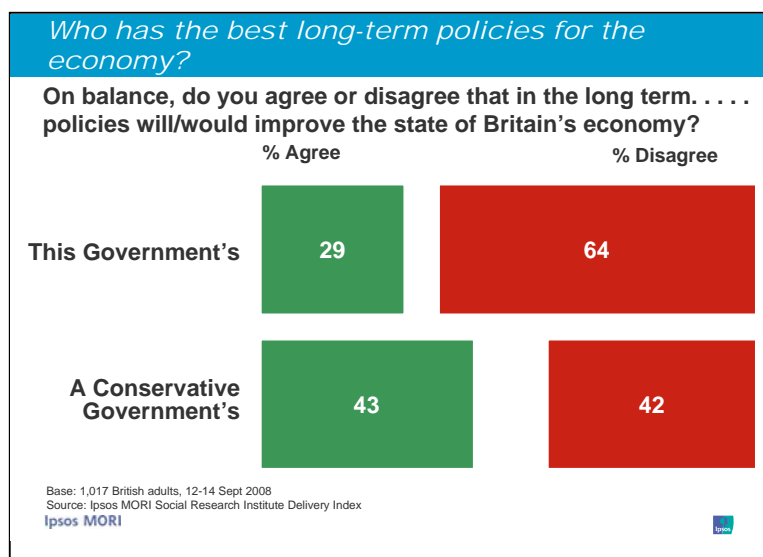


Ipsos MORI Delivery Index - The public were sceptical about Government policies in tough economic times, though there are more recent signs that they are beginning to rally round the Government

By Angela Klein and Graham Keilloh

With bad news on the economy permeating the headlines, the Government is facing a tough environment and Ipsos MORI's latest Delivery Index, from September, reflects this. Most of the public were sceptical about many Government policies, particularly its economic policies, and many felt the Opposition may do a better job. Nevertheless, in our more recent Political Monitor, overall satisfaction with the Government and Prime Minister have improved markedly in the last two months, suggesting that the public are beginning to cluster around the Government in this time of crisis.

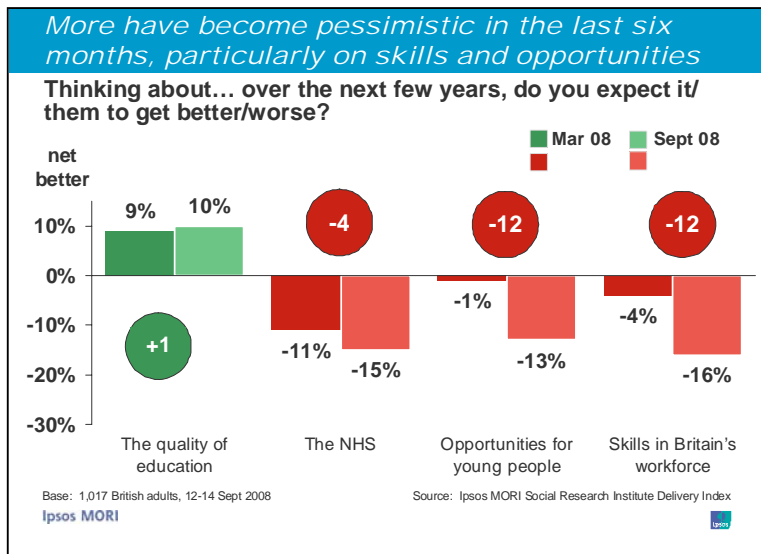
The economy is firmly back at the top of the public's agenda (see our latest Issues Index, wherein people are most likely to spontaneously mention the economy as the most important issue facing Britain: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/concern-about-economy-at-record-high-but-unemploy.ashx>). Back in September, when the credit crunch, subsequent economic slowdown and many banking crises had happened, though much of the Government's subsequent response had not been outlined, the public were not convinced that the Government had long-term policies that would improve Britain's economy. Indeed, Britons were more than twice as likely to believe that the Government's policies would *not* improve the state of the economy than to believe they would (64% were pessimistic and 29% were optimistic). The public were more pessimistic about this issue than at any other time in the past 11 years, and there was a twenty-one percentage point decrease in net economic optimism since November last year. For the Conservatives, the picture was rosier but still not a ringing endorsement of their policies: 43% of the public believed Conservative policies would improve the economy and 42% believed that they would not.



Nevertheless, our monthly Political Monitor waves conducted since the latest Delivery Index indicate that the public have, more recently, become increasingly positive about the Government's and Prime Minister's handling of the ongoing economic crisis. Public satisfaction with the Government and with Prime Minister Gordon Brown has improved significantly over the past two months. One in three (32%) are now satisfied with the way the Government is running the country, an increase of fourteen points from September. Six in ten (59%) remain dissatisfied, but this figure is down from 76% in September. Additionally, while half (50%) of the public remain dissatisfied with the way Gordon Brown is doing his job as Prime Minister, this figure has dropped by 19 points from September. His satisfaction ratings have risen by seventeen points since September to 41% in November.

This may reflect a phenomenon we often see that in times of crisis many of the public 'rally behind' the incumbent Government and leader. A similar pattern was seen in Britain after the 11 September terrorist attacks, for example. Indeed, this phenomenon is seen in many countries in western Europe currently, with French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel also receiving more positive ratings in their countries recently.

Reflecting concerns about the economy, the Delivery Index also showed that the public had become more pessimistic about opportunities for young people and the skills in Britain's workforce. Net public optimism about skills and opportunities stands at -16 and -13 respectively, compared with -4 and -1 respectively in March this year.



As with policies to improve the economy, the public were sceptical that the Government's policies will improve public services over the long term. By a margin of almost two to one, Britons were more likely to think the Government's policies will not improve public services than think they will (net optimism is -28). The public were also on balance pessimistic about the Conservatives' policies for public services, though not to the same extent, with net optimism towards the Conservatives' policies on the public services at -5.

Few of the public felt the NHS will improve, though pessimism was less widespread than in late 2006 and early 2007, when we recorded the lowest-ever ratings towards the NHS. By contrast, education continued to be viewed most positively, with more believing it will improve than believe it will get worse.

The public were also overwhelmingly likely to be pessimistic about the Government's ability to deal with climate change, immigration and crime, as well as to listen to the people's priorities. Indeed, the net rating for believing the Government will deal with climate change has dropped from -17 to -26 since March. This may reflect an expectation that 'green' issues will be less of a focus for Government in the current economic climate (this also appears to be the case in our latest Issues Index: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/concern-about-economy-at-record-high-but-unemploy.ashx>).

For more details on the latest Delivery Index please see: [DELIVERY INDEX SLIDES](#)

More details on the latest Political Monitor can be found at: <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/home-page-news/conservatives-down-to-3-point-lead-over-labour.ashx>

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Delivery Index technical details

- Ipsos MORI interviewed 1,017 British adults 18+ across Great Britain
- Fieldwork conducted by telephone between 12-14 September 2008

- Data weighted to the national population profile
- An '**' indicates a finding of less than 0.5%, but greater than zero
- Where percentages do not add up to exactly 100% this is due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't knows" or to multiple answers

Political Monitor technical details

- Ipsos MORI interviewed 1,002 adults aged 18+ across Great Britain.
- Fieldwork conducted by telephone 14th – 16th November 2008
- Data weighted to the national population profile
- An '**' indicates a finding of less than 0.5%, but greater than zero
- Where percentages do not add up to exactly 100% this is due to computer rounding, the exclusion of "don't knows" or to multiple answers