



Winning public support for transportation funding

Obstacles and opportunities for public buy-in

Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance
University of Toronto

March 1, 2011



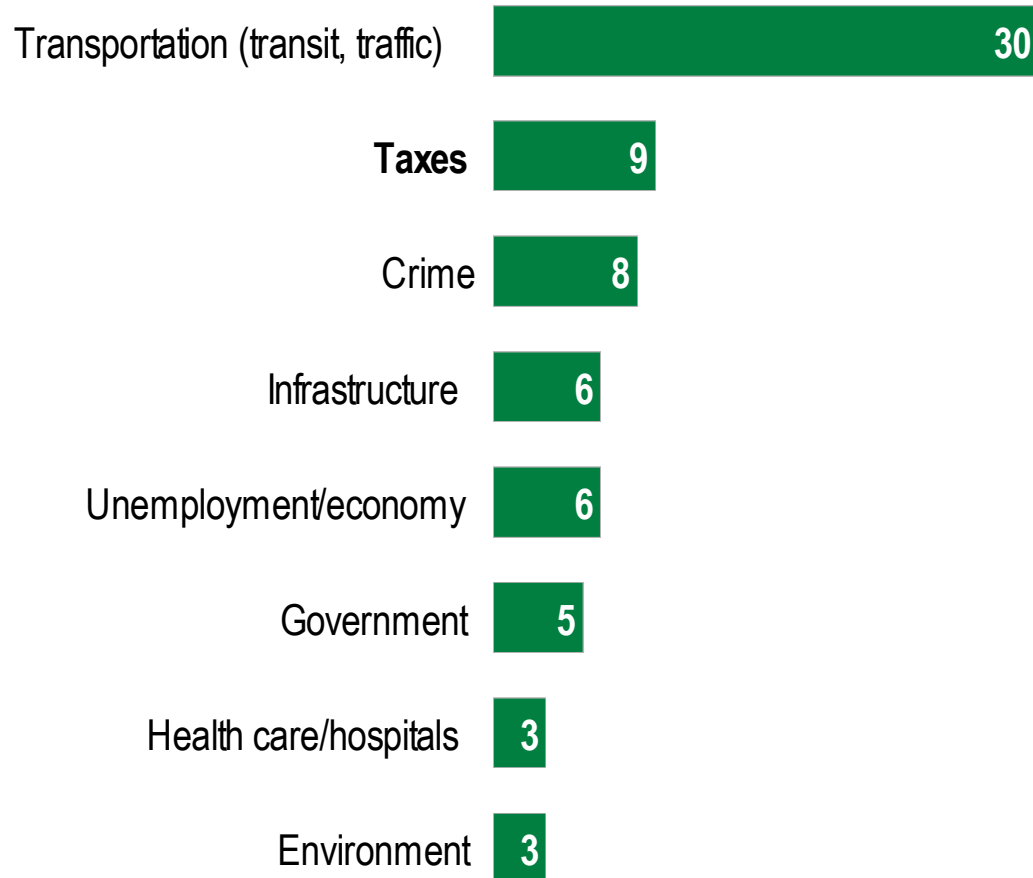
ENVIRONICS
RESEARCH GROUP

— What does the public think?



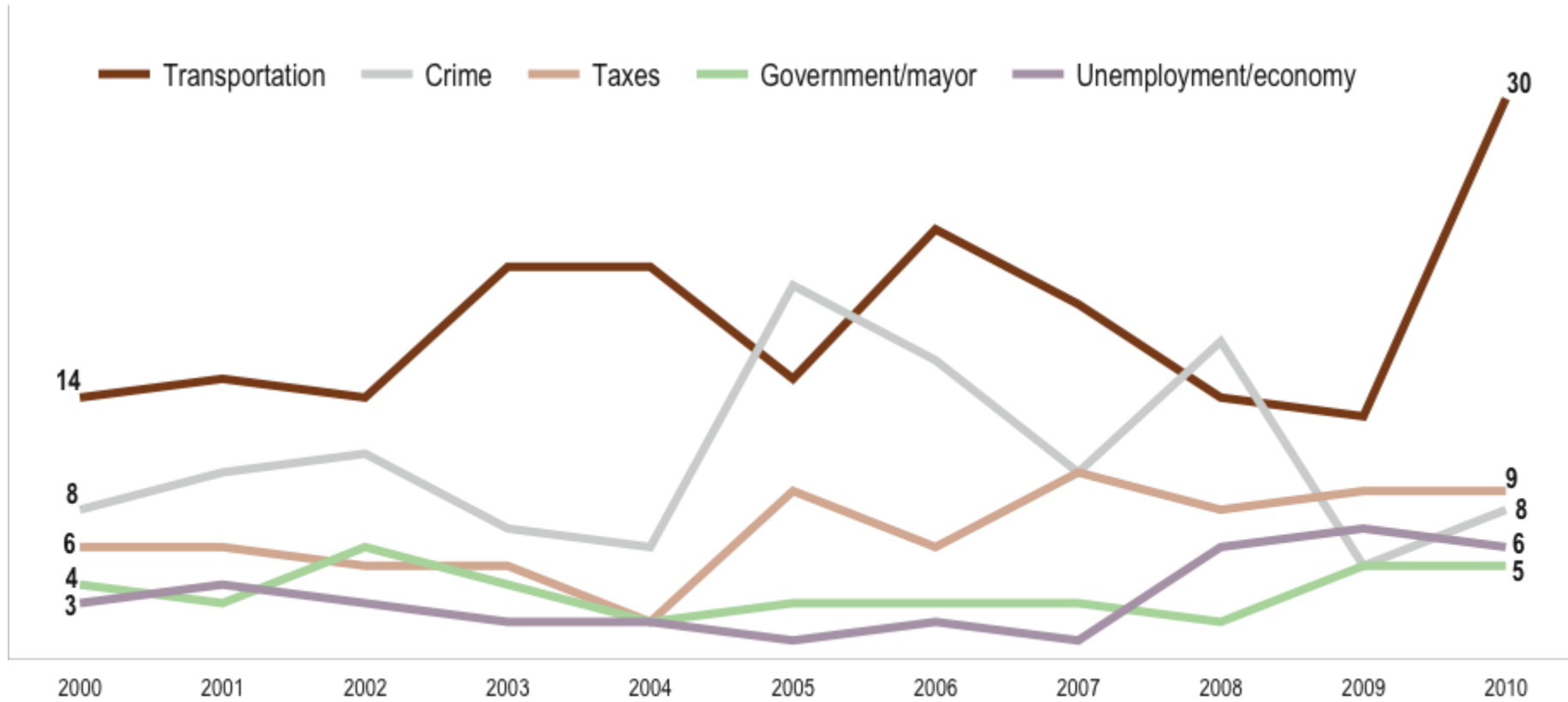
Most important problem facing your municipality

GTA Top mentions December 2010



Most important problem facing local municipality

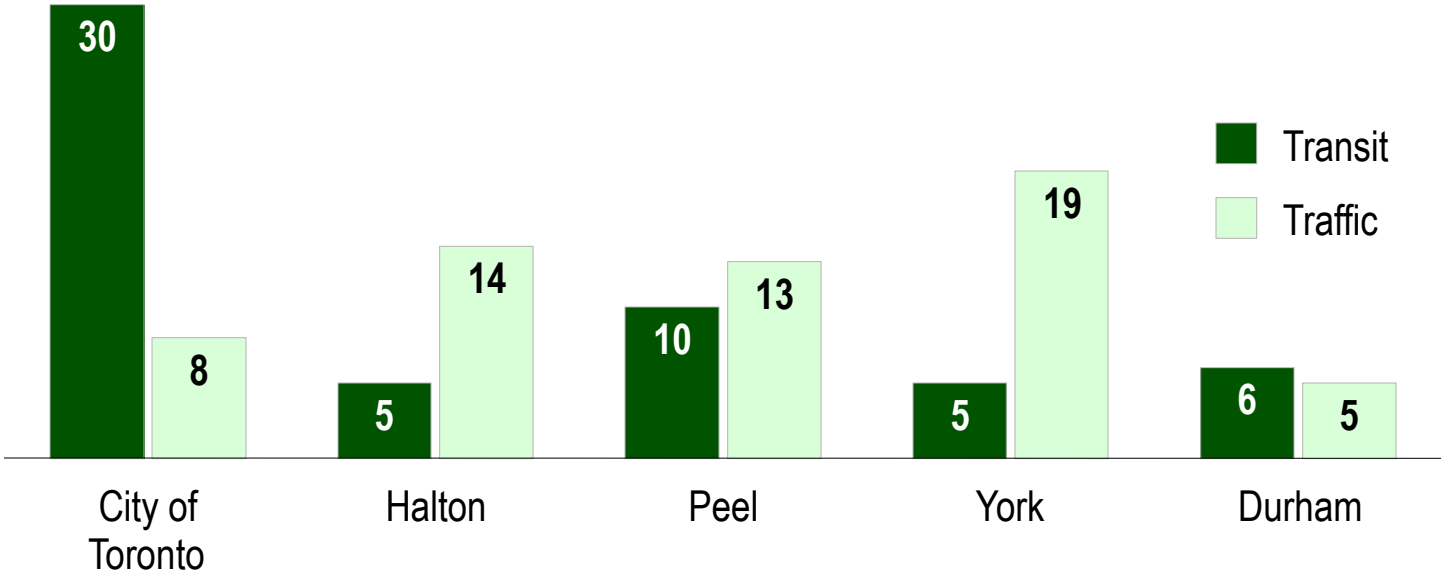
GTA 2000 – 2010 Top issues (unprompted)



