

Post-Election Crackdown In Iran Has Had Limited Impact on the Minority Expressing Strong Opposition to the Regime

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Introduction

Overview -- Comparison of the findings from the early 2008 and late 2009 Iran surveys conducted by World Public Opinion (WPO) shows that the number of Iranians who consistently express very critical views of their government associated with Reformers has fallen by just four percentage points amidst the current repressive climate (from 17% to 13%), and the number expressing moderately critical views has fallen by six points (from 46% to 40%). During this period, the number of Iranians who consistently express positive views of their political system associated with Conservatives has risen by 11 points (from 36% to 47%). About one-fifth of these Conservatives (10% of the public) take a militant position against U.S. influence, and can be termed “Hardline Conservatives.” The views of these several groups continue to diverge considerably on most public issues, with the notable exception that all groups mainly eschew Iran’s development of nuclear weapons. Demographically, WPO’s 2009 survey shows that Reformers tend to be younger, better educated and more likely to live in urban areas than Moderates and Conservatives

Regime support groups – Three separate opinion groups within the Iranian public were initially identified in analyses of World Public Opinion’s 1-2/2008 survey, using the statistical clustering technique Latent Class Analysis on three different measures of support for the Iranian government.¹ Consistent with much ongoing analytical discourse inside and outside Iran, these three groups were labeled as Conservatives, Moderates and Reformers. The three groups differ sharply in how they view Iran’s system of government. The same three groups were recreated on WPO’s latest Iran survey (8/27-9/10/09),² as well as its early 2008 survey, using a simplified 7-point scale based on responses to the same three government support measures. All three of these measures, discussed below, tap the theoretical construct of “regime support,” with Conservatives identified as those consistently supportive of the regime, Reformers consistently opposed, and Moderates having mixed views.

Respondents who answered all three questions (89% of the 8-9/09 survey sample) were located on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 for those definitely opposing Iran’s government on all three questions to 6 points for those definitely supporting the government on all three questions. Three groups of respondents are identified based on these scores – Conservatives (5-6 points), Moderates (2-4 points), and Reformers (0-1 point) – and their divergent views mirror the diversity of opinion among Iran’s political elites.³

¹ Latent Class Analysis (LCA) segmented the sample statistically into relatively homogeneous groups based on respondents’ answers to the three questions relating to support for the Iranian government. Additional information about this analytical approach is contained in an earlier article co-authored with David B. Nolle and Elaine El Assal, “Iranian Public Is Not Monolithic: Iranians Divide Over Their Government But Unite on Forgoing Nuclear Weapons,” World Public Opinion.org., 5/18/09.

² This survey is based on telephone interviews with a sample of 1,003 Iranians. More than four-fifths of Iranians have landline telephones in their households. About half of the households contacted (52%) refused to be interviewed.

³ A number of scholars have written about the major political factions among the Iranian elites (see, for example, the works of Shahram Chubin, Akbar Ganji, Ray Takeyh, and Sanam Vakil), but comparable empirical analyses of the major political divisions in representative national surveys of the Iranian public are rare.

Regime support measures – The three major substantive groups within Iran’s public are defined by their sharp and consistent divergence on these three WPO questions relating to support of the Iranian government (“regime support”): (1) Satisfaction with the Iranian election process (“very satisfied” given 2 scale points, “somewhat satisfied” – 1 scale point, and “not very satisfied” or “not at all satisfied” – 0 points); (2) Support for the government’s right to censor destabilizing news (2 scale points) versus support for a free press (0 points); and (3) Trust in Iran’s national government (trust “most of the time” – 2 scale points, trust “some of the time” – 1 point, and trust “rarely” or “never” – 0 points). (See Table 1 for the exact wording and findings for each of these questions.) On each of these questions support for the regime declines sharply and progressively from the highest regime support (Conservatives) to the least regime support (Reformers). For example, the vast majority of Conservatives (91%) trust the Iranian government “most of the time,” most Moderates (58%) trust it “some of the time,” and most Reformers (65%) trust it “rarely” or “never.” (See Table 1A)

The three groups show naturally sharp contrast on the question containing only two choices -- having either media freedom or government censorship. All Conservatives favor the government’s right to censor potentially destabilizing news and all Reformers favor media freedom. Moderates favor media freedom over government’s right to censor media by a 61-39 percent majority (Table 1B).

