

# Canada's World Survey 2018

Final Report  
April 2018



This study was conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with the following organizations:

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SFU Public Square is a signature initiative at Simon Fraser University, designed to spark, nurture and restore community connections, establishes the university as the go-to convener of serious and productive conversations about issues of public concern. More than a single place or program, SFU Public Square assembles the hearts, minds, and talents of diverse communities to promote inclusive, intelligent, and inspiring dialogue.

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#### **For more information about this study, contact:**

**Keith Neuman, Ph.D.**

The Environics Institute for Survey Research

416-969-2457

[keith.neuman@environics.ca](mailto:keith.neuman@environics.ca)



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# Introduction

## Background

Canada is a country with strong international connections. Most of the population is comprised of people with roots in other countries, and today Canada welcomes roughly 300,000 immigrants each year from across the globe, most of whom settle in and become citizens while at the same time maintaining strong connections with the communities from which they came. The country's prosperity depends in large part on trade with other countries and maintaining a positive trade balance. And Canadians are ever mindful of their much bigger neighbour to the south, with which they share much in common but also see as distinctly different.

So in many ways we are an outwardly-focused people, yet the dominant narrative around our international connections focuses on government policy – foreign aid, military missions and peace keeping, and international trade pacts. How do Canadians as individuals relate to the broader world?

**2008 Canada's World Survey.** This question provided the impetus for the inaugural Canada's World survey, which was conducted in early 2008 as part of a national citizen dialogue sponsored by Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Public Dialogue that focused on the role that Canada and Canadians can and should play in the world outside our borders.

The survey was the first to ever ask Canadians about how they see their place in the world, and that of their country – not simply what they believe their governments should be doing: What do they see as the top global issues, and how do they orient personally to the world outside of the national borders, in terms of their interests, travel and

personal connections? How do they view Canada's current role in world affairs, and what do they think it should be?

The results revealed many insights (and some notable surprises), and received widespread coverage through media partnerships with the CBC, *The Globe and Mail*, and *Le Devoir*.

**2018 Canada's World Survey.** A decade later, the Environics Institute conducted a second Canada's World survey, to determine how Canadian public attitudes, priorities and actions have evolved over time, as well as address emerging issues. This research was conducted in partnership with SFU Public Square at Simon Fraser University, the Canadian International Council, and the Bill Graham Centre for Contemporary International History.

The research consisted of a national public opinion survey conducted by telephone with a representative sample of 1,501 Canadians (18 years and older), between October 23 and November 26, 2017. The results from a survey of this size drawn from the population would be expected to provide results accurate to within plus or minus 2.5 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples (the margin of sampling error will be larger for specific subgroups of the population).

The following sections present results from the research, with an emphasis given to how opinions and actions have changed since 2008, and how they vary across relevant segments of the population (e.g., region, education level, country of birth). Additional details are available under separate cover that provides the results of all survey questions by a range of population segments. All results are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.

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## Key stories

### Canadians' views on global issues and Canada's role in the world have remained notably stable over the past decade.

In the decade following the first Canada's World Survey (conducted early in 2008), the world experienced significant events that changed the complexity and direction of international affairs: beginning with the financial meltdown and ensuing great recession in much of the world, followed by the continued rise of Asia as an emerging economic and political centre of power, the expansion of global terrorism, increasing tensions with North Korea and risks of nuclear conflagration; and a growing anti-government populism in Western democracies. Despite such developments, Canadians' orientation to many world issues and the role they see their country playing on the international stage have remained remarkably stable over the past decade. Whether it is their perception of top issues facing the world, concerns about global issues, or their views on the direction the world is heading, Canadians' perspectives on what's going on in the world have held largely steady.

As in 2008, Canadians have maintained a consistent level of connection to the world through their engagement in international events and issues, their personal ties to people and cultures in other countries, frequency and nature of their travel abroad, and financial contributions to international organizations and friends and family members abroad. And Canadians continue to view their country as a positive and influential force in the world, one that can serve as a role model for other countries.

### This consistency notwithstanding, Canadians have been sensitive to the ebb and flow of international events and global trends.

While Canadians' perspectives on many issues have held steady over the past decade, there have also been some shifts in how they see what's going on in the world and how they perceive Canada's role on the global stage, in response to key global events and issues. This suggests Canadians

are paying attention to what happens beyond their own borders, and that Canadian public opinion is responsive to media coverage of the global stage.

Canadians today are more concerned than a decade ago about such world issues as terrorism, the spread of nuclear weapons, and global migration/refugees. And the public has adjusted its perceptions of specific countries as having a positive (e.g., Germany) or negative (e.g., North Korea, Russia) impact in the world today. Canadians are also shifting their opinions about their country's influence in world affairs, placing stronger emphasis on multiculturalism and accepting refugees, our country's global political influence and diplomacy, and the popularity of our Prime Minister.

### Canadians increasingly define their country's place in the world as one that welcomes people from elsewhere.

Multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion are increasingly seen by Canadians as their country's most notable contribution to the world. It is now less about peacekeeping and foreign aid, and more about who we are now becoming as a people and how we get along with each other. Multiculturalism and the acceptance of immigrants and refugees now stand out as the best way Canadians feel their country can be a role model for others, and as a way to exert influence on the global stage.

Moreover, Canadians are paying greater attention to issues related to immigration and refugees than they did a decade ago, their top interest in traveling abroad remains learning about another culture and language; and they increasingly believe that having Canadians living abroad is a good thing, because it helps spread Canadian culture and values (which include diversity) beyond our shores. Significantly, one in three Canadians report a connection to the Syrian refugee sponsorship program over the past two years, either through their own personal involvement in sponsoring a refugee family (7%) or knowing someone who has (25%).

Young Canadians' views and perspectives on many aspects of world affairs have converged with those of older cohorts, but their opinions on Canada's role on the world stage have become more distinct when it comes to promoting diversity.

It is young Canadians (ages 18 to 24) whose level of engagement with world issues and events has evolved most noticeably over the past decade, converging with their older counterparts whose level of engagement has either not changed nor kept pace with Canadian youth. Young people are increasingly following international issues and events to the same degree, they are as optimistic about the direction of the world as older Canadians, and they are close to being as active as travelers. At the same time, Canadian youth now hold more distinct opinions on their country's role in the world as it relates specifically to diversity. They continue to be the most likely of all age groups to believe Canada's role in the world has grown over the past 20 years, and are now more likely to single out multiculturalism and accepting immigrants/refugees as their country's most positive contribution to the world.

Foreign-born Canadians have grown more engaged and connected to world affairs than native-born Canadians, and are more likely to see Canada playing an influential role on the global stage.

Foreign-born Canadians have become more involved in what's going on outside our borders over the past decade, opening a noticeable gap with their native-born counterparts. They continue to follow international news and events more closely than people born in Canada, but have developed a much greater concern for a range of issues since 2008, while native-born Canadians' views have not kept pace. Canadians born elsewhere have grown more optimistic about the direction in which the world is heading, while those born in the country have turned more pessimistic. And Canadians born in other countries have also become more positive about the degree of influence Canada has on world affairs, and the impact the country can have on addressing a number of key global issues.





# Executive summary

The Canada's World 2018 research reveals a Canadian population that, as a whole, continues to be deeply engaged with the world outside our borders, and is still keen to be even more so. Consistent with trends over the past decade, significant numbers of Canadians closely follow world events, have personal or family connections to other countries and regions, provide financial assistance to organizations and family members overseas, travel to many parts of the globe for a variety of reasons, and are interested in doing more. Most Canadians maintain a positive view of their country's role in world affairs, and remain convinced it can do more in demonstrating leadership in such areas as global migration, human rights, and the environment.

Compared to a decade ago, Canadians' views of the world have remained remarkably stable despite the range of socio-political and economic issues and events that have shaped the global order since 2008. Still, some important shifts have occurred. Canadians today are more sensitive to terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons, with North Korea and Russia increasingly seen as negative forces in the world. Meanwhile, Canadian policies of multiculturalism and the acceptance of immigrants and refugees from around the world have emerged as a key component of Canadians' perspectives on Canada's influence on the global stage, and the role Canada can play in shaping the future direction of world affairs.

The following are highlights from the research.

## HOW CANADIANS SEE THE WORLD TODAY

Global warming and the environment, and war/conflict, continue to be the most salient global issues on the minds of Canadians. But there is rising concern about terrorism, hunger and famine, and the spread of nuclear weapons, as the salience of the environment and war/conflict has waned over the past decade for Canadians.

Canadians are largely split on whether they are optimistic or pessimistic about the direction they think the world is heading over the next 10 years. More than four in ten say they are basically optimistic about the direction the world

is heading, compared with slightly more who say they are basically pessimistic; the balance is essentially unchanged from a decade ago despite the serious challenges now confronting many parts of the world.

Canadians see their own country first and foremost as a positive force in the world, consistent with views held a decade ago. Among other countries mentioned, the most prominent now include Germany (top-of-mind for many more Canadians than in 2008), followed by Great Britain, Sweden, and the United States. On the other side of the ledger, the USA is once again singled out by Canadians as a negative force in today's world, with increasing focus also now given to North Korea and Russia.

## CANADIANS' PERSONAL ORIENTATION TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE CANADA

Canadians pay attention to world events, and follow them as closely as they do local and national issues; this has not changed over the past 10 years. War and conflict (particularly in the Middle East) still hold the most interest, but less so than a decade ago. Growing attention is now paid to human rights, politics, nuclear weapons, and immigration/refugees, while interest in the environment and poverty/global hunger has declined.

Much like a decade ago, Canadians express a personal interest in countries and regions in many parts of the world, but their strongest connections continue to be with those countries that share the closest historic ties with Canada, namely Western Europe and the United States. Fewer Canadians express strong interest in Northeastern Asia (e.g., China, Japan, Korea, Philippines, Taiwan), the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand, or Eastern Europe and Russia.

Eight in ten Canadians have travelled outside Canada and the U.S., with the frequency of such trips higher than in 2008; three in ten have taken more than 10 trips in their life time. Tourism continues to be the most common reason for travel, but increasing proportions are also taking trips to see friends and family, and to visit places of birth or ancestry. Fewer travel for business or as part of a job, education, or to

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

Four in ten Canadians report making financial donations to organizations that address global issues, and one in five has sent money to family and friends living abroad, mostly but not exclusively by those who were born in another country. This pattern is similar to that found in 2008. Among those who have given money, the average two-year donation has increased modestly from 10 years ago, with total donations to organizations and family now totaling approximately \$26 billion. By comparison, the Canadian government's official development assistance in 2014-16 totalled just over \$11 billion.

Two-thirds of Canadians have travelled to the U.S. in the past five years, but one in four reports changing or reconsidering plans for future visits because of the current political climate. Canadians' overall opinion of the United States has worsened significantly since Donald Trump became the President, but a majority believe US-style populism is unlikely to come to Canada.

Canadians view of their country as a trading nation has strengthened over the past decade. There is a strong and growing consensus that international trade is important for Canadian jobs and the quality of life in the country; close to three-quarters of the population now hold this view. Close to two-thirds believe NAFTA has helped rather than hurt the Canadian economy, a sentiment that has also become more widespread since 2008.

## **CANADA'S CURRENT AND POTENTIAL ROLE IN THE WORLD**

The majority of Canadians believe (as they did in 2008) their country exerts at least some influence in world affairs today, and that its impact has grown over the past 20 years. This is largely because of its peacekeeping and/humanitarian efforts, but also increasingly due to its multiculturalism and acceptance of immigrants, and its political influence and diplomacy. The quarter of Canadians who feel Canada's global influence has declined over time continue to attribute this to what they see as their country's limited influence over (or support to) other countries, and a lack of independence or leadership.

Canadians now see multiculturalism and the acceptance of immigrants as their country's most positive contribution to the world, a change from a decade ago when peacekeeping topped the list. It is no longer just about making war or peace, but rather who we are now becoming as a people and how we get along with each other. This shift is also reflected in the finding that six in ten Canadians support accepting an increased number of refugees into the country and by the fact that seven percent of Canadian adults – close to two million people – report being personally involved in helping Syrian refugees come to and settle in our country.

Close to half of Canadians are confident that Canada can definitely strengthen its influence in the world, although they are less confident of this than a decade ago. Areas of greatest potential impact include dealing with global migration and refugees, discouraging human rights abuses, tackling hunger and famine in the developing world, reducing the spread of infectious diseases, and showing leadership on environmental issues.

A strong majority of Canadians believes their country can make a difference in the world by setting an example at home, especially in terms of its policies on multiculturalism, immigration and refugees, a view that is now more prominent than a decade ago. Support for human rights at home and for strong environmental policies are also considered important areas that Canada can act upon as a role model for other countries.

Canadians continue to have the most confidence in activities of their country's NGOs and Canadian post-secondary institutions working abroad to make a positive difference in the world, and to a lesser extent the Canadian government and businesses. This is unchanged from a decade ago.

Meanwhile, an increasing majority considers the estimated three million Canadians currently living abroad to be a positive benefit to the country, and as a positive influence on Canada's role in the world. These expatriates are seen to be good ambassadors and spread Canadian culture and values through their volunteering, work, and education activities. The few who express concern about Canadians living abroad worry about economic-related issues such as not paying taxes, not benefitting the Canadian economy, and taking advantage of services without paying for them – reasons more widely cited than in 2008.

**HOW OPINIONS VARY ACROSS THE COUNTRY.** While conclusions about public opinion described above hold true across the Canadian population, there are notable differences in viewpoints across the country by age, country of birth, and education level. The key variations are as follows:

**Age.** Young Canadians' have grown more engaged with the world outside of Canada over the past decade; in many respects their connections to the world are now much closer to their older counterparts whose level of engagement has remained largely unchanged or not kept pace with Canadian youth. For example, Canadians 18 to 24 years of age are now as likely to follow international news and events as those 60 plus, and they display increasing optimism about the direction in which the world is heading, while older Canadians have become more pessimistic. This shift in perspectives may be due to the fact that young people are traveling abroad more than ever, increasingly as tourists and volunteers, but also to visit family and friends or their place of ancestry.

Older Canadians (60 plus), by comparison, have slowed the pace of their international travel, with little change in the reasons they go abroad. Further, Canadian youth embrace the idea of living abroad for work, study, or volunteer opportunities and do so more enthusiastically than their older counterparts, a pattern unchanged from 2008.

A majority of Canadians young and old continue to believe Canada plays an influential role in world affairs. However, they hold moderately different perspectives on Canada's role in international affairs. Like a decade ago, Canadian youth remain the most likely of all age groups to believe Canada's position in the world has grown over the past 20 years, to feel Canada can be an effective role model for other countries, and to be confident the Canadian government can make a positive difference overseas. Unlike a decade ago, however, young people today are more likely than older Canadians to single out multiculturalism and accepting immigrants/refugees as the main reason for Canada's increased standing on the global stage, and to see this as where their country can make a positive contribution to the world. Young Canadians are also more likely to contend that Canada can make a difference in the world by addressing issues related to global migration and refugees, religious and ethnic hatred, hunger and famine in the developing world, and human rights abuses.

