which response option describes best **how frequently you thought about inflation** in the last three months?

Never

Once a month

Once every other week

Once a week

Multiple times a week

Daily

Which response option describes best **how frequently you saw/read/heard news about inflation** in the last three months?

Never

Once a month

Once every other week

Once a week

Multiple times a week

Daily



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

From our experience, it can take about **2 minutes** to complete this question. Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,085 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



2.2.2 Wave 2

Welcome

This study is conducted by researchers from the University of Bergen and University of Cologne. You must be a US citizen of at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. If you do not fulfill these requirements, please do not continue any further.

If you experience a technical error or problem, do not try to restart or retake the study. Rather, send us an email with a description of your problem and we will get back to you. If you have any questions regarding this study, please email ingar.haaland@uib.no.

I have read and understood the above and want to participate in this study.

Yes

No



Please enter your Prolific ID:



Inflation

We now want to ask you some questions about inflation.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year. It is defined as the yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services (Consumer Price Index).



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words. Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

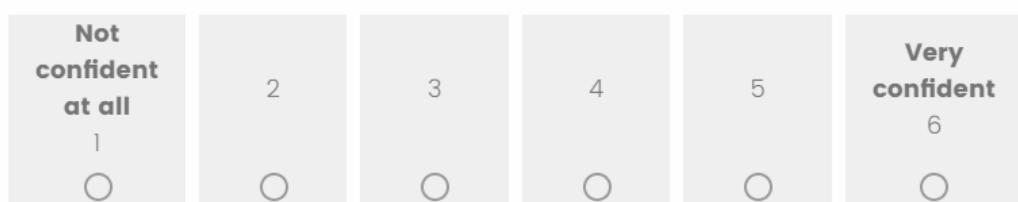
In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.5%.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



How confident are you in your understanding of why inflation has increased?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Thank you!

Thank you so much for your time and responses.



3 Household survey: Pent-up Demand and Energy Narrative Provision Experiment (April 2022)

In April 2022, we conducted an experiment with a household sample in which respondents are randomly assigned to receive a narrative blaming the energy crisis for higher inflation, receive a narrative blaming pent-up demand due to forced savings during the pandemic, or receive no narrative. We also conduct a follow-up survey in which we elicit some of the outcome measures. Below we post screenshots of the key survey questions.

3.1 Baseline Survey

The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies. To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both “Very strongly interested” and “Not at all interested” as your answer to the **below** question.

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

- Very strongly interested
- Very interested
- A little bit interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested



Please explain: What is your opinion about the yearly switch to daylight saving time? Do you like or dislike it? Please use about 15-30 words.



What is your age?

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 or older

Which gender describes you most accurately?

- Male
- Female

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than primary school
- Less than high school degree
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree in college (2-year)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Professional degree (JD, MD)

What was your household income in 2021 in US dollars before taxes and deductions?

- Less than 15,000
- Between 15,000 and 25,000
- Between 25,000 and 50,000
- Between 50,000 and 75,000
- Between 75,000 and 100,000
- Between 100,000 and 150,000
- Between 150,000 and 200,000
- More than 200,000

In which region do you currently reside?

- Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA)
- Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)
- South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)
- West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

In which region do you currently reside?

- Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA),
- Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)
- South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)
- West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

Which of these describes your current employment situation most accurately?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed and looking for a job
- Unemployed but not looking for a job
- Retired
- Student
- Other



Inflation

Some of the following questions are about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

On this page, we briefly explain in more detail what we mean when we refer to the inflation rate. Please read the definition carefully.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year. It is defined as the **yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services** (Consumer Price Index).

For instance, an inflation rate of 2% means that, on average, prices for goods and services rise by 2% over 12 months. That is, a typical bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 at the beginning of a year costs \$1,020 at the end of that year.

If the inflation rate is negative, it is referred to as **deflation**. This means that goods and services become less expensive from one year to the next.



Inflation

What do you think was the rate of inflation in the US over the last 12 months? Please respond in %.

