



OVERVIEW

This newsletter provides an overview of the key findings from the latest Opinion Leaders' Panel research. In total 764 adults living in Trinidad and Tobago were interviewed for Wave 16, all having agreed to become members of the new Opinion Leaders' Panel when interviewed and recruited in Wave 15 at the beginning of 2010.

This edition updates regular trend questions on issues such as satisfaction with the Government and key national issues. The survey also addresses a number of specific policy and delivery issues, such as NAPA, the air and ferry service between Trinidad and Tobago, use of ICTs and a range of questions about visiting Port of Spain.

SATISFACTION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE

Half of the public (51%) are satisfied with the way the new Government is running the country and just seventeen percent are dissatisfied. This represents a significant shift in public attitudes since the beginning of 2010 when one in five people (20%) expressed satisfaction and more than seven in ten (72%) dissatisfaction.

The latest ratings of the Government's performance are impressive not only because of the sharp turnaround in public attitudes since the General Election, but also because they currently represent the highest level of satisfaction ever recorded in the Opinion Leaders' Panel research since its inception in 2002.

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DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY

Reflecting the increase in public satisfaction with the performance of the Government, there has also been a sharp improvement in people's attitudes towards the direction the country is moving in. At the beginning of 2009 and 2010, only one in four people (24%) believed that the country was "moving in the right direction" and almost two in three (64%) felt it was "moving in the wrong direction". In the latest research, attitudes have almost reversed. Now more than half of the public are optimistic about the direction of the country (56%) and just one in five people pessimistic (20%).

SYSTEM OF GOVERNING TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

Since 2008 there has been a doubling in the proportion of people who say that the system of governing Trinidad & Tobago "works extremely well and could not be improved", but this is a doubling from a very low base of 4% to 9%. Half the public believes that there "could be quite a lot of improvement" (30%) or that the system "needs a great deal of improvement" (20%).

VISITING PORT OF SPAIN

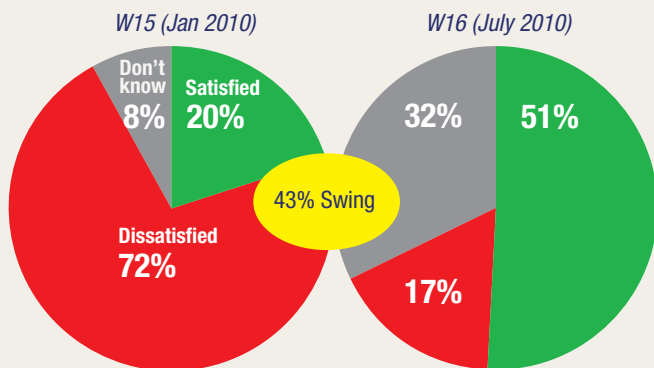
Approximately one in ten Trinidadians (10%) who do not reside in Port of Spain travel to the capital city each weekday, with a further six percent (6%) travelling there on a Saturday, but just one percent (1%) on a Sunday.

During a weekday, the two main reasons that people travel into Port of Spain are for "business" (42%) and "work" (41%). Approximately one in eight persons also travel to Port of Spain for "shopping" (13%) during a weekday.

The most popular mode of transport into Port of Spain is by "Maxi Taxi" (32%), followed by using one's "own car" (28%) or "Taxi (H Car)" (22%).

Chart 1: Government's Performance

Q Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country?



Base: 764 TT adults, 20 June - 25 July 2010

MANIFESTO PLEDGES

When prompted with a list of the key manifesto pledges, people are most likely to remember pledges about *Laptops* (93% recall), *Senior Citizens Grants* (91%) and *Property Tax* (79%), and least likely to remember pledges on *Constitutional Reform* (33%), *Ministry of the People* (33%) and *Reforestation* (23%).

The pledges people expect to have the greatest impact on their lives are *Property Tax* (42%), *Police* (40%) and *Minimum Wage* (40%).

Overall, people are confident that all the key pledges will be implemented within the next 12 months. The pledge on the *Life Fund* has the highest level of “net confidence” (+69), followed by *Senior Citizens Grant* (+60), *Roads* (+54) and *Property Tax* (+52).

