

# BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE MUSLIM WORLD

## GLOBAL OPINION REPORT NO. 99

Week: December 20-26, 2009

Presentation: December 30, 2009

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## **PRELUDE:**

This report consists of 20 surveys. All of these surveys are national surveys of their respective countries. As the year 2009 and the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are approaching their end, so we have year and decade reviews for various countries in this report. These reviews include an evaluation of either year 2009 or this decade by publics in U.S, Britain and Russia.

The year 2009 remained marked with global economic crisis. It is interesting to note that out of the three countries mentioned above it is only in Russia that people express positive views about the year 2009 and the Russia's performance in the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century generally has been positive as they have reestablished their economy and political system after disintegration of Soviet Union. Does it mean that Russia is successfully emerging as power and the people are losing confidence in their states in Britain and U.S. Russians feel their economic situation is getting better and their country is on the right track. It is important to note that Russia succeeded in strengthening its economy in this decade and their leaders enjoyed high support of the Russian public.

On the country people in U.S. describe this decade as the worst decade ever since Second World War. People in Britain have similar kind of views about the year 2009. The commonality between these two western capitalist countries has been that their leadership remained unpopular one way or the other. President Obama started with a very high profile but just in a year his ratings also declined to a poor situation. in this decade, Americans ratings of the congress and their Presidents have never been stable and for most of the time these ratings remain dismal.

Only at the time of 9/11, and the commencement of war on terror, U.S. president got very high popularity and soon the president became as unpopular as the war on terror itself. Americans views changed in a couple of years about Iraq war in particular and Afghan war in general. They also lost the faith in the decision to go to war in Iraq and more recently in the decision to go to Afghanistan. For most of the half decade, Americans highest concern was not to defeat terrorist in Iraq, Afghanistan or Pakistan rather they were more concerned about their declining economic conditions, poor job market, and inflation. Poor economic conditions, declining confidence in leadership and political institutions, what does these indicate? Somehow similar is the situation in U.K, does it mean that both of these countries are struggling to maintain their current stature. Do these indicate that these are the indicators of their downfall?

## SUMMARY OF POLLS

### **MIDDLE EAST**

Palestinians Show Disappointment With Peace Process, Parties involved and the U.S.

AWARD recent survey of Palestinians show that Palestinians are getting disappointed with the peace process but they also show their commitment to peace. Moreover they also getting disappointing with the parties involved in the process and they are also not satisfied with the role of the U.S. government.

December 15, 2009

### **JAPAN & KOREA**

Half of Japanese Deny Vote to DPJ and LDP

Many people in Japan would not cast a ballot for either of the country's two main political parties in the next election, according to a poll by NHK. 35.6 per cent of respondents would vote for the governing Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and 17.7 per cent would back the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

December 27, 2009

### **AFRICA**

Women In South Africa Standing Up For Gender Equality

Presently, women in South Africa are maintaining their optimism about the future of their families, children and the country. However, when women look at their own lives, they are less optimistic now than a year ago. Furthermore, most of the women in South Africa are intolerant of gender inequality, especially with regard to the right to education.

17 December 2009

### **EAST EUROPE**

Former Soviet Nations Aren't Banking on the Dollar

The dollar is not king in most former Soviet nations. In its place, Gallup surveys this year show residents in 12 of 15 countries are more likely to view their own local currency or the euro as the most profitable and safest to keep their money in.

December 22, 2009

New Year 2010: Is The Crisis Over?

Recent survey of the Russian public shows that Russians see the year 2009 as somehow positively. They have become more positive of the economic situation of the country and more today believe that the country is going in the right direction.

December 25, 2009

Cold War: Who Started It And Who Won It?

A survey of Russian public opinion shows that they have mixed views of 'cold war'. They blame U.S. for starting cold war and majority of them are of the view that no one won it. A majority of them neglect the possibility of its restart.

December 08, 2009

### **WEST EUROPE**

Britons Side with Banning Minarets in UK

People in Britain are open to the idea of banning minarets, according to a three-country poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 37 per cent of respondents in Britain would vote in favour of a ban, while 25 per cent would vote against it.

December 22, 2009

## 2009 'Worst Year For One In 20'

A recent YOUNGOV survey shows that one in 20 people in Britain describe 2009 as their worst year ever and almost half say they are most worried about money or debt.

Dec 14, 2009

## Two-in-Five Britons Would Vote Tory

The Conservative party remains ahead of all rivals in Britain, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 40 per cent of respondents would support the Tories in the next election to the House of Commons.

December 21, 2009

## Sarkozy's Disapproval Rating Soars in France

The proportion of people in France who express disappointment with Nicolas Sarkozy's performance has risen sharply, according to a poll by Ifop published in *Paris Match*. 61 per cent of respondents disapprove of the president's leadership, up six points since October.

December 23, 2009

## French Praise the Debré Education Law

The vast majority of people in France still agree with a 50-year old law which allows private schools to enter into contracts with the state, according to a poll by CSA published in *La Croix*. 84 per cent of respondents think the Debré Law was a good thing.

December 22, 2009

## Swedes Now More Receptive to Joining Euro

The proportion of people in Sweden open to adopting the common European currency has grown over the past five years, according to a poll by Statistics Sweden. 44 per cent of respondents would vote Yes in a referendum on adopting the euro, up seven points since November 2004.

December 26, 2009

## Norwegians Condemn Obama's Snubbing of King

Many people in Norway deem it unacceptable that United States president Barack Obama rejected an invitation to a state banquet hosted by King Harald V earlier this month, according to a poll by InFact published by *Verdens Gang*. 44 per cent of respondents share this opinion.

December 20, 2009

## **NORTH AMERICA**

### This Christmas, 78% of Americans Identify as Christian

This Christmas season, 78% of Americans identify with some form of Christian religion, a proportion that has been declining in recent decades. The major reason for this decline has been an increase in the percentage of Americans claiming no religious identity, now at 13% of all adults.

December 24, 2009

### Public Looks Back at Worst Decade in 50 Years

As the current decade draws to a close, relatively few Americans have positive things to say about it. By roughly two-to-one, more say they have a generally negative (50%) rather than a generally positive (27%) impression of the past 10 years. This stands in stark contrast to the public's recollection of other decades in the past half-century. When

asked to look back on the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, positive feelings outweigh negative in all cases.

December 21, 2009

#### The Decade in Review: Four Key Trends

A review of decade long Gallup data shows four major trends. Satisfaction with the direction of the country and approval ratings of Congress and president both declined as compared to a decade ago. In 2001 terrorism was the highest concern but soon after it economic concerns became the top problem and it dominated the decade.

December 23, 2009

#### Americans Agree with Obama on Wall Street

Many people in the United States believe Barack Obama was right when he referred to Wall Street bankers as "fat cats", according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 83 per cent of respondents agree with their president.

December 23, 2009

### **LATIN AMERICA**

#### Chileans Doubt Peru's Accusation of Spying

The large majority of Chileans grant no credibility to claims by the Peruvian government that Chile was spying on their military, according to a poll by CERC. 76 per cent of respondents share this opinion.

December 24, 2009

### **AUSTRALASIA**

#### Climate Change Deal is Important for Australians

Three quarters of people in Australia think reaching a global agreement on climate change is the most important thing the country can do, according to a poll by Essential Research. 74 per cent of respondents share this point of view.

December 25, 2009

#### New Zealand's National Ends Year on High Note

New Zealand's governing National party ends 2009 with a solid support rate, according to a poll by Roy Morgan International. 54 per cent of respondents would vote for the conservative party in the next election to the House of Representatives.

December 23, 2009

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### **Palestinians Show Disappointment with Peace Process, Parties involved and the U.S.**

*(AWARD) Peace Process, Role of the US Government, Evaluation of Living Conditions and Institutions, Elections and Reconciliation, December 15,2009*

AWARD recent survey of Palestinians show that Palestinians are getting disappointed with the peace process but they also show their commitment to peace. Moreover they also getting disappointing with the parties involved in the process and they are also not satisfied with the role of the U.S. government.

Publication date: December 15, 2009

Field work: 8-10 December 2009

Sample size: 1200 Palestinians in West Bank and Gaza  
Margin of Error:  $\pm 3\%$

### **1. Disillusionment with the peace process, but commitment to peace continues.**

In spite of their disillusionment with the peace process that started after the Oslo Accord, the majority of Palestinians still believe that negotiations are the best method to end the occupation. They, however, do not believe that the terms of the exiting process are satisfactory.

The results of the AWRAD poll reveal that a majority disagree with the peace process as they have experienced it.

- About 68 percent agree (or somewhat agree) that the negotiations have failed and that the peace process is at a deadlock. Only 19 percent disagree and 10 percent somewhat disagree.
- After 18 years of negotiations, a majority felt that Palestinians are now farther from achieving their goal of establishing a Palestinian state. One-fifth said that they do not know. Only 27 percent felt that Palestinians are closer to establishing a state.
- Events during last year made Palestinians even less hopeful, where two- third of the respondents said that they are less hopeful in the peace process now than one year ago. In contrast, 28 percent said that they are more hopeful.

These views reflect the reality on the ground, but also the lack of trust in the parties involved.

- The most trusted party in its commitment to the peace process is the Palestinian National Authority (PA)/Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), where two-thirds of the respondents said that it is serious about its commitment to ending the occupation and establishing a Palestinian state. In contrast, 28 percent said that the PA/PLO is not committed.
- The most surprising result is the one related to how many Palestinians view the commitment of Hamas. As much as 64 percent said that Hamas is not committed to ending the occupation and establishing a state, while 45 percent said that it is committed.
- As much as 94 percent said that Israel is not committed, and 87 percent said that the U.S. is not committed. As much as 74 percent said that the UN is not committed and about 68 percent said that neither the EU nor the Arab countries are committed.

The credibility of the American government as a mediator is questioned.

- One-quarter of the respondents believe that the American government is a neutral party in the negotiations. Two-thirds disagree.
- About 83 percent of the respondents have no faith that the American government will ever assist the Palestinians to end occupation and build their state. Only 13 percent believe it will.

- About 21 percent believe the Obama administration is capable of helping the Palestinians end the occupation. About 72 percent do not believe that the Obama administration is capable of helping the Palestinians.

In addition, the credibility of actions of the Israeli government is questioned by the Palestinians.

- As much as 61 percent oppose going back to the negotiations as a result of the Israeli Prime Minister's declaration of a 10-months freeze on new settlement building. About 31 percent supported going back to the negotiations under the new declaration.
- In addition, three-quarters of the respondents believe that the Israeli government is not serious about implementing the declared freeze on settlement building.
- Furthermore, 81 percent believe that Israel is not making any serious efforts to stop settlement building.
- Overall, 76 percent oppose the U.S. call to go back to the negotiations without a freeze on settlement building.

These views did not prevent the majority of Palestinians to believe that negotiations continue to be the best approach.

- About 54 percent of the respondents agree that negotiations are still the best method to end the occupation regardless of the current deadlock, while 41 percent had given up on this method.
- But what kind of negotiations? About 66 percent believe that negotiations as they were undertaken in the past will be ineffective. One-third, however, believe that to continue them as they are will be effective or somewhat effective.
- In contrast, about 59 percent believe that negotiations under new and more balanced terms such as an international conference will be effective. About 36 percent disagree.
- About 46 percent believe that resorting to armed attacks will be effective, while 50 percent believe that armed attacks will be ineffective.
- If Palestinians were to choose one of the most effective method, they would choose negotiations under new terms (23 percent), followed by a mix of negotiations and popular uprising (20 percent), a mix of negotiations and armed attacks (18 percent), armed attacks (17 percent), continue the negotiations without conditions (14 percent) and popular uprising (8 percent).
- Overall, negotiations and non-violent approaches are believed to be more effective by a majority of Palestinians.

## **2. The dismantlement of the PA is not a popular choice**

The majority of Palestinians oppose any scenario that involves the dismantlement of the PA.

