

# Public Attitudes to Police and Oversight

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*Fredericton, New Brunswick*



*CACOLE Workshop 2010*

June 8, 2010

# Methodology

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This survey was conducted between May 27 – June 2, 2010 and was based on EKOS' unique *Probit* methodology, which is the only national survey product based strictly on random probability sampling. This panel is randomly recruited from the general population, meaning that the only way to be included in *Probit* is through random selection. All panel members are verified by live interviewers. Unlike opt-in internet-only research panels, this panel supports confidence intervals and error testing. Note that even though it uses a random probability approach, it does not cover the roughly twenty percent of households with no internet access.

- In total, a random sample of 1,058 online Canadians aged 18 and over responded to the survey.
- A sample of this size provides a margin of error of +/- 3.0 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as regions).
- The research updates a number of long term tracking indicators on public opinion regarding law enforcement and civilian oversight

# Outline

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**1.0 Public outlook on law enforcement**

**2.0 Civilian oversight**

**3.0 Accessing the complaints system**

**4.0 Conclusions**

# 1.0 Public outlook on law enforcement

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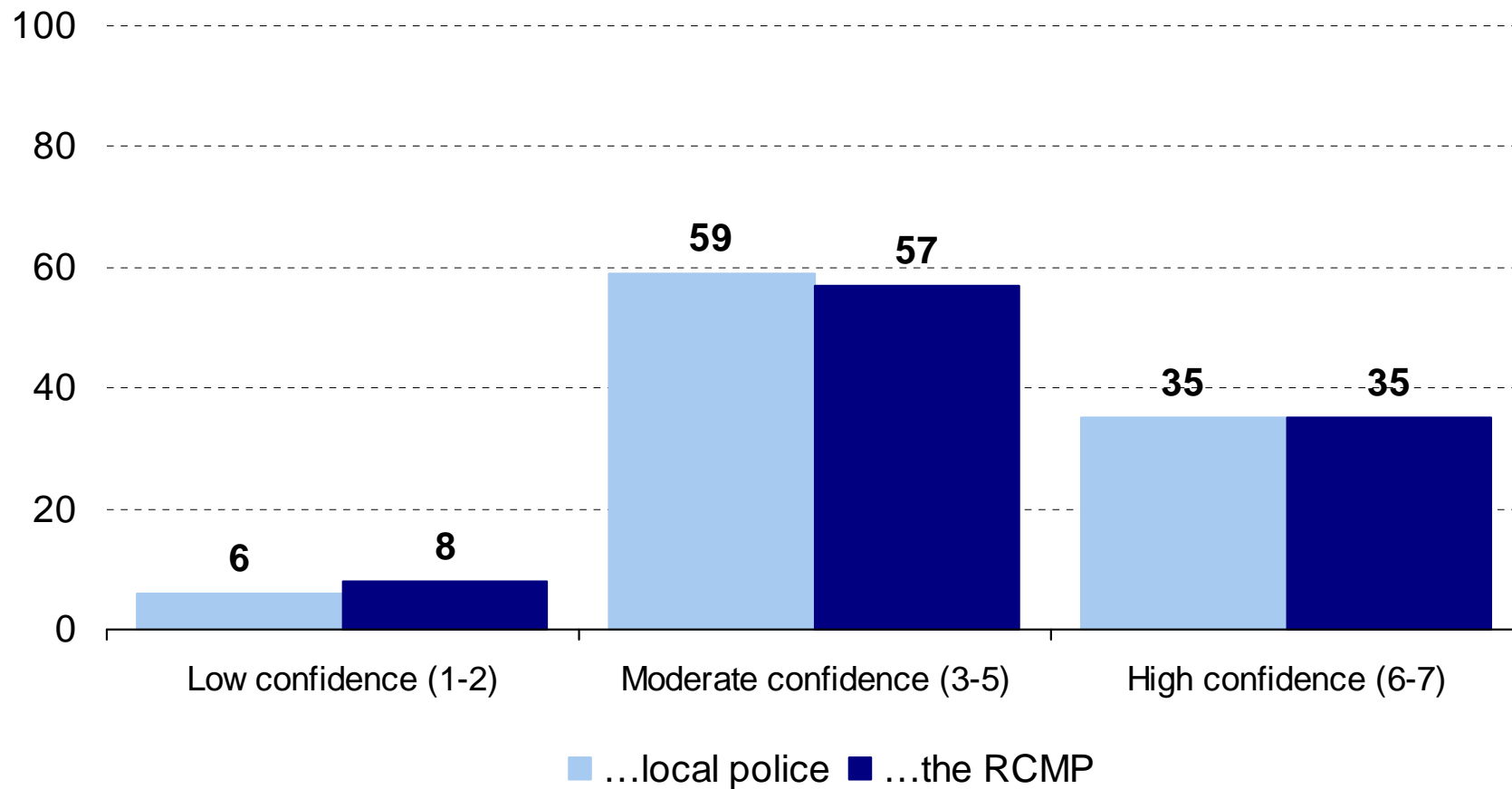


