



Consistent Priorities

An Analysis of the Looking West 2006 Survey

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The NEXT West Project

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The Looking West 2006 Survey is the fourth survey in the Looking West series (previous Looking West Surveys were conducted in 2001, 2003, and 2004). The Looking West Surveys tap into the views and opinions of western Canadians on a number of key public policy topics. The purpose of the Looking West Surveys is to inform the public, community leaders, government staff, and elected officials about the views and perspectives of western Canadians. Previous Looking West Survey reports can be found at www.cwf.ca.

Additional reports based on the results of the Looking West 2006 Survey will be released by the Canada West Foundation in the summer and fall of 2006, including a major report on generational transformation.

Researchers: Interested in Using the Looking West 2006 Survey Data?

As part of the Canada West Foundation's commitment to encouraging ongoing research on western Canadian public policy issues, the Looking West 2006 dataset will be made available, free of charge, for nonprofit purposes to post-secondary institutions, academics, students and nonprofit agencies. Dataset availability is anticipated in January 2007. For more information, please contact Robert Roach, Director of Research (roach@cwf.ca).

Executive Summary

Conducted in February and March 2006 after the recent federal election, the Looking West 2006 Survey included a wide range of questions on public policy priorities, political identity, and democratic participation and attitudes. The 2006 survey collected the opinions of a representative sample of 4,000 western Canadians and is the fourth installment in the series (previous Looking West Surveys were conducted in 2001, 2003, and 2004). The objective of the Looking West Surveys is to help western Canadians and their governments better understand the opinions and attitudes of western Canadians.

Consistent Priorities presents an analysis of the battery of questions in the Looking West 2006 Survey that pertain to the public policy priorities of western Canadians. Future reports will present analyses of other survey topics including a major report in the fall of 2006 that will compare the responses of western Canadians under 35 years of age and those 35 and over.

Key public policy priority findings of the Looking West 2006 Survey include:

- A number of policy issues are consistently rated as high priorities across the West: health care and patient wait times; government accountability; and protecting the environment.
- Although reducing poverty is not a top issue of political debate nationally or provincially, it continues to be a major concern for western Canadians, with roughly two-thirds of respondents rating this issue as a high priority.
- Many of the policy areas that dominate public debate—such as lowering taxes, improving the military, improving Canada-US relations, and childcare (be it daycare or funding for parents)—are rated as a “high priority” *by less than a majority of western Canadians*.
- While terrorism may be a top policy issue in the United States, it is clearly less of a concern in western Canada. Almost 6 in 10 western Canadians feel it is unlikely that Canada will experience a major terrorist attack in the next 5 years, and less than a majority rate “protecting Canada from terrorist attacks” as a high priority.
- While providing funding to parents receives a larger number of “high priority” ratings than does developing a national daycare program, the gap between the two is small (less than 3 percentage points). A positive correlation is seen between responses to these two childcare options: individuals who rate one option highly are likely to also rate the other highly.
- The vast majority of western Canadians believe that it is likely that Canada will remain united in 20 years.
- About 1 in 10 western Canadians feel that their province should separate from Canada, with these respondents overwhelmingly preferring that their province separate and form a confederation with the other western provinces over their province separating and becoming an independent country. In other words, the *limited* support that exists for separatism is *western* separatism, rather than BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, or Manitoba separatism.
- About 1 in 10 western Canadians feel Quebec should separate—the same number that stated their own province should separate. Almost 1 in 4 stated that they don’t care if Quebec separates.
- The Looking West 2006 Survey examined five of Prime Minister Harper’s six priority areas. The data indicate considerable support in western Canada for Prime Minister Harper’s agenda.

1. Introduction

2006 looks to be a promising year for policy debate in Canada. After a federal election that was defined in part by the theme of “change”—change not only in government and government practices, but also changes in policy—Canadians elected a minority Conservative government. The delicate balance of power in the House of Commons, combined with the Conservative government’s desire to demonstrate its capacity to govern and the Liberal Party’s need to rebuild and redefine itself, should mean exciting federal public policy debates in the year ahead. Fiscal policy, social policy, Canada’s international role, and issues of law and order are but a few examples of the many federal policy topics likely to be discussed in the coming months.

2006 also looks to be a promising year for policy debate at the provincial level in western Canada. British Columbians will be debating lifting the moratorium on offshore drilling and the pros and cons of the Pacific Gateway initiative. In Alberta, the Progressive Conservative leadership contest will generate a variety of policy platforms as candidates attempt to distinguish themselves from each other and from outgoing Premier Ralph Klein. Saskatchewan residents will be discussing the ongoing challenges of an agricultural economy and how to position the province within the equalization debate. In Manitoba, the effects of a rising dollar on its manufacturing sector will be a hot button issue, as will be the need for more immigrants. These are but a few examples of the public policy topics that will be animating political debates and watercooler conversations in the West in the year ahead.

In this political environment, it is useful for party leaders, policy analysts, and political commentators (be they professional commentators or the armchair variety) to have an understanding of where the western Canadian public stands on key policy issues.

The Canada West Foundation’s Looking West Surveys are designed to provide valid and reliable data on western Canadian public opinion. The Looking West 2006 Survey is the fourth in the series; previous Looking West Surveys were conducted in 2001, 2003 and 2004. Unlike many other surveys, which often lump provinces together (thus obscuring important differences among the provinces) and/or have provincial sample sizes that do not allow for meaningful analysis of opinion in a single province, the Looking West Surveys use large provincial samples to allow for statistically significant analysis of each of the four western provinces (including urban-rural analyses). In addition, the Looking West Surveys replicate a number of questions over the years, allowing for an analysis of attitudinal trends.

The Looking West 2006 Survey included a wide range of questions on public policy priorities, political identity, and democratic participation and attitudes. This report is focused on the public policy priorities. Future reports will present analyses of the other topics. In addition, a forthcoming report will explore the similarities and differences between respondents 18-34 years of age and those age 35 and older. These reports will be released over the summer and fall of 2006.

2. Methodology

Looking West 2006 is a random sample telephone survey of western Canadians 18 years of age or older. On behalf of the Canada West Foundation, Probe Research Inc. coordinated and administered the survey from February 23, 2006 to March 29, 2006 through its Winnipeg, Manitoba call centre Dataprobe. It should be noted that this fielding window for the survey was purposely chosen in order to have at least one month separating the federal election of January 23, 2006 from the interview period.

To allow for statistically significant analyses of each province, as well as the West as a whole (BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba), a large sample was used. A total of 4,000 residents were interviewed by telephone across British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. With a sample of 4,000 across the region, one can say with 95% certainty that the results are within +/-1.55 percentage points of what they would have been if the entire adult population of the region had been interviewed. The margin of error is higher within the survey population's sub-groups. The provincial breakdowns, and the margins of error, are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1:
Sample Size and Margin of Error**

	Total N	Margin of Error +/- 95 times out of 100
BC	1,000	3.1%
Alberta	1,000	3.1%
Saskatchewan	1,000	3.1%
Manitoba	1,000	3.1%
Western Canada	4,000	1.55%

In the presentation of aggregate western Canadian regional data, a weighting adjustment factor was applied to match each province's sample weight to its portion of the regional population of those aged 18 years of age and over. Half of the respondents from each province were under 35 years of age, while the other half were 35 years of age or older. A weighting adjustment factor was applied to correct for this over-sampling of the 18-34 age group. A full analysis of the similarities and differences between the two age samples will be presented in a forthcoming Looking West 2006 Survey report on generational transformations.

Because non-responses ("don't know/refused") are not reported in the tables or text, the data in the figures in this report do not always add up to 100%.

Urban size analyses are based on postal codes, and have the following categories: urban core (a large urban area around a Census Metropolitan Area [CMA] or Census Agglomeration [CA] with a population of at least 100,000 persons in the case of a CMA, or between 10,000 and 99,999 in the case of a CA); urban fringe (includes all small urban areas [with less than 10,000 population] within a CMA or CA that are not contiguous with the urban core of the CMA or CA); rural fringe (all territory within a CMA or CA not classified as an urban core or an urban fringe); small urban; and rural.

Some survey questions replicate questions asked in the Looking West 2003 and/or Looking West 2004 Surveys. For a complete overview of these surveys, please see the following Canada West Foundation reports: *Looking West 2003: A Survey of Western Canadians*; *Regional Distinctions: An Analysis of the Looking West 2004 Survey*; and *Western Directions: An Analysis of the Looking West 2004 Survey*. (All of these reports are available for free at www.cwf.ca.)

