

Rule Britannia & Viva Italia? As Canadian favourability toward the U.S. plummets, other G7 allies prevail

Four-in-five hold favourable view towards United Kingdom, compared to half towards the US

October 26, 2018 – As Canadians reflect on their love lost for the U.S. in the age of President Trump, other G7 allies are finding themselves coming first in Canadian hearts and minds.

As 2018 wanes, a new study from the Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians looking to Europe for countries they hold in high favour, while America is now seen only slightly more favourably (49% say this) than India (44%).

Two years of volatile trade negotiations and insults from the U.S. administration toward Canada's leadership appear to have profoundly affected public opinion.

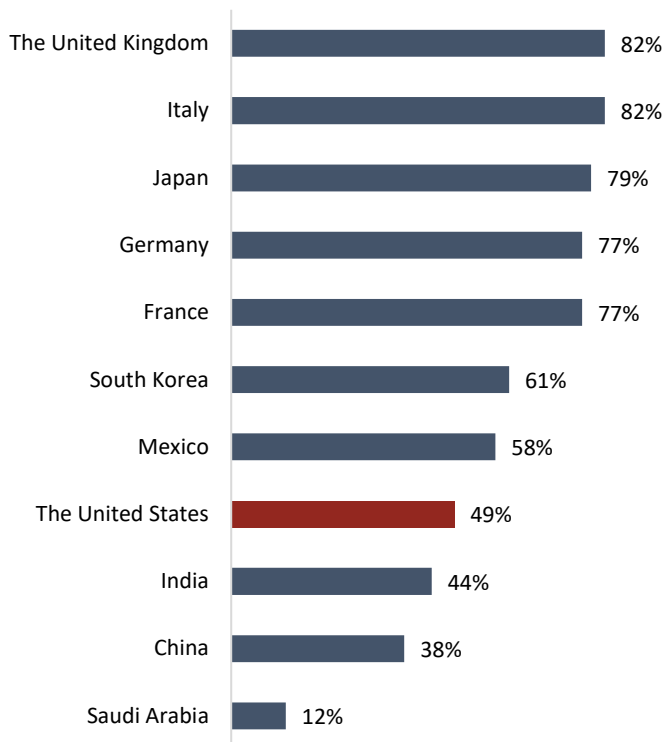
Opinions toward Mexico, the other (future) signatory of the new U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), do not appear to have suffered the same pummelling.

Indeed, the United States' favourability among Canadians has now dropped below that of Mexico (58%), while the percentage of Canadians saying they hold a favourable view of America's southern neighbour is [up 7 percentage points](#) since 2016.

More Key Findings:

- The U.K. and Italy emerge as the most favoured countries among those offered. Slightly more than four-in-five Canadians (82%) view each favourably, while Japan garners favour from 79 per cent
- Only one-in-ten (12%) Canadians view Saudi Arabia favourably. Interestingly, younger Canadians (those 18-34 years of age) are twice as likely as those ages 55 and older to view that country positively (18% to 8% respectively)

Percentage of Canadians saying they have a "favourable" view of each country:



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from October 11 – 17, 2018, among a representative randomized sample of 1,500 Canadian adults who are members of [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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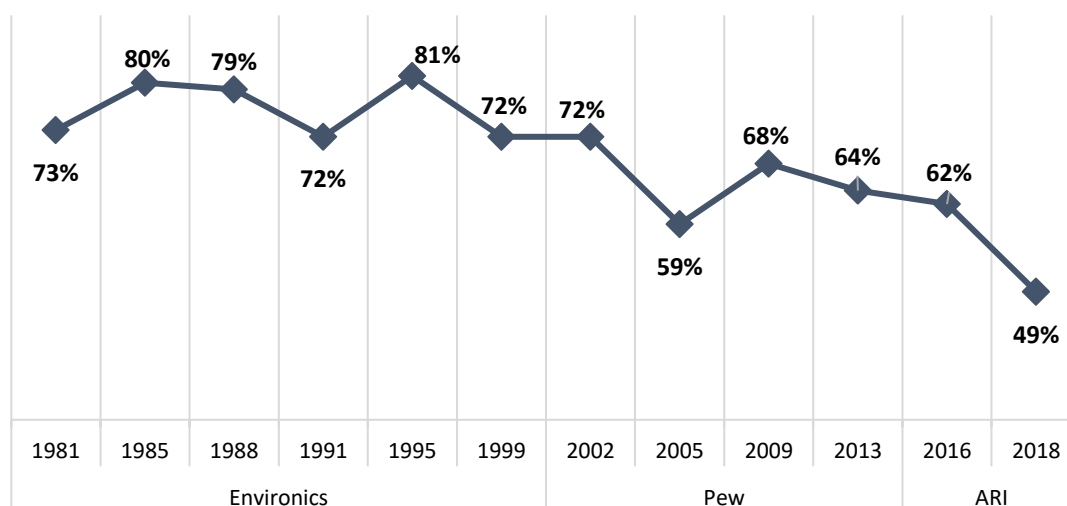
Canadians' views of 11 key countries

This survey asked Canadians whether they hold a favourable or unfavourable opinion of 11 countries that hold important relationships with Canada. The countries canvassed in this survey represent Canada's [nine largest](#) single-nation trading partners (the United States, China, the United Kingdom, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Germany, France, and Italy), plus India (Canada's 11th-largest trading partner and a major source of immigration) and Saudi Arabia (Canada's 20th-largest trading partner, and [the subject](#) of recent [diplomatic controversies](#)).

The countries included in the survey are shown in the first graph of this release, listed in order from most to least favourability among the Canadian public.

The fact that roughly half of Canadians (49%) hold a favourable view of the United States is significant, particularly given that Canadians have historically held their southern neighbour in much higher esteem. This newest data shows favourability 10 points lower than the previous low-mark, 59 per cent, which was during the second term of George W. Bush's presidency. At that time, three-quarters of Canadians viewed Bush unfavourably, and four-in-ten said they believed he was [more dangerous to global security](#) than Osama Bin Laden:

Percentage of Canadians holding a "favourable" view of United States:



Canadians' wavering faith in the U.S. comes at a time when many are feeling disappointed by the new U.S. Canada Mexico Agreement (USMCA) and frustrated with the actions of U.S. President Donald Trump and his administration.

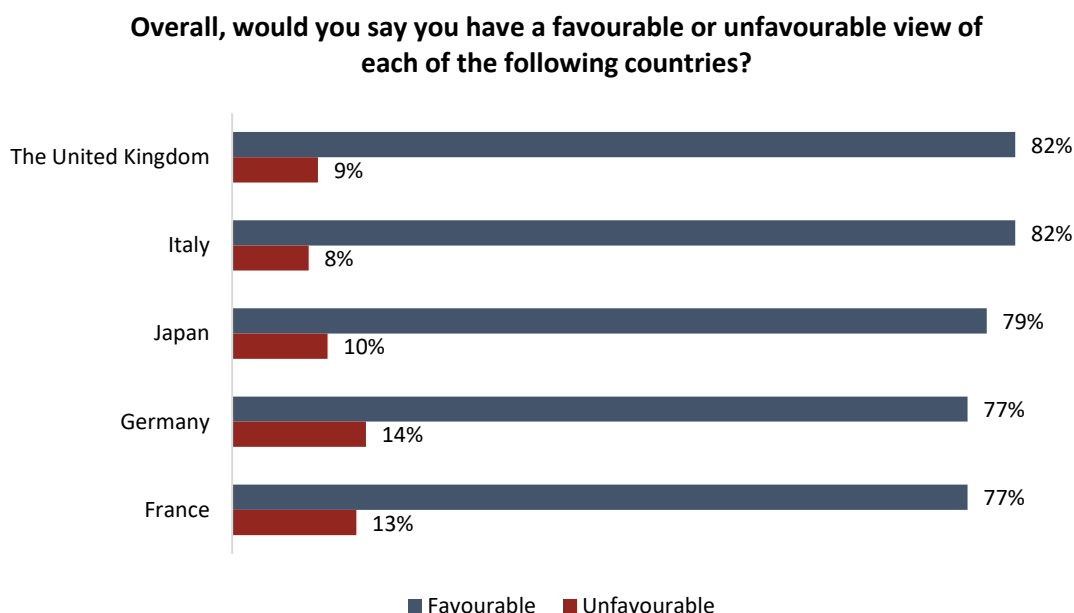
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Related – USMCA: Canadians ambivalent about “New NAFTA”, feeling bruised by U.S.

