

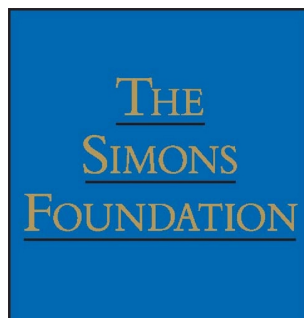


# THE CANADA'S WORLD POLL

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January 2008

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## BACKGROUND

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### Canada's World

Canada's World is a three-year citizen's dialogue focusing on the roles that Canada and Canadians can, and should, play in the world outside our borders. It is a collaborative, non-partisan, non-ideological initiative of the country's leading scholars, leaders (e.g., from business, diaspora and civil society), youth, retired diplomats and senior public servants who are active in international programming, research, education and public policy development.

The initiative, launching in February 2008, will entail a range of initiatives and activities designed to inspire thoughtful discussion on a range of topics and issues pertinent to Canada's role in the world. Among these initiatives is public opinion research designed to measure Canadians' experiences, connections, perceptions, expectations and priorities in a way that is systematic, credible and effectively complements the other forms of public input and dialogue.

### The Canada's World Poll

*The Canada's World Poll* is groundbreaking research that provides an in-depth and objective review of how Canadians see their own place in the world and that of their country, not simply what they believe their governments should be doing. What do Canadians see as the top global issues, and how do they orient personally to the world outside of the national borders, in terms of their interests, their travel, and their commercial, idealistic, emotional and personal connections to their

family, friends and historical roots? How do they view Canada's current role in world affairs, and what do they think it should be?

*The Canada's World Poll's* principal sponsor is The Simons Foundation, and is also sponsored by the Environics Institute, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), *The Globe and Mail* and *Le Devoir*.

The research was conducted by Environics Research, and consists of a comprehensive national public opinion survey conducted by telephone with a representative sample of 2,001 Canadians between January 9 and 22, 2008. The sampling covers all regions (including the Northern territories), and includes over-samples of youth aged 15 to 24 and new Canadians (those born abroad). The results from a survey of this size drawn from the population would be expected to produce results accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points, in 95 out of 100 samples (the margin of sampling error will be larger for specific subgroups of the population). (For more detailed information on the survey methodology, contact Keith Neuman at Environics Research Group: [keith.neuman@environics.ca](mailto:keith.neuman@environics.ca))

The following sections present the results of this survey, with a focus on national results and how findings vary by key segments of the population, in terms of age cohort (focusing on youth aged 15 to 24), place of birth (focusing on new Canadians) and across regions of the country.



## KEY STORIES FROM THE CANADA'S WORLD POLL

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- 1 **Canadians feel strongly connected to the world outside their country's borders. This connection comes through both their engagement with international events, and their personal connections to people and cultures in other countries.**

Canadians follow international news about as closely as they follow news closer to home, at the federal, provincial and local levels. This strong engagement with international events suggests that Canadians, in some respects, feel they are as much citizens of the world as they are citizens of their own country. Two-thirds of Canadians say they feel a personal connection to a country or region in another part of the world—and while a plurality cite an ancestral link as the reason, many others say they simply have a personal interest in the country or region because of meaningful personal experiences or because they know people there (more than half have friends and family abroad with whom they maintain regular contact).

Three-quarters of Canadians have travelled outside Canada and the United States at some point in their lives, and one-quarter have taken more than 10 trips outside North America. And the connection also extends to financial assistance: In the past two years, four in ten Canadians have donated to organizations or causes that address issues in other countries (projected to total \$7.3 billion annually), and one in five have given financial help to family or others they know abroad (estimated at \$20 billion annually). These amounts sent by individual Canadians abroad dwarf the \$4 billion in official development assistance given by the Canadian government in 2006.

- 2 **Canadians are proud of their country's history of military bravery and sacrifice, but believe the country's most important future contributions to world affairs will be in other ways.**

When asked to name Canada's greatest contribution to the world since becoming a country, Canadians most often name their country's participation in past World Wars. But when asked how they believe Canada can make the greatest international contributions in the future, Canadians see a new kind of heroism, and focus on a very different type of effort, demonstrating leadership on global warming and the environment, confronting human rights abuses and fighting hunger and poverty.

- 3 **When Canadians think about how their country can make a positive difference on the international scene, they are more likely to put their faith in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private citizens, than in Canadian businesses or the federal government.**

Canadians want their country to “do good” in the world, and can more easily see this happening through the work of non-governmental organizations or individual citizens than by what Canadian business and government might accomplish (explaining in part their generous support to organizations working overseas). Most Canadians like the fact there are three million of their fellow citizens currently living abroad, because they see them as positive ambassadors for Canada, who will bring valuable experiences home with them. And many here at home would like to join them overseas: Six in ten express interest in personally travelling abroad for three months or more to do volunteer work (given the opportunity).

**4 Canadians feel a strong sense of personal connection to the United States, but many disapprove of America's recent activities on the international stage.**

Many Canadians also have strong ties to their southern neighbour. Two-thirds have visited the U.S. in the past five years, and one-third have visited family or friends over this time period. At the same time, Canadians are also distinctly uncomfortable with the American's current role in world affairs, and the U.S. is the country they name most often as one that stands out as being a negative force in the world today (52% name the U.S., Iran comes second at 21%).

Canadians may be worried about the current state of affairs in the U.S., but rather than reflect knee-jerk anti-American sentiment, these results may in fact reveal how much Canadians care about their cousins to the south and desire a return to the days when America was widely respected around the Globe. Evidence for this can be found in the fact that Canadians are paying close attention to the current battle for the U.S. White House: Almost half (46%) believe the outcome of this race matters a great deal to Canada, and 15 percent say they would give up their vote in the next federal election if it meant they could cast a ballot in the United States and influence that country's election. And, while the presidential candidates have yet to be picked, Canadians clearly prefer to see a Democrat (34%) over a Republican (5%) become the next to occupy the White House.

**5 Canadians feel the world is a more dangerous place because of nuclear weapons, and overwhelmingly support a complete elimination of such weapons, if this could be accomplished through an enforceable ban.**

Nuclear weapons have been a reality of the modern age for more than 60 years and, while nuclear disarmament has been off the political and policy radar screen for the past few decades, Canadians are anything but complacent about the threats inherent in this technology. Nine in ten (88%) Canadians believe nuclear weapons make the world a

more dangerous place, and almost as many (73%) strongly support total elimination if this could be accomplished through an enforceable ban. While Canada does not face the moral dilemma of possessing its own nuclear arsenal, it does export nuclear technology and most believe such exports should not be allowed to any country that might end up using them to develop nuclear weapons.

**6 Foreign-born Canadians understandably maintain stronger connections to the world outside Canada. And yet their opinions and perspectives about Canada and its role in the world are notably consistent with the national average.**

As would be expected, Canadians born in other countries tend to follow international news more closely, travel outside Canada and the United States with greater frequency, and generally feel more personally connected to people and events abroad. But these new Canadians are surprisingly like their native-born compatriots when it comes to how they view Canada's strengths and weaknesses, and how their adopted country might best contribute to the world.

**7 The country's youth (those aged 15 to 24) are as connected to world events and individuals as older Canadians, but are also more idealistic in their view of Canada's place in the world today, and what it could be.**

While today's youth tend to be less engaged with local, provincial and national news, young Canadians match the national average when it comes to paying close attention to international issues and events. Canadians aged 15 to 24 are also as likely as the national average to have made a donation to an international cause or organization in the past two years. Young Canadians are as likely as others to say they feel a personal connection to another part of the world, although less likely to place that connection with the United States or Western Europe. Fifteen- to 24-year-olds express the highest levels of interest in living abroad, whether for study or volunteer projects, or simply for cultural and linguistic immersion. When it comes to the difference Canada could be making in the world,

young Canadians stand out in their belief that their country could be doing more to end hunger in the developing world, tackle global warming and fight human rights abuses worldwide.

**8 While Canada is often a nation of regional division when it looks inward, when Canadians look outwards, they are remarkably similar in their degree of “global connectivity” and views about their country’s place in the world and what this might be.**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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This research reveals a Canadian population that is, as a whole, deeply engaged with the world outside their borders, and keen to be more so. Significant numbers of Canadians closely follow world events, have personal or family connections to other countries and regions, provide financial assistance to organizations and family members overseas, travel to many parts of the globe for a variety of reasons, and are interested in doing even more. Most have a positive view of their country's current role in world affairs, but also believe it can do more in demonstrating leadership in such areas as environmental protection, human rights and famine relief.

The following are key highlights from the research.

### How Canadians see the world today

- Global warming and the environment has emerged in the minds of Canadians as the world's most pressing issue, but there is also considerable concern about such issues as war and conflict, hunger and famine in the developing world, human rights abuse, and the gap between rich and poor.
- Canadians are evenly split on whether they are optimistic or pessimistic about the world's future over the coming decade. Positive trends tend to be seen in terms of technological advances, while environmental degradation and world conflict are the most prominent negative trends.
- Most Canadians see their own country as one that stands out as a positive force in today's world, followed distantly by the U.S. and Great Britain. The U.S. stands out as being seen as a negative force in the world, well ahead of such countries as Iran, North Korea and Pakistan.

### Canadians' personal orientation to the world outside Canada

- Canadians are paying attention to world events, and follow them as closely as they do local, provincial and national issues. War and conflict (including the mission in Afghanistan) is of greatest interest, followed by world events involving environmental issues and politics.
- Most Canadians have at least one foreign country or region in which they have a personal interest or connection. This is most apt to be Western Europe or the U.S., but noticeable proportions identify other parts of the world. For new Canadians, the attachment is primarily to their place of birth, while for others it stems from general interest, personal experience or having friends overseas.
- Canadians rely on traditional media to stay informed about world events but use of the Internet is also common, especially among youth and new Canadians. There is significant use of foreign-based information sources, but very limited reliance on social networking sites or blogs.
- Three-quarters of Canadians have travelled outside Canada and the U.S., mostly as tourists, but also to visit family or friends, to visit one's place of birth or ancestry, for employment, to study and to volunteer. One-quarter have taken more than 10 trips in the past five years alone.
- More than half of Canadians maintain close personal ties to individuals living in other countries, rising to 80 percent among new Canadians. Many have provided financial assistance either to foreign-based causes and organizations, or to family and friends abroad.

- Canadians demonstrate considerable interest in travelling abroad for new experiences, especially to become immersed in another culture, language and people, but also to do volunteer work, to seek employment and to study.
- Most Canadians have travelled to the U.S. in the past five years, mostly as tourists and, to a lesser extent, to visit family and friends, to shop or to work.
- Many Canadians are paying close attention to the U.S. Presidential race, and believe the outcome matters a great deal to Canada; some would even give up their right to vote in Canada to help elect the next President. At the same time, a majority do not favour one U.S. political party over the other.
- Almost all Canadians believe their country can make a difference in the world by setting an example at home, especially in its environmental practices, but also in such areas as support for human rights and in the area of multiculturalism and immigration.
- Canadians are most confident in the ability of their country's NGOs to make a positive difference on the world stage, followed by the capabilities of individual Canadians. Opinion is more divided on the role that Canadian governments and businesses can play in contributing to world issues.
- Most Canadians consider the large community of Canadians currently living abroad to be a positive benefit to the country, rather than a liability. Expatriate Canadians are viewed as good ambassadors and having experiences that enrich themselves and something they may bring back to enrich their native land as well.