3. Policy Priorities

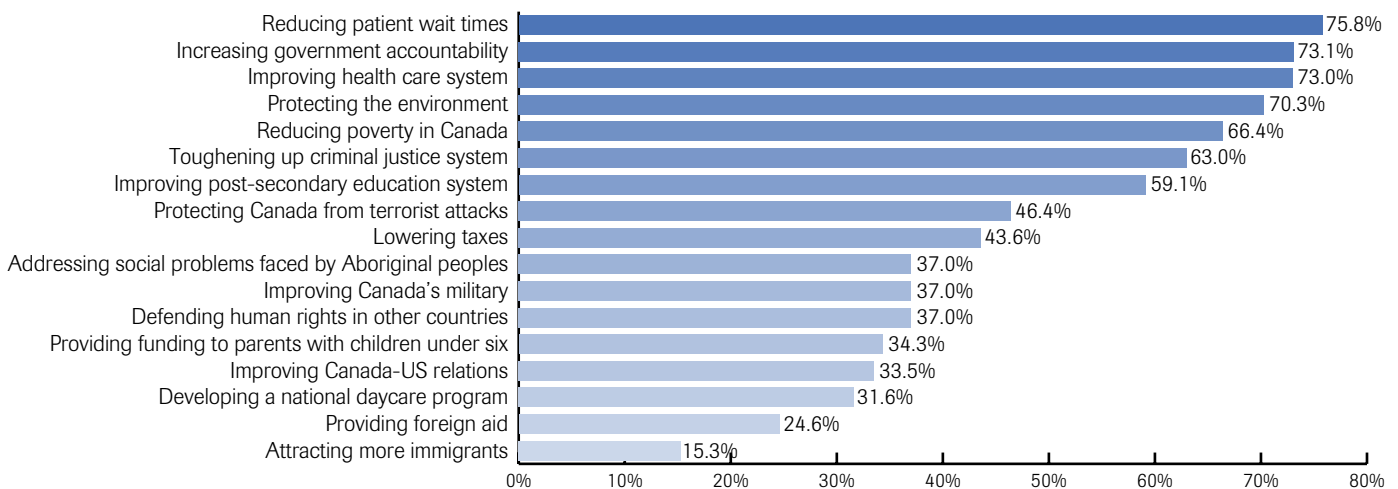
Respondents were asked about public policy issues in three ways. First, respondents were asked an open-ended question: “What two or three public policy issues concern you most?” In this report, these responses will be referred to as “open policy priorities.” Second, respondents were asked to rate 17 policy issues as either “a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority.” In this report, these responses will be referred to as “closed policy priorities.” Finally, specific questions were asked relating to security, national unity, and the environment.

This section provides a broad overview of the closed and open policy priorities, with an emphasis on provincial variations (where they exist). Later sections explore specific policy issues in more detail. Statistically significant demographic variations, where they exist, are identified.

3.1 Relative Ranking of 17 Closed Policy Priority Areas

Respondents were asked to rank the priority of 17 policy issues: lowering taxes; improving [province]’s health care system; improving [province]’s post-secondary education system, which includes universities, colleges, technical schools and trades training; reducing poverty in Canada; attracting more immigrants to [province]; protecting the environment; improving Canada-US relations; providing foreign aid to developing countries; addressing social problems faced by Canada’s Aboriginal peoples; protecting Canada from terrorist attacks; improving Canada’s military; defending human rights in other countries; increasing government accountability; toughening up Canada’s criminal justice system; providing funding to parents with children under six; reducing health care patient wait times; developing a national daycare program. (The question order was rotated by Probe Research Inc. to avoid biases related to placement in the list.)

**Figure 2:
Policy Area is a "High Priority" (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

The number of respondents rating each policy issue as a high priority is presented in Figure 2. Looking at the West as a whole, there are a number of findings that are of particular interest:

- Both health care questions—the general question on improving the health care system and the more specific question on reducing health care patient wait times—rank highly as policy priorities. Reducing patient wait times has a slightly greater number of respondents rating it as a high priority, but the difference between the two questions is less than 3 percentage points.
- The Looking West 2006 policy priorities data demonstrate how seriously western Canadians see the issue of government accountability, as almost 3 in 4 rate it as a high priority. Indeed, increasing government accountability and improving the health care system received the same number of high priority ratings.
- Concern about protecting the environment continues to be high, with 7 in 10 respondents rating this as a high priority issue.
- Although reducing poverty is not a top issue of political debate nationally or provincially in western Canada, it continues to be a top concern for western Canadians, with roughly two-thirds of respondents rating this issue as a high priority. It is interesting to note that, while reducing poverty ranks very high, addressing social problems faced by Canada's Aboriginal peoples receives a high priority rating from only about a third of respondents.
- Many of the policy areas that dominate public debate—such as lowering taxes, improving the military, improving Canada-US relations and childcare/funding for parents—are specified as a “high priority” by less than a majority of western Canadians.
- Less than a majority of western Canadians rate “protecting Canada from terrorist attacks” as a high priority. While this may be a top policy issue in the United States, it is clearly less of a concern in western Canada. That said, protecting Canada from terrorist attacks rates higher than lowering taxes, improving the military, improving Canada-US relations and childcare/funding for parents, among other issues.
- While providing funding to parents receives a higher number of “high priority” ratings than does developing a national daycare program, the gap between the two is small (less than 3 percentage points).
- Despite considerable policy discussion about the need for increased immigration to the western provinces to address labour supply shortages, fewer than 2 in 10 western Canadians rate “attracting more immigrants” as a high priority.

The provincial breakouts of the number of respondents rating each policy issue as a high priority are presented in Figure 3 on the following page. Provincial variations of note include:

- In all 4 western provinces, the top ranked policy priority areas are reducing patient wait times, improving the health care system, increasing government accountability, and protecting the environment. The western provinces vary in their ranking of these priorities, but the top issues are consistent across the West.
- In 3 of the 4 western provinces, reducing poverty in Canada is among the top five policy issues. Manitoba is the exception to this pattern, placing toughening up the criminal justice system ahead of reducing poverty.

**Figure 3:
Policy Area is a "High Priority" by Province (%)**

BC		AB	
Reducing patient wait times	79.2	Increasing government accountability	75.0
Improving health care system	77.0	Reducing patient wait times	72.0
Protecting the environment	73.8	Protecting the environment	68.6
Increasing government accountability	73.2	Improving health care system	68.0
Reducing poverty in Canada	67.4	Reducing poverty in Canada	65.4
Toughening up criminal justice system	61.2	Toughening up criminal justice system	64.3
Improving post-secondary education system	60.0	Improving post-secondary education system	60.4
Protecting Canada from terrorist attacks	42.9	Protecting Canada from terrorist attacks	50.4
Lowering taxes	39.9	Lowering taxes	45.8
Defending human rights in other countries	39.6	Improving Canada's military	43.0
Addressing social problems faced by Aboriginal peoples	38.0	Improving Canada-US relations	37.2
Developing a national daycare program	35.0	Defending human rights in other countries	35.1
Providing funding to parents with children under six	34.9	Providing funding to parents with children under six	34.4
Improving Canada's military	33.9	Addressing social problems faced by Aboriginal peoples	32.9
Improving Canada-US relations	30.8	Developing a national daycare program	27.7
Providing foreign aid	26.0	Providing foreign aid	24.3
Attracting more immigrants	12.7	Attracting more immigrants	15.6
SK		MB	
Reducing patient wait times	74.6	Improving health care system	74.9
Increasing government accountability	70.5	Reducing patient wait times	74.7
Improving health care system	69.3	Increasing government accountability	70.1
Reducing poverty in Canada	66.0	Protecting the environment	67.6
Protecting the environment	64.1	Toughening up criminal justice system	66.9
Toughening up criminal justice system	62.3	Reducing poverty in Canada	65.3
Improving post-secondary education system	56.6	Improving post-secondary education system	54.3
Lowering taxes	49.9	Protecting Canada from terrorist attacks	50.3
Protecting Canada from terrorist attacks	44.0	Lowering taxes	46.2
Addressing social problems faced by Aboriginal peoples	41.8	Addressing social problems faced by Aboriginal peoples	40.8
Improving Canada-US relations	34.5	Improving Canada's military	35.7
Providing funding to parents with children under six	34.3	Defending human rights in other countries	34.7
Defending human rights in other countries	34.2	Improving Canada-US relations	32.8
Improving Canada's military	32.5	Developing a national daycare program	31.5
Developing a national daycare program	29.4	Providing funding to parents with children under six	31.5
Attracting more immigrants	22.3	Providing foreign aid	24.0
Providing foreign aid	20.0	Attracting more immigrants	18.9

Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

- In Alberta, increasing government accountability rates higher than health care/wait times and all other issues.
- Saskatchewan is the only province in which reducing taxes rates higher than protecting Canada from terrorist attacks.
- Saskatchewan and Manitoba respondents are more likely than their western neighbours to rate addressing social problems faced by Canada's Aboriginal peoples as a high priority. Alberta respondents are the least likely to rate this as a high priority.
- Alberta respondents are much more likely than respondents in other provinces to rate improving Canada's military as a high priority.

- In BC and Manitoba, the percentage of respondents rating daycare and funding for parents as high priorities is the same. In Alberta and Saskatchewan, a higher percentage of respondents rate funding for parents as a high priority, but the gap between funding for parents and daycare is not as large as one might expect: less than 5 percentage points for Saskatchewan and less than 7 percentage points for Alberta.
- Saskatchewan is the only province in which attracting immigrants is not the lowest ranked policy priority (providing foreign aid sits in that position). Indeed, Saskatchewan respondents are significantly more likely than respondents from other provinces to rate attracting immigrants as a high priority (though it still ranks 16 out of 17 with only 22.0% rating it a high priority).

The full responses (high, medium, low, or not a priority) for each policy area, as well as significant demographic variations, are presented in later sections of this report.

3.2 Ranking of Policy Priority Areas Over Time

Seven of the 17 policy areas—health care, environment, post-secondary education, lowering taxes, reducing poverty, Canada-US relations, and immigration—were included in previous Looking West Surveys. It should be noted that the preamble to the policy priority questions was altered slightly for the 2006 Survey. The Looking West 2003 and 2004 preambles read as follows: “Thinking about what governments can do to ensure the future prosperity and quality of life in [province], would you rate the priority of the following as a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority?” The Looking West 2006 preamble was changed to: “I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority.”

