



Left-Right? Forward-Backward?

Examining Longer Term Shifts in Values, Social Class,
and Societal Outlook

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Outline

1. Values and Ideology
2. Shifting Outlook
 - a) Middle class erosion
 - b) From security decade to “end of progress”
 - c) Western decline?
 - d) Trade and global outlook
3. Democracy and Role of the State
 - a) Role of government
 - b) Trust and democracy
4. Conclusions and Implications



1. Values and Ideology

A. Values (i)

- » Value shifts running at cross-currents with political landscape
- » The “bluing” of Canada is more apparent than real
- » While the Harper Government is decidedly blue, there is little evidence to suggest a societal shift to the right
- » In fact, all indicators suggest a movement away from the right
- » Self-professed ideology is a potent predictor of overall values
- » Canadians have historically been less ideologically entrenched than Americans and less small “c” conservative
- » At outset of this century, “neither” dominated reflecting pragmatism, eclecticism and political promiscuity
- » Around 5 years ago, we see increased polarization as center is displaced and, more recently, a rise in small “l” liberal ideology
 - Dialectical response to unprecedented government from the right?



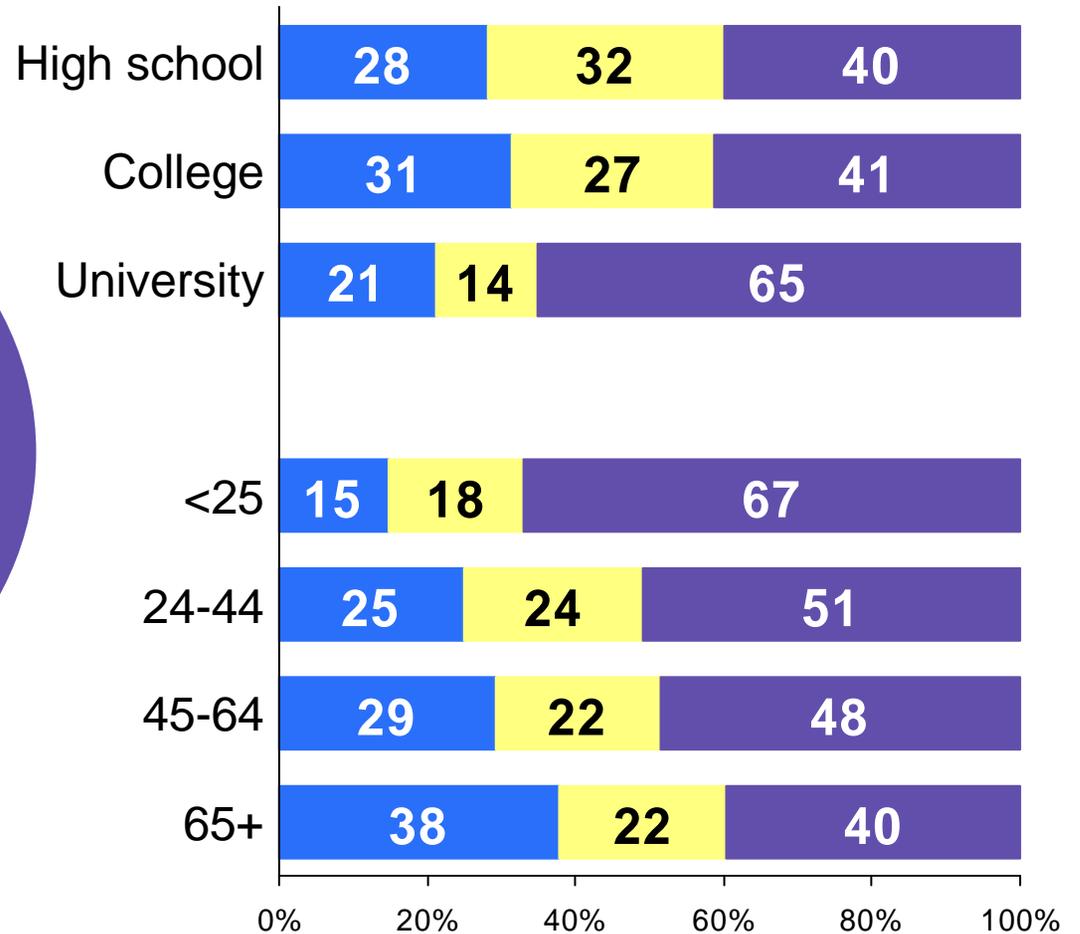
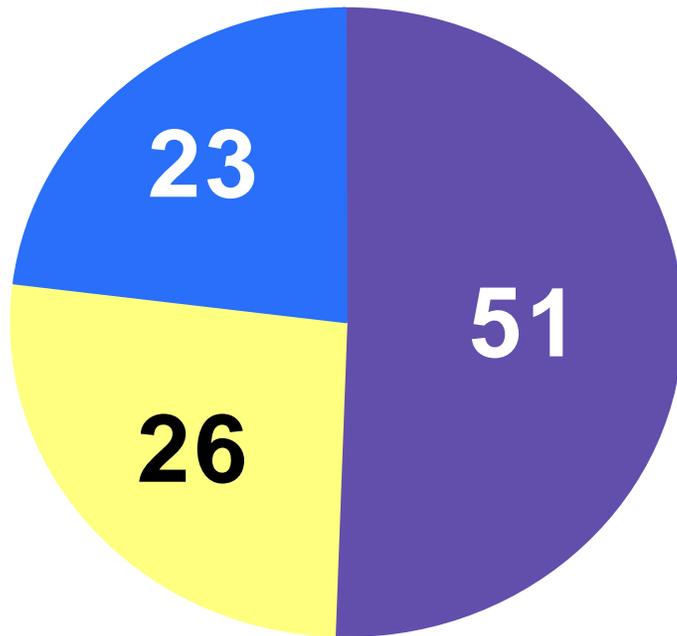
A. Values (ii)

- » New fractures with profound ideological tensions across old and young, men and women, university and college, scientific versus moralistic world view, and regional differences transformed
- » Value shifts clearly mirror this phenomenon
- » While most values are stable (as we expect) there are significant changes across those values which are linked to small “c” conservatism; most notably declining emphasis on traditional family values, respect for authority and minimal government
- » These declines are much more vivid in under 40 Canada
- » The dissatisfaction with societal trajectory is partly linked to the growing contradiction of a right wing gerontocracy and an emerging “next Canada” which is eschewing those values
- » Perceptions of greatest achievement and value shifts at tension with objective data



Political ideology: New fault lines

Q. Do you consider yourself a small "c" conservative or a small "l" liberal?



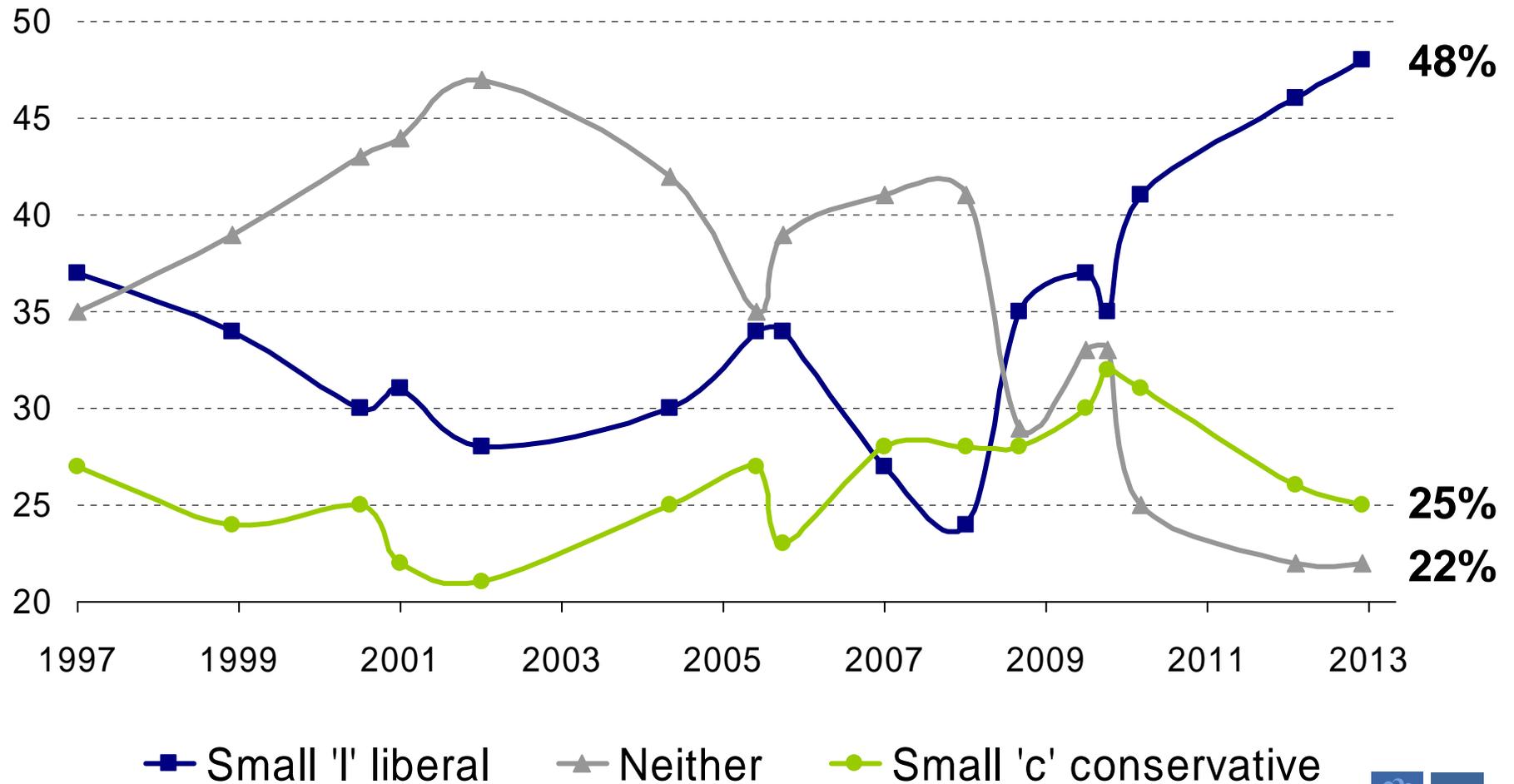
■ Conservative
 ■ Neither
 ■ Liberal

Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who did not provide valid responses.

BASE: Canadians; November 20-29, 2012 (n=1,181)

Tracking political ideology

Q. Do you consider yourself a small "c" conservative or a small "l" liberal?

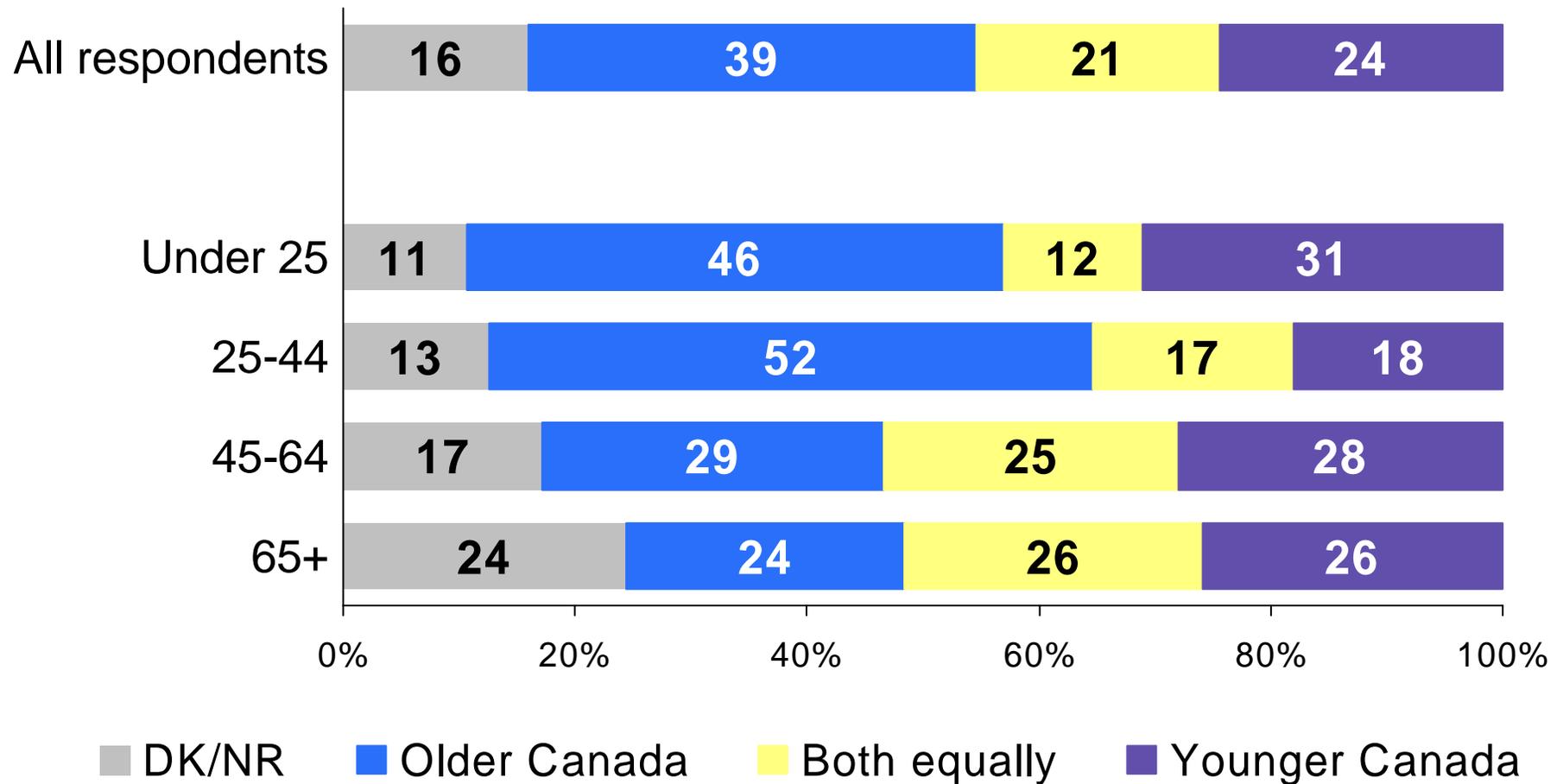


BASE: Canadians; most recent data point November 20-29, 2012 (n=1,181)

