

Attachment and Advantages: How Canadians View their Country, their Province and their Neighbour



A REPORT FROM
THE CONFEDERATION
OF TOMORROW
2021 SURVEY OF CANADIANS

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The **Confederation of Tomorrow** surveys are annual studies conducted by an association of the country's leading public policy organizations: the **EnviroNics Institute for Survey Research**, the **Canada West Foundation**, the **Centre D'Analyse Politique – Constitution et Fédéralisme**, the **Institute for Research on Public Policy**, the **Brian Mulroney Institute of Government** and the **Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy**. The surveys give voice to Canadians about the major issues shaping the future of the federation and their political communities. The 2021 study consists of a survey of 5,814 adults, conducted online in the provinces between January 25 and February 17; and online and by telephone in the territories between January 25 and March 1. Survey results are weighted by region, gender, age, language, education, immigrant background and Indigenous identity, to ensure they are representative of the country as a whole. When results are reported for the territories (individually or combined), these are weighted separately to ensure they are representative of that region.

Executive summary

The mid-point of each calendar year offers an ideal opportunity for Canadians to reflect on issues related to national identity. This period is marked by three national holidays in quick succession: Quebec's Saint Jean Baptiste Day (or *Fête Nationale*) on June 24, Canada Day on July 1, and Independence Day in the United States on July 4. This report, based upon the Confederation of Tomorrow 2021 survey of Canadians, presents findings on feelings of attachment to Canada, as well as to one's province or territory, and explores perceptions of Canada's advantages relative to the United States in the aftermath of the 2020 U.S presidential election.

Attachment to Canada and to province/territory

Most Canadians feel attached to the country, and to their province or territory. However, the situations inside and outside Quebec are very different. Canadians outside Quebec are more likely to feel very attached to Canada than very attached to their province or territory. The opposite is true in Quebec, where fewer feel very attached to Canada, and more feel very attached to their province.

Outside Quebec, attachment to Canada is highest in PEI and Nova Scotia, and lowest in the North. The proportion feeling very attached to their province or territory is highest in the easternmost provinces, and lowest in the Northwest Territories and Alberta.

Outside Quebec, the proportion that is very attached to Canada increases significantly with age. But unlike in the rest of the country, younger Quebecers (and younger francophone Quebecers, specifically) are more, not less, likely to say they feel very attached to Canada.

Feelings of attachment to Canada and to one's province or territory also vary by political ideology, but in different ways across the country. In Manitoba and Alberta, for instance, those on the right are more likely than those on the left to feel very attached to their province. In Newfoundland

and Labrador, Quebec (among francophones) and British Columbia, the pattern is reversed, with feelings of provincial attachment being stronger among those on the left.

For the vast majority of Canadians, feelings of attachment to Canada, and to their province or territory, overlap: they feel attached to both, rather than choosing one form of attachment over another. Francophone Quebecers offer a partial exception to this pattern. While the majority of francophone Quebecers feel attached to both Canada and Quebec, a more sizeable minority feels attached to Quebec but not to Canada. The Prairie provinces offer a partial exception in the opposite sense: this is the only region where more than one in ten feels attached to Canada, but not to their province or territory.

The Prairie provinces stand out, however, not only because of the more sizeable minority that feels attached to Canada but not to their province or territory, but also because of the greater extent of political polarization related to this sentiment. In these provinces, very few of those who place themselves on the political right feel attached to Canada, but not to their province; among those on the left, however, the proportion reaches one in three. This polarization is most pronounced in Alberta.

In addition to feeling attached to Canada and to their province or territory, most Canadians also feel attached to the city, town or region where they live. This sense of attachment does not vary by size of community: the proportion feeling very attached to their city, town or region is similar for those living in metropolises, mid-sized cities and smaller towns.

Comparing Canada and the United States

Across a wide range of areas, Canadians believe their country performs better than the United States, and they have become even more sure of Canada's advantage over time.

Of all the items asked about in the survey, health care is the one that Canadians are most likely to say is better in their country than in the United States. But large majorities also say that, compared to the U.S., Canada maintains a better quality of life for its citizens; is better at promoting equality for ethnic and racial minorities; provides better social security for groups like senior citizens, the unemployed and the poor; has a better educational system; and has a better system of government. A majority of Canadians also says their country has a higher standard of living than does the U.S.

In most of these areas, Canadians have become even more likely than they were 30 years ago to say that their country does better than the U.S. This change is most noticeable in the case of views about government. In 1991, Canadians were divided as to which country had the better system of government. Since then, in the wake of years of polarized politics in the U.S., culminating in the tumultuous presidency of Donald Trump, the proportion saying Canada's system of government is better has doubled, while the proportion preferring the U.S. system has collapsed.

The proportions of Canadians that say their country offers a higher standard of living and has more opportunities to get ahead have also increased.

When considering both the standard of living and opportunities to get ahead, younger Canadians are more likely than their older counterparts to say that Canada does

better. Thirty years ago, however, these differences among age groups were absent. The improved assessment of Canada's performance between 1991 and 2021 is therefore largely driven by the fact that younger generations today are much more likely than younger generations 30 years ago to say that Canada does better.

The 2020 U.S. Presidential Election

Canadians are much more likely to take a positive than a negative view of the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. This is the case in most regions of the country, but not all. In Alberta, opinions are much more evenly divided. In fact, the proportion of Albertans saying the outcome will be bad for Canada edges out that who say it will be good by a small margin.

