

**Fractured Foundations:
Distrust and Democratic Decline in Canada**

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Ethics Statement

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Abstract

This paper investigates the declining levels of trust in government and its impact on Canada's democracy. Trust is foundational for the rule of law, economic growth, government stability and the development of political capacity in citizens. The extent of the trust deficit in Canada is determined by analyzing data recently collected by the Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue's national survey on democratic culture. The primary causes and consequences of distrust are identified using the survey data and interviews with academic experts. The research results suggest increasing citizens' opportunities to meaningfully participate in government is the strongest approach to improving trust in government. Citizens' reference panels, participatory budgeting and reforming to a proportional representation system are the specific options evaluated using standardized criteria and measures. The policy analysis demonstrates that implementing national participatory budgeting and citizens' reference panels would both be effective steps towards rebuilding trust and increasing citizens' capacities.

Keywords: democracy; trust; efficacy; cynicism; public participation

This capstone is dedicated to all the innovators, disruptors, engagement practitioners, academics and community organizers that are cultivating, developing and fighting for more spaces for public voices in the political processes.

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List of Acronyms

BCCA	British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform
CA	Citizens' Assembly
CJ	Citizens' Juries
CRP	Citizens' Reference Panels
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PB	Participatory budgeting
PR	Proportional representation
SMP	Single member plurality
SFU	Simon Fraser University
STV	Single-transferrable vote
UBC	University of British Columbia
V	Cramer's V result

Glossary

Citizens' Assemblies (CA)	A large group of at least 100 randomly selected citizens that are representative of the demographics of the area, that come together to learn, consult, deliberate and make collective recommendations on a specific policy area over a year.
Citizens' Juries (CJ)	A small group of 12-24 randomly selected citizens that are representative of the demographics of the area, that come together to learn, deliberate and make a collective recommendation on a specific policy area over several days.
Citizens' Reference Panels (CRP)	A medium sized group of 24-48 randomly selected citizens that are representative of the demographics of the area, that come together to learn, deliberate and make a collective recommendation on a specific policy area over several months.
Cramer's V (V)	Statistical test to measure the substantive significance of a relationship between two independent variables.
Distrust	The opposite of trust and goes beyond just the absence of trust, to assuming the worst in an actor or institution.
Interpersonal trust	Trust between people. If trust is limited to people within a specific group, then it is <i>particularized</i> interpersonal trust and if the trust is with the greater public it is <i>generalized</i> interpersonal trust.
Institutional trust	Trust between citizens and their institutions and government; believing that government has both the motivation and competence to act in one's interest, without oversight.
Mini-public	Democratic innovations that rely on inviting a group of randomly selected citizens that can volunteer to participate, and from those that opt-in to participate a representative sample is selected. These participants are asked to learn, deliberate and make recommendations on a specific policy topic for a set amount of time.
Mistrust	The absence of trust; political scepticism.

Participatory Budgeting (PB)	Democratic innovation where residents of a community deliberate and collectively decide how a specific portion of their government's budget will be spent.
Political apathy	The lack of interest or indifference towards politics.
Political cynicism	The negative evaluation of the political process and belief that political and non-political actors are inherently corrupt, incompetent, and self-serving.
Political efficacy	The perception held by citizens that they are able to influence government and hold elected officials accountable.
Populism	Mix of a divisive rhetoric that puts 'the people' against 'the elite.' Term often associated with politicians and parties that undermine democratic structures in the name of representing the people. ¹
Trust	The positive perception about the actions and motivations of an individual or organization.

¹ International IDEA, 'The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy's Resilience' (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, November 2017), 107.

Executive Summary

Policy Problem

Trust is foundational for the rule of law, economic growth, government stability and the development of political capacity in citizens. The policy problem this capstone aims to resolve is that the current levels of trust in government in Canada is too low and the risk of further declines in trust creates fundamental challenges to the effective functioning of Canada's government and democracy, and for the future wellbeing of its citizens. This capstone aims to identify and evaluate direct approaches the federal government can implement to increase Canadians' trust in government.

Methodology

A mixed-methods approach is used, starting with a literature review to define trust, the causal factors that influence levels of trust and consequences of low trust. The literature review findings are applied to the contemporary Canadian context through the quantitative analysis of the survey data collected by the Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue's 2019 national poll on Canada's democratic culture. Subsequently, a series of qualitative interviews are conducted with academic experts in democratic theory to review key findings from the quantitative analysis and to evaluate the potential policy solutions. The results of this research are used to inform, evaluate and recommend policy options to increase trust in government in Canada.

Findings

The research in this capstone found that political cynicism is widespread in Canada and highly related to levels of distrust, with a significant portion of Canadians that are distrusting of government also believing that they cannot influence government, that voting does not matter, that elected officials do not care, and whom are also distrusting of other democratic institutions such as the Supreme Court, media and elections. Trust is also proven to be distributed unevenly in the public, with those of lower socioeconomic standing being more likely to be distrusting and cynical of government.

While the research reinforces the extent of the policy problem, the research also indicated potential opportunities for improvement. Political efficacy is determined to be highly related to levels of trust. Increasing the opportunities to participate in the democratic process is recognized as the most effective method of increasing both political efficacy and trust.

Policy Options and Analysis

Legislating the regular use of citizens' reference panels for national policy, implementing annual national participatory budgeting and reforming the federal electoral system to a proportional representation system are the three options analyzed. The primary objective of the policy options is to sustain and improve the trust Canadians have in their government institutions, thereby increasing the capacity of society to effectively contribute to and strengthen Canada's democracy. Measures focus on increasing the number of opportunities for all citizens to meaningfully participate in the democratic process, as well as increasing the incentives to participate. Other objectives include reducing the causes of distrust such as hyper-partisanship, and assessing administrative complexity, cost and stakeholder acceptance of each policy option. The options are evaluated and compared against these criteria in order to inform the policy recommendation.

Recommendations

Given the results of the policy analysis, implementing both citizens' reference panels and participatory budgeting at a federal level are recommended. The long-term goal is for these processes is to transform the policy-making process into a more inclusive and innovative experience that allows for the public's direct involvement. Individuals that participate in the processes are able to develop their civic capacities, as well as become models of engagement for the wider public. If the government successfully communicates the results of these panels and sessions, and Parliament actively considers and acts on their recommendations, then trust can grow and spread to all areas of government.

Chapter 1.

Introduction

1.1. Policy Problem

The 2019 Canadian federal election made one thing clear: Canadians are dissatisfied with the way their government is working. They were not happy with their existing government, the alternatives, and for many, not satisfied with the process to change government itself. A common theme throughout many media headlines leading up to the election was the discontent Canadians felt about the election regardless of who won.² Long-standing regional fractures between the Prairies and other parts of Canada became more evident post-election, and that dissatisfaction in the government turned into cynicism and anger, and for some it even translated into a desire to withdraw from the system entirely.³ Since 2016, the communications firm Proof Inc. has been measuring Canadians' trust in public and private organizations through public opinion surveys, creating their CanTrust Index that found post-election in October 2019 that 48% of Canadians believe their electoral system is fair, and only 44% believe it actually represents the votes of citizens.⁴ These responses signify an 8% drop in Canadians' trust in their electoral system since 2018.

Trust in the electoral system is not the only form of trust that is dropping in Canada. Proof Inc.'s 2019 report highlights significant drops in trust in non-profits, news media, corporations and governments. The least trusted organizations are large

² John Ibbitson, 'Which Leader Do You Dislike the Least? Cynicism Reigns Ahead of Federal Election', *The Globe and Mail*, 2 September 2019, sec. Opinion, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-the-unpopularity-of-justin-trudeau-and-andrew-scheer-wont-make-for-a/>.

³ Sean Simpson, 'Trudeau Won the Election but Now Must Regain Canadians' Trust', *Global News*, 24 October 2019, sec. Commentary, <https://globalnews.ca/news/6076428/justin-trudeau-western-alienation/>; Joseph Brean, 'How the 2019 Federal Election Became a Vote for Nothing', *National Post*, 21 October 2019, <https://nationalpost.com/feature/federal-election-2019-liberals-conservatives-ndp-green-ppc-bq>.

⁴ Proof Inc., 'CanTrust Index 2019 Post-Election Study: Trust in Canada's Leaders and Democratic Institutions', <https://www.slideshare.net/GetProof/trust-in-canadas-leaders-and-democratic-institutions?ref=https://www.getproof.com/news/post-election-survey-reveals-further-drop-in-canadians-trust-in-our-democracy/>.

corporations with 20% trust, dropping from 29% in 2016, followed by governments with 36% trust, dropping from 40% in 2016, and media dropping from 51% in 2018 to 36% in 2019.⁵ Proof Inc. also looked at trust in leaders and found that CEOs have 45% trust, the Prime Minister has 40% and the least trusted are provincial premiers with 34% trust.⁶ These findings demonstrate a clear decline in trust in Canadian institutions and organizations.

Trust is critically important to the functioning of democracies and society. It is foundational for respecting the rule of law, economic growth, government stability, and the development of political capacity in citizens.⁷ Attention to trust is important for all countries, and global declines in trust are connected to decreased political participation, rise of anti-democratic leaders, and the overall weakening of democracies around the world.⁸ Canada cannot be complacent; the government needs to actively improve standards of trust to ensure Canada's democracy is not only protected, but also thriving. As such, the policy problem this capstone aims to resolve is the current levels of trust in government in Canada is too low and the risk of further declines in trust creates fundamental challenges to the effective functioning of Canada's government and democracy, and for the future wellbeing of its citizens. Specifically, this capstone focuses on direct approaches the federal government can implement to increase Canadians' trust in government.

The objectives of this capstone are to determine the extent of the trust deficit in Canada, identify its primary causes, and evaluate policy options to directly increase Canadians' trust in government. This capstone investigates low levels of trust in Canadian government using a mixed-method approach. The theoretical literature on trust is applied to the Canadian context by analyzing the dataset collected in a national survey conducted by Simon Fraser University's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, and insights from academic experts in democratic theory are gathered through qualitative

⁵ Proof Inc., 'CanTrust Index 2019', 2019.

⁶ Proof Inc.

⁷ OECD, 'Trust in Government, Policy Effectiveness and the Governance Agenda', in *Government at a Glance 2013* (Paris: OECD, 2013), 22–23.

⁸ Richard Wike and Janell Fetterolf, 'Liberal Democracy's Crisis of Confidence', *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 4 (2018): 136–50.

interviews. The results of this research are used to inform, evaluate and recommend policy options to increase trust in government in Canada.

1.2. Overview of Capstone

In order to address this policy problem, Chapter 2 provides background and context on the extent of the gaps related to trust and democracy globally and in Canada. Chapter 3 provides a literature review defining trust, analyzing factors that influence levels of trust, the consequences for low trust and an overview of possible measures to rebuild and maintain trust. Chapter 4 explains the methodologies used for this research. Chapter 5 provides the results of the quantitative survey analysis and Chapter 6 highlights the thematic analysis of the qualitative interviews with experts. Chapter 7 provides the key implications from the research results. Chapters 8 to 10 analyze policy options for increasing trust in the Canadian government. Chapters 11 and 12 outline the recommended approaches and provide final thoughts.

Chapter 2.

Canada's Democracy in Context

It is necessary first to understand the historical and current context of democracies around the world, in order to better understand the challenges Canada's democracy is experiencing. This chapter outlines the indicators of democratic decline globally and compares it to Canada's long-term and current context.

2.1. State of Global Democracies

Fears of weakening democracies worldwide have been prevalent since the 1960s. The primary concerns are the downward trends in voter turnout, as well as decreasing civic participation and trust in democratic institutions and actors.⁹ Rising nativism, widespread attacks on the integrity of mass media, weakening of civil liberties, and growing support for anti-democratic populist parties and leaders has further amplified these longstanding concerns.¹⁰

Freedom House and the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, two measures of the quality of democracies, report annual declines in the integrity of the world's democracies.¹¹ The Organization on Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) reports that only 42% of OECD countries' citizens have confidence in their national governments.¹² Similarly, the Pew Research Centre found in their 2018 Global Attitudes Survey that 51% of the citizens in the 27 countries surveyed are not satisfied with the way democracy is working in their country, and 61% do not believe elected officials care what ordinary people think.¹³ In addition, the Edelman Trust Barometer found in their 2019 survey of 27 countries that only 20% of democratic citizens believe

⁹ Wike and Fetterolf.

¹⁰ Wike and Fetterolf, 136.

¹¹ World Movement for Democracy, 'A Call for Democratic Renewal', Statement by Steering Committee (Washington, DC, November 2015).

¹² OECD, *Government at a Glance 2017* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2017), 215.

¹³ Richard Wike, Laura Silver, and Alexandra Castillo, 'Many Across the Globe Are Dissatisfied With How Democracy Is Working' (Pew Research Centre, April 2019), 5.

their political system is working for them, and over 70% desire change.¹⁴ Other measures provide further evidence of diminishing support for government in most advanced industrial democracies, and evidence suggests there is some erosion of commitment to democracy as a system of government generally.¹⁵ Canada is not immune to these global trends.

2.2. State of Canada's Democracy

Structurally, Canada is considered a high-quality democracy with a strong constitution, entrenched civil liberties and open institutional arrangements.¹⁶ While Canada ranks relatively high in global measures of democracy (e.g. a Freedom House score of 99/100 in 2018; ranking 6th in the world in the Democracy Index),¹⁷ it would be misleading to assume Canada's democracy is not in need of improvement. Despite Canada's high ranking, its weakest scores are in political participation and political culture, reflected by Canada's low voter turnout, low membership in political parties and lack of general political engagement.¹⁸ Canada's democratic performance has also been declining over time, like other democracies, illustrating its underperformance relative to its previous capacity and potential performance.

2.2.1. Indicators of democratic decline over time

In terms of traditional indicators of democratic decline, Canada continues to have low voter turnout in elections for all levels of government. Figure 1 displays national election turnout and demonstrates a clear long-run downward trend in voter turnout. This is highlighted by the fact the highest turnouts from the past two decades (in the 2015 and

¹⁴ Edelman, '2019 Edelman Trust Barometer Global Report', Annual Report (Edelman, 2019), 15, https://www.edelman.com/sites/g/files/aatuss191/files/2019-02/2019_Edelman_Trust_Barometer_Global_Report.pdf.

¹⁵ Russell J. Dalton, 'The Social Transformation of Trust in Government', *International Review of Sociology* 15, no. 1 (2005): 136–37; Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, 'The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect', *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (2016): 5–8.

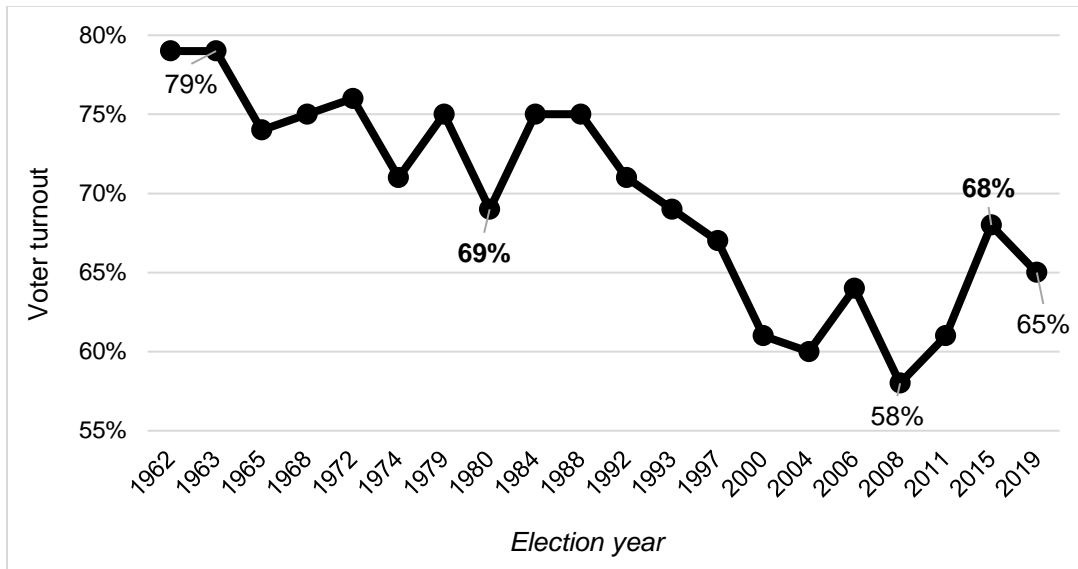
¹⁶ Freedom House, 'Canada Profile', Freedom in the World 2019, 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/canada>.

¹⁷ Freedom House.; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2017 Free Speech under Attack' (London: The Economist Group, 2018).

¹⁸ The Economist Intelligence Unit, 'Democracy Index 2017 Free Speech under Attack', 21.

2019 elections), are still lower than the lowest years of the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Clearly, fewer Canadians are voting in federal elections.

Figure 1. Federal Election Voter Turnout 1962-2019¹⁹



Both Freedom House and Democracy Index measures focus on the structural assessment of democracies; they largely ignore the perspective of citizens when measuring the quality of democracies, and exclude elements related to democratic satisfaction, commitment, and capacity.²⁰ Many rigorous public opinion polls illustrate a fuller picture of Canadians' dissatisfaction and growing disillusionment with their democracy by looking beyond the structural elements of democratic institutions.

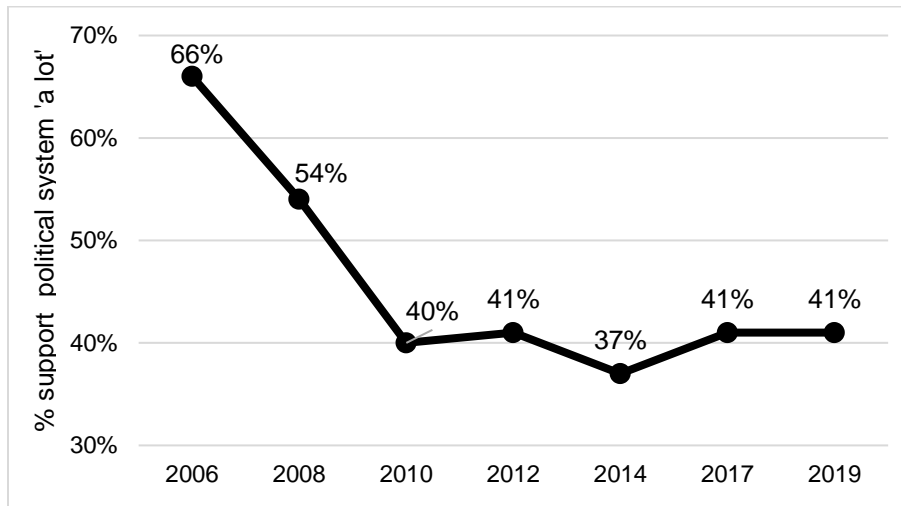
Using the Environics Institute's survey findings, Figure 2 depicts the decline in the number of Canadians that have 'a lot' of support in Canada's political system since 2006, demonstrating one example of declining in support in Canada's democratic system. Their findings illustrates a 25% drop in the number of Canadians with significant support in the political system, resulting in well under half of Canadians having support for their system in 2019.²¹

¹⁹ Elections Canada, 'Voter Turnout at Federal Elections and Referendums'.

²⁰ Quinton Mayne and Brigitte Geissel, 'Putting the Demos Back into the Concept of Democratic Quality', *International Political Science Review* 37, no. 5 (November 2016): 636–37.