The friendly five: G7 (minus U.S.) gets most favourable reviews

The countries Canadians think of most fondly are all members of the G7: the economic powers that have long been stewards of the post-World War II global order. Vast majorities of the Canadian public feel positively about the United Kingdom, Italy, Japan, Germany, and France, and fewer than one-in-six offer a negative opinion about each:



Views of these five nations tend to be quite consistent across demographic groups, with at least seven-in-ten across all regions, ages, and genders expressing a favourable opinion of each one ([see comprehensive tables for greater detail](#)).

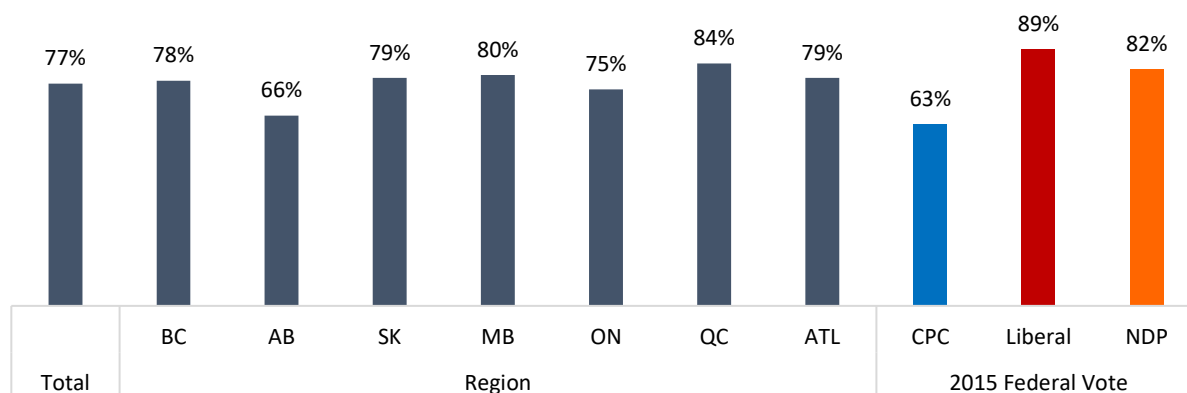
The most notable divergence in Canadian opinion on any of these five allies comes in assessments of France. Opinion of the French Republic is highest among residents of Quebec, a finding reflective of that province’s historical, cultural, and linguistic ties to the European country.

Political partisanship also plays a slight role in how France is perceived, with past supporters of the Conservative Party less enthusiastic about the country than 2015 Liberal and New Democratic Party voters. That said, strong majorities across all three parties hold favourable views of France, as seen in the graph that follows.

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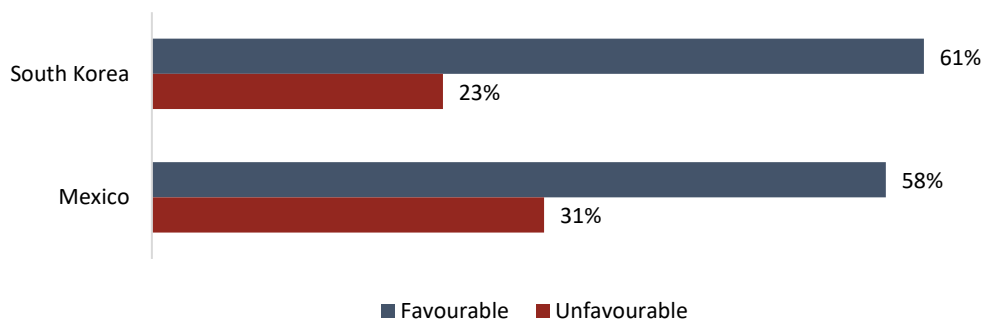
Percentage saying they have a "favourable" view of France:



Mexico and South Korea viewed largely positively

The next “tier” of countries, in the minds of Canadians, includes two major trading partners that are not part of the G7: South Korea and Mexico.