The data presented in Figure 4 indicate that public opinion has fluctuated somewhat over the years. The largest change occurred in the “improving Canada-US relations” category, which dropped almost 11 percentage points from 2004 (in the early days of the Martin government) to 2006 (at the very start of the Harper government). Protecting the environment has increased in the number of respondents rating it as a high priority, jumping 6 percentage points between 2003 and 2006. Attracting more immigrants also saw a boost in support between 2004 and 2006.

Figure 4:
Policy Area is a "High Priority" (Western Canada), 2003, 2004, and 2006 (%)

	2003	2004	2006
Improving health care system	74.0	73.9	73.0
Protecting the environment	64.1	65.6	70.3
Reducing poverty in Canada*	n/a	68.6	66.4
Improving post-secondary education system	57.1	58.6	59.1
Lowering taxes	41.3	41.0	43.6
Improving Canada-US relations	n/a	44.2	33.5
Attracting more immigrants	13.0	10.4	15.3

*The wording of this policy priority changed slightly: in the Looking West 2004 Survey, it was “reducing poverty,” while in the Looking West 2006 Survey it was “reducing poverty in Canada.” This change was made due to the addition of international policy priorities to the 2006 policy priority list, which may have led some respondents to assume that “reducing poverty” might include reducing poverty in other countries.

Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

3.3 Comparing “Top Five” Open and Closed Policy Priorities

Public opinion data, including the Looking West Surveys, frequently report public attitudes toward policy issues based on survey responses to closed survey questions. There are a number of advantages to doing so: in particular, the questions can be focused on “hot” or emerging policy issues. However, one limitation of closed survey questions is that they do not allow for the introduction of new or outside topics. Thus, it is possible that there is a public policy issue that is important to a large number of respondents that is not picked up by the closed questions.

To address this limitation, the Looking West 2006 Survey included an open-ended question in which respondents were asked to self-identify public policy issues of concern to them. This open-ended question was asked before the respondents were asked about other policy priorities to ensure that their responses were not biased toward the 17 issues on the Looking West policy priority list.

Respondents could provide up to three answers, and only 15% of respondents did not identify at least one issue of concern. Survey respondents identified a wide variety of issues that are important to them. In total, 73 separate issues were identified—well beyond the 17 policy issues in the closed list. Some observations of note in the open policy data include:

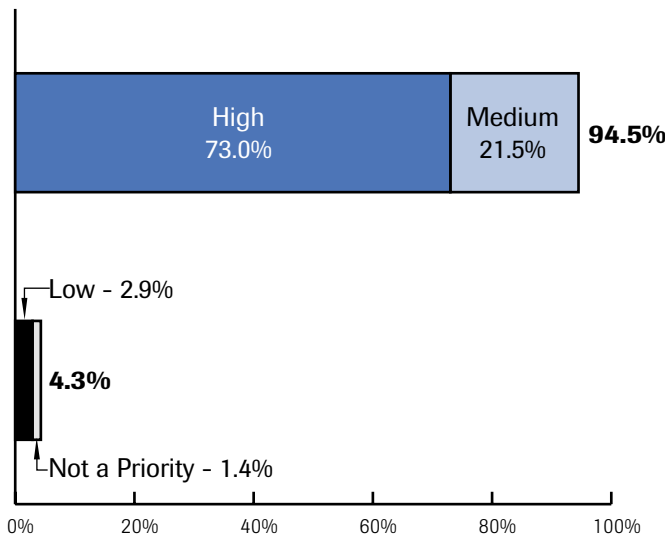
- While health care received the highest number of mentions, there were only a limited number of health issues raised. These included concerns about food and water safety, concerns about Hepatitis C, HIV and AIDS, and concerns about public health threats, such as avian flu.
- Survey respondents identified myriad social issues of concern. Poverty, child poverty, homelessness, seniors issues, native issues, childcare, child protection, children and youth programs, family problems, social services, and handicapped/disability issues are but a few examples.
- The economic issues raised included taxes, the economy in general, jobs and unemployment, and agriculture and rural economies.
- Many respondents identified governmental issues as top policy issues to them, including government accountability, Senate reform, government debt, and government spending.
- While there has been debate in recent years on gay rights and same sex marriage in Canada, only 2.4% of respondents identified these issues (either positively or negatively) in the open policy question.

Despite the vast range of responses in the open-ended policy question, there are some similarities of note between the open and closed questions. First, in both the open and closed questions, concern about health care is at the top of the list. The results of the open-ended question, however, reveal that people see health care as a complex package of issues that goes beyond wait times. Second, in both sets of questions, concerns about government accountability are high. And finally, the environment garners considerable attention in both the open and closed policy questions.

4. Health Care

Health care has been a perennial policy issue in Canada for years, with concerns expressed regarding the system’s cost, quality, and efficiency. Looking West 2006 respondents were asked to rate the priority of health care in two ways: in general terms (“improving [province]’s health care system”) and in terms of health care efficiency (“reducing health care patient wait times.”)

**Figure 5:
Improving Health Care System (Western Canada)**



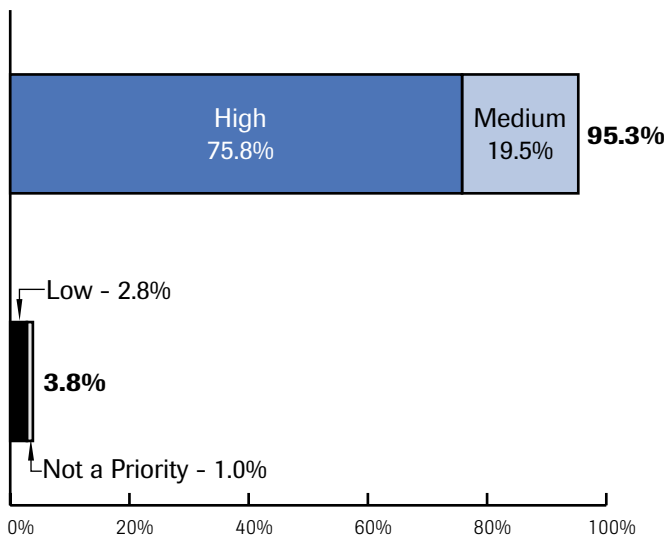
Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

It should come as little surprise to those familiar with Canadian politics to learn that improving the health care system is seen as a high or medium priority by over 9 in 10 western Canadians (Figure 5). British Columbia and Manitoba respondents are more likely than Alberta and Saskatchewan respondents to rate this as a high priority policy issue.

Women, respondents aged 35-44 and 55-64, immigrants, visible minority respondents, Aboriginal respondents, and respondents with an annual household income less than \$100,000 are more likely to rate improving the health care system as a high priority. Respondents living in urban fringe communities are less likely to rate this as a high priority. Also, while the relationship is not perfectly linear, a general pattern is seen with educational levels: as level of education increases, respondents are less likely to rate improving the health care system as a high priority.

Health care efficiency is also a critical priority for western Canadians: over 9 in 10 rate reducing patient wait times as a high or medium priority (Figure 6). Indeed, reducing patient wait times sneaks past the more general priority of “improving the health care system” in the rankings. The high ranking of reducing patient wait times is seen across all four western provinces and across the major demographic categories.

**Figure 6:
Reducing Patient Wait Times (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

There are some variations of note with respect to respondents who rate this as a high priority issue: visible minority respondents, immigrants, women, respondents aged 65 and over, and respondents with an annual household income less than \$100,000 are more likely to rate reducing patient wait times as a high priority. In addition, as education increases, respondents are less likely to rate reducing patient wait times as a high priority, and more likely to rate it as a medium priority.

As one would expect, there is a very strong correlation between these two policy priorities: respondents who rate reducing patient wait times as a high priority are also very likely to rate improving the health care system as a high priority.

5. Social Programs: Poverty, Aboriginal Issues, and Childcare

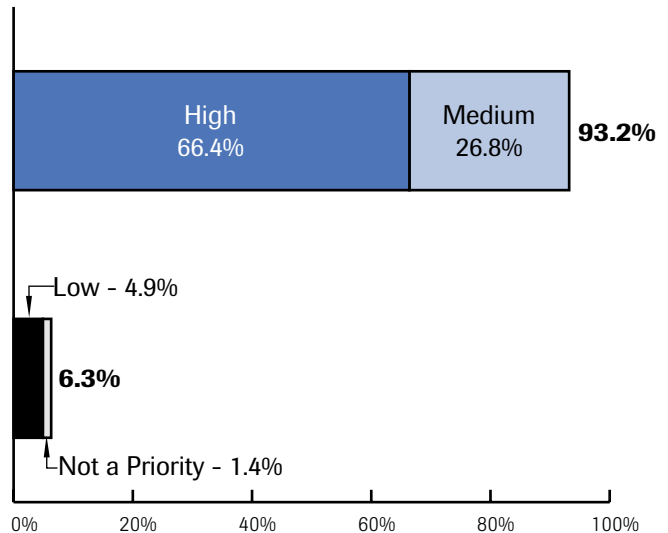
Social programs are key expenditure areas for federal and provincial governments, and areas that can have an impact upon the lives of Canada’s most marginalized and vulnerable people. Looking West 2006 respondents were asked to rate the priority of three key social policy issues: poverty (“reducing poverty in Canada”); Aboriginal issues (“addressing social problems faced by Canada’s Aboriginal peoples”); and childcare funding (“providing funding to parents with children under six” and “developing a national daycare program”).

