AmericasBarometer

The Public Speaks on Democracy and Governance Across the Americas

CANADA 2012

Final Report

THE ENVIRONICS INSTITUTE

The Environics Institute

The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 to promote relevant and original public opinion and social research on important issues of public policy and social change.

The focus of the Institute's mandate is to survey individuals and groups not usually heard from, asking questions not normally asked. Integral to the Institute's approach is: a) early consultation and engagement with populations to be surveyed to ensure a respectful approach in how the research is conducted; and b) broad dissemination of research findings to stimulate constructive discourse and informed responses to the research findings.

The Institute pursues this mission by:

(1) Sponsoring survey research on issues of public importance which are not being addressed by other organizations (e.g., governments, media, foundations) in Canada and abroad;

(2) Proactively disseminating Institute-sponsored research to encourage its use and impact, through media partnerships and by providing access to academic researchers, students, foundations, think tanks and journalists;

(3) Encouraging informed public discourse on issues related to Institute-sponsored research;

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For more information, contact Dr. Keith Neuman, Executive Director, at 416-969-2457 or at keith.neuman@environics.ca.

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Introduction

AmericasBarometer

The AmericasBarometer (www.AmericasBarometer.org) is a multi-country public opinion survey on democracy and governance in the Americas, conducted every two years by a consortium of academic and think-tank partners in the hemisphere.

The AmericasBarometer is co-ordinated by Vanderbilt University's Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), which has been supporting surveys on governance for many years, beginning in Costa Rica in the 1970s. This research has grown over time and now encompasses North America, Latin America and the Caribbean (covering 26 countries, representing 99% percent of the hemisphere's population). It is the only comprehensive survey project of its kind in the Western Hemisphere.

The AmericasBarometer is a significant and important research project that contributes to our understanding of the changes in how citizens across the hemisphere view their country on key issues of democracy and governance. This is especially true in the Latin American region, which has evolved in a profound way from one dominated in the 1970s by authoritarian and military regimes to one where democratic systems are almost universal. This makes the research a unique source of public opinion data that is used extensively by academic researchers, governments and organizations such as the World Bank, the Organization of American States, the Inter-American Development Bank and the United Nations Development Programme.

In each country, the survey is conducted with a representative sample of voting-age adults, in some cases including oversamples to provide for analysis at the regional level. Surveys are conducted face-to-face with respondents in their households, except in the USA and Canada, where surveys are conducted online using established Internet panels. A core set of survey indicators are repeated every two years to measure evolving trends over time, as well as facilitate cross-national comparisons. Surveys undergo pre-testing and translation into major languages used in each country.

AmericasBarometer survey data are publicly available, with comprehensive reports produced at the country level (for more information see www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/).

Canada and the AmericasBarometer

The focus of the AmericasBarometer has been on Latin America, given the changing dynamics of governance and democracy in this region over the past decade. The inclusion of Canada and the USA has also been important because they are part of the Americas, and serve as relevant benchmarks and points of comparison.

The inclusion of Canada in this international research project is significant given the country's long-standing adherence to a democratic system, its tradition of good governance and because of its proximity as an alternative to the U.S. model. A comparison of the 2008 Canadian data with those from the other 22 countries showed that Canadians had the most confidence in their democratic system of government and other political institutions.

The inclusion of Canada in this year's AmericasBarometer survey is also timely because of an expanding debate about the state and direction of the country's democratic system. Declining voter turnout, prorogation of Parliament (and most recently of the Ontario Legislature), the student protest movement in Quebec and other developments are seen by some as evidence of a steady deterioration in the country's democratic system. This research provides a definitive view of how the Canadian public views its democratic institutions and governance today, how such opinions have changed over the past six years, and how they compare with the public perspective in other countries across the hemisphere.

In addition to providing the international community with insight into how Canada fits into the western hemispheric picture, the research can also serve an important domestic role in providing:

- A catalyst for interchange between Canadians and Latin American/Caribbean organizations and peoples;
- A unique source of knowledge on governance and public policy for the Canadian polity, based on long-term tracking of public opinion over time;
- A database for scholars and post-secondary students, as a source of information and tool for learning; and
- A valuable basis of comparison across regions and socio-economic segments of the Canadian population.

The USA has been included in every AmericasBarometer survey since the project's conception, but Canada has not been consistently represented because of the absence of a Canadian partner capable of conducting the research on a sustained basis. The primary sources of funding for AmericasBarometer surveys (e.g., UNDP, USAID) cannot be used for this type of research in a developed country like Canada.

In 2006 and 2010, a Canadian survey of modest scope was conducted through funding from Vanderbilt University, but no country-specific analysis or report was prepared. In 2008, a more comprehensive survey and analysis was conducted by the Environics Research Group as part of its syndicated Focus Canada research program. In 2012, the Environics Institute joined the LAPOP consortium as the Canadian partner, and conducted the Canadian portion of this year's survey.

2012 AmericasBarometer survey

The 2012 AmericasBarometer survey was conducted in Spring 2012 in 26 countries, with a total sample of 40,971 individuals (with individual country samples ranging from 1,412 in Haiti to 3,009 in Bolivia). The questionnaire consisted of a core set of questions (tailored to country-specific terminology) and was administered by a domestic research institute, in most cases university-based (a list of research partners can be found in Appendix A). In all countries except Canada and the USA, the survey was administered as in-person interviews in people's homes.

The Canadian survey is an adapted version of the core version developed by LAPOP, with appropriate customization of terminology and the inclusion of additional questions of particular relevance to the Canadian context. The survey focuses on the following themes:

- Attitudes about democracy and public institutions
- Citizen engagement in the democratic process
- Protection of democratic rights and freedoms
- The rule of law and personal security
- Government's role in economic equality

The survey was conducted in English and French by Elemental Data Collection Inc., using an established online panel with a representative sample of 1,501 Canadians (aged 18 and over) between May 15 and 22, 2012. The sample was weighted by region, age and gender to match the country's population. The Canadian questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE. This methodology is the same used for the Canadian version of the AmericasBarometer survey in 2010 (with a sample of 1,500), while the 2006 (N=601) and 2008 (N=2,032) Canadian surveys were conducted by telephone. These differences in sample size do not affect the comparability of results over time, but the shift from telephone to online survey methods is another story. The research literature has demonstrated that the way in which respondents complete a survey (referred to as "survey mode") can influence how they answer questions. Interview-based surveys (e.g., telephone, in-person) have a tendency to elicit comparitively more socially-desirable responses, in comparison to surveys involving self-administration (paper and pencil questionnaires and online surveys) since the latter does not involve direct contact with another individual.

What this means is the comparison between 2006/2008 and 2010/2012 results from Canadian AmericasBarometer surveys must be treated with some caution, since some of the differences may be due to survey mode rather than changes in opinions.

Report synopsis

The following sections of this report present the results of the 2012 Canadian survey, including an analysis of trends based on the previous waves where data are available (only some of the current questions were included in previous Canadian waves of the AmericasBarometer). The report also includes selected comparisons with other countries and regions.

Detailed tables are also available under separate cover that includes: a) 2012 Canadian results by region and demographic segments of the population; and b) 2012 results for all 26 countries (for questions included on the Canadian survey). Please note that data presented for the 25 countries outside Canada are based on a pre-release version of the 2012 AmericasBarometer survey.

All results are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

How do Canadians feel about their country's democratic system of government and institutions in the year 2012? Canadians continue be among the most positive of citizens across the western hemisphere, but no longer stand out quite as much as before. Citizens maintain a general sense of pride in the country's democracy overall, but their trust in the institutions that run the country is mixed: most are positive about the country's armed forces and, to a lesser extent, the RCMP and justice system. But there is much less trust in political institutions (e.g., Parliament, the Prime Minister, political parties), and while opinions have held largely stable since 2010, there is clear evidence of decline (especially for Parliament) since 2006.

If expectations for governance are not being met, Canadians do not express widespread desire for significant change in the system, either by expanding democracy through more "government by the people" populism or by shrinking democracy through more dictatorial powers granted to the Prime Minister. It is also apparent that most Canadians are not actively engaged in the political process, whether by closely following the issues, identifying with a political party or looking at voting as a civic responsibility (despite it being seen as a central feature of the country's democracy). At the same time, Canadians are actively engaged in other ways, through signing petitions, connecting on issues through social media and helping solve issues in their local community – in these ways, the country's youth are at least as active as older generations.

Canadians' cynicism about politics notwithstanding, they also demonstrate notable confidence in their democratic institutions in terms of supporting the rights of individuals to openly criticize their government (provided, of course, it is done through legal means). Across the Americas, Canadians are among the most confident in the protection of their basic citizens' rights and in the guarantee of a fair trial. Canadians also stand out in the hemisphere (along with Americans) in supporting the full participation of marginalized groups (e.g., women, gays) in the political process.

Canada has weathered the recent global economic recession much better than most other countries, and in comparative terms Canadians are the most upbeat in the western hemisphere about their national economy and household financial situation. But not all Canadians are doing well financially, and there is widespread concern about income equality. Most Canadians feel their politicians are defending the rich to the detriment of the poor, and support active federal government efforts to reduce income disparities. On this issue Canadians fall somewhere between citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean (who more strongly endorse active government efforts on income inequality) and Americans (who are divided on this issue). What distinguishes Canadians is their support for reducing poverty and inequality through higher taxes on the rich.

The results of this study can be summarized around five main themes:

1. ATTITUDES ABOUT DEMOCRACY AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

Public confidence in the state of democracy in Canada. Canadians are generally, if not enthusiastically, positive about the state of democracy in their country today. Seven in ten express satisfaction with the current democracy, although only seven percent are very satisfied compared with three in ten who are dissatisfied. Satisfaction levels have declined a bit since 2006, but remain among the highest in the hemisphere (second only to Uruguay).

What does "democracy" mean to Canadians? Several themes emerge, but most prominently the public thinks about democracy as providing the right to good government, in terms of the freedom to vote and elect governments. Other themes emphasize personal freedoms (e.g., freedom of speech, freedom of movement) and a good quality of life (fairness and equality, right to a decent life). The ways in which Canadians define democracy are notably similar across the country.

Public confidence in political institutions. While Canadians are positive about their political system as a whole, they are

much less likely to think as highly of the country's political institutions. The public's degree of trust in major institutions varies significantly, with views largely stable since 2010 but in some cases notably lower than in 2006.

Canadians are most likely to say they have a lot of trust in the country's **Armed Forces** (53%) and **RCMP** (36%), and to a lesser extent the **Supreme Court** (34%) and **justice system** (26%) (with no more than one in six having little or no trust in any of these). These ratings of the RCMP, Supreme Court and justice system are among the most positive in the hemisphere.

In contrast, no more than one in six place a lot of trust in the country's **Parliament** (17%) or **Prime Minister** (16%), and even fewer give a strong vote of confidence to **political parties** (10%) or the **mass media** (6%). For the latter two institutions, Canadians' trust levels are among the lowest in the hemisphere, although higher than those given by Americans. Opinions in Canada are unchanged since 2010, but trust in Parliament has declined noticeably since 2006. Public skepticism is fuelled in part by a growing belief that those governing the country are not interested in what citizens like themselves think.

Canadians are evenly split on the performance of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and predictably divided along regional and partisan political lines. Across the hemisphere, Canadians are among the least likely to express strong trust in their national leader, comparable to opinions expressed in Costa Rica and Peru.

Support for changing the political system. Despite widespread cynicism about political institutions, there is little evidence of a groundswell of public desire for a more populist form of government. Few (13%) agree with the populist notion of people governing directly rather than through elected representatives, and this proportion has not grown since 2008 (although the percentage outright rejecting this approach has declined). Government by the people does not attract a strong constituency in any part of the country, nor is it embraced anywhere else in the western hemisphere.

As well, there is limited support in Canada for allowing the Prime Minister to govern without Parliament (15%) or the Supreme Court (11%) when the country is facing difficult times, or to limit the voices of opposition parties (7%). This largely echoes the opinions of citizens throughout the hemisphere.

One type of change that would be acceptable to most Canadians is a national government led by a coalition of political parties (influenced, perhaps, by having lived with minority governments for much of the past decade). Seven in ten (69%) endorse the legitimacy of parties coming together when none wins a majority, and this reflects a majority view across the country (including both Conservative voters and those on the political left). However, public support for coalition governments drops significantly (to 43%) if they include parties with a majority of seats but not the party winning the most seats.

2. CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Engagement in politics. Most Canadians give some attention to politics, but it is a small proportion (15%) who say they have a lot of interest. Fewer than three in ten (28%) agree they understand the most important political issues facing the country, and the gap between young and old on this question has widened just since 2010. Internationally, Canadians express a greater interest in politics than citizens of most Latin American and Caribbean countries, but it is Americans who stand out as articulating the strongest interest (influenced perhaps by this year's national election).

The fact that Canadians are not more politically engaged may be in part due to the relative absence of well-defined political ideology in this country. On the general political spectrum, most (68%) Canadians place themselves broadly within the middle, with the remainder roughly balanced between left (14%) and right (18%). Left-leaning Canadians are most heavily represented in Quebec, among those under 30 and those with a non-Christian affiliation or none at all, while those on the right tend to be in Alberta, high-income households, immigrants and evangelical Christians.

Across the hemisphere, Canadians are among the most likely to identify with the political centre, in contrast to Americans who are the most polarized and with the largest segment identifying with the right.

Voting is identified by many Canadians as a central feature of the country's democracy, but a freedom that fewer are choosing to exercise than in the past. One reason for this trend is the fact that a significant minority (43%) of citizens define the act of voting as a "choice" rather than a "duty," with this view especially widespread among younger generations.

Another factor is the erosion of loyalty to political parties, with only one in three (32%) Canadians currently identifying with a federal political party. Identification with a political party varies significantly across the hemisphere, with Canada falling somewhat below the average (and half the proportion of Americans (63%) who identify with a party).

Other forms of civic engagement. Voting aside, citizens are engaging in other forms of political expression, in the form of signing petitions (33%) and sharing information through social media (24%) in the past year. By comparison, only five percent of Canadians report participating in protests and demonstrations, most notably by youth in B.C. and Quebec. Across the hemisphere, Canadians are among the most active in terms of signing petitions and using social media, but trail well behind Americans.

A significant minority of Canadians were also actively involved in their local community in the past year, with three in ten (30%) having helped to solve a local problem and a similar proportion (25%) having attended a meeting for a local community issue. Canadians' general level of "civic action" (combining seven measures of community and political actions) reveals that the most active tend to be those on the political left, affiliated with non-Christian religions, and live in Vancouver. As well, it is younger Canadians rather than older ones who are the most civically engaged.

3. PROTECTION OF DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Protection of basic citizens' rights. As with the country's state of democracy, Canadians are more likely (29%) than not (12%) to believe that basic citizens' rights are protected under the country's political system, although notably a majority (59%) do not have a clear opinion. Public confidence in such protections is noticeably stronger among those with higher incomes and who identify with the political right. Internationally, Canadians are among the most positive of any country in the hemisphere (second only to Nicaragua), while Americans are noticeably less apt to share this view and Mexicans are somewhere in between.

Tolerance for political dissent. An important indicator of the public's confidence in the political system is their comfort with political dissent and the rights of those who openly criticize the system. Very few (7%) Canadians agree with the view that such dissent represents a threat to the country, and this perspective is reflected across the country. The public broadly accepts citizen participation in those forms of dissent which are legal (e.g., community-based problem-solving, political campaigns, legal demonstrations), while largely condemning those that are outside of the law (vigilante justice, road blockades, seizing property). Views in Canada are typical of those expressed in other regions of the Americas, although there are considerable differences across countries. Americans are generally the most supportive of citizens' right to dissent.

Canadians are almost three times as likely to approve (35%) as disapprove (13%) of people who participate in legal political demonstrations, but there appears to be a widening gap between Quebecers (where approval is highest and growing) and elsewhere (with approval declining in Ontario and the Prairies). Across the hemisphere, Canadians are among the least likely to endorse political action through legal demonstrations, along with the citizens of Honduras, Haiti and Bolivia.

Protection of group rights. Canadians are largely supportive of protecting the rights of marginalized groups, including the rights of individuals from the LGBT community to run for public office and to marry, and for gender equality in the workplace and the political arena. In these areas, there is a sharp divide between the attitudes of Canadians and Americans, and citizens of Latin America and the Caribbean who express a much more conservative perspective.

At the same time, Canadians among the least likely to support legislated affirmative action quotas to promote participation of marginalized groups, such as reserving candidate spaces for women, or university placements for students from ethnic or racial minorities.

4. RULE OF LAW AND PERSONAL SECURITY

Confidence in the justice system. Canadians give a lukewarm endorsement of the country's justice system. Only one in four (27%) feel strongly that the courts are able to guarantee a fair trial, and only one in ten (10%) have strong faith in the system punishing the guilty if they themselves were a victim of crime (versus 42% with little to no faith). This ambivalence notwithstanding, by hemispheric standards, Canadians are among the most confident in the guarantee of a fair trial (second only to Guyana).

Corruption in government. Given the media focus on government misdeeds, it is perhaps not surprising that a majority of Canadians believe that corruption among public officials is common (47%) if not very common (17%). And given the current investigations currently underway in Quebec, it is in this province where government corruption is most widely seen as very common, and where it has increased noticeably since 2008 (while declining marginally elsewhere in the country). Internationally, Canadians are less likely than citizens of almost every other country to say corruption is very common. Very few Canadians report having been asked for a bribe by police (3%) or government officials (2%) in the past year – which, along with Americans, is the lowest level in the hemisphere (by comparison, 20% of Mexicans say police have asked them for a bribe).

Canadians respect the rule of law, but there is no consensus when it comes to the challenges faced by law enforcement when fighting crime. Four in ten (40%) Canadians believe it acceptable for authorities to sometimes "cross the line" in order to catch criminals. Opinions are broadly similar across the Americas, but the expectation on governments to always abide by the law is more widespread in many countries, including the USA, Brazil, Venezuela, Panama and Jamaica.

Personal security. Most Canadians describe their own neighbourhood as safe, but they are less likely to do so than six years ago, and this is accompanied by a similar decline in sense of trust in ones' neighbours. Perceptions of neighbourhood safety are strongest in Atlantic Canada and weakest in Montreal and among women in larger urban centres. One in six say their neighbourhood is affected a lot (2%) or somewhat (12%) by gangs, most notably in western Canada. Canadians, along with Americans, are among the most secure in their sense of local safety, but it is in these two countries alone where the decline in sense of community trust is most evident.

One in seven (13%) Canadians report having been the victim of a crime in the past 12 months, generally consistent with self-reports dating back to 2006. Reported crime victimization is higher in western Canada and among youth, but is at or below average in the country's three largest urban centres (Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver), where victimization rates have declined since 2008. Personal experience with crime in Canada is lower than in many countries across the Americas, but is by no means the lowest.

5. GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN ECONOMIC EQUALITY

Defending the rich versus the poor. Many Canadians do not believe their politicians have their priorities right when it comes to addressing income inequality. A majority (51%) believe their elected officials *currently* defend the interests of the rich over those of the poor (versus only 6% who say they now mostly defend the poor), while nine in ten believe these priorities *should be* evenly balanced (60%) or favour the poor (34%). Public attitudes show a similar pattern elsewhere in the hemisphere, with Canadians and Americans less likely than others to want their politicians to focus primarily on defending the poor.

Government actions to reduce income inequality. Consistent with their views about politicians' priorities, Canadians (by a 51% to 6% margin) believe the federal government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and poor. This view is most widespread in Quebec (versus the Prairies), and reveals a growing divide between those on the left and right sides of the political spectrum (although support still outweighs opposition among those on the right). Canadians' support for active federal intervention in this area is not as strong as in Latin America or the Caribbean, but is double the level of support expressed by Americans (the lone country where opposition outweighs support).

Canadians are most likely to believe that governments can reduce poverty and income inequality by creating jobs and improving the economy (40%), or by increasing taxes on the rich (31%), with few placing their faith in improvements to public education, public assistance to the poor, improving infrastructure or reducing government spending. Across the hemisphere, Canadians stand out as being the most likely to endorse poverty reduction through higher taxes on the rich (followed by Americans).

Canadians' expressed priority on addressing income disparities does not translate into widespread support for paying higher taxes for boosting direct government transfers to the poor (24%) or expanded public health services (35%). Predictably, opinions on such taxes reflect a clear divide between left and right sides of the political spectrum. Internationally, Canadian support for such taxes is similar to that in the USA, and varies significantly across the rest of the hemisphere.

Federal government role in the economy. There is no public consensus about the role the federal government should play in the national economy, but Canadians are more likely (29%) than not (10%) to agree that the government (versus the private sector) should be primarily responsible for job creation, and this view has strengthened since 2008. Opinions are more divided when it comes to government ownership of key industries as a way to promote economic growth (17% agree versus 26% disagree). Views on the role of government in the national economy divide sharply across the hemisphere, with citizens in Latin America and the Caribbean advocating an active government role, and Americans just as strongly opposed.

National and household economic well-being. Across the western hemisphere, Canadians are far and away the most positive about health of their national economy. Close to four in ten (37%) describe the current economy as good or very good, compared with 21 percent who say it is bad or very bad (essentially unchanged from 2010). This stands in sharp contrast to citizens in most other countries (only Uruguayans are more upbeat), especially in comparison with the citizens of El Salvador, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the USA.

Canadians are also generally positive about their household financial circumstances, being twice as likely to describe them as good (40%) than as bad (20%), largely unchanged from 2010. By hemispheric standards, this is better than most countries but by no means the best; the most positive household finances are reported by citizens in South America (notably Brazil, Argentina and Ecuador). By comparison, difficult household circumstances are most widely reported in Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

While Canadians may be among the most economically secure citizens in the Americas, they are also among the least likely to describe themselves as very satisfied with their lives overall (25%) – although they are no more likely to say they are dissatisfied. Strong overall life satisfaction is most evident in Central and South America, although there is considerable variation across countries (highest in such countries as Brazil, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic, and lowest in Haiti and Suriname). In Canada, life satisfaction is strongest in Atlantic Canada and the Prairies, among Canadians 60 plus, and among those placing strong importance on religion in their lives.

Civic and Political Engagement

This section focuses on citizens' engagement with their local community and participation in politics, issues and the electoral process.

Local community engagement

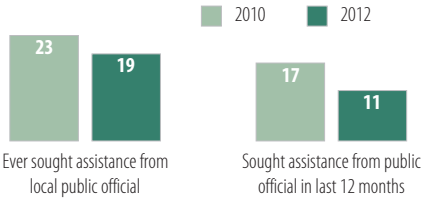
REQUESTING HELP FROM LOCAL PUBLIC OFFICIALS. Measuring the extent to which Canadians are reaching out for assistance from public officials is one indicator of trust in local government and engagement in the local community. Overall, a noticeable minority of Canadians have requested help from local governments. Roughly one in five (19%) Canadians have asked for assistance from a local public official or local government at some point in the past, and one in ten (11%) have done so in the past 12 months.

The incidence of requesting such assistance is lower than in 2010, with the proportion of those reporting to have done so in the past 12 months down by a third (down 6 percentage points).

Efforts to seek assistance at some point in the past are most evident in Atlantic Canada (24%) and least so in Quebec (15%), both of which stand out from the rest of Canada. Incidence of requesting assistance is highest among those who are active in other areas of the community, such as attending town meetings and solving problems within their communities. Requesting assistance from local governing bodies is also most prevalent among Canadians aged 45 to 59 and those with lower household incomes, but does not vary by community size, gender or education level.

Of those who requested such help from local officials in the last 12 months, just over half (51%) reported their issue or request had been resolved, up slightly from the proportion of those who reported this in 2010 (42%).

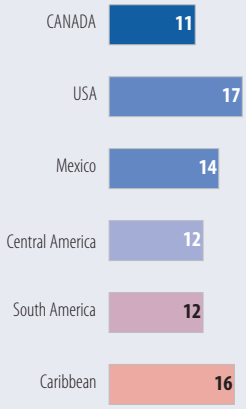
Seeking assistance from local public officials



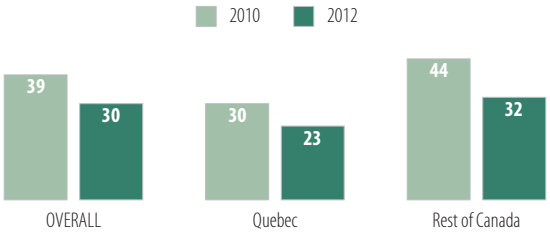
International comparison

The incidence of requesting help from public officials is notably similar across the hemisphere. Canadians are somewhat more likely than citizens elsewhere to report this activity, although marginally less so than residents of the USA (22%), several Central American countries (Guatemala, El Salvador) and Haiti (21%). At the same time, Canadians are no more likely to have done so in the past 12 months, and those who have are less apt to report the issue they were seeking help on was resolved (the highest success rates are reported in the Caribbean).

Sought assistance from public official in last 12 months



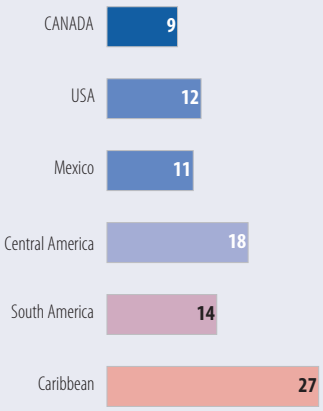
Helped solve local community problem in last year



International comparison

Canadians' efforts to help solve community problems are comparable to the hemispheric average, although they are less likely to be doing so frequently (at least once a month). Americans are marginally more apt to make such effort (but show the same downward trend since 2010) and the most active of all are citizens of Haiti (34% helping at least once a month), Paraguay (29%), Guatemala (25%) and Jamaica (24%).

