

Provocation Ideas Festival Survey 2023

Festival Report



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Key Findings

1

A plurality is more concerned than excited about AI

When asked about how they felt about the increased use of AI, a plurality (47%) say that they are more concerned than excited. Half of the respondents express that AI had both positive and negative impacts on our society so far. Interestingly, 45% believe that AI has the potential to make fair decisions in complex situations, such as court sentencing and law enforcement. This combination of attitudes reflects a public uncertain but curious about new technology. Considering the novelty of AI, this is not surprising, but the findings shed light on the current open space for AI policy. Public opinion is not yet solidified.

2

Some aspects of AI excite Canadians, others have them feeling very concerned

Asked whether the use of AI across a range of issues made them feel more excited or concerned, respondents expressed excitement for the potential of AI performing household chores, slowing down the aging process and preventing disease, performing repetitive tasks, and diagnosing medical problems. Conversely, they voiced concern about AI handling customer service calls, the accelerated development of military technology, making important life decisions for individuals, and predicting people's thoughts and behaviors.

3

Most say regulation of AI seems difficult, and 54% think AI should be regulated globally

A significant majority (73%) of Canadians believe that regulating AI will be a challenging task. Unlike other questions concerning AI's impact on society, where younger individuals tend to be more optimistic than older ones, age did not influence respondents' perception of the difficulties associated with regulating AI. Across all age groups, Canadians share the belief that regulating AI will present a serious challenge. The support for global-level regulation (54%) is noteworthy and suggests that Canadians recognize the complexities associated with governing AI.

4

Canadians divided on the impact of digital media

More individuals report that the rise of digital media has had a positive impact on their lives (33%) compared to those who state it has had a negative impact (10%). However, the majority (52%) express that digital media has had a mixed impact, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. In terms of its effect on democracy in Canada, 26% believe that digital media has made it stronger, while 31% believe it has made it weaker. Additionally, 28% state that it has made no difference. A majority (55%) of respondents express that the rise of digital media has led people to become more informed than ever before, whereas only 24% believe that people are now less informed than ever before.

5

Canadians think that the criminal justice system is failing those with mental health issues

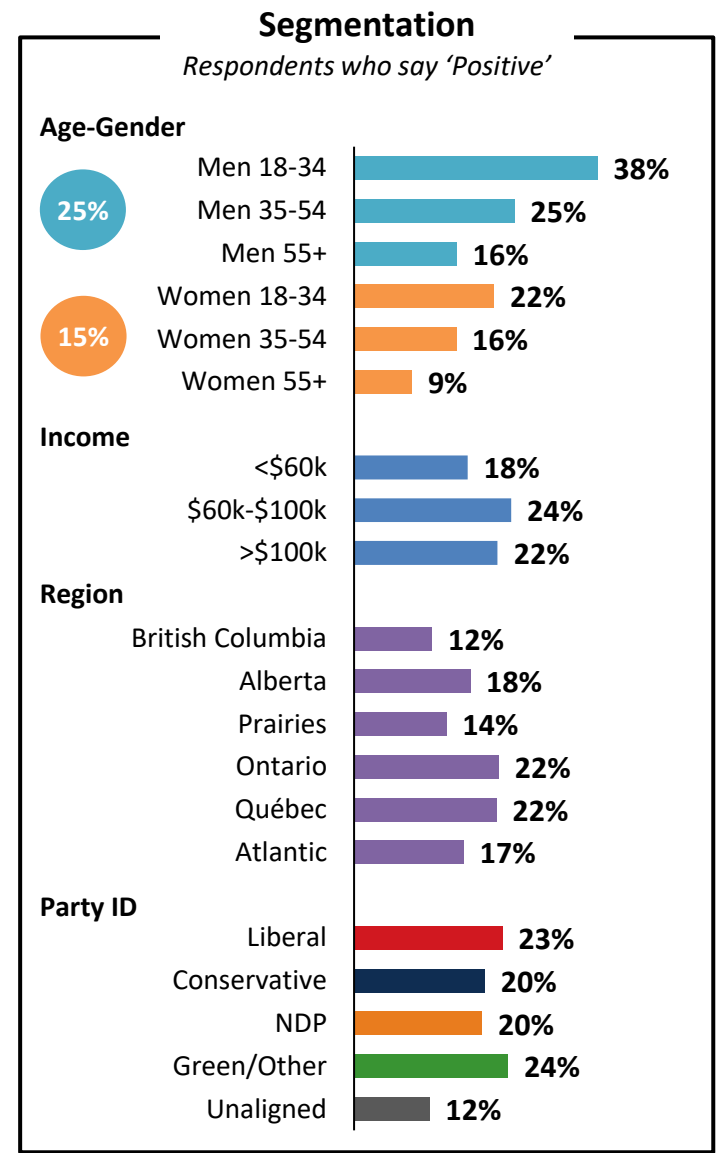
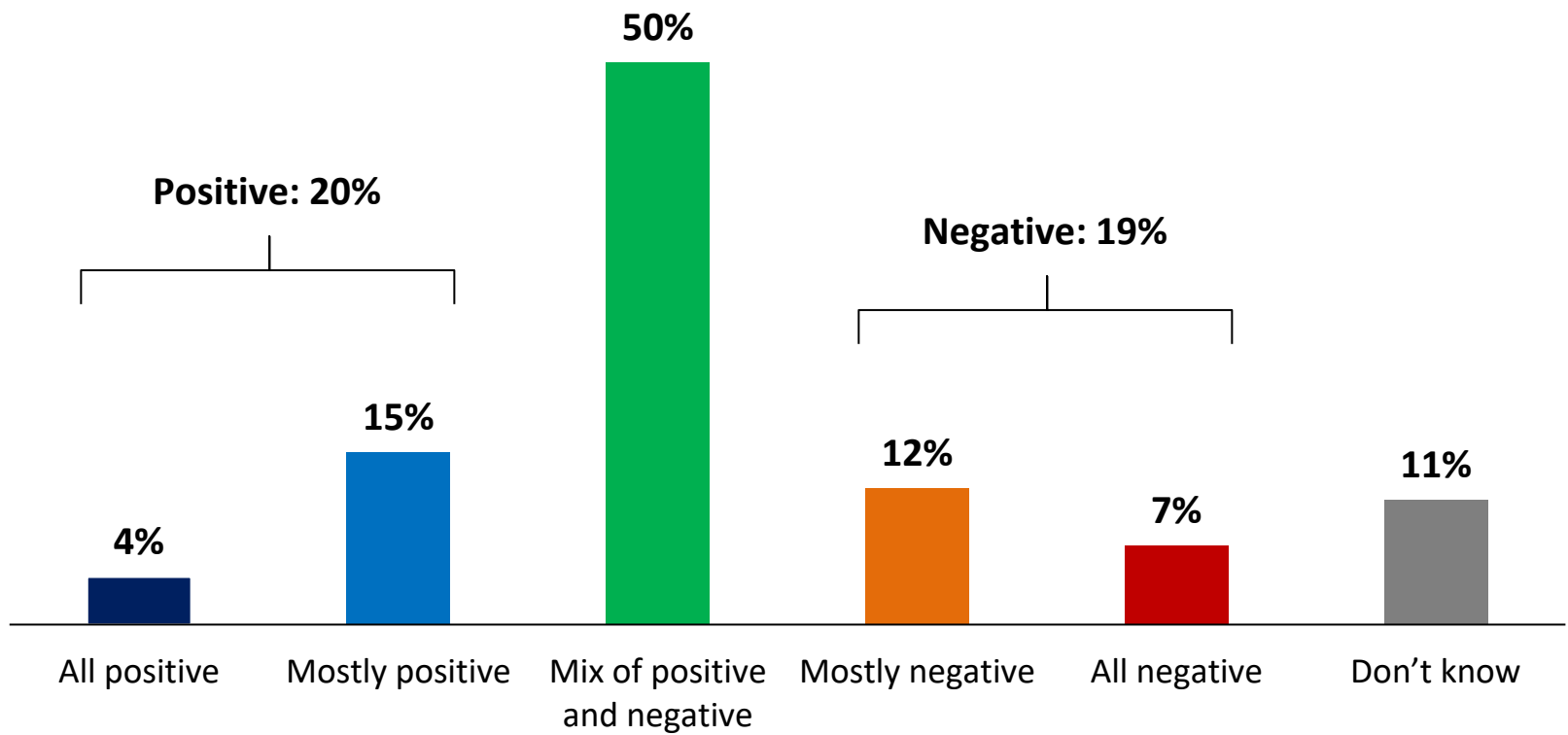
Only 16% of respondents, consistent across demographic groups, feel that the Canadian criminal justice system effectively handles individuals with mental health issues. In terms of the main role of the justice system, more Canadians believe that it should focus on rehabilitation (48%) rather than punishment (41%). Additionally, a majority (61%) of respondents believe that drug use should be treated as an illness, emphasizing prevention and treatment. When considering alternative approaches to the criminal justice system, a plurality (45%) of respondents view mental health courts or diversion programs as good alternatives.

The Promise and Perils of AI

Impact on Society:

Half believe that AI technology has had a mixed impact on our society, higher positivity among young people

