

Do Canadians still believe in democracy?

The survey research evidence

**DemocracyXChange Summit
Ryerson University
January 26, 2019**



“Having chosen a way of life which consults the mass of the people . . . we must listen to what the people themselves have to say, for public opinion can only be of service to democracy if it can be heard.”

George Gallup (1940)

“Surveys produce just what democracy is supposed to produce – equal representation of all citizens.”

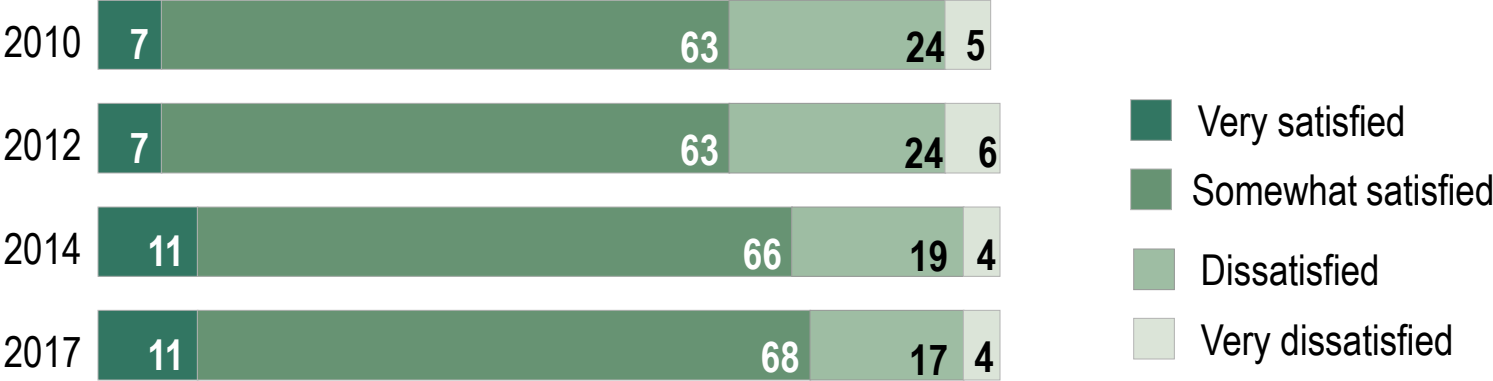
Sidney Verba (1996)



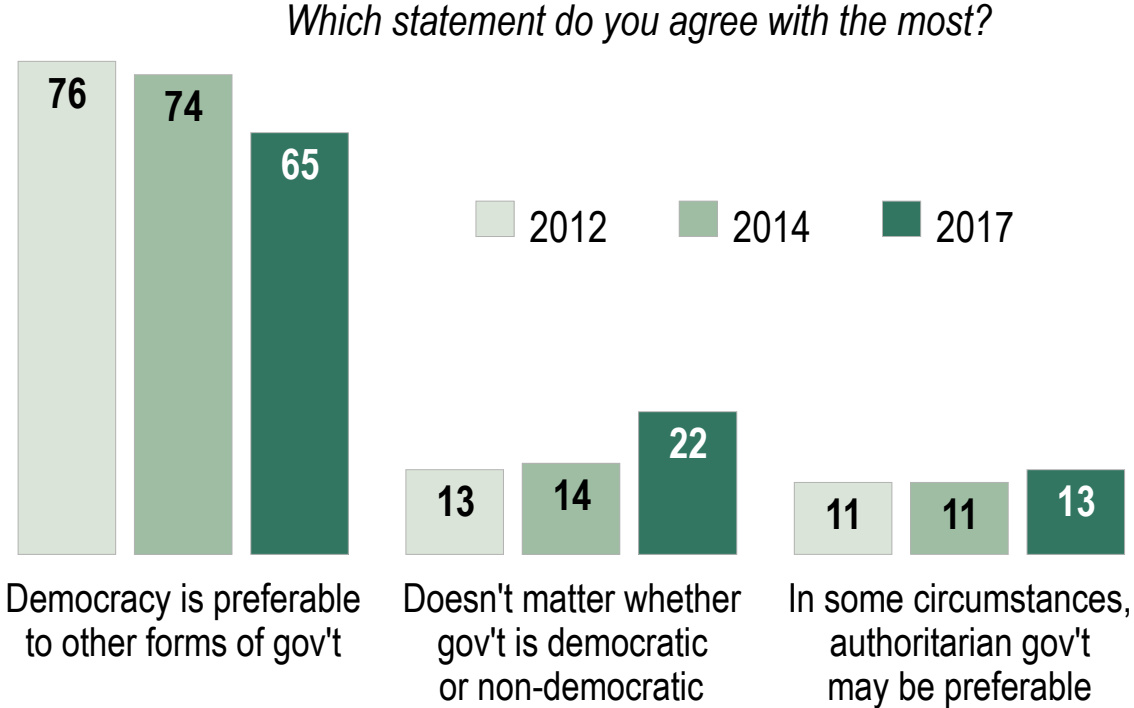
Do Canadians have confidence in their democracy and national institutions?

Most Canadians are somewhat if not very satisfied with their country's democracy. Satisfaction levels have held steady since 2010.

How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada today?

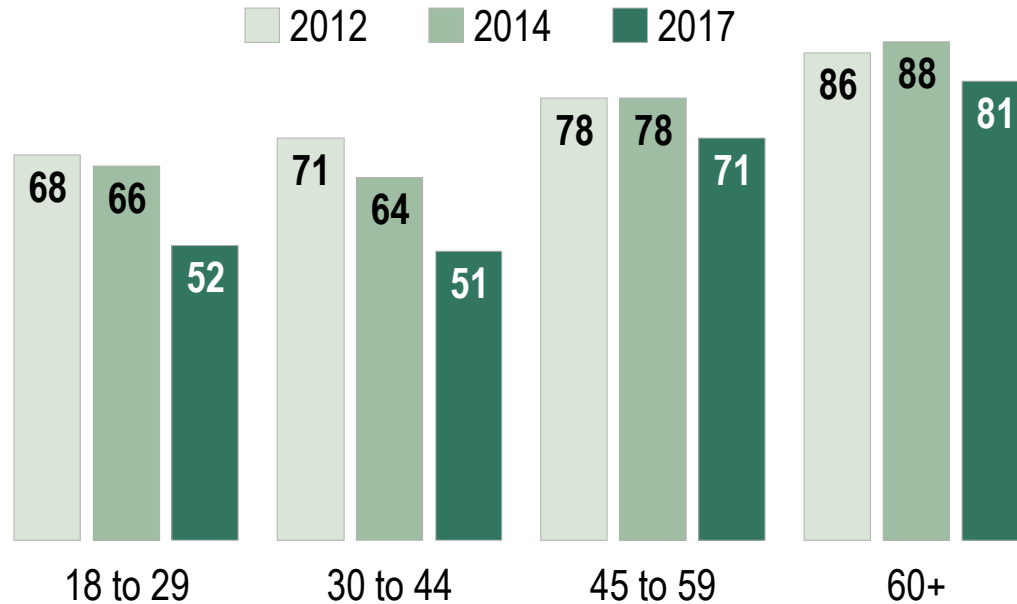


Most Canadians believe in democracy over other forms of government, but this commitment has softened since 2012 . . .



