



confederation
of tomorrow

2019 Survey of Canadians

MAKING FEDERALISM WORK:
LEADERSHIP, TRUST & COLLABORATION

Final Report

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**Environics
Institute**
For Survey Research

Mowat Centre
ONTARIO'S VOICE ON PUBLIC POLICY

**CANADAWEST
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Introduction

Background

For much of the late 20th century, Canadian politics was dominated by high-stakes attempts to remake or dismantle the country's federation. First ministers met regularly for mega-constitutional deal-making, while successive Quebec and federal governments wrestled with iterations of pre- and post-referendum strategies. The 1990s alone witnessed a national referendum on the Constitution, a second and closely-contested referendum on Quebec independence, and two new regionally-based political parties – Reform and the *Bloc Québécois* – taking turns as Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition.

In recent years, it has appeared that such storms have now finally passed. A new generation of Canadians has come of age with no direct memories of national unity crises. Regional party fragments have once again coalesced around the traditional left-centre-right national options. And as other countries wrestle with the rise of inward-looking nativism, Canada appears to offer hope as a successful example of multiculturalism and multinational federalism capable of reconciling unity and diversity.

In fact, Canada's sesquicentennial in 2017 marked one of the only times the country has been able to celebrate a significant birthday in the absence of a serious national unity crisis. Canada's 50th birthday fell in the midst of the First World War and a crisis over conscription that split the country between British and French. The country's 75th birthday found it fighting another world war, with a second conscription crisis just over the horizon. The centennial, while full of optimism, coincided with the Quiet Revolution, and preceded the founding of the *Parti Québécois* by only one year. The country's 125th birthday, in 1992, was almost forgotten in the run-up to the referendum on the Charlottetown Accord – with the dramatic electoral gains of the *Bloc Québécois* and the Reform Party, and the re-election of a *Parti Québécois* government soon to follow.

Even though such events have receded into the past, the current political agenda remains full of unresolved issues that can easily divide Canadians along the fault lines of region and identity. Controversies over transnational pipelines are pitting erstwhile regional allies against one another, while the country's plan to meet international climate change obligations is at risk from several provinces challenging the wisdom of carbon pricing. As the resource-led boom in and around Alberta turned to bust, Albertans' support, not only for environmental policies, but also for broader wealth-sharing arrangements within the federation has come into question.

Meanwhile, the Quebec government's position paper on its "way of being Canadian" was launched in 2017 without sparking a serious reply from its partners in Confederation. This was followed by the province's only avowedly federalist political party not only losing power but receiving its lowest ever share of the popular vote. Atlantic Canada, for its part, continues to search for ways to offset its declining demographic and economic clout. In the North, the three territories are implementing different forms of devolution of power, both from Ottawa to territorial governments, and from territorial government to forms of Indigenous self-government. And the lack of concrete actions to match verbal commitments toward reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples threatens to undermine the country's harmony at home, as well as its reputation abroad.

In short, as Canada moves past its 150th birthday, once again new dimensions and challenges to the structure and governance of Canada are demanding greater attention. These issues are being considered by governments, think-tanks and universities, but it is also important to hear from the rest of Canadians, who have both a say and a stake in the outcomes. And it is important to hear what a new generation of citizens has to say, both about the unresolved challenges they have inherited and the emerging challenges they are called upon to confront.

Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey

This is the goal of the 2019 Confederation of Tomorrow survey. The name “Confederation of Tomorrow” is taken from the landmark Confederation of Tomorrow conference, convened and hosted in November 1967 by Premier John Robarts of Ontario. The event allowed political leaders from all 10 provinces to share their perspectives on the country’s promising future, and to lay the foundations for a stronger federation amid the energy and excitement of the country’s centennial. It was a conference whose purpose was not to pretend that there were simple solutions to complex problems, but to ensure that there was an opportunity for each region’s distinctive perspectives on the country to be expressed and heard.

It is in that spirit that the 2019 Confederation of Tomorrow survey was conducted with representative samples of Canadians from every province and territory, to hear their perspective on the country’s federal system as it is today and what it might be. The research draws from previous national surveys conducted over the past several decades to understand not only what Canadians think today, but how public perspectives have evolved over time.

The research was conducted by the Environics Institute for Survey Research, in partnership with five leading public policy organizations across the country: the Canada West Foundation, the Mowat Centre, the Centre D’Analyse Politique – Constitution et Fédéralisme, the Institute for Research on Public Policy, and the Brian Mulroney Institute of Government at Saint Francis Xavier University.

The research consisted of a national public opinion survey conducted online (in the provinces) and by telephone (in the territories) with a representative sample of 5,732 Canadians (ages 18 and over) between December 14, 2018 and January 16, 2019. The survey sample was stratified to provide for meaningful representation in all 13 provinces and territories, as well as the country’s Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). Many of the questions included on the survey were drawn from previous national surveys stretching back to the 1980s. This provides the basis for identifying how public opinion has changed (or not) over time. Further details on the survey methodology and previous research are provided in the Appendix.

About this report

This report is the second of three that presents the results of this research. It focuses on the ways in which the country's federal, provincial and territorial governments should work together as federal partners to address key issues. The first report, *Canada: Pulling Together or Drifting Apart?*, was published earlier this year. Additional details are provided under separate cover that provides the results for each survey question by region and jurisdiction, demographic characteristics and other population segments. All results are presented as percentages unless otherwise noted.

Acknowledgements

This research was made possible with the support from a number of organizations and individuals. The study partners would like to acknowledge the contributions of Erich Hartmann, Kiran Alwani and Stefanie Folgado at the Mowat Centre; Darcy Zwetko and Tom Hatry at Elemental Data Collection Inc.; and Steve Otto, Cathy McKim, and Elaine Stam for their excellent work in the final report production. Finally, much appreciation is expressed to the 5,732 Canadians who took the time to share their perspectives on the Confederation of Tomorrow.

Executive Summary

The first report from the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey, *Canada: Pulling Together or Drifting Apart?*, highlighted significant tensions within the federation. Large majorities in a number of jurisdictions outside of Central Canada feel that their province or territory does not get the respect it deserves, has less than its fair share of influence on national decisions, and receives less than its fair share of federal spending. And while political support for Quebec sovereignty appears to have cooled, there has been no notable warming in the province in support for federalism.

This second report shows that, these tensions notwithstanding, there remains considerable support among Canadians for sharing and collaboration across jurisdictions. Many Canadians may be dissatisfied with the way the federation is working, but this does not mean that they are prepared to turn their backs on one another. That said, there are some notable variations in views across the country that speak both to the existence within Canada of distinct provincial and territorial political cultures and, more generally, to the country's underlying diversity and complexity.

Sharing the Wealth

Equalization: Since the economic downturn in the country's oil and gas sector, the federal equalization program – through which a portion of the revenues collected by the federal government is redistributed to provinces that would have difficulty funding adequate public services on their own – has come in for increasingly pointed criticism by political leaders in Alberta and Saskatchewan, who frame it as yet another penalty imposed on their provinces by their federal partners. This criticism notwithstanding, three in four Canadians support the country's equalization program. Even in provinces that typically do not receive equalization payments, support for the program outweighs opposition by a factor of more than two to one. Support, however, has softened somewhat over the past two decades, particularly in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In Alberta, only a very thin majority remains supportive.

Natural resources: Many Canadians also appear open to sharing the country's resource wealth. More than two in five

say that natural resources are part of the country's wealth, and so the royalties earned on them should be used to benefit all Canadians. By contrast, only one in five believe that natural resources, and the royalties they generate, belong to the province or territory in which they are found. Importantly, however, another one in three Canadians do not pick sides, saying it depends on the resource or how it is shared. Preference for the view that natural resources belong to the province or territory in which they are found is higher in the oil and gas producing provinces of Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Saskatchewan; but even in these provinces, views are more divided than hardline, with about as many saying that natural resources are part of the country's wealth, and an even larger proportion saying that it depends.

The economic union: There is a stronger consensus on the question of the right of Canadians to move from one jurisdiction to another in order to find employment. Nine in ten Canadians agree that workers in Canada should have the right to move to another province or territory, and be eligible for a better job than the one they currently have. In the case of barriers to the movement of goods, however, Canadians are much less certain. Three in ten say that their provincial or territorial government should be allowed to favour local businesses by preventing businesses from elsewhere in Canada from selling their products in their province or territory, while fewer than one in four disagree. A plurality, however, is not definitive either way, saying that it depends on circumstances, such as the type of product or business.

Politics of compromise: Finally, a small majority of Canadians is generally supportive of the politics of compromise. More than half want their provincial or territorial government to try to find a balance between its economic interest and that of other parts of Canada, even if that means compromising on some of the policies that might be best for them. Fewer than one in three, by contrast, prefer that their provincial or territorial government put its jurisdiction's economic interests first, even if that means implementing policies that weaken the economies of other parts of Canada.

Managing the Federation

Decentralization: Canada is the most decentralized federation in the developed world. That said, Canadians are more likely to want to see an even greater shift of responsibilities from the federal to their provincial government than vice versa. Just over one in three say that the government of their province should take charge of many of the things the federal government does right now. This is twice as many as the proportion who say that the federal government should take charge of many of the things the government of their province does right now. Almost one in three say that the division of powers should remain as it is now. Alberta, Quebec and Saskatchewan stand out as being more supportive of a shift of power from the federal to the provincial level.

