



Canada Report

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Sustainable Governance Indicators 2020

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Executive Summary

Canada's economic position is relatively strong, despite lingering risks deriving from internal trade hurdles, high levels of household debt, sluggish business investment and overheated property markets in major cities. Labor-market conditions continue to be favorable, with the unemployment rate near an all-time low at 5.5%; many companies are reporting an acute shortage of skilled workers, and Canadians are also seeing wage gains accelerate. On the policy side, the Trudeau government showed resolve in facing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) renegotiations and a canola ban from China, avoiding an economic downturn. Although Trudeau has now completely abandoned his promise of a balanced budget by 2019, his government remains in a strong fiscal position, with low levels of debt despite growing deficits. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about the provinces, many of which find themselves in a precarious fiscal situation projected to worsen due to the strain caused by rising healthcare costs.

Prime Minister Trudeau's first term in office brought many successes, most notably the implementation of a national carbon tax, and a change in the child benefits system that resulted in a sharp decline in child poverty. Indeed, it appears that the Liberals in power have delivered at least in part on the vast majority of their electoral promises. These successes notwithstanding, the government has been plagued by unfulfilled expectations dating from the 2015 campaign. Many of the bills introduced have been lackluster, falling short of the "transformational" reforms that were pledged. For instance, the Trudeau government dropped its campaign promise to eliminate first-past-the-post federal elections. While some are of the opinion that the complete abandonment of electoral reform reveals a long-standing and fundamental failure of governance and a lack of commitment to structural change, others believe there was no societal consensus on that issue. Individual provinces such as Quebec may yet institute electoral reforms, and the lessons from these experiences may eventually lead to change at the federal level. Provincial experimentation leading to national adoption has worked in many policy areas such as healthcare, and might work similarly in electoral reform.

Much less controversial is the view that the administration failed to resolve the problems associated with the disastrous Phoenix pay system, a payroll processing system for federal employees that was introduced in 2011.

The 2019 budget, while lacking some of the big-ticket items expected from a Liberal government, seems to build modestly on the Liberal's platform. The budget provides further subsidies for electric cars, decreases the interest rate on student loans, and has plans for the creation of a national pharmacare plan. Notably absent are a national childcare plan, sufficient funding for Indigenous infrastructure and reconciliation, and a credible strategy to improve housing affordability in the major cities.

Federal-provincial relations are another area in which the government is haunted by the 2015 campaign. Attempts to find an appropriate balance between anti-climate-change policies and the interests of Canada's large natural-resources sector have led both to the approval of several pipelines and the introduction of a national price on carbon. Rather than appeasing the growing sentiment of western alienation, these policies further inflamed the tensions between the West and Ottawa. Calling for a cancellation of the carbon tax and a complete overhaul of the recently passed environmental-assessment act, the governments of Alberta and Saskatchewan have been quite vocal about their disdain for the federal government. The Liberals failed to win a single seat within these provinces in the most recent federal parliamentary election. At the same time, environmental groups and community stakeholders in British Columbia have been baffled by the government's decision to purchase and subsequently approve the Trans-Mountain Pipeline. Much needs to be done to repair the relationship with the West and stop the Wexit movement from picking up momentum. Relations with all provinces are also going to continue to be tense as fiscal pressure builds, particularly as healthcare-system sustainability is set to deteriorate as Canada's population ages.

Government relations with Indigenous peoples remain fraught. Overall, Indigenous people face worse outcomes in the labor market and justice system than do non-Indigenous Canadians. As in other areas, Prime Minister Trudeau's government has had difficulty meeting its commitments here. The educational system on reserves, overseen by the federal government, remains underfunded compared to the provincially managed schools outside reserves. Infrastructure systems are critically inadequate, especially with regard to drinking water. The government's National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls was initially greeted with cautious optimism, but is now widely seen as flawed due to high-profile mismanagement and resignations.

Overall, Canada retains its relatively strong position in relation to sustainable governance but there are many gaps that need to be filled. Canada will have to act with resolve if it wants to keep its position in relation to the world.

Key Challenges

In October 2019, Canadian voters cast their ballots after what was arguably one of the most polarized federal election campaigns in memory. The reelected Liberal government now faces a divided parliament, and cannot govern without the support of at least some of its rivals. But a minority government does not need to be paralyzed. Indeed, many observers see the new reality as a real opportunity for legislative change; after all, it was minority governments that introduced universal healthcare and the Canada Pension Plan.

The economic environment in which the government is set to operate is uncertain, but at least for now appears reasonably strong. The forecast for Canada remains moderate but steady, despite its dependence on natural resources and its close links to the United States. The country's ability to absorb people from diverse cultures will help bridge the gap in the prime working-age population. Canada's relationship with the United States has stabilized after the renegotiation of NAFTA and the abolition of tariffs.

Canada's dealings with China as a global power are poised to become a growing challenge in the coming years. Relations have soured following the arrest of a top Chinese executive under a U.S. warrant for breaking sanctions with Iran on Canadian soil. In return, Chinese authorities formally arrested two Canadians for crimes related to national security, and banned canola and other agricultural products, citing health concerns. Like others, the Canadian government must develop a strategy for continued economic exchange, working with China to address global issues while also seeking to advance human rights within the country.

Ottawa is currently facing two threats to national unity in its relationship with the provinces. A stagnating energy industry paired with a lack of pipeline capacity and the passage of new environmental legislation has fueled feelings of alienation in oil-producing provinces such as Alberta and Saskatchewan. Mending the relationship with the West, including a possible reform of the interprovincial equalization payments, should be done swiftly, before the "Wexit" movement gains momentum. In doing so, the Trudeau administration must find a way to meet commitments to reduce greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions while also providing a transition path for the oil-dependent economies of the West. In the East, the Bloc Québécois' resurgence is likely to create further friction. While a sovereign Quebec may not be on the immediate agenda, the highly contentious Bill 21, which bars public employees from

wearing religious symbols (e.g., hijabs, niqabs, crucifixes) could spell trouble for the government and reignite separatist enthusiasm. The majority of Quebecers are in favor of the bill, which according to several high-ranking UN rapporteurs is a clear violation of human-rights accords, and which the federal government will have to challenge in court if it wants to uphold its avowed values of equality, diversity and inclusion.

As elsewhere, the importance of climate change as a major policy issue continues to grow. Unlike other countries, Canada faces additional hurdles, as most approaches to reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions are likely to raise tensions between Ottawa and the West, and between Liberals and Conservatives in the House of Commons, where Trudeau needs to maintain support for his government. However, action is needed; although Canada's environmental commitments have clearly improved under Trudeau, they remain insufficient. While his government was successful in implementing a national carbon-tax requirement, revamping the environmental-assessment act and banning oil tankers on the northern coast of British Columbia, it still is far from meeting its Paris climate-accord agreements, and even further from the path needed to reach its commitment of zero emissions by 2050. Progress in this area may prove even more elusive in the face of quibbles over jurisdiction and provincial opposition.

Improving relations with First Nations and other Indigenous groups in Canada once again constitutes a fundamental and unresolved challenge for the government. Relations have soured, with many of the government's promises remaining unfulfilled. Overall, the government has not followed up on its pledge to recast its dealings with the Indigenous population as a nation-to-nation relationship; this would require substantial restructuring of departmental mandates to ensure that Indigenous rights and titles are being honored.