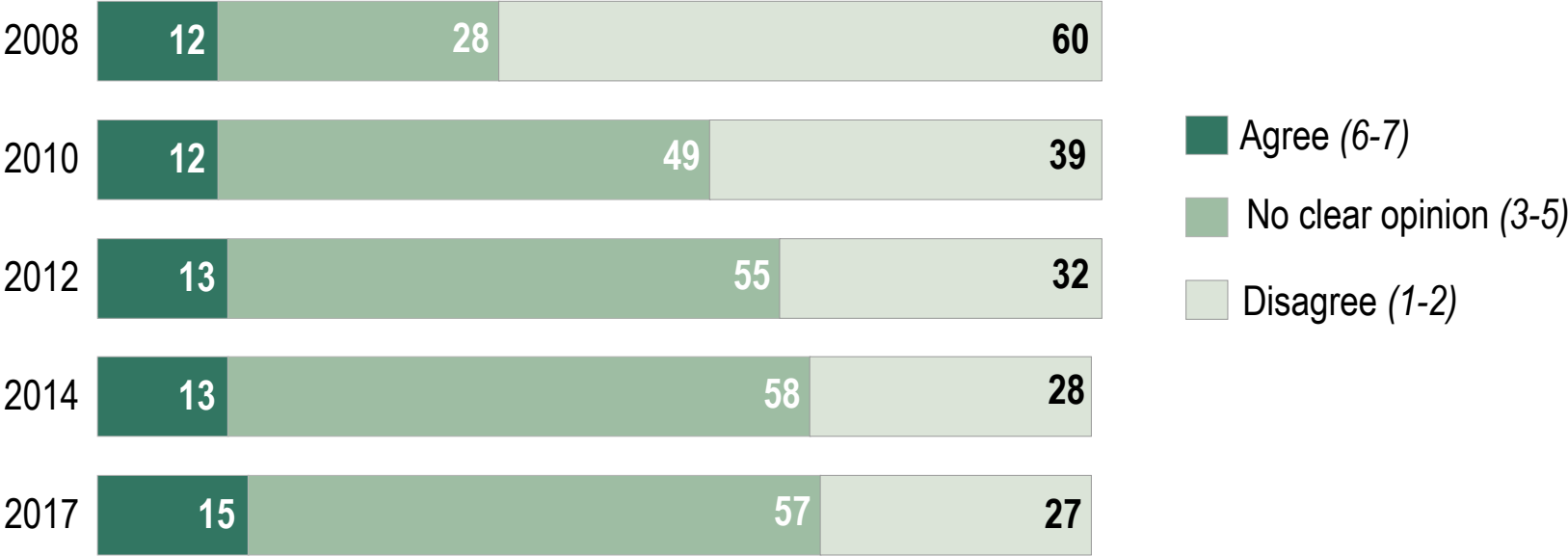
... and this trend is most evident among Canadians under 45 years of age.

Democracy is preferable to other forms of government



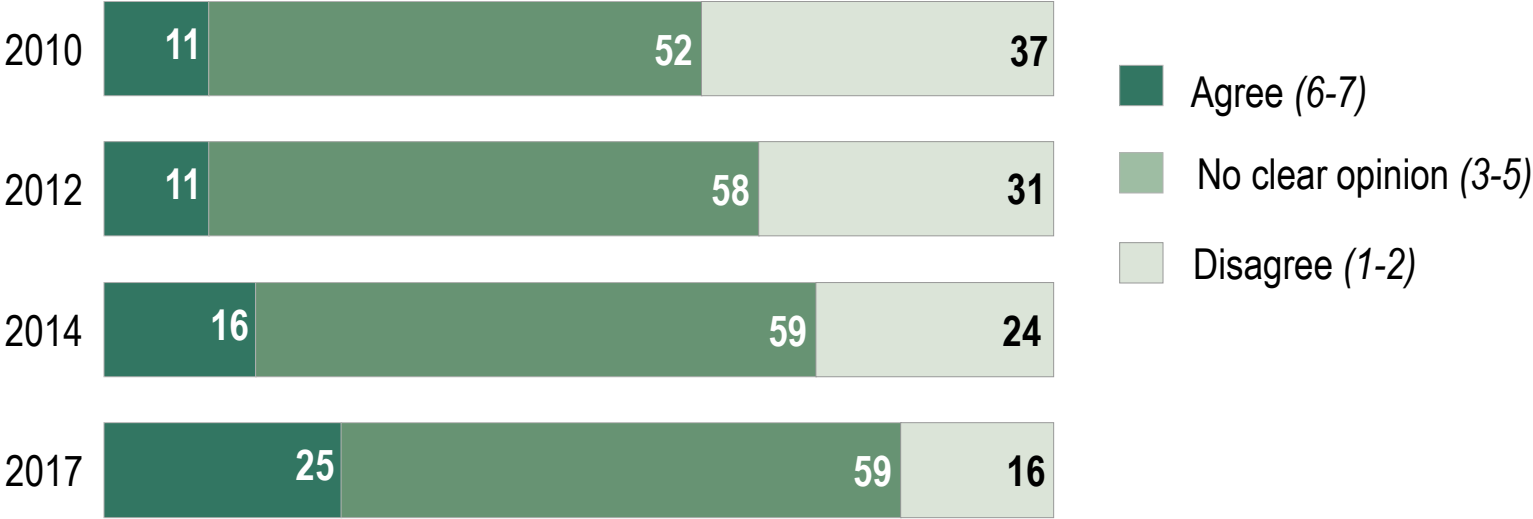
Few Canadians embrace the populist idea of governing directly rather than through elected officials, but gaining ground on the political right.

Agree – Disagree: *The people should govern directly rather than through elected representatives*



The public is feeling more confident that their politicians are listening to what people like them are thinking.