Possibly the most significant area of concern is on the *Minimum Wage*, perceived to be the pledge with the largest potential impact but also considered one of the least likely to be implemented (61% confident).

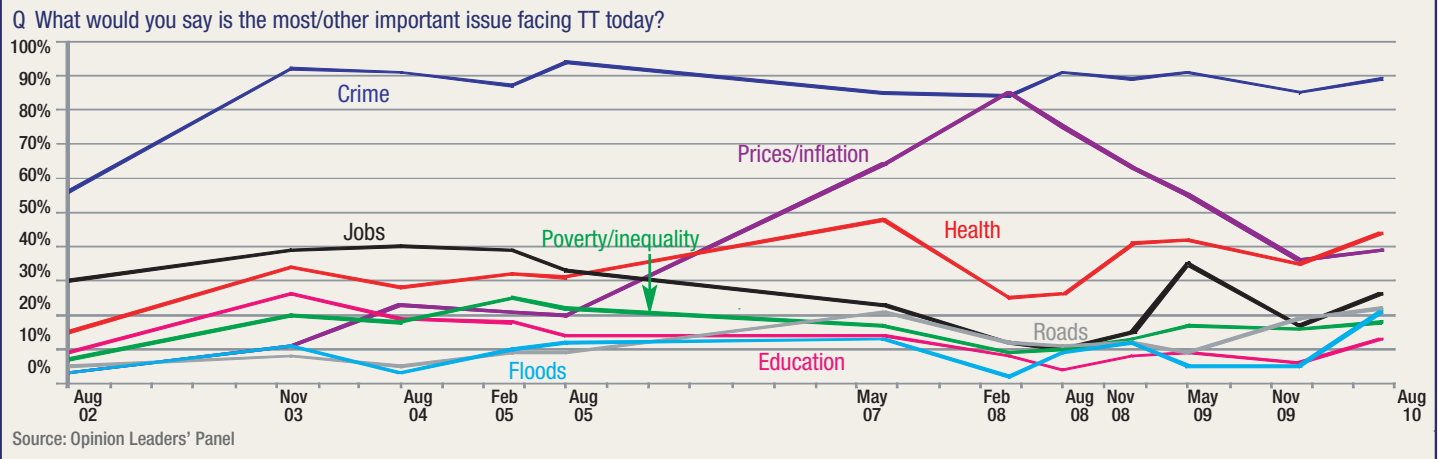
ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY

As observed for Wave 15, which was conducted at the beginning of the year, the three issues people are most concerned about are *crime* (89% see this as one of the most important national issues), *health/hospitals* (44%), and *prices/inflation* (39%).

Longer term trends analysis shows that for several years *crime* has been seen as the one of the most important issues facing the country by around nine in ten people and that this has remained fairly constant since 2003. The only time when *crime* was challenged for being the most important issue was in early 2008 when as many people identified *prices/inflation* as one of the most important issues. Concern about prices/inflation peaked in 2008, but it is still much more of a concern since that time than before 2006.

Over time concern about *health/hospitals* has gradually increased though the direction of travel has not been straightforward. This is likely to be explained by the fact that some health-related issues, such as dengue fever and swine flu, will be seasonal or “one-off” events that might impact on the public’s overall level of concern.

Chart 2: Key Issues Facing TT (Trend)



PUBLIC SERVICES AND COMPLAINTS

There are very high levels of optimism about future improvements to public services generally, as a third of the public (32%) expect public services to be “much better” over the next few years and a higher proportion (44%) to get “a little better”. Only a small percentage of the public expect public services to get “a lot” (2%) or “a little” (2%) worse.

Public expectations about improvements in the *Health Service* and *Police Service* are also very high with 78% of the public expecting the *Health Service* to provide “better” services over the next few years and 65% expecting improvements from the *Police Service*.

However, the vast majority of the public are critical of the way public services deal with complaints, with 88% saying “you need a lot of determination to get something done about a complaint” and many do not believe public services understand their customers (43% say they do not).

While concern about *jobs/unemployment* has increased over the past couple of years it still remains lower than the level of concern recorded between 2003 and 2005/06.

NAPA

There is a very high level of awareness of NAPA with more than nine in ten people (93%) having heard about it. The public also feel positive about the potential impact of NAPA, with more than half the public (57%) saying it will benefit the country and just under a quarter (23%) saying it will not.

