



## NATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY

***Canadians have major concerns about the state of the environment, national unity, and social inequality in year 2020***

***Also, a strong belief that Canada will be a more tolerant society and will have greater influence in world affairs by 2020***

**6:00 AM, Jun. 30, 2006** – On the eve of the country's 139<sup>th</sup> birthday, Canadians are generally optimistic in their outlook and think Canada will become a more tolerant and caring society in the future and increase, considerably, its influence on the world stage.

However, when asked to imagine what Canada will look like in the year 2020, Canadians have major concerns about the environment, national unity and growing social inequality. Almost one quarter of Canadians volunteered that global warming will be the single greatest challenge facing the country in the year 2020. By way of comparison, only one in ten Canadians rank healthcare as the number one challenge that will confront Canada in 2020. When it comes to the future of the federation, one in three Canadians believe that Quebec will have separated by the year 2020. The country is also concerned about growing wealth disparities. Fully eight in ten Canadians think that the gap between rich and poor will have widened in Canada by 2020.

These are some of the findings of a new national telephone survey commissioned by the **Dominion Institute** to launch ***Canada in 2020***: a four month public dialogue to discover what Canadians' think will be the single most important issue facing the country in the year 2020 (see page 5 for more information). **Canada in 2020** is an initiative of the non-partisan Dominion Institute in association with **La Presse**, **The Toronto Star** and **CBC News**. For this survey the **Innovative Research Group** polled 1,007 randomly selected Canadians. The survey was conducted by telephone between June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

## **Three-quarters believe global warming will be greatest crisis facing mankind by the year 2020**

Almost three-quarter (72%) of Canadians agreed with the statement that “global warming will have become the greatest crisis facing mankind by the year 2020”. When prompted to identify the single greatest challenge facing Canada in the year 2020 almost one quarter (23%) of respondents cited the environment or global warming.

Albertans (57%) are the least likely to agree that global warming will be the greatest crisis facing mankind. This compares to at least 70% of respondents in each of the other regions. Women (75%) are more likely to share this position than are men (69%).

On a more positive note, while most view global warming as becoming the greatest crisis facing man, close to seven-in-ten (68%) say that “energy conservation and new technologies will have made the environment better” by the year 2020.

The view that conservation and new technologies will make the environment better is shared by seven-in-ten British Columbia (72%) and Ontario (71%) residents compared to just six-in-ten (60%) of those in Quebec. The most optimistic Canadians on this front are those with a college (75%) or high school or less (73%) education in comparison to those with a university degree (63%) or a post-graduate degree (57%).

## **Close to one-third believe Quebec will separate by 2020**

One of the major national issues that has preoccupied Canadians since the time of Confederation has been the country’s national unity. Looking to Canada’s future, concerns about national unity are not likely to go away as close to one-quarter (23%) of Canadians believe that “the province of Quebec will have separated” by 2020.

As would be expected, residents of Quebec (31%) are the most likely to agree that Quebec will have separated by 2020. This compares to the views of Atlantic Canadians (24%), Albertans (22%), Ontarians (21%), residents of Manitoba/Saskatchewan (17%) and British Columbia (16%). This position is also more likely to be held by Canadians under 45 years of age (27%) than by those 45 and older (19%).

## **Eight-in-ten believe gap between rich and poor will widen**

Looking at some domestic issues, according to close to eight-in-ten (78%) Canadians, “the gap between the rich and the poor will have widened” by 2020, while less than one-in-five (17%) disagrees. However, almost two-thirds (63%) believe “Canada will be a more tolerant and caring society” by 2020.

Interestingly, those in middle income households, that is between \$60,000 and \$80,000 (86%), are the most likely to believe the gap between rich and poor Canadians will widen, followed by those in the highest income bracket (\$100,000+: 81%); this compares to the views of those making less than \$60,000 annually (76%), and those with household incomes of between \$80,000 and \$100,000 (73%). Canadians with a post-secondary education (81%) are also more likely to concur with this viewpoint than are current students (73%) or those with just a high school diploma or less education (73%).

### **Just one-in-five believes terrorism will no longer be a threat to Canada by 2020; a third think troops will still be in Afghanistan**

When it comes to one of the most important current issues face the world, just one-in-five (22%) Canadians believes that “global terrorism will no longer be a threat to Canadian society”, while seven-in-ten (70%) disagree.

Regionally, this belief is strongest in Ontario (25%) and British Columbia (24%), followed by Alberta (20%), Quebec (20%), Atlantic Canada (18%) and finally, Manitoba/Saskatchewan (14%). This position is also more likely to be held by those 55 years of age and older (25%) than by those 45 to 54 (20%) or 35 to 44 (18%). Canadians with a high school diploma or less education (27%) are more likely to concur with this assessment than are those with a university (20%) or college (16%) education.

When it comes to Canada’s current military commitment to the War on Terrorism, that is the Canadian Forces deployment to Afghanistan, a third of (33%) Canadians agree with the statement “Canadian troops will still be on the ground in Afghanistan in 2020”.

There also appears to be a strong age gap on this topic, with just under half (45%) of those 18 to 34 agreeing that a significant contingent of Canadian troops will still be in Afghanistan in 2020, compared to just three-in-ten (29%) of those 35 to 54 and one-quarter (25%) of older Canadians. One other striking difference in position is that just one-in-ten (10%) Canadians with a post-graduate degree agrees Canadian troops will still be in Afghanistan in 2020 compared to approximately one-third of those with lower levels of education and over two-fifths (44%) of current students.

