

CANADIAN PRESS / LEGER MARKETING

How Canadians Perceive Poverty

Report

September 13, 2001



1.0 Study Report

1.1 One out of Ten Canadians Consider Themselves Poor

(n=)	POOR	RICH	NEITHER RICH NOR POOR	DON'T KNOW / REFUSAL
1508	17.0%	17.8%	64.8	0.5%

1.2 The Gap Between Rich and Poor Continues to Grow

(n=1508)	Consider themselves RICHER compared to ten years ago	Consider themselves JUST AS RICH compared to ten years ago	Do not consider themselves AS RICH as ten years ago	Don't know / Refusal
Rich Class	53.8%	22.0%	22.7%	1.6%
Middle Class	31.7%	29.9%	37.1%	1.3%
Poor Class	14.1%	16.7%	67.4%	1.8%
TOTAL	32.6%	26.2%	39.6%	1.6%

1.3 Job Creation Represents the Best Way to Fight Poverty

Q4 In your opinion, what is the best way to fight poverty? Is it...? n= 1508	
... to create more jobs	56.7%
... to make the rich pay more than they do	12.2%
... to better inform the population	13.9%
... to help charitable organizations	5.7%
... to increase social welfare	4.8%
Other	5.2%
Don't know	1.5%

1.4 The Idea of a Minimum Income Guaranteed by the State is Making Headway

(n=)	FOR	AGAINST	DON'T KNOW/REFUSAL
------	-----	---------	--------------------

1508	63.9%	31.2%	4.9%
-------------	--------------	--------------	-------------

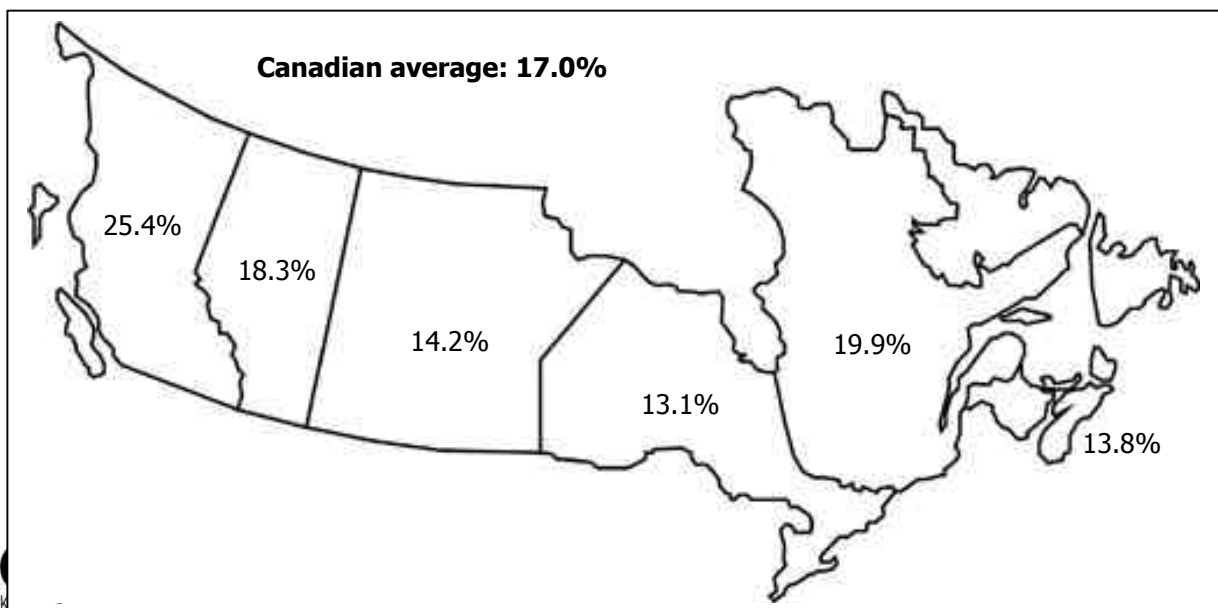
2.0 Results

2.1 One Out of Ten Canadians Consider Themselves Poor

More specifically, 17.0% of Canadians claim they are poor. Of this 17.0% we find 12.1% who consider themselves moderately poor and 4.9% who consider themselves poor. On the other end of the spectrum, we find that 1.4% of Canadians see themselves as belonging to the rich class and 16.4% to the moderately rich class. In addition, 64.8% consider themselves neither rich nor poor.

Q1 Do you consider yourself to be part of the class of people that are RICH, MODERATELY RICH, NEITHER RICH NOR POOR, MODERATELY POOR or POOR? n=1508	RICH	Moderately RICH	Neither Rich Nor POOR	Moderately POOR	POOR	Dnk/Ref.
Atlantic provinces	1.2%	10.3%	74.7%	7.0%	6.8%	0.0%
Quebec	1.0%	21.7%	57.0%	14.9%	5.0%	0.4%
Ontario	1.4%	15.2%	70.0%	9.2%	3.9%	0.3%
Prairies	0.7%	13.0%	71.4%	8.7%	5.6%	0.7%
Alberta	1.7%	15.5%	63.7%	16.6%	1.7%	0.8%
British Columbia	2.7%	16.0%	55.2%	16.7%	8.7%	0.7%
Canada	1.4%	16.4%	64.8%	12.1%	4.9%	0.5%

Proportion of Canadians who consider themselves poor



56,3% of those who define themselves as poor have a household income of \$20,000 or less. Furthermore, 38.2% of those without a job, 48.7% of individuals with an elementary school education and 25.4% of British Columbians also perceive themselves in that manner.

