

Canadians and Americans: Shared Values but Not Shared Culture

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The McGill Institute for the Study of Canada and the Association for Canadian Studies

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Must the phrase “American culture” refer exclusively to the culture of the United States? Or may we use it to designate the shared experience of countries like Canada, the United States and Mexico, whose identities have been forged by geographical proximity and overlapping histories. Beginning February 13 through February 15th the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada (MISC) will hold its annual conference under the theme “Are We American? Canadian Culture in North America”, the 2008 conference will ask whether it makes sense to speak of a common North American culture.

In light of the forthcoming conference the Association for Canadian Studies and the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada commissioned the firm Leger Marketing to inquire into Canadian opinion on shared North American values and the similarity of Canadian and American cultures. Some 1500 Canadians were surveyed over the period January 31 to February 4, 2008 with a margin of error of 3.5 19 times out of 20. The survey found that:

Highlights:

-The majority of Canadians (59%) agree that all North Americans share certain values which are different from those of the rest of the world.

-A majority of Canadians (65%) disagree that Canadian and U.S. culture are basically the same

-Two-thirds of Canadians disagree that those Canadians who wish to be successful in the arts and culture cannot avoid moving to the United States

1) I think all North Americans share certain values which are different from those of the rest of the world

The majority of Canadians (59%) agree that all North Americans share certain values which are different from those of the rest of the world.

On the basis of gender male respondents were more likely to agree that all North Americans share certain values which are different from those of the rest of the world (68%) than female respondents (51%).

	Total	Male	Female
Total absolu :	1501	630	871
TOTAL AGREE	59%	68%	51%
Strongly agree	15%	19%	12%
Somewhat agree	44%	48%	40%
TOTAL DISAGREE	34%	27%	40%
Somewhat disagree	25%	19%	32%
Strongly disagree	8%	8%	8%
DK/Refused	7%	5%	9%

On the basis of language Francophones were most likely to agree (61%) that all North Americans share certain values which are different from those of the rest of the world. This is the case of 59% of Anglophones and Allophones.

	Total	French	English	Other
Total absolu :	1501	611	774	116
TOTAL AGREE	59%	61%	59%	59%
Strongly agree	15%	12%	14%	24%
Somewhat agree	44%	50%	45%	35%

TOTAL DISAGREE	34%	31%	35%	33%
Somewhat disagree	25%	26%	26%	23%
Strongly disagree	8%	5%	8%	10%
DK/Refused	7%	7%	7%	8%

On the basis of education respondents with no postsecondary education were more likely to agree that all North Americans share certain values which are different from those of the rest of the world (63%) than respondents with are university educated (54%). This is the case of 62% Canadians who have a college education.

	Total	Elem/sec	College	Univ.
Total absolu :	1501	301	492	686
TOTAL AGREE	59%	63%	62%	54%
Strongly agree	15%	20%	14%	13%
Somewhat agree	44%	43%	48%	42%
TOTAL DISAGREE	34%	27%	33%	43%
Somewhat disagree	25%	22%	26%	29%
Strongly disagree	8%	5%	7%	14%
DK/Refused	7%	10%	5%	2%

2) I think Canadian and U.S. culture are basically the same

Less than a third (31%) of Canadians agree that Canadian and U.S. culture are basically the same. A majority of Canadians (65%) disagree that Canadian and U.S. culture are basically the same.

On the basis of gender there are no considerable differences in those who agree that Canadian and U.S. culture are basically the same.

	Total	Male	Female
Total pondéré :	1501	735	766
Total absolu :	1501	630	871
TOTAL AGREE	31%	32%	29%
Strongly agree	6%	8%	5%
Somewhat agree	24%	25%	24%
TOTAL DISAGREE	65%	64%	65%
Somewhat disagree	34%	34%	35%
Strongly disagree	30%	30%	31%
DK/Refused	5%	4%	6%

On the basis of language Canadians whose first language is neither English nor French are more likely to agree that Canadian and U.S. culture are basically the same (35%) than Francophones (31%) and Anglophones (29%).

	Total	French	English	Other
Total pondéré :	1501	327	865	309
Total absolu :	1501	611	774	116
TOTAL AGREE	31%	31%	29%	35%
Strongly agree	6%	4%	6%	9%
Somewhat agree	24%	27%	23%	25%
TOTAL DISAGREE	65%	64%	66%	60%
Somewhat disagree	34%	38%	34%	32%
Strongly disagree	30%	26%	33%	28%
DK/Refused	5%	5%	5%	5%

On the basis of education Canadians with no postsecondary education are more likely to agree that Canadian and U.S. culture are basically the same (37%) than Canadians with a college (30%) and university (26%) education.

	Total	Elem/sec	College	Univ.
Total pondéré :	1501	545	443	477
Total absolu :	1501	301	492	686
TOTAL AGREE	31%	37%	30%	26%
Strongly agree	6%	9%	4%	6%
Somewhat agree	24%	28%	26%	19%
TOTAL DISAGREE	65%	57%	66%	73%
Somewhat disagree	34%	30%	38%	36%
Strongly disagree	30%	27%	28%	37%
DK/Refused	5%	6%	4%	1%

3) Canadians who wish to be successful in the arts and culture cannot avoid moving to the United States

When asked “Canadians who wish to be successful in the arts and culture cannot avoid moving to the United States”, 28% of Canadians agreed with the statement, while the majority of Canadians 66% disagree with the statement.

On the basis of gender men were more likely to agree that Canadians who wish to be successful in the arts and culture cannot avoid moving to the United States (32%) than females (23%).

	Total	Male	Female
Total pondéré :	1501	735	766
Total absolu :	1501	630	871
TOTAL AGREE	28%	32%	23%
Strongly agree	7%	9%	6%
Somewhat agree	20%	23%	17%

TOTAL DISAGREE	66%	63%	68%
Somewhat disagree	36%	35%	37%
Strongly disagree	30%	28%	32%
DK/Refused	7%	6%	8%

On the basis of language Anglophones were more likely to agree that Canadians who wish to be successful in the arts and culture cannot avoid moving to the United States (30%) than Allophones (24%) and Francophones (23%)

	Total	French	English	Other
Total pondéré :	1501	327	865	309
Total absolu :	1501	611	774	116
TOTAL AGREE	28%	23%	30%	24%
Strongly agree	7%	4%	8%	9%
Somewhat agree	20%	19%	22%	16%
TOTAL DISAGREE	66%	72%	63%	66%
Somewhat disagree	36%	42%	33%	37%
Strongly disagree	30%	30%	30%	29%
DK/Refused	7%	5%	7%	10%

On the basis of education Canadians with a college education were more likely to agree that Canadians who wish to be successful in the arts and culture cannot avoid moving to the United States (32%) than Canadians with a university education (27%). This is the case of 26% of Canadians with no postsecondary education.

	Total	Elem/sec	College	Univ.
Total pondéré :	1501	545	443	477
Total absolu :	1501	301	492	686
TOTAL AGREE	28%	26%	32%	27%
Strongly agree	7%	8%	8%	7%
Somewhat agree	20%	18%	24%	20%
TOTAL DISAGREE	66%	65%	63%	71%
Somewhat disagree	36%	33%	34%	42%
Strongly disagree	30%	32%	29%	29%
DK/Refused	7%	10%	5%	3%