

Consultoría Interdisciplinaria en Desarrollo S. A.
- CID Gallup Latinoamérica -

Technical Details

Date of fieldwork:	January 29 through February 3, 2005.
Type of interview:	One per household, personal or telephone.
Number of interviews:	1,216.
Margin of error:	±2.8 points (95% confidence level) in its total results.
Respondent:	Adult Salvadoran, resident in a private household at the time of the survey.
Sample Type:	Random, representative of the country's adult population.
Geographical area:	Entire national territory distributed in three geographical strata.

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Public Opinion Survey
EL SALVADOR #58
February, 2005

INTRODUCTION

CID Gallup Latinoamérica –Consultoría Interdisciplinaria en Desarrollo S. A.—is the pioneering market research and public opinion company in El Salvador and all other Central American nations. Founded in 1977, it started releasing public opinion surveys in El Salvador in the mid 1980s. This series of public opinion studies serves as a communication link between the public and the country’s leaders, and helps citizens share their opinions freely about their lives. As a result, the hope is that they play a part in strengthening the democratic process of Central American countries.

A total of 1,216 Salvadoran citizens were surveyed between February 3rd and 29th, 2005 either by telephone or in their homes using a pre-coded, structured questionnaire. A representative sample of the population was applied, and the survey’s total results have a margin of error of ± 2.8 percentage points, calculated at a 95% confidence level.



Over 250,000 Salvadorans have been surveyed by CID Gallup.

The Salvadoran society has received CID Gallup’s poll takers with great confidence, interest and seriousness in all these years. Today, this has allowed the company to present the results of Public Opinion Survey No.58. CID wishes to thank the Salvadoran public for all of its support throughout the years. It also wishes to recognize the two media who have made the program possible, and who own first-day publishing rights: El Diario de Hoy and Tele Corporación Salvadoreña –TCS. CID expresses its gratitude to all institutions, organizations and individuals who have contributed in this democratic effort.

METHODOLOGY

A. SAMPLE

Public Opinion Survey #58 was conducted January 29th through February 3rd, 2005. Respondents were selected by means of a random and representative sample of Salvadoran adults, aged 18 and over, residing in private households in all of the national territory. The sample is weighted by region of residence to reflect real population values.

The summary of the sample is presented below.

Sample Summary:
Sociodemographic Characteristics.
n =1,216 ^(a)

Characteristic	%	Characteristic	%
Respondent age	100	Education	100
18 to 24	25	Primary / none	55
25 to 39	37	High School	36
40 to 59	26	Superior	9
60 and over	12		
Gender	100	Region	100
Male	50	San Salvador Metro	28
Female	50	Other cities	16
		Rest of country	56

Source: Appendix, statistical tables.

a/ n =1,216 is the same for all graphs and tables, unless otherwise stated.

b/ Total sums may add up to “99” or “101” due to rounding of decimals.

Note: Sample is weighted by region of residence.

B. DATA COLLECTION

1. The questionnaire

The information was obtained using a pre-coded, structured questionnaire, made up of a majority of close-ended questions. The questionnaire was tested before going in to the field, and all field staff was trained prior to data collection. Questions are designed according to different issues dominating the country's media agenda. Similarly, recommendations are regularly submitted by academics, journalists, politicians and businessmen.

2. Method of collection

Personal and telephone interviews were used to gather the information. The sample frame used was census data from the "Instituto de Estadística y Censos de El Salvador". The political distribution of the country, used in the sample design, is as follows: "departamento," "municipio," and "cantón."

The telephone interview allows the company to reach difficult to access areas that have a high security level. In these cases, the sample frame is the national telephone directory.

The sample for personal interviews was applied in a "multi-stage" manner. The Primary Sampling Units –municipalities- were selected, using the Probability Proportional to Size. "City Blocks" or their equivalent inside each unit were randomly selected and, finally, the interviews were conducted there.

Respondents were people located in their houses between 13:00 and 21:00 hours in the country's urban areas, and starting from 09:00 in rural areas. Respondents were selected using the "last birthday" technique, complimented using an age and sex quota by each of the sample's segments. Respondents thus selected form a representative sample of the country's adult population.

