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CANADIANS AND POPULISM

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EXCERPTS FROM A RESEARCH REPORT

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PRESENTED TO COGECO MEDIA BY CROP

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SEPTEMBER 22, 2017

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**life to ideas**

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## Methodology

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A panel-based online survey of Canadians 18+ years old, conducted from August 24 to 29 in order to measure Canadians' opinions and perceptions regarding various attitudes associated with the current rise of a populist movement in several Western countries.

Interview length: 10 minutes

A final sample of 1,053 respondents across Canada.

The final sample was weighted to reflect the actual distribution of the Canadian population in terms of age, sex, region, education and mother tongue, based on the census data issued by Statistics Canada.

A man in a suit is seen from the back, addressing a large, blurred crowd of people. The entire scene is overlaid with a teal color filter. The text 'Likelihood to vote for a populist leader' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image, with a white horizontal line underneath it.

# Likelihood to vote for a populist leader

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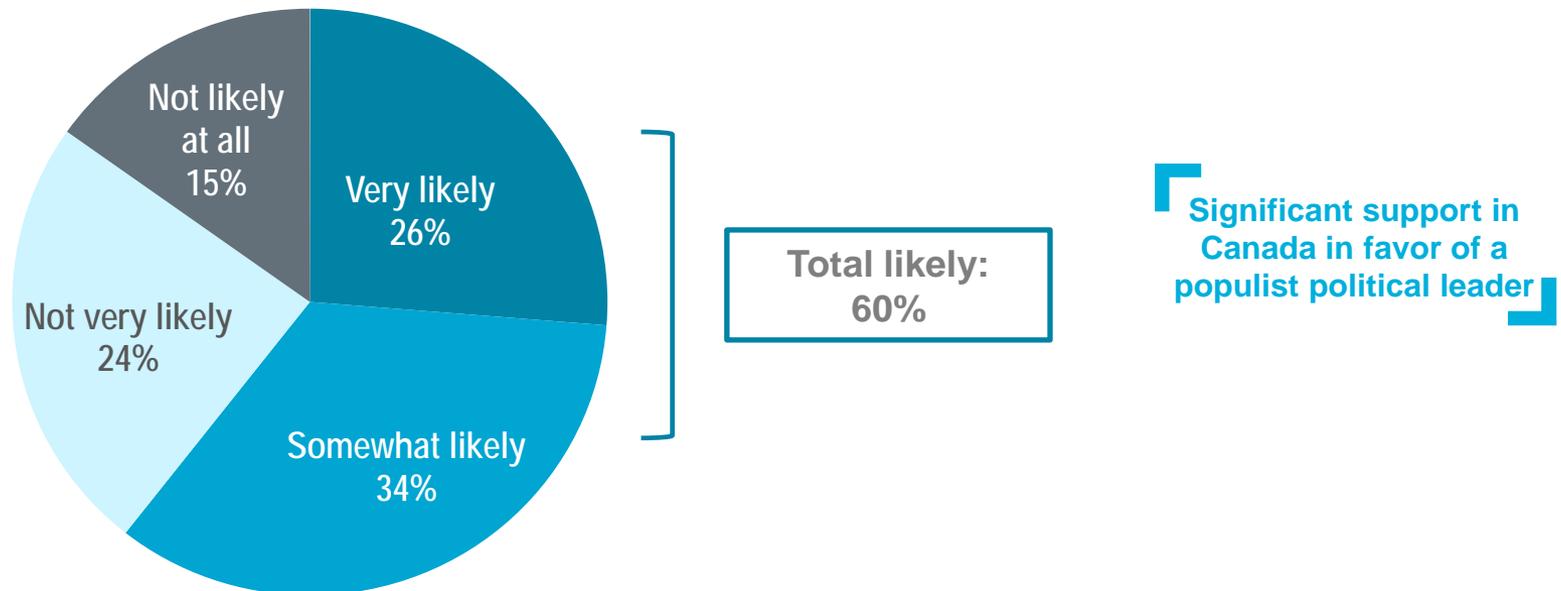
# Likelihood to vote for a populist leader

Base: Total Canadian respondents; n=1053

Q9. Now, let's suppose that a **new political candidate** makes the **following 4 promises** during an election campaign:

- a. Close borders substantially to immigrants and refugees
- b. Make the protection of our national identity a priority
- c. Not be at the service of the rich, the powerful and the elite of the country
- d. Really work for the country's middle class

