

# Canadian Millennials

## Social Values Study



FINAL REPORT

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THE J.W. McCONNELL  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

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

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# Introduction

## Canada's Millennial generation

Millennials make up more than a quarter of the Canadian population. The cohort of Canadians born between 1980 and 1995 (now aged 21 to 36) is one of the largest in the country's history, and is literally the country's future: who they are today and what they become will shape Canada for the next half-century and beyond. Leaders and institutions need to understand and support these young adults as citizens, consumers, employees, voters and donors.

Much of what passes for analysis of this generation of Canadian adults amounts to little more than anecdote and stereotype. Aside from data on youth unemployment, student debt and the embrace of everything digital, the Canadian conversation is remarkably devoid of solid evidence about how Millennials live, what they think, what they value, what they want, or what they hope to achieve. Are they motivated strivers facing a tough job market, or entitled brats who are too picky to accept an unfulfilling job? Are they talented digital innovators or just screen addicts? Have they been nurtured by their Boomer parents' loving encouragement, or are they entitled narcissists poisoned by a lifetime of unearned praise? Newspapers, newsfeeds and dinner tables teem with opinions.

Perhaps the biggest limitation in this discussion is how it lumps an entire generation into a single group, the implicit assumption being that age alone is the defining characteristic. This type of shorthand misses the important insights revealed by Michael Adams two decades ago in his landmark book *Sex in the Snow*. In that bestselling analysis of Canadian society, Adams showed that demography is no longer destiny, and that every generation is composed of distinct subgroups or "tribes," each defined by a unique constellation of social values by which individuals orient themselves to the world and their lives.

Over the past two decades, the company Environics Research has pioneered the application of social values theory and analysis to improve their understanding of modern society and social trends. This work has proven to be of practical benefit to governments, businesses and non-profits in Canada and abroad. Environics' ongoing research program has now been applied to understanding Canada's Millennial generation, which is the most diverse generation in the country's history, not only across ethnic, national and religious backgrounds, but also in terms of their values and life choices.

The research demonstrates there is some truth in Millennial stereotypes, but the generalizers miss most of the picture. There is evidence of some familiar types (the basement-dwelling tech lovers; the Occupy-movement idealists; the hipster enthusiasts of all things local, artisanal and vintage), but many do not fit these molds. Any serious effort to understand this generation will require a social values lens, and reaching them will require careful consideration of key segments.

Just as important, most of the focus on this emerging generation comes from marketers' intent on discovering how best to effectively position and promote products and services. But Millennials are also citizens of the country, their province and local community. As much as we may need to know what products they desire, it is equally essential to understand how this generation views its place in society, in its social relations, and its orientation to our institutions.

## The study

The Environics Institute for Survey Research partnered with The Counselling Foundation of Canada, RBC, The McConnell Family Foundation and Apathy is Boring to conduct a seminal study of Canada's Millennials to understand how members of this generation are taking their place in society through the lens of their social values. The primary focus of this study is in three areas:

- Life goals and markers of adulthood
- Career aspirations and work
- Political and civic engagement

The study employs survey research methods, arguably the most effective way to learn directly about the experiences and perspectives of a large population in a systematic and quantifiable way. This research examines the experiences, priorities, attitudes and social values of Millennials across Canada, and identifies where there is commonality across the generation and where there are meaningful differences, whether by life stage (e.g., living with parents or with a spouse), demographics (gender, education, ethnicity) or social values.

This research also provides valuable insight into how Millennials are similar and different from the generations preceding them (notably, their Boomer parents and the Gen-Xers just ahead of them). The Institute retained Environics Research to administer the survey and provide the underlying analysis of the social values framework (the company maintains proprietary ownership of the social values methodology and benchmark data).

The research consisted of an in-depth survey conducted online with a representative sample of 3,072 Canadians aged 21 to 36 across Canada. The survey was administered by Environics Research between July 6 and August 31, 2016, and the sample was stratified by age, gender and region. The survey was supplemented by additional qualitative content collected from a selected sample of survey participants via video; and selected verbatim statements from this material are included in this report.

## Synopsis

The report begins with an introduction of the social values research model pioneered by Environics Research, and includes a profile of the six Millennial social values tribes. The remainder of the report presents the results of the survey covering the main themes described above. The analysis incorporates relevant benchmark indicators drawn from other research that provides the basis for comparing Millennials with older generations of Canadians, and with Millennials in other countries. Also included are verbatim comments from survey participants provided on video.

The appendix presents an overview of how the social values of Millennials are similar and different from Canadian Gen-Xers and Boomers, including when these cohorts were the age of today's Millennials.

Detailed banner tables presenting the results for all survey questions by population segments are available under separate cover. All results are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.

## Executive Summary

The results of this study reveal how Canadian Millennials are a diverse group; the various stereotypes often used to describe them are present, but these do not define this generation. Millennials share a common age bracket but reflect a range of experiences, perspectives, attitudes and activity when it comes to how they approach life, their careers, and engagement with politics and their community.

One of the most important differentiators among Millennials is education, which emerges as a key factor in how well Millennials are faring in the present, their outlook toward the future, and especially in the extent of engagement in politics and civic life. Household income (related to education) is also important in some areas, notably overall life satisfaction. By comparison, characteristics such as age within this cohort, gender, region, living situation and family composition play less of a role in Millennials' perspectives as they relate to the themes explored in this study.

Ethnic background and place of birth is another important part of the Millennial story in Canada. Millennials born outside the country and those with non-white ethnicity make up a significant proportion of the generation, the most ethnically-diverse in the country's history. These young adults stand out as having a more traditional orientation to adulthood and career success, while at the same time expressing greater motivation to succeed and optimism about their future prospects.

Social values – as organized into the six distinct “tribes” – provide the clearest portrait of the diversity encompassing this generation. These tribes reflect some of the key demographic patterns such as education and ethnicity, but go well beyond them to reveal a more holistic characterization of Millennials' orientation to life, career/work and political/civic engagement. **Engaged Idealists** are among the most socially connected and upbeat, already embarked on a meaningful career path and keen to make a contribution to society. They share much in common with a much smaller group, **Critical Counterculturists**, who take a more questioning stance on the status quo, status and authority.

**Diverse Strivers** and **New Traditionalists** are more ethnically-mixed groups, the former among the most focused on career success but also active in their communities, while the latter are the oldest and most established of the tribes,

and for whom traditional values and religion are important guideposts.

In sharp contrast, **Lone Wolves** (comprising one in six Canadian Millennials) are the group making the least progress in establishing themselves, and playing an active role in, in society. Compared with other Millennials, Lone Wolves are more likely to be unemployed or underemployed, have little or no post-secondary education, lack clear lifetime goals and confidence in future success, and are the least engaged in their communities.

Finally, **Bros & Brittanys** make up the largest segment of this generation (one in three), and as such tend to define the average in terms of their life experiences, aspirations and priorities. Financial stability is an important life goal and most are employed, but they also put a premium on having a good time and getting along rather than changing the world.

This typology offers a valuable framework for understanding Millennials in Canada, and determining how best to consider their priorities and interests with respect to marketing, public policy and citizen engagement.

Finally, this study underscores the fact that Millennials in many respects are not all that different from older generations of Canadians. There are predictable life cycle differences, as young adults tend to be more oriented toward exploration, novelty and crowds. But in terms of life goals, career aspirations, and community engagement, Millennials do not appear to differ much from their parents and grandparents. Where Canadian Millennials do stand out from previous generations is in their adaptability to complexity, having a flexible definition of family, embracing multiculturalism (while at the same time being more xenophobic than the two previous generations of youth), and being more accepting of authority and institutions (government, business, advertising).

Despite the challenging economic climate facing young adults today, Millennials are notably optimistic about their lives generally and their long term financial prospects, although also more focused on the principle of saving than Gen-Xers or Boomers were when they were young adults. At the same time, Millennials as a whole are more likely than other generations to lack life goals and feel alienated from society, an emerging social trend most clearly evident among Lone Wolves.

The following provides an overview of the key findings across the major themes covered in the study.

## Defining a generation

**What it means to be an adult.** Millennials are most likely to define adulthood in terms of having a steady job and good relations with ones family, followed by home ownership and community engagement; these may well resemble the markers of being grown up for previous generations. But in sharp departure from the past, today's young adults are less likely to define adulthood in terms of the traditional markers of marriage and having children: Few in this generation consider these to be essential for being an adult, and almost half consider marriage to be not especially important. Millennials differ from their parents and grandparents in having a more flexible definition of family.

In contrast with other Millennials, Immigrants and others with Asian backgrounds are most likely to place importance on all of the markers of adulthood (but especially marriage and children), as are those in the most ethnically diverse social values tribes (Diverse Strivers, New Traditionalists). By contrast, Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturists – the most educated of tribes – are least apt to define adulthood in these terms, although they place importance on being engaged in ones community.

**What is unique about Millennials.** To older generations Millennials appear to stand out as being about everything digital and social media, but this is not how most in this cohort define themselves. Only one in four identify digital literacy as the characteristic that makes their generation unique or distinctive; most mention a diverse mix of other positive (e.g., open-minded) or negative (sense of entitlement) attributes, while more than one-third cannot come up with anything they believe captures the essence of their generation. Digital technology may be for Millennials what TV was for their Boomer parents and radio and movies for their Elder grandparents.

**Financial circumstances and future prospects.** As the youngest cohort of adults with many in the process of establishing themselves financially in a challenging economic climate, it is not surprising that fewer than four in ten Millennials feel they currently have enough money to live the kind of life they want. But they are notably optimistic about the prospects of achieving their financial goals in the future,

even among those with limited incomes. Immigrants and Millennials with Asian and other non-white ethnic backgrounds are especially confident about doing better financially than their parents. Current circumstances notwithstanding, Millennials' general orientation toward longterm financial security is more positive than that of older generations, both today and when they were themselves young adults.

**What Millennials want out of life.** What Millennials most want to have in their lifetime is positive family or partner relationships (defined variously in terms of marriage, love/relationships, children, quality time), followed by financial security and a meaningful career or work, as well as travel, and home ownership. The priority on family and relationships is at the top of the list across the generation, but is most evident for women, and those in the Engaged Idealist and New Traditionalist tribes.

But not all Millennials are looking ahead: One in five do not identify any lifetime goals for themselves, with this group most apt to include Lone Wolves, as well as men who live alone, those without a high school diploma, and those who are not looking for work. These are the young adults who are struggling to establish their lives and place in society, or may have already given up.

## Career/work experience and aspirations

**Current work experience.** Eight in ten Millennials are currently working (whether full time, part time or self-employed), and most are reasonably if not fully satisfied with their current job. Job satisfaction is tied in part to household income, but also influenced by social values: Diverse Strivers are the most positive of tribes about their current employment, likely due to their strong motivation to succeed.

About half of working Millennials believe their salary and education/skills are well matched with their current job, although this is not strongly linked to job satisfaction. At the same time, one in three say they currently work in a job that is not directly related to their education and skills.

**What Millennials want most from their work.** Among five work/career goals presented, Millennials place the highest priority on achieving balance between work and their personal life, with eight in ten saying this is critically important to them. Close in importance is achieving financial security, with somewhat less emphasis placed on generating wealth and



having flexibility in how and when they work. Millennials as a cohort place the lowest career priority on making an important contribution to society, with this largely a function of social values: it is of strong importance to Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturists, and not so much among Bros & Brittanys and Lone Wolves..

**Achieving work and career goals.** Millennials are more likely than not to feel confident about achieving their work and career goals, but this is more likely to be the case for those with higher levels of education and income, as well as for Diverse Strivers and Engaged Idealists. Millennials are most likely to identify economic conditions (e.g., weak economy, lack of jobs, low salaries, lack of opportunities) as the biggest obstacle to achieving their goals.

But many also point to personal challenges, in the form of competing priorities (e.g., family, time pressures), and limitations such as laziness, lack of confidence or health issues. Family and friends are the principal source of support helping individuals toward their work and career goals, but almost four in ten do not appear to have any such support in their lives (most likely to be the case for Lone Wolves).

**Value of post-secondary education.** Post-secondary education has long been touted as important if not essential for career and life success, but many Millennials are not convinced of this. Only three in ten believe a degree is essential to having a fulfilling life. Among those who have a post-secondary degree, fewer than half say it has been very helpful so far in their career, and this group is evenly divided on whether or not they would get the same degree were they to do it over again (although few would opt to pursue something outside of formal education).

Among those who do not yet have a post-secondary degree, fewer than half now have plans to follow this path (if not already enrolled), while the balance are divided between those who say no and those who remain uncertain. Views about the value of post-secondary education improve along with current level of education, and are also most positive among immigrants and Millennials with a South Asian background.

## Political and civic engagement

**Following news and current events.** Low voter turnout has earned Millennials a reputation for being disconnected from politics and current events, but this is more a stereotype than reality. Most Millennials say they follow news and current events at least daily if not multiple times per day, with frequency of attention linked closely to education level. The most commonly followed issues pertain to security and safety (e.g., terrorism, crime) and politics (Canadian, US, international), along with the economy and social issues.

As might be expected, social media is the most common media platform for keeping track of news and current events, but there is also widespread use of more traditional media including TV, print newspapers and radio.

**Interest in politics and voting.** Interest in politics is mixed, and largely a function of educational attainment and related social values: Strong interest is most widespread among Millennials with a graduate degree and Critical Counterculturists, and least evident among those without any post-secondary education and Lone Wolves.

Millennials are most likely to pay attention to national politics, but significant proportions also follow what is happening at the international and provincial/local levels. Three-quarters of Millennials eligible to vote report having done so in the 2015 federal election, with education the most significant predictor. Those not voting are most likely to give motivational reasons such as lack of trust in candidates or parties, cynicism about politics or feeling uninformed, while a smaller proportion cite barriers that kept them from voting, such as being too busy or out of town.

**Active engagement in issues.** About one in four Canadian Millennials have been actively engaged in a cause or issue over the past year, most likely involving social justice, the environment, politics or health care. Such involvement is linked to education as well as social values, with Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturists the most active (in contrast with Bros & Brittanys and Lone Wolves); these are also the tribes who feel most confident that collective action can make a difference in solving community problems. Millennials tend to get involved in causes or issues through online channels, but a significant proportion also prefer to participate in person at events and group meetings (especially New Traditionalists).

**Volunteering.** Millennials do volunteer work, but it is not the norm. One in three report having done some form of volunteer work in the past year, in most cases putting in fewer than five hours per month. Those who volunteer are most apt to be motivated to give back to their community or support an important cause, but many also do so for personal development (providing a sense of accomplishment, building experience and skills, networking and improving job opportunities). Many Millennials have not volunteered because they don't have the time or interest, but for others it is the lack of opportunity: no one has ever asked them or they do not know how to get involved.

As with other forms of engagement, volunteering increases with educational attainment, but is also more common among younger Millennials (who are less apt to have children), as well as among those who are ethnically non-white. Engaged Idealists, New Traditionalists and Diverse Strivers are the most active volunteers, with Bros & Brittanys and Lone Wolves least apt to do so.

**Charitable giving.** Two-thirds of Millennials have donated money or goods in the past year, although amounts are modest (few have given more than \$300). Donations are most common among women, Albertans and New

Traditionalists (likely due to their religious affiliations), and only slightly more likely among those who have also volunteered their time in the past year. Millennials are most likely to make their donations online (including crowdfunding), but significant numbers have also done so in person, whether in the workplace, on the street or at charity events.

**Social trust.** Engagement in society is both a precursor and an outcome of general trust in other people, and the evidence suggests that Millennials may be less trusting than previous generations. Only one-third in this cohort believe most people can be trusted, compared with two thirds who say you cannot be too careful dealing with other people. Trust in others is most closely linked to education level and also related social values tribes, with Critical Counterculturists and Engaged Idealists the most trusting while Bros & Brittanys and Lone Wolves the least so.

Social trust does not differ between native born and immigrant Millennials, but is more pronounced among men, B.C. residents (and least so in Quebec), as well as among those who belong to one or more local groups or organizations.

# Social Values and Canadian Millennials

## Defining social values

The term “social values” today takes on many meanings and connotations, as for example “family values” whose precise nature is tacitly assumed if not well-defined. But the term also has a more conceptually coherent pedigree, starting in the 1960s when psychologist Milton Rokeach used social science to develop a definition of social values that are beliefs or conceptions about: a) desirable modes of conduct and how one should live (e.g., honesty, hard work); and b) social ideals and outcomes (e.g., peace, good health).

Such formative and fundamental beliefs about desirable means and ends are thought to be largely molded in adolescence and early adulthood experience. Social values are informed by people’s prevalent experiences and perceptions, gained through family and social contacts, as well as exposure to broader societal events and trends. Social values may have an idealistic and ideological dimension, but perhaps more importantly they serve pragmatically as an adaptation to, and justification for, current personal or cultural practices. In this way, values may best be described as deeply held beliefs that both determine and reflect a person’s responses to the world as he or she strives to meet basic and higher-order needs. In total, one’s social values represent a host of mental, emotional and motivational postures with which one navigates life, and interacts with others and oneself, as well as making moral decisions about what is good and bad.

## Environics’ social values research

This concept of social values has been explored systematically starting in the 1960s in France, and later across Europe, to better understand socio-cultural trends in society. In the early 1980s, two research firms (Environics Research Group and Montreal-based CROP) adapted this social values research model for North America. Environics Research now conducts regular social values surveys of Canadians (annually) and Americans (every four years) on behalf of its clients. This work also provides for broader analysis of social values trends, and has served as the foundation for several books published by Michael Adams,

including *Sex in the Snow: Canadian Social Values at the End of the Millennium* (1997); *Fire and Ice: The United States, Canada and the Myth of Converging Values* (2003), and *Stayin’ Alive: How Canadian Baby Boomers will Work, Play and Find Meaning in the Second Half of their Adult Lives* (2010).

The Environics Research social values methodology incorporates a set of 80 or so social value trends or “constructs,” based on the research and in-depth multivariate analysis. Examples of social values include:

- **Adaptive navigation.** Having the flexibility to adapt to unforeseen events that interfere with the realization of one’s goals. Being flexible in defining one’s expectations and ways of meeting one’s objectives.
- **Joy of consumption.** Intense gratification through consumption of consumer goods (other than basic necessities). Enjoying consumption for the pleasure of consumption (feeling more excited about the act of buying than by the use of the products purchased).
- **Acceptance of violence.** The belief that violence is an inevitable part of life. People strongest on this trend even accept violence as an outlet for letting off steam or as a way of getting what they want.

The individual social value trends are combined in terms of how they relate to one another, and collectively form an underlying structure that portrays higher-order world views. This analysis provides a distinct social values profile for particular segments of the population, such as a generation. Two decades ago, the book *Sex in the Snow* introduced the social values “tribes” of Canadian generations (Elders, Boomers, Gen-Xers). The premise of the book is that demography is no longer destiny; people and society can no longer be understood according to the traditional categories of gender, age and social class, and that social values are as important, if not more so, in what drives human behaviour and social trends.

