

GENERATIONAL DISCONNECT IN CANADA

IPSOS EQUALITIES INDEX 2025

A 31-country Global Advisor study

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Assumptions about consistent generational views on basic ideas such as "what is fairness" are likely wrong.

Generational Divides in Canadian Society

Is there a Boomer Bubble where their lived experiences have sheltered them from today's reality?

Or ...

Are the views of younger generations a reflection of the moment?

As Sabrina Maddeaux writes in the Hub [Sabrina Maddeaux: Young Canadians deserve far better than they're getting - The Hub](#) young

Canadians are facing high taxes, declining services and dwindling opportunities.

The answers are likely yes and yes and as a result Canada is experiencing a significant philosophical divide between generations.

While Baby Boomers largely embrace a traditional meritocratic worldview where equal opportunities lead to fair outcomes based on individual effort, Gen Z is moving toward a perspective that questions whether structural factors limit the effectiveness of merit alone and whether equal outcomes should be a more direct goal.

The generation gap in Canada reflects fundamentally different frameworks for understanding fairness and success.

Recognizing these divergent starting points is essential for productive cross-generational dialogue about Canada's future and for any organization or company looking to communicate across generations in Canada.

These differences will also generate quite different policy preferences, a challenge for governments as they look to encourage growth and struggle with how to pay for or borrow for new initiatives.

The Ipsos Equalities Index 2025

[Ipsos Equalities Index 2025: More needs to be done to promote equality, but support has slipped over the last two years](#) | Ipsos reveals significant generational differences in how Canadians view success, fairness, and equality. These divergent perspectives have important implications for policymakers, businesses, and organizations looking to bridge generational gaps.

Generational Divides in Canadian Society

Different Views on Success Factors

One of the most striking findings shows a clear generational divide in how Canadians understand success: 53% of Baby Boomers believe success depends primarily on personal merit and effort, with only 19% attributing it to factors beyond individual control. For Gen X (41% credit merit and effort versus 24% citing external factors), for

Millennials (36% favor merit and effort versus 28% emphasizing external factors) and for Gen Z there is an even split (35% for both perspectives).

Contrasting Definitions of Fairness

The generations also diverge significantly on what constitutes a "fair society": 47% of Baby Boomer define fairness as equal opportunities, with only 14% prioritizing equal outcomes. For

Gen X 38% value equal opportunities versus 21% prioritizing equal outcomes. For Millennials 40% favor equal opportunities versus 23% emphasizing equal outcomes. While Gen Z is the only generation to prioritize equal outcomes (32%) over equal opportunities (29%).

Canada's Position on Equality

On the issue of equality overall Canada ranks better than most

countries on the GINI index (a measure of income inequality) and are correspondingly among the least likely to feel that equality efforts need to go further. And while the generational differences re: equality are less striking, Gen Z is the only generation that says more needs to be done on equality.

Generational Divides in Canadian Society

Why Does it Matter?

There is a need to tailor communications that narrow on a specific generation as well as those that attempt to work across generations.

The ideas of "fairness," "opportunity," and "success" differ considerably by generation. Whether you are offering a financial service aimed at creating long-term success or justifying a public policy based on its fairness understand that what might appeal to one generation may well alienate another. If you are looking to encourage people to act, say to take personal steps to address climate change or take

AI related training, the messages that will resonate with Boomers (emphasizing personal responsibility and equal opportunity) will not work with younger Canadians who see structural factors as barriers to their ability to act or achieve a certain outcome.

When it comes to workplace culture it is safe to assume that the different generations have fundamentally different expectations about fairness and merit in hiring, promotion, and compensation practices.

When it comes to diversity programs or learning initiatives older generations may prefer

"equal opportunity" framing, while younger generations may respond better to outcome-focused messaging.

Both the public and private sector could benefit from taking steps within their organizations or across society at large to create opportunities for intergenerational dialogue to build mutual understanding of their different worldviews.

Ipsos Digs Deeper

Across most of our work, whether our own proprietary studies or work for clients, we are seeing these generational differences play out. We help our clients evaluate the potential and the impact of their offers, policies and communications across all generations.

For a deeper understanding of how these generational differences might affect your work please do not hesitate to contact your Ipsos partners in Canada.

