

Paranormal Beliefs: Using Survey Trends from the USA to Suggest a New Area of Research in Asia

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Abstract

Americans continue to have beliefs in the paranormal, for example in UFOs, ghosts, haunted houses, and clairvoyance. Yet, to date there has not been a systematic gathering of data on popular beliefs about the paranormal, and the question of whether or not there is a convincing trend in beliefs about the paranormal remains to be explored. Public opinion polling on paranormal beliefs shows that these beliefs have remained stable over time, and in some cases have in fact increased. Beliefs in ghosts (25% in 1990 to 32% in 2005) and haunted houses (29% in 1990, 37% in 2001) have all increased while beliefs in clairvoyance (26% in 1990 and 2005) and astrology as scientific (31% in 2006, 32% in 2014) have remained stable. Belief in UFOs (50%) is highest among all paranormal beliefs. Our findings show that people continue to hold beliefs about the paranormal despite their lack of grounding in science or religion.

Key Words: Paranormal beliefs, ghosts, astrology, UFOs, clairvoyance

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Introduction

Paranormal beliefs such as belief in ghosts, haunted houses, astrology, and clairvoyance have a persistent presence despite having little or no grounding in scientific evidence. In 1991, Gallup Jr. and Newport (1991, p. 137) noted that "paranormal beliefs are widespread. Yet belief in astrology and the reality of UFOs has lessened, superstitions are widely disbelieved, and the New Age movement is unadmired." The paranormal also finds a home in popular culture as seen in the wide viewership of vampire-themed television programs. Yet, trends regarding paranormal beliefs that are not a part of dominant religious traditions remained underexplored.

What counts as paranormal belief, referred also as anomalous experience (McClenon, 1990), unconventional beliefs (Glendinning, 2006), and nonofficial religion (Kim, 2005), differ significantly from the particular cultural and religious context. According to Mencken, Bader, & Kim (2009, p. 66), "any supernatural belief that is outside of the beliefs and doctrines of the dominant belief system of a culture would be considered 'paranormal.'" For example, for the question "Do you believe in ... Reincarnation – being reborn in this world again and again," 56% of Japanese, 65% of Taiwanese, 33% of Americans, and 29% of English answered Yes (definitely/probably) (ISSP Research Group, 2012). In East Asian countries reincarnation seems to be a religious belief accepted by a majority of the public, but in Western countries only a minority believe in it and it is probably more paranormal rather than religious.

In the Western countries, considerable empirical research has examined the relationship between religious beliefs and paranormal beliefs, either that religious people are more likely to have paranormal beliefs due to their spiritual commonality or they are less likely to have paranormal beliefs due to the substitution of religion for paranormal beliefs (Donahue, 1993; Emmons & Sobal, 1981; Fox, 1992; Glendinning, 2006; Glendinning & Bruce, 2006; MacDonald, 1995; Mencken et al., 2009; Mencken, Bader, & Stark, 2008; Orenstein, 2002; Rice, 2003; Sparks, 2001; Torgler, 2007; Weeks, Weeks, & Daniel, 2008;

Wuthnow, 1976). The examination of the link between religion and paranormal beliefs resulted in mixed findings, which can be attributed to multidimensionality of paranormal beliefs as well as religious beliefs (Hergovich, Schott, & Arendasy, 2005; Rice, 2003).

In East Asian countries, little research has been conducted on paranormal beliefs, whether they are religious paranormal beliefs (i.e., heaven and hell), classic paranormal beliefs (i.e., astrology, ESP), or other paranormal beliefs (i.e., UFOs) or experiences (i.e., illness cured by prayer) (Rice, 2003). Especially in Japan and Korea, fortune-telling is still quite popular (Kentaro, 1995; Kim, 2003). In Japan, even the mobile fortunetelling market has grown from ¥10.3 billion in 2004 to ¥18.2 billion in 2007 (Martin, 2009). In Korea, there are about 300,000 fortune tellers, and, in 2012, 70% of respondents had already had their fortunes read, or planned to do so in that year (Strother, 2015). Using the 2008 East Asian Social Survey, Kim et al. (2014) found that the prevalence of considering the Four Pillars of Destiny for naming children differs by country: 52% in Japan, 42% in Korea, and 17% in China. While there is no relationship between religious groups and considering the Four Pillars of Destiny for naming children in China, in Japan and Korea, a clear order of prevalence of considering the Four Pillars of Destiny for naming children was found: Buddhists, the nonreligious, and Christians. These findings are related with the Buddhist tradition, such as monks being fortune-tellers (for Japan, Kentaro, 1995; for Korea, Yi, 2005, p. 253 and Leverrier, 1972).

