

# American Popular Culture: As Prosaic and Conservative As It Is Dynamic

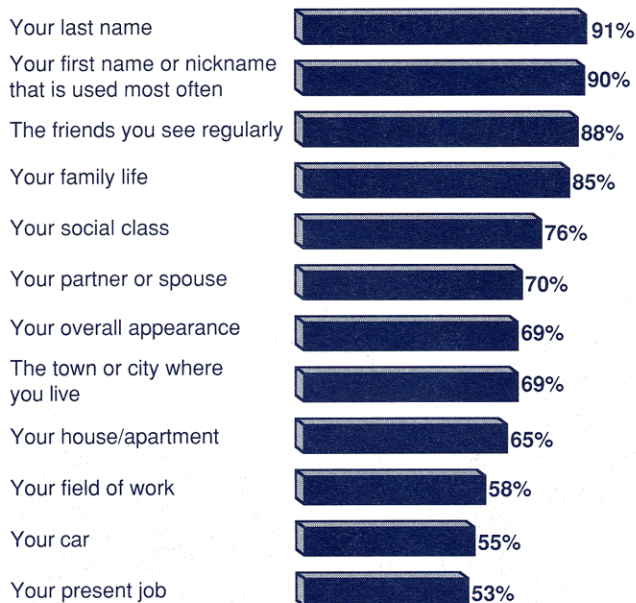
Opinion polls are most widely used to describe views on weighty issues—what the public thinks should be done about the federal deficit, or welfare reform, or the tragedy in Bosnia. But they are also useful in charting more prosaic things. Like any other, this nation reveals itself most clearly in the norms, tastes and behavior of everyday life. We bring together survey findings on these elements of popular culture in the next 12 pages.

One thing comes through clearly. We are resolute standpatters on the forms and symbols of national life—from our currency (no dollar coins, and keep the penny) to our measures (no to “metric America”) to our anthem (“O say can you see...,” if not sing). In the interview that follows this data section, Philip Diehl, Director of the US Mint, tells of the education he has received in the brouhaha over the proposed new dollar coin.

## I Like My Life Pretty Well As It Is, Thank You

**Question:** Some people would like to change certain things about themselves, while others are happy to keep things as they are....For each of these things, would you say you would like to change it or do you like it the way it is?...

*Those responding “I like it as it is”*



**Note:** Selected items shown.



**ROPER** August 7-14, 1993

## Of Course, Some Things Change

**Question:** ...Tell me for each one whether you have done it in the past year or not?...

*Those responding “Yes”*



American Popular Culture

# Americans are Institutional Conservatives

**Question A:** The Star Spangled Banner has been our national anthem since 1931. Some people feel that America the Beautiful would be more appropriate.... How do you feel—would you like to... stay with the Star Spangled Banner, or change to America the Beautiful as our national anthem?



**ROPER**

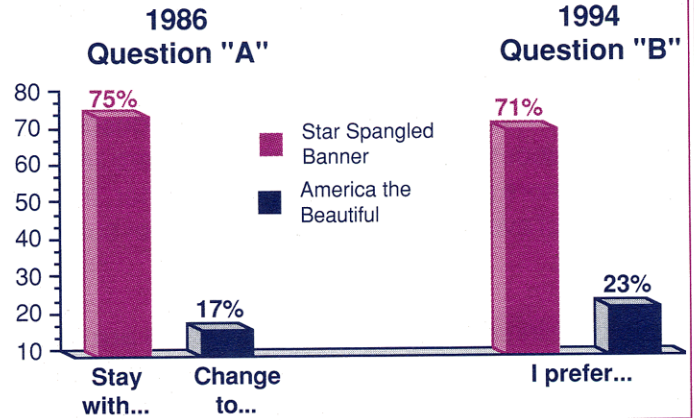
For *US News & World Report/CNN*, June 11-15, 1986