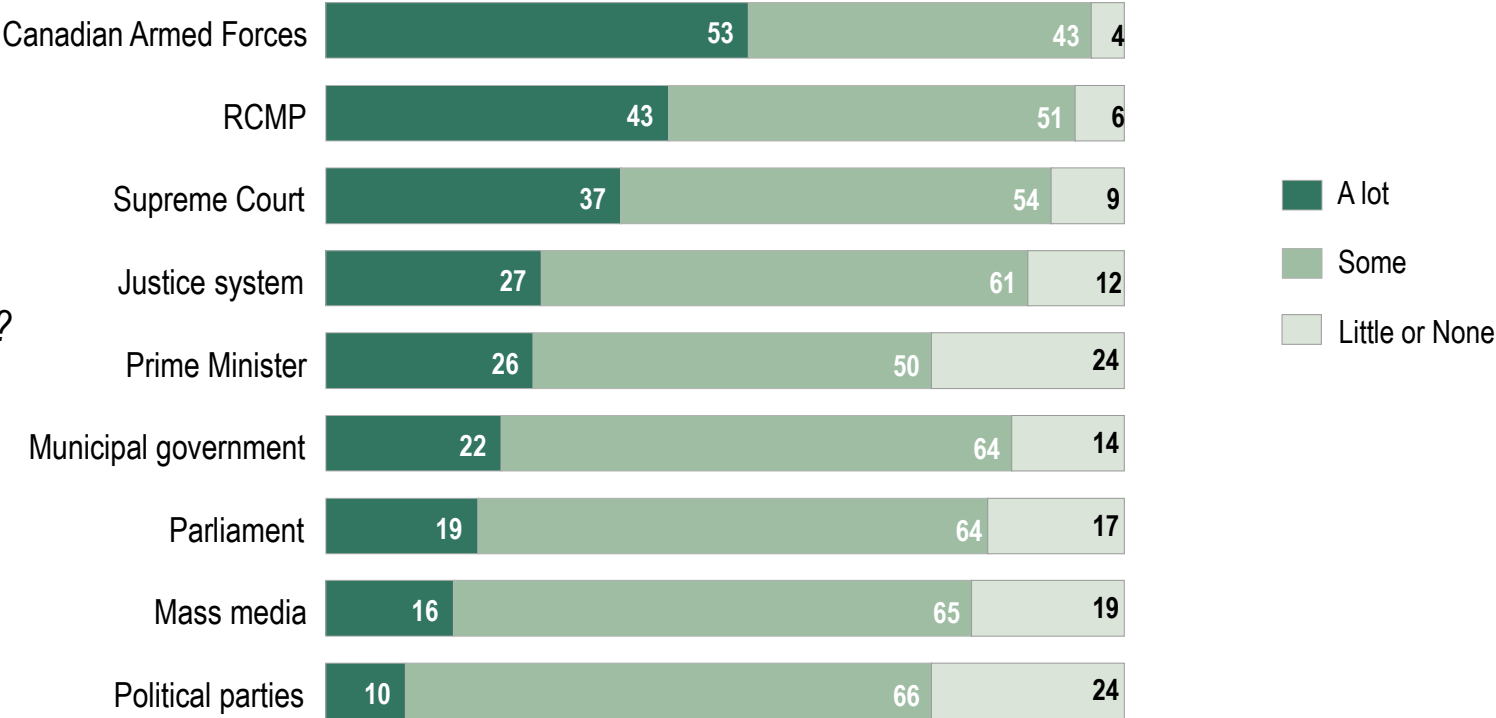
Agree – Disagree: *Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think*



There is wide variation in the level of trust in selected national institutions, but relatively few have little or no trust in any of them.

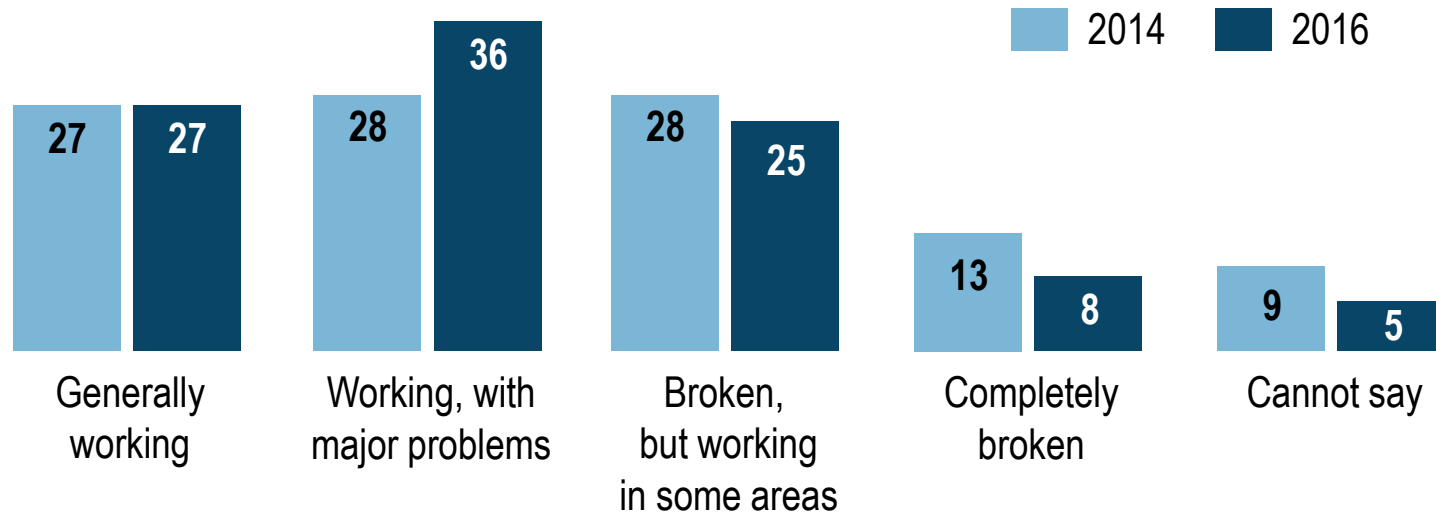
2017

To what extent do you trust . . . ?