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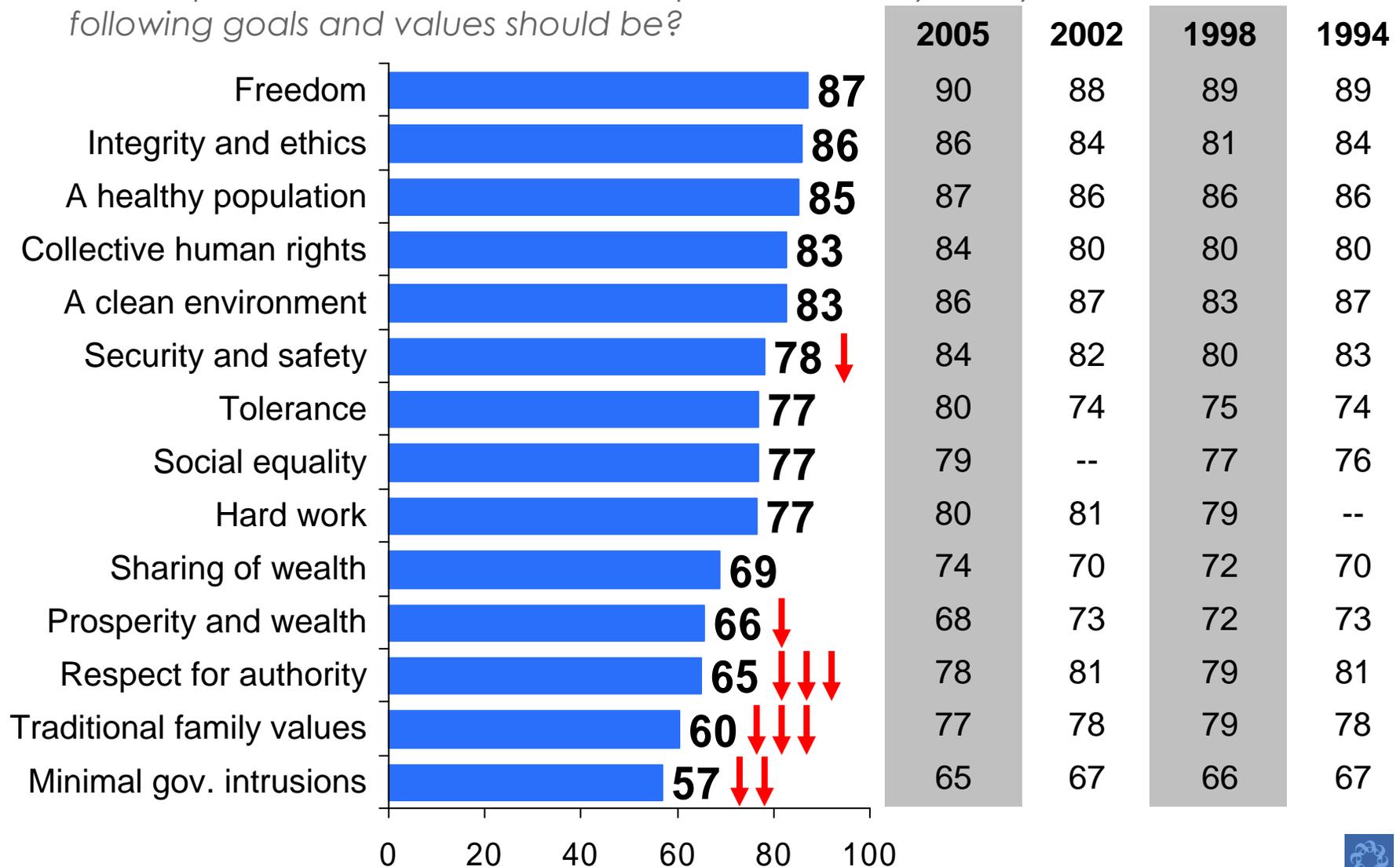
Treatment of older vs. younger Canada

Q. About half of Canada's population, younger Canada, is under the age of 42, while the other half, older Canada, is over 42. Do you think the Government of Canada focuses more on the values and interests of younger Canada or older Canada?



Most important goals and values

Q. If you were to direct Canadian society as to which goals or values should be most important in its direction, how important would you say each of the following goals and values should be?

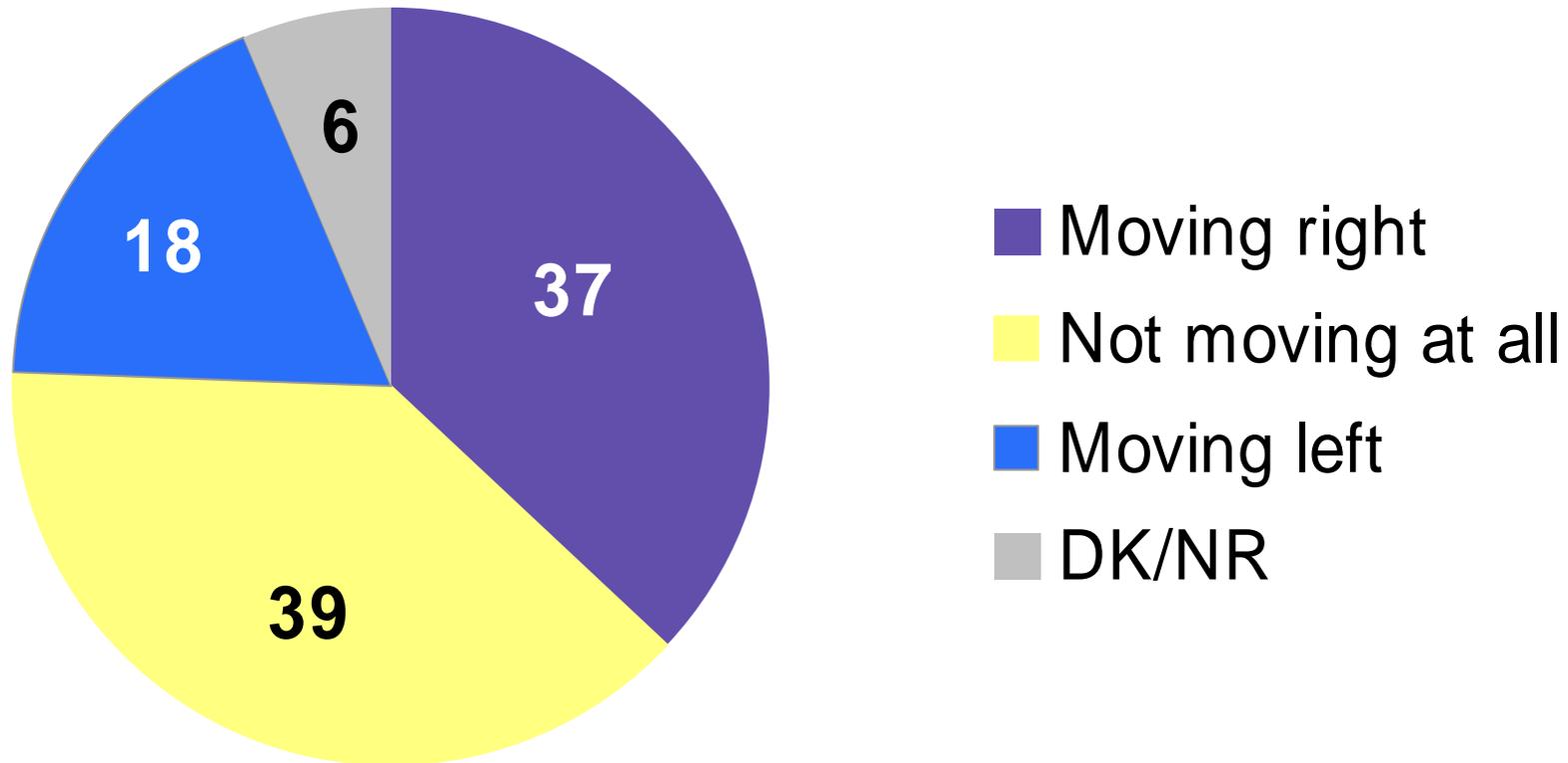


BASE: Canadians; November 20-29, 2012 (n=1,181)

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Perceived shift in Canadian ideology

Q. When it comes to political ideology, some people say that Canada is moving to the right while others say it is moving to the left. Do you believe Canada is moving right, moving left, or not moving at all?



2. Shifting Outlook

- a) Middle class erosion
- b) From security decade to “End of Progress”
- c) Western decline?
- d) Trade and global outlook

A. Middle class erosion

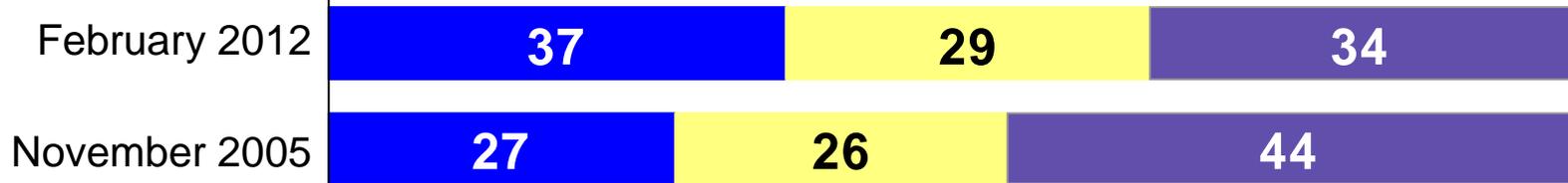
- » Economy changing profoundly and affecting societal outlook
- » Evidence that the ethic of progress is unraveling
- » Current generation sees themselves falling backward and sees more precipitous decline in future
- » Typical youth optimism muted
- » Rooted in fears of Western decline and rising concentration of wealth at top
- » The middle class eroding, primary victim-loser over longer term
- » Growing resentment to the upper classes



Changes in quality of life over time

25 years ago

Thinking about your overall quality of life, would you say that **you are** better off, worse off, or about the same as the previous generation was **25 years ago**?



25 yrs from now

Thinking about your overall quality of life do you think **the next generation will be** better off, worse off, or about the same as you are **25 years from now**?

