

## Half of Canadians say crime is rising in their communities, as confidence in police, courts wanes

Percentage of Canadians who perceive an increase in crime up from 30% to 48% over past six years

**January 10, 2020** – Crime rates in Canada dropped precipitously from 1991 until 2014, falling more than 50 per cent during that period. Since then, however, crime rates have ticked upward in each of the past four years for which data is available.

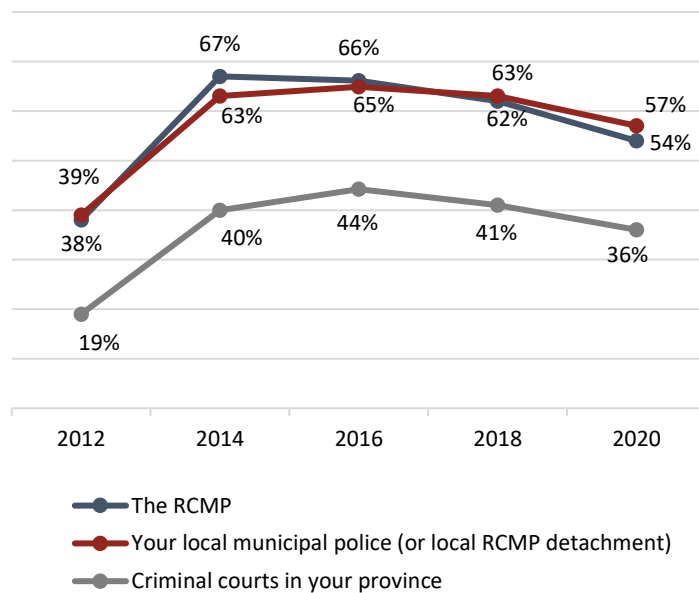
A new study from the Angus Reid Institute, the latest in a biennial series gauging Canadians experiences with and opinions of the justice system, finds public perceptions in their communities following that same trend.

Indeed, half of Canadians (48%) now say that crime has increased in their community over the past five years, up from 42 per cent in 2018 and 30 per cent in 2014.

The proportion of Canadians holding this view is considerably higher in the western provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In each region, six-in-ten residents or more say they are perceiving more crime now than five years ago.

Additionally, confidence in the RCMP and local police forces continues to decline. While at least half of Canadians still have confidence in each organization, the proportion saying this dropped in 2018 and again in this latest data.

### How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system? (complete confidence/a lot of confidence shown)



#### **METHODOLOGY:**

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from December 2 – 4, 2019 among a representative randomized sample of 1,655 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 +/- 2.0 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.

#### **More Key Findings:**

- Confidence in the RCMP is down eight percentage points from 2018. Notably, the number of visible minority residents who say they have 'no confidence at all' in the RCMP is double that of non-minorities (17% to 9%)

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- 15 per cent of Canadians say that they have personally been the victim of a crime in the past two years that involved reporting to the police. This represents an increase of six points from 2014
- Opinions of the Supreme Court of Canada are significantly more positive than those of provincial courts. Approximately half (48%) say they have confidence in the SCOC while just 36 per cent say this of their own provincial courts

### **About ARI**

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.