Helped solve local problem at least once a month



HELPING TO SOLVE A PROBLEM IN THE COMMUNITY. Another important aspect of community engagement is the extent to which people are actively helping to solve problems within their community. Generally, Canadians are more active in helping to solve local problems than in requesting help from the local government. Three in ten (30%) Canadians report having tried to solve a local problem at least once in the past 12 months, although only one in ten (9%) from this group indicate having done so on a regular basis (at least once a month).

Canadians' reported efforts to help others have declined since 2010 (when 39% reported to have done so at least once in the past 12 months), although the proportion most actively engaged (at least monthly) has held steady.

The level of active participation in helping others is similar across the country, with the notable exception of Quebec: one in four (23%) Quebecers report having helped solve a problem in their community in the past year, compared to one in three Canadians in other provinces. The decline in activity since 2010 is equally evident in both parts of the country. In 2010, Canadians young and old were equally likely to help solve problems in their community. This has changed in 2012, as older cohorts are now less likely to repeat such efforts since 2010, especially among those aged 60-plus.

Participation in helping others in the community is also more prevalent among men, Canadians with higher levels of education, and among both evangelical Christians and those who belong to non-Christian faiths. Participation rates are similar regardless of community size (urban and rural) or country of birth.

ATTENDANCE AT LOCAL COMMUNITY MEETINGS.

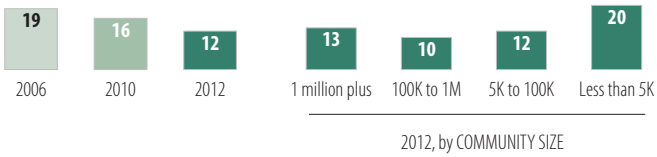
Town or city council meetings are important forums for learning and having a say about important local issues. A small proportion of Canadians attend such meetings in the community, and participation has declined since 2006. About one in ten Canadians (12%) indicated in 2012 that they attended a town meeting, city council meeting or other meeting in the last 12 months, compared with 19 percent in 2006 and 16 percent in 2010.[1]

Attendance at town or city council meetings is most prevalent among Canadians living in smaller communities (population less than 5,000). Men are also twice as likely to attend these meetings as women (16% vs. 8%). Attendance is roughly the same throughout the provinces, as well as across income levels and age cohorts. Residents born elsewhere are equally as likely to attend these meetings as those born in Canada.

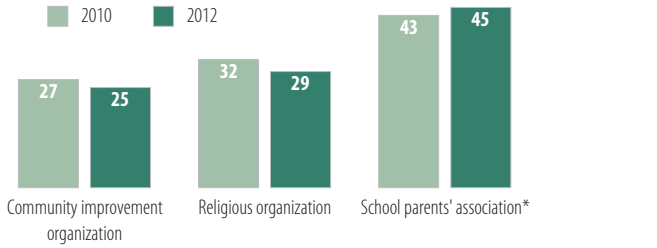
Canadians are more active in attending other types of meetings within the community, and participation rates have held largely steady since 2010. Roughly one in four (25%) attended a meeting of a *community improvement organization* in the past 12 months, and a slightly higher proportion attended meetings of a *religious organization* (29%); relatively few, however, attend such meetings more than once a month. Among Canadians with at least one child living in their household, 45 percent attended meetings of a *parents' association* in the past year. Reported attendance levels for these types of local meetings have held steady since 2010.

In all cases, attendance is more prevalent among Canadians with higher socio-economic status, as well as among those born outside of Canada. Attendance at religious meetings is most frequent among individuals identifying as evangelical Christians (58% report weekly attendance). Canadians who attend local community meetings are also more likely to be actively engaged in other areas of the community (e.g., requesting help from public officials or helping to solve community problems), as well as expressing a keener interest in politics.

Attended town/city council meeting in the past year



Attendance at community meetings in the past year

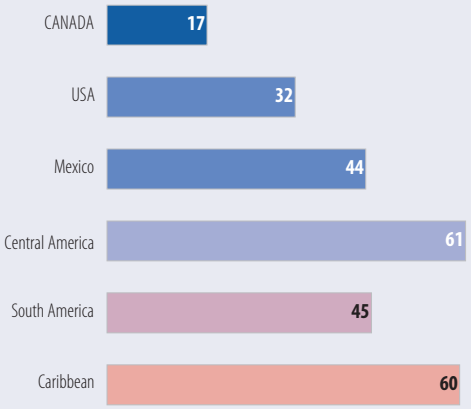


* Those with children in household

International comparison

Canadians' attendance at local town meetings and community improvement associations is average for the hemisphere, but is among the lowest when it comes to school parents' associations and religious organizations. By comparison, Americans are among the most active participants in local town meetings (along with residents of Haiti and the Dominican Republic).

Attend religious meetings at least once a month



[1] Note possible mode effects between 2006 (where the survey was administered via telephone) and 2010 (online) – see Introduction for discussion of this methodological issue.

CIVIC ACTION INDEX. An index of "civic action" was created to provide a measure of citizens' overall general level engagement in their communities. The index was created from seven specific local engagement actions reported on the survey (attended municipal meetings, helped solve local problems, follow the news daily, participated in demonstrations/protests, signed petitions, shared political information online and have an interest in politics).

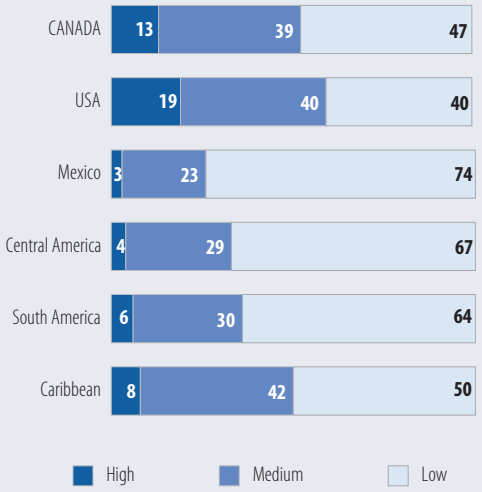
Canadians were categorized into one of three levels of civic action: high (13% of the population), medium (39%) and low (47%), based on the number of these actions reported on the survey. This index allows for a useful way by which to understand how attitudes and behaviours about such issues as democracy and politics are linked to individuals' level of civic engagement.

Who in Canada is most likely to be in the high civic action group? These individuals are most likely identify as left on the political spectrum (29%), adhere to a non-Christian religious faith (29%) or live in Vancouver (22%). To a lesser extent this group is more likely to be male, under 30 years of age, hold a university degree, and live either in major urban centres or rural communities. Civic action scores do not vary by household income or place of birth.

International comparison

The civic action index was also created for the other countries in the hemisphere (excepting Bolivia, one of the index items was not included on the survey). Canada (13%) and the USA (19%) have the highest proportion of citizens in the high civic action group, with the lowest proportions in such countries as Mexico (3%), Brazil (5%) and Jamaica (4%), where majorities fall into the "low civic action" group.

Civic action index

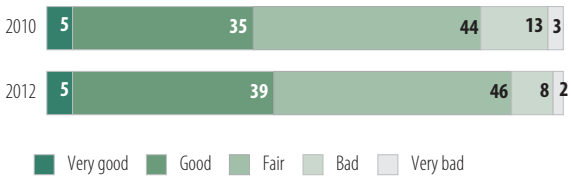


QUALITY OF MUNICIPAL SERVICES. A primary connection that many residents have with their community is through the services provided by their local municipality, including police, schools, waste disposal and public transit. Over the past decade, fiscal pressures have made it increasingly difficult for local governments to maintain consistent service levels.

Despite this trend, Canadians are generally satisfied with the services provided by their municipal government, and this sentiment has strengthened since 2010. Nearly half say that these services are either very good (5%) or good (39%), while only one in ten (10%) say they are bad or very bad. A plurality (46%) give somewhat faint praise in rating their local service quality as "fair." Ratings of municipal services has gone up since 2010, when four in ten (40%) Canadians said services were either good or very good, while one in six (16%) said they were bad or very bad.

Satisfaction with municipal services is most prevalent among residents of Quebec, Canadians aged 60-plus and those with the most education, but no more than one-sixth in any group express clear dissatisfaction with the services provided by their municipality. Satisfaction does not vary depending on income, community size, or among different levels of active engagement in the community. Perceptions of community safety, however, play a large part in determining the quality of local services: Satisfaction is highest among people who say their neighbourhood is safe and not affected by gangs, and those who have not been the victim of a crime.

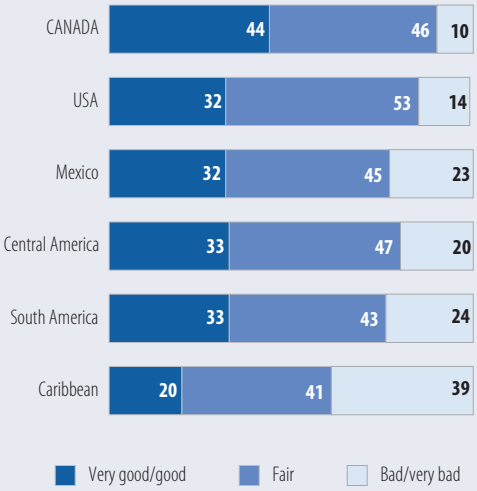
Quality of local municipal services



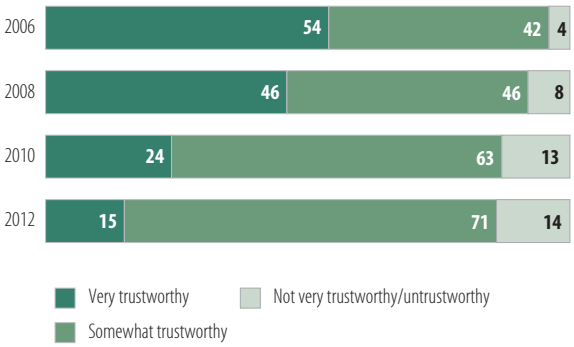
International comparison

Canadians stand out as being among the most positive in the hemisphere about the services provided by their municipality. They are the second most likely to describe these services as very good or good (second only to Argentina), and are the least likely to say their municipal services are bad/very bad. The lowest levels of satisfaction are reported by residents of Haiti and Jamaica.

Quality of local municipal services



Trust people in your community

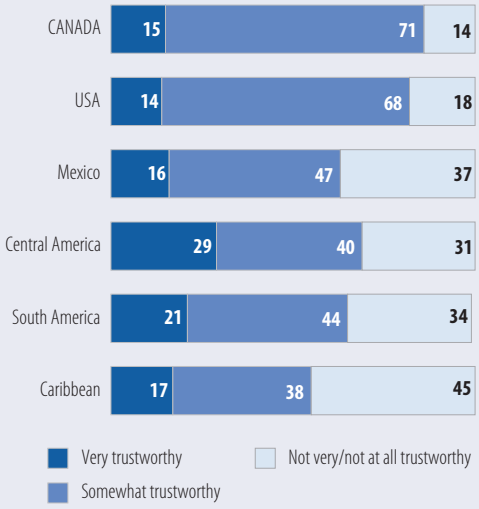


International comparison

In terms of trust in ones neighbours, Canadians are generally comparable to other countries, but also less likely than any other to describe their neighbours as not very trustworthy/untrustworthy. Canadians' views are comparable to those of Americans and more positive than Mexicans. Residents in Central America are, on average, the most trusting, while Caribbean residents are the least positive – most notably in Haiti, where two-thirds consider their neighbours to be not very trustworthy or untrustworthy.

Since 2006, trust in neighbours has remained largely stable across most of the hemisphere, with the notable exception of declines in the USA and Canada.

Trust in people in your community



ARE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY TRUSTWORTHY?

A key indicator of connection to one's local community is the extent to which others are seen as trustworthy. Most Canadians place some degree of trust in their neighbours, but notably less so than in previous years. Nearly nine in ten Canadians say the people in their community are either very trustworthy (15%) or somewhat trustworthy (71%), compared with a small minority (14%) who believe they are not very trustworthy or untrustworthy. But strong trust in members of the community has fallen since 2006, when a majority of Canadians considered others in their community to be very trustworthy.[2]

Trust in community members is highest in the Atlantic provinces, where three in ten (28%) say members of their community are very trustworthy, in contrast to Quebec and British Columbia, where only one in ten (11% each) share this view. Residents of smaller, rural communities tend to be more trusting of their neighbours than residents of larger urban centres – except in Toronto, where trust levels are at the national average (and well above Montreal and Vancouver).

Trust in one's neighbours is also stronger among Canadians with higher levels of education and income, but does not vary by gender, religion or country of birth. Trust is also highest among older Canadians; however, the proportion of those aged 60-plus expressing high trust in their neighbours has declined more dramatically than among other age groups since 2010 (down 15 percentage points). Not surprisingly, strong trust of others coincides with perceptions of neighbourhood safety and trust in ones' municipal government.

The notable decline in community trust among Canadians (and Americans) suggests an important trend may be taking place, but awaits further corroboration from other research. The most recent national data from Statistics Canada on "sense of belonging to ones community" is from 2010, which shows a stable trend dating back to 2006. At the same time, the latest report from the new Canadian Index of Wellbeing reports a noticeable decline of 24 percent in Canadians overall wellbeing between 2008 and 2010, which the report concludes is driven in large part by a drop in living standards resulting from the recent economic recession.

[2] The significant drop in "very trustworthy" responses between 2006 and 2010 is likely due at least in part to the shift in mode from telephone to online surveys.

There are several trends that might help explain a declining sense of trust in ones neighbors, including increasing levels of immigration and ethnic diversity within the population, growing income inequality, and the shrinking number of families with young children (who often serve as important connectors to neighbours).

Political engagement

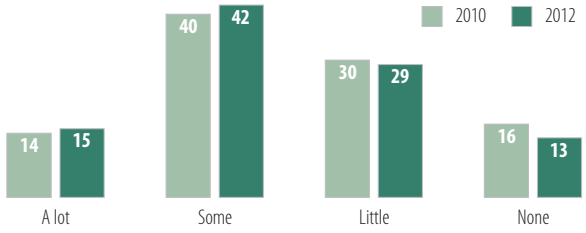
GENERAL INTEREST IN POLITICS. Most Canadians express a general interest in politics, with a majority expressing a lot (15%) or some (42%) interest, compared with those who express little (29%) or no (13%) interest in politics. These numbers are virtually identical to those measured in 2010. Strong interest in politics is most pronounced among Canadians high on the civic action index (54% say a lot of interest), as well as among men and older citizens, and least evident among Canadians under 30 and evangelical Christians. Interest levels do not vary by household income or political orientation.

Three in ten Canadians (28%) strongly agree they understand the most important political issues of the country (up from 22% who expressed this view in 2010), compared with only nine percent who strongly disagree (11% in 2010). This growing sense of strong understanding about Canadian politics over the past two years has taken place exclusively among Canadians 45 and older, and those 60-plus (38%) are now almost twice as likely to hold this view compared with those under 30 (20%). Across the country, strong understanding of important political issues is most evident among men, Canadians with at least some college education, those scoring high on the civic action index, those who show a lot of interest in politics, and those who identify clearly with either the left or right side of the political spectrum.

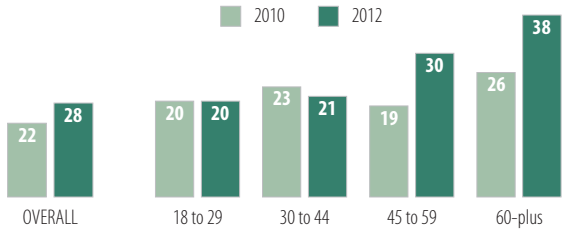
International comparison

Within the hemisphere, Canadians are the most likely to describe themselves as having "some" interest in politics (versus a lot or little/none), although they are above average in their level of understanding of important domestic political issues. Americans stand out as expressing the strongest level of interest in politics (49%, versus only 20% who say little or none) and considering themselves to be well-informed. Interest in politics is considerably lower throughout most of Latin America, and in some countries three-quarters say their level of interest is little to none (e.g., Bolivia, Costa Rica, Chile, Haiti).

Personal interest in politics

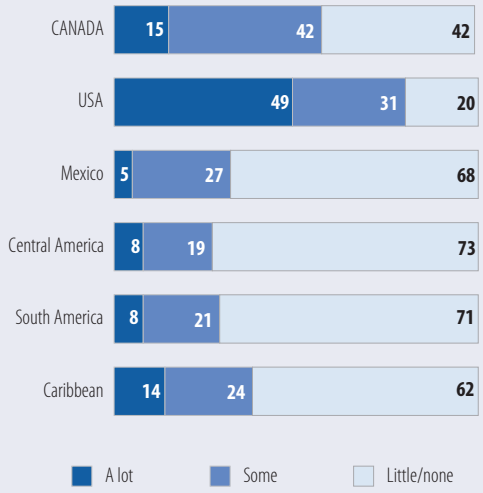


*You feel you understand the most important political issues of the country**



* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Personal interest in politics



ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL ISSUES. To what extent are Canadians active in expressing their political views through collective efforts? A significant minority report making some efforts to do so, with more than four in ten (44%) having in the past 12 months signed a petition, shared political information online using social media (e.g., Facebook or Twitter), or participated in a demonstration or protest march.

Signing petitions. Of the three activities, signing a petition requires the least effort on the part of citizens and has the highest rate of participation, with one in three (33%) Canadians indicating they have signed one in the last 12 months. This action is by far most commonly reported by individuals on the left side of the political spectrum (56%), compared with those on the right (33%) and in the middle (30%). Petition signers are also somewhat more likely live in Atlantic Canada, have a university degree and be under 30 years of age.

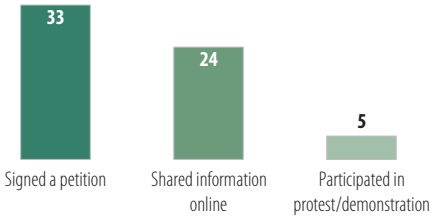
Sharing political information with social media. The emergence of social media sites like Facebook and Twitter has made it possible to share ideas and information like never before. As with signing a petition, sharing information on social networks is simple, but requires a bit more effort on the part of the user. One in four (24%) Canadians report having read or shared political information online using social media in the last 12 months. This group is notable in being younger (42% of those aged 18-29, compared to only 14% among those aged 60-plus) and leaning towards the left side of the political spectrum (39%). Sharing political information via social media does not vary noticeably by province, community size, education or household income.

Participating in demonstrations and protest marches. Participation in demonstrations and protest marches requires more effort and commitment. Only five percent of Canadians have taken part in such activities in the last 12 months, which is unchanged since 2010. Participation levels are highest among residents of Quebec (8%) and British Columbia (7%), and among Canadians under 30 (12%), as well as among both the least educated (less than high school, 9%) and the most educated (university degree, 8%).

Given the recent student strikes in Quebec, it should be no surprise that young Quebecers aged 18 to 29 are among the most likely in Canada to have participated in demonstrations in the past year (16% in 2012 and 12% in 2010). The most active group, however, is youth in B.C. (19%, compared to 17% in 2010), likely reflecting the anti-HST movement in that province that led to a repeal of the unpopular tax.

Is it the same citizens who are involved in all three forms of political activism? In each case, participants are more likely to be under 30 years of age, left-leaning in their political orientation, and civically engaged in other ways. At the same time, these characteristics only partially define those who are politically active in these ways, and these activities are reported by Canadians from all segments of the population.

Political actions taken in last 12 months



International comparison

Canadians and Americans stand out as being the most politically active in engaging in petition signing and social media, although Americans are considerably more so (52% have signed petitions in the past year, and 42% have read or shared political information via social media). Across Latin America, roughly one in ten report either activity in the past year, although there is some regional variation (residents of Suriname and Uruguay are comparatively active via social media).

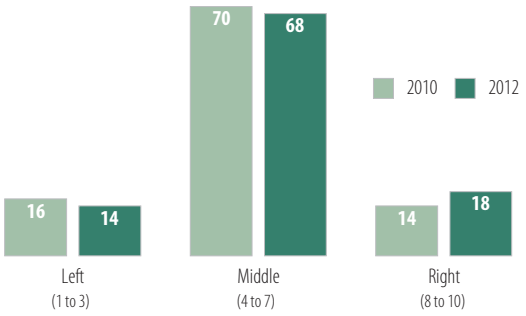
Participation in demonstrations and protest marches is comparatively uncommon across most of the hemisphere. Fewer than one in ten report such activity in the past year, with the exceptions of Haiti (18%), Bolivia (17%), Peru (13%) and Paraguay (12%).

GENERAL POLITICAL ORIENTATION. Politics in the 20th century has long been defined along a "left-right" spectrum, and while this dialectic no longer dominates political thought, it still holds meaning. The Canadian public has been historically characterized as largely "centre-left" on this spectrum, but after six-plus years of a Conservative government in Ottawa, some commentators are suggesting that Canadians' political orientation and values are shifting to the right.

Where do Canadians place themselves on this spectrum today? As in 2010, seven in ten Canadians consider themselves to be in the middle of the political spectrum (assigning a rating of 4 to 7 on a 10 point scale), with the remainder divided between those on the left (13%) (1 to 3) and those on the right (17%) (8 to 10). About one in ten (12%) were unable to place themselves on this spectrum, and were removed from the analysis.[3] Since 2010, there has been a minor shift (3 percentage points) from the left side of this spectrum to the right, with the majority remaining squarely in the middle.

The balance of political orientation is notably consistent across the population, with the majority in all groups identifying with the middle ground. A left political orientation is most evident among Quebecers (especially in Montreal), Canadians under 30 and those with no religious affiliation. Right-leaning Canadians are most likely to live in Alberta, be in the top income bracket and born outside of Canada. Those on the left are more likely to be actively engaged in their local community (29% with a high civic action index), compared with those on the right (16%) or in the middle (11%).

General political orientation

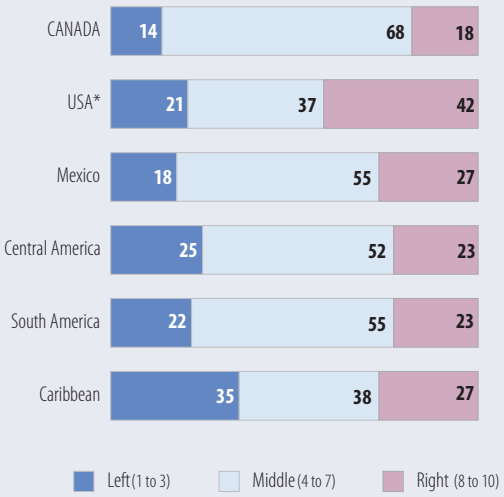


International comparison

Across the hemisphere, the largest group of citizens place themselves broadly within the political centre, with representation marginally stronger on the right than on the left. Canadians stand out as being most likely to be in the middle (along with Peruvians and Argentinians). Americans, by contrast, are among the most politically polarized of all (only 37% are in the middle) and most heavily weighted on the right (at 42%, tied with citizens of the Dominican Republic).

In Central and South America, the majority place themselves in the centre, with an even balance between left and right regionally, but varying by country (Nicaragua, Guatemala and Uruguay shading to the left, with El Salvador, Colombia and Paraguay tilting to the right). Haitians stand out as being the most likely of any in the hemisphere to identify with the political left (46%).

General political orientation



* Data from Gallup (2012)

[3] The percentage of respondents who did not provide a response to the political orientation question were removed from the data and analysis, in order to facilitate comparison with the 2010 data (the 2010 survey did not offer a "decline to answer" option).

Participation in the electoral process

VOTING IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS. Voting in elections is perhaps the most fundamental means of participating in a democratic system. And yet, there has been a noticeable decline in voter turnout in general elections in Canada for the past decade.

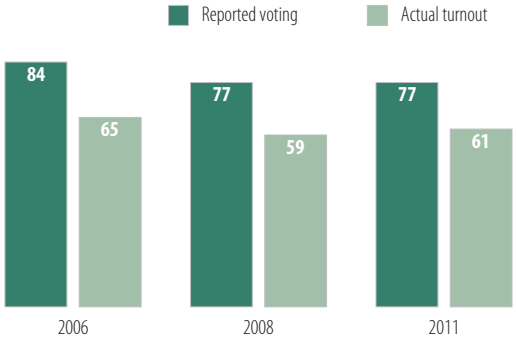
Voter turnout in the last federal election. Voting levels in the last several federal elections have been among the lowest recorded in Canada, and this downward trend is reflected in the reported voting levels. Three-quarters (77%) of eligible voters reported having voted in the last (May 2011) federal election, consistent with what was reported in 2008, but down from 2006 (84%). Reported voting levels have tracked consistently about 10 percent above the actual voting turnouts across the period.

In terms of who is most likely to vote, age is the most significant factor: Older Canadians are more likely to vote than young ones. Despite a small increase in turnout from 2010, only six in ten voters under 30 reported having voted in the last federal election, compared to nine in ten among those aged 60-plus. Reported voting in this election is also higher among civically-engaged Canadians, those with higher incomes and education, and those who place themselves on the left or right of the political spectrum (versus the middle). Reported voting does not vary across different provinces or by community size.

Voting a duty or a choice? The reasons for declining voter turnout are not fully understood, but some have suggested that citizens are now more likely to see voting as a choice (e.g., as just one of many consumer choices) rather than a civic duty (as a central requirement of citizenship). In fact, just over half (57%) of Canadians see voting as a duty, compared with more than four in ten (43%) who maintain it is a choice.

