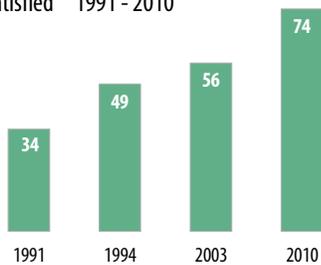


National Unity and Governance

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT. The media is full of stories about how governments are not meeting their obligations, letting the public down, and overtaxing hardworking families. Yet at a broad level, Canadians are expressing a record high degree of confidence in the underlying system of government. Three-quarters say they are very (19%) or somewhat (55%) satisfied with the Canadian system of government, up 18 points from 2003 and more than double the proportion expressing this view in 1991.

This trend has taken place across the country, but most significantly in Alberta (75% satisfied, up 33 points since 2003), reversing a previous downward trend. Satisfaction levels now range from a high of 82 percent in Manitoba to a low of 70 percent in Quebec and B.C.

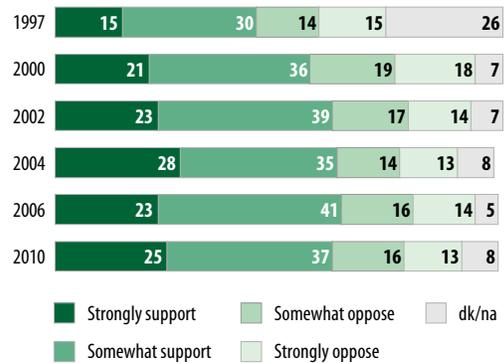
Satisfaction with Canadian system of government
Satisfied 1991 - 2010



PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. The public's underlying confidence in the system of government helps to explain the lack of any growing groundswell of support for changing the system through proportional representation (which failed to win voter approval in B.C., Ontario and PEI in recent years). A majority (62%) of Canadians continue to support proportional representation in principle, but this level of support is essentially unchanged since 2002.

Since 2006, support has increased marginally in eastern and central Canada, while declining more noticeably in the west (especially in Saskatchewan where only 47 percent now favour the concept (down 14 points). Support is now highest in Quebec and among Canadians under 45 years of age. Strong opposition is most noticeable in Vancouver.

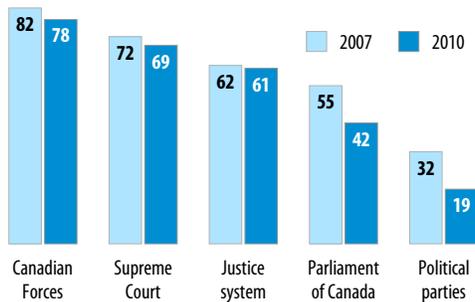
Support for proportional representation
1997 - 2010



CONFIDENCE IN INSTITUTIONS. How much confidence do Canadians have today in the country's major governing institutions? In some cases, public confidence is strong and reasonably stable, in others it has diminished noticeably. In the first case, Canadians continue to express strong confidence in the country's military – the Canadian Forces (78%, down 4 points since 2007), the Supreme Court of Canada (69%, down 3) and the country's justice system (61%, down 1). In contrast, fewer than half (42%) now have a similar level of confidence in the Parliament (down 13 points), and fewer than half as many (19%) are now confident in the country's political parties (down 13).

Confidence in the justice system and Supreme Court is highest in Ontario and lowest in B.C., and in both cases also increases along with socio-economic status. Confidence in the Canadian Forces is now highest in Saskatchewan (91%) and lowest in Quebec (65%). Declining confidence in Parliament and political parties is consistent across the country.

Confidence in institutions
2007 - 2010



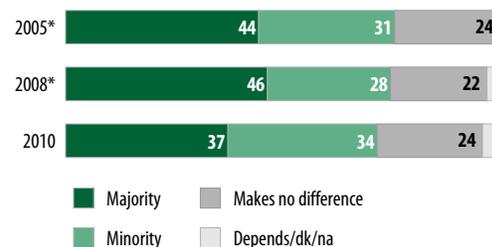
MINORITY GOVERNMENT. Canada has had a minority government since 2004, the longest stretch in the country's history. Canadians are currently divided about whether this is in the best interest of the country, although they appear to be growing somewhat more comfortable with minority Parliaments over the past few years. Currently, one-third (34%) say minority government is better for the country, compared with 37 percent who prefer to see a majority (another 24% say it makes no difference either way). This current split reflects a more divided perspective than in 2005 and 2008, when greater proportions endorsed majority governments (44% and 46%, respectively).

