

Making Sense of the Social World¹

Read each “belief” and the statements that follow carefully. Circle the ONE statement (a, b, c, or d) that most closely reflects your personal “belief.” Below the question circle the ONE number that most closely reflects how strongly you hold this “belief,” with 0 representing no opinion, 1 reflecting a very weak “belief,” and 5 reflecting a very strongly held “belief.”

1. It is the responsibility of a State to provide adequate funding for K-12. When I think about extracurricular activities, I tend to believe that...
- (a) Only those activities directly linked to the core academic program that improve academic success (such as a mathematics competition) or those activities that foster entrepreneurship in young people (such as Future Business Leaders of America) should be supported by the government.
 - (b) It is the responsibility of parents and families to cover the costs of extracurricular activities. Parents are best suited to determine appropriate extracurricular activities and to pay fees. Furthermore, many young people would benefit from greater participation in community-based extracurricular activities outside of the public school system.
 - (c) States should provide funding to support extracurricular activities so children from a wide variety of backgrounds have access to affordable after school activities that allow them to pursue a wide variety of interests and provide mentorship/coaching/supervision.
 - (d) The government should fully fund extracurricular activities that allow students to pursue their own interests, learn at their own pace, and to integrate formal knowledge with practical aspects of their lives. Our public school systems provide an excellent setting for young people to discover the power of collaborating with others.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0	1	2	3	4	5
	No opinion	Weak		Moderate		Strong

2. When I think about *environmental policy*, I tend to believe that ...
- (a) Profit-making activity sometimes generate “costs” on individuals and communities even when they do not participate in the private transactions. As a result, market failures (such as pollution) are likely to emerge and to persist; therefore, government policy that regulates business to protect the environment is worth pursuing.
 - (b) Most profit-making activity relies on the exploitation of nature. This exploitation, along with the desperate need for capitalism to “grow or die” suggests that confronting the environmental crises that threaten our planet requires confronting capitalism.
 - (c) Government regulation in the name of “protecting the environment” has gotten out of hand and we should scale back how much government intervention we are subjected to. States and local communities are best equipped to make decisions about their natural resources and the federal government should surrender power accordingly.
 - (d) To appropriately manage the environment we need to develop more comprehensive private property rights around topics such as the “carbon rights” so that markets can effectively address environmental concerns such as climate change and so that governments do not need to get involved.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0	1	2	3	4	5
	No opinion	Weak		Moderate		Strong

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3. When I think about *higher education*, I tend to believe that ...

- (a) The purpose of higher education is to impart tradition and knowledge to the next generation of students to protect and preserve our culture and fulfill the employment needs of the economy. Governance of campuses should be left to experts who know best. Since individuals benefit most from college degrees the cost of the degree should be an individual burden.
- (b) The purpose of higher education is to assist students in exploring their personal development and growth in mind, body and spirit. Colleges and universities should offer a wide range of intellectual, artistic and professional development opportunities. Higher education is the key to social mobility. Higher education serves the public good and government should provide financial support to decrease the burden of the cost.
- (c) The purpose of higher education is to provide necessary disruptive innovation to our society. A college degree should promote critical and creative thinking to enable students to solve the real world problems of today. Governance of campuses should be shared equally among all stakeholders. Higher education should be free and accessible to all.
- (d) The purpose of higher education is to educate the elite few who can afford it and have the intellectual capacity to provide future leadership and fulfill the most technically challenging fields. Faculty tenure should be abolished and a merit pay system based on graduation/employment rates should be implemented. Our academic institutions should be run efficiently like businesses.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0	1	2	3	4	5
	No opinion	Weak		Moderate		Strong

4. When I think about *policy responses to poverty*, I tend to believe that ...

- (a) The primary purpose of welfare programs is to maintain a pool of cheap labor and control over a potentially rebellious lower class. Effective public policy within a market economy will require something like “asset-based redistribution.”²
- (b) Misguided government policies can foster dependence and contribute to poverty. These approaches should end. Government should also modify eligibility requirements for social welfare programs to change individual behavior toward increased self-reliance and responsibility.
- (c) Public policy should challenge market forces that cause poverty. More specifically, some combination of higher minimum wages, means-tested benefits for the poor, federally-funded day-care centers, “workfare”/public jobs for the poor, and a stronger social safety net are the best ways to confront poverty.
- (d) Poverty programs should seek to foster virtue and social order without destabilizing the institutions of family, church, and neighborhood. Well-designed poverty programs could eventually eliminate much of the need for intervention by government.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0	1	2	3	4	5
	No opinion	Weak		Moderate		Strong

² *Asset-based redistribution* is a policy proposal that advocates giving all citizens ownership rights to assets such as workplaces and residences.