As with voting itself, views on this question are closely linked to age cohort. Older Canadians consider voting a duty, while younger Canadians consider it more of a choice. Across the country, seeing voting as a duty is somewhat more common among residents of Quebec (especially those in Montreal), as well as among Canadians with more education and those high on civic action. Opinions on this question do not vary by gender, income, or whether individuals were born in Canada or elsewhere. Not surprisingly, attitudes toward voting are strongly linked to reported voting behaviour. Of those who consider voting a duty, 94 percent say they voted in the last federal election, compared to 60 percent among those who consider voting a choice.

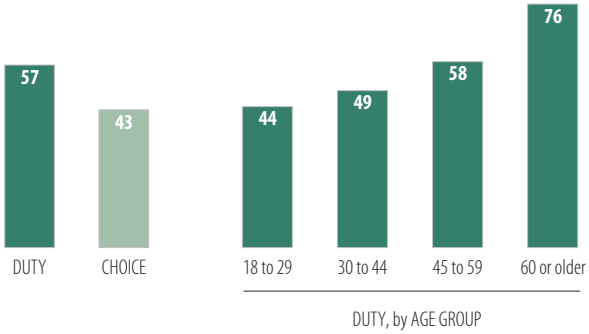
Voting in last federal election



International comparison

Voting in the previous national election is reported by majorities in all countries, with the highest reported turnout numbers given by Americans (85%), and citizens of most South American countries (with Peru and Uruguay breaking the 90% threshold). Voting is least apt to be reported by those living in Honduras (51%), Paraguay (60%) and Jamaica (62%).

Voting as a duty or a choice



[4] Research studies in Canada have consistently shown a greater proportion of eligible voters reporting to have voted in a particular election than was actually the case. Such over-reporting is due in part to social desirability (i.e., people wanting to present themselves in the most favourable light).

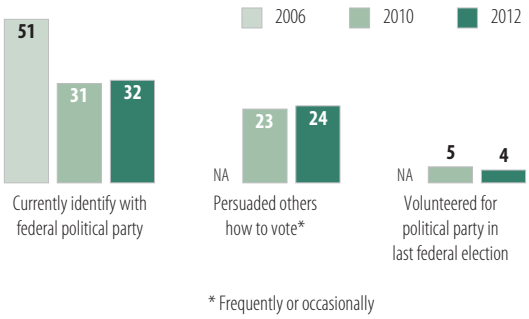
PARTICIPATION IN PARTY POLITICS. Beyond the simple act of voting, more active ways of participating in the political process include identifying with a particular party, volunteering one's time to work on election campaigns, and attempting to persuade others how to vote.

Identifying with federal political party. Identification with a federal political party used to be the norm in Canada, as most people readily identified as a Liberal, Conservative or NDP supporter (based on family history or group identification), but this is no longer so common. Only one-third (32%) of Canadians now identify with a federal political party, similar to the proportion indicating this in 2010, but down significantly from 2006, when half (51%) made such a declaration.

Federal party identification remains most common among older Canadians (41% of those aged 60-plus compared to only 24% for those under 30 years of age) and those with a college diploma (37%), as well as by those who place themselves on the left (45%) or right (47%) of the political spectrum (but understandably with very different parties). The likelihood claiming loyalty to a federal political party does not vary by province, community size or income.

Persuading others to vote for a party or candidate. Persuading others to vote a particular way is another way of being active in party politics. One in four Canadians say they either frequently (4%) or occasionally (20%) try to persuade others to vote for a party or candidate during election times, compared to those who rarely (29%) or never (47%) do so. These numbers remain essentially unchanged since 2010.

Participation in party politics



Efforts to persuade others to vote for a party or candidate are most commonly reported by Canadians who identify with a particular party, those high on civic action, those who place themselves on either the left or the right of the political spectrum, those with more education and those who live in larger communities.

Working for political parties. One of the most active ways of participating in the political process is to volunteer for parties during elections. A small (4%) proportion of Canadians belong to this group of active individuals, similar to 2010 (5%).

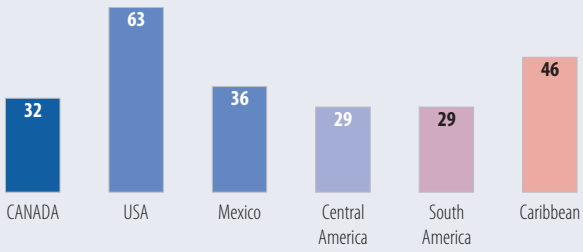
Party volunteer work is most commonly reported (not surprisingly) by Canadians who score highly on civic action (12%), those who identify with a political party (8%) and also among evangelical Christians (10%). Participation levels are consistent across province and community size, as well as by age, education and household income.

International comparison

Citizen identification with a national political party varies significantly across the hemisphere. Canadians fall well below average, but are similar to Mexicans and the regional average for Central and South America, followed by Nicaragua (54%) and Uruguay (53%). U.S. citizens (63%) are among the most likely to identify with a party, along with those living in the Dominican Republic (63%), while fewer than one in six citizens of Guatemala (13%) and Chile (14%) do so.

There is less variation in the incidence of persuading others how to vote or volunteering for a political party in the last national election. Once again, Americans are among the most active (almost half say they have done so at least occasionally), while Canadians are roughly at the average for the hemisphere.

Identify with national political party



Confidence in Democracy and the Political System

This section shifts the focus from Canadians' participation and engagement to their attitudes and opinions about democracy and the country's political system.

Confidence in political system

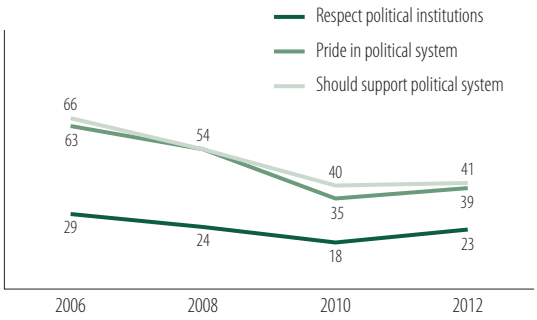
CONFIDENCE IN POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS. How do Canadians feel generally about their current political system? The survey posed three questions looking at different aspects of this issue, focusing on pride in the system, belief in the importance of supporting it and respect for the institutions underlying the system. Overall, Canadians are more positive than negative about their political system, but confidence levels are lower than they were four to six years ago.

Pride in the political system. Canadians ranked the extent to which they "feel proud of living under the Canadian political system" on a scale ranging from "1" (not at all) to "7" (a lot). Four in ten (39%) express a high level of pride in the political system (ratings of 6 or 7), compared to half (50%) who are neutral (ratings of 3-5), and one in ten (11%) who indicate a low level of pride (ratings of 1 or 2). The public's level of pride in the country's political system has declined significantly since 2006 (when 63% expressed a high level of pride), although there has been a slight rebound since 2010.[5]

Should support the political system. Apart from how people feel about their political system, do they believe it requires their support? Similar to the question on pride, four in ten (41%) Canadians feel strongly that "one should support the political system of Canada," compared with fewer than one in ten (8%) who believe this is not the case. Moreover, the trend since 2006 follows the same pattern as with pride in the system: A sharp decline from 2006 through 2010, and then flattening out.

Respect for political institutions. When the focus shifts from the overall political system to the underlying institutions, public confidence is significantly lower. Just one in four

Strong respect, pride and support of Canadian political system*



* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (1=not at all, 7=a lot)

(23%) Canadians strongly "respect the political institutions of Canada" (ratings of 6-7), compared with six in ten (62%) in the middle, and one in six (15%) who express a low level of respect. The trend line on this question is similar to the two previous ones, with a proportionately smaller decline between 2006 and 2010, and a more noticeable rebound over the past two years.

Across the population, confidence and support for the country's political system is stronger among Canadians 60-plus, and among those who identify with the right side of the political spectrum (who also tend to be older). Opinions are largely similar across regions and socio-economic categories and, more surprisingly, do not vary by level of civic action: This suggests that Canadians' respect or pride in their country's political system and institutions are not linked to their own level of civic and political engagement.

Finally, the decline in opinions about the country's political system and institutions since 2006 appear to be broad-based across the population rather than centred within specific groups (where trend data is available for making such comparisons).

[5] Here is another example where the change in survey mode likely accounts for some of the change in opinions between 2008 and 2010.

International comparison

Canadians' level of confidence in their political system is as strong as or better than most parts of the western hemisphere. They are among the most likely to express strong pride in their political system (along with Nicaraguans and Uruguayans), and somewhat more so than Americans and Mexicans. Such pride is least evident in Bolivia (16%), Haiti (14%) and Honduras (9%).

Canadians are above average in their belief in the importance of supporting one's political system, and similar to the perspective of Americans and Mexicans. Citizens in other regions are somewhat less apt to share this view, although there is considerable variation across countries (strong agreement in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Uruguay and Suriname, much less so in Honduras, Bolivia and Brazil).

In terms of respect for political institutions, Canadians' relatively low regard is similar to opinions across the hemisphere, although a bit less likely to fall into strongly positive or negative views. In sharp contrast, Americans are among the least respectful of their political institutions, while Mexicans are among the most positive. The other regions are more apt to be positive than negative, with stronger respect in El Salvador (51%), Nicaragua (49%) and the Dominican Republic (44%), and least so in Honduras (12%) and Haiti (17%).

Confidence in political system*

	Proud of political system	Should support political system	Respect political institutions
CANADA	39	41	23
United States	31	39	15
Mexico	28	35	37
Central America	22	28	33
South America	20	24	30
Caribbean	19	28	30

* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (7 = a lot, 1 = not at all)

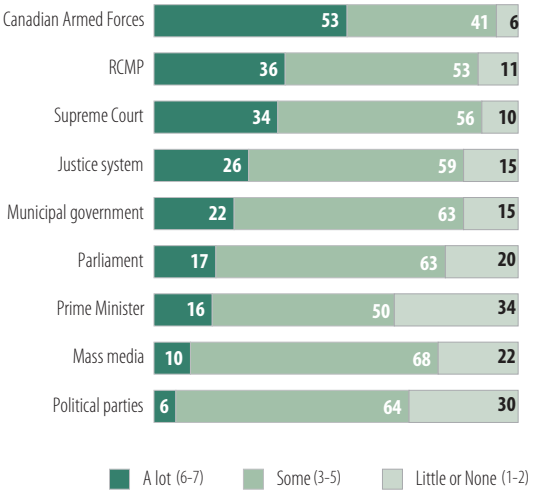
TRUST IN KEY INSTITUTIONS. How much do Canadians trust a number of their key institutions related to politics, the media and the uniformed services? The survey measured the level of public trust using the same 1 (not at all) to 7 (a lot) scale referenced in the previous section. Trust levels vary noticeably across institutions, with relatively little change since 2010, but more noticeable declines dating back to 2006.

Trust in Canadian Armed Forces. Among the institutions measured, the Canadian Armed Forces enjoy the highest level of public trust. Over half (53%) express a high degree of trust (ratings of 6 or 7) compared to a small minority (6%) who place little or no trust (ratings of 1 or 2). Trust in the Canadian Armed Forces is strong across the country, but most widespread in Atlantic Canada and the Prairies, among older Canadians, and among those who identify with the political right. Such trust is least evident in Quebec, but even here positive views outweigh negative by a four-to-one margin (44% versus 10%). Trust in the Armed Forces declined modestly between 2008 and 2010 (possibly due to mode effects noted elsewhere), but has edged back up over the past two years.

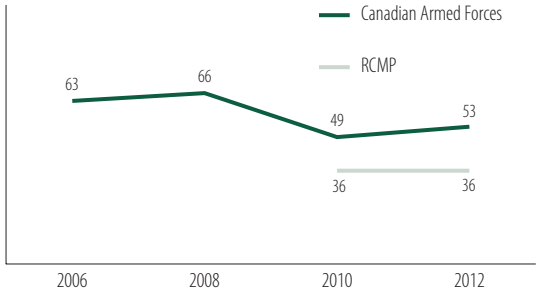
Trust in the RCMP. The RCMP continues to be among the most trusted of Canadian institutions, despite several major controversies in recent years. More than one in three (36%) Canadians express a lot of trust in the RCMP, compared with one in ten (11%) showing little or no trust. As with the Armed Forces, trust in the RCMP is somewhat higher among older Canadians and those on the right of the political spectrum; this opinion is least apt to be shared in British Columbia, and especially in Vancouver (25% are positive versus 19% negative). Trust in the RCMP is fairly consistent across community size, socio-economic status and level of civic action.

Trust in the justice system. One-quarter (26%) of Canadians say they trust the justice system to a great degree, compared with 15 percent expressing little or no trust. Trust has increased slightly from 2010 (22%), but remains below well below levels recorded in 2006 and 2008 (although the proportion expressing clear distrust has remained consistently low). Trust in the justice system is highest among residents of larger communities, older Canadians (aged 60-plus), those with the highest incomes, those on the right of the political spectrum and those born outside of Canada.

Level of trust in key institutions

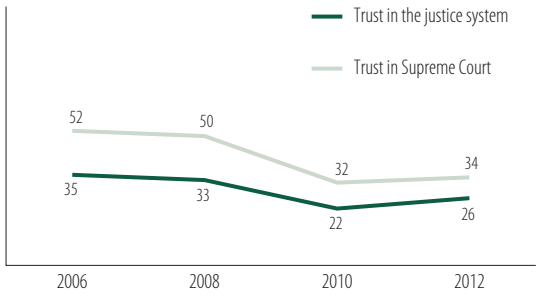


Strong trust in security and defense institutions*



* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (1=not at all, 7=a lot)

Strong trust in Canadian justice*



* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (1=not at all, 7=a lot)

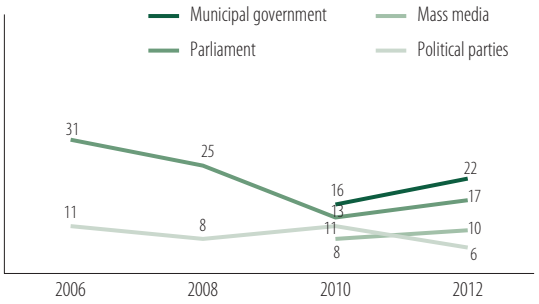
Trust in the Supreme Court. Canadians are somewhat more positive in their confidence in the country's Supreme Court. One-third (34%) indicate a high level of trust in the Supreme Court, similar to 2010 (32%) but down from 2006 (52%) and 2008 (50%). Levels of distrust, however, are significantly lower, with only one in ten (10%) indicating little or no trust, a number that has held steady since 2006. As with views of the justice system overall, confidence in the Supreme Court is strongest among residents of larger communities, older age groups, those on the right of the political spectrum and those born outside of Canada.

Trust in Parliament. In comparison with the uniformed services and the justice system, Canadians express less confidence in their central political institutions. The public is divided in the degree to which they trust the country's national Parliament, with one in five (17%) expressing strong trust, and a slightly larger percentage (20%) saying they have little or not trust. Trust levels have declined by almost half since 2006 (when 31% expressed strong levels of trust), but have rebounded modestly since 2010 (13%). Across the country, public trust in Parliament is highest among older Canadians, those on the right of the political spectrum and those born outside of Canada, while lowest among those on the left (13% positive versus 31% negative) and those with lower socio-economic status.

Trust in municipal government. Canadians appear to have more confidence in local institutions. Just over one in five (22%) express strong trust in their municipal government (and this view has strengthened modestly since 2010), compared with 15 percent who have little or no trust. Trust in local government is most widespread among residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Canadians 60-plus, those on the right of the political spectrum and those high on civic action. Trust in local government does not vary by community size, education or household income.

Trust in mass media. Canadians' confidence in the country's mass media is somewhere between that of Parliament and political parties. One in ten (10%) express a high degree of trust in the mass media, compared with twice as many (22%) who have little or no trust. Trust levels are highest in Quebec, among Canadians 60-plus and those with lower socio-economic status, and lowest in B.C., and among Canadians high on civic action and those without a religious affiliation. The level of public trust in the mass media has remained essentially unchanged since 2010.

Strong trust in political institutions and mass media*



* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (1=not at all, 7=a lot)

Trust in political parties. Political parties are least likely to have earned the trust of Canadians, with only six percent expressing strong trust, compared with 30 percent who say they have little or none. Trust in political parties has consistently been lower than other institutions, and has declined by almost half since 2010 (when 11% expressed strong trust). Confidence in political parties varies most noticeably by political orientation: Those on the right are among the most trusting (13% positive versus 17% negative), while those on the left are least apt to be so (6% positive versus 41% negative). Low trust in political parties is also more evident in eastern Canada, among rural residents, and those without any college or university education.

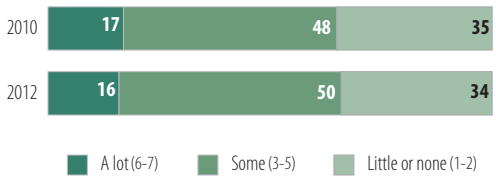
Trust in the Prime Minister. In Canada, the Prime Minister is not the Head of State, but is the head of the national government and the leader of the country, making this position and individual a political institution in itself. Comparatively few Canadians express a strong level of trust in Prime Minister Stephen Harper, on par with their trust in Parliament but greater than their trust in political parties. One in six (16%) express a strong level of trust (ratings of 6-7), compared to twice as many (34%) who have little or none (ratings of 1-2). Trust levels are essentially unchanged since 2010.

Public trust in the Prime Minister varies sharply across the country, reflecting well-established political divides. Stephen Harper is most likely to enjoy strong trust levels in Ontario and the west, among Canadians 60-plus, immigrants and those on the right of the political spectrum. But even

among these groups, trust is far from universal; in Alberta, for instance, only 22 percent express a strong level of trust (compared with 17% who have little or none). On the other end of the spectrum, trust levels are least evident in Quebec (8% positive versus 48% negative), left-leaning Canadians (4% versus 63%) and, more surprisingly, among rural residents (9% versus 43%). Trust in the Prime Minister is not closely tied to trust in other political institutions such as Parliament and political parties, but rather can be predicted largely based on political orientation and party affiliation.

Apart from the general degree of trust in the Prime Minister, how well do Canadians believe he is performing in this role? On this question the public is evenly divided: one-third (33%) believe Stephen Harper is currently doing a good job, one-third (33%) say he is doing a bad job, and the remainder (34%) say neither good nor bad. This assessment is essentially unchanged since 2010. As would be expected,

Trust in the Prime Minister



Canadians' views about the current PM's performance are closely tied to level of trust. Good performance ratings are most widely given in Alberta, by those on the right of the political spectrum and evangelical Christians, while a negative assessments are most evident in Quebec, among Canadians on the left and those high on civic action.

International comparison

Canadians' degree of trust in their institutions is at or above average for the hemisphere, with a couple of notable exceptions. Canadians are among the most trusting when it comes to their national police (RCMP), Supreme Court and the justice system (with levels of trust comparable to such countries as Suriname and Nicaragua). Canadian trust levels are generally comparable with respect to the Armed Forces, municipal government, Parliament and political parties; in North America, Canadians are more positive than Americans but less so than Mexicans.

Canadians are among the least likely to express strong trust in their Prime Minister or President, similar to opinions expressed in Costa Rica and Peru, and marginally better than Panama and Honduras. Americans are more divided, with greater proportions either strongly positive or strongly negative. The same pattern also applies to public assessment of the Prime Minister's job performance; Stephen Harper's job performance ratings is lower than the average in all regions, and is better than leaders of seven out of the 25 other countries. The lowest leader performance ratings are given in Honduras (17%), Chile (21%), Costa Rica (23%) and Panama (23%), while the highest are in Ecuador (64%), Nicaragua (60%), Brazil (59%) and Argentina (56%).

Finally, Canada is near the very bottom in terms of strong public trust in its mass media, ahead of only the USA which by far scores the lowest (4% strong trust, versus 49% none at all). Trust in mass media is most evident in the Dominican Republic (52%) and Nicaragua (47%).

Level of trust in key institutions*

	CANADA	United States	Mexico	Central America	South America	Caribbean
Armed Forces	53	60	51	39	40	38
National police	36	27	14	19	22	23
Supreme Court	34	20	23	16	21	17
Justice system	26	20	19	16	17	15
Municipal government	22	17	28	24	21	13
Parliament/legislature	17	6	24	15	16	15
Prime Minister/President	16	27	32	24	33	41
Mass media	10	4	29	28	37	36
Political parties	6	2	12	9	9	11

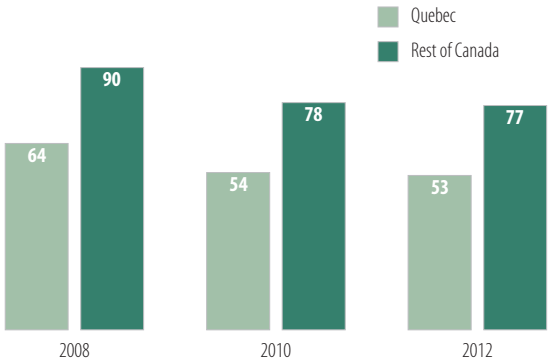
* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (7 = a lot, 1 = not at all)

PRIDE IN THE COUNTRY. Canadians have mixed feelings about their politician institutions today, but comparatively few are ambivalent about the country overall. A clear majority of the population are proud to be Canadian – and believe that, despite our differences, we are strongly united as a country.

Pride in being Canadian. Seven in ten (72%) say they are proud of being a Canadian (6 or 7, out of 7), compared with only four percent who express little or no pride (1 or 2). As positive as these numbers are, the breadth of agreement on feeling proud is down from 2008, when 84 percent expressed this sentiment.

Across the country, strong pride in being Canadian varies noticeably, but most significantly in the case of Quebec, where only 53 percent express strong pride in being Canadian (similar to 2010, but down from 2008). Pride in being Canadian is also stronger among older Canadians, those with higher incomes (but not higher education) and those with a right-leaning political orientation. Pride in being Canadian is largely consistent by community size, country of birth and level of civic action.

Strong pride in being Canadian*

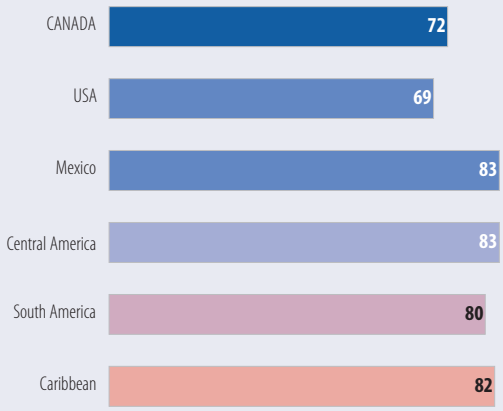


* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (1=not at all, 7=a lot)

International comparison

While most Canadians express strong pride in their country, the proportion expressing such feelings is actually stronger in most other countries across the hemisphere. Over nine in ten citizens say they are very proud in such countries as Nicaragua, Suriname and the Dominican Republic, with many others in the 80 to 90 percent range. Canada shares the lower end of the list, along with the USA, Brazil, Chile and Haiti.

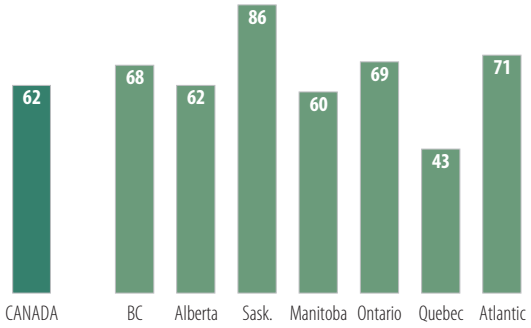
Strong pride in nationality



Things that unite Canadians. Canada is a vast and diverse country, where citizens are divided not only by great distances, but by human elements like culture and language. These differences aside, Canadians are more likely than not to agree there are many things that unite them as a country. Six in ten (62%) strongly agree with the statement *"Despite our differences, we Canadians have many things that unite us as a country,"* compared with only four percent who strongly disagree.

Opinions on this question are similar across the country, with the notable exceptions of Saskatchewan (86% strongly agree) and Quebec (only 43% share this view, versus 10% who strongly disagree). Strong agreement is also most widespread among Canadians aged 60-plus and among those who identify with the right of the political spectrum.

*Despite differences, we Canadians have many things that unite us**



* 6 or 7 on a 7-point scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

Attitudes about democracy

A central theme of the AmericasBarometer research is how citizens think about democracy, in terms of what it means and how it is practiced in their country.

MEANING OF DEMOCRACY. Canadians were asked to describe, in their own words, what "democracy" means to them (no response options were provided on the survey). Three-quarters of Canadians provided a response, most of which fit into three broad themes, and many loosely associated with various aspects of "freedom."[6]

The most common of the three themes relates democracy to the *right to good government*. Three in ten (30%) define democracy as the ability to vote and participate in electing government, with smaller proportions emphasizing the concept of "majority rules" (5%) and freedom from dictatorship (3%).

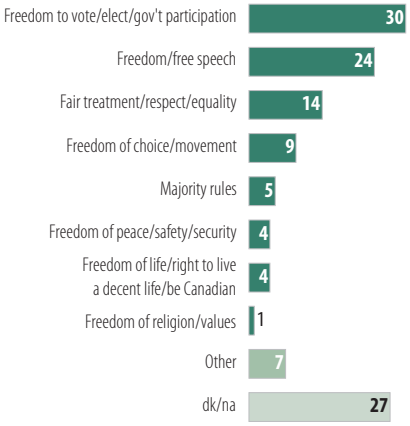
The second theme defining democracy refers to *personal freedoms*, including those who say that freedom of speech (24%) and freedom of choice and movement (9%); another one percent specifically refer to freedom of religion.