Across the country, support for minority governments is strongest in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while support for majority governments is most evident in Ontario, Alberta and B.C. By federal party preference, NDP supporters are most likely to endorse minority governments (47%), while Conservative supporters are strongest on a majority (51%).

Do Canadians believe it matters which political party is in power in Ottawa? Two-thirds (64%) believe it does, and this view has strengthened since 2004 (when only 56% expressed this view). Belief in the difference between parties is strongest in B.C. and Toronto (69% each), as well as among Canadians aged 18 to 29, and those with the most education and income, while least evident in Atlantic Canada (53%). Supporters of the federal Liberal and Conservative parties are much more likely to share this view than those who support the Green Party or remain undecided.

Minority or majority government better for country?

2005 - 2010



* Tracking data from surveys conducted by Environics Research Group for CBC

GOVERNMENT SPENDING PRIORITIES. Canadians' opinions about where the federal government should be spending more and spending less are largely as they have been over the past decade. But, since 2008, the priority placed on spending more has declined across most areas, signalling a reduced appetite or expectation for growing government expenditures (possibly a reaction to the recent stimulus package and/or concerns about growing deficits). As before, the public is most likely to look for higher spending in such areas as reducing child poverty (78%), education (70%), health care (69%), social services for the elderly (69%) and environmental protection (62%) – all of which are down four to nine percentage points (except for social services for the elderly, which is unchanged).

The bottom of the list continues to include such areas as domestic security (28% say government spending should increase), national defence (26%), the justice system (24%) and foreign aid (19%); in these areas, comparable proportions would like to see reduced spending, while the majority/plurality advocate stable funding.

The areas showing the greatest *decline* in public support for increased spending since 2008 include the justice system (down 15 points), child care (down 12) and energy development (down 11). Areas showing no change in support for increased spending include Employment Insurance (30%, up 1), arts and culture (30%, up 1), and support to farmers (51%, down 1). Support for increased spending in some areas peaked in 2008 (e.g., transportation/infrastructure, job creation, assistance to cities), and has been declining since mid-decade in other areas (national defence, foreign aid, domestic security, social services for the poor).

Federal government spending priorities

Spend more 1994 - 2010

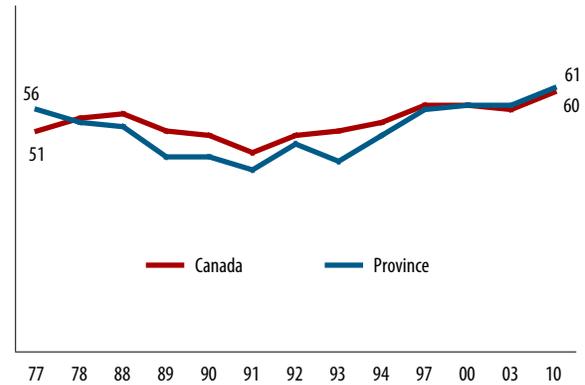
	1994	1999	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2010
Reducing child poverty	–	70	76	78	79	83	78	82	78
Education	56	72	73	74	80	79	71	77	70
Health care	41	75	80	77	81	81	80	78	69
Social services for elderly	48	60	64	66	66	68	69	69	69
Environmental protection	38	50	58	63	67	71	74	70	62
Programs for poorer regions	46	53	60	66	65	67	60	65	60
Job creation programs	57	58	55	54	55	64	48	66	58
Social services for the poor	41	53	56	59	61	81	60	60	55
Transportation/infrastructure	16	23	54	56	60	57	57	60	54
Support to farmers	28	42	48	51	54	52	47	52	51
Child care	42	50	52	54	52	60	52	62	50
Energy development	24	30	49	57	58	63	55	57	46
Canadian sovereignty in coastal waters	–	–	–	–	–	–	46	40	38
Assistance to cities	–	–	36	43	40	40	37	43	34
Employment Insurance	–	35	30	28	30	33	25	30	31
Aboriginal peoples	–	17	21	27	25	30	25	32	30
Arts and culture	15	18	23	24	23	24	24	29	30
Domestic security	–	–	–	–	38	38	38	30	28
National defence	14	28	47	53	50	44	38	30	26
Justice system	20	25	30	30	34	39	35	39	24
Foreign aid	–	–	17	36	34	27	21	22	19

BILINGUALISM. Bilingualism has been an official federal policy for more than 40 years, and while it has had limited impact on many parts of the country, Canadians' support is at an all-time high. Six in ten (60%) favour bilingualism for all of Canada, up four points since 2003 and now at its highest level since 1977. This trend is evident in all parts of the country except B.C. (although up significantly in Vancouver) and notably in Alberta (51% up 10), as well as among men and Canadians under 45 years of age. Support for bilingualism in Canada continues to be strongest in Quebec (90% up 1 and at the highest level in this province since 1977), and lowest in Saskatchewan (39%, up 3) and among Canadians aged 60 plus (49%, down 7).