- As much as 72 percent oppose the dismantlement of the PA to allow for any international takeover of responsibility in the West Bank and Gaza until a state is established. About 23 percent support such a scenario.

- About 61 percent oppose the dismantlement of the PA to allow for the restoration of the resistance movement. One-third supports such a scenario.
- Only 17 percent support a confederation between West Bank and Jordan and between Gaza and Egypt. In the West support for a confederation reaches 23 percent. In general, as much as 75 percent oppose such a scenario.

### **3. A majority would like to see Hamas concede power to the PA**

It is interesting to find a majority of Palestinians would like to see a Hamas concession of power to the PA.

- A majority of 52 percent support the idea that Hamas should concede its authority in Gaza to the PA. In contrast, 40 percent oppose this idea.
- In contrast, only 17 percent would like to see a concession of authority by the PA to Hamas. Three-quarters of the respondents oppose that the PA concede its authority to Hamas.

This preferable evaluation of the PA is illustrated in many other questions especially when evaluating the performance of the Fayyad and the Haniyeh governments.

- About 64 percent evaluate the performance of the Fayyad government positively (good or medium), while 46 percent evaluate the performance of the Haniyeh government positively.
- About 38 percent would prefer to live under the Fayyad government, while 18 percent would prefer to live under the Haniyeh government. As much as 37 percent would not choose any of the governments (prefer a unity government or other forms).
- It is interesting to find out that a higher percentage of Gaza respondents would rather live under a Fayyad government (41 percent) compared with West bank respondents (37 percent).
- However, only 14 percent of West Bank respondents would prefer to live under a Haniyeh government as compared with 25 percent among Gazans.

These evaluations are related to an overall assessment of various aspects on living conditions.

- A higher percentage of Gazans (49 percent) feel that the freedom of press and speech in their region is weak compared with 37 percent in the West Bank.
- A higher percentage of Gazans (56 percent) feel that there is abuse of human rights compared with 50 percent in the West Bank.
- A higher percentage of Gazans (49 percent) feel that the respect for personal freedoms in their region is weak compared with 41 percent in the West Bank.
- A higher percentage of Gazans (32 percent) feel that corruption among officials in their region is widespread compared with 26 percent in the West Bank.
- A higher percentage of Gazans (53 percent) feel that the equality in service delivery in their region is weak compared with 46 percent in the West Bank.



It is also interesting to find that a vast majority of Palestinians would like to see a continuation of PA support to Gaza.

- As much as 79 percent of the respondents believe that the Fayyad government should continue to support salaries and other social services in Gaza even if Gaza continues to be under the control of Hamas. Only 10 percent oppose such a premise.

#### **4. Shared responsibility for lack of reconciliation; Hamas is more blamed**

A majority believes that both factions (Hamas and Fateh) are to blame for delaying the elections and for stalling the reconciliation agreement. However, more respondents feel that Hamas is more to blame than Fateh.

- About 58 percent say that Fateh and Hamas are blamed equally for the delay in carrying out the elections. About 26 percent blame Hamas only and 10 percent blame Fateh only.
- As to the delay in signing the reconciliation agreement proposed by Egypt, 52 percent blame both factions. About 30 percent blame only Hamas and 12 percent blame only Fateh.

#### **5. While majority supports a continuation of an Abbas presidency, a majority oppose an appointment of Duwaik**

Indicators show that elections will not take place in their due date (January 24, 2010). Under this scenario a constitutional vacuum will take place.

- Mr. Aziz Duwaik of Hamas, who is the head of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC), announced that he is ready to step in as a president if President Abbas steps down. His announcement received 29 percent support as it is the constitutional thing to do. In contrast, 51 percent opposed his presidency as he will not be able to govern. As much as 20 percent said that they do not know.
- In general, 60 percent believe that the election will not take place on its due date, while only 22 percent still believe that it would.

#### **6. Haniyeh, Fayyad, Mustafa Barghouti and Dahlan are most popular in case Abbas and Marwan decide not to run**

If Abbas and Marwan Barghouti decided not run for a presidential election, the space will be open for a number of potential leaders. This data, however, must be viewed carefully as other candidates might also become popular if they decided to run or if their factions declare their support for them.

- From among a list of 10 candidates from Fateh, Hamas and independents Haniyeh, Fayyad and Mustafa Barghouthi come on top (with about 14 percent each). They are followed by Mohamad Dahlan (10 percent).

- This scenario will be different if one candidate runs on behalf of the PLO and its allies and one candidate from the Islamic movement ( Hamas ).

## **7. Fateh leads the pack and Hamas is competitive**

The results of the election for the PLC will depend on how conditions evolve by the time of the elections. Today, however, we could make the following predictions.

- If only Fateh and Hamas ran, Fateh would receive 68 percent and Hamas 32 percent of the vote.
- If the following three lists ran, Fateh would receive 54 percent, Hamas 29 percent, and a list of independents led by Fayyad 17 percent.
- If the following three lists ran, Fateh would receive 53 percent, Hamas (28 percent) and a list of independents led by Mustafa Barghouthi (19 percent).
- If the following three lists ran, Fateh would receive (52 percent), Hamas 28 percent, and a list of independents led by Fayyad and Mustafa Barghouti 20 percent.
- In an open election with all potential lists, Fateh receives 55 percent, Hamas 27 percent, and 18 percent will go to the rest of the lists.

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## **JAPAN & KOREA**

### **Half of Japanese Deny Vote to DPJ and LDP**

December 27, 2009

Many people in Japan would not cast a ballot for either of the country's two main political parties in the next election, according to a poll by NHK. 35.6 per cent of respondents would vote for the governing Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), and 17.7 per cent would back the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).

However, 46.7 per cent of respondents would not vote for either one of them.

Last August, Japanese voters renewed the House of Representatives. Final results gave the DPJ a victory with 308 of the 480 lower house seats at stake. Yukio Hatoyama, the DPJ leader, was sworn in as prime minister in September.

Aside from a brief period in the 1990s, the LDP had administered Japan's government for more than five decades.

Earlier this year, Japan began to recover from its most serious recession since the end of World War II.

The Hatoyama government is focusing its efforts on reviving the economy. On Dec. 17, the prime minister said he will honour campaign promises to cut the tax on gasoline, even though the

government desperately needs the revenue, saying, "[DPJ] candidates campaigned to abolish temporary gas taxes. I believe we should value that idea."

### **Polling Data**

Which party would you vote for if a House of Representatives election took place today?

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)	35.6%
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)	17.7%
Other / Not sure	46.7%

*Source: NHK*

*Methodology: Telephone interviews with 1,111 Japanese adults, conducted from Dec. 11 to Dec. 13, 2009. No margin of error was provided.*

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## **AFRICA**

### **WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA STANDING UP FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

17 December 2009

Presently, women in South Africa are maintaining their optimism about the future of their families, children and the country. However, when women look at their own lives, they are less optimistic now than a year ago. Furthermore, most of the women in South Africa are intolerant of gender inequality, especially with regard to the right to education.

This is according to the latest Ipsos Markinor bi-annual omnibus survey results. The interviewing took place nationally from 4 April 2009 to 21 April 2009. A total of 3 340 in-home, face-to-face interviews were conducted where respondents were randomly selected according to strict scientific procedures in order to achieve a representative sample of the South African adult population, 18 years and older.

The results were filtered by all adult (18+) female responses. Depending on the response rate, the sample error for the poll based on the female representation is between 0.88% and 1.72%.

Considering that the current global economic recession hit South Africa towards the end of last year, women in South Africa were fairly divided in their views about the future. Only half of the women in South Africa believe that their children have a bright future ahead of them. About 4 in every 10 women in South Africa believe that their families' lives will be better off in a year's time, even though only 3 in every 10 of the women in South Africa felt that their families were better off than a year ago. Just over 4 in every 10 women in South Africa continue to believe that the country is moving in the right direction.

In May 2008, a third (33%) of women were satisfied with their lives; now only a quarter (26%) of women are satisfied with their lives.

Generally, men in South Africa are slightly more optimistic about their families' future, their children's future, their own lives, and the direction of the country in comparison to the female adult population in South Africa.

To summarise the findings:

	Females		Males		◁ ▷
	May '08	May '09	May '08	May '09	
<b>Your family's lives are better off than a year ago</b>	33%	30%	34%	32%	
<b>Your family's lives will be better off in a year's time</b>	39%	39%	42%	40%	
<b>Your satisfaction with your own life has improved</b>	33%	26%	34%	31%	
<b>Your children or the children of family or friends have a bright future ahead of them</b>	52%	51%	53%	54%	
<b>The country is going in the right direction</b>	44%	41%	47%	45%	

However, it is positive to note that nearly two-thirds of South African women (65%) agreed that over the last 15 years they have seen a great improvement in the area of women's rights.

Levels of disagreement with the different forms of gender inequality:

- The highest intolerance was towards a man beating his wife: 86% of women in South Africa disagree that it is acceptable for a man to beat his wife
- This is followed by 8 in every 10 women (80%) disagreeing that a boy has more right to an education than a girl
- Then, seven out of every 10 women disagreed with the statement "a women's place is in the house"
- Slightly less than two-thirds of women (63%) disagreed that when jobs are scarce, men should have more right to jobs than women
- Lastly, just over half of women (54%) disagreed that men make better political leaders than women do

Below is a table showing the opinions of South African males and females on the following statements:

MAY '09	Females		Males		◇
	Strongly agree/somewhat agree	Strongly disagree/somewhat disagree	Strongly agree/somewhat agree	Strongly disagree/somewhat disagree	
It is acceptable for a man to beat his wife	5%	86%	6%	82%	
A boy has more right to an education than a girl	8%	80%	11%	73%	
A women's place is in the house	14%	70%	20%	60%	
When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to jobs than women	22%	63%	38%	42%	
Men make better political leaders than women do	25%	54%	41%	36%	

Overall, men in South Africa are more tolerant of gender inequalities than the women in South Africa.

(<http://ipsos-markinor.co.za/>)

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## **EAST EUROPE**

### **Former Soviet Nations Aren't Banking on the Dollar**

*Local currency or euro viewed as most profitable*

December 22, 2009

The dollar is not king in most former Soviet nations. In its place, Gallup surveys this year show residents in 12 of 15 countries are more likely to view their own local currency or the euro as the most profitable and safest to keep their money in.

*In your opinion, which currency is the most profitable and safe to keep money in: (local currency), dollars, or euros?*

	<b>In (local currency)</b>	<b>In dollars</b>	<b>In euros</b>	<b>In several currencies (volun- teered)</b>	<b>It is not profitable to have money savings (volun- teered)</b>	<b>Don't know/ Refused</b>
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Turkmen- istan	79	12	3	3	1	2
Azerbaijan	69	17	9	2	2	2
Armenia	53	14	18	1	4	10
Kazakhstan	41	12	12	8	6	21
Kyrgyzstan	40	21	11	2	3	22
Tajikistan	34	29	7	3	2	26
Russia	33	4	16	10	13	23
Uzbekistan	32	41	2	1	12	12
Moldova	32	7	36	9	2	13
Ukraine	27	10	19	10	9	25
Georgia	20	24	38	1	3	14
Latvia	19	7	53	5	6	11
Lithuania	17	4	56	3	7	13
Belarus	13	17	21	22	7	21
Estonia	10	7	47	11	8	17

Surveys conducted April-August 2009

GALLUP®

For decades the U.S. dollar has been the world's reserve currency, often desired by many (including those in many former Soviet countries) over their own. But the dollar's weakness in recent years has made it less attractive and may help explain why, with the exception of Uzbekistanis, Belarusians, and Tajikistanis, residents in so many former Soviet countries see their own currencies or the euro as the safest. People in some of these countries, such as Kazakhstan and Armenia, still exhibit more faith in their own currencies than any other asked about -- even though they've seen their local legal tender lose value this year.