**Country of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are more connected to, and engaged in, what's going on outside our borders than native-born Canadians. They follow international news and events more closely than those born in Canada, and remain more active as travelers for tourism, work, education, or volunteer opportunities. Perhaps not surprisingly, they are also more likely than native-born Canadians to give financial support – and in more significant amounts – to family members or others they know living in another countries.

Foreign-born Canadians also express greater concern than native-born Canadians about a range of issues (e.g. hunger and famine in the developing world, the spread of infectious diseases, global warming/environmental problems, and terrorism); ten years ago both groups displayed the same level of concern about these issues in 2008. Moreover, those born outside Canada display increasing optimism about the direction the world is heading while those born in the country have become slightly more pessimistic over the past decade.

Foreign-born Canadians are now more likely to believe Canada has a lot of influence in world affairs, and that this influence has grown over the past 20 years; native-born Canadians are less likely to hold these views than in 2008. Of note, Canadians born outside the country are more apt to single out multiculturalism and accepting immigrants as the main reason for Canada's increased standing on the global stage. While both groups feel this is the most positive contribution Canada can make to the world, it is those born outside the country who are now most likely to believe that Canada can make a big difference in addressing key policy issues such as global warming and environmental problems, growing income inequality, terrorism, human rights abuses, and global migration.

Second generation Canadians - those born in Canada of one or both immigrant parents – are increasingly more connected to and engaged in world affairs, in comparison with those whose family has been in the country for two or more generations. Like a decade ago, second generation Canadians travel more frequently abroad, and are more likely to do so as tourists, volunteers, or for visits to friends and family or their places of ancestry. However, over the past 10 years, they have turned the tables on third plus generation Canadians to more enthusiastically embrace the idea of traveling abroad to work, study, volunteer, or learn another

language or culture. Similarly, second generation Canadians are now more likely than third plus generation Canadians to give financial support to causes or organizations working to address problems in other countries, a reversal of positions from a decade ago. More second generation Canadians were also involved directly in the Syrian refugee program or knew someone who was involved.

**Region.** Being connected to or engaged with the world does not happen in a consistent fashion across all regions of the country. Residents of B.C. and Ontario (where there are a proportionately greater number of immigrants and second generation Canadians) are among the most likely to follow global issues and events, as was the case a decade ago. Yet, the issues Canadians follow or are concerned about depends on the province: B.C., Alberta, and Ontario residents are most likely to focus on the economy and finances, Quebecers express greater interest in the environment, while people living in Manitoba or Saskatchewan pay more attention to poverty and nuclear weapons.

B.C., Ontario, and Quebec residents are more frequent travelers outside of Canada than those living in other provinces, with Quebecers becoming more frequent travelers than a decade ago. Further, it is B.C., Alberta, and Ontario residents, more than others, who provide financial support to causes or organizations working to address issues in other countries; this remains unchanged from 2008.

Perceptions of Canada's role in the world are largely consistent across the country. However, Ontarians are among those most convinced of Canada's potential impact on a wide range of global issues (e.g. nuclear weapons, spread of infectious diseases, global warming, gap between rich and poor, global migration and refugees, and cyber security), while Atlantic Canadians believe more than residents elsewhere that Canada's most positive contribution to the world is its multiculturalism policies and acceptance of immigrants/refugees.

**Education.** Education appears to be a defining factor in how engaged Canadians are with the world, and in their views of Canada's position in addressing global issues. Like a decade ago, university graduates follow world issues and events more closely than others, particularly as they relate to politics, the environment, and human rights. They also remain the most active travelers, more likely to travel abroad as tourists or volunteers, or to visit family, friends or their places of ancestry. Canadians with college or university experience also express greater levels of interest in traveling abroad for work, study, volunteering, or living in another country to learn another language or culture. But while university graduates are the most convinced of Canada's potential influence in world affairs, it is Canadians who have not completed a high school education who are most convinced of Canada being able to make a big difference on such key global issues as the spread of nuclear weapons, the decline of democracy, and the loss of jobs due to automation.



# How Canadians see the world today

## Major issues facing the world today

Global warming and the environment, and war and conflict, continue to be the most salient global issues on the minds of Canadians, but there is also considerable concern about terrorism, hunger and famine, and the spread of nuclear weapons.

**MOST IMPORTANT WORLD ISSUE.** When asked to name what they see as the most important issue or problem facing the world today (unprompted, without being offered response options), Canadians identify a number of issues, but at the top of the list are climate change and pollution, as well as war and conflict; one-in-five mentioned each of these issues. Also named are starvation/world hunger, the economy, and terrorism. By comparison, few Canadians specifically mention Donald Trump or U.S. politics/foreign policy or racism/hatred as the world's most pressing issues.

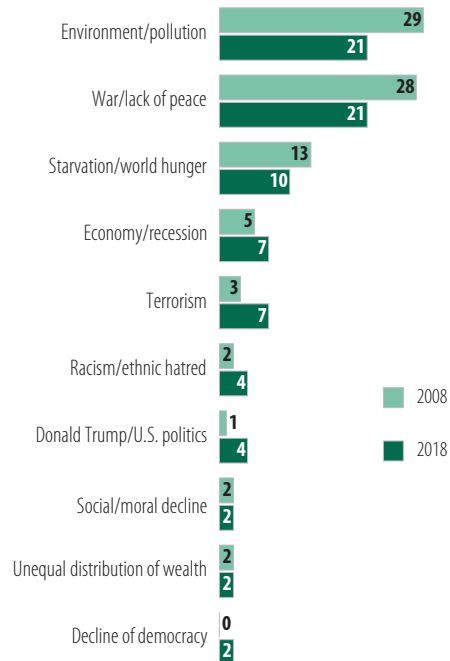
Both climate change and war/conflict also topped the list of Canadians' most important issues in 2008 when they were even more prominent: their salience has waned over the past decade (dropping 8 and 7 percentage points, respectively), along with mention of starvation/hunger. On the other hand, Canadians are now more focused on terrorism and the economy than was the case 10 years ago.

Views on which world issues Canadians feel are most important vary across different population subgroups. Changes from a decade ago have occurred as a result of how certain subgroups perceive the various issues.

**Region.** Climate change/pollution is now considered a pressing world issue by more Quebecers (26%) than other Canadians. Atlantic Canada residents single out terrorism more than others (13%), while racism/hatred is top of mind for more of those living in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (10%). In terms of shifts over the past decade, far fewer British Columbians are now placing importance on climate change/pollution today (down 20 points) than was the case 10 years ago when they led the country by a wide margin. Elsewhere, Quebecers are now placing less focus on war/conflict (down 13 points); Atlantic Canadians are more likely

## Most important world issue

Top mentions



Q.1  
What do you think is the most important issue or problem facing the world today?

to single out terrorism (up 10 points); and a greater number of Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents mention racism/ethnic intolerance (up 8 points), now considered the third most important world problem in these two provinces.

**Age Cohort.** Canadians of all ages single out climate change/pollution as a pressing world issue. However, older Canadians (60+) put war/conflict as their number one issue (28%), well ahead of their younger counterparts. Canadians of all ages, however, now place less importance today on climate change/pollution than a decade ago; the greatest decline occurred among younger Canadians 18-24 years of age (down 10 points). Fewer older Canadians single out war/conflict as a top world issue compared to 2008 (down 7 points).

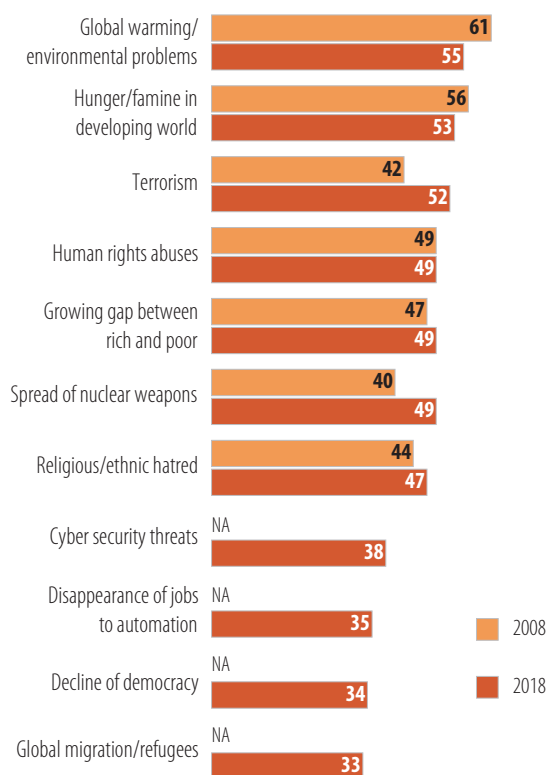
**Place of Birth/Generation.** Canadians born outside the country are twice as likely to identify terrorism as the most important world issue (12% vs. 6% of Canadian-born), but are less likely to identify war and conflict (17% vs. 23%). Among native-born, third plus generation Canadians put greater importance on war and conflict than do second generation Canadians. The overall decline in the importance of this issue is due in part to the fact that fewer second generation Canadians mention it today than was the case a decade ago (down 16 points).<sup>1</sup>

**Travel outside Canada.** Canadians who have traveled extensively outside Canada (more than 10 times) are among those most likely to cite climate change/pollution as the most important issue facing the world (26%), while non-travelers are most apt to single out war and conflict as a top problem (26%). Less frequent travelers have become more sensitive to terrorism as a world problem over the past decade (up 7 points), while those who have never traveled abroad are now less likely to single out war and conflict as a pressing issue (down 12 points since 2008).

**MAJOR WORLD CONCERNS.** The survey also asked Canadians to rate their level of concern with each of 12 specific global issues. All 12 issues elicit clear levels of concern among a majority, and in three cases a majority says they are “very concerned”: global warming/other environmental problems, hunger and famine in the developing world, and terrorism. Just under half also express this level of concern about four other issues: human rights abuses, the growing gap between rich and poor, the spread of nuclear weapons, and religious and ethnic hatred. Comparatively fewer Canadians are seriously troubled by cyber security threats, the decline of democracy, global migration/refugees, the loss of jobs and careers due to workplace automation, or the spread of infectious diseases, although clear majorities say they are at least somewhat or very concerned about these global issues.

Over the past decade, Canadians’ strong concern has increased noticeably on two of these issues: terrorism (up 10 percentage points), and the spread of nuclear weapons (up 9). By comparison, three issues generate less concern than in 2008: the spread of infectious diseases (down 24), global warming/pollution (down 6) and hunger/famine (down 3).

### Very concerned about specific world issues



Q.3a-1  
Please tell me whether you are very, somewhat, not very or not at all concerned about each of the following global issues?

Expressions of *strong concern* for the various top and growing global issues vary across the country, most notably between regions, genders, age cohorts, and place of birth. Shifts in the level of concern about top issues from a decade ago have occurred as a result of how certain subgroups now view those issues.

<sup>1</sup> First generation is defined as individuals living in Canada who were born in another country. Second generation includes those born in Canada, with one or both parents born elsewhere.

**Global Warming/environmental problems.** Residents of Atlantic Canada (59%), Ontario (59%), and Quebec (56%) are more concerned about global warming and other environmental problems than Canadians in other regions. Other groups expressing strong concern on global warming include women (59%), people born outside Canada (64%), and Canadians who follow international issues very closely (64%). The overall decline in concern about this issue over the past decade is partly due to a significant drop among residents living in small communities/rural areas (down 28), Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Quebec residents (down 11 and 10 points, respectively), native-born Canadians (down 9), pessimists about the direction of the world (down 12), and non-travelers (down 12).

**Hunger and Famine in Developing World.** Strong concerns about hunger and famine are most widespread in Ontario (57%), as well as among women (59%), Canadians without a high school diploma (62%), allophones (66%), and individuals who follow international issues very closely (61%). The overall drop in concern about this issue over the past decade is most evident in Quebec and Atlantic Canada (down 7 and 6 points, respectively). Perhaps the most notable trend is a growing divergence in the level of strong concern about hunger and famine among immigrants (66%) and those born in Canada (50%), revealing a significant gap that was virtually nonexistent in 2008.

**Terrorism.** Concern about global terrorism is strongest in Atlantic Canada (61%), as well as among older residents (61%), foreign-born Canadians (60%), and people without a high school diploma (71%). The overall rise in strong concern about this issue over the past decade has been particularly acute in British Columbia and Quebec (up 17 and 12 points, respectively), and among Canadians born outside the country (up 15 points), and people with lower levels of education and income. Of note, some convergence in views on terrorism has occurred over the past decade. For example, second generation Canadians have become much more concerned about this issue, closing a wide gap with third plus generation Canadians that existed in 2008. Much the same has happened among those who have traveled abroad one or more times, whose level of concern about terrorism has grown much closer to non-travelers today than was the case a decade ago.

**Spread of Nuclear Weapons.** The spread of nuclear weapons is of greatest concern to Atlantic Canada residents (56%), older Canadians (66%), women (54%), third plus generation Canadians (49%), and people without a high school diploma (64%). More Canadians in all regions have stronger concerns on this issue than in 2008, although this trend is most acute among British Columbians (up 17 points). Canadians 60 and older also express greater concern about the spread of nuclear weapons than 10 years ago (up 16 points), much like Canadian youth (up 18). Of note, concern about this issue has increased among both Canadians who are optimistic and those who are pessimistic about the direction of the world, but the gap has widened over the past 10 years.

**Spread of infectious diseases.** Strong concern about this issue is much more evident among Canadians born in other countries (31%) in comparison with those who are native-born (17%). Others with a strong concern include people who have not completed a high school diploma, individuals living in low income households (33%), and allophones (who also tend to be immigrants). The significant drop in concern about the spread of infectious diseases over the past 10 years is evident across the country but is most significant among Atlantic Canada residents (down 34 points), Canadian youth (down 36), and third plus generation Canadians (down 29). Since 2008, there has been a convergence of views on concern for this issue between second and third plus generation Canadians, and between optimists and pessimists. On the other hand, the gap between foreign- and native-born Canadians has widened considerably (now a 14 point gap).

**Human rights abuses.** Those most likely to express the strongest concern about human rights abuse include Canadians aged 18 to 24 (58%), people living in low income households (60%), and Canadians who follow international issues very closely (58%). Shifts in the degree of strong concern about this issue are most noticeable Atlantic Canada residents (down 12 points), youth (up 9), and people without a high school diploma (up 9).

**Cyber crime and threats to cybersecurity.** Canadians most concerned about this issue include those 40 years of age and older (44%), and people who follow international issues very closely.

**Global migration and refugees.** This issue generates a higher degree of concern among Alberta residents (41%), older residents (41%), second generation Canadians (42%), those who are pessimistic about the direction the world is heading (39%), and individuals who follow international issues very closely (40%).

**Decline of democracy.** Canadians 60 years of age and older (42%) stand out as the most strongly concerned about the decline of democracy as a global issue, in comparison with their younger counterparts (this view is shared by 25% among those aged 18 to 24, and 28% among those aged 25 to 39). Strong concern is also more evident among foreign-born Canadians (41%), and individuals who follow international issues very closely (45%).

**Disappearance of jobs and career opportunities due workforce automation.** Canadians expressing the strongest concern about the impact of workforce automation on jobs and career opportunities live in Atlantic Canada (47%) and Ontario (42%), along with foreign-born Canadians (45%), people without a high school diploma (52%), individuals in low income households (46%), allophones (44%), and Canadians who are pessimistic about the direction the world is heading (40%).