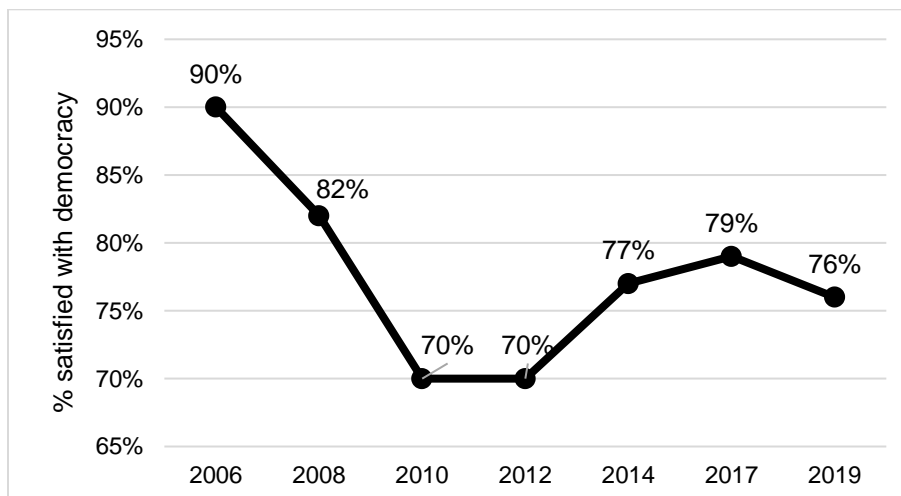
²¹ Environics Institute, 'AmericasBarometer: The Public Speaks on Democracy and Governance in the Americas' (Ottawa, Canada: The Environics Institute for Survey Research, July 2017).

Figure 2. Percentage of Canadians with a lot of support for Canada’s political system²²



With a decrease of 14-percentage points since 2006, Figure 3 also demonstrates declining satisfaction in Canadian democracy. Beyond longitudinal trends, it is important to understand Canadians’ current perspectives on their democracy in depth, which is highlighted in the recent survey by SFU’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

Figure 3. Percentage of Canadians satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada²³



²² Environics Institute, ‘AmericasBarometer: The Public Speaks on Democracy and Governance in the Americas’; Environics Institute, ‘Confidence in Democracy and the Political System: An Update on Trends in Public Opinion Canada’ (Toronto: The Environics Institute for Survey Research, September 2019), 4.

²³ Environics Institute, ‘Confidence in Democracy and the Political System.’

2.2.2. Current state of Canada's Democracy: Strengthening Canadian Democracy survey

The Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue at SFU recently conducted an in-depth survey regarding Canada's democratic culture. This capstone uses this data to further investigate the policy problem of trust and democracy. In July 2019 the Centre for Dialogue (referred to as "the Centre" going forward) conducted a national survey assessing Canadians' baselines according to three overarching themes: (1) commitment to democracy and appeal of populism, (2) levels of trust, participation and belonging, and (3) influence of social media and disinformation on democracy.²⁴ The details about the survey methodology are discussed in Chapter 4.

The Centre's key finding is that Canadians are committed to democracy, but they are not satisfied with the way it is currently functioning. The survey demonstrates a growing dissatisfaction with the quality of Canada's democracy. They find that 77% of Canadians prefer democracy as a system of government, 10% prefer an authoritarian government and 13% do not think it matters either way. That said, only 57% of Canadians indicate they believe Canada is currently governed democratically, suggesting they prefer democracy but do not think Canada's democracy is performing well.²⁵ Interestingly, 84% of Canadians perceive representative democracy as a good governing system and 70% of Canadians believe direct democracy is a good governing system.²⁶

Figure 4 showcases the high levels of disenchantment Canadians feel regarding elected officials and political participation, with a significant portion believing that voting does not matter, they cannot influence government even if they try, and that elected officials do not care what they think.

²⁴ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 'Strengthening Canadian Democracy Report 1: State of Democracy and Appeal of Populism' (Vancouver, British Columbia: Simon Fraser University, August 2019), 4, https://2caa86ae-d93b-45c1-bc2e-07277517228f.filesusr.com/ugd/f79cdf_f69769eb644140ccbb6dc58a603f96aa.pdf.

²⁵ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 5.

²⁶ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 22–23.

Figure 4. Canadians' evaluation on their ability to influence government²⁷

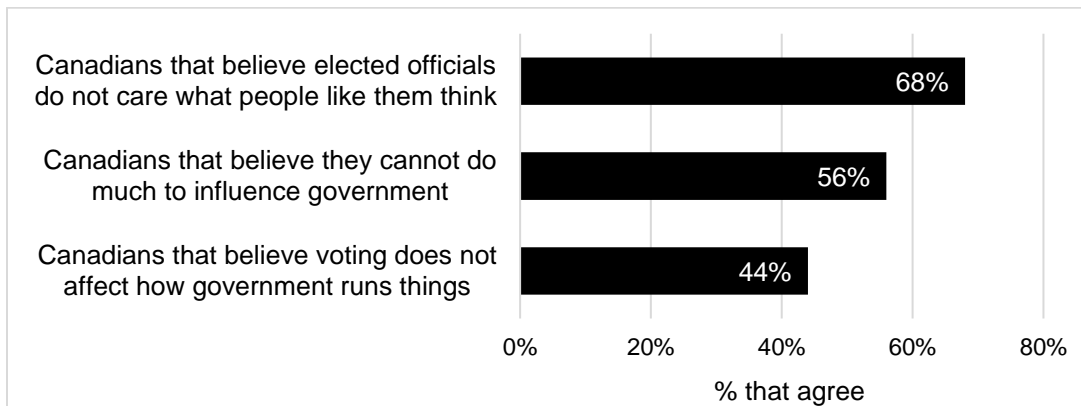
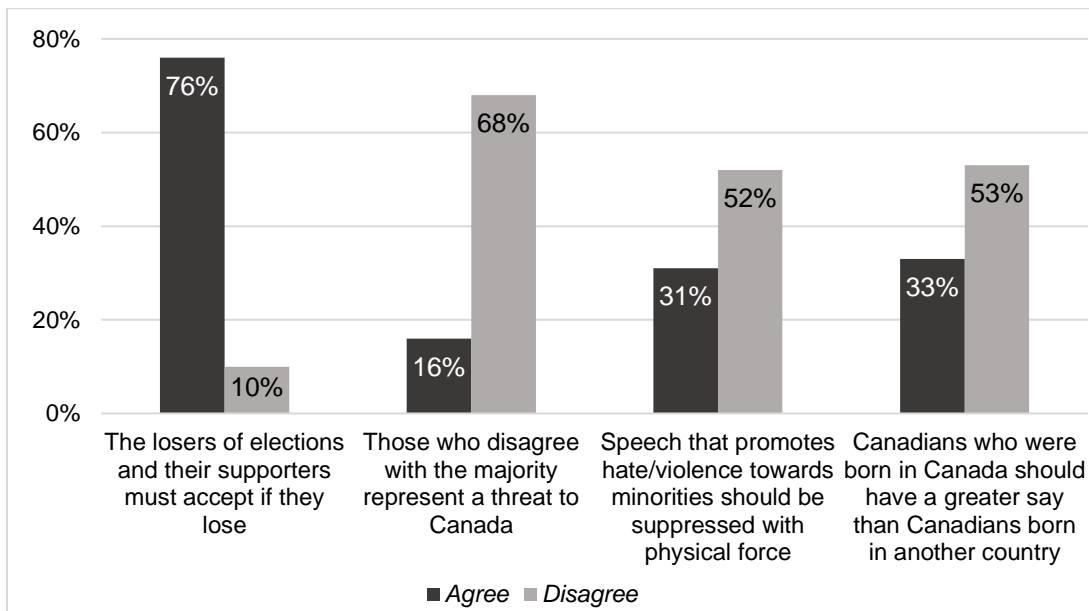


Figure 5 illustrates that the majority of Canadians align with core democratic values, however, one third of Canadians accept the statement that “Canadians born in Canada should have a greater say in what the government does” and nearly one third agree hate speech should be suppressed with physical force.²⁸ Both suggest deep and concerning divides in Canada related to the rule of law and equality of citizens.

Figure 5. Percentage of agreement or disagreement with democratic principles²⁹



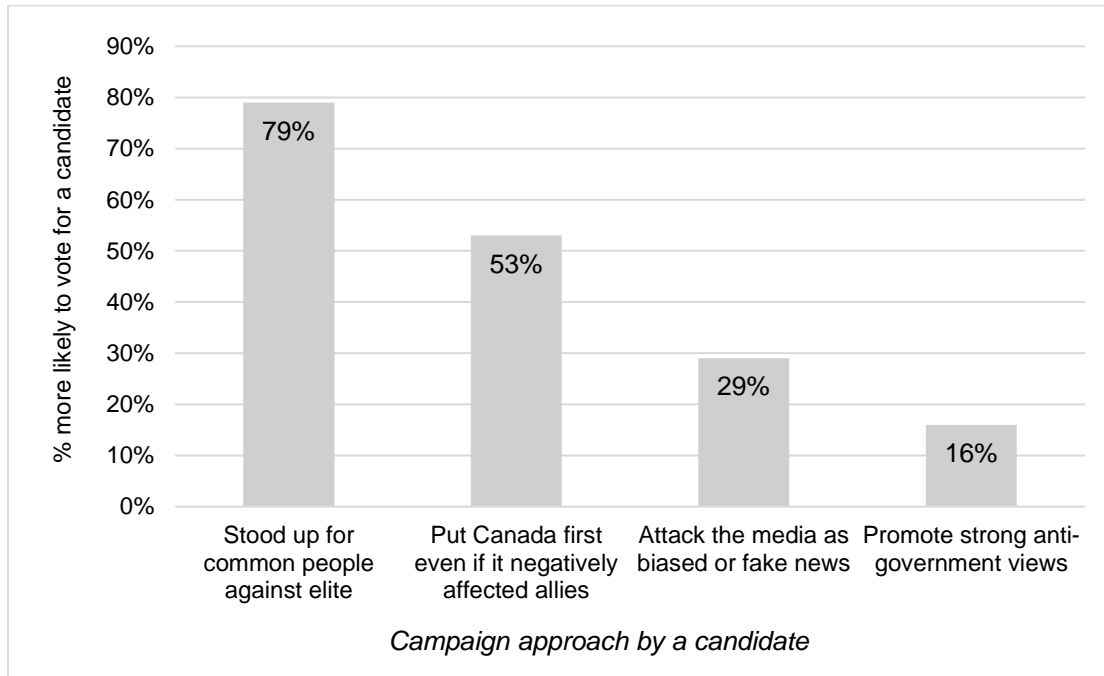
²⁷ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 25.

²⁸ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 38–39.

²⁹ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, ‘State of Democracy & Appeal of Populism’.

Figure 6 displays the percentage of Canadians that are more likely to vote for a candidate with certain characteristics commonly associated with populist leaders. While Canadians find some populist approaches appealing, such as candidates that prioritize the average citizen over the “elite” and puts Canada before its allies, they are not strongly swayed by anti-media and anti-government approaches.

Figure 6. Percentage of Canadians more likely to vote for a candidate using each approaches³⁰



Concerning the survey questions regarding participation, belonging, trust, and their relationship with democracy, the Centre found that 44% of Canadians feel there are too few opportunities to participate and 60% believe the education about their rights and responsibilities as citizens is insufficient.³¹ Despite this, many Canadians participate passively and actively in their community and government.³²

Furthermore, Figure 7 displays the survey results for levels of trust in Canadian democratic institutions and actors, as well as levels of trust in neighbours and people of

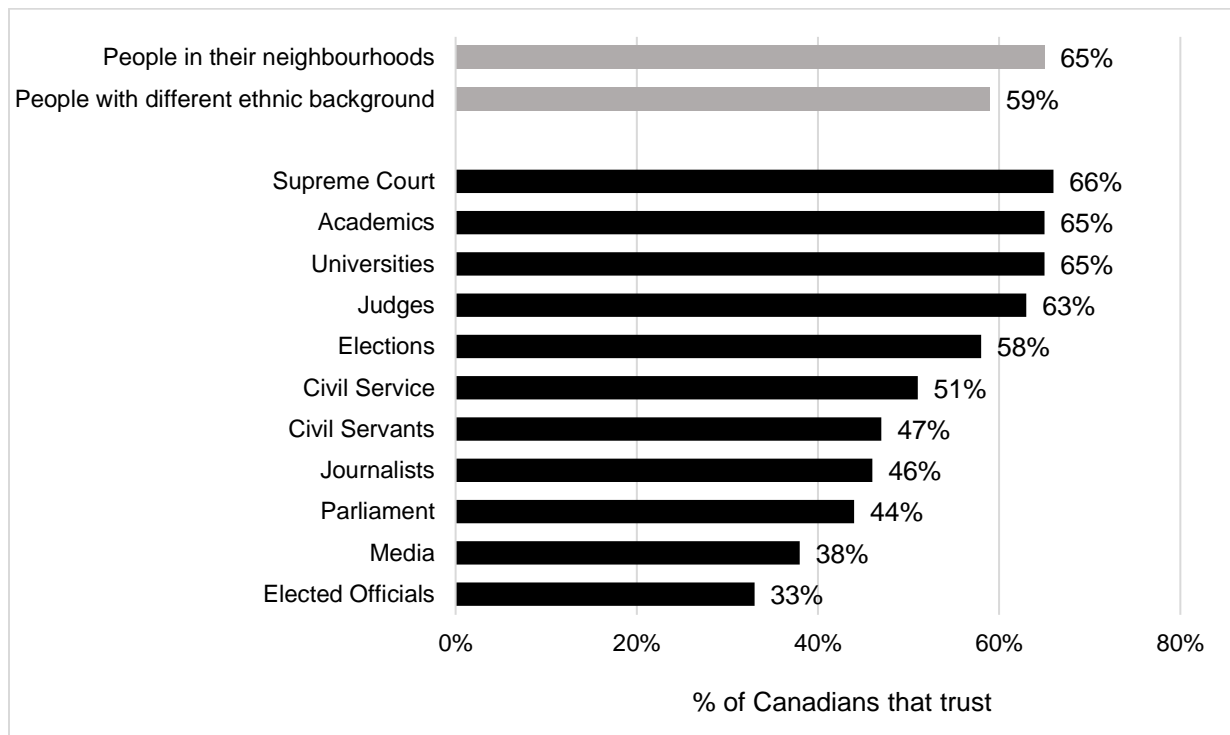
³⁰ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue.

³¹ Ibid.

³² SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, ‘Strengthening Canadian Democracy Report 2: Trust, Participation, and Belonging’ (Vancouver, British Columbia: Simon Fraser University, August 2019), 6.

different ethnicities. Trust is highest in the justice system, universities, and elections, but begins to decrease when looking at trust in the civil service. Trust is relatively high between members of the public, as measured by trust in neighbours and people of different ethnicities. Trust however is much lower for the media, journalists, Parliament and elected officials.

Figure 7. Percentage of Canadians that trust each group³³



The Centre's findings help triangulate the global trend of weakening democracies in the Canadian context. Despite Canada's appearance as a top-ranking democracy, there is evidence of a growing disconnect and distrust between Canadians, their government, and democracy.

³³ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 49.

Chapter 3.

Literature Review

Trust is a key indicator of the relationship between citizens and their government. Trust in turn influences governments' capacity to govern, citizens' willingness to comply with the law, and the overall ability of a democracy to function.³⁴ Trust in government is also essential for citizens to develop their political voice and influence government.³⁵ This chapter examines the literature on defining what trust is, why it is important, and what can cause losses and gains in trust.

3.1. Defining Trust

Trust is a complex topic with many definitions and interpretations. At its broadest understanding, the OECD defines trust as a positive perception about the actions and motivations of an individual or organization.³⁶ The OECD differentiates between “general interpersonal trust” as being between people in the general public, and “institutional trust” as being between citizens and their institutions, namely government.³⁷ Institutional trust involves believing that government has both the motivation and competence to act in one's interest, without oversight.³⁸ Trust in government can thus be understood as the belief that government or elected officials will fulfill the public's expectations and represent their interest. Trust requires relinquishing some control over one's self-determination to others for the purpose of increasing their collective capacities.³⁹

Another key concept is “mistrust”, which is defined as the absence of trust, and is often synonymous with political scepticism. “Distrust” is the opposite of trust and goes

³⁴ OECD, *Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust*, OECD Public Governance Reviews (OECD, 2017).

³⁵ OECD, *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust* (OECD, 2017).

³⁶ OECD, *Government at a Glance 2017*, 214.

³⁷ OECD, *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust*.

³⁸ Pippa Norris, 'The Conceptual Framework of Political Support', in *Handbook on Political Trust*, ed. Sonja Zmerli and Tom van der Meer (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 19.; Warren,33.

³⁹ Mark E Warren, 'What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need? Trust from the Perspective of Democratic Theory', in *Handbook on Political Trust*, ed. Sonja Zmerli and Tom van der Meer (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 33.

beyond just mistrusting, to assuming the worst in an actor or institution, which is highly related to political cynicism.⁴⁰

Trust, mistrust and distrust are all deeply integrated into the theory and realities of democracies. Warren in his chapter “What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need? Trust through Democratic Theory” in *Handbook to Political Trust*, presents several types of trust and their relationships to democracy. His primary argument is that both trust and distrust are essential to the functioning of democracy. Democracies are founded on the acknowledgement that people cannot be trusted with absolute power. Democracies have a system of checks and balances in order for citizens to oversee those in positions of power.⁴¹ This system is meant to allow people to rightfully distrust the people in power but have the means to hold them accountable through mechanisms such as regular elections, constitutions, Charters of Rights, independent judiciaries and media scrutiny.

Warren acknowledges there are different types of trust which can support democracy and others undermine it.⁴² One type of trust that strengthens democracy is generalized interpersonal trust between citizens that allows for the maintenance of civil society and social capital, as opposed to particularized trust, which is trust that does not go beyond narrow groups.⁴³ Other beneficial forms of trust include vertical trust between the public, experts and professionals, and towards non-partisan public offices including government agencies, ministries, and judiciaries. The public should trust these institutions to execute their roles fairly and impartially.⁴⁴

On the other hand, Warren considers sceptical distrust towards political actors as a beneficial form of distrust for democracy. While skeptical distrust directed at political actors is warranted to keep partisan positions in check, it is essential that public trust exists in the surrounding processes to keep political actors accountable, or as he puts it:

[...] even though citizens should not trust partisan political elites, at least as a general matter, they do need a second-order trust in political institutions that channels political conflict into the democratic media of public discourse and voting, and in doing so institutionalizes distrust.

⁴⁰ Sonja Zmerli and Tom van der Meer, ‘The Deeply Rooted Concern with Political Trust’, in *Handbook on Political Trust* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 4–5.

⁴¹ Warren, ‘What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?’, 33–34.

⁴² Warren, ‘What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?’

⁴³ Warren, 35.

⁴⁴ Warren, ‘What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?’, 34.

Citizens should be able to trust that contentious decisions are made in the open, through public talk and transparent voting, rather than through backroom deals they cannot possibly monitor.⁴⁵

The implication of Warren's analysis is that second-order trust in political institutions needs to translate into political participation by citizens. Second-order trust requires citizens to have the capacity to participate, including being knowledgeable about government activities, as well as having opportunities to participate and influence government. Political efficacy is the perception held by citizens that they can influence government and hold elected officials accountable,⁴⁶ and is an essential component of second-order trust. Citizens need to trust the political system to be free and open, trust the media to inform them on government activity, and trust themselves as citizens to be able to influence and change government when necessary. For democracy to function public distrust toward political actors should motivate the public to act on their dissatisfaction.