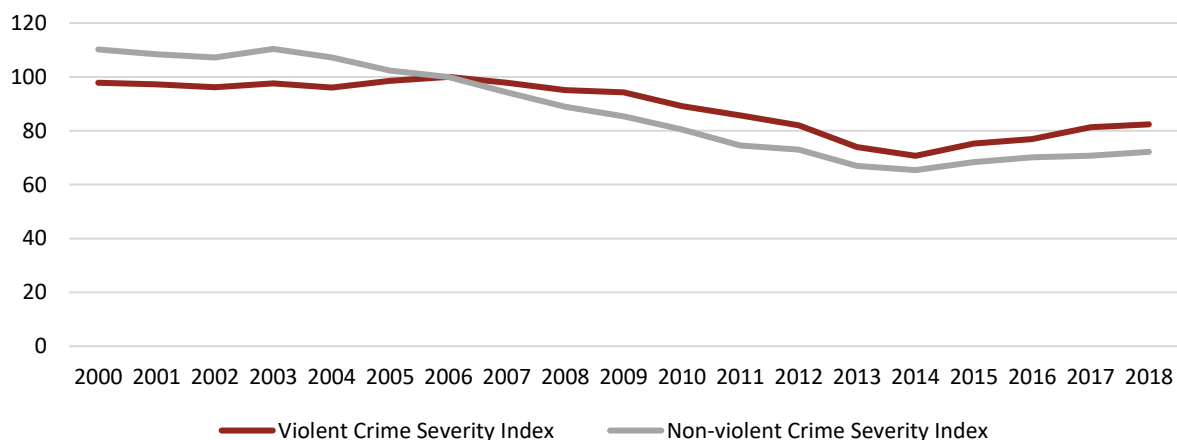
### **INDEX:**

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- **Personal exposure to crime**
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### **Perceptions of crime in Canadian communities**

Crime rates in Canada can be viewed in different ways, depending on the time frame one chooses to take. For instance, the crime rate and severity of crimes is [down 17 per cent](#) over the previous decade of tracking, from 2008 to 2018. However, for the fourth straight year the Crime Severity Index (CSI) [has risen](#). Note that the CSI measures both the volume and severity of crimes that are reported to police.

**Crime severity index in Canada over time**  
Source: Statistics Canada

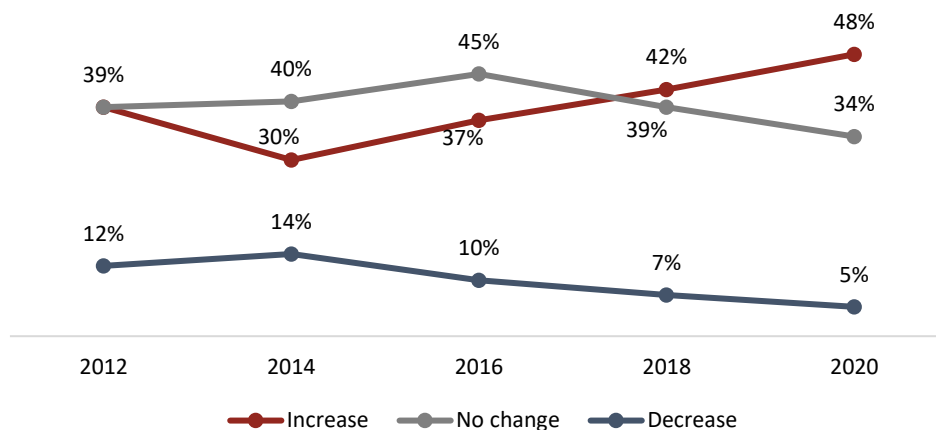


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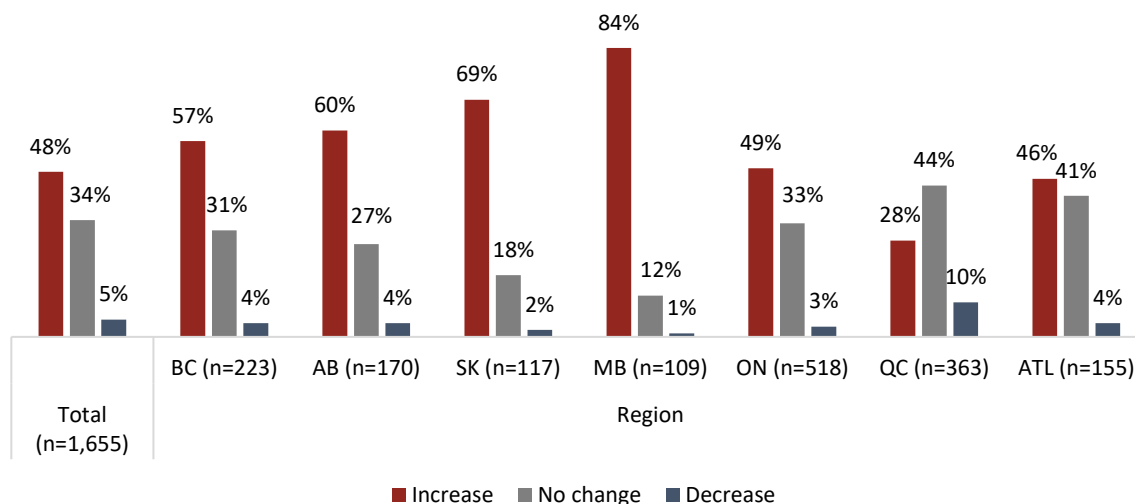
Alongside this upward tick in the CSI is a corresponding rise in the number of Canadians who believe crimes rates have been increasing in their own communities. This question has been asked every two years since 2012 and in each two-year increment beginning in 2014, the proportion of Canadians saying crime has risen in their community has jumped. During that six-year period, the total has risen from 30 per cent to 48 per cent, as seen below:

**Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?**



The opinion that crime is increasing, rather than decreasing, is higher in every region of the country, but is most concentrated in western provinces, as seen in the graph below:

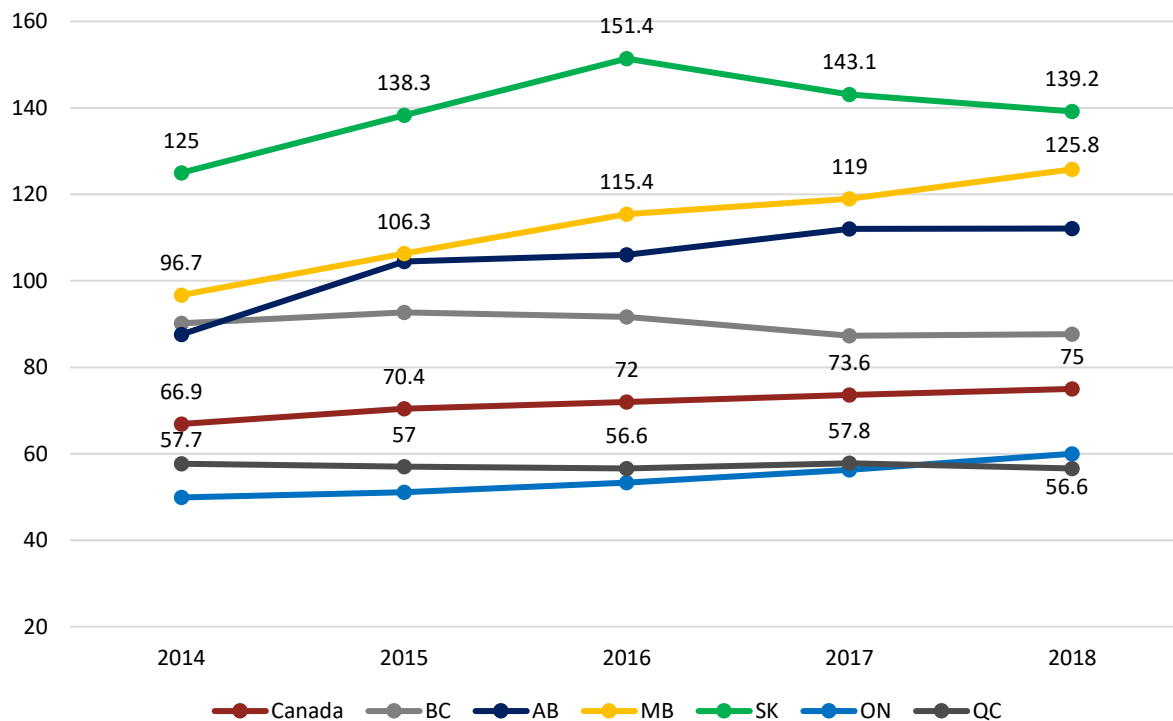
**Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?**



Saskatchewan and Manitoba rank highest regionally in terms of both the perception that crime is rising, and their reported CSI rating. Notably, Regina, Saskatoon and Winnipeg all [rank in the top five](#) in terms of cities with the highest crime rates in the nation. None of the top five cities (Lethbridge and Kelowna round out top five) are from provinces east of Manitoba.