### Canada's current and potential role in the world

- Most Canadians believe their country exerts at least some influence in world affairs today, and that it has grown over the past 20 years, largely because of its peacekeeping and/or military activities focusing on fighting terrorism. Those who see a diminishing influence point to less peacekeeping or declining independence from the U.S. on foreign policy.
- Canadians see peacekeeping as their country's most important contribution to the world, while the environment is most apt to be viewed as its greatest missed opportunity for global leadership. Many events are identified as Canada's most significant historical moment on the world stage, but the list is dominated by military conflicts, led by participation in World War II.
- Most Canadians are confident that Canada can increase its influence in the world, particularly in addressing hunger and famine in the developing world, discouraging human rights abuses, and showing leadership on global warming and other environmental issues.

### Nuclear weapons

- Canadians believe that nuclear weapons have made the world a more dangerous place, with the greatest threat coming from terrorist attacks. There is overwhelming public support among Canadians for the complete elimination of the world's nuclear weapons.
- Canadians are more likely than not to feel that Canada is safer under the protection of NATO's nuclear arsenal. At the same time, a majority believe the use of NATO's nuclear weapons would never be justified under any circumstances.
- Most Canadians believe Canada should not be exporting its nuclear technology to countries that may end up using it to develop nuclear weapons.

## HOW CANADIANS SEE THE WORLD TODAY

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### Major issues facing the world today

*Global warming and the environment has emerged in the minds of Canadians as the world's most pressing issue, but there is also considerable concern about such issues as war and conflict, famine in the developing world, human rights abuse, and the gap between rich and poor.*

### Top world issue

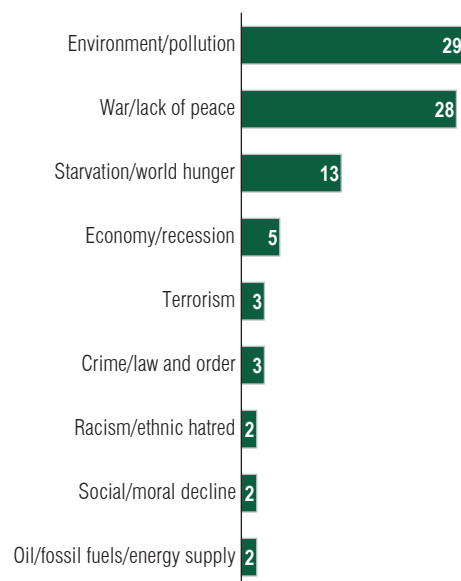
Canadians see the environment as the most important issue facing the world today, followed closely by war and conflict. When asked to name what they see as the most important issue or problem in the world (unprompted, without being offered response options), three in ten (29%) Canadians name the environment or pollution as the most serious, while 28 percent cite war or a lack of peace, and another 13 percent name world hunger. By comparison, no more than five percent identify any other global issue, including economic problems (5%), terrorism (3%) and crime/law and order (3%).

That economic concerns are not more salient is surprising, given media coverage in recent weeks of the growing turmoil in global equity markets and a possible recession in the U.S. that could sideswipe Canada.

These current results reflect a definitive shift in just the past two years, based on ongoing tracking through Environics' FOCUS CANADA research. In 2006, it was war/lack of peace at the top of the list (20%), followed by terrorism (17%), the environment (17%) and starvation/world hunger (16%).

### Most important world issue

Top mentions



### Q.1

*What do you think is the most important issue or problem facing the world today?*

## Major world concerns

Similarly, when Canadians are then presented with a slate of issues and asked about their level of concern with each, again the environment emerges at the top of the list. Six in ten (61%) Canadians say they are very concerned about global warming and other environmental problems.

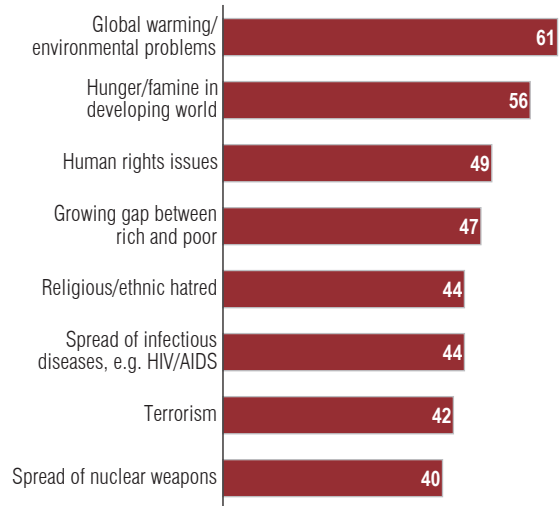
Large proportions of Canadians also say they are very concerned about hunger and famine in the developing world (56%), human rights abuses (49%), and the growing gap between rich and poor (47%), with equal numbers saying they are at least somewhat concerned about each issue. At least four in ten state they are very concerned about the spread of infectious diseases like AIDS (44%), religious and ethnic hatred (44%), terrorism (42%) and the spread of nuclear weapons (40%). On none of these issues do fewer than three in four Canadians say they are at least somewhat concerned.

**Age cohort.** Young Canadians, aged 15 to 24, stand out as most concerned about the planet they will inherit, with one-third (32%) identifying the environment as the most important global issue, along with 32 percent of 25- to 39-year-olds, with this focus declining among older cohorts. Youth are comparatively less apt to name war and conflict (24%) (the number one issue among Canadians aged 60 plus). Compared with older cohorts, youth are also more likely to express concern about the spread of infectious diseases, while less apt to be very concerned about the spread of nuclear weapons, religious and ethnic hatred, terrorism, and the gap between rich and poor.

**Place of birth.** Those born in Canada are somewhat more likely (30%) than those born elsewhere (25%) to see the environment as the top issue facing the planet, while foreign-born Canadians name war (28%) only slightly more often than do native-born Canadians (27%). Another issue on which native- and foreign-born Canadians diverge is the threat of terrorism: New Canadians are more likely (6%) to see terror as the top global issue, compared with just three percent of the Canadian-born.

**Region.** Global warming and the environment is most apt to be seen as the top global issue in B.C. (41%) and the Territories (32%), while in Quebec war and conflict is the number one global issue (37% – nine

## Very concerned about specific world issues



### Q.4

*Please tell me whether you are very, somewhat, not very or not at all concerned about each of the following global issues ...?*

points above the national average). When prompted, however, Quebecers are somewhat more likely than other Canadians to say they are very concerned about global warming and the environment (66%), as well as the spread of nuclear weapons (44%).

## Is the world heading in the right or wrong direction?

*Canadians are evenly split on whether they are optimistic or pessimistic about the world's future over the coming decade. Positive trends tend to be seen in terms of technological advances, while environmental degradation and world conflict are the most prominent negative trends.*

### Optimistic or pessimistic?

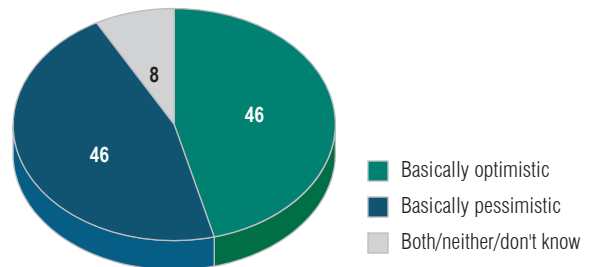
Canadians are evenly split on whether the world's future will be better or worse than today: Just under half (46%) say they are basically optimistic about the direction they think the world is heading over the next 10 years, while the same proportion (46%) are basically pessimistic. The remainder have a mixed view (5%) or could not offer a response (3%).

**Age cohort.** Middle-aged Canadians (40 to 59 years of age) are the most likely to express optimism about the direction of world events (48%), while youth aged 15 to 24 are least apt to share this view (43% optimistic versus 48% pessimistic).

**Place of birth.** New Canadians, like youth, are more apt to be pessimistic (48%) than optimistic (43%) about the direction they see the world heading over the next decade.

**Region.** Across Canada, it is residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan who are most upbeat about the world direction (52% optimistic versus 39% pessimistic), followed by Quebecers (47% versus 44%). By contrast, the least hopeful opinions are found in B.C. (38% optimistic versus 55% pessimistic).

### General view of world's direction over next decade



#### Q.2

*Would you say you are basically optimistic or basically pessimistic about the direction you think the world is heading over the next 10 years?*

## Positive and negative trends

In what ways do Canadians believe the world is a better place than it was 20 years ago? When asked (unprompted), the most significant trends are of a technological nature: technology advancements (21%), medical advancements (14%) and communications/information technology (10%). Less widely cited are increased environmental awareness (7%), economic improvements/more jobs (5%), higher incomes/less poverty (4%), better education (4%) and global awareness (4%). Very few identify positive trends in areas of social justice and human rights, peace and conflict, tolerance or improved quality of life. Perhaps most telling is that four in ten (39%) Canadians could not think of any way in which they felt the world is now a better place compared with 20 years ago (i.e., 1987, just before the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe).

When asked how the world has gotten worse over the past 20 years, Canadians are most apt to name environmental degradation and global warming (25%)

or world conflict (22%), followed by increased crime (13%) and declining moral values (10%). One in ten (12%) could not think of any way in which the world is now a worse place than 20 years ago.

**Age cohort.** On positive trends, youth are most likely to emphasize technology advances (28%), while Canadians aged 60 and over are the ones least able to identify any positive trends (47%). On negative trends, it is the 60 plus cohort most likely to mention world conflict, crime and world hunger in the developing world.

**Place of birth.** New Canadians are most likely to mention positive trends around technology advances.

**Region.** There are few regional differences on positive trends. On negative trends, environment/climate change is most prominently mentioned in the territories (38%) and least so in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (19%).

## Good guys and bad guys on the world stage

*Most Canadians see their own country as one that stands out as a positive force in today's world, followed distantly by the U.S. and Great Britain. The U.S. stands out as being seen as a negative force in the world, well ahead of such countries as Iran, North Korea and Pakistan.*

### Good countries

When asked to name countries that stand out as being a positive force in the world today, six in ten (59%) Canadians name their own country. No other country is identified by more than one in six, with the next most common mentions being Great Britain/UK (16%) and the United States (15%). Other Western European countries are mentioned by fewer than one in ten (ranging from 8% for Sweden and France, down to 1% for Iceland). Other countries mentioned include Australia (7%), China (3%) and Japan (2%). No other country is identified by more than one percent of Canadians. One in five (21%) do not identify any country as standing out as a positive force in the world today.