Few Canadians believe that their governments are completely broken

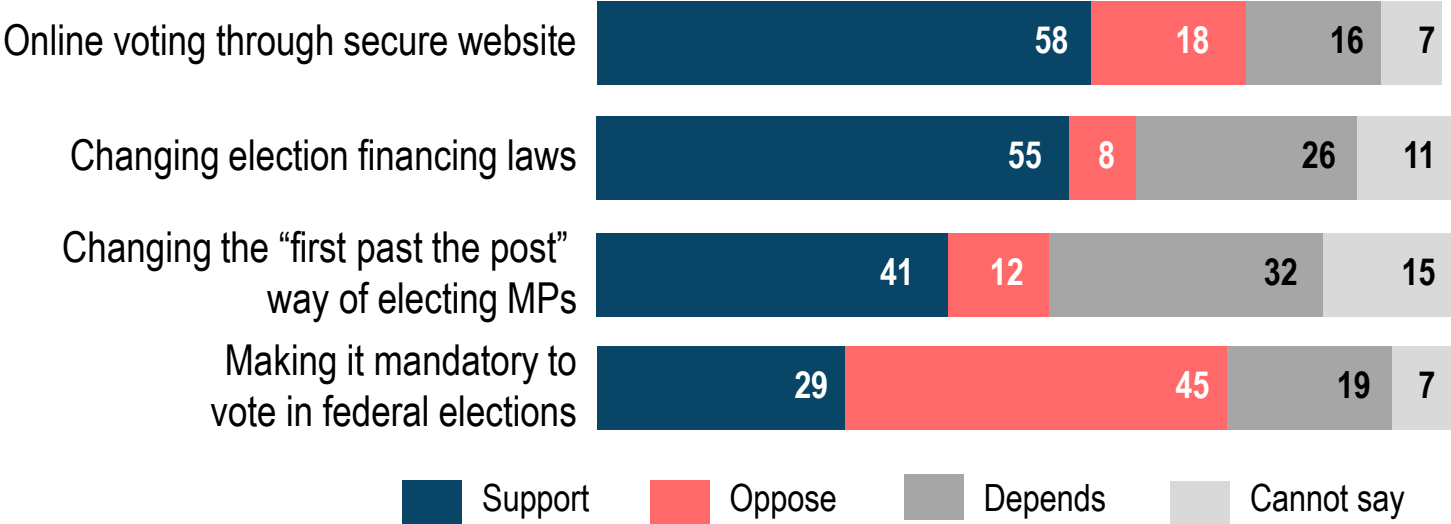
Are governments in Canada today working or broken?



There is public support - but limited demand - for changes to the federal electoral system.

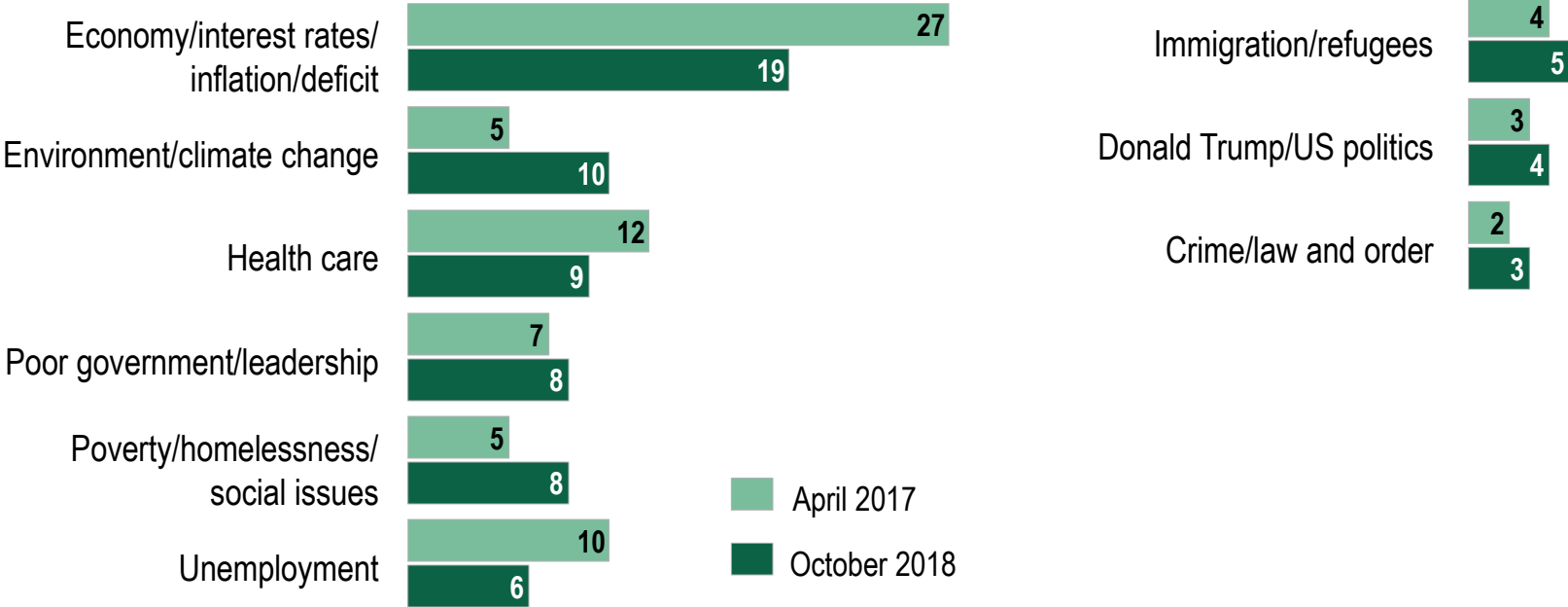
2016

Support or oppose changes to federal electoral system



Democracy and governance are not top-of-mind among the major issues facing the country today.

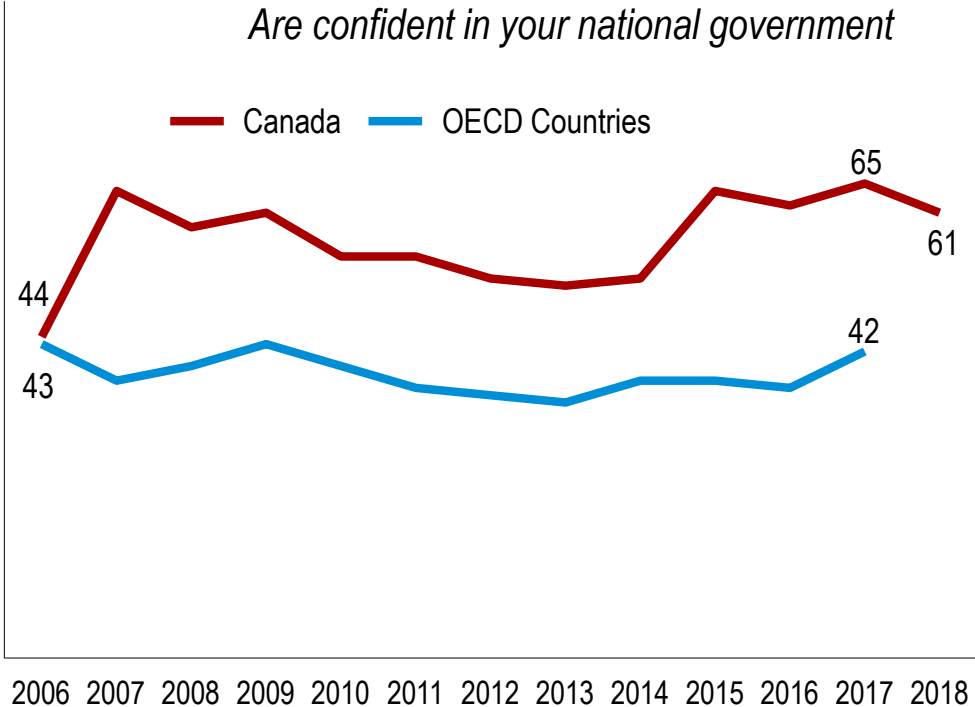
Most important problem facing Canada today (unprompted responses)