### **Faith in Local Legal Tender Varies**

Although residents in most former Soviet countries surveyed tend to see their own currencies as the most profitable and safe to keep their money in, support levels vary tremendously within the region. Turkmens are the most likely of those surveyed to say their currency is safest and most

profitable (79%), with the dollar placing a distant second (12%) and the euro a remote third (3%).

*In your opinion, which currency is the most profitable and safe to keep money in: (local currency), dollars, or euros?*

<b>In (local currency)</b>	
	<b>%</b>
Turkmenistan	79
Azerbaijan	69
Armenia	53
Kazakhstan	41
Kyrgyzstan	40
Tajikistan	34
Russia	33
Uzbekistan	32
Moldova	32
Ukraine	27
Georgia	20
Latvia	19
Lithuania	17
Belarus	13
Estonia	10

Surveys conducted April-August 2009

GALLUP®

Belarusians and Estonians, on the other end of the spectrum, are the least likely to say their own currencies are the safest and most profitable. Nearly half of Estonians (47%) choose the euro, while 1 in 10 or fewer choose their own currency (10%) or the dollar (7%). In Belarus, which devalued its currency this year and pegged its money to the ruble, dollar, and euro, results are understandably more mixed -- a relatively high percentage (22%) says keeping money in several currencies is most profitable and safe.

### **Euro Cash Favored in EU Member States, Georgia, and Moldova**

Residents in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia -- European Union (EU) member states that maintain their own currencies -- show a strong preference for the euro over their own local legal tender and the dollar. They are the most likely of all surveyed to pick the euro, with about half of residents in each country choosing this currency as the most profitable and safe.



*In your opinion, which currency is the most profitable and safe to keep money in: (local currency), dollars, or euros?*

	<b>In euros</b>
	%
Lithuania	56
Latvia	53
Estonia	47
Georgia	38
Moldova	36
Belarus	21
Ukraine	19
Armenia	18
Russia	16
Kazakhstan	12
Kyrgyzstan	11
Azerbaijan	9
Tajikistan	7
Turkmenistan	3
Uzbekistan	2

Surveys conducted April-August 2009

GALLUP®

Although not European Union members, Georgia and Moldova have grown closer with the European Union in recent years. Possibly reflecting these warming relations, Georgians are also more likely to identify the euro (38%) as the safest and most profitable currency to keep their money in over their own (20%) and the dollar (24%). In Moldova, residents notably are as likely to choose the euro (36%) as their own currency (32%).

### **Top Dollar in Uzbekistan**

Uzbekistan, which also has seen its share of currency problems this year, is the only country surveyed in which residents are more likely to say the dollar is the best to keep one's money in. Forty-one percent of Uzbekistanis choose the dollar, while 32% pick their own currency as the most profitable and safe.

*In your opinion, which currency is the most profitable and safe to keep money in: (local currency), dollars, or euros?*

	<b>In dollars</b>
	<b>%</b>
Uzbekistan	41
Tajikistan	29
Georgia	24
Kyrgyzstan	21
Belarus	17
Azerbaijan	17
Armenia	14
Kazakhstan	12
Turkmenistan	12
Ukraine	10
Latvia	7
Estonia	7
Moldova	7
Lithuania	4
Russia	4

Surveys conducted April-August 2009

GALLUP®

Overall, trust in the dollar is highest in Uzbekistan, and roughly one-quarter or more in Georgia (24%) and Tajikistan (29%) choose the dollar as the most profitable and safe currency. Further, in most former Soviet countries in Central Asia, residents are still more likely to pick the dollar over the euro.

### **Bottom Line**

Although the U.S. dollar has strengthened recently, Gallup data suggest that international dependency on the U.S. dollar -- in terms of its perceived strength on a global stage -- is in doubt. Residents in many former Soviet countries are more likely to see their local currency or the euro as the most profitable and safe, which may make them more receptive to the idea -- floated by Russia, China, and others earlier this year -- of replacing the dollar as the world's reserve currency with a supernational currency.

### **Survey Methods**

Results are based on face-to-face interviews with between 500 and 2,000 adults, aged 15 and older, conducted April-August 2009 in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan. For results based on the total sample of national adults, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error ranges from  $\pm 2.8$  percentage points in Russia to  $\pm 5.3$  percentage points in Lithuania. The margin of error reflects the influence of data weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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## **NEW YEAR 2010: IS THE CRISIS OVER?**

25.12.2009

Recent survey of the Russian public shows that Russians see the year 2009 as somehow positively. They have become more positive of the economic situation of the country and more today believe that the country is going in the right direction.

Russian Public Opinion Research Center (VCIOM) presents the data describing in what mood Russians are meeting New Year and how they are planning to celebrate this holiday.

### **Social welfare of Russians**

**The level of satisfaction with life made up 75% in November:** 28% - quite satisfied (in the beginning of 2009 - 25%), 47% - partly satisfied (in January - 45%). The percentage of those who are dissatisfied with their life has decreased compared to the previous year: 24% versus 29% in January.

**The majority of Russians are not expecting their life to get worse next year:** 28% forecast changes for the better (in January - 20%), 43% think everything will be the same (38% thought so in the beginning of this year). Compared to the beginning of 2009, the number of pessimists has decreased twice (from 24 to 12%).

**Less Russians assess their financial well-being negatively:** whereas 28-33% of Russians reported bad financial well-being in the beginning of 2009, the number of such respondents declined to 24% in November. On the contrary, the percentage of those who gave positive assessment has grown from 9 to 12% over the recent month. The percentage of Russians with average financial self-evaluation has also gone up over the recent half a year (from 59% in July to 63% in November).

**Compared to spring this year, Russians give more positive assessment of economic situation in Russia:** the share of those who evaluate the current economic situation as being good has grown from 5% in March to 9% in November. As before, the majority of Russians give average assessment (48%); 39% give negative answer (in March and April - 42-43%).

**More Russians assess the political situation in the country as being average (from 54% in July to 59% in current month).** The rest of respondents equally assess it as both good and bad (16% for each). The most positive assessments were recorded in May: 20% of respondents assessed political situation as good.

**Every fourth respondent (24%) think things in the country are going in the right direction (compared to the beginning of 2009 - 18-19%).** The percentage of those who partly agree with this statement has been growing over the recent months (from 42% in September to 49% in November). The proportion of those who oppose this statement is falling down (from 34% in April to 21% in November, in the beginning of 2009 - 27%).

**The share of Russians negatively evaluating the situation in the country has decreased twice over the year:** those who gave "bad" assessment were 58% in March, now they are only 32%. On the contrary, positive views have increased from 2% in March to 9% in November). Over half a year the predominant view has been that "everything is ok" (47-50%, in March - 29%).

**Compared to March, there have been positive changes in public assessment of life:** the proportion of those who think their life is good has increased from 19 to 25%. As before, the majority of respondents report that the living situation is hard, but they can tolerate this (61%). Those who cannot tolerate hardships are in the minority (10%).

**Russians are more optimistic about their life changing for the better:** the share of Russians who expect positive changes has increased over the recent five month from 25 to 38% and this is the first time this percentage is equaled to the percentage of Russians who do not expect any changes (40%). On the contrary, the share of those who forecast worsening of the situation is decreasing (in March - 20%, now - 11%).

**As before, the most popular strategy of behavior in terms of crisis has been active constructive position (48%).** The proportion of those who think thing nothing should be done as they predict improvement of the situation has increased over the recent three months (from 19 to 24%). Eleven percent also has passive position because of the futility of their actions. Those who choose to resist are in the minority (7%).

**Adaptation to the crisis is still under process:** whereas 53% of respondents reported they had adapted to changes in March, now the share of such respondents has reached a maximum over the entire period of measurement (62%). Other 18% are going to adapt to the situation in the future. Those who report they will never get used to the changes are in the minority (13%, in September - 15%).

### **Rating of political institutions**

**D.Medvedev Confidence rating was fluctuating within 44-45% during autumn.** This figure had steadily growth from April to August (from 42%) and reached a maximum over the year (47%).

**President`s approval level made up 71-73% in autumn.** The maximum was recorded in July-August (growth from 71 to 77%).

**The level of trust in Putin has been the same and fluctuating within 54 to 55% over the recent three months.** This number was growing from 52 to 57% from April to August and reached the highest point in January (60%).

**The Prime-minister approval rating has also been stable during autumn (74-76%).** The highest jump in this indicator was recorded in July-August from 74 to 80%.

**Government approval rating made up 51-54% in autumn.** The approval growth of this political institution coincides with the President's and Prime-minister's approvals and recorded in July-August (growth from 51 to 59%).

### **Plans for New Year**

**Most of Russians (91%) are planning to celebrate New Year`s Eve** - the number of such respondents has almost remained the same (in 1999 - 95%). Less number of persons (59%) is going to celebrate Orthodox Christmas on 7th of January (they were 69% in 1999). The Old New Year celebrated on 13th of January 2010 will be marked by 45% of respondents though they were 64% in 2002 and 58% in 1999. Only 5% of Russians are going to celebrate Catholic Christmas (there were 17-18% of such respondents in 1999 and 2002). Five percent report they are not planning to celebrate at all.

**Most of Russians will meet New Year at home (75%).** Twelve percent are going to visit friends (12%). Less popular answers were as follows: going to restaurant (2%), going to dacha and countryside (1% for each). However, 4% are not planning to celebrate New Year at all (the highest indicator over the entire measurement period; the percentage of such respondents did not exceed 2% in previous years).

**About two-thirds of Russians are going to watch the New Year TV address of the president;** more Russians reported so in 2009 compared to 1998 (73% versus 56% respectively). Every tenth refuse to watch TV address (36% in 1998).

**The average sum of money Russians are going to spend on New Year celebration is growing year by year, especially money spent on food:** compared to 2008, the average sum grew from 1.879 rubles to 2.116 rubles (in 2005 - 1155 rubles). The average cost of gifts has also risen - from 1.824 rubles to 2.058 rubles over the year (in 2005 - 1.105 rubles). As to other expenditures(New Year tree, tour packages, going to restaurants and theatres), there is a slight cost growth from 1.502 to 1.654 rubles over the year (in 2005 - 902 rubles).

**The most popular New Year gift over the recent years has been souvenirs (30%, a year ago - 37%),** followed by candies, alcohol, delicatessen on the second place (24% versus 30% in 2008) and toys (23% versus 28% respectively). The third place is held by cosmetics, fragrances, accessories (20%). Eight percent of Russians are going to give money, 7% (for each group) - flowers and jewelry, 6% (for each) - audio and visual products, clothes and shoes, 5% - cellular phones, 4% - domestic appliances. Less popular gifts are theatre, cinema and concert tickets (2%), photo, audio and video equipment, computer, and tour packages (1% for each). Eighteen percent are not planning to give presents to friends and relatives. The number of persons who are undecided has grown (15% versus 9% in previous years).

**Money (10%), jewelry, fragrances (cosmetics and accessories) (9% for each group) are the most demanded New Year presents Russians would like to get.** Souvenirs and candies (delicatessen, alcohol) are things most of Russians prefer to give but rarer to get (7 and 4% respectively). Same thing refers to toys - only 1% of respondents would like them to have as a gift. Seven percent of respondents (for each) would like to get cellular phone or car as a present, 6% - tour package, 5% - clothes and shoes, 4% (for each) - flowers, domestic appliances, photo-, audio and video equipment, 3% (for each) - audio and visual products, concert (theatre) tickets (or lunch at a restaurant). Seventeen percent report they do not want to be given New Year gifts; 25% were undecided.