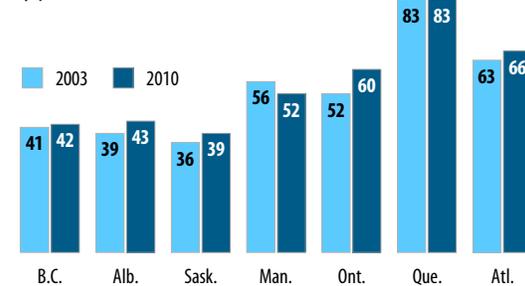
Similar levels of support are also expressed for bilingualism *in one's own province*, although regional differences are somewhat more apparent. Six in ten (61%) favour bilingualism for their own province, up four points since 2003 and also at the highest level since 1977. Support is strongest in Quebec (83%) and Atlantic Canada (66%), while lower in the three most western provinces – Saskatchewan (39%), Alberta (43%) and B.C. (42%) – where support is only marginally stronger than before. Generational differences are also evident in this case, with support increasing among Canadians under 30 (75%, up 9) and declining among those aged 60 plus (52%, down 7).

While Canadians are becoming more supportive of bilingualism in principle, they are placing less importance on speaking the other Official Language. Fewer than four in ten (38%) anglophones now agree it is important to speak French (down from 66% in 1985), and just under half (48%) of francophones agree it is important to speak English (versus 98% in 1985). This decline is most dramatic among Canadians with a university education (29% now agree, down 43 points).

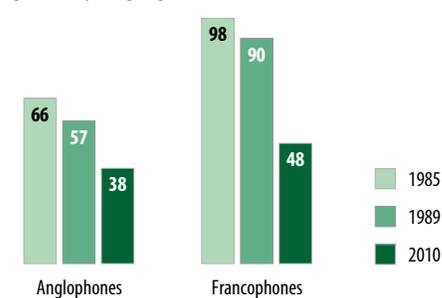
Support for bilingualism in ...
1977 - 2010



Support for bilingualism in own province
By province 2003 - 2010



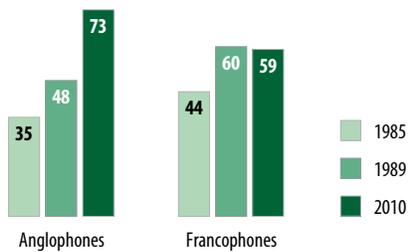
It is important to speak the other official language
Agree By language 1985 - 2010



ENGLISH-FRENCH RELATIONS. English-French relations in Canada are now less contentious than in previous decades. However, language-based differences have not disappeared, especially among anglophones. Three-quarters (73%) of anglophones now agree that *“French-Canadians and English Canadians disagree on most things today,”* almost doubling from 35 percent in 1985. A similar trend is apparent among francophones, but unlike before they are now less likely than anglophones to agree with this statement (59%, up 15 points since 1985).

French and English Canadians disagree on most things these days

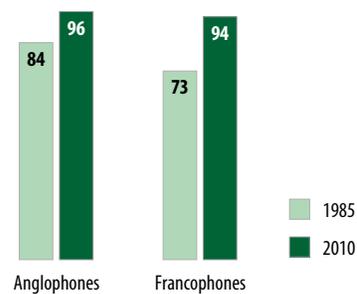
Agree By language 1985 - 2010



Whatever divisions Canadians see along the language divide may also be something most believe will diminish over time. Almost all anglophones (96%) and francophones (94%) alike now agree with the statement that *“Young French-Canadians and young English-Canadians generally have the same interests,”* reflecting a notable increase in agreement levels from 1985 (84% and 73%, respectively). This trend is evident across the population, but strong agreement has grown most significantly among Canadians aged 60 plus.