Overall, would you say you have a favourable or unfavourable view of each of the following countries?



Interestingly, these two nations are more popular among younger Canadians. Among those ages 18-34, favourability for each one rises to two-thirds, while other age groups are closer to six-in-ten, or less ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

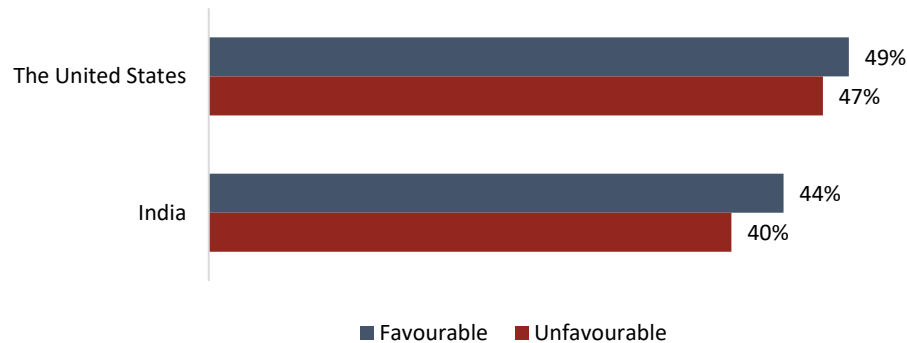
Mixed views on U.S. and India

The country on this list most comparable to the United States – in terms of Canadians’ perceptions of it, at least – is India. For each country, slightly more Canadians express a favourable opinion than an unfavourable one, as seen in the following graph:

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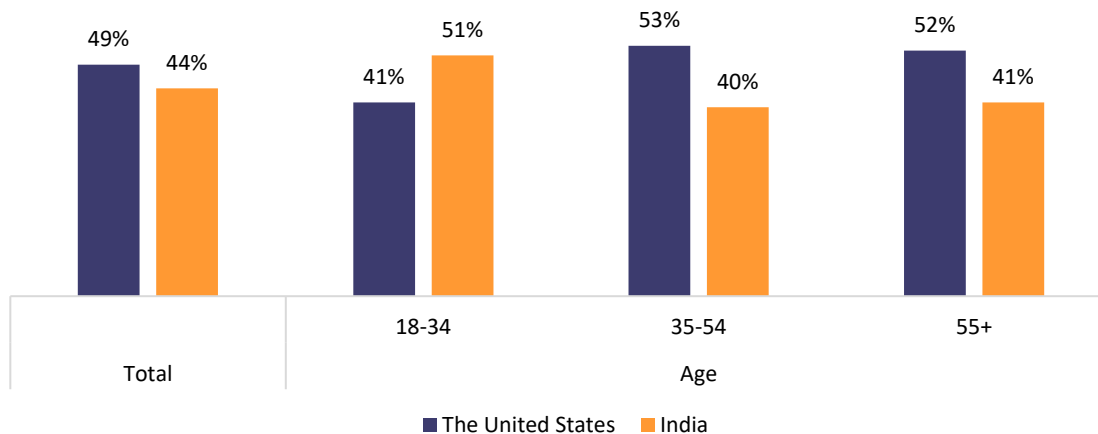
Overall, would you say you have a favourable or unfavourable view of each of the following countries?



As might be expected, given the omnipresent nature of American news, culture, and politics in Canada, fewer people express uncertainty about the U.S. (4% do) than do so about India (16%).

