

A CANADIAN SPRING: MORE PEOPLE SEE COUNTRY MOVING IN RIGHT DIRECTION; CANADIANS SEE ITS REPUTATION MUCH HIGHER IN THE WORLD



Nik Nanos

In his fifth annual *Mood of Canada* survey for *Policy Options*, Nik Nanos finds Canadians in much better humour than a year ago. Nearly two Canadians in three think the country is moving in the right direction. And nearly half of Canadians think Canada's standing in the world has improved over the last year. He calls it "a Canadian spring."

Ce cinquième sondage annuel sur l'humeur du Canada, réalisé par Nik Nanos pour *Options politiques*, a trouvé les Canadiens dans de bien meilleures dispositions qu'il y un an : près des deux tiers croient que leur pays est engagé dans la bonne direction, près de la moitié pensent que sa réputation internationale s'est améliorée. Une sorte de « printemps canadien », observe le spécialiste des sondages.

Canadians are in much better humour about their country, and its standing in the world, than they were a year ago. Fully 63.5 percent of Canadians think the country is moving in the right direction, up from about 52 percent in 2010. And nearly half of Canadians, 48.7 percent, think Canada's reputation in the world has improved over the last year — up 20 points in one year. You could call it "a Canadian spring."

These are the principal findings of the fifth annual *Mood of Canada* poll conducted by Nanos Research for *Policy Options*. Nanos Research was in the field from October 20 to 24 and polled 1,202 Canadians by telephone. The margin of error for this random survey is plus or minus 2.8 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

These are strong numbers for Stephen Harper and his new Conservative majority government. The Prime Minister's and the government's approval scores are also much improved over a year ago, with 40.2 percent of Canadians saying their performance was very good or good, up 10 points from 2010. Only 24.3 percent gave them poor or very poor scores, down four points from last year (question 1).

Even on the thorny question of federal-provincial relations, 18 percent of Canadians rate them improved, up from only 12 percent last year, while those who say relations have not improved have declined from 36 to 30 percent (question 3).

But it is the numbers on the country moving in the right direction, and Canadians' perception of their standing in the world, that show an uptick.

In the five years we've been doing the *Mood of Canada* survey for *Policy Options*, the right direction upswing is at 63.5 percent, up from 52.2 percent in 2010 (question 2).

The arrival of a "strong, stable, national Conservative majority government," to quote the PM on the campaign trail, may have something to do with it.

The fact that Canada also has the strongest economic performance of any G7 country coming out of the recession would not have gone unnoticed by Canadians.

Canada's superior economic performance is possibly part of "the Canadian spring," which we see as being multi-faceted in terms of how Canadians see their reputation and standing improving in the world. This "Canadian spring" is relative to the turbulence Canadians are witnessing outside of their borders, including our American neighbour to the south and the Europeans.

With regard to diplomacy and defence, Canadians obviously feel things are improving, with the end of our combat role in Afghanistan, and Canadian participation in and indeed leadership of the NATO mission to Libya, which resulted in the ouster of the Gadhafi regime after more than 40 years of dictatorship. Canadian planes flew more than 10 percent of the 6,000 sorties that gave the rebels ownership of the sky above Libya.

Normally, foreign policy is not a top-of-mind issue and it is seldom a ballot question in elections, but after a low in 2010 of about 28.7 percent of Canadians who thought Canada's reputation around the world had

improved or somewhat improved, that number has jumped to 48.7 percent (question 4).

But as with the right direction numbers, Canadians' self-perceived reputational data have never gone

up so sharply in the five-year history of the *Mood of Canada* poll.

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Question 1. Would you describe the performance of the current federal Conservative government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper as very good, good, average, poor or very poor?

		Total <i>n</i>	Very good %	Good %	Average %	Poor %	Very poor %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,202	13.4	26.8	32.1	12.8	11.5	3.4
	Atlantic	120	14.5	25.5	35.4	15.9	6.9	1.7
	Quebec	300	7.3	24.4	29.6	15.0	19.1	4.7
	Ontario	359	12.8	27.0	37.5	12.4	7.7	2.6
	Prairies	243	18.1	36.0	24.9	9.2	7.9	3.9
	BC	180	17.5	19.1	33.2	12.4	14.3	3.5
Gender	Male	579	14.6	29.8	31.4	10.3	12.1	1.8
	Female	622	12.3	24.1	32.7	15.1	10.9	4.9
Age	18 to 29	246	13.7	24.9	29.7	15.0	15.0	1.7
	30 to 39	204	7.7	29.4	38.1	13.2	6.3	5.3
	40 to 49	249	12.7	27.5	36.6	11.2	8.6	3.4
	50 to 59	221	14.2	21.7	30.0	14.5	15.3	4.3
	60 plus	282	17.2	30.0	27.6	10.6	11.7	2.9
Vote profile	Liberal	226	11.2	28.9	35.0	14.5	9.7	0.7
	Conservative	364	29.4	40.9	20.1	5.8	3.2	0.5
	NDP	289	3.4	15.9	37.9	19.6	21.2	1.9
	Bloc	35	3.4	10.1	23.1	16.0	43.9	3.5
	Green	37	0.0	8.4	50.2	16.0	25.4	0.0
	Other	14	31.3	0.0	35.0	10.3	4.6	18.9
	Undecided	235	5.5	23.5	39.0	12.6	7.5	12.0

Question 2. Would you say that Canada as a country is moving in the right direction or the wrong direction?