- Recent softening of confidence in the RCMP
  - Confidence significantly weaker among younger age groups
- No distinction between police at the local level and police at the national level

# Confidence in law enforcement:

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*Q: How much confidence do you have in ... ?*



## 2.0 Civilian oversight

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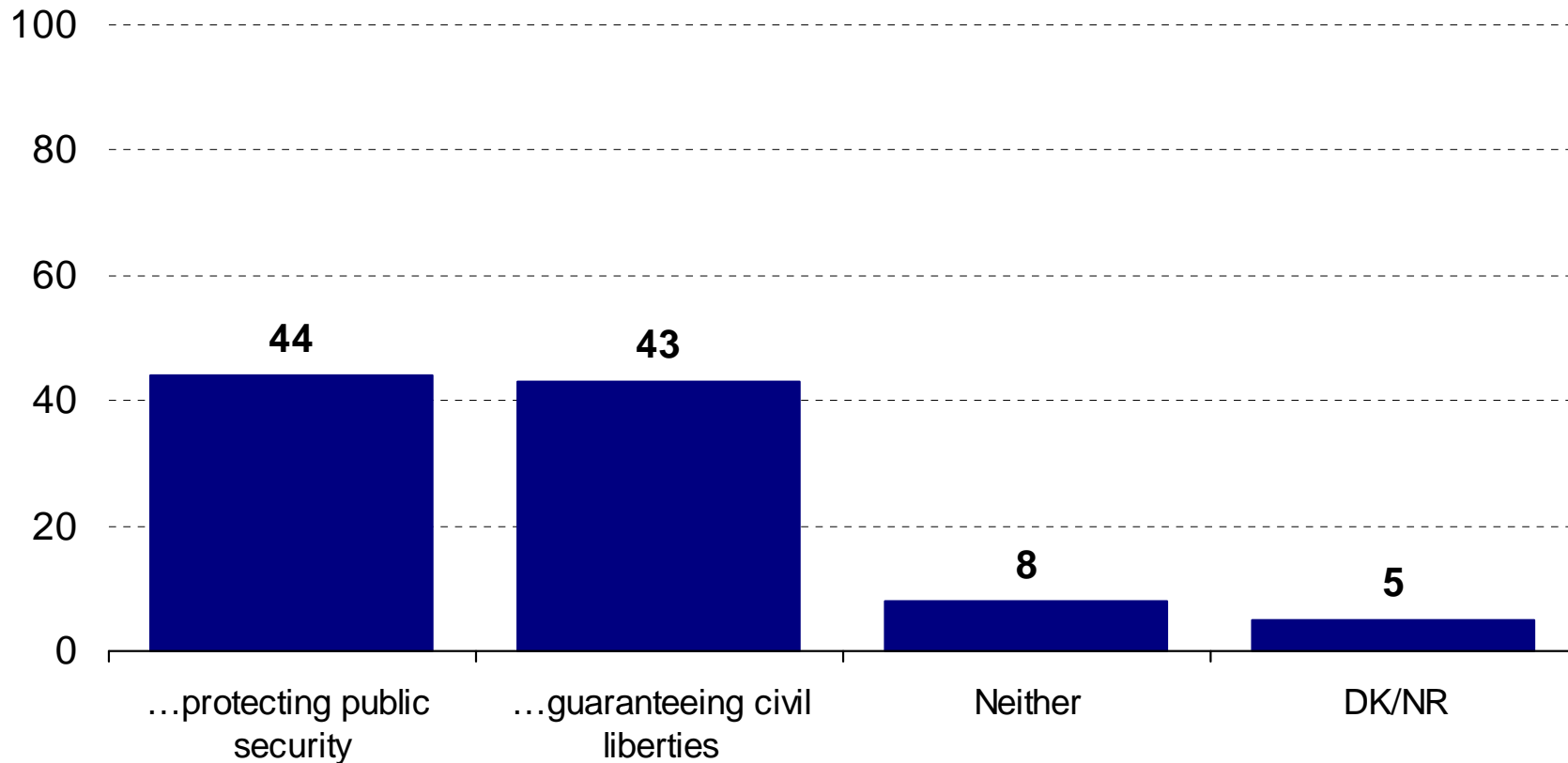


