

## AUGUST 2009 POLITICAL OPINION POLL REPORT: ISSUES

**Table 01 A: National Issue of Greatest Concern**

Cost of Living	33%
Economy	20%
Unemployment	20%
Housing	9%
Crime/Gangs/Security	7%
Leadership	4%
Youth Concerns	3%
Roads & other Infrastructure	1%
Environment	1%
Corruption	1%
Social Services	1%
Immigration	0.2%
Immorality	0.1%
Schools/Education	0.1%
Agriculture	0.1%

In addition to the political issues presented in the main component of this poll report, CADRES also explored several related issues and these are presented in this section. Issues were explored in two main ways that can be referred to as “*open ended*” and “*closed ended*”.

The approach used in this section presents exclusively national information in instances where there is no correlation between party support and the issue being examined. Therefore in instances where an analysis is presented which shows party affiliation, it is because this affiliation has impacted on the issue under examination. In instances where there is no such correlation, the issue is examined exclusively from the perspective of Barbados as a whole.

There was one main “*open ended*” question and this is presented in table 01 A. In this instance, respondents were asked to identify the single most important issue of concern to them at this time and once this information was received, it was allocated into the most

logical category by interviewers.

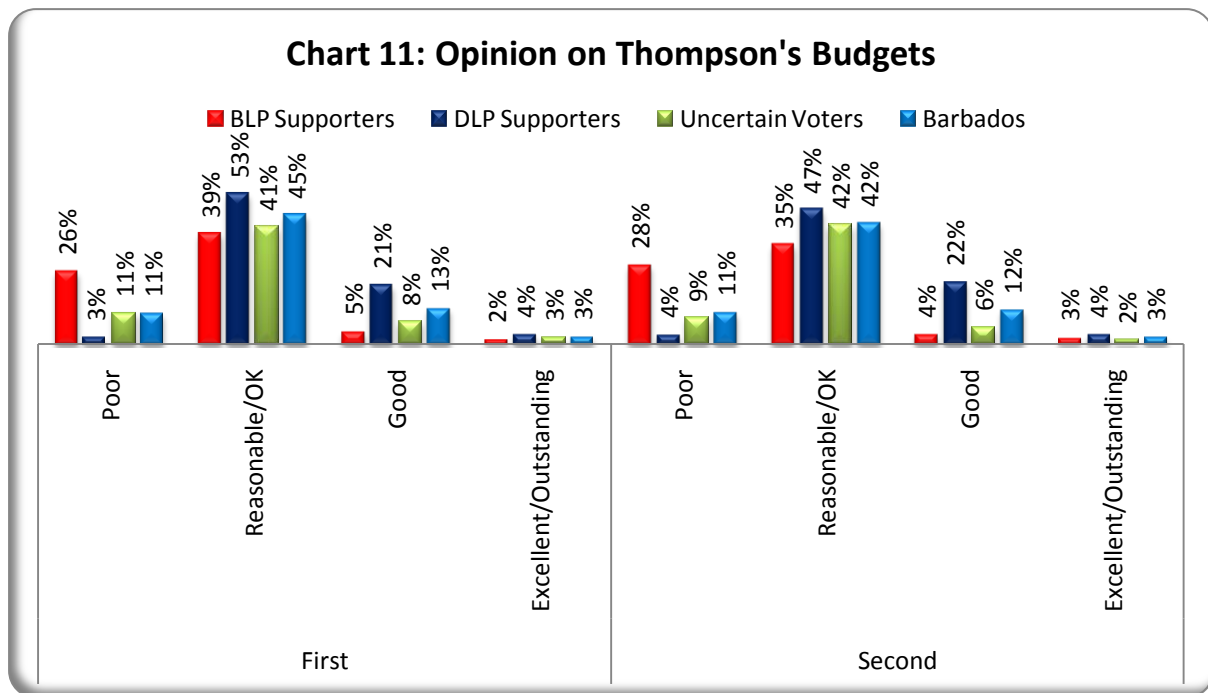
It is clear from table 01A that Barbadians continue to be most concerned about the cost of living, the economy and unemployment. These three issues are very much related and more than two-thirds of Barbadians are preoccupied with these issues. This is similar to the last CADRES poll conducted on the eve of the 2008 election which demonstrated a similar concern and it is also noteworthy that CADRES has recently identified a similar preoccupation in virtually every Caribbean island surveyed.

