

Views from (both sides of) the 49th: Canadians take more pride in their country than Americans do in their own

Nine-in-ten in Canada (89%) say their country is a safe place to live; half as many say this in U.S. (43%)

March 23, 2023 – Americans and Canadians are inextricably linked, both by the largest international border, and by a culture that often times overlaps, even while maintaining distinction. And while both countries face challenges within their own political and social discourse, Canadians appear to have an advantage in terms of the harmony they perceive at home, even if it isn't unanimous.

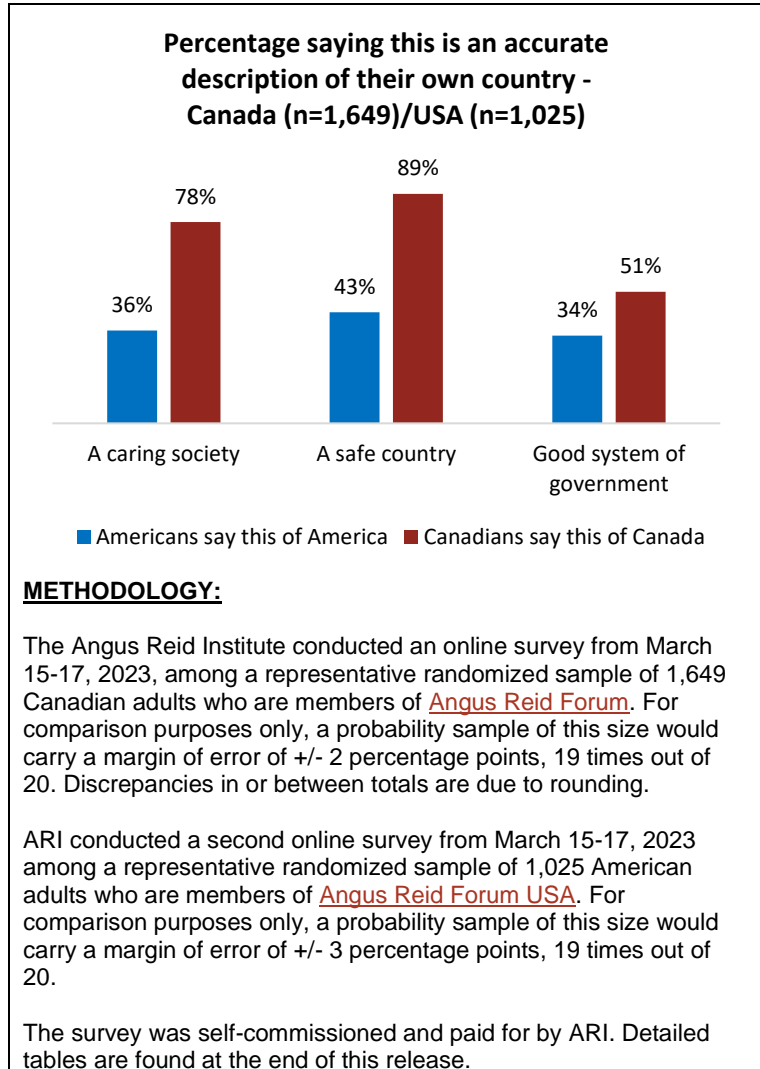
A new cross-border study by the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians more unified than Americans in viewing their country as a caring and safe place to call home, and a positive contributor to the globe.

Overall, four-in-five Canadians (78%) say their country is a caring society, just one-in-three Americans say the same (36%). Nine-in-ten north of the 49th parallel say they live in a safe country (89%), while half as many – two-in-five (43%) – say this to the south. Further, 62 per cent in Canada say their country contributes positively in world affairs, while 39 per cent of Americans say this.

In some cases, Canada's advantage is significant, but perhaps less than impressive in a vacuum. For example, Canadians are far more likely to say that their system of government is good than Americans, but still just 51 per cent feel this way (34% in the U.S.).

What is also notable in these data is the favourable view that Americans have of Canada compared to their own country. On every item canvassed, Americans are more likely to feel favourably about Canada more than their own country. This is most pronounced in two areas. Two-thirds of Americans feel Canada is a safe country (64%), whereas 43 per cent say this of their own. Additionally, more than half (56%) say that Canada is a caring country, 20 points more than say this of the U.S. (36%).

After struggling through the COVID-19 pandemic, and the challenges it created within communities, Canadian views of their own country may be improving. Compared to January 2022, the percentage of Canadians saying their country is caring (+15), prosperous (+7) and safe (+4) have all improved.



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More Key Findings:

- Trump voters are much more likely to say they are proud of their country (72%) than Biden voters (52%). In Canada, past Conservative voters are least likely to say this (64%) among supporters of the major federal parties (Liberals 92%, NDP 77%, Bloc Québécois 78%).
- Four-in-five (83%) in Quebec say they are proud of the country they live in, the highest number in the country; three-in-five (60%) in Saskatchewan also say this, the lowest.
- Canadians are more likely (67%) than Americans (51%) to feel that the United States is a prosperous country.
- Canadians who identify as visible minority are three times as likely (25%) to say that they had a poor border crossing experience with U.S. Customs than those who do not identify this way (8%).

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

Part One: Views of America

- Canadian views of America
- Comparing American views of America
- Political identity divides in many areas

Part Two: Views of Canada

- Canadian views of Canada
- American views of Canada

Part Three: Comparing views of their own countries

Part Four: Experiences crossing the border

- Canadian experiences with U.S. Customs
- Visible minorities three-times as likely to report poor experiences

Part One: Views of America

As U.S. President Joe Biden makes his first official visit to Canada since taking office in 2021, he lands with Canadians having [a high opinion of the Canada-U.S. strategic relationship](#), but view their southern neighbour through a critical lens.