Clear majorities of supporters of the Liberal Party, the NDP and the Green Party say that the outcome of the U.S. election will be good for Canada, as do one in two supporters of the Bloc Québécois. Conservative Party supporters, in contrast, are more likely to say that Joe Biden's election as president will be bad for Canada than they are to say it will be good.

Most of those who see the election outcome being good for Canada explain their view by mentioning the positive character traits of Joe Biden, or the negative character traits of his predecessor. Those who say the outcome will be bad for Canada are most likely to say this is because Joe Biden is against Canadian oil or will cancel pipeline projects.

Attachment

Most Canadians feel attached to the country, and to their province or territory – and most feel attached to both at the same time, rather than choosing one form of attachment over another. Feelings of attachment to Canada and to one’s province or territory vary by political ideology, but in different ways across the country.

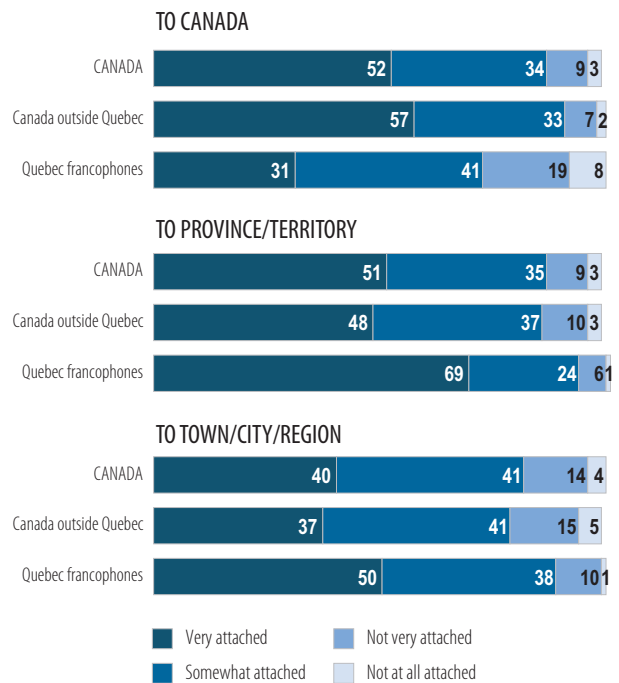
Attachment to Canada and to province/territory

Most Canadians feel attached to the country, and to their province or territory.

- 86 percent feel attached to Canada, including 52 percent who feel very attached, and 34 percent who feel somewhat attached; and
- the same proportion (86%) feels attached to their province or territory, including 51 percent who feel very attached, and 35 percent who feel somewhat attached.

Across Canada as a whole, the proportions feeling very attached to Canada (52%) and very attached to their province or territory (51%), are more or less equal. However, the situations inside and outside Quebec are very different. Canadians outside Quebec are more likely to feel very attached to Canada (57%) than very attached to their province or territory (48%). The opposite is true in Quebec, where fewer (38%, including 31% of francophones) feel very attached to Canada, and more (62%, including 69% of francophones) feel very attached to their province.

Sense of attachment



Q.3

How attached do you feel to each of the following?

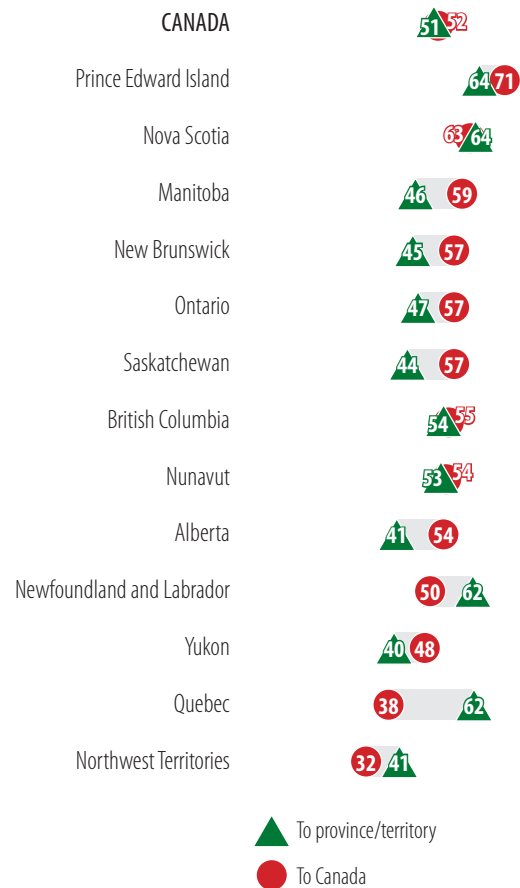
There are, however, important variations in opinions outside Quebec as well. Excluding Quebec, attachment to Canada is highest in PEI (where 71% say they are very attached) and Nova Scotia (63%), and lowest in the North (43%), especially in the Northwest Territories (32%). The proportion feeling very attached to their province or territory is highest in the easternmost provinces of Nova Scotia (64%), PEI (64%), and Newfoundland and Labrador (62%) – where it reaches the same level as in Quebec (though slightly lower than the level for francophone Quebecers). It is lowest in the Northwest Territories (41%) and Alberta (41%).

It is also interesting to compare levels of attachment to Canada and to one's province, across the different jurisdictions:

- In three jurisdictions – Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Northwest Territories – residents are *more likely* to say they are very attached to their province or territory than they are to say they are very attached to Canada.
- In three jurisdictions – Nova Scotia, British Columbia and Nunavut – residents are *equally likely* to say they are very attached to their province or territory and to Canada.
- In the remaining seven jurisdictions – PEI, New Brunswick, Ontario, the three Prairie provinces and Yukon – residents are *less likely* to say they are very attached to their province or territory than they are to say they are very attached to Canada.