Western Canadians are clearly concerned about poverty, as 9 in 10 rate reducing poverty to be a high or medium priority (Figure 7). These responses are consistent across the four western provinces. Women, visible minority respondents, and Aboriginal respondents are most likely to rate reducing poverty as a high priority. In addition, as education and annual household income increase, respondents are less likely to rate this as a high priority and more likely to rate it as a medium priority. Finally, respondents living in urban fringe communities are less likely to rate this as a high priority, while respondents living in rural areas are more likely to rate it as a high priority.

The social problems faced by many of Canada’s Aboriginal people—including poverty, homelessness, unemployment, family breakdown, and addictions—have been well documented. Given the high proportion of Aboriginal people living in western Canada, one might expect western Canadians to place priority on addressing these problems. This expectation is fulfilled in the Looking West 2006 Survey public opinion data: over three-quarters of western Canadians rate addressing Aboriginal social problems as a high or medium priority.

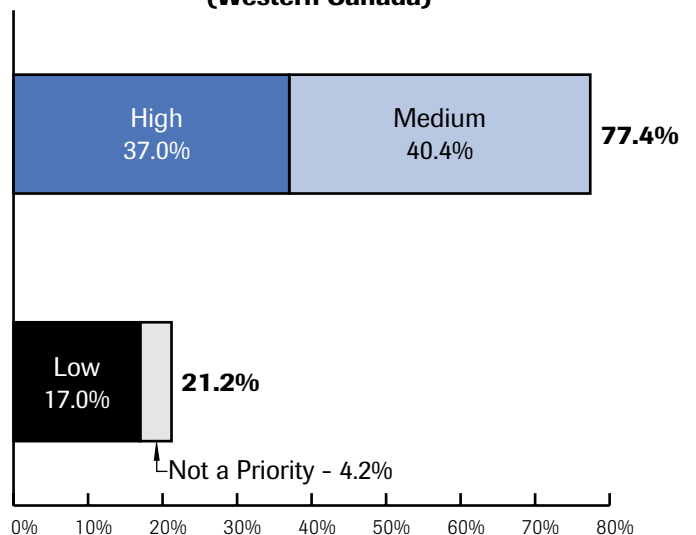
Modest provincial variations are present, with respondents from Saskatchewan and Manitoba more likely to rate this as a high priority, and respondents from Alberta more likely to rate this as a medium priority. Highly educated respondents (those with either a bachelor’s degree or a graduate/professional degree) are more likely to rate addressing Aboriginal social problems as a high priority, as are respondents aged 55 and over, Aboriginal respondents, women, immigrants, respondents living in urban core or rural areas, and respondents with annual household incomes of less than \$80,000.

Figure 7:
Reducing Poverty in Canada (Western Canada)



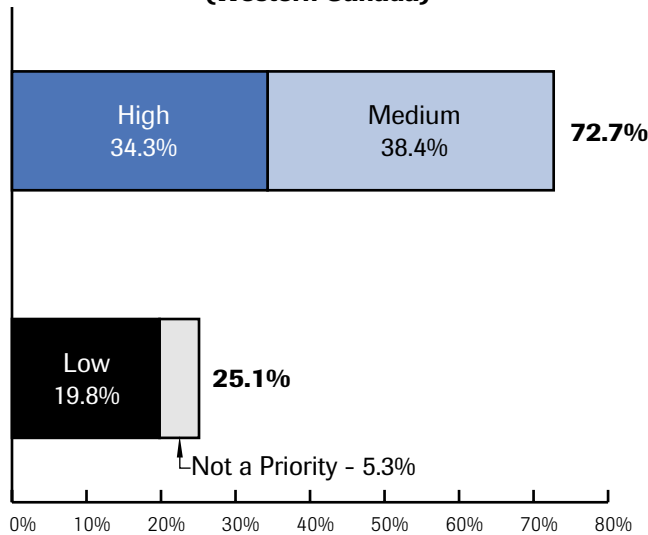
Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

Figure 8:
Addressing Aboriginal Social Problems (Western Canada)

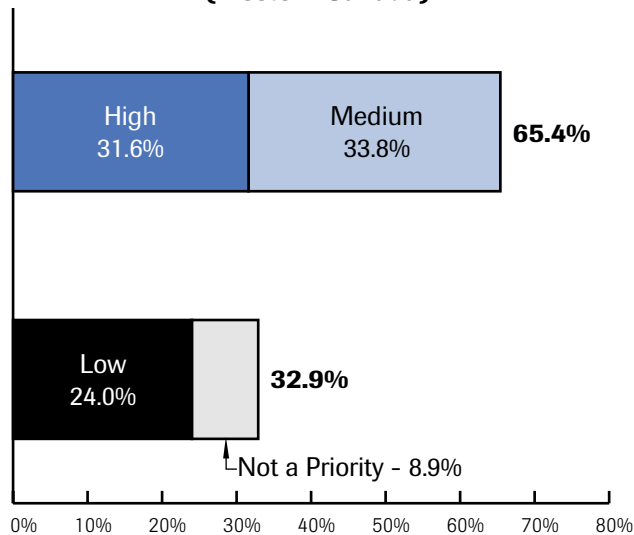


Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

Figure 9:
Providing Funding to Parents With Children Under Six
(Western Canada)



Developing a National Daycare Program
(Western Canada)



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

Perhaps unsurprisingly, there is a correlation between the two policy priorities, reducing poverty and addressing Aboriginal social problems: respondents who rate reducing poverty as a high priority are likely to rate addressing Aboriginal social problems as either a high or medium priority.

The two childcare questions in the Looking West 2006 Survey represent two recent childcare program funding alternatives in Canadian national policy debate. The policy priority data suggest that, while neither alternative is a top priority for western Canadians (both received “high priority” ratings from only about a third of respondents), childcare is still important to western Canadians, with approximately two-thirds of respondents rating each option as a high or medium priority. Of the two options, funding to parents with children under six garners a greater number of high priority ratings, as seen in Figure 9.

Some interesting differences are seen between the priority placed on the two childcare alternatives. The priority placed on funding to parents is rather consistent across the four western provinces, and men and women have similar ratings of this policy issue. Respondents aged 18-44 (particularly those aged 18-34), immigrants, visible minority respondents, and Aboriginal respondents are more likely to rate funding for parents as a high priority, while respondents living in urban fringe and rural fringe communities are less likely to rate it as a high priority. As education and income increase, the number of respondents rating funding for parents as a high priority decreases.

Greater variability is seen with respect to the priority placed on a national daycare system. Respondents from Alberta and Saskatchewan are less likely than respondents from British Columbia to rate developing a national daycare program as a high priority. In addition, a gender gap is seen, with women more likely than men to rate this as a high priority. As with funding to parents, immigrants, visible minority respondents and Aboriginal respondents are more likely to rate developing a national daycare program as a high priority, and as income increases, the number of respondents rating daycare as a high priority decreases. Also, respondents living in urban fringe and rural fringe communities are less likely to rate this as a high priority.

An interesting difference is seen with education, however: as education increases, the number of “high priority”

responses decreases until the highest educational category (graduate or professional degree) is reached, where the number of “high priority” responses jumps back up to levels similar to those of high school graduates. Finally, respondents aged 25-44 and, to a lesser extent, respondents aged 18-24 and 65 and over, are more likely to rate this as a high priority.

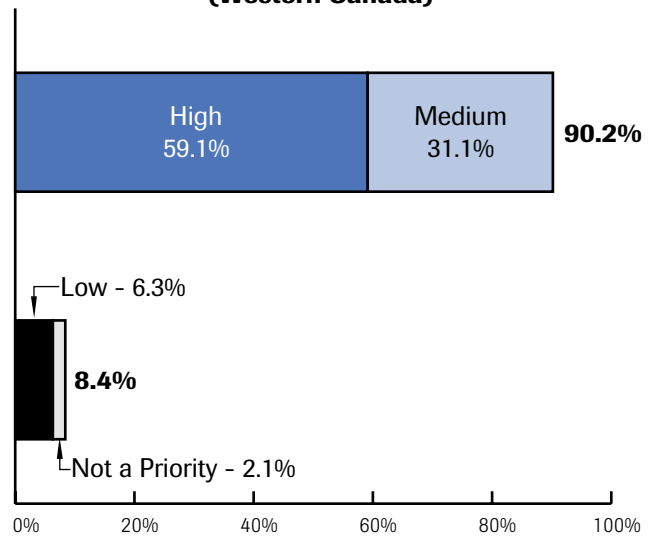
Public debate can present these two childcare options as opposites, suggesting that individuals who support daycare do not support funding to parents, and vice versa. However, the Looking West 2006 Survey data suggest that this is not the case, as a positive correlation is seen between responses to these two childcare options. Simply put, individuals who rate funding for parents as a high priority are also likely to rank developing a national daycare program as a high or medium priority, and individuals who rate funding for parents as not at all a priority are likely to provide a similar ranking to developing a national daycare program. A positive correlation is also seen between each of the childcare options and reducing poverty in Canada.

6. Human Capital: Post-Secondary Education and Immigration

The current and future supply of human capital (skilled labour) in western Canada has been a growing concern due to low birth rates and the retirement of the baby boomer generation. Looking West 2006 Survey respondents were asked to rate the priority of two human capital policy issues: post-secondary education and training (“improving [province]’s post-secondary education system, which includes universities, colleges, technical schools and trades training”), and immigration (“attracting more immigrants to [province]”).