In summary, the look ahead through Trudeau's second term contains considerable risk. The government must deal with the frayed relationship with the Western provinces, the resurgence of the separatist bloc and the precarious situation with China while maintaining the confidence of the House of Commons. Overall, the Liberal government's first term in office has moved Canada toward sustainable governance in many areas, but there are still large gaps that need to be filled in order to achieve long-term sustainability. The Liberals under Trudeau will have to rise above partisanship and show that they can work with other parties in order to pass enduring reforms yielding long-term benefits.

Party Polarization

Canada is a parliamentary democracy, and its first-past-the-post electoral system generally produces absolute parliamentary majorities for the winning political party, which are further strengthened by strict party discipline. As a result, the Canadian government can implement its policies irrespective of how polarized or hostile opposition parties may be.

Still, all large federal parties have historically pulled toward the center. This is especially true for the governing Liberal Party, which has always emphasized “big tent” politics, and garnered support in the last election by promoting middle-of-the-road policies and compromises. However, in past years, other political parties have been moving further toward their respective ends of the left-right political spectrum, with the left-leaning New Democratic Party taking a more socialist stance, and the recent schism in the right-leaning Conservative Party that led to the formation of the populist People’s Party of Canada. Overall, therefore, parties are today arguably more likely to be defined by their ideological stance than previously. However, it is important to note that relatively speaking, the main parties of government (i.e., the Liberal Party and Conservative Party) are close enough to find common ground on broad topics (e.g., free trade) regardless of recent shifts.

At the same time, cross-party cooperation is hindered by what is allegedly the strictest form of party discipline in the world. Members of parliament rarely vote against party lines, and party leaderships maintain strict control over speech content and committee work. In a report by advocacy group Samara Canada, members of parliament stated that party lines were rigid and it was difficult to work as an individual. Multipartisan deals are largely only possible when the party leadership is negotiating – it is difficult to deal with members of parliament themselves. (Score: 9)

Citation:

Johnston, Richard (2015). “Canada is polarizing—and it’s because of the parties,” in *Political Polarization in American Politics*, eds. Daniel J. Hopkins and John Sides. New York: Bloomsbury, 2015, pp. 120-125.

Samara Canada (2017), “Flip the Script,” available at https://www.samaracanada.com/docs/default-source/reports/flip-the-script—by-the-samara-centre-for-democracy.pdf?sfvrsn=2d09002f_2

Policy Performance

I. Economic Policies

Economy

Economic Policy
Score: 8

In its fall 2019 Monetary Policy Report, the Bank of Canada projected real GDP growth of 1.7% in 2020, a slight increase from 1.5% in 2019. Real gross domestic income (GDI) growth, which takes changes in terms of trade into account, slowed in 2019 to a growth of 1.6%, down from last year's 2%. Projections for 2020 are slightly lower, at 1.5%. This slowdown of growth can be attributed to a reduction in business investment and exports due to global uncertainty, combined with a decline of investment in the energy sector stemming from transportation constraints. These constraints are expected to ease as pipeline and rail capacity gradually expand.

Canada has implemented market-oriented policies that have enhanced the country's attractiveness to business. Yet there are areas where Canada's economic framework could be more conducive to productivity growth, as described in the 2020 World Bank Doing Business Report, which ranked Canada 23rd out of 190 countries for the overall ease of doing business, down from eighth place out of 181 countries in 2009.

A key challenge for Canada involves the coordination of regulatory policy across federal and provincial jurisdictions, exacerbated by the presence of interprovincial barriers to trade and labor mobility. In many areas, effecting change requires cooperation between different levels of government, which frequently impedes progress.

Another factor is the country's dependence on natural resources, which account for roughly 20% of GDP. Aside from the risks associated with the high levels of price volatility in this sector, uncertainties regarding policies and regulations surrounding major projects (e.g., the duty to consult with Indigenous groups) have the potential to stall investment. This factor may be

mitigated by the current Liberal government's new Bill C-69 (the Environmental Assessment Act), which is aimed at reducing uncertainty in large-scale projects. The effectiveness of the bill has yet to be demonstrated, however.

Another issue affecting Canada's competitiveness is the role played by marketing boards, which set production quotas. While these issues came to the fore during the recent NAFTA renegotiations, no major party has made a commitment to significantly reduce these barriers.

Household debt levels remain high. The current ratio of household debt to disposable income in Canada is above 177%, and housing affordability continues to decline. Although the federal government has repeatedly tightened mortgage-lending rules in recent years, and provincial governments have enacted legislation to curb real-estate investment by foreign entities, housing markets in Canada's largest cities of Vancouver and Toronto remain unbalanced. A possible correction in the housing market would pose a significant risk. There appears to be room for additional measures to mitigate speculative investment activity, and to improve coordination between federal and provincial regulators.

A final concern focuses on the need for talent and innovative ability. In the World Economic Forum's most recent Global Competitiveness Report, Canada continues to receive low rankings with regard to the quality of education, technological readiness, business sophistication and the capacity to innovate. The federal budgets in 2018 and 2019 attempted to stimulate innovation through the development of "innovation superclusters," but these clusters have not yet made a major impact.

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The World Bank, Doing Business 2019, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32436/9781464814402.pdf>
OECD Economic Surveys: Canada July 2018, https://read.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-canada-2018_eco_surveys-can-2018-en#page9
Canada: 2016 Article IV Consultations, International Monetary Fund, June 2016, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2016/cr16146.pdf>
World Economic Forum, The Global Competitiveness Report 2019.
Bank of Canada, Monetary Policy Report, October 2019, <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/mpr-2019-07-10.pdf>

Labor Markets

Labor Market
Policy
Score: 8

The unemployment rate in Canada is primarily driven by the business cycle, which reflects aggregate demand conditions. Labor-market policies and programs such as unemployment insurance and training programs have limited effect on overall unemployment, although these policies and programs are

important for income support and the upgrading of skills. Overall, labor-market regulation in Canada is relatively light, and there are few rigidities that impede the operation of the labor market. The most significant of these may be regional employment-insurance benefits. Together with the high cost of living in growing metropolitan areas, these benefits reduce the outflow of labor from regions with high unemployment rates, which could explain Canada's large drop in the ranking of internal labor-market mobility in the most recent World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness report.

The national labor market continued its strong performance in 2019, with Canada's unemployment rate reaching a 40-year low of 5.9%. The increase was due to higher than normal employment figures in the service industry, offsetting stagnation in the energy industry. The long-term unemployment rate shot up during the 2008 to 2009 recession and has remained elevated since, but is low by international standards. Nevertheless, the labor-force participation rates of some groups (specifically women, young Canadians and Indigenous peoples) are lower than they could be, with these groups representing a significant untapped source of potential economic growth. Unemployment rates among Indigenous Canadians, particularly those of Inuit and First Nations members living on reserves, remain very high, suggesting that existing employment-support programs are insufficient. While 2018 did see an increase in the labor-force participation rate for women, and a 1% decrease in the unemployment rate among off-reserve Indigenous peoples, both of these rates remain far from the corresponding rates among white males. The 2019 budget attempted to build on the previous year's budget in this area by including a series of measures designed to increase labor-force participation and employment rates for these groups.

The federal government has recognized both the need to improve the economic environment (for instance, by encouraging businesses to hire new workers) and the need for more effective workplace training, but many of its measures in this area have not had the desired effect. Labor shortages are a growing problem. The 2019 budget attempts to address this issue with the introduction of the Canada Training Credit, which people can apply toward fees at training services, colleges, universities and other eligible institutions providing occupational skills.