In this report, we trace trends in paranormal beliefs that have little to no basis in religious traditions in the United States. We divide paranormal beliefs into four areas: (1) belief in Ghosts and Haunted Houses, (2) belief in Astrology and its validity, (3) belief in UFOs and Extraterrestrial Life, and (4) belief in Clairvoyance, ESP, Telepathy, and Channeling. Our research can contribute to the knowledge of paranormal beliefs because to date there has not been a systematic gathering of data on popular beliefs about the paranormal, and the question of whether or not there is a convincing trend in beliefs about the paranormal remains to be explored. Also, our report illustrates what useful information could be obtained from similar East Asian studies, and to the extent there are clear trends

in the US, these would be the basis for formulating research questions about trends in East Asia. For example, the Westernization of Asian countries may impact paranormal beliefs in Asian countries.

Public Belief in Ghosts and Haunted Houses

Public belief in ghosts and haunted houses has in fact been growing. The belief in ghosts among respondents has had a remarkable trajectory since 1978 when the Gallup poll asked “Do you believe in ghosts?” (Table 1). At that time only 11% of respondents indicated that they believed in ghosts and an overwhelming majority (89%) responded that they did not believe in ghosts. If we look at the Gallup poll between 1990 and 2005, the percentage of respondents demonstrating a belief in ghosts had climbed from 25% to 32%.

Similarly, between 1990 and 2005 the Gallup poll asked respondents about their beliefs regarding haunted houses (Table 2), the public belief in haunted houses has increased from 29% to 37%. This increase is due to a fall of 8 points of those respondents who do not believe that houses could be haunted, and not those respondents who are “not sure” about the possibility of houses being haunted. The trend of belief in ghosts and haunted houses seems to suggest that they are closely related.

Public Belief in Astrology and Its Validity

Astrology is the study of how stars and planets interact and influence daily human life. Horoscopes and star signs are among the most prevalent expressions of this belief. Public belief in astrology has remained remarkably consistent over years when Roper, Gallup, and Harris (Table 3) asked about it. For example, Gallup poll shows a general trend of stability between 1994 and 2005.

There has been some additional exploration of the extent to which people consider astrology “scientific.” Beginning in 1990, respondents to the Public Attitudes Towards and Understanding of Science and Technology Trend Survey were asked (Table 4), “Would you say astrology is very scientific, sort of scientific, or not scientific at all?” What is remarkable

here is that while nearly a quarter of respondents believe in astrology (Table 3), less than 10% of respondents think it is very scientific, and roughly six-in-ten respondents think that astrology is not scientific at all. Still a plurality of respondents indicated that astrology is at least somewhat scientific (“very scientific” or “sort of scientific”).

It is also possible to look at the prevalence of participation in activities related to astrology. That is, the number people who actually check their horoscope. Since 1979, the number of respondents who have indicated that they read their horoscope every day has fallen from 12% to 7% while those who occasionally read their horoscopes has risen from 28% to 30% over the same period (Table 5). However, there seems to be an overall decrease of those who read their horoscope at least occasionally (45% in 1999).

Public Belief in UFOs and Extraterrestrial Life

Perhaps the most popular paranormal belief in contemporary American society is the belief that beings from outside our solar system visit Earth in spaceships. Typically, the term UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) is applied to mean an extraterrestrial space craft. While the term literally can apply to terrestrial crafts or objects that simply could not be identified, it is much more popularly associated with extraterrestrial beings. Fortunately, public opinion surveys have supplied researchers with a variety of items that can be examined together to illustrate public belief in the phenomenon of alien visitation.