What is the **likelihood that you would vote for this candidate?**



# Likelihood to vote for a populist leader according to demographic profile (1/2)

Base: Total Canadian respondents; n=1053

	TOTAL	EDUCATION			COMMUNITY SIZE		
		Sec.	Coll.	Univ.	1 Mill. inhab.	100k to 1 Mill.	<100k
	n= 1053 %	272 %	418 %	363 %	465 %	299 %	289 %
<b>Total likely</b>	<b>60</b>	61	<b>68</b>	<b>47</b>	59	<b>54</b>	<b>69</b>
Very likely	26	27	<b>31</b>	<b>17</b>	27	<b>20</b>	31
Somewhat likely	34	35	37	30	32	34	38
<b>Total unlikely</b>	<b>40</b>	39	<b>32</b>	<b>53</b>	41	<b>46</b>	<b>31</b>
Not very likely	24	24	<b>21</b>	<b>31</b>	23	<b>30</b>	20
Not likely at all	15	15	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>	18	16	<b>11</b>

**A stronger tendency to support populist ideas among Canadians whose education is lower than a bachelor's degree as well as residents of small communities (under 100,000 residents)**

Q9. Now, let's suppose that a new political candidate makes the following 4 promises during an election campaign: : a. Close borders substantially to immigrants and refugees; b. Make the protection of our national identity a priority; c. Not be at the service of the rich, the powerful and the elite of the country; d. Really work for the country's middle class. What is the likelihood that you would vote for this candidate?

# Likelihood to vote for a populist leader according to demographic profile (2/2)

Base: Total Canadian respondents; n=1053

	TOTAL	AGE			REGION	
		18-34	35-54	55+	Quebec	CWQ
	n= 1053 %	191 %	426 %	436 %	310 %	743 %
<b>Total likely</b>	60	<b>50</b>	<b>66</b>	62	<b>66</b>	<b>59</b>
Very likely	26	<b>18</b>	<b>31</b>	27	30	25
Somewhat likely	34	31	36	35	36	34
<b>Total unlikely</b>	40	<b>50</b>	<b>34</b>	38	<b>34</b>	<b>41</b>
Not very likely	24	<b>31</b>	<b>20</b>	24	24	24
Not likely at all	15	19	14	14	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>

Populist ideas resonate less with Millennials (18-34 years old), but find slightly more appeal among Quebecers than in the rest of Canada.

Q9. Now, let's suppose that a new political candidate makes the following 4 promises during an election campaign: : a. Close borders substantially to immigrants and refugees; b. Make the protection of our national identity a priority; c. Not be at the service of the rich, the powerful and the elite of the country; d. Really work for the country's middle class. What is the likelihood that you would vote for this candidate?

A group of seven diverse young people (four women and three men) are smiling and looking towards the camera. The image is overlaid with a solid blue color. The text is positioned on the left side of the image.

**Attitudes that are most  
likely to foster a populist  
vote**

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## Most attractive populist promise according to the intention to vote or refrain from voting for a populist leader

Base: Total Canadian respondents; n=1053

Q10. Which of these four promises most corresponds to your own beliefs?	TOTAL	Likelihood to vote for a populist leader				TOTAL LIKELY	TOTAL UNLIKELY
		Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	Not likely at all		
	n= 1053 %	277 %	353 %	255 %	168 %	630 %	423 %
Close borders substantially to immigrants and refugees	13	37	7	3	2	20	2
Make the protection of our national identity a priority	9	15	10	7	2	12	5
Not be at the service of the rich, the powerful and the elite of the country	24	18	24	29	31	21	29
Really work for the country's middle class	40	28	51	44	33	41	39
None of these promises fits with my own beliefs	12	2	7	18	32	5	24

The desire to put an end to Canada's open policy to immigrants and asylum seekers is the populist promise that finds the greatest appeal among those most likely to vote for a populist leader (37% of Canadians who would *very likely* vote for a populist leader think it is the one promise of the four that would most draw them in), while looking out for the middle class is rather associated with moderate voting intentions in favour of a populist agenda (51% of those who would *somewhat likely* vote for a populist candidate pick this promise as most attractive).