Q.1T

Transportation as most important municipal problem

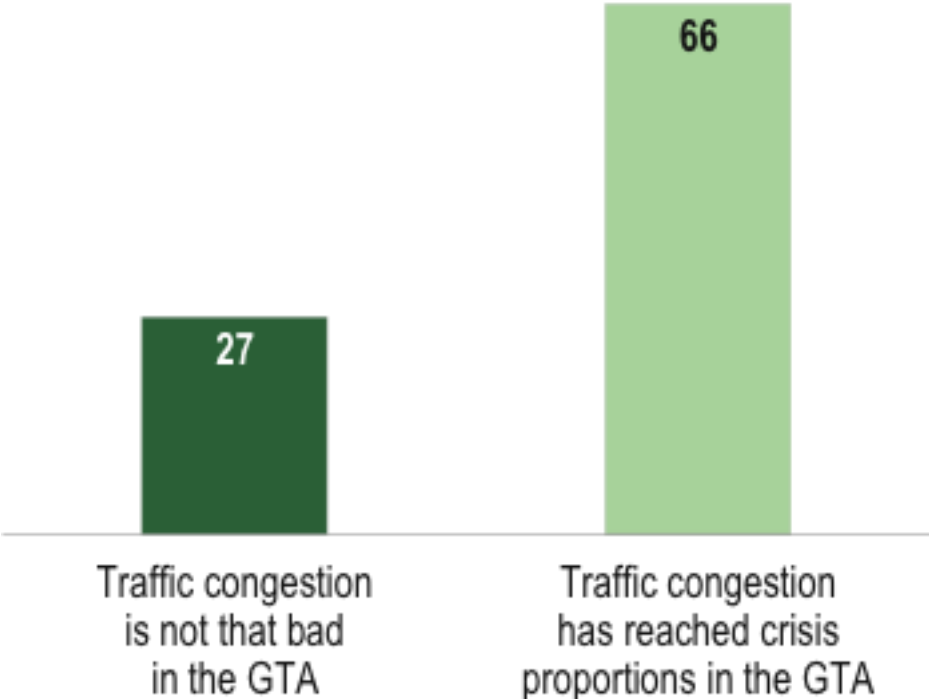
GTA December 2010



Q.1T

Seriousness of traffic congestion in the GTA

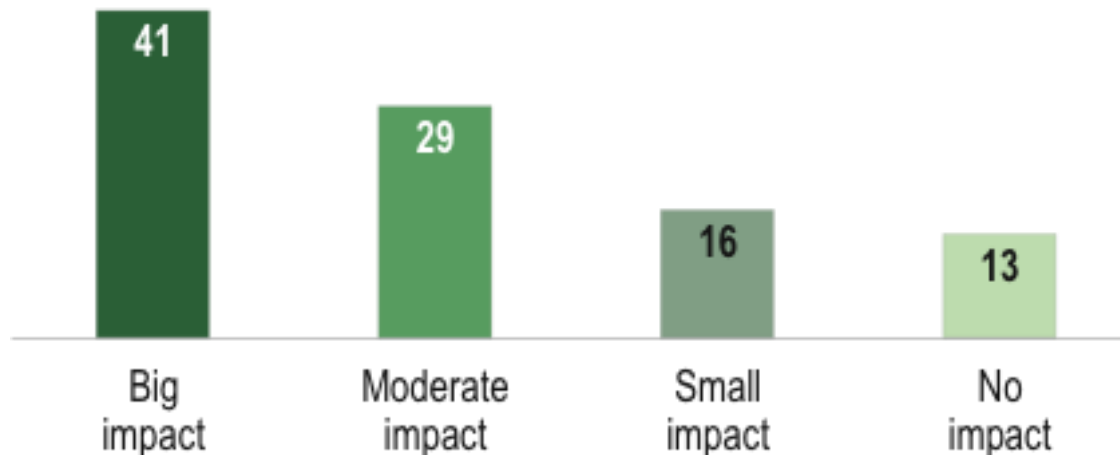
GTA December 2010



Q.17

Impact of traffic congestion on quality of life

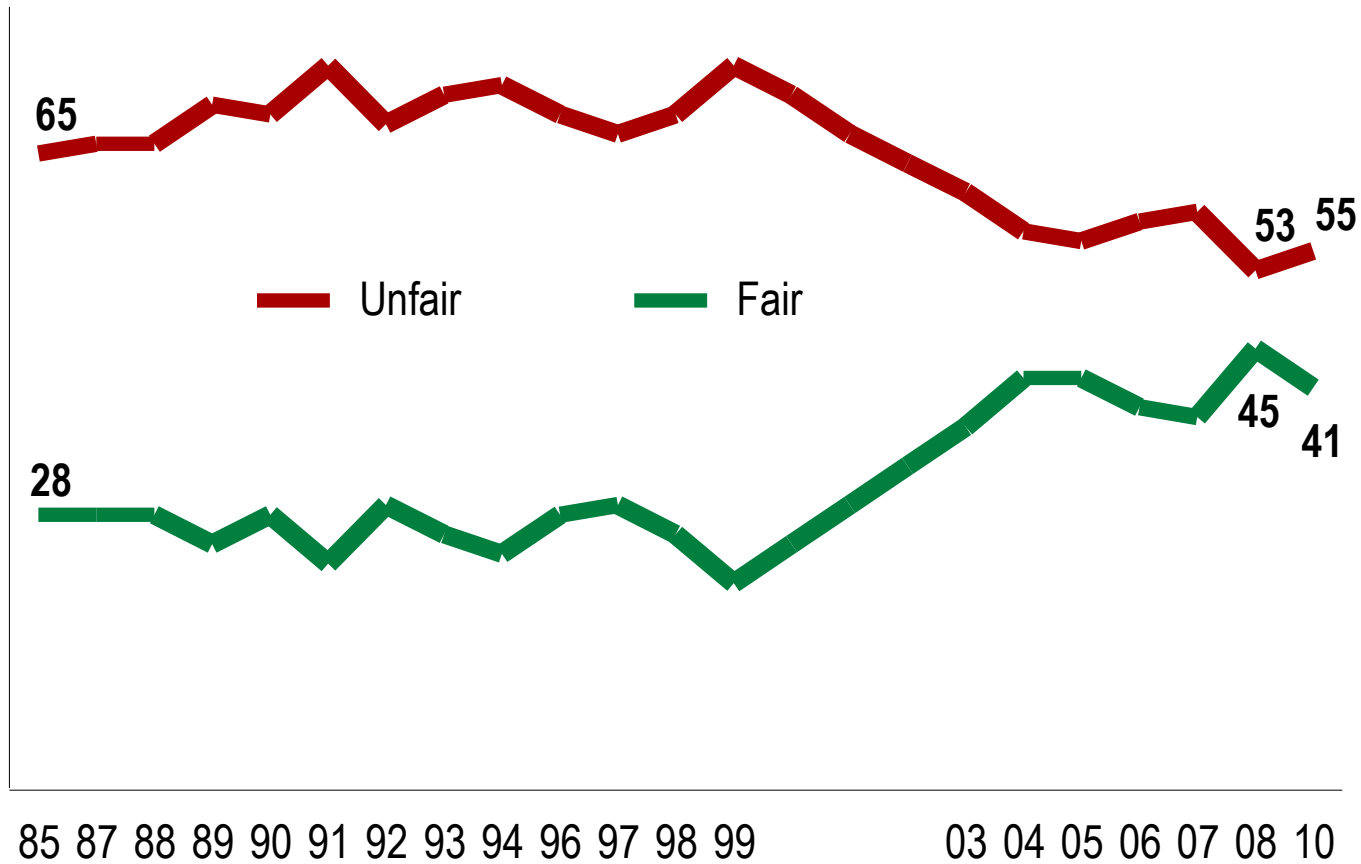
GTA December 2010



Q.19

Fairness of the tax system

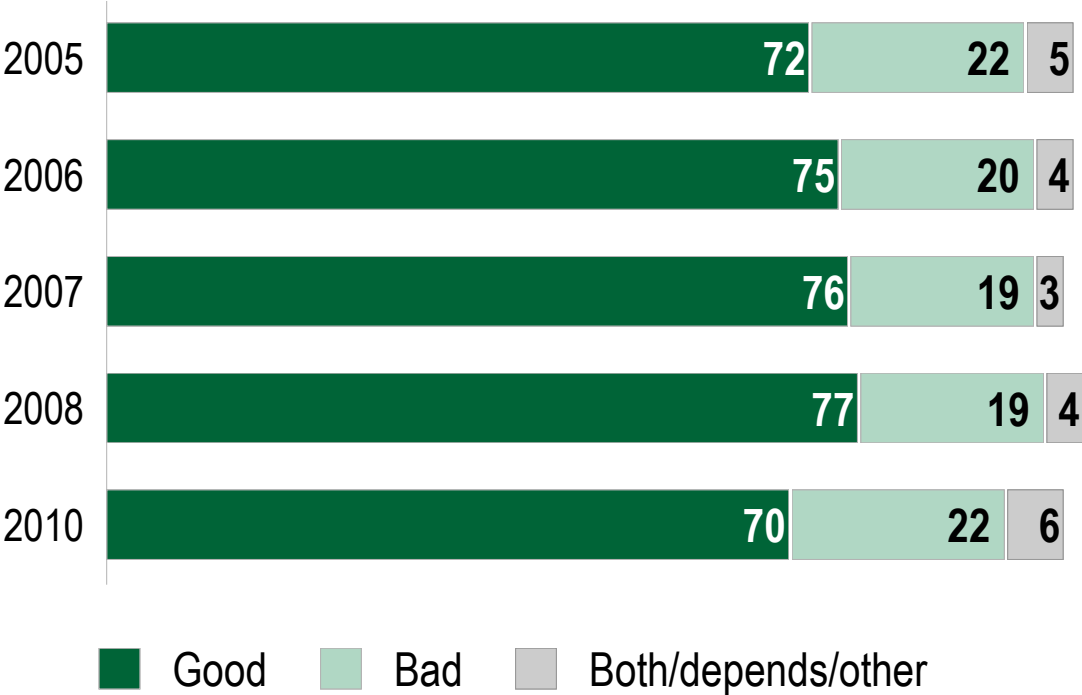
Canada 1985 - 2010



Q.9

Taxes mostly good or mostly bad?