Views on the division of powers are linked to perceptions of how the government and federation are working. Canadians who say their province does not get the respect it deserves, does not have its fair share of influence on national decisions, or does not receive its fair share of federal spending, are more likely to say that the government of their province should take charge of many of the things the federal government does right now.

Leadership: In terms of which order of government should take the lead on various issues, Canadians shy away from putting too many eggs in the same basket. A plurality of Canadians trust both the federal and their provincial or territorial government equally when it comes to promoting economic growth and job creation, addressing climate change, and managing energy resources. On the issue of health care, a plurality (by a small margin) trust their provincial or territorial government more, and on immigration and refugee settlement, a plurality trusts the federal government more.

The views of Quebecers are somewhat distinct. Quebecers are the most likely to say they trust their provincial government more to manage the health care system. They are also more likely to trust their provincial government more on the issues of energy and immigration, compared with a plurality of Canadians outside Quebec who trust both governments equally when it comes to energy, and the federal government more when it comes to immigration. When it comes to managing energy resources, however, residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan are even more likely than Quebecers to trust their provincial governments more.

Asymmetrical federalism: One way in which the federation can accommodate different views on the division of powers is through the practice of asymmetrical federalism, which means provinces that seek more powers can reach individual arrangements with the federal government to that effect. This practice, however, runs counter to most people's sense of how the federation should work. Three in five Canadians say that the federal government should treat each province the same, so that no province has any more powers than another. Support for the equal treatment of provinces is highest in Newfoundland and Labrador, and Alberta. Support for more asymmetrical arrangements is noticeably higher in Quebec than elsewhere – but even in Quebec, it is the minority position.

Views on whether powers should be distributed equally or asymmetrically among provinces align with other views on federalism in Quebec, but not in the rest of Canada. Only in Quebec are those who are less satisfied with federalism and more favourable to a shift in the division of powers in the province's favour, also more favourable of asymmetry.

Importance of national policy: The survey also asked Canadians whether, in relation to particular issues, they prefer that the federal government set one national policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory, or that each province and territory set its own policy. On none of the five issues mentioned does a majority clearly favour one option over the other.

There are notable variations, however, across different issues and jurisdictions. In the case of pharmacare policy, a plurality or a very thin majority in every province except Quebec favours Ottawa setting one national policy that would be the same across all jurisdictions. In the case of energy policy, such as choosing the best sources of energy to develop, Alberta stands out as the only province in which a majority favours each province and territory making its own policy. In four other provinces (Quebec, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and British Columbia), the proportion favouring provincial or territorial energy policies is less than 50 per cent, but still outweighs the proportion favouring one national energy policy set by the federal government.

In most provinces, a plurality thinks the federal government should set one national climate change policy (such as

choosing whether to place a tax on carbon emissions). The one clear exception is Saskatchewan, where a plurality favours each province and territory setting its own policy. It is notable that having one national policy in this area is the preference of a majority in Quebec and a plurality in British Columbia, even though these provinces are exempt from the new federal carbon tax precisely because they already have their own policies to reduce carbon emissions. It is possible that the fact that current federal policy leaves room for distinct provincial or territorial policies in this area is why Quebecers and British Columbians are more supportive of the idea of having one national climate change policy. It is also possible that they are supportive of federal intervention in other provinces that so far have not imposed their own taxes on carbon.

Federalism and the Territories: The territories have a distinct position in the federation, and one that has continued to evolve over the past decades, with the creation of Nunavut and the progression of devolution arrangements with Ottawa and self-government arrangements with First Nations. But national surveys are rarely large enough to report separately on how Northerners view the federation.

The Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey shows that a plurality of residents of the three territories say that their territorial government, rather than the federal government or the government of city or town, is the one that best represents their interests. Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous peoples in the territories – and in particular, in Yukon and the Northwest Territories – have distinct views on this question: Indigenous peoples are much more likely to say that their territorial government best represents their interests, whereas, among non-Indigenous peoples, the municipal government is the most likely to be mentioned.

Taking the three territories together, the territorial government emerges as the one that is more likely to be trusted to make the right decisions on three of the five issues mentioned in the survey: managing the health care

system; promoting economic growth and job creation; and managing energy resources. Both the territorial government and the federal government are equally likely to be trusted to address climate change, and the federal government is more likely to be trusted to manage immigration and refugee settlement.

The pattern, however, differs in each territory. In Nunavut, the territorial government is more likely to be trusted on each of the issues, with the exception of immigration. In the Northwest Territories, the territorial government is much more likely to be trusted on health care, and somewhat more likely to be trusted on energy and climate change. However, the territorial and federal governments are equally likely to be trusted on the economy. In Yukon, the territorial government is trusted more on the economy and energy, but the federal government is trusted more on climate change.

Views in the three territories also differ on the question of whether the federal government should set one national policy on climate change that would be the same across all jurisdictions, or whether the territorial government should set their own policies. A majority in Nunavut supports territorial policies, a majority in Yukon supports one national policy set by Ottawa, and views are evenly split between the two options in the Northwest Territories.

Overall, these results speak to one of the general findings of the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey, which is that the concept of region is not always the most salient one to use to capture patterns of opinions on the federation in Canada. There are significant differences within the North on the questions of which government is the best representative or the most trusted. Residents of each individual territory have distinct perspectives, as do, in some cases, Indigenous peoples in the region, and, among Indigenous peoples, Inuit peoples (related to the distinctiveness of Nunavut).

Making Federalism Work

While majorities in individual provinces and territories may be frustrated with how their jurisdiction is treated within the federation, this second report from the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey finds little evidence that Canadians are turning their backs on each other. A majority remains supportive of sharing the country's wealth through the existing equalization program, and only a minority thinks that the royalties from natural resource development should only benefit the jurisdiction in which those resources are found. More often than not, Canadians look to both orders of government, rather than only one or the other, to address key issues such as the economy, energy and climate change. While more Canadians lean towards a shift of powers from Ottawa to the provinces than vice versa, there remains considerable support for federal

leadership to advance pan-Canadian policies in areas such as pharamacare and climate change. Finally, Canadians are more likely to favour the politics of compromise – wherein their provincial or territorial government seeks to find a balance between their jurisdiction's interest and the national one – than a zero-sum approach.

Beneath these broad patterns, there remain a number of exceptions, with specific jurisdictions holding distinct views on some, though not necessarily all, of these questions. These exceptions are important to note, as they speak to the underlying diversity and even complexity of the country. These exceptions and differences notwithstanding, the survey results taken as a whole paint a picture of a federation whose citizens continue to prefer collaboration over polarization.

Chapter 1: Sharing the Wealth

Is your province wealthy or poor?

Most Canadians consider the province they live in to be relatively wealthy, but views vary across the country: a majority in the four largest provinces as well as Saskatchewan consider their province to be very or somewhat wealthy, while a majority in Manitoba and the four Atlantic provinces say their province is not very wealthy or is poor. In every part of the country, the proportion considering their province to be wealthy is lower than it was in 1977.

Most Canadians consider the province they live in to be relatively wealthy. When asked to think about their province and its resources, almost two thirds (65%) see their province as being either very (13%) or somewhat (52%) wealthy, compared with three in ten who say they think of their province as not very (25%) wealthy or poor (5%).¹

Canadians living in the four largest provinces are much more likely to consider their provinces to be at least somewhat wealthy. This view is held by 78 per cent of those in BC, 74 per cent of both Ontarians and Albertans, and 59 per cent of Quebecers. A majority of residents of Saskatchewan (59%) also consider their province to be very or somewhat wealthy. By contrast, a majority of those in Manitoba (60%) and the four Atlantic provinces (ranging from 60 per cent in Newfoundland and Labrador, to 77 per cent in New Brunswick) say their province is not very wealthy or is poor.

The proportion considering their province to be poor is particularly high in New Brunswick, at 29 per cent.

Table 1
Do you think of your province as wealthy or poor?
(%) By province

Province	Very wealthy	Somewhat wealthy	Not very wealthy	Poor	Cannot say
Newfoundland and Labrador	8	29	45	15	2
Prince Edward Island	10	19	53	14	3
Nova Scotia	3	20	58	19	*
New Brunswick	2	19	48	29	2
Quebec	9	50	34	4	3
Ontario	15	59	17	3	6
Manitoba	4	31	52	8	5
Saskatchewan	10	49	33	4	5
Alberta	20	54	19	4	4
British Columbia	17	61	15	2	6

Q16. Thinking for a minute about your province and its resources, do you think of your province as a very wealthy province, somewhat wealthy, not very wealthy or poor?

¹ Note that the questions reported on in this section were not asked in the territories.

