



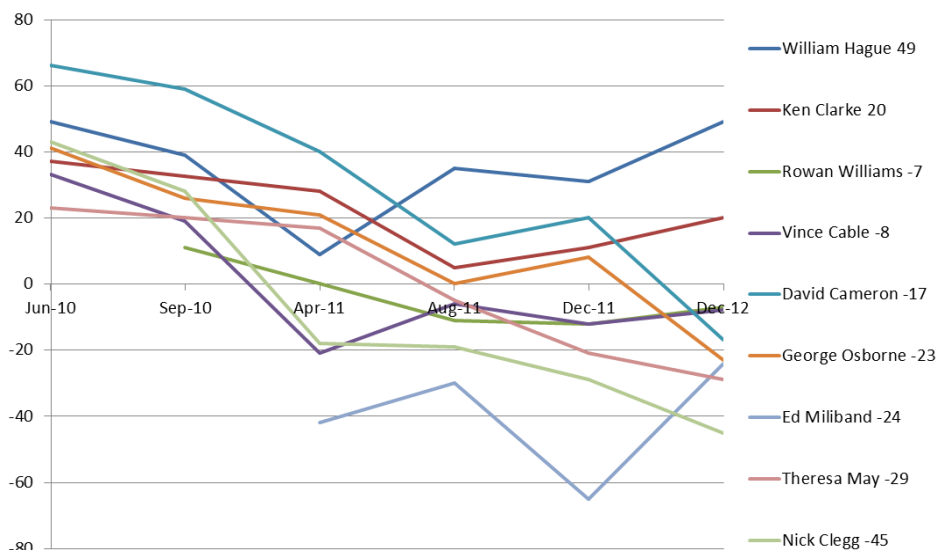
MAY THINKTANK SURVEY: GOVERNMENT APPROVAL, THE ECONOMY AND THE OLYMPICS

Approval of David Cameron, George Osborne and other key government figures has dropped sharply amongst UK ‘influentials’, as ratings for Ed Miliband rise for the first time. Two thirds of respondents reject the idea of referendums on House of Lords reform and EU membership. Confidence in the world’s major economies has increased but eurozone problems are expected to continue with Greece seen as very likely to leave the common currency.

YouGovStone interviewed 835 members of its ThinkTank of 4000+ influential Britons between 24/05/2012 and 31/05/2012, with panellists including those drawn from politics, business, media, academia, NGOs, and the public sector.

Approval of key political figures

 How well do you believe each of the following are doing
 in their current roles? Net score (% positive - % negative)



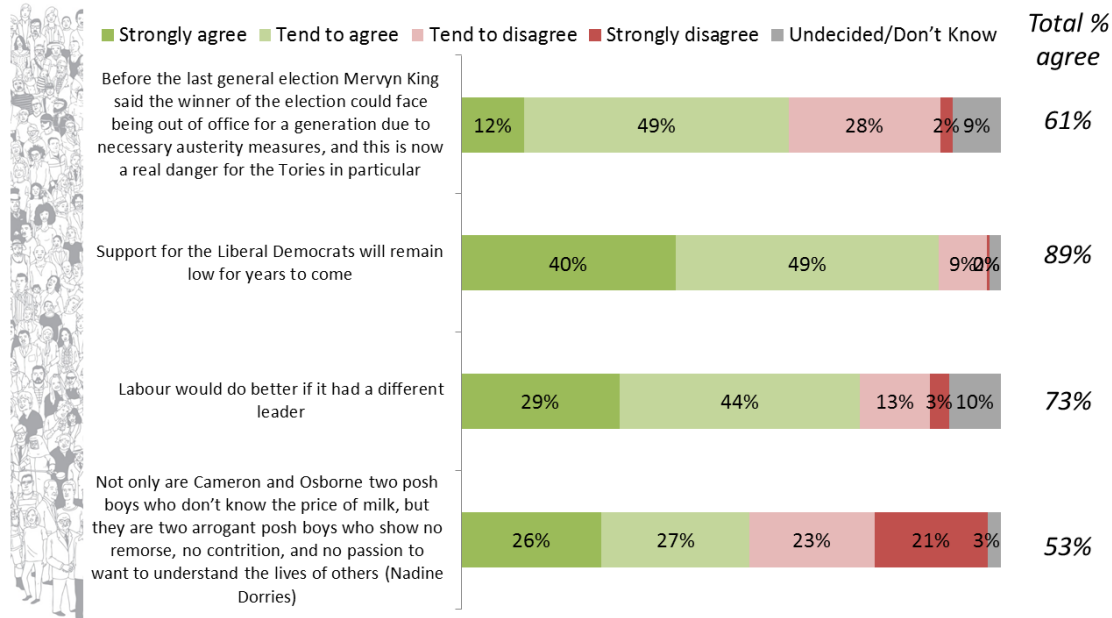
Base: Jun-10, 877; Sep-10, 697; Apr-11, 904; Aug-11, 938; Dec 11, 803; May 12, 835 UK ‘influentials’.