Overall, the Canadian labor market is very flexible, particularly for a developed country. In the 2019 Global Competitiveness Report, Canada's labor market was ranked eighth out of 141 countries overall, and sixth with regard to the current labor force's skill levels. While these rankings are quite good relative to other OECD countries, it still represents a decline from the previous year's ranking of seventh place.

Citation:

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World Economic Forum (2017). The Global Competitiveness Report 2017-2018. <http://reports.weforum.org/global-competitiveness-index-2017-2018/>

World Bank. Doing Business Report 2020 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/32436/9781464814402.pdf>

CFIB press release Aug 9 2018 <https://www.cfib-fcei.ca/en/media/canadas-job-vacancies-rate-reaches-new-heights>

Taxes

Tax Policy
Score: 8

Like other Western economies, Canada has seen the share of total income going to the top 1% of earners increase dramatically since 1980. Moreover, the earnings of male workers have stagnated as labor demand has polarized due to changes in technology and trade.

The income-tax system is reasonably progressive and continues to be useful in equalizing after-tax incomes for lower income brackets. According to the Conference Board of Canada, there are now almost 200 tax breaks for federal income-taxpayers, resulting in an estimated CAD 100 billion of foregone tax revenue annually. Some experts have argued that the multitude of overlapping tax expenditures benefit high-income individuals at the expense of low-income households. The 2019 budget introduced a \$200,000 cap on stock-option exemptions, a policy move that aligned Canada's treatment of stock options with that of the United States. For individuals with earnings above CAD 200,000 annually, the combined federal/provincial marginal tax rate exceeds 50% in more than half the provinces but is still well below the top income-tax bracket in similar countries and the United States. The 2018 budget introduced the Canada Workers Benefit (CWB) as a refundable tax credit intended to supplement the earnings of low-income workers and improve work incentives for low-income Canadians. The move was welcomed by experts, as the CWB has higher benefits and is more easily accessible than its predecessor, the Working Income Tax Benefit, which was widely considered ineffective.

In 2019, the Multilateral Instrument was introduced through Bill C-82. This instrument, developed by the OECD, is designed to prevent tax-base erosion and profit-shifting by multinational corporations' use of tax havens.

Canada fares well in terms of tax competitiveness. There is no double taxation at the corporate or individual level. Statutory corporate-tax rates at the federal

level and within the provinces have been reduced significantly in recent years. The marginal effective tax rate on investment has fallen, and is now the lowest among G-7 countries, and is below the OECD average. Capital taxes have been largely eliminated. A 2018 U.S. tax cut, which implemented a series of corporate-tax reduction measures, is a concern, as it could trigger a loss of tax revenue and investment. The Trudeau administration did not offer the same tax cuts as the United States, but instead offered more investment into the Strategic Innovation Fund, and created a new External Advisory Committee on Regulatory Competitiveness in order to reduce the red tape that many businesses claim slows down investment.

Citation:

The Conference Board of Canada, "Reinventing the Canadian Tax System: The Case for Comprehensive Tax Reform." March 23, 2012.

Department of Finance, Government of Canada, "Introducing the Canada Workers Benefit." posted at https://www.fin.gc.ca/n18/docs/18-008_5-eng.pdf

Budgets

Budgetary Policy
Score: 7

Canada's government is in a relatively strong fiscal position. For the current fiscal year of 2019 – 2020, the Parliamentary Budget Officer projects a budget deficit of CAD 17.7 billion, which represents a roughly CAD 4 billion increase from last years' deficit. Still, Canada's budget deficit as a proportion of GDP is low by international standards, as is its (net) public debt-to-GDP ratio, which is projected to drop below 29% in the next five years.

In its most recent 2018 fiscal sustainability report, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) estimates that the federal government could permanently increase spending or reduce taxes by 1.4% of GDP (CAD 29 billion in current dollars) while maintaining net debt at its current (2017) level of 31.1% of GDP over the long term. The same cannot be said for long-run provincial fiscal sustainability, where debt ratios range from roughly 3% in Alberta to over 40% in Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador. The PBO considers current fiscal policy in the provinces to be unsustainable, primarily due to rising healthcare costs.

The current Trudeau administration was elected with a promise to increase the deficit by almost CAD 10 billion in order to fund its campaign promises. This increased budget deficit would drastically change forecasts, but the Trudeau administration says it will keep the debt-to-GDP ratio below the fiscal-anchor level of 31%.

Recent changes to the Financial Administration Act require the government to seek parliamentary approval to borrow in debt markets. In November 2017, the Borrowing Authority Act came into force which sets a maximum amount

on the government's total stock of market debt and on borrowing by agent enterprise Crown corporations, and requires the government to report to parliament on the status of borrowing.

Citation:

Department of Finance, Government of Canada, Annual Financial Report of the Government of Canada Fiscal Year 2017–2018 accessible at <https://www.fin.gc.ca/afr-rfa/2018/index-eng.asp>

Parliamentary Budget Officer, Fiscal Sustainability Report 2018, posted at https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2018/FSR%20Sept%202018/FSR_2018_25SEP2018_EN_2.pdf

Parliamentary Budget Officer, Economic and Fiscal Outlook – October 2018 – Revised Oct. 31, 2018, posted at https://pbo-dpb.gc.ca/en/blog/news/EFO_Oct_2018

Research, Innovation and Infrastructure

R&I Policy
Score: 7

Canada's economic and policy environment is conducive to innovation and investment in productivity growth. Moreover, the country benefits from a large talent pool; its population has the OECD's highest level of educational attainment with regard to the proportion of the population with a post-secondary education. The number of researchers per capita in Canada is on a par with that of other developed countries.

Despite this, a 2015 report from the federal government's Science, Technology and Innovation Council found that the country continues to lag behind other countries when it comes to key innovation measures such as patent filings and corporate R&D spending. Similarly, a recent report from the Council of Canadian academics warns that although Canada remains a leading global contributor to research, its standing is at risk due to a sustained slide in private and public R&D investment. Indeed, as a share of gross domestic product, R&D expenditures have steadily declined in Canada since 2001, with the ratio now standing at 1.7%, well below the OECD average. The same report bemoaned that there are significant barriers between innovation and wealth creation in Canada, resulting in a deficit of technology startups growing to scale in Canada and a consequent loss of economic benefits.

In 2017, the government announced that it would provide CAD 950 million funding in support for "innovation superclusters," with the goal of encouraging innovation, R&D and economic growth. In addition, a Strategic Innovation Fund with a budget of CAD 1.26 billion over five years was created, with the funding to be allocated to firms across Canada's industrial and technological sectors. The 2019 budget added very little to the aforementioned programs. The question of how effective government policy is in encouraging R&D investment and productivity gains remains a contentious one.

Citation:

Council of Canadian Academies (2018) *Competing in a Global Innovation Economy: The Current State of R&D in Canada*, Ottawa (ON): Expert Panel on the State of Science and Technology and Industrial Research and Development in Canada. http://new-report.scienceadvice.ca/assets/report/Competing_in_a_Global_Innovation_Economy_FullReport_EN.pdf.