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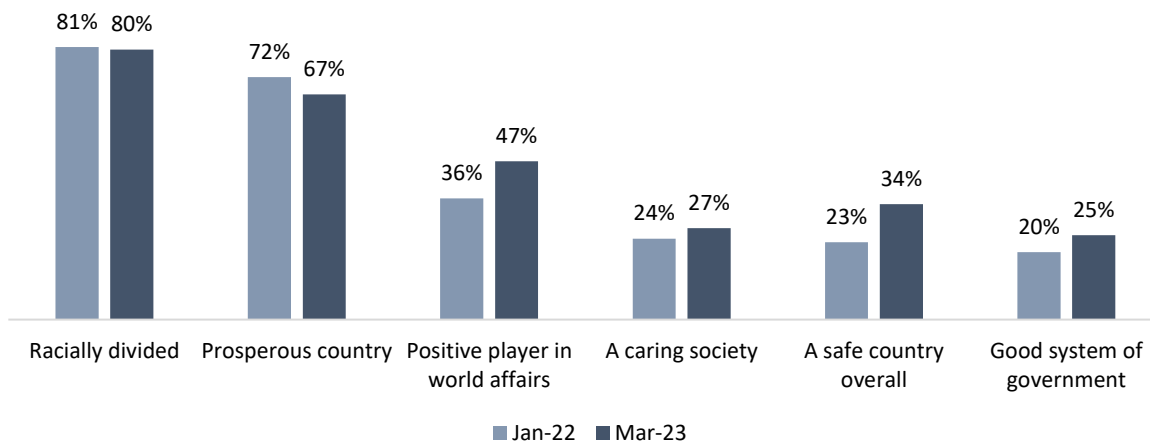
Related: [Mr. Biden Goes to Ottawa: China tops list of issues Canadians want PM-President summit to address](#)

Canadian views of America

While most Canadians (67%) view the United States as prosperous, and half (47%) feel it has a positive effect on the world stage overall, fewer would call American society caring (27%) and the country safe overall (34%). Just one-quarter in Canada assess the American system of government positively (25%). As well, four-in-five (80%) would describe the U.S. as racially divided.

There has been improvement regarding some of these assessments over the last year. More Canadians call the U.S. safe (+11 percentage points) and a positive player in world affairs (+11 percentage points) than in January 2022. The latter sentiment comes after a year where the U.S. has stood with NATO and other allies in fortifying the Ukraine against Russia's invasion, and cooperated in shooting down unidentified flying objects over North American airspace in the [wake of the Chinese spy balloon incident](#).

**Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the United States:
(Canadian respondents, percentage who say 'accurate' shown)**



Canadians view the U.S. differently depending on their political lens. Past Conservative voters offer more positive assessments than others. They are the most likely to call the U.S. caring (42%), safe (50%), prosperous (78%) and a positive player in world affairs (58%). Those who voted CPC in 2021 also offer more favourable assessments of America's government (34%) and are less likely to describe the U.S. as racially divided (69%) though a majority still do.

Meanwhile, assessments from past NDP voters are the most critical:

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Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the United States: (Canadian respondents; percentage who say 'accurate' shown)					
	Total (n=1,649)	2021 Federal Vote			
		CPC (n=470)	Liberal (n=456)	NDP (n=252)	BQ (n=100)
Racially divided	80%	69%	92%	90%	79%
A nice place to visit	75%	84%	67%	65%	92%
Prosperous country	67%	78%	67%	49%	68%
Positive player in world affairs	47%	58%	51%	30%	58%
A safe country overall	34%	50%	25%	24%	23%
A caring society	27%	42%	20%	13%	22%
Good system of government	25%	34%	23%	13%	32%

Across the country, there are varying assessments of Canada's neighbour to the south. Quebecers are most likely to call the U.S. a nice place to visit (87%) as well as a positive player in world affairs (55%). Those in Saskatchewan are most likely to describe the U.S. as a caring society (35%), prosperous (72%), safe (48%), and having a good system of government (29%):

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(Canadian respondents; percentage who say 'accurate' shown)

	Total (n=1,649)	Region						
		BC (n=195)	AB (n=159)	SK (n=123)	MB (n=139)	ON (n=455)	QC (n=418)	ATL (n=160)
Racially divided	80%	83%	73%	64%	66%	85%	79%	78%
A nice place to visit	75%	72%	69%	79%	74%	72%	87%	69%
Prosperous country	67%	62%	68%	72%	66%	67%	69%	64%
Positive player in world affairs	47%	38%	44%	51%	41%	47%	55%	47%
A safe country overall	34%	33%	41%	48%	38%	35%	28%	33%
A caring society	27%	26%	27%	35%	30%	30%	23%	27%
Good system of government	25%	18%	23%	29%	27%	26%	29%	22%

Canadian men and women offer differing assessments of the U.S., as well. Men are more likely than women to call American society caring, to believe it to be a safe country overall, and to offer positive assessments of the American system of government:

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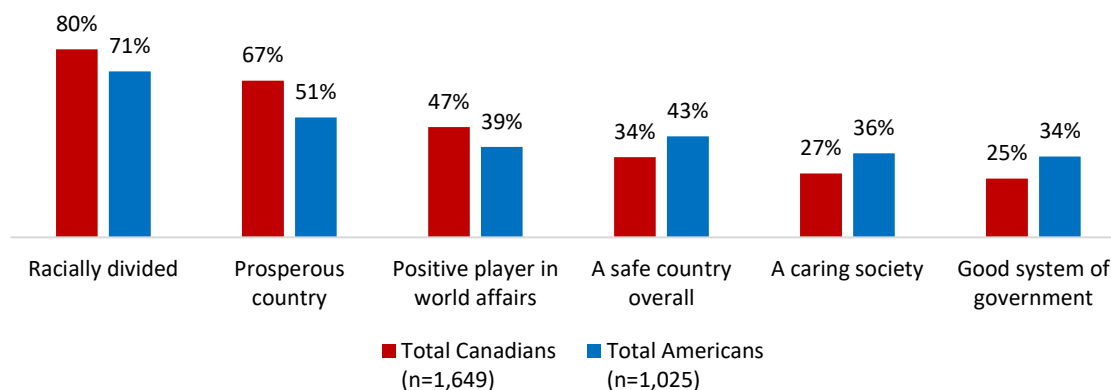
Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the United States:
(Canadian respondents; percentage who say 'accurate' shown)