- Growing preference for freedom over security
- Recent surge in awareness of review bodies, though most still unable to name a specific agency
  - Awareness higher among seniors and men
- Review bodies seen as more important than ever, particularly among seniors
- Monitoring RCMP perceived as equally important to monitoring intelligence agencies

## Trade-off between civil liberties and security:

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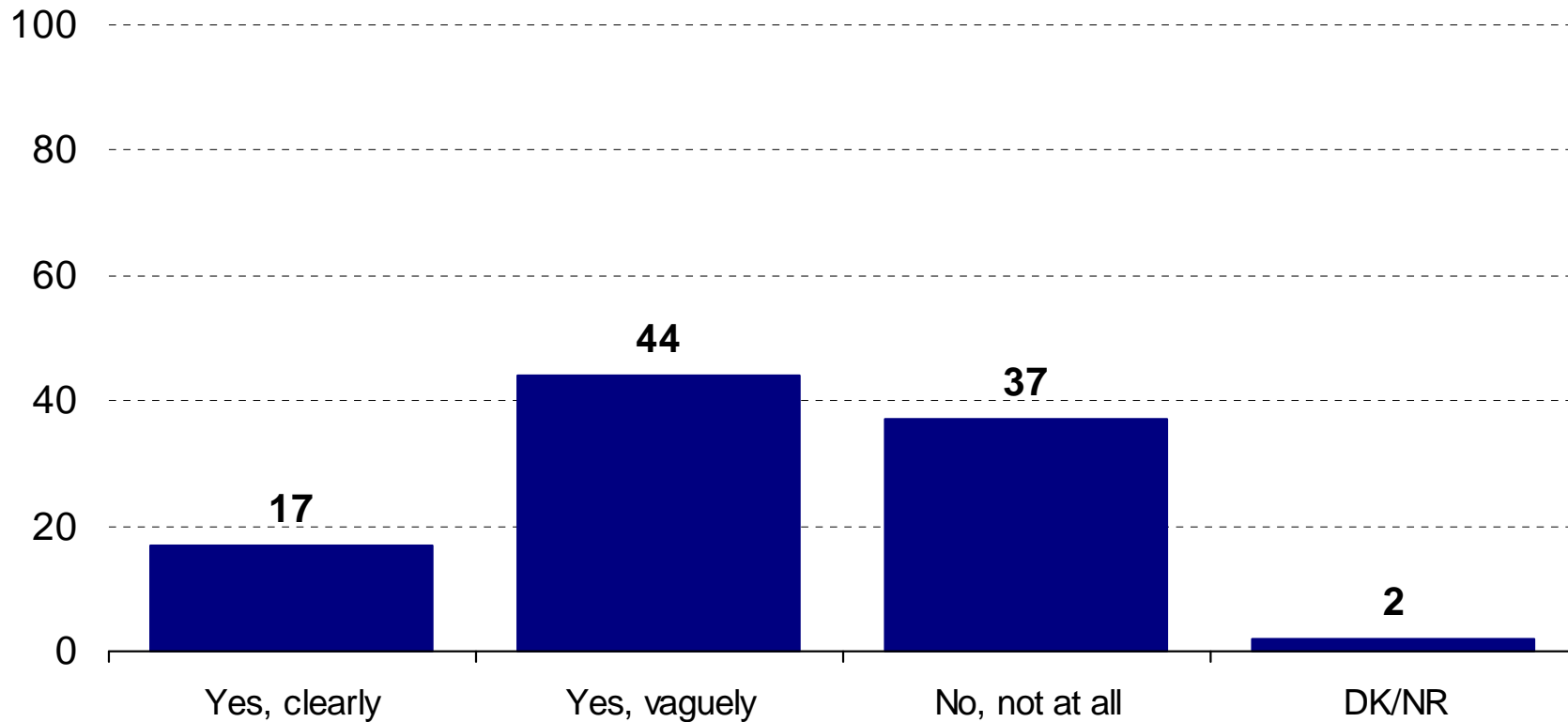
*Q: Recognizing that both are important in today's world, which of the following do you feel the Government of Canada should place the most emphasis on . . . or . . . ?*



