

Public Services and Government



The Scottish
Government

Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2009: Core Module - Attitudes to Government, the Economy and Public Services in Scotland



SCOTTISH SOCIAL ATTITUDES SURVEY 2009
CORE MODULE:
ATTITUDES TO GOVERNMENT, THE ECONOMY
AND PUBLIC SERVICES IN SCOTLAND

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Responsibility for the opinions expressed in this report, and for all interpretation of the data, lies solely with the author.

Rachel Ormston

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report presents findings from the 2009 *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey (SSA) on two key questions:
 - How have attitudes to government, public services and the economy changed over time? And
 - Who held more or less positive views on these issues in 2009?
2. It explores both longer-term trends in public opinion since the start of devolution in 1999 and changes in attitudes over the shorter period since the last SSA took place in 2007.

Changing attitudes to government in Scotland

3. At the outset of devolution in 1999, expectations of the new Scottish institutions of government were very high – for example, 81% believed they would trust the Scottish Parliament ‘just about always’ or ‘most of the time’ to act in Scotland’s interests, 64% thought having a Scottish Parliament would give ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed and 70% thought it would give Scotland a stronger voice in the UK. However, SSA data from 2000 to 2006 suggest that these initial expectations, perhaps unsurprisingly were not completely met in practice. By 2006, around half said they trusted the Scottish Government ‘just about always’ or ‘most of the time’ to act in Scotland’s interests. Moreover, by 2006 more people believed that having a Scottish Parliament was making no difference to ordinary people’s say in government and Scotland’s voice in the UK than thought devolution was improving these things.
4. In 2007, this picture changed dramatically. The proportions who trusted the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s interests and to make fair decisions increased significantly (from 51% to 71% and from 31% to 47% respectively). More people (albeit only just) said they thought having a Scottish Parliament was giving ordinary people more say than felt it was making no difference (47% vs. 45%). Similarly, for the first time since 2003 more people felt having a Scottish Parliament was giving Scotland a stronger voice in the UK than that it was making no difference (61% vs. 32%).
5. A key question for this report was whether or not these improvements in public perceptions of government in Scotland had been maintained into 2009. The answer appears to be no, not completely. Trust in the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s interests fell by 10 percentage points between 2007 and 2009. The proportion of people who trusted them to make fair decisions also fell by 11 points. Trust in the UK government to act in Scotland’s interests and to make fair decisions also fell (by 10 points and 15 points respectively) between 2007 and 2009. At the same time, fewer people felt that having a Scottish Parliament was giving Scotland a stronger voice in the UK than said this in 2007 (down to 52% from 61%).
6. However, there were some areas where attitudes remained similarly positive or had even improved on 2007 figures. For example, there was no decrease in the proportion who felt having a Scottish Parliament gave ordinary people more say

in how Scotland is governed (47% in both 2007 and 2009). Meanwhile, the proportion of people who believed the Scottish Government was 'very' or 'quite good' at listening continued to rise (48%, up from 43% in 2007). Moreover, the proportion who believed the Scottish Government was the institution with most influence over how Scotland is run increased from 28% in 2007 to 33% in 2009, reflecting a gradual upward trend from 2000 onwards in the proportion who believe the devolved political institutions have most influence over Scotland's affairs.

7. Further, even in those areas where attitudes were more negative than in 2007, when set against the context of 10 years of data since 1999, public opinion in 2009 arguably remained relatively upbeat. For example, the proportion who said having a Scottish Parliament gave Scotland a stronger voice in UK and the proportion who said they trusted the Scottish Government 'always' or 'most of the time' to act in Scotland's interests were both higher in 2009 than in any year from 2004 to 2006. Moreover, views of the Scottish Government remained more positive than views of the UK government. People in Scotland expressed greater trust in the Scottish Government than in the UK government to act in Scotland's interests and make fair decisions. Similarly, more people said the Scottish Government was 'very' or 'quite good' at listening than said the same of the UK Government.

Changing attitudes to economic performance and public services

8. The 2009 SSA took place when Britain was in the middle of a severe recession. This was clearly reflected in public perceptions of the performance of the economy and the general standard of living in Scotland over the previous 12 months. While in 2007 more people thought the economy had got stronger than felt it had got weaker in the preceding year, in 2009 this picture was completely reversed – 72% thought the economy had got weaker and just 8% that it had improved. The balance of opinion on the general standard of living was similarly more negative in 2009 compared with 2007. However, very few people appeared to attribute negative economic performance or falls in living standards to Scottish Government policies. Just 14% thought the recent standard of the economy resulted from Scottish Government policies, compared with 31% who thought it reflected UK government policies and 36% who attributed it to some other reason.
9. Poor perceptions of living standards in Scotland in general did not appear to be reflected in a dramatic decrease in people's levels of satisfaction with their *own* standard of living – at 7.64 (out of a possible 10), the 'mean' satisfaction score for people's own standard of living was not significantly lower than that recorded in 2007.
10. Changing public perceptions of Scotland's economic performance were reflected in changing priorities for Scottish Government action – 33% said the Scottish Government should prioritise helping the economy to grow faster, compared with 16% who said the same in 2007. At the same time, the proportion who said it should prioritise cutting crime fell from 27% to 17%.

11. In Scotland, as in Britain as a whole, public opinion has shifted over the last decade from a clear majority favouring increasing taxes and spending on public services, towards more people thinking that tax and spending levels should be kept the same. In 2009, 53% thought the level of taxation and spending should stay the same (up from 35% in 2004), compared with just 37% who wanted an increase (down from 56% in 2004). Similarly, 42% in 2009 said that benefits for the unemployed were too high and discourage job seeking (up from 32% in 2003), compared with 31% who felt they were too low and caused hardship (down from 41% in 2003).
12. In terms of perceptions of public service performance over the last year, the 2009 survey showed that the proportion of people who thought standards in the Health Service had increased outweighed the proportion who thought they had fallen, albeit only just. This was an improvement on 2004 to 2006, when more people felt standards in the Health Service were falling than increasing. At the same time, there were falls in the proportions who believed standards in education and public transport were increasing. However, the most common response with respect to each service was that standards had not changed in the previous 12 months.
13. In 2009, for the first time, the proportion of people who thought recent standards in the health service in Scotland reflected Scottish Government policies outweighed the proportion who attributed them to the UK government. More generally the 2009 data again suggested that the Scottish Government gets a greater amount of the 'credit' from those who believe standards are improving, and a relatively small share of the 'blame' from those who think things are getting worse. Previous indications that the Scottish institutions might be starting to pick up more of the 'blame' as well as the credit over time were not reflected in the 2009 data.

How do attitudes vary?

Attitudes to government

14. Some groups of people in Scotland were particularly likely to hold positive views of the Scottish Government and Scottish Parliament in 2009. These included:
 - **Men** – 43% of men, compared with 29% of women, trusted the Scottish Government 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' to make fair decisions
 - Those with **higher levels of education** – 71% of those with higher education qualifications, compared with 52% of those with no qualifications, trusted the Scottish Government 'just about always' or 'most of the time' to act in Scotland's interests
 - **Broadsheet readers** displayed higher levels of trust than tabloid readers in the Scottish Government to act in Scotland's interests (69% compared with 53%)
 - **SNP supporters** – 65% of SNP supporters said having a Scottish Parliament was giving ordinary people more say, compared with 43% of Labour supporters, 40% of Conservatives and 35% of those who did not identify with any political party

- Those who supported either **devolution** or **independence** were much more likely than those who would prefer Scotland not to have its own parliament to hold positive views of both the Scottish Government and Parliament
- Those who **trust other people in general** also tended to be more trusting of the Scottish Government
- Similarly, those who were more **'socially connected'** within their community were more positive about the impact of the Scottish Parliament
- And those who were **more active in making their views known** on issues of importance to them were more likely to believe that having a Scottish Parliament was giving ordinary people more say.

15. In comparison with findings from SSA 2007, these findings suggest something of a return to the status quo. Divides that were less apparent in 2007 – by education, party-political identification and constitutional preference – had re-emerged in the 2009 data.

Attitudes to the economy and living standards

16. Many people across all social groups felt that both the economy and living standards in Scotland had worsened in the previous 12 months. Those who were unemployed were particularly likely to feel the economy had got a lot worse, while those who were finding it difficult to cope on their income were particularly likely to feel the general standard of living had fallen.

17. In terms of people's perceptions of their own standard of living, those on lower household incomes, those who were unemployed or permanently sick or disabled, those who felt they were struggling to cope on their income, and those who felt their health was bad or very bad all had lower average 'satisfaction' scores than other groups. These findings were broadly in line with findings from the 2007 survey – as of 2009, there was no evidence that particular groups had become much more negative in their perceptions of their own living standards since the recession.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 The Scottish Government Office of the Chief Researcher has funded a 'core module' of questions on attitudes to government, the economy and public services in the *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey (SSA) since 2004, continuing a time series begun in 1999. This report presents findings on two key questions:

- How have attitudes to government, public services and the economy changed over time? and
- Who held more or less positive views on these issues in 2009?

Why measure public attitudes?

1.2 There are at least three key reasons why public views of government, the economy and public services are important.

1.3 First, the last two decades have seen rising levels of concern across the Western world about public disengagement from politics. In one of the best known accounts of these concerns, Putnam (2000) argues that, since the 1960s, Americans have become not only less likely to vote, but also less likely to voice their views by writing to politicians or the media and less engaged in both party politics and civic organisations. Similar findings have been cited across many other advanced industrialised democracies. Blind (2006) points to declining public trust in government and political institutions since the mid-1960s across many nations, stating that *'although the pattern and the pace of the decrease are dissimilar across countries, the downward trend is ubiquitous'*. Although a *'certain degree of suspicion on the part of the citizenry'* (Blind, 2006) is sometimes regarded as healthy in a democracy, political trust is still widely regarded as essential to functioning, effective government. Without it, politicians may struggle to sustain public support for, and cooperation with, their policies. As such, attitudes to government remain a concern for policy makers and political scientists across the world.

1.4 A second reason for being interested in how the public views government in Scotland is that the Scottish Parliament was itself intended to rebuild and revitalise public attitudes in this area. The introduction to the report of the Consultative Steering Group on the Scottish Parliament suggested that its establishment offered *'the opportunity to put in place a new sort of democracy in Scotland, closer to the Scottish people and more in tune with Scottish needs'* (Scottish Office, 1998). It was hoped that by establishing a parliament in Edinburgh, which reflected the political preferences of the people of Scotland rather than those of their neighbours South of the border, devolution would deliver policies on public services and economic growth that better met Scotland's needs. Moreover, the procedures of the devolved institutions – in particular, the parliamentary petitions system and the extensive public consultation undertaken by the Executive before passing legislation - were also designed to promote engagement between government and public. Examining attitudes to government in Scotland can help assess how successful devolution

has been in (re)engaging the public with politics in Scotland in general. Meanwhile, views of the performance of public services and the economy cast light on how successful devolution has been in the eyes of the public in delivering policies that better meet Scottish needs.

- 1.5 The current Scottish Government remains committed to engaging the public in discussions about the future direction of public policy. In August 2007, it launched a 'national conversation' about Scotland's constitutional future. While the SNP government's preference is for Scottish independence, the First Minister stated that the 'national conversation' should '*allow the people of Scotland to debate, reflect and then decide on the type of government which best equips us for the future*' (Scottish Executive, 2007). He also emphasised the need for it to secure '*the greatest possible participation*' from the public. Another recent development aimed at engaging the public with politics in Scotland is the proposal to hold elections to Scotland's Health Boards. Thus a third reason for being interested in findings from the core module is to place these more recent policy developments in the context of broader attitudes to government in Scotland in 2009. How far the Scottish Government is seen to listen to the public's views, for example, has implications for their ability to engage the public in a 'national conversation' about Scotland's future. Similarly, findings on public attitudes to the economy are important given the Scottish Government's 'central purpose' of '*increasing sustainable economic growth*'.

Changing contexts, changing attitudes

- 1.6 The decade since the first Scottish Parliament elections in 1999 has seen considerable political and social change in Scotland. There have been three changes of First Minister and three different political parties have formed governments in Edinburgh (Labour and the Liberal Democrats in coalition from 1999 to 2007, and a Scottish National Party (SNP) minority government since the 2007 election). There have been high profile divergences from England and Wales over public policy, most notably over university and college tuition fees (abolished in Scotland in 2001¹, but increased via 'top-up' fees in England from 2006) and free personal care for the elderly (introduced in Scotland from 2002, but not in England and Wales). And in terms of wider social change, rising immigration to Scotland (particularly from the countries which joined the European Union in 2004) along with a growth in the birth rate have led to increases in the Scottish population from 2002 onwards, following almost a decade of decline (GROS 2009²).
- 1.7 The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey has taken place every year since 1999, with the exception of 2008.³ The 2009 survey thus provides an opportunity to look back at how attitudes to government, public services and the economy in Scotland have changed in the decade since devolution. How does public

¹ Upfront fees were abolished in 2001. A further bill to end the Graduate Endowment Scheme was passed in February 2008, meaning that no Scottish student who graduated on or after 1st April 2007 will have to pay for their tuition even after they leave.

² See also <http://www.gro-scotland.gov.uk/statistics/publications-and-data/population-estimates/population-estimates-time-series-data.html> for details of Scotland population estimates from 1855 to 2008.

³ The survey was rested in 2008 while ScotCen reviewed its operation and funding.

opinion of devolution in practice compare with early aspirations for the Parliament? Have views of who has most influence over Scottish public policy changed? And how, if at all, have public assessments of the performance of Scotland's public services changed since 1999?

- 1.8 As well as reflecting on changing public attitudes over the last 10 years, this report also examines how attitudes have changed in the shorter time period since the survey last took place in 2007. Fieldwork for the 2007 SSA started in May that year, shortly after the SNP formed a minority government in Edinburgh. This was the first change in government in Scotland since devolution, following eight years of Labour-Liberal Democrat coalition. It was also the first time that different parties had held power in London and Edinburgh. At the UK level, Tony Blair was succeeded as Prime Minister by Gordon Brown in June 2007, with opinion polls suggesting that the Labour government at Westminster enjoyed something of a 'bounce' in support over the following months (labelled at the time as 'the Brown bounce' – see Mortimore, 2007).
- 1.9 The 2009 survey took place in a very different political context. The SNP had been in power in Scotland for two years – as such, any 'election bounce' which may have been apparent in the 2007 findings might be presumed to have subsided. Moreover, opinion polls suggested the UK government was markedly less popular in mid-2009 than it had been in 2007.⁴ Scandals around MPs expenses, which attracted widespread media coverage from May 2009, did nothing to improve the image of politicians at Westminster generally. The economic context for the 2009 survey was also radically different. Scotland, along with the rest of the UK and many other countries worldwide, was in recession. News headlines in 2009 variously labelled this recession as the '*worst since the 1930s*' (BBC News website, 6 May 2009), '*the worst recession in over 100 years*' (Independent, 10 February 2009), and '*the worst in modern history*' (The Telegraph, 12 August 2009).
- 1.10 This report explores how public attitudes to government, public services and the economy have changed over the two years since 2007 in the light of this political and economic upheaval. Were any improvements in attitudes to government recorded in 2007 maintained, or did they fall back to pre-2007 levels as both the SNP government's 'honeymoon' period and the 'Brown Bounce' came to an end and political scandals ran high in the headlines? Were people more or less positive about the impact of devolution two years into a new administration? What did the public think about standards in health, education and public transport after two years of policy-making by the SNP minority government in these areas? And how were public views on the economy affected by the recession?

⁴ For example, compare poll data in The Constitution Unit's Scotland Devolution Monitoring Report for September 2007 with that reported in their September 2009 report.

The data

1.11 The *Scottish Social Attitudes* survey (SSA) was established by the Scottish Centre for Social Research. It provides robust data on changing social and political attitudes to inform both public policy and academic study. Around 1,500 face-to-face interviews are conducted annually (1,482 in 2009) with a representative probability sample of the Scottish population. Interviews are conducted in respondents' homes, using computer assisted personal interviewing technology. Around 9 in 10 respondents also complete a paper self-completion questionnaire. The survey has achieved a response of between 55% and 65% in each year since 1999 (in 2009, the response was 55%). The data is weighted to correct for over-sampling, non-response bias and to ensure it reflects the sex-age profile of the Scottish population. Further technical details about the survey are included in Annex B.

1.12 While the analysis in this report focuses particularly on 2009 data, extensive use is made of earlier years of SSA. It also builds on the findings presented in previous SSA reports on attitudes to government and public services (particularly Bromley and Given, 2006, Curtice, 2007, Given and Ormston, 2007a and b, Ormston and Sharp, 2007a and b, and Ormston, 2008).

Analysis and reporting conventions

1.13 All percentages cited in this report are based on the weighted data (see Annex B for details) and are rounded to the nearest whole number. All differences described in the text (between years, or between different groups of people) are statistically significant at the 95% level or above, unless otherwise specified. This means that the probability of having found a difference of at least this size if there was no actual difference in the population is 5% or less.⁵ Further details of multivariate analysis conducted for this report is included in Annex B.

Use of 'Scottish Government' and 'Scottish Executive' in this report

1.14 On 3rd September 2007, the SNP administration took the decision to change the name 'Scottish Executive' to 'Scottish Government'. Questions in SSA 2009 therefore referred to the 'Scottish Government' rather than the 'Scottish Executive'. However, the term 'Scottish Executive' is used in this report when referring to findings from 2007 and earlier.⁶ Footnotes and endnotes to tables and charts provide further details on any changes to question wording over time.

Report structure

1.15 The next two chapters of this report summarise trends in attitudes to government and views of the performance of public services and the economy. They look back across 10 years of SSA data to examine how public attitudes

⁵ Thus significance tests on differences reported in the text produced p-values of ≤ 0.05 . Cases where differences were on the margins of being statistically significant at this level (where p is only slightly above 0.05) are identified in the text or in footnotes.

⁶ 87% of 2007 fieldwork was completed *before* the September name change.

have changed since the start of devolution, as well as highlighting changes since the last SSA in 2007. Chapter Two looks particularly at issues of trust, public engagement and efficacy – how much do people trust the government, how well do they think government listens to their views, and how much confidence do they have in the ability of government to respond to their wishes and needs? Chapter Three focuses on changing public evaluations of the economy and general standard of living in Scotland, and of the performance of key public services. It also explores perceptions of who is responsible for standards in public services and the economy. Chapter Four builds on findings from previous SSA reports to look at how attitudes to government and the economy vary between different groups of people in Scotland in 2009. It also examines whose views have changed since 2007 – have any shifts in attitudes occurred across the board, or have the views of some groups of people changed more than those of others? Finally, Chapter Five summarises the key themes of the report. More detailed results tables and technical details of the 2009 survey are included in annexes to this report.

2 CHANGING ATTITUDES TO GOVERNMENT IN SCOTLAND

Introduction

2.1 This chapter summarises trends in:

- **Trust** in government (to act in Scotland's interests and to make fair decisions)
- General levels of public **awareness** of government activities
- Perceptions of how **responsive** government is to the public's views and wishes, and
- Views of the relative **influence** of different institutions over how Scotland is run and the impact of having a Scottish Parliament on Scotland's **voice** within the UK.

Trust in government

2.2 As discussed in Chapter One, political trust is widely regarded as an essential component of a successful, functioning democracy. If the public does not have a basic level of trust in government to act in a fair and honest manner, then their willingness to engage in dialogue with government, or even to follow laws and policies may be severely compromised. As Blind (2006) puts it:

Trust, in this regard, emerges as one of the most important ingredients upon which the legitimacy and sustainability of political systems are built.