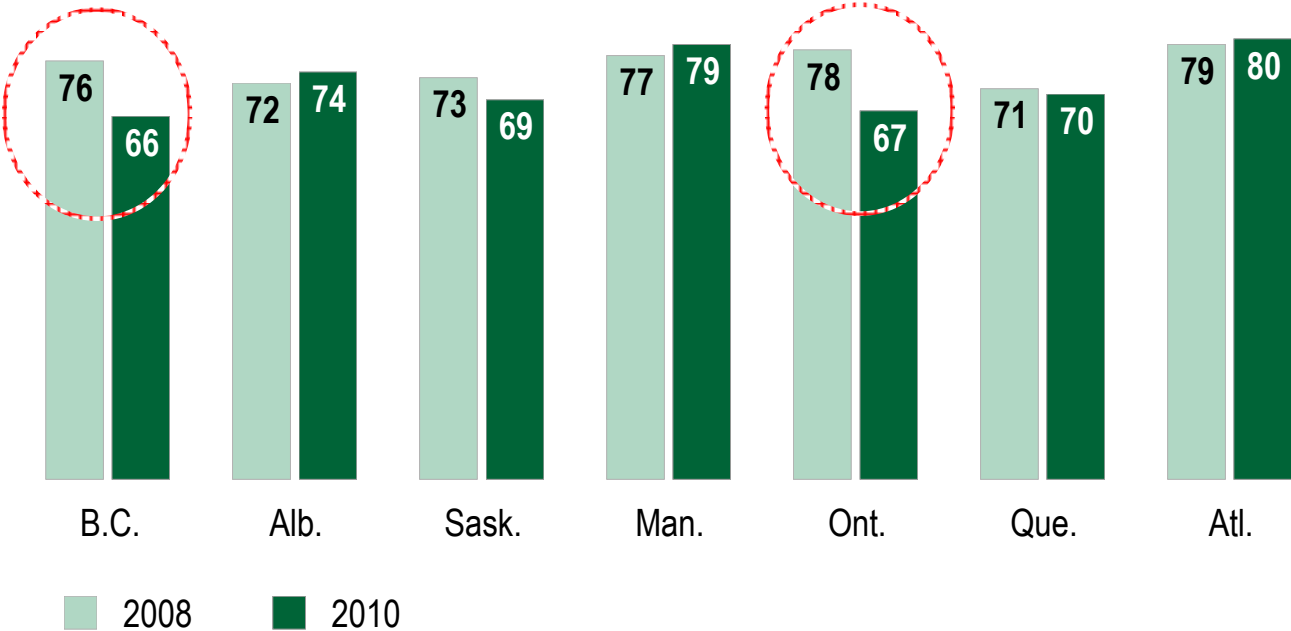
Canada 2005 - 2010



Q.10

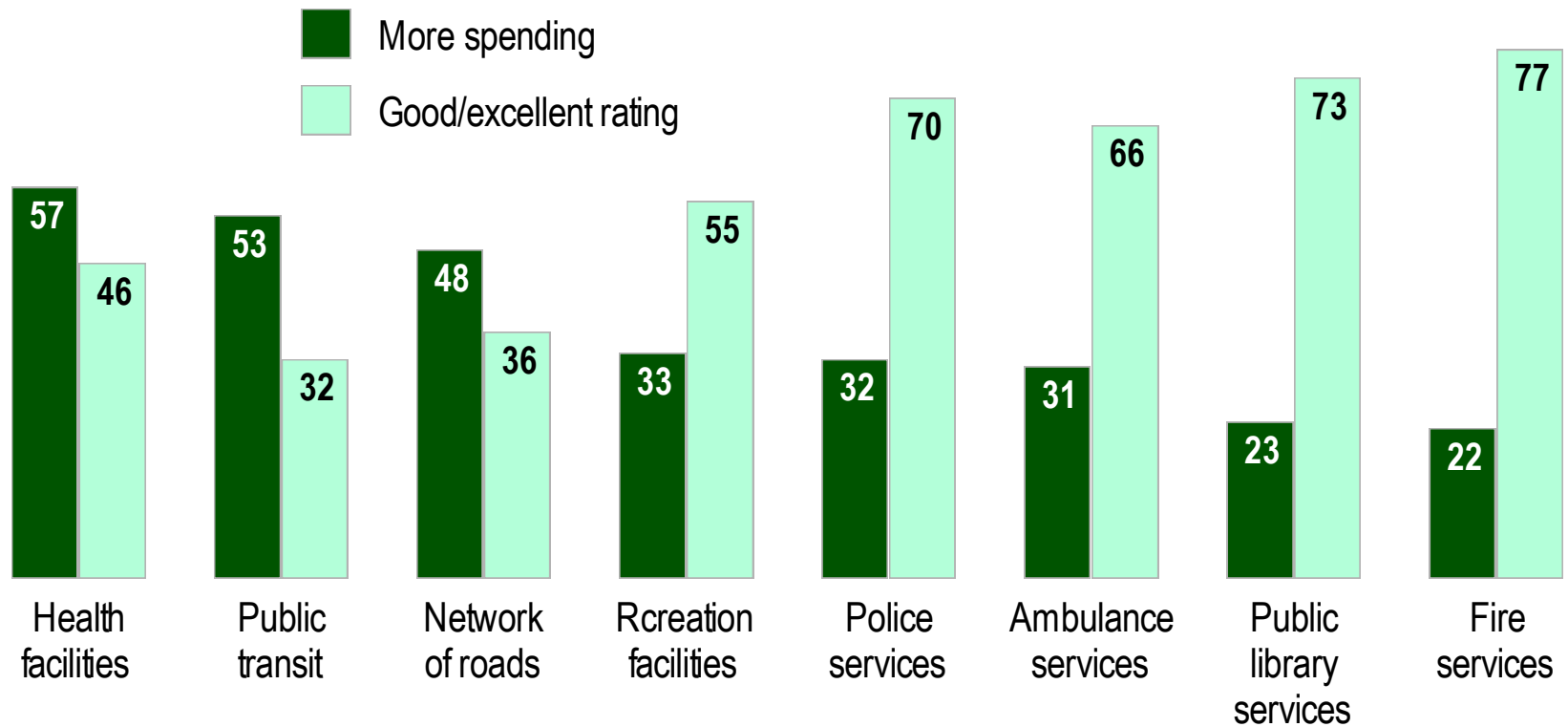
Taxes are mostly good

By province 2008 - 2010



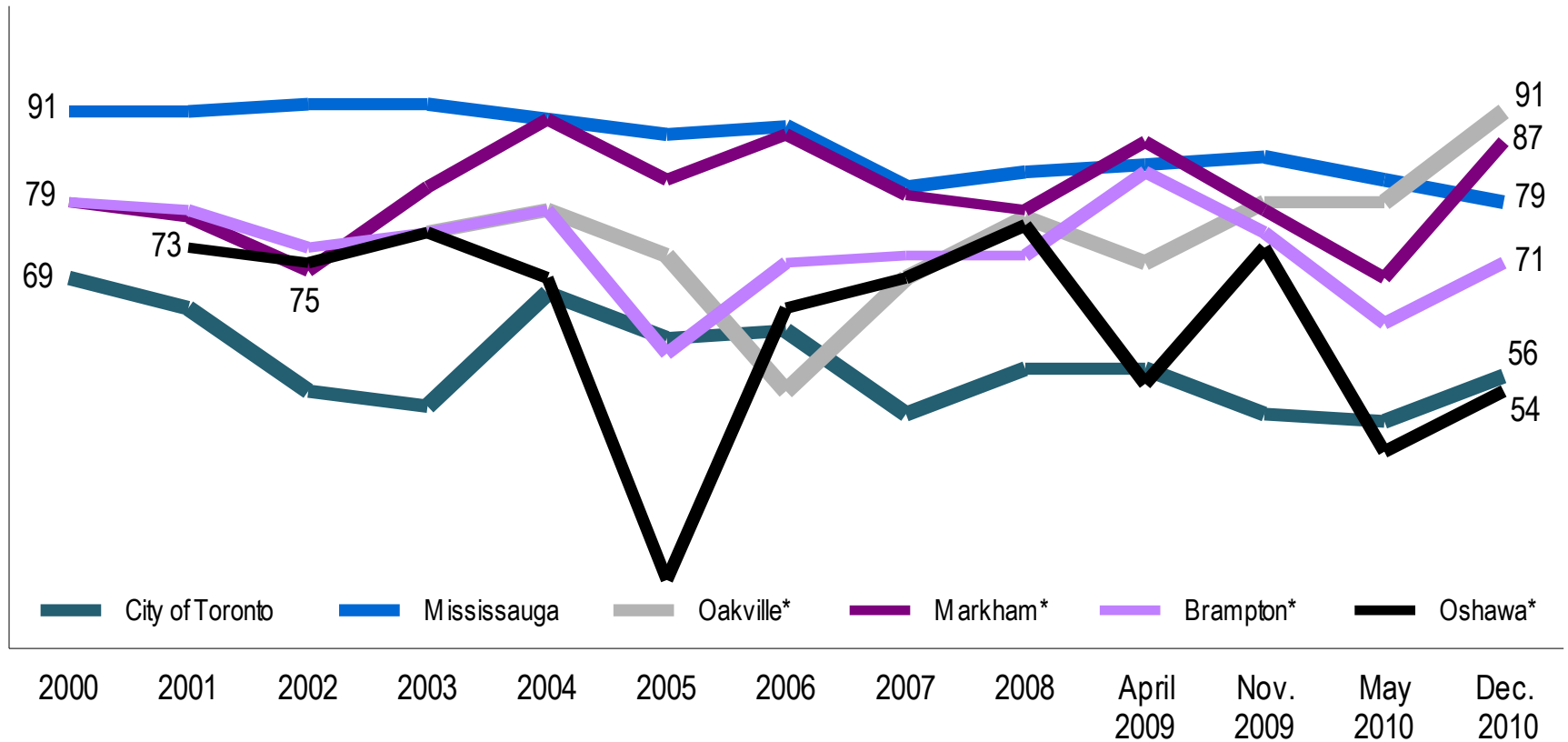
Q.10

Municipal spending preferences vs. satisfaction with services 2010



Satisfaction with municipal government

Very/somewhat satisfied 2000-2010



* Note: small sample sizes

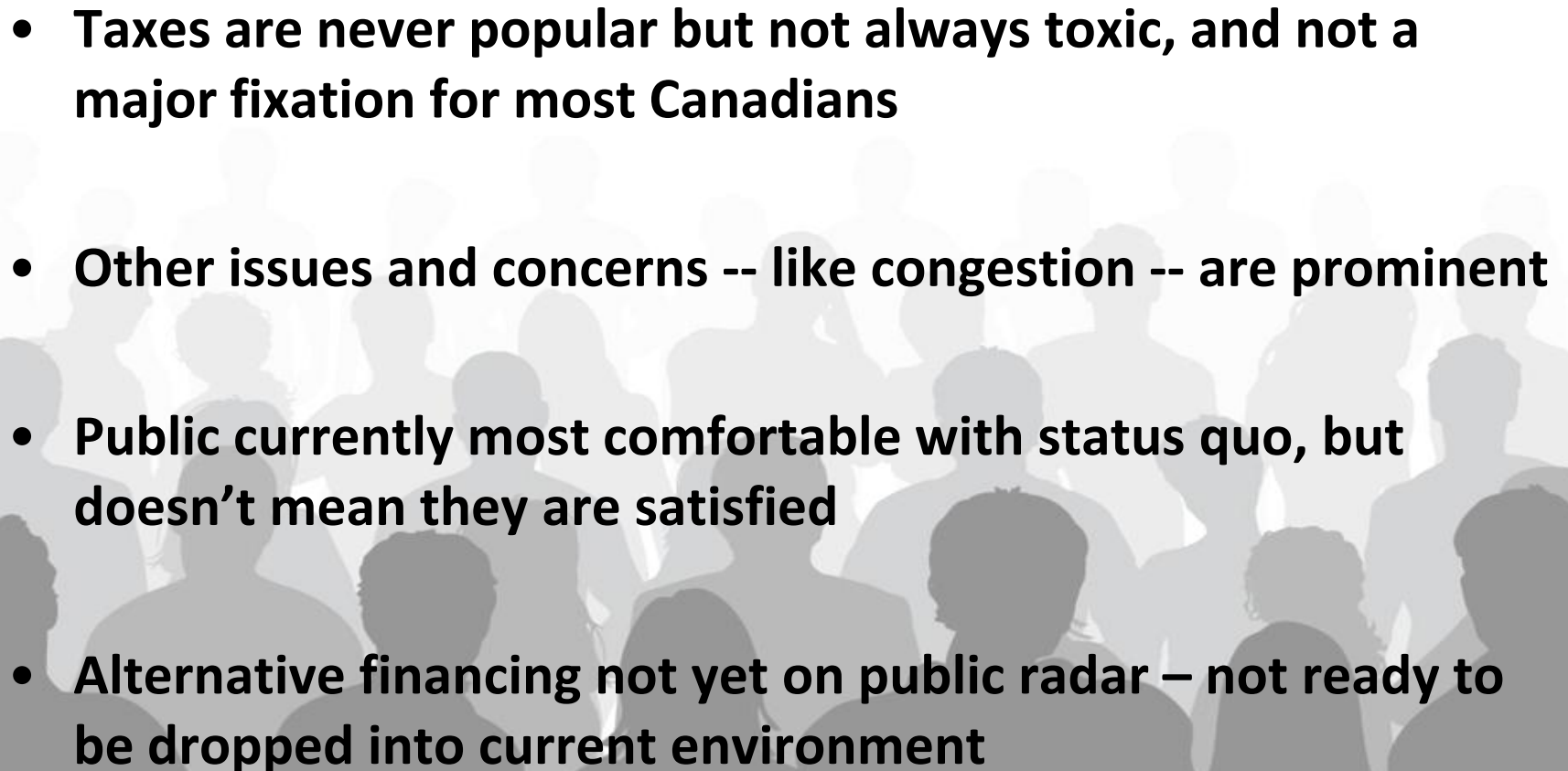
Alternative Financing

- Private involvement in public services is low on the public agenda
- Public is split but fear of loss trumps financial benefits
- More likely to support for services like public transit than for health or security

