



# **An Analysis of Multiple Polls of the Iranian Public**

- **The June 12 Election**
- **The Perceived Legitimacy of the Regime**
- **The Nature of the Opposition**

February 3, 2010

STEVEN KULL  
CLAY RAMSAY  
STEPHEN WEBER  
EVAN LEWIS

**WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG IS A PROJECT MANAGED BY  
THE PROGRAM ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY ATTITUDES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND**

### **Board of Advisors**

**I.M. Destler**  
University of Maryland

**Catherine Kelleher**  
US Naval War College

**Fred Steeper**  
Market Strategies

**Gloria Duffy**  
Commonwealth Club

**Anthony Lake**  
Georgetown University

**Daniel Yankelovich**  
Public Agenda Foundation

**Bill Frenzel**  
Brookings Institution

**Benjamin Page**  
Northwestern University

**Alan Kay**  
Americans Talk  
Issues Foundation

**Robert Shapiro**  
Columbia University

**WorldPublicOpinion.org (WPO)** is an international collaborative project, managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes at the University of Maryland, with the aim of giving voice to public opinion around the world on international issues. As the world becomes increasingly integrated, problems have become increasingly global, pointing to a greater need for understanding between nations and for elucidating global norms. With the growth of democracy in the world, public opinion has come to play a greater role in the foreign policy process. WorldPublicOpinion.org seeks to reveal the values and views of publics in specific nations around the world as well as global patterns of world public opinion.

**The Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA)** was established in 1992 with the purpose of giving public opinion a greater voice in international relations. PIPA conducts in-depth studies of public opinion that include polls, focus groups and interviews. It integrates its findings together with those of other organizations. It actively seeks the participation of members of the policy community in developing its polls so as to make them immediately relevant to the needs of policymakers. PIPA is a joint program of the Center on Policy Attitudes and the Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM).

**The Center for International and Security Studies at Maryland (CISSM)**, at the University of Maryland's School for Public Policy, pursues policy-oriented scholarship on major issues facing the United States in the global arena. Using its research, forums, and publications, CISSM links the University and the policy community to improve communication between scholars and practitioners.

Abe Medoff and Marie Mainil managed the production of the report, with contributions from Donna Hamill and Jeremy Worthington.

The WorldPublicOpinion.org project is funded in part by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Calvert Foundation.

## Introduction

On June 12, 2009, Iran held a presidential election which was closely followed by people both inside and outside Iran. There were four candidates--the incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and three other contestants: Mir Hossein Mousavi, Mohsen Rezai, and Mehdi Karoubi. For the first time in the history of the Islamic republic, there were televised debates among the candidates, and massive rallies were held, particularly by supporters of Mousavi and Ahmadinejad.

Media around the world, and notably in the West, covered the election campaign with great interest. The race was perceived to be close and difficult to predict, with a good likelihood that a second round of voting would be necessitated by the absence of a majority for any candidate.

The final results of the election, issued by the Ministry of Interior of Iran, showed the incumbent with a large majority: Ahmadinejad 63%, Mousavi 34%, Rezai 2%, and Karoubi 1%.

This announcement was greeted with protests inside Iran and abroad. Supporters of Mousavi took to the streets for many days—at first in enormous numbers not seen since the days of Iran’s 1979 revolution. Violence, arrests, and deaths occurred.

Later months saw the government organize a large and systematic program of repression against those who protested the election results--from show trials of reformist members of the political elite to severe violations of the human rights of an unknown (but growing) number of ordinary citizens. This program of repression continues at this writing.

Following the June 12 election, various scholars sought to analyze the election tallies released by the Interior Ministry in an effort to characterize how likely it was that fraud had taken place, and if so, whether fraud was extensive enough to invalidate the result.

Probably the best known of these is Chatham House’s “Preliminary Analysis of the Voting Figures in Iran’s 2009 Election.” Written by a group of researchers from the University of St. Andrews Institute of Iranian Studies, it compared first-round voting in Iran’s 2005 election—which first brought Ahmadinejad to power -- with the 2009 vote province by province and found Ahmadinejad’s increases in strength so sharp as to be implausible. It also pointed out that the 2009 variations between votes in largely rural and largely urban provinces were almost nonexistent by comparison with the first round in 2005. Considering Karoubi’s low vote totals in 2009, it noted that his 2005 strengths in his home province of Lorestan and other provinces with large ethnic minorities were nowhere to be seen four years later.

Almost as well known as the Chatham House analysis is that of Walter Mebane, a political scientist, statistician, and expert on electoral fraud. His analysis found that, based on Benford’s law, the distribution of certain digits in the official election results was statistically improbable and thus a possible sign of manipulation. However he concluded, “There are suspicious elements here, but there’s no solid evidence of fraud.”

Mehdi Kalaji, an expert on the Iranian political system, noted that it was highly suspicious that 20 million paper ballots were reported as counted just three hours after the closing of the polls. Renard Sexton of FiveThirtyEight.com noted that, given the history of turnouts in Iranian elections, the high turnout would have suggested a closer outcome.

However, after reviewing the early evidence of irregularities, Glenn Kessler and Jon Cohen of the Washington Post concluded, “There are many signs of manipulation and outright fraud in Iran’s dispute election results ... but the case for a rigged outcome is far from ironclad.” In other words, even if some fraud did occur, it is not clear that the outcome would have been fundamentally different.

The question of what actually occurred in the election is not simply an academic question at this point. It has implications for US foreign policy. Some policy analysts have argued that the apparent fraudulence of the election, plus the mass protests, have so weakened the Iranian regime that it is now vulnerable. Thus, it is argued, the US should refrain from engaging with the regime as if it were legitimate.

Implicitly or explicitly, this argument is predicated on the hypothesis that the opposition to the current regime, as manifested in widespread demonstrations, reflects a majority sentiment among the Iranian people that the government is illegitimate.

Perhaps most central, it is also based on the hypothesis that, should the regime fall and the opposition come to power, it would have a fundamentally different set of policies in relation to the US.

But are these hypotheses correct? It is important to ensure that US foreign policy is based on accurate assessments, instead of theories, wishes, and preferences. The experience of the Iraq war, with its mistaken expectation that US troops would be greeted as liberators after the invasion, should underline this.

In addition, the continued obscurity of the election outcome does no favors for supporters of change and reform in Iran. A sure way for a movement to make costly errors is to misestimate the kind and degree of sympathy it has from the population.

Thus there are three hypotheses that should be assessed to the extent possible:

- Ahmadinejad did not win the June 12 Iranian election.
- The Iranian people perceive the current government as illegitimate.
- The opposition, should it come to power, would have policies much more favorable to the US.

The most natural way to test these hypotheses is to examine public opinion polls. During the run-up to the election, a number of Iranian media outlets reported on poll findings. These had contradictory results and were very poorly documented in terms of who conducted the poll, the wording of the questions, the methods, or the actual findings, and thus were not credible. Efforts to find more information about these purported polls led nowhere.

There was a survey conducted by Terror Free Tomorrow using telephone interviews conducted by callers outside Iran. It was carried out May 11-20, 2009, well before the election and before the televised debates. Iranian presidential election campaigns are limited by law to 30 days. The value of this poll is somewhat constrained by its early timing, and the fact that only 51% expressed a candidate preference and the remainder said they didn’t know or didn’t answer.

Now, however, there is an accumulation of documented polls, with complete data sets, from different sources that have been made available for examination, and which potentially have the capacity to shed light on these assumptions. These include:

- A survey by WorldPublicOpinion.org conducted by means of telephone interviewing by a research agency outside Iran which used native Farsi speakers as interviewers. This study was conducted in August 27-September 10, 2009, considerably after the election.
- A series of 10 tracking telephone surveys on the election and voter preferences conducted by the University of Tehran's survey unit, with eight waves leading up to the election and two subsequent to it. These are the basis for a book in press in Iran. When the book's text was finished, the surveys' datasets were put into the public domain via the University's website.<sup>1</sup>
- A telephone survey conducted by the Canadian polling firm GlobeScan over June 19-24 which used an established commercial survey agency in Iran. These data are available through PIPA.

### **Can Polls of Iranians Be Considered Valid?**

Naturally, the question arises as whether it is feasible to conduct polls in Iran, given its authoritarian nature. These concerns fall into two broad categories: questions about whether Iranians can express their views honestly, and questions about whether the data could be fabricated.

#### ***Can Iranians express their views honestly given the possibility of reprisals?***

The idea here is that many respondents in Iran may say the opposite of what they think and do so across various questions.

It should be noted that eight of the polls explored here were conducted before the election. While it is true that Ahmadinejad was the sitting president, expressing support for another candidate was not at that time a politically subversive act. The election itself was sanctioned by the government, and Mousavi was clearly associated with the Iranian revolution. Further, most observers of Iran agree that the weeks of the 2009 election campaign were the most open period Iranian society had experienced in recent years. People were freely expressing support for candidates other than Ahmadinejad without any negative consequences.

Polls conducted after the election, especially those conducted during the crackdown, are more rightly subject to concern about possible self-censorship. However, it should be noted that respondents did have the option of declining to answer questions rather than proffering false statements.

As we shall see, polls conducted during the three months after the election did find a smaller number willing to say that they voted for Mousavi and, in the one conducted three months after the election, a larger number declining to answer—something that could be attributed to self-censorship. However, as we shall see, there was not a substantial increase in the numbers saying that they voted for Ahmadinejad. Interestingly, this is the case even though in Western countries it is common for post-

---

<sup>1</sup> Professor Seyed Mohammad Marandi of the Faculty of World Studies, University of Tehran is accepting requests from educational institutions for copies of the datasets ([mmarandi@ut.ac.ir](mailto:mmarandi@ut.ac.ir)). Online, go to <http://fws.ut.ac.ir/> and then switch to English (see upper left corner). Click "PEOPLE & THE TENTH ELECTION" under "News" for a table enumerating the datasets.

election polls to show more saying they voted for the declared winner than said so before the vote, and more than the actual vote tally—something that is called the “bandwagon effect.”

In addition, if we assume that respondents might be censoring themselves for fear that they are being monitored and might be punished for making politically undesirable statements, we would expect that responses to other sensitive questions would show this censoring effect. However, in a number of cases majorities took positions that were arguably more sensitive than saying they did not vote for Ahmadinejad. For example, in the WPO poll, conducted during the crackdown, respondents were asked how much confidence they had in a number of institutions. For all institutions, a majority said they had at least some confidence, but for some of the most politically sensitive institutions less than half said they had a lot of confidence. For the Guardian Council—the institution most associated with the regime itself—just 42% said they had a lot of confidence. Even for the institutions that might be assumed to be monitoring the respondent’s responses, only modest numbers said they had a lot of confidence—Ministry of Interior (38%) and the police (52%).

Furthermore, respondents showed a readiness to implicitly criticize the Guardian Council. In the press there was much discussion of the fact that before the election took place, some members of the council had openly declared for Ahmadinejad. In September WPO asked “Do you think it is appropriate for members of the Guardian Council to support a candidate in an election, or do you think they should always remain neutral?” An overwhelming majority (75%) said Council members should always remain neutral.

Also, if one assumes that the fear of reprisals causes people to refrain from taking positions that are less than laudatory of the government, then it follows that when the government has intensified its crackdowns on dissent, full endorsement of the government should increase. However, if people are answering candidly they are probably less likely to give their full endorsement. As we shall see below, in a poll by GlobeScan conducted in the week after the election, a large number but less than a majority (49%) said they were very satisfied with the current system of government. When WPO asked the same question in early September--when government repression was more extensive and systematic--the number saying they were very satisfied did not increase, but dropped 8 points to 41%.

