

Canada-U.S. perspectives: 'sunny ways' versus gloomy days

Opinions about their own country, and those of their neighbour, reveal starkly contrasting outlooks

March 9, 2016 – When it comes to self-reflection on the states of their own nations, a new, two-country public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute shows Canadian chests swelling and American hearts sinking on a number of important societal attributes.

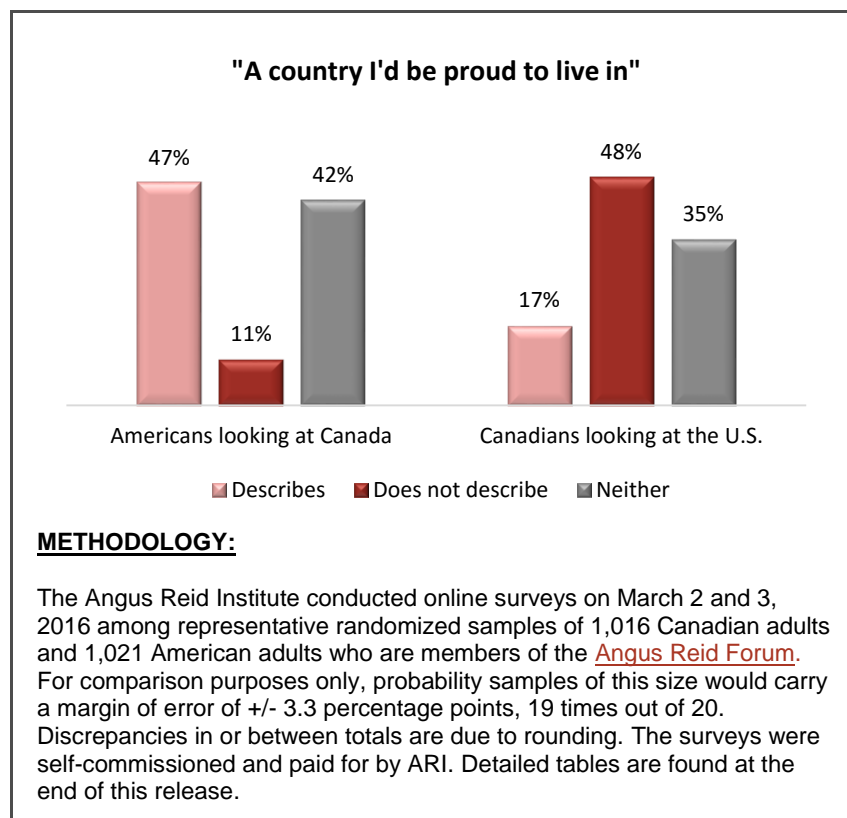
The survey – conducted as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and US President Barack Obama ready themselves for an historic state dinner – shows majorities in both countries view the other as a valuable friend and ally.

That said, Canada generally receives much higher praise from Americans than vice versa, particularly when it comes to Canada's perceived strengths as a caring society, in contrast to America's relative perceived weaknesses around community safety and racial unity.

But for all of the brightness and buoyancy Canadians may feel, they also see storm clouds forming on the horizon in the form of a potential Donald Trump presidency, pinning their hopes for a healthy U.S.-Canada relationship instead on Hillary Clinton.

Key Findings:

- While nearly half of Americans (47%) see Canada as a country they'd be proud to live in, fewer than one in five (17%) Canadians say they feel this way about the U.S.



CONTACT:

Angus Reid, Chairman: 604.505.2229 angus@angusreid.org

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

- Canadians looking across the line associate few positive attributes with the U.S. By contrast, Americans looking north take a more cheerful view of Canada on many fronts – in most cases, brighter than their own ratings of their country
- As to the looming US presidential election: if they could vote, Canadians would back Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump nearly four-to-one (66% to 17%). Contrast this with the comparatively tiny six-point gap separating American voters for Clinton (40%) and for Trump (34%)

This report is divided into three sections: Views on the U.S. (beginning below), views on Canada (beginning on page 5), and analysis (beginning on page 8)