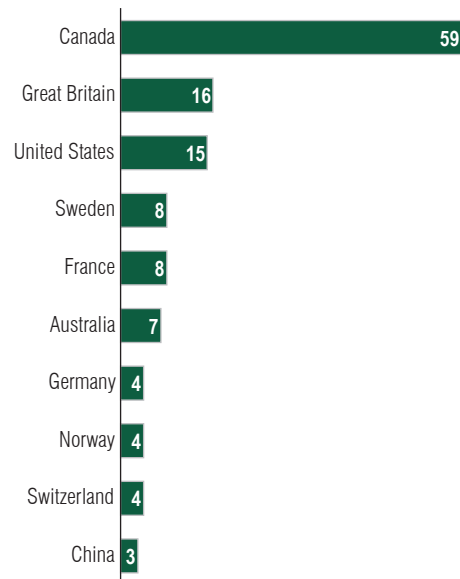
**Age cohort.** Canadians in the 60-plus age cohort stand out from the other three age groups in being less likely (52%) to see Canada as a positive force in the world, and more likely to name the U.S. (21%).

**Place of birth.** Although, foreign-born Canadians are somewhat less likely to name Canada as a positive force in the world (54%), they still name it far more often than any other country. This group is less apt to identify the UK (11%).

**Region.** Quebecers are the least likely to name Canada as a positive force in the world (49%), while residents of Atlantic Canada (67%) are the most likely to do so.

## Countries standing out as a positive force in today's world

Top mentions



Q.5a

*What countries, if any, stand out as being a positive force in the world today? Any others?*

## Bad countries

When it comes to naming countries that stand out as a negative force in the world today, half (52%) of Canadians point to their nearest neighbour, the U.S. Other countries making the list are Iran (21%), Iraq (19%), China (13%), Afghanistan (11%), Pakistan (9%), North Korea (8%) and Russia (6%). Others name regions such as Africa (7%) and the Middle East (5%), while another four percent specifically identify Israel or the Palestinian territories. Four percent name Canada as a negative force in the world, while 13 percent could not name any country fitting this role.

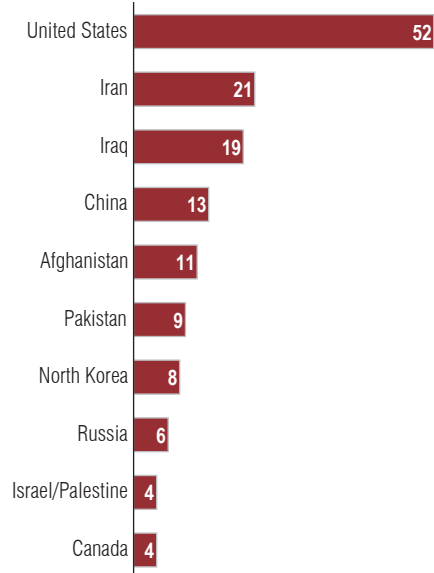
**Age cohort.** Young people stand out in their belief that the U.S. is a negative force in today's world (63%, versus only 36% of Canadians aged 60 plus), while less apt to name Iran (11%) or Pakistan (4%).

**Place of birth.** New Canadians are marginally less apt to identify the U.S. as a negative force (49% versus 53%), and to mention Middle Eastern countries.

**Region.** Perception of the U.S. as a negative force in the world today is most widespread in B.C. (58%) and Quebec (56%), but close to the 50 percent level in every region except the North (36%). Middle Eastern countries are most prominently identified in Alberta and least so in Quebec. In no region do more than five percent name Canada as a negative force in today's world.

## Countries standing out as a negative force in today's world

Top mentions



Q.5b

*What countries, if any, stand out as being a negative force in the world today? Any others?*

## CANADIANS' PERSONAL ORIENTATION TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE CANADA

### Extent of focus on outside world

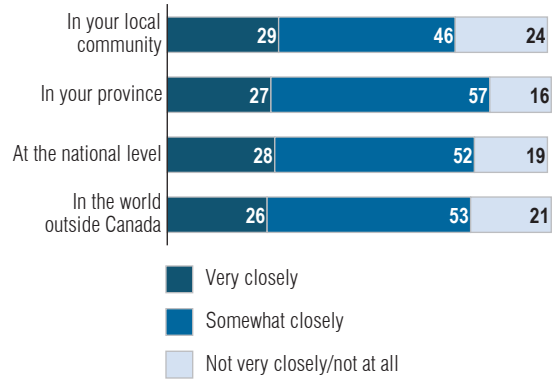
*Canadians are paying attention to world events, and follow them as closely as they do local, provincial and national issues. War and conflict (including the mission in Afghanistan) is of greatest interest, followed by world events involving environmental issues and politics.*

Canadians are strongly engaged with international events. Eight in ten Canadians report that they follow issues and events in the world outside Canada very (26%) or somewhat (53%) closely. This is nearly as high as the proportion of Canadians who follow provincial (84%) or national (80%) news and events at least somewhat closely, and marginally exceeds the proportion who report following local news (75%). The proportion that follow international news very closely (26%) is similar to the proportions that closely follow national (28%), provincial (27%) and local (29%) news.

International research has shown that Canadians are among the most globally engaged citizens on earth. In a 2007 study, the *Pew Global Attitudes Project* found that of 47 countries surveyed, Canadians were the fourth most likely (after Germany, Mali and France) to report following international news consistently—not just when something exceptional was happening.

**Age cohort.** Canada's youth report lower levels of engagement in following news and events at all levels, but the gap is smallest when it comes to international coverage. In reporting that they follow a given type of news at least somewhat closely, 15- to 24-year-olds fall below the national average by 16 points at the local level (59%), 15 points at the provincial level (69%), and 10 points at the national level (70%). When it comes to international news, however, the gap between young Canadians (72%) and the national average is just seven points, with nearly a quarter (23%) of those

### How closely do you follow issues and events?



#### Q.6

*Please tell me if you follow issues and events very closely, somewhat closely, not very closely or not at all closely that take place ...?*

aged 15 to 24 reporting that they follow world news very closely—only three points behind the national average.

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are markedly more engaged with international news than native-born Canadians. Over a third (37%) of foreign-born Canadians report following international issues very closely compared with only 23 percent of those born in this country.

**Region.** Across the country, close following of international news and events is most widespread in Ontario (31%) and the North (32%), and least evident in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (17%), Quebec (20%) and Atlantic Canada (22%). It is in Quebec where residents are most likely to say they do not follow international news and events closely (32% – 11 points above the national average), but they are also less likely than other Canadians to say they closely follow local and national news, and are slightly below average in following provincial issues (24% do so closely).

### Types of events followed

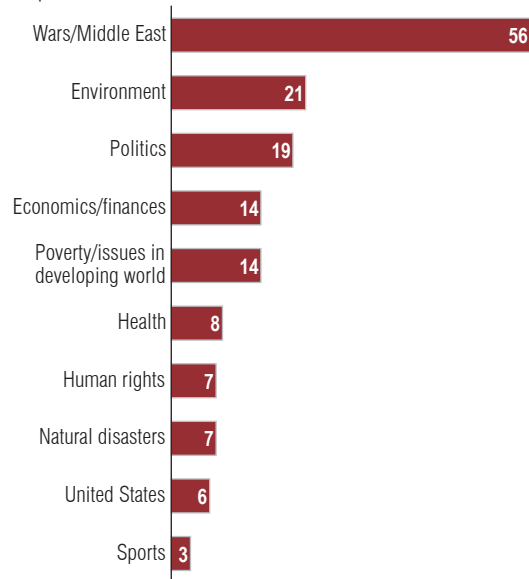
When asked about the kinds of events they are most likely to follow at the international level (unprompted), Canadians are most likely to mention wars, especially those in the Middle East (including Afghanistan) (56%). Other issues of particular interest include the environment (21%), politics (19%), economics and finances (14%), poverty and related Third World issues (14%), health (8%), human rights (7%) and natural disasters (7%).

**Age cohort.** Youth are less apt to focus on world politics (14%) and economics or finances (9%).

**Place of birth.** New Canadians are somewhat more likely to express interest in following world issues pertaining to politics (24%) and economics and finances (20%).

**Region.** Interest in global war and conflict is strongest in Atlantic Canada (61%) and in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (61%), and comparatively lower in Quebec (53%) and B.C. (49%). Interest in international environmental issues is strongest in B.C. (27%) and the North (29%).

### World issues/events most likely to follow Top mentions



### Q.7

*What kinds of issues or events in the world outside Canada are you most likely to follow? Anything else?*

*Subsample: Those who follow issues and events in the world outside Canada very, somewhat or not very closely*

## Countries and regions of greatest interest

*Most Canadians have at least one foreign country or region in which they have a personal interest or connection. This is most apt to be Western Europe or the U.S., but noticeable proportions identify other parts of the world. For new Canadians, the attachment is primarily to their place of birth, while for others it stems from general interest, personal experience or having friends overseas.*

### Countries and regions of personal interest

Canadians express a personal interest in many parts of the world, but the strongest connections appear to be with those countries that share the closest cultural and historic ties with Canada, namely Western Europe and the U.S. Two-thirds (68%) of Canadians identify one or more regions or countries with which they feel a particular connection or personal interest. This connection is most likely to be with countries in Western Europe or Scandinavia (31%), followed by the U.S. (19%).

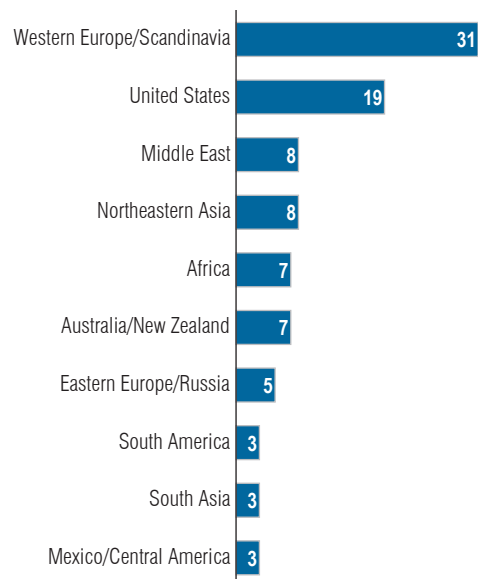
Smaller proportions of Canadians say their strongest interest lies in each of the Middle East (8%), Northeastern Asia (e.g., China, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan) (8%), Australia or New Zealand (7%), Africa (7%), or Russia and Eastern Europe (5%). A number of other regions each capture the focus of no more than three percent of Canadians, including South America, South Asia, Mexico/Central America and the Caribbean. One in three (32%) Canadians say that no particular region in the world is of special interest to them.

**Age cohort.** Youth aged 15 to 24 are somewhat less apt to identify a personal connection with Western Europe (27%) or the U.S. (14%), but no less likely than older cohorts to name at least one country or region of interest.

**Place of birth.** Predictably, new Canadians are more likely than native-born to express a personal interest in almost all parts of the world (including Western Europe and the U.S.), but especially Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Europe.

## Regions/countries of greatest personal interest or connection

Top mentions



*Q.8*

*Is there any particular region or country of the world outside Canada you feel particularly connected to, or interested in? Any others?*

**Region.** B.C. residents express the strongest interest in the U.S. (24%), Northeastern Asia (12%) and Australia (10%). Interest in the Middle East is most evident in Ontario (11%), while Quebecers express the least connection with the U.S. (12%).

