

## Two Canadas? Regional divisions over direction of the country, hope for future, define start to the year

*Quebecers happy and hopeful while Albertans largely anxious and pessimistic*

**January 15, 2020** – The prospect of a new year is bringing new concerns and anxieties for some Canadians, and a bullish outlook for others. How they feel has largely to do with where they live.

A new study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds a national average of six-in-ten Canadians satisfied with the way things are going in Canada today. But most of these people are concentrated in Quebec, Ontario, Atlantic Canada and, to a lesser extent, British Columbia.

The outlook in the other western provinces looks entirely different. Seven-in-ten Albertans (71%), three-in-five Saskatchewan residents (61%), and close to half of Manitobans (46%) voice dissatisfaction. Further, the proportion of dissatisfied residents has risen in each of the four western provinces since 2016. Increases in Alberta (+24) and Saskatchewan (+18) are most stark.

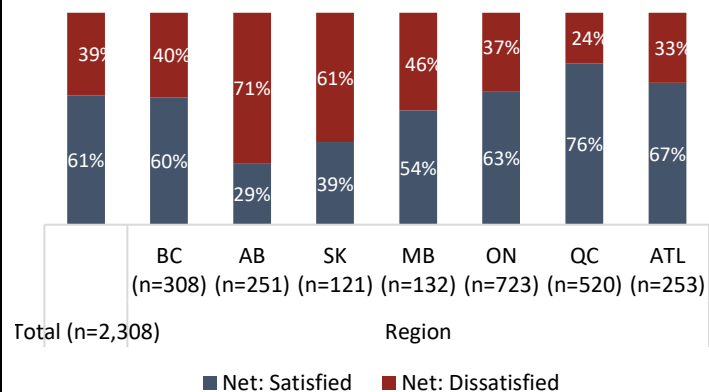
This unhappiness is inextricably linked to political perspectives and what partisans want to see from their government. For those who supported the Liberals in October, satisfaction is almost unanimous (90%). Conservative voters, meanwhile, are three times less likely to share this view (31%).

That said, Canadians are apparently divorcing some of their dissatisfaction with the country from views about their own, individual future. At least three-in-five residents in every region of the country say they are optimistic about what the future holds for them, personally.

### More Key Findings:

- Financial wellbeing is a factor, but perhaps a smaller one than some may anticipate, when it comes to hope for a person's own future. Canadians with the highest household income levels are most positive (82% optimistic), but those with the lowest household incomes are nonetheless, overwhelmingly optimistic (68%)

**Overall, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Canada today?**



### **METHODOLOGY:**

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from December 18 – 26, 2019 among a representative randomized sample of 2,308 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.

### CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

- Quebecers are most positive about the future of their own province (73%) followed by British Columbians (57%). Meanwhile, Albertans (77%) and Atlantic Canadians (58%) are most pessimistic
- Concerns about the next generation are abundant. Across all age groups, three-in-five Canadians say they are pessimistic about the future of the next generation