3. Interviewers and field supervisors

Experienced interviewers work in every CID Gallup poll. They were trained for this survey prior to going into the field, and pilot tests were conducted. At least 33% of all interviews were re-contacted (per interviewer, per day) in order to guarantee that all information collected was true to the respondent's opinions and that he/she were randomly selected according to the sample design.

4. Some of the places visited

In each of the sample's segments, 12 to 15 households were visited, and only one respondent per home was interviewed.

Some of the municipalities visited in "San Salvador Metropolitano" include: Nueva San Salvador, Nuevo Cuscatlán, San Salvador: Colonia Cucumacayan, Colonia Las Lomitas, Colonia Davidson, Colonia Campiña, Col. El Roble, Lotificación Melara, Plan de la Laguna, Col. Israel, Apopa, Cuscatancingo, Ilopango, Delgado, Mejicanos, San Marco, Soyapango, Santo Tomás, San Martín, Tonacatepeque.

Some of the municipalities visited in the region defined as "Cities with a population of 10,000 or more" include: Ahuachapán, Santa Ana, Chalchuapa, Acajutla, Sonzacate, La Libertad, Zaragoza, Guazapa, Cojutepeque, La Paz, Sensuntepeque, Usulután, San Vicente, San Miguel, San Francisco Gotera, Berlín, Santa Rosa de Lima.

In the third region, "Rest of the country," some of the municipalities visited include: Ahuachapán, Ciudad Arce, Coatepeque, El Paraíso, Guaymango, Jiquilisco, Meanguera, Nahulingo, Opico, San Juan Nonualco, Santa Rita, Santa Rosa, Guachipilín, Tacaba, Tonacatepeque.

C. DATA PROCESSING

SPSS Version 12.0 for Windows was used to process the data. Cross tabulations include region of residence, age, gender, education level, family's financial situation compared to last year, and political party preference.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The country is currently going through a period of optimism, and President Antonio Saca has benefited a great deal from this. Seven out of ten respondents have a favorable opinion of Saca's job performance as president, while only 16% considers he has performed poorly. This gives Saca a positive net index of 54 percentage points, placing him as the best-evaluated president in twenty years, compared to the previous three that preceded him.

Despite this, there appears to be certain amount of pessimism with regards to the family's finances and the cost of living. The impact these issues will have will be evaluated in future public opinion measurements.

In political terms, and following the normal behavior of voters after elections, a little over half the participants in the study currently state they do not support any political party in the country. One year before the local and congressional elections, this causes some uncertainty about their results. However, the two principal political parties continue to be ARENA, currently receiving one third of support from the public, and the FMLN in second place. The "third option" parties have comparatively less support at present.

In other areas, the public considers that the directors of the country's National Soccer Team is primarily responsible for having been disqualified in El Salvador's attempts reach to the World Cup in Germany, 2006. The public is currently against sending Salvadoran troops to Iraq, even if this is considered to be a symbol of their friendship with the United States. Few respondents know about the Fiscal Reform currently being pushed by the government, and one in five homes in El Salvador reports at least one victim of crime and violence in the past four months. This last issue is associated with the public's opinion that criminality is the country's principal problem. As a result of the current campaign conducted by former President Francisco Flores, 44% of participants in the study are aware of the Organization of American States –OAS— while a majority would feel proud if Mr. Flores were to be elected Secretary General of this institution. Most indicate that the government should support him in this endeavour.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

1. There is some sense of optimism in the country: a little over half the participants in the study believe it is “heading in the right track.”
2. Economic problems as a whole, such as the “high cost of living” and “unemployment” are the principal social concerns for respondents. As a personal concern, the most worrying issue is “crime and violence.”
3. News stories related to crime and violence are the ones that the highest proportion of respondents recalls in the 30 days prior to the survey.
4. Seven out ten respondents agree with the action taken by two FMLN congressmen regarding the approval of bonds to finance the budget.
5. The overall majority of the population (89%) indicates they know “a little” or “nothing at all” about the fiscal reform being promoted by the government.
6. There is at least one person who has been the victim of crime in the past four months, living in one out of five households (21%).
7. The cost of basic living needs (food, housing and transport) is the principal concern for the country’s families. The proportion of responses for these issues increases today compared to previous opinion surveys.
8. There are more people that consider their family’s financial situation is today “worse off” than one year ago (36%), than those who state the opposite is true. Despite this, more respondents believe their financial situation will “improve” in the coming twelve months.
9. The sense of optimism observed last September (36%) decreases by nine percentage points and reaches 27% in February 2005.
10. Seven out of ten respondents (71%) believe that the cost of living has “increased a great deal” in the past four months.
11. The public is against sending Salvadoran troops to Iraq.
12. Sending Salvadoran troops to Iraq is primarily seen as a “sign of friendship with the United States.” However, 23% of respondents indicate Salvadoran soldiers are there due to “pressure from the U.S.”

