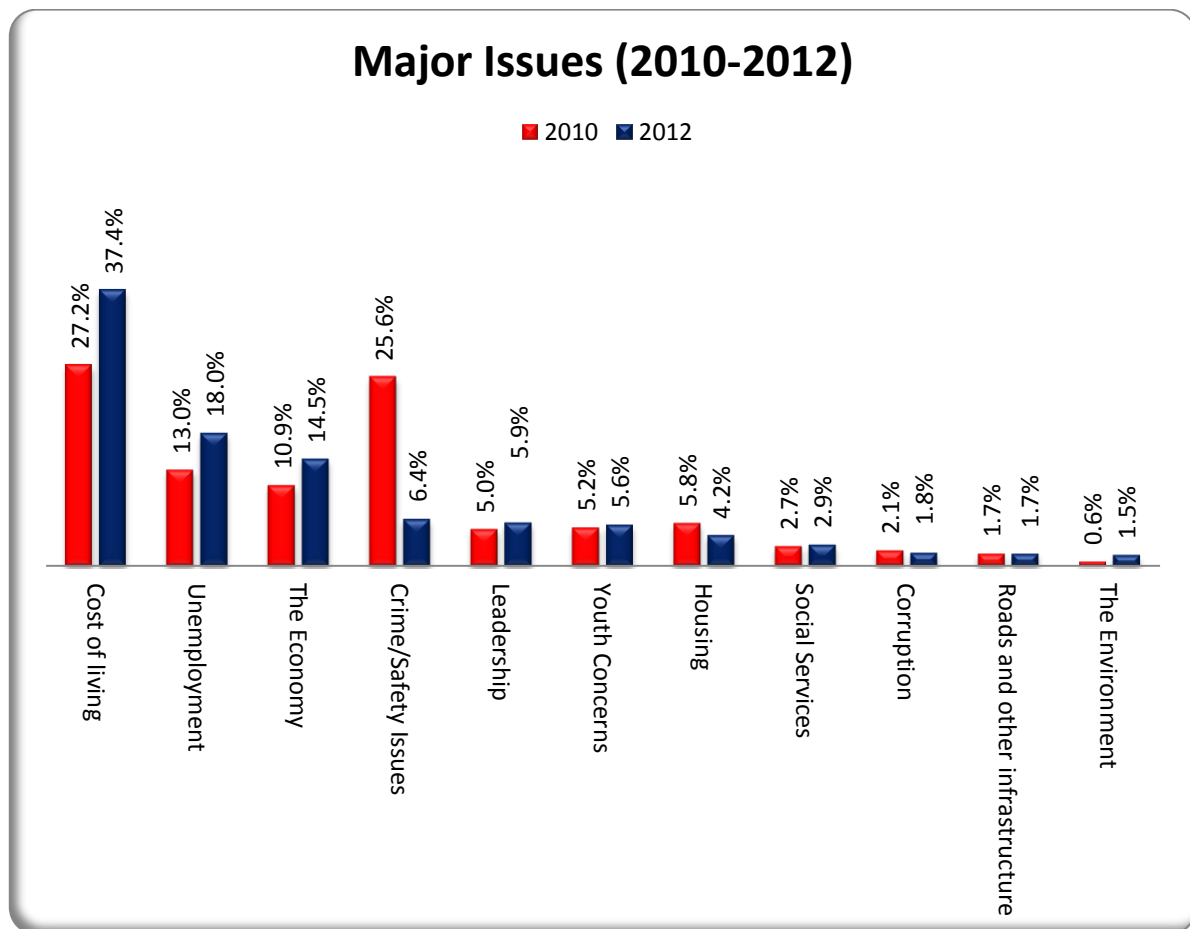


Barbados Political Opinion Poll: Major Issues

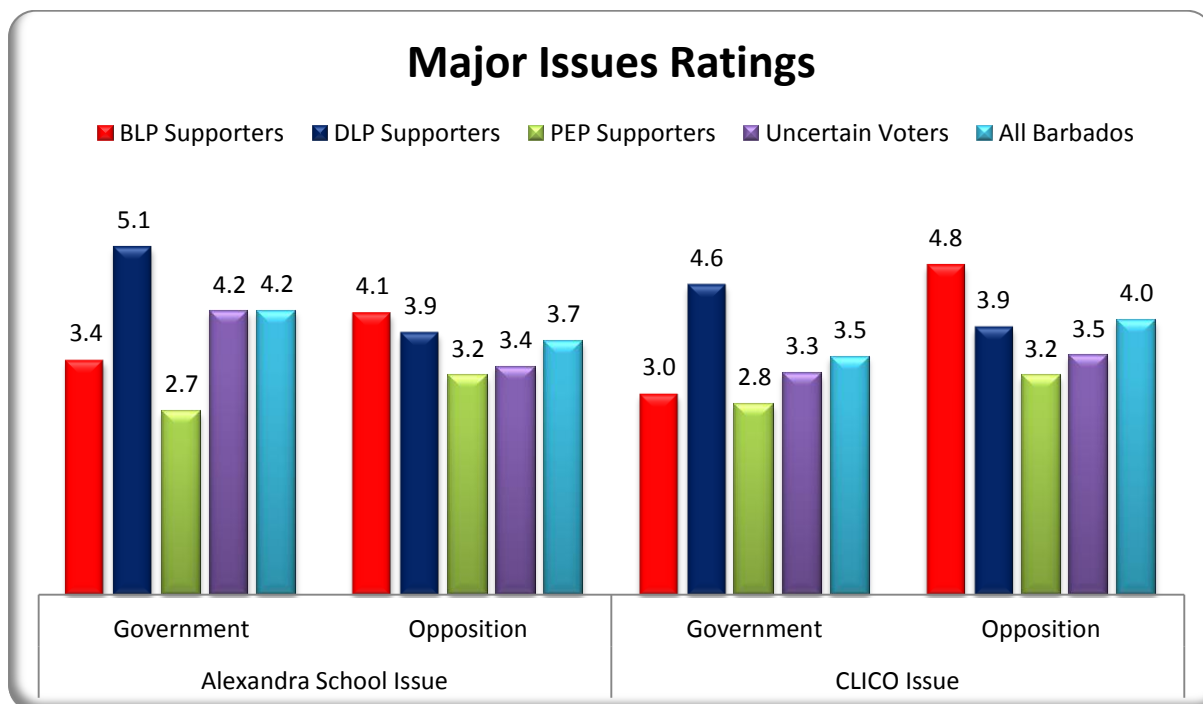
As a companion report to that which was presented in last week's Sunday Sun, CADRES now presents data relating to the major national issues covered in this survey of public opinion. As is the custom, the national issues are explored using both direct and indirect techniques and the results are presented in tabular and diagrammatic form on these pages. The most significant question asked relating to issues is presented on the chart entitled "Major Issues (2010-2012)" and is based on an "open ended" question that was posed to respondents in both instances. Responses received were categorised into sub-groups and in this instance compared to the responses received in the last CADRES poll (2010).

It is striking that the Cost of Living continues to be the major issue of concern for most Barbadians and indeed is now more of a concern for us than was the case in 2010. In this instance 10% more Barbadians are now most concerned about the Cost of Living that was the case in 2010. There have also been increases in the level of concern about unemployment and the economy, with a significant and commensurate decrease in the level of concern about Crime/Security issues. It is noteworthy that the last survey was conducted during the time of the Tudor Street incident which created widespread national concern about Crime. In as much as there was no major incident this year, Barbadians have therefore turned their attention (back) to national economic concerns.