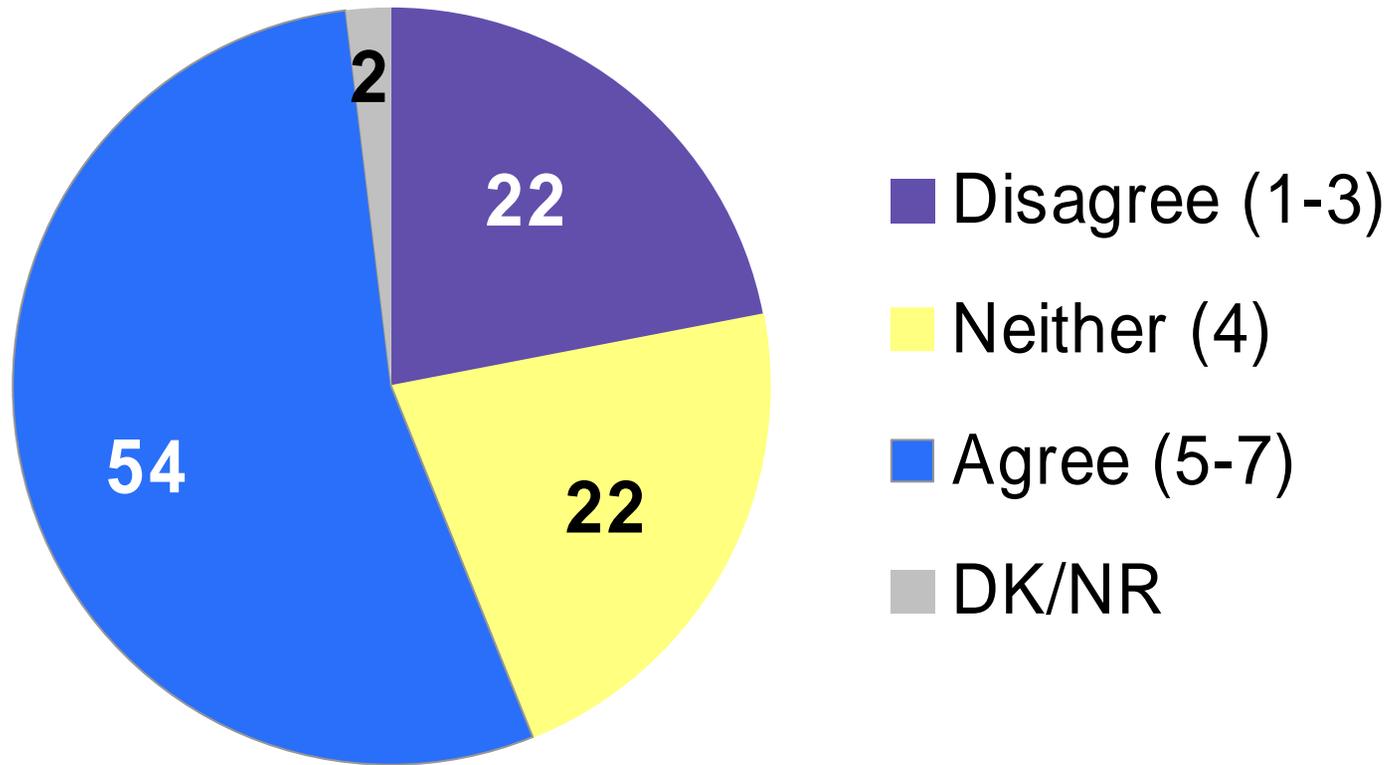


0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

■ Worse off ■ About the same ■ Better off

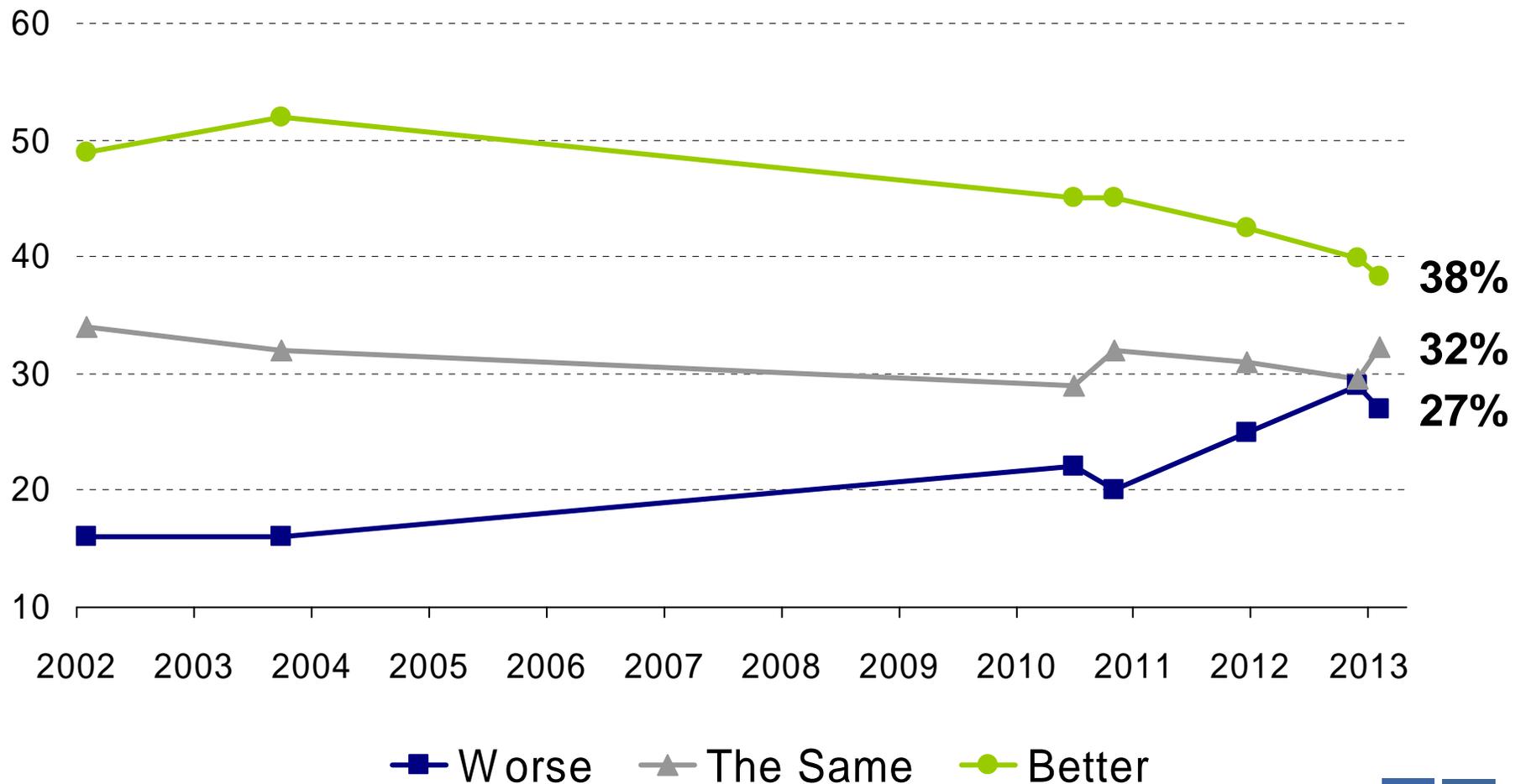
Concerns about falling standard of living

Q. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: Today's young Canadians can expect to have a lower standard of living than their parents.



Long-term personal financial outlook

Q. Thinking ahead over the next FIVE YEARS or so, do you think your personal financial situation will be better or worse than it is today?

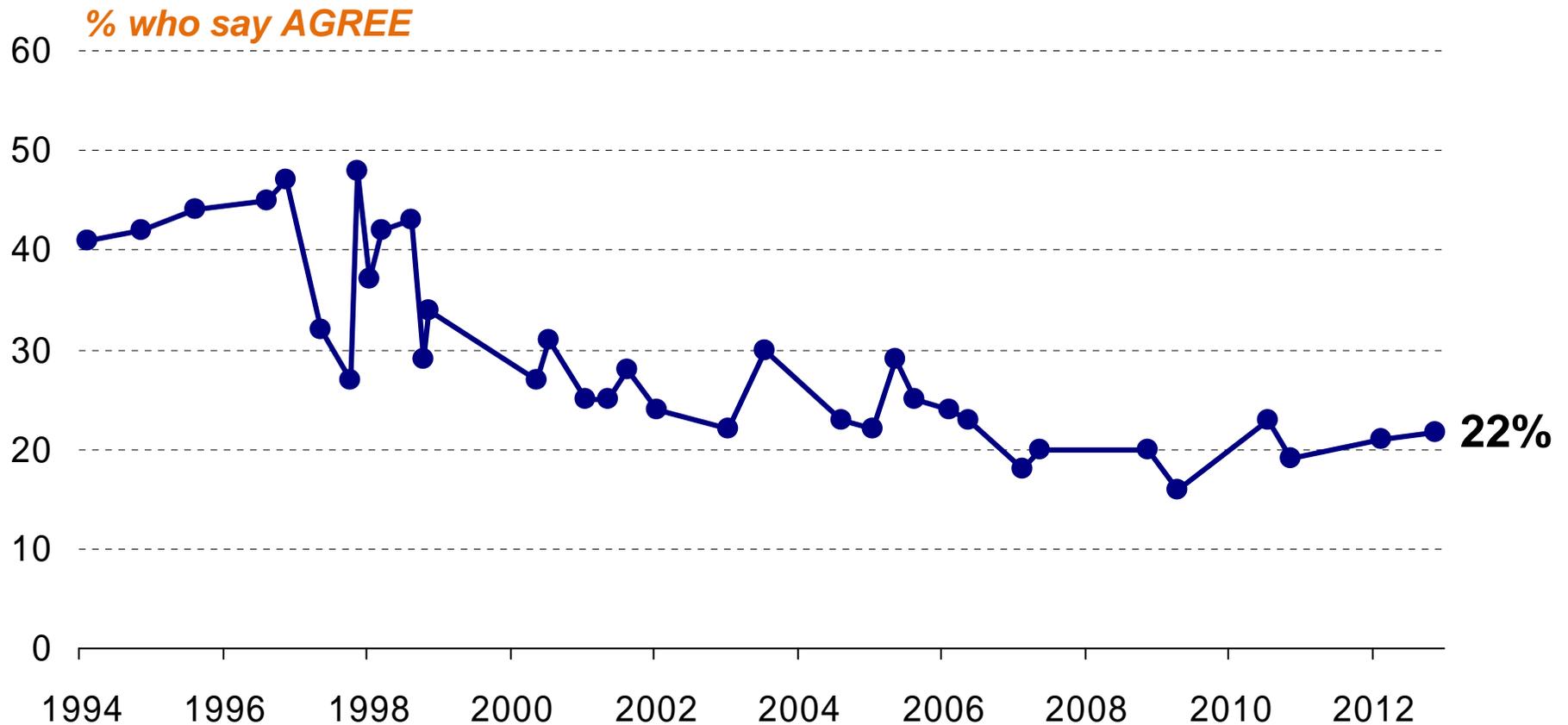


BASE: Canadians; most recent data point February 1-4, 2013 (n=1,502)

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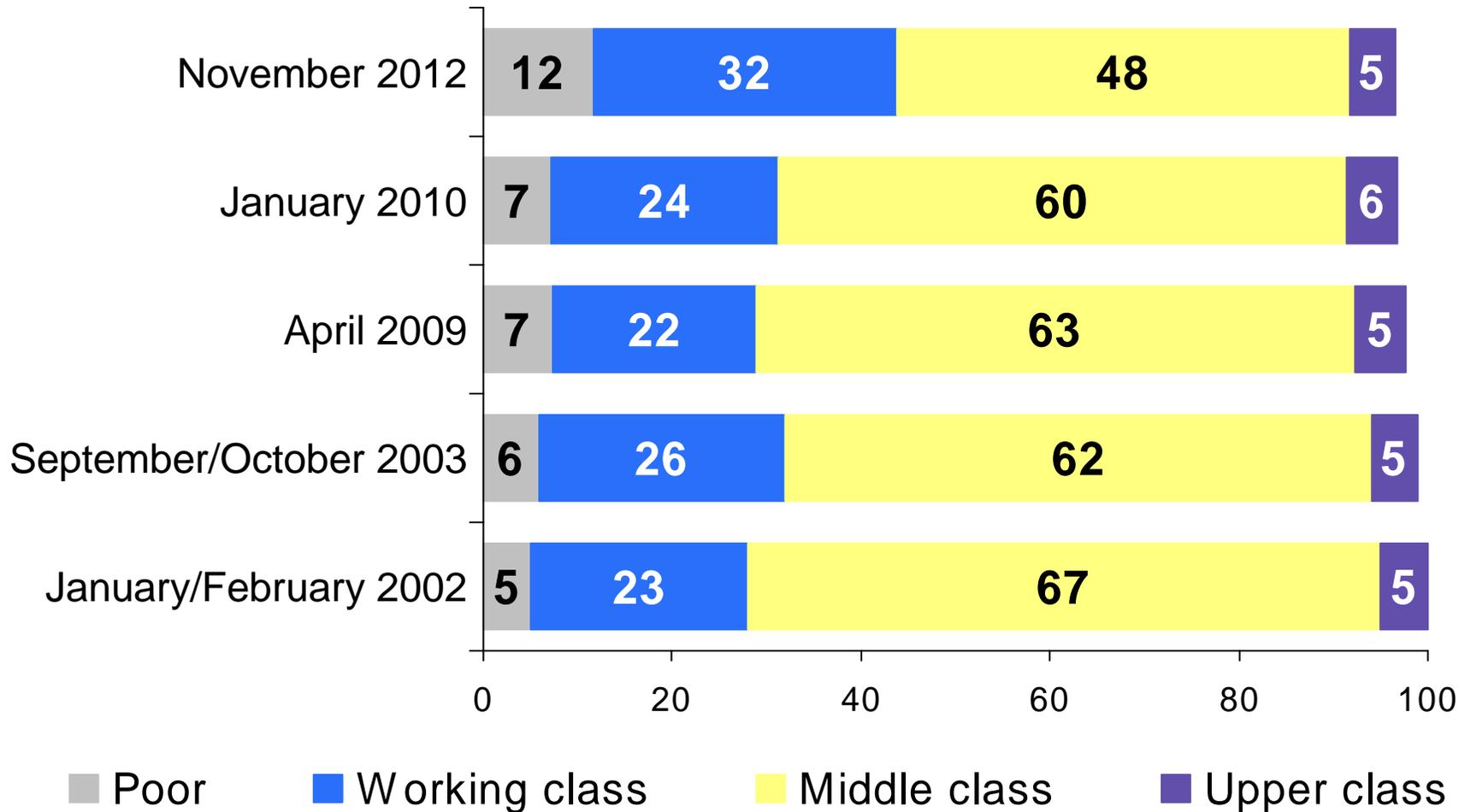
Perceptions of job security

Q. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: *I think there is a good chance I could lose my job over the next couple of years.*