2.3 SSA includes questions on two different aspects of trust – trust to act in Scotland's interests and trust to make fair decisions. In order to place trust in the Scottish Government in context, respondents are also asked how much they trust the UK Government. The first set of questions is worded as follows:

*How much do you trust the **UK government** to work in Scotland's best long-term interest?*

and

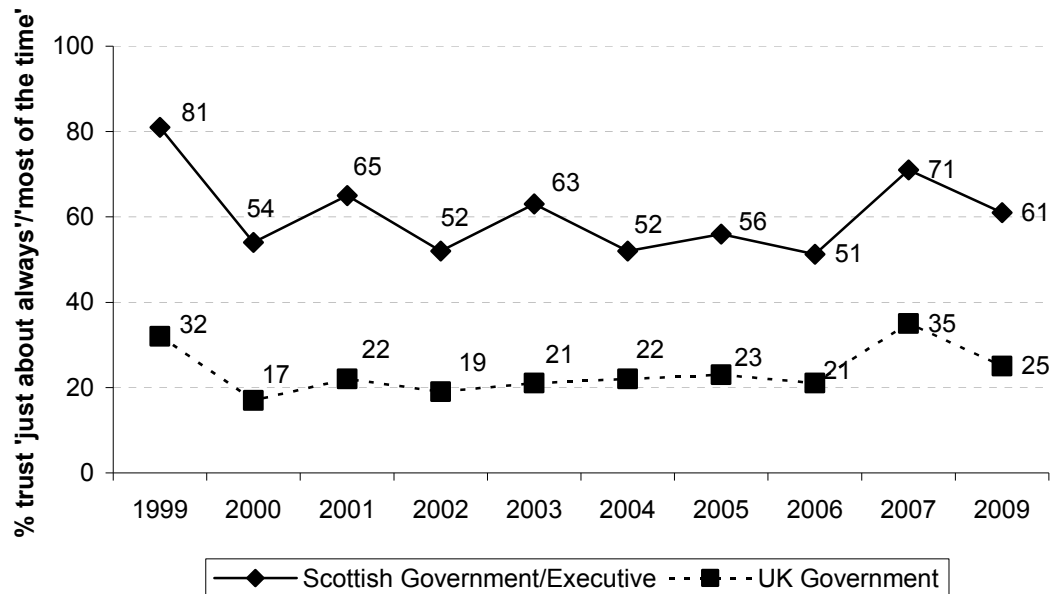
*How much do you trust the **Scottish Government** to work in Scotland's best interests?*

2.4 The answer options are 'just about always', 'most of the time', 'only some of the time' and 'almost never'.

2.5 These questions were first asked in 1999, just after the inaugural Scottish Parliament election. Arguably, devolution was too new at that point for people to have formed a view on how much they trusted the new institutions of government. Given this, the second question was phrased prospectively in 1999 - it asked how much people *would* trust a Scottish Parliament to work in Scotland's best interests. The findings (Figure 2.1) demonstrate that aspirations for the new parliament were very high – no fewer than 81% believed they would

trust the Scottish Parliament 'just about always' or 'most of the time'. However, perhaps unsurprisingly, these high expectations were not completely met. Just a year later, in 2000, the proportion who said they actually *did* trust the Parliament 'just about always' or 'most of the time' was substantially lower, at 54%. That said, trust in the Scottish institutions of government to act in Scotland's best interests still clearly outweighed trust in the UK government to do the same.

Figure 2.1: Trust in the UK and Scottish Government⁷ to act in Scotland's interests? (1999-2007, 2009, % trust 'just about always'/'most of the time')



Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

2.6 Between 2000 and 2006, the proportion expressing high levels of trust in the Scottish Parliament/Executive to act in Scotland's best interests varied between around a half and two thirds. Trust in the UK government remained considerably lower, at around 1 in 5. However, in 2007 the picture changed dramatically. Trust in the Scottish Executive increased by 20 points compared with 2006 figures, to 71%, while trust in the UK government also increased by 14 points, from 21% to 35%.

2.7 As discussed in Chapter One, the 2007 survey took place immediately after the Scottish Parliament election. Other surveys have shown that public attitudes to government often improve in the immediate aftermath of an election (see, for example, Bromley and Curtice, 2002) – indeed, the previous 'peaks' in trust in the Scottish Government coincided with UK (2001) and Scottish Parliament (2003) election years. Thus a key question for this report was whether or not

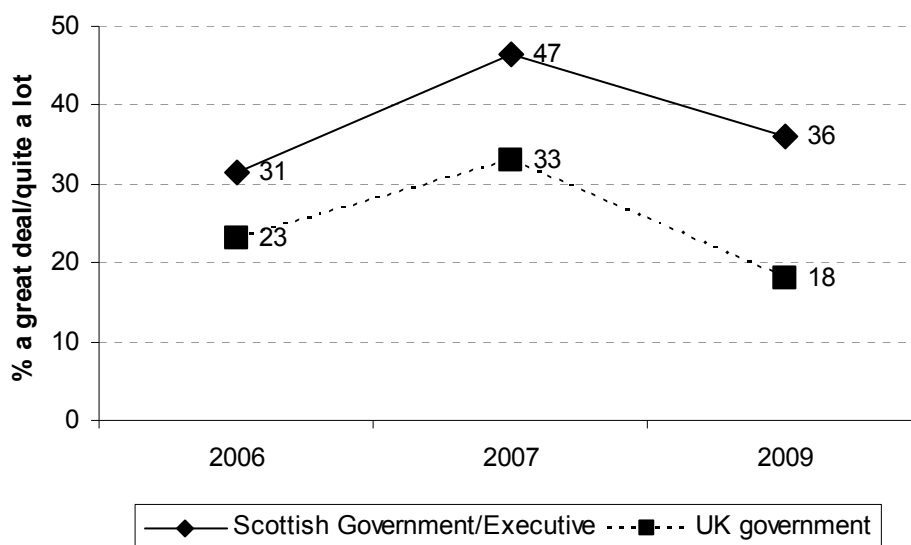
⁷ Prior to 2004, this question asked about the Scottish Parliament. However, in response to criticisms that the two questions were not comparing equivalent institutions, a split sample experiment was undertaken in which half the sample were asked about the Scottish Parliament and half about the Scottish Executive. The difference in wording made a negligible difference to the results (see Bromley and Given, 2005, for full results), so from 2005-2007 the question was changed to ask about the Scottish Executive. In 2009, the question was amended again to ask about the Scottish Government in the light of the September 2007 name change.

this increase in trust was maintained into 2009. As shown in Figure 2.1, the answer is no, not completely. At 61%, the proportion of people who said they trusted the Scottish Government 'just about always' or 'most of the time' to act in Scotland's best interests was some 10 points lower in 2009 compared with 2007. Trust in the UK government also fell 10 points, from 35% to 25%.

- 2.8 However, at 61%, the proportion expressing high levels of trust in the Scottish Government was still higher than the equivalent figures for 2004 to 2006 (between 51% and 56%). Moreover, it was close to the previous 'peaks' in trust seen in 2001 and 2003. Thus when seen in the context of the previous 10 years, trust in the Scottish Government in 2009 remained relatively strong, even if it had declined from the high point of 2007.
- 2.9 Findings from the second set of questions on trust in government, which ask how much people trust the UK and Scottish governments to make 'fair decisions', show a broadly similar pattern. These questions were introduced in 2006, in order to examine whether people's views vary across different dimensions of 'political trust'. For example, people might trust government to act in the interests of Scotland as a whole, but not to treat different groups of people in Scotland with equal consideration. 'Fair decisions' are defined in the question in terms of this equal consideration, as 'decisions that are fair to different groups of people in the UK/Scotland'.
- 2.10 As with trust to act in Scotland's interests, trust in government to make fair decisions increased dramatically between 2006 and 2007 (Figure 2.2). The proportion who said they trusted government 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' to make fair decisions increased from 31% to 47% for the Scottish Executive and from 23% to 33% for the UK Government. However, again this increase was not sustained. The 2009 figures were 11 points lower for the Scottish Government and 15 points lower for the UK government. While trust in the Scottish Government to make fair decisions remained slightly higher than in 2006 (36% compared with 31%⁸), trust in the UK government on this measure was the lowest recorded by the survey.

⁸ Though note that the difference between the 2006 and 2009 figures is only statistically significant at the 90% level ($p = 0.059$).

Figure 2.2: Trust in the UK and Scottish Government to make fair decisions? (2006-2007, 2009, % trust 'a great deal'/'quite a lot')



Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

Awareness of government

2.11 As discussed in the introduction to this report, both the current Scottish Government and the Consultative Steering Group that wrote the 'blueprints' for the Scottish Parliament's procedures have been concerned to engage the public with politics in Scotland. While awareness of government activities is not a sufficient condition for political engagement, it is arguably a necessary one – if someone knows nothing about what the government has been doing, they are less likely to want to get involved in discussions with them about specific issues and policies.

2.12 SSA has included questions on how much people have seen or heard about the work of the Scottish and UK governments in the last 12 months on four occasions since 2004. The findings show, first, that public awareness of UK government activities has always been somewhat higher than their awareness of Scottish Government activities (Table 2.1 and 2.2). This remained the case in 2009 – 52% had seen or heard 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' about the work of the UK government, compared with 46% who said the same of the Scottish Government. However, awareness of *both* UK government and Scottish Government activities was higher in 2009 than in 2006, when the question was last asked. The proportion saying they had heard 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' increased by 11 percentage points in each case - from 35% to 46% for the Scottish Government and from 41% to 52% for the UK government. In spite of this general upward trend, around a quarter continue to report low levels of awareness, having heard 'not very much' or 'nothing at all' about the work of either the Westminster or Scottish Government in the last 12 months. Communicating the work of government to the widest possible audience thus remains a challenge for governments both North and South of the border.

Table 2.1: How much have people seen or heard about the activities of the Scottish Government/Scottish Executive¹ in the last 12 months? (2004-2006, 2009², column %)

	2004	2005	2006	2009
	%	%	%	%
A great deal/quite a lot	29	30	35	46
Some	30	28	31	29
Not very much/nothing at all	40	40	33	24
Don't know	1	1	1	1
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1482</i>

1 - Prior to 2009, the question asked about the 'Scottish Executive'.

2 - This question was not asked in SSA 2007

Table 2.2: How much have people seen or heard about the activities of the UK Government in the last 12 months? (2004-2006, 2009¹, column %)

	2004	2005	2006	2009
	%	%	%	%
A great deal/quite a lot	34	39	41	52
Some	29	26	26	23
Not very much/nothing at all	36	34	32	24
Don't know	1	2	1	1
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1482</i>

1 - This question was not asked in SSA 2007

2.13 In so far as it indicates an interest in politics and provides a necessary basis for further engagement, this greater public awareness of government is clearly positive. However, it is worth noting that awareness does not necessarily mean that government activities are viewed in a favourable light. People may, for example, be aware of government primarily through negative media coverage of particular policies or actions.

2.14 One way of exploring this issue is to look at whether those who indicate high levels of awareness are more or less trusting of government. This analysis suggests that, with respect to the Scottish Government at least, those who have seen or heard more about their activities also appear to trust them more. For example, 70% of those who had seen or heard 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' about the work of the Scottish Government in 2009 also said they trusted the Scottish Government to act in Scotland's best interests 'just about always' or 'most of the time'. In contrast, just 42% of those who had heard 'not very much' or 'nothing at all' said they would trust the Scottish Government 'just about always' or 'most of the time'.⁹

2.15 This relationship between awareness and trust to act in Scotland's interests was not, however, apparent for the UK government. Among those who had heard most about recent UK government activities, just 28% expressed high levels of trust in their capacity to act in Scotland's best interests. This was not significantly higher than the 20% of those with low levels of awareness of UK government activities who said the same. Thus while awareness of Scottish

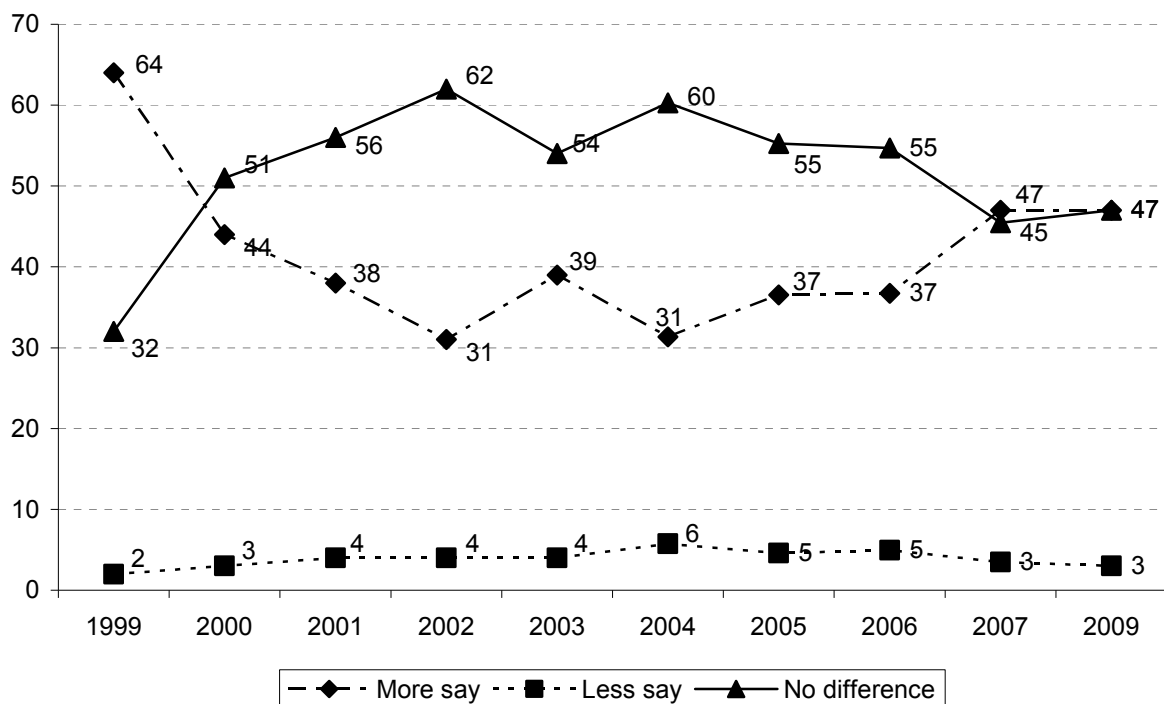
⁹ A similar relationship was apparent between awareness and trust in the Scottish Government to make 'fair decisions'

Government activities was, by and large, associated with viewing them positively, awareness of the UK government was not so clearly linked with more positive attitudes. Perhaps awareness of UK government activities in 2009 was influenced by the media focus on MP's expenses, which created substantial difficulties for Westminster and may have had a negative impact on public attitudes.

Perceptions of responsiveness

- 2.16 An important corollary of political trust is 'efficacy' – that is, the extent to which people believe that political systems are open to and able to act on their wishes and needs. As discussed in Ormston (2008), there is evidence to suggest that when people believe that governments do not listen to them, they are less likely to participate in either elections or in non-electoral political activities like contacting MPs or signing petitions (see for example Bromley and Curtice, 2002 and Curtice and Seyd, 2003).
- 2.17 SSA includes two questions that tap the extent to which Scottish government is seen as responsive to the public's needs and desires. First, it asks whether having a Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed, less say or is making no difference. Second, it asks how good people think the Scottish Government is at listening to people's views before making decisions. The second question is also asked in relation to the UK government.
- 2.18 Looking first at how much say people think having a Scottish Parliament has given ordinary people, the pattern of public opinion from 1999 to 2007 broadly mirrors that seen above with respect to trust in government (Figure 2.3). In 1999, expectations were high – 64% expected that having a Scottish Parliament would give ordinary people more say. However, a year into devolution, this figure had fallen to 44%. Between 2001 and 2006, the proportion who felt having a Scottish Parliament was giving ordinary people more say varied between 31% and 39%. Throughout this period, however, more people (between 54% and 62%) thought it was making no difference. But in 2007, this position was reversed – for the first time since 1999, the proportion who felt that having a Scottish Parliament gave people more say was higher (albeit only just) than the proportion who felt it was making no difference (47% compared with 45%). However, in contrast with the fall in political trust since 2007, the 2009 survey suggests this improvement in views of the impact of the parliament has been maintained. In 2009, 47% – the same proportion as in 2007 – said having a Scottish Parliament was giving ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run.

Figure 2.3: Does having a Scottish Parliament give ordinary people more say in how Scotland is governed, less say, or is it making no difference?¹⁰ (1999-2007, 2009, %)



Base: All respondents
 Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

2.19 The belief that the Scottish Executive listens to people’s views before taking decisions also increased between 2006 and 2007 (Figure 2.4). While there were small yearly increases in the proportions saying the Scottish Executive was ‘very’ or ‘quite good’ at listening from 2004, the increase from 36% to 43% between 2006 and 2007 was the biggest recorded. In 2009, this figure increased again, to 48%¹¹. At the same time, the proportion of people in Scotland who thought the UK government was good at listening, which has always been lower, stood at just 18%¹².

¹⁰ The question wording altered slightly between years, as follows:

1999 “Will a Scottish Parliament...”

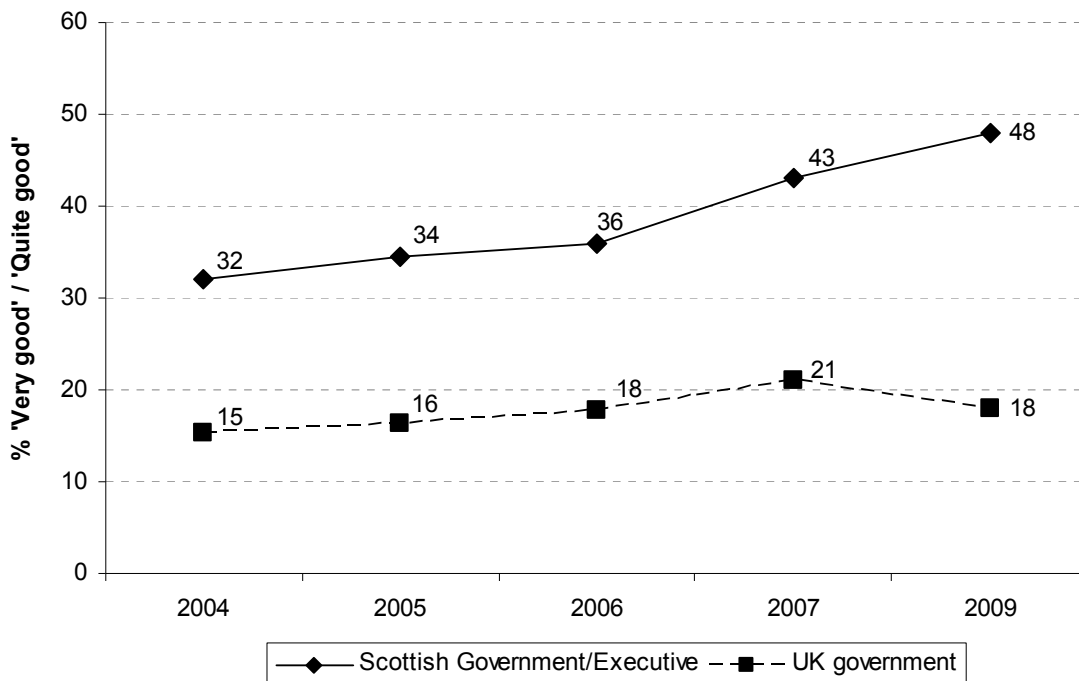
2000 “Do you think that having a Scottish parliament is going to...”

2001-2009 “Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving...”

¹¹ Though note that the increase from 2007 to 2009 is only significant at the 90% level ($p = 0.057$).

¹² This is not statistically significantly different from the 2007 figure of 21%.

Figure 2.4: How good are the Scottish Executive/Government and the UK government at listening to people’s views before taking decisions? (2004-2007, 2009, % ‘very good’/‘quite good’)



Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

Note that from 2004-2007 the question asked about the ‘Scottish Executive’. In 2009, it asked about the ‘Scottish Government’

Voice and influence

2.20 In addition to believing that government listens, successful dialogue between government and public also relies on people believing government can act on their views. Even if people think an institution is good at listening, if they believe it has no influence, they are likely to have less faith in its ability to meet their needs. SSA asks three questions relating to aspects of the perceived influence of government in Scotland. First, it asks people which institution they think *does* have most influence over how Scotland is run – the Scottish Government, the UK government at Westminster, Local Councils or the European Union. Next, it asks which of these institutions *ought* to have most influence. Responses to these two questions indicate whether the perceived balance of influence between different institutions is in line with public preference. Finally, SSA asks whether people think having a Scottish Parliament is giving Scotland a stronger voice in the UK, a weaker voice, or making no difference – a measure of the perceived impact of devolution on the influence of Scotland in the broader UK context.