The three groups also differ considerably in their assessment of the process by which authorities generally are elected in Iran. Most Conservatives (64%) are “very satisfied” with the Iranian election process, most Moderates (61%) are “somewhat satisfied” with it, while the vast majority of Reformers (87%) are “not very” or “not at all” satisfied with the Iranian election process (Table 1C). The 11-point increase since 2008 in the number of Conservatives identified by our regime support scale is due mainly to changes in response on this question. The number of respondents saying they were “very satisfied” with the Iranian election process doubled between the 2008 (20%) and 2009 (42%) surveys.⁴ In contrast, the number of respondents who said they trust the Iranian government “most of the time” rose only 1 percentage point (from 55% to 56%), and the number who expressed support for government’s right to censor the media rose 3 percentage points (from 60% to 63%) between the 2008 and 2009 surveys.⁵ Employed together these three regime support measures should gauge the size and positions of different Iranian factions over time more reliably than would a single measure.

Additional issues, besides the regime support measures, on which Iranian Conservatives, Moderates and Reformers diverge are discussed in the text below. These include other questions relating to Iran’s domestic institutions (e.g., opinions regarding President Ahmadinejad and the Supreme Leader) and

⁴ This increase between the 2008 and 2009 surveys is due to the increased percentage of Conservatives (from 38% to 64%) and Moderates (from 12% to 28%) who said they were “very satisfied” with the Iranian election process. None of the Reformers were “very satisfied” on either survey; in fact, about nine-tenths of Reformers expressed dissatisfaction on both surveys.

⁵ Reference to the number of respondents here refers to the 89% of the sample who responded to all three regime support questions on the 2009 survey, and to the 70% who did so on the 2008 survey, and thus who could be scaled and categorized as either Conservative, Moderate or Reformer. Five other questions, besides the three regime support measures, were asked on both the 2008 and 2009 surveys. Two of these show distinct shifts, although not nearly as great as the 22-point change in *very satisfied* with the election process noted above: Favorable opinion of the U.S. government rose nine percentage points between 2008 and 2009 (from 8% to 17%). Also, perception that a U.S. goal is to maintain control over Middle East oil resources fell eight points (from 87% in 2008 to 79% in 2009). However, on three other trend questions, as well as two of the three regime support measures discussed above, changes in response between the 2008 and 2009 surveys were only three percentage points or less.

perceptions of the U.S. government. Several instances of “partial divergence” will also be examined, in which two of the groups share fairly similar views on an issue, but these views differ sharply from those of the third group. An example of partial divergence is opinion of the American people, in which Conservatives and Moderates are both closely divided, while a large majority of Reformers have a favorable opinion. Then, several issues are examined in which the views of the three groups converge, including minority support within all groups for Iran’s developing nuclear weapons and the widespread belief within all groups that a U.S. objective is to maintain control over Middle East oil resources.

Divergent and Convergent Attitude Patterns

President Ahmadinejad – The divergence among the three groups – Conservatives, Moderates and Reformers -- on their confidence in and vote for Iran’s President Ahmadinejad are among the largest encountered in this study, approaching the differences found on the general measures of regime support discussed above. For example, 84 percent of Conservatives express *a lot of confidence* in President Ahmadinejad, compared to 59 percent of Moderates and only 18 percent of Reformers. At the time of WPO’s recent survey (8-9/09) the number of Conservatives (47%) nearly matched the number of Moderates and Reformers combined (53%). Thus, confidence in President Ahmadinejad among the total Iranian respondents (66%) was heavily influenced by his extremely positive support among Conservatives (Table 2A).