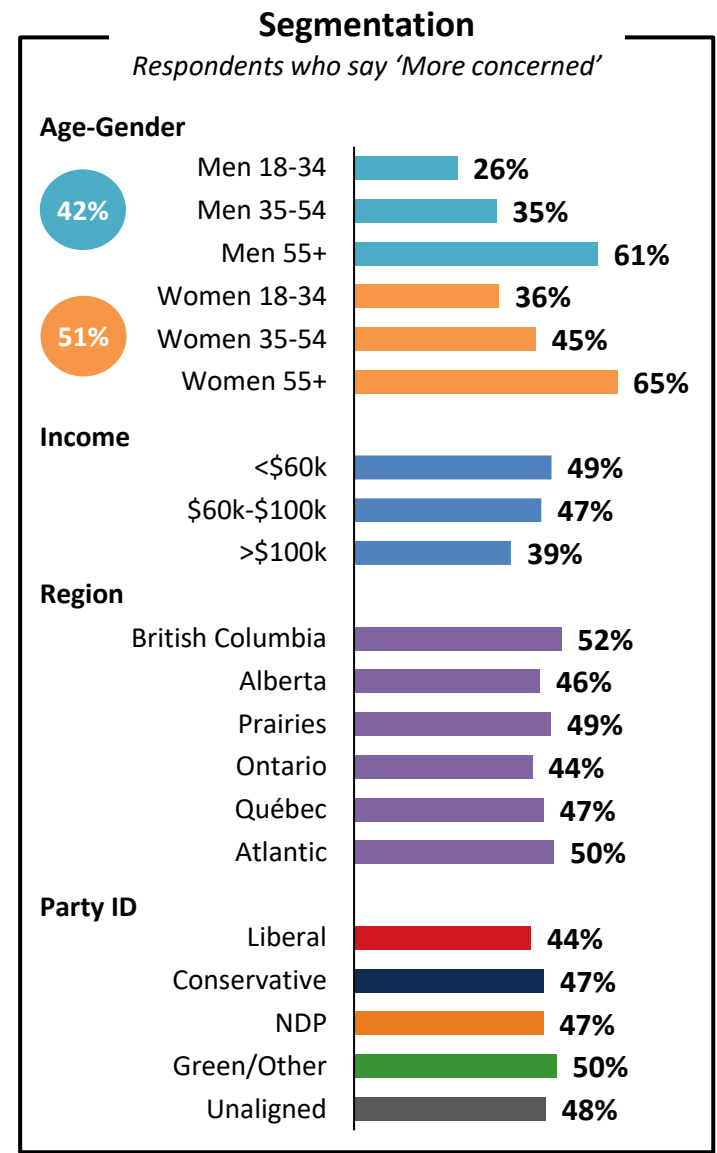
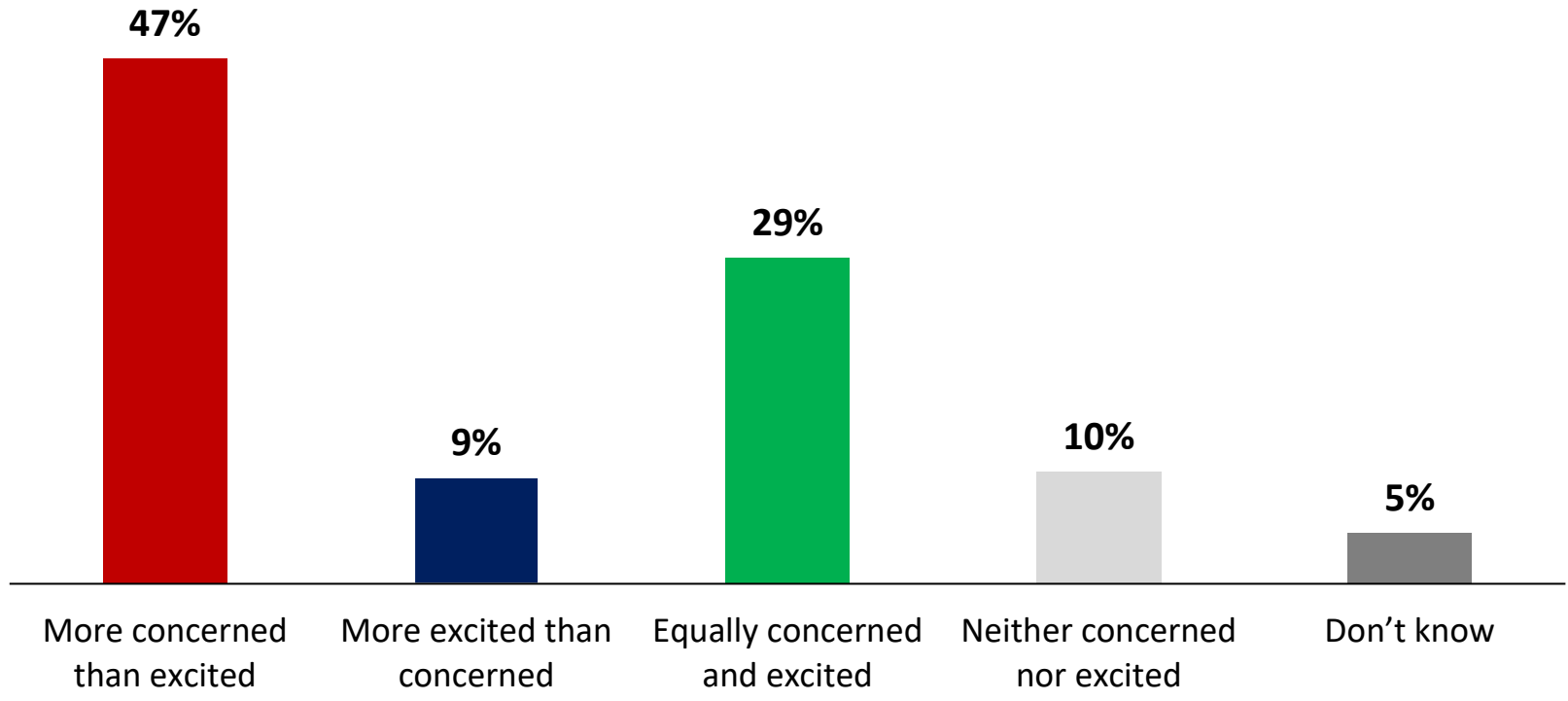
Q Overall, would you say artificial intelligence technology has had a positive or negative effect on our society so far?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Attitude towards Artificial Intelligence:

Nearly half are more concerned than excited about the increased use of artificial intelligence in daily life

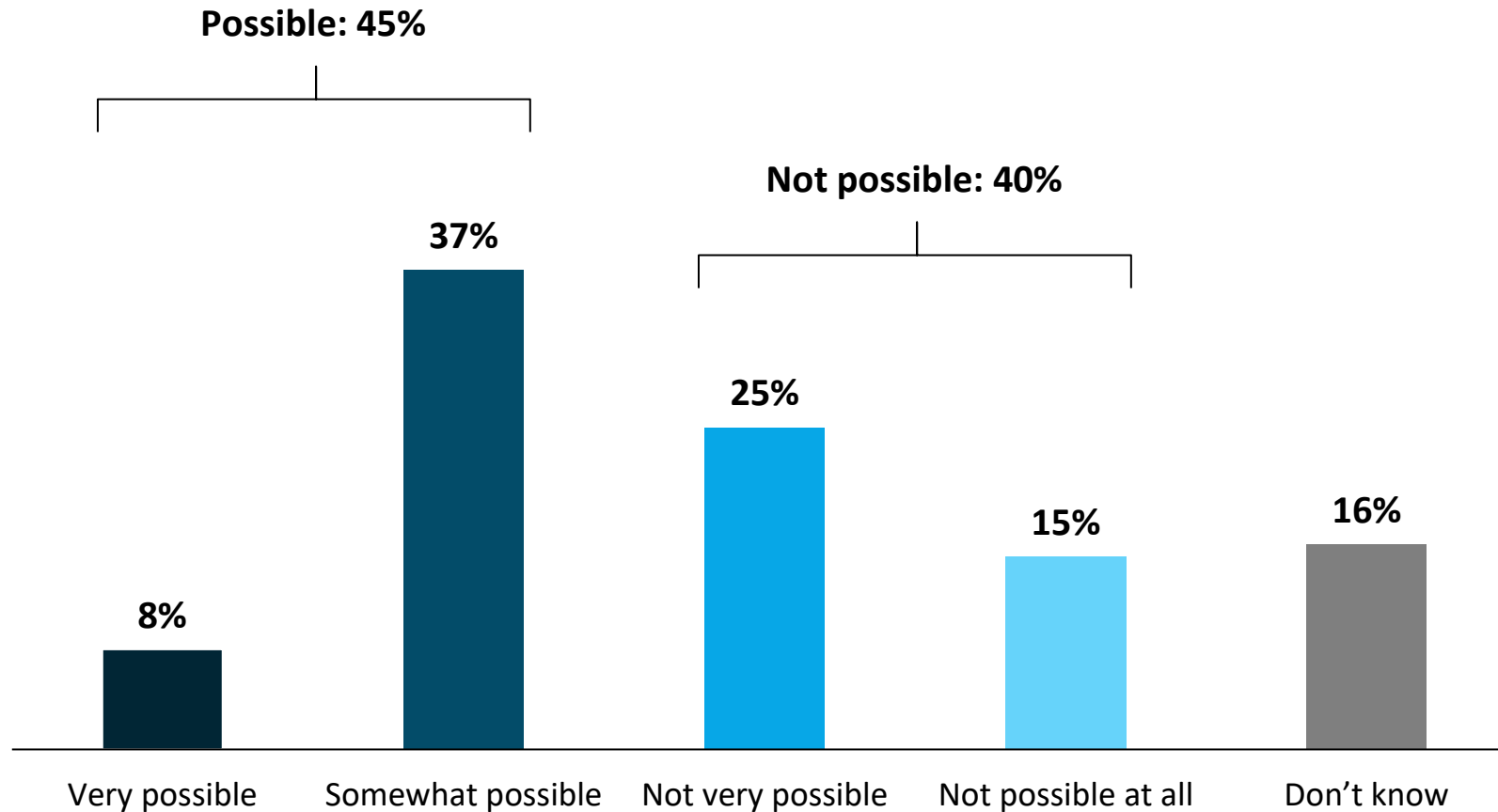
Q Artificial intelligence computer programs are designed to learn tasks that humans typically do, for instance recognizing speech or pictures. Overall, would you say the increased use of artificial intelligence computer programs in daily life makes you feel...
 [asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Attitude towards AI Decision-Making:

Slightly more people think that it is possible (45%) than not possible (40%) for AI to make fair decisions

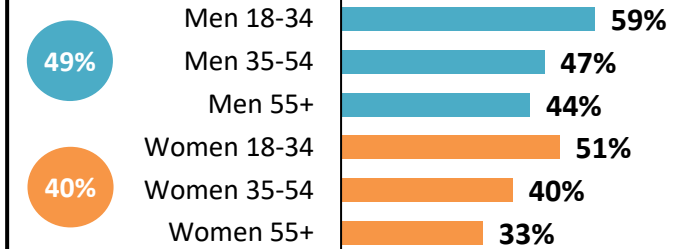
Q Artificial intelligence is already being used in the courts to help with sentencing, and in law enforcement for facial recognition. Do you think it is possible or not possible for artificial intelligence computer programs to make fair decisions in complex situations?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'Possible'

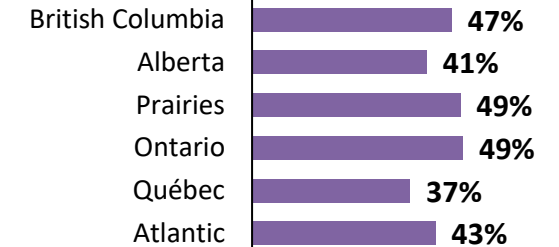
Age-Gender



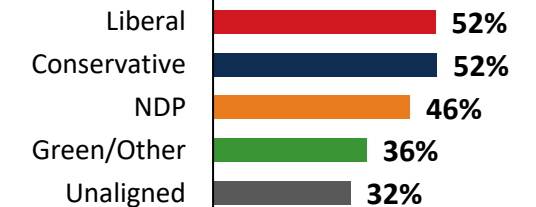
Income



Region



Party ID



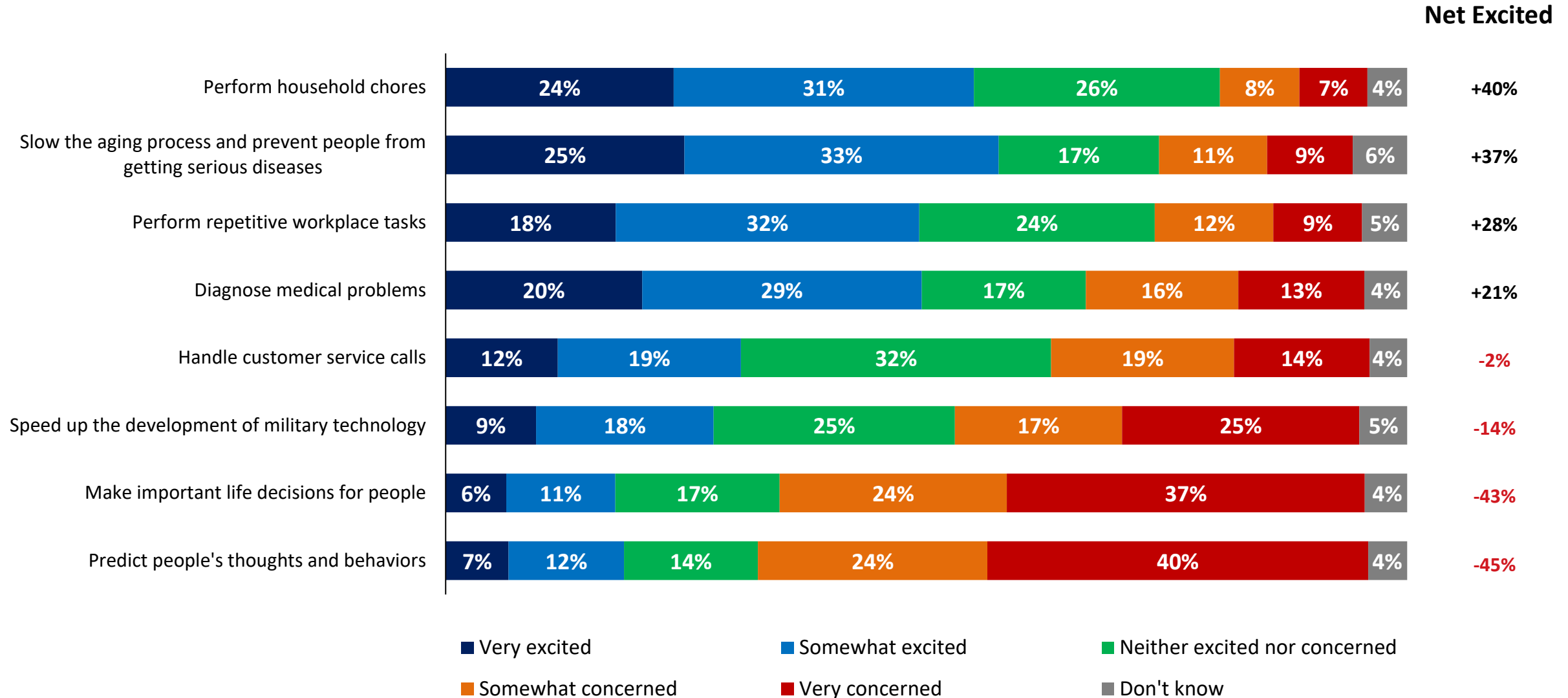
AI Attitudes:

Respondents are most excited about AI performing chores and most concerned about predicting thoughts



How excited or concerned would you be if artificial intelligence computer programs could do each of the following?