The third broad theme emphasized by Canadians defines democracy as providing *a good quality of life* for its citizens. This is most likely to encompass the concept of fairness and equality (14%), while small proportions mention the freedom to live a decent life (4%), and the safety and security (4%) that comes with democracy.

Responses are fairly consistent across most groups of Canadians, but with some differences. Residents of Quebec, for instance, are more likely to associate democracy primarily with personal freedom and free speech (33%). Canadians with higher levels of education are more apt to emphasize freedom to vote and elect governments, while those with less education are not as likely to offer any opinion of what democracy means to them.

What does democracy mean to you?

Unprompted responses



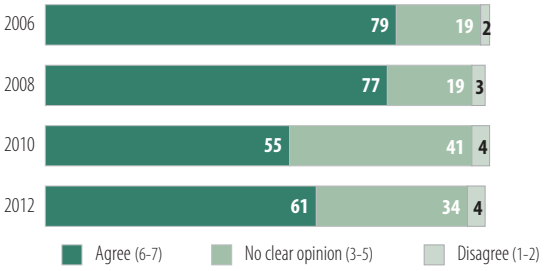
[6] This question was asked in both 2006 and 2008, but the results are not directly comparable to 2012 findings because of the different survey mode, and also the way in which the unprompted responses were coded.

DEMOCRACY AS THE BEST FORM OF GOVERNMENT. Canadians place declining trust in many of the country's political institutions (see previously), but continue to have confidence in the country's democratic system on which these institutions are founded.

A clear majority (61%) of Canadians agree with the statement *"Democracy may have its problems, but it is better than any other form of government"* (ratings of 6 or 7 out of 7), while only four percent disagree (ratings of 1 or 2) and one-third (34%) do not have a clear opinion either way (ratings of 3 to 5). The proportion in agreement is up slightly from 2010 (55%), although down from 2006 and 2008 (likely due to survey mode effects). Very few Canadians in any of the waves expressed clear disagreement with the statement.

Confidence in democracy as the best form of government is the prevalent view across the country, but most widespread among older Canadians, those with higher levels of education and income, and those on the right side of the political spectrum. This view is shared by less than a majority among Atlantic Canadians, Canadians under 30, those without a high school diploma and those who did not vote in the 2011 federal election.

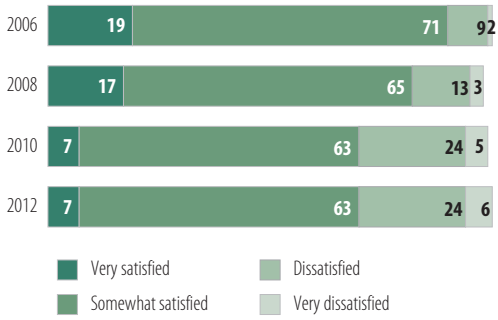
Democracy is the best form of government



SATISFACTION WITH HOW DEMOCRACY WORKS IN CANADA. How well do citizens believe their democracy is currently working? Canadians are more positive than negative in their assessment, with few expressing strong feelings either way. Seven in ten are very satisfied (7%) or satisfied (63%), compared with three in ten (30%) who are dissatisfied (24%) or very dissatisfied (6%). Opinions are essentially unchanged from 2010, but down somewhat from 2006 and 2008 (likely due in part to changes in survey mode as described above).

Satisfaction with democracy in Canada today is highest among residents of Ontario (74%) and western Canada (74% to 78%, compared with only 56% in Quebec), as well as among Canadians with higher levels of education and income, and immigrants. Views on this question also vary noticeably across the political spectrum: Canadians placing themselves on the right of the political spectrum (85%) are much more likely to be satisfied with democracy in Canada today than those on the left (54%).

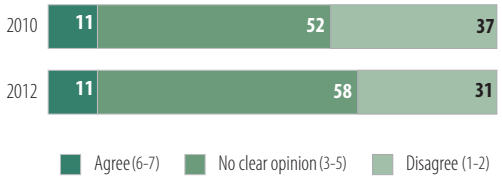
Satisfaction with democracy in Canada



Do politicians listen? While Canadians are more likely than not to express satisfaction with their democratic system, this is not because they feel their elected officials are especially attentive to what they care about. Only one in ten (11%) agree with the statement *"Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think,"* compared with three times as many (31%) who disagree. Opinions have improved modestly since 2010, when a higher proportion (37%) disagreed with this statement.

Opinions on this issue are similar across the country. No more than one in six Canadians in any region or demographic group agree that elected officials care what the public thinks, although disagreement is more evident in eastern Canada, and among rural residents, those with low incomes and those born in the country. The one notable difference is by political orientation: Canadians on the right of the political spectrum are among the most likely to agree with the statement (27% versus 19% disagree), in sharp contrast to those on the left (3% agree versus 53% disagree).

Those who govern are interested in what people like you think



International comparison

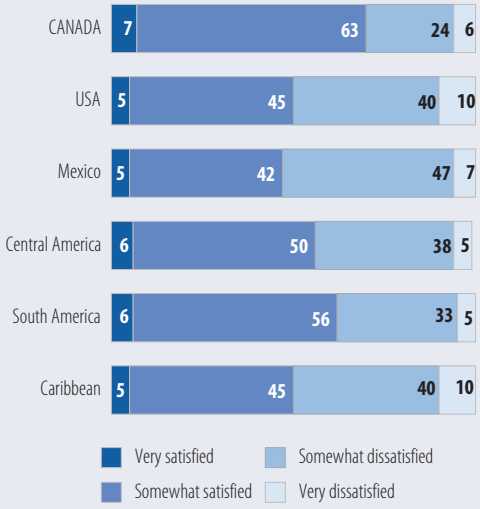
Canadians stand out as being the most satisfied with how democracy is working in their own country, second only to Uruguayans (79%), and comparable to Argentinians (69%). Citizens in other countries tend to be more divided, with fewer than half satisfied in such countries as Mexico, Haiti and Paraguay. Across the hemisphere, few appear to hold strong opinions on this issue: no more than one in ten in any country say they are either very satisfied or very dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with democracy has improved modestly across the hemisphere as a whole between 2006 (51% very/somewhat satisfied) and 2012 (58%), but the trend is moving in the opposite direction in North America, to a smaller degree in Mexico (52% to 47%) and, more dramatically, in the USA (80% to 50%), as well as in Canada.

Canadians and Americans (63%) are among the most confident in the democratic form of government, although this view is the most widespread in Uruguay (79%), Venezuela (76%) and Argentina (72%). By comparison, agreement that democracy is the best form of government is least evident in Peru (35%), Bolivia (33%) and Honduras (31%). Clear rejection of this premise, however, does not exceed one in ten citizens in any country except Honduras (25%).

Attitudes about politicians' interest in what the public thinks are generally similar across the hemisphere, with Canadians no more likely than average to agree with statement, but less apt to disagree. Americans stand out as being the most negative (50% disagree), along with citizens of Costa Rica (58%) and Honduras (50%).

Satisfaction with democracy in your country



BELIEF IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS/LIMITING GOVERNMENT PROCESS. Canada is now one of the world's oldest continuous democracies, and has yet to experience serious threats that are common in other parts of the world. The most notable exception was the enactment of the *War Measures Act*, which temporarily suspended civil liberties in response to the October Crisis of 1970. More recently, many felt the country's democracy was under attack when Prime Minister Steven Harper twice prorogued Parliament when faced with a possible loss of confidence vote in the House of Commons.

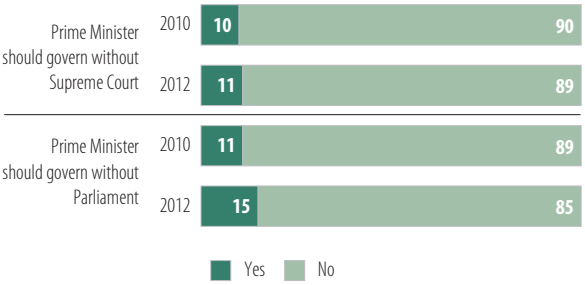
Given this stable historical record, does the public believe that there might be circumstances that would justify suspending the normal functioning of the country's democratic system? Results show that very few Canadians support such actions when the country is facing difficult times, but many do not strongly reject limits on opposition voices.

Suspension of Parliament and the Supreme Court. Relatively few Canadians believe there are circumstances that would provide justification for the Prime Minister to close Parliament (15%) or dissolve the Supreme Court (11%), and proceed to govern without these institutions. Support for the former has increased marginally since 2010 (up from 11%; up primarily in western Canada), while essentially unchanged in the case of dissolving the Supreme Court.

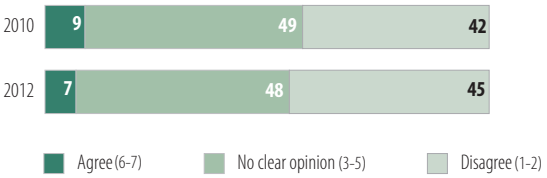
Support for a Prime Minister override does not exceed the 30-percent threshold among any identifiable groups, but is most evident among Vancouver residents, Canadians on the political right and Conservative voters, while least likely to be shared by Quebecers and those on the political left. Younger Canadians are marginally more likely than older ones to feel such action might be justified under difficult times.

Limiting the voice of opposition parties. Canadians also do not support the Prime Minister limiting the voice of opposition parties, although this idea is by no means universally rejected. Less than one in ten (7%) agree with the statement: *"It is necessary for the progress of this country that our prime ministers limit the voice and vote of opposition parties,"* compared with close to half (45%) who disagree (with most of this group disagreeing in the strongest terms – 7 out of 7). At the same time, a plurality (48%) of Canadians do not express a clear opinion on this issue (giving ratings of 3 to 5 out of 7). Opinions are largely unchanged from 2010.

Limiting the democratic process in difficult times



Prime minister should limit the voice of opposition parties



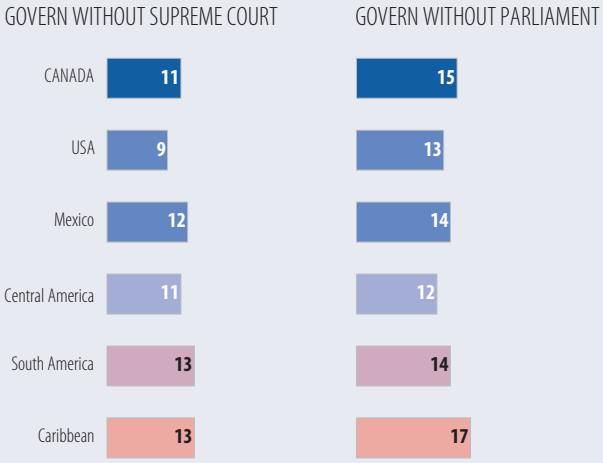
Opposition to limiting opposition parties is widespread across the country, but increases with age and education, and is most pronounced among Canadians on the political left (72%). Support for prime ministerial limits on the opposition is most apt to be expressed by Canadians on the political right (12%) and among evangelical Christians (14%).

International comparison

Public opinion about the justification for government without legislatures or courts in difficult times is notably similar across the western hemisphere. Support for such measures is somewhat higher in countries such as Ecuador and Paraguay, and least so in Panama and Jamaica. Canadians and Americans, their faith in democracy notwithstanding, do not stand out in rejecting such executive prerogative.

In terms country leaders limiting the voice of opposition parties, the opinions of Canadians are largely echoed in the sentiments of citizens across the hemisphere. Americans stand out as most opposed to such practice (63%), along with citizens of Guyana (62%) and Trinidad & Tobago (62%). Agreement on the need for limiting opposition voices is most evident in El Salvador (27%), Paraguay (23%) and Ecuador (22%).

It is preferred to limit democracy in difficult times

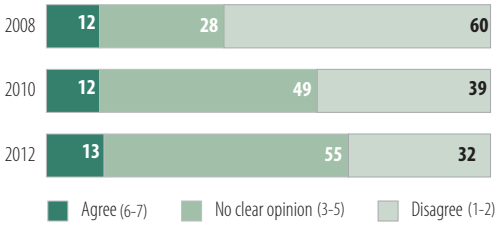


DIRECT GOVERNANCE BY THE PEOPLE. Canadian democracy is founded on the principle of governance through elected representatives, but the country has had its share of populist movements championing the right for citizens to have a direct say in important decisions. The most recent example is use of the B.C. referendum legislation, which resulted in the citizenry voting to eliminate the province's recently introduced Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

The recent emergence of "government by the people" initiatives notwithstanding, this approach to democracy is not widely endorsed across the population, although opposition appears to be waning. Just over one in ten (13%) Canadians agree that *"The people should govern directly rather than through elected representatives,"* compared with one-third (32%) who disagree. Strong support has held steady since 2008, but the level of disagreement has fallen significantly since 2008, signaling that Canadians are now much less likely than before to reject out of hand this approach to governance.

Direct government by the people is not strongly endorsed by any identifiable segment of the population; no more than one in five agree with the statement. Support is most evident among Canadians without a high school diploma, those high on civic action and those on the political left, while opposition is most widespread among those 60-plus and those on the political right.

The people should govern directly rather than through elected representatives

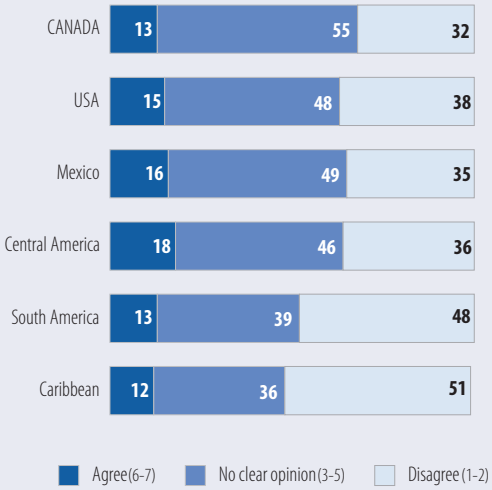


International comparison

Direct governance by the people rather than through elected representatives is not a popular concept anywhere in the hemisphere, with disagreement outweighing agreement by a wide margin in every country. Canadians, along with fellow North Americans in the USA and Mexico, are about average in their likelihood of supporting this concept, although somewhat less apt to strongly oppose it.

Support for government by the people is most apt to be voiced by citizens of Nicaragua (33%) and El Salvador (29%), while strong opposition is most evident in Uruguay (63% strongly disagree).

The people should govern directly rather than through elected representatives



Parliamentary politics

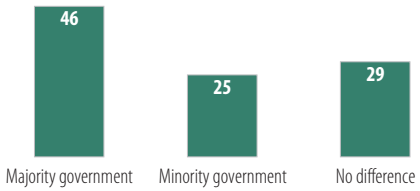
Canada has one of the most stable parliamentary systems in the world, but the last several years have witnessed an unprecedented period of turbulence, including four general elections in relatively quick succession, prorogation of Parliament on two separate occasions when the ruling minority government faced defeat in the House, opposition parties openly discussing formal coalitions, and an increasingly polarized political culture both on and off Parliament Hill. What do Canadians make of these developments?

MAJORITY VERSUS MINORITY GOVERNMENT.

Canada's parliamentary system has typically produced majority governments for most of its 145-year existence, but also periods of minority governments. The last federal election (May 2011) marked the end of an extended run of minorities dating back to 2004 (first led by the Liberals and then the Conservatives). Does the public believe one form of government is better for the country than the other? There is no public consensus on this issue, but overall, Canadians believe it is better to have a majority government (46%) over a minority government (25%), with the remainder (29%) indicating it makes no difference.

Views on the relative merits of majority versus minority governments vary most noticeably along partisan political lines. Preference for majority governments is strongest among those supporting the current government, including Conservative voters (67%) and Canadians on the political right (71%), while minority governments are most apt to be favoured among those on the left (44%) and BQ supporters (47%). Those least apt to believe it makes a difference include Canadians under 45, those with the least education and income, and those who didn't vote in the 2011 federal election. Preference for majority governments is also higher among Canadians who have more trust and respect for the country's political institutions.

Which form of government is best?



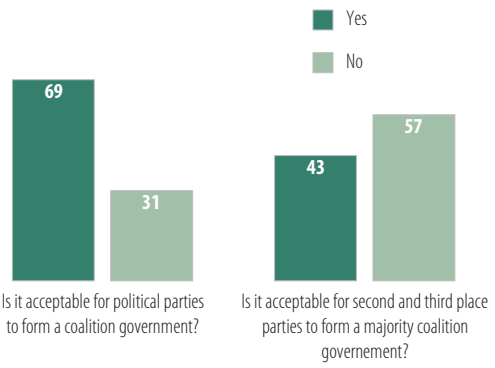
COALITION GOVERNMENT. Coalition governments have made rare appearances at the provincial level (e.g., Ontario in 1985, Saskatchewan in 1999), but have only been part of federal politics twice in Canada's history (the last one occurring in 1917). In December 2008, the three opposition parties signed an agreement to form such a coalition upon defeating the then-current minority Conservative government. This arrangement was effectively attacked by the government, which then succeeded in avoiding defeat through prorogation of Parliament. Since that time, coalition governments have been successfully formed in both the United Kingdom and Australia.

Whatever misgivings Canadians may have had about political coalitions in 2008, the general principle now appears to be broadly accepted. Seven in ten Canadians (69%) say that political parties should consider the option of forming a coalition government if none wins a majority in an election, compared with 31 percent who take reject this approach. This perspective reflects the majority view across the country, including among Conservative party voters (61%), those on the political right and even non-voters. The legitimacy of such a coalition is most widespread among Canadians on the left of the political spectrum (84%), those 60-plus and those with a university degree, while lowest in Alberta (58%) and among Canadians without a high school diploma (53%).

This support for the general principle of government coalitions notwithstanding, Canadians are much less likely to endorse such arrangements when it does not include the party winning the most seats in a general election. Just over four in ten (43%) support the formation of a coalition government by the parties finishing second and third in a general election that together have a majority of seats; by comparison, a majority (57%) say coalition governments must include the party winning the most seats.

As with opinions about coalitions generally, public attitudes on this question are reflective of the current political climate in Canada. Support for second-third party coalition governments is widespread among Canadians on the political left (71%) and much less so among those on the right (30%). Acceptance of such coalitions is also higher among younger Canadians and those with more education.

Coalition government in Canada



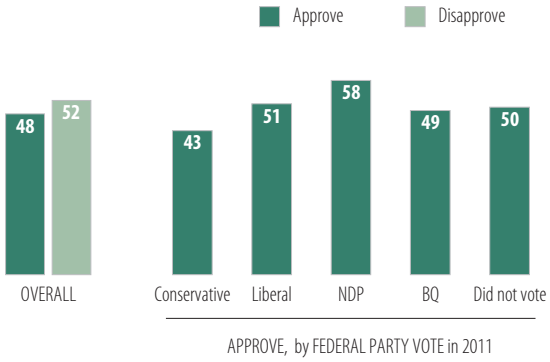
PUBLISHING STRATEGIC VOTING INFORMATION.

The confluence of closely fought elections and the Internet age has given birth to a new election campaign strategy of publishing riding-specific information to help Canadians make strategic decisions about where to place their vote (e.g., if their primary aim is to defeat a particular party rather than to elect one). The last two federal elections featured grassroots initiatives designed to support strategic voting among those wishing to defeat the current Conservative government.

Such initiatives are legal, but do not currently enjoy broad public support. Canadians are evenly split between those who approve (48%) and disapprove (52%) of advocacy organizations publishing information during federal elections to help voters determine which party in their riding has the best chance of defeating a party they do not want to see elected.

Support for publishing strategic voting information is mixed across the country, but is most likely to be endorsed by Vancouverites, younger Canadians, those with the most education and income, and those on the political left. In contrast to other questions about federal politics, opinions on this issue vary only modestly by federal party support.

Advocacy groups publishing information during federal election



Tolerance for political dissent

Tolerance for minority opinions is not how most Canadians think of democracy, but it is in fact one of the fundamental principles dating back to its 18th century roots. Canada in the 20th century has had a reputation for tolerance of political dissent, which seems to be tested every decade or so (October crisis in the 1970s, APEC protests in the 1980s and most recently the Toronto G20 protests in 2010). How accepting are Canadians today of those who express views that go against established norms?

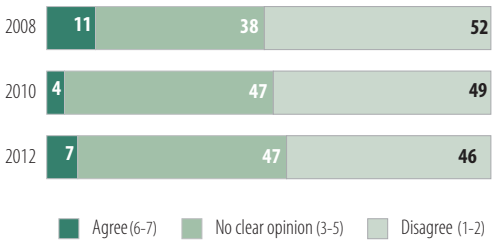
DO MINORITY VIEWS THREATEN THE COUNTRY?

Few Canadians believe dissent, in itself, is a threat to the country's stability. Fewer than one in ten (7%) agree with the statement *"Those who disagree with the majority represent a threat to the country,"* while close to half (46%) disagree. This sentiment is largely unchanged since 2008, although opinions are now marginally less polarized.

The public's level of comfort about minority views extends across the country. Clear disagreement about minority views posing a threat is most evident among Canadians with a university education, those on the left of the political spectrum, those high on civic action and those without religious affiliation. No more than one in six from any group express agreement, with this view most evident among Canadians on the right (14%), those 60-plus (12%) and those without a high school diploma (14%).

Despite general stability in opinions since 2010, views have polarized across the political spectrum, with left-leaning Canadians strengthening in their disagreement about this type of threat (rising from 62% to 68%), and those on the right now less likely to share this perspective (declining from 50% to 37%; compared with 14% who strongly agree with the statement).

Those who disagree with the majority represent a threat to the country

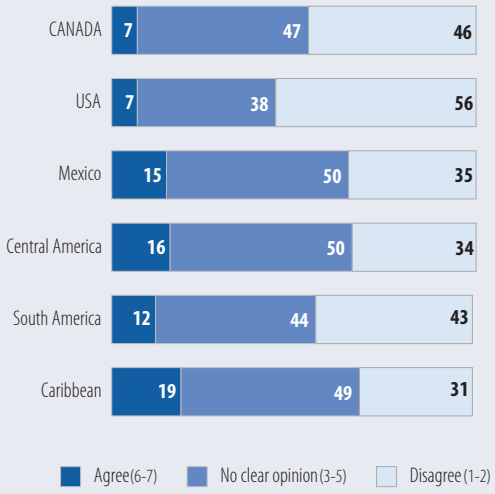


International comparison

Canadian opinion on the threat posed by minority opinions is average for the hemisphere. Americans are somewhat more likely to disagree with the statement, while Mexicans are less apt to do so. The variation across countries is modest, with the belief that minority views pose a threat most evident in Nicaragua (24%), Paraguay (23%) and Haiti (22%).

For the hemisphere as a awhole, public discomfort with political dissent has declined, from 22 percent in 2008 to 13 percent in 2012.

Those who disagree with the majority represent a threat to the country



APPROVAL OF POLITICAL ACTION. Canadians may be tolerant of dissenting opinions, but what about when dissenters take action to pursue their political aims? Public approval rests primarily on whether such actions are legal and non-violent. The survey tested Canadians' acceptance of seven forms of political action on a 10-point scale ranging from strongly disapprove (1) to strongly approve (10).

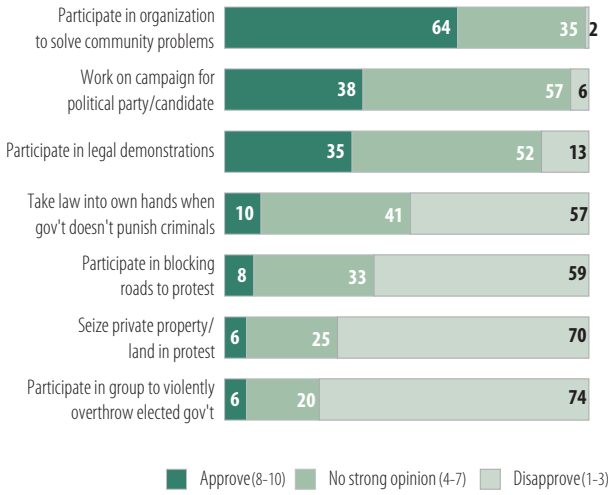
Working with organizations to solve community problems. Almost everyone accepts the legitimacy of furthering political objectives through participation in organizations or groups trying to solve community problems. Two-thirds (64%) voice clear approval (ratings of 8-10), compared with just two percent who clearly disapprove (ratings of 1-3). Opinions are commonly held across the country, although most widely among Canadians with a university education, those on the political left and those high on civic action. No more than four percent from any identifiable group express disapproval on this action. Opinions are stable since 2010, except for a polarizing trend between those on the left (where approval has strengthened) and those on the right (where such approval has declined).

Working on political campaigns. The traditional outlet for political action in Canada has been through established political parties, and this remains widely accepted, although less so than working through local community groups. Four in ten (38%) Canadians approve of people working for campaigns for a political party or candidate, compared with only six percent who disapprove.

Public approval of such action is similar across the country, but since 2010 has increased in Quebec (to 45%), and declined in Atlantic Canada (28%) and Alberta (32%). Clear approval of working on political campaigns is also more widespread among those 45 and older, those with a college or university education, and those high on civic action. Canadians on the left and right of the political spectrum are equally likely to voice approval, but this reflects a notable shift since 2010, when those on the right were more apt to approve of working through the political system.

Participation in legal demonstrations. Canadians are now almost as likely to approve of people who participate in legal political demonstrations, with one-third (35%) voicing clear approval, compared with 13 percent who clearly disapprove. Public approval of legal demonstrations is most widespread and rising in Quebec (56%, up 5 points since 2010), where student-led street demonstrations have dominated the political agenda for much of 2012. Acceptance is considerably less evident elsewhere across the country, notably in Ontario (29%) and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (19%), where approval levels have declined since 2010. Public approval of legal demonstrations has strengthened over the past two years among men, Canadians 18 to 29 and those on the political left. Disapproval is most apt to be voiced by those 60-plus (24%).