Regardless, citizens may become distrusting of the entire political process if they do not trust the accountability mechanisms, thereby generalizing their distrust beyond elected officials to the non-political aspects of government. Generalized distrust is damaging to democracy because it produces political cynicism – the negative evaluation of the political process and the belief that political and non-political actors are inherently corrupt, incompetent, and self-serving.⁴⁷ If citizens stop trusting monitoring and accountability mechanism such as voting or the media, and stop believing their participation matters, generalized distrust and cynicism can undermine the legitimacy and stability of democracy. It can translate into apathy and isolation, or manifest into anger and mobilization against democracy itself through anti-democratic forces.⁴⁸ Warren's analysis demonstrates the types of trust and distrust that are essential for democracy, and those that must be avoided to prevent the decline in Canada's democratic system.

⁴⁵ Warren, 35.

⁴⁶ Zmerli and van der Meer, 'The Deeply Rooted Concern with Political Trust', 5.

⁴⁷ Zmerli and van der Meer, 5.

⁴⁸ Warren, 'What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?', 50.

3.2. Importance of Trust for the Functioning of Society

3.2.1. Benefits of trust

Beyond the theoretical understanding of trust provided by Warren, the OECD's research on trust depicts why trust in government is important to the functioning of democracy and society. The OECD's findings demonstrate that trust is vital for the respect for the rule of law, the growth and stability of the economy and the overall legitimacy and sustainability of democracies.⁴⁹ In terms of governance, trust increases government's ability to effectively implement policy and provide services efficiently. Trust also increases compliance with the law, thereby increasing safety and reducing crime and enforcement costs. Trust in government is also required to encourage investment and foster economic growth.⁵⁰ In addition, trust is particularly essential in crisis situations and for solving complex problems such as climate change.⁵¹ High levels of trust improves society, whereas the absence of trust can result in decreased economic efficiency, increased costs, slowed growth and impaired policy implementation and service delivery.

3.2.2. Consequences of distrust

Foa and Mounk in their article, "The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect," focus their research on the consequences distrust has on the political system itself. The authors argue that there are clear indicators that distrust is leading to decreasing commitment to democracy as a political system.⁵² They justify their argument by comparing American and European longitudinal survey data that suggests that a decreasing number of democratic citizens in the USA and Europe perceive democracy as an essential form of government.⁵³ As well, the data indicates that commitment to key democratic values continues to drop, along with decreasing levels of trust in parliaments and elected officials, weakening party affiliation, decreasing voter turnout and other

⁴⁹ OECD, 'Trust in Government, Policy Effectiveness and the Governance Agenda', 22–23.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ OECD, *Trust and Public Policy: How Better Governance Can Help Rebuild Public Trust*, OECD Public Governance Reviews (OECD, 2017), 11.

⁵² Foa and Mounk, 'The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect', 5–8.

⁵³ Foa and Mounk, 'The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect'. 7.

forms of civic participation.⁵⁴ Concurrently, the data suggests there has been growing acceptance of authoritarian values and interest in non-democratic forms of government.⁵⁵ Consequently, Foa and Mounk argue this data reflects an instability in democracies, as some have begun to dismantle.⁵⁶ Using Warren's framework, one could interpret Foa and Mounk's findings as signs of generalized distrust spreading to the democratic system itself. Although Canadian data is not used, Foa and Mounk's research demonstrates the importance of preventatively addressing the gaps in trust Canada is experiencing.

3.3. Factors that Influence Levels of Trust

It is important to understand what influences levels of trust in order to inform how political trust can be earned back and maintained. The OECD has thoroughly researched the primary factors that influence trust across its member countries, and Dalton in his chapter in *Handbook on Political Trust*, "Political Trust in North America," analyzes and critiques the main causal research findings using Canadian and American data. Dalton also looks at comparative longitudinal data, specifically looking at the downward trends in trust in both the USA and Canada from the 1960s to 2015. Dalton finds that both Canada and the USA have very different economic and political situations, making isolating a causal link between downward trends in low trust challenging. He examines seven potential causes to lowering trust: (1) government performance, (2) economic performance, (3) scandals, (4) media, (5) globalization, (6) social capital and (7) value changes.

Government Performance

The first causal factor is government performance in the form of policy changes and service delivery failing to meet the public's expectations, leading citizens to withdraw their confidence in the government's capacity to meet their expectations, therefore

⁵⁴ Foa and Mounk, 6.

⁵⁵ Foa and Mounk, 'The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect'.

⁵⁶ Foa and Mounk, 15–17.

decreasing trust over time.⁵⁷ Relatedly the OECD argues that people's political efficacy – a key component of second-order trust – can be “built and destroyed by people's experiences when interacting with public institutions and by institutions that are not perceived as responsive to people's needs.”⁵⁸ However, Dalton argues that Canada's policy performance has arguably grown stronger over time, with increased incomes, availability and quality of services, but nonetheless trust has continued to decline.⁵⁹ What has changed is the size of governments' policy mandates, making it harder to satisfy citizens due to the diversity of services provided at different levels of government, thus increasing opportunities for disappointment. A purely performance-based explanation is unlikely to be a causal factor for decreasing trust in Canada given the lack of direct evidence provided and improving performance is therefore unlikely to increase trust.

Economic Performance and Perceptions

The second potential cause of lowering trust is economic performance. A theory presented by many academics, including the OECD, is that economic downturns lower institutional trust.⁶⁰ However, Dalton argues only modest empirical evidence exists to link economic performance to trust and suggest a correlational, not causal relationship.⁶¹ As well, when economies improve, there is not an equivalent rise in trust, indicating that economic uncertainty and hardship may lower trust, but economic booms do not necessarily build trust.

Scandals

Political scandals and perception of corruption are another proposed cause of lowering trust. Dalton argues that while scandals and corruption are the obvious explanation for distrust, once the scandalous actors are removed, the distrust remains.⁶² Evidence suggests in response to scandals, citizens distrust all politicians and

⁵⁷ Russel Dalton, 'Political Trust in North America', in *Handbook on Political Trust*, ed. Sonja Zmerli and Tom van der Meer (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 382, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782545118>.

⁵⁸ OECD, 'Government at a Glance 2019' (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2019), 160, <https://doi.org/10.1787/8ccf5c38-en>.

⁵⁹ Dalton, 'Political Trust in North America', 384.

⁶⁰ OECD, 'Trust in Government, Policy Effectiveness and the Governance Agenda'.

⁶¹ Dalton, 'Political Trust in North America', 383.

⁶² Dalton, 384–85.

government, not just the specific political actors involved, demonstrating generalized distrust. Like recessions, scandals may certainly lower trust, but the removal of the problem actors does not renew trust.

Media

The fourth proposed causal factor is the relationship between the mass media and trust. Dalton contends that the media increasingly reports on scandals and highlights dissatisfaction with government, but the data is unclear whether the media generates distrust in government or is simply reflecting and reporting the distrust already present. Dalton adds that levels of media consumption do not correlate in a significant way to the level of trust in government, nor does the structure of media (public or private) in different countries change the level of distrust.⁶³ Therefore the evidence suggests the media has minimal causal impact on trust levels.

Globalization

The issue of globalization relates to multiple factors already presented, including increasing economic uncertainty and volatility, as well as restricting national governments' abilities to control their internal policies. Dalton argues evidence linking globalization and trust are indirect at best.⁶⁴

Social Capital

Another theorized causal factor is the decline in social capital in Western democracies. This was first proposed by Putnam wherein he argues that social connections and involvement have been on the decline in America since the 1950s and that decline has driven the corresponding reduction in social capital, therefore eroding interpersonal and political trust, as well as political participation.⁶⁵ Trust is predicted to be higher in those who are more engaged in their communities, suggesting that lower social

⁶³ Dalton, 385.

⁶⁴ Dalton, 386.

⁶⁵ Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

capital is expected to result in lower generalized trust between citizens.⁶⁶ Evidence demonstrates a correlation with levels of trust, but not a clear causal link.⁶⁷

Change in Values

The final causal factor that Dalton is most convinced of is the theory that shifting to post-materialist values explains decreases in trust. Dalton argues that as citizens become more post-materialistic, they become less trusting of politicians, parties and institutions because their expectations are higher than previous materialist generations. He argues that decreases in trust is not detrimental because it produces more engaged citizens or “critical citizens”.⁶⁸ Foa and Mounk disagree, arguing distrust is undermining democratic values and creating more withdrawn citizens.⁶⁹

3.3.2. Rebuilding trust in government

Trust is a complex concept – lowering trust and increasing distrust have a range of intersecting causes. There are many factors that can cause trust to decrease, but effective ways of increasing trust are complicated and unclear. In terms of how to rebuild trust in government, the literature is often vague and unfocused. A key takeaway from the literature is that trust in government reflects citizens’ perceptions of government. When government is not meeting the expectations of citizens through poor quality services, scandals, unresponsive policies and poor economic conditions, citizens’ distrust grows and persists. However, improving political actors’ behaviour, government service delivery or economic performance would not necessarily translate into increased trust. The additional research in this capstone aims to identify what approaches would increase Canadians’ trust in government.

⁶⁶ Lisa Young, ‘Civic Engagement, Trust, and Democracy: Evidence from Alberta’, in *Value Change and Governance in Canada*, ed. Neil Nevitte (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 108.

⁶⁷ Dalton, ‘Political Trust in North America’, 386.

⁶⁸ Dalton, 387.

⁶⁹ Foa and Mounk, ‘The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect’, 5–6.

Chapter 4.

Methodology

Two methodologies are used in this study to analyze the policy problem and identify potential solutions. The primary methodology is the quantitative analysis of the survey data collected by the Centre's national survey on democratic culture conducted in July 2019. The secondary methodology is the qualitative analysis of interviews with experts in the field of democratic theory to provide insights into the results of the survey analysis and policy options. This chapter describes the approaches used in both methodologies.

4.1. Survey Methodology

The Centre conducted their survey between July 5th and 15th, 2019, among a randomly selected representative sample of 3,524 Canadians, carrying a margin of error of ± 1.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The survey was conducted online and over the phone and offered in both official languages. The data has been weighted by the Centre to reflect the Census on age, gender and province/territory representation.⁷⁰ The purpose of the survey for the Centre was to understand where Canadians currently stand in terms of their relationship with democracy. The baseline descriptive statistics can be found in Chapter 2. A full list of the questions asked in the survey can be found in Appendix A.

The analysis in this capstone uses cross-tabulations and basic statistical analysis tools on the data collected from the Centre's survey. The analysis was conducted using SPSS software. Cross-tabulations were used to compare the impact of multiple independent variables on levels of trust, as well as to look at the levels of trust depending on different demographic variables. The significance of the cross-tabulations were tested using chi-squared tests at 0.05 significance.⁷¹ All results presented in

⁷⁰ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 'State of Democracy & Appeal of Populism', 12.

⁷¹ Two variable chi-squared statistical test compares categorical variables evaluates whether the observed results reflect independence of the variables. The results determine whether the relationship between the variables is significant or not, meaning the results signify the variables

Chapter 5 have $\alpha < 0.0001$, meaning they are all statistically significant. Cramer's V test is the primary analytical tool applied in order to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables.⁷² Chi-squared measures statistical significance, and Cramer's V measures substantive significance or how strongly related the two variables are.⁷³ Cramer's V results are interpreted based on Marchant-Shapiro's recommended approach displayed in Table 1. This means that when testing the strength of the relationship between levels of trust and another variable, if the Cramer's V results are > 0.3 there is a very strong relationship between those variables, and it is highly likely the level of trust and the other variable are related. Whereas if $V < 0.1$ there is a very weak relationship between trust levels and the other variable. The full Cramer's V and cross-tabulation results are in Appendix B and C, only the most relevant findings are presented in Chapter 5.

Table 1. How to interpret Cramer's V⁷⁴

Cramer's V Results (V)	Qualitative Interpretation
$0 \leq V < 0.10$	Very Weak
$0.10 \leq V < 0.20$	Weak
$0.20 \leq V < 0.30$	Moderate
$V \geq 0.30$	Strong

4.2. Interview Methodology

The secondary methodology is qualitative interviews with academic experts in democratic theory and political trust which are used to better understand the conclusions drawn from the primary methodology, as well as to learn what policy options exist and are feasible in the Canadian context. The interviews were conducted with three academics selected for their distinctive expertise within the academic realm of Canadian

are not independent but related. If the resulting p-value is below the significance level of ($\alpha = 0.05$), then the relationship is significant.

⁷² Cramer's V is used to measure how substantive the significance is between variables in tabulations larger than 2x2, and results vary between 0 and 1, with 0 suggesting no association. The greater the association, the more related to two variables are.

⁷³ Theresa Marchant-Shapiro, *Statistics for Political Analysis: Understanding the Numbers* (London: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015), 245, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483395418>.

⁷⁴ Marchant-Shapiro, 258–60.

democracy, one specializing in political trust, one in democratic institutions and actors, and one in actionable policy solutions related to improving democracy. They were asked to share their insights on the current challenges for Canada's democracy, the deficiencies related to trust, and the potential causes, consequences and solutions to these issues. The results and analysis of the interviews are explored in Chapter 6.

Chapter 5.

Survey Analysis

This chapter outlines the results of the survey analysis comparing trust in government to other relevant variables. Question 11(a) asked participants to rate their level of trust in Parliament on a scale of 1-7, and for the purpose of this analysis, responses between 1-3 are considered 'distrusting', those that selected 4 are considered neutral and those that selected 5-7 are considered 'trusting.' This is used as the primary measure of trust in government. All the results are statistically significant, and their substantive significance is described in each section based on their Cramer's V (V) results. All relationships are interpreted to be correlational, not necessarily causal.

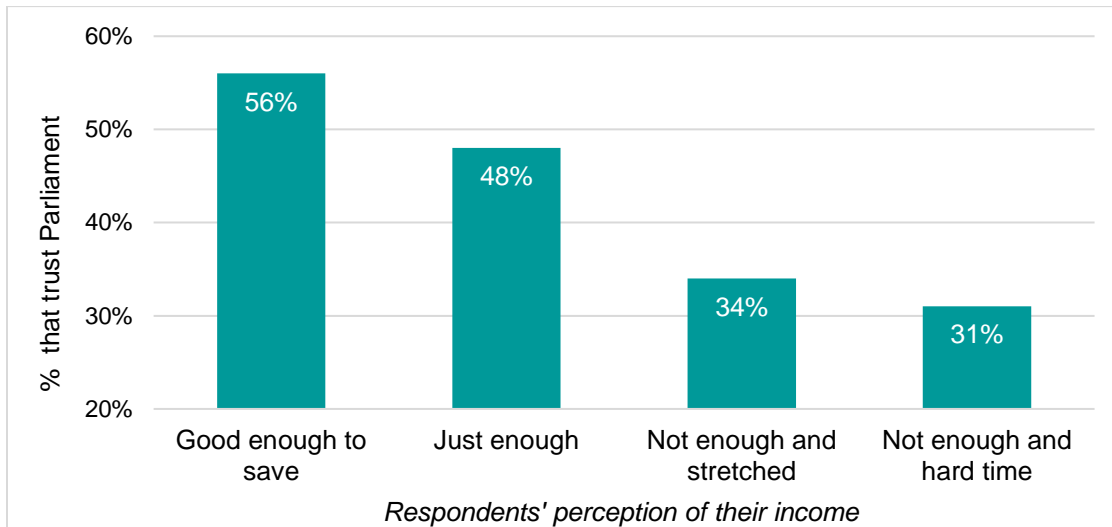
Five key insights can be inferred from the survey analysis. First, there is evidence, although not strong, that a relationship exists between socioeconomic status and levels of trust in government. Second, there is a very strong relationship between trust in government and levels of political efficacy and cynicism. Therefore, levels of trust in government are highly related to people's belief that they can influence government and how positively or negatively they view government. Third, there is evidence of widespread generalized distrust in Canada based on the strong relationships between trust in Parliament and trust with other democratic institutions, suggesting that distrust is not particularized to just to one institution but instead generalized to all areas. Fourth, there is a moderate relationship between levels of trust in government and levels of generalized interpersonal trust. Finally, there is weak evidence of a relationship between level of trust in government and level of agreement with populist rhetoric.

5.1. Socioeconomic Factors and Trust

Respondents were asked about a range of demographic and identity information in the survey including age, gender identity, country of origin, country respondents' parents were born in, province of residence, and whether they identify as Indigenous, a visible minority, person with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ and/or a newcomer to Canada. Compared to other demographic variables, income and education have the strongest relationships with levels of trust, however the relationships are not strong. Figure 8

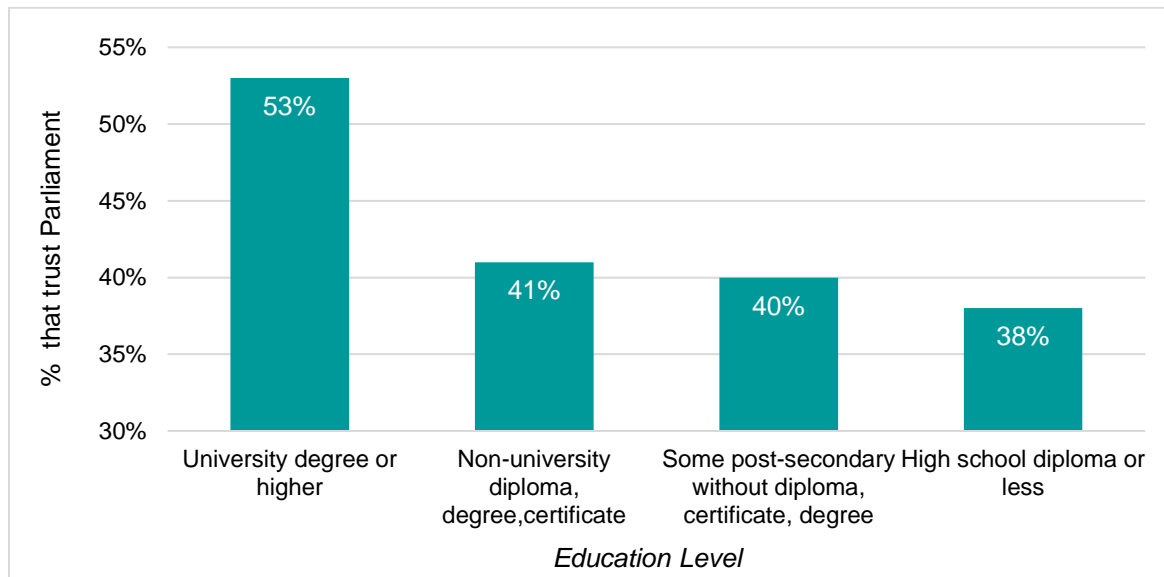
highlights that the more comfortable respondents feel financially, the more trusting they are of government. Over half of respondents with enough income to save are trusting in Parliament, whereas, less than one third of respondents that feel they do not have enough income trust Parliament.

Figure 8. Level of trust in Parliament based on income



A similar linear pattern is displayed in Figure 9 in relation to education and trust. The higher the respondents' education, the higher their trust in Parliament. Over half of university graduates are trusting, and less than half of respondents without a university degree trust Parliament. Despite the low statistical strength in the relationships between trust and income and education, with $V = 0.147$ and 0.102 respectively, relationships clearly exist between the two variables and trust, demonstrating a correlation between trust in government and socioeconomic status exists in Canada.