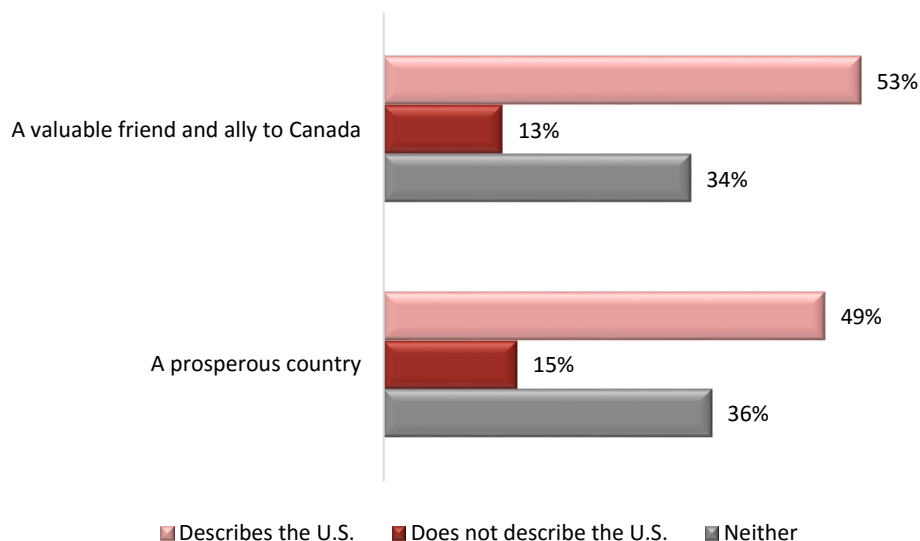
PART 1: Views on the United States

Canadian views on the US:

Canadian and American respondents were presented with a dozen attributes and asked to indicate – on a scale from 1 to 5 – how much each describes the other country (they were also asked about their own countries, as will be discussed later in this release).

Using this scale (please see the end of the release for further methodological explanation) two main attributes emerge in Canadian appraisal of the United States, as seen in the graph that follows:

Canadian views on the U.S.

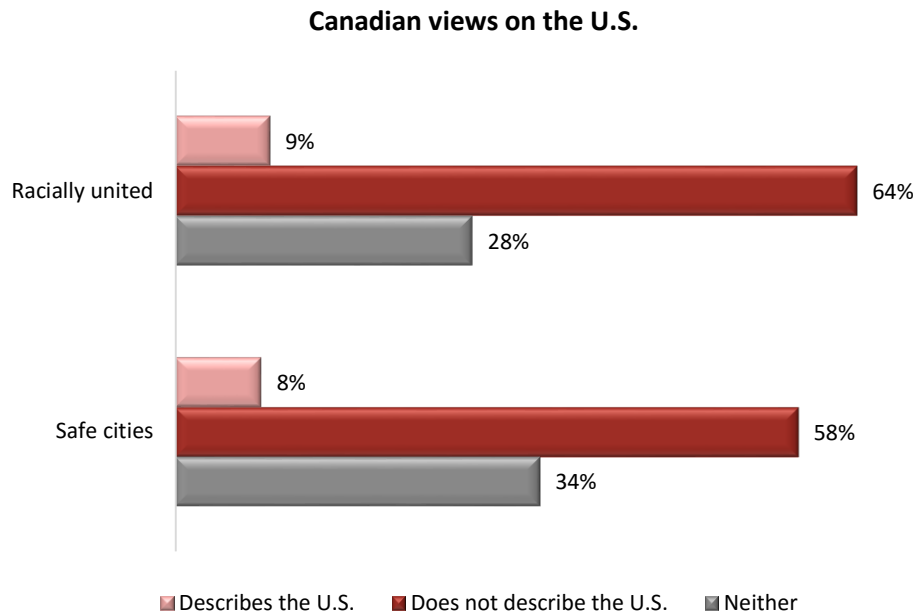


CONTACT:

Angus Reid, Chairman: 604.505.2229 angus@angusreid.org

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

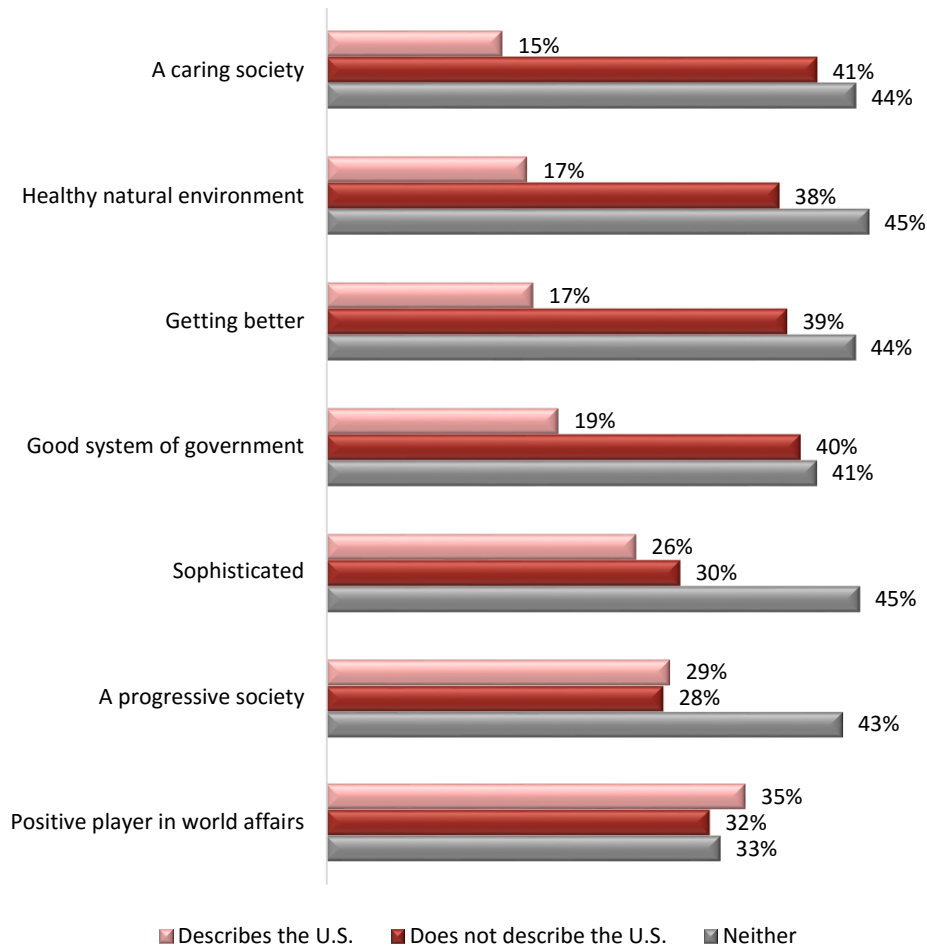
Canadians are considerably less convinced that other attributes canvassed describe their neighbour, especially the two in the following graph:



For most of the other areas canvassed, Canadians are inclined to choose “neither.”

However, in all but two of these cases, they are more likely to say the attribute does not describe the US than to say it does. The exceptions – “a progressive society and “positive player in world affairs” – are found at the end of the following graph:

Canadian views on the U.S.



Canadians' views on their southern neighbours tend to be fairly consistent across demographic groups. Regionally, British Columbians are somewhat more likely to say most of the items assessed do not describe the U.S., while Quebecers are slightly more inclined to say certain phrases – notably “positive player in world affairs” and “good system of government” – *do* describe America ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

Americans on the US?

This survey also finds Americans fairly critical of their own country on many of the national attributes assessed.