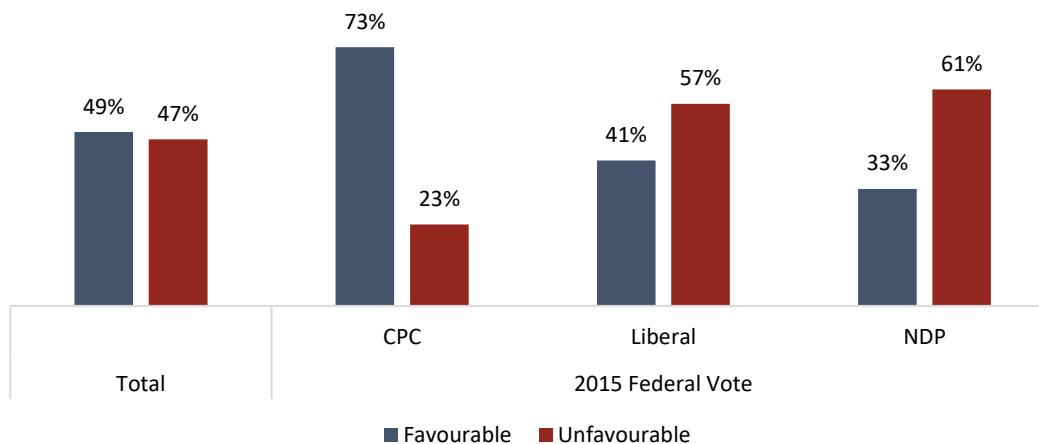
Age again has a significant influence on opinions of these two countries, with younger Canadians more likely to express a favourable view of India and considerably less likely to express on of the U.S. These perspectives are reversed among older respondents:

Percentage saying they have a "favourable" view of each country:



Politics is also a significant driver of opinion on the United States, with nearly three-quarters of past Conservatives (73%) holding a favourable view of their southern neighbour, compared to fewer than half of those who supported other parties in 2015:

Overall, would you say you have a favourable or unfavourable view of the United States?

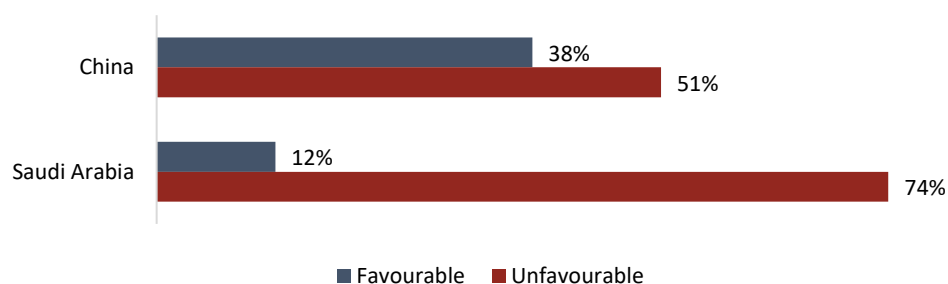


Views of India, meanwhile, are not polarized along party lines ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

Fear (China) and Loathing (Saudi Arabia)

Rounding out the bottom of the list are a pair of countries Canadians are more likely to view unfavourably than favourably. Roughly half (51%) of respondents to this survey say they have an unfavourable view of China, while nearly three-quarters (74%) say the same of Saudi Arabia:

Overall, would you say you have a favourable or unfavourable view of each of the following countries?



As seen in the preceding graph, Canadians are considerably more mixed in their opinions about China than Saudi Arabia.

The ambivalent review of China is consistent with past ARI polling. In 2017, half of Canadians (50%) rated Chinese investment in their country as “about equally good and bad.” The rest leaned more toward the view that such investment does more harm than good (35%), rather than being a net positive (15%).

