

Canada at 149: One-in-four say Canada's 'Golden Age' is yet to come

Canadians spend this holiday divided over whether they're satisfied with the direction of the country

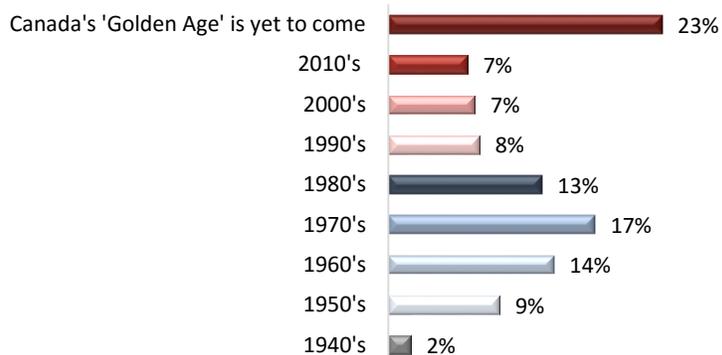
June 30, 2016 – As Canadians prepare to celebrate their country's 149th birthday, a new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds them feeling a mixture of hope and gloom when reflecting on their home and native land. While Canadians see many different sources of pride – in particular Canada's culture, place in the world and sporting achievements – painful economic realities are dampening perceptions of both the country's present and its future in the minds of many.

That said, when asked about Canada's Golden Age, many remain hopeful. The largest number of respondents say our best days are yet to come, rather than choosing a decade already passed as this country's shining moment.

Key Findings:

- Canadians are split evenly when asked whether they are satisfied (42%) or dissatisfied (42%) with the way things are currently going in their country
- Economic concerns are a key driver of pessimism about the Canada and its future – just one-quarter say the nation's economic prospects are better now than a quarter-century ago, while four-in-ten (41%) say they're worse

If you had to choose from the decades below, which would you say has been Canada's "Golden Age"?



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from June 13 - 16, 2016, among a representative randomized sample of 1519 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 3 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.

- A narrow majority (52%) do however, say they are concerned that the next generation will be worse off than they are currently
- Canadians are bullish about this nation’s creative industries – one-half (49%) say Canadian-produced music is more successful now than 25 years ago, while four-in-ten (42%) say the same about Canadian TV and film productions

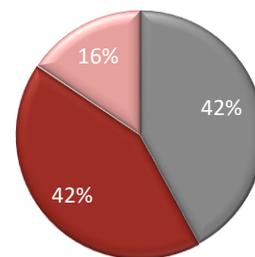
Happy Canada Day?

It’s time for an annual summer celebration in Canada, as citizens from coast-to-coast don their red-and-white and welcome a long weekend. And although 2016’s events are slightly dwarfed by the bigger [Canada 150](#) festivities planned for next year, that won’t stop most Canadians from gathering to belt out the anthem this year - seven-in-ten say they’ll be marking the occasion.

The mood across the country for July 1 is likely to be a little brighter than the one Canadians report in their day-to-day lives, however.

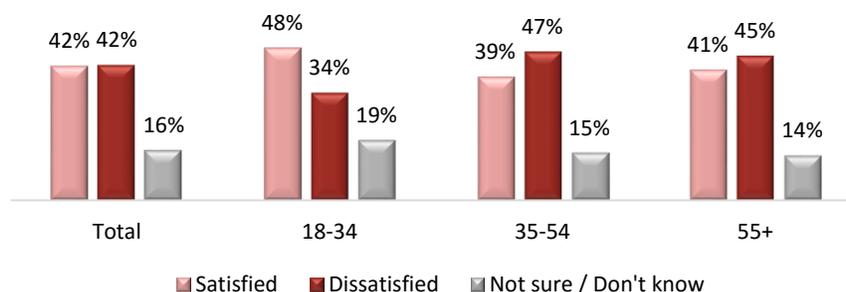
When asked whether they are satisfied with the way things are going in this country right now, two equally divided segments emerge – 42 per cent say they’re satisfied, while 42 per cent say they’re dissatisfied – with the remaining 16 per cent saying they’re unsure. Younger Canadians report higher levels of satisfaction with the country’s direction. Almost half (48%) of those age 18-34 say they’re pleased. Their elders are less enthusiastic – both of the older cohorts report more dissatisfaction than satisfaction about the state of the nation, as seen in the following graph:

All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?



