

Canada at 159: Majority optimistic of future as 'united' country, even as few believe separatist threats will pass

Most say it's unrealistic that Alberta, Quebec will ever actually separate

June 29, 2026 – Canada Day is often a time to reflect on the country's history, but this July 1, perhaps more so than others, will have Canadians pondering Canada's future. National unity is set to be challenged during a pivotal fall with both a Quebec provincial election and Alberta referendum on the calendar.

New data from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute finds most Canadians believe it's unlikely that either Alberta (64%) or Quebec (67%) will separate from the country. And three-in-five (58%) describe themselves as "optimistic" about the future of Canada as a united country.

But that doesn't mean Canadians are dismissive of the separatist movements as a passing fad. Fewer than one-in-five (17%) believe separatism will fade in Alberta and Quebec over time.

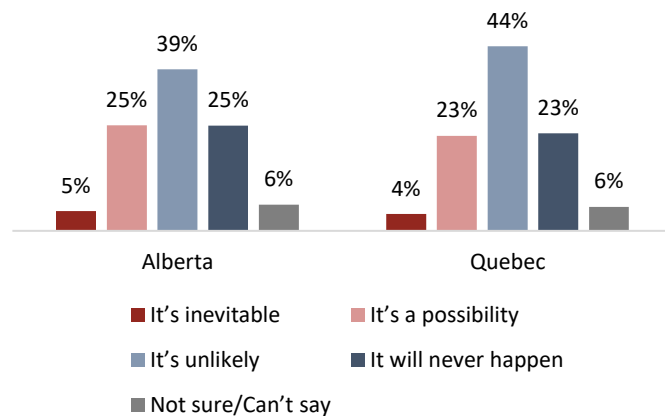
Indeed, most describe it either as a describe it as a reflection of "serious regional frustration" (36%) or go further and say the movements are a "fundamental problem" for Canada's national unity (36%).

Within the provinces dealing with the separatist sentiment, Albertans are more likely to describe Alberta separation as inevitable (10%) or possible (26%) than Quebecers (5%, 25% respectively), although that is a minority view in both provinces.

And Albertans are more likely to describe separatist pushes as "fundamental" threats to Canada's unity (46%) than those in Quebec (35%). In both provinces, however, provincial political leanings play a major role in how residents view their respective situations. Those who would vote UCP if there were an immediate Alberta election are more likely to believe Alberta separation is inevitable (19%) or likely (45%) than others in the province; same goes when comparing those who would vote for the separatist Parti Québécois in Quebec (18% inevitable; 41% likely) to others.

And how realistic do you think it is that either Alberta or Quebec would ever separate from Canada?

(All respondents, n=4,237)



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from June 4-10, 2026, among a randomized sample of 4,237 Canadian adults. Respondents are drawn from the [Angus Reid Forum](#), a large-scale online panel developed to include Canadian residents in each of the 343 federal ridings in Canada and representative of the Canadian population by age, gender, family income, ethnic status and education. The sample was weighted to be representative of adults nationwide according to region, gender, age, household income, and education, based on the Canadian census. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2 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.

For more information on our polling methods, [click here.](#)

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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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Optimism for the future of ‘united’ Canada from most, but many push back

July 1 is a day to celebrate national pride but also to reflect on the state of the country 159 years after confederation. For the second straight year at this time, Canada is under pressure both internal – separatist movements in Alberta and Quebec – and external – economic sanctions and threats of annexation from U.S. President Donald Trump that perhaps leaves many with lingering questions as to what the future of Canada may look like.

