

Provocation Ideas Festival Survey 2022

Democracy and Civil Discourse Report



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Key Findings



Key Findings

1

Most are satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada, but most also don't feel the government listens to them

In an apparent democratic paradox, sixty-eight percent (68%) report being satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada, but fifty-seven percent (57%) say that they don't think government listens to people like them.

2

Compromise in politics, a core democratic principle, is seen as both necessary for democracy and bad for the public

Interestingly, fifty-nine percent (59%) agree that compromise is necessary to make democracy work, but a slim majority (51%) think that compromise results in bad things for the Canadian public.

3

Canadians are not sure how far they can trust what government says, but tend to trust municipal governments the most

Less than 40% believe that the federal or provincial government usually shares information they believe is true. 45% believe municipal government are mostly truthful. While it varies by level, roughly a third believe governments sometimes share information they know is not true. Between 11% and 16% believe governments usually or always share information they know is NOT true.

4

Many Canadians say the state of discourse is deteriorating, and social media isn't helping

A plurality (41%) say that discourse in Canada has become less fact-based, and 46% say it has become less respectful. Overall, 42% think that social media is bad for civil discourse in Canada.

5

Social media is seen as contributing to the spread of disinformation and half believe that these companies should regulate offensive content

A majority (70%) think that disinformation on social media is a big problem. A narrow majority (51%) want social media companies to regulate offensive content but 39% say users should have the right to post what they want.

What do Canadians have to say?

I am not satisfied with democracy in Canada!
(28%)

The federal government sometimes shares information it knows is not true!
(33%)

I want to hear from ordinary Canadian voters!
(54%)

Too many people are offended by the language others use!
(52%)

It doesn't matter what you do – you can't make a difference in politics!
(36%)

On certain issues, regular Canadians should have the final say!
(69%)

I don't think government considers my views.
(57%)

Civil discourse has become less respectful of differing opinions!
(46%)

Social media has a negative impact on civil discourse!
(42%)



NOTE: Actual question wording has been abbreviated due to space restrictions

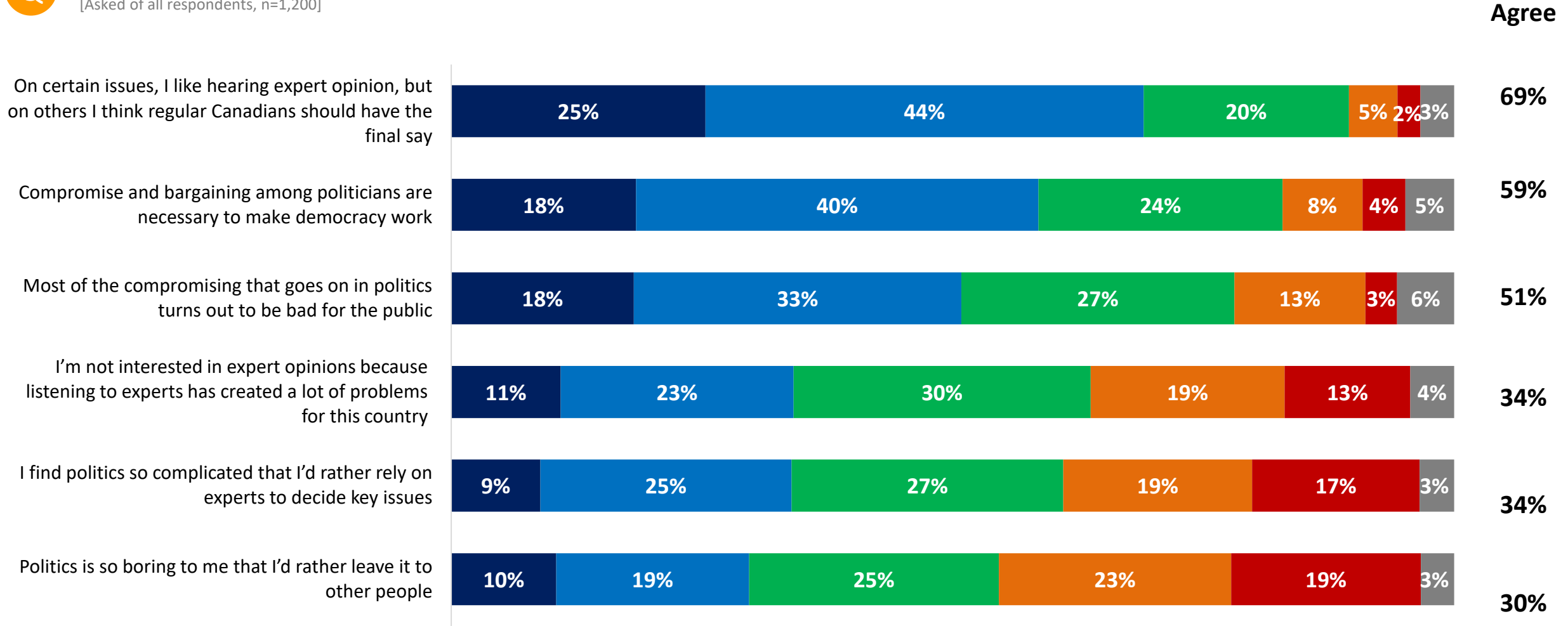
Democracy & Civil Discourse In Canada

Compromise & Expert Opinion: The viewpoint that regular Canadians should have the final say has the highest level of agreement



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

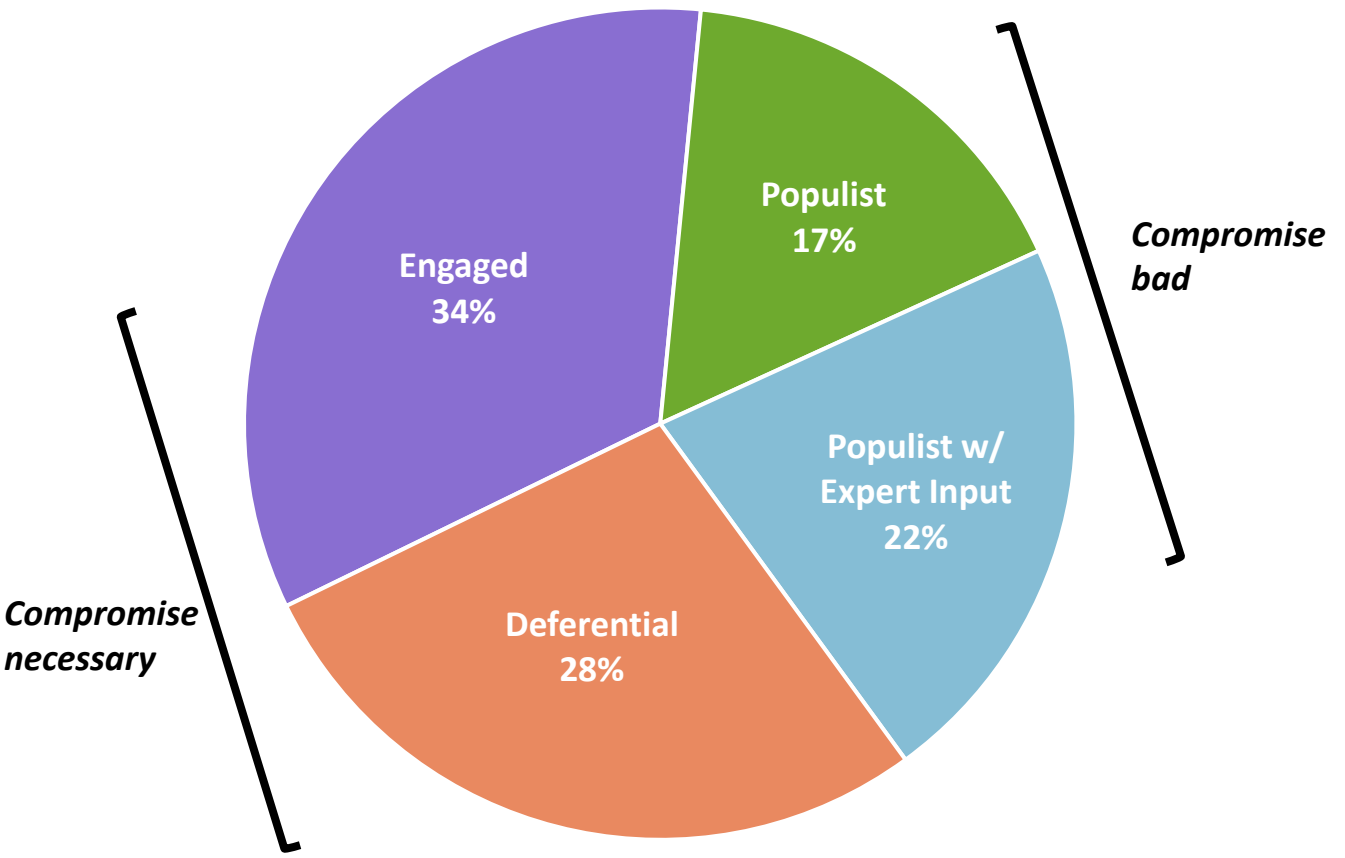


■ Strongly agree
 ■ Somewhat agree
 ■ Neither agree nor disagree
 ■ Somewhat disagree
 ■ Strongly disagree
 ■ Don't know



Democratic Participation Segments: One-third (34%) are Engaged, the next largest segment, Deferentials, make up 28% of the sample

We created four segments based on responses to a battery of questions about decision-making and compromise.



Segments	Description
Engaged	These respondents want to be involved in politics and welcome expert input on the process. They believe in compromise.
Populist	These respondents don't support compromise and want to leave decisions to regular people without expert intervention.
Populist w/ Expert Input	These respondents also don't support compromise, but they support having experts weigh in on the process.
Deferential	These respondents want to leave the decisions to experts, and believe compromising is necessary to make democracy work.

Defining the Democratic Participation Segments

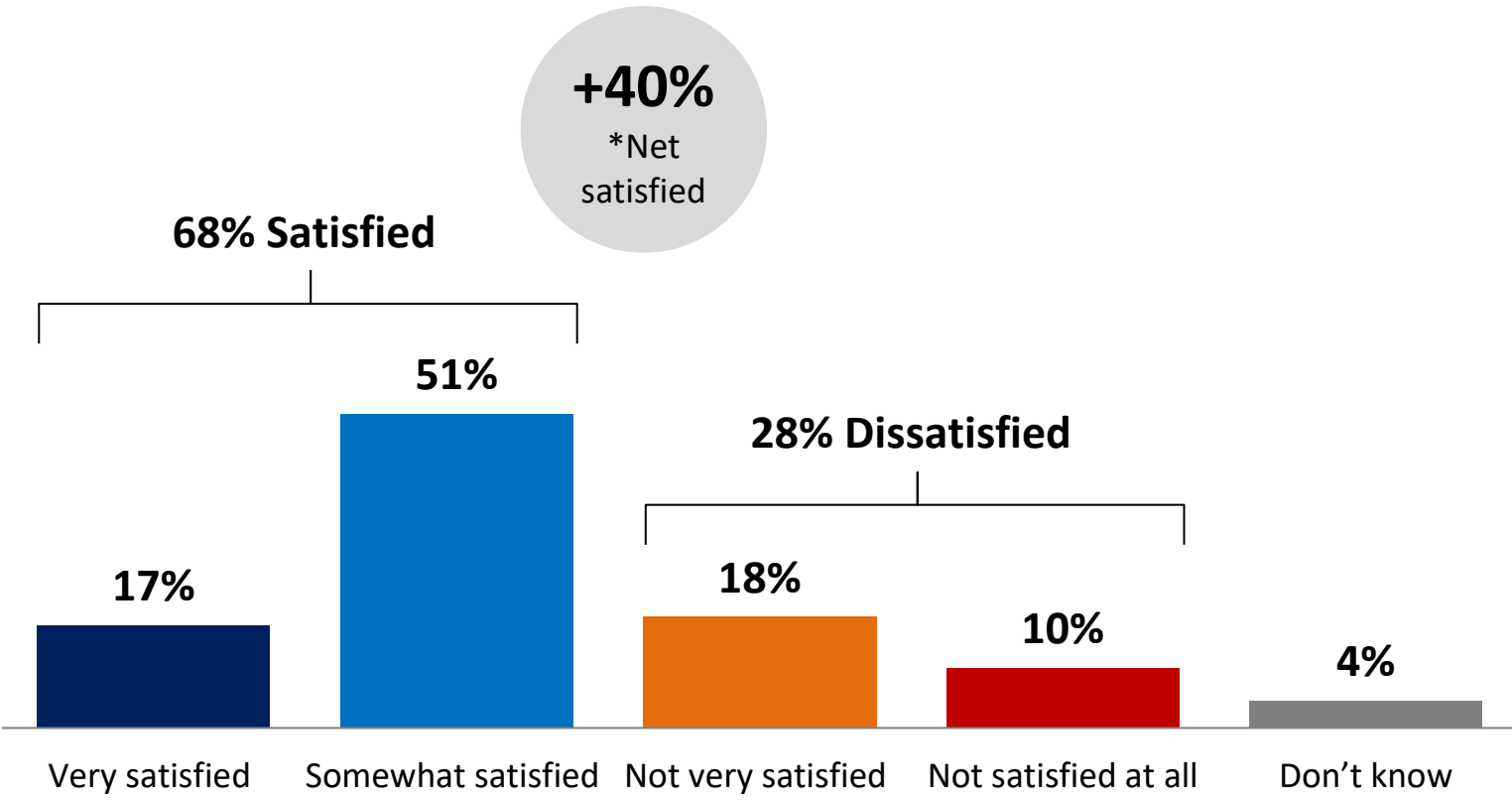
Based on the respondents' attitudes to questions about expertise in decision-making and compromise, we have grouped respondents who share similar attitudes into four segments. The table below shows the extent to which each segment agrees with the statements used to create the segmentation.