On this occasion, CADRES sought to establish which areas of work or specific projects were deemed most important to Barbadians at this time and in this instance, CADRES presented them with a list of government activities. The full list of projects government was pursuing is presented in table 02A which also demonstrates our priorities. Clearly, more than half of Barbadians would wish government to focus most on housing and least on the expansion of the sea port. There is a marked difference between the number one priority and the second most important issue which is Improved Water Resource Management. It is also striking that Barbadians do NOT think that several of government’s social programmes are priorities.

**Table 02 A: Major Priority for Government**

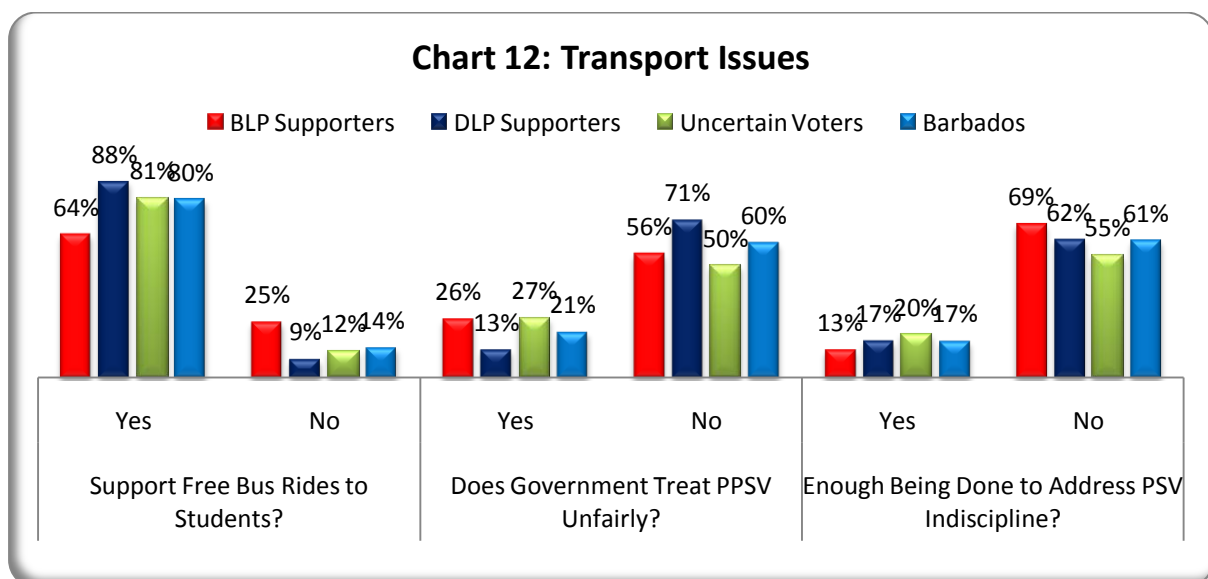
Housing	52%
Improved Water Resource Management	15%
Road Improvement	10%
New School Construction	7%
Summer Camps	5%
Constituency Councils	5%
Integrity Legislation	4%
Sea Port Expansion	4%

Chart 11 presents the responses to two questions that spoke to two budgets presented by the Prime Minister since his election and this demonstrates that while party support influenced the individual's opinion on the budget, a majority of Barbadians had a favourable opinion of both budgets. It is striking that while there was some disagreement regarding the extent to which the budget was "reasonable" or "good", there was consensus that neither was excellent/outstanding.

