Daniel Friesen
December 11th, 2020

Presentation to the Executive Policy Committee
Regarding the Proposed 2021 City of Winnipeg Budget

The proposed 2021 budget is insufficient, disappointing, and without vision. It clearly shows that Mayor Bowman and council are uninterested and unwilling to listen to the concerns of constituents and take the steps needed to invest in services that constituents need most; steps that are crucial to improving the quality of life in our city. In short, this budget tells constituents that their priorities are not valued by this current municipal government. And that is a huge problem.

More people participated in the budget consultations last year than have ever done so before. It is clear Winnipeggers care deeply and want to have a say in how their tax dollars are being spent. The three most important services identified were medical response, community livability, and public transit. The three least important were golf services, parking, and the police. 50% of respondents marked the police as “not important” or “not important at all”.

Yet the big winners in this budget have been roads and the police. It is clear from this proposed budget that council has no desire to actually listen to constituents concerns and are content to stay the course with a status quo that is keeping our crime rate high, driving us further into insolvency, and making mockery after mockery and excuse after excuse of constituents who take time out of their busy lives to come to express their concerns to you.

I’ve consistently seen the majority of councillors when questioned about this budget dodge accountability and present misleading stats by selectively talking about the operating or capital budgets, passing off one time provincial or federal investment as investment on behalf of the city and and deflect criticisms of spending by appealing to differences in percentages rather than actual dollar figures. Stop manipulating the public through spin, stop claiming to hold one set of values and then voting in a way that goes totally counter to them.

A $50 million grant from the province that council is directed to invest into community services over three years is not real, long-term investment. Funds earmarked for transit from the federal government is not real, long-term investment. Stop wasting constituents’ time, by being deliberately deceptive. Listen to constituents who are telling you over and over that they want long-term investment in transit, bike lanes, sidewalk clearing, libraries, the arts, trees, and other life sustaining services, not roads and police.

Furthermore throughout presentations to the police board yesterday, councilors Mayes and Chambers continually criticized the data from the budget response survey saying that it was not a representative sample of Winnipeggers and couldn’t be considered statistically valid.

I would ask what the point of asking the public’s opinion is if council is just going to write it off as invalid if the results disagree with the status quo of funding roads and police and cutting everything else? We see this again and again, concerned citizens take time out of their lives, do research, put together presentations, experts freely give their time and

present their knowledge and council totally disregards all but the most tepid of progressive moves towards creating equity in our city.

A poll from Statistics Canada published November 2020, shows that just 29% of Winnipeggers feel police “ensure the safety of the citizens in the area". Councilor Mayes yesterday also talked about the generational gap in the perceived helpfulness or harmfulness of police as shown in a recent survey done by the city. This is backed up by a recent Angus Reid poll which shows that Canadians 45 and older are relatively uncritical of the police, and that favourability among 18 to 34-year-olds is considerably lower. This same poll noted that Canadians 54 years and older are far less likely to have had direct experience with police over the past five years. Meanwhile, three-quarters of 18 to 34-year-olds have had interactions with police.

What we see here is that one group’s opinion is backed up by a perception, a feeling, an assumption, and the other group’s opinion is backed up in large part by lived experiences. The prevailing opinion among experts, sociologists, criminologists, ect, would back up the latter experienced based opinion, and fact based on extensive research, that police do not create safety. If this is all not considered valid data to council, then I don’t know what could be. If you can stand to ignore this data, the overwhelming opinion of experts, and the lived experience of BIPOC and poor people in our city, then it is quite clear that council is not budgeting based on evidence and are simply making a deliberate choice to value certain lives over others.

The police provide little value to our city, in any sense of the word. They show up only after danger, violence, or harm has occurred, and even then they only had a total clearance rate of around 30% for all crime in 2019. The police budget has grown approximately 163% since 2000 representing 26.5% of the city’s total tax supported expenditures. This investment in policing have not contributed to community safety. Instead, funding police services to exorbitant levels has proliferated crime by channelling needed resources away from social services and communities and continuing to further inequality. Community services and tranist have consistently borne the brunt of budget cuts while police spending and wages have risen faster than inflation. It seems there are clearly two sets of rules in Winnipeg: one for police, and another for all other city workers.

I am aware of the Harvard-Bloomberg study that the EPC discussed on November 18th. However, without actually reducing the police budget, this is putting a bandaid on a bullet wound. Crime does not appear in a vacuum, nor is it the result of a moral failing on the part of individuals. It is the result of communities being deprived of resources, the result of people not being able to meet their basic needs. If the police continue to hoard the resources granted to them by council, it’s futile to simply redirect who picks up on the other end of a call for service.

Similarly, we can’t afford to pay for the infrastructure we have, yet council keeps pouring money into more of the same. Winnipeg is ever nearing a net financial position of -$1 billion. At a certain point we have to either choose to give in, go the way of Detroit, and become a dead city, or listen to what constituents have been begging for and invest in infrastructure that mode shifts us away from single passenger vehicles in a serious way.

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When council cuts transit service, doesn't fund snow clearing from sidewalks, and chooses to not quickly build a network of protected bike lanes, we end up pushing more people to drive, which uses a lot more infrastructure than the alternatives of walking, biking and bussing. Council's addiction to continually funding the things that bring the least value to our city, roads and police, is literally bankrupting our city and making life worse for our city's most vulnerable.

You can only blame the province and the feds for not giving the city enough money for so long. Eventually you have to either admit that you don't care, or actually listen to what constituents are saying, defund the police, invest in transit, invest in active transportation, the arts, libraries, public housing, and the other life sustaining services that actually bring value and quality of life to our city.

We are in the midst of a global pandemic, a worsening climate crisis, an economic downturn, and significant social upheaval. We're far past the time for half measures, good intentions, and empty promises. Council, as leaders in and representatives of our communities, have a choice of how your legacies will be reflected on.

You can stay in the pockets of Manitoba Heavy Construction, True North, and the police, dig our city further into debt, climate inaction, and inequity, or you can be part of the city council that actually chose to make a change for the better by investing in things that make our communities more livable and vibrant; by investing in things that are important to your constituents.

I am asking the EPC to cut the police budget by 10% as posited by Councillor Rollins earlier this year as a first step to defunding and to invest those funds into community services. I am also asking that the EPC implement a hiring freeze for police, and not replace officers when they retire or resign.

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Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019



by Dyna Ibrahim

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Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019: Highlights

- In 2019, more than four in ten (41%) Canadians living in the provinces said they had a great deal of confidence in the police, while about half (49%) said they had some confidence.
- People living in census metropolitan areas (40%) were less likely than those in census agglomerations (44%) or in rural areas (45%) to report having a great deal of confidence in the police.
- Canadians who said they had a physical (38%), or mental or cognitive (33%) disability were less likely than people without a disability (43%) to report having a great deal of confidence in the police.
- Three in ten (30%) First Nations people, Métis and Inuit said they had a great deal of confidence in the police, compared with 42% of non-Indigenous people.
- Canadians belonging to population groups designated as visible minorities were significantly less likely to report having a great deal of confidence in the police (35%), compared with 44% of non-visible minorities.
- Seniors (53%) were more likely to report having a great deal of confidence in the police compared with young Canadians aged 15 to 24 (36%).
- Less than half of Canadians thought their local police were doing a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to (49%), enforcing the laws (46%), ensuring the safety of citizens (44%), treating people fairly (42%), promptly responding to calls (40%) and supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime (37%). Less than one in five (18%) Canadians felt that the local police were doing a good job on all six of these measures.

Public perceptions of the police in Canada's provinces, 2019

by Dyna Ibrahim, Canadian Centre for Justice and Community Safety Statistics

In Canada, the police rely on continued support and cooperation from the Canadian public to efficiently and successfully carry out its duties. The public's willingness to report crime, to cooperate with police during investigations, to call if in need of assistance and to abide by laws and police orders, are all associated with how they view the police (Brown and Benedict 2002; Cao 2014; Chow 2012; Ren et al. 2005). Positive perceptions of police among citizens are, therefore, a critical aspect of public safety and contribute to a lower level of crime.

Historically, police agencies across Canada have used various localized means to assess public confidence and opinions about the police. In order to streamline these types of measures and allow for trend and comparative analysis across time and jurisdictions, a police performance metrics framework for Canadian policing was developed in 2017 by Public Safety Canada. In addition to traditional indicators such as crime rates, calls for service and traffic offences that are typically used to measure police performance, the framework also identified trust and confidence in the police and public perceptions of the police as being critical to this end (Giacomantonio et al. 2019; Mazowita and Rotenberg 2019; Public Safety Canada 2019).

This *Juristat* article uses data from the 2019 General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) to examine perceptions of the police among Canadians living in the provinces. The article has two sections: confidence in the police and perceptions of police performance. Text box 1 provides information on how these two concepts were measured in the 2019 GSS on Victimization. Within each section, findings are presented for the following populations: seniors; persons with physical, and mental or cognitive disabilities; Indigenous peoples; people belonging to groups designated as visible minorities and; sexual minority persons. Information on experiences of criminal victimization are not included in this article.[1]

Although the current article is largely based on data collected in 2019, some results related to perceptions of police from the 2020 crowdsourcing initiative "Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians: Experience of Discrimination" are also presented (Text box 2). Together, the findings in this article will provide more recently available, national-level information on the perceptions Canadians have of the police—including those of people belonging to population groups designated as visible minorities (hereafter referred to as visible minorities) and Indigenous people.

Text box 1
Measures of confidence in the police and perceptions of police performance

To measure confidence in the police, the 2019 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization asked respondents to indicate how much confidence they had by selecting one of the categories provided: "a great deal of confidence," "some confidence," "not very much confidence" or "no confidence at all."

To measure perceptions of police performance, respondents were asked about their thoughts on whether their local police force or the RCMP detachment in their community do a good job, an average job or a poor job with respect to six elements: "enforcing the laws," "promptly responding to calls," "being approachable and easy to talk to," "supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime," "ensuring the safety of the citizens in their area" and "treating people fairly."

Across Canada, different communities are served by different police services including municipal stand-alone police services, First Nations self-administered police services, provincial police services, and federal policing (Conor et al. 2019). Questions in the 2019 GSS on Victimization related to confidence in police and perceptions of police performance did not specify the policing jurisdiction serving a respondent's community. As such, this article does not include analysis based on police jurisdiction.

New means of collecting data and impact on trend analysis

In 2019, the GSS on Victimization offered, for the first time, the ability for respondents to complete the survey online. This new collection for the GSS was in recognition of the need to adapt to the changing use of technology and the ever present demands on Canadians' time. By having telephone and self-administered internet questionnaire as modes of data collection, the 2019 GSS offered survey respondents greater flexibility and convenience in providing key and vital information to Statistics Canada.

It is important to point out, however, that changes in survey methodology can affect the comparability of data over time. It has previously been shown that certain topics are more susceptible to variations based on collection mode—and among these topics are social desirability variables such as perceptions of the police (Boivin and Lam 2016; Hennigan et al. 2002; Linchiat and Krosnick 2010). Therefore, the current article does not present any trend analysis as it is impossible to determine with certainty whether, and to what extent, differences in a variable are attributable to an actual change in the population or to changes in the survey methodology. Analysis of the impact that the mode of collection had on the results of the survey is expected to be completed at a later date.

Confidence in the police

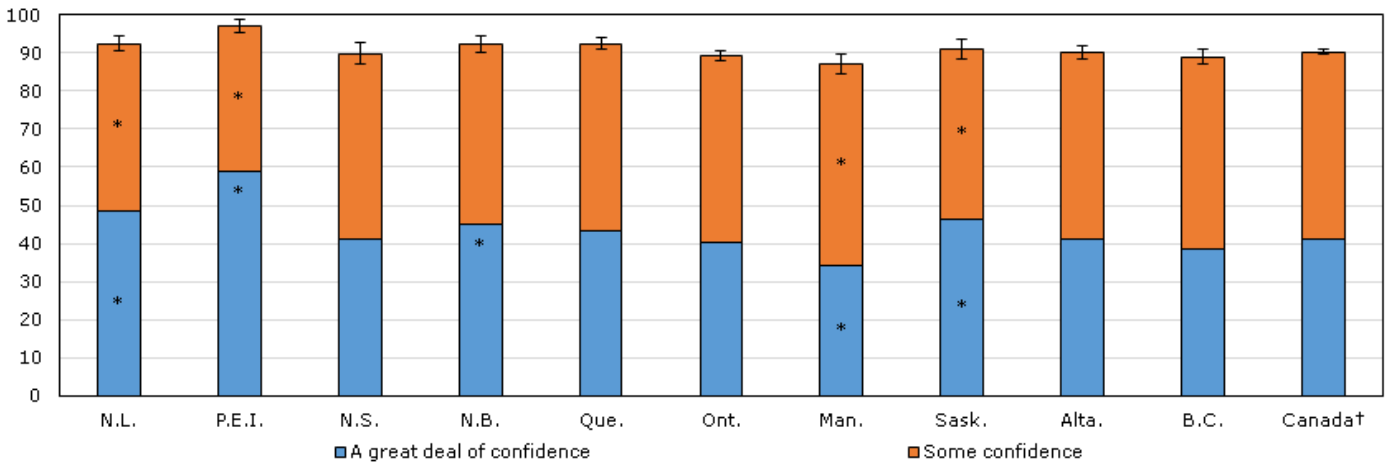
Nine in ten Canadians have confidence in the police

In 2019, nine in 10 Canadians living in the provinces said that they had a great deal or some confidence in the police (90%). More than four in ten (41%) reported having a great deal of confidence in the police, while almost half (49%) said they had some confidence in the police. Less than one in ten people (7%) said they did not have very much confidence in the police. A small minority (2%) of Canadians reported having no confidence at all in the police.[2]

Confidence in the police varies provincially

The degree to which Canadians reported confidence in the police varied by province.[3] In Newfoundland and Labrador (49%), Prince Edward Island (59%), New Brunswick (45%) and Saskatchewan (46%) the proportions of residents reporting a great deal of confidence in the police were higher compared to the national level (Chart 1).[4] In Manitoba, residents were less likely to say they had a great deal of confidence in the police compared with the overall provincial proportion (34% versus 41%).