The three groups diverge sharply also in stating who they would vote for “if the same election were to be repeated again tomorrow.” Most Conservatives (68%) said they would vote for Ahmadinejad, as did a plurality of Moderates (46%). But a plurality of Reformers said they would vote for Mousavi (30%) or another opposition candidate (9%). Large numbers of respondents, however, refused to answer this question or volunteered that they wouldn’t vote in a new election, including half of the Reformers (51%) and about two-fifths of Moderates (44% -- Table 2B). These and other findings in this survey indicate that Iranian support for the opposition candidates is seriously underrepresented here, resulting perhaps partly from a “bandwagon effect” of going with the declared winner, as well as underreporting of support for opposition candidates in a harsh political environment.

The Supreme Leader and religious rule – Iran’s Conservatives are far more supportive than Reformers of the Supreme Leader’s dominant political role in Iran, while Moderates lie between these two extremes. Seventy-two percent of Conservatives believe Iran’s constitution gives the Supreme Leader the “necessary amount of power,” compared to 59 percent of Moderates and 34 percent of Reformers.⁶ In contrast, half of Reformers state that the Supreme Leader has too much power (52%), a view expressed by only 18 percent of Moderates and 9 percent of Conservatives (Table 3A).

The three groups diverge similarly on the power that should be wielded by a “council of senior religious scholars” relative to the people’s elected representatives. A 74-14 percent majority of Conservatives believe such a religious council should have the power to overturn laws passed by elected representatives. A lesser 59-30 percent majority of Moderates agree. However, a 49-38 percent plurality of Reformers think such laws should not be subject to veto by a religious council (Table 3B).

⁶ A handful of about five percent in each group say the Supreme Leader has too little power.

Satisfaction with conditions at home and abroad – On the whole, Iranians are inclined to believe that Iran’s economic situation has worsened in recent years, while its relations with western countries have remained about the same. Respondents were asked separately whether Iran’s economic situation and its relations with the West have improved, worsened, or stayed about the same compared to four years ago. The three groups diverge considerably on these two questions: Conservatives express the most optimism, with a two-fifths plurality saying that Iran’s economy and its relations with the West have improved. Reformers, in contrast, have a decidedly pessimistic outlook on these two issues: Large majorities of Reformers believe conditions have worsened regarding Iran’s economy (76%) and its relations with western countries (66%). Moderates take intermediate positions on these issues (Tables 4A-B).

Images of the United States – All Iranian groups make very sharp distinctions between how they view the American people and the U.S. government. Each group has a predominantly favorable opinion of the American people (52% *favorable* vs. 38% *unfavorable*, three group average), but a predominantly negative view of the U.S. government (17% *favorable* vs. 78% *unfavorable* on average). On the whole, Iranians show slightly more confidence in President Obama than they had in President Bush (16% vs. 7% *a lot* or *some* confidence). Nevertheless, in contrast to most other foreign publics recently surveyed, a majority of Iranians (72%) express little or no confidence in U.S. President Obama.⁷

Differences between how the three groups view the American people and the U.S. government are not as sharp as the distinctions all of them make between Americans and their government. Pluralities of Conservatives (47%) as well as Moderates (50%) have a favorable opinion of the American people, while clear majorities of these groups have negative views of the U.S. government and President Obama. Three-fourths of Reformers (74%) have a favorable opinion of Americans, but Reformers are closely divided in their assessment of the U.S. government and President Obama. Reformers’ several images of the U.S. are far more positive than those of Moderates (about 25% difference on average), while the Moderates’ images of the U.S. are only slightly more positive than those of Conservatives (7% difference on average). This might be termed a “partial divergent” pattern, with Reformers being the outlier group (Tables 5A-C).