Attachment to Canada and to province/territory

Very attached, by province/territory



Q.3

How attached do you feel to each of the following?

Strong attachment to Canada, and to one's province or territory, varies among age groups and by immigration background, but in different ways inside and outside of Quebec.

AGE

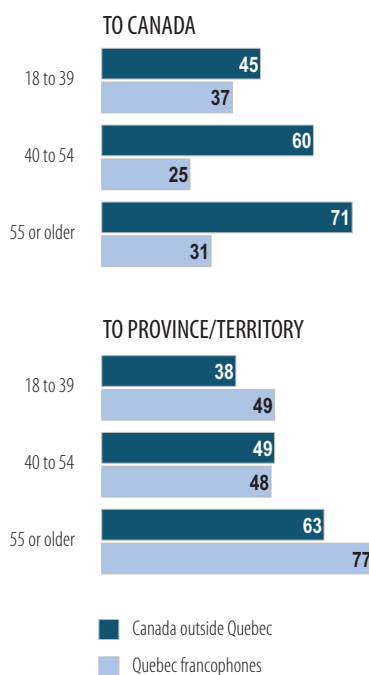
- Outside Quebec, the proportion that is very attached both to Canada and to their province or territory increases significantly with age.
- Within Quebec, the same relationship holds in the case of attachment to the province: older Quebecers are more likely than their younger counterparts to say they feel very attached to Quebec. But, unlike in the rest of the country, younger Quebecers are more, not less, likely to say they feel very attached to Canada. This is the case both for Quebecers in general, and for francophone Quebecers specifically.¹

IMMIGRANT BACKGROUND

- Outside Quebec, those born in Canada to Canadian-born parents are more likely than first- or second-generation Canadians to say they feel very attached both to Canada and to their province or territory.
- Inside Quebec, the same relationship holds in terms of attachment to the province: Quebec residents born in Canada to Canadian-born parents are more likely than those with an immigrant background to say they feel very attached to Quebec. But, unlike in the rest of the country, immigrant Quebecers (whether first or second generation) are much more likely than those without an immigrant background to say they feel very attached to Canada.

Attachment to Canada and to province/territory

Very attached, by age group

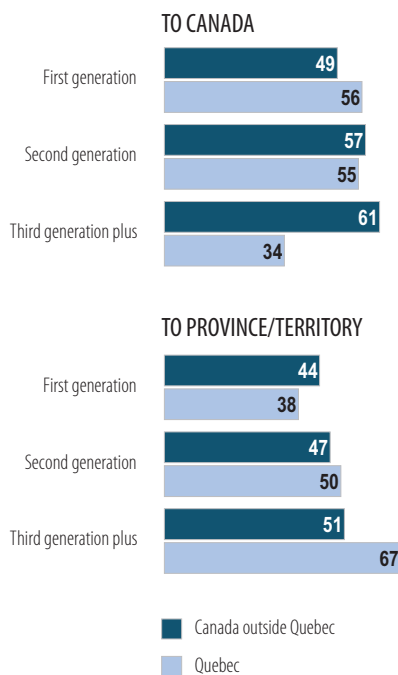


Q.3

How attached do you feel to each of the following?

Attachment to Canada and to province/territory

Very attached, by immigrant background



Q.3

How attached do you feel to each of the following?

¹ This is consistent with the findings from the 2020 survey based on an analysis of somewhat different questions; see: Charles Breton, Alain-G. Gagnon, Andrew Parkin, « Un étonnant fossé des générations chez les Québécois francophones, » *Policy Options/Options Politiques* (September 15, 2020); Donald Abelson, Colleen Collins, Charles Breton, Alain-G. Gagnon and Andrew Parkin, "Millennial and Gen Z Francophones Don't Value Quebec Nationalism," *Maclean's* (August 26, 2020).

Attachment and political ideology²

Feelings of attachment to Canada and to one's province or territory also vary by political ideology, but in different ways across the country.³

In terms of attachment to Canada:

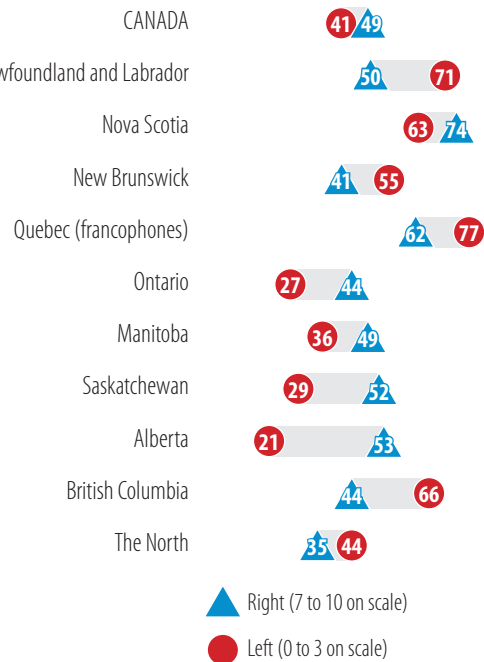
- In three provinces (New Brunswick, Manitoba and Alberta), those who place themselves on the political left are significantly *more likely* than those on the right say they feel very attached to Canada. In New Brunswick, there is a 24-point difference between the two groups; the difference is 23 points in Manitoba and 28 points in Alberta.
- Conversely, in two provinces (Newfoundland and Labrador, and among francophones in Quebec), those on the political left are significantly *less likely* than those on the right say they feel very attached to Canada. The difference between the groups is 17 points in Newfoundland and Labrador, and 14 points among francophones in Quebec.