Quebecers are most likely to say crime is decreasing in their communities, and that province is the only one that has seen a decrease in its CSI rating since 2014:

**Crime Severity Index by Province 2014 - 2018**  
(Source: StatsCan)

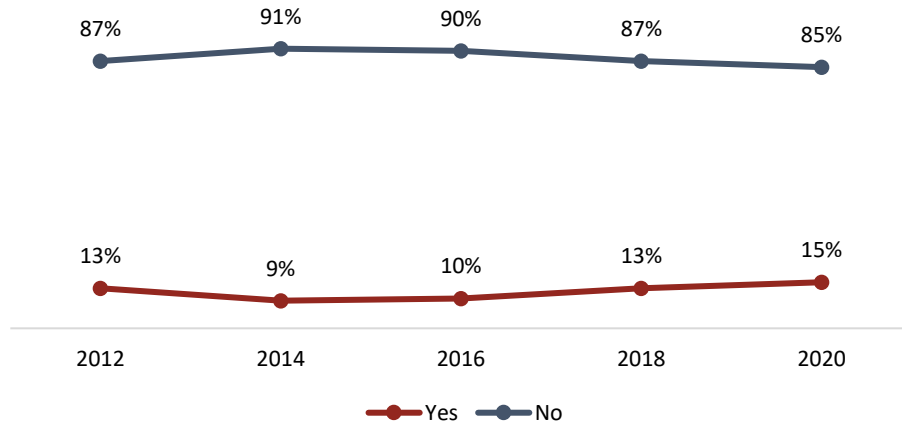


\*note Atlantic Canadian provinces excluded as our data looks at the region in aggregate

### Personal exposure to crime

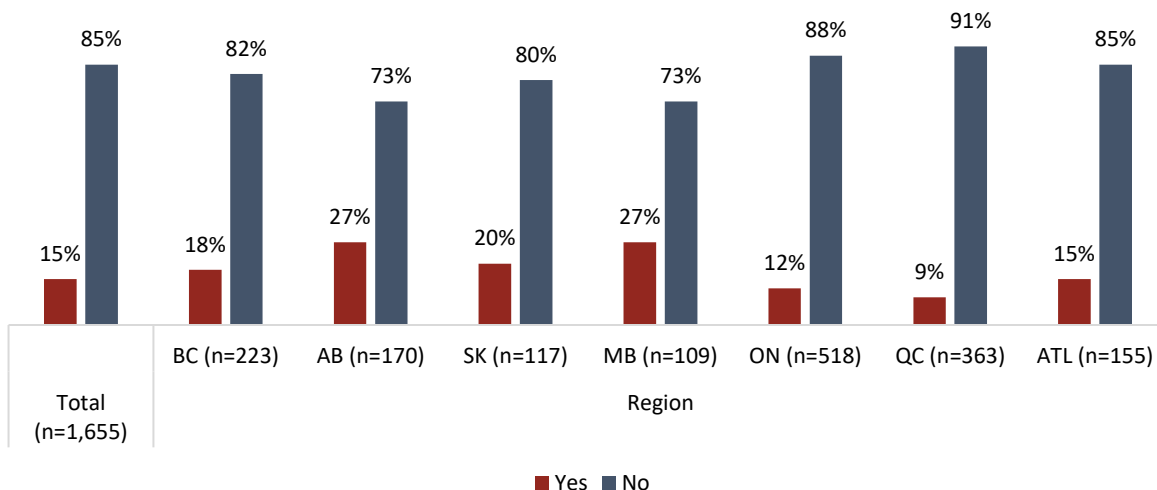
Canadians' own experience with crime has inched upward over the past six years, with 15 per cent now saying that they have been a victim of a crime that involved the police. This figure represents a six-point increase since 2014:

**In the past two years, have you yourself been a victim of crime which involved the police, such as an assault, a break-in or some other type of crime?**



Personal experience with criminal activity is again lowest in Quebec, and higher in the provinces west of Ontario:

**In the past two years, have you yourself been a victim of crime which involved the police, such as an assault, a break-in or some other type of crime?**



**Confidence in justice system declines again**

Near the start of the last decade, most Canadians expressed [a lack of confidence](#) in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, their local police forces, and the courts system – including the Supreme Court of Canada. These findings came on the heels of a number of scandals and investigations, including allegations that RCMP leadership had [covered up](#) pension fraud, as well as inquiries into police mismanagement of the case of serial killer Robert Pickton and abuse of power in other B.C. cases.

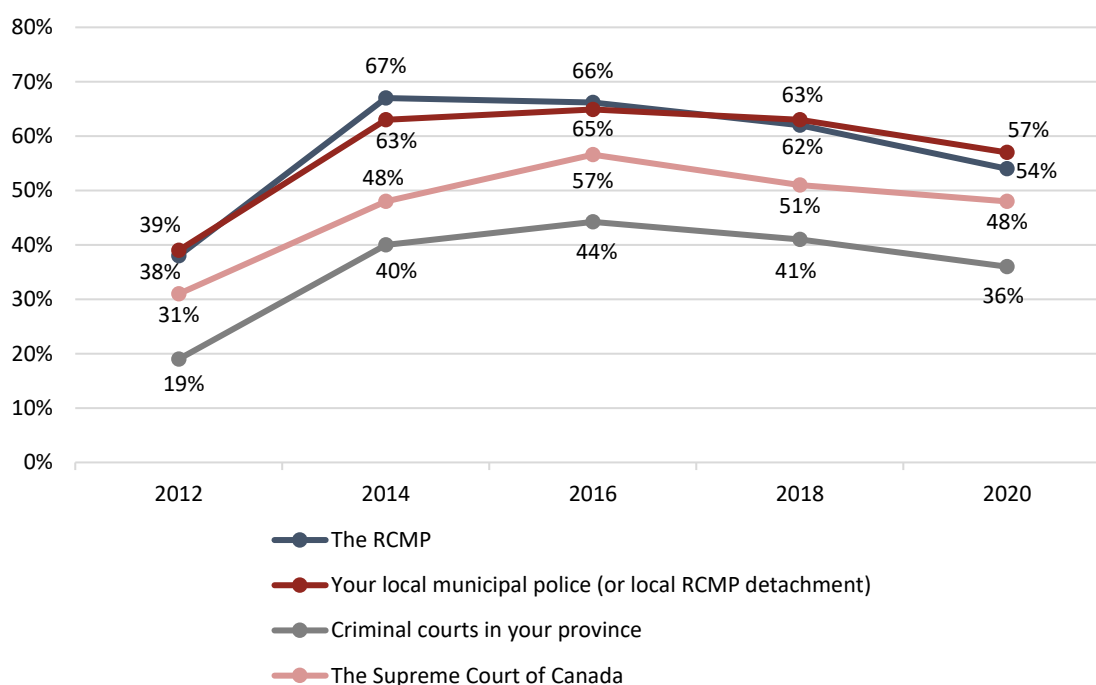
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By 2014, however, Angus Reid found confidence in the justice system to have improved significantly, to a level that remained fairly consistent in the Angus Reid Institute's 2016 installment of this survey. Confidence declined slightly across each aspect of the justice system in 2018 and does so again in this latest data. While approximately half of Canadians still have confidence in the RCMP, their local municipal police forces and the Supreme Court, the level of confidence for each is down over the past four years.