Perceptions of U.S. objectives – The three opinion groups show a variety of patterns, converging as well as diverging, in their responses to questions about U.S. objectives abroad. Respondents were asked about four possible U.S. objectives in the Middle East and toward Muslim societies: whether each was *definitely* or *probably* a U.S. goal or *definitely* or *probably* not a U.S. goal. All of the groups show considerable suspicion of the U.S. on each objective. However, the patterns of response vary. Does the U.S. want to “weaken and divide the Islamic world?” Two-thirds or more of Conservatives (82%) and Moderates (68%) say this is *definitely* a U.S. goal, compared to less than two-fifths of Reformers (37%). Somewhat fewer in each group believe it is *definitely* a U.S. goal to “impose American culture on Muslim society” (Conservatives – 69%, Moderates – 55%, Reformers – 31%. Tables 6A-B).

⁷ Two recent multicountry surveys have examined President Obama’s popularity. The Pew Global Survey (5-6/09) found majorities in 17 of the 24 countries surveyed expressed confidence in President Obama, compared to four countries where majorities had little or no confidence in the President (Palestine Territories, Jordan, Turkey and Pakistan). World Public Opinion.org (4-6/09) found majorities in 12 of the 20 countries it surveyed expressed confidence in the U.S. president, compared to five countries where majorities had little or no confidence in him (Palestine Territories, Egypt, Iraq, Russia and Pakistan).

The three groups' views converge regarding whether a U.S. goal is to "maintain control" over Middle East oil resources: Four-fifths of each group believe this is *definitely* or *probably* a U.S. objective, including about three-fifths in each group who say it *definitely* is (Conservatives – 67%, Moderates – 61%, Reformers – 57%). The Iranian groups displayed somewhat less suspicion regarding whether the U.S. aims to see "the creation of an independent and economically viable Palestinian state." About three-fifths of Conservatives (61%) and Moderates (57%), as well as a plurality of Reformers (46%), believe this is *definitely* or *probably* not a U.S. goal (Tables 6C-D).

Iran's regional role – In its early 2008 Iran survey WPO found that about 30 percent of each group favored Iran playing a "*dominant power* role that exerts the most influence" in the Persian Gulf region. About 45 percent in each group preferred Iran being part of a *cooperative arrangement* with other countries in the Gulf. In its recent Iran survey WPO asked respondents whether they approved or disapproved "attacks on U.S. military troops based in the Persian Gulf states." On this question gauging anti-U.S. militancy the three groups showed what might be considered a "mild divergent pattern": Conservatives are closely divided (37% approve vs. 36% disapprove), while a plurality of Moderates (45%) and a majority of Reformers (57%) disapprove. For the three groups overall, 33 percent approve attacks against U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf and 42 percent disapprove – comparable to the numbers WPO obtained last year backing a *dominant vs. cooperative* Iranian role in the Gulf (Table 7B).

On a separate question, somewhat fewer Iranians on the whole support "attacks against U.S. military troops in Afghanistan" (26% vs. 48% oppose). The three groups again show a mildly diverging pattern, with a third of Conservatives approving (32%), compared to 23 percent of Moderates and 16 percent of Reformers (Table 7A).

Nuclear weapons – The Iranian public continues to broadly agree that their country should develop nuclear energy and technology, but not nuclear weapons. There has been a convergence of views among most Conservatives, Moderates and Reformers about Iran not seeking nuclear weapons. In 2008, WPO found only about one-fifth in each group said they believe Iran should develop nuclear weapons, after being informed that Iran's position was to have a full fuel cycle nuclear energy program without developing nuclear weapons. In the latest survey about one-fifth in each group believe Iran should reject offers to remove current sanctions against Iran in return for permitting inspections to ensure that Iran is not developing nuclear weapons. About one-third of Iranians as a whole want their country to maintain a sanctions-free uranium enrichment program, while permitting inspectors to ensure that Iran is not pursuing nuclear arms. And another one-third of Iranians are content with their country having a nuclear energy program, without either uranium enrichment or nuclear weapons. The three groups differ on the last two alternatives: A plurality of Conservatives (40%) want Iran to have a nuclear enrichment program, while a majority of Reformers (56%) want only a nuclear energy. Moderates are divided on these two alternatives – 34 percent want nuclear enrichment and 32 percent nuclear energy (Table 8A).

