BBC WORLD SERVICE POLL

Global Poll: Obama Overwhelmingly Preferred to Romney

October 22nd, 2012

A new 21-nation poll for BBC World Service indicates that citizens around the world would strongly prefer to see Barack Obama re-elected as US President rather than his Republican challenger Mitt Romney.

The poll of 21,797 people, conducted by GlobeScan/PIPA between July 3 and September 3, 2012, indicates that Obama is preferred to Romney in 20 of the 21 countries polled. Overall, an average of 50 per cent would prefer to see Obama elected, compared to only 9 per cent who prefer Romney. The rest express no preference between the two.

Of all the countries polled, France is currently the most strongly pro-Obama, with 72 per cent wanting him to be re-elected and just 2 per cent preferring Romney. Australia (67%), Canada (66%), Nigeria (66%), and the UK (65%) are among the other countries with large majorities favouring Obama.

Pakistan, where 14 per cent want to see Romney elected compared to 11 per cent who prefer Obama, is the only country where the current President is not the favoured candidate—but here, three-quarters (75%) express no opinion. The countries with the largest proportions favouring Mitt Romney are Kenya (18%) and Poland (16%).

Despite Obama facing a closer race than in 2008, his support around the world has not slipped relative to four years ago. The current results are broadly in line with the results of a similar BBC World Service poll conducted in 2008, which found that Obama was the preferred choice for US President in all 23 nations polled. Compared to four years ago, support for Obama's election has risen in seven of the 15 countries polled in both years (France, Brazil, the UK, Panama, Indonesia, India, and Turkey), dropped in four (Kenya, Mexico, Poland, and China), and is steady in four (Australia, Canada, Nigeria, and Germany).

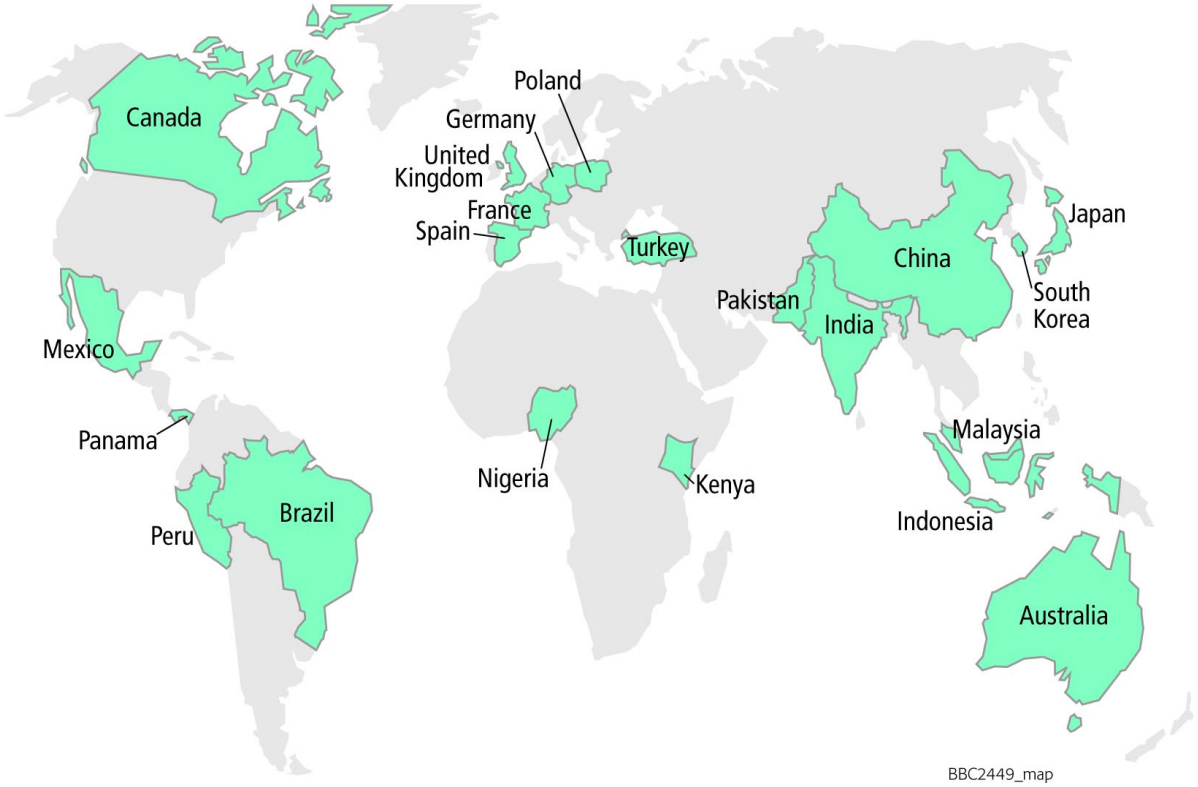
The emphatic preference for Obama's re-election worldwide is in sharp contrast to the state of public opinion in the USA, where polls now show the two candidates to be nearly tied in public backing.