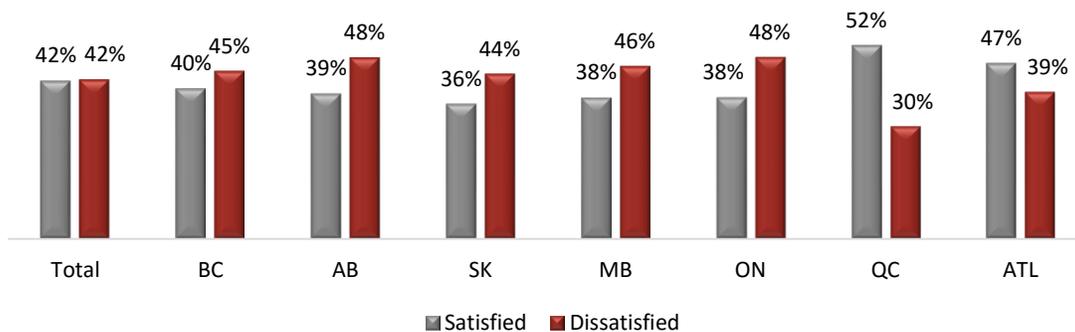
■ Satisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Not sure

Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?



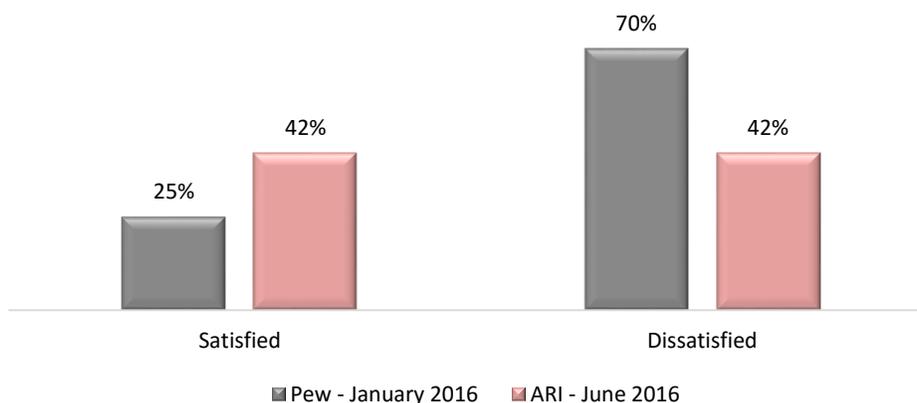
Regionally, Quebecers (52%) and Atlantic Canadians (47%) are most satisfied with the path of the nation - roughly half in each region say so. The picture for the rest of Canada is more bleak. Slightly fewer than half of Albertans (48%) – mired in economic frustrations for the better part of the past two years – report dissatisfaction, and each of the other provinces follow a similar trend:

All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?



To put this into context, Canada’s southern neighbours are gloomier: when Pew Research asked Americans a similar question this past January, it found significantly lower satisfaction with the direction of the United States. Just one-quarter (25%) of Americans say they’re satisfied with the way things are going in their country, while 70 per cent voice dissatisfaction, which may have Canadian ‘split’ seeming a least a little bit chipper lofty by comparison.