### **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.

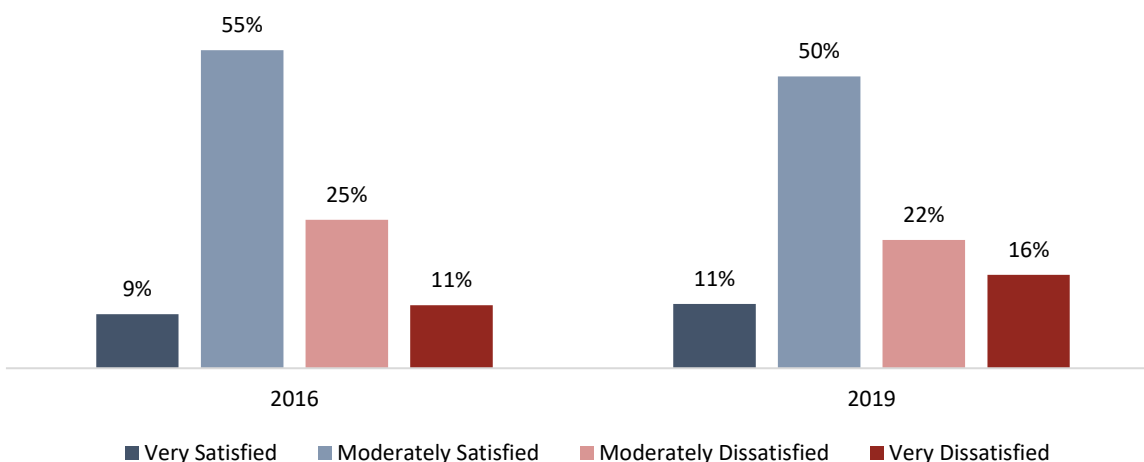
### **INDEX:**

- **State of the nation**
  - **Regional divide in perspectives**
  - **Political points of view**
- **Feelings about the future**
  - **Personal hopes are high**
  - **Less optimism at the provincial, national level**
  - **Does politics determine positivity?**
  - **Majorities across all ages think next generation is in trouble**

### **State of the nation**

For the majority of Canadians, 2020 begins in a reasonably good state. Six-in-ten (61%) say they are satisfied with the way things are going in Canada today. This feeling appears to have remained consistent over the last few years, as [polling by the Institute from 2016](#) shows nearly the same level of satisfaction:

#### **Overall, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Canada today?**



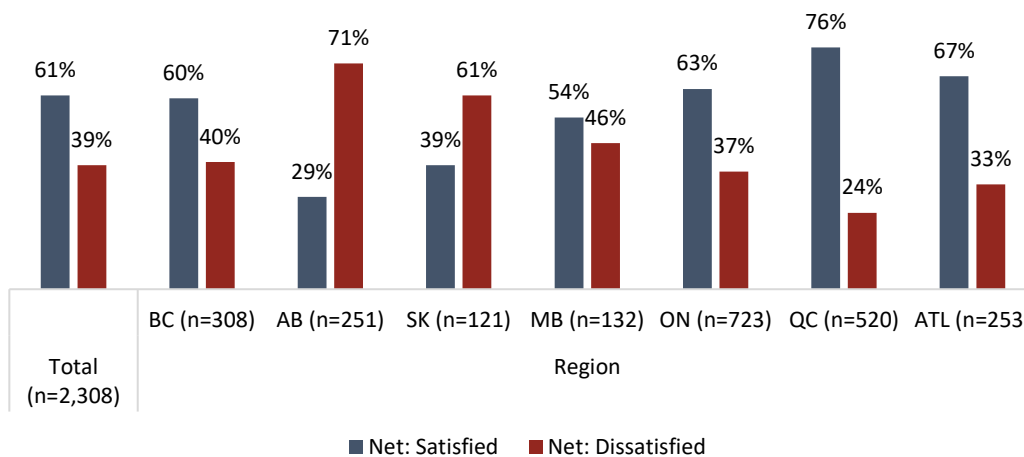
### **CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**Regional divide in perspectives**

There are, however, wide regional divisions on this question of satisfaction with the direction of the country. Amid concerns about western alienation that have dominated discussions in political circles in recent years, both Alberta and Saskatchewan residents lean toward dissatisfaction, and Manitoba residents are divided. Conversely, three-quarters of Quebec residents are comfortable with the way things are going:

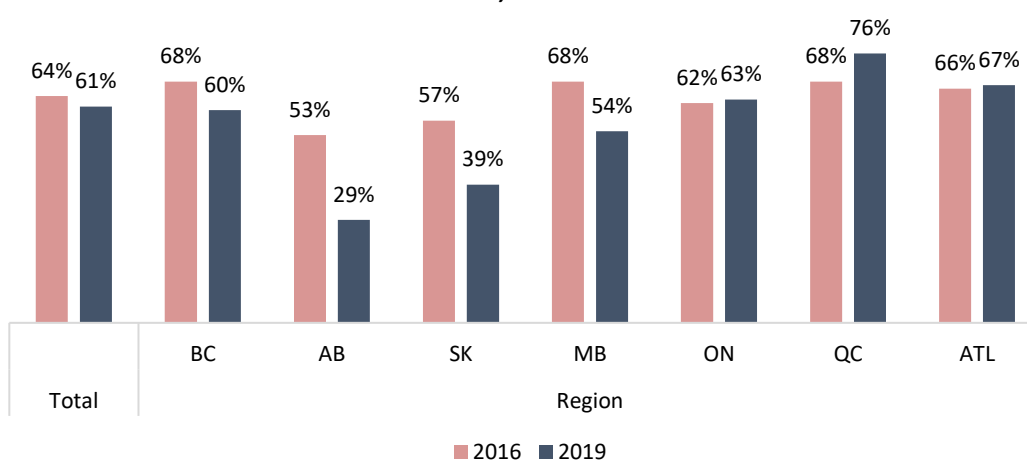
**Overall, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Canada today?**