# Fears of loss of national identity & culture and populist vote

Base: Total Canadian respondents; n=1053

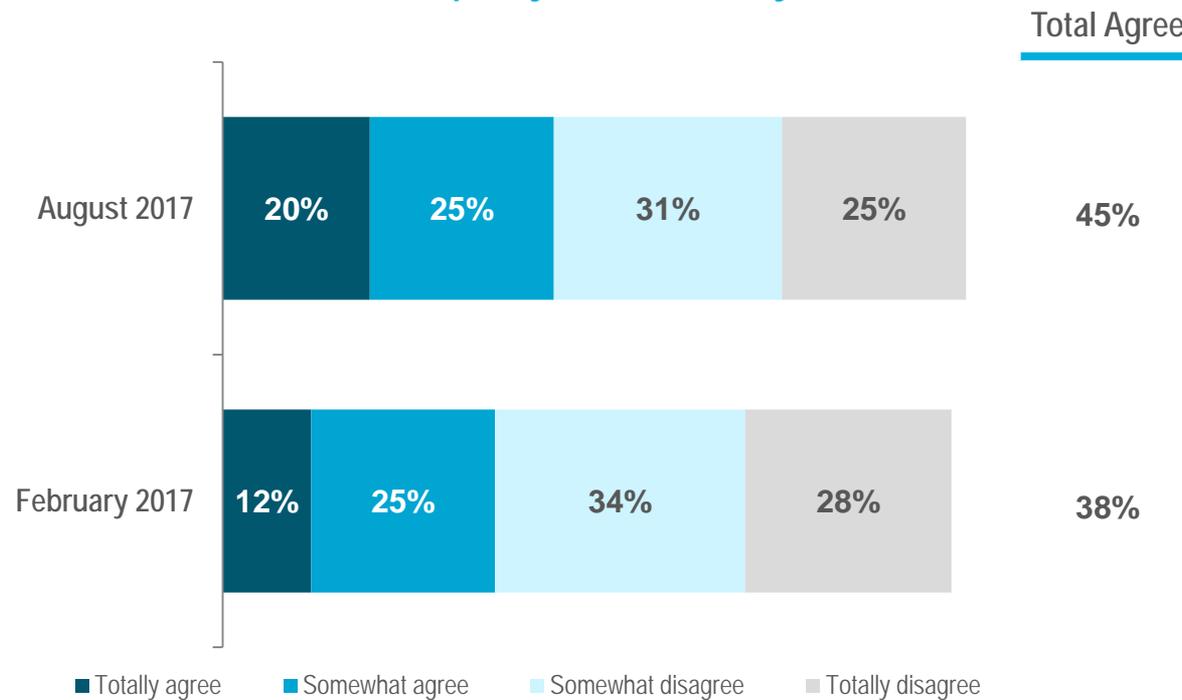
Agree with the following statements ("Totally" + "somewhat") ↓	TOTAL  n=	Likelihood to vote for a populist leader				TOTAL LIKELY %	TOTAL UNLIKELY %
		Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	Not likely at all		
A too open immigration policy in our country carries the risk of losing our own identity	1053 48	277 87	353 55	255 21	168 9	630 69	423 16
Overall, there is too much immigration. It threatens the purity of the country	45	83	52	17	9	65	14
Canada goes too far by receiving too many refugees	63	94	74	39	22	83	33

People’s fear that the increasing number of immigrants represents a threat to our culture and identity is the driver that most predisposes them to vote for a potential candidate with a populist agenda; it also explains why the promise to close borders is the most attractive for those citizens who would most likely vote for a populist leader: while 48% of Canadians agree that “A too open immigration policy in our country carries the risk of losing our own identity”, the level of support to this idea ratchets up to 87% among people who would very likely vote for a populist leader.

# Fears of loss of national identity and contextualization of “refugee crisis” perceptions (1/2)

Base: Total Canadian respondents (September 2017, n=1053; February 2017, n=2513)

“Overall, there is too much immigration. It threatens the purity of the country”