Figure 9. Level of trust in Parliament based on education



5.2. Political Efficacy, Cynicism and Trust

Respondents were also asked about the responsiveness of Canada's democracy with questions about their perceived ability to influence government, which can be interpreted as measuring levels of cynicism and efficacy.

As previously defined, political efficacy is an individual's belief that they have a say in what government does,⁷⁵ and political cynicism is the negative belief that government is inherently corrupt and self-serving.⁷⁶ Three survey questions assess respondents' level of political efficacy and cynicism. Question 4(a) asked respondents to indicate whether or not they believe elected officials care what average citizens think. This is one measure of political cynicism. Question 4(b) asked respondents to choose whether or not they believe voting affords them a say in how government operates. Respondents that believe that voting matters can be interpreted as having higher political efficacy, as they believe their actions make a difference. Whereas, respondents that do not believe their vote can make a difference can be interpreted as being politically cynical. Similarly, question 4(c) asked respondents to choose whether or not ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government even if they are willing to try.

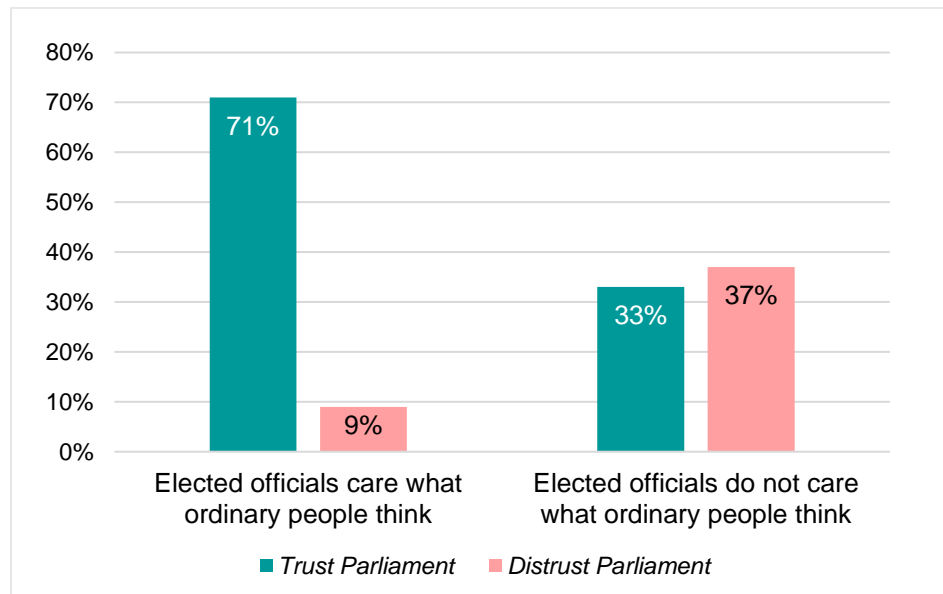
⁷⁵ OECD, 'Government at a Glance 2019', 160.

⁷⁶ Zmerli and van der Meer, 'The Deeply Rooted Concern with Political Trust', 5.

Like 4(b), responses that suggest respondents believe they can make a difference indicate political efficacy, and those that do not can be interpreted as cynical of the system.

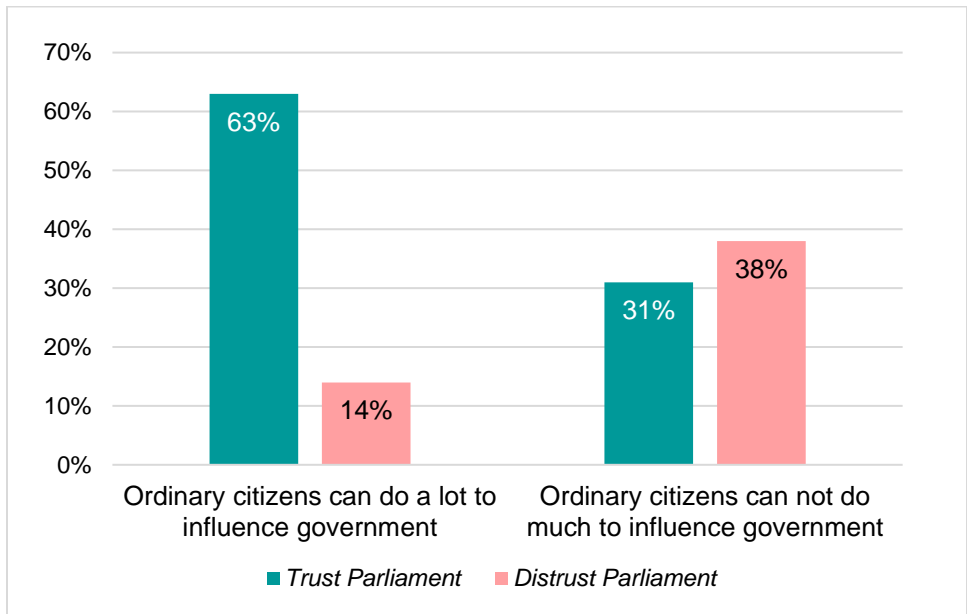
The statistical analysis demonstrates a very strong positive relationship between trust in Parliament and the perception that elected officials care about ordinary people with $V = 0.378$. This is emphasized in Figure 10 which depicts over 70% of those that have a positive view on elected officials are trusting, and only 9% are distrusting. In contrast, only 33% of those that believe elected officials do not care trust Parliament, while the majority is distrusting of Parliament.

Figure 10. Levels of trust in Parliament based on perspective on elected officials



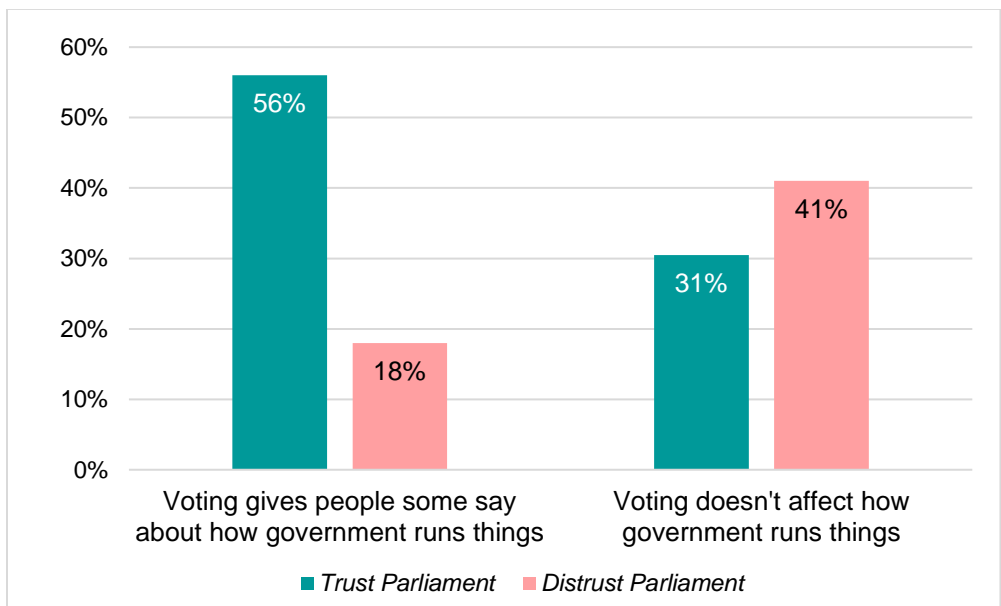
There is also a strong relationship between trust in Parliament and the perception that ordinary citizens can influence government with $V = 0.333$. This implies the more trusting in government respondents are, the higher their confidence in their ability to influence government. Figure 11 illustrates that while 63% of respondents that believe they can influence government trust Parliament; most respondents that believe ordinary citizens cannot influence government are distrusting of government.

Figure 11. Level of trust in Parliament based on perspective on ability to influence government



There is a moderately strong relationship between trust in government and perceptions about the effectiveness of voting with $V = 0.286$. Figure 12 illustrates that over half of respondents that believe voting gives them a say are trusting in Parliament and just over 40% of those that do not believe voting matters are distrusting of government.

Figure 12. Level of trust in Parliament based on perspective on impact of voting



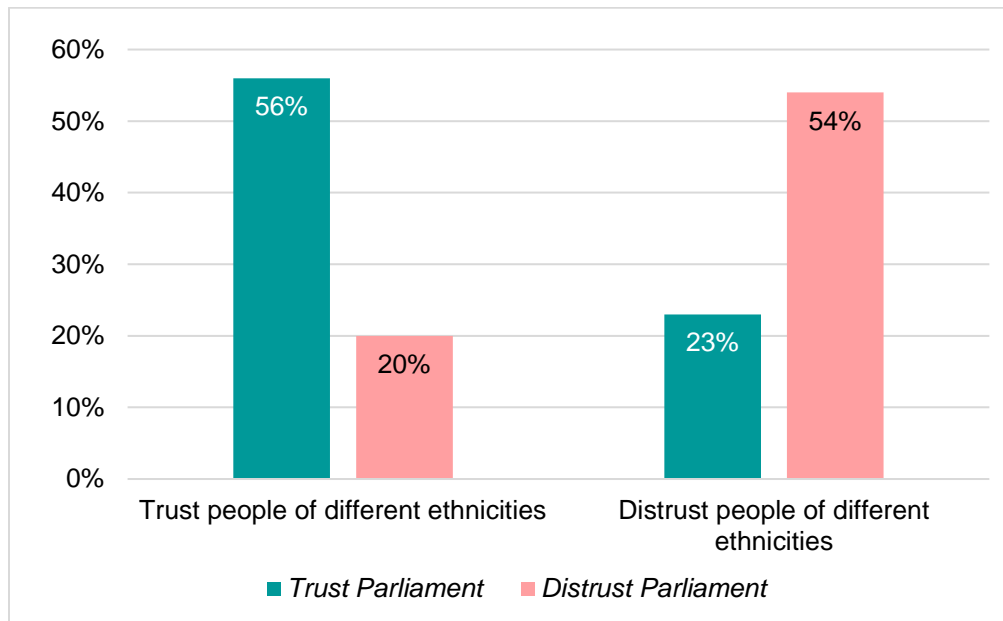
5.3. Trust in Other Institutions, Groups and Actors

Trust in Parliament is one of twelve other trust indicators explored in the Centre's survey. Statistical analysis demonstrates strong relationships exist with levels of trust in Parliament and levels of trust in other groups, with V ranging from 0.292-0.437. There is a very strong relationship between trust in Parliament and trust with all other democratic institutions, with all having $V > 0.3$. Other democratic institutions include the Supreme Court, media, the civil service, elections and universities. This also suggests respondents that are distrusting of one democratic institution, are likely distrusting of all democratic institutions, demonstrating a potential indicator of distrust being generalized beyond the political realm.

Additionally, trust in Parliament is moderately related to trust between other members of the public. Question 12(b) asked respondents their level of trust in people with a different ethnic background than them. This is one way to measure generalized interpersonal trust, as it determines how much people trust people outside of their ethnic group.⁷⁷ There is a moderate relationship between levels of trust in Parliament and levels of general interpersonal trust with $V = 0.229$. Figure 13 illustrates the more trusting respondents are in people from different ethnic backgrounds, the more likely they are to trust government. 56% of respondents that trust people of different backgrounds also trust Parliament, and only 20% distrust Parliament, whereas the opposite is evident for respondents that distrust people from other cultures – over 50% are also distrusting of Parliament. This implies that general interpersonal trust and trust in government are at least moderately related.

⁷⁷ Mark Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

Figure 13. Trust in Parliament versus trust of people of different ethnicities



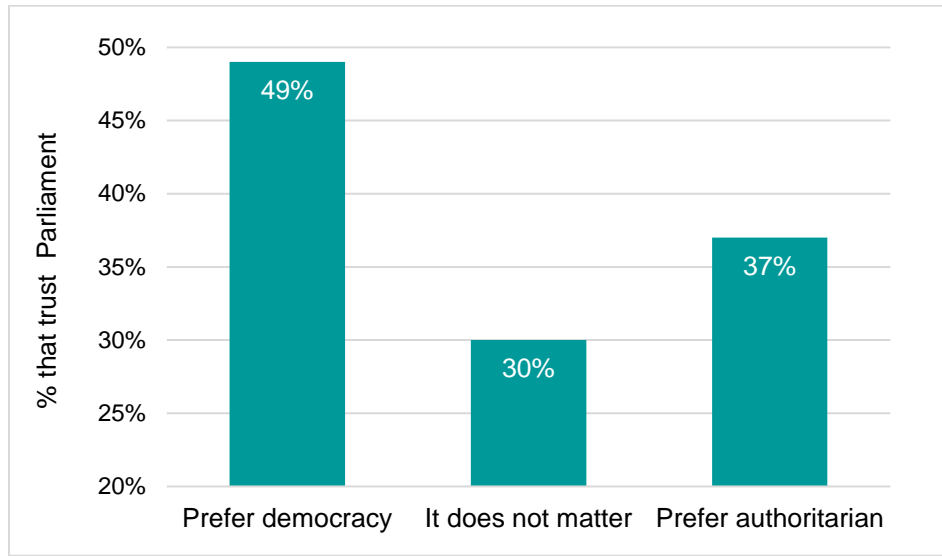
5.4. Commitment to Democracy and Appeal of Anti-Democratic Values

The survey also asked respondents their level of commitment to democracy and its essential values, as well as their level of connection to hypothetical populist candidates. Although the results are statistically significant, the Cramer's V results suggests the relationships are fairly weak between levels of trust in government and preference for democracy and respondents' perspective on common populist appeals. The most relevant variables are analyzed in the following subsections.

5.4.1. Preference for democracy

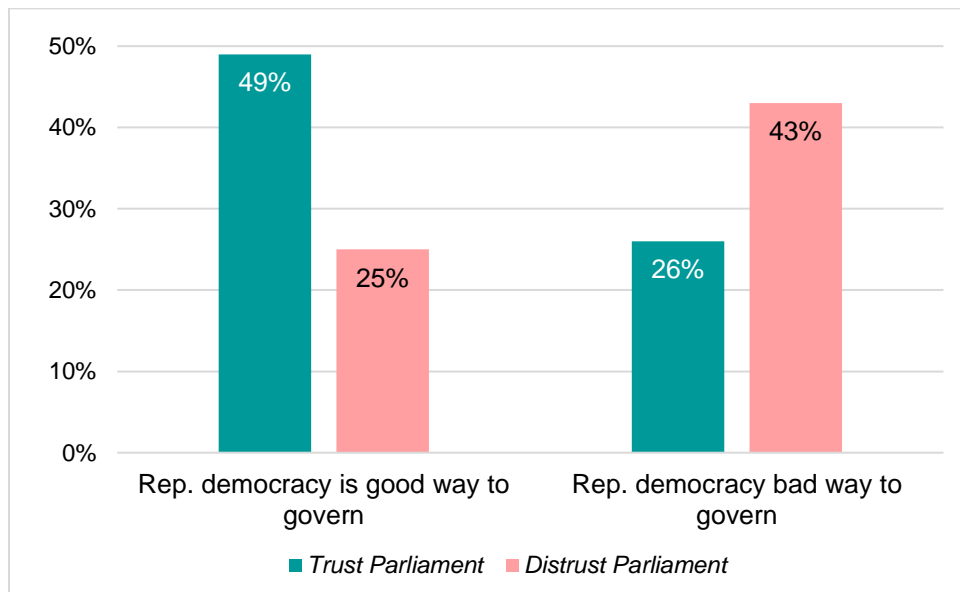
Question 5 directly asked respondents whether they believe democracy is the most preferable form of government or if does not matter or if they prefer an authoritarian system. The results suggest there is a weak relationship between preference for democracy and levels of trust in government with $V = 0.105$. Figure 14 showcases that nearly half of those respondents preferring democracy are trusting, whereas those that think that it does not matter whether Canada is democratic or not are the least trusting. Surprisingly, respondents that are open to authoritarian governments instead of democracy are more trusting than those who do not care.

Figure 14. Level of trust in Parliament based on preferred form of government



Another depiction of people's preference for Canada's current democratic system was in question 6(b) that asked respondents whether they perceive representative democracy as a good or bad way to govern. There is a moderately weak relationship between this variable and trust in Parliament with $V = 0.176$. Although not strong, Figure 15 demonstrates that those that are supportive of representative systems are clearly more likely to be trusting, and those that feel it is a bad way to govern are more likely to be distrustful.

Figure 15. Level of trust in Parliament based on perspective on representative democracy



5.4.2. Commitment to democratic values and appeals of populism

Questions 7 (a) through (e) asked respondents their level of agreement or disagreement with statements representing key democratic values. All the results are significant, but weak or very weak. Questions 8 (a) through (e) asked respondents their likelihood of voting for a hypothetical candidate holding certain values that are meant to represent common populist tactics. Like the responses for questions 7, these results are all substantively insignificant and signify that levels of trust in Parliament is weakly related to decreasing commitment to democratic values or appeals to populist leaders. Based on the findings in this data, which can be found in full detail in Appendix B, Canadians with very low levels of trust in Parliament, are not necessarily more likely to be drawn to populist candidates.

Chapter 6.

Interview Analysis

Experts in Canadian democracy and democratic theory were interviewed in order to gain a deeper understanding of the policy problem and policy options available. The following experts were interviewed:

- Dr. Maxwell Cameron, Acting Director, School of Public Policy and Global Affairs, University of British Columbia, former Director of the Centre for the Study of Democratic Institution and founder of the Institute for Future Legislators.
- Dr. Mark Warren, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia, Harold and Dorrie Merilees Chair in the Study of Democracy.
- Dr. David Moscrop, SSHRC postdoctoral fellow in the Department of Communication at the University of Ottawa; author of *Too Dumb for Democracy? Why We Make Bad Political Decisions and How We Can Make Better Ones*.

This chapter presents the thematic findings from the interviews. Key themes include linking the causes of distrust to systemic influences, identifying the root causes of trust, as well as consensus on the primary deficiencies in Canada's democracy that are connected to low trust and potential approaches to resolving those threats.

6.1. Distrust is a Systemic Problem

When asked what causes distrust, the experts interviewed provided many causal pathways, but expressed that distrust is largely a systemic issue, rooted in history. The pathways to distrust for many countries can be traced through their historical social structure, with more hierarchical societies tending to be more distrusting. Moreover, the interviews highlight that Canada is both a liberal and a democratic society but that the two systems are not inherently linked. They expressed that Canada's liberalistic focus on individualism and competition undermines the democratic elements by cultivating more distrust. The proliferation of neo-liberalism in all spheres of life results in greater

inequality and a reduction in the capacity of collective decision-making.⁷⁸ Additionally, experts interviewed explained that globalization and the vast expansion of government mandates have further increased distrust by making the government's job incredibly complex and more challenging to hold to account.

The experts interviewed also discussed specific causes of trust and distrust. Interpersonal trust is shaped throughout one's development from parenting, schooling and social interactions.⁷⁹ Additionally, interpersonal trust, and therefore political trust is often divided along socioeconomic lines: those with more income and education are more likely to have social connections, social trust and therefore political trust. In contrast, distrust in government is presented as a result of excessive partisanship, lack of quality political leadership, and lack of opportunities to participate.