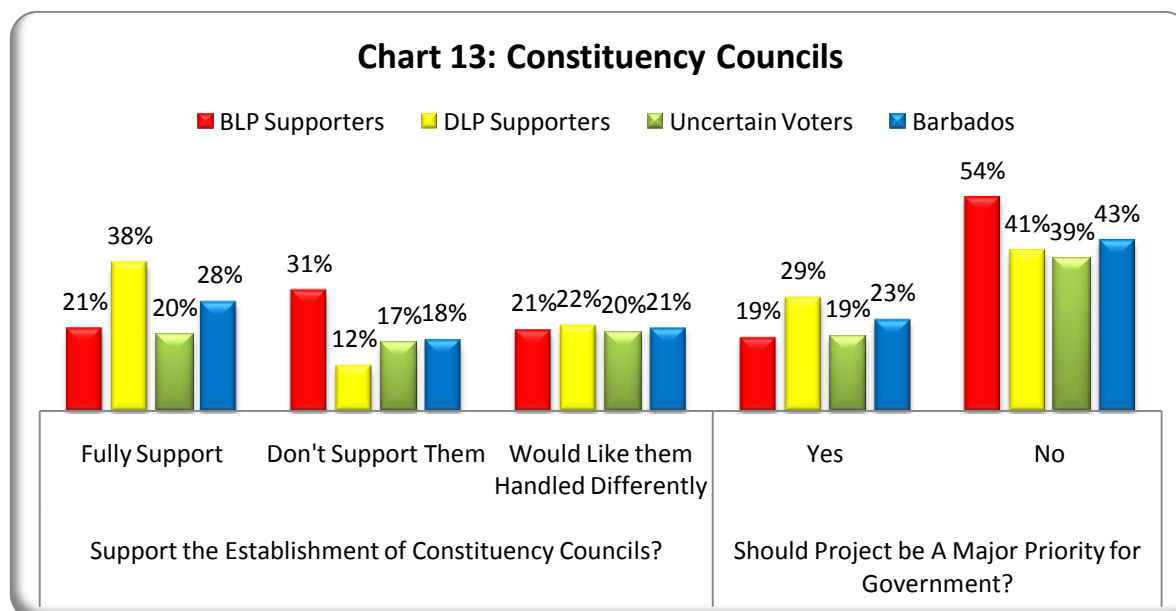


On this occasion several transportation issues were included in the survey and these were grouped and presented in Chart 12 which demonstrates that an overwhelming majority (80%) of Barbadians support the free bus rides for children initiative. It is also noticeable that the largest section of objection to that initiative comes from supporters of the BLP (25%).

Respondents were also asked if they thought that government treated the PPSVs unfairly and again there was some dissimilarity influenced by party support, but generally slightly less than two-thirds of Barbadians did not think that the Private PSVs were treated unfairly by government. Moreover a similar quantity of persons expressed the view that government was still not doing enough to control indiscipline on these vehicles and there was unanimity on this point across the political spectrum.

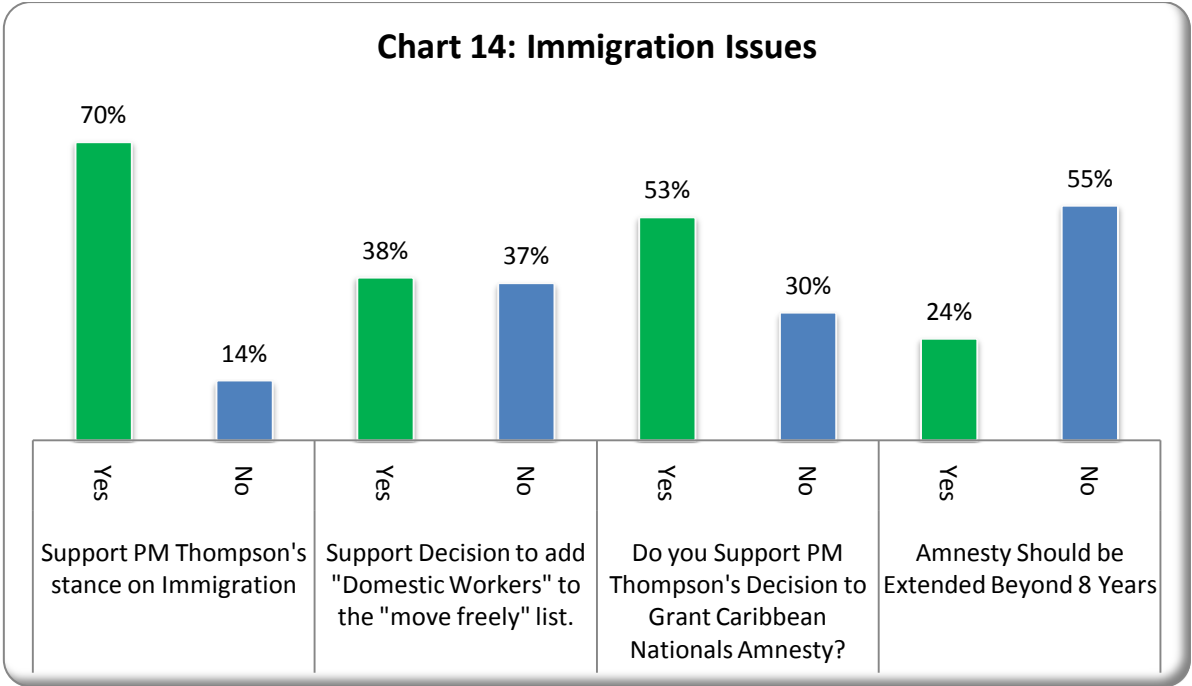


The constituency council project is central to the government's programme and was therefore included in the specific evaluation being conducted. In this instance, persons were asked if they supported the councils and also if they believed that this experiment in quasi-local government was a priority. It is interesting that the councils have not attracted as much negativity based on political affiliation as one would have thought, since 28% of Barbadians and 21% of BLP supporters support the initiative fully. There is also consensus as it relates to approximately 20% of Barbadians that would have preferred the councils to be handled differently. At any rate, a majority of Barbadians do NOT consider the constituency councils to be a priority at this time, which is consistent with the responses received above in the section that examined priorities.