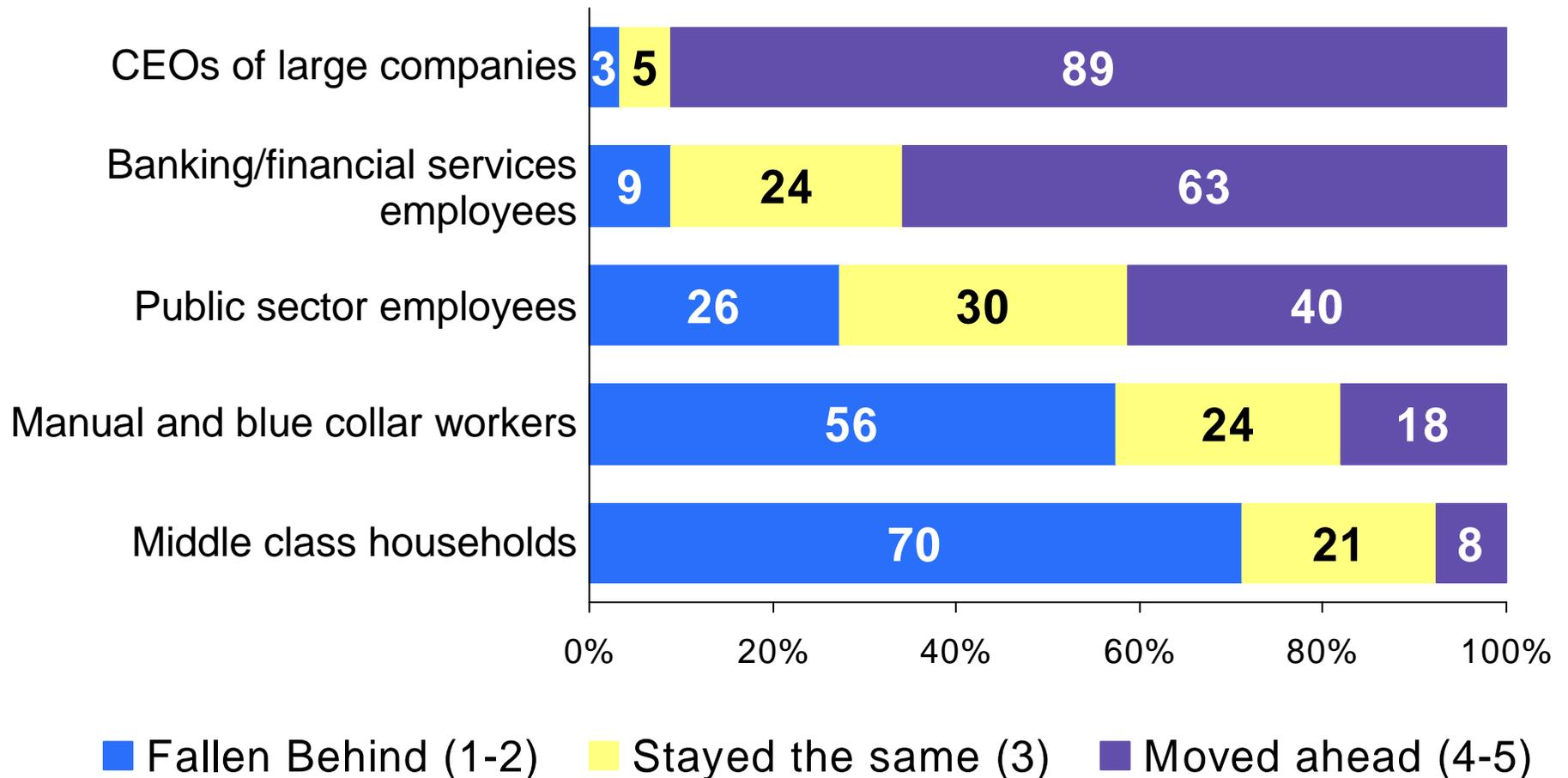
Self-rated social class

Q. *Would you describe you and your household as poor, working class, middle class, or upper class?*



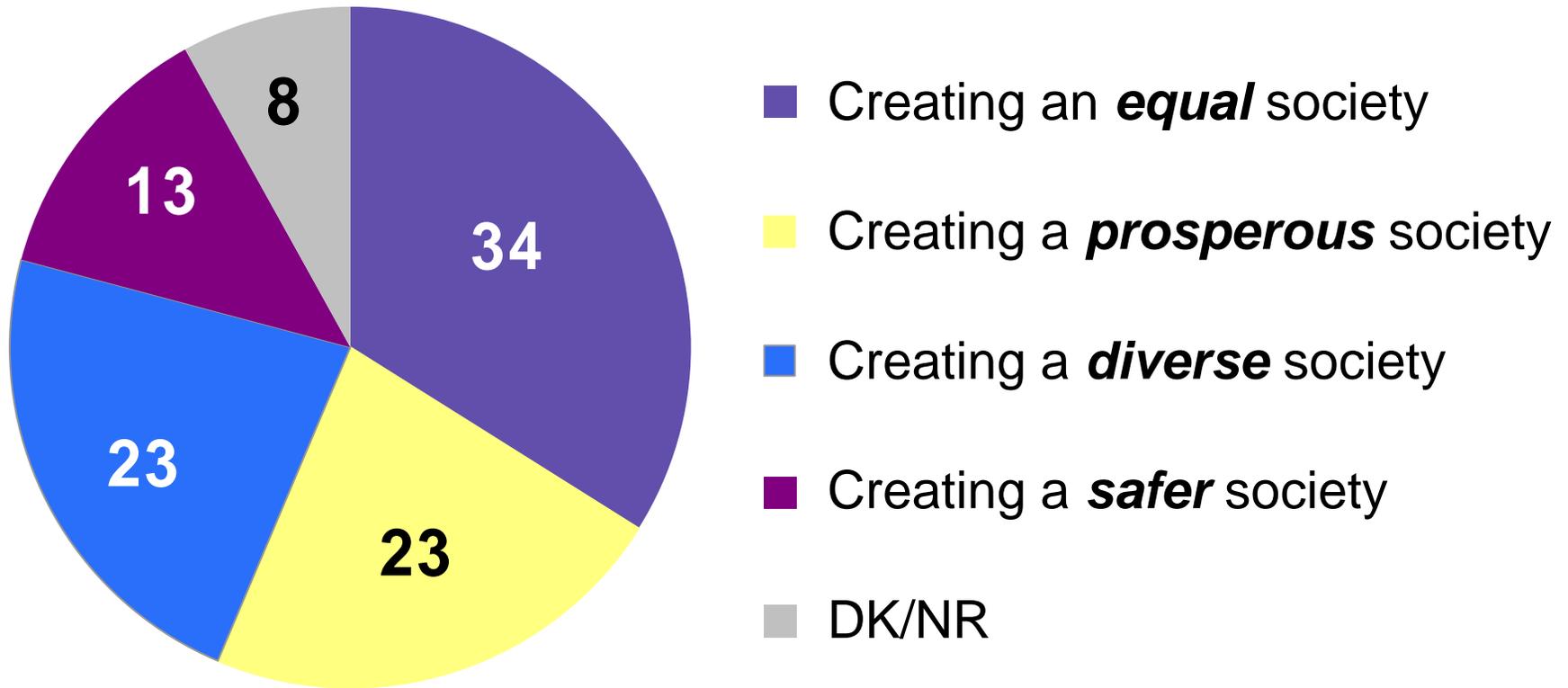
Long-term winners and losers

Q. Do you believe the following groups have moved ahead, fallen behind, or stayed the same over the last 25 years?



Greatest Canadian achievement

Q. Which of the following do you believe is Canada's greatest achievement over the last twenty years.

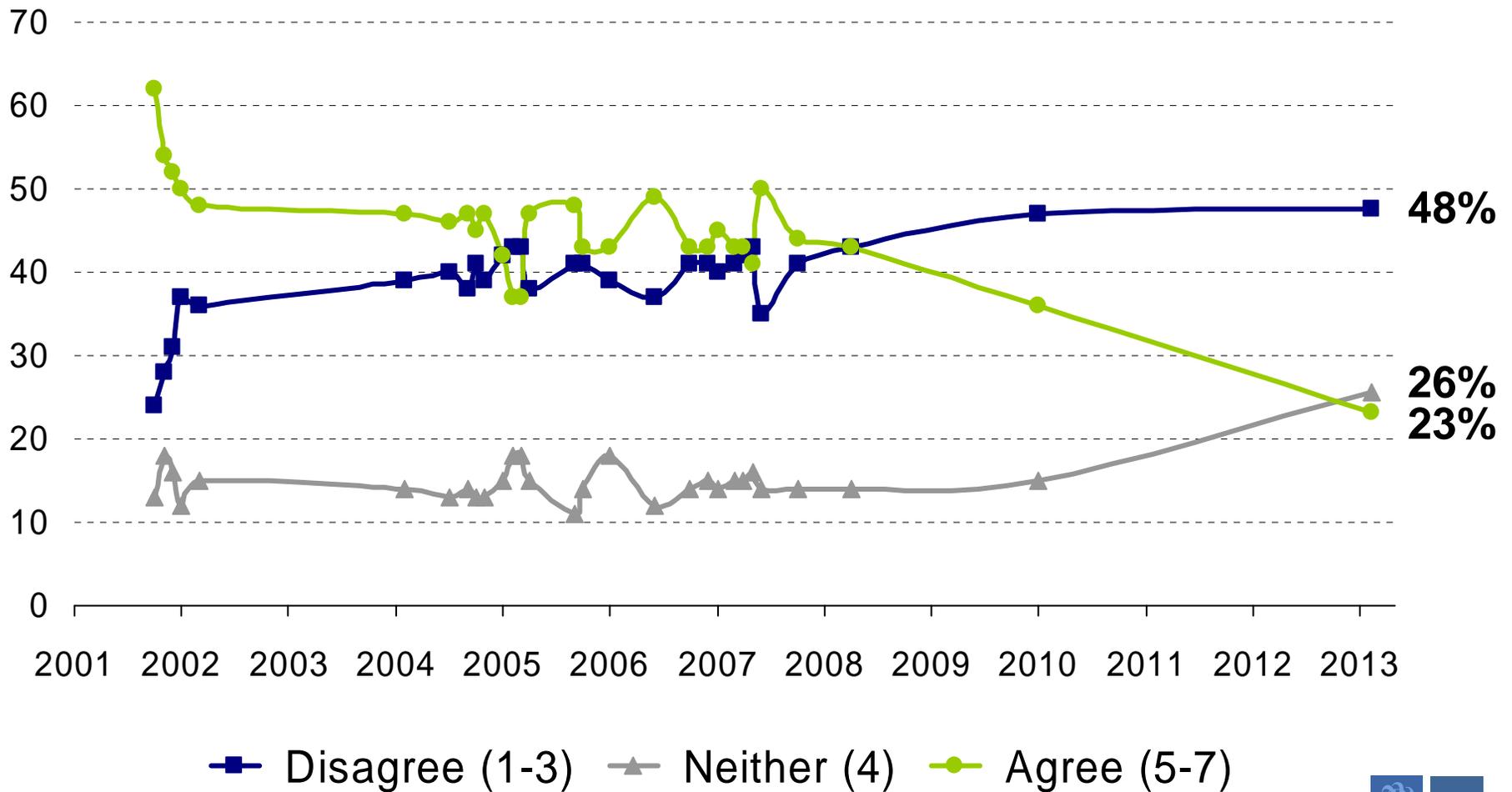


B. From security decade to “End of Progress” (i)

- » Historically, civil liberties and security were relatively balanced principles and operated in a state of equilibrium
- » September 11th dramatically transformed the balance points such that civil liberties were dramatically eclipsed by security concerns
- » This has swung back to a skew in the opposite direction (not just equilibrium)
- » Security fears have been replaced with fears about the economy – we’ve moved from the **security decade** to the **economic anxiety decade**
- » Divisions are quite acute across party support – progressives more persuaded by civil liberties
- » Steady rise in longer term pessimism regarding economic outlook over last decade
 - Trend line continues to erode

Additional powers for law enforcement

Q. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: police and intelligence agencies should have more powers to ensure security even if it means Canadians have to give up some personal privacy safeguards?

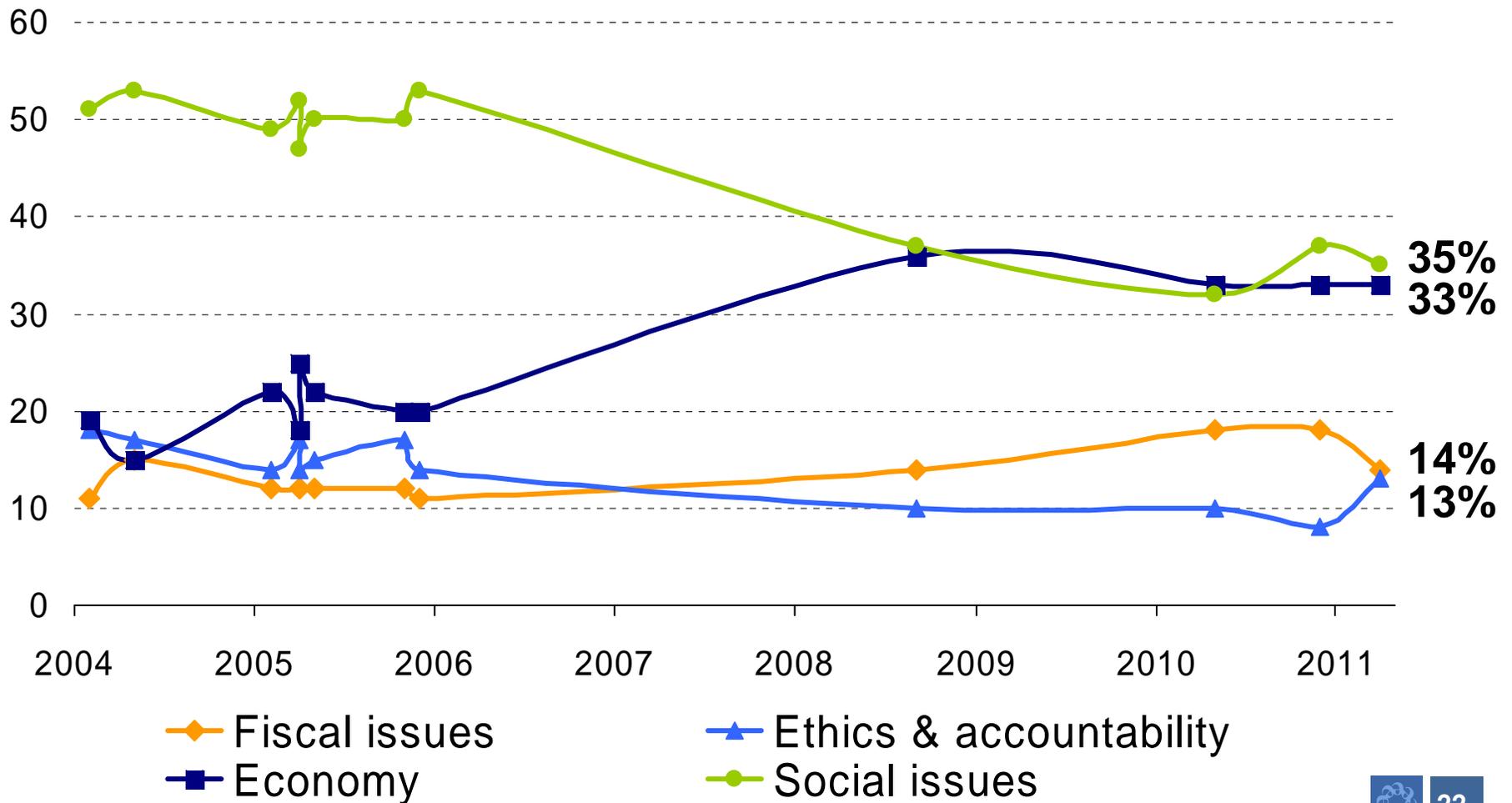


BASE: Canadians; most recent data point February 1-10, 2013 (n=5,947)

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Most important election issue

Q. Of the following issues, which one do you think should be the most important issue for the next federal election: 1) issues like ethics and accountability; 2) the economy, jobs, and growth; 3) fiscal issues like taxes and debt; or 4) social issues like health and education?