Approval of people's actions to achieve political goals



Vigilante justice. Public acceptance drops precipitously once political actions stray outside of an established legal framework. Only one in ten (10%) Canadians voice approval for vigilante justice – people taking the law into their own hands when the government doesn't punish criminals – with more than half (57%) disapproving. This is the majority view across the country, and has held steady since 2006 (although somewhat fewer now assign a 10, the strongest disapproval rating). Disapproval is most widespread among women, older Canadians, those in the top income bracket and mainline Protestants. Approval is most apt to be expressed by those without a high school diploma (18%), but also among those high on civic action (20%).

Blocking roads. Similarly, few (8%) approve of people participating in the blocking of roads to protest, versus six in ten (59%) who disapprove. Age appears to be the greatest predictor of views about this type of political action, and this gap has widened since 2010: Canadians 18 to 29 are least likely to voice disapproval (38%), with this rising to 80 percent among those 60-plus. Opinions about blocking roads in protest are now similar across regions of the country, reflecting a jump in strong disapproval among Quebecers (up 17 points to 63%), and stable to declining disapproval elsewhere. Across the political spectrum, those on the right are most disapproving and those on the left least so, although this sentiment has declined modestly on both sides since 2010.

Seizing private property or land. Public resistance is even greater when it comes to seizing private property or land as a form of protest, with seven in ten (70%) expressing clear disapproval, up marginally from 2010. Once again, age is major factor in shaping opinions on this type of political action (disapproval rising to 47% among 18-29 and to 88% among those 60-plus). Quebecers have stood out as being more accepting of such action, but have become much less so in the past two years (64% now disapprove, compared with 48% in 2010). Disapproval with seizures of private property is also most widespread among Canadians on the right side of the political spectrum and mainline Protestants.

Violent overthrow of the government. Finally, three-quarters of Canadians (74%) reject the legitimacy of people participating in a group to violently overthrow an elected government (with 53% assigning the strongest possible disapproval rating of 10). This sentiment is consistent with that expressed in 2010, and is a strong majority view among all identifiable groups. As with seizure of property, Quebecers – who in 2010 were more to approve of such actions – are now more likely to be in line with other Canadians (whose disapproval has dropped marginally in the past two years). Disapproval increases with age, although 60 percent of Canadians 18 to 29 disapprove of people working to overthrow an elected government.

International comparison

Public opinion about acceptable forms of public protest is notably consistent across the hemisphere. Canadian attitudes are close to the average in all cases except participating in legal demonstrations where Canada is among the lowest (perhaps in response to the recent student protests in Quebec). Americans are among the most approving for those actions that are legal.

There is considerable variation across countries. Among the legal forms of action, approval tends to be highest in such countries as Uruguay, Nicaragua, Guyana and Belize, and lowest countries such as Honduras and Haiti. There tends to be more consistency in the level of approval of non-legal actions, although there are significant differences in the proportions who clearly disapprove. Citizens of Belize stand out as being among those most likely to voice approval of non-legal political actions, while vigilante justice is also considered acceptable by a quarter of those living in Nicaragua, Suriname and the Dominican Republic.

Approve of actions to achieve political goals*

	CANADA	United States	Mexico	Central America	South America	Caribbean
Participate in organization to solve community problems	64	71	57	58	61	63
Work on campaign for political party/candidate	38	53	45	38	38	40
Participate in legal demonstrations	35	53	44	41	49	47
Take law into own hands when government doesn't punish criminals	10	6	11	16	10	16
Participate in blocking roads to protest	8	12	10	13	13	15
Seize private property/land in protest	6	6	4	6	5	4
Participate in group to violently overthrow elected government	6	5	6	5	5	5

* 8-10 on a 10-point scale (1 = strongly disapprove, 10 = strongly approve)

RIGHTS FOR THOSE CRITICIZING THE GOVERNMENT.

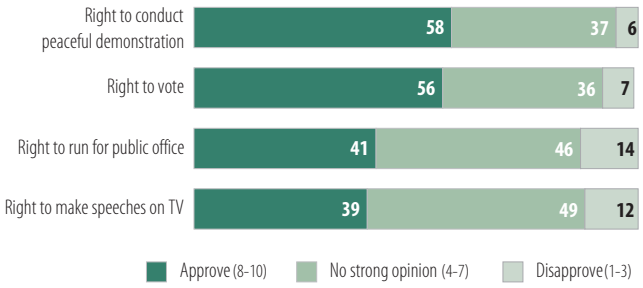
The 2012 AmericasBarometer also explored tolerance for political dissent by asking about the rights of individuals who live in Canada and say bad things about the Canadian form of government (using the same 10 point approval-disapproval scale). In all cases, the public is approving rather than disapproving of the rights of such dissenters, although more so in some cases than in others.

Right to conduct peaceful demonstrations. Close to six in ten (58%) Canadians clearly approve of dissenters' right to conduct peaceful demonstrations in order to express their views (versus 6% who disapprove), consistent with 2010 (58%) but modestly below 2006 (65%) and 2008 levels (64%).[7] Approval of this right is somewhat stronger among younger Canadians (with the age gap widening since 2010), among those with more education, those with high civic action, and especially among those on the political left (81%).

Right to vote. A majority (56%) of Canadians approve of government critics' right to vote, up from 50 percent in 2010, although below the proportion expressing this view in 2006 (67%) and 2008 (65%). Opinions are largely similar across the country, but rising approval since 2010 is most evident in Eastern and Central Canada. Such approval is also more evident among Canadians with higher socio-economic status, those on the left of the political spectrum, and those high on civic action.

Right to run for public office. Four in ten (41%) approve of those critical of the Canadian form of government being permitted to run for public office, compared with 14 percent who disapprove. As with the other items in this series, opinions are unchanged from 2010 (40%), but below 2006 (60%) and 2008 (60%) levels. Approval of this right is most pronounced in Quebec (52%), where it has increased since 2010 (along with the Prairies), while this view is now less widespread in Alberta (37%) and B.C. (35%). Rejection of dissenters' right to run for office is most evident among Canadians 60 plus (23%) and evangelical Christians (24%).

Protection of the rights of people critical of the Canadian form of government



Right to make speeches on TV. Four in ten (39%) also approve of government critics appearing on TV to make speeches, consistent with 2010 (38%), but below 2006 (53%) and 2008 (54%) levels. Once again, Quebecers are the most accepting of such rights (50%) – and they have become more so over the past two years, with residents in most other regions becoming less supportive. Across the population, clear approval of dissenters being permitted to make TV speeches is strongest among men, Canadians with higher levels of education, those on the left and those high on civic action.

International comparison

Public attitudes about the rights of those who criticize their country's form of government vary noticeably across the region. Canadians' views are somewhat above the average, and Americans stand out as the most protective of such rights. By comparison, Mexicans and citizens of many Central American countries are least apt to share this perspective. Honduras stands out, where only nine percent approve of critics' right to vote and 18 percent believe they should be allowed to hold peaceful demonstrations. Support for protection of criticism is also notably lower in countries such as El Salvador, Haiti, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, while very high in Guyana, Uruguay, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Protection of the rights of people critical of the national form of government*

	CANADA	UNITED STATES	MEXICO	CENTRAL AMERICA	SOUTH AMERICA	CARIBBEAN
Right to conduct peaceful demonstration	58	76	34	29	37	42
Right to vote	56	66	30	25	35	32
Right to run for public office	41	53	19	19	29	21
Right to make speeches on TV	39	50	22	20	30	23

* 8-10 on a 10-point scale (1 = strongly disapprove, 10 = strongly approve)

[7] Another likely example of mode effects described earlier in the report.

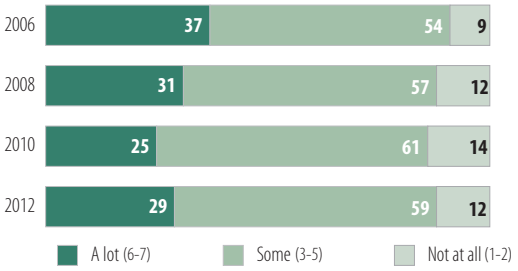
Democratic and human rights

Another hallmark of democracies is the protection of the civil and human rights of its citizens. Perhaps the most telling indicator is how well countries protect the rights of minority populations, especially those that are marginalized or visibly different from the majority.

PROTECTION OF CITIZENS' BASIC RIGHTS. Canadians are more likely than not to believe basic citizen rights are protected under the country's political system, but few feel strongly that this is the case. Three in ten (29%) firmly believe that such basic rights are well-protected (ratings of 6 or 7 out of 7), compared with 12 percent who say this is not the case (ratings of 1 or 2), with most (59%) somewhere in the middle. The degree of public confidence in the protection of basic human rights is largely unchanged from 2010, but lower than in 2006 and 2008 (likely due in part to mode effects described previously).

Belief that Canada does a good job of protecting the rights of its citizens is most evident in Alberta (38%, up noticeably since 2010) and Toronto (36%), as well as among immigrants (38%), and those on the right of the political spectrum (42%). Household income appears to be a clear factor on this question, with strong confidence expressed by 41 percent of those in the top income bracket, compared with only 24 percent in the bottom bracket. In addition to low-income Canadians, low confidence in human rights protection is most prevalent among Atlantic Canadians, those on the political left, those without religious affiliation and those high on civic action.

Extent to which citizens' basic rights are protected

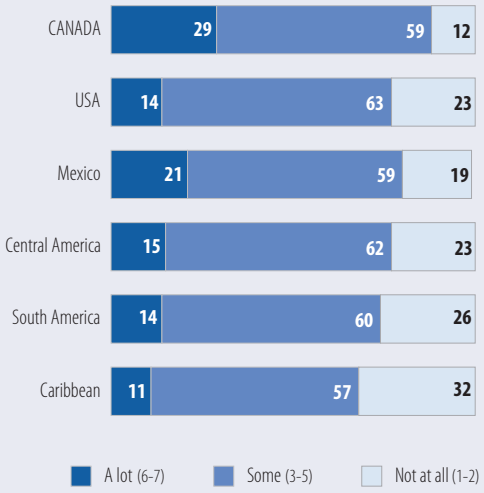


International comparison

Although only a minority of Canadians feel strongly about the protection of basic rights, they are among the most positive of any country in the hemisphere, second only to Nicaraguans (32% of whom say their rights are well-protected). Americans, by comparison, are less apt to share this view, with Mexicans somewhere in between.

In other regions, there is wide variation in opinions, with reasonably positive views in such countries as Venezuela and Belize, and negative ones in countries such as Honduras, Peru, Bolivia, Haiti and the Dominican Republic.

Extent to which citizens' basic rights are protected



PROTECTING THE RIGHTS OF SPECIFIC GROUPS. The survey addressed issues pertaining to the rights of particular groups in society that have experienced discrimination and/or have been marginalized in some way.

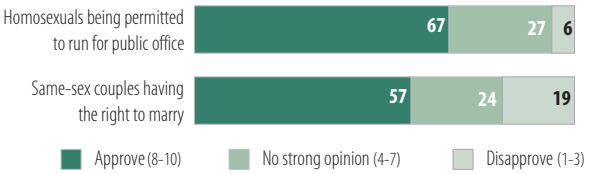
LGBT community. The gay-lesbian-bisexual-transgendered (LGBT) community in Canada has made great strides over the past decade, in terms of gaining legal rights and public acceptance. Openly gay and lesbian politicians have been elected at all levels of government, and this fact now seems to be accepted by most Canadians. Two-thirds (67%) now strongly approve of homosexuals being permitted to run for public office, compared with just six percent who strongly disapprove.[8] Opinions on this question are largely stable since 2006, although strong disapproval is now at an all-time low.

Acceptance of LGBT politicians is the majority view across the country, but more so among Atlantic Canadians and Quebecers, women, Canadians with higher levels of education and income, and those born in the country.

The two principal predictors of attitudes are political orientation and religion. Those on the political left (86%) are more likely to voice approval than those in the middle (65%) or the political right (68%) – 74 percent of those on left give the highest possible approval rating (10 out of 10), compared with 38 percent on the right. But since 2010, approval has increased most noticeably among Canadians on the political right. Across religious faiths, approval of gay politicians is the majority view among mainline Protestants (70%), Catholics (63%) and non-Christian religions (66%), but drops to 33 percent among evangelical Christians (with 21% of this group strongly disapproving).

Canada was one of the first countries to formally recognize same-sex marriages, in 2005 – and at that time, this law divided Canadians. Over the past several years, however, public opinion has shifted decisively in support of such unions.[9] Strong approval (57%) now outweighs strong disapproval (19%) by a three-to-one margin. There is majority approval across the country (including among Catholics and Canadians 60-plus), with the exceptions of immigrants (49% approve versus 24% disapprove), Canadians on the political right (49% versus 27%), and those who voted Conservative in the 2011 federal election (42% versus 34%). The one outlying group is evangelical Christians, with only 21 percent approving of same-sex marriage, compared with 53 percent who disapprove.

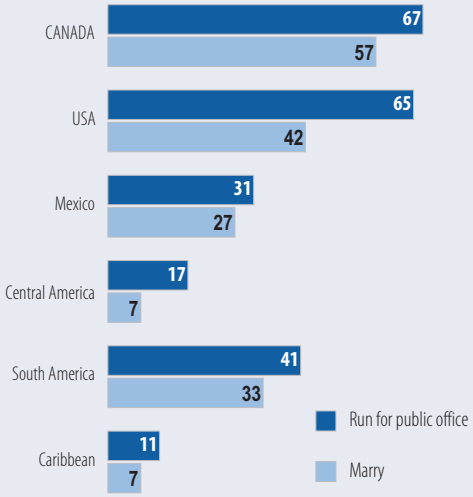
Approval of LGBT rights



International comparison

LGBT rights are one issue which sharply divides Canada and USA with most other countries in the hemisphere. Canadians (along with Uruguayans) are the most supportive of such rights, followed by Americans. Very few citizens in Central America and the Caribbean approve, especially Haiti and Jamaica (where more than 90% disapprove of same-sex marriage). Opinions are somewhat more varied in South America, with support for same-sex marriage ranging from five percent in Guyana, to 61 percent in Uruguay, 38 percent in Brazil and 39 percent in Argentina.

Approve LGBT rights*



* 8 to 10 on a 10 point scale (1=strongly agree, 10=strongly disagree)

[8] The term "homosexual" was used in the survey question to be consistent with the language used in the other 25 countries for the 2012 AmericasBarometer.

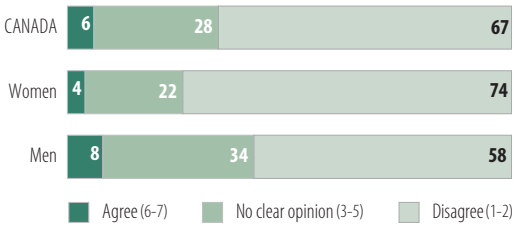
[9] Based on the Environics Institute Focus Canada 2010 report (see www.environicsinstitute.org).

Women. Women make up at more than half of the population, but have not shared equal status with men in most societies for much of human history. The 20th century witnessed a revolution in correcting this imbalance – and in countries like Canada, gender equality is now an established legal and cultural norm. Yet, full equality has yet to be realized, and women continue to be underrepresented in politics at all levels.

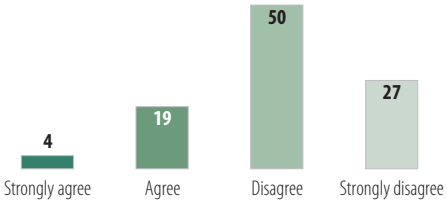
Gender equality may not yet be fully achieved in the workplace, but Canadians soundly reject the idea that when there is not enough work, men should have a greater right to jobs than women. Two-thirds (67%) strongly disagree with this paternalistic sentiment, compared with just six percent who strongly agree. This reflects a broadly normative view across the country, but is most strongly articulated by women (74%, versus 58% of men), Canadians on the left of the political spectrum (85%) and those without religious affiliation (79%), but no more than one in ten from any group voice agreement (strong disagreement is least apparent among evangelical Christians – 46%).

Public sentiment about gender equality extends to opinions about political leadership. Three-quarters strongly disagree (27%) or disagree (50%) that men are better political leaders than women, compared with one in four who agree (19%) or strongly agree (4%). Rejection of the superiority of men as political leaders is the majority view across the country, including among men (69%, versus 85% of women). Those most apt to agree with the superiority of men as political leaders include Canadians on the political right (36%) and those affiliated with non-Christian religions (37%). Opinions vary somewhat by age in a counterintuitive pattern: Canadians aged 18 to 29 (31%) are more likely than those aged 45 or over (18%) to endorse the idea that men make better political leaders.

When there is not enough work, men should have a greater right to jobs than women

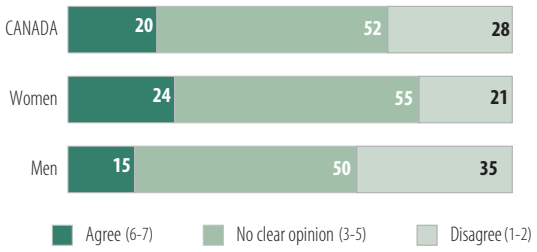


Men are better political leaders than women



Is gender equality in politics important enough to legislate it? On this question, there is no public consensus. One in five (20%) Canadians agree that *"The Canadian government should require that political parties reserve some space on their lists of candidates for women, even if they have to exclude some men,"* with 28 percent who strongly disagree and another 52 percent with no strong opinion either way. This absence of a clear position is evident across most groups, even among women (24% strongly agree versus 21% strongly disagree) and those on the political left (26% versus 26%). Opposition is most evident among Canadians who voted Conservative in the last federal election (43%) and Canadians in the top income bracket (40%).

Political parties should be required to reserve candidate spaces for women

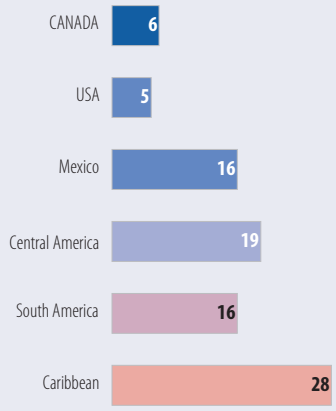


International comparison

Gender politics is another issue that divides the hemisphere. Americans share Canadians' rejection of the idea that men have a greater right to employment when jobs are scarce, but this view has somewhat more credence in other regions, especially in the Caribbean. At least three in ten citizens agree with the statement in the Dominican Republic (39%), Guyana (33%) and Nicaragua (31%). Views about men making better politicians than women follow a similar pattern.

Paradoxically, support for gender equality does not translate into support for political parties reserving space for women to become candidates. Canadians are less likely than citizens of any other country to endorse this approach (note: this question was not asked in the USA). Support for reserving space for women is at 40 percent or higher in Mexico and every other region, and is especially widespread in El Salvador (72%), Uruguay (68%) and the Dominican Republic (65%).

*When there is not enough work, men should have a greater right to jobs than women**



*6 or 7 on a 7 point scale (1=strongly disagree, 7=strongly agree)

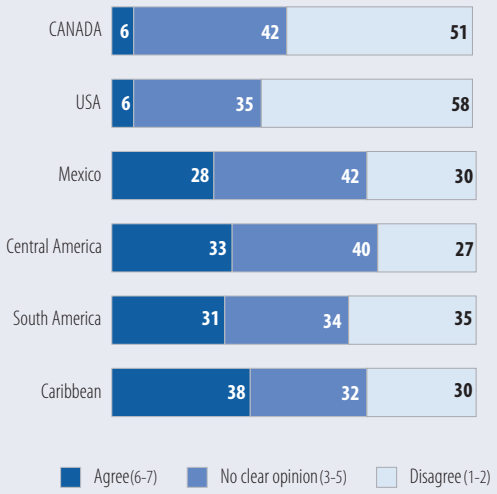
Affirmative action for ethnic minorities. Education is widely considered to be the most effective means of promoting the economic and social integration of ethnic minorities who may be marginalized. In some countries (notably the U.S.), specific policies are adopted to reserve spaces in universities for members of ethnic minorities who might not otherwise meet all of the necessary requirements for admission.

Such policies are not prevalent in Canada and this approach is not widely supported. Only six percent of Canadians strongly agree that *"Universities ought to set aside openings for students who are racial or ethnic minorities, even if that means excluding other students,"* with 51 percent who strongly disagree. There is minimal support for affirmative action policies is evident throughout the country, even among immigrants and Canadians on the left of the political spectrum. Opposition is most widely voiced in Alberta, among Canadians in the top income bracket and those who voted Conservative in the last federal election.

International comparison

This type of affirmative action policy is largely rejected by Canadians and Americans, but has considerably more support elsewhere in the hemisphere, and is endorsed by three in ten or more in Central America (33%), South America (31%) and the Caribbean (38%). Support is especially widespread in Paraguay (57%), followed by Uruguay (49%), Nicaragua (45%) and Honduras (42%).

Universities should set aside openings for students from racial/ethnic minorities



Individuals with physical disabilities. Another group within society fighting marginalized status are those with physical handicaps (e.g., with impaired sight, hearing, mobility). In Canada, there are clear signs of progress in acknowledging and supporting the participation of individuals from this community, ranging from "signed" broadcasts of Parliamentary sessions, and citizens with readily apparent disabilities now serving in high profile positions (e.g., MP Stephen Fletcher, Ontario Lieutenant Governor David Onley).

Physical disabilities may once have been seen as a barrier to serving in public office, but no more. Eight in ten Canadians now approve of such individuals running for public office (58% of whom give the strongest rating of 10), compared with only one percent who disapprove. This view is expressed by clear majorities across the country, with the strongest sentiment expressed by Atlantic Canadians, those with higher socio-economic status, those without religious affiliation, and in particular those on the political left (81% of whom give 10 out of 10).

Rule of Law, Crime and Corruption

A good justice system is a prerequisite for any good democracy; one that instills confidence in the public that their rights will be protected and wrongdoers will be punished. As reported in an earlier section, Canadians are more confident in the justice system than they are in most other government institutions, and this level of trust is somewhat higher than in many countries in the western hemisphere. This section further explores the public's confidence in the justice system, as well as covering crime victimization and government corruption.

Confidence in the justice system

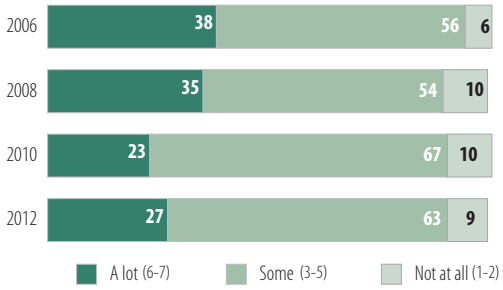
TRUST IN JUDICIAL PROCESS. A properly functioning judicial system is one that does many things, including guaranteeing a fair trial for those accused of committing a crime and then punishing those who have been found guilty. Public confidence in these two functions is therefore important in determining how well the system is operating.

Guarantee a fair trial. The right to a fair trial is a fundamental aspect of any nation that supports the rule of law. Under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, this is a right that is guaranteed in Canada. The extent to which citizens believe this is true, however, is important in assessing the stability of the Canadian justice system.

Overall, Canadians give a lukewarm endorsement to the justice system's ability to guarantee a fair trial. One in four (27%) believe clearly this is the case, compared with only nine percent who say it is not the case, but most (63%) are somewhere in the middle on this question. Confidence in the courts has increased slightly from 2010, but well below levels recorded in 2006 and 2008 (likely due to the effect of switching survey modes). The proportion that are definitively critical has remained consistently low over this time period.

The extent to which the courts are seen as guaranteeing a fair trial increases with income, education and age, and is also highest among Ontario residents and those on the political right. As might be expected, belief in the courts is highly correlated with the overall level of trust in the Canadian justice system.

To what extent do courts in Canada guarantee a fair trial?

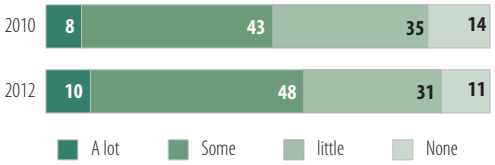


Punishing the guilty. If a fair trial renders a guilty verdict, citizens would expect the justice system to dole out an appropriate punishment for the wrongdoing. The survey asked Canadians if they were victims of robbery or assault, how much faith do they have that the judicial system would punish the guilty?

As with the guarantees for a fair trial, the public does not express overwhelming confidence in the justice system to mete out punishment to the guilty. Only one in ten (10%) say they have a lot of faith in this type of outcome, with a strong plurality (48%) indicating they would have "some" faith. These numbers reflect a modest improvement since 2010.

Faith in the judicial system punishing the guilty is highest in Ontario (especially in Toronto, where 19% have a lot of faith), among Canadians born outside of the country and those on the right of the political spectrum. Little to no confidence is most evident in eastern Canada, and among individuals with the lowest levels of education and income.

Faith in punishing the guilty

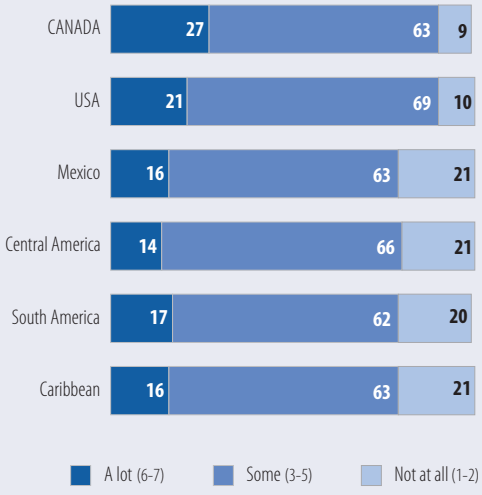


International comparison

The extent of citizens' faith in the guarantee of a fair trial is broadly similar across the hemisphere, but Canadians are among the most confident, second only to the Guyanese (30% have a lot of faith). Americans are somewhat less confident, and it is lower still in other regions. Faith in the system is more evident in Belize, Jamaica and Venezuela, and lowest in Honduras, Peru, Bolivia and Paraguay.