2.21 When the Scottish Parliament first opened, it was clear that a significant proportion of people in Scotland expected it to be influential – 41% thought it would be the institution with most influence over how Scotland is run, compared with 39% who thought it would be the UK government (Table 2.3). However,

again initial expectations appeared to give way to scepticism about the influence of the Parliament in practice – by 2000, just 13% said it was the institution with most influence, compared with two thirds (66%) who thought it was the UK government. That said, from 2000 to 2007 the proportion who thought the Scottish Parliament/Executive¹³ had most influence did gradually increase, from 13% in 2000 up to 28% in 2007.

2.22 In 2009, this proportion increased again, to 33%. This means that the ‘gap’ between the proportion of people who think the Scottish Government is the most influential and the proportion who say it is the UK government now stands at just 6 points, compared with 53 points at its widest in 2000. However, it is worth noting that there remains a sizeable ‘gap’ between the institution people think *does* have most influence over how Scotland is run, and their preferences for who *ought* to have most influence. In 2009, 72% said the Scottish Government ought to have most influence – 39 points higher than the 33% who thought they actually did (see Annex A, Table A8).

Table 2.3: Who has most influence over the way Scotland is run? (1999-2007, 2009, %)

	1999*	2000	2001	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%
The Scottish Government/Executive/Parliament	41	13	15	17	19
The UK government at Westminster	39	66	66	64	48
Local councils in Scotland	8	10	9	7	20
The European Union	5	4	7	5	6
(Don't know)	8	8	-	6	7
(Not answered)	-	-	-	-	*
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1482</i>	<i>1663</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>
	2005	2006	2007	2009	
	%	%	%	%	
The Scottish Government/Executive/Parliament	23	24	28	33	
The UK government at Westminster	47	38	47	39	
Local councils in Scotland	15	18	8	11	
The European Union	8	11	9	10	
(Don't know)	7	9	7	7	
(Not answered)	*	*	*	-	
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>	

*In 1999 the question wording was: “When the new parliament starts work, which of the following do you think will have most influence over the way Scotland is run”

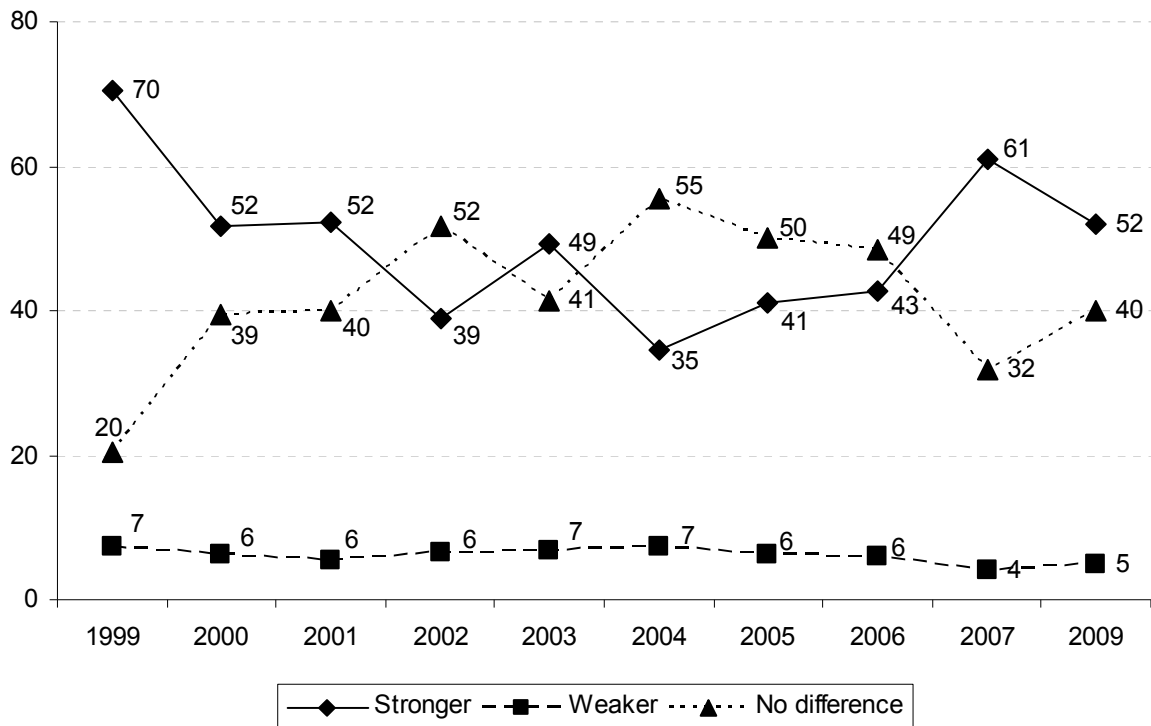
2.23 While the majority of people in Scotland thought that either the Scottish or UK governments have most influence over how Scotland is run, in 2009 around 1

¹³ In 2004 an experiment was run whereby half the sample was asked about the Scottish Parliament and half was asked about the Scottish Executive. The change of wording made negligible difference to the responses given, therefore the combined results are shown here. From (2005-2007), the question asked solely about the Scottish Executive. In 2009, the question was amended to ask about the Scottish Government, following the September 2007 name change.

in 10 thought Local Councils have most influence and a further 1 in 10 said it was the European Union. However, in spite of the further devolution of control over policy and spending signalled by the 2007 'Concordat' between the Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, the proportion who considered local government most influential was only slightly higher in 2009 compared with 2007 (11% compared with 8%). In fact, between 2004 and 2006 more people thought local councils had most influence than have thought this since.

- 2.24 Turning to perceptions of the impact of having a Scottish Parliament on Scotland's voice in the UK, a by now familiar pattern from 1999-2007 emerges (Figure 2.5). In 1999, 70% thought having a Scottish Parliament would give Scotland a stronger voice in the UK, but by 2000 the proportion who thought it was actually doing so was only 52%. Views fluctuated between 2000 and 2006, although from 2004 to 2006 more people thought the Parliament was making no difference than that it was giving Scotland a stronger voice. But in 2007 this position was reversed, with 61% saying having a Scottish Parliament gave Scotland a stronger voice.
- 2.25 In 2009, views were less positive than in 2007 – 52% thought having a Parliament had strengthened Scotland's voice, down 9 points on two years earlier. However, set against the context of the previous 10 years of data, public opinion was still relatively upbeat. In particular, it remained the case in 2009 that more people felt the Parliament was having a positive impact than that it was making no difference. Moreover, at 52% the proportion saying it gave Scotland a stronger voice was similar to previous 'peaks' seen in 2000/2001 and 2003.

Figure 2.5: Perceptions of the impact of having a Scottish Parliament on Scotland's voice in the UK (1999-2007, 2009, %)



Base: All respondents
 Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

3 CHANGING ATTITUDES TO ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICES

Introduction

3.1 This chapter summarises trends in:

- Views of the strength of the **economy** and the general **standard of living** in Scotland over the previous year
- People's feelings about their **own standard of living**
- Public **priorities** for government action
- Broader attitudes towards **government spending** (in particular, the appropriate balance between taxation and spending and the level of unemployment benefit)
- Evaluations of the **performance of key public services** (health, education and public transport) over the previous year, and
- Beliefs about **who is responsible** for the performance of public services and the economy in Scotland.

Views on the economy, standard of living and public spending

3.2 The 2009 SSA took place between May and early November, a period during which Britain was in the grip of a severe recession. Britain was officially declared in recession in January 2009, when the Office for National Statistics showed a second consecutive quarter of 'negative growth'. However, this announcement followed over a year of intensive media coverage and political concern about the state of the global economy. A recent report from the Economic and Social Research Council (Vaitlingham, 2009) summarised the impact of the recession across all areas of life in the UK. House prices fell dramatically, and in mid-2009 it was predicted they would continue to fall for another three years. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research predicted that national income per head would take until March 2014 to return to its March 2008 level (July 2009 quarterly forecast). Unemployment rates in Scotland rose throughout 2009, although they did remain slightly lower than rates elsewhere in the UK (ONS, January 2010). Higher uncertainty led to firms postponing investment and recruitment, although in 2009 it was suggested that the full impact of the recession on jobs may not yet have been felt. Similarly, while lower income from taxation combined with the heavy public investment required to support banks at the outset of the crisis made future public spending cuts inevitable, as of 2009 these cuts still lay in the future.

3.3 Given the very different context in which the 2009 SSA took place, we may anticipate that questions asking for views on Scotland's economy are likely to have received quite different responses compared with the 2007 survey. Figure 3.1 indicates that was indeed the case. It shows 'net balance' scores for public opinion on the strength of the Scottish economy and the general standard of living in Scotland. These scores are calculated by subtracting the proportion who felt the economy or general standard of living had got weaker or fallen in

the last 12 months, from the proportion who said they had got stronger or increased. Taking the economy as an example, in 2007, 30% thought the economy had got stronger and just 11% that it had got weaker (36% thought it had stayed the same). Thus the 'net balance' of opinion was +19, indicating that more people felt it was improving than thought it was getting worse. However, by 2009 this picture was dramatically reversed – the 'net balance' of opinion on the economy stood at -64, reflecting the fact that 72% thought the economy had got weaker in the previous 12 months compared with just 8% who felt it had improved. The 'net balance' of opinion on the general standard of living was also considerably more negative, at -38 compared with +9 in 2007.¹⁴

Figure 3.1: 'Net balance' scores for views of Scotland's economy and the general standard of living in the last 12 months (2004-2007, 2009)



Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

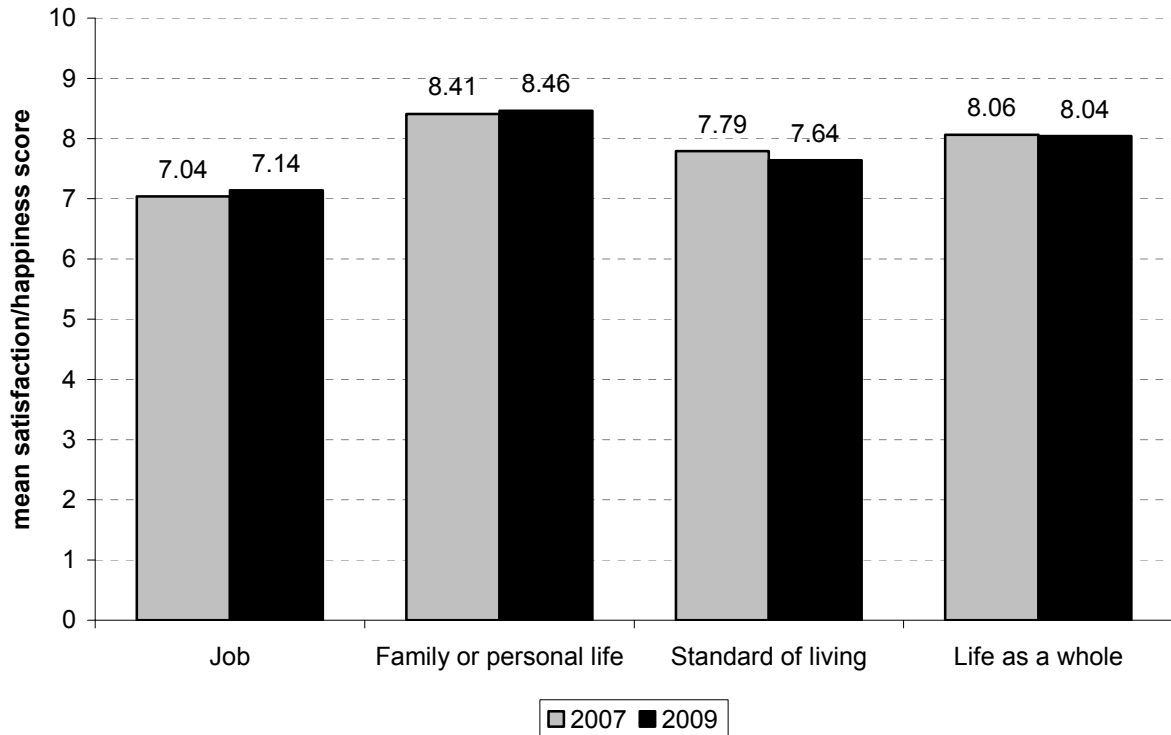
3.4 But what of people's attitudes to their *own* standard of living? As discussed above, although Britain was in recession in mid-2009, there was some evidence to suggest that the full impact on jobs and public services had not yet been felt. As such, it might be that the general sense of gloom about Scotland's economy had not yet fed through into more negative views of people's own situation. Moreover, low inflation and lower prices in shops benefited those people who retained stable jobs, which may have helped mitigate the impact of the recession on overall perceptions of living standards in 2009. In fact, people did not appear to feel significantly less positive about their own lives in 2009 compared with 2007. SSA asked people how satisfied they were on a scale of 0 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied) with their lives as a whole and with specific aspects of their lives (family or personal life, standard of living and, for those in paid employment, their main job). Figure 3.2 shows 'mean scores' on each question for 2007 and 2009 and indicates that there was no statistically significant change.¹⁵ However, it is of course possible that this lack

¹⁴ For full figures for these questions, see Annex A, Tables A.10 and A.11

¹⁵ Although there is a slight decrease in satisfaction with general standard of living, this is not statistically significant at the 95% level ($p = 0.087$).

of change overall conceals significant decreases in satisfaction for particular groups of people. This issue is examined in Chapter Four.

Figure 3.2: Mean scores for satisfaction with different aspects of life (2007, 2009)



Base: All except those who answered 'don't know' (for job satisfaction, base = all respondents in paid employment, except those who answered 'don't know'). See Annex A, Table A.12 for sample sizes.

3.5 High levels of public concern about the economy are reflected in changing priorities for government action. In every year since 2004, SSA has asked people to choose from a list of broad areas which they think should be the Scottish Government's 'highest priority, that is, the most important thing it should try and do'. Between 2004 and 2007, improving the nation's health and cutting crime vied for the top position (Table 3.1). However, in 2009 'helping the economy to grow faster' was the most commonly chosen response, selected by 33% compared with 16% in 2007. It appears that the Scottish Government's key purpose of 'increasing sustainable economic growth' found increased resonance with public priorities for action in 2009 – though in fact when taken together the proportion who prioritise improving education, health or housing (41%) still outweighs the proportion who prioritise growing the economy. In fact, the shift appear to primarily reflect a fall in the proportion who thought the Scottish Government should prioritise 'cutting crime' (down 10 points, from 27% in 2007 to 17% in 2009), rather than any dramatic decrease in the proportion who think they should prioritise health, education or housing.

Table 3.1: What should be the Scottish Government's* highest priority? (2004-2007, 2009, column %)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Help the economy to grow faster	16	18	14	16	33
Cut crime	22	23	24	27	17
Improve standards of education	17	15	16	12	15
Improve people's health	27	26	24	17	13
Improve housing	12	10	12	16	13
Improve the environment	4	4	6	5	3
Improve public transport	1	1	2	1	1
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>

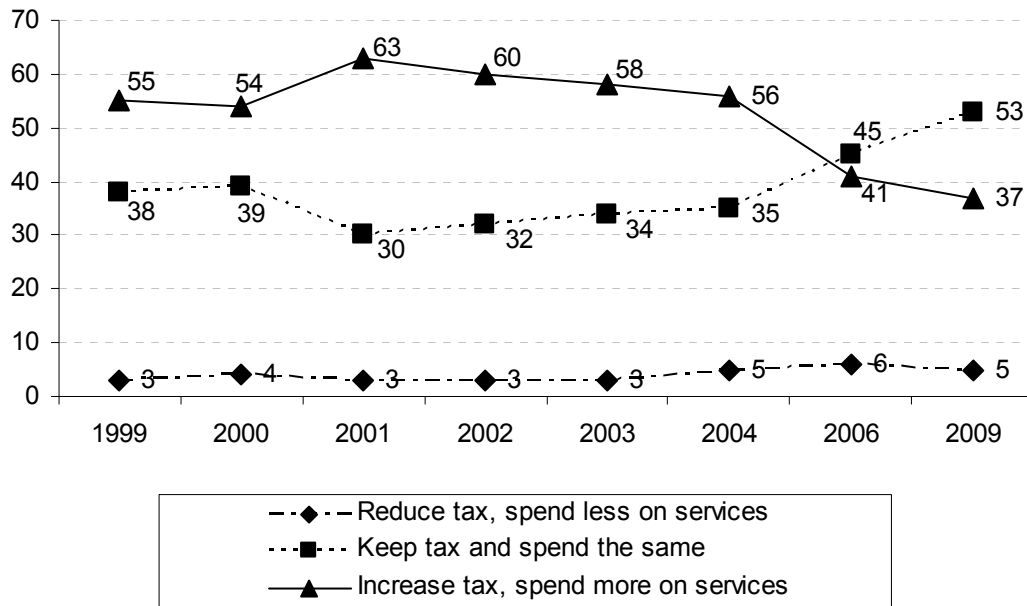
Base = all respondents

* Prior to 2009, this question asked about the 'Scottish Executive'

Note: not all columns add to exactly 100% due either to rounding or because of small proportions saying either 'don't know' (1% in 2009) or giving some other top priority (less than 3% in 2009).

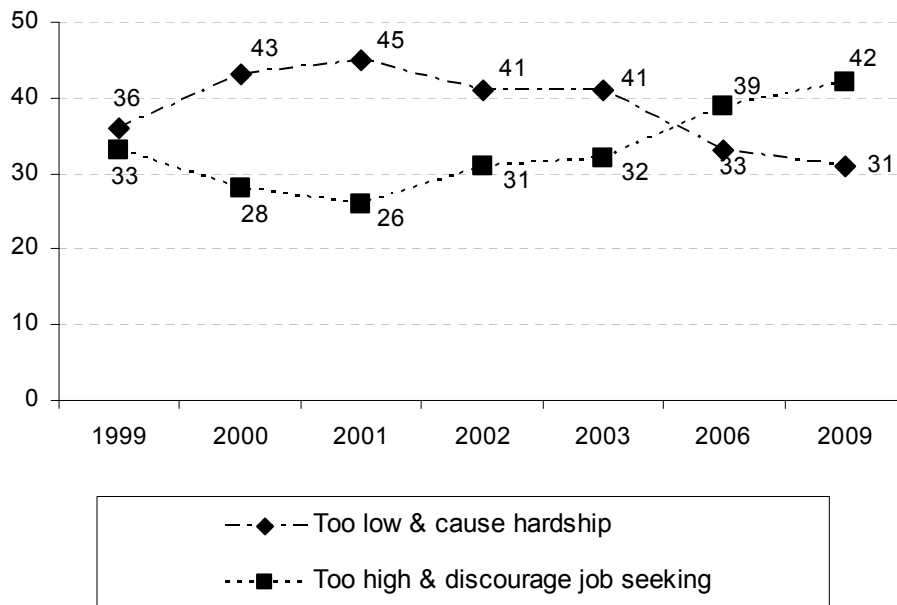
- 3.6 Increasing concern about economic performance might also be expected to affect views on government spending. SSA has included two questions (funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and ScotCen) designed to measure general attitudes towards government spending on a number of occasions since 1999. The first asks people whether they think the government should reduce taxes and spend less on health, education and social benefits, keep taxes and spending the same, or increase taxes and spend more on services and benefits. The second asks people whether they think the level of benefits for unemployed people are too low and cause hardship, or whether they are too high and discourage people from finding jobs. Both questions can be used to examine the extent to which the public supports a more generous approach to public spending, which favours boosting services and benefits, or whether they believe public spending needs to be reigned in. The second question in particular also taps support for redistributing finances from the better off to those on low incomes.
- 3.7 In Scotland, the public appeared to favour a more generous approach to spending and benefits up to around 2003/2004 (Figure 3.3). Between 1999 and 2004, between 54% and 63% thought government should increase taxes and spend more on services. This easily outweighed the proportion who thought taxes and spending should stay the same (30% to 38%) or that it should be reduced (just 3-5%) Similarly, between 1999 and 2003 more people felt that unemployment benefits were too low and caused hardship than that they were too high and discouraged job seeking (Figure 3.4). However, somewhere between 2003 and 2006 opinion appears to have shifted in favour of reigning in both spending and benefits. By 2009, the proportion who felt taxation and spending should stay the same outweighed the proportion who felt they should increase (53% compared with 37%). Meanwhile, the proportion who felt benefits for the unemployed were too high and discouraged job seeking stood at 42%, compared with 31% who felt they were too low.