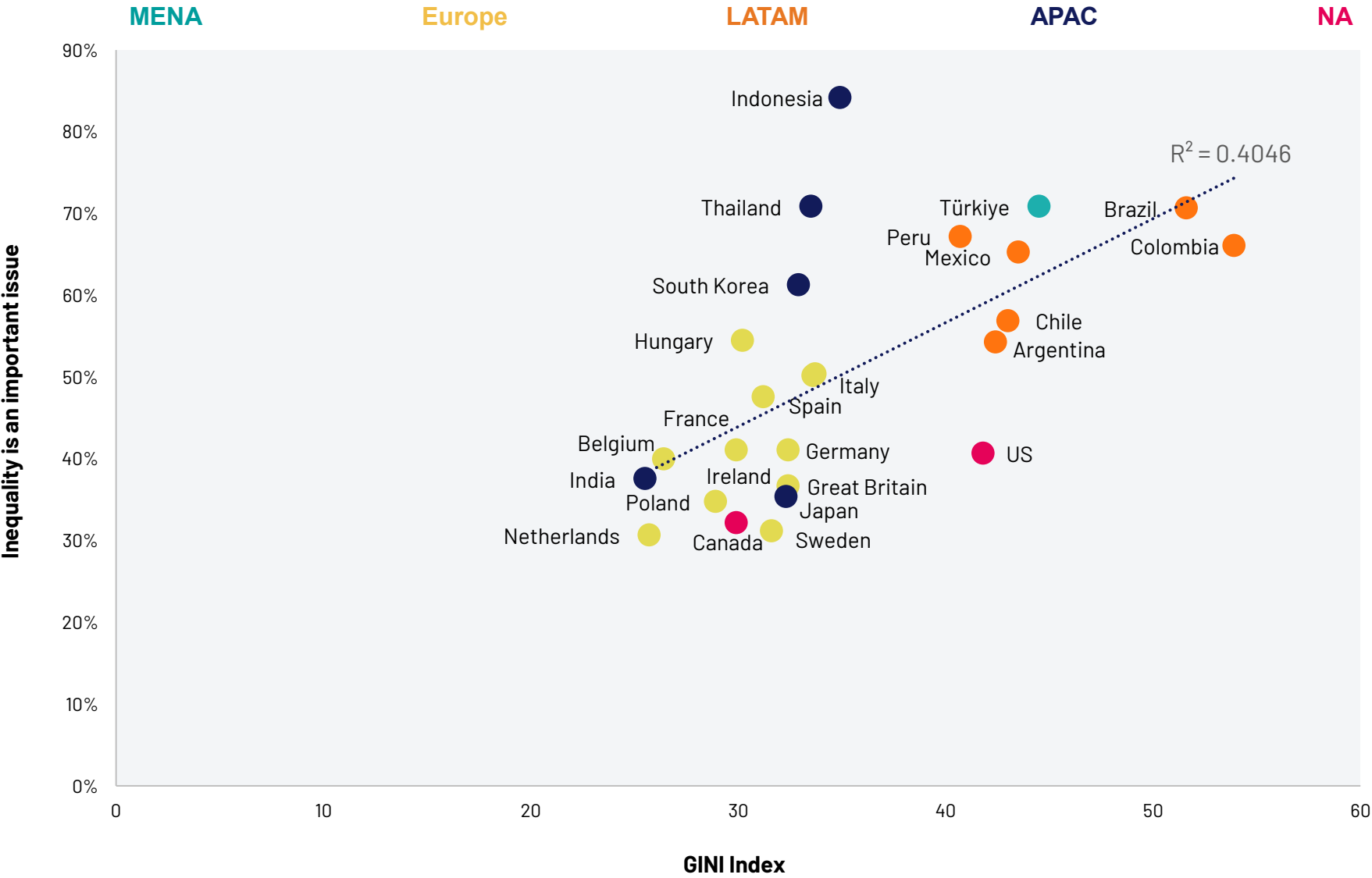


Canada ranks better than most other countries on the GINI index and also lower than most on perceived importance.

The GINI Index measures income or wealth inequality, where 0 represents perfect equality and 100 represents perfect inequality.

Base: 23,228 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 21 February and 7 March 2025.