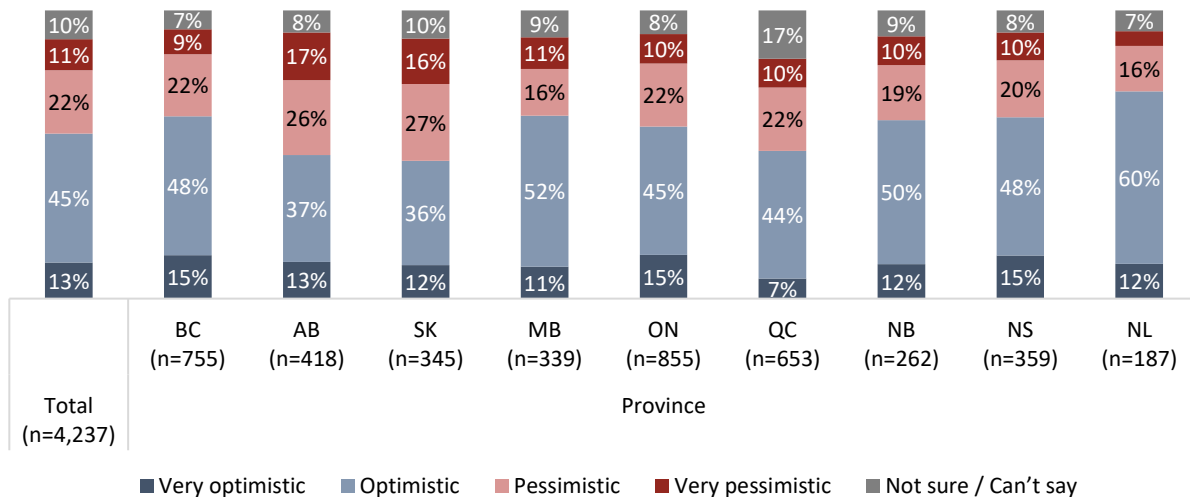
Even with everything in the background, three-in-five (58%) Canadians say they are optimistic about “the future of Canada as a united country”, nearly double the number who are pessimistic.

Optimism varies by province. Those in Saskatchewan (48%), Alberta (50%) and Quebec (51%) are the least optimistic about the country’s future as a unified entity. Those two prairie provinces are also the most pessimistic (Alberta, 43%; Saskatchewan, 43%). There is the more uncertainty in Quebec (17%) than elsewhere. Optimism is highest in Newfoundland and Labrador (72%):

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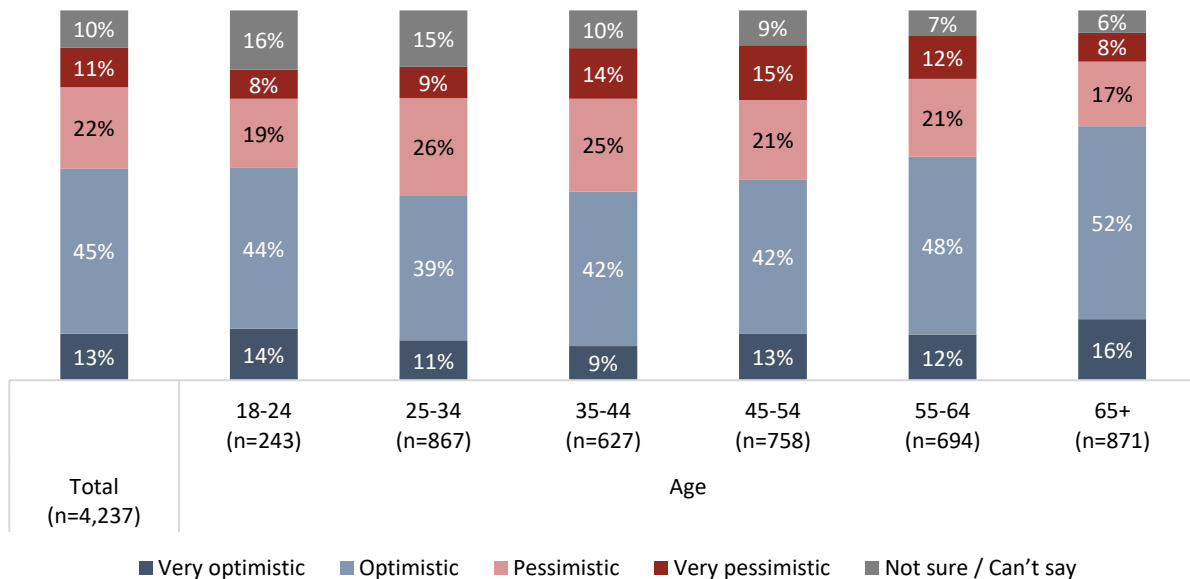
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Thinking about the future of Canada as a united country, would you say you are:



Although at least half of Canadians of all ages say they are optimistic about the future of Canada as a united country, Canadians older than 64 are much more optimistic (68%) than younger ones. Canadians aged 35 to 44 (39%) are the most likely to be pessimistic:

Thinking about the future of Canada as a united country, would you say you are:

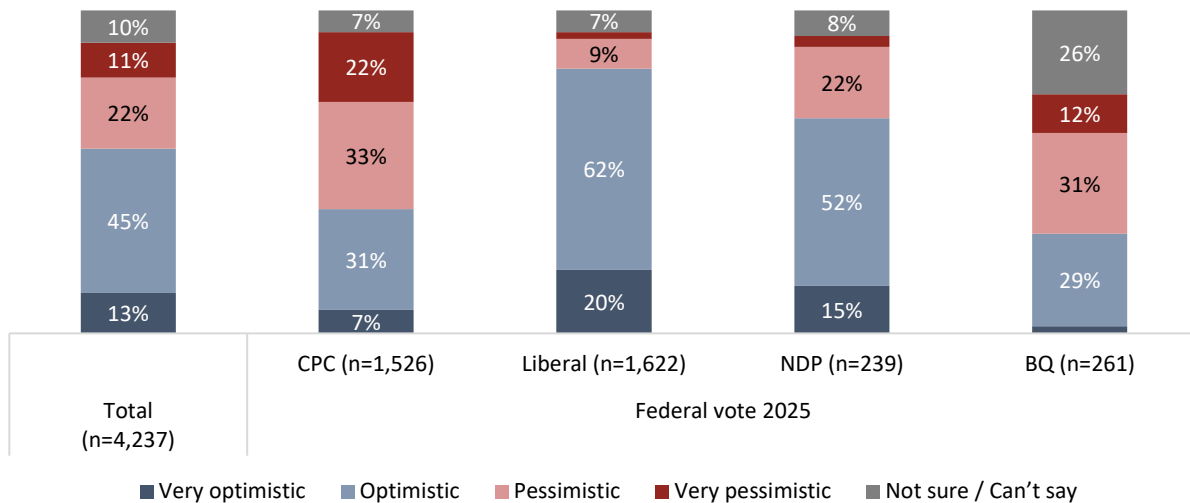


There is also a political lens which changes respondents' views on the future of the country. Those who voted Conservative in last year's federal election are more pessimistic (55%) than optimistic (38%), as are those who voted for the Bloc Québécois (43% pessimistic, 30% optimistic). More than four-in-five (82%) past Liberal voters and two-thirds (67%) of past NDP voters say they are optimistic that Canada's future is as a united country:

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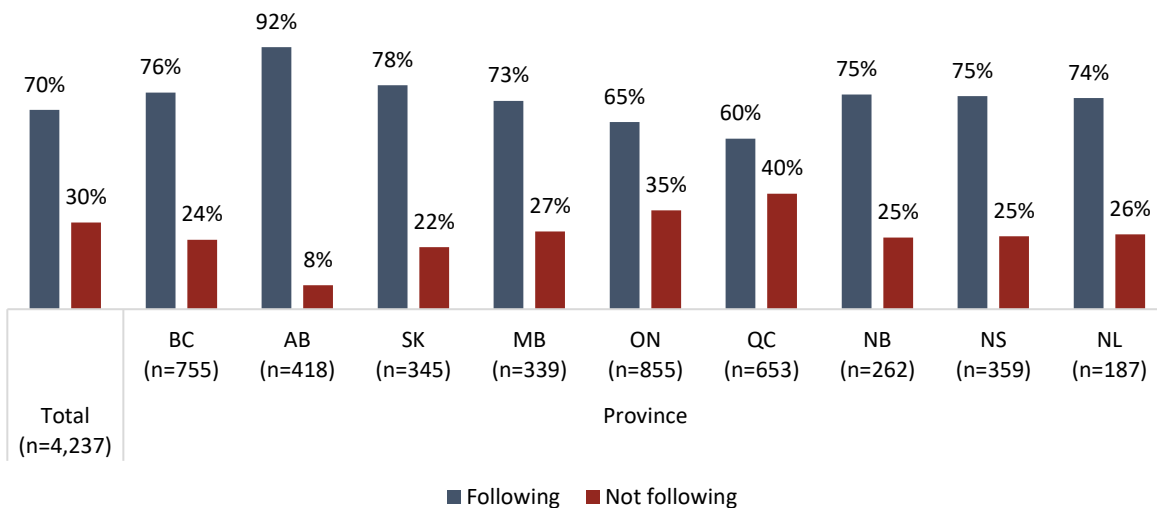
Thinking about the future of Canada as a united country, would you say you are:



The National Unity Discussion

The dual separatist movements in Quebec and Alberta are on the minds of most Canadians as the anniversary of Canada's confederation nears. Seven-in-ten (70%) say they are following the discussion of those provinces' independence movements. Attention is highest in Alberta (92% following), while lower in Quebec (40% not following). Elsewhere, at least three-quarters are following the news of separatist pushes in all provinces except Ontario:

As you may have seen or heard, there has been renewed discussion of separatism or independence movements in both Alberta and Quebec. How closely have you been following this issue?



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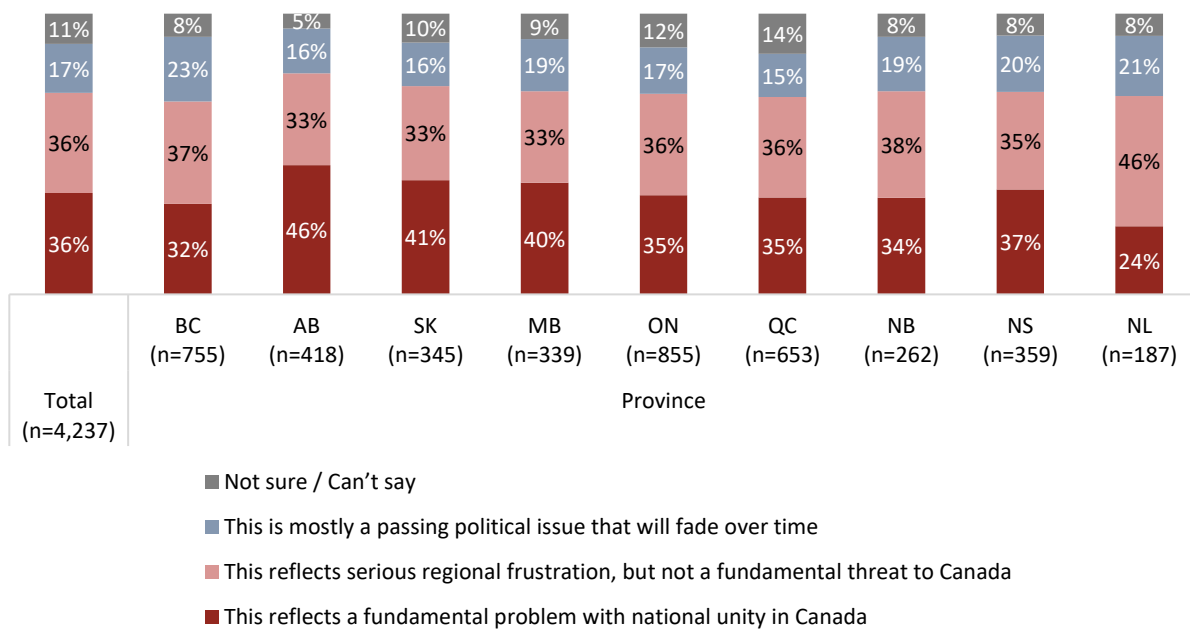
Fewer than one-in-five believe separatist movements ‘will fade over time’

