

5G Divide: As decision looms, there's little Canadian consensus over Huawei's role in network buildout

Just over half (56%) support banning Huawei's involvement, one-in-three say a limited role is fine

February 11, 2020 – As its [Five Eyes allies](#) choose sides in the Huawei 5G debate, the Canadian government has yet to make a decision.

Now, the latest study from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadian public opinion offering little guidance in terms of which way to lean.

While a slight majority (56%) favour following the U.S., Australia and New Zealand in banning any participation from Chinese telecom giant Huawei in building the nation's next generation wireless network, one-in-three (34%) would support a limited arrangement like the one recently approved by the United Kingdom. The rest, (10%) favour having Huawei build the entire 5G infrastructure.

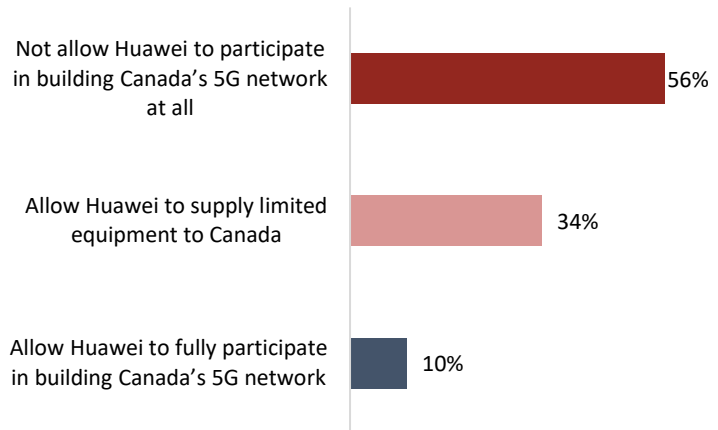
Opinion is driven in part by political preference, with a majority of past Conservative voters inclined to block Huawei altogether, and those on the left side of the political spectrum – particularly in Quebec – more open to allowing the company in.

Of course, preventing a global [leader in 5G technology](#) may have an impact beyond the quality and cost of the network. Sino-Canadian relations have been strained by an ongoing diplomatic dispute involving senior Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, who was arrested by Canadian officials in December 2018 and is currently at trial. In retaliation, two Canadians were arrested and have yet to be released.

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.

Canada could choose from a number of options in building its own network. Which would you prefer: (All respondents, n=1,505)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from February 3 - 5 among a representative randomized sample of 1,505 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.

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Slight majority say Huawei should have zero involvement in 5G infrastructure

Fifth-generation wireless technology is expected to play a significant role in the lives of Canadians in the coming decade. Faster speeds ([up to 20 times](#) what’s currently available), and better connectivity are anticipated as Canadian demand for smart devices and data [continues to rise](#).

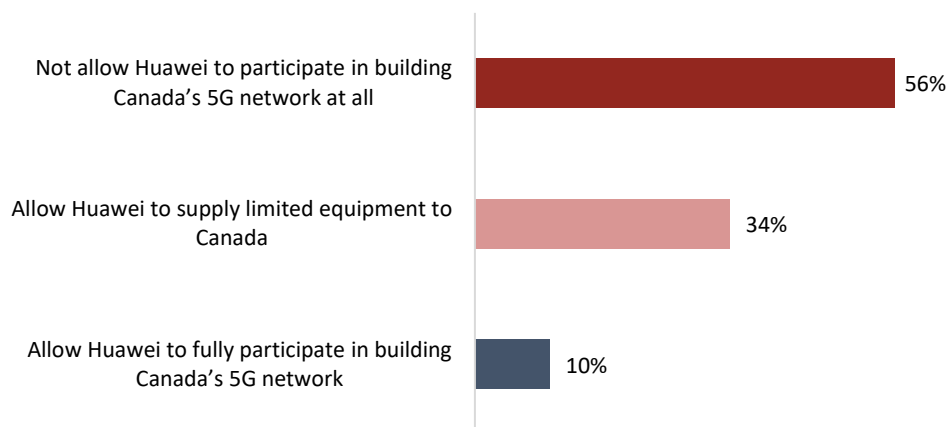
There are few companies that offer 5G technology. Huawei is considered a global leader, having [spent more](#) on research and development in 2018 than both of the other market leaders, Ericsson AB and Nokia Oyj, combined. That said, Canada’s allies have been concerned about the security issues that may arise if China gains access to vast amounts of domestic data. Senior Canadian military officials have also [reportedly said](#) Huawei would be a national security risk if allowed to build the network.

Tensions between Canada and China have been high since the arrest of Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou in 2018. Meng was arrested at the request of the United States for [violating sanctions in Iran](#). In 2019, exports to China [dropped \\$4.6 billion](#) in 2019, down approximately 16 per cent from the year prior.

These factors further complicate Canada’s yet-to-be-announced decision to accept or reject Huawei’s participation in 5G infrastructure. While the United States, Australia and New Zealand have rejected the company, the United Kingdom announced recently that it would allow Huawei to be involved in [“peripheral”](#) parts of network production.