While converging on the issue of having nuclear weapons, the three groups diverge regarding the impact of current sanctions on Iran and whether these sanctions will be increased if Iran continues its current nuclear program. Reformers believe these sanctions have had *a lot* of negative impact on Iran's economic situation (51%) and expect the sanctions will *definitely be increased* if Iran continues its nuclear program (59%). Conservatives show far less concern about sanctions: Only 15 percent believe sanctions have had *a lot* of negative impact and only 28 percent expect sanctions will *definitely be increased* if Iran continues its nuclear program. Moderates take an intermediate position on these two questions (Tables 8B-C).

Negotiations with the United States – All three groups mainly favor “full unconditional negotiations” with the U.S. government, but support among Moderates (64%) and especially Reformers (82%) was considerably greater than among Conservatives (52%). Forty-three percent of Reformers *strongly favor* Iran-U.S. negotiations; in contrast, 30 percent of Conservatives *strongly oppose* them (Table 9A). These results are fairly similar to those obtained on a question about relations with western cultures that WPO asked in 2008. In that survey WPO asked about the overarching issue of whether Muslims can expect to find “common ground” with western cultures. About two-thirds of each Iranian group said that “it is possible to find common ground” with western cultures, compared to about one-tenth in each group who believed “violent conflict between the two cultures is inevitable.”

On a question about regional cooperation with the U.S., WPO’s recent Iran survey found a partial divergence of opinion. Both Conservatives and Moderates are closely divided about Iran “cooperating with the U.S. to combat the Taliban operating in Afghanistan near Iran’s border.” About two-fifths in each group favor such cooperation and about two-fifths oppose it. However, Reformers favor this cooperation by a near two-to-one margin (62% in favor vs. 32% opposed – Table 9B).

Hardline Versus Mainline Conservatives

Many observers of Iranian politics have commented on recent shifts in the regime, including its increased wariness of U.S./Western influences that helped spark the “color revolution” in the Ukraine and its harsh crackdown on Iranian protestors following the June election. These shifts are attributed to the rising influence of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps and the lesser role of more moderate clergy in regime decision-making. The increase in the relative power of Iranian “hard-liners” is described by numerous writers.⁸

“Hardline Conservatives” can be distinguished from other Conservatives by their anti-U.S./West militancy and are operationalized in this analysis of WPO’s 8-9/09 survey by their *strong approval* of “attacks [not necessarily by Iranian forces] on U.S. military troops in Afghanistan.” (See Table 7A) About one-fifth of Conservatives, 10 percent of the respondents, fall into this militant Hardline Conservative group. The remaining Conservatives, 37% of the respondents, can be termed “Mainline Conservatives.”

Perhaps the sharpest difference between Hardline Conservatives and the other groups is their age: Two-thirds of Hardline Conservatives (66%) are 35 years of age or older, compared to slightly over two-fifths of Mainline Conservatives (43%) and Moderates (46%) and one-third of Reformers (33%). In contrast, two-thirds of Reformers (67%) are 18-34 years of age, compared to slightly more than half of Moderates (54%) and Mainline Conservatives (58%) and about a third of Hardline Conservatives (35%, Table 10A). On education level and urban/rural dwelling Hardline Conservatives show hardly any difference from Mainline Conservatives and Moderates. Reformers, however, stand out from all of the other groups both in their higher education background (35% have college degrees vs. one-fifth in each of the other groups) and their higher urban concentration (76% vs. two-thirds in each of the other groups, Tables 10B-C).

⁸ For example, see Michael Slackman, “Hard-line Rise Alters View of Iran’s Nuclear Ambition,” New York Times, 12/25/09; Karim Sadjadpour, “Engagement with Iran: An Assessment of Options,” MiddleEastProgress.org, 12/8/09; Maziar Bahari, “Why We Should Still Talk with Iran,” Washington Post, 11/26/09; and Robert Worth, “Iran Expanding Effort to Stifle the Opposition,” New York Times, 11/24/09.