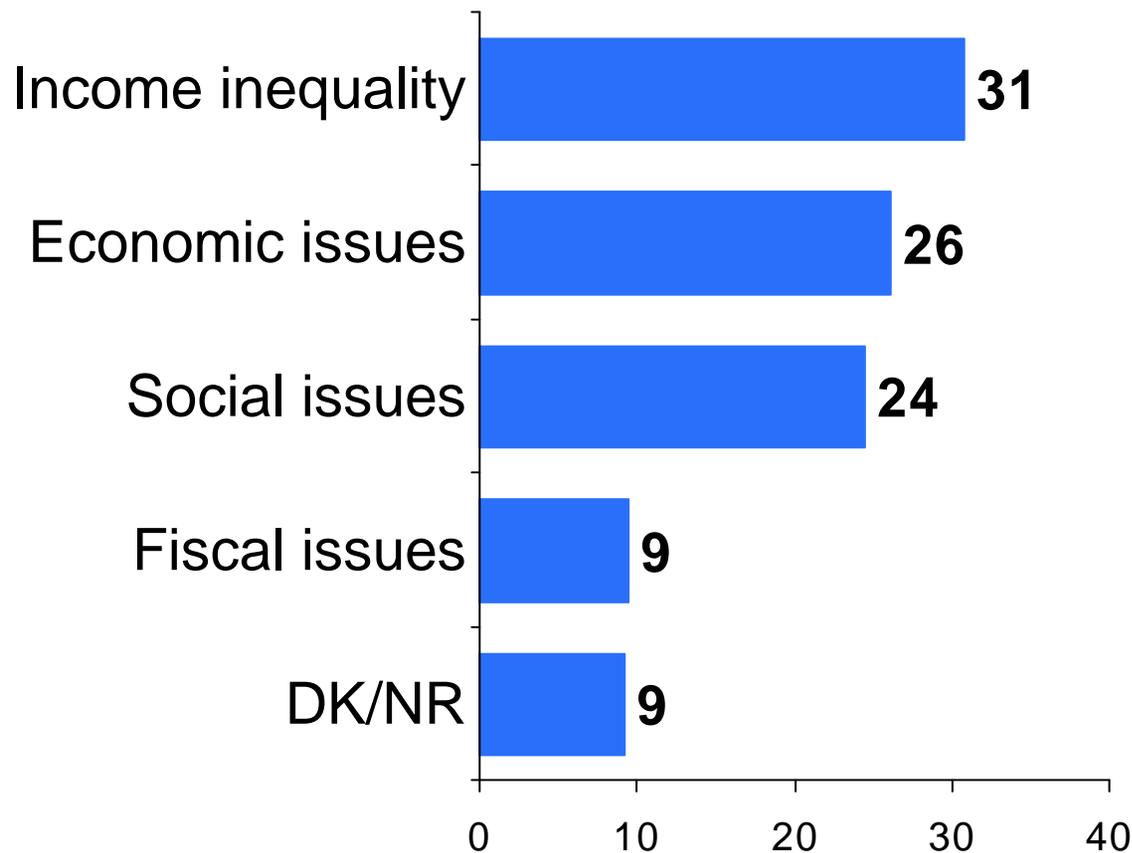


BASE: Canadians; Most recent data point April 4-7, 2011 (n=2,204)

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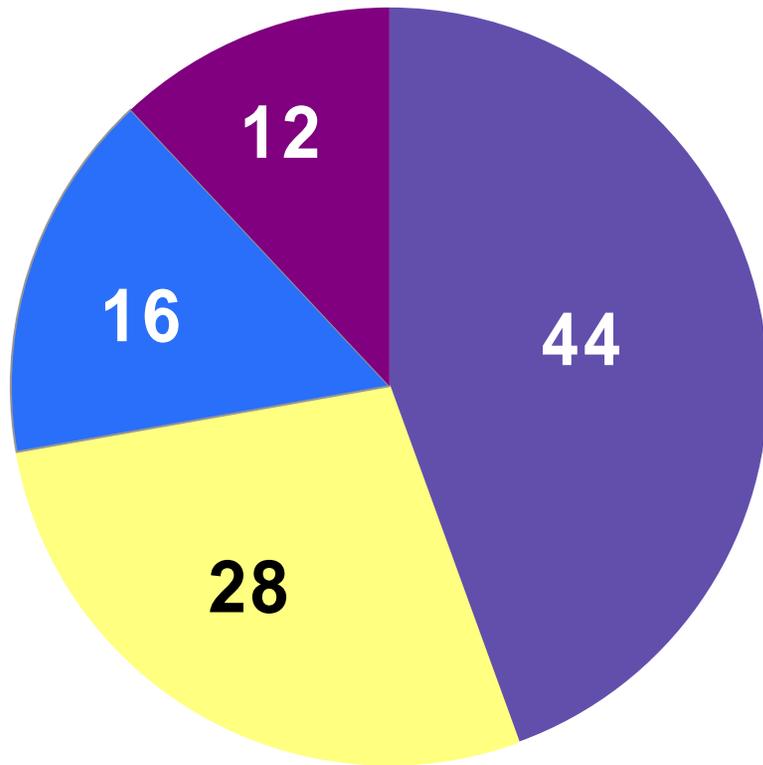
Most important issue for discussion

Q. Which of the following do you think should be the most important issue in discussions about Canada's future? Should it be: 1) social issues like health and education; 2) issues related to the economy like economic growth and jobs; 3) Fiscal issues like taxes and debt; 4) Issues such as the growing gap between rich and poor; or 5) none of these?



Reaction to a prolonged economic downturn

Q. If you were sure that there was going to be a prolonged downturn in the economy with low economic growth and high unemployment, which of the following would you be MOST likely to do?



- Hunker down (e.g., delay retirement, delay major purchases, etc.)
- Improve your skills set (i.e., get more formal education or more skills training)
- Look for a new job in an industry that is doing well
- Move to another location in Canada or to another country

Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who did not provide valid responses.

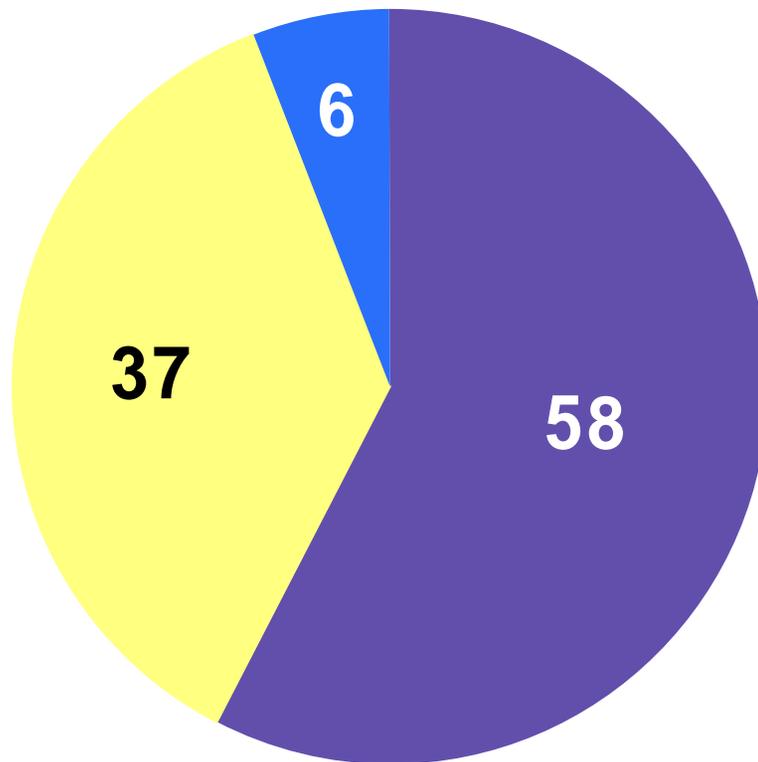
BASE: Canadians; November 20-29, 2012 (n=1,181)

C. Western decline?

- » Economic collapse is the leading fear and the top goal is protecting Canada's economic advantage
- » Major lean to lost decade
- » North America and Europe seen in decline
- » China and Asia emerging powers
- » Arctic Rim provides boost

Long-term global economic outlook

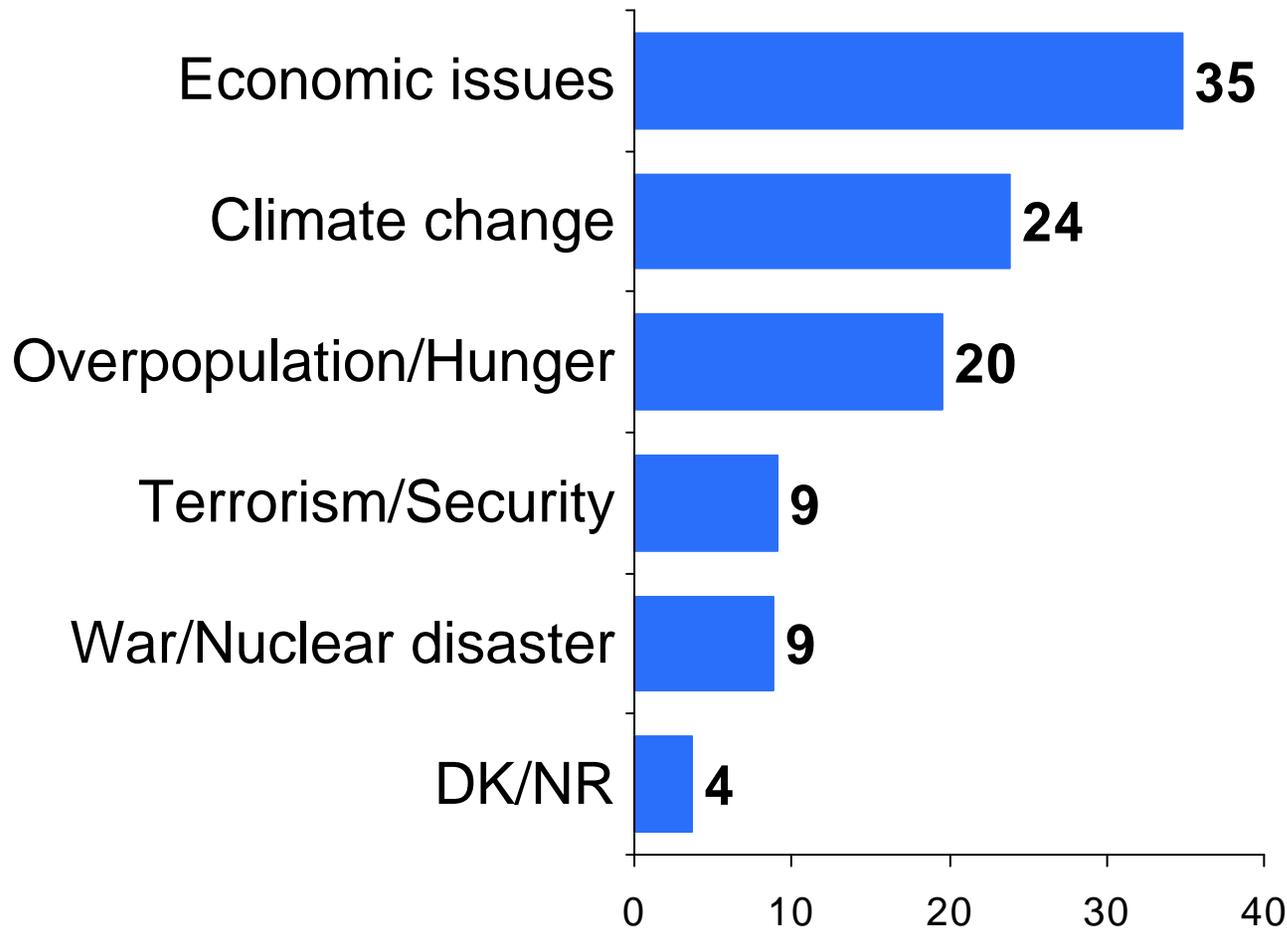
Q. As you may know, many Western nations facing serious debt problems and global economic growth has stagnated over the last five years. Some economists say future generations will call this period “the lost decade”. Do you believe that we heading towards a period of prolonged economic stagnation or do you believe that the world economy will begin to improve in the near future?