6.2. Generalized Interpersonal Trust is Foundational to Democracy

When asked about the relationship between trust and democracy, experts agree that trust is critical to the functioning of democracy, stressing the importance of generalized interpersonal trust. Generalized interpersonal trust, as opposed to particularized trust, is viewed as foundational to the development of political trust. Warren defines particularized trust as in-group trust, whereas generalized trust is trust across group differences, so trusting people from different ethnicities, religions and of a different socioeconomic group.⁸⁰ Cameron argues that for democracy to work, people need to be invested and trust in other citizens to vote in the best interest of the community or country. When citizens are perceived as too self-interested and not committed to the collective process, others may feel foolish for not doing the same. Those people then also become cynical and “become a model for cynicism for other people.”⁸¹ This can be interpreted to mean cynicism can be contagious, leading to a pattern of people not being invested in each other and weakening democracy. As people distrust other citizens and government, they will give more reason for others to do the

⁷⁸ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

⁷⁹ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁸⁰ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁸¹ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

same. Moscrop mirrors this premise in a positive light, wherein citizens partaking in positive participation experiences, such as citizens' assemblies, become models of efficacy and knowledge experts that positively empowers others.⁸²

Warren also perceives interpersonal trust as necessary for the functioning of democracies, as it is needed to start businesses, organize, and advocate for collective action. He views it as a "precursor to political capacity," and therefore necessary for citizens to have the confidence and ability to represent themselves and pressure government.⁸³ In other words, interpersonal trust is essential to political efficacy. Political efficacy will translate into trust in government if the government responds to this pressure appropriately.

6.3. Threats to Canada's Democracy

The experts interviewed agree that while Canada's democracy ranks highly in the world, it is underperforming relative to its potential and has problems that need to be addressed. The core areas identified as undermining Canada's democracy include the public's high level of disengagement, the disconnect between elected officials and the public, and the institutionalized untrustworthiness of elected officials.

6.3.1. Political disengagement and disenchantment

Lack of political participation is argued to be the primary threat to Canada's democracy by multiple experts interviewed. Canadians are not drawn to running for public office and are less likely to join political parties, vote or participate democratically in other ways. This is argued to be a result of a lack of opportunities, encouragement or incentives for the public to learn, practice or participate in politics. Politics is described by Cameron as something that is learnt by doing, so if Canadians' only opportunity to participate is voting a few times every few years, there is minimal motivation for Canadians to invest their time and energy into understanding the political processes.⁸⁴ The experts interviewed argue political engagement is strongly linked to levels of trust

⁸² David Moscrop, interview by author, February 3, 2020.

⁸³ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁸⁴ Maxwell Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

because if citizens do not believe their voice matters or care to participate, it is a strong indicator that they do not trust the system. The result is a disconnected public that is apathetic at best, cynical at worst – both of which are harmful to democracy. The consequences of this lack of capacity in citizens may leave Canada vulnerable in the event of a global crisis that requires trusting, resilient and resourceful citizens to manage.

6.3.2. Division between elected officials and the public

The second major deficiency identified is Canada's political party system and how the system discourages elected officials from connecting with citizens and their constituents. Warren states that Canada's Westminster system creates, "...this natural tendency for political elites to forget where they came from," so elected officials campaign to their constituents during an election, then disconnect nearly immediately after.⁸⁵ This occurs because the existing institutional arrangements create no incentives for elected officials to stay connected, creating what Warren describes as a "cycle of disaffection."⁸⁶ Cameron believes it is not just the lack of communication between elected officials and their constituencies creating a divide, but also the lack of symbolic representation of the diversity of Canadians.⁸⁷ Many Canadians do not see themselves reflected in the make-up of Parliament, leading citizens to feel unrepresented and alienated, consequently further decreasing their trust in the system.

6.3.3. Elected officials untrustworthy by nature and institutions

The third deficiency debated by the experts is whether elected officials deserve to be distrusted and whether that is good or bad for Canada's democracy. When asked specifically, the experts interviewed did not find the levels of trust in elected officials or Parliament reported by the Centre's survey to be surprising.⁸⁸ Warren is not overly concerned with these levels, first because he characterizes the level of trust as relatively high compared to other countries, and second, because he views political actors in

⁸⁵ Mark Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁸⁶ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁸⁷ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

⁸⁸ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue survey indicated 33% of Canadians trust elected officials and 44% trust Parliament.

government as being inherently untrustworthy due to the strategic nature of being an elected actor.⁸⁹ He frames it as a trade-off between trust and monitoring, and that systematically elected officials are not meant to be trusted but instead monitored and scrutinized. What Warren did find concerning is how low levels of trust in media are, based on the Centre's survey.⁹⁰ The media are one of those key monitoring tools needed to hold officials to account, as he puts it: "...democracies only work well if citizens have good trusted places to go for information, so that's a bit of a red flag."⁹¹

Cameron understands why elected officials are distrusted, but still finds the survey results concerning. He defends elected officials by acknowledging that current institutional arrangements make it incredibly difficult for elected officials to be trusted, as they are expected to represent many competing interests including their party, constituency, country and their own conscience.⁹² These competing views make it nearly impossible for their work to satisfy all those they are meant to represent. Cameron argues that Canadians need more opportunities to see what elected officials are really doing and see them try to find balance and compromise with their decisions.⁹³ Instead, citizens witness excessive partisanship without evidence of civility or willingness to bring different sides together, furthering the public's distrust in government officials. Although the system makes things nearly impossible for elected officials to be trusted, the experts agree that better quality leaders and candidates are also important.

6.4. Methods of Increasing Trust

When asked how to increase trust in government, the responses appear to depend on the perceived nature of the problem. Warren argues solutions should be aimed at increasing interpersonal trust across groups through indirect mechanisms focussed on improving the wellbeing of all citizens.⁹⁴ Moscrop agrees that people need

⁸⁹ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁹⁰ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue survey indicated 38% of Canadians trust media.

⁹¹ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁹² Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

⁹³ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

⁹⁴ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

their basic needs met before they can develop trust.⁹⁵ There are two broad categories of indirect solutions suggested, (1) policies that , such as reducing crime or a guaranteed annual income; and (2) policies that increase the opportunities for people to interact with diverse groups and develop empathy, including changing housing and zoning rules, and most importantly enhancing public-school systems.⁹⁶ These needs focused solutions are recommended by all the experts interviewed. Cameron adds that a strong welfare state is essential for the stability of a democracy and suggests the reason for Canada’s resilience against anti-democratic movements is a result of Canada’s welfare state. He states that, “everywhere that populism occurs, it’s in response to exclusion, discrimination, marginalization,” which is mitigated by Canada’s robust welfare state.⁹⁷

More direct methods of increasing trust in government are also discussed by experts. The direct methods focus on increasing engagement and opportunities to influence government, increasing transparency within government and electing better quality leaders. The specific solutions brought up include citizens’ assemblies and juries, electoral reform to a proportional representation system, participatory budgeting, and political party reform.

⁹⁵ Moscrop, interview by author, February 3, 2020.

⁹⁶ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

⁹⁷ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

Chapter 7.

Research Analysis

This chapter brings together the results from the literature review, survey analysis and interviews, and is divided into five key conclusions based on the research findings of this capstone and the implications for policy options.

7.1. Trust and Political Efficacy are Highly Interconnected

The first major finding is that there is a very strong relationship between trust in government and levels of political efficacy in Canada. The connection between trust in government and efficacy is emphasized by the OECD, which describes institutional trust as a “prerequisite for people’s political voice,” and is further reinforced by the survey analysis.⁹⁸ The survey analysis finds that Canadians with high levels of trust in government are very likely to also have a strong sense of political efficacy; they are more likely to believe they can make a difference, elected officials care, and voting matters. Indeed, Warren also reinforces in both his article and in his interview the essential nature of political efficacy and participation for the functioning and legitimacy of democracies. He argues elected officials should not be trusted, thus the public needs to monitor officials’ actions to hold them accountable.⁹⁹ Monitoring elected officials requires the public to be informed, have the capacity to participate, and have opportunities to share their views – all of which are characteristics fundamentally tied to political efficacy.

The connection between trust and efficacy is important when determining policy options to increase trust. Cameron states “...if you want efficacious voters, we want people to feel that they matter, and everyone, in fact, to matter,” therefore in order for Canadians to be both willing to invest in and gain the skills and knowledge to participate and ultimately build trust in the political system, citizens need opportunities to meaningfully participate.¹⁰⁰ Not only would this build trust, it would also strengthen Canada’s democracy by fostering meaningful citizen participation. That said, the data

⁹⁸ OECD, *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Trust*, 4.

⁹⁹ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

¹⁰⁰ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

simultaneously demonstrates that low levels of trust and political cynicism are strongly related and prevalent in Canada.

7.2. Canada has widespread Political Cynicism

The research also reveals that Canadians who are distrusting of government are more likely to have negative feelings about all aspects of the democratic process. A significant portion of Canadians have low confidence in their ability to influence government or have their views heard.¹⁰¹ These prevalent beliefs illustrate the presence of generalized distrust that can undermine democracy.¹⁰² The evidence of generalized distrust is also apparent with the very strong relationship between levels of trust in Parliament and trust levels in other democratic institutions discussed in Chapter 5. This demonstrates that Canadians that are distrusting of elected Parliament are highly likely to be distrusting of all democratic institutions, not just political ones.

Furthermore, monitoring is necessary to hold government accountable, and the strong relationship between distrust and cynicism suggests Canadian's have low second-order trust in political institutions and accountability mechanisms. If elected officials are going unmonitored by large portions of the population, they are not held to account, which in turn weakens Canada's democracy. Decreasing voter turnout displayed in Figure 1 further illustrates this lack of monitoring. Overall, findings suggest that Canadians need to regain trust in the mechanisms through which to hold government accountable and that this can be supported by providing more opportunities for citizens to meaningfully hold government accountable.

7.3. Interpersonal Trust is essential to Political Trust

Thirdly, there is a moderate relationship between levels of trust in government and levels of generalized interpersonal trust. The experts interviewed make it clear that generalized trust between citizens is essential to a strong democracy. The analysis of the survey data in Figure 14 demonstrates that trust between people of different

¹⁰¹ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 'State of Democracy & Appeal of Populism:' 44% of Canadians do not think voting matters, 56% of Canadians believe they cannot influence government and 68% agree elected officials do not care what Canadians think.

¹⁰² Warren, 'What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?', 51.

ethnicities and levels of trust in Parliament are moderately related,¹⁰³ which signals the connection between interpersonal and political trust. However, the Centre's survey data displayed in Figure 7 suggests that 66% of Canadians trust their neighbours and 59% trust people of different ethnicities. The latter is a specific measure of generalized interpersonal trust suggested by Warren in the interview.¹⁰⁴ The Centre's survey results can be interpreted as reflecting high levels of interpersonal trust relative to Canadians' trust in other institutions and actors, and therefore indicating that Canada has reasonably high levels of interpersonal trust. Consequently, interpersonal trust is important, but not the area of trust needing to be addressed directly for the purpose of this capstone.

7.4. Equity concerns with Trust

The fourth finding is evidence of a relationship between socioeconomic status and levels of trust in government. Inequality, marginalization and isolation are proven to be correlated with lower levels of trust and can either result in apathy and withdrawal from the process or push people towards more radical movements.¹⁰⁵ Warren argues that Canadians with lower socioeconomic status are more likely to be distrusting, and those with higher incomes and education tend to be more trusting of both other people and government. Warren explains that monitoring government is essential to the democratic processes, but states that, "tools to monitor are there for everyone more or less, but the people who actually use them will tend to be long term residents, older, white, and certainly more educated."¹⁰⁶ Therefore, Canada is experiencing unequal participation in monitoring activities such as voting and other forms of participation. However, this socioeconomic divide is only partially backed by the survey analysis. While the results indicate that the strongest demographic variables linked to levels of trust in government in Canada are income and education, the relationships are statistically weak. This may relate to Cameron's suggestion that Canada's welfare state has successfully prevented too great of a socioeconomic divide in Canada. Although not

¹⁰³ Analysis in Chapter 5 found $V = 0.229$ between trust in different ethnicities and trust in Parliament.

¹⁰⁴ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

¹⁰⁵ Warren, 'What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?', 45.

¹⁰⁶ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020

enormous, there is still clearly a gap to consider when evaluating policy options to ensure citizens are given equal opportunities and means to trust government and hold them to account.

7.5. Canada has weak evidence of Lowering Commitment to Democracy

The final conclusion from this research is that fears that decreasing levels of trust can translate into lower commitment to democracy, thereby strengthening anti-democratic movements, is not strongly evident in Canada.¹⁰⁷ While the literature and expert interviews certainly suggest there is a relationship between distrust and the appeal of populist parties and leaders, the survey data highlights that the levels of distrust in Canada is very weakly linked to anti-democratic populism. The populist tropes such as anti-elitism that Canadians do strongly agree with in the Centre's survey would not be considered anti-government, because while it does indicate significant distrust and cynicism towards government, it does not demonstrate an increased acceptance to dismantle the current democratic system.

Cameron suggests Canada has been less susceptible to anti-democratic populism due to Canada's robust welfare state. He argues people are attracted to populist leaders as a result of inequality, marginalization and exclusion.¹⁰⁸ While there is some evidence that Canadians feel ignored, the fact remains that Canada has a more equitable society because of its relatively strong social safety net, thereby helping to prevent further marginalization. Foa and Mounk use American data for their evidence of decreased commitment to democracy, and as the USA has a significantly weaker social support system, this aligns with Cameron's premise.¹⁰⁹ This indicates that while Canada is not under immediate threat of anti-democratic movements, there is a strong incentive to maintain and improve the social welfare system in Canada.

¹⁰⁷ Foa and Mounk, 'The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect'.

¹⁰⁸ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

¹⁰⁹ Foa and Mounk, 'The Danger of Deconsolidation: The Democratic Disconnect'.

Chapter 8.

Policy Options

The analysis of the literature, survey data and interviews has identified a breadth of potential approaches to address the gaps in trust between Canadians and the federal government. The approaches to increasing trust include policies to improve socioeconomic outcomes, political party reform, public service reform, and policies to increase the quantity and quality of citizen participation opportunities. The factors that influence trust examined in Chapter 3 demonstrate improvements in the quality of elected officials, government services and economic performance do not directly translate into increased trust, but the survey analysis and expert interviews suggest improving participation can.¹¹⁰ This capstone takes a citizen-centred approach to building trust, focusing on options that have direct impacts on citizens through providing better opportunities to influence government and develop political capacity. The survey analysis strongly links political efficacy and political trust, and the expert interviews highlight that currently there are an insufficient number of meaningful opportunities for citizens to build trust and political efficacy. Increasing the number of meaningful participatory opportunities and improving existing opportunities provides citizens with both a reason and an opportunity to acquire critical civic skills and knowledge that are not just foundational to building trust between citizens and government, but also essential for democracy.¹¹¹

This chapter presents three policy options designed to increase trust in government through improving political participation opportunities in Canada: (1) mini-publics in the form of citizens' reference panels; (2) participatory budgeting and (3) electoral reform to a proportional representation system.

¹¹⁰ Dalton, 'Political Trust in North America'.

¹¹¹ Maxwell Cameron, 'Better Democracy', Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies, 1 June 2017, <https://pwias.ubc.ca/wall-papers/better-democracy>.

8.1. Option 1 Mini-Publics: Citizens' Reference Panels

Mini-publics are a type of democratic innovation that directly engages the public in the policy-making process by using randomly selected citizens to take part in a deliberative process. The purpose of mini-publics is to learn what the public's opinions would be if they were fully informed, in order to provide guidance and direction to government on a particular issue.¹¹²

Mini-publics provide space for the development of trust not just for participants, but also for the wider public. For the public, mini-publics both reduce sources of distrust, and add new actors and institutions to generate trust. Mini-publics can serve to depoliticize a topic by removing the influence of competing partisan actors and interest groups, and replacing them with ordinary citizens making collective informed decisions.¹¹³ Mini-publics allow for a more reciprocal relationship between the government and citizens, as the public sees government relinquish some policy control to citizens. Participants in the mini-publics themselves become models of participation that the public can trust and identify with, thereby building the public's confidence in the impact ordinary Canadians can make.¹¹⁴ The Centre's data highlights that Canadians are more likely to trust each other than trust elected officials, highlighting why decisions made by mini-publics are well received.¹¹⁵ There is criticism that mini-publics may only generate trust in the specific topic they focus on. However, experts argue if routinely used, mini-publics can act as a new policy-making institution that is highly trusted – but requires the government to enact the recommendations made by mini-publics, in order to effectively build trust. Trust can diffuse to other government institutions, if the government is perceived as respectful and responsive to the will of the public.¹¹⁶

¹¹² Claudia Chwalisz, *The People's Verdict: Adding Informed Citizen Voices to Public Decision-Making* (London: Rowman & Littlefield International, 2017), 5.

¹¹³ Michael K. MacKenzie and Mark E. Warren, 'Two Trust-Based Uses of Minipublics in Democratic Systems', in *Deliberative Systems*, ed. John Parkinson and Jane Mansbridge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 95–124, <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139178914.006>.

¹¹⁴ Moscrop, interview by author, February 3, 2020.

¹¹⁵ SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, 'Trust, Participation, and Belonging', 49. 59% of Canadians trust people of different ethnicities, 65% trust their neighbours and 33% of Canadians trust elected officials.

¹¹⁶ Cameron, interview by author, December 18, 2019 & Moscrop, interview by author, February 3, 2020.

There are three common types of mini-publics that differ in terms of number of participants, time and the capacity of the project, which is outlined in Table 2. The 2004 British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (BCCA) is the most frequently cited example of a citizens' assembly (CA), where participants were asked to learn about electoral reform and make a recommendation on the type of proportional representation system to include on a referendum to the public.¹¹⁷ Citizens' reference panels have also been conducted in Canada at multiple jurisdictional levels, including nationally on Pharmacare in 2016 and mental health care in 2015.¹¹⁸ The CRPs process include meeting four to six times over several months, first learning from experts on the subject matter, then deliberating options with other participants and finally finding consensus with recommendations for government to consider and publicly respond to.¹¹⁹

Table 2. Types of mini-publics¹²⁰

Type of Mini-public	Number of participants	Average length of time
Citizens' Assemblies (CA)	100+	1 year
Citizens' Reference Panels (CRP)	24-48	2-3 months
Citizens' Juries (CJ)	12-24	1 to 2 days

Given that CAs are a substantial undertaking in terms of time, cost, and resources and CJs are very brief, CRPs are the policy option chosen for consideration. Compared to the other formats, CRPs strike the balance between feasibility and effectiveness. The specific policy option is to legislate the regular use of CRPs in federal policy making. Federal legislation would be created requiring the use of CRPs for specific circumstances or topics that would be laid out in the legislation. CRPs would be made up of 24-48 citizens that are randomly selected in a process that allows them to opt-in to participate, while ensuring a representative sample of all regions and

¹¹⁷ Mark E Warren and Hilary Pearce, 'Introduction: Democratic Renewal and Deliberative Democracy', in *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-2.

¹¹⁸ Chwalisz, *The People's Verdict*, 33.

¹¹⁹ Chwalisz, 6.

¹²⁰ Chwalisz, 5.

demographic groups are included.¹²¹ Participants would meet multiple times over several months to learn from experts, deliberate and make recommendations for government on a specific topic. Their findings would need to be made public and be openly addressed by government, but they would not be binding.

8.2. Option 2 Participatory Budgeting

Participatory budgeting (PB) is another type of democratic innovation identified by the interviewed experts to increase trust in government. PB provides citizens with direct say in how their tax dollars are spent. Participants are asked to represent their community, as opposed to their personal opinions. Typically, a specific percentage of the budget is allocated to a self-selected group of citizens that deliberate, negotiate and vote on how those resources are allocated.¹²² PB is used globally, including in several Canadian municipalities.

