

Could a Progressive Platform Capture Canada's Youth Vote?



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	5
ACTIVIST GOVERNMENT	8
SOCIAL CONSERVATISM	12
THE ENVIRONMENT VERSUS JOBS	15
SPENDING PRIORITIES	17
TAXES	24
RACE AND GENDER	28
CONCLUSION	34
SURVEY METHODOLOGY	37
APPENDIX	38

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A team of political scientists received a grant from the Social Sciences Research and Humanities Council in 2011 to launch the Comparative Provincial Elections Project (CPEP). This report represents the first time that this new and unique dataset has been analyzed to compare the political attitudes of older Canadians to young Canadians.

The dataset of 8,121 respondents, collected through a post-election survey of voters in each province over a complete cycle of provincial elections, allows for a level of detailed analysis not possible prior to the completion of the project at the end of 2014.

While generally Canadians display progressive attitudes, the analysis shows that young Canadians aged 35 and under across all walks of life are more likely to be to the left of older Canadians aged 36 or over, with some differences among young people from different provinces.

The key findings are:

- More than older Canadians, younger Canadians want an activist government that creates jobs and ensures a decent standard of living.
- More younger Canadians are socially progressive than older Canadians and want a government that adapts its moral views to changes within society.
- Compared to older Canadians, younger Canadians are much less likely to prioritize economic growth over environmental protection and to want increased government spending on the environment.
- A solid majority of Canadians support increasing corporate taxes and are generally unwilling to adopt tax cuts if it means reductions to public services. Younger Canadians are even more supportive of tax increases tied to better public services than older Canadians.
- While a strong majority of Canadians want either higher or stable spending on social programs, more young Canadians are keen to see higher spending on health and education than older Canadians.

- More young people who are university-educated, big city dwellers, Ontarian, or British Columbian tend to lean more to the left. More young people that have not attended university, live in small cities and rural areas, or are Manitoban tend to lean more to the right.
- Young Ontarians are the least concerned with maintaining traditional values and most likely to perceive gender inequality as an issue. More of them also tend to want to spend more on infrastructure and social assistance, and less on crime and justice, than the average Canadian.

INTRODUCTION

There is much media focus and discussion on lagging interest and engagement of Canadian youth in politics. While low voter turnout rates are often pointed to as evidence of apathy and disaffection, there is ample literature that problematizes the notion that youth are disengaged from politics and civic life writ large.

But what are the political priorities of young Canadians? Are these priorities similar to those of older Canadians? How do the political priorities of young people from certain walks of life differ from the political priorities of young people from other walks of life? Answering these questions is important for political parties and other actors seeking to put forward policies and programs that might motivate younger Canadians to vote and change the complexion of the country's politics. For organizations seeking to push for progressive change, it can help inform where political support for certain priorities already lies and where it needs to be built.

THE SIZE OF THIS SAMPLE ALLOWS US TO DRILL DOWN INTO THE NUMBERS AND DISCOVER NOT ONLY THE DIFFERENCES IN POLITICAL PRIORITIES BETWEEN YOUNGER AND OLDER CANADIANS, BUT ALSO THE DIFFERENCES AMONG YOUNG CANADIANS THEMSELVES.

This study analyzes a new and unique dataset. In 2011, a team of political scientists received a grant from the Social Sciences Research and Humanities Council to launch the Comparative Provincial Elections Project (CPEP). Along with additional funding from various universities, the team was able to conduct a post-election survey of voters over a complete cycle of provincial elections (i.e. one in each province) starting with the 2011 Prince Edward Island election and ending with the election in New Brunswick in September 2014.

The resulting dataset contains 8,121 respondents and has a representative sample of 2,048 Canadians aged 35 and under and 6,073 Canadians aged 36 or over. The size of this sample allows us to drill down into the numbers and discover not only the differences in political priorities between younger and older Canadians, but also the differences among young Canadians themselves.

For instance, we can compare young Canadians in Prince Edward Island to those in British Columbia and we can compare young Canadians with low incomes to young Canadians with high incomes. This level of detail was not possible to attain prior to the completion of the CPEP dataset.

If we define young as being 35 years of age or younger, what emerges from the analysis of this dataset is that there are disagreements on and variations in degrees of support for a range of political priorities between young and older Canadians across all walks of life and in all provinces. Young Canadians, no matter where they live and what they do, are more likely than older Canadians to want an activist government that is socially liberal, cares about the environment, and spends more on social programs related to health care and education. In many ways, more young voters support elements of a progressive political agenda than older voters.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUNG AND OLD VOTERS IS USUALLY THE DEGREE TO WHICH YOUNG CANADIANS EMBRACE A PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL AGENDA AS OPPOSED TO STRIDENT DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO AGE GROUPS.

More young Canadians also tend to place a lower priority on infrastructure spending compared to older Canadians. While the differences are less pronounced, young Canadians are generally more in favour of personal tax increases than older Canadians, particularly if those tax increases are tied to better public services. As such, more young Canadians are likely to be “left-wing” than older Canadians. Though it should be noted that Canadians remain broadly progressive on most issues, the difference between young and old voters is usually the degree to which young Canadians embrace a progressive political agenda as opposed to strident disagreement between the two age groups.

However, it would be incorrect to say that young Canadians are always to the left of older Canadians on every issue. It is found that solid majorities of young and older Canadians both want to see higher corporate taxes and do not want governments to increase their spending on either crime and justice or social assistance. Interestingly, young Canadians are slightly less likely to recognize

the existence of systematic discrimination of racial minorities and patriarchy (i.e. a male dominated society) compared to older Canadians.

Using percentages, the analysis below compares responses of Canadians to 19 different survey questions and breaks down the results by age group. The average score on the scale being used, or what the “average Canadian”¹ would think, is also reported. This initial analysis gives a good summary of the differences and similarities between young and older Canadians on these questions.

The appendix dives into greater detail. It reports the average score of young and older Canadians on the scale being used across various socio-demographic groups: province; income; level of education; sex; living in a big city versus living in a smaller city or rural area; and religiosity (i.e. the level of importance that one attaches to religion). The appendix allows us to explore the extent to which young Canadians across different walks of life agree or disagree with one another.

1 The technical term for the numbers presented here is the “mean.” It indicates what is the “average” or most ‘typical’ response within a sample. For instance, if the answer scale is 1 = strongly agree, 2 = somewhat agree, 3 = somewhat disagree, and 4 = strongly disagree, a mean of ‘2.5’ would indicate the average score within the sample fell exactly at the mid-point between ‘somewhat agree’ and ‘somewhat disagree.’

ACTIVIST GOVERNMENT

Chart 1

Government should leave it ENTIRELY to the private sector to create jobs.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)²

National Average: 2.91



Nearly 70% of Canadians do not think that the responsibility to create jobs should rest solely with the private sector. This opinion is even more common among young Canadians. While two thirds of older Canadians disagree that job creation should be left to the private sector, slightly over three quarters of young Canadians disagree.

² The number of "I don't know" responses was very low for all of these questions and have been excluded from the analysis.

If we look at the appendix, we see that more young Canadians from nearly all provinces and socio-demographic groups are likely to disagree with this statement than the average Canadian. As could be expected, there is also a sizeable gap between young and older Canadians across all socio-demographic groups.

What we are seeing here is that there is a real difference of opinions on this statement between young and old Canadians, no matter what they do and where they live. The only exception is Manitoba, where young people are slightly less likely to disagree with this statement as opposed to older Canadians.