In terms of attachment to one's province or territory:

- In Manitoba and Alberta, the greater likelihood of those on the left being very attached to Canada is mirrored by the greater likelihood of those on the right being very attached to their province. Manitobans on the right are 13 points more likely than those on the left to be very attached to their province; in Alberta, the left-right difference reaches 32 points.
- In several additional jurisdictions, those on the right are also more likely to feel very attached to their province. This is the case in Nova Scotia (with an 11-point differences between those on the left and right), Ontario (17 points) and Saskatchewan (23 points).
- New Brunswick differs from provinces such as Manitoba and Alberta in that those on the left are more likely to feel very attached to both Canada and to their province. New Brunswickers on the left are 14 points more likely than those on the right to be very attached to their province.

Attached to province or territory

Very attached, by political ideology



Q.3

How attached do you feel to each of the following?

² The analysis in this section excludes PEI and each of the three territories, due to the smaller survey samples in those jurisdictions.

³ Survey participants were asked: In politics, people sometimes talk of left and right. Where would you place yourself on the scale below? (0 = left; 10 = right); in this report, "left" refers to those who placed themselves between 0 and 3 on the scale; "centre" refers to those who placed themselves between 4 to 6; and "right" refers to those who placed themselves between 7 to 10.

- In Newfoundland and Labrador, and Quebec (among francophones), the greater likelihood of those on the right being very attached to Canada is mirrored by the greater likelihood of those on the left being very attached to their province. Quebec francophones on the left are 15 points more likely than those on the right to be very attached to their province; in Newfoundland and Labrador, the left-right difference reaches 21 points.
- British Columbians on the left are also more likely than their counterparts on the right to feel very attached to their province (with a 22-point difference between the two groups).

In some cases, it appears that these differences in feelings of attachment between those on the political left and right are a product of the parties that hold power federally and provincially. In Manitoba and Alberta, for instance, those on the right are more likely to feel very attached to their province – where Conservative parties hold office – but are less likely to feel very attached to Canada – where the Liberal Party holds office. Yet, this pattern is not consistent; it does not apply to the cases of Quebec, Nova Scotia or New Brunswick, for instance. It also cannot account for the variance in the size of the left-right gap in attachment across provinces. To some extent, then, these ideological differences likely reflect deeper issues of provincial political culture that go beyond support or opposition for the current parties in power federally or provincially.

Overlapping allegiances

For the vast majority of Canadians, feelings of attachment to Canada, and to their province or territory, overlap: they feel attached to both, rather than choosing one form of attachment over another. Overall, this is the case for four in five Canadians: 79 percent feel very or somewhat attached both to Canada and to their province or territory; compared to only seven percent who feel attached to Canada, but not to their province or territory; eight percent who feel attached to their province or territory, but not to Canada; and five percent who feel neither attached to Canada nor to their province or territory.

Once again, however, francophone Quebecers offer a partial exception to this pattern. While the majority of francophone Quebecers (69%) feel attached to both Canada and Quebec, a more sizeable minority (23%) feels attached to Quebec, but not to Canada. In no other part of Canada does the proportion feeling attached to their province or territory, but not to Canada, reach 10 percent.

The Prairie provinces offer a partial exception in the opposite sense: this is the only region where the proportion feeling attached to Canada, but not to their province or territory, surpasses 10 percent (14%). The figure for each of the provinces in the region is nine percent in Manitoba, 13 percent in Saskatchewan and 15 percent in Alberta.

Table 1: Attachment to Canada and to province (combined)

	Attached to Canada and to province/territory	Attached to Canada, but not to province/territory	Attached to province/territory, but not to Canada	Neither attached to Canada nor to province/territory
Canada	79	7	8	5
Canada outside Quebec	81	8	4	5
Quebec francophones	69	3	23	4
Newfoundland and Labrador	82	6	3	6
Maritimes	83	7	5	4
Ontario	84	6	3	5
The Prairies	75	14	6	5
British Columbia	83	5	5	6
The North	78	7	7	8

"Attached" combines those who say they are very or somewhat attached. "Not attached" combines those who say they are not very or not at all attached.

Q.3

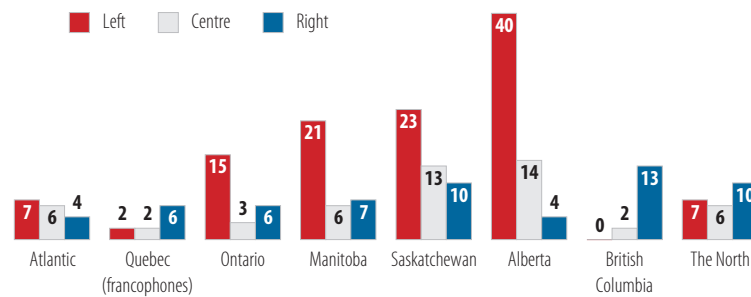
How attached do you feel to each of the following?

The Prairie provinces stand out, however, not only because of the more sizeable minority that feels attached to Canada but not to their province or territory, but also because of the greater extent of political polarization related to this sentiment. In these provinces, only five percent of those who place themselves on the political right feel attached to Canada, but not to their province; among those on the left, however, the proportion reaches 33 percent. By comparison, in the rest of Canada (all jurisdictions taken together, excluding the Prairie provinces), there is no noticeable difference in the likelihood of holding this view between those on the right (8%) and those on the left (10%).

These left-right differences are again much more prominent in Alberta: in that province, four percent of those on the right feel attached to Canada, but not to their province, compared to 40 percent of those on the left.