## Awareness of review bodies:

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*Q: Have you ever heard about any review bodies that are responsible for monitoring the activities of Canada's law enforcement and security agencies?*





## Awareness of specific review bodies:

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*Q: Can you name any of the existing Canadian review bodies?*

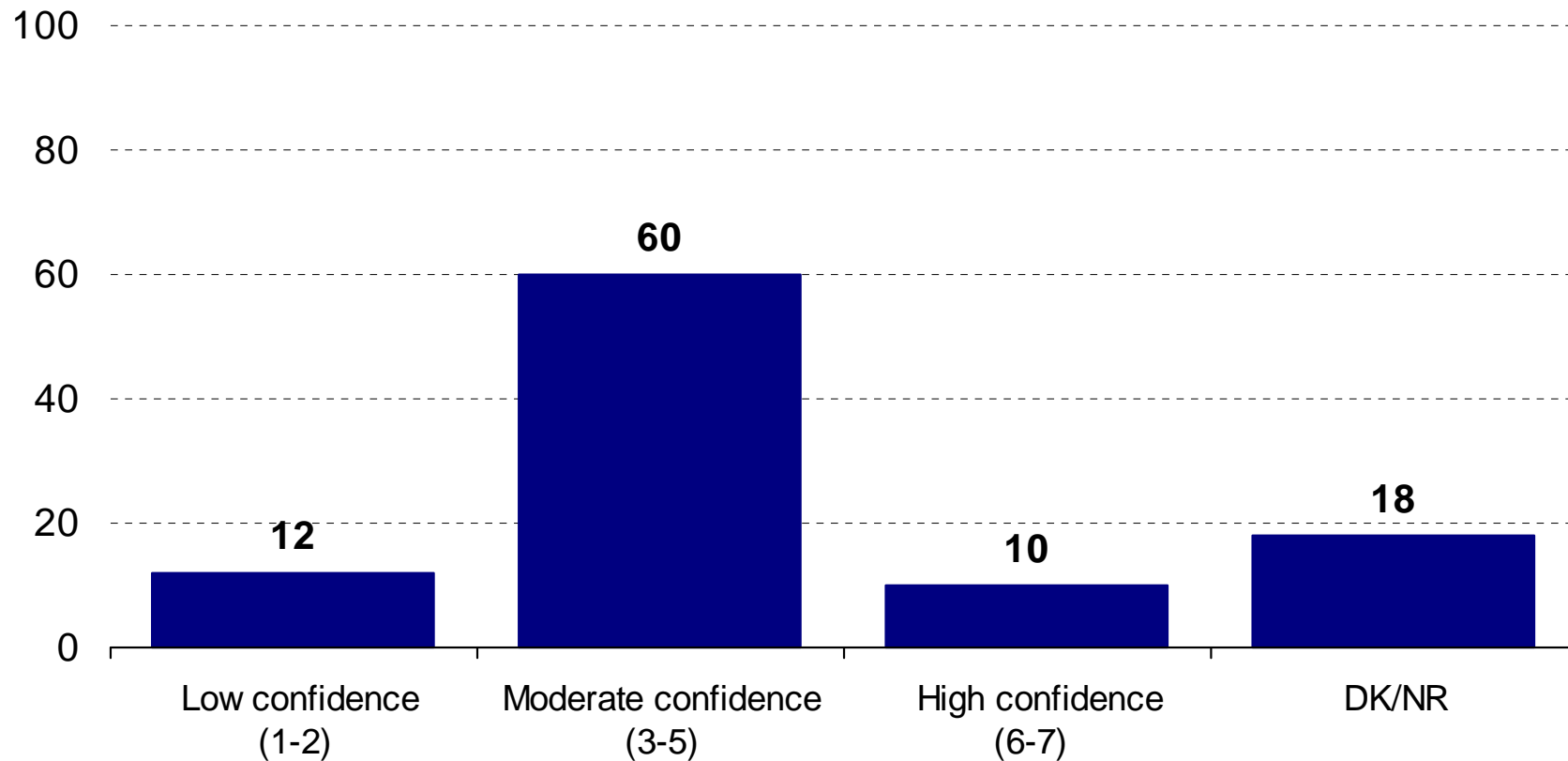
Law enforcement bodies (e.g., internal reviews)	11%
Special Investigation Unit	7%
Inspector General, CSIS	4%
Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP	3%
Security Intelligence Review Committee	2%
Other**	7%
DK/NR	67%