GlobeScan Director of Global Insights Sam Mountford comments: "While the presidential race in America looks like going down to the wire, global public opinion appears to be firmly behind Barack Obama's re-election—even if two in five express no preference between the two candidates."

Steven Kull, Director of PIPA comments: "Obama's election in 2008 led to a major recovery of America's image in the world and people are showing little interest in changing horses now."

A total of 21,797 citizens across 21 countries were interviewed face-to-face, by telephone, or online between July 3, 2012 and September 3, 2012. Polling was conducted for BBC World Service by the international polling firm GlobeScan and its research partners in each country. In six of the 21 countries, the sample was limited to major urban areas. The margin of error per country ranges from +/- 2.0 to 3.7 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

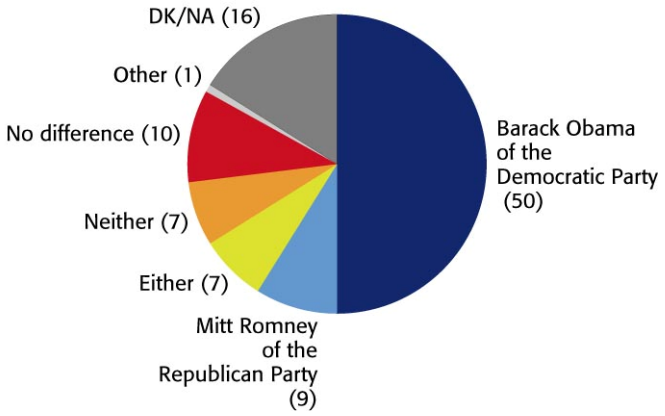
Participating Countries



In Brazil, China, Indonesia, Kenya, Panama, and Turkey urban samples were used.

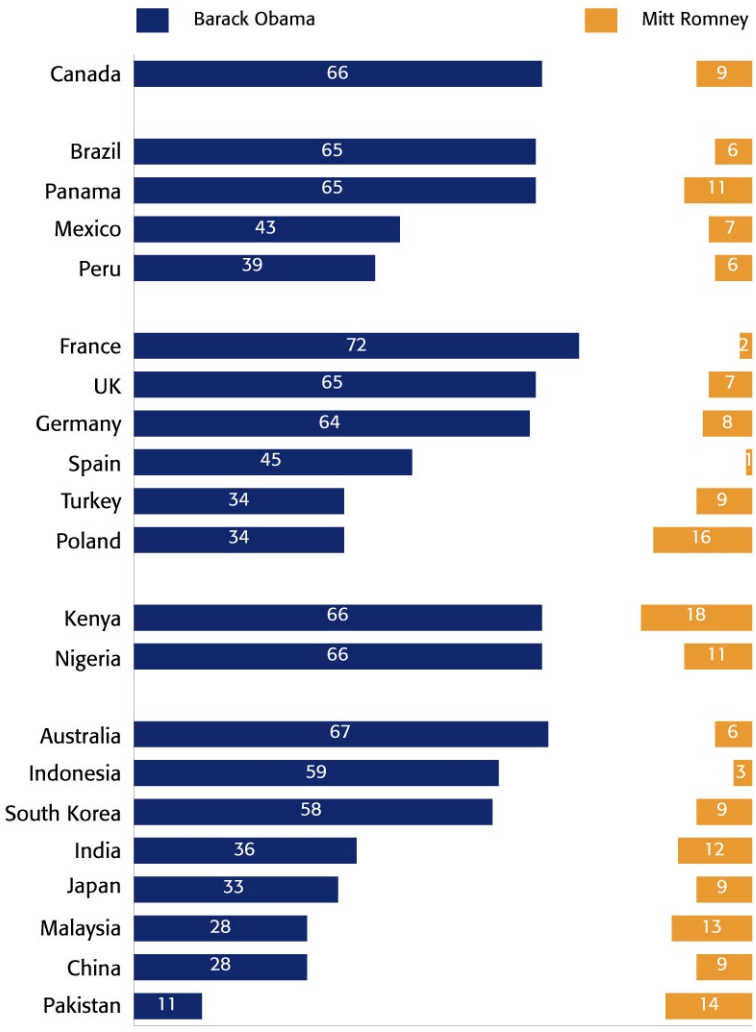
Preferred Candidate for the US Presidential Elections