Source: World Bank
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI>

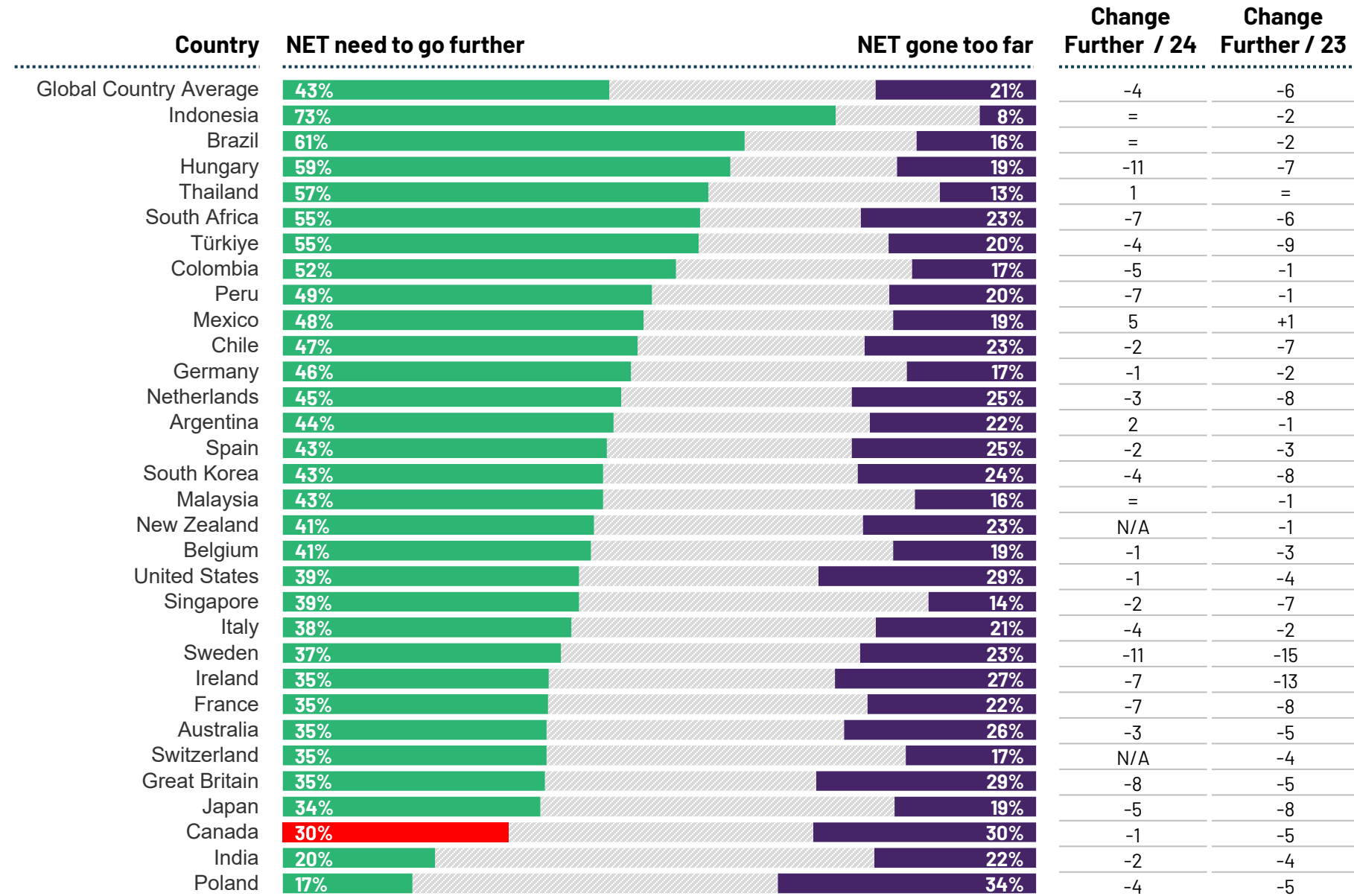


Canadians are among the least likely globally to feel that equality efforts need to go further.

Thinking about attempts to promote equality for all groups of people in your country, do you think that, overall...

- They have gone much too far
- They have gone a little too far
- They are about right
- They need to go a little further
- They need to go much further
- Not sure

Base: 23,228 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 21 February and 7 March 2025.