The pattern of responses over time is also relevant to this issue. As we shall see in the first weeks of the campaign there was a sharp decline in support for Ahmadinejad, which then strengthened following the debate and leading up to election day. This weakens the argument that the Iranian public was unwilling to express their views on the candidates. Most outside commentary about the campaign noted the vigor of campaigners in both camps. It seems implausible that public frankness suddenly peaked on June 1, but then receded sharply in the remaining ten days of the contest.

### *Could the poll data have been fabricated?*

These concerns are of two types:

- That the poll dataset has been invented out of whole cloth—there were never any respondents or interviews; or
- That some results in an actual poll dataset have been altered.

In part to address these concerns, the WPO poll was conducted by telephone, calling into Iran from a nearby country. Fortunately, telephone penetration in Iran is high enough to make this feasible, with slightly over 80% of households having a landline telephone. Thus the possibility of government intervention was eliminated. The telephone interviewing was supervised by a WPO associate, and

analysis of the patterns of responses by different interviewers did not reveal any indication that any interviewers were biasing the results.

Concerns about government fabrication or data-tampering can however be raised in connection with the series of polls conducted by the survey unit at the University of Tehran. While the university is a respected academic institution and is generally seen as being much more closely aligned with the opposition than with the Ahmadinejad administration, it is possible that the government stepped in and forced the researchers to put forward fabricated or falsified data. The same can be said for the GlobeScan poll that was conducted by a fielding agency in Iran through telephone interviews.

First, as we shall see, the top-line answers to the key questions are largely consistent between the poll that was conducted from outside Iran and those conducted inside Iran.

Further, substantial efforts were made to determine whether such fabrication or data-tampering occurred. It should be noted that, while it is easy to manufacture findings for a single question, it is not easy to produce a credible dataset that includes multiple questions. There are logical relations between answers on different questions, and one would expect to find these patterns reappearing across different polls. In examining the patterns of relations between question answers within specific polls, between polls conducted within Iran, and between polls conducted within Iran and from the outside, we found that the patterns of responses were largely consistent.

As we shall see, the top-line findings from the various polls vary across time. Another effort, discussed below, was to determine if these variations had any logical relation to external events over the course of the election. As we shall see, we found that they did.

## **The June 12 Election**

Our primary goal here is to determine whether the available data support the widely-stated hypothesis that the election was stolen, i.e., that Ahmadinejad did not have a majority of the votes in the June 12<sup>th</sup> election. This involves not only looking at the topline responses to questions about for whom respondents planned to or did vote, but also if the patterns of responses on various questions tell a consistent and coherent story within and across various data sets. Thus we will ask the following questions:

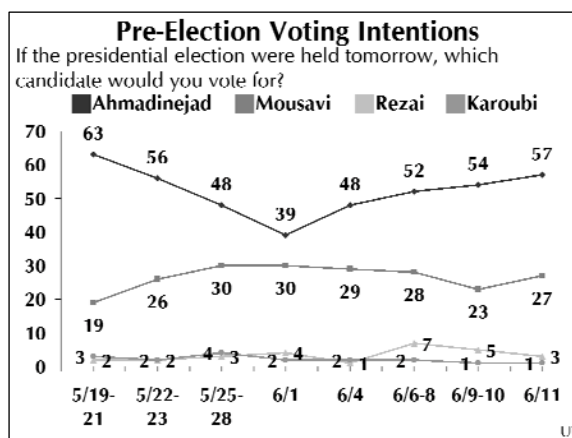
1. Before the election, for whom did Iranians say they planned to vote? Were these consistent across all polls? How did Iranians evaluate the qualities of the candidates?
2. After the election, for whom did Iranians say they did vote? Were these consistent across all polls? How did Iranians evaluate Ahmadinejad?
3. Do the trendline patterns move up and down in a way that make sense over the course of the campaign? This is yet another test of validity. (This will be covered in title Appendix 1: Analysis of Trendline Data, May-June 2009).

Our goal here is not to establish whether—or how much—fraud took place in running or reporting the election. The margin of error in polling is generally not small enough to rule out the possibility of any fraud. It is possible that some fraud occurred *and* that Ahmadinejad would have won if fraud had not occurred. As we shall see the polling data show that in the first weeks of the campaign Ahmadinejad's numbers were falling precipitously. Ahmadinejad's allies in government could have had this information and been anxious about securing a majority that in fact they had, and thus committed violations of election law because they feared the election was close.

### Pre-Election Polls of Candidate Preferences

In eight UT polls conducted during the month before the election Ahmadinejad was always the front runner. At the beginning of the month he had majority support, but then dropped to below half as Mousavi moved within striking distance. After the debate he recovered majority support and went into the election with a solid majority.

UT questions about voting intentions were asked only to those who said they planned to vote in the upcoming presidential election—this ranged from 81% to 91%. On June 11, 91% said they planned to do so. They were then asked, “If the presidential election were held tomorrow, which candidate would you vote for?”



In the first poll, conducted May 19-21, a robust 63% said they would vote for Ahmadinejad, while just 19% said they would vote for Mousavi.

Over the next two weeks leading up to the debate on June 4, however, Ahmadinejad’s support went progressively lower. By May 25-28 the number supporting him dropped below half to 48%, and by June 1<sup>st</sup> it was just 39%. Meanwhile, Mousavi’s support rose to 30%.

After the debate Ahmadinejad’s numbers rose. By June 6-8 he once again moved into the majority at 52%, and on June 11—the day before the election—he reached 57%. Mousavi’s rise largely stalled out after the debate. However, on the last day he saw a 4-point surge, rising from 23 to 27%.

It should be noted that the official numbers for Ahmadinejad in the June 12 vote—63%—were six points higher than the 57% who said they would vote for him the day before. Arguably this is a sign of possible fraud. However, it should be noted that in the June 11 poll 10% did not provide an answer, and the official election results for Mousavi—34%—was also six points higher than the numbers saying on June 11 that they would vote for him.

On June 11 respondents were also asked “if Ahmadinejad and Mousavi go to the second round, which candidate will you vote for then?” Fifty-six percent said they would vote for Ahmadinejad.

Rezai and Karoubi scraped along the bottom for the whole period, never getting above single digits, indeed only once getting above 5% (Rezai on June 6-8 reached 7%).

### Pre-Election Assessments of the Qualities of Candidates

Another issue is how respondents evaluated the qualities of the candidates. All of the polling on these questions was conducted by UT in advance of the election.

The question here is whether respondents as a whole evaluated the specific qualities of the candidates in a manner consistent with their voting intentions. As we will discuss in Appendix 1, evaluations of the qualities of candidates went through substantial ups and downs in the month running up to the election. Not all questions were asked in each poll, so the trendlines are patchy on some questions.



However, at no point did evaluations of Mousavi surpass those of Ahmadinejad, including on June 1 when Ahmadinejad’s ratings were reaching a low point.

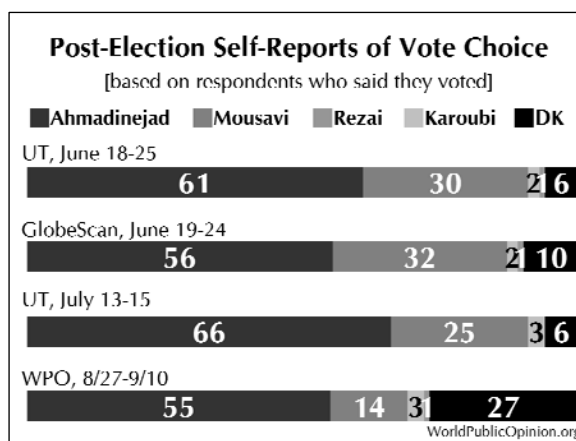
- On which candidate “has a better understanding of people’s problems,” in four polls Ahmadinejad always outpaced Mousavi. At the high point at the beginning, this was a 50 point advantage, which narrowed to 20 points and then expanded to 31 points on June 11.
- On which candidate is “more honest,” on June 11 Ahmadinejad led by 31 points.
- On which candidate is “more unwavering,” Ahmadinejad led by 47 points on May 19-21 and 19 points on June 1.
- On which is “more unpretentious and down to earth,” on June 1 Ahmadinejad led by 55 points.
- On which candidate “will be better able to deal with the country’s economic problems,” Ahmadinejad led by 14 points on June 1.
- On which candidate “will be better able to make Iran outstanding in the world,” on June 11 Ahmadinejad led by 32 points.
- Asked whether each candidate was “mostly geared toward introducing his own programs or attacking the other candidates,” Ahmadinejad never went below 51% saying that he was mostly introducing his programs, and outpaced Mousavi on this by 14 points going into the election.
- Asked which candidate’s campaign has “been more effective,” Ahmadinejad’s was given better ratings in every case except on June 1, when the numbers were equal. On June 11 Ahmadinejad led by 13 points.

Also, despite Mousavi’s reported appeal to youth, even at Ahmadinejad’s low point on June 1, he led Mousavi on who is likely to be “more successful in dealing with the problems that are specific to the youth” by 8 points, though this was down from a 34-point advantage on May 19-21.

**Post-Election Self-Reports of Vote Choice**

After the election, questions about how people voted in the election were asked in four polls: two by the University of Tehran, one by GlobeScan, and one by WPO. All of them show majorities saying they voted for Ahmadinejad. The post-election polls taken in June generally correspond with the pre-election polling of the last week before the election.

The polling done in July and in August-September show a significant decline in the number saying they voted for Mousavi, as election day gave way to mass demonstrations, followed in turn by sharp government repression. The numbers of those refusing to answer is also much higher in August-September.



UT’s first post-election poll was conducted over June 18-25. Sixty-one percent of those who said they voted (54% of the total sample) said they voted for Ahmadinejad. Thirty percent said they voted for Mousavi, 2% for Rezai, and less than 1% for Karoubi (6 % did not answer).

Three weeks later (July 13-15), this question was repeated: 66% said they voted for Ahmadinejad and 25% for Mousavi (all other numbers were unchanged).

GlobeScan also polled over almost exactly the same days (June 19-24) and found that of those who said they had voted, 56% said they voted for Ahmadinejad, 32% for Mousavi, 2% for Rezai, and less than 1% for Karoubi. Ten percent did not answer. While GlobeScan has Ahmadinejad's score 5 points lower, it has Mousavi's score quite close to UT's result (2 points apart).

The latest of these polls to ask how people voted was by WPO (August 27-September 10). This poll was conducted by telephone from outside the country. Among those who said they voted, 55% said they voted for Ahmadinejad, just 14% for Mousavi, 3% for Rezai, and 1% for Karoubi. Importantly, a high 26% now refused to answer. Compared to UT's July results, those saying they had voted for Mousavi were down 11 points, and those saying they had voted for Ahmadinejad were *also* down 11 points.

It is common in post-election polling to see some rise in those saying they voted for the winner. Some of this may be reflected in the rise in Ahmadinejad's numbers (61% to 66%) reported by the UT. WPO's results appear to be affected by the period of repression that followed the mass demonstrations, with a quarter of voters now not wishing to declare themselves. It is interesting to note that this anxiety did not take the form of increasing Ahmadinejad's total, which instead declined to 55%.

Another post-election question asked by UT on July 13-15, just a month after the election, was "If the same election was to be repeated again, whom would you vote for?"

A resounding 60% said they would vote for Ahmadinejad, while just 17% said they would vote for Mousavi. Four percent said they would not vote, and 15% did not answer. It should be noted that this does not necessarily indicate an increase in the number favoring Ahmadinejad, because this question was asked of all respondents, while the above-mentioned questions were only asked to those who said they voted.