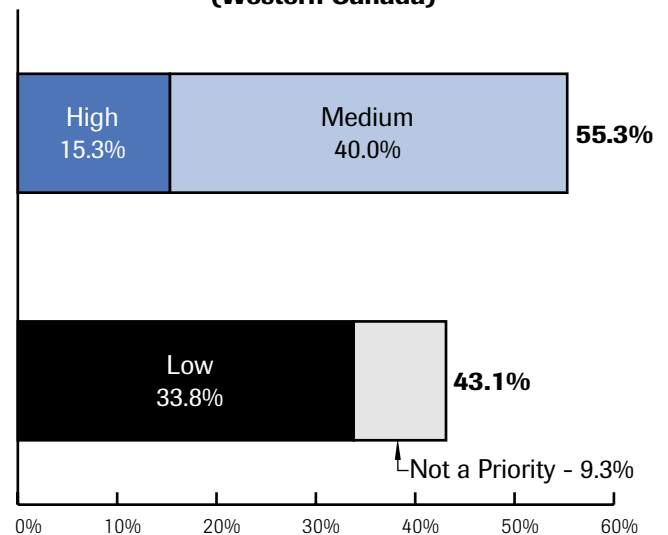
Post-secondary education is a key issue in the West, with 9 in 10 respondents identifying this as a high or medium priority. This rating was consistent across the three western-most provinces, and drops very slightly in Manitoba. Respondents aged 18-24 are particularly concerned about this issue, with over 7 in 10 rating it as a high priority. Visible minority and Aboriginal respondents are more likely than other respondents to rank this as a high priority. Respondents living in urban fringe communities are less likely to rate this as a high priority. Interestingly, respondents with a bachelor or graduate/professional degree are less likely to rate improving post-secondary education as a high priority,

**Figure 10:
Improving Post-Secondary Education System
(Western Canada)**



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

**Figure 11:
Attracting More Immigrants to Province
(Western Canada)**



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

and in general, as annual household income increases, respondents are less likely to rank this as a high priority.

While attracting more immigrants garners the least number of high priority ratings in the Looking West 2006 Survey policy priority list, this does not mean that westerners feel it is a low priority. Indeed, the majority of respondents rate this as either a high or medium priority. However, 1 in 5 respondents rates attracting immigrants as a low priority or not a priority, demonstrating a range of opinion on the issue.

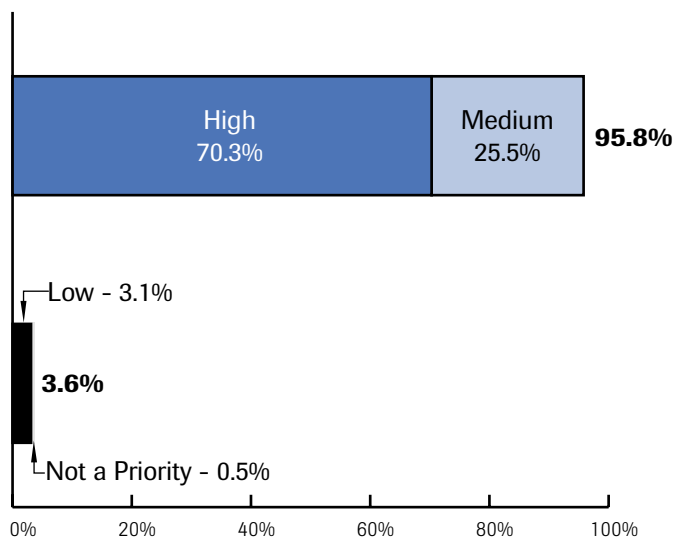
Saskatchewan and Manitoba respondents stand apart from their western neighbours, with almost two-thirds of respondents rating this as a high or medium priority. (In Saskatchewan, almost one-quarter of respondents rate it as a high priority.) In addition, respondents with a bachelor's or graduate/professional degree and respondents aged 35-44 and 65 and over are more likely to rate attracting more immigrants as a high priority, as are immigrants themselves. Respondents living in urban fringe communities are less likely to rate this as a high priority.

7. Environment

As past Looking West Surveys have demonstrated, environmental issues are a top concern to many western Canadians. Looking West 2006 Survey respondents were asked two questions about the environment. First, they were asked to rate the priority of "protecting the environment." Second, they were asked to rate their agreement with the statement, "I am concerned that economic growth may result in long-term environmental damage to Canada."

Almost all western Canadians rate protecting the environment as a high or medium priority, with less than 4% of respondents rating it as a low priority or not a priority. Indeed, when looking at high and medium priority ratings combined, the environment garners greater support than any other policy issue addressed in the survey—including health care and government accountability.

**Figure 12:
Protecting the Environment (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

While over 9 in 10 respondents from each of the four western provinces rate protecting the environment as a high or medium priority, BC is notable for having the greatest percentage of respondents (over 7 in 10) rating it as a high priority, and Alberta is notable for having the greatest percentage of respondents (over 9 in 10) rating it as either a high or medium priority. Women, immigrants, visible minority respondents, Aboriginal respondents, and respondents with a high school diploma or less are more likely to rate protecting the environment as a high priority, while respondents aged 45-54 and those living in rural fringe areas are less likely to rate it as a high priority. In general, as annual household income increases, the percentage of respondents stating protecting the environment is a high priority decreases.

Two-thirds of western Canadians are concerned about the long-term environmental impact of economic growth. The number of "concerned westerners" is highest in Alberta (7 in 10 strongly or somewhat agree with the statement "I am concerned that economic growth may result in long-term environmental damage to Canada") and lowest in Saskatchewan (6 in 10 strongly or somewhat agree). There are a number of

demographic variations on this question. Women are more likely than men to strongly agree with the statement, while men are more likely than women to somewhat disagree. As age increases, the number of respondents strongly agreeing with the statement decreases, and in general, as annual household income increases, the percentage of respondents strongly agreeing decreases and the percentage of respondents somewhat disagreeing increases. Finally, Aboriginal respondents, visible minority respondents, and respondents with less than a high school diploma are more likely to agree strongly with the statement, while respondents living in urban fringe areas are much less likely to do so.

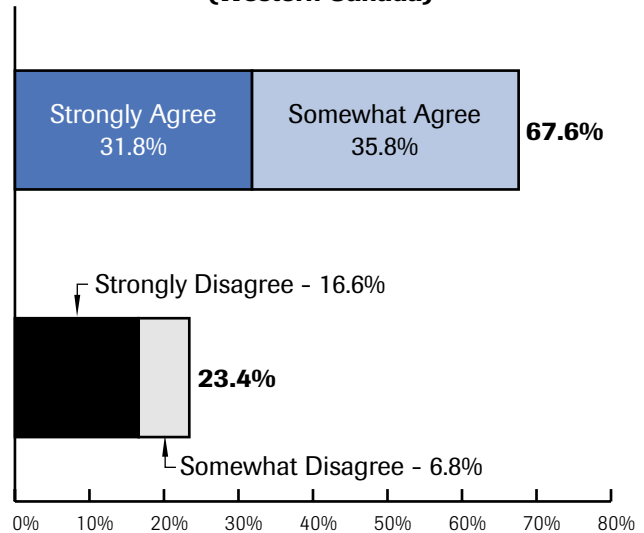
Not surprisingly, there is a strong positive correlation between these two variables: respondents who express concern about environmental damage tend to rate protecting the environment as a high priority.

8. International Role: Trade, International Relations, Military

Canada’s international role includes a variety of dimensions, such as trade, the capacity and role of the military, foreign aid, and diplomatic relations. Looking West 2006 Survey respondents were asked to rate the priority of four international policy issues: Canada’s relationship with the United States (“improving Canada-US relations”), foreign aid (“providing foreign aid to developing countries”), the military (“improving Canada’s military”) and promoting human rights (“defending human rights in other countries”).

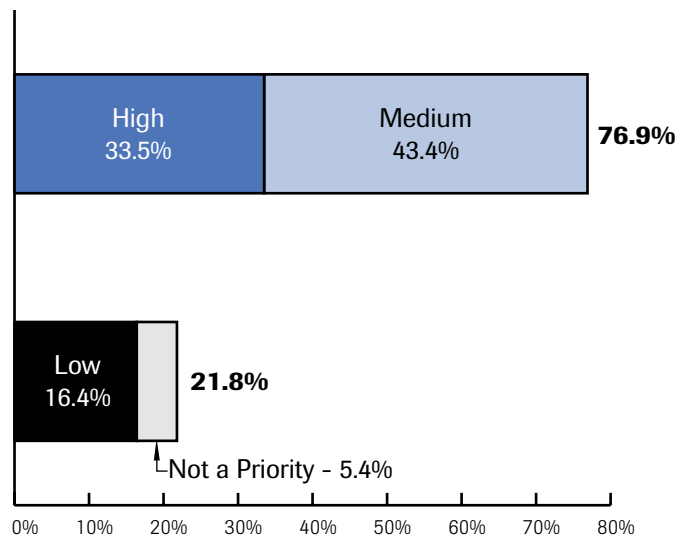
The Canadian-American relationship has been a topic of heated discussion in recent years, and three-quarters of western Canadians feel that improving this relationship is a high or medium priority. British Columbia respondents are slightly less likely than respondents from the prairie provinces to rate this as a high or medium priority. Men, respondents aged 45 and over, respondents living in urban fringe and rural areas, visible minority respondents and Aboriginal respondents are more likely to rate improving the Canada-US relationship as a high priority, while respondents with annual household incomes of \$60,000-89,999 are less likely to rate this as a high priority. As education increases, respondents are less likely to rate improving the Canada-US relationship as a high priority.

