

## Canadians' expectations post-pandemic; support for the poor, environmental protection, gain in importance

*Study canvasses views on social issues, representation in media, trust in justice system*

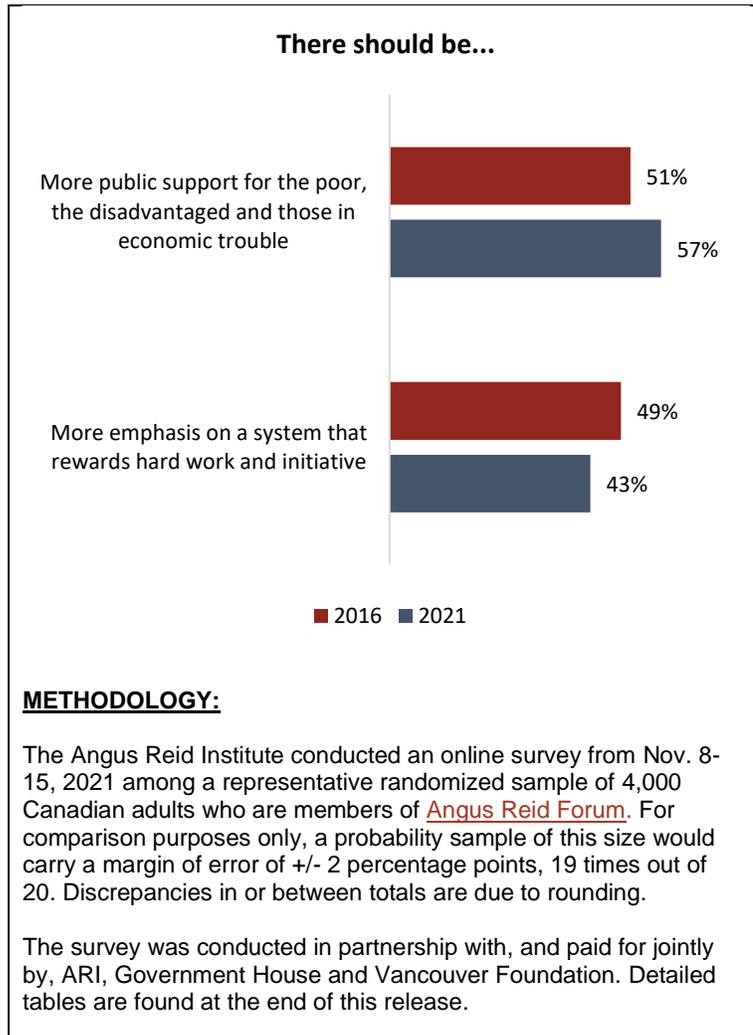
**June 9, 2022** – Canadians values and social expectations are not fixed, they're a constantly evolving target for public policy to approximate and bring to life. Politicians often try to capitalize on the moment to generate momentum for sweeping changes. So, how do Canadians feel after two years of living through the COVID-19 pandemic?

A new study from the Angus Reid Institute, in partnership with [Government House](#) and [Vancouver Foundation](#), finds increased enthusiasm for social supports, more concern about environmental protection, and an ever-creeping secularism in Canadian society.

Indeed, comparing recently gathered data with that from a landmark 2016 study done by ARI, it is evident that a notable shift has taken place. The percentage of Canadians who prefer "more public support for the disadvantaged" has increased six points (51% to 57%), while those who prefer a system that "rewards hard work and initiative" has subsequently fallen in the faceoff (49% to 43%). Amid growing and well-documented concern about climate change, the percentage of residents who prefer a focus on environmental protection versus economic growth has likewise shifted. The environmental aspect is now the priority of 63 per cent, while 37 per cent say economic concerns are paramount.

These and other shifts in Canadian perspectives help to portray how the country can change over a five-year period. Though only a capture of a moment in time, these new realities are nonetheless key measures of expectations and values.

For media, who strive to tell these stories, the challenge is a disconnect with a portion of the audience. Using the Angus Reid Institute's Canadian Values Index – a composite measure of progressive and conservative values across a spectrum – one can see that those on the Centre-Right and Right of the Index are vastly more likely to say that the stories they care about are not being told, and they are not



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being represented. Canada is made up of myriad perspectives, and 84 per cent of Canadians say that news media should reflect a range of different views and leave it up to viewers to decide what is of value.

That said, Canadians also express considerable doubt about their own compatriots' ability to discern fact from fiction. Nine-in-ten (91%) say they are worried about people's ability to tell what is real and what is fake in an increasingly online environment.

### More Key Findings:

- Seven-in-ten Canadians say that facts are real, established ideas or concepts. Three-in-ten disagree, and say that facts are subjective, and what is real can change from one person to the next.
- Three-in-five (61%) say that news media do a good job of presenting stories and facts as they are, while 39 per cent say most of the stories in the news can't be trusted. This rises to 47 per cent among 18- to 34-year-olds.
- Quebecers are more likely to have confidence in their province's criminal courts than residents of other provinces. There, more than half (54%) say they have complete or a lot of confidence in that system.
- Those on the "Right" of the Canadian Values Index (23% of the population) lack trust in many key pillars of society. This extends from the courts to even teachers. Two-in-five (41%) express confidence in teachers to do what is right in Canada. This increases to 64 per cent among the Centre-right, to a high of 89 per cent among the Left.

### 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.*

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**Part Three: Trust in justice system**

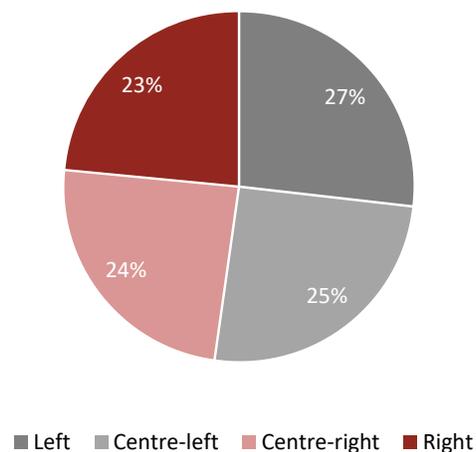
- Provincial criminal courts panned
- The ‘Right’ have little confidence in any area of Canadian society

**Part One: Social values**

**Canadian Values Index**

ARI created a Canadian Values Index to score respondents on their opinions across nine faceoff questions that represent competing perspectives on values in Canada ([view scoring here](#)). The result was an Index which places respondents in four categories, each representing about one-quarter of the sample: Left (27% of the sample), Centre-left (25%), Centre-right (24%) and Right (23%):

**Canadian Values Index  
(All respondents, n=4,000)**

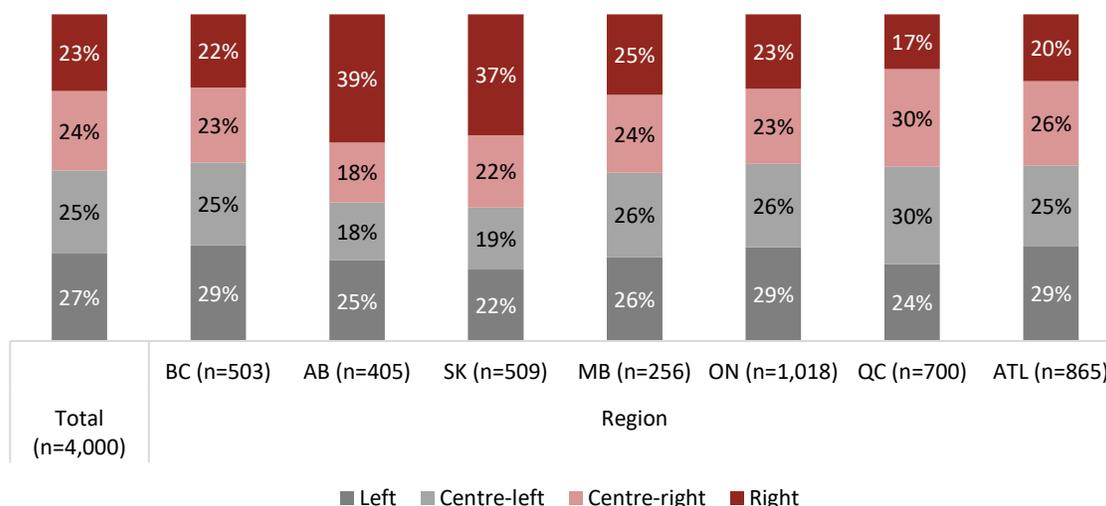


There is some regional variation of distribution along the CVI, most significantly in Alberta and Saskatchewan. In those two provinces, approaching two-in-five fall into the Right category, the most of any region in the country. Meanwhile, in Quebec, there are less – one-in-six (17%) – in that category. Instead, people in that province are more likely to be Centre-right (30%) or Centre-left (30%) than in other regions in the country. For the other provinces, distribution along the index is close to the national average:

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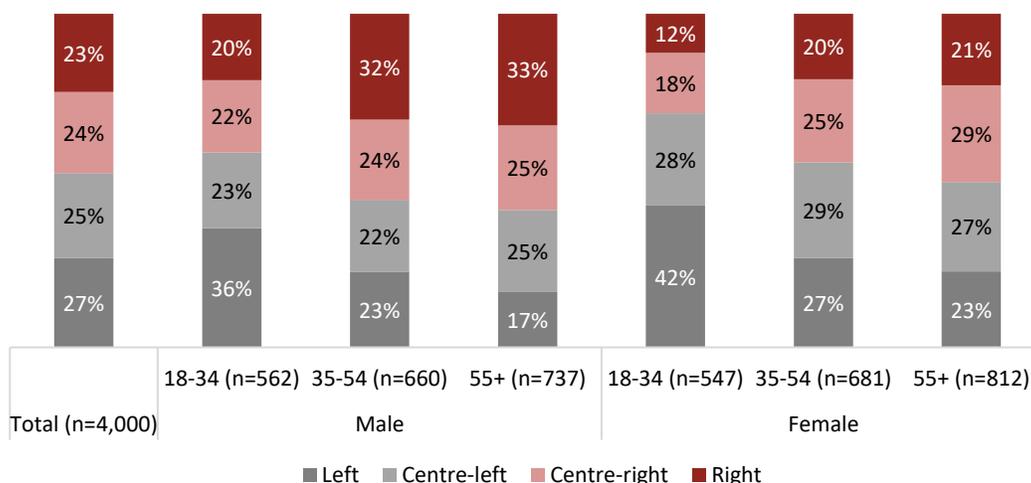
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### Canadian Values Index by Region



Men are more likely to fall into the Right segment of the CVI than women. As well, Canadians over the age of 34 are more likely to be in the Right category than those aged 18- to 34-years-old. Women that age are the most likely (42%) to be categorized as Left by the CVI:

### Canadian Values Index by Age and Gender



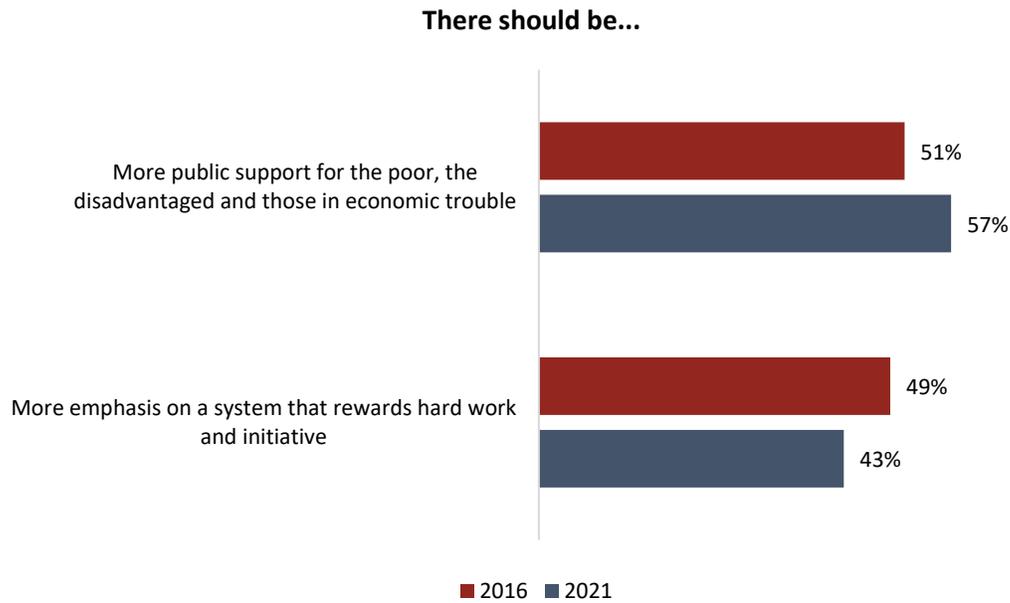
### Values shifting as pandemic, climate change alter expectations

Since ARI last asked many of these questions in 2016, Canada and the world have been warped by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing health crisis tested Canada's social safety net as restrictions slowed the economy.

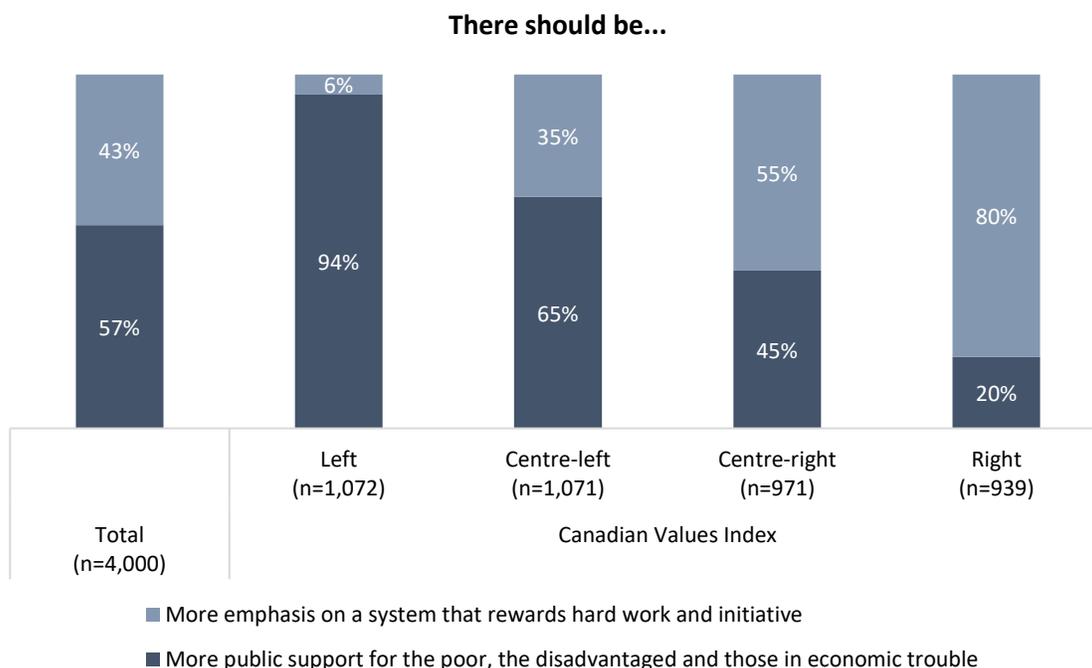
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Perhaps because of the events of the pandemic, there has been a shift in Canadians views on government support for the poor. Approaching three-in-five (57%) believe there should be more public support for the disadvantaged, a six-point increase from five years ago when ARI previously asked this question. Conversely, the proportion of Canadians who believe there should be more emphasis on a system that rewards initiative has since declined:



Along the CVI, nearly all (94%) of those in the Left category believe there should be increased public resources available to those in economic trouble. At the other end of the Index, four-in-five (80%) of those in the Right category say instead the system should reward hard work:



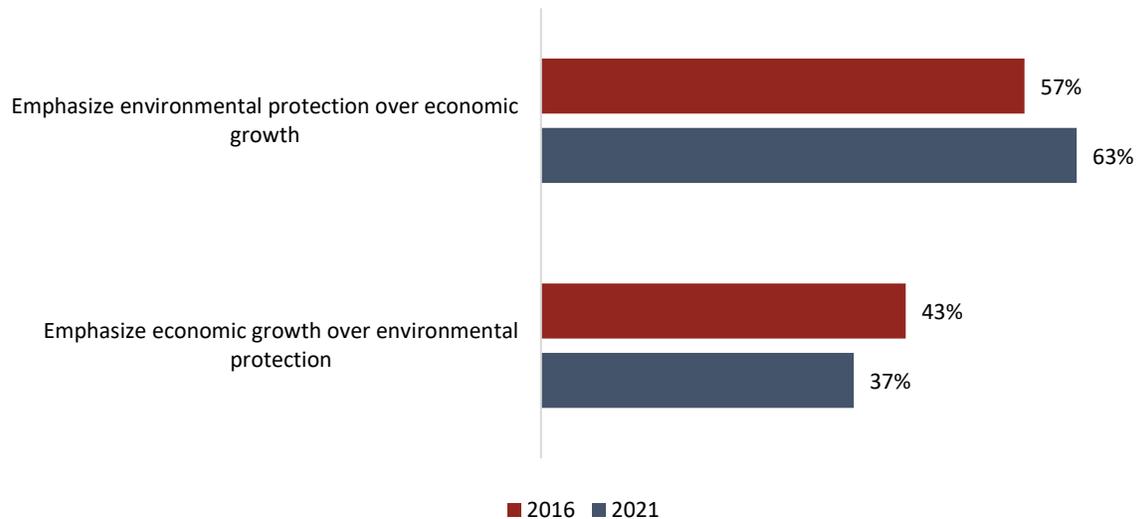
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Besides the effects of the global pandemic, Canada also experienced a year of large-scale weather disasters in 2021. British Columbia, especially, was battered by [fires](#) and [floods](#) made worse by climate change. The destruction of both made headlines across the country.

