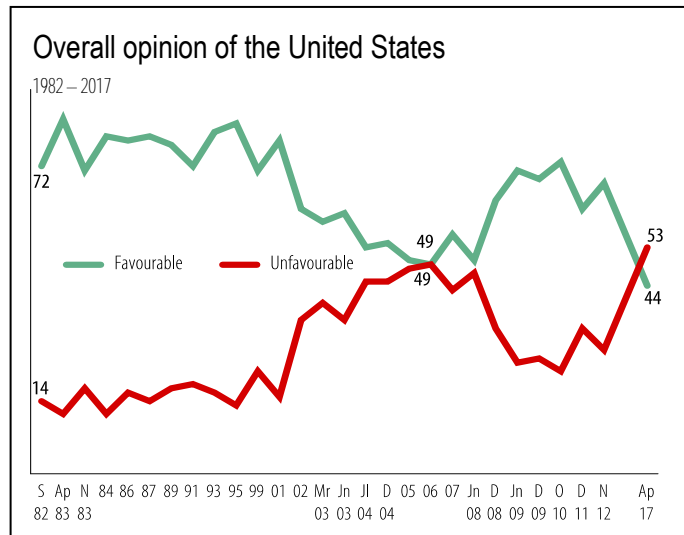


Canada – USA relations

The election of Donald Trump has had a negative impact on Canadians' overall opinion of the USA, and is now at its lowest level in 35 years. One in four Canadians has changed plans for US travel this year or is considering it. Opinion is divided on whether the anti-government populism happening elsewhere will arrive in Canada soon.

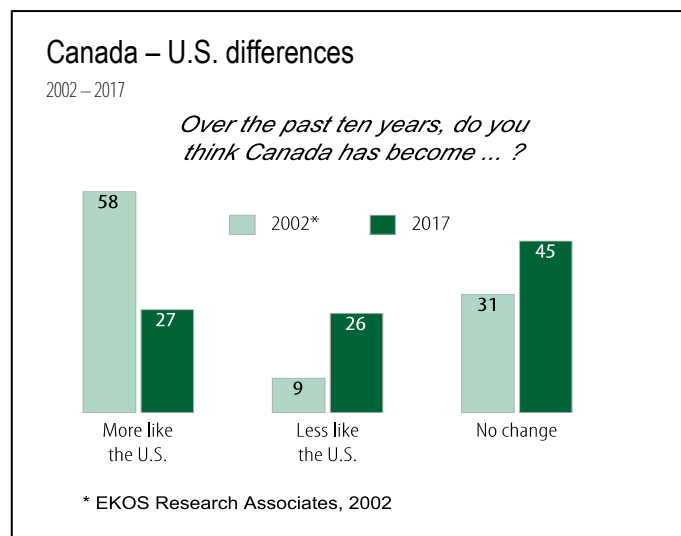
Overall opinion of the USA. The unexpected election of Donald Trump to the US Presidency last fall delivered a major jolt to that country's political and cultural fabric, and has also had a dramatic impact on how Canadians view their neighbour to the south. Fewer than half now hold a very (9%) or somewhat (35%) favourable overall opinion of the USA, down substantially since Fall 2012, during the lead up to Barack Obama's reelection victory (when 68% held a positive opinion). This represents the lowest favourable rating of the USA since Focus Canada began measuring it in 1982. A majority say their overall opinion of the USA is somewhat (33%) or very (20%) unfavourable (with very unfavourable ratings almost tripling since 2012).

This significant decline in favourable impressions of the USA is evident across the country, but most noticeably in eastern Canada, among those Canadian-born, and women (only 38% of women are positive, down 32 percentage points from 2012). Favourable impressions are comparatively higher among residents of the Prairie provinces (54%) and men (51%). Very unfavourable ratings are highest among Canadians in the lowest income bracket (29%) and those born in another country (27%).