When asked if UFOs were real or merely figments of people’s imagination (Table 6), 49% of respondents in 1996 answered that they were, in fact, real. This represents a slight decrease from 1973 when 54% of respondents believed that they were real. However, while this number did trend slightly downward, the converse answer, that they are a result of people’s imagination, did not significantly trend upward. Over the same period, a similar proportion of respondents thought UFOs were the result of people’s imagination. The biggest increase was in the respondents who answered “don’t know/ no opinion” from 15% in 1973 to 21% in 1996. This still suggests, however, that a strong plurality of respondents believe that UFOs are actual phenomenon.

Another survey item regarding UFOs helps us to better understand public beliefs and opinions on extraterrestrial life forms. When asked if the respondents had themselves seen a UFO or if anyone they knew had ever seen a UFO (Table 7), an overwhelming majority indicated that they had not. In 2000, as many as 79% of respondents indicated they had not seen a UFO and only 13% indicated that they knew someone who had seen a UFO. This data point is of particular interest because it is one of only two years in which respondents were asked if they knew someone who had seen a UFO. The other year in which the question wording included was 1997, and then only 75% of respondents answered in the negative and 17% indicated that they knew someone who had seen a UFO in person.

The picture is more complicated when respondents were asked about whether life exists in space at all. Between 1982 and 2010, respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they believed that intelligent life existed elsewhere in the universe and not whether that life can or does visit earth in any capacity (Table 8). Public opinion is more closely divided on this issue. Typically, a majority of respondents indicated that they believed that intelligent life did exist elsewhere in the universe, but a strong plurality indicated that they did not believe so. An ABC poll conducted in 1997 and 2008 shows no changes in belief in intelligent life in the universe.

Clairvoyance, Fortune Tellers, ESP, and Telepathy

The final set of paranormal beliefs examined in our study deals with the power of the human mind. The belief in clairvoyance is best described as the idea that a person can read the past or future through some power inherent in the human mind. This belief is often manifested in the form of fortune tellers who are believed to possess some insightful powers into questions of the future or the past. Between 1978 and 2005 there has been a steady and persistent trend in the percentage of people who believe that clairvoyance exists (Table 9). While the majority do not believe clairvoyance, about a quarter of the population believe clairvoyance, and about an equal number of respondents indicated that they were

not sure if clairvoyance exists. Although approximately a quarter of respondents believe in the power of clairvoyance, three surveys conducted after 1990 show that the number of people who actually consulted with fortune tellers was about 11 percentage point less (Table 10).

Extrasensory perception, or the ability to use a “sixth sense,” has had a slight trend downward but has still retained a very strong plurality of the population as believers (Table 11). The respondents who believed in ESP fell to 41% in 2005 from 48% in 1996. Again, compared to belief in ESP, only half or one-third of people actually experience ESP (Table 12). Like belief in ESP, public belief in telepathy has remained stable over recent years (Table 13). Unlike other paranormal beliefs, public belief in channeling is significantly lower (Table 14). Four out of five surveys indicate that the highest percentage of believers of channeling was reported at 15%.

Conclusion

Despite recent and major advancements in technology and science in the past few decades, the trends of beliefs in many paranormal items have remained steady or slightly decreased. The exception is that the belief in ghosts and haunted houses has slightly increased. Although people are more likely to believe in some paranormal beliefs, such as astrology, UFO, or clairvoyance, they are less likely to encounter UFOs or consult fortune tellers. Given that very few of the items that are available make any connection between belief in the paranormal and the scientific validity of these beliefs, this leaves a remarkable gap in our understanding regarding public opinion and paranormal beliefs. Also, the research on paranormal beliefs may help us better understand the effects of social and cultural changes on people’s beliefs. Furthermore, since there is little known about cross-cultural differences in paranormal beliefs and the sources of these differences, future research needs to focus on how diverse social structures and cultural traditions in Asian countries influence paranormal beliefs.