Figure 3.3: Views on balance between tax and spending on services (1999-2004, 2006, 2009, %)



Base: All respondents
 Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

Figure 3.4: Views on benefits for the unemployed (1999-2003, 2006, 2009, %)



Base: All respondents
 Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2
 NB figures for each year do not sum to 100% as the proportion saying 'neither', 'don't know' or giving some other answer are not shown here. See Annex A, Table A.13 for the full figures.

3.8 General attitudes to public spending and unemployment benefits do then appear to have hardened since the early 2000s. However, as these shifts were apparent from 2006 onwards, they do not appear to be a reaction to the current

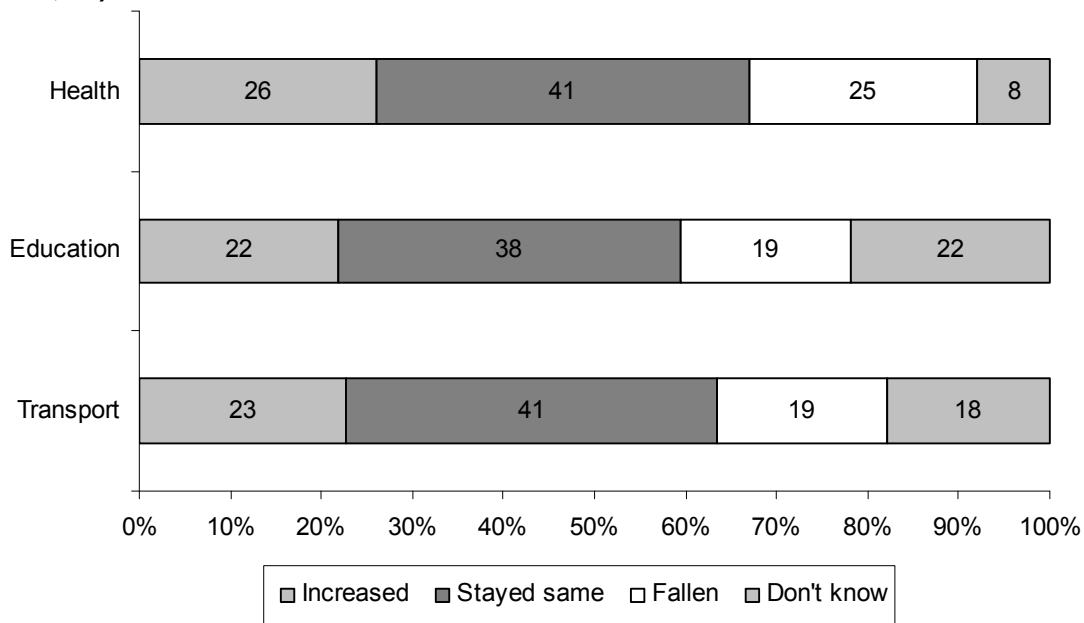
recession or recent increases in the public debt. An alternative explanation, put forward in Curtice (2010) is that changing public attitudes on the appropriate balance between spending and taxation are a reaction to actual levels of government investment in services. Citing over 20 years of British data from the British Social Attitudes survey (SSA's sister survey), he argues that support for increasing taxation and spending increased during the 1980s in response to cutbacks under the Conservative government at the time, but fell during the 2000s *'as Labour's increased spending eventually sated the public's appetite'*. Attitudes to unemployment benefits at the Britain-wide level, on the other hand, appear to have changed in line with changes in the UK Labour party's policies in this area. Curtice argues that the shift towards a much stronger focus on finding work and discouraging reliance on benefits led Labour supporters in particular to modify their views in the light of their party's new ideological position.¹⁶

Views of public service performance

- 3.9 If views of the economy and general standard of living in Scotland were much more negative in 2009, what of views of Scotland's public services? As discussed above, the recession is widely expected to create a squeeze on future public spending, necessitating difficult decisions about services. However, as of 2009 such cuts largely lay in the future and their impact was yet to be felt.
- 3.10 Findings from SSA suggest that the most common view in Scotland in 2009 was that the performance of public services had not changed in the previous 12 months (Figure 3.5). Forty-one per cent felt standards in the health service and in public transport had stayed the same, while 38% said the same for education. Only around a quarter in each case felt standards were increasing, while a fifth to a quarter thought they were getting worse.

¹⁶ Note that according to a report by the Trades Union Congress (2009), the actual value of unemployment benefits relative to average earnings has been falling since the late 1970s/early 1980s. Thus the increase in the proportion saying unemployment benefits are too high appears to be unrelated to actual trends in the level of unemployment benefits.

Figure 3.5: Perceptions of public service performance over the last 12 months (2009, %)

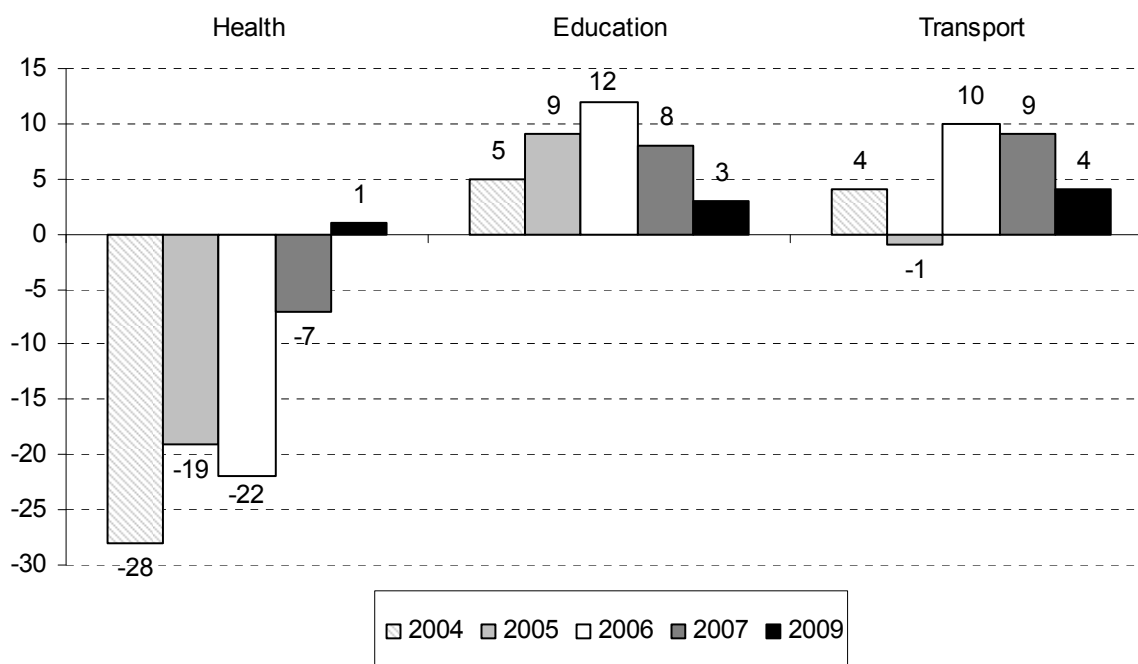


Base: All respondents
 Sample size: 1,482

3.11 The report on the 2007 core module (Ormston, 2008) noted that while there had been some substantial improvements in general attitudes to government (trust, belief having a Scottish Parliament gives people a say, etc.) between 2006 and 2007, there was less obvious change in perceptions of public services over the same period. The 2009 survey, however, reveals some clearer changes across the period from 2006 to 2009. These changes are summarised using 'net balance' scores (described in paragraph 3.3) in Figure 3.6.

3.12 The most obvious shift in the balance of opinion is with respect to health. Throughout the period from 2004 to 2006, many more people felt that standards in the health service in Scotland had fallen than that they had increased. There was a slight improvement in this picture in 2007, although it remained the case that more people thought things were getting worse than that they were getting better. However, in 2009, for the first time the balance of opinion was positive – albeit only just, at +1. It is important to exercise some caution in interpreting this finding – as shown in Figure 3.5, it remains the case that many people think standards in the health service are static. However, it does indicate that the high levels of dissatisfaction with health service performance recorded in earlier years may have started to abate.

Figure 3.6: ‘Net balance’ scores for views of public service performance in the last 12 months (2004-2007, 2009)



Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

3.13 In contrast, the balance of opinion on education seems to have headed in the opposite direction since 2006. This is primarily a reflection of a fall in the proportion who think standards are improving (30% in 2006, 22% in 2009), rather than a big increase in the proportion who think standards are declining (see Annex A, Table A.15 for detailed figures). Similarly, slightly fewer people felt standards in public transport were improving in 2009 compared with 2006 (23% compared with 29% - Annex A, Table A.16).

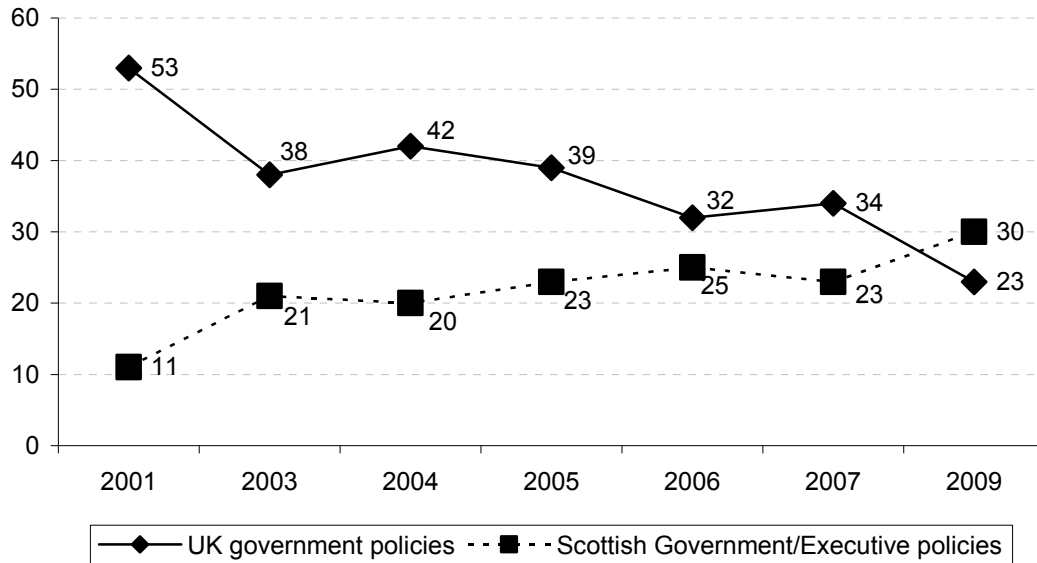
Changing perceptions of responsibility for public services and the economy

3.14 The previous chapter showed that although a majority still believe that the UK government at Westminster has most influence over how Scotland is run, people in Scotland are gradually becoming more likely to view the Scottish Government as the institution with most influence (Table 2.3). SSA also asks people what they think recent standards in the economy, the general standard of living and public services are the result of – Scottish Government policies, UK government policies, or something else altogether? The findings provide a more detailed picture of changing perceptions of the relative influence of the Scottish and UK governments.

3.15 Since 1999, the Scottish administration has been primarily responsible for setting policies relating to the NHS, education and public transport in Scotland. However, this has not always been reflected in public views of who is responsible for these areas. For example, in 2001 as many as 53% thought standards in the health service in Scotland were largely the result of UK

government policies (Figure 3.7). While the proportion attributing standards in the health service to the Scottish Executive did gradually increase between 2001 and 2006, in 2007 it remained the case that more people attributed standards in this area to the UK government. In 2009, this position was reversed for the first time – 30% said that standards in the health service were the result of Scottish Government policies, compared with 23% who attributed this to the UK government.

Figure 3.7: Beliefs about reasons for standards in the health service in the last 12 months (2001, 2003-2007, 2009, %)



Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

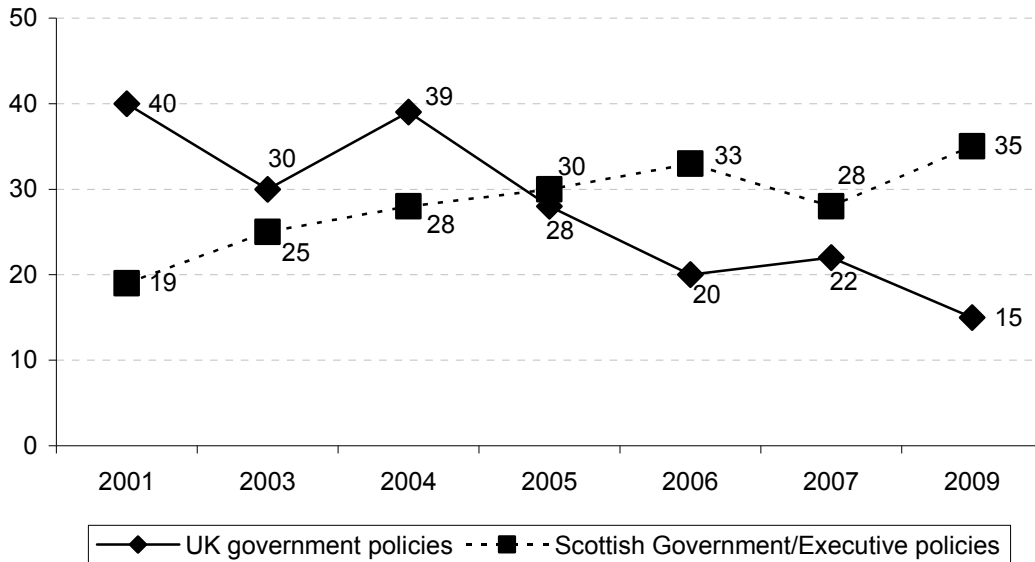
NB percentages do not sum to 100% as the figure does not show the proportions who answered 'some other reason', 'both', 'don't know' or who were not asked the question because they did not know whether standards had increased, fallen or stayed the same in the last year. See Annex A, table A.17 for full results.

3.16 The public appeared to recognise Scottish Executive responsibility for standards in education somewhat earlier, perhaps reflecting the long tradition of a distinct Scottish education system. From 2005 onwards, the proportion who attributed standards to the Scottish Executive was higher than the proportion attributing it to the UK government (Figure 3.8). However, by 2009 the perceived influence of the UK government over education in Scotland had declined even further – from 28% who attributed standards in education in 2005 to UK government policies, to just 15% in 2009. The pattern of opinion on responsibility for public transport has changed less over time, with the proportion attributing standards to the Scottish Executive/Government consistently outweighing the proportion attributing them to the UK government since the question was first asked in 2004 (see Annex A, Table A.19 for figures on public transport).

3.17 Taken together, these findings mean that in 2009, for the first time, more people attributed the recent performance of all three of these key areas of public services to the policies of the Scottish Government rather than the UK government. A decade after the first Scottish Parliament elections, SSA

demonstrates that the public has gradually become more likely to attribute responsibility for Scottish public services to the Scottish administration.

Figure 3.8: Beliefs about reasons for standards in education in the last 12 months (2001, 2003-2007, 2009, %)



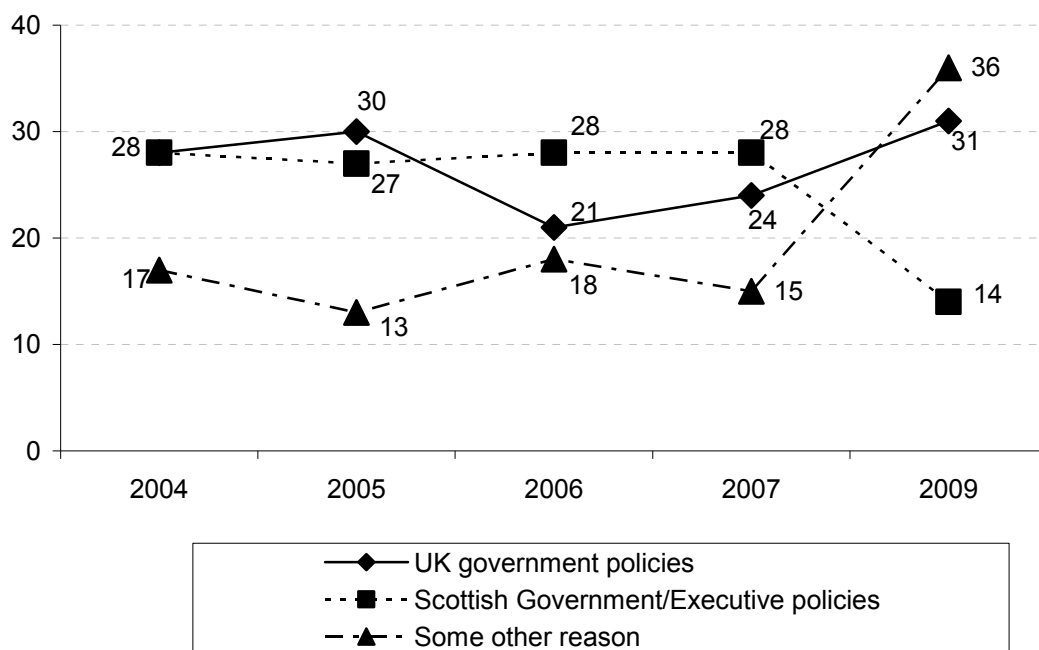
Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

NB percentages do not sum to 100% as the figure does not show the proportions who answered 'some other reason', 'both', 'don't know' or who were not asked the question because they did not know whether standards had increased, fallen or stayed the same in the last year. See Annex A, table A.18 for full results.

3.18 Views on responsibility for the economy in 2009 look quite different to those in previous years. Perhaps reflecting the 'global' nature of the economic crisis, the most common view was that economic performance in the previous 12 months reflected 'some other reason' (36% - Figure 3.9). However, the UK government also attracts a greater share of the perceived responsibility than the Scottish Government (31% compared with 14%). In fact, at 14%, the proportion who felt economic performance reflected Scottish Government policies was half what it was two years earlier, in 2007 (28%). Thus while people appear to support the idea that the Scottish Government should prioritise growing the economy, most people do not believe that Scotland's recent economic performance results primarily from Scottish Government policies.

Figure 3.9: Beliefs about reasons for standards in the economy in the last 12 months (2004-2007, 2009, %)



Base: All respondents

Sample size: see Annex B, Table 2

NB percentages do not sum to 100% as the figure does not show the proportions who answered 'both', 'don't know' or who were not asked the question because they did not know whether standards had increased, fallen or stayed the same in the last year. See Annex A, table A.20 for full results.

3.19 Beliefs about who was responsible for the general standard of living in Scotland in 2009 were similar to those on the economy. 'Other reasons' were most commonly cited (34%), followed by UK government policies (31%), with Scottish Government policies chosen least often (15% - see Annex A, Table A.21 for full figures).

Credit and blame

3.20 The last section looked at the perceived balance of responsibility between the Scottish Government, the UK government and other reasons in explaining the performance of public services, the economy and the general standard of living. However, these questions alone do not reveal who gets the 'credit' when things are believed to be going well, and who gets the 'blame' when things are perceived to be in decline.