Chart 2

Government should see that everyone has a decent standard of living.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 1.94

On the whole, Canadians very much favour the idea that governments are responsible for ensuring that everyone has a decent standard of living, although we see a 10% gap in agreement with this statement between young and older Canadians.



The appendix reveals that all socio-demographic groups of young Canadians scored above the national average on agreement with this statement with the exception of young Manitobans and young high-income earners.

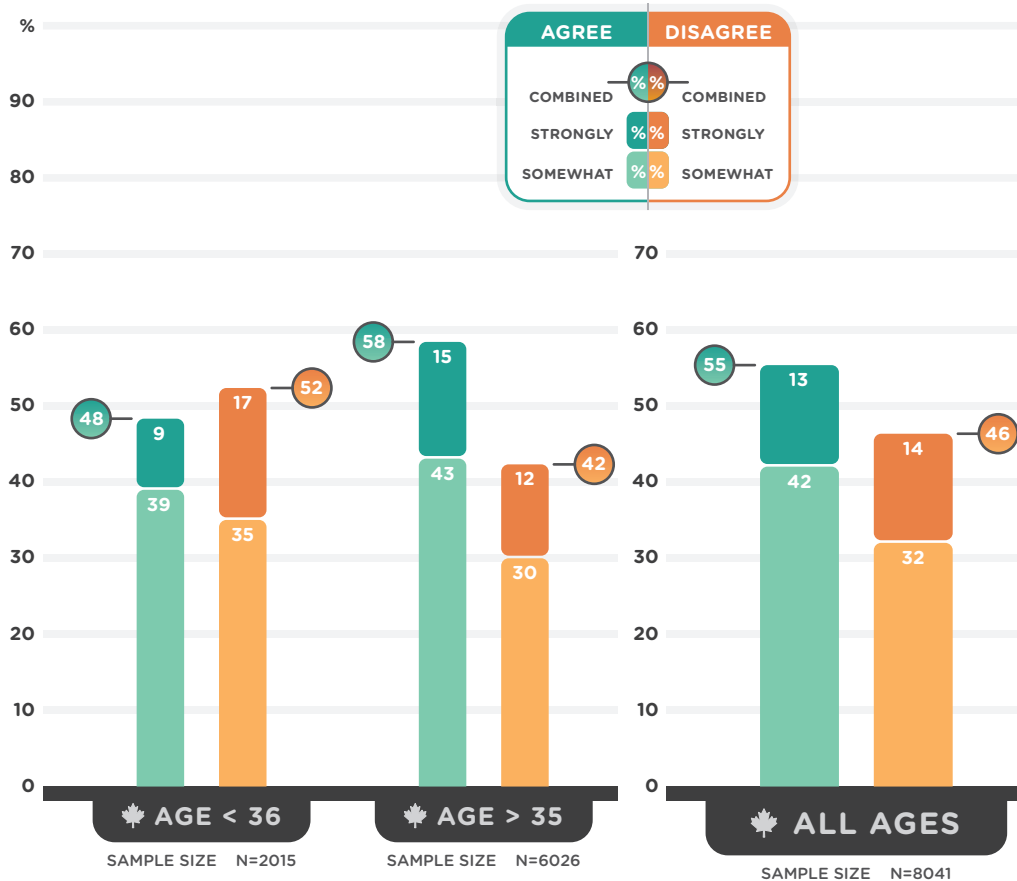
More young people in Quebec and Newfoundland are less likely to agree with this statement than older people. In all other socio-demographic groups, young people agree more with this statement than do older Canadians in those groups.

Chart 3

Government regulation stifles personal drive.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 2.47



When it comes to government regulation, a slight majority of Canadians have the negative view that it stifles personal drive in some way. However, when we break down the CPEP data by age group, a somewhat different story emerges. A small majority of young Canadians disagree with the statement that “government regulation stifles personal drive” while a minority of older Canadians disagree.

When we compare the national average on this question to the results in the appendix, we see that young Canadians from nearly all socio-demographic groups are more likely to disagree with statement than the average Canadian. The small exceptions are young Canadians living in Manitoba, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador as well as young Canadians living outside of big cities.

Chart 4

SOCIAL CONSERVATISM

The world is always changing and we should adapt our view of moral behaviour to these changes.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 2.33



One of the cornerstones of social conservatism is that moral values, generally those found in religious texts, are immutable and should not change as society modernizes. As a whole, a large majority of Canadians do not agree, and rather believe that we should adapt our moral views as society changes. The difference between young and older Canadians on this question is striking.

Young Canadians are overwhelmingly in favour of adjusting moral views along with changes in society. Older Canadians are less sure. A sizeable minority disagrees that our views on moral issues should be subject to change in relation to what

is happening in society. If older Canadians do agree with the adaptability of our moral views, they are lukewarm in their agreement. Only 13% of older Canadians strongly agreed with the above statement compared to 27% of younger Canadians.

As could be expected, the gap between young and old on this issue is found across all socio-demographic groups examined. The appendix shows that religious young people and young people living on the Prairies are the most socially conservative on this measurement while young Canadians who are non-religious as well as young British Columbians are the least social conservative.

Chart 5

This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family values.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 2.21



Taken as a whole, a sizeable majority of Canadians are convinced of the importance of maintaining “traditional family values.” However, if we break our sample down into young and older Canadians, the numbers tell a different story. While 62% of older Canadians believe in the importance of maintaining “traditional family values,” younger Canadians are very much split down the middle on this issue. This pattern persists across all socio-demographic groups examined in the appendix.

The young people that are least concerned with maintaining traditional values are non-religious, live in big cities, have gone university, or are residents of Ontario. The young people that are most likely to be concerned with maintaining traditional values are religious, do not live in big cities, have not attended university, or are residents of Saskatchewan.