Approval for many key Government figures has dropped sharply since respondents were last asked this question in December 2011. David Cameron and George Osborne in particular have seen their evaluations plummet, with negative net scores for the first time. However, William Hague and Vince Cable have seen their ratings improve. Ed Miliband’s score has also risen from -65 in December to -24 now, a large improvement but still negative.

Policy and party performance



How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Base: 835 UK 'influentials', May 24th - 31st 2012.

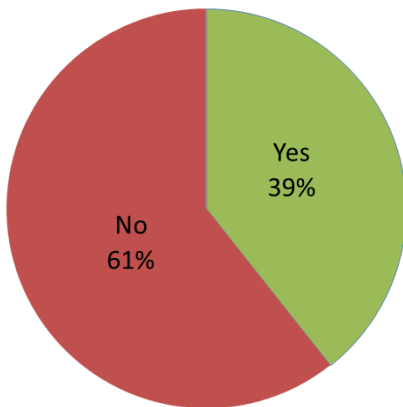
Almost two thirds of respondents agree that due to necessary austerity measures the parties having to implement these will necessarily suffer, and that this is now a danger for the Tories in particular. 89% also think that the Liberal Democrats will struggle with low support for years to come. This ties in with the question on how respondents think the local elections will impact the balance of power between the two Coalition parties: 43% believe the Conservatives will gain power, another 43% believe the balance will remain as it is. Only 7% think the Liberal Democrats will be able to gain more power in the Coalition following their poor showing in the local elections.

The 'influentials' are divided over Nadine Dorries' accusation that David Cameron and George Osborne are out of touch with the public – although 53% agree with her comment, 44% disagree. Labour, too, is still seen as facing difficulties; three quarters believe that the party would do better with someone other than Ed Miliband as its leader.

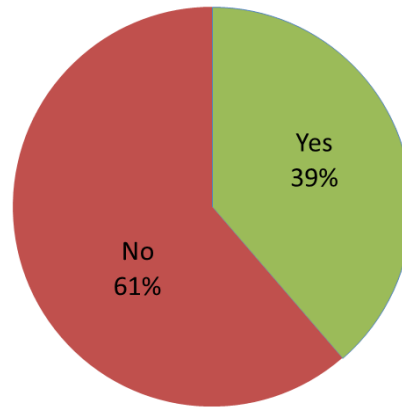
Should there be a national referendum on...



...House of Lords reform?



...Britain's membership of the EU?



Base: 835 UK 'influentials', May 24th- 31st 2012.

61% of respondents were against holding a referendum on House of Lords reform, and the same proportion reject having a referendum on Britain's membership of the EU. However, examined more closely, the data varies between these two questions. Those who would vote Liberal Democrat at the next general election were far more likely to reject holding a referendum on House of Lords reform – 75% were against this, compared to 62% of Conservative and 63% of Labour voters. This is different for the question on the referendum on Britain's EU membership: in this instance, both Liberal Democrat and Labour voters were predominantly against a referendum, with 81% choosing 'No'. Conservative voters are more balanced here, with 53% against but 47% for a referendum on Britain's membership.

