

December 2025

IPSOS UPDATE

A selection of the latest
research and thinking
from Ipsos teams around
the world



Ipsos Update December 2025

Our round-up of research and thinking from Ipsos teams around the world

As we reach the half-way point of the 2020s, and a quarter of the way through the 21st century, we've been asking people how they think life today compares with the past. A sense of nostalgia is all-pervasive. Given the choice, more would prefer to be born in 1975 rather than today, and by a margin of almost two to one. Majorities in most countries say that people were happier back then. We can of course debate just how good things *actually were* in days gone by – after all, seven in 10 people across the 30 nations studied weren't even alive in 1975! In many ways, these new findings tell us as much about the present as the past.

And there's certainly much to be cautious about right now. Our new

World Affairs & Security Report finds the proportion saying "when you really think about it, more things are getting better in the world these days than are getting worse" falling to a new low of 33%. Our State of Democracy study finds widespread concerns about the way things are going across Europe and the US. And barely a third expect COP30 to be "effective and bring concrete results" when it comes to addressing climate change.

We do find some reasons for cautious optimism in the new Cost of Living Monitor. Fewer people now think their country's economy is in recession, and concerns about rising interest rates have decreased considerably over the past couple of years. Worries about

rising food and essential costs are front and centre, but not quite at the elevated levels they were.

In this vein, our French team have been in search of "reasons to be cheerful". Their new analysis challenges the negative discourse so prevalent when it comes to France today. Meanwhile, our state of the nation report on Lebanon shows, despite ongoing challenges, there have been improvements in consumer confidence, with local products gaining ground and tourism starting to recover to pre-crisis levels.

This month's edition also features fascinating new research on how cities and countries are viewed by people around the globe. London retains its

top place in the Ipsos/Resonance World's Best Cities Index, for the eleventh year in a row. Meanwhile our World Affairs report finds Brand Canada is holding up well, topping the list of countries likely to have a positive influence of the world, also for the tenth successive year.

As ever, we hope this selection sparks new thinking and supports the work you are doing. If you'd like to discuss anything, please do get in touch.



Simon Atkinson
**Chief Knowledge
Officer**

Poll Digest

Some of this month's findings from Ipsos polling around the world

Canada:

46% expect to vacation this winter despite economic uncertainty.

USA:

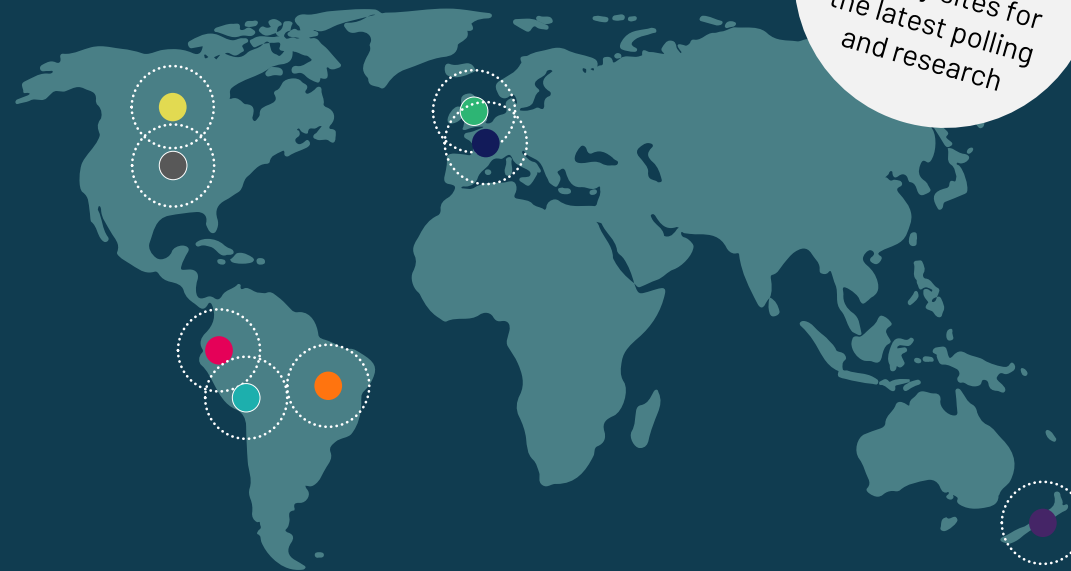
55% agree the risks of taking military action against cartels in other countries outweigh the benefits.