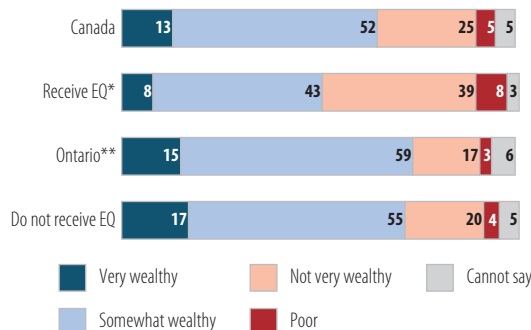
Perceptions of provincial wealth also differ between those who live in provinces that receive equalization, and those who do not. (Equalization is a transfer from the federal government to less wealthy provinces to ensure that they are able to provide reasonably comparable services at reasonably comparable tax rates.) Forty-seven per cent of those who live in one of the five provinces that typically receive equalization say that their province is not very wealthy or is poor. This compares with only 24 per cent in the four provinces that typically *do not* receive equalization.²

While most Canadians consider the province that they live in to be wealthy, the proportion holding this view is much lower than it was in 1977, the last time this question was asked in a national study of attitudes on federalism. In 1977, nine in ten felt that their province was very or somewhat wealthy, compared with two-thirds in 2019. The proportion saying they consider their province to be very wealthy fell from 54 per cent to only 13 per cent. In 1977, only nine per cent of Canadians considered their province to be not very wealthy or poor, compared with 30 per cent today.

The change in perception over the forty years – in terms of the decline in the proportion feeling their province is wealthy – is evident in every part of the country. In 1977, 74 per cent of Albertans, 71 per cent of British Columbians, and 69 per cent of Ontarians said that they thought of their province as very wealthy; by comparison, the figures in 2019 are 20 per cent, 17 per cent, and 15 per cent respectively.

Is your province wealthy or poor?

2019



* Excluding Ontario

** Ontario receives equalization in 2018-19 but not 2019-20; it is therefore categorized separately.

Q16.

Thinking for a minute about your province and its resources, do you think of your province as a very wealthy province, somewhat wealthy, not very wealthy or poor?

² The provinces that typically receive equalization are Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and Manitoba. They have received (or will receive) equalization in each of the last ten years, from 2010-11 to 2019-20. The provinces that typically do not receive equalization are British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Newfoundland and Labrador; none of these provinces have (or will) receive equalization during that same ten-year period. Ontario is excluded from both groups because it is in a transitory position: it had been receiving equalization since 2009-10, but there is no payment planned for 2019-20. For details, see: <https://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/mtp-eng.asp>.

Support for equalization

Canadians are broadly supportive of equalization: three-quarters support the federal equalization program, while 16 per cent are opposed. Even in those provinces that do not receive equalization payments, fewer than one in three are opposed to the program. Support for equalization, however, has declined somewhat over the past two decades, particularly in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

As mentioned, the equalization program is a federal transfer provided to those provinces that are not otherwise able to provide comparable services at comparable levels of taxation. The federal government transfers federal funds to provinces with below average revenue-raising capacity. Provinces with higher capacity to raise revenue do not receive equalization.

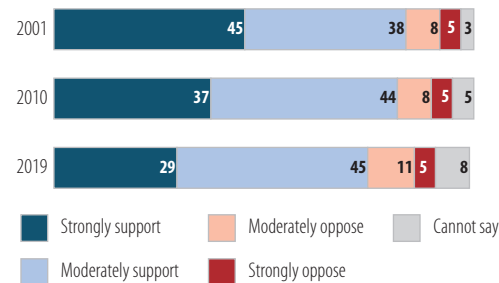
The program is often misunderstood or mis-described as a transfer from richer to poorer provinces. In fact, it is funded through federal taxation, meaning that all Canadians, including those in provinces that receive equalization, contribute to the funding of the program. However, the program only provides direct benefits to those living in the provinces entitled to receive equalization payments. In 2019-20, these provinces are Manitoba, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

Whether it is well understood or not, the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey shows that Canadians are broadly supportive of equalization: three-quarters support the federal equalization program, including 29 per cent who strongly support it, and 45 per cent who moderately support it. Sixteen per cent are opposed (including only five per cent opposed strongly), and eight per cent cannot say.³

Not surprisingly, overall support is higher (81%) in the five provinces that typically receive equalization payments, and lower (63%) in the four provinces that typically do not.⁴ However, even in those provinces that do not receive equalization payments, only about one in four (27%) are opposed to the program.

Support for equalization

2019



Q17.

As you may know, under the federal equalization program, the federal government transfers money to the poorer provinces, in order to ensure that Canadians living in every province have access to similar levels of public services. How much do you support or oppose the equalization program?

³ Note that the questions reported on in this section were not asked in the territories.

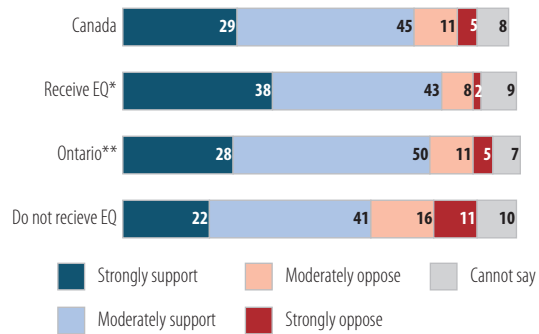
⁴ Ontario is excluded from either group because it is in a transitory position. See note 2.

Support for equalization, however, has declined somewhat over the past two decades.⁵ In 2001, 83 per cent of Canadians supported the program and 81 per cent supported the program in 2010, compared with 74 per cent in 2019. This trend is most noticeable in terms of the strength of support. In 2001, a plurality (45%) strongly supported equalization and an additional 38 per cent moderately supported it. In 2019, strong support has fallen to 29 per cent, while moderate support has risen to 45 per cent.

The decline in support for equalization has not been uniform across the country. Since 2001, support has remained more or less stable in Quebec, dipped slightly in Atlantic Canada and slightly more in Ontario, and fallen much more significantly in the west (from 82 per cent in 2001, to 65 per cent in 2019 – a drop of 17 percentage points). At the provincial level, the decline in support is most pronounced in Saskatchewan (22 points) and Alberta (23 points). Presently, only a slim majority of Albertans (51%) support equalization, while 40 percent oppose it (divided equally between those who moderately and strongly oppose the program).

Support for equalization

2019



* Excluding Ontario

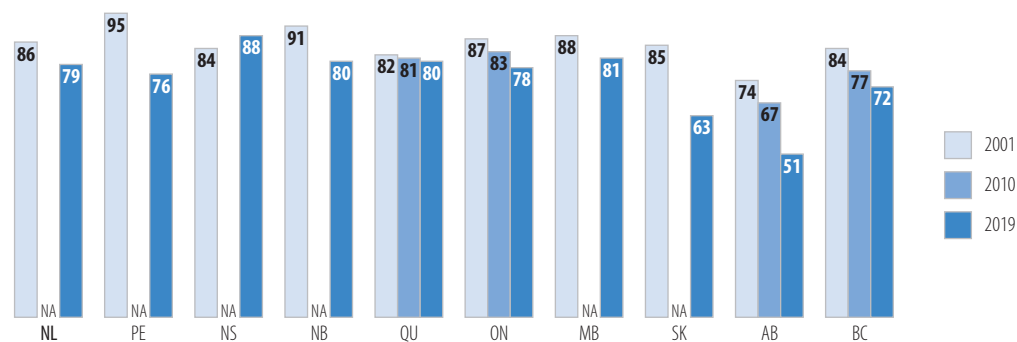
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Q17.

As you may know, under the federal equalization program, the federal government transfers money to the poorer provinces, in order to ensure that Canadians living in every province have access to similar levels of public services. How much do you support or oppose the equalization program?

Support for equalization

2019, by province



Q17.

As you may know, under the federal equalization program, the federal government transfers money to the poorer provinces, in order to ensure that Canadians living in every province have access to similar levels of public services. How much do you support or oppose the equalization program?

⁵ Note that the 2019 survey introduced an important modification to the wording of the question. Previous surveys had described equalization as a program through which “money is transferred from the richer provinces to the poorer ones, in order to ensure that Canadians living in every province have access to similar levels of public services” (emphasis added). In order to provide a more accurate description, the 2019 survey described equalization as a program through which the federal government transfers money to the poorer provinces” (emphasis added). It is not clear whether this change in wording affected responses.

Equalization: more or less?

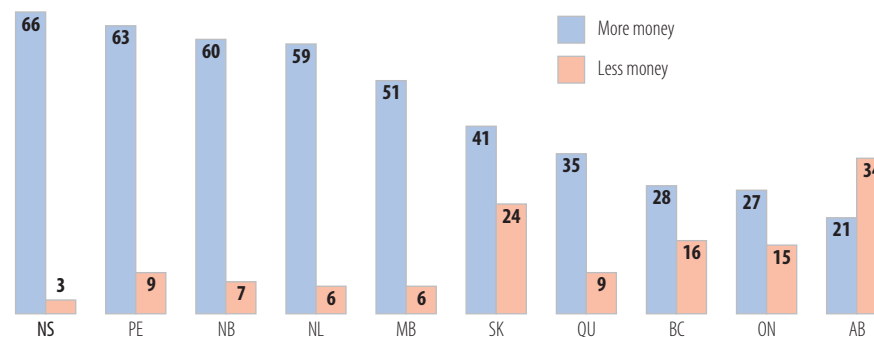
The proportion of Canadians that supports a change to the total amount of money that the equalization program transfers to the recipient provinces has increased over time. Interestingly, the proportion favouring an increase in the size of the program, and that favouring a decrease, have both increased.