CONTACT:

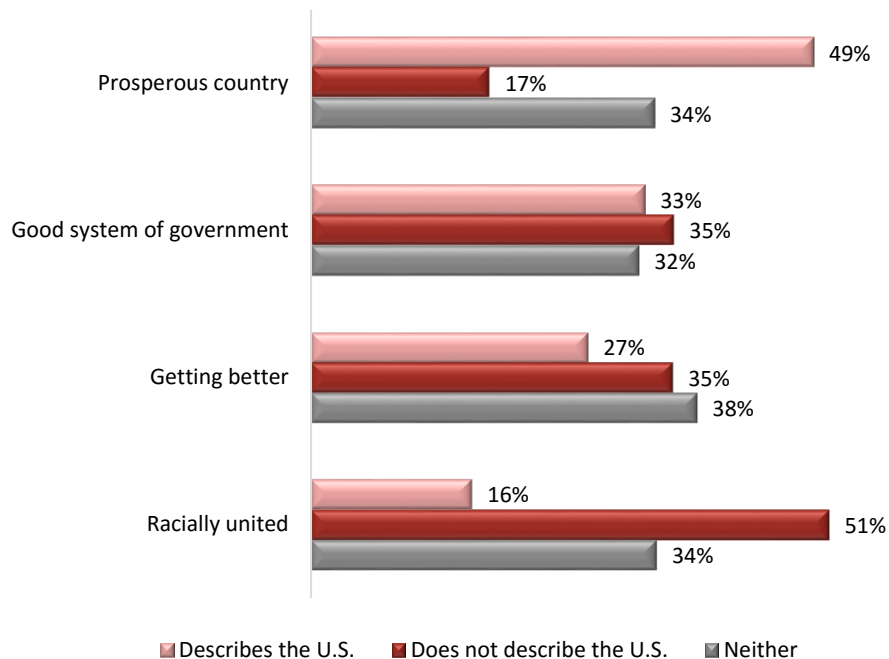
Angus Reid, Chairman: 604.505.2229 angus@angusreid.org

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

As with their northern neighbours, Americans are most likely to identify their country as "prosperous" and are most critical about America's "racial unity," with fully half (51%) saying that term does not describe their country.

Americans are also as likely to disagree as agree that their country has "a good system of government" and that it is "getting better:"

American views on the U.S.