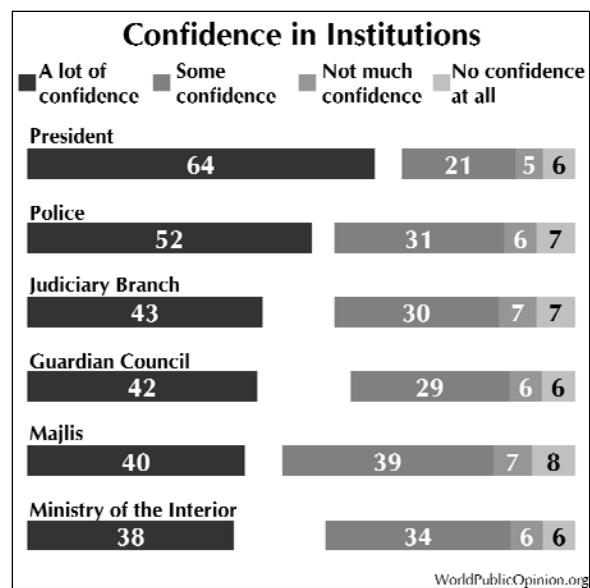
### **Post-Election Assessments of Ahmadinejad**

In the weeks after the election, UT asked several questions evaluating how likely it was that Ahmadinejad would succeed on several fronts. Majorities expressed optimism, though less than a majority expressed a high level of optimism.

- Asked "to what degree Ahmadinejad will be able to bolster national unity," 41% said very much and 28% said somewhat.
- Asked "to what degree will Ahmadinejad be able to make Iran outstanding in the world," 45% said very much and 27% said somewhat.
- Asked "how likely is it that Ahmadinejad will fail combating economic corruption," 36% said not at all, while 21% said not much.

WPO in August-September found a similar pattern when asked to evaluate Ahmadinejad's honesty. Asked, "How honest do you think Ahmadinejad is when he speaks to the people?" Forty-eight percent said "very honest," while 33% said "somewhat honest."

When WPO asked, in a series of questions about Iranian institutions, how much confidence respondents had in “the president,” a very large 64% said a lot of confidence and 21% said some confidence. What is striking here—and lends credibility to the finding—is that the presidency was the only institution to get a large majority expressing a lot of confidence. As discussed above, for the Guardian Council—an institution more closely associated with the regime itself and thus more politically sensitive—only 42% said they had a lot of confidence. Even for the institutions that might be assumed to be monitoring the respondent’s responses, modest numbers said they had a lot of confidence—Ministry of Interior (38%) and the police (52%).



### How Could Some Iranians Believe Mousavi Would Win?

A persisting question is how some Iranians could have believed that Mousavi would win the election and to believe this with such fervor that they went out on the street to demonstrate. Pre-election University of Tehran polls show that in the first few weeks of the campaign Ahmadinejad’s support dropped precipitously. There were corresponding news reports of the Mousavi campaign gaining momentum. Further, Ahmadinejad did not enjoy majority support in the city of Tehran—a major political center where ideas and perceptions are formulated—and there were no credible polls to counter these perceptions. Thus it is not surprising that many people—especially in Tehran—may have had the impression that Mousavi would win.

According to the UT, it was only in the last twelve days or so of the campaign that Ahmadinejad’s support recovered. In the absence of credible polls, it would not be surprising for people to fail to detect such a change in such a short time frame. The course of these developments is analyzed more closely in Appendix 1.

### The Perceived Legitimacy of the Government

The first assumption, just discussed, is largely based on the view that the demonstrations challenging the validity of the election reflect a broad opposition to Ahmadinejad’s presidency. A second assumption goes further and says that the demonstrations not only express a preference for a different candidate but they reflect a majority challenge to the legitimacy of the entire government. At one level, this legitimacy is seen as challenged because Ahmadinejad’s election was seen as fraudulent. At a more fundamental level, the regime itself is seen as illegitimate for deeper ideological reasons.

To test this assumption, we have relevant questions from two UT polls as well as the GlobeScan and WPO polls. These include questions on whether Iranians perceive the recent election as legitimate, whether they perceive the regime as a legitimate government, and whether they endorse the central Islamist features of the current system.

Because all of these polls were taken in the post-election period--when there were mass demonstrations and eventually a violent crackdown--they are subject to greater concern that people may have been censoring themselves from making any politically controversial statements. Thus the attitudes of the general public need to be viewed with some caution. Nonetheless, they do tell us how many people are willing to step forward and express challenges to the regime—an important measure of whether the Iranian public is pre-revolutionary.

In this light, it is particularly useful to look at the views of those who say they voted for Mousavi. Given that these people felt bold enough to tell a pollster that they voted for an opposition candidate, they were probably willing to express other views that may be politically sensitive. Arguably, if the majority of Mousavi supporters do not reject the legitimacy of the regime, it is unlikely that others do so.

## Overview

Majorities of Iranians expressed confidence in the legitimacy of the electoral process. A large majority said that the election was free and fair and that state television was impartial. During the run-up to the election, a majority consistently assumed that Ahmadinejad would win, and thus were not surprised when he did. After the election, they overwhelmingly endorsed him as the legitimate president, and few thought the election should be rerun as called for by Mousavi and Karoubi.

Mousavi supporters had more complex views of the election that changed over time. One week after the election, a modest majority said that it had been fair. By mid-July, a majority had come to believe that it was not fair. But then by September they came back to saying that it was fair.

Before the election, Mousavi supporters said that the state media were being impartial, but this number declined as the election approached, and one week after the election a slight majority said that they were not impartial. At the beginning of the election cycle, a plurality of Mousavi supporters thought that Ahmadinejad would win, but by the eve of the election two-thirds thought that Mousavi would win. Shortly after the election, a plurality of Mousavi supporters accepted Ahmadinejad as the legitimate president, but by mid-July, with the crackdown, a plurality said he was not. By September, though, a slight majority once again said that he was the legitimate president.

Turning to the broader issue of legitimacy of the regime, for the general public large majorities say they are satisfied with the current system, and the system by which authorities are elected, though less than half say they are very satisfied. Similarly a majority express confidence in the Guardian Council, but less than half say they have a lot of confidence. A majority approves of having a council of religious scholars vet laws according to whether they are deemed consistent with Islam. A majority says that the way the supreme leader is selected is consistent with democracy, and only a minority think he has too much power.

For most of these questions, a majority of Mousavi supporters concur with the general public in their support for the system, but the majority is smaller and the number saying they are very supportive is quite a bit smaller. On the questions about the supreme leader, Mousavi supporters are divided.

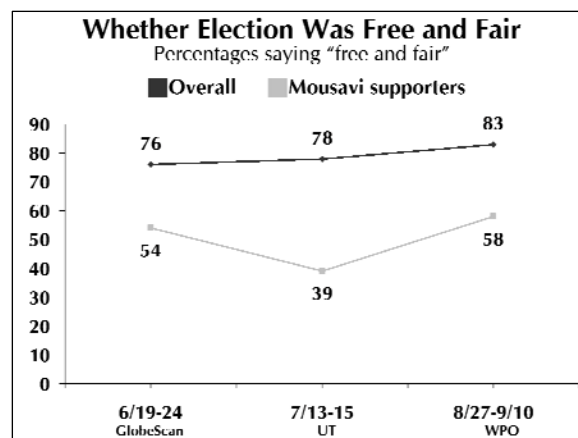
Both the general public and Mousavi supporters favor greater freedom of expression, but they diverge on whether the government has the right to control information that could be destabilizing.

## The Legitimacy of the Election

### *Whether the Election Was Free and Fair*

Respondents were asked how free and fair the election was on three occasions: one week afterward by GlobeScan, one month afterward by the University of Tehran, and two and a half months afterward by WPO.

In the general public, a very large majority always said the election was at least mostly free and fair. One week after the vote, in the general public three-quarters (76%) said the election was fair, with 54% saying that it was “completely free and fair,” while another 22% said it was “mostly free and fair” (GlobeScan). Just 16% said the election was not very fair or not at all fair. By July 15, the number saying it was free and fair grew to 78% with 60% were calling it “completely free and fair.” (UT). By September, it grew further to 83%, with 66% saying it was completely fair and 17% somewhat fair, while 10% called it not very or not at all fair (WPO).



The views of the Mousavi supporters were considerable less positive but in most cases, a majority still saw it as at least mostly free and fair. One week after the election, 54% of Mousavi supporters said the election was fair but only 22% said it was completely so (32% said mostly). Forty-one percent called it unfair--not very fair (23%) or not at all fair (18%). By mid-July, as the demonstrations were at their height and opposition to Ahmadinejad’s presidency was especially visible, Mousavi supporters shifted: only 39% said the election was fair and 57% said it was unfair. But in September views reverted to their immediate post-election assessments, with 58% calling the election free and fair and 34% calling it unfair.

On three occasions, UT asked a question that offered the opportunity to criticize state television’s coverage of the presidential campaign. A majority of Iranians always said state television, or IRIB, tended to be impartial. However, those calling it *very* impartial were never a majority, and the critical minority grew over time.

On June 6-8, 73% said that “IRIB’s programs” have been very (40%) or somewhat (33%) impartial “in introducing the candidates,” while 17% said IRIB was not very (11%) or not at all (6%) impartial. On June 9-10, a lower 69% said IRIB was very (34%) or somewhat (35%) impartial; and one week after the election this was down to 66%, while 29% now said IRIB was not very (17%) or not at all (12%) impartial.

Mousavi voters were similar and, at first, only slightly more critical. A 70% majority on June 6-8 thought IRIB was very (32%) or somewhat (38%) impartial, but already by June 9 this majority had dropped to 61%, with 32% calling IRIB not very (21%) or not at all (11%) impartial. One week after the election, 51% of Mousavi voters thought IRIB had *not* been very (28%) or at all (24%) impartial, while 43% thought it had been very (10%) or somewhat (33%) impartial.

In July, UT also asked whether IRIB had been impartial in its coverage of “post-election unrest.” Two thirds (68%) said it had been very (40%) or somewhat (28%) impartial, while 25% disagreed.

Among Mousavi supporters, though, a 52% majority said IRIB had *not* been impartial; 41% of this group thought it had been.

### *Whether the Election Should be Rerun*

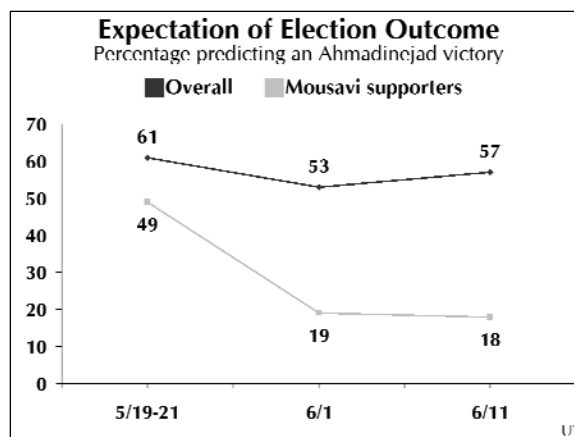
The strongest test of satisfaction with the election is probably offered by a GlobeScan question which asked over June 18-24 about running the election again, as Mousavi and Karoubi demanded at the time. Respondents were asked: “Some people have been calling for re-running the elections with greater oversight of the process. To what extent do you agree or disagree with re-running the elections with greater oversight?”

Among all Iranians, only 28% wanted to run the election again, while 63% opposed the idea. Only a modest majority of Mousavi voters—54%--wanted to re-run the election while 36% disagreed (29% strongly). Interestingly, though the great majority of Ahmadinejad voters rejected re-running the election, 11% of this group thought it a good idea.

### *Pre-Election Expectations of Outcome*

If the election were perceived to be free and fair one would expect that the outcome accorded with their pre-election expectations. This is largely true of the general public, but not Mousavi supporters.

On May 19-21, 61% of the general public expected that Ahmadinejad would win, while just 8% expected Mousavi to win. This drifted downward to a low point on June 1, when 53% expected Ahmadinejad would win and 22% expected this of Mousavi. By June 11, going into the elections, 57% expected Ahmadinejad to win, while 24% expected Mousavi to win.