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

Canadians are largely split on whether they are optimistic or pessimistic about the direction they think the world is heading over the next 10 years, but this is notably similar to the view expressed a decade ago.

World events over the past couple of years signaled dramatic shifts in global affairs where nothing seemed certain anymore, upending decades of seeming stability. Great Britain continued along its Brexit path seeking to extricate itself from Europe; the United States inaugurated Donald Trump as its President, triggering a chaotic cascade of challenges to the foundations of decades-old U.S. global leadership from NATO and the UN to the Middle East and NAFTA. Tensions with North Korea have escalated to a point where the spectre of nuclear war – long ago thought to be unlikely – has resurfaced as a visceral threat. And, on the heels of Europe’s refugee crisis, Germany’s far right party established a solid foothold in the Bundestag, raising doubts about Chancellor Angela Merkel’s “steady hand” in shaping Europe’s future.

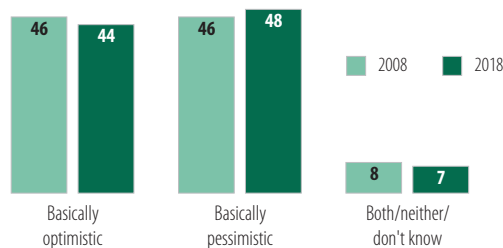
And yet, amidst this chaotic and increasingly threatening picture, Canadians are no more pessimistic about where the world is heading than they were 10 years ago (in early 2008, at a relatively stable time before the global financial meltdown). Today, more than four in ten say they are basically optimistic about the direction the world is heading over the next 10 years, compared with slightly more who say

they are basically pessimistic, a shift of only two percentage points since 2008. This division in perspectives is evident across the population, although some groups are more optimistic and others more pessimistic.

**The Optimists.** The most optimistic Canadians in 2018 are those aged 18 to 24 (49%) and 40 to 59 (49%), as well as men (46%), Canadians born outside the country (52%), and allophones (51%). While optimism among all Canadians has dropped marginally since 2008, certain groups have become more optimistic, notably Canadians aged 18 to 24 (up 6 points), Canadians born outside the country (up 9), and British Columbians (up 7).

**The Pessimists.** In 2018, Canadians most apt to be pessimistic about the direction of the world include those 60 and older (53%) or between 25 and 39 years of age (52%), women (51%), Canadian-born (50%), francophones (54%), and individuals who follow international issues very closely (52%). The slight rise in pessimistic views over the past decade can be attributed somewhat to the increase among older Canadians (up 10 points), Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Quebec residents (up 8 each), people without a high school diploma (up 8), and francophones (up 9).

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



Q.2

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

## Good and bad guys on the world stage

Canadians continue to see their own country first and foremost as a positive force in the world, with secondary attention given to such countries as Germany, Great Britain, and Sweden. The United States is once again singled out as a negative force in today's world, with increasing focus also given to North Korea and Russia.

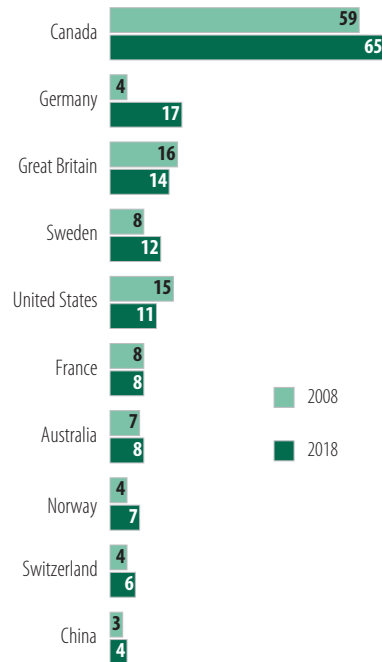
**GOOD COUNTRIES.** Canadians' views on what countries stand out as being a positive force in the world today are generally similar to those expressed in 2008. When asked (unprompted) to name such countries, a clear majority of Canadians name their own country (65%). Among others, the most prominent mentions now include Germany, followed by Great Britain, Sweden, and the United States. Other countries included in the list (each with fewer than 10%) include France, Australia, Norway, and Switzerland. Very few Canadians acknowledge the two other current world powers China and Russia as positive forces in the world. Compared to a decade ago, Canadians position countries differently; Germany now holds second spot, up from seventh in 2008; Great Britain has dropped to third from second, and the United States has fallen to fifth place from third ten years ago.

**Canada.** Canadians 40 years and older (67%) and second generation Canadians (71%) are among the most likely to name their own country as a positive force in the world in 2018. This is a dramatic reversal from a decade ago when those 60 and older, and second generation Canadians were much less likely to see Canada so positively. Regionally, Quebecers are now more likely than in 2008 to put Canada on this list (up 11 points), closing the gap with other Canadians.

**Germany.** Those most likely to see Germany in a positive light include second generation Canadians (21%), men (21%), university graduates (25%), individuals who follow international issues more closely (26%), and frequent travelers abroad (26%). Across the country, there has been a convergence of views on Germany compared to a decade ago (when British Columbians and Albertans were more likely than others to consider Germany a positive force in the world). Positive shifts in perceptions of Germany are most noticeable among Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Atlantic Canada residents (up 18 and 15 points, respectively), first generation Canadians (up 15), university graduates (up 20), and Canadians who follow international news very closely (up 19).

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

Top mentions



Q.4a

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

**United States.** The United States is most likely to be seen as a positive force in the world among Canadians aged 60 plus (16%), men (14%), Canadians with no more than a high school education (15%), and people optimistic about the direction of the world (14%). Placement of the US on this list has declined most noticeably since 2008 among Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Alberta residents (down 11 and 7 points, respectively), and Canadians 25-39 years of age (down 7).

**BAD COUNTRIES.** When asked which countries stand out as being a negative force in the world, Canadians once again put the United States squarely at the top of the list. Next most apt to be named include North Korea and Russia. Just over one in ten identify Iran, China, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. The positioning of “bad” countries has shifted over the past decade. The United States is more firmly entrenched at the top of the list (up 6 points from 2008). More significantly, North Korea moved five spots, from seventh to second, and Russia jumped from eighth to third. Overall, Canadians are less likely to single out countries in the Middle East (i.e. Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan), with the exception of Saudi Arabia. As in 2008, very few Canadians (2%) view their own country as a negative force.

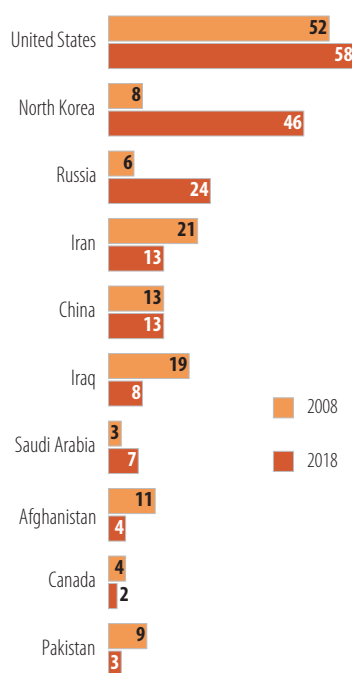
**United States.** Canadians most likely to view the U.S. as a negative force in the world include those aged 18 to 24 (67%), native-born Canadians (60%), women (64%), people with some post-secondary experience (63%), English and French mother tongue (60%), people who are pessimistic about the direction of the world (65%), and frequent international travellers (62%). Regionally, there has been a convergence of views over the past decade, largely due to an increase in the number of Manitoba/Saskatchewan and Atlantic Canadian residents who now view the United States negatively (up 10 points each). Among the different age cohorts, a significantly greater number of those aged 60 and over now see the US as a bad actor in the world today compared to a decade ago (50%, up 14 points).

**North Korea.** Canadians who consider North Korea to be a negative force in the world are most likely to live in British Columbia and Alberta (52% each), along with second generation Canadians (53%), men (51%), and people who follow international issues at least somewhat closely (49%). The significant rise in naming North Korea as a bad actor in the world is evident across all population groups.

**Russia.** Canadians across the country have also turned more negative towards Russia over the past decade. Those most likely to see this country as a negative force in the world include those aged 40 and older (27%), university graduates (27%), pessimists (28%), Canadians who follow international issues very closely (28%), and frequent travelers (28% of those who have traveled abroad 10 or more times). For the most part, these are the same subgroups that stood out in 2008.

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

### Top mentions



Q.4b

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

**Middle East.** Those most likely to view countries in the Middle East in a negative light include B.C. and Alberta residents (40% and 41%, respectively), middle-aged (39%) and older (35%) Canadians, men (37%), people with some post-secondary experience (19%), and frequent international travellers (40%). Over the past decade, the most noticeable decline in naming Middle Eastern countries as a negative force in the world occurred among Atlantic Canada and Alberta residents (down 23 and 18 points, respectively), third plus generation Canadians (down 19), Canadians with a high school diploma (down 21), and people living in small and rural communities (down 25).

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# Personal orientation to the world outside Canada

## Extent of focus on outside world

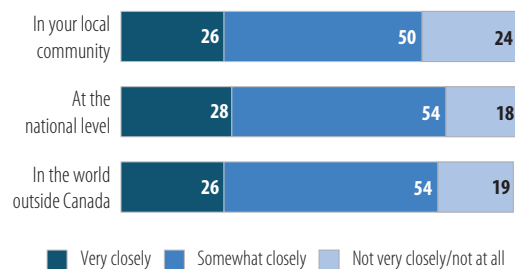
Canadians pay attention to world events, and follow them as closely as they do local and national issues. War and conflict (particularly in the Middle East) still hold the most interest. Growing attention is paid to human rights, politics, nuclear weapons, and immigration/refugees, while interest in the environment and poverty/global hunger has declined.

**FOLLOWING INTERNATIONAL EVENTS.** Most Canadians pay attention to international events; eight in ten report that they follow issues and events in the world outside Canada very (26%) or somewhat (54%) closely, the same proportion as a decade ago. Their attention to what's going on beyond our borders also continues to mirror how much they follow news and events nationally within Canada, and locally within their own communities.

**Age cohort.** Compared to a decade ago, Canada's youth have become more engaged in following news and events at all levels, closing the gap with older Canadians. The shift is greatest when it comes to international coverage. In reporting that they follow a given type of news at least somewhat closely, 18 to 24 years olds (83%) are as likely to pay attention to international news and events as those 60 years and older (86%), largely closing the gap from 2008. On both the national and local scenes, the change has been more modest: Older Canadians still pay much more attention to issues and events than youth, but in each case the gap has shrunk by five percentage points.

**Place of birth/Generation.** Foreign-born Canadians continue to be more engaged with international news than native-born Canadians. Over a third (35%) of foreign-born Canadians report following international issues very closely compared to 25 percent of those born in this country; the gap between the two groups has closed slightly over the past decade. When it comes to national issues, those born outside the Canada (37%) are more likely than native-born Canadians (26%) to follow news and events very closely, unlike a decade ago when their attention levels were similar. A

## How closely do you follow issues and events?



Q.5a-c  
Please tell me if you follow issues and events very, somewhat, not very or not at all closely that take place:

similar shift has occurred among native-born Canadians of different generations; second generation Canadians (33%) are more likely than third plus generation Canadians (25%) to pay attention to events at the national level; in 2008 a much smaller three point gap separated these two groups.

**Region.** Canadians' attention on international news and events is growing more similar across regions of the country. The greatest shifts driving this convergence have occurred in Saskatchewan/Manitoba and British Columbia where such attention has increased by 8 and 6 percentage points, respectively, while declining in Alberta (down 6). Quebec residents continue to be most likely to say they do not follow international news and events (25%), but this number has dropped seven percentage points since 2008.

**WORLD ISSUES MOST CLOSELY FOLLOWED.** When asked about the kinds of events they are most likely to follow at the international level (unprompted), Canadians are most likely to mention wars, including those in the Middle East, although less so than a decade ago. Other issues followed include politics, the environment, and economics/finance. There has been a minor re-shuffling in the interest level Canadians have for other issues over the past 10 years, with, for example, increasing focus on politics and human rights. Two issues now among the top ten in 2018 were not on the list in 2008: nuclear weapons/disarmament (mentioned by 7%) and immigration/refugees (6%). On the other hand, Canadians' interest in the environment and poverty/global hunger has waned over the past 10 years.

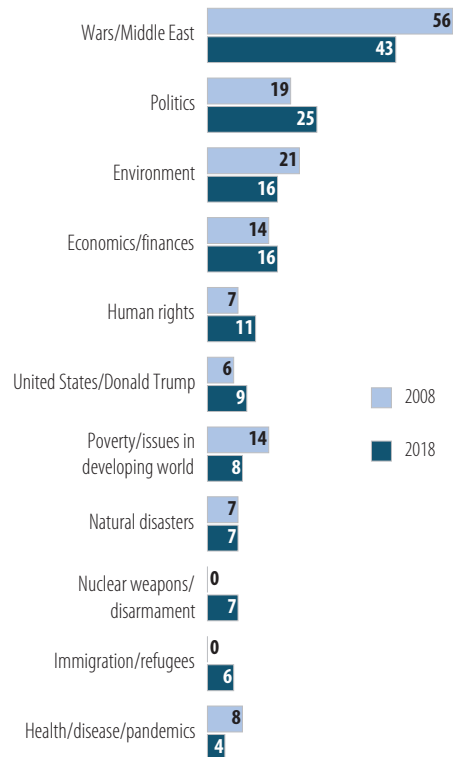
**Wars/Middle East.** Canadians across the country follow issues or events tied to international conflict to more or less the same degree. Those most likely to pay attention to these issues include men, individuals in middle to higher income households (\$60K or more), Canadians who follow international issues very or somewhat closely, and people who are more pessimistic about the direction the world is heading.

The amount of attention paid to wars/Middle East in various parts of the country has changed from a decade ago when interest was higher in certain provinces (Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan/Manitoba, and Alberta). The overall drop in interest in these issues has been particularly steep among those living in Atlantic Canada (down 20 points) and Alberta (down 17). A shift in interest for wars/Middle East has also occurred across a range of socio-demographic groups; those least likely to follow these issues now compared to 10 years ago include women, Canadians without a high school diploma, lower income Canadians, and people who are optimistic about the direction the world is heading.

**Politics.** Canadians most likely to pay attention to international news related to politics include second generation Canadians, men, university graduates, people who follow international issues very or somewhat closely, and individuals who have travelled abroad three or more times in their lives. The overall rise in interest in international politics has been particularly strong in Quebec and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (up 13 points each), bringing residents in these two provinces up to the level of Canadians living elsewhere. A convergence of views has also occurred across age cohorts, driven largely by growing interest

## World issues/events most likely to follow

Top mentions



Q.6

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

among Canadian youth (up 11 points), and between native- and foreign-born Canadians (where interest among the latter group has risen 8 percentage points). Other Canadians contributing most to the increase in interest in international politics include second generation Canadians, people without a high school diploma, francophones, and frequent international travelers.