 %

Do you think that the inflation rate over the last 12 months is higher, lower, or about the same as inflation one year ago (from 24 months to 12 months ago)?

- Higher today
- About the same
- Lower today



Inflation has increased

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7.9%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,079 in the next year.



Treatment: Pent-up demand narrative

Why has inflation increased?

Please read the following information carefully. On the next page, we will ask you a question about the text below, so please read everything carefully.

We recently surveyed economic experts who study inflation in the United States. These experts emphasized that **pent-up demand resulting from the pandemic** was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

According to this explanation, households were forced to save money during the pandemic because there were less opportunities to spend money. As the economy reopened and restrictions were lifted, people quickly started traveling again and going to restaurants. They were buying more, spending some of the money they couldn't spend during the lockdowns. **In short, people were flush with cash and eager to spend their lockdown savings.** This resulted in a high demand for goods and services, which led to increased prices.

Here are some example explanations from our expert survey:

During the 2 years of lockdown, demand has dropped because people postponed or could not visit shops. Now after the lockdowns, there is a catch up in demand, suddenly demand is high, but firms have not anticipated such a strong demand.

Covid resulted in higher savings rates, so consumers had more money to spend.

As a result of the lockdown, spending has been restrained. But now that we are returning to normality, consumers are eager to return to the usual spending.



As you just read on the last page, experts emphasize that pent-up demand resulting from the pandemic was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

Please describe in your own words how pent-up demand resulting from the pandemic caused the rise of inflation.



Treatment: Energy crisis narrative

Why has inflation increased?

Please read the following information carefully. On the next page, we will ask you a question about the text below, so please read everything carefully.

We recently surveyed economic experts who study inflation in the United States. These experts emphasized that the **global energy crisis** was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

According to this explanation, shortages of oil and natural gas led to climbing energy prices. There are many reasons for the energy crisis, including new environmental regulations, reduced investments in fossil fuels, closure of nuclear plants, global political insecurities, reduction in gas supplies from Russia, as well as disruptions to global supply chains.

Energy is an important input for many firms and expenditures for energy account for a substantial share of production costs. Companies responded by passing along those higher costs in the form of higher prices to consumers, contributing to high inflation. In addition, many households rely on natural gas for heating and on gasoline produced from oil for driving. Therefore, price increases of oil and natural gas substantially increased the inflation rate.

In sum, the global energy crisis has led to higher electricity and gasoline bills for consumers as well as higher costs for firms, making them increase prices to cover the costs.

Here are some typical explanations from our expert survey:

The price of energy has increased, with a knock-on effect on the cost of manufacture.

Inflation is particularly high because of a spike in retail gasoline (petrol) prices.

Energy inflation is due in part to reduced investment in fossil fuels capacity.



As you just read on the last page, experts emphasize that the global energy crisis was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

Please describe in your own words how the global energy crisis caused the rise of inflation.



Post-treatment outcomes

Your forecast for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7.9%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).

Not confident at all		Very confident			
1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Final questionnaire

Please answer the following three questions. These are the final questions of the survey.

Which candidate did you vote for in the 2020 Presidential Election?

- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden
- Other
- Did not vote

Are you liberal or conservative?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Neither liberal nor conservative
- Conservative
- Very conservative

What was the highest level of any course in economics, finance or business you ever took?

- I never took a course in economics, finance or business
- High school level
- College level
- Graduate level



3.2 Follow-up Survey

Inflation

We now want to ask you some questions about inflation.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year. It is defined as the yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services (Consumer Price Index).



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7.9%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,079 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



How confident are you in your understanding of why inflation has increased?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Your forecast for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7.9%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).

Not confident at all		Very confident			
1	2	3	4	5	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Your forecast for the future

In the last months, the US economy has been influenced by the global energy crisis.

Specifically, shortages of oil and natural gas led to climbing energy prices. There are many reasons for the energy crisis, including new environmental regulations, reduced investments in fossil fuels, closure of nuclear plants, global political insecurities, reduction in gas supplies from Russia, as well as disruptions to global supply chains.

