

The U.S.-Global Leadership Report

What People Worldwide Think of U.S. Leadership

The U.S.-Global Leadership Track is the largest global public opinion study of views about U.S. leadership. This report is the seventh in an annual series and includes U.S. leadership approval data from 132 countries and areas that Gallup surveyed in 2015.

Gallup has been asking adults worldwide to rate the leadership of the U.S. since 2005, providing a comparison of how perceptions of U.S. leadership change over time and from administration to administration.

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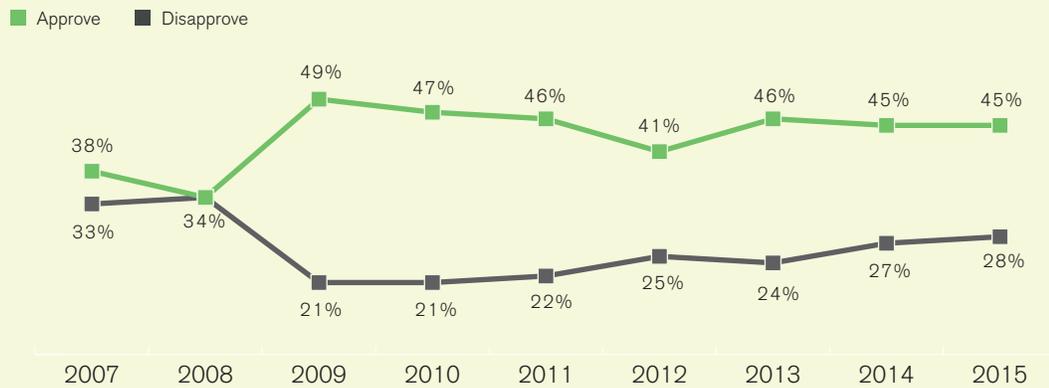
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Worldwide Perceptions of U.S. Leadership

THE U.S. EXPERIENCED ITS SHARE of foreign policy challenges in the penultimate year of President Barack Obama's second term. Arguably on the plus side: the historic Iran nuclear deal, restored relations with Cuba, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and alliances with Asia. On the minus side: continued threats from the Islamic State group, lingering conflicts in Syria and Yemen and the terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, California. Against this backdrop, median approval of U.S. leadership across the 132 countries and areas surveyed in 2015 stood at 45%, unchanged from the previous year.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Global medians



SOURCE: GALLUP

However, the flatness in the overall trend somewhat masks the mix of gains and losses worldwide. Regionally, approval ratings are still strongest in Africa, as they have been for the past decade, but approval remained mired at its lowest level in the history of Gallup's trend. Ratings in Asia also remained mostly unchanged from 2014. The bright spots for U.S. leadership are Europe and the Americas, where ratings continue to improve. In Europe, ratings have almost rebounded to the levels at the beginning of the Obama administration.

Beyond 2016, the next president of the U.S. will continue to face even more challenges, making the strength of U.S. alliances and partnerships — and the soft power of what the world thinks of the U.S. — more important than ever.

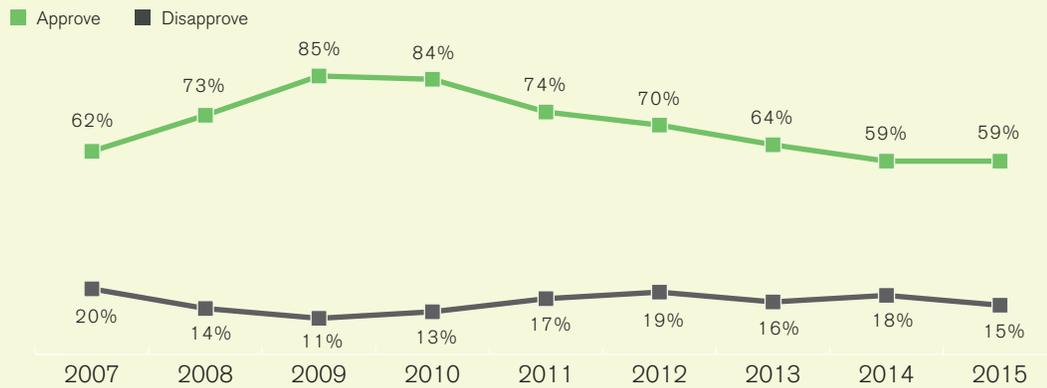
A closer look at where U.S. leadership stands at the regional and country levels reveals specific areas of strength and weakness.