PB can increase trust in government similarly to mini-publics, as it provides citizens with more opportunities to directly influence how their money is spent and prioritize funding in services, they believe are important. Like mini-publics, PB provides opportunities for citizens to develop their civic capacity, including experience making complex trade-offs that elected officials routinely make, thereby developing a deeper understanding of the political process.¹²³ Cameron argues that the experience of making real decisions with public funds helps citizens understand the reality of what elected officials face, potentially developing empathy through a common understanding of the challenges, thus reducing distrust.¹²⁴ The allocation of funds for the PB process indicates to citizens the trust government has in the public's capacity, encouraging a more positive relationship. A frequent beneficial outcome of PB is that they often result in increased spending on vital social programs related to reducing poverty and inequality, leading to

¹²¹ The recommended recruitment tactic includes sending out invitations to participate to substantial number of randomly selected Canadians, typically 10,000+ wherein participants can choose whether to accept. From those that accept, a representative sample is chosen based on demographics, and if any key groups are missing, actively seek out those communities.

¹²² Stephen Elstub and Oliver Escobar, 'A Typology of Democratic Innovations' (Political Studies Association's Annual Conference, Glasgow, 2017), 23, <https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/conference/papers/2017/A%20Typology%20of%20Democratic%20Innovations%20-%20Elstub%20and%20Escobar%202017.pdf>.

¹²³ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

increases in education and health outcomes.¹²⁵ Investments in these areas can also help increase interpersonal and institutional trust.¹²⁶

The specific policy option analyzed further is expanding and enhancing the pre-budget federal consultation process by requiring an annual national PB session. The PB participants would set-high level spending priorities for the federal government for the use of discretionary social program funding. This PB process would involve collecting online feedback from the general public, followed by an in-person consultation with approximately 100 randomly selected citizens that would meet multiple times over two-to-three months. The participants would be selected in the same random selection process as CRPs that would ensure a representative sample. Like a mini-public, participants would have learning, deliberation and decision-making processes that would be informed by the public's online feedback. PB participants would make collective recommendations on specific high-level spending priorities for the discretionary social program funds. Although non-binding, the recommendations would be timed to inform the budget development process and require a public response from government.

8.3. Option 3 Electoral reform: Proportional Representation

As identified in the literature and interviews with experts, changing Canada's electoral system from its single member plurality (SMP) system to a proportional representation (PR) system may help increase Canadians' trust in government. Canada's current electoral system does not encourage citizens to vote for their genuine preference, and instead citizens often compromise on their beliefs by voting strategically or choosing not to vote at all, resulting in apathy, alienation and distrust.¹²⁷ In contrast, PR systems provide voters with more opportunities to vote for candidates that align with their interest and would help generate second-order trust in elections, since citizens'

¹²⁵ David Moscrop, *Too Dumb for Democracy? Why We Make Bad Political Decisions and How We Can Make Better Ones* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane Editions, 2019), 218.

¹²⁶ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020

¹²⁷ Warren, 'What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?', 49–50.; Maxwell Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

votes can better reflect their true values.¹²⁸ PR gives voters more choice and impact with their vote, therefore increasing citizens' incentive to participate and trust the system.

Beyond the direct voting implications, there are additional benefits for democracy and trust that are accompanied with PR systems. PR systems are more likely to result in coalitions that can reduce hyper-partisan politics that cause Canadians to distrust government. Instead coalitions encourage politicians to compromise and collaborate.¹²⁹ Similarly, author David Meslin adds that a ranked ballot system, such as a single-transferrable vote (STV) system would motivate political parties to reach out beyond their base and try to appeal *en masse*, because being a voter's second choice can also have a positive impact.¹³⁰ STV is also the system that was recommended by the BCCA due to participants' prioritization of voter choice.¹³¹

Warren warns that PR systems, as a result of the longevity of the coalitions they introduce, can reduce transparency and accountability of elected officials.¹³² This can ultimately foster distrust if elected officials do not disclose their dealings. Warren however also recommends STV since it can encourage coalitions to be made publicly prior to voting, thus increasing transparency.¹³³ Therefore, a PR system would motivate participation and highlight reasons to trust government and elections, as well as remove causes of distrust.

¹²⁸ Warren, 49–50.

¹²⁹ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

¹³⁰ Dave Meslin, *Teardown: Rebuilding Democracy from the Ground Up* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2019), 100.

¹³¹ Mark E Warren and Hilary Pearse, 'Introduction: Democratic Renewal and Deliberative Democracy', in *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹³² Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

¹³³ Warren, 'What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?', 49–50.

Chapter 9.

Objectives and Measures

This chapter presents the objectives of the policy options and criteria they are compared against. There are three societal objectives: development, equity and protection, and three government objectives: complexity, cost and stakeholder acceptance. Each objective has one to three measures, and a benchmark for each measure that translates to a scoring from 1-3 in 0.5 intervals. The scale translates as follows: 1 is low impact, 2 is medium impact and 3 indicates high impact. High impact is the preferred outcome, unless otherwise indicated with *. Table 3 provides a summary of the criteria and measures.

9.1. Primary Objectives

The overarching policy objective is to improve and sustain the trust Canadians have in their government institutions, thereby increasing the capacity of society to effectively contribute to and strengthen Canada's democracy. Trust is an integral part of building capacity in the public, because it signifies that citizens are empowered to have their voice heard and that government will respond in turn. These objectives include encouraging the development of trust and citizens' confidence in their democratic system, while ensuring all citizens have equal access to opportunities and capacities to participate in their democracy. The primary objective is divided into two subcategories: development and equity.

9.1.1. Development of citizens' trust and capacities

This capstone's policy problem is that the level of trust in government in Canada is too low, thus the primary consideration of any potential solution is how well it increases trust in government. Given the complexity of trust, this criterion aims to evaluate how well each policy option increases not only the trust Canadians have in government, but also how well they increase citizens' capacity to participate in democracy. Subsequently, the three measures used include: (1) the degree the policy

options increase trust in government, (2) the increase in the number of opportunities to participate, and (3) the increase in incentives to participate.

The second and third measures focus on increasing citizens' belief that they can influence government, as the research demonstrates this is important to developing trust. The research found that political efficacy increases through greater participation and opportunities. Canadians appear to have too few opportunities to participate, so increasing the quantity of opportunities is important. Increasing the quality of opportunities is also necessary to ensure citizens are inclined to actually participate, which is measured based on the level of impact participants perceive having on government decisions for each policy option.

9.1.2. Equity

Democracy is rooted in equality between all members of society. It is therefore important that all citizens have the capacity and opportunities to participate in their democratic institutions equally. The interviews, survey analysis and literature suggest that trust and efficacy are experienced differently; individuals of lower socioeconomic status, particularly with less education and lower incomes, are less likely to believe they can influence government and therefore are less trusting. As such, it is important to consider the most isolated Canadians to ensure that policy options do not further widen this gap in trust. This is measured by the degree the policy options purposefully take steps to include all groups, including socioeconomic status, region, age, ethnicity and other demographics.

9.2. Additional Objectives

9.2.1. Reduction in excessive partisanship

An additional consideration is whether the options reduce the causes of distrust, namely reducing polarization and hyper-partisanship in government. Experts believe excessive partisanship is a growing problem in Canada and is argued to increase distrust not only in political representatives but in government as a whole. This criterion relates to protecting the public from being overwhelmed by partisan and biased information that inhibits their ability to be informed or accurately represented. This

measure focuses on the degree to which the options can reduce levels of conflict between parties, and instead encourage compromise, cooperation and civility, therefore minimizing a source of distrust.

9.2.2. Administrative complexity

This criterion is divided into two measures. The first focuses on how difficult the policy options are to implement, which is measured by determining how many jurisdictions or departments need to be coordinated to implement the options. The more jurisdictions involved, the less feasible the option is to implement. The second measure focuses on the complexity of communicating the programs to the public. Communication is a critical element of any policy option, as trust can only be raised if the positive policy changes are widely understood. If these changes are not disseminated to the public, they will have minimal to no effects on trust.

9.2.3. Cost

Cost to government is also an important consideration, particularly when determining the policy feasibility. This measure focuses on the approximate size of the financial resources required to implement the policy option.

9.2.4. Public and stakeholder acceptance

The public and elected officials are the primary stakeholders, and their level of acceptance is a key measure in evaluating the options. These stakeholders have different motivations and priorities; their acceptance is measured separately using available public opinion data when available, or the level of acceptance of similar policies.

Table 3. Summary of Criteria and Measures

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Benchmark</i>	<i>Value</i>						
DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZENS' TRUST AND CAPACITIES										
Trust in government	Increase trust in government.	Degree to which the policy increases in Canadians' trust in government.	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Considerable increase</td></tr> <tr><td>Some increase</td></tr> <tr><td>No increase</td></tr> </table>	Considerable increase	Some increase	No increase	<table border="1"> <tr><td>High (3)</td></tr> <tr><td>Medium (2)</td></tr> <tr><td>Low (1)</td></tr> </table>	High (3)	Medium (2)	Low (1)
Considerable increase										
Some increase										
No increase										
High (3)										
Medium (2)										
Low (1)										
Opportunities to participate	Increase in the number of opportunities	Number of additional opportunities to participate in democracy annually.	<table border="1"> <tr><td>3+ new opportunities</td></tr> <tr><td>1-2 new opportunities</td></tr> <tr><td>No new opportunities</td></tr> </table>	3+ new opportunities	1-2 new opportunities	No new opportunities	<table border="1"> <tr><td>High (3)</td></tr> <tr><td>Medium (2)</td></tr> <tr><td>Low (1)</td></tr> </table>	High (3)	Medium (2)	Low (1)
3+ new opportunities										
1-2 new opportunities										
No new opportunities										
High (3)										
Medium (2)										
Low (1)										
Incentives to participate	Increase the value citizens get from participating in the democratic process.	Extent citizens perceive themselves as having an influence on decisions.	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Significant influence</td></tr> <tr><td>Some influence</td></tr> <tr><td>No influence</td></tr> </table>	Significant influence	Some influence	No influence	<table border="1"> <tr><td>High (3)</td></tr> <tr><td>Medium (2)</td></tr> <tr><td>Low (1)</td></tr> </table>	High (3)	Medium (2)	Low (1)
Significant influence										
Some influence										
No influence										
High (3)										
Medium (2)										
Low (1)										
EQUITY										
Equal levels of participation	Increase trust and participation of all people, particularly those excluded.	Degree to which the policy ensures citizens from disadvantaged and excluded groups participate in democracy.	<table border="1"> <tr><td>Directly encourages inclusion</td></tr> <tr><td>Indirectly results in inclusion</td></tr> <tr><td>No impact on inclusion</td></tr> </table>	Directly encourages inclusion	Indirectly results in inclusion	No impact on inclusion	<table border="1"> <tr><td>High (3)</td></tr> <tr><td>Medium (2)</td></tr> <tr><td>Low (1)</td></tr> </table>	High (3)	Medium (2)	Low (1)
Directly encourages inclusion										
Indirectly results in inclusion										
No impact on inclusion										
High (3)										
Medium (2)										
Low (1)										

REDUCTION IN EXCESSIVE PARTISANSHIP				
Reducing polarization	Reduction in the causes of distrust, namely hyper-partisan and polarized behaviour by elected officials.	Degree polarization is discouraged by the policy.	Significantly reduces conflict and encourages cooperation	High (3)
			Somewhat reduces conflict between parties	Medium (2)
			No effect or encourages conflict between parties	Low (1)
COMPLEXITY				
Difficulty of implementing the policy*	Degree of coordination between the federal government and provinces/territories, or other government departments.	Number of jurisdiction and/or departments that need to be coordinated with to implement.	Coordination between multiple departments and jurisdictions	High (1)
			Coordination between multiple departments or jurisdictions	Medium (2)
			Minimal coordination	Low (3)
Communication ease	The level of complexity in explaining the policy to the public.	Level of communications ease.	Straightforward to communicate	High (3)
			Some complexity in communications	Medium (2)
			Complicated to communicate	Low (1)

COST				
Cost to government *	Cost to government to implement.	Approximate size of financial resources required.	<div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Substantial costs and resources required</div> <div style="background-color: #fff3cd; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Moderate costs and resources</div> <div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Low costs</div>	<div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">High (1)</div> <div style="background-color: #fff3cd; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Medium (2)</div> <div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Low (3)</div>
PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER ACCEPTANCE				
Acceptance by the public	Support from the public.	Degree of support from the public.	<div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Significant support</div> <div style="background-color: #fff3cd; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Some support</div> <div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Minimal/no support</div>	<div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">High (3)</div> <div style="background-color: #fff3cd; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Medium (2)</div> <div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Low (1)</div>
Acceptance by government	Support from government and elected officials.	Degree of support from elected officials.	<div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Significant support</div> <div style="background-color: #fff3cd; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Some support</div> <div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Minimal/no support</div>	<div style="background-color: #d4edda; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">High (3)</div> <div style="background-color: #fff3cd; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Medium (2)</div> <div style="background-color: #f8d7da; padding: 2px; text-align: center;">Low (1)</div>
* Value of high, medium, low reversed wherein 3 is low and 1 is high.				

Chapter 10.

Policy Analysis

The three potential policy options are: legislating citizens' reference panels (CRP) into the federal policy making process, mandating an annual participatory budgeting (PB) process and reforming the electoral system to a proportional representation (PR) system. These options are analyzed and compared using the criteria and measures presented in the previous chapter.

10.1. Policy Option 1: Citizens' Reference Panels

Trust in government: There is the potential for a considerable increase in the level of trust in government if the use of CRPs is done openly, loudly and often. All participants are likely to develop significant trust, efficacy, policymaking skills and knowledge.¹³⁴ If CRPs successfully become an integrated part of the policy process, it itself becomes a new representative institution. As the public began to learn more about the BCCA when it existed, the more trusting they were of the BCCA and the more likely they were to support its decision.¹³⁵ STV received 57.7% of the BC referendum voters' votes, demonstrating the trust people had in the BCCA's decision-making.¹³⁶ Warren suspects that the level of trust in the BCCA was in the 70% range; based on the Centre's data, that would be significantly high for a political institution.¹³⁷ Legislating CRPs permanently into the policy process would help overcome the critique that mini-publics only generate trust in a single topic, as they would become an established institution themselves. The experts interviewed confidently argue that implementing mini-publics to

¹³⁴ Andre Blais, Kenneth Carty, and Patrick Fournier, 'Do Citizens' Assemblies Make Reasoned Choices?', in *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly*, ed. Mark E Warren and Hilary Pearse (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 130–32.

¹³⁵ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

¹³⁶ Fred Cutler et al., 'Deliberation, Information, and Trust: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly as Agenda Setter', in *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly*, ed. Mark E Warren and Hilary Pearse (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 186.

¹³⁷ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

deal with contentious issues would “...almost certainly increase trust in government.”¹³⁸ This option would certainly increase trust in government for participants, and likely increase trust on the specific topic they focus on for the wider public. However only with significant commitment from government and time to normalize the use of CRPs would this option potentially spread trust to all of aspects of government, therefore this option earns a medium score in increasing trust in government.

Opportunities to participate: Integrating and regularizing the use of CRPs would create a new institution within which citizens could participate, however that opportunity would only be available to several hundred people annually and consequently scores a medium-low in increasing opportunities to participate.

Incentives to participate: CRPs would likely give participants a strong sense of influence over government on the specific topic they are assigned; however, there are two caveats to that benefit. Firstly, the opportunity would be available to a limited number of citizens. Those citizens who do participate are likely to build knowledge, skills and efficacy as they have a space where their voice is desired and listened to.¹³⁹ Secondly, the decisions made by the CRPs are not binding, meaning that while there is potential for direct influence, impact is not guaranteed. If government chooses to ignore the recommendations of CRPs, then this option could generate more cynicism that government does not care and that citizen voices are not valued. However, if the decisions made by CRPs are recognized, then citizens would gain more confidence in the government’s responsiveness and may motivate greater participation in general. Overall, this option only directly affects a small number of people and paired with the reliance on elected officials’ behaviour, therefore this option receives a medium score for increasing incentives to participate.

Equal levels of participation: CRPs directly ensure that the public is proportionally represented in the panels through its selection process. The process includes recruiting a large group of randomly selected citizens and selecting a representative sample of the

¹³⁸ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

¹³⁹ Gerry Stoker and Mark Evans, ‘Does Political Trust Matter?’, in *Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance*, ed. Stephen Elstub and Oliver Escobar (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019), 131.

public from the individuals that elect to participate.¹⁴⁰ By selecting participants at random, it overcomes the challenges of self-selection wherein people from marginalized groups and in lower socioeconomic standing are less likely to volunteer to participate. Participants would have their expenses covered and receive compensation for their involvement. As well, the analysis of the BCCA found that the learning phase of the process removed any inequalities in knowledge, allowing participants from all backgrounds to contribute and participate equally.¹⁴¹ Although only a small sample of the population directly participates, those that do participate become role models for engagement for the wider public, and seeing empowered members from disadvantaged groups should have positive impacts for non-participants as well. This proactive approach to inclusion results in this option receiving a high score in equity.

Reducing polarization: CRPs reduce polarization in politics regarding the specific topic they address. CRPs removes power from parties and special interest groups by reducing their control of the agenda and messaging around a specific topic.¹⁴² CRPs often focus on controversial topics that may be highly politicized in the political realm, so the recommendations made within CRPs would be free from partisan influence, consequently providing a legitimized and depoliticized recommendation for the public.

This can be beneficial to parties as it provides a mechanism to address topics that elected officials may avoid or may appear to have conflicts of interest with. Parties have an opportunity to work together to implement the non-partisan will of the CRPs since decisions made would not have the perception of strategic benefit that may result in partisan conflict. While this would be the ideal outcome, it is not guaranteed; this option still relies on the whims of partisans and only effects the partisanship of a single topic in the policy-making process, resulting in a medium score at reducing partisanship.

Difficulty of implementing the policy: CRPs are somewhat complex to implement; they require a specialized recruitment strategy that can take time, transportation of participants, and coordination with experts. Although this requires significant

¹⁴⁰ Chwalisz, *The People's Verdict*.

¹⁴¹ Blais, Carty, and Fournier, 'Do Citizens' Assemblies Make Reasoned Choices?', 140.

¹⁴² John Ferejohn, 'Conclusion: The Citizens' Assembly Model', in *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly*, ed. Mark E Warren and Hilary Pearse (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 210–11.

coordination between individuals, it does not require inter-provincial coordination. It may however require interdepartmental coordination, depending on the topic. Therefore, this option receives a medium score for complexity.

Communication ease: Communication is important to the success of CRPs as a mechanism of increasing trust in government. Citizens need to know what CRPs are, how they work, when they are happening, who is participating, what their recommendations are, and how government responds to them. If citizens are not aware that average citizens, like them, are making informed decisions for government, and that government is acting on them, then CRPs would not generate public trust. CRPs are relatively unknown concepts, so a significant public education plan would be needed initially, in addition to ongoing public updates on the different panels and their outcomes both in terms of both recommendations and government response. Given the complexity of the topic and necessity of a strong communications plan, this option receives a low score in communication ease.

Cost to government: The cost of CRPs are minimal, particularly compared to larger mini-publics such as CAs. The national CRPs on mental health cost Canada \$204,000. Having minimum five CRPs a year would cost around a million dollars.¹⁴³ While there would be the additional cost of the public education campaign required for the first year of implementation, this option is considered low cost, so receives a low score on cost.