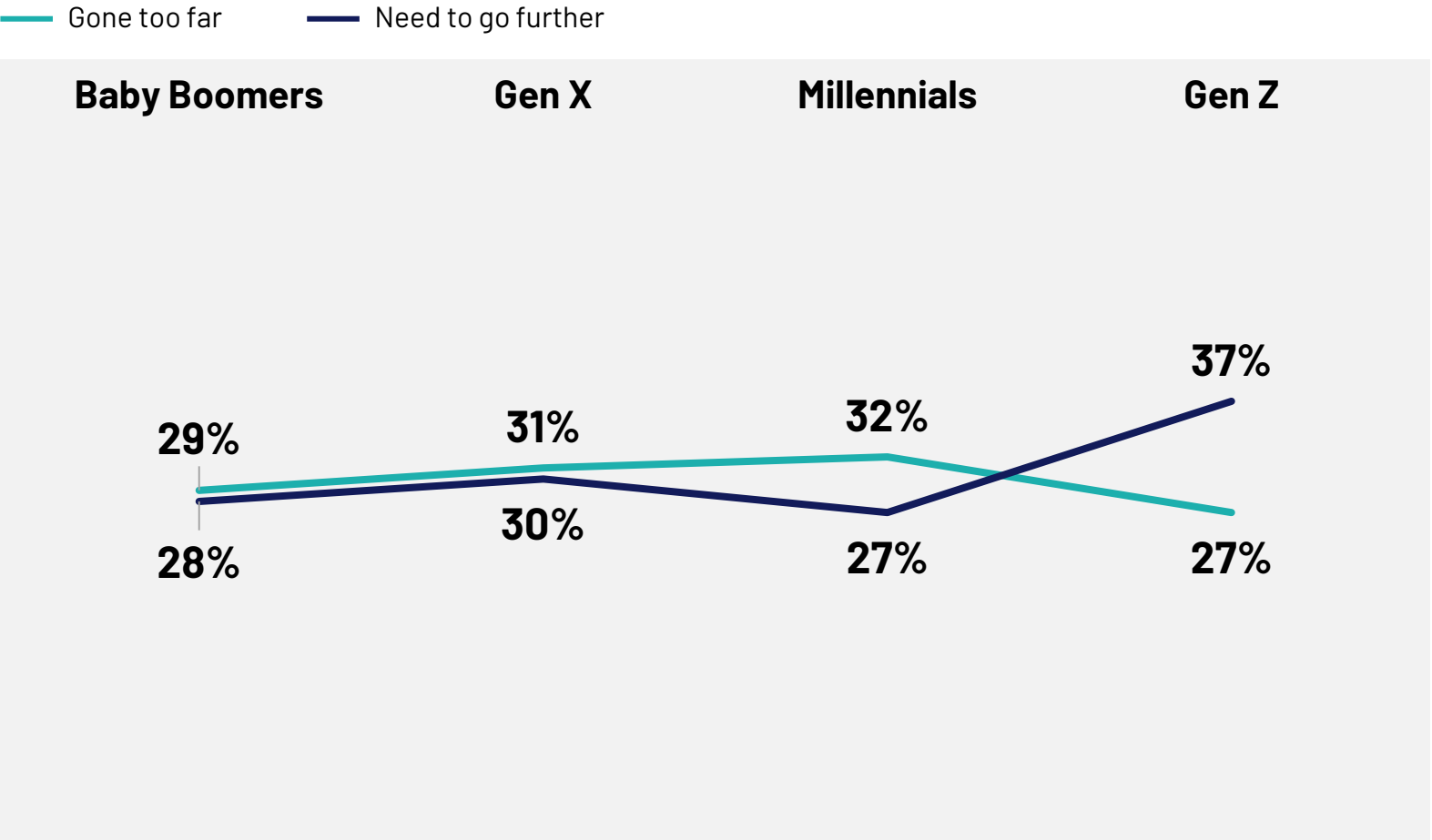
In Canada, only Generation Z feel that more needs to be done to promote equality

Thinking about attempts to promote equality for all groups of people in your country, do you think that, overall...

- They have gone much too far
- They have gone a little too far
- They are about right
- They need to go a little further
- They need to go much further
- Not sure

Base: 21,759 online adults under the age of 75, interviewed February 21, and March 7, 2025

Should we do more to promote equality?

