

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

**The Opinion of Canadians
With Regards to the
Death Penalty**

Report

August 31, 2001



1.0 Study Results

1.1 Slightly more than half of Canadians are in favour of the death penalty.

(n=)	FOR	AGAINST	DON'T KNOW/REFUSAL
1508	52.9%	43.0%	4.1%

1.2 The percentage of Canadians in favour of the death penalty would decrease if they were certain that criminals condemned to life imprisonment would never regain their freedom.

(n=)	FOR	AGAINST	DON'T KNOW/REFUSAL
1508	37.6%	57.3%	5.1%

1.3 One Canadian out of seven would watch a televised execution.

(n=)	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW/REFUSAL
1508	14.6%	84.3%	1.1%

2.0 Results

2.1 Slightly More Than Half of Canadians are in Favour of the Death Penalty

A small majority (52.9%) of Canadians are in favour of the death penalty while 43.0% of them are against it. In addition, 4.1% did not express an opinion.

61.8% of Albertans, 56.9% of men, 57.1% of individuals 25 to 34 years old, 56.5% of those with an annual household income of less than \$40,000, 62.5% of labourers and 60.6% of those who do not have at least a college-level education are in favour of the death penalty.

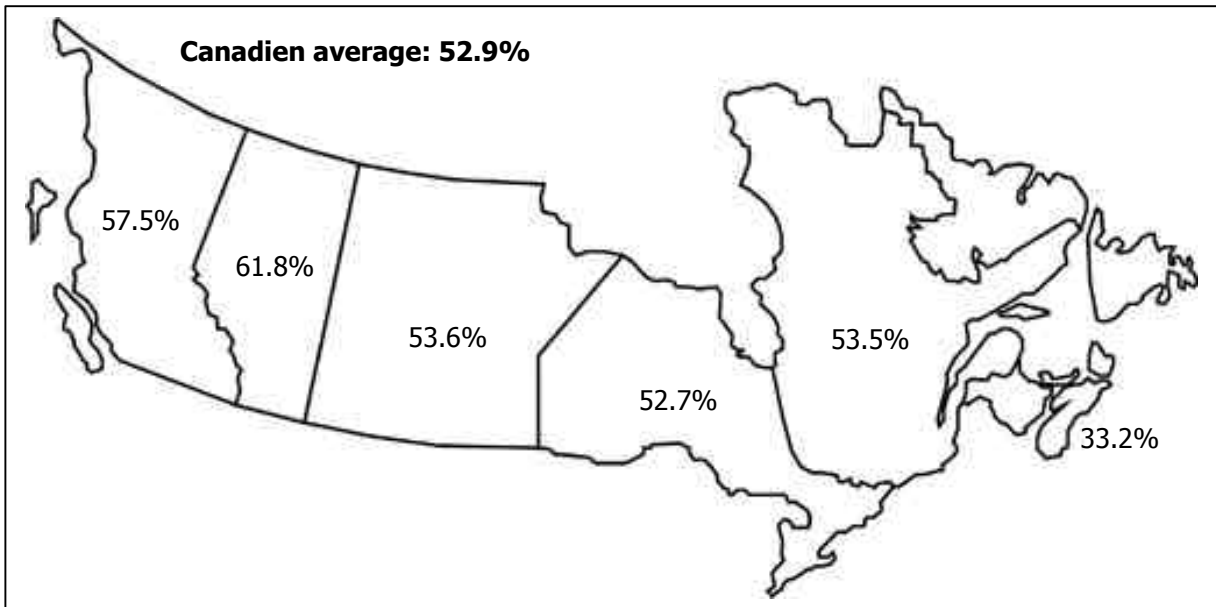
On the other hand, 53.8% of residents of Atlantic Canada, 49.7% of those who are 65 years of age or more, 46.6% of individuals in the higher income brackets, 49.6% of professionals and 57.7% of University-educated Canadians are opposed to the death penalty.

Among the main reasons evoked to justify their support of the death penalty we find that 34.6% of Canadians support the death penalty because they do not want the guilty parties to commit other crimes, 24.2% support it because they want to see justice done, 21.9% because it will dissuade criminals, 11.6% to save on the cost of imprisonment and 5.0% to avenge the victims of the crimes.

