

Specific Topic of Interest – Primary and Secondary

After looking through the codebook on Outlook on Life Surveys, 2012, and my discontent over the upcoming presidential election selections, I thought I'd research American's belief in the federal government and how well they think it is a good representation of them and their wishes.

I'd further like to explore how 'life' effects this belief, through race, sex, employment and income using a young adult just out of college, middle age, and retirement age.

Published Academic Work Bibliographic Information

[Trust in federal government: The phenomenon and its antecedents](#) - D Owen, J Dennis, 2001

[Is it the middle that is frustrated? Americans' ideological positions and governmental trust](#), JR Hibbing, JT Smith - American Politics Research, 2004 - apr.sagepub.com

[Political trust revisited: Déjà vu all over again?](#), J Citrin, S Luks, 2001

[Stealth democracy: Americans' beliefs about how government should work](#), JR Hibbing, E Theiss-Morse – 2002

[Political Bubbles: Financial Crises and the Failure of American Democracy](#) - [N McCarty](#), [KT Poole](#), [H Rosenthal](#) - 2013

[Outcomes, process, and trust of civil servants](#) - [GG Van Ryzin](#) - Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 2011 - PMRA

[The irony of democracy: An uncommon introduction to American politics](#) - L Schubert, T Dye, H Zeigler – 2015

HYPOTHESIS:

I think the average American starts out believing in the federal government, their policies and all the things that the government does. There is a 'defining moment/s' somewhere towards middle age, so the belief has been shot to hell and as our personalities become more and more defined, what the government does isn't seen as representing what Americans want or need when it negatively effects American's way of life. Or if it is something that's needed, pieces of this policy are left undefined, or just not thought of, so the policy negatively affects more people than it helps, which makes the government policy makers seem out of touch with reality. Retirement, *if* the individual is able to retire, the belief/disbelief will be determined by how comfortably you can live afterwards.

I think the American public was distrustful of the federal government before the Iraq war, but that just deepened the distrust. Then a repeat of the Great 1929 Depression that was called 'The Recession' and all its ramifications, many of which we're still living though, further strengthened that distrust. Retirement, *if* the individual is able to retire, the belief/disbelief will be determined by how comfortably you can live after.

Codebook

W1_CASEID: Case ID (Wave 1) – First wave of respondents

W1_A1: How interested are you in what's going on in government and politics?

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Extremely interested | 4 Slightly interested |
| 2 Very interested | 5 Not interested at all |
| 3 Moderately interested | |

W1_A4: In 2008, John McCain ran on the Republican ticket against Barack Obama who ran on the Democratic ticket. Do you remember whether or not you voted in that election?

- | | |
|-------|------|
| 1 Yes | 2 No |
|-------|------|

W1_A5A: Who did you vote for?

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1 John McCain | 2 Barack Obama |
|---------------|----------------|

W1_A12: Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

- | | |
|-----------|--------------|
| 1 Approve | 2 Disapprove |
|-----------|--------------|

W1_B1: How much do government officials care what people like you think?

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 1 A great deal | 4 A little |
| 2 A lot | 5 Not at all |
| 3 A moderate amount | |

W1_B2: How much can people like you affect what the government does?

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| 1 A great deal | 4 A little |
| 2 A lot | 5 Not at all |
| 3 A moderate amount | |

W1_B3: How often does the federal government do what most Americans want it to do?

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Always | 4 Once in a while |
| 2 Most of the time | 5 Never |
| 3 About half the time | |

W1_B4: Generally speaking, how angry do you feel about the way things are going in the country these days?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Extremely angry | 4 A little angry |
| 2 Very angry | 5 Not angry at all |
| 3 Somewhat angry | |

W1_C1: Generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an Independent, or something else?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Republican | 3 Independent |
| 2 Democrat | 4 Something else, please specify |

W1_D1: How would you rate Barack Obama?

W1_D12: How would you rate The Republican Party?

W1_D12: How would you rate The Democratic Party?

W1_F1: When you think about your future, are you generally optimistic, pessimistic, or neither optimistic nor pessimistic?

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1 Optimistic | 2 Pessimistic |
| 3 Neither | |

W1_F2: And when you think about the future of the United States as a whole, are you generally optimistic, pessimistic, or neither optimistic nor pessimistic?

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1 Optimistic | 2 Pessimistic |
| 3 Neither | |

W1_F3: A basic American belief has been that if you work hard you can get ahead and reach the goals you set and more. Is this true or false today?

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Extremely true | 2 Moderately true |
| 3 Slightly true | 4 Neither |
| 5 Slightly false | 6 Moderately false |
| 7 Extremely false | |

W1_F4_A: [To own a home] For yourself and people like you, how easy or hard is it to reach these goals?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 Very hard | 2 Somewhat hard |
| 3 Somewhat easy | 4 Very easy |

W1_F4_B: [To have a financially secure retirement] For yourself and people like you, how easy or hard is it to reach these goals?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 Very hard | 2 Somewhat hard |
| 3 Somewhat easy | 4 Very easy |

W1_F4_D: [To become wealthy] For yourself and people like you, how easy or hard is it to reach these goals?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 Very hard | 2 Somewhat hard |
| 3 Somewhat easy | 4 Very easy |

W1_F4_E: [To do better than one's parents did] For yourself and people like you, how easy or hard is it to reach these goals?

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 Very hard | 2 Somewhat hard |
| 3 Somewhat easy | 4 Very easy |

W1_F6: How far along the road to your American Dream do you think you will ultimately get on a 10-point scale where 1 is not far at all and 10 nearly there?