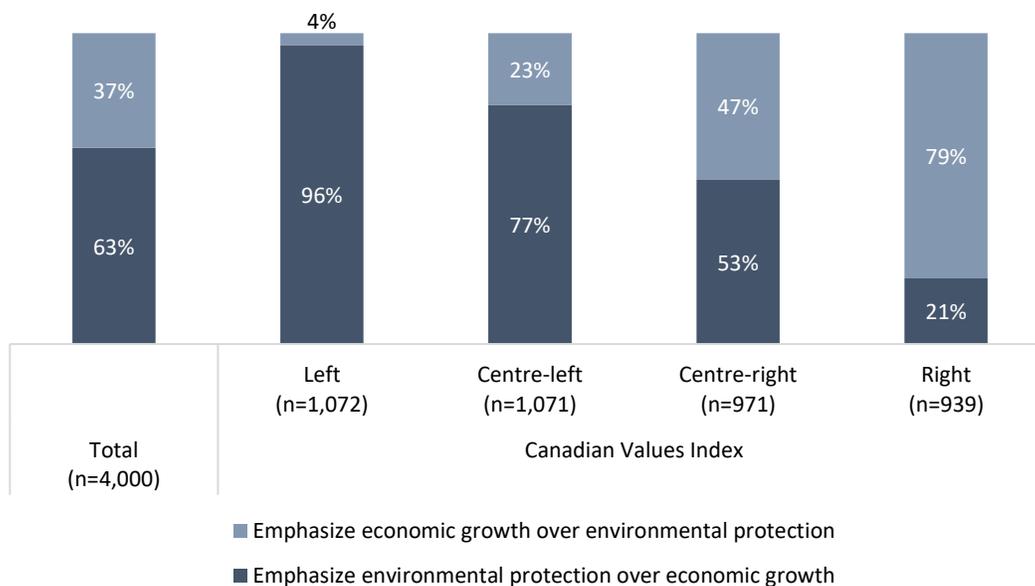
Compared to 2016, more Canadians now believe the country should prioritize environmental protection over economic growth:

**Overall, Canada's policies should...**



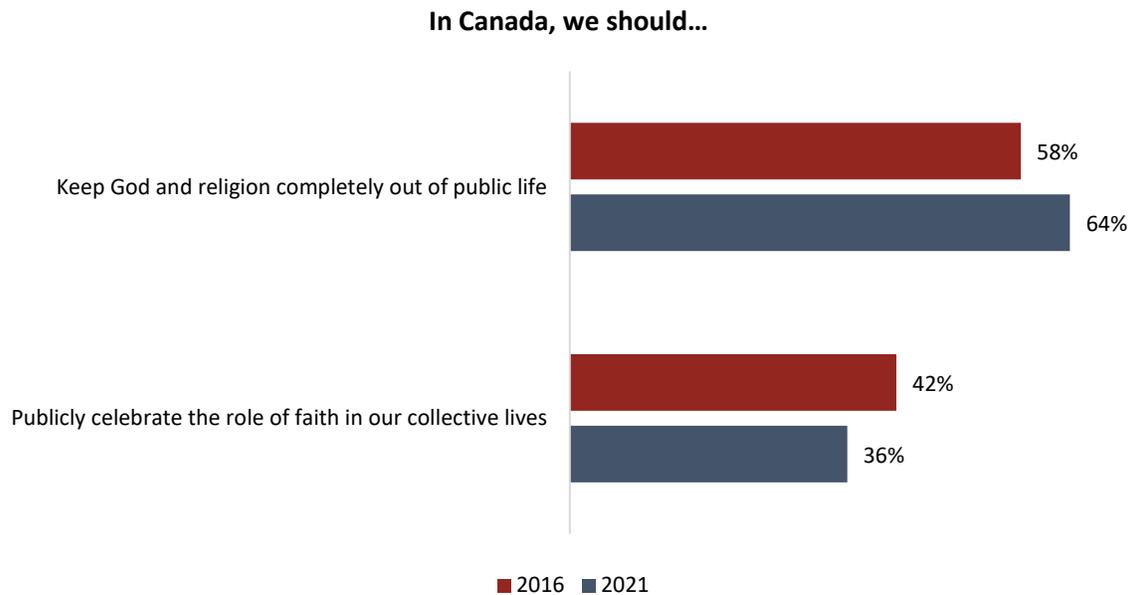
The desired balance between economic and environmental concerns shifts depending on the CVI. Nearly all (96%) on the Left believe environmental protection should be paramount, while four-in-five (79%) on the Right believe instead economics should trump the environment:

**Overall, Canada's policies should...**

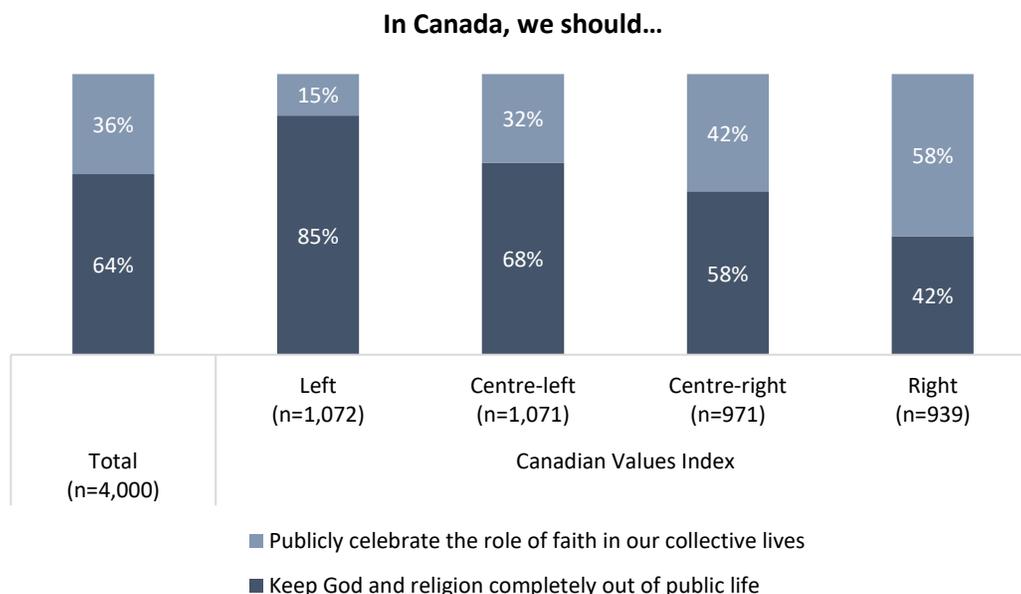


**Secularism, diversity, and reconciliation**

Another matter which has seen a shift in half a decade: faith in the public square. Approaching two-thirds (64%) now believe we should keep God and religion completely out of public life, more than the three-in-five (58%) who said so in 2016:



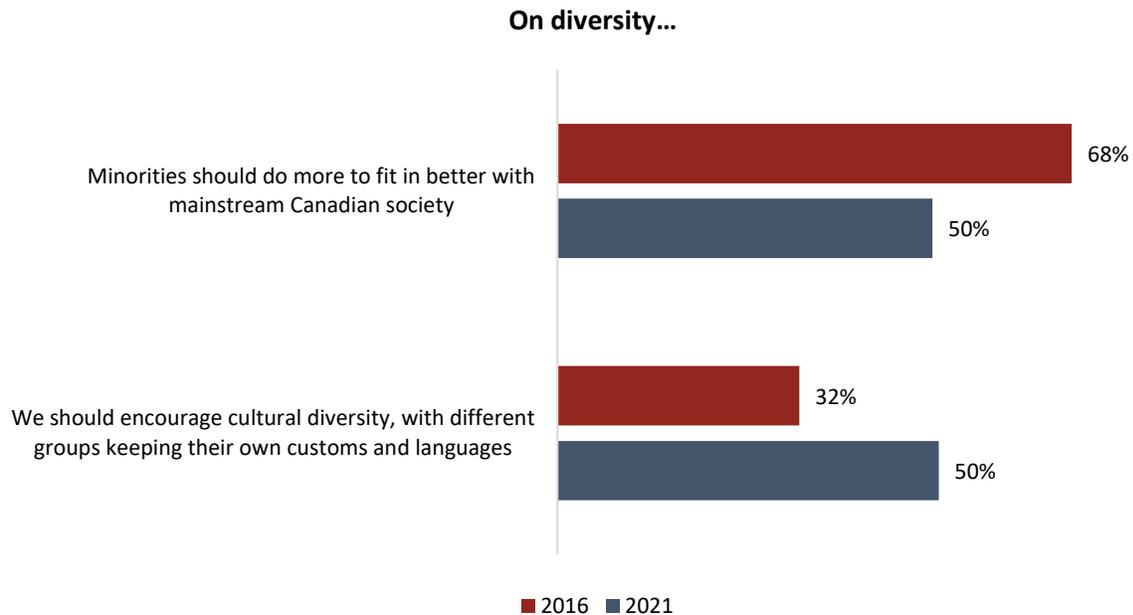
For all CVI groups except on the Right, a majority believe we should keep God out of public life. That majority grows the further Left you move on the Index. For those in the Right, three-in-five (58%) say we should publicly celebrate faith in our collective lives:



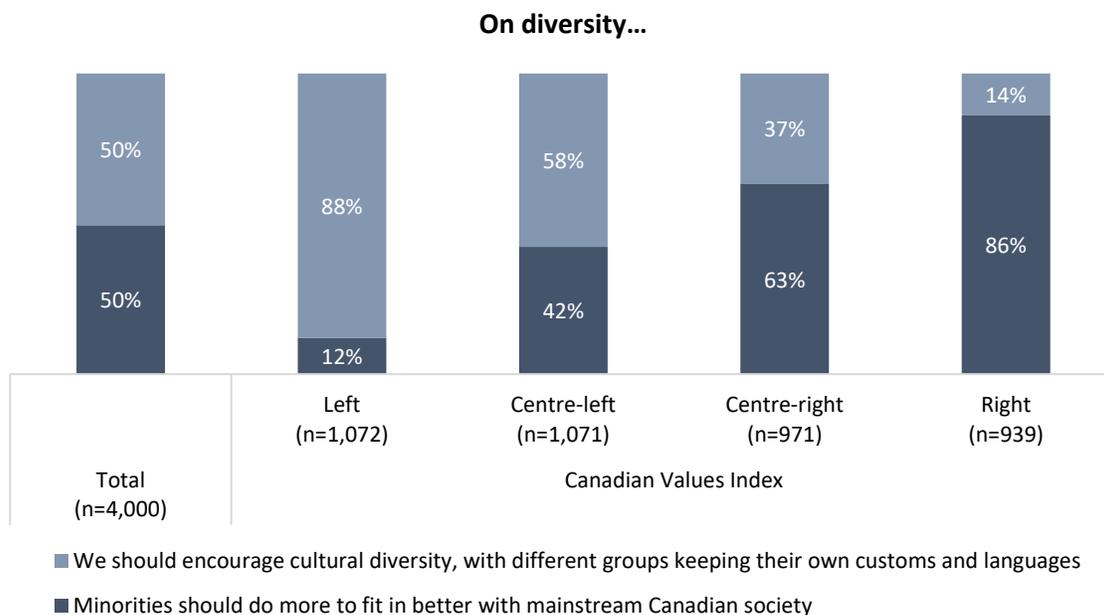
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On the subject of diversity, there has been a far greater shift in the opinion of Canadians. Opinions are evenly split between believing minorities should do more to fit in with mainstream society and wanting to encourage cultural diversity. In 2016, more than two-thirds (68%) believed homogeneity was more important:



On this matter, the Left and Right of the Index are mirrored. For those in the Left group, nearly all believe cultural diversity should be encouraged. For the Right, nearly all believe instead minorities should do more to fit in:



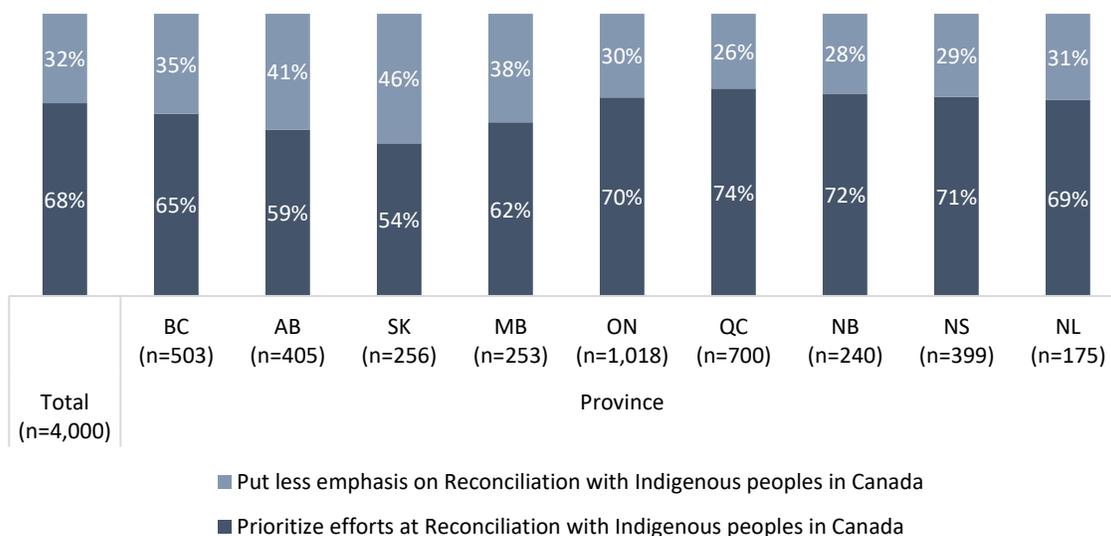
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More than two-thirds (68%) of Canadians believe reconciliation should be prioritized with Indigenous peoples in Canada. One-third (32%) believe those efforts should have less emphasis.

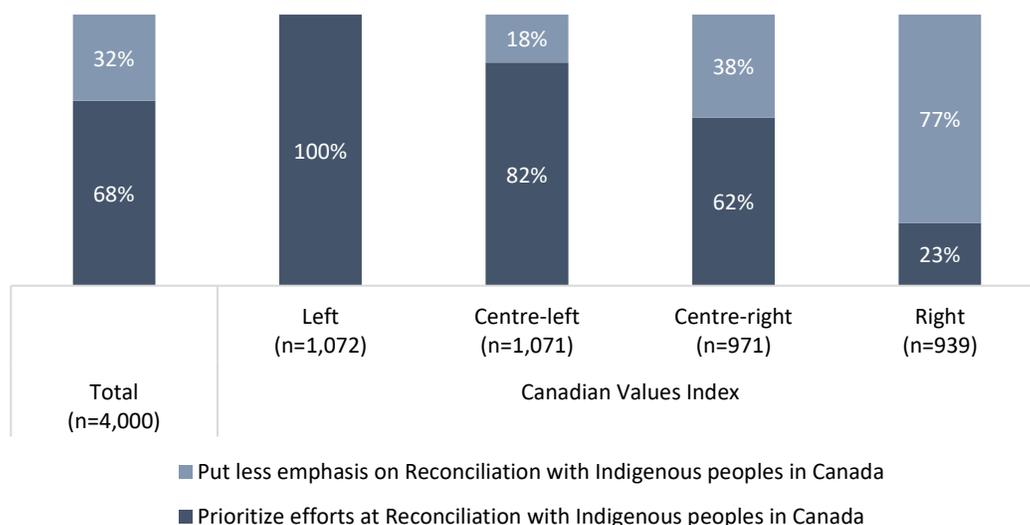
Regionally, there is some separation on this matter, though in each province in the country more than half believe reconciliation efforts should be prioritized. Albertans and Saskatchewanians are the most likely to say less emphasis should be placed on reconciliation:

**Canada should...**



On this issue, the Right separates itself even from the Centre-right. Three-quarters (77%) of those in the Right segment believe less emphasis should be placed on reconciliation. For all other groups, that opinion is in the minority, or in the case of the Left, non-existent:

**Canada should...**



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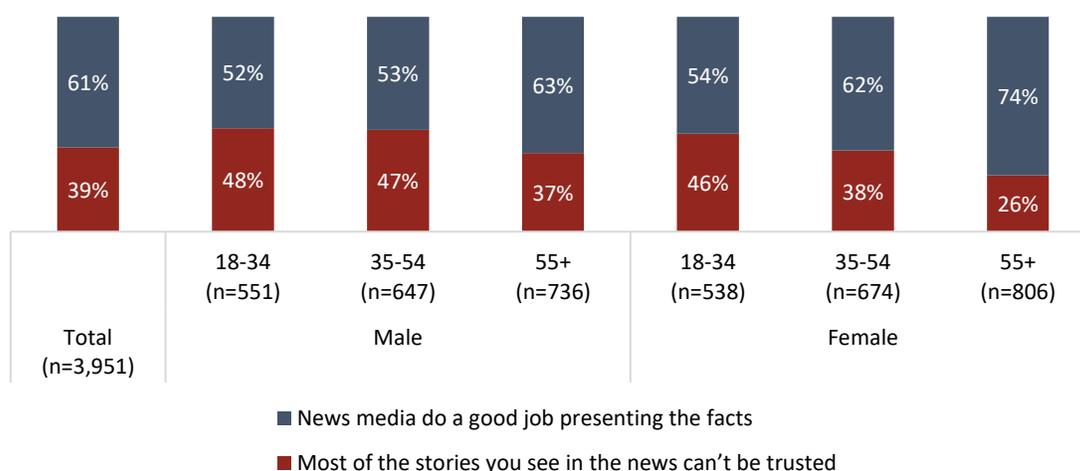
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**Part Two: Trust in Institutions**

**Gauging trust in media**

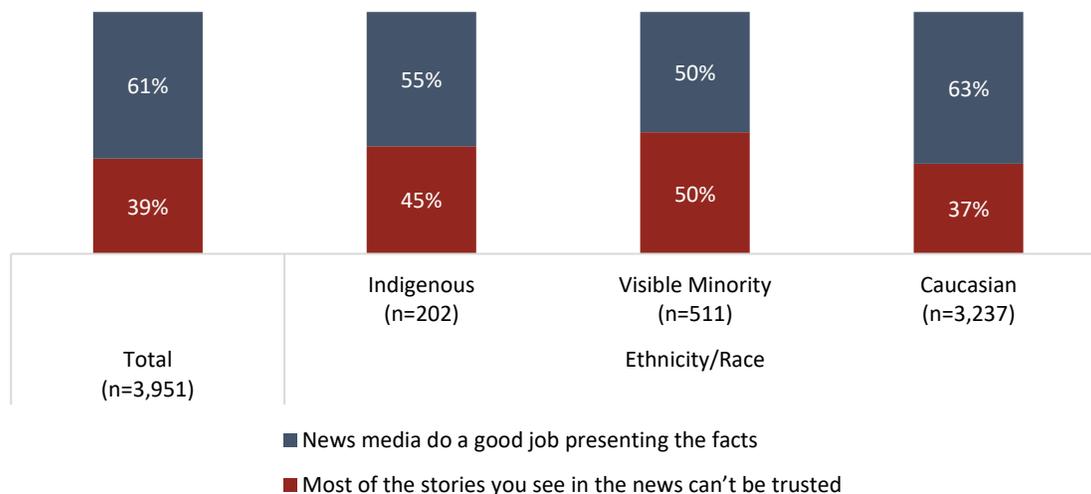
A majority of Canadians believe news media does a good job presenting the facts. However, a significant number of Canadians, two-in-five (39%), say most of the stories you see in the news can't be trusted. This distrust of the media is higher among younger Canadians – half (48%) of 18- to 34-year-old men and more than two-in-five (46%) women that age believe the stories in news media cannot be trusted. Trust is highest among women over the age of 54, of whom three-quarters (74%) believe news organizations present the facts well:

**And, in your view, which is more accurate:  
(Among those who consume the news)**



For visible minorities and Indigenous peoples, trust in media is lower than for those who don't identify as such. Half of those who identify as visible minorities and more than two-in-five (45%) of those who identify as Indigenous say what the news media reports can't be trusted. Fewer (37%) Caucasians say the same:

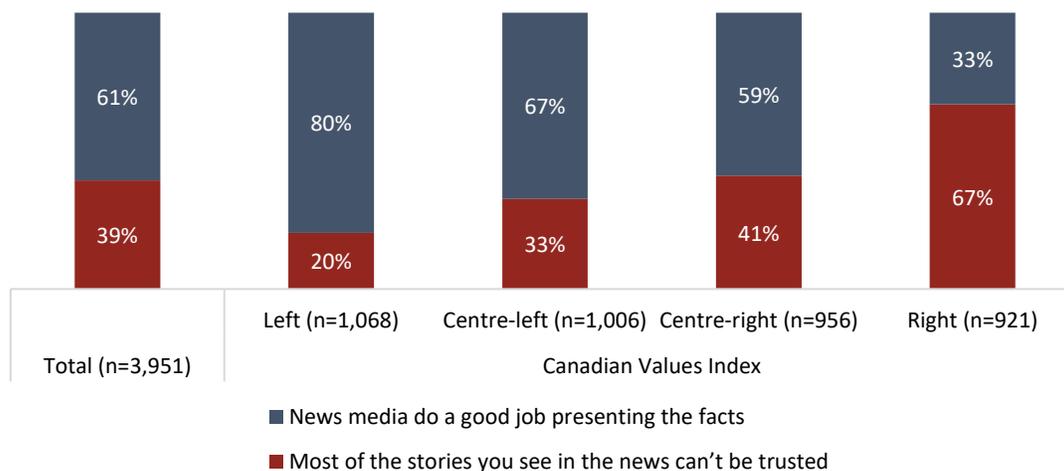
**And, in your view, which is more accurate:  
(Among those who consume the news)**



*\*Note, proportion of Indigenous responses is approximately representative size in total population*

There is also a significant difference in trust in media across the CVI. Two-thirds (67%) of those in the Right segment don't trust most of the stories in the news, a proportion triple that of those in the Left who say the same:

**And, in your view, which is more accurate:  
(Among those who consume the news)**



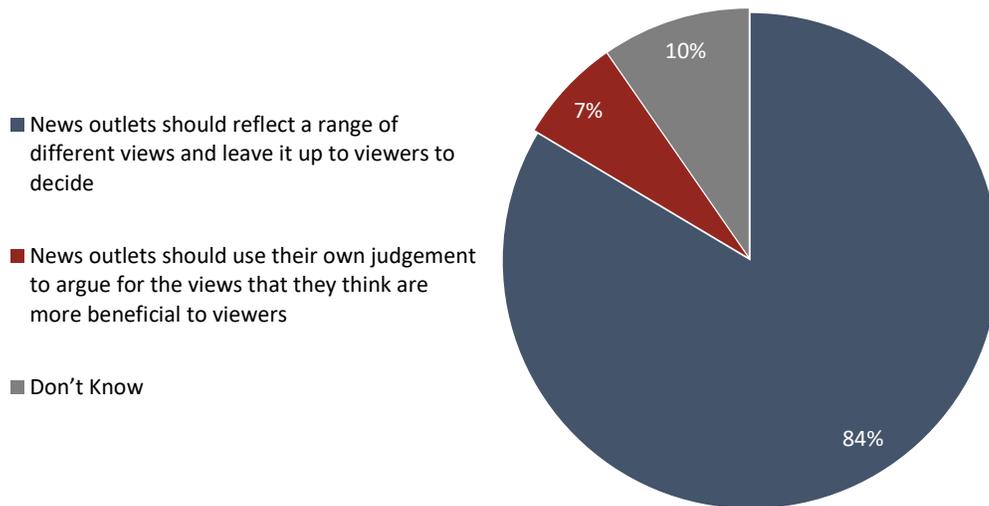
**Expectations from reporting**

Perhaps the significant lack of trust among Canadians is because of a gap between expectations of what the news should be and how they see the news reported to them. Nearly all (84%) believe the news media's job when it comes to reporting on social and political issues is to reflect a range of different views and let viewers decide what's true. Few (7%) believe instead that news outlets should use their own judgement and argue for views they believe are beneficial to viewers:

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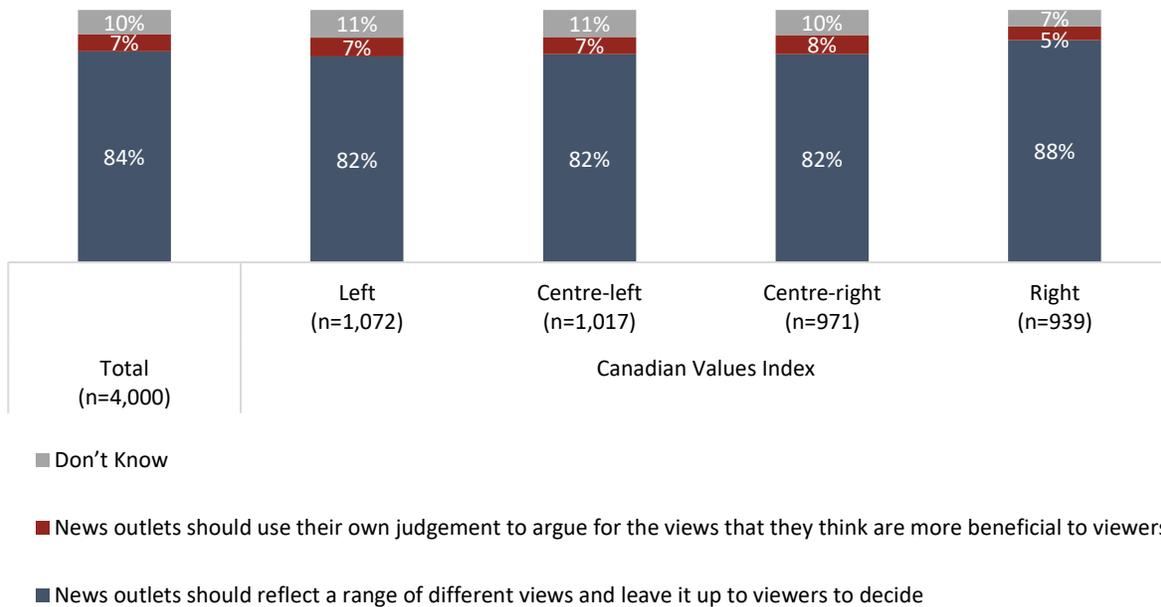
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**When news outlets report on social and political issues, which of the following comes closest to your view?  
(All respondents, n=4,000)**



This perspective on the role of the news media is near uniform across the CVI. The proportion who believes the news should offer up competing views and let the viewers decide range from four-in-five (82%) of those in the Centre groups and in the Left to nine-in-ten (88%) of those in the Right:

**When news outlets report on social and political issues, which of the following comes closest to your view?**



**Representation in coverage**

A common criticism of news media is whether or not they fairly represent all segments of the population. Historically, [women are underrepresented](#) in news media. As well, [coverage of visible minorities](#) is also lacking, perhaps reflecting the fact that newsrooms in [Canada are mostly white](#). Political views, too, can be underrepresented in media.

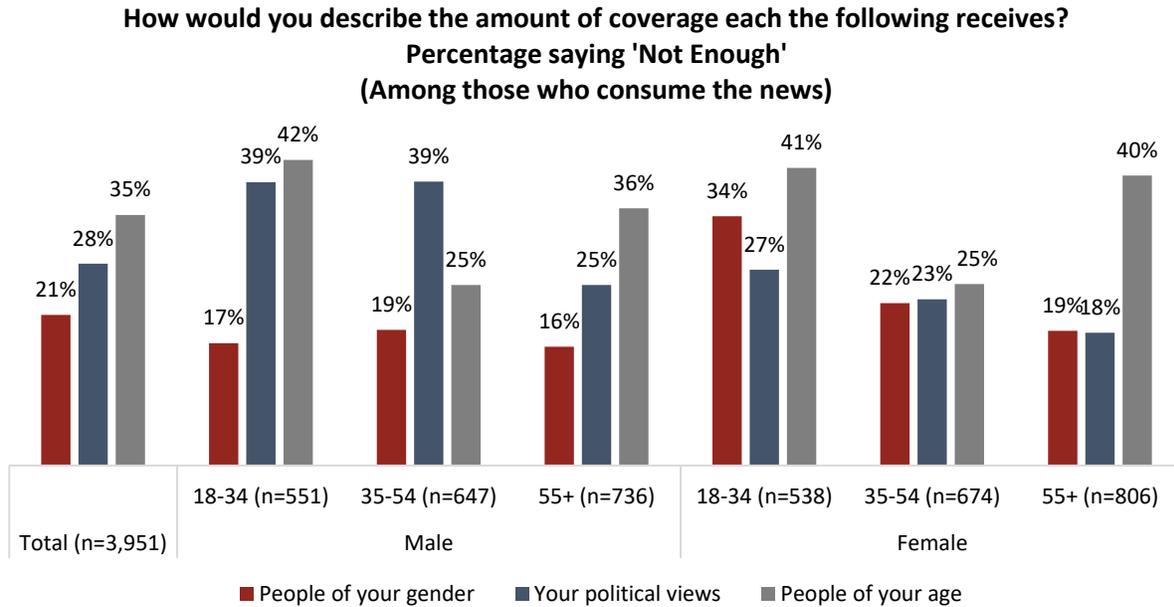
The perception for Canadians varies. One-in-five (21%) believe their gender is underrepresented in media. That feeling is much stronger among women aged 18- to 34-years-old.