When it comes to punishing the guilty, Canadians are no more likely than most to express strong confidence in the system, but they are less apt to be clearly negative. Americans are more confident by comparison (16% have a lot of faith versus 8% who have none), but the strongest faith in punishing the guilty can be found in Nicaragua (31% a lot of faith), the Dominican Republic (25%) and El Salvador (24%). In contrast, little or no faith is the strong majority view in such countries as Paraguay (71%), Haiti (66%), Mexico (65%) and Bolivia (63%).

Extent to which courts guarantee a fair trial

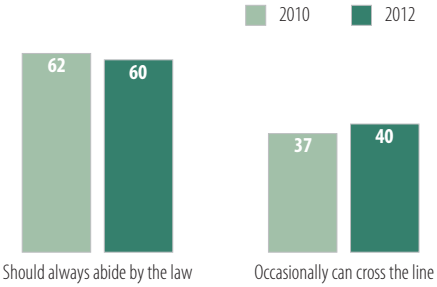


SHOULD AUTHORITIES ABIDE BY THE LAW? In order for the justice system to hold fair trials and punish wrongdoers, the authorities must first catch those who are accused of committing a crime. The means by which criminals are caught is therefore an interesting issue to bring up in describing the public's attitudes towards justice. Should the authorities always abide by the law in order to catch criminals?

While the majority of Canadians agree that authorities should always abide by the law in order to catch a criminal, there is by no means a consensus among Canadians on the matter. Six in ten (60%) believe that authorities should always abide by the law in order to catch criminals, but a sizeable minority (40%) believe that occasionally they may cross the line. Opinions have remained generally unchanged since 2010.

This balance in perspective is the norm across most of the country, with some variation. Priority on always abiding by the law is more widespread in Ontario (65%) and Manitoba/ Saskatchewan (64%), lower income Canadians, immigrants and especially those on the political left (70%). Albertans stand out as being least apt to share this view (47%). There is little variation among different community sizes and levels of education.

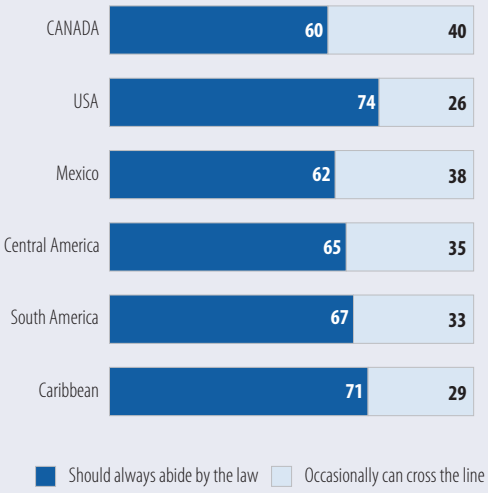
To catch criminals, authorities ...



International comparison

Across the hemisphere, the public is more likely to favour always abiding by the law to catch criminals, but the balance varies. Canadians are more likely than citizens from many countries to say it is acceptable to sometimes cross the line to catch criminals, and certainly more so than Americans (26%).

To catch criminals, authorities ...



Crime and community safety

A key factor influencing civic engagement, social capital and quality of life is the degree of safety and security people feel they have in the community in which they live. The survey explored this area in terms of personal experience with crime (as victims), perceptions of gang activity and general perceptions of safety within their neighbourhood.

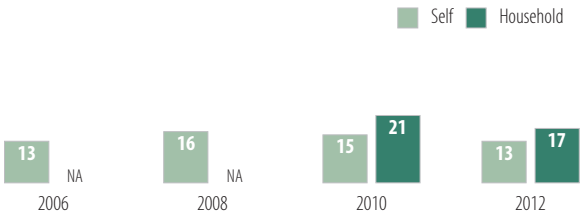
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH CRIME. Data on crime in Canada is collected primarily in two ways: police-reported crime data and self-reported victimization surveys, which may take into account criminal behaviour that goes unreported to the police. The survey posed several self-reporting questions about citizens' experience with crime as victims.

One in seven (13%) Canadians report they were a victim of some form of crime within the past 12 months, with this proportion generally similar since 2006. A smaller percentage (7%) indicates someone else in their household was a crime victim over this period – and when accounting for overlap, this translates into one in six (17%) households experiencing crime of some type in the previous year, down marginally from 2010.

Rates of self-reported personal crime victimization vary by region, and are highest in the western provinces (notably Alberta at 18%) and lowest in Ontario (11%). Reported crime statistics consistently show perpetrators of crime to be predominantly young, and this also goes for victims: 19 percent of Canadians 18 to 29 report having been a victim in the past year, compared with only six percent among those 60-plus. More surprisingly, reported victimization does not vary by education or household income.

While the rate of reported crime victimization is lowest among residents of communities of less than 5,000 (8%), the country's largest urban centres (Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver) show rates of victimization at or below the national average, with the highest being in Vancouver (15%), followed by Toronto (12%) and Montreal (11%). Each of these urban centres showed a decline in self-reported crime victimization since 2008, with the largest drop in Vancouver, followed by Toronto.

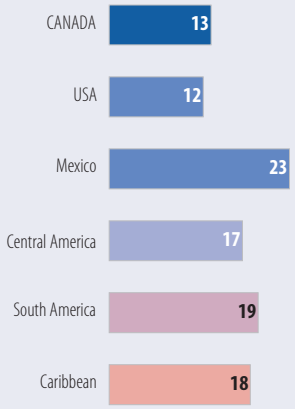
Victimized by crime in last 12 months



International comparison

Reported personal crime victimization in Canada is lower than in many countries in the hemisphere, although by no means the lowest. The Canadian rate is comparable to that in the USA, and below the average in other regions but there is considerable variation across countries. Self-reported victimization over the previous 12 months is lowest in Panama (7%), Guyana (8%) and Jamaica (8%), and highest in Ecuador (28%), Peru (28%), Bolivia (26%) and Mexico (23%).

Self victimized by crime in last 12 months



Among Canadians reporting crime victimization in the past 12 months, two-thirds (67%) say this happened to them only once in this time period, with the remainder divided between those victimized twice (17%), and those with three or more such experiences (16%) over the past year. The average number of crimes experienced (among those experiencing any crimes in this time period) is 1.7 times, unchanged from 2010.[10]

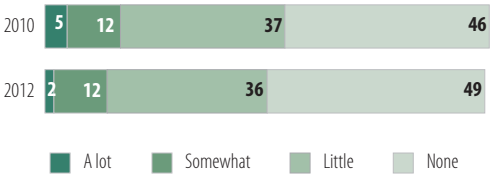
[10] This is based on a "trimmed" average (95%), which does not include a small handful of outlier responses that almost certainly reflect gross over-reporting.

LOCAL GANG ACTIVITY. The presence of gangs represents a major source of crime and has been an ongoing source of concern in many of Canada's major cities. Close to one in six Canadians report their neighbourhood is affected a lot (2%) or somewhat (12%) by gangs, with one-third (36%) saying there is little gang activity, and half (49%) who say their neighbourhood is not affected at all by gangs. Perceptions of local gang problems are down marginally since 2010.

Across the country, perceptions of notable gang activity ("a lot" or "some") is more prevalent in western Canada – especially in Manitoba/Saskatchewan (24%) and Vancouver (30%) – and least evident in Atlantic Canada (7%). Such perceptions are also higher in larger urban centres, although less so in Montreal (12%). Since 2010, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta are the only areas of the country where perceptions of neighbourhood gang activity did not decrease.

Reporting of gang activity is also highest among Canadians aged 18 to 29, those with less than high school education, lower household income and those born outside of Canada. Among those in neighbourhoods with at least some gang activity, nearly half (47%) say someone in their household was a crime victim in the past year.

Neighbourhood affected by gangs



SAFETY OF NEIGHBOURHOOD. How safe do Canadians feel in their communities, in terms of the likelihood of being assaulted or robbed? Most Canadians believe their neighbourhoods are safe, but the strength of this view has been on the decline.

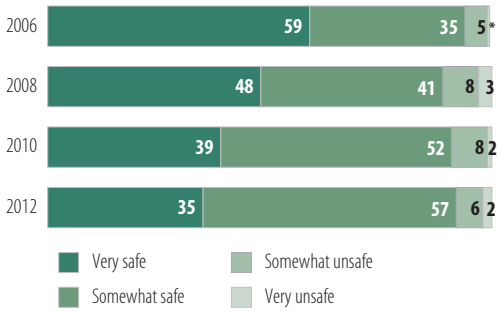
One-third (35%) of Canadians say they feel very safe in their neighbourhood, with a majority (57%) indicating that they feel somewhat safe, and one in ten feeling somewhat (6%) or very (2%) unsafe. The proportion reporting to feel at least somewhat safe has held notably steady since 2006, but the number who feel very safe has been declining steadily, indicating an overall drop in perceived local safety over this time period.[11]

Perceptions of one's neighbourhood as very safe are most widespread in Atlantic Canada (46%) and least so among Quebecers (25%; and only 16% among Montrealers). Despite Toronto's reputation for big-city crime and violence, residents' perceptions of local safety match the national average (35%) and is somewhat higher than in Vancouver (27%).

Predictably, women (32%) are somewhat less likely than men (37%) to feel very safe in their neighbourhood, and this has been the case since 2006. Yet, this gender difference is relatively modest, and only exists in communities of 100,000 and over.

This decline in perceptions of neighbourhood safety mirrors the one on neigbourhood trust (see page 14), and may be influenced by the same factors (e.g., increased diversity within the population, growing income inequality). This trend calls for further corroboration. The Environics Institute's Focus Canada research shows Canadians' perceptions of safety walking alone at night in their neighborhood has held remarkably stable over the past 35 years, and that the public is less likely than at any time since 1994 to believe crime rates are increasing.

Safety of neighbourhood where you live

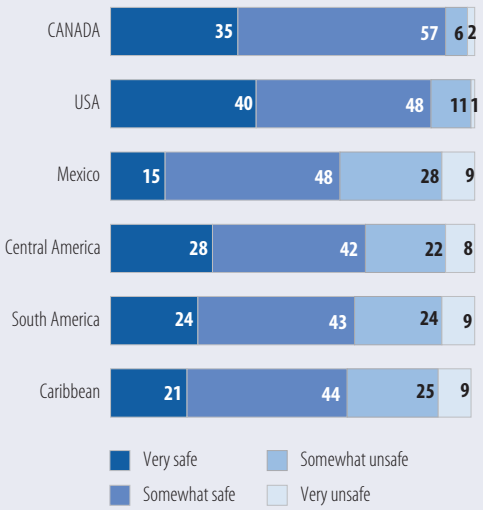


International comparison

Canadians report the lowest level of local gang activity in the hemisphere, with similar results from the USA. A lot of gang activity is indicated by an appreciable proportion in the Dominican Republic (24%), Brazil (18%), El Salvador (16%), Colombia (17%), Peru (15%) and Mexico (12%).

Similarly, Canadians are among the most secure in terms of personal safety in their neighbourhoods, along with Americans and countries such as Paraguay, Nicaragua and Jamaica. It is a different story in many other countries in the hemisphere, with neighbourhoods considered unsafe by significant proportions in such countries as Peru (50%), Venezuela (43%), El Salvador (42%) and Bolivia (40%).

Safety of neighbourhood where you live



[11] The notable decline in "very safe" neighbourhood ratings between 2008 and 2010 may be due in part to survey mode effects noted earlier in this report.

Corruption in government

Bribery and corruption in government can undermine public confidence in the democratic system and institutions. While not as big a concern in Canada as in some other countries, corruption at various levels of government is apparent, and often makes for big headlines. In the past decade, the federal sponsorship scandal dominated federal politics for a period of time, and was instrumental in the downfall of the Liberal Party of Canada.

BRIBERY AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS. In some countries, petty bribery is a common practice of exchange for obtaining needed public services or avoiding public sanctions, such as traffic tickets. Such activity happens in Canada as well, but appears to be infrequent. Only three percent of Canadians report having been *asked for a bribe by a police officer* in the past 12 months, and comparable to the proportion reported in 2010 (1%). Incidence of being asked for a bribe by a police officer is marginally higher in Alberta (6%) and among those aged 18 to 29 (5%).

Similarly, only two percent of Canadians report having been *asked for a bribe by a government employee* in the last 12 months, consistent with findings from 2006 (1%) and 2010 (2%). The prevalence of such experiences is similar across the population, but is a bit higher in British Columbia (5%).

International comparison

Canadians and Americans report the lowest levels of requests for bribes from police officers and government employees. Such experiences are noticeably higher in other countries, notably Mexico (20%), Bolivia (19%) and Guatemala (18%) in the case of police officers, and Haiti in the case of government employees (17%).

Asked for a bribe in last 12 months

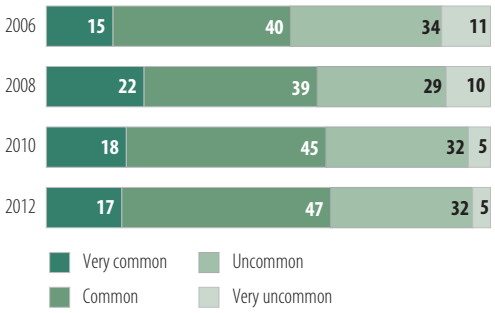
CORRUPTION AMONG PUBLIC OFFICIALS. Apart from direct experience, what is the public's perception about the prevalence of government corruption in Canada today? While very few may be confronted with public servants asking for bribes, most believe corruption is a common part of the country's governance.

Based on their own experience or what they hear, almost two-thirds of Canadians believe that corruption among public officials is very common (17%) or common (47%), compared with one-third (32%) who say it is uncommon, and only five percent who maintain it is very uncommon. These results are largely unchanged at the national level since 2006, except for a modest decline in the proportion who believe corruption among public officials in Canada is very uncommon.

Public views about the breadth of government corruption vary across the country. Quebec stands out as the province where such corruption is most widely seen as very common (32%) and where it has increased noticeably since 2008 (influenced in part by the current media stories about irregularities surrounding construction industry contracts that pressured the provincial government to set up an independent inquiry. Elsewhere in Canada, the public is much less apt to believe government corruption is very common (the lowest being Alberta at 6%), and this view has diminished in these regions of the country since 2008.

The view that government corruption is very common is also more prevalent in smaller communities (less than 5,000 residents) (27%) and among those with lower socio-economic status (household income and education). Canadians who place themselves on the left of the political spectrum (69%) are also slightly more likely to say corruption is common than those on the right (57%), as was also the case in 2010.

Corruption among public officials

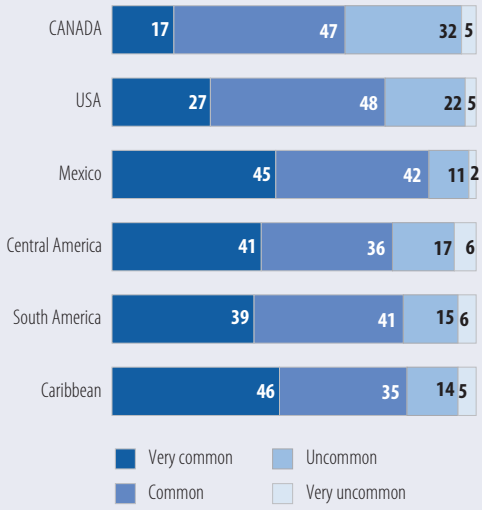


International comparison

Canadians are less likely than citizens of any other country to say corruption is very common among public officials, with the notable exception of Suriname (6%). The view that such corruption is very common is held by at least four in ten citizens in many countries, including Columbia (60%), the Dominican Republic (59%), Peru (53%), Argentina (51%), Honduras (52%), Panama (50%) and Mexico (45%).

Perception of government corruption across the hemisphere have decreased marginally since 2006, with the most significant declines in Nicaragua, Ecuador, Chile and Brazil, while increasing most noticeably in Colombia.

Corruption among political officials



Addressing Income Inequality

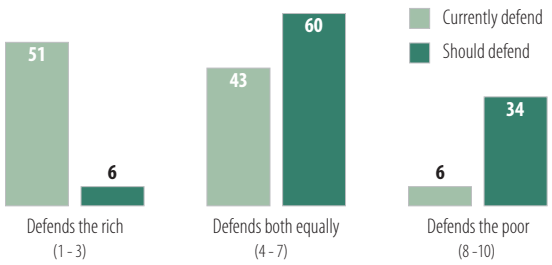
There have always been significant disparities in wealth in society, but this reality gained new prominence in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis and subsequent anemic recovery. Statistics published by the OECD document a growing divide between the haves and have-nots in many countries, a situation that is contributing to economic and political unrest in many parts of the world. How do Canadians see this issue, and what would they like to see done about it?

Defending the rich versus the poor

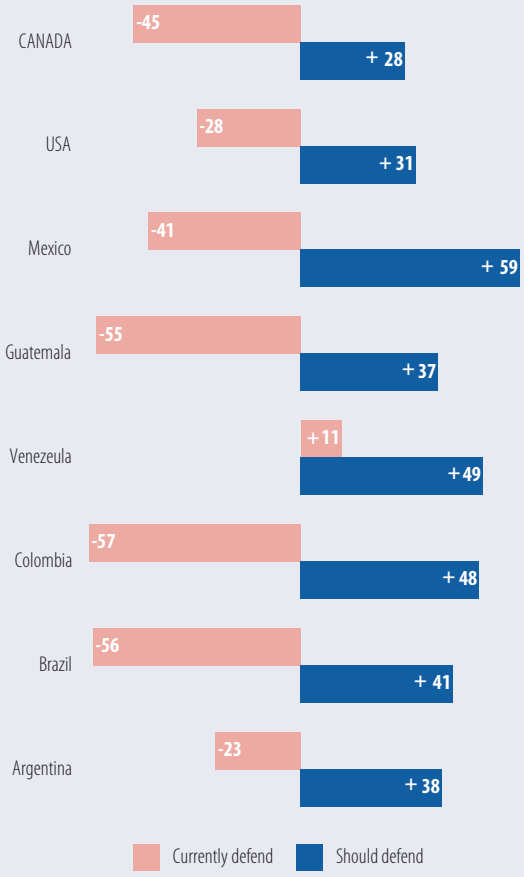
While the wealthy "one percent" of the population is a primary target for discontent, much of the blame for growing income inequality is placed on government policies that are seen as favouring the rich. This sentiment is clearly evident in Canada, in terms of a mismatch between what they see as governments' current priorities and what they think they should be.

When asked to rate their politicians in terms whose interests they currently defend, Canadians are much more likely to say they favour the rich (51%) than the poor (6%). When asked to rate where they would like to see their politicians' focus, there is greater emphasis on defending the poor (34%) than the rich (6%), although a majority (60%) say they should give equal favour to both ends of the income spectrum.

Who do Canadian politicians defend?



Politicians defending the poor over the rich*



* Index = % defends the poor minus % defends the rich

International comparison

Public attitudes about politicians' priorities follow roughly the same pattern across most of the 12 countries that included these questions in the survey. In all but one country, citizens tend to believe their politicians favour the rich over the poor but should be doing otherwise, although the proportion expressing this view varies with respect to current priorities. Politicians are most likely to see their politicians currently favouring the rich over the poor in Guatemala, Colombia and Brazil, while this is much less the case in the USA and Argentina. Venezuelans stand out in being more likely to say their politicians favour the poor (29%) rather than the rich (18%).

There is more agreement across the hemisphere in terms of looking to politicians to place greater emphasis on defending the poor, although those in Canada and the USA are less likely than others to share this perspective.

Combining the results of these two questions highlights the disconnect between where Canadians think politicians currently stand and where they would like them to stand. A clear majority express such a disconnect, which is composed of two groups: One in three (35%) believe politicians currently defend the rich when they should be defending the poor, while a similar proportion (36%) feel politicians now defend the rich but should give equal weight to rich and poor. Only one percent say politicians currently defend the poor but should defend the rich.

The remaining third of the population does not see a mismatch in politicians' priorities: seven percent agree with their current favouring the rich, another seven percent endorse their current defence of the poor, and another 16 percent view current and preferred priorities as roughly balanced between rich and poor.

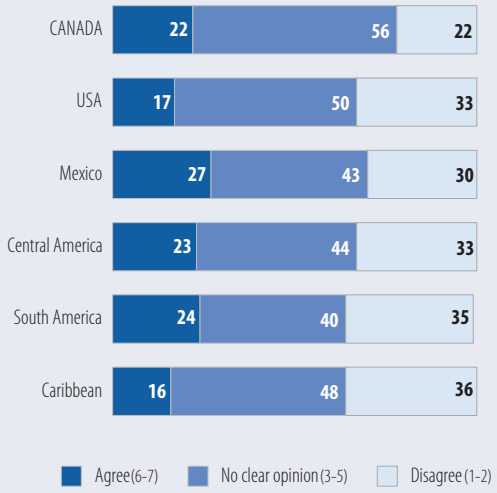
These segments of the Canadian population have a few distinct characteristics. Those who think politicians currently defend the rich, but would like to see them defend the poor, are most likely to live in Atlantic Canada, live in smaller communities, are among the lowest income earners, and identify with the political left. Those who think politicians currently defend the rich, but would like to see a more balanced treatment of rich and poor, tend to live in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, be among the top income earners, identify with the middle or right politically, and be female.

Attitudes towards those getting help from government. One of the primary arguments against government assistance programs is that they create a dependency that keeps low-income individuals from becoming self-sufficient. Public opinion on this issue is mixed, with relatively few holding strong views. In responding to the statement *"Some people say that people who get help from government social assistance programs are lazy,"* one in five (22%) Canadians agree, the same proportion (22%) disagree and the majority (56%) have no clear opinion either way. Opinions on this question do not vary significantly across the country. Agreement is a bit stronger in eastern Canada and those on the political right, while disagreement is more pronounced among low-income Canadians (41%) and those on the left (40%).

International comparison

Public opinion about whether government program recipients are lazy is generally similar across the hemisphere, but Canadians are less likely than citizens in most other countries to disagree on this view (only Argentinians (16%) are less likely to disagree). Agreement is most pronounced in Argentina (44%), Uruguay (39%), Venezuela (31%) and Belize (30%), and least evident in Haiti (9%). Disagreement is most widespread in Guyana (59%) and Nicaragua (46%).

People who get help from government social assistance programs are lazy

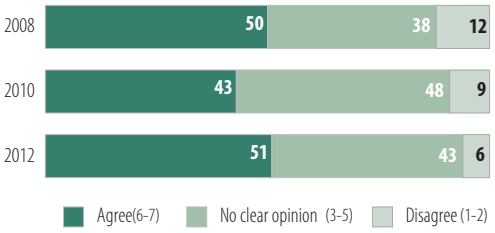


Government action to reduce income inequality

SHOULD GOVERNMENT BE ACTIVE IN ADDRESSING INCOME INEQUALITY? Given the perceived mismatch in politicians' priorities vis à vis the rich and poor, it is not surprising there is strong public support for more active government intervention to address this issue. Half (51%) of Canadians agree their federal government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor, compared with only six percent who disagree. The results to this question are similar to results from 2008, where roughly the same proportion of Canadians indicated this level of agreement.

Opinions on this question vary considerably across the country, with support for active government intervention expressed by two-thirds (66%) of Quebecers, compared with four in ten or fewer residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan (38%) and Alberta (36%). Such support is also highest among Canadians aged 45 to 59, and those with lower levels of education and income. Predictably, views on this issue vary strongly by political orientation, as those on the left of the spectrum (71%) are nearly twice as likely to agree with this statement as those on the right (37%). This gap has increased in the last several years, as support for government intervention among those on the left has increased dramatically since 2010, while opinions of those on the right have increased to a smaller degree.

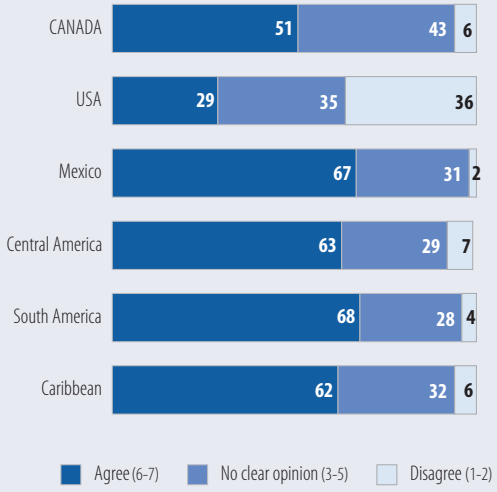
Government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality



International comparison

Canadians' support for an activist federal government on income inequality is not as strong as in Latin America and the Caribbean, but is double the level expressed in the USA (the lone country where opposition outweighs support). Close to eight in ten citizens express support for a more active national government effort to address income disparities in Suriname, Uruguay, Nicaragua and the Domincan Republic. Other than the USA (29%), the only other country where such support falls below the 50 percent mark is Haiti (45%).