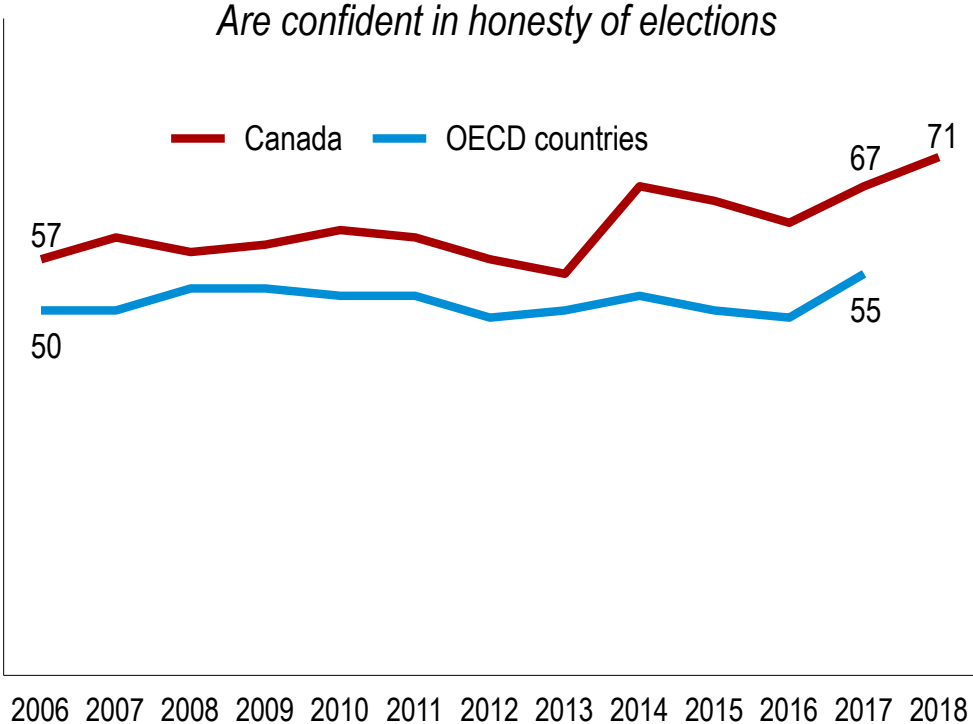
**How opinions in Canada compare with
those in other countries**

A clear majority of Canadians express confidence in their national gov't, and well above the level of many OECD countries, and especially the USA.



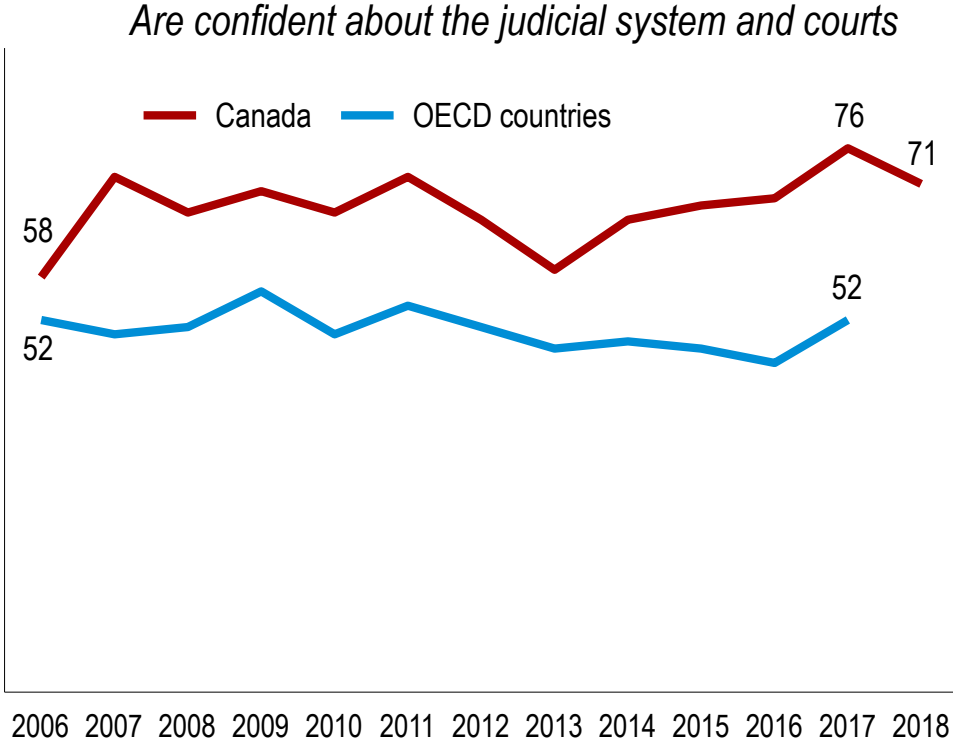
Country	2018 %
Denmark	63
Germany	59
Sweden	49
United Kingdom	42
France	38
USA	31

Most Canadians trust the way elections are held in this country, well above the OECD average.



Country	2018 %
Sweden	85
Germany	73
United Kingdom	65
Denmark	55
France	54
USA	37

And Canadians demonstrate a similarly high level of confidence in their judicial system.