Democratic Participation Segments

Total Agree	Engaged	Populist	Populist w/ Expert Input	Deferential
Most of the compromising that goes on in politics turns out to be bad for the public	34%	83%	86%	25%
Compromise and bargaining among politicians are necessary to make democracy work	95%	37%	21%	57%
I'm not interested in expert opinions because listening to experts has created a lot of problems for this country	33%	91%	30%	5%
I find politics so complicated that I'd rather rely on experts to decide key issues	19%	48%	28%	48%
Politics is so boring to me that I'd rather leave it to other people	14%	56%	25%	37%
On certain issues, I like hearing expert opinion, but on others I think regular Canadians should have the final say	91%	54%	95%	31%

Democracy in Canada: 68% are satisfied with the way democracy works; Indigenous people and non-voters are more likely to dissatisfied

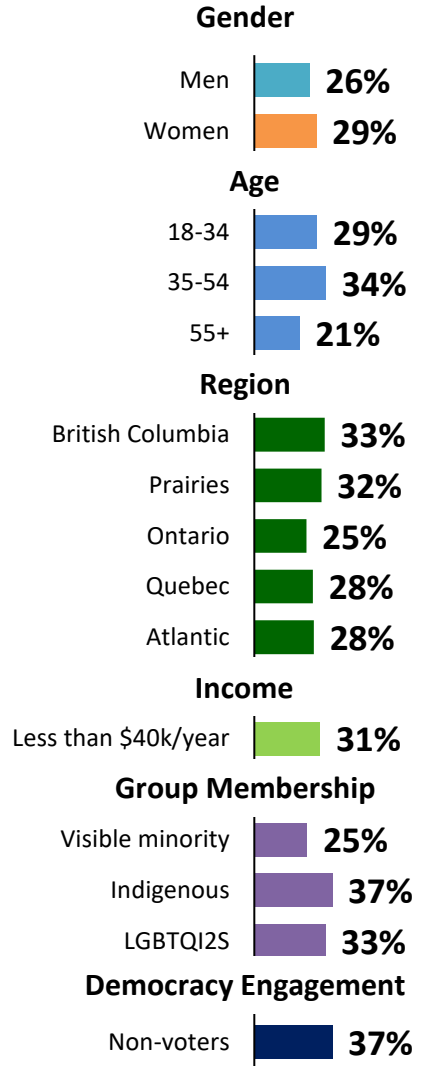
Q Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada?
 [Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



*Net satisfied = (total satisfied) – (total dissatisfied)

Segmentation

Those who say 'Dissatisfied'



Democracy in Canada BY Democratic Participation: Engaged Canadians are the most satisfied with how democracy works in Canada



Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada? BY Democratic Participation Segments

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Democratic Participation Segments

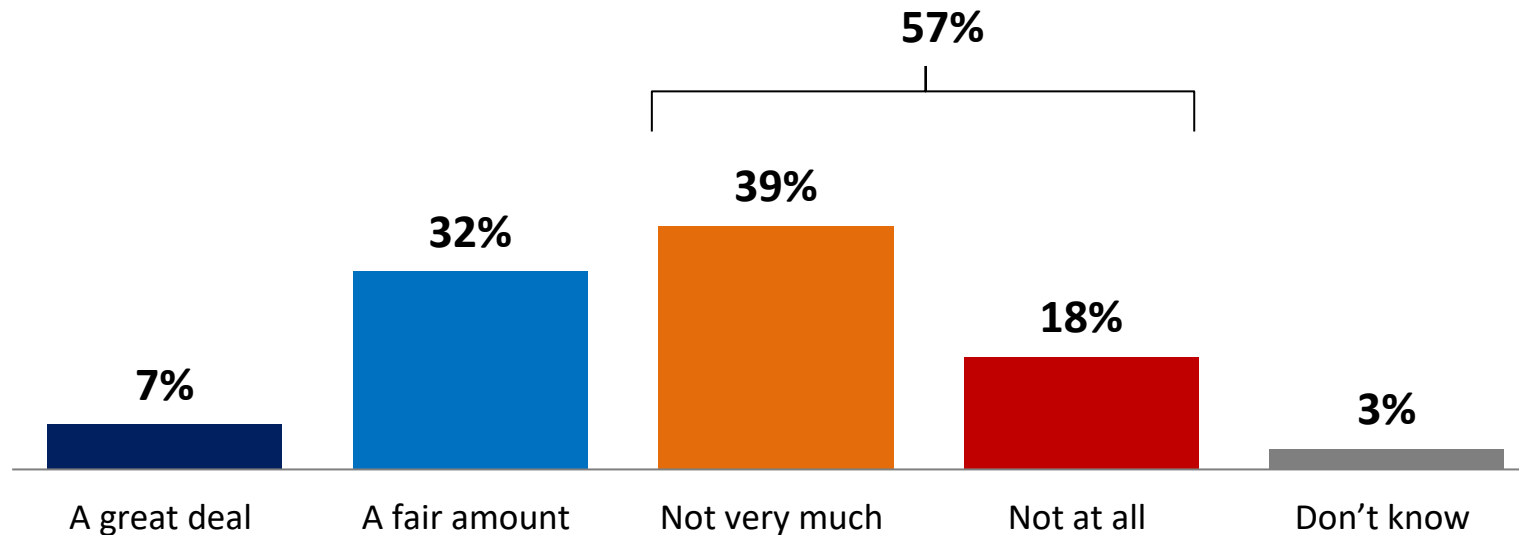
	Engaged	Populist	Populist w/ Expert Input	Deferential
Satisfied (Very + Somewhat)	79%	54%	55%	72%
Unsatisfied (Very + Somewhat)	19%	42%	42%	18%
NET Satisfied (Satisfied – Unsatisfied)	60%	12%	13%	54%
Don't know	2%	4%	3%	10%

Government Decisions: Most (57%) feel the government does not consider their views much when making decisions



When government makes decisions, to what degree, if at all, do you think it considers the views of people like you?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



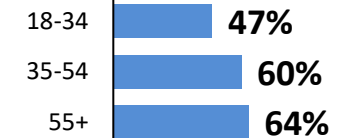
Segmentation

Those who say 'Not very much/not at all'

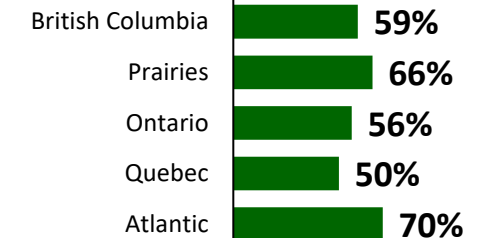
Gender



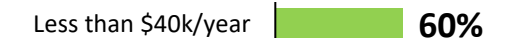
Age



Region



Income



Group Membership



Democracy Engagement



Government Decisions BY Democratic Participation: Populists w/ Expert Input feel that the government considers their views the least



When government makes decisions, to what degree, if at all, do you think it considers the views of people like you? BY Democratic Participation Segments
[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Democratic Participation Segments

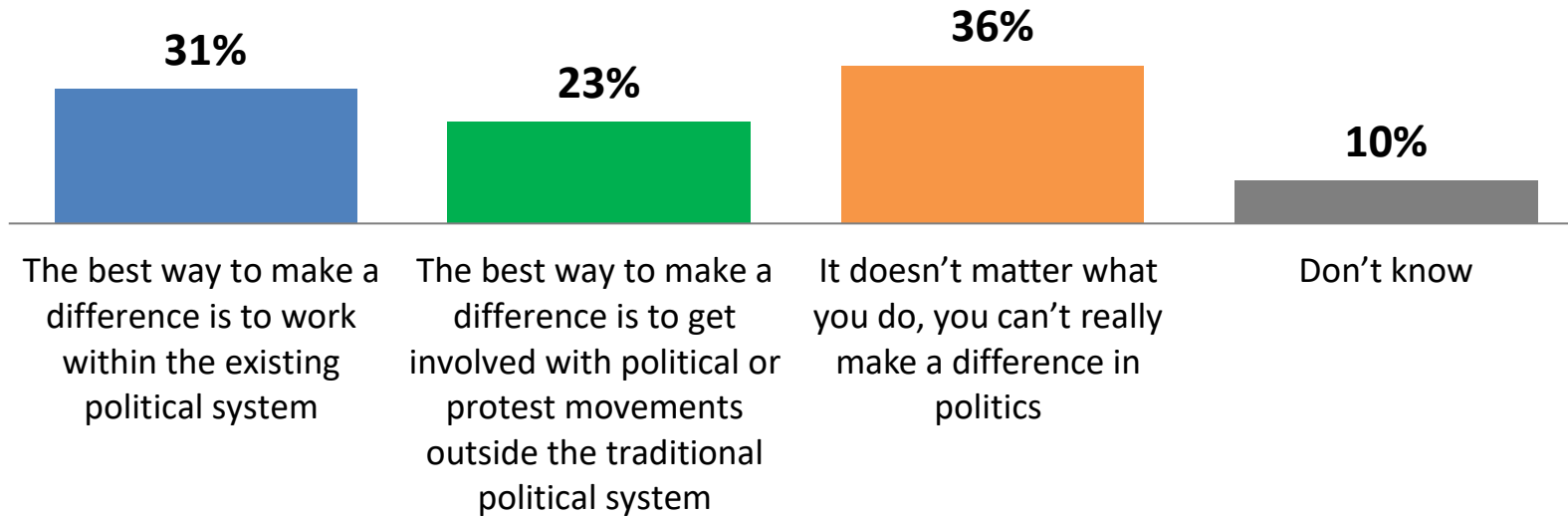
	Engaged	Populist	Populist w/ Expert Input	Deferential
Great deal + Fair amount	45%	40%	25%	43%
Not very much + Not at all	53%	60%	74%	48%
NET	-8%	-20%	-49%	-5%
Don't know	1%	0%	1%	9%

Political Process: A plurality feel that they can't make a difference in politics; higher among non-voters & those who earn less than \$40k/year



Which statement best represents your view of the political process in Canada?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



Segmentation

Those who say 'Doesn't matter'

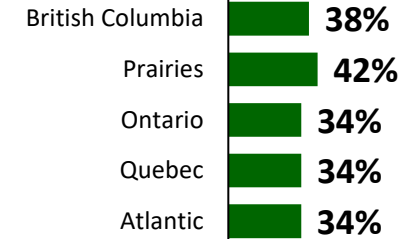
Gender



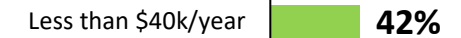
Age



Region



Income



Group Membership



Democracy Engagement



Political Process BY Democratic Participation: Half (49%) of Populists w/ Expert Input feel like they can't make a difference in politics



Which statement best represents your view of the political process in Canada? BY Democratic Participation Segments

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Democratic Participation Segments

	Engaged	Populist	Populist w/ Expert Input	Deferential
The best way to make a difference is to work within the existing political system	44%	21%	22%	28%
The best way to make a difference is to get involved with political or protest movements outside the traditional political system	23%	25%	22%	23%
It doesn't matter what you do, you can't really make a difference in politics	28%	44%	49%	31%
Don't know	5%	10%	6%	18%

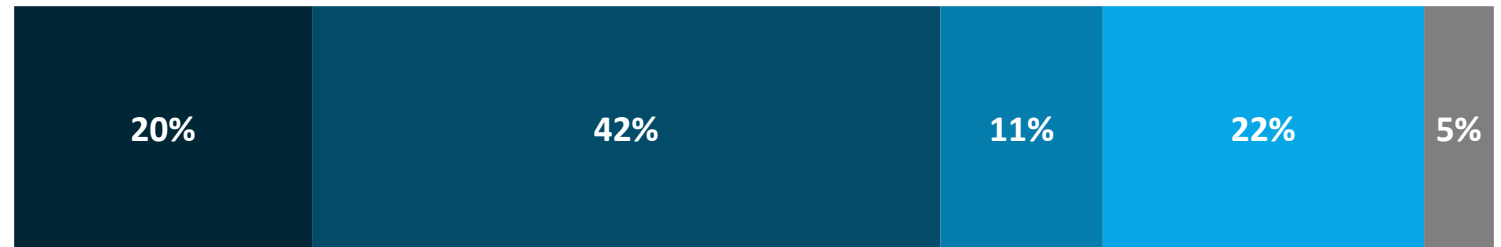
Democracy Personal Engagement: 3-in-5 (63%) have discussed politics with someone who has opposing views at least a few times



In the past 12 months, how often have you _____.