## Meet the Canadian Millennial social values tribes

In 2015, Environics Research identified the six distinct social values tribes of the Canadian Millennial generation, which are as follows:



### **Bros & Brittanys** (32% of Canadian Millennials)

This is the largest group, making up one-third of the generation. Bros & Brittanys are avid risk-takers who pursue thrills and excitement, and are enthusiastic consumers. They are Millennials who work hard to get paid and have the lifestyle they want. They embrace technology and appreciate social connectivity. Looking good and being respected is important to them—and, as such, they like to stay current with the latest trends. These Millennials are not looking to change the world and sometimes they don't feel in control of their destinies. Time for an escape and a little fun like catching a concert, beer and HD sports in the man cave or a girls' night out are important to them

As the largest of all tribes, Bros & Brittanys tend to define the mainstream demographically. Compared with other tribes they are more likely to be Quebecers, male, a bit older, living with a partner (but in common-law rather than marriage), and employed full-time versus being in school. Bros & Brittanys are one of the tribes most likely to be born in Canada and ethnically white, but are also well-represented by ethnic Chinese. They have average level incomes and just below average educational attainment.



### **Diverse Strivers** (20%)

To Diverse Strivers, 'making it' in life, and doing things that bring new and intense experiences are top priorities. These Millennials crave material success and they push themselves to achieve it in a number of ways. They work hard in their careers and pursue personal challenges (like marathons or marathon hot yoga sessions) in the off-hours. They strive to inspire respect in those closest to them by doing their duty, and being upstanding members of their families and communities. They take care to look good, and have the latest gadgets and toys to maintain a sharp and successful appearance. Diverse Strivers report high levels of vitality—they love crowds, attention and pursue intensity in all they do—and they need every bit of their energy to keep pushing

forward toward their goals; they never stop building their resumes to satisfy their ambitions and impress others.

Diverse Strivers are the most multicultural of the Millennial tribes. They are most likely to be born in another country, and to have a non-white ethnic background, especially South Asian but also others (Black, Latino, Chinese). This group is also more male than female, younger in age than most other tribes, and tends to be concentrated in Ontario (especially in the GTA). Despite being younger, they are as likely as average to be married (but not common-law) and to have children; Diverse Strivers not yet married or parents are among those most keen to want this in their future. Being younger, they are more likely to be students, although they have average employment and household income levels.



### **Engaged Idealists** (17%)

Engaged Idealists are Millennials on steroids: engaged, sociable, energetic, experience-seeking and idealistic. They believe in contributing as much as possible to their relationships, careers and communities—and the reward for their efforts is personal growth and development. These Millennials believe that their actions matter, shaping their lives and the world around them. They recognize that their environment is complex, but feel confident in their ability to navigate it. They want interesting, meaningful careers that let them express themselves and use the creativity that is central to their identity. Money is nice, but the quality of their work experiences is a higher priority. They also try to have time for spontaneous fun, which they see as an important part of a happy, balanced life.

Engaged Idealists are primarily Canadian-born and mostly identify ethnically as white. They are the most female of the groups (at 60%), a bit younger than average, and are most present in Ontario (but also with solid western representation). Engaged Idealists are among those most likely to be living with a partner or spouse (versus with family or roommates), but no more likely to be married/common-law, and less apt to have children (being somewhat younger). They are among the most educated of tribes (behind only Critical Counterculturists) and have slightly higher than average household incomes.



### **Lone Wolves (16%)**

Deeply skeptical of authority, and lacking strong social and emotional connections, Lone Wolves resemble the stereotypical Gen Xers of the 1990s: cool and standoffish. These Millennials are solitary, and favour keeping life simple and straightforward. They are seldom involved in community events and rarely feel strongly connected to what's going on in society at large. Still, whereas some people feeling disconnected from society are angry or hostile to others, Lone Wolves are low-key (e.g., they are not xenophobic or sexist). If disaffected Gen Xers' motto was "Whatever," perhaps the Lone Wolves' words to live by are "I'm not hurting anyone. Just let me be."

Despite stereotypes, Lone Wolves are equally likely to be male or female, as well as being somewhat older than average, and most concentrated in Quebec. They are among the most native-born and ethnically white of tribes (along with Engaged Idealists). Their domestic arrangements are comparable to Millennials overall in terms being married and having children; but Lone Wolves not yet settled in this way are by far the least interested of any tribe in getting married or having kids. Among the tribes, they are least likely to be employed full-time or currently in school, and among those most apt to be not looking for work (along with New Traditionalists, but for different reasons). This tribe has the highest proportion of Millennials without post-secondary education and household incomes under \$30K.



### **New Traditionalists (11%)**

As their name suggests, New Traditionalists hold many values that would not be out of place in the 1950s—but their outlook also reflects some distinctly 21st century concerns, including an interest in environmental issues. These Millennials are more religious and spiritual than others: Religion is an important part of their lives and central to their identity. They believe in staying true to the values with which they were brought up, particularly towards conservative family and gender roles. New Traditionalists also value traditional modes of etiquette and propriety: appropriate dress, good manners, respect for elders, a tidy home. They respect authority figures more so than their peers, report a stronger sense of duty, and a greater sense of identification with their family roots and ancestors.

New Traditionalists are the oldest and most established of the Millennial tribes. They are also more likely than average

to be female, to be married (but not common-law) and have children (and those who are not yet married or parents are most likely to want these in their future). This tribe is slightly over-represented in Alberta and Manitoba. Along with Diverse Strivers, this group has a high proportion of immigrants, and a broad ethnic mix (especially those identifying as Black). New Traditionalists are somewhat less apt to be employed full-time, with a higher than average number not looking for work (likely stay-at-home mothers). They have a higher than average level of education, and the highest household incomes of any tribe (in part because of being older and married).



### **Critical Counterculturists (4%)**

Millennials in the Critical Counterculture segment are the engaged, critical young people sometimes featured in stories

about 20-somethings building businesses, pursuing groundbreaking online activism, and otherwise shaking up the world. They share many of the same progressive values as Engaged Idealists: They believe in gender equality, are at ease with diversity of all kinds, and reject discrimination and injustice. But while Engaged Idealists see the world through a social and emotional lens – pursuing authentic relationships and experiences, and striving to express their true selves – the gold standard for Critical Counterculturists is clear-eyed rationality. They reject status and authority they see as illegitimate or superficial; they don't mind leading when they can add value to a project, but would hate for someone to judge them by their jeans or smartphone.

This is by far the smallest of the Millennial tribes. Critical Counterculturists are equally likely to be male or female, they are most likely to fit into the middle age range (27 to 31), and present in British Columbia. They stand out most as being the least family-oriented of tribes: They are most likely to be single and have no children, and are most keen to keep it that way. Critical Counterculturists are also by far the most educated group (one in five has a graduate degree), although their household incomes are a bit below average. This tribe is one of three (along with Diverse Strivers and New Traditionalists) with a higher proportion of immigrants, but most also identify ethnically as white (e.g., anglophones arriving from the USA and Europe).

Further details about how the social values of Millennials compare with other generations of Canadians are provided in the appendix to this report.



# Defining a Generation

This section addresses how Millennials (Canadians ages 21 to 36) see themselves as individuals in society and their generation as a whole. Topics include: a) how they define adulthood; b) in what ways, if any, they believe their generation is unique or distinctive; c) satisfaction with their lives and financial situation (currently and their future prospects); and d) life goals and aspirations.

## Markers of adulthood

*The two most defining features of adulthood for Millennials are having a steady job, and good relations with parents and family. Home ownership and community engagement are less widely seen as essential to being an adult, but the greatest ambivalence is around the traditional institutions of marriage and children.*

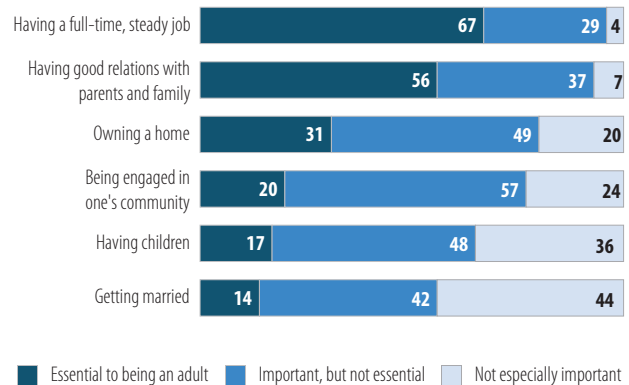
The survey presented participants with a list of six markers of adulthood, and asked the extent to which they believe each is essential to being an adult in today's world. The survey then offered them the opportunity to identify any other important markers (unprompted).

Across the six markers, Millennials place the greatest importance on having **full-time steady work** (67% deem this as essential to being an adult), followed by **having good relations with one's parents and family** (56%). By comparison, fewer consider as essential **owning a home** (31%) or **being engaged in one's community** (20%).

Fewer than one in five identifies as essential the most traditional markers of adulthood: **having children** (17%) and **getting married** (14%). These two markers are the ones about which Millennials are most divided (with 36% and 44%, respectively, saying they are not especially important to being an adult today).

Four in ten Millennials volunteer one or more other types of markers of adulthood, when asked (unprompted). At the top of this list is being accountable or taking responsibility for one's actions (e.g., generally, financially, as a citizen),

## Important markers of adulthood



mentioned by one in five (22%). Close to one in ten (8%) cites having positive relationships (respecting or accepting others, being a role model).

The significance placed on these markers varies across the generation. All six are given greater prominence by immigrants than by native-born Canadians, and especially among Millennials of Chinese and South Asian backgrounds.<sup>1</sup> Getting married and/or having kids is also somewhat more likely to be seen as essential by men (vs. women). The importance placed on community engagement increases with education level, and is least evident in Quebec (12%).

<sup>1</sup> Further analysis reveals that among South Asian and Chinese Millennials, immigrants are more likely than those native-born to place strong importance on having a full-time job, good relations with parents and family, having children and getting married. This suggests that generation in Canada plays a stronger role than ethnic background (at least for these ethnic groups), and that the children and grandchildren of immigrants are adopting the perspective of longer-term residents.

Markers of adulthood vary across social values tribes (in part due to their ethnic makeup).

Diverse Strivers are among the most likely to emphasize all of the markers, with New Traditionalists not far behind. In contrast, Critical Counterculturists are least apt to see any as essential to being an adult, with the notable exception of community engagement.

Lone Wolves and Engaged Idealists are also less likely than most other tribes to emphasize these markers, but the latter are the ones most likely to identify responsibility and accountability as important. Bros & Brittanys (being the largest group), are close to the average on most markers, although most apt to emphasize having a steady job and placing a lower priority on community engagement.

## Essential markers of adulthood

By social values tribe

	BROS AND BRITTANYS	LONE WOLVES	ENGAGED IDEALISTS	DIVERSE STRIVERS	NEW TRADITIONALISTS	CRITICAL COUNTERCULTURE
Having a full-time, steady job	75	61	51	78	65	47
Having good relations with parents and family	56	42	53	67	70	36
Owning a home	35	22	19	47	30	15
Being engaged in one's community	10	5	29	35	30	27
Having children	18	10	7	30	20	5
Getting married	13	8	5	26	21	3

### *What does being an adult mean to you? How is it different from what it meant for your parents' generation?*

We're experimenting more, we're taking more risks . . . We're not afraid of taking risks and we're not afraid to question authority and we're not afraid to reach out to other generations, whether they're younger or older, and promote group work or promote team work and to learn from each other. And we're not afraid of questioning ourselves, we're not afraid of re-inventing ourselves. – Engaged Idealist (female, 38, Ontario)

Being an adult and being grown-up are two very different things, I think. Being an adult is as simple as being responsible for yourself, for your actions you know finding that job, going to work, paying the bills – the stupid boring stuff. – Lone Wolf (female, 26, Alberta)

Being an adult to me signifies more responsibility by taking a job and being responsible towards the family – making money for the family and taking care of the family for the kids, and for my wife. – Diverse Striver (male, 36, Ontario)



## What makes Millennials distinct or unique?

*There is no defining view among Millennials about what makes their generation distinctive or unique, but the most common attribute is digital literacy (identified by one in four). Many attributes are positive (open-mindedness, adaptability), while some are critical (sense of entitlement, lack of respect).*

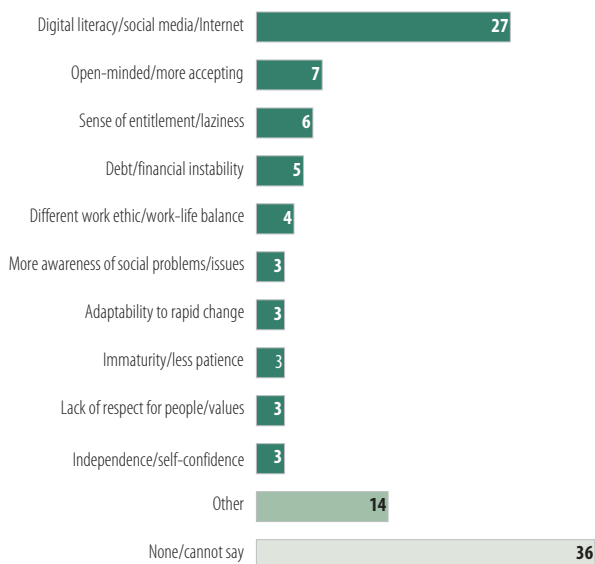
Every generation gets a label that ostensibly captures the essence of what it represents (in all cases, an oversimplification, but such naming carries weight). To date, Millennials have been tagged with a variety of labels that often conflict, although older generations may be most focused on their use of and comfort with digital technology. In what ways, if any, do Millennials themselves see their generation as being distinct or unique, in comparison with older generations in Canada?

When asked this question (unprompted), most Millennials identify at least one characteristic that defines their generation, but there is surprisingly little agreement on what they are. Among the responses, digital literacy is the key distinction that Millennials are most likely to say separates themselves from previous generations, mentioned by one in four (27%). This theme includes the usage of social media, and the belief that the Internet marks the distinction between themselves and older generations.

By comparison, no other characteristic or trait is identified by as many as one in ten. Across this list, many of the characteristics are positive, such as Millennials being open-minded or accepting, having a different work ethic (more work-life balance), a greater awareness of social issues, and better able to adapt to change. Other attributes are self-critical, including a sense of entitlement or “attitude,” immaturity, and a lack of respect for others and their values. Notably, more than one-third (36%) of Millennials cannot identify anything about their generation as being distinct or unique from older generations.

The ways in which Canadian Millennials characterize their generation are largely similar across the population, and notably consistent across age sub-cohort, gender and ethnic background. The differences emerge most notably by education levels and related social values tribes.

## What makes the millennial generation unique?



### *How do you think being an adult today is different from what it meant for your parents' generation?*

Our parents' generation is different in the sense that they're very practical, you know you work, you work hard, it shouldn't matter what the job is, it's that it pays good money, you provide for your family, and when it's time to retire then you really deserve it. Whereas the younger generation – especially from 1985 and then younger it's a very more privileged type of upbringing and sense of entitlement.  
– Bro & Brittany (female, 31, Ontario)

I think being an adult today is very different from what it used to be. I think part of it is the hustle, if you will – the ability to figure things out, the ability to learn quickly, and the ability to be agile and flexible as circumstances change, whether it be financial or societal.  
– Critical Counterculturist (male, 27, Ontario)

A lot of people in my generation think it's acceptable to go out and buy whatever you want, drink, party and don't give a second thought about student debt or basically anything. – Bro & Brittany (female, 27, Ontario)

Critical Counterculturists, Engaged Idealists and New Traditionalists are more likely to have distinct views about how Millennials are unique and different, while Bros and Brittanys, Diverse Strivers, and especially Lone Wolves, are least apt to identify any defining attributes (51% of Lone Wolves do not offer any response to this question, compared with only 17% of Engaged Idealists).

It is Critical Counterculturists and Engaged Idealists who are among those most likely to believe that digital literacy is the key to understanding how Millennials are different. They also tend to believe that Millennials are more open-minded and accepting of others, that debt and financial instability marks their generation, that they are more aware of social problems, and that Millennials are more adaptable to rapid changes. These perceptions are likely influenced by these tribes' higher levels of educational attainment (currently enrolled or having completed graduate education).

### *What is it about your generation that older people don't get?*

I think that it really rattles us when people say that we're entitled, because we're not. We're kind of upset about the fact that Baby Boomers have actually wrecked a lot of stuff, that we have to come to inherit the problems for like the environment. – New Traditionalist (female, 31, Saskatchewan)

The difference between our generation and our parents' generation is largely based on technology and access to technology. I know that my parents both struggle to use smartphones and tablets, and even laptops, whereas I think it's a given now that we have to be able to integrate these kinds of devices into our lives. – Engaged idealist (female, 28, British Columbia)

## Life satisfaction

Overall life satisfaction is moderate to high for most Millennials, and appears to be most heavily influenced by household income (which is closely linked to other factors such as age, employment and marital status). New Traditionalists and Engaged Idealists are the most satisfied among social values tribes, while Lone Wolves are least apt to feel this way about their lives.

All things considered, how satisfied are Millennials with their lives as a whole at this point in time? This question is often posed on surveys as a global measure of happiness, fulfilment or success. The survey used a standard question that employs an 11-point scale, ranging from “0” (extremely dissatisfied) to “10” (extremely satisfied).

As with any population, there is considerable variation in the overall life satisfaction among Canadian Millennials. Half (50%) express a medium level of satisfaction, with scores in the middle of the range (5 – 7). Just over one-third (36%) have a high level of life satisfaction (8 – 10), compared with fewer than half as many (14%) who express low satisfaction (0 – 4). The mean score is 6.6 (out of a possible 10).

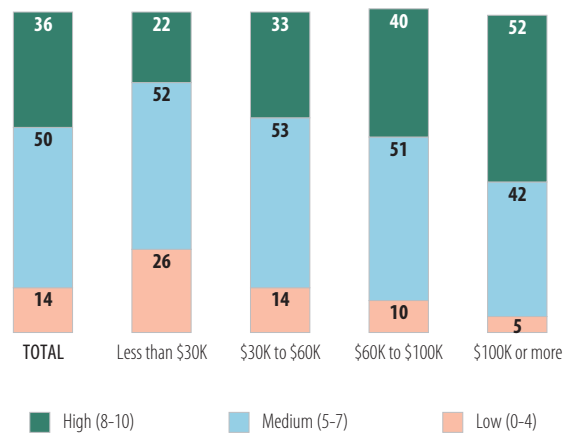
As would be expected, overall life satisfaction varies across the population and the most significant factor appears to be household income: High satisfaction rises steadily across income strata (22% among those earning less than \$30,000, more than doubling to 52% among those earning \$100,000 plus). Life satisfaction is also related to other factors related to income, and so is higher among older Millennials, those employed full-time, those with a post-secondary degree and those who are married.

Low life satisfaction is most evident among Millennials without a high school diploma (26%), those not working (27%) or looking for work (30%), those with household incomes under \$30K (26%) and Indigenous individuals (22%).

Life satisfaction also varies across values tribes above and beyond income. High life satisfaction is most common among New Traditionalists (45%) and Engaged idealists (42%, compared with only 6% in this tribe with low satisfaction). Lone Wolves have the lowest levels of overall life satisfaction (29% high, versus 24% low), which may in part coincide with being overrepresented in the lowest income category. But high life satisfaction is least apt to be reported by Critical Counterculturists, despite their education and close to average household incomes.