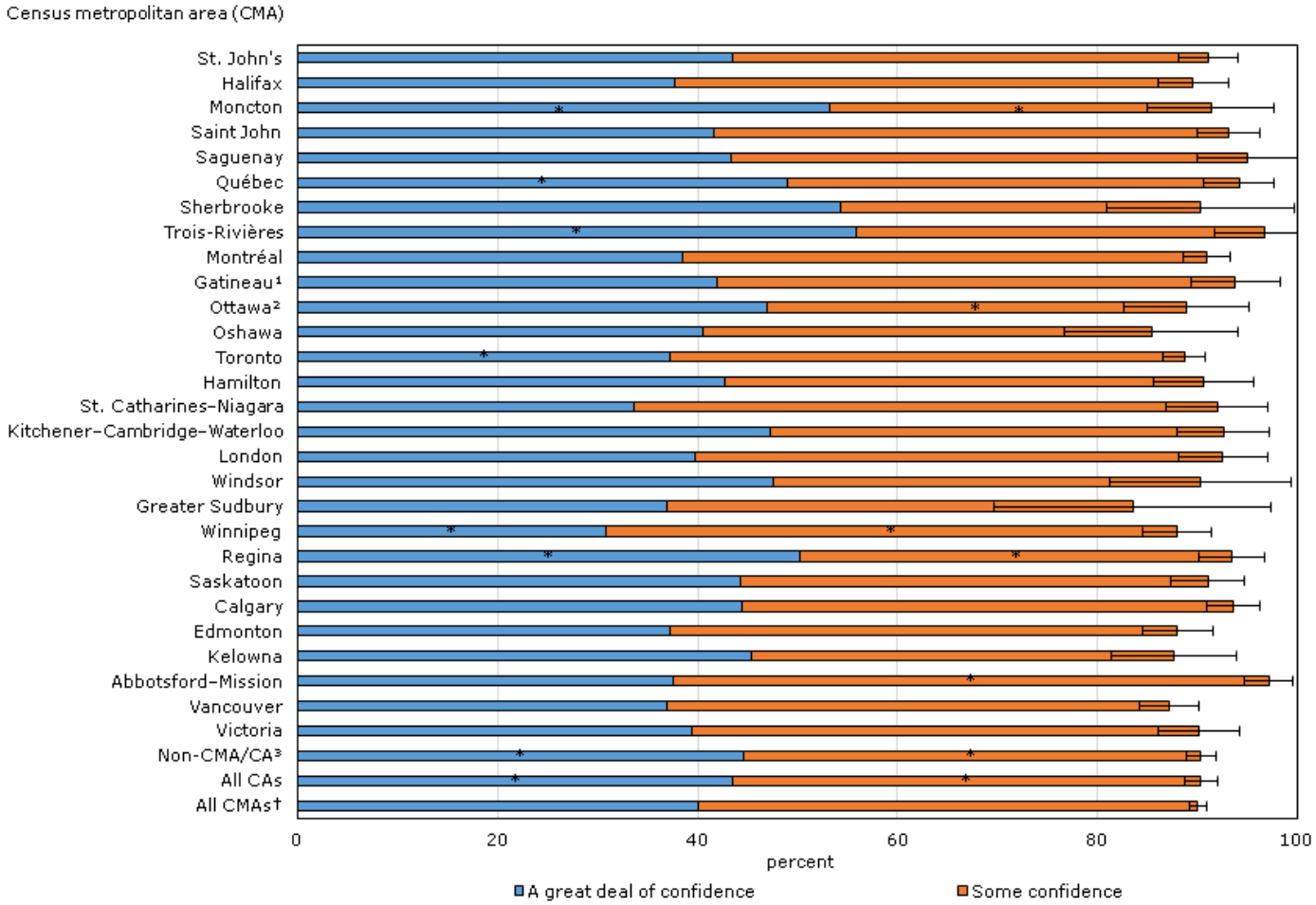
Chart 1
Confidence in police among Canadians, by province, 2019



* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
† reference category
Note: The confidence intervals presented in this chart apply to the total of the categories "a great deal of confidence" and "some confidence." Percent calculations include "don't know" and missing responses, but these data are not shown.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Four in ten Canadians living in census metropolitan areas (CMAs) (40%) reported a great deal of confidence in the police, a lower proportion compared with people living in census agglomerations (CAs) (44%) or in rural areas (45%) (Chart 2).[5] While confidence in the police was generally high across all large Canadian cities, proportions of people reporting a great deal of confidence varied in some. For example, about half of the residents of Trois-Rivières (56%), Moncton (53%), Regina (50%) and Québec (49%) reported having a great deal of confidence in the police, while this was less often the case in Winnipeg (31%) or Toronto (37%).

Chart 2
Confidence in police among Canadians, by census metropolitan area, 2019



* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
† reference category
1. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.
2. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.
3. Represents rural areas and small towns.
Note: A CMA is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in its core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data on place of work. A census agglomeration (CA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. To be included in the CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data on place of work. CMAs which had low response counts are not shown. The confidence intervals presented in this chart apply to the total of the categories "a great deal of confidence" and "some confidence." Percent calculations include missing responses, but these data are not shown. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Geographical differences in confidence levels in police may be partly attributed to the demographic profiles of the respective areas. For example, according to the 2016 Census of Population, there are fewer visible minorities in Prince Edward Island and more seniors relative to the rest of Canada. On the other hand, the CMA of Winnipeg has the largest Indigenous population, and nearly half of Toronto's population are people belonging to population groups designated as visible minorities (Statistics Canada 2017).

Recent negative encounters with police result in lower confidence

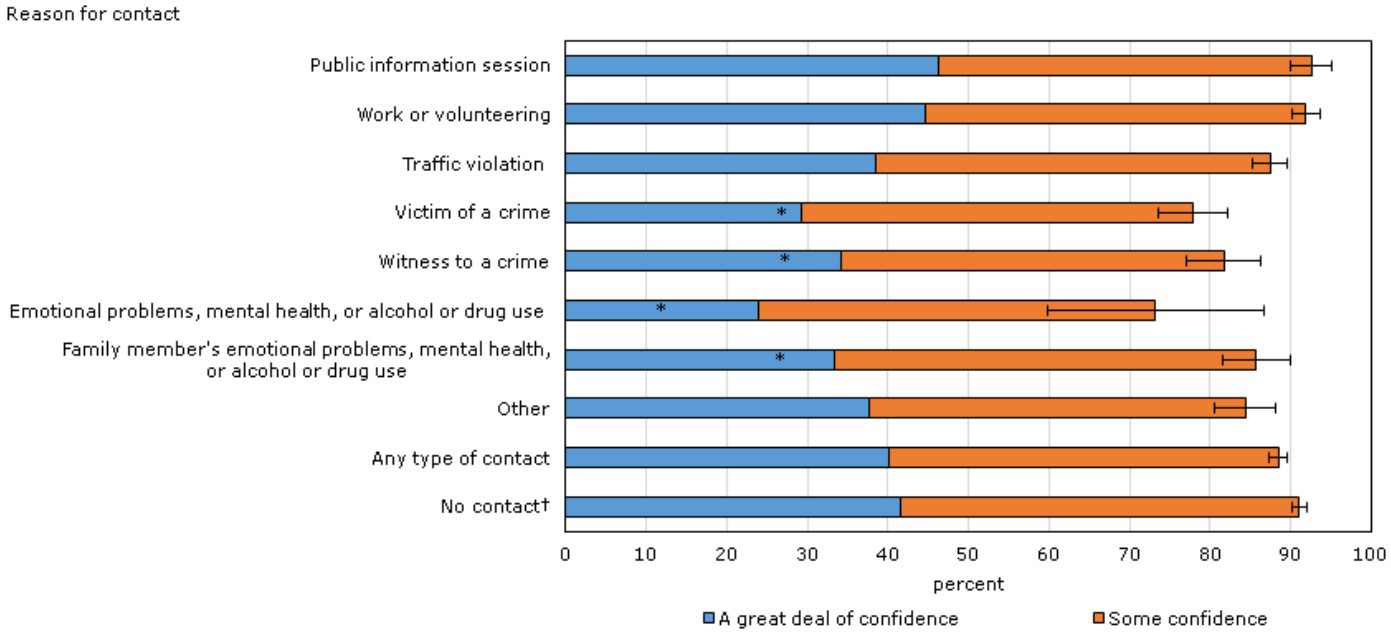
Many studies have found that confidence in and perceptions of the police are greatly affected by prior experiences with the police, and particularly whether the experience was perceived as positive or negative (Brown and Benedict 2002; Cao 2014; Chow 2012; Cotter 2015; Myhill and Beak 2008).

In 2019, about one in three Canadians (34%) reported having recent contact with police (in the previous 12 months). This contact could have been during work, volunteering or public information sessions, in relation to a crime—as a victim, an accused or a witness—or for other reasons such as emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use. The level of confidence in the police was high regardless of recent contact, and Canadians who reported a recent encounter with police

were, generally, as likely to say that they had a great deal of confidence in the police (40%) as those who did not report a contact with police in the previous year (42%).

However, compared with individuals who did not have a recent interaction with police, confidence in the police was relatively lower among those who came into contact with the police in relation to emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use, or a crime. Specifically, about one-quarter (24%) of people who said they came into contact with the police in the previous 12 months for their own emotional problems, mental health or alcohol or drug use and one-third (33%) of those who said their recent interaction with police was related to a family member's emotional problems, mental health or alcohol or drug use reported having a great deal of confidence in the police (Chart 3). Similarly, among victims and witnesses of crime, about one in three (29% and 34%, respectively) reported a great deal of confidence in the police.

Chart 3
Confidence in police among Canadians who reported having contact with police in the previous 12 months, by reason for contact, provinces, 2019



* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
† reference category
Note: The confidence intervals presented in this chart apply to the total of the categories "a great deal of confidence" and "some confidence." Reasons for police contact are provided for people who indicated that they had contact with police in the previous 12 months. Percent calculations include "don't know" and missing responses, but these data are not shown. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

In addition to there being some differences in the level of confidence reported based on the type of encounter that an individual had with the police, positive and negative perceptions of the encounter magnified these differences. Almost nine in ten (87%) Canadians who had contact with police in the previous year said that, overall, the interaction was positive, while 12% felt it was negative. Canadians who reported having a positive recent experience with the police were significantly more likely to have a great deal of confidence in the police compared with those who reported having a recent negative experience (44% vs. 10%). In other words, Canadians who reported a negative recent experience with the police were six times as likely to report low confidence in the police as people who said that their recent experience with police was positive (42% versus 7%).[6]

Multiple logistic regression analysis confirmed the association between contact with police and confidence in the police.[7] The analysis revealed that when other variables are held constant, having a recent negative encounter with police significantly increased the odds of reporting low confidence in the police (6.5 times higher odds than not having a recent contact) (Table 1). Conversely, reporting a recent positive encounter reduced the odds of reporting low confidence in the police.

Seniors most confident in police

Research shows that there are a number of factors which can have an impact on public perceptions of and confidence in the police. These factors range from demographic characteristics such as age and race, to socio-economic characteristics such as income and level of education, as well as perceptions about one's neighbourhood circumstances and experiences of victimization (Cao 2014; Chow 2012; Gannon 2005; Payne and Gainey 2007).[8]

Consistent with findings in previous research, confidence in the police was highest among seniors. While similar proportions of younger Canadians below the age of 45 said they had a great deal of confidence in the police, the share of Canadians over this age who said the same increased with every age group. Seniors 75 years and older (53%) were significantly more likely than younger Canadians to report having a great deal of confidence in the police (Table 1).[9]

Confidence, generally, did not differ by gender among Canadians living in the provinces in 2019.[10] Similar proportions of women (42%) and men (41%) said they had a great deal of confidence in the police.[11]

After holding all variables of interest constant (all variables in Table 1), people aged 65 and older had lower odds of reporting low confidence in the police than younger people aged 15 to 24.

Canadians with disabilities less likely to report great deal of confidence in police

The Canadian Survey on Disability estimates that in 2017, about 22% of the population aged 15 and over (approximately 6.2 million people) reported having a disability (Morris et al. 2018).[12] Challenges related to interactions between Canadians with a mental or cognitive disorder and police continue to be the subjects of ongoing public discussion, with more of these interactions being reported in recent years (Coleman and Cotton 2014). A 2015 article reported that about one in five people who had a recent contact with police had a mental or substance use disorder (Boyce et al. 2015).

In 2019, confidence in the police among Canadians who reported having a mental or cognitive, or physical disability was generally lower when compared to people who said they did not have a disability.[13] One in three (33%) individuals reporting a mental or cognitive disability and about two in five (38%) with a physical disability said that they had a great deal of confidence in the police—proportions significantly lower than that of Canadians with no disability (43%).

Individuals who reported having a mental or cognitive disability (42%) or a physical disability (35%) were more likely to say they had had a police encounter in the previous 12 months compared with individuals with no disability (33%). Additionally, people with a mental or cognitive, or a physical disability were more likely to say their encounter was negative compared to people with no disabilities (15% each, versus 11%). Of note, about 8% of Canadians with mental or cognitive disabilities who had contact with police said they had an encounter related to their own emotional problems, mental health or alcohol or drug use.

Moreover, it has been reported that people with disabilities experience higher rates of violent victimization and a lower sense of safety than people with no disabilities, factors which may contribute to their overall lower level of confidence in the police (Cotter 2018; Perreault 2017).

When all other factors were held constant, having a mental or cognitive disability increased the odds of reporting low confidence in the police by about 50% while the odds of reporting low confidence in the police were 30% higher for people who had a physical disability than for people who did not report any disabilities. People who had both physical, and mental or cognitive disabilities had 70% higher odds of reporting low confidence in police.

Confidence in police lower among Indigenous people

In 2019, three in ten (30%) First Nations people, Métis and Inuit said that they had a great deal of confidence in the police, a proportion significantly lower compared with non-Indigenous people (42%).[14] First Nations people reported the lowest level of confidence in the police with under three in ten (27%) saying they had a great deal of confidence in the police. Similarly, one in three (32%) Métis reported a great deal of confidence in the police.[15]

Confidence in police reported among Indigenous people living in urban areas did not differ significantly from those living in rural areas in terms of reporting a great deal of confidence in the police (33% and 25%, respectively).[16] However, Indigenous people living in urban areas were significantly less likely to report low confidence in the police (13%, compared with 23% among Indigenous people living in rural areas).

Despite the fact that contact with the police has been shown to have an impact on confidence, when all factors of interest are held constant—including any recent police encounters—Indigenous people had nearly twice the odds (1.9 times) of reporting low confidence in the police.[17] Of note, while Indigenous people (44%) were more likely than non-Indigenous people (34%) to report a contact with police in the previous year, of those who had contact, similar proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people said that their recent encounter with police was negative, a factor which significantly impacts confidence in the police. Indigenous people also generally reported similar reasons for coming into contact with the police.[18] These findings are evidence that other factors are contributing to the lower degree of confidence in the police among Indigenous people.

The issue of poor relations between the police and Indigenous people and racialized people in Canada is well documented (Ben-Porat 2008; Brown and Benedict 2002; Chan and Mirchandani 2002; Council of Canadian Academies 2019;

Jones et al. 2014; Nilson and Mantello 2019; Selkirk 2020). The relationship between Indigenous people and the police has been described as one of mistrust, a characterization that is rooted in colonialization. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, for example, has described how the involvement of police in the residential school system has impacted Indigenous people and their trust in police (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015). In addition, *The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls* also presents recent evidence of how historical events and system responses to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls directly contribute to the lack of trust in police among Indigenous people (MMIWG 2019). These reports, along with others, have shown the impact of colonialization on factors such as socio-economic inequities, trauma, mental health issues, and substance abuse which disproportionately affect Indigenous people. These factors perpetuate a cycle of contact with the police and other systems that are under scrutiny for systemic racism and systemic contact, and therefore further distrust in police (Text box 2) (Canada Parliament 2020a; Canada Parliament 2020b; Cao 2014; Chrismas 2012; Council of Canadian Academies 2019; LeBeuf 2011; Jones et al 2014; Malakieh 2019; Nilson and Mantello 2019).

Of note, despite reporting a lower level of confidence in the police, Indigenous people have reported greater feelings of safety in their neighbourhood than non-Indigenous people—a finding that may be attributable to strong community ties (Perreault 2017).

Visible minorities report less confidence in the police

In 2019, 87% of people designated as visible minorities reported having a great deal or some confidence in the police, this was slightly lower than the 92% among non-visible minorities.[19] The proportion of visible minority Canadians who said that they had a great deal of confidence in the police was nine percentage points lower than for non-visible minorities (35% versus 44%). Southeast Asian (25%) and Chinese (26%) Canadians, in particular, were significantly less likely to report having a great deal of confidence in the police. While Black and Latin American people were as likely as non-visible minority people to say they had a great deal of confidence in the police, nearly one in five (18% and 17%, respectively) reported having not very much or no confidence in the police—more than double the proportion among non-visible minorities (8%).

It is worth noting that while visible minorities were less likely to report a contact with police in the previous year (29%, versus 36% among non-visible minorities), 16% of visible minorities who reported a recent police encounter said that their experiences were negative, a proportion higher than that of non-visible minorities (10%). When all other factors are kept constant, visible minorities were found to have 50% greater odds of reporting low confidence in the police than non-visible minorities. Overall, 13% of visible minorities reported low confidence in the police, compared with 8% of non-visible minorities.