Figure 13:
Concerned About Long-Term Environmental Damage (Western Canada)



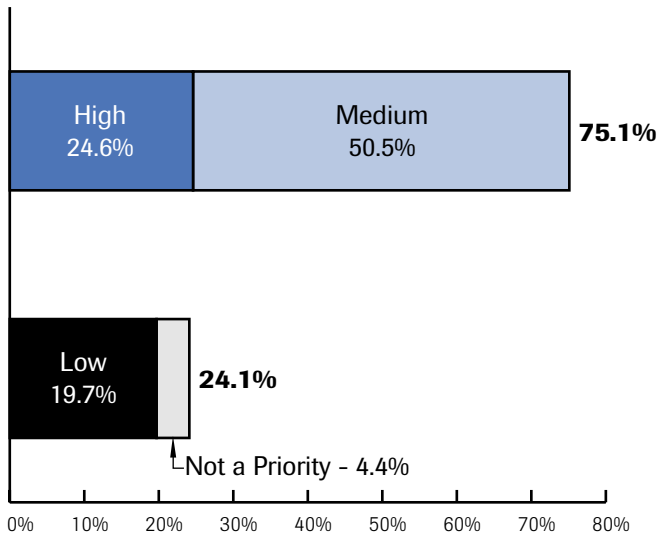
Survey Question: I am concerned that economic growth may result in long-term environmental damage to Canada: strongly agree; somewhat agree; neither agree nor disagree; somewhat disagree; strongly disagree.

Figure 14:
Improving Canada-US Relations (Western Canada)



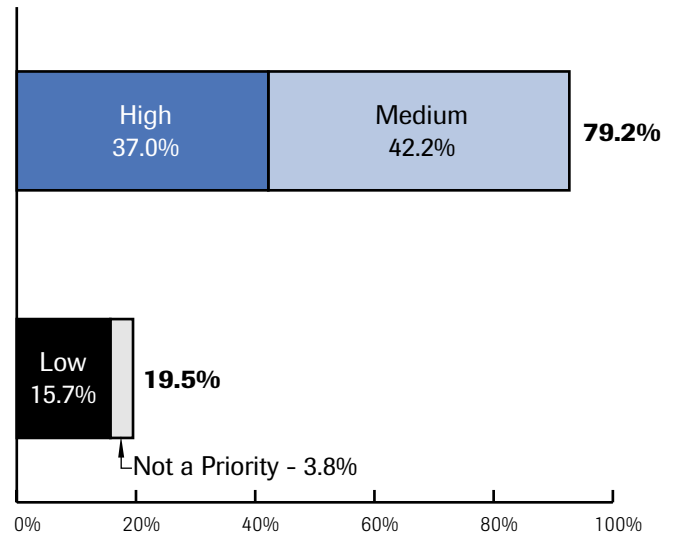
Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

**Figure 15:
Providing Foreign Aid (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

**Figure 16:
Defending Human Rights (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

Unlike the Canada-US relationship, foreign aid has not been a particularly high profile policy debate in recent years. Despite this, three-quarters of western Canadians rate it as a high or medium priority. Saskatchewan respondents are slightly less likely to rate this as a high or medium priority. Respondents with a bachelor's degree or a graduate/professional degree, respondents aged 18-34 (particularly those aged 18-24), women, immigrants, visible minorities, respondents living in urban core, urban fringe, or small urban areas, and respondents with an annual household income of less than \$20,000 are more likely to rate providing foreign aid as a high priority.

Defending human rights in other countries is rated as a high or medium priority by almost 8 in 10 western Canadians. British Columbia respondents are most likely to rate this as a high or medium priority. Women, respondents aged 18-34 (particularly those aged 18-24), respondents with an annual household income of less than \$20,000, visible minority respondents, respondents living in smaller urban centres, and respondents with a high school diploma, a bachelor's degree or a graduate/professional degree are more likely to rate defending human rights in other countries as a high priority.

Improving the military also received a high or medium priority rating by almost 8 in 10 western Canadians. Alberta respondents were the most likely to rate improving the military as a high or medium priority, and BC respondents were the least likely to rate it as a high or medium priority. Men, visible minority respondents, Aboriginal respondents, respondents living in rural areas, and respondents with annual household incomes of under \$40,000 are more likely to rate improving the military as a high priority. As education increases, respondents are less likely to rate improving the military as a high priority. Conversely, as age increases, respondents are more likely to rate it as a high priority.

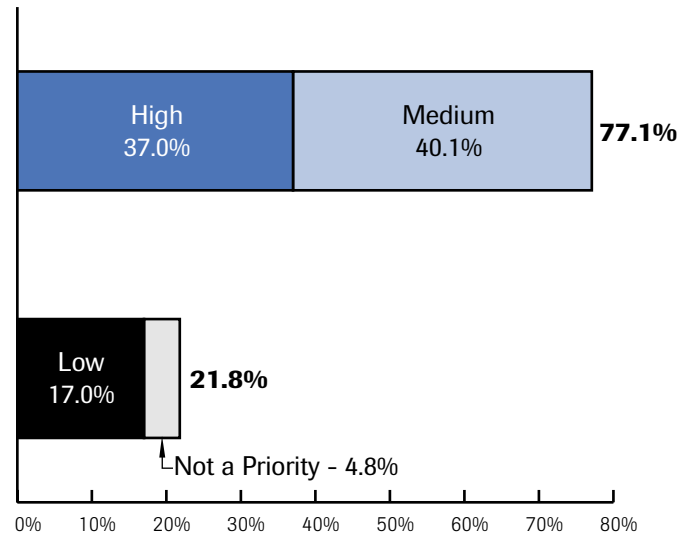
All 4 of the international role policy priorities are considered to be a high or medium priority by over 7 in 10 western Canadians. There are positive correlations between all 4 international role policy priority areas. The strongest correlations are seen between improving the Canada-US relationship and improving the military, and between providing foreign aid and defending human rights.

9. Public Safety: Crime and Terrorism

Public safety has been an emerging public policy issue. The Looking West 2006 Survey examined two dimensions to public safety: crime and terrorism. To assess attitudes about crime, respondents were asked to rate the priority of “toughening up Canada’s criminal justice system.” (This particular wording was used to echo the language used by the Conservative Party in the 2006 federal election.) To assess perceptions of terrorism, respondents were first asked, “Thinking ahead to the next five years, how likely do you think it is that Canada will experience a major terrorist attack? Highly likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or highly unlikely.” Later in the survey, respondents were asked to rate the priority of “protecting Canada from terrorist attacks.”

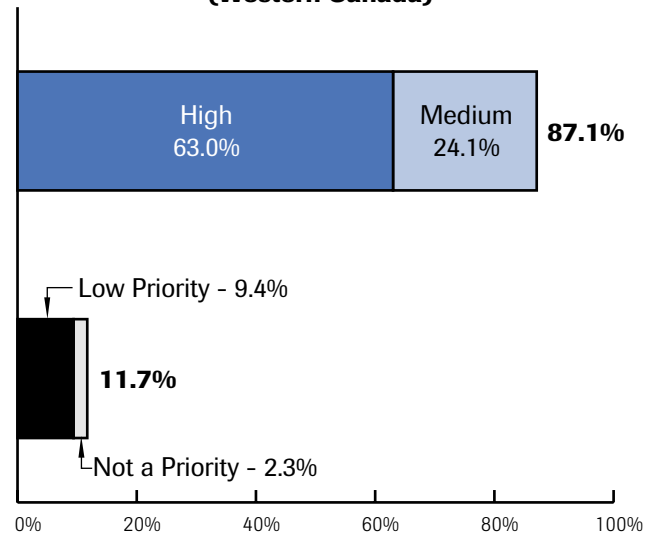
Crime is typically a popular policy issue, and this is certainly seen in the Looking West 2006 Survey data: almost 9 in 10 western Canadians rate toughening up the criminal justice system as a high or medium priority. In general, as age increases, respondents are more likely to rate criminal justice as a high priority. Visible minority respondents, Aboriginal respondents, respondents living in rural areas, and respondents with annual household incomes below \$100,000 are more likely to rate this as a high priority. As education increases, respondents are less likely to rate toughening up the criminal justice system as a high priority.