How important do you think that the global energy crisis will be for inflation over the next 12 months?

- Very important
- Important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important

Your forecast for the future

In the last months, the US economy has been influenced by pent-up demand resulting from the pandemic. Households were forced to save money during the pandemic because there were less opportunities to spend money. Once the lockdowns were lifted, households were flush with cash and started to spend their lockdown savings. This resulted in a high demand for goods and services.

How important do you think that pent-up demand will be for inflation over the next 12 months?

- Very important
- Important
- Moderately important
- Slightly important
- Not important



Which hypothesis do you think the researchers try to test in this study?



4 Household Survey: Monetary Policy Narrative Provision Experiment (June 2022)

In June 2022, we conducted an experiment with a household sample in which respondents are randomly assigned to receive a narrative blaming the energy crisis for higher inflation or receive a narrative blaming loose monetary policy for higher inflation. Below we post the survey screens providing respondents with different narratives. We also conduct a follow-up survey in which we elicit some of the outcome measures. Below we post screenshots of the key survey questions.

4.1 Baseline Survey

The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies. To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both “Very strongly interested” and “Not at all interested” as your answer to the **below** question.

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

- Very strongly interested
- Very interested
- A little bit interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested



Please explain: What is your opinion about the yearly switch to daylight saving time? Do you like or dislike it? Please use about 15-30 words.



What is your age?

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 or older

Which gender describes you most accurately?

- Male
- Female

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than primary school
- Less than high school degree
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree in college (2-year)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Professional degree (JD, MD)

What was your household income in 2021 in US dollars before taxes and deductions?

- Less than 15,000
- Between 15,000 and 25,000
- Between 25,000 and 50,000
- Between 50,000 and 75,000
- Between 75,000 and 100,000
- Between 100,000 and 150,000
- Between 150,000 and 200,000
- More than 200,000

In which region do you currently reside?

- Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA)
- Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)
- South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)
- West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

Which of these describes your current employment situation most accurately?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed and looking for a job
- Unemployed but not looking for a job
- Retired
- Student
- Other



Inflation

Some of the following questions are about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

On this page, we briefly explain in more detail what we mean when we refer to the inflation rate. Please read the definition carefully.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year.
It is defined as the **yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services** (Consumer Price Index).

For instance, an inflation rate of 2% means that, on average, prices for goods and services rise by 2% over 12 months. That is, a typical bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 at the beginning of a year costs \$1,020 at the end of that year.

If the inflation rate is negative, it is referred to as **deflation**. This means that goods and services become less expensive from one year to the next.



Inflation

What do you think was the rate of inflation in the US over the last 12 months? Please respond in %.

 %

Do you think that the inflation rate over the last 12 months is higher, lower, or about the same as inflation one year ago (from 24 months to 12 months ago)?

- Higher today
- About the same
- Lower today



Inflation has increased

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.6%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,086 in the next year.



Treatment: Monetary policy narrative

Why has inflation increased?

Please read the following information carefully. On the next page, we will ask you a question about the text below, so please read everything carefully.

We recently surveyed economic experts who study inflation in the United States. These experts emphasized that the **very low interest rates pursued by the Federal Reserve (Fed)**, which led to a massive injection of money into the economy, were an important cause for the rise of inflation.

The Federal Reserve is the central bank of the US economy. It influences economy-wide interest rates by adjusting the federal funds rate, which is the most important interest rate in the economy. During the pandemic, the Federal Reserve reduced interest rates to historically low levels.

The low interest rates led to a massive injection of money into the economy. Because of low interest rates, consumer credits, mortgages, and business investments became extremely cheap. At the same time, low interest rates made it unattractive to save money. This bolstered demand for big purchases, from houses and cars to business investments like machinery and computers.

The high demand for goods and services created a mismatch: Strong demand exceeded the available supply, leading to economy-wide pressure on prices. Goods and services became more expensive. The result: a rise of inflation.