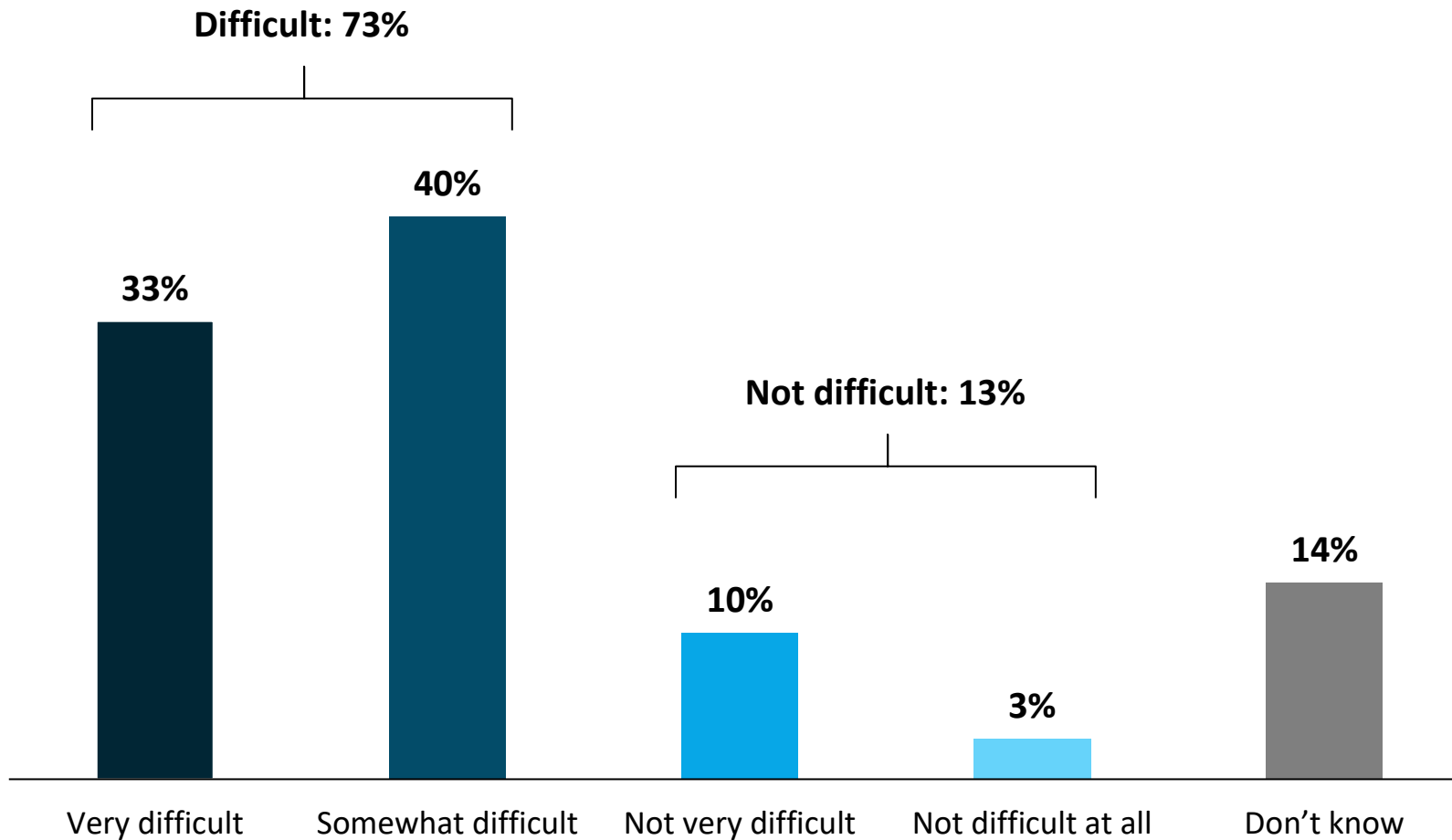
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Regulation:

3-in-4 say that it would be difficult to regulate the technology behind artificial intelligence

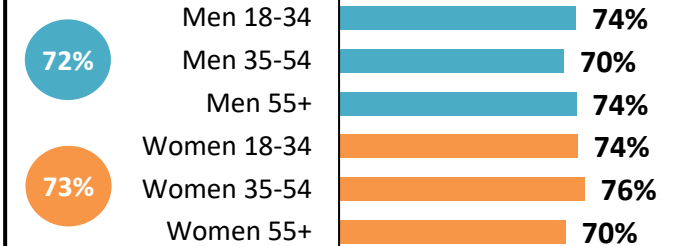
Q One key debate in artificial intelligence is whether or not it can be regulated. How difficult do you think it would be to regulate the technology behind artificial intelligence?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'Difficult'

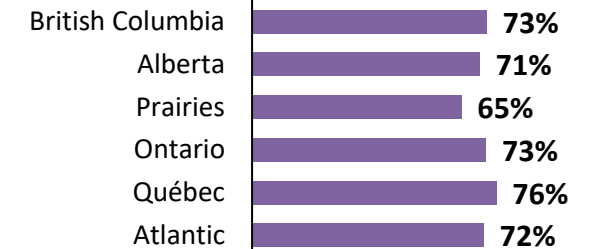
Age-Gender



Income



Region



Party ID



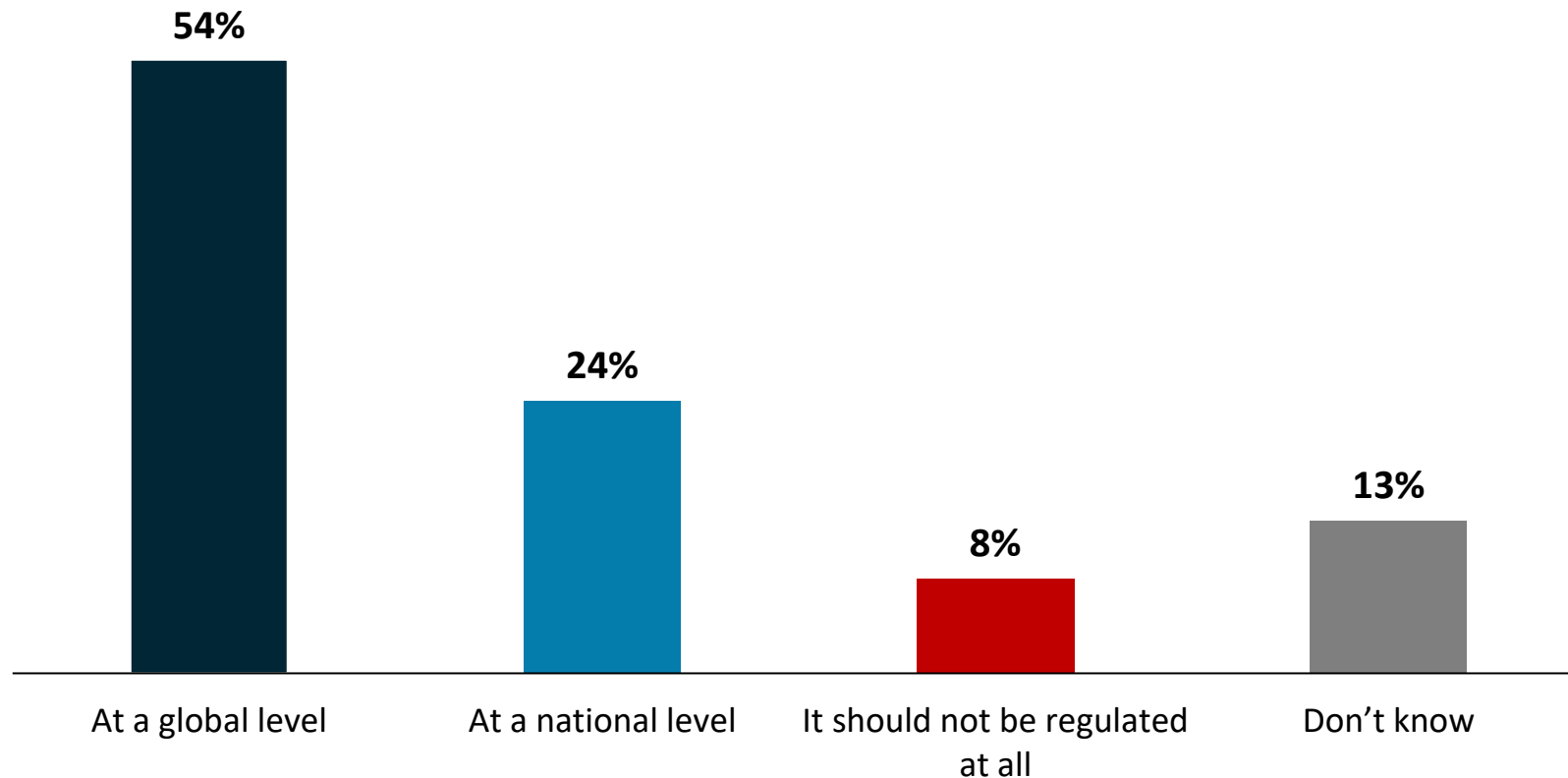
Level of Regulation:

Over half believe that artificial intelligence should be regulated at a global level



Assuming artificial intelligence can be regulated, do you think it should be regulated at a global level, at a national level, or do you not think artificial intelligence should be regulated at all?

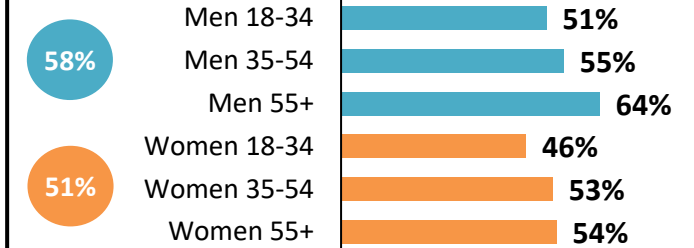
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'At a global level'

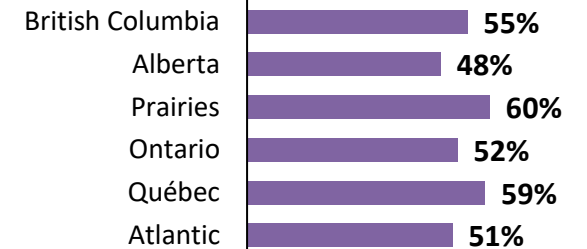
Age-Gender



Income



Region



Party ID



The Promise and Perils of Digital Media

Personal Impact:

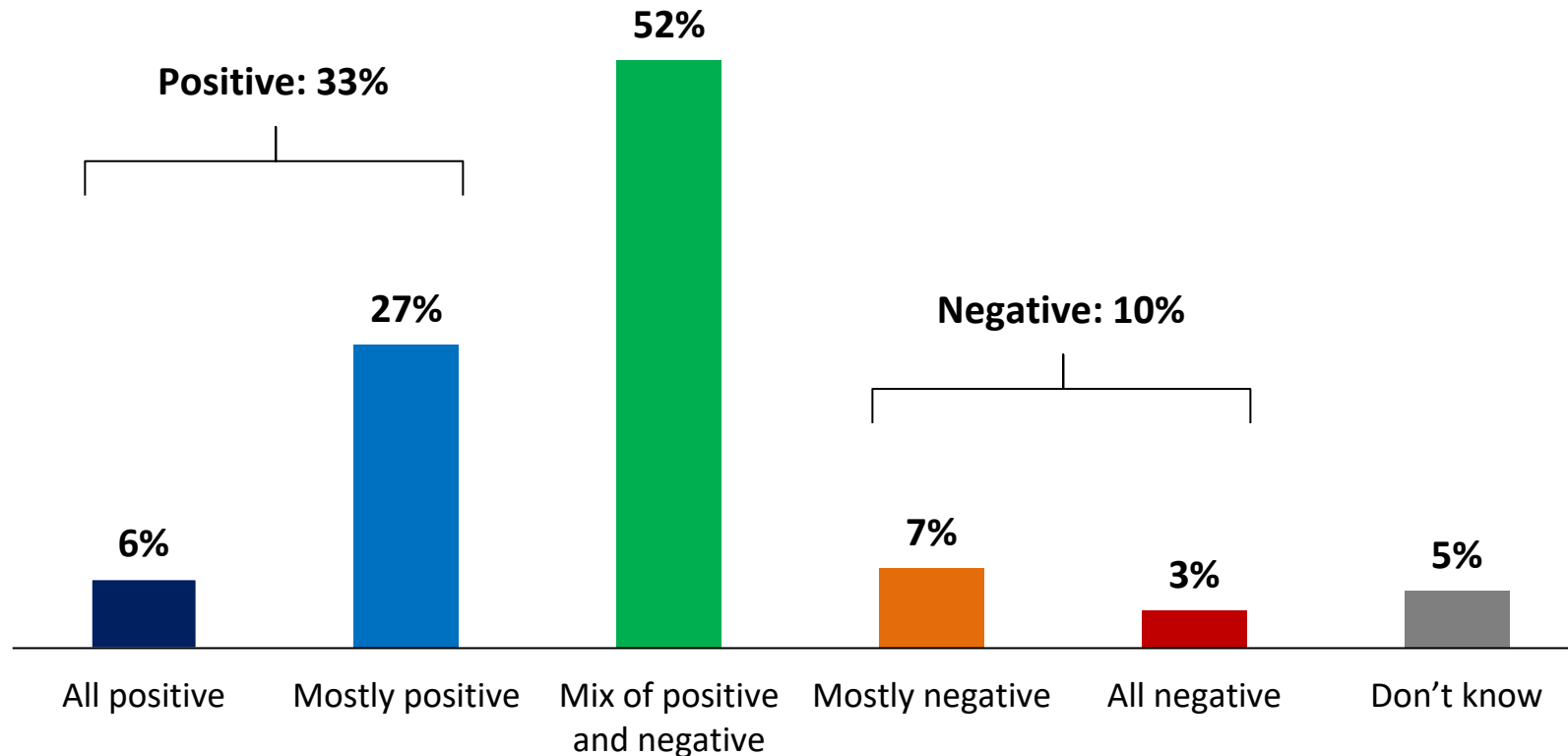
Over half say the rise of digital media had a mix of positive and negative impact on their life; 1-in-3 say positive

Q

The rise of digital media refers to the significant shift in society and the economy that has occurred as a result of the widespread adoption and integration of digital technologies, such as computers, the internet, and mobile devices.

Has the rise of digital media made a positive or negative impact in your life?

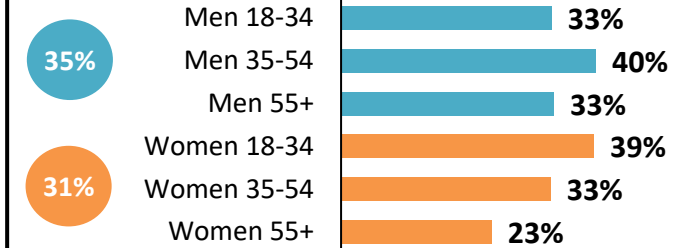
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'Positive'

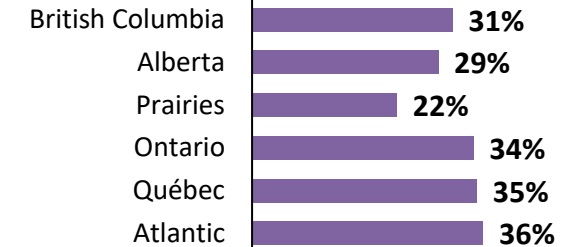
Age-Gender



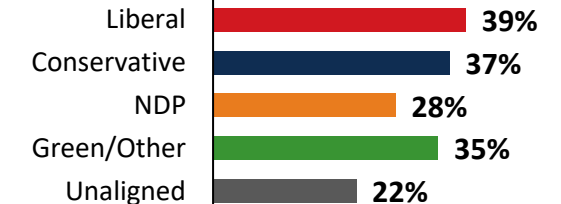
Income



Region



Party ID

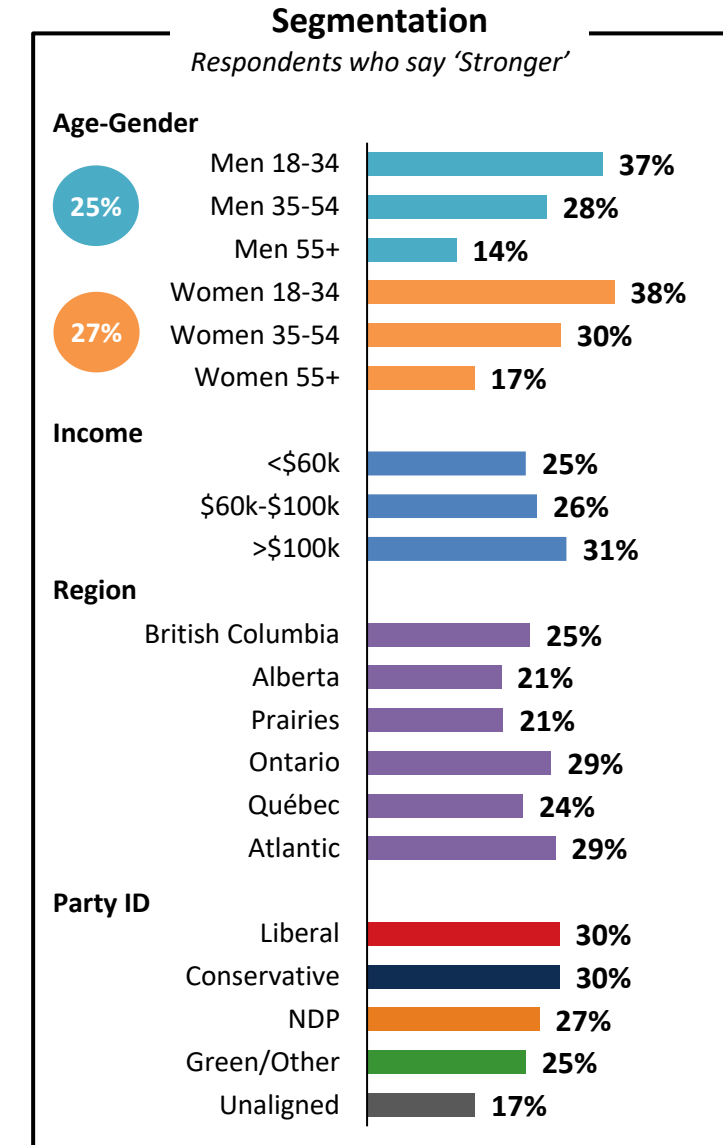
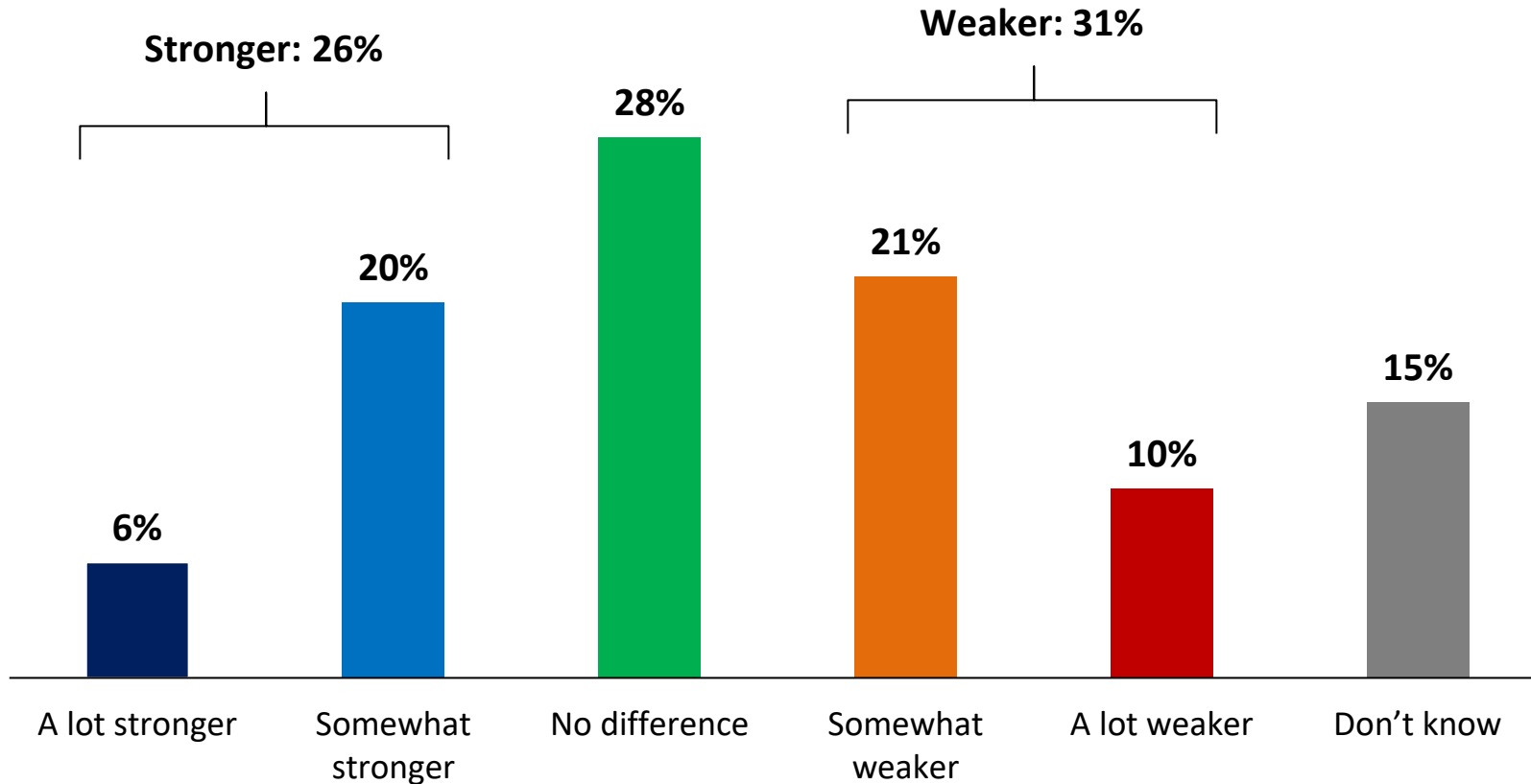


Impact on Democracy:

Respondents are split on whether the rise of digital media resulted in democracy becoming stronger or weaker