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Discussed politics with someone who disagrees with your political views?



Changed your mind on an issue because of something you read or heard?



■ Many times

■ A few times

■ Once

■ Never

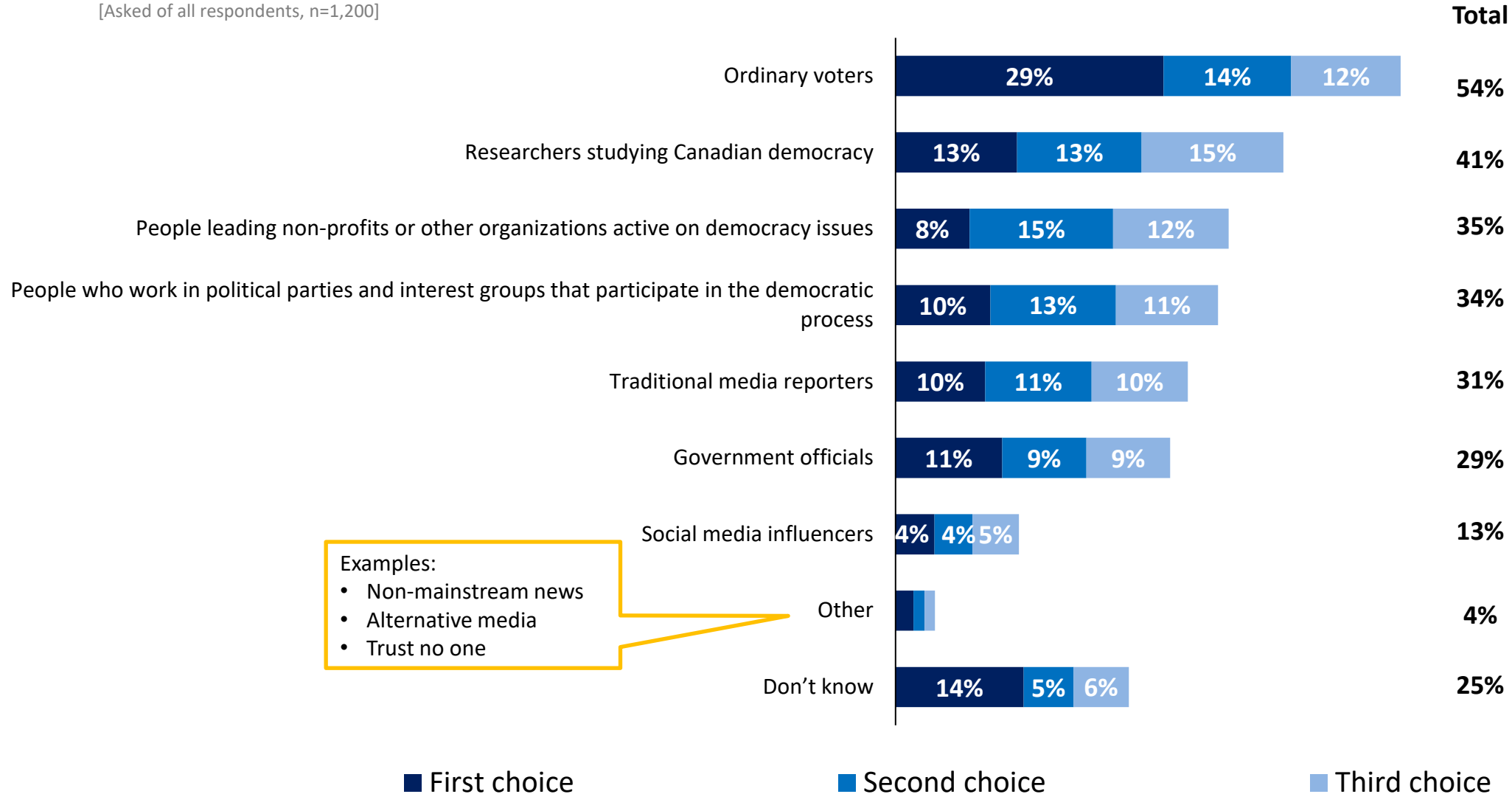
■ Don't know

Discussion of Political Issues: Over half (54%) are most interested in hearing the opinions of ordinary voters



When it comes to discussions about political issues in Canada, who are you most interested in hearing from? And who would be your second choice? And who would be your third choice?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



Examples:

- Non-mainstream news
- Alternative media
- Trust no one

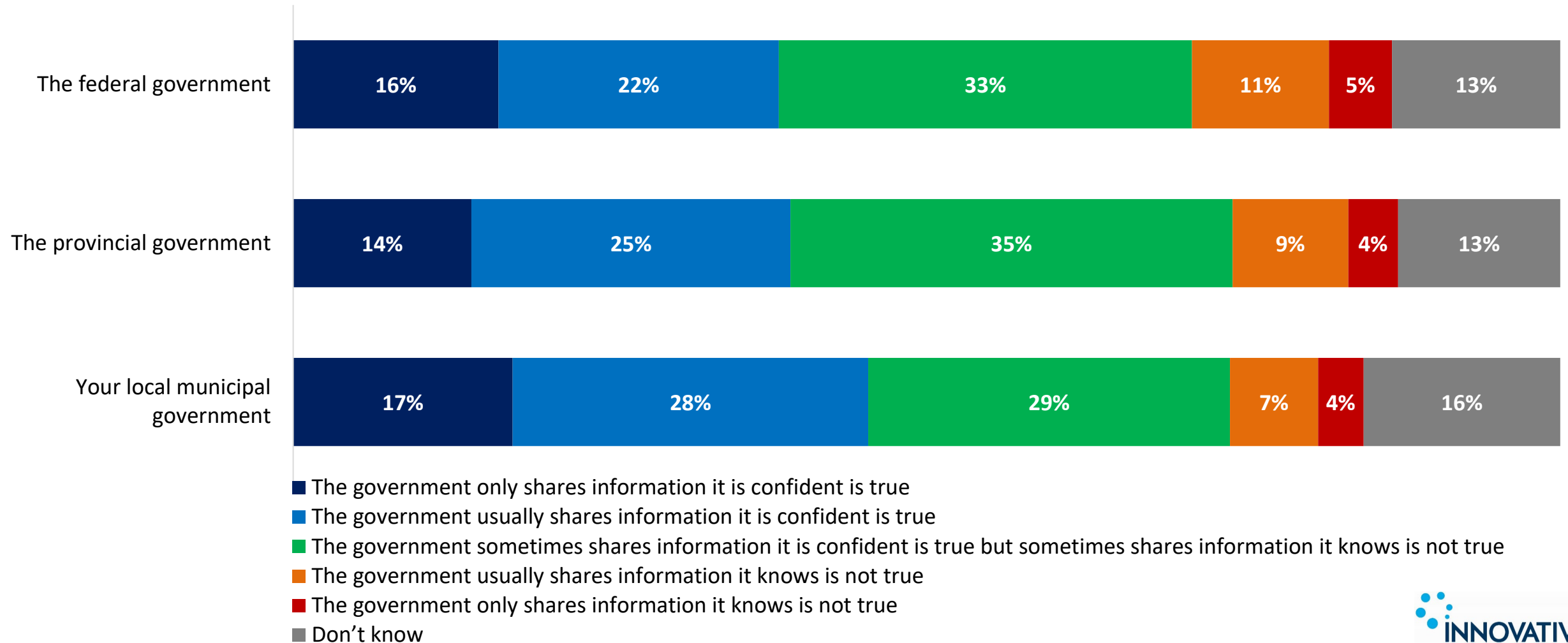
Government Information Truthfulness

Truthful Information: Municipal gov'ts are believed to share the most truthful information, while the federal government shares the least



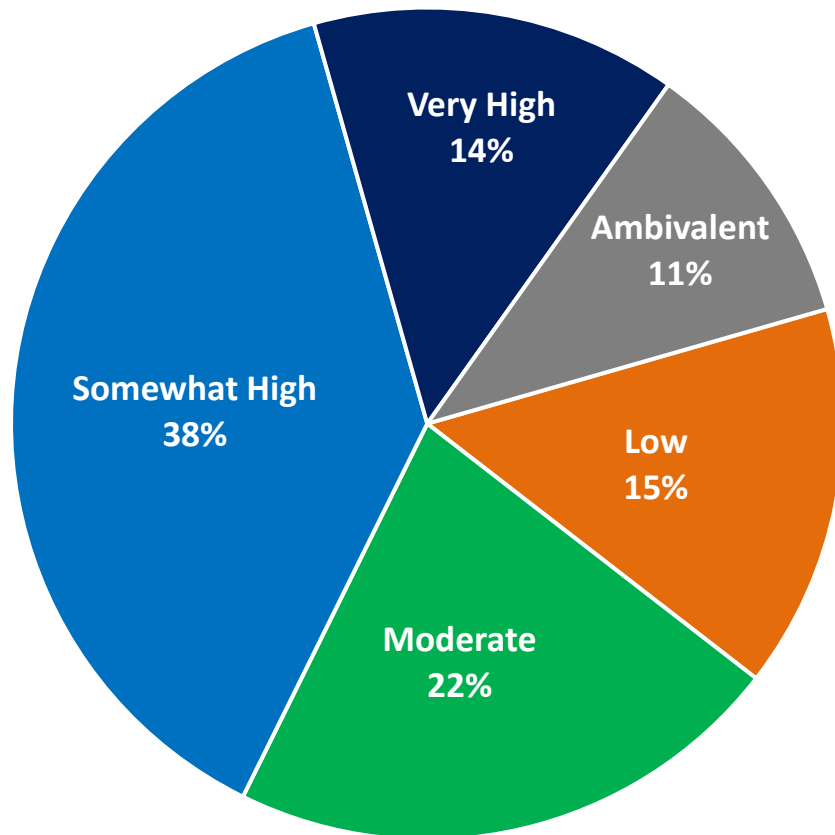
Different levels of government often share important information with the public. Thinking about each of the different levels of government, how truthful do you feel that information is?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



Democracy Trust Index: Over half (53%) have a High Democracy Trust index, followed by Moderate (22%), Low (15%), and Ambivalent (11%)

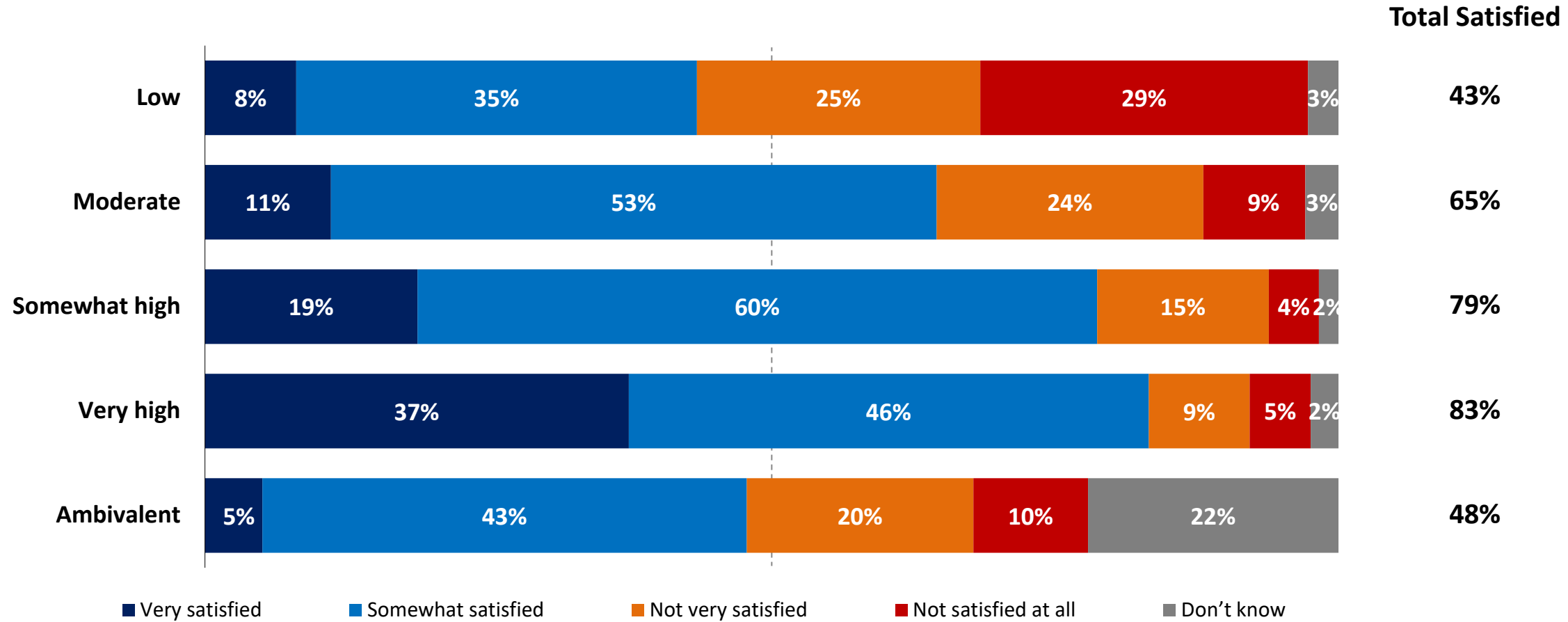
We created an index based on responses to this question: Different levels of government often share important information with the public. Thinking about each of the different levels of government, how truthful do you feel that information is?