The analysis of these data according to demographic factors also does not produce any major surprises since the national issues were only impacted by age and party support. As such, the younger persons interviewed were significantly more concerned about the major national economic issues, as were the BLP supporters and "Uncertain Voters".



In addition to the major “open ended” question, CADRES also solicited specific information on issues that were deemed to be topical and these are presented in the two relevant presentations. The methodology was a mixture of the “scoring” technique used to evaluate the government and opposition’s performance, along with questions about the preference for options available to government presented in Table 01. The “major issue” ratings are presented according to party support which allows for a more detailed examination of the extent to which party support impacts on a specific issue.



Alexandra School Issue:

The Alexandra school issue is one of the more recent issues that this government has grappled with and the poll was able to capture public opinion subsequent to the PM’s intervention. Overall Barbadians gave both the government and opposition a failing grade for their handling of the issue and it is noteworthy that the Opposition was considered to have handled the issue less-well than the Government. This perspective is an interesting one since the issue was fundamentally one for the government to manage and the poor assessment of the opposition suggests that Barbadians expected the opposition to engage the issue in some way. The overall failing grade for government on this issue is complimented by a question that spoke to an assessment of the PM’s intervention which demonstrates that a majority of Barbadians generally did NOT believe that the PM’s intervention was “helpful”.