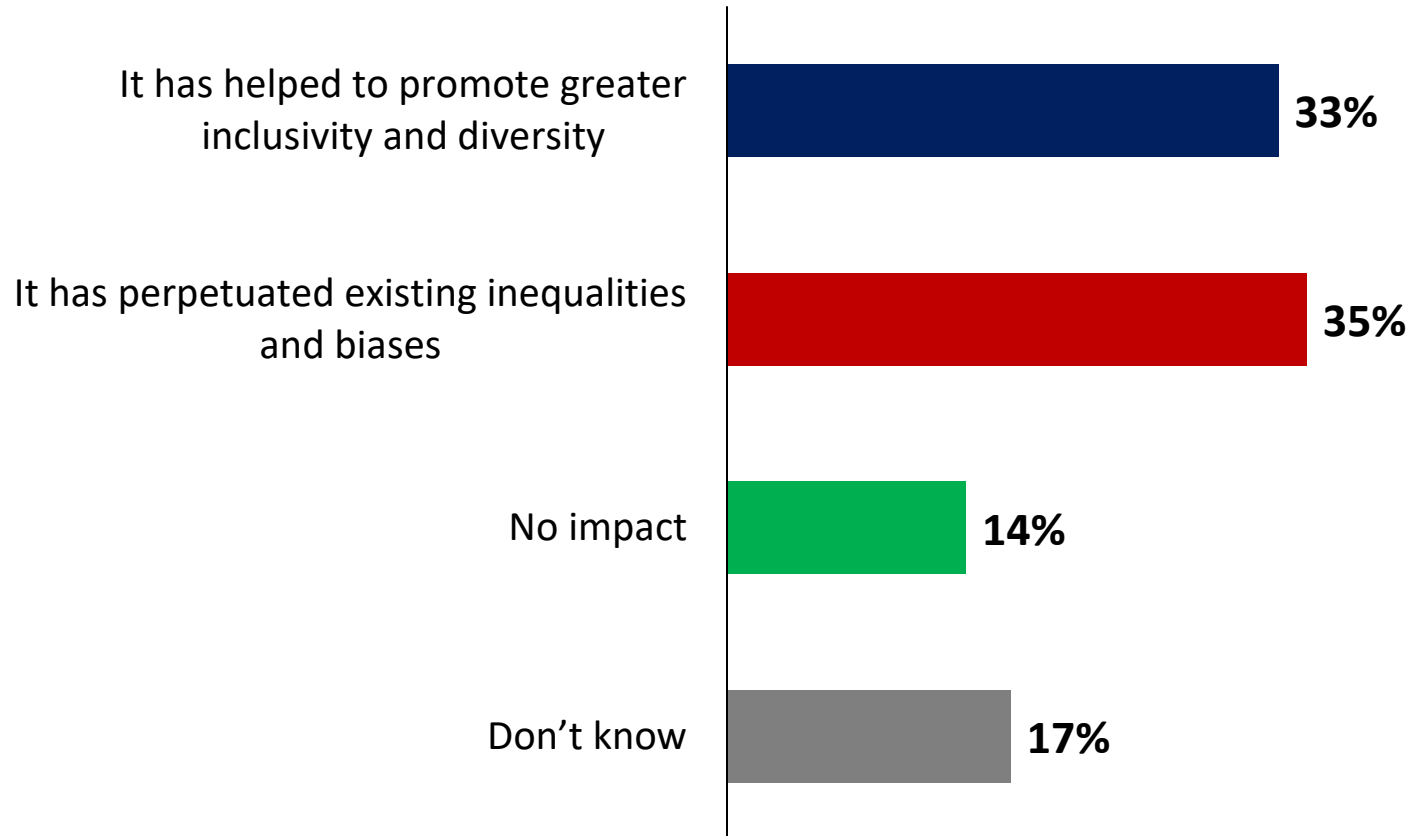
In your opinion, has the rise of digital media resulted in democracy becoming stronger, weaker, or has it not made a difference?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Impact on Equity and Diversity:

Respondents are split on digital media's impact on equity and diversity

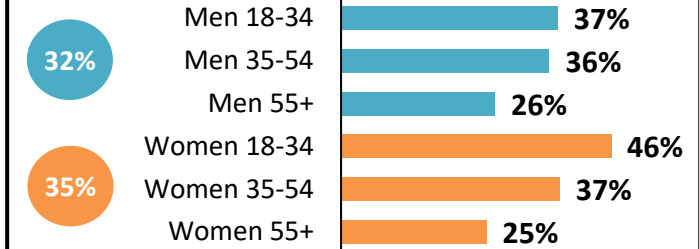
Q In what ways has digital media impacted equity and diversity in our society?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'Helped to promote...'

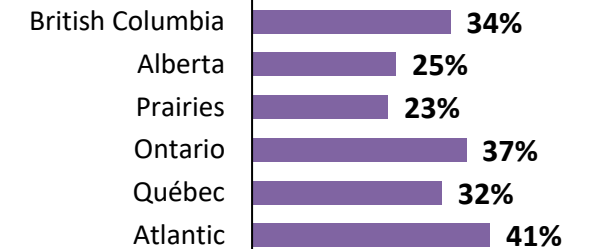
Age-Gender



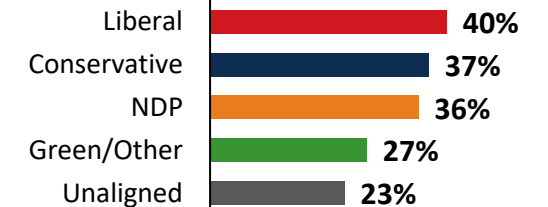
Income



Region



Party ID



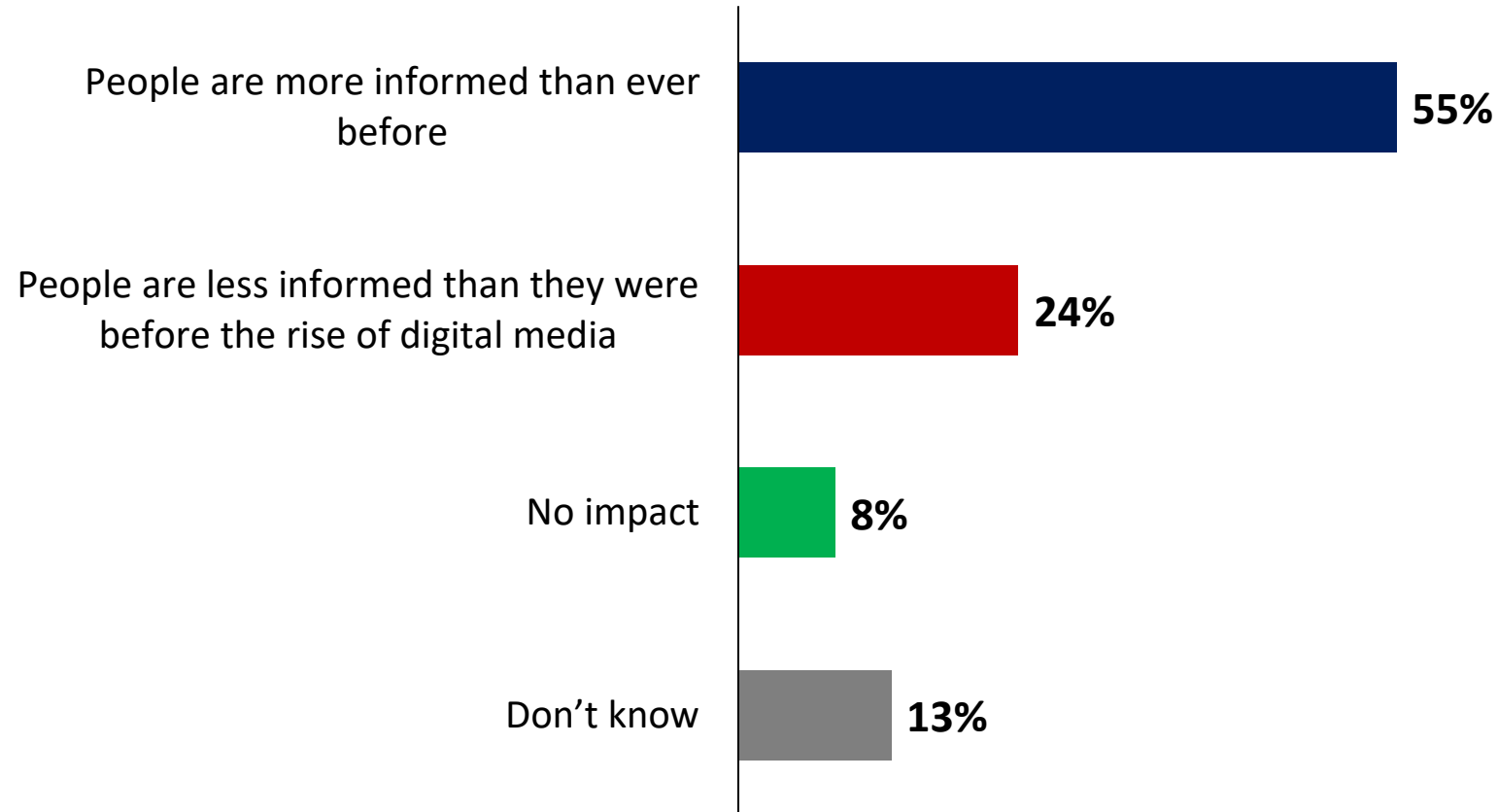
Impact on Public Engagement:

Over half believe that because of digital media, people are more informed than ever before



In your opinion, how has the rise of digital media impacted public engagement and understanding of critical issues?

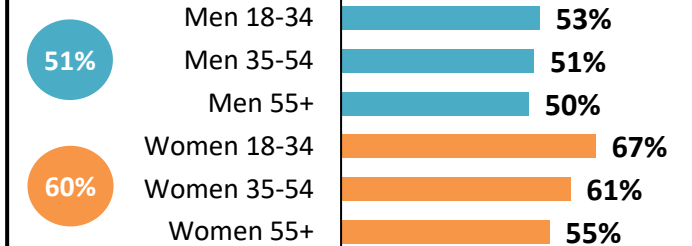
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'More informed'

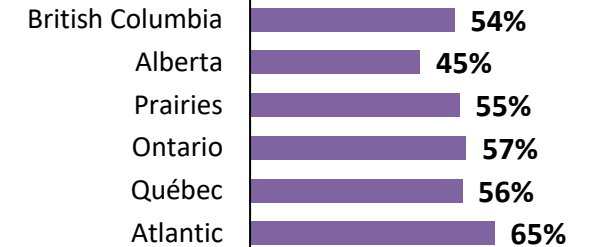
Age-Gender



Income



Region



Party ID



Crime/Justice and Mental Health

Access to Support:

Over 3-in-5 have never accessed mental health support or thought about doing so



Have you ever accessed mental health or substance misuse support, tried to access support, or thought about accessing them for yourself or someone you know in the past year?

[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]

I have accessed mental health or substance misuse support in the past year for myself, or helped someone I know do so.

16%

I have tried to access mental health or substance misuse support for myself or someone I know in the past year, but was unable to do so.

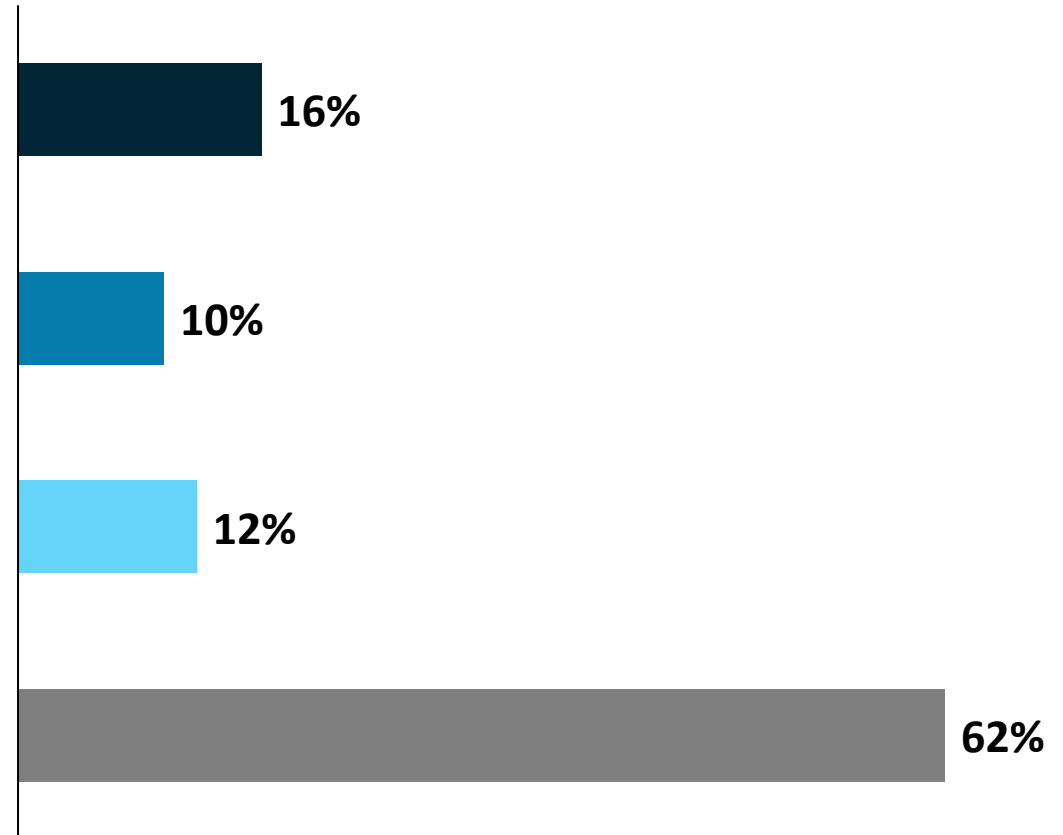
10%

I have thought about accessing mental health or substance misuse support, but have not tried to do so in the past year.