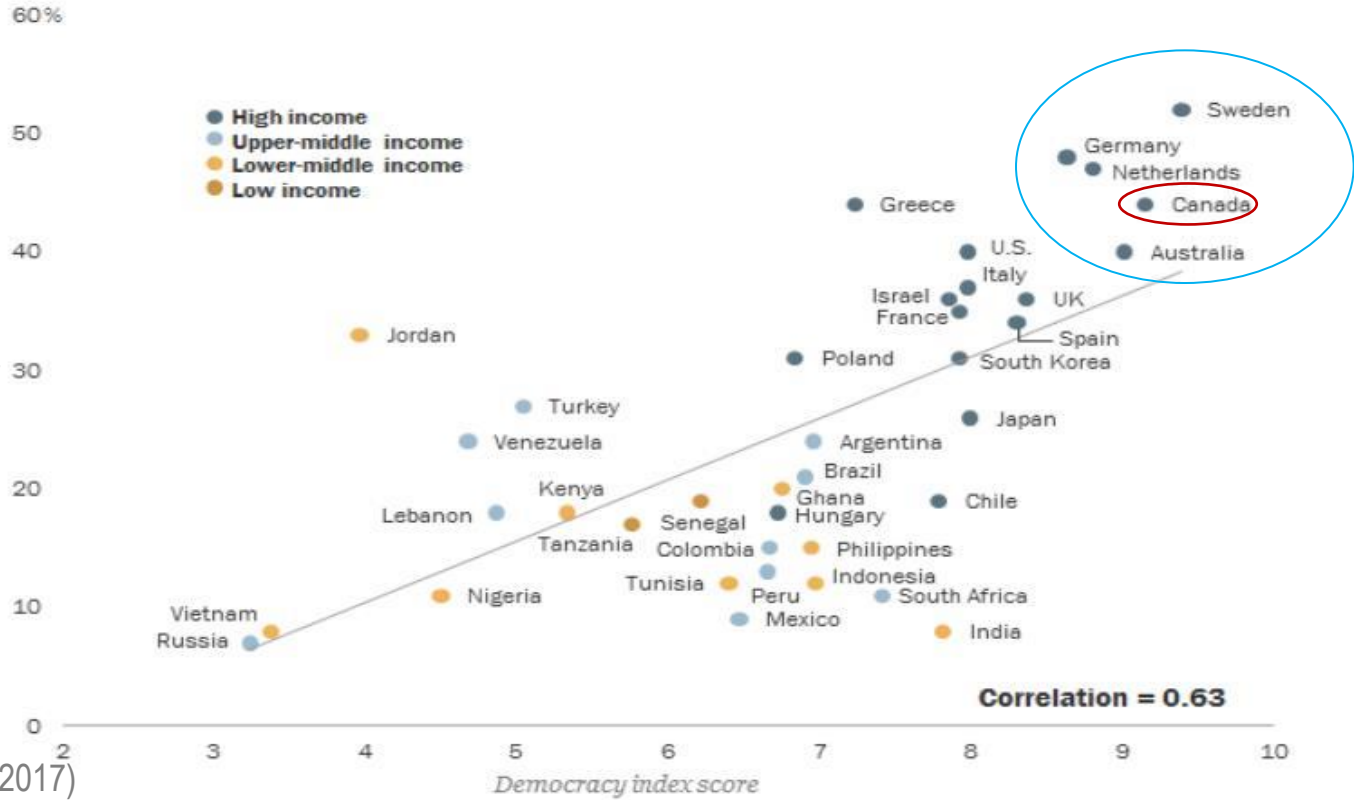
Country	2018 %
Denmark	87
Germany	71
United Kingdom	69
Sweden	66
France	56
USA	53

Worldwide, Canadians are among the most committed to the principle of democracy in which elected representatives govern.

2017

Commitment to democracy by country

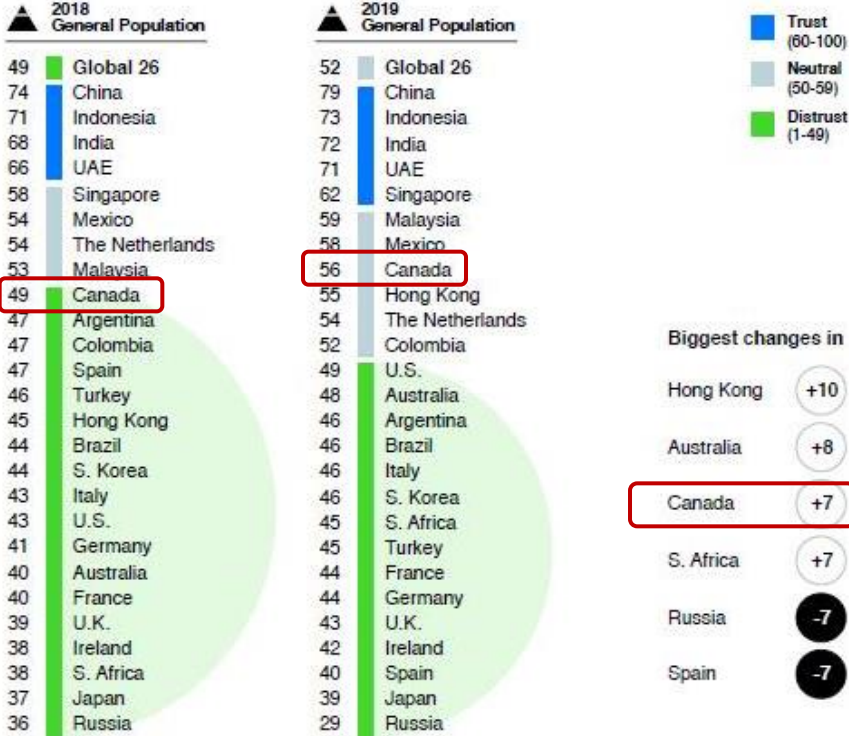
y axis = expressed commitment
x axis = democracy index



The most recent international trust ratings put Canada in the upper tier, showing improvement over the past year.

2018 - 2019

Overall trust in country's institutions



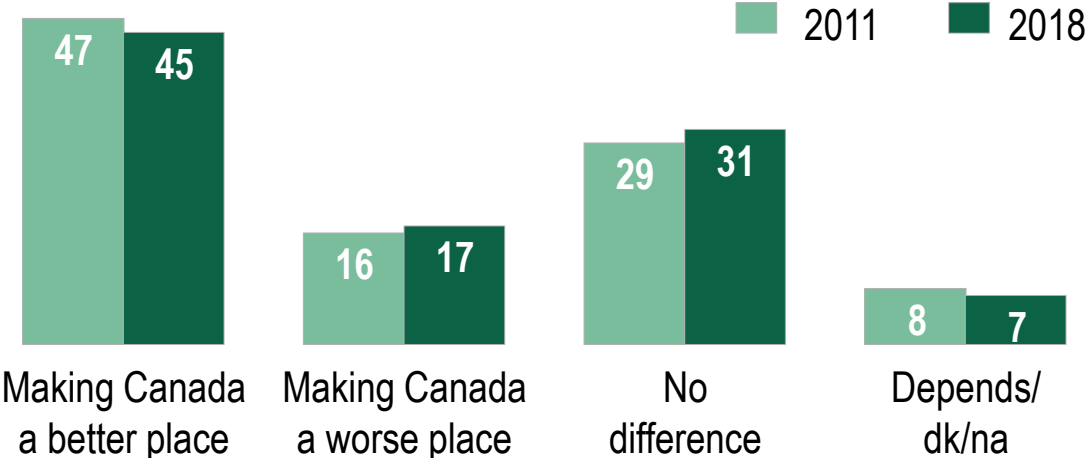


Canada Arrivals
Arrivées Canada

Are Canadians growing more xenophobic?