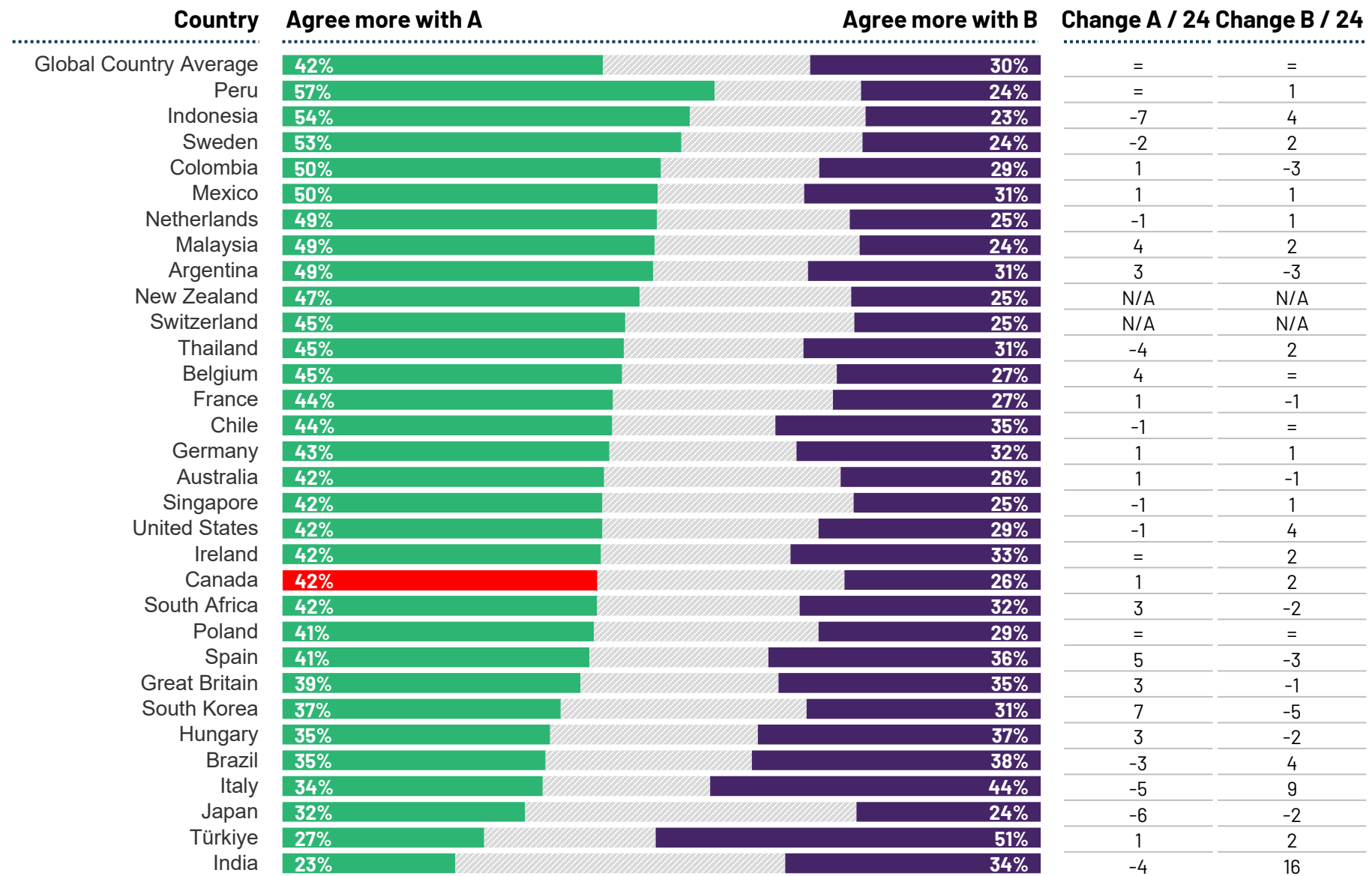


A plurality of Canadians (42%) agree that success is based on merit and effort.

With which of these two statements do you agree more?

- A. People's chances of success in your country depend mostly on their own merit and efforts
- B. People's chances of success in your country depend mostly on factors beyond their control

Base: 23,228 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 21 February and 7 March 2025.