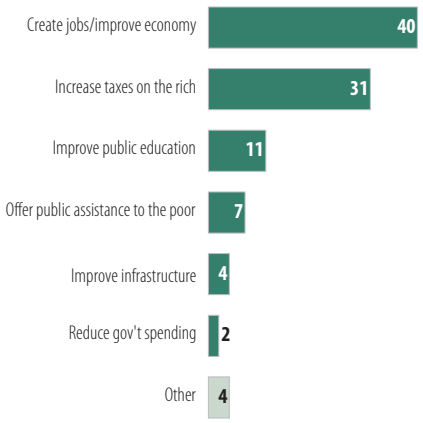
Government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality



HOW TO ADDRESS INCOME INEQUALITY? How might government best reduce poverty and inequality in Canada? Among a list of six policy options, Canadians are most likely to say the best approach is to create jobs or improve the economy (40%), or increase taxes on the rich (31%) (the survey only accepted one response). Fewer emphasized improving public education, offering public assistance to the poor, improving infrastructure or reducing government spending. Four percent offered a range of other policy approaches that were not presented on the survey.

Creating jobs and improving the economy is most widely identified in Ontario (46%, especially in Toronto), in comparison with increasing taxes (26%). Elsewhere in the country, Canadians are more divided between the two top options. Focus on job creation, while increasing with education and income, and is also higher among immigrants, women and Canadians on the political right. Helping address income inequality through higher taxes on the rich is most popular among rural Canadians, francophones, older citizens, those with the lowest incomes and those on the political left.

What should government do to reduce poverty and inequality



International comparison

Citizens across much of the hemisphere are most likely to identify job creation and economic growth as the best way for government to address poverty and inequality in their country, although this view is least evident in Canada among the 12 countries surveyed on this question. Canadians, followed by Americans, are most apt to look to increasing taxes on the rich, a policy that receives only single-digit emphasize elsewhere, with the exception of Chile (15%).

What should government do to reduce poverty and inequality?

	Create jobs/improve economy	Increase taxes on the rich	Improve public education	Offer assistance to the poor	Other
CANADA	40	31	11	7	10
United States	53	22	12	5	8
Mexico	73	5	10	8	4
Guatemala	72	6	7	8	6
Costa Rica	84	3	5	5	4
Venezeula	90	*	4	3	3
Colombia	73	3	8	9	7
Peru	73	6	10	5	6
Brazil	69	2	15	7	8
Chile	59	15	16	7	3
Uruguay	73	4	17	3	4
Argentina	83	4	7	3	4

* Less than one percent

GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE ECONOMY.

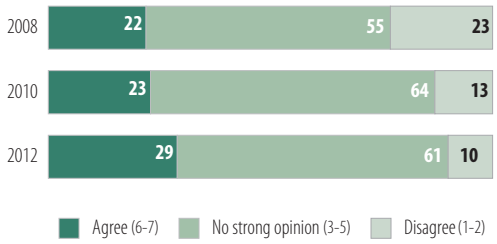
Given the importance placed on addressing income disparities through the job creation and economic growth, how much of a role do Canadians believe government should have in the nation's economy? There is no public consensus on this question, but Canadians are three times as likely to agree (29%) as disagree (10%) with the statement that *"The Canadian government, more than the private sector, should be primarily responsible for creating jobs."* This reflects a noticeable shift in support for this idea since 2008.

Agreement in the importance of the federal government in creating jobs is most widely expressed in Quebec, among rural Canadians, and those with the least education and income, and those on the political left (38%). Support is least evident in the Prairies and among those on the political right (26%; although this still outweighs those in this group who disagree, 19%).

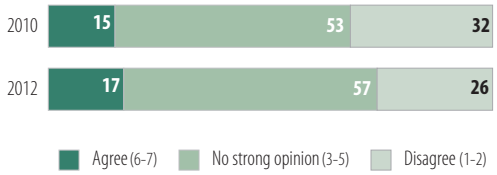
The public is less supportive of government ownership in key industries as a way to promote economic growth. Only one in six (17%) Canadians agree that *"The Canadian government, instead of the private sector, should own the most important industries,"* compared with 26 percent who disagree. Opposition to government ownership has declined somewhat since 2010.

Three is limited support for government ownership of key industries across the country, exceeding one in four Canadians only among those on the political left (29%) and those high on the civic action index (29%). Disagreement with the statement is most evident among those 60-plus (34%) and those on the political right (35%).

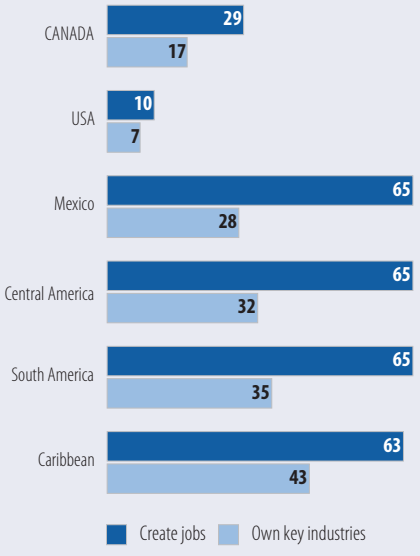
The Canadian government, more than the private sector, should be primarily responsible for creating jobs



The Canadian government, more than the private sector, should own the most important industries



National government should have primary responsibility*



* Percent agree

International comparison

Public attitudes about the role of national governments in the domestic economy divide sharply along the Rio Grande River. Canadians are lukewarm, while Americans are mostly opposed to their government having a primary responsibility for job creation or owning major industries.

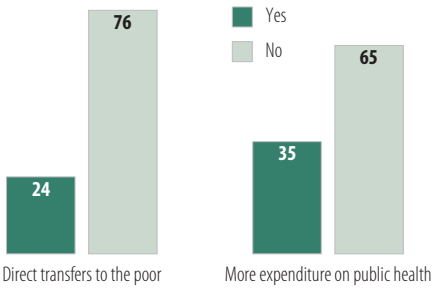
Elsewhere in the hemisphere, citizens are much more supportive of an active government role, especially in terms of job creation (supported by at least eight in ten citizens in Nicaragua, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic. Public support for nationalization of key industries is not quite as widespread, but endorsed by majorities in Belize (53%), Panama (51%), Suriname (52%) and Paraguay (53%).

WILLINGNESS TO PAY MORE TAXES. Reducing income inequality actively through government programs can be achieved through programs that benefit everyone or by targeting those most in need. Such programs are already well-established in Canada (i.e., the Canada Social Transfer and the equalization payment program). But is the priority for reducing inequality high enough in the public's mind, however, to justify higher taxes? For the majority of Canadians, the answer is no.

Transfer payments to the poor. When asked if they would be willing to pay more taxes than they currently do so that the government can spend more on direct income transfers to the poor, only one in four (24%) Canadians say yes. This level of support is roughly the same across the country, but varies most noticeably by household income and political orientation: Not surprisingly, willingness to consider paying more tax to support those less fortunate is much higher among Canadians on the political left (43%) than among those on the right (21%), but there is just as sharp a divide among those in the bottom income bracket (household incomes under $30K) (40%) and those at the top end of the scale (more than $100K) (18%).

Greater expenditure on public health. Canadians are marginally more supportive of paying more tax than they currently do so that government can spend more on public health services (35%). Support for higher taxes of this type is highest in Toronto (44%) and lowest in Quebec (28%). There are few differences across demographic strata (including household income), but once again the issue of taxes divides along political orientation, with greater support on the left (50%) than on the right (33%).

Willing to pay more taxes to fund ...



International comparison

Canadians (24%) and Americans (25%) express a similar level of support for paying higher taxes to help the poor, with Mexicans (17%) somewhat less apt to share this view. Among the nine other countries in which this question was asked, support is strongest in Uruguay (42%) and Costa Rica (34%), and weakest in Guatemala (11%).

As in Canada, citizens in other countries are also somewhat more likely to consider paying more taxes for public health services. Again, Americans' (34%) level of support is comparable to Canadians. Elsewhere, such willingness is most widespread in Uruguay (56%), Venezuela (44%) and Argentina (42%), and least so in Guatemala (16%).

Willing to pay more taxes to increase income transfers to the poor

The Economy, Life Satisfaction and Religion: Canada in the Americas Context

This final section focuses on topics outside the main themes covered in the AmericasBarometer 2012 study, but which further enhance our understanding of how Canadians compare with citizens in other countries throughout the western hemisphere. Included are questions about overall life satisfaction, the economy and household financial well-being, the importance of religion and desirable traits in children.

Overall life satisfaction

The very first question on the survey asks respondents how satisfied they are in general with their life.

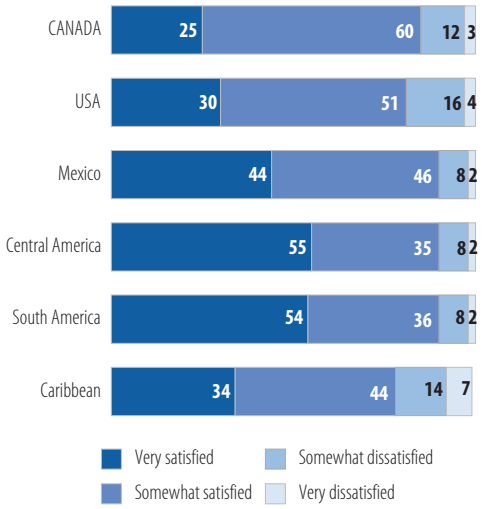
More than eight in ten Canadians report to be at least "somewhat" with their lives, but only one in four (25%) are "very" satisfied, and this reflects a modest decline since 2010, when 29 percent made this assessment.

Canadians are less likely than citizens of most other countries to describe themselves as very satisfied with their lives, although no more apt to say they are dissatisfied. Citizens in Central and South America are most likely to say they are very satisfied with their lives, although there is considerable variation across countries: This assessment is reported by six in ten or more residents of such countries as Brazil, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama and the Dominican Republic, compared with fewer than one in six living in Haiti and Suriname. Dissatisfaction is most evident in Haiti (33%), although this is a dramatic improvement since 2010 and before.

Across the Americas, life satisfaction ratings have improved in most countries, especially since 2010.

In Canada, strong life satisfaction is most widespread in Atlantic Canada and Manitoba/Saskatchewan, as well as among Canadians 60-plus and those on the political right. This assessment is least apt to be reported among residents of Montreal, those in the lowest income bracket and those on the political left. Since 2010, strong life satisfaction declined most noticeably among Canadians aged 45 and over.

Overall satisfaction with your life



It would seem counterintuitive that citizens of wealthy countries like Canada and the USA would be less likely to be very satisfied with their lives overall. International studies generally show that happiness (a related measure) generally increases with income, although it is also been documented by Canadian economist John Helliwell and others that income is only one of many factors influencing personal happiness, others being social support, mental health and individual values. Canadians may indeed be among the wealthiest of the hemisphere's citizens; but their frame of reference is themselves and other Canadians, and the recent recession and other trends (stagnant incomes, youth unemployment) may be having an impact. Evidence for this comes from the recently-reported decline in the newly-developed Index of Canadian Wellbeing over the 2008 –2010 period.

National economic trends

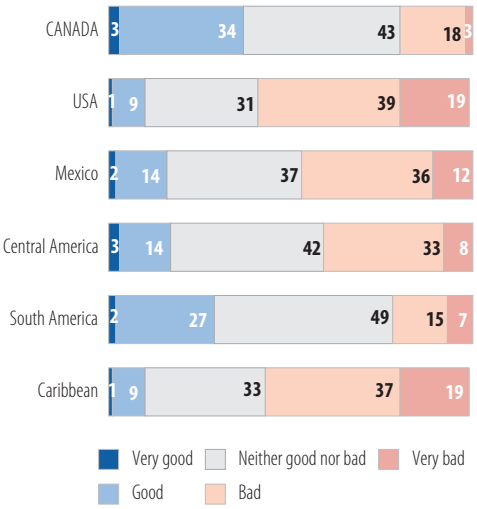
CURRENT NATIONAL ECONOMY. Canadians may not be the happiest citizens, but they are far and away among the most positive about their national economy. Close to four in ten (37%) describe the country's current economy as good or very good, compared with 21 percent who say it is bad or very bad. This stands in sharp contrast to citizens of many other countries in other regions. Only Uruguayans are more upbeat (43% good versus 13% bad). The most negative assessments are given in El Salvador, Haiti, the Dominican Republic and the USA.

Canadians' assessment of their current national economy has remained steady since 2010. Views about the country's economy are the most positive among residents of Alberta, Manitoba/Saskatchewan, and Toronto, as well as younger Canadians, men, immigrants, those with more education and income, those on the political right and those very satisfied with their life overall. Negative assessments are most evident in Quebec, and among Canadians with the least education and income.

ECONOMY COMPARED WITH LAST YEAR. Despite the generally positive views on the Canadian economy, only one in five (20%) say that the current economic situation is now better than it was 12 months ago, compared with one-quarter (23%) who believe it is now worse. This represents a sharp drop from 2010, when almost twice as many (37%) felt the economy was improving (versus 21% who said it was getting worse). Canadians' perceptions of the economic trend is largely similar to the hemispheric average, although somewhat less apt to feel their economy is getting worse. A positive economic trend is most apt to be reported by citizens of Uruguay (38%) and Suriname (33%), while a declining trend is most evident in Honduras (59%), the Dominican Republic (58%) and El Salvador (55%).

In Canada, residents of Alberta (34%) are most likely to see the economy improving, along with younger Canadians, those with higher incomes and education, and those on the political right. This perspective is least apt to be shared by Quebecers (9%), Canadians with the least income and those on the political left.

Your country's current economic situation



Household financial circumstances

CURRENT HOUSEHOLD FINANCES. In terms of individuals' own household financial situation, Canadians are twice as likely to describe it as very good (5%) or good (35%), as describe it as bad (16%) or very bad (4%), and this assessment is essentially unchanged from 2010. Predictably, Canadians are more upbeat than citizens in most other countries in the hemisphere, although by no means the most positive. Good or very good household finances are reported by four in ten or more of those living in the South American countries of Brazil, Argentina, Guyana and Ecuador, and are least evident in Haiti (12%) and the Dominican Republic (14%), where four in ten describe their situation as bad.

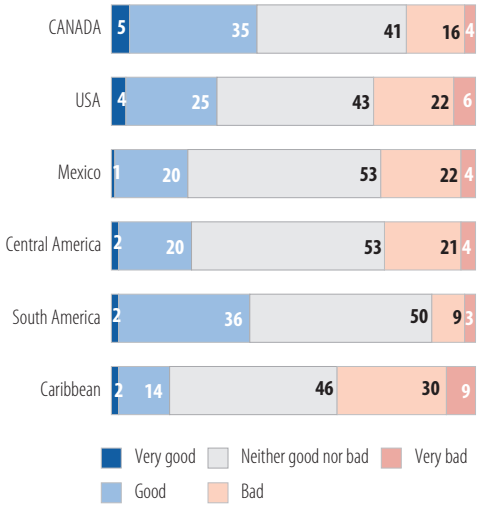
Across the Americas, household economic circumstances have shown improvement, especially since 2010. In some countries the lowest point was in 2008 (e.g. Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras), and in others the high point was in 2010 (Peru, Bolivia, Chile).

In Canada, descriptions of personal economic circumstances vary predictably by household income, ranging from 19 percent among those earning annual household incomes of less than $30K, to 70 percent among those earning more than $100K. To a lesser degree, positive reports are more prevalent among residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan (51%) (versus 34% in B.C.), those 60-plus, immigrants and those on the political right.

PERSONAL ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES COMPARED WITH LAST YEAR. While Canadians are among the most positive about their personal economic circumstances, their sense of how this has changed or not over the past year falls largely on the hemispheric average. One in five (20%) report their circumstances have improved, while a slightly larger proportion (24%) say it is now worse (the rest saying there has been no change). These results are essentially unchanged from 2010.

As with current assessment, it is South Americans who are most likely to report their personal finances have improved over the past year, notably those in Uruguay (38%) and Brazil (34%). Worsening conditions are most widely described by citizens of the Dominican Republic (46%), Honduras (43%) and El Salvador (40%), with this assessment reported by one in three Mexicans (34%) and Americans (32%).

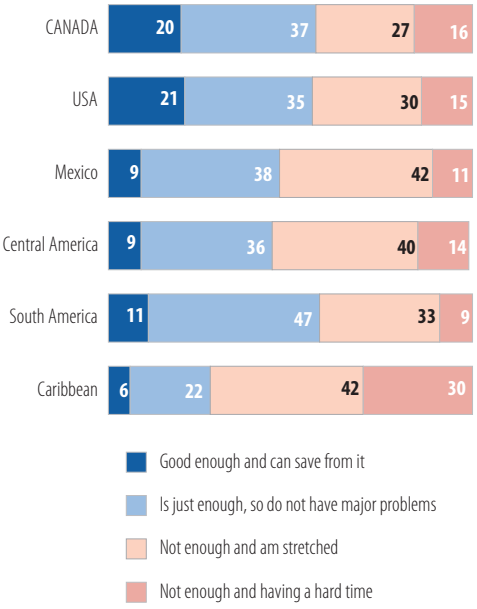
Your own current economic situation



ADEQUACY OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME. Overall income is an important predictor of economic well-being, but perhaps more important is the extent to which income is sufficient to meet individuals' needs. Close to six in ten Canadians report their current household income is adequate, either that it is "good enough for them and they can save from it" (20%) or "is just enough so they do not have any major problems" (37%). More than one in four (27%) say their income "is not enough for them and they are stretched," while one in six (16%) go farther in reporting it "is not enough and they are having a hard time." These proportions are essentially unchanged since 2010. Adequacy of income is a good predictor of overall life satisfaction: Not having enough income is reported by one in five (21%) Canadians very satisfied with their lives, compared with 67 percent of those who are dissatisfied.

Compared with the hemispheric average, Canadians are somewhat more represented at both extremes, as are Americans. The variation across countries is not as significant as national economies might predict – in every country, a majority of citizens place themselves in one of the two middle categories. The Caribbean presents the greatest contrast, as citizens of Trinidad and Tobago are the most likely of all to say they have enough and can save (26%), while economic hardship is most widely reported in Jamaica (32%), the Dominican Republic (31%) and Haiti (30%).

Your own current household income is ...



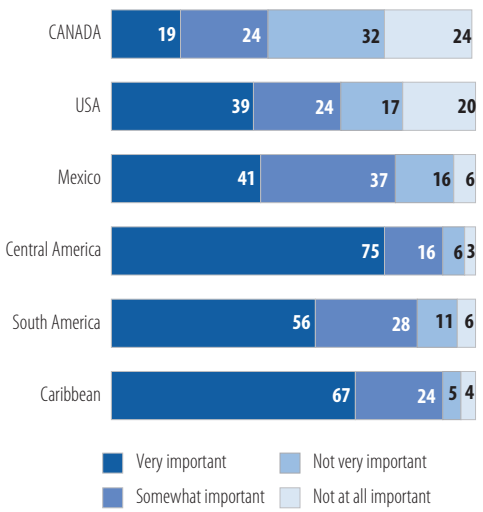
IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION

Other research has documented a gradual decline in Canadians' affiliation to religious faiths, and this suggests that religion itself is becoming less important generally. One in five (19%) say religion is very important in their life and another 24 percent indicate it is somewhat important, while the majority maintain it is not very (32%) or not at all (24%) important. These proportions are essentially unchanged since 2010.

On this question, Canada stands out clearly from almost every other country in the western hemisphere – especially those in Central America and the Caribbean, where strong majorities say religion is very important, most widely in El Salvador (85%) and Guatemala (80%). The only other country comparable to Canada on this issue is Uruguay (where 23% say very important, versus 38% who say not at all).

In Canada, religion is most apt to be seen as very important among residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Canadians 60-plus, immigrants, those on the political right and evangelical Christians. Those most apt to say religion is not at all important to them include residents of B.C. and Quebec, Canadians under 45 years of age, those in the top income bracket and those on the political left. Importance on religion is positively correlated with overall life satisfaction.

Importance of religion in your life



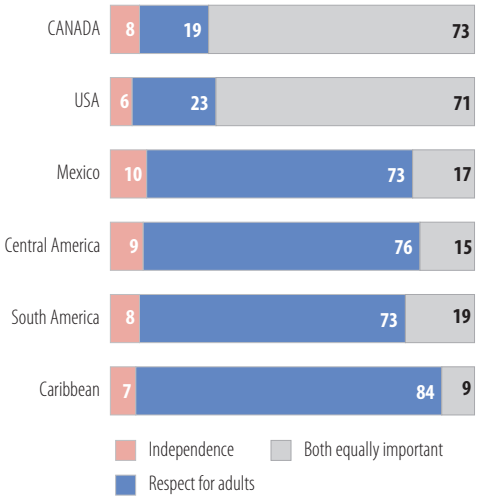
DESIRABLE TRAITS IN CHILDREN

An interesting indicator of social values is what people consider to be positive traits for children to have. This year's survey asked whether it is most important for children to have "independence" or "respect for adults," or both of these traits equally. On this question, Canada and the USA stand in sharp contrast to the rest of the hemisphere: most citizens of both countries say that both of these traits are of equal importance in raising children.

By comparison, a clear majority in every other country places the greatest emphasis on respect for adults. The breadth of this view is most widespread in the Dominican Republic (94%), El Salvador (92%) and Nicaragua (89%), and comparatively lower in Chile (56%). No more than one in ten citizens in any country believe that independence is more important than respect for adults (with this perspective most evident in Peru (13%) and Honduras (12%).

The view that children should be raised with both independence and respect for adults is the clear majority view across Canada. Respect for adults attracts somewhat more of an endorsement in Quebec and Vancouver (25% in each), among men (23%) and evangelical Christians (31%). Independence is most apt to be favoured among Canadians on the political left (15%).

Most important characteristic for children



Appendix A:

AmericasBarometer – International Partners

NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

- Algonquin College
- The Environics Institute for Survey Research
- Université Laval
- York University

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- Miami Consortium for Latin American & Caribbean Studies
- Project on Ethnicity and Race in Latin America (PERLA)
- Vanderbilt University

MEXICO

- Data – Opinión Publica y Mercados (DATA-OPM)
- Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México

CENTRAL AMERICA

BELIZE

- Borge y Asociados

COSTA RICA

- Estado de la Nacion
- Centro Centroamericano de Población (CCP)/Universidad de Costa Rica

EL SALVADOR

- Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (Funda Ungo)

GUATEMALA

- Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASIES)

HONDURAS

- Federación de Organizaciones No Gubernamentales para el Desarrollo de Honduras (FOPRIDEH)
- Hagamos Democracia

NICARAGUA

- Red Nicaragüenese por la Democracia y el Desarrollo Local

PANAMA

- Centro de Iniciativas Democráticas (CIDEM)

SOUTH AMERICA

ARGENTINA

- Centro de Implementación de Políticas Públicas para la Equidad y el Crecimiento (CIPPEC)
- Universidad Torcuato Di Tella

BOLIVIA

- Ciudadanía – Comunidad de Estudios Sociales y Acción Pública
- Embajada De Suecia

BRAZIL

- Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq)
- Universidade de Brasília

CHILE

- Instituto de Ciencia Política (ICP)/Pontifica Universidad Católica de Chile

COLOMBIA

- Observatorio de la Democracia
- Facultad de Ciencias Sociales/Universidad de Los Andes

ECUADOR

- Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales Sede Ecuador (FLACSO)
- Prime Consulting
- Universidad San Francisco de Quito

PARAGUAY

- Centro de Información y Recursos para el Desarrollo (CIRD)

PERU

- Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)

SURINAME

- Anton de Kom Universiteit van Suriname

URUGUAY

- CIFRA González Raga & Asociados
- Universidad de Montevideo

VENEZUELA

- Centro de Investigación Social (CISOR)
- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

CARIBBEAN

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

- Gallup República Dominicana
- Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo (INTEC)

GUYANA

- Development Policy and Management Consultants

HAITI

- Université d'Etat d'Haïti

JAMAICA

- The University of the West Indies

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

- The University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago

Appendix B:

AmericasBarometer 2012 – Canadian Questionnaire (English)

THE ENVIRONICS INSTITUTE

Latin American Public Opinion Project LAPOP Proyecto de Opinión Pública de América Latina

AmericasBarometer by LAPOP Barómetro de las Américas www.AmericasBarometer.org

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

AmericasBarometer: Canada Online Survey, 2012

SPLASH PAGE

Thank you for participating in this survey, which is part of an international (26-country) study covering a broad range of topics. The Canadian survey is being conducted by the non-profit Environics Institute.

The survey will take about 20 minutes to complete. You must provide a response to all questions, but some offer a "decline to answer" option.

To move forward in the survey, please click on the Next button located in the bottom left of your screen. Do not use your browser buttons.

More information about the international study is provided at the end of the survey.

[Numbers in brackets indicate previous waves of the Canadian survey]

1. (LS3) *[10]* To begin, in general how satisfied are you with your life? Would you say that you are...?
(1) Very satisfied (2) Somewhat satisfied (3) Somewhat dissatisfied (4) Very dissatisfied

2. (SOCT1) *[10]* How would you describe **the country's** economic situation?
(1) Very good (2) Good (3) Neither good nor bad (fair) (4) Bad (5) Very bad

3. (SOCT2) *[10]* Do you think that **the country's** current economic situation is better than, the same as or worse than it was **12 months ago**?
(1) Better (2) Same (3) Worse

4. (IDIO1) *[10]* How would you describe **your** overall economic situation?
(1) Very good (2) Good (3) Neither good nor bad (fair) (4) Bad (5) Very bad

5. (IDIO2) *[10]* Do you think that **your** economic situation is better than, the same as, or worse than it was 12 months ago?
(1) Better (2) Same (3) Worse

Now, moving on to a different subject, sometimes people and communities have problems that they cannot solve by themselves, and so in order to solve them they request help from a government official or agency.