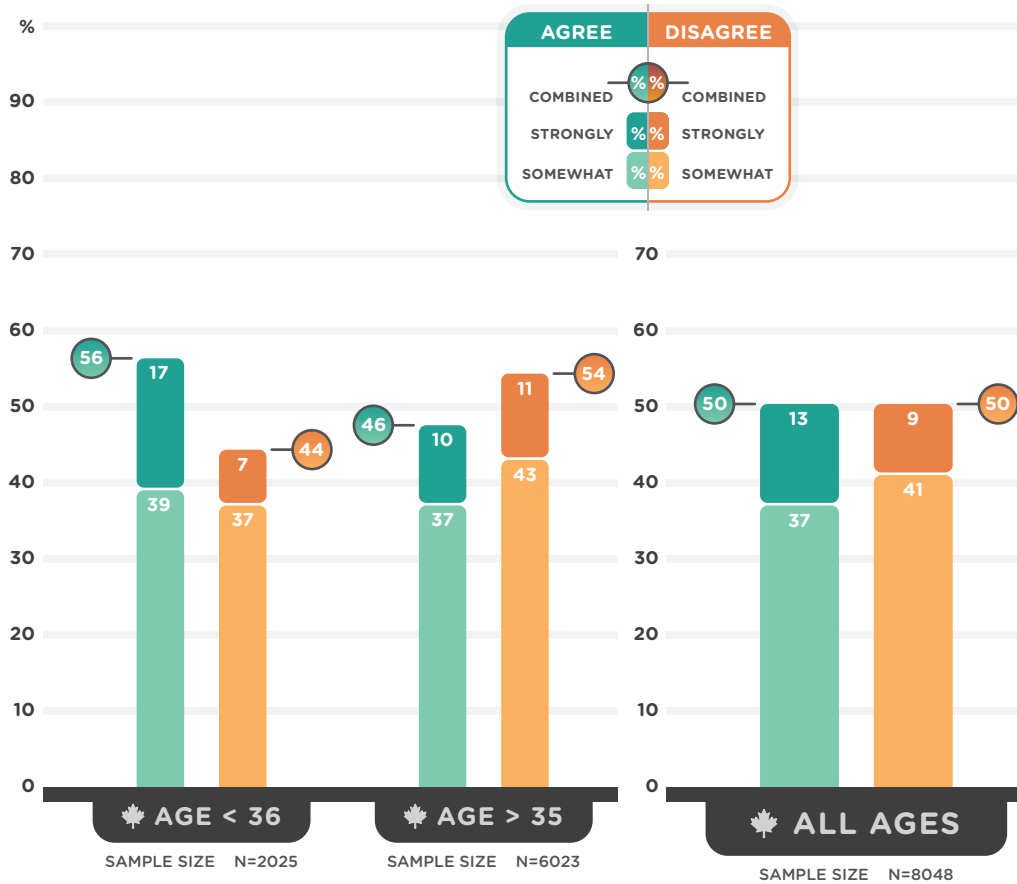
THE ENVIRONMENT VERSUS JOBS

Chart 6

Protecting the environment is more important than creating jobs.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 2.46



There is a popular misconception that increased environmental protection could mean the loss of jobs. When it comes to the trade-off between jobs and environmental protection Canadians are split exactly down the middle: 50% want to prioritize jobs and 50% want to prioritize the environment.

However, there is a striking difference between young and older Canadians on this issue. While older Canadians favour creating jobs by a slight majority, younger Canadians favour protecting the environment by a slight majority. With the exception of young people from Alberta and New Brunswick, more young people in all socio-demographic groups examined agree with this statement more than the national average.

Further, there are no examples of socio-economic groups or provinces where older Canadians agreed more with this statement than young Canadian members of the group or province.

SPENDING PRIORITIES

Chart 7

The CPEP survey asked Canadians if they wanted their provincial governments to spend “more, less, or about the same” on a variety of policy areas. If we look at the national averages reported below, the spending priorities of Canadians went in this order: health care, K-12 education, infrastructure, post-secondary education, the environment, crime and justice, and social assistance.

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Health Care

National Average: 1.44 | Health Care



Out of all of the policy areas that we asked about, health care was the top spending priority for Canadians. Given that older people are heavier users of health care than younger people, they could be assumed to be more likely to wish for increased government spending, and therefore transfers from the federal government, in this area. However, there is a sizeable 10% difference between young Canadians and older Canadians who stated that their provincial government should spend more on health care.

If we look at the appendix, this gap in opinions on health care spending between young and older Canadians is found across every socio-economic

group examined, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador. Young women as well as young people living in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador were the most likely to desire higher health care spending. The socio-demographic groups of young people that are less likely to want higher health care spending are males, those who have attended university, or residents of Alberta and New Brunswick.

Chart 8

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education

National Average: 1.51



The second highest government spending priority for Canadians is K-12 education. Interestingly, the importance of K-12 education is due to the strong desire of young Canadians to see increased government spending in this area. A large majority of young Canadians (61%) want to see more public spending in this area compared to a slight minority of older Canadians (48%) who want the same thing.

Overall, the CPEP dataset shows that older Canadians are more likely to be

content with the status quo when it comes to K-12 education spending. In the appendix, this gap in attitudes between young and older Canadians is shown to persist in all socio-demographic groups examined. Further, young Canadians from all socio-demographic groups are more likely to desire higher K-12 education spending than the average Canadian.

Chart 9

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Post-secondary Education

(1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less)
 National Average: 1.67 (n = 2031, 6030)



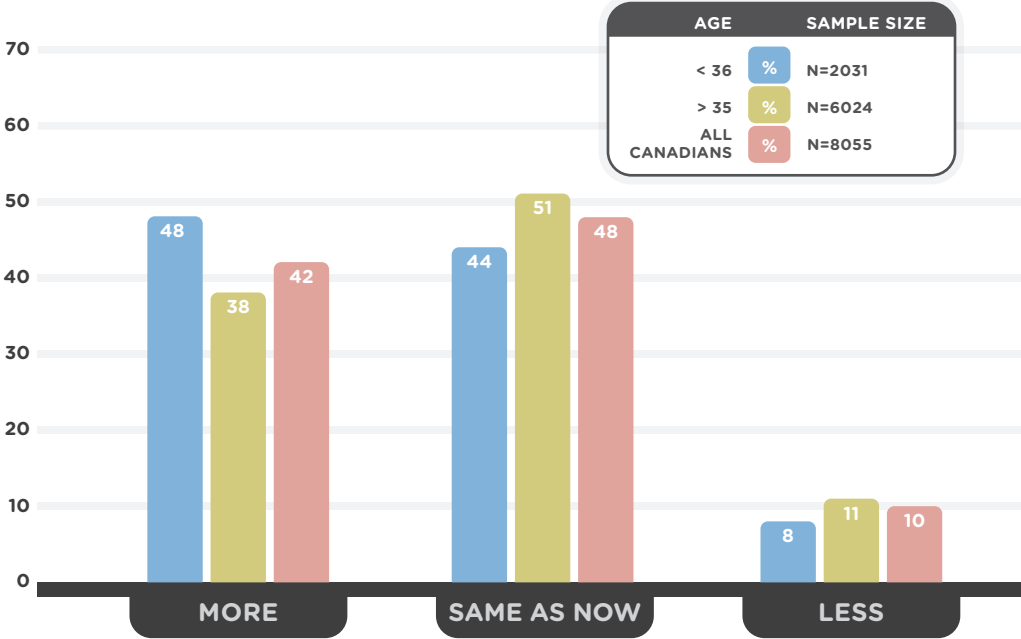
Generally speaking, Canadians place a higher priority on spending on K-12 education compared to post-secondary education. Indeed, 53% of Canadians want more spent on K-12 education as opposed to 41% who want higher spending on post-secondary education. However, there is a sizeable age gap here. While only 37% of older Canadians lean towards increasing spending on post-secondary education, almost half of young Canadians want their provincial government to increase spending in this area.

The appendix illustrates that this gap is found in all socio-demographic groups, with the exception of Newfoundland and Labrador. Further, young people from all socio-demographic groups are more likely to want governments to spend more on post-secondary education than the average Canadian.

Chart 10

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? The Environment

(1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less)
 National Average: 1.68



Taken as a whole, 42% of Canadians want to see an increase in government spending on the environment. Once again the gap between older and young Canadians is noteworthy. A near majority of young Canadians (48%) would like to see more government spending on the environment compared to a clear minority of older Canadians (38%).

In the appendix, this sizeable difference in the opinions between young and old can be found in all socio-demographic groups, except for Newfoundland and Labrador where young and old agree on this issue. Only high-income young

people as well as young Manitobans want government to spend less on the environment than the average Canadian.

Chart 11

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Infrastructure

(1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less)

National Average: 1.62



Overall, infrastructure is a rather high priority for Canadians with 46% saying that provincial governments should spend more in this area. Once again, we see a difference of opinion between young and older Canadians. Roughly half of older Canadians believe that provincial governments should spend more on infrastructure compare to 39% of young Canadians.