13. Participants in the study believe that the quality of soccer being in the country is “worse” today than ten years ago.
14. It is believed the “national directive” are those principally responsible for the National Soccer Team’s inability to classify to the World Cup in Germany in 2006.
15. El Salvador is considered to be “a country of opportunities” by the majority (54%) of respondents.
16. A total of 44% of the public associates the Organization of American States – OAS— with an international organism or institution.
17. Those who are aware of the OAS indicate they would be proud if Francisco Flores were elected Secretary General, which is why a large proportion of respondents indicate the government should help Flores be elected.
18. Participants in the study are split in terms of their opinions regarding the job the Consumer’s Office is doing: 29% provide a positive response, while 30% believe the institution has performed poorly.
19. There are several measures that majorities of respondents are in favor of in order to improve the bus service in El Salvador, such as: the compulsory visit of buses to repair shops for maintenance reviews; compulsory passenger insurance; and constantly renewing the bus fleet.
20. A little over half the participants in the study would be in favor of bringing back the colón as a means of payment to be used alongside the US dollar, El Salvador’s currency.
21. Four out of five Salvadorans believe that an extension of the immigration policy known as TPS will benefit their “long distance brothers” who reside in the U.S.
22. Participants in the study do not believe the country’s judicial system is providing a fair trial to those charged with corruption in the ANDA case.
23. The ARENA political party, with the support of 33% of participants in the study, is the country’s largest political force. It is followed by the FMLN with 12% of responses. Despite this, a majority of respondents (52%) have no preference or sympathy towards any one political party at present.

24. Respondents tend to be opposed to the December 2004 Supreme Court ruling that allows political parties that did not receive three per cent of the vote in the last elections to continue to exist.
25. Antonio “Tony” Saca –as a person- enjoys a positive image among the public. Today, 71% of participants in the study have a favorable opinion of him, making him the most popular public personality in the survey, followed by Vilma Escobar. By contrast, Schafik Handal, even though very well-known, receives mostly negative responses.
26. Respondents indicate that, for the good of the country, the government and the FMLN must sit down and engage in dialogue.
27. In the public’s view, Schafik Handal is the absolute leader of the FMLN.
28. The public believes that it is necessary that the budget be approved if the country is to go forward. The budget is perceived to be necessary if the government wishes to push its agenda through.
29. The public is split on its opinion of the Mayor of San Salvador Carlos Rivas Zamora: similar proportions of respondents give him a positive job performance evaluation (24%) as those who give him a negative one (28%).
30. Seven out of ten participants in the study (70%) have a favorable opinion on how Antonio Saca is doing his job as president, while 16% has a negative view of his administration. This leaves him with a positive net index of 54 percentage points.
31. At a similar juncture in their administrations, Antonio Saca is the best-evaluated president in the past twenty years. He easily surpasses Alfredo Cristiani, who up to now had achieved the best results.
32. Three out of five respondents (58%) believes that Antonio Saca will keep his campaign promises during his tenure as president.

33. Seven out of ten respondents (69%) mention at least one achievement of the Tony Saca Administration, especially its “Super Tough Action Plan” (Plan Super Mano Dura).
34. A total of 53% of participants in the study mention a flaw of the administration, especially raising the price of basic goods.
35. The majority of Salvadorans believe that Ana Ligia de Saca is doing a good job as first lady.
36. Only one out of four participants in the study mention any minister as “the best” one. Among those who mention a minister, those who receive the most responses include Darlyn Meza, José Guillermo Maza and René Figueroa.
37. Two out of five respondents believe that El Salvador in 2009 will be “better off” than it was at the beginning of Antonio Saca’s term as president.