**Question B:** Which would you prefer as the national anthem: the Star Spangled Banner or America the Beautiful?



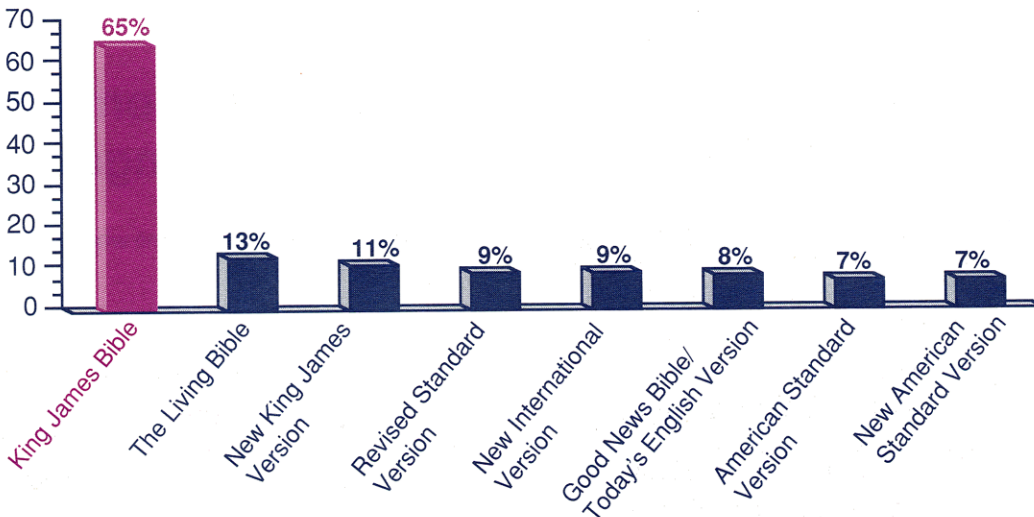
**GALLUP**

For *America's Talking*, June 17-19, 1994



**Question:** Which version(s) of the Bible do you have in your home?

In Percent



Note: Multiple responses accepted.



**KRC**

For The American Bible Society, March 30-April 7, 1995

**Question A:** Would you favor changing the Constitution to prevent any president of the US from serving a third term?



**GALLUP**

December 2-7, 1939

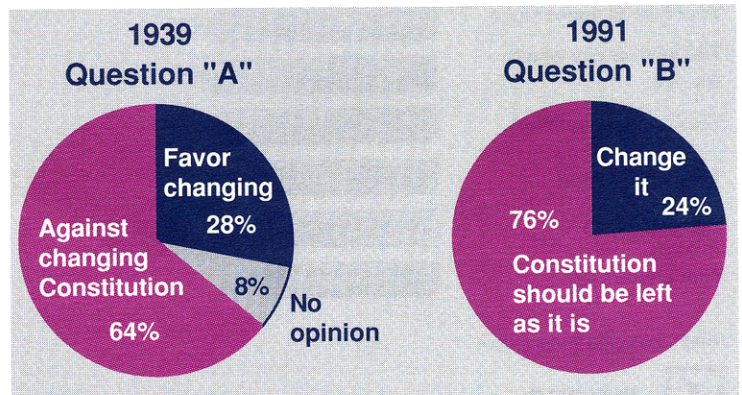
**Question B:** .... Do you think the Constitution should be changed to allow a person to serve only one four year term, ...serve three four year terms, ...serve as many terms as he can be elected, or should the Constitution be left as it is now?

Note: For Question B those responding "don't know" (1%) have been calculated out.



**PSRA**

February 28-March 3, 1991



# Money & Measures: No Change, Please

1995

**Question:** Currently the federal government is considering getting rid of the one dollar bill and replacing it with a new, one dollar coin. Would you favor or oppose that action?



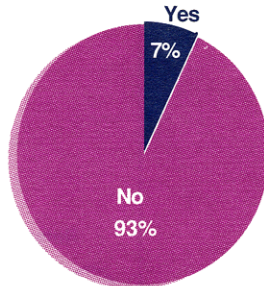
**Note:** Response of "don't know" (4%) has been calculated out.