Peru:

59% of those who would like to start a new life abroad would do so for an economic improvement.

Chile:

45% of households have an income that doesn't last until the end of the month.



Brazil:

40% say deaths caused by police to combat organised crime is justifiable.

Great Britain:

50% of the public say immigration is a concern.

France:

97% are unable to distinguish between 100% AI music and human music.

New Zealand:

61% identify the cost of living as the most pressing issue facing their country.

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Widespread nostalgia for the old days

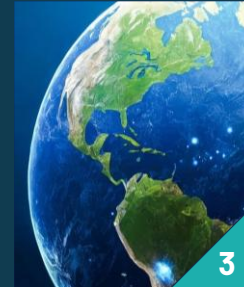
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Given the choice, people would prefer to have been born in 1975 rather than 2025 by a margin of almost two to one (44% vs. 24%).

Is Life Getting Better?

Widespread nostalgia for the old days

In a new 30-country Global Advisor survey, Ipsos asks the public to assess how life is in 2025 compared to their perceptions of life in 1975.

Given the choice, people would prefer to have been born in 1975 rather than 2025 by a margin of almost two to one (44% vs. 24%). This is despite 72% of people across the 30 countries surveyed having been born since 1975. An average of 44% say they would rather have been born then, far ahead of the 24% who favour today's times.

Only one country stands out – South Korea. It's the only place

where more would choose to be born today (44%) rather than 50 years ago (19%). Meanwhile, France leads in the nostalgia stakes, with 57% preferring 1975. Belgium, Mexico (both 53%), Great Britain and New Zealand (both 52%) are close behind.

There's a prevailing sense that people were happier in the old days. An average of 55% say their country was a happier place in 1975, with just 16% feeling the mood is better right now. It's worth noting that our survey finds people don't always have a detailed grasp of what's changed over this period: respondents tend to overestimate

life expectancy in their country 50 years ago and to underestimate longevity in today's world.

Gen Z breaks the pattern (just). It's the only age group where there's a preference for being born in the 2020s. But even among this youngest section of the population, the margin is razor-thin, reflecting the depth of unease about both our present and our future.

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Attitudes to COP30

Divided expectations, systemic demands, and governance challenges

Ahead of the 30th annual UN climate meeting (COP30), just one in two people (44%) knew of the conference's purpose: a meeting between countries to negotiate actions to combat climate change.

One in three people across 30 countries (34%) told us they expected it to be effective and bring about concrete results. In contrast, one in two thought it would be "merely symbolic" without real change in fighting climate change.

Across 30 countries, there's a notable desire for companies to be doing more. Seven in 10 (69%) agree that companies prioritise

profit over environmental concerns, with a similar proportion (65%) supporting a requirement for companies and industries to allocate part of their profits to tackle climate change.

One in two people (54%) agree that billionaires should bear most of the costs of combatting climate change, with support rising to 66% in both Türkiye and Italy but notably lower in Japan (39%) and Argentina (45%).

When it comes to key obstacles to climate action, politicians are seen as a bottleneck. A lack of political will among government leaders is the most-cited barrier globally

(42%), with Latin American countries particularly likely to consider this a key obstacle (51% on average across the region).

A lack of enforcement against deforestation and pollution (34%) and a lack of funding for environmental projects (31%) also rank highly.

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Across 30 countries, there's a notable desire for companies to be doing more.



World Affairs & Security Report

America's reputation drops

In the latest edition of our annual Ipsos World Affairs polling for the [Halifax International Security Forum](#), we explore global attitudes towards conflicts and threats to the world.