The push for Alberta independence, while simmering since separatists ran for positions in the provincial legislature in the 1980s, has only recently rose to prominence and become a national talking point. The Quebec separatist movement has ebbed and flowed but has always been a consistent undercurrent to Canada’s national political scene since the first 1980 referendum.

With this history, Canadians are well-versed in the resiliency of separatist movements. Fewer than one-in-five (17%) say they believe the current separatist threats will fade over time. Instead, one-third (36%) believe they are reflective of serious regional grievances, but not a fundamental threat to Canada. An equal-sized group (36%) believe these current separatist movements *are* a fundamental threat to the country’s national unity.

That latter group is largest in the prairie provinces of Alberta (46%), Saskatchewan (41%) and Manitoba (40%):

Thinking about separatist movements in Alberta and Quebec, which of the following is closer to your own view?

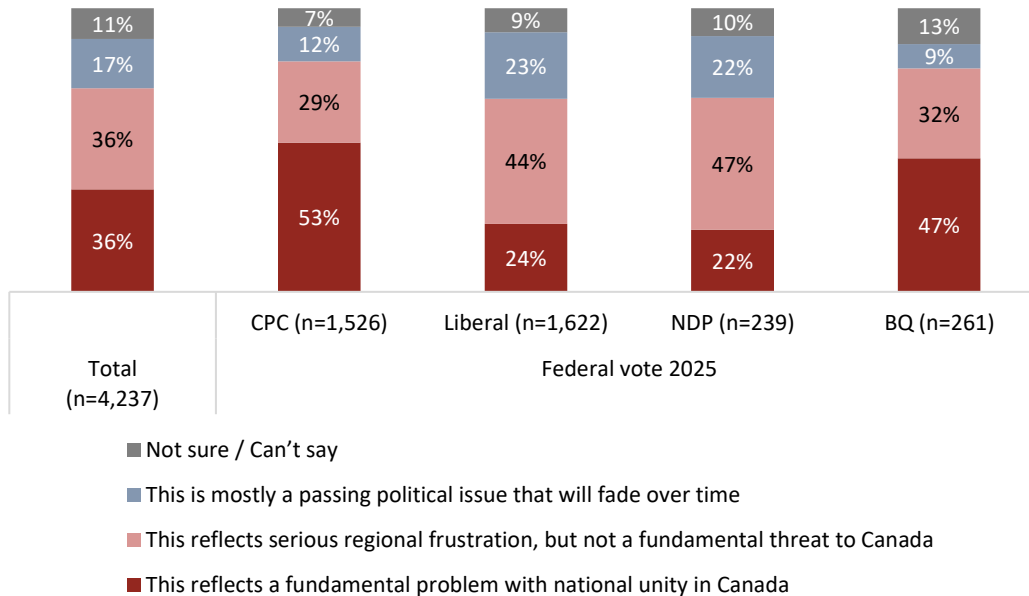


More than half (53%) of those who voted for the Conservatives in last year’s federal election believe the current separatist movements in Alberta and Quebec pose a “fundamental problem with national unity”. Half (47%) of those who voted for the Bloc Québécois agree. Those who voted for the Liberals (44%) and NDP (47%) are more likely to say the movements reflect regional frustration, but not a pivotal breaking point for the country.

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Thinking about separatist movements in Alberta and Quebec, which of the following is closer to your own view?