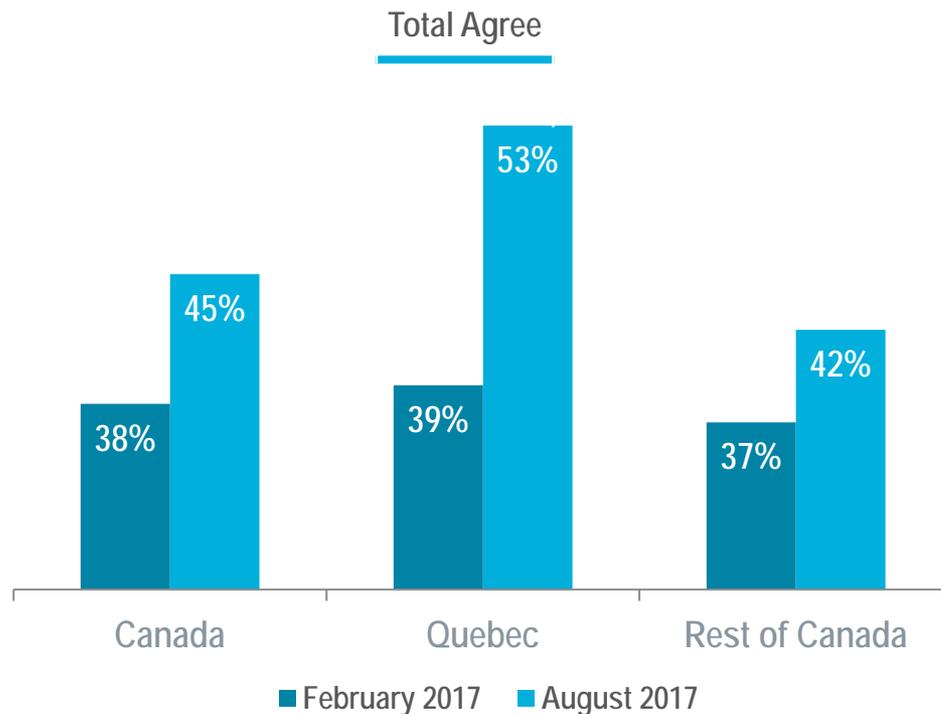
With the influx of Haitian refugees from the United States, there is a perception that the country is going through a refugee crisis, which exacerbates people’s fear of losing their identity and culture

Q5. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

# Fears of loss of national identity and contextualization of “refugee crisis” perceptions (2/2)

Base: Total Canadian respondents (September 2017, n=1053; February 2017, n=2513)

“Overall, there is too much immigration.  
It threatens the purity of the country”



This phenomenon of exacerbated fears is particularly strong in Quebec, where the influx of refugees is most concentrated today

Q5. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

# The perception of a failing democratic system and populist vote

Base: Total Canadian respondents n=1053

Agree with the following statements ("Totally" + "somewhat") ↓	TOTAL	Likelihood to vote for a populist leader				TOTAL LIKELY	TOTAL UNLIKELY
		Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	No likely at all		
	n= 1053 %	277 %	353 %	255 %	168 %	630 %	423 %
I firmly believe that our democratic system has reached its limits. The country is in dire need of a strong leader at its head with the full power to run things	51	76	59	32	22	67	28
Our society puts so much value on tolerance and "political correctness" that we end up caring more about the needs of minorities than those of the majority	70	92	81	55	35	85	47

**The perception that Western democracy has veered off course and no longer focuses on the "right" problems in society is the second attitude most often associated with the adoption of populist ideas.**

# Cynicism toward the current political leaders & media and populist vote

Base: Total Canadian respondents n=1053

Agree with the following statements ("Totally" + "somewhat") ↓	TOTAL n=	Likelihood to vote for a populist leader				TOTAL LIKELY %	TOTAL UNLIKELY %
		Very likely	Somewhat likely	Not very likely	No likely at all		
I do not trust any of the political parties that represent us currently at the various levels of the government	57	77	58	47	36	66	42
The traditional political parties couldn't care less about the concerns of the middle class or those of people like me	70	87	74	60	46	80	55
The media are an accomplice of the Establishment and power in the country	65	78	71	54	49	74	52

**A feeling that the elite today is corrupt and no longer serves the public interest is the third driver supporting populist leanings.**

An open book is shown from a top-down perspective, lying flat on a surface. The pages are slightly curved, and the book is open to a spread of pages. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The text 'Fake news and public consultations' is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the book. A white horizontal line is positioned below the text.