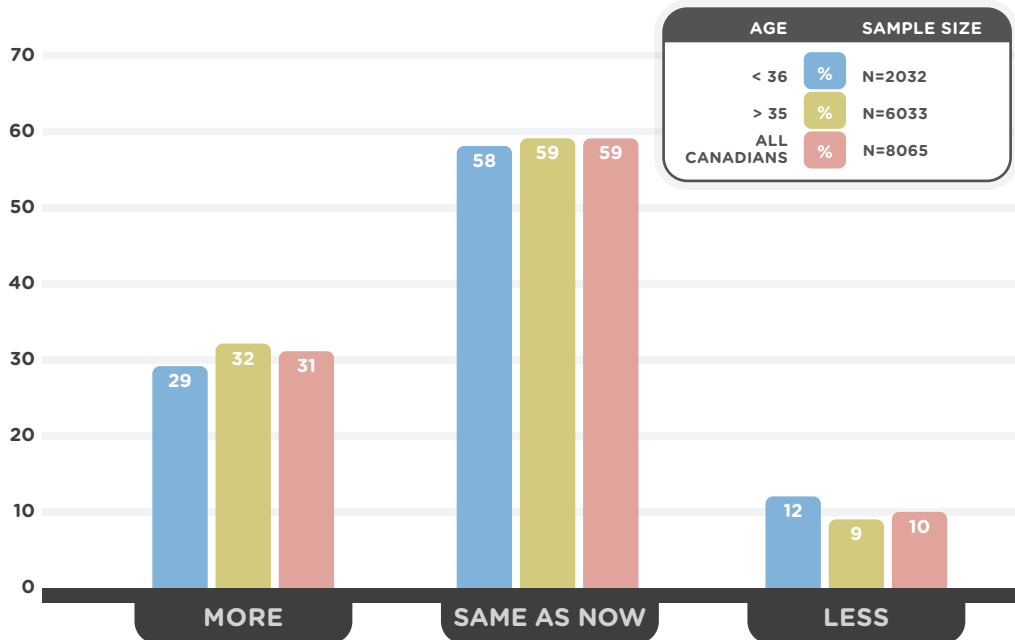
If one examines the appendix, this gap can be found in all socio-demographic groups, with the exception of big cities where young and older Canadians have similar views on this issue. Only young people residing in Ontario or Saskatchewan as well as young people living in big cities want to spend more on infrastructure than the average Canadian.

Chart 12

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Crime and Justice

(1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less)

National Average: 1.79



According to the CPEP dataset, increased spending on crime and justice is not an important priority for either older or younger Canadians. Just less than one third of Canadians stated that provincial governments should spend more on crime and justice. Young Canadians lean slightly towards spending less on crime and justice than older Canadians, but the difference is almost non-existent.

When we look at the appendix, we can see that there is more diversity among young people on this issue compared to other issues dealt with in the analysis. More young people who are religious or live in places like Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Newfoundland and Labrador tend to want to spend more on crime and justice. On the other hand, more young people who have gone to university or live in New Brunswick, British Columbia, and Ontario want to spend less on crime and justice.

Chart 13

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Welfare

(1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less)

National Average: 2.12



While Canadians strongly believe that the government should ensure that all citizens should have a decent standard of living, increased government spending on social assistance was found to be a low priority for both older and younger Canadians. Almost a third of Canadians think the government should spend less on social assistance and only 18% of Canadians surveyed believed that their provincial government should spend more on social assistance.

The differences in opinion on this issue between young and older Canadians were nearly non-existent. The data indicates that more young Canadians are slightly inclined to want provincial governments to spend less on social assistance than older Canadians, but the difference is well within the margin of error. The appendix depicts that there is quite a range of opinion among the different socio-demographic groups of young Canadians. More young people living in big cities as well as young Ontarians and British Columbians are more likely to want greater spending on social assistance compared to young people who live in Saskatchewan or Manitoba and young people residing in smaller cities and rural areas.

TAXES

Chart 14

Should personal income taxes be increased, decreased or kept about the same as now?

(1 = Increased, 2 = Kept about the same, 3 = Decreased)

National Average: 2.25



While there appears to be little appetite among Canadians for increases to personal income taxes, only a minority of Canadians has bought into the tax cutting agenda. Indeed, 62% of Canadians want personal income taxes to be kept the same or increased. There are only minor differences of opinions between young and old Canadians on this issue, but more young Canadians do lean slightly towards the “increased/kept the same position” when compared to older Canadians.

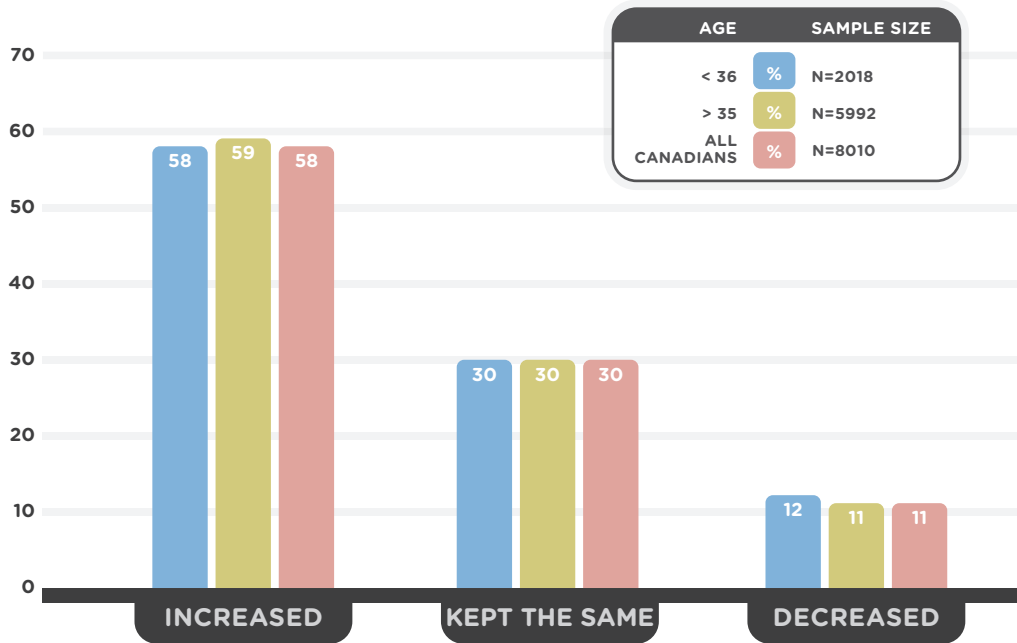
Young Canadians also appear more willing to forego tax cuts than their older counterparts. The appendix shows that more young people who did not go to university as well as young people living in Nova Scotia and Manitoba are likely to want to see personal income taxes cut while more young people who have attended university as well as young Albertans and New Brunswickers are more likely to want personal taxes increased or kept the same. As is discussed below, support for higher taxes increases when it is tied to better government services.

Chart 15

And corporate taxes, should they be increased, decreased or kept about the same?

(1 = Increased, 2 = Kept about the same, 3 = Decreased)

National Average: 1.53



Overall, a solid majority of Canadians (60%) are favourable to increasing corporate taxes and only a very small minority of Canadians (11%) wants to see corporations pay less in taxes. There are essentially no differences in the opinions of young and older Canadians on this issue. Moreover, there is not a large range of opinion among young people from different socio-demographic groups when it comes to corporate taxes.