Average of 21 Countries, 2012



Preferred Candidate for the US Presidential Elections

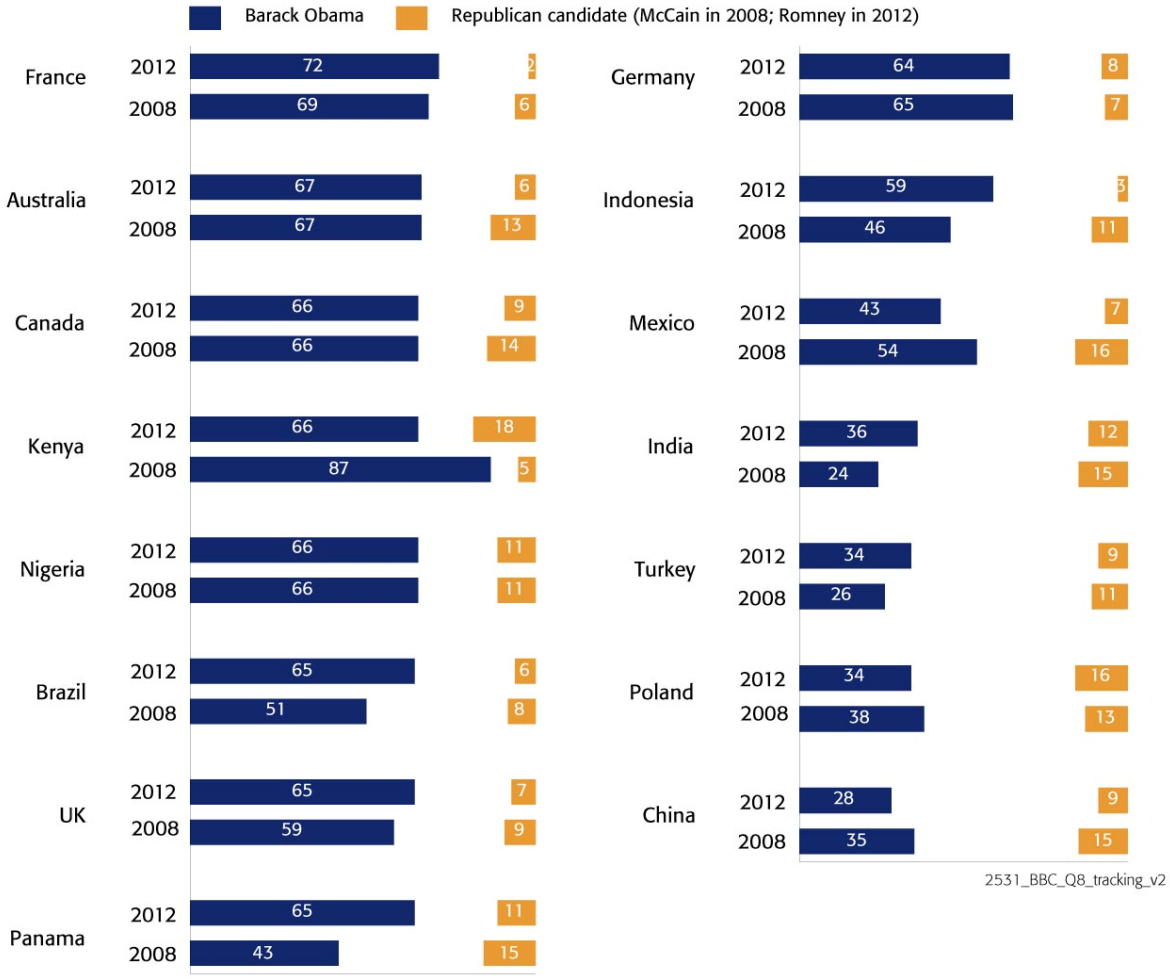
By Country, 2012



The white space in this chart represents "Either," "Neither," "No difference," "Other," and "DK/NA."