12%

I have never accessed mental health or substance misuse support or thought about doing so.

62%



Access to Support Segmentation (Part 1):

Younger people are more likely to have accessed mental health support than older people



Have you ever accessed mental health or substance misuse support, tried to access support, or thought about accessing them for yourself or someone you know in the past year?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]

	Gender			Age-Gender					
	Total	Men	Women	Men 18-34	Men 35-54	Men 55+	Women 18-34	Women 35-54	Women 55+
I have accessed mental health or substance misuse support in the past year for myself, or helped someone I know do so.	16%	14%	19%	15%	15%	11%	30%	18%	12%
I have tried to access mental health or substance misuse support for myself or someone I know in the past year, but was unable to do so.	10%	11%	9%	23%	9%	3%	14%	12%	4%
I have thought about accessing mental health or substance misuse support, but have not tried to do so in the past year.	12%	10%	14%	11%	12%	7%	19%	13%	11%
I have never accessed mental health or substance misuse support or thought about doing so.	62%	66%	59%	50%	63%	79%	37%	58%	74%

Access to Support Segmentation (Part 2):

Those in Alberta and Atlantic provinces are more likely to have never accessed mental health support



Have you ever accessed mental health or substance misuse support, tried to access support, or thought about accessing them for yourself or someone you know in the past year?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]

	Region							Party ID				
	Total	BC	AB	Prairies	ON	QC	Atlantic	Liberal	CPC	NDP	Green/ Other	Unaligned
I have accessed mental health or substance misuse support in the past year for myself, or helped someone I know do so.	16%	17%	11%	16%	19%	13%	20%	14%	20%	19%	16%	14%
I have tried to access mental health or substance misuse support for myself or someone I know in the past year, but was unable to do so.	10%	11%	8%	10%	8%	13%	5%	10%	10%	13%	11%	6%
I have thought about accessing mental health or substance misuse support, but have not tried to do so in the past year.	12%	17%	13%	15%	13%	8%	5%	12%	10%	20%	12%	10%
I have never accessed mental health or substance misuse support or thought about doing so.	62%	56%	68%	58%	60%	65%	70%	64%	61%	49%	61%	70%

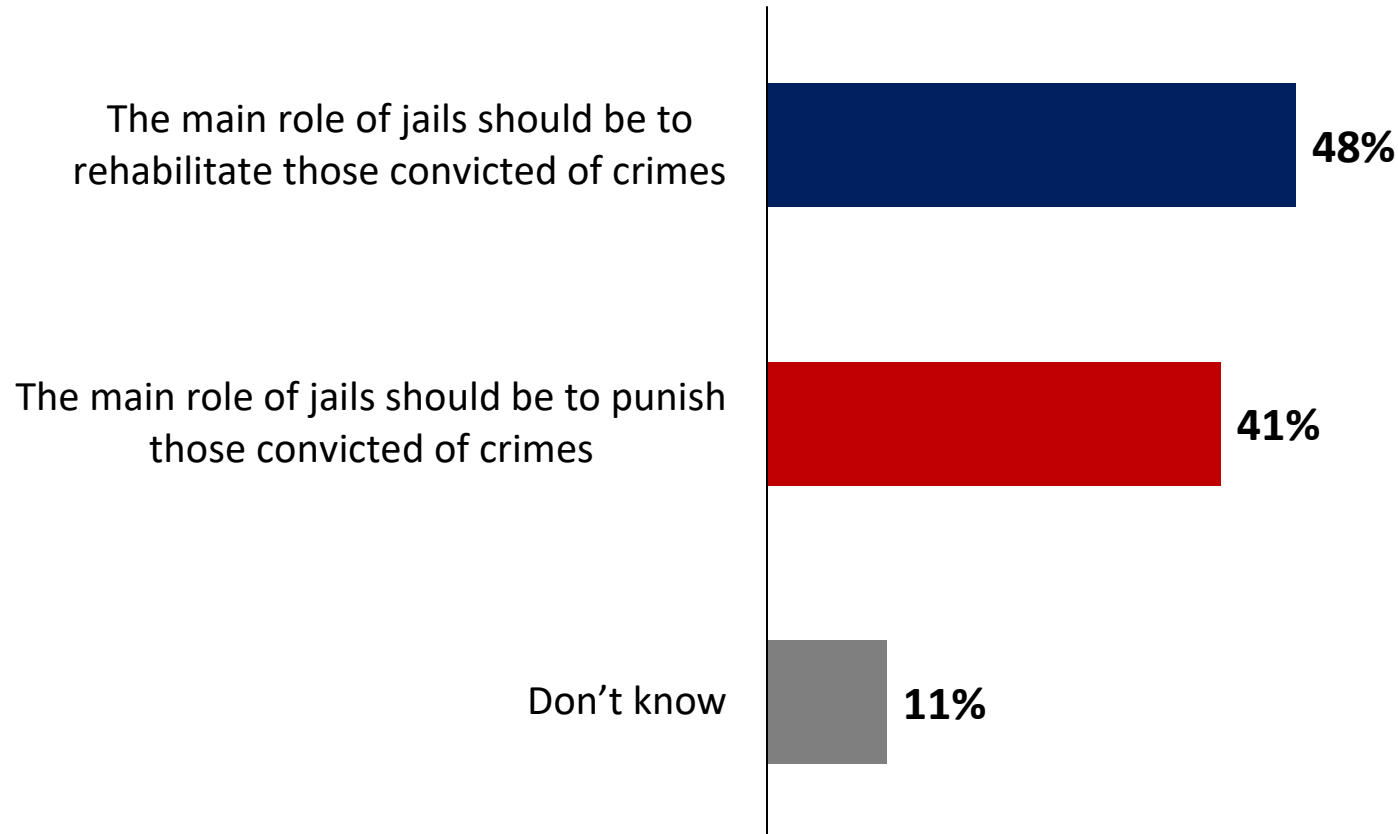
Role of Jails:

48% believe that the main role of jails should be to rehabilitate, as opposed to 41% who say punish



Thinking about the role of the criminal justice system, which of these statements come closer to your own point-of-view?

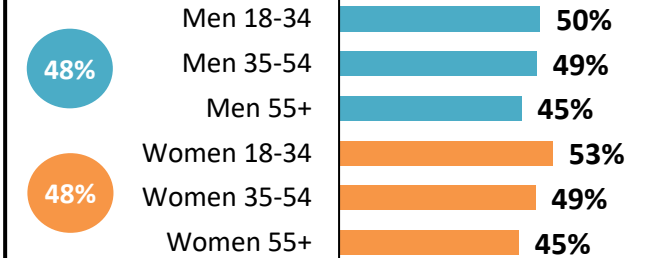
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'Rehabilitate'

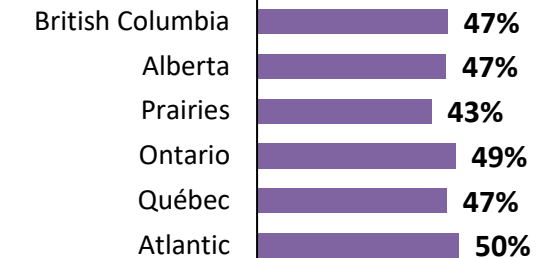
Age-Gender



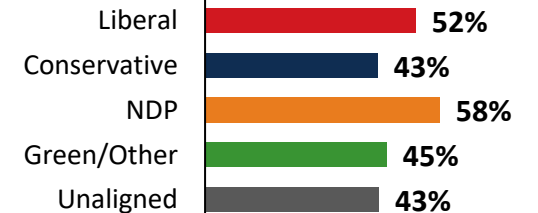
Access to Support



Region



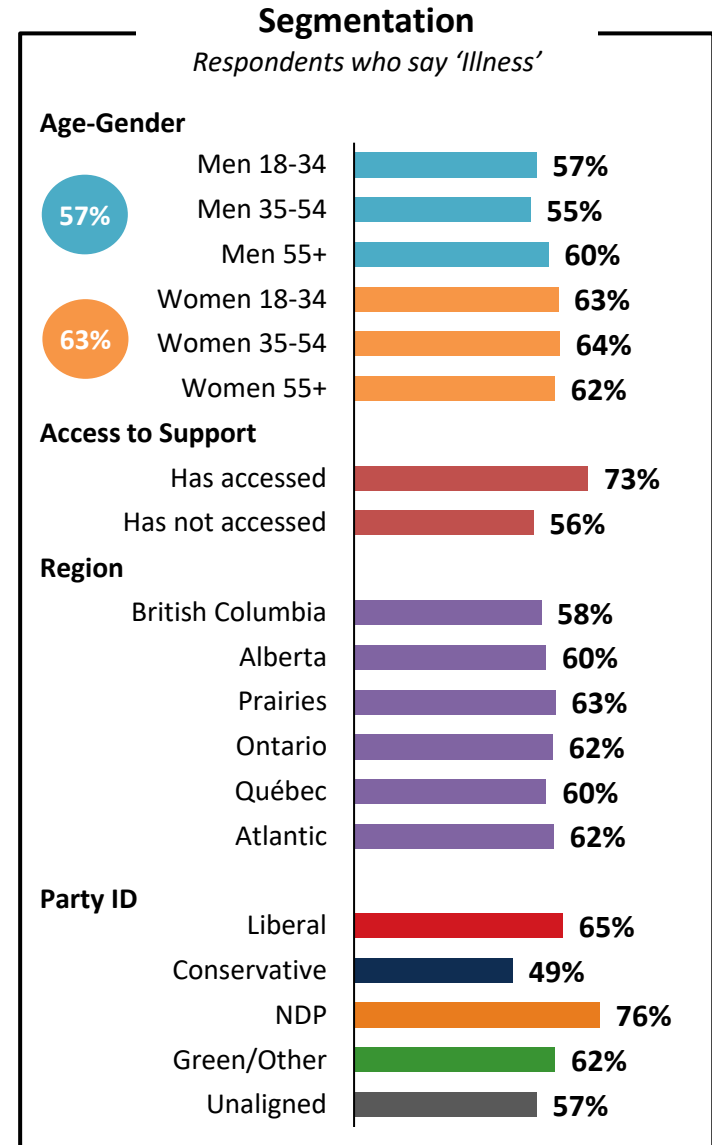
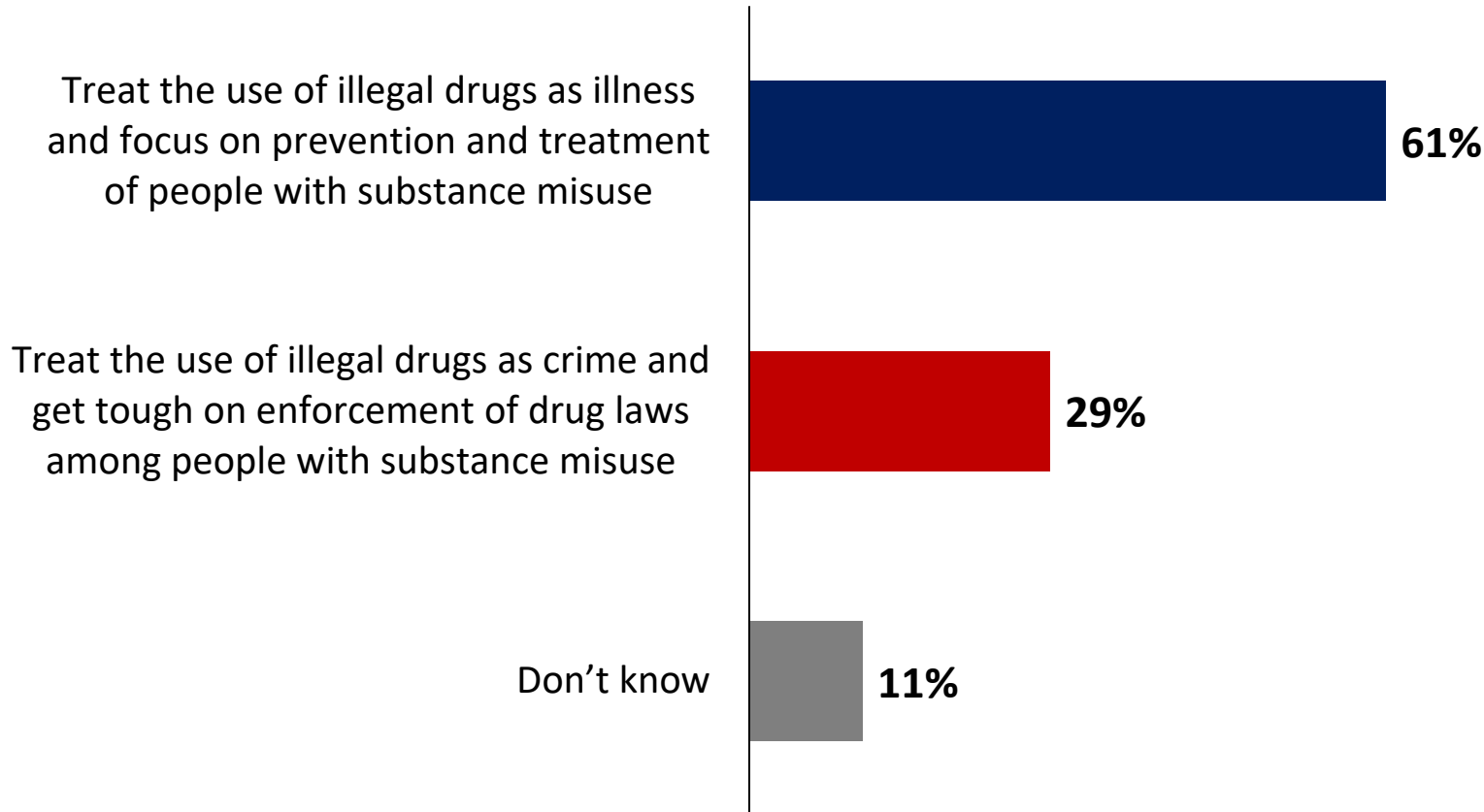
Party ID



