

“Doth I Protest”; Ontarians and not Quebecers are Canada’s leading public demonstrators

Jack Jedwab - Association for Canadian Studies
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May Day couldn’t be better timed in Quebec where demonstrations against the governments proposed tuition hikes have seen several consecutive days of street gathering drawing thousands of persons. If a title were offered for most public demonstrators over the course of 2012 surely Quebecers and particularly younger Quebecers would be the clear recipients. But in terms of the overall degree to which individuals from across Canada report that over the past five years they have participated in a public demonstration. A Leger Marketing survey commissioned by the Association for Canadian Studies reveals that over the past five years some 15% of the population acknowledge that they have participated in a public demonstration. Some 1522 Canadians were surveyed over the week of March 19th, 2012 with a margin of error for a telephone survey with an equivalent sample of 2.9% points 19 times out of 20. As we shall observe below, those who demonstrate are more likely to consider themselves leaders and not followers but perhaps paradoxically regard themselves as disempowered.

Nearly one in five Ontarians report having done so ahead of Quebec at 15%. It is worth noting that amongst Quebecers between the ages of 18 and 24 some 42% say they have participated in a public demonstration over the past 5 years compared with 36% of Ontarians.

In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Canada	6.8%	8.4%	11.0%	73.9%
Ontario	8.2%	11.1%	8.7%	72.1%
Quebec	7.5%	7.7%	8.6%	76.2%
British Columbia	7.4%	5.9%	18.1%	68.6%
Atlantic	4.0%	7.0%	13.0%	76.0%
Alberta	3.8%	5.7%	14.6%	75.9%
Prairies	3.0%	6.0%	11.0%	80.0%

On the basis of mother tongue, francophones are actually allophones and anglophones in terms of the extent to which they report having participated in a public demonstration. Keep in mind the survey was conducted on March 19th prior to the massive street protests in Quebec over tuition hikes.

	In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
French	6.6%	6.0%	9.3%	78.0%
English	7.2%	8.7%	12.5%	71.6%
Other	5.7%	10.8%	7.4%	76.1%
Total	6.7%	8.4%	11.0%	73.9%

On the basis of age young people between the age of 18 and 24 are by far more likely to report having participated in a public demonstration over the past 5 years.

	In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
18-24 years of age	12.3%	22.9%	12.3%	52.5%
25-34 years of age	9.7%	9.7%	16.6%	64.0%
35-44 years of age	6.1%	5.7%	12.8%	75.3%
45-54 years of age	7.5%	8.1%	10.4%	73.9%
55-64 years of age	4.4%	5.3%	8.8%	81.4%
65-74 years of age	3.0%	3.9%	5.9%	87.2%
75 years of age or older	1.5%	1.5%	4.5%	92.4%

On the basis of education it is persons with the lowest level of schooling that are least likely to have participated in a demonstration .

In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
... High school, general or professional (8 to 12 years)	3.7%	8.2%	9.3%	78.8%
... College pre-university, technical training, certificate (CEP), accreditation (ASP) or proficiency diploma (DEP)	8.2%	8.8%	10.4%	72.6%
... University certificates and diplomas	9.4%	5.2%	11.5%	74.0%
... University Bachelor (including classical studies)	5.5%	10.7%	11.9%	71.9%

On the basis of gender it is men more so than women that report having participated in a public demonstration,

	In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
...A man	8.6%	9.9%	11.8%	69.7%
...A woman	5.1%	7.0%	10.2%	77.8%

Persons with the lowest income were most likely have reported participating in a public demonstration over the past 5 years.

In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
\$19,999 or less	11.3%	17.7%	17.7%	53.2%
between \$20,000 and \$39,999	6.5%	10.7%	10.3%	72.5%
between \$40,000 and \$59,999	4.0%	7.2%	11.6%	77.2%
between \$60,000 and \$79,999	6.4%	9.3%	9.3%	75.0%
between \$80,000 and \$99,999	8.0%	6.3%	8.6%	77.0%
\$100,000 or more	8.7%	5.5%	8.7%	77.1%

Those who have participated in a public demonstration over the past 5 years are most likely to agree strongly that the government doesn't care much about what they think.

	I don't think that the government cares much about what people like me think			
In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	64.1%	21.4%	11.7%	2.9%
Somewhat agree	36.7%	46.9%	15.6%	.8%
Somewhat disagree	28.9%	42.2%	25.3%	3.6%
Strongly disagree	41.5%	37.3%	16.8%	4.4%

Those who have participated in a public demonstration over the past 5 years are most likely to agree that when with a group of people they take the lead in making decisions.

In the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration	When I'm with a group of people, I take the lead in making decisions			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Strongly agree	15.5%	60.2%	22.3%	1.9%
Somewhat agree	10.2%	57.8%	28.9%	3.1%
Somewhat disagree	5.4%	40.7%	48.5%	5.4%
Strongly disagree	5.4%	44.8%	36.7%	13.1%

Those who have participated in a demonstration trust teachers the most and politicians the least.

Strongly agree that in the past 5 years, I have taken part in a public demonstration	The following can be trusted a lot, somewhat trusted, trusted a little or not trusted at all:			
	Trusted a lot	Somewhat trusted	Trusted a little	Not trusted at all
Journalists	3.9%	46.6%	40.8%	8.7%
Teachers	38.2%	43.1%	15.7%	2.9%
Politicians	5.8%	13.6%	37.9%	42.7%
Police	12.7%	51.0%	20.6%	15.7%