	Total (n=1,649)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=222)	35-54 (n=261)	55+ (n=318)	18-34 (n=217)	35-54 (n=270)	55+ (n=358)
Racially divided	80%	79%	73%	79%	81%	85%	83%
A nice place to visit	75%	80%	82%	76%	76%	69%	70%
Prosperous country	67%	67%	75%	75%	57%	60%	65%
Positive player in world affairs	47%	50%	49%	58%	34%	37%	48%
A safe country overall	34%	46%	40%	38%	20%	34%	28%
A caring society	27%	34%	34%	31%	19%	21%	24%
Good system of government	25%	29%	34%	30%	18%	18%	21%

Comparing American views of America

On most fronts, Canadians are more critical of the U.S. than Americans. However, Americans are less likely to believe their own country to be a positive player in world affairs (39%) than Canadians (47%). Belief that the U.S. is a caring society (36%), safe overall (43%) and has a good system of government (34%) do not rise to majority levels among Americans:

Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the United States:
(Percentage who say 'accurate' shown)



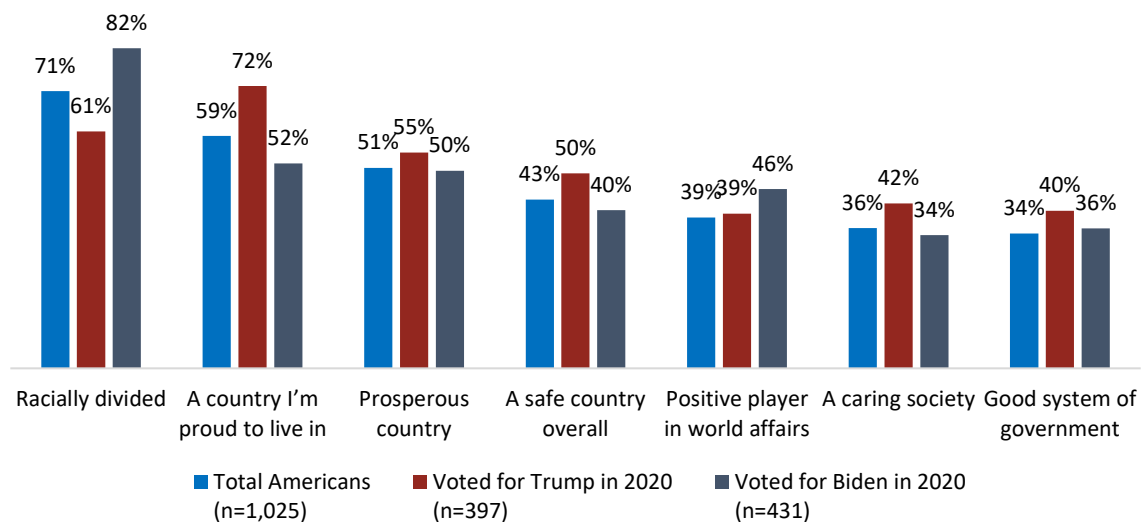
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Political identity divides in many areas

Persistent political rifts remain evident more than two years after a divisive presidential election. Those who voted for former U.S. President Donald Trump view their country differently than those who voted for the current president. Past Trump voters are more likely to view the country as prosperous and safe, and say they are proud to live there than past Biden voters. Four-in-five (82%) of those who voted for the current president describe the U.S. as racially divided, more than those who voted for Trump (61%) who say the same:

Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the United States: (American respondents; percentage who say 'accurate' shown)



Part Two: Views of Canada

Canadian views of Canada

Overall, Canadians offer a positive assessment of their country. Strong majorities believe it to be a caring society (78%), a safe country overall (89%) and prosperous (69%). However, two-in-five (38%) believe Canada to be racially divided and only half (51%) would call the Canadian system of government “good”.

Canadians’ perceptions of their country have become more positive in the last 12 months. In January 2022, the country was dealing with the Omicron wave of COVID-19 with public health restrictions. Majorities of Canadians said on the eve of the two-year anniversary of the pandemic that COVID-19 pulled Canadians apart and brought out the worst in people. Perhaps time has healed some of those divisions.

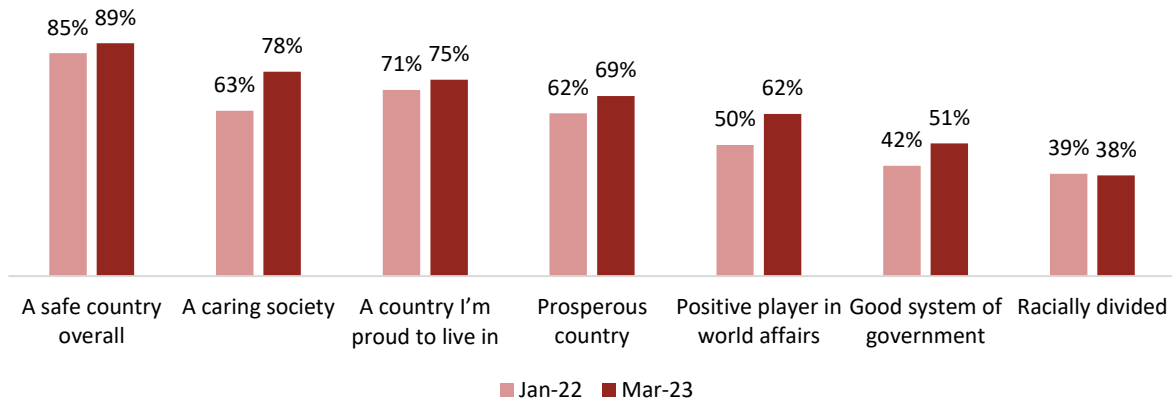
Related: Vast majorities say pandemic pulled Canadians apart, brought out the worst in people

Now Canadians are more likely to call their society caring (+15 points), prosperous (+7), and safe (+4). Three-quarters of Canadians say they are proud to live in Canada, an increase of four percentage points from January 2022. Canadians are also more likely to believe they have a good system of government (+9) and say their country is a positive player in world affairs (+12):

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Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of Canada:
(Canadian respondents; percentage who say 'accurate' shown)



Political leanings seem to affect how Canadians assess their own country. Past Liberal voters are more likely to describe Canada in sunny ways than past supporters of other parties. Nearly all of those who voted Liberal in 2021 say Canada is a safe country overall (96%), has a caring society (90%), is prosperous (86%) and is a positive player in world affairs (86%).