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Science, Technology and Innovation Council (2015) *Canada’s Innovation Challenges and Opportunities, State of the Nation, 2014*, [http://www.stic-csti.ca/eic/site/stic-csti.nsf/vwapj/STIC_1500_SON_Report_e_proof4.pdf/\\$FILE/STIC_1500_SON_Report_e_proof4.pdf](http://www.stic-csti.ca/eic/site/stic-csti.nsf/vwapj/STIC_1500_SON_Report_e_proof4.pdf/$FILE/STIC_1500_SON_Report_e_proof4.pdf)

Global Financial System

Stabilizing
Global Financial
System
Score: 9

The Canadian government, through various departments and agencies, contributes actively to the effective regulation and supervision of the international financial architecture. The Bank of Canada has been particularly prominent in the international arena. The former Bank of Canada Governor and current government of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, chairs the G-20 Financial Stability Board. Other senior Bank of Canada officials have played important roles in other international financial forums. The Office of the Superintendent of Financial Institutions (OSFI) has also been very active internationally.

II. Social Policies

Education

Education Policy
Score: 8

Education quality in Canada is high. The country has a number of world-class universities and the average quality of its universities is high. Canadian teachers are well-paid by global standards. The most recent Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) report, released in December 2019 and covering results for 2018 results, showed that Canadian students score well above the OECD average in reading (fourth place among 77 countries), science (sixth place) and mathematics (10th place).

Equity in access to education is impressive. Canada has the highest proportion of the population aged 20 to 64 with some post-secondary education, thanks to the extensive development of community colleges. There are many educational second chances for Canadian youth. The high school completion rate is also high and rising. Socioeconomic background represents a much

lower barrier to post-secondary education in Canada than in most other countries.

Education is under the jurisdiction of the provinces. Allocated resources are reasonable and, in general, efficiently used. The federal government has recently increased grant money for students from low- and middle-income families by 50%.

Despite the strengths of the Canadian education and training system, there are challenges, the biggest of which is the gap in educational attainment between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations. Schools on reserves are federally funded through Indigenous Service Canada. A recent evaluation carried out for the ministry found that education opportunities and results are not comparable to those off the reserves, that the comparatively lower quality of teacher instruction and curriculum is affecting student success, and that funding gaps relative to provincially funded regular (off-reserve) schools persist, especially in isolated, low-population communities. The 2019 budget places a new focus on post-secondary education for Indigenous peoples, setting aside CAD 800 million over the next 10 years to enhance post-secondary education strategies.

Citation:

Summative Evaluation of the Elementary/Secondary Education Program on Reserve, report prepared for AANDC, June 2012. http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DA-M-INTER-HQ-AEV/STAGING/texte-text/e_v_else_1365173418229_eng.pdf

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Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion
Policy
Score: 8

Most social policies, such as income transfers (e.g., child benefits, pensions) and educational policies, support societal inclusion and ensure equal opportunities. A Center for the Study of Living Standards (CSLS) study found that Canada’s after-tax income Gini coefficient, which measures inequality after taxes and transfers, was 23.7% lower than the market-income Gini coefficient before taxes and transfers. The study also found that while the

market Gini coefficient increased by 19.4% between 1981 and 2010, almost half of the increased market-income inequality was offset by changes in the transfer and tax system. Based on this, it appears that Canada's redistribution policies reduce market-income inequality to a considerable degree.

However, for certain groups, notably recent immigrants and Indigenous Canadians, social policy has not prevented social exclusion. For immigrants, social disparities tend to diminish with the second generation, but persistent gaps remain for the Indigenous population. Despite the Trudeau government's promises to improve economic outcomes for Indigenous peoples, progress has proved elusive. Indigenous children are more than twice as likely as non-Indigenous children to live in poverty. Using figures from the 2016 census, a Canadian Press review found that four out of every five Aboriginal reserves have median incomes that fall below the poverty line.

In 2018, the federal government released its first-ever poverty-reduction strategy, which stressed the importance of social inclusion and established a target for poverty reduction. Passed into law in 2019, the Poverty Reduction Act established these targets, Canada's official poverty line and an advisory council on this issue. As reported by the update on the poverty strategy released in 2019 (ESDC, 2019), the country is currently ahead of schedule in reaching its target of a 20% reduction in poverty, with this goal appearing likely in 2019 as opposed to 2020. However, this lower poverty rate excludes Indigenous peoples living on reserves, where child poverty rates are around 51%.

Citation:

Andrew Sharpe and Evan Capeluck (2012) "The Impact of Redistribution on Income Inequality in Canada and the Provinces, 1981-2010," CSLS Research Report 2012-08, September. <http://www.csls.ca/reports/csls2012-08.pdf>

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Health

Health Policy
Score: 8

Like educational policy, healthcare is primarily the responsibility of the individual provinces. Canadians are generally in good health, as evidenced by the high and rising level of life expectancy.

The most glaring problem with the Canadian system is timely access to care. The number of practicing doctors and hospital beds per 1,000 inhabitants is well below the OECD average, as is the number of MRI and CT units per million. In a 2017 study by the Commonwealth Fund, Canada ranked last for providing timely access to care out of 11 high-income countries. Canadians regularly experience long waiting times for medical care, including access to family doctors, specialists and emergency services. In its latest report on the health of Canada's seniors, the fund documents that Canada was below the international average, with only about 40% of seniors able to get a same- or next-day appointment with their regular physician, and performed worst for waiting times for specialists, with almost 30% of seniors having to wait two months or longer for a specialist appointment.

The Canadian Institute for Health Information reported in 2017 that over the last several years waiting times for elective or less urgent procedures have increased, despite efforts to reduce them. However, for more urgent procedures there has been an increase in the number of patients receiving care within the medically acceptable benchmark, albeit with considerable variation across the provinces.

Income is not a barrier to treatment, with high-quality care freely provided for almost the entire population. However, inefficiencies in the system have led to patients traveling abroad to receive medical treatment and increased demand for domestic for-profit clinics, which endangers Canada's otherwise impressive record of equity in healthcare. A recent report by the Fraser Institute estimated that over 63,000 Canadians received non-emergency medical treatment outside Canada in 2016. One effect of equity in access to healthcare services is the small gap in perceived health between the top and bottom income quintiles. However, since dental care, eye care and drugs prescribed for use outside of hospitals are excluded from general coverage, not all income groups have equal access to these types of healthcare services – low-income Canadians are far more likely to decline prescriptions or skip dental visits. In the 2019 election campaign, Trudeau pledged to implement a national pharmacare program, although the administration has not made clear how it would fund such a program.

The cost efficiency of the Canadian healthcare system is not impressive. Canada's healthcare spending as a share of GDP, while well below that of the

United States, is above that of many European countries.

Overall, Canada's healthcare system outperforms the United States but trails behind that of comparable European countries (e.g., Germany, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands). The Commonwealth Fund report ranked Canada third to last overall on a comparative score card of 11 healthcare systems.

Citation:

Canadian Institute for Health Information (2017), *Wait Times for Priority Procedures in Canada, 2017*, posted at https://www.cihi.ca/sites/default/files/document/wait-times-report-2017_en.pdf

Commonwealth Fund (2017), *Mirror, Mirror 2017: International Comparison Reflects Flaws and Opportunities for Better U.S. Healthcare*, posted at <http://www.commonwealthfund.org/interactives/2017/july/mirror-mirror/>

Commonwealth Fund (2017), *2017 Commonwealth Fund International Health Policy Survey of Older Adults*, available at <https://www.cihi.ca/en/quick-stats>.

Organization of Economic Development. "Health at a Glance 2015," OECD Indicators, retrieved from http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/health_glance-2015-en

"Leaving Canada for Medical Care, 2017," *Fraser Research Bulletin*, Fraser Institute, June 2017.