**Environment.** Quebecers, university graduates, and frequent travellers top the list of Canadians most likely to follow global environmental issues in 2018. The drop in attention paid to these issues over the past decade has been most noticeable in British Columbia (down 14 points), and among third plus generation Canadians (down 12) whose interest level is now much closer to second generation Canadians than ten years ago. Other Canadians with declining interest in global environmental issues include 18 to 24 year olds, lower income Canadians, and less frequent international travelers.

**Poverty/global hunger.** Atlantic Canada residents and older Canadians (60+) stand out as being most likely to say they follow news and issues related to poverty and global hunger. The overall level of interest in these issues has changed from a decade ago when it was more consistent across the country. Saskatchewan/Manitoba and Alberta residents contributed most to this shift (down 13 and 9 points, respectively), while Atlantic Canadians' interest remained more stable. The attention paid to poverty/global hunger also dropped off among some population groups, which added to the overall decline. Canadians with higher household incomes, for example, are less likely to follow these issues today (down 10 points) compared to a decade ago when their interest was consistent with others. The same pattern occurs among residents of smaller-sized communities (down 9 points), and individuals with some post-secondary education (down 8 points). Notably,

Canadians who follow international issues very closely are less likely to pay attention today to poverty/global hunger than others in 2018 (down 9 points) compared to a decade ago when they expressed greater interest in these issues.

**Nuclear weapons/disarmament.** The emergence of this issue in 2018 is due in part to greater interest among residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and among Canadians who follow international issues very closely.

**Immigration/refugees.** Canadians most likely to follow news and events on this topic include Albertans, and frequent international travelers (i.e. traveled 10+ times abroad). Notably, there is no difference in attention to global immigration/refugee issues between native-born and foreign-born Canadians, nor between second and third plus generation Canadians.

## COUNTRIES AND REGIONS OF GREATEST INTEREST.

Much like a decade ago, Canadians express a personal interest in many parts of the world, but their strongest connections continue to be with those countries that share the closest cultural and historic ties with Canada, namely Western Europe and the United States. When asked (unprompted), seven in ten Canadians say they feel particularly connected to or are interested in one or more regions or countries. This connection is most likely to be with countries in Western Europe or Scandinavia, followed by the United States.

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

While the overall pattern of connection to, or interest in, specific countries or regions across the globe has remained fairly stable over the past decade, there have been changes in the relative attention given by different groups of Canadians to particular countries.

**Western Europe/Scandinavia.** Older Canadians (60+), native-born first generation Canadians, university graduates, people whose mother tongue is English or French, and individuals who follow international issues very closely are those most likely to feel particularly connected to or interested in Western European or Scandinavian countries. Compared to a decade ago, interest has grown more noticeably among Quebecers, older Canadians, university graduates, and people who follow international issues very closely. Interest has declined among those with the lowest levels of education and income.

**United States.** A sense of personal connection to the United States is most evident among university graduates, Canadians in higher income households (\$100K+), and anglophones. Increased interest in the U.S. compared to a decade ago is most noticeable among residents of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, as well as university graduates.

## Regions/countries of greatest personal interest or connection

### Top mentions



Q.7

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

**No interest in other countries/regions.** Canadians least apt to express interest in any country or region include those living in Atlantic Canada (44%), native-born Canadians (34%; especially third plus generation (38%)), and individuals who do not follow international issues at all (51%). Such absence of interest in other countries and regions of the world has increased among Atlantic Canadians (up 7 points), third plus generation Canadians (up 7), people without a high school diploma (up 12), those who do not follow international issues (up 19), and non-travelers (up 13).



## Canadians' travel experiences abroad

Eight in ten Canadians have travelled outside Canada and the U.S., with the frequency of such trips higher than in 2008. Tourism continues to be the most common reason for such travel, but increasing proportions are going to see friends and family, to visit places of birth or ancestry, and to volunteer.

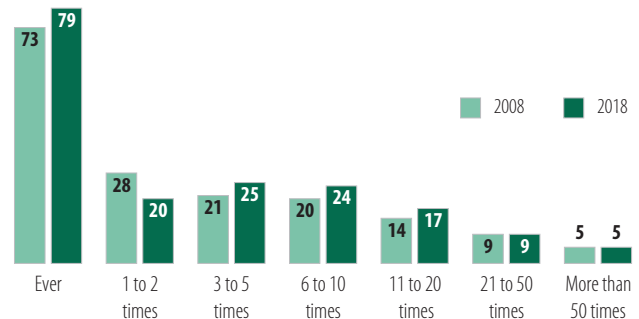
While the internet and social media have opened up new avenues and channels through which Canadians can connect to people and places around the globe, travel remains an important vehicle they use to see and experience this in person. Canadians are active travelers, and have become more so over the past decade; close to eight-in-ten have travelled outside Canada and the U.S. at least once in their lives. The frequency of regular travel has risen over the decade; half of Canadians (49%) now report three to ten trips in their lifetime (up 8 percentage points since 2008), with a third having done so more than ten times (up 3).

Canadians are most likely to spend time abroad as tourists, but significant numbers are also visiting family and friends or taking trips to see their place of birth or country of ancestry. Fewer travel for business or as part of a job, education, or to do volunteer work. Compared to a decade ago, Canadians are increasingly likely to travel abroad as tourists, and also are making more trips to visit family and friends, or to visit their place of birth or ancestry. Smaller numbers are leaving Canada for business or part of a job, or for education. There has been a slight increase in the number of Canadians who have traveled to do volunteer work; the 11 percent who report such activity translates to close to 4 million adult Canadians, double the number in 2008.

**Age cohort.** Older Canadians (ages 40 to 59) are the most frequent international travelers with a third reporting more than 10 trips abroad. However, Canada's youth are closing the gap, with more than half of those 18 to 24 years of age (56%) having travelled outside Canada and the U.S. between three and ten times (up 13 points since 2008). The proportion of young people with more than ten trips abroad has more than doubled over the same period to 21%, significantly closing the gap with older Canadians (33%). Young people are travelling increasingly as tourists, but there have been notable increases in the number who go abroad for volunteer work, and to visit their place of birth or country of ancestry. Younger Canadians are also now more likely than those 60 years of age or more to have travelled to do volunteer work (a 7-point gap).

### Travel outside Canada and the U.S.

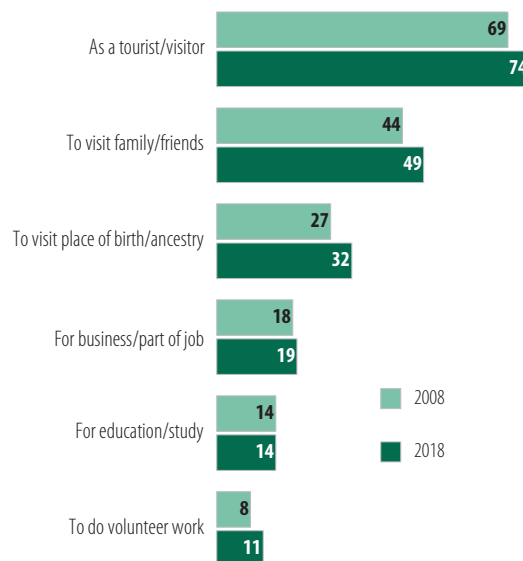
Number of trips



Q.9

Approximately how many times have you ever travelled outside Canada and the U.S. for any purpose?

### Reasons for travelling outside Canada and the U.S.



Q.8a-f

Please tell me if you have ever travelled outside Canada and the US for any of the following reasons:

**Generation/Place of birth.** Perhaps not surprisingly, given their strongest international ties, foreign-born Canadians are the most active travelers abroad; four in ten have made more than 10 international trips. They are followed by second generation (33%) and third plus generation (25%) Canadians; by comparison, 27% of native-born Canadians have travelled as frequently. Foreign-born Canadians are much more likely than native-born Canadians to travel abroad to visit family and friends (42 point gap) or their birthplace or country of ancestry (59 point gap).

In terms of their reasons for traveling abroad, second generation Canadians are more likely than third plus generation Canadians to travel in all of the six scenarios, but most noticeably for travel to visit friends and family (34 point gap) or to see their place of birth or country of ancestry (34 point gap). Over the past 10 years, differences in travel behaviour between these population groups have grown wider, with foreign-born and second generation Canadians more likely to be traveling abroad in all six scenarios than native-born and third plus generation Canadians, respectively.

**Region.** Quebec, Ontario, and BC residents are the most frequent international travellers, with three in ten having made more than 10 trips abroad in their lifetime. Ontarians and British Columbians are more likely than others to travel as tourists to other countries or to visit family and friends; Ontarians are by far those most likely to visit their place of birth or country of ancestry (this aligns with the fact that

Ontario has the highest proportion of foreign born and second generation Canadians). The frequency of international travel has jumped most noticeably since 2008 among Atlantic Canada and Alberta residents; more than half now say they have travelled abroad three to ten times compared to about a third a decade ago. Travel for tourism is more common than before among Quebec, Alberta, and Saskatchewan/Manitoba residents. Meanwhile, volunteering abroad is an increasingly popular pursuit among British Columbia and Ontario residents, compared with a decade ago.

**Community Size.** Canadians living in major urban centres (1 million plus population) travel abroad more frequently than others; four in ten have done so 10 or more times in their lifetime, a much larger proportion than those living in areas of Canada with smaller populations. Residents of small and rural communities (with populations under 5,000) have nonetheless become more frequent travelers in the past decade; 55 percent have now been outside the country three to ten times (up 17 points compared to 2008).

However, Canadians living in the larger urban centres (1 million plus) remain much more active travelers at the high-range of trips; the proportion who have been abroad more than 10 times has risen eight points over the past decade, compared to a drop of eight points for those in smaller communities. More frequent travel for those in the smaller communities has been largely for tourism and to visit their place of birth or country of ancestry, while urban dwellers are traveling more to visit family or friends.

## Orientation to the USA

Most Canadians have travelled to the United States in the past five years, but one in four reports changing or reconsidering plans for future visits because of the current political climate. Canadians' overall opinion of the US has worsened since Donald Trump became the President, but most believe US-style populism is unlikely to come to Canada.

### CANADIANS' TRAVEL TO THE UNITED STATES.

The United States is Canada's closest neighbour, is the best known to most Canadians, and the country with the easiest travel access. Two-thirds of Canadians report having travelled to the U.S. in the past five years. Among those who have visited the U.S., 40% have done so no more than five times while another 13% have made between six and ten visits. More than one in ten Canadians reports having made more than ten trips south of the border in the past five years. Overall, travel patterns to the U.S. have changed little over the past decade.

The most frequent Canadian travellers to the US (up to 5 times in the past 5 years) include B.C., Alberta, and Ontario residents, younger Canadians, and those with higher levels of education and income. Such travel is least frequent among Atlantic Canadians, those 60 and older, francophones and third plus generation Canadians.

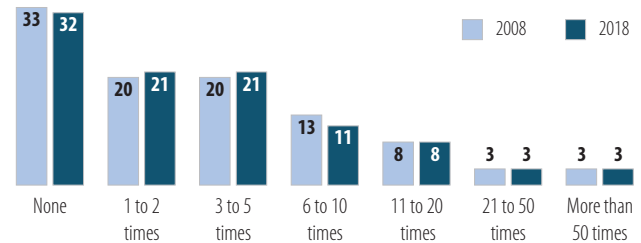
Shortly after taking office in early 2017, the Trump administration instituted new travel regulations that placed restrictions on visitors who hold citizenship with selected countries in the Middle East from visiting the United States. This created problems at the U.S.-Canada border for Canadians holding passports from these countries, and some organizations (e.g. public schools) cancelled plans for U.S. travel. The chill created by the new U.S. policies has caused some Canadians to reconsider their travel plans south of the border.

One in four Canadians reports to have either already changed his or her plans to visit the U.S. because of the current political climate in the country (16%), or is considering doing so (9%). These results are essentially unchanged from a Focus Canada survey conducted in April 2017.<sup>2</sup>

Rethinking travel to the U.S. is reported across the population, but is most noticeable among British Columbia residents, women, university graduates, people living in

### Travel to the U.S. in past five years

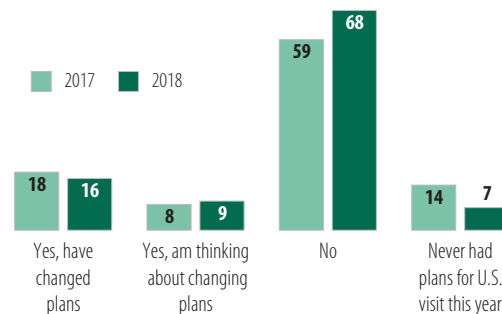
Number of trips



Q.14

How many times have you travelled to the United States in the past five years?

### Changing plans to visit the U.S. this year



Q.15

Have you personally either changed your plans, or are thinking about changing your plans, for travelling to the United States this year because of the current political climate in that country?

large urban centres (1 million plus), and Canadians whose mother tongue is other than French. Of note, foreign-born Canadians are no more or less likely than native-born Canadians to have changed plans to travel in the United States. Some Canadians have become even more reluctant to travel south of the border over the course of 2018, notably residents of British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Others are less affected by the political climate in the U.S. in a way that would cause them to change their travel plans to the country; Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Alberta, and Ontario residents are more resolved to not change their plans to visit the U.S. than was the case earlier in 2018.

2 Focus Canada 2017 – Canadian public opinion about immigration and the U.S.A.

**OVERALL OPINION OF THE UNITED STATES.** Amidst the drama and chaos that has characterized the first year of the Trump Presidency, one that delivered a major jolt to that country's political and cultural fabric, Canadians' views of their neighbour to the south have taken a negative turn. Less than half of the Canadian population now holds a very (12%) or somewhat (35%) positive overall opinion of the United States; this is down substantially from 2012 during the lead up to Barack Obama's re-election victory. Although slightly more positive than in April 2017, Canadians' overall views of the U.S. remain at their lowest point since Environics began measuring it in 1982.

Those most likely to have a favourable opinion of the United States include Albertans (53%), men (55%), allophones (56%), and people who are optimistic about the direction the world is heading (56%). This view is least apt to be shared by Quebecers (41%), women (39%) and francophones (40%).

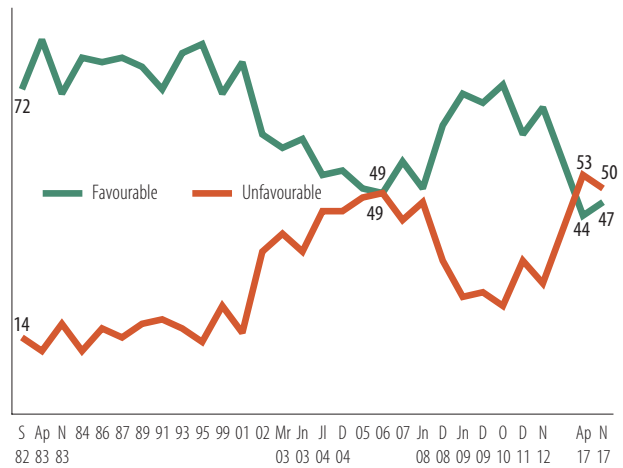
While the overall decline in favourable impressions of the United States since 2012 is evident across Canada, there has been some rebound in views over the past six months among some Canadians. Ontario and Atlantic Canada residents, for example, have more favourable views of the U.S. compared to six months ago (up 7 points each), as is the case among lower income Canadians (up 11). The opposite is true, however, for Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents (down 7 points).