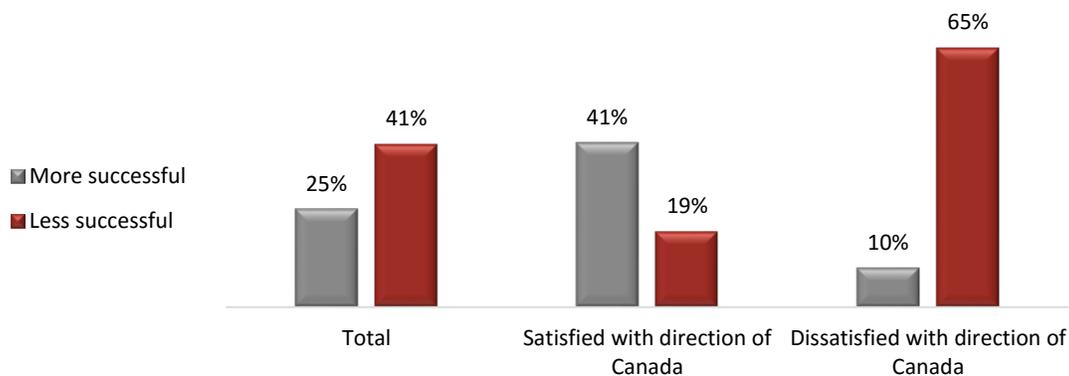
All in all, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in this country today?



Economic prospects dampen view for many

The core issue driving discontentment, which has been a trend in a number of [recent ARI reports](#), appears to be a persistent feeling of economic anxiety. When asked to reflect on Canadian economic prospects in 2016 versus 25 years ago, one-quarter (25%) say Canada is having more success today than it was a quarter-century ago. Further, only one-in-ten (10%) of the “dissatisfied” group take this positive view, while two-thirds (65%) say the country is having a more difficult time now.

Overall, would you say Canada as a country today is more successful or less successful in each of the following areas compared to 25 years ago? "Canada's Economic Prospects"

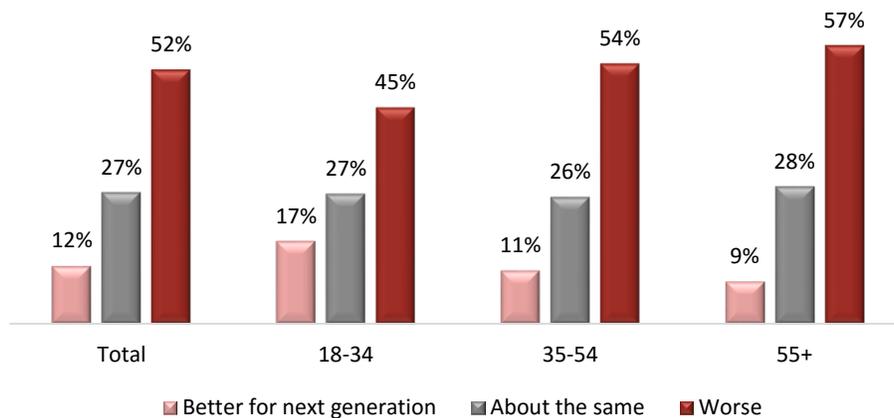


In some respects, they may be correct. The value of the dollar in the early '90s hovered between 85 and 90 cents U.S., compared to the more recent range of 70 and 78 cents. [Purchasing power has declined](#) for Canadians, household debt is [at an all-time high](#) and housing prices across the country are [widely viewed as unreasonable](#) by most residents.

For these reasons, perhaps, pessimism about economic prospects is not limited to the near term. Canadians also worry about the next generation having the opportunity to thrive. When asked if the future of the next generation of Canadians will be better, worse, or the same as life currently, half (52%) take the pessimistic view, and only one-in-ten (12%) say life will be better.