Acceptance by the public: The public would likely show significant support for this option, as it depoliticizes important issues, and provides citizens a voice. Although most Canadians are likely unfamiliar with the concept, an effective communications strategy and successful trials would add further support. In Australia in 2018, when the public surveyed on implementing citizens' juries to solve "complex problems that Australia's parliament cannot fix" over 60% of respondents supported the idea.¹⁴⁴ Almost half of Canadians in the Centre's 2019 survey indicated there were too few opportunities to participate and Ekos Research in 2017 found 84% of Canadians agree that they would

¹⁴³ Chwalisz, *The People's Verdict*, 21.

¹⁴⁴ Gerry Stoker, Mark Evans, and Max Halupka, 'Trust and Democracy in Australia: Democratic Decline and Renewal', *Democracy 2025* (Museum of Australian Democracy, December 2018), 44, <https://www.democracy2025.gov.au/documents/Democracy2025-report1.pdf>.

feel better about government decisions if input from average citizens was included on a regular basis.¹⁴⁵ Both of these results demonstrate a strong appetite for more engagement opportunities. Ekos also found when Canadians are asked about their consultation preferences, 82% want information gathered at consultations to shape decision-making, 78% want subject-matter experts available to answer questions, 69% want opportunities for discussion with other participants and 65% want consultations run in person – all features of CRPs.¹⁴⁶ There is little evidence to suspect this proposal would not have high public acceptability, so it receives a high score.

Acceptance by government: The government is more likely to be resistant to the required use of CRPs as they take power away from elected officials and high-ranking bureaucrats. Only 13% of Australian federal representatives surveyed supported their proposal to increase the use of citizens' juries and 64% indicated they were against it.¹⁴⁷ The authors of the Australian report believe that the results from this and other questions suggest there is a "limited desire to open up the system to direct influence from the public."¹⁴⁸ Although different, Canadian officials may also be resistant to giving some of their power to the public. There are benefits for elected officials though, as CRPs' decisions can help legitimize and de-politicize policy options, provide guidance on sensitive topics elected officials are hesitant to talk about, as well as increase trust in the process. For these reasons this option receives a low score for government acceptance.

10.2. Policy Option 2: Participatory Budgeting

Trust in government: Similar to CRPs, PB encourages open, inclusive and collective decisions to be made by ordinary citizens and have the potential to increase trust in government for both participants and the wider public. Participants in the in-person sessions gain confidence in their own abilities and have an opportunity to directly decide how government funds are allocated, increasing both their trust and efficacy. The

¹⁴⁵SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue; Ekos Research Associates Inc., 'Rethinking Citizen Engagement', Narrative Report (Ottawa, Canada, March 2017), 7.

¹⁴⁶ Ekos Research Associates Inc., 15.

¹⁴⁷ Gerry Stoker, Mark Evans, and Max Halupka, 'How Australia Federal Politicians Would like to Reform Their Democracy', Democracy 2025 (Museum of Australian Democracy, October 2019), 14, <https://www.democracy2025.gov.au/documents/Democracy2025-report1.pdf>.

¹⁴⁸ Stoker, Evans, and Halupka, 13.

OECD found when analyzing cases of PB that participants had high levels of trust and confidence in government.¹⁴⁹ PB also often direct funds in ways that close gaps in both services and trust, as the public can directly allocate funds to areas that are unitedly perceived as lacking, therefore removing a source of distrust and increasing trust through better services that often increase the wellbeing of disadvantaged groups.¹⁵⁰ The experts interviewed for this capstone further support the premise that PB would increase trust to the wider public and Moscrop specifically advocates for a federal PB model.¹⁵¹ Given the success of past PB cases,¹⁵² this option is given a high score for increasing trust in government.

Opportunities to participate: PB would provide an opportunity for all citizens to provide their feedback online, and an additional opportunity for selected citizens to directly make decisions on funding allocations. As a result, this option receives a high score on increasing opportunities to participate.

Incentives to participate: PB can significantly increase citizens' perceptions that they can influence government decisions, as the recommendations made by PB on how funds should be allocated are directly given to Parliament. PB participants are able to control the agenda of the process and can provide direction on a substantial amount of funding to broad range of programs, unlike CRPs that only address a singular issue. Although decisions are still ultimately determined by government like a CRP, the significantly greater quantity of participants involved and substantial potential impact of the outcomes of PB result in this option receiving a high score for increasing incentives to participate.

Equal levels of participation: Like CRPs, national PB can actively ensure people from marginalized groups are included through the same selection process of ensuring there is a randomly selected representative sample of participants. In addition, PB has

¹⁴⁹ OECD, *Trust and Public Policy*, 94–95.

¹⁵⁰ Siddiquir Osmani, 'Participatory Governance: An Overview of Issues and Evidence', in *Building Trust Through Civic Engagement*, ed. United Nations (Vienna, Austria: United Nations, 2007), 29–30.

¹⁵¹ Moscrop, interview by author, February 3, 2020.

¹⁵² Graham Smith, *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation* (Cambridge University Press, 2009), chap. Popular assemblies: from New England town meetings to participatory budgeting.

low barriers to participate with accessible online opportunities for all Canadians, plus compensation for in-person participants. Although only a small portion of the public would participate in-person, the online option is available to all to have their say, and like with CRPs, in-person participants become symbolic representatives to the public of engagement. Therefore, PB receives a high score in equity.

Reducing polarization: Similarly to CRPs, PB provides participants and the public an open, inclusive non-partisan process that depoliticizes information and policy decisions.¹⁵³ Unlike CRPs, PB allows participants to set priorities on a substantial portion of public funding, and specifically makes recommendations on the available discretionary funds that are typically used strategically or ideologically by elected officials. Although PB does require political agreement to implement the recommendations, the scale and legitimacy of the process could significantly reduce partisanship of public information and spending, therefore, it receives a high score on reducing polarization.

Difficulty of implementing the policy: In terms of complexity to implement, PB would require significant changes to the pre-budget consultation process, along with substantial interdepartmental coordination in order to implement the recommendations. This PB option strictly uses discretionary funding, as opposed to statutory funding, and thus would not change any committed funding, though the results could affect many departments and existing programs depending what the PB process decides to fund. Hence, it receives a medium-high score in complexity.

Communication ease: Communication of PB activities, like CRPs, is critically important to the goal of increasing trust in the wider public. The public needs to be aware of the existence of the PB, the participants and the decisions made and the response from government in order for trust to be developed. PB is a less complex concept than CRPs or electoral reform, and it is only an annual occurrence so it will be less demanding to communicate than CRPs. However, given the importance and relative novelty of the concept, PB receives a medium score for communication ease.

Cost to government: PB would require greater consultation, recruitment and participation costs than a single CRP, but it is only an annual occurrence. Like CRPs, it

¹⁵³ OECD, *Trust and Public Policy*, 94–95.

would also require a public education plan and communication of the results of the annual PB, but this would likely be less demanding than CRPs. The actual money allocated to the PB to deliberate is not considered in the costs. The costs are estimated to be more than the CRPs, and thus receives a medium score.

Acceptance by the public: PB, like CRPs, would provide new avenues for citizens to directly participate and this would address the previous mentioned statistics on Canadians' desire for more chances to participate. Ekos also found 68% of Canadians want direct input in government decision-making¹⁵⁴ and PB would certainly provide a direct opportunity for citizens to make policy decisions through the allocation of government funds. PB is widely accepted by the communities they take place in,¹⁵⁵ thus receives a high score in public acceptance.

Acceptance by government: Government acceptance is less clear. The federal government is required to relinquish significant power, as well as a significant portion of discretionary funds which are often used for political priorities. PB has been implemented around the world by supportive governments from all sides of the political spectrum.¹⁵⁶ PB has not been implemented widely in Canada, and it has never been applied at a national level so there is a high level of scepticism regarding how likely government will accept the concept. Due to the significant impact on elected officials, this option receives a low score for government acceptance.

10.3. Policy Option 3: Electoral Reform

Trust in government: A PR system would likely result in improvements to trust in government. The trade-off between a majoritarian system and a proportional one is often between representation and accountability.¹⁵⁷ A PR system would improve the representation of people's voting preferences, as well as diversify the candidates and

¹⁵⁴ Ekos Research Associates Inc., 'Rethinking Citizen Engagement', 16.

¹⁵⁵ OECD, *Trust and Public Policy*, 94–95.

¹⁵⁶ Ernesto Ganuza and Gianpaol Baiocchi, 'The Long Journey of Participatory Budgeting', in *Handbook of Democratic Innovation and Governance*, ed. Stephen Elstub and Oliver Escobar (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2019), 77–79.

¹⁵⁷ Tom van der Meer, 'Democratic Input, Macroeconomic Output and Political Trust', in *Handbook on Political Trust*, ed. Sonja Zmerli and Tom van der Meer (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2017), 274–77.

parties.¹⁵⁸ Representation that better reflects voting preferences increases trust in national institutions as there is a more direct alignment between citizens' desires and the results.¹⁵⁹ A more proportional voting system would also reduce the concentration of power between a few parties, and would open government to more perspectives, thereby reducing the elitist perspective or sentiments that the system is 'rigged.'¹⁶⁰

The trade-off with accountability could cause different trust issues, such as the potential for more backroom dealings, since PR systems are more likely to result in coalitions.¹⁶¹ Coalitions make it more challenging to hold parties accountable, and the longevity in PR systems makes it harder to change who is in power. The specific model of PR can help overcome these issues. Warren recommends the STV model because it would encourage coalitions to be made openly during campaigns.¹⁶² Overall, New Zealand experienced an increase in trust after switching to a PR system,¹⁶³ reinforcing that trust would likely increase in the Canadian context as well. As such, PR receives a medium score in increasing trust.

Opportunities to participate: Reforming to a PR system would not add any new participation opportunities, it would instead increase the quality of the existing opportunities. It thereby receives a low score regarding increasing the number of opportunities to participate.

Incentives to participate: A PR system would increase citizens' perception of having influence on government. PR makes voting more attractive, so although voting already is a direct mechanism to influence government, more citizens are likely to vote for two reasons. First, votes are more likely to 'count' in a non-majoritarian system, and second, in PR systems like STV, parties have a greater incentive to encourage all citizens to vote. Consequently, there would be a larger 'get-out-the-vote' effort.¹⁶⁴ Countries with the highest voter turnouts are predominately countries with PR

¹⁵⁸ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

¹⁵⁹ van der Meer, 'Democratic Input, Macroeconomic Output and Political Trust', 274.

¹⁶⁰ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

¹⁶¹ Warren, interview by author, Vancouver, January 8, 2020.

¹⁶² Warren, 'What Kinds of Trust Does a Democracy Need?', 49–50.

¹⁶³ van der Meer, 'Democratic Input, Macroeconomic Output and Political Trust', 275.

¹⁶⁴ Meslin, *Teardown*, 120.

systems.¹⁶⁵ Survey analysis on New Zealanders also found that voters were more likely to be trusting, efficacious and believe their vote counts after switching from a majoritarian to a PR system.¹⁶⁶

In addition to increasing the incentive to participate through voting, PR systems may also increase citizens' interest in running as candidates or establishing new parties, as smaller parties have a higher chance to win seats. Given the diversity of incentives that increase the reasons to participate and directly influence Canada's democracy, PR receives a high score in incentives to participate.

Equal levels of participation: Reforming to a PR system would have indirect benefits for encouraging people from disadvantaged groups to participate in democracy. A PR system would increase incentives for members of marginalized groups to participate as both voters and candidates.¹⁶⁷ The increased motivation for parties to attract more voters would increase the diversity of people that vote, plus PR systems typically result in more diverse candidates, thereby adding new voices and reducing the power of established candidates and parties.¹⁶⁸ The lack of direct measures to increase inclusion results in a medium score for equity.

Reducing polarization: Shifting to a PR system would change the dynamics of the entire political system, potentially reducing polarization and encouraging civility between elected officials in two ways. First, as previously mentioned, PR systems typically result in coalitions or minority governments, thus encourage compromise and cooperation between parties for government to function. Second, in PR systems like STV, parties have a strong incentive to attract a diverse range of voters, as opposed to only their 'base,' since they could be a voters second choice. Depending on the type of PR system selected, it may encourage parties to broaden their platforms and demonstrate their capacity to collaborate to make their campaign promises a reality. As a result of the systematic change in dynamics, PR receives a medium score for reducing polarization.

¹⁶⁵ Andre Blais and R. K. Carty, 'Does Proportional Representation Foster Voter Turnout?', *European Journal of Political Research* 18, no. 2 (March 1990): 174–75, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6765.1990.tb00227.x>.

¹⁶⁶ van der Meer, 'Democratic Input, Macroeconomic Output and Political Trust', 275.

¹⁶⁷ Meslin, *Teardown*, 120.

¹⁶⁸ Meslin, 120.

Difficulty of implementing the policy: A PR system would be relatively complex to implement and include coordinating with multiple jurisdictions and provinces in the short-term. A national referendum would be recommended to legitimately shift to a PR system, which would need provincial coordination to execute. If passed, it would result in an overhauling of Elections Canada's regulations. Its complexity to implement results in a high score.

Communication ease: Reforming to a PR system would be complicated and important to communicate. There would need to be a significant public education campaign for both the referendum and, if it passed, for several election cycles. Given that election systems in general are complex and hard to understand, particularly new systems, there would be difficulty explaining the changes. As such, PR receives a low score in communications ease.

Cost to government: Reforming to a PR system would include significant upfront costs including the price of a national referendum, a significant communications strategy before and after, if successful, to inform the public of the change, as well as significant restructuring and reorganization for Elections Canada. This option receives a high score for cost to implement.

Acceptance by the public: Public interest in changing the electoral system is mixed. In the 2015 election, the Liberal party won a majority while promising to reform the system, and when they failed to do so, the next election they still won, but with much fewer seats. The 2019 election however resulted in a more extreme example of the disproportionality of Canada's current system, as the Conservative party received the 'popular vote' but the Liberal party received more seats. Angus Reid's polling suggests that post-election there was a significant increase in support for electoral reform nationally from 53% support in 2016, to 68% in November 2019.¹⁶⁹ Nevertheless, every provincial referendum on electoral reform has not been successful in reforming the system, including in BC in 2018, 2009, and 2005, and Ontario in 2007. Although there is evidence of some interest in electoral reform, given the mixed history with attempts at reform, PR receives a medium-low score in public acceptance.

¹⁶⁹ Angus Reid Institute, 'Electoral Reform Revival? Support for Changing Voting Systems Skyrockets Post Election', *Angus Reid Institute* (blog), 22 November 2019, <http://angusreid.org/electoral-reform-trend/>.

Acceptance by government: Similarly, government acceptance is also quite minimal. Although the current governing party won a majority government while promising electoral reform, they quickly dropped the idea once in power. Governments notoriously do not want to implement electoral reform because those in power know they can win in the current system.¹⁷⁰ In PEI they held multiple referendums and plebiscites on electoral reform that received majority approval, but the provincial government failed to enact those results.¹⁷¹ Given the behaviour of previous governments, this option is given a low score on government acceptance.

10.4. Summary of Analysis Results

Table 4 displays the summary of the policy analysis described in this chapter. The total scores for each criterion are totaled and displayed. Option 2, participatory budgeting receives the highest scores and performs the strongest with the primary objectives. Option 1, CRPs performs similarly to PB, with slightly better results in overall government feasibility objectives of cost, and acceptance.

¹⁷⁰ Cameron, interview by author, Vancouver, December 18, 2019.

¹⁷¹ Meslin, *Teardown*, 104.

Table 4. Policy Analysis Results

Criterion	Option 1 Citizens' Reference Panels	Option 2 Participatory Budgeting	Option 3 Proportional Representation
DEVELOPMENT OF CITIZENS' TRUST AND CAPACITIES			
Trust in government	Medium (2)	High (3)	Medium (2)
Opportunities to participate	Medium-Low (1.5)	High (3)	Low (1)
Incentives to participate	Medium (2)	High (3)	High (3)
EQUITY			
Equal levels of participation	High (3)	High (3)	Medium (2)
REDUCTION IN EXCESSIVE PARTISANSHIP			
Reducing polarization	Medium (2)	High (3)	Medium (2)
COMPLEX			
Difficulty of implementing the policy*	Medium (2)	Medium-High (1.5)	High (1)
Communication ease	Low (1)	Medium (2)	Low (1)
COST			
Cost to government*	Low (3)	Medium (2)	High (1)
STAKEHOLDER ACCEPTANCE			
Acceptance by the public	High (3)	High (3)	Medium-Low (1.5)
Acceptance by government	Low (1)	Low (1)	Low (1)
Total	20.5/30	24.5/30	15.5/30
Key: (1) (1.5) (2) (2.5) (3)			

Chapter 11.

Recommendations

This capstone recommends that both PB and CRPs be implemented at a national level. National PB would enhance and expand the existing pre-budget consultations held by the Government of Canada, first by expanding its online public consultation, followed by holding multiday PB sessions over several months in person with approximately 100 randomly selected Canadians representing the regions and demographics of Canadians as well as possible. Those in the session would be informed by the online feedback, be provided learning opportunities with experts, and have deliberation within the groups to ultimately provide priorities to the government with high-level spending allocation suggestions for the discretionary social program funds. The recommendations would be provided to the Parliamentary Budget Office and expected to be publicly addressed by government.

In addition, this capstone recommends legislation be introduced that integrates the regular use of CRPs into the legislative branch. The legislation would lay out specific topics and circumstances that would require the use of CRPs. Recommended topics include those directly relating to elected officials that may appear to be conflict of interests, such as officials' wages, campaign financing, changes to the electoral system, and electoral boundaries, as well as complex and contentious topics legislators have had challenges addressing. CRPs would also require a rigorous recruitment process, like PB, followed by expert presentations, deliberations and the provision of recommendations for the federal government's consideration and public response.

Both options are recommended to provide citizens with greater opportunities to meaningfully participate in two different areas, PB for broad policy influence on high-level spending decisions, and CRPs for deep deliberation and recommendations on specific controversial areas.

Political Realities

The key to the success of PB and CRPs is to ensure strong communications with the public of the processes, the participants and the results identified by each panel and

session. This is essential to building legitimacy and trust in PB and CRPs as decision-making institutions. Trust will only be diffused to the rest of government if the recommendations made by PB and CRPs are acted upon, or at least genuinely considered, by Parliament. If they are ineffective or perceived as a symbolic gesture, they will not increase trust and may ultimately reduce trust in government further. This is the largest barrier to implementing these policy options, as government is likely to be resistant to giving up its power. However, if government is committed to increasing trust in the public and strengthening Canadian democracy, then the relationship between government and the public needs to shift. As the OECD puts it, “active participation is a relationship based on partnership with the government,”¹⁷² thus PB and CRPs cannot be done in isolation—they need government to act on their decisions. Ideally, in the long-term PB and CRPs would become established components of the political system, generating positive norms of trust and enhancing the public’s capacity to make decisions and government’s capacity to listen.

¹⁷² OECD, *Trust and Public Policy*, 116.

Chapter 12.

Conclusion

Low levels of trust in government is a complex problem that is challenging countries around the world and there is no single policy to resolve this issue. Trust is fragile and requires substantial time, effort and commitment across many intersecting areas to be sustained and grown. Canada needs to prevent distrust from spreading further by reducing cynicism in the democratic processes and increasing citizens' political efficacy. To that end, Canadians need their basic needs met and to have strong support systems provided by the government to feel safe and secure. Having those basic needs met is foundational to the development of interpersonal trust and essential for any chance of fostering institutional trust. Institutional trust then can be built through providing more opportunities for citizens to meaningfully participate in their society, be better represented by people like them, and see evidence of government's responsiveness. Citizens cannot be expected to care, pay attention or participate in government – let alone trust government – if they do not feel like their voice or actions matter. Citizens' voices will only be perceived to matter if they have opportunities to participate in ways which meaningfully influence government.