U.S. Approval Remains at Record Low in Africa

THE IMAGE OF U.S. LEADERSHIP continued to be the strongest worldwide in Africa in 2015, bolstered by majority approval in 19 sub-Saharan African countries. However, median approval remained at 59% — still the lowest point in the history of the trend. This marks the end of a downward trend every year since Obama took office.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Africa medians



SOURCE: GALLUP

Residents in most countries are more likely to approve than disapprove of the leadership of the U.S. Only in Somalia, Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt are residents more likely to disapprove than approve.

Approval in the region was lowest in Egypt (10%), which has typically ranked toward the bottom of the list every year. However, Egyptians' approval ratings declined 10 percentage points between 2014 and 2015. The current rating is notably now the lowest measured during the Obama administration and is a full 20 points lower than it was when he first took office. But the lowest approval ever measured in Egypt still belongs to the previous administration — 6% in the last year of the George W. Bush presidency.

Big Losses

Six of the seven countries worldwide where approval ratings declined by 10 or more percentage points in 2015 were in Africa. Cameroon led the region and the world in declines, with ratings dropping by 25 points. But this drop largely reflects an increase in the percentage who did not express an opinion (rising from 18% to 39%) rather than a dramatic increase in disapproval.

Regional Highlights and Insights

- At least two-thirds of residents in 15 sub-Saharan African countries said they approve of the job performance of U.S. leadership. Residents of the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) are the most likely in all of Africa to approve, with eight in 10 (80%) expressing support.

- Egyptians' approval ratings declined 10 percentage points between 2014 and 2015. The current approval rating of 10% is the lowest in the region and is a full 20 points lower than when Obama first took office.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Africa	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Approval difference from 2014 to 2015 (pct. pts.)
Congo-Brazzaville	80%	5%	15%	8
Chad	76%	8%	16%	-1
Senegal	76%	9%	15%	-5
Rwanda	74%	10%	15%	-2
Gabon	73%	14%	14%	1
Kenya	73%	15%	12%	15
Burkina Faso	72%	15%	13%	-2
South Africa	71%	18%	11%	13
Guinea	70%	9%	21%	-4
Nigeria	70%	6%	24%	10
Congo-Kinshasa	68%	14%	17%	-6
Ghana	67%	9%	24%	13
Mali	66%	18%	16%	-8
Mauritania	66%	20%	14%	6
Niger	66%	17%	16%	1
Ivory Coast	60%	11%	29%	-8
Togo	59%	8%	33%	-8
South Sudan	54%	14%	32%	6
Benin	51%	10%	39%	-12
Madagascar	50%	28%	22%	2
Sierra Leone	49%	6%	45%	-19
Botswana	47%	18%	35%	-14
Tanzania	46%	31%	23%	-3
Cameroon	45%	16%	39%	-25
Uganda	43%	17%	40%	-5
Liberia	36%	8%	56%	-3
Zambia	33%	18%	49%	-20
Mozambique	30%	22%	47%	-5
Ethiopia	29%	4%	67%	7
Somalia	25%	35%	40%	1
Tunisia	25%	53%	22%	-8
Morocco	16%	26%	58%	-4
Egypt	10%	62%	28%	-10