Younger Canadians are most hopeful: They're twice as likely as those 55 and older to believe conditions will improve (17% versus 9%, respectively). Still, even among the under 35, the largest group (45%) anticipate more difficulty for the next generation, as seen in the following graph:

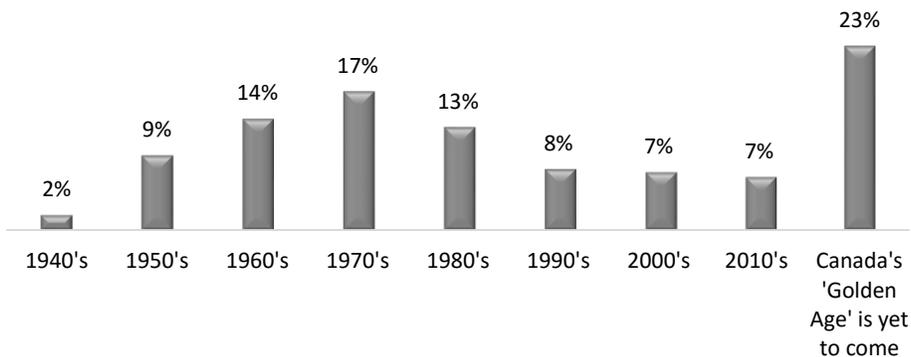
Do you think the future of the next generation of Canadians will be better, worse, or about the same as life today?



History to celebrate, and a hopeful future

The news isn't all bad. In fact, Canadians are hopeful for the future despite their unenthusiastic forecast for the next generation. When asked to look back and choose a decade as Canada's "Golden Age," the largest number of respondents – almost one-in-four (23%) – say that we've yet to see Canada's best.

If you had to choose from the decades below, which would you say has been Canada's "Golden Age"?



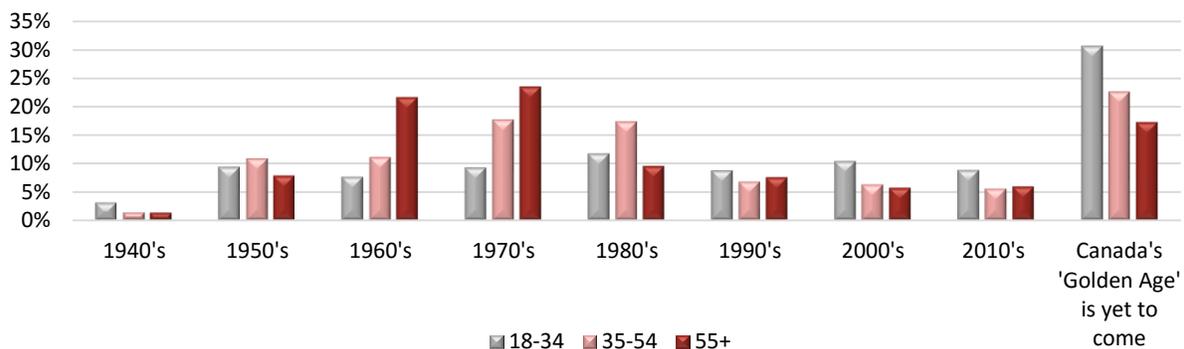
Age drives opinion on this question: older Canadians are most likely to choose the 1960s or '70s as the Golden Age. Indeed, a strong argument can be made for the 1960s and 14 per cent of Canadians – 22 per cent over the age of 55 -- would make it.

Much of the nation's modern foundation was constructed in this period. John Diefenbaker began the formative decade by introducing the Canadian Bill of Rights in 1960. Lester B. Pearson led the

government from 1963 – 68, overseeing the establishment of universal health care, the Canada Pension Plan, the Order of Canada, a student loan system, a unified Armed Forces and the creation of the current flag.

Many (17%) also look back fondly on the 1970s. Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his Liberals ruled nearly the entire decade in Parliament and Canada adopted an official policy of multiculturalism, arguably one of the country's [defining attributes](#). Iconic events took place as well – Paul Henderson scored his famous game winner against the Soviets, the CN Tower was built as the world's tallest free-standing structure and Montreal hosted the Summer Olympic Games.

If you had to choose from the decades below, which would you say has been Canada's "Golden Age"?



The 1970's emerge as top choice based on preferences of both the 35-54 group and those over 55, though middle-aged Canadians show a fondness for the 80's as well. 17 per cent of them choose this decade, which saw landmark achievements for women in government – Canada's first female Speaker of the House, Governor General (Jeanne Sauvé for both) and Supreme Court Justice (Bertha Wilson) – the passage of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms – the first Canadian to fly in space (Marc Garneau) and the emergence of some of this country's most inspirational figures of this lifetime: Terry Fox and Rick Hansen.