## Reasons for interest

When asked to name the reason for their interest in the country or region they have named, a plurality of Canadians (34%) cite an ancestral link or because it is their place of birth. Significant proportions of Canadians cite other reasons for feeling connected to different parts of the world, including a general personal interest (28%), a personal experience in the country or region they named (17%), some kind of link or impact this country has with Canada (12%), or friends they have in this country or region (9%).

**Place of birth.** Predictably, most (61%) new Canadians cite place of birth or family background as the reason

for their interest in another country, while native-born are more likely to mention general interest, personal experiences or a link to Canada.

**Age cohort.** Youth are most apt to cite general interest (34%) as the reason for their stated connection to other parts of the world, while Canadians 60 plus are more likely to base this on personal experience (22%).

**Region.** Quebecers are most apt to cite general interest (35%) and having friends overseas (13%), and least likely to say it is because of a direct family connection.

## How Canadians inform themselves about world events

*Canadians rely on traditional media to stay informed about world events but use of the Internet is also common, especially among youth and new Canadians. There is significant use of foreign-based information sources, but very limited reliance on social networking sites or blogs.*

How do Canadians inform themselves about issues and events happening in countries and regions outside Canada? Three-quarters (74%) name television as a medium through which they acquire news about the world, followed by newspapers (52%) and the Internet (39%). Smaller proportions mention radio (19%), books and magazines (10%), friends/family members (5%) and schools/universities (2%).

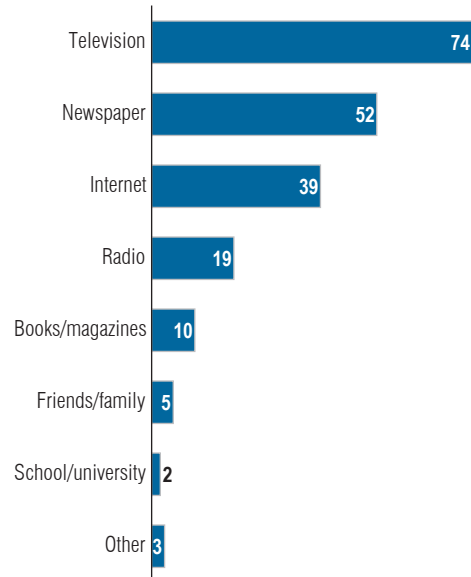
Eight in ten (82%) Canadians use the Internet, with 57 percent doing so on a daily basis. When asked where they go on-line for information about world news, Canadians reveal trust in traditional news outlets even if they are reaching those outlets on-line. Canadians' most common sources of international news online are the websites of television and radio broadcasters (41%), and websites associated with newspapers and magazines (31%). Thirty-one percent of Canadians say they Google their way to the best and most recent international news stories, while smaller proportions turn to exclusively on-line channels like Sympatico and Yahoo. Four in ten (42%) Canadians report to be registered on one or more social networking sites (e.g., FaceBook, MySpace), but very few (2%) Canadians volunteer this as a source for international news and events.

While Canadians seem to rely on traditional news outlets for keeping informed about world events, four in ten (41%) say they use media or information sources that originate outside of Canada or the U.S.

**Age cohort.** As would be expected, Canadian youth (15 to 24) are the most connected cohort—96 percent say they use the Internet (66% report using it daily), and 74 percent are registered on social networking sites. This group is most apt to report using the Internet to stay informed about world events (52%), but they are also active users of TV (66%) and newspapers (41%),

## Main sources of information about world events

Top mentions



Q.10

*Where do you most often get your information about issues and events happening in countries and regions outside of Canada? Any others?*

although they don't make as much use of newspaper websites compared with older Canadians). Few youth rely on either social networking sites (6%) or blogs (2%) as sources of international news, and are less likely to use media/information originating outside Canada and the U.S.

**Place of birth.** New Canadians are as likely as native-born to rely on traditional media (TV, newspapers, radio) for staying informed on world events, but they are more active users of the web (53%, versus 36% for native-born), and not surprisingly are almost twice as

likely to report using media/information sources originating outside North America (61% versus 37%).

**Region.** Quebecers are above average in reporting a reliance on television for news of what is happening in the world (77%), but less apt to use other sources, including the Internet (33%). Quebecers are somewhat less apt to use the Internet on a regular basis, less likely to rely on foreign-based media (34%) and are much less likely than other Canadians to use social networking (25%). Use of foreign media is most widespread in B.C. (53%).

## Canadians' travel experiences abroad

*Three-quarters of Canadians have travelled outside Canada and the U.S., mostly as tourists, but also to visit family or friends, to visit one's place of birth or ancestry, for employment, to study and to volunteer. One-quarter have taken more than 10 trips in the past five years alone, and to a wide range of countries.*

An important means of connection to the broader world is through direct travel experience. Canadians are a well-travelled people, with three-quarters (73%) having travelled outside Canada and the U.S. at least once at some point in their lives. As would be expected, Canadians are most likely to have travelled as a tourist (69%), but significant proportions have done so to visit friends and/or family (44%), to visit their place of birth or ancestry (27%), or for business or part of a job (including military service (18%). Small but appreciable numbers of Canadians have travelled abroad for education or study (14%) and to do volunteer work (8% – this translates into more than 2 million Canadians).

A significant proportion of Canadians are regular travellers overseas. Among Canadians who have travelled abroad, about half (49%) have done so up to five times (28% report one or two trips, 21% between three and five trips). One in four have travelled abroad between 11 and 50 times, while one in twenty (5%) report more than 50 trips overseas.

What is also notable is the breadth of countries visited by Canadians in just the past five years. Seven in ten (70%) Canadians report having travelled abroad in this time period, and have visited most parts of the world, most commonly Western Europe and Scandinavia (34%), Mexico and Central America (22%), the Caribbean (20%), South America (10%)—in most cases as tourists on vacation. Smaller but notable proportions have visited Eastern Europe (8%), Northeastern Asia (7%), Australia/New Zealand (6%), Africa (4%), the Middle East (3%) and Southeast Asia (3%).

### Have travelled outside Canada and U.S. By reason



Q.13

*Please tell me if you have ever travelled outside Canada and the U.S. for any of the following reasons ...*

**Age cohort.** Youth aged 15 to 24 are the least travelled cohort, but almost two-thirds (64%) report having travelled outside Canada and the U.S. at least once, not much lower than the incidence for older cohorts (ranging from 72% to 78%). Youth are more apt to have made only one or two such trips, but are as likely as older cohorts to have travelled overseas for education or volunteer work. Youth are slightly overrepresented in trips to Mexico and Central America (28%) and in trips to the Middle East (7%).

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are overrepresented in all types of travel categories, especially visiting their countries of origin (75%) and making visits to family and friends in other countries (82%). New

Canadians also report a higher frequency of trips in the past five years (37% made more than 10 trips abroad over this time period).

**Region.** Travel abroad is most widely reported by residents of Ontario (80%) and B.C. (78%), and lowest among residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (58%), the North (62%), Atlantic Canada (64%) and Quebec (67%). Travel for volunteer purposes is more common in Western Canada. Quebecers who travel internationally are more likely than average to report trips to Western Europe (43%) and Mexico and Central America (26%), but tend to be roughly average or slightly below average in travel to most other destinations.

## Personal connections abroad

*More than half of Canadians maintain close personal ties to individuals living in other countries, rising to 80 percent among new Canadians. Many have provided financial assistance either to foreign-based causes and organizations, or to family and friends abroad.*

### Friends and family connections abroad

Canadians have strong personal ties to countries all over the world. More than half (55%) name one or more countries in which they have friends or family members with whom they are closely in touch and with whom they have visited in the past five years.

The countries with which the greatest proportions of Canadians have close personal ties are the United States (20%) and the United Kingdom (10%). Less frequently mentioned but still home to close friends or family members of substantial numbers of Canadians are France (5%), Australia and New Zealand (5%), Northeast Asia (3%), Eastern Europe and Russia (3%) and Germany (3%). Two percent of Canadians say they have close friends or family members in each of the following: Italy, Ireland, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Central America, South America and Africa. One percent say the same of Southeast Asia, South Asia, Portugal, Switzerland, the Netherlands and Scotland.

**Age cohort.** While it would be expected that older Canadians would be more likely to have friends or family abroad (just by having had more years on this planet), Canadian youth aged 15 to 24 (55%) are almost as likely as those aged 25 to 39 (57%), 40 to 59 (53%) and 60 plus (57%) to report such connections, and with the same breadth of countries around the world.

**Place of birth.** Eight in ten (80%) foreign-born Canadians have close family and friend connections abroad, with this rising to 90 percent among those who immigrated in the past 10 years. Foreign-born Canadians are more than twice as likely as the national average to report strong personal ties to Western Europe (41%)

and higher than average proportions of the foreign-born also report strong connections to Northeast Asia (9%), Eastern Europe (9%), the Caribbean (7%), the Middle East (6%), Africa (6%), South Asia (5%) and South America (5%).

**Region.** Family and friends connections abroad are most widely reported in Ontario (62%), Alberta (63%) and B.C. (61%), while this is the case among almost half as many Quebecers (36%).

### Financial support

For some Canadians, these close personal connections inspire monetary support—either of organizations or of individuals. Four in ten (39%) Canadians report that in the past two years, they have *donated money to an organization that addresses problems or issues in other countries*. Of those who gave money in the past two years, 45 percent report that their donation was for less than \$250, but 15 percent report donations of \$1,000 or more, with the average donation being \$860. Projected to the country’s population this translates into almost 8.5 million Canadians contributing approximately \$7.3 billion over the past year.

### Financial assistance given overseas in past two years



#### Q.17

*In the past two years, have you or someone in your household given financial support to ... Any causes or organizations that address problems or issues in other countries ... To family members or others you know living in another country?*

#### Q.18

*Approximately how much have you given in financial support to ... in the past 12 months?*

*Subsample: Those who have, or someone in their household has, given financial support to causes/organizations and/or family/friends living in another country*

One in five (18%) say they *provided financial support to family members or others they know living in another country*. Although this is a smaller proportion compared with those who gave to organizations, the size of the donation is significantly greater, averaging \$5,938 over the past two years. Projecting this to the population provides an estimate of close to 3.4 million Canadians sending approximately \$20 billion to family and others in the past year.<sup>1</sup> By comparison the Canadian government's official development assistance in 2006 totalled only \$4 billion.

**Age cohort.** Young Canadians aged 15 to 24 are as likely as older cohorts (40%) to say they had made a donation to an organization working internationally (40%). Their average donation at \$924 is higher than the national average, although lower than that reported by other Canadians under 60 (Canadians 60 plus donated the smallest average amount at \$507). Youth are slightly more likely than average to have sent money to another country to help family members

or others they know (22%), but the average amount given by those who have done so (\$910) is well below the national average.

**Place of birth.** New Canadians are marginally more likely than native-born to report foreign assistance to foreign-based causes and organizations (41% versus 38%), and on average have donated less money (\$573 versus \$921). But this group is three times as likely to have sent money to family and others they know abroad (36% versus 13%), and given larger amounts (\$2,365 versus \$1,904).