In general, this left-right polarization of feelings of attachment are largely absent in the Atlantic provinces and Quebec, grows significantly as one moves west from Ontario toward Alberta, and then dramatically reverses direction and lessens in scale as one crosses the Rockies and moves into B.C. (where those who are attached to Canada, but not to their province are more likely to be on the political right). This suggests that, west of the Ottawa river, and most notably in Alberta, the standard left-right ideological cleavage in politics aligns with different feelings of attachment to Canada and to one's province. That this alignment exists is not necessarily surprising. The Confederation of Tomorrow survey shows, however, that its importance varies dramatically across the country.

Proportion of residents attached to Canada, but not to their province or territory
By political ideology



Q.3
How attached do you feel to each of the following?

Attachment to city, town or region

In addition to feeling attached to Canada and to their province or territory, most Canadians also feel attached to the city, town or region where they live. This is the case for 81 percent of the population, including 40 percent who feel very attached, and 41 percent who feel somewhat attached.

In terms of attachment to one's city, town or region, the variations among population groups are relatively modest. The proportion feeling very attached to their city, town or region is somewhat higher than average in Quebec (48%), and among those age 55 and older (50%). It is also slightly higher among those born in Canada to Canadian-born parents (43%) compared to immigrants (35%).

Notably, however, it does not vary by size of community: the proportion feeling very attached to their city, town or region is similar for those living in cities of at least one million residents (40%), those living in communities of between 100,000 and 999,999 residents, (37%), and those living in smaller communities of fewer than 100,000 residents (41%). Among those living in big cities, the proportion saying they feel very attached to them is highest in Montreal (47%), followed by Vancouver (43%).

Comparing Canada and the United States

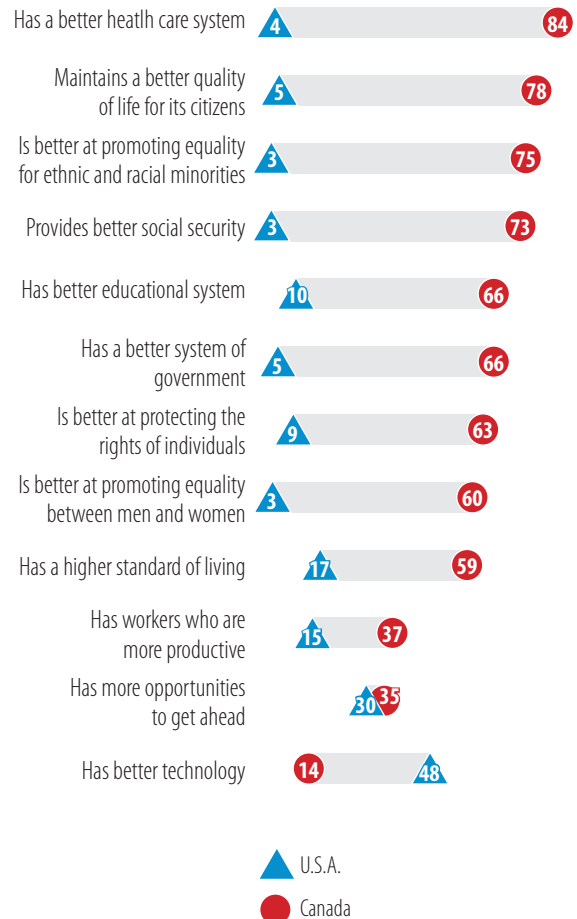
Across a wide range of areas, Canadians believe their country performs better than the United States; and they have become even more sure of Canada's advantage over time. Canadians are increasingly sure that their country offers not only a better quality of life, but also a higher standard of living than does the U.S.

Which country performs better?

Historically, most Canadians have felt that their country does better than the United States at delivering social programs such as health care or old age pensions, but not at providing opportunities to individuals to get ahead, or at developing new technology. The latest survey shows that, compared to the views from three decades ago, Canadians today are even more convinced that their country performs better than the United States, across a wider range of areas.

- Of all the items asked about in the survey, health care is the one that Canadians are most likely to say is better in their country than in the United States: 84 percent of Canadians say that Canada has a **better health care system**, compared to only four percent who say the U.S. health care system better.
- Roughly three in four Canadians say that, compared to the U.S., Canada **maintains a better quality of life for its citizens** (78%), is better at promoting **equality for ethnic and racial minorities** (75%), and provides **better social security for groups like senior citizens, the unemployed and the poor** (73%). In each of these areas, no more than five percent say the U.S. does better than Canada.
- Two-thirds of Canadians say that Canada has a better **educational system** than the U.S. (66%) (compared to 10% who say the U.S. system is better), and the same proportion say that Canada has a better **system of government** (66%) (compared to 5% who say the U.S. system is better).
- About three in five Canadians say their country is better at **protecting the rights of individuals** (63%) (compared to only 9% who say the U.S. does better) and **promoting equality between men and women** (60%) (compared

Which country does better?



QUS1
When you think about Canada and the United States, which country would you say ...?

to only 3% who say the U.S. does better). And a similar proportion says their country has a **higher standard of living** (59%) (compared to 17% who say the standard of living in the U.S. is higher).

- Only a minority of Canadians (37%) believe that Canadian **workers are more productive** than their American counterparts; however, this is still greater than proportion who say that the U.S. has more productive workers (15%). In this case, almost one in two say that neither country has more productive workers (30%), or do not express an opinion (17%). Similarly, only 35 percent of Canadians say that their country offers **more opportunities to get ahead**, but this is slightly more than the proportion who say that the U.S. offers more opportunities (30%); 25 percent say that neither country has more opportunities to get ahead, and 10 percent do not express an opinion.
- The one area where Canadians are more likely to say the U.S. does better than Canada is that of technology. Only 14 percent of Canadians say that their country has **better technology**, compared to 48 percent who say U.S. technology is better; 26 percent say that neither country has better technology, and 12 percent do not express an opinion.