Canadians' views on equalization can be gauged not only by asking about their support for the program, but also by asking whether they think that the amounts the program transfers from the federal government to poorer provinces should be increased or decreased. Currently, more than one in two Canadians either say that there should be no change to the amounts transferred (36%) or express no opinion (17%). About one in three say that the equalization program should be changed to transfer more money (32%), and 15 per cent say it should be changed to transfer less money.

The proportion of Canadians that supports a change to the total amount of money that the equalization program transfers to the recipient provinces has increased over time.⁶ Interestingly, the proportion favouring an increase in the size of the program, and that favouring a decrease, have both increased.⁷

- The proportion saying that the equalization program should be changed so that the federal government transfers more money to the poorer provinces has risen slightly from 27 per cent in 2001 to 32 percent in 2019.
- The proportion saying that the program should be changed so that it provides less money to the poorer provinces has also risen slightly from nine per cent to 15 per cent over the same period.
- The proportions favouring no change or offering no opinion have both decreased.

Changes to equalization
2019, by province



Q18.

And do you think that the equalization program should be changed so that the federal government transfers more money to the poorer provinces, less money to the poorer provinces, or should the program be kept as it is now?

⁶ As with the previous question, the wording of the survey question shifted in 2019, to ask about the amount of money transferred from the federal government to poorer provinces, rather than from the richer provinces to the poorer provinces.

⁷ The increase in the proportion offering no opinion is likely due in part to the change in survey mode from telephone to online.

Support for an increase to the amount of funds provided through the program is predictably much higher in those provinces that typically receive equalization payments. Currently, in these five provinces, 42 per cent say that the equalization program should be changed so that the federal government transfers more money to the poorer provinces, compared with 29 per cent in the provinces that typically do not receive equalization, and 27 per cent in Ontario. At the same time, only 23 per cent of those in the non-recipient provinces (along with 16 per cent in Ontario) want the program to be changed so that it transfers less money.

Across provinces, support for an increase in the amount of money transferred through the equalization program is highest in Nova Scotia (66%), with support almost as high in the other three Atlantic provinces. Support for a decrease in the amount of money transferred through the equalization program is highest in Alberta (34%), followed by Saskatchewan (24%).

In terms of changes over time, the largest increase in preference for an equalization program that transfers more money has been in the Maritime provinces and in Manitoba (each of these provinces has received equalization payments throughout the period covered by the surveys reported here). The largest increases in preference for an equalization program that transfers less money have been

in Saskatchewan and Alberta. In each case, however, the change was registered between the 2001 and 2010 surveys, and not more recently, despite the criticisms of the program aired by political leaders in these provinces over the past year. In Alberta, the proportion favouring transferring less money through equalization doubled from 19 percent in 2001 to 37 percent in 2010, before edging back slightly to 34 per cent in 2019.

The case of Saskatchewan is notable, as its status in terms of equalization has changed over time. In 2001, when the province received equalization, 85 per cent supported the program in general and only five per cent favoured a program that transferred less money. In 2019, when the province did not receive equalization, 63 per cent still favour the program, and 24 per cent favour a program that transfers less money.

By comparison, however, support for equalization and the amount of money transferred through it has remained unchanged over the same period in Newfoundland and Labrador, even though it also changed status from an equalization recipient to non-recipient. (Over the period covered by the surveys reported here, Ontario and BC have also shifted in and out of recipient status. In both provinces, there has been a moderate decline in support for the program over time, and no significant change in preference for a larger or smaller program.)

Table 2
Equalization
(%) By province

Province	Year	Equalization status	Support Equalization	Equalization should transfer more money	Equalization should transfer less money
Newfoundland and Labrador	2001	Recipient	86	61	2
	2019	Non-recipient	79	59	6
Ontario	2001	Non-recipient	87	25	8
	2019	Non-recipient	78	27	15
Saskatchewan	2001	Recipient	85	32	5
	2019	Non-recipient	63	41	24
Alberta	2001	Non-recipient	74	13	19
	2019	Non-recipient	51	21	34
British Columbia	2001	Recipient	84	24	14
	2019	Non-recipient	72	28	16

Natural resource royalties

A plurality of Canadians say that natural resources are part of the country's wealth, and so the royalties earned on them should be used to benefit all Canadians, though many also are not sure, saying it depends on the resource or how it is shared. Preference for the contrary view that natural resources belong to the province or territory in which they are found is higher in the oil and gas producing provinces, but even there, it is not the plurality choice.

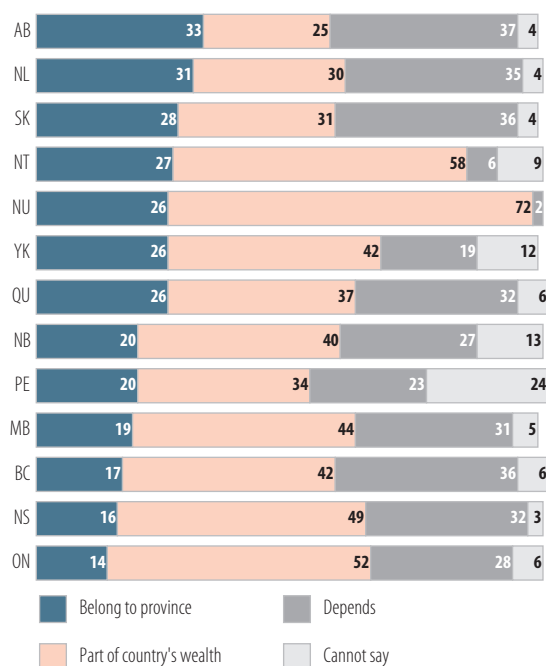
Provinces in Canada have jurisdiction over natural resources, including the ability to collect revenue from their resources through royalties (the territories increasingly also have this power through agreements with the federal government). The public's views on the question of who should own natural resources in Canada and how the revenues they generate should be shared, however, are somewhat split. A plurality of Canadians (43 per cent) say that natural resources are part of the country's wealth, and so the royalties earned on them should be used to benefit all Canadians. That's twice as many as the proportion (21 per cent) who say that natural resources belong to the province or territory in which they are found, and so the royalties earned on them should belong solely to the province or territory to spend or invest as it sees fit. Importantly, however, almost one in three Canadians are not sure, saying it depends on the resource or how it is shared.

Preference for the view that natural resources belong to the province or territory in which they are found is higher in the oil and gas producing provinces of Alberta (33%), Newfoundland and Labrador (31%) and Saskatchewan (28%), followed by the three territories and Quebec (just over one in four in each case). In Alberta, Newfoundland and Labrador and Saskatchewan, however, the proportion saying that it depends is larger than the proportion who are definitive in their view that natural resources belong to the province or territory in which they are found.⁸

Only in Alberta does the proportion saying that resource royalties belong solely to the province (33%) clearly outweigh the proportion saying they are part of the whole country's wealth (25%).

Sharing natural resource royalties

2019



Q.19.

Natural resource industries like oil and gas, mining and forestry generate significant financial revenue to governments in the form of royalty payments. Which of the following two statements is closer to your own view: a) Natural resources belong to the province or territory in which they are found, and so the royalties earned on them should belong solely to the province or territory to spend or invest as it sees fit; b) Natural resources are part of the country's wealth, and so the royalties earned on them should be used to benefit all Canadians; c) Depends (e.g., on the resource, how shared); d) Cannot say.

In Ontario (52%) and Nova Scotia (49%), about half of the population thinks that natural resources are part of the country's wealth, and so the royalties earned on them should be used to benefit all Canadians

⁸ Note that responses differ in the territories because the territorial survey was conducted by telephone and not online. In the territories, the "depends" option was not read out over the telephone, and was only recorded if it was mentioned by the respondent. For this reason, the proportion of people who say "it depends" in the territories is much lower than in the provinces.

The economic union

Almost nine in ten Canadians agree that workers in Canada should have the right to move to another province or territory and be eligible for a better job than the one they currently have. Canadians are less categorical, however, in their support for the free movement of goods across provincial or territorial borders.

While Canada is a federation, it functions as a single national economy, with free movement of people and goods across provincial and territorial boundaries -- in principle. In practice, there are a number of regulatory barriers which impede this free movement, ranging from protectionist measures for local beer and wine industries, to provincial licencing requirements for specific professions.

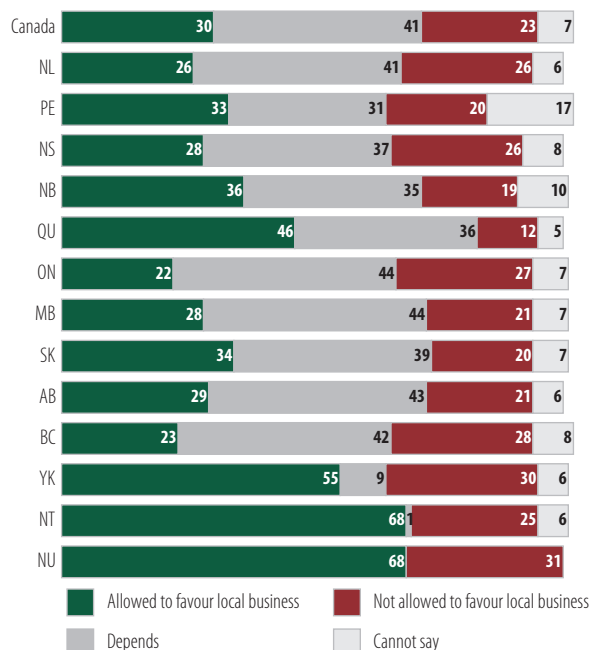
Canadians have different views on these barriers, depending on whether they are related to labour mobility or to protections for local businesses.