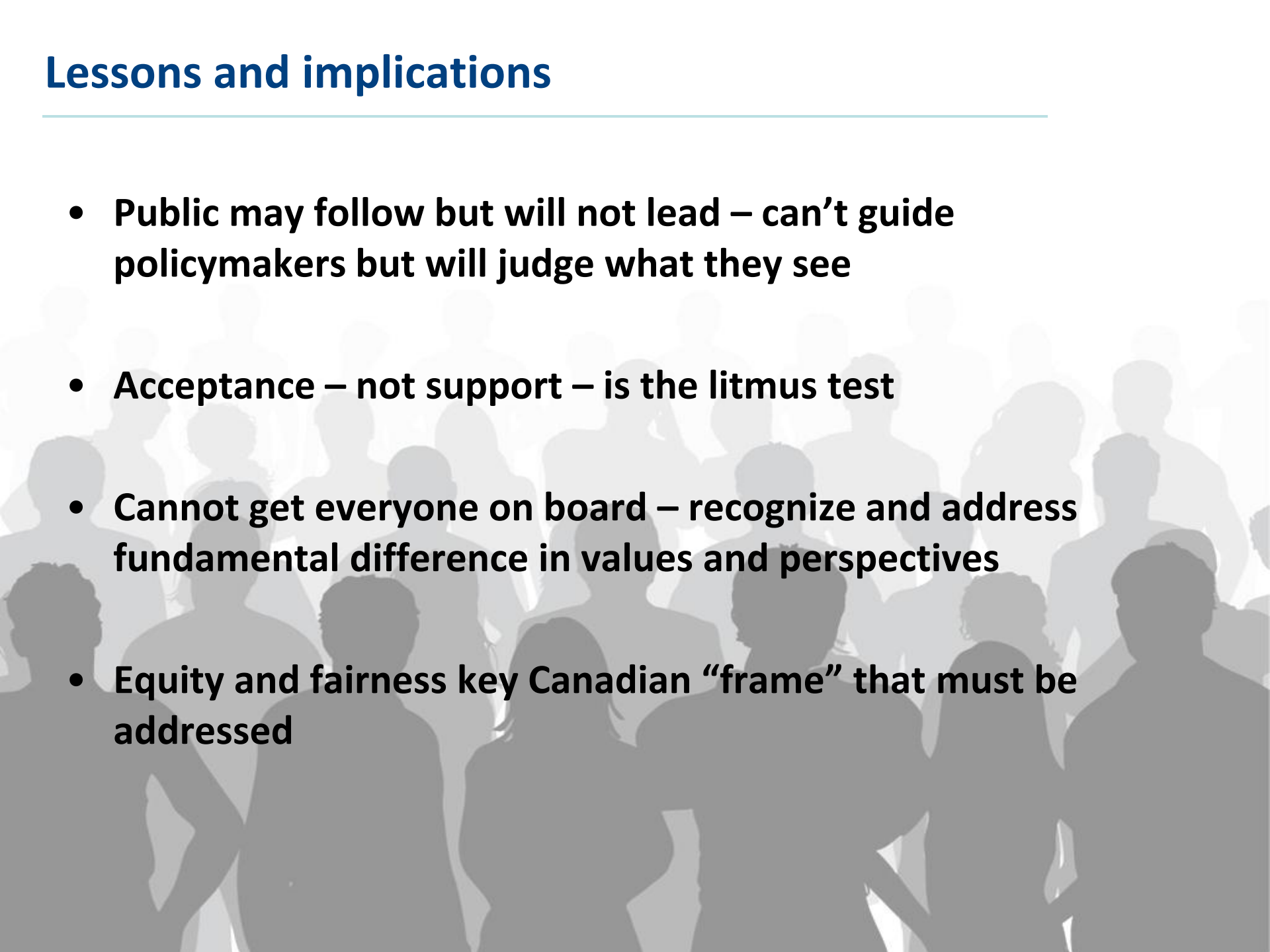
Concluding insights



What this research tells us

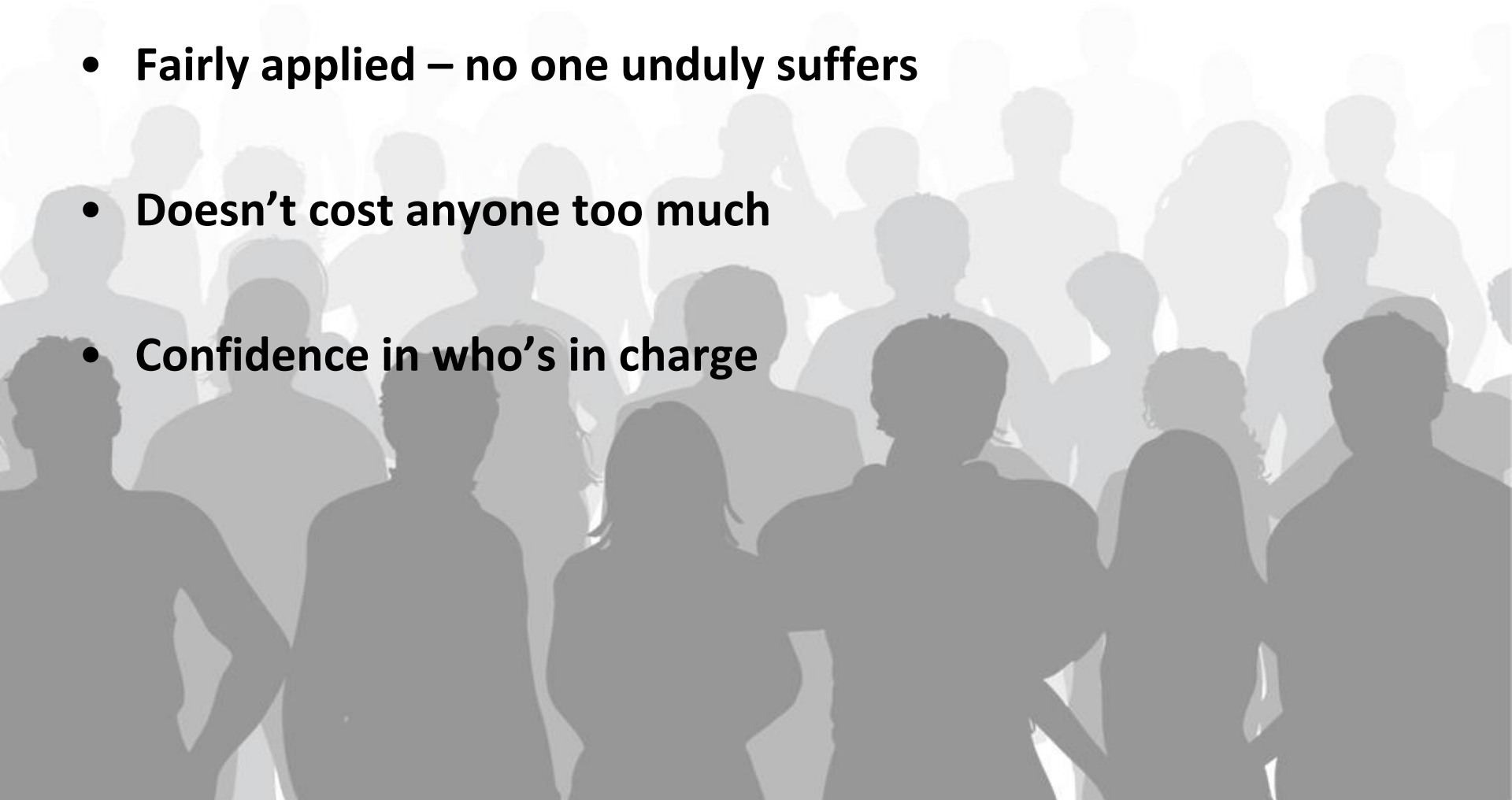
- **Taxes are never popular but not always toxic, and not a major fixation for most Canadians**
 - **Other issues and concerns -- like congestion -- are prominent**
 - **Public currently most comfortable with status quo, but doesn't mean they are satisfied**
 - **Alternative financing not yet on public radar – not ready to be dropped into current environment**
- 
- A background image showing a dense crowd of people's silhouettes in various shades of gray, creating a sense of a large group or public gathering.

Lessons and implications

- **Public may follow but will not lead – can't guide policymakers but will judge what they see**
 - **Acceptance – not support – is the litmus test**
 - **Cannot get everyone on board – recognize and address fundamental difference in values and perspectives**
 - **Equity and fairness key Canadian “frame” that must be addressed**
- 
- A background image showing a large crowd of people in silhouette, rendered in shades of gray. The silhouettes are of various heights and are scattered across the slide, creating a sense of a diverse group of people.

Keys to public acceptance

- **Effective in improving mobility - not a tax grab**
- **Fairly applied – no one unduly suffers**
- **Doesn't cost anyone too much**
- **Confidence in who's in charge**





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www.EnvironicsResearch.ca

Mobility pricing in Canada





Do we just give up for now?

Relevant research on public attitudes and priorities

- General attitudes towards taxes
- Environmental pricing reform
- Congestion and road pricing



Role of public opinion research

- Systematic → Quantifiable → Replicable → Credible
- Why it's needed
 - Know where target audiences stand – and how it is changing
 - Test internal assumptions
 - Distinguish public views from media portrayal
 - Distinguish public views from stakeholder positions