Changes in opinion over time

What is no less notable, however, is that in most of these areas, Canadians have become even more likely than they were 30 years ago to say that their country does better than the U.S.⁴

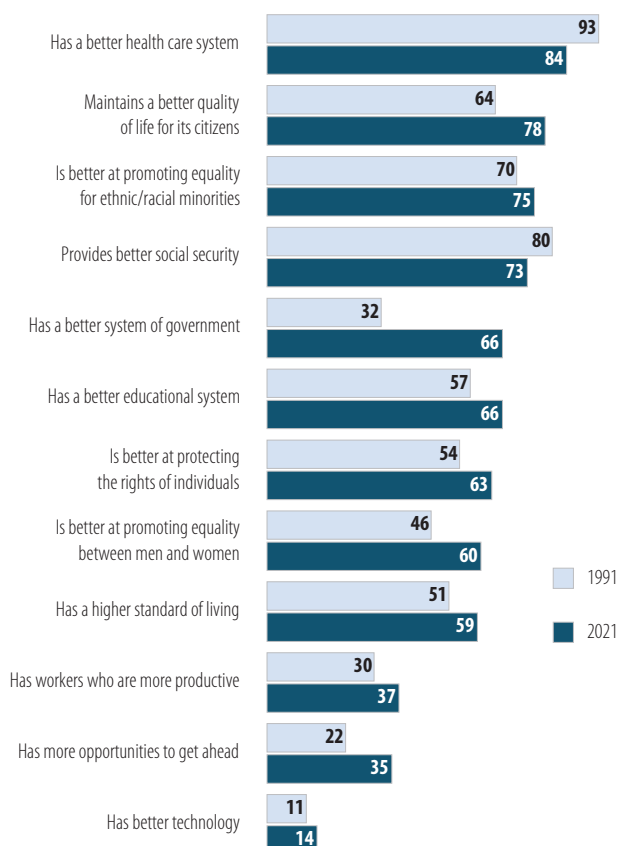
This change is less noticeable in the four areas where Canadians were already most convinced that their country was doing better. In fact, Canadians today are slightly less likely than they were in 1991 to say that their country has a better health care system or a better social security system, and slightly more likely to say that neither country does better in these two areas.

Compared to 30 years ago, there has been a slight decline in the proportion of Canadians that says the U.S. is better at promoting equality for ethnic and racial minorities.⁵ In the case of maintaining a better quality of life for its citizens, there has been an increase in the proportion that says that Canada does better than the U.S. As a result, in each of these two areas, the gap between the proportion saying Canada does better and the proportion saying the U.S. does better has widened: from 52 to 73 points in the case of maintaining a better quality of life, and from 60 to 72 points in the case of promoting equality for ethnic and racial minorities.

Across many of the other areas asked about in the survey, the change has been more significant. It is most noticeable in the case of views about government. In 1991, Canadians were divided on which country had the better system of government, with one in three saying was Canada (32%) and about the same proportion saying it was the U.S. (30%). Since then, the proportion saying Canada's system of government is better has doubled, reaching 66 percent, while the proportion preferring the U.S. system has collapsed to only five percent. In the wake of years of polarized politics in the U.S., culminating in the tumultuous presidency of Donald Trump, the gap between the proportion saying Canada's system of government is better and the proportion saying government is better in the U.S. has widened from two percentage points to 61 points.

Which country does better?

Percentage that choose Canada, 1991-2021



QUS1

When you think about Canada and the United States, which country would you say...?

⁴ Data from previous years are from the Environics Focus Canada surveys.

⁵ Previous survey asked which country "is more tolerant of ethnic and racial minorities." In 2021, the wording of this question was modified to ask which country "is better at promoting equality for ethnic and racial minorities."

In several other areas, the change is less dramatic, but still significantly in Canada's favour:

- The proportion of Canadians that says their country has a better educational system has increased by nine points since 1991. The gap between the proportion saying Canada does better and the proportion saying the U.S. does better has widened, from 43 points to 56 points.
- The proportion of Canadians that says their country does better at protecting the rights of individuals has also increased by nine points since 1991. The gap between the proportion saying Canada does better in this area and the proportion saying the U.S. does better has widened, from 42 points to 54 points.
- The proportion of Canadians that says their country does better at promoting equality between men and women has increased by 14 points since 1991. The gap between the proportion saying Canada does better and the proportion saying the U.S. does better has widened, from 34 points to 57 points.
- The proportion of Canadians that says their country has a higher standard of living has increased by eight points since 1991, but the proportion saying it is better in the U.S. has declined more noticeably, from 34 percent to

17 percent. As a result, the gap between the proportion saying Canada has a higher standard of living and the proportion saying it is higher in the U.S. has widened considerably, from 17 points to 42 points.

- Whereas in 1991, Canadians were equally like to say that either Canada or the U.S. had workers who are more productive, they are now more than twice as likely to say it is Canada than they are to say it is the U.S.
- Canadians were previously much more likely to say that the U.S. has more opportunities to get ahead than they were to say it is Canada; in 2021, they are slightly more likely to say it is Canada rather than the U.S.
- In only one area has the U.S. maintained its edge: technology. As in 1991, Canadians in 2021 remain more likely to say that the U.S. has better technology. However, the gap in favour of the U.S. has narrowed from 57 points to 34 points.