Experiences and perceptions of systemic racism in policing and acts of racial prejudice by officers are likely factors contributing to the overall lower sense of confidence in the police within this segment of the population (British Columbia 2020; Canada Parliament 2020b; Stelkia 2020; Weitzer and Tuch 2005). Visible minorities are more likely to report experiencing discrimination when dealing with the police (Text box 2). According to the 2019 GSS on Victimization, 2% of visible minority Canadians reported experiencing some form of discrimination in the previous five years while dealing with police, compared with 0.6% of non-visible minority Canadians. The underrepresentation of visible minorities in police agencies has also been shown to have an impact on perceptions of police among visible minorities (Chow 2012). In 2018, visible minorities made up 22% of the Canadian population but 8% of police officers in Canada that year (Conor et al. 2019). Moreover, visible minorities are more likely to live in larger cities and are overrepresented in low-income neighbourhoods, and although they experience victimization at a lower rate than non-visible minorities they are less likely to feel safe in their neighbourhoods—factors found to be negatively correlated with perceptions of police (Chow 2012; Perreault 2017; Simpson 2018a).

Text box 2
Trust in police, August 2020

During the summer of 2020, many discussions around issues of systemic racism within policing emerged in Canada in light of some high profile incidents of police misconduct (British Columbia 2020; Canada Parliament 2020a; Canada Parliament 2020b). Such highly publicized incidents have been seen to negatively impact public perceptions of the police (Weitzer 2002; Weitzer and Tuch 2005). Many Canadians took to the streets in protest to express their frustrations with police misconduct that target Indigenous, Black and other racialized people. Further, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic earlier in the year led to some rules and restrictions being put in place to combat the spread of this disease, impacting Canadians' daily lives. There have been indications of a disproportionate impact of these new rules and their enforcement measures on specific communities, including Indigenous, Black and other racialized and disadvantaged groups (Deshman et al. 2020). These rules have also been found to have some negative impact on Canadians' perceptions about crime in their neighbourhoods and feelings of safety, particularly among Indigenous people (Arriagada et al. 2020)—both of these factors have been shown to contribute to one's perceptions of the police.

Therefore, although the focus of the current article is to examine data collected in the 2019 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, in an effort to shed some light on even more recent attitudes towards police and any indications of changes in perceptions—particularly among Indigenous people and visible minorities—this text box uses data from the crowdsourcing initiative *Impacts of COVID-19 on Canadians: Experience of Discrimination.* This data collection was conducted in August 2020 and collected information on perceived experiences of discrimination during the COVID-19 pandemic, which included questions about perceptions of the police and other justice and public institutions. It is important to note, however, that crowdsourcing does not have a probabilistic sampling design and as such, the information presents the opinions of the participants only and cannot be generalized to the overall Canadian population. Moreover, the crowdsourcing questionnaire collected information on level of trust, and provided response categories that were different from the GSS on Victimization. Therefore, no direct comparisons should be made between the two data sources, and for this reason, results presented in this text box focus on participants who reported having low trust and GSS data are not included in this textbox.

Over 36,000 people in Canada took part in the crowdsourcing initiative. Among them, 23% reported having low trust in the police.[20] This proportion was the same for distrust in the court system and local governments, but higher than what was reported for federal government (21%), school system (20%), public health agencies (13%) health care system (13%), and local merchants or business people (9%). Other institutions that received a higher level of distrust than police included major corporations, provincial or territorial governments, by-law officers, banks and Canadian media. In comparison, a similar 2015 study previously found that Canadians had much higher levels of confidence in the police than they had for the school system, courts and federal parliament, among others (Cotter 2015).

Participants who identified as members of some population groups were particularly more likely to express distrust in the police. For example, four in ten (40%) participants identifying as Indigenous expressed a distrust in police compared with 19% of non-Indigenous and non-visible minority participants.[21] Similarly, about three in ten (31%) participants who identified as belonging to population groups designated as visible minorities expressed distrust in police. Distrust in police was particularly high among Black participants (52%) and people who identified as belonging to multiple visible minority groups (44%).

When asked about experiences of discrimination or unfair treatment by others since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2% of all participants reported such experiences while interacting with the police. While less than 1% of non-Indigenous and non-visible minority participants said they had experienced discrimination while interacting with the police since the pandemic began, notably larger proportions of Black (8%), multiple visible minority (7%), Indigenous (6%) and Latin American (6%) participants said the same. The vast majority of participants who reported experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment while dealing with the police also reported having low trust in the police (82%).

For more results from this crowdsourcing initiative, see Statistics Canada 2020.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual Canadians report moderate confidence in the police

Sexual minority Canadians (namely those who self-identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or otherwise not heterosexual), overall, had feelings of confidence in the police that were similar to heterosexual Canadians, however the degree of confidence reported differed.[22] For example, lesbian or gay Canadians (31%) and bisexual Canadians (25%) were significantly less likely to report having a great deal of confidence in the police, compared with heterosexual Canadians (42%).

Overall, similar proportions of sexual minority Canadians and heterosexual Canadians reported having contact with police in the previous year, and perceptions about recent encounters with police among sexual minorities were similar to those reported among heterosexual Canadians.

Sexual minorities in Canada report experiencing higher victimization rates, poorer mental health and struggle with fears of stigmatization and discrimination when having to interact with police compared with heterosexual Canadians (Jaffray 2020; Nadal 2015; Simpson 2018b). Feelings of safety are also lower among lesbian, gay and bisexual Canadians compared with heterosexual people (Perreault 2017). These factors are potential contributors to a reduced sense of confidence in the police among this segment of the population. When other factors of interest are held constant, being lesbian, gay or bisexual did not impact the odds of reporting lower confidence in the police.

Text box 3
Confidence in Canadian criminal courts

The 2019 General Social Survey on Victimization asked Canadians about their confidence in the Canadian criminal courts. Consistent with previous findings (Cotter 2015), confidence in Canada's criminal courts was generally lower than that in police. While 41% of Canadians said that they had a great deal of confidence in the police, one in seven (14%) Canadians said they had a great deal of confidence in the criminal courts.

About one in five (20%) Canadians reported having ever come into contact with the Canadian criminal courts. People with prior contact with the criminal courts were as likely as those with none to report having some or a great deal of confidence in the courts. However, people who reported having contact with the criminal courts were more likely to say that they do not have very much confidence in the courts (24%) or no confidence at all (11%) compared to Canadians with no previous contact (13% and 3%, respectively).

About 18% of Canadians said they did not know how much confidence they had in the Canadian criminal courts. This answer category was more common among people who said they never had contact with the criminal courts (data not shown).

Although women were as likely as men to report confidence in the police, this was not the case for confidence in the criminal courts: 12% of women said they had a great deal of confidence in criminal courts compared with 15% of men. Reporting a great deal of confidence in the Canadian criminal courts was also less common among: common law and divorced people, non-visible minorities, non-immigrants, people with disabilities (mental or cognitive, and physical), bisexual people, people with no university diploma, and people with no religion.[23]

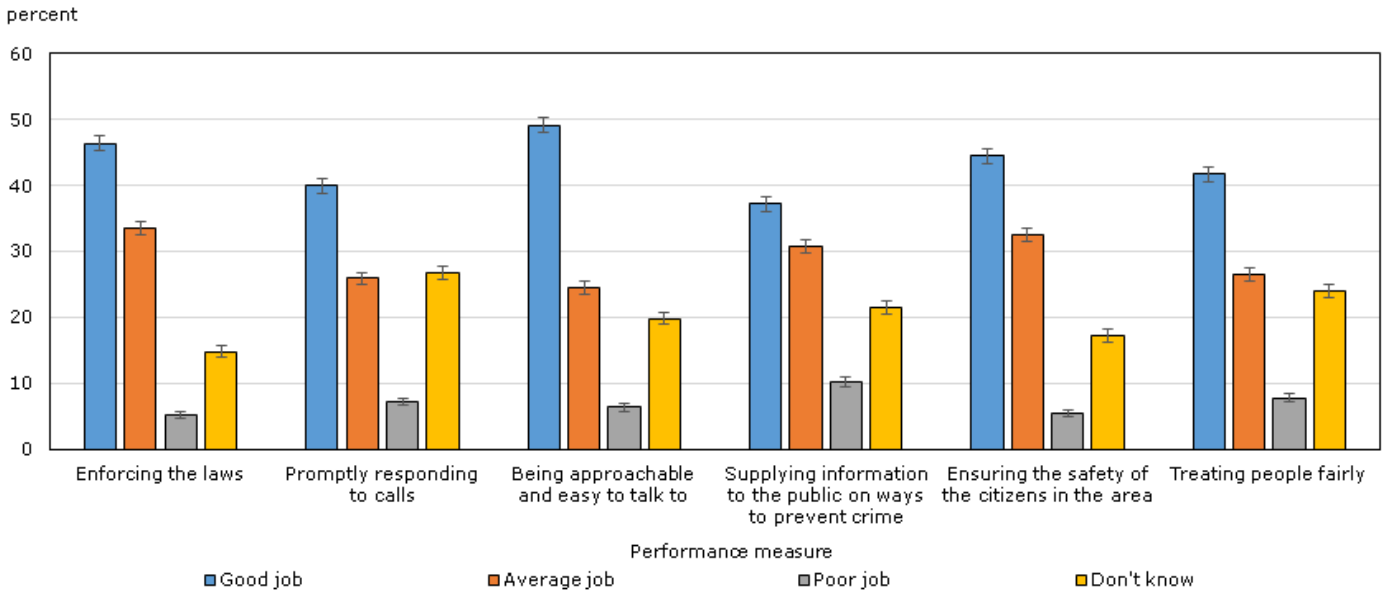
Confidence levels in Canada's criminal courts were similar across most provinces, with the exception of in Manitoba (9%) and Alberta (11%) where residents were less likely to say they had a great deal of confidence when compared with the national level.

Perceptions of police performance

Less than half of Canadians think their local police are doing a good job

Across all six police performance measures included in the GSS on Victimization (see Text box 1), less than half of Canadians reported that their local police were doing a good job. In 2019, overall, the beliefs that the police were doing a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to (49%) and enforcing the laws (46%) were rated slightly more favourably among Canadians, followed by the police ensuring the safety of citizens (44%) and treating people fairly (42%) (Chart 4, Table 2). About four in ten said the same about the police promptly responding to calls (40%) and supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime (37%). About one in five Canadians (18%) felt that the police were doing a good job on all six measures.

Chart 4
Perceptions of police among Canadians, by performance measure, provinces, 2019



Note: Percent calculations include missing responses, but these data are not shown. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

The proportion of Canadians who said their local police were doing an average job ranged between 24% and 33% across all six measures. One in ten people, or less, said the police were doing a poor job.

Perceptions about police performance linked to perceptions about recent encounters

Canadians who had a recent encounter with the police were as likely as those who did not to say that the police were doing a good job for five out of the six measures. The sole exception among the measures was that Canadians who reported a contact with the police in the previous 12 months were more likely to say that the police were doing a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to compared with those who did not report a recent police encounter (53% versus 47%).

Perceptions of police performance sometimes differed among Canadians based on the type of encounter reported. For example, Canadians who reported coming into contact with the police in the previous year because of a public information session were more likely to say that the police were doing a good job of being approachable and easy to talk to (63%) and supplying information on how to prevent crime (51%), compared to people who did not come into contact with the police in the last year for any reason (Table 3). In contrast, Canadians who were victims of crime in the last year were less likely to say the police were doing a good job of enforcing the laws (32%).

Moreover, among Canadians who reported a recent police encounter, their perceptions of police performance appeared to be associated with their opinion of how the encounter went—whether positively or negatively. Unsurprisingly, people who said they had a recent negative experience with the police were significantly less likely to say the police were doing a good job on any of the measures compared to people with recent positive experiences, and, vice versa, people with a recent positive encounter were more likely to say the police were doing a good job. To once again use the example of perceptions related to enforcing the laws, 15% of Canadians who had a recent negative encounter with the police said that the police were doing a good job, and 25% said they were doing a poor job. In comparison, 50% of people who said their recent experience with the police was positive said the police were doing a good job, while 5% said they were doing a poor job.

It is worth noting that in 2019, between 15% and 27% of people said they did not know if their local police were doing a good job on at least one of the measures. This was more common among people who reported not having any contact with the police in the previous year.[24]

Perceptions of police performance generally similar by gender, differ by age group and sexual orientation

Perceptions of police performance generally varied across different age groups. However, overall, older Canadians had more positive views than younger Canadians. For example, Canadian seniors (those aged 75 and older) were more likely than Canadians aged 15 to 24, to say that their local police do a good job an all of the measures except of promptly responding to calls, for which they were as likely to say the police were doing a good job (Table 2).

When comparing by gender, men and women reported similar opinions when it came to perceptions of police performance, with under half saying that the police do a good job on each of the measures.[25] The sole exception was in relation to treating people fairly which was rated slightly less favourably among women (40% versus 43%).

Canadians who reported being bisexual were far less likely than heterosexual Canadians to say that the police were doing a good job on three of the measures. Namely, around one in three or fewer bisexual people said that the police were doing a good job enforcing the laws (25%), being approachable and easy to talk to (34%), and ensuring the safety of citizens (33%), which compares with 47%, 50% and 45%, respectively, among heterosexual people.

People with disabilities less likely to say police are doing a good job

People reporting a disability were generally less satisfied with police performance. Canadians who reported a mental or cognitive disability were less likely than people without disabilities to say the police were doing a good job on all of the measures, namely, of enforcing the laws (39% versus 48%), promptly responding to calls (37% versus 41%), being approachable and easy to talk to (43% versus 50%), supplying the public with information to prevent crime (33% versus 38%), ensuring the safety of citizens (38% versus 46%) and treating people fairly (36% versus 43%). Similarly, compared to people with no disabilities, people with a physical disability less often said they thought the police were doing a good job on four of the measures: enforcing the laws (44%), promptly responding to calls (38%), ensuring the safety of citizens (41%) and treating people fairly (40%).

Perceptions of police performance generally similar among Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

In 2019, Indigenous people generally had perceptions of police performance that were similar to non-Indigenous people. The sole exception was in relation to enforcing the laws, which was driven by a less positive perception among First Nations people. First Nations people were significantly less likely to say that the police were doing a good job of enforcing the laws compared with non-Indigenous people (36% and 47%, respectively). Métis reported similar levels of satisfaction with police performance on all of the six measures when compared to non-Indigenous people.[26]

Overall in the provinces, perceptions of police performance among Indigenous people were similar regardless of whether they lived in urban or rural areas.

Perceptions of police performance vary among visible minority groups

Overall, Canadians who identified as belonging to a group designated as visible minority were significantly less likely than non-visible minorities to say the police were doing a good job on five of the six elements measured, except when it came to promptly responding to calls, for which similar proportions said the police were doing a good job. Differences, however, varied among Canada's largest ethnic groups. For example, Chinese Canadians were less likely to say the police were doing a good job on all six measures, while Latin Americans (37%) and Southeast Asians (35%) were less likely to say the police were doing a good job of enforcing the laws compared with non-visible minorities (49%). With the exception of Latin Americans, Filipino and Arab Canadians who had similar views as non-visible minorities, all of the remaining ethnic groups reported lower levels of satisfaction with police performance related to treating people fairly. Overall, about one in three (34%) visible minority Canadians said the police were doing a good job of treating people fairly, compared with 45% of non-visible minorities.

It is worth noting that between 20% and 30% of visible minorities reported that they did not know if the police were doing a good, average or poor job.

Established immigrants rate police performance less favourably

Immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to say that the police were doing a good job on two out of the six measures: being approachable and easy to talk to (46% versus 50%) and treating people fairly (38% versus 43%). Immigrants who had been in Canada longer than ten years generally had less positive views compared with non-immigrants. On five out of the six measures, these established immigrants were less likely than non-immigrants to say that the police were doing a good job—with the exception being when it came to promptly responding to calls, for which they held similar views.

Recent immigrants, on the other hand, generally had the same or more positive opinions about police performance when compared to non-immigrants. When it came to promptly responding to calls (47%) and ensuring the safety of the citizens in the area (51%), recent immigrants were more likely to say that the police do a good job compared with non-immigrants (39% and 45%, respectively).

