

CANADIAN FEDERAL ELECTION 2011

Most Canadians Face Election with Mistrust, Skepticism and Cynicism

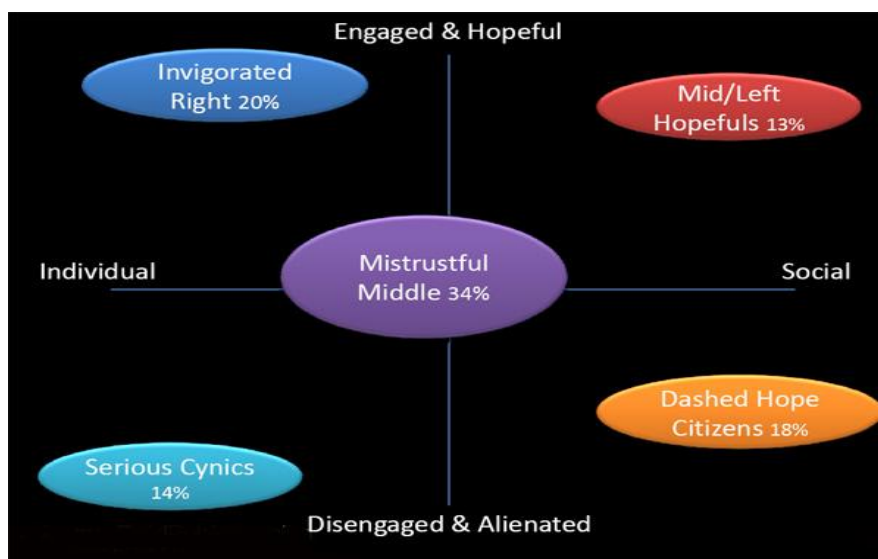
Unique segmentation shows that a third of Canadians are waiting to be swayed by policy ideas.

[OTTAWA – Apr. 25, 2011] – As Canadians prepare to cast their ballots in the fourth federal election held in the past eight years, a unique segmentation conducted by Angus Reid Public Opinion shows that only one third of Canadians are truly connecting with the main federal parties, while large proportions of respondents hold feelings of mistrust, skepticism and even cynicism towards politics.

A precise assessment of the views of Canadians and their relationship with politics requires a process known as segmentation—an analysis that takes into account specific psychographic and behavioural variables in order to understand different viewpoints.

For this particular study, Angus Reid Public Opinion developed a segmentation based on the way Canadians engage with federal politics, and how this relationship varies depending on political values. In this process, the pattern of people’s responses—their own attitudes, feelings and experiences expressed throughout the course of the survey—determines the nature and number of segments.

The online survey of a representative national sample of 2,032 Canadian adults uncovered five different segments: Invigorated Right (20%), Mid/Left Hopefuls (13%), Mistrustful Middle (34%), Dashed Hope Citizens (18%), and Severe Cynics (18%).



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Invigorated Right

Politics plays an important role in the life of members of this group. They maintain positive feelings about the current government. They also tend to believe that democracy in Canada has become stronger recently, and agree that tougher sentencing rules are required for convicted criminals. Most of the people in this group voted for the Conservative Party in 2008, and four-in-five intend to do so again in 2011.

Mid/Left Hopefuls

Members of this group are prone to expressing optimism in the positive effect of politics and the actions of politicians. However, they are likely to be dissatisfied with the current state of affairs at the federal level. They also tend to support social programs and immigration. Most of the people in this group voted for the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party (NDP) in 2008, and seven-in-ten intend to do so again in 2011.

Mistrustful Middle

Member of this group stay clear of joining either of the two extremes of the political spectrum. Their views on politics and politicians overall tend to be skeptical, but they show contempt to the current political options. They are more likely to oppose military deployments overseas, and welcome stricter environmental regulations. Half of the people in this group voted for either of the country's two major parties in 2008, and are once again looking to Tories or Grits in this year's ballot.

Dashed Hope Citizens

The views of members of this group are closer to the left than the right. However, they voice serious doubts on the ability of political parties to represent their interests in an honest and effective manner. Half of the people in this group say they will vote for the candidate they dislike the least in the next federal election, and most of them believe the country is currently on the wrong track. Most of these respondents will support the Liberals, the NDP or the Greens in this year's ballot.

Serious Cynics

Members of this group have a predominantly negative opinion of politics and politicians. They do not see any point in taking part in federal elections, and have fostered deep feelings of distrust towards the government. Three-in-four people in this group believe none of the current federal political parties cares about them, or represents an alternative they would enthusiastically support. Still, three-in-five would back either the Conservatives or the NDP in this year's election.

Analysis

One-in-five Canadians (20%) are part of the Invigorated Right group, and share the current governing party's views on topics such as sentencing, global warming, and the state of democracy in Canada.

The other group that shows some motivation to vote is the Mid/Left Hopefuls, who will overwhelmingly back either the Liberals or the NDP in the election. This group unmistakably embraces social issues, but is considerably smaller than the Invigorated Right (13%).

A third of Canadians (34%) are part of the Mistrustful Middle, and are waiting to be swayed. These respondents show a deep disappointment with the quality of leadership in the federal parties, but feel compelled to take part in the democratic process.

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About a third of Canadians form the final two groups. The Dashed Hope Citizens (18%) are more likely to coalesce around leftist parties, but are not particularly thrilled with any of the choices before them. Finally, the Severe Cynics (18%) are the least likely to become engaged in politics, and are also the most likely to see the government as an infringer.

The current state of affairs has led to an increase in supporters of the right, who are clearly motivated to vote and provide the country with another Conservative government. The Mid/Left Hopefuls are not satisfied with the way things are going and feel that Canada has become a worse place under the Tories. Still, they do not appear ready deliver a power shift.

The key group in this election is the Mistrustful Middle, where respondents are currently being courted primarily by the Tories and NDP. This is the biggest of the five groups encountered, and the one where policy ideas are taking a more prevalent role than traditional support for existing parties.

[Take the survey and discover which group you belong to](#)

[Read the entire presentation here](#)

METHODOLOGY DETAILS

From April 15 to April 16, 2011, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,032 randomly selected Canadian adults who are Angus Reid Forum panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.2%, 19 times out of 20. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region Census data to ensure a sample representative of the entire adult population of Canada. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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About Angus Reid Public Opinion

[Angus Reid Public Opinion](#) is a public affairs practice headed by Dr. Angus Reid: an industry visionary who has spent more than four decades asking questions to figure out what people feel, how they think and who they will vote for. A team of talented and experienced practitioners with a unique and profound understanding of global issues conduct high quality research throughout the world on a daily basis for corporations, governments, academic researchers, and non-profit organizations.

About Vision Critical®

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**For more information, please contact
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