In the case of labour mobility, almost nine in ten (87%) Canadians agree that workers in Canada should have the right to move to another province or territory and be eligible for a better job than the one they currently have. There is very little variation in views across the country: almost nine in ten Canadians in each major region of the country are supportive of the right to move anywhere in the country to be considered for a job.

In the case of measures to protect local businesses, however, views are much less categorical. Only 23 per cent of Canadians think that their provincial or territorial government should not be allowed to favour local businesses by preventing businesses from elsewhere in Canada from selling their products in their province or territory. A larger proportion (30%) says that their provincial or territorial government should be allowed to prevent businesses from elsewhere in Canada from selling their products in their province or territory. A plurality (41%), however, is not definitive either way, saying that it depends on circumstances, such as the type of product or business.

On this question, there are some differences among provinces. Quebecers (46%) are the most likely to support the ability of their provincial government to favour local businesses, followed by residents of New Brunswick (36%),

Internal trade barriers: favouring local businesses 2019



Q28.

Do you think your [provincial/territorial] government should, or should not, be allowed to favour local businesses by preventing businesses from elsewhere in Canada from selling their products in your province or territory?

Saskatchewan (34%) and Prince Edward Island (33%). Support for measures that favour local businesses is lowest in Newfoundland and Labrador (26%), British Columbia (23%), and Ontario (22%). There are no regional patterns, as provinces from central Canada, the West and the Atlantic region are all included among those most and least in favour.⁹

⁹ Note that responses differ in the territories because the territorial survey was conducted by telephone and not online. In the territories, the "depends" option was not read out over the telephone, and was only recorded if it was mentioned by the respondent. For this reason, the proportion of people who say "it depends" in the territories is much lower than in the provinces.

Balancing national and provincial/territorial economic interests

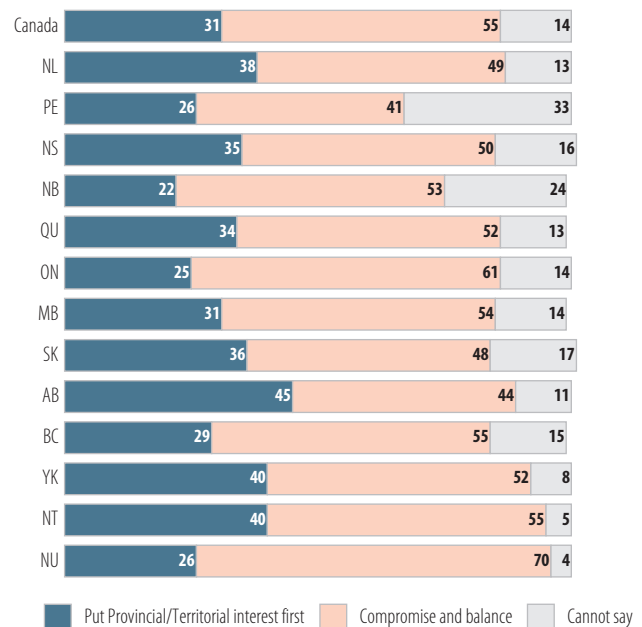
Canadians are more likely to want their provincial or territorial government to try to find a balance between its own economic interest and that of other parts of Canada than they are to want their provincial or territorial government to always put its own jurisdiction's economic interests first.

Provincial and territorial governments often need to consider the appropriate balance between their responsibility to promote their own jurisdiction's economic interest and the need to compromise in support of the broader national interest.

Overall, a majority of Canadians support the search for compromise: 55 per cent would prefer their provincial or territorial government to try to find a balance between its own economic interest and that of other parts of Canada, even if that means compromising on some of the policies that might be best for them. A minority (31%) would prefer that their provincial or territorial government put its jurisdiction's economic interests first, even if that means implementing policies that weaken the economies of other parts of Canada, while 14 per cent cannot say which option they prefer.

Support for an approach that puts the provincial or territorial interest first, even if that weakens the economies of other parts of Canada, is strongest in Alberta (45%), followed by Yukon (40%) and the Northwest Territories (40%). Support for finding a balance between the provincial or territorial interest and the national interest is highest in Nunavut (70%) and Ontario (61%). Again, it is notable that there is no clear regional pattern – as those living in jurisdictions within the same region do not necessarily provide similar answers to this question. For instance, Albertans are 16 points more likely than British Columbians to favour an approach that puts the province's economic interest first; the same gap separates those in Newfoundland and Labrador from those in New Brunswick.

Balancing provincial / territorial and the national interest 2019



Q.27.

Which of the following statements about the role of the {name of province or territory} government best describes your view? a) My provincial/territorial government should put {name}'s economic interests first, even if that means implementing policies that weaken the economies of other parts of Canada; or b) My provincial/territorial government should try to find a balance between {name}'s and the economic interest of other parts of Canada, even if that means compromising on some of the policies that might be best for {name}; c) Cannot say

Chapter 2: Managing the Federation

The distribution of powers

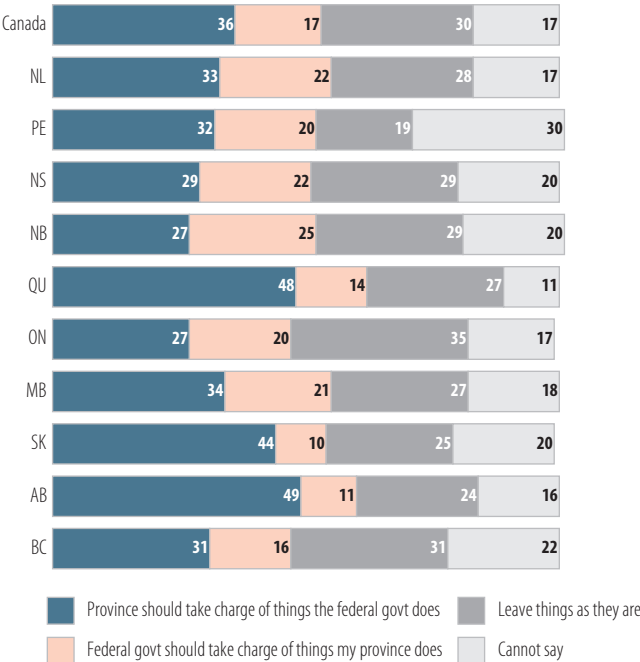
Almost one in two Canadians either favours the status quo when it comes to the division of powers between Ottawa and the provinces, or has no opinion. Just over one in three Canadians favours a shift of powers to the provinces – twice as many as the proportion that wants more powers for the federal government.

Canada is the most decentralized federation in the developed world; the federal government in Ottawa accounts for a smaller share of both total public spending and total public revenue than its counterparts in any other comparable country. That said, Canadians are more likely to want to see an even greater shift of responsibilities from the federal to their provincial governments than a shift in the other direction.

Just over one in three (36%) Canadians say that the government of their province should take charge of many of the things the federal government does right now. This is twice as many as the proportion (17%) who say that the federal government should take charge of many of the things the government of their province does right now. That said, a greater proportion – almost one in two – support neither option, with 30 per cent saying that the division of power should remain as it is now, and 17 per cent not giving an opinion.¹⁰

In no province does a majority support either more powers for their provincial government, or more powers for Ottawa. However, several provinces do stand out as being more supportive of a shift of powers from the federal to the provincial level: Alberta (49%), Quebec (48%) and Saskatchewan (44%). In the other seven provinces, support for this option is closer to 30 per cent.

More power for federal or provincial governments? 2019



Q.23. Which of the following statements is closest to your own view of how governments should work in Canada?

¹⁰ Note that the questions reported on in this section were not asked in the territories.

A number of other factors are related to views on the distribution of powers within the federation.

- **How one's province is treated within the federation:** Canadians who say their province does not get the respect it deserves, does not have its fair share of influence on national decisions, or does not receive its fair share of federal spending are more likely to say that the government of their province should take charge of many of the things the federal government does right now. These factors are especially salient in Quebec and Alberta. For instance, 65 per cent of Quebecers who say their province is not treated with the respect it deserves also want to see a shift of power from the federal to the provincial government, compared with 32 per cent of those who say that Quebec is respected. In Alberta, the proportion favouring a shift of power from the federal to their provincial government is 20 points higher (56%) among those who say Alberta is not respected than it is among those who say that it is (36%).
- **Attitudes about government in general:** Canadians who favour smaller government, or who believe that governments have a negative impact on most people's lives, are also more likely to favour greater decentralization of power within the federation. Again, these factors appear especially salient in Alberta: 69 per cent of Albertans who favour a smaller government with fewer services also favour a transfer of powers from Ottawa to Edmonton, compared with 39 per cent who favour a larger government with more services. Similarly, 58 per cent of Albertans who see government as having a negative impact on most people's lives also favour a more decentralized federation, compared with 38 per cent of those who see government as having a positive impact.