- 1 Not far at all in achieving the American Dream
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 Nearly there in achieving the American Dream

W1_G2: Now thinking about the country's economy, would you say that compared to one year ago, the nation's economy is now better, about the same, or worse?

- | | |
|----------|------------------|
| 1 Better | 2 About the same |
| 3 Worse | |

W1_G3A: Do you think the economy, in the country as a whole, will be better, about the same, or worse in 12 months?

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 Better | 2 About the same |
| 3 Worse | |
| 5 Disagree strongly | |

W1_I1: How well does the U.S. Congress represent all Americans?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Extremely well | 2 Very well |
| 3 Moderately well | 4 A little well |
| 5 Not well at all | |

W1_I2: How well does the U.S. Congress represent you?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Extremely well | 2 Very well |
| 3 Moderately well | 4 A little well |
| 5 Not well at all | |

W1_I2: How well does the U.S. Congress represent you?

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1 Extremely well | 2 Very well |
| 3 Moderately well | 4 A little well |
| 5 Not well at all | |

W1_J3A_C: [Unemployment in the U.S.] Compared to 2008 would you say the following is now better or worse?

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 Much better | 2 Somewhat better |
| 3 About the same | 4 Somewhat worse |
| 5 Much worse | |

W1_K1_A: [The government in Washington] How much do you think you can trust the following institutions?

- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 Just about always | 2 Most of the time |
| 3 Only some of the time | 4 Never |

W1_N1I: How would you rate Congress?

W1_P2: People talk about social classes such as the poor, the working class, the middle class, the upper-middle class, and the upper class. Which of these classes would you say you belong to?

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1 Poor | 2 Working class |
| 3 Middle class | 4 Upper middle class |
| 5 Upper class | |

W1_P11: Is anyone in your household currently unemployed?

- | | |
|-------|------|
| 1 Yes | 2 No |
|-------|------|

W1_P13: Are you a citizen of the United States?

- | | |
|-------|------|
| 1 Yes | 2 No |
|-------|------|

W1_P13A: Were you born a United States citizen or are you a naturalized U.S. citizen?

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Born a US citizen | 2 Naturalized US citizen |
|---------------------|--------------------------|

W1_P13B: In what year did you become a U.S. citizen? Please enter the full year when you became a citizen, for example 1962 or 2000.

- | | |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1 Before 1960 | 2 1960 to 1969 |
| 3 1970 to 1979 | 4 1980 to 1989 |
| 5 1990 to 1999 | 6 2000 to 2009 |

W1_P15: Do you personally, or jointly with a spouse, have any money invested in the stock market right now either in an individual stock or in a mutual fund?

- | | |
|-------|------|
| 1 Yes | 2 No |
|-------|------|

W1_P20: Which of the following income groups includes YOUR personal annual income (Do not include the income of other members of your household)?

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Less than \$5,000 | 2 \$5,000 to \$7,499 |
| 3 \$7,500 to \$9,999 | 4 \$10,000 to \$12,499 |
| 5 \$12,500 to \$14,999 | 6 \$15,000 to \$19,999 |
| 7 \$20,000 to \$24,999 | 8 \$25,000 to \$29,999 |
| 9 \$30,000 to \$34,999 | 10 \$35,000 to \$39,999 |
| 11 \$40,000 to \$49,999 | 12 \$50,000 to \$59,999 |
| 13 \$60,000 to \$74,999 | 14 \$75,000 to \$84,999 |
| 15 \$85,000 to \$99,000 | 16 \$100,000 to \$124,999 |
| 17 \$125,000 to \$149,999 | 18 \$150,000 to \$174,999 |
| 19 \$175,000 or more | |

Based on 2034 valid cases out of 2294 total cases.

PPAGECAT: Age - 7 Categories

- | | |
|---------|---------|
| 1 18-24 | 2 25-34 |
| 3 35-44 | 4 45-54 |
| 5 55-64 | 6 65-74 |
| 7 75+ | |

PPEDUCAT: Education (Categorical)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 Less than high school | 2 High school |
| 3 Some college | 4 Bachelor's degree or higher |

PPETHM: Race / Ethnicity

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 White, Non-Hispanic | 2 Black, Non-Hispanic |
| 3 Other, Non-Hispanic | 4 Hispanic |
| 5 2+ Races, Non-Hispanic | |

PPGENDER: Gender

- | | |
|--------|----------|
| 1 Male | 2 Female |
|--------|----------|

PPHHHEAD: Household Head

0 No

1 Yes

PPMARIT: Marital Status

1 Married

3 Divorced

5 Never married

2 Widowed

4 Separated

6 Living with partner

PPREG9: Region 9 - Based on State of Residence

1 New England

3 East-North Central

5 South Atlantic

7 West-South Central

9 Pacific

2 Mid Atlantic

4 West-North Central

6 East-South Central

8 Mountain

PPSTATEN: State

11 ME

13 VT

15 RI

21 NY

23 PA

32 IN

34 MI

41 MN

43 MO

45 SD

47 KS

52 MD

54 VA

56 NC

58 GA

61 KY

63 AL

71 AR

73 OK

81 MT

83 WY

85 NM

87 UT

91 WA

93 CA

12 NH

14 MA

16 CT

22 NJ

31 OH

33 IL

35 WI

42 IA

44 ND

46 NE

51 DE

53 DC

55 WV

57 SC

59 FL

62 TN

64 MS

72 LA

74 TX

82 ID

84 CO

86 AZ

88 NV

92 OR

94 AK