**ANTI-GOVERNMENT POPULISM – COULD IT HAPPEN HERE?** The election of Donald Trump as U.S. President in 2016 coincided with a broader movement in countries in Europe and elsewhere that has been described as anti-government populism, and a reaction against more progressive politics and values that have prevailed in many western countries. Many are now speculating whether this same trend might inevitably take hold in Canada.<sup>3</sup>

Four in ten Canadians believe it is very (12%) or somewhat (27%) likely that some form of anti-government populism will happen in Canada over the next few years, compared with a modest majority saying it is not very (43%) or not at all (16%) likely to occur. This represents a shift in views that reflect a growing doubt about populism emerging in this country; in April of 2017 Canadians were more divided on this question (45% saying likely to happen, versus 51% saying unlikely).

3 Michael Adams, *Could it Happen Here? Canada in the Age of Trump and Brexit* (Simon and Schuster, 2017)

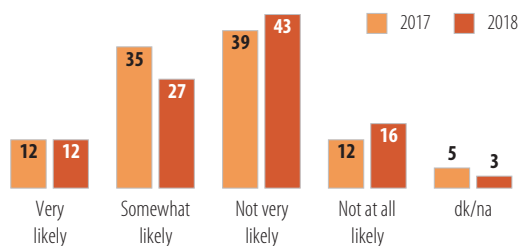
Overall opinion of the United States  
1982 – 2017



Q.30  
In general, what is your overall opinion of the United States? Is it very favourable, somewhat favourable, somewhat unfavourable or very unfavourable?

Those most likely to believe a Trump-like populism could gain traction in Canada include Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents, native-born and second generation Canadians, and individuals who have not completed a high school education. Canadians least apt to believe anti-government populism will come to Canada include Atlantic Canadians, university graduates, and very frequent international travelers. Canadians' growing doubt since April that this trend could happen in the country is most noticeable in Atlantic Canada (down 10 points) and Alberta (down 8), and among Canadians born elsewhere (down 10), who are now less likely than native-born Canadians to see populism taking hold in Canada. Canadians in lower income households (less than \$30K) have also become more skeptical about this development (down 13 points).

Likelihood that anti-government populism will happen in Canada



Q.31  
The election of Donald Trump reflects a major change in US politics and policies, and is similar to trends in some European countries like the UK and France. How likely do you think it is that this form of anti-government populism will happen in Canada over the next few years?

## Financial support and remittances abroad

Four in ten Canadians report making financial donations to organizations that address global issues, and one in five has sent money to family and friends living abroad; this is most common but by no means exclusive among those who were born in another country.

Canadians come from all over the world, and most keep personal connections to family and friends despite being separated by distance. For some Canadians, these close personal connections inspire monetary support—both for organizations doing work they believe in, and for family or friends.

Four in ten (39%) Canadians report that in the past two years, they or someone in their household **have donated money to an organization that addresses problems or issues in other countries**; this is the same proportion as recorded in 2008. Among those who have given money, close to half have donated less than \$250 (48%), but 18 percent report donations of \$1,000 or more, with the average two-year donation being \$684. Projected to the country's population this average donation translates into almost 11 million adult Canadians contributing approximately \$7.5 billion over the past two years. In 2008, the average donation amount over the previous two years was \$643.<sup>4</sup>

One in five (19%) Canadians says his or her household **has provided financial support to family members or others they know living in another country**, essentially the same percentage as reported this activity in 2008. Although this is a smaller proportion compared with those who gave to organizations, the size of the donation is significantly greater, averaging \$2,492 over the past two years. Projecting this to the population provides an estimate of close to 5.3 million Canadians sending approximately \$13.3 billion to family and others in the past two years. In 2008, the average size of remittances reported was \$2,066<sup>5</sup>

Combined, these contributions to overseas organizations and individuals totalled almost \$21 billion over the past two years. By comparison, the Canadian government's official

## Financial assistance given overseas in past two years

		Average donation past two years
To causes/organizations that address problems in other countries	39	\$643
	39	\$684
To family members or others that you know living in other countries	18	\$2,066
	19	\$2,492

Q.11a-b

In the past two years have you or someone in your household given financial support to ...

Q.12a-b

(If yes) Approximately how much have you given in financial support in the past 12 months?

development assistance in the 2014-16 period was just over \$11 billion.” Canadians’ activity in making contributions overseas varies noticeably across the population.<sup>6</sup>

**Age cohort.** Canadians aged 18 to 24 (36%) are as likely as those 60+ (38%) to say they had made a donation to an organization working internationally. Young Canadians’ average donation at \$832 is higher than the national average, although lower than that reported by older Canadians (\$925). Youth are more likely than average to have sent money to another country to help family members or others they know (26%), but the average amount given by those who have done so (\$1,875) is well below the national average.

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are as likely as those native-born to report giving financial support to foreign-based causes and organizations (39% each), but on average, foreign-born Canadians have donated more money (\$739 versus \$670, respectively). But Canadians born elsewhere are close to three times as likely to have sent money to family and others they know abroad (40% versus 14% of native-born Canadians), and given larger amounts (\$4,152 versus \$1,504, respectively). The amounts given by second generation Canadians fall somewhere in between those of immigrants and those who have been in the country three or more generations.

4 This amount reported for 2008 has been revised following publication of the 2008 survey report

5 This amount reported for 2008 has been revised following publication of the 2008 report.

6 Government of Canada, Statistical Report on Development Assistance 2015-16. <http://www.international.gc.ca/gac-amc/publications/odaaa-lrmado/sria-rsai-2015-16.aspx?lang=eng#os>

**Mother tongue.** Anglophones (42%) and allophones (38%) are more apt to have donated money to foreign-based causes or organizations in other countries than francophones (28%). Average donation amounts of allophones (\$906) are substantially larger than for English (\$681) or French (\$441) speakers. When it comes to giving financial support to family members or others they know in another country, allophones (many of whom are immigrants) (40%) are more than twice as likely to have done so. However, the amount they have donated is fairly close that of anglophones (\$2,743 vs. \$2,725, respectively), compared to a much lower figure for francophones (\$890).

**Region.** Contributions to organizations abroad are most widely reported by residents of BC and Alberta (47% in each province). It is residents of these provinces, plus Ontario, who are most apt to be sending money to family and friends living in other countries (in part at least because these provinces include the highest proportion of immigrants). By comparison, Saskatchewan/Manitoba (27%) and Atlantic Canada (28%) residents are the least likely to report sending money to foreign-based causes and organizations. In terms of contribution amounts, British Columbians report significantly higher amounts donated (\$863), double that of Quebecers (\$411) and Atlantic Canadians (\$429). In terms of amounts sent to family and friends, higher amounts are reported in Saskatchewan/Manitoba (\$3,315) and Ontario (\$3,083), with far lower amounts are reported in Atlantic Canada (\$797) and Quebec (\$1,161).

## Personal interest in living abroad

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

As the world becomes increasingly connected, people gain a greater appreciation for the myriad experiences they can have to spend time in other countries for tourism, work, education, or volunteering. Governments and organizations, who see potential economic and societal benefits for Canadian society through enhanced global connections, offer multiple and growing opportunities for Canadians to expand their horizons. Many Canadians cannot resist the temptation.

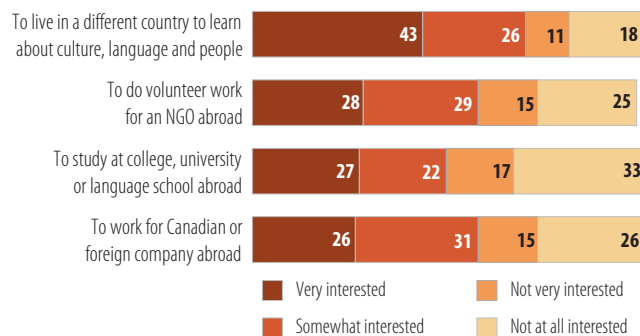
More than four in ten (44%) Canadians report having worked, studied or volunteered abroad, and a much larger percentage say they have an interest in this type of experience if presented with the opportunity. This willingness to leave Canada to spend time abroad has held steady over the past decade. Seven in ten Canadians say they would be very (43%) or somewhat (26%) interested in living in a different country to learn about its culture and language, virtually the same number as in 2008.

Smaller numbers would be at least somewhat interested in working for a Canadian or foreign company (58%), doing volunteer work for a non-governmental organization (58%), or studying at a college, university or language school (49%). In each case, the views of Canadians have remained more or less stable over the past decade, although there has been a small decrease in interest to study abroad and to do volunteer work (down 4 points each).

**Age cohort.** Canadians 18 to 24 and those 25 to 39 years of age are among those most keen to embrace all four scenarios of living abroad. Those 25 to 39 years old, in particular, are the most interested today compared to 10 years ago in travelling for study (up 6 points), doing volunteer work (up 5), or living in a different country to learn about its culture and language (up 4). By comparison, their enthusiasm to work abroad for a Canadian or foreign company has waned over the past decade (down 7). Interest levels among older cohorts for all scenarios also remain solid, but, unlike their younger counterparts, working abroad has become more appealing to them than a decade ago (up 6 points among middle-aged, up 3 for 60+).

**Region.** Residents of Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia express the greatest interest in these types of international experiences, although BC residents are less inclined than a decade ago. Most noticeable, however, is the rising interest among Ontarians and Albertans to work for a Canadian or foreign company abroad (up 7 and 12 points, respectively). Alberta residents also express much greater interest than a decade ago in living in a different country to learn about its culture and language (up 9 points). In contrast, those living in Atlantic Canada, Saskatchewan and Manitoba have much less interest in all four scenarios than was the case ten years ago, most noticeably in doing volunteer work and working for a Canadian or foreign company.

### Interest in travel to foreign countries



Q.36a-d

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

**Generation/Place of Birth.** Second generation Canadians are much more likely to express interest in international experience of all types than third generation Canadians. This is a significant change from 2008 when both groups expressed similar levels of interest in working for a Canadian or foreign company or studying abroad. Moreover, a decade ago second generation Canadians were much less interested in doing volunteer work for a non-governmental organization, whereas now the situation is reversed. Foreign-born Canadians express the greatest interest in working abroad, followed by second generation Canadians, and then third plus generation Canadians. For other types of international experiences, there is no difference among these groups.

**Gender.** As was the case in 2008, Canadian men are more likely to be interested in working for a Canadian or foreign country abroad, while Canadian women express greater enthusiasm for doing volunteer work for a non-governmental organization.

**Education.** University graduates continue to express much greater interest in taking part in international experiences than those with less formal education, most noticeably individuals who have not completed high school. This latter

group is much less interested in any of the four scenarios than was the case a decade ago, particularly when it comes to studying abroad (down 19 points).

**Mother tongue.** Allophones are among the most likely to embrace the idea of international experience, and their interest has risen over the past decade, unlike their French and English counterparts. This is true for studying abroad, working for a Canadian or foreign company, and doing volunteer work. Notably, allophones are much more likely to have been born outside Canada.

**International travel experience.** It is perhaps not surprising that Canadians who have traveled abroad more frequently in their lives are also those most likely to seek international experiences that involve working, studying, living, or doing volunteer work in a foreign country. It is nonetheless notable that very frequent travel abroad (i.e. more than 10 times) does not seem to be what differentiates the level of interest. In fact, Canadians who have traveled abroad less often (i.e. three to ten times) are as likely to want to take part in the four scenarios. Rather, it is those with much less travel experience (i.e. none or one to two times) who express the least interest in doing so.





# Canada's current role in the world

## Canada's influence in the world today

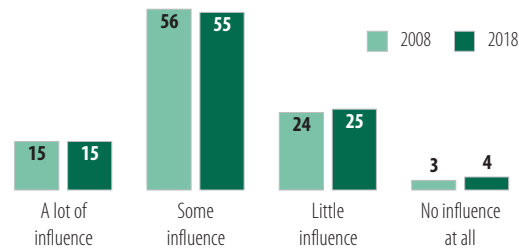
Most Canadians believe – as they did in 2008 – that their country exerts influence in world affairs today, and that its impact has grown over the past 20 years. This is attributed largely to peacekeeping and/humanitarian efforts, but also increasingly due to the country's multiculturalism and acceptance of immigrants.

**CURRENT INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD.** Do Canadians believe their country is having an impact on today's world? They are most likely to believe Canada has "some influence" (55%), with relatively few (15%) saying Canada exerts "a lot of influence." By comparison, three in ten Canadians believe Canada has little (25%) or no (4%) influence in the world in 2018. Public perceptions of Canada's influence in world affairs has changed very little over the past decade.

More notable is the fact that most Canadians believe Canada's role in the world has grown stronger during the past 20 years. Six in ten feel Canada's role has grown a great deal (16%) or at least somewhat (44%), compared with a quarter who see a decline in influence, either somewhat (20%) or a great deal (7%). While these results suggest that most Canadians believe their country's global influence is rising, this is no more the case than in 2008 when the opinions expressed were essentially the same.

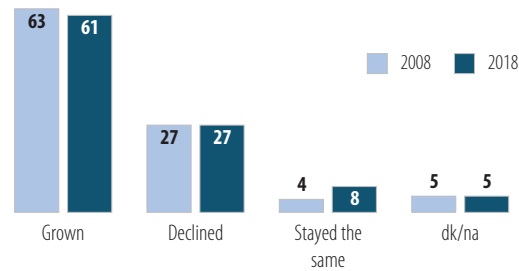
**Region.** Views on Canada's current influence in the world are similar across the country, although Atlantic Canada residents (77%) are among those most apt see Canada having at least some influence in world affairs generally, while Quebecers and Albertans (66% each) are least likely to share this view. These regional differences also apply to how Canada's role is seen to have changed over the past 20 years, and reflects a noticeable decline since 2008 in positive opinions about Canada's sway in the world among Albertans (down 8 points).

## Canada's influence in the world today



Q.16  
How much impact or influence do you believe Canada has today in world affairs generally?

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



Q.17  
Do you think Canada's role in world affairs has grown or declined during the past 20 years?

**Age cohort.** Views of Canada's current influence in the world are similar across age groups. However, Canadian youth (18-24) are more likely than their older counterparts to perceive Canada's role in world affairs as having grown in the past 20 years (75%).

**Place of birth/Generation.** Foreign-born Canadians (21%) are more likely than native-born residents (13%) to believe that Canada wields a lot of influence in world affairs, and they are also more apt to say Canada's role internationally has grown a great deal over the past 20 years (24%, vs. 14% of native-born Canadians). This difference reflects a growing divergence from a decade ago, when foreign and native-born Canadians held largely similar views on this question. There is little difference in the opinions of second and third plus generations.

**Gender.** Women (75%) are more likely than men (64%) to believe Canada has at least some influence in world affairs,

and to perceive its role has grown over the past 20 years (67%, vs. 54% of men). This reflects a significant shift from 2008 when the two genders were much closer in their views.