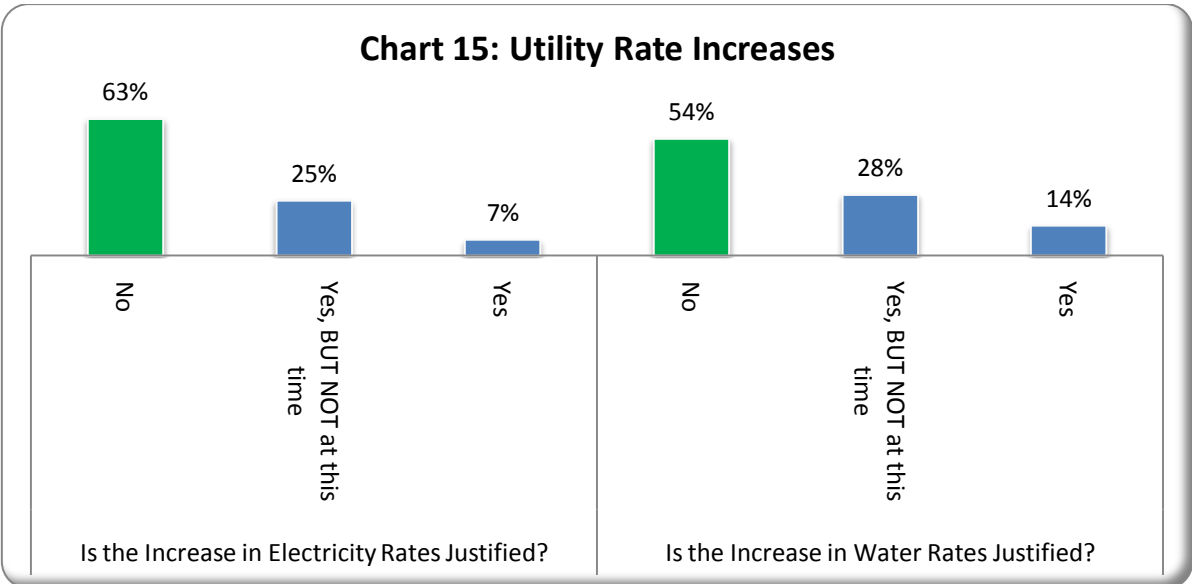


CADRES also took the opportunity to reflect on the public's attitude towards the controversial immigration policy of the DLP government and it is particularly noteworthy here that there is a high level of consensus on all issues and little disagreement that is influenced by political persuasion. In this regard, 70% of Barbadians support the PM's stance on immigration, while 14% object and the remainder preferred not to offer an opinion. The attitude towards the issues, related to the PM's policy that were examined, was less profound since equal numbers of people support and oppose the PM's decision to add domestic workers to the list of "skilled migrants" that are entitled to free movement. The fact that this policy will have little impact on the ability of "Domestics" to come to Barbados in search of work has not been well explained and as such there is clearly a belief that by doing this Barbados is exposing its "flank" and people seem to have considerable difficulty with this perception.

Half of Barbadians (53%) support the amnesty offered to Caribbean nationals and this statistic is consistent with an earlier CADRES poll in which Barbadians expressed a preference for this type of facility to accommodate persons that were presently living in the island illegally. There is, however, still a strong body of opinion (30%) that is not supportive of the amnesty and this level of opposition should not be ignored. It is also clear that there is little support for an extension of the amnesty beyond the present eight year limit since more than half of Barbadians were opposed to such an extension.



Finally, CADRES asked respondents about the proposed increases in electricity and water rates and in this instance gave respondents the option to support or oppose the increases, or to suggest that the increases were reasonable but not at this time. Chart 15 presents the data collected in this regard and demonstrates that Barbadians are opposed to the increases being proposed. It is interesting that more Barbadians appear opposed to increases in electricity than water rates since 63% think that electricity increases are NOT justified, while 54% think that water rates aren't justified. In both instances one quarter of Barbadians believe that the timing of the two increases could have been better.



**CADRES August 2009**