	Yes	No	
6. (CP4A) *[10]* In order to solve your problems have you ever requested help or cooperation from a local public official or local government (for example, a mayor, municipal council, provincial official, or provincial premier)?	1	2	

Now let's talk about your local municipality...

7. (NP1) *[06/10]* Have you attended a town meeting, city council meeting or other meeting in the past 12 months?
(1) Yes (2) No

8. (NP2) *[10]* Have you sought assistance from or presented a request to any office, official or councillor of the municipality within the past 12 months?
(1) Yes [Continue] (2) No [Go to SGL1]

9. (MUNI10) *[10]* Did they resolve your issue or request?
(1) Yes (0) No

10. (SGL1) *[10]* Would you say that the services the municipality is providing to the people are...? (1) Very good (2) Good (3) Neither good nor bad (fair) (4) Bad (5) Very bad

	Once a week	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a year	Never		
11. (CP5) *[10]* Now, changing the subject. In the last 12 months have you tried to help to solve a problem in your community or in your neighborhood? Please, tell us if you did it at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year or never in the last 12 months.	1	2	3	4		

12. *[06/08/10]* For each of the following groups and organizations, please indicate if you attend their meetings at least once a week, once or twice a month, once or twice a year, or never.

	Once a week	Once or twice a month	Once or twice a year	Never		
a. (CP6) *[06/08/10]* Meetings of any religious organization?	1	2	3	4		
b. (CP7) *[06/08/10]* Meetings of a parents' association at school?	1	2	3	4		
c. (CP8) *[06/08/10]* Meetings of a community improvement committee or association?	1	2	3	4		

13. (IT1) *[06/08/10]* And speaking of the people from around here, would you say that people in your community are very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy or untrustworthy...?
(1) Very trustworthy (2) Somewhat trustworthy (3) Not very trustworthy (4) Untrustworthy

14. (AB 2006/2008/Q.26) *[06/08/]* In a few words, what does **"democracy"** mean to you?
PLEASE TYPE IN YOUR RESPONSE – NO MORE THAN 10 WORDS

(88) Decline to answer

15. (L1) Now, to change the subject....The following scale goes from left to right, where "1" means LEFT and "10" means RIGHT. Nowadays, when we speak of political leanings, we talk of those on the left and those on the right. In other words, some people sympathize more with the left and others with the right.

According to the meaning that the terms "left" and "right" have for you, and thinking of your own political leanings, where would you place yourself on this scale?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Decline to answer (88)
Left									**Right**	

16. (GI0) *[10]* We would like to know how much information people have about politics and the country. About how often do you pay attention to the news, whether on TV, the radio, newspapers or the internet?
(1) Daily (2) A few times a week (3) A few times a month (4) Rarely (5) Never

17. (PROT3) *[10]* In the **last 12 months**, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?
(1) Yes (2) No

18. (PROT6) In the **last 12 months** have you signed any petition?
(1) Yes (2) No

19. (PROT8) And in the last twelve months, have you read or shared **political information** through any social network website, such as Twitter or Facebook?
(1) Yes, has done (2) No, has not done

20. (JC15A) *[10]* Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the Prime Minister to close the Parliament, and govern without Parliament?	(1) Yes, it is justified	(2) No, it is not justified
21. (JC16A) *[10]* Do you believe that when the country is facing very difficult times it is justifiable for the Prime Minister to dissolve the Supreme Court, and govern without the Supreme Court?	(1) Yes, it is justified	(2) No, it is not justified

22. (VIC1EXT) *[06/08/10]* Now, changing the subject, have you been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, have you been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or any other type of crime in the past 12 months?
(1) Yes [Continue] (2) No [Skip toVIC1HOGAR] (88) Decline to answer [Skip toVIC1HOGAR]

23. (VIC1EXTA) *[10]* How many times have you been a crime victim during the last 12 months? ____ [fill in number] (88) Decline to answer

24. (VIC1HOGAR) *[10]* Has any other person living in your household been a victim of any type of crime in the past 12 months? That is, has any other person living in your household been a victim of robbery, burglary, assault, fraud, blackmail, extortion, violent threats or **any other type** of crime in the past 12 months?
(1) Yes (2) No (99) No one else in household (88) Decline to answer

25. (AOJ8) *[10]* In order to catch criminals, do you believe that the authorities should always abide by the law or that occasionally they can cross the line?
(1) Should always abide by the law (2) Occasionally can cross the line

26. (AOJ11) *[06/08/10]* Speaking of the neighborhood where you live and thinking of the possibility of being assaulted or robbed, do you feel very safe, somewhat safe, somewhat **un**safe or very **un**safe?
(1) Very safe (2) Somewhat safe (3) Somewhat unsafe (4) Very unsafe

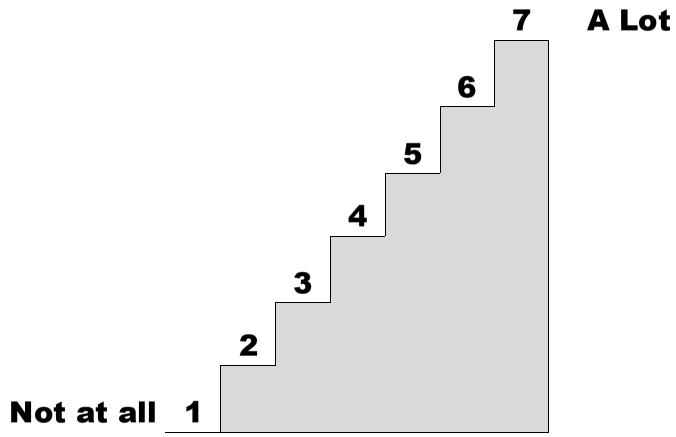
27. (AOJ12) *[10]* If you were a victim of a robbery or assault how much faith do you have that the judicial system would punish the guilty?
(1) A lot (2) Some (3) Little (4) None

28. (AOJ17) *[10]* To what extent do you think your neighborhood is affected by gangs?
(1) A lot (2) Somewhat (3) Little (4) None

29. Here is a staircase with steps numbered 1 to 7, where "1" is the lowest step and means NOT AT ALL and "7" the highest and means A LOT.

x. FOR EXAMPLE: If we asked you to what extent do you like watching television, if you don't like watching it at all, you would choose a score of 1, and if, in contrast, you like watching television a lot, you would indicate the number 7. If your opinion is between not at all and a lot, you would choose an intermediate score.

So, to what extent do you like watching television?

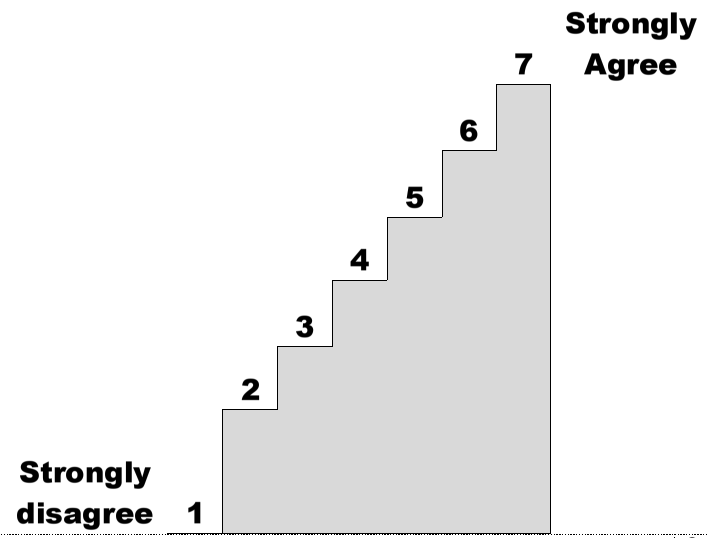


We are going to ask you a series of questions, and ask that you use the numbers provided in the staircase to answer. Remember, you can use any number. **a.** (B1) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you think **the courts in Canada guarantee a fair trial**? *If you think the courts do not ensure justice at all, choose number 1; if you think the courts ensure justice a lot, choose number 7 or choose a point in between the two.*	Coded 1-7
b. (B2) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you respect **the political institutions of Canada**?	Coded 1-7
c. (B3) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you think that **citizens' basic rights are well protected by the political system of Canada?**	Coded 1-7
d. (B4) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you **feel proud of living under the political system of Canada**?	Coded 1-7
e. (B6) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you think that **one should support the political system of Canada**?	Coded 1-7
f. (B10A) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you **trust the justice system**?	Coded 1-7

g. (B12) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you **trust the Canadian Armed Forces**?	Coded 1-7
h. (B13) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you **trust the Parliament**?	Coded 1-7
i. (B18) *[10]* To what extent do you **trust the RCMP**?	Coded 1-7
j. (B21) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you **trust political parties**?	Coded 1-7
k. (B21A) *[10]* To what extent do you **trust the Prime Minister**?	Coded 1-7
l. (B31) *[06/08/10]* To what extent do you **trust the Supreme Court**?	Coded 1-7
n. (B32) *[10]* To what extent do you **trust your municipal government**?	Coded 1-7
o. (B43) *[06/08/10]* To what extent are you **proud of being a Canadian**?	Coded 1-7
p. (B37) *[10]* To what extent do you **trust the mass media**?	Coded 1-7

30. (M1) *[10]* Speaking in general of the current government, how would you rate the job performance of Prime Minister Harper? (1) Very good (2) Good (3) Neither good nor bad (fair) (4) Bad (5) Very bad	

31. Now we will use a similar staircase, but this time "1" means STRONGLY DISAGREE and "7" means STRONGLY AGREE. A number in between 1 and 7 represents an intermediate score.



Taking into account the current situation of this country, and using the staircase, we would like you to tell us how much you agree or disagree with the following statements. **a.** (POP101) *[10]* It is necessary for the progress of this country that our prime ministers limit the voice and vote of opposition parties.	Coded 1-7
b. (POP107) *[08/10]* The people should govern directly **rather than** through elected representatives.	Coded 1-7
c. (POP113) *[08/10]* Those who disagree with the majority represent a threat to the country.	Coded 1-7
d. (EFF1) *[10]* Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think.	Coded 1-7
e. (EFF2) *[10]* You feel that you understand the most important political issues of this country.	Coded 1-7
f. (ING4) *[06/08/10]* Democracy may have problems, but it is better than any other form of government.	Coded 1-7
g. (CANAB 2008/45) Despite our differences, we Canadians have many things that unite us as a country.	Coded 1-7

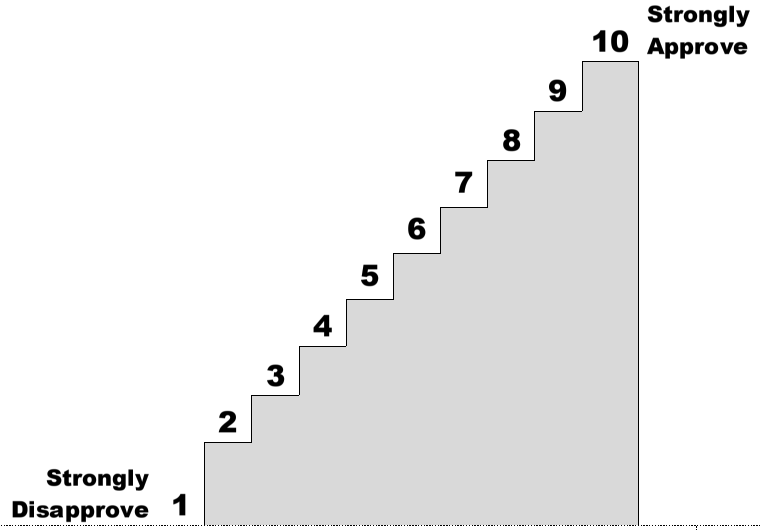
32. Now we are going to show some items about the role of the federal government. Please tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with the following statements. We will continue using the same staircase from 1 to 7.

a. (ROS1) *[10]* The Canadian government, instead of the private sector, should own the most important enterprises and industries of the country.	Coded 1-7
b. (ROS2) *[08/10]* The Canadian government, more than individuals, should be primarily responsible for ensuring the well-being of the people.	Coded 1-7
c. (ROS3) *[08/10]* The Canadian government, more than the private sector, should be primarily responsible for creating jobs.	Coded 1-7
d. (ROS4) *[08/10]* The Canadian government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor.	Coded 1-7
e. (CCT3) Changing the topic…Some people say that people who get help from government social assistance programs are lazy.	Coded 1-7
f. (GEN1) Changing the subject again, some say that when there is not enough work, men should have a greater right to jobs than women.	Coded 1-7
g. (GEN6) The Canadian government should require that political parties reserve some space on their lists of candidates for women, even if they have to exclude some men.	Coded 1-7
h. (RAC2A) Universities ought to set aside openings for students who are racial or ethnic minorities, even if that means excluding other students.	Coded 1-7

33. (PN4) *[06/08/10]* And now, changing the subject, in general, would you say that you are very satisfied, satisfied, dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the way democracy works in Canada?
(1) Very satisfied (2) Satisfied (3) Dissatisfied (4) Very dissatisfied

34. Now here is a 10-point staircase, which goes from 1 to 10, where "1" means that you STRONGLY DISAPPROVE and "10" means that you STRONGLY APPROVE.

Below is a list of some actions that people can take to achieve their political goals and objectives. Please tell us how strongly you would approve or disapprove of people taking the following actions.



a. (E5). *[10]* Of people participating in legal demonstrations, how much do you approve or disapprove?	Coded 1-10
b. (E8) *[10]* Of people participating in an organization or group to try to solve community problems.	Coded 1-10
c. (E11) *[10]* Of people working for campaigns for a political party or candidate.	Coded 1-10
d. (E15) *[10]* Of people participating in the blocking of roads to protest.	Coded 1-10
e. (E14) *[10]* Of people seizing private property or land in order to protest.	Coded 1-10
f. (E3) *[10]* Of people participating in a group working to violently overthrow an elected government.	Coded 1-10
g. (E16) *[06/10]* Of people taking the law into their own hands when the government does not punish criminals.	Coded 1-10

35. The following questions are to find out about the different ideas of the people who live in Canada. Please continue using the 10 point staircase, with "1" meaning STRONGLY DISAPPROVE, and "10" meaning "STRONGLY APPROVE."

a. (D1) *[06/08/10]* There are people who only say bad things about the Canadian form of government, not just the incumbent government but the system of government. How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people's **right to vote**?	Coded 1-10
b. (D2) *[06/08/10]* How strongly do you approve or disapprove that such people be allowed **to conduct peaceful demonstrations** in order to express their views?	Coded 1-10
c. (D3) *[06/08/10]* Still thinking of those who only say bad things about the Canadian form of government, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted **to run for public office**?	Coded 1-10
d. (D4) *[06/08/10]* How strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people appearing on television **to make speeches**?	Coded 1-10
e. (D5) *[06/08/10]* And now on a different topic, thinking about homosexuals, how strongly do you approve or disapprove of such people being permitted to **run for public office**?	Coded 1-10
f. (D6) How strongly do you approve or disapprove of same-sex couples having the right to marry?	Coded 1-10
g. (D7) How strongly do you approve or disapprove of people who are physically handicapped being permitted to run for public office?	Coded 1-10

36. (DEM2) *[06/10]* Now changing the subject, which of the following statements do you agree with the most:
(1) For people like me it doesn't matter whether a government is democratic or non-democratic
(2) Democracy is preferable to any other form of government
(3) Under some circumstances an authoritarian government may be preferable to a democratic one.

	No	Yes	Decline to answer
Now we want to talk about your personal experience with things that happen in everyday life…			
37. (EXC2) *[10]* Has a police officer asked you for a bribe in the last 12 months?	0	1	88
38. (EXC6) *[06/10]* Did any government employee ask you for a bribe in the last 12 months?	0	1	88

39. (EXC7) *[06/08/10]* Taking into account your own experience or what you have heard, corruption among **public officials** is…
(1) Very common (2) Common (3) Uncommon (4) Very uncommon?

40. (VB1) *[10]* Are you eligible to vote in Canadian elections?
(1) Yes (2) No (Skip to VB10)

41. (VB2) *[06/10]* Did you vote in the last **federal election,** held in May 2011?
(1) Voted [Continue]
(2) Did not vote [Go to VB10]
(88) Decline to answer [Go to VB10]

42. (VB3) Which party did you vote for in the last federal election of 2011?
(4101) The Conservative Party
(4102) The Liberal Party
(4103) The New Democratic Party
(4104) The Green Party
(4105) The Bloc Quebecois
(00) None
(77) Other
(88) Decline to answer

43. (VB10) *[06/10]* Do you currently identify with a federal political party?
(1) Yes [Continue] (2) No [Go to POL1]

44. (VB11) Which Federal political party do you identify with?
(4101) The Conservative Party
(4102) The Liberal Party
(4103) The New Democratic Party
(4104) The Green Party
(4105) The Bloc Quebecois
(4106) Other
(88) Decline to answer

45. (POL1) *[10]* How much interest do you have in politics: a lot, some, little or none?
(1) A lot (2) Some (3) Little (4) None

46. (PP1) *[10]* During election times, some people try to convince others to vote for a party or candidate. How often have you tried to persuade others to vote for a party or candidate?
(1) Frequently (2) Occasionally (3) Rarely, or (4) Never

47. (PP2) *[10]* There are people who work for parties or candidates during electoral campaigns. Did you work for any candidate or party in the last federal elections of 2011?
(1) Yes, worked (2) Did not work

48. (CANVB1) People have different views about voting. For some, voting is a DUTY. They feel that they should vote in every election. For others, voting is a CHOICE. They only vote when they feel strongly about that election. For you personally, is voting FIRST AND FOREMOST a Duty or a Choice?
(1) A duty (2) A choice

49. (CANVB2) In some countries, including Canada, when no single party wins a majority of seats in an election, several parties come together to form a coalition government. Do you think this is an option that the Canadian parties should consider if none wins a majority in an election?
(1) Yes, parties should consider coalitions (2) No, parties should not consider coalitions

50. (CANPOL2) If a federal election results in the second and third place parties together having a majority of seats in the new Parliament, do you believe they should be allowed to form a coalition government? Or do you believe that only the party with the most seats should be allowed to form a government?
(1) Second and third place party should be allowed to form a government
(2) Only the party with the most seats should be allowed to form a government

51. (CANPOL3) Do you approve or disapprove of advocacy organizations publishing information during a federal election to help voters determine which party in their riding has the best chance of defeating another party they **don't** want to see elected?
(1) Approve
(2) Disapprove

52. (CANVB3) Do you think it is better to have a majority government, a minority government or does it make no difference?
(1) A majority government (2) A minority government (3) No difference

53. (VB50) Some say that in general, men are better political leaders than women. Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree?
(1) Strongly agree (2) Agree (3) Disagree (4) Strongly disagree

54. (AB1) Changing the subject, which one of the following characteristics would you say is most important for a child to have?:
(1) Independence (2) Respect for adults (3) Both equally

And now on another topic

55. (SOC9) Would you be willing to pay more taxes than you do currently so that the government can spend more on **public health services**?
(1) Yes (2) No

56. (SOC10) In your opinion, what should the government do to reduce poverty and inequality in Canada? *(Please check only one)*
(1) Create jobs/improve the economy (2) Promote agrarian reform
(3) Improve public education services (4) Offer public assistance to the poor
(5) Increase taxes on the rich (6) Improve infrastructure (highways, water, sewage)
(9) Other (SPECIFY _____)

57. (SOC11) Would you be willing to pay more taxes than you do currently so that the government can spend more on **direct income transfers to the poor**?
(1) Yes (2) No

58. (SOC12A) On this scale from 1 to10 where 1 means defending the rich and 10 means defending the poor, **where are** Canada politicians located today? Coded 1-10

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Defends the rich									**Defends the poor**

59. (SOC12B) And using the same scale, where 1 means defending the rich and 10 means defending the poor, where **would you like** Canada politicians to be located? Coded 1-10

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Defends the rich									**Defends the poor**

And now a few questions about yourself for classification purposes . .

60. (Q3C) What is your religion, if any?

(1) Catholic

(4114) Greek Orthodox/Eastern Orthodox

(2) Protestant, Mainline Protestant or Protestant non-Evangelical (Anglican; Calvinist; Lutheran; Methodist; Presbyterian; Episcopalian)

(5) Evangelical and Pentecostal (Evangelical; Pentecostals; Church of God; Assemblies of God; Universal Church of the Kingdom of God; Gospel; Christ Pentecostal Church; Christian Congregation; Mennonite; Brethren; Christian Reformed Church; Charismatic non-Catholic)

(6) Church of Latter Day Saints (LDS) (Mormon)

(12) Jehovah's Witness.

(4113) Muslim

(10) Jewish (Orthodox; Conservative; Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal)

(3) Other Non-Christian Eastern Religions (Buddhist; Hinduism; Taoist; Confucianism; Baha'i)

(7) Traditional or Aboriginal Religions

(4) None (Believe in a Supreme Entity but do not belong to any religion)

(11) Agnostic, atheist (Do not believe in God).

(15) Other

(88) Decline to answer

61. (Q5B) *[10]* How important is religion in your life?
(1) Very important (2) Rather important (3) Not very important (4) Not at all important

62. (Q10NEW) *[12]* Which of the following best describes the total annual income before taxes of all members in your household for 2011?

(01) Less than $10,000
(02) $10,000 to $19,999
(03) $20,000 to $29,999
(04) $30,000 to $39,999
(05) $40,000 to $49,999
(06) $50,000 to $59,999
(07) $60,000 to $69,999
(08) $70,000 to $79,999
(09) $80,000 to $99,999
(10) $100,000 to $119,999
(11) $120,000 to $139,999
(12) $140,000 to $159,999
(13) $160,000 to $189,999
(14) $190,000 to $219,999
(15) $220,000 to $249,999
(16) More than $250,000

(88) Decline to answer

63. (Q10D) *[10]* The salary that you receive and total household income:
(1) Is good enough for you and you can save from it
(2) Is just enough for you, so that you do not have major problems
(3) Is not enough for you and you are stretched
(4) Is not enough for you and you are having a hard time

(88) Decline to answer

64. (Q11) *[10]* What is your marital status?
(1) Single [Go to Q12C] (2) Married [CONTINUE]
(3) Domestic partnership (living with an unmarried partner) [CONTINUE]
(4) Divorced [Go to Q12C]
(5) Separated [Go to Q12C] (6) Widowed [Go to Q12C]

(88) Decline to answer [Go to Q12C]

65. (GEN10) Thinking only about yourself and your spouse and the salaries that you earn, which of the following phrases best describe your salaries

(1) You don't earn anything and your spouse earns it all;
(2) You earn less than your spouse;
(3) You earn more or less the same as your spouse;
(4) You earn more than your spouse;
(5) You earn all of the income and your spouse earns nothing.
(6) No salary income

(88) Decline to answer

66. (Q12C) *[10]* How many people in total live in your household at this time? _____
(88) Decline to answer

67. (Q12) *[10]* How many children, if any, do you have? _____
(00 = none → Skip to CANETID) (88) Decline to answer

68. (Q12B. *[12]* How many of your children are under 13 years of age and live in your household? _____
00 = none (88) Decline to answer

69. (CANETID) *[12]* In addition to being Canadian, what is your primary ethnic or cultural background?
(If more than one, please indicate your primary background)

(1) English/Scottish/Irish Welsh
(2) French/Quebecois
(3) Italian
(4) Portuguese
(5) Other European (Russian, German, Dutch, Scandinavian, Polish, Spanish, Hungarian)
(3) Aboriginal (First Nations, Metis, Inuit)
(4) African
(5) Greek
(6) Jewish
(7) West Indian (Caribbean, Jamaican, Guyanese)
(8) South Asian (East Indian, Sri Lankan, Pakistan)
(9) Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Cambodian, Malaysian, Filipino)
(10) Chinese
(11) Other East Asian (Japanese, Korean)
(12) West Asian/Middle Eastern/Arab
(13) Latin American (Mexican, Central/South American)
(14) American
(15) Canadian
(98) Other (SPECIFY _____)
(88) Decline to answer

70. (CANNC4) Were you born in Canada?
(1) Yes (2) No (88) Decline to answer

71. (CANNC5) Was your **mother** born in Canada?
(1) Yes (2) No (88) Decline to answer

72. (CANNC6) Was your **father** born in Canada?
(1) Yes (2) No (88) Decline to answer

73. (Q10D) In what year were you born? __ __ __ __
(88) Decline to answer:

74. (Q1) *[06/08/10]* Please indicate your gender.
(1) Male
(2) Female
(88) Decline to answer

75. (ED) *[06/08]* What is the highest level of education that you have reached?

(01) Some elementary
(02) Completed elementary
(03) Some high school
(04) Completed high school
(05) Community college/ vocational/ trade school/ commercial/ CEGEP
(06) Some university
(07) Completed university
(08) Post-graduate university/professional school

(88) Decline to answer

76. (PROV) *[10]* In which province do you currently live?

(01) Alberta
(02) British Columbia
(03) Manitoba
(04) New Brunswick
(05) Newfoundland
(06) Nova Scotia
(07) Ontario
(08) Prince Edward Island
(09) Quebec
(10) Saskatchewan

77.. (CANPOS) Please indicate your postal code: *(Do not include any spaces)*

(88) Decline to answer

This completes the survey. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

This survey is part of an international study called the "AmericasBarometer" and is being conducted in 26 countries in North, Central and South America. The results for the Canadian survey (and international comparisons) will be published by the Environics Institute later this year.

For more information about the Americas Barometer, visit:
http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/about-americasbarometer.php

THE ENVIRONICS INSTITUTE

900-33 Bloor Street East
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1
416 • 920 • 9010
www.environicsinstitute.org