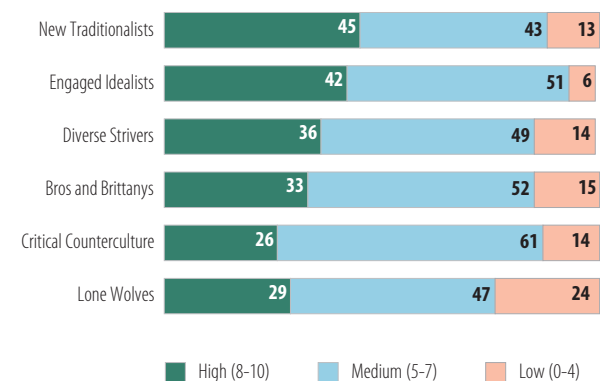
### Overall life satisfaction

By household income



### Overall life satisfaction

By social values tribe



## Benchmark Comparisons

How does life satisfaction for Canadian Millennials compare with other groups, based on the same survey question?

Canadian population. Across the Canadian population (ages 15 to 74), data from the 2014 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) shows that overall life satisfaction levels are notably consistent across the Millennial, Gen-X and Boomer generations. [Note: The life satisfaction scores are not directly comparable to this current survey because differences in the mode by which the surveys were conducted, which results in the CCHS results being significantly more positive].

Millennials in other countries. In a survey of Millennials in 23 countries conducted by the IRIS network in 2015, Canadians fall a bit below the average level of overall life satisfaction (in this survey 26% expressed high level of satisfaction, compared with 34% in the low satisfaction group). Countries with the highest levels of Millennial life satisfaction are in Latin America (Mexico – 49%; Colombia – 44%; Brazil – 43%), consistent with other research. This level of life satisfaction is least evident in Japan (18%) and Turkey (18%).

## Financial situation and prospects

*A majority of Millennials do not feel they have the income they need to live as they would like, but most are optimistic that they will achieve this sometime in the future. Similarly, they are more likely to say they are worse off than better off than their parents were at their current age, but are hopeful about eventually achieving their parents' level of affluence.*

It is well-documented that Millennials are facing much greater challenges than previous generations in achieving financial stability, due to many factors including fewer full-time and well-paying jobs, an increasingly globalized economy and high levels of student debt.

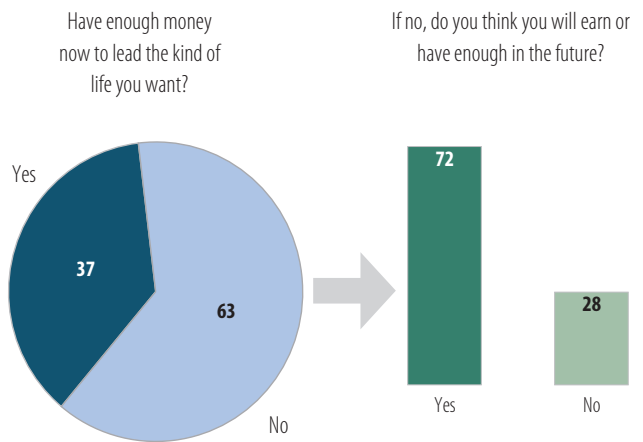
**Adequacy of current income.** Not surprisingly, fewer than four in ten (37%) Canadian Millennials say they currently have enough money to lead the kind of life they want. As would be expected, this is largely a function of household income, although even among those earning \$100,000 or more, only two-thirds consider their income to be sufficient for their desired lifestyle.

At the same time, there is also considerable optimism about the prospects for future financial success. Among those who do not currently earn or have enough money today, seven in ten (72%) believe they will be able to do so in the future. In this case, current household income has only a modest impact on outlook toward the future relative to other factors: Belief in future earning power is most evident

among younger Millennials (ages 21 to 26), immigrants and individuals with “other” ethnic backgrounds (those who do not identify as white, Indigenous, Chinese or South Asian).

Among social values tribes, it is Engaged Idealists (80%) who are the most optimistic about their future earning potential, while Lone Wolves are least so (60%), a difference that is due in part to demographic characteristics of these groups.

### Have enough money to live as you would like

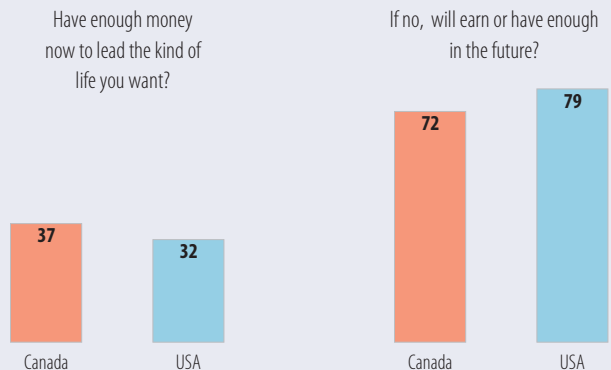


### Benchmark Comparisons

The perspective of Canadian Millennials is similar to that expressed by U.S. Millennials, based on a Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2014. American Millennials are marginally less positive about their current financial situation, but slightly more optimistic about their future prospects.

### Have as much money to live as you would like?

Canada and USA\*



\* Pew Research Center (February 2014)

**Financial situation versus parents.** Millennials were asked how they are doing financially, compared with how they think their parents were doing at the same age they are now. Only one-third (33%) feel that they are personally better off than their parents were at this younger age, compared with a slightly larger proportion (37%) who say they are worse off; another one in five (22%) believes it is about the same.

Although many feel worse off right now, Millennials are more optimistic that their situation will be better in the future. Half (49%) say they expect to be better off than their parents once they reach the age their parents are today. One in four (23%) anticipates being worse off, while the balance (28%) expect it to be about the same.

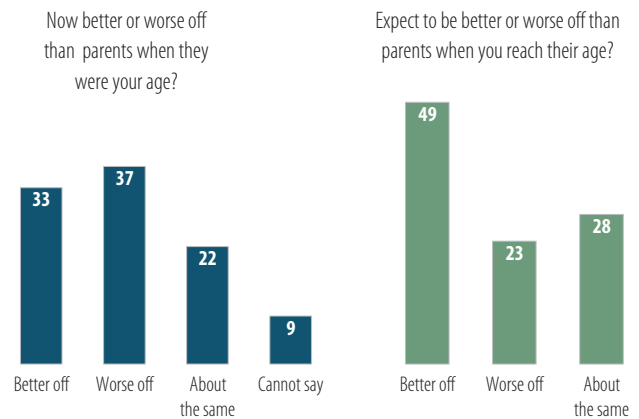
Predictably, it is older Millennials (ages 32 to 36), those with more income and education, and those married/living with spouse (dual income) who are most apt to currently feel better off than their parents financially, while younger Millennials (21 to 26) and those with lower incomes tend to feel worse off. This confirms the role that life situation plays in perceived financial wellness/success.

Opinions on this question also vary by country of birth and ethnic background: Immigrants and individuals with Asian and other non-white backgrounds are among the most positive, while white Millennials are the least apt to share this view. Across social values tribes, it is Diverse Strivers and New Traditionalists (the two most ethnically diverse groups) who feel they are better off today than their parents were when younger, while Critical Counterculturalists (also a group with notable immigrant representation) are the most negative.

With respect to future outlook and improving social mobility, factors such as current income and education levels make less of a difference, while ethnic background and social values remain significant predictors of optimism. New Traditionalists and Diverse Strivers are the most positive about eventually doing better than their parents, while Critical Counterculturalists are the least so (see box below).

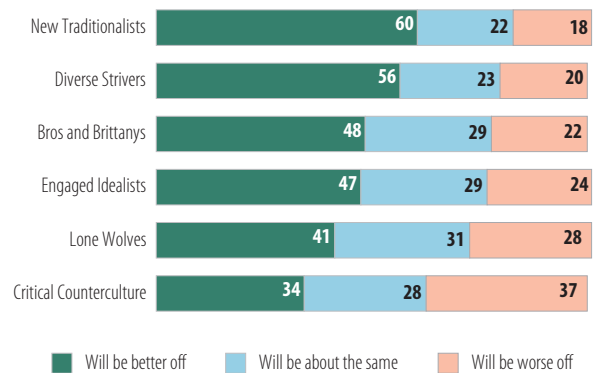
Millennials born in another country tend to be more positive about their future prospects, but this does not apply to all groups. Among those with a South Asian background, immigrants (71%) are much more optimistic about doing better than their parents than those native-born (38%). Among those with a Chinese background, it is native-born who are more apt to express this view (53%, versus 44%).

## Financial prospects compared with parents



## Financial prospects compared with parents

By social values tribe



## Financial Success versus Parents – Social Values Tribe Profiles

The youngest and most aspirational tribe, **Diverse Strivers**, and the eldest and wealthiest tribe, **New Traditionalists**, are the groups who feel the most assured about their present and future financial success. Most New Traditionalists and Diverse Strivers (39% and 36%, respectively) consider themselves better off than their parents at their current age, and a majority expect to be better off still when they reach the age of their parents (60% and 56%, respectively). Notably, both groups are overrepresented by Millennials born outside of Canada and come from non-white backgrounds.

In contrast, **Critical Counterculturists** are the most doubtful about their financial situation. Half (50%) say they feel worse off than their parents compared to their parents at their current age; this proportion declines to two in five (37%) who expect to be worse off when they reach their parents' age, but is still significantly higher than all other groups. This is despite the fact that Critical Counterculturists are the most university-educated of the tribes. Given their tendency to examine society on a philosophical level, it is possible that their high standards and idealism have given them a more pessimistic outlook toward their own future.

**Engaged Idealists** share some of the cynicism of Critical Counterculturists but not to the same degree. Many Engaged Idealists (41%) consider themselves worse off than their parents right now, and their pessimism lightens only moderately when considering the future; fewer than half (47%) expect to be better off down the road, which is notable given they have higher than average incomes. Because Engaged Idealists are also more university educated, their tendency to be idealists may make them more judgmental of their current situation as compared to how it might be in a better world.

**Bros and Brittany** and **Lone Wolves**, the groups who were more likely to have difficulty identifying unique attributes about their generation, are less likely to feel strongly about how they are doing financially compared with their parents. Lone Wolves tend to be more pessimistic about their financial success, while Bros and Brittanys tend to define the generational average.

## Life goals and aspirations

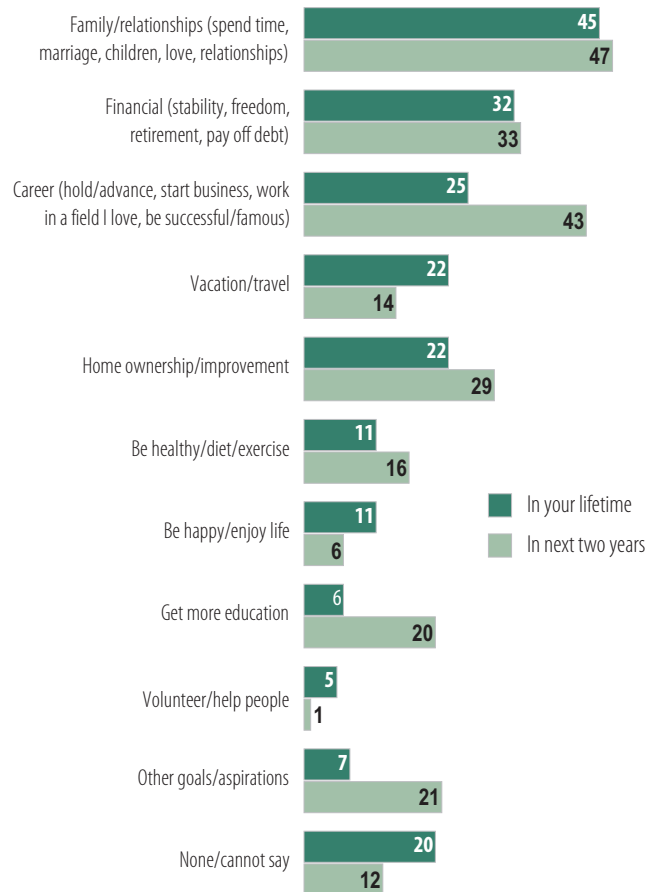
*Over their lives Millennials most want to have positive family relationships, followed by financial stability, a meaningful career, opportunities for travel and a comfortable home. One in five doesn't identify any long-term life goals, a group most likely to comprise young men, and those without post-secondary education or good job prospects.*

What do Millennials want most out of life? The survey asked participants to name up to three things they most want to achieve in their lifetime, and also what they most want to accomplish over the next two years (both questions were asked unprompted).

At the top of the lifetime list are aspirations relating to **family and relationships** (including children and marriage), mentioned by almost half (45%) of those surveyed. Next in importance are **financial goals** (stability, freedom) (32%), **career success** (build/advance career, start a business, work in loved field, become famous) (25%), **home ownership** (22%), **vacation travel** (22%) and **health and wellness** (11%), and **happiness** (11%). Other life goals are identified (e.g., further education, volunteering), each by less than one in ten, while one in five (20%) doesn't identify any lifetime goals.

When it comes to shorter term goals (next two years), family and relationships (47%) remain the most identified priority, but higher emphasis is given to career success, home ownership and further education, and less to vacation travel and being happy. Financial goals are equally as important in the shorter term, but the focus is more concentrated on financial stability and paying off debts.

## Life goals and aspirations





The relative importance placed on the main categories of life goals varies across the population:

- **Family/relationships goals** are most likely to be mentioned by women, younger Millennials, and residents of Quebec and Alberta. Immigrants are only marginally more focused on this aspiration than native-born, and there is no difference by ethnic background. Among social values tribes, family and relationships is most apt to be the focus for New Traditionalists (who most closely fit the demographic profile outlined above), but also Engaged Idealists, and least evident among Lone Wolves (this group is most likely to say they have no particular lifetime goals) and Critical Counterculturalists (also the group least apt to define adulthood as having good family relationships).
- **Financial goals** are most important to older Millennials (ages 32 to 36; those most apt to be established with a partner/spouse, children and a career), as well as among men and ethnic Chinese, and least evident among Quebecers. Across social values tribes, Bros & Brittanys and Diverse Strivers are most likely to aspire to financial stability/freedom, while this appears to be of least interest to Engaged Idealists.
- **Career goals** are comparatively more important to younger Millennials (who are still establishing careers), as well as among those with a graduate degree and current students (at any level), and those with Indigenous or “other” ethnic backgrounds.<sup>2</sup> Career aspirations are least apt to be mentioned by Millennials currently in high school and those not looking for work. Among social values tribes, this goal is most common among Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturalists (these groups, along with Indigenous Millennials, are most apt to specifically identify a desire to work in a field they love).
- **Goals related to home** are an aspiration common across the cohort, but somewhat more evident among younger Millennials, those with less education and income, women and Indigenous individuals.
- **Travel/vacation goals** are largely associated with higher household incomes, but also prominent among Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturalists (the two social values tribes also most apt to say they aspire to a happy and enjoyable life).
- **Education goals** to be achieved *over the next two years* are most evident among younger Millennials, women, those currently employed part-time and Indigenous Millennials. They are also most apt to be mentioned by Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturalists (the two most educated of social values tribes).
- **Those who do not identify any life goals** are most likely to be Lone Wolves, but in addition are also overrepresented among men, Millennials who live alone, those who do not have a high school diploma (including current high school students) and those not looking for work.

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<sup>2</sup> The emphasis given to various life goals sometimes varies by ethnic background and place of birth in the case of South Asians and Chinese Millennials (the two distinct ethnic groups for which there are large enough subsamples to support this type of analysis). A case in point is the importance placed on career goals: Among South Asians, career goals are given more prominence by native-born (30%) than by immigrants (23%); for ethnic Chinese it is the reverse (23% among native-born versus 47% among immigrants).



# Work/Career Experience and Aspirations

A central theme of this study is to better understand Millennials' perspective on work and career, including their current experiences, their goals and aspirations, challenges, and sources of support. This section also examines the value of post-secondary education in achieving a fulfilling life.

## Current work experience

*Two-thirds of employed Millennials are satisfied with their current job. Job satisfaction is closely tied to household income — but social values also play a role, with Diverse Strivers among the most positive about their work. Many, but not most, feel their pay cheque and education/skills are commensurate with their jobs, and one-third is working in areas unrelated to what they have been trained to do.*

**Employment status.** Close to eight in ten Millennials report to be currently working, mostly full-time (57%), as well as part-time (14%) or self-employed (7%). One in ten (11%) is currently a full-time student, while one in five is either seeking employment (10%) or not looking for work at this time (11%) (totals exceed 100% because some individuals fit more than one category).

Employment status varies predictably by age across the Millennial cohort, as older individuals are more likely to be in the workforce and younger ones in school. Full-time employment is most common among men, ethnic Chinese and Bros & Brittanys, and least so among those who are Indigenous or have “other” ethnic backgrounds. Millennials not currently looking for work are most apt to be those without a high school diploma and Indigenous, and to a lesser extent women (e.g., likely at home with small children), as well as New Traditionalists and Lone Wolves.

## Employment status

By age sub-cohort

MARKER OF ADULTHOOD	21 TO 26 YEARS OF AGE	27 TO 31 YEARS OF AGE	32 TO 36 YEARS OF AGE
Employed full-time	42	61	66
Employed part-time	20	11	11
Self-employed	5	7	8
Student (full-time, part-time)	32	10	5
Looking for work	13	10	8
Not looking for work	10	10	11

**Current job satisfaction.** Among Millennials employed (full-time, part-time or self-employed), how satisfied are they with their current job? Two-thirds say they are very satisfied (23%) or satisfied (44%), compared with one in ten who is dissatisfied (9%) or very dissatisfied (3%). The remaining 20 percent do not have a clear opinion either way, indicating they are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

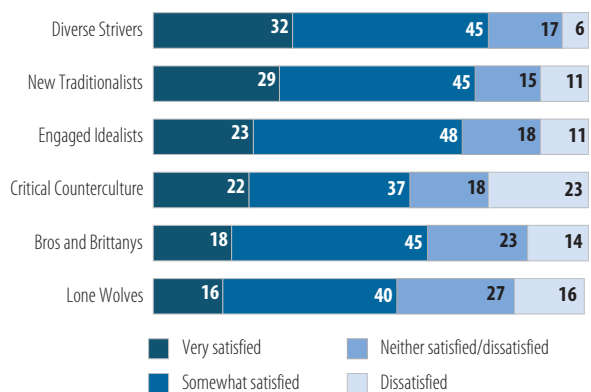
Job satisfaction is most closely linked to household income (and whether one’s income currently supports their desired lifestyle), but as a matter of degree: At all income levels, satisfaction outweighs dissatisfaction by a wide margin (even among those earning less than \$30K per year, 54% express satisfaction versus 17% who are dissatisfied). The effect of income on job satisfaction shows up with related factors, as satisfaction levels are also higher among Millennials who are employed full-time or self-employed, those with higher levels of education, and those with higher overall life satisfaction.

But social values also play a role. Diverse strivers are the most satisfied with their current work (77% satisfied, versus only 6% dissatisfied), despite having lower than average household incomes; their motivation to succeed may well give them comparatively greater satisfaction in their working life.