In sum, the Federal Reserve's low interest rate policy has led to too many dollars chasing the available goods and services, leading to a surge in inflation.

Here is one example explanation from our expert survey:

"The Fed pumped far too much money into the economy in a short period of time during the COVID crisis."

As you just read on the last page, experts emphasize that low interest rates pursued by the Federal Reserve were an important cause for the rise of inflation.

Please describe in your own words how low interest rates pursued by the Federal Reserve caused the rise of inflation.



Treatment: Energy crisis narrative

Why has inflation increased?

Please read the following information carefully. On the next page, we will ask you a question about the text below, so please read everything carefully.

We recently surveyed economic experts who study inflation in the United States. These experts emphasized that the **global energy crisis** was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

According to this explanation, shortages of oil and natural gas led to climbing energy prices. There are many reasons for the energy crisis, including new environmental regulations, reduced investments in fossil fuels, closure of nuclear plants, global political insecurities, reduction in gas supplies from Russia, as well as disruptions to global supply chains.

Energy is an important input for many firms and expenditures for energy account for a substantial share of production costs. Companies responded by passing along those higher costs in the form of higher prices to consumers, contributing to high inflation. In addition, many households rely on natural gas for heating and on gasoline produced from oil for driving. Therefore, price increases of oil and natural gas substantially increased the inflation rate.

In sum, the global energy crisis has led to higher electricity and gasoline bills for consumers as well as higher costs for firms, making them increase prices to cover the costs.

Here is one example explanation from our expert survey:

The price of energy has increased, with a knock-on effect on the cost of manufacture.

As you just read on the last page, experts emphasize that the global energy crisis was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

Please describe in your own words how the global energy crisis caused the rise of inflation.



Post-treatment outcomes

Your forecast for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.6%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Final questionnaire

Please answer the following three questions. These are the final questions of the survey.

Which candidate did you vote for in the 2020 Presidential Election?

- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden
- Other
- Did not vote

Are you liberal or conservative?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Neither liberal nor conservative
- Conservative
- Very conservative

What was the highest level of any course in economics, finance or business you ever took?

- I never took a course in economics, finance or business
- High school level
- College level
- Graduate level



4.2 Follow-up Survey

Inflation

We now want to ask you some questions about inflation.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year. It is defined as the yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services (Consumer Price Index).



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.6%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,086 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



How confident are you in your understanding of why inflation has increased?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Your forecast for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.6%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Which hypothesis do you think the researchers try to test in this study?



5 Household Survey: Priming Experiment (December 2021)

In December 2021 we conducted an experiment with a household sample in which we exogenously draw respondents' attention to government spending. Below, we post the key questions of this experiment.

Priming treatment (treated respondents only)

US government spending

What comes to your mind when you think about recent government spending programs?

Please write 3-4 sentences.



Post-treatment outcomes

Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.8%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,068 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



Your forecast for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.8%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



6 Household Survey: Experiment on Narratives and the Interpretation of Information (April 2022)

In April 2022 we conducted an experiment with a household sample. In a 2x2 design, respondents are first randomly assigned to either receive a narrative blaming the energy crisis for the increase in inflation or receive a narrative emphasizing the role of high government spending. Subsequently, they are randomly assigned to receive one of two different expert forecasts about future government spending. Below, we post the core survey questions of this experiment.

Pre-treatment questions

What is your age?

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 or older

What is your gender?

Male

Female

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

Less than primary school

Less than high school degree

High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)

Some college but no degree

Associate degree in college (2-year)

Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Professional degree (JD, MD)

What was your household income in 2021 in US dollars before taxes and deductions?

- Less than 15,000
- Between 15,000 and 25,000
- Between 25,000 and 50,000
- Between 50,000 and 75,000
- Between 75,000 and 100,000
- Between 100,000 and 150,000
- Between 150,000 and 200,000
- More than 200,000

In which region do you currently reside?

- Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA)
- Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)
- South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)
- West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

Which of these describes your current employment situation most accurately?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed and looking for a job
- Unemployed but not looking for a job
- Retired
- Student
- Other

Inflation

Some of the following questions are about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

On this page, we briefly explain in more detail what we mean when we refer to the inflation rate. Please read the definition carefully.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year. It is defined as the **yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services** (Consumer Price Index).

For instance, an inflation rate of 2% means that, on average, prices for goods and services rise by 2% over 12 months. That is, a typical bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 at the beginning of a year costs \$1,020 at the end of that year.

If the inflation rate is negative, it is referred to as **deflation**. This means that goods and services become less expensive from one year to the next.



Inflation

What do you think was the rate of inflation in the US over the last 12 months?
Please respond in %.

 %

Do you think that the inflation rate over the last 12 months was higher, lower, or about the same as inflation one year ago (from 24 months to 12 months ago)?

- Higher today
- About the same
- Lower today



Information about the US economy

The remainder of this study consists of two separate parts. Now, the first part begins. In this part, your task is to read, understand, and summarize information about the US economy.



Inflation has increased

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,085 in the next year.



Treatment: Energy crisis narrative

Why has inflation increased?

Please read the following information carefully. On the next page, we will ask you a question about the text below, so please read everything carefully.

We recently surveyed economic experts who study inflation in the United States. These experts emphasized that the **global energy crisis** was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

During the last two years, shortages of oil and natural gas have led to climbing energy prices. There are many reasons for the energy crisis, including new environmental regulations, reduced investments in fossil fuels, closure of nuclear plants, supply chain issues, and global political insecurities. **This has led to higher electricity and gasoline bills for consumers as well as higher costs for firms, making them increase prices to cover the costs, creating a historic surge in inflation.**

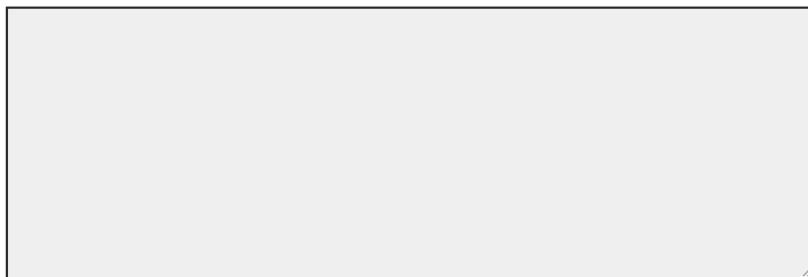
As one expert put it, “The price of energy has increased, with a knock-on effect on the cost of manufacture.”



Why has inflation increased?

As you just read on the last page, experts emphasize that the global energy crisis was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

Please describe in your own words how the “global energy crisis” caused the rise of inflation.



Treatment: Government spending narrative

Why has inflation increased?

Please read the following information carefully. On the next page, we will ask you a question about the text below, so please read everything carefully.

We recently surveyed economic experts who study inflation in the United States. These experts emphasized that **high demand caused by massive government spending** was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

During the last two years, Congress has unleashed a torrent of federal money to support the economy, approving roughly \$6 trillion in relief measures, including the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan featuring \$1,400 checks to most households.

The massive injection of money into the economy led to an extremely high demand for goods and services. **This resulted in too much money chasing too few goods, creating a historic surge in inflation.**

As one expert put it, “The increase in government spending has boosted aggregate demand, and hence inflation.”



Why has inflation increased?

As you just read on the last page, experts emphasize that high demand caused by massive government spending was an important cause for the rise of inflation.

Please describe in your own words how “high demand caused by massive government spending” caused the rise of inflation.



Treatment: Government spending increase

Expert forecast: Higher government spending ahead

The Survey of Professional Forecasters is a quarterly survey in which leading experts provide macroeconomic forecasts for the economy of the United States.

One of the key forecasts in the survey relates to changes in real federal government spending (that is, changes in federal government spending after adjusting for changes in the overall price level of goods and services).

According to a recent forecast by an expert from the Survey of Professional Forecasters, **real federal government spending will increase by six percentage points** over the next 12 months.