Majority say it's unlikely Alberta or Quebec will separate

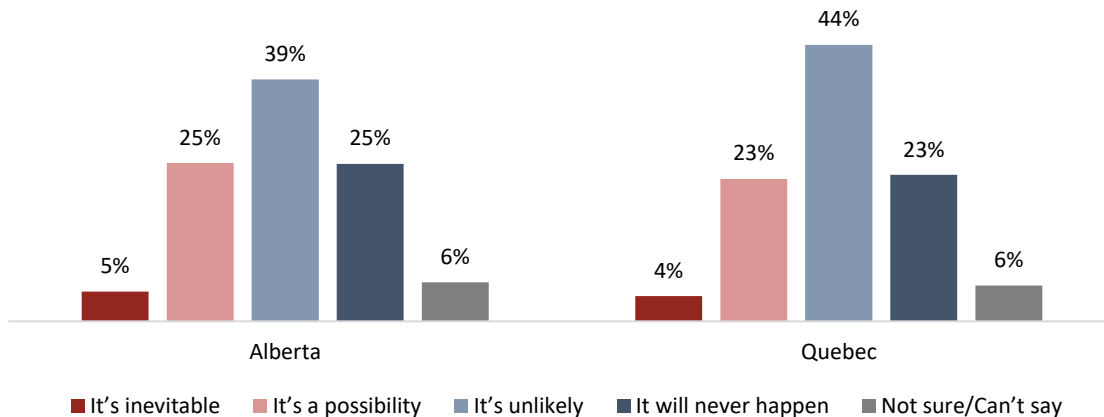
Overall, few Canadians believe it's "inevitable" that Quebec (4%) or Alberta (5%) will separate. And only one-quarter for each province describe separation as a "possibility". Instead, most believe Alberta or Quebec separating is unlikely or that it will never happen.

Comparatively, there are slightly more Canadians who believe Alberta separating is at least a possibility (30%) than Quebec (27%):

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**And how realistic do you think it is that either Alberta or Quebec would ever separate from Canada?
(All respondents, n=4,237)**



The View from Alberta

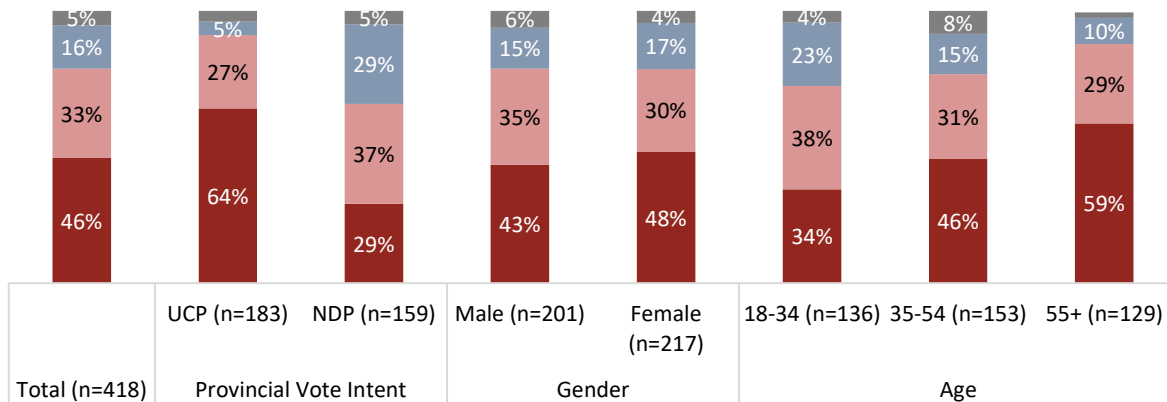
In Alberta, the view that separatist movements represent a “fundamental problem with national unity” of the country is much more common among those who would vote UCP if the election were today (64%) than those who would support the NDP (29%). And more Albertans older than 54 (59%) describe separatist movements as a “fundamental” issue for Canada than younger ones. According to the Angus Reid Institute’s most recent polling on Alberta separation, UCP voters, and older Albertans, are the core groups who would be most likely to vote for the province to leave the country if there were a referendum on separation.