*\*\*Category includes the following responses mentioned by 2% or fewer: Auditor General, Civilian/Independent Review Committees, Government/Parliamentary Review Committees, and Other Government Related Departments/Agencies.*

## Confidence in review bodies:

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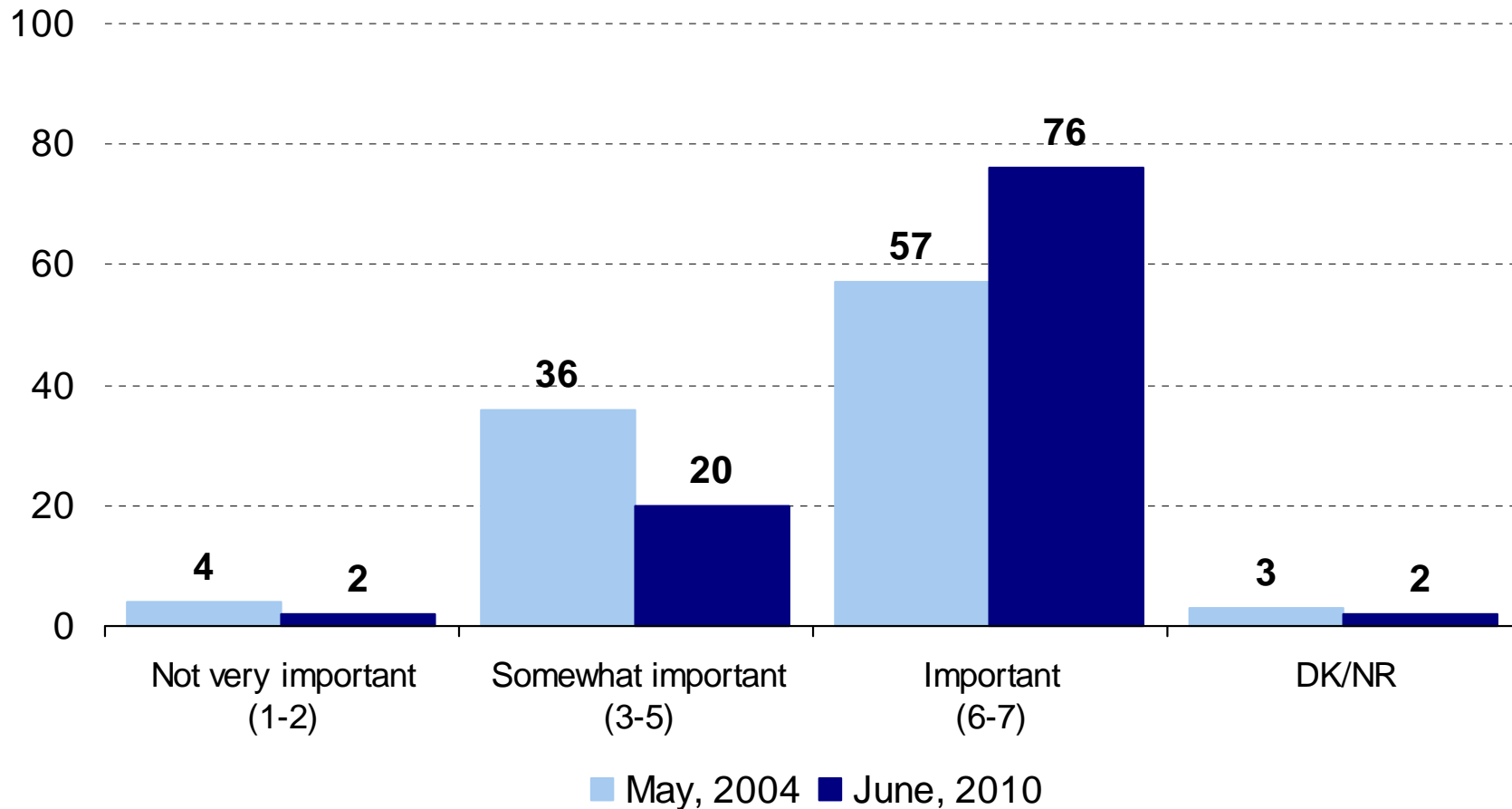
*Q: How much confidence do you have in the bodies responsible for overseeing the activities of Canada's law enforcement and security agencies?*