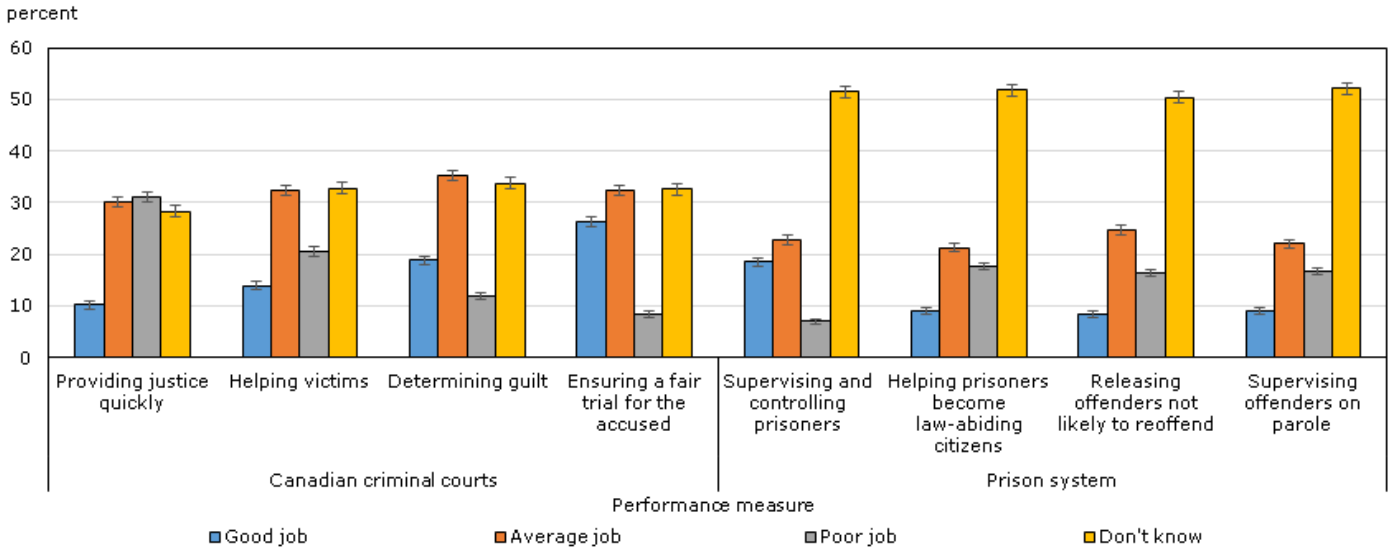
Between 19% and 29% of immigrants reported that they did not know if the police were doing a good, average or poor job on each of the six performance measures included. These proportions were generally similar among recent and established immigrants.

Text box 4
Canadians' perceptions of the criminal justice system

In addition to questions on the perceptions of local police, the 2019 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization also asked questions regarding Canadians' perceptions of other aspects of the Canadian justice system, namely, criminal courts and prisons. With regards to criminal courts, the GSS asked respondents if they thought the Canadian criminal courts were doing a good job, an average job or a poor job of providing justice quickly, helping victims, determining guilt and ensuring a fair trial for the accused. Similarly, respondents were asked if they thought that the prison system does a good job, an average job or a poor job of supervising and controlling prisoners while in prison, helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens, releasing offenders who are not likely to commit another crime and supervising offenders on parole.

Perceptions about the criminal courts and prisons were generally less positive compared to perceptions related to police performance. Among the measures of performance of the criminal courts, Canadians were least likely to say the criminal courts were doing a good job of providing justice quickly (10%) or helping victims (14%) (Text box 3 chart). Instead, about one in three (31%) and one in five (21%) Canadians thought the criminal courts were doing a poor job on these two measures, respectively. Canadians were slightly more likely to say the criminal courts were doing a good job of ensuring a fair trial (26%) and determining guilt (19%).

Text box 4 chart
Canadians' perceptions of Canadian criminal courts and the prison system, by performance measure, provinces, 2019



Note: Percent calculations include missing responses, but these data are not shown. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Canadians were even less positive about their perceptions of Canadian prisons. About one in five (18%) said they believed prisons are doing a good job of supervising and controlling prisoners while in prison, and about one in ten said the same about helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens, releasing offenders, and supervising offenders on parole.

Notably, about one in three Canadians said they did not know if the criminal courts were doing a good, average or poor job, while around half said the same about prisons.

Residents of Ontario report lower levels of satisfaction with police performance, more satisfaction with police in Prince Edward Island

In 2019, there were many provincial variations in Canadians' level of satisfaction with police performance. Prince Edward Island was the only province to report higher levels of satisfaction with police performance on all six measures compared with the Canadian provincial average. Quebec residents rated their local police more favourably on five out of the six measures (all except for being approachable and easy to talk to) (Table 4). In contrast, compared with all of the provinces, people living in Ontario were less likely to say their local police were doing a good job on any of the six measures.

Perceptions about police performance also differed regionally, with people living in census agglomerations and rural areas having more positive perceptions on all of the measures compared with people living in CMAs (Table 5). Perceptions of police also differed among CMAs in a variety of ways ranging from some cities reporting higher levels of satisfaction in police performance for most of the measures to others reporting satisfaction with police for some measures but not others. For example, Canadians living in Québec, Trois-Rivières and Sherbrooke were more likely to report that their local police do a good job on five of the six measures when compared to the overall CMA averages, while lower proportions of people in Toronto and Winnipeg said the police were doing a good job on five out of the six measures.

Similar to what was previously noted about confidence in the police, provincial and regional differences in perceptions of police among residents may be partly attributed to the demographic profiles of these areas.

Summary

The vast majority of Canadians reported having confidence in the police in 2019, reporting either a great deal (41%) or some confidence (49%).

Prior negative encounters with police was the most influential factor in predicting reported confidence levels (among the factors included in the article). People who said they had a negative encounter with the police in the previous year had odds almost seven times higher of reporting low confidence in the police. Other factors which negatively impacted Canadians' confidence levels in police included: identifying as a visible minority, an Indigenous person, or a person with a disability. On the other hand, being 65 or older reduced the odds of reporting low confidence in the police.

Between 37% and 49% of Canadians in 2019 felt that the police were doing a good job on the performance measures included. Namely, enforcing the laws; promptly responding to calls; being approachable and easy to talk to; supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime; ensuring the safety of the citizens in their area; and treating people fairly.

Similar to confidence in police, perceptions of police performance were linked to opinions formed by prior experiences with police. For example, Canadians who reported a negative police encounter in the previous 12 months were significantly less likely to say the police were doing a good job on any of the measure compared with people with no recent police contact, while more favourable views were more common among people with recent positive encounters.

As was the case with confidence in police, some sub-populations also held more positive perceptions of police. Specifically, people aged 45 and older generally had more positive views about police performance compared with those aged 15 to 24, while visible minorities, and people with disabilities generally had less positive views. Dissimilar to findings related to confidence in the police, Indigenous people generally had similar perceptions about police performance as non-Indigenous people except in relation to enforcing the laws, which was viewed less favourably among First Nations people. Further, established immigrants (those who immigrated to Canada before 2010), had less favourable views on five of the six measures, while recent immigrants were more likely than non-immigrants to say that the police were doing a good job of promptly responding to calls and ensuring the safety of the citizens in the area.

Many studies have shown that confidence in and perceptions of police among citizens are associated with several factors including their demographic characteristics, socioeconomic status, environmental exposures and prior negative experiences. While this article has presented a number of demographic characteristics, and some reported prior negative interactions with the police, it is important to consider other factors which have been linked to public perceptions of the police. These would include experiences of victimization and factors associated with vulnerability to victimization such as neighbourhood characteristics and perceptions of personal safety.

Methods for logistic regression analysis

The odds ratios presented throughout this article were the results of multiple regression analysis which was undertaken to assess the influence of factors of interest on the level of confidence that Canadians had in police. To simplify the interpretation of results, the dependent variable in the model was defined as having low confidence (not very much or no confidence at all). All variables listed in Table 1 were included in the model, however, only variables which had a significant impact ($p < 0.05$) were kept in the final model to yield the odds ratios. These variables are: age group, disability status, visible minority status, Indigenous identity, religious affiliation and recent contact with police (positive, negative or no contact in the previous 12 months).

Survey description

This article uses data from the General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety (Victimization). In 2019, Statistics Canada conducted the GSS on Victimization for the seventh time. Previous cycles were conducted in 1988, 1993, 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014. The main objective of the GSS on Victimization is to better understand issues related to the safety and security of Canadians, including perceptions of crime and the justice system, experiences of intimate partner violence, and how safe people feel in their communities.

The target population was persons aged 15 and older living in the ten Canadian provinces, except for people living full-time in institutions. In 2019, the survey was also conducted in the three territories using a different sampling design. However, data pertaining to the territories, and to incidents of crime experienced in the previous twelve months for the provinces and territories will be released at a later date.

Data collection

Data collection took place between April 2019 and March 2020. Responses were obtained by computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) and, for the first time, the GSS on Victimization offered a self-administered internet collection option to survey respondents. Respondents were able to respond in the official language of their choice.

An individual aged 15 or older was randomly selected within each household to respond to the survey. An oversample of Indigenous people was added to the 2019 GSS on Victimization to allow for a more detailed analysis of individuals belonging to this population group.

In 2019, the sample size was 20,454 respondents, this number included an oversample of 3,056 Indigenous people.

Response rates

In 2019, the overall response rate was 36.4% (41.0% for the main sample, and 22.2% for the oversample). Non-respondents included people who refused to participate, could not be reached, or could not speak English or French. Respondents in the sample were weighted so that their responses represent the non-institutionalized Canadian population aged 15 and older.

Data limitations

As with any household survey, there are some data limitations. The results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to sampling errors. Somewhat different results might have been obtained if the entire population had been surveyed.

For the quality of estimates, the lower and upper bounds of the confidence intervals are presented in the tables and charts. Confidence intervals should be interpreted as follows: If the survey were repeated many times, then 95% of the time (or 19 times out of 20), the confidence interval would cover the true population value. Throughout this article, unless otherwise specified, statistically significant differences were determined using 95% confidence intervals.

Statistics Canada has confidence in the quality of the data disseminated from the 2019 GSS and assures that the data are fit for use for this analysis. Because of method used to collect information for the GSS, however, the data may not be representative for some subpopulations and smaller geographic areas. For example, this would have a more notable impact on populations with language barriers, or those in remote areas with less reliable telephone or telecommunications.

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Notes

1. At the time that this article was being produced, 2019 General Social Survey data related to incidents of victimization were not available. Data pertaining to the territories, and to incidents of crime experienced in the previous twelve months for the provinces and territories, will be published at a later date.

2. Responses of don't know and not stated are included. For this reason, and because of rounding, total may not add up to 100%.

3. This article Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, which will be published at a later date.

4. Unless otherwise specified, all differences indicated are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

5. A census metropolitan area (CMA) is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in its core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data on place of work. CMAs which had low response counts are not shown. A CA is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. To be included in the CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data on place of work. In this article, rural areas include people in the provinces living outside of CMAs and CAs. Urban areas include people living in a CMA or a CA.

6. Low confidence refers to reporting not very much or no confidence at all in police.

7. All variables listed in Table 1 were included in the model, however, only variables which had a significant impact ($p < 0.05$) were kept in the final model. To simplify the interpretation of results, the dependent variable in the model was defined as

having low confidence (not very much or no confidence at all). See the section Methods for logistic regression analysis for additional details.

8. Income and victimization data are not included in this report as they were not yet available for analysis at the time of release of this article.

9. Differences between seniors aged 75 and older and all age groups were statistically significant.

10. The General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization asked respondents to identify their sex at birth as well as their gender. Gender refers to the gender that a person internally feels (gender identity along the gender spectrum) and/or the gender a person publicly expresses (gender expression) in their daily life, including at work, while shopping or accessing other services, in their housing environment or in the broader community. A person's current gender may differ from the sex a person was assigned at birth (female or male) and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. Unless otherwise specified, references to men and women, in this article, are in relation to a person's reported gender (reported on the 2019 GSS on Victimization as male or female).

11. Due to small data counts, estimates for non-binary populations (whose current gender was not reported exclusively as male or female) are too unreliable to publish.

12. The Canadian Survey on Disability is the official source of data on the prevalence of disability in Canada.

13. People with disabilities refers to people who report a mental or cognitive (learning, developmental, memory, mental health-related), or physical (hearing, visual, mobility, flexibility, dexterity, pain) condition that limits their daily activities.

14. The specific question in the survey asked respondents "Are you an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis or Inuk (Inuit)?" In the current article, the term Indigenous is used to refer to all First Nations people, Métis, and Inuit. Where possible, results are presented for each distinct group.

15. The estimate for the proportion of Inuit who reported a great deal of confidence in the police was too unreliable to publish.

16. Difference is not statistically significant.

17. All factors on Table 1 were included in the model, including having a recent negative encounter.

18. With the exception of family members' emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use reasons (which was more common among Indigenous people than non-Indigenous people (10% vs. 2%)), Indigenous and non-Indigenous people reported similar reasons for coming into contact with police.

19. In this article, the non-visible minority population excludes Indigenous people.

20. Level of trust was measured on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 meant "No trust at all" and 5 meant "A great deal of trust". In this article, the terms 'low trust' and 'distrust' are used interchangeably to refer to people who gave a response of 1 or 2 to this question.

21. To analyze the experiences of Indigenous and visible minority participants separately, in this text box, comparisons are made to non-visible minorities and non-Indigenous people.

22. The 2019 General Social Survey on Victimization provided a write-in response option to the question "What is your sexual orientation" where respondents could specify their sexual orientation if it was not already listed as a response option (Heterosexual, Homosexual, or Bisexual). Due to sample size, those who reported a sexual orientation other than these options are grouped under the broad category of *sexual orientation not elsewhere classified (n.e.c.).*

23. All characteristics included on Table 1 (with the exception of variables related to contact with the police) were tested, and only those that were significantly different are listed here. For the characteristics listed, comparisons are being made to the following categories (respectively): married people, visible minorities (particularly South Asian, Black, Filipino and Arab Canadians), immigrants (recent and established), people with no disabilities, heterosexual people, people with a university diploma or higher, and non-Christians and Muslims. Due to small sample size, comparisons to the Inuit population was not feasible.

24. Percent calculations presented in this article include "Don't know" responses. It should be noted that percentage of those who gave don't know responses differ for each population group and for different measures.

25. Due to small data counts, estimates for non-binary populations are too unreliable to publish.

26. Data for Inuit are not releasable due to small sample size.

Detailed data tables

Table 1
Canadians' confidence in police, by selected characteristics, provinces, 2019

Selected characteristics	A great deal of confidence			Some confidence			Not very much or no confidence			Odds ratio (of reporting low confidence)[1]
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval		
	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	
Total population	**41**	**40**	**42**	**49**	**48**	**50**	**9**	**9**	**10**	**...**
Age group (years)										
15 to 24	36	31	40	53	49	57	11	9	14	Reference category
25 to 34	32	29	35	54	51	57	14	12	16	1.3
35 to 44	40	37	43	48*	45	51	12	10	14	1.1
45 to 54	42*	39	44	49	46	52	9	7	10	0.8
55 to 64	45*	43	47	48*	45	50	7*	6	8	0.7
65 to 74	48*	45	50	45*	43	48	6*	5	7	0.7*
75 and older	53*	50	56	43*	40	46	4*	3	5	0.4***
Gender[2]										
Male	41	39	42	49	47	50	10	9	11	Reference category
Female	42	40	43	49	48	51	9*	8	9	n.s.
Non-binary	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	...
Sex										
Male	41	39	42	49	47	50	10	9	11	Reference category
Female	42	40	43	49	48	51	9*	8	10	n.s.
Marital status										
Married	45	44	47	47	45	48	8	7	8	Reference category
Common-law	36*	33	39	54*	51	57	10*	8	12	n.s.
Widowed	48	45	52	44	41	48	6	4	9	n.s.
Separated	38*	32	43	48	42	54	14*	10	18	n.s.
Divorced	42	39	46	48	44	51	10	8	12	n.s.
Single, never married	35*	32	37	53*	50	55	13*	11	15	n.s.
Indigenous identity										
Non-Indigenous person	42	40	43	49	48	50	9	9	10	Reference category
Indigenous person	30*	25	36	53	47	59	16*	12	21	1.9***
First Nations	27*	20	35	55	46	64	18*	12	25	...
Métis	32*	25	40	52	44	61	15	9	22	...
Inuit	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	...