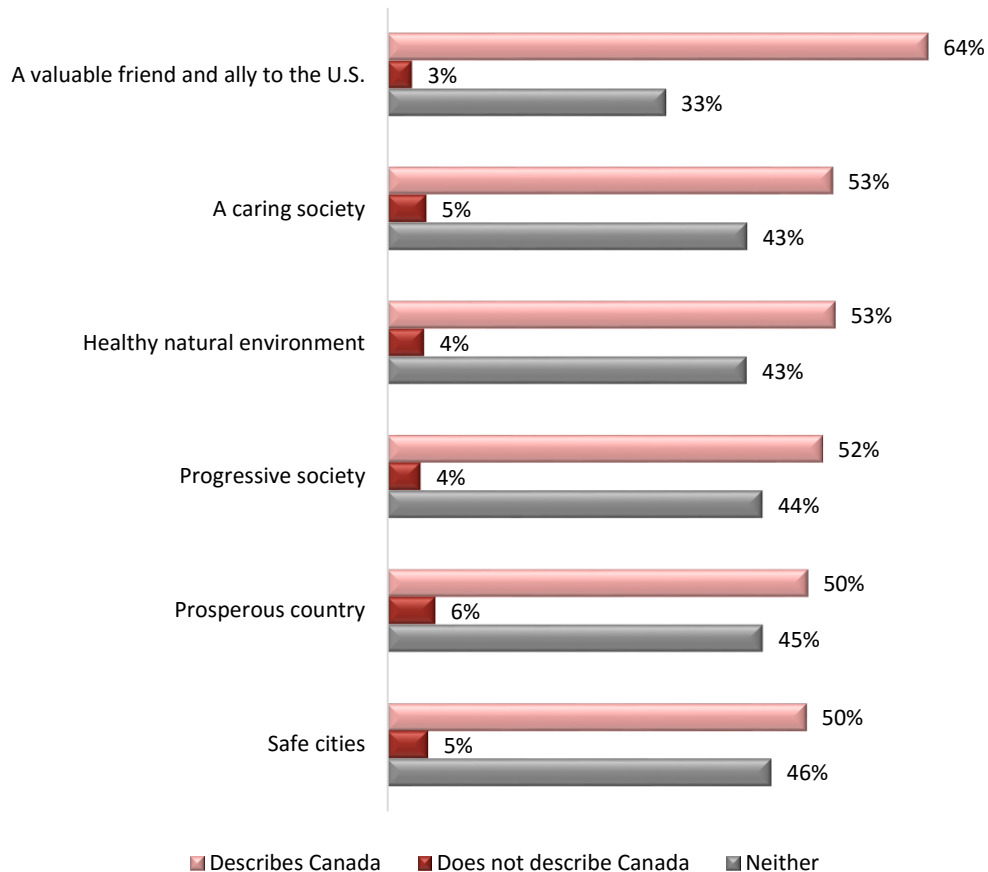


PART 2: Views on Canada

American views on Canada

So, how do Americans assess Canada? Quite a bit more favourably than they assess their own country, on most measures:

American views on Canada:



There are areas where Americans give Canada lower positive ratings, but this does not necessarily translate into more hardened or negative views. Rather, large numbers of Americans – especially women and those with lower levels of formal education – are neutral or unsure about certain attributes ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

True to conventional wisdom then, the American elephant is evidently much less familiar with the Canadian mouse: “unsure” responses averaged 25 per cent across the American sample compared to the roughly five per cent recorded among Canadians when asked about the U.S (see note on methodology at the end of this release).

CONTACT:

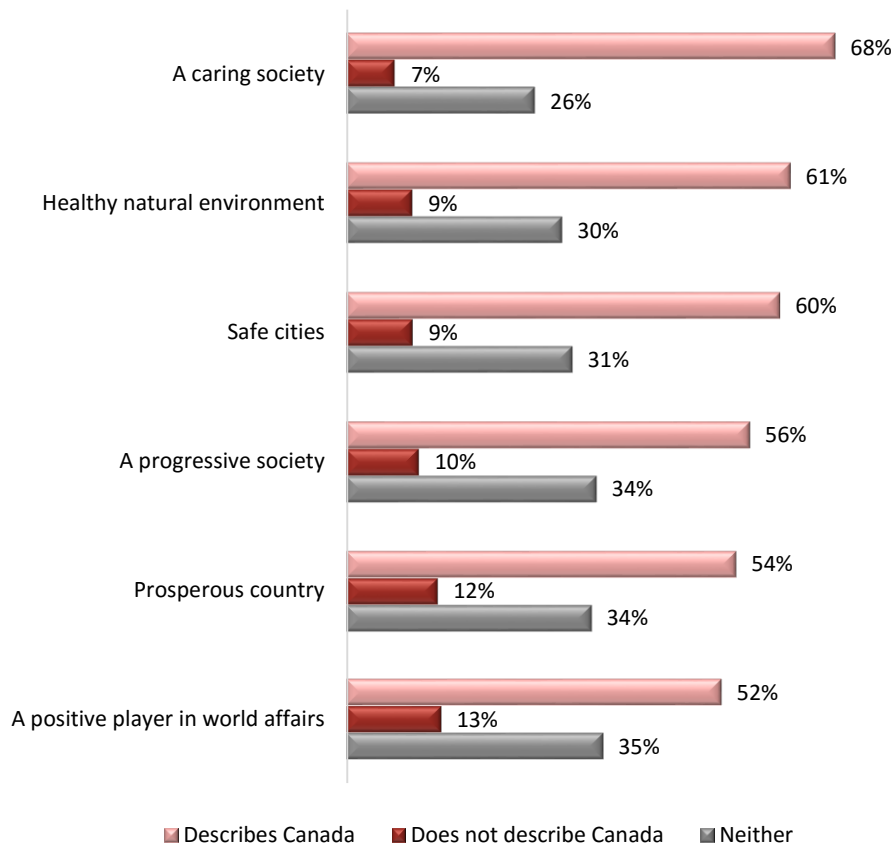
Angus Reid, Chairman: 604.505.2229 angus@angusreid.org

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

Canadians on Canada?

To put it bluntly, Canadians like Canada. Just as Americans offer a good deal of praise for their northern neighbours in this survey, Canadians feel pretty satisfied with themselves these days. Indeed, a full majority say six of the 10 national attributes assessed do indeed describe their country (Americans do not meet this threshold for any of the attributes they self-assessed in the survey).

