



## FACTUM

### Half of Canadians (52%) Say COVID-19 Hasn't Brought Them Any Closer Together; Sense of Isolation and Loneliness as Strong Today as in the Spring (54%)

Provincial identity strengthens: one in three don't feel they have much in common with Canadians in other provinces

**Toronto, ON, January 1, 2021** – The lockdowns, distancing and masks that have characterized much of 2020 have kept Canadians apart like never before. A new Ipsos study conducted exclusively for Global News examines how this unprecedented period of isolation has impacted social cohesion in Canada – and finds that while most are missing the quality time with those they love, many feel like the experience has done little to unite us.

#### *A common struggle, but few commonalities*

Enforced time apart has made Canadians yearn for spending time together: more than half (54%) agree that physical distancing has left them feeling lonely or isolated – unchanged since April – and three in four (75%) now value time spent with their friends and family more than they did before the pandemic.

Beyond that, however, there is less of a sense that we are all in this together. More than half of Canadians (52%) disagree (13% strongly/39% somewhat) that COVID-19 has brought Canadians closer together. This feeling is strongest in Alberta – where the second wave has hit particularly hard at a time when the province is already in economic turmoil – with more than two in three (68%) Albertans disagreeing that Canadians are any closer than they were pre-pandemic.

For some, it's a question of difference. One in three Canadians (32%) disagree that they have a lot in common with Canadians living in other provinces, rising to half (49%) in Quebec. A majority (68%) do agree (10% strongly/58% somewhat) they have "lots in common" with Canadians living in other provinces – a feeling shared by roughly three in four in Alberta (76%), Ontario (75%), BC (74%), and the Prairies (72%), two in three Atlantic Canadians (58%), and half of Quebecers (51%).

The sense of isolation many of us have felt in 2020 includes a sense of distance from those who live closest to us: four in ten Canadians feel like they have nothing in common with their neighbours, with 42% agreeing (10% strongly/32% somewhat).

#### *Stronger provincial identity fuels sense of difference, isolation*

In most parts of the country, a majority consider themselves Canadian first (63%), leaving 37% who identify with their province first. Provincial identity has strengthened significantly (+7 points) since the last time Ipsos asked question eight years ago: in 2012, seven in ten (70%) saw themselves as Canadians first, compared to three in ten (30%) who most closely identified with their province.



## FACTUM

Identity matters because it influences opinions significantly: those who say they identify with their province first are less likely to feel they have a lot in common with Canadians in others province: only 54% do, compared to 76% of those who see themselves as Canadians first. Interestingly, those who identify more closely with their province than with Canada are also significantly more likely to agree that physical distancing has left them feeling lonely or isolated (58% vs. 51% of those who identify as Canadian first).

Quebec (53%) and Atlantic Canada (50%) are currently the only two regions where half or more identify with their province first and foremost, while clear majorities in Ontario (74%), Alberta (73%), BC (64%), and the Prairies (58%) say they are Canadian first.

### *No quick return to normal*

Canadians have grown more cynical than they were in the early days of the pandemic about the possibility of a quick return to normal life. Once the spread of the virus is contained, only 57% are confident that things like work, school, and social life will get back to the way they were before the pandemic, marking an 8-point downturn in confidence since in April.

Despite the uncertain future and the strains put on Canadians' sense of social cohesion, there is still some sense of common struggle in the face of the pandemic, which could help explain why a majority in every province *disagree* that their province should get access to COVID-19 vaccines first. Disagreement is highest in Alberta (79%) and lowest in Quebec (59%). In Canada overall, 68% disagree that their province should be first in line for the vaccine, while one in three (32%) agree that they *should* get priority.



## FACTUM

### About the Study

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos poll conducted between December 11-14, 2020, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,000 Canadians aged 18+ was interviewed online. Quotas and weighting were employed to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the Canadian population according to census parameters. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within  $\pm 3.5$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadians aged 18+ been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

### For more information on this news release, please contact:

Darrell Bricker  
CEO, Ipsos Global Public Affairs  
+1 416 324 2001  
[Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com](mailto:Darrell.Bricker@ipsos.com)

© 2020, Ipsos Limited Partnership

*This polling release and the data contained in it are the sole and exclusive property of Ipsos. They are NOT designed to support any election outcome or prediction model and no license to use the polling release or the data is either granted or implied by their publication. Ipsos does not endorse, and has no responsibility for the accuracy of, the result of any predictive model that incorporates this polling data. Furthermore, any use of this information to produce polling aggregations or election models without Ipsos' written permission will be considered a violation of our intellectual property, and Ipsos reserves the right to take appropriate legal action.*

### About Ipsos

Ipsos is the world's third largest market research company, present in 90 markets and employing more than 18,000 people.

Our passionately curious research professionals, analysts and scientists have built unique multi-specialist capabilities that provide true understanding and powerful insights into the actions, opinions and motivations of citizens, consumers, patients, customers or employees. We serve more than 5000 clients across the world with 75 business solutions.

Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos is listed on the Euronext Paris since July 1st, 1999. The company is part of the SBF 120 and the Mid-60 index and is eligible for the Deferred Settlement Service (SRD).

ISIN code FR0000073298, Reuters ISOS.PA, Bloomberg IPS:FP

[www.ipsos.com](http://www.ipsos.com)