3.21 This issue has been explored in some detail in earlier SSA reports (Park and McCrone, 2006, Given and Ormston, 2007a, Ormston and Sharp, 2007a). Park and McCrone identified a 'reverse symmetry' in perceptions of responsibility in 2003 – Scottish institutions tended to pick up most of the 'credit' from those who believed things were going well, while the UK government received most of the 'blame' from people who felt things were getting worse. However, in the early years after devolution, relatively few people felt that the Scottish institutions were influencing standards in public services in any case. So from

this perspective it is perhaps unsurprising that Westminster continued to get the 'blame' when people felt things had gone wrong. Given and Ormston (2007a) speculated that as the public became more aware of the areas for which the Scottish Executive had responsibility, they might become more inclined to hold it responsible for *both* perceived improvements *and* perceived falls in standards. By 2006, there was some tentative evidence that this was beginning to happen. For example, while in 2001 just 8% of those who thought standards in the health service had fallen attributed this to Scottish Executive policies, by 2006 the equivalent figure was 20%. Moreover, the proportion who 'blamed' the UK government for perceived poor performance of the Health Service in Scotland fell from 64% in 2001 to 44% in 2006. So while the UK government continued to pick up a bigger share of the 'blame', by 2006 there was some evidence that the Scottish Executive was (very gradually) starting to pick up an increasing share of this 'blame' (see Ormston and Sharp, 2007a for further details).

3.22 So what was the picture by 2009? It appears that, although the Scottish Government was continuing to pick up an increased share of the credit, they picked up even less of the 'blame' from people who thought standards had fallen. Taking health as an example (Table 3.2), as discussed above, in 2006 20% of those who felt the health service in Scotland was getting worse attributed this to Scottish Executive policies. But by 2009 this had fallen back to 12%. At the same time, the proportion of those who felt the health service was improving who attributed this to the Scottish Government increased from 41% in 2006 to 55% in 2009. And while there was less change in attribution of 'credit' and 'blame' with respect to education and public transport, there was certainly no evidence of any increase in the share of the blame apportioned to the Scottish Government. Thus the 'reverse symmetry' in public views of who should receive credit and blame for Scotland's public services appears to be just as strong in 2009 as it was in the early years of devolution, if not stronger.

Table 3.2: Attribution of ‘credit’ and ‘blame’ for standards in the last 12 months (2003, 2006, 2009, column % within area)

	% of those who say standards have ...					
	... increased (credit)			... fallen (blame)		
	2003	2006	2009	2003	2006	2009
Standards in the Health service are result of ...						
Scottish Government/Executive* policies	46	41	55	16	20	12
UK government policies	29	24	18	48	44	41
Some other reason	11	17	13	19	20	30
Standards in education are result of ...						
Scottish Government/Executive* policies	43	50	57	25	28	28
UK government policies	31	22	13	44	36	30
Some other reason	11	15	17	16	21	28
Standards in public transport¹⁷ are result of ...						
Scottish Government/Executive* policies	NA	53	53	NA	29	26
UK government policies	NA	14	12	NA	20	18
Some other reason	NA	22	23	NA	36	42
Standards in the economy¹⁸ are result of ...						
Scottish Government/Executive* policies	NA	47	66	NA	26	7
UK government policies	NA	19	14	NA	42	38
Some other reason	NA	20	12	NA	16	44
General standard of living is result of ...						
Scottish Government/Executive* policies	31	30	40	12	18	6
UK government policies	36	28	24	60	51	39
Some other reason	18	26	17	16	18	44

Base = all respondents. For sample size, see Annex A, Table A.22

* Prior to 2009, questions asked about the ‘Scottish Executive’

NB percentages do not sum to 100% as the figure does not show the proportions who answered ‘both’, ‘don’t know’ or who were not asked the question because they did not know whether standards had increased, fallen or stayed the same in the last year.

3.23 With respect to the economy and the general standard of living, the Scottish Government received the lion’s share of the ‘credit’ from the small proportion of people who felt these had improved in the year prior to the 2009 survey. However, very few of the much bigger group of people who think the economy is weaker and standards of living have fallen considers the Scottish Government to ‘blame’ for this. For example, while in 2006 26% of those who thought the economy had got weaker attributed this to Scottish Executive policies, in 2009 just 7% said the same. The most common view among those who felt the standard of living and economy had got worse was that this resulted from ‘some other reason’, beyond either UK or Scottish Government policies.

¹⁷ Questions on standards in public transport were first asked in 2004.

¹⁸ Questions on standards in the economy were first asked in 2004.

4 HOW DO ATTITUDES TO GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMY VARY?

Introduction

4.1 The previous chapters have outlined overall trends in attitudes to government and the economy since 1999. This chapter builds on findings from previous SSA reports to look in more detail at who is most and least positive in their views of these areas in 2009. After looking at variations in attitudes to government in Scotland in general, it focuses in more detail on those areas where there were significant changes in opinion between 2007 and 2009. Did trust in the Scottish Government and the belief that having a parliament strengthens Scotland's voice in the UK decrease equally across all social groups? Or were there particular people who became more negative? Were some groups particularly pessimistic about Scotland's economy in 2009, or were views similarly gloomy across all kinds of people in Scotland.¹⁹ Finally, the chapter looks briefly at who is most likely to blame poor economic performance on government policy, rather than broader global economic forces.

Who is most and least positive about government in Scotland in 2009?

4.2 Analysis of who was most and least positive about government in Scotland in 2009 confirmed many of the patterns found in earlier SSA reports. While there were some variations by demographic factors (notably gender and education), analysis suggests that it is people's underlying political and social attitudes (e.g. party political identification, constitutional preference and general level of trust in other people) which are often the best predictors of their attitudes to government.

Gender and education

4.3 Women were significantly less positive than men about a number of aspects of government in Scotland in 2009 (Table 4.1). For example, just 29% of women, compared with 43% of men, trusted the Scottish Government 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' to make fair decisions. Similar findings were apparent with respect to trust to act in Scotland's best interests and the belief that having a Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run. These gender divisions were *not* apparent in 2007 – an issue discussed in more detail below.

4.4 As discussed in Ormston (2008), surveys often find that people who are highly educated are more positive about government in general (see for example Bromley, Curtice and Seyd, 2004 and Warren (ed.) 1999). This was reflected in SSA 2009 (Table 4.1) – those with degrees were significantly more likely than those with no qualifications to trust the Scottish Government to act in

¹⁹ The findings reported in this chapter were informed by logistic regression analysis. This identified which factors were significantly associated with positive perceptions of the Scottish Government, and with negative views about the general performance of the economy, the general standard of living and people's own standard of living. See Annex B for details.

Scotland's best interests (71% vs. 52%), to believe having a Scottish Parliament gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK (64% vs. 43%) and to think that having a Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run (60% vs. 35%).²⁰

Table 4.1: Attitudes to government by gender and education, 2009 (cell %)

	Trust SG 'just about always/ most of the time' to act in Scotland's Best interests	Trust SG 'a great deal/ quite a lot' to make fair decisions	Having a Scottish Parl. gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK	Having a Scottish Parl. gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run	Scottish Government is very/ quite good at listening	Sample size
ALL	61	36	52	47	48	1482
Gender						
Men	67	43	58	54	52	656
Women	55	29	47	41	45	826
Education						
None	52	33	43	35	45	324
Degree/HE	71	44	64	60	56	490

4.5 In general, analysis of the 2009 data suggests that other demographic and area-level factors – like age, self-rated hardship²¹, whether someone works for the public or private sector, what region of Scotland people live in, whether they live in an urban or a rural area, and whether they live in a deprived or affluent area of Scotland – were not significant predictors of attitudes to government after other factors (like education and party political identification) were taken into account.²²

Newspaper readership and political attitudes

4.6 Another common finding from earlier years of SSA is that people who read broadsheet newspapers tend to express more positive views of government than do tabloid readers. This remained the case in 2009 – for example, 69% of

²⁰ Note that there is no relationship between this and the previous finding – women in our sample were just as likely as men to have Higher Education Qualifications, and gender was associated with trust in the Scottish Government independently of education (see Annex B, model 1).

²¹ Whether someone believes they are living comfortably, coping or finding it difficult on their current income.

²² These factors were either not identified as significant in multivariate analysis, or they were significant for only one of the five questions on attitudes to government discussed above. Moreover, where they were significant the pattern of variation was often not straightforward. For example, although regression modelling suggests age was significantly associated with trust in the Scottish Government to make fair decisions, the pattern was not linear – those aged 65+ were not significantly more likely than those aged 18-24 to think this. Similarly, although regression analysis suggests that people's feelings about their own income are related to their views on whether having a Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say, in fact the views of those who say they are living comfortably are not significantly different from those of people who are finding it difficult to cope. See Annex B for more details.

broadsheet readers said they trusted the Scottish Government ‘just about always’ or ‘most of the time’ to act in Scotland’s best interests, compared with just 53% of tabloid readers (Table 4.2)²³. Those who are more interested in politics in general also tend to be more positive about government and about the impact of devolution.

Table 4.2: Attitudes to government by newspaper readership and interest in politics, 2009 (cell %)

	Trust SG ‘just about always/ most of the time’ to act in Scotland’s Best interests	Trust SG ‘a great deal/ quite a lot’ to make fair decisions	Having a Scottish Parl. gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK	Having a Scottish Parl. gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run	Scottish Government is very/ quite good at listening	Sample size
ALL	61	36	52	47	48	1482
Newspaper						
Tabloid	53	32	50	42	41	503
Broadsheet	69	42	60	56	52	294
None	63	37	51	47	51	677
Interest in politics						
Great deal/quite a lot	67	46	64	57	55	506
Some	63	33	55	48	48	447
Not much/none	53	28	39	37	41	529

4.7 In terms of more specific political attitudes, unsurprisingly, those who identify with the party of government tend to trust government more. Blind (2006) suggests that this reflects ‘rational political trust’ – ‘*an interest-based calculation whereby citizens evaluate whether the government and/or the political leaders act in accordance with their partisan agenda*’. In 2009, SNP identifiers were more positive than those who identified with the Labour or Conservative party, or those with no political affiliation across most measures of attitudes to government in Scotland (Table 4.3)²⁴. For example, 65% of SNP supporters said having a Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run, compared with 43% of Labour supporters, 40% of Conservatives and 35% of those who did not support any particular party.

²³ Respondents were asked whether they regularly read a daily morning newspaper, and if so which one. Their responses were recorded by interviewers, and the newspapers subsequently grouped for analysis according to whether they were broadsheets or tabloids. The question did not specifically ask about reading newspapers online, although it is possible that some respondents included this in their answer.

²⁴ Party political identification is identified through a series of questions. Respondents are asked if they support any particular party. Those who say no are asked if they feel closer to one party than another. Those who still answer no are asked which party they would support if there was a general election tomorrow.

4.8 Attitudes to having a Scottish Parliament in the first place also affect views of government in Scotland (Table 4.3). However, here the dividing line appears to be simply whether people think Scotland should have its own parliament, and not whether they would prefer that parliament to be independent or not. For example, 65% of those whose preferred option is for Scotland to have its own parliament within the UK and 66% of those who would prefer it to be independent say they trust the Scottish Government ‘just about always’ or ‘most of the time’ to act in Scotland’s best interests. This compares with just 37% of those who would prefer Scotland to be governed solely from Westminster.

Table 4.3: Attitudes to government by party political identification and constitutional preference, 2009 (cell %)

	Trust SG ‘just about always/ most of the time’ to act in Scotland’s Best interests	Trust SG ‘a great deal/ quite a lot’ to make fair decisions	Having a Scottish Parl. gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK	Having a Scottish Parl. gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run	Scottish Government is very/ quite good at listening	Sample size
Party identification						
SNP	77	51	69	65	61	324
Lib Dem	76	43	62	58	53	109
Labour	57	39	52	43	45	397
Conservative	62	30	52	40	48	200
None	45	22	34	35	41	269
Other	58	30	53	47	44	183
Constitutional preference						
Westminster rule	37	19	17	15	32	129
Devolution	65	37	59	51	50	845
Independence	66	43	55	54	52	404

4.9 Those who chose ‘Scottish’ rather than ‘British’ as the national identity that best described them were also more likely to say they trusted the Scottish Government ‘just about always’ or ‘most of the time’ to act in Scotland’s interests (61% compared with 52%) and to feel that having a Scottish Parliament gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK (52% compared with 44%).

Social trust and political participation

4.10 Social capital theorists like Putnam (2000) have argued that political and social trust tend to coalesce, with low levels of one often associated with low levels of the other. Findings from SSA 2009 lend some support to this theory – people who are more trusting of other people in general also tend to display higher levels of political trust (Table 4.4). For example, 42% of those who thought

'most people can be trusted' compared with just 29% of those who felt 'you can't be too careful dealing with people' trusted the Scottish government 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' to make fair decisions. It is worth noting, however, that the relationship between social and political trust is far from perfect – there are significant numbers of people who appear to trust government but not each other, and vice versa.

- 4.11 Those who were more 'socially connected' within their community also tended to be more positive about the impact of having a Scottish Parliament on Scotland's say in the UK and on ordinary people's say in government in 2009 (Table 4.4). For example, 53% of those who appeared most connected with other people in their area²⁵ compared with 42% of those who were less connected felt that having a Scottish Parliament was giving ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run. Again, this lends some support to the idea that social and political capital go together – people who feel more engaged in their community may also feel more engaged with broader political structures.
- 4.12 Finally, a similar association was apparent between taking part in actions to make your views known and feeling that having a Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say (Table 4.4). Fifty-six per cent of those who had done something 'active' to make their views on an issue known in the last few years (such as contacting an MP or attending a public meeting) felt devolution was giving ordinary people more say, compared with just 39% of those who had not done anything.
- 4.13 Of course, it is not possible to establish from this data what direction these relationships run in. For example, do people who are more active in making their views known feel that having the Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people more say as a result of having their *own* ideas listened to? Or are those who believe the Scottish Parliament has empowered people to make their views known more likely to take such action in the first place? In practice, the two may be mutually reinforcing.

²⁵ Based on responses to a series of questions designed to measure 'social connectedness'. These questions asked people how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: 'I regularly stop and speak to people in my area'; 'If my home was empty, I could count on one of my neighbours to keep an eye on it'; and 'I feel that there are people in this area I could turn to for advice and support'. Responses to the three questions were combined to form an overall measure of 'social connectedness'.

Table 4.4: Attitudes to government by social trust, connectedness and participation in actions to make views known, 2009 (cell %)

	Trust SG 'just about always/ most of the time' to act in Scotland's Best interests	Trust SG 'a great deal/ quite a lot' to make fair decisions	Having a Scottish Parl. gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK	Having a Scottish Parl. gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run	Scottish Government is very/ quite good at listening	Sample size
ALL	61	36	52	47	48	1482
Social trust						
Most people can be trusted	69	42	60	53	51	794
Can't be too careful dealing with people	51	29	44	41	44	653
Social connections with local area¹						
Most connected	63	40	60	53	52	411
Middle	59	36	53	48	48	591
Least connected	60	33	46	42	46	480
Participation in action to make views known²						
'Active' participation	65	41	60	56	50	678
'Low level' participation	65	36	54	46	43	154
No, nothing	55	31	45	39	47	644

1 – These categories were derived by combining people's responses to 3 statements about their connections with people in their local area (see footnote 13, above) and splitting them into three groups based on their combined 'score' across these questions.

2 – Participants were asked to say which, if any, of a list of things they had done as a way of registering what they thought about an issue in the last few years (see Annex A, Table A.23 for the full results of this question). Those who only mentioned giving money or signing a petition were classed as having done something 'low level' to make their views known, on the basis that neither action requires significant time or engagement with others. Those who had taken one of the other actions listed (including contacting an MP, MSP or local council, attending meetings, going on protests, etc.) were classed as having done something more 'active' to make their views known.

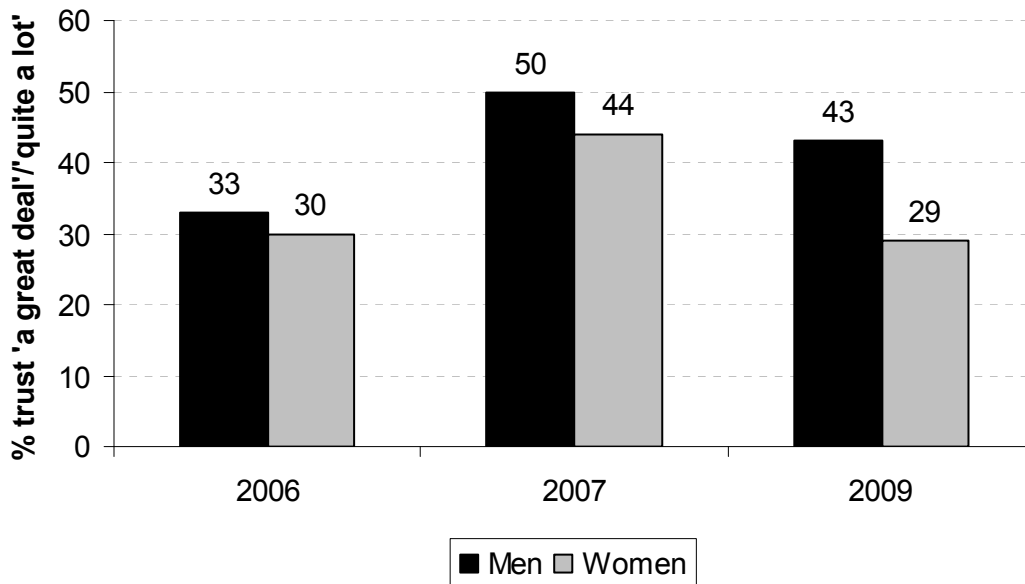
Whose views have changed since 2007?

4.14 Chapter Two showed that the very high levels of trust in government and the increased level of belief that having a Scottish Parliament strengthens Scotland's voice in the UK seen in 2007 were not maintained into 2009. But did positive views on these issues decline across all social groups, or did the views of some groups alter more than others in the two years from 2007 to 2009? Comparisons of findings from 2007 and 2009 suggest that, while the views of

most groups of people became somewhat more negative, several groups particularly stand out (see Annex A, Tables A.24 to A.26 for full details).

4.15 First, trust in the Scottish Government appears to have fallen more among **women than men** (Figure 4.1). In 2007, 50% of men and 44% of women expressed ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ of trust in the Scottish Executive to make fair decisions – a gap of just 6 points. But by 2009, while the proportion of men who trusted the Scottish Government on this measure had fallen to 43%, the proportion of women who said the same fell even more sharply, to 29%. In fact, it appears that while the views of men remained more positive in 2009, trust among women had fallen back to close to 2006 levels.

Figure 4.1: Trust the Scottish Government ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ to make fair decisions by gender, 2006, 2007, 2009 (%)



Base: All respondents

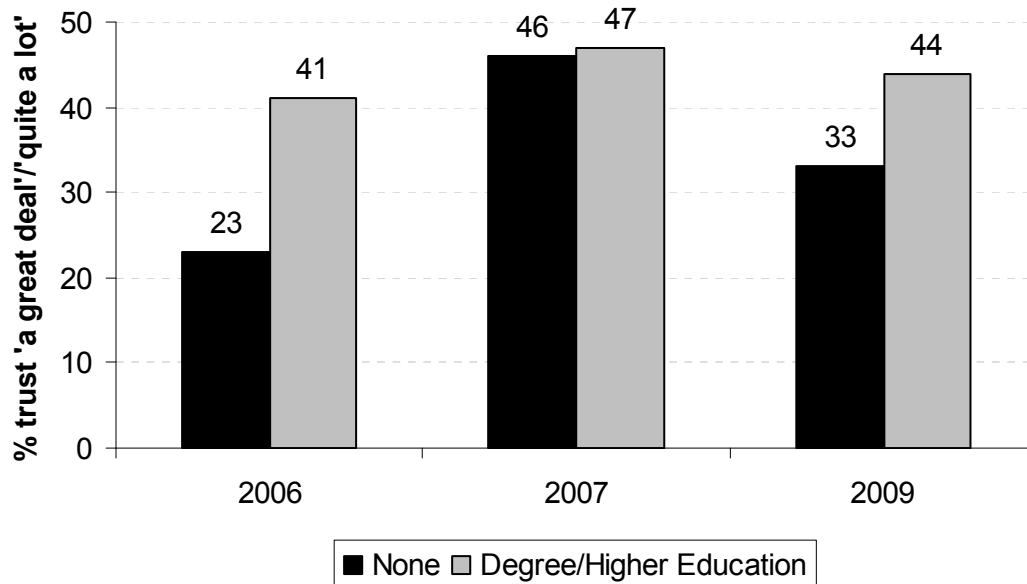
Sample size: 2007 Men = 645, women = 863; 2009 Men = 656, women = 826.