Treatment: Government spending decrease

Expert forecast: Lower government spending ahead

The Survey of Professional Forecasters is a quarterly survey in which leading experts provide macroeconomic forecasts for the economy of the United States.

One of the key forecasts in the survey relates to changes in real government spending (that is, changes in government spending after adjusting for changes in the overall price level of goods and services).

According to a recent forecast by an expert from the Survey of Professional Forecasters, **real federal government spending will decrease by four percentage points** over the next 12 months.



Post-treatment questions

Forecasting the development of the US economy

Now, the second part begins. In this part, your task is to forecast the future development of the US economy.



Your forecast for the future inflation rate

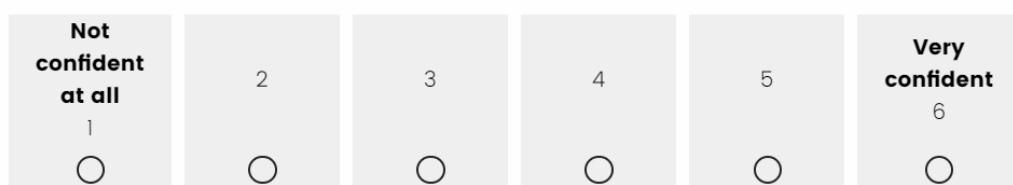
In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 8.5%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Your forecast for future government spending

Do you think real federal government spending will increase or decrease over the next 12 months?

Increase

Decrease



Your forecast for future government spending

By how many percentage points do you expect real government spending to decrease over the next 12 months?

percentage points

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).

Not confident at all	2	3	4	5	Very confident
1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Your forecast for future government spending

By how many percentage points do you expect real government spending to increase over the next 12 months?

percentage points

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Final questionnaire

Please answer the following three questions. These are the final questions of the survey.

Which candidate did you vote for in the 2020 Presidential Election?

- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden
- Other
- Did not vote

What was the highest level of any course in economics, finance or business you ever took?

- I never took a course in economics, finance or business
- High school level
- College level
- Graduate level

Which hypothesis do you think the researchers try to test with this survey?



7 Household Survey: Media Experiment (February 2022)

In February 2022, we conducted an experiment with a household sample in which we give respondents incentives to search for and read a news article about inflation. We post the survey questions for the three waves of the experiment below.

7.1 Wave 1: Baseline

On which device are you taking this survey?

- Mobile phone
- Tablet
- Desktop



The next question is about the following problem. In questionnaires like ours, sometimes there are participants who do not carefully read the questions and just quickly click through the survey. This compromises the results of research studies. To show that you are reading the survey carefully, please choose both “Very strongly interested” and “Not at all interested” as your answer to the **below** question.

Given the above, how interested are you in politics?

- Very strongly interested
- Very interested
- A little bit interested
- Not very interested
- Not at all interested



Please explain: What is your opinion about the yearly switch to daylight saving time? Do you like or dislike it? Please use about 15-30 words.



Please enter your Prolific ID:



What is your age?

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 34
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- 55 - 64
- 65 or older

Which gender describes you most accurately?

- Male
- Female

What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?

- Less than primary school
- Less than high school degree
- High school graduate (high school diploma or equivalent including GED)
- Some college but no degree
- Associate degree in college (2-year)
- Bachelor's degree in college (4-year)
- Master's degree
- Doctoral degree
- Professional degree (JD, MD)

What was your household income in 2021 in US dollars before taxes and deductions?

- Less than 15,000
- Between 15,000 and 25,000
- Between 25,000 and 50,000
- Between 50,000 and 75,000
- Between 75,000 and 100,000
- Between 100,000 and 150,000
- Between 150,000 and 200,000
- More than 200,000

In which region do you currently reside?

- Northeast (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT, NJ, NY, PA)
- Midwest (IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)
- South (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV, AL, KY, MS, TN, AR, LA, OK, TX)
- West (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY, AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

Which of these describes your current employment situation most accurately?