Equality or asymmetry

Three in five Canadians say that the federal government should treat each province the same, so that no province has any more powers than another, while only 28 per cent say that the federal government should be allowed to offer more powers to those provinces that want them. Views on whether powers should be distributed equally or asymmetrically among provinces align with other views on federalism in Quebec, but not in the rest of Canada.

One way in which the federation can accommodate different views on the division of powers is through the practice of asymmetrical federalism, through which provinces that seek more powers can reach individual arrangements with the federal government to that effect. The Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey suggests, however, that this practice runs counter to most people's sense of how the federation should work. Three in five Canadians (61%) say that the federal government should treat each province the same, so that no province has any more powers than another, while only 28 per cent say that the federal government should be allowed to offer more powers to those provinces that want them, so that the federal system can respond to the different needs that some provinces may have (12 per cent cannot say).

Support for the equal treatment of provinces, in terms of the distribution of powers, is highest in Newfoundland and Labrador (74%) and Alberta (70%), and lowest in Quebec (51%). Support for more asymmetrical arrangements is noticeably higher in Quebec than elsewhere (39%) – but even in Quebec, it is the minority position.

Unlike the previous question on the division of powers, views on whether provinces should all have the same powers do not necessarily align with feelings about how one's province is treated within the federation. Outside Quebec, the two views (that is, views on asymmetry and views on respect and influence) do not seem to be related: 27 per cent of Canadians outside of Quebec who say their province gets the respect it deserves favour allowing the federal government to offer more powers to those provinces that want them, as do 24 per cent of those who say their province is not respected. In Quebec, however, there is a strong relationship between the two questions. Among Quebecers who say that their province gets the respect it deserves, support for allowing more powers for some

provinces is about the same as in the rest of Canada (29%). But support for an asymmetrical distribution of powers shoots up to 49 per cent among those Quebecers who say Quebec is not respected.

Similarly, outside Quebec, support for asymmetry is more or less the same among those who agree and those who disagree with the notion that the advantages of federalism for their province outweigh the disadvantages. In Quebec, however, those who disagree with the statement that the advantages of federalism outweigh the disadvantages are also much more likely to favour an asymmetrical distribution of powers.

The difference between how the question of asymmetry is viewed inside and outside of Quebec can also be illustrated by looking at the relationship between that question and the previous question about whether the federation should become more or less decentralized. In Quebec, views on these two questions are related: those who favour a transfer of powers from the federal to their provincial government are also significantly more likely to say that some provinces should be allowed to obtain more powers than others. Outside Quebec, however, this is not the case; if anything, the relationship runs in the opposite direction: Canadians outside Quebec who favour a transfer of powers from the federal to their provincial government are somewhat less likely to say that some provinces should be allowed to obtain more powers than others.

In short, views on whether powers should be distributed equally or asymmetrically among provinces align with other views on federalism in Quebec but not in the rest of Canada. Only in Quebec are those who are less satisfied with federalism and more favourable to a shift in the division of powers in the province's favour also more favourable of asymmetry. This suggests that forming inter-provincial alliances on the issue of asymmetry may prove difficult, not only because support for asymmetry is the minority preference in each province and lower outside of Quebec, but also because Quebecers and other Canadians who may share some frustration with how their province is treated in the federation will not necessarily agree that an asymmetrical arrangement is an appropriate response.

Which level of government is trusted more to address key issues?

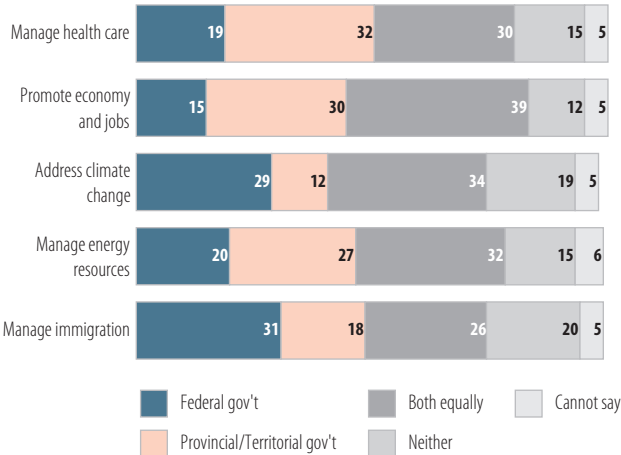
Canadians do not have a clear preference when it comes to how issues should be managed in the federation. In three of five policy areas mentioned in the survey, a plurality of Canadians trust both the federal and their provincial government equally, while the provincial government is trusted more on one issue, and the federal government more on another. Across the five issue areas, no option (trusting the federal government more, trusting the provincial government more, trusting both equally, or trusting neither) attracts more than 50 per cent support in any province.

The formal division of powers notwithstanding, Canadians may trust one order of government over the other to address their policy priorities, based on a range of factors including their own policy and political preferences. They may also trust both the federal and their provincial or territorial government equally, or they may have little trust in both orders of government.

The survey asked Canadians about which level of government they trust more to make the right decisions in five broad areas of policy: managing the health care system; promoting economic growth and job creation; addressing climate change; managing energy resources; and managing immigration and refugee settlement. In three of these areas -- economic growth and job creation, climate change, and energy -- a plurality of Canadians trust both the federal and their provincial or territorial government equally. On the issue of health care, a plurality (by a small margin) trusts their provincial or territorial government more, and on immigration and refugee settlement, a plurality trusts the federal government more.

The proportion trusting the federal government more is highest in the case of immigration (31%) and lowest in the case of economic growth and job creation (15%). Trust of provincial and territorial governments is highest in the case of health care (32%) and lowest in the case of climate change (12%). The proportion trusting both orders of government equally is highest in the case of economic growth and job creation (39%), while the proportion trusting neither is highest in the case of immigration (20%).

Which level of government is trusted to address key issues? 2019



Q25. Which level of government do you trust more to make the right decisions in the following areas:

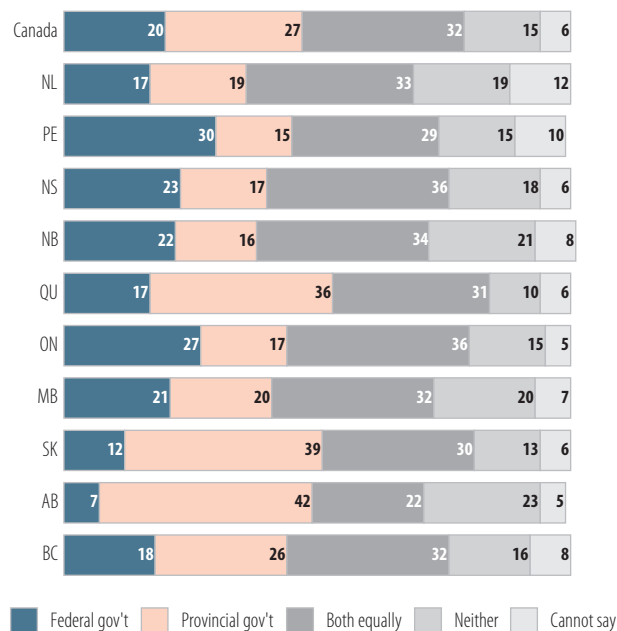
On the question of which government is more trusted, the views of Quebecers are somewhat distinct. This is particularly so when it comes to managing the health care system: a plurality of Quebecers trust their provincial government more (47%), while 22 per cent trust both the federal and the provincial government equally. Outside Quebec, only 28 per cent trust their provincial or territorial government more, while 32 per cent trust both governments equally. A plurality of Quebecers also trust their provincial government more on the issues of energy and immigration, whereas a plurality of Canadians outside Quebec trust both governments equally when it comes to energy, and the federal government more when it comes to immigration.

Residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan, however, are even more likely than Quebecers to trust their provincial government more to manage energy resources (42 per cent in Alberta, and 39 per cent in Saskatchewan), and even less likely than Quebecers to trust the federal government more in this area (seven per cent in Alberta, and 12 per cent in Saskatchewan). More generally, in both Alberta and Saskatchewan, a plurality trusts the provincial government more on three of the five issues – health care, the economy, and energy – which is more than in most other provinces (the exception being Quebec).

The option of trusting neither government is rarely the choice of the plurality. It edges out the other options in only two provinces: in Prince Edward Island, on the issue of health care (27%), and in Alberta, on the issues of climate change (33%) and immigration (30%).

Overall, across the five issue areas, no option (trusting the federal government more, trusting the provincial government more, trusting both equally, or trusting neither) attracts more than 50 per cent support in any province. This is suggestive of a lack of consensus on these questions, and, perhaps more importantly, a preference for a more collaborative rather than a one-sided approach to managing the federation. Simply put, Canadians do not have a one-sided preference when it comes to how issues should be managed in the federation: it depends both on the issue and where in the country they live, and even then, no option attracts the support of the majority.

Which level of government is trusted to address key issues? Managing the energy system 2019



Q25.
Which level of government do you trust more to make the right decisions in the following areas:

Which government is the most trusted in the Territories?