**Region.** Quebecers are the least likely to have provided money to foreign-based causes and organizations (27%) and (along with Northerners) to family and friends overseas (13%), but those who do report significantly higher amounts donated, relative to other Canadians. Providing assistance to individuals abroad is most widely reported by residents of Ontario (21%), B.C. (21%) and Alberta (20%).

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1 This figure is similar in scale to the \$15 billion estimate for 2005 projected in a C.D. Howe analysis prepared for the Canadian Defence & Foreign Affairs Institute in December 2006.

## Interest in living abroad

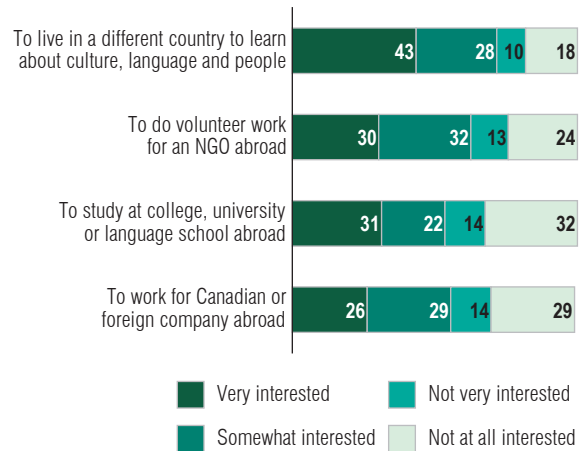
*Canadians demonstrate considerable interest in travelling abroad for new experiences, especially to become immersed in another culture, language and people, but also to do volunteer work, to seek employment and to study.*

Three in ten (29%) Canadians have worked, studied or volunteered abroad, but many more have an interest in this type of experience should they ever get the opportunity to do so. Seven in ten Canadians say that they would be very (43%) or somewhat (28%) interested in living abroad to learn about another country's culture, language and people, while smaller majorities would be at least somewhat interested in working with an organization to do volunteer work in another country (62%), living abroad for three months or more to work for a Canadian or foreign company (55%), or pursuing a study program at a college, university or language school (53%).

**Age cohort.** Youth are markedly above average in their enthusiasm for all four scenarios for living abroad. Canadians aged 15 to 24 are more likely to say they would very interested in going overseas to immerse themselves in another language and culture (60%) and to study (54%), while to a lesser extent do volunteer work (41%) or work for a Canadian or foreign company (33%). Interest levels are lower but still significant among older cohorts, even among Canadians aged 60 plus (21% of this group would be very interested in volunteer work abroad, and 30% would be keen to just experience another country's culture, language and people).

As baby boomers move into their 60s and beyond and look to active life well into their 80s, there is a huge opportunity for governments and NGOs to find ways to motivate older boomers to do fulfilling work abroad (to "give something back"), at a time when so many have the financial means to completely or at least partially cover the costs of one or more meaningful foreign adventures. Many would be very motivated to do something meaningful abroad in the second half of their adult lives, to leverage their life experience, after they are completely or semi-retired. In the future, newcomers and their successful second generation children who have "made it in Canada" might also

## Interest in travel to foreign countries



Q.40

*Would you personally be very, somewhat, not very or not at all interested in doing each of the following in a foreign country for at least three months, if given an opportunity to do so ...?*

be motivated to do the same. Obviously, many young people are unwilling to wait for their older adult years to take the plunge into the beckoning world beyond our borders. For these idealistic young people, getting rich and famous on Wall Street or in L.A. does not have as much allure as doing something meaningful somewhere in the rest of the world.

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians do not differ much from native-born in their degree of interest in foreign-based experiences, but they are more apt to say they have some interest in working abroad for a Canadian or foreign company (64%). It is perhaps surprising that foreign-born Canadians would match the national average (71%) in a desire to pursue a cultural immersion experience in another country, since presumably many immigrants have already had—or are currently having—an experience of linguistic and cultural immersion in Canada.

**Region.** Residents of Alberta, Quebec and the North express the keenest interest in these types of international experiences, notably Quebecers in working abroad (35% very interested), and Northerners in doing volunteer work (38%) and cultural immersion (52%).



## CANADIANS' PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE U.S.

### Canadians' travel experiences in the United States

*Most Canadians have travelled to the U.S. in the past five years, mostly as tourists and, to a lesser extent, to visit family and friends, to shop or to work.*

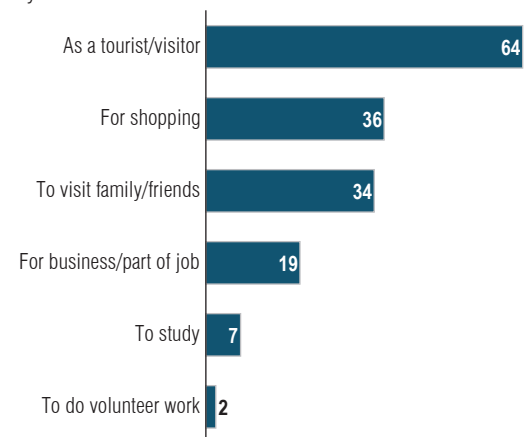
The foreign country closest to Canada is the United States, and it is perhaps the best well-known to most Canadians. Seven in ten Canadians report having travelled to the U.S. in the past five years. Almost two-thirds of Canadians (64%) have travelled to the U.S. as tourists over this time period, while somewhat fewer have made trips across the border for shopping (36%), or visits with friends and family (34%). One in five (19%) have travelled to the U.S. for business reasons or as part of a job, while smaller proportions have gone to study (7%) or to volunteer with an organization (2%).

Among those who have travelled to the U.S. in the past five years, a majority have done so no more than five times (with 28% reporting one or two visits and 29% reporting between three and five visits). One in six (16%) have made between 11 and 50 trips, while another four percent have done so more than 50 times over this time period.

**Age cohort.** Youth, aged 15 to 24, travel to the U.S. in a similar pattern to older cohorts, except for lower reporting of cross-border travel for work (7%) and higher levels of travel for shopping (46%).

**Place of birth.** Travel patterns to the U.S. among new Canadians compares closely with those of native-born, with respect to tourism, study and volunteer initiatives, but they are more likely to visit family and friends south of the border (45%), and marginally more likely to report trips for shopping (39%) and employment (22%).

### Have travelled to U.S. in past five years



#### Q.19

*Please tell me if you've traveled to the U.S. in the past five years for any of the following reasons ...*

**Region.** Quebecers are less likely than average to report travel to the United States for any reason, although those that do so have done so as frequently as other Canadians in the past five years. Half of Quebecers (51%) say they have travelled to the U.S. as tourists over the past five years (compared with 72% of Ontarians and 71% of B.C. residents). They are also least apt to report U.S. trips for visiting family and friends (20%) and shopping (18%).

## Focus on U.S. presidential race

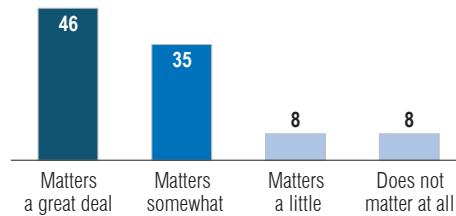
*Many Canadians are paying close attention to the U.S. presidential race, and believe the outcome matters a great deal to Canada, and some would give up their right to vote in Canada to help elect the next president. At the same time, a surprising number do not favour one U.S. political party over the other.*

The race for the U.S. presidency in 2008 is the most wide-open in decades, and with serious candidates threatening to break the race and gender barriers, it has attracted unprecedented media coverage around the world. And Canadians are paying close attention. Close to half (46%) say the outcome of this race “matters a great deal” to Canada, with most of the rest indicating it matters “somewhat” (35%); with few maintaining the choice of next U.S. president matters “a little” (8%) or “not at all” (8%) to Canada. The importance this race matters enough to one in six (15%) Canadians that, given the choice, they would opt to vote for U.S. president rather than for the party of the next Canadian prime minister (79%).

As much as the choice of next U.S. president may matter to Canadians, there is a surprising lack of partisanship in terms of the desired outcome. Canadians express a preference for a Democrat (34%) rather than a Republican (5%) as the next occupant of the White House, but a majority (56%) say the party affiliation does not matter either way or have no clear view (5%). This may reflect the large number of candidates running for both parties, and the view that almost any successor will represent an improvement over the current outgoing president (which FOCUS CANADA surveys has shown to be the least popular U.S. president since polling began in this country).

**Age cohort.** Canadian youth are as likely as others to say the outcome of the next U.S. presidential race matters a great deal (48%), and are the most likely to say they would rather vote for the next U.S. president (25%) than the next Canadian government (70%). Yet at the same time, this group is least apt to express a partisan preference for a Democrat or Republican.

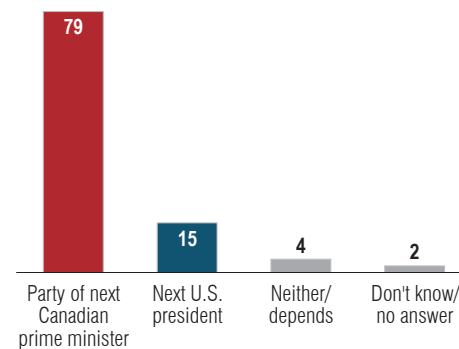
## Does choice of next U.S. president matter to Canada?



Q.22

*How much do you think it matters for Canada who ends up becoming the next U.S. president? Does this matter a great deal, matters somewhat, matters a little doesn't matter at all?*

## Which would you rather vote for?

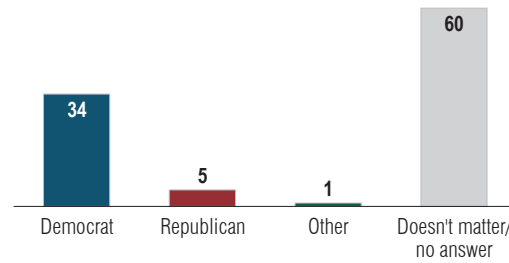


Q.23

*If you were given a choice to vote for only one of the following, would you rather vote to elect ...?*

Place of birth. Foreign-born Canadians are somewhat more likely than native-born to feel the outcome of the U.S. race matters a great deal to Canada (50%), and are more likely to say they would like to see a Democrat in the White House (43%, versus 7% who favour a Republican). Close to one in five (18%) would opt to vote for the next President than the next Canadian government (77%). Many of Canada's foreign-born residents come from countries where international polls show American foreign policy to be quite unpopular.

### Preference for next U.S. president



Q.21

*Would you like to see the next U.S. president be a Republican or a Democrat, or does it not matter either way to you?*



## CANADA'S CURRENT ROLE IN THE WORLD

### Canada's influence in the world today

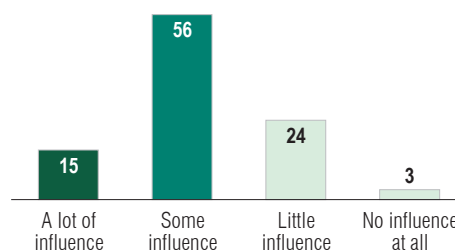
*Most Canadians believe their country exerts at least some influence in world affairs today, and that it has grown over the past 20 years, largely because of its peacekeeping and/or military activities focusing on fighting terrorism. Those who see a diminishing influence point to less peacekeeping or declining independence from the U.S. on foreign policy.*

How do Canadians view the impact their country has in today's world? Most believe Canada exerts "some" influence in the world today (56%), although few (15%) would say Canada exerts "a lot of influence." The remainder say the country exerts little influence (24%) or none at all (3%) on the world stage.