Indices	Description
Low	On average these respondents think that governments share information they know is not true
Moderate	On average these respondents think that governments share both information that they know is true and untrue
Somewhat High	On average these respondents think that governments share somewhat more information that they know is true than information they know is untrue
Very High	On average these respondents think that governments mostly share information that they know is true
Ambivalent	These respondents said "Don't know" to all three questions about the information governments share

Democracy in Canada BY Democracy Trust Index: Those with higher Democracy Trust are more satisfied with the way it works

Q Generally speaking, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Canada?
[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

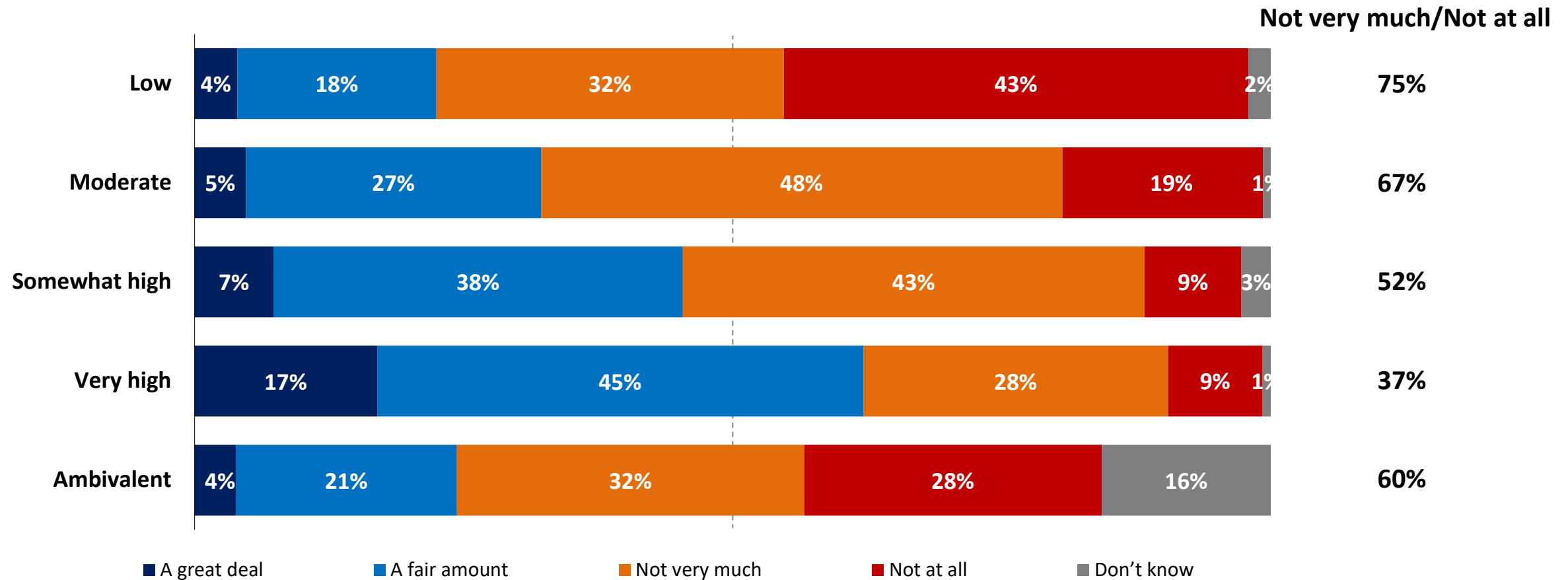


Government Decisions BY Democracy Trust Index: Those in the Low segment most likely to say the government doesn't consider their views



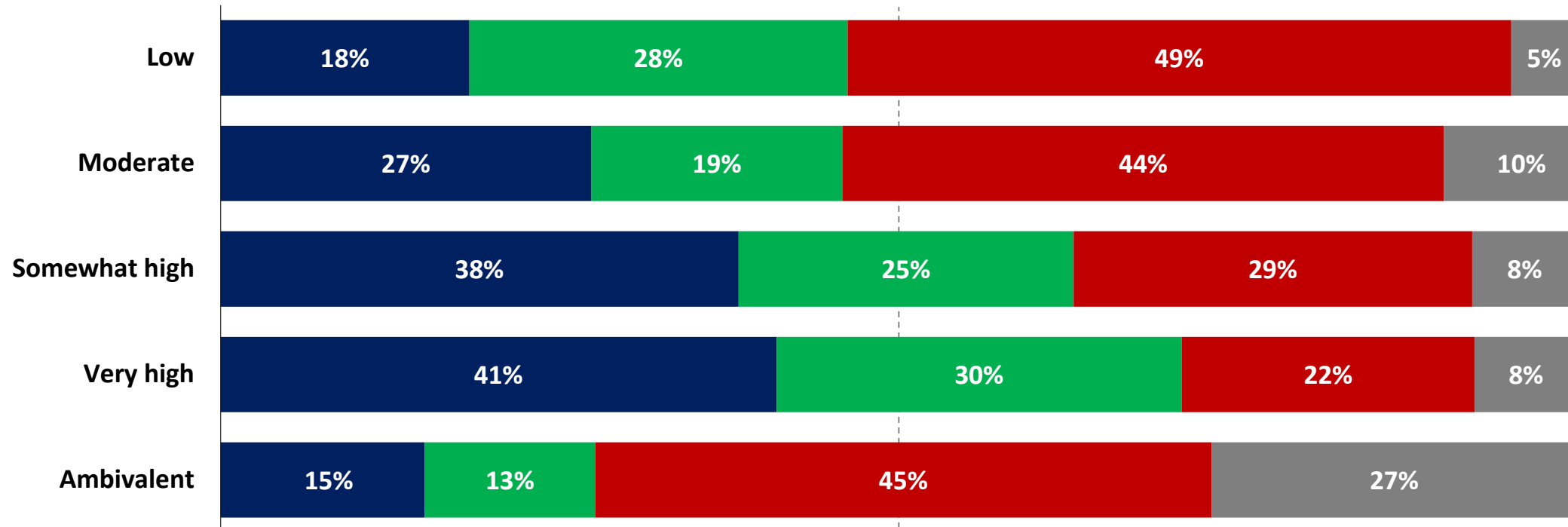
When government makes decisions, to what degree, if at all, do you think it considers the views of people like you?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



Political Process BY Democracy Trust Index: Most respondents high on trust index believe the best way is within the existing political system

Q Which statement best represents your view of the political process in Canada?
[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



- The best way to make a difference is to work within the existing political system
- The best way to make a difference is to get involved with political or protest movements outside the traditional politic
- It doesn't matter what you do, you can't really make a difference in politics
- Don't know

Compromise & Expert Opinion BY Democracy Trust Index: Higher agreement on 'Canadians should have the final say' among all groups



To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Democracy Trust Index

Total Agree	Low	Moderate	Somewhat High	Very High	Ambivalent
On certain issues, I like hearing expert opinion, but on others I think regular Canadians should have the final say	67%	70%	70%	80%	50%
Compromise and bargaining among politicians are necessary to make democracy work	37%	57%	68%	78%	34%
Most of the compromising that goes on in politics turns out to be bad for the public	70%	57%	44%	48%	42%
I'm not interested in expert opinions because listening to experts has created a lot of problems for this country	54%	33%	29%	32%	31%
I find politics so complicated that I'd rather rely on experts to decide key issues	27%	32%	34%	50%	24%
Politics is so boring to me that I'd rather leave it to other people	28%	33%	24%	36%	37%

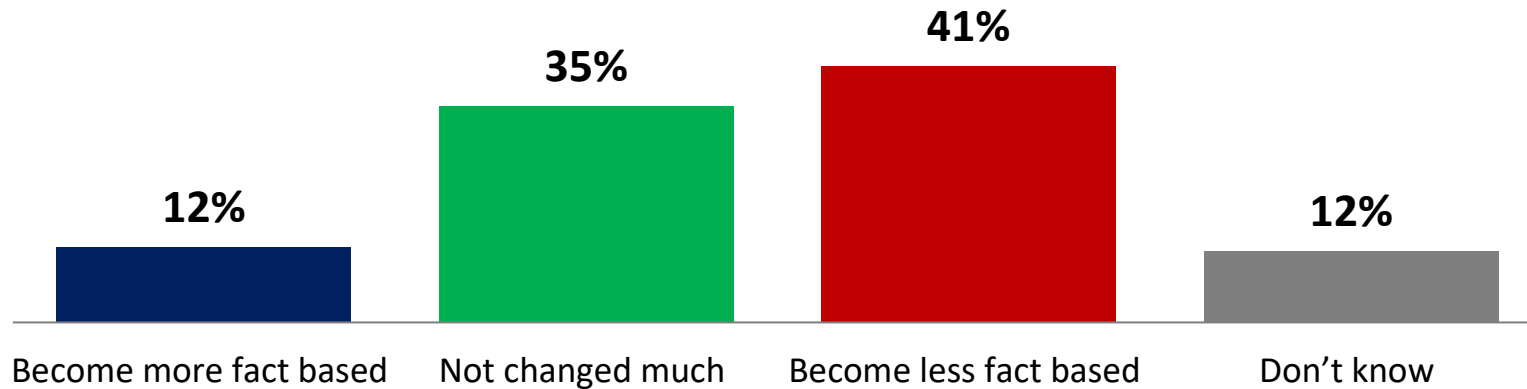
Social Media and Civil Discourse

Fact Based: 2-in-5 (41%) say that civil discourse has become less fact based; higher among older respondents (47%)



Over the last several years would you say the tone and nature of civil discourse in this country has...

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



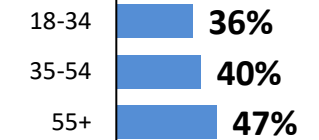
Segmentation

Those who say 'Less fact based'

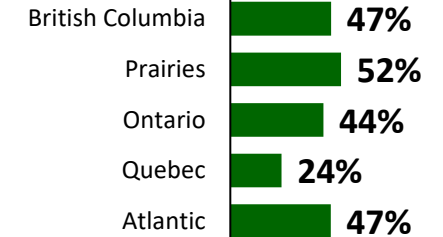
Gender



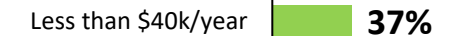
Age



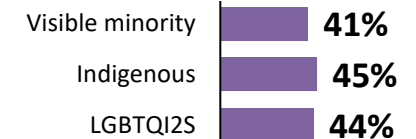
Region



Income



Group Membership



Democracy Engagement

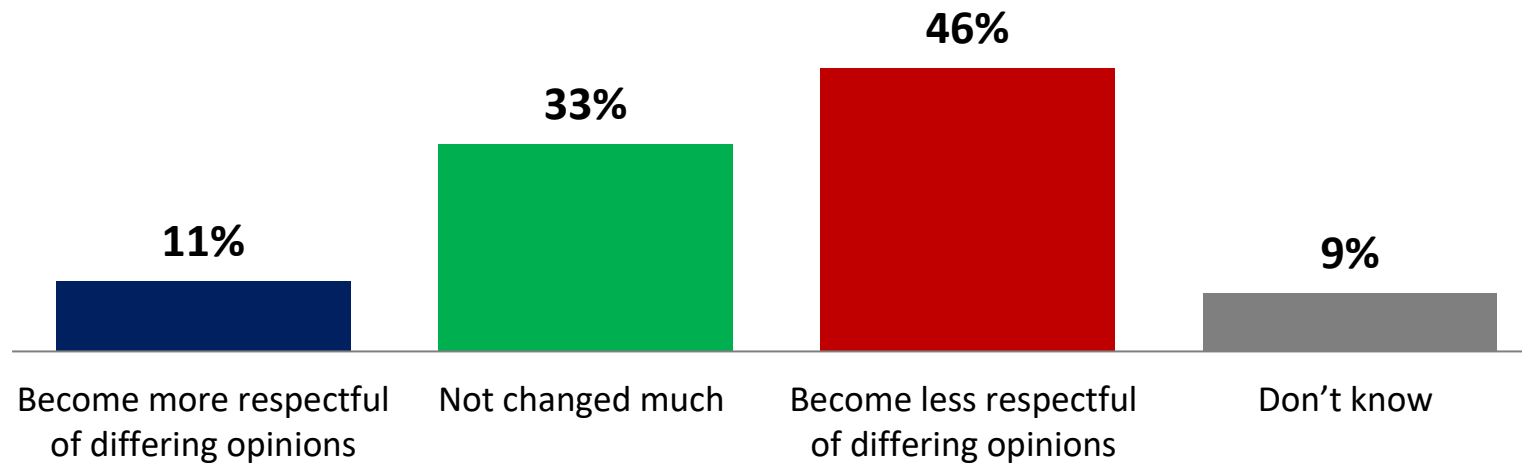


Respecting Opinions: Nearly half (46%) of those polled believe that civil discourse has become less respectful of differing opinions



Over the last several years would you say the tone and nature of civil discourse in this country has...