CLICO Issue:

The CLICO issue was also assessed and in this regard government scored even lower than it did on the Alexandra issue. The 3.5 score awarded to government expresses a high level of national disappointment, while the 4.0 score given to the opposition suggest that Barbadians were not exactly thrilled with the performance of the opposition’s response either, although it seems to have done better with CLICO than was the case for Alexandra. The specific CLICO questions sought to determine how Barbadians viewed the relationship between the CLICO’s leadership and that of the government of Barbados (*formerly*).

The majority of Barbadians surveyed (43%) indicated that they believed that the “slowness” of government’s response was influenced by its leader’s proximity to the former leadership of CLICO. It was however interesting that a similar majority argued that their opinion of former PM Thompson has not been negatively coloured by the implications of the CLICO forensic inquiry, suggesting that Thompson’s image was not entirely framed by this single issue.

REDjet

CADRES asked two questions about REDjet designed to ascertain the level of public interest in supporting the airline and it was determined that Barbadians were almost equally divided on the issue of what more can be done to help the airline. A statistically insignificant majority argues that more can be done to help REDjet, but a clear majority of those surveyed did NOT support financial assistance to the airline. It is clear that Barbadians are sympathetic to the REDjet cause and believe that it should be facilitated, but not by way of financial assistance.

Almond Beach Village

The Almond questions were intended to determine the propriety of providing government assistance and indeed if enough was being done to help it. The results here suggest that Barbadians are of the strong opinion that more could have been done to save this hotel from closing and when compared to the REDjet data it is clear that the devotion to Almond is stronger. It is therefore ironic that Barbadians are split on the provision of government assistance to the hotel, although less opposed than was the case for REDjet. Equal numbers of Barbadians support and oppose assistance to Almond which implies a level of uncertainty regarding our attitude. These data convey a sense that Barbadians are somewhat hesitant to see government put money into private ventures at this time, which is no-doubt related to the financial pressure that the public perceives itself to be under at this time.

Raul Garcia Issue

Questions related to the Garcia issue were also explored and the data suggests that Barbadians are generally supportive of government’s reaction thus far, which stands in contrast to the other issues explored. A majority of Barbadians surveyed (41%) expressed their support for Government’s handling of the Garcia issue thus far, while 34% were unhappy.

CADRES also sought options from respondents based on three options which were read-out to respondents by interviewers. The vast majority of Barbadians (41%) support the continued detention of Garcia at a facility somewhere other than HMP Dodds, while there was little interest in either his continued detention at Dodds or his unconditional release. In both of these instances only 12% of Barbadians were so inclined.

Departure of CARICOM Nationals

The final question posed in this section relates to the perceived exodus of CARICOM nationals from Barbados over the past few years on account of Government’s immigration policies. CADRES asked respondents if they have (or know someone who has) personally suffered from this exodus, either by the loss of rental income or diminished income from some other form of business previously patronised by such persons. The results appear to suggest that the fallout from this exodus was minimal since only 22% claim to have been affected (or knew someone who did). Upon reflection; however, this 22% represents one-fifth of a population 260,000 which could be well over 50,000 Barbadians that have been personally affected by this exodus which is therefore not insignificant. This response does not necessarily indicate that these 50,000 persons hold the government responsible for their losses, but the data do help to debunk a widely held view that these persons who left were NOT making a tangible economic contribution to the Barbados economy.

Table 01: Specific Issues

PM's intervention in the Alexandra issue	Oppose	40%
	Support	35%
REDjet	Think more can be done to help	39%
	Think enough has been done	35%
	Do NOT support financial assistance to REDjet	42%
	Support financial assistance to REDjet	38%
Almond Beach Village	Think more can be done to save Almond	46%
	Think enough has been done for Almond	23%
	Do not support financial assistance to Almond	39%
	Support financial assistance to Almond	38%
CLICO	Think DLP's speed in responding to CLICO influenced by its "proximity" to CLICO's management	43%
	Don't think DLP's speed in responding to CLICO influenced by its "proximity" to CLICO's management.	30%
	My views of PM Thompson haven't changed after CLICO's audit revelations.	43%
	My views of PM Thompson have changed after CLICO's audit revelations	32%
Raul Garcia Issue	Support the Government's handling of the Garcia issue	41%
	Don't think the Garcia issue has been well handled	34%
	Prefer confinement of Garcia at a detention facility somewhere	41%
	Prefer continued imprisonment of Garcia at HMP Dodds	12%
	Prefer unconditional release of Garcia into Barbadian society	12%
CARICOM National's Departure	Haven't suffered and know no one who has ...	63%
	I have or know someone who has suffered due to the decline in the numbers of CARICOM nationals'.	22%