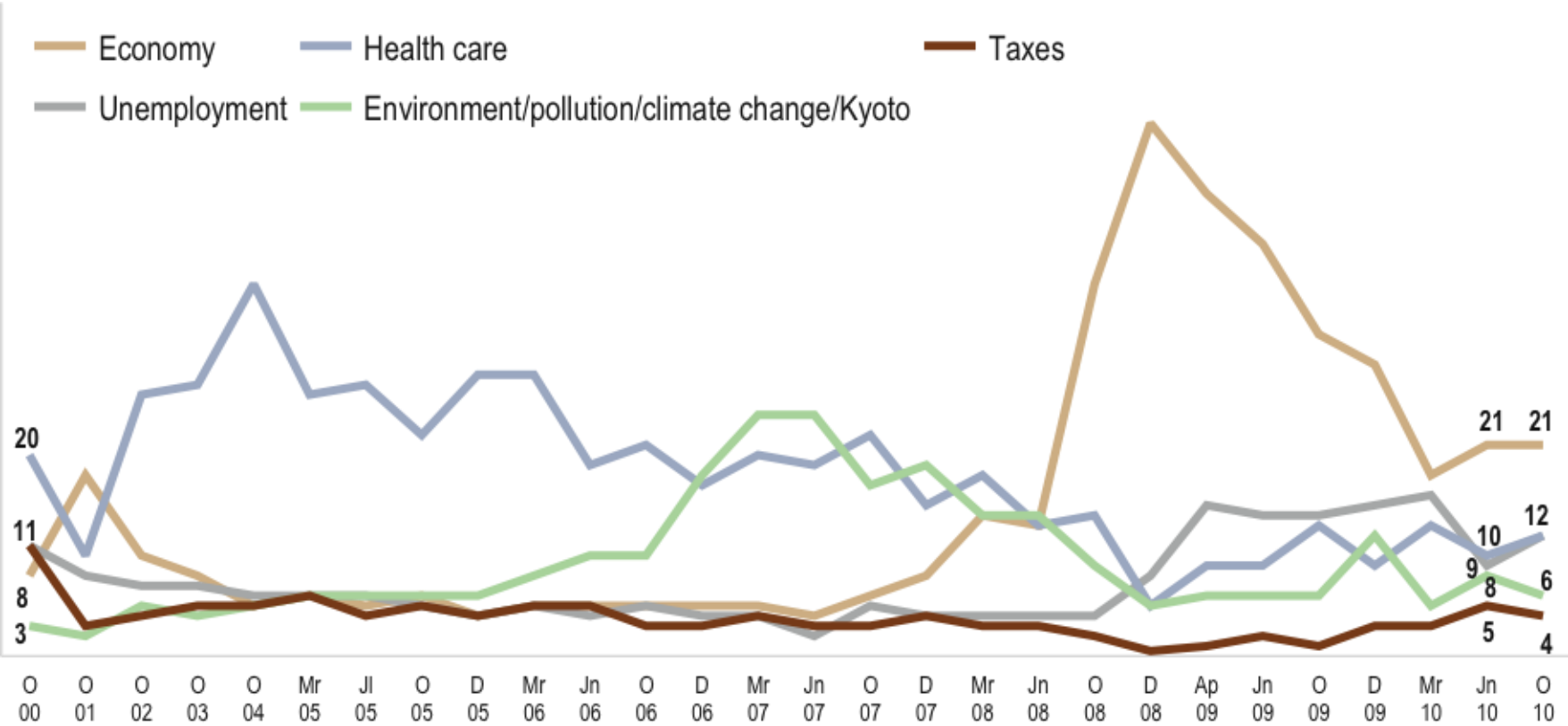


General attitudes toward taxes



Most important problem facing Canadians today

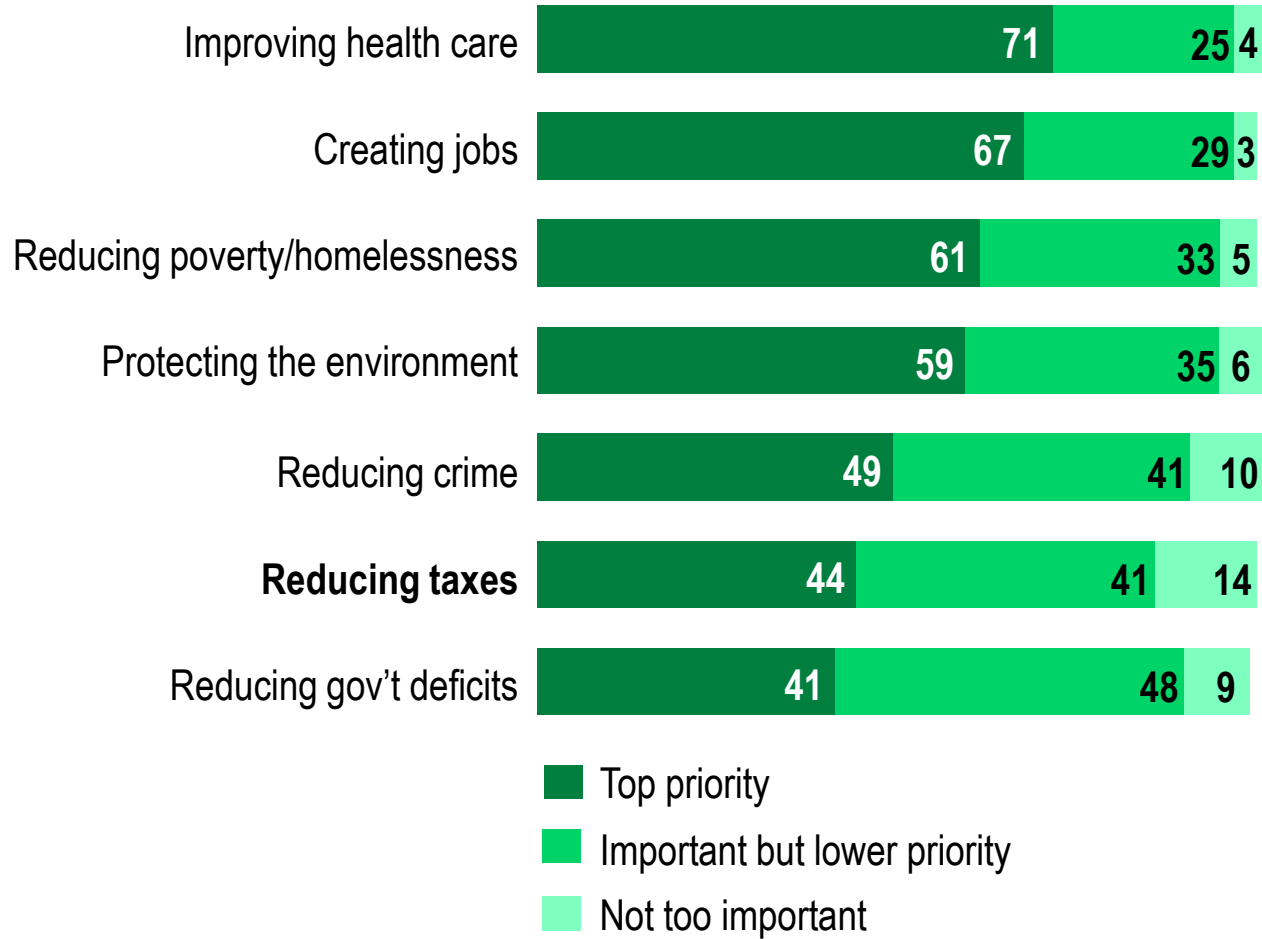
Canada 2000 - 2010



Q.2

Top priorities for Canada

Canada November 2010



Q.2



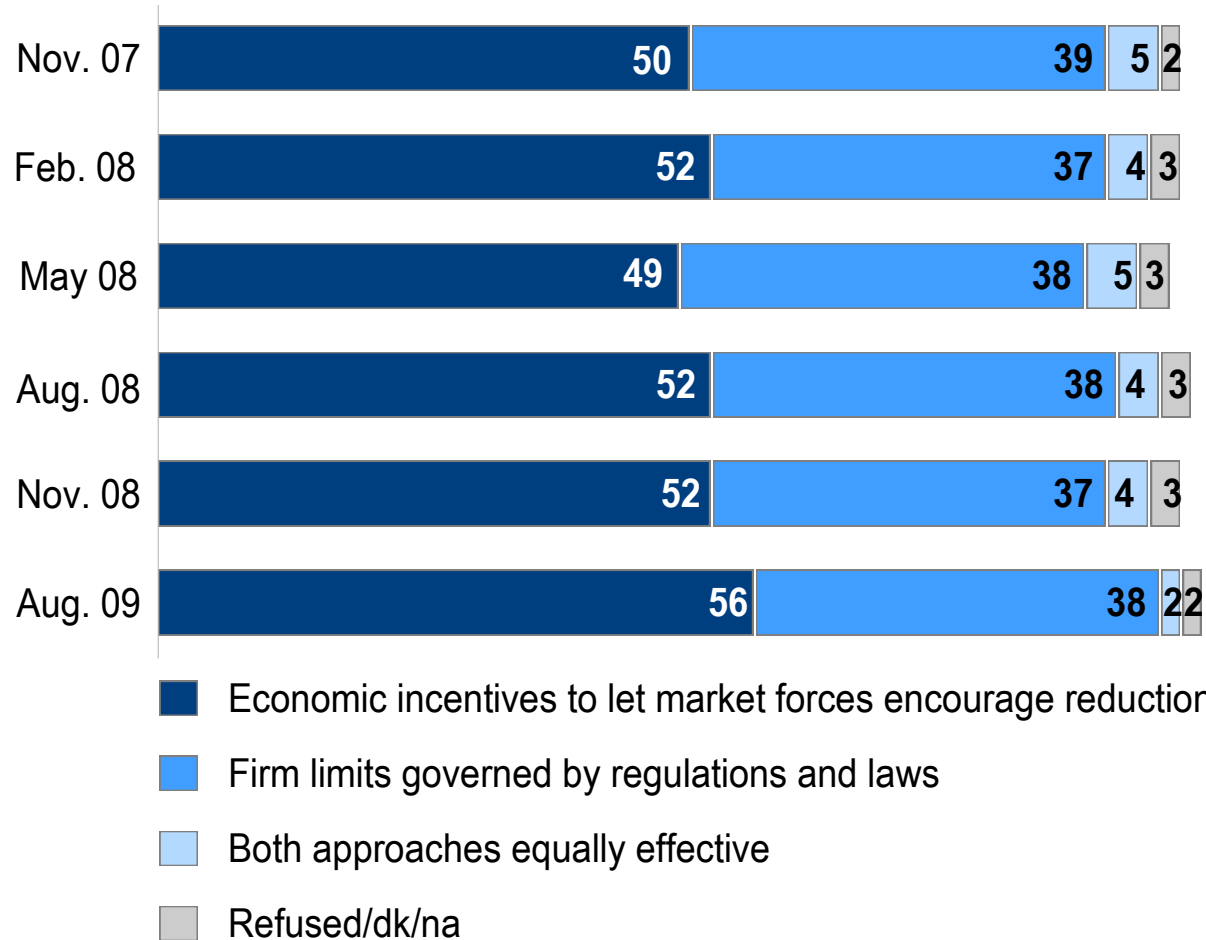
Environmental pricing reform

Environmental pricing reform

- Market forces are powerful drivers of decision-making – but prices typically exclude environmental costs/benefits
- Environmental pricing (EPR) incorporates environmental costs/benefits into pricing, and removing externalities
 - Creating markets for nature's environmental services now treated as free
 - Adjusting fiscal policy to better integrate environmental costs and benefits
- EPR principles and mechanics are straightforward – but face significant political and social obstacles

Most effective approach for reducing carbon emissions

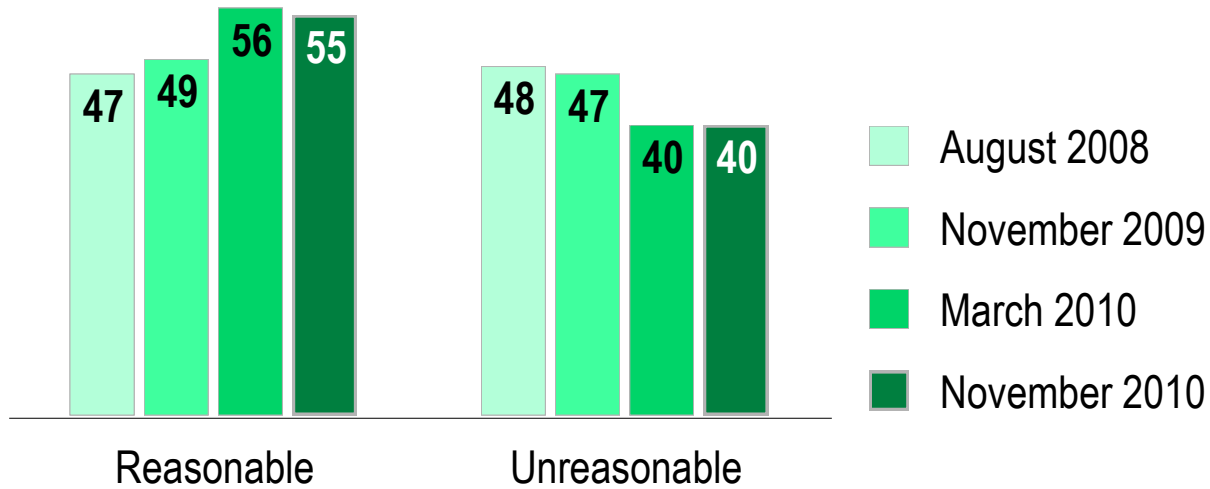
Canada August 2009



Q.6

Reasonable for consumers to pay \$100/year to reduce GHG?