*The initiative Russian opinion polls were conducted on December 12-13, 2009. 1600 respondents were interviewed at 140 sampling points in 42 regions of Russia. The margin of error does not exceed 3.4 %.*

<b>Which of the statements below best describes your life ? (close-ended question, one answer)</b>										
	<b>March 2009</b>	<b>April 2009</b>	<b>May 2009</b>	<b>June 2009</b>	<b>July 2009</b>	<b>August 2009</b>	<b>September 2009</b>	<b>October 2009</b>	<b>November 2009</b>	<b>December 2009</b>
<i>The situation is good for me and my family; it is easy for me to overcome any difficulties</i>	18	18	19	21	23	25	25	27	23	<b>25</b>
<i>My living is hard but I can tolerate this</i>	67	66	68	65	61	62	59	59	62	<b>61</b>
<i>I cannot tolerate</i>	12	14	11	12	14	11	13	12	13	<b>10</b>

<i>hardships any more</i>										
<i>Hard to tell</i>	3	2	2	2	2	3	4	2	3	4

<b>How are you going to celebrate New Year? (close-ended question, one answer)</b>						
	<b>2003</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<i>At home</i>	74	73	77	76	77	<b>75</b>
<i>Visit friends</i>	15	15	13	14	13	<b>12</b>
<i>Restaurant, club</i>	2	3	2	2	2	<b>2</b>
<i>At dacha ( mine, my relatives`)</i>	1	1	1	1	2	<b>1</b>
<i>Countryside, outside the city in boarding house</i>	1	1	1	1	1	<b>1</b>
<i>Abroad</i>	0	0	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
<i>no celebrations</i>	2	2	2	2	2	<b>4</b>
<i>Hard to tell</i>	5	5	4	4	5	<b>5</b>

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## **COLD WAR: WHO STARTED IT AND WHO WON IT?**

A survey of Russian public opinion shows that they have mixed views of 'cold war'. They blame U.S. for starting cold war and majority of them are of the view that no one won it. A majority of them neglect the possibility of its restart.

December 08, 2009

Russian Public Opinion research Center (VCIOM) presents the data describing the level of knowledge Russians have about the Cold War and whether such a restart of the confrontation is possible nowadays.

**Every tenth Russian knows the beginning and the end of the Cold War 1946-1991 (10%).** Other 11% are aware in general when the war took place ("after the end of the WWII"), but they do not know the particular dates. Most of respondents think that the confrontation ended up not due to the collapse of the USSR, but earlier - between 1950 and 1979 (20%). On the contrary, other 10% point out the wrong date of the beginning of the Cold War (1960-1991); and 2% are confident it still goes on. Nevertheless, 45% have no idea about the time frame of this historical period.

**The majority of Russians do not know why this period is called the Cold War (58%).** Those interviewed consider that the main reason for that is that the confrontation did not take military character (26%); 10% mention arms race (10%). Other 9% think that the Cold War period got its name due to the "cold" relations between the United States of America and Russia.

**Most of respondents adhere to the traditional for our history point of view: the Cold War was started by the United States (49%).** Russians rarer mention the US though (10%). Other answers are as follows: the European Union countries (7%), East Asian countries or all countries (1% for each). Forty-two percent of Russians do not know who initiated the confrontation.

**As a rule, Russians are undecided on who won the Cold War (44%); the rest of respondents think no one won (27%).** Fourteen percent consider that all participants benefited from the end of the Cold War; other 8% mention the US; 6% - the USSR.

**As before, a relative majority of Russians think the resumption of the Cold War between Russia and West/US is not possible (44%, a year ago - 53%):** 38% think it is hardly possible, 6% - definitely impossible. Thirty-seven percent think such a scenario is real: 8% think the confrontation is definitely possible, 29% - likely possible. Those who are confident that a new confrontation between Russia and the US will never happen are basically adherents of Fair Russia party (60%) and Southerners (50%). They are opposed by LDPR supporters (45%), Siberians and Far-Easterners (40 and 41%), who tend to think the resumption of the Cold War is real.

<b>Which period in history is called "Cold War"?</b> ( <i>open-ended question, one answer</i> )	
1950-1979	20
<i>after World War II</i>	11
1946 - 1991	10
1960 - 1991	10
1950 - present	2
<i>other</i>	2
<i>hard to tell</i>	45
<b>Why this period is called "Cold War"?</b> ( <i>open-ended question, not more than three answers</i> )	
<i>The confrontation between the USSR and the US did not take military character</i>	26
<i>The USSR and the United States were rapidly building up their military potentials, were engaged in arms race</i>	10
<i>The US-USSR relations were "cold" and tense</i>	9
<i>Other</i>	0
<i>Hard to tell</i>	58
<b>Which country (countries) started the Cold War?</b> ( <i>open-ended question, any number of answers</i> )	
<i>the United States</i>	49
<i>USSR, Russia</i>	10
<i>European Union countries</i>	7
<i>China, Japan, Korea</i>	1



<i>All countries</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Other</i>	<b>1</b>
<i>Hard to tell</i>	<b>42</b>

**Which country (countries) won the Cold War?**  
*(open-ended question, any number of answers)*

<i>No one won</i>	<b>27</b>
<i>Every country benefited from the end of this war</i>	<b>14</b>
<i>US</i>	<b>8</b>
<i>USSR, Russia</i>	<b>6</b>
<i>Hard to tell</i>	<b>44</b>

**There has been a lot of talk recently about the possibility of the restart of the Cold War, the confrontation between Russia and West, the United States. How would you assess such a possibility?**

*(close-ended question, one answer)*

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
<i>Definitely possible</i>	8	6	<b>8</b>
<i>Likely possible</i>	32	29	<b>29</b>
<i>Hardly possible</i>	41	43	<b>38</b>
<i>Definitely impossible</i>	7	10	<b>6</b>
<i>Hard to tell</i>	12	13	<b>19</b>

**There has been a lot of talk recently about the possibility of the restart of the Cold War, the confrontation between Russia and West, the US. How would you assess such a possibility?**

*(close-ended question, one answer)*

	<b>Total respondents</b>	<b>Parties which Russians would vote for, if elections to the State Duma took place next Sunday</b>					<b>I would not take part in elections</b>
		<b>United Russia</b>	<b>CPRF</b>	<b>LDPR</b>	<b>Fair Russia</b>	<b>Others</b>	
<i>Definitely possible</i>	<b>8</b>	6	17	10	4	12	10
<i>Likely possible</i>	<b>29</b>	29	21	35	28	24	33
<i>Hardly possible</i>	<b>38</b>	40	31	28	51	40	36
<i>Definitely impossible</i>	<b>6</b>	6	9	12	9	8	7
<i>Hard to tell</i>	<b>19</b>	20	21	15	9	16	14

*The initiative Russian opinion polls were conducted on November 28-29, 2009. 1600 respondents were interviewed at 140 sampling points in 42 regions of Russia. The margin of error does not exceed 3.4 %.*

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## **WEST EUROPE**

### **Britons Side with Banning Minarets in UK**

December 22, 2009

People in Britain are open to the idea of banning minarets, according to a three-country poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 37 per cent of respondents in Britain would vote in favour of a ban, while 25 per cent would vote against it.

In the United States, 21 per cent of respondents would vote to ban minarets, while 19 per cent disagree. In Canada, 35 per cent of respondents would vote against a ban, while 27 per cent would endorse one.

Within the frame of Switzerland's direct-democracy system, a group of citizens or leaders of the eight cantons together can call a referendum to challenge a law approved by the federal legislature. The vote is decided with a simple majority.

Last year, the ultra-nationalist Swiss People's Party (SVP) gathered more than 113,000 signatures to force a nationwide referendum on banning the construction of minarets in Swiss mosques. The minaret—a tower from which the call to prayer is sounded—is a distinctive architectural feature of Islamic mosques. At this time, only the mosques in Geneva, Wangen near Olten, Winterthur and Zurich have minarets.

Last month, 57.5 per cent of Swiss voters cast a ballot in favour of banning the construction of minarets in Swiss mosques.

Taner Hatipoglu, president of the Federation of Islamic Organisations in Zurich, expressed dismay at the outcome of the referendum, saying, "The initiators have achieved something everyone wanted to prevent, and that is to influence and change the relations to Muslims and their social integration in a negative way."

### **Polling Data**

Suppose a similar referendum took place in [COUNTRY]. Would you vote in favour or against banning minarets in [COUNTRY]?

	<b>CAN</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>BRI</b>
In favour	27%	21%	37%
Against	35%	19%	25%
Would not vote	16%	29%	18%

Not sure	22%	32%	21%
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*Source: Angus Reid Strategies*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,000 Canadian adults, 1,004 American adults, and 2,002 British adults, conducted from Dec. 9 to Dec. 12, 2009. Margins of error range from 2.2 per cent to 3.1 per cent.*

## **2009 'Worst Year For One In 20'**

Dec 14, 2009

One in 20 people described 2009 as their worst year ever and almost half said they were most worried about money or debt, a survey has showed.

Samaritans urged people not to let their concerns spiral out of control after a further 18% of those surveyed said it had been bad for them.

The poll of more than 2,000 people also found problems in relationships with family and friends (35%), physical health concerns (32%), fears over job security (24%) and workplace stress (24%) made up the top five of the UK's biggest worries.

Just 18% said they thought it had been a good year.

Samaritans' Chief Executive Catherine Johnstone said: "In the last year, Samaritans received five million calls and many of them were about the worries identified in this survey, with approximately one in every ten calls linked to financial stress.

"If people don't talk about their problems, they can build up over time and spiral into more serious emotional distress.

"Sharing your troubles can be a huge relief and is often the first step to finding a way of coping with the challenges that life throws at all of us."

The survey, which was carried out online by YouGov between November 27-30, also found loneliness was one of the top worries for 21% of young people aged 18-24, compared with only 8% of people aged 55 and over.

It also found more women (25%) worried about their appearance or ageing than men (18%); 10% of men worried about sport and how their favourite team was doing compared with 1% of women; and people have been more worried about domestic politics (24%) and world affairs (23%) than about what was happening in their own neighbourhood (8%).

## Two-in-Five Britons Would Vote Tory

December 21, 2009

The Conservative party remains ahead of all rivals in Britain, according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 40 per cent of respondents would support the Tories in the next election to the House of Commons.

The governing Labour party is second with 24 per cent, followed by the Liberal Democrats with 20 per cent. 16 per cent of respondents would vote for other parties.

In June 2007, Gordon Brown officially became Labour leader and prime minister, replacing Tony Blair. Brown had worked as chancellor of the exchequer. Blair served as Britain's prime minister since May 1997, winning majority mandates in the 1997, 2001 and 2005 elections to the House of Commons.

Since December 2005, David Cameron has been the leader of the Conservative party. In December 2007, current parliamentarian Nick Clegg became the new leader of the Liberal Democrats.

On Dec. 15, Cameron suggested that the country's political scene needs more outsiders, declaring, "In the Internet age, when you can shop and travel at the click of a mouse, finding something that makes politics link more directly to people is a very good idea. I think trying to increase the level of people power in politics is a really good thing and big thing and something I've tried to do. I'm a great believer you should go beyond the Westminster fish tank."

The next election to the House of Commons must be held on or before Jun. 3, 2010. Sitting prime ministers can dissolve Parliament and call an early ballot at their discretion.

### Polling Data

If a General Election were held tomorrow, which one of the following parties would you be most likely to support in your constituency? - Decided Voters with Leaners

	<b>Dec. 18</b>	<b>Dec. 10</b>	<b>Nov. 23</b>
Conservative	40%	40%	39%
Labour	24%	23%	22%
Liberal Democrats	20%	19%	21%

Other	16%	19%	18%
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Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion

Methodology: Online interviews with 2,010 British adults, conducted from Dec. 16 to Dec. 18, 2009. Margin of error is 2.2 per cent.

## Sarkozy's Disapproval Rating Soars in France

December 23, 2009

The proportion of people in France who express disappointment with Nicolas Sarkozy's performance has risen sharply, according to a poll by Ifop published in *Paris Match*. 61 per cent of respondents disapprove of the president's leadership, up six points since October.

The popularity of prime minister François Fillon has also fallen, with 55 per cent of respondents saying they disapprove of his performance.