The main reasons why Canadians are opposed to the death penalty were described as follows: for 38.4% of Canadians it is to avoid judicial error, 38.2% feel that society does not have the right to kill, 13.5% believe that the death penalty does not dissuade criminals and 6.1% oppose the death penalty because they feel criminals can be rehabilitated.

Q1 Generally speaking, are you FOR or AGAINST the death penalty for persons convicted of murder? n=1508	FOR	AGAINST	DNK/REFUSAL
Atlantic provinces	33.2%	53.8%	13.0%
Quebec	53.5%	44.3%	2.2%
Ontario	52.7%	44.3%	3.0%
Prairies	53.6%	36.1%	10.4%
Alberta	61.8%	35.8%	2.3%
British Columbia	57.5%	39.1%	3.4%
Canada	52.9%	43.0%	4.1%

Proportion of Canadians In Favour of the Death Penalty



Q2 For which of the following reasons are you for the death penalty? Is it mostly...	
n= 789 respondents in favour of the death penalty	
... so that the guilty parties may not commit any more crimes	34.6%
... so that justice may be done	24.2%
... to dissuade other criminals	21.9%
... to save the cost of imprisonment	11.6%
... to avenge the victim or victims	5.0%
Other	2.0%
Don't know	0.7%

Q3 For which of the following reasons are you against the death penalty? Is it mostly...	
n= 655 respondents against the death penalty	
... to avoid the risk of legal errors	38.4%
... because society does not have the right to kill	38.2%
... because the death penalty does not dissuade criminals	13.5%
... because criminals can be rehabilitated	6.1%
Other	2.7%
Don't know	1.1%

2.2 The Percentage of Canadians in Favour of the Death Penalty Would Decrease if They Were Certain that Criminals Condemned to Life Imprisonment Would Never Regain Their Freedom

If Canadians were convinced that criminals serving life sentences would never get out of jail, 37.6% of them would be in favour of the death penalty.

Q4 If you were certain that criminals serving life sentences would never get out of prison, would you be FOR or AGAINST the death penalty? n=1508	FOR	AGAINST	DNK
Atlantic provinces	27.7%	58.8%	13.4%
Quebec	35.6%	62.0%	2.4%
Ontario	38.2%	57.6%	4.2%
Prairies	38.0%	49.1%	12.9%
Alberta	44.7%	51.8%	3.5%
British Columbia	40.2%	55.3%	4.5%
Canada	37.6%	57.3%	5.1%

2.3 One Canadian Out of Seven Would Watch a Televised Execution

More specifically, 14.6% of the Canadian population say they would watch the re-broadcasting of an execution.

In fact, that is indeed what 19.9% of those in favour of the death penalty would do, but strangely enough it is also what 9.3% of those opposed to this type of punishment would do.

19.2% of men, 18.8% of individuals in the 25-to-34-age bracket, 24.4% of individuals whose mother tongue is neither French nor English and 22.0% of labourers are more likely to share this view.

Q6 Would you watch the re-broadcasting of the execution of a condemned person on television? n= 1508	YES	NO	DNK
Atlantic provinces	13.0%	84.9%	2.1%
Quebec	11.2%	88.1%	0.7%
Ontario	15.1%	83.7%	1.2%
Prairies	21.9%	76.1%	2.1%
Alberta	15.6%	83.5%	0.9%
British Columbia	16.0%	83.3%	0.7%
Canada	14.6%	84.3%	1.1%

3.0 Methodology

This study was conducted by Leger Marketing through telephone interviews among a representative sample of 1508 English- or French-speaking Canadians, 18 years of age or older.

The interviews were conducted from our Montreal and Winnipeg call centres between August 3 and 13, 2001. Up to ten recalls were made in the case of non-response.

Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to geographic location, gender and language spoken at home to ensure a sample representative of the entire Canadian adult population. In the end, the maximum margin of error obtained for a sample of 1508 respondents, is of $\pm 2.6\%$, 19 times out of 20.