After the Liberal party has been elected to a minority government in the past two elections while losing the popular vote, three-quarters (77%) of those who voted Liberal in 2021 believe Canada has a good system of government. That is not the view of most past Conservative voters, whose party has won the popular vote in the last two elections but did not form government. Three-in-ten (30%) of those who voted Conservative in 2021 believe Canada has a good system of government:

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	Total (n=1,649)	2021 Federal Vote			
		CPC (n=470)	Liberal (n=456)	NDP (n=252)	BQ (n=100)
A safe country overall	89%	87%	96%	91%	89%
A caring society	78%	76%	90%	72%	80%
A country I'm proud to live in	75%	64%	92%	77%	78%
Prosperous country	69%	55%	86%	67%	78%
Positive player in world affairs	62%	38%	86%	68%	70%
Good system of government	51%	30%	77%	56%	60%
Racially divided	38%	36%	38%	48%	17%

Those in Quebec and Saskatchewan find themselves at opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to assessing the country they live in. Saskatchewan residents are typically more critical, while Quebecers offer more praise. Four-in-five (83%) in Quebec say they are proud of the country they live in, the most in the country; three-in-five (60%) in Saskatchewan agree, the least.

As well, those in Alberta and Saskatchewan, typical Conservative electoral strongholds, are the least likely to believe Canada has a good system government. Those in Quebec are the most likely to offer Canada's system of government praise:

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A safe country overall	89%	84%	92%	88%	85%	89%	90%	90%
A caring society	78%	73%	81%	70%	83%	79%	77%	81%
A country I'm proud to live in	75%	70%	69%	60%	70%	75%	83%	78%
Prosperous country	69%	61%	68%	54%	68%	69%	75%	67%
Positive player in world affairs	62%	54%	54%	47%	63%	65%	67%	62%
Good system of government	51%	51%	38%	33%	46%	52%	57%	50%
Racially divided	38%	44%	44%	51%	43%	41%	25%	45%

More than four-in-five women and men of all ages call Canada a safe country overall. However, Canadian men are less likely than Canadian women to say they are proud to live in the country, to believe Canada to be a positive player in world affairs, and call Canada's system of government "good".

Meanwhile, younger Canadians are more likely than older ones to believe Canada to be racially divided. However, that is a minority opinion among all age groups:

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	Total (n=1,649)	Male			Female		
		18-34 (n=222)	35-54 (n=261)	55+ (n=318)	18-34 (n=217)	35-54 (n=270)	55+ (n=358)
A safe country overall	89%	87%	88%	91%	86%	89%	91%
A caring society	78%	70%	76%	80%	74%	77%	86%
A country I'm proud to live in	75%	66%	65%	79%	70%	78%	85%
Prosperous country	69%	63%	65%	73%	67%	65%	76%
Positive player in world affairs	62%	57%	54%	56%	68%	67%	69%
Good system of government	51%	41%	44%	54%	48%	53%	58%
Racially divided	38%	41%	39%	36%	43%	42%	34%

American views of Canada

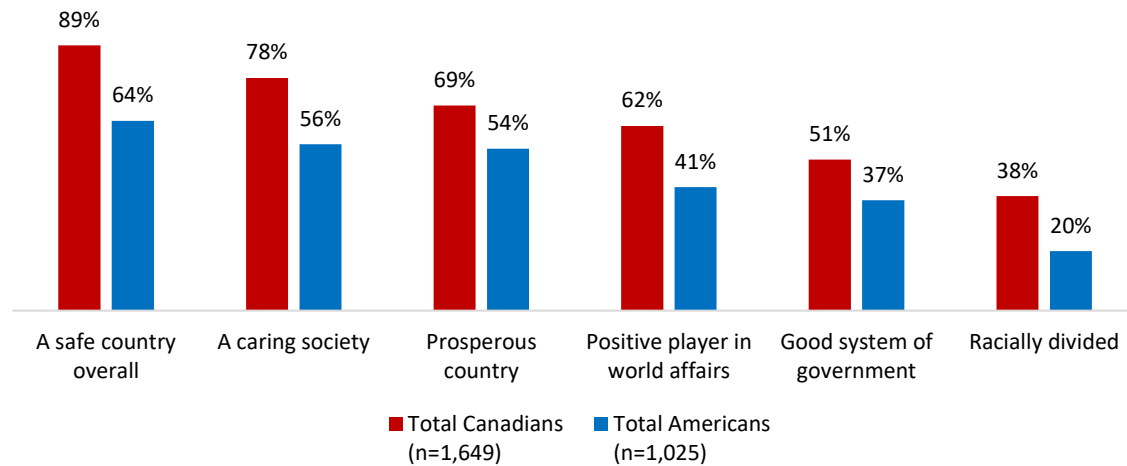
Americans are less effusive in praise of Canada than Canadians are of their own country. Still, majorities south of the border believe Canada to be safe (64%), caring (56%) and prosperous (54%). Also, Americans are half as likely (20%) as Canadians (38%) to believe Canada to be racially divided – however, half of Americans (51%) say they don't know if that's the case.