Younger and older adults feel people their age are not shown enough in the media. Canadians aged 35- to 54-years-old are less likely to hold that view.

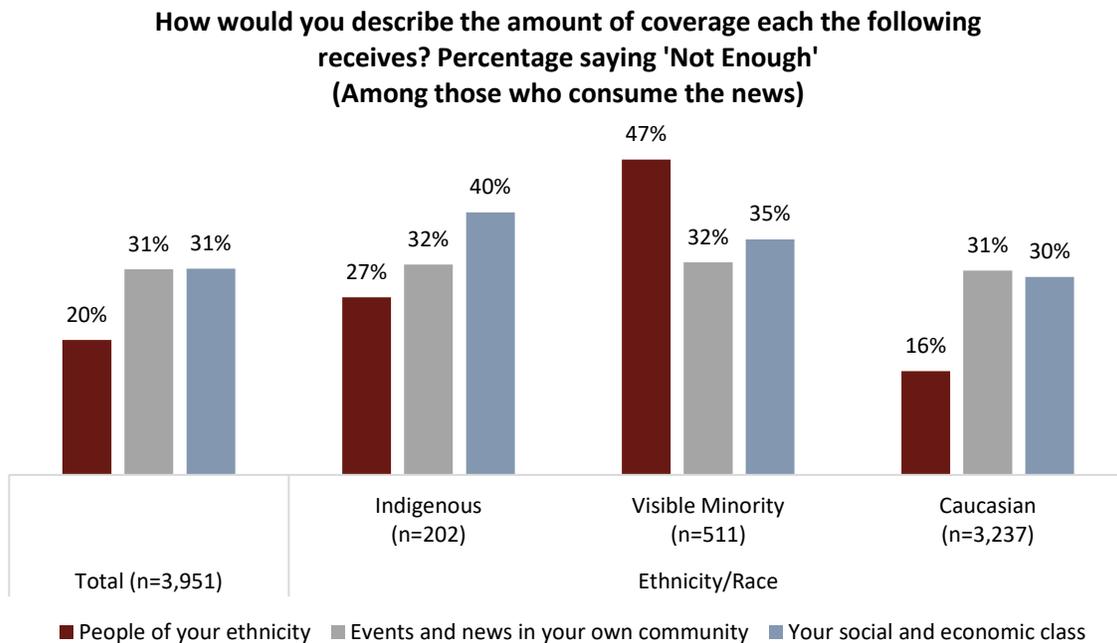
As for political views, men under the age of 55 are the most likely to believe their political beliefs are underrepresented in media, at two-in-five (39%). Women, and especially those older than 55-years-old, believe that at lower rates:

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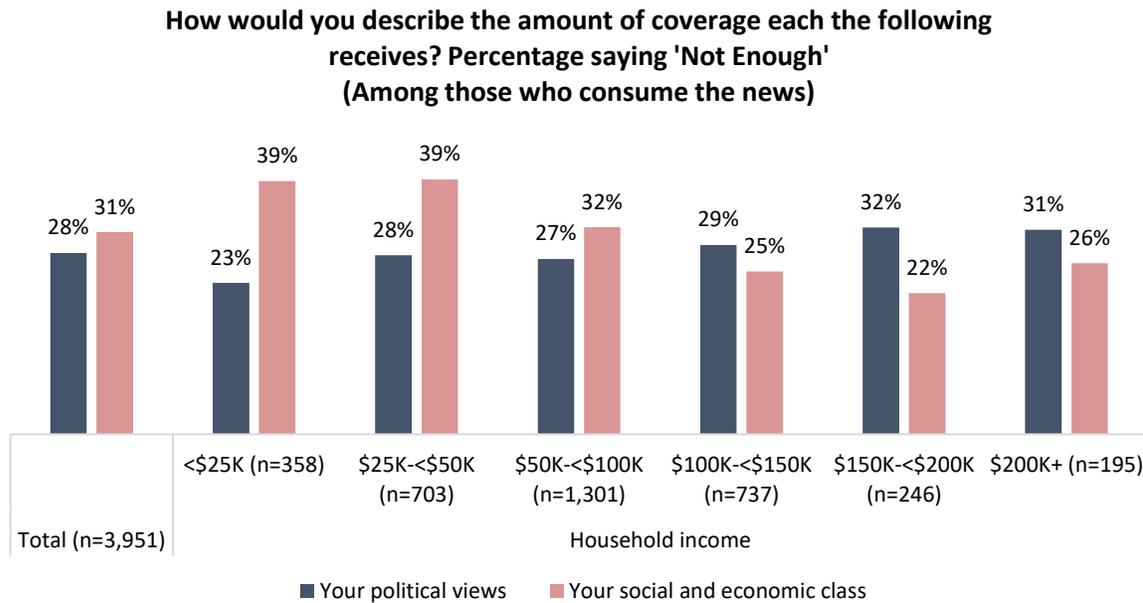


For those that identify as visible minorities, half (47%) feel people of their ethnicity are undercovered in news stories, a rate three times as high as those who don't identify as such. Those who identify as Indigenous are less likely to say that, but still report it at a higher rate than Caucasians:



*\*Note, proportion of Indigenous responses is approximately representative size in total population*

Canadians in lower income households are also more likely to feel underrepresented in news media. Two-in-five (39%) in households earning less than \$50,000 annually say their social and economic class does not receive enough coverage in the media. That number falls to one-quarter (26%) for those in the highest income households:



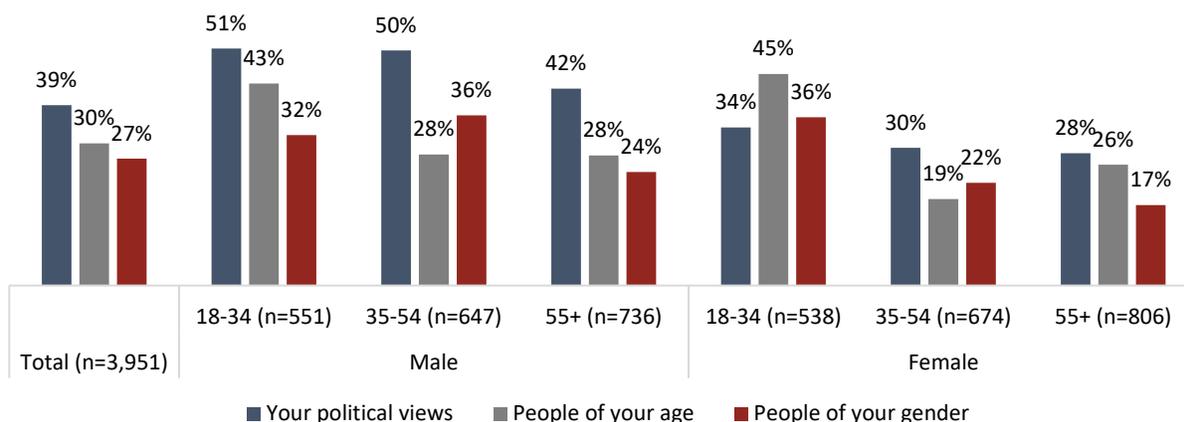
While the breadth of coverage is one element of news media, whether or not people feel they are treated fairly by what coverage exists is another. Two-in-five (39%) of Canadians believe the media covers their political beliefs unfairly. That sentiment is much higher among men, and especially those under the age of 55.

Three-in-ten (30%) feel people their age are treated unfairly by the news. That sentiment is much higher among the youngest group of Canadian adults.

One-quarter (27%) believe their gender gets unfair coverage by the media. Men under 55 and women aged 18- to 34-years-old believe that at higher levels than other demographics:

**Do you think news organizations cover each of the following fairly or unfairly?**

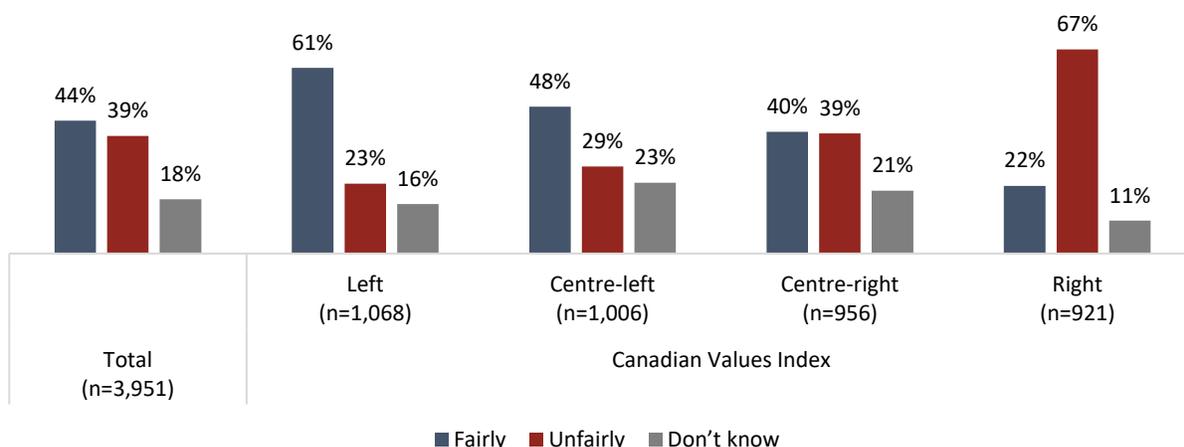
**Percentage saying 'Unfairly'  
(Among those who consume the news)**