- Employed full-time
- Employed part-time
- Self-employed
- Unemployed and looking for a job
- Unemployed but not looking for a job
- Retired
- Student
- Other



Inflation

Some of the following questions are about your views on and beliefs about the inflation rate in the US.

On this page, we briefly explain in more detail what we mean when we refer to the inflation rate. Please read the definition carefully.

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year. It is defined as the **yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services** (Consumer Price Index).

For instance, an inflation rate of 2% means that, on average, prices for goods and services rise by 2% over 12 months. That is, a typical bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 at the beginning of a year costs \$1,020 at the end of that year.

If the inflation rate is negative, it is referred to as **deflation**. This means that goods and services become less expensive from one year to the next.



Inflation

What do you think was the rate of inflation in the US over the last 12 months? Please respond in %.

 %

Do you think that the inflation rate over the last 12 months is higher, lower, or about the same as inflation one year ago (from 24 months to 12 months ago)?

- Higher today
- About the same
- Lower today



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,070 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



How confident are you in your understanding of why inflation has increased?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).

Not confident at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very confident	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	



Your forecast for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).

Not confident at all	1	2	3	4	5	Very confident	6
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	



Final questionnaire

These are the final questions of the survey.

In politics, as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, a Democrat, or an Independent?

- Republican
- Democrat
- Independent

Who did you vote for in the 2020 presidential election?

- Donald Trump
- Joe Biden
- Other
- Did not vote



In politics, as of today, do you lean towards the Republican Party or lean towards the Democratic Party?

- The Republican Party
- The Democratic Party

Are you liberal or conservative?

- Very liberal
- Liberal
- Neither liberal nor conservative
- Conservative
- Very conservative



Which of the newspapers below have you read at least once during the last 12 months? Please check all that apply.

- Breitbart
- BuzzFeed News
- Boston Herald
- Chicago Sun-Times
- Daily Mail
- Drudge Report
- InfoWars
- Los Angeles Times
- New Republic
- Newsmax
- New York Daily News
- New York Post
- Palmer Report
- The Denver Post
- The Huffington Post
- The Mercury News
- The New York Times
- The Wall Street Journal
- The Washington Post
- The Washington Times
- USA Today
- I have not read any of the newspapers above during the last 12 months



Thank you!

Thank you so much for your time and responses.



7.2 Wave 2: Treatment

Inflation treatment

On the next page, we will assign you a topic and ask you to spend around **five minutes** to find a relevant newspaper article about the topic and carefully read through the article.

We will then ask you to provide a link to the article that you read and to provide a summary of the article in three to four sentences **using your own words**.

Everyone who provides a summary of the article in their own words in at least three to four sentences will receive an additional bonus of 50 cents.



The topic assigned to you is **US inflation**.

Please now spend around **five minutes** to find and read a relevant newspaper article about US inflation.

You can choose to read any newspaper article you want about US inflation. Choose a source that you would normally consult if you wanted to read up on US inflation.

This page will auto-advance after five minutes, but you can submit the page before if you manage to read through the article in less than five minutes.

0458



Please copy the link to the article you read about US inflation in the text box below.

Please write a summary of the article you read about US inflation. Use your own words and respond in three to four sentences.



If there are any remarks that you would like to make or clarifications that you would like to obtain, please do let us know by writing them into the field below.



Miami treatment

The topic assigned to you is **tourist attractions in Miami**.

Please now spend around **five minutes** to find and read a relevant article about tourist attractions in Miami.

You can choose to read any article you want about tourist attractions in Miami. Choose a source that you would normally consult if you wanted to read up on tourist attractions in Miami.

This page will auto-advance after five minutes, but you can submit the page before if you manage to read through the article in less than five minutes.

04 55



Please copy the link to the article you read about tourist attractions in Miami in the text box below.

Please write a summary of the article you read about tourist attractions in Miami. Use your own words and respond in three to four sentences.