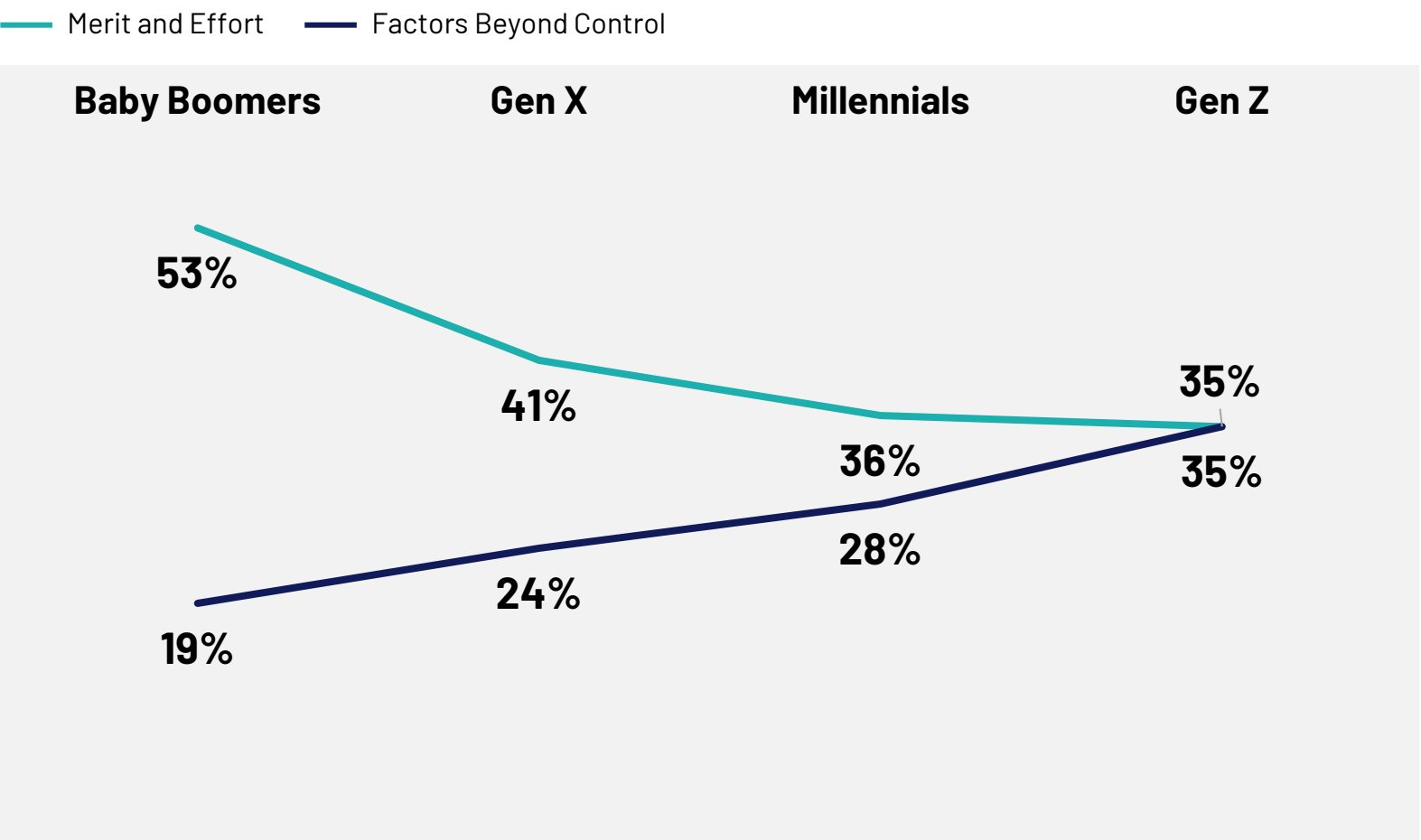
In Canada, the Generations disagree greatly on the factors for success. Boomers most likely to cite merit and effort as the key.

In your country, what do people’s chances of success depend on?

- A. People's chances of success in your country depend mostly on their own **merit and efforts**
- B. People's chances of success in your country depend mostly on factors **beyond their control**

Base: 21,759 online adults under the age of 75, interviewed February 21, and March 7, 2025

What determines Success?