New Traditionalists (74% overall satisfaction) and Engaged Idealists (71%) also express higher than average levels of job satisfaction (these are the tribes with the highest average incomes), while it is Critical Counterculturists (59%) and Lone Wolves (57%) who are least apt to share this experience (these tribes have the lowest average incomes).

## Current job satisfaction

By social values tribe



**Matching income with education, training and skills.** The survey asked employed Millennials if they believe their current employment income is commensurate with their education, training and skills. Opinions are evenly divided between those who say their income is about right for their education/training/skills (44%) and those who believe it is lower than what they would expect (44%). Another one in ten (12%) reports earning more than he or she might have expected.

Responses to this question are most closely linked to current household income in a predictable pattern (a match is reported by 51% in the top income bracket, compared with 37% in the lowest bracket). Those most likely to say they are underpaid include immigrants and Millennials who are neither white nor Indigenous, women, and to a lesser extent New Traditionalists and Critical Counterculturists.

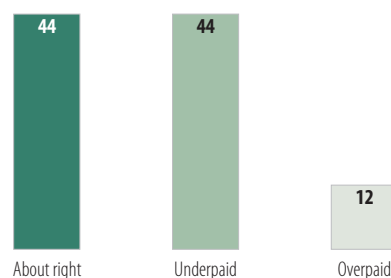
How much of a difference does a match between employment income and education/training make in overall job satisfaction? Results show it has little impact above and beyond household income. Those who report a good match are roughly as satisfied with their job as those in the upper income brackets, and those who say they are under-paid express the same level of job satisfaction as those in the lower income brackets. Being over-paid does little to boost one's job satisfaction.

**Matching education/training and skills with current job.** How well do employed Millennials feel their current education, training and skills match with their current job role and responsibilities? Half (49%) report a good match, while 13 percent believe they are overqualified for the work they do, and seven percent consider themselves to be underqualified (i.e., their education and skills are less than what their job calls for). Another one-third (32%) indicate they have chosen to take a job in an area in which their education, training and skills are not applicable.

Responses on this question are linked most clearly with household income and education. Millennials with a post-secondary degree are the most likely to say there is a good match between their education/training and their jobs, but are also among those most apt to believe they are overqualified. Having more income increases the probability of reporting a good match, versus taking on work unrelated to one's education and training, but is not related to feeling over- or underqualified.

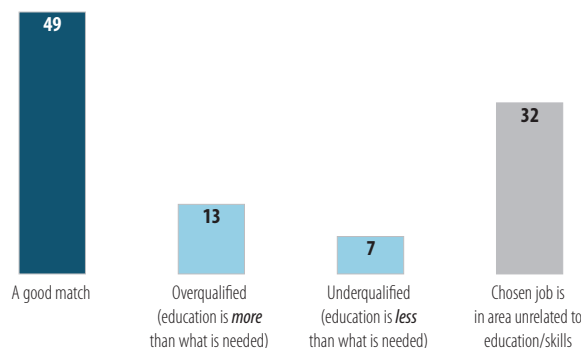
## Matching income with current job

How well does your current job's income match with education, training and skills?



## Matching education and skills with current job

How well do your education, training and skills match with your current job?



Across social values tribes, Diverse Strivers are the ones most apt to say they are under-trained for their work, while it is Lone Wolves who most likely to report having chosen jobs unrelated to their education and training. Finally, matching education, training and skills with one's current job has a marginally stronger impact on overall job satisfaction, than does a match with one's income.

## Career goals and aspirations

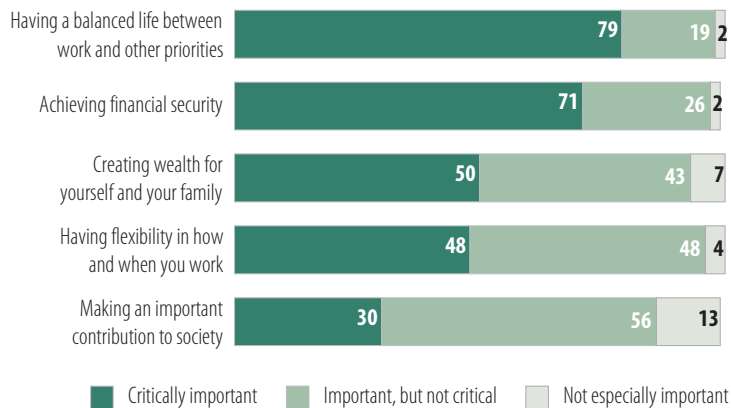
Millennials place the greatest career priority on achieving balance between work and personal life, ahead of financial security or creating wealth. The generation is divided on the relative importance of making money versus contributing to society, which is largely based on education, but also ethnic background and social values.

What do Millennials want most from their careers? Among five goals presented on the survey, the greatest priority is placed on **achieving balance between work and their personal life** (79% say this is critically important). This is ahead of **achieving financial security** (71%) and **creating wealth for oneself and one’s family** (50%).

The importance of work-life balance fits with the emphasis this generation places on family and relationships, as well as other life goals around travel, and health and wellness. It is also reflected in the importance placed on having a degree of autonomy in the workplace, with almost half (48%) placing critical importance on **having flexibility in how and when one works**.

In comparison, Millennials are less apt to place critical importance on **making an important contribution to society** (30%), although a majority says it is important, if not critical. This is a career aspiration that splits the generation, as reflected in the fact that opinions are evenly divided between those who would “like to make a lot of money in business” (50%) and those who would “prefer to do work that is in the public interest” (50%).

### Importance of work and career goals

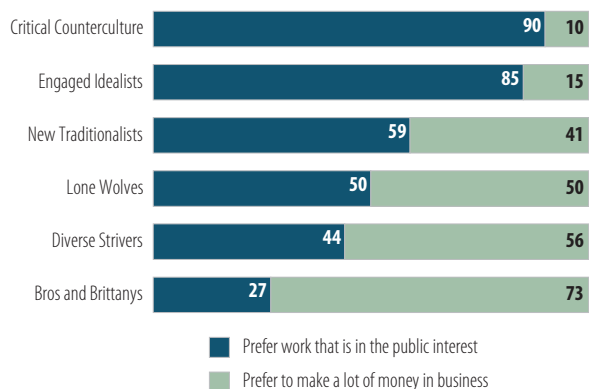


The relative importance placed on these career goals varies across the population:

- Having a balanced life between work and other priorities.** This career goal is the top priority across all groups, but increases along with education and household income, and is also more apt to be seen as critically important by women (83% versus 75% among men). Across social values tribes, achieving work-life balance is most widely prioritized among Engaged Idealists (89%) and New Traditionalists (87%) (the two most affluent tribes), and least so among Lone Wolves (67%; although only 5% of this group say it is not especially important).
- Achieving financial security.** The priority placed on this career goal is surprisingly consistent across the Millennial population, but is somewhat more evident in Alberta (77%), as well as among Bros & Brittanys (77%) and Diverse Strivers (75%).<sup>3</sup> Paradoxically, the importance placed on financial security increases modestly along with household income (those most likely to have already achieved financial security are the ones most apt to focus on it as a career goal).
- Creating wealth for themselves and their family.** The importance placed on creating wealth is only weakly related to household income, and is more about ethnic background and social values. This priority is most widely considered to be critical among Millennials with a Chinese (62%) or South Asian (65%) background, as well as among Diverse Strivers (67%). It is least apt to be given this importance by Critical Counterculturists (24%), followed by Engaged Idealists (36%) and Lone Wolves (38%).
- Having flexibility in when and how you work.** Flexibility in the workplace is a top priority among roughly half of Millennials in every group, but is most prominent among those with a graduate degree, immigrants, those with a South Asian or “other” ethnic background, and Diverse Strivers. This view is least apt to be shared by Lone Wolves, although a majority of this group sees such flexibility as important if not critical.

- Making an important contribution to society.** The importance placed on making a contribution to society is most closely linked to education, both in terms of attainment and level of study among current students (51% of current graduate students say this is a critically important career goal). This goal is also most widely emphasized by South Asian immigrants (54%) and Diverse Strivers (44%; a group with the largest component of the South Asian population), as well as among Engaged Idealists (46%; one of two tribes with the most education).
- Making this type of contribution is least apt to be a critical career aspiration for Millennials without a high school diploma (19%), Indigenous individuals (25%) and Quebecers (23%), as well as Bros & Brittanys (18%) and Lone Wolves (15%).

### Preferred type of work By social values tribes



<sup>3</sup> Among Chinese Millennials, creating wealth is given more priority by immigrants than native-born Canadians; for South Asians it is the reverse.

The division among Millennials between building wealth and contributing to society is further revealed when they are asked to choose between doing “making a lot of money in business” and “doing work that is in the public interest.” Older Millennials (who are more established financially and career-wise) are more likely to tip on the side of choosing work that is in the public interest.

Immigrants may place an importance on doing work that makes a contribution, but when faced with a choice they are less likely to choose this option over making money. The greatest difference emerges among social values tribes: The vast majority of Critical Counterculturists and Engaged Idealists say they would choose working in the public interest over making a lot of money, while a majority of Bros & Brittans, and to a lesser extent Diverse Strivers, take the opposite view.

*Briefly describe your ideal job or career, and what makes it attractive.*

My ideal job or career would be one that strikes a good work-life balance – one where I can succeed at both my job and the work that I do, but also having an adequate amount of time for my personal life. – New Traditionalist (female, 29, Ontario)

My ideal career is one in which I have a good work-life balance. I would like to go to work, work hard, feel good about what I’m doing at work, but then at the end of the day I like to go home from work, leave my work behind, and go and have time to myself or with my family or friends.  
– Bro & Brittany (female, 25, Saskatchewan)

One of the things I’ve always wanted to do is become a doctor. Right now I’m an accountant, I studied at school to become an accountant, and one of the things that I thought would be really nice is instead of focusing on finance, focusing on actually giving back to people and helping them through medicine.  
– Diverse Striver (male, 26, Ontario)

My passion is helping people achieve their goals – no matter what those are. The main goal we’re after in the end is happiness. I love watching people.  
– Engaged Idealist (female, 27, Alberta)



## Confidence, challenges and supports

Millennials are more likely than not to express confidence in eventually achieving their work and career goals. A weak economy is most broadly seen as the largest barrier to realizing their aspirations, but many also identify competing priorities and personal limitations. Family and friends are the most significant source of support.

**Confidence in attaining career goals.** How confident do Millennials feel today about achieving their current work and career goals over time? Overall, this generation is cautiously confident: Three in ten (29%) say they are very confident in achieving their goals, with more than half (54%) indicating they are “somewhat” confident. One in six is not very (14%) or not at all (3%) confident in this outcome.

What separates those who are very confident with those less sure? A post-secondary degree and higher incomes appear to make the most difference, although a clear majority of Millennials in all groups express some, if not strong, confidence in achieving their career aspirations.

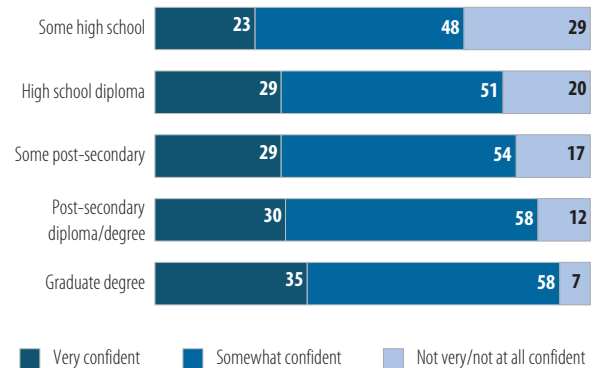
Those least apt to have such confidence include individuals without a high school diploma, those who are neither employed nor in school, those with the lowest incomes, and Indigenous Millennials. Among social values tribes, Diverse Strivers and Engaged Idealists are the most confident, with Lone Wolves and Critical Counterculturalists the least so (despite this latter group having the highest levels of educational attainment).

**Source of confidence.** When asked (unprompted) what gives them hope and confidence in achieving their work and career goals over time, Millennials are most likely to point to their hard work and determination (17%), with others emphasizing personal capabilities such as belief in themselves, their success so far, their experience and skills, and their education or training. Others emphasize the important support they receive from family or friends, their education and training, job security and a supportive work environment. Notably, almost four in ten (39%) could not identify anything in particular in responding to this question.

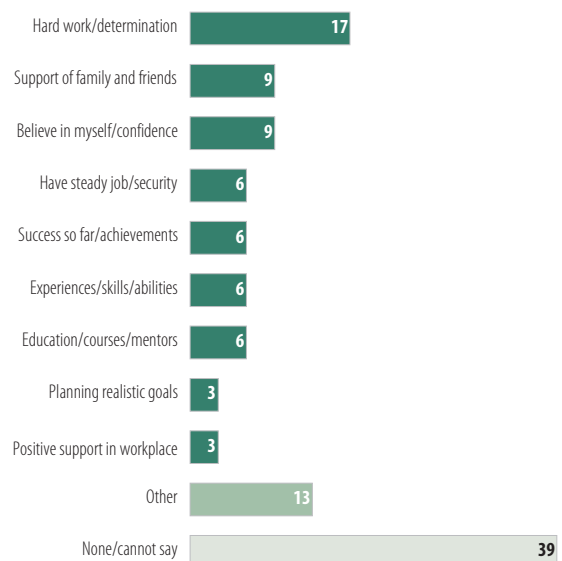
Responses to this question are largely similar across the Millennial generation. The theme of hard work and determination is somewhat more prominent among current students, Engaged Idealists and Diverse Strivers, while support from family and friends is most evident among women and Indigenous Millennials. Consistent with their

### Confidence in attaining career goals

By education levels



### What gives you confidence in attaining career goals?



low level of confidence, Lone Wolves are least able to identify any basis for hope and confidence in achieving their career aspirations.

**Biggest challenges.** When asked (again unprompted) to name the biggest challenges facing them in achieving their work and career goals, Millennials identify a range of themes. First and foremost is the **weak economy** (41%), including a challenging job market, low salaries, competition for scarce jobs, and the cost of living.

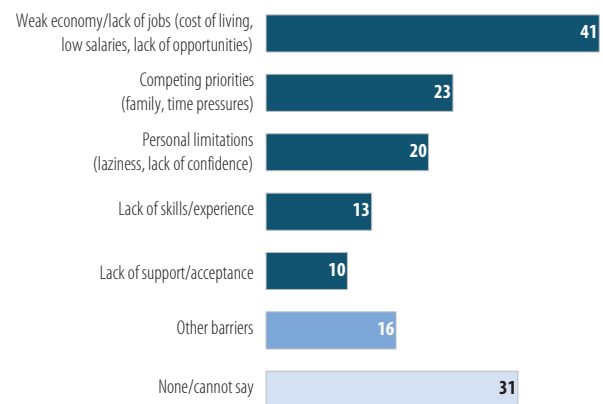
The next most mentioned theme is **competing priorities** (23%), which encompasses challenges related to the desire for work-life balance, time management pressures, and family or personal issues requiring attention (e.g., child care).

For some, the desire for work-life balance is seen as working against achieving other career goals, such as building wealth/getting ahead. Almost as prominent is **acknowledgement of personal limitations** (20%), such as procrastination, laziness and lack of energy or motivation, health or other disabilities, a lack of confidence, and not making good decisions.

Others identify constraints relating to a lack of skills or experience (13%) and an unsupportive work environment (from other people, employers, discrimination) (10%). Three in ten (31%) do not identify any specific challenges that stand in the way of their career and work aspirations (most apt to be the response among those with the least education).

A weak economy is the predominant theme across the generation, but increases with educational attainment, and is most prominently mentioned by Critical Counterculturists (the most educated tribe), as well as by residents of Atlantic Canada and Alberta. Competing priorities is most evident among college/technical school students, Indigenous Millennials, women, New Traditionalists and Engaged Idealists (who also are among the most likely to mention personal limitations). Lack of skills is linked to being younger in the generation and not having a post-secondary degree, while lack of workplace support is most apt to be emphasized by Millennials with higher levels of education and income.

## Biggest challenges facing work/career goals?



### *What stands in the way of achieving your ideal job or career?*

I feel like my friends and I are facing so much more instability economically, environmentally, socially than any other generation has faces in recent years, and those sort of things have been given to us by generations previous. – Diverse Striver (female, 27, Manitoba)

My dream job would be to film live concerts, but unfortunately that's not realistic because of the travel that would be involved now that I have a family. – Bro & Brittany (male, 35, Ontario)

I think the only thing that's really gotten in my way of trying to accomplish what I want job-wise is that I suffer from mental illness and anxiety problems, but I would say that probably that is more like a road block and a detour than actually stopping me from achieving what I want. – NewTraditionalist (male, 26, Ontario)

**Most important types of support.** Survey participants were also asked (unprompted) to name the single most important type of support they received in helping them toward their work and career goals.

The largest source of support for Millennials is from people close to them (40%), both family members and friends. Others identify support they have received from the workplace (10%) (e.g., management, mentors, co-workers), followed by smaller proportions mentioning financial support, self-confidence, and education/training. More than one-third (37%) do not identify any important sources of support in helping them in their work or career.

The support of family and friends is mentioned most often by younger Millennials, current students, women, those with at least some post-secondary education, and Engaged Idealists. Workplace support is more often mentioned by those with a post-secondary degree and those with higher incomes, and again Engaged Idealists (who are most likely to name multiple sources of support, versus Lone Wolves who are least apt to identify any).

**Use of occupational and labour trends information.** One potentially valuable resource for seeking employment and career direction is published information about occupational trends that identify where the best opportunities might be found in the short and longer term. Three in ten (30%) Millennials report having made use of this type of information in their search for work and/or career success. This is most apt to be reported by younger Millennials, as well as by current students and those looking for work (these groups overlap). Use of such information is marginally higher among immigrants than native-born, and more noticeable among those whose ethnic background is in the “other” category. Lone Wolves are least apt to report using such information (17%), while Bros & Brittanys fall somewhat below the average (26%).

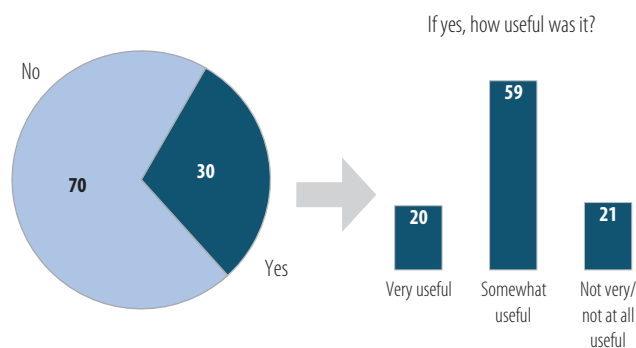
Among those who report using such information, one in five (20%) says it was very useful, with an equal proportion indicating it was not very (17%) or not all useful (3%). The majority (59%) rate the information somewhere in between.

This resource is most widely valued by Millennials with a South Asian or “other” ethnic background, and Diverse Strivers, with this least evident among those not employed nor in school, and Lone Wolves.