**GALLUP**

For CNN/USA Today, June 5-6, 1995

1994

**Question:** The phrase 'In God We Trust' has been printed on our currency since 1957. Do you think a different phrase or motto should be printed on our bills?



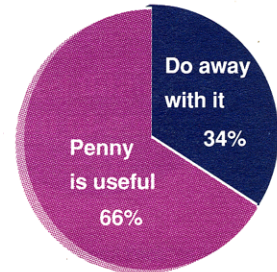
**Note:** Response of "don't know" (1%) has been calculated out.

**ICR**

For the PLUS ATM Network, August 3-7, 1994

1993

**Question:** Do you think the penny is a useful coin, or should the government do away with it?



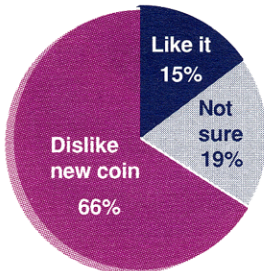
**Note:** Response of "don't know" (3%) has been calculated out.

**ABC**

September 16-19, 1993

1979

**Question:** What is your opinion of the new coin (Susan B. Anthony dollar)? Do you mostly like it or mostly dislike it?



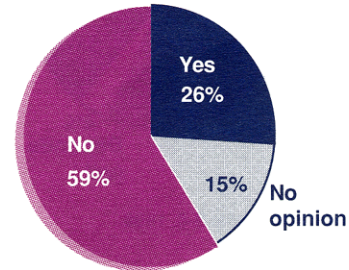
**Note:** Asked of the 89% who have heard or read about the new coin.

**GALLUP**

September 7-10, 1979

1961

**Question:** A proposal has been made to issue paper money with a different color for the different amounts, with the one dollar bill remaining green. Would you like to see paper money issued in different colors, or not?



**GALLUP**

June 23-28, 1961

## I'd Sooner Walk a Mile than a Kilometer

1965

**Question:** Would you like to see the US change to the metric system?

Yes 38%

No 46%

**Note:** Asked of the 29% who know what the metric system is.

**GALLUP**

August 27-September 1, 1965

1977

**Question:** Would you like to see the US adopt the metric system?

Yes 38%

No 53%

**Note:** Asked of the 76% who know what the metric system is.

**GALLUP**

January 7-10, 1977

1991

**Question:** Would you like to see the US adopt the metric system?

Favor 33%

Oppose 64%

**Note:** Asked of the 80% who know what the metric system is.

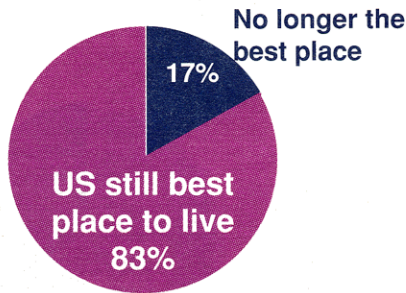
**GALLUP**

August 8-11, 1991

## American Popular Culture

# This "Cultural Conservatism" Flows From American Nationalism

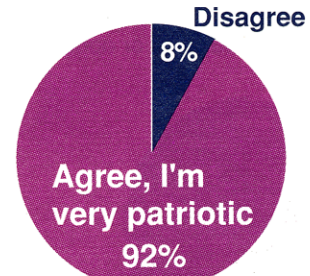
**Question:** Earlier on in American history, many people thought the US was the very best place in the world to live. Do you think it still is, or not?



**Note:** Response of "don't know" (4%) has been calculated out.

**RC** For *Reader's Digest*, August 22-29, 1994

**Question:** ...For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree with it, mostly agree with it, mostly disagree with it or completely disagree with it....I am very patriotic.