Further, just over one-in-three Canadians say they have confidence in their own provincial court system:

**How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system?  
(complete confidence/a lot of confidence shown)**

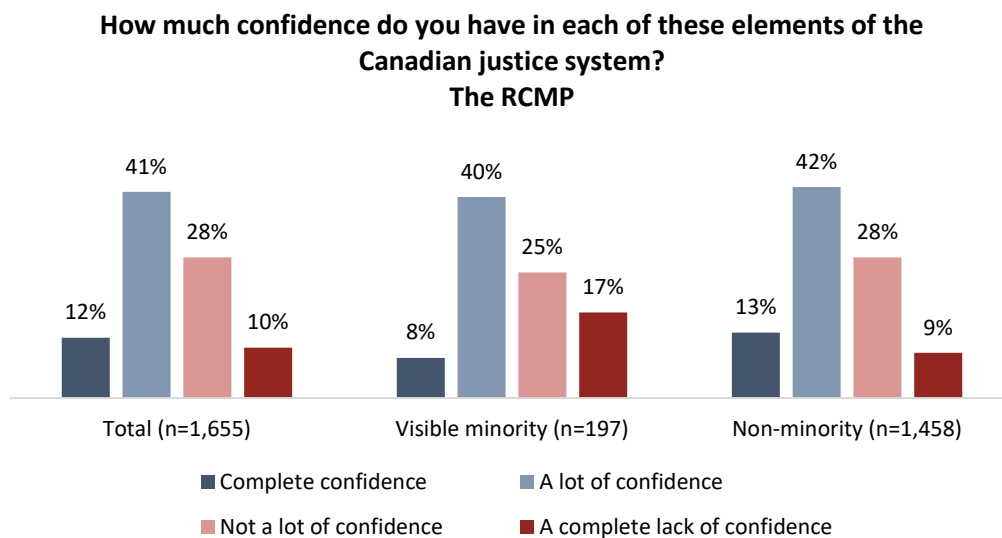


### Views of police

Views of the different levels of law enforcement in the country are varied across different populations and regions. This finding comes as some jurisdictions in the country debate whether to introduce new provincial or municipal forces. In Surrey, British Columbia, a recent municipal budget outlined \$129 million over five years to help create a [municipal police force](#) set to begin operations in 2021. In [Alberta](#), Premier Jason Kenney recently announced that his government is considering creating its own provincial police force. As a national institution, the RCMP garners slightly less confidence than do their local detachments (where they exist):

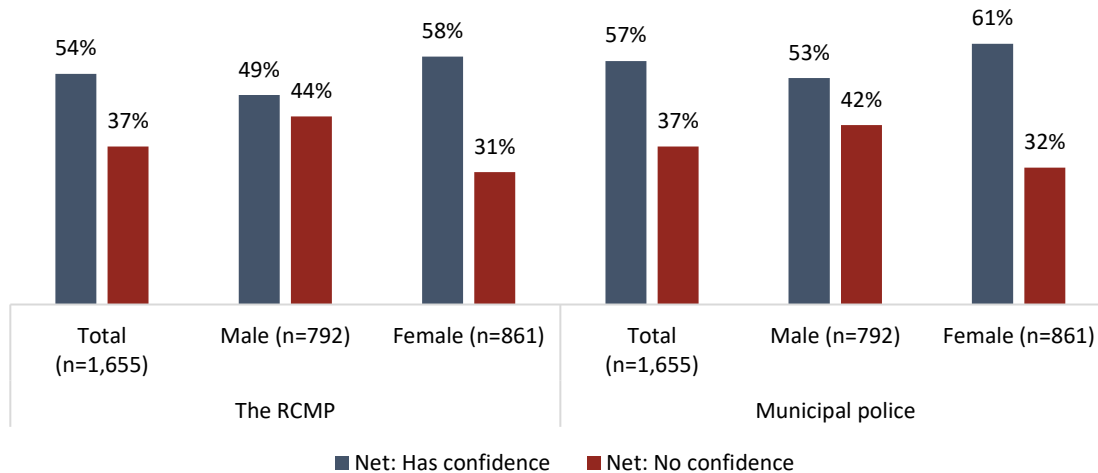
How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system? (Have confidence)								
	Total (n=1,655)	Region						
		BC (n=223)	AB (n=170)	SK (n=117)	MB (n=109)	ON (n=518)	QC (n=363)	ATL (n=155)
The RCMP	54%	61%	46%	57%	49%	52%	55%	57%
Your provincial police force	-	-	-	-	-	59%	54%	-
Your local municipal police (or local RCMP detachment)	57%	63%	54%	61%	46%	56%	59%	53%
Criminal courts in your province	36%	32%	31%	30%	23%	36%	44%	33%
The Supreme Court of Canada	48%	44%	38%	39%	31%	52%	54%	47%