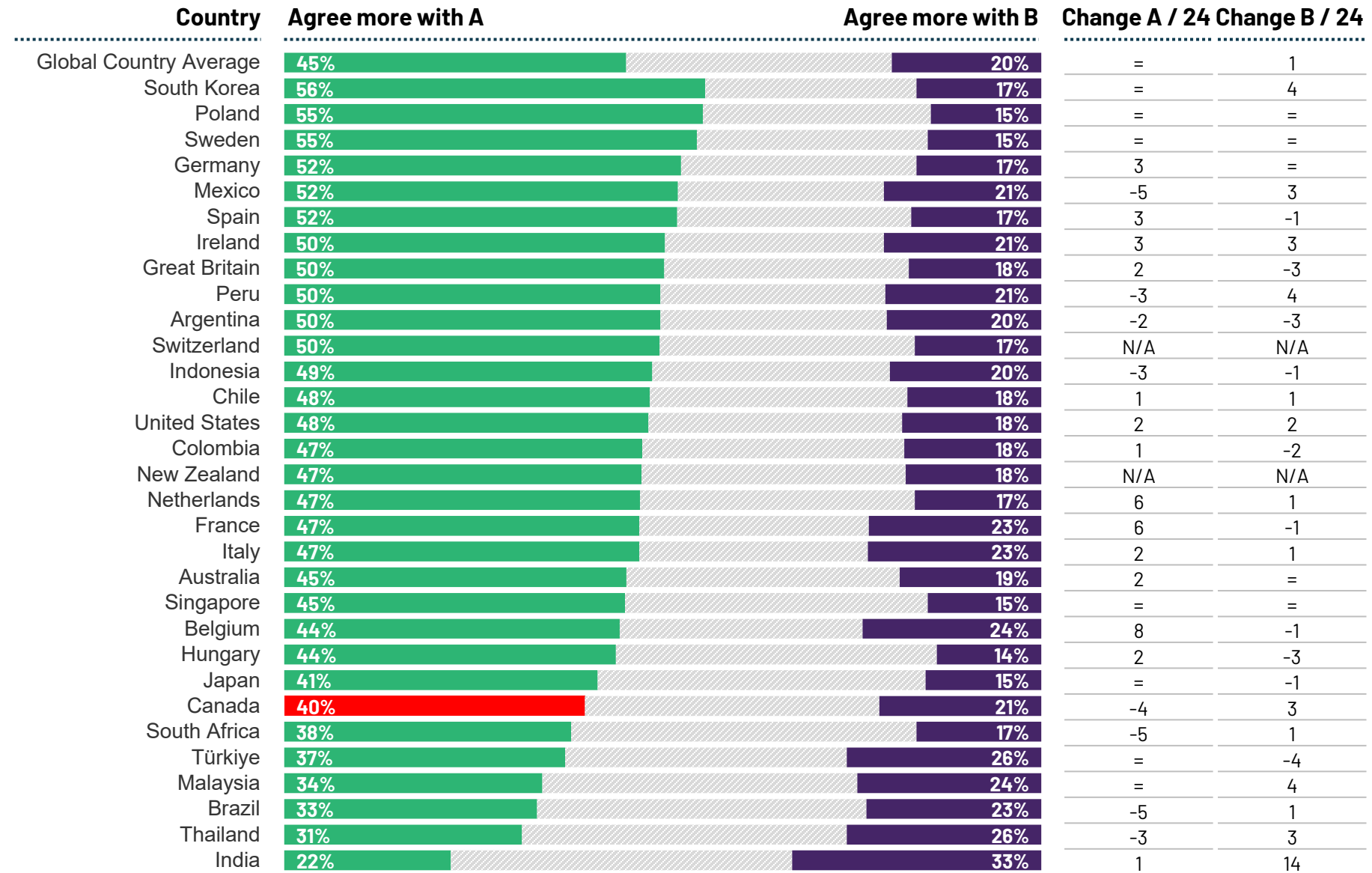


A plurality of Canadians (40%) agree that a fair society is one where everyone has the same opportunities.

Which of these two statements do you agree more?

- A. A fair society is one in which everyone is given the same opportunities
- B. A fair society is one in which everyone enjoys the same quality of life

Base: 23,228 online adults under the age of 75 across 31 countries, interviewed 21 February and 7 March 2025.