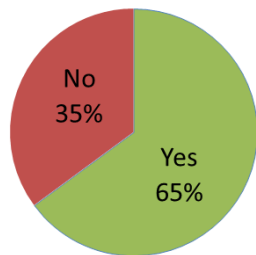
Leading economies



Managing the UK economy

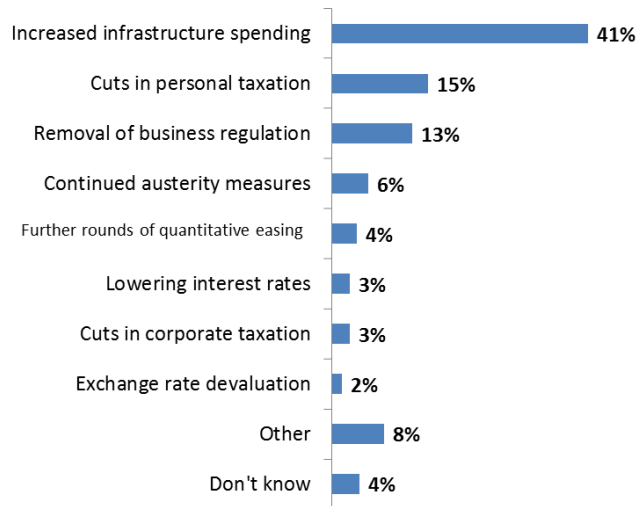


Do you expect the Government to stick to its current economic plan over the next year or two?



Base: 835 UK 'influentials', May 24th- 31st 2012.

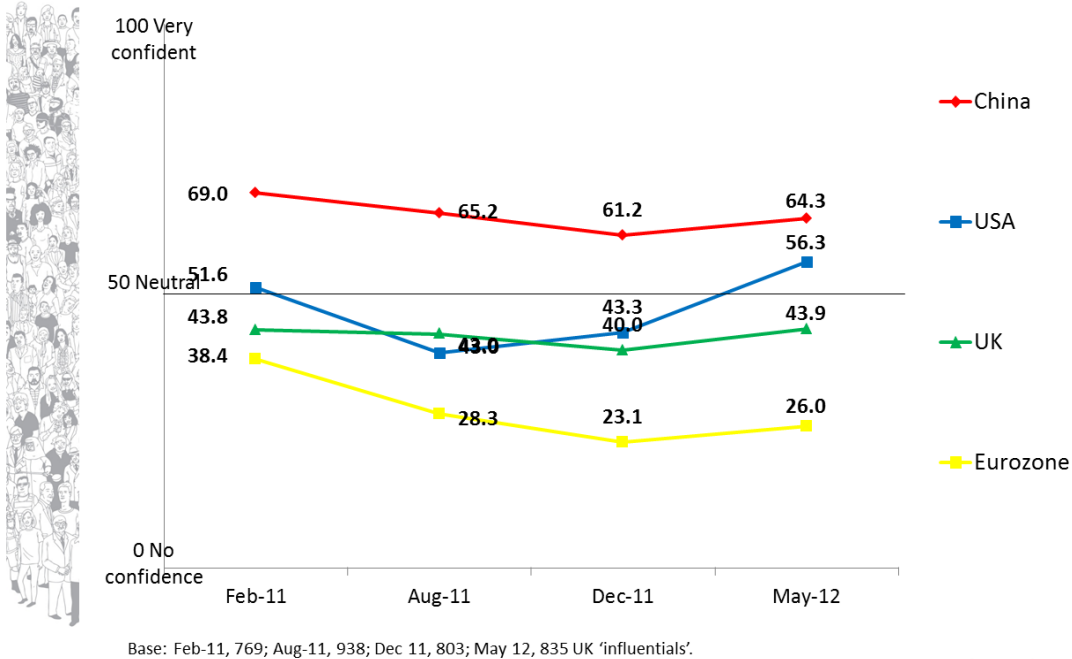
What single measure within the Government or Bank of England's control do you believe would have the greatest positive benefit to the UK economy?