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



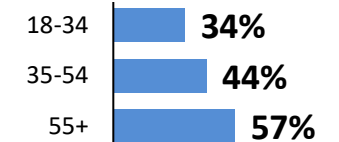
Segmentation

Those who say 'Less respectful'

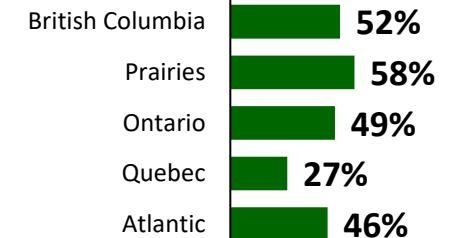
Gender



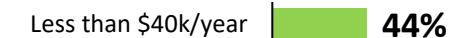
Age



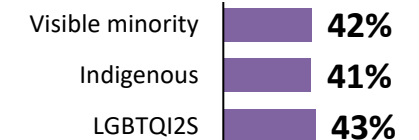
Region



Income



Group Membership



Democracy Engagement

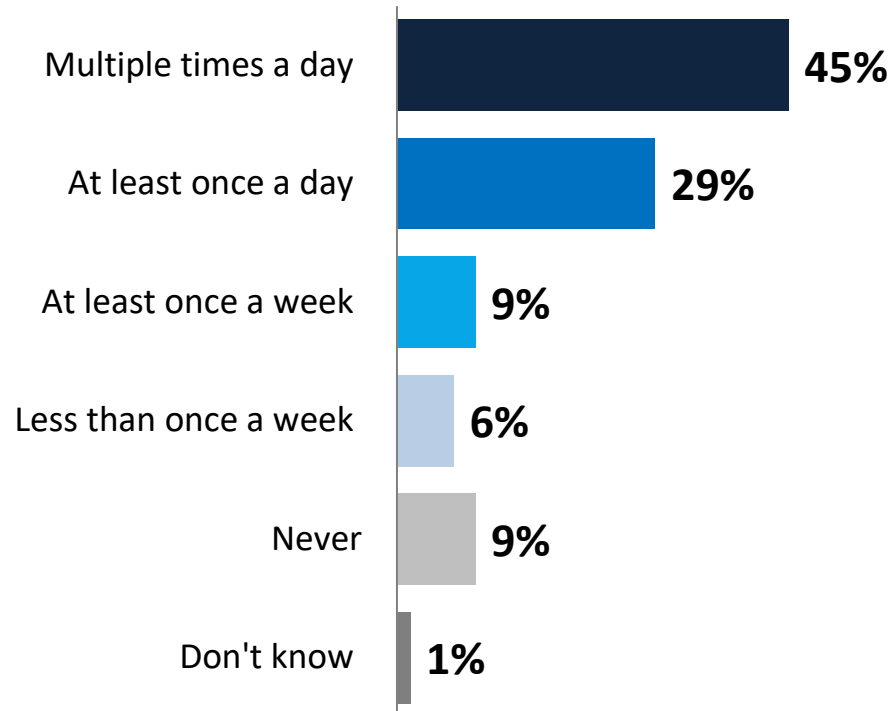


Social Media Usage: Nealy half (45%) use any type of social media platform multiple times a day; Facebook most popular for finding info



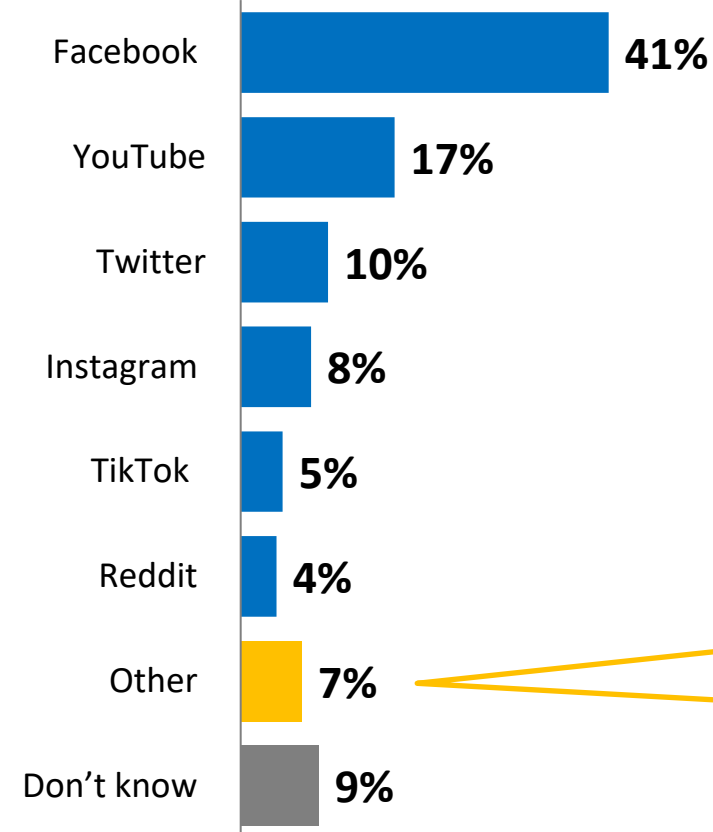
How often do you use any type of social media platform?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



And which social media platform do you use the most when you are looking for information about political issues and events?

[Asked of all respondents who use social media platforms, n=1,075]

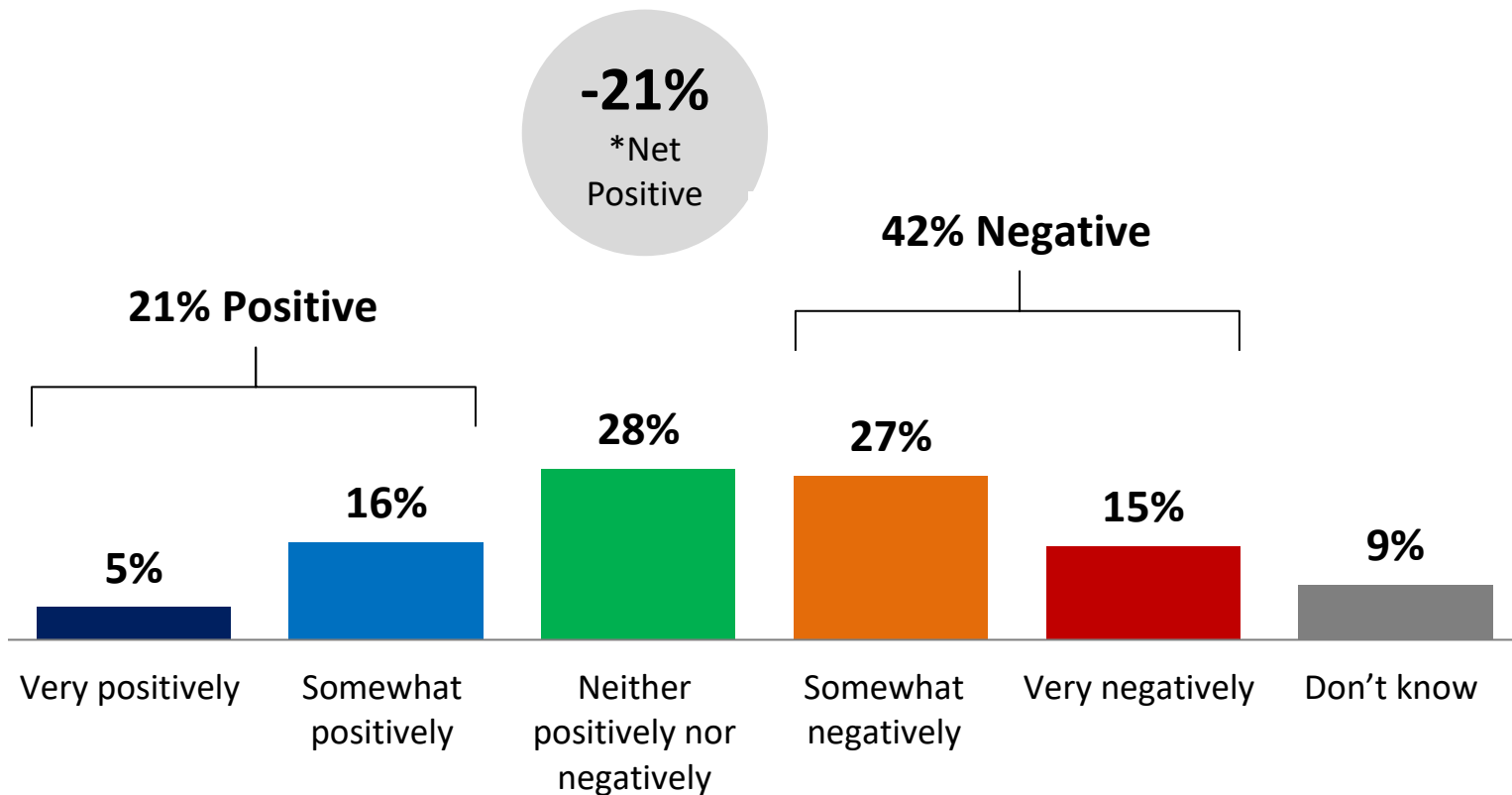


Top Examples:

- News Media Apps
- Snapchat Stories
- LinkedIn
- Rumble

Social Media Impact: Two-in-five (42%) of Canadians think that social media negatively impacts civil discourse

Q In what way, if at all, do you think social media impacts civil discourse in Canada?
 [Asked of all respondents who use social media platforms, n=1,200]



*Net positive= (total positive) – (total negative)

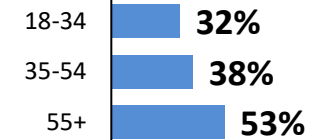
Segmentation

Those who say 'Negatively'

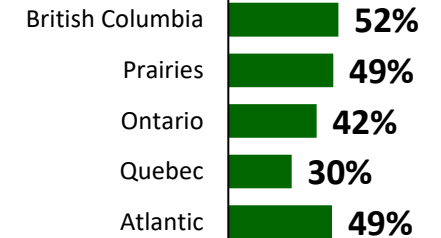
Gender



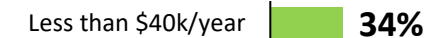
Age



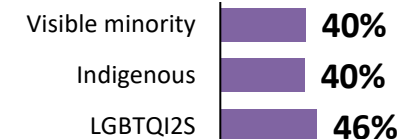
Region



Income



Group Membership



Democracy Engagement



Social Media Impact BY Democratic Participation: Engaged Canadians feel most strongly that social media negatively impacts civil discourse



In what way, if at all, do you think social media impacts civil discourse in Canada? BY Democratic Participation Segments

