2011 Hamilton College Youth Poll on Poverty and Policy

Codebook

Designed and Analyzed by:

Paul Hagstrom, Professor of Economics And students in Economics 350 (The Economics of Poverty)

Eamanon Anderson

Elizabeth Bilharz

Lukas Bridenbeck

Shelagh Browne

Tiago Correia

Chiranjeeva Dayananda

Philip DiDonato

Jonathan Fass

Sarah Flisnik

Rebekah Gibson

Camden Griffith

Katrina Keay

Alexander Lawson

Yazan Sehwail-Ramahi

Jacob Taylor

Pauline Wafula

Survey Administered by:

Knowledge Networks

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Original Survey Questions

Q1 Considering the recent economic situation, would you say that poverty is...

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
A serious problem in the United States	1,370	82.93	83.13
Not a serious problem	278	16.83	16.87
	4	0.24	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q2 What percentage of the US population do you think lives in poverty?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
35%.	700	42.37	42.66
25%.	499	30.21	30.41
15%.	361	21.85	22.00
5%.	81	4.90	4.94
	11	0.67	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q3 Below what annual income should a family of 4 be considered poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
\$12,000	295	17.86	18.06
\$22,000	576	34.87	35.27
\$32,000	498	30.15	30.5

\$42,000	264	15.98	16.17	
	19	1.15		
Total	1.652	100.00		

Q4. Do the growing incomes of the wealthiest people in the country negatively affect the quality of life of those with lower incomes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	502	30.39	30.80
Yes	1,128	68.28	69.20
	22	1.33	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q5. Is your financial situation better or worse than it was two years ago?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Better	437	26.45	26.68
Worse	618	37.41	37.73
The same	583	35.29	35.59
	14	0.85	
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q6. In your opinion, which is a bigger problem in the United States?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Racism	326	19.73	19.99
Poverty	1,305	79.00	80.01
	21	1.27	
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q6. In your opinion, which is a bigger problem in the United States?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Access to health care	947	57.32	58.17
Poverty	681	41.22	41.83
	24	1.45	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q6. In your opinion, which is a bigger problem in the United States?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The threat of terrorism	522	31.60	32.24
Poverty	1,097	66.40	67.76
	33	66.40	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q6. In your opinion, which is a bigger problem in the United States?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Income inequality	789	47.76	48.82
Poverty	827	50.06	51.18
	36	2.18	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q6. In your opinion, which is a bigger problem in the United States?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The budget deficit	954	57.75	58.60
Poverty	674	40.80	41.40
	24	1.45	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q7. Please indicate which of the following you consider to be major causes of poverty

a. Drug abuse

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,044	63.20	64.29
No	580	35.11	35.71
•	28	1.69	
Total	1,652	100.00	

b. Lack of health insurance/medical bills

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,161	70.28	71.80
No	456	27.60	28.20
	35	2.12	
Total	1,652	100.00	

c. Lack of skills

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,043	63.14	64.42
No	576	34.87	35.58
	33	2.00	
Total	1,652	100.00	

d. Single-parent families

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,091	66.04	67.39

No	528	31.96	32.61
	33	2.00	
Total	1,652	100.00	

e. Lack of available jobs

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,355	82.02	83.69
No	264	15.98	16.31
	33	2.00	
Total	1,652	100.00	

f . The welfare system

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,028	62.23	63.81
No	583	35.29	36.19
	41	2.48	
Total	1,652	100.00	

g. Immigration and immigrants

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	827	50.06	51.18
No	789	47.76	48.82
	36	2.18	
Total	1,652	100.00	

h. Lack of willingness to work

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,066	64.53	65.84
No	553	33.47	34.16
	33	2.00	
Total	1,652	100.00	

i. Decline in moral values

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	921	55.75	57.06
No	693	41.95	42.94
•	38	2.30	
Total	1,652	100.00	

j. Poor quality of public schools

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	918	55.57	56.77
No	699	42.31	43.23
	35	2.12	
Total	1,652	100.00	