The largest differences of opinion between Hardline and Mainline Conservatives are the former's considerably greater distrust of U.S. objectives: For example, 86 percent of Hardline Conservatives (vs. 64% of Mainline Conservatives) believe that "imposing American culture on Muslim society" is *definitely* a U.S. goal. And 69 percent of Hardline Conservatives (vs. 47% of Mainline Conservatives) believe that "creating an independent and economically viable Palestinian state" is *definitely not* a U.S. goal.

Conclusion

These survey analyses show that Iranian society remains openly and sharply divided and mirrors the rifts evident among its political elites. The three regime support groups we have identified – Conservatives, Moderates and Reformers – diverge most sharply on issues of Iranian governance, including confidence in Iran's president and system of theocratic rule. The Iranian government's harsh crackdown on protestors has had limited impact in intimidating its opposition: The number of Iranian Reformers who consistently express critical views of their government has fallen by only four percentage points since the post-election repression. The three regime support groups diverge also in their evaluations of Iran's current economic situation (Conservatives the most positive and Reformers the most negative) and in their opinions of and desire for negotiations with the U.S. government (Conservatives the most negative and Reformers the most positive).

On Iran's having nuclear weapons the three groups converge: About one-fifth in each group favors Iran's development of nuclear weapons, even at the cost of continuing to bear current sanctions. The three regime support groups also concur in the widely-held belief that the U.S. aims to "maintain control over the oil resources of the Middle East."

Hardline Conservatives, defined here by their relatively militant anti-U.S. stance, comprise one-tenth (10%) of the Iranian public. They are similar in number to their ideological opposites – the Reformers (13%) – on the regime support scale. The Reformers, identified here by their negative responses to interviewers on all three regime support measures, could be likened to the bold protestors who have taken to the streets following Iran's June presidential election. The recent battles in the streets of Iran can be viewed as an ongoing struggle between Hardline Conservatives and Reformers for the support of Iran's majority. In this struggle Reformers are not isolated in their discontent with the current regime. Despite the intimidating political climate, about two-thirds of Moderates (representing about one-fourth of the public) continue to express at least some mistrust of their government and their desire for a free press in telephone interviews.

Nearly as sharp as the differences between Hardline Conservatives and Reformers on governance and other issues are their different age distributions: Two-thirds of Hardliners are over 34 years of age; two-thirds of Reformers are between 18-34 years of age. Should Iran's youth maintain their preference for a more open society as they mature, then the Reformist camp will have a long-term advantage.

Tables

Table 1. Regime Support Typology⁹

A. “How much of the time do you think you can trust the national government in Tehran to do what is right – most of the time, some of the time, rarely or never?”

B. “Which view is closer to yours? Do you think:”

(1) “The government should have the right to prevent the media from publishing things that it thinks will be destabilizing.”

(2) “The press should have the right to publish news and ideas without any government control.”

C. “In general how satisfied are you with the process by which the authorities are elected in this country – very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied or not at all satisfied?”

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Trust Iran’s national government:</u>			
Most of the time	91%	34%	0%
Some of the time	9	58	35
Rarely or never (combined)	0	9	65
B. <u>Favor media censorship/freedom in Iran:</u>			
(1) Gov’t should have right to censor	100%	39%	0%
(2) Media should be free of gov’t control	0	61	100
C. <u>Satisfaction with Iran’s election process:</u>			
Very satisfied	64%	28%	0%
Somewhat satisfied	36	61	13
Not satisfied	0	11	87

Table 2. Views of Iranian President Ahmadinejad

A. “Now I’m going to read you a list of institutions in our country. Please tell me whether you have a lot of confidence, some confidence, not much confidence, or no confidence at all in each of them.... How about the President?”