4.16 Similarly, in 2007, there was barely any difference in the proportion of men and women who felt that having a Scottish Parliament gave Scotland a stronger voice in the UK (62% vs 60%). But by 2009, the gap between men and women had widened, with just 47% of women saying this (down 13 percentage points from 2007), compared with 58% of men (down just 4 points – see Annex A, Table A.26).

4.17 Second, **education** appeared to be a somewhat stronger predictor of trust in government in 2009 than it was in 2007 (Figure 4.2). The 2007 survey found that the ‘gap’ in trust in government between graduates and those with no qualifications noted in previous years had narrowed considerably (Ormston, 2008). This was largely a result of a big increase in trust among those with no qualifications (from 23% in 2006 to 46% in 2007). However, by 2009, trust among this group had fallen back significantly, while among graduates trust remained higher. Thus the ‘gap’ between the proportion of graduates and the

proportion of those without qualifications who trusted the Scottish Government to make fair decisions was 11 points in 2009 (44% vs. 33%), compared with just 1 point in 2007 (47% vs. 46%).

Figure 4.2: Trust the Scottish Government ‘a great deal’ or ‘quite a lot’ to make fair decisions by highest educational qualification, 2006, 2007, 2009 (%)



Base: All respondents

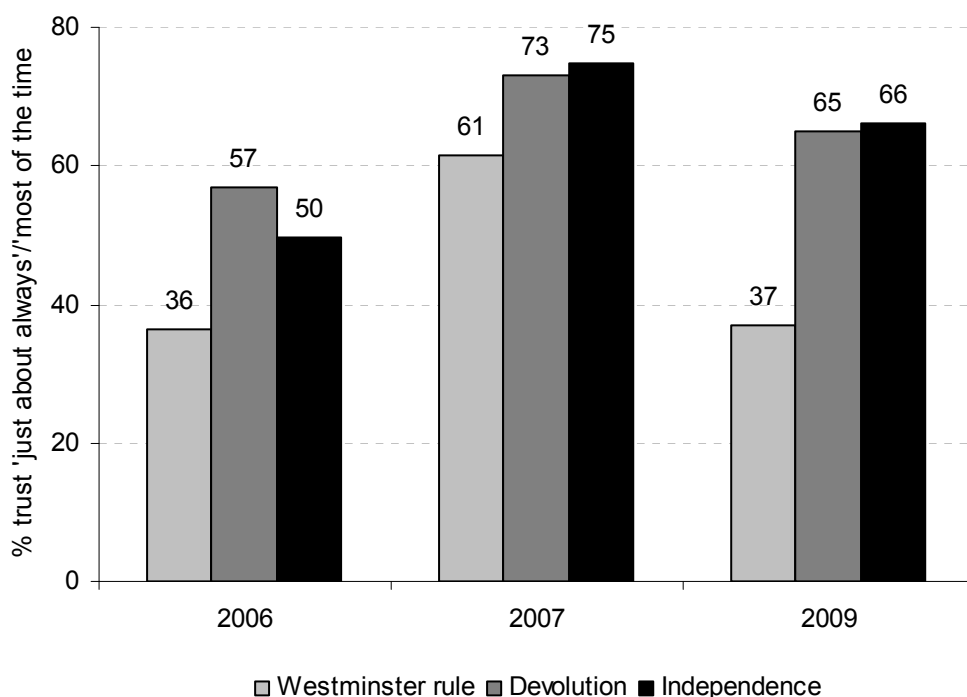
Sample size: 2007 No qualifications = 367, degree/HE = 487; 2009 no qualifications = 324, Degree/HE = 490.

4.18 In terms of **party political identification**, the 2007 report found that while unsurprisingly SNP supporters were most likely to express positive views about government in Scotland, in fact positive perceptions had also increased among supporters of other parties and those with no particular party affiliation. However, by 2009, while trust in the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s best interests was down just 1 point from 2007 among SNP identifiers, it had fallen by 16 points among Labour identifiers (see Annex A, Table A.24). Thus levels of trust in government were more clearly divided along party political lines in 2009 than in 2007.

4.19 Interestingly, the same pattern was not apparent with respect to the belief that having a Scottish Parliament gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK, where the views of Labour and SNP identifiers fell by an identical amount (8 points – see Annex A, Table A.26). Perhaps the SNP’s preference for an independent parliament has led their supporters to feel somewhat less satisfied with the devolved institutions of government in Scotland than they were in 2007 (although they were still relatively more positive than supporters of other parties).

4.20 Finally, trust in the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s best interests fell particularly sharply (from 61% in 2007 to 37% in 2009) among those whose **constitutional preference** is for Scotland to be run solely from Westminster (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3: Trust the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s interests ‘just about always’/‘most of the time’ by constitutional preference, 2006, 2007, 2009 (%)



Base: All respondents

Sample size: 2006 WM rule = 154, Devolution = 852, Independence = 478; 2007 WM rule = 142, Devolution = 953, Independence = 330; 2009 WM rule = 129, Devolution = 845, independence = 404.

4.21 In summary then, the 2009 findings on trust in government and attitudes to the impact of devolution on Scotland’s voice in the UK suggest something of a return to the usual patterns of difference following the changes seen in 2007. The gap in trust between the most and least educated has re-emerged. Party political divides were more evident than in 2007. And trust in the Scottish Government to act in Scotland’s interests was much lower among those who support Westminster rule than among those who support either devolution or independence. At the same time, while levels of trust in the Scottish Government among women have fallen back to close to 2006 levels, trust among men has remained more positive.

Who is most and least positive about the economy in 2009?

4.22 Chapter Three showed that perceptions of both Scotland’s economy and the general standard of living were significantly more negative in 2009 than they were in 2007 (paragraph 3.3). This is unsurprising, given the very different economic context. However, perhaps a more interesting question is whether everyone’s views were similarly negative, or whether some groups of people were even more likely than others to feel pessimistic.

4.23 In fact, analysis to explore who was most likely to say that the economy had got ‘a lot weaker’ in the 12 months prior to the 2009 survey suggests that there

were relatively few significant differences of opinion. Men and women, people in deprived and affluent areas, people in managerial and professional occupations and those in routine or semi-routine jobs, and people on high and low incomes were all similarly likely to feel the economy had got a lot weaker. However, there were some differences by age and by economic status. Older people, aged 65 plus, were relatively less likely to say the economy had got ‘a lot weaker’ (18%, compared with 31% of those aged 40-64 and 39% of those aged 18-24 – Table 4.5). Further analysis suggests this may in part reflect their position in the labour market, since the main factor significantly associated with thinking the economy had got ‘a lot weaker’ in 2009 was economic status. Half of those who were unemployed in 2009 felt the economy was a lot weaker, compared with 32% of those who were working or waiting to take up paid work and just 19% of those who were retired (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Believe Scotland’s economy ‘a lot weaker’ in the last 12 months by age and economic status, 2009 (%)

	%	<i>Sample</i>
ALL	29	1482
Age		
18-24	39	82
25-39	30	320
40-64	31	677
65+	18	402
Economic status		
Unemployed	50	75
Education/training	39	35
Working	32	768
Permanently sick or disabled	27	82
Retired	19	417
Looking after the home	23	87

4.24 There was somewhat more variation in attitudes to the general standard of living, although again many people across all social groups felt this had fallen in the previous 12 months. Women were somewhat more likely than men to feel standards of living had fallen a lot (20% compared with 13% - Table 4.6). In terms of age, it was those in the 40-64 year-old age group who were most pessimistic – 22% felt it had fallen a lot, compared with 11% of those aged 65 and over. People’s views about the general standard of living in Scotland also appeared to be related to their feelings about their own incomes – 32% of those who said they were finding it difficult to cope on their income felt the general standard of living in Scotland had fallen a lot in the previous 12 months, compared with just 12% of those who said they were living comfortably (Table 4.6). Finally, those who were less trusting of other people in general tended also to be slightly more negative about changes in the general standard of living – 22% of those who felt ‘you can’t be too careful dealing with people’

compared with 12% of those who said 'most people can be trusted' thought the general standard of living had fallen 'a lot'.²⁶

Table 4.6: Believe general standard of living has 'fallen a lot' in the last 12 months by gender, age, and self-rated hardship, 2009 (%)

	%	Sample
ALL	16	1482
Gender		
Men	13	656
Women	20	826
Age		
18-24	11	82
25-39	14	320
40-64	22	677
65+	11	402
Self-rated hardship		
Finding it difficult/very difficult	32	183
Coping	17	591
Living very/fairly comfortably	12	699

Who is most and least positive about their own standard of living?

4.25 Chapter Three also revealed that although people believed the general standard of living in Scotland had fallen, overall people's satisfaction with their own standard of living remained high, with a mean score of 7.64 out of a possible 10, which was not significantly different from the 2007 mean score of 7.79 (paragraph 3.4). However, it is of course possible that this overall score masks differences in satisfaction between groups. Given and Webster (2008) used SSA 2007 data to explore such differences. Very similar factors were associated with people's satisfaction with their own standard of living in 2009 (see Table 4.7). In particular, satisfaction varied with:

- **Economic activity** – those who were unemployed or permanently sick or disabled were less satisfied on average with their own standard of living than were those in employment or education, retired people, and those who were looking after the home or family.²⁷
- **Household income** – people in the lowest income group had a mean satisfaction score of just 6.75, compared with 8.28 for those in the highest group.

²⁶ Note that regression analysis (Annex B, model 6) suggests that marital status was also significantly related to thinking the general standard of living had fallen a lot. Those who had never married or formed a civil partnership were slightly less likely than those who had separated, divorced or dissolved a civil partnership to say the general standard of living had fallen a lot. However, the bivariate differences were not particularly big. Moreover, they disappear when you look the proportion who thought the standard of living had fallen 'a little' or 'a lot' together.

²⁷ Note that although regression analysis of factors associated with a below average score for satisfaction with own living standards does not show this precise pattern after other factors – like income and self-rated hardship - are taken into account, bivariate analysis indicates clear differences in mean satisfaction scores by economic activity.

- **Self-rated hardship** – similarly, those who felt they were struggling to cope on their current income had a mean score of 5.6 compared with a score of 8.5 for those who said they were living comfortably.
- **Self-assessed health** – people who said their health was bad or very bad had lower mean ‘standard of living’ scores than those who felt they were in very good health (6.1 compared with 8.2).

4.26 Thus the overall high level of satisfaction with standards of living in 2009 *did* mask significant differences between different groups. However, the pattern of variation in 2009 was very similar to that in 2007 – there was no evidence that particular types of people had become *more* negative since the start of the recession. This may, of course, change in future years. Given that people’s satisfaction with their general standard of living appears to be related to actual and perceived economic status, any future increases in unemployment, for example, may have an impact at both the overall level and for particular subgroups.

Table 4.7: Satisfaction with general standard of living – mean scores (2007, 2009)

	2007	2009
ALL	7.79	7.64
Employment status		
In work/ waiting to take up paid work	7.80	7.70
Education/ training scheme	8.20	8.15
Unemployed	6.52	6.32
Retired	8.20	8.10
Permanently sick or disabled	6.53	6.10
Looking after the home	7.71	7.82
Household Income		
Bottom quartile	7.02	6.75
2	7.53	7.27
3	7.80	7.75
Top quartile	8.37	8.28
Self-rated hardship		
Living very/fairly comfortably	8.51	8.53
Coping	7.37	7.32
Finding it difficult/very difficult	5.43	5.56
Self-assessed health		
Very good	8.21	8.20
Fairly good	7.76	7.67
Fair	7.31	7.07
Bad/very bad	6.43	6.08

For sample sizes, see Annex A, Table A.27.

Who blames the government for economic performance?

4.27 In the final section of Chapter Three (paragraph 3.17), we saw that over a third of people believed Scotland’s economic performance in the year prior to the

2009 survey reflected 'other reasons', and not either UK or Scottish Government policy. However, taken together the proportion who believed that economic performance was the result of either UK (31%) or Scottish (14%) government policy was still considerable. In the last section of this chapter, we examine who is most and least likely to attribute poor economic performance to government policy.

4.28 Overall, 33% of people believed that in 2009 (a) the economy had got weaker and (b) that this was the result of either UK or Scottish Government policies. There were some demographic variations in the people most and least likely to think this – for example, unemployed people were more likely to think this (43%) compared with those in work (35%) and retired people (24%). Moreover, those aged 40-64 were somewhat more likely to say this than either younger or older people (38% compared with 28% of 18-24 year-olds and 25% of those aged 65 plus). However, there was no significant variation by gender, deprivation, income, social class, etc. Rather, views varied significantly with trust in both the UK and Scottish Government. For example, among those who trusted the UK Government 'just about always' or 'most of the time' to act in Scotland's best interests, just 21% blamed government for the perceived weakness of Scotland's economy. In contrast, 42% of those who 'almost never' trusted the UK government to act in Scotland's interest did so. A very similar pattern is apparent with respect to trust in the Scottish Government – 27% of those who 'just about always' trusted the Scottish Government to act in Scotland's interests blamed government for the state of the economy, compared with 45% of those who 'almost never' trusted it. Again, the direction of this relationship is unclear. It might be reasonable to assume that those who are generally suspicious of government are more likely to believe they have been incompetent in their handling of economic issues, and to blame them as a result. But equally it could be that some people have become less trusting of government because they believe governments have mishandled the economic crisis.

5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 As discussed in Chapter One, a key question for this report was whether the positive opinions of government in Scotland recorded in 2007 would be maintained in 2009. In some areas, these attitudes do indeed appear to have been sustained. For example, the proportion who believed that having a Scottish Parliament is giving ordinary people more say was as high in 2009 as in 2007 (although a significant proportion continue to believe it is making no difference). Meanwhile, the proportion who believed the Scottish Government listens to people before taking decisions was even higher in 2009 than in 2007, although gradual improvements in the belief the Scottish Executive listened were starting to emerge before 2007. Similarly, more people than ever before thought the Scottish Government was the institution with most influence over how Scotland is run, although again this reflects a more gradual trend beginning in the early 2000s, rather than a big shift in attitudes over the last few years.
- 5.2 In other areas, however the big shifts in public opinion seen in 2007 were not sustained. Political trust fell, as did the belief that having a Scottish Parliament is giving Scotland a stronger voice in the UK. However, when compared with both attitudes to the UK government and with attitudes to Scottish government over the last decade, arguably public views of government in Scotland remained relatively positive in 2009. In the areas where views have become somewhat more negative since 2007, this is in part explained by a re-emergence of previous patterns of difference by education, party political identification and constitutional preference. The need to consider ways of engaging those with low levels of educational qualifications in particular – an issue associated with other kinds of disadvantage (like low income) – remains a key challenge for government.
- 5.3 Public views of the economy and the general standard of living in Scotland were significantly more pessimistic in 2009 compared with 2007, reflecting radical changes in the UK's economic circumstances. However, this was not yet reflected in increased pessimism among the public about their own standard of living. Given the strong association between people's economic status and their feelings about their own standard of living, this may change in future years if there is any increase in unemployment, for example.
- 5.4 Public priorities for government action in 2009 also focused more than in earlier years on Scotland's economy. More people in 2009 compared with 2004-2007 said the Scottish Government should prioritise growing the economy over other issues like cutting crime (although taken together improving health, education and housing remained priorities for 2 in 5 people). However, findings on what people believe the performance of Scotland's economy results from suggest that few people attribute recent economic performance to Scottish Government policies.
- 5.5 The most common view of standards in the health service, education and public transport in Scotland in 2009 was that they had simply stayed the same

in the past 12 months. However, there was some evidence that views of standards the health service in particular had become less negative than in previous years. At the same time, fewer people thought standards in education were improving in 2009 than said the same in 2006.

- 5.6 The next few years are likely to see increasing pressures on public service budgets. As such, further improvements in standards may have to be delivered without big increases in spending. In fact, this report suggests that the Scottish public's appetite for further increases in spending (insofar as this implies increases in taxes) was lower in 2009 than it was a decade earlier. Whether views on taxation and spending will shift again if public service budgets become increasingly tight remains to be seen.

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ANNEX A – DETAILED TABLES

Notes on tables

- ‘*’ indicates less than 0.5 percent but greater than zero
- ‘-’ indicates no respondents gave this answer
- All figures are rounded to the nearest whole number (from 2 decimal places, such that 0.49 rounds down and 0.51 up)

Chapter 2 detailed tables

Table A.1: How much do you trust the UK government to work in Scotland’s best long-term interest? (column %)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	%	%	%	%	%
Just about always	3	1	2	2	2
Most of the time	29	16	20	17	19
Only some of the time	52	54	55	51	58
Almost never	14	26	22	26	20
(Don’t know)	-	-	-	-	-
(Not answered)	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1482</i>	<i>1663</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1665</i>	<i>1508</i>
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Just about always	2	2	2	3	2
Most of the time	20	21	19	32	23
Only some of the time	50	53	52	44	48
Almost never	26	21	24	18	24
(Don’t know)	2	3	3	3	3
(Not answered)	*	*	-	*	-
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>

Table A.2: How much do you trust the Scottish Government/Executive /Parliament* to work in Scotland's best interests?

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	%	%	%	%	%
Just about always	26	9	13	9	10
Most of the time	55	45	52	43	52
Only some of the time	14	34	29	34	31
Almost never	2	9	5	11	4
(Don't know)	-	-	-	-	-
(Not answered)	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1482</i>	<i>1663</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1665</i>	<i>1508</i>
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Just about always	9	10	8	14	14
Most of the time	43	46	43	57	47
Only some of the time	37	33	37	22	31
Almost never	10	7	8	4	5
(Don't know)	2	3	3	4	3
(Not answered)	*	*	-	*	*
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>

*Prior to 2004, the question asked about the Parliament. In 2004 an experiment was run whereby half the sample was asked about the Scottish Parliament and half was asked about the Scottish Executive. The change of wording made negligible difference to the responses given therefore the combined results are shown here. In 2009, the wording was changed again to ask about the Scottish Government, following the September 2007 name change.

Table A.3: How much would you say you've seen or heard about the work of the UK government over the last twelve months?

	2004	2005	2006	2009
	%	%	%	%
A great deal	11	12	14	23
Quite a lot	23	27	27	29
Some	29	26	26	23
Not very much	31	29	26	19
Nothing at all	5	5	6	4
(Don't know)	1	2	1	1
(Not answered)	-	*	-	-
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1482</i>

Note: this question was not asked on SSA 2007

Table A.4: And how much would you say you've seen or heard about the work of the Scottish Government/Executive* over the last twelve months?

	2004	2005	2006	2009
	%	%	%	%
A great deal	9	7	8	14
Quite a lot	21	24	27	32
Some	30	28	31	29
Not very much	33	34	26	20
Nothing at all	7	7	7	4
(Don't know)	1	1	1	1
(Not answered)	-	*	-	-
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1482</i>

Note: this question was not asked on SSA 2007

* Prior to 2009, the question asked about the 'Scottish Executive'.

Table A.5: From what you have seen and heard so far do you think that having a Scottish parliament is giving ordinary people...