Young Canadians are quite united in their desire to see higher corporate taxes, or at least to ensure that corporate taxes do not go down. The only possible exception is young Manitobans who are more likely to be in favour of decreasing or keeping corporate taxes the same compared to other young Canadians.

Chart 16

Please indicate where on this scale you would place yourself:

0 = Favours raising taxes to increase public services and

10 = Favours cutting public services to cut taxes.

National Average: 5.19



The previous two questions did not place any context around the issue of taxation. This question links increasing taxes with better public services and decreasing taxes with cuts to public services. Once this context is added, it is clear that a conservative agenda of tax cuts and smaller government is not representative of what Canadians really think.

Only a small minority of Canadians (23%) leans towards the position of cutting taxes and reducing the size of government. Even more young Canadians reject the right-wing agenda of cutting taxes and shrinking government than older Canadians.

As we can see, more young Canadians tend to place themselves lower on this scale towards the position of increasing taxes in order to increase public services compared to older Canadians. When we look at the appendix, the averages for most of the socio-demographic groups of young people are below the national average of 5.19 while the averages for most of the socio-demographic groups of older people are above the national average.

In short, most types of young Canadians tend to be to the left of the average Canadian on this issue while most types of older Canadians tend to be the right of the average Canadian. Once again, young Manitobans distinguish themselves as an outlier to the right compared to other young Canadians.

RACE AND GENDER

Chart 17

Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 2.21



On most of the questions that we have been examining, attitudes of young Canadians have generally been to the left of attitudes of older Canadians. However, the picture is more complicated when we consider issues of race and gender.

One of the foundations of feminism is the recognition of the existence of patriarchy (i.e. a male-dominated society). To test the extent to which Canadians believe in the existence of patriarchy, we asked them their level of agreement with the statement, “Society has reached the point where women and men

have equal opportunities for achievement.” Though a crude measure, the more a respondent agrees with this statement, the less they are taken to recognize patriarchy as a problem. Interestingly, a sizeable majority of Canadians do agree with this statement. Even more young Canadians are likely to agree with this statement than older Canadians, and the appendix illustrates that this pattern is maintained in every socio-demographic group of young people examined.

More young females and more young males agree with this statement than older females and older males. It is possible that the source of this divergence lies in differences in lived experiences. Young Canadians have grown up in society that is less overtly sexist and patriarchal than older Canadians. As such, young Canadians may be more likely to believe that gender equality has been reached than older Canadians who lived through the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s.

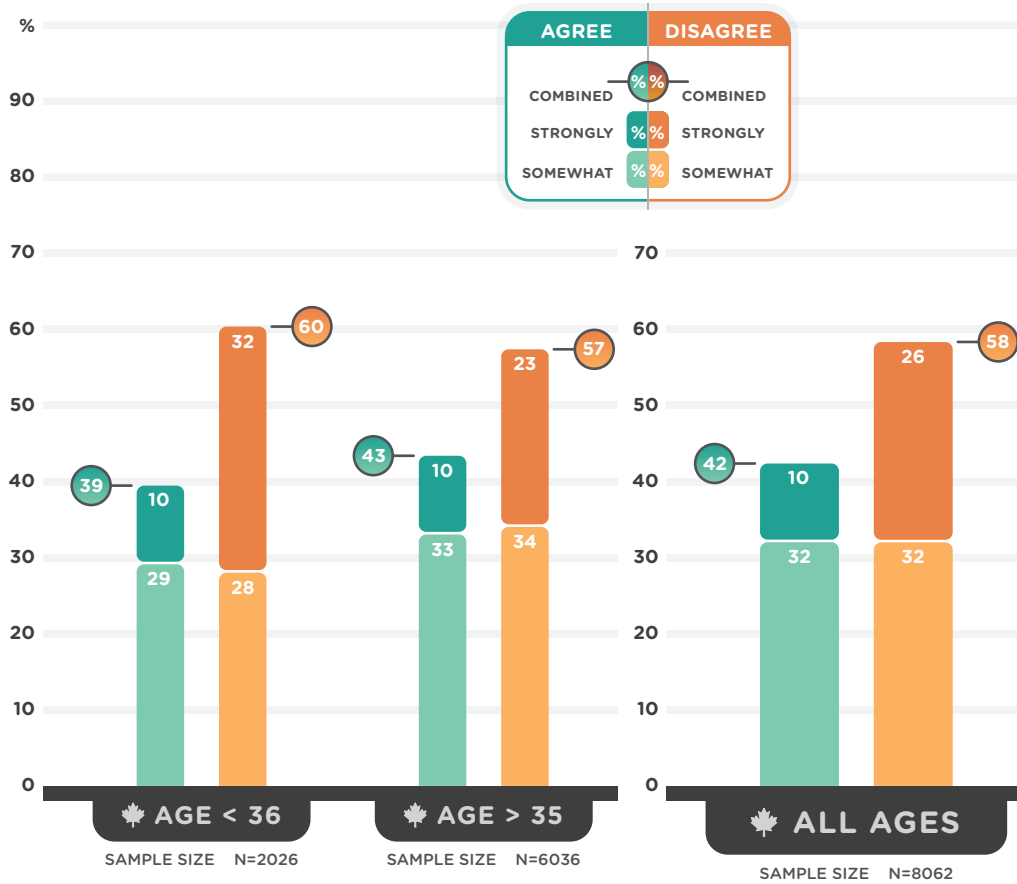
The socio-demographic groups of young Canadians that are most likely to recognize patriarchy are those who earn high incomes, have gone to university, or live in Ontario and New Brunswick. On the other hand, the socio-demographic groups of young Canadians that are least likely to recognize patriarchy include males, those with no university, or residents of Manitoba and Quebec.

Chart 18

It is more difficult for non-whites to be successful in Canadian society than it is for whites.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 2.73



When asked about a statement outlining the existence of systematic discrimination against non-whites in society, Canadians generally disagree. More young Canadians are skeptical of this proposition than older Canadians. Whereas 57% of older Canadians disagree with the statement that it is hard for non-whites to get ahead, 60% of young Canadians disagree.

According to the appendix, the only young Canadians who agree with the statement more than the national average were those who have gone to university, live in big cities, or live in Ontario. If we look at the various socio-demographic groups there are no instances where older Canadians disagree with the statement more than younger Canadians.

Once again it is possible that lived experience lies at the root of this divergence of opinions between older and young Canadians. Younger Canadians have grown up in a more tolerant society where ethnic diversity is considered a source of strength for our country and multiculturalism is positively viewed. Reflecting their experiences within contemporary Canadian society, they may be less likely to believe we have a problem with systematic racism.

However, visible minorities who may actually be the subject of discrimination appear to think differently. Indeed, according to the CPEP data, 63% of visible minority Canadians agree with this statement compared to 41% of Canadians who do not identify as a visible minority.

Chart 19

It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Aboriginals would only try harder they could be just as well off as everyone else.

(1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree)

National Average: 2.56



Since the previous question asked about “non-whites,” the CPEP team wanted to ask a similar question concerning Aboriginal to see if there was any difference. As it turns out, Canadians are slightly more willing to admit that systematic racism exists for Aboriginal people as opposed to the broader category of “non-white.” Indeed, public opinion is essentially split down the middle on this issue.

Taken as whole, there is also no striking difference between young and older Canadians. However, if take a closer look, a difference emerges. More young Canadians are likely to strongly agree with this statement concerning Aboriginals than older Canadians. The appendix shows that more young people

are likely to be in agreement with this statement than older Canadians across nearly all socio-demographic groups and provinces.