Table 1

Public Belief in Ghosts

GALLUP: For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in...In ghosts or that spirits of dead people can come back in certain places and situations

Date	Believe	Not Sure	Don't Believe	DK/Refused	N
GALLUP 2/24-27/78 ^{a, b}	11	-	89	-	1553
PMP 4/28-5/15/89 ^c	33	13	54	-	1000
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	25	19	56	-	1226
GALLUP 10/24-27/91	28	17	55	-	1003
HARRISP 7/25-28/94 ^d	36	-	64	-	1249
PSRA/NW 6/27-28/96 ^e	39	-	58	3	769
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	30	19	50	1	1000
FOX/ODP 10/29-30/97 ^f	30	7	63	-	903
HARRISP 7/17-21/98 ^d	35	-	65	-	1011
FOX/ODP 5/19-20/99 ^b	28	-	68	4	856
GALLUP 10/21-24/99 ^b	33	-	65	2	1005
GALLUP 10/25-28/00 ^b	31	-	67	2	1004
GALLUP 5/10-14/01 ^g	38	17	44	1	1012
FOX/ODP 9/23-24/03 ⁱ	34	6	60	-	900
GALLUP 6/6-8/05 ^j	32	19	48	1	1003
CBS 10/3-5/05 ^k	48	-	45	7	808
FOX/ODP 10/25-26/05 ^{i, l}	34	-	62	4	900
AP/IPAP 10/16-18/07 ^m	34	-	65	1	1013
CBS 10/6-8/10 ^k	42	-	54	4	804
CBS 9/28-10/2/11 ⁿ	40	-	56	4	1012

^a Personal interviews

^b "Do you believe in ghosts?"

^c “Do you think it is true or false that...there are spirits or ghosts in the world that make their presence known to living people?”

^d “(I will read you a list of things some people believe in. Please say for each one if you believe in it, or not.)...Ghosts”

^e “(I am going to read you a list of some things having to do with the paranormal or supernatural. As I read each one, please tell me if you believe in it or don't believe in it.) What about...ghosts?”

^f “Do you personally believe in...ghosts?”

^g “(For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.) How about...ghosts or that the spirits of dead people can come back in certain places and situations?”

ⁱ “(Do you personally believe in the existence of each of the following?)...Ghosts”

^j “(For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.) How about...ghosts, or that sprits of dead people can come back in certain places and situations?”

^k “Do you believe in ghosts, or that the spirits of dead people can come back in certain places or situations?”

^l National registered voters

^m “In general, do you believe in or do you not believe in...ghosts?”

ⁿ “Do you believe in ghosts, or that the spirits of dead people can come back in certain places and situations?”

Table 2

Public Belief in Haunted Houses

GALLUP: For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in...That house can be haunted

Date	Believe	Not Sure	Don't Believe	DK/No Opinion	N
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	29	17	54	-	1226
GALLUP 10/24-27/91	28	18	54	-	1003
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	33	19	47	1	1000
GALLUP 5/10-14/01^a	42	16	41	1	1012
GALLUP 6/6-8/05^a	37	16	46	1	1003

^a “For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in. How about...that houses can be haunted?”

Table 3

Public Belief in Astrology

ROPER: Now here is a list of some different things. Would you tell me for each one whether it is something you believe in, or something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in?...Astrology

Date	Believe	Not Sure	Don't Believe	DK/No Opinion/Refused	N
GALLUP 10/3-6/75 ^{a, b}	22	-	69	9	1558
ROPER 1/8-22/77 ^a	25	29	45	-	2006
GALLUP 2/24-27/78 ^{a, c}	31	-	69	-	1553
ROPER 1/5-19/85 ^a	23	30	47	-	1989
GALLUP 5/13-15/88 ^{d, e}	12	-	80	8	1204
ABC/WP 5/19-25/88 ^f	16	-	80	4	1500
PMP 4/28-5/15/89 ^g	11	10	79	-	1000
GALLUP 6/14-17/90 ^h	25	21	54	-	1226
GATVP 1/4-6/91 ^b	32	-	66	2	600
HARRISP 6/25-28/94 ⁱ	37	-	63	-	1249
GALLUP 12/16-18/94 ^h	23	17	61	-	1016
PSRA/NW 6/27-28/96 ⁱ	41	-	54	5	769
GALLUP 9/3-5/96 ^h	25	22	52	1	1000
HARRISP 7/17-21/98	37	-	63	-	1011
GALLUP 5/10-14/01 ^k	28	18	52	2	1012
FOX/ODP 9/23-24/03 ^{d, l}	29	7	64	-	900
GALLUP 6/6-8/05 ^k	25	19	55	1	1003
FOX/ODP 10/25-26/05 ^{d, l}	37	-	57	6	900
PEW/PEWF 8/20-27/09 ^m	25	-	71	4	2003
PEW/PLAAS* 1/3-3/27/12 ^{n, o}	30	-	62	8	3511
PEW/PHCNLS** 5/24-7/28/13 ^{o, p}	31	-	65	4	5103