Younger generations are more likely to say that the Golden Age has yet to dawn. Three-in-ten (31%) millennials hold this view, along with roughly one-quarter (23%) of 35-54 year olds.

Canada Now and Then

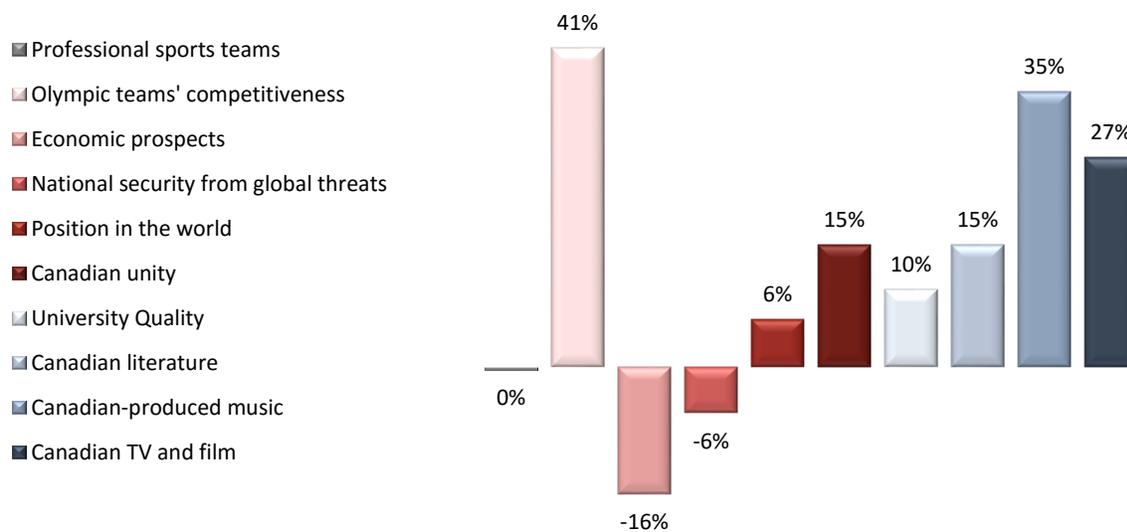
The survey also asked Canadians to consider a number of areas within their culture, and share whether they believe Canada is more or less successful in each now compared to 25 years ago.

What's Worse?

As noted, economic prospects receive a poor rating – just one-in-four (25%) say Canada is more successful now, while 41 per cent say the opposite. Subtracting those saying less from those saying more

yields an overall 'success score' of -16 for this issue. The scores for each issue canvassed are shown in the following graph:

**Overall, would you say Canada as a country today is more successful or less successful in each of the following areas compared to 25 years ago?
(Success Score = 'more successful' minus 'less successful')**



The only other issue receiving a negative score than economic prospects is national security. Here, 27 per cent say the country is better positioned now against global threats compared to the past, whereas one-in-three (33%) feel less safe. A similar trend is noted in [Gallup polling of Americans](#), who feel more worried now than in the past when considering their safety from terror threats.

What's Better?

Canada's Olympic teams' competitiveness has become a great source of pride for many Canadians, though this is likely speaking primarily to the Winter Games. Half (49%) of respondents say the nation is more successful now than in the past. This comes in the wake of two straight gold medals for both the men's and women's hockey teams in 2010 and 2014, and a first and third place finish in overall medals at those respective Games. Canada's showings at the Summer Olympics have not been as impressive, finishing 36th in the 2012 medal count in the most recent London Summer Olympics.

Creative industries receive enthusiastic scores as well. Half (49%) of respondents say Canadian-produced music is more successful now and just 14 per cent say the contrary. And there's a great deal of evidence to support this sentiment. Consider this – Canadian hip-hop artist Drake is the [most streamed artist in the world](#). And the person he overtook to claim the crown? Fellow Canadian Justin Bieber.