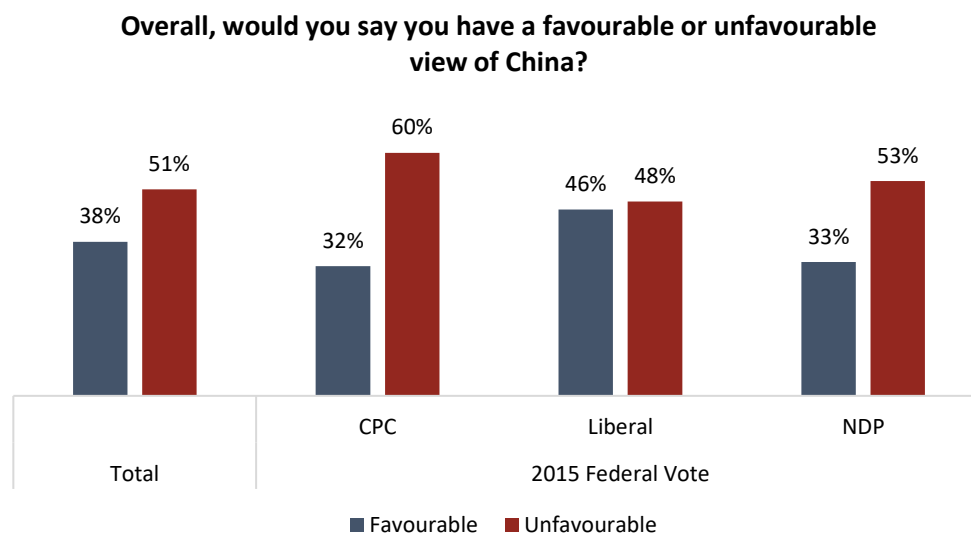
[Related – Foreign Direct Investment in Canada: Who’s favoured, who’s frowned upon?](#)

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China is more popular with those who voted for Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party in 2015 than it is with past Conservatives or New Democrats, a finding that may reflect the Trudeau government's [expressed interest](#) in greater trade with the world's most populous nation.

That said, unfavourable views of China still outpace favourable ones among past Liberals:



Past ARI polling about Saudi Arabia has tended to focus on the federal government's approval of a 15-year, \$15 billion agreement for Canadian companies to sell light armored vehicles (LAVs) to the Kingdom. In 2016, when the Trudeau government [declined to cancel the deal](#) – which was negotiated by the previous government of Stephen Harper – half of Canadians (48%) said this was a bad decision.

More recently, 40 per cent of Canadians said the deal should be cancelled because of Saudi Arabia's poor human rights record, and a further 44 per cent said the LAV agreement could be left in place, but future weapons agreements with the Saudis should be prohibited.

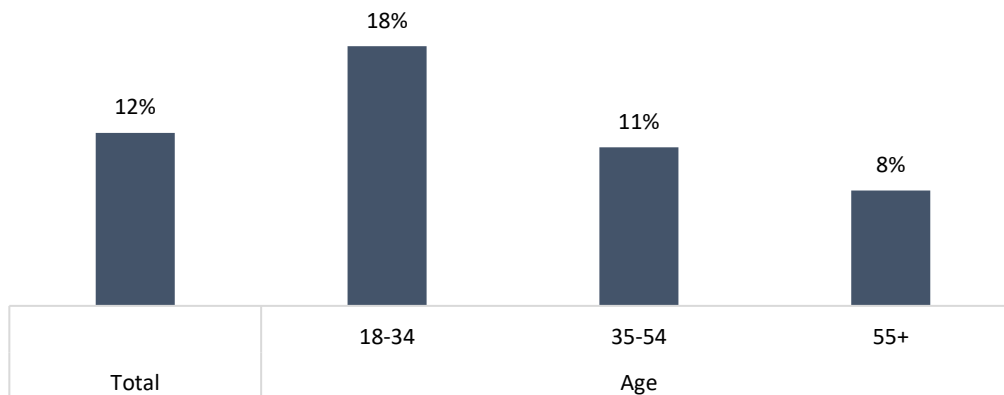
[Related - Is Canada responsible when defence exports are used abroad against civilians?](#)

Majorities across all demographic groups express negative views of Saudi Arabia, but it's notable that younger Canadians are twice as likely as those over age 55 to express positive views:

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Percentage saying they have a "favourable" view of Saudi Arabia:



*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).