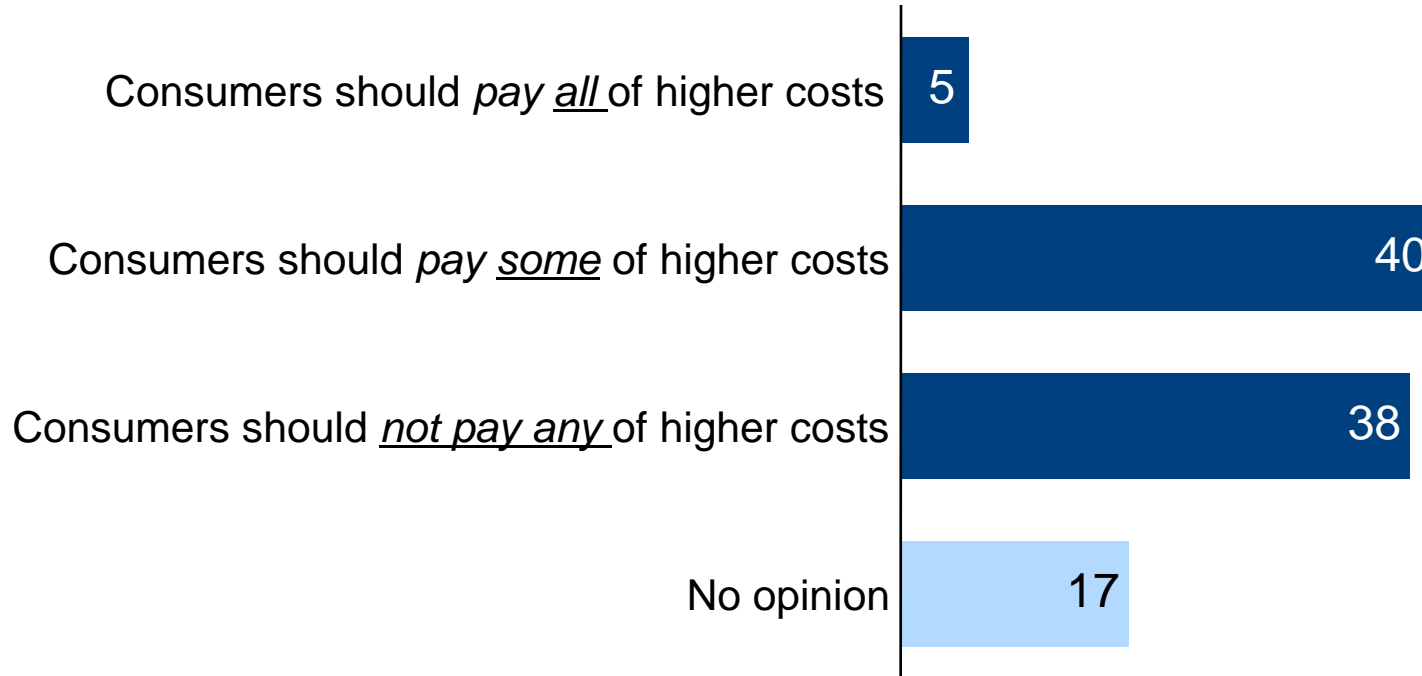
Canada 2008 - 2010



Q.11

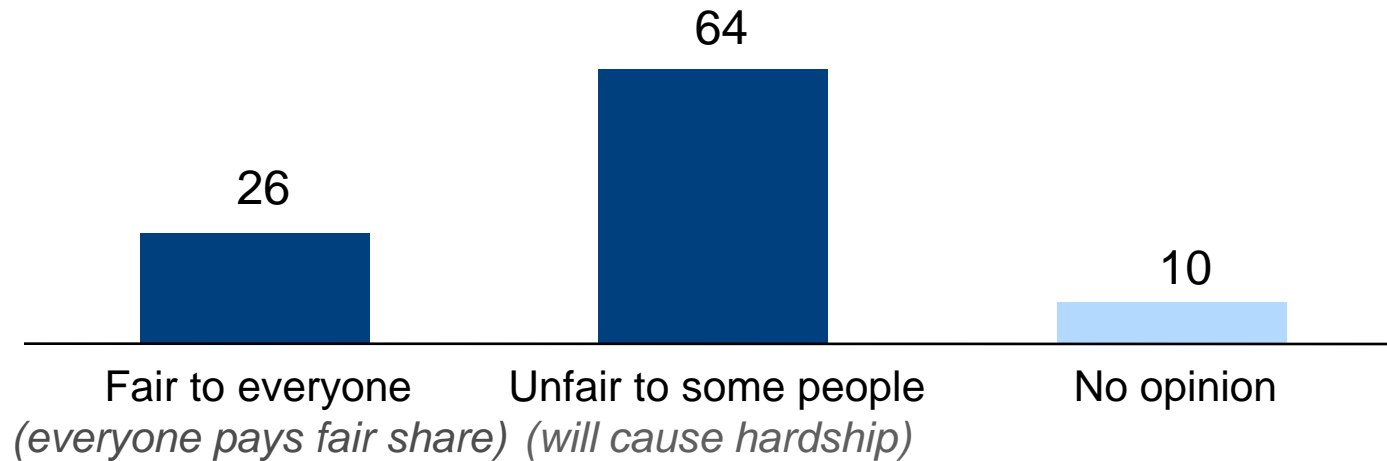
How much of higher industry costs should be passed on to consumers to help pay for environmental improvements

Canada 2008



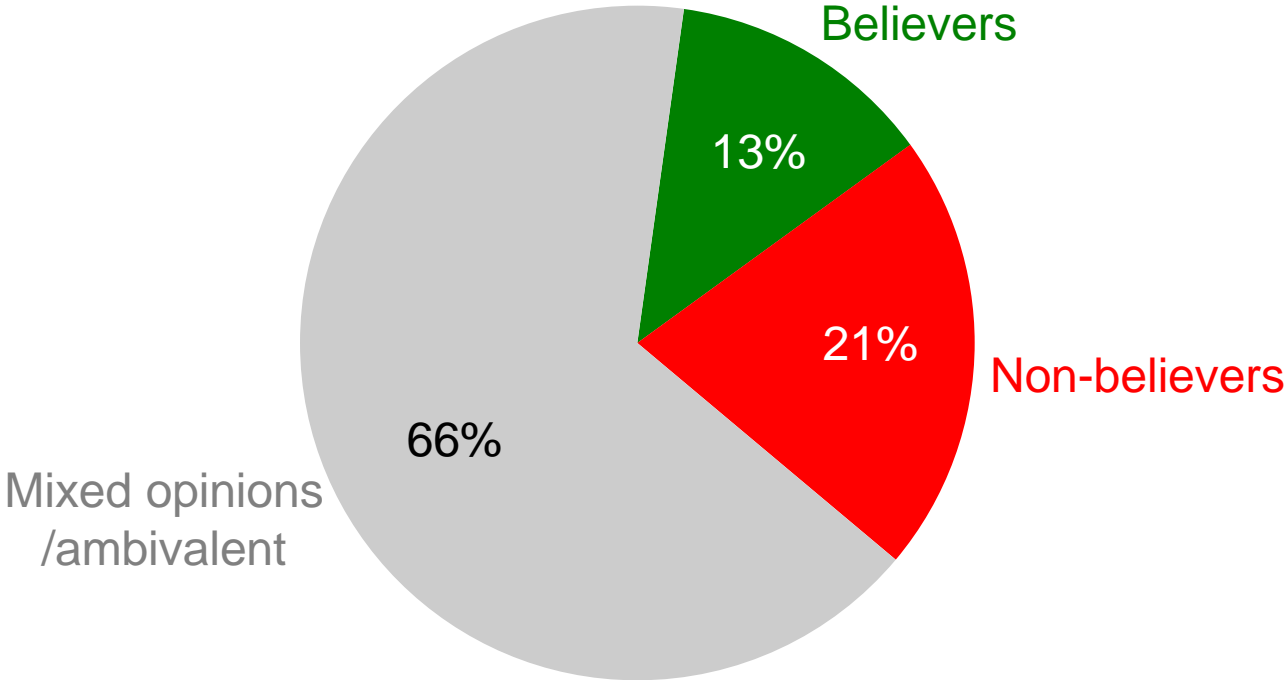
Charging consumers higher prices for goods/services to account for their environmental impact is . . .