		Total <i>n</i>	Right direction %	Wrong direction %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,202	63.5	27.9	8.5
	Atlantic	120	64.0	27.2	8.7
	Quebec	300	51.7	38.9	9.5
	Ontario	359	68.0	21.3	10.7
	Prairies	243	71.6	21.4	6.9
	BC	180	63.1	32.3	4.5
Gender	Male	579	64.9	27.5	7.7
	Female	622	62.3	28.4	9.3
Age	18 to 29	246	60.3	30.9	8.8
	30 to 39	204	61.6	29.6	8.8
	40 to 49	249	69.1	22.7	8.2
	50 to 59	221	61.2	31.6	7.2
	60 plus	282	64.7	26.0	9.3
Vote profile	Liberal	226	63.6	27.7	8.7
	Conservative	364	79.8	15.1	5.1
	NDP	289	53.8	40.5	5.7
	Bloc	35	32.7	62.5	4.8
	Green	37	45.3	33.4	21.3
	Other	14	62.3	27.3	10.4
	Undecided	235	57.7	26.7	15.6

Question 3. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not improved and 5 is improved, how would you rate the relationship between the federal government and the provincial governments over the past year?

		Total <i>n</i>	Mean %	Not improved %	Somewhat not improved %	Neutral %	Somewhat improved %	Improved %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,202	2.77	14.7	15.1	42.5	12.5	5.6	9.6
	Atlantic	120	2.76	14.9	15.9	47.1	14.7	4.0	3.4
	Quebec	300	2.68	14.4	25.1	35.8	10.6	7.0	7.1
	Ontario	359	2.80	12.0	12.2	48.5	10.3	4.3	12.8
	Prairies	243	3.03	8.6	10.8	43.8	17.0	6.7	13.1
	BC	180	2.53	28.4	9.9	37.2	12.6	5.2	6.7
Gender	Male	579	2.79	15.1	15.4	41.5	14.1	5.9	8.1
	Female	622	2.76	14.3	14.9	43.5	11.0	5.4	10.9
Age	18 to 29	246	2.68	18.6	10.4	40.2	14.7	2.7	13.4
	30 to 39	204	2.76	9.9	19.4	41.8	12.5	3.0	13.5
	40 to 49	249	2.67	14.3	19.9	43.3	8.6	4.8	9.1
	50 to 59	221	2.73	18.9	13.9	40.6	13.4	6.6	6.6
	60 plus	282	2.97	11.7	13.0	45.9	13.4	9.9	6.2
Vote profile	Liberal	226	2.73	17.3	13.4	44.7	11.0	6.1	7.5
	Conservative	364	3.09	9.2	9.9	45.1	20.4	8.3	7.2
	NDP	289	2.50	20.1	21.0	40.0	8.2	3.2	7.4
	Bloc	35	2.07	27.9	38.5	25.0	1.9	1.9	4.8
	Green	37	2.67	14.0	9.3	50.7	0.0	5.4	20.6
	Other	14	2.96	14.8	4.6	48.6	4.6	13.1	14.3
	Undecided	235	2.75	12.0	15.8	40.5	11.1	4.0	16.6

Question 4. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 is not improved and 5 is improved, how would you rate Canada's reputation around the world over the past year?

		Total <i>n</i>	Mean %	Not improved %	Somewhat not improved %	Neutral %	Somewhat improved %	Improved %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,202	3.35	11.1	10.7	27.0	30.0	18.7	2.5
	Atlantic	120	3.31	11.4	9.3	31.4	30.4	15.8	1.7
	Quebec	300	3.12	11.7	17.8	27.1	28.2	12.3	3.0
	Ontario	359	3.50	10.9	7.1	24.8	32.7	22.3	2.1
	Prairies	243	3.51	8.4	9.0	28.0	27.3	24.1	3.3
	BC	180	3.28	13.9	9.3	27.1	31.3	16.5	2.0
Gender	Male	579	3.35	11.7	11.6	23.5	33.8	18.1	1.2
	Female	622	3.35	10.4	9.8	30.3	26.5	19.1	3.8
Age	18 to 29	246	3.18	15.0	9.8	31.1	29.4	14.1	0.7
	30 to 39	204	3.44	10.7	8.7	24.7	30.2	21.1	4.6
	40 to 49	249	3.33	8.9	12.0	30.3	31.4	15.4	1.9
	50 to 59	221	3.33	11.4	12.2	26.0	28.7	19.5	2.2
	60 plus	282	3.48	9.6	10.6	23.1	30.4	23.1	3.3
Vote profile	Liberal	226	3.31	13.8	11.8	25.0	25.9	22.3	1.1
	Conservative	364	3.69	7.7	7.3	18.5	40.3	25.1	1.1
	NDP	289	3.03	17.3	12.6	31.3	24.0	13.0	1.8
	Bloc	35	2.64	19.7	23.3	35.0	17.8	4.3	0.0
	Green	37	3.47	6.0	5.4	34.9	26.3	16.7	10.7
	Other	14	3.89	.0	4.6	33.1	21.9	31.9	8.5
	Undecided	235	3.34	6.2	11.9	34.0	28.5	13.9	5.5