^a Personal interviews

^b "Do you believe in astrology, or not?"

^c "Do you believe in astrology?"

^d National registered voters

^e "Recently, Nancy Reagan's interest in astrology has been in the news. What are your own views on astrology? Do you personally believe in it, or not?"

^f "Do you believe in astrology? In other words, that the position of the stars and planets influence people's lives?"

^g "Do you think it is true or false that...astrology can accurately predict the future?"

^h "(For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.)...In astrology, or that the position of the stars and planets can affect people's lives"

ⁱ "(I will read you a list of things some people believe in. Please say for each one if you believe in it, or not.)...Astrology"

^j "I am going to read you a list of some things having to do with the paranormal or supernatural. As I read each one, please tell me if you believe in it or don't believe in it. What about...astrology?"

^k "(For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.) How about...astrology, or that the position of the stars and planets can affect people's lives?"

^l "(Do you personally believe in the existence of each of the following?)...Astrology"

^m "(Which, if any, of the following do you believe in?) Do you believe...in astrology, or that the position of the stars and planets can affect people's lives?"

ⁿ National adult Asian-Americans

^o "Which, if any, of the following do you believe in? Do you believe...in astrology, or that the position of the stars and planets can affect people's lives, or not?"

^p National adult Hispanics

Table 4

Perception of Astrology as Scientific

GSS: Would you say that astrology is very scientific, sort of scientific, or not scientific at all?

Date	Very Scientific	Sort of Scientific	Not Scientific at all	Don't Know	N
PUBLIC 79^a	8	34	50	9	1635
PUBLIC 83	10	35	51	4	1631
PUBLIC 85	8	31	57	3	2003
PUBLIC 88	6	31	60	3	2041
PUBLIC 90	6	29	60	5	2005
PUBLIC 92	7	29	62	3	1995
PUBLIC 95	7	28	60	5	2006
PUBLIC 97	7	29	59	5	2000
PUBLIC 99	7	29	59	5	1882
PUBLIC 01	9	31	56	4	1574
GSS 06^a	5	26	65	4	1864
GSS 08^a	5	28	63	3	1505
GSS 10^a	7	26	63	4	691
GSS 12^a	9	34	53	4	1002
GSS 14^a	6	26	65	2	1239

^a Personal interviews

Table 5

Checking Horoscopes

PUBLIC ATTITUDES: Do you ever read a horoscope or your personal astrology report? (If Yes, ask:) Do you read an astrology report every day, quite often, just occasionally, or almost never?

Date	Every Day	Quite Often	Occasionally	Almost Never	Don't Read	DK	N
PUBLIC 10/79^a	12	9	28	37	13	1	1635
PUBLIC 5/83	14	10	31	36	9	-	1631
PUBLIC 11/85	9	6	37	12	36	-	2003
PUBLIC 6/88	9	8	33	13	37	-	2041
PUBLIC 9/90	9	8	33	13	38	-	2005
PUBLIC 11/92	8	8	35	13	37	-	1995
PUBLIC 3/95	7	6	33	14	40	-	2006
PUBLIC 5/97	7	8	33	12	38	2	2000
PUBLIC 3/99	6	6	32	17	40	-	1882
PUBLIC 2/01	7	8	30	18	38	-	1574
GSS 06^{a, b, c}	58	-	-	-	42	-	1864
GSS 08^{a, b, c}	54	-	-	-	46	-	1505
GSS 10^{a, b, c}	53	-	-	-	47	-	691
GSS 12^{a, b, c}	49	-	-	-	50	-	1002
GSS 14^{a, b, c}	45	-	-	-	55	-	1239

^a Personal interviews

^b Now, for a new subject. Do you ever read a horoscope or your personal astrology report?