## Most important type of support you have received for your work/career



## Use of occupational trends/labour market data



## The value of post-secondary education

*Millennials have mixed views about the value of post-secondary education, with only three in ten believing it is essential to having a fulfilling life. Among those who now have a degree, fewer than half say it has been very helpful to them so far in their career, and this group is divided on whether they would get the same degree were they to do it over again.*

The conventional wisdom has long been that post-secondary education is an important, if not essential, foundation for both career and life success. The country has invested heavily in building and supporting an extensive network of publicly-funded colleges and universities, and Canada has one of the highest rates of post-secondary education in the world. To what extent do Millennials find post-secondary education to be the keystone for work and career success?

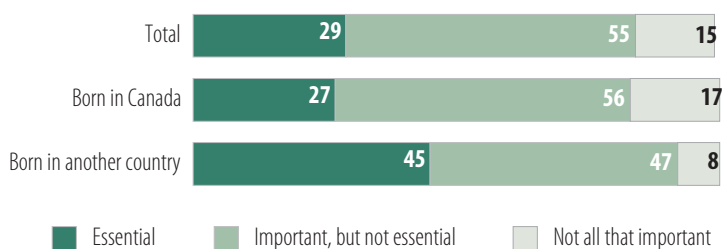
**How essential is having a post-secondary degree?** Most Millennials in Canada see clear value in post-secondary education, but relatively few are convinced of its necessity. Three in ten (29%) say having a post-secondary (college or university) degree is essential to having a fulfilling life, with a

majority (55%) maintaining it is important but not essential, while another 15 percent believe it is not that important.

The importance placed on a post-secondary degree varies noticeably across the population. Seeing it as essential increases (although not dramatically) along with educational attainment (27% among those without a high school diploma, to 42% among those with a graduate degree), but this is not the case with household income. As important as education is where one was born: Immigrants and Millennials with South Asian backgrounds are especially likely to say a post-secondary degree is essential to a fulfilling life (with no difference between native-born and immigrants). This view is least apt to be shared by Millennials who are self-employed and those who live in Alberta.

Across tribes, Diverse Strivers (with the most significant immigrant component) place the strongest value on post-secondary education (44%), with this view least evident among Lone Wolves (22%), along with Engaged Idealists (21%) and Critical Counterculturists (19%), but likely for very different reasons.

How important is a post-secondary degree to having a fulfilling life?



**Value of post-secondary degree in achieving life goals.** Another way to explore the value of post-secondary education is to ask Millennials who now have a degree (27% of the cohort) how valuable they have found it to be so far in terms of helping them achieve their life goals. Responses are positive if not strongly so.

Most Millennials are divided between those who say their post-secondary education or degree has been very helpful (41%) and those who believe it has been somewhat helpful (43%). The remainder believe it has been not very (12%) or not at all (3%) helpful to them so far in achieving their life goals.

This mixed assessment is evident across the generation, but with some variation. Millennials most positive about the value of their post-secondary education to date include those with a graduate degree (53% say very helpful), and those in the top income bracket, as well as Engaged Idealists, Diverse Strivers and Critical Counterculturists. This view is least apt to be shared by ethnic Chinese, B.C. residents and Lone Wolves (30% in this group say their education has not been helpful in their lives). Opinions on this question are notably similar across age sub-cohorts: Younger Millennials (ages 21 to 26) with a post-secondary degree are as likely as older ones to feel it has been helpful to them so far.

**Would they get the same post-secondary education again?**

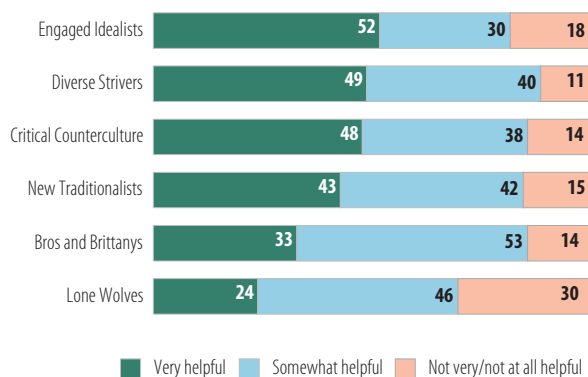
Millennials with a post-secondary degree were also asked, if they could do it over again, would they have gotten the same degree or done something else instead. Again the response is mixed. Of this group, just under half (47%) say they would in fact have gotten the same post-secondary education they completed. A slightly higher proportion indicate they would have followed a different path, either pursuing a different type of post-secondary education (45%) or doing something else instead of getting a degree (7%).

Perspectives on this retrospective question are generally similar across the cohort, with some variation. Satisfaction with the chosen educational path is most evident among younger Millennials, those with a graduate degree, those in the top income bracket, those who identify ethnically as white, Quebecers and those with a high level of life satisfaction.

Millennials most likely to say they would have pursued a different educational degree include women and ethnic Chinese. Doing something other than post-secondary

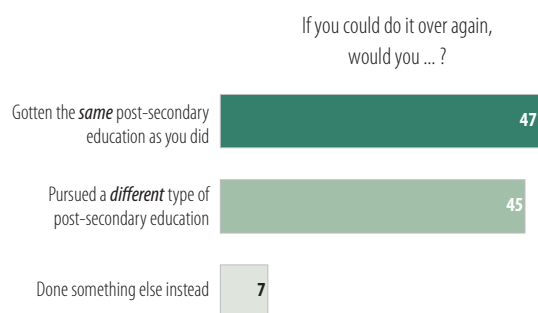
**How valuable has your post-education been?**

By social values tribe



**Was your post-secondary degree the right decision?**

Those with a post-secondary degree



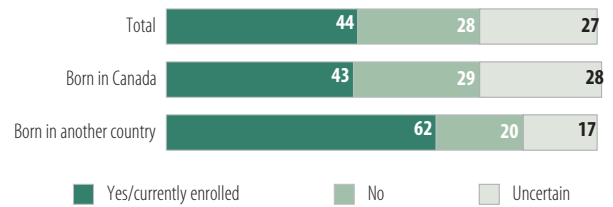
education is the least identified option across the generation, but is most evident among those who are self-employed, lower income Millennials, men, residents of Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, those with low life satisfaction and Lone Wolves.

**Plans for further post-secondary education.** Millennials who do not yet have a university degree were asked if they have plans for, or are considering, getting further education at the college, university or post-graduate level (this group comprises 44% of the Millennial cohort). More than four in ten in this group say they do have such plans (33%) or are already enrolled in a post-secondary or graduate degree program (11%). The balance are divided between those who say they have no such plans (28%) and those who are currently uncertain (27%).

Those most likely to be planning further education/already enrolled include immigrants, and Millennials with South Asian or other ethnic backgrounds. This is also more apt to be the case for younger Millennials and those who already have some post-secondary education. Such plans are least evident among those without a high school diploma (32%), Quebecers, Lone Wolves and Bros & Brittanys.

### Plan to get further post-secondary education

Those without a post-secondary degree, by place of birth



## Institutional support and confidence

*Most Millennials do not believe the needs and aspirations of their generation have been well-supported by the country's major institutions. They are most likely to express general confidence in non-profit and public sector institutions, and least apt to trust the Canadian media and major corporations.*

Younger generations in Canada today are confronted with a variety of challenges in getting established that were not faced by their parents, in such areas as employment, financial stability, affordable housing, education and child care. In many respects, these are collective problems resulting from economic, structural and political conditions, and can only be addressed by the country's major institutions, including governments, colleges and universities, and the private sector.

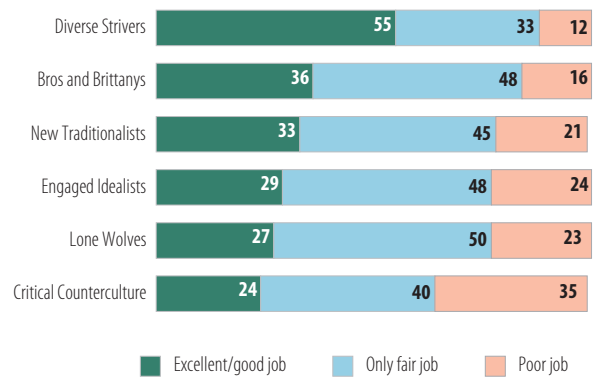
Millennials in Canada are not especially impressed with how the country's major institutions are supporting their generation. Only one in three believes these institutions are doing an excellent (6%) or good (31%) job of supporting the needs and aspirations of people in their generation. Two-thirds say the support provided has been only fair (45%) or poor (19%).

A positive view about institutional support for Millennials is most evident among Millennials with a graduate degree (45% say excellent or good), immigrants, those with a South Asian background (53%), and men, while poor ratings are most apt to be given by those who are ethnically white (20%) or Indigenous (27%). Across social values tribes, Diverse Strivers are the most positive (55% say excellent or good), while Critical Counterculturists (despite their higher levels of education) are less than half as likely to share this view (24%).

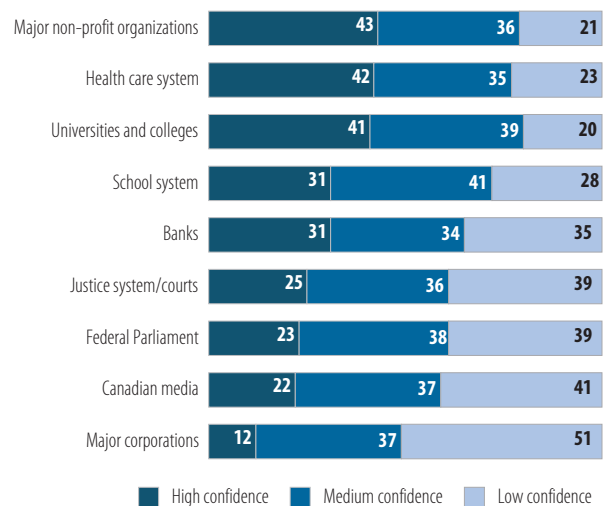
**Confidence in major institutions.** Millennials were also asked to rate their level of general confidence in each of nine major Canadian institutions or sectors. None receive strong marks by as many as half of this generation, but there is considerable variation across the list. A high level of confidence (ratings of 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale) is most likely to be given to major non-profit organizations (such as the YMCA or United Way) (43%), the country's health care system (42%), and universities and colleges (41%); in each case, no more than half as many express low confidence.

### How well are major institutions supporting needs/ aspirations of millennials?

By social values tribe



### Confidence in Canadian institutions



Three in ten Millennials say they have a high level of confidence in the school system (31%) and the country's banks (31%), with roughly the same proportion expressing low confidence (ratings of 1 or 2). One in four expresses strong confidence in the justice system and courts (25%), Federal Parliament (23%) and Canadian media (22%). Finally, just over one in ten (12%) has a high level of confidence in major corporations, compared with half (51%) who have low confidence.

How does confidence in institutions vary across the generation? Positive ratings are more widely given by those with higher incomes and those born outside Canada (and especially those with Chinese or South Asian backgrounds). There are also notable differences across social values Tribes: Diverse Strivers are by far the most positive in their trust of the country's institutions (consistent with their view that they are doing a good job of supporting their generation), while Lone Wolves are at the least trusting (consistent with their general sense of disconnection with society).

Critical Counterculturists are more selective: they are particularly critical of banks and major corporations, but comparatively positive about major non-profit organizations, universities/colleges, and the Federal Parliament. Their Engaged Idealist colleagues exhibit a similar profile, with higher than average ratings of major non-profit organizations and the health care system, and notably lower confidence in banks, the justice system/courts, Canadian media and major corporations.

New Traditionalists (who tend to have higher incomes and were born outside Canada) are more likely than average to express confidence in major non-profit organizations, but less so when it comes to universities/colleges and the school system, and they are the most critical of all tribes when it comes to Canadian media.

## Benchmark Comparisons

How does confidence in major institutions among Millennials compare with the view of Canadian Gen-Xers and Boomers?

General Social Survey (2013). This survey conducted by Statistics Canada used the same question with some of the same institutions, but conducted by telephone versus online surveys. The degree of confidence is notably similar across the three generations. Millennials are somewhat more confident in the federal Parliament, and less so when it comes to Canadian media. There is no difference when it comes to the school system, banks and major corporations.

AmericasBarometer 2014. This survey was conducted in Canada (online) and across most of the western hemisphere, and included a similar question about trust in institutions. In this study, Millennials were somewhat less trusting of Parliament, the justice system and mass media in comparison with older generations.



# Political Engagement

Much has been written about low voter turnout among younger generations, why this may be the case, and what it may mean for the future of politics, political institutions and society. This study addresses the question by focusing on Millennials' expressed interest in current affairs, and how they are engaging (or not) in terms of voting and in other ways.

## Following news and current events

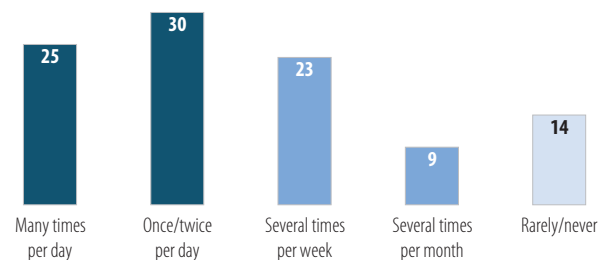
*More than half of Millennials say they follow news and current events on at least a daily basis, focusing on such issues as safety/security, politics, the economy and social issues. They rely on various media sources, mostly online, but also TV and radio. Education level is the strongest predictor of keeping up with current issues in the news.*

**Frequency of attention.** The stereotypes surrounding Millennials do not include them having an active interest in what is happening in the world of politics and current events, but in fact most Canadians in this generation claim to be paying attention. More than half report following news and current events (e.g., international, national, regional, local) at least once or twice a day (30%), if not many times throughout the day (25%). Fewer than one in six (14%) say they do so rarely or never.

Frequency of attention is most closely linked to educational attainment: Following news and current events at least daily rises from 38 percent among Millennials without a high school diploma to 75 percent among those with a graduate degree, with the biggest gap among those who do so many times throughout the day. Daily attention is also somewhat more evident among men (64% versus 47% of women), and is lower in Quebec (48%) than elsewhere in Canada.

Differences across social values tribes are modest and linked to education. Daily attention is most widespread among Critical Counterculturists (the most educated of tribes) (67%, with 35% doing so many times each day), followed by Engaged Idealists (62%) and Diverse Strivers (62%). Lone Wolves are least apt to report the same frequency (43%), with one-quarter saying they pay little or no attention to news and current events.

How frequently do you follow news/current events?



*It is often said that today's youth are not engaged or interested in politics and public affairs. Do you think this is true, and why?*

I actually really disagree that youth aren't as engaged in politics or public affairs 'these days.' I think they're actually more engaged and more interested and more knowledgeable than they were when I was a teenager. – Critical Counterculturist (female, 32, Nova Scotia)

I don't feel that politics is important to me in respect to my daily life. Like, I don't see how something that's happening in a different country, how that would affect me in my life.

– Bro & Brittany (female, 29, Ontario)

Today's youth are engaged and interested in politics and public affairs only on a superficial, surface level.

– Engaged Idealist (male, 36, Nova Scotia)

**Issues most closely followed.** The survey also asked survey participants (without prompting) what news and current affairs issues they have been following most closely in the past few months. Just over half identify one or more issues, covering a range of themes. Most commonly mentioned are issues pertaining to **security and safety** (terrorism, crime cases/trials, gun/other violence) (35%), and **politics** (U.S. politics in particular, international politics, Canadian politics) (31%).

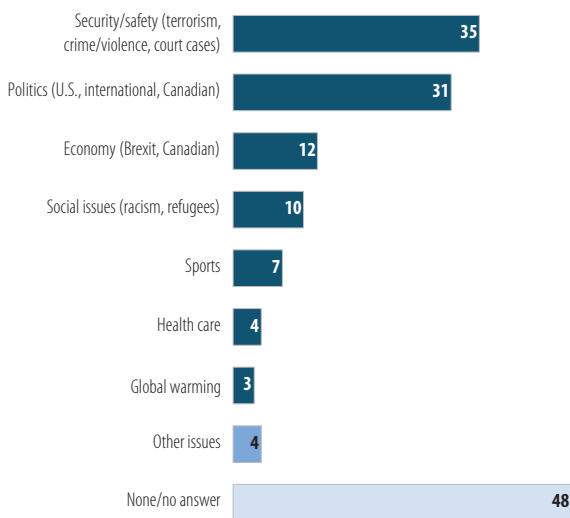
Smaller proportions say they have been closely following the **economy** (Brexit, Canadian economy) (12%), **social issues** (racism, refugees) (10%), **sports** (7%), **health care** (4%) and **global warming** (3%). Almost half (48%) do not identify any issues they have been paying attention to recently, with this response most common among groups least apt to be following news and current events on a regular basis (e.g., those with lower levels of education, Lone Wolves).

Responses to this question are generally similar across the generation, with a few notable differences. In particular, attention to politics and the economy is closely linked to higher levels of education. Critical Counterculturalists and Engaged Idealists (the two most educated tribes) have been paying particular attention to U.S. politics, with the former tribe also focusing on the economy and social issues.

**Media sources.** Millennials make use of a wide variety of media to follow news and current events. Not surprisingly, online digital sources are the most common, starting with social media (67%), but also online news platforms (e.g., Huffington Post, iPolitics) (51%), online blogs (17%) and online commentary shows (e.g., Daily Show, Colbert Report) (16%). But traditional media also figure prominently, including television (53%), radio (38%) and print newspapers (28%).

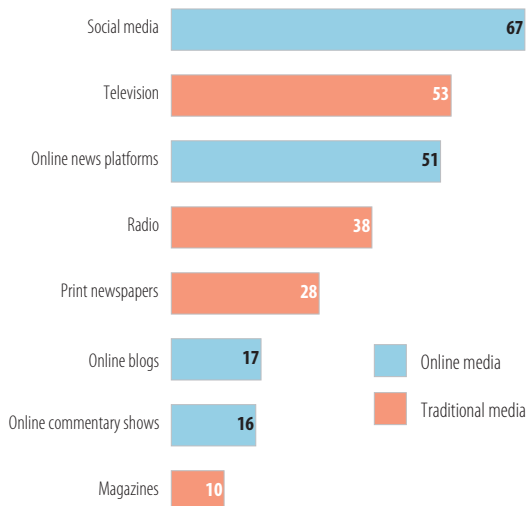
Media use for news and current events varies by group. Social media is most popular among younger Millennials, women, and residents of Atlantic Canada and Alberta. Television is more apt to be used by older Millennials and those with less education, while use of online news platforms and commentary shows increases with education level (68% of those with a graduate degree use the former, compared with only 36% of those without any post-secondary education).

### What issues do you most closely follow?\*



\* Those who follow issues at least several times per month

### Which media do you use for news/current events? \*



\* Those who follow issues at least several times per month

Differences in media use are also apparent among social values tribes in a predictable pattern. Engaged Idealists are most likely to use all sources for news and current events, except TV. Critical Counterculturists also rely on multiple sources, but with a particular emphasis on online content.

Diverse Strivers tend to rely more heavily on traditional media relative to other tribes, although most do use social media for this type of information. And, consistent with other results in this section, Lone Wolves are least apt to use most types of media to stay current, although they are average users of TV.