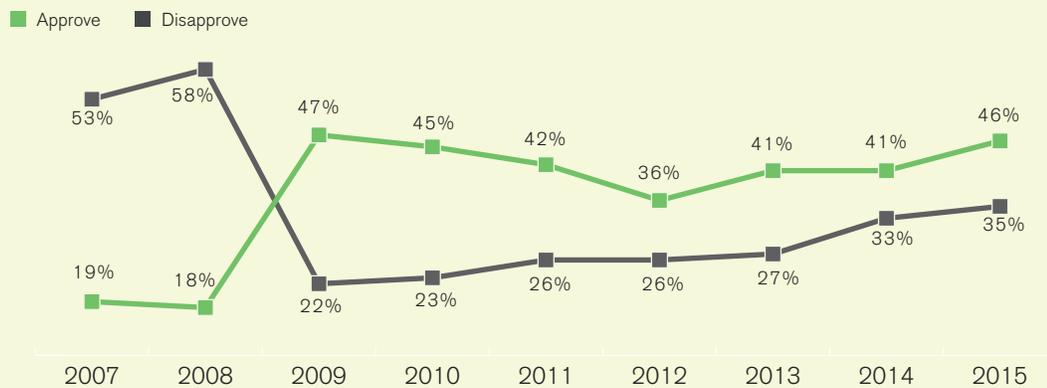
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European Approval Up, Disapproval Stable

EUROPE LED DECLINES IN APPROVAL of U.S. leadership in 2012 as America likely shouldered some of the blame for the financial crisis there, but ratings started to improve as Europe began to recover. The 46% median approval rating in 2015 almost rebounded to the level when Obama took office in 2009. Disapproval, however, has not receded. The 35% median disapproval rating in Europe is the highest recorded during the Obama administration, but this is still far lower than the majority disapproval observed during the last years of the George W. Bush administration.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Europe medians



SOURCE: GALLUP

U.S. Leadership Strong Among Key Allies, Record-Worst in Russia

The U.S. achieved majority support in 15 countries in 2015, including many countries in the European Union and featuring key allies such as France, Ireland, Italy and the United Kingdom. Kosovo led the region — and the world — in approval for the second consecutive year, with 85% approving of U.S. leadership.

The crisis in Ukraine and tensions with Russia in 2014 that stretched into 2015 (and, so far, into 2016) clearly soured public opinion in Russia and former Soviet republic Belarus on the leadership of the U.S. Approval ratings in both countries dropped to single-digit record lows in 2014, and they did not recover in 2015. Instead, Russians' ratings of the U.S. actually worsened, and the 1% who approve of the U.S. is not only the lowest in the world in 2015, but is also the lowest Gallup has ever recorded.

Regional Highlights and Insights

- Amid fraying relations with the West, Russian approval remained the lowest in the region, sinking to a record low (1%); approval remained highest in Kosovo (85%).
- Majorities in Russia (89%), Belarus (67%) and Serbia (56%) disapproved of the leadership of the U.S. in 2015.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Europe	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Approval difference from 2014 to 2015 (pct. pts.)
Kosovo	85%	7%	8%	4
Albania	74%	12%	14%	0
United Kingdom	65%	28%	7%	4
Netherlands	64%	29%	7%	-2
Ireland	63%	31%	5%	2
Italy	61%	35%	3%	2
Belgium	59%	29%	12%	-5
France	58%	30%	12%	6
Hungary	56%	14%	30%	2
Romania	56%	14%	30%	6
Luxembourg	55%	34%	10%	2
Malta	54%	25%	22%	1
Denmark	52%	27%	21%	1
Portugal	51%	15%	34%	-4
Spain	51%	41%	8%	8
Finland	50%	40%	10%	5
Norway	50%	31%	19%	-3
Lithuania	47%	28%	25%	-2
Switzerland	47%	43%	11%	3
Czech Republic	46%	34%	20%	8
Poland	46%	28%	25%	7
Croatia	45%	29%	25%	4
Germany	44%	47%	9%	0
Sweden	41%	31%	28%	0
Moldova	39%	18%	43%	0
Macedonia	38%	33%	29%	-1
Northern Cyprus	36%	37%	26%	1
Ukraine	35%	40%	25%	-3
Austria	34%	60%	6%	2
Estonia	34%	42%	24%	-2
Bulgaria	32%	37%	31%	-3
Cyprus	30%	37%	33%	1
Slovenia	30%	50%	21%	0
Montenegro	29%	48%	23%	3
Greece	28%	50%	23%	2
Latvia	28%	46%	26%	-3
Iceland	27%	36%	36%	*
Bosnia and Herzegovina	26%	39%	35%	-3
Slovakia	26%	47%	27%	-7
Serbia	16%	56%	28%	1
Belarus	9%	67%	24%	2
Russia	1%	89%	9%	-3