B. “If the same election were to be repeated again tomorrow, who would you vote for?”

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Confidence in President Ahmadinejad:</u>			
A lot of confidence	84%	59%	18%
Some confidence	12	26	27
Not much or None at all	2	10	48
Don’t know, Refused	2	4	6
B. <u>Vote in a new election:</u>			
Ahmadinejad	68%	46%	10%
Mousavi	2	8	30
Others	3	3	9
Don’t know, Refused	23	29	13
Will not vote (volunteered)	4	15	38

⁹ As noted in the Introduction, the three regime support groups used in Tables 1-10 below are identified by their responses on the three questions listed in Table 1. Eighty-nine percent of the sample answered all three question and their responses were used to locate them on a 7-point regime support scale, ranging from Conservatives (47% of those scaled) who are consistently supportive of Iran’s governing institutions contained in Table1 to Reformers (13%) who consistently oppose these institutions. Moderates (40%) take an intermediate position.

Table 3. Views of the Supreme Leader and Religious Rule

A. "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?"

B. "Please tell me which of these two views is closer to yours?"

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

(2) If laws are passed by elected representatives of the people, they should not be subject to a veto by senior religious scholars.

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Iran's constitution gives Supreme Leader:</u>			
Less power than is necessary	5%	7%	4%
The necessary amount of power	72	59	34
More power than is necessary	9	18	52
Don't know, Refused	14	16	10
B. <u>Authority of religious council:</u>			
(1) Can overturn laws	74%	59%	38%
(2) Cannot overturn laws	14	30	49
Don't know, Refused	12	11	13

Table 4. Satisfaction with Conditions at Home and Relations Abroad

"Please tell me whether you think each of the following things have in general gotten better, gotten worse, or are about the same compared to four years ago:

A. "How about the economic situation of the country as a whole?"

B. "How about Iran's relations with western countries?"

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Iran's economic situation:</u>			
Has gotten better	42%	23%	6%
Has remained about the same	13	16	12
Has gotten worse	32	50	76
Don't know, Refused	13	11	5
B. <u>Iran's relations with western countries:</u>			
Has gotten better	42%	31%	14%
Has remained about the same	15	21	9
Has gotten worse	20	30	66
Don't know, Refused	22	18	11

Table 5. Images of the United States

A-B. "Please tell me if you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following:" A "The current U.S. government;" B "The American people"
 C. "How much confidence do you have in U.S. President Barack Obama to do the right thing regarding world affairs -- a lot of confidence, some confidence, not much confidence, or no confidence at all?"

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Opinion of the current U.S. government:</u>			
Favorable (Very Favorable)	9% (1)	18% (3)	46% (7)
Unfavorable (Very Unfavorable)	87 (80)	76 (67)	51 (40)
Don't know, Refused	5	6	3
B. <u>Opinion of the American people:</u>			
Favorable (Very Favorable)	47% (9)	50% (12)	74% (32)
Unfavorable (Very Unfavorable)	42 (33)	40 (33)	19 (12)
Don't know, Refused	11	11	8
C. <u>Confidence in U.S. President Obama:</u>			
A lot	0%	2%	10%
Some	7	14	35
Not much, None	80	72	44
Don't know, Refused	13	12	11

Table 6. Perceptions of U.S. Objectives

"Thinking now about U.S. actions around the world, please tell me if you think each of the following is or is not a U.S. goal?" Four responses: "Definitely a U.S. goal, probably a U.S. goal, probably not a U.S. goal, or definitely not a U.S. goal."

A. "To weaken and divide the Islamic world."

B. "To impose American culture on Muslim society."

C. "To maintain control over the oil resources of the Middle East."

D. "To see the creation of an independent and economically viable Palestinian state."

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Weaken and divide the Islamic world:</u>			
A U.S. goal (Definitely)	90% (82)	84% (68)	60% (37)
Not a U.S. goal (Definitely not)	5 (3)	11 (6)	35 (21)
Don't know, Refused	5	5	5
B. <u>Impose American culture on Muslim society:</u>			
A U.S. goal (Definitely)	83% (69)	73 (55)	69% (31)
Not a U.S. goal (Definitely Not)	9 (6)	22 (12)	26 (12)
Don't know, Refused	7	6	5
C. <u>Maintain control of M.E. oil resources:</u>			
A U.S. goal (Definitely)	81% (67)	77 (61)	83% (57)
Not a U.S. goal (Definitely Not)	6 (4)	12 (9)	9 (9)
Don't know, Refused	12	12	8
D. <u>See the creation of Palestinian state:</u>			
A U.S. goal (Definitely)	24% (14)	28 (14)	39% (16)
Not a U.S. goal (Definitely Not)	61 (52)	57 (47)	46 (35)
Don't know, Refused	16	15	16