# Importance of review bodies that monitor security agencies:

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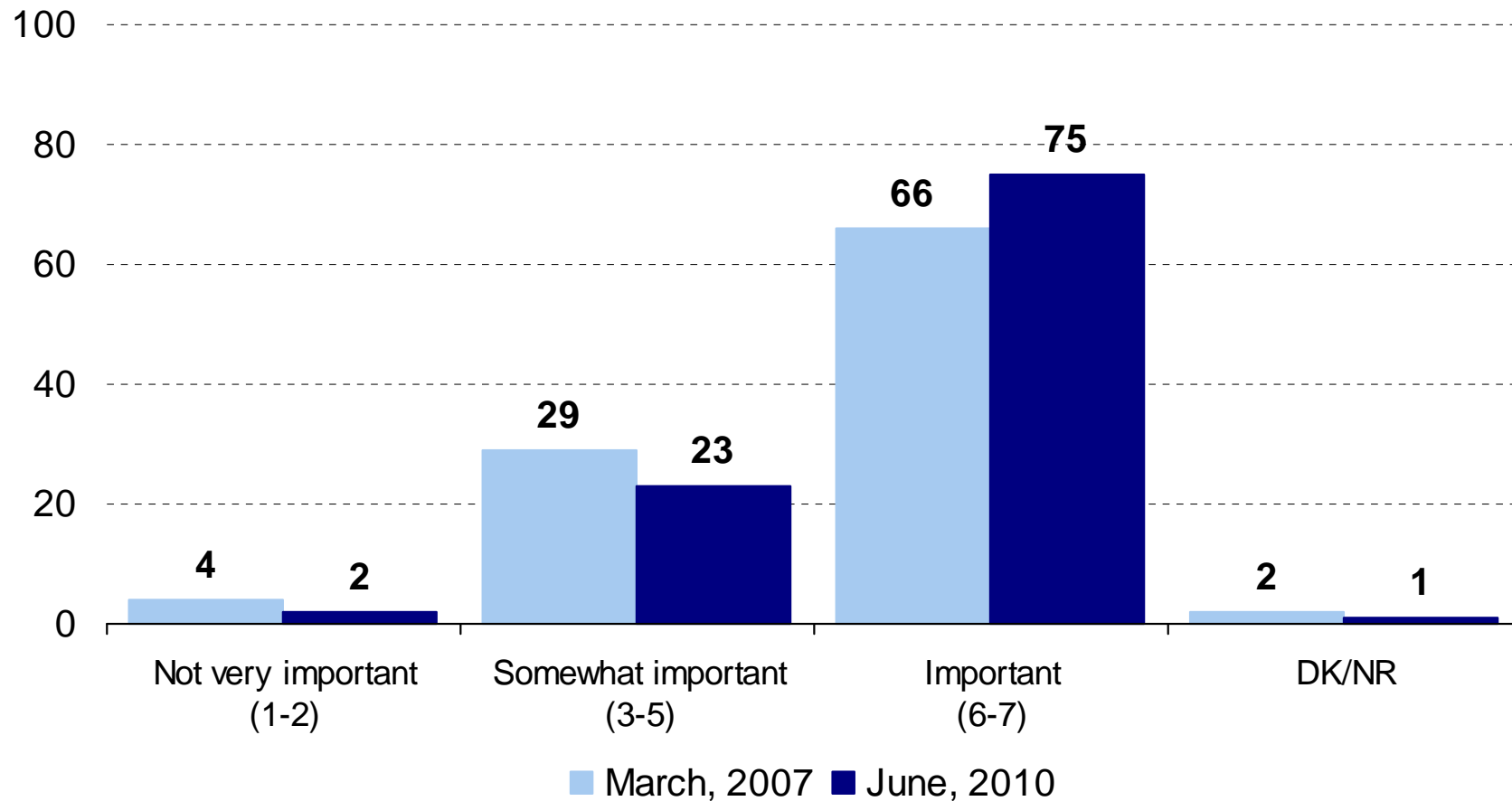
**Q:** How important is it that there are independent review bodies that monitor the activities of **security intelligence agencies**?