Less than half (48% on average across 30 countries) now think that America will have a positive impact on world affairs over the next decade, down 12 percentage points from our polling last year, which was done right before now-US President Donald Trump won the election.

America's northern neighbours are now the least likely of all 30 countries to think the US will have

a positive impact with just 24% of Canadians saying so, down a whopping 28 points compared to 2024.

The proportion who think the US will have a positive impact fell in 29 of 30 countries in 2025. The global reputation of the US also slid during Trump's first term (2017-2021).

Disinformation and hacking worries remain high, with just over three in four (77% on average across 30 countries) saying the spread of disinformation to influence public opinion is a real threat in the world today. Being hacked for fraudulent/espionage

purposes (77%) ties disinformation as the number one threat for the second year in a row.

This connects across to a broader sense of unease over the countries surveyed. Four-fifths (80%) on average agree over the past year the world has become more dangerous.



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Seeing the Unseen

How Vision AI and AI agents are transforming product testing

The rise of generative AI has had a significant impact on product development, reducing cycle times from years to just months. This urgency is driven by the need for a first-mover advantage in rapidly evolving markets. However, while speed is crucial, sustainable growth depends on a true and total understanding of the product experience, to prevent consumer dissatisfaction and brand damage.

In this Ipsos Views paper, the third edition in our *Humanizing AI* series, we explore how integrating human intelligence (HI) and artificial intelligence (AI) can improve product testing using

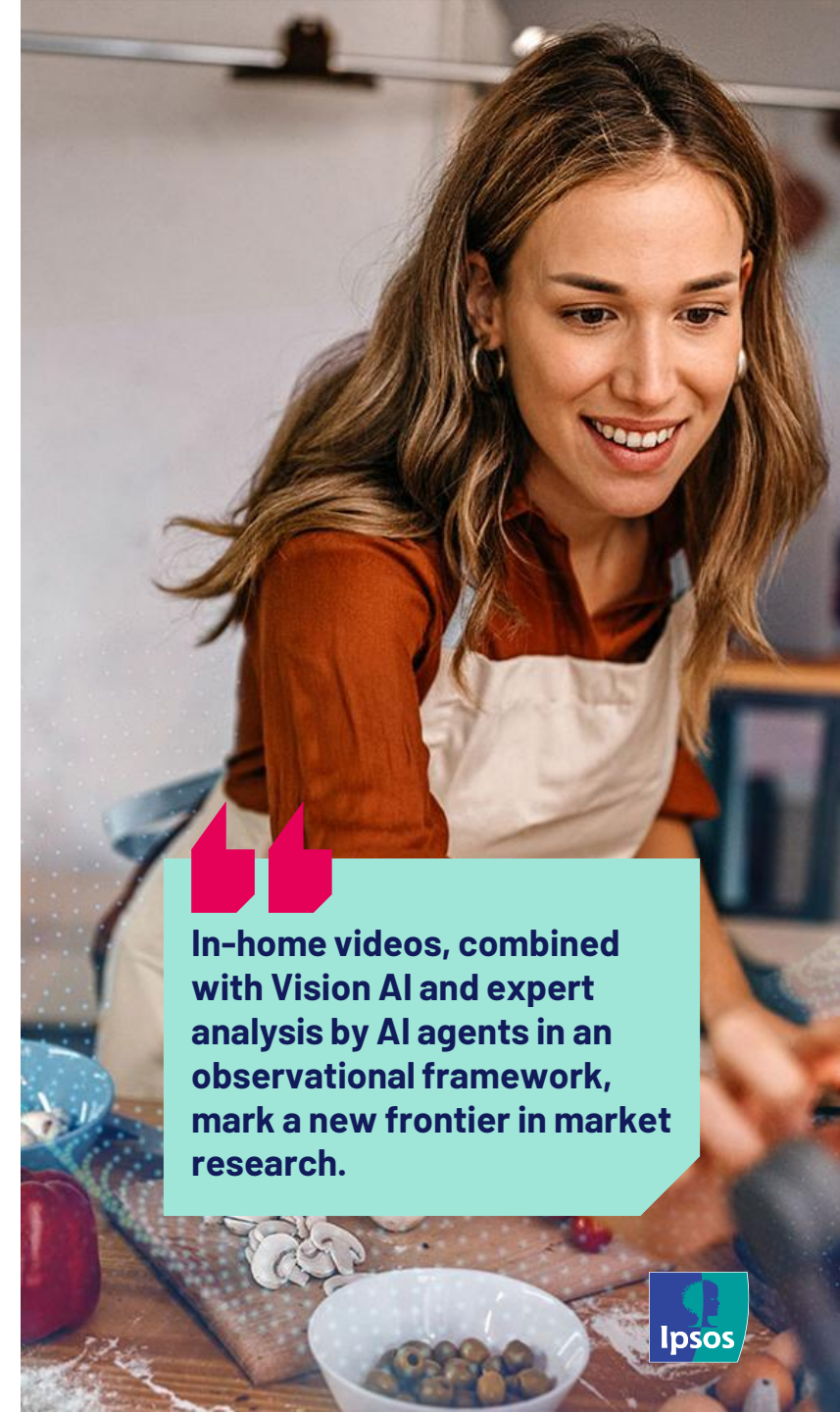
advanced technologies such as vision AI and AI agents. These tools transform traditional in-home usage tests (IHUTs), which typically depend on consumer memory, by capturing real-world product experiences with video and providing nuanced analysis.