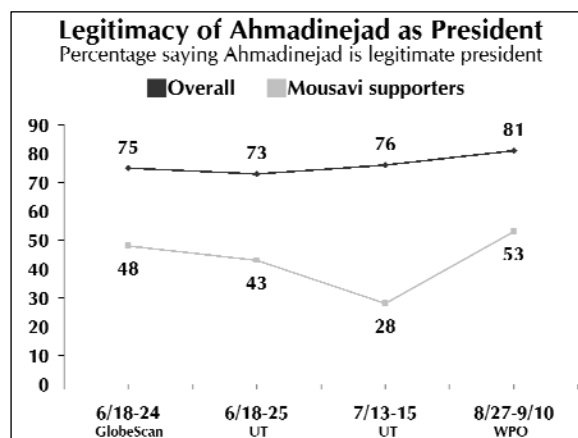
Mousavi supporters, however, went through a major shift in which they grew certain of victory. On May 19-21 a plurality of 49% thought Ahmadinejad would win, while 31% thought Mousavi would win. But then on June 1 a big majority of Mousavi supporters—64%--came to think their man would win, and the night before the election this was up to 68%. This goes a long way toward explaining the depth of the incredulity expressed on the streets of Tehran by Mousavi supporters after the results were announced.

UT also asked which candidate’s campaign has “been more effective.” Ahmadinejad’s campaign was given better ratings in every case except on June 1, when the numbers were equal. On June 11 Ahmadinejad led by 13 points. Understandably, Mousavi supporters felt their candidate’s campaign was more effective (77% on June 1, 71% on June 11).

### *Whether Ahmadinejad is the Legitimate President*

All three polling sources, after the election, asked whether respondents thought Ahmadinejad is the legitimate president. GlobeScan asked this over June 18-24; the University of Tehran asked it in an overlapping time period, and then again in mid-July; and WPO asked it in early September.

Among the general public, a very large majority endorsed Ahmadinejad's legitimacy as president—presumably because they believed that he had genuinely won the election. Three in four (75%) in GlobeScan's June poll called Ahmadinejad the legitimate president; 13% disagreed and 13% declined to answer. At the same time, UT found 73% who thought Ahmadinejad's presidency was legitimate and 14% who disagreed (13% declined to answer). Thus the two poll sources give snapshots of opinion one week after the election that correspond quite closely. In July this number grew to 76%, and in WPO's September poll 81% agreed.



Obviously, many who said the election outcome was legitimate did not prefer Ahmadinejad as president—so much is clear from the self-reports of vote choice in the very same polls. However, this does not mean that all who voted for Mousavi (or a minor candidate) were finally convinced by arguments that the election was rigged.

In the June polls, a plurality of Mousavi supporters said they did see Ahmadinejad as the legitimate president. In GlobeScan's poll, conducted shortly after the election, a plurality of 48% called Ahmadinejad legitimate and 34% disagreed. In the UT poll, conducted at the same time, 43% of Mousavi supporters said he was legitimate and 38% disagreed.

However, it appears that among Mousavi voters doubts grew over time. In mid-July, though the crackdown was well underway, UT found the number saying that Ahmadinejad was the legitimate president dropped precipitously to just 28% of this group, while the number saying he was not legitimate jumped to 46% (a high 26% declined to answer).

But in September views shifted back. The WPO poll found 39% of Mousavi supporters calling the Ahmadinejad presidency illegitimate—about what UT had found in June—but 53% now said it was legitimate, slightly higher than GlobeScan's June result.

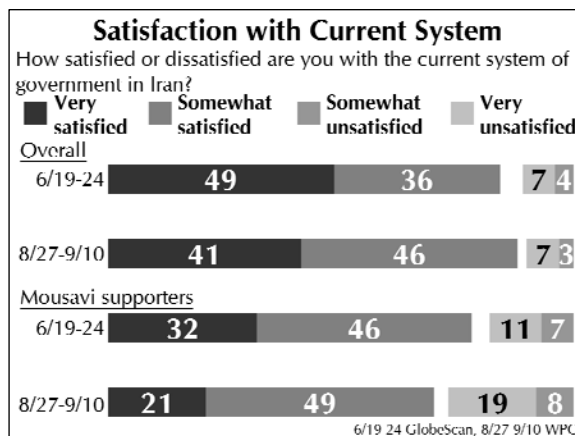
In post-election polls in June and July, UT found large majorities expressing confidence “in the declared election results.” In June, 83% expressed complete (60%) or some (23%) confidence, while 12% expressed little (5%) or no (7%) confidence in the declared results; July's figures were very similar.

Among Mousavi voters, confidence in the declared results dropped—just as it did in response to whether the election was free and fair. In June a 58% majority expressed complete (13%) or some (45%) confidence, while 35% expressed little (14%) or no (21%) confidence; then in July, only a 49% plurality expressed confidence—down 9 points—while 45% expressed little (13%) or no (33%) confidence.

**The Legitimacy of the Regime**

*Satisfaction with Current System of Government*

The GlobeScan poll and WorldPublicOpinion’s poll both asked a standard question about satisfaction with the respondents’ current system of government that has been asked in many countries over decades. While less than a majority said they were very satisfied, very small numbers said they were dissatisfied--among Mousavi supporters as well as the general public. Interestingly, after the crackdown, satisfaction levels dropped in the general public as well as among Mousavi supporters--contrary to the assumption that the crackdown would prompt people to claim they feel greater enthusiasm for the current system.



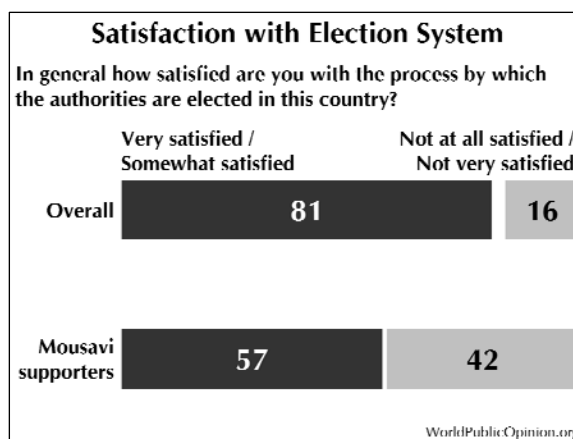
GlobeScan, asking one week after election day, found that among all Iranians just under half (49%) said they were very satisfied, while another 36% said they were somewhat satisfied. Just 11% said they were very (4%) or somewhat (7%) dissatisfied.

Among Mousavi supporters, 32% said they were very satisfied, but another 46% said they were somewhat satisfied with Iran’s system of government. Only 18% said they were very (11%) or somewhat (7%) dissatisfied—only slightly more than the general public.

WorldPublicOpinion asked the same question in early September, when government repression was more extensive and systematic. In the general public, those saying they were very satisfied dropped 8 points to 41% (somewhat satisfied, 46%), while dissatisfaction stayed steady. Similarly, among Mousavi supporters, those saying they were very satisfied dropped 11 points to 21% (somewhat satisfied, 49%). Dissatisfaction rose 9 points but was still fairly small at 27%.

*Satisfaction with the Election System*

Dissatisfaction with election processes is considerably stronger among Mousavi supporters than in Iran’s public as a whole—but still is not shared by a majority of Mousavi supporters. Shortly after the election, a modest majority of Mousavi voters backed the opposition’s demand to run the election again, though far from all Mousavi supporters agreed. A very large majority of the general public say Guardian Council members should always remain neutral during an election campaign, and Mousavi supporters are no different in this regard.



In early September, as the conflict between government and opposition developed and hardened, WPO asked “In general, how satisfied are you



with the process by which the authorities are elected in this country?” Eight in 10 Iranians said they were at least somewhat satisfied. Forty percent said they were very satisfied and another 41% somewhat satisfied; 16% were somewhat (10%) or very (6%) unsatisfied. Only 21% of Mousavi supporters said they were very satisfied, while another 36% said they were somewhat satisfied; 42% said they were somewhat (25%) or very (17%) dissatisfied.

***Constitutional Role of Islamic Authorities***

Majorities of both the general public and Mousavi supporters accept the principle by which religious authorities have the last word on legislation. Mousavi supporters are more inclined than Iranians in general to think that the method by which the supreme leader is chosen is undemocratic, and that the constitution grants the supreme leader too much power. However, neither of these views is held by a majority among Mousavi supporters.

WPO’s September poll asked questions about the principle of “guardianship of the jurispudent” (*velayat-e faqih*) and about the office of supreme leader that were only possible to ask by calling into Iran from outside the country.

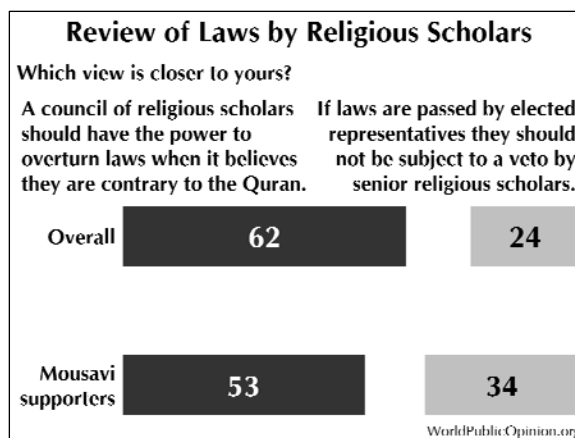
On the review of laws by religious scholars, respondents were asked to choose between an argument that laid down the principle and another that challenged it:

--A council of religious scholars should have the power to overturn laws when it believes they are contrary to the Quran.

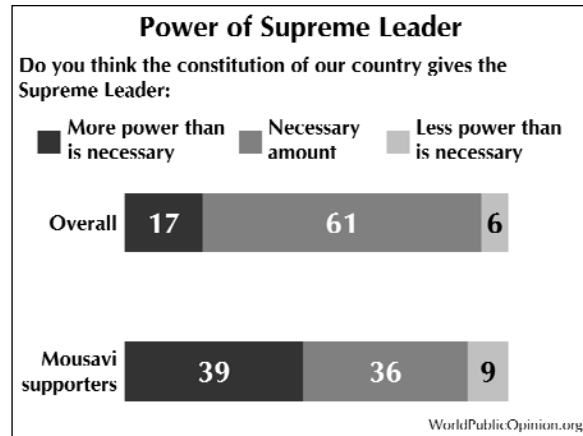
--If laws are passed by elected representatives they should not be subject to a veto by senior religious scholars.

In the general public, 62% chose the argument that supported the principle; 24% chose the challenge instead. Mousavi supporters were not very different from Iranians as a whole; 53% of them supported the principle, while 34% challenged it.

The supreme leader (a better translation of his official title is “guide of the revolution”) is chosen for a lifetime term by a clerical body, the Assembly of Experts, which itself is popularly elected. WPO asked, “Do you think the way the supreme leader is selected is or is not consistent with the principles of democracy?” Among all Iranians, a 55% majority said it was consistent, while 14% said it was not (a high 31% did not give an answer). Mousavi supporters were divided: over a third (36%) thought the selection method was *not* consistent with democracy, as many (34%) thought it was, and 30% did not answer.



Finally, respondents were asked about the constitutional powers of the supreme leader: “Do you think the constitution of our country gives the supreme leader more power than is necessary, less power than is necessary, or the necessary amount of power?” Overall, three in five Iranians (61%) thought the supreme leader had the necessary amount of power, while 17% thought it was too much and 6% thought it was too little. Mousavi supporters were again divided: only 36% thought the leader had the necessary amount of power, while a (statistically equivalent) 39% thought he had too much (less than necessary: 9%).



### *Freedom of Expression*

Immediately after the election, GlobeScan asked respondents whether they would agree or disagree with “putting a greater priority on rights of freedom of speech and the press.” With this formulation—which implies a calibrated opening-up—majorities agreed, especially among Mousavi voters but also in the general public. Seventy-one percent of the general public agreed (35% very much), as did 79% of Mousavi voters (49% very much).”