Participatory budgeting and citizens' reference panels are two of many potential democratic innovations to provide citizens a voice, develop their civic capacity, change policy outcomes, and ultimately develop trust in government. They require major changes to the democratic practices, but without a major disruption to the existing democratic process, trust will continue on its downward trajectory. This capstone exclusively focuses on federal approaches, but innovations such as these would be powerful to implement at all levels of government to develop trust, reduce causes of distrust and strengthen Canada's democracy. Another limitation of this capstone is the lack of causal data on trust in government, so another area for further research would be collecting more in-depth data to better understand the causes of distrust in Canada. As well, this capstone recommends further research into policy solutions to address distrust in media and journalism, as it is another significant trust deficit threatening Canada's democracy.

The world is becoming increasingly complex and interconnected with major global and national issues on the horizon. Canada needs to develop the capacity of its citizens to be informed, skilled and knowledgeable in deliberation and decision-making in order to be trusting and resilient to the challenges ahead. “Trust is the glue that binds the state together, without it, or if enough of that glue dries up, then the whole thing falls apart.”¹⁷³

¹⁷³ Moscrop, interview by author, Vancouver, February 3, 2020.

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Appendix A.

SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue Strengthening Canadian Democracy National Survey Questions

1. Generally speaking, do you follow news about Canadian politics or policy issues affecting Canadians ...?

Everyday
Several times a week
Once or twice a week
Less than once a week
Practically never

2. In your view, how democratically is Canada being governed today, that is where, through their elected representatives, citizens have a say in decisions that affect them?

(10 point scale 1=not at all democratic, 10=Completely democratic)

3. Do you believe that nowadays in Canada we have too little, about the right amount, or too much of...?

- a) Freedom of the press
- b) Freedom to express political views without fear
- c) Freedom of religion
- d) Equal rights for women and men
- e) Protection of rights for minorities
- f) Opportunities for political participation of citizens
- g) Education of citizens about their rights and responsibilities

Way too much
Too much
About the right amount
Too little
Way too little

4. Which statement comes closest to your own views, even if neither is exactly right?

- a) Most elected officials care what people like me think
Most elected officials don't care what people like me think
- b) Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things
Voting by people like me doesn't really affect how government runs things
- c) Ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Ottawa if they are willing to make the effort
There is not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Ottawa even if they are willing to make the effort

5. Which of the following statements do you agree with **the most**? Please select one only.

Democracy is preferable to any other form of government

For people like me, it doesn't matter whether a government is democratic or non-democratic

Under some circumstances an authoritarian government may be preferable to a democratic one.

6. Do you think each of the following types of political systems is a good way or a bad way to govern Canada?
- a) A system where citizens, not elected officials, vote directly on major national issues to decide what becomes law
 - b) A system where representatives elected by citizens decide what becomes law
 - c) A system in which a strong leader can make decisions without interference from parliament or the courts
 - d) A system in which experts, not elected officials, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country
 - e) A system in which the military rules the country

Very good way

Somewhat good way

Somewhat bad way

Very bad way

7. Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?
- a) Those who disagree with the majority represent a threat to Canada.
 - b) Free and fair elections have both winners and losers; the losers and their supporters must accept that they have lost an election
 - c) Public speech that promotes hate or violence towards minorities should be suppressed with physical force
 - d) Canadian citizens who were born and raised in Canada should have a greater say in what government does than those who came from another country and became citizens
 - e) The interests of ordinary Canadians are today ignored by government in favour of what benefits the establishment

(7-point scale 1=Strongly disagree, 7=Strongly agree)

8. Thinking about what is important and what is not important to you when deciding what candidate to vote for in an election, would you be more likely or less likely to vote for a candidate if they...?
- a) Attacked the media as biased or producing fake news
 - b) Supported the use of experts for making policy
 - c) Stood up for common people against the elite
 - d) Put Canada first even if it negatively affected relations with our allies
 - e) Promoted strong anti-government views

Much more likely to vote for the candidate

Slightly more likely to vote for the candidate

Slightly less likely to vote for the candidate

Much less likely to vote for the candidate
Would make no difference

10. Generally speaking, what level of anger do you feel towards people who do not share your political views, or do a person's political views not really matter to you?

A lot of anger
Some anger
Not very much anger
No anger at all
Political views don't really matter

11. Do you trust or not trust each of the following institutions or organizations?

- a) Parliament
- b) Elections
- c) The mass media
- d) Supreme Court
- e) Civil service
- f) Universities

Do not trust at all 1– 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Trust a lot

12. Do you trust or not trust each of the following groups of people?

- a) People in your neighbourhood
- b) People with a different ethnic background from your own
- c) Elected officials
- d) Journalists
- e) Judges
- f) Civil servants
- g) Academics

Do not trust at all 1– 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Trust a lot

13. In **the last 12 months**, have you done each of the following activities in relation to a particular issue or policy that you were concerned about or interested in? Please check all that apply.

- a) Looked at a variety of news and information sources to get different points of views
- b) Signed a petition (online or in-person)
- c) Answered a government survey
- d) Posted comments online
- e) Contacted a non-government organization
- f) Called or wrote to an elected official
- g) Joined in a boycott of a company
- h) Called or wrote to the media
- i) Actively tried to get others to take political action
- j) Participated in an organized protest or demonstration
- k) Volunteered in an election campaign
- l) Attended a public consultation meeting
- m) Volunteered with a group working to advance a cause

14. Have you **ever done** each of the following activities in relation to a particular issue or policy that you were concerned about or interested in? Please check all that apply.
15. Thinking about **the last 12 months**, please indicate if you have done any of the following in your community. Please select all that apply.
- Participated in a neighbourhood or community project such as a neighbourhood clean-up or community garden
 - Attended a neighbourhood or community meeting
 - Visited a local library, community centre or recreation centre
 - Attended a cultural or ethnic event put on by a cultural or ethnic group different than yours
 - Volunteered time to an organization
 - Worked with others to solve a problem in your community
 - [ANCHOR] I have not done any community activities in the past year
16. What are your top sources for information on politics, government, and public issues you're interested in? Please select **up to three sources**.
- TV
 - Radio
 - Newspapers (print or website)
 - News feeds through social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
 - University research
 - Government website
 - Search engine (e.g. Google, etc.)
 - Video hosting websites & podcasts (e.g. YouTube, etc.)
 - Other
17. When it comes to voting in elections in Canada, your province, or your city, which applies to you most? Please select one only.
- I vote in every election
 I vote in most elections
 I used to vote, but no longer do
 I rarely vote
 I have never voted
18. How would you describe your sense of belonging to each of the following?
- Your local neighbourhood
 - Province or territory
 - Canada
- Very strong
 Somewhat strong
 Somewhat weak
 Very weak
 Prefer not to say
19. Please rate your feelings towards each of the following Canadian political parties, with 10 meaning a very warm, favourable feeling, 0 (zero) meaning a very cold, unfavourable feeling, and 5 meaning not particularly warm or cold. You can use any number from zero to ten: the higher the number the more favourable your feelings

are toward that political party. If you have no opinion or have never heard of that party, please select "Don't know".

- a) Liberal Party of Canada
- b) Conservative Party of Canada
- c) New Democratic Party of Canada
- d) Green Party of Canada
- e) Bloc Québécois [*SHOW IN QUEBEC ONLY*]

Very cold, unfavourable 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 Very warm, favourable Don't know

A. Online Disinformation

20. Generally speaking, do you trust or not trust information you get from ...?

- a) TV
- b) Radio
- c) Newspapers (print or website)
- d) News feeds through social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- e) University research
- f) Government website
- g) Search engine (e.g. Google, etc.)
- h) Video hosting websites & podcasts (e.g. YouTube, etc.)

Do not trust at all 1– 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – 7 Trust a lot

21. In your view, is the existence of news or information that is false or misleading a problem or not a problem for democracy in Canada?

Very serious problem

Serious problem

Somewhat of a problem

Not very much of a problem

Not at all a problem

Don't know

22. What impact, if any, does news and information that is false or misleading currently have on ...?

- a) Your confidence in government institutions
- b) Your confidence in political leaders' ability to solve problems

Big impact

Moderate impact

Small impact

No impact at all

Don't know

23. In general, do you think that access to mobile phones, the internet, and social media has made Canadians more or less _____, or has it not had much impact either way?

- a) Divided in their political opinions
- b) Accepting of people who have different views than they do
- c) Willing to engage in political debates

More

Less

Not had much impact either way

Don't know

24. Do you think that social media has increased, decreased, or not had much effect on...?
- a) The risk that Canadians might be manipulated by politicians
 - b) The risk that foreign powers might interfere in Canada's elections
 - c) The ability for regular Canadians to have a meaningful voice in the political process

Increased a lot
Increased somewhat
Decreased somewhat
Decreased a lot
Not had much impact

25. There has been a lot of talk recently about what can be done to address the issue of false or misleading information being spread via social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google). Which of the following is closest to your view on what should be done? Please choose one only.

The Government of Canada should impose regulations on social media platforms
Social media companies should self-regulate
There should be no regulations or controls placed on social media platforms
Don't know/Not sure

26. When you think of using the internet or social media platforms or apps, which is more important to you ?
- a) Protecting your personal information / Having free access to services offered by social media companies who want to use it to sell advertising
 - b) Being able to say what you want / Preventing people from saying harmful or hateful things
 - c) Removing harmful or hateful content / Letting people decide on their own what they see or read
 - d) Distinguishing facts from fake news on your own / Having a system of fact checkers to help you identify what is fake news

27. Are you....?

Male
Female
Non-binary
Transgender
Other
Prefer not to say

28. When you think about political parties in Canada, and who you tend to vote for, do you generally consider yourself more of a...?

Liberal
Conservative
New Democrat
Green
Other
None of the above

29. In what year were you born?

30. Were you born in Canada or in another country?

Canada
Another country

31. In which country were you born?

32. Were your parents born in Canada or in another country?

Both parents born in Canada
One parent born in Canada/One parent born elsewhere
Both parents born elsewhere

33. What language did you first learn in childhood and still understand? Select one only.

English
French
English and French equally
An Indigenous language
Other Language
Prefer not to say

34. Which of the following groups, if any, do you identify with or consider yourself a part of? Please check all that apply.

Visible minority
Person with disabilities
LGBTQ2S+
Newcomer to Canada
Indigenous
None of the above
Prefer not to answer

35. What is your permanent place of residence? Please indicate your province or territory.

[IF "BRITISH COLUMBIA" IN Q.35, ASK:]

36. Do you currently reside in...?

Metro Vancouver
Elsewhere in BC

[IF "ALBERTA" IN Q.35, ASK:]

37. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater Calgary
Greater Edmonton
Elsewhere in Alberta

[IF "SASKATCHEWAN" IN Q.35, ASK:]

38. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater Regina
Greater Saskatoon
Elsewhere in Saskatchewan

[IF "MANITOBA" IN Q.35, ASK:]
39. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater Winnipeg
Elsewhere in Manitoba

[IF "ONTARIO" IN Q.35, ASK:]
40. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater Toronto (GTA)
Greater Ottawa
Elsewhere in Ontario

[IF "QUEBEC" IN Q.35, ASK:]
41. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater Montreal
Greater Quebec City
Elsewhere in Quebec

[IF "NEW BRUNSWICK" IN Q.35, ASK:]
42. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater Moncton
Greater Fredericton
Elsewhere in New Brunswick

[IF "PEI" IN Q.35, ASK:]
43. Do you currently reside in...?

Charlottetown
Elsewhere in PEI

[IF "NOVA SCOTIA" IN Q.35, ASK:]
44. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater Halifax
Elsewhere in Nova Scotia

[IF "NEWFOUNDLAND/LABRADOR" IN Q.35, ASK:]
45. Do you currently reside in...?

Greater St. Johns
Elsewhere in Newfoundland/Labrador

46. Do you consider the place where you live to be more urban, suburban, or rural?

Urban
Suburban
Rural
Don't know

47. What is the highest level of education you completed?

High school diploma or less

Some post-secondary, without diploma, certificate, degree

Non-university diploma, degree, certificate

University Bachelor's degree or higher

Other

Prefer not to say

48. Would you say that the salary that you receive and your total household income...?

Is good enough for you and you can save from it

Is just enough for you, so that you do not have major problems

Is not enough for you and you are stretched

Is not enough for you and you are having a hard time

Prefer not to say

Appendix B.

Survey Analysis Cramer's V Results

Results are ordered from the highest Cramer's V score to lowest, only including statistically significant results.

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	P value	Cramer's V
Level of trust in Parliament	(12c) Level of trust in Elected Officials	0	0.437
Level of trust in Parliament	(11b) Level of trust in elections	0	0.433
Level of trust in Parliament	(11e) Level of trust in Civil Service	0	0.409
Level of trust in Parliament	(11d) Level of trust in Supreme Court	0	0.407
Level of trust in Parliament	(4a) Perspective on whether or not elected officials care what ordinary people think.	0	0.378
Level of trust in Parliament	(12e) Level of trust in Judges	0	0.343
Level of trust in Parliament	(4c) Perspective on whether or not ordinary citizens can do a lot influence government in Ottawa.	0	0.333
Level of trust in Parliament	(11c) Level of trust in media	0	0.323
Level of trust in Parliament	(12f) Level of trust in Civil servants	0	0.321
Level of trust in Parliament	(11f) Level of trust in Universities	0	0.318
Level of trust in Parliament	(12d) Level of trust in Journalist	0	0.296
Level of trust in Parliament	(12g) Level of trust in academics	0	0.292
Level of trust in Parliament	(4b) Perspective on whether or not voting gives ordinary citizens a say in how government runs things.	0	0.286
Level of trust in Parliament	(2) Perspective on how democratic Canada is governed today.	0	0.274

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	P value	Cramer's V
Level of trust in Parliament	(12b) Level of trust in people of different ethnicities	0	0.229
Level of trust in Parliament	(7e) Perspective on whether the interest of ordinary are ignored or not in favour of the establishment.	0	0.198
Level of trust in Parliament	(12a) Level of trust in neighbours	0	0.183
Level of trust in Parliament	(6b) Perspective on whether representative democracy is a good or bad way to govern Canada.	0	0.176
Level of trust in Parliament	(28) Political party association	0	0.167
Level of trust in Parliament	(3b) Enough freedom of expression	0	0.16
Level of trust in Parliament	(3e) Protection of minority rights	0	0.149
Level of trust in Parliament	(48) Income level	0	0.147
Level of trust in Parliament	(7d) Perspective on whether Canadians born in Canada should or should not have a greater say than Canadians born outside of Canada.	0	0.146
Level of trust in Parliament	(3a) Enough freedom of press	0	0.144
Level of trust in Parliament	(8e) Support or oppose candidates that has promote anti-government views	0	0.132
Level of trust in Parliament	(6a) Perspective on whether direct democracy is a good or bad way to govern Canada.	0	0.13
Level of trust in Parliament	(3f) Enough opportunities to participate	0	0.124
Level of trust in Parliament	(3c) Enough freedom of religion	0	0.113
Level of trust in Parliament	(7b) Perspective on whether losers of elections and their supports should accept they have lost or not.	0	0.113
Level of trust in Parliament	(8a) Support or oppose candidates that attack media as biased	0	0.108
Level of trust in Parliament	(5) Preference for democracy	0	0.105
Level of trust in Parliament	(47) Level of education	0	0.102

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	P value	Cramer's V
Level of trust in Parliament	(29) Age	0	0.093
Level of trust in Parliament	(46) Urban, Suburban, Rural	0	0.087
Level of trust in Parliament	(8d) Support or oppose candidates that put Canadian first over allies	0	0.076
Level of trust in Parliament	(30) Born in Canada vs other country	0	0.075
Level of trust in Parliament	(7c) Perspective on whether hate speech should be suppressed or not with physical force	0	0.074
Level of trust in Parliament	(3d) Enough gender equality	0	0.068
Level of trust in Parliament	(3g) Enough civic education	0	0.063
Level of trust in Parliament	(8b) Support use of experts	0	0.061
Level of trust in Parliament	(7a) Perspective on whether those that disagree with the majority are a threat or not to Canada.	0	0.058

Appendix C.

Survey Analysis Cross-Tabulations

Table C.1. Cross-Tabulation results of trust in Parliament and evaluation of Canada's democratic performance

Trust level in Parliament	Perceptions of how democratic Canada is governed today.		
	Fully Democratic	Somewhat Democratic	Not democratic
Trust	78%	55%	26%
Neutral	12.5%	28.2%	29.8%
Distrust	9.8%	17%	44%

Table C.2. Cross-Tabulation results for trust in Parliament and perspective on elected officials

Trust level in Parliament	Most elected officials care what people like me think	Most elected officials don't care what people like me think
Trust	71%	33%
Neutral	20%	30%
Distrust	9%	37%

Table C.3. Cross-Tabulation results trust in Parliament and perspective on citizen's ability to influence government

Trust level in Parliament	Ordinary citizens can do a lot to influence the government in Ottawa if they are willing to make the effort	There is not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government in Ottawa even if they are willing to make the effort
Trust	63%	31%
Neutral	23%	31%
Distrust	14%	38%

Table C.4. Cross-Tabulation results trust in Parliament and perspective on voting influence

Trust level in Parliament	Voting gives people like me some say about how government runs things	Voting by people like me doesn't really affect how government runs things
Trust	56%	30.5%
Neutral	26%	29%
Distrust	18%	40.5%

Table C.5. Cross-tabulation results trust in Parliament and preference for democracy

Trust level in Parliament	Political System Preference		
	Democracy is preferable	For people like me, it doesn't matter	Authoritarian government may be preferable.
Trust	49%	30%	37%
Neutral	27%	29%	29.5%
Distrust	25%	41%	33%

Table C.6. Cross-tabulation and analysis results trust in Parliament and perspectives of representative democracy

Trust level in Parliament	Representative Democracy: A system where representatives elected by citizens decide what become law	
	Good way to govern	Bad way to govern
Trust	48.5%	26%
Neutral	27%	30%
Distrust	25%	43%

Table C.7. Cross-tabulation results for trust in Parliament and trust in people of different ethnicity

Trust level in Parliament	Trust level in people with a different ethnic background		
	Trust	Neutral	Distrust
Trust	56%	31%	23%
Neutral	24%	38%	23%
Distrust	20%	32%	54%

Table C.8. Cross-Tabulation and analysis results trust in Parliament and political party association

Trust in Parliament	Political party identify the most with.				
	Liberal	Conservative	New Democrat	Green	Bloc Québécois
Trust	60.5%	38.7%	46.5%	36.5%	49.4%
Distrust	14.2%	36.8%	25.9%	33.2%	28.5%

Table C.9. Cross-tabulation results trust in Parliament and income

Trust level in Parliament	Income			
	Good enough and can save	Just enough and no major problems	Not enough and stretched	Not enough and hard time
Trust	56%	48%	34%	31%
Neutral	23%	27.5%	31%	25%
Distrust	21%	24%	36%	44%

Table C.10. Cross-tabulation results trust in Parliament and education

Trust level in Parliament	Education			
	University degree or higher	Non-university diploma, degree, certificate	Some post-secondary, without diploma, cert, degree	High school diploma or less
Trust	53%	41%	39.5%	38%
Neutral	26%	28%	28%	29%
Distrust	21%	31%	32%	33%