In May 2007, Sarkozy, candidate for the centre-right Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) and former interior minister, won the presidential run-off with 53.06 per cent of the vote. Sarkozy appointed Fillon—who had been his adviser and presidential campaign leader—as prime minister.

On Dec. 21, while in an official visit to China, Fillon praised the bi-lateral relationship and talked of an agreement to collaborate in the area of nuclear energy, declaring, "Nuclear cooperation is rooted in both our republics' aim to value technological innovation and energy independence. These agreements also are a proof of the solid relations between China and France."

### Polling Data

Do you approve or disapprove of Nicolas Sarkozy's performance as president?

	Dec. 2009	Oct. 2009	Sept. 2009
Approve	39%	39%	45%
Disapprove	61%	55%	55%

Do you approve or disapprove of François Fillon's performance as prime minister?

	Dec. 2009	Oct. 2009	Sept. 2009
Approve	44%	49%	52%
Disapprove	55%	50%	47%

Source: Ifop / Paris Match

Methodology: Telephone interviews with 1,002 French adults, conducted on Dec. 3 and Dec. 4, 2009. No margin of error was provided.

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## **French Praise the Debré Education Law**

December 22, 2009

The vast majority of people in France still agree with a 50-year old law which allows private schools to enter into contracts with the state, according to a poll by CSA published in *La Croix*. 84 per cent of respondents think the Debré Law was a good thing.

The Debré Law of 1959—introduced by then prime minister Michel Debré— regulated the relationship between private and state schools. Under its terms, the salaries of private school teachers are paid by the state.

Catholic schools were amongst the most benefitted with this particular law, since they were noticeably short of funds. At the same time, the government managed to offer more schooling options to a growing population.

On Dec. 18, Éric de Labarre, general secretary of Catholic education, said the Debré Law "allows guaranteeing school pluralism while respecting the unity of the nation."

### **Polling Data**

In France, since the passing of the Debré Law in 1959, private schools can enter into a contract with the State so that their operating expenses are dealt with under the same conditions as public schools. Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing?

Good	84%
Bad	15%
Not sure	1%

*Source: CSA / La Croix*

*Methodology: Telephone interviews with 1,009 French adults, conducted on Nov. 9 and Nov. 10, 2009. No margin of error was provided.*

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## **Swedes Now More Receptive to Joining Euro**

December 26, 2009

The proportion of people in Sweden open to adopting the common European currency has grown over the past five years, according to a poll by Statistics Sweden. 44 per cent of respondents would vote Yes in a referendum on adopting the euro, up seven points since November 2004.

Conversely, 42 per cent of respondents would vote No.

The euro has been used in 12 European Union (EU) countries since January 2002. At the time, Sweden, Britain and Denmark were the only EU members that did not adopt the currency. At this point, the euro is the official currency in 16 of the 27 EU member states. The European Central Bank has set a fiscal deficit limit of 3.0 per cent to allow other member nations to adopt the euro. Slovenia began using the currency in 2007, Cyprus and Malta in 2008, and Slovakia in 2009.

Sweden held a referendum on the euro on Sept. 14, 2003. In that nationwide ballot, 56 per cent of voters chose to keep the krona as the national currency.

On Dec. 7, Swedish finance minister Anders Borg said that the government—led by an alliance of centre-right parties—will call a new referendum on adopting the euro "as soon as possible," once there are strong signs that a Yes vote would come through.

### **Polling Data**

How would you vote if a new referendum on the Euro were held today?

	<b>Nov. 2009</b>	<b>Nov. 2004</b>
Yes	44%	37%
No	42%	49%
Undecided	14%	14%

*Source: Statistics Sweden*

*Methodology: Interviews to 6,398 Swedes, conducted from Oct. 28 to Nov. 25, 2009. Margin of error is 1.2 per cent.*

### **Norwegians Condemn Obama's Snubbing of King**

December 20, 2009

Many people in Norway deem it unacceptable that United States president Barack Obama rejected an invitation to a state banquet hosted by King Harald V earlier this month, according to a poll by InFact published by *Verdens Gang*. 44 per cent of respondents share this opinion.

In October, the Nobel Committee—which is based in Oslo—awarded the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize to Obama.

On Dec. 10, Obama received the Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo. The American president, who said he wanted to keep a low profile while in Norway, decided to miss some of the ceremonies accompanying the event, including a lunch banquet with King Harald V. The latter has been Norway's monarch since 1991.

Several media outlets in Norway described Obama's decision not to have lunch with the monarch as "a bit arrogant."

### **Polling Data**

Do you think it was acceptable or unacceptable for U.S. president Barack Obama not to attend the state banquet with King Harald V?

Acceptable	34%
Unacceptable	44%

Source: InFact / Verdens Gang

Methodology: Interviews with 1,000 Norwegian adults, conducted in December 2009. Margin of error is 3 per cent.

## NORTH AMERICA

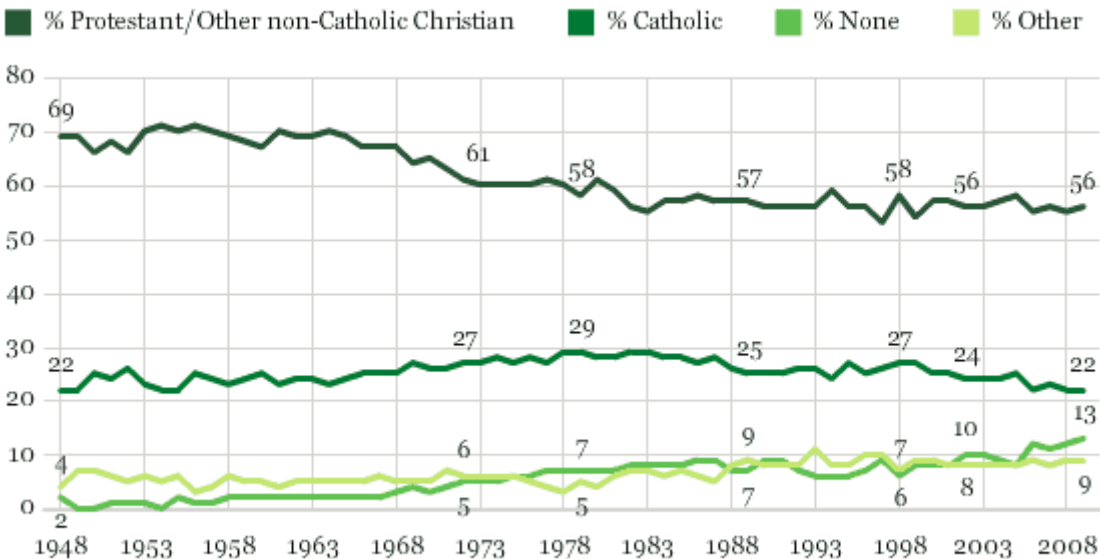
### This Christmas, 78% of Americans Identify as Christian

Over time, fewer Americans identify as Christian; more have no religious identity

December 24, 2009

This Christmas season, 78% of Americans identify with some form of Christian religion, a proportion that has been declining in recent decades. The major reason for this decline has been an increase in the percentage of Americans claiming no religious identity, now at 13% of all adults.

What is your religious preference?



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The trend results are based on annual averages of Gallup's religious identity data in America that stretch back over 60 years. One of the most significant trends documented during this period is the substantial increase in the percentage of American adults who don't identify with any specific religion. In 1948, only 2% of Americans did not identify with a religion. That percentage began to rise in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Eleven years ago, in 1998, 6% of Americans did not identify with a religion, a number that rose to 10% by 2002. This year's average of 13% of Americans who claim no religious identity is the highest in Gallup records.

The percentage of Americans who identify as Catholic, Protestant, or some other non-Catholic Christian faith has been concomitantly decreasing over the years. This suggests that one of the major patterns of religious transition in America in recent decades has been the shift from identification as Christian to the status of having no specific religious identification.

In 1948, 91% of Americans identified with a Christian faith. Twenty years ago, in 1989, 82% of Americans identified as Christian. Ten years ago, it was 84%. This year, as noted, 78% of all American adults identify with a Christian faith.

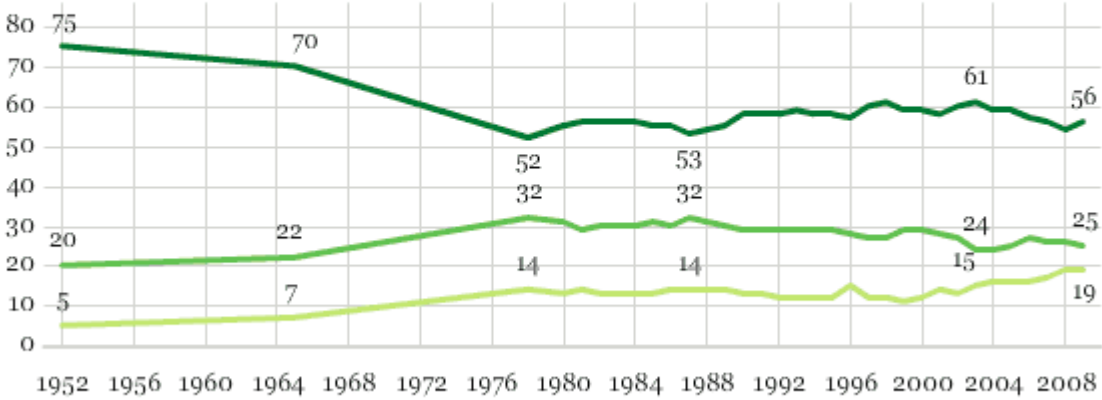
There has also been a slight increase in the percentage of Americans who identify with a religion that is not specifically classified as Christian. Sixty years ago, for example, 4% of Americans identified with a non-Christian religion. By 1989, 9% of Americans were in this non-Christian religion category, the same percentage as today.

### **Personal Importance of Religion**

Does the decrease in religious identity signify that religion is losing its importance for Americans? There was a substantial drop in the percentage of Americans who said religion was "very important" in their lives between the 1960s and the 1970s -- from 70% in 1965 to 52% by 1978 -- but in recent decades, this "very important" percentage has remained relatively steady. The overall figure today -- 56% -- is slightly higher than it was 31 years ago.

*How important would you say religion is in your own life -- very important, fairly important, or not very important?*

■ % Very important    ■ % Fairly important    ■ % Not very important



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"The percentage of Americans who in theory could celebrate Christmas this week as a specific component of their religious faith is down significantly from where it was 50 or 60 years ago."

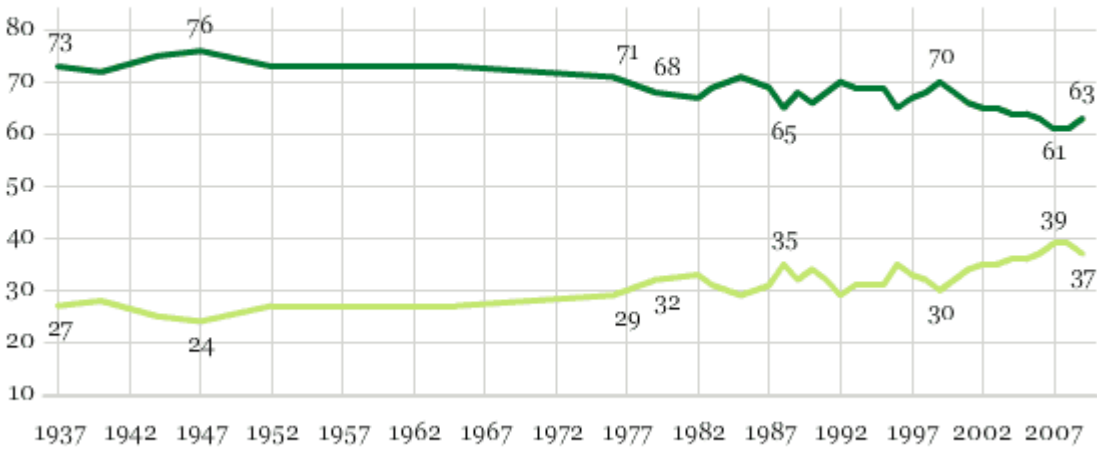
There has been a slight tendency over the years for Americans to shift from a "fairly important" category to the "not very important" category in answer to this religious importance question. The percentage saying religion is not very important in their lives was routinely in the 12% to 15% range from 1978 through the early years of this decade. In more recent years, this percentage has drifted slightly upward, and is at 19% this year.