### **Half of Canadians believe that the country’s foreign policy will be identical to the U.S. and that a global flu pandemic will occur by 2020**

One view for this optimistic outlook regarding Canada’s expended influence, is that close to half (48%) say “there will be little difference between Canadian and American foreign policy” by the year 2020.

Regionally, there is little difference in positions regarding this suggestion. The one striking difference in viewpoint is found among education groups. Canadians with a high school diploma or less education (59%) are the most likely to concur with this proposition, followed by those with a college education (50%), compared to the position of Canadians with a post-graduate degree (41%) and a bachelor's degree (40%).

After having watched the effects of SARS and tracked the spread of avian flu, half (51%) of Canadians say that, by the year 2020, "there will have been a world-wide flu pandemic." One-in-three (35%) disagrees with this prognosis.

### **However, Canadians are also optimistic when it comes to breakthroughs and accomplishments Canada could achieve by 2020**

While Canadians may have serious concerns about the future of the country when it comes to global warming, national unity, social justice, and international affairs they also believe that Canada is posed to make important breakthroughs and achieve new collective accomplishments by the year 2020.

Fully two-thirds of Canadians think Canada will be a more tolerant and caring society by the year 2020. Those in the highest household income bracket (52%) are less likely than other Canadians to hold this position as are Canadians 45 and older (only 19%). In contrast, one quarter Canadians under 45 years of age think Canada will be a more tolerant and caring society by the year 2020.

Regionally, residents of British Columbia (70%), Alberta (66%), and Quebec (64%) are the most likely to share this viewpoint, followed by those in Atlantic Canada (61%) and Ontario (60%). Residents of Manitoba and Saskatchewan (50%) are least likely to believe this will be the case by the year 2020.

Further illustrating their optimistic viewpoint, two-thirds (67%) of Canadians say that "a cure for breast cancer will have been discovered" by 2020, compared to 25% who disagree. Looked at from a gender perspective, women (70%) are more optimistic than are men (63%) regarding a cure for breast cancer being discovered by the year 2020.

Looking at how Canadians see Canada's place in the world, two-thirds (66%) believe "Canada's influence in international affairs will have increased considerably" by 2020, while one-quarter (24%) disagrees.

Finally, when asked the eternal question about a glass filled half way, eight-in-ten (82%) Canadians see it as half full, while only 14 per cent believe it is half empty.

## ***About this survey***

**Innovative Research Group**, Inc. ([www.innovativeresearch.ca](http://www.innovativeresearch.ca)), a Toronto-based research firm, was commissioned to survey 1,007 randomly selected Canadians. The survey was conducted between Thursday June 15<sup>th</sup> and Sunday June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 and has a margin of error of  $\pm 3.1\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

**Canada in 2020** ([www.twenty-twenty.ca](http://www.twenty-twenty.ca)) is a four month public dialogue initiated by The Dominion Institute to discover what Canadians think will be the single most important issue facing the country in the year 2020. The Institute has brought together twenty leading commentators from across Canada to write essays on the single issue or event that they think could transform Canada by the year 2020. The essays will be published in *La Presse* and *The Toronto Star* over four months starting July 1. CBC News will take the discussion started in both papers to a national audience by featuring interviews, commentary, and mini-documentaries on the ideas raised by each of the twenty contributing authors. The public will be encouraged to add its voice to the debate through the project's website and a \$2020 essay contest. Canada in 2020 will conclude in December 2006 with a one-day citizens' symposium in Ottawa.

**The Dominion Institute** ([www.dominion.ca](http://www.dominion.ca)) was established in 1997 by a group of young professionals concerned about the erosion of a common memory in Canada. In the space of eight short years, the Institute has had a far-reaching impact on Canadians' knowledge and perceptions of their history and shared citizenship, through groundbreaking public opinion research, high-profile internet, education and television programming, book publications, and meaningful curriculum reform. The Institute is a non-partisan organization and a federally registered charity (#873968176 RR0001).

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## ***Attribution***

In the first instance this survey should be identified as a "Canada in 2020/Dominion Institute survey conducted by Innovative Research Group". All subsequent mentions can be "Canada in 2020/Dominion Institute poll conducted by Innovative".

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## Full Survey Question Text

Q1. When looking at a glass of water filled half way, do you consider the glass to be...?

Half full	1
Half empty	2
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

Q2. What do you think will be the single greatest challenge facing Canada in the year 2020? [Open-ended]

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements? **By the year 2020** [randomize and read statements]

Strongly agree	1
Somewhat agree	2
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Somewhat disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5
Don't know	8 [VOLUNTEERED]
Refused	9 [VOLUNTEERED]

### Health

Q3. A cure for breast cancer will have been discovered

Q4. There will have been a worldwide flu pandemic

### Federalism

Q5. National unity in Canada will be stronger than ever before

Q6. The province of Quebec will have separated from Canada

### **Security & Terrorism**

Q7. Global terrorism will no longer be a threat to Canadian society

Q8. A significant number of Canadian troops will be deployed in Afghanistan

### **Environmental**

Q9. Energy conservation and new technologies will have made the environment better

Q10. Global warming will have become the greatest crisis facing mankind

### **Canada & The World**

Q11. Canada's influence in international affairs will have increased considerably

Q12. There will be little difference between Canadian and American foreign policy

### **Values**

Q13. Canada will be a more tolerant and caring society

Q14. The gap between the rich and poor will have widened