Northerners – and especially Indigenous peoples in the North – are more likely to choose their territorial government as the one that best represents their interests. Across the North, the territorial government is also more likely to be trusted to make the right decisions in the areas of health care, the economy, and energy, while both the territorial government and the federal government are equally likely to be trusted to address climate change. Responses, however, differ in each territory.

In order to gauge attitudes on the division of powers in the North, residents of the three Territories were asked which government best represents their interests. Non-Indigenous peoples were asked to choose either the federal government, the government of their territory, or the municipal government in their city or town as the one that best represents their interests. Indigenous peoples were also offered the option of choosing their Indigenous government.

Overall, Northerners are more likely to say that their territorial government best represents their interests. Thirty-eight per cent select their territorial government, compared with 21 per cent who say it is their municipal government, and 16 per cent who say it is the federal government. Eight per cent say it is their Indigenous government (an option only available to Indigenous peoples). Six per cent say none of these governments best represents their interests.

Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the North, however, provide very different responses to this question. Indigenous peoples (44%) are much more likely than non-Indigenous peoples (27%) to say that their territorial government best represents their interests, and they are much less likely than non-Indigenous peoples to say that it is the government of their city or town. Neither group, however, is very likely to say that it is the federal government.

The situation is somewhat different in Nunavut, where the notion of an Indigenous government other than the

territorial government makes little sense. In Nunavut, the territorial government is seen by both Inuit and non-Inuit (or non-Indigenous) peoples as best representing their interests. In Yukon and the Northwest Territories, however, the difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples remains.¹¹

One finding that stands out is that in none of the territories and for neither Indigenous nor non-Indigenous peoples, is the federal government seen by more than one in five as their best representative.

A somewhat different perspective on this issue arises from the question, discussed above in the case of the provinces, regarding which level of government is trusted more to make the right decisions in five different policy areas. This question was asked differently in the telephone survey conducted in the territories than it was in the online survey conducted in the provinces. In the territories, the options of trusting both levels of government equally, or of trusting neither government, were not mentioned by the interviewer, although the interviewer did record these responses if they were provided by survey respondents without prompting. Unlike the previous question asked in the territories about which government best represents people's interests, there was no option to choose a municipal or Indigenous government.

Overall, taking the three territories together, the territorial government is more likely to be trusted on three of the issues mentioned: managing the health care system; promoting economic growth and job creation; and managing energy resources. Both the territorial government and the federal government are equally likely to be trusted to address climate change, and the federal government is more likely to be trusted to manage immigration and refugee settlement. There are very few differences in the responses of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

¹¹ Results differentiating between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples within each territory should be treated with caution as the sample sizes are relatively small; the territorial samples are also subject to the national rather than separate regional weighting. That said, taking the Northwest Territories and Yukon together, 42 per cent of Indigenous peoples (n=79) say their territorial government best represents their interest, 26 per cent say it is their Indigenous government, 16 per cent say it is the federal government, and none say it is their municipal government. Among non-Indigenous peoples in these two territories (n=224), the municipal government is the most likely to be mentioned (40%), followed by the territorial government (25%) and the federal government (15%).

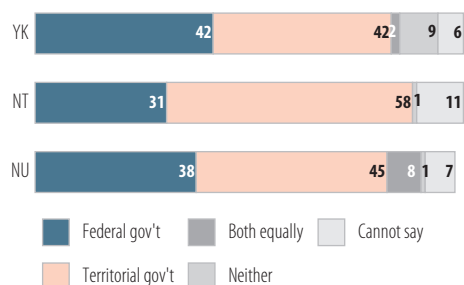
The pattern, however, differs in each territory (excluding the case of immigration, where the federal government is consistently trusted more).

- In Nunavut, the territorial government is more likely to be trusted on each of the four remaining issues. The territorial government is favoured over the federal government by only seven percentage points in the case of health care, but by 18 points in the case of energy.
- In the Northwest Territories, the territorial government is much more likely to be trusted on health care, and somewhat more likely to be trusted on energy and climate change. However, the territorial and federal governments are equally likely to be trusted on the economy.
- The pattern in Yukon is almost the reverse of that in the Northwest Territories. Most notably, the territorial government is trusted overwhelmingly more on the economy, but is trusted just as much as the federal government on health care. And while the territorial government is somewhat more trusted on energy, the federal government is overwhelmingly trusted more on climate change.

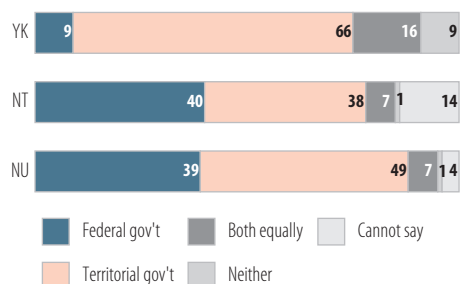
Overall, these results speak to one of the general findings of the Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey, which is that the concept of region is not always the most salient one to use to capture patterns of opinions on the federation in Canada. There are significant differences within the North on the questions of which government is the best representative or the most trusted. Residents of each individual territory have distinct perspectives, as do, in some cases, Indigenous peoples in the region, and among Indigenous peoples, Inuit peoples (related to the distinctiveness of Nunavut).

Which level of government is trusted to address key issues? 2019

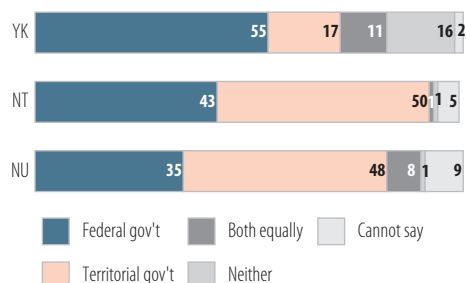
Managing the health care system



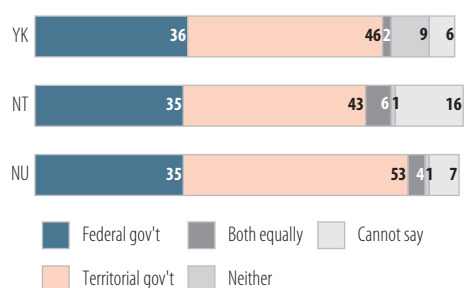
Promoting economic growth and jobs



Addressing climate change



Managing the energy system



Q25.

Which level of government do you trust more to make the right decisions in the following areas:

National or provincial/territorial policies?

There is no clear consensus among Canadians as to whether key issues are best dealt with through uniform federal policies or through provincial or territorial policies that might differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. On the specific issue of climate change, a plurality say that the federal government should set one national policy for Canada, with residents of Saskatchewan standing out as the exception. Quebecers and British Columbians are the most likely to support a uniform national policy on climate change despite the fact that these provinces' own carbon pricing policies exempt them from the new federal carbon tax.

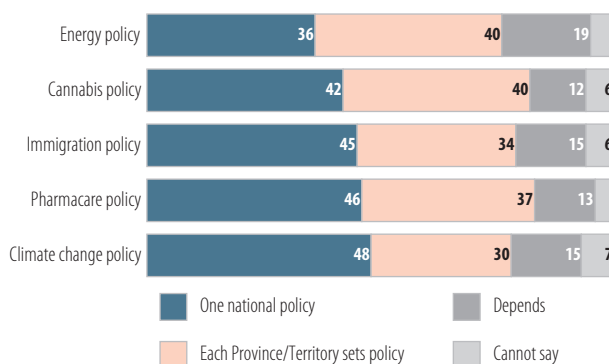
The federal and provincial or territorial governments often differ on whether key issues are best dealt with through uniform federal policies or through provincial or territorial policies that might differ from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey asked Canadians to consider this question in the context of five different issues:

- Immigration policy, such as choosing how many immigrants to accept and where they can settle in Canada
- Pharmacare policy, such as choosing who can receive benefits to cover the costs of prescription drugs
- Climate change policy, such as choosing whether to place a tax on carbon emissions
- Cannabis policy, such as choosing where and how cannabis can be legally sold to the public
- Energy policy, such as choosing which are the best sources of energy to develop

The results show that there is no clear consensus: on none of the five issues does a majority of Canadians clearly favour either a uniform federal policy or different provincial or territorial policies.

Need for one national policy?

2019



Q26.

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think the federal government should set one national policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory, or whether there should be no national policy and that each province and territory should be able to set its own policy:

In the case of three of the five issues, a plurality believes that the federal government should set one national policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory. This is most notable in the case of climate change policy, where 48 per cent favour the federal government setting one national policy and 30 per cent favour each province and territory setting its own policy (the remaining say it depends (15%), or cannot say (7%)). A single policy set by the federal government is also the preferred option in the case of pharmacare (46%) and immigration (45%).