### **Church Membership**

As would be expected, given the drop in the percentage of Americans who have a religious identity, there has been a similar drop in the percentage of Americans who say they are a member of a church or synagogue.

*Do you happen to be a member of a church or synagogue?*

■ % Yes    ■ % No



GALLUP®

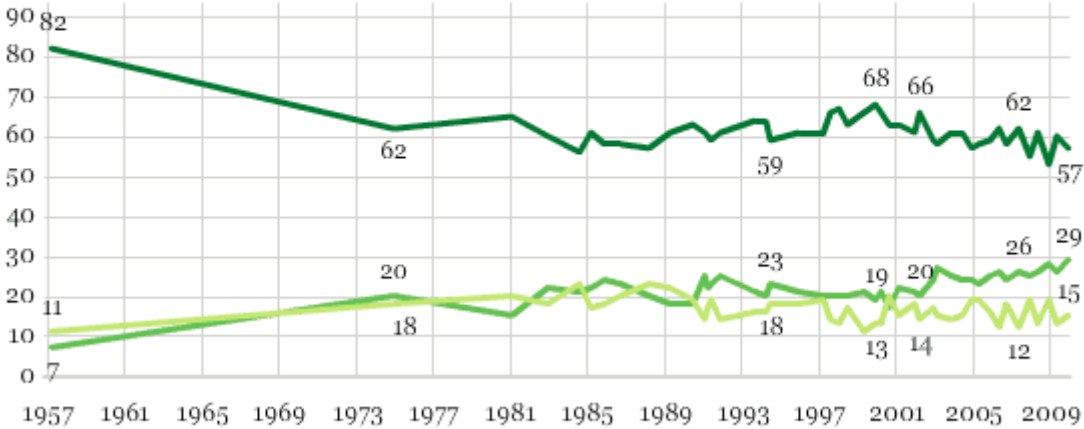
Gallup first asked this church membership question in 1937, at which time 73% of Americans said they were a member of a religious congregation. That percentage stayed above 70% in occasional Gallup surveys conducted through 1976, and remained in the high 60% range for the most part through the beginning of this decade. In recent years, the church membership percentage has been drifting down, reaching as low as 61% in Gallup's averages for 2007 and 2008. This year's average is 63%.

### **Is Religion Old-Fashioned and Out of Date?**

Gallup has asked Americans over the years whether "religion can answer all or most of today's problems" or whether it "is largely old-fashioned and out of date." The majority of Americans over the last 52 years have chosen the first of these responses.

*Do you believe that religion can answer all or most of today's problems, or that religion is largely old-fashioned and out of date?*

■ % Can answer    ■ % Old-fashioned    ■ % Other/No opinion



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The biggest change in attitudes on this measure came between Gallup's survey in 1957 -- a very religious decade, based on Gallup indicators -- and the data collected in more recent decades.

The years from 1974 to the present have been marked by significant fluctuations in the answer to this question. Generally speaking, the percentage of Americans saying that religion can answer all or most of today's problems has been in a range between the mid-50s and the mid-60s. The recent decade high point was 68% in a survey conducted 10 years ago, in December 1999. The recent low point was 53% in a survey conducted last December. In two surveys conducted this year, the percentages saying that religion can answer all or most of today's problems were 60% and 57%.

A considerable percentage of Americans over the years, when confronted by the two choices offered by this question, have replied that they can't choose or have another opinion. This year, for example, 13% and 15% of Americans have given one of these answers in Gallup's two surveys that included this question.

### **Bottom Line**

The United States remains a dominantly Christian nation. Almost 8 out of 10 Americans identify with a Christian religion. And the vast majority of those who identify with any religion identify with one that is Christian.

Yet, the percentage of Americans who in theory could celebrate Christmas this week as a specific component of their religious faith is down significantly from where it was 50 or 60 years ago. The most important reason for this shift is straightforward: there has been an increasing percentage of Americans who say they have no specific religious identity.

The fact that fewer Americans say they have a religious identity does not necessarily mean there has been a decrease in overall religiosity in America. It is possible that some proportion of those who don't identify with a specific religion are still personally or spiritually religious.

Although a little more than one out of five Americans do not identify with a Christian faith, the Christmas season has ramifications for a broader segment of society. A Gallup survey conducted last year showed that 93% of all American adults said they celebrated Christmas.

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## **Public Looks Back at Worst Decade in 50 Years**

*Internet, Cell Phones Are Changes for the Better*

December 21, 2009

As the current decade draws to a close, relatively few Americans have positive things to say about it. By roughly two-to-one, more say they have a generally negative (50%) rather than a generally positive (27%) impression of the past 10 years. This stands in stark contrast to the public's recollection of other decades in the past half-century. When asked to look back on the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, positive feelings outweigh negative in all cases.

<b>Good Riddance to the 2000s</b>					
<i>Your overall impression of the...</i>					
	<u>1960s</u>	<u>1970s</u>	<u>1980s</u>	<u>1990s</u>	<u>2000s</u>
<i>Is generally...</i>	%	%	%	%	%
Positive	34	40	56	57	27
Negative	15	16	12	19	50
Neither	42	37	27	22	21
Don't know	8	7	5	3	2
	100	100	100	100	100
<b>9/11 Attacks Stand Out</b>					
<i>Most important event of the decade</i>	%				
9/11 terrorist attacks	53				
Barack Obama's election	16				
2008 financial crisis	12				
George W. Bush's election	6				
War in Iraq	5				
Hurricane Katrina	3				
Other (vol.)	1				
Don't know	3				
	100				
<b>But Most Say 2010s Will Be Better</b>					
<i>Next decade will be...</i>	%				
Better	59				
Worse	32				
Same (vol.)	4				
Don't know	5				
	100				
Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.					

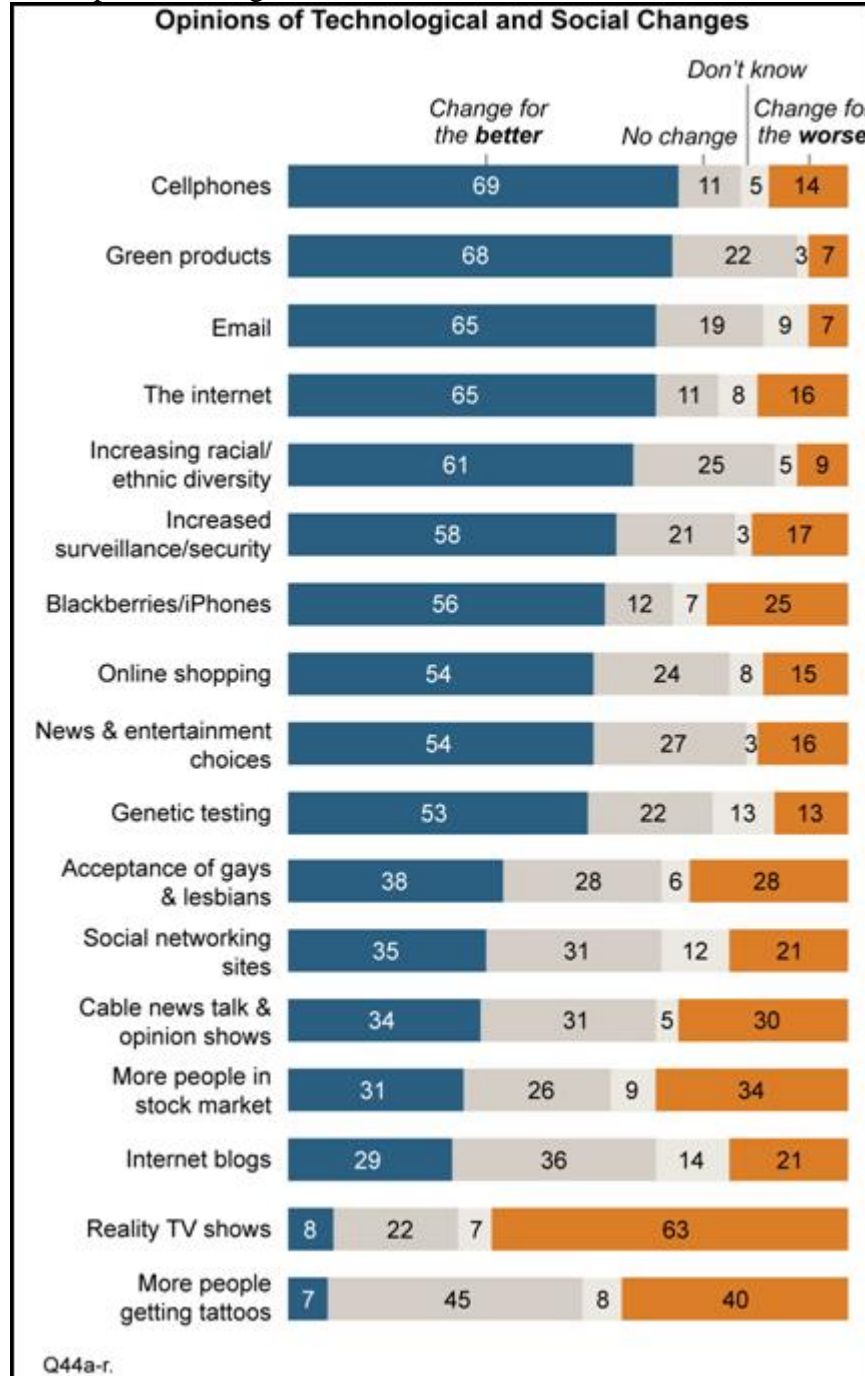
To be sure, the passage of time may affect the way people view these historical periods. For example, had we asked the public's impression of the 1970s in December of 1979, the negatives may well have outweighed the positives.

By a wide margin, the 9/11 terrorist attacks are seen as the most important event of the decade, with Barack Obama's election as president a distant second -- even among his political supporters. And the sour view of the decade is broad-based, with few in any political or demographic group offering positive evaluations.

Happy to put the 2000s behind them, most Americans are optimistic that the 2010s will be better. Nearly six-in-ten (59%) say they think the next decade will be better than the last for the country as a whole, though roughly a third (32%) think things will be worse.

There are a number of recent changes and trends that are viewed favorably. In particular, the major technological and communications advances are viewed in an overwhelmingly positive light.

Clear majorities see cell phones, the internet and e-mail as changes for the better, and most also view specific changes such as handheld internet devices and online shopping as beneficial trends.



There is greater division of opinion, however, over whether social networking sites or internet blogs have been changes for the better or changes for the worse.

Most see increasing racial and ethnic diversity as a change for the better, as well as increased surveillance and security measures and the broader range of news and entertainment options.

But the public is divided over whether wider acceptance of gays and lesbians, cable news talk and opinion shows, and the growing number of people with money in the stock market are good or bad trends. Reality TV shows are, by a wide margin, the least popular trend tested in the poll; 63% say these shows have been a change for the worse. Tattoos are also unpopular with many -- 40% say more people getting tattoos is a change for the worse, though 45% say it makes no difference and 7% see it as a change for the better.