When media freedom was presented as something that could produce instability, a majority of Iranians tended to endorse the government’s right to limit media freedom—while a majority of Mousavi supporters did not. In September, WPO presented two arguments and asked respondents to choose one:

- The press should have the right to publish news and ideas without any government control.
- or
- The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it thinks will be destabilizing.

Overall, a 58% majority thought the government should be able to prevent information from being published, while 36% wanted unrestricted press freedom. However, among Mousavi supporters, three in five--59%--supported unrestricted press freedom and only 33% accepted restrictions.

The same WPO poll asked respondents to assess actual freedom of speech in Iran: “In Iran, how free do you think people are to express controversial political views, without fear of being harassed or punished?” Only 27% of Iranians said they were completely free in this regard, but another 44% said they were somewhat free; 23% said they were “not very free” (12%) or “not at all free” (11%). Views were a bit more negative among Mousavi supporters. Only 17% said they were completely free, 30% said they were somewhat free, while half said they were either not very free (20%) or not free at all (30%). Thus nearly twice as many Mousavi supporters complained about the level of freedom as compared to the general public.

***Economic freedoms***

Majorities of all Iranians, and a large majority of Mousavi supporters, want to make significant changes in the economy. The private sector is estimated to make up only around a fifth of Iran's economy, and a powerful state sector is expressly provided for in the constitution. On the labor side of the equation, it is illegal to form independent trade unions. In fact, untrammelled union activity has existed only during a few brief episodes in modern Iran's history.

One week after the election, GlobeScan asked whether respondents favored measures for "expanding the private sector in Iran." In the general public, 64% supported this idea (38% strongly), with just 20% opposed. Among Mousavi voters, a similar 66% were in favor (42% strongly).

The same poll also asked about "allowing labor unions to be established." Among all Iranians, 70% favored this reform (36% strongly) with only 9% opposed (21% did not answer). Seventy-five percent of Mousavi voters wanted to see trade unions established (43% strongly).

**The Nature of the Opposition**

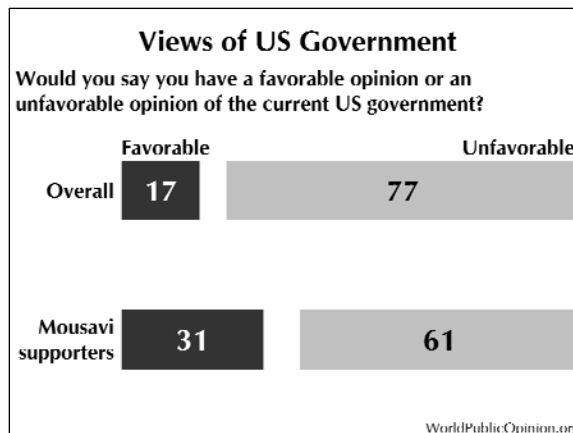
The post-election uprising has bred hope in many circles that the opposition to the existing regime represents a movement with policy views that are much more favorable to the US. The closest approximation of the opposition available in the available polling data is the people who, despite the tense political environment, environment, were bold enough in the post-election polls to say that they voted for Mousavi. The question then is: what are the positions of these Mousavi supporters on issues of concern to the US?

Overall there are far more similarities than differences between Mousavi supporters' worldview and that of Iranians at large. Broadly Mousavi supporters have a negative view of the US as an international actor and assume that US goals are generally hostile to them, their region, and the Islamic world, though on some questions the size of the majority is bit smaller. There is no sign that Mousavi supporters would be more yielding on nuclear issues than Iranians in general, particularly in regard to their nuclear program.

That said, the data show some significant differences between Mousavi supporters and the general Iranian public. Unlike the general public, most Mousavi voters would favor cooperation with the United States in dealing with the Taliban's operations in Afghanistan that affect Iran's eastern border. A plurality would go further, seeking to cooperate in ways that would help stabilize Afghanistan and Iraq. More generally, Mousavi supporters are keenly aware that Iran's relations with the West are on a downward slide. A plurality of Mousavi voters (though far from all) sees US President Barack Obama as an individual who respects Islam.

### Little Difference in Views of the US Government

Most Mousavi voters appear to be only slightly less negative toward the US government than Iranians in general. Among Mousavi supporters, in the WPO poll, 61% expressed an unfavorable view of “the current US government” (46% very), and just 31% had a favorable view. In the full public, 77% percent had an unfavorable view of the US government (69% very). Seventeen percent had favorable views.



When Iranians look at US actions in the Islamic world and the Middle East, the views they form are very negative, and Mousavi supporters’ views are hardly different. Like other Iranians, most doubt whether it is really a US goal to see the creation of a Palestinian state. Mousavi supporters assume the US is focused on dominance of the region’s resources, and that its interest in promoting democracy is sharply circumscribed by its power politics. Importantly, though, Mousavi supporters do not approve of attacks on US troops in Afghanistan or the Persian Gulf states—nor does the Iranian public.

WPO asked a series of questions about US foreign policy goals in its September poll, including one formally declared by both Bush’s and Obama’s administrations: “to see the creation of an independent and economically viable Palestinian state.” Among Mousavi supporters, 50% thought it was not a US goal (definitely not, 38%), while 35% thought it was. In the full public, 55% thought this was not a US goal (definitely not, 46%), while 25% thought it was.

Asked whether it was a US goal “to maintain control over the oil resources of the Middle East,” a very large 89% of Mousavi supporters said it was (59% definitely). This was even more than in the general public, where 78% said so (62% definitely).

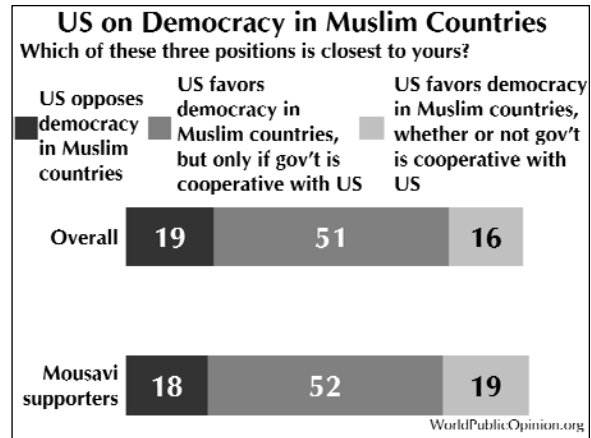
Three in four Mousavi supporters (75%) thought it was a US goal “to impose American culture on Muslim society” (48% definitely), and as many in the full public (75%) thought the same thing, though more were categorical about it (57% definitely).

More broadly, 68% of Mousavi supporters thought it was a US goal “to weaken and divide the Islamic world” (54% definitely). A higher 81% of the full public thought the same thing (68% definitely).

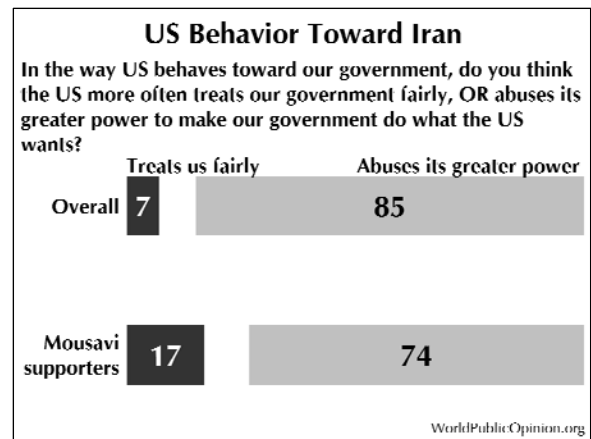
Mousavi voters were no different from Iranians in general in their jaundiced view of how the US views democracy in Muslim countries. Respondents were given three choices:

- The US favors democracy in Muslim countries, whether or not the government is cooperative with the US
- The US favors democracy in Muslim countries, but only if the government is cooperative with the US
- The US opposes democracy in Muslim countries

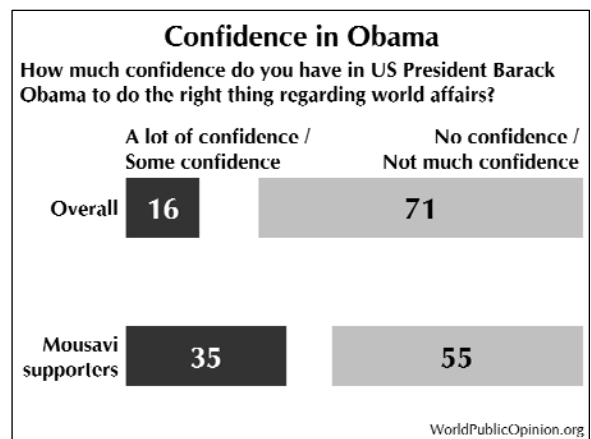
Fifty-two percent of Mousavi supporters chose the middle option, saying “the US favors democracy in Muslim countries, but only if the government is cooperative with the US.” Eighteen percent thought the US simply opposes democracy in Muslim countries, while just 19% thought the US favors democracy unconditionally. The general public was no different (51%, 19% and 16% respectively).



Mousavi supporters also share the view of most Iranians that the United States tends to abuse its power in its dealings with Iran. Respondents were asked whether, “In the way the US behaves toward our government...the US more often treats our government fairly, or abuses its greater power to make our government do what the US wants?” Seventy-four percent of Mousavi supporters said the US abuses its greater power (treats us fairly, 17%). Eighty-four percent of Iranians agreed (treats us fairly, 7%).



While it is only a minority, the size of the minority of Mousavi supporters who approve of attacks on US troops is not significantly smaller than for the general Iranian public. Twenty-four percent of Mousavi supporters approve of attacks on US troops in Afghanistan (48% disapprove), and 32% approve of attacks on US troops in the Persian Gulf states (46% disapprove). The public as a whole was statistically no different. One point of difference: unlike most Iranians, a majority of Mousavi supporters assess Iran’s relations with the West as worsening. WPO asked in September whether “Iran’s relations with Western countries have in general gotten better, gotten worse, or are about the same as compared to four years ago.” Among Mousavi supporters, a clear majority (57%) said relations were worse. Only 27% of this group thought relations were better (16%) or about the same (11%). However, among Iranians overall attitudes were fairly evenly distributed, with 33% calling relations better, 30% worse, and 16% about the same.



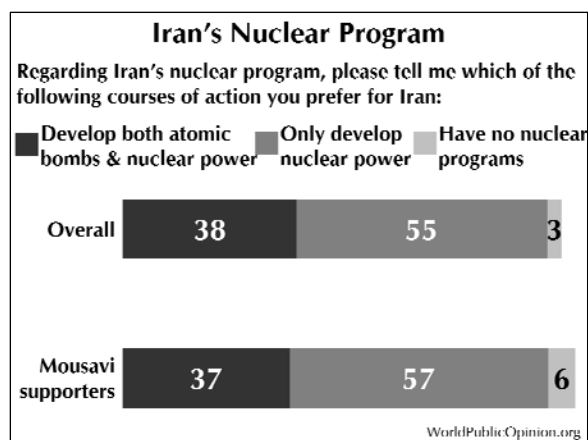
A majority of Mousavi supporters express little or no confidence in Obama. Asked “How much confidence do you have in US President Barack Obama to do the right thing regarding world affairs?” 35% expressed some (29%) or a lot (6%) of confidence, while 56% expressed low confidence (36%, none at all). This is only marginally better than the general public: 16% had a lot (2%) or some (14%) confidence, while 70% expressed low confidence (57%, none at all).

However, Mousavi supporters are different from Iranians on whether Obama respects Islam. Among Mousavi supporters, a plurality of 47% thought Obama *does* respect Islam, while 37% thought he does not. Overall, 59% of Iranians thought Obama does *not* respect Islam, and 25% thought that he does.