Canadian views on Canada

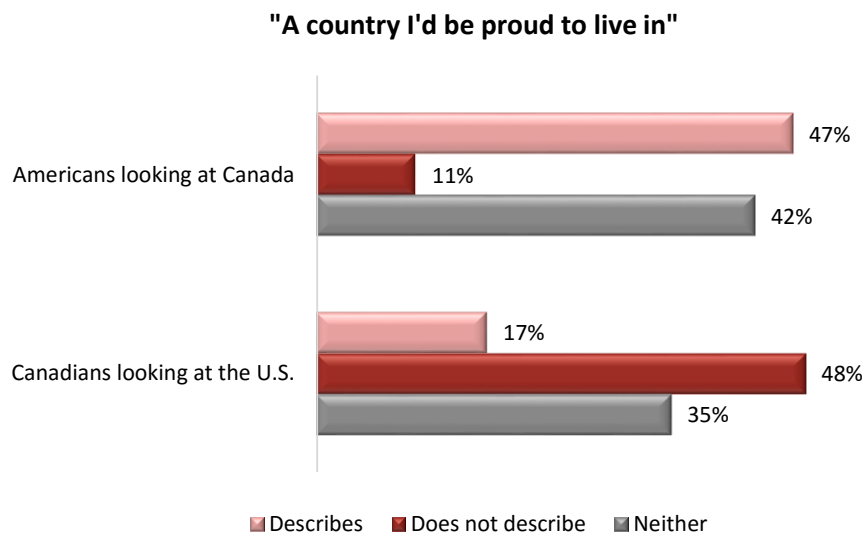


The other four items canvassed also yield net positive responses from Canadians, though the number who say each of these phrases describes their country is less than half ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

PART 3: Analysis

Proud to live where?

Americans and Canadians were asked to what extent they'd be proud to live in the other's country. Responses here tell much of the tale of the survey results overall:



Among the Americans most likely to say Canada is a country they'd be proud to live in? Those who support Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump in the pair's likely general election face-off.

Three-in-five Clinton supporters (61%) say Canada is a place they would be proud to call home, compared to 39 per cent of those planning to vote for Trump who say the same.

North of the border, men, Quebecers, and 2015 Conservative voters are most likely to say the phrase "a country I'd be proud to live in" describes the United States – though in each case, larger numbers say it *doesn't* describe the U.S. than say it does ([see comprehensive tables](#)).

Cross-border perspectives on the US presidential race

A significant divide also exists when it comes to bilateral perspectives of the US Presidential race.

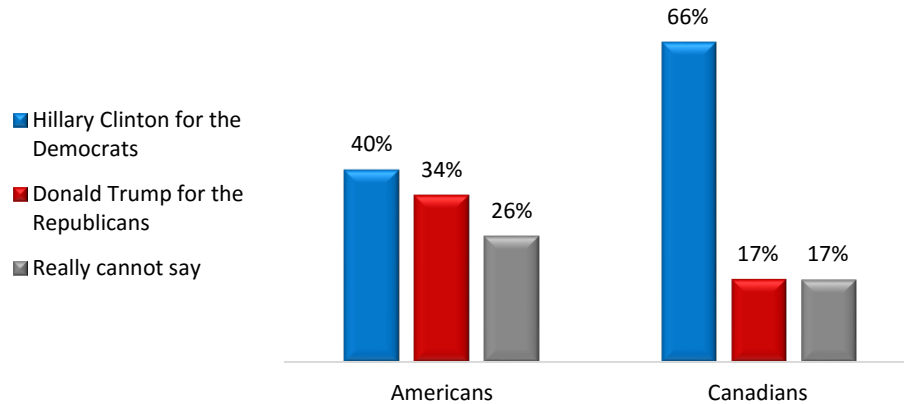
Asked to size up a clash of two political titans - American respondents favour Hillary Clinton over Donald Trump – but only slightly. This is consistent with Clinton-Trump face-off results [reported in U.S. media polling](#) over the past few weeks. Canadians, meanwhile, have a much stronger preference for the presumed Democratic candidate, voicing support for Clinton over Trump by a margin of four-to-one:

CONTACT:

Angus Reid, Chairman: 604.505.2229 angus@angusreid.org

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

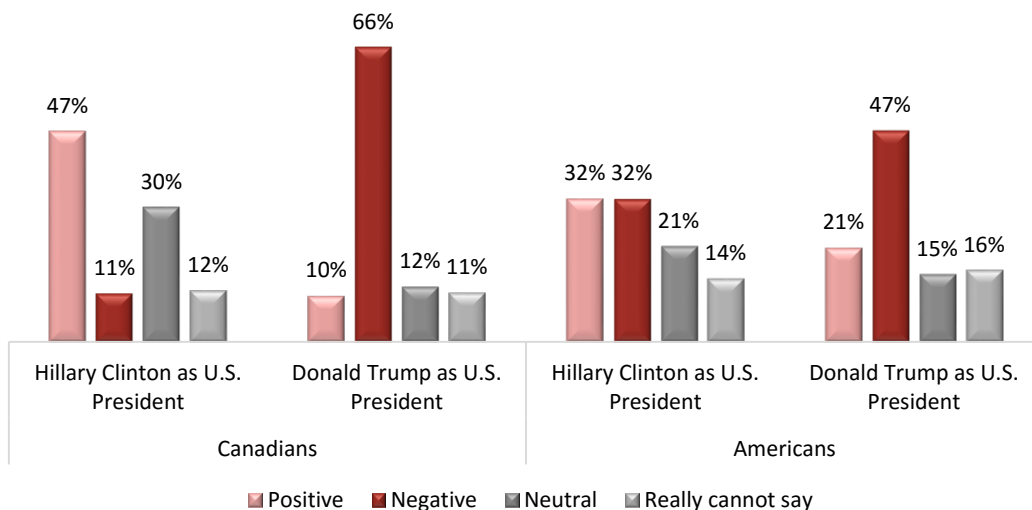
Who would you prefer between these two choices for US President?



Canadians are also anxious about what a Trump presidency would mean for Canada-US relations. – Indeed, two-thirds (66%) fear such an outcome would negatively impact the relationship.

By contrast, a plurality of Canadians say a Hillary Clinton White House would positively impact bilateral ties. And while Americans don't see a Trump administration as a particularly good thing for their northern neighbor, they are split on the prospects for the same under a second President Clinton:

Do you think each of the following would have a positive impact, negative impact, or be neutral overall for U.S.-Canada relations?



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 organization 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.

Summary tables follow. For comprehensive results by region, age, gender, education, and other demographics, see [Canada tables](#) or [U.S. tables](#).

Methodological notes:

For the purposes of our analysis, those choosing a 1 or a 2 are classified as saying the phrase “does not describe” the country in question, while those choosing a 4 or a 5 indicate the phrase “describes” it. Responses in the middle of the scale (a 3) or outside of it (“don’t know”) are “neither.”

How well does each of these phrases describe the United States and American society? (“A country I’d be proud to live in”)				
	Total (1016)	Federal Vote Last		
		CPC (252)	Liberal Party (366)	NDP (179)
5 Completely describes The US	4%	7%	4%	3%
4	13%	19%	11%	9%
3	30%	41%	30%	23%
2	22%	17%	24%	26%
1 Does not describe The US at all	26%	14%	27%	33%
Really cannot say	5%	1%	5%	7%

CONTACT:

Angus Reid, Chairman: 604.505.2229 angus@angusreid.org

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl

How well does each of these phrases describe Canada and Canadian society? ("A country I'd be proud to live in")				
	Total (1021)	2016 vote preference		
		Hillary Clinton for the Democrats (405)	Donald Trump for the Republicans (351)	Don't know (265)
5 Completely describes Canada	18%	24%	14%	13%
4	29%	37%	25%	23%
3	21%	18%	26%	18%
2	8%	5%	14%	6%
1 Does not describe Canada at all	2%	0%	3%	4%
Really cannot say	22%	16%	19%	35%