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 1 — continued
Canadians' confidence in police, by selected characteristics, provinces, 2019

Selected characteristics	A great deal of confidence	95% confidence interval		Some confidence	95% confidence interval		Not very much or no confidence	95% confidence interval		Odds ratio (of reporting low confidence)[1]
	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	
Visible minority status										
Non-visible minority[3]	44	43	45	48	46	49	8	7	9	Reference category
Visible minority	35*	32	37	52*	49	55	13*	11	15	1.5***
South Asian	44	38	50	43	37	49	13*	9	18	...
Chinese	26*	22	31	59*	54	64	14*	11	19	...
Black	38	30	48	43	34	52	18*	11	27	...
Filipino	39	31	47	55	47	63	5	3	10	...
Arab	37	26	51	43	30	57	20	9	37	...
Latin American	35	26	45	47	35	59	17*	10	28	...
Southeast Asian	25*	15	38	64*	50	76	11	5	23	...
Other[4]	33*	28	39	56*	50	62	11	7	16	...
Immigrant status										
Non-immigrant	41	40	43	49	48	50	9	8	10	Reference category
Immigrant	41	38	43	48	46	51	11	9	12	n.s.
Recent immigrant	46	41	52	44	39	49	9	6	13	...
Established immigrant (immigrated before 2010)	39	37	42	49	47	52	11	9	13	...
Non-permanent residents	39	27	51	52	39	64	8	4	17	n.s.
Religion										
No religion	34	32	36	53	51	55	13	12	15	Reference category
Christian religion	46*	44	47	47*	46	49	7*	6	8	0.6***
Non-Christian religion	41*	36	45	47*	43	51	12	10	16	0.8
Disability										
Person without disability	43	42	45	48	46	49	8	8	9	Reference category
Person with disability	37*	35	38	52*	50	54	11*	10	12	...
Physical disability	38*	36	40	51*	49	53	11*	9	12	1.3*
Mental/cognitive disability	33*	30	36	53*	50	56	14*	12	16	1.5*
Sexual orientation										
Heterosexual	42	40	43	49	48	50	9	8	10	Reference category
Lesbian or gay	31*	24	40	54	45	62	15	8	25	n.s.
Bisexual	25*	17	34	60*	50	70	14	8	22	n.s.
Sexual orientation n.e.c.[5]	30	14	52	47	31	64	23*	13	37	n.s.

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 1 — end
Canadians' confidence in police, by selected characteristics, provinces, 2019

Selected characteristics	A great deal of confidence	95% confidence interval		Some confidence	95% confidence interval		Not very much or no confidence	95% confidence interval		Odds ratio (of reporting low confidence)[1]
	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	
Highest level of education										
No high school diploma	45	41	48	46	42	49	9	7	12	Reference category
High school diploma	39*	37	42	50	47	52	10	9	12	n.s.
College or trade diploma	40*	38	42	49	47	51	10	9	12	n.s.
University diploma or higher	42	40	44	49	48	51	8	7	9	n.s.
Main activity										
Employed	39	37	40	51	49	52	10	10	11	Reference category
Looking for paid work	35	22	52	52	36	67	F	F	F	n.s.
Going to school	44	37	52	48	40	55	8	5	12	n.s.
Retired	50*	48	52	45*	43	47	5*	4	6	n.s.
At home[6]	41	37	46	46	41	51	13	9	17	n.s.
Other	47	39	56	43	35	52	9	5	14	n.s.
Contact with police										
Did not have contact in the past 12 months	42	40	43	49	48	51	8	8	9	Reference category
Had contact in the past 12 months	40	38	42	48	46	50	11*	10	13	...
Positive contact	44*	42	46	48	46	51	7*	6	8	0.7*
Negative contact	10*	8	14	47	41	53	42*	37	48	6.5***

... not applicable
F too unreliable to be published
n.s. not significant (applies to odds ratio results only. Variable removed from the final model).
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
*** significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.001$)
1. Odds ratios represent the odds of reporting not very much or no confidence at all in the police. Final model only includes variables which were significant. Odds ratios presented for physical, and mental or cognitive disability excludes people who reported having both a physical, and mental or cognitive disability (they were included in the final model but not shown in the table).
2. The General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) asked respondents to identify their gender as well as their sex at birth. Gender refers to the gender that a person internally feels (gender identity along the gender spectrum) and/or the gender a person publicly expresses (gender expression) in their daily life, including at work, while shopping or accessing other services, in their housing environment or in the broader community. A person's current gender may differ from the sex they were assigned at birth (female or male) and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. Non-binary refers to individuals whose current gender was not reported exclusively as male or female.
3. Excludes Indigenous people.
4. Includes individuals who identified as belonging to multiple groups designated as visible minority.
5. n.e.c. not elsewhere classified.
6. Includes individuals who stated that in the past 12 months they were caring for their children; doing household work; were on maternity, paternity or parental leave; or had a long-term illness.
Note: Percent calculations include missing responses. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 2
Canadians' perceptions of police, by selected characteristics, provinces, 2019

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Enforcing the laws			Promptly responding to calls			Being approachable and easy to talk to		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Selected characteristics	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Total population	**46**	**45**	**47**	**40**	**39**	**41**	**49**	**48**	**50**
Age group (years)									
15 to 24[†]	43	38	47	40	36	44	43	39	48
25 to 34	40	37	43	36	33	39	42	39	45
35 to 44	45	42	47	39	37	42	51[*]	48	53
45 to 54	48[*]	45	50	39	37	42	50[*]	47	53
55 to 64	50[*]	48	52	40	38	42	51[*]	49	53
65 to 74	51[*]	49	54	44	42	47	56[*]	53	58
75 and older	52[*]	49	55	45	42	48	56[*]	53	59
Gender[1]									
Male[†]	46	44	48	41	39	43	50	48	51
Female	47	45	48	39	37	41	49	47	50
Non-binary	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Sex									
Male[†]	46	44	48	41	39	43	50	48	51
Female	47	45	48	39	37	40	49	47	50
Marital status									
Married[†]	47	45	48	39	38	41	50	49	52
Common-law	49	45	52	42	39	45	48	45	52
Widowed	51[*]	48	55	44[*]	41	48	57[*]	54	61
Separated	52	46	58	45	40	51	54	49	60
Divorced	49	46	53	41	38	45	54	51	58
Single, never married	43[*]	40	45	39	36	41	44[*]	41	47
Indigenous identity									
Non-Indigenous person[†]	47	45	48	40	39	41	49	48	50
Indigenous person	39[*]	32	45	38	32	44	44	39	50
First Nations	36[*]	28	45	38	30	48	41	33	50
Métis	40	32	49	39	31	47	48	40	57
Inuit	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Visible minority status									
Non-visible minority[†, 2]	49	48	51	41	39	42	53	51	54
Visible minority	40[*]	37	42	38	36	41	40[*]	38	43
South Asian	44	38	51	46	39	52	46[*]	40	52
Chinese	29[*]	24	34	28[*]	23	33	32[*]	27	37
Black	47	38	56	45	36	54	43[*]	35	52
Filipino	43	35	52	42	35	50	48	40	57
Arab	42	29	55	51	37	64	46	34	60
Latin American	37[*]	27	48	40	30	51	40[*]	30	51
Southeast Asian	35[*]	23	49	32	21	46	40	27	54
Other[3]	43[*]	37	49	36	31	42	38[*]	33	44
Immigrant status									
Non-immigrant[†]	47	46	48	39	38	41	50	49	52
Immigrant	45	42	47	41	38	43	46[*]	43	48
Recent immigrant	49	44	54	47[*]	42	52	50	45	56
Established immigrant (immigrated before 2010)	44[*]	41	47	39	36	42	45[*]	42	48
Non-permanent residents	45	33	57	51	39	63	49	37	62

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 2 — continued
Canadians' perceptions of police, by selected characteristics, provinces, 2019

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Enforcing the laws			Promptly responding to calls			Being approachable and easy to talk to		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Selected characteristics	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Religion									
No religion†	40	38	43	35	33	37	43	41	45
Christian religion	50*	49	52	43*	41	44	54*	52	55
Non-Christian religion	44	40	49	41*	37	45	43	38	48
Disability									
Person without disability†	48	47	50	41	39	42	50	49	52
Person with disability	42*	40	44	39	37	40	47*	45	49
Physical disability	44*	42	46	38*	36	40	48	46	51
Mental/cognitive disability	39*	36	43	37*	34	40	43*	40	46
Sexual orientation									
Heterosexual†	47	46	48	40	39	41	50	49	51
Lesbian or gay	42	34	50	41	33	50	47	39	55
Bisexual	25*	18	35	40	29	52	34*	25	44
Sexual orientation n.e.c.[4]	36	19	56	34	18	54	24*	14	38
Highest level of education									
No high school diploma†	49	45	52	44	40	48	52	48	55
High school diploma	46	44	48	40	38	43	50	48	53
College or trade diploma	47	45	49	40*	38	42	51	49	53
University diploma or higher	46	44	48	39*	37	41	47*	45	48
Main activity									
Employed†	45	44	46	38	37	40	47	46	49
Looking for paid work	34	21	50	31	18	47	34	22	49
Going to school	49	41	57	49*	41	56	52	45	60
Retired	52*	50	54	44*	42	46	55*	53	57
At home[5]	42	37	47	39	34	44	47	42	52
Other	48	40	56	45	36	54	61*	52	69
Contact with police									
Did not have contact in the past 12 months†	47	45	48	39	38	41	47	46	49
Had contact in the past 12 months	45	43	47	41	39	43	53*	51	55
Positive contact	50*	48	52	44*	42	47	58*	56	60
Negative contact	15*	12	19	16*	13	21	17*	13	21

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 2 — continued
Canadians' perceptions of police, by selected characteristics, provinces, 2019

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime			Ensuring the safety of the citizens in the area			Treating people fairly		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Selected characteristics	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Total population	**37**	**36**	**38**	**44**	**43**	**46**	**42**	**41**	**43**
Age group (years)									
15 to 24[†]	34	30	39	44	39	48	40	36	44
25 to 34	30	28	33	40	37	44	37	34	40
35 to 44	36	33	38	43	41	46	42	40	45
45 to 54	35	33	37	44	41	47	42	39	44
55 to 64	39[*]	37	42	44	42	47	40	38	43
65 to 74	46[*]	43	48	49[*]	47	51	46[*]	44	49
75 and older	46[*]	43	48	50[*]	48	53	49[*]	46	52
Gender[1]									
Male[†]	37	36	39	45	44	47	43	42	45
Female	37	36	39	44	42	45	40[*]	38	42
Non-binary	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Sex									
Male[†]	37	36	39	45	44	47	44	42	45
Female	37	36	39	44	42	45	40[*]	38	41
Marital status									
Married[†]	38	37	40	44	43	46	42	41	44
Common-law	36	33	39	47	44	50	41	38	44
Widowed	46[*]	42	49	48[*]	45	52	47[*]	43	51
Separated	43	38	49	48	42	54	45	39	50
Divorced	38	35	42	46	42	49	40	37	44
Single, never married	34[*]	31	36	43	40	45	40	37	42
Indigenous identity									
Non-Indigenous person[†]	37	36	38	45	44	46	42	41	43
Indigenous person	38	32	44	42	36	49	41	35	47
First Nations	38	30	46	40	32	48	37	29	46
Métis	39	31	48	45	37	54	46	37	55
Inuit	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Visible minority status									
Non-visible minority[†, 2]	39	38	41	47	46	48	45	43	46
Visible minority	31[*]	29	34	39[*]	36	41	34[*]	31	36
South Asian	33[*]	28	39	41	35	47	37[*]	31	43
Chinese	22[*]	17	27	25[*]	21	30	28[*]	24	33
Black	40	32	48	51	42	60	32[*]	24	41
Filipino	41	33	49	48	40	56	45	37	54
Arab	26[*]	16	38	46	33	60	38	26	52
Latin American	30	21	41	31[*]	22	41	37	26	49
Southeast Asian	27[*]	16	40	34	22	48	25[*]	15	38
Other[3]	33[*]	27	39	42	36	48	31[*]	26	36
Immigrant status									
Non-immigrant[†]	38	36	39	45	44	46	43	42	44
Immigrant	35	33	38	42	40	45	38[*]	36	41
Recent immigrant	39	34	45	51[*]	46	57	48	43	53
Established immigrant (immigrated before 2010)	34[*]	32	37	40[*]	37	43	36[*]	33	38
Non-permanent residents	42	30	55	51	39	63	47	35	59

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 2 — end
Canadians' perceptions of police, by selected characteristics, provinces, 2019

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime			Ensuring the safety of the citizens in the area			Treating people fairly		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Selected characteristics	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Religion									
No religion†	31	29	33	39	37	41	36	34	38
Christian religion	42*	40	43	49*	47	50	46*	45	48
Non-Christian religion	31	27	35	40	36	45	35	31	39
Disability									
Person without disability†	38	36	39	46	45	48	43	42	45
Person with disability	37	35	38	41*	39	43	39*	37	41
Physical disability	38	36	40	41*	39	43	40*	38	42
Mental/cognitive disability	33*	30	37	38*	35	41	36*	33	39
Sexual orientation									
Heterosexual†	38	36	39	45	44	46	42	41	43
Lesbian or gay	31	24	39	39	31	48	38	30	47
Bisexual	29	19	41	33*	24	44	36	26	48
Sexual orientation n.e.c.[4]	30	14	52	36	20	55	30	14	51
Highest level of education									
No high school diploma†	41	37	44	49	45	52	49	46	53
High school diploma	39	37	42	46	43	48	41*	39	44
College or trade diploma	39	37	41	46	44	48	43*	41	45
University diploma or higher	33*	31	35	42*	40	44	39*	37	41
Main activity									
Employed†	35	33	36	43	42	44	40	39	41
Looking for paid work	35	22	50	37	23	53	30	18	45
Going to school	43*	35	51	50	42	58	43	36	51
Retired	45*	43	47	49*	47	51	47*	45	49
At home[5]	39	34	44	42	37	47	41	36	46
Other	37	30	45	46	37	54	48	40	57
Contact with police									
Did not have contact in the past 12 months†	37	36	39	45	43	46	41	40	43
Had contact in the past 12 months	37	36	39	44	42	46	42	40	44
Positive contact	41*	39	43	48*	46	50	46*	44	48
Negative contact	12*	9	16	16*	12	20	16*	12	20

F too unreliable to be published
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
† reference category
1. The General Social Survey on Canadians' Safety (Victimization) asked respondents to identify their gender as well as their sex at birth. Gender refers to the gender that a person internally feels (gender identity along the gender spectrum) and/or the gender a person publicly expresses (gender expression) in their daily life, including at work, while shopping or accessing other services, in their housing environment or in the broader community. A person's current gender may differ from the sex they were was assigned at birth (female or male) and may differ from what is indicated on their current legal documents. Non-binary refers to individuals whose current gender was not reported exclusively as male or female.
2. Excludes Indigenous people.
3. Includes individuals who identified as belonging to multiple groups designated as visible minority.
4. n.e.c. not elsewhere classified.
5. Includes individuals who stated that in the past 12 months they were caring for their children; doing household work; were on maternity, paternity or parental leave; or had a long-term illness.
Note: This table presents the proportion of respondents who reported that the police did a good job for the various measures. The remainder of the responses include those who felt that the police do an average job or a poor job as well as those who said they did not know. It should be noted that percentage of those who gave don't know responses differ for each population group and for different measures. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 3
Canadians' perceptions of police, by reason for police contact, provinces, 2019