### Little Difference on Iran's Nuclear Program

Like Iranians in general, a majority of Mousavi supporters want to develop nuclear power, while a significant minority want nuclear weapons as well. Though Mousavi supporters are even more likely to perceive sanctions as hurting Iran, and most expect more sanctions to come, they are no less determined to continue Iran's nuclear program.

In September, WPO offered three alternatives in regard to Iran's nuclear program: "to develop both atomic bombs and nuclear power, to only develop nuclear power, or to have no nuclear programs." Among Mousavi supporters, a mere 6% wanted to have no nuclear program; a modest majority (57%) wanted to develop nuclear power only, but 37% wanted weapons as well. The general public was statistically the same as Mousavi supporters (only nuclear power, 55%, weapons also 38%, no program 3%).



This support persists despite the perception (even higher among Mousavi supporters than the general public) that sanctions are hurting Iran and are likely to worsen. In July, the University of Tehran asked: "As you know, our country is under sanctions because of its nuclear program. To what degree do you think these sanctions have negatively affected our country?" Among Mousavi supporters, 74% said they have been very (39%) or somewhat (35%) negative, while 57% of Iranians said the effects have been very (22%) or somewhat (35%) negative. Further, 74% of Mousavi supporters thought it likely "these sanctions will be increased," while 60% of Iranians thought this.

WPO asked similar questions in September, with similar results. Among Mousavi supporters, 81% said the sanctions had had a negative impact and 86% thought they would increase, while in the public 60% then thought the sanctions had negative impact, and 70% thought it likely that sanctions would increase.

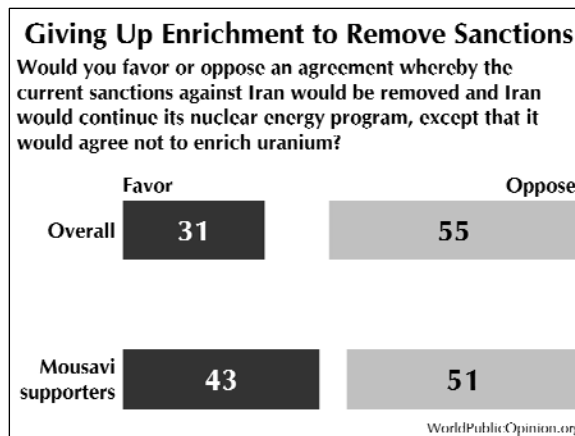
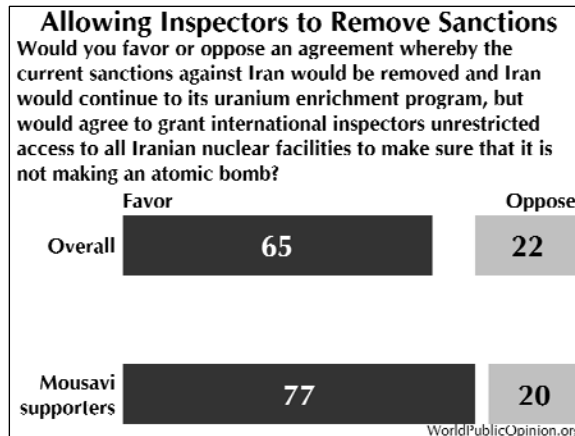
Nonetheless, despite their higher recognition of the sanctions' cost, a very large majority of Mousavi supporters supported accepting the sacrifice in order to continue the nuclear program. In the July 13-15 UT poll, 78% agreed (57% strongly) "for Iran not to give up its nuclear activities regardless of the circumstances." Among all Iranians, 86% agreed—73% strongly.

WPO also tested two possible ways out of the impasse between the international community and Iran over its nuclear program. Overall, a large majority of Mousavi supporters would favor their government precluding the development of nuclear weapons in exchange for the lifting of international sanctions against Iran. This is also true of a majority of Iranians in general, though by a smaller margin.

WPO first asked, “Would you favor or oppose an agreement whereby the current sanctions against Iran would be removed and Iran would continue its nuclear energy program, except that it would agree not to enrich uranium?” Among Mousavi supporters, 51% opposed it and 43% were in favor. Among all Iranians, a 54% majority opposed such an agreement, with 31% in favor.

Those who opposed this agreement (or did not answer) were then asked: “Would you favor or oppose an agreement whereby the current sanctions against Iran would be removed and Iran would continue its uranium enrichment program, but would agree to grant international inspectors unrestricted access to all Iranian nuclear facilities to make sure that it is not making an atomic bomb?” Sixty percent of those Mousavi supporters who had *not* accepted the first deal *did* accept the one based on unrestricted inspections, as did 52% of all Iranians. Thus, a combined 77% of Mousavi supporters were willing to accept one deal or the other—a bit higher than the 65% of Iranians overall.

This picture is confirmed by a question GlobeScan asked one week after the election: whether Iranians would agree with “pursuing Iran’s nuclear program cooperatively with other nations, accepting full inspections if sanctions are lifted.” Among Mousavi supporters, 65% agreed with this approach and 20% disagreed, while in the general public, 59% agreed and 24% disagreed.



**Somewhat More Readiness to Cooperate with the US**

Mousavi supporters express a readiness to cooperate with the US. In most cases this is true of Iranians in general, but Mousavi supporters support cooperation by a wider margin, and on a few options the general public does not support cooperation while Mousavi supporters do.

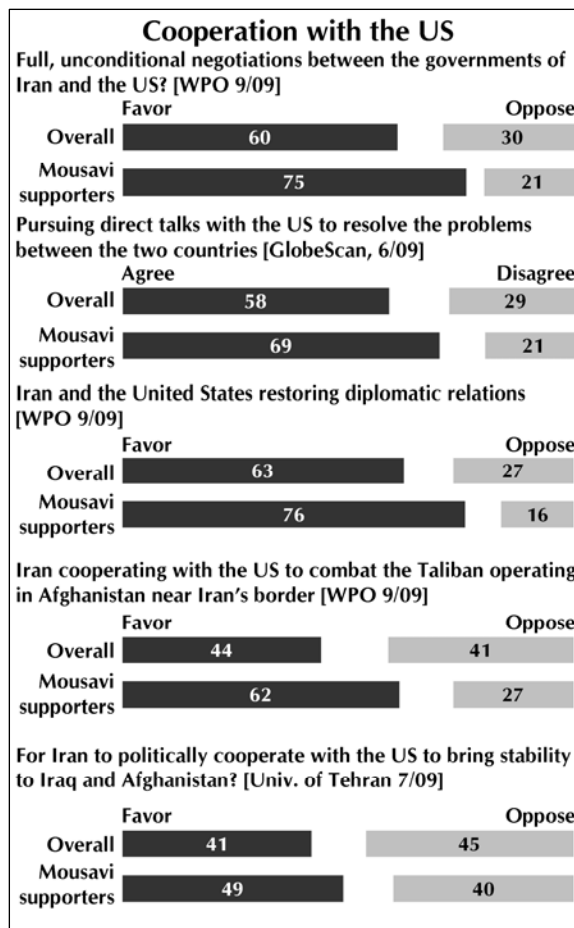
A major point of agreement is on negotiation with the US. WPO asked, “To what degree do you favor or oppose full, unconditional negotiations between the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the government of the United States?” Seventy-five percent of Mousavi supporters favored this (39% strongly), as did 60% of all Iranians (20% strongly). Similarly, GlobeScan’s June post-election poll asked what respondents thought of “Pursuing direct talks with the US to resolve the problems between the two countries.” Sixty-nine percent of Mousavi supporters agreed with this (33% strongly); so did 58% of Iranians (26% strongly).

Establishing diplomatic relations with the US is another point of agreement. Three in four Mousavi supporters (76%) would welcome diplomatic relations with the United States (38% strongly). Likewise, 63 percent of all Iranians said to WPO in September that they would “favor Iran and the United States restoring diplomatic relations”; 27% were opposed.

However, when it comes to more specific areas of cooperation, Mousavi supporters do show a readiness to cooperate not found in Iranians in general. Asked by WPO, “to what degree do you favor or oppose Iran cooperating with the US to combat the Taliban operating in Afghanistan near Iran’s border?” 62% of Mousavi supporters were in favor (40% strongly). On this issue, Iranians in general were divided: 44% favored the idea while 41% opposed it.

UT inquired about the same issue, but in more sweeping terms, asking respondents whether they agreed with the idea “for Iran to politically cooperate with the US to bring stability to Iraq and Afghanistan.” A plurality of Mousavi supporters (49%) agreed and 40% disagreed. Among Iranians overall, 45% rejected this idea while 42% were favorable.

When military cooperation with the US was highlighted by UT, a clear majority of Mousavi supporters were opposed as were an even larger majority of Iranians. Fifty-nine percent of Mousavi supporters disagreed (46% strongly) “for Iran to militarily cooperate with the US to fight terrorist organizations such as the Taliban”; only 33% agreed. Iranians in general were even more negative, with 66% disagreeing (58% strongly).



### Appendix 1: Analysis of Trendline Data, May-June 2009

A question in evaluating the credibility of polling data is whether numerous datasets tell a story that is coherent. This means that related measures move up and down in a rational manner and that shifts in the data correspond logically to shifts in reported perceptions and other external events. In this section we will take the various datasets and try putting them together into such a narrative.

The 2009 election campaign in Iran was only about four weeks long. Its ups and downs can be followed thanks to the almost continuous polling by the University of Tehran survey unit. Unfortunately, to our knowledge, there were no comparable poll series undertaken by other organizations during the election campaign.

Overall, the tracking polls show that Mousavi, during the middle of the campaign, came close to forcing Ahmadinejad into a second round. Ahmadinejad saved himself from this fate only by making better use of the televised debates (something utterly new in Iran) than Mousavi did. Ahmadinejad then recovered support, but did not return all the way to the high levels he had at the start of the campaign.



These trends are quite important because they offer insight into why Mousavi and his supporters expressed confidence they were going to win the election, and why world media, in reporting the campaign, saw Mousavi as having momentum and Ahmadinejad as in trouble. All these perceptions were corroborated by the polling data at a certain stage--the middle of the campaign.

The campaign period can be divided into two phases:

--From mid-May until the beginning of the televised debates, the data indicate that Ahmadinejad's support faltered and Mousavi's gathered momentum. By June 1 Ahmadinejad was apparently in serious danger of not obtaining 50 percent and being forced into a second round.

--In the first debate in which he appeared (June 3), Ahmadinejad managed to stop the bleeding. From that point, according to the data, on he recovered support without quite returning to the high level he had at the very beginning of the campaign. Mousavi's support seems to have hit a plateau, and though he did not lose his gains from May, he did not attract wider support.

In the last part of the campaign, a growing minority—ultimately one-third—of voters told interviewers they felt the tones of *all* the candidates' campaigns were overly negative. This sentiment became more attached to perceptions of Mousavi, however, than to perceptions of Ahmadinejad. Of those who thought on the eve of the vote that the election environment is not healthy, 38% thought Ahmadinejad was primarily attacking other candidates instead of discussing his own programs—but 48% felt this way about Mousavi.

### **Phase 1: Ahmadinejad Falters, Mousavi Rises**

A wide range of poll questions asked from May 19 through June 1 by the UT group show Ahmadinejad's vulnerability to a challenge. This would accord with the body of observation and reportage at the time by witnesses of the campaign.

*The visibility of Mousavi's campaign quickly overtook, and apparently surpassed, the visibility of Ahmadinejad's campaign.* Four times in this two-week period, UT asked "During the past week, which candidate's campaign did you come across the most often?" At the beginning, 25% said Ahmadinejad's campaign and 16% Mousavi's campaign; by June 1, 42% said Mousavi's campaign and 38% that of Ahmadinejad.