There is also a lot of uncertainty among those who live in the United States as to whether Canada has a beneficial effect on the world (43% can't say/not sure), or if it has a good system of government (39% can't say/not sure, [see detailed tables](#)):

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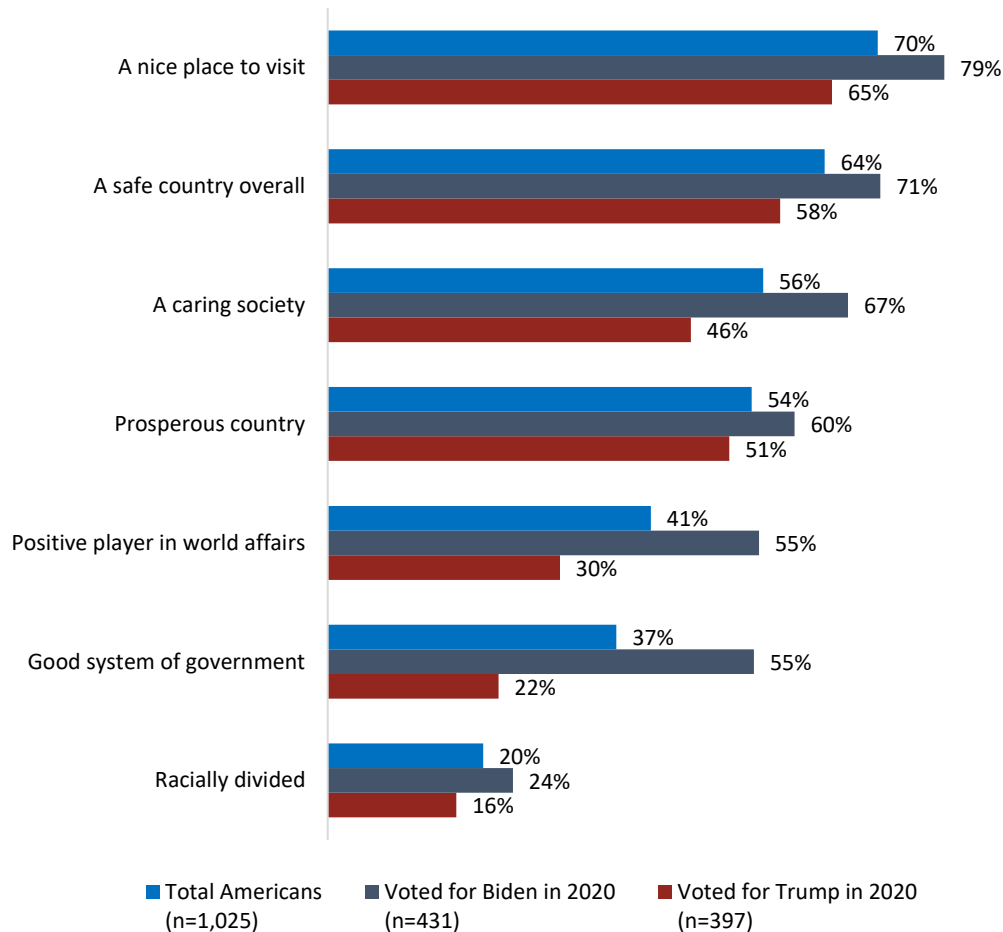
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Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of Canada:
(Percentage who say 'accurate' shown)



Overall, past Biden voters offer more praise of Canada than past Trump voters. Still, majorities of Trump voters believe Canada to be a nice place to visit (65%), safe (58%) and prosperous (51%). Approaching half of those who voted Trump for president in 2020 also believe Canada to be a caring society (46%):

**Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of Canada:
(American respondents; percentage who say 'accurate' shown)**



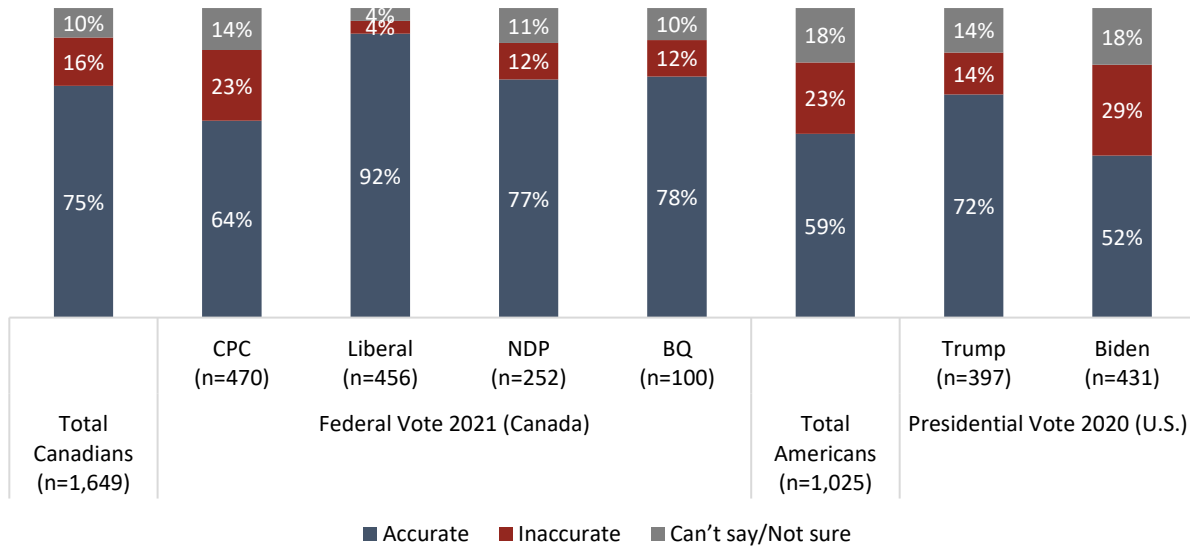
Part Three: Comparing views of their own countries

The relatively rosy views of Canadians are more evident when comparing Canadian views of Canada to American views of the United States. Three-quarters of Canadians (75%) are proud to live in Canada, a view held most prominently by past Liberal Party voters (92%). South of the border, three-in-five (59%) are proud to live in America. Notably, right wing political supporters in America are more likely to be proud of their country than others, while the inverse is true in Canada:

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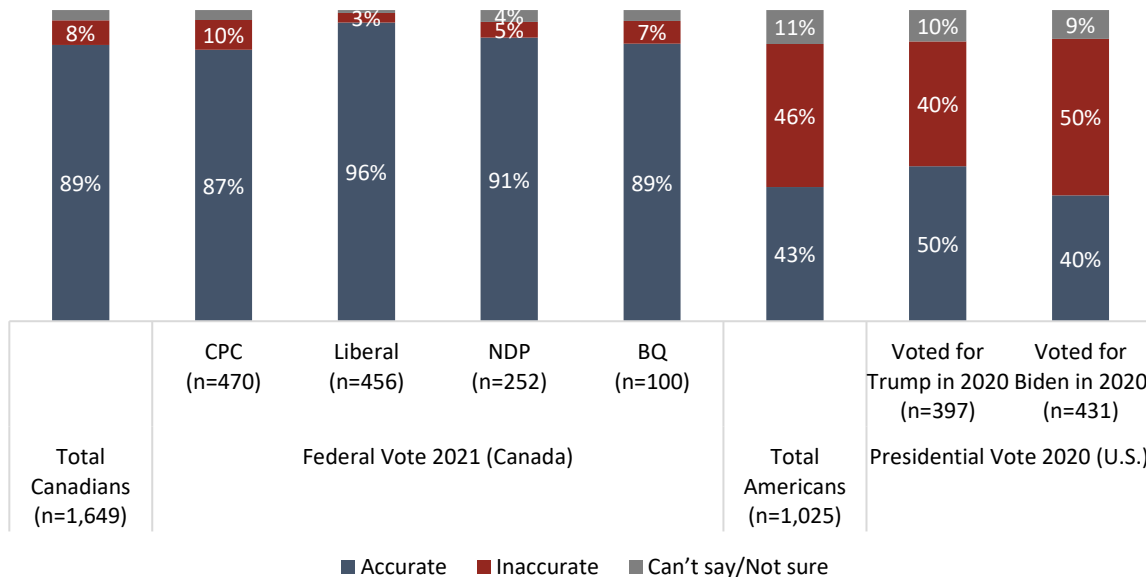
Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the country you live in:
A country you're proud to live in



Canadians are more than twice as likely as Americans (89% to 43%) to say that their country is safe. In Canada, these views are near-universal, while in the United States, Trump and Biden voters offer close to the same (low) level of positive appraisal:

Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the country you live in:

A safe country overall

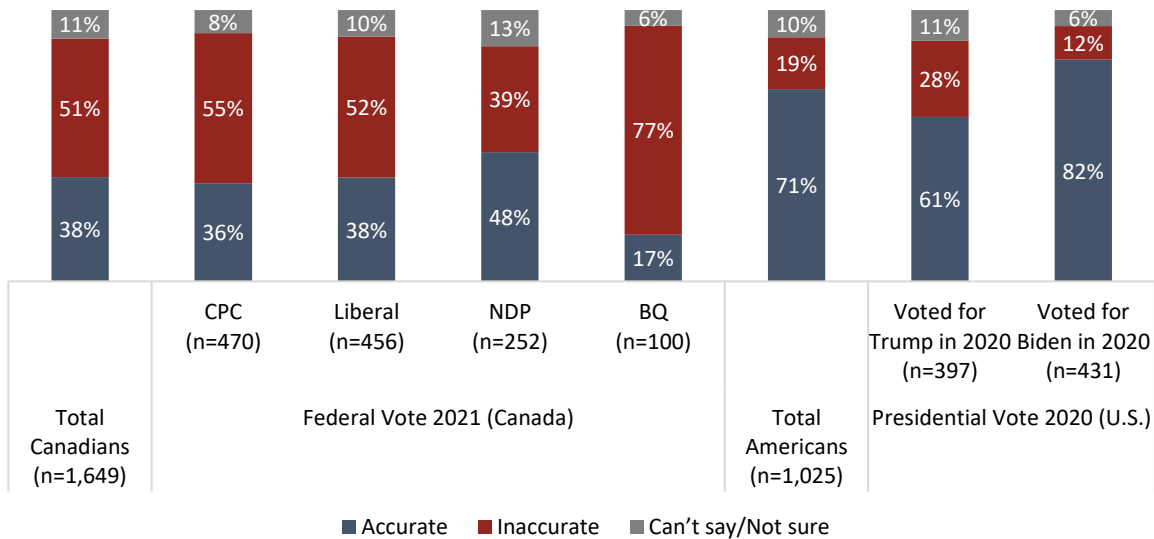


Both countries have significant challenges when it comes to race and ethnicity. For example, studies have found that police use more force against visible minorities in Canada, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples remains a key concern for many. In the United States, Black Lives Matter has brought increased attention to racial issues, though the seriousness of these same issues divides Americans.

Overall, Americans are much more likely to say their country is racially divided. This view approaches a majority among past NDP voters in Canada, but a majority of other political supporters disagree:

Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of the country you live in:

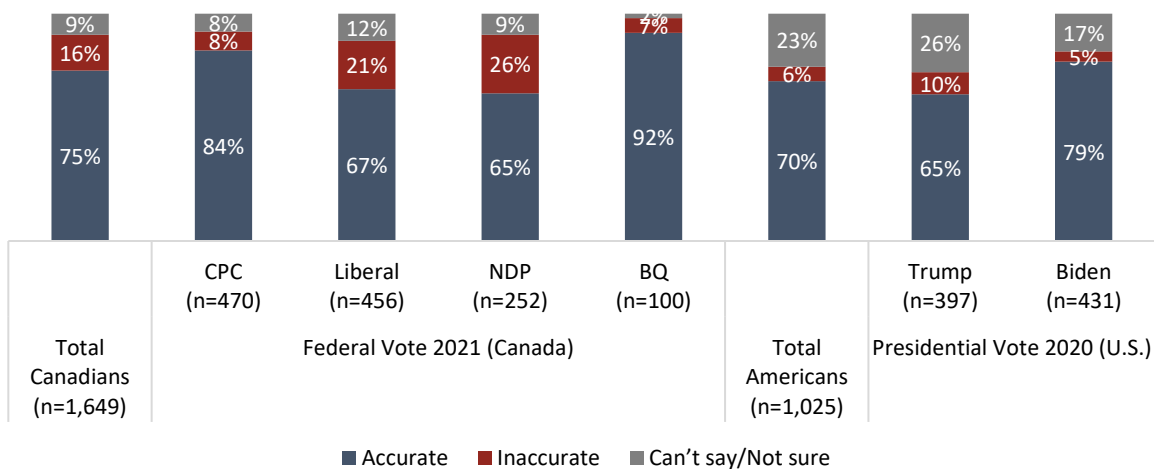
Racially divided



Perhaps unsurprisingly, with world class cities and landscapes strewn across their sprawling nations, Americans and Canadians both tend to agree that their countries are nice places to visit.