Young French and English Canadians generally have the same interests

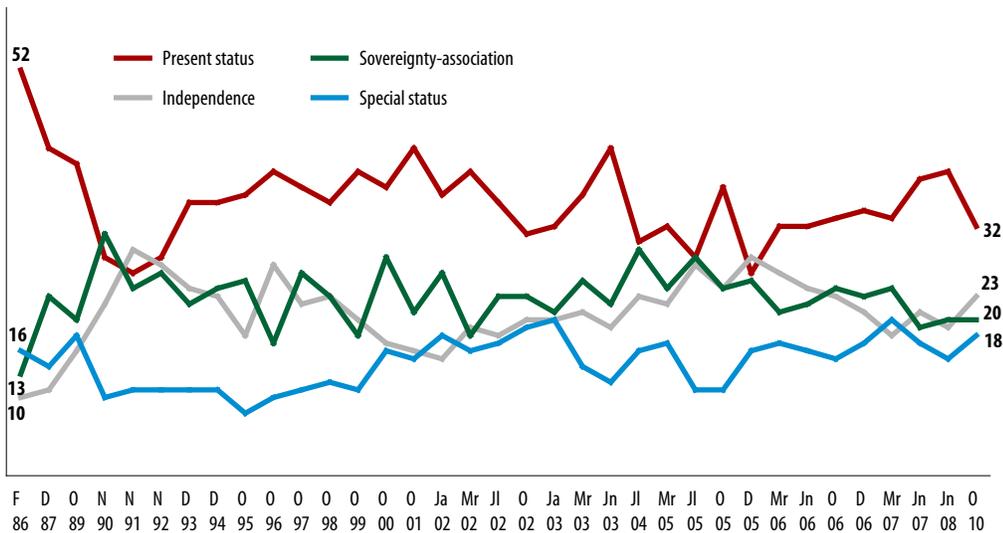
Agree By language 1985 - 2010



CONSTITUTIONAL OPTIONS FOR QUEBEC. The constitutional issues surrounding Quebec's place in confederation remain largely unresolved. Public support for outright separation from Canada remains low, but Quebecers are expressing less satisfaction with the status quo than in the past couple of years. Since mid-2008, the proportion of Quebecers favouring their province's current status within confederation has declined to 32 percent (down 7 points), while there is increasing support for the options of independence (23%, up 4) and special status (18%, up 3). One in five (20%, unchanged) continue to prefer the option involving some type of special status within Canada.

The shift in support from current status to independence is most noticeable among Quebecers under 30, while those aged 60 plus continue to be most in favour of the status quo.

Constitutional options for Quebec
Quebec 1986 - 2010

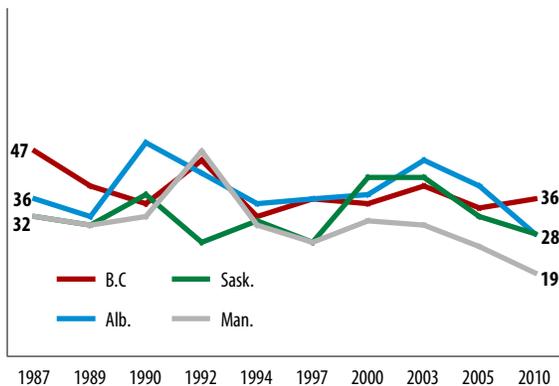


Base: Quebec residents

WESTERN ALIENATION. How do western Canadians feel about their place in Canada, given a history of frustration and anger at what is seen as too much control by easterners? The sense of alienation is considerably weaker than in past decades, and has diminished further since 2005 in the Prairie provinces. Focus Canada has been tracking a set of “agree-disagree” statements that serve as key indicators of the evolving trend:

“Western Canada gets so few benefits from being part of Canada that they might as well go it on their own.” Only three in ten (30%) westerners now agree with this statement, down four points since 2005 and the lowest regional proportion since 1987. This view is now at historic lows in Alberta (28%, down 11), Saskatchewan (28%, down 4) and Manitoba (19%, down 6), and is up marginally in B.C. (36%, up 2), although well below the peak recorded in this province in 1987 (47%). Since 2005, this view has declined most significantly among westerners under 30 (17%, down 15).

West gets so few benefits, it should go it alone
1987 - 2010



“In many ways, Canada’s western provinces have more in common with the western U.S. than they do with the rest of Canada.” Four in ten (42%) of westerners agree with this statement, largely unchanged from 2005. Agreement is up marginally in B.C. (48%, up 2) and Manitoba (39%, up 7), and down in Saskatchewan (34%, down 3) and Alberta (38%, down 10).

“There is no such thing as Western Canada, people in each province have very different views from the others.” Just over half (53%) of westerners concur with this statement, unchanged from 2005. Opinions are now essentially the same across the four provinces, which since 2005 reflects rising agreement in Manitoba (up 9 points) and Saskatchewan (up 4), and declining agreement in B.C. (down 4).