## Importance of review bodies that monitor the RCMP:

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**Q:** How important is it that there are independent review bodies that monitor the activities of **the RCMP**?



## 3.0 Accessing the complaints system

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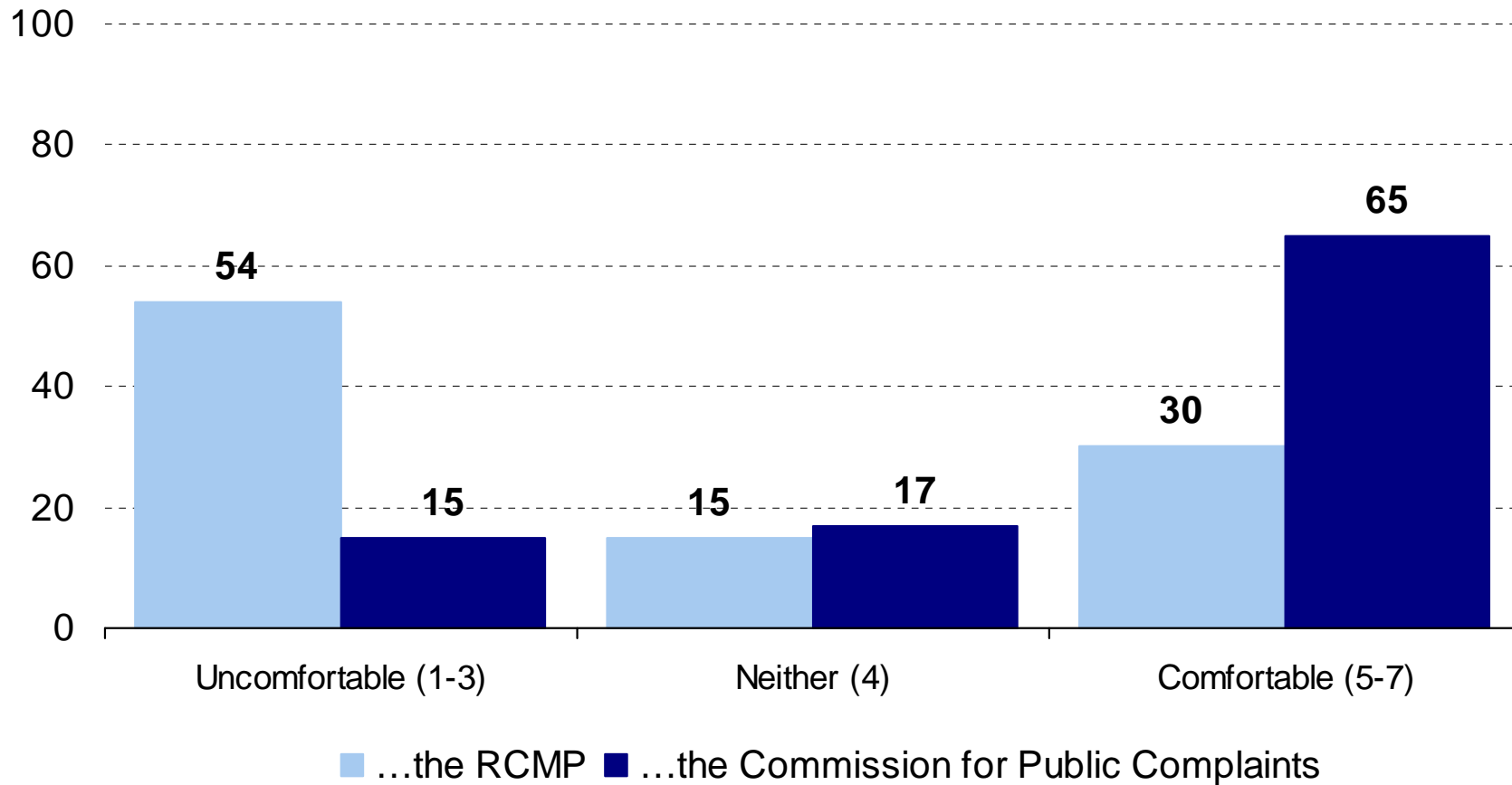