Evolution of Pro-Obama Sentiment vs Republican Candidates in US Presidential Elections

By Country, 2008–2012



The white space in this chart represents "Either," "Neither," "No difference," "Other," and "DK/NA."

For more details, please visit www.GlobeScan.com or www.WorldPublicOpinion.org

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The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) of the Center for International and Security Studies at the University of Maryland, undertakes research on attitudes in publics around the world on a variety of international issues and manages the international research project WorldPublicOpinion.org.

BBC World Service is an international multimedia broadcaster, delivering a wide range of language and regional services on radio, TV, online and via wireless handheld devices. It uses multiple platforms to reach its weekly audience of 166 million globally, including shortwave, AM, FM, digital satellite and cable channels. Its news sites include audio and video content and offer opportunities to join the global debate. BBC World Service offers its multilingual radio content to partner FM stations around the world and has numerous partnerships supplying content to news websites, mobile phones and other wireless handheld devices as well as TV channels. For more information, visit bbcworldservice.com.

Questionnaire

Q8. The candidates for the US Presidential election in November are Barack Obama of the Democratic Party, and Mitt Romney of the Republican Party. Who would you prefer to see elected president of the United States?
ROTATE ORDER OF CANDIDATES. CODE ONE.

01 Barack Obama of the Democratic Party
02 Mitt Romney of the Republican Party
VOLUNTEERED (Do not read)
03 Either
04 Neither
05 No difference
97 Other
99 DK/NA

Backgrounder: Region-by-Region Results

North America
In Canada, two thirds of respondents (66%) prefer Obama over Romney as the next President of the USA, with just 9 per cent favouring the Republican candidate. Support among Canadians for the current incumbent in the White House is thus at the same level as in 2008 when he ran against John McCain, and well above the global average of 50 per cent.

Latin America
In the four Latin American countries surveyed, respondents mostly support Barack Obama rather than Mitt Romney in the US Presidential election. In Brazil and in Panama, support for Obama is particularly high (65% in both countries), and has risen compared with 2008 levels (up 14 and 22 points, respectively).

Large pluralities of Mexicans (43%) and Peruvians (39%) also prefer Obama over Romney, but these proportions are significantly below the 21-country global average (50%). In these two countries, 50 per cent or more express no preference between the two candidates. In Mexico, support for Obama is not as strong as in 2008 when he was facing McCain—54 per cent backed him then.

Europe
European public opinion strongly favours Obama over his Republican challenger. France is the most strongly pro-Obama of all participating countries, with 72 per cent wanting him to be re-elected—22 per cent above the global average —and just 2 per cent preferring Romney.

Britons and Germans are also supportive of Obama, with 65 and 64 per cent respectively saying they prefer the Democrat candidate. The percentage of Germans favouring Obama has remained stable compared to 2008, but Obama's support in the UK has risen by seven points.

Spaniards are not as bullish as their core EU counterparts. Though a large plurality of 45 per cent supports Obama against only 1 per cent who favour Romney—the smallest level of Republican support in the survey—a majority does not express any preference between the two candidates. In this way, views in Spain resemble those observed in Poland and Turkey, where pluralities supporting Obama (34% in both cases) are much lower than the global average (50%), and are outnumbered by majorities without any preference (50% and 57%, respectively). Furthermore, support for Obama in Poland has slipped since 2008, when it was recorded at 38 per cent. Poland is also one of the countries where support for Romney is strongest, with 16 per cent favouring the Republican candidate—the second highest proportion after Kenya (18%).

Africa
In the two Sub-Saharan countries surveyed, a preference for Obama in the next US Presidential election is clear. In both Kenya and Nigeria, two-thirds of the population (66%) say they would prefer to see Obama elected. Opinion among the Nigerian public is the same as it was in 2008 in the run-up to Obama's first election (66% Democratic vs 11% Republican).

However, support for Obama in Kenya has plummeted, dropping 21 points, from 87 per cent four years ago. And, with 18 per cent saying they would prefer to see Romney win the election, Kenya is the country where support for the Republican challenger is the highest. Only 5 per cent of Kenyans preferred McCain over Obama in 2008.

Asia
The Asian countries surveyed are mostly split between two groups: one where the level of support for Obama is strong and above the global average (50%), and another where

pluralities of respondents who prefer to see Obama defeat Romney are outnumbered by majorities without any preference between the candidates.