These provincial discrepancies correlate with the findings of another Angus Reid Institute study related to economic confidence released in November. Albertans were three times as likely than Quebec residents to say that their standard of living has worsened in the last year (56% to 18%).

Notably, satisfaction with the direction of the country has dropped in all western provinces, most noticeably in Alberta and Manitoba, and is close to unchanged, or improved in the eastern regions of the country:

**Percentage saying they are "Satisfied" with the way things are going in Canada, 2016 vs 2019**

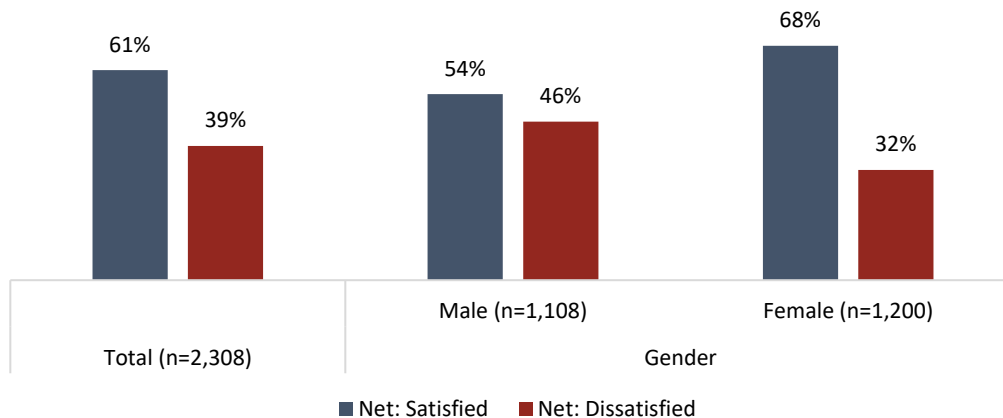


**CONTACT:**

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

Men are more disappointed than women with the state of the country. Half of men (46%) say they are dissatisfied with the way things are going, while one-third of women (32%) say the same. Age, meanwhile, appears to play no real factor in opinions ([see detailed tables](#)):

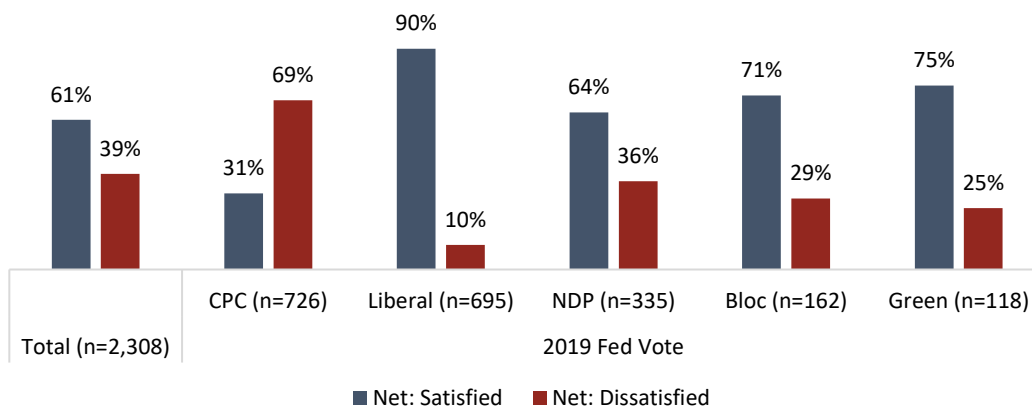
**Overall, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Canada today?**



**Political points of view**

Politics play an important role in perception of this issue. Those who supported the Conservative Party in the recent federal election are overwhelmingly likely to say that they are dissatisfied with the way things are going. Indeed, just three-in-ten (31%) say the country is on the right track. This, compared to nine-in-ten Liberal supporters (90%) and more than 64 per cent of all other major federal party backers:

**Overall, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Canada today?**



**CONTACT:**

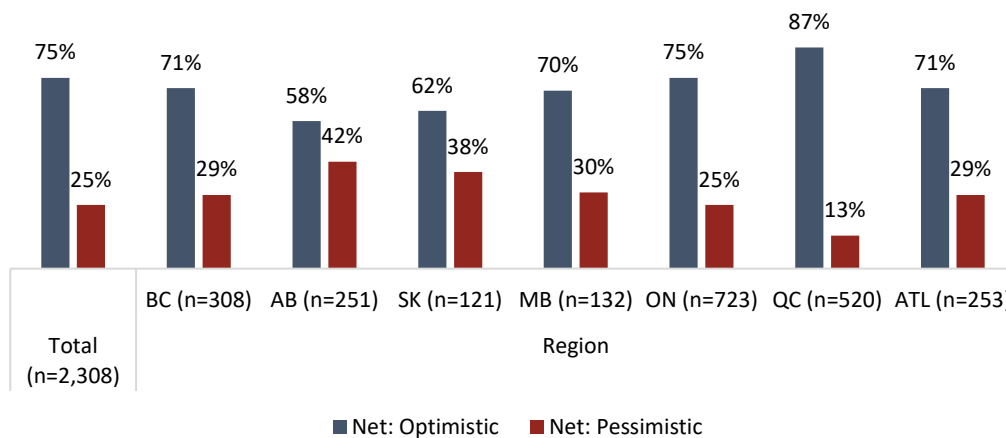
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)

**Feelings about the future**

**Personal hopes are high**

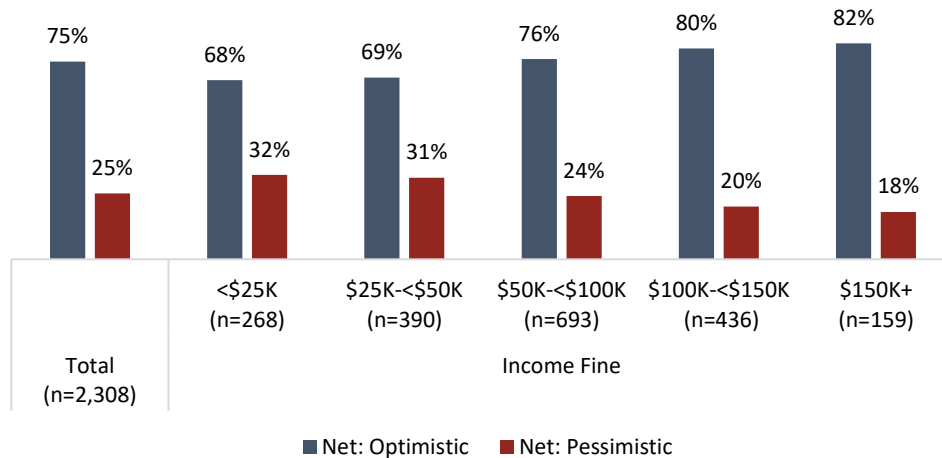
While a significant portion of the population feels things are going very poorly in Canada today, the sentiment that they are personally at risk of suffering in the future is relatively uncommon. When Canadians look at their own lives, three-quarters are inclined to say they are optimistic about their personal future, and even six-in-ten residents from Alberta and Saskatchewan agree. Quebecers again lead in national optimism, with 87 per cent saying good things are still to come from a personal perspective.

**Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about your own future?**



Finances are a factor in this equation, but perhaps not to the level one might assume. While Canadians are slightly more likely to be optimistic at the higher ends of the household income spectrum, seven-in-ten are still positive at the lower end as well:

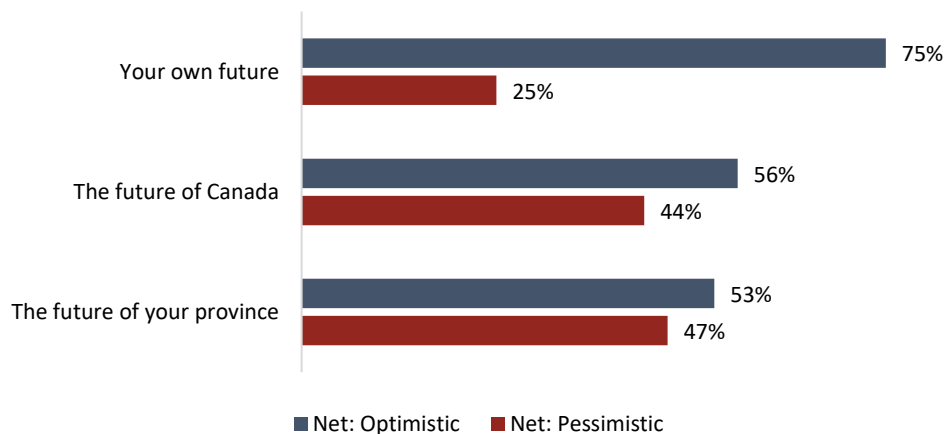
**Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about your own future?**



**Less optimism at the provincial, national level**

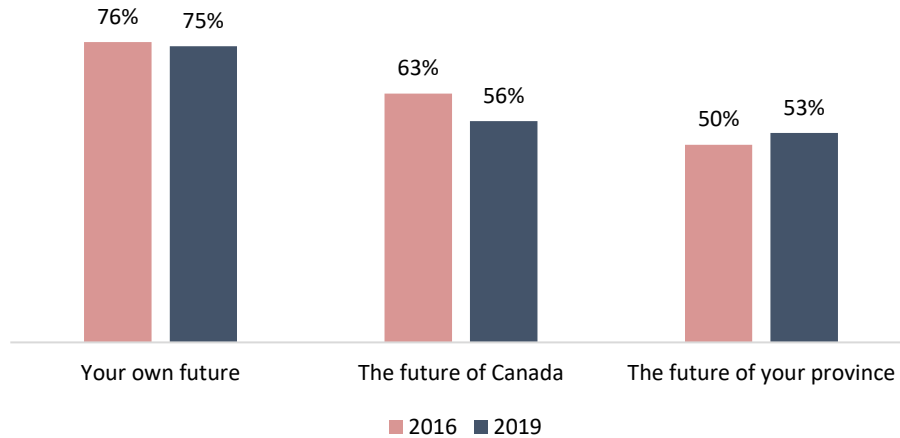
While optimism is high when it comes to personal perspectives, hope evaporates among a considerable group of Canadians when they cast their eyes to the broader picture. Compared to the three-quarters who say their own future is bright, just 53 per cent hold this view when it comes to their own province, and just 56 per cent when it comes to the nation.

**Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about each of the following?**



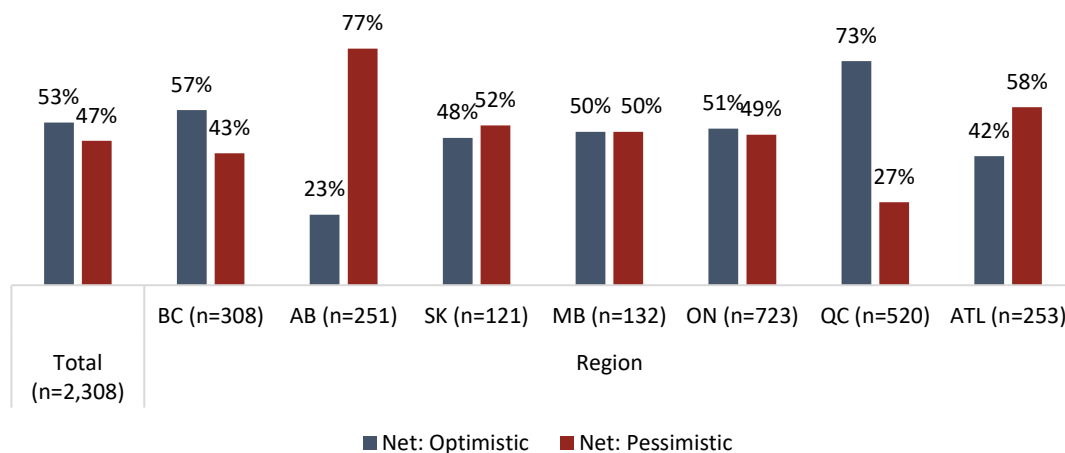
The number of Canadians feeling optimistic about their own futures has held firm over the past few years, as have opinions about provincial outlooks. The one element of prognostication where Canadian views have soured is with respect to the future of the country. The percentage saying they have a rosy view of Canada's future has dropped by seven points:

Percentage saying they are "Optimistic" about each:



The contrast in provincial outlooks is particularly staggering. Three provinces, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, are split in opinion. British Columbians and Quebecers are most positive, with firm majorities in each saying they are optimistic about the future path of the province. Atlantic Canadians and especially Albertans, however, are pessimistic. Negativity is most pronounced in Alberta, where three-quarters of residents (77%) are pessimistic about the future of their home jurisdiction:

Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about the future of your province?

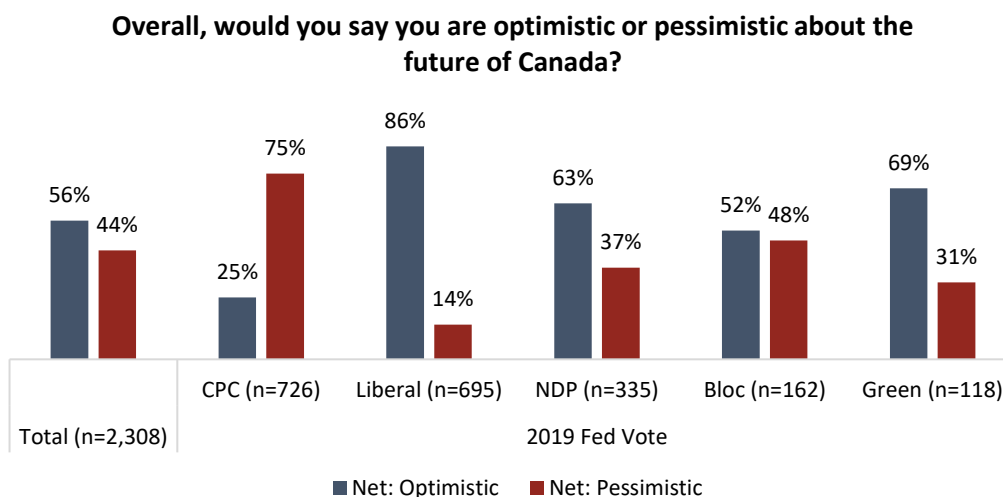


Regional breakdowns are similar when it comes to the future of the country, though Atlantic Canadians are considerably more positive about the country's future than their own:

Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about each of the following? (Percentage optimistic shown)								
	Total (n=2,308)	Region						
		BC (n=308)	AB (n=251)	SK (n=121)	MB (n=132)	ON (n=723)	QC (n=520)	ATL (n=253)
Your own future	75%	71%	58%	62%	70%	75%	87%	71%
The future of your province	53%	57%	23%	48%	50%	51%	73%	42%
The future of Canada	56%	54%	31%	38%	42%	59%	67%	62%

### Does politics determine positivity?

Where the national picture is concerned, politics tells the story. As was the case with perspectives on satisfaction with the direction of the country, discussed in part one, Liberals and Conservatives hold wildly divergent mindsets. Nearly nine-in-ten Liberal Party voters (86%) say that they are optimistic about the future of Canada. Conversely, just 25 per cent of those who supported the CPC in October agree with them. Three-quarters (75%), meanwhile, are pessimistic. Green Party and NDP voters are more reserved in their optimism, but lean toward positivity themselves:



### Majorities across all ages think next generation is in trouble

In 2016, the Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians if they felt that young people starting out now, hoping to establish themselves and reach the same standard of living as their parents and grandparents, are facing tougher conditions than previous generations. Millennials overwhelmingly agreed that they have it worse, and to the surprise of some, half of Canadians over the age of 55 felt the same way.