Just over two in five people (42%) say they are “certain/likely” to use NAPA over the next year, but slightly less than half the public (47%) do not expect to do so, including 21% who are “certain not to”.

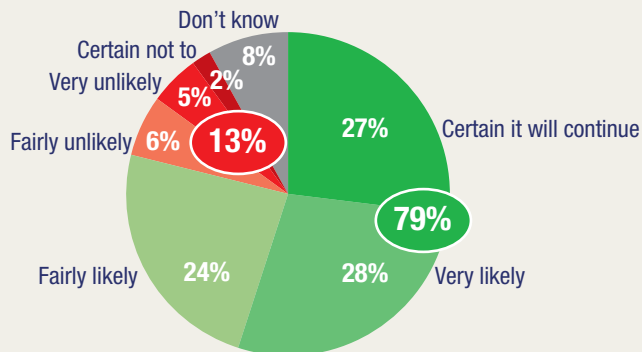
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Most people are confident the new Government will lead the country towards developed nation status (79%).

When asked how well developed they feel that the country is compared with other countries, the public view Trinidad & Tobago as an “averagely” developed nation. This is derived from the mean score of 5.2 when respondents answered the following question: “On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 represents the least developed country in the world and 10 represents the most developed where would you place Trinidad & Tobago today?”. People expect the country to become more developed relative to other nations over the next decade with the mean score for expectation in 2015 at 6.7 and by 2020 at 8.0. In other words, the public expect Trinidad & Tobago to be among the 20% or so most developed nations by the year 2020.

Chart 3 National Development Agenda

Q How confident, if at all, are you that the new Government will continue to lead Trinidad & Tobago towards a developed country status?



Base: 764 TT adults, 20 June – 25 July 2010

THE SEA AND AIR SERVICE BETWEEN TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

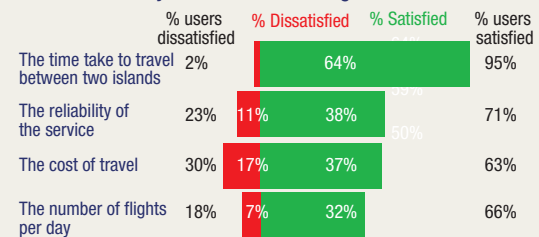
Far more people are satisfied than dissatisfied with the Air Service (45% vs. 8%) and the Ferry Service (58% vs. 7%) which connect Trinidad and Tobago. This gives a “net satisfaction” score of +37 for the Air Service and +51 for the Ferry Service. However, many people do not express an opinion on either service (47% for the Air Service and 35% for the Ferry Service).

Levels of satisfaction are higher among those who have actually used each of the services. Seven in ten (71%) of those who have used the Air Service in the last 12 months are satisfied with the service, and 86% of Ferry Service users also reported positively about their experiences.

As shown in the charts below, Air Service and Ferry Service users and the public are both generally satisfied with all aspects of the two services.

Chart 4 Air Service (General Public's Views)

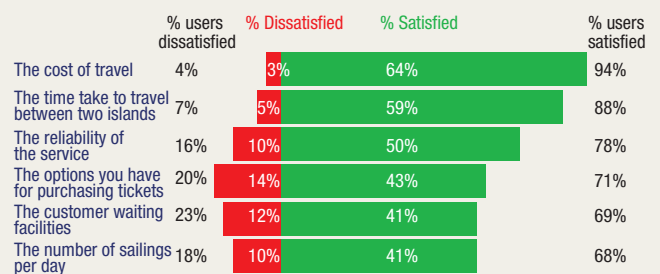
Q Thinking about the Air Service, please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following.



Base: 764 TT adults, 20 June – 25 July 2010

Chart 5 Ferry Service Public vs Users Views

Q Thinking about the Ferry Service, please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following.



Base: 764 TT adults, 20 June – 25 July 2010

Tobagonians are more critical of the Air Service than Trinidadians. Overall, 39% of Tobagonians are dissatisfied with the Air Service and approximately three in ten (28%) are dissatisfied with “the reliability of the service”, “the cost of travel” and “the number of flights per day”. Similarly, more Tobagonians are dissatisfied with the Ferry Service – two in five (40%) are dissatisfied with the Ferry Service. Tobagonians are particularly critical of “the customer waiting facilities” (47% dissatisfied), “the reliability of the service” (38%) and “the number of sailings per day” (37%).