Families

Family Policy
Score: 8

The labor-force participation rate for women with children all under six years of age in Canada is high by international standards. According to Statistics Canada, the number of two-income families nearly doubled over the past decades: in 2015, 69% of couples with a child under 16 years of age have two working parents. In recent years, one key policy has been the increase in the child tax credit, which has reduced the barriers associated with the so-called welfare wall. In the past, when single parents, mostly women, left welfare, they lost all income benefits for their children. With the integration of the welfare system with the universal, income-tested child benefits, there is now less disincentive to leave welfare and enter the labor market. In 2016, the federal government significantly increased the level of child benefits and in 2017 indexed benefits to inflation.

Canada does not have a universal childcare system, although some provinces have taken steps to implement their own, such as Nova Scotia's pre-primary education system and most notably Quebec's CAD \$7 per day daycare scheme. The absence of a universal childcare system may make it more difficult for some women to combine parenting and employment. The average net cost of childcare in Canada is among the OECD's highest, both as a share of the average wage and as a share of the average family income. Canada is

below the OECD average in terms of participation rates in formal care and preschool participation rates for children under five years of age. When elected in 2015, the Trudeau government promised to develop a national strategy for childcare and early childhood education. However, jurisdiction over these matters lies largely with the provinces, and little progress has been made to date.

The 2018 federal budget emphasized gender equity with one of the central goals being to increase female participation in the labor force. The budget introduced a new Employment Insurance Parental Sharing Benefit, which will allow parents to add five weeks at up to 55% of their average weekly insurable earnings and a new parental leave option for adoptive parents on a “use-it-or-lose-it” basis to encourage mothers to remain in the workforce or rejoin the labor market earlier. Yet, many stakeholders noted that the government has been unable to create a national childcare system, which is widely seen as the most effective way to remove barriers to women’s participation in the workforce.

Citation:

OECD Family database www.oecd.org/els/social/family/data base

OECD (2011), *Doing Better for Families*, Chapter 4. Reducing barriers to parental employment, <http://www.oecd.org/social/soc/doingbetterforfamilies.htm#publication>

Statistics Canada. 2016. “The rise of the dual-earner family with children.” *The Daily*. Statistics Canada catalogue no. 11-630-X. Accessed October 11, 2017 at <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2016005-eng.htm>

Federal budget 2018, *Equality + Growth: A Strong Middle Class*, retrieved from <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2018/docs/plan/budget-2018-en.pdf>

Pensions

Pension Policy
Score: 8

The basic components of Canada’s public pension retirement-income system are the demogrant Old Age Security (OAS), the income-tested Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) and the contribution-fed, earnings-based Canada/Quebec Pension Plan (CPP/QPP). Other tiers of the pension system include employer pension plans (both defined-benefit and defined-contribution plans) and government incentive programs for individual saving such as Registered Retirement Saving Plan (RRSPs) and Tax-Free Saving Accounts (TFSA).

The Canadian pension system seems to be relatively effective as a tool to reduce poverty among the elderly. For individuals over 70 years of age in the lowest quintile of the earnings distribution, the proportion of working income “replaced” by retirement income is nearly 100%. Since 1995, elderly incomes

at the bottom have been growing, but not as quickly as the incomes of the rest of the population. Using Statistics Canada's Low-Income Cutoff (LICO) measure of poverty, an absolute definition, the poverty rate for people 65 and over was 4.7% in 2016, one of the lowest rates ever recorded in the history of the series. In contrast, Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure (LIM), a relative poverty definition, senior poverty rates have been on an upward trend over recent years, increasing from a low of 3.9% in 1995 to 14.2% in 2016. In the recent election campaign, the Liberal government promised to increase old-age security benefits by an extra 10% once recipients turn 75, which is estimated to reduce poverty in this age group by 14.5%.

Intergenerational equity is not a major concern for the Canadian pension system as there is a close relationship between contributions and benefits on an individual basis. With the recent benefits and contribution expansion, the CPP/QPP is projected to replace only a third of the average wage up to a ceiling that will reach CAD 82,700 in 2025. Thus, middle- and upper-income workers with no employer pension plan or private savings may not be able to replace a sufficient proportion of their pre-retirement earnings. In the private sector, this issue affects three in four workers.

The CPP is considered to be actuarially sound and fiscally sustainable at its current rate and benefit structure, due to large increases in contribution rates implemented in the late 1990s. The fiscal sustainability of the OAS/GIS is tied to the sustainability of the federal government's overall fiscal balance, and is fostered by the indexation of benefits to the CPI rather than to nominal wage increases.

Citation:

Milligan, K. and T. Schirle, Simulated Replacements Rates for CPP Reform Options, School of Public Policy Research Paper, Volume 7(7), University of Calgary, 2014.

Milligan, K (2019) Old Age Security Expansion. Letter written to Liberal policy advisor Tyler Meredith, retrieved Nov 11 2019 from <http://blogs.ubc.ca/kevinmilligan/2019/09/18/old-age-security-expansion/>.

Integration

Integration Policy
Score: 9

Now receiving over 300,000 immigrants per year, Canada has one of the highest annual immigration-to-population ratios in the world. Cultural, education and social policies, including language training and orientation courses, support the integration of immigrants. Canada also allows immigrants to become citizens after three years of residency, one of the shortest residency requirements in the world. The high educational attainment of immigrants, the highest in the world with around half of immigrants having university educations, also facilitates integration.

Nevertheless, these policies do have weaknesses, as seen by the relatively poor labor-market performance of recent immigrants and immigrants’ high rate of return to their countries of origin. A CSLS study found that, in 2018, the hourly wage of immigrants to Canada with less than five years of residence averaged just 82% of the hourly wage of people born in Canada. However, this was up from 78% in 2010, so progress is being made. The relative wage for university educated recent immigrants was even worse, 70% in 2018, but up from 65% in 2010. Immigrants’ labor-market integration is impeded by a number of factors, including difficulties in having their professional credentials recognized by Canadian authorities, the concentration of immigrants in a small number of major cities (e.g., Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal) and language barriers. In spite of these challenges, 2018 saw an increase in employment rates among immigrants of 4.6%. In fact, according to Stats Canada, net employment growth over the last five years has been accounted for almost entirely by immigrants.

Citation:
 Andrew Sharpe (2019) “Labor Market Performance of Immigrants in Canada, 2006-2018,” CSLS Research Report, forthcoming (Ottawa: Centre for the Study of Living Standards).

Safe Living

Internal Security
 Policy
 Score: 8

Canada’s internal security policy has been quite effective in protecting citizens against security risks. Canada has experienced no terror attacks mounted from outside the country, which suggests that the Canadian intelligence services are doing excellent work. Two separate attacks by native Canadians in 2014, resulting in the deaths of two soldiers, prompted the previous government to introduce a number of bills to bolster security and the power of agencies. These laws increased the powers of Canada’s spy agency, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), to share information and operate internationally, criminalized the promotion of terrorism, and provided the federal police, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, with new preventative arrest powers. The Liberal government has implemented a new bill designed to roll back some of the powers assumed by the previous government. Bill C-59, which removed some of the liberties accorded to the CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment (CSE; the country’s signals-intelligence organization) in the past, also established new review bodies designed to increase security-service accountability.

Crime rates in Canada are low from an international perspective and continue to fall. Canadians in general have a high degree of confidence and trust in the police. However, this is not true to the same extent within the Indigenous

community. A report released by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in 2014 stated that between 1980 and 2013, 1,181 Indigenous women were reported murdered or missing. The UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of Canada previously expressed concerns about violence against Indigenous women and girls and Canada's perceived failure to address the problem. The government has launched the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls to gather evidence and propose recommendations on the issue. The inquiry has faced substantial criticism over the past year, with several key members stepping down and victims' families calling for a complete restructuring of the program.