7.3 Wave 3: Endline

Please enter your Prolific ID:



Inflation

After yesterday's announcement of the new inflation numbers, we want to ask some of the questions about inflation from the survey that you took a few days ago. **Please keep in mind that the questions today refer to the latest inflation numbers released yesterday.**

The inflation rate measures how much prices in the economy rise from year to year. It is defined as the yearly growth of the general price level of goods and services (Consumer Price Index).



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**

We are interested in what you think, so please describe your views and opinions.



Why has the inflation rate increased?

In previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost between \$1,015 and \$1,025 in the next year.

Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7.5%. At this rate, a bundle of goods and services that costs \$1,000 in one year, would cost \$1,075 in the next year.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



How confident are you in your understanding of why inflation has increased?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



Your forecast for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 7.5%.

What do you think the US inflation rate (in %) will be over the next 12 months?

 %

How confident are you in the above prediction?

Please answer on a scale from 1 (Not confident at all) to 6 (Very confident).



How many online and offline newspaper articles have you read about the latest inflation numbers that were released Thursday this week?



8 Expert Survey (November 2021)

In November 2021, we conducted a survey with academic experts. We post the core survey screens of the expert survey below.

Welcome

Thanks a lot for participating in this short survey! This study is about your beliefs about the inflation rate in the US. It is conducted by researchers from the University of Cologne.

Please consent to the processing of your data and our privacy policy. No conclusions about your person will be drawn. You can withdraw your consent at any time.

▼ Click on the triangle to display the full privacy policy.

The goal of this research study is to better understand how people think about inflation. Survey respondents will answer a series of questions on their views.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time, and for any reason, simply by closing your browser.

This study has been reviewed and given favourable opinion by the Institutional Review Board of the German Association for Experimental Economics Research.

If you require further information, please contact roth@wiso.uni-koeln.de.

Which rights do I have?

You have the right to obtain information about the personal data stored about you (Art. 15 GDPR). Should incorrect data be processed, you have the right to rectification (Art. 16 GDPR). When the legal requirements are met, you have the right to request the deletion or restriction of the processing and submit an objection against the processing of your data (Art. 17, 18 and 21 GDPR).

You have the right to complain to the competent data protection authorities.

The consent given here can be withdrawn at any time with effect for the future.

Thank you for taking the time to read this Participant Information Leaflet.

I consent

We are very grateful for your participation and highly value your careful and honest response.

We prepared a similar set of questions for respondents from the US general population. Therefore, some of the questions in this survey were designed such that laypeople can understand them.



Important

On the next page, you will encounter an open question in which we will ask you to describe your thoughts and views, using your own words.

From our experience, it can take about **2 minutes** to complete this question. Your responses are very valuable for this research project. Therefore, **please take your time to respond carefully.**



Why has the inflation rate increased?

The US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%.

Which factors do you think caused the increase in the inflation rate? Please respond in full sentences.



Your forecasts for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%.

Do you think the higher inflation rate is temporary or persistent?

- Temporary:** 12 months from now, the inflation rate will be **3% or lower** again.
- Persistent:** 12 months from now, the inflation rate will still be **higher than 3%**.



Your forecasts for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%.

Next, we would like you to think about the different things that may happen to inflation **over the next 12 months. In your view, what would you say is the percent chance that, over the next 12 months...**

(Please note: The numbers need to add up to 100%).)

The rate of inflation will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%



Your forecasts for the future

Recall that, in previous years, the US inflation rate has mostly varied between 1.5% and 2.5%. Recently, however, the inflation rate has increased. It is now at 6.2%.

Now, we would like you to think about the different things that may happen to inflation over the time between **four and five years from now** (that is, between 49 and 60 months from now). **In your view, what is the percent chance that, over the time between 49 and 60 months from now...**

(Please note: The numbers need to add up to 100%).

The rate of inflation will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of inflation will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 0% and 2%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 2% and 4%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 4% and 8%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be between 8% and 12%.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
The rate of deflation (the opposite of inflation) will be 12% or higher.	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%
Total	<input type="text" value="0"/>	%

