
CTV/ANGUS REID GROUP POLL

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This Canada-wide poll was conducted by telephone between August 22nd and 24th, 1997, among a representative cross-section of 1,200 Canadian adults aged 18 years and older.

The data were statistically weighted to ensure the sample's age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to the 1996 Census data.

With the national sample of 1,200, one can say with 95 percent certainty that the results are within ± 2.8 percentage points of what they would have been had the entire adult Canadian population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within the various sub-groupings of the survey population.

INFIDELITY

The majority (66%) of Canadians feel that if their spouse or partner had an affair, they would “try to work things out”, compared to three in ten (29%) Canadians who feel that “the relationship would end”. Whereas one in ten (10%) Canadians report that they would have a one night stand (86% report that they would not), a slightly higher proportion (13%) of Canadians report that they think their partner would have a one night stand (76% indicate that their partner would not).

Further, two-thirds (67%) of Canadians report that a politician’s admission to having an affair would have no impact upon their likelihood of voting for them; however three in ten (30%) indicate that they would be less likely to vote for a politician who admitted to having an affair.

As well, this poll indicates that public opinion is split regarding comfort levels with TV broadcasting shows which portray characters having affairs as acceptable: 50% are comfortable with TV broadcasting such shows, compared to 45% who are uncomfortable.

These are the highlights of the findings of the of the province-wide poll of 1,200 Canadians aged 18 years and older conducted between August 22nd and 24th, 1997.

After the Affair: Working Things Out

Two-thirds (66%) of Canadians feel that “if their spouse or partner had an affair, it would not necessarily mean an end to the relationship and they would try to work things out”. Three in ten (29%) Canadians, however, feel that “if their spouse or partner had an affair, it would automatically end the relationship and there would be no chance of forgiveness”. Five percent are undecided. (Table 1)

- Those most likely to report that they would “try to work things out” include British Columbians (72%), Albertans (72%), Canadians aged 55 and older (72%), those who are separated or divorced (72%) and those who report having had an affair (81%).

- Conversely, those most likely to indicate that the affair “would automatically end the relationship” include younger Canadians aged 18 to 34 (38%), “single” (35%) Canadians or those living in common law relationships (34%).

Resisting Temptation

Given the scenario, “Imagine that you are out of town without your partner or spouse and you met a very attractive person who was interested in having sex with you. It would be a one night stand that your partner or spouse would never find out about and there was no chance of contracting any sexually transmitted disease”, one in ten (10%) Canadians report that they would have the one night stand, compared to the majority (86%) who would not. Four percent (4%) are undecided. (Table 1)

- Canadians expressing higher levels of fidelity given this scenario (or who are most likely to report that they would not have the one night stand) include residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (93%), Atlantic Canadians (91%), females (92%, versus 80% of males), widowed Canadians (94%) and those who report that they have not had an affair (93%).

The Trust Factor

However, Canadians appear to trust themselves slightly more than they would trust their spouses given this one night stand scenario. Whereas one in ten (10%) Canadians report that they would have the one night stand, a slightly higher proportion (13%) of Canadians report that they think their spouse would do it if they were in exactly the same circumstance. Three-quarters (76%) of Canadians indicate that their partner would not have the one night stand, given the same circumstances. (Table 1)

Canadians indicating higher levels of trust towards their spouse or partner in this one night stand scenario (or who are most likely to report that their spouse or partner would not have the one night stand) include residents of Saskatchewan/Manitoba (84%), Albertans (85%), more affluent Canadians with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more (85%), married Canadians (85%) and those who report that they have not had an affair (83%).

Infidelity and Political Voting Intentions

- Two-thirds (67%) of Canadians indicate that knowing that a competent politician running for office admitted to having an affair would have no impact on their likelihood of voting for them. However, three in ten (30%) Canadians report that they would be less likely to vote for a politician running for office who admitted to having an affair, two percent (2%) would be more likely to vote for a politician who admitted to having an affair and one percent (1%) are undecided. (Table 1)
- Residents of Quebec (86%) and more affluent Canadians with annual household incomes of \$60,000 or more (73%) are more likely to indicate that no impact would be made upon their voting intentions knowing that a politician admitted to having an affair.
- As well, Canadians in “common law” relationships (83%), those who are separated or divorced (73%) and Canadians who report having had an affair (81%) are more likely to indicate that no impact would be made upon their voting intentions if a politician running for office admitted to having an affair.

Comfort Levels in TV Broadcasting of Affairs

- Public opinion is split regarding comfort levels with TV broadcasting shows which portray characters having affairs as acceptable. Specifically, one-half (50%) of Canadians are either “very” (24%) or “somewhat” (26%) uncomfortable with TV broadcasting shows like this, compared to just under one-half (45%) feeling “very” (17%) or “somewhat” (28%) uncomfortable with TV broadcasting shows which portray characters having affairs as acceptable. (Table 1)
- Canadians most likely to feel uncomfortable with these TV shows tend to be residents of the Prairies (74% of Albertans and 62% of those in Saskatchewan/Manitoba are uncomfortable), older Canadians aged 55 and older (63%) and widowed Canadians (75%).
- On the other hand, residents of Quebec (72%), younger Canadians (54%), those in common law relationships (67%) and those who report having had an affair (63%) are more likely to feel comfortable with TV broadcasting shows which portray characters having affairs as acceptable.

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