The 2000s in a Word*			
36	Downhill	8	Bush
35	Change	8	Interesting
24	Good	8	Terrible
18	Poor	7	Confusing
17	Decline	7	OK
16	Disappointing	7	Sucks
16	Turbulent/Turmoil	6	Mess/Messed up
14	Chaos/Chaotic	6	Sad
13	Not good	5	Challenging
11	Bad	5	Crazy
11	Fair	5	Difficult
10	Disaster	5	Excess
10	Greed	5	Hard
10	Rollercoaster	5	Hopeful
10	Scary	5	Lost
9	Depressing	5	Struggle
9	Tumultuous	5	Successful
9	Worse/Worsening	5	Wow!

\* Figures show the number of people, out of 779 asked, who offered each word or phrase. These figures are not percentages. ©40F1.

## A 'Downhill' Decade

The breadth and depth of discontent with the current decade is reflected in the words people use to describe it. The single most common word or phrase used to characterize the past 10 years is downhill, and other bleak terms such as poor, decline, chaotic, disaster, scary, and depressing are common. Other, more neutral, words like change, fair and interesting also come up, and while the word good is near the top of the list, there are few other positive words mentioned with any frequency.



## Boomers Look Back Fondly

There is no significant generational divide in impressions of the current decade: Roughly half in all age groups view the 2000s negatively, while less than a third rate the decade positively.

<b>Generations View the Decades</b>				
	----- <i>Current age</i> -----			
	18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
	%	%	%	%
<b>2000s</b>				
Generally positive	28	31	26	23
Generally negative	49	49	55	45
Neither/DK	24	21	19	32
	100	100	100	100
<b>1990s</b>				
Generally positive	67	64	51	43
Generally negative	9	18	26	21
Neither/DK	25	18	23	36
	100	100	100	100
<b>1980s</b>				
Generally positive	49	60	59	54
Generally negative	9	12	17	11
Neither/DK	42	28	24	36
	100	100	100	100
<b>1970s</b>				
Generally positive	34	28	59	44
Generally negative	15	20	11	16
Neither/DK	51	52	30	40
	100	100	100	100
<b>1960s</b>				
Generally positive	26	22	49	46
Generally negative	9	17	15	19
Neither/DK	65	61	36	35
	100	100	100	100
N	112	201	216	131

Q41F2. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

This is in stark contrast to generational differences in views of previous decades. The 1990s are viewed far more positively by younger people -- roughly two-thirds of Americans younger than age 50 have a positive impression of the decade compared with fewer than half of people ages 50 and older. The 1960s, by contrast, receive generally positive ratings from people ages 50 and older, while those under 50 offer more mixed views.

The biggest generational division of opinion is in retrospective evaluations of the 1970s. Baby Boomers -- most of whom are between the ages of 50 and 64 today and were between ages 20 and 34 in 1979 -- view this decade in an overwhelmingly favorable light, with positive impressions outnumbering negative views by 48 points (59% positive vs. 11% negative). By contrast, people who were younger than 20 at the end of the 1970s -- who are currently in their 30s and 40s -- offer a less positive assessment; just 28% view the decade positively, 20% negatively, and 52% say neither or offer no opinion.

The decade out of the last half century with the best image right now is the 1980s. While comparable percentages offer positive evaluations of the 1980s (56%) and 1990s (57%), negative ratings for the 1980s are lower than for the 1990s (12% vs. 19%).

<b>Partisan Gap in Optimism About Coming Decade</b>			
	<u>Rep</u>	<u>Dem</u>	<u>Ind</u>
<i>Impression of the 2000s</i>			
	%	%	%
Generally positive	35	25	26
Generally negative	46	54	49
Neither/DK	19	21	24
	100	100	100
<i>Outlook for 2010s</i>			
Better	49	75	55
Worse	42	20	34
Same/DK	9	5	11
	100	100	100

Q40AF1, Q41eF2. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

And the balance of opinion about the 1980s is overwhelmingly positive across all age groups -- with positive views outnumbering negative by more than three-to-one across the board.

### **Next Decade Looks Better**

Most Americans (59%) think the next decade will be better than the current one for the country as a whole, and this perspective is widely shared across most political and demographic groups. But a significant minority -- 32% -- is of the view that things will be worse in the 2010s than in

the 2000s. Republicans are twice as likely as Democrats (42% vs. 20%) to offer a pessimistic

<b>Most Will Welcome the 2010s</b>				
	<i>Next decade will be</i>			<i>N</i>
	<u>Better</u>	<u>Worse</u>	<u>Same/DK</u>	
	<i>%</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>(Vol.) %</i>	
Total	59	32	9=100	779
18-29	65	29	7=100	101
30-49	60	31	9=100	267
50-64	50	42	8=100	234
65+	62	26	13=100	164
<i>Family income</i>				
\$75k+	64	32	4=100	223
\$30-75k	61	33	6=100	276
<\$30k	58	30	12=100	183
<i>Religion</i>				
Wh. Evang.	38	52	10=100	171
Wh. Mainl.	62	29	8=100	151
Wh. Cath.	66	24	10=100	123
Unaffiliated	63	28	9=100	129
Q40AF1. Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.				

assessment of the next decade.

Roughly a third (34%) of independents offer a gloomy prediction.

Generationally, Americans between the ages of 50 and 64 are the most pessimistic about the 2010s -- 42% think things will be worse over the next 10 years. This compares with 30% of people under age 50 and just 26% of those age 65 and older. Along religious lines, white evangelical Protestants take a far more pessimistic view of the next decade than other major religious groups. Just over half (52%) of white evangelicals predict that the coming decade will be worse than the current one, far more than the number of white mainline Protestants (29%), white Catholics (24%) or unaffiliated (28%) Americans who take this view.

### **The Decade in Review: Four Key Trends**

Changes in approval of Congress, president; satisfaction with the U.S.; perceived top problems

December 23, 2009

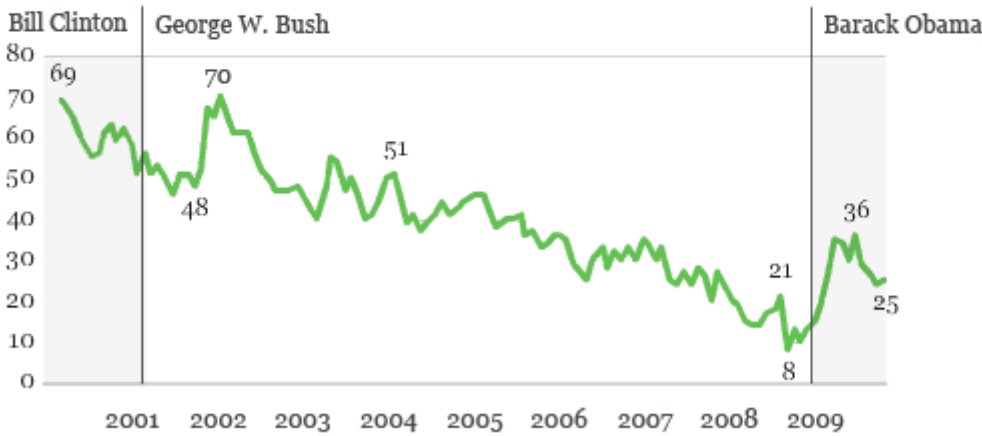
As 2009 draws down, Gallup reviews four of the key trends that reveal how Americans reacted to the twists and turns experienced in public affairs and the economy over the past decade.

### **Satisfaction With the Way Things Are Going**

### U.S. Satisfaction -- Trend Since January 2000

In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in the United States at this time?

■ % Satisfied



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At the start of this decade, Americans' satisfaction with the direction of the country stood at 69%, near the record-high 71% established in early 1999 that was fueled by a booming economy. Satisfaction levels quickly descended in 2001 as economic concerns mounted, and fell below 50% in mid-August of that year (48%). However, in the first few months after the 2001 terrorist attacks, public satisfaction quickly rebounded -- part of a broader "rally around the flag" effect triggered by 9/11 -- reaching 70% in December.

The 9/11 effect on U.S. satisfaction dissipated in less than a year, with satisfaction returning to 49% by July 2002. Americans' satisfaction with the direction of the country generally remained between 40% and 50% in 2003 (averaging 46%), but fell to an average 43% in 2004, 38% in 2005, 31% in 2006, and 28% in 2007. Satisfaction sank further -- along with a faltering U.S. stock market -- at the start of 2008, dropping well below 20% for the first time since 1992.

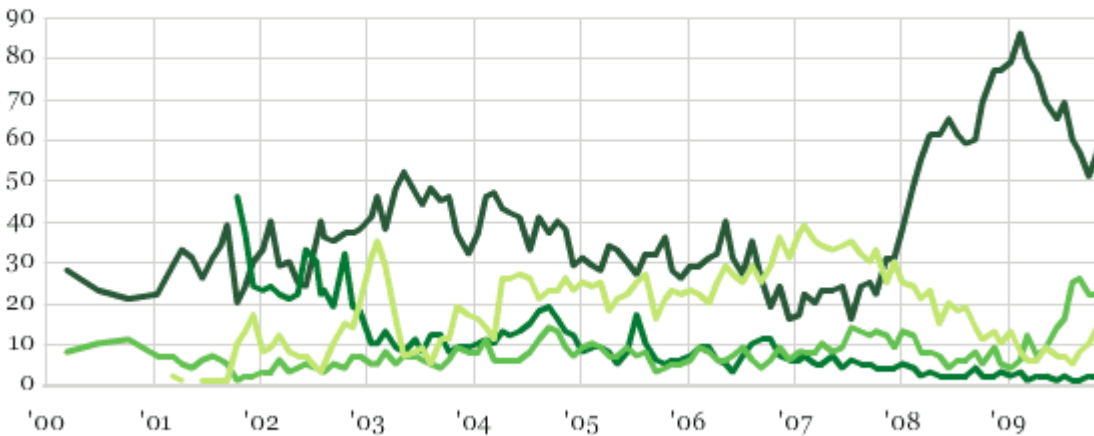
U.S. satisfaction nearly collapsed in late 2008, falling from 21% in September to 8% in October in the midst of the emerging Wall Street financial crisis. Satisfaction recovered only slightly over the next few months, then rose more sharply in April and May 2009 -- driven largely by increased satisfaction among Democrats under the new Obama administration. Satisfaction in 2009 peaked at 36% in August. However in the last few months of the year, it settled back into the mid-20s, finishing the decade at 25% in December -- still below the decade average.

### Most Important Problem

*What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?*

Trend since January 2000

■ Total economic ■ Terrorism ■ Healthcare ■ Total war/Iraq/Afghanistan



GALLUP

As might be imagined, Americans have identified a wide variety of issues as being "the most important problem facing this country" when asked this question throughout the decade. In Gallup's last reading of the decade -- in December 2009 -- 29 different problems were mentioned by at least 1% of Americans.

The accompanying graph tracks the decade-long trends in Americans' mentions of four of these problems: 1) the economy (a category that includes all mentions of economic issues); 2) terrorism; 3) wars (a category including either general mentions of wars or mentions of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan specifically); and 4) healthcare.

Two of these four issues -- terrorism and wars -- were basically not on Americans' radar in the first year and a half of the decade. That changed after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Mentions of terrorism as the nation's most important problem went from zero in early September 2001 to 46% in October of that year. Concerns over terrorism began to decline from that point on, and by decade's end, only 1% to 2% of Americans were mentioning terrorism as the country's top problem.

"The lowest presidential job approval rating of the decade was 25%, and Bush reached it three times in the fall of 2008, including at the time of the 2008 election to choose his successor."

Americans' mentions of war as the nation's most important problem (including general mentions of war as well as specific mentions of the situations in Iraq and Afghanistan) also increased after Sept. 11, and began to rise substantially in the final months of 2002 and into 2003 as the Bush administration made it clear that the U.S. was going to become militarily involved in Iraq. By May 2003, after Bush's "Mission Accomplished" speech on the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln,

mentions of war as the nation's top problem fell and remained low through the summer of that year. Then, as it became evident that the Iraq war was by no means over -- and as U.S. casualties mounted, hitting 1,000 in September 2004 -- mentions of Iraq as the nation's top problem began to increase, and basically stayed relatively high through the summer of 2008, before falling to the single digits as the decade ended. Mentions of Afghanistan as the nation's top problem were at a low 4% at decade's end.