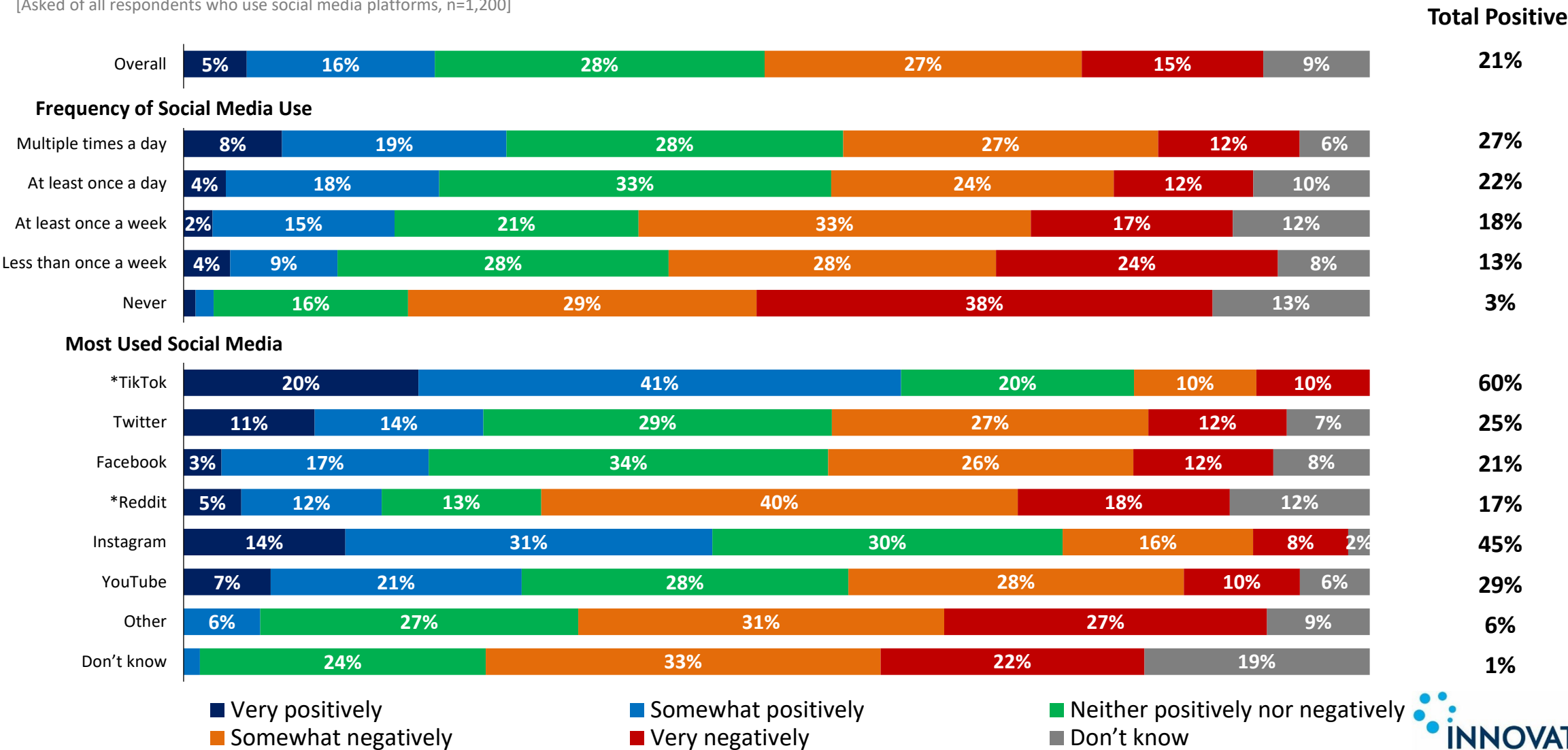
[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Democratic Participation Segments

	Engaged	Populist	Populist w/ Expert Input	Deferential
Positive (Very + Somewhat)	19%	32%	23%	16%
Total Negative (Very + Somewhat)	53%	34%	38%	36%
NET Positive (Positive – Negative)	-34%	-2%	-15%	-21%
Don't know	4%	7%	10%	15%

Social Media Impact: TikTok and Instagram users are most likely to say they think social media impacts civil discourse positively

Q In what way, if at all, do you think social media impacts civil discourse in Canada?
 [Asked of all respondents who use social media platforms, n=1,200]



* Note: Small 'n' size (n<60) for 'Reddit' and 'TikTok'. Approach results with caution.



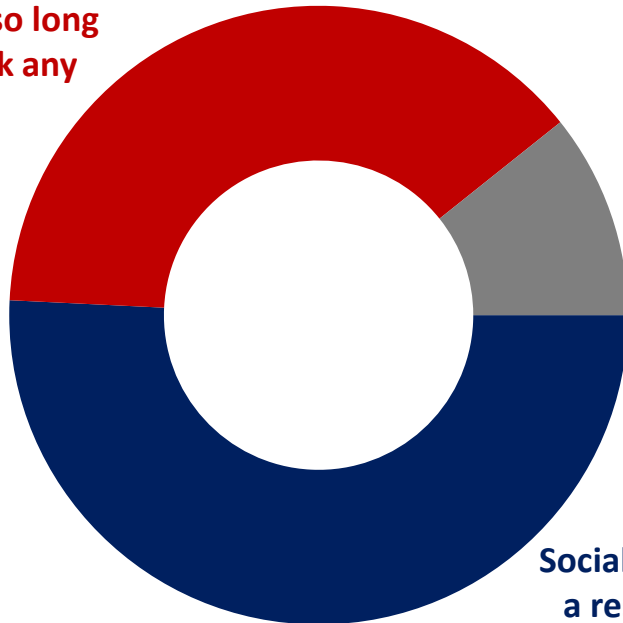
Content on Social Media: Half (51%) believe that social media companies have a responsibility to remove offensive content



Thinking about the content posted on social media, which comes closer to your own point-of-view?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Social media users have the right to say and post any content they wish, so long as they don't break any laws
39%



Social media companies have a responsibility to identify and remove offensive content from their platforms
51%

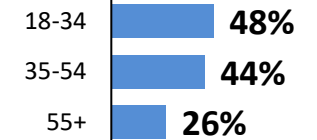
Segmentation

Those who say 'Users have the right to say and post any content'

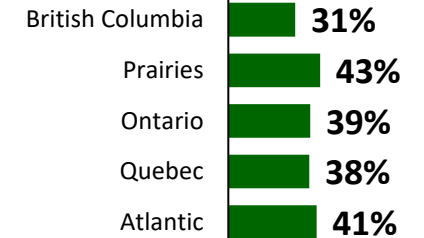
Gender



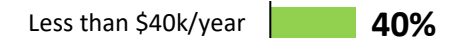
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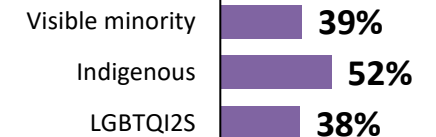
Region



Income



Group Membership



Democracy Engagement



Content on Social Media BY Democratic Participation: Half of Populists w/Expert Input feel social media users can post any content they wish



Thinking about the content posted on social media, which comes closer to your own point-of-view? BY Democratic Participation Segments
 [Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Democratic Participation Segments

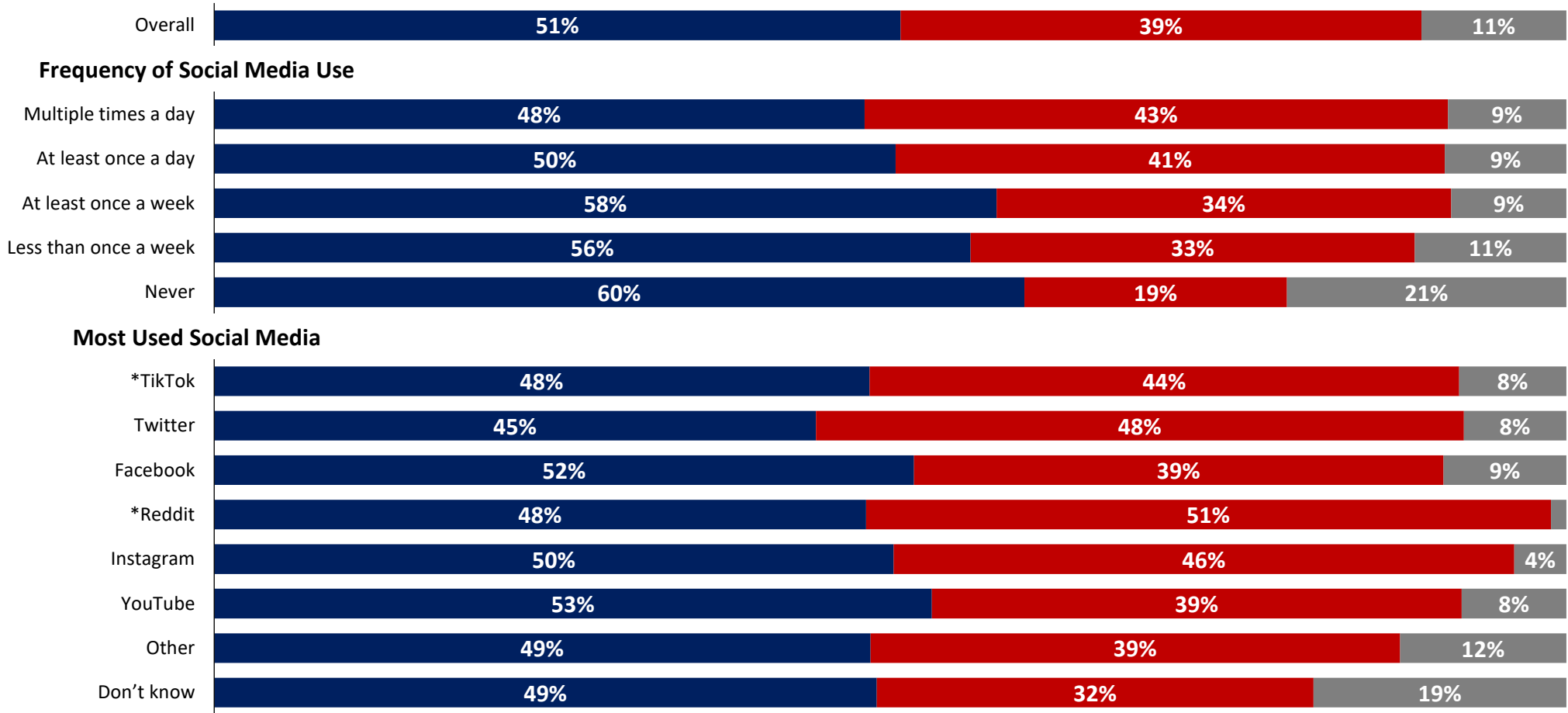
	Engaged	Populist	Populist w/ Expert Input	Deferential
Social media companies have a responsibility to identify and remove offensive content from their platforms	61%	42%	42%	50%
Social media users have the right to say and post any content they wish, so long as they don't break any laws	36%	45%	49%	30%
Don't know	3%	12%	9%	20%

Content on Social Media: Frequent social media users are more likely to say they have the right to say and post anything they wish



Thinking about the content posted on social media, which comes closer to your own point-of-view?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



- Social media companies have a responsibility to identify and remove offensive content from their platforms
- Social media users have the right to say and post any content they wish, so long as they don't break any laws
- Don't know