The four groups of young people that are most likely to recognize systematic discrimination against Aboriginals are those who have gone to university, live in big cities, or are residents of British Columbia or Ontario.

CONCLUSION

This analysis of attitudes of young Canadians sketches the type of political priorities that young Canadians may be looking for from political parties in this critical election year.

Generally, young people are looking for an activist government that intervenes in the economy to create jobs, regulate where necessary, and ensure that Canadians have a decent standard of living. While young Canadians are split on the issue of whether we need to protect “traditional family values,” they are quite definitive that governments should be socially liberal and adapt their views on moral issues as society modernizes.

Compared to older Canadians, more young people are more likely to want to see government spending on the environment increased or kept the same and nearly half of young Canadians believe that environmental protection is more important than creating jobs.

THE LEVEL OF CONSENSUS OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT PROVINCES AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS WAS UNEXPECTED.

Young Canadians are quite supportive of more spending on important social programs like health care, K-12 education, and postsecondary education while they place a lower priority on increasing spending on crime, infrastructure, and social assistance. Young people are willing to pay for this increased social spending through increasing taxes or foregoing personal income tax cuts. Young Canadians, like all Canadians, appear to be particularly interested in ensuring that corporations pay more taxes. Finally, young Canadians are a bit skeptical when it comes to recognizing the existence of patriarchy and systematic discrimination in Canadian society.

Perhaps, the most intriguing finding of this study is that young people from all walks of life have relatively similar political priorities. Upon close examination of the appendix, young people from a large variety of socio-economic groups and provinces line up to one side or the other of the national average on most of these 19 measurements. The level of consensus of young people from different provinces and socio-demographic groups was unexpected.

This is not to say that there are no differences among young people when it comes to politics. As seen above, more young people who are university-educated, big city dwellers, Ontarian, or British Columbian lean more to the left while more young people that have not attended university, live in small cities and rural areas, or are Manitoban lean to the right. However, for the most part, such differences are outweighed by patterns of similarities among the viewpoints of young Canadians from different socio-demographic groups and provinces.

A second important finding of this study is that there are real differences in the political priorities of young Canadians and older Canadians, regardless of where they live, who they are, and what they do. Young Canadians from nearly all of the socio-demographic groups and provinces examined were more likely than older Canadians to desire an activist government; want more social spending; be socially liberal; and favour higher taxes in exchange for better public services. Across a surprising large number of socio-demographic groups and provinces, more young Canadians than older Canadians are likely to support a progressive political agenda.

ACROSS A SURPRISING LARGE NUMBER OF SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS AND PROVINCES, MORE YOUNG CANADIANS THAN OLDER CANADIANS ARE LIKELY TO SUPPORT A PROGRESSIVE POLITICAL AGENDA.

Certainly, young and older Canadians do not vehemently disagree on everything. There were agreements between younger and older Canadians on levels of corporate taxes and spending on crime and social assistance. On other measurements, the difference between young and old Canadians was one of degree rather than direction. Both young and older voters generally support more activist governments, more rather than less spending on health, education and the environment and are prepared to accept higher taxes if tied to better public services. However, more young voters support elements of this progressive agenda than older voters.

The interesting exception to this conclusion was the findings concerning the questions on race and gender. It would take more research to determine if the

variation between young and old Canadians on issues of race and gender could be the product of differences in lived experiences. Arguably, young Canadians have grown up in a society with less overt racism and sexism than older Canadians and this experience may be affecting their opinions on the existence of systematic discrimination and patriarchy.

This study provides a broad outline of the political priorities of young Canadians and how those priorities differ from the political priorities of older Canadians. While young Canadians do not appear to be less civically engaged or politically aware than older Canadians, they do have lower voter turnout rates than their parents and grandparents. Is it possible that young Canadians are voting less because they do not see their political priorities being discussed during elections? Do they feel that politicians, who are generally older than they are, have a lack of understanding about what young people think about politics? Or, that politicians do not care about the priorities of young people?

Certainly, answering questions such as these requires further investigation. However, as we head into the next federal election, political parties should be thinking about the kinds of policies that will capture the imagination of young Canadians and align with their political values and priorities.

Due to the differences in attitudes between young and older Canadians, the mobilization of a large number of young voters during the 2015 federal election could transform the Canadian electorate and change the types of issues that are talked about on the campaign trail. Putting forth a bold vision to appeal to young people could be the key to ushering a new and progressive era of Canadian politics.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Abacus Data collected the CPEP data on behalf of the research team in the weeks immediately after each province's provincial election. Fieldwork for the various provincial modules was conducted as follows: Newfoundland and Labrador, 12–30 October, 2011 (sample = 851); Prince Edward Island, 4–25 October, 2011 (sample = 509); Ontario, 7–31 October, 2011 (sample = 1044); Manitoba, 5–31 October, 2011 (sample = 775); Saskatchewan, 8–21, November 2011 (sample = 821); Alberta, 25 April–15 May, 2012 (sample = 897), Quebec, 5–29 September, 2012 (sample = 1009); British Columbia, 15–29 May, 2013 (sample = 803); Nova Scotia, 9 October–3 November, 2013 (sample = 797); and New Brunswick, September 23–15 October, 2014 (sample = 657).

The survey was conducted in two steps. Respondents were selected randomly from a randomly recruited hybrid Internet-phone panel that supports confidence intervals and error testing. In smaller provinces where the panel was unable to complete the required interviews, Interactive Voice Response (IVR)-to-Web methodology was used to complete the required numbers of interviews. The IVR-to-Web methodology is based on a random digit dial sample (RDD) that is drawn from a dual land-mobile frame.

The sample is dialed by an IVR system where an announcement is made to the responding household indicating that an online survey is available for this randomly selected household. The message indicates the survey site URL and a unique password to access the survey website. The respondent then goes online at their convenience, inputs their password and fills out the survey. All of the geo-encoded information from the RDD sample is merged back to the unique passwords during analysis allowing for greater depth of analysis.

The Marketing Research and Intelligence Association policy limits statements about margins of sampling error for most online surveys. The margin of error for telephone-based random survey of 8,000 Canadians would under 1%, 19 out of 20 times. The margin of error for telephone based random surveys of comparable sizes in each province that CPEP examined is +/- 3%, 19 times out of 20. The CPEP data were weighted according to census data to ensure that the sample matched Canada's population according to age, gender, educational attainment, and region.

APPENDIX

This appendix reports the averages for each socio-demographic group broken down by age group. In order to read it properly, begin by looking at the scale that is used to answer the question being asked. The first group of questions uses a scale of 1 to 4 with “1” being strongly agree and “4” being strongly disagree. As such, the closer the average of the group is to “1” the more there is agreement with the statement and the closer the average is to “4” the more disagreement there is with the statement and a score of “2.5” would be exactly in the middle of scale or a neutral position. The questions on spending priorities use a scale of 1 to 3 with “1” being spend more, “2” being spend the same, and “3” being spend less.

Similarly, the questions on taxing use a 1 to 3 scale with “1” being tax more, “2” being tax the same, and “3” tax less. The closer the average is to “1” the more there is agreement with taxing or spending more, the closer the average is to “2” the more there is agreement with taxing or spending the same, and the closer that the average is to “3” the more there is agreement with taxing or spending less. The final question uses a scale of 1 to 10 where the closer the average to “1” the higher the agreement with raising taxes to increase public services and the closer the average to “10” the higher the agreement with cutting public services to cut taxes. Evidently, “5” would be a neutral position on this scale.

