

## CANADIANS' PERSONAL ORIENTATION TO THE WORLD OUTSIDE CANADA

### Extent of focus on outside world

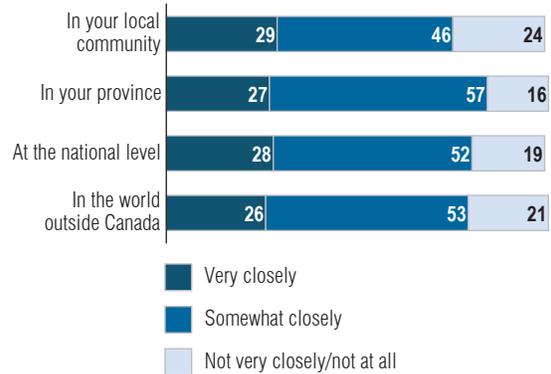
*Canadians are paying attention to world events, and follow them as closely as they do local, provincial and national issues. War and conflict (including the mission in Afghanistan) is of greatest interest, followed by world events involving environmental issues and politics.*

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

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

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

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



#### Q.6

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

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

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

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

### Types of events followed

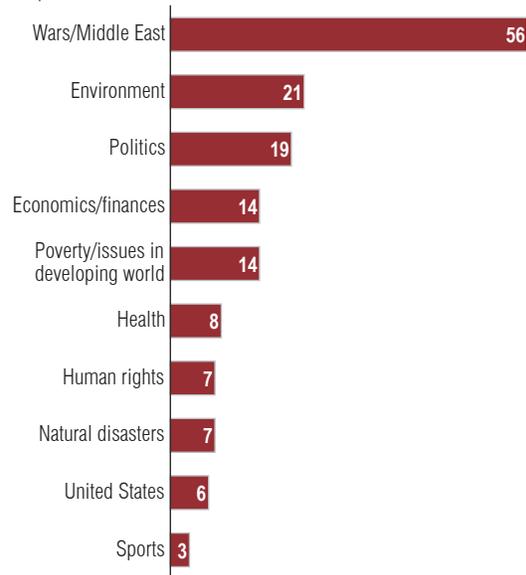
When asked about the kinds of events they are most likely to follow at the international level (unprompted), Canadians are most likely to mention wars, especially those in the Middle East (including Afghanistan) (56%). Other issues of particular interest include the environment (21%), politics (19%),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

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

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

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

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



### Q.7

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

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

## Countries and regions of greatest interest

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

### Countries and regions of personal interest

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

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

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

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

## Regions/countries of greatest personal interest or connection

Top mentions



Q.8

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

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

## Reasons for interest

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

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

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

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

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

## How Canadians inform themselves about world events

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

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

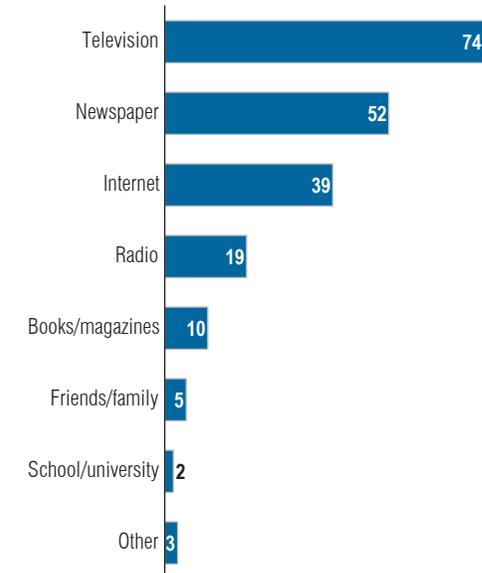
Eight in ten (82%) Canadians use the Internet, with 57 percent doing so on a daily basis. When asked where they go on-line for information about world news, Canadians reveal trust in traditional news outlets even if they are reaching those outlets on-line. Canadians' most common sources of international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

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

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

## Main sources of information about world events

Top mentions



Q.10

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

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

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

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

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

## Canadians' travel experiences abroad

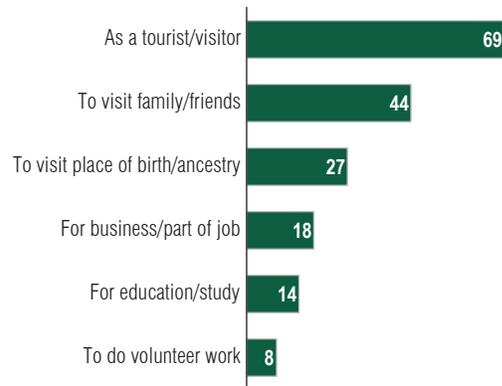
*Three-quarters of Canadians have travelled outside Canada and the U.S., mostly as tourists, but also to visit family or friends, to visit one's place of birth or ancestry, for employment, to study and to volunteer. One-quarter have taken more than 10 trips in the past five years alone, and to a wide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

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

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

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

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



Q.13

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

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

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

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

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

## Personal connections abroad

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

### Friends and family connections abroad

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Financial support

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

### Financial assistance given overseas in past two years



#### Q.17

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

#### Q.18

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Interest in living abroad

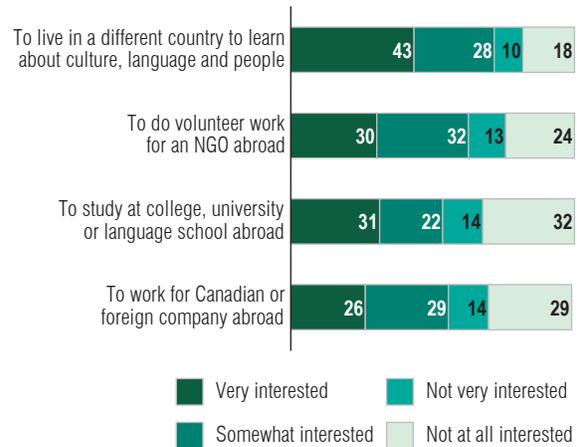
*Canadians demonstrate considerable interest in travelling abroad for new experiences, especially to become immersed in another culture, language and people, but also to do volunteer work, to seek employment and to study.*

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

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

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

## Interest in travel to foreign countries



Q.40

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

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

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

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