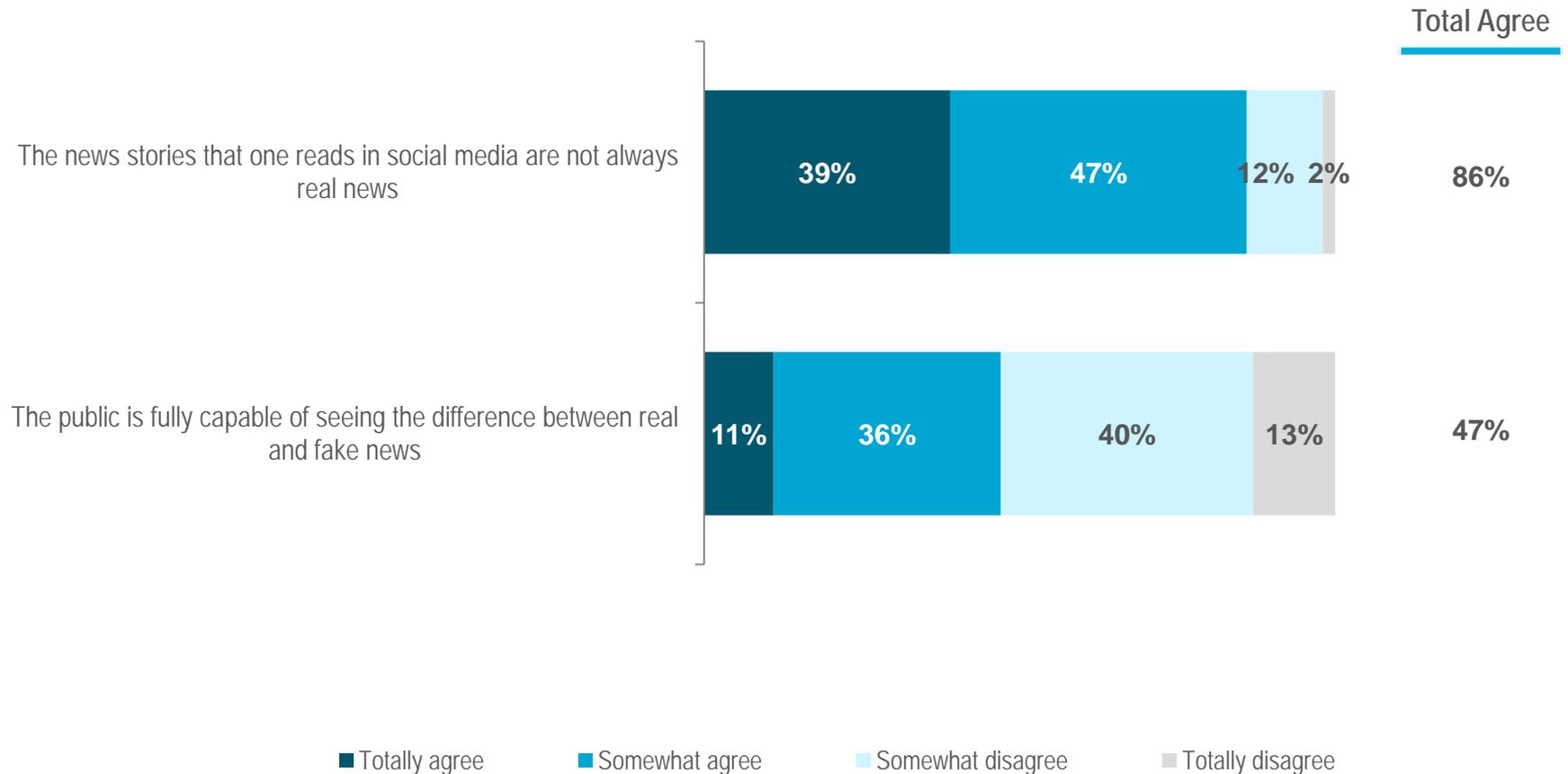
# **Fake news and public consultations**

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# Fake news

Base: Total Canadian respondents; n=1053

There is a relative consensus on the existence of fake news on social media, but opinions are divided as to the public's ability to discern fake from real news

