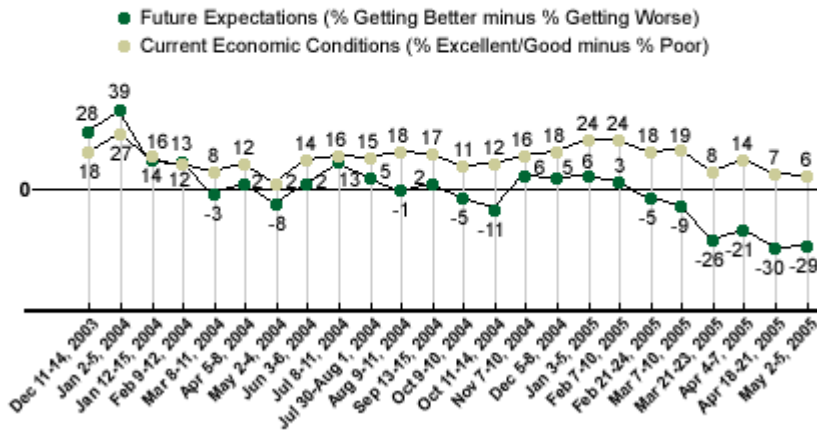


GALLUP News Service- The Economy

How would you rate economic conditions in this country today -- as excellent, good, only fair, or poor? Right now, do you think that economic conditions in the country as a whole are getting better or getting worse?

Numbers shown in percentage points



American Public Opinion About the Economy

May 24, 2005

by Joseph Carroll

Current Economic Conditions

Gallup's monthly update on the economy, last conducted May 2-5, finds little change over the past several months in the public's ratings of the current economy. The poll shows that 31% of Americans describe the state of the economy as excellent or good, while 25% describe it as poor.

These results have remained stable since mid-March, about the time the public's perceptions of the economy turned more sour. A January poll found that 41% of Americans said the economy was excellent or good, and 17% said it was poor. The results were essentially the same in February and early March. By mid-March, 32% described the economy as excellent or good, and 24% said it was poor.

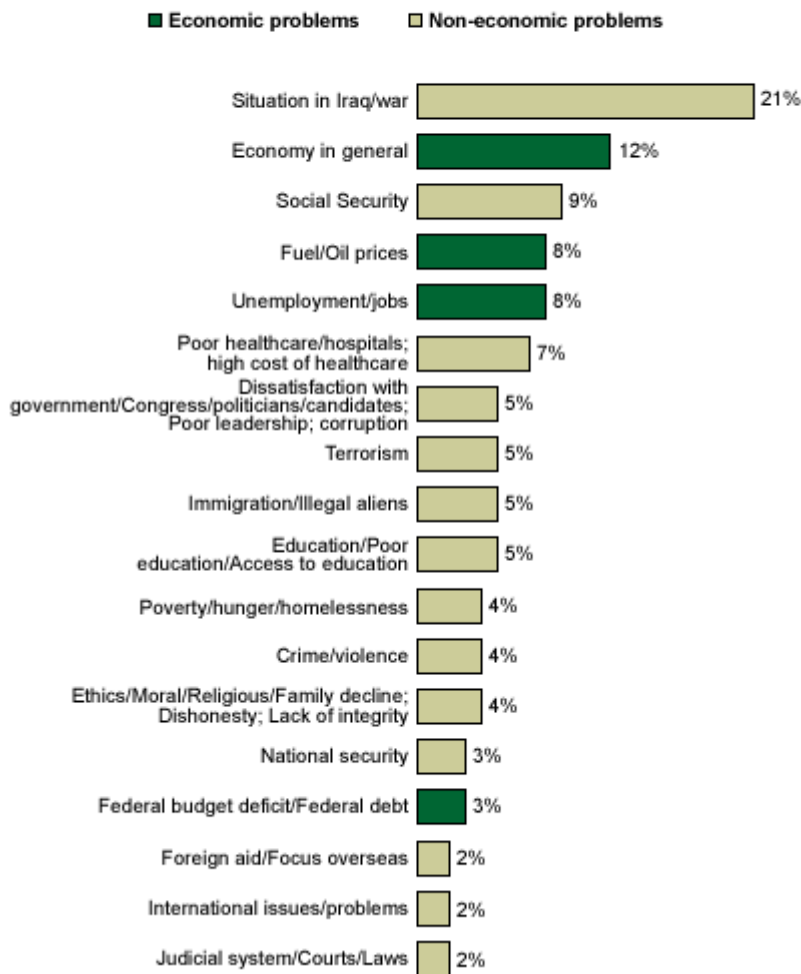
Economic Outlook

Roughly 6 in 10 Americans (61%) say economic conditions in the country are getting worse, while a third (32%) say they are getting better. These results are among the most negative that Gallup has recorded since the start of the year.

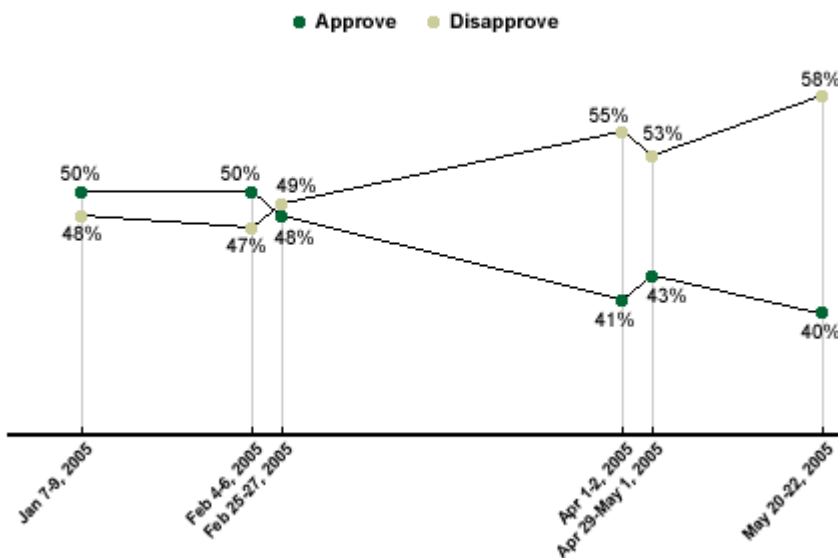
In January, Americans were more positive than negative about the direction of the economy, with 48% saying economic conditions were getting better and 42% saying they were getting

**What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?
Economic problems versus non-economic problems**

May 2-5, 2005



George W. Bush's Approval Ratings on the Economy



worse. By mid-February, the reverse was true, with 48% saying conditions were getting worse and 43% saying they were getting better. Since that time, perceptions of the economic outlook have gradually grown more pessimistic.

The Economy as the Most Important Problem

The May 2-5 poll finds that 33% of Americans mention, without prompting, some aspect of the economy -- including the general state of the economy, unemployment, or fuel prices -- as the most important problem facing the country today. The percentage of the public mentioning the economy as the top problem has shown little change since April, but is slightly higher than it was in February (29%) or March (28%). In January, 31% mentioned some aspect of the economy as the top problem.

George W. Bush's Handling of the Economy

The latest CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup poll, conducted May 20-22, finds that 40% of Americans say they approve and 58% disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the economy. This is the lowest economic approval rating that Bush has received on the economy since he took office in 2001. Bush had received ratings as low as 41% before this, including several times in May and June 2004, and again in April of this year.

Bush's approval ratings on the economy were much higher at the start of the year. In January, 50% of Americans approved of Bush's handling of the

economy. This decreased to 48% in late February, and then again to 41% in early April, before rising slightly to 43% in late April/early May.