	1997*	1999**	2000	2001	2002	2003
	%	%	%	%	%	%
...more say in how Scotland is	79	64	44	38	31	39
...less say	2	2	3	4	4	4
...or, is it making no difference	17	32	51	56	62	54
(Don't know)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(Not answered)	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sample size</i>	882	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	
	%	%	%	%	%	
...more say in how Scotland is	31	37	37	47	47	
...less say	6	5	5	3	3	
...or, is it making no difference	60	55	55	45	47	
(Don't know)	3	4	4	4	3	
(Not answered)	*	*	-	*	*	
<i>Sample size</i>	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482	

*1997 data source = Referendum study

**1999-2009 data source = Scottish Social Attitudes survey

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 "Will a Scottish Parliament..."

2000 "Do you think that having a Scottish parliament is going to..."

2001 onwards "Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving..."

Table A.6: In general how good would you say the Scottish Executive/Government* is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Very good	1	3	2	2	4
Quite good	31	32	34	41	44
Not very good	41	38	39	35	33
Not at all good	17	16	14	9	8
(Don't know)	10	12	11	13	11
(Not answered)	*	*	-	*	-
<i>Sample size</i>	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

*From 2004-2007, the question asked about the Scottish Executive. In 2009, the question was amended to ask about the Scottish Government.

Table A.7: And how good would you say the UK government is at listening to people's views before it takes decisions?

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Very good	1	1	1	*	1
Quite good	14	15	17	21	17
Not very good	50	52	49	50	51
Not at all good	30	25	27	21	23
(Don't know)	6	7	7	8	7
(Not answered)	*	*	*	*	-
<i>Sample size</i>	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

Table A.8: Which do you think ought to have most influence over the way Scotland is run?

	1999	2000	2001	2003	2004
	%	%	%	%	%
The Scottish Government/Executive/Parliament*	74	72	74	66	67
The UK government at Westminster	13	13	14	20	12
Local councils in Scotland	8	10	8	9	17
The European Union	1	1	1	1	1
(Don't know)	-	5	-	-	3
(Not answered)	-	-	-	-	*
<i>Sample size</i>	1482	1663	1605	1508	1637

	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%
The Scottish Government/Executive/Parliament *	67	64	71	72
The UK government at Westminster	13	11	14	13
Local councils in Scotland	15	19	9	11
The European Union	1	1	1	*
(Don't know)	4	4	4	3
(Not answered)	*	*	*	-
<i>Sample size</i>	1549	1594	1508	1482

*In 2004 an experiment was run whereby half the sample was asked about the Scottish Parliament and half was asked about the Scottish Executive. The change of wording made negligible difference to the responses given, therefore the combined results are shown here. In subsequent years (2005-2007), the question asked solely about the Scottish Executive.

Table A.9: From what you have seen and heard so far do you think that having a Scottish parliament is giving Scotland.....

	1997	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
	%	%	%	%	%	%
...a stronger voice in the United	70	70	52	52	39	49
...a weaker voice in the United	9	7	6	6	7	7
...or, is it making no difference?	17	20	40	40	52	41
(Don't know)	-	-	-	-	-	-
(Not answered)	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sample size</i>	882	1482	1663	1605	1665	1508
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	
	%	%	%	%	%	
...a stronger voice in the United	35	41	43	61	52	
...a weaker voice in the United	7	6	6	4	5	
...or, is it making no difference?	55	50	49	32	40	
(Don't know)	3	3	3	3	3	
(Not answered)	*	*	-	*	*	
<i>Sample size</i>	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482	

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 "Will a Scottish Parliament..."

2000 "Do you think that having a Scottish parliament is going to..."

2001 onwards "Do you think that having a Scottish Parliament is giving..."

Chapter 3 detailed tables

Table A.10: 2What about the Scotland's economy? Has it got stronger or weaker since (month of interview) 2008?

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
A lot stronger	3	2	2	2	1
A little stronger	25	21	28	28	7
Stayed the same	29	34	28	36	11
A little weaker	22	19	18	10	43
A lot weaker	5	3	2	1	29
(Don't know)	17	22	21	22	8
<i>Sample size</i>	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

Table A.11: What about the general standard of living in Scotland? Has it increased or fallen since (month of interview) 2008?

	1999	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increased a lot	2	3	4	4	3	4	2	3
Increased a little	27	27	30	27	25	30	27	13
Stayed the same	43	45	36	40	45	37	41	25
Fallen a little	18	15	17	18	17	17	16	38
Fallen a lot	6	4	7	6	4	5	4	16
(Don't know)	5	6	7	5	7	6	9	4
<i>Sample size</i>	1482	1605	1508	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

Note:

The question wording in each year was:

1999 and 2001 "Thinking back to the UK general election in 1997"

2003 "Thinking back to the last Scottish election in 1999"

2004 onwards "since (month of interview) (previous year)".

Table A.12: Satisfaction with different aspects of life (2007, 2009)

	Satisfaction with job?		Satisfaction with family/personal life		Satisfaction with standard of living		Satis with life as a whole?	
	2007	2009	2007	2009	2007	2009	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
0 (extremely dissatisfied/unhappy)	1	1	*	*	*	*	*	*
1	1	3	*	*	*	*	*	*
2	3	1	*	*	1	1	*	*
3	3	5	1	1	1	2	1	1
4	4	3	2	1	3	3	1	2
5	10	10	3	5	5	7	5	5
6	9	7	4	4	7	8	7	5
7	18	18	11	9	17	16	14	14
8	28	28	23	22	30	27	30	29
9	15	10	23	22	19	18	23	23
10 (extremely satisfied/happy)	9	15	31	36	16	17	19	21
Don't know	*	*	1	*	*	*	*	-
Not answered	-	-	*	*	*	-	*	*
<i>MEAN</i> ¹	7.04	7.14	8.41	8.46	7.79	7.64	8.06	8.04
<i>Sample size</i>	827	765	1508	1482	1508	1482	1508	1482
<i>Sample size excluding DK/not answered</i>	825	764	1492	1475	1498	1480	1495	1479

1 - Means are calculated on sample excluding don't know/not answered.

The base for 'job satisfaction' includes only those in paid employment

Table A.13: Attitudes to unemployment benefits (1999- 2003, 2006, 2009)

	1999	2000	2001	2003	2006	2009
	%		%	%	%	%
Too low and cause hardship	36	43	45	41	33	31
Too high and discourage job seeking	33	28	26	32	39	42
(Neither)	22	17	16	16	18	17
(Other response)	3	7	6	5	3	5
Don't know	5	6	7	7	6	5
Not answered	*	-	-	*	*	-
	1482	1663	1605	1508	1594	1482

Table A.14: Thinking back over the last twelve months*, that is since (month of interview) 2008, would you say that since then the standard of the health service in Scotland has increased or fallen? (1999, 2001, 2003-2007, 2009)

	1999	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increased a lot	2	2	2	3	2	4	2	4
Increased a little	21	21	18	15	15	16	17	22
Stayed the same	35	29	25	31	38	31	45	41
Fallen a little	20	26	26	23	24	23	20	17
Fallen a lot	14	15	20	23	12	18	6	8
(Don't know)	8	7	8	5	10	8	10	8
(Not answered)	-	-	-	-	*	-	-	-
Sample size	1482	1605	1508	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

*The question wording in each year was:

1999 and 2001 "Thinking back to the UK general election in 1997"

2003 "Thinking back to the last Scottish election in 1999"

2004 onwards "Thinking back over the last 12 months".

Table A.15: And what about the quality of education in Scotland? Has it increased or fallen since (month of interview) 2008?*

	1999	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Increased a lot	3	3	3	3	2	4	1	2
Increased a little	23	24	22	23	23	26	18	20
Stayed the same	32	33	27	37	39	32	45	38
Fallen a little	17	16	18	15	12	13	10	15
Fallen a lot	7	5	11	7	5	5	2	4
(Don't know)	19	19	19	16	20	20	23	22
Sample size	1482	1605	1508	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

*The question wording in each year was:

1999 and 2001 "Thinking back to the UK general election in 1997"

2003 "Thinking back to the last Scottish election in 1999"

2004 onwards "since the (month of interview) (previous year)".

Table A.16: And what about the standard of public transport in Scotland? Has it increased or fallen since (month of interview) 2008?

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Increased a lot	5	2	7	4	4
Increased a little	20	19	22	23	19
Stayed the same	41	36	34	38	41
Fallen a little	14	16	12	12	15
Fallen a lot	8	6	7	6	4
(Don't know)	13	21	18	17	18
(Not answered)	-	*	-	*	-
Sample size	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

Table A.17: Views on what standards in the health service in last 12 months are mainly the result of

	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	53	38	42	39	32	34	23
Mainly the result of the Scottish Government/Executive's ² policies	11	21	20	23	25	23	30
For some other reason	16	17	18	14	18	17	21
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	4	7	7	5	7	4	9
(Don't know)	8	8	9	9	10	13	9
(Not answered) ¹	7	8	5	10	8	10	8
Sample size	1605	1508	1637	1549	1594	1508	1482

Note:

In 1999 the follow-up question simply asked whether any differences were the result of the policies of the Labour government at Westminster therefore they are not reported here.

1 NB 'Not answered' includes those routed past this follow-up question because they answered 'don't know' when asked whether standards had increased or fallen in the last 12 months. However, they are included in the base here so that the figures are representative of the views of the population as a whole as to who is responsible for public service standards in the last 12 months.

2 NB the question wording changed in 2009 to ask about the 'Scottish Government', following the change of name from 'Scottish Executive' to 'Scottish Government' in September 2007.

Table A.18: Views on what standards in education in last 12 months are mainly the result of

	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	40	30	29	28	20	22	15
Mainly the result of the Scottish Government/Executive's ² policies	19	25	28	30	33	28	35
For some other reason	14	12	15	12	15	15	18
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	3	7	5	4	5	3	6
(Don't know)	5	7	7	7	6	9	5
(Not answered) ¹	19	19	16	20	20	23	22
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>

Note:

In 1999 the follow-up question simply asked whether any differences were the result of the policies of the Labour government at Westminster therefore they are not reported here.

1 See note re. 'Not answered' below Table A.17.

2 NB the question wording changed in 2009 to ask about the 'Scottish Government', following the change of name from 'Scottish Executive' to 'Scottish Government' in September 2007.

Table A.19: Views on what standards in public transport in last 12 months are mainly the result of

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	17	20	13	17	11
Mainly the result of the Scottish Government/Executive's ² policies	28	28	31	31	31
For some other reason	29	21	25	22	26
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	5	4	4	3	6
(Don't know)	8	6	9	9	8
(Not answered) ¹	13	21	18	18	18
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>

1 See note re. 'Not answered' below Table A.17.

2 NB the question wording changed in 2009 to ask about the 'Scottish Government', following the change of name from 'Scottish Executive' to 'Scottish Government' in September 2007.

Table A.20: Views on what strength of the economy in last 12 months is mainly the result of

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	28	30	21	24	31
Mainly the result of the Scottish Government/Executive's ² policies	28	27	28	28	14
For some other reason	17	13	18	15	36
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	6	5	7	4	8
(Don't know)	5	5	4	7	3
(Not answered) ¹	17	22	21	22	8
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>

1 See note re. 'Not answered' below Table A.17

2 NB the question wording changed in 2009 to ask about the 'Scottish Government', following the change of name from 'Scottish Executive' to 'Scottish Government' in September 2007.

Table A.21: Views on what general standard of living in last 12 months is mainly the result of

	2001	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Mainly the result of the UK government's policies at Westminster	53	43	38	42	33	37	31
Mainly the result of the Scottish Government/Executive's ² policies	12	18	18	17	21	19	15
For some other reason	18	16	24	19	22	22	34
(Both Westminster and Scottish Executive)	6	10	7	6	8	4	8
(Don't know)	7	8	9	10	9	10	6
(Not answered) ¹	6	7	5	7	6	9	5
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1605</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1637</i>	<i>1549</i>	<i>1594</i>	<i>1508</i>	<i>1482</i>

Note:

In 1999 the follow-up question simply asked whether any differences were the result of the policies of the Labour government at Westminster therefore they are not reported here.

1 See note re. 'Not answered' below Table A.17

2 NB the question wording changed in 2009 to ask about the 'Scottish Government', following the change of name from 'Scottish Executive' to 'Scottish Government' in September 2007.

Table A.22: Sample sizes for Table 3.2

	Those who say standards have ...					
	... increased (credit)			... fallen (blame)		
	2003	2006	2009	2003	2006	2009
Standards in the Health service	304	313	387	689	696	383
Standards in education	365	438	310	434	310	283
Standards in public transport	NA	466	333	NA	283	257
Standards in the economy	NA	454	120	NA	330	1037
General standard of living	479	548	229	382	349	783

Chapter 4 detailed tables

Table A.23: In the last few years, have you ever done any of the things on this card as a way of registering what you personally thought about an issue?

	%
No, have not done any of these	45
Contacted an MP or MSP	17
Contacted a government department directly	5
Contacted my local Council ²	23
Responded to a consultation document	7
Attended a public meeting	14
Contacted radio, TV or a newspaper	5
Signed a petition (including online petitions) ³	28
Raised the issue in an organisation I already belong to	5
Gone on a protest or demonstration	4
Attended an event organised as part of a consultation exercise	6
Spoken to an influential person	9
Formed a group of like-minded people	2
Joined an existing organisation	4
Actively took part in a campaign (e.g. leafleting, stuffing envelopes etc)	3
Given money to a campaign or organisation	13
<i>Sample size</i>	<i>1482</i>

Note:

Column sums to more than 100 as respondents could pick more than one.

Table A.24: Trust Scottish Executive 'just about always'/'most of the time' to act in Scotland's best interests, by demographic factors and political attitudes, 2007 and 2009 (cell %)

	2007	Sample size	2009	Sample size	Change 07 to 09
ALL	71	1508	61	1482	-10
Gender					
Men	73	645	67	656	-6
Women	69	863	55	826	-14
Education					
None	63	367	52	324	-11
Degree/HE	77	487	71	490	-6
Party identification					
SNP	78	346	77	324	-1
Lib Dem	75	128	76	109	+1
Labour	73	503	57	397	-16
Conservative	64	189	62	200	-2
None	57	186	45	269	-12
Other	66	156	58	183	-8
Constitutional preference					
Westminster rule	61	142	37	129	-24
Devolution	73	953	65	845	-8
Independence	75	330	66	404	-9

Table A.25: Trust Scottish Executive ‘a great deal’/‘quite a lot’ to make fair decisions, by demographic factors and political attitudes, 2007 and 2009 (cell %)

	2007	Sample size	2009	Sample size	Change 07 to 09
ALL	47	1508	36	1482	-11
Gender					
Men	50	645	43	656	-7
Women	44	863	29	826	-15
Education					
None	46	367	33	324	-13
Degree/HE	47	487	44	490	-3
Party identification					
SNP	52	346	51	324	-1
Lib Dem	53	128	43	109	-10
Labour	53	503	39	397	-14
Conservative	37	189	30	200	-7
None	33	186	22	269	-11
Other	37	156	30	183	-7
Constitutional preference					
Westminster rule	35	142	19	129	-16
Devolution	48	953	37	845	-11
Independence	52	330	43	404	-9

Table A.26: Belief having a Scottish Parliament gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK, by demographic factors and political attitudes, 2007 and 2009 (cell %)

	2007	Sample size	2009	Sample size	Change 07 to 09
ALL	61	1508	52	1482	-9
Gender					
Men	62	645	58	656	-4
Women	60	863	47	826	-13
Education					
None	52	367	43	324	-9
Degree/HE	69	487	64	490	-5
Party identification					
SNP	77	346	69	324	-8
Lib Dem	63	128	62	109	-1
Labour	60	503	52	397	-8
Conservative	45	189	52	200	+7
None	47	186	34	269	-13
Other	59	156	53	183	-6
Constitutional preference					
Westminster rule	25	142	17	128	-8
Devolution	65	953	59	845	-6
Independence	72	330	55	404	-17

Table A.27: Sample sizes for Table 4.7

	<i>2007</i>	<i>2009</i>
ALL	<i>1498</i>	<i>1480</i>
Employment status		
In work/ waiting to take up	<i>828</i>	<i>767</i>
Education/ training scheme	<i>37</i>	<i>35</i>
Unemployed	<i>62</i>	<i>75</i>
Retired	<i>378</i>	<i>416</i>
Permanently sick or disabled	<i>69</i>	<i>82</i>
Looking after the home	<i>107</i>	<i>87</i>
Household Income		
Bottom quartile	<i>268</i>	<i>321</i>
2	<i>375</i>	<i>288</i>
3	<i>263</i>	<i>259</i>
Top quartile	<i>323</i>	<i>331</i>
Self-rated hardship		
Living very/fairly comfortably	<i>784</i>	<i>699</i>
Coping	<i>563</i>	<i>590</i>
Finding it difficult/very difficult	<i>148</i>	<i>183</i>
Self-assessed health		
Very good	<i>542</i>	<i>509</i>
Fairly good	<i>673</i>	<i>554</i>
Fair	<i>191</i>	<i>315</i>
Bad/very bad	<i>90</i>	<i>98</i>

ANNEX B –TECHNICAL DETAILS OF THE SURVEY

The Scottish Social Attitudes series

1. The Scottish Social Attitudes (SSA) survey was launched by the Scottish Centre for Social Research (ScotCen) in 1999, following the advent of devolution. Based on annual rounds of interviews with around 1,500 people drawn using probability sampling (based on a stratified, clustered sample)²⁸, its aims are to facilitate the study of public opinion and inform the development of public policy in Scotland. In this it has similar objectives to the British Social Attitudes (BSA) survey, which was launched by ScotCen's parent organisation, the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen) in 1983. While BSA interviews people in Scotland, these are usually too few in any one year to permit separate analysis of public opinion in Scotland (see Park, et al, 2010 for more details of the BSA survey).
2. SSA has been conducted annually each year since 1999, with the exception of 2008. The survey has a modular structure. In any one year it typically contains four or five modules, each containing 40 questions. Funding for its first two years came from the Economic and Social Research Council, while from 2001 onwards different bodies have funded individual modules each year. These bodies have included the Economic and Social Research Council, the Scottish Government and various charitable and grant awarding bodies, such as the Nuffield Foundation and Leverhulme Trust.

The 2009 survey

3. The 2009 survey contained modules of questions on:
 - Government and public services in Scotland (funded by the Scottish Government Office of the Chief Researcher from 2004-2007 and again in 2009)
 - Anti-social behaviour (funded by the Scottish Government)
 - What makes somewhere a good place to live, with a particular focus on the importance of greenspace (funded by the Scottish Government)
 - Drugs and recovery from problem drug use (funded by the Scottish Government),
 - National identity, in collaboration with David McCrone and Frank Bechhofer of the University of Edinburgh (funded by the Leverhulme Trust)
 - Escape places and violence (funded by NHS Health Scotland), and
 - Constitutional change (self-funded by ScotCen).
4. Findings from the modules funded by the Scottish Government will be available in reports published on their website (www.scotland.gov.uk), while separate

²⁸ Like many national surveys of households or individuals, in order to attain the optimum balance between sample efficiency and fieldwork efficiency the sample was clustered. The first stage of sampling involved randomly selecting postcode sectors. The sample frame of postcode sectors was also stratified (by urban-rural, region and the percentage of people in non-manual occupations) to improve the match between the sample profile and that of the Scottish population. For further details of the sample design, see para 6 below.

programmes of dissemination are planned for each of the other modules. This technical annex is designed to accompany Scottish Government reports based on SSA 2009. It covers the methodological details of the survey as well as further discussion of the analysis techniques used in the reports.

Sample design

5. The survey is designed to yield a representative sample of adults aged 18 or over, living in Scotland. The sample frame is the Postcode Address File (PAF), a list of postal delivery points compiled by the Post Office. The detailed procedure for selecting the 2009 sample was as follows:
 - I. 102 postcode sectors were selected from a list of all postal sectors in Scotland, with probability proportional to the number of addresses in each sector for addresses in urban areas and a probability of twice the address count for sectors in rural areas (i.e. the last 3 categories in the Scottish Government's 6 fold urban-rural classification). Prior to selection the sectors were stratified by Scottish Government urban-rural classification²⁹, region and percentage of household heads recorded as being in non-manual occupations (SEG 1-6 and 13, taken from the 2001 Census).
 - II. 30 addresses were selected at random from each of these 102 postcode sectors
 - III. Interviewers called at each selected address and identified its eligibility for the survey. Where more than one dwelling unit was present at an address, all dwelling units were listed systematically and one was selected at random using a computer generated random selection table. In all eligible dwelling units with more than one adult aged 18 or over, interviewers had to carry out a random selection of one adult using a similar procedure.