One-in-three Canadians (34%) say it would be best to follow the U.K’s lead and allow limited, but some, involvement. Meanwhile, more than half (56%) say they would block Huawei entirely and go with another provider:

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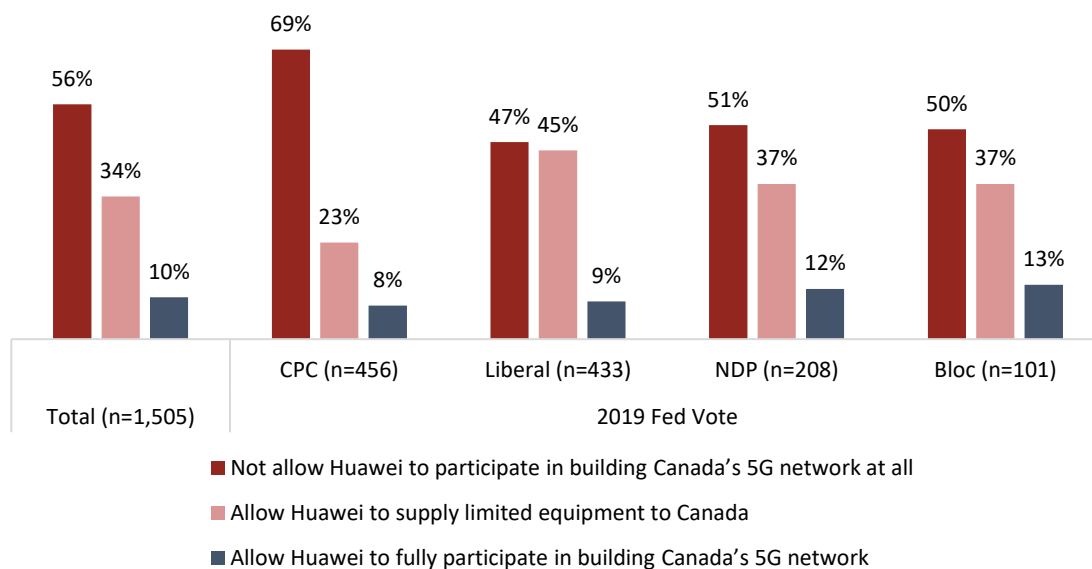
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Seven-in-ten CPC voters oppose any investment, others divided

After the decision was announced in the U.K. that Huawei would be permitted to play a more limited role in 5G network production, [some senior British Conservatives](#) wrote to party members in their country to express concern.

It's a sentiment apparently felt by many of Canada's Conservative voters too. Those who supported the CPC in the 2019 federal election are most likely to say that Huawei should be banned, while supporters of other major federal parties are divided:

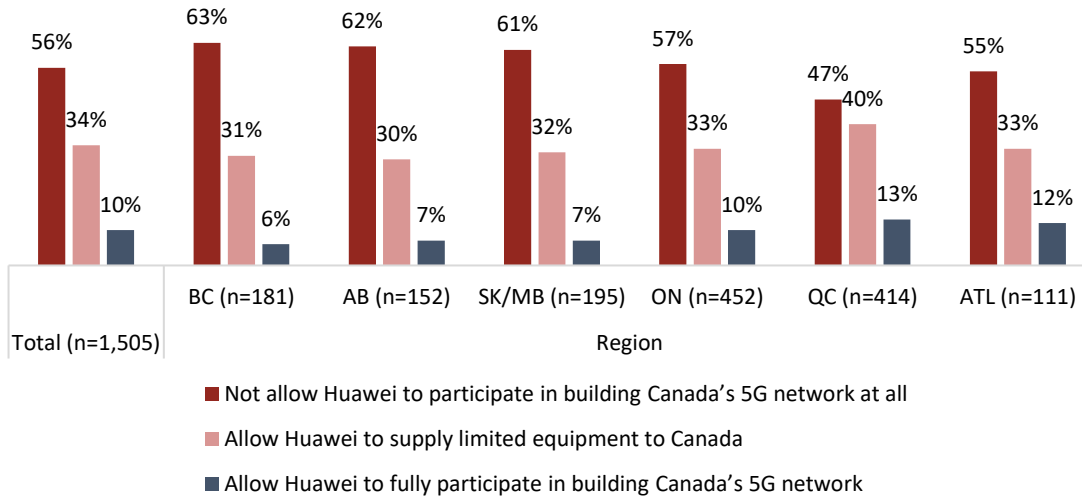
Canada could choose from a number of options in building its own network. Which would you prefer:



Opposition higher in western provinces, half in Quebec open to at least partial investment

Huawei [maintains](#) that it does not have a connection to the Chinese government and any espionage-related activities, though [Chinese law stipulates](#) that companies support national intelligence efforts. Quebec residents are most open to the company in a limited role, while those in the four westernmost provinces are most likely to say that a ban is the best course of action:

Canada could choose from a number of options in building its own network. Which would you prefer:



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