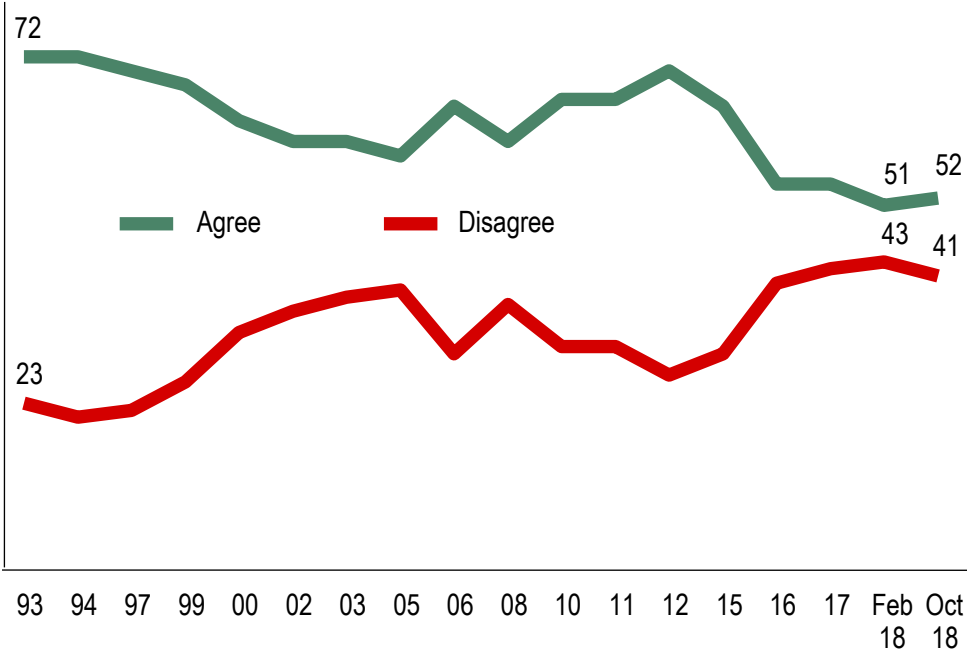
Few Canadians see immigration as hurting the country, unchanged since 2011.

Canada accepts about 300,000 new immigrants each year. Do you think that on balance the effect of these individuals coming to the country is . . . ?



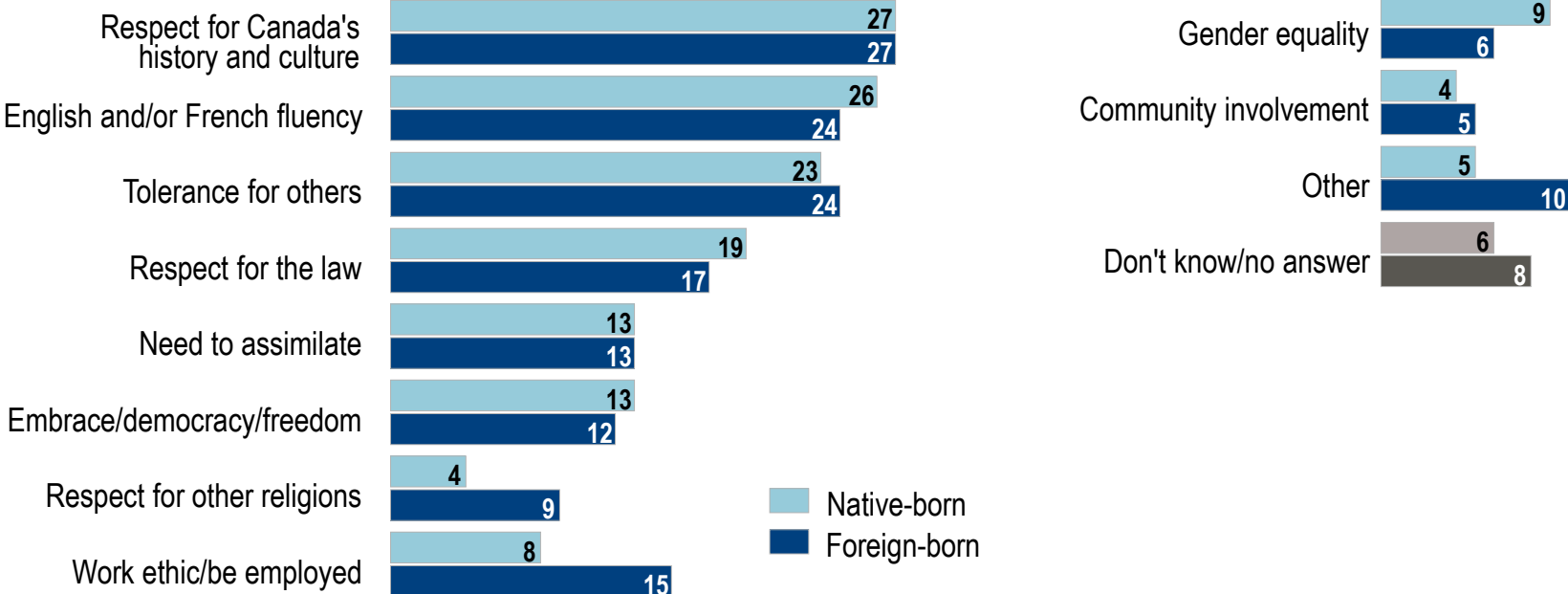
A majority continue to believe that “too many” immigrants are not adopting Canadian values, but much less so than in the past.

Agree or disagree: “Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian values”



Native and foreign-born Canadians generally agree on what values immigrants should adopt when they arrive.