The use of video ethnography, alongside Vision AI, uncovers product use moments that surveys might overlook, offering a more comprehensive view of the consumer experience. It enables businesses to observe consumers interacting with products in an unfiltered way, providing deeper, actionable insights.

Seeing product experiences at scale reduces the risk of product failure and empowers brands to meet expectations more effectively. By leveraging this advanced, AI-driven research methodology, businesses can anticipate trends, make informed decisions, and innovate effectively to meet and exceed consumer demands in today's highly competitive market.

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In-home videos, combined with Vision AI and expert analysis by AI agents in an observational framework, mark a new frontier in market research.



Cost of Living Monitor 2025

A majority expect inflation to rise

The eighth edition of our *Cost of Living Monitor* tracks how people across 30 countries feel about their finances during the “Uneasy Decade”.

For some countries, it feels like things have turned a corner in the last 12 months. While inflation started to fall in many countries in 2023, it has taken some time for people to be more satisfied with the situation. On average across 30 countries, 37% say they are living comfortably/doing alright, while 32% are just getting by and 27% struggling.

Throughout the countries surveyed, feelings are mixed about

what the future holds. As many think their disposable income will rise, as think it will fall. The same think it will stay the same. However, when we look at this on a country level, things are less equal.

Many in Europe and in English-speaking countries are feeling relatively positive about their current financial situation. However, these same countries do not think that it will stay good.

Most of these countries are more likely to think their disposable income will fall in the next year than rise. Even somewhere like the Netherlands, the country where people are most content with their

finances, 35% think their disposable income will fall in the next year.

People in France are the most likely to think they will have less money to spend after bills in the next year, with 44% thinking their disposable income will decline. While 41% think their standard of living will fall in 2026, which is up 4pp since autumn last year.



37% say they are living comfortably/doing alright, while 32% are just getting by and 27% struggling.

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State of Democracy 2025

Threats facing democracy across Europe and the US

The 2025 edition of *The State of Democracy* finds a continued dissatisfaction with how democracy works.

Across the nine countries, satisfaction has fallen most since 2024 in the Netherlands (-12pp to 36%) and France (-6pp to 19%), following political instability in both countries.

Sweden remains the only country where a majority are satisfied with how democracy is working.

With the exception of Poland, there is a strong sense that the way democracy is working is under pressure. The Netherlands and France again lead on negative

perceptions, with 76% and 81%, respectively, saying the way democracy is working has worsened.

Despite dissatisfaction, majorities across most countries say democracy is crucial to society and should be maintained. Croatia is the only country where more people say democracy is only worth keeping if it delivers good quality of life.