*No data available for 2014.

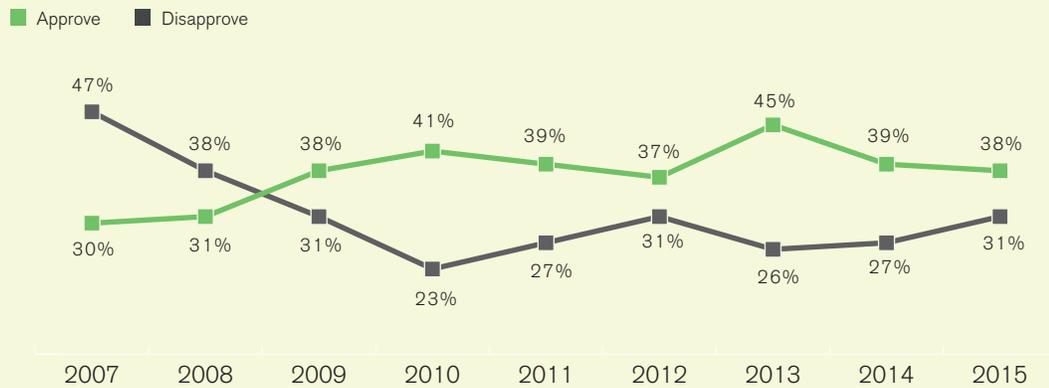
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Approval Steady in Asia

ALTHOUGH THE U.S. AND 11 PACIFIC RIM countries finally reached a deal in late 2015 on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the image of U.S. leadership did not appear to benefit much in the Asia-Pacific region — with perhaps the exception of Malaysia, which led the world with a 27-point increase in approval — nor did it benefit much from reaching a nuclear deal with Iran. In fact, the 38% median approval in 2015 is essentially unchanged from approval in 2014. The median 31% disapproval is at the same level it was at the start of the Obama administration and in 2012.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Asia medians



SOURCE: GALLUP

In 2015, the U.S. — for the most part — failed to recoup 2014's big losses in approval that took place in former Soviet republics in Central Asia, where the crisis in Ukraine and U.S. tensions with Russia overshadowed relations. Approval in Kazakhstan, which led the region — and the world — in declines in 2014, actually dropped an additional percentage point to 8% approval in 2015. Kazakhstan's rating is the lowest in Asia for the second consecutive year, but it has since been joined by the Palestinian Territories, where approval is 9%.

Approval declined by 10 points or more in only one country: Singapore. However, the drop from 55% approval in 2014 to 36% approval in 2015 is chiefly attributable to a sharp rise in the percentage of residents with no opinion of U.S. leadership rather than to an increase in disapproval.

In addition to Malaysia, approval ratings also increased by 10 points or more in Sri Lanka, where fieldwork overlapped with Secretary of State John Kerry's historic visit there — the first by a U.S. secretary of state in 43 years. Sri Lankans' approval ratings rose from 17% to 27%, but the majority (63%) still don't know enough about U.S. leadership to have an opinion.