Canada 2008



Canadians' orientation to EPR

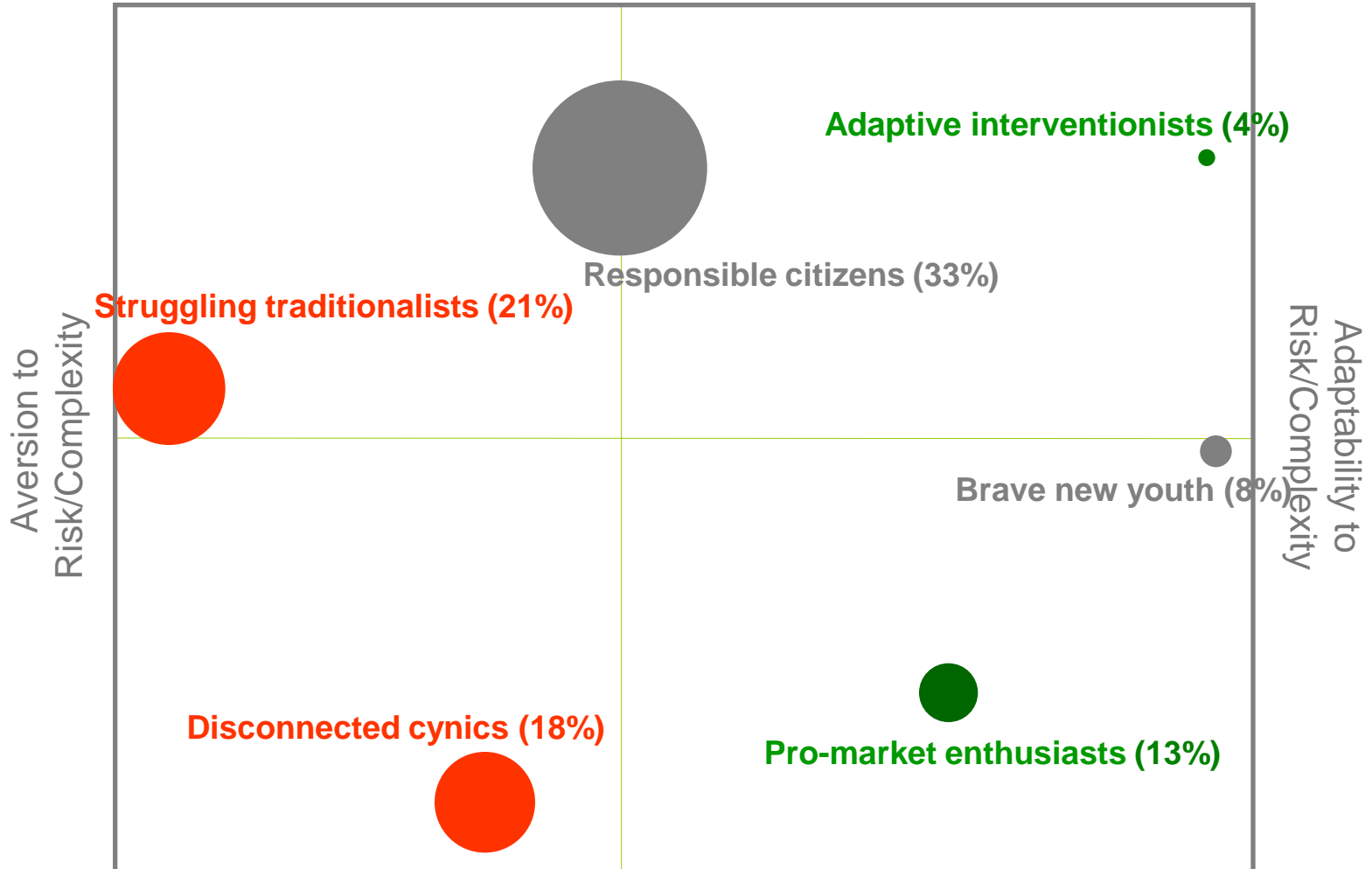
Canada 2008



Orientation to EPR by values-based groups

Canada 2008

Social Responsibility & Engagement



Social Darwinism & Disconnection

Sustainable Prosperity EPR Social Values Project

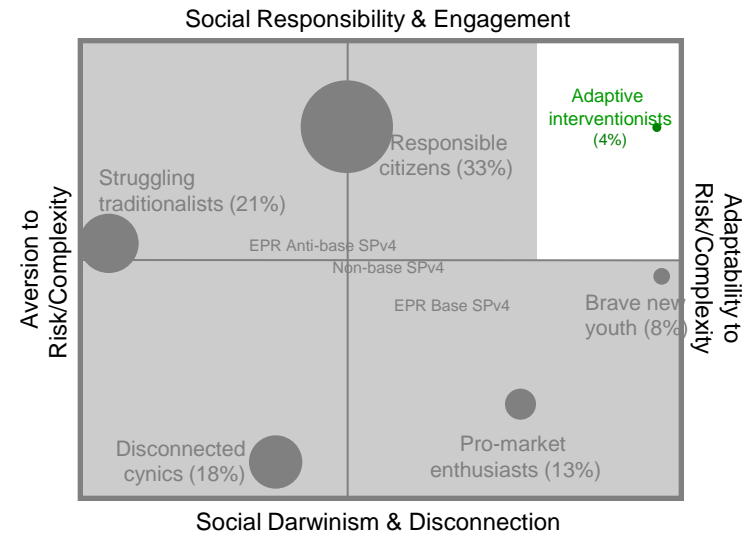
Adaptive interventionists (4% of the population)

- Stronger of two Believer groups on EPR orientation – upper right-hand quadrant

- Support for EPR rooted primarily in sense of responsibility to address environmental challenges, and confidence in government intervention

- Demographic characteristics

- Mostly male
- Somewhat younger
- Highest income group
- Highest in Ontario / higher foreign born
- Higher support for Conservatives; Highest for Green Party



- Strongest values

- Enthusiasm for technology (*highest of all groups*)
- Adaptability to complexity in life
- Belonging to the global village
- Ethical consumerism
- Ecological lifestyle

- Weakest values

- Fatalism
- Social darwinism
- Anomie & aimlessness
- Pursuit of happiness to detriment of duty
- Primacy of environmental protection

Pro-market enthusiasts (13% of the population)

- Weaker of two Believer groups on EPR orientation – lower right-hand quadrant

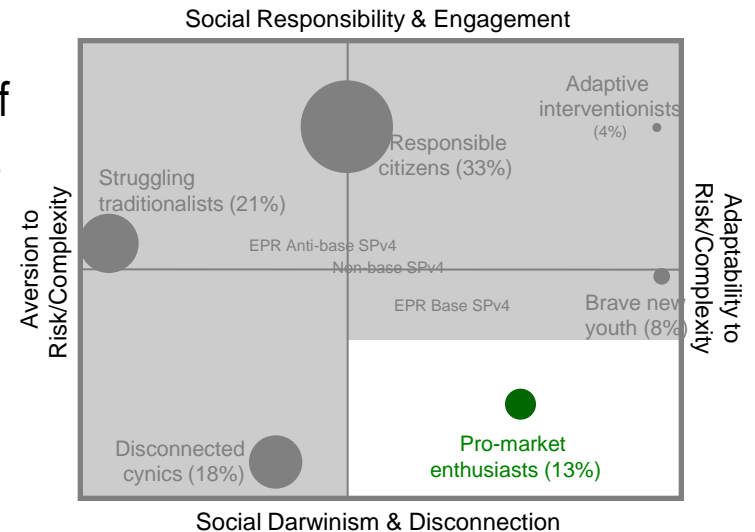
- Support for EPR not out of principle or efficacy in environmental solutions, but more an acceptance of market forces, and little concern about environment or impacts on the vulnerable

- Demographic characteristics

- Mostly male
- Somewhat younger
- Higher than average incomes
- Higher representation in Prairies
- Strongest support for Conservative Party

- Strongest values

- Social darwinism (*highest of all groups*)
- Adaptability to complexity / Adaptive navigation
- Enthusiasm for technology / Faith in science
- Penchant for risk taking
- Confidence in big business



Weakest values

- Ethical consumerism
- New social responsibility
- Primacy of environmental protection
- Belonging to the global village
- Financial concern for the future

Struggling traditionalists (21% of the population)

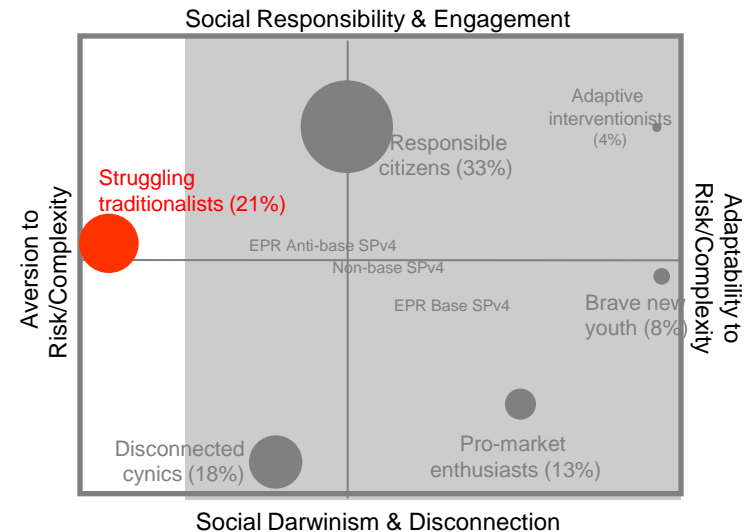
- Strongest Non-believer group on EPR orientation – far left-hand side of the map
- View EPR primarily as a threat to themselves (and others) rather than a solution to anything. Most vulnerable and focused on survival

- Demographic characteristics

- Highest concentration of women
- Oldest group
- Lowest levels of education
- Distributed evenly across the country
- Lowest support for Green Party

- Strongest values

- Risk aversion (*highest of all groups*)
- Aversion to complexity in life
- Financial concern for the future
- Apocalyptic anxiety
- Skepticism toward big business
- Primacy of environmental protection

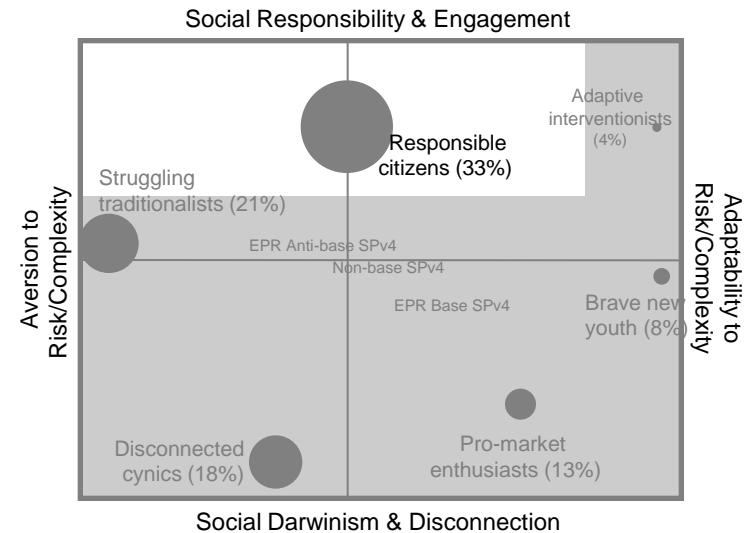


Weakest values

- Enthusiasm for technology
- Control of destiny
- Penchant for risk taking
- Faith in science
- Acceptance of violence

Responsible citizens (33% of the population)

- Middle-ground group on EPR orientation – near the top of the map
- High degree of social responsibility – concerned about social impacts of EPR, but also feel strongly about the need to address environmental problems
- Demographic characteristics
 - Slightly more female
 - A bit younger than average
 - Higher representation in Quebec
 - Highest support for the Bloc Quebecois



Strongest values

- Ethical consumerism (*second highest group*)
- New social responsibility (*second highest*)
- Belonging to the global village
- Ecological lifestyle
- Attraction to nature
- Control of destiny
- Social learning

Weakest values

- Social darwinism (*lowest*)
- Fatalism
- Ethnic intolerance (*lowest*)
- Confidence in big business (*lowest*)
- Penchant for risk taking (*second lowest*)
- Adaptability to complexity in life

How EPR is currently positioned with Canadians

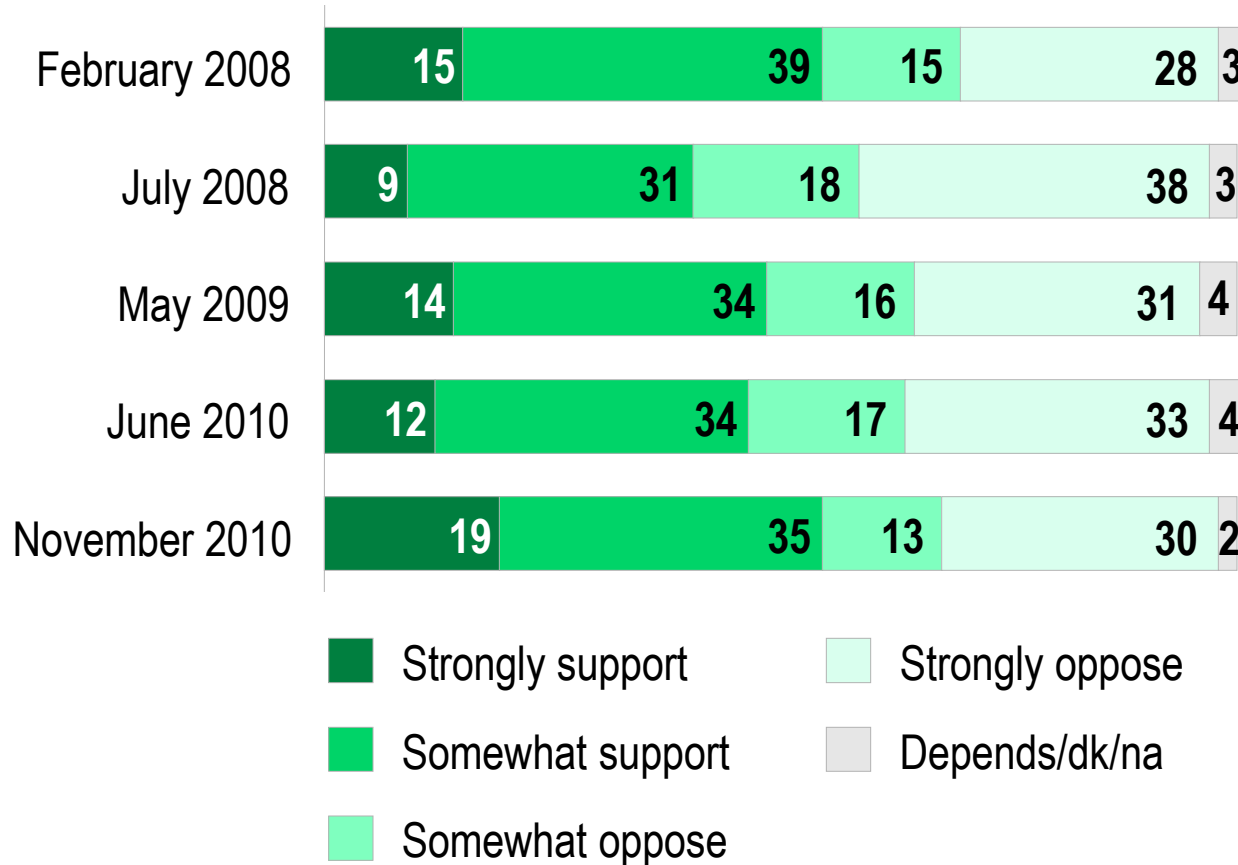
- EPR – as currently framed – is poorly positioned within Canadians' value space
- Very small base of solid support; pro-market enthusiasts are unlikely to be a helpful constituency in promoting EPR initiatives
- EPR runs up against strongly-held Canadian values around collective action and protection of the vulnerable
- Demonstrates how EPR has been framed too narrowly around economic mechanisms vs. broader principles

What about the B.C. carbon tax?