Overall, Canadians are slightly more likely to believe their political views are covered fairly than unfairly by the news media. However, there is significant difference in belief along the CVI. Three-in-five (61%) of those in the Left segment believe news organizations cover their political views fairly. Meanwhile, two-thirds (67%) of those in the Right believe instead their political beliefs are covered unfairly:

**Do you think news organizations cover each of the following fairly or unfairly?**

**"Your political views"  
(Among those who consume the news)**



**Are facts... facts?**

Oxford Languages chose "post-truth" as its word of the year in 2016, after U.S. President Donald Trump was elected and began routinely making false and misleading claims. Some have begun to call recent

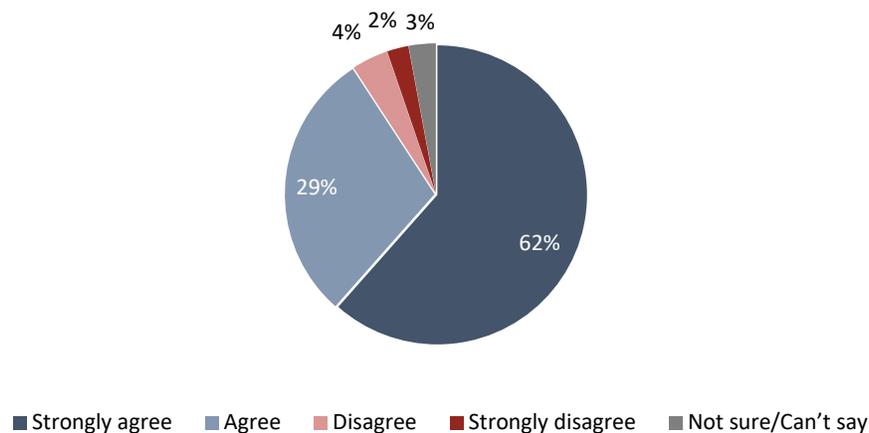
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years the "post-truth era", as the rapid spread of misinformation through social media clouds what is and isn't true.

Indeed, nine-in-ten (91%) worry that people struggle with the ability to discern between what is true and what is not when it comes to information from the internet:

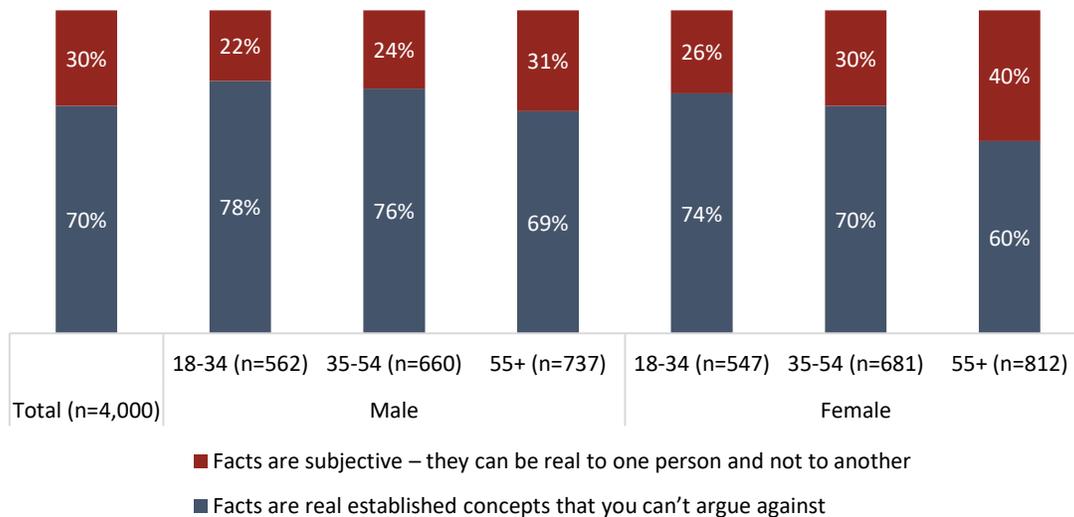
**Agree vs. Disagree:**  
**"When it comes to information on the internet, I am concerned about  
 peoples' ability to figure out what is real and what is fake"**  
 (All respondents, n=4,000)



Meanwhile, for some, what is fact for one person could be untrue to someone else. There are three-in-ten who believe facts are subjective and open to interpretation between individuals.

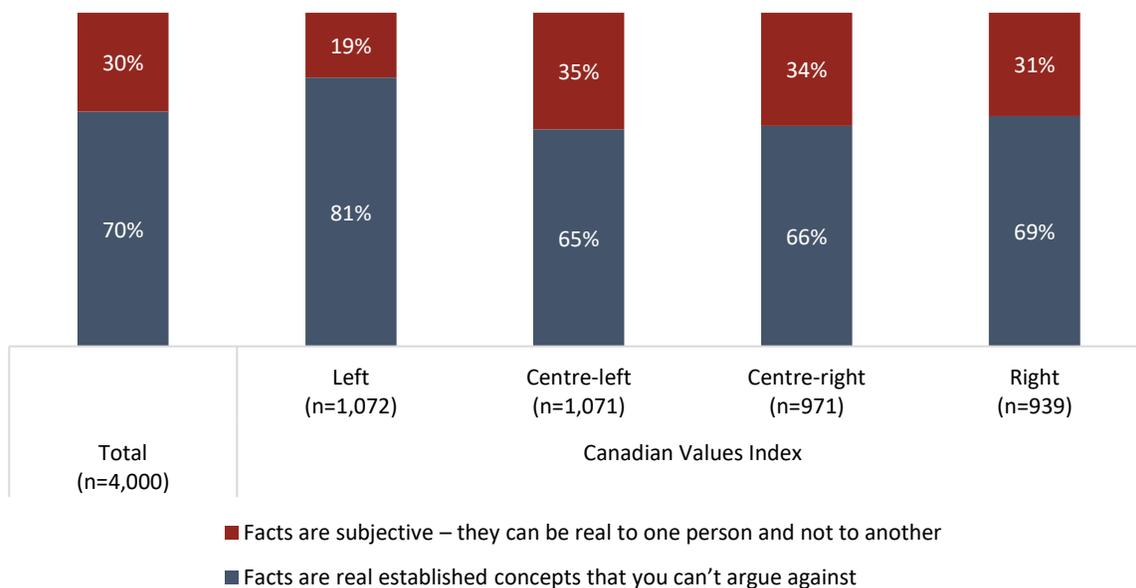
Older Canadians are much more likely to believe facts are subjective than their younger counterparts; two-in-five women over the age of 54 say that's the case. Comparatively, one-in-five (22%) men aged 18- to 34-years-old say the same:

**When it comes to facts would you say...**



On this concept, those in the Left segment of the CVI separate themselves from other groups. Four-in-five (81%) in the Left say facts are established concepts that can't be argued against. For those who fall in other segments, there are significantly more who believe instead what is and isn't a fact depends on the person:

**When it comes to facts would you say...**



**Part Three: Trust in justice system**

The Canadian justice system is perceived well around the world. It was ranked 12th in 2021 by independent, Washington, D.C.-based [World Justice Project](#) an organization which globally tracks and

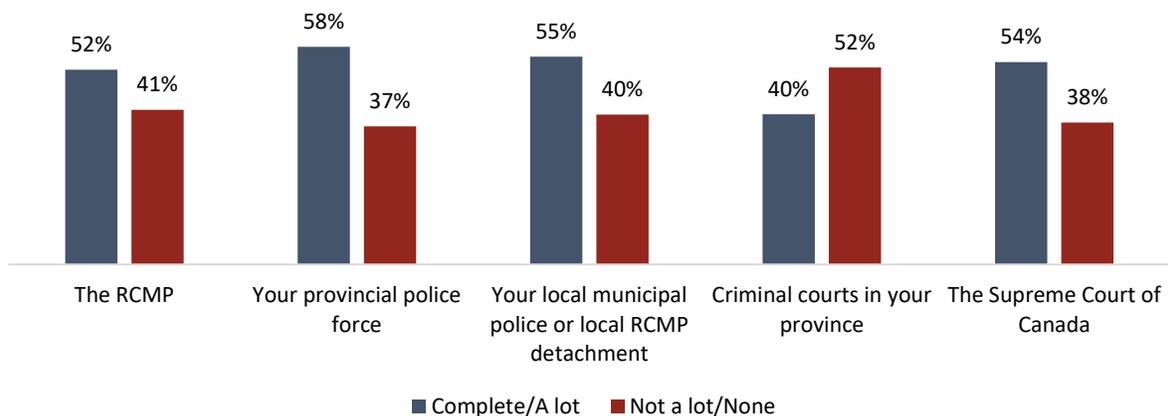
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measures the rule of law. Denmark, Norway, and Finland top the list, while Canada's neighbour, the United States, is ranked 27th.

Still, closer to home, many Canadians have their doubts about the justice system. While more than half say they have complete or a lot of confidence in the RCMP, local police forces and the Supreme Court, in each case, there are significant minorities who lack confidence in those key elements of the Canadian justice system. At least two-in-five say they don't have much confidence in the Supreme Court of Canada (38%), the RCMP (41%), their provincial police force (37%), and municipal police force (40%). Meanwhile, half (52%) say they don't have much faith in their province's criminal courts.

**How much confidence do you have in each of these elements of the Canadian justice system?**  
(All respondents, n=4,000)



### **Provincial criminal courts panned**

Quebecers are the most likely to profess confidence in their province's criminal courts. Elsewhere, majorities say they have low levels of confidence in that institution.