Asian Countries Still Among Most Disapproving

In the past, the list of countries with the highest disapproval ratings of the U.S. worldwide has been dominated by countries in the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia regions. While this is still largely the case, former Soviet countries are firmly among them in 2015 for a second year. In Asia, residents of the Palestinian Territories (79%) were the most disapproving for the second consecutive year, with Lebanon (72%), Pakistan (71%) and Kazakhstan (70%) following closely behind. While approval didn't change markedly in Iran after the nuclear deal was reached in 2015, disapproval did drop 10 points from 61% in 2014 to 51% — holding on to the bare majority.

Regional Highlights and Insights

- Cambodia and the Philippines led the region again with the highest approval of U.S. leadership in 2015, with at least two in three residents in each country approving. Majorities in five other countries — Malaysia, New Zealand, South Korea, Australia and Mongolia — also approved.
- There were two double-digit approval increases in Asia: Malaysia and Sri Lanka. In Singapore, there was a double-digit decline in U.S. leadership approval, but this is chiefly attributable to a large increase in the number of residents with no opinion.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Asia	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Approval difference from 2014 to 2015 (pct. pts.)
Cambodia	74%	12%	14%	7
Philippines	64%	29%	7%	-2
Malaysia	56%	29%	16%	27
New Zealand	53%	25%	23%	-3
South Korea	53%	23%	24%	4
Australia	52%	23%	25%	-1
Mongolia	52%	12%	35%	9
Israel	50%	40%	10%	-4
Taiwan	49%	15%	36%	0
Afghanistan	46%	43%	12%	4
Georgia	44%	26%	30%	-3
Thailand	44%	25%	31%	5
Bhutan	44%	4%	53%	*
Azerbaijan	43%	31%	26%	-2
Armenia	42%	31%	27%	-1
Japan	41%	22%	38%	-5
Myanmar	41%	5%	54%	0
Nepal	40%	11%	49%	-3
Turkmenistan	38%	43%	19%	*
Bangladesh	36%	31%	33%	8
Singapore	36%	11%	53%	-19
Tajikistan	32%	50%	18%	7
Turkey	32%	37%	30%	0
Iraq	30%	57%	13%	-2
Kyrgyzstan	27%	54%	18%	6
Sri Lanka	27%	10%	63%	10
Vietnam	27%	7%	66%	*
India	25%	18%	56%	0
Uzbekistan	23%	40%	37%	-7
Indonesia	22%	36%	42%	-7
Pakistan	20%	71%	9%	-2
Syria	20%	59%	21%	*
Iran	19%	51%	30%	5
Lebanon	18%	72%	10%	-3
Yemen	15%	69%	17%	-2
Palestinian Territories	9%	79%	12%	-7
Kazakhstan	8%	70%	22%	-1

*No data available for 2014.

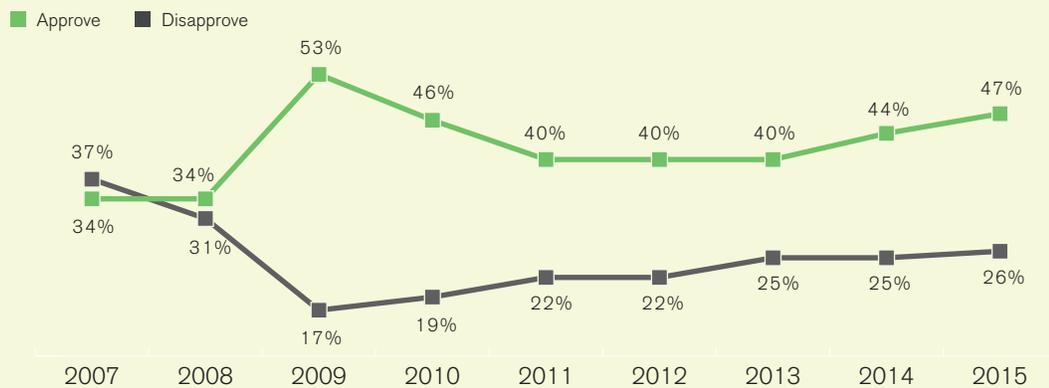
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U.S. Image Continues to Improve in Americas