Table 7. Iran's Regional Role

A. "Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of attacks on U.S. military troops in Afghanistan? Do you strongly approve, somewhat approve, have mixed feelings, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose?"

B. "How about attacks on U.S. military troops based in the Persian Gulf states?"

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Attacks on U.S. troops in Afghanistan:</u>			
Approve (Approve strongly)	32% (21)	23% (14)	16% (6)
Mixed feelings	18	18	20
Oppose (Oppose Strongly)	41 (35)	53 (43)	59 (47)
Don't know, Refused	9	6	4
B. <u>Attacks on U.S. troops in Persian Gulf states:</u>			
Approve (Approve strongly)	37% (24)	32% (21)	19% (11)
Mixed feelings	12	14	11
Oppose (Oppose Strongly)	36 (29)	45 (35)	57 (46)
Don't know, Refused	15	9	12

Table 8. Nuclear Weapons

A. "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? [Those who said "oppose" or Don't know/Refused were then asked this question:] 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?"

B. "As you may know, Iran is currently under sanctions for enriching uranium. To what degree would you say these sanctions have had a negative impact on our country's situation?"

C. "If Iran continues its current nuclear program, including enriching uranium, how likely do you think it is that the current sanctions against Iran will be increased? Do you think they will ...?"

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Preference regarding Iran's nuclear program:</u>			
Favor nuclear weapons despite sanctions	22%	26%	16%
Favor nuclear enrichment, not nuclear weapons	40	34	25
Favor nuclear energy only	25	32	56
Don't know, Refused	14	9	4
B. <u>Perceived impact of sanctions on Iran:</u>			
A lot of negative impact	15%	24%	51%
Some negative impact	36	40	35
Only a little negative impact	18	14	9
No negative impact	21	14	4
Don't know, Refused	9	9	2
C. <u>Expect sanctions will be increased:</u>			
Definitely	28%	37%	59%
Probably	37	37	27
Probably not	14	9	4
Definitely not	12	8	3
Don't know, Refused	9	8	6

Table 9. Negotiations with the United States

A. “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?”

B. “To what degree do you favor or oppose Iran cooperating with the U.S. to combat the Taliban operating in Afghanistan near Iran’s border?”

	<i>Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Negotiations between Iran and the U.S.:</u>			
Favor (Favor strongly)	52% (13)	64% (21)	82% (43)
Oppose (Oppose strongly)	36 (30)	32 (22)	15 (11)
Don’t know, Refused	12	4	4
B. <u>Cooperate with U.S. Against Taliban:</u>			
Favor (Favor strongly)	41% (19)	42% (19)	62% (46)
Oppose (Oppose strongly)	43 (36)	46 (35)	32 (19)
Don’t know, Refused	17	12	6

Table 10. Demographic Characteristics

	<i>Hardline Conservatives</i>	<i>Mainline Conservatives</i>	<i>Moderates</i>	<i>Reformers</i>
A. <u>Age:</u> 18-24 years	20%	25%	28%	38%
25-34	15	33	26	29
35-44	23	18	20	13
45 and over	43	25	26	20
B. <u>Education:</u> Illiterate to Primary	21%	16%	11%	8%
Some secondary	16	14	15	4
HS, Tertiary, Assoc. Degree	43	53	55	52
BA or higher college degree	20	18	19	35
C. <u>Community:</u> Urban	67%	65%	68%	76%
Rural	33	35	31	24