To summarize, in a wide range of areas, Canadians believe their country performs better than the United States; and, in most of these areas, they have become even more sure of Canada's advantage over time. The change over time is most striking in the area of government, but there has also been significant change in areas such as the standard of living and opportunities to get ahead.

Table 2: Which country does better?

1987-2021

	1987	1991	2021	Gap 1991: Canada minus U.S.A.	Gap 2021: Canada minus U.S.A.
Has a better health care system					
Canada	91	93	84	90	80
U.S.	3	3	4		
Neither	2	1	8		
No opinion	4	3	4		
Maintains a better quality of life for its citizens					
Canada	72	64	78	52	73
U.S.	10	12	5		
Neither	13	17	13		
No opinion	5	7	5		
Is better at promoting equality for ethnic and racial minorities					
Canada	76	70	75	60	72
U.S.	9	10	3		
Neither	8	13	18		
No opinion	7	7	5		
Provides better social security for groups like senior citizens, the unemployed and the poor					
Canada	81	80	73	77	70
U.S.	4	3	3		
Neither	7	8	15		
No opinion	9	8	9		
Has a better educational system					
Canada	58	57	66	43	56
U.S.	16	14	10		
Neither	13	14	14		
No opinion	12	15	10		
Has a better system of government					
Canada	49	32	66	2	61
U.S.	23	30	5		
Neither	16	23	22		
No opinion	12	14	7		
Is better at protecting the rights of individuals					
Canada	57	54	63	42	54
U.S.	14	12	9		
Neither	18	22	20		
No opinion	11	12	7		

continued ...

Table 2: Which country does better? ... continued
1987-2021

	1987	1991	2021	Gap 1991: Canada minus U.S.A.	Gap 2021: Canada minus U.S.A.
Is better at promoting equality between men and women					
Canada	53	46	60	34	57
U.S.	13	12	3		
Neither	20	27	28		
No opinion	14	15	9		
Has a higher standard of living					
Canada	45	51	59	17	42
U.S.	42	34	17		
Neither	9	12	18		
No opinion	3	3	6		
Has workers who are more productive					
Canada	32	30	37	-1	22
U.S.	28	31	15		
Neither	25	27	30		
No opinion	15	13	17		
Has more opportunities to get ahead					
Canada	24	22	35	-30	5
U.S.	52	52	30		
Neither	15	17	25		
No opinion	9	10	10		
Has better technology					
Canada	11	11	14	-57	-34
U.S.	70	68	48		
Neither	12	14	26		
No opinion	7	7	12		

Q.US1

When you think about Canada and the United States, which country would you say ...?

Variations in opinion among Canadians

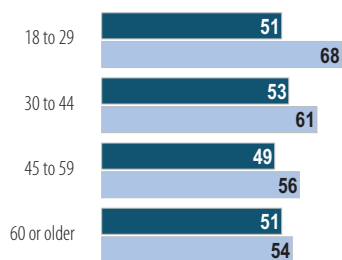
On these questions, there are some notable differences of opinion among different population groups – though, in some cases, it is the absence of any difference that is worth noting. For instance, in 2021, Quebecers are more likely than other Canadians to say that Canada does better than the U.S. at maintaining a better quality of life, but are less likely to say that Canada does better than the U.S. at providing a higher standard of living. Women are more likely than men to say that Canada does better than the U.S. when it comes to protecting the rights of individuals, but are no more likely than men to say that Canada does better at promoting equality between men and women. Racialized and non-racialized Canadians are equally likely to say that Canada does better than the U.S. at promoting equality for ethnic and racial minorities.

When considering both the standard of living and opportunities to get ahead, younger Canadians are more likely than their older counterparts to say that Canada does better. Thirty years ago, however, these differences among age groups were absent. The improved assessment of Canada’s performance between 1991 and 2021 is therefore largely driven by the fact that younger generations today are much more likely than younger generations 30 years ago to say that Canada does better. Specially, 68 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds today, compared 51 percent in 1991, say that Canada has a higher standard of living than the U.S.; in the case of providing opportunities to get ahead, 46 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds today, compared 21 percent in 1991, say that Canada does better.

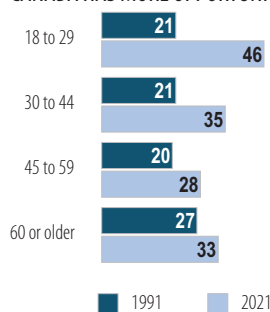
Which country does better?

By age group, 1991-2021

CANADA HAS A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING THAN THE U.S.



CANADA HAS MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO GET AHEAD THAN THE U.S.



Q. US1

When you think about Canada and the United States, which country would you say...?

The 2020 U.S. Presidential Election

Canadians are much more likely to take a positive than a negative view of the outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election. Most of those who see the election outcome being good for Canada mention the positive character traits of Joe Biden, or the negative character traits of his predecessor. Those who say the outcome will be bad for Canada are most likely to say this is because Joe Biden is against Canadian oil or will cancel pipeline projects.

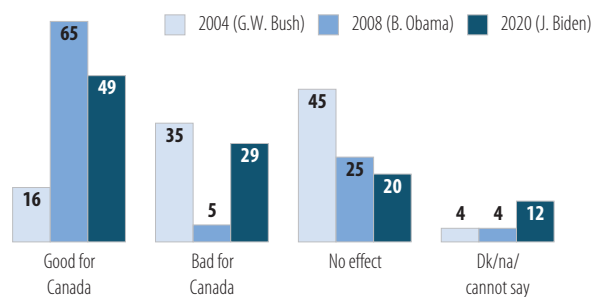
The election outcome

The election of Joe Biden as U.S. president in November 2020 signalled the end of a tumultuous four years in Canada-U.S. relations. President Trump's term had led to tense negotiations between the two countries on issues relating to trade and border security; and more generally to heightened concerns among Canadians over the growing political polarization and deteriorating race relations among their neighbours to the south.