Based on your own experiences, perceptions and opinions, do each of these reflect an accurate or inaccurate picture of [the United States/Canada]:

A nice place to visit

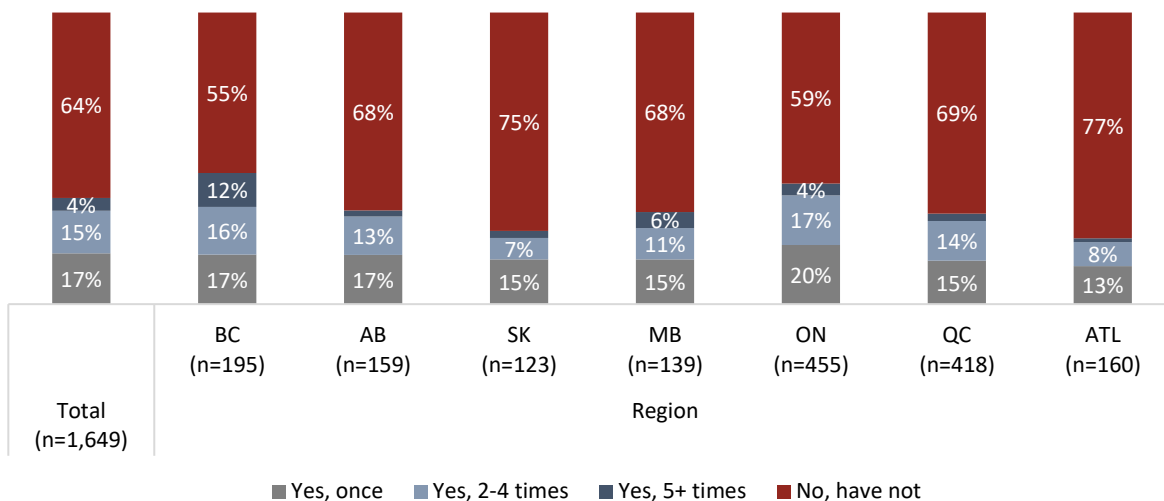


Part Four: Experiences crossing the border

With so much shared border between the two allies, there are more than 100 land-border crossings used by Canadians and Americans. While millions cross between the two countries each year, Canadians are much more likely travelers than Americans.

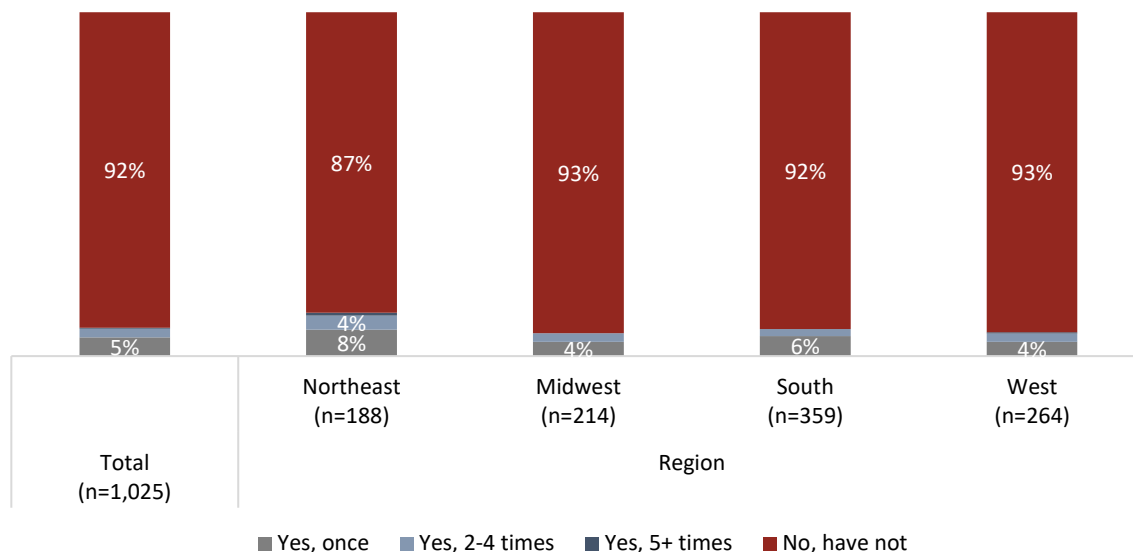
As COVID-19-related border restrictions have been removed, travel has increased. Over the past 12 months, 36 per cent of Canadians say that they crossed into the states. Half of these (53%) were done in a vehicle, while 39 per cent used air travel ([see detailed tables](#)):