Figure 17: Improving Military (Western Canada)



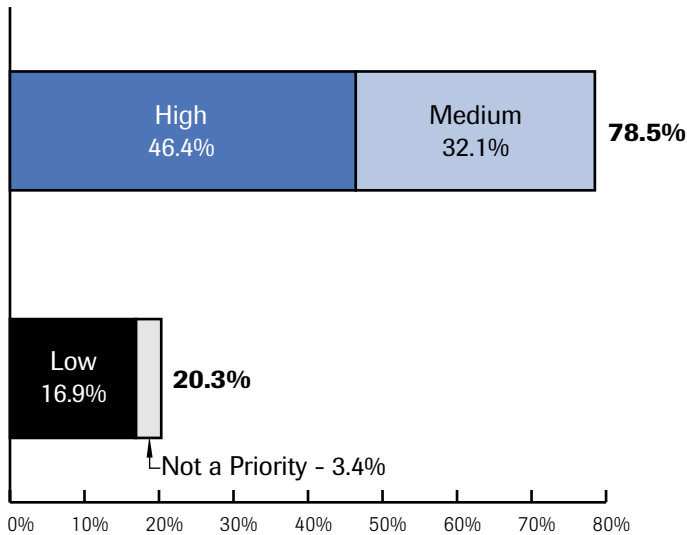
Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

Figure 18: Toughening Up Criminal Justice System (Western Canada)



Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

**Figure 19:
Protection From Terrorism (Western Canada)**

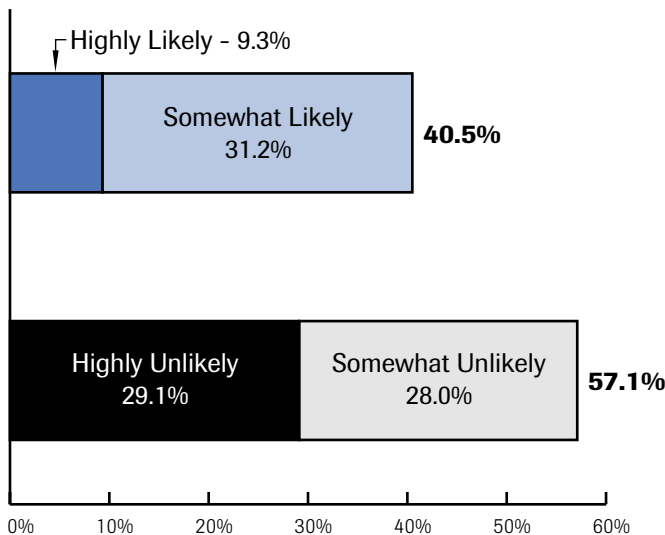


Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

Almost 8 in 10 western Canadians rate protecting Canada from terrorist attacks as a high or medium priority. Manitoba respondents are more likely to rate this as a high or medium priority, while BC respondents are more likely than prairie respondents to rate this as a low priority or not a priority. Women, respondents aged 45 and over, visible minority respondents, respondents living in rural areas, immigrants and Aboriginal respondents are more likely to rate this as a high priority. Respondents living in urban fringe areas are less likely to rate this as a high priority. In general, as education and annual household income increase, the percentage of respondents rating protecting Canada from terrorist attacks as a high priority decreases.

While western Canadians may place priority on protecting Canada from terrorist attacks, this does not mean that they feel such an attack is imminent. Almost 6 in 10 feel it is unlikely that Canada will experience a major terrorist attack in the next 5 years. Saskatchewan respondents are less likely than respondents from other provinces to anticipate a major terrorist attack. Respondents aged 35-64, those living in urban fringe communities, visible minority respondents and Aboriginal respondents are more likely to predict a future terrorist attack. Respondents with a bachelor's degree or a graduate/professional degree are less likely to anticipate a major terrorist attack in the next 5 years.

**Figure 20:
Likelihood of Terrorist Attack (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: Thinking ahead to the next five years, how likely do you think it is that Canada will experience a major terrorist attack? highly likely; somewhat likely; somewhat unlikely; highly unlikely.

As one would expect, respondents who feel a terrorist attack is likely typically rate protecting Canada from terrorist attacks as a high priority.

10. Taxes

Like health care, tax cuts are a long-standing policy issue for Canadians. Looking West 2006 Survey respondents were asked to rate the priority of “lowering taxes.” About 8 in 10 western Canadians rated this as a high or medium priority, with Saskatchewan respondents being the most likely to state this as a high or medium priority. Respondents with annual household incomes below \$100,000 were slightly more likely than other respondents to rate this as a high priority. In addition, respondents with a high school diploma or less, those living in rural areas, respondents aged 35-44, visible minority respondents and Aboriginal respondents were more likely to identify lowering taxes as a high priority.

11. Government Accountability

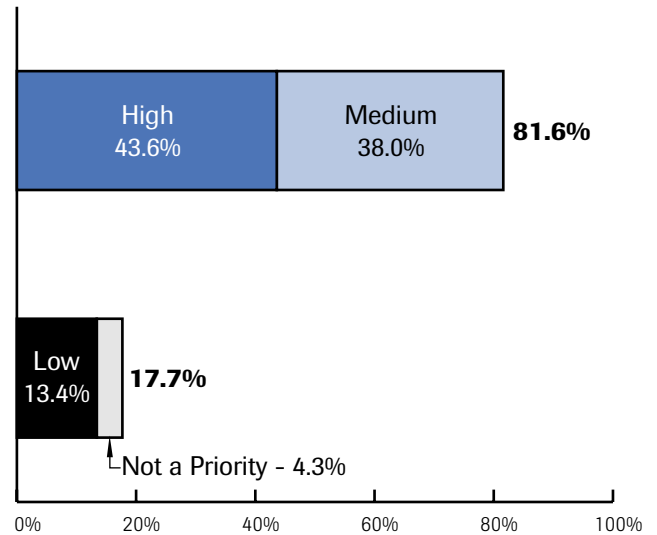
To assess public attitudes toward increasing government accountability, Looking West 2006 Survey respondents were asked to rate the priority of “cleaning up government.” (This particular wording was used to echo the language used by opposition parties, particularly the Conservative Party, in the 2006 federal election.)

Government accountability is clearly a top priority for western Canadians: over 9 in 10 rate it as a high or medium priority. BC and Alberta respondents are more likely to rate this as a high priority. As age increases, respondents are more likely to rate this as a high priority. In addition, respondents with annual household incomes of \$20,000-99,999 are more likely than the lowest and the highest income brackets to rate cleaning up government as a high priority. Finally, respondents with university degrees—particularly those with graduate/professional degrees—are less likely to rate this as a high priority, while respondents living in rural areas are more likely than those living in other community types to rate this as a high priority.

12. National Unity

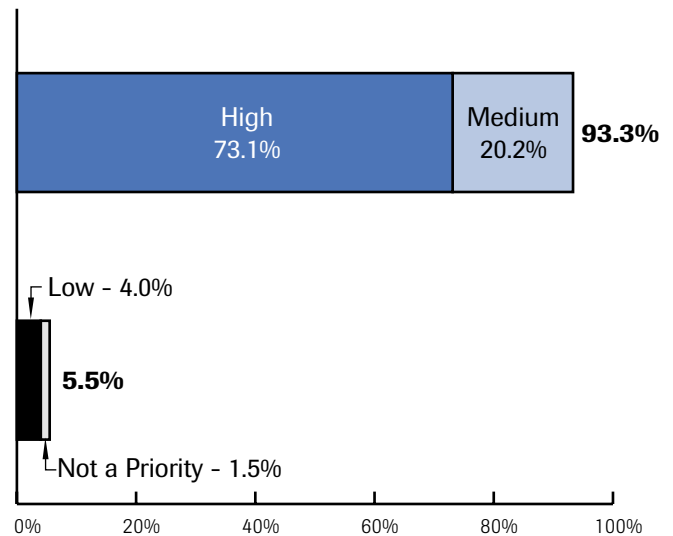
No discussion of Canadian public policy is complete without some consideration of national unity and the strained federal relationship. The Looking West 2006 Survey included three questions that address this theme. First, respondents were asked, “Thinking ahead 20 years, how likely do you think it is that Canada will still be united, that is, with all 10 provinces remaining part of Canada? Highly likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or highly unlikely?”

**Figure 21:
Lowering Taxes (Western Canada)**



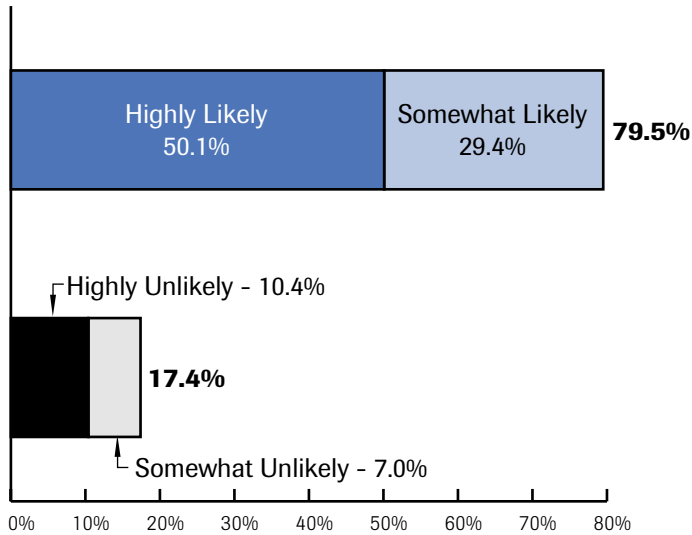
Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

**Figure 22:
Cleaning Up Government (Western Canada)**



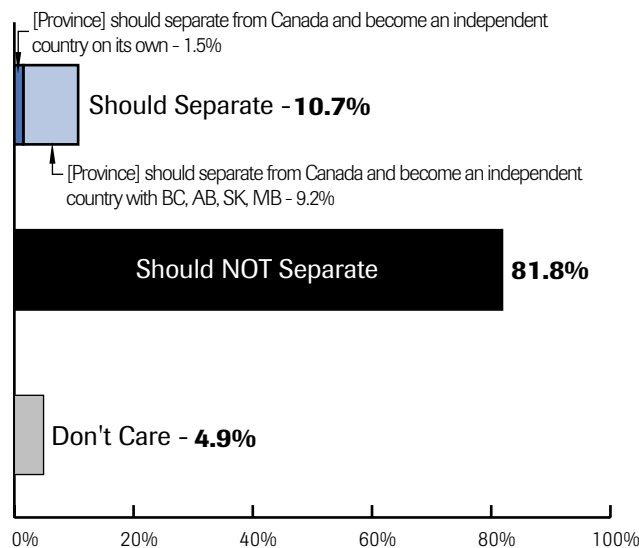
Survey Question: I am now going to ask you some questions about the importance of a number of specific public policy issues. For each issue, please rate its priority to you as either a high priority, a medium priority, a low priority, or not a priority. [rotate order]

**Figure 23:
Likelihood of National Unity (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: Thinking ahead 20 years, how likely do you think it is that Canada will still be united, that is, with all 10 provinces remaining part of Canada? highly likely; somewhat likely; somewhat unlikely; highly unlikely.