The appendix reports the averages for each socio-demographic group broken down by age group. The definition of female/male and province is quite self-explanatory. “University” means that the respondent has either completed a university degree, completed some university course work, or is currently enrolled at a university. “No university” indicates that the respondent either has a high school education or below or has completed, partially completed, or is currently enrolled in some type community college or CEGEP program. “Religious” means that the respondent stated that religion was either “very important” or “somewhat important” to them. “Not religious” means that the respondent stated that religion was either “somewhat unimportant” or “not very important at all” to them. Finally, CMA means that the respondent lives in Census Metropolitan Area whereas Non-CMA means that they do not.

Government should leave it ENTIRELY to the private sector to create jobs.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.91				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	3.05	2.86	AB	3.08	2.74
HIGH-INCOME	3.04	2.82	SK	2.94	2.77
NO UNIVERSITY	2.96	2.75	MB	2.79	2.81
UNIVERSITY	3.21	3.04	ON	3.21	2.90
NOT RELIGIOUS	3.08	2.91	QC	2.98	2.82
RELIGIOUS	2.98	2.77	NB	2.99	2.81
NON-CMA	2.93	2.74	NS	3.04	2.86
CMA	3.12	2.90	PEI	3.03	2.76
FEMALE	3.09	2.93	NL	3.00	2.99
MALE	2.97	2.75	CANADA	3.04	2.84

Government should see that everyone has a decent standard of living.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 1.94				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	1.70	1.88	AB	1.90	2.31
HIGH-INCOME	2.00	2.12	SK	1.93	2.07
NO UNIVERSITY	1.80	2.02	MB	2.10	2.12
UNIVERSITY	1.80	2.00	ON	1.75	2.01
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.79	2.02	QC	1.91	1.88
RELIGIOUS	1.82	2.02	NB	1.75	1.84
NON-CMA	1.87	2.02	NS	1.66	1.72
CMA	1.80	1.98	PEI	1.72	1.78
FEMALE	1.72	1.89	NL	1.75	1.62
MALE	1.89	2.02	CANADA	1.82	2.00

Government regulation stifles personal drive.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.47				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	2.54	2.40	AB	2.68	2.43
HIGH-INCOME	2.68	2.41	SK	2.47	2.46
NO UNIVERSITY	2.48	2.28	MB	2.40	2.50
UNIVERSITY	2.83	2.69	ON	2.86	2.50
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.64	2.47	QC	2.53	2.37
RELIGIOUS	2.53	2.33	NB	2.49	2.36
NON-CMA	2.33	2.35	NS	2.48	2.35
CMA	2.77	2.48	PEI	2.31	2.33
FEMALE	2.62	2.49	NL	2.40	2.35
MAL	2.56	2.31	CANADA	2.67	2.45

The world is always changing and we should adapt our view of moral behaviour to these changes.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.33				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	2.12	2.43	AB	2.35	2.62
HIGH-INCOME	2.12	2.46	SK	2.24	2.72
NO UNIVERSITY	2.13	2.49	MB	2.19	2.60
UNIVERSITY	2.05	2.40	ON	2.11	2.43
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.93	2.25	QC	2.06	2.10
RELIGIOUS	2.31	2.65	NB	2.00	2.45
NON-CMA	2.15	2.48	NS	2.01	2.49
CMA	2.03	2.37	PEI	1.98	2.45
FEMALE	2.10	2.46	NL	1.99	2.41
MALE	2.06	2.45	CANADA	2.10	2.46

This country would have many fewer problems if there were more emphasis on traditional family values.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.35				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	2.48	2.21	AB	2.58	2.21
HIGH-INCOME	2.40	2.57	SK	2.27	1.97
NO UNIVERSITY	2.30	2.10	MB	2.32	2.20
UNIVERSITY	2.93	2.70	ON	2.88	2.48
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.78	2.63	QC	2.45	2.41
RELIGIOUS	2.16	1.94	NB	2.40	2.13
NON-CMA	2.28	2.22	NS	2.40	2.11
CMA	2.76	2.42	PEI	2.54	2.06
FEMALE	2.47	2.29	NL	2.44	1.95
MALE	2.53	2.28	CANADA	2.50	2.28

Statement Protecting the environment is more important than creating jobs.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.46				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	2.30	2.51	AB	2.53	2.59
HIGH-INCOME	2.43	2.52	SK	2.44	2.60
NO UNIVERSITY	2.37	2.58	MB	2.45	2.61
UNIVERSITY	2.26	2.41	ON	2.33	2.56
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.29	2.44	QC	2.30	2.43
RELIGIOUS	2.40	2.62	NB	2.54	2.65
NON-CMA	2.45	2.54	NS	2.43	2.55
CMA	2.26	2.49	PEI	2.36	2.40
FEMALE	2.32	2.50	NL	2.42	2.68
MALE	2.35	2.57	CANADA	2.33	2.53

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Health Care...

1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less

National Average 1.44				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	1.36	1.46	AB	1.57	1.65
HIGH-INCOME	1.46	1.52	SK	1.36	1.47
NO UNIVERSITY	1.34	1.45	MB	1.37	1.49
UNIVERSITY	1.48	1.54	ON	1.43	1.59
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.38	1.50	QC	1.34	1.43
RELIGIOUS	1.40	1.46	NB	1.49	1.53
NON-CMA	1.32	1.54	NS	1.22	1.40
CMA	1.39	1.54	PEI	1.18	1.32
FEMALE	1.31	1.41	NL	1.26	1.26
MALE	1.47	1.55	CANADA	1.38	1.48

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education...

1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less

National Average 1.51				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	1.40	1.56	AB	1.43	1.64
HIGH-INCOME	1.44	1.57	SK	1.41	1.60
NO UNIVERSITY	1.41	1.57	MB	1.44	1.65
UNIVERSITY	1.42	1.54	ON	1.47	1.80
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.41	1.55	QC	1.42	1.52
RELIGIOUS	1.43	1.57	NB	1.40	1.58
NON-CMA	1.38	1.57	NS	1.27	1.50
CMA	1.40	1.68	PEI	1.42	1.61
FEMALE	1.38	1.51	NL	1.31	1.39
MALE	1.46	1.62	CANADA	1.41	1.56

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Post-Secondary Education...

1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less

National Average 1.67				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	1.59	1.70	AB	1.66	1.77
HIGH-INCOME	1.66	1.72	SK	1.58	1.66
NO UNIVERSITY	1.60	1.73	MB	1.61	1.84
UNIVERSITY	1.58	1.66	ON	1.49	1.72
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.59	1.66	QC	1.56	1.63
RELIGIOUS	1.58	1.71	NB	1.44	1.71
NON-CMA	1.65	1.73	NS	1.45	1.68
CMA	1.51	1.69	PEI	1.47	1.70
FEMALE	1.57	1.69	NL	1.43	1.46
MALE	1.63	1.73	CANADA	1.59	1.71

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? The Environment...

1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less

National Average 1.68				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	1.59	1.70	AB	1.67	1.77
HIGH-INCOME	1.70	1.73	SK	1.63	1.81
NO UNIVERSITY	1.63	1.76	MB	1.79	1.81
UNIVERSITY	1.56	1.62	ON	1.50	1.79
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.60	1.69	QC	1.50	1.63
RELIGIOUS	1.66	1.76	NB	1.58	1.64
NON-CMA	1.59	1.79	NS	1.52	1.76
CMA	1.46	1.74	PEI	1.50	1.56
FEMALE	1.57	1.67	NL	1.63	1.64
MALE	1.67	1.77	CANADA	1.62	1.72

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Infrastructure...