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Enforcing the laws			Promptly responding to calls			Being approachable and easy to talk to		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Reason for police contact	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Contact with police in the previous 12 months	45	43	47	41	39	43	53*	51	55
Public information session	51	46	57	44	39	49	63*	58	68
Work or volunteering	50	46	53	41	38	44	59*	55	62
Traffic violation	47	44	50	41	37	44	48	45	51
Victim of a crime	32*	28	37	37	32	42	49	43	54
Witness to a crime	41*	36	46	42	37	47	51	45	56
Being arrested	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use	34*	22	47	44	31	59	42	30	56
Family member's emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use	37*	30	44	40	33	47	52	45	59
Other reasons	42*	38	46	41	36	45	52*	47	56
No contact with police in the previous 12 months†	47	45	48	39	38	41	47	46	49

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime			Ensuring the safety of the citizens in the area			Treating people fairly		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Reason for police contact	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Contact with police in the previous 12 months	37	36	39	44	42	46	42	40	44
Public information session	51*	46	56	52*	47	57	49*	44	54
Work or volunteering	41*	38	44	47	44	50	48*	45	52
Traffic violation	36	33	39	46	43	50	39	35	42
Victim of a crime	33	28	38	34*	30	39	42	37	47
Witness to a crime	35	31	40	38*	34	43	41	36	47
Being arrested	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use	36	24	50	44	31	58	30	19	43
Family member's emotional problems, mental health, or alcohol or drug use	34	28	41	38*	31	45	38	31	45
Other reasons	30*	26	34	38*	34	43	37*	33	41
No contact with police in the previous 12 months†	37	36	39	45	43	46	41	40	43

F too unreliable to be published
* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
† reference category
Note: This table presents the proportion of respondents who reported that the police did a good job for the various measures. The remainder of the responses include those who felt that the police do an average job or a poor job as well as those who said they did not know. It should be noted that percentage of those who gave don't know responses differ for different measures. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 4
Canadians' perceptions of police, by province, 2019

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Enforcing the laws			Promptly responding to calls			Being approachable and easy to talk to		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Province	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Newfoundland and Labrador	44	40	48	37	33	41	60*	57	64
Prince Edward Island	61*	56	67	55*	50	61	66*	61	71
Nova Scotia	43	39	47	45*	41	49	54*	50	58
New Brunswick	47	43	50	44	40	47	55*	51	59
Quebec	60*	57	62	49*	47	52	47	45	50
Ontario	42*	40	44	37*	36	39	46*	44	48
Manitoba	38*	34	41	31*	28	35	50	46	53
Saskatchewan	46	42	49	36*	32	39	59*	56	62
Alberta	44	41	47	35*	32	38	56*	52	59
British Columbia	42*	39	45	37	35	40	49	46	52
Canada†	**46**	**45**	**47**	**40**	**39**	**41**	**49**	**48**	**50**

	The local police do a good job of...								
	Supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime			Ensuring the safety of the citizens in the area			Treating people fairly		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
Province	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
Newfoundland and Labrador	47*	44	51	52*	48	56	53*	49	57
Prince Edward Island	51*	45	57	63*	58	68	61*	56	67
Nova Scotia	37	33	40	45	41	49	40	36	44
New Brunswick	38	34	42	47	43	50	50*	46	53
Quebec	41*	38	43	54*	52	57	48*	46	51
Ontario	34*	32	36	40*	38	42	36*	34	38
Manitoba	37	34	41	36*	33	40	39	36	43
Saskatchewan	44*	40	47	47	43	51	50*	46	54
Alberta	43*	40	46	46	43	48	46*	43	49
British Columbia	33*	31	36	40*	37	43	40	37	43
Canada†	**37**	**36**	**38**	**44**	**43**	**46**	**42**	**41**	**43**

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
† reference category
Note: This table presents the proportion of respondents who reported that the police did a good job for the various measures. The remainder of the responses include those who felt that the police do an average job or a poor job as well as those who said they did not know. It should be noted that percentage of those who gave don't know responses differ for each province and for different measures. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Table 5
Canadians' perceptions of police, by census metropolitan area, 2019

Census metropolitan area (CMA)	The local police do a good job of...								
	Enforcing the laws			Promptly responding to calls			Being approachable and easy to talk to		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
St. John's	44	39	49	34	29	39	55*	49	60
Halifax	42	36	47	46*	40	51	50	44	55
Moncton	49	41	58	46	38	55	59*	50	67
Saint John	47	40	54	46*	39	54	56*	49	63
Saguenay	66*	52	78	51	37	66	58	44	71
Québec	72*	65	78	54*	46	61	50	42	58
Sherbrooke	74*	59	85	62*	47	75	56	40	71
Trois-Rivières	78*	61	89	56*	40	70	70*	53	83
Montréal	52*	48	56	45*	41	49	42*	38	45
Gatineau[1]	60*	49	70	47	36	59	49	37	60
Ottawa[2]	40	34	47	33	27	39	40	34	47
Oshawa	48	36	60	44	32	56	52	40	64
Toronto	40*	37	43	36	33	39	42*	39	45
Hamilton	39	31	47	33	24	42	43	36	51
St. Catharines–Niagara	40	29	52	43	31	56	45	33	57
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	48	37	60	46	35	58	60*	49	70
London	38	29	48	37	27	47	51	41	60
Windsor	44	30	59	36	24	51	50	36	64
Greater Sudbury	46	28	66	30	14	52	43	26	63
Winnipeg	31*	27	35	25*	21	30	40*	36	45
Regina	44	37	51	30*	24	36	50	43	57
Saskatoon	43	37	49	36	30	42	54*	48	61
Calgary	46	40	51	36	31	41	55*	49	60
Edmonton	38*	33	44	29*	24	35	52*	46	58
Kelowna	40	31	49	40	31	49	44	35	53
Abbotsford–Mission	52	42	62	40	31	50	48	38	58
Vancouver	39*	35	43	36	32	40	45	41	49
Victoria	44	37	50	37	31	43	49	43	56
All CMAs†	**45**	**43**	**46**	**39**	**37**	**40**	**46**	**45**	**48**
All census agglomerations (CAs)	**49***	**46**	**52**	**44***	**41**	**47**	**53***	**50**	**56**
Non-CMA/CA[3]	**52***	**49**	**55**	**43***	**41**	**46**	**59***	**56**	**62**

See notes at the end of the table.

Table 5 — end
Canadians' perceptions of police, by census metropolitan area, 2019

Census metropolitan area (CMA)	The local police do a good job of...								
	Supplying information to the public on ways to prevent crime			Ensuring the safety of the citizens in the area			Treating people fairly		
		95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval			95% confidence interval	
	percent	from	to	percent	from	to	percent	from	to
St. John's	45*	40	50	43	38	48	45*	40	50
Halifax	35	30	41	42	36	47	34	29	40
Moncton	42	34	50	47	39	55	53*	45	62
Saint John	37	31	43	45	39	52	46*	39	53
Saguenay	47	34	61	62*	47	75	51	37	66
Québec	45*	37	53	67*	60	73	59*	51	66
Sherbrooke	62*	46	76	65*	49	78	61*	44	75
Trois-Rivières	50	35	64	67*	51	80	69*	52	82
Montréal	33	30	37	46*	43	50	40	36	44
Gatineau[1]	44	34	55	63*	51	74	38	28	50
Ottawa[2]	28*	22	34	37	31	44	27*	22	33
Oshawa	36	26	48	50	38	62	30	20	42
Toronto	29*	27	32	37*	34	40	33*	30	36
Hamilton	34	26	43	37	29	45	33	26	40
St. Catharines–Niagara	43	31	56	47	35	60	42	30	54
Kitchener–Cambridge–Waterloo	44	33	56	49	38	61	45	34	57
London	45*	35	55	41	31	52	38	29	49
Windsor	44	31	58	51	36	65	48	34	62
Greater Sudbury	34	18	55	44	26	64	40	22	60
Winnipeg	32	28	37	29*	25	33	30*	26	34
Regina	36	30	42	39	33	46	40	33	47
Saskatoon	39	34	46	46	40	52	46*	40	52
Calgary	40	34	46	43	38	48	46*	41	52
Edmonton	40*	35	46	42	37	47	40	35	45
Kelowna	34	26	42	31*	23	39	36	28	46
Abbotsford–Mission	48*	38	57	54*	44	63	42	33	52
Vancouver	32	28	36	37*	33	41	37	33	41
Victoria	32	27	38	43	37	49	39	33	45
All CMAs†	**35**	**34**	**36**	**42**	**41**	**44**	**39**	**37**	**40**
All census agglomerations (CAs)	**42***	**39**	**44**	**47***	**44**	**49**	**45***	**42**	**47**
Non-CMA/CA[3]	**44***	**41**	**47**	**52***	**50**	**55**	**53***	**51**	**56**

* significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)
† reference category
1. Gatineau refers to the Quebec part of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.
2. Ottawa refers to the Ontario part of the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA.
3. Represents rural areas and small towns.

Note: A CMA is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CMA must have a total population of at least 100,000, of which 50,000 or more must live in its core. To be included in the CMA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data on place of work. A CA is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a population centre (known as the core). A CA must have a core population of at least 10,000. To be included in the CA, other adjacent municipalities must have a high degree of integration with the core, as measured by commuting flows derived from previous census data on place of work. CMAs which had low response counts are not shown. This table presents the proportion of respondents who reported that the police did a good job for the various measures. The remainder of the responses include those who felt that the police do an average job or a poor job as well as those who said they did not know. It should be noted that percentage of those who gave don't know responses differ geographically and for different measures. Excludes data from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.
Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey.

Policing in Canada: Major study reveals four mindsets driving current opinions and future policy preferences

by David Korzinski | October 8, 2020 8:00 pm

Canadian perceptions of police vary significantly by age and ethnicity

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October 9, 2020 – Canadians have watched protests south of the border calling for an end to police violence against Black and other Americans of colour, and participated[1] in protests in this country calling for greater accountability and acknowledgement of what they say is systemic racism in Canadian policing as well.

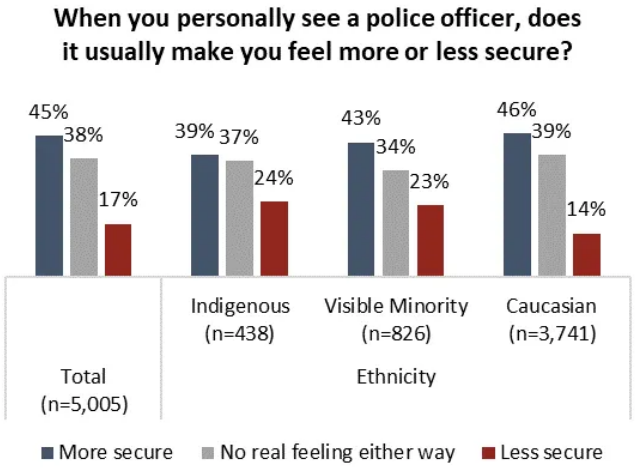
Now, a comprehensive review of perspectives on policing in this country, from the non-profit Angus Reid Institute, finds a country at once critical and supportive of the police in their communities.

This first installment of a two-part series on policing in Canada finds three-quarters view the police in their community favourably, despite concerns about how officers may treat some demographics. For a similar number, 72 per cent, local police are a source of pride. This includes two-thirds of Indigenous and visible minority respondents.

However, younger Canadians are less likely than their older peers to view the police positively. Those aged 18-24, on average, feel less secure when they see a police officer (38%) than more secure (32%), whereas this tendency is reversed in all older age groups. Similarly, more than one-in-three 18-24-year-olds (37%) view police in their own community unfavourably, compared to just one-in-ten (11%) among those 65 and up.

The landscape of perspectives in Canada includes considerable nuance, such that Angus Reid Institute researchers created the Policing Perspectives Index, which categorizes Canadians based on their attitudes toward police. This report explores the views of the True Blue, Silent Supporters, Ambivalent Observers, and Defunders in great detail.

More Key Findings:



- Looking at provincial differences, residents of Alberta and Saskatchewan lean the most towards warm perceptions of police, while Ontario has the highest proportion of those with a more negative view.
- Indigenous people and those who identify as visible minorities are more likely to feel less secure around and less favourable toward police compared to Caucasians, though the proportion who feel the opposite is still higher in each case.
- Two-thirds of Canadians have had at least one direct interaction with an officer over the past five years. For most, this was a comfortable experience. Negative experiences vary by age, gender, and ethnicity.

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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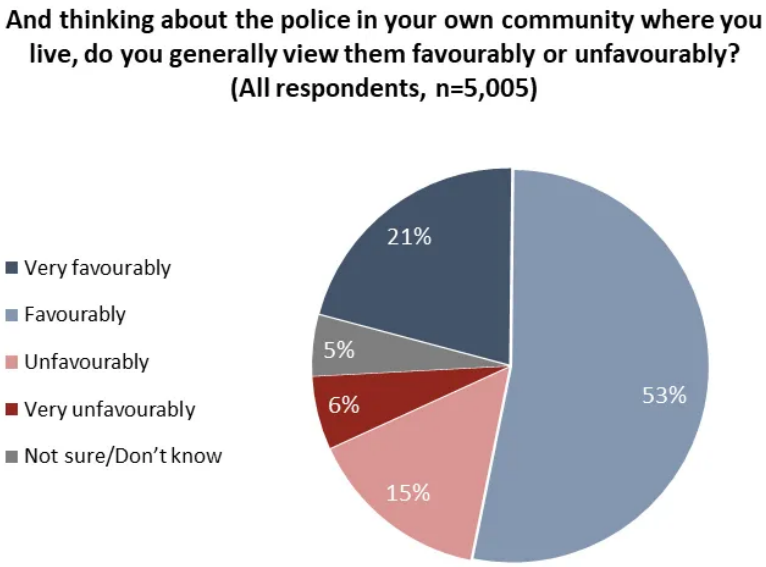
- **Pride in community police**
- **Defunders equally likely to say experience positive, negative**
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***Coming up next*: Policy issues, defunding, and systemic racism**

Part One: Views of police in Canada

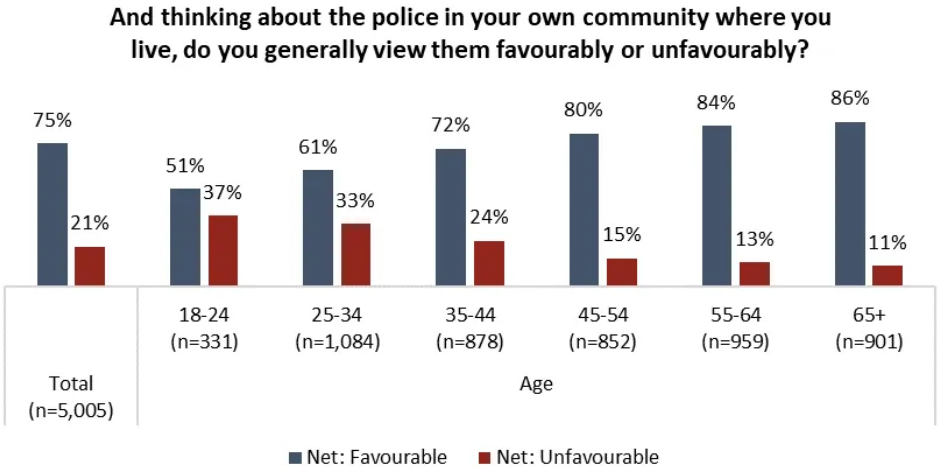
Policing in Canada is oftentimes complex, with municipal, provincial, and federal forces comprising a mosaic of services offered across the country. The relationship Canadians have with their police mirrors this complexity.