As the Angus Reid Institute has previously found, visible minorities express lower levels of confidence in police forces. When asked about the RCMP, visible minorities are twice as likely to say that they have a complete lack of confidence compared to non-minorities (17% to 9%). Overall, 48 per cent of visible minorities express confidence in the RCMP:



Men are more skeptical than women about the trustworthiness of police in their communities. Half of men in the country have confidence in the RCMP, while a majority of women say the same:

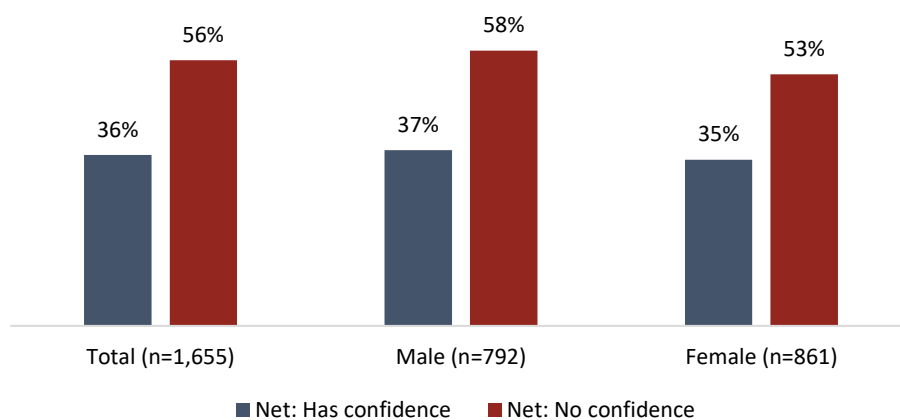
### Confidence in police



### Views of courts

Negative opinions from both men and women converge when it comes to Canada's provincial court systems. Asked about confidence in criminal courts within their respective provinces, just over one-in-three Canadians, male and female, say that they have it:

### Confidence in criminal courts within province



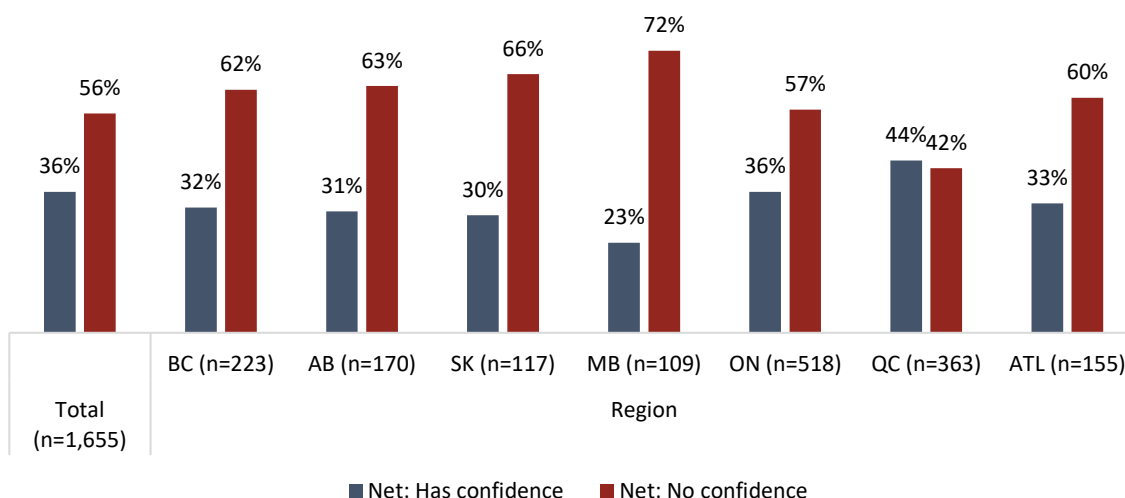
Regionally, only Quebec residents approach majority territory when it comes to confidence in provincial criminal courts. Most of the country leans heavily toward lacking confidence in this branch of the justice system:

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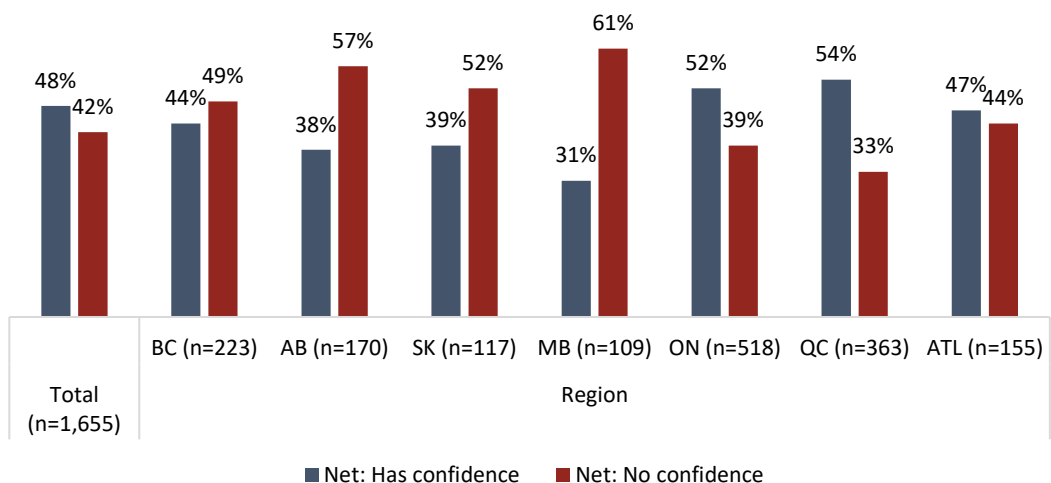


### Confidence in criminal courts within province



Canadians have been consistently found to have more confidence in the Supreme Court of Canada than their provincial courts. Only two provinces, however, Ontario and Quebec, have a majority of residents voicing confidence in the highest court in the land. Overall, 48 per cent of Canadians say they have confidence in the SCOC, and just 14 per cent have complete confidence (see detailed tables):

### Confidence in Supreme Court of Canada



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

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<b>Over the past five years or so, would you say there has been an increase, decrease, or no change in the amount of crime in your community?</b>					
	<b>ARI 2012 (1,005)</b>	<b>ARI 2014 (1,013)</b>	<b>ARI 2016 (1,505)</b>	<b>ARI 2018 (1,520)</b>	<b>ARI 2020 (1,655)</b>
<b>Increase</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>48%</b>
<b>No change</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>Decrease</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>5%</b>

<b>In the past two years, have you yourself been a victim of crime which involved the police, such as an assault, a break-in or some other type of crime?</b>					
	<b>ARI 2012 (1,005)</b>	<b>ARI 2014 (1,013)</b>	<b>ARI 2016 (1,505)</b>	<b>ARI 2018 (1,520)</b>	<b>ARI 2020 (1,655)</b>
<b>Yes</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>15%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>91%</b>	<b>90%</b>	<b>87%</b>	<b>85%</b>

<b>How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system?</b>					
	<b>ARI 2012 (1,005)</b>	<b>ARI 2014 (1,013)</b>	<b>ARI 2016 (1,505)</b>	<b>ARI 2018 (1,520)</b>	<b>ARI 2020 (1,655)</b>
<b>The RCMP</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>66%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Your local municipal police (or local RCMP detachment)</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Criminal courts in your province</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>36%</b>
<b>The Supreme Court of Canada</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>48%</b>