**Have you travelled to the United States in the past 12 months?
(Canadian respondents)**



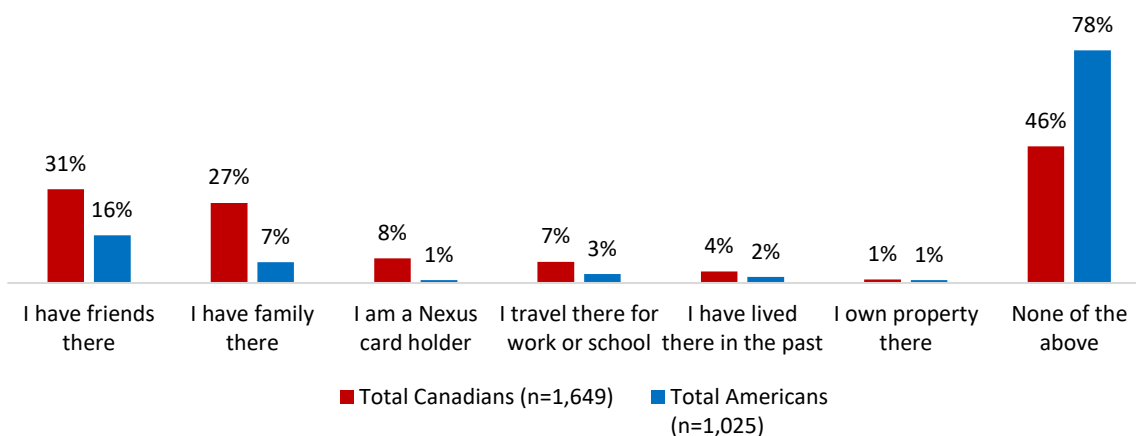
Conversely, a smaller proportion of Americans traveled to Canada in the past year. The highest number of crossings are reported in the Northeast of the country:

**Have you travelled to Canada in the past 12 months?
(American respondents)**



The connection between the countries is evidently much stronger for Canadians. Those north of the border are twice as likely to have friend in the United States as vice versa, and four-times as likely to have family in that country:

**Which of the following, if any, apply to you?
(Americans on Canada, Canadians on the U.S.)**



Canadian experiences with U.S. Customs

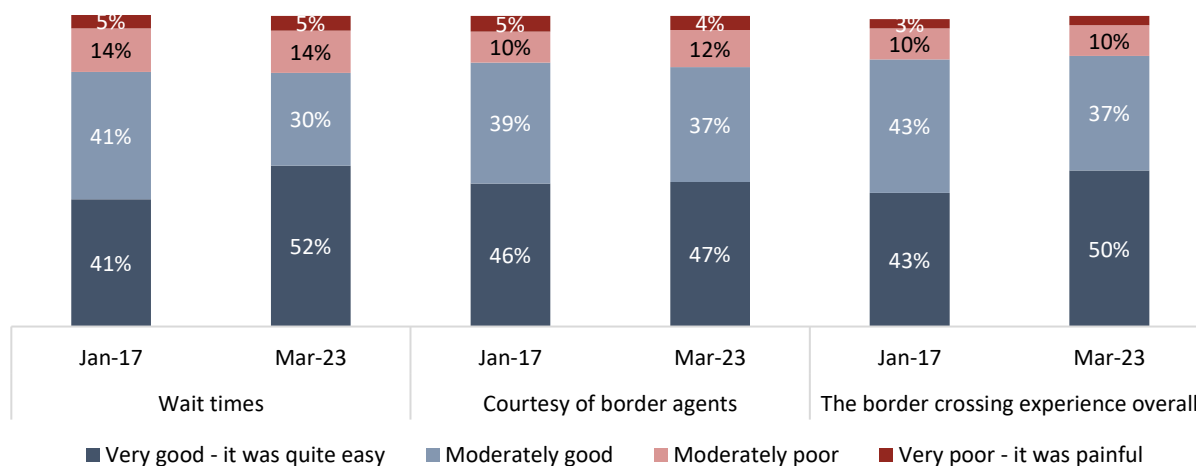
The last 12 months have been challenging from a travel perspective for Canadians. Significant delays hampered travelers on airlines and trains in 2022. One of the areas of relative ease, however, are the experiences of Canadian travellers with U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Overall, the vast majority

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say their wait times, experience with border agents, and overall crossing experience, were good when they travelled to the U.S.:

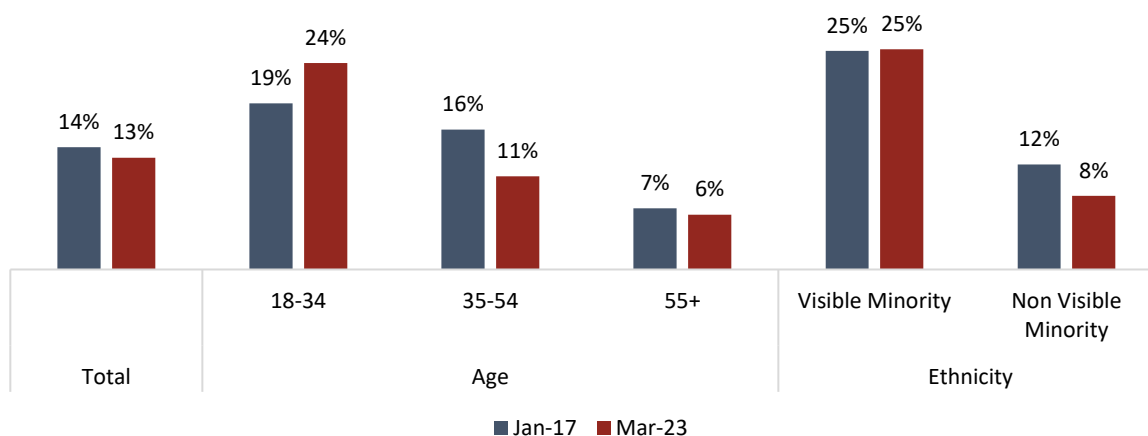
**How would you rate your experience with the U.S. Customs and Border Protection on each of the following measures?
(Among Canadians who visited U.S. at least once in past 12 months)**



Visible minorities three-times as likely to report poor experiences

Although experiences are generally positive, there are two groups who push back on this sentiment. One quarter of both young people – those between the ages of 18 and 34 – and visible minorities say that they have had poor experiences overall at the border within the last year. These responses from visible minorities are three-times higher than those who do not self-identify this way:

**Percentage who had a 'moderately' or 'very poor' overall border crossing experience with U.S. Customs and Border Protection
(Among Canadians who visited U.S. at least once in past 12 months)**



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

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

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