Perhaps more notably is the fact that most Canadians believe Canada's role in the world is now stronger than in the past. Almost two-thirds hold the view that Canada's role in world affairs has increased a great deal (20%) or at least somewhat (43%), compared with one in four who say it has declined somewhat (20%) or a great deal (7%). One in ten believe Canada's influence on world events has stayed more or less the same since the 1980s (4%) or are unable to say either way (5%).

**Age cohort.** Young people aged 15 to 24 express greater confidence about Canada's sway on the international scene, with 25 percent believing Canada has a lot of influence globally and 72 percent indicating this role has strengthened in the past two decades. There is little difference in viewpoints across the three older age cohorts.

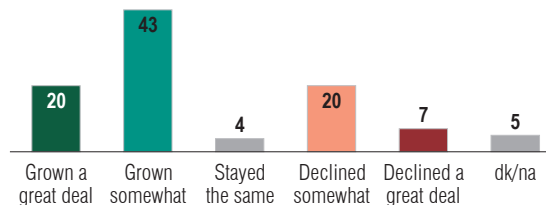
### Canada's influence in the world today



#### Q.24

*How much impact or influence do you believe Canada has today in world affairs generally? Would you say Canada has ...?*

### Canada's role in world affairs during past 20 years



#### Q.25

*Do you think Canada's role in world affairs has grown or declined during the past 20 years? Would that be a great deal or somewhat?*

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are as likely as native-born to say that Canada yields a lot of influence on world affairs today (16%), but are more apt to say it has little or no influence (33%), and are somewhat less likely to believe the country's role has strengthened a great deal since the 1980s (17%).

**Region.** Views on this issue are similar across the country, but residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (80%) and the North (82%) are most apt to feel Canada has at least some influence in world affairs. Atlantic Canadians are most likely to believe this role has strengthened (72%), while this view is least apt to be shared by Quebecers (58%, although more likely than most to say it has grown a great deal). Quebecers are less likely than other Canadians to cite peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts as examples for the country's increased influence.

#### How Canada's role has grown

Those who believe Canada's influence has grown in recent decades are most likely to point to peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts (27%) or military efforts and

support for the war on terror (26%) as examples of ways in which the country's influence has increased. Others cite general helpfulness and global awareness (14%), increased economic support to other countries (13%), increased global popularity (11%) and augmented diplomatic influence (10%). Another 15 percent of Canadians who say Canada's influence has grown in recent decades are unable to name any specific examples.

#### How Canada's role has declined

Those who see Canada's influence as having declined over the past 20 years are most likely to cite the decline in peacekeeping support to other countries as the major reason for this decline (37%). Others mention a lack of independence and leadership (17%), Canada's failure to differentiate itself from the United States (16%), overall poor governance by the federal government (16%) and support for the war on terror (14%) as reasons for a loss of influence in world affairs.

NOTE: Sample sizes are too small to allow meaningful group comparisons on this question.

## Canada's contributions to the world today

*Canadians see peacekeeping as their country's most important contribution to the world, while the environment is most apt to be viewed as its greatest missed opportunity for global leadership. Many events are identified as Canada's most significant historical moment on the world stage, but the list is dominated by military conflict, led by participation in World War II.*

### Most important contribution

Despite changes in the deployments and priorities of Canada's armed forces, a quarter of Canadians (26%) continue to believe that peacekeeping is the most important contribution Canada makes to the world. Foreign-aid is the second most commonly named Canadian contribution (17%), followed by support for multiculturalism/immigration (a total of 7%) and human rights (5%).

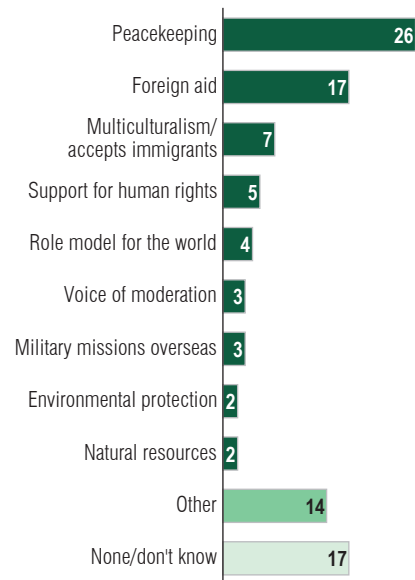
Smaller proportions of Canadians believe that their country's greatest contributions are to serve as an example to other countries (4%), to serve as a voice of moderation in global discourse (3%) and significantly—given our current role in Afghanistan—to support allies in military campaigns, including the war on terror (3%). One in six (17%) are unable to name anything as the country's most important contribution to the world.

Trend analysis from Environics' FOCUS CANADA surveys reveals that Canadians' emphasis on peacekeeping has declined noticeably since 2006, when 35 percent identified it as the country's number one contribution to the world. Focus on foreign aid has increased modestly over the past two years (up 3 points) while there is little change in other mentions.

**Age cohort and place of birth.** Young people and foreign-born Canadians do not differ substantially from the Canadian average in their views on this question.

**Region.** Quebecers stand out in being more likely to see foreign-aid (27%) as Canada's greatest contribution to the world, while less likely to name peacekeeping (20%) (as was the case in 2006).

## Canada's most positive contribution to the world



### Q.27

*In your opinion, what is the most positive contribution that Canada, as a country, makes to the world?*

## Greatest historical moment on the world stage

What would Canadians consider to be the country's finest historical moment, in terms of demonstrating leadership on the world stage? When asked (unprompted), a wide range of answers are offered but the public tends to think of events involving war and conflict. Canadians see their countries' greatest moments on the world stage as having come through military endeavour, specifically participation in the World Wars and the Korean War: one in five Canadians (19%) name one of these conflicts as marking the country's most positive moments of global leadership. World War II is the single most commonly mentioned campaign, named by 14 percent of Canadians, followed by Vimy Ridge (4%).

Eight percent of Canadians name moments associated with peacekeeping and the United Nations as periods of outstanding Canadian leadership, while six percent name Prime Minister Lester Pearson's Nobel Peace Prize as a highlight of Canada's history in the world. Three percent of Canadians cite the country's refusal to join the war in Iraq as a great moment of global leadership for Canada, while two percent say that participating in the war on terror has been Canada's most positive international effort.

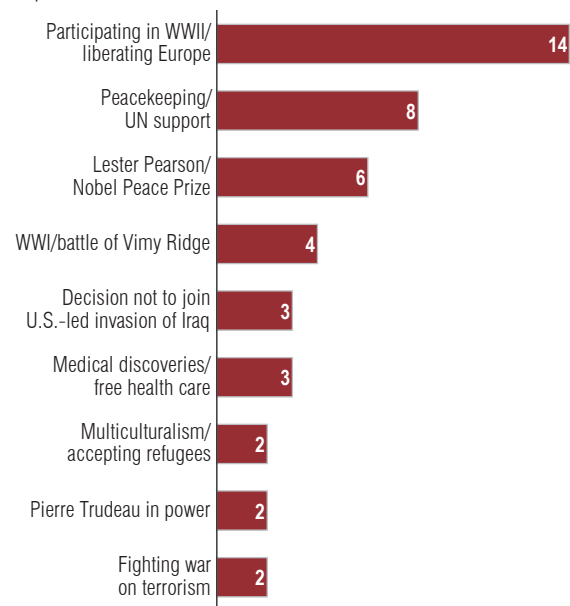
By comparison, few cite events of a non-military nature, such as medical discoveries or the country's health care system (3%), multiculturalism and immigration policies (2%), the Constitution or Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1%), signing the North American Free Trade Agreement (1%) or the Kyoto Protocol (1%). Of significance is the fact that over four in ten (44%) Canadians cannot think of any historical moment as the country's finest on the world stage.

**Age cohort.** Youth are least able to identify any event as the country's finest international moment. Canadians 60 and over are most apt to remember World War Two, and Lester Pearson winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians give responses similar to those of native-born on this question, although somewhat less likely to name participation in the World Wars and the Korean war as Canada's best moments on the world stage (15%).

## Canada's greatest historical moment on the world stage

Top mentions



Q.29

*Thinking about Canada's role in the world since it became a country 140 years ago, what, in your view, has been Canada's finest historical moment in terms of demonstrating positive leadership on the world stage?*

**Region.** Residents of Quebec and Manitoba/Saskatchewan are least able to identify any event as Canada's finest international moment.

## Missed opportunities

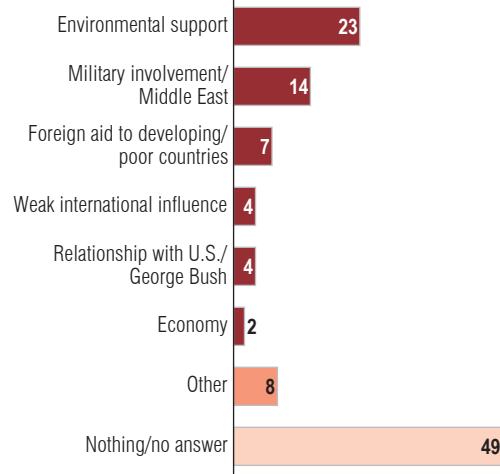
Canadians were also asked to identify any areas in which they felt Canada has missed an important opportunity to make a positive contribution to the world. Half name such a missed opportunity, the most common responses being demonstrating more leadership on environmental issues (23%) and in its military activity in the Middle East (not playing a more active role) (14%), while others cite more that could have been done with foreign aid (7%), having more influence on other countries (4%), and the country's relationship with the U.S. and President Bush (4%). The other half of Canadians (49%) cannot identify any significant missed opportunities for positive contribution in the world.

**Age cohort.** Youth are least able to identify any missed opportunities (56%).

**Place of birth.** No differences emerge in responses to this question

**Region.** Quebecers are most likely to name environmental leadership (29%) and military activities in the Middle East (17%) as Canada's missed opportunities for global contribution.

## Canada's biggest missed opportunity for global leadership



Q.28

*And in what areas, if any, do you think Canada has missed an important opportunity to make a positive contribution to the world?*



## WHAT CANADA'S ROLE IN THE WORLD COULD BE

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### How Canada can make a difference in the world

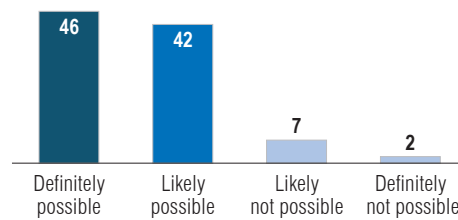
*Most Canadians are confident that Canada could increase its influence in the world, particularly in addressing hunger and famine in the developing world, discouraging human rights abuses, and showing leadership on global warming and other environmental issues.*

### Potential for increased world influence

What potential do Canadians see for their country expanding its role and influence in world affairs? Among Canadians who see their country as having moderate to no influence on the world stage, most believe it is possible for this to change. Close to half (46%) of Canadians who believe Canada's current influence is modest to nil believe it is "definitely" possible for the country to hold more sway internationally, and an additional 42 percent say this scenario is at least "somewhat" possible. Just one in ten from this group see increased Canadian influence as likely not (7%) or definitely not (2%) possible.