[Related: Millennials think they have it tougher than past generations, and half of boomers agree](#)

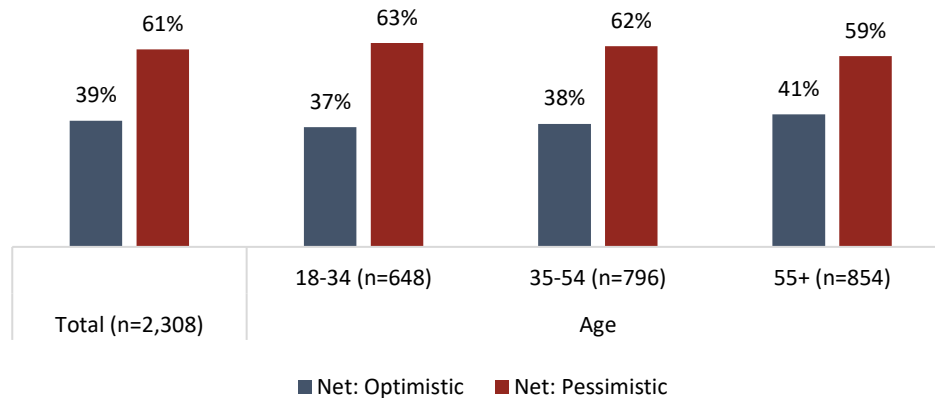
#### CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 [shachi.kurl@angusreid.org](mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org) @shachikurl  
 Dave Korzinski, Research Director: 250.899.0821 [dave.korzinski@angusreid.org](mailto:dave.korzinski@angusreid.org)



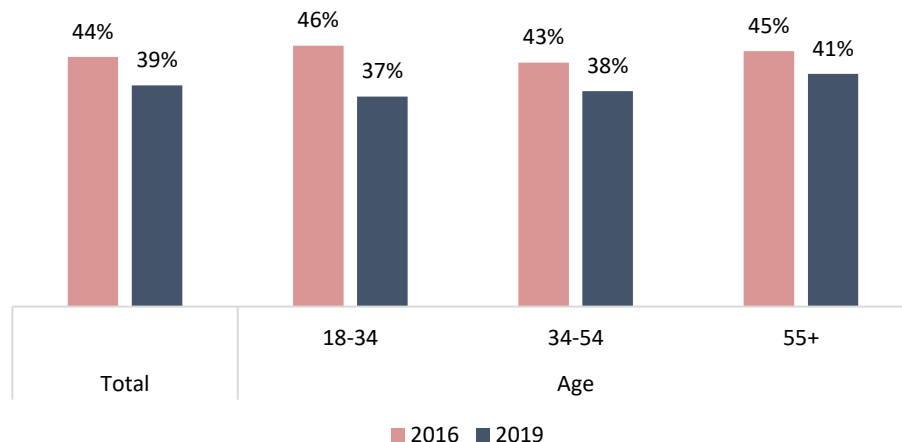
Changing [economic conditions](#), [climate change](#) and [global instability](#) all likely play a factor in sentiment today, which finds six-in-ten Canadians across all age categories pessimistic about the future for young people:

**Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about the future of the next generation?**



Optimism regarding the future of the next generation has remained relatively consistent over the past three years, though, notably, the percentage of young adults (ages 18 to 34) reporting a positive outlook has dropped by 11 points since 2016:

**Percentage saying they are "Optimistic" about the future of the next generation, 2016 vs 2019**



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

<b>Overall, how satisfied are you with the way things are going in Canada today?</b>		
	<b>ARI 2016 (3,901)</b>	<b>ARI 2019 (2,308)</b>
<b>Very Satisfied</b>	9%	11%
<b>Moderately Satisfied</b>	55%	50%
<b>Moderately Dissatisfied</b>	25%	22%
<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>	11%	16%
<b>Net: Satisfied</b>	64%	61%
<b>Net: Dissatisfied</b>	36%	39%

<b>Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about each of the following? (Percentage saying “Optimistic” shown)</b>		
	<b>ARI 2016 (3,901)</b>	<b>ARI 2019 (2,308)</b>
<b>Your own future</b>	76%	75%
<b>The future of your province</b>	50%	53%
<b>The future of Canada</b>	63%	56%
<b>The future of the next generation</b>	44%	39%

<b>Overall, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about each of the following? (Percentage saying “Pessimistic” shown)</b>		
	<b>ARI 2016 (3,901)</b>	<b>ARI 2019 (2,308)</b>
<b>Your own future</b>	24%	25%
<b>The future of your province</b>	50%	47%
<b>The future of Canada</b>	37%	44%
<b>The future of the next generation</b>	56%	61%