Americans' designation of economic-related issues as the nation's top problems waxed and waned during the decade. Over 20% of Americans were mentioning some aspect of the economy as the nation's top problem in early 2000. Those concerns rose to over 50% by May 2003, but fell into the teens by late 2006 and into 2007. Then, beginning in the late fall of 2007, Americans increasingly began to mention aspects of the economy as the top problem, with a sharp rise in concerns by the winter and spring of 2008. By the summer of 2008, 60% or more of Americans were mentioning some aspect of the economy as the nation's top problem. Concern spiked even higher in the fall of 2008 and winter of 2009, reaching the decade's highest point in February of this year, when 86% of Americans spontaneously mentioned economic issues as the nation's top problem. As the decade ended, economic concerns had abated somewhat, dropping to 55% in December 2009.

The perception that healthcare is the nation's top problem was fairly scarce during most of the decade, reaching a low point of 1% in October 2001 (as terrorism overrode other concerns). By the summer of 2009, as President Obama and congressional leaders began to focus intently on new healthcare reform legislation, the public's mentioning of healthcare as the country's top problem began to rise again, reaching 26% by late August/early September. At decade's end, concerns over healthcare had drifted back to 16%.

### **Presidential Job Approval**

### Gallup Historical Presidential Job Approval Trends

From Bill Clinton to Barack Obama

■ % Approve



GALLUP

The decade has spanned the administrations of three presidents: Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

Clinton's final year in office was fairly uneventful. Clinton had solid ratings in the high 50% and low 60% range for most of 2000, finishing his presidency on a high note with a 66% job approval rating.

Bush began his term in early 2001 with ratings also in the high 50% and low 60% range, but his job approval ratings began to settle down, and by Gallup's Sept. 7-10, 2001, survey, Bush's job approval was at 51%. Then, after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, Bush was the recipient of the largest rally effect in Gallup history, with his approval rating rising 39 percentage points to 90% in the space of two weeks. The 90% rating is the highest in Gallup history. Bush's approval rating -- perhaps inevitably -- generally sloped downward after that, but remained well above average in 2002 and for most of 2003. By the time he sought re-election in 2004, his approval rating hovered near 50%.

Bush's second term was characterized by below-average ratings, which sank to the 30% range in his final two years in office -- including frequent drops into the 20s in his last year. The lowest presidential job approval rating of the decade was 25%, and Bush reached it three times in the fall of 2008, including at the time of the 2008 election to choose his successor. Bush's last approval rating, just before he left office, was 34%.

Obama took office with job approval ratings in the 60% range, beginning the honeymoon phase of his presidency, which lasted well into the summer months. By late summer, however, his

approval ratings were in the low 50% range; they dipped below the majority approval level in November, and have been at or near 50% in December.

## Congressional Job Approval

*Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?*

Trend since January 2000



GALLUP®

The decade of the 2000s saw both a new high and a new low in congressional job approval. The rally in support for government institutions after the 9/11 terror attacks extended to Congress, as 84% of Americans in October 2001 said they approved of the job Congress was doing, shattering the previous high of 57% from February 1998.

But that era of goodwill did not last, as approval ratings of Congress gradually descended -- following the same general pattern seen for George W. Bush's presidential job approval ratings. By October 2005, congressional job approval fell below 30%; it was 26% in the fall of 2006 when Americans transferred party control of both houses of Congress to the Democrats in that year's midterm elections.

The change in party control only had a very short-lived positive impact on Congress' ratings, which improved 16 points from December 2006 (21%) to February 2007 (37%) after the transfer of power. By August 2007, approval had dipped to a record-tying low of 18%, and the following year, Congress' ratings established a new historical low of 14%.

The new Obama administration helped to boost ratings of Congress again in 2009; congressional approval went from 19% in January to 39% in March. But again, those higher ratings did not persist, and at the end of the decade, Congress' job rating stands at 25%.



## Americans Agree with Obama on Wall Street

December 23, 2009

Many people in the United States believe Barack Obama was right when he referred to Wall Street bankers as "fat cats", according to a poll by Angus Reid Public Opinion. 83 per cent of respondents agree with their president.

Since 2007, defaults on so-called subprime mortgages—credit given to high-risk borrowers—in the U.S. caused volatility in domestic and global financial markets and ultimately pushed the U.S. economy into a recession. A recession is defined as two consecutive quarters of negative growth. The crisis has affected the global financial and credit systems, and triggered layoffs in companies around the world.

In 2008, the U.S. government took control of mortgage lenders Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. Other financial institutions—including Bear Stearns, Merrill Lynch, Lehman Brothers, American International Group (AIG), IndyMac Bancorp and Washington Mutual—have been sold, placed under bankruptcy protection, or received emergency loans from the Federal Reserve. On Sept. 15, the stock market plummeted in North America, Europe and Asia.

In American elections, candidates require 270 votes in the Electoral College to win the White House. In November 2008, Democratic nominee Obama secured a majority of electoral votes, defeating McCain. In January, Obama became the first African American president in U.S. history.

Earlier this month, Obama expressed dissatisfaction with the current state of affairs, saying, "I did not run for office to be helping out a bunch of fat cat bankers on Wall Street. (...) [Bankers] are drawing down \$10, 20 million bonuses after America went through the worst economic year that it's gone through in decades and you guys caused the problem."

### Polling Data

We would now like for you to take a moment to watch a video. Please click on the link to watch the video in a new window. We'll then ask you a few questions.\_

To respondents who watched the video: Do you agree or disagree with President Obama referring to Wall Street bankers as "fat cats"?

Agree	83%
Disagree	13%
Not sure	4%

*Source: Angus Reid Public Opinion*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,002 American adults, conducted on Dec. 17 and Dec. 18, 2009. Margin of error is 3.1 per cent.*

## LATIN AMERICA

### Chileans Doubt Peru's Accusation of Spying

December 24, 2009

The large majority of Chileans grant no credibility to claims by the Peruvian government that Chile was spying on their military, according to a poll by CERC. 76 per cent of respondents share this opinion.

Last month, the Peruvian government sent documents to Chile which showed that Víctor Ariza—a military officer with the Peruvian Air Force—had been spying and compiling sensitive military secrets on behalf of Chile since 2003. Ariza has since confessed that he indeed operated as a spy.

The matter has strained relations between the two neighbouring countries, which have a history of mutual animosity. Peru's Supreme Court will decide in February whether Ariza will face trial before a civilian or a military court.

On Nov. 16, when the story broke, García said that his country "has been the victim of an act of espionage." Fabián Vío, the Chilean ambassador, was recalled from Peru. Peruvian ambassador Carlos Pareja also left Chile.

On Dec. 16, Vío and Pareja returned to their duties. José Antonio García Belaunde, the Peruvian foreign minister, celebrated the decision, saying, "The presence of the ambassadors means that there is a strong willingness to strengthen relations."

#### Polling Data

Peruvian president Alan García has accused Chile of spying in its military installations. Do you think the allegations of the Peruvian president are truthful?

Yes	8%
No	76%
Not sure	16%

*Source: Centro de Estudios de la Realidad Contemporánea (CERC)*

*Methodology: Interviews with 1,200 Chilean adults, conducted from Nov. 24 to Dec. 5, 2009. Margin of error is 3 per cent.*

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## AUSTRALASIA

### Climate Change Deal is Important for Australians

December 25, 2009

Three quarters of people in Australia think reaching a global agreement on climate change is the most important thing the country can do, according to a poll by Essential Research. 74 per cent of respondents share this point of view.

Having a bill of rights is next on the list of important issues with 63 per cent, followed by gaining a seat on the United Nations (UN) Security Council with 59 per cent, having a treaty with indigenous Australians with 56 per cent, and having a referendum on Australia becoming a republic with 41 per cent.

The term global warming refers to an increase of the Earth’s average temperature. Some theories say that climate change might be the result of human-generated carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. In 2007, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a report which states that global warming has been "very likely"—or 90 per cent certain—caused by humans burning fossil fuels.

In 1998, several countries agreed to the Kyoto Protocol, a proposed amendment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The agreement commits nations to reduce their emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases.

Australia held a federal election in November 2007. Final results gave the Australian Labor Party (ALP) 85 seats in the 150-member House of Representatives. ALP leader Kevin Rudd was officially sworn in as prime minister in December, bringing an end to the 11-year tenure of Liberal leader John Howard as head of Australia’s government.

Rudd signed the Kyoto Protocol immediately after being sworn in, delivering on one of his electoral promises. In March 2008, the Kyoto Protocol came into effect. In July, the Rudd government introduced its Green Paper, a proposal to curb carbon emissions.

In September 2008, after reviewing the Green Paper, the government said it will implement a "Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme." The proposal has not yet been approved by lawmakers, but is expected to take effect in July 2010.

On Dec. 21, Rudd commented on the lack of a binding agreement at the conclusion of the Copenhagen Climate Change Summit, saying, "It’s a huge sense of frustration, which is: You push as hard as you can, you give it everything you’ve got, to produce the biggest outcome for Australia possible. (...) But what’s equally the case is just how frustrated you get when you feel that people don’t see sense" in curbing greenhouse gas emissions.

**Polling Data**

How important are the following issues for Australia? ("Very Important" and "Somewhat Important" listed)

Reaching a global agreement on climate change	74%
Having a Bill of Rights	63%
Gaining a seat on the UN Security Council	59%
Having a treaty with indigenous Australians	56%
Having a referendum on becoming a republic	41%

*Source: Essential Research*

*Methodology: Online interviews with 1,113 Australian adults, conducted from Nov. 24 to Nov. 29, 2009. No margin of error was provided.*

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## **New Zealand's National Ends Year on High Note**

December 23, 2009

New Zealand's governing National party ends 2009 with a solid support rate, according to a poll by Roy Morgan International. 54 per cent of respondents would vote for the conservative party in the next election to the House of Representatives.

The opposition Labour party is second with 27.5 per cent, followed by the Greens with 9.5 per cent, New Zealand First with four per cent, the Maori Party with 1.5 per cent, ACT also with 1.5 per cent, and United Future with 0.5 per cent.

New Zealanders renewed the House of Representatives in November 2008. Final results gave the conservative National party 45.50 per cent of the vote and 59 seats in the 122-member legislature. The Labour party garnered 33.77 per cent of the vote and 43 mandates. The remaining seats went to other parties and independents.

Also in November 2008, National leader John Key formed a government with the support of ACT, United Future and the Maori Party. Helen Clark announced her resignation as Labour leader, and was supplanted by former trade and defence minister Phil Goff.

In April 2009, the Greens and National signed a memorandum of understanding, under which both parties established a "good faith working relationship" with no prerequisite policy commitments.

On Nov. 29, Key rejected several recommendations issued by a taskforce led by former central bank chief Don Brash, including massive tax cuts and cutting spending from 36 per cent of GDP this year to 29 per cent in 2010. The prime minister said that he is "not convinced that absolutely radical big bang reform is the right way to go," adding, "It would certainly have a dramatic effect on New Zealanders and in the short term it would feel very much like we were pulling the rug out from underneath them."

### **Polling Data**

If an election were held today which party would receive your party vote?

	<b>Dec. 13</b>	<b>Nov. 29</b>	<b>Nov. 15</b>
National	54%	53.5%	51.5%
Labour	27.5%	30.5%	33%
Greens	9.5%	7%	6.5%
New Zealand First	4%	2.5%	2.5%

Maori Party	1.5%	3.5%	2%
ACT	1.5%	1.5%	2.5%
United Future	0.5%	--	1%
Progressives	--	--	--

*Source: Roy Morgan International*

*Methodology: Telephone interviews with 858 New Zealand voters, conducted from Nov. 30 to Dec. 13, 2009. No margin of error was provided.*

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