Majorities in all countries – except Sweden – are worried about the state of democracy in the next five years. Fake news, a lack of accountability among politicians, rising extremism and corruption are seen as the biggest threats to

democracy.

When it comes to potential solutions for strengthening democracy, stronger anti-corruption laws and protecting the independence of the courts are seen as effective solutions in nearly all countries.

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Majorities in all countries – except Sweden – are worried about the state of democracy in the next five years.



Despite ongoing economic and social challenges like inflation and unemployment, a stronger national mood is developing.

The Cedar's Turn

Lebanon's emerging momentum in 2025

In 2025, Lebanon is cautiously optimistic, as seen through a rise in the Ipsos Lebanon Consumer Sentiment Index from 34.7 in November 2024 to 38.2 in July 2025.

More than half of respondents now feel the country is on the right track, with an increased willingness to make major purchases.

Despite ongoing economic and social challenges like inflation and unemployment, a stronger national mood is developing. This includes a surge in pride and preference for Lebanese products, with 73% of

consumers increasing their use of local goods over the past five years.

Lebanese goods are not only seen as competitive internationally but also preferred as a show of economic solidarity. Online, positive sentiment about Lebanon has grown by 137%, according to Ipsos Synthesio, aided by political changes and a focus on gender equality and women's rights, recognised as crucial for national progress.

Moreover, the tourism sector is rebounding, highlighted by increased international arrivals

and digital engagement focused on Lebanon's culture and hospitality.

These changes indicate a shift from mere survival to a hopeful trajectory towards rebuilding, stabilising, and achieving greater inclusion and opportunity.

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2026 World's Best Cities

London remains the most desirable city in the world

Drawing on Ipsos data, the 2026 World's Best Cities Report reveals the top 100 cities with the best reputations around the world.

In collaboration with [Resonance Consultancy](#), we asked 21,000 people from 31 different countries to tell us the cities that most appealed to them as places to visit, to work, or to live.

This data was then combined with hard “performance” metrics including air quality, the strength of internet infrastructure, availability of green space, labour force participation, and data from social media review sites to determine the most globally desirable destinations for investment, business, and tourism.

This unique and intensive methodology produced the same result as last year – with London retaining its title as the world’s most prestigious city. It secured the top position in three of the 34 subcategories (the most of any city).

The full rankings and analysis can be found on the [Resonance website](#), along with a downloadable copy of the report.

Each city was assessed according to its liveability, lovability, and prosperity. Taking all these considerations into account, the 2026 top 10 best cities were revealed as follows:

1. London, UK
2. New York, USA
3. Paris, France
4. Tokyo, Japan
5. Madrid, Spain
6. Singapore
7. Rome, Italy
8. Dubai, UAE
9. Berlin, Germany
10. Barcelona, Spain

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London secured the top position in three of the 34 subcategories (the most of any city).

Shortcuts



Beyond Appearances

Co-authored by Brice Teinturier, Alexandre Guérin, and Arnaud Caré, this book draws on years of studies and opinion polls conducted by Ipsos to paint a more nuanced portrait of French society. It offers a well-reasoned and substantiated message of hope to help break free from the nation's stereotypical gloom and rediscovers reasons for optimism.

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UK's Changing Culture Wars

Perceptions of division in the UK have reached their highest point since trends began in 2020, with 84% of the public now saying the country feels divided – up from 79% two years ago and 74% five years ago.

The findings come in a new study carried out by King's College London and Ipsos, as part of a research programme that began in 2020.

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From Silent Epidemic to Measurable Value

This Ipsos report reframes Alzheimer's disease as a health system risk multiplier, exploring the knock-on effects of the disease and its management on global health systems.

It offers commentary on the real-world evidence, health economics and research opportunities in the Alzheimer's disease space.

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Please email IKC@ipsos.com with any comments, including ideas for future content.

Cover photo: **Fortaleza, Brazil**. Brazil hosted this year's COP30 – discover global attitudes to the event [here](#).

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