**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](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Z_DTwljcixsC&oi=fnd&pg=PA209&dq=americans+and+the+federal+government&ots=v_YCF_FMgc&sig=3anI4YN4PAyzYT6CSTXYKrqfoT8) - D Owen, J Dennis, 2001

### [Is it the middle that is frustrated? Americans' ideological positions and governmental trust](http://apr.sagepub.com/content/32/6/652.short), JR Hibbing, JT Smith - American Politics Research, 2004 - apr.sagepub.com

### [Political trust revisited: Déjà vu all over again?](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Ibhs3vKItIwC&oi=fnd&pg=PA9&dq=related:GECQ8-Kndn0J:scholar.google.com/&ots=FfpnieEE2g&sig=26tPSsFZoCOKqd1Ujwy6xBqJjlE), J Citrin, S Luks, 2001

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### [Political Bubbles: Financial Crises and the Failure of American Democracy](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=0QeCe3bZSS0C&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=americans+belief+in+the+federal+government&ots=CCoTDKFkfH&sig=ISfmf59rXQc-tc0o3p2u6ZTph-A) - [N McCarty](https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=sGWqvYwAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=sra), [KT Poole](https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=eRmBw1AAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=sra), [H Rosenthal](https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=Nzv-VYsAAAAJ&hl=en&oi=sra) - 2013

### [Outcomes, process, and trust of civil servants](http://jpart.oxfordjournals.org/content/21/4/745.short) - [GG Van Ryzin](https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=LMZsS60AAAAJ&hl=en&oi=sra) - Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory, 2011 - PMRA

[The irony of democracy: An uncommon introduction to American politics](https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=op-aBAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=americans+belief+in+the+federal+government&ots=EpufcXMQ_h&sig=686aNszxW8CjsCP88XiTBNxxN1A) - 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 distust. 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 Before1960 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 2 Widowed

3 Divorced 4 Separated

5 Never married 6 Living with partner

PPREG9: Region 9 - Based on State of Residence

1 New England 2 Mid Atlantic

3 East-North Central 4 West-North Central

5 South Atlantic 6 East-South Central

7 West-South Central 8 Mountain

9 Pacific

PPSTATEN: State

11 ME 12 NH

13 VT 14 MA

15 RI 16 CT

**21 NY** 22 NJ

**23 PA** **31 OH**

32 IN **33 IL**

34 MI 35 WI

41 MN 42 IA

43 MO 44 ND

45 SD 46 NE

47 KS 51 DE

52 MD 53 DC

54 VA 55 WV

56 NC 57 SC

**58 GA** **59 FL**

61 KY 62 TN

63 AL 64 MS

71 AR 72 LA

73 OK **74 TX**

81 MT 82 ID

83 WY **84 CO**

85 NM 86 AZ

87 UT 88 NV

91 WA 92 OR

**93 CA** 94 AK