When I look at my Facebook page, you know, and something horrible has happened across the world, everyone is so engaged with that and discussing about it and sometimes, like, my Facebook wall and Twitter feed just won't shut up about the issue.

— Bro & Brittany (female, 34, Ontario)

I think social media has a MASSIVE influence on this and provides a way for youth to engage in politics and public affairs that simply didn't exist when I was younger.

— Critical Counterculturist (female, 32, Nova Scotia)

## Interest in politics

*This generation is evenly divided between those who are and those who are not interested in politics, based largely on how much education one has. Those who do pay attention have broad interests covering international, national and provincial/local politics.*

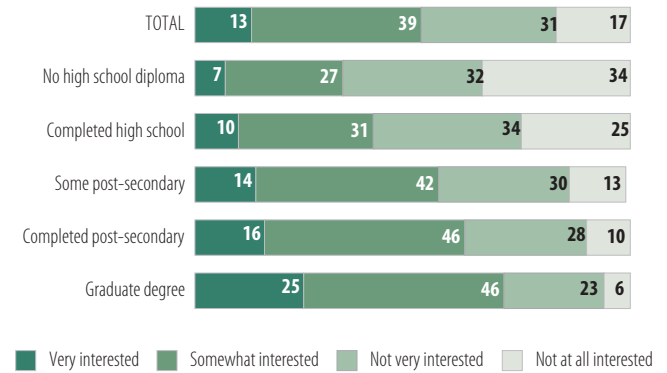
**General interest in politics.** Survey participants were asked more specifically about their general interest in politics. Across Millennials, there is a range in the degree of interest, largely a function of certain demographics, and to a lesser extent social values. Overall, about half of Millennials say they are very (13%) or somewhat (39%) interested in politics, with the other half indicating they are not very (31%) or not at all (17%) interested.

As with frequency of following news and current events, interest in politics is closely linked to educational attainment: Millennials with a graduate degree are twice as likely to say they are at least generally interested (and almost four times as likely to be very interested), in comparison with those who do not have a high school diploma. Interest in politics is also higher among individuals with a South Asian background.

By comparison, interest (not very/not at all interested) is least evident among Millennials aged 21 to 26, women, Quebecers and those with the lowest incomes. Among social values tribes, Critical Counterculturists stand out as the most focused on politics (77% are very/somewhat interested), with Lone Wolves at the other end of the spectrum (35%).

## Current interest in politics

By educational attainment



I feel like my voice wouldn't be heard if I even tried to enter the political ring or whatever. I think it's really just because it's mostly the older generation that's in there. — Bro & Brittany (female, 29, Ontario)

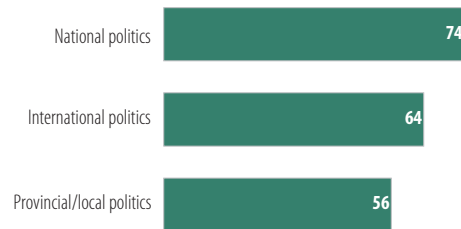
I don't follow [politics] daily, but I will be involved and be informed when it comes to making decisions about my country. — Engaged Idealist (female, 36, British Columbia)

**Type of politics.** Millennials who closely follow politics tend to focus broadly rather than at just one level. Among those who say they are very or somewhat interested, three-quarters (74%) follow national politics, with clear majorities also following politics at the international level (64%), and provincial or local level (56%).

National politics are most likely to be of interest to Millennials with a graduate degree, while international politics are particularly relevant to immigrants and ethnic Chinese. By comparison, provincial or local politics are most apt to be of interest among older Millennials (32 – 36), those with an undergraduate degree, and residents of Atlantic Canada, Quebec and Alberta.

Critical Counterculturists express the strongest interest in politics at all three levels (mirrored by Engaged Idealists to a lesser extent). Despite Diverse Strivers being a group with a high concentration of immigrants, they are no more likely than average to be focusing on international politics (as immigrants are generally). Lone Wolves are the tribe least apt to be interested in politics, but for those who are there is notably strong focus on politics at the provincial or local level.

**Interest in politics is mostly ...**  
Among those interested in politics



**Benchmark Comparisons**

Several of the same questions were on the 2013 General Social Survey. A direct comparison of results with the current survey cannot be made because the age cohorts are not identical and the survey mode was different (in-person and telephone interviews, versus online). But the results from the GSS are instructive in terms of how attention to news and current events and general interest in politics varies across the population.

**Following news and current events.** Results show that in fact Canadians’ interest in news and current events increases with age in a linear fashion: Among the youngest group (15 to 24) only 28% report daily attention, and this level rises steadily with each older cohort: 46% (25 to 34), 55% (35 to 44), 65% (45 to 54), 76% (55 to 64) and 85% (65 plus).

**Interest in politics.** There does not appear to be a large generational gap when it comes to general interest in politics. Millennials (defined here as ages 25 to 34) are only marginally less apt to be very interested than Gen-Xers, with a somewhat larger gap in comparison with Boomers and Elders.

## Voting behaviour

*Three-quarters of Millennials eligible to vote in the 2015 federal election say they did so, with educational attainment the most significant predictor. Those not voting are most likely to cite motivational reasons, such as lack of trust in candidates or parties, cynicism about politics, lack of interest and feeling uninformed.*

**2015 federal election.** The 2015 Canadian General Election marked a significant change in direction for the country, with the young upbeat Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau leading his party to a major upset victory over the long-governing Conservative Party led by a very different type of leader. Much has been made of Trudeau's youthful appeal, and his success in attracting young voters not previously engaged in politics.

Estimates from Elections Canada provide evidence of this change. Overall voter turnout in 2015 was 68 percent, up noticeably from the previous election (61%), and across age cohorts the biggest jump was among voters aged 18 to 34 (65%, up from 49% in 2011). Moreover, turnout was significantly higher among young Canadians eligible to vote for the first time (74%) compared with those who were previously old enough to do so (64%).

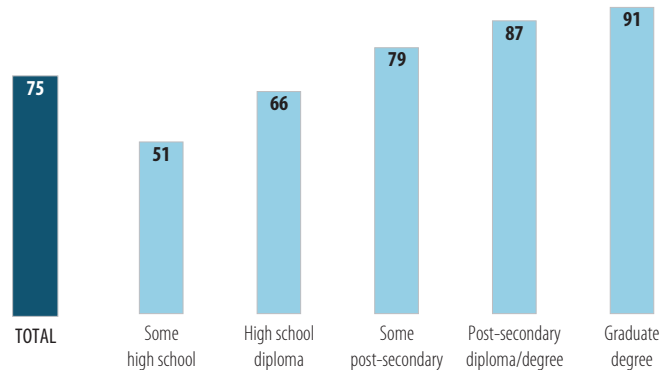
Results from this study are roughly comparable with the Elections Canada estimates, although somewhat inflated.

Seven in ten (69%) participants surveyed say they voted in the 2015 federal election, and this number increases to 75 percent when the percentage who say they were not eligible (mostly immigrants) are removed from the total.<sup>4</sup>

As with general interest in politics, voter turnout among Millennials is mostly a function of educational attainment: 91 percent among those with a graduate degree, compared with only 51 percent of those who have not completed high school (numbers are adjusted for eligibility to vote). Self-reported voting in the 2015 federal election is also somewhat higher among older Millennials and men, as well as among Critical Counterculturists and Engaged Idealists (all groups with higher levels of education).

### Voted in 2015 federal election

Among those eligible to vote, by educational attainment



<sup>4</sup> It is almost always the case that self-reports of voting behaviour is inflated above actual turnout, and this occurs for various reasons (e.g., people say they voted because they feel they should have done so, or it's the expected thing to do).

**Reasons for not voting.** Those Millennials who were eligible to vote in the 2015 federal election but did not do so (23% of this cohort) were asked (unprompted) why they didn't vote. A variety of reasons are given, with most fitting into one of two themes: motivation and barriers.

Close to six in ten (57%) eligible non-voters say they didn't vote in this election for motivational reasons, which include not trusting or liking any of the candidates, lack of interest, feeling uninformed, cynicism (nothing changes, don't like politics), laziness or indecision about who to support. Three in ten (31%) cite reasons relating to external barriers, such as lack of time/schedule issues, being out of town and medical reasons.

Reasons for not voting differ somewhat across the population. Motivational reasons are most commonly given among non-voting Millennials who are older and have children, and those experiencing precarious employment (e.g., lower education, inadequate incomes, working part-time or looking for work). Men tend to be more likely than women to express a lack of interest and cynicism about politics, while women are most apt to say they are uninformed.

Among social values tribes, it is Bros & Brittanys and Lone Wolves (the two expressing the least interest in politics) who are most likely to cite motivational reasons for not voting in the past federal election.

## Reasons for not voting in 2015

Those eligible who did not vote

MOTIVATIONAL REASONS	57
Did not trust/like the candidates	15
No interest in voting	11
Uninformed	9
Cynical (nothing changes/doesn't matter)	8
Don't like politics/don't like to vote	7
Lazy/forgot	5
Couldn't decide who to vote for	4
BARRIERS	31
No time/too busy	17
Out of town	6
Sick/medical reasons	2
Couldn't get a ride	2
Religious reasons	2
Didn't receive a voting card	2
OTHER REASONS	5

By comparison, not voting because of external barriers is more commonly mentioned by Millennials with higher levels of education and income, as well as among women. This category is also more prominent among Critical Counterculturists, New Traditionalists and Engaged Idealists, although even among these groups such barriers are less apt to be mentioned than motivational reasons.

### *Why in Canada are young people less likely to vote in elections than older people?*

Younger people just need to be more informed. I think that there's a possibility that they do not think that their one vote is going to make a difference. The biggest thing I think is just interest – interest in politics, interest in everything to do with politics including the actual politicians.

– Engaged Idealist (female, 35, Prince Edward Island, voted in 2015 federal election)

I don't feel like in school we really learned very much about politics . . . I know that I didn't feel like I really understood political parties or what they stood for, or how the system sort of works today. – Diverse Striver (female, 28, Ontario, voted in 2015 federal election)

The generation we grew up in, we watched our parents vote and it did no good. It didn't matter who they decided to support, whether it was provincial or federal or even like in your small town; there were no changes, there was no benefits to it . . . I myself have never voted for anything for that reason. One voice isn't going to make a difference. – Diverse Striver (female, 31, Ontario, did not vote in 2015 federal election)

I think the reason in Canada why younger people are not voting as much as older people is because we have kids, we're working one to three jobs. I know for me personally I couldn't get the time off work. – Engaged Idealist (female, 28, British Columbia, did not vote in 2015 federal election [unable to leave work])

**Federal party identification.** Two-thirds of Millennials identify with one of the federal political parties, and in roughly the same order as the 2015 election outcome. Three in ten (29%) identify as Liberals, followed by Conservatives (16%), the New Democratic Party (11%) and the Green Party (5%); 15 percent in Quebec identify with the Bloc Québécois.

Liberal Party supporters are most likely to be immigrants, and individuals of South Asian descent (49%), as well as Diverse Strivers and Critical Counterculturists, while Conservatives are well-represented among men, Millennials with a Chinese background and New Traditionalists. NDP supporters are most apt to be looking for work, have lower levels of life satisfaction and to belong in the Critical Counterculture tribe, while the Green Party is most apt to attract Engaged Idealists.

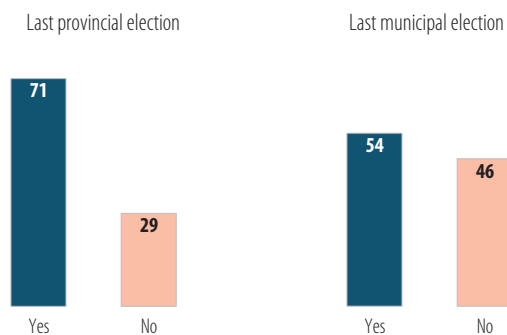
Household income and education play a significant role in whether or not Millennials identify with any party: those without a high school diploma (49%) are almost twice as likely to say they have no affiliation, compared with those who have a graduate degree (26%). Low party identification also typifies Lone Wolves, consistent with their general lack of interest in politics.

**Voting in provincial and municipal elections.** What about participation in provincial or municipal elections? Among Millennials eligible to vote (92% of the survey sample), seven in ten (71%) report voting in their most recent provincial election, while just over half (54%) say they voted in their previous municipal election.

The pattern of who has and has not voted in provincial and municipal elections is largely the same as with the past federal election. Voting is most closely linked to educational attainment, and this is also reflected among social values Tribes: Critical Counterculturists and Engaged Idealists are the most active voters at both levels, with Lone Wolves and Bros & Brittanys least apt to report the same.

Across the country, voting in the last provincial election is most widely reported by Millennials in Quebec (77%), and least so in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (65%).

### Voted in previous provincial/municipal elections Those eligible to vote





## Active engagement in issues

*One in four Millennials report active engagement with issues and causes in the past year, most often online but also in-person at events and meetings. Social values help shape the extent and nature of involvement, with Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturists leading the pack.*

**Active involvement in issues and causes.** Beyond voting and following current events in the news, are Millennials also actively engaged in other ways? Just under one in four (23%) identify one (or more) causes or issues in which they have been actively following or are engaged in over the past 12 months. This is most likely to include social justice issues (e.g., animal rights, racism, refugees, Pride) (9%), followed by global warming/environmental issues, politics and health care. Three-quarters (77%) do not indicate any issues they are actively following or engaged in over this period.

As with interest in politics and current affairs, active engagement with issues or causes is mostly strongly determined by educational attainment and social values. Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturists are, by far, the most involved of tribes: They are roughly twice as likely as the generation average to be engaged in social justice, environmental and political issues, and they are the only two tribes to mention more than one issue in any appreciable numbers. In contrast, only one in ten (11%) Lone Wolves has been active on any issue over the past year, with Bros & Brittanys only moderately more so (16%).

Also noteworthy is the fact that such activity does not vary by gender, age sub-cohort, place of birth or ethnicity, and (unlike education) is only weakly related to income. Across the country, Quebecers are less likely than other Millennials to identify issues in which they have been actively engaged.

### Actively followed/engaged in issues – past 12 months

By social values tribe

ISSUE/CAUSE	TOTAL	BROS AND BRITTANYS	LONE WOLVES	ENGAGED IDEALISTS	DIVERSE STRIVERS	NEW TRADITIONALISTS	CRITICAL COUNTERCULTURE
Social/justice	9	5	3	17	10	11	19
Global warming/environment	4	1	1	9	4	4	7
Politics	3	2	2	7	2	4	8
Health care	3	2	1	6	3	4	3
Community planning/development	2	1	1	5	2	3	4
Other	7	4	2	10	5	9	13
None/no answer	77	84	89	61	75	70	63

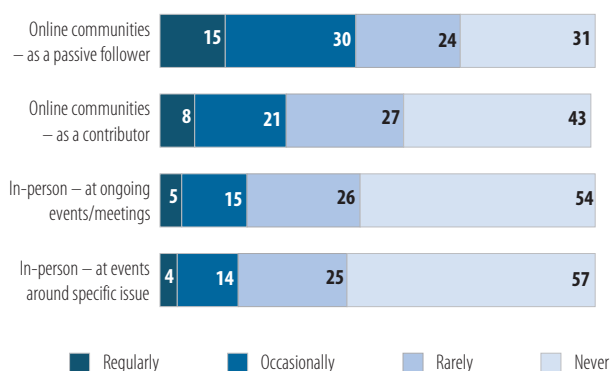
**Modes of engagement.** Survey participants were also asked how frequently they have been following or engaged in causes/issues in the past year in each of four specific ways. As digital natives, Millennials are more likely to be involved online than in person. More than four in ten say that in the past 12 months they have regularly (15%) or occasionally (30%) participated in online conversations about an issue or cause, **passively as a follower** (e.g., social media “liking” or responding to content), while close to three in ten regularly (8%) or occasionally (21%) participated in online conversations, **actively as a contributor** (in blogs or on social media content sharing).<sup>5</sup>

By comparison, one in five Millennials have participated regularly (5%) or occasionally (15%) in **ongoing events or meetings about a cause/issue** in the past 12 months (e.g., organized by a collective or interest group), with similar proportions doing so in the case of **in-person meetings organized around a particular issue** (e.g., protests, demonstrations, meetings).

The pattern of engagement across the Millennial generation is largely similar across the four modes of engagement. Educational attainment is only modestly related to the frequency of reported activity, while social values appear to be the most significant discriminator.

Consistent with the other questions in this section, Critical Counterculturists and Engaged Idealists are among the most active participants, while Lone Wolves and Bros & Brittanys the least so. But in this case, Diverse Strivers stand out as the most active of all in being regular or occasional participants in active online conversations (51%), and in-person events both ongoing (39%) and specific (36%). This may be a function of their interest in networking, and seeing such participation as valuable to their professional and/or personal development.

## How have you been actively engaged – past 12 months?



<sup>5</sup> Given the social desirability embedded in this type of question, the “regularly participate” response likely provides the most accurate indication of actual behaviour.

Those who rarely or never participated in these four modes of engagement were asked why they have not done so more often or at all (offering five possible reasons plus the opportunity to give others). In all cases, Millennials are most likely to say they are not interested or don't consider it worthwhile, followed by lack of time or it simply not being a priority for them.

A much smaller proportion indicate they haven't had opportunities to be more active (with this somewhat more evident of in-person events). Very few volunteered any additional reasons (totals exceed 100% because participants could and often did provide more than one reason). Diverse Strivers are more likely than other tribes to cite lack of time as the reason they are not more actively involved both online and in person.

**Other forms of engagement in social or political issues.** The survey also asked Millennials to identify (unprompted) any other ways (not already presented) in which they follow or engage in social or political issues, whether in their community or at a broader scale. One in ten (9%) responded affirmatively, mentioning such activities as discussions with friends/family/colleagues, social media, becoming informed/research, donations or volunteering. Across social value tribes, such activity is more widely reported by Critical Counterculturists (14%), Engaged Idealists (14%) and New Traditionalists (12%), and least evident among Lone Wolves (5%), Bros & Brittanys (7%) and Diverse Strivers (8%).

### Why not more actively engaged in issues/causes?

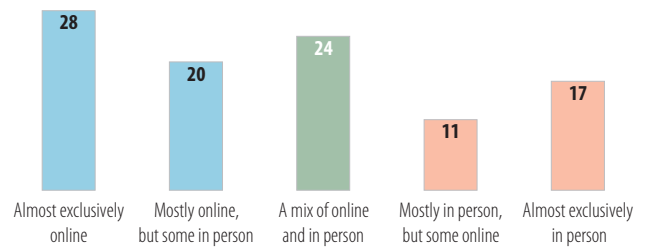
ISSUE/CAUSE	ONLINE: AS A PASSIVE FOLLOWER	ONLINE: AS AN ACTIVE CONTRIBUTOR	IN PERSON – ATTENDING ONGOING MEETINGS	IN PERSON – ATTENDING SPECIFIC EVENTS
Not interested/not worthwhile	60	56	49	50
Not a priority right now	31	36	32	32
Lack of time	31	31	41	39
Lack of opportunity	6	7	12	12
Did so previously/no longer able to	2	2	3	2
Other reasons	1	2	1	1

**Online versus in-person involvement.** How do Millennials' generally get involved in their community and participate in organizations, causes or issues? Overall, the balance clearly favours online connections, but many in this generation also value in-person involvement. Close to half say their involvement is exclusively (28%) or mostly (20%) online, compared with fewer than three in ten who say they would rather participate exclusively (17%) or mostly (11%) in person. The balance (24%) like a mix of online and in-person interaction.