It is no surprise, then, to find that Canadians are much more likely to take a positive than a negative view of the election result. One in two Canadians (49%) say the election of Biden as U.S. president will be good for Canada, compared one in five (19%) who say it will be bad. An additional 20 percent say it will have no effect, and 12 percent do not offer an opinion.

The proportion of Canadians who say that Biden's victory will be good for Canada is somewhat lower than was the case for Barack Obama's election in 2008 (65%), but much higher than for George W. Bush's victory in 2004 (16%). More Canadians today say that Biden's victory will be bad for Canada, compared to the small proportion (5%) that said the same about Obama's win in 2008; but in 2004, almost twice as many as today said that the election result will be bad for Canada. In 2004, Canadians were much more likely than today to say that the outcome of the U.S. election will have no real effect in Canada either way (45% held that view in 2004, compared to 20% who say the same regarding the 2020 election).

Outcomes of U.S. presidential elections
2004-2020



Q.US3

As you may know, the U.S. election in November resulted in the election of Joe Biden as President. Overall, do you think the outcome of the U.S. election will be good for Canada, bad for Canada, or likely have no real effect either way over the next four years?

Opinions on the implications of Biden's victory, however, vary somewhat across the country. Canadians in most regions are much more likely to say that the outcome of the U.S. election will be good for Canada than they are to say it will be bad. But there are two exceptions:

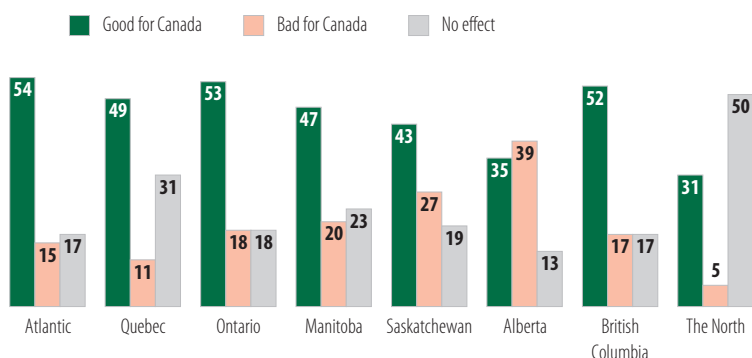
- Saskatchewanians are also more likely to say the outcome will be good for Canada (43%) than they are to say it will be bad (27%), but by a smaller margin than average.
- Among Albertans, opinions are much more evenly divided, with the proportion saying the outcome will be bad for Canada (39%) edging out that who say it will be good (35%).

There are also modest differences among age groups, with Canadians between the ages of 18 and 34 (56%) being more likely than those between the ages of 35 and 54 (46%), or those age 55 and older (48%), to say that the outcome of the U.S. election will be good for Canada.

Finally, there are significant differences of opinion among the supporters of the main federal political parties. Clear majorities of supporters of the Liberal Party (68%), the NDP (64%) and the Green Party (63%) say that the outcome of the 2020 U.S. election will be good for Canada, as do 50 percent of supporters of the Bloc Québécois. Conservative Party supporters, in contrast, are more likely to say that Joe Biden's election as president will be bad for Canada (41%) than they are to say it will be good (29%).

Outcome of the 2020 U.S. presidential election

By region



Q.US3

As you may know, the U.S. election in November resulted in the election of Joe Biden as President. Overall, do you think the outcome of the U.S. election will be good for Canada, bad for Canada, or likely have no real effect either way over the next four years?

Reasons for seeing election outcome as good or bad

To better understand the views of Canadians on the outcome of the U.S. presidential election, those who said it will be either good or bad for Canada were asked to say why. This was an open-ended question, and survey participants could answer in their own words.

Most of those (62%) who see the election outcome being good for Canada mention the positive character traits of Joe Biden, or the negative character traits of his predecessor. For these Canadians, a Biden presidency will be good for Canada because Biden himself is reasonable, honest, intelligent or, perhaps most importantly, simply not Donald Trump. By contrast, relatively few of those who welcome a Biden presidency offer a reason that has to do with a specific policy position. Seven percent mention that the U.S. Democrats and the federal Liberals in Canada have similar policy agendas, four percent mention Biden's environmental policies, and four percent expect Biden to be less protectionist.

Keeping in mind that fewer Canadians say the election outcome will be bad for Canada, it is nonetheless notable that those in this group are much more likely to give reasons that relate to specific policy positions. Specifically, 42 percent of this group say the outcome will be bad for Canada because Biden is against Canadian oil or will cancel pipeline projects; and 24 percent say it will be bad because Biden is protectionist or isolationist. Eight percent say Biden simply doesn't like Canada, five percent say he is too far to the left, and four percent say he is too environmentalist. Character issues (such as Biden being either corrupt or not mentally fit) are mentioned by 10 percent of Canadians who say the election outcome will be bad for Canada.

Notably, among those who say the election outcome will be bad for Canada, those in Alberta are even more likely than average (53%) to say it is because Biden is against Canadian oil or will cancel pipeline projects. The most common reason offered by Quebecers who say the election outcome will be bad for Canada is because Biden is protectionist or isolationist (47%).



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