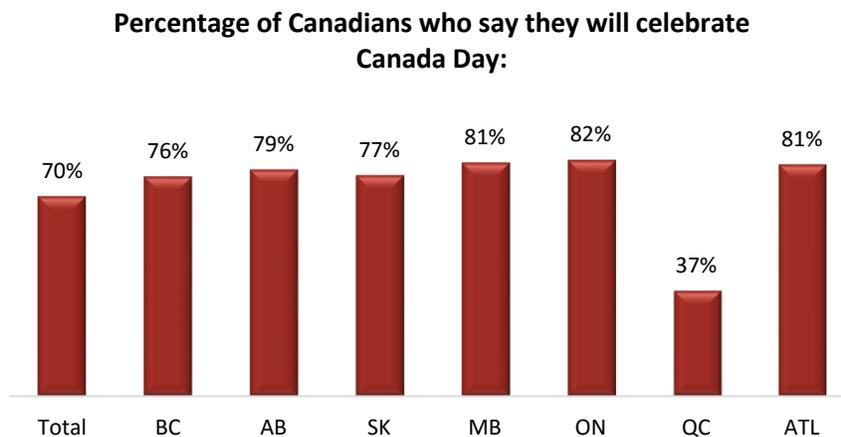
The same general feeling of positivity follows for Canadian television and film. Two-in-five (42%) say the industries are thriving more now than in the past, with 15 per cent disagreeing.

What's the Same?

In a time of sports extremes, where the Toronto Blue Jays made the playoffs for the first time in 22 years, the Raptors made the NBA Eastern Finals for the first time ever, and no Canadian NHL team qualified for the playoffs for the first time since 1970, Canadians choose the middle ground. When asked about professional sports teams in Canada, an identical number of individuals say the country is either more successful or less successful (27% for each), for a net success score of zero. One-third (33%) say “about the same”.

Parties across the country for Canada Day

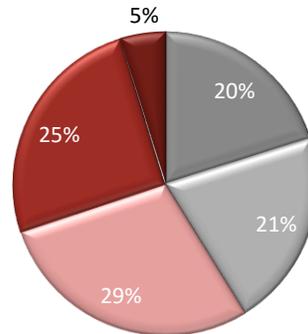
Satisfied or not with the current state of affairs, most Canadians have one thing in common – they'll be out to celebrate their nation's 149th birthday on July 1. As previously mentioned, fully seven-in-ten (70%) say they plan on marking the occasion in some way, though the number of people celebrating is actually higher than the national average in most areas of the country. As seen in the following graph, nearly 80 per cent in most regions say they will be celebrating on Canada Day, while fewer than two-in-five Quebecers say the same:



Some plan to attend a public event in their municipality and possibly take in fireworks (20%), while others say they'll spend time with family and friends over a barbeque or a trip to the beach (21%). And those looking for a party shouldn't have to go too far as more than [1,300 festivals](#) are scheduled across the country.

Similar numbers of Canadians are either planning to celebrate but have not narrowed in on plans yet (29%) or plan to skip any events and just enjoy the day off (25%). An unfortunate few (5%) report that they have to work.

Canada Day is coming up on July 1st. Will you be celebrating "Canada's birthday" in some way?



- Yes, attend a public event/fireworks
- Yes, with family or friends -- BBQ/beach/etc.
- Yes, will mark Canada Day, but not sure how yet
- No, will not mark Canada Day, just enjoy the summer day off
- No, will be working Canada day

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

Overall, would you say Canada as a country today is more successful or less successful in each of the following areas compared to 25 years ago? [Canada's economic prospects]				
	Total (1519)	Satisfied (639)	Dissatisfied (643)	Not sure / Don't know (236)
Much more successful	3%	5%	0%	2%
More successful	22%	36%	10%	18%
About the same	30%	36%	22%	34%

Less successful	34%	18%	52%	28%
Much less successful	7%	1%	14%	6%
Not sure/Can't say	5%	3%	3%	12%