Related: Alberta Separation: Three-in-five say they’d vote in October to stay, but half say the question is “confusing”

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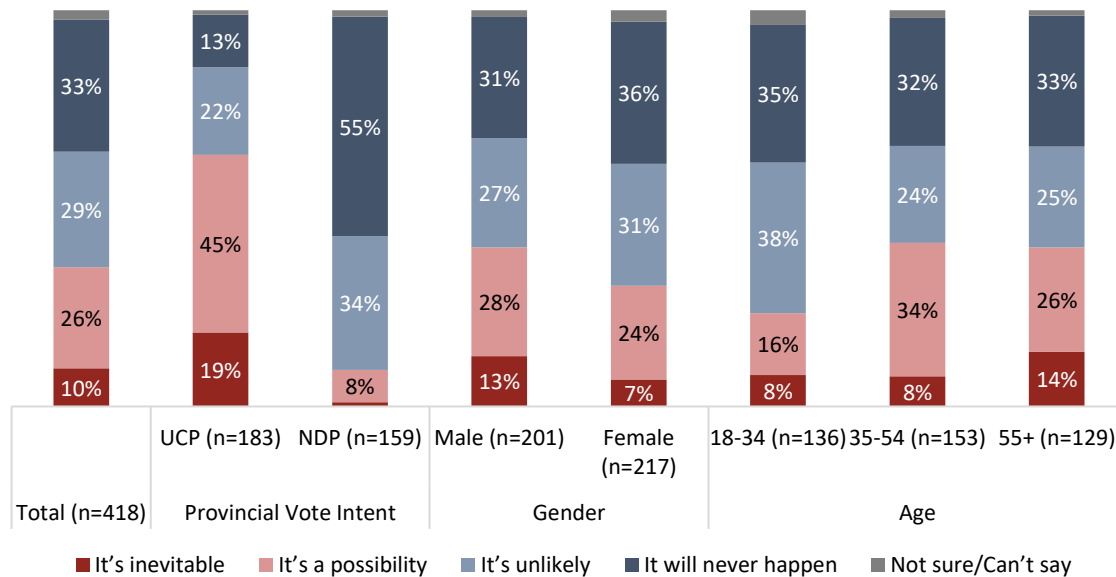
Thinking about separatist movements in Alberta and Quebec, which of the following is closer to your own view?



- Not sure / Can't say
- This is mostly a passing political issue that will fade over time
- This reflects serious regional frustration, but not a fundamental threat to Canada
- This reflects a fundamental problem with national unity in Canada

Yet, despite the above data, few in the province, even among the more separatist leaning groups of UCP voters and older Albertans, believe separation is an inevitability. Those who would vote UCP are the most likely to describe it as a “possibility” and less likely to dismiss it as “unlikely” or “never going to happen”. A majority (55%) of those who would vote NDP in a provincial election today believe Alberta is never going to separate:

And how realistic do you think it is that Alberta would ever separate from Canada?