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5. When I think about *equality for women*, I tend to believe that ...

- (a) Equality under the law should be supplemented by affirmative action programs designed to require employers to make concerted efforts to locate qualified female applicants for jobs. Market-determined wages can be unfair due to stereotyping, therefore anti-discrimination laws serve an important role in our economy.
- (b) The possibility of meaningful policy reform on women's equality is severely limited as long as government remains an instrument in the hands of the ruling class. The liberation of women requires a broad-based social movement to abolish both capitalism and patriarchy.
- (c) Both government and the market are to blame for undermining women's roles and threatening the family. Meaningful policy reform must revitalize the market's potential for producing wealth while protecting women and families from the corrosive impact of market forces. Government should consciously promote traditional values and women's roles.
- (d) Discrimination against women could be significantly reduced if we gave markets more freedom. Virtually all government intervention should be abolished, and public life should remove all references to women's equality in laws and public policies.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0	1	2	3	4	5
	No opinion	Weak		Moderate		Strong

6. When I think about *immigration*, I tend to believe that ...

- (a) Immigration policy must carefully balance our commitment to the “melting pot” ideals that made this country what it is today along with protecting the integrity of our existing institutions. People who are here illegally should have a potential “path to citizenship” if they can demonstrate that they will be productive, contributing members of society.
- (b) Labor deserves the same freedom and the ability to move across international borders that capital currently enjoys. Immigration policy that restricts the movement of people undermines basic human rights and is not in the best interests of working people. A more open immigration policy can foster greater solidarity across international borders.
- (c) People across the globe have different abilities and make different choices. When these differences are rewarded in the marketplace, the United States economy benefits. Appropriate immigration policy would auction opportunities for individuals to migrate to the U.S. and either individuals or businesses should be allowed to bid on these openings.
- (d) Immigration policy impacts our culture and our communities. The U.S. government should prohibit migration of individuals to the U.S. from “suspect” populations outside of our country and it should dramatically limit how many people are allowed to move here at all. We also should aggressively prosecute people who are in this country illegally.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0	1	2	3	4	5
	No opinion	Weak		Moderate		Strong

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7. When I think about our *political process*, I tend to believe that ...

- (a) The selection of our elected representatives is too important a task to allow money to corrupt it. All political campaigns should be publicly funded and no individual, corporation, or organization should be allowed to try to “buy” an election.
- (b) Money is speech and should be protected in a similar fashion. Individuals, corporations, and organizations should be free to spend as they see fit to support candidates and causes of their choosing. Unrestricted money in our political processes will foster healthy competition of candidates and ideas.
- (c) Government regulation of campaign spending is misguided. More appropriate government involvement in our electoral process would focus on protecting the integrity of our elections. Restrictions on voter registration are important to reduce voter fraud.
- (d) The role of money in politics has compromised our democracy. The Citizens United Supreme Court ruling should be reversed, the so-called “Super PACs” should be eliminated from our political process, and some reasonable restrictions on campaign spending should be revisited.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0 No opinion	1 Weak	2	3 Moderate	4	5 Strong
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8. When I think about *financial markets and Wall Street*, I tend to believe that ...

- (a) Government involvement in financial affairs is misguided and inappropriate. Government bailouts for institutions deemed “too big to fail” would not be necessary if the government didn’t try to provide financial services. We don’t need financial entities created by the government (such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac).
- (b) Government regulation of financial markets is necessary for economic stability. Strong firewalls should exist between commercial banks and investment banks. The financial deregulation efforts of the 1980s and 1990s were misguided and should be revisited beyond modest the financial regulation of recent years.
- (c) Efficient financial markets provide a valuable service in allocating scarce capital resources and fostering economic growth. Competition and unfettered innovation should be encouraged. Financial deregulation has been good for economy and continued deregulation is worth pursuing.
- (d) Financial capital (e.g., Wall Street) has grown in power in recent decades in ways that distort our economy and that undermine other sectors. Appropriate policy would break up any institution that is “too big to fail” and seriously explore placing our banking system under government control.

How strongly do you hold this belief?	0 No opinion	1 Weak	2	3 Moderate	4	5 Strong
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