Approach to Substance Abuse:

3-in-5 believe that the best approach to substance abuse is to treat it as illness and focus on prevention

Q Do you think the best approach to substance abuse is...
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]

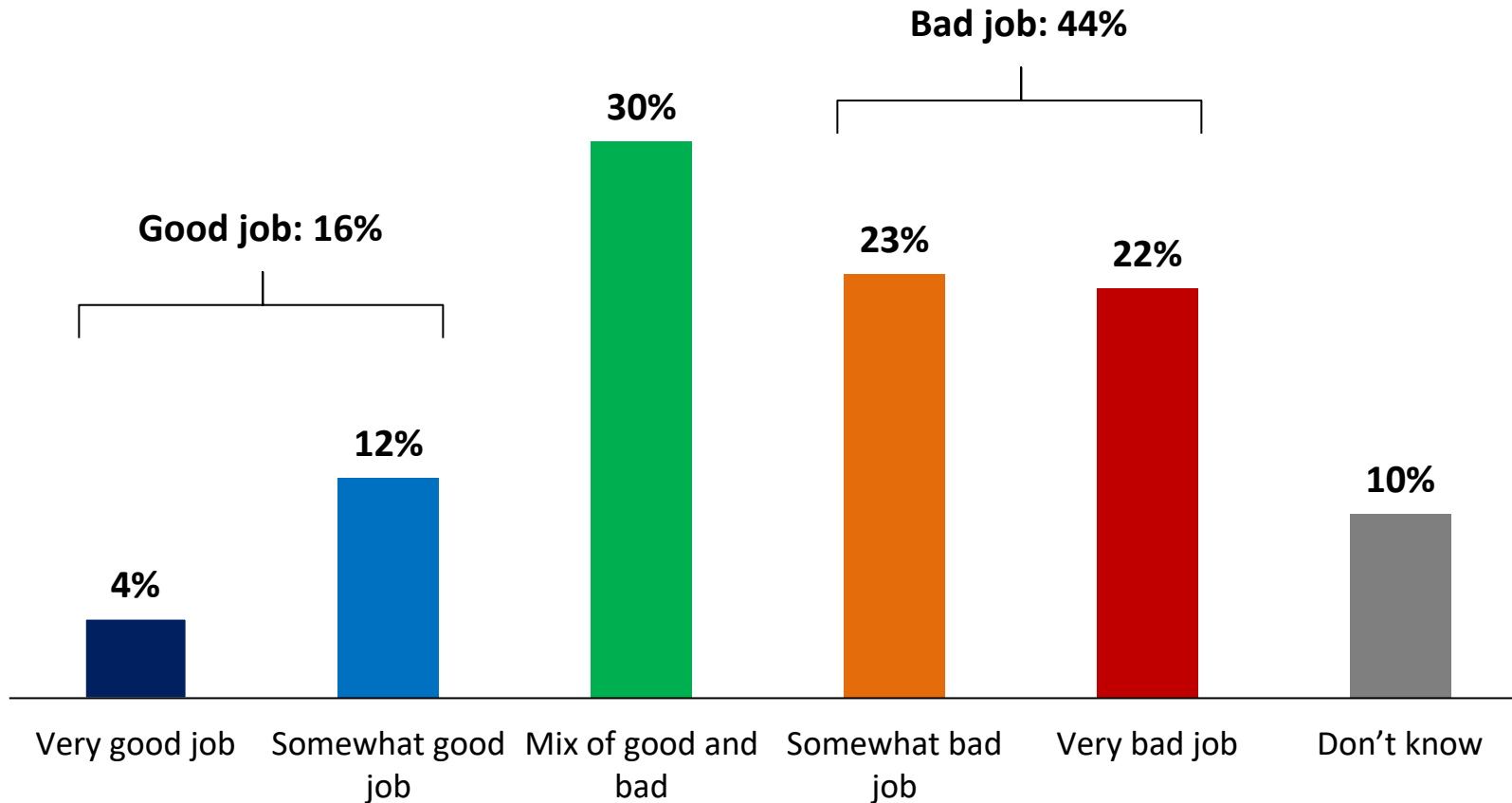


Attitude towards Criminal Justice System:

44% believe the criminal justice system does a bad job dealing with people in the system that have mental issues



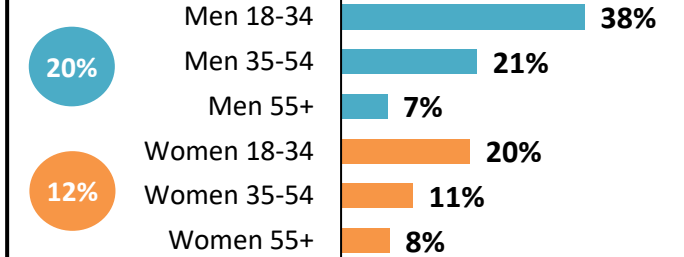
Do you think the criminal justice system in Canada does a good job or bad job of dealing with people in the system that have mental health issues?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'Good job'

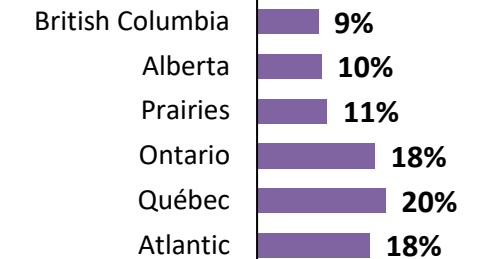
Age-Gender



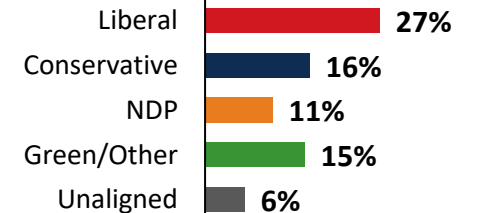
Access to Support



Region



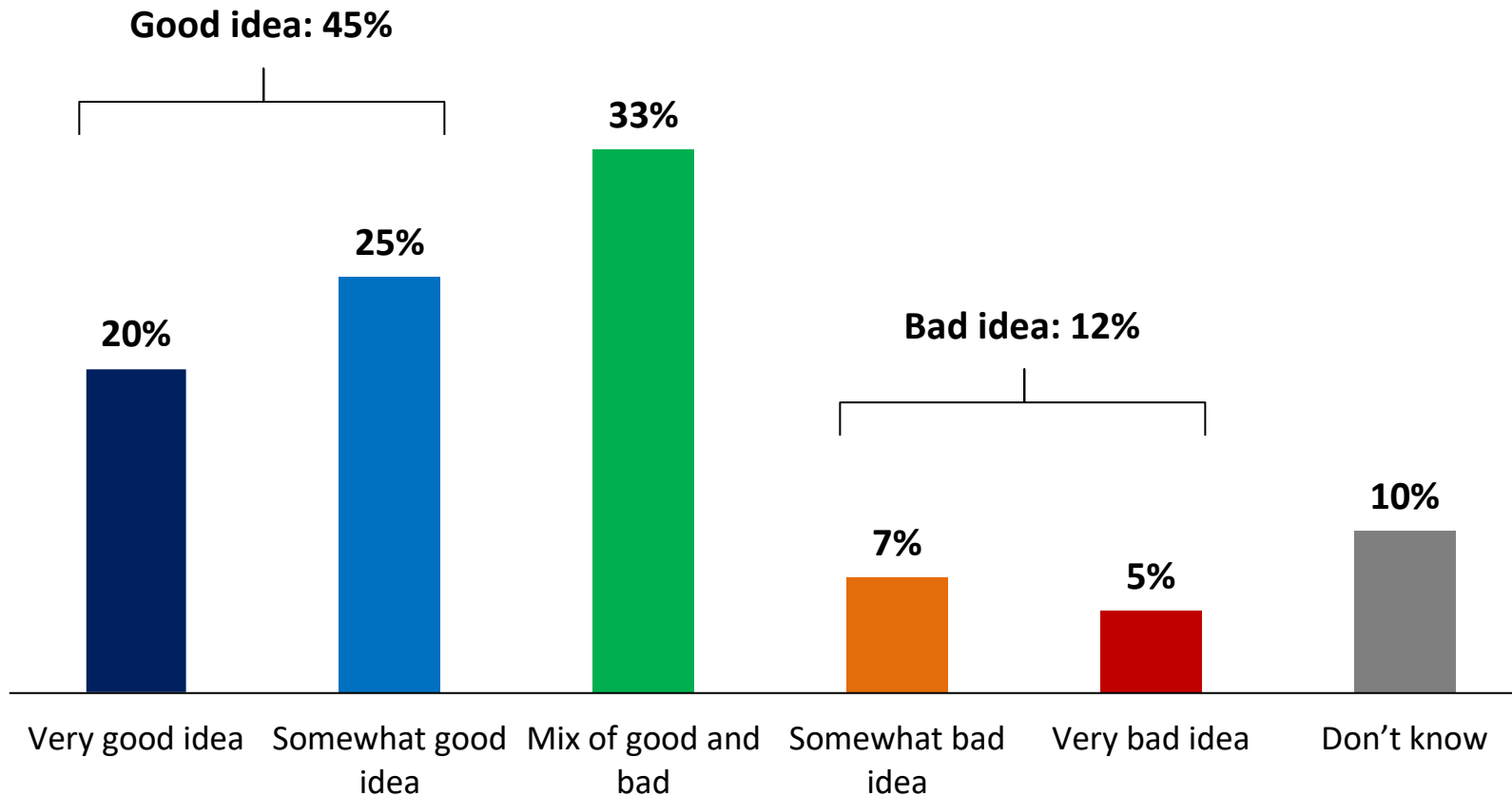
Party ID



Alternative Criminal Justice Approaches:

45% think alternative criminal justice approaches are a good idea; 12% think it would be a bad idea

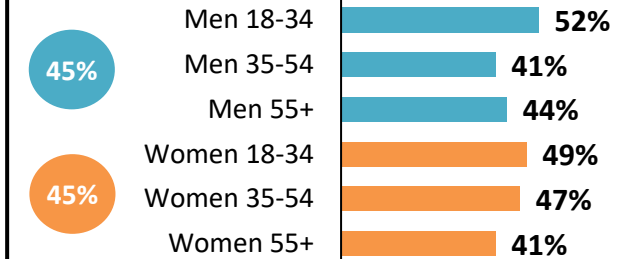
Q As you may be aware, different places in Canada have been trying alternative criminal justice approaches, such as mental health courts or diversion programs for people with mental health or substance misuse issues. Do such alternatives sound like a good or bad idea to you?
[asked of all respondents, n=1,000]



Segmentation

Respondents who say 'Good idea'

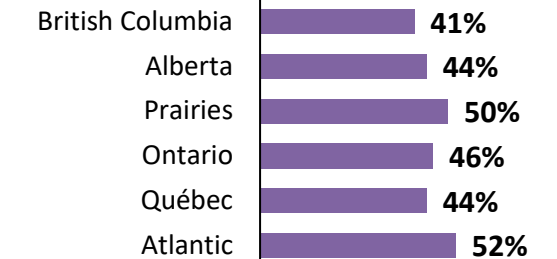
Age-Gender



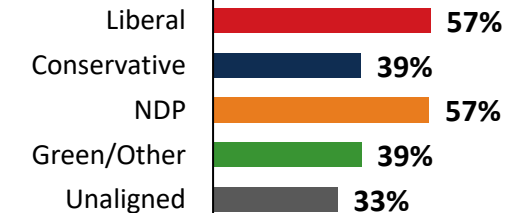
Access to Support



Region



Party ID

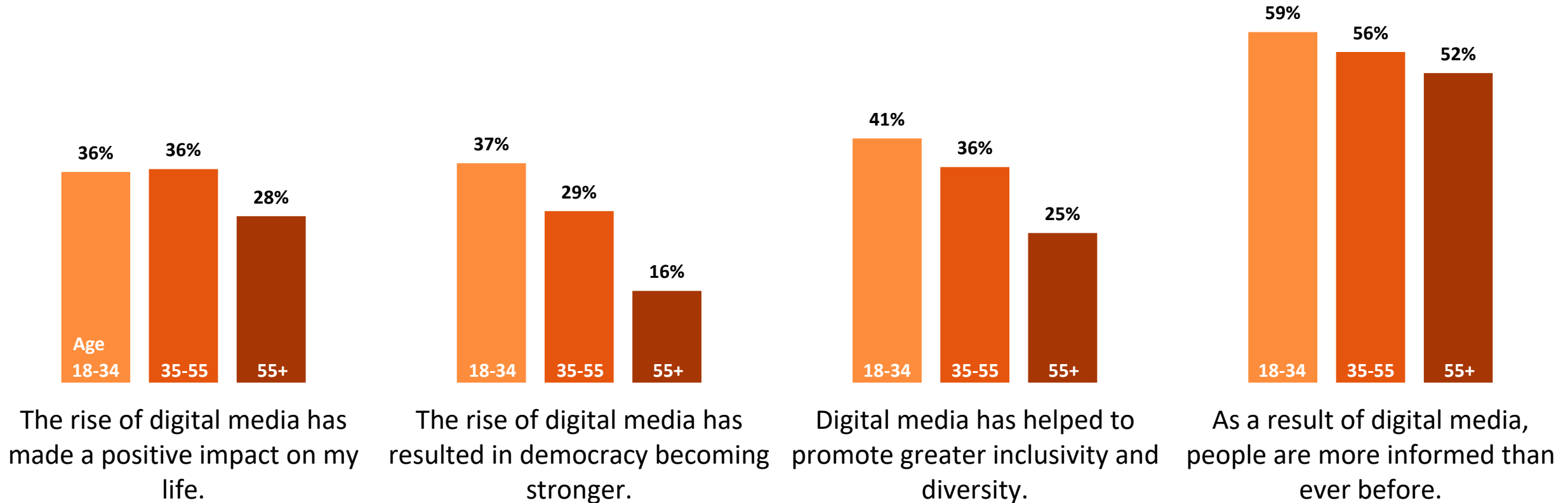


Generational Comparison on Provocative Ideas

Digital Attitudes by Age:

Younger people have more positive attitudes about the rise of digital media and its personal and societal impact

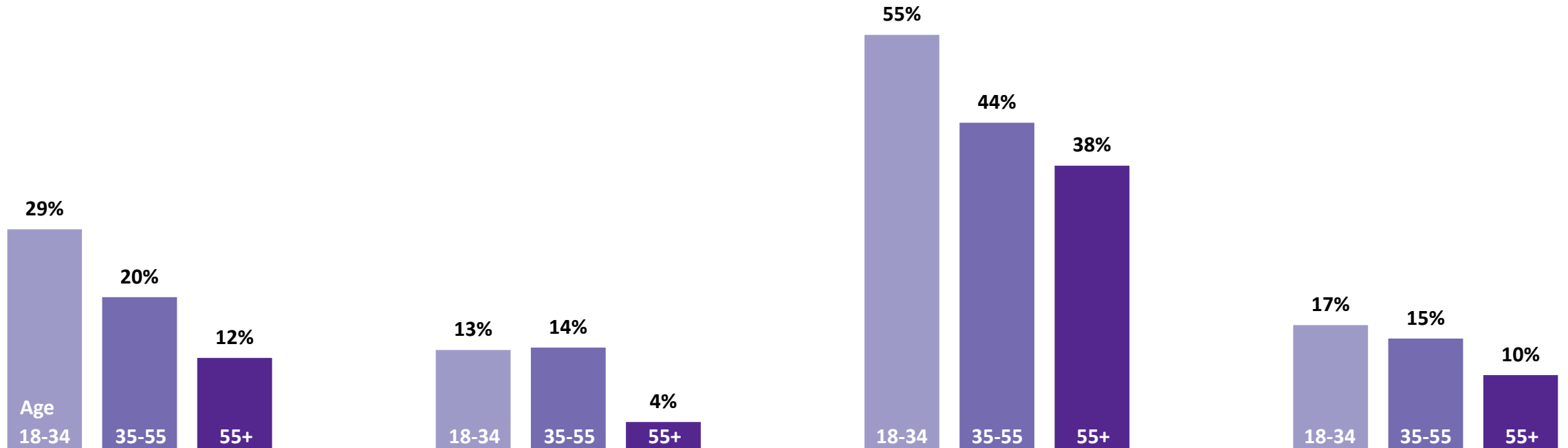
Attitudes towards the rise of digital media by age groups



AI Attitudes by Age:

Younger people are more optimistic about AI's impact, ability, and regulation

Attitudes towards artificial intelligence by age groups



AI technology has had a positive effect on our society so far.

The increased use of AI computer programs in daily life makes me feel more excited than concerned.

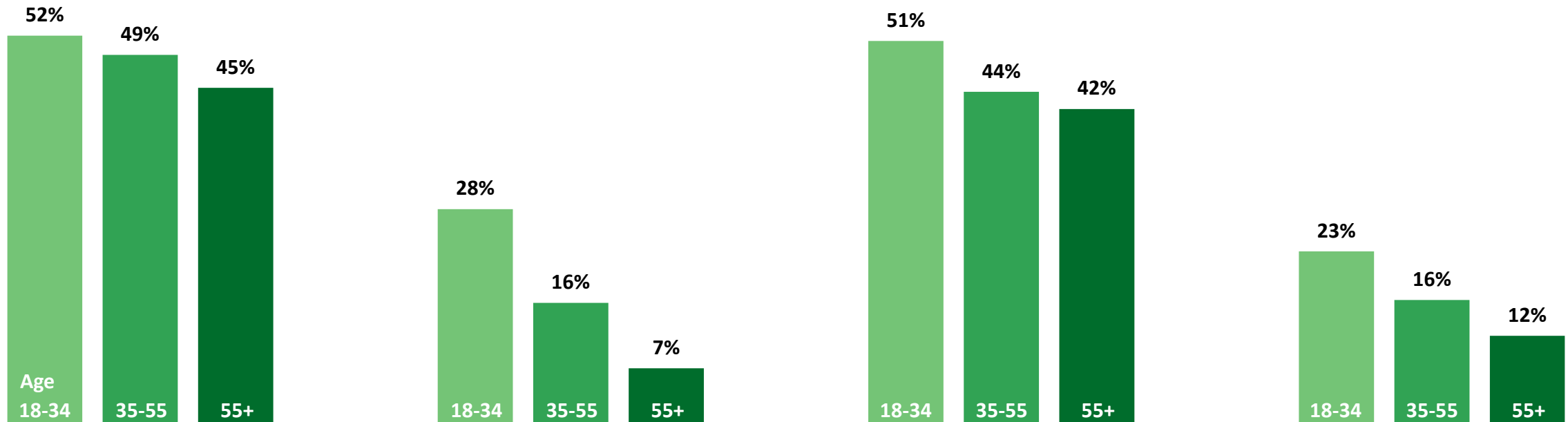
I think it is possible for AI computer programs to make fair decisions in complex situations.

I don't think it would be difficult to regulate the technology behind AI.

Crime/Mental Health and Justice Attitudes by Age:

Younger people have more positive attitudes about the criminal justice system and have accessed support more

Attitudes towards crime/mental health and criminal justice system by age groups



The main role of jails should be to rehabilitate those convicted of crimes.

The criminal justice system in Canada does a good job of dealing with people in the system that have mental health issues.

Alternative criminal justice approaches sound like a good idea.

I have accessed mental health or substance misuse support in the past year for myself, or helped someone I know do so.

Methodology

Survey Methodology



These are the results of an online survey conducted between May 4th and May 9th, 2023.

Method: This online survey was conducted using INNOVATIVE's Canada 20/20 national research panel with additional respondents from Lucid, a leading provider of online samples. Each survey is administered to a series of randomly selected samples from the panel and weighted to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample.

Sample Size: n=1,343 Canadian citizens, 18 years or older. The results are nationally weighted to n=1,000 based on Census data from Statistics Canada.

Field Dates: May 4th and May 9th, 2023.

Weighting: Results for Canada are weighted by age, gender, region, education, and party identification to ensure that the overall sample's composition reflects that of the actual population according to Census data, in order to provide results that are intended to approximate a probability sample. Weighted and unweighted frequencies are reported in the table.

Margin of Error: This is a representative sample. However, since the online survey was not a random probability-based sample, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Statements about margins of sampling error or population estimates do not apply to most online panels.

Note: Graphs may not always total 100% due to rounding values rather than any error in data. Sums are added before rounding numbers.

	Unweighted (n)	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (n)	Weighted (%)
Men 18-34	115	8.6%	139	14.0%
Men 35-54	182	13.6%	158	15.9%
Men 55+	300	22.5%	187	18.9%
Women 18-34	208	15.6%	135	13.6%
Women 35-54	229	17.2%	164	16.5%
Women 55+	300	22.5%	209	21.0%
Region				
BC	198	14.7%	139	13.9%
AB	148	11.0%	110	11.0%
Prairies	83	6.2%	65	6.5%
ON	519	38.6%	391	39.1%
QC	265	19.7%	227	22.7%
Atlantic	130	9.7%	67	6.7%



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Building Understanding.