- Respondents highly uncomfortable filing a complaint directly with the RCMP
- Clear preference for filing a complaint with a third party (i.e. the CPC)
- E-mail quickly becoming favoured channel for accessing the complaints system
  - Young people prefer e-mail; seniors more likely to opt for more traditional means

# Filing a complaint against the RCMP:

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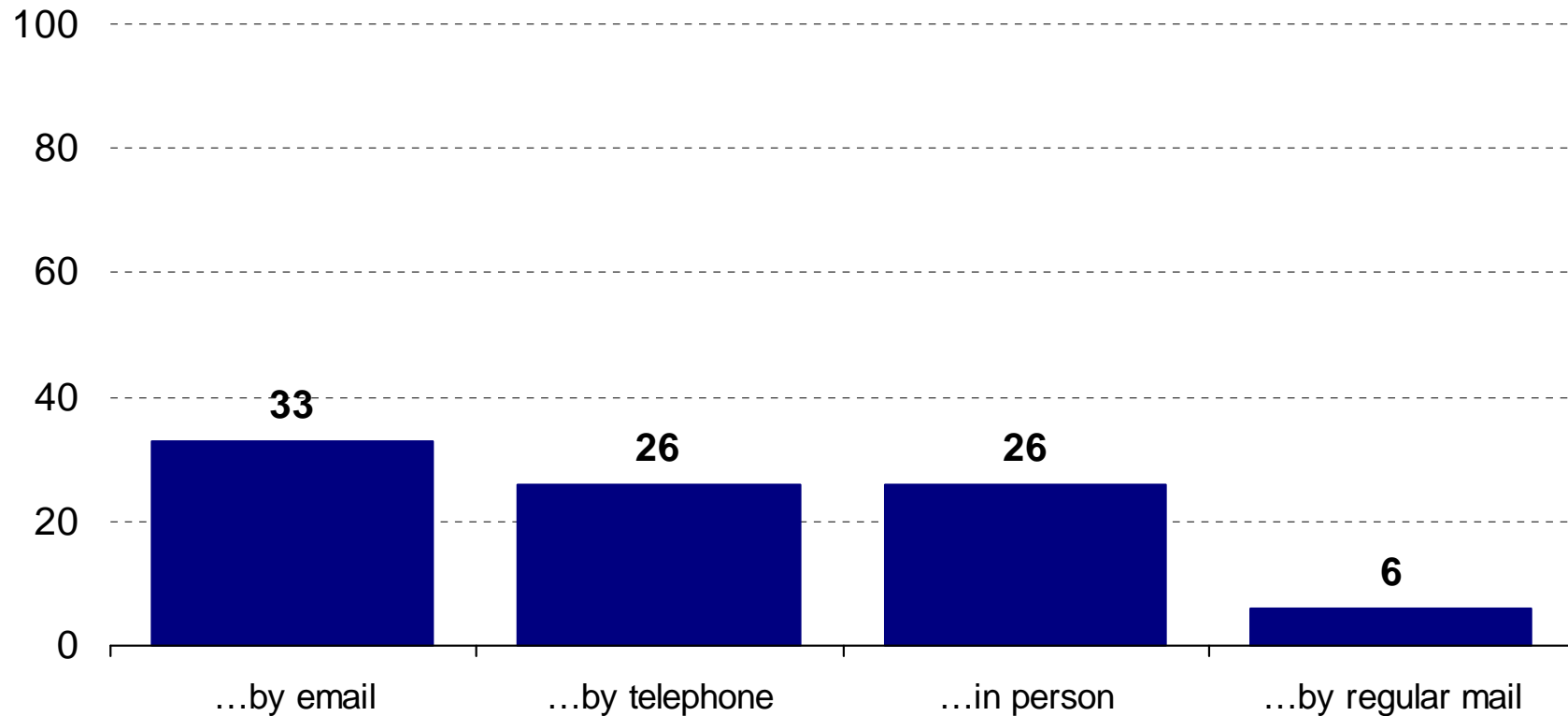
*Q: If you wanted to make a complaint about the RCMP, how comfortable would you feel going to ... ?*



## Preference for accessing the complaints system:

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*Q: And what would be your preference for accessing the complaints system? Would you prefer to make a complaint ... ?*



## 4.0 Conclusions

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- Confidence remains strong but has softened somewhat
- Security-civil liberties fulcrum swinging back to civil rights (somewhat)
- Oversight is increasingly important
- Independent oversight more desirable



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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