*Soon Mousavi's campaign was perceived by the public as about as effective as Ahmadinejad's campaign.* Asked "Irrespective of who you intend to vote for, which candidate's campaign has been more effective?" on May 19-21, 45% said Ahmadinejad's campaign, while just 18% said Mousavi's campaign. By June 1, Ahmadinejad's campaign was perceived as most effective by only 38%; those thinking this of Mousavi's campaign were up to 39%.

*The image of Ahmadinejad as concerned about the problems of ordinary people lost some of its luster.* On May 19-21, 63% said Ahmadinejad was the candidate who "has a better understanding of people's problems"; by June 1 this had fallen 17 points to 46%. Mousavi's image in this regard improved (from 13% to 26%).

*Views of Ahmadinejad's foreign policy abilities were declining.* From 56% on May 19-21, he dropped below the halfway mark (49%) as "the candidate better able to make Iran outstanding in the world" [sic]. Over the same time, Mousavi rose from 17% to 27% on this question. Probably related

to foreign policy performance was a question about “backbone”: “Which candidate do you think is more unwavering?” On this rating Ahmadinejad dropped from 58% to 47%, while Mousavi rose from 11% to 28%.

*Ahmadinejad was also making no headway on his weak point—the economy.* Forty-six percent thought he was the candidate “better able to deal with the country’s economic problems” on May 19-21; by June 1 this was down 5 points to 41%. Over the same period Mousavi went from 14% to 26% of Iranians thinking he could handle the economy better than the other three candidates.

*As Iranians pondered, many were deciding that improving the economy was more important than international affairs.* On three occasions they were asked to “imagine that you have to pick between two candidates. The victory of one will result in the improvement of Iran’s economy. The victory of the other will result in the improvement of Iran’s power in the world. Which one would you pick?” On May 19-21, a 46% plurality preferred the international option, while 38% chose the economic option. But by June 1, 45% preferred the economic option, and the international option was down to 40%.

*Ahmadinejad was increasingly seen as the wrong person to handle pressing issues affecting the younger generation.* His rating dropped from 50% to 39% in two weeks as “the candidate...you think will be more successful in dealing with our youth’s problems,” while Mousavi’s rating rose 15 points, from 16% to 31%.

To sum up, the data consistently portray Ahmadinejad’s support as eroding and Mousavi’s support as growing. In two weeks the percentage saying they planned to vote for Ahmadinejad dropped 24 points. His commanding position of May 19-21--63%-- evaporated, and by June 1 he was well below the halfway mark at 39%. Mousavi was the only candidate gaining in the process, moving from 19% to 30%.

## Phase 2: Ahmadinejad Recovers, Mousavi Hits a Plateau

On the night of June 3, Ahmadinejad and Mousavi met in the second of six debates. (Each debate matched up two of the four candidates; Ahmadinejad would appear three times in all but would not debate Mousavi again.) Ahmadinejad, in his opening statement, went for broke on a populist appeal:<sup>2</sup>

[For] four years, I tolerated all this. I tolerated all the insults directed at me...I forgave it all; I [would] still like to forgive all this ... but I cannot allow [the] people to be insulted, people’s choice and actually peoples’ understanding; this, I cannot let go. People do not allow me to take it easy on this when ... their dignity is being insulted. In my meetings with people in various cities and people from different walks of life ... they come and ask me to go to their defense and defend their positions.

After this buildup, Ahmadinejad linked Mousavi with two former presidents – Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Mohammad Khatami -- painting three eras of the republic’s political elite as a unified whole, conspiring to defeat him.

<sup>2</sup> The quotations are from a rough but complete English translation of the transcript on the site irantracker.org.: <http://www.irantracker.org/analysis/mousavi-ahmadinejad-june-3-presidential-debate-transcript>.

I had already promised people to let them know what is happening. ... Today [it is not] Mr. Mousavi ... sitting in front of me. It is not Mr. Mousavi alone. It's three consecutive governments in front of me, facing me. It's Mr. Mousavi, it's Mr. Hashemi, and it's also Mr. Khatami. ... As a matter of fact, these people have always been joining forces together and they have been attacking this government, criticizing this government, and trying to hurt this government. Of course people already know all about this, but the youths should also know, realize the fact that [this is not] one single candidate, it's a group of people with Mr. Hashemi as an axis and Mr. Khatami and Mr. Mousavi cooperating [with] him, moving against me.

In Ahmadinejad's rhetoric, the actual candidate Mousavi disappeared and Rafsanjani—whom Ahmadinejad defeated handily in 2005—took his place. As the transcript shows, Mousavi was quite unprepared for an attack on this level.

From this point until the eve of the vote, the UT data show Ahmadinejad's fortunes improving, with some measures rising back up above the 50% mark. Between June 1 and June 11, those thinking Ahmadinejad had "a better understanding of people's problems" rose 9 points to 55%; Mousavi was statistically unchanged at 24%. Those thinking Ahmadinejad was "better able to make Iran outstanding in the world" rose 5 points to 54%; Mousavi fell 4 points to 22%. And those judging that Ahmadinejad was running the most effective campaign rose 6 points to 44%; Mousavi's campaign fell 8 points to 31%.

At the same time, however, the public's preference to give the economy priority over international affairs kept increasing. By June 11, 48% said they would prefer a candidate who would improve Iran's economy over one who would increase Iran's "power in the world": 39% disagreed—a gap of 9 points. A candidate who could have presented himself convincingly as a better economic manager might well have benefited from this view in the electorate.

In the voting intention question—which the UT asked on June 4, June 6-8, June 9-10, and June 11—Ahmadinejad's support rose steadily. On the day after the debate it was up 9 points, though still less than half of Iranians (39% on June 1 to 48% on June 4). By June 8 it was 52% and by June 11, 57%—an 18-point recovery that left him 6 points below his peak of May 19-21.

Mousavi did not suffer losses in the polls corresponding to Ahmadinejad's gains. From 30% on June 1, all but one of the ratings that followed remained within the margin of error of 30% (June 4, 29%, June 6-8, 28%,; June 9-10, 23%; June 11, 27%). But the poll data suggest that Mousavi was no longer attracting new swaths of voters.

## Appendix 2: Demographic Variations in Voting Preferences

The purpose of this appendix is twofold. First, it seeks to determine whether, according to the poll data, Ahmadinejad did or did not win in any one of a range of key demographic subgroups—as follows:

- Age groups
- Women and men
- Urban and rural voters
- Ethnic minorities (Azeris and Turkmen)
- Residents of Tehran province and city
- Internet users
- Viewers of Western news media

Second, it seeks to establish in which subgroups Mousavi's support was *relatively stronger, compared to his performance with other groups* as a candidate.

In addition to its value in providing more detailed insights into the election, this is another data validation exercise beyond those undertaken in the body of the report. For each subgroup, we will check to see whether any one of the three sources of poll data disagrees with the others. If different polls point in opposite directions regarding a given subgroup's candidate preferences, this would tend to throw the reliability of one or more datasets into question.

The polls examined here are discussed--generally in the following order--for each subgroup:

- University of Tehran: June 6-8, June 9-10, and June 11, aggregated  
June 18-25 and July 13-15, aggregated
- GlobeScan: June 18-24
- WPO: August 27-September 10

All questions discussed are limited to respondents who (before the election) said they expected to vote or (after the election) said they did vote on June 12. The three University of Tehran polls in the six days before the vote are aggregated to give a larger overall sample size, and thus higher reliability in examining subgroups. Polls earlier than June 6, however, are excluded because they pertain to earlier stages of the campaign when views were shifting. The university's two post-election polls are aggregated for a more detailed picture after the vote, but discussed separately from the polls immediately before the vote.

All three data sources are compared wherever possible. In the case of viewers of Western news media, unfortunately only WPO data is available. In the case of Internet users, all University of Tehran pre-election polls are included to permit us to examine the small category of daily Internet users.

## **Ahmadinejad's Performance With Key Subgroups**

### ***Age***

All the different datasets show Ahmadinejad having majority support among all age groups. In the University of Tehran's pre-election polling, there was virtually no age effect. After the election, two sources (University of Tehran and GlobeScan) both found an age variation, in which Ahmadinejad did best among people over 45. However, WPO data did not support this.

In UT's post-election polling (limited to those who said they had voted), 61% of those up to 25 and 63% of those 26 to 35 said they had voted for Ahmadinejad, as did 64% of those 36 to 45 and a remarkably high 70% of those over 45.

In GlobeScan's post-election poll (June 18-24), among reported voters, 53% of those up to 25 and 56% of those 26 to 35 said they had voted for Ahmadinejad; so did 54% of those 36 to 45 and 61% of those over 45—repeating the pattern that UT found of higher support among older voters. WPO, however, found no age effect.

### ***Gender***

The data indicate that Ahmadinejad succeeded in garnering majority support among women who went to the polls. While Ahmadinejad also had majorities among men, he did significantly less well with them. All the different datasets are in agreement on this pattern.

In UT's last week of pre-election polling (June 6-11), 56% of women expressed intentions to vote for Ahmadinejad. In UT's post-election polling, among women who said they had voted, 67% said they had voted for Ahmadinejad. Among men, UT shows Ahmadinejad doing less well (52% before the election; 61% of voters after the election).

In GlobeScan's poll one week after the election, 58% of women who said they had gone to the polls said they had voted for Ahmadinejad, while 54% of men said so.

In WPO's September poll, among women who said they had voted, 59% said they had chosen Ahmadinejad; again, men were less supportive at 52%.

### ***Urban and rural voters***

All the datasets, with one exception, show Ahmadinejad with majority support from both urban and rural Iranians. The exception is UT's pre-election polling, which shows Ahmadinejad ahead among urban voters but below the 50% mark. All the datasets show Ahmadinejad as significantly stronger with rural voters than he was with urban voters; further, UT and GlobeScan agree on the dimensions of the gap after the vote (14-17 points). WPO found a smaller gap, however (7 points).

It should be noted that the polls from all three data sources include respondents' self-reports that the place where they live is urban or rural. Thus polls offer a more fine-grained view of urban-rural differences than can the approach of comparing largely urban provinces with largely rural provinces, which some analysts of the election took due to the limitations of the initial election results.

In UT's last week of pre-election polling, Ahmadinejad had a 46% plurality among urban residents and a 71% majority among rural residents. In UT post-election polling, Ahmadinejad had a 59% majority among urban residents and a 75% majority among rural residents.

GlobeScan's June poll also shows less urban support for Ahmadinejad: 51%, as opposed to 68% among rural residents. WPO, likewise, found 53% for Ahmadinejad among urban residents and a higher 60% among rural residents.

### *Ethnic Minorities (Azeris/Turkmen)*

All the datasets agree in showing Ahmadinejad in the lead and ahead of Mousavi with Azeris and Turkmen minorities (approximately 24% of Iran's population, hereafter "Azeris"), but they do not all indicate definite *majority* support.

In the university's aggregated polling one week before the election, Ahmadinejad had a bare 51% support among Azeris. In noting these low-majority figures, it should be remembered that one in five of those intending to vote did not name a preferred candidate. In the university's aggregated post-election polling, Ahmadinejad's support among Azeris who said they voted was 66%.

The GlobeScan poll included an oversample of the northwestern city of Tabriz, the capital of East Azerbaijan province, near Mousavi's home town of Khameneh. Ninety-three percent of the Tabriz respondents were of Azeri ethnicity. In Tabriz a 46% plurality said they voted for Ahmadinejad (Mousavi, 36%). This oversample is the instance, noted above, where majority support for Ahmadinejad is not confirmed. The later WPO poll shows Ahmadinejad with 59% support among Azeris.

### *Tehran City and Province*

The GlobeScan poll is the only one that conducted an oversample of the *city* of Tehran and thus is the only one available for this analysis. For Tehran province, which is substantially larger, in addition to GlobeScan's data, aggregated UT data is adequate.