U.S. LEADERSHIP APPROVAL RATINGS in the Americas continued to improve in 2015, with the 47% median approval for the region reaching its highest point in the past five years. Although approval ratings did not increase dramatically in any country — with the exception of Uruguay — ratings moved in a positive direction in the majority of countries in the region. There were no double-digit declines in any country.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

Americas medians



SOURCE: GALLUP

Led by a 15-point increase in Uruguay, approval ratings moved in a positive direction in 14 countries in the region and in a negative direction in five. Residents in most countries are generally more approving than disapproving of U.S. leadership.

Only in Argentina are residents more likely to disapprove (40%) than approve (24%) of U.S. leadership. But recent developments between the U.S. and Argentina hint that this could someday change. There are signs that years of icy relations between the U.S. and Argentina are beginning to thaw with the election of President Mauricio Macri in late 2015. In early 2016, Obama became the first president to visit Argentina in decades.

Regional Highlights and Insights

- Approval in the region is highest in Canada, where more than six in 10 (64%) say they approve of the leadership of the U.S. Majorities also approve in El Salvador (57%), Honduras (56%), Panama (53%) and Haiti (52%).
- Argentines are the least likely to approve of U.S. leadership, with slightly fewer than one in four residents doing so. Argentines are almost twice as likely to disapprove (40%) as approve (24%), while 36% say they do not have an opinion.

Do you approve or disapprove of the job performance of the leadership of the United States?

The Americas	Approve	Disapprove	Don't know/ Refused	Approval difference from 2014 to 2015 (pct. pts.)
Canada	60%	32%	8%	4
El Salvador	59%	22%	19%	3
Honduras	56%	32%	12%	2
Panama	54%	18%	28%	3
Haiti	54%	15%	31%	-4
Brazil	53%	21%	26%	2
Dominican Republic	50%	22%	28%	3
Costa Rica	48%	24%	29%	-4
Mexico	48%	19%	33%	6
Paraguay	48%	18%	34%	0
Guatemala	47%	13%	40%	1
Peru	44%	33%	23%	6
Colombia	43%	38%	19%	4
Uruguay	43%	24%	34%	15
Nicaragua	40%	25%	35%	6
Ecuador	39%	31%	30%	-1
Venezuela	39%	28%	33%	-6
Chile	36%	25%	39%	-1
Bolivia	36%	31%	33%	6
Argentina	33%	29%	37%	2

Figures may not add to 100% because of rounding.

Fewer Big Losses in 2015

Approval of U.S. leadership dropped substantially — by 10 points or more — in just seven countries in 2015, which is far fewer than the 16 in 2014. Losses were primarily clustered in Africa.

Biggest Losses in Approval

	Approve	Approval difference from 2014 to 2015 (pct. pts.)
Cameroon	45%	-25
Zambia	33%	-20
Sierra Leone	49%	-19
Singapore	36%	-19
Botswana	47%	-14
Benin	51%	-12
Egypt	10%	-10

Similar Gains to Those in 2014

U.S. leadership approval increased substantially — by 10 points or more — in seven countries in 2015, which is equal to those in 2014.

Biggest Gains in Approval

	Approve	Approval difference from 2014 to 2015 (pct. pts.)
Malaysia	56%	27
Kenya	73%	15
Uruguay	44%	15
Ghana	67%	13
South Africa	71%	13
Nigeria	70%	10
Sri Lanka	27%	10