k. Racism and discrimination

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	684	41.40	42.35
No	931	56.36	57.65
	37	2.24	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q8. In your opinion, are people more likely to be poor because of bad luck or because of bad choices?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Bad luck	283	17.13	17.36
Bad choices	1,347	81.54	82.64
•	22	1.33	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q9. With which of the following statements do you agree most?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The wealthy have a responsibility to help the poor	969	58.66	59.74
The wealthy do not have a responsibility to help the poor	653	39.53	40.26
	30	1.82	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q10. In comparison to people with incomes above the poverty line, how much effort do you think that poor people put into their work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less effort	354	21.43	21.78
Same amount	775	46.91	47.69
More effort	496	30.02	30.52
	27	1.63	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q11. How many of the poor do you believe have the ability to raise themselves out of poverty?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Most do	457	27.66	28.12
Some do	951	57.57	58.52
Most do not	217	13.14	13.35
•	27	1.63	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q12. If the average person you know was to receive \$5,000 do you think he or she would use the money responsibly?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	702	42.49	42.23
No	922	55.81	56.77
•	28	1.69	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q13. If an average poor person was to receive \$5,000 do you think he or she would use the money responsibly?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	778	47.09	48.14
No	838	50.73	51.86
	36	2.18	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q14. Do you think poor households manage their money wisely?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	825	49.94	50.89
No	796	48.18	49.11
	31	1.88	
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q15. Current food assistance programs, such as the food stamp program, provide either vouchers or the equivalent of a debit card each month that can be used only to purchase food in grocery stores. Would you favor changing our government food assistance programs to cash transfer programs or would you favor keeping the current system?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Change to cash	177	10.71	10.91
Keep current system	1,446	87.53	89.09
	29	1.76	
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q16a. If you were president, how would you rank the following national issues?

Please select the most important issue from the following.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Unemployment	819	49.58	50.09
Health care	272	16.46	16.64
The national debt	437	26.45	26.73
National security	107	6.48	6.54
•	17	1.03	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q16b. Please select the most important issue from the remaining.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Poverty	379	22.94	22.94
Unemployment	1,046	63.32	86.26
Income inequality	214	12.95	99.21
	13	0.79	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q18. In your opinion, how effective are government anti-poverty programs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Effective	313	18.95	19.93
Not effective	1,306	79.06	80.67
	33	2.00	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q19. What effect do our current anti-poverty programs have on the overall economy?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The hurt the economy	525	31.78	32.55
They help the economy	378	22.88	23.43
They have no effect	710	42.98	44.02
	39	2.36	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q20. Should the government spend more money, less money, or about the same amount of money on antipoverty programs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
More	539	32.63	33.54
Less	452	27.36	28.13
About the same	616	37.29	38.33
	45	2.72	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q21. In your opinion, which of the following anti-poverty programs is most effective?

Cash assistance for the poor such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The Unemployment insurance program

Tax-based assistance such as the earned income tax credit

The food stamp program

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Cash assistance for the	240	14.53	14.94
poor such as TANF			
The unemployment	331	20.04	20.61
insurance program			
Tax-based assistance	319	19.31	19.86
such as the earned			
income tax credit			
The food stamp	716	43.34	44.58
program			
	46	2.78	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q22. Do you believe that anti-poverty programs lower the poverty rate?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	588	35.59	36.50
No	1,023	61.92	63.50
	41	2.48	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q23. Do you believe that most people who receive aid from anti-poverty programs actually need it?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	971	58.78	60.24
No	641	38.80	39.76
•	40	2.42	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q24. Do you believe that anti-poverty programs discourage people from working?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,017	61.56	63.05
No	596	36.08	36.95
•	39	2.36	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q25. Do you believe that the government is morally obligated to help the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,143	69.19	70.56
No	477	28.87	29.44
	32	1.94	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q26. Would you be in favor of or opposed to:

a. Increasing cash assistance to the poor

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
In favor of	567	34.32	35.20
Opposed to	1,044	63.20	64.80
	41	2.48	
Total	1,652	100.00	

b. Increasing food and housing assistance

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
In favor of	1,154	69.85	71.59
Opposed to	458	27.72	28.41
•	40	2.42	
Total	1,652	100.00	

c. Increasing the minimum wage

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
In favor of	1,248	75.54	77.76
Opposed to	357	21.61	22.24
•	47	2.85	
Total	1,652	100.00	

d. Increasing tax-based assistance such as the earned income credit

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
In favor of	1,125	68.10	70.01
Opposed to	482	29.18	29.99
	45	2.72	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q27. How do you believe the government could most help the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Increasing cash assistance	105	6.36	6.50
Increasing minimum wage	516	31.23	31.93
Increasing earned income	111	6.72	6.87

credit				
Reducing unemployment	884	53.51	54.70	
	36	2.18		
Total	1 652	100.00		

Q28. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

"Those with high incomes, say \$200,000 or more (roughly the top 4% of earners), have a responsibility to aid the poor more than they do now."