Of note is the fact that, most (70%) Millennials say their current mode of involvement is the way they like it (i.e., their preference) rather than what they do out of necessity. This is the case regardless of the balance of their activity online versus in person.

The mode of community/issue involvement varies noticeably across social values tribes. It is Bros & Brittanys and Lone Wolves who are most heavily tilted toward online engagement (when they choose to do so), making up a majority in each group (with significant proportions saying they do so almost exclusively). A majority of Critical Counterculturists also engage online, but are not as likely to do so exclusively. In contrast, New Traditionalists are more likely to get involved in person (38%) than online (34%). Engaged Idealists and Diverse Strivers are closer to the generational average on this question, with the former more likely than average to fall into the most/exclusively in-person category. What doesn't change across tribes is the satisfaction level with the current mode being preferred rather than out of necessity.

### How do you generally engage with your community and issues?



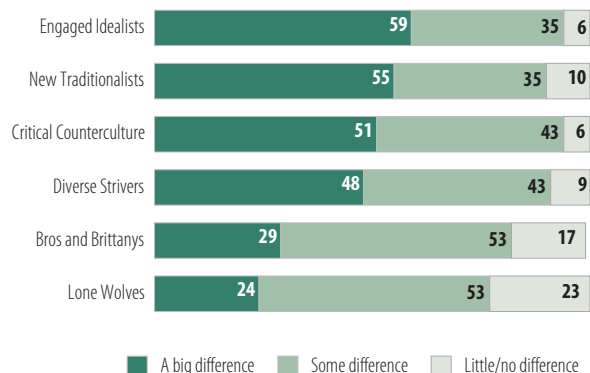
**Belief in collective action making a difference in solving community problems.** Active engagement may depend in part on how confident people feel that collective action can have a positive impact. Canadian Millennials as a whole express a moderate degree of agency. Four in ten (41%) believe that people working together as a group can make “a big difference” solving problems in their community, with a comparable proportion (45%) saying this can make “some” difference. Another one in ten (13%) are more cynical in maintaining that such efforts make “little or no” difference.

How Millennials answer this question depends in large part on their social values. Engaged Idealists are by far the most optimistic (59% say a big difference), followed closely by New Traditionalists (55%) and Critical Counterculturists (51%). By comparison, fewer than three in ten Lone Wolves (24%) or Bros & Brittanys (29%) share this view; these are the same tribes that demonstrate the least interest or activity in current events and issues.

Perspectives on this issue also vary more modestly by other characteristics. Belief in making a big difference is more evident among younger Millennials, those with at least some post-secondary education, Indigenous individuals, those with “other” ethnic backgrounds, and residents of the Prairie provinces. This view is least apt to be shared among Quebecers and ethnic Chinese.

## How much difference can people working together make in solving community problems?

By social values tribe





# Civic Engagement

This section addresses the theme of civic engagement, the extent to which and how Millennials are involved in civic life and the communities in which they live. Specific topics include: volunteer activity, charitable giving, membership in organizations and clubs, and social trust.

## Volunteering

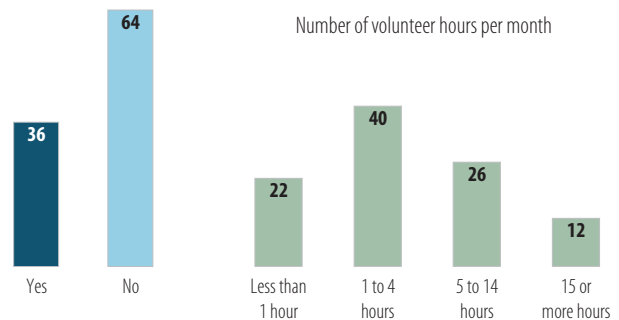
*Just over one-third of Millennials have volunteered in the past year, with most giving less than five hours of time per month. They are most likely motivated to give back to their community, but many also cite the value of personal or professional development. Many haven't volunteered because they lack the time, but some say no one has ever asked them or they don't know how to get involved.*

**Volunteering effort.** One important type of civic engagement is volunteering one's time for an organization, group or cause. Just over one-third (36%) of Millennials report having done unpaid volunteer work for an organization in the past 12 months. Of this group, the extent of involvement varies, based on the numbers of hours of volunteer work per month. Six in ten say they have given small amounts of their time – less than an hour per month (22%) or between 1 and 4 hours per month (40%). One in ten (12%) have made a more substantial commitment, giving 15 or more hours per month.

Across the generation, the likelihood of doing any volunteer work over the past year varies in some predictable ways. Most significantly it is linked to education: Millennials with a graduate degree (50%) are twice as likely as those without a high school diploma (25%) to report volunteer work. It is also more apt to be the case for younger Millennials, current post-secondary students, and those who are not yet parents, while least evident among Quebecers, and those who identify as white or Indigenous.

Social values also make a big difference: Volunteer activity is reported by half of Engaged Idealists (51%) and New Traditionalists (51%), followed closely by Diverse Strivers (47%); it is much less a common activity among Bros & Brittanys (22%) and Lone Wolves (21%).

## Volunteered your time in past 12 months?



Among Millennials who have done any volunteer work over the past year, the time commitment is more evenly distributed, but there are some notable exceptions to the general pattern of engagement. Some of the groups least apt to do any volunteer work are also the ones most likely to put in 15 plus volunteer hours per month, notably Quebecers, Millennials with less education and lower household incomes, and Lone Wolves. This also applies to those whose ethnic background is South Asian or “other,” and New Traditionalists. Millennial volunteers most apt to put in a token effort (less than 1 hour per month) include those employed full-time, ethnic Chinese and Bros & Brittanys.

**Type of volunteer activity.** Millennials who report volunteering their time in the past 12 months have done so in a variety of ways. The most common include organizing or supervising events and activities (37% of this group, or 13% of all Millennials); canvassing or fundraising (25%); and teaching, educating or mentoring (24%). Some other forms of volunteering encompass “white collar” activities such as serving on a committee or board, communications (research, writing) and office work, while others get involved in hands-on types of support such as delivering or serving food, maintenance and repair, coaching sports, and providing health care supports (e.g., elder or child care).

The type of volunteer activity varies somewhat across social values tribes. Engaged Idealists (the most active volunteers) are especially likely to report organizing events, teaching or mentoring (along with New Traditionalists), serving on a board or committee (along with Critical Counterculturists) and doing communications work. Critical Counterculturists are the tribe most apt to be helping with office work (bookkeeping, administrative), while Bros & Brittany are most prominent in coaching or refereeing sports and recreation activities.

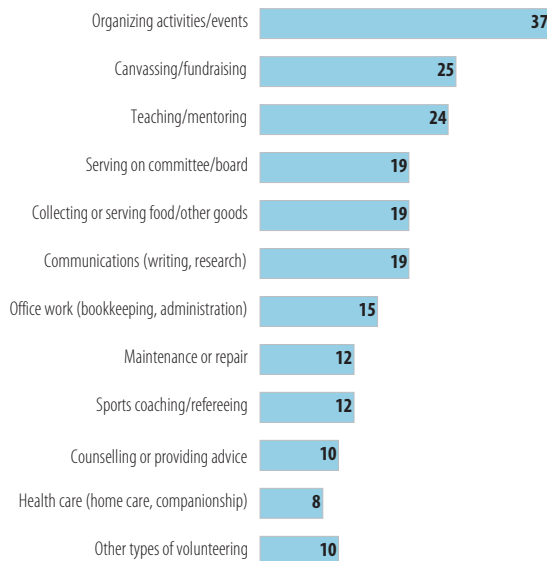
**Reasons for volunteering.** Millennials give a range of reasons for why they have volunteered over the past year, and they can be categorized into two broad types. Most common are reasons pertaining to making a contribution or because of an obligation. Included are the desire to give back, because they or someone else has been affected by the issue or cause (e.g., a disease like cancer), because they have been asked by a friend or someone else to help, because family or friends are also volunteering, and to fulfill a religious obligation.

The other category of reasons for volunteering pertains to furthering one’s own development and growth. This includes achieving a sense of accomplishment, using one’s skills and experiences, exploring one’s own strengths, networking and meeting people, and improving one’s health or well-being.

The range of reasons for volunteering is evident across all parts of this generation, with some variation. Making a contribution/giving back is most widely cited by older, more educated Millennials, and women, while networking benefits are more apt to be cited by younger individuals, current students and immigrants, and ethnic Chinese.

## Types of volunteer activity

Those volunteering in past 12 months



## Reasons for volunteering

Those volunteering in past 12 months

TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION/ SUPPORT A CAUSE	
Make a contribution/give back	55
You/someone has been affected by issue/cause (e.g., cancer)	32
Asked by friend to volunteer	26
Family/friends already volunteer	24
Support a particular cause	24
Fulfill religious obligation	11
FOR PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
Sense of accomplishment	47
Use experiences and skills	41
Explore personal strengths	25
Network/meet people	24
Improve job opportunities	24
Improve well-being or health	21



Across tribes, Critical Counterculturists are the most likely of all groups to emphasize making a contribution (77%) and supporting a particular cause (63%). Engaged Idealists are the most apt to mention making a contribution, gaining a sense of accomplishment, using their skills and experience, and networking, while it is mostly New Traditionalists who volunteer to fulfill religious obligations (38%).

**Reasons for not volunteering.** Those who have not volunteered in the past 12 months (64% of the Millennial generation) give a number of reasons for not doing so, which fall within a few broad themes:

- The most common response is a **lack of time or availability** (53% say they did not have time, and 22% mention they couldn't make a long-term commitment). These reasons are most commonly cited by more established individuals (employed, parents, more education and income), those with Chinese or "other" ethnic backgrounds, as well as Engaged Idealists and New Traditionalists.
- The second biggest type of reason is a perceived **lack of opportunity**: 35 percent say they haven't volunteered because no one asked them, and another 23 percent say they didn't know how to get involved. Not knowing how to get involved is emphasized by younger Millennials and students, as well as South Asians and Critical Counterculturists. Men and self-employed Millennials are among those most likely to say they were never asked to volunteer.
- One-quarter (24%) indicate a **lack of interest** in volunteering. This group is most apt to include men, residents of Atlantic Canada and Quebec, ethnic Chinese, Lone Wolves and Bros & Brittany.
- A similar proportion mentions **external barriers** in the form of financial costs/affordability (11%), health limitations (11%) and lack of available child care (1%). Health barriers are most common among women, those with the least education and income, and Indigenous individuals.
- One in six (14%) say they would **prefer to give money** instead of time. Predictably, this reason is most apt to come from Millennials who are employed full-time and in the top income bracket.

### *What do you get personally out of the volunteer work that you do?*

For me, what I get out of volunteering is a satisfaction that I'm doing something that I know I love and that I'm passionate about, so for example, when I tutor I know that education and promoting higher learning and reaching someone's full potential has been something that's made a difference in my life. – Diverse Striver (female, 24, Ontario)

I don't have that much volunteer experience, but I have done some volunteering through my university to participate in orientation week and the planning of that, which is very enjoyable for me.

– Bro & Brittany (female, 22, Nova Scotia)

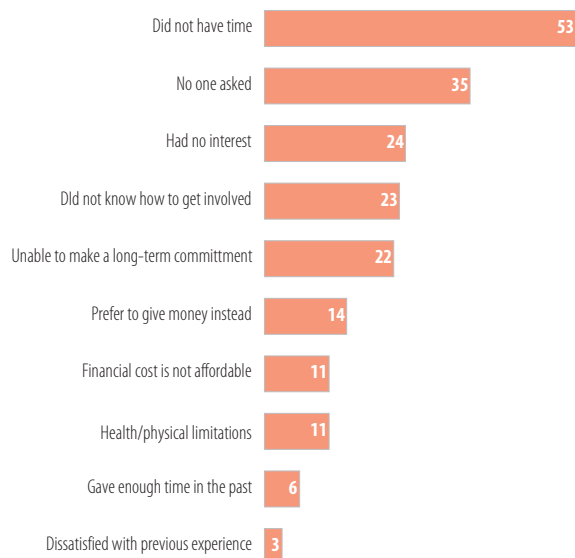
I get a great satisfaction for helping and giving back to the world.

– Diverse Striver (female, 22, Ontario)

With the economic situation the way it is, some of us in my generation are having to volunteer to get the kind of experience we need to get into the careers that we're in school for. – Engaged Idealist (female, 31, Ontario)

### Reasons for not volunteering

Those not volunteering in past 12 months



- One in ten (9%) cite **previous experience with volunteering** as the reason for not doing so this past year (gave enough time in the past, dissatisfaction with previous experience). This type of reason is most apt to be given by Millennials of Chinese and South Asian backgrounds, and Diverse Strivers.

## Benchmark Comparisons

How does volunteer activity among Millennials compare with that for older generations in Canada, based on results to the same questions on the 2013 General Social Survey?

**Volunteer activity in the previous 12 months.** The incidence of volunteering in the past 12 months is notably stable across generations (37% for Millennials aged 15 to 34, 37% for Gen-Xers, 35% among Boomers). Millennial volunteers are somewhat more likely than Gen-Xers to put in at least 5 hours per month (57% versus 54%), but trail behind Boomers (62%).

**Reasons for volunteering.** Millennials are more likely than their older counterparts to volunteer because their friends are doing it, to network, for job opportunities and to explore their strengths. They are less apt to do so because someone they know has been personally affected (e.g., by a disease), and to improve their health and well-being. These differences are modest, with the exception of seeking job opportunities.

**Reasons for not volunteering.** Millennials who have not volunteered in the previous 12 months are more likely than older generations to say this is because no one asked them, because they did not know how to do so, and because they have no time for it. They are less apt to give as reasons health limitations, inability to make a long-term commitment to volunteering, and a preference to give money instead of time.

## Charitable giving

*Two-thirds of Millennials have made donated money or goods in the past year, although relatively few have given more than \$300. Charitable giving is tied to household income, but also social values, with New Traditionalists among the most generous. Online contributions are the most common, but many have also given through workplace and charity events, and in response to in-person appeals.*

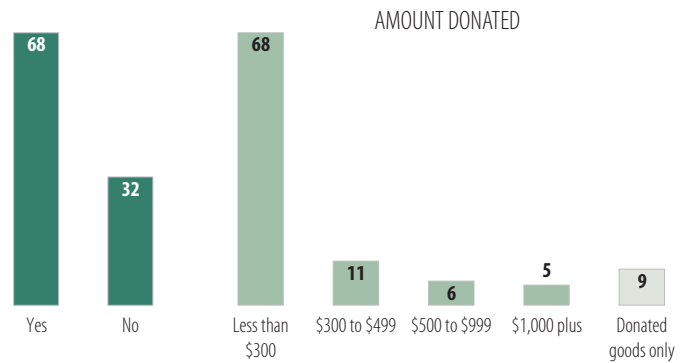
**Charitable donations in past 12 months.** Two in three (68%) Millennials across Canada say they have donated money or goods to an organization or charity in the past 12 months. Of this group, most (68%) have given less than \$300, with only one in ten (11%) reporting contributions of \$500 or more. A comparable proportion (9%) say they have donated only goods over the past year.

As would be expected, charitable giving is partly a function of household income, as well as education (the two being closely linked). Incidence of donations are reported by almost eight in ten (78%) Millennials earning \$100K or more, but also by a majority (57%) of those earning less than \$30K. Individuals without a high school diploma (26%) are the ones most apt to say they have donated only goods in the past year.

Across the country, giving is more widespread among women (72% versus 63% of men) and residents of Alberta (75%), while lowest in Quebec (62%). In no identifiable group, however, do fewer than half of Millennials report donating money or goods in the past year. Donating money or goods is only modestly related to giving of one's time as a volunteer (it is reported by 74% of those who have volunteered over the past year, compared with 66% of those who have not done so).

Across social values tribes, New Traditionalists are the most generous, with 80 percent having donated something, and 20 percent of this group giving \$1,000 or more (much of which may have been directed to their religious denomination). Engaged Idealists and Critical Counterculturists are close behind (77% and 75%, respectively, have donated something), but few in these tribes have donated more than \$500 in the past year. Just over half of Bros & Brittanys (64%) and Lone Wolves (57%) have made contributions, and only three percent of these groups have given amounts of \$1,000 or more (in comparison to one in ten who say they have donated goods only).

### Charitable donations in past 12 months?



**Method of giving.** Those who have made contributions over the past year were asked about the methods by which they did so (from a list provided, along with space to add other options). Given the digital life of Millennials, it is no surprise that a majority (54%) have made contributions via online channels (including crowdfunding websites, by text and email). At the same time, just as large a proportion have made donations offline in various venues, including workplace events (26%), on the street or the doorstep (22%), while attending charity events (22%) and elsewhere (9%).

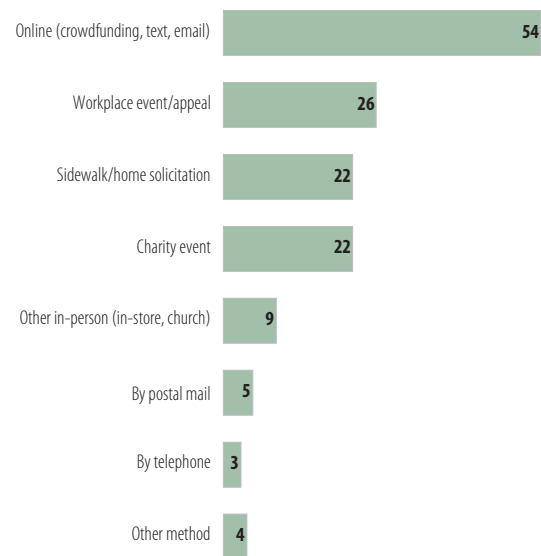
By comparison, very few report making charitable contributions by postal mail (5%) or in response to a telephone solicitation (3%).

Online donations are common across the generation, but most widespread among Millennials with higher levels of education and income, and ethnic Chinese (61%), as well as among Engaged Idealists (56%) and Critical Counterculturists (59%).

Engaged Idealists and Diverse Strivers are the tribes most apt to give at charity events, while New Traditionalists are overrepresented among those who give in-person (e.g., at their place of worship).

## Method of making donation

Those donating money/goods in past 12 months



## Benchmark Comparisons

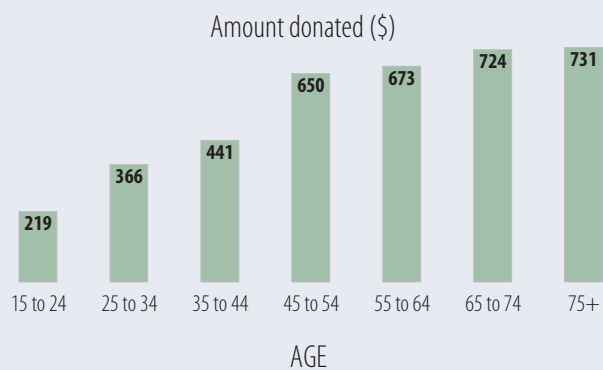
How does volunteer activity among Millennials compare with that for older generations in Canada, based on results to the same questions on the 2013 General Social Survey?