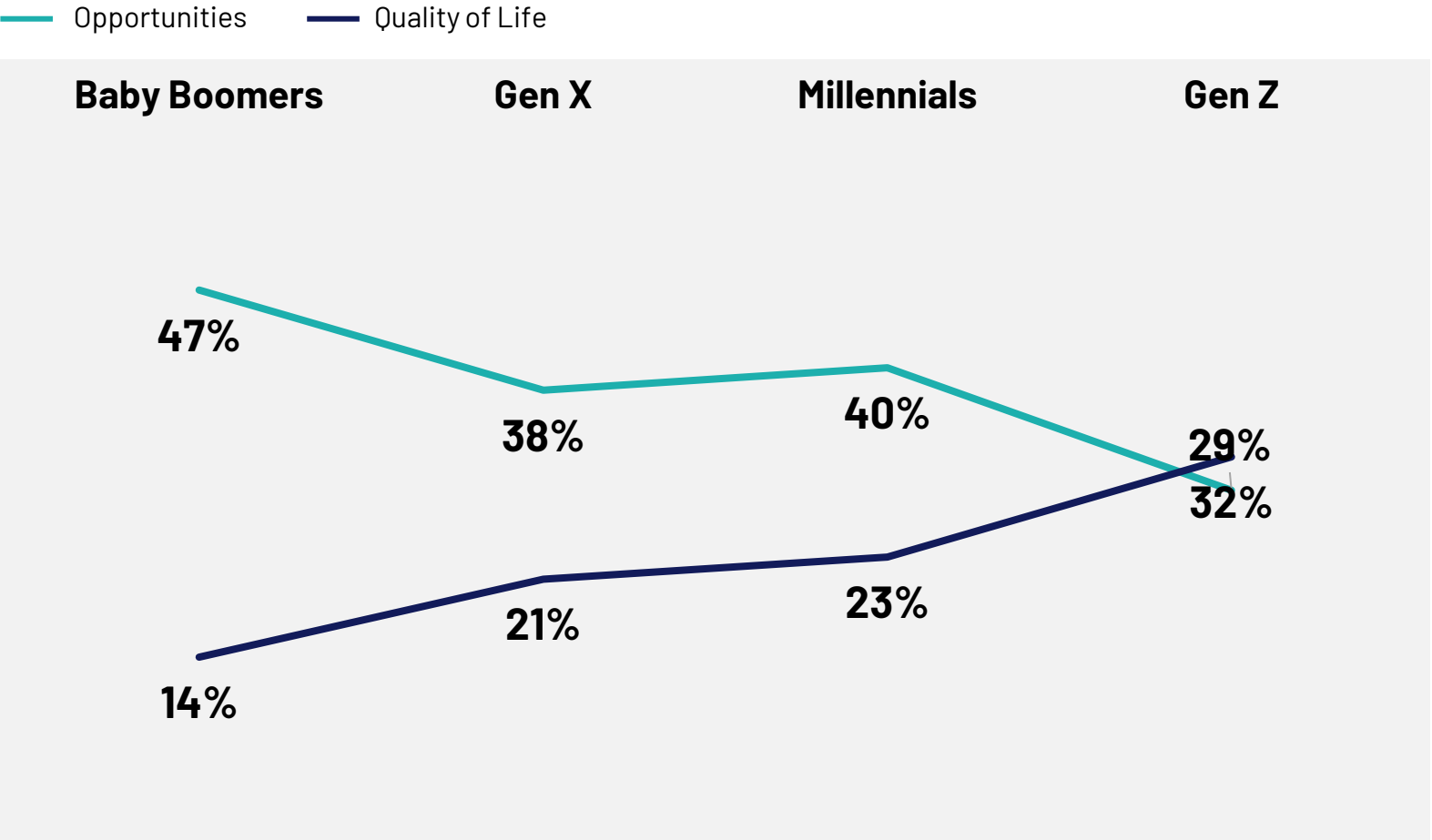
In Canada, the Generations disagree greatly on what is a fair society. Boomers most likely to cite equal opportunities as the key.

What is a fair society?

- A. A fair society is one in which everyone is given the same opportunities
- B. A fair society is one in which everyone enjoys the same quality of life

Base: 21,759 online adults under the age of 75, interviewed February 21, and March 7, 2025

What is a Fair Society?



METHODOLOGY for Ipsos Equalities Index 2025: More needs to be done to promote equality, but support has slipped over the last two years | Ipsos

These are the results of a 31-country survey conducted by Ipsos on its Global Advisor online platform and, in India, on its IndiaBus platform, between Friday, February 21, and Friday, March 7, 2025. For this survey, Ipsos interviewed a total of 23,228 adults aged 18 years and older in India, 18-74 in Canada, Republic of Ireland, Malaysia, South Africa, Türkiye, and the United States, 20-74 in Thailand, 21-74 in Indonesia and Singapore, and 16-74 in all other countries.

The sample consists of approximately 1,000 individuals each in Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand, Spain, and the U.S., and 500 individuals each in Argentina, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Hungary, Indonesia,

Ireland, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, and Türkiye. The sample in India consists of approximately 2,200 individuals, of whom approximately 1,800 were interviewed face-to-face and 400 were interviewed online.

Samples in Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Hungary, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.S. can be considered representative of their general adult populations under the age of 75. Samples in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Indonesia, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Thailand, and Türkiye are

more urban, more educated, and/or more affluent than the general population. The survey results for these countries should be viewed as reflecting the views of the more “connected” segment of their population.

India’s sample represents a large subset of its urban population – social economic classes A, B and C in metros and tier 1-3 town classes across all four zones.

The data is weighted so that the composition of each country’s sample 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 and markets in which the survey was conducted. It

has not been adjusted to the population size of each country or market and is not intended to suggest a total result.

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

The precision of Ipsos online polls is calculated using a credibility interval with a poll where N=1,000 being accurate to +/- 3.5 percentage points and of where N=500 being accurate to +/- 5.0 percentage points. For more information on Ipsos’ use of credibility intervals, please visit the Ipsos website.