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Agree	904	54.72	56.01
Disagree	710	42.98	43.99
	38	2.30	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q29. Do you think those with incomes above \$200,000 (roughly the top 4% of earners) should pay higher taxes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,015	61.44	62.93
No, should pay about the same as they do now	506	30.63	31.37
No, should pay less than they do now	92	5.57	5.70
	39	2.36	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q30. In your opinion, who should pay more in taxes to aid the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The top 4% of incomes	564	34.14	34.97
The top 25% of incomes	316	19.13	19.59
The top 50% of incomes	173	10.47	10.93
All households should	92	5.57	5.70
pay more Nobody should pay	468	28.33	29.01
more	20	2.26	
•	39	2.36	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q31. Revenue for government assistance for the poor should come mostly from

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Taxes on wages or labor	288	17.43	17.99
income			

Taxes on investment	158	9.56	27.86
income			
Taxes on inheritances	71	4.30	32.29
Taxes on corporations	739	44.73	46.16
Other	345	20.88	21.55
	51	3.09	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q32. If the government decides to reduce its overall spending, what area should be reduced the most?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Defense spending	886	53.63	55.24
Infrastructure spending like roads and bridges	316	19.13	19.70
Social security and programs for the elderly	120	7.26	7.48
Programs that aid low income families	282	17.07	17.58
	48	2.91	
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q33. Would you be willing to pay more in federal income tax if the purpose was to help the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	632	38.26	39.43
No	971	58.78	60.57
	49	2.97	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q34. What level of education does your most educated parent or guardian have?

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Some high school	145	8.78	9.01
High school	346	20.94	21.50
Some college	306	18.52	19.02
Associates degree (2 year college)	180	10.90	11.19
Bachelor's degree (4 year college)	351	21.25	21.81
Beyond college (masters, doctorate, etc)	281	17.01	17.46
•	43	2.60	
Total	1,652	100.00	

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	641	38.80	39.49
No	982	59.44	60.51
	29	1.76	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q36. How long did it take you to find a job?

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percent
Less than 3 months	99	5.99	15.49
3-6 months	99	5.99	15.49
6-12 months	70	4.24	10.95
Over one year	66	4.00	10.33
I'm still unemployed	305	18.46	47.73
	1,013	61.32	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q37. How would you classify your household income?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Lower class	413	25.00	25.57
Lower middle class	813	49.21	50.34
Upper middle class	378	22.88	23.41
Upper class	11	0.67	0.68
	37	2.24	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q38. Do you intend to vote in the next year's presidential election?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	1,196	72.40	73.87
No	423	25.61	26.13
	33	2.00	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Constructed Demographic Variables

Lost Job

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Lost job in past 2 years	982	59.44	60.51
Not lost job	641	38.80	39.49
	29	1.76	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Voter

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Nonvoter	423	25.61	26.13
Voter	1,196	72.40	73.87
	33	2.00	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Female

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Male	839	50.79	50.79
Female	813	49.21	49.21
Total	1,652	100.00	

Household Head

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Not Head	850	51.45	51.45
Head	802	48.55	48.55
Total	1,652	100.00	

Nonwhite

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
White	1,081	65.44	65.44
Nonwhite	571	34.56	34.56
Total	1,652	100.00	

Hispanic

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Not Hispanic	1,367	82.75	82.75
Hispanic	285	17.25	17.25
Total	1,652	100.00	

Married

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Not Married	1,230	74.46	74.46
Married	422	25.54	25.54
Total	1,652	100.00	

Education

Free	equency Percent	Valid Percent	

HS or less	638	38.62	38.62	
College	1,014	61.38	61.38	
Total	1,652	100.00		

Education of Parents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
HS or less	491	29.72	30.52
College	1,118	67.68	69.48
	43	2.60	
Total	1,652	100.00	

Age

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
24 or older	856	51.82	51.82
23 or younger	796	48.18	48.18
Total	1,652	100.00	

Poor

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Not Poor	1,275	77.18	77.18
Poor	377	22.82	22.82
Total	1 652	100.00	

Constructed from survey questions. Some are replicates of survey questions above.

Q1 Currently, would you say that poverty is...

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Not serious problem	278	16.83	16.83
Serious problem	1,370	82.93	99.76
	4	0.24	100.00
Total	1 652	100.00	

Q2 What percentage of the US population do you think lives in poverty?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 35%	941	56.96	56.96
35%	700	42.37	99.33
	11	0.67	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q4 Do the growing incomes of the wealthiest people in the country negatively affect the quality of life of those with lower incomes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	502	30.39	30.39
Yes	1,128	68.28	98.67
	22	1.33	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q5 Is your financial situation better or worse than it was two years ago?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The same or better	1,020	61.74	61.74
Worse	618	37.41	99.15
	14	0.85	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q6 In your opinion, which is a bigger problem in the United States?