ICT INDICATORS

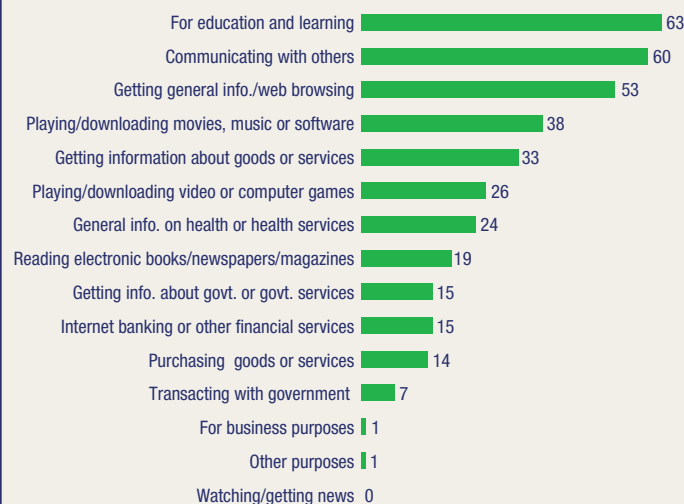
Nearly all households in Trinidad and Tobago possess a television (97%) and there is almost universal ownership of radios (94%) and mobile phones (93%). In contrast less than half of households have a fixed line telephone (46%). Additionally, a minority of persons have Internet access (30%) or PCs (42%) in their households.

There is a high level of interest in allowing a Government agency to text a customer when “an application or document is ready for collection” where people use such a service. In total almost nine in ten people (88%) say that they would be interested in receiving these types of text messages. The same proportion of the public (88%) are also interested in receiving text messages from Government that keeps them “informed about new Government services and benefits”.

Overall, 61% of respondents do not access the Internet, the same number as recorded in 2008. The three most popular uses of the Internet are “for education and learning” (63%), “communicating with others” (60%) and “getting general information/web browsing” (53%). Only a small number of people currently use the Internet to “transact with Government” (7%), though twice this proportion say they the web to “get information about government or government services” (15%).

Chart 6: Use of the Internet

Q Which, if any, of the following have you undertaken using the Internet in the last 12 months?



Base: 265 TT adults who use the Internet, 20 June – 25 July 2010

FOCUS ON TOBAGO

Tobagonians are amongst the most confident in the new Cabinet. For example, 74% of Tobagonians think the Cabinet will take the country in the right direction (compared with 69% of the public generally). However, there is some concern about how the new Ministry of Tobago Development and the Tobago House of Assembly will work together in the future.

The three most important issues for Tobagonians are crime (81%), healthcare (46%) and unemployment/jobs (39%).

Tobagonians make much more use of the Ferry Service (76% have used it in the past 12 months) and Air Service (64% used it) than people living in Trinidad. Also, fewer Tobagonians are satisfied with either service than the public generally. For example, net satisfaction with the Ferry Service is +51 for the public as a whole but only +9 among Tobagonians.

Household ownership in Tobago is higher than the average for both islands with respect to fixed line telephones (63%), Internet (42%) and PCs (63%).

METHODOLOGY

The Opinion Leaders’ Panel (OLP) is a panel of approximately 3,000 citizens of Trinidad and Tobago, and is representative of the entire adult population. The fieldwork for Wave 16 was conducted among 764 panel members who were interviewed face-to-face in respondents’ own homes between 20th June and 25th July 2010.

As with all waves of the Panel, after fieldwork was completed, the data were checked and weighted to the latest available census data to ensure that the results are properly representative of all adults resident in the country.

Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of “don’t know/not stated” responses.

Thanks again to the Panel members for their participation in the research. The Opinion Leaders’ Panel is a very important tool for Government in determining ways and means of making its services more responsive and more efficient. We need your fullest support in helping us to shape our Public Services for the betterment of all citizens. More updates will be provided in later issues of Opinion Leaders’ News.

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