1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less

National Average 1.62				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	1.72	1.58	AB	1.69	1.62
HIGH-INCOME	1.69	1.53	SK	1.60	1.45
NO UNIVERSITY	1.71	1.58	MB	1.69	1.39
UNIVERSITY	1.68	1.56	ON	1.50	1.52
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.71	1.57	QC	1.71	1.61
RELIGIOUS	1.68	1.58	NB	1.85	1.65
NON-CMA	1.81	1.62	NS	1.76	1.70
CMA	1.58	1.53	PEI	2.01	1.80
FEMALE	1.76	1.61	NL	1.74	1.49
MALE	1.63	1.53	CANADA	1.70	1.57

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Crime and Justice...

1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less

National Average 1.79				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	1.83	1.78	AB	1.77	1.77
HIGH-INCOME	1.84	1.77	SK	1.75	1.69
NO UNIVERSITY	1.78	1.72	MB	1.46	1.53
UNIVERSITY	1.92	1.89	ON	2.10	1.99
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.88	1.82	QC	1.76	1.81
RELIGIOUS	1.75	1.73	NB	1.92	1.92
NON-CMA	1.86	1.78	NS	1.84	1.72
CMA	1.92	1.88	PEI	1.89	1.79
FEMALE	1.77	1.75	NL	1.61	1.57
MALE	1.88	1.79	CANADA	1.83	1.77

Should YOUR PROVINCIAL government spend more, less, or about the same as now in the following areas? Welfare...

1 = More, 2 = About the Same, 3 = Less

National Average 2.12				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35			
			BC	1.86	1.90
LOW-INCOME	2.10	2.06	AB	2.21	2.13
HIGH-INCOME	2.13	2.25	SK	2.37	2.13
NO UNIVERSITY	2.18	2.15	MB	2.48	2.24
UNIVERSITY	2.11	2.01	ON	2.06	2.12
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.13	2.07	QC	2.28	2.17
RELIGIOUS	2.18	2.15	NB	2.27	1.98
NON-CMA	2.39	2.14	NS	2.23	2.09
CMA	2.05	2.08	PEI	2.15	2.06
FEMALE	2.14	2.09	NL	2.13	2.07
MALE	2.17	2.12	CANADA	2.16	2.11

Should personal income taxes be increased, decreased or kept about the same as now?

1 = Increased, 2 = Kept about the same, 3 = Decreased

National Average 2.25				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35			
			BC	2.16	2.08
LOW-INCOME	2.22	2.27	AB	2.01	2.19
HIGH-INCOME	2.24	2.25	SK	2.30	2.31
NO UNIVERSITY	2.33	2.34	MB	2.34	2.31
UNIVERSITY	2.01	2.09	ON	2.20	2.27
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.22	2.22	QC	2.26	2.35
RELIGIOUS	2.24	2.32	NB	2.08	2.13
NON-CMA	2.31	2.34	NS	2.36	2.47
CMA	2.16	2.24	PEI	2.27	2.47
FEMALE	2.22	2.26	NL	2.28	2.49
MALE	2.24	2.29	CANADA	2.23	2.27

And corporate taxes, should they be increased, decreased or kept about the same?

1 = Increased, 2 = Kept about the same, 3 = Decreased

National Average 1.53				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35			
			BC	1.43	1.48
LOW-INCOME	1.44	1.54	AB	1.58	1.62
HIGH-INCOME	1.49	1.61	SK	1.66	1.56
NO UNIVERSITY	1.59	1.54	MB	1.73	1.59
UNIVERSITY	1.42	1.48	ON	1.45	1.57
NOT RELIGIOUS	1.45	1.49	QC	1.54	1.39
RELIGIOUS	1.64	1.55	NB	1.46	1.43
NON-CMA	1.51	1.51	NS	1.55	1.57
CMA	1.52	1.51	PEI	1.64	1.48
FEMALE	1.52	1.43	NL	1.59	1.45
MALE	1.55	1.62	CANADA	1.54	1.52

Please indicate where on this scale you would place yourself: 0 = Favours raising taxes to increase public services and 10 = Favours cutting public services to cut taxes.

0 = Left-wing Position, 10 = Right-wing Position

National Average 5.19				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	4.88	5.37	AB	4.39	4.87
HIGH-INCOME	5.36	4.94	SK	5.04	5.25
NO UNIVERSITY	5.13	5.51	MB	5.95	5.30
UNIVERSITY	4.46	4.93	ON	4.74	5.65
NOT RELIGIOUS	4.82	5.17	QC	5.22	5.47
RELIGIOUS	5.03	5.51	NB	5.27	5.11
NON-CMA	5.27	5.32	NS	5.01	5.68
CMA	4.65	5.38	PEI	5.16	5.34
FEMALE	4.68	5.03	NL	4.64	5.05
MALE	5.14	5.63	CANADA	4.90	5.34

Society has reached the point where women and men have equal opportunities for achievement.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.21				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	2.00	2.27	AB	2.21	2.19
HIGH-INCOME	2.27	2.27	SK	2.05	2.34
NO UNIVERSITY	1.96	2.21	MB	1.91	2.33
UNIVERSITY	2.33	2.40	ON	2.42	2.44
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.09	2.31	QC	1.81	1.99
RELIGIOUS	2.07	2.23	NB	2.35	2.52
NON-CMA	2.02	2.21	NS	2.22	2.55
CMA	2.18	2.29	PEI	2.10	2.30
FEMALE	2.24	2.46	NL	2.11	2.21
MALE	1.91	2.08	CANADA	2.15	2.27

It is more difficult for non-whites to be successful in Canadian society than it is for whites.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.73				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35	BC		
LOW-INCOME	2.82	2.61	AB	2.86	2.79
HIGH-INCOME	2.81	2.74	SK	2.83	2.69
NO UNIVERSITY	2.99	2.81	MB	3.02	2.65
UNIVERSITY	2.46	2.40	ON	2.56	2.55
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.77	2.64	QC	2.73	2.44
RELIGIOUS	2.85	2.73	NB	2.74	2.51
NON-CMA	2.96	2.68	NS	2.96	2.61
CMA	2.67	2.57	PEI	2.94	2.64
FEMALE	2.79	2.63	NL	2.84	2.84
MALE	2.86	2.75	CANADA	2.81	2.69

It's really a matter of some people not trying hard enough; if Aboriginals would only try harder they could be just as well off as everyone else.

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Somewhat Agree, 3 = Somewhat Disagree, 4 = Strongly Disagree

National Average 2.56				AGE < 36	AGE > 35
	AGE < 36	AGE > 35			
			BC	2.81	2.71
LOW-INCOME	2.58	2.56	AB	2.37	2.47
HIGH-INCOME	2.58	2.49	SK	2.16	2.33
NO UNIVERSITY	2.42	2.34	MB	1.94	2.43
UNIVERSITY	2.96	2.93	ON	2.89	2.85
NOT RELIGIOUS	2.65	2.67	QC	2.60	2.50
RELIGIOUS	2.39	2.48	NB	2.57	2.68
NON-CMA	2.24	2.55	NS	2.38	2.71
CMA	2.81	2.70	PEI	2.29	2.50
FEMALE	2.61	2.65	NL	2.50	2.46
MALE	2.45	2.50	CANADA	2.53	2.57