Citation:

UN Human Rights Council (2013). Universal Periodic Review: Canada. Report available at <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/UPR/Pages/CASession16.aspx>

Royal Canadian Mounted Police (2014). Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women: A National Operational Overview. Report available at <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-national-operational-overview>

Forcese Craig, "A Report Card on the National Security Bill" 22 June 2017, <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2017/a-report-card-on-the-national-security-bill/>

Global Inequalities

Global Social
Policy
Score: 7

Canada's government has a long history of supporting international efforts to promote socioeconomic opportunities in developing countries, and has shown leadership on critical issues such as nutrition and child health. Canada's share of official development assistance has declined in relative terms and was only 0.26% of gross national income (GNI) in 2016, ranking 18th in the world. In 2016, the federal government began a review of its existing aid policies, and has now reoriented the majority of international assistance to creating equal opportunities for women and girls in the world's poorest countries, in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

A North-South Institute study makes the case that Canada's focus on improving aid effectiveness and accountability is insufficient as an overarching guide to promoting development. This is because the focus on aid effectiveness captures only a small part of Canada's engagement with the developing world. A broader vision that includes aid and non-aid policies is needed in order for Canada to improve the coherence of its development policy and be an effective actor in the international development sphere. In principle, Canada promotes a fair global trading system. In practice, domestic interests are often paramount. For example, the government vigorously defends Canada's agricultural marketing boards in trade negotiations, even though the removal of the trade barriers related to these boards would give developing countries better access to the Canadian market.

Citation:

OECD Data, ODA as a percentage of GNI, data obtainable at <https://data.oecd.org/oda/net-oda.htm>

OECD, “Gender equality and women’s rights in the post-2015 agenda: A foundation for sustainable development,” posted at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/POST-2015%20Gender.pdf>

Anni-Claudine Bulles and Sghannon Kindornay (2013) “Beyond Aid: A Plan for Canadian International Cooperation” North-South Institute, May. <http://www.nsi-ins.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/BuellesKindornay.2013.CNDPolicyCoherenceEN.pdf>

III. Environmental Policies

Environment

Environmental
Policy
Score: 7

Environmental policy, across the board, is more-or-less balanced in Canada, with some areas performing better than others. Biodiversity in Canada’s forests and waterways has declined over the past decade, and climate change and renewable-energy policies have featured prominently in public policymaking in the last several years.

Since taking office in 2015, the Liberal government’s environmental record has been mixed. On the one hand, the decision to approve and then – in an attempt to rescue the project following investor uncertainty – nationalize the highly controversial Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion at a cost of CAD 4.5 billion raised serious questions about Trudeau’s commitment to fighting climate change and protecting Indigenous rights. The government has finished a second round of consultations and reapproved the project (following a court decision to allow for further consultation), with construction expected to begin in 2020. The pipeline still faces challenges from British Columbia, whose premier has said he will do everything in his power to prevent the expansion.

On the other hand, 2019 saw the passage of bills C-48, a moratorium on large oil tankers accessing ports on British Columbia’s north coast, and C-55, which establishes a network of protected marine areas and prohibits certain activities in these areas. These actions are signs of an effort to improve the country’s marine-resources conservation. In 2016, Canada ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, committing to a reduction in greenhouse-gas emissions by 30% compared to 2005 levels by 2030. This commitment has been adopted as a national target. Canada has also set a legally binding target of net zero emissions by 2050. The Pan-Canadian Framework on Clean Growth and Climate Change represents a collaborative effort to ensure that the target is

met through carbon pricing, investments in energy efficiency and renewable-energy strategies. Renewable-energy policy is largely the responsibility of the provinces, and several provinces have already made significant efforts to address climate change. However, the 2017 Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development report concluded that federal government departments and agencies are “nowhere near being ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change.”

A parliamentary review of Canada’s federal environmental assessment and regulatory processes, initiated by the Trudeau government in 2016, led to the proposal of sweeping changes to a number of laws related to the environment. Bill C-69, which passed in June 2019, is designed to streamline the impact assessment process, while simultaneously widening its scope from purely adverse environmental factors to considerations such as the government’s ability to meet its climate-change commitments, contributions to sustainability, and the impact of policies on Indigenous groups and their rights. This measure was applauded by environmental groups and Indigenous peoples, and has the potential to speed up the assessment process and reduce uncertainty, which may also benefit industry.

The government has also passed legislation to impose a carbon tax in provinces without a comparable program. Experts agree that this carbon tax is too low to achieve Canada’s commitments. At the same time, the Trudeau government continues to face fierce opposition to the tax from some provinces. Attempts to challenge the law in court have so far failed, but the issue is expected to go to the Supreme Court.

Citation:

Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2017 Fall Report of the Commissioner of the Environment and Sustainable Development to the Parliament of Canada, posted at http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_cesd_201710_00_e_42488.html

Theresa McClenaghan (2012) “Bill C-38: Federal Budget Bill 2012 Implications for Federal Environmental Law” Canadian Environmental Law Association, June. <http://www.cela.ca/sites/cela.ca/files/Bill-C-38-Federal-Budget-Bill-Review-and-Implications.pdf>

Tasker, John Paul. “Trudeau cabinet approves Trans-Mountain, Line 3 pipelines, rejects Northern Gateway.” CBC, November 29, 2016. Accessed on September 27, 2017 at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/federal-cabinet-trudeau-pipeline-decisions-1.3872828>

Harris, Kathleen. “Liberals to buy Trans-Mountain pipeline for \$4.5B to ensure expansion is built.” CBC, May 29, 2018. Accessed on November 2, 2018 at <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/liberals-trans-mountain-pipeline-kinder-morgan-1.4681911>

Global Environmental Protection

Global
Environmental
Policy
Score: 7

The government of Canada in principle supports the design and advancement of global environmental-protection regimes. In the past, Canada’s approach to environmental policy has, to a large degree, followed that of the United States, given the close economic relations between the two countries. Three years into their mandate, the Liberals have generally focused on domestic policy and have rarely led on new international frameworks for environmental protection. At the Paris Climate Conference (COP21) Prime Minister Trudeau announced CAD 30 million for the world’s poorest countries to combat climate change, and CAD 300 million to the Green Climate Fund for clean technology innovation.

The Canada-United States-Mexico Agreement (CUSMA), which was signed in November 2018 by Canada, the United States and Mexico as a replacement for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), includes a chapter on environmental cooperation with the stated aim to “promote mutually supportive trade and environmental policies and practices.” Although experts criticized CUSMA as being weak on environmental protection, in particular, because it does not directly address climate change, the new agreement no longer includes NAFTA’s investor-state dispute settlement (“ISDS”) system, which was often used to challenge Canadian environmental decision-making, and which many commentators believed had a chilling effect on environmental regulation in Canada.

Citation:
Michael Connell, Canada: USMCA Trade Deal And The Environment, October 2018, Siskinds LLP.
Retrieved Nov 12 2019 at
<http://www.mondaq.com/canada/x/748452/Environmental+Law/USMCA+Trade+Deal+and+the+Environment>

Quality of Democracy

Electoral Processes

Candidacy
Procedures
Score: 10

The right to be a candidate in a federal election is laid down in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, with the associated procedures and responsibilities specified in the Canada Elections Act. There are virtually no restrictions on becoming a candidate for election. Almost all Canadian citizens 18 years old or over can present themselves as candidates for federal elections. Exceptions include members of provincial or territorial legislatures, certain judges, election officers, people who were candidates in a previous election but who did not conform to the expense-reporting rules, and persons imprisoned in a correctional institution. There is no cost to being a candidate in a federal election. A CAD 1,000 deposit is required, but this is reimbursed if the candidate's official agent submits the electoral campaign return after the election within the prescribed time. Administrative procedures are not onerous (a nomination form is required containing signatures by either 50 or 100 people residing in the constituency in which the candidate wants to run, with the number depending on the electoral district's population).