Response rates

6. The Scottish Social Attitudes survey involves a face-to-face interview with respondents and a self-completion questionnaire, completed by around nine in ten of these people (89% in 2009). The numbers completing each stage in 2009 are shown in Table 1. See Bromley, Curtice and Given (2005) for technical details of the 1999-2004 surveys, Given and Ormston (2006) for details of the 2005 survey, Cleghorn, Ormston and Sharp (2007) for the 2006 survey and Ormston (2008) for the 2007 survey.

²⁹ See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/07/29152642/7> for details.

Table 1: 2009 Scottish Social Attitudes survey response

	No.	%
Addresses issued	3060	
Vacant, derelict and other out of scope ¹	358	11.7
Achievable or 'in scope'	2702	
Unknown eligibility ²	49	1.8
Interview achieved	1482	54.8
Self-completion returned	1320	48.9
Interview not achieved	1220	44.7
<i>Refused</i> ³	817	30.2
<i>Non-contacted</i> ⁴	188	7.0
<i>Other non-response</i> ⁵	166	6.1

Notes to table

1 This includes empty / derelict addresses, holiday homes, businesses and institutions.

2 'Unknown eligibility' includes cases where the address could not be located, where it could not be determined if an address was residential and where it could not be determined if an address was occupied or not.

3 Refusals include refusals prior to selection of an individual, refusals to the office, refusal by the selected person, 'proxy' refusals made by someone on behalf of the respondent and broken appointments after which a respondent could not be re-contacted.

4 Non-contacts comprise households where no one was contacted after at least 6 calls and those where the selected person could not be contacted.

5 'Other non-response' includes people who were ill at home or in hospital during the survey period, people who were physically or mentally unable to participate and people with insufficient English to participate.

Sample size for previous years

7. The table below shows the achieved sample size for the full SSA sample (all respondents) for all previous years.

Table 2: Scottish Social Attitudes survey sample size by year

Survey year	Achieved sample size
1999	1482
2000	1663
2001	1605
2002	1665
2003	1508
2004	1637
2005	1549
2006	1594
2007	1508
2009	1482

Weighting

8. All percentages cited in this report are based on weighted data. The weights applied to the SSA 2009 data are intended to correct for three potential sources of bias in the sample:

- Differential selection probabilities
- Deliberate over-sampling of rural areas
- Non-response.

9. Data were weighted to take account of the fact that not all households or individuals have the same probability of selection for the survey. For example, adults living in large households have a lower selection probability than adults who live alone. Weighting was also used to correct the over-sampling of rural addresses. Differences between responding and non-responding households were taken into account using information from the census about the area of the address as well as interviewer observations about participating and non-participating addresses. Finally, the weights were adjusted to ensure that the weighted data matched the age-sex profile of the Scottish population (based on 2008 mid-year estimates from the General Register Office for Scotland).

Fieldwork

10. Fieldwork for the 2009 survey ran between late April and early September 2009. An advance letter was sent to all addresses and was followed up by a personal visit from a ScotCen interviewer. Interviewers were required to make a minimum of 6 calls at different times of the day (including at least one evening and one weekend call) in order to try and contact respondents. All interviewers attended a one day briefing conference prior to starting work on the study.
11. Interviews were conducted using face-to-face computer-assisted interviewing (a process which involves the use of a laptop computer, with questions appearing on screen and interviewers directly entering respondents' answers into the computer). All respondents were asked to fill in a self-completion questionnaire which was either collected by the interviewer or returned by post. Table 1 (above) summarises the response rate and the numbers completing the self-completion in 2009.

Analysis variables

12. Most of the analysis variables are taken directly from the questionnaire and to that extent are self-explanatory. These include age, sex, household income, and highest educational qualification obtained. The main analysis variables requiring further definition are set out below.

National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC)

13. The most commonly used classification of socio-economic status used on government surveys is the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC). SSA respondents were classified according to their own occupation, rather than that of the 'head of household'. Each respondent was asked about their current or last job, so that all respondents, with the exception of those who had never worked, were classified. The seven NS-SEC categories are:
 - Employers in large organisations, higher managerial and professional
 - Lower professional and managerial; higher technical and supervisory
 - Intermediate occupations
 - Small employers and own account workers
 - Lower supervisory and technical occupations
 - Semi-routine occupations

- Routine occupations.

14. The remaining respondents were grouped as 'never had a job' or 'not classifiable'.

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)

15. The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD)³⁰ 2009 measures the level of deprivation across Scotland – from the least deprived to the most deprived areas. It is based on 38 indicators in seven domains of: income, employment, health, education skills and training, housing, geographic access and crime. SIMD 2009 is presented at data zone level, enabling small pockets of deprivation to be identified. The data zones are ranked from most deprived (1) to least deprived (6,505) on the overall SIMD 2009 and on each of the individual domains. The result is a comprehensive picture of relative area deprivation across Scotland.

16. The analysis in this report used a variable created from SIMD data indicating the level of deprivation of the data zone in which the respondent lived in quintiles, from most to least deprived.³¹

Analysis techniques

17. Regression analysis aims to summarise the relationship between a 'dependent' variable and one or more 'independent' explanatory variables. It shows how well we can estimate a respondent's score on the dependent variable from knowledge of their scores on the independent variables. This technique takes into account relationships between the different independent variables (for example, between education and income, or social class and housing tenure). Regression is often undertaken to support a claim that the phenomena measured by the independent variables cause the phenomenon measured by the dependent variable. However, the causal ordering, if any, between the variables cannot be verified or falsified by the technique. Causality can only be inferred through special experimental designs or through assumptions made by the analyst.

18. All regression analysis assumes that the relationship between the dependent and each of the independent variables takes a particular form. This report was informed by logistic regression analysis – a method that summarises the relationship between a binary 'dependent' variable (one that takes the values '0' or '1') and one or more 'independent' explanatory variables. The tables in this annex show how the odds ratios for each category in significant explanatory variables compares to the odds ratio for the reference category (always taken to be 1.00).

19. Taking Model 1 (below) as an example, the dependent variable is based on trust in the Scottish Government to act in Scotland's interests. If the respondent trust the Scottish Government to act in Scotland's interests 'just about always' or 'most

³⁰ See <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/> for further details on the SIMD.

³¹ These variables were created by the ScotCen/NatCen Survey Methods Unit. They are based on SIMD scores for all datazones, not just those included in the sample – so an individual who lives in the most deprived quintile of Scotland will also be included in the most deprived quintile in the SSA dataset.

of the time', the dependent variable takes a value of 1. If not, it takes a value of 0. An odds ratio of above 1 means that, compared with respondents in the reference category, respondents in that category have higher odds of saying they trust the Scottish Government 'just about always' or 'most of the time'. Conversely, an odds ratio of below 1 means they have lower odds of saying this than respondents in the reference category. The 95% confidence intervals for these odds ratios are also important. Where the confidence interval does not include 1, this category is significantly different from the reference category. If we look at education in Model 1, we can see those with higher education qualifications have an odds ratio of 1.75, indicating that they have higher odds of saying they trust the Scottish Government 'just about always' or 'most of the time' compared with those in the reference category (i.e. those with no qualifications). The 95% confidence interval for those with HE qualifications (1.27-2.41) does *not* include 1, indicating this difference between is significant.

20. The significance of each independent variable is indicated by 'P'. A p-value of 0.05 or less indicates that there is less than a 5% chance we would have found these differences between the categories just by chance if in fact no such difference exists, while a p-value of 0.01 or less indicates that there is a less than 1% chance. P-values of 0.05 or less are generally considered to indicate that the difference is highly statistically significant, while a p-value of 0.06 to 0.10 may be considered marginally significant.
21. It should be noted that the final regression models reported below were in some cases produced following several stages, with initial models using forward stepwise analysis to identify significant factors from a longer list of possible variables. The models below show the final model for each variable, which was produced using the Complex Survey command (CS Logistic) in SPSS 15.0. Unlike forward stepwise models, CS Logistic models can account for complex sample designs (in particular, the effects of clustering and associated weighting) when calculating odds ratios and determining significance. The models shown below include only those variables found to be significant after the regression models were run using CS logistic.

Regression models

Model 1: Factors associated with saying trust Scottish Government 'just about always'/'most of the time' to act in Scotland's interests (2009)

Dependent variable encoding 1 = Trust SG 'just about always'/'most of the time' 0 = NOT trust 'just about always'/'most of the time'	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Gender (p = 0.027)		
Male (reference)	1.00	
Female	0.73	0.56-0.96
Highest educational qualification (p = 0.008)		
None (reference)	1.00	
Standard grades or equivalent	1.17	0.83-1.64
Highers or equivalent	1.20	0.74-1.95
Degree/Higher education	1.75	1.27-2.41
Newspaper readership (p = 0.003)		
Tabloid (reference)	1.00	
Broadsheet	1.59	1.09-2.31
No paper	1.62	1.21-2.18
Party political identification (p = 0.000)		
SNP (reference)	1.00	
Liberal Democrat	0.95	0.51-1.78
Labour	0.58	0.38-0.87
Conservative	0.73	0.44-1.19
None	0.36	0.23-0.56
Other/missing	0.53	0.31-0.89
National identity (p = 0.019)		
British (reference)	1.00	
Scottish	1.48	1.01-2.17
Other	2.28	1.27-4.10
Constitutional preference (p = 0.001)		
Westminster rule (reference)	1.00	
Devolution	2.60	1.43-4.70
Independence	2.95	1.53-5.71
Social trust (p = 0.000)		
Most people can be trusted (reference)	1.00	
Can't be too careful dealing with people	0.57	0.43-0.76

Nagelkerke R2 = 17%

Other factors included in initial stepwise modelling but which were not significant after other factors and the complex sample design were accounted for were: age; self-rated hardship³²; occupational sector; Scottish Government urban-rural classification (6-fold); area deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles); general interest in politics; region; participation in action to make views known³³; social connectedness³⁴.

³² Whether someone believes they are living comfortably, coping or finding it difficult on their current income.

³³ See Annex A, Table A.23 for the full results of the question this measure is based on.

³⁴ Based on responses to a series of questions designed to measure 'social connectedness'. These questions asked people how strongly they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: 'I regularly stop and speak to people in my area'; 'If my home was empty, I could count on one of my neighbours to keep an eye on it'; and 'I feel that there are people in this area I could turn to for advice and support'. Responses to the three questions were combined to form an overall measure of 'social connectedness'.

Model 2: Factors associated with saying trust Scottish Government ‘a great deal’/‘quite a lot’ to make fair decisions (2009)

Dependent variable encoding 1 = Trust SG ‘a great deal’/‘quite a lot’ 0 = NOT trust ‘a great deal’/‘quite a lot’	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Gender (p = 0.002)		
Male (reference)	1.00	
Female	0.64	0.49-0.84
Age (p = 0.050)		
18-24 (reference)	1.00	
25-39	0.93	0.47-1.82
40-64	0.63	0.34-1.21
65+	0.95	0.50-1.81
Interest in politics (p = 0.008)		
Not very much/none (reference)	1.00	
Some	0.93	0.64-1.33
A great deal/quite a lot	1.53	1.10-2.14
Party political identification (p = 0.004)		
SNP (reference)	1.00	
Liberal Democrat	0.82	0.47-1.43
Labour	0.77	0.54-1.12
Conservative	0.50	0.31-0.81
None	0.37	0.24-0.59
Other/missing	0.52	0.31-0.88
Constitutional preference (p = 0.003)		
Westminster rule (reference)	1.00	
Devolution	2.33	1.26-4.30
Independence	3.06	1.60-5.86
Social trust (p = 0.008)		
Most people can be trusted (reference)	1.00	
Can’t be too careful dealing with people	0.65	0.47-0.89

Nagelkerke R2 = 14%

Other factors included in initial stepwise modelling but which were not significant after other factors and the complex sample design were accounted for were: highest educational qualification; self-rated hardship; occupational sector; Scottish Government urban-rural classification (6-fold); area deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles); newspaper readership; national identity; region; participation in action to make views known; social connectedness.

Model 3: Factors associated with saying having a Scottish Parliament gives Scotland a stronger voice in the UK (2009)

Dependent variable encoding 1 = Stronger voice in the UK 0 = NOT stronger voice in the UK	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Highest educational qualification (p = 0.000)		
None (reference)	1.00	
Standard grades or equivalent	1.08	0.77-1.52
Highers or equivalent	0.99	0.63-1.55
Degree/Higher education	1.74	1.30-2.33
Party political identification (p = 0.011)		
SNP (reference)	1.00	
Liberal Democrat	0.64	0.38-1.09
Labour	0.64	0.41-0.98
Conservative	0.71	0.46-1.12
None	0.40	0.25-0.64
Other/missing	0.57	0.36-0.89
Interest in politics (p = 0.006)		
Not very much/none (reference)	1.00	
Some	1.39	1.03-1.88
A great deal/quite a lot	1.82	1.27-2.62
National identity (p = 0.027)		
British (reference)	1.00	
Scottish	1.44	1.00-2.07
Other	2.28	1.26-4.13
Constitutional preference (p = 0.000)		
Westminster rule (reference)	1.00	
Devolution	6.13	3.37-11.15
Independence	5.64	2.78-11.44
Social trust (p = 0.005)		
Most people can be trusted (reference)	1.00	
Can't be too careful dealing with people	0.64	0.47-0.87

Nagelkerke R2 = 20%

Other factors included in initial stepwise modelling but which were not significant after other factors and the complex sample design were accounted for were: gender; age; self-rated hardship; occupational sector; Scottish Government urban-rural classification (6-fold); area deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles); newspaper readership; region; participation in action to make views known; social connectedness.

Model 4: Factors associated with saying having a Scottish Parliament gives ordinary people more say in how Scotland is run (2009)

Dependent variable encoding 1 = gives ordinary people more say 0 = NOT more say	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Gender (p = 0.000)		
Male (reference)	1.00	
Female	0.60	0.48-0.76
Highest educational qualification (p = 0.000)		
None (reference)	1.00	
Standard grades or equivalent	1.08	0.75-1.55
Highers or equivalent	1.57	0.99-2.49
Degree/Higher education	2.37	1.74-3.21
Self-rated hardship (p = 0.054)		
Finding it difficult/very difficult on present income (reference)	1.00	
Coping	0.69	0.44-1.07
Living very/fairly comfortably	1.03	0.67-1.57
Party political identification (p = 0.031)		
SNP (reference)	1.00	
Liberal Democrat	0.76	0.44-1.32
Labour	0.55	0.35-0.84
Conservative	0.52	0.31-0.88
None	0.46	0.29-0.72
Other/missing	0.58	0.34-0.98
Constitutional preference (p = 0.000)		
Westminster rule (reference)	1.00	
Devolution	5.70	2.94-11.05
Independence	7.35	3.42-15.78
Participation in action to make views known (p = 0.006)		
Nothing (reference)	1.00	
'Active' participation	1.64	1.22-2.20
'Low level' participation	1.18	0.77-1.81
Social connections with local area (p = 0.024)		
Most connected (reference)	1.00	
Intermediate	0.84	0.60-1.19
Least connected	0.62	0.43-0.87

Nagelkerke R2 = 20%

Other factors included in initial stepwise modelling but which were not significant after other factors and the complex sample design were accounted for were: age; occupational sector; Scottish Government urban-rural classification (6-fold); area deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles); newspaper readership; interest in politics; national identity; social trust; region.

Model 5: Factors associated with saying Scottish Government is ‘very’ or ‘quite good’ at listening to people’s views before making decisions (2009)

Dependent variable encoding 1 = Scottish Government ‘very’ or ‘quite’ good at listening 0 = NOT ‘very’ or ‘quite good’	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Newspaper readership (p = 0.008)		
Tabloid (reference)	1.00	
Broadsheet	1.48	1.02-2.15
No paper	1.54	1.18-2.01
Party political identification (p = 0.024)		
SNP (reference)	1.00	
Liberal Democrat	0.79	0.51-1.23
Labour	0.58	0.38-0.89
Conservative	0.70	0.44-1.11
None	0.49	0.33-0.73
Other/missing	0.56	0.36-0.87
Constitutional preference (p = 0.006)		
Westminster rule (reference)	1.00	
Devolution	2.14	1.33-3.47
Independence	2.19	1.22-3.93

Nagelkerke R2 = 6%

Other factors included in initial stepwise modelling but which were not significant after other factors and the complex sample design were accounted for were: gender; age; highest educational qualification; self-rated hardship; occupational sector; Scottish Government urban-rural classification (6-fold); area deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles); interest in politics; national identity; social trust; region; participation in action to make views known; social connectedness.

Model 6: Factors associated with saying general standard of living in Scotland has 'fallen a lot' in the last 12 months (2009)

Dependent variable encoding 1 = standard of living has 'fallen a lot' 0 = NOT fallen a lot	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Gender (p = 0.014)		
Male (reference)	1.00	
Female	1.65	1.11-2.44
Age (p = 0.016)		
18-24 (reference)	1.00	
25-39	0.85	0.39-1.86
40-64	1.41	0.56-3.55
65+	0.69	0.24-1.95
Marital/relationship status (p = 0.016)		
Separated/divorced/dissolved civil partnership (reference)	1.00	
Married/civil partnership/living as married	1.09	0.69-1.72
Widowed/surviving partner from civil partnership	0.84	0.39-1.81
Never married/civil partnered	0.55	0.33-0.93
Self-rated hardship (p = 0.000)		
Finding it difficult/very difficult on present income (reference)	1.00	
Coping	0.43	0.26-0.69
Living very/fairly comfortably	0.29	0.16-0.52
Social trust (p = 0.015)		
Most people can be trusted (reference)	1.00	
Can't be too careful dealing with people	1.73	1.12-2.68

Nagelkerke R2 = 11%

Other factors included in initial stepwise modelling but which were not significant after other factors and the complex sample design were accounted for were: highest educational qualification; socio-economic class (NS-SEC 5 category); household income (quartiles); presence of children in the household; Scottish Government urban-rural classification (6-fold); area deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles).

Model 7: Factors associated with below average score for satisfaction with own standard of living (2009)

Dependent variable encoding 1 = below average score 0 = NOT below average	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Main economic activity (p = 0.004)		
Unemployed (reference)	1.00	
Working/waiting to take up paid work	1.05	0.44-2.50
Permanently sick or disabled	1.02	0.33-3.22
Retired	0.48	0.19-1.18
Looking after the home	0.34	0.11-1.04
Household Income (p = 0.022)		
£11,999 or less	1.00	
£12,000-£22,999	0.72	0.44-1.16
£23,000-£37,999	0.60	0.36-1.01
£38,000+	0.33	0.17-0.63
Self-rated hardship (p = 0.000)		
Finding it difficult/very difficult on present income (reference)	1.00	
Coping	0.33	0.20-0.54
Living very/fairly comfortably	0.07	0.04-0.13
Self-rated health (p = 0.006)		
Very good (reference)	1.00	
Fairly good	1.52	1.08-2.13
Fair	1.74	1.10-2.74
Bad/very bad	3.72	1.73-8.02

Nagelkerke R2 =35%

Other factors included in initial stepwise modelling but which were not significant after other factors and the complex sample design were accounted for were: sex; age; highest educational qualification; socio-economic class (NS-SEC 5 category); marital/relationship status; presence of children in the household; Scottish Government urban-rural classification (6-fold); area deprivation (Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation quintiles); social trust; disability³⁵.

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³⁵ As measured by a question which asks whether or not respondents have any long-term illness, health problems or disability, expected to last for a year or more

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