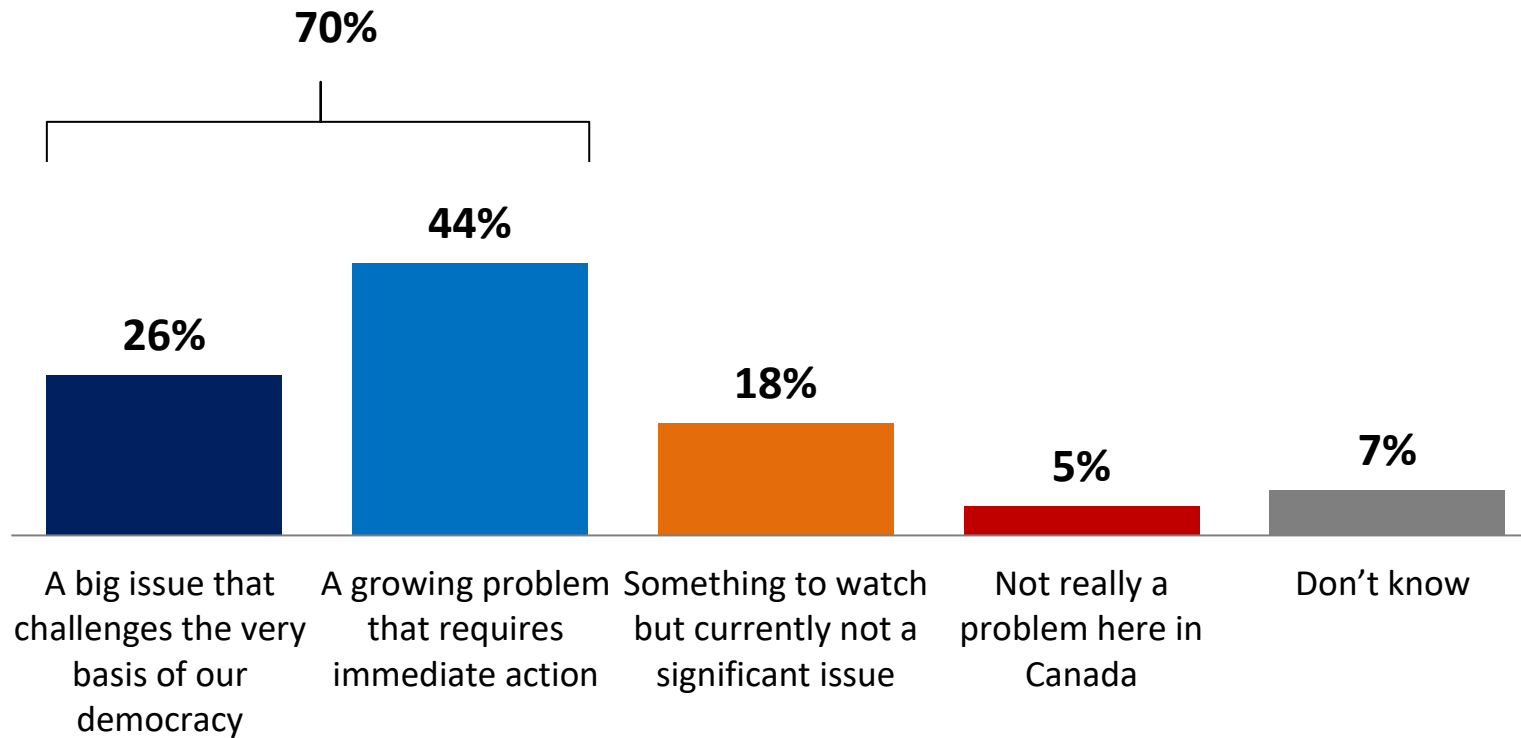
* Note: Small 'n' size (n<60) for 'Reddit' and 'TikTok'. Approach results with caution.

Spread of Disinformation: Seven-in-ten (70%) believe that disinformation via social media is a growing or large problem



How big a problem is the use of social media to spread disinformation, information made intentionally to deceive, here in Canada?

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



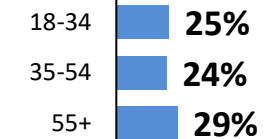
Segmentation

Those who say 'Big Issue'

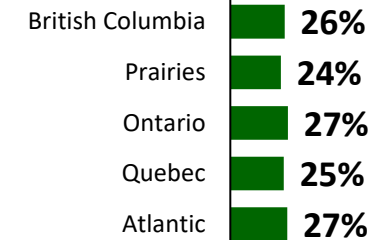
Gender



Age



Region



Income



Group Membership



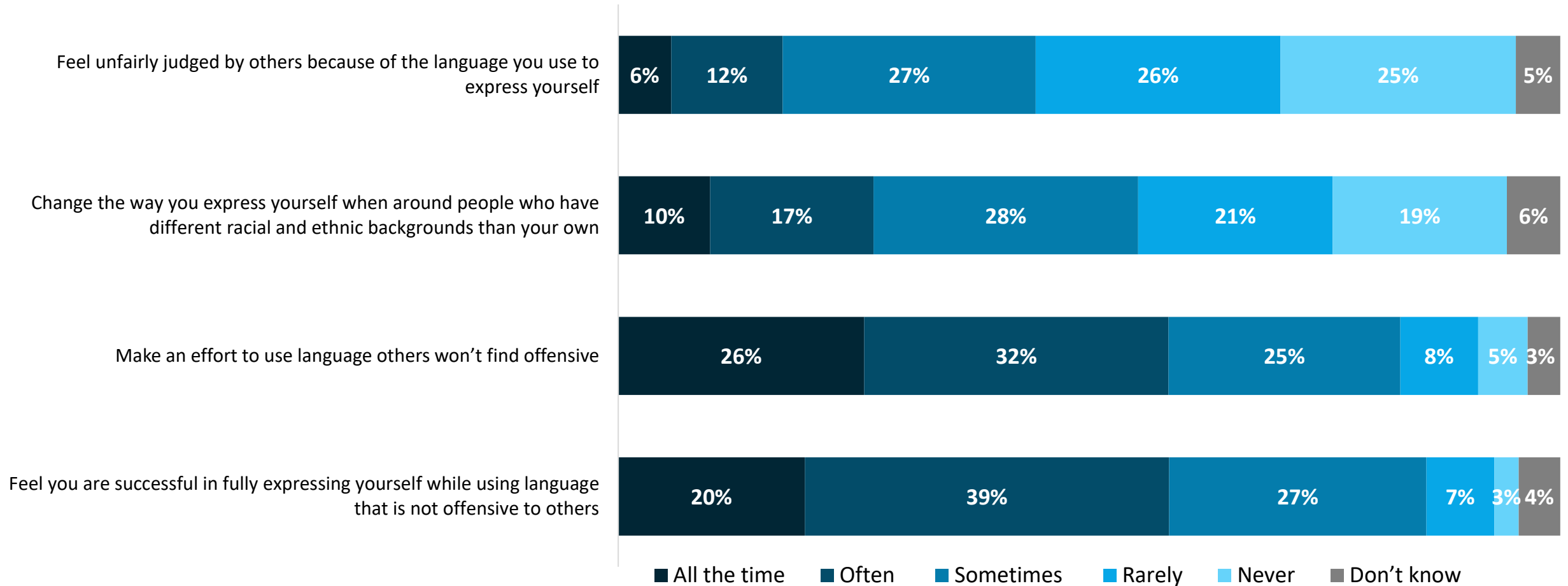
Democracy Engagement



Civil Discourse Engagement

Civil Discourse Engagement: 3-in-5 (58%) believe they are successful in fully expressing themselves without using offensive language

Q When talking to others, how often do you do/feel each of the following...
[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]



Civil Discourse Engagement BY Democratic Participation: 55% of Populists try to use inoffensive language whilst expressing themselves



When talking to others, how often do you do/feel each of the following... BY Democratic Participation Segments

[Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

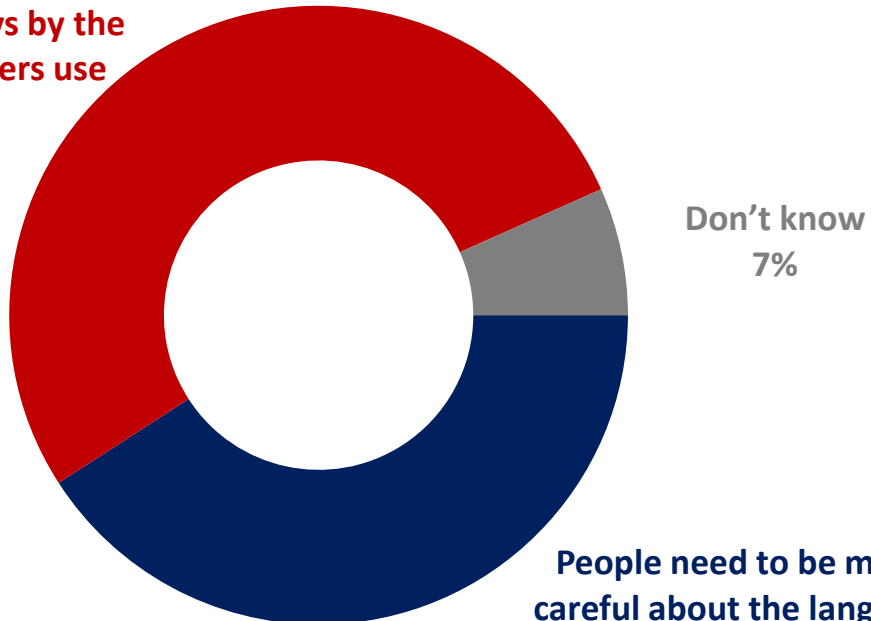
Democratic Participation Segments

All the time + Often	Engaged	Populist	Populist w/ Expert Input	Deferential
Feel unfairly judged by others because of the language you use to express yourself	13%	26%	20%	16%
Change the way you express yourself when around people who have different racial and ethnic backgrounds than your own	24%	37%	26%	26%
Make an effort to use language others won't find offensive	66%	55%	55%	54%
Feel you are successful in fully expressing yourself while using language that is not offensive to others	65%	58%	57%	52%

Offensive Discourse: Half (52%) believe too many people are easily offended by others' language; highest among Indigenous group (66%)

Q Which statement comes closer to your own view—even if neither is exactly right?
 [Asked of all respondents, n=1,200]

Too many people are easily offended these days by the language that others use
52%



People need to be more careful about the language they use to avoid offending people
41%

Segmentation

Those who say 'Too many easily offended'

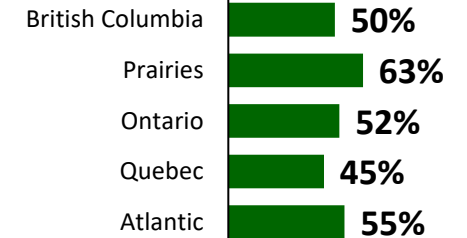
Gender



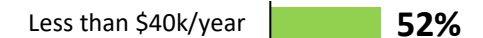
Age



Region



Income



Group Membership



Democracy Engagement



Appendix: Methodology and Demographics

Survey Methodology

Innovative Research Group (**INNOVATIVE**) was commissioned by the Provocation Ideas Festival (PIF) to conduct an online survey to identify opinions and attitudes towards a variety of provocative and important issues.



Method: This online survey was conducted using Lucid, a leading provider of online sample. Each survey is administered to a series of randomly selected samples from the panel and weighted to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. More details about Lucid can be found [here](#).

Sample Size: n=1,391 Canadians, 18 years or older. The results are **weighted to n=1,200** based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: May 15th to May 18th, 2022

Weighting: Results are weighted by age, gender, and region to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual population according to Census data.

Margin of Error: This is a representative sample. However, since the online survey was not a random probability based sample, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Statements about margins of sampling error or population estimates do not apply to most online panels.

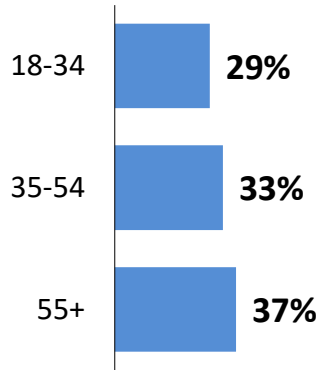
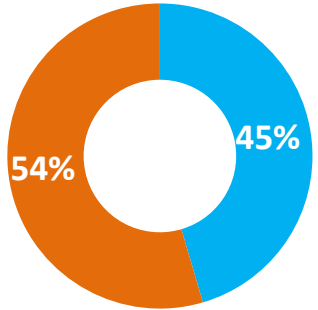
Full disclosure standards can be found [here](#).