On the topic of the RCMP, Quebecers too are the least likely to say they hold no confidence in that police force. Comparatively, half of Atlantic Canadians have little faith in that organization. The RCMP has been the target of [significant criticism](#) over its handling of the deadly Nova Scotia shooting in 2020. In Alberta, too, confidence in the RCMP is low as [the UCP government proposes to replace](#) it in that province with a provincial police force.

Notably, provincial police forces do fare slightly better than the RCMP in Ontario but are viewed with less trust in Quebec.

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Those who say they have little or no confidence in each:								
	Total (n=4,000)	Region						
		BC (n=503)	AB (n=405)	SK (n=256)	MB (n=253)	ON (n=1,018)	QC (n=700)	ATL (n=865)
Criminal courts in your province	52%	58%	66%	55%	58%	55%	36%	57%
The RCMP	41%	48%	50%	41%	42%	44%	25%	48%
Your local municipal police or local RCMP detachment	40%	41%	46%	37%	41%	41%	31%	46%
The Supreme Court of Canada	38%	43%	51%	46%	41%	39%	24%	40%
Your provincial police force	37%					38%	34%	49%

The lack of belief in provincial criminal courts is fairly consistent across age and gender groups. Younger Canadians are more likely to say they have little or no confidence in various levels of policing. Men over the age of 34 are the most likely to say they lack trust in the Supreme Court of Canada:

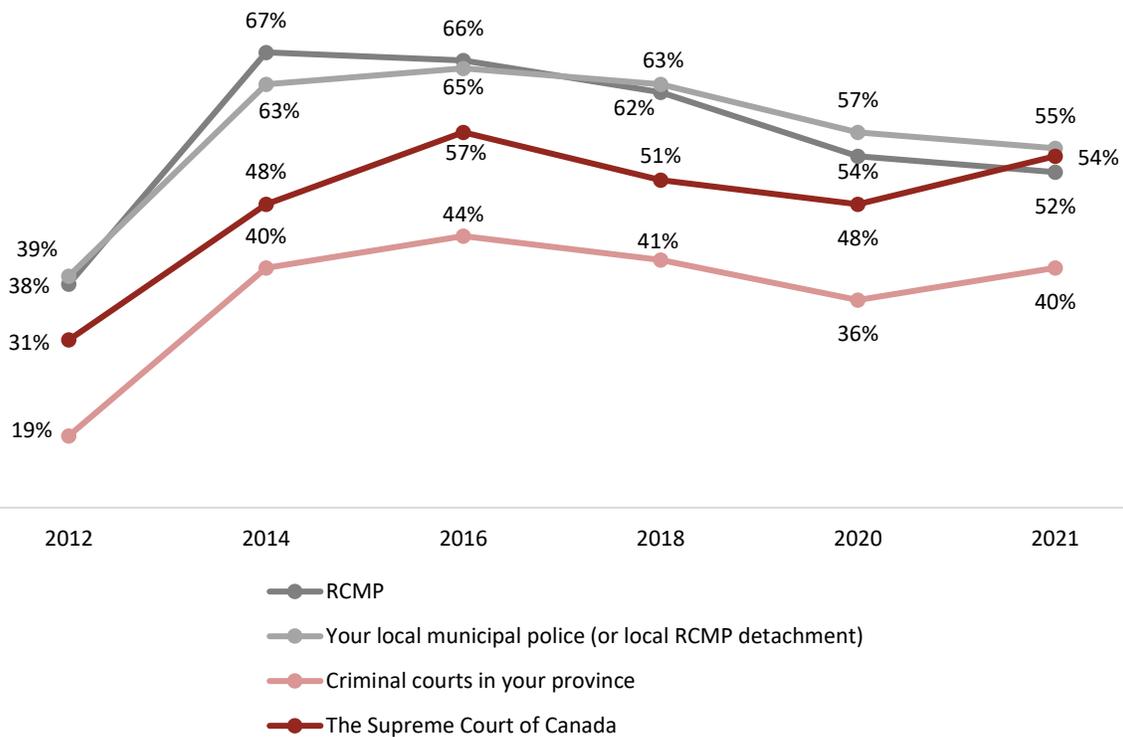
Those who say they have little or no confidence in each:							
	Total (n=4,000)	Age and Gender					
		Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=562)	35-54 (n=660)	55+ (n=737)	18-34 (n=547)	35-54 (n=681)	55+ (n=812)
Criminal courts in your province	52%	47%	56%	55%	49%	55%	51%
The RCMP	41%	50%	44%	41%	49%	38%	30%
Your local municipal police or local RCMP detachment	40%	47%	44%	35%	55%	38%	28%
The Supreme Court of Canada	38%	37%	44%	41%	35%	35%	33%
Your provincial police force	37%	50%	40%	32%	46%	34%	25%

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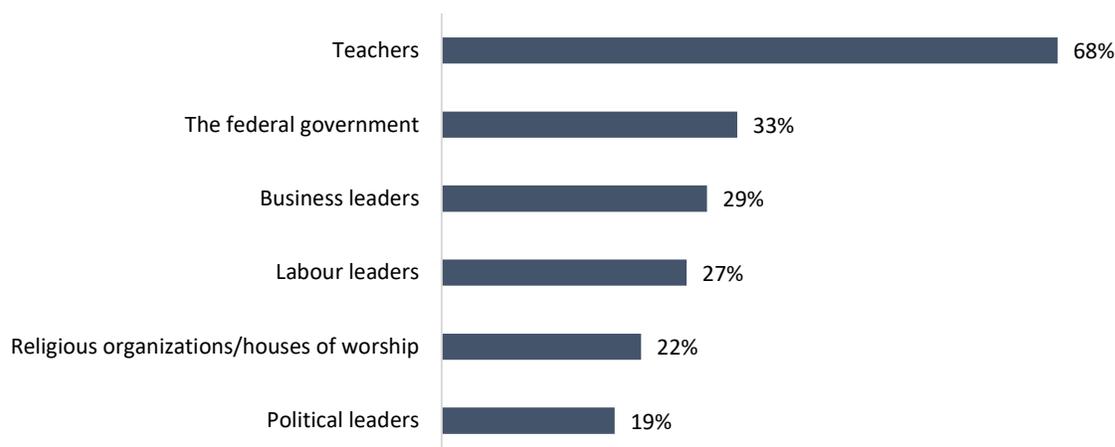
For the RCMP and local police forces, confidence has steadily declined from 2014. On the other hand, confidence in the court systems have wavered over the years, though trust in the country's highest court has rebounded after a period of decline:

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



When it comes to other key professions in society, confidence is lacking – except for teachers, whom seven-in-ten Canadians say they have complete or a lot of confidence in. Elsewhere, Canadians express little faith:

**And please tell us how much confidence you have in each of the following groups and institutions to operate in the best interest of Canadians (All respondents, n=4,000; those with complete/a lot of confidence shown)**

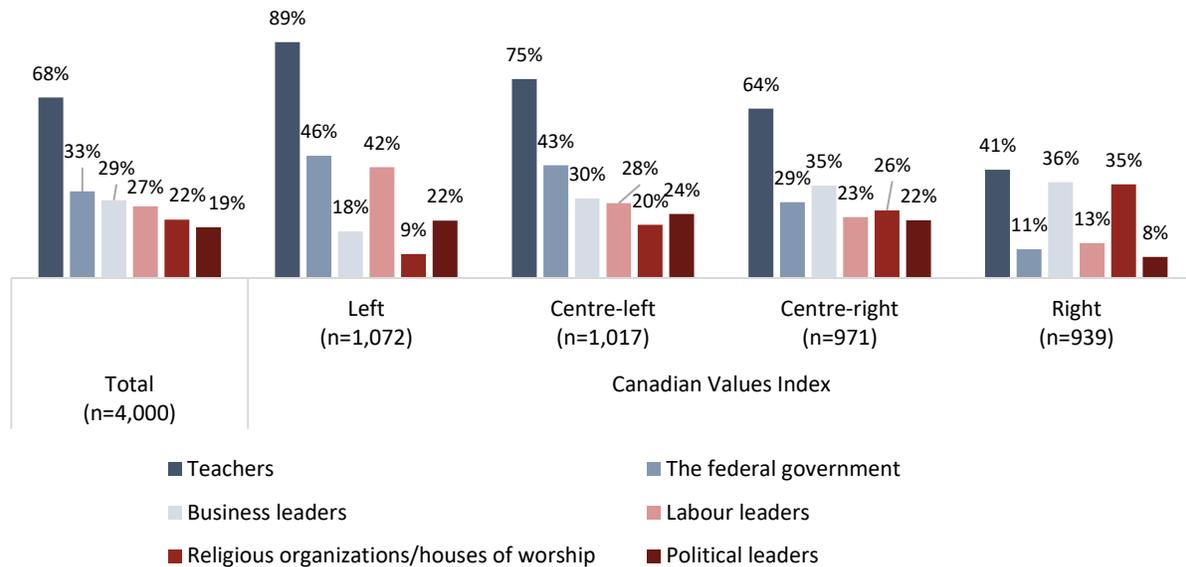


**The ‘Right’ have little confidence in any area of Canadian society**

Canadians’ confidence in teachers is not evenly distributed along the CVI. Majorities in the Left, Centre-left and Centre-right segments say they are confident in the country’s teachers. For those in the Right, two-in-five agree.

Indeed, those that fall into that category on the Index express little confidence in any of the professions presented to them. Notably, they are also far less likely than other segments to say they believe in the federal government or politicians in general:

**And please tell us how much confidence you have in each of the following groups and institutions to operate in the best interest of Canadians (Those with complete/a lot of confidence shown)**



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

*For detailed results by the Canadian Values Index, [click here](#).*

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