^c There are only two possible responses: Yes or No. In the table, "Yes" is under the column of "Every Day," and "No" is under the column of "Don't Read."

Table 6

UFOs as Real or Imagined

GALLUP: In your opinion, are UFO's (unidentified flying objects) something real or just people's imagination?

Date	Real	Not Sure	Imagination	DK/No Opinion	N
GALLUP 4/14-19/66^{a, b}	47	-	30	19	1574
GALLUP 11/2-5/73^{a, c}	54	-	30	15	1550
GALLUP 3/3-6/78^a	57	-	27	16	1560
GALLUP 2/2-18/87	49	21	30	-	527
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	47	-	31	22	1226
GATVP 2/28-3/3/91^d	61	-	25	14	600
ABC/WP 5/12-15/94^e	57	-	34	9	1523
PSRA/NW 6/27-28/96	48	-	32	20	769
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	49	-	31	21	1000

^a Personal interviews

^b "In your opinion, are they (flying saucers) something real, or just people's imagination?" The total percentage is not 100% because 4%, "Not asked--haven't heard of flying saucers" is not included.

^c "In your opinion, are they (UFO's, or unidentified flying objects) something real or just people's imagination?"

^d "In your opinion, are UFOs something real, or just people's imagination?"

^e "Now I have a few questions about unidentified flying objects, or U.F.O.s. In your opinion, are they something real, or just people's imagination?"

Table 7

Personal Encounters with UFOs

GALLUP: Have you, yourself, ever seen anything you thought was a UFO (Unidentified Flying Object)?

Date	Yes, personally	Yes, Someone I know	Not Sure	No	DK/ Refused	N
GALLUP 11/2-5/73^a	11	-	-	89	-	1550
GALLUP 3/3-6/78^a	9	-	2	88	-	1560
GALLUP 2/2-18/87^b	9	-	-	91	-	527
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	14	-	-	85	1	1226
GATVP 2/28-3/3/91^c	14	-	-	85	1	600
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	12	-	-	87	1	1000
FOX/ODP 6/97^{d, e}	11	-	4	85	-	905
TIME/CNN/YPP 6/4-5/97^f	8	17	1	75	-	1024
TIME/CNN/YPP 1/12-13/00^g	7	13	2	79	-	1564

^a Personal interviews

^b "Have you ever seen anything you thought was a UFO (unidentified flying object)?"

^c "Have you yourself ever seen anything you thought was a UFO or unidentified flying object?"

^d National registered voters

^e "Have you ever seen or thought you saw a UFO (Unidentified Flying Object)?"

^f "Have you or has anyone you know ever seen a UFO (Unidentified Flying Object) or anything they believed was a spacecraft from another planet?"

^g "Have you or anyone you know ever seen a UFO (Unidentified Flying Object), or haven't you?...Yes, personally, yes, someone I know, no"

Table 8

Intelligent Life in the Universe

ABC News: Do you believe that some form of intelligent life does or does not exist in outer space?

DATE	Yes	No	No Answer	N
Merit Report 1/11-17/82	47	37	16	1200
ABC 7/8-9/97^a	56	37	7	505
CBS 7/13-14/97^b	58	32	10	1042
CBS 3/1-2/98^b	51	38	11	782
CBS 12/17-19/99^b	50	39	11	1026
FOX/ODP 7/25-26/01^{c, d}	54	30	-	900
CBS 1/20-1/25/06^b	48	42	10	1229
ABC New 1/25-1/29/08	55	37	8	1019
CBS 1/29-31/10	47	41	12	868

^a Do you personally believe there is intelligent life on other planets, or not?