When it comes to the overall perspective with which Canadians regard the police in their own community, opinion is favourable but not without fractures. Three-quarters (75%) view them favourably. For one-in-five (21%), however, the view is unfavourable:



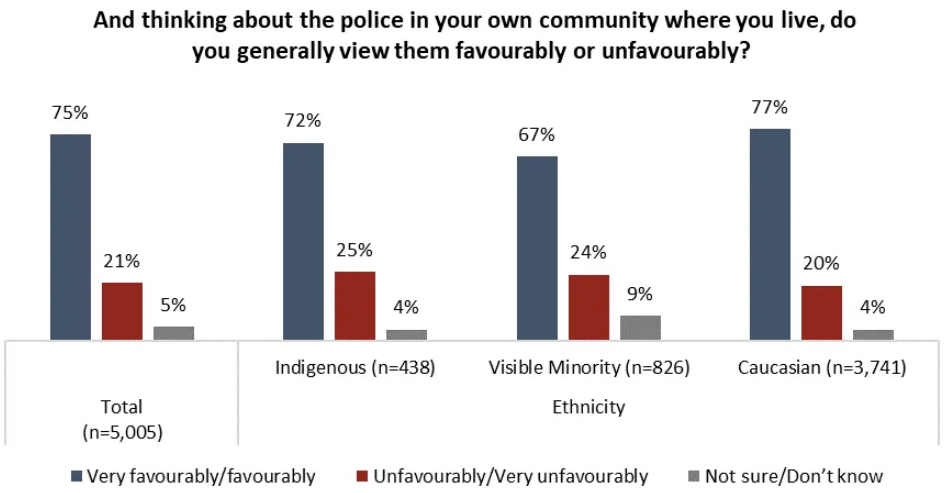
Generational gap

The divergence appears to be in part generational. While Canadians 45 years of age and older are relatively uncritical about the police serving their community, favourability among 18 to 34-year-olds is considerably lower:



Indigenous and Visible Minority views

Notably, Indigenous respondents and those who identify as a visible minority are slightly more likely than Caucasians to hold an unfavourable view of their community police. That said, the vast majority in all groups say they view the police favourably. This does not, however, mean that these same respondents do not think that there is a systemic issue with how police interact with members of minority groups, as will be seen in the second part of this series:



The gap in opinion surfaces again when looking at these three groups across generations. In each of them, younger respondents are far more likely to view the police unfavourably. Indigenous respondents ages 35 to 54 are also more likely than others their age to feel this way:

And thinking about the police in your own community where you live, do you generally view them favourably or unfavourably?									
	Total n=5,005	Indigenous n=438			Visible Minority n=828			Caucasian n=3,741		
		18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+
Favourable	75%	62%	68%	90%	53%	73%	79%	61%	78%	85%
Unfavourable	21%	34%	27%	9%	34%	19%	16%	33%	18%	12%

Views from provinces, major cities

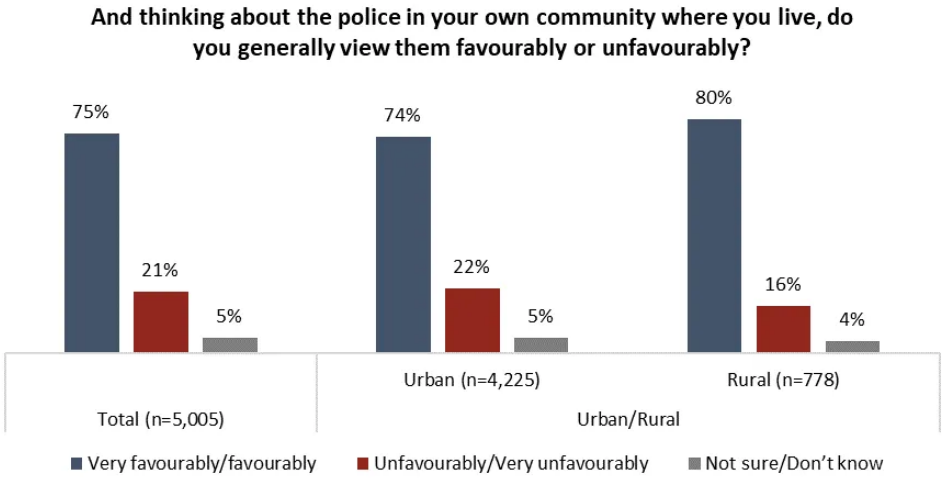
This ratio of favourable to unfavourable views holds relatively constant across the country. No fewer than 73 per cent of respondents in every region and province view their police favourably, though people in Newfoundland and Labrador, served by both the provincial force, the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, and the federal RCMP, are most favourable towards about their police (86%)

Discontent is more evident when focusing on major cities. In many of Canada's big cities: Metro Vancouver, Winnipeg, Greater Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax, favourability is lower and unfavourable views rise to one-quarter or higher:

And thinking about the police in your own community where you live, do you generally view them favourably or unfavourably?											
	Total (5,005)	Major City									
		VAN (n318)	CGY (n160)	EDM (n240)	REG (n124)	SSK (n123)	WPG (n304)	GTA (n474)	MTL (n293)	QC (n96*)	HFX (n128)
Net: Favourable	75%	69%	79%	79%	84%	75%	70%	69%	67%	74%	72%
Net: Unfavourable	21%	27%	16%	19%	16%	19%	26%	24%	29%	22%	25%
Not sure /Don't know	5%	4%	5%	2%	1%	5%	4%	7%	4%	4%	3%

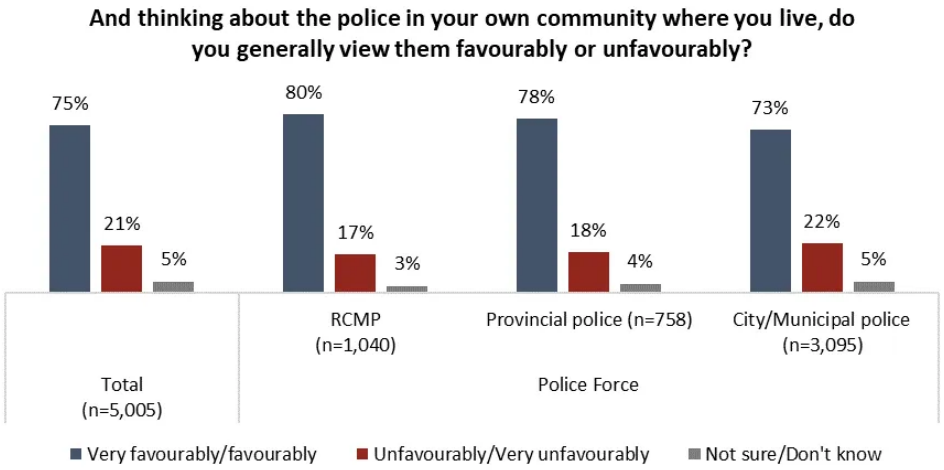
**indicates small sample size, interpret with caution*

This trend toward lower favourability in urban centres is clearer when comparing directly to those Canadians who live in sparsely populated areas. Urban Canadians are about 40 per cent more likely to view police unfavourably than those in rural areas:



<u>Type of police department has little impact on opinion</u>

The type of police force that serve Canadians in their community does not appear to play a major role in favourability. Those who have a municipal police force are slightly less likely to say that they hold favourable views than those who rely on a provincial or RCMP force as their primary community service. Municipal police in Canada make up the largest cohort of individual officers; in 2017, 56 per cent[2] of all police in Canada were employed by a stand-alone municipal department.



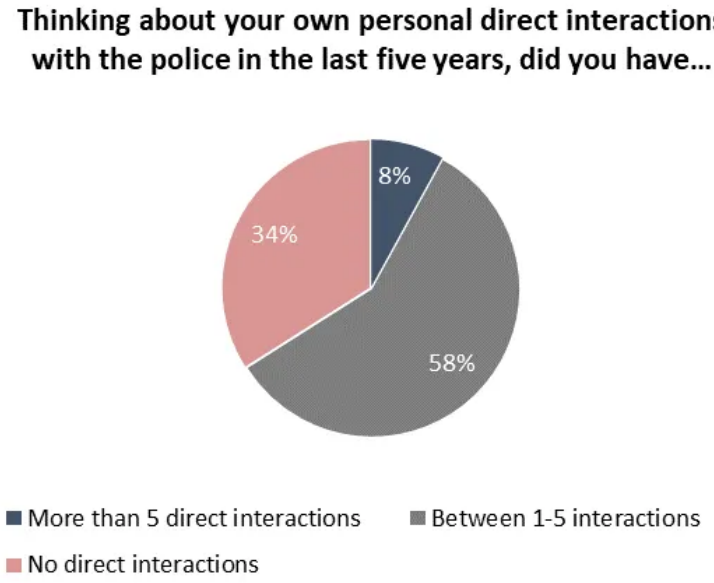
Part Two: Interactions with Police

In order to separate broader perceptions from personal experiences, respondents were asked how many times they have had an experience with an officer and whether that experience was positive or problematic.

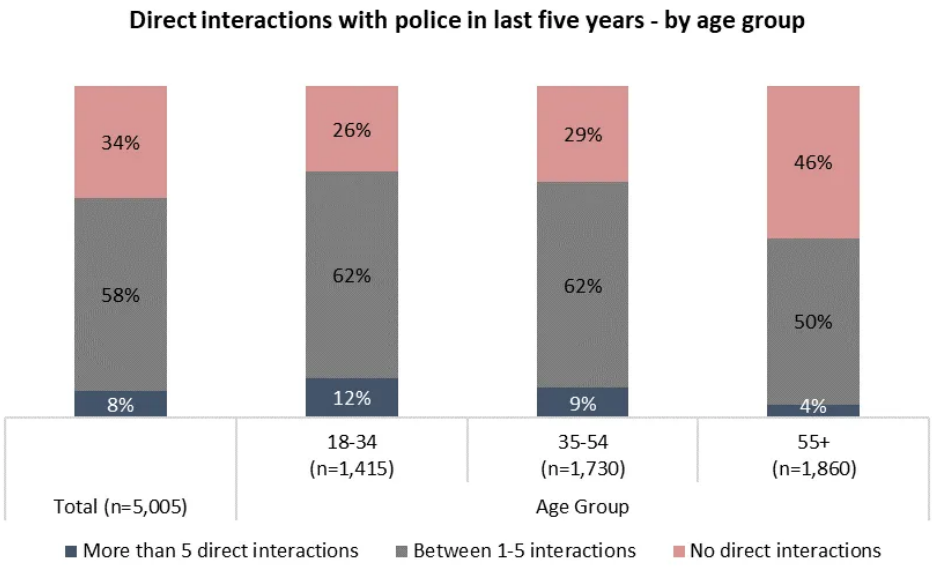
Two-thirds have interacted with an officer

The majority of Canadian adults had at least one "direct interaction" with a police officer in the last five years, described as "anything from a traffic stop, to speeding ticket, to reporting a break in or disturbance, or an arrest". Due to confidentiality, respondents were not asked specific details about their encounter.

Three-in-five (58%) say that they have had between one and five direct interactions, while eight per cent say that they have had more than five.

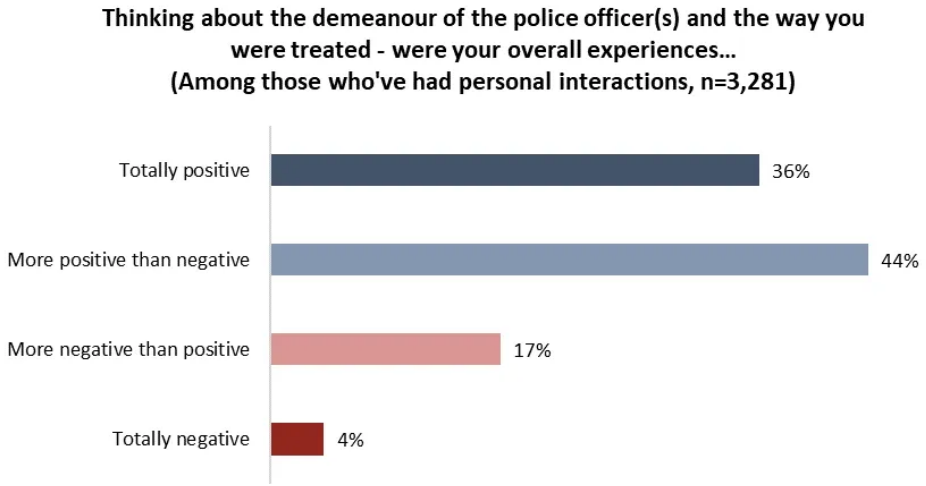


Canadians older than 54 years are far less likely to have had direct experience with officers over the past five years. Meanwhile, three-quarters of 18 to 34-year-olds have had interactions:



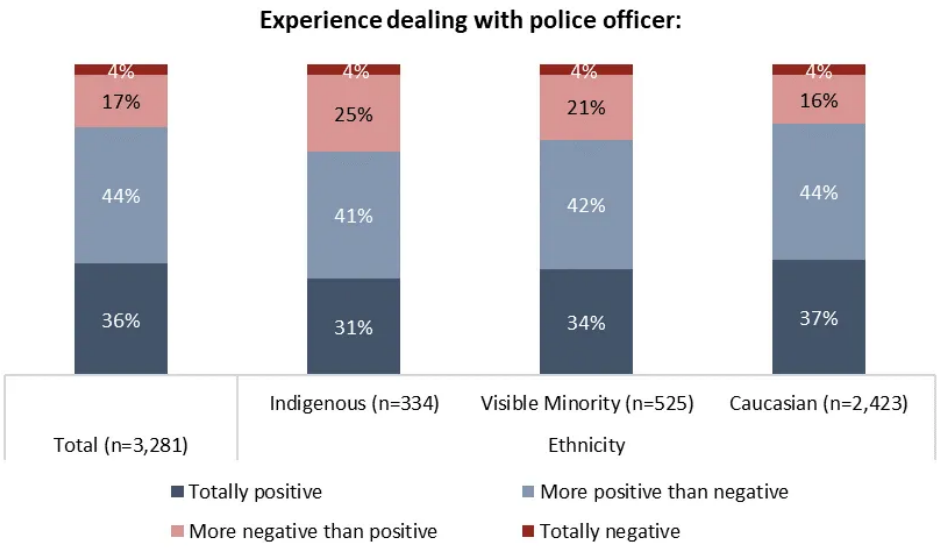
Indigenous peoples more likely to have negative experience

Among those who have had direct interactions with police, one-in-three (36%) say this was an entirely positive experience. Just over two-in-five (44%) say it was more positive than negative, while one-in-five (21%) say that the experience was more negative or totally negative.



The type of police force with which a person has interacted is not a huge factor in experience, but it is worth noting that experiences with the RCMP are overall, more positive than interactions with municipal police (see detailed tables[3]).

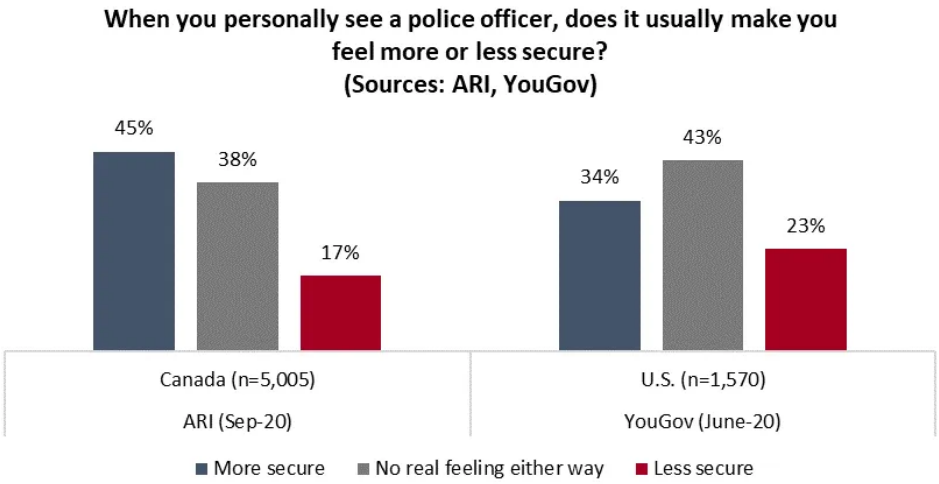
Indigenous respondents are most likely to say that their experiences have been negative. Three-in-ten (29%) say this, compared to one-quarter of visible minorities (25%) and one-in-five Caucasians (20%):



Part Three: Do police make Canadians feel more or less secure?