- The world is in for a period of prolonged economic stagnation
- The global economy will recover sooner rather than later
- DK/NR

Biggest threat to global well-being

Q. In today's world, what would you say is the biggest threat to global well-being?

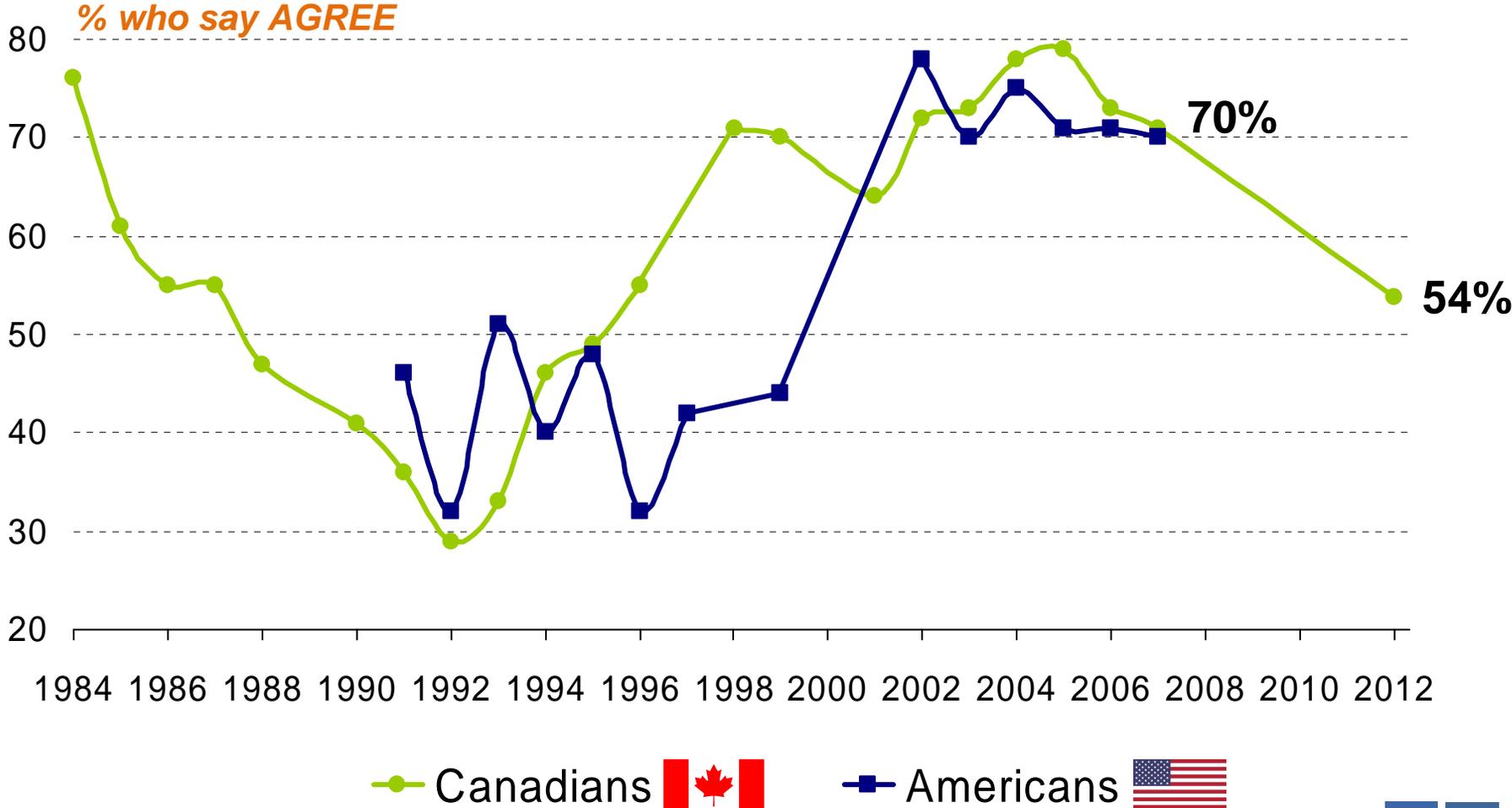


D. Trade

- » Trade support strong but down (North America only?)
- » Whiplash-like shift from United States to China
- » Huge consensus on American decline
- » New economic fears may be linked to an “end of progress” outlook

Tracking support for free trade agreements

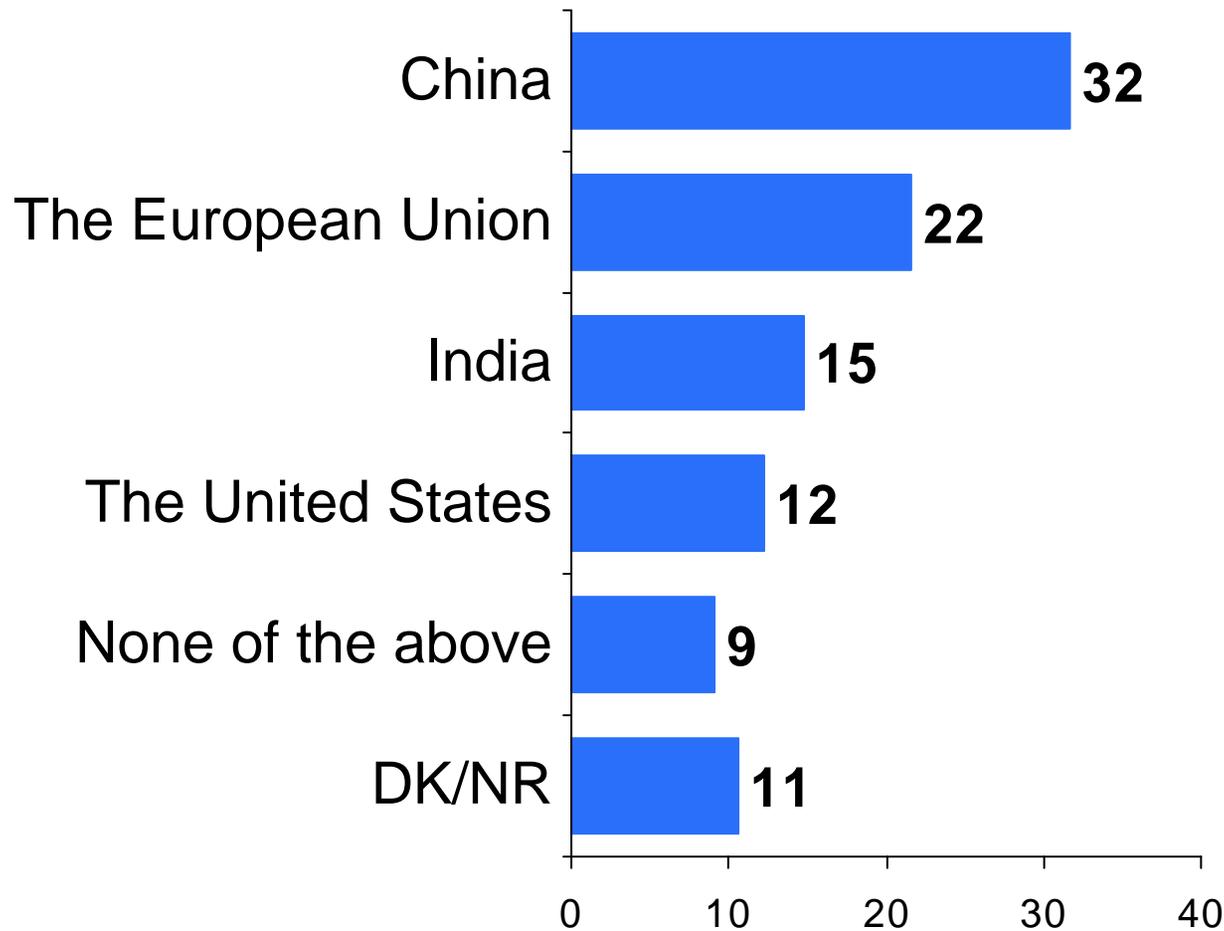
Q. Please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statement: "There should be free trade between Canada, the United States, and Mexico."



BASE: Canadians; most recent data point March 6-11, 2012 (n=2,001)

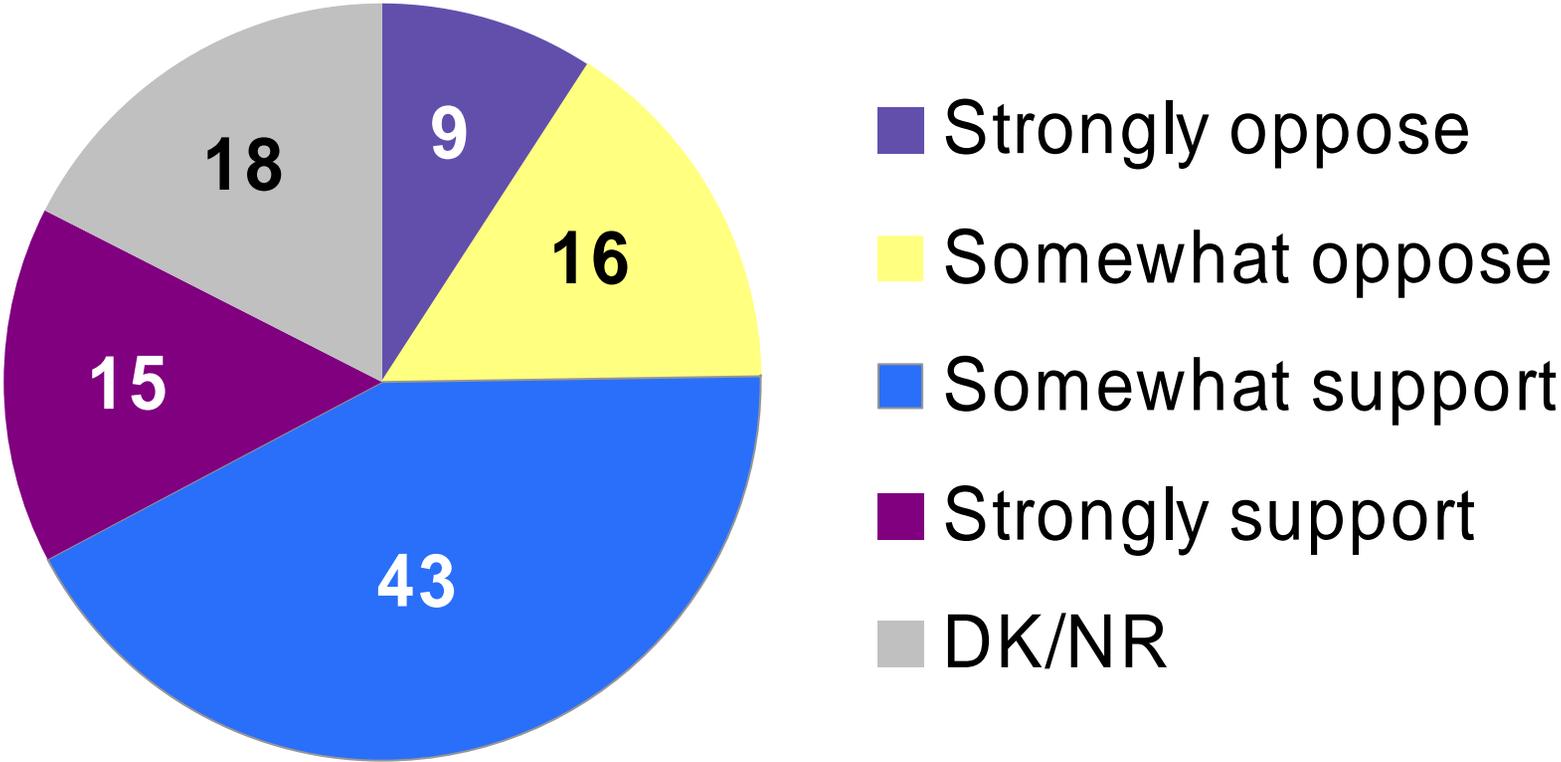
Preferred partner for future trading

Q. For much of the last century, Canada's economy has been closely tied to the United States. Over the last few decades, however, Canada has been opening up trade with other countries. Which of the following partners do you believe Canada should be trying to tie itself to more?



Support for Pan American free trade agreement

Q. Would you support or oppose a broader Pan American free trade agreement that would include North America, Central America, and South America?



3. Democracy and Role of Government

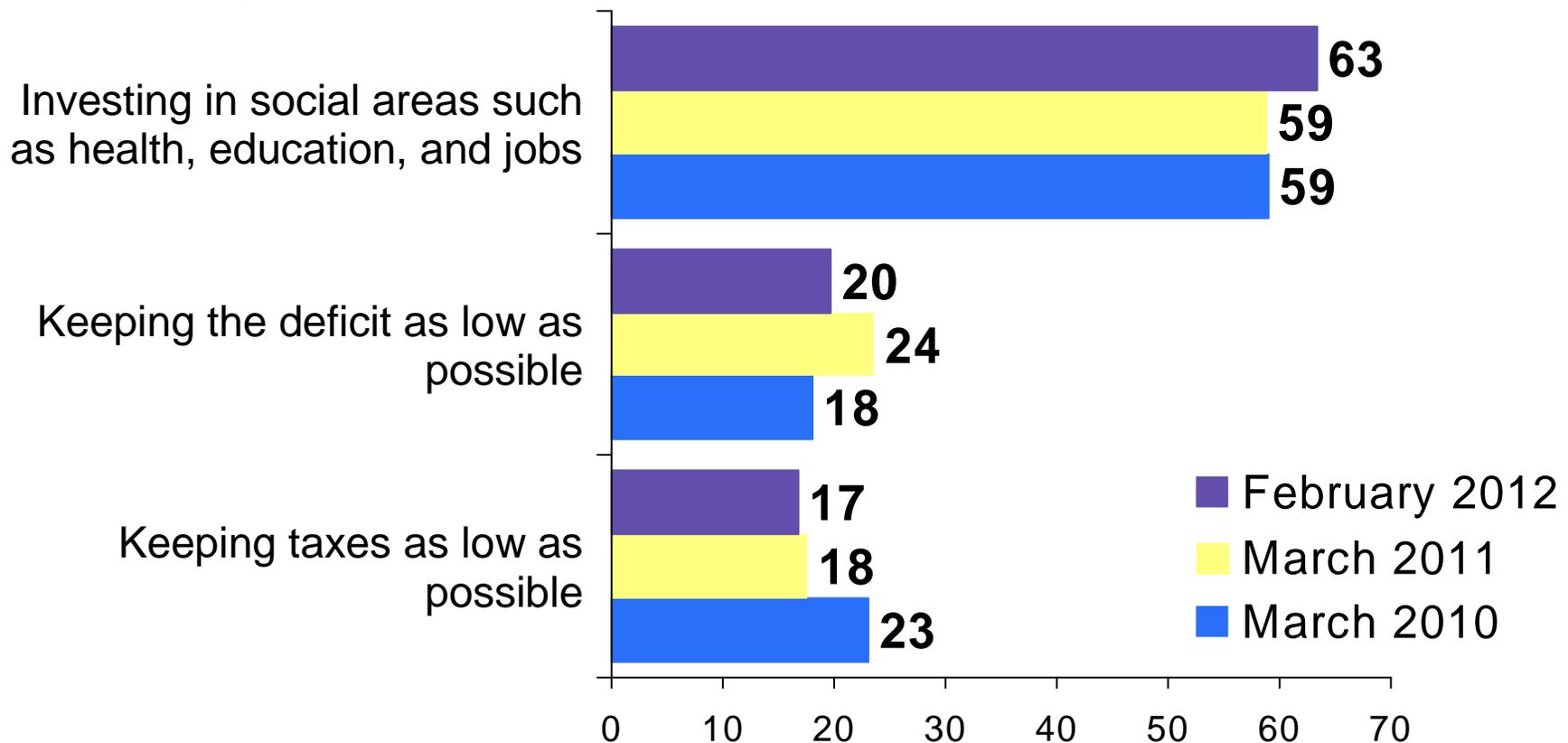
- a) Role of government
- b) Trust and democracy

A. Role of government

- » Evidence suggests growing appetite for larger (but more effective) government
- » Growing fatigue/skepticism with the mantra of *“less government + lower taxes = prosperity for all”*
- » Tax no longer a four-letter word?