**Education.** Canadians who have not completed a high school diploma hold slightly more positive views of Canada's impact in world affairs (74%, vs. 68% of those with some post-secondary experience). However, compared to a decade ago, they are much less likely to believe Canada's global role has grown (down 9 points), bringing them closer to the views of Canadians with higher levels of education.

**Frequency of international travel.** Canadians who have travelled overseas (70%) are somewhat more likely than non-travellers (63%) to say Canada has at least some influence in world affairs, and also to feel this has grown over the past 20 years. This reflects a noticeable drop in positive views among non-travellers since 2008, while the those of travellers have held steady over this time period.

**HOW CANADA'S ROLE HAS GROWN.** Those who believe Canada's influence in the world has grown in recent decades were asked (unprompted) how they think has been manifested. Peacekeeping and humanitarian efforts top the list followed by multiculturalism and refugee policies (up significantly from 2008) and Canada's political influence and diplomacy. Further down the list of reasons for Canada's growing world influence are being a positive role model, and the current Prime Minister being a popular world leader. Compared to a decade ago, slightly fewer Canadians single out peacekeeping a humanitarian efforts as an indicator of Canada's increasing influence in global affairs (down 3 points). In contrast, more Canadians mention our country's political influence/diplomacy (up 7), and the popularity of our Prime Minister (up 10). Canadians who believe their country's influence in the world is growing are much less likely than a decade ago to point to the country's military involvement overseas and war against terrorism (down 19).

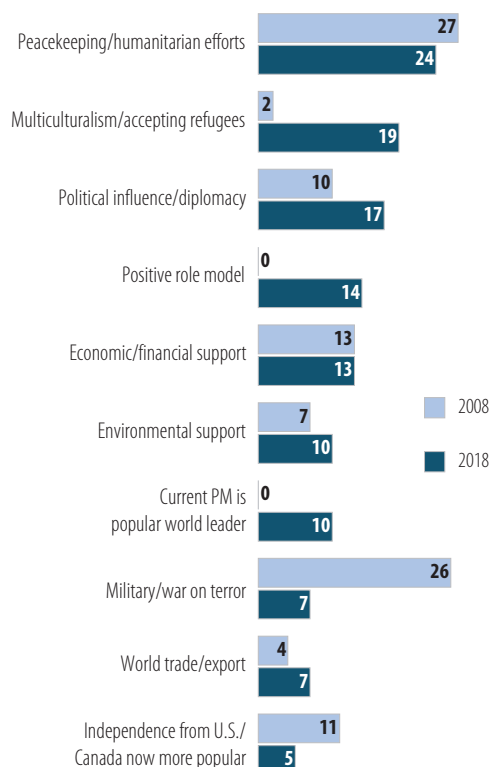
**Peacekeeping/Humanitarian efforts.** Canadians most likely to single out Canada's peacekeeping efforts include 18-24 year olds (28%), and those foreign-born (27%). Compared to a decade ago, Quebecers are now more likely than before to single out this reason for Canada's growing influence in world affairs (up 9 points), bringing them more in line with Canadians living in other provinces. By comparison, focus on peacekeeping has declined noticeably among Atlantic Canadians (down 14), university graduates, people who follow international issues very closely, and Canadians who have never travelled abroad.

**Multicultural/accepting refugees.** The growing focus on Canada's multiculturalism and refugee policy is evident across the country, but most noticeably in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (now at 25%), Canadians 18 to 24 (28%), those born in other countries (2%), and allophones (28%). This reason for Canada's growing world role is least evident in Quebec (13%) and among Canadians who do not follow international issues (14%).

**Political influence/diplomacy.** Native-born Canadians (18%) are more likely than foreign-born Canadians (12%) to give this reason as an indication of a growing role for Canada in world affairs. Compared to a decade ago, some groups are more likely to mention this reason, including Atlantic Canada residents (up 13 points), older Canadians (up 9), francophones (up 12), optimists about the direction the world is heading (up 10), and infrequent international travellers (up 10).

## How has Canada's role in the world grown?

### Top mentions



Q.18a

In what way do you think Canada's role in the world has grown?

**Current PM is popular world leader.** Canadians most likely to attribute their country's growing influence to the popularity of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau live in Quebec (20%) or are francophones (17%).

**Military/war on terror.** The significant drop in importance attributed to Canada's military efforts on the international scene is most noticeable among Saskatchewan and Manitoba residents (down 25 points), foreign-born Canadians (down 21), men (down 21), and Canadians who live in communities with 100,000 population or less (down 23). This reason is now mentioned by no more than 10 percent of any identifiable group across the country.

**HOW CANADA'S ROLE HAS DECLINED.** The quarter of Canadians who see Canada's influence declining over the past 20 years are most likely to attribute this what they see as their country's lack of influence over (or support to) other countries. One in five says the diminishing role is due to a lack of independence or leadership in relation to other nations, while one in six cites poor government policy generally or the negative influence of politics. Around one in ten or fewer cites a reduced commitment to foreign aid, support for war and military commitments, and on Canada being too dependent on foreign policy.

Compared to a decade ago, fewer Canadians believe Canada's declining role in the world is due to our lack of influence or other countries (down 13 points), to too much dependence on the U.S. (down 12), or to less support for war and military undertakings (down 4). On the other hand, more Canadians attribute the decline to a reduced commitment to foreign aid (up 9) or to a lack of independence or leadership in relation to other nations (up 4).

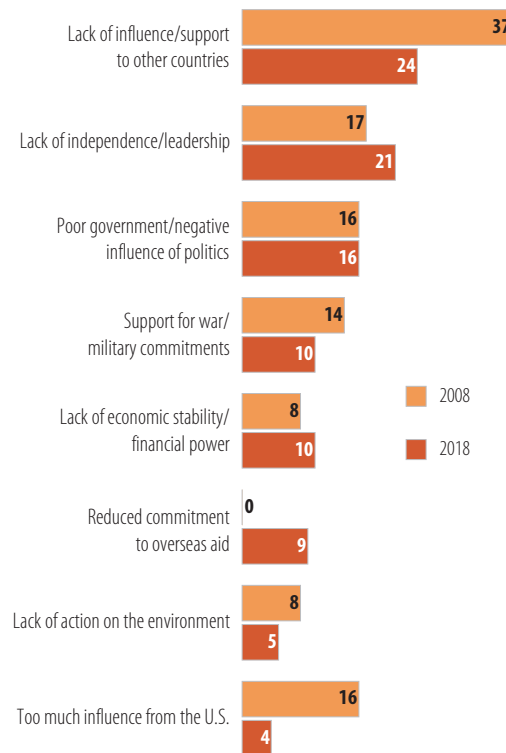
**Lack of influence/support to other countries.** Canadian youth (41%) are among those most likely to cite this as a reason for a decline in Canada's role internationally, along with B.C. residents and Canadians in the top income brackets, while it is least evident among those with in the lowest levels of education and income. The overall 13-point drop in the number of Canadians who attribute Canada's decline globally to this aspect is most notable among Alberta residents (down 33 points), foreign born Canadians (down 22), third plus generation Canadians (down 21), and those who follow international issues very closely (down 28).

**Less independence/leadership.** Albertans (46%) are those most likely to say Canada's decline in world affairs is due to having less independence and leadership, reflecting a significant jump since 2008 (up 21 points), with increases also apparent among foreign-born Canadians (up 16) and those with the least education and income.

**Too much influence from U.S.** The overall drop in the proportion of Canadians since 2008 who single out too much American influence as a reason for the decline in Canada's role internationally is most noticeable in Quebec (down 20 points) and Canadians who follow international issues very closely (down 19 points).

## How has Canada's role in the world declined?

### Top mentions



Q.18b

In what way do you think Canada's role in the world has declined?

**CANADA'S MOST POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION TO THE WORLD.** When asked (unprompted) what they believe to be their country's most positive contribution to the world today, four in five Canadians identify at least one attribute. At the top of the list is Canada's policies of multiculturalism and welcoming refugees from other countries, mentioned by 25 percent, almost four times the number who gave this response in 2008.

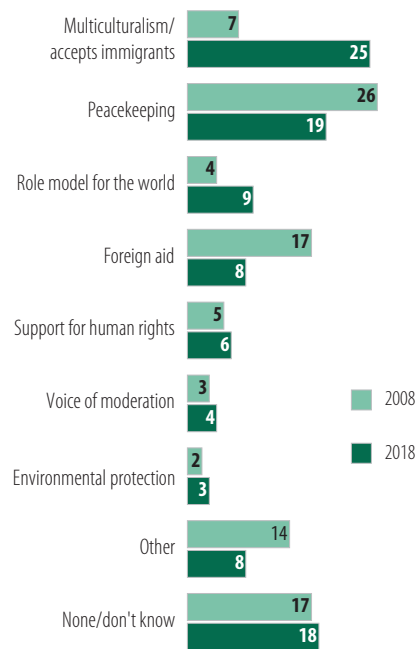
Peacekeeping was seen as Canada's top world contribution in 2008, and now occupies the second position (down 7 points). Other positive contributions (all mentioned by fewer than one in ten) include Canada serving as a role model for the world, foreign aid, support for human rights, being a voice of moderation and environmental protection. Just under one in five (18%) could not identify anything in response to this question.

**Multiculturalism/accepts immigrants.** This contribution that Canada makes to the world is now the most common across all identifiable groups; it is most widely cited by Atlantic Canadians (36%) and those aged 18 to 24 (35%), while being least evident among Canadians without a high school diploma (21%). However, its emergence since 2008 is most pronounced among Atlantic Canadians (up 34 points), those 18 to 24 (up 26) and second generation Canadians (up 23).

**Peacekeeping.** Canadians from across the country differ little in the degree to which they view peacekeeping as an important Canadian contribution, and the drop in emphasis given to this role is evident across the population.

**Foreign aid.** The overall decline since 2008 in the importance attributed to foreign aid as Canada's contribution to the world is most significant among Quebecers (down 20 points), and Canadians who do not follow international issues (down 16).

Canada's most positive contribution to the world  
Top mentions



Q.19  
In your opinion, what is the most important contribution that Canada, as a country, makes to the world today?

## Canada's refugee program

There is broad support for continuing to accept large numbers of refugees into the country. One in three Canadians reports a connection to the recent Syrian refugee sponsorship program, either directly or through someone they know.

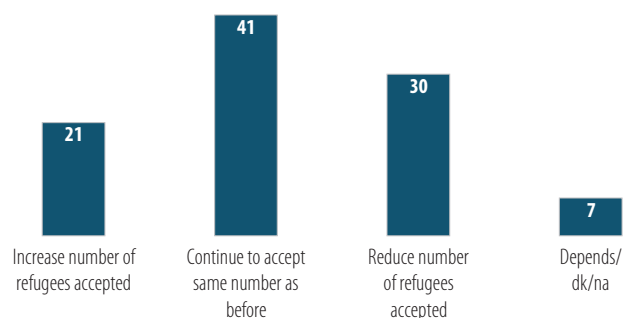
**NUMBER OF REFUGEES TO BE ADMITTED.** In 2015, the Canadian government expanded the number of refugees it accepts in response to the unprecedented number of people migrating across countries and continents, many of whom were refugees fleeing dangerous conditions in their home countries. Much of the focus has been on the plight of Syrians whose country has been suffering from an ongoing civil war that has created many casualties and devastated communities. The newly-elected Trudeau government scrambled to admit 30,000 Syrian refugees by early 2016 through government- and private-sponsored programs.

This number of refugees in a single year is unprecedented, but there is notable public support for continuing this policy. There is no public consensus on this question, but a clear majority believes that the country should continue to accept either the same number of refugees as before (41%) or an increased number of refugees (21%). Three in ten (30%) say the number of refugees accepted should be reduced over the next two years.

Those most likely to advocate maintaining the same number of refugees include Canadians 18 to 24 years of age (51%), and people who are optimistic about the direction the world is heading (44%). Support for increasing the number accepted to the country is most evident among Canadians 18-39 years of age (26%), university graduates (28%), and Canadians who follow international issues very closely (29%).

Those most apt to say there should be fewer refugees include residents of the three prairie provinces (38%), Canadians with lower levels of education and income, residents in smaller communities and rural areas, and those who have done no international travel (35%). Of note, native- and foreign-born Canadians hold similar views on the acceptance of refugees; more than six in ten in each case would support a similar level of influx of refugees or an increase in the number welcomed each year. The same pattern emerges for second and third plus generation Canadians.

### How many refugees should Canada accept in the next two years?



Q.20

*In the past 2 years, Canada has responded to the world refugee crisis by expanding the number of refugees it accepts, which totaled about 30,000 in the past year. Most of these refugees are Syrians who were living as displaced persons in neighbouring countries. For each of the next two years, do you think Canada should accept:*

## INVOLVEMENT IN REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

**PROGRAM.** Canada is the only country in the world that sponsors refugees by private individuals and non-governmental organizations such as religious groups. This method of refugee sponsorship was first developed in the late 1970s to admit a large group of Vietnamese refugees, and it proved both successful and popular. In 2015, the plight of Syrians fleeing a dangerous homeland prompted many Canadian cities and organizations to organize a similar campaign to find places for roughly 25,000 Syrian families living in resettlement camps.

This private sponsorship program has clearly touched a sizeable proportion of the population. Seven (7%) percent of those surveyed say they were directly involved in sponsoring refugees (as part of a sponsoring family, group or organization), and another 25 percent say they know someone who was involved in this program. This suggests that close to two million adult Canadians were involved directly in the sponsorship of refugees, with another seven million who knew someone who did so.

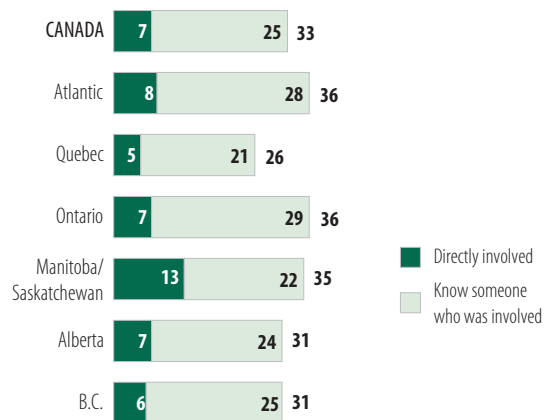
Direct involvement in the refugee program is reported across the country, but is most evident among residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (13%). Overall connection to the programs (direct involvement or knowing someone who was involved) is most evident in Ontario and Atlantic Canada (36% in each case), among older Canadians 60 plus (37%), second generation Canadians (39%), women (38%), university graduates (43%), anglophones (37%), Canadians who follow international issues very closely (40%), and frequent world travellers (42%). Such connection is least evident among francophones (21%) and Canadians without a high school diploma (21%).

How is direct involvement in the Syrian refugee program linked to the other issues covered in this survey? Does this group of Canadians stand out in a particular way, or is there evidence that involvement in the program may have had some influence in people's outlook on how their country operates in the global context?

This research cannot clearly establish causality but some links are apparent. Canadians directly involved in the program differ from the population-at-large in terms of expressing greater concern about such global issues as hunger/famine, human rights abuses, religious and ethnic hatred, and global migration; they are more likely to see

## Personal connection to the Syrian refugee sponsorship program

By province



Q.21

Many of the refugees coming to Canada in the past two years were privately sponsored by Canadian families and organizations. Were you either involved in his sponsorship program in some capacity, or know of someone who was involved?