**Note:** Response of "don't know" (1%) has been calculated out.

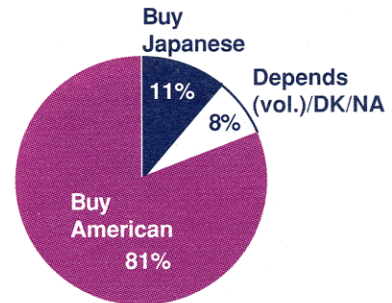
**PSRA** For the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, July 13-27, 1994

**Question:** In general, would you say you try to buy the best product, regardless of whether it is American-made or imported, or would you say you try to buy American-made products instead of imported products whenever you can?



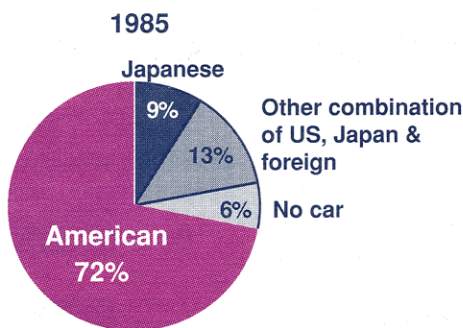
**CBS/NYT** June 4-6, 1995

**Question:** If you wanted to buy a product, and you saw one that was made in Japan and another that was made in the United States for the same price—would you probably buy the Japanese product, or the American product?

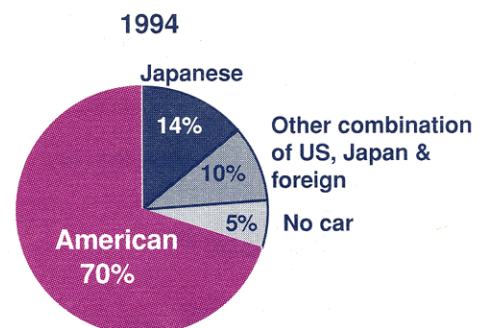


**CBS/NYT** June 4-6, 1995

**Question:** What kind of car do you own—American, Japanese or some other foreign car?



**CBS/NYT** July 16-21, 1985



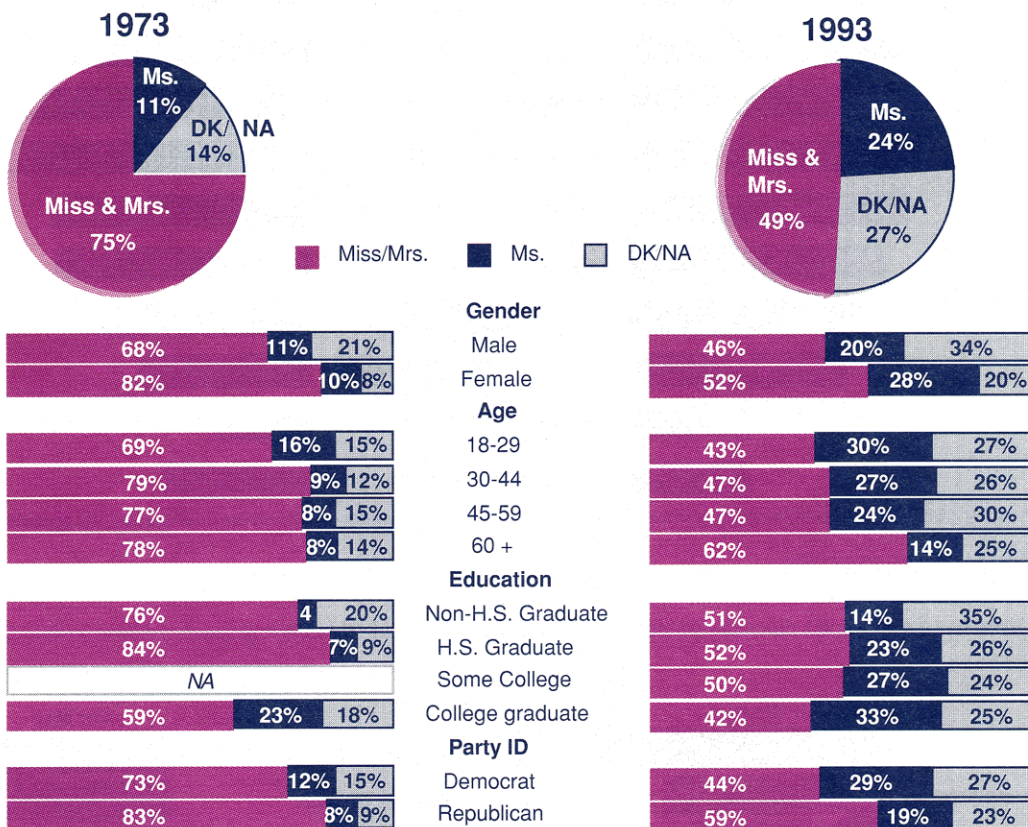
**Note:** Response of "don't know" (2%) has been calculated out.