In the first group, Australia is by far the most strongly pro-Obama, with 67 per cent wanting him to be re-elected—the second-highest percentage in the survey (after France). This emphatic pro-Obama sentiment matches the level of support Obama registered in 2008 when he was opposed by John McCain. However, twice as many Australians favour today's Republican candidate (13% for Romney now vs 6% for McCain then). Indonesians and South Koreans also have a strong preference for Obama over Romney, with 59 and 58 per cent respectively favouring the candidate of the Democrats. In Indonesia, support for Obama has risen 13 points since 2008, when just 46 per cent favoured his election.

India tops the second group of Asian countries, with 36 per cent favouring Obama, followed by Japan (33%). In Malaysia and China, 28 per cent feel the same. However, support for Obama is rather muted in these four countries, as is seen in the high proportions of respondents unable to choose between the candidates, which range from 52 per cent in India to 64 per cent in China. The trajectories of support for Obama over his Republican opponents have followed opposite directions in the two Asian giants. In India, support has risen by 12 points over the past four years, up from 24 per cent, whereas in China it slipped 7 points, down from 35 per cent in 2008.

Isolated from the two main groups above, Pakistan is the only country in the survey where Romney enjoys more support than Obama (14% vs 11%). However, this small difference in public favour is less striking than is the fact that 75 per cent of Pakistanis express no preference.

Methodology

In total 21,797 citizens in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom, were interviewed face-to-face or by telephone between July 3, 2012 and September 3, 2012. Polling was conducted for BBC World Service by GlobeScan and its research partners in each country.

In Brazil, China, Indonesia, Kenya, Panama, and Turkey urban samples were used. The margin of error per country ranges from +/- 2.0 to 3.7 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Country	Sample Size (unweighted)	Field dates	Sample frame	Survey methodology	Type of sample
Australia	1009	July 27 – August 11, 2012	18+	Telephone	National
Brazil	828	July 26–August 23, 2012	18–69	Telephone	Urban[1]
Canada	1007	July 20 – August 8, 2012	18+	Telephone	National
China	1000	July 30 – August 15, 2012	18+	Telephone	Urban[2]
France	825	July 5–12, 2012	15+	Telephone	National
Germany	1002	July 13 – August 6, 2012	16–70	Telephone	National
India	1010	August 7–16, 2012	18+	Face-to-face	National
Indonesia	1000	July 3–18, 2012	18+	Face-to-face	Urban[3]
Japan	1000	August 1–5, 2012	20-69	Online	National
Kenya	1000	August 19–25, 2012	18+	Face-to-face	Urban[4]
Malaysia	1212	July 3–31, 2012	21+	Face-to-face	National
Mexico	1000	August 9–13, 2012	18+	Face-to-face	National
Nigeria	1000	August 13–19, 2012	18+	Face-to-face	National
Pakistan	2375	July 22–28, 2012	18+	Face-to-face	National
Panama	1005	July 28 – August 10, 2012	18+	Telephone	Urban[5]
Peru	1007	August 10–18, 2012	18–70	Face-to-face	National
Poland	1011	August 14–22, 2012	18+	Face-to-face	National
South Korea	703	August 13–17, 2012	18+	Telephone	National
Spain	800	July 12–20, 2012	18+	Telephone	National
Turkey	1002	July 12 – September 3, 2012	15+	Face-to-face	Urban[6]
United Kingdom	1001	July 3 – August 18, 2012	18+	Telephone	National

[1] In Brazil the survey was conducted in Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Curitiba, Goiânia, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and São Paulo, representing 18 per cent of the national population.

[2] In China the survey was conducted in Beijing, Beiliu, Chengdu, Dujiangyan, Fenyang, Fuyang, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Manzhouli, Quanzhou, Qujing, Shanghai, Shenyang, Shuangcheng, Wuhan, Xi'an, Xining, and Zhengzhou, representing 45 per cent of the national adult population.

[3] In Indonesia the survey was conducted in Bandung, Jakarta, Makassar, Medan, and Surabaya, representing 27 per cent of the national adult population.

[4] In Kenya the survey was conducted in Nairobi, Nyanza, Riff Valley, and the Central, Coast, Eastern and Western Regions, representing 37 per cent of the national adult population.

[5] In Panama the survey was conducted in Panamá, Chiriquí, Colón, Coclé, Veraguas, Herrera, Bocas del Toro and Los Santos, representing 70 per cent of the adult population.

[6] In Turkey the survey was conducted in Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Istanbul, Izmir, Konya, Samsun, and Zonguldak, representing 56 per cent of the national adult population.

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