The View from Quebec

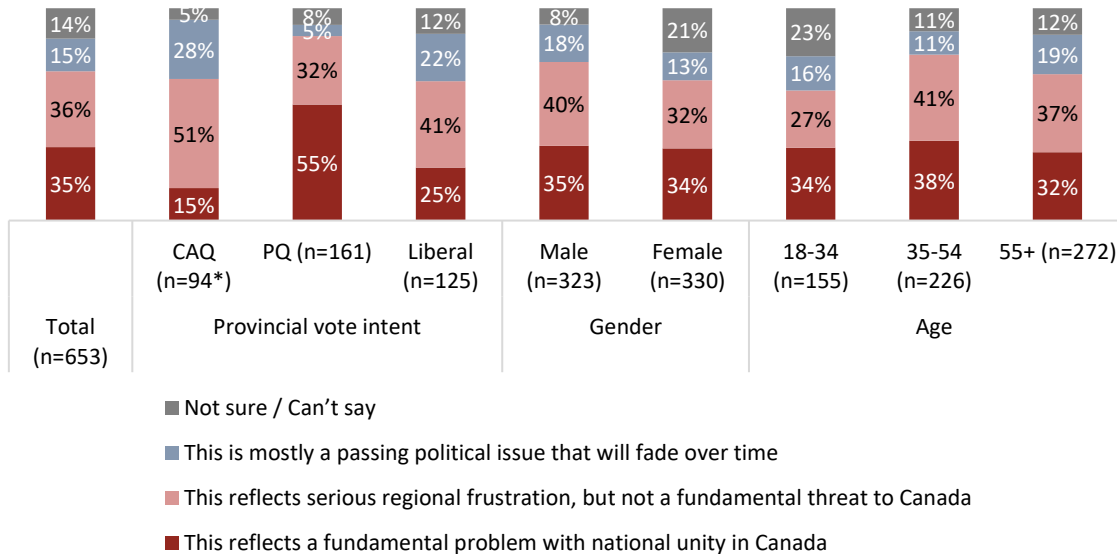
October is set to be a pivotal month for both the separatist movement in Alberta, with a series of referendums, and Quebec, with the provincial election.

Provincial politics plays a key role in Quebecer's perspectives on the separatist issue. Those who would vote for the separatist Parti Québécois in a provincial election today are more likely to describe the separatist movements in Alberta and Quebec as a fundamental problem for Canada's national unity. Those who would vote for the incumbent Coalition Avenir Québec or the opposition Liberals are more likely to believe the push for separatism in both provinces is instead a reflection of regional grievances, but not a threat to national unity:

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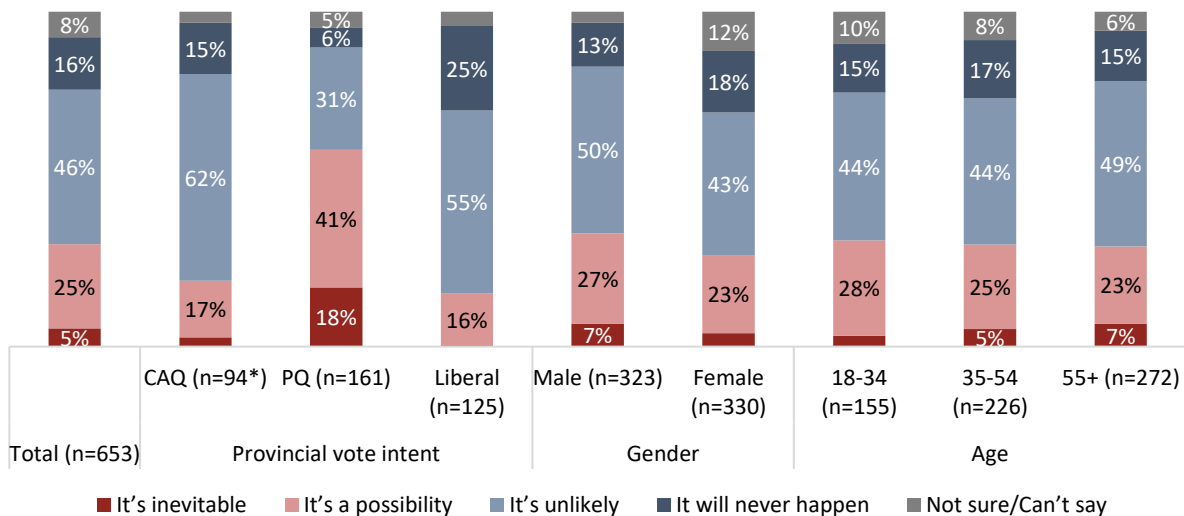
Thinking about separatist movements in Alberta and Quebec, which of the following is closer to your own view?



*Smaller sample size

Parti Québécois supporters are most likely to believe Quebec separating is likely or inevitable. For everyone else, the dominant view is that separation is unlikely or will never happen:

And how realistic do you think it is that Quebec would ever separate from Canada?



*Smaller sample size

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

DRAFT

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