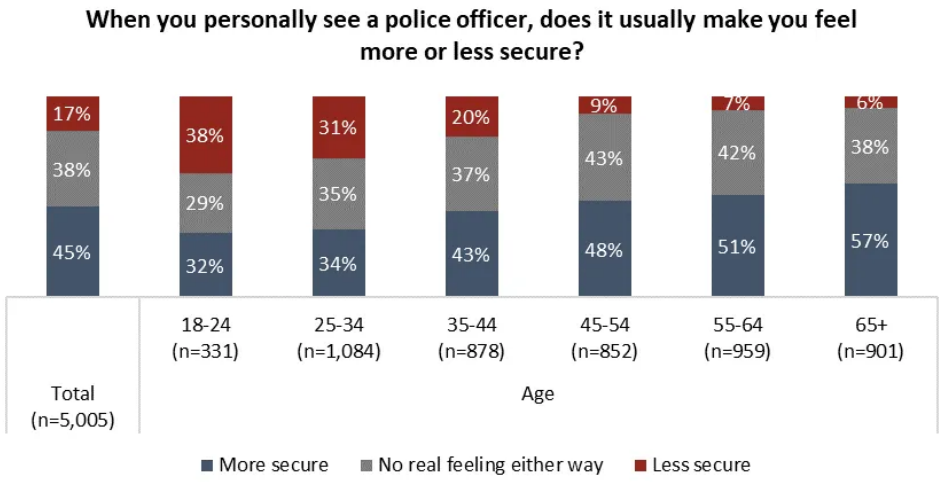
Canada compared to United States

Another valuable measure of Canadian public opinion is how secure Canadians feel around police. Overall, fewer than half of the population says they feel *more* secure when they see a police officer. For one-in-five (17%) seeing an officer in public generates unease. Canadian responses are considerably more positive than those given by Americans:



Wide differences by age and ethnic background

The generational story again highlights divisions. Younger Canadians feel much more threatened by police presence than their older ones:



Also notable are the responses from Indigenous respondents and visible minorities. Both groups are more likely to say that they feel less secure when police are around than Caucasian respondents.

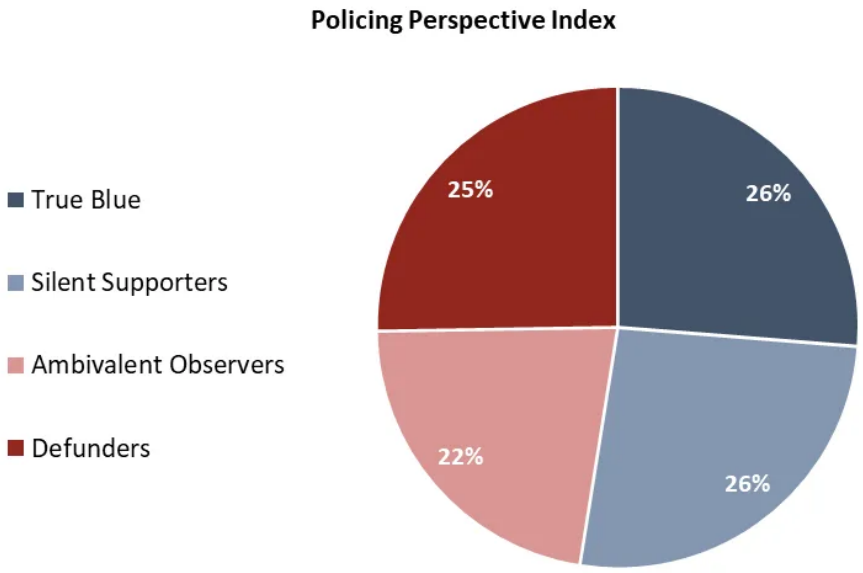
Younger Indigenous respondents are equally likely to say that they more secure (35%) and less secure (35%) in the presence of police. Meanwhile, younger visible minorities are most likely to voice feeling less safe – two-in-five do so (39%).

When you personally see a police officer, does it usually make you feel more or less secure?										
	Total n=5,005	Indigenous n=438			Visible Minority n=828			Caucasian n=3,741		
		18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+	18-34	35-54	55+
More secure	45%	35%	39%	47%	35%	47%	52%	33%	46%	54%
Less secure	17%	35%	25%	8%	39%	16%	8%	30%	13%	6%
No change	38%	30%	37%	45%	26%	37%	40%	37%	41%	39%

Part Four: Policing Perspective Index

To distill the numerous viewpoints in Canada about policing, researchers at the Angus Reid Institute created an index based on responses to seven different questions about police and their place in the community. Further methodology may be found at the end of this report.

The Policing Perspective Index places Canadians into four groups. The True Blue, Silently Supportive, the Ambivalent Observers and the Defunders:



Four Perspectives in Canada

Before exploring their attitudes and opinions when it comes to policing in Canada, it is worth considering the demographic makeup of each group in the Index. Below are a number of the broad demographic characteristics from each:

True Blue: 26% of population

- Wealthier: 39 per cent have an annual household income of over $100K
- Equally likely to be male (52%) or female (48%)
- Highest proportions found in Alberta and Saskatchewan
- Lowest proportion of university educated
- More Conservative: 61 per cent of True Blue voted CPC in the last federal election

Silent Supporters: 26% of population

- Household income distribution consistent with national average
- Highest proportion of women (56%) to men (44%) of the four groups
- Highest proportions found in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec
- Equally Liberal (37%) and Conservative (35%)

Ambivalent Observers: 22% of population

- Consistent household income and age distributions, nearly identical to national average for both
- Slightly more female (53%) than male (47%)
- Highest proportions found in British Columbia and Quebec
- Significant segments voted for Liberals (37%), CPC (28%) and NDP (18%) in 2019

Defunders: 25% of population

- Equally likely to be male (48%) and female (51%) but much younger than other groups
- Highest proportions found in Manitoba and Ontario
- Highest proportion of university educated
- Largest number of past Liberal (47%) and NDP (28%) voters among the four groups

Below is a detailed regional distribution of each group by province:

Policing Perspective Index by Province										
	Total (5,005)	Region								
		BC (628)	AB (599)	SK (500)	MB (485)	ON (1,026)	QC (868)	NB (235)	NS (312)	NL (254)
True Blue	26%	29%	39%	44%	33%	21%	22%	34%	28%	33%
Silent Supporters	26%	22%	22%	27%	21%	25%	33%	28%	27%	38%
Ambivalent Observers	22%	25%	18%	14%	19%	21%	25%	20%	21%	19%
Defunders	25%	24%	21%	15%	27%	33%	20%	19%	24%	11%

Below is a detailed regional distribution of each group by major city:

Policing Perspective Index by Major City											
	Total (5,005)	Major City									
		VAN (n318)	CGY (n160)	EDM (n240)	REG (n124)	SSK (n123)	WPG (n304)	GTA (n474)	MTL (n293)	QC (n96*)	HFX (n128)
True Blue	26%	25%	35%	36%	37%	38%	26%	17%	18%	34%	27%
Silent Supporters	26%	20%	22%	19%	27%	26%	20%	23%	28%	23%	25%
Ambivalent Observers	22%	25%	21%	18%	15%	17%	20%	20%	26%	22%	20%
Defunders	25%	29%	22%	26%	22%	19%	33%	39%	28%	21%	28%

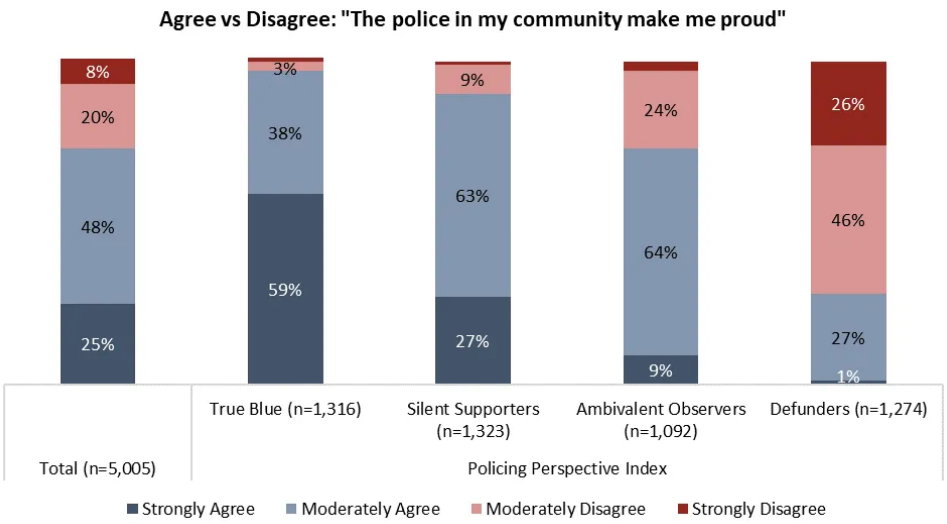
**indicates small sample size, interpret with caution*

Part Five: Analysis by Policing Perspective Index

These four groups have widely varying attitudes towards the police. This is demonstrated by how much pride each group feels for their local department, their past experiences with officers, and whether seeing one gives them a sense of security or not. The differences between groups is often stark, reflecting the disparate views held in Canada.

Pride in community police

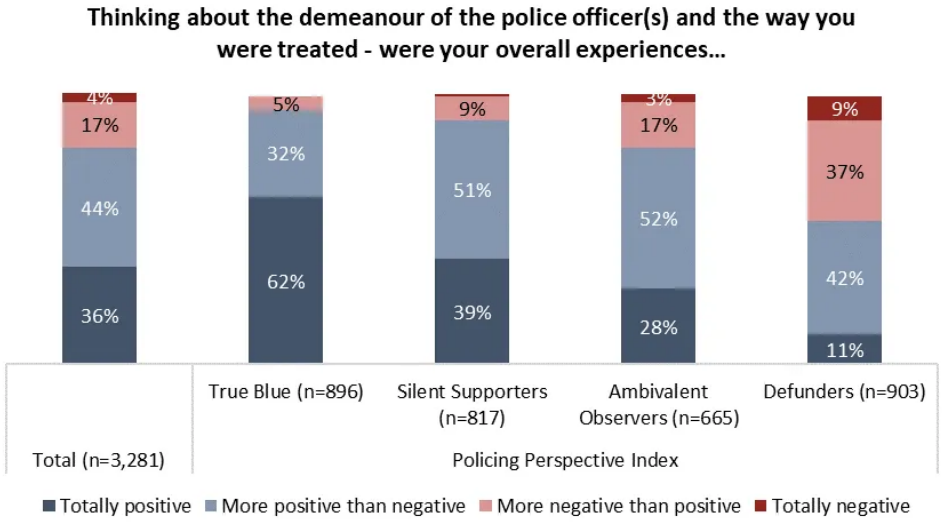
First, consider the responses given across these groups on the question of pride in their community police. For the True Blue, the feeling or pride is strong, and it is unanimous. Silent Supporters feel a consistent but more muted pride, Ambivalent Observers are 'moderate' in their views, while Defunders tend to disagree with the notion:



Defunders equally likely to say experience positive, negative

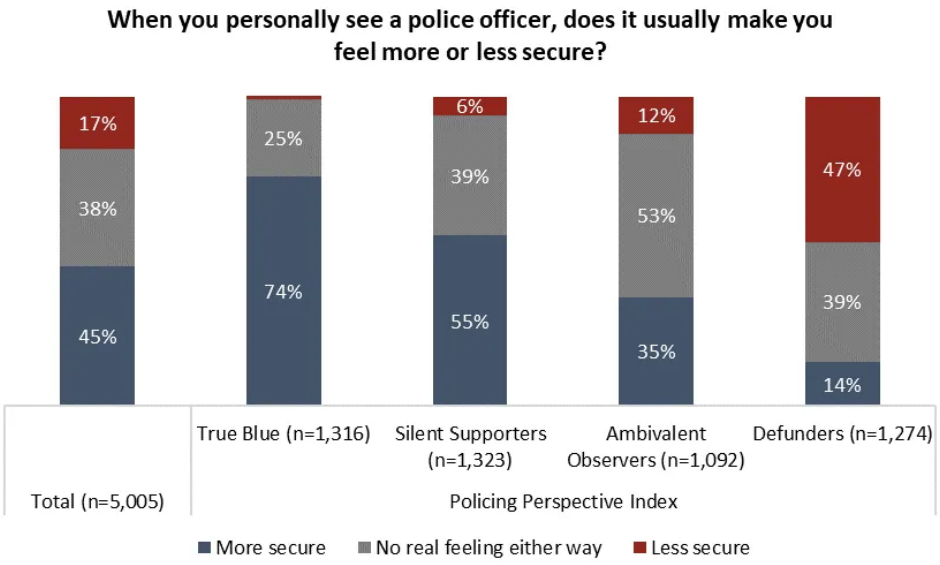
The Policing Perspective Index also offers an additional dimension by which to look at Canadians' personal experiences with police. First, consider the variance in overall experience among members of these groups that have had at least one direct encounter with a police officer in the last five years.

Those among the True Blue and Silent Supporters, tending to be older, wealthier, and more conservative, have had few poor experiences with a police officer. The Defunders, younger, urban, left-leaning Canadians, are far more divided.



Defunders feel less secure, True Blue safer

Perceptions of safety in the presence of police also vary among these four groups. Those who feel less secure are found primarily in the Defunders group; half (47%) of them feel this way. Meanwhile, half of Ambivalent Observers say that police presence makes no impact either way (53%) and majorities of the two other groups feel more secure.



Coming up next: Policy issues, defunding, and systemic racism

Canadian opinions towards issues such as police budgets, rehabilitation of criminals, and systemic racism in policing will be canvassed in the second part of this comprehensive study.

Notes on Methodology

The Policing Perspectives Index is based on responses to seven questions. Respondents were scored first on six attitudinal statements related to police conduct, based on whether they agreed or disagreed:

- The police are too quick to use force to solve a problem
- There is a serious problem with systemic racism in the RCMP
- Police officers are not held accountable when they abuse their power
- Police unions cover up for bad cops
- Complaints about police misconduct are taken seriously in my community

Additionally, respondents were scored on a separate question related to the amount of money that is spent on the police in their community.

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, click here.[4]

For detailed results by Policing Perspective Index, ethnicity, and urban centres, click here.[5]

For detailed results by finer age groups, click here.[6]

For detailed results by age of ethnic group, click here.[7]

To read the full report, including detailed tables and methodology, click here.[8]

To read the questionnaire, click here.[9]

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Related Posts

Endnotes:

1. participated: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Floyd_protests_in_Canada
2. 56 per cent: https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54912-eng.htm
3. see detailed tables: http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.05_PolicePart1_PoliceType_PRTables.pdf

4. ***click here.***: http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.05_PolicePart1_Demo_PRTables.pdf
5. ***click here.***: http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.05_PolicePart1_IndexEthCity_PRTables.pdf
6. ***click here.***: http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.05_PolicePart1_FineAge_PRTables.pdf
7. ***click here.***: http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.05_PolicePart1_AgeEth_PRTables.pdf
8. click here.: http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.09_Policing.pdf
9. click here.: http://angusreid.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2020.10.09_Policing_Part1_Qnaire.pdf
10. **shachi.kurl@angusreid.org**: mailto:shachi.kurl@angusreid.org
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