

The Earl Babbie RESEARCH CENTER

Research at the Babbie Center

In keeping with the Babbie Center's mission to address critical social issues through cutting edge social science research, we have engaged in an unprecedented, ongoing study of fear in America. Now in its eighth year, the Chapman Survey of American Fears (CSAF) asks a representative national sample of Americans about more than 90 fears and related behaviors. The fastest growing of these fears is being the victim of a mass shooting. These fears and those related to terrorism are explored in

our recently published book, *Homeland InSecurity: Terrorism, Mass Shootings, and the Public*, Routledge. In addition, The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) quoted Babbie Center research in its annual National Advisory Council Report to the FEMA Administrator, under potential solutions to improve public disaster preparedness.

2020-2021 HIGHLIGHTS

The Earl Babbie Research Center at Chapman University is dedicated to empowering students and faculty to conduct studies that address critical social, behavioral, economic, and environmental problems—work that is more important than ever.

The Center's mission is to provide research support and instruction to students, faculty, and the broader community, and to produce research that addresses societal problems, both at home and abroad.

FEAR ITSELF

The Chapman Survey of American Fears in the News

The CSAF survey has been cited in over 1,000 print, broadcast, and online media. This past year, our work has been discussed by *CNN*, *the Atlantic*, and *NPR*, as well as many regional outlets. It has been utilized or cited in over 60 scholarly works and peer reviewed articles, produced by academicians around the country.

Student Research

Student researchers are a central part of the CSAF project. They are involved in every aspect of the survey, from researching new content areas, to writing questions and analyzing results. In addition, more than 100 undergraduate research projects have used the CSAF, and these are archived in Chapman University's Digital Commons.

The Babbie Center congratulates undergraduate research fellow Muhammad Karkoutli

(‘20) who will begin doctoral work at UW-Madison, fully funded. Research experience gained at the Babbie Center was key to his success. As Karkoutli explains, “While an undergraduate research fellow at the Earl Babbie Research Center, I gained hands-on research experience. I put into practice both qualitative and quantitative research methods that I had learned in the classroom. In addition, I strengthened my ability to communicate and present research in several mediums. These included blog posts, data visualizations, and even an international research conference in Hawaii.

Needless to say, these experiences were rewarding. They not only opened the possibility to pursue a career as an academic and researcher but also influenced my decision to apply to Ph.D. programs in Political Science. These experiences aided me in the graduate application process as I was able to articu-

late a clear research agenda. In one interview, we talked at length about the different projects I worked on as an undergraduate research fellow. I believe that these experiences helped me in gaining admission to Ph.D. programs in Political Science.

Students interested in social science research should consider the opportunity to be an undergraduate research fellow as it is an excellent opportunity not only to learn, but also to be directly involved in the research process.”

Fear in the Age of COVID-19

The top 10 fears of Americans have shifted notably since 2019. The top fear remains corrupt government officials for the sixth year in a row, with a 2% increase from the 77.2% of Americans in 2019 that reported being very afraid/afraid. Fear of loved ones dying has risen from its previous rank as fifth to second place – even while its share of Americans has dropped from 62.9% in 2019 to 58.5%. Fear of both widespread civil unrest and a loved one contracting COVID-19 make their debut in the top 10, with approximately equal shares of Americans reporting fear of these. Fear of loved ones becoming seriously ill, on the other hand, has dropped in its rank from third to fifth place in conjunction with a decrease in fear from 66.7% in 2019 to 57.3%. Once again aligning with the major events of 2020, fear of a pandemic/major epidemic, economic/financial collapse, and biological warfare debut on the top 10's lower end. Meanwhile, fears of cyber-terrorism and pollution of oceans, rivers and lakes have each dropped in rank. Cyber-terrorism has gone from seventh to eighth place and lost nearly 8% of Americans (59.2% in 2019) while pollution of large bodies of water has dropped from second to ninth place and lost nearly 18% of its share of Americans (68.0% in 2019).