Note: *Graphs may not always total 100% due to rounding values rather than any error in data. Sums are added before rounding numbers.*

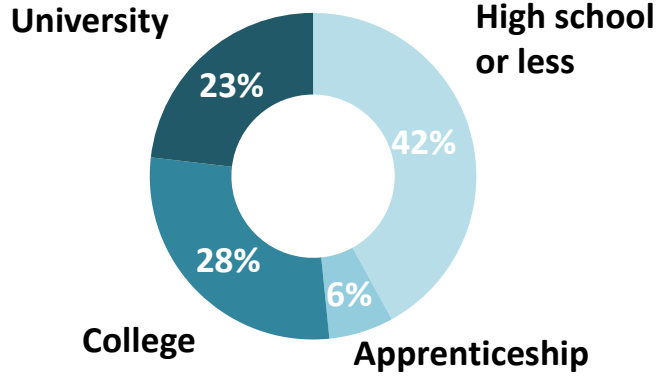
Demographics

Gender & Age

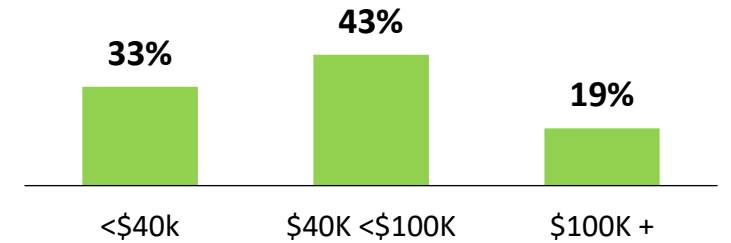
Women Men



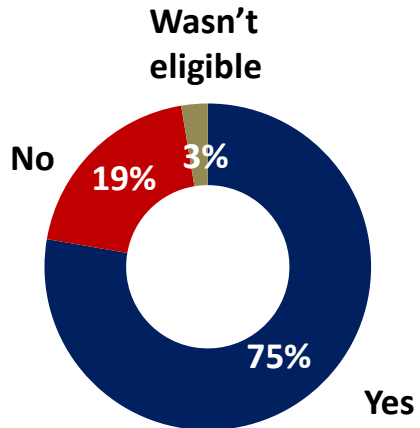
Education



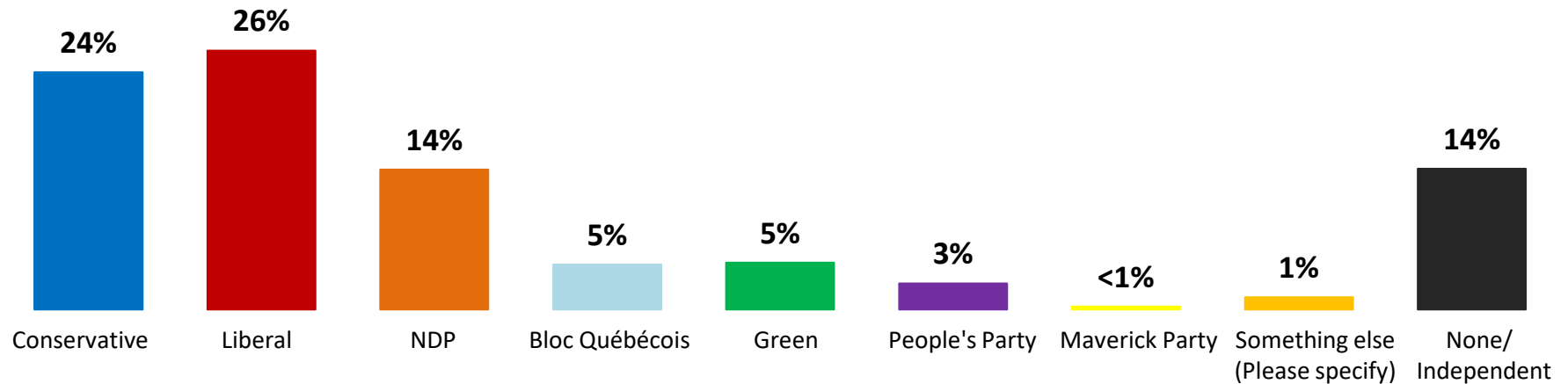
Household Income



Vote in 2021 Election



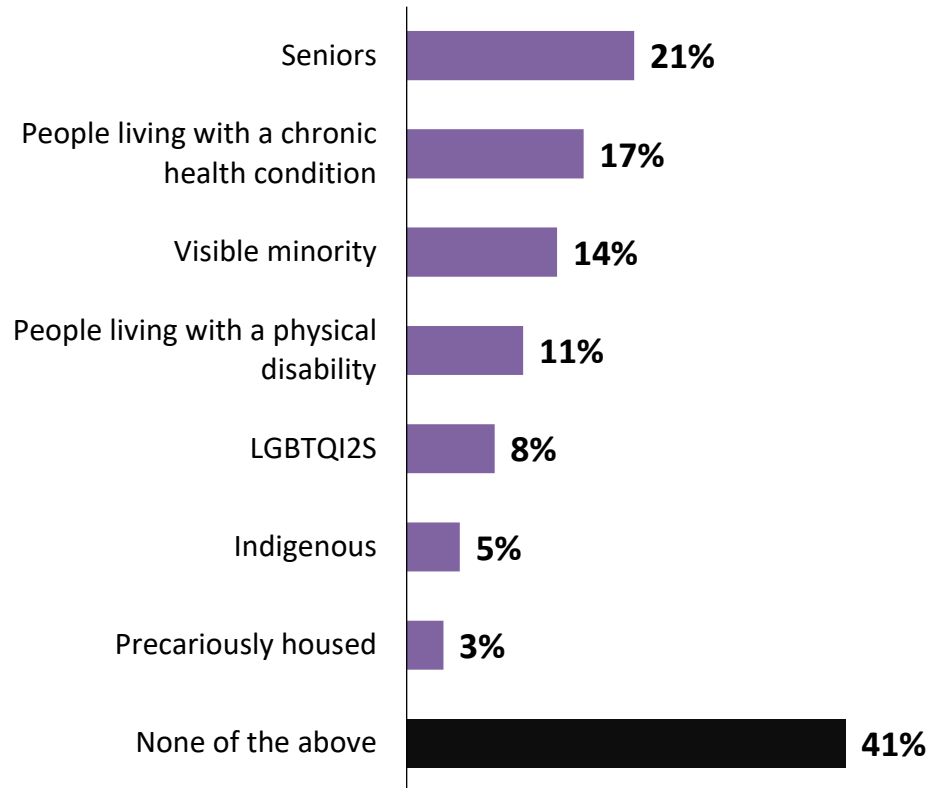
Federal Party ID



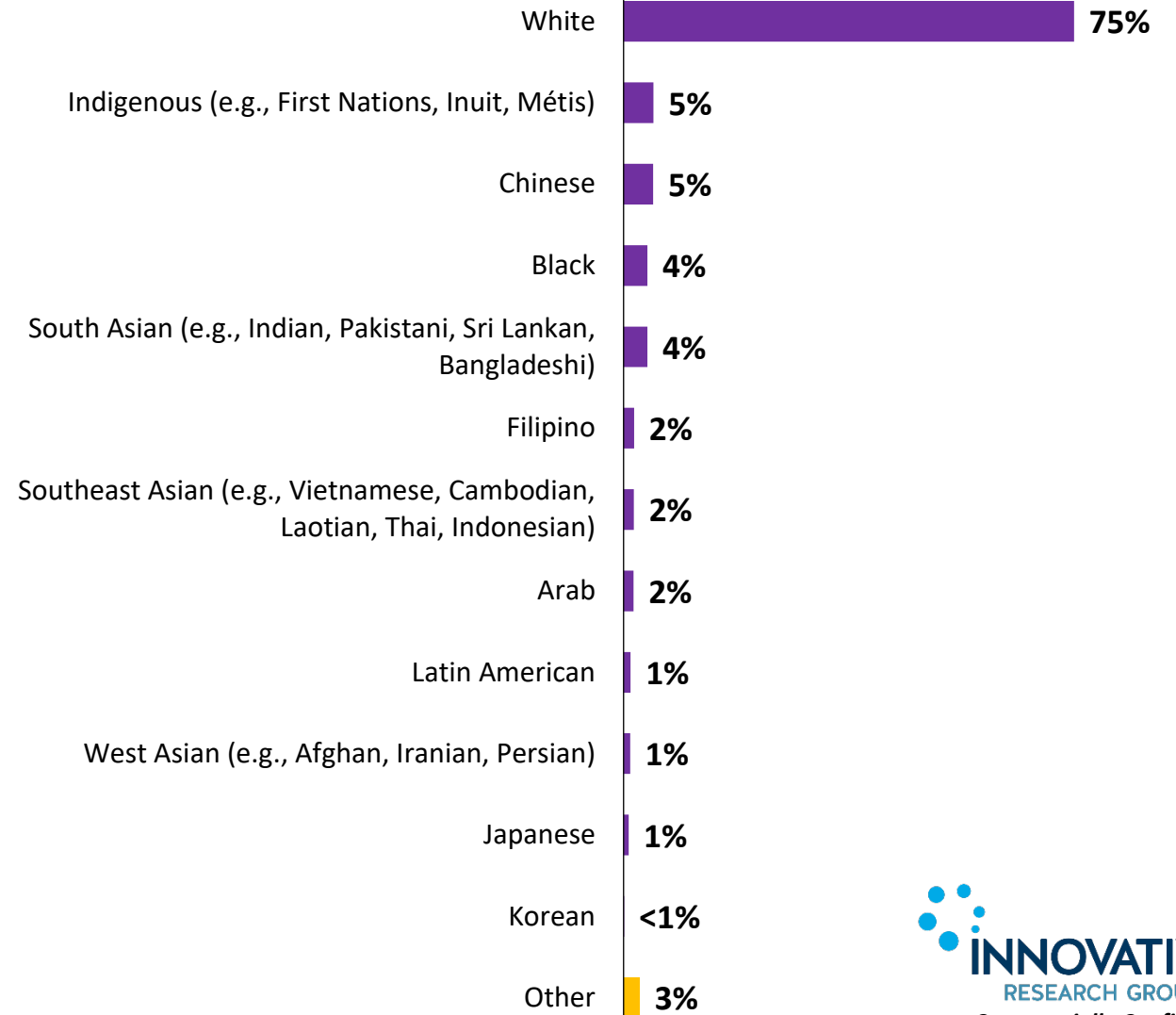
Note: "Don't know" and "Prefer not to say" not shown.

Demographics: *Identity & Diversity*

Group Membership



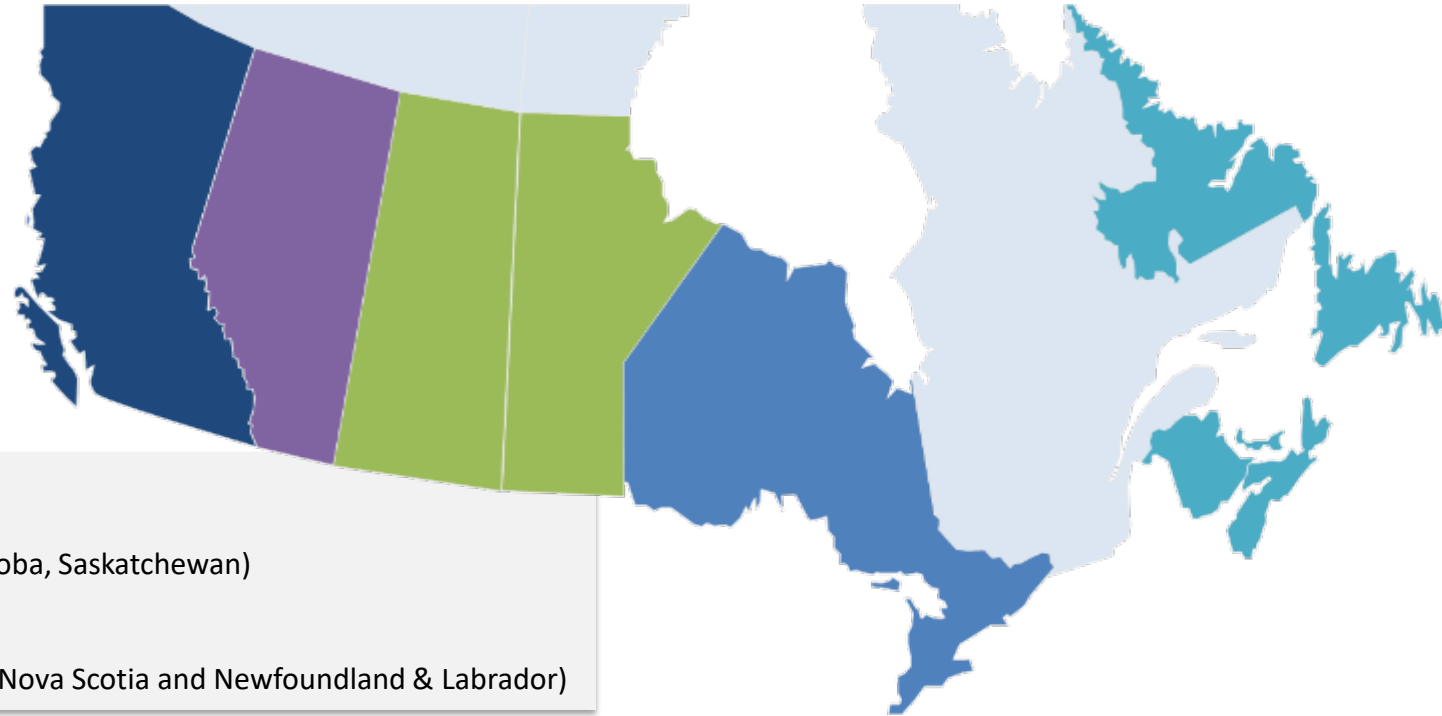
Ethnicity



Note: "Don't know" and "Prefer not to say" not shown.

Demographics: *Regional Segmentation*

Sample
n=1,200



Regional groupings include:

- British Columbia (Yukon)
- Prairie Region (Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan)
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Atlantic (PEI; New Brunswick; Nova Scotia and Newfoundland & Labrador)

	Total	BC	AB	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic
Unweighted (n)	1,391	193	156	99	556	259	128
Unweighted (%)	100%	13.9%	11.2%	7.1%	40%	18.6%	9.2%
Weighted (n)	1,200	163	135	78	461	282	82
Weighted (%)	100%	13.6%	11.2%	6.5%	38.4%	23.5%	6.8%

* In the analysis Alberta and Prairies are grouped together as "Prairies"



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