

# Feis paper essay

[Countries](#), [United States](#)



The general American public reacts uniquely to prevailing circumstances. This ranges from how they react to laws about to be passed or how they will vote for the incoming president. The prevailing economic circumstances always have a lot of say in the verdict of the American public. If people are jobless, if they cannot afford a decent education for their children, if they cannot access medical care or if they cannot afford decent housing, then a problem arises where the American public feels like the government doesn't care about them anymore and that they are better off trying to solve their own problems without awaiting for the government to come in and help them out. This kind of public opinion is dangerous as no government can do well without the support of her citizens. Many governments have been overthrown since they lack support from the people. It is at such times that extremist groups like Al Qaida take over and terrorize a state. America has survived a lot of attacks from within and without but at the current state of democracy the future of this great nation seems bleak unless mitigation measures are put in place.

In the United States of America there is a heightened level of public distrust. Most public servants are viewed with a lot of mistrust as the citizens feel like they do little to help them achieve what they want in life, regardless of the fact that they had promised to help them through so that they can achieve their dream (Lipset and Seymour, 23). With this kind of mistrust democracy is stifled as the government does not interact freely with the people; something that is truly disastrous.

Many government operate within a tight budget, this is the case as the needs f the citizens are always on the rise. Regardless of this fact the

government always has to be careful to work with the budget proposed and failure to do so could put the country in serious debt which is bad for its economy. There are very few countries, if any, where the citizens can declare openly that their government is spending the taxpayer's money well. If the citizenry is not understanding with the government's needs there is the danger of regression. There general public needs to empathise with the economic situation of a country if times are bad and be willing to tighten their belts a little. When a government decides to cut back on spending it is aimed at making sure that none of the areas that the government needs to fund are neglected though the funding may be in limitation. This has in more than one occasion seen the political careers of many people suffer greatly. Without this most countries America included would have been declared failed states. For the citizens to have empathy they need to be involved directly or indirectly with government activities for example, campaigns against drug and substance abuse.

For the longest time in the history of America the public has been known to engage in civic activities and that is what has made America such a great nation and one that is admired by many. These activities include voting, where one is allowed to exercise their democracy and elect leaders of their choice, the public is engaged indirectly in the making of the country's laws this is through the law makers they elect to represent them, they are also directly involved in the constitution making process. Once the constitution is drafted they are given copies of it to read and propose amendments if need be. The constitution making process puts into consideration the views of all the citizens since it's the document that guides the application of the law to

the public.

The media has been a culprit in its portrayal of American politics, one that is full of greed and mistrust. Tom Volgy an ex- Mayor of a key western city says that the public servants are not always what the public knows them as, since there are many of them who are honest and hardworking despite popular belief. Volgy says he interviewed about 300 public servants and elected legislatures and discovered that most of them live an average life and give up their normal lives in service to the country, for most they are motivated by a sense of civic responsibility. Though this is hardly the picture we get from the media. Most, if not all, the general public gets their information from the media and consequently this shapes their opinion. It is highly risky if the media, either by omission or addition of detail, fail to give an accurate account on the state of affairs in the country and this includes the level of commitment of the legislatures.

The decline in the public trust can equally be traced to low key public engagements. Unlike the 1990s, there has been a decline in the way the government deals with the public in terms of engagement and involvement. Before, there were intensive support for town hall meetings, public debates and consultations. However, the public are rarely consulted today. The argument that democracy is enforced through the elected representatives, indirectly, has reduced the chances of civic engagement. As such, the public has held a low keep social trust on the government.

Past history in the American politics has been riddled with politicians who are not trust worthy since after they get a taste of power they never want to have anything to do with their constituents. The politicians tend to ignore

public demands and get to the trap of capitalistic corporates. As a result the citizens have viewed new legislatures as being no different from the past ones, before they get a chance to serve them.

Lack of transparency has also been a great contributor to the decline in civic involvement of the Americans. If a government is involved in business that the public is not aware of this spells suspicion and if the citizens cannot have the government account on how it's spent funds then there will be dire consequences.

## **Implications**

The declining rates of public trust, empathy, and civic engagement levels have negative implications. One, the situation has led to passage of laws and implementation of policies that are of low quality. Some of them are good, but the public is not aware of them. In some situations, the public ends up being swayed by the media or political rhetoric like the case of Obamacare. Two, the situation has led to emergence of pro-elite NGOs that alienate the masses further. In the past years, there were proactive special interest groups that lobbied the government, advocated for change and pushed a wider public participation in development and public affairs. For example, in 1960s, the civil rights lobby groups pushed for change of the discriminative laws. Differently, today, the NGOs are largely elitist and engage in the public to ascertain extent. While most NGOs argue to voice the masses' opinion, most of the affairs are board room based. Consequently, the elitism of the special interest groups has locked out the participation of other groups in public affairs.

## **Solutions**

A country that is stable should be democratic, the economy of such a state needs to be able to sustain its population and it should be politically upright. Once the problems that hinder these are resolved we will be able to enjoy a state that lives harmoniously. The relationship between the American government and the general public needs to be improved to foster the trust between them, seeing that they have to work together to help America realize her dreams. According to Volgy Americans should be careful not to lose the democracy they enjoy and one they have seemingly been taking for granted.

Lastly, there is need for massive public education on their rights. The civic education programs should be part of school curriculums at lower levels. In the media, government offices and events, the citizens need to be educated and reminded of their duties at all times.

## **Works Cited**

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