There are no significant group differences on this question, although strong confidence in an expanded role is marginally lower among Canadians 60 plus and residents of Atlantic Canada.

### Can Canada strengthen its influence on world affairs?



#### Q.31

*You said earlier that Canada has {Q.24 response: some/little/no influence} in world affairs today. Do you think it is definitely, likely, likely not or definitely not possible for Canada to strengthen its influence on world affairs if it chose to do so?  
Subsample: All except those who said Canada has a lot of influence in world affairs today*

## Areas of potential contribution

Beyond the general idea of how much more of an impact Canada could have on world affairs, many Canadians believe their country can make a difference on a number of specific areas. On each of eight major global issues presented, a majority say they believe Canada can make some “some” if not “a big” difference. The public is most likely to say Canada can make a difference in addressing hunger and famine in the developing world (84%), human rights abuses (83%), global warming and other environmental problems (82%) and the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV-AIDS (79%). The environment and human rights are the issues on which the greatest proportion of Canadians think their country could make a big difference (44% say their country could have a big impact on the environment agenda and 40% say the same about human rights).

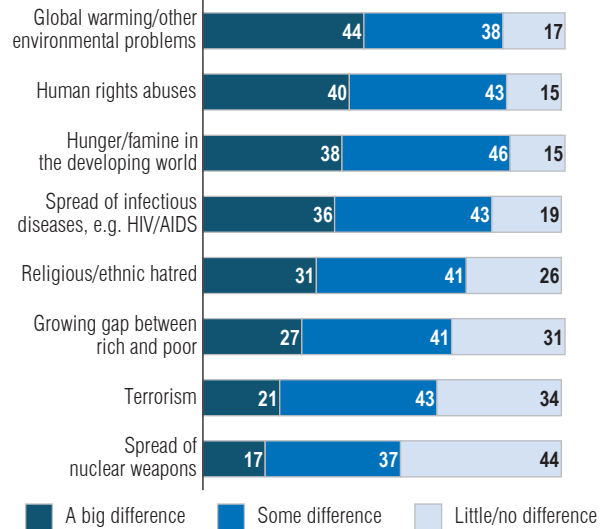
Other issues on which Canadians believe their country could make a difference include easing ethnic and religious hatred (72%), the growing gap between rich and poor (68%), terrorism (64%) and impeding the spread of nuclear weapons (54%). Nuclear weapons are the issue on which Canadians are most doubtful their country can have an impact, with 13 percent of Canadians saying they think Canada can have no effect at all in this area. On each of the other issues named, no more than eight percent of Canadians think Canada is not in a position to make at least some difference.

Young Canadians aged 15 to 24 and foreign-born Canadians differ from the Canadian average in similar ways on this question, with both groups being more likely than other Canadians to believe that Canada can make a big difference on particular issues.

**Age cohort.** Canadians aged 15 to 24 are significantly more likely than average to believe Canada could make a big difference in fighting hunger in the developing world (51%), tackling global warming and promoting environmental protection (53%) and discouraging human rights abuses (51%).

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are more likely than the average Canadian to believe that Canada could make a big difference in diminishing ethnic and religious hatred in the world (42%).

## Where Canada can make a difference in world issues



### Q.33

*Do you believe that Canada as a country can make a big difference, some difference, little difference or no difference in each of the following world issues ...?*

**Region.** Quebecers tend to be in line with the national average on this question.

## Canada as a role model to the world

*Almost all Canadians believe their country can make a difference in the world by setting an example at home, especially in its environmental practices, but also in such areas as support for human rights and in the area of multiculturalism and immigration.*

One way for a country to exert its influence on world affairs is in demonstrating to the rest of the world what it can do at home. A strong majority of Canadians (86%) believe their country can accomplish such a feat, and have a positive impact on the world by acting as a role model to other countries. Just 12 percent say they think Canada can have little influence over other countries by setting an example in the way it conducts its affairs at home.

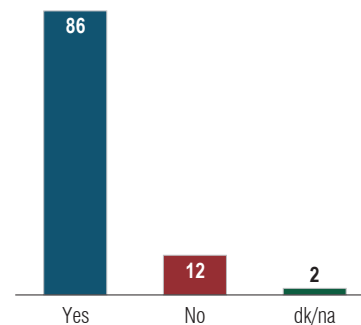
Asked to name particular policies or practices on which Canada might set an example to other countries, the environment emerges as Canadians' top choice, with 17 percent saying that Canada could be an effective role model in this area. Other areas in which Canadians think their country could set an example include support for human rights (12%), multiculturalism and inviting immigration policies (11%), peacekeeping (7%), and foreign aid (4%). Smaller proportions of Canadians say that having a strong health care system (4%), and reducing the gap between rich and poor (4%) would make Canada a strong example to other countries.

**Age cohort.** Young people aged 15 to 24 are slightly more likely (91%) than others to believe that setting an example at home is an effective way for Canada to influence other countries. But they are no more likely to identify specific areas in which this can be done (and in fact somewhat more likely to plead ignorance on this question).

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians stand out in naming Canada's immigration and multiculturalism policies (16%) as something that could set an effective example to the world.

**Region.** Quebecers are above average in their belief that support for human rights (20%) and peacekeeping (13%) could be areas in which Canada might be an example. Environmental leadership is most apt to be emphasized by residents of the North (27%) and Atlantic Canada (23%).

Can Canada have positive impact by serving as a role model for other countries?



Q.34

*Do you think Canada can have a positive impact on world affairs by serving as a role model to other countries? By this, I mean setting an example at home for how important issues can be addressed, that might show other countries what can be done?*

How can Canada best serve as a role model to other countries?

Top mentions



Q.35

*On what issue, or in what way, do you think Canada could be most effective in serving as a role model to other countries? Subsample: Those who think Canada can be an effective role model*

## Confidence in Canadian actors

*Canadians are most confident in the ability of their country's NGOs to make a positive difference on the world stage, followed by the capabilities of individual Canadians. Opinion is more divided on the role that Canadian governments and businesses can play in contributing to world issues.*

Canadians believe their country can play a major role in world affairs, but who in Canada would they most trust to carry this out? Most have at least some confidence in a range of actors, from government to NGOs, to Canadian businesses and individual Canadians, but the degree of confidence varies noticeably. Canadians are most likely to have a great deal of confidence in the foreign activities of non-governmental organizations, such as the Red Cross and Save the Children (47%). One-third (32%) have this level of trust in the actions of individual Canadians, while fewer place this confidence in Canadian businesses (20%) and the Canadian government (20%). In these latter cases, about one in four (24%) say they have little or no trust in the capabilities of government or businesses to make a positive difference in the world.

**Age cohort.** Youth aged 15 to 24 register above-average confidence in both NGOs and the Canadian government. Six in ten (59%) young Canadians say they have a great deal of confidence in NGOs to make a positive difference in the world, and 28 percent have a great deal of confidence in the federal government to do the same.

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are about average on this question.

**Region.** Like youth, Quebecers stand out in registering the strongest level of confidence in NGOs (57%).

## Confidence in capabilities of Canadian actors working abroad



### Q.36

*There are different actors in Canadian society that are currently involved in the world abroad. Please tell me if you have a great deal of confidence, some confidence, or little confidence in the capabilities of ... to make a positive difference in the world.*

## The role of Canadians living abroad

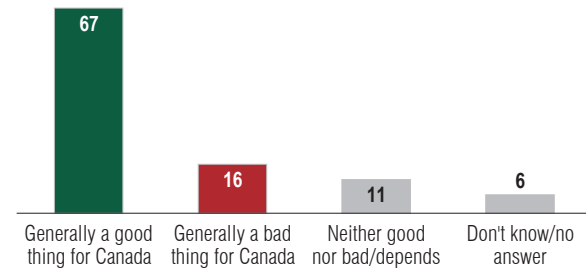
*Most Canadians consider the large community of Canadians currently living abroad to be a positive, rather than negative, thing for the country. This expatriate community is viewed as good ambassadors and a means of enriching both its members and their country back home.*

An estimated three million Canadian citizens currently live abroad. When asked whether they believe this is a good or a bad thing for Canada, two-thirds of Canadians (67%) respond that they see it as positive, compared with one in six (16%) who believe having so many Canadian citizens living in other countries is a problem. An equivalent proportion (17%) do not have a clear view either way.

Among those who see large numbers of Canadians living abroad as a good thing for Canada, most say this is because they believe these people are likely to be good ambassadors for the country (39%) and that they will bring home valuable experiences (22%). Other reasons for support of Canadians living in other countries include a belief that it is useful for Canadians to learn about other parts of the world (21%) and that Canadians' international mobility strengthens Canada's role in the world (15%) or spreads Canadian values (8%).

Those who express concern about Canadians living abroad say they believe that Canadian citizens should simply be required to live on Canadian soil (23%), while others give reasons that are variations on the idea of free-riding: 16 percent believe Canadians abroad take advantage of Canadian public services without paying for them, 10 percent worry that they expect the Canadian government to help them when they are in trouble, 10 percent worry that Canadians abroad do not pay taxes and another 10 percent worry about a general disloyalty to the country. [Subsamples on this question are too small to enable useful group comparisons].

## Opinion about 3 million Canadians now living abroad



### Q.37

*There are an estimated three million Canadians currently living abroad in other countries. Do you believe having this number of citizens living in other countries is generally a good thing or a bad thing for Canada?*

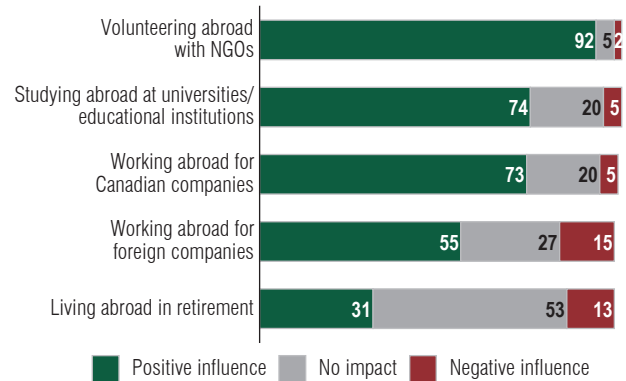
The survey also reveals that the public is largely supportive regardless of what their fellow citizens are doing abroad. Almost everyone (92%) believes that Canadians volunteering abroad with non-governmental organizations have a positive influence on Canada's role in the world. Smaller but strong majorities also feel the same way about Canadians who are living in a foreign country to study (74%) or work for Canadian companies (73%). A smaller majority (55%) are positive about the influence of Canadians working for foreign countries abroad, but only 15 percent believe this has a negative influence (with 27% saying it has no impact either way on Canada's role in the world). Finally, only three in ten (31%) believe that Canadians who move overseas to retire have a positive influence on Canada's role, but most of the remainder are neutral (53%) rather than critical (13%) of these expatriates.