Two thirds of respondents believe the Government will stick to its current economic plan in the near future. Of those that would vote Conservative at the next general election, an even larger majority (81%), believe this. Labour supporters however are nearly evenly split, with 52% expecting a U-turn on economic policy in the next year or two.

Asked which single economic measure would have the greatest positive impact on the UK economy, a majority of respondents chose increased infrastructure spending; this measure being even more popular with Liberal Democrat and Labour voters, with two thirds choosing it. Conservative voters are more split between this measure (23%) and removing business regulation to boost the economy (also 23%). Respondents in business however also preferred infrastructure spending (36%) and cuts in personal taxation (19%); removing regulation only comes third for this group, at 14%.

How confident do you feel about these four economies?



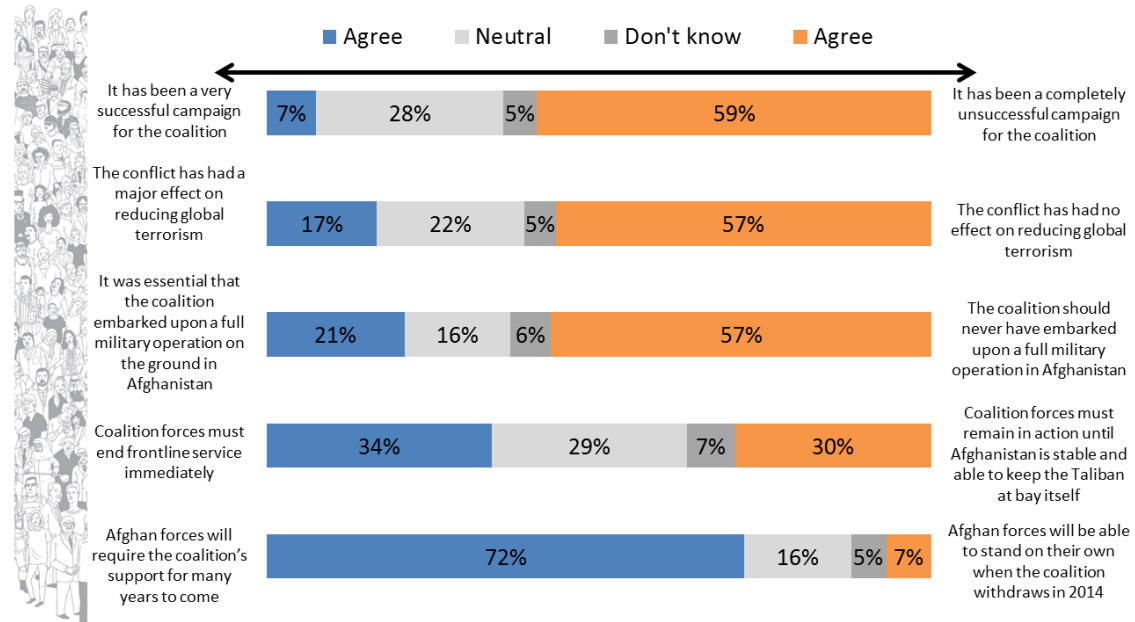
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Looking at four leading economies, confidence has picked up for all of them. Confidence has grown particularly in the US economy, with respondents now cautiously optimistic. Scores have also risen for China as well as for the UK and the eurozone, although the latter two economies are still seen negatively.

With regards to the eurozone debt crisis, respondents were shown a variety of possible outcomes to the crisis and were asked to choose the most likely one. 30% believe only Greece will leave the eurozone, with a further 35% predicting that Greece and at least one other country will have to leave. Only 9% see the euro eventually being abandoned by all its members. 19% believe that the eurozone will remain intact, with no country leaving.

Afghanistan

Please think about each of the opposing statements in turn and find the position on the scale which best reflects your view when thinking about operations in Afghanistan by the coalition (of 50 countries including US, NATO, etc).