Media Access
Score: 8

While national media outlets do demonstrate political orientations, in general there is fair and balanced coverage of election campaigns and parties. Under sections 335, 339 and 343 of the Canada Elections Act, every broadcaster in Canada is required to make a minimum of 390 minutes of airtime during each federal general election available for purchase by registered political parties. The allocation of airtime among the parties is usually based on a formula that takes into account factors such as the party's percentage of seats in the House of Commons, its percentage of the popular vote in the last general election, and the number of candidates it endorsed as a percentage of all candidates. The Canadian system is primarily one of paid political advertising; that is, any broadcasting time used before an election has to be paid for. While CBC/Radio-Canada does provide a small amount free airtime to federal and provincial parties, this does not represent a significant share of political advertising in Canada. However, whether or not this translated into unequal access is unclear, as campaign spending regulations likely impose de facto limits on how much parties can actually spend on televised advertising time.

The Elections Act restricts the amount any outside group can spend on political advertising during a normal-length political campaign to CAD 500,000 (as of 2019), with no more than CAD 4,000 being spent in any one electoral district. New legislation also limits on pre-election spending; in the three-month period before the official start of the campaign period, non-party entities can spend no more than CAD 1 million, while political parties can spend up to CAD 1.5 million on advertising in this period.

Citation:

Parliament of Canada, Bill C-23: An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, posted at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=6684613>.

Sinha Awanish, "Canada's Election Laws are Changing- Here's what you need to know," 10 May 2018, accessed on 27th October 2019. <https://www.mccarthy.ca/en/insights/articles/canadas-election-laws-are-changing-heres-what-you-need-know>

Voting and
Registration
Rights
Score: 9

All Canadian citizens 18 years and over have the right to vote, including the mentally deficient and people who are imprisoned in a correctional facility. Until recently, the only exceptions were election officers and, following a 2015 Ontario Court of Appeal ruling, non-resident citizens who have resided abroad for more than five years. In January 2019, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Canadians living abroad for any length of time can continue to vote in federal elections. Canada has a system of universal voter registration; the government is in charge of registering its citizens to vote as a means of protecting their constitutional right (this stands in contrast with the United States' system of citizen-initiated opt-in registration). Additionally, Canada allows for election-day registration for those who the universal registration system missed. Procedures for voting are not onerous. Adequate opportunity for casting an advance ballot is provided. There are four days of advance polling, ending the week before election day. Additionally, people can vote by mail if they cannot attend to a polling station due to physical incapacity or foreign residency.

The previous Conservative government made some highly controversial changes to Canada's election law. The current Liberal government attempted to reconcile these issues with its Bill C-76, the Elections Modernization Act. This measure allows voter information cards to be recognized as an acceptable form of identification, and restores the rights of Canadians living abroad to vote in elections no matter how long they have lived abroad.

Citation:

Parliament of Canada, Bill C-23: An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and other Acts and to make consequential amendments to certain Acts, posted at <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=6684613>.

Parliament of Canada, Bill C-33: An Act to amend the Canada Elections Act and to make consequential

amendments to other Acts, posted at <http://www.parl.ca/DocumentViewer/en/42-1/bill/C-33/first-reading>

CBC (2019) “Supreme Court of Canada guarantees voting rights for expats”
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/supreme-court-expat-voting-rights-ruling-1.4970305>

Party Financing
 Score: 8

The Canada Elections Act requires registered parties or electoral-district associations to issue income-tax receipts for contributions, and to make public reports on the state of their finances. Furthermore, the act requires registered parties to report and make public all contributions of more than CAD 20. Elections Canada provides access to the full database online for public use. Corporations, trade unions, associations and groups are prohibited from contributing to political parties. Only individuals are allowed to contribute. The amount that candidates and leadership contestants may contribute to their own campaigns is CAD 5,000 and CAD 25,000, respectively. Individuals receive generous tax credits for political donations. Annual contributions to registered parties, registered associations, electoral candidates, and nomination and leadership contestants are capped at a relatively modest amount of CAD 1,550. However, transparency in political financing is still seen as a problem. Public debate over transparency recently reignited after it was revealed in the press that the prime minister and other senior ministers were raising millions of dollars at private “cash-for-access” fundraisers, giving donors secretive cabinet access. Furthermore, provincial practices and rules regarding political donations vary widely. Fixed contribution limits, for example, range from only CAD 100 per year in Quebec to CAD 6,000 per year in New Brunswick. Yet, in other provinces like Saskatchewan, any individual, corporation, union or special interest group can make a political contribution of any size to a provincial political party.

In addition to individual donations, political parties are funded by the government. Each registered federal political party that received at least 2% of all valid votes in the last general election, or at least 5% of the valid votes in the electoral districts in which it has a candidate, is reimbursed 50% of its national campaign expenses and further “election rebates” for riding-specific expenses. Until 2015, such parties were also given a per-vote subsidy, largely considered to be the most democratic financing regime. A bill passed in 2012 reduced and later eliminated this subsidy, seen as negative from the perspective of fairness in party financing.

Citation:

Elections Canada, Administrative Compliance Policy for Political Financing, retrieved 2015 from http://www.elections.ca/pol/acp/adcom_e.pdf.

Popular Decision-Making
 Score: 7

On the federal level, there are few opportunities for Canadians to make binding decisions on matters of importance to them through popular initiatives or referendums; on this level, it is impossible to circumvent the elected

representatives. On the provincial level, British Columbia remains the only jurisdiction in Canada with voter-initiated recall and referendum legislation. It is worth noting that the Royal Commission on Electoral Reform concluded in 1991 that “in Canada, the particular vulnerability of the prime minister and cabinet ministers to the use and abuse of the recall would make this instrument of direct democracy especially detrimental to our system of representative democracy.”

Citation:

Forum Research. Media Release July 6, 2016, Two-Thirds See Need for Referendum on Electoral Reform, posted at <http://poll.forumresearch.com/post/2547/two-thirds-see-need-for-referendum-on-electoral-reform/>

Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, *Reforming Electoral Democracy*, Minister of Supply and Services, 1991, p. 247.

Access to Information

Media Freedom
Score: 9

The only publicly owned media organization in Canada at the national level is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), which runs radio and television stations. Its independence from government control is ensured by statute. However, this independence has limits. For example, it is unlikely that Radio-Canada, the French-language division of the CBC, would be permitted to advocate the breakup of the country. Privately owned media organizations can of course take any political position they wish. In theory, if a government does not like the viewpoint of a particular media outlet, it can use the retraction of government advertising as a punishment. This is seldom done by the federal government or provincial governments, but is more common on the part of municipal governments. Electronic media are subject to licensing requirements, but this regulation is performed by an independent body, the Canadian Radio and Television Commission (CRTC), without overt political influence. The federal government does appoint the members of the CRTC, as well as the head of the CBC. The federal government has put forward measures, including financial assistance, to support traditional media outlets that are struggling to survive the loss of advertising revenue to Google and Facebook.

