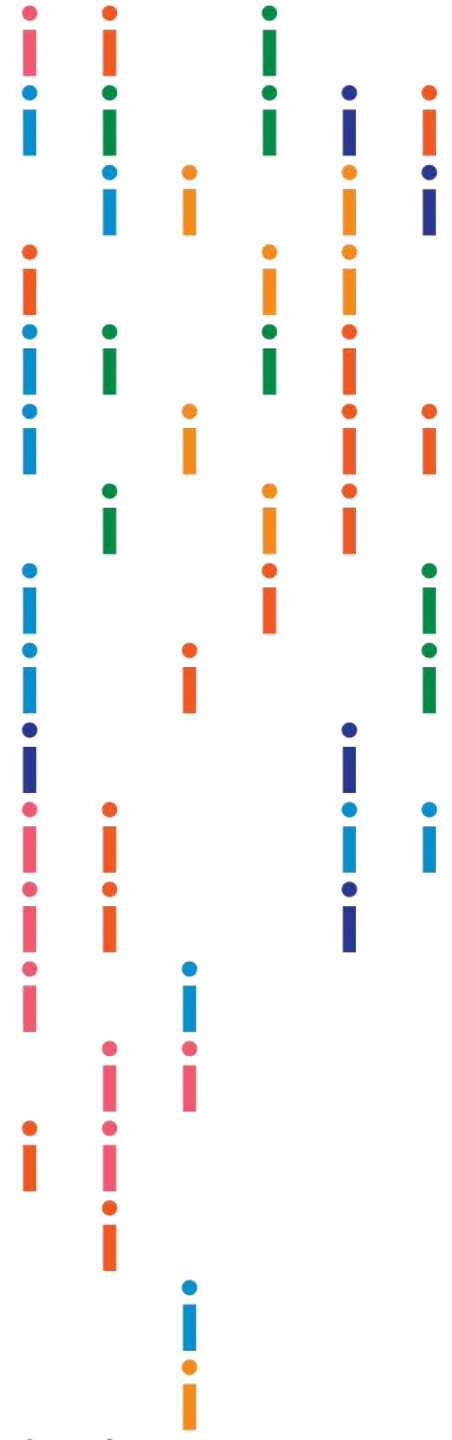


# Citizens' aspirations and anxieties and the politics of inclusive prosperity

Andrew Parkin  
Executive Director, Environics Institute

Inclusive Prosperity: Recoupling Growth, Equity and Social Integration

*Queen's International Institute on Social Policy  
August 20-21, 2019*



# The Environics Institute for Survey Research

Established by Michael Adams in 2006 as a non-profit research institute

Promotes relevant public opinion & social research on important issues of public policy and social change

Conducts research to help us better understand Canada as it is today, how it is changing, and where it may be heading

Focuses on surveying individuals/groups not usually heard from, asking questions not normally asked

*QIISP 2019*



# Three questions

1. How are public attitudes on economic security (or insecurity) and inequality evolving?
  - What is the current balance between optimism and anxiety and how has this changed?
  - How do these attitudes vary within the population?
2. How are public attitudes related to social integration evolving?
  - How do these attitudes vary within the population?
3. Are feelings about economic security and social integration generating political upheaval and polarization?



# Public Opinion Research

- Public opinion research provides clues, not answers:

“We’re building something here, Detective. All the pieces matter.”

- Lester Freamon (“The Wire”)

- The joy of triangulation:

Different results from different questions is a feature, not a bug.



# Part 1a: Optimism and anxiety

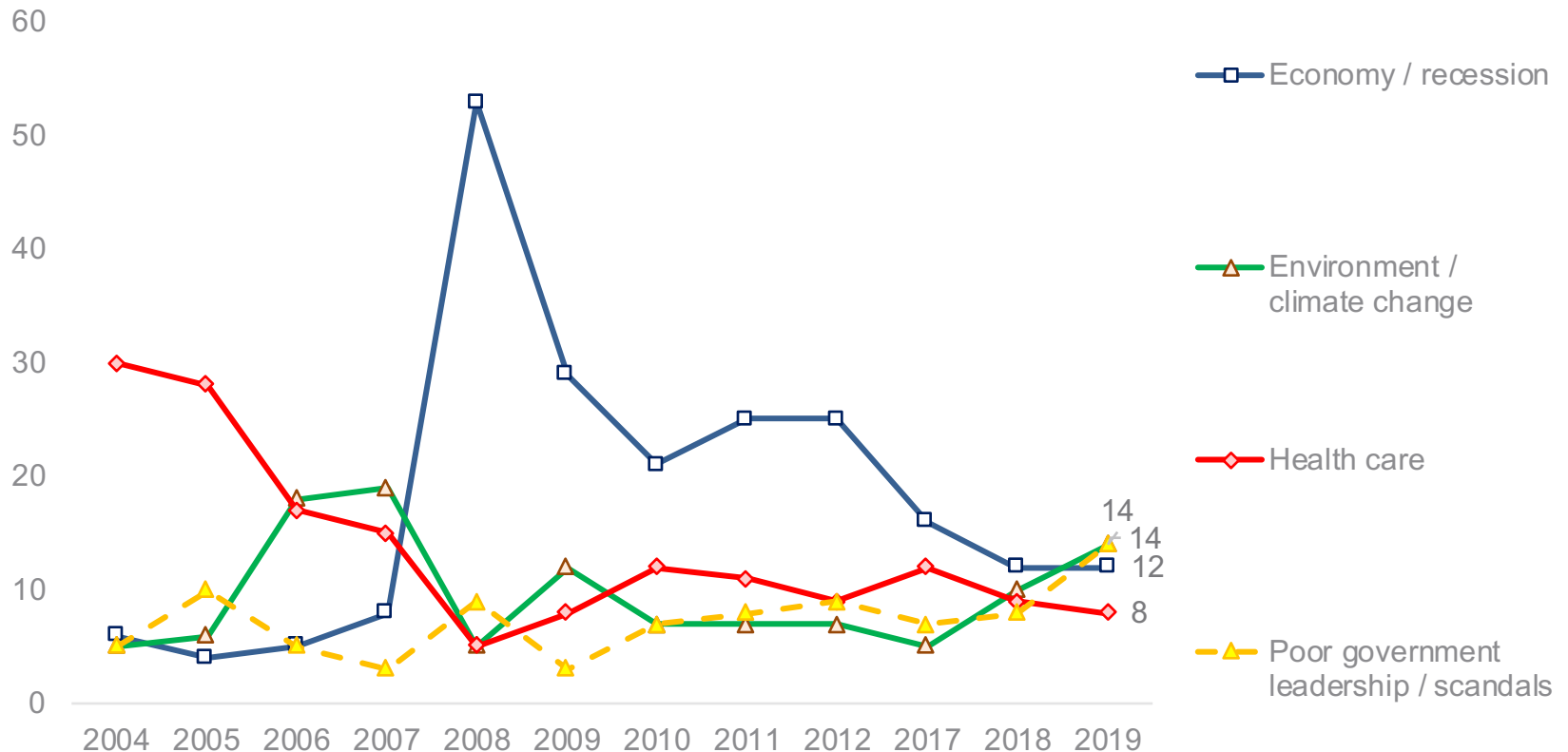
## Overview

- General economic outlook is (finally) improving
- The pattern is consistent across major demographic groups, but not regions
- But recognition of improved economic conditions appears to be co-existing with accentuated anxieties about:
  - Affordability
  - Job security
  - Fairness
  - Inter-generational mobility



# The economy is no longer seen as the most important problem facing Canada

2004-2019



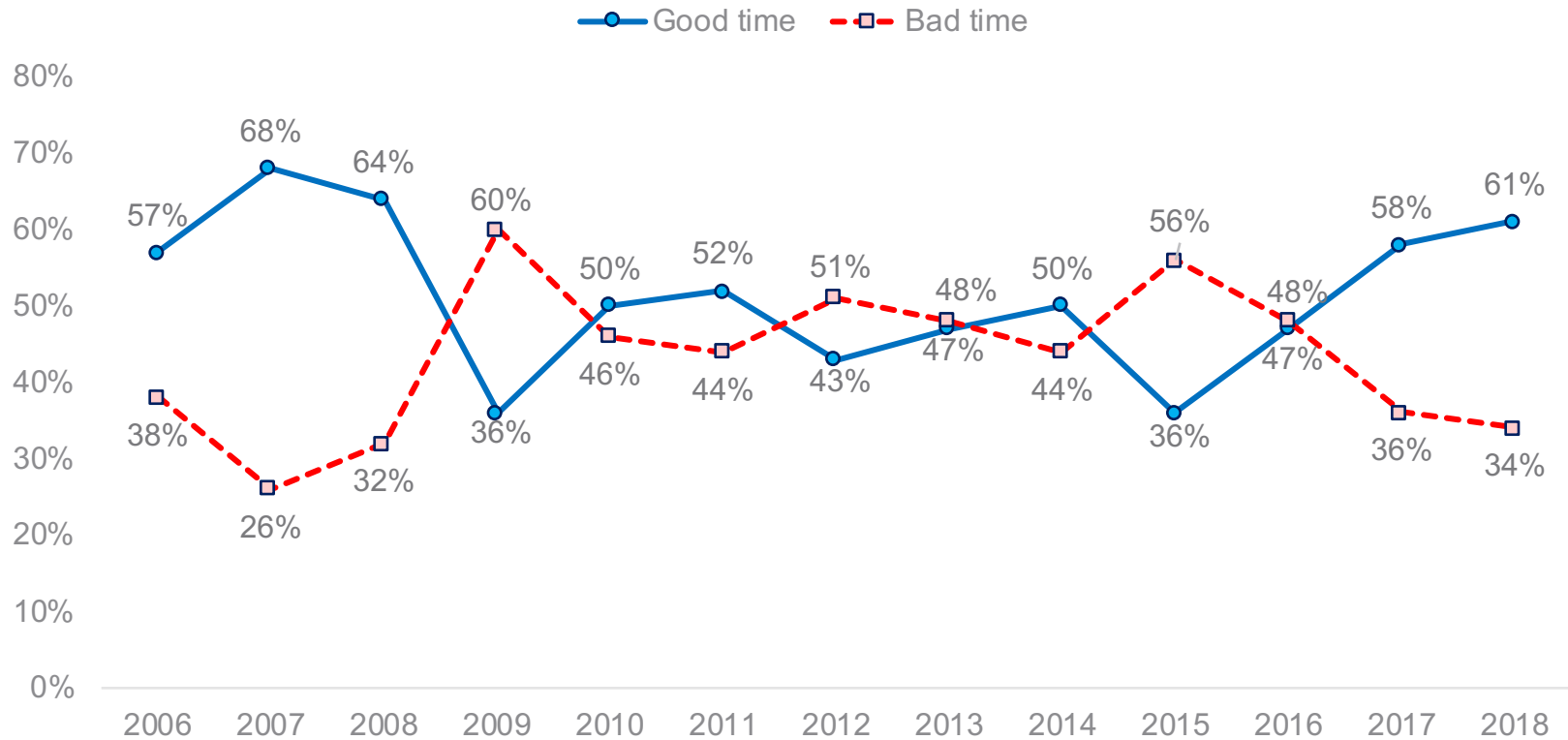
In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing CANADIANS today?

Source: Focus Canada



# A growing proportion say that now a good time to find a job

2006-2018

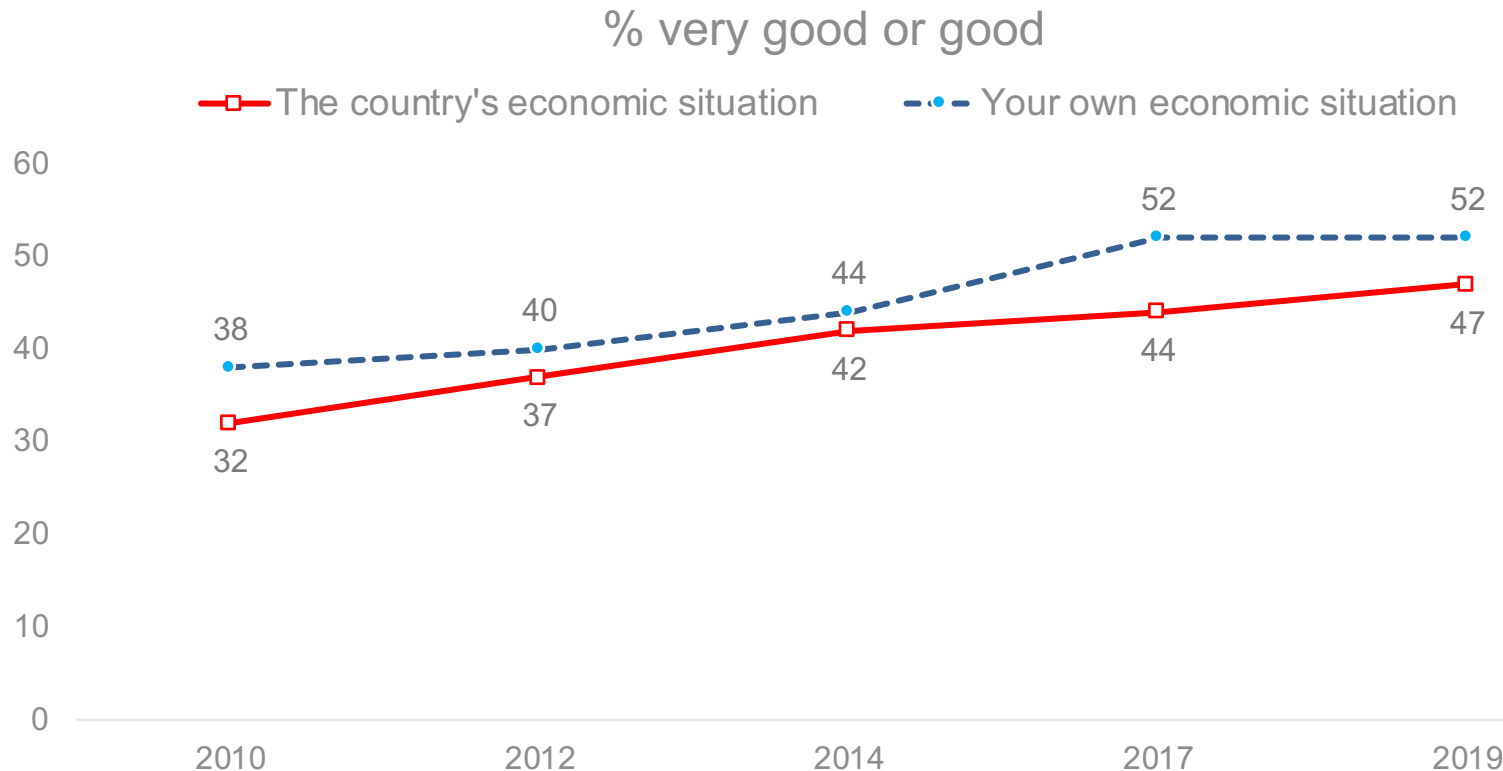


Thinking about the job situation in the city or area where you live today, would you say that it is now a good time or a bad time to find a job?



# Views on the economic situation are improving

2010-2019



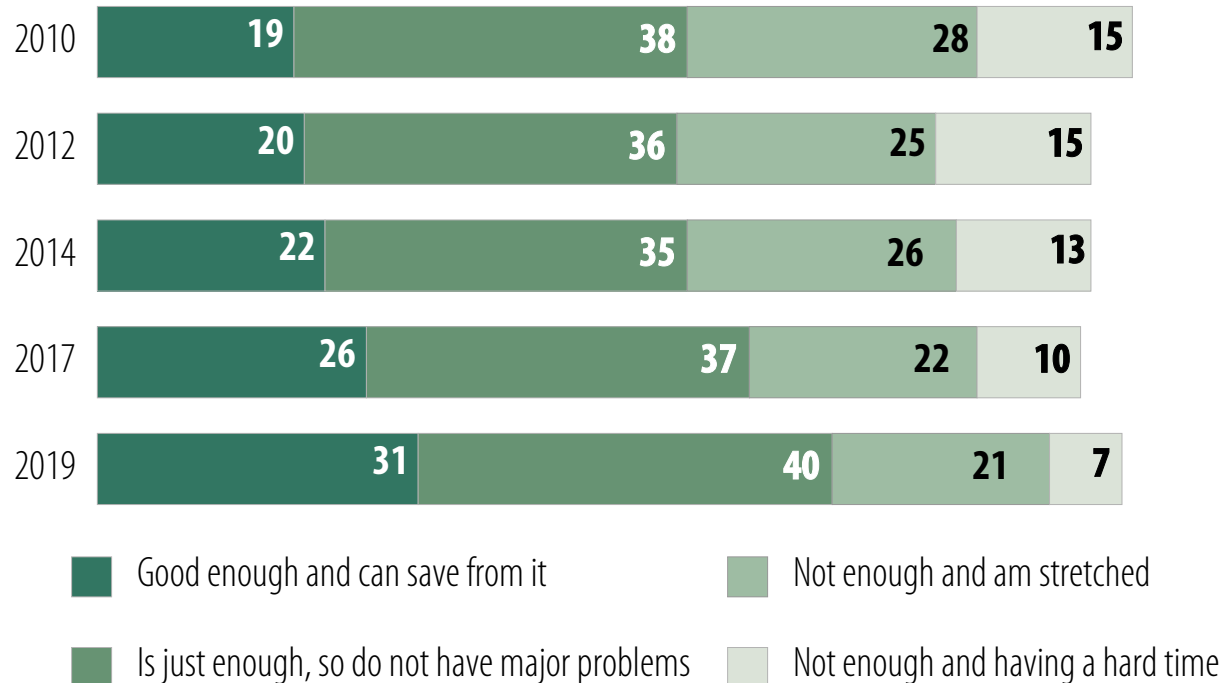
*How would you describe the country's economic situation?  
How would you describe your overall economic situation?*





# More say their household income is enough to get by on

2010-2019

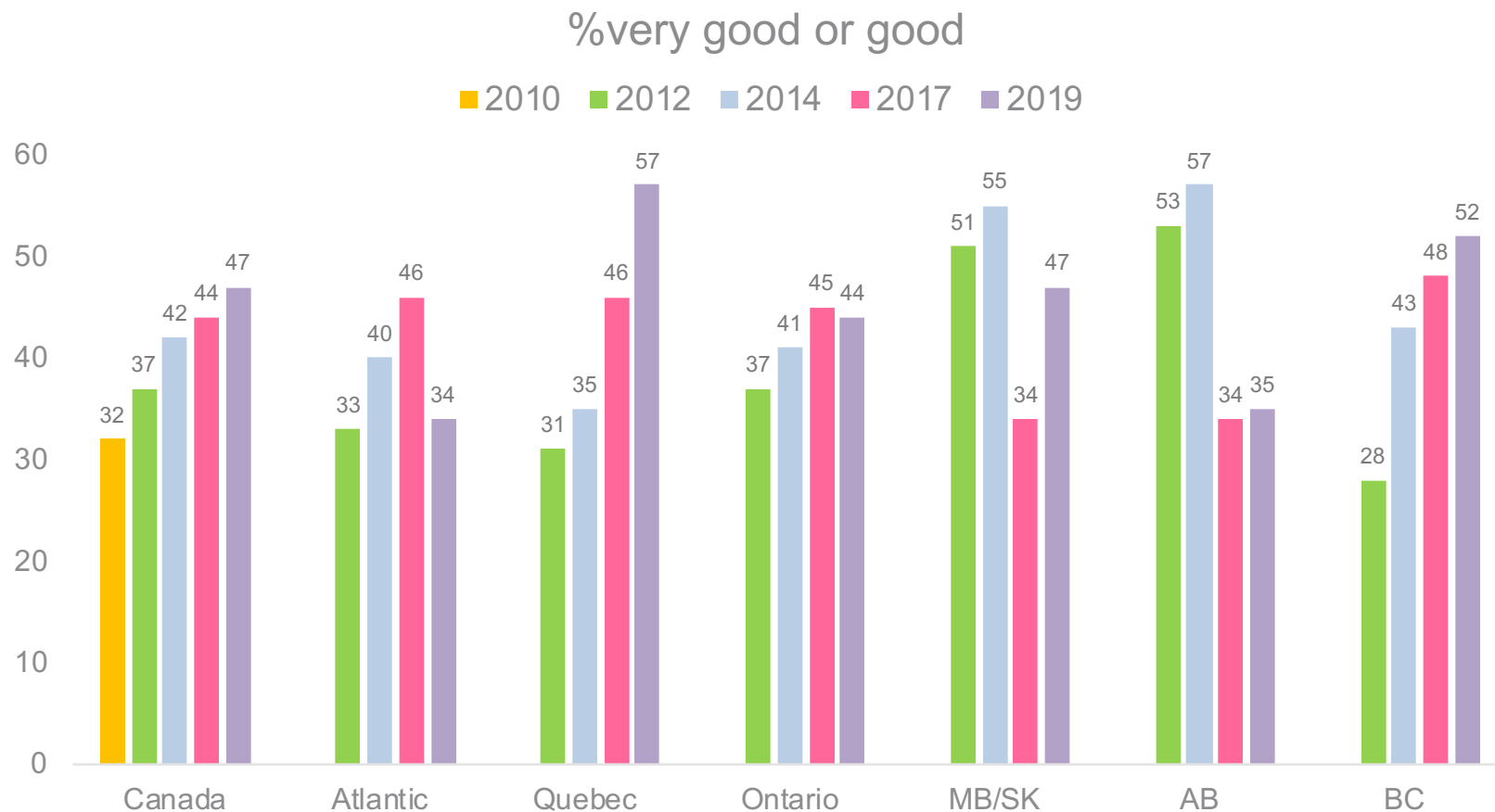


How would you describe the country's economic situation?



# Views on the country's economic situation vary by region

2010-19



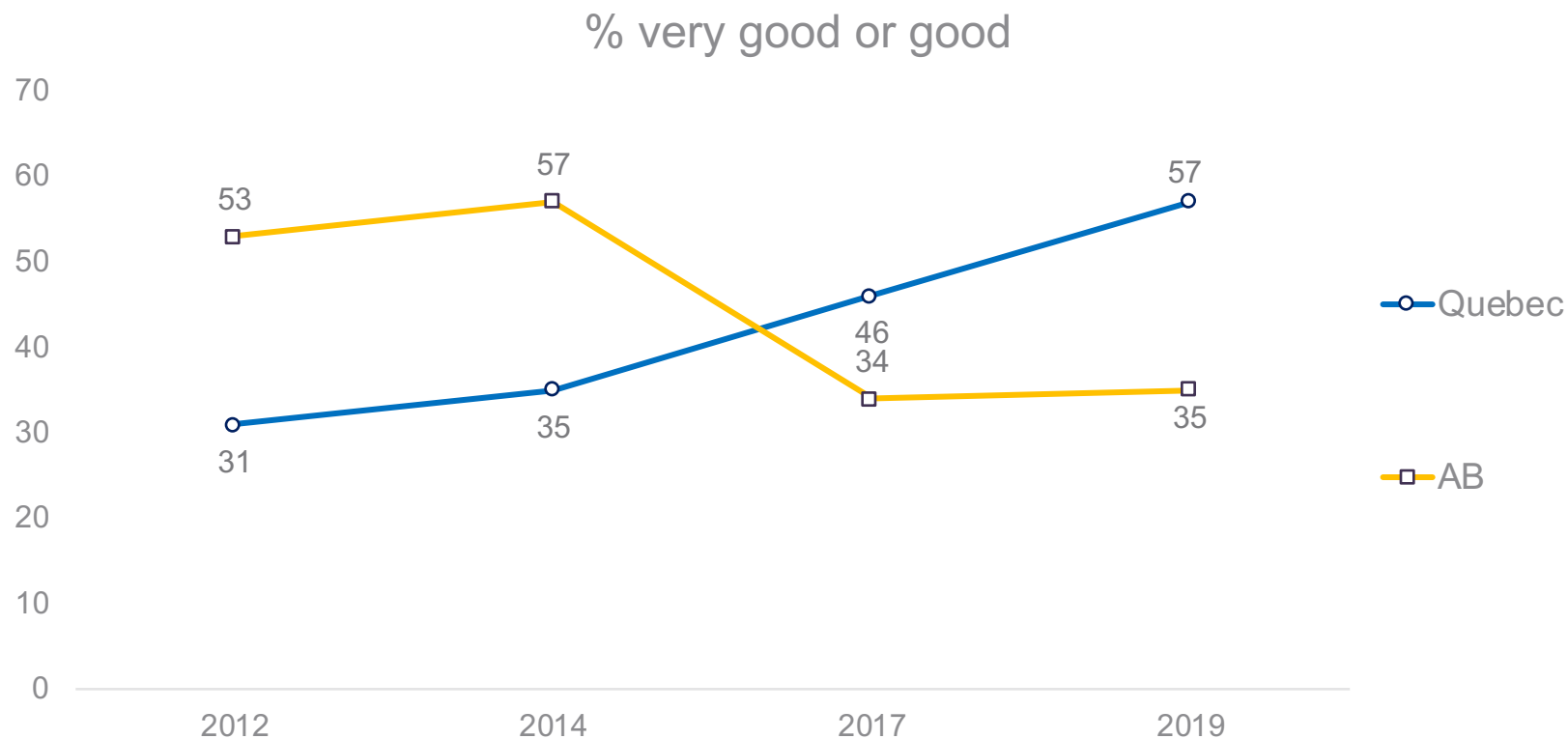
*How would you describe the country's economic situation?*

Source: Americas Barometer



# “X” marks the spot: on economic outlook, Quebec and Alberta have switched places

2010-19

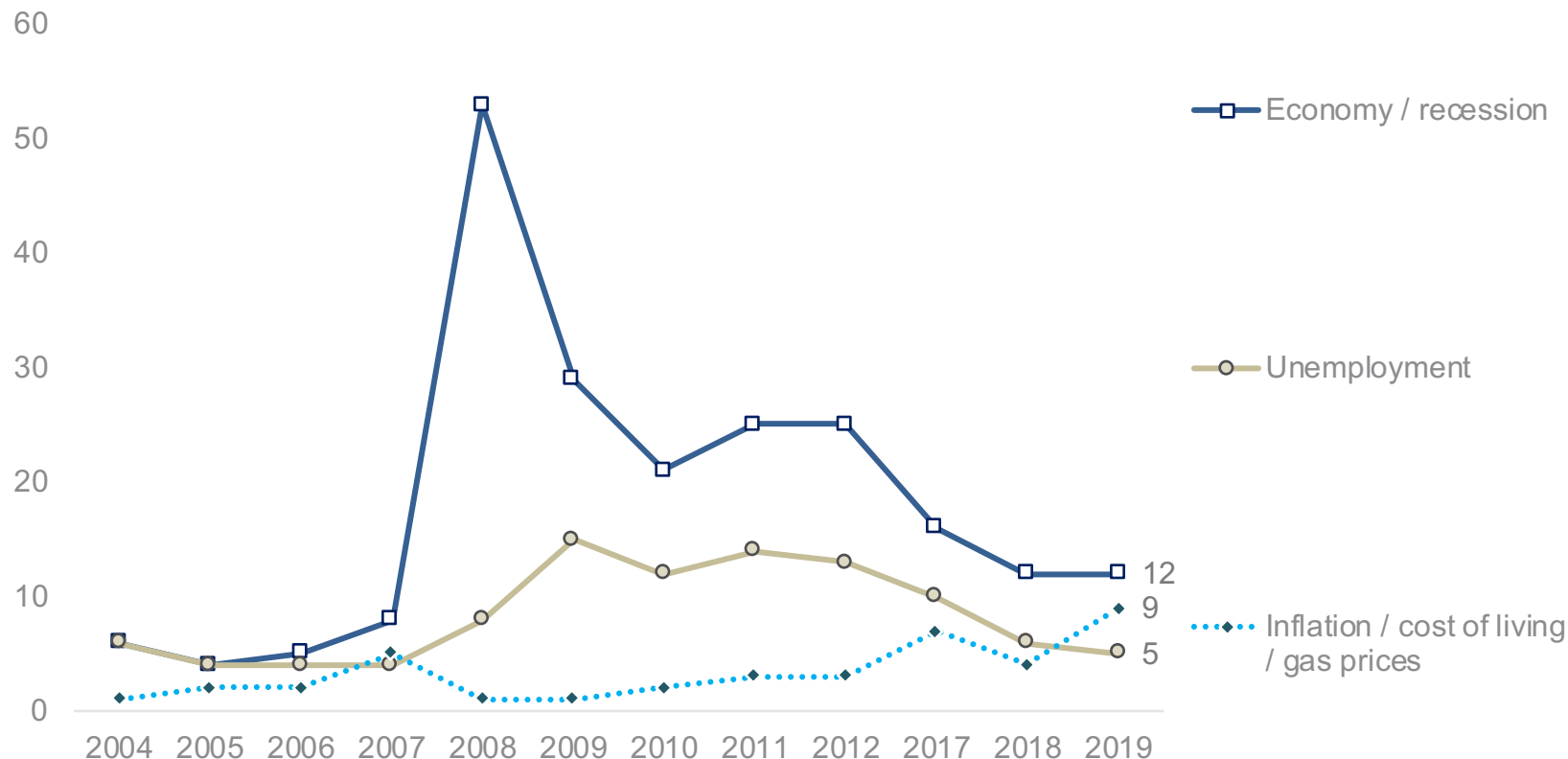


How would you describe the country's economic situation?



# There is a small but noticeable increase in the proportion seeing the cost of living as the most important problem

2004-2019



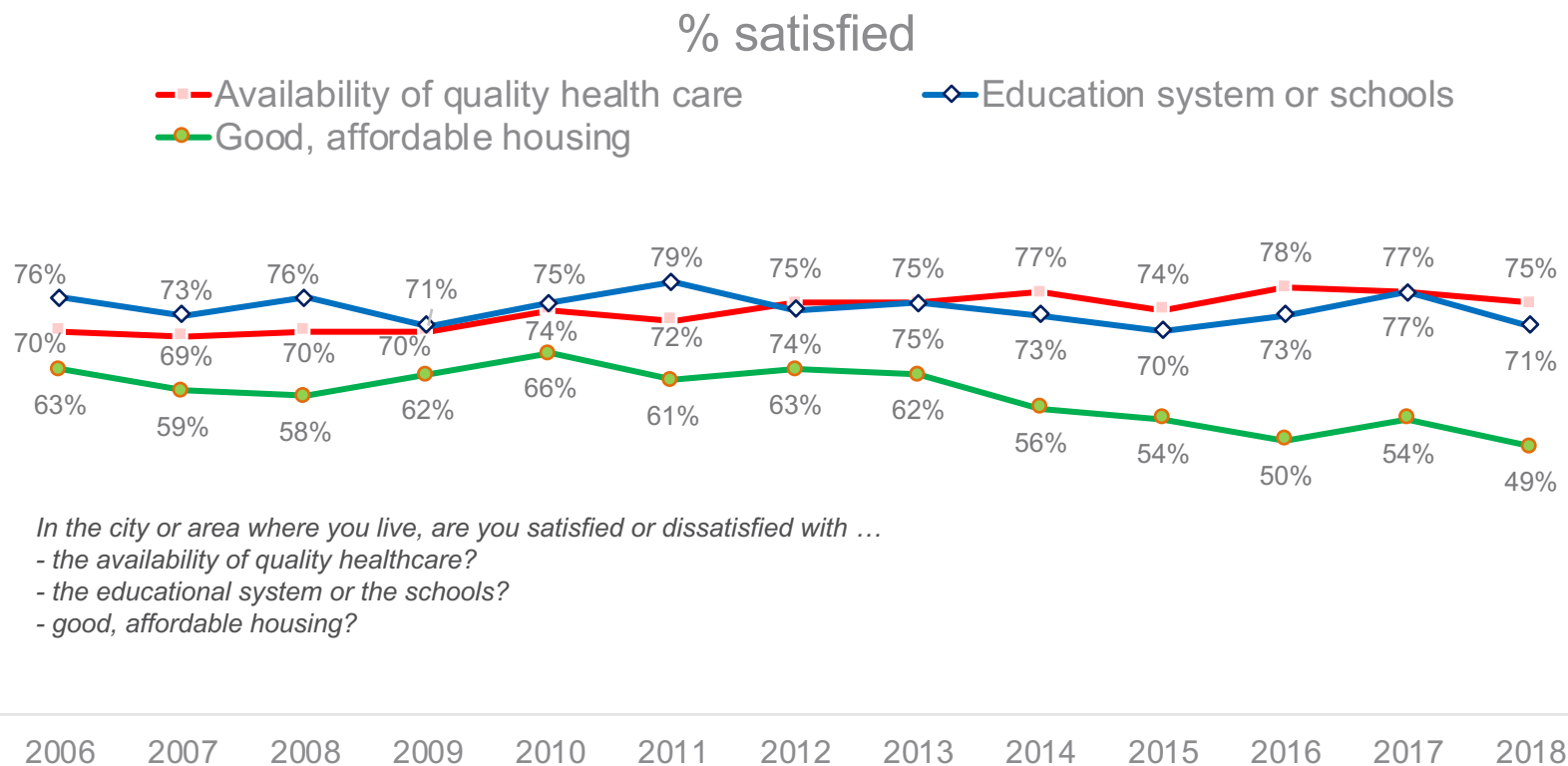
*In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing CANADIANS today?*

Source: Focus Canada



# Satisfaction is high and stable in the case of health care and education, but declining in the case of housing

2006-2018



Source: World Gallup Poll



# Different cities, different priorities

2019

Calgary-Edmonton (n=370)		Vancouver (n=271)		Toronto (n=529)		Montreal (n=595)	
Economy	23.8%	Affordable housing	16.2%	Economy	12.1%	Environmental issues / climate change / pollution	14.5%
Government / political representation	12.4%	Economy	11.8%	Affordable housing	8.5%	Immigration / illegal immigration / refugees	10.9%
Energy industry / oil / pipelines	11.1%	Environmental issues / climate change / pollution	8.9%	Government / political representation	8.0%	Healthcare / mental health	9.4%
Jobs / unemployment	7.6%	Cost of living / inflation	8.9%	Jobs / unemployment	7.4%	Economy	8.6%
Immigration / illegal immigration / refugees	4.3%	Homelessness / income inequality / poverty	5.9%	Cost of living / inflation	5.9%	Government / political representation	7.6%
Healthcare / mental health	4.1%	Immigration / illegal immigration / refugees	5.9%	Immigration / illegal immigration / refugees	5.8%	Taxes / high taxes	3.5%
Environmental issues / climate change / pollution	3.8%	Government / political representation	4.8%	Crime / drug crime	5.1%	Homelessness / income inequality / poverty	3.0%
Taxes / high taxes	3.5%	Healthcare / mental health	4.4%	Environmental issues / climate change / pollution	4.7%	Debt / finances / money problems	3.0%
Cost of living / inflation	2.7%	Taxes / high taxes	3.0%	Taxes / high taxes	3.9%	Social issues / prejudice	3.0%
Government spending / budget / deficit	2.2%	Crime / drug crime	3.0%	Healthcare / mental health	3.7%	Cost of living / inflation	2.9%

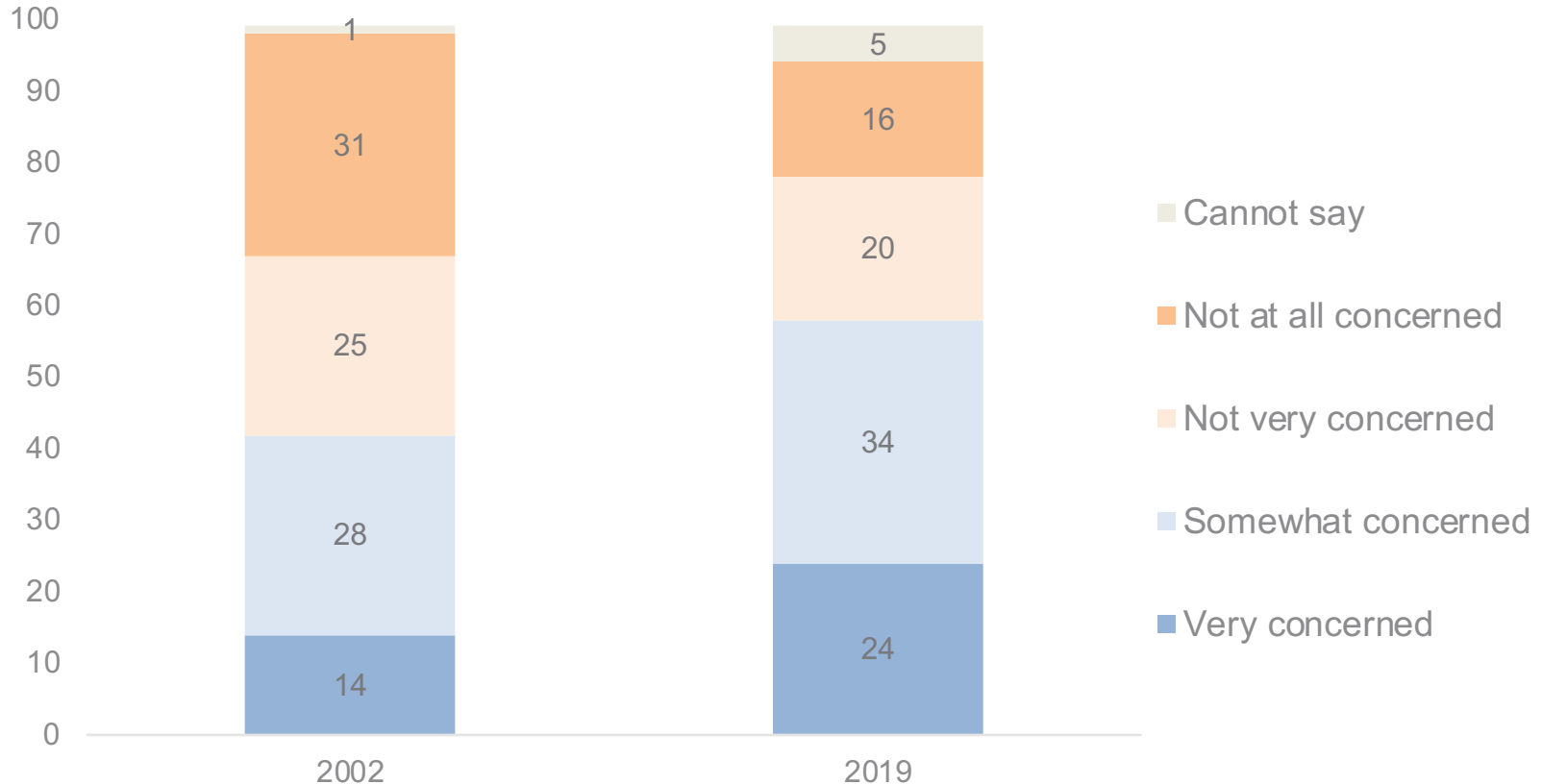
*In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing CANADIANS today?*

Source: Confederation of Tomorrow



# There is growing concern about job security

2002 / 2019



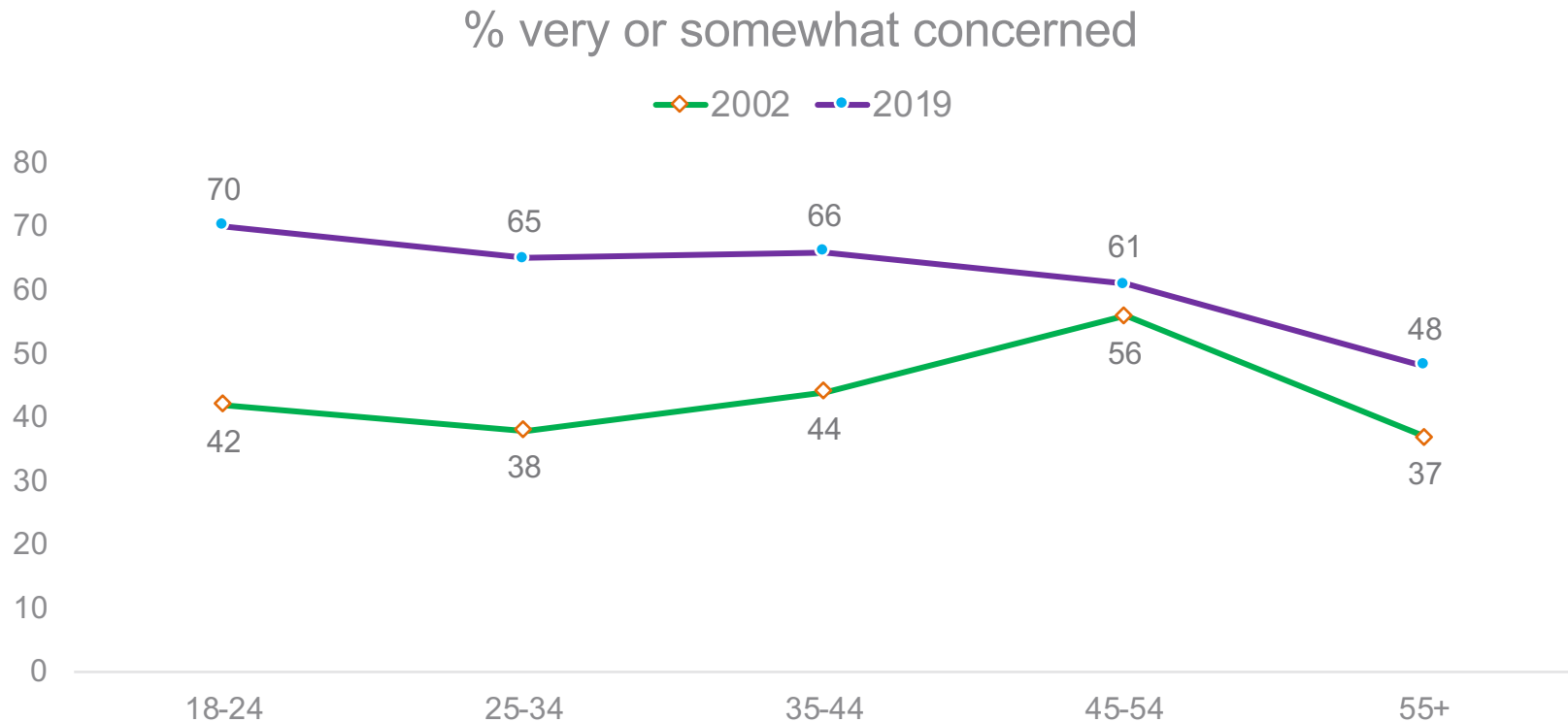
2019: How concerned are you about yourself or a member of your immediate family finding or keeping a stable, full-time job? 2002: Are you very, somewhat, not very or not at all worried about you or a member of your immediate family finding or keeping a stable, full-time job?

Source: CRIC (Charter, 2002); Confederation of Tomorrow, 2019



# There is growing concern about job security, particularly among younger Canadians

2002 / 2019



2019: How concerned are you about yourself or a member of your immediate family finding or keeping a stable, full-time job? 2002: Are you very, somewhat, not very or not at all worried about you or a member of your immediate family finding or keeping a stable, full-time job?

Source: CRIC (Charter, 2002); Confederation of Tomorrow, 2019

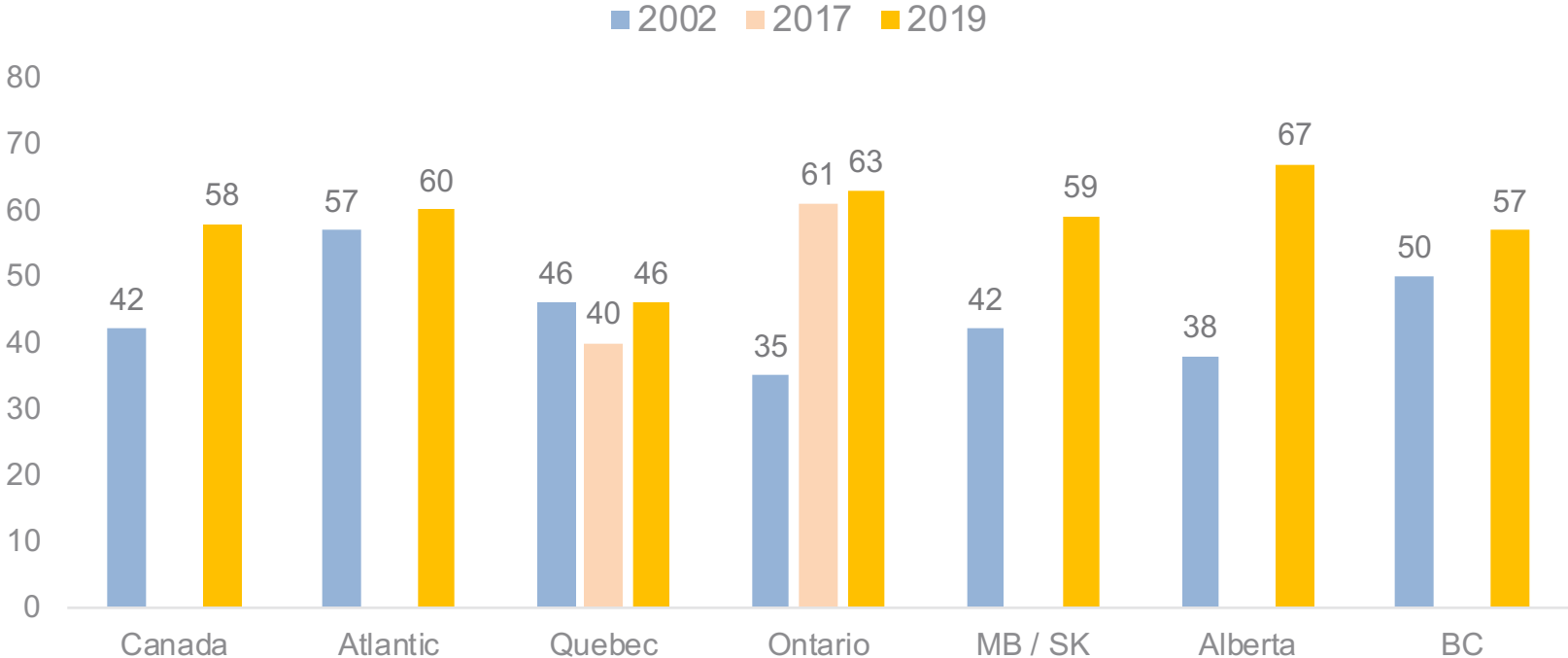




# Concern about job security has grown more steeply in Ontario and Alberta

2002 / 2017 / 2019

% very or somewhat concerned



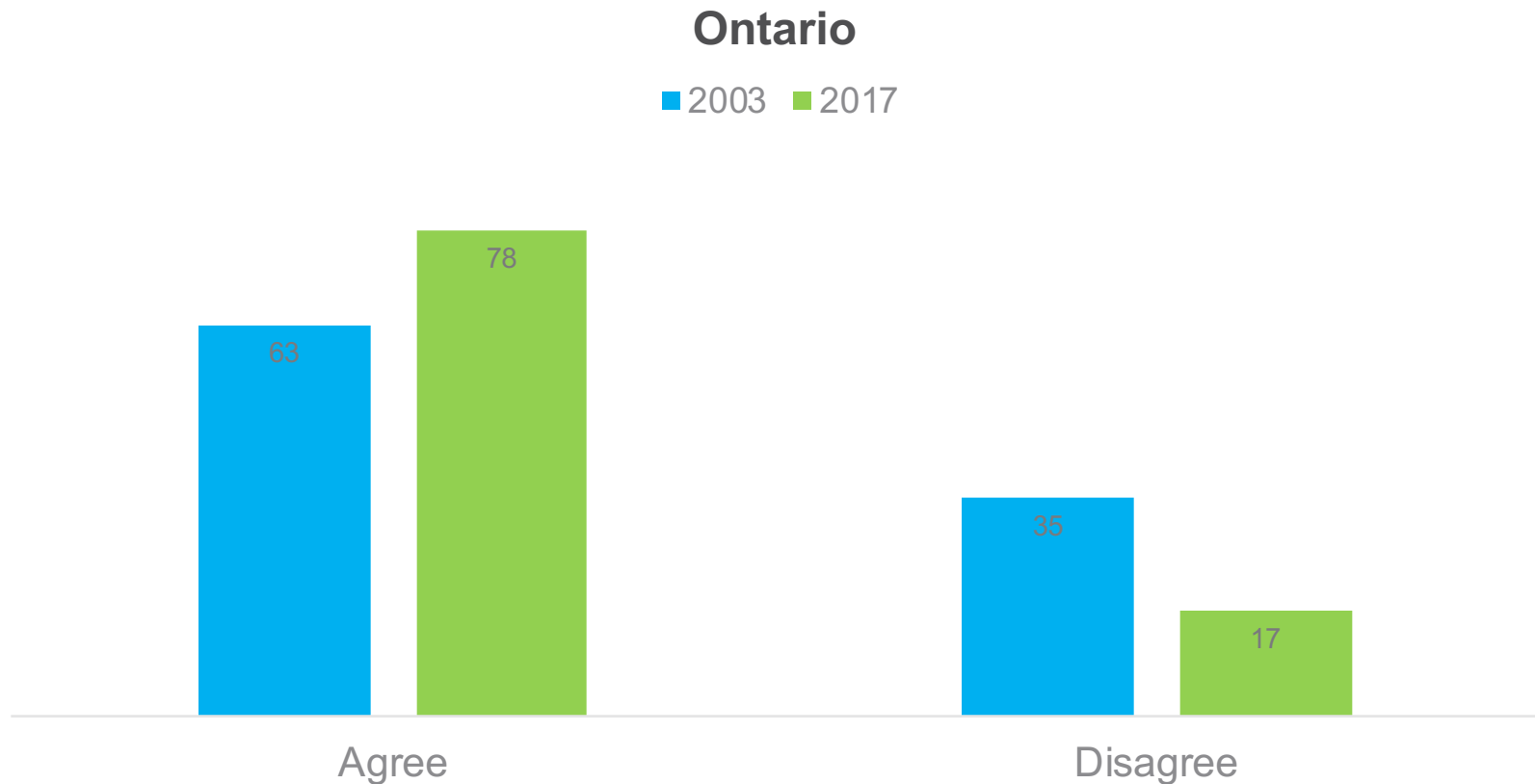
How concerned are you about yourself or a member of your immediate family finding or keeping a stable, full-time job?

Source: : CRIC (Charter, 2002); Mowat Centre (Portraits, 2017) Confederation of Tomorrow, 2019



# More Ontarians agree that whom you know counts more than how hard your work

2003 / 2017



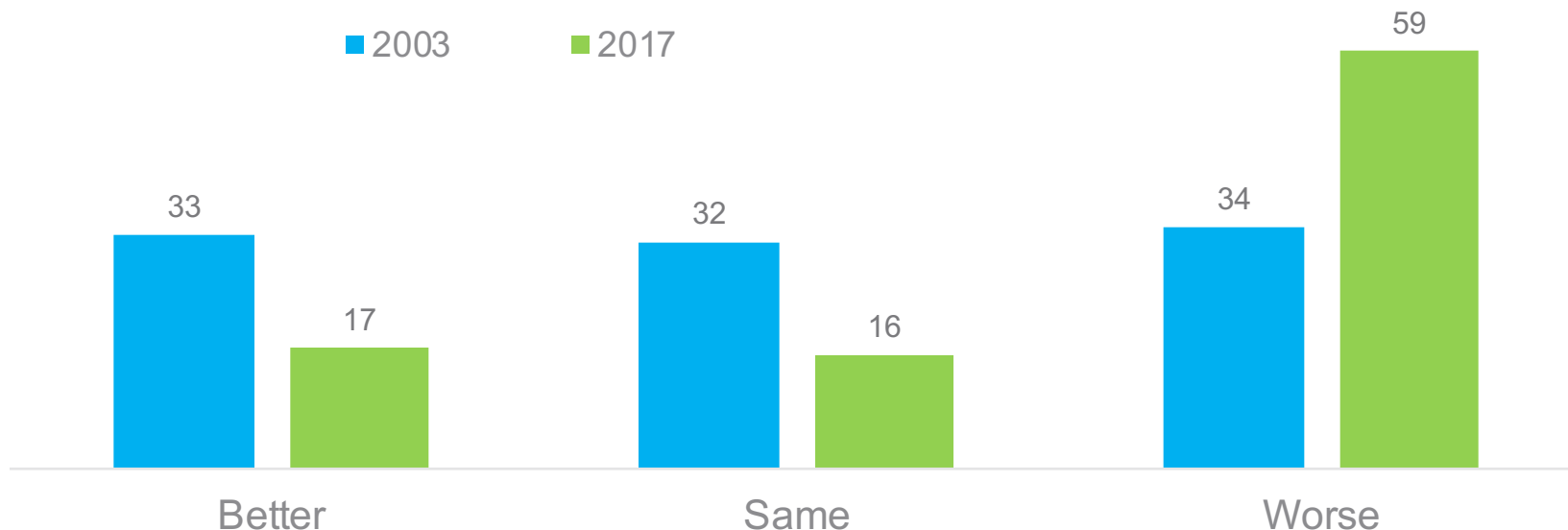
*it has been said that what counts today is not what you can do, or how hard working you are, but whom you know and how much influence you have. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement? Strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree.*



# Most now say that young Canadians will be worse off than their parents

2003 / 2017

## Ontario



Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view? (a) When they get older, today's young Canadians will have a BETTER standard of living ; (b) When they get older, today's young Canadians will have a WORSE standard of living; (c) When they get older, today's young Canadians will have the SAME standard of living



# Part 1b: Inequality

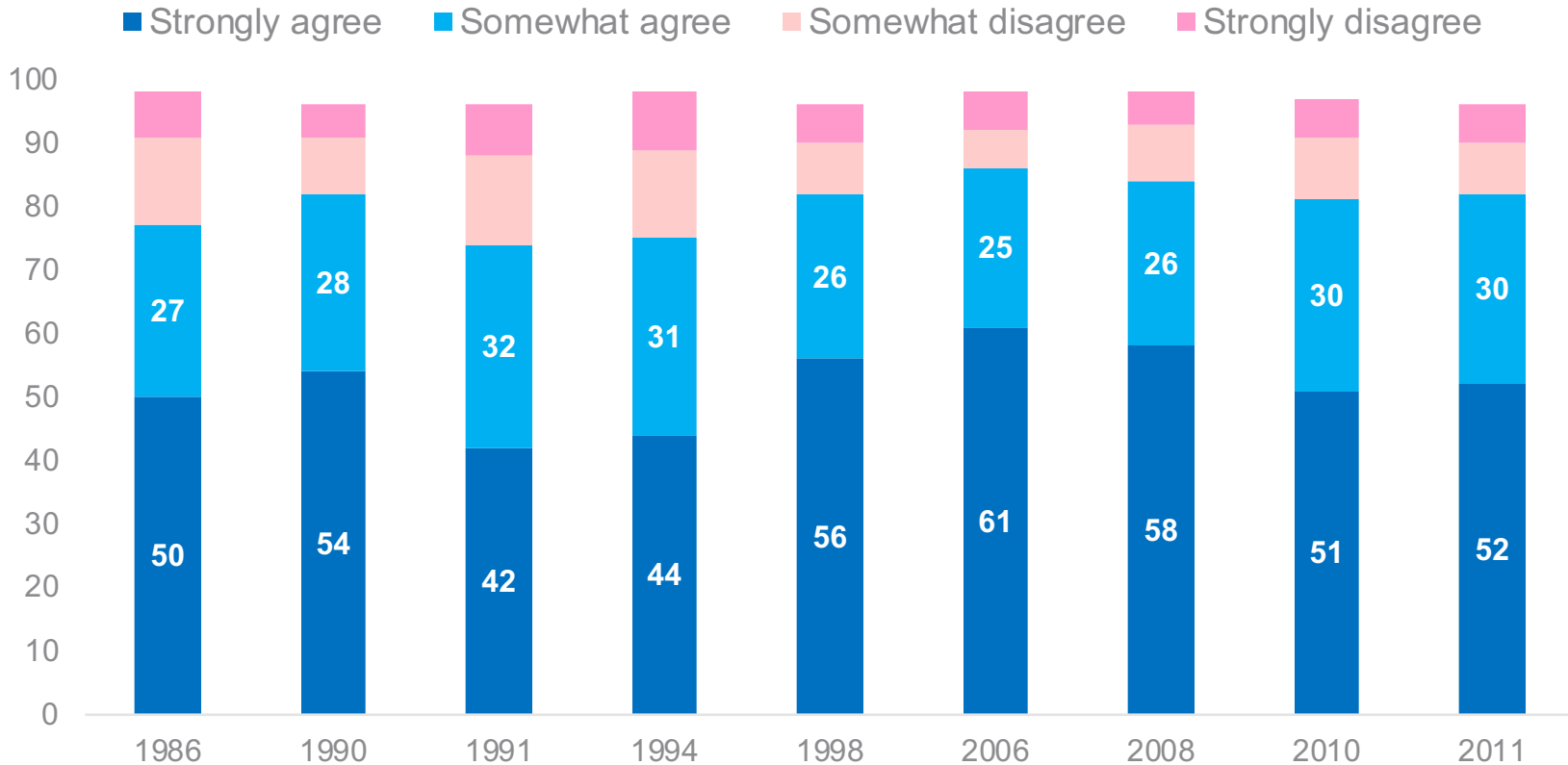
## Overview

- Concern about inequality is long-standing, but not necessarily increasing
- The extent to which reducing inequality is a priority varies (depending on how the question is asked)
- While those with lower incomes are certainly more supportive of redistribution, the situation is more one of consensus than of cleavage



# Should the government reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor?

1996 - 2011



*Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree that governments in Canada should actively find ways to reduce the gap between wealthy people and those less fortunate?*

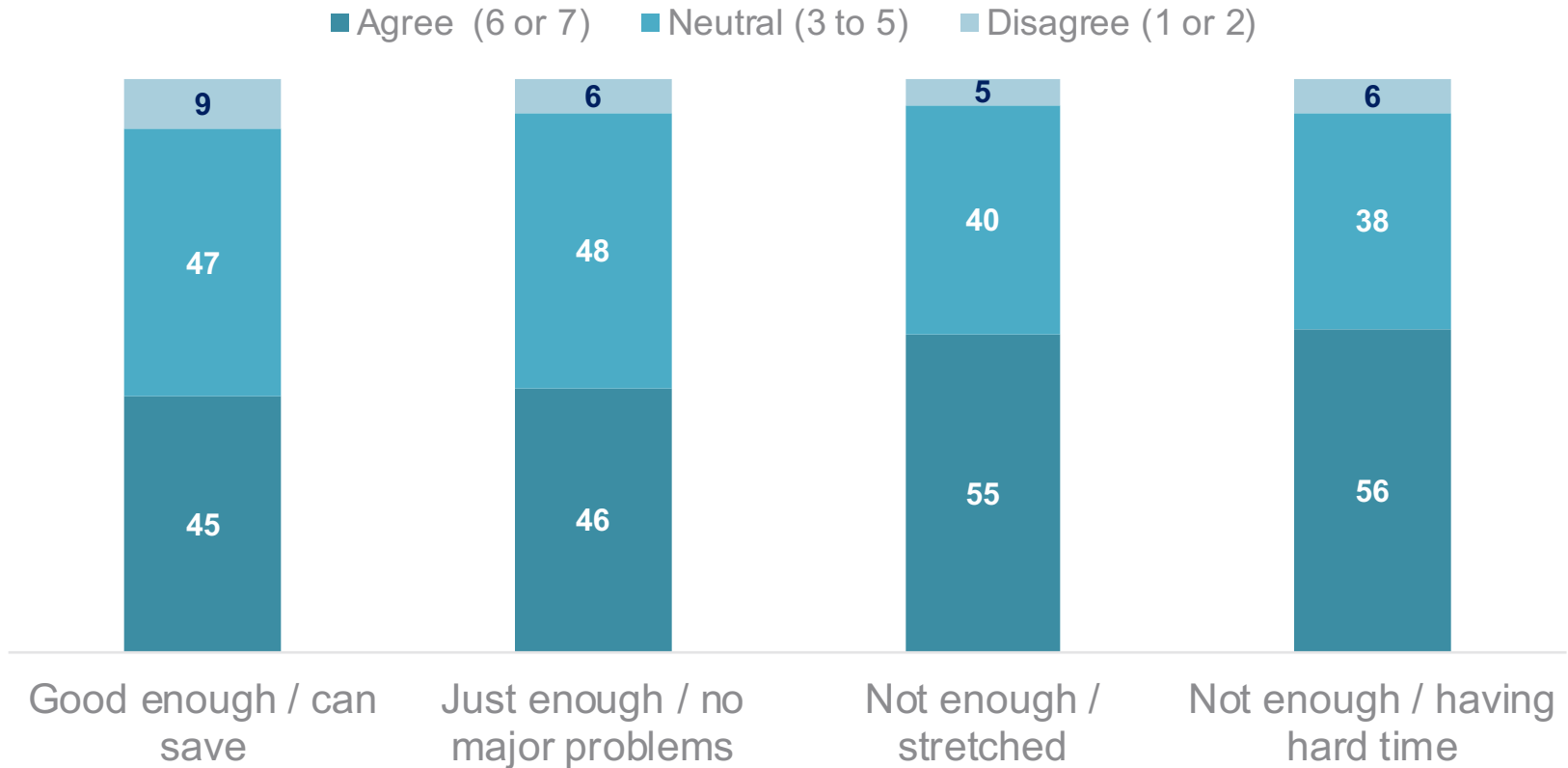
Environics Institute QIISP 2019

Source: Focus Canada



# Government's responsibility for actively addressing inequality – by description of income (2017)

2017

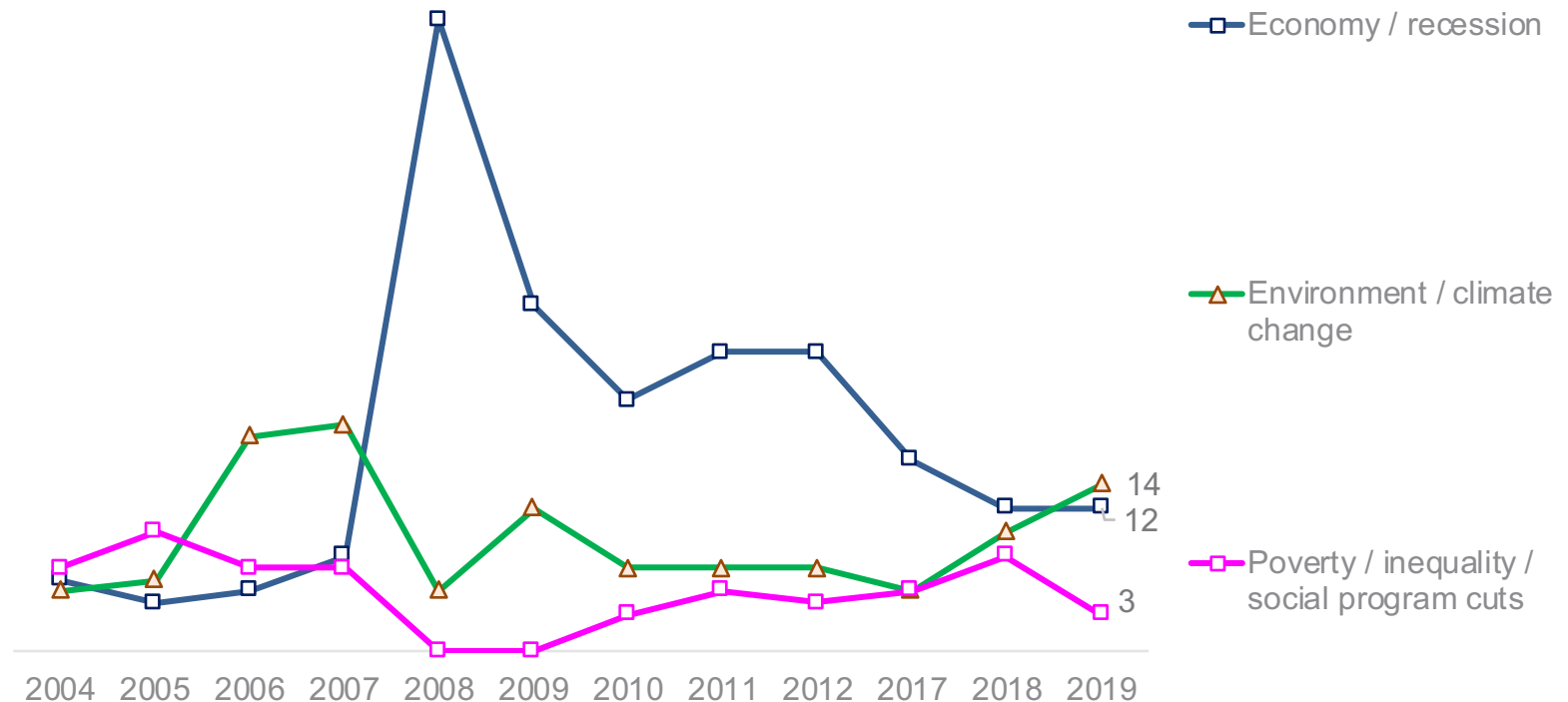


*The Canadian government should implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between the rich and the poor.*



# No sustained increase in the proportion saying that inequality is the most important problem facing Canada

2004-2019



*In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing CANADIANS today?*

Source: Focus Canada



# Reducing inequality among top three priorities

(% saying item is high priority for making the country work better)

2017

Ontario		Quebec	
Spending more on health care	56	Spending more on health care	61
Being economically competitive	49	<b>Reduce inequality rich-poor</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Reduce inequality rich-poor</b>	<b>47</b>	Being economically competitive	52
Addressing climate change	43	Addressing climate change	49
Spending more on education/training	40	Cutting taxes	48
Cutting taxes	40	Spending more on education/training	47
New international trade agreements	40	New international trade agreements	42
Reconciling with Indigenous peoples	26	Improving Canada/US relations	34
Improving Canada/US relations	22	Transferring power to provinces	26
Spending more on military	14	Reconciling with Indigenous peoples	23
Giving more to big cities	9	Giving more to big cities	11
Transferring power to provinces	8	Spending more on military	5

*When it comes to helping the country work better, how much of a priority do you think each of the following should be?*





# Part 2: Social integration

## Overview

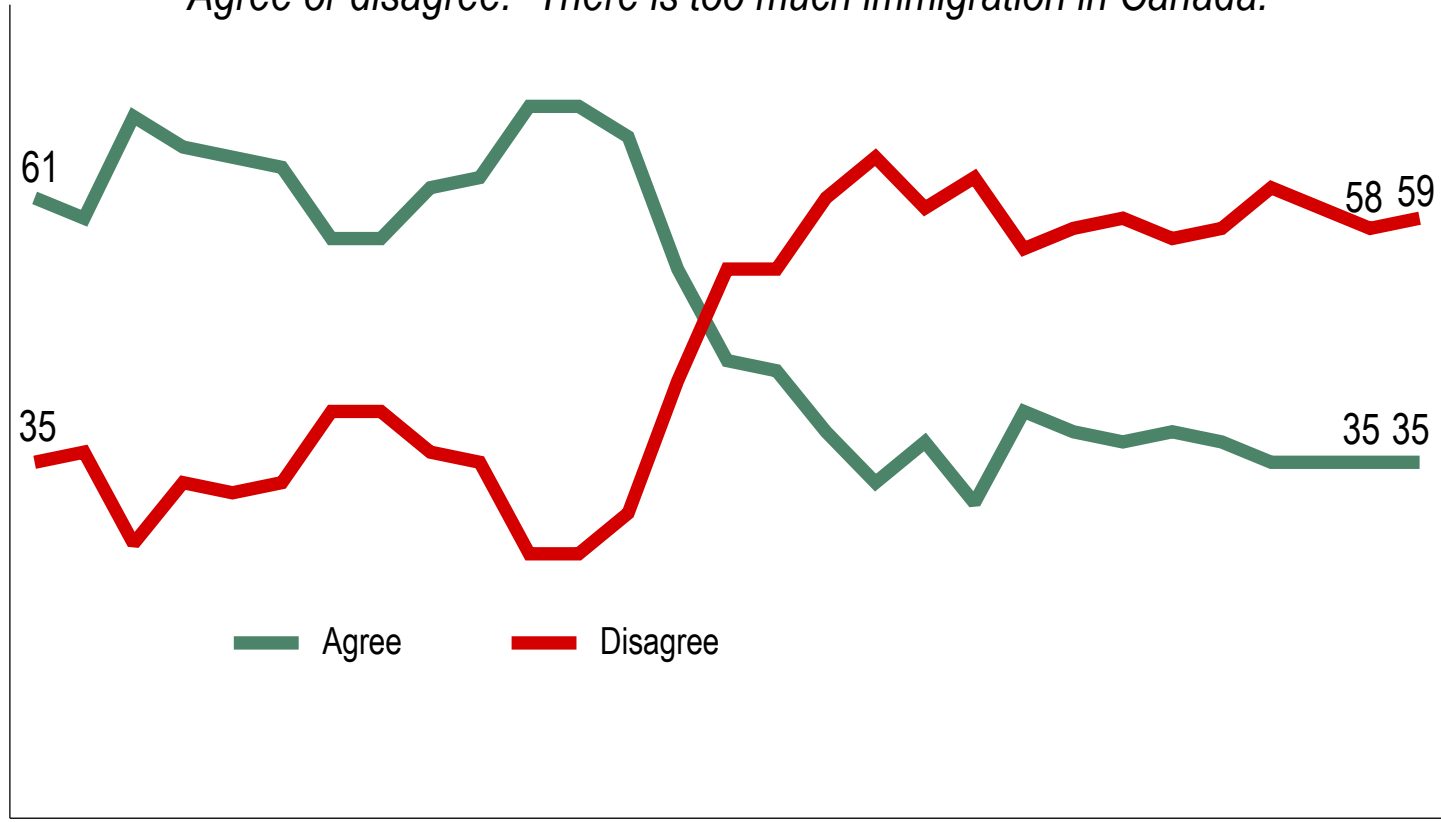
- Overall, Canadians' views about immigrants and refugees have become much more welcoming over the long term, and held remarkably steady over the short term
- While views on some questions remain divided, this is nothing new
  - There is no evidence of a “hardening” of attitudes
- Attitudes to immigration are consistently related to region, age, education and income



# Today a majority of Canadians disagree that there is too much immigration, reflecting a sea change in opinions from the past

1977 - 2019

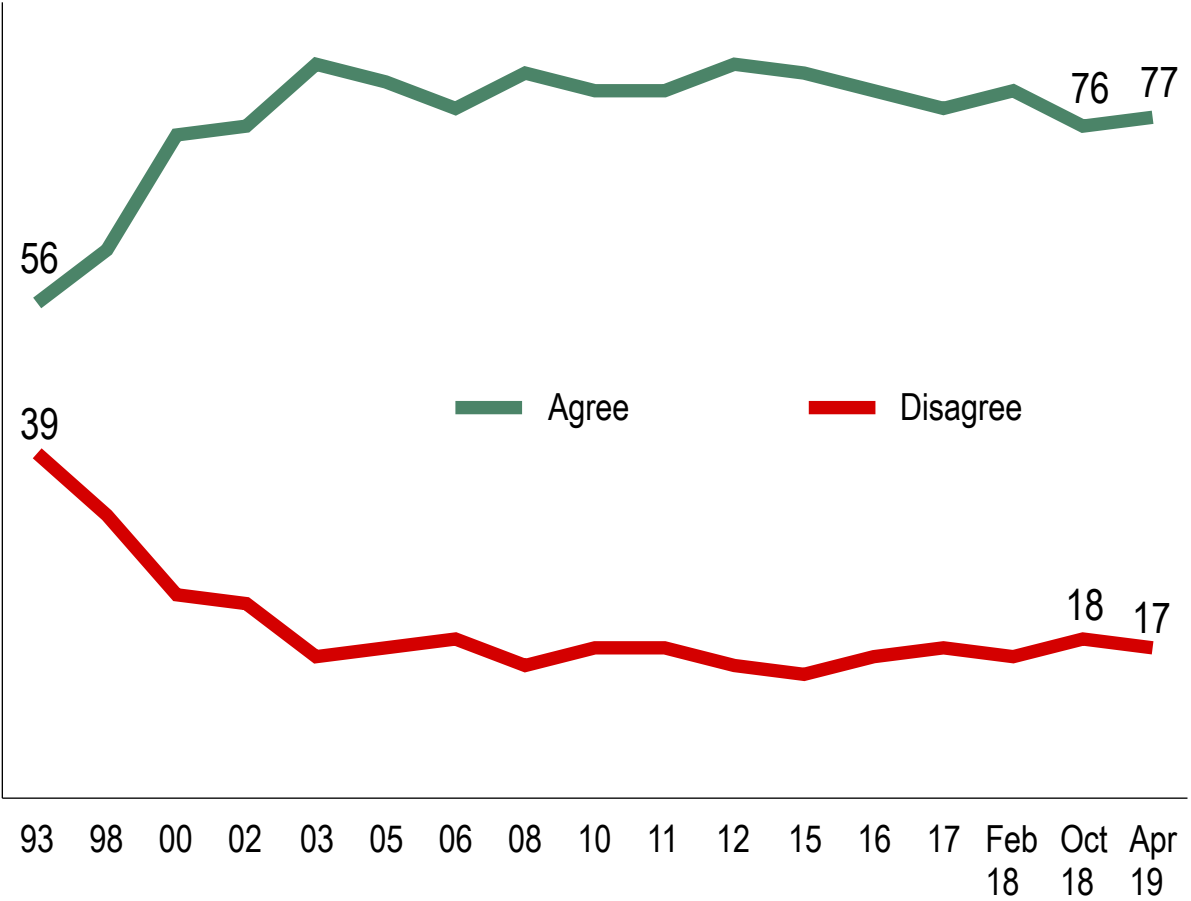
Agree or disagree: "There is too much immigration in Canada."



# Most Canadians view immigrants as helping rather than hurting the economy

1993 - 2019

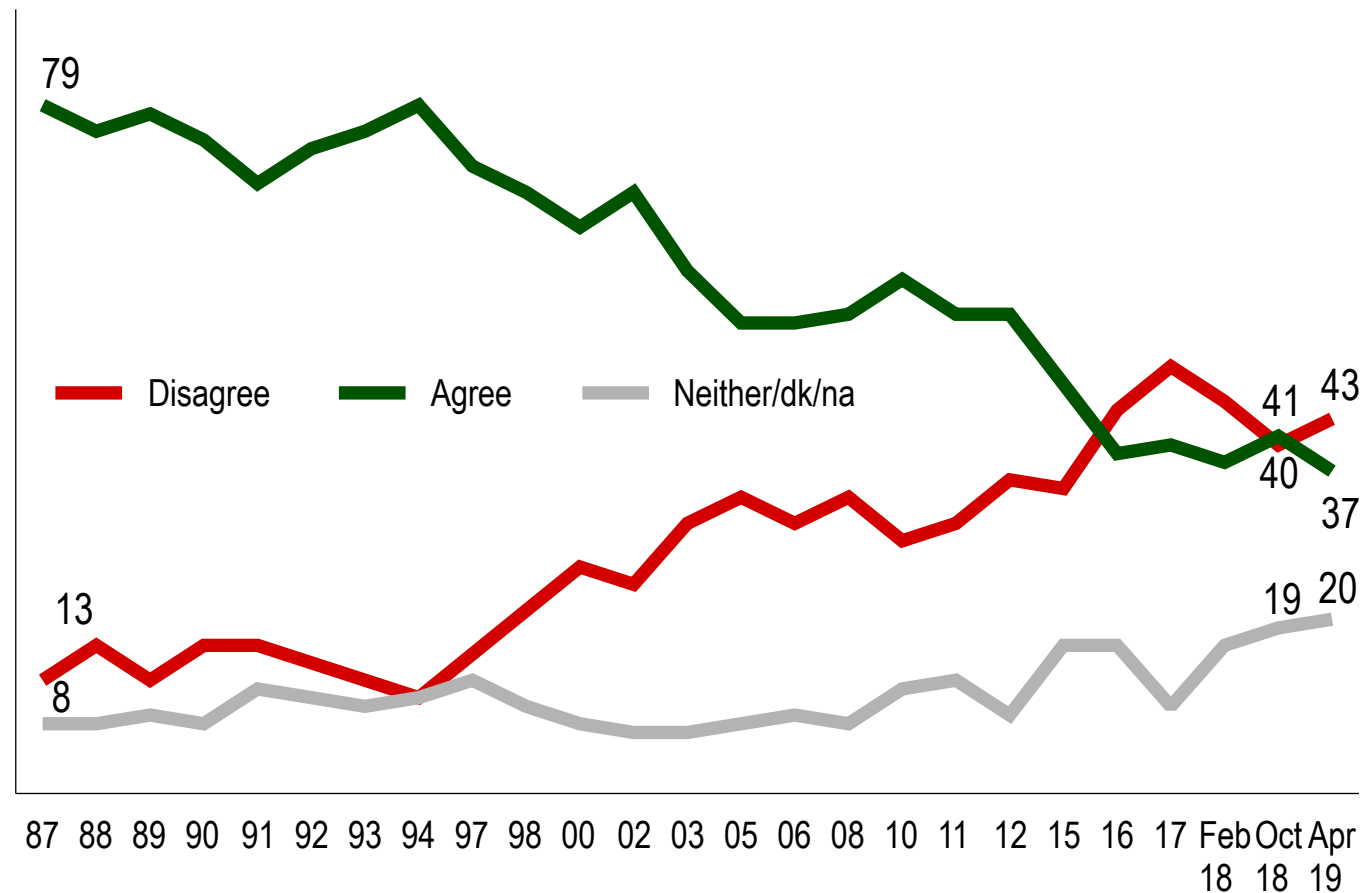
Agree or disagree: "The economic impact of immigrants is positive"



# A growing plurality now reject the idea that many refugee claimants are not legitimate

1987 - 2019

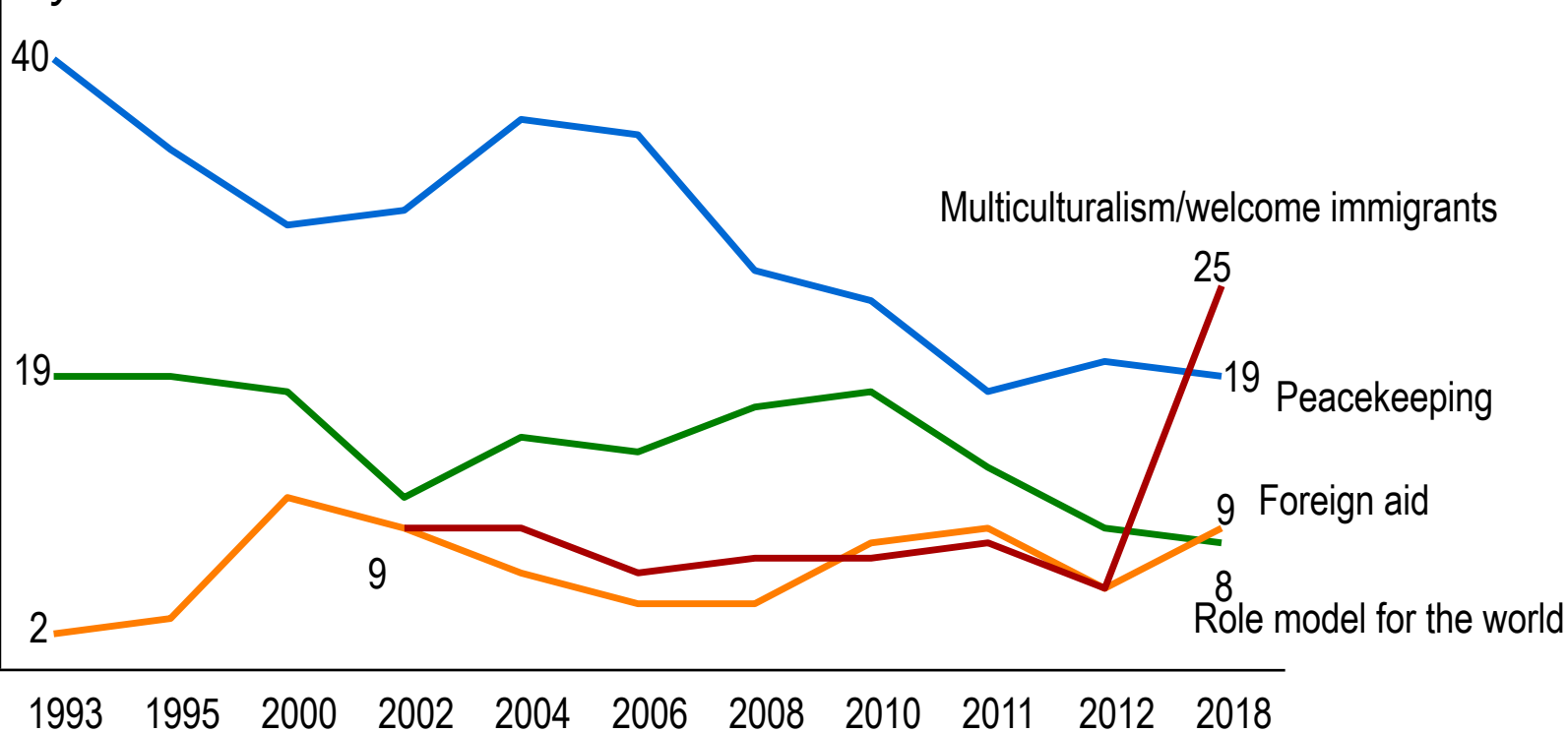
Agree or disagree: "Too many refugee claimants are not legitimate"



# Canadians' view of their country's global contribution is shifting from peacekeeping and foreign aid, to being a place for immigrants

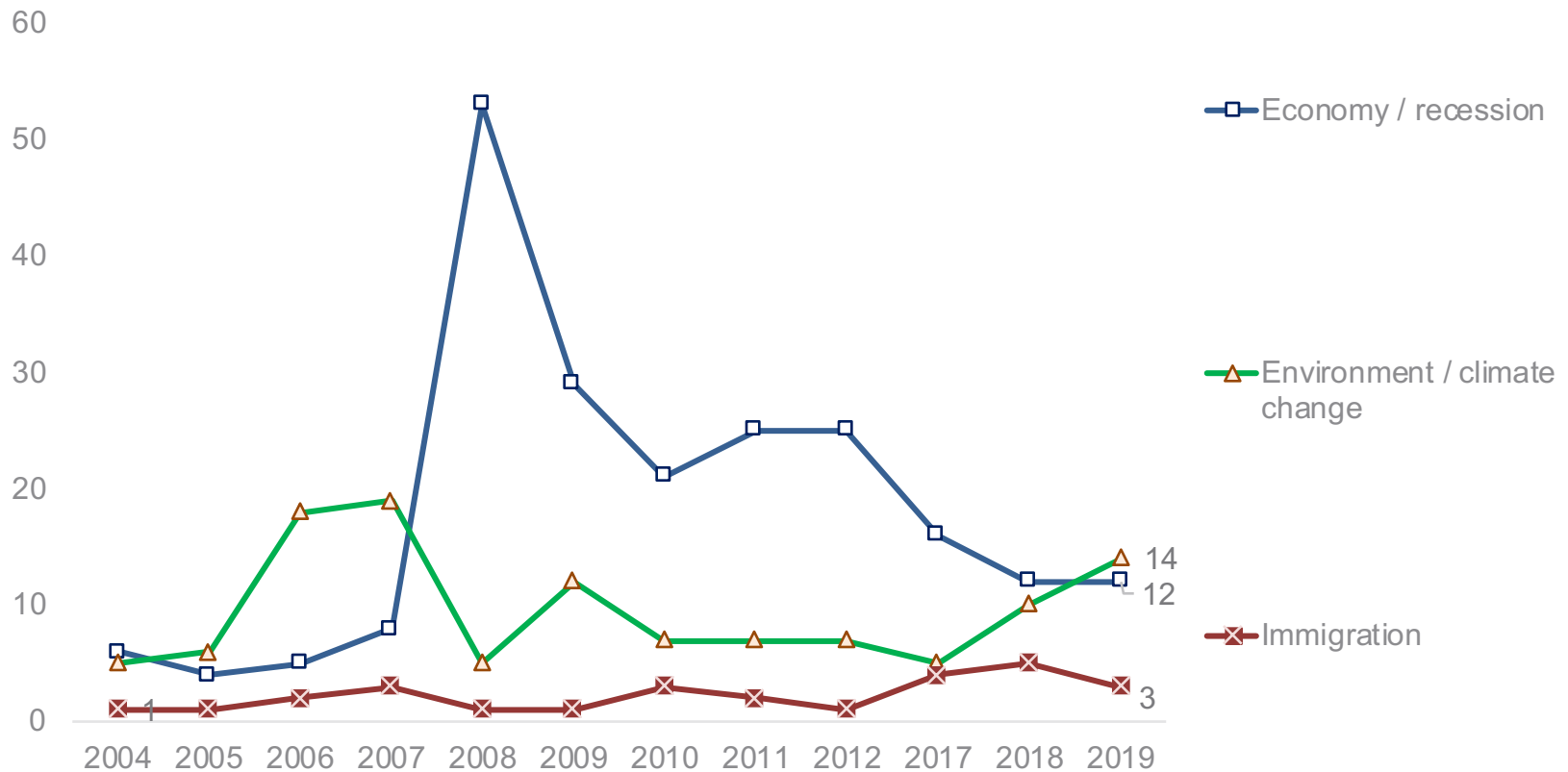
1993 – 2018 Top mentions (unprompted)

*What is the most important contribution that Canada makes to the world today?*



# Very few say that immigration is the most important problem facing Canada

2004-2019



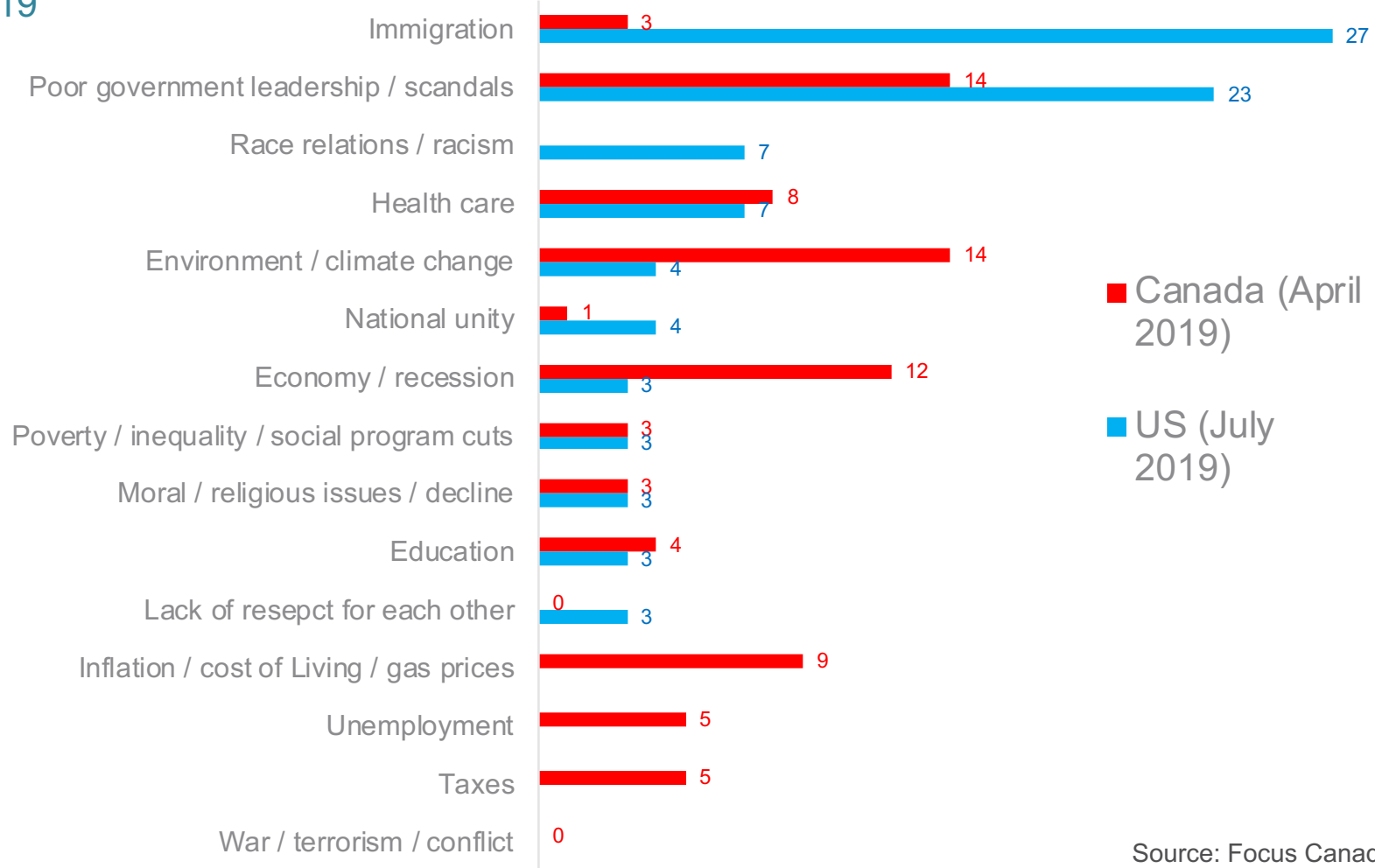
*In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing CANADIANS today?*

Source: Focus Canada



# Americans are 9 times more likely than Canadians to say that immigration is the most important problem facing their country today

2019



■ Canada (April 2019)

■ US (July 2019)



# Attitudes to immigration are consistently related to region, age, education and income

---

2019

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Higher support for immigration</b>	<b>Lower support for immigration</b>
Region	Atlantic / BC	Alberta / Prairies
Age	Younger	Older
Education	University	HS or less
Income	Higher income	Lower income
Immigration	--	--
Gender	--	--

*Overall, there is too much immigration to Canada*

Source: Focus Canada





# Part 3: Polarization

## Overview

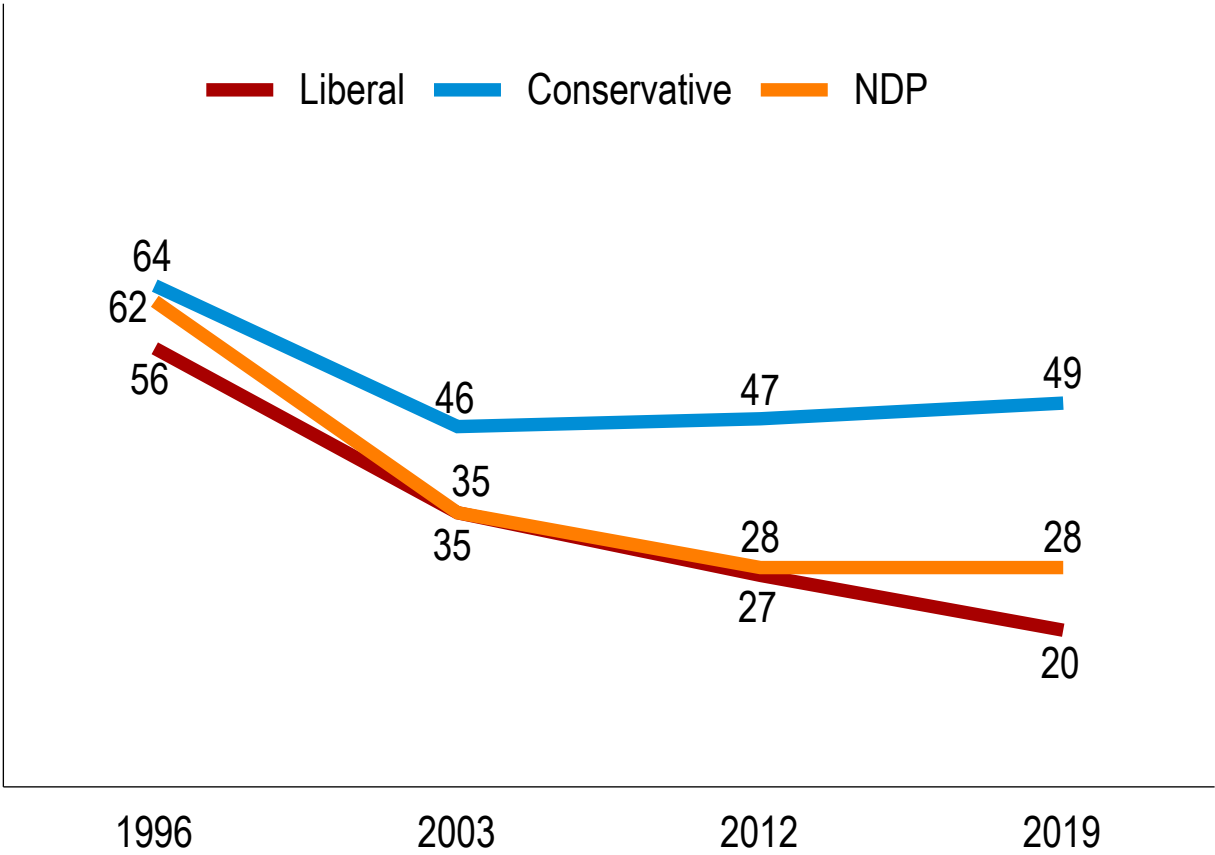
- There is some evidence of polarization, including polarization along partisan lines
- It is doubtful that this is related to heightened economic anxiety
- Attitudes towards tolerance and economic security have always been linked, but it is not clear that this is what has been changing
  - Not clear that economic concerns are “generating” polarization
- The “fault-lines” may lie elsewhere
  - The proposition that “feelings about social integration are generating polarization” is possibly backwards – keeping in mind that feelings are on the whole more welcoming



# In Canada there is growing political polarization around the number of immigrants being accepted each year

1996 - 2019 By political party support

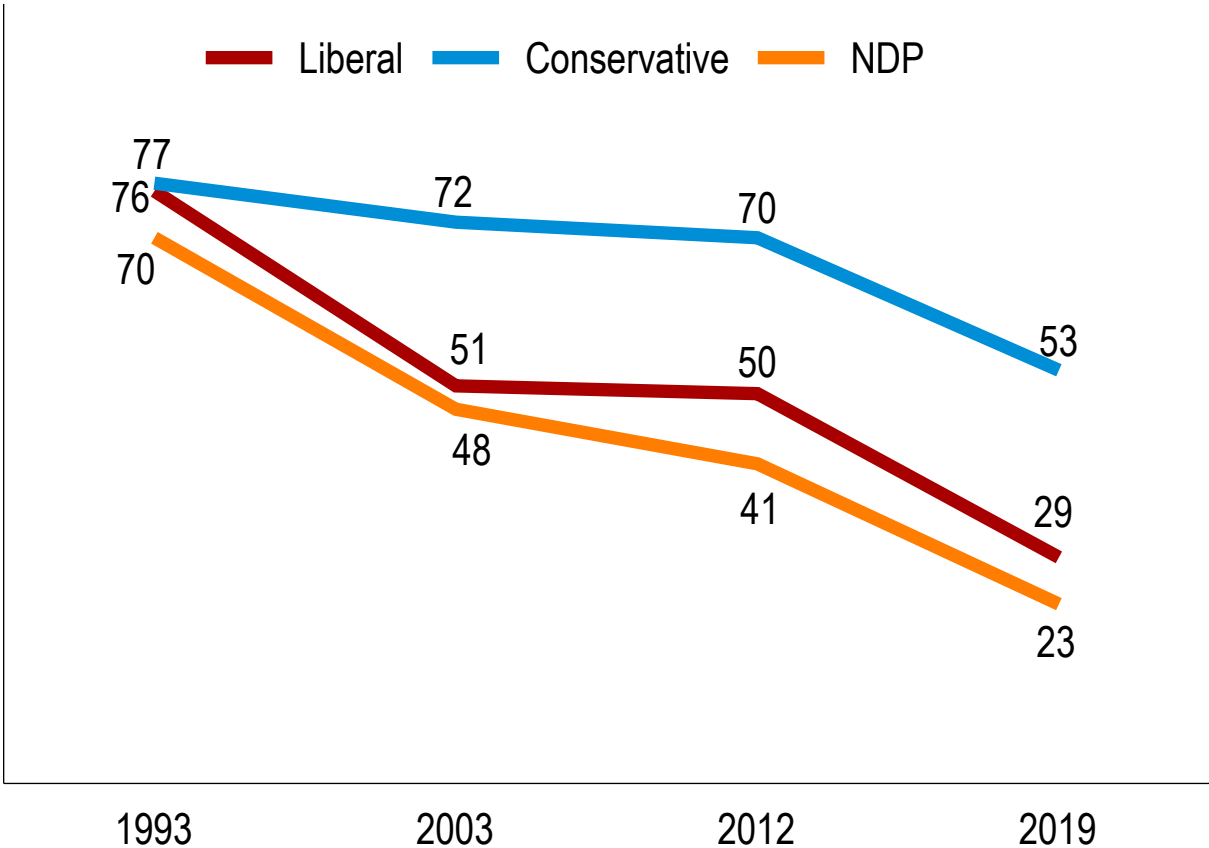
*Agree or disagree: "There is too much immigration in Canada"*



# Public concerns about illegitimate refugees are declining across the population, but less so among Conservatives

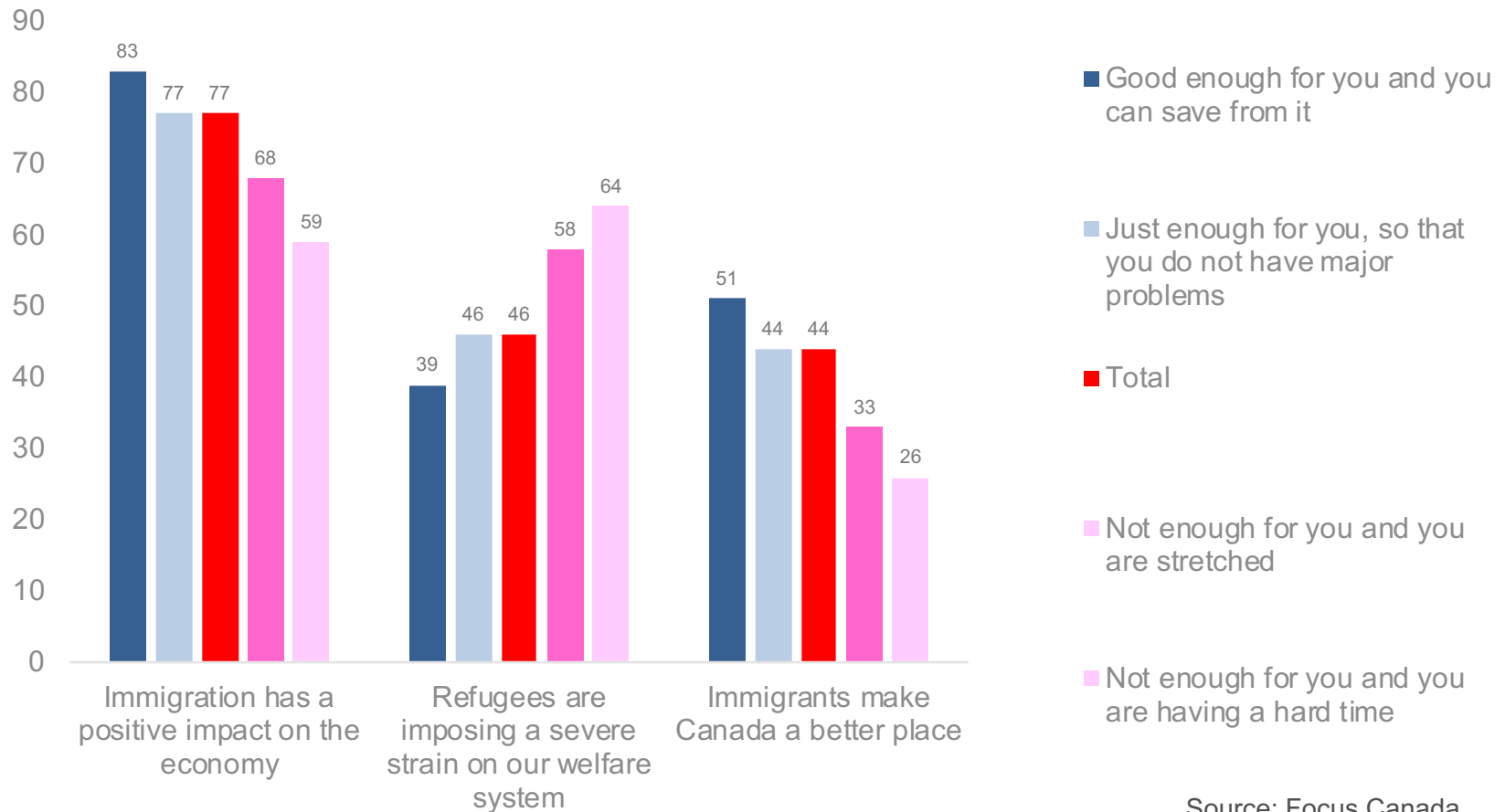
1993 - 2019 By political party support

Agree or disagree: "Too many refugee claimants are not legitimate"



# Views on immigration and household income are linked

2019

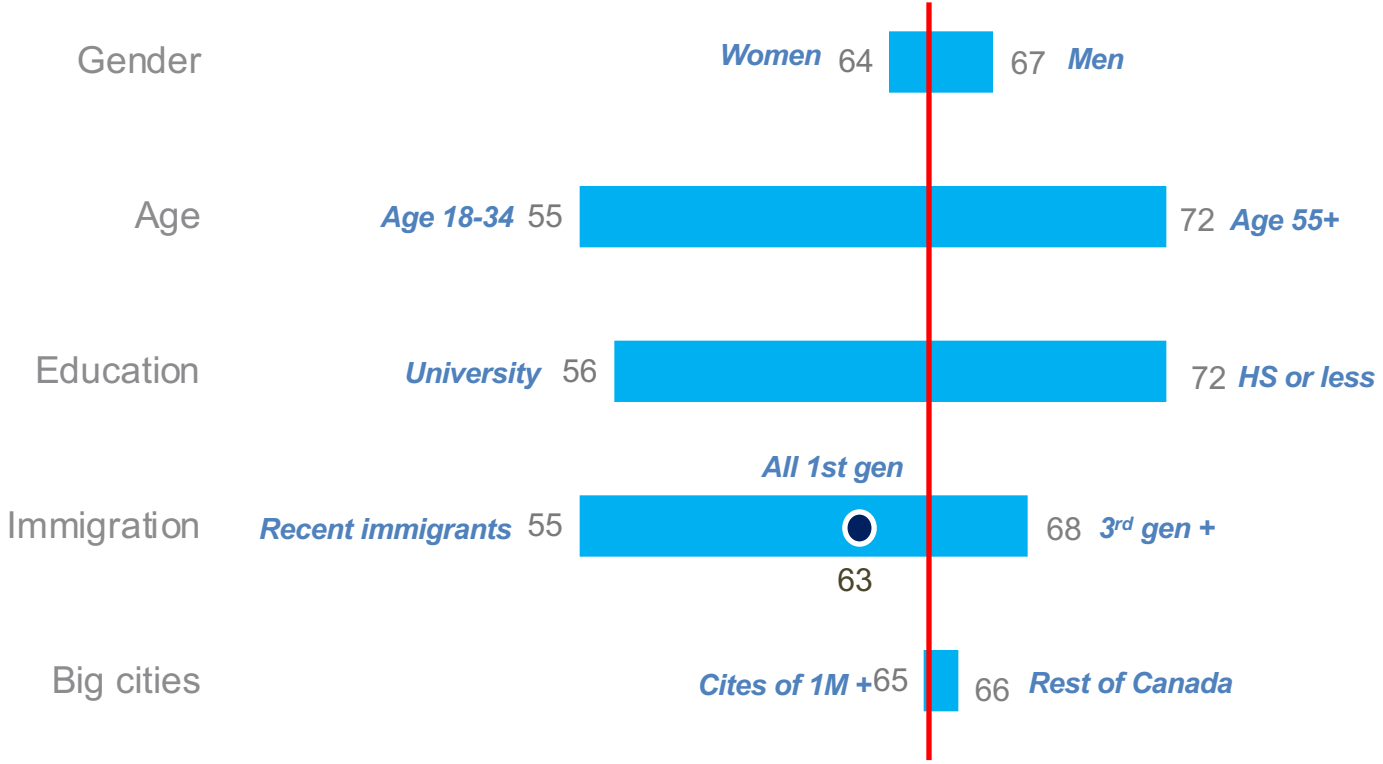


Source: Focus Canada



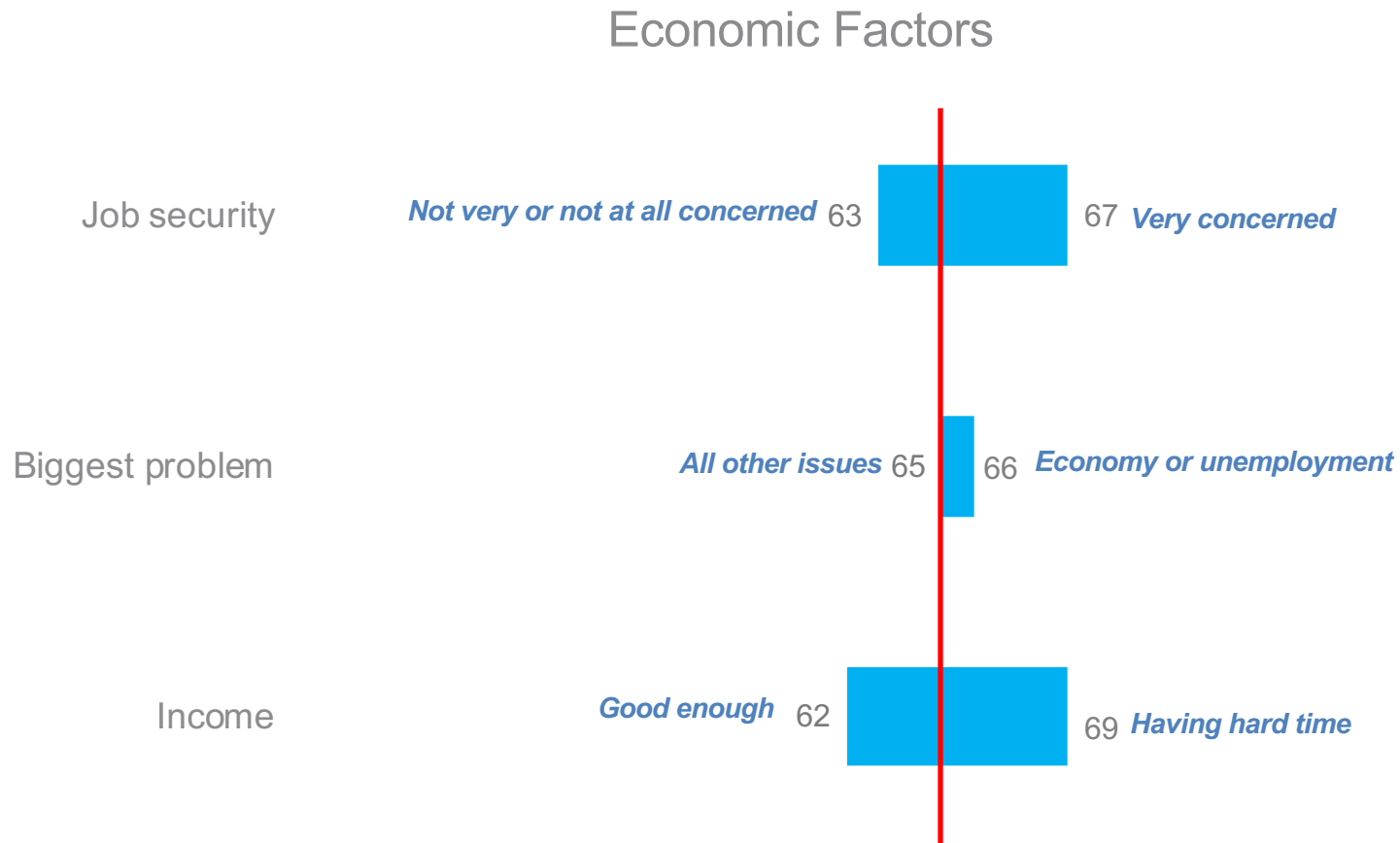
# 1. Agreement that too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values is related to *age and education*

Demographic Factors



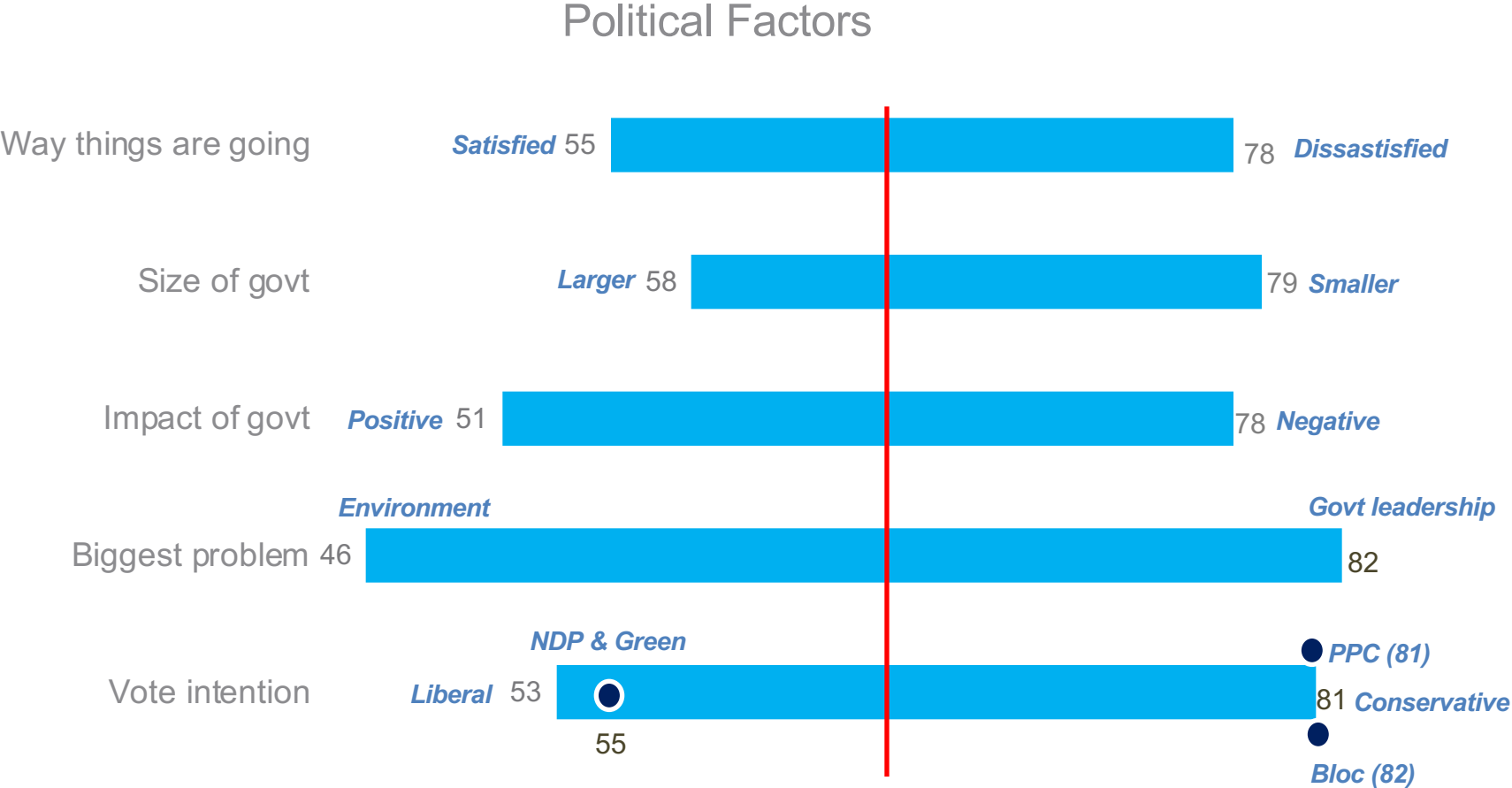
Agree: There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values

## 2. Agreement that too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values is not as strongly related to *economic concerns*



*Agree: There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values*

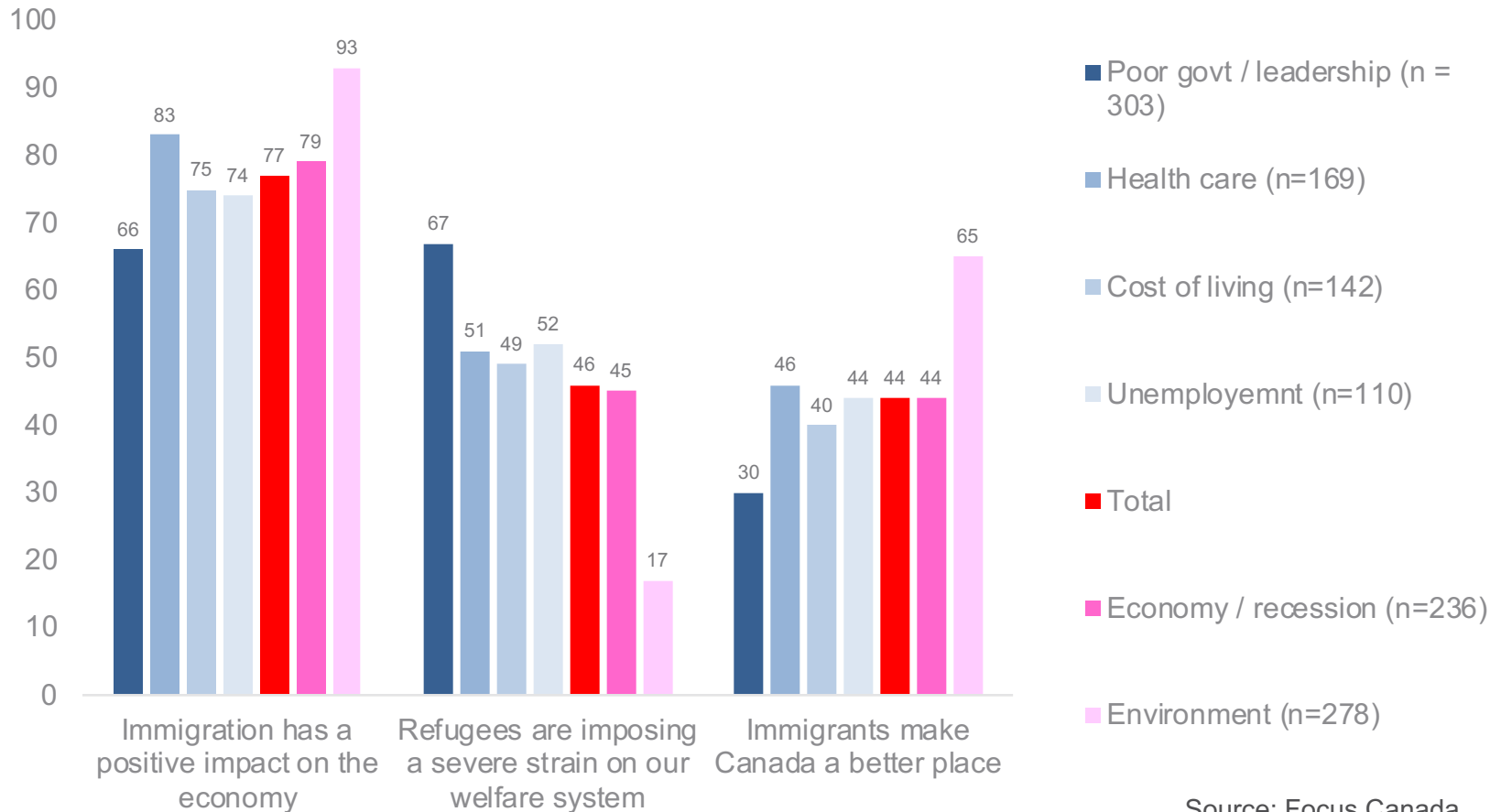
### 3. Agreement that too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values is very strongly related to *political views*



Agree: There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values

# Views on immigration, by choice of most important problem facing Canada

2019



Source: Focus Canada





# Recap

# Recap

- Improved general economic outlook is co-existing with accentuated anxieties (affordability, job security, inter-generational mobility)
- The main “cleavage” in the country in terms of economic outlook is regional
- The urban / rural divide is not really a thing
- Concern about inequality is long-standing, but not necessarily increasing
- Views on immigration and refugees are becoming more and not less positive, but political polarization around the issue is increasing its visibility (salience)
- Attitudes towards tolerance and economic security have always been linked, but it is not clear that this is the most relevant fault-line



# Data presented in this survey

Details of Environics Institute projects and surveys, including reports, tables, and notes on methodology, can be found on our website at <https://www.environicsinstitute.org/projects>

The following Institute surveys are cited in this presentation:

## ➤ **Americas Barometer**

- Multi-country public opinion survey on democracy, governance and political engagement
- 2019 data for Canada (n=1,508) conducted between June 27 – July 10, 2019

## ➤ **World Gallup Poll**

- Conducted annually in 140 countries.
- Canadian survey data collected by Gallup in August 2018 (n=1,009)

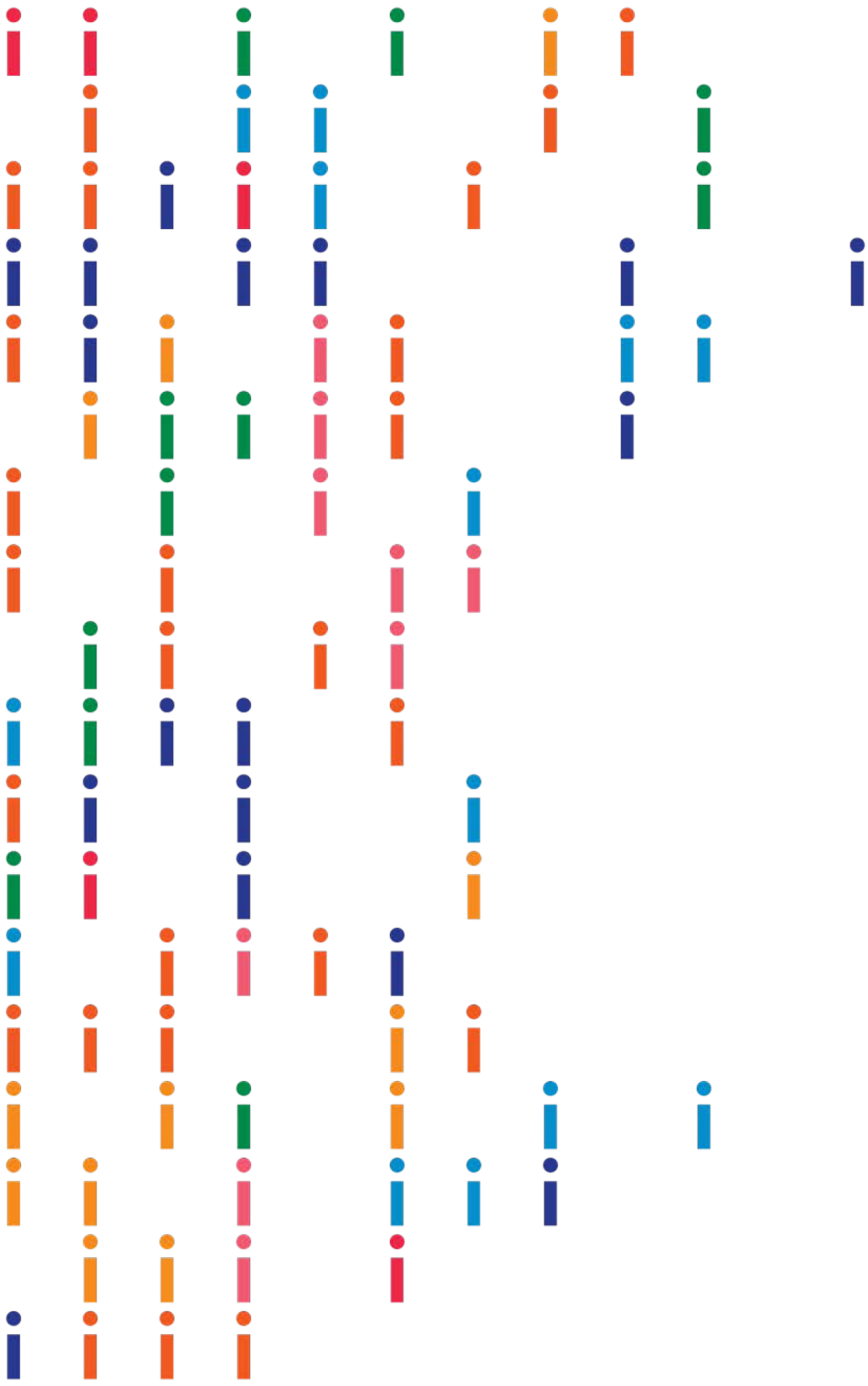
## ➤ **Focus Canada**

- Focus Canada is an ongoing public opinion research program that provides a credible, independent and sustained source of Canadian public opinion data on important issues facing the country. The most recent Focus Canada survey of 2,000 Canadians was conducted between April 1 and 10, 2019

## ➤ **Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey of Canadians**

- The Confederation of Tomorrow 2019 survey of Canadians was conducted online (in the provinces) and by telephone (in the Territories) with a sample of 5,732 Canadians (age 18 and over) between December 14, 2018 and January 16, 2019.





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