Canada as a force of good in the world, to be more frequent world travellers (visiting friends, ones place of birth or ancestry, and to volunteer), to give to international causes and send remittances to family and friends abroad, and – not surprisingly – support increased numbers of refugees being admitted to Canada over the next two years. This profile notwithstanding, in demographic terms the seven percent of individuals who participated in the recent Syrian refugee sponsorship program are in many respects reflective of the broader Canadian population

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# What Canada’s role in the world could be

## How Canada can make a difference in the world

Most Canadians believe their country can strengthen its influence in the world, although somewhat less so than a decade ago. Areas of greatest potential impact include dealing with global migration and refugees, discouraging human rights abuses, and tackling hunger and famine in the developing world.

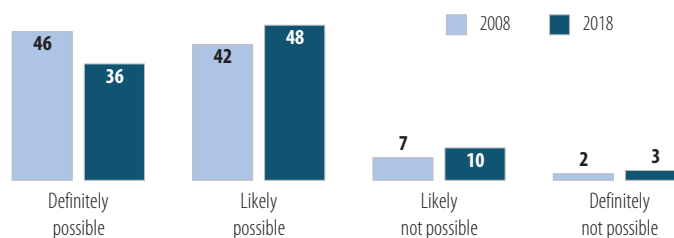
### POTENTIAL FOR INCREASED WORLD INFLUENCE.

Most Canadians see their country as being a positive force on global issues, but to what extent do they believe Canada can expand its role and influence in world affairs? Among those who see their country as having moderate to no influence on the world stage, most believe this can be strengthened; one in three (36%) says it is “definitely” possible for the country to hold more sway internationally, and an additional 48 percent believe this scenario is at least “somewhat” possible. Just over one in ten (13%) remains skeptical about this type of increased role for Canada.

While these results indicate a positive view of Canada’s potential in broadening its global influence, they also reflect somewhat less confidence than a decade ago when a greater proportion said this was definitely possible (a decline of 10 percentage points from 2008), as opposed to somewhat possible. This decline in strong confidence is most noticeable in Alberta (down 17 points), Manitoba and Saskatchewan (down 13). By comparison, more than four in ten (43%) Atlantic Canadians now say a stronger role is definitely possible (up 3 points).

Across the population, confidence in the potential for Canada to strengthen its global influence is now stronger among immigrants and second generation Canadians (reversing a previous gap with third plus generation in 2008), as well as among those with at least some post-secondary education.

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



Q.22

*Do you think it is definitely, likely, likely not or definitely not possible for Canada to strengthen its influence on world affairs if it chose to do so?*

**WHERE CANADA CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN WORLD ISSUES.**

Beyond the general idea of how much more influence Canada might have on world affairs, many Canadians believe their country can make a difference on a number of specific issues. Across 12 major global issues (the same list as presented for level of concern – see above), in all but one case a majority believe Canada can make at least some difference, although fewer than half say it would be “a big” difference. Canadians are most likely to say Canada can make a big difference in addressing global migration and refugees (38%), human rights abuses (32%) global warming and other environmental problems (32%), the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV-AIDS (28%), and hunger and famine in the developing world (25%). At the bottom of this list are terrorism (17%), the growing gap between rich and poor (16%) and the spread of nuclear weapons (14%), compared with 52% who say Canada can make little or no difference).

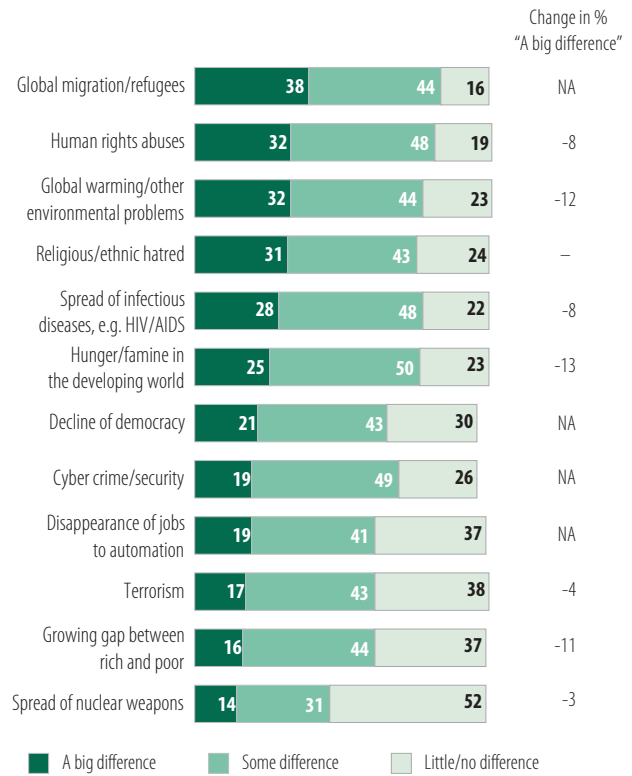
Canadians are less convinced today than a decade ago that Canada can make a difference on seven of the eight global issues considered in 2008. Their confidence in Canada making a “big difference” has dipped most notably on tackling hunger and famine (down 13 points), global warming and other environmental problems (down 12), and the growing gap between the rich and poor (down 11).

Views of Canada’s potential impact on these issues vary across the population, as does the shift in perspectives compared with a decade ago.

**Global migration and refugees.** Canadian youth (58%) are more than twice as likely as older Canadians to feel Canada can make a big difference in addressing global migration and refugee issues. Foreign-born Canadians (47%) are also more likely than native-born Canadians (especially third plus generations) to express this sentiment, as are allophones (46%).

**Global warming and other environmental problems.** Canadians born outside the country (44%) express greater confidence in Canada’s potential impact on global environmental issues than those born in Canada. This perspective is also shared more strongly among university graduates (36%), and people who follow international issues very closely (36%). Of some note, the overall drop in the proportion of Canadians who feel Canada can make a big difference addressing environmental issues is most pronounced in Alberta (down

**Where Canada can make a difference in world issues**



Q.23a-1  
Do you believe Canada as a country can make a big difference, some difference, little difference or not difference at all in each of the following world issues?

22 points), among youth 18-24 (down 21), and people living in small communities of less than 5,000 (down 25).

**Human rights abuses.** Belief in Canada’s ability to have a significant impact on international efforts to deal with this issue is strongest among young Canadians (47%, versus just 28% of those 60+), as well as foreign-born Canadians, allophones, and individuals who follow international issues very closely. The overall decline since 2008 in public confidence in Canada making a big difference on human rights is evident across the population.

**Spread of infectious diseases.** The potential for Canada making a big difference globally to deal with pandemic disease is shared most strongly by foreign-born Canadians (36%), and by people who follow international issues very closely (36%). Compared to a decade ago, far fewer Alberta residents (down 18 points), lower income Canadians (down 19), and people living in small communities of less than 5,000 (down 16) believe Canada can make a big difference in this area.

**Hunger and famine in the developing world.** Canadians living in Saskatchewan, Manitoba (32%) and Ontario (30%) are more likely than residents of other provinces to believe Canada can make a big impact on addressing global hunger and famine. Across the age groups, it is those under 40 years of age who are most optimistic in this regard (32%). Notably, Canadians in the lowest household income category (34%) are more than twice as likely as those in the top category to feel Canada can make a big difference in this area. The decline since 2008 in the percentage of Canadians overall who hold this view is most visible among Atlantic Canada residents (down 19 points), youth (down 17), and third plus generation Canadians (down 21).

**Religious and ethnic hatred.** Young Canadians 18 to 24 years of age (41%) display much greater optimism than their older counterparts about the potential for Canada to have an impact on issues related to religious and ethnic hatred. This is also true of foreign-born Canadians (38%) and allophones (42%).

**Terrorism.** Foreign-born Canadians (28%) are more likely than native-born Canadians (18%) to believe Canada can make a big difference in global efforts to stem the tide of terrorism (and second generation are more likely to share this view than those in third plus generations). The overall drop in confidence in Canada's potential to address terrorism in the world since 2008 is greatest among young Canadians (down 9 points) and third plus generation Canadians (down 8).

**Growing gap between rich and poor.** A belief that Canada can make a big difference in addressing income inequality is most

pronounced among Canadians under 40 years of age (22%), those with lower levels of household income (21%) and allophones (25%). This view has declined since 2008 most visibly among Canadians with no more than a high school diploma (down 20 points) and Canadian youth (down 17).

**Spread of nuclear weapons.** Canadians most likely to say their country can make a big difference halting the spread of nuclear weapons include Canadians aged 60 plus (20%), those born in another country (20%), and those with a high school diploma (25%).

**Cyber crime and threats to cybersecurity.** Canadians across the country hold a similar opinion about the extent to which Canada can have an impact on this issue, but it is most evident among foreign-born Canadians (24%), people generally optimistic about the direction the world is heading (22%), and those who follow international issues very closely (23%).

**Disappearance of jobs to automation.** Belief in Canada making a difference on this challenging trend is most evident among Canadians who have not completed a high school diploma (32%) and people living in lower income households (30%). Albertans stand out as being notably pessimistic on this issue (24% say Canada can make no difference at all on this issue).

**Decline of democracy.** Atlantic Canada residents (30%), foreign-born Canadians (28%), and Canadians without a high school diploma (33%) are more likely than others to believe that Canada can make a big difference in helping to address the global decline of democracy.

### SUPPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.

In the post-World War II period, Canada helped found and promote a number of international organizations – the United Nations, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and Group of Seven (G7) industrialized countries – that have formed the basic infrastructure of world affairs for more than half a century. And, due to our historical roots, Canada is also part of the British Commonwealth of Nations. These organizations have been front and centre as forums for dealing with pressing global issues, but recent political and economic trends are now presenting fresh challenges to their influence.

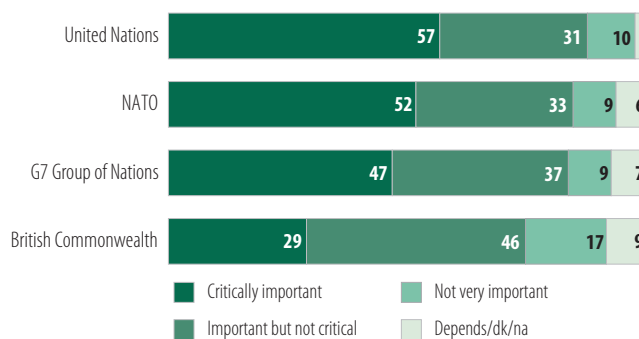
Within this context, it is notable that a majority of Canadians believe it is important if not critical that Canada be actively supportive and involved with these international organizations. In two cases – the United Nations, and NATO – a majority say it is “critically important” for the country to continue their engagement with them (57% and 52%, respectively). Marginally less priority is given to involvement with the G7 Group of countries (52%), while there is considerably less importance placed on the British Commonwealth (25%).

**Region.** The strongest views for active support and involvement in these organizations emerges in Ontario and Quebec, most notably for the United Nations (60% and 62%, respectively). Ontario (52%) residents are also behind the G7 more than others, while Atlantic Canadians (60%) are more likely to see Canada’s involvement in NATO as critically important more than those living in other regions. In contrast, Albertans (18%) are among those most apt to view the UN as not very important, while Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Quebec residents are most likely to place low importance on being involved with the British Commonwealth (21% each).

**Age cohort.** Canadians 40 years and older are more likely than their younger counterparts to view Canada’s involvement in all of these organizations as critically important. This is particularly true when it comes to NATO and the G7, where over half of older Canadians support Canada’s involvement compared to about four in ten of those under 40. For the British Commonwealth, just one in five younger Canadians sees Canada’s involvement as critical, compared to four in ten older Canadians.

**Education.** University graduates (54%) place much greater importance on Canada’s support of the G7 group of nations than do those without a university degree. By comparison, involvement with the British Commonwealth is most likely to be a priority for Canadians who have not completed a high school diploma (36%) (and who also tend to be older).

### Importance of Canada’s active support and involvement in international organizations



Q.26a-d  
How important do you believe it is that Canada be actively supportive and involved with ... ?

## International trade

Most Canadians believe NAFTA has been good for the Canadian economy, and this sentiment has strengthened over the past decade. There is a strong and growing consensus that international trade is important for Canadian jobs and the quality of life.

### IMPACT OF NAFTA ON CANADIAN ECONOMY.

President Donald Trump’s “America First” protectionist stance has put the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement in question. Questions about the benefits and costs of NAFTA for the economies across the continent have been used by negotiators to position their demands at the bargaining table, with the Canadian government asserting the agreement has had an overall positive impact for all NAFTA partners. The Canadian public is clearly onside with the positive impact on their own country.

More than six in ten (63%) Canadians believe NAFTA has helped the Canadian economy, over three times the proportion (18%) who say it has been hurtful. The positive view has grown significantly since 2011 (up 13 points) and is now at its highest level since Environics Research starting asking this question in 1995.<sup>7</sup>

Public support for the economic benefits of NAFTA are strong across the country, but especially so in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (72%), as well as among university graduates (68%), Canadians who are optimistic about the direction of the world (71%), and frequent world travellers (70%). A negative view of NAFTA is most evident among Canadians with the lowest levels of education and income. The increase in public support for NAFTA is most noticeable in Alberta (up 19 points), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (up 18), and among people living in rural areas of the country (up 18).

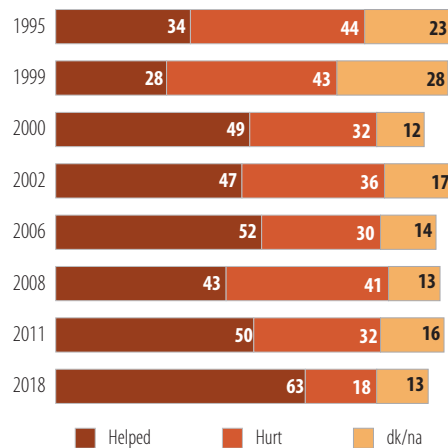
**IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE.** While Americans are now debating the merits of international trade, Canadians are almost wholly in agreement that it is essential to the well-being of their country. More than nine in ten say that international trade is very (73%) or somewhat (22%) important to maintaining Canadian jobs and quality of life, with only four percent dismissing it as not very or not at all important. The proportion who say international trade is very important has strengthened modestly since 2008 (up 5 percentage points), and is now at its highest level since 2000 when this question was first asked by Environics Research.<sup>8</sup>

7 Focus Canada 2011

8 Focus Canada 2008-2

### Impact of NAFTA on Canadian economy

1995 – 2017



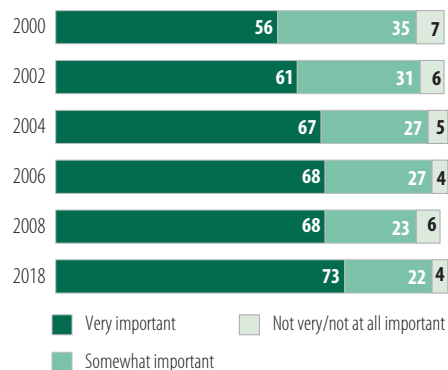
Q.28

As you may know, Canada is part of NAFTA – a free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico. On balance, to do you think NAFTA has helped the Canadian economy or hurt the Canadian economy?