30-minute methods

Learning at the Babbie Center

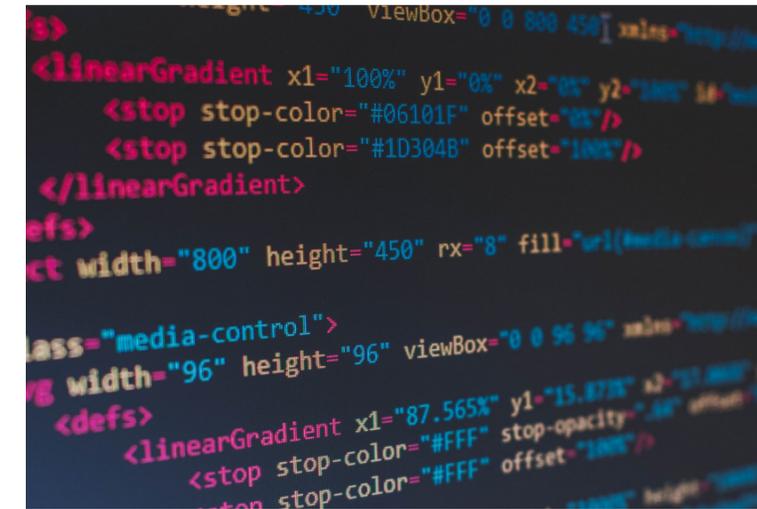
To support our mission of providing methodology instruction to the Chapman community, the Babbie Center initiated a workshop series, 30-Minute Methods. These workshops proved to be very popular and covered topics ranging from SPSS basics to linear regression. Participants can follow-up with one-on-one consultations specific to their research projects.

The Fear Survey as Art

The Babbie Center congratulates the Escalette Permanent Art Collection for receiving a \$35k grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, for a project entitled Code Becomes Palette. The digital artwork will turn data obtained through the Chapman Survey of American Fears into an art installation. Babbie Center affiliated faculty, who conduct the CSAF, had the opportunity to meet with world famous artist Daniel Canogar to discuss the significance of the survey and fear in society. We can't wait to see the finished artwork!

Visit with the Babbies

Earl and Suze Babbie regularly visit Chapman, and this year they visited virtually. We were thrilled to see them. Dr. Babbie gave a thought-provoking lecture on challenges facing society post-COVID-19. Students and faculty had the opportunity for a great discussion afterwards.



TOP 10 FEARS OF 2020/2021

Top 10 Fears of 2020/21	% Afraid or Very Afraid
1 - Corrupt Government Officials	79.6 %
2 - People I love dying (#5 in 2019)	58.5 %
3 - A love one contracting the coronavirus (COVID-19)	58 %
4 - People I love becoming seriously ill (#3 in 2019)	57.3 %
5 - Widespread civil unrest	56.5 %
6 - A pandemic or a major epidemic	55.8 %
7 - Economic/financial collapse	54.8 %
8 - Cyber-terrorism (#7 in 2019)	51.0 %
9 - Pollution of oceans, rivers and lakes (#2 in 2019)	50.8 %
10 - Biological warfare	49.3 %

Above is a list of the 10 fears for which the highest percentage of Americans reported being "Afraid," or "Very Afraid."
Because the survey was fielded at the start of 2021 (Jan 5th to 15th), we have used 2020/2021 in the title.



WILDFIRES AND DEBRIS FLOW RESEARCH

The Babbie Center continued working in partnership with the National Weather Service (Oxnard/Los Angeles) on a project to develop and test public warnings about wildfires and debris flows. Devastating wildfires, and the debris flows that sometimes follow in their wake, are increasing in frequency across Southern California. Despite the best efforts of emergency managers and local governments to educate the public, residents remain dangerously unprepared. Thus, there is an urgent need for effective disaster communications, from pre-incident preparedness to warnings of imminent danger and evacuation orders.

This ongoing project has four distinct elements and draws on expertise from across Wilkinson College, including faculty and students at

the Babbie Center, the Henley Lab and The Ideation Lab. The Babbie Center conducted a survey of residents to ascertain knowledge, attitudes, and behavior with regard to wildfires and debris flows. Second, existing infographics currently used for educating and warning the public were evaluated for efficacy. Third, taking what we learned from the evaluation of existing material, new messages and infographics were developed and rigorously tested. The NWS now has templates and ready to post graphics for social media that can be deployed in a disaster. This project will expand and continue into 2021 with the development of educational materials for the public.