**Figure 24:
Western Separatism (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: There is occasionally talk about western separation, that is, the separation of some or all of the four western provinces from Canada. Thinking specifically of [province], which of the following statements best represents your views? [Province] should separate from Canada and become an independent country on its own; [Province] should separate from Canada and become an independent country with BC, AB, SK, MB; [Province] should not separate from Canada; I do not care if [Province] does or does not separate from Canada.

Second, respondents were asked about western separatism with the following question:

“There is occasionally talk about western separation, that is, the separation of some or all of the four western provinces from Canada. Thinking specifically of [province], which of the following statements best represents your views? [Province] should separate from Canada and become an independent country on its own; [Province] should separate from Canada and become an independent country with BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba; [Province] should not separate from Canada; or I do not care if [Province] does or does not separate from Canada.”

Finally, respondents were asked about Quebec separatism with the following question:

“The issue of Quebec separation has been a topic of national debate for decades. Which of the following statements best represents your views? Quebec should separate from Canada; Quebec should not separate from Canada; or I do not care if Quebec does or does not separate from Canada.”

The vast majority of western Canadians expect Canada to remain united in 20 years, with one-half of all respondents stating continued national unity is highly likely. BC respondents are particularly optimistic, with over 8 in 10 stating unity in 20 years is likely. A large gap is seen with education: the number of “highly likely” responses rises as educational levels increase—ranging from a low of 4 in 10 respondents with less than a high school diploma to a high of 6 in 10 respondents with a graduate/professional degree. In addition, men, respondents living in urban cores or in rural fringe areas, and respondents with an annual household income of over \$60,000 are more likely to state that national unity in 20 years is highly likely. Respondents under age 35 and those aged 65 and over are less likely to state that national unity is highly likely in 20 years. Finally, visible minority respondents are less likely to state that national unity is highly likely, and more likely to state that it is highly unlikely.

Over 8 in 10 western Canadians feel that their province should not separate from Canada, while 5% of western Canadians do not care if their province separates or not. Just over 1 in 10 western Canadians feel that their province should separate from Canada, with these respondents

overwhelmingly preferring their province to separate and form a confederation with the other western provinces over separating and becoming an independent country. In other words, the limited support that exists for separatism is western separatism, rather than BC, Alberta, Saskatchewan, or Manitoba separatism.

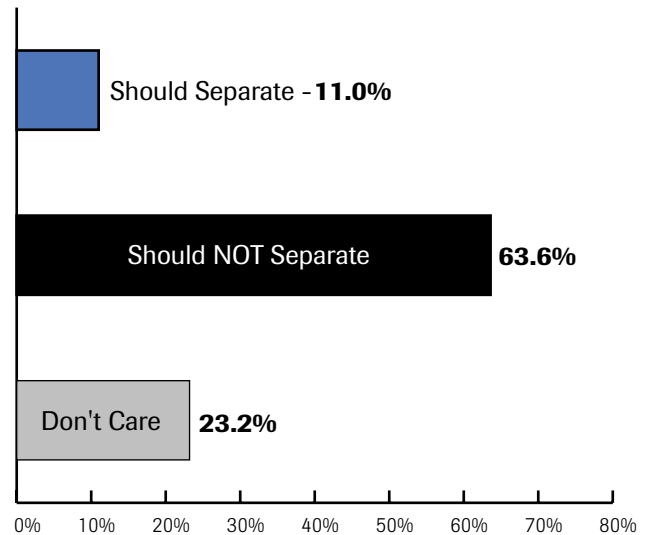
Alberta respondents are most likely to state their province should separate, while Manitoba respondents are the least likely. Men, visible minority respondents, and respondents with less than a high school diploma are more likely to state that their province should separate and form a union with other western provinces. There is also a jump with age: respondents aged 45 and over are more likely than those under 45 to state their province should become part of a western confederation. Finally, there is an interesting urban/rural variation: respondents living in urban fringe areas are more likely than those living in other community types to say that their province should become its own country or to say that they do not care if their province does or does not separate, and are less likely to state that their province should not separate from Canada.

While western Canadians are rather emphatic that their own provinces should not separate, they are less so when it comes to Quebec: almost 1 in 4 western Canadians stated that they don't care if Quebec separates. However, 6 in 10 stated that Quebec should not separate, and only 1 in 10 stated Quebec should separate—the same number that stated their own province should separate.

The “should separate” position is highest in Alberta and lowest in Manitoba, while the “don't care” position is highest in Saskatchewan. Respondents under age 35, Aboriginal respondents and visible minority respondents are more likely to state that they do not care if Quebec separates, and respondents aged 18-24 and 65 and over and visible minority respondents are more likely to state that Quebec should separate. Responses also vary with education: as educational levels increase, respondents are more likely to state that Quebec should not separate. And again there is an interesting urban/rural variation: respondents living in urban fringe areas are much more likely to say that Quebec should separate.

There are relationships between these variables: respondents who state that their province should separate are more likely to state that it is either highly or somewhat unlikely that Canada will remain united in 20 years, and respondents who state that it is highly or somewhat unlikely that Canada will remain united are more likely to state that both their province and Quebec should not separate. Respondents who state that their province should separate are more likely to state that Quebec should separate.

**Figure 25:
Quebec Separatism (Western Canada)**



Survey Question: The issue of Quebec separation has been a topic of national debate for decades. Which of the following statements best represents your views: Quebec should separate from Canada; Quebec should not separate from Canada; I do not care if Quebec does or does not separate from Canada.

13. Federal Government Priorities

Upon election, Prime Minister Harper announced that his government would have the following priorities: clean up government; GST and other tax reductions; toughen up the criminal justice system; implement the Conservative childcare program; negotiations with the provinces on fiscal imbalance; and introduce patient wait times guarantees.

The Looking West 2006 Survey taps into all but one of these issues through its policy priority questions; only the issue of federal-provincial fiscal imbalance was not addressed in the survey. Western Canadians' opinions are presented in Figure 26. The data indicate considerable support in western Canada for Prime Minister Harper's agenda.

**Figure 26:
Public Opinion in the West and Federal Government Priorities**

Policy Area	% rating issue "high or moderate priority"
Clean up government*	93.3% (73.1% high, 20.2% moderate)
GST and other tax reductions*	81.6% (43.6 high, 38.0% moderate)
Toughen up criminal justice system	87.1% (63.0% high, 24.1% moderate)
Implement childcare program**	72.7% (34.3% high, 38.4% moderate)
Patient wait times guarantees	95.3% (75.8% high, 19.5% moderate)


* The Looking West 2006 Survey asked respondents to rate the priority of "lowering taxes," without specific mention of the GST or any other form of taxation.

** The Looking West 2006 Survey asked respondents to rate the priority of "providing funding to parents with children under six," which reflects descriptions of the Conservative childcare plan in their party platform.

14. Conclusion

As was noted in the Introduction, a dominant theme in Canadian politics and policy for 2006 is change. Yet, when it comes to western Canadian attitudes toward public policy issues, the more prominent theme is consistency.

As has been found in previous Looking West Surveys, attitudes on public policy issues are remarkably similar across the four western provinces: policy priorities in BC are also of concern in Saskatchewan, and Manitobans share many views with Albertans.

Another point of consistency is found in the policy priorities themselves: health care, the environment, and reducing poverty are of continued interest and priority to the western Canadian public. These are both provincial and national issues that will likely preoccupy public debate for the years to come. 

About the Canada West Foundation

Our Vision

A dynamic and prosperous West in a strong Canada.

Our Mission

A leading source of strategic insight, conducting and communicating non-partisan economic and public policy research of importance to the four western provinces, the territories, and all Canadians.

Canada West Foundation is a registered Canadian charitable organization incorporated under federal charter (#11882 8698 RR 0001).

In 1970, the One Prairie Province Conference was held in Lethbridge, Alberta. Sponsored by the University of Lethbridge and the Lethbridge Herald, the conference received considerable attention from concerned citizens and community leaders. The consensus at the time was that research on the West (including BC and the Canadian North) should be expanded by a new organization. To fill this need, the Canada West Foundation was created under letters patent on December 31, 1970. Since that time, the Canada West Foundation has established itself as one of Canada's premier research institutes. Non-partisan, accessible research and active citizen engagement are hallmarks of the Foundation's past, present and future endeavours. These efforts are rooted in the belief that a strong West makes for a strong Canada.

More information can be found at www.cwf.ca.



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