This broad consensus about the importance of international trade is evident across the country, but most widely viewed as very important by Canadians born outside the country (83%), by men (77%), university graduates (78%), those who follow international issue very closely (80%), and frequent travellers (78%).

### Importance of international trade to Canada

2000 – 2017



Q.29

Would you say that international trade is very, somewhat, not very or not at all important to maintaining Canadian jobs and quality of life?

## Canada as a role model to the world

Almost all Canadians believe their country can make a difference in the world by setting an example at home, increasingly in terms of multiculturalism, immigration and refugees.

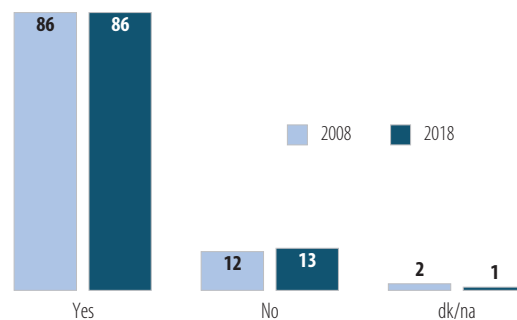
One way for a country to exert its influence on world affairs is by demonstrating to the rest of the world what it can do at home. A strong majority of Canadians (86%) believe their country can have a positive impact on the world by acting as a role model to other countries, setting an example of how important issues can be addressed. Just 13 percent say they think Canada can have little influence over other countries by setting its actions at home as a role model for the rest of the world. Canadians' opinions on this question are essentially unchanged since 2008.

The view of Canada as a role model for the world is shared by a large majority of Canadians across all provinces and population subgroups. This view has improved modestly since 2008 in Quebec and Atlantic Canada (up 4 points each), while declining more noticeably in Alberta (down 12).

When asked (unprompted) how Canada might set an example to other countries, Canadians offer a range of ideas but at the top of the list is being a country that promotes multiculturalism and immigration, and accepts refugees. Further down the list is support for human rights at home and strong environmental policies. Other areas in which Canadians think their country could set an example include peacekeeping, and diplomacy/good relations with other countries. Compared to a decade ago, more Canadians emphasize multiculturalism and immigration (up 10 points from 2008) while fewer single out environmental policies (down 9).

**Age cohort.** Compared to a decade ago, there has been a general convergence of views across all age cohorts in the extent to which they consider each of the specific areas as the best way for Canada to act as a role model internationally.

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



Q.24

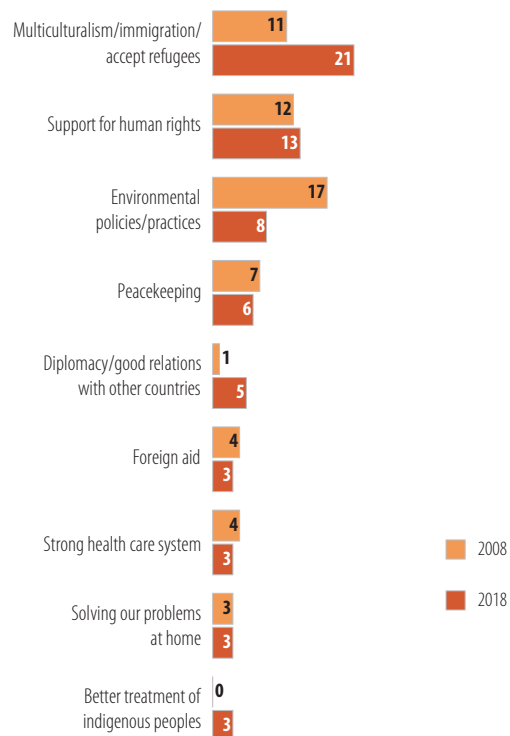
*Do you think Canada can have a positive impact on world affairs by serving as a role model to other countries?*

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born and native-born Canadians are equally likely to name Canada’s immigration and multiculturalism policies as something that could set an effective example to the world. This reflects a shift from a decade ago when foreign-born Canadians were much more likely to mention this area (the gap has shrunk due to an 11-point jump in mentions among native-born Canadians).

**Region.** Since 2008, views of Canadians from across the country have converged on how Canada might serve as an example for the rest of the world. This is most visible on multiculturalism due to particularly large increases in the emphasis given to this area in Alberta (up 17 points), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (up 14), and Ontario (up 13). On support for human rights, it is once again the views of Albertans (up 11) that are most noticeable, along with some slippage in Quebec (down 6). The emphasis given to strong environmental policies has declined most significantly in Alberta (down 16) and Atlantic Canada (down 14).

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

### Top mentions



Q.25

*On what issue or in what way do you think Canada could be most effective in serving as a role model to other countries?*

## Canadians working abroad

Canadians are most confident in the international activities of their country’s NGOs and Canadian post-secondary institutions, and to a lesser extent the Canadian government and businesses. An increasing majority believe that the three million Canadians living abroad is a positive thing because they make good ambassadors and spread Canadian culture and values.

### CONFIDENCE IN CANADIAN ACTORS ABROAD.

Canadians believe their country can play a major role in world affairs, but who in Canada would they trust most to make a positive difference? Most have at least some confidence in a range of actors, from government to NGOs, Canadian businesses and individual Canadians, but the degree of confidence varies.

Canadians are most likely to have a “great deal” of confidence in the foreign activities of non-governmental organizations, such as the Red Cross and Save the Children (44%). Over a third (37%) displays this level of confidence in the actions of Canadian universities and colleges, while slightly fewer (31%) hold the same view of individual Canadians. A quarter expresses great confidence in the Canadian government (26%) and Canadian businesses (24%). Confidence levels are generally comparable to those recorded in 2008, with modest growth in the confidence in government (up 6 points) and business (up 4).<sup>9</sup>

**Age cohort.** Youth (ages 18 to 24) are among the most confident in Canadian actors working overseas. Close to half of young Canadians (48%) say they have a great deal of confidence in NGOs to make a positive difference in the

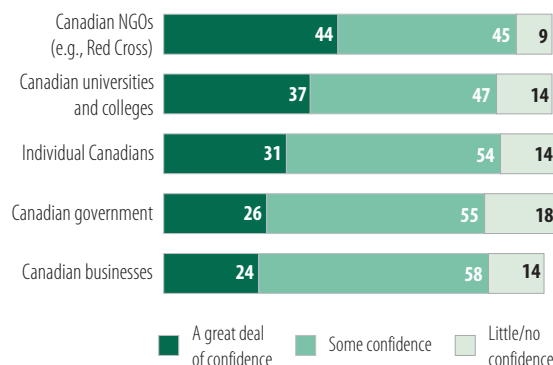
world, while a third (32%) has a great deal of confidence in the federal government to do the same, and a quarter has the same level of confidence in business (25%). Young Canadians are less convinced than a decade ago of the capabilities of NGOs (down 11 points from 2008), but express more confidence in Canadian businesses (up 7).

**Place of birth.** Foreign-born Canadians are more likely than native-born Canadians to have a great deal of confidence in Canadian universities and colleges (47%), government (32%), Canadian businesses (28%), and individual Canadians (39%). This reflects a shift from a decade ago when both groups shared similar views on the latter three actors.

**Region.** Quebecers stand out in registering the strongest level of confidence in both NGOs (53%), and Canadian universities and colleges (44%). Along with Ontario (26%) and Atlantic Canada (28%) residents, Quebecers are also most likely to express a great deal of confidence in the Canadian government to make a positive difference in the world. Overall, compared to a decade ago, views of Canadians across the country have shifted towards greater convergence with respect to the level of confidence they have in individual Canadians and in Canadian businesses.

### Confidence in capabilities of Canadian actors working abroad

By type of actor



*Q.32a-e*  
There are different actors in Canadian society that are currently involved in the world abroad. Please tell me if you have a great deal, some, little, or no confidence in the capabilities of:

<sup>9</sup> Canadian universities and colleges were not included as a category in the 2008 survey

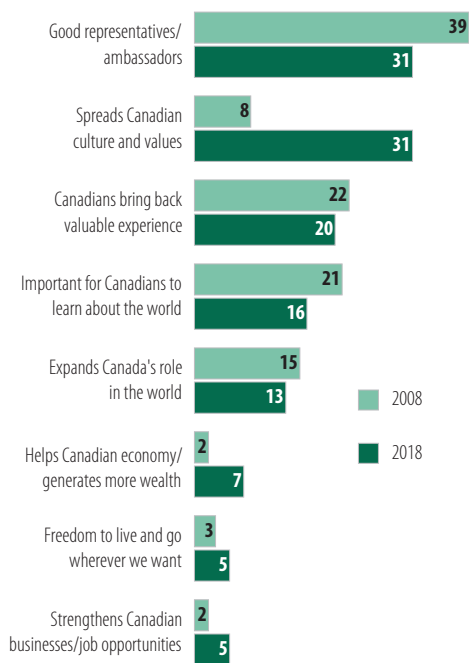


**CANADIANS LIVING ABROAD.** An estimated three million Canadian citizens currently live abroad. When asked whether they believe this is a good thing or a bad thing for Canada, seven in ten (70%) see it as a positive, compared with just over one in ten (12%) who consider it a problem. The proportion of Canadians with a positive view has increased marginally since 2008 (up 3 points). Those most apt to have a negative view include Canadians aged 60 plus (16%), those with a high school diploma (20%) and allophones (21%).

Those who see large numbers of Canadians living abroad as a good thing for Canada are most likely to say this is because they believe these people spread Canadian culture and values to others (31%) and as good ambassadors for the country (31%), while others emphasize expats abroad carry good experiences back home with them, allows them to learn about the world, strengthens Canada's role in the world, and helps the Canadian economy and business ties. Compared to 10 years ago, positive opinions Canadians express today about their fellow citizens living abroad are more closely tied to spreading Canadian culture and values, and less to them being good ambassadors for Canada.

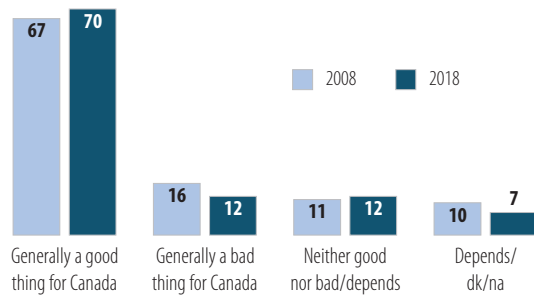
### Why it's good to have Canadians living abroad

Top mentions



Q33a  
Why do you say it is a good thing?

### Opinion about 3 million Canadians now living abroad

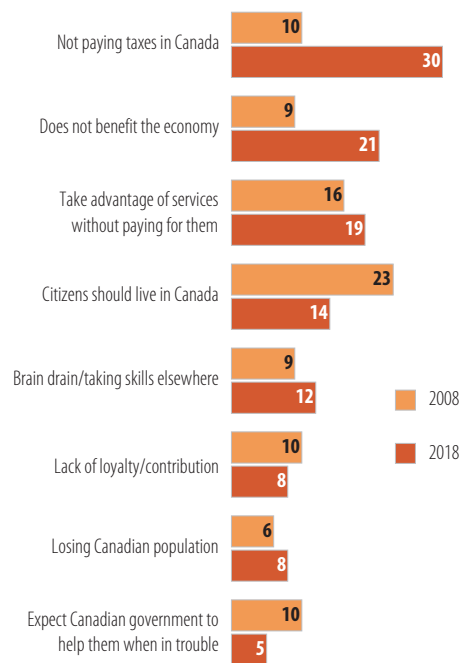


Q.33  
There are an estimated 3 million Canadians currently living abroad in other countries. Do you believe having this number of citizens living in other countries is generally a good thing or a bad thing for Canada?

The small percentage of Canadians who express concern about Canadians living abroad are most likely to say this is a bad thing because they are not paying taxes (30%), it does not benefit the Canadian economy (21%) and because these expatriates are taking advantage of services without paying for them – all economic-related reasons and all more widely cited than was the case in 2008. Others express worry about expatriates taking their skills and experiences elsewhere (e.g., brain drain), not being loyal, and the fact that this means Canada is losing population.

### Why it's bad to have Canadians living abroad

Top mentions



Q.33b  
Why do you say it is a bad thing?

### IMPACT ON CANADA OF CITIZENS LIVING ABROAD.

The public is largely supportive of Canadians living abroad regardless of what their fellow citizens are doing, seeing a range of activities as having a positive influence on Canada's role in the world. Almost everyone (91%) believes that Canadians volunteering abroad with non-governmental organizations have a positive impact on Canada's position in the world. Strong majorities also feel the same way about Canadians who are working abroad for Canadian companies or studying at university and other educational institutions. Over half also view Canadians working in another country for a foreign company favourably. Finally, only three in ten believe that Canadians who move overseas to retire have a positive influence on Canada's role, but most of the remainder are neutral (54%) rather than seeing it as having a negative influence (11%).

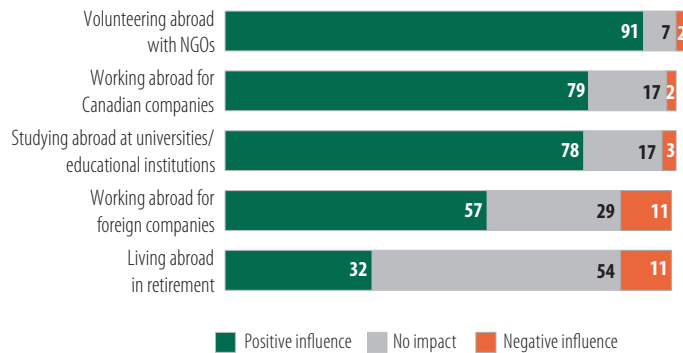
Very little has changed in the past decade in how Canadians perceive the influence expatriates might have on Canada's

role in the world. The only shift of note is with respect to Canadians working abroad for Canadian companies, which is now seen more positively than in 2008 (up 6 points).

Across the country, Quebecers are more likely than others to view Canadians working abroad for Canadian companies (85%) or studying (83%) as having a positive influence on the country's role in the world. Atlantic Canadians (97%), on the other hand, are especially strong in endorsing volunteering abroad. University graduates have more favourable views than others of Canadians who volunteer abroad with NGOs like the Red Cross (93%), who study abroad (83%), or who work abroad for foreign companies (64%), seeing them as having a positive influence on Canada's role in the world. Compared to a decade ago, many more Quebecers see working abroad for Canadian companies or studying as a positive influence on Canada's role in the world (up 10 and 9 points, respectively).

### Impact on Canada of citizens living abroad

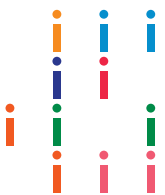
By reason for living abroad



Q.35a-e

Canadians are living abroad for a number of reasons. Please tell me if you think each of the following have a positive influence on Canada's role in the world, a negative influence, or really have no influence either way?

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**Environics  
Institute**

**The Environics Institute  
for Survery Research**

900-33 Bloor Street East  
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1

416 969 2457  
[www.environicsinstitute.org](http://www.environicsinstitute.org)