GlobeScan's post-election oversample of Tehran city shows Mousavi with a 9-point lead—45% to Ahmadinejad's 36%. This fits with the perception of most observers that Mousavi supporters had the upper hand in the city.

Turning to the *province* level, in UT polling one week before the election, among those who said they planned to vote, Mousavi had a narrow lead—42%, compared to 39% for Ahmadinejad. In UT's aggregated post-election polls there, among those who said they did vote, Ahmadinejad had a modest majority (51% to Mousavi's 37%). Similarly in Tehran province, GlobeScan's post-election poll found 47% saying they had voted for Ahmadinejad and 39% for Mousavi.

### *Internet Users*

Both the UT polls and the WPO poll asked a detailed question about Internet use. The large aggregate number of UT respondents (pre- and post- election) means that, although only 5% said they used the Internet "almost daily," this group constitutes 510 respondents.

The general perception on the part of reporters and observers was correct: among those who regularly communicate and access information through the Internet, most favored Mousavi. Among the large majority with little or no connection to the Internet, most favored Ahmadinejad by about two to one.

In the aggregate of pre-election UT polls, only 28% of near-daily Internet users supported Ahmadinejad, while a striking 50% of near-daily Internet users supported Mousavi. Among those who *never* use the Internet, 56% supported Ahmadinejad and just 22% supported Mousavi.

In the UT polls after the election, the same effect is evident: only 39% of near-daily users said they ultimately voted for Ahmadinejad, while 50% said they voted for Mousavi. Among non-users, 70% said they voted for Ahmadinejad, while 22% voted for Mousavi.

In the WPO data, the sample size was not large enough to do a valid analysis, but the effects were in the same direction.

### ***Viewers of Western News Media***

Among viewers of Western news media, Ahmadinejad had more voters than Mousavi, but his margin was significantly lower in this group. Interestingly, viewers of Western media reported higher abstention from voting than non-viewers did.

Reportage of the demonstrations that followed the election observed that those involved commonly used non-Iranian news sources to supplement their information. With this in mind, the WPO poll asked respondents whether or not they followed the radio or satellite television broadcasts of the BBC or Voice of America. Twenty percent said they did follow such programming, while 80 percent said they did not; less than 1% refused to answer. Unfortunately, neither the UT polls nor the GlobeScan poll asked a comparable question.

Forty-three percent of those listening to Western media said they voted for Ahmadinejad, compared to 58% of non-listeners—a 15-point difference. Twenty-nine percent of voters who followed Western media said they voted for Mousavi, while only 11% of non-listeners said they did—an 18-point difference.

At the same time, those who follow Western media seem to have been less likely to vote. Seventy-seven percent of this group said they voted, but 22% said they did not. Among those who did *not* tune in to Western media, 90% said they voted and 10% said they did not.

### **Mousavi's Relative Strengths Among Subgroups**

All three sources of data can be examined to assess Mousavi's *relative* strengths. In what groups did he garner more support than he did in other groups?

There is very little disagreement among the three data sources—as is visible in the table below. WPO's poll is a somewhat weaker indicator, probably due to its two-and-a-half months' distance from the election, but it confirms the other two data sources in four of five categories.

<i>Mousavi's Strong Points of Support</i>				
	<b>UT Pre-Election</b>	<b>UT Post-Election</b>	<b>GlobeScan</b>	<b>WPO</b>
<b>Age</b>	Up to age 25, 5 points above those over 45	Up to age 25, 12 points above those over 45	Up to age 25, 11 points above those over 45	No clear effect
<b>Gender</b>	Men, 4 points above women	Men, 5 points above women	Men, 6 points above women	Men, 6 points above women
<b>Education</b>	Tertiary education (college and above), 21 points above those with primary education	Tertiary education, 23 points above primary education	Tertiary education, 23 points above primary education	Tertiary education, 10 points above primary education
<b>Urban/Rural</b>	Urban residents, 21 points above rural residents	Urban, 12 points above rural	Urban, 9 points above rural	Urban, 3 points above rural
<b>Internet Use</b>	Daily use, 33 points above those who have never used the internet	Daily use, 28 points above complete non-users	Daily use, 16 points above complete non-users	Daily use, 8 points above complete non-users

This composite picture of Mousavi's relative strengths shows that (as expected), his support was stronger among young people, especially those 25 and younger, than it was among older age groups. Also as expected, Mousavi had higher support with the most educated strata in the population than he did among the less educated.

In a measure related to education, frequent Internet users were more likely to support him than those who do not use the Internet. Mousavi also did better among urban residents than he did among people in rural areas—as would follow from having a more educated support base. More surprisingly, Mousavi was slightly but consistently stronger among men than he was among women.



### **Appendix 3: Methodology**

This report is based upon survey work by three different organizations: WorldPublicOpinion.org, GlobeScan, and academics at the University of Tehran. All three organizations used approximately the same survey methods – random-digit telephone interviewing to a national sample of Iranians. Each used a different data collection organization: WorldPublicOpinion.org contracted with a telephone survey agency which called into Iran from a neighboring country and used native Farsi speakers as interviewers; GlobeScan used an experienced commercial survey agency in Iran; the University used its own survey capabilities. The University of Tehran and GlobeScan studies were done completely independently.

The household penetration of telephone landlines in Iran is reported to be over 80 percent by Iran's telecommunication company. WorldPublicOpinion.org conducted an in home survey with a national probability sample of Iranians in January-February, 2008 and found that 84 percent of Iranians reported having a landline telephone in their household.

None of the surveys used a procedure to sample cell-phone-only households. While this methodological feature is becoming more common in US polling, it does not seem to be employed regularly in Iran. We are not aware of data on the proportion of the Iranian population that can only be reached by cell phones. However, Internet use in Iran reported in the WPO.org survey (36%) closely matched estimates of the World Factbook (33.5%). This suggests that users of newer telecommunications technologies were well represented. Furthermore, young people were not under-represented in the sample. It was not necessary to up-weight the young age group in the sample; young people are usually thought to be the population most affected by telephone survey designs which do not include cell phone sample frames.

#### **The WorldPublicOpinion.org Study**

This study was designed, managed, and analyzed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland as part of the WorldPublicOpinion.org. Staff from this organization have carried previous studies in Iran using face-to-face interviewing and have also conducted focus groups in Iran. This organization is responsible for all of the survey questions and the interpretation of the findings.

The survey was executed by means of computer-assisted-telephone interviewing by a professional research agency outside Iran. All interviewers were native Farsi speakers. Telephone interviewing and an outside agency were chosen for this study so that there would be no political constraints on questions asked or speculation about the influence of Iranian authorities on the data collection process. In the past, when we have examined clearly documented studies of the Iranian public, we have found that telephone methods and face-to-face methods have produced very similar findings with comparable questions.

The sample was stratified by Iranian provinces using area codes and telephone exchanges for landline telephones in Iran. Numbers were randomly selected and the last four digits of actual telephone numbers were randomly varied. When a residence was reached, an adult was selected randomly using the next birthday technique. An initial attempt and three callbacks were made in an effort to complete an interview.

In implementing the random digit sample, a total of 2,886 households were contacted. Of the 2,886 contacted households, in 691 a qualified respondent could not be reached and in 106 there was a language barrier (non-Farsi). Of the 2,089 households successfully screened for qualification, there were 1,086 refusals (52%) and 1,003 completed interviews (cooperation rate 48%). Including cases in the denominator where a qualified respondent was not reached, the response rate was 34.8% (1,003 divided by 2886.)

For reference, the most recent poll by Terror Free Tomorrow conducted before the election in May, 2009 reported a 58% cooperation rate and a 42% refusal rate.

A sample of 1,003 interviews completed in this study has a margin of error of +/- 3.1 percentage points.

All thirty Iranian provinces were represented in the completed sample in proportions similar to their actual populations, as were rural and urban areas and females and males. A post-weighting procedure was employed using gender, age, province, and urban-rural residence as factors. Demographic targets were based upon 2005 data from the Statistical Center of Iran. In general, the weighting effect was quite small; however, respondents 55 years and older had to be up-weighted and those 35-44 down-weighted somewhat.

### **The GlobeScan Study**

GlobeScan is an international survey research organization headquartered in Toronto established in 1987. GlobeScan's professional staff designed the questionnaire and arranged for it to be conducted by a commercial survey research agency in Tehran which they had previously used for Iran surveys.

The survey was conducted June 19–24, 2009, or 7–12 days after the June 12 election. It consisted of a random digit telephone sample stratified by urban-rural and by province; a total of 1,051 adults were interviewed in a nationally representative sample plus over-samples of 191 respondents in the city of Tabriz, 89 in the city of Tehran, and 183 in the province of Lorestan. The over-samples were carried out to permit a separate analysis of reported voting in these areas. The national data were weighted by province, gender, and age to properly reflect national parameters. GlobeScan reported a contact rate of 83% in their survey and a completion rate of 82% among qualified households, for a net response rate of 68%. The margin of error for the national sample in the GlobeScan survey is +/- 3.0 percentage points.

### **The University of Tehran Tracking Study**

This set of surveys was carried out as an academic pilot project by a group of University of Tehran professors and researchers as part of a plan to inaugurate a University of Tehran International Center for Opinion Research. The findings should be considered an academic research project and not an official expression by the University.

The surveys were conducted by means of telephone interviews using random digit sampling. Each sample was stratified by province and by urban-rural within province. Five of the waves were later post-weighted by province to bring the obtained sample more precisely in line with provincial populations. Through personal communication, we have been informed that across the surveys UT contact rates averaged about 81% and among households successfully contacted, about 85% completed the interview and about 15% refused, or a net response rate of about 69%.

The UT survey data consists of eight national survey waves prior to the election and two waves subsequent to it. (We also received data from a survey wave of 8 of Iran's 30 provinces, but we have not used this non-national survey in the analysis.) The surveys were conducted with the following schedule and sample sizes:

	<u>Sample Size</u>	<u>Margin of Error</u> (+/- percentage pts.)
May 18-21, 2009	1,166	2.9
May 22-23	3,657	1.6
May 25-28	1,091	3.0
June 1	625	3.9
June 4	543	4.2
June 6-8	2,084	2.1
June 9-10	1,009	3.1
June 11	450	4.6
<b>June 12 – Presidential Election</b>		
June 18-25	1,051	3.0
July 13-15	1,199	2.8

### Observations on Response Rate

There seems to be pattern across the three studies presented here, plus a comparison with the most recent Terror Free Tomorrow poll, that telephone interviewing from inside Iran (UT and GlobeScan) produces a higher response rate than calling from outside the country. This may be due to the fact that virtually all Iranian phones have caller ID and some potential respondents may be aware that the call-in poll is coming from another country. Moreover, introducing the survey as being conducted by the University of Tehran is likely to have a response rate benefit from the University's good name.

The WorldPublicOpinion.org poll also was conducted in late August and early September after a period of great controversy about the election and a crackdown on demonstrations by Iranian authorities. We see in the WPO poll not only a lower response rate overall, but a lower response to the question about voting choice.

It should be noted that all of the response rates here are higher than those most commonly found in the US. Researchers in the US have found that when random digit samples are post weighted they produce a strong representation of public opinion even though the response rate to telephone surveys in the US are generally lower than those found in these studies of the Iranian public. The WPO poll and the GlobeScan poll (as well as the earlier Terror Free Tomorrow poll) were post-weighted weighted by province and by demographics.

In comparisons of the various polls of Iranians examined here, those with higher response rates were not distinctly different than those with lower response rates.





WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG

A PROJECT MANAGED BY  
THE PROGRAM ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY ATTITUDES  
1779 MASSACHUSETTS AVE. NW, SUITE 510,  
WASHINGTON, DC 20036  
PHONE: 202-232-7500, FAX: 202-232-1159  
INFO@PIPA.ORG  
[HTTP://WWW.WORLDPUBLICOPINION.ORG](http://www.worldpublicopinion.org)