**Charitable giving.** The incidence of charitable giving in the past 12 months is somewhat lower among Millennials (aged 21 to 34) (72%) in comparison with Gen-Xers (79%), Boomers (81%) and Elders (82%).

The average annual amount donated increases steadily along with age. In 2012, Canadian Millennials 25 to 34 gave on average \$366 to charitable organizations and causes, which is about half the amount given by those aged 65 and over.

## Average amount donated to charitable causes

Those donating in past 12 months, by age cohort\*



\* 2013 General Social Survey (Statistics Canada)

## Group membership

*Fewer than half have participated in local community organizations or informal groups in the past year, most commonly unions/professional associations and sports/recreation clubs. Group membership rises along with educational attainment and employment, and is most evident among ethnic Asians and those social values tribes most actively involved in other forms of civic engagement.*

Another form of civic engagement entails membership or participation in groups and organizations, which may be formally constituted, or simply groups of individuals who get together regularly for activities or discussion. Among Canadian Millennials, such activity is common but by no means the norm. Fewer than half (46%) report to have participated in any of nine broad types of organizations/groups in the past 12 months (participants were also given the chance to identify other types of groups not specified in the survey). Among those with such involvement, 30 percent indicate involvement in only one type of group, with the remainder (16%) mentioning two or more (the average number of groups is 1.5).

Across the nine types of groups, Millennials are most likely to belong/participate in unions or professional associations (18%), and sports or recreational leagues/clubs (14%). Smaller proportions are involved with religious groups, local community associations (including school and neighbourhood groups), arts and culture organizations, political parties or groups around political causes, and youth-focused organizations (e.g., Big Brothers/Big Sisters, YMCA).

Overall group participation or membership varies across the generation, most notably by educational attainment: Participation in at least one group is reported by fewer than three in ten (28%) without a high school diploma, rising to 65 percent among those with a graduate degree (half of whom belong to more than one group). Participation is also more widespread among those employed (versus looking or not looking for work), as well as among residents in Western Canada (51%, mostly with with religious and sports organizations), with membership lowest in Quebec (40%).

Country of birth and ethnicity also make a difference. Immigrants (51%) are somewhat more likely than native-born (46%) Millennials to belong to at least one group. And such activity is most evident among those ethnically Chinese

## Group member or participant in past 12 months

ORGANIZATION/GROUP TYPE	%
Union or political association	18
Sports or recreational club/league	14
Religious group	9
School group/neighbourhood/civic/community association	8
Cultural/educational or hobby organization	7
Arts organization or collective	4
Political party or group	4
Youth organization (Big Brothers, YMCA)	4
Other type	3
<hr/>	
More than one group	16
One group	30
No group	54

(notably unions or professional associations) and South Asian (religious, arts, political and youth-oriented groups). South Asians are also the most likely to have participated in more than one group (26%).

Social values are also a significant factor in understanding Millennials participation in groups and organizations, consistent with other forms of political and civic engagement. In this case, it is New Traditionalists who are the most active (68% belong to at least one group), largely because of their involvement with religious communities (38%) but not exclusively (24% of this tribe belong to more than one group).

Majorities of Engaged Idealists (56%), Diverse Strivers (54%) and Critical Counterculturists (52%) belong to at least one group, with the group profiles generally similar (although it is Critical Counterculturists who are most apt to be involved with politics). In contrast, comparatively few Bros & Brittanys (38%) and Lone Wolves (30%) report having participated in any group or organization in the past 12 months, and no more than one in ten from either tribe mentions more than one category.

## Benchmark Comparisons

The survey question about group membership was based closely on the 2013 General Social Survey, providing the basis for comparing Millennials' participation with that of older generations in Canada. Overall participation levels are notably similar across generations, in terms of the likelihood of reporting membership in one or more groups.

In terms of the group type, there is variation in a predictable pattern: Millennials are more likely than Gen-Xers or Boomers to report involvement in sports and recreation, schools and community groups, and youth-oriented organizations, and somewhat less apt to belong to unions or professional associations, and cultural or educational groups.

## Social trust

*One-third of Millennials believe most people can be trusted, a smaller proportion than older generations. Trust in others is most closely linked to higher levels of education and with related social values tribes. Immigrants and South Asians in particular are among the most optimistic about recovering a lost wallet or purse, with this view least apt to be shared by Quebecers.*

Beyond involvement in specific activities and organizations, civic engagement also encompasses a broader sense of belonging to one's community and acceptance by others. This is often what is described as "social capital," which refers to the vibrancy of social networks, and the extent to which there is trust and reciprocity within a community and among individuals. There is ample evidence that high levels of such reciprocity, trust and connection are not simply 'feel good' notions, but key ingredients to making communities productive, healthy and safe. This study included two well-established measures of social trust in other people.

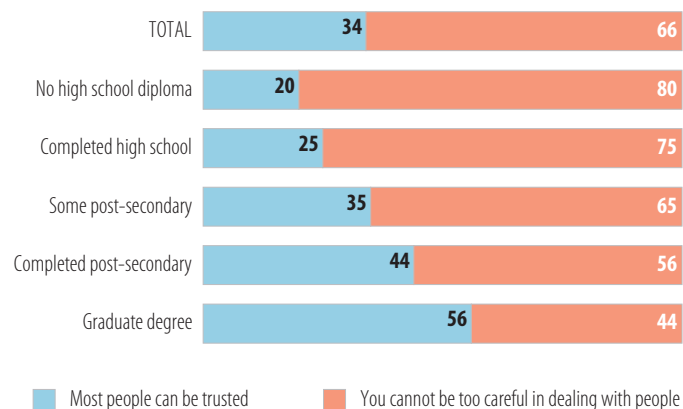
**General trust in other people.** One in three (34%) Millennials ascribes to the view that "most people can be trusted," with two-thirds (64%) saying instead "you cannot be too careful in dealing with people."

As with other results presented in this study, perspectives on this question are closely related to educational attainment in a linear fashion: trust in others is the view of only 20 percent who do not have a high school diploma, more than doubling to 56 percent among those with a graduate degree.

Along with education, a similar pattern can be observed with the related factors of household income, income adequacy and employment status. As well, general trust is more evident among men (38% versus 30% among women), Millennials without children (38%), ethnic Chinese (44%), B.C. residents (42%, compared with 25% in Quebec), and those who belong to one (39%) or more than one (47%) group/organization. There are no differences across age sub-cohorts, or between native-born and immigrants to Canada. Across social values tribes, general trust in others is most widespread among the two most educated groups: Critical Counterculturists (53%) and Engaged Idealists (47%), while least evident among Bros & Brittanys (28%) and Lone Wolves (29%).

### General trust in other people

By educational attainment



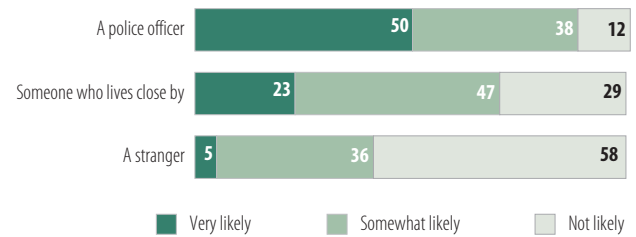
**Recovering a lost wallet or purse.** One of the most well-known indicators of social capital measures people's confidence in having a lost wallet or purse containing \$200 returned by each of several types of individuals (someone who lives close by, a police officer, and a stranger).

Predictably, Millennials' confidence in recovering a lost wallet with money inside varies significantly depending on who might find it. They are most likely to say it is very likely that their lost wallet/purse would be returned by a police officer (50%), with about half as many anticipating this outcome if it was found by someone living close by (23%). Very few (5%) expect they would ever see it if recovered by a stranger.

Trust in recovery from a **police officer** is comparatively strong across the generation, but rises modestly with educational attainment and household income. It is also stronger among immigrants (55% versus 49% among native-born), and residents in western Canada (58%, compared with 50% in Ontario and only 38% in Quebec). New Traditionalists (58%) are the most trusting in police, with Lone Wolves (44%) least apt to share this view.

Confidence in recovering a lost wallet or purse from **someone living close by** follows a similar pattern. A very likely return is most apt to be expected by Millennials with more education and income, as well as by immigrants (27%) and South Asians (29%), and residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (32% versus only 16% in Quebec).

## How likely are you to recover a lost wallet/purse from ... ?



Among social values tribes, it is Diverse Strivers (30%), Engaged Idealists (28%) and New Traditionalists (27%) who express the most confidence in recovering a lost wallet or purse from a neighbour, compared with Critical Counterculturists (18%) and Lone Wolves (14% versus 38% in this group who believe this is not at all likely).

Finally, trust in a **stranger's** good deeds is low across all Millennials. In this case, education and income do not make much of a difference in saying a recovery is very likely, but those with higher levels are less apt to conclude it is not at all likely. South Asians (14%) and Diverse Strivers (10%) are the groups most apt to believe it is very likely that a stranger would return their lost wallet or purse, with Quebecers (72%), Bros & Brittanys (65%) and Lone Wolves (68%) among those most likely to believe this is not a likely outcome.

### Benchmark Comparisons

The same measures of social trust have been asked on other surveys in recent years, providing the basis for comparison across generations (although direct comparison with the current survey is not possible because of differences in survey mode).

**General Social Survey 2013.** Results from this national survey show that Millennials are less trusting than Gen-Xers or Boomers, both on general trust and expectation of recovering a lost wallet or purse, most notably in the case of someone living close by (with Boomers the most confident in all cases).

**Focus Canada 2012.** The results from this Environics Institute national survey also shows lower levels of trust among Millennials with respect to recovering a lost wallet or purse, but only a small difference in terms of general trust in others. This survey also found notable differences in social trust by education level and by region, with the lowest trust levels in Quebec.



## Appendix

# Social Values Across Generations

## Introduction

This study focused on the social values of Canada's Millennial generation, and how this can help us better understand these individuals as they navigate adulthood in such areas as life goals, careers and engagement with their community. What is also relevant is how the social values of Millennials as a whole compare with those of previous generations, and in particular their Boomer parents and the Gen-Xers just ahead of them, both today and when they were themselves young. Are the social values most prominent among Millennials today largely the same as those driving previous generations of youth (reflecting this particular life stage), or is there something distinctive about Millennials that marks them as new, which may provide important signals about how society is evolving?

This question was addressed through secondary analysis of existing data on the social values of Canadians from the ongoing research program conducted by the Environics research company. The data are drawn from:

- A national survey of Canadians conducted in 2016, from which a comparison of current social values can be made across generations (Millennials, Gen-Xers, Boomers, Elders); and
- Earlier surveys conducted over the past three decades which measured the social values of Boomers and Gen-Xers when they were themselves young adults.<sup>1</sup>

## Results

The analysis reveals that Millennials in many respects share much in common with the two previous generations of Canadians. There are predictable life cycle differences, as young adults tend to be more oriented toward exploration and risk taking, the pursuit of novelty, status recognition, and new technology. But in terms of life goals, career aspirations, and community engagement, Millennials do not appear to differ all that much from their parents and grandparents.

Where Canadian Millennials do stand out from previous generations when they were young is in their adaptability to complexity, having a flexible definition of family, embracing multiculturalism and a global consciousness (while also more xenophobic), and being more accepting of authority.

In the face of challenging economic climate, Millennials are notably optimistic about their lives generally and their long term financial prospects. At the same they are also more concerned about their finances than Gen-Xers were at their age (a legacy of the last financial crisis), and perhaps for this reason are also more focused on the principle of saving and being discriminating consumers. Finally, Millennials as a whole are more likely than the two previous generations to lack life goals and to feel alienated from society, an emerging social trend most clearly evident among Lone Wolves.

The results reveal three broad categories that show how the social values of Millennials compare with those of previous generations in different ways (definitions of the social values identified are provided below). This analysis identifies the notable differences in social values across generations based on the available data, but does not address the potential meaning or significance of these patterns (this may be the topic of future Environics publications).

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<sup>1</sup> This analysis included only those social values constructs that have been measured consistently over the time periods covered, which is a subset of the constructs included in the 2016 research. As well, the comparisons are based on comparing each generation at ages 27 to 36 (a subset of the full cohort), based on what data are available.

## 1. Social values on which Millennials stand out that have consistently reflected young adulthood

There are a number of social values on which Millennials today are clearly stronger or weaker than older Canadians, which largely reflect their stage of life as being young adults establishing themselves in the world. That is, these values that also stood out for Boomers and Gen-Xers in a similar way when they were young adults.

This includes a number of social values on which Millennials are notably stronger than older generations that typify the coming-of-age of youth, such as ***Pursuit of Intensity, Penchant for Risk, Pursuit of Novelty, Acceptance of Violence, Sexual Permissiveness, Pursuit of Originality, and Personal Creativity.***

Millennials are also weaker than older Canadians on the values of ***Duty*** and ***Religiosity***, both today, and reflecting a generation difference that applied to Gen-Xers and Boomers when they themselves were young.

## 2. Social values on which Millennials stand out, but less so than for previous generations of youth

This category includes a number of values that in the past young adults have been stronger or weaker than older Canadians, but where Millennials appear to be less different than Gen-Xers and Boomers were when they were young. An example is ***Rejection of Authority***: This is a value in which youth have typically been stronger than older Canadians, but Millennials do not stand out as much as Gen-Xers or Boomers (that is, there is a smaller gap than in the past between youth and older Canadians).

There is another set of social values that in the past have been weaker among young adults than older Canadians, but where the gap is now smaller when it comes to Millennials. This category includes the values ***Financial Concern, Utilitarian Consumerism, Discriminating Consumerism*** and ***Saving on Principle.*** These are values on which Millennials today are weaker than their elders, but where the gap between young and old is smaller than when Gen-Xers were young adults; this may well reflect the lasting impact of the 2008-09 financial crisis and resulting recession, when Millennials were coming of age.

A similar pattern can be observed with three other social values, ***Fulfillment through Work, National Pride*** and ***Community Involvement.*** These are values in which young Boomers and Gen-Xers were noticeably weaker than older Canadians, but today this generation gap is now smaller; that is, Millennials are more likely than the two previous generations of youth to be closer to their elders in the emphasis given to these values.

## 3. Social values on which Millennials stand out most clearly from previous generations

On some social values, Millennials clearly stand out from older Canadians in a way that is not a function of youth, and which reflects a departure from the pattern observed with Boomers and Gen-Xers when they were young adults.

In particular, Millennials are stronger on the values of ***Adaptability to Complexity, Flexible Families*** and ***Anomie and Aimlessness*** (this last case reflecting the emergence of the Lone Wolves tribe, which does not have a clear pedigree from Boomer or Gen-X tribes).

Not surprisingly, Millennials are somewhat more likely than their elders to be strong on the value ***Enthusiasm for Technology***, although there is less of a generation gap on this value than one might expect (gender appears to play a stronger role, with men much more predominant on this value than women in each generation). At the same time, Millennials today are also more likely than Gen-Xers were as youth to be strong on the contrary value of ***Technology Anxiety***, which measures concerns about the broader social and ethical implications of advancing technology, in comparison with the personal benefits.

Finally, Millennials stand out from older Canadians today in being stronger on the value of ***Multiculturalism*** (in part reflecting the ethnically diverse composition of this cohort), and much more so than Gen-Xers did when they were young (there is no data available for Boomers). At the same time, Millennials today are similar to older generations on the values of ***Global Consciousness*** and ***Xenophobia***, and in both cases place comparatively greater emphasis on these values than previous generations did in their youth.

## Social Values Definitions

- **Acceptance of Violence** – view violence as an inevitable fact of life that must be accepted with a certain degree of indifference; also believe violence can be both cathartic and persuasive.
- **Adaptability to Complexity** – tendency to adapt easily to the uncertainties of modern life, and not to feel threatened by the changes and complexities of society; view this complexity as a learning experience and source of opportunity.
- **Anomie and Aimlessness** – the feeling of having no goals in life, and alienation from society; having the impression of being cut off from what's happening.
- **Community Involvement** – interest in what's happening in one's neighbourhood, city, town or region; reflects activity ranging from reading weekly community newspapers to involvement in community organizations.
- **Discriminating Consumerism** – tendency to actively adopt defensive strategies to shield oneself from the artificial needs created the consumer society, and to see product information before making purchases.
- **Duty** – the belief that duties and obligations to others should be fulfilled before turning to one's personal pleasures and interests.
- **Enthusiasm for Technology** – a favourable bias toward technology. Fascination with the possibilities offered by modern technology, and confidence in the capacity of science and technology to better their lives.
- **Financial Concern** – the feeling of insecurity about one's financial future, particularly in old age, and of being personally responsible in this area.
- **Flexible Families** – willingness to accept nontraditional definitions of family (such as common law and same-sex marriages), and the belief that family is defined more by emotional links than legal or institutional formalities.
- **Fulfillment through Work** – a need to invest one's work life with meaning and to feel that one's work is useful to others and has some social value.
- **Global Consciousness** – considering oneself a "citizen of the world" first and foremost over being a citizen of one's country; feeling an affinity to peoples in all countries.
- **Multiculturalism** – openness toward diverse cultures, ethnic communities and immigrants; a belief that ethnic groups should maintain their culture identities, and that others should seek to learn about them
- **National Pride** – defining one's identity through national pride, and believing that Canada should hold a strong position in the world.
- **Penchant for risk** – the desire to take risks to get what one wants, and engaging in dangerous or forbidden activities because of the emotional high.
- **Personal creativity** – the desire to use one's imagination and creative talents in daily life, both at work and at play.
- **Personal Optimism** – general optimism about one's future personal outcomes (including financial well-being).
- **Pursuit of intensity** – the desire to live intensely and be guided less by reason and ideology than by one's emotions, feeling and intuition (and to continually experience new sensations).
- **Pursuit of novelty** – an active desire to discover new products, services and experiences, and to integrate them into the routine of daily life.
- **Pursuit of Originality** – need to feel different from others; a preoccupation with demonstrating one's individuality through original touches.
- **Rejection of Authority** – a belief in not playing by the rules, that persons or organizations in positions of authority should not be deferred to at all times; the view that young people should be taught to question rather than obey authority.
- **Religiosity** – placing great importance on religion as a guide to life, including affiliation with an organized religious faith.
- **Saving on Principle** – the tendency to save and accumulate money, motivated by a moral impulse for future security.
- **Sexual Permissiveness** – tendency to be sexually permissive regarding oneself and others; fidelity within marriage or between partners and the prohibition against premarital sex are of little importance.
- **Technology Anxiety** – threatened by technological changes and having concerns about the ethical and moral dimensions towards which science is advancing.
- **Utilitarian Consumerism** – tendency to base purchase decisions on utilitarian rather than aesthetic considerations.
- **Xenophobia** – the sense that too much immigration threatens the purity of the country; that immigrants should set aside their cultural backgrounds and blend into the dominant culture.



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