In addition, we note that 30.4% of Canadians who consider themselves poor have a car that is less than five years old, 38.9% have a cellular phone and 4.9% have a pool.

Q2 Among the following items, can you please tell me which ones you have in your home...? n= 1508	RICH CLASS	MIDDLE CLASS	POOR CLASS
... a car that is less than 5 years old	64.4%	51.8%	30.4%
... a refrigerator	97.7%	98.6%	96.5%
... a microwave oven	93.5%	92.5%	88.4%
... a pool	22.5%	11.2%	4.9%
... a colour television	97.5%	97.1%	97.1%
... cable television or a satellite dish	82.1%	79.6%	71.1%
... a VCR	92.6%	92.6%	85.6%
... a cellular phone	62.9%	54.8%	38.9%

Moreover, Canadians feel that poverty engenders serious social consequences. In fact, 23.7% feel that poverty leads to alcohol and drug abuse, 21.0% believe that poverty is responsible for the break-up of families, 18.5% think it explains school drop out rates, 11.6% that it leads to family violence and 10% to health problems. These figures regarding the consequences of poverty are similar across all social classes.

Q2 Among the following consequences of poverty, which one do you think occurs most frequently? Is it... n= 1508	
... alcoholism and drug abuse	23.7%
... break-up of families	21.0%
... dropping out of school	18.5%
... family violence	11.6%
... crime	10.9%
... health problems	10.0%
Other	1.7%
Don't know	2.7%

2.2 The Gap Between Rich and Poor Continues to Grow

The rich are getting richer and the poor poorer if we rely on the responses gathered among the various segments of the Canadian population. In fact, 53.8% of the rich claim to be richer than ten years ago while 67.4% of the poor perceive themselves as poorer today compared to ten years ago.

When considering the overall population without taking into account income levels, we note that 32.6% of Canadians feel they are richer today, 26.2% believe they are just as rich today as yesterday and 39.6% than they are not as rich.

48.5% of individuals aged 24 or less, 52.6% of those with an income of more than \$60,000, 48.0% of professionals and 42.9% of University-educated Canadians consider themselves richer today. On the other hand, 50.9% of those in the 45-64-age bracket, 45.0% of Quebeckers, 60.1% of those with an income of \$20,000 or less, 54.4% of retirees and 51.4% of the lesser educated claim they are poorer today compared to ten years ago.

Q3 Compared to ten years ago, do you think you are RICHER, JUST AS RICH or NOT AS RICH? n=1508	RICHER	JUST AS RICH	NOT AS RICH	DNK/ REFUSAL
Atlantic provinces	28.9%	33.8%	36.4%	0.9%
Quebec	29.2%	24.0%	45.0%	1.9%
Ontario	35.1%	28.8%	34.7%	1.3%
Prairies	29.8%	23.0%	45.1%	2.1%
Alberta	36.2%	25.4%	35.8%	2.6%
British Columbia	32.6%	20.6%	45.5%	1.4%
Canada	32.6%	26.2%	39.6%	1.6%

2.3 Job Creation Represents the Best Way to Fight Poverty

56.7% of Canadians think that job creation remains the best way to fight poverty.

Q4 In your opinion, what is the best way to fight poverty? Is it... n=1508	To create more jobs	Other	DNK/Refusal
Atlantic provinces	56.7%	41.5%	1.9%
Quebec	65.4%	33.3%	1.3%
Ontario	52.6%	46.2%	1.2%
Prairies	63.4%	35.5%	1.0%
Alberta	52.6%	45.7%	1.7%
British Columbia	52.0%	45.4%	2.7%
Canada	56.7%	41.8%	1.5%

However, and in more or less the same proportion, 58.6% of the population feels that governments are not devoting enough resources to helping the poor. In that light, it is important to point out that only 7.0% of Canadians think that governments are allocating too much money to the poorest citizens.

Q5 Do you have the impression that governments devote TOO MUCH money, NOT ENOUGH money or JUST ENOUGH money to help the poorest people? n=1508	TOO MUCH	NOT ENOUGH	JUST ENOUGH	DNK/ REFUSAL
Atlantic provinces	7.3%	69.0%	20.4%	3.3%
Quebec	4.3%	58.8%	33.3%	3.6%
Ontario	7.7%	61.5%	26.6%	4.2%
Prairies	8.6%	55.8%	28.1%	7.5%
Alberta	5.2%	45.8%	40.6%	8.4%
British Columbia	10.0%	54.0%	33.3%	2.7%
Canada	7.0%	58.6%	30.1%	4.4%

2.4 The Idea of a Minimum Income Guaranteed by the State is Making Headway

A percentage of 63.0% of Canadians are in favour of a minimum income guaranteed by the state.

In fact, this idea is shared by Canadians across the country the percentage being essentially the same from one province to the next. All segments of the population, with the exception of Canadians who have a household income of more than \$60,000, share this view. This particular segment of the population favours the minimum income in a proportion of 55.6%.

Q6 Would you be FOR or AGAINST a minimum income guaranteed by the state? n=1508	FOR	AGAINST	DNK/REFUSAL
Atlantic provinces	60.4%	32.1%	7.4%
Quebec	66.4%	31.0%	2.6%
Ontario	63.8%	30.1%	6.1%
Prairies	64.5%	27.2%	8.3%
Alberta	62.3%	34.6%	3.1%
British Columbia	62.5%	34.1%	3.3%
Canada	63.9%	31.2%	4.9%

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 centers 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.