**Age cohort.** Canadians aged 15 to 24 are somewhat more likely than others to believe that having many Canadians living abroad is a good thing for Canada, and are most positive about Canadians abroad who live abroad to study or retire. Those aged 60 plus are least apt to share these views.

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are moderately less likely than average (61%) to think that Canadians living abroad has a positive effect on Canada, but are more apt to be neutral on this issue (23%) than view it as bad for the country (15%).

**Region.** Residents of Atlantic Canada (73%) and B.C. (73%)—the coastal regions—are most likely to see the Canadian expatriate community as a good thing for the country, with this view somewhat less evident in Ontario (63%). In no region, however, do more than 17 percent consider it bad for Canada.

### Impact on Canada of citizens living abroad



#### Q.39

*Canadians are living abroad for a number of reasons. Please tell me if you think each of the following have a positive influence on Canada's role in the world, a negative influence or really have no impact either way ... Canadians studying abroad at universities and other educational institutions ... Canadians working abroad for Canadian companies ... Canadians working abroad for foreign companies ... Canadians volunteering abroad with non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross ... Canadians living abroad who are retired.*

## NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND DISARMAMENT

### Nuclear weapons and global security

*Canadians believe that nuclear weapons have made the world a more dangerous place, with the greatest threat coming from terrorist attacks. There is overwhelming public support among Canadians for the complete elimination of the world's nuclear weapons.*

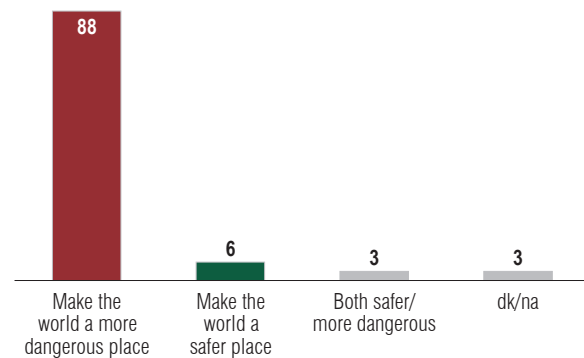
#### Impact of nuclear weapons on world safety

One of the major challenges facing today's world is the presence—and potential use—of nuclear weapons, which are currently in the arsenal of seven countries (officially) and likely several more. The devastating destructive power of such weapons is unquestioned, and this very power has made them highly effective as a deterrent to potential aggression against these countries and their allies. How do Canadians view the role of nuclear weapons in today's world—does it make the world a safer or more dangerous place?

Canadian public opinion is close to consensus on this question—nine in ten (88%) Canadians believe that nuclear weapons make the world a more dangerous place, with few saying it creates a safer world (6%). The remainder are more equivocal in their response to this question (3%) or are unable to offer one (3%). This sentiment is held equally strongly across the population, but youth aged 15 to 24 are especially likely to express the view that nuclear weapons make for a more dangerous world (93%).

Comparison with a 2007 international survey sponsored by The Simons Foundation reveals that Canadian opinion on this question is similar to sentiments expressed in six other nations (which either have nuclear

#### Impact of nuclear weapons



Q.42

*Do you think nuclear weapons make the world a safer place or a more dangerous place?*

capability domestically or through NATO).<sup>2</sup> Strong majorities also believe nuclear weapons have made the world a more dangerous place by residents of Germany (92%), Italy (90%), Israel (87%), the United States (79%), France (77%) and Great Britain (73%).

2 The Simons Foundation, "Global Public Opinion on Nuclear Weapons," Vancouver Canada, September 2007.

## Greatest nuclear threat

In the Cold War era, the only danger from nuclear weapons came from potential war between major powers (as the Cuban Missile Crisis nearly demonstrated). In the early years of the 21st century, a new threat emerged in the form of non-state terrorists using nuclear weapons to strike out at their enemies. And it is this latter threat that Canadians now take more seriously. Canadians are more likely to say the greatest threat to world peace and security comes from the use of nuclear weapons by terrorists (51%) than their use by those countries who possess such weapons (31%). One in six (15%) maintain that both represent an equally significant threat, while only a handful (4%) cannot offer a response.

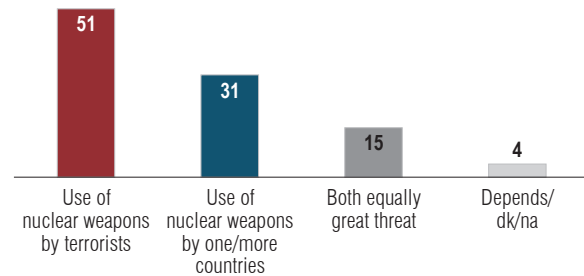
This view is evident across most of the population, but concern about terrorist use of nuclear weapons is strongest among Canadians 40 and older, while youth aged 15 to 24 are more evenly divided: 42 percent say the greater threat comes from terrorists, but almost as many point to major powers (40%). Quebecers stand out in being almost twice as likely as other Canadians to insist that both threats are equally serious.

## Elimination of nuclear weapons

Canadians' uneasiness with nuclear weapons leads to a clear desire to rid them from the world. Close to nine in ten say they would strongly (73%) or moderately (15%) support the elimination of all nuclear weapons in the world through an enforceable agreement. Just one in ten moderately (4%) or strongly (5%) oppose such a move, while only three percent do not offer a clear opinion either way. This support for elimination is strong across the country, but most widespread in Quebec (84%), while somewhat less so in the Prairies and Atlantic Canada, and in the North.

Strong support for elimination is significantly more widespread than it is in four of the six countries polled on this question in 2007, including France (51%), Great Britain (50%), the U.S. (44%) and Israel (43%). Only in Italy (84%) and Germany (78%) do more citizens voice stronger support for eliminating such weapons.

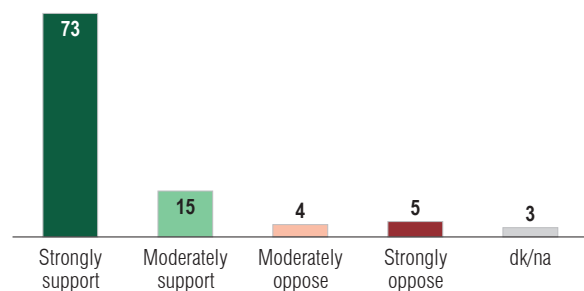
## Which is the greater threat?



Q.43

*Which do you consider the greater threat: The use of nuclear weapons by one or more countries, or the use of nuclear weapons by terrorists?*

## Elimination of all nuclear weapons



Q.46

*Would you support or oppose eliminating all nuclear weapons in the world through an enforceable agreement? Is that strongly or moderately {support/oppose}?*

## NATO's nuclear capability

*Canadians are more likely than not to feel that Canada is safer under the protection of NATO's nuclear arsenal. At the same time, a majority believe the use of NATO's nuclear weapons would never be justified under any circumstances.*

### Impact on Canada

Canada does not have any nuclear weapons but is a member of NATO, for which its nuclear arsenal is a cornerstone of its military capability. Despite Canadians' misgivings about the threat that nuclear weapons pose to world security, a majority (54%) believe that Canada is a safer country because of NATO's nuclear capability. Three in ten (30%) say that Canada is less safe because of its tie to NATO's nuclear arsenal, while another one in six are equivocal (6%) or unable to say either way (10%).

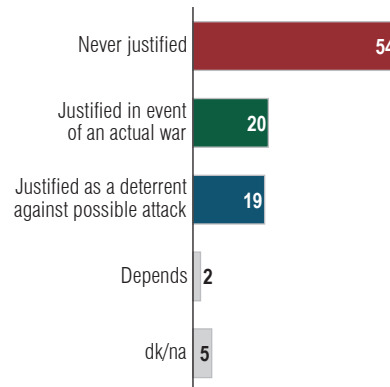
Residents of Atlantic Canada (63%) and Ontario (60%) are most apt to believe Canada is safer under NATO protection, while opinion is more divided among Quebecers (41% say safer, versus 35% who say less safe) and Canadian youth aged 15 to 24 (50% versus 38%).

### Use of NATO's nuclear capability

While Canadians are more likely than not to feel safer because of NATO's nuclear deterrence, there is considerable discomfort about the prospect of these weapons ever being used. Only one in five (20%) believe the use of nuclear weapons by NATO would be justified in the event of an actual war, and a similar proportion (19%) say such use would be justifiable as a deterrent against a possible attack. A majority (54%) express the view that the use of NATO nuclear weapons would never be justified.

Opinions on this question are largely similar across the population, with some variation in proportions. The view that NATO nuclear strikes would be justified in the event of war is somewhat more evident among Albertans (26%) and youth (27%). Belief that use of such weapons is never justified is strongest in Quebec (61%) and among new Canadians (58%).

## Use of NATO nuclear capability



### Q.45

*Do you think the use of nuclear weapons by NATO would be ... Justified in the event of an actual war ... Justified as a deterrent against a possible attack ... Never be justified?*

Canadians are less categorical in their belief that use of NATO nuclear weapons would never be justified, in comparison with Germans (77%) and Italians (70%). But they are much more likely to express this view, when compared with the citizens of Great Britain (49%), France (43%), the U.S. (40%) and Israel (22%) in terms of whether the use of nuclear weapons by their own country would ever be justified.

## Canadian policy on nuclear exports

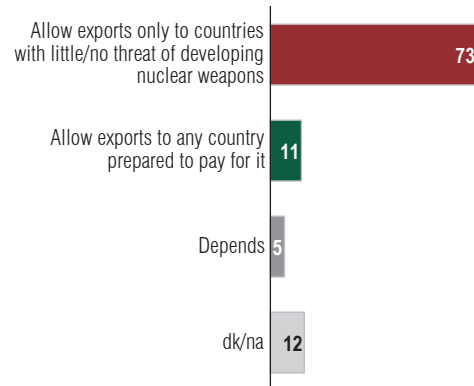
*Most Canadians believe Canada should not be exporting its nuclear technology to countries that may end up using it to develop nuclear weapons.*

While Canada does not manufacture or have nuclear weapons, it has a nuclear technology industry that exports nuclear energy products and services to other countries around the world. These exports are not directed to supporting nuclear arms, but some concerns have been expressed about whether or not this might be happening in some indirect ways.

With Canadians concerned about the hazards of nuclear weapons and their potential use, there is a clear preference for the country's nuclear technology industry to err on the side of safety over profits. Three-quarters (73%) say that Canada's nuclear exports should only be allowed to countries with little or no threat of developing nuclear weapons, compared with one in ten (11%) who maintain the industry should be able to export its products to any country prepared to pay for them. Another one in six say it would depend (e.g., on the countries in question) (5%) or cannot offer an opinion either way (12%).

Support for restricted exports is the majority view across the country, but most evident in Alberta (78%), B.C. (77%) and Atlantic Canada (77%). Youth aged 15 to 24 are among those most apt to feel that industry should be able to export to any country prepared to pay for the technology (18%).

## Preferred policy on Canadian nuclear technology exports



Q.47

*Canada has a nuclear technology industry which exports nuclear energy products and services to other countries. Should Canada's industry be allowed to export its technology ... To any country prepared to pay for it ... Only to countries with little or no threat of developing nuclear weapons?*