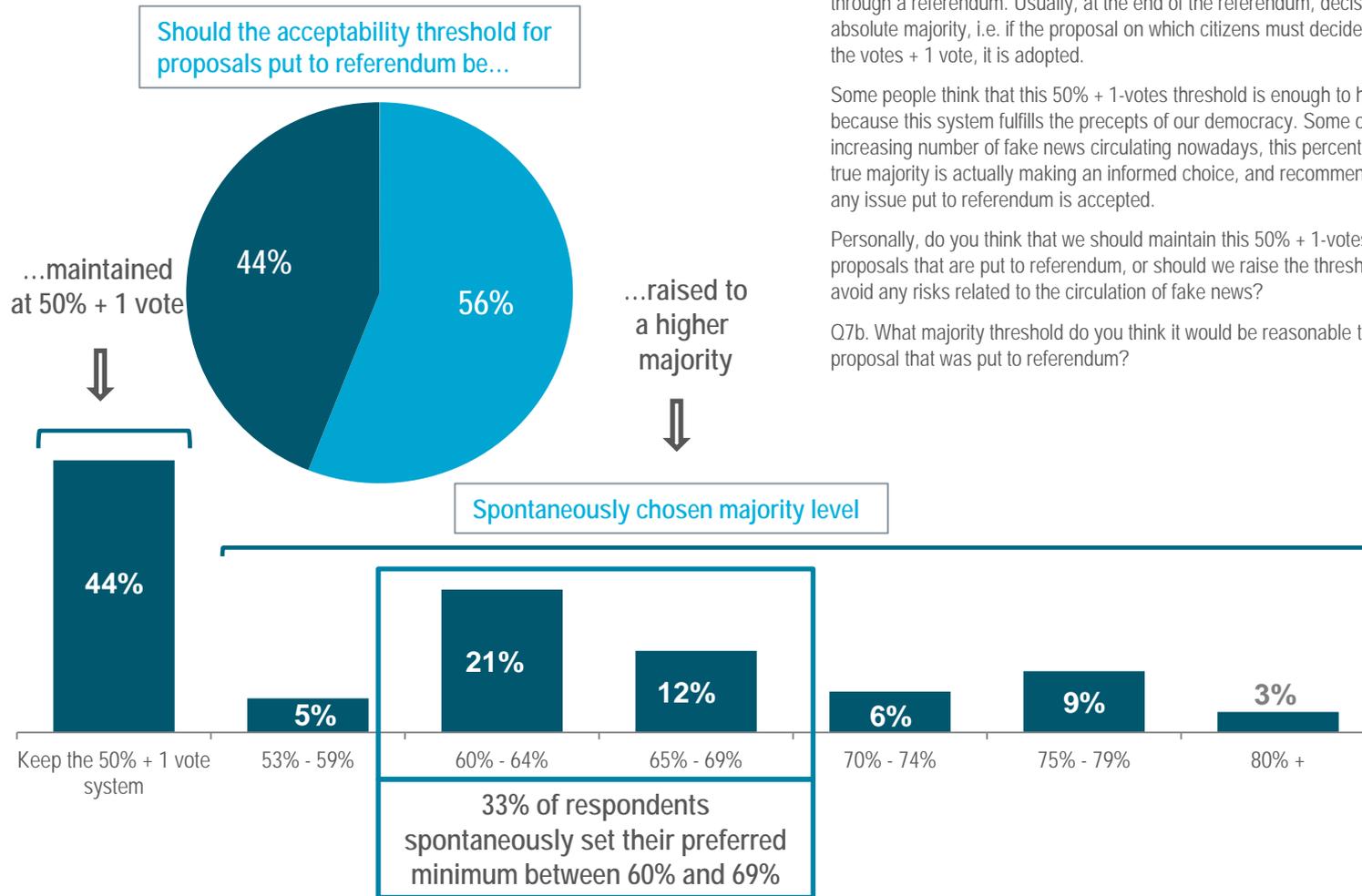


Q5. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements.

# Fake news and referendum acceptability threshold

Base: Total Canadian respondents; n=1053

Opinions are very divided when it comes to deciding what the minimum acceptability threshold should be for any new proposal put to referendum



Q7a. A country's population is at times called upon to give an opinion about an important issue through a referendum. Usually, at the end of the referendum, decisions are made on the basis of absolute majority, i.e. if the proposal on which citizens must decide obtains a minimum of 50% of the votes + 1 vote, it is adopted.

Some people think that this 50% + 1-votes threshold is enough to have a proposal accepted because this system fulfills the precepts of our democracy. Some others think that with the increasing number of fake news circulating nowadays, this percentage cannot guarantee that a true majority is actually making an informed choice, and recommend raising the threshold at which any issue put to referendum is accepted.

Personally, do you think that we should maintain this 50% + 1-votes system when adopting new proposals that are put to referendum, or should we raise the threshold to a higher majority level to avoid any risks related to the circulation of fake news?

Q7b. What majority threshold do you think it would be reasonable to set in order to adopt a proposal that was put to referendum?

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555, RENÉ-LÉVESQUE BLVD. WEST

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MONTREAL (QUEBEC) H3A 1B9

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SUITE 1501

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T 514 849-8086

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WWW.CROP.CA

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