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What She-cession? Canadians Point to Divisions Between Rich and Poor as Major Social Tension, Downplay Gender Divide

Seven in ten (69%) recognize tension between rich and poor, 37% note tension between men and women

Toronto, ON June 8th, 2021 — A once-in-a-lifetime event like the COVID-19 pandemic can serve to bring people together, or to highlight their divisions. Over the course of the past 15 months, countries from around the world have seen news headlines discussing the “she-cession”, or health inequities between different races and age groups. Despite many saying “we’re all in this together,” a new global Ipsos study suggests many countries around the world perceive divisions within their borders.

Greatest tension in Canada between the rich and poor

A new Ipsos Global Advisor poll, carried out in partnership with the Policy Institute at King’s College London asked respondents in 28 countries to indicate how much tension there is between varying demographic groups. Canadians indicate that the dichotomy between the rich and the poor is the most tense relationship (69%) in the country, in line with the data showing people worldwide perceive most tension to exist between the rich and poor (Global Country Average of 74% say there is at least a fair amount of tension).

Notably, despite conversations in the media and political realms about gender equality or the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on women, Canadians place tensions between the binary genders as some of the lowest in relative terms with only 37% stating there is at least a fair amount of tension between the genders.

With financial tensions ranking as the highest in the nation, and gender differences being perceived as some of the lowest, in the middle is a variety of dichotomies Canadians were asked to weigh in on.

| How much tension, if any, would you say there is between... | Canada % good deal/fair amount of tension | Global Average % good deal/fair amount of tension |
|--|---|---|
| Rich and poor | 69% | 74% |
| Different ethnicities | 64% | 62% |
| Immigrants and people born in Canada | 63% | 66% |
| Those with more socially liberal, progressive ideas and those with more traditional values | 61% | 65% |
| People who support different political parties | 59% | 69% |
| Different social classes | 59% | 67% |





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| The metropolitan elite and ordinary working people | 56% | 62% |
| Different religions | 53% | 57% |
| Old and young | 38% | 46% |
| Men and women | 37% | 48% |
| Those in cities and those outside of cities | 36% | 42% |
| Those with a university education and those without a university education | 33% | 47% |

Canadians indicated that the relationship between different ethnicities is the second most tense relationship (64% say there is a good deal/fair amount of tension) in their country. Similar proportions indicate that tensions between immigrants and people born in Canada (63%), between social progressives and those with traditional values (61%), those of differing social class (59%) and those who support different political parties (59%) also plague the country.

There is relatively less tension seen between those of differing religions (53%), between old and young (38%), by levels of education (33%), or between cities and those outside cities (36%).

It is notable that in all cases except one, the perceived tensions in Canada fall below that of the global average, which would suggest that Canadians have lower societal tensions than most countries. However, Canada sits slightly above average regarding tensions between differing ethnic groups, indicating that there may be strain below the surface for a country which prides itself in welcoming newcomers and immigrants.

Canadians ambivalent towards being politically correct

People in the 28 countries surveyed were asked to rate their feelings about political correctness on a scale from 0 to 7, with 0 meaning many people are too easily offended and 7 meaning people need to change the way they talk to be more sensitive to those from different backgrounds. Overall, in most of the countries most people leaned towards believing we need to change the way people talk (in the Global Country Average, 31% placed themselves 0 to 3 on the scale and 60% 4 to 7). Canadians were most likely to feel ambivalent (45%) towards political correctness, not leaning towards either pole.

Culture wars less of a concern for Canadians

Just over a third of people globally think their country is divided by “culture wars”. Respondents were asked “From what you see on TV, in the news media, and online and in your conversations with others, to what extent do you agree or disagree that [your country] is divided by “culture wars”?” Three in ten (28%) Canadians agreed with this statement, below the global country average of 35%.

In contrast to other polled nations, Canada fell well below South Africa and the United States which led polling with 58% and 57% of respective respondents agreeing that culture wars divide their nations. However, Canada shows less unity than Japan, where only 9% of respondents agreed that culture wars plague their country.



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Notably, while in most countries relatively few actively disagreed with the statement, the level of “don’t knows” remains fairly high, suggesting that the concept of a “culture war” may remain unfamiliar for many.

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About the Study

These are the results of a 28-market survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform. Ipsos interviewed a total of 23,004 adults aged 18-74 in Singapore, 18-74 in the United States, Canada, Malaysia, South Africa and Turkey, 21-74 in Singapore and 16-74 in 22 other markets between 23 December 2020 and 8 January 2021.

The sample consists of approximately 1,000 individuals in each of Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, mainland China, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Spain and the U.S., and 500 individuals in each of Argentina, Chile, Hungary, India, Malaysia, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, and Turkey.

The samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden and the U.S. can be taken as representative of their general adult population under the age of 75.

The samples in Brazil, Chile, mainland China, India, Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, and Turkey are more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these markets should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more “connected” segment of their population.

The data is weighted so that each country’s sample composition best reflects the demographic profile of the adult population according to the most recent census data.

“The Global Country Average” reflects the average result for all the countries where the survey was conducted. It has not been adjusted to the population size of each country and is not intended to suggest a total result.

Where results do not sum to 100 or the ‘difference’ appears to be +/-1 more/less than the actual, this may be due to rounding, multiple responses, or the exclusion of “don’t know” or not stated responses.

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About Ipsos

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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).

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