^b "Do you personally believe that there is intelligent life somewhere in space, or not?"

^c National registered voters

^d "Do you believe there is intelligent life on other planets?"

Table 9

Public Belief in Clairvoyance

GALLUP: (For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.)...In clairvoyance, or the power of the mind to know the past and predict the future

Date	Believe	Not Sure	Don't Believe	DK/No Opinion	N
GALLUP 2/24-27/78^{a, b}	26	-	75	-	1553
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	26	23	51	-	1226
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	27	25	46	2	1000
GALLUP 5/10-14/01^c	32	23	45	-	1012
GALLUP 6/6-8/05^c	26	24	50	-	1003

^a Personal interviews

^b "Do you believe in Clairvoyance?"

^c "(For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.) How about...clairvoyance, or the power of the mind to know the past and predict the future?"

Table 10

Consultation of Fortune Tellers

PEW: Have you ever...consulted a fortune-teller or psychic?

Date	Yes	No	DK/Refused	N
PMP 4/28-5/15/89^a	26	73	-	1000
GALLUP 6/14-17/90^b	14	85	1	1226
GALLUP 9/3-5/96^c	17	83	-	1000
PEW/PEWF 8/20-27/09	15	85	1	2003

^a "Have you ever had your fortune told by a fortune teller, palm reader, psychic, or such person?"

^b "(Now, as I read another list, I want you to tell me whether or not you have ever had each of these types of experiences.)...Consulted a fortune-teller or psychic"

^c "(As I read another list, I want you to tell me whether or not you have ever had each of these types of experiences.) Have you ever...consulted a fortune-teller or psychic?"

Table 11

Public Belief in ESP

GALLUP: (For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.)...In ESP or Extrasensory Perception

Date	Believe	Not Sure	Don't Believe	DK/No Opinion	N
ROPER 1/8-22/77^{a, b}	53	26	21	-	2006
GALLUP 2/24-27/78^{a, c}	54	-	46	-	1553
ROPER 1/5-19/85^{a, b}	50	28	22	-	1989
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	49	22	29	-	1226
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	48	23	27	3	1000
FOX/ODP 5/19-20/99^{d, e}	32	-	63	5	856
GALLUP 5/10-14/01^f	50	20	27	3	1012
CBS 2/24-26/02^g	57	-	34	9	861
GALLUP 6/6-8/05^f	41	25	32	2	1003
AP/IPAP 10/16-18/07	48	-	49	3	1013

^a Personal interviews

^b "(Now here is a list of some different things. Would you tell me for each one whether it is something you believe in, or something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in?)...ESP (extra sensory perception)"

^c "Do you believe in ESP (Extra Sensory Perception)?"

^d National registered voters

^e "Do you believe in psychic powers such as ESP (Extra Sensory Perception), clairvoyance, or the ability to communicate with a spirit world?"

^f "For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in. How about...ESP or Extra Sensory Perception?"

^g "Now, turning to a different subject, do you think that psychic phenomena occur--that there are such things as ESP (Extra Sensory Perception) or telepathy, or other experiences that can't be explained by normal means?"

^h "In general, do you believe in or do you not believe in...extra-sensory perception or ESP?"

Table 12

Experience in ESP

GALLUP: Have you ever personally experienced any kind of psychic phenomena--such as telepathy or ESP (Extra Sensory Perception)?

Date	Yes	No	DK/No Answer	N
GALLUP 9/25-30/49^a	66	34	-	1500
GATV 3/91^b	26	72	2	600
PSRA/NW 6/27-28/96^b	26	72	2	769
CBS 2/24-26/02	16	83	1	861

^a Personal interviews

^b Have you yourself ever experienced any kind of psychic phenomenon—such as telepathy or ESP (Extra Sensory Perception)?