Methodology

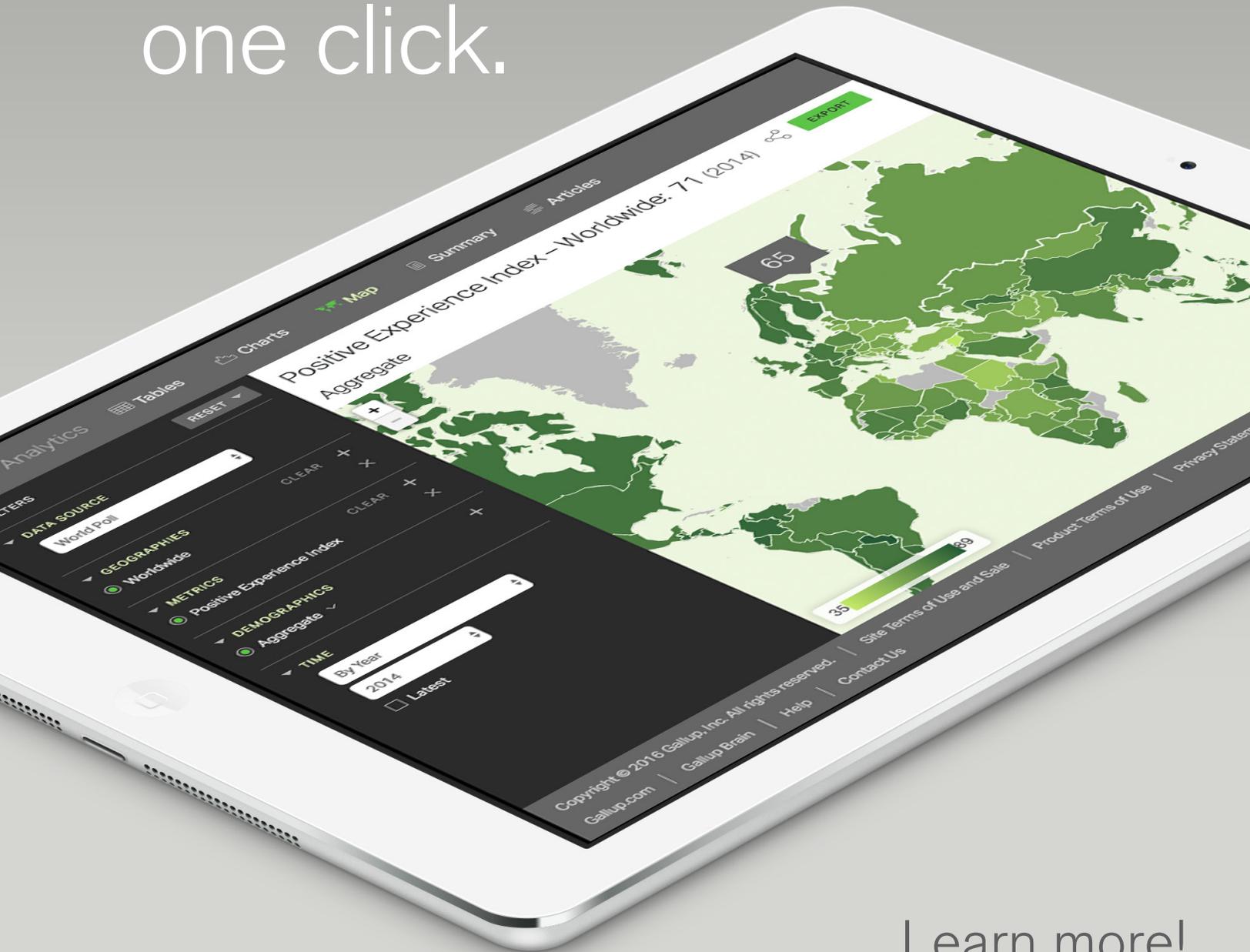
Results are based on face-to-face and telephone interviews with approximately 1,000 adults, aged 15 and older, conducted throughout 2014 in 135 countries and 2015 in 132 countries. For results based on the total samples, margin of sampling error ranges from ± 2.5 percentage points to ± 5.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The margin of error reflects the influence of data weighting. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

With some exceptions, all samples are probability-based and nationally representative of the resident population aged 15 and older.

Exceptions include areas where the safety of interviewing staff is threatened, scarcely populated islands in some countries, and areas that interviewers can reach only by foot, animal or small boat.

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