Support for carbon tax in B.C.

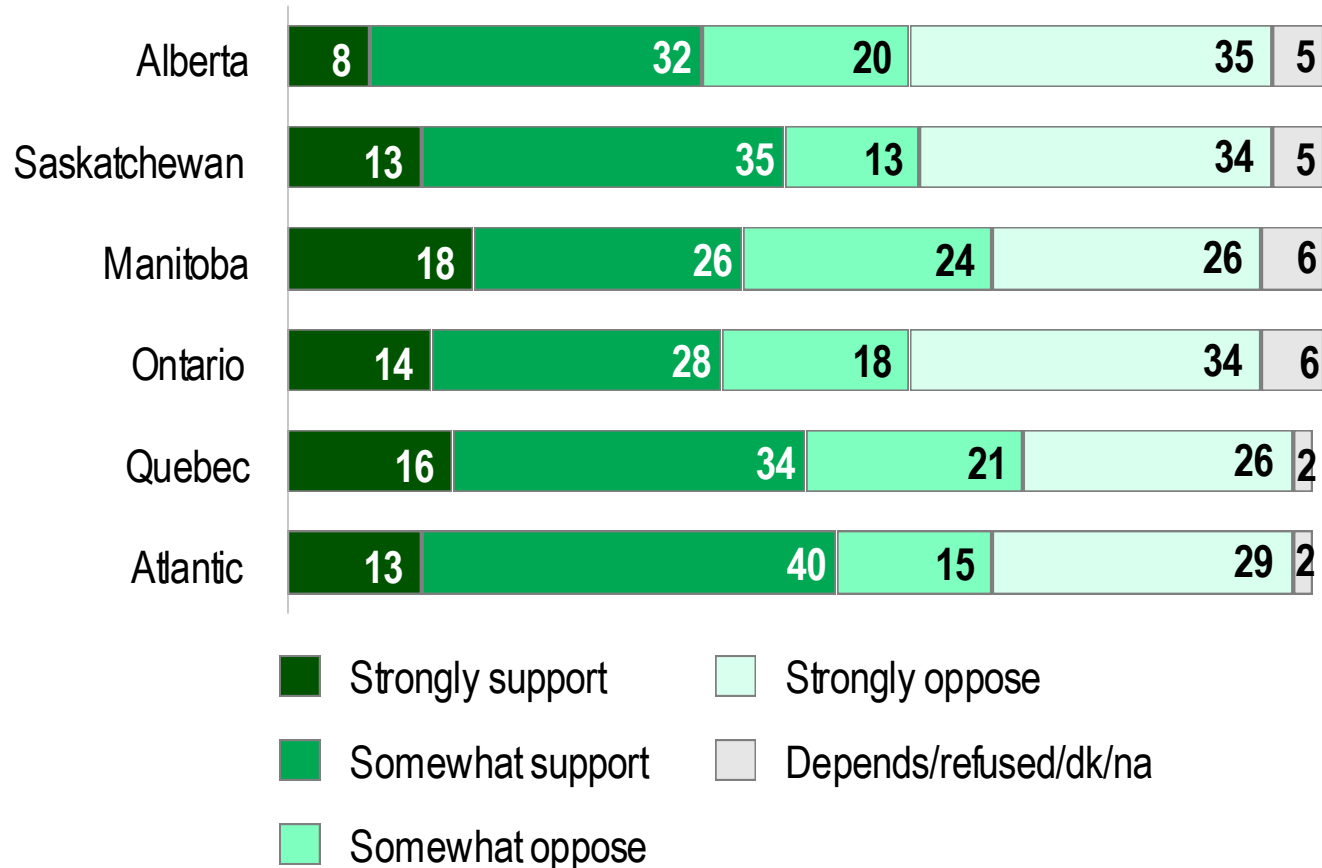
British Columbia November 2010



Q.12

Support for B.C.-style carbon tax in own province

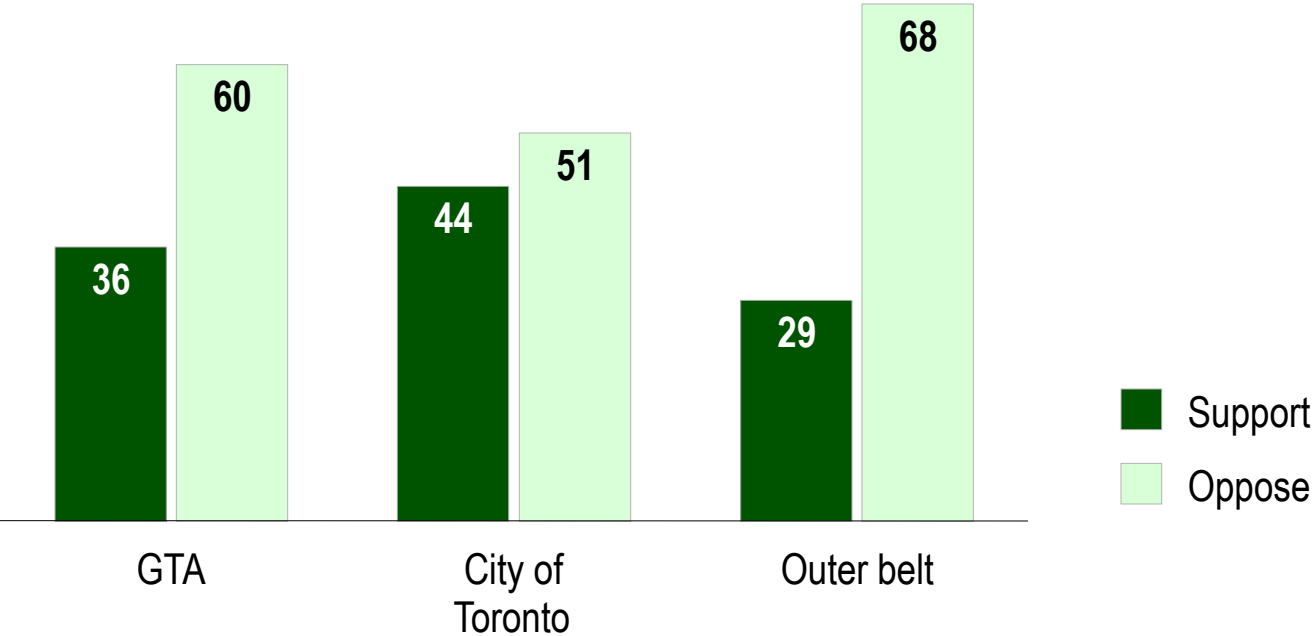
By region June 2010



Q.11b

Support for road tolls to reduce traffic congestion

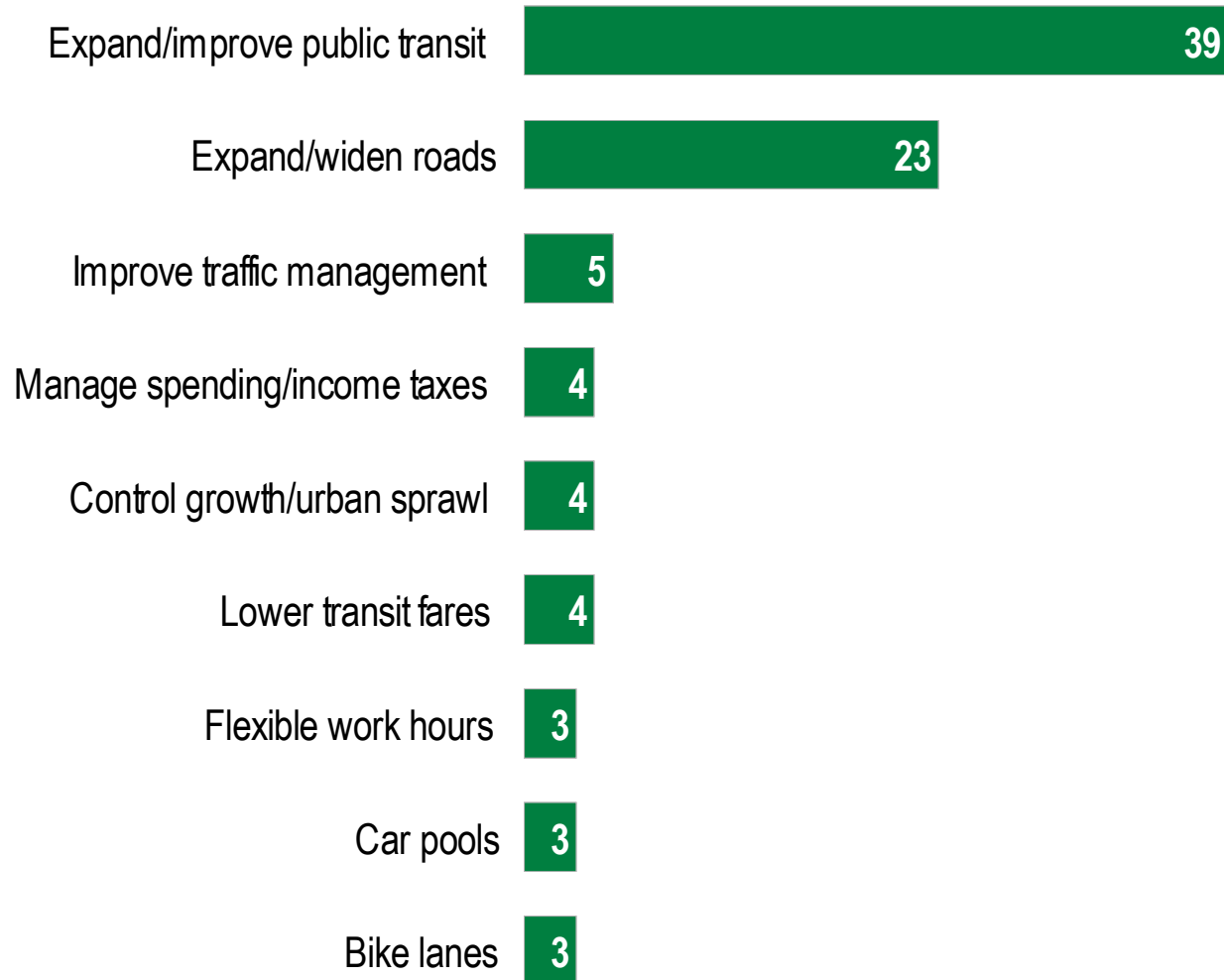
GTA December 2010



Q.20

Alternatives to road tolls

GTA Top mentions Among those who oppose road tolls December 2010



Q.21