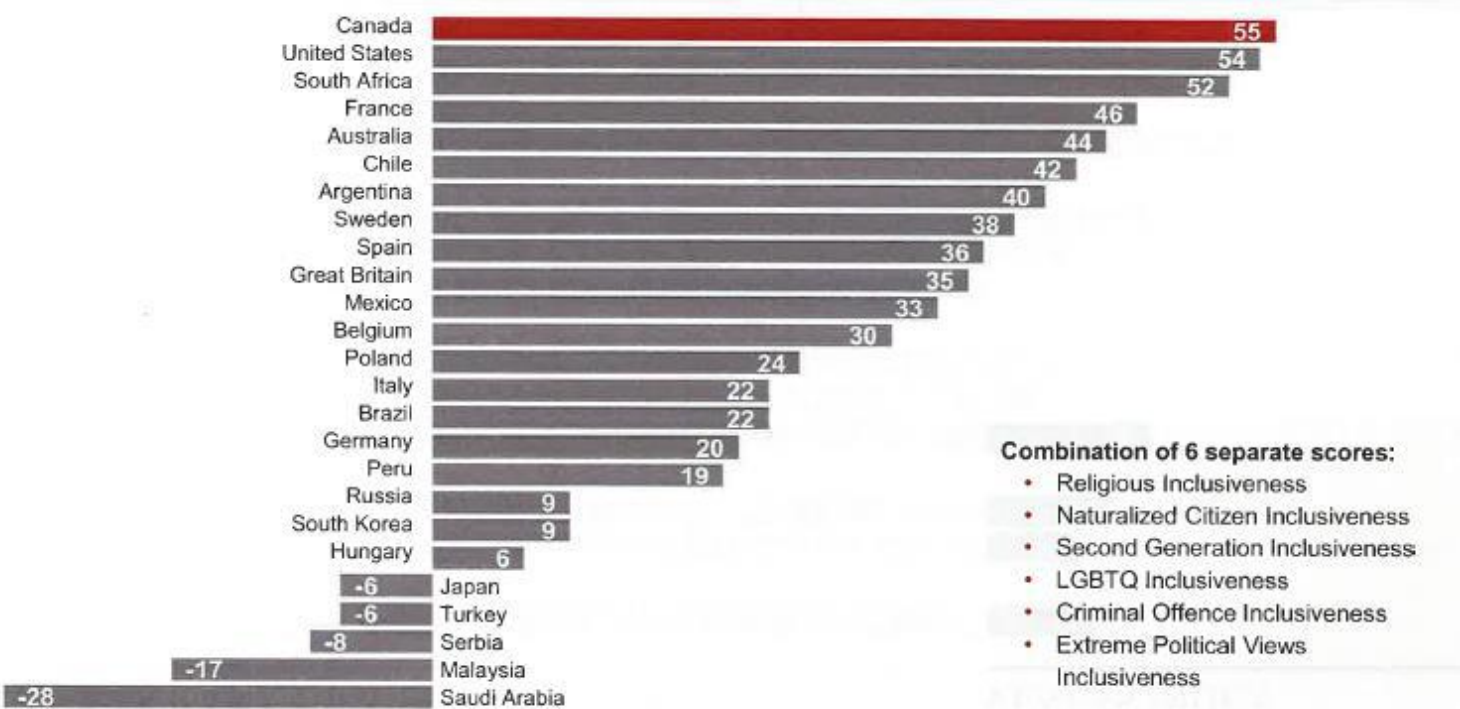
2018 *What values are most important for immigrants to adopt? (unprompted mentions)*



Internationally, Canada ranks first out of 25 countries on “overall inclusiveness.”

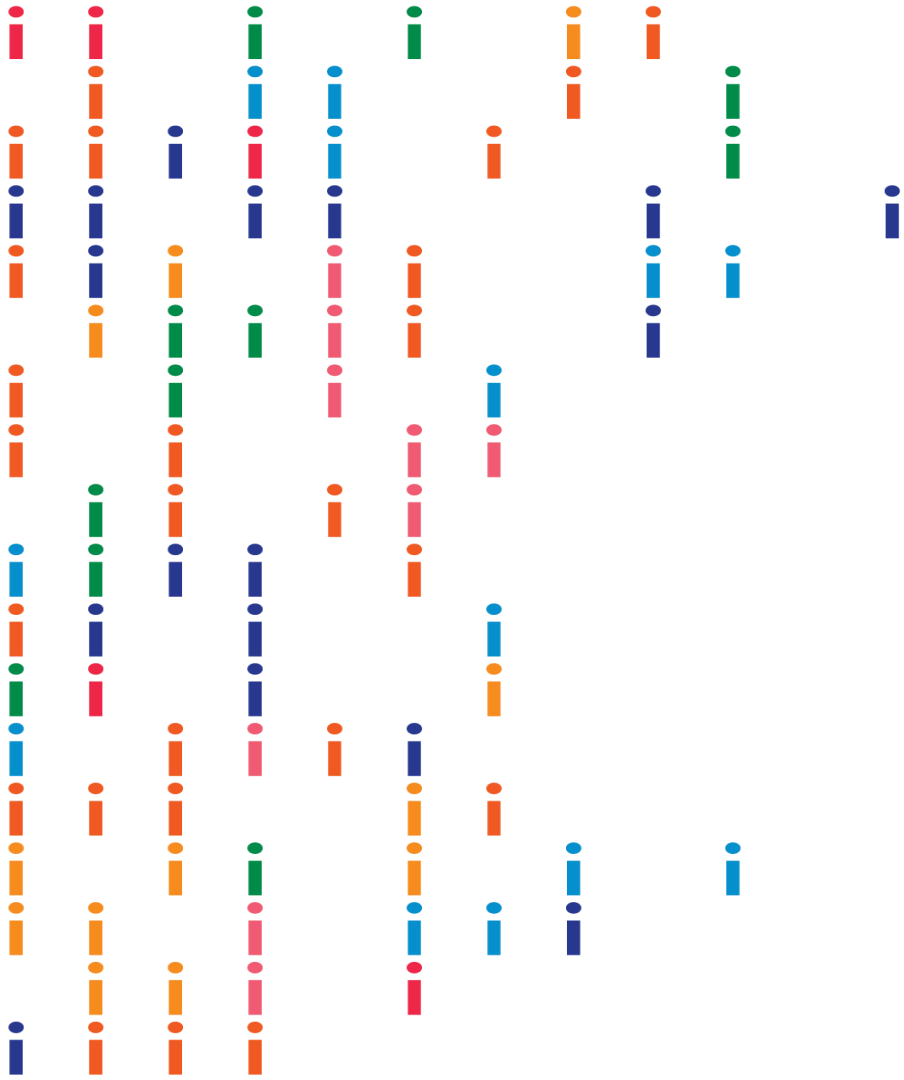
2018

Overall inclusiveness index





What can we take away from this?



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