a. Racism or poverty

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Poverty	1,305	79.00	79.00
Racism	326	19.73	98.73
	21	1.27	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

b. Access to health care or poverty

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Poverty	681	41.22	41.22
Health Care	947	57.32	98.55
	24	1.45	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

c. Threat of terrorism or poverty

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Poverty	1,097	66.40	66.40
Terrorism	522	31.60	98.00
	33	2.00	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

d. Income inequality or poverty

Frequency Percent	Valid Percent
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Poverty	827	50.06	50.06	
Inequality	789	47.76	97.82	
	36	2.18	100.00	
Total	1,652	100.00		

e. The budget deficit or poverty

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Poverty	674	40.80	40.80
Deficit	954	57.75	98.55
	24	1.45	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q8 In your opinion, are people more likely to be poor because of bad luck or because of bad choices?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Bad Choices	1,347	81.54	81.54
Bad Luck	283	17.13	98.67
	22	1.33	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q9 With which of the following statements do you agree most?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
The wealthy have a responsibility to help the poor	683	41.34	41.34
The wealthy do not have a responsibility to help the poor	969	58.66	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q10 In comparison to people with incomes above the poverty line, how much effort do you think that poor people put into their work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Same or less effort	1,129	68.34	68.34
More effort	496	30.02	98.37
•	27	1.63	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q11 How many of the poor do you believe have the ability to raise themselves out of poverty?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Most do not or some do	1,168	70.70	70.70
Most	457	27.66	98.37

	27	1.63	100.00	
Total	1.652	100.00		

Q12 If the average person you know was to receive \$5,000 do you think he or she would use the money responsibly?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	922	55.81	55.81
Yes	702	42.49	98.31
	28	1.69	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q13 If an average poor person was to receive \$5,000 do you think he or she would use the money responsibly?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	838	50.73	50.73
Yes	778	47.09	97.82
	36	2.18	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q14 Do you think poor households manage their money wisely?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	796	48.18	48.18
Yes	825	49.94	98.12
	31	1.88	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q18 In your opinion, how effective are government anti-poverty programs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Not effective	1,306	79.06	79.06
Effective	313	18.95	98.00
	33	2.00	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q19 What effect do our current anti-poverty programs have on the overall economy?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Don't hurt economy	1,088	65.86	65.86
Hurt economy	525	31.78	97.64
	39	2.36	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q20 Should the government spend more money, less money, or about the same amount of money on antipoverty programs?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Spend same or less	1,068	64.65	64.65
Spend more	539	32.63	97.28
	45	2.72	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q22 Do you believe that anti-poverty programs lower the poverty rate?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	1,023	61.92	61.92
Yes	588	35.59	97.52
	41	2.48	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q23 Do you believe that most people who receive aid from anti-poverty programs actually need it?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Don't need	641	38.80	38.80
Need	971	58.78	97.58
	40	2.42	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q24 Do you believe that anti-poverty programs discourage people from working?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	596	36.08	36.08
Yes	1,017	61.56	97.64
•	39	2.36	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q25 Do you believe that the government is morally obligated to help the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	509	30.81	30.81
Yes	1,143	69.19	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q26a Would you be in favor of increasing cash assistance to the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	1,044	63.20	63.20
Yes	567	34.32	97.52
	41	2.48	100.00

Total	1,652	100.00

Q26b Would you be in favor of increasing food and housing assistance?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	458	27.72	27.72
Yes	1,154	69.85	97.58
	40	2.42	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q26c Would you be in favor of increasing the minimum wage?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	357	21.61	21.61
Yes	1,248	75.54	97.15
•	47	2.85	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q26d Would you be in favor of increasing tax-based assistance such as the earned income tax credit?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	482	29.18	29.18
Yes	1,125	68.10	97.28
	45	2.72	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q28 Do you agree or disagree with the following statement? "Those with high incomes, say \$200,000 or more (roughly the top 4% of earners), have a responsibility to aid the poor more than they do now."

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Disagree	710	42.98	42.98
Agree	904	54.72	97.70
	38	2.30	100.00
Total	1 652	100.00	

Q29 Do you think those with incomes above \$200,000 (roughly the top 4% of earners) should pay higher taxes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Should not	598	36.20	36.20
Should	1,015	61.44	97.64
	39	2.36	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q30 In your opinion, who should pay more in taxes to aid the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Someone	1,145	69.31	69.31
Nobody	468	28.33	97.64
	39	2.36	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q30 In your opinion, who should pay more in taxes to aid the poor?

The top 4% of incomes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	1,049	63.50	63.50
Yes	564	34.14	97.64
•	39	2.36	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q30 In your opinion, who should pay more in taxes to aid the poor?

The top 25% of incomes?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	733	44.37	44.37
Yes	880	53.27	97.64
•	39	2.36	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q31 Revenue for government assistance for the poor should mostly come from

Taxes on corporations

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	913	55.27	55.27
Yes	739	44.73	100.00
Total	1.652	100.00	

Q32 If the government decides to reduce its overall spending, what area should be reduced the most?

Defense

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	766	46.37	46.37
Yes	886	53.63	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q32 If the government decides to reduce its overall spending, what area should be reduced the most? Programs that aid low income families

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	1,370	82.93	82.93
Yes	282	17.07	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	

Q33 Would you be willing to pay more in federal income tax if the purpose was to help the poor?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
No	1,020	61.74	61.74
Yes	632	38.26	100.00
Total	1,652	100.00	