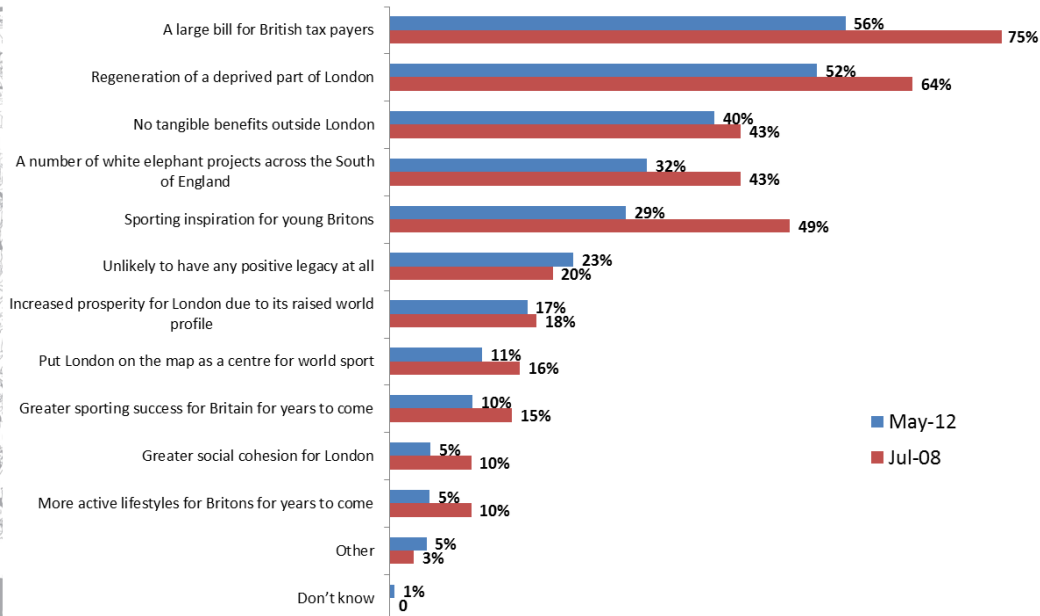
Base: 835 UK 'influentials', May 24th- 31st 2012.

As members of the coalition of forces in Afghanistan plan their withdrawal, the survey also explored opinions on the campaign overall, using a series of opposing statements. Most respondents are rather pessimistic about the campaign: 57% agree that 'The coalition should never have embarked upon a full military operation in Afghanistan', and the same proportion believes that 'the conflict has had no effect on reducing global terrorism'. Similarly, 72% state that 'Afghan forces will require the coalition's support for many years to come'. However, although 30% believe that coalition forces should remain in action until the Afghan state is stable enough to keep the Taliban at bay itself, 34% think coalition forces should end frontline services immediately. Regarding the campaign overall, respondents have a negative outlook: 59% believe it has been a completely unsuccessful campaign for the coalition.

The London Olympics



What legacy for Britain, if any, do you feel the 2012 Olympics in London will leave?



Base: July 2008, 249; May 2012, 835 UK 'influentials'

Finally, the panel was asked to evaluate the impact of the imminent London Olympics. On the whole, respondents are negative as to its legacy: out of the top 5 selected responses, 1st was ‘A large bill for the British taxpayer’, 3rd ‘No tangible benefits outside London’, and 4th ‘A number of white elephant projects across the South of England’. Only two positive outcomes are chosen in the top 5 – ‘Regeneration of a deprived part of London’ (2nd) and ‘Sporting inspiration for young Britons’ (5th). These views are similar to when we asked respondents the same question in July 2008. However, in 2008 ‘sporting inspiration for young Britons’ came 3rd; which has now dropped to 5th in 2012. Furthermore, only 56% of respondents now see the main outcome as being ‘A large bill for British taxpayers’; down from 75% in 2008.

PLEASE NOTE, YOUNGOVSTONE IS A PREDECESSOR OF YOUNGOV'S REPUTATION DEPARTMENT. YouGov now regularly surveys MPs, business leaders and other groups of high level decision makers in the UK and internationally. If your organisation needs to know what these individuals think, please contact Oliver Rowe, Director of Reputation Research on +44 (0)207 012 6032 or email oliver.rowe@yougov.com