Preferred government priorities

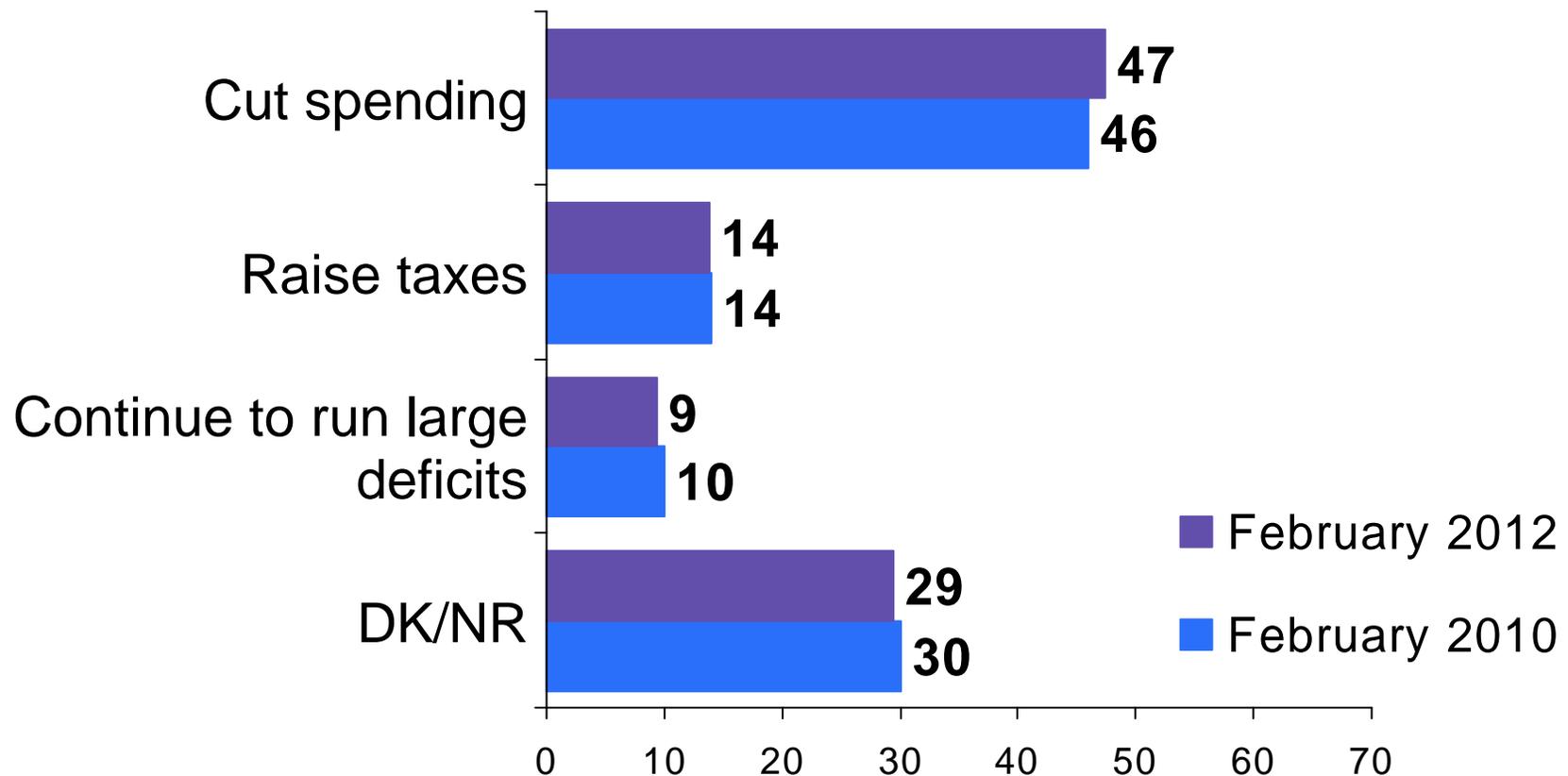
Q. The federal government faces major challenges in dealing with its finances. The country also has major ongoing investment needs. Which of the following 3 priorities should be the most important principle for dealing with these challenges?



Note: In our most recent poll, this question was changed to give respondents the option of skipping the question. The 2012 results exclude the 7 per cent of respondents who did not provide a valid response.

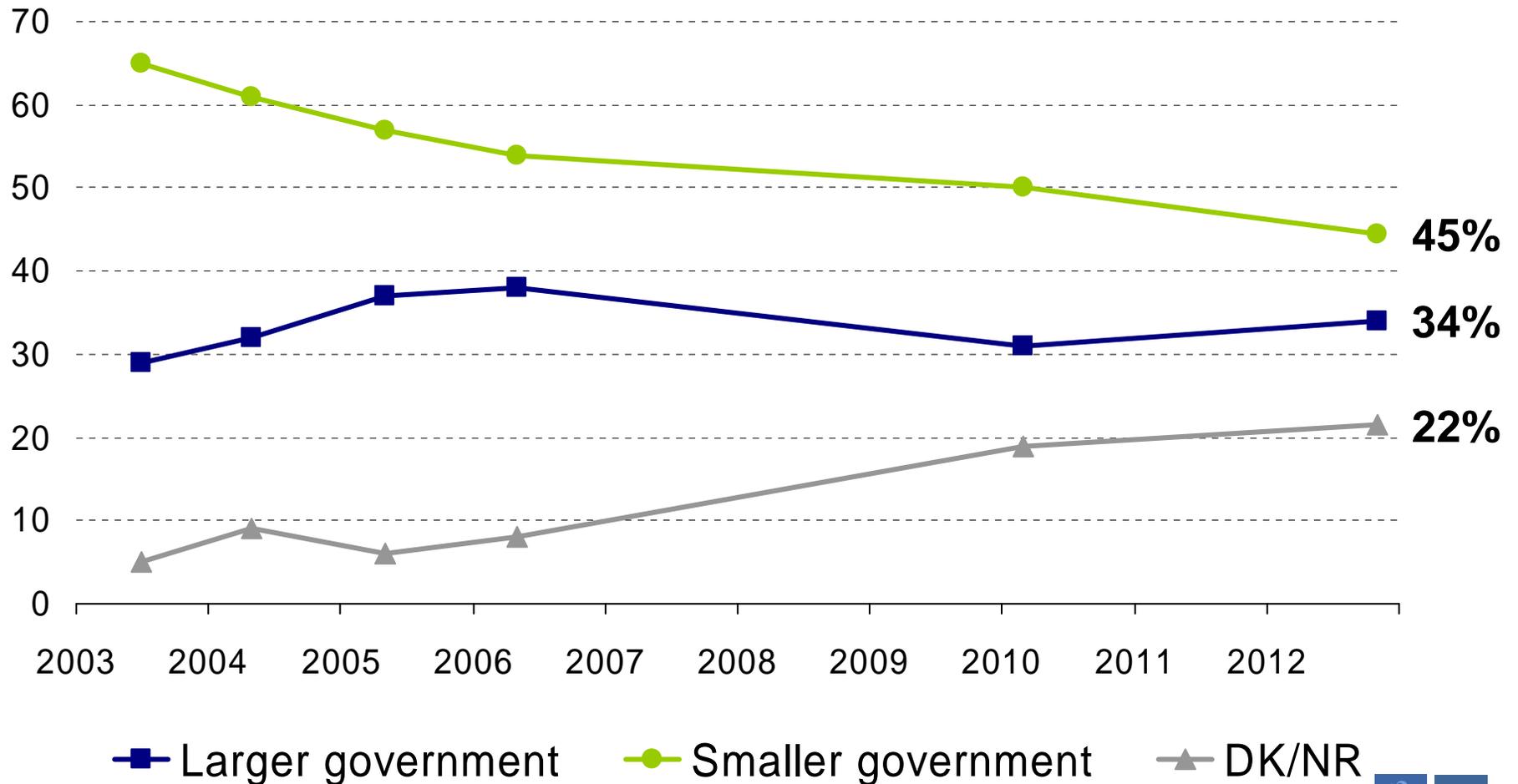
Preferred approach to deficit

Q. In your opinion, what should the Government of Canada's main approach to the deficit be for the coming year?



Preferred size of government

Q. Generally speaking, which of the following would you say that you favour?



BASE: Canadians; most recent data point November 20-29, 2012 (n=1,181)

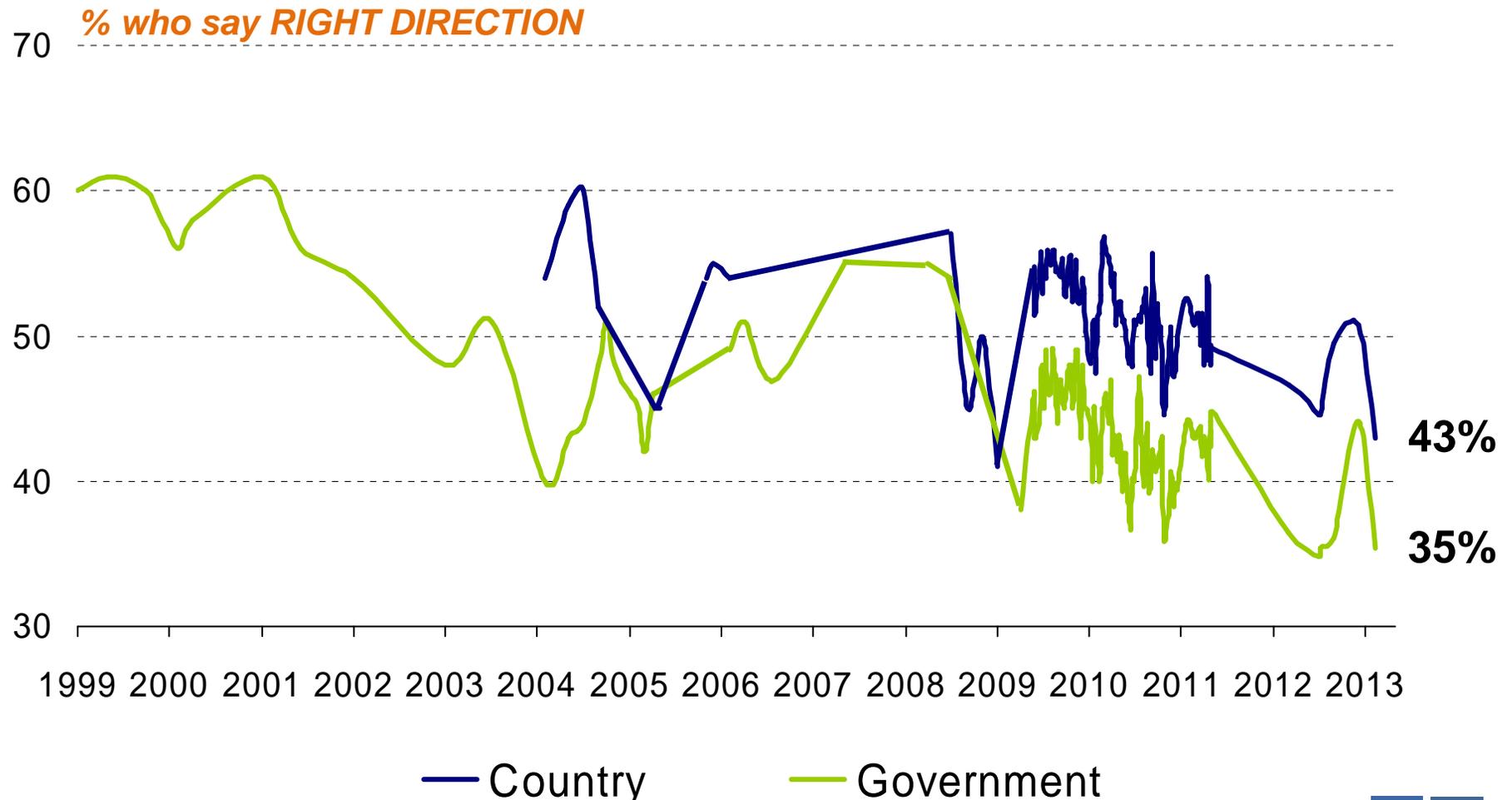
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B. Trust and democracy