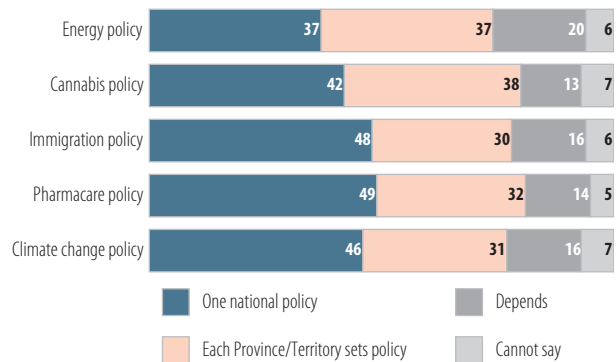
Views are evenly split on the two other issues. In the case of cannabis policy, 42 per cent prefer one national policy and 40 per cent prefer that there be no national policy. In the case of energy policy, 40 per cent prefer that each jurisdiction set its own policy, while almost as many – 36 per cent – want the federal government to set one national policy for Canada.

Views on these issues differ inside and outside of Quebec.

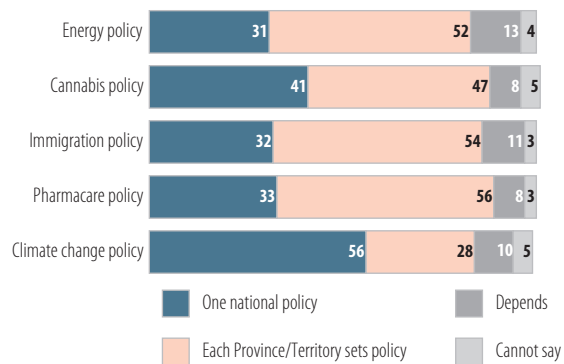
- Outside of Quebec, the option of having one national policy set by the federal government is favoured in the case of climate change, pharmacare, and immigration, while views are fairly evenly split between the two options in the case of cannabis and energy.
- In Quebec – and in particular among francophones – views lean much more heavily away from having one national policy in four of the five areas, most notably on energy, where 52 per cent of francophone Quebecers say that each province or territory should set its own policy, but also on pharmacare (56% favour provincial policies) and immigration (54%). On cannabis, francophone Quebecers also lean toward provincial policies, but somewhat less decisively (47%).
- On one issue, however, francophone Quebecers are more likely to favour one national policy set by the federal government over provincial policies: a majority (56%) of francophone Quebecers say that when it comes to climate change policy, such as choosing whether to place a tax on carbon emissions, the federal government should set one national policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory, whereas 28 per cent say that there should be no national policy and that each province and territory should be able to set its own policy. Quebecers (regardless of language) are actually more likely than Canadians in any other province or territory to favour federal leadership in this area.

Need for one national policy?

2019 Canada outside Quebec



2019 Francophone Quebecers



Q26.

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think the federal government should set one national policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory, or whether there should be no national policy and that each province and territory should be able to set its own policy:

There are further differences in opinion across jurisdictions worth noting in three of the five policy areas covered in the survey.

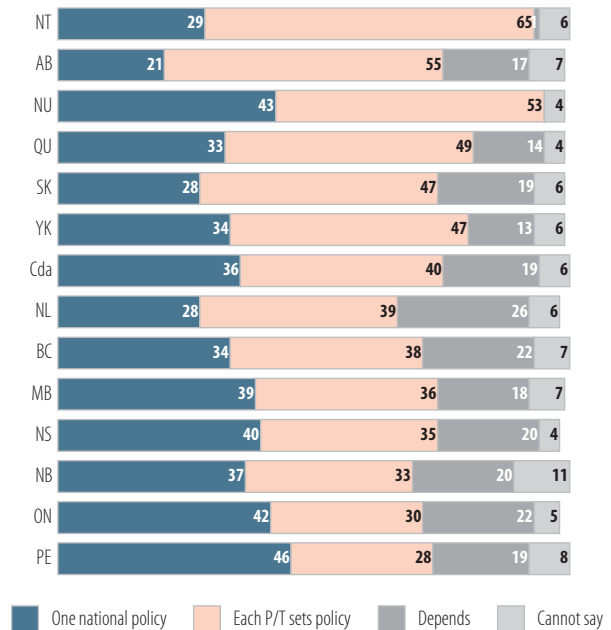
Pharmacare policy, such as choosing who can receive benefits to cover the costs of prescription drugs:

- In every province except Quebec, a plurality or a very thin majority favours Ottawa setting one national pharmacare policy that would be the same for every province and territory.
- A majority also favours one national policy in this area in Nunavut, but not in the Northwest Territories or Yukon. In these two territories, a majority favours allowing provinces and territories to set their own policies.

Energy policy, such as choosing which are the best sources of energy to develop:

- Alberta (55%) is the only province in which a majority favours each province and territory making its own policy.
- In four other provinces (Quebec, Saskatchewan, Newfoundland and Labrador, and British Columbia), the proportion favouring provincial or territorial policies is less than 50 per cent, but still outweighs the proportion favouring one national policy set by the federal government.
- In five provinces (Manitoba, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario and Prince Edward Island), a plurality favours one national policy set by the federal government.
- In the Territories, more people favour territorial policies as opposed to one national policy, including a majority in the Northwest Territories (65%) and Nunavut (53%).

Need for one national policy? Managing energy policy 2019



Q26.

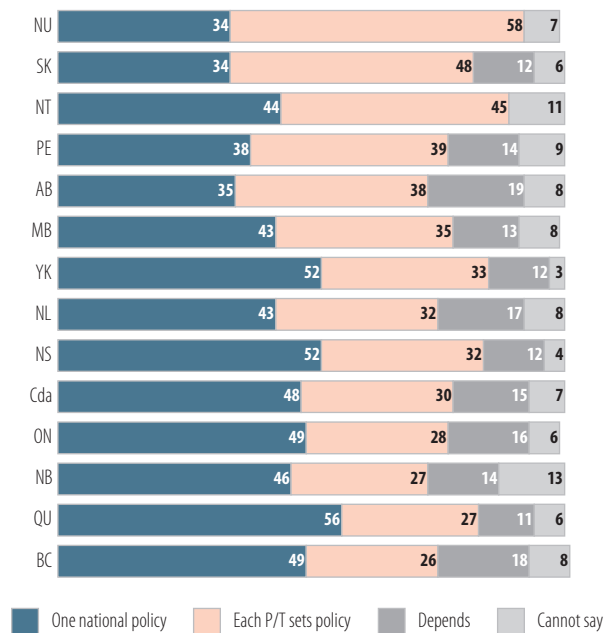
For each of the following, please indicate whether you think the federal government should set one national policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory, or whether there should be no national policy and that each province and territory should be able to set its own policy:

Climate change policy, such as choosing whether to place a tax on carbon emissions:

- In most provinces, a plurality thinks that the federal government should set one national climate change policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory. The one clear exception is Saskatchewan, where only 34 per cent favour a national policy compared with 48 per cent who say that each province and territory should set its own policy. A plurality also favours provincial or territorial policies in Prince Edward Island and Alberta, but by such a small margin that it is more accurate to say that opinions there are evenly split.
- Having one national policy is the preference of a plurality or even a majority in Manitoba, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, New Brunswick, Quebec and British Columbia.
- Views on this question differ in each of the three territories, with a majority (58%) in Nunavut supporting territorial policies, a majority in Yukon (52%) supporting one national policy set by Ottawa, and views evenly split between the two options in the Northwest Territories.

The finding that Quebecers and British Columbians are more likely to support one national policy on climate change is especially interesting as both of these provinces are exempt from the new federal carbon tax precisely because they already have their own provincial policies to reduce carbon emissions. It is possible that their support for the federal government setting one national policy in this area is shaped by the fact that the national policy that does exist (known as the Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change) is one that allows provinces and territories to pursue their own course. It may also be the case that Quebecers and British Columbians are expressing support for federal intervention in other provinces that so far have not imposed their own tax on carbon.

Need for one national policy? Managing climate change policy 2019



Q26.

For each of the following, please indicate whether you think the federal government should set one national policy for Canada that would be the same for every province and territory, or whether there should be no national policy and that each province and territory should be able to set its own policy:

Appendix

Source material

This research references a number of previous public opinion surveys, from which the current survey draws comparisons. The details of this previous research is presented below.

Surveys conducted by the Centre for Research and Information on Canada (CRIC). Between 1998 and 2006, CRIC conducted a series of public opinion studies on a range of national unity issues, including the evolution of support for federalism and sovereignty in Quebec, regionalism, relations with Aboriginal peoples, Canadian identity, bilingualism, multiculturalism, Canada-U.S. relations, globalization, and civic engagement. The specific surveys cited in this report are Portraits of Canada, an annual survey on attitudes toward the federation, and the New Canada survey on Canadian identity, conducted in 2003. Many of the reports and questionnaires for these surveys are available online from the Carleton University library at <https://library.carleton.ca/find/data/centre-research-and-information-canada-cric>. Selected data tables are available upon request from the authors.

Surveys conducted by the Mowat Centre. Since its inception, the Mowat Centre has conducted two studies on the evolution of attitudes to the federation. The first, entitled The New Ontario: The Shifting Attitudes of Ontarians Toward the Federation, was a national survey conducted in 2010. The second, entitled Portraits 2017, was a survey of Ontario and Quebec that focused on a range of issues, including the federation. Survey reports are available from the Mowat Centre at www.mowatcentre.ca.

The Searching Nation, a national survey on attitudes toward federalism and national unity, conducted for Southam News in 1977 by Goldfarb Consultants Limited. A copy of the results of this survey was accessed through the University of Toronto library.



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