Table 13

Public Belief in Telepathy

GALLUP: (For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.)...In telepathy, or communication between minds without using the traditional five senses

Date	Believe	Not Sure	Don't Believe	DK/No Opinion	N
GALLUP 9/25-30/49^{a, b}	37	-	54	9	1500
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	36	25	39	-	1226
PSRA/NW 6/27-28/96^c	56	-	39	5	769
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	35	24	39	2	1000
GALLUP 5/10-14/01^d	36	26	35	3	1012
GALLUP 6/6-8/05^d	31	27	42	-	1003

^a Personal interviews

^b "Do you believe in mental telepathy—that is, that an idea or thought which one person has can reach another person in some distant place without letters, or telegrams, or any other means?"

^c "(I am going to read you a list of some things having to do with the paranormal or supernatural. As I read each one, please tell me if you believe in it or don't believe in it.) What about...telepathy, or that some people can communicate with others through means other than the five senses?"

^d "(For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.) How about...telepathy, or communication between minds without using the traditional five senses?"

Table 14

Public Belief in Channeling

GALLUP: For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in...In channeling, or allowing a 'spirit-being' to temporarily assume control of a human body during a trance

Date	Believe	Not Sure	Don't Believe	DK/No Opinion	N
GALLUP 6/14-17/90	11	22	67	-	1226
PSRA/NW 6/27-28/96^a	25	-	69	6	769
GALLUP 9/3-5/96	12	21	64	3	1000
GALLUP 5/10-14/01^b	15	21	62	2	1012
GALLUP 6/6-8/05^b	9	20	70	1	1003

^a“(I am going to read you a list of some things having to do with the paranormal or supernatural. As I read each one, please tell me if you believe in it or don't believe in it.) What about...channeling, in which a 'spirit-being' temporarily assumes control of a person's body during a trance?”

^b“(For each of the following items I am going to read you, please tell me whether it is something you believe in, something you're not sure about, or something you don't believe in.) How about...channeling, or allowing a 'spirit-being' to temporarily assume control of a human during a trance?”

APPENDIX I

Abbreviations:

AARP-BS: AARP Miracles, Divine Healings, and Angels: Beliefs Survey

AARP-AS: AARP Thoughts on the Afterlife Survey

ABC/WP: ABC News/Washington Post Poll

ANTI-SEM: Anti-Semitism in the United States Survey

AP/IPAP: Associated Press/Ipsos-Public Affairs Poll

CARA: CARA Values Study

CBS: CBS News Poll

FOX/ODP: FOX News/Opinion Dynamics Poll

GATVP: Great American TV Poll

GALLUP: Gallup Poll

GSS: General Social Survey

GB/USA: Gordon Black/USA Today Poll

HARRISS: Harris Survey

HARRISP: Harris Poll

LAT: Los Angeles Times Poll

NYT: New York Times Poll

PMP: Parents Magazine Poll

PSRA/NW: Princeton Survey Research Associates/Newsweek Poll

PEW/PHCNLS: Pew Hispanic Center National Survey of Latinos

PEW/PLAAS: Pew Social Trends/Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life Asian-American Survey

PEW/PEWF: Pew Research Center for the People & the Press/Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life Religion & Public Life Survey

PUBLIC: Public Attitudes Towards and Understanding of Science and Technology Trend Survey

RAPS: Religion and the American People Survey

RLA: Religious Life in America

ROPER: Roper Report

SPV: Sex, Profanity and Violence

TIME/CNN/YPP: Time/CNN/Yankelovich Partners Poll

WVS: World Values Survey

Unless otherwise indicated in the table notes, all surveys involved national adult samples and were conducted via telephone. Survey response rates were as follows.

APPENDIX II

Response Rates:

AARP: No response rates were available

ABC News: No response rates are available

Associated Press: AP-Ipsos Poll -- Oct. 16-18, 2007; N=1,013 adults; Aapor Response Rate was 3.9%; 24 minute study

Barna Report: No response rates are available

CARA Values Study: No response rates are available

Fox News: No response rates are available

General Social Survey: 71.2% in 2006; 70.4% in 2008; 70.3% in 2010; 71.4% in 2012; 69.2% in 2014

Harris Interactive: No response rates are available

Parents Magazine: No response rates are available

Pew Research Center: No response rates are available

PSRA: No response rates are available before 2002.

Roper Poll: No response rates are available

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