**CBS/NYT** December 6-9, 1994

# Polite Address:

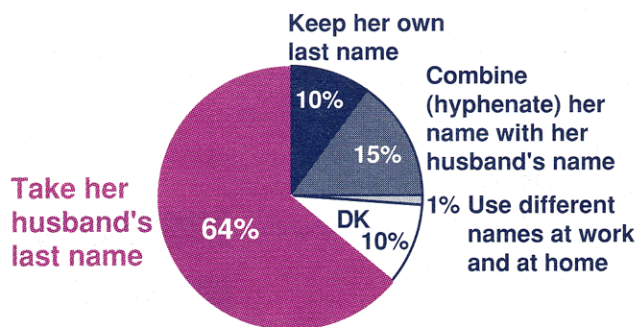
## —Ms. Gains But Still Not Our First Choice— —Taking Hubby's Name Still Goes—

**Question:** There has been a move to change the form of address for women from Miss and Mrs. to Ms. Which form of address do you like best for women—Miss and Mrs. or Ms.?



**ROPER** Latest that of September 11-18, 1993

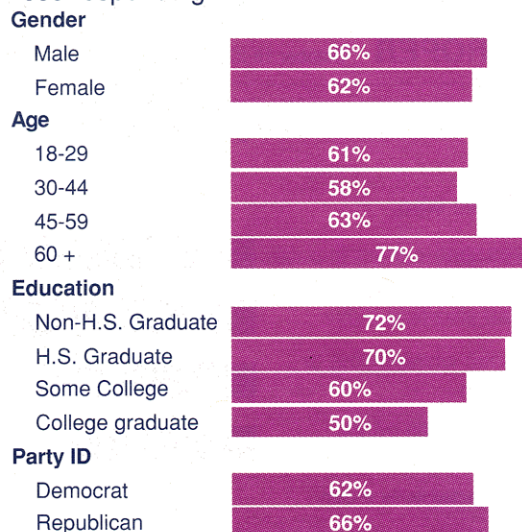
**Question:** People have different opinions about whether or not women should change their names when they marry.... Which of the following options do you consider to be the best choice for a newly married woman?



**Note:** When asked whether men should change their names when they marry, 4% responded he should take his wife's last name; 81% keep his own last name; 6% combine names; 1% use different names at work/home; and 8% don't know.