- » Confidence in national direction nearing historic low
- » Satisfaction with federal direction has dropped by half over past 15 years
- » The temporary surge in trust the federal government enjoyed in the middle of the last decade has disappeared
- » Declining trust part of broad post-material shifts in advanced Western world (continuing)

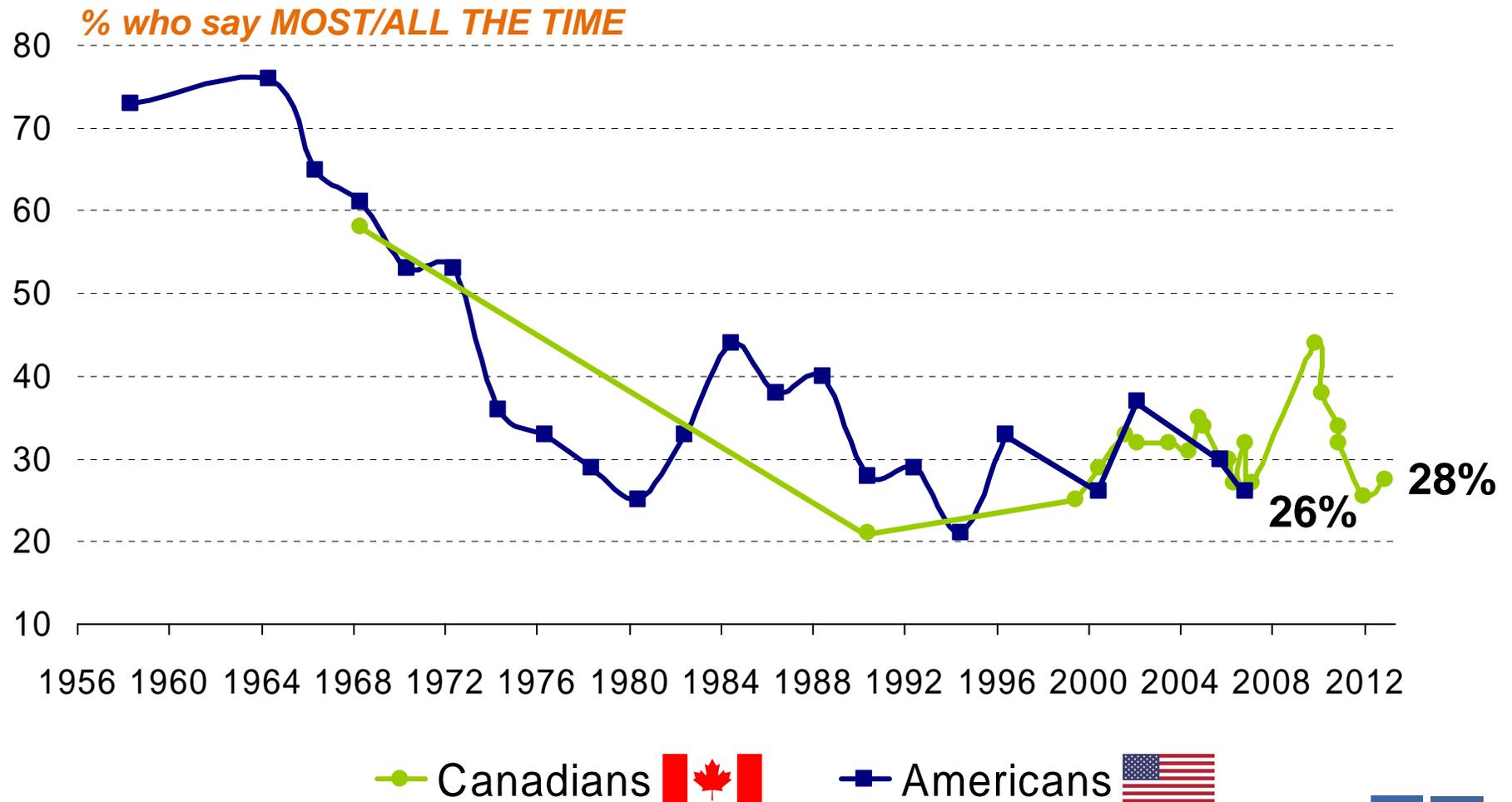
Direction of country/government

Q. Thinking ahead over the next YEAR or so, do you think your personal financial situation will be better or worse than it is today?



Tracking trust in government

Q. How much do you trust the government in Ottawa/Washington to do what is right?

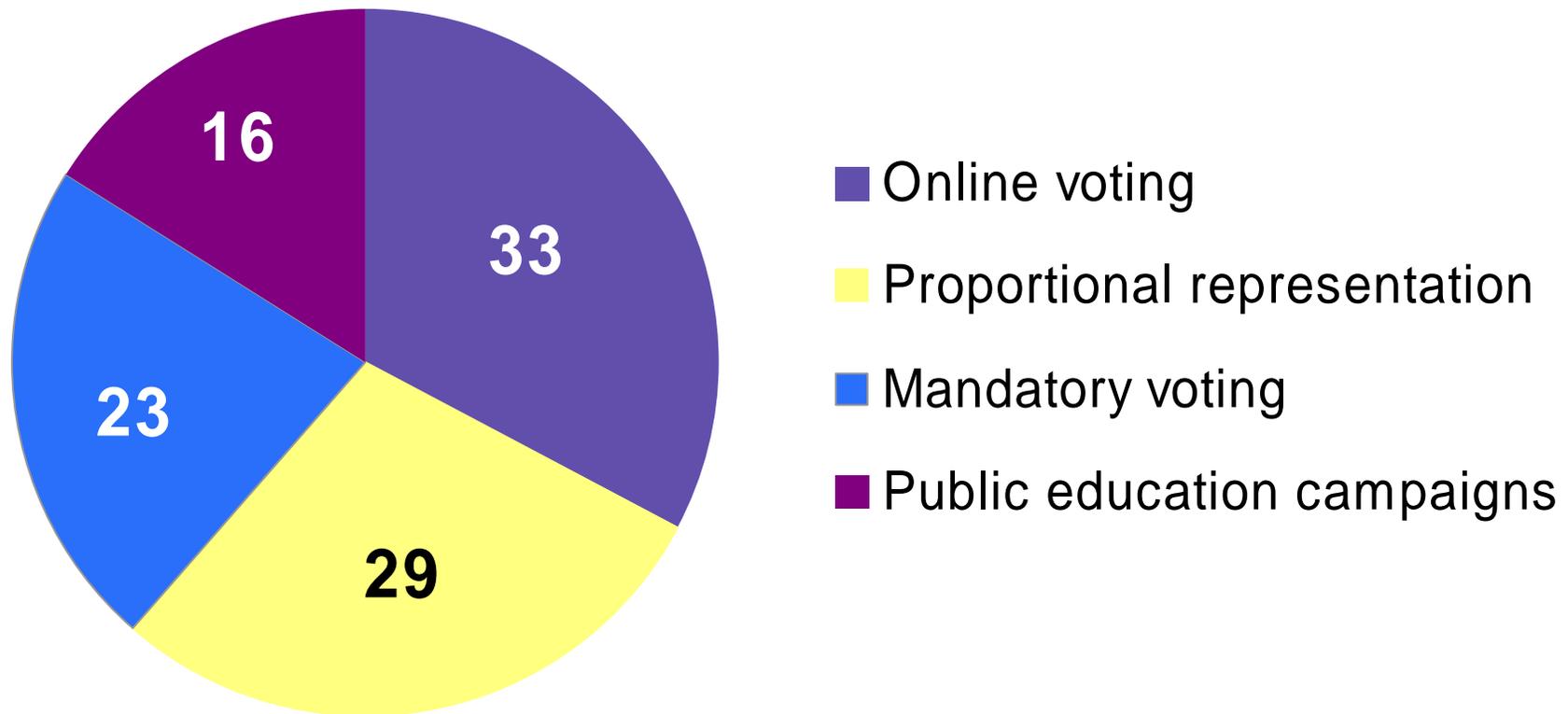


BASE: Canadians; most recent data point November 20-28, 2013 (n=1,500)

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Best method for improving voter participation

Q. Which of the following options do you think would be the best way to improve voter participation in Canada?

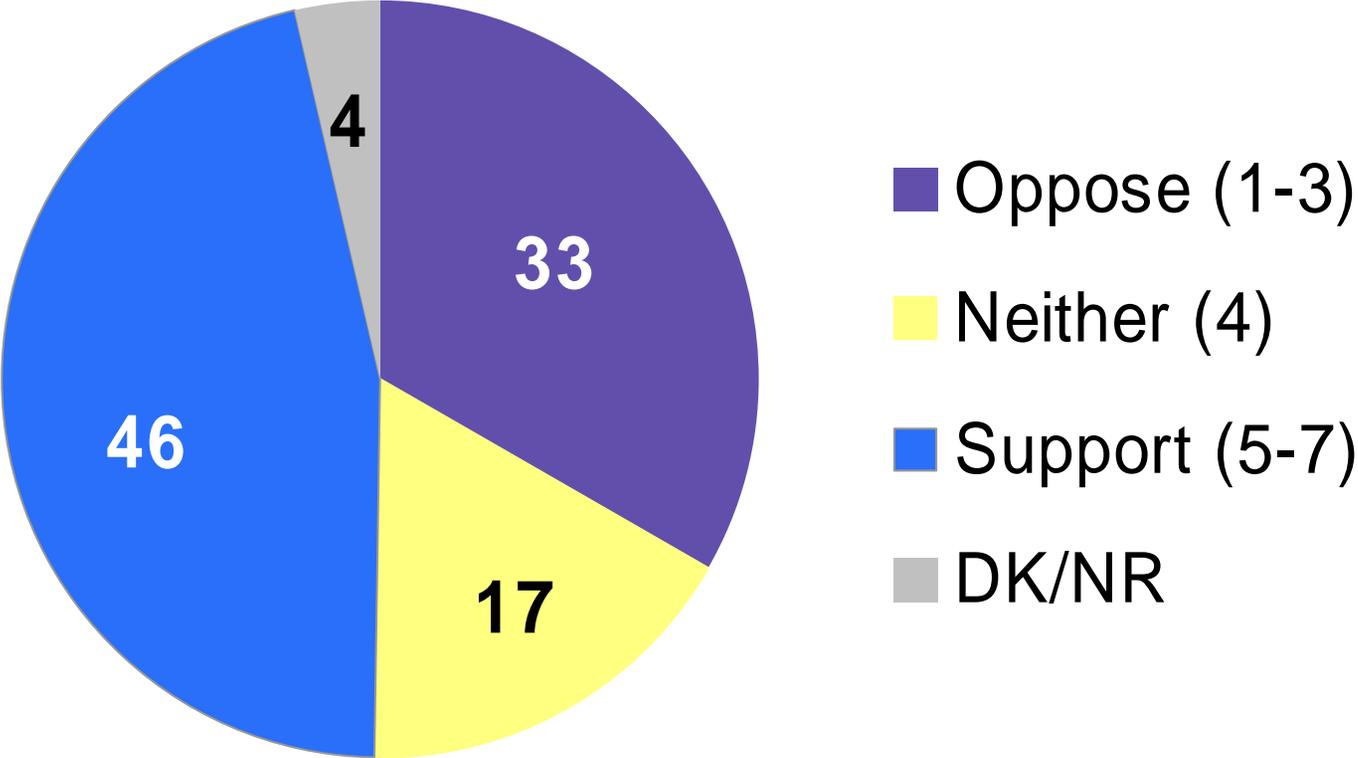


Note: Figures adjusted to exclude those who did not provide valid responses.

BASE: Canadians; December 9-15, 2009 (n=3,386)

Support for compulsory voting

Q. A number of countries such as Australia and Brazil have implemented compulsory voting, where citizens are required to vote in elections. Would you oppose or support introducing compulsory voting in Canada?



4. Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions (i)

- » An incipient end of progress outlook is taking root
- » Product of both real and imagined sources
- » Two key drivers:
 - Relative decline/stagnation
 - Inequality rising
- » A looming generational storm/shocking disengagement from our most valuable resource – “next Canada”
- » A paradoxical collision between dominant narrative/public opinion and empirical record of value shifts
- » A declining and pessimistic middle class
- » This new grimmer passive world view can become part of a vicious circle of self-fulfilling prophecy
- » How can Canada get its mojo back?

Conclusions (ii)

- » Search for a new economic blueprint
 - Fairness and profits
- » Rejection of “supply side” and “trickle down” economics, and conditional receptivity to a more effective and resourced state
 - Tax no longer a four letter word?
- » Whiplash like defection from end of history and American hyper-power
 - Hello China!
- » Democratic trust at nadir
- » Federal gerontocracy with little connection to next Canada
- » Political arithmetic: youth vote has $\frac{1}{4}$ impact from 20 years ago

Moving forward

- » These sentiments are exaggerated and thinly rooted
- » Encouraging a new, positive, multi-sector blueprint for renewed progress
- » Renewal of inclusive, liberal-capital charter (fairness + profits + growth)
- » Exact form unclear, but this is the challenge of our time
- » Strengthened commitment to skills and knowledge – workplace as conduit for skills transfer? (shift to workplace with compensation diverted from ineffectual sources)
- » Trades and apprenticeship strategy
- » Making workplaces exciting again, incubators of innovation and skills
- » Accelerating population growth through diversity and immigration, brand Canada s the first society based on civic nationalism (not race)
- » Open, smart Canada

Some positive sources to build on

1. Canadian advantage on multiculturalism and immigration (post-national society)
2. Renewed agile statism (effective, partnered view from the bridge)
3. Inclusive
 - Rebalance incentive systems
 - Renew middle class
 - Rebuild middle rungs on ladder (taxation, executive compensation, etc.)
4. Re-engage next Canada (mandatory voting?)
5. End the negative ecology of the permanent campaign and restore focus on policy, not politics
6. Democratic coalitions – partnerships may be necessary to better balance and reflect overall values/pluralism/post-party democracy?



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