Citation:

CBC/Radio-Canada, Ottawa. Press Release February 2017, CBC/Radio-Canada shares its Accountability Plan, <http://www.cbc.radio-canada.ca/en/media-centre/2017/02/01/>

Media Pluralism
Score: 6

Media ownership in Canada is concentrated, with a small number of Canadian-owned and Canadian-controlled media conglomerates dominating the mainstream print and electronic media. There is also strong media concentration in some parts of the country (e.g., the Irving newspapers in New

Brunswick). This trend has accelerated with the of projected shutdown of several dozen local newspapers following a deal between two national newspaper corporations, Torstar and Postmedia Group.

A case can be made that the lack of competition in the industry has led to a lack of diversity in views and positions. For example, mainstream media outlets rarely support social-democratic political parties. The mainstream print media argue that while their editorials generally express a right-wing or centrist political orientation, they make an effort to seek out contributors with left-wing perspectives and to provide balanced coverage of issues. Whether this is indeed the case is, however, doubtful. Although alternative sources of information such as online newspapers, magazines and social media (e.g., blogs) may help promote a pluralism of opinions, mainstream media likely will continue to play a crucial role in setting the national agenda. In this regard, the concentration of media ownership in Canada means that certain opinions are not represented to the degree that they are held by the general population.

Access to
Government
Information
Score: 7

Access to official information in Canada has been regulated by the 35-year-old Access to Information Act, which was generally regarded as antiquated. In response, the Trudeau government passed Bill C-59 in June 2019, a measure intended to reform the law and bring it into the 21st century. The new legislation has widely been seen as an improvement. Importantly, it expands the power of the Information Commissioner, giving this entity the authority to order institutions to release records at the end of an investigation when a complaint is deemed to be “well-founded.” When appropriate, the Information Commissioner will also be able to issue publication orders for new complaints that cannot be satisfactorily resolved through informal resolution mechanisms, as well as publish the results of investigations. Furthermore, institutions may now ask the Information Commissioner for approval to decline access requests that are vexatious, made in bad faith or otherwise represent an abuse of the right of access.

The Commissioner had previously expressed a number of concerns about the bill, which were subsequently resolved in committee before the measure was passed into law. One caveat is that the right to information does not apply to the Prime Minister’s Office or other ministerial offices. Government institutions can also decline a request if it concerns a large number of records, is deemed to be made in “bad faith” or would interfere with government operations.

As is the case elsewhere, access to information in Canada is often impeded by bureaucratic procedures and delays. The 2017 Freedom of Information Audit by News Media Canada awarded the system a grade of F for the disclosure of

information, stating that the process for requesting and accessing government documents is slow and inefficient, and that very few requests are granted in a timely manner. It remains to be seen whether these realities will change under the new act.

Citation:

News Media Canada (2017) 2017 Freedom of Information Audit, posted at <https://nmc-mic.ca/public-affairs/freedom-of-information/2017-freedom-information-audit/>

Office of the Information Commissioner, Annual Report, 2018-2019, posted at <https://www.oic-ci.gc.ca/ar-ra/2018/Home.html>

Civil Rights and Political Liberties

Civil Rights
Score: 9

In general, the state and the courts show a high degree of respect for civil rights and political liberties in Canada. Of course, there is a trade-off between protecting the rights of individuals from government intrusion, and ensuring public safety and security from terrorist threats. Two security breaches in 2014, the shooting of a soldier on ceremonial duty at the Canadian National War Memorial in Ottawa and an attack on military personnel in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, gave new impetus to the government's plans to introduce new anti-terrorism legislation. In 2015, the government passed the Anti-Terrorism Act (Bill C-51), which introduced sweeping changes to the Canadian security apparatus. It includes expanded surveillance and intelligence sharing, a remodeling of the Canadian no-fly regime in the style of the United States, and expanded powers and courtroom anonymity for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS). The bill was the subject of intense public debate as many civil libertarians and privacy advocates opposed the bill.

In a 2015 report, the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concerns about the bill. Two civil liberty organizations, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association and Canadian Journalists for Free Expression, have since launched a legal challenge to C-51 under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. For its part, the Trudeau administration passed Bill C-59, which made sweeping changes to the National Security Act. The measure removed some of the powers given to CSIS and the Communications Security Establishment (CSE; the country's signals-intelligence agency) by the previous government, and introduced several oversight mechanisms designed to make these bodies more accountable. However, the bill also expanded the CSE's mandate, giving it new abilities and roles. Many experts are worried about domestic data privacy, as the bill does not prevent the CSE from collecting data on Canadians via the internet. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association maintains that the bill stops short of repealing the measures in C-51 that had threatened civil liberties.

Citation:

Bill C-51, An Act to enact the Security of Canada Information Sharing Act and the Secure Air Travel Act, to amend the Criminal Code, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service Act and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and to make related and consequential amendments to other Acts (2015). Retrieved from the Parliament of Canada website <http://www.parl.gc.ca/HousePublications/Publication.aspx?Language=E&Mode=1&DocId=8056977>.

Canadian Civil Liberties Association, "CCLA with Civil Society Groups Issue Joint Letter on Bill C-59 and National Security Law in Canada," September 19, 2017, posted at <https://ccla.org/ccla-civil-society-groups-issue-joint-letter-bill-c-59-national-security-law-canada/>

Forcese, G. and K. Roach, "A Report Card on The National Security Bill," Institute for Research on Public Policy (IRPP), June 22 2017, posted at <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/june-2017/a-report-card-on-the-national-security-bill/>

United Nations Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Canada's sixth report in relation to Canada's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, August 2015. <http://docstore.ohchr.org/SelfServices/FilesHandler.ashx?enc=6QkG1d%2fPPRiCAqhKb7yhskswUHe1nBHTSwwEsgdxQHJBoKwgsS0jmHCTV%2fFsa7OKzz9yna94OOqLeAavwpMzCD5oTanJ2C2rbU%2f0kxdos%2bXCyn4OFm3xDYg3CouE4uXS>

Political Liberties
Score: 8

The state and the courts generally show a high degree of respect for civil rights and political liberties in Canada. In designing its anti-terrorism and national security laws, the government needs to strike a balance between the need to ensure public safety, and protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals.

The federal government has passed Bill C-59 in an effort to remedy flaws in the National Security Act introduced by the Harper government in 2015. The new measure comprehensively overhauls Canada's national security laws, enhancing oversight and ministerial control, and addresses constitutional problems. Human rights and civil liberty organizations have welcomed the new accountability framework created by the bill, but have criticized provisions empowering the national security agency to conduct mass surveillance and cyber-attacks.

In a 2015 report, the UN Human Rights Committee voiced concerns about the excessive use of force by law enforcement officers during mass arrests in the context of protests on both the national and provincial levels.

Citation:

United Nations Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Canada's sixth report in relation to Canada's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, August 2015.
Canadian Civil Liberty Association, Civil Society Statement regarding Bill C-59, posted at <https://ccla.org/civil-society-statement-regarding-bill-c-59/>

Non-discrimination
Score: 8

Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms was enacted in 1982, with the aim of preventing all types of overt discrimination based on gender, physical ability, ethnic origin, social status, political view or religion. Groups believing they suffer from the effects of discrimination continue to emerge. Basing their

claims on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, some have taken their cases to the courts, often winning. The Canadian government has established policies such as employment equity and pay equity to protect and promote the rights of disadvantaged groups (often called equity groups) such as women, ethnic minorities, Indigenous peoples and