**ROPER** August 7-14, 1993

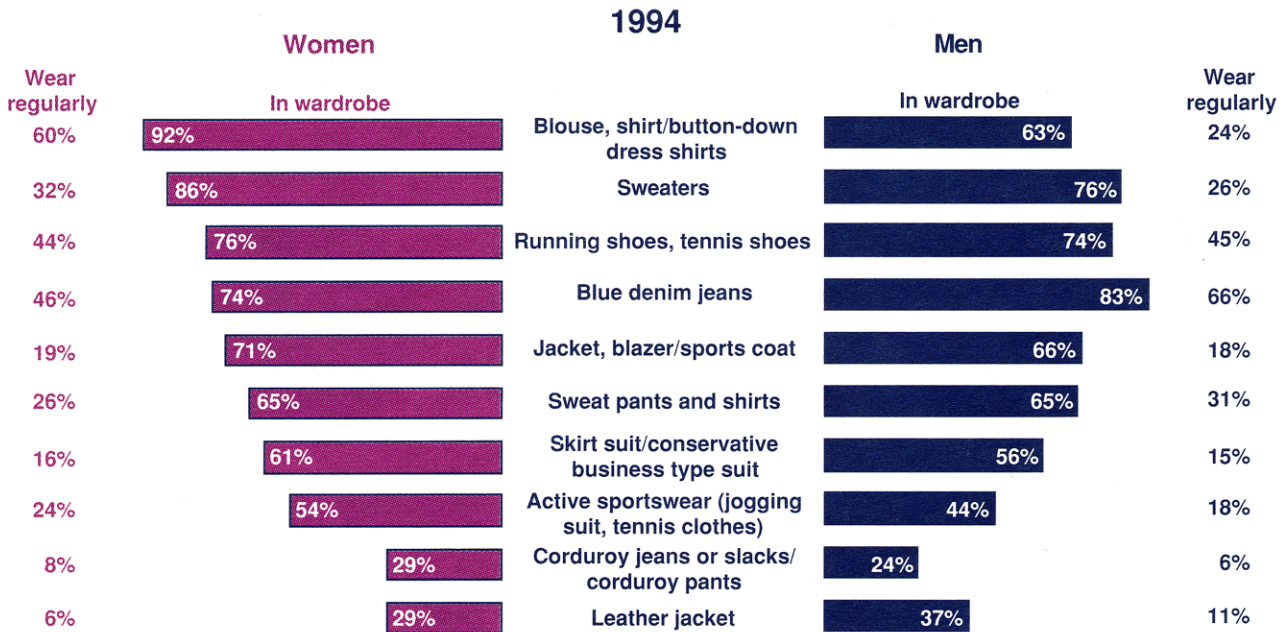
Those responding "Take Husband's Last Name"



American Popular Culture

# Tastes—and Distastes—in Dress

**Question:** Now here is a list of some different types of clothing.... Would you... call off each item that you now have in your wardrobe?... Now... call off any things that you wear on a regular basis—that is when they are in season?



**Note:** Selected items shown. For similar clothing items the women's type is listed first followed by a "/" then the men's reference appears.

**ROPER** August 20-31, 1994

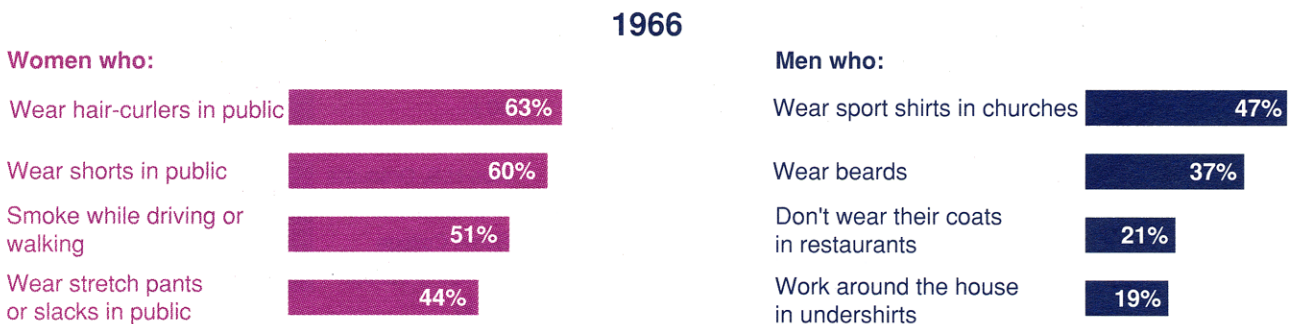
**Question:** ...Here is a list of things currently in fashion. Would you call off all those things you've come to like about the new look?



**Note:** Top 5 responses shown. Multiple responses were accepted.

**ROPER** October 18-27, 1971

**Question:** Which of these things do you think are in bad taste?



**Note:** Selected items shown.

**GALLUP** February 10-15, 1966