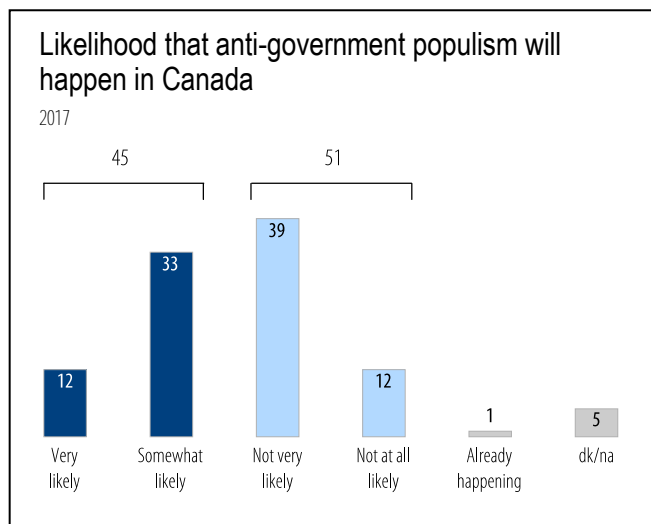
Are Canada and the USA becoming more alike? Fifteen years ago, research conducted by EKOS Research showed that most Canadians were of the opinion that their country was becoming more like the USA. In 2017 this is much less likely to be the case. Only one in four (27%) now subscribes to this view (down from 58% in 2002), with a comparable proportion (26%) saying Canada has become *less* like the USA (up 17 points). A growing plurality (45%) maintains there has been little change over the past decade.

Opinions on this question are generally similar across the population. The view that Canada is becoming more like the USA is most evident in Alberta and B.C. and among Canadians with the lowest household incomes. The opposite view is comparatively more prevalent in Atlantic Canada and among Canadians 18 to 29 years of age, as well as among those with higher levels of education and income.



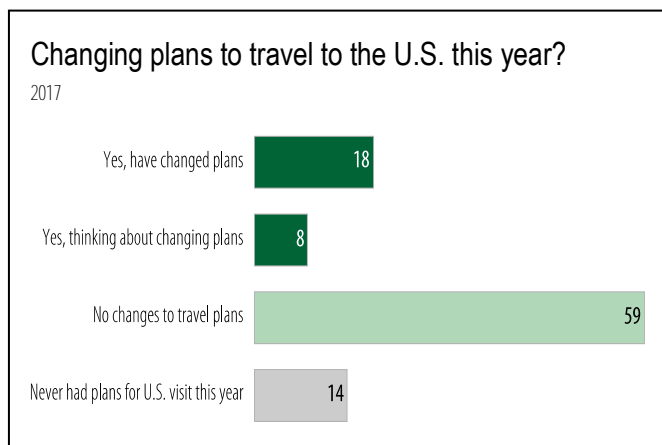
Anti-government populism: Can it happen here? The election of Donald Trump is part of a broader trend sweeping countries in Europe and elsewhere that might be described as anti-government populism and a backlash against progressive politics and values that until recently have been on the ascendency in much of the western world. Will this trend find its way to Canada?

On this question, Canadians are divided, with few holding definitive views. Nearly half believe is it very (12%) or somewhat (33%) likely that this type of anti-government populism will happen in Canada over the next few years, compared with a bare majority who say it is somewhat (39%) or very (12%) unlikely. One percent insists that it is already happening.



Public opinion on this question is notably consistent across the country, with a few exceptions. Albertans are the most likely to anticipate the arrival of anti-government populism (52%, including 19% who say it is very likely to happen). At the other end of the spectrum, only one-quarter (25%) of Vancouverites share this view. Education and income appear to have a modest influence on perspectives; those with higher levels are somewhat less apt to believe this trend will happen in Canada.

Changing travel plans to the USA. One of the first steps of the new Trump administration involved new travel restrictions placed on visitors who hold citizenship with selected countries in the Middle East. This has created problems at the border for Canadians holding such passports and some organizations (e.g., public schools) have cancelled plans for US travel. The chill created by the new US policies is causing many Canadians to rethink their travel plans.



Close to one-fifth (18%) of Canadians surveyed say they have already changed their plans for visiting the USA this year because of the current political climate in that country, with another eight percent who say they are thinking about doing the same. Six in ten (59%) have not done so, while another 14 percent report they never had any plans for US travel this year.

Rethinking travel to the USA is evident across all groups of the population, but most noticeably among residents of Ontario (30% already changed plans or thinking about it) and B.C. (32%), as well as women (31%, versus 21% among men). Canadians born outside the country (22%) are somewhat more likely than native born (17%) to have already changed plans for such travel.

The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 to promote relevant and original public opinion and social research on important issues of public policy and social change. The focus of the Institute's mandate is to survey individuals and groups not usually heard from, asking questions not normally asked. For further information see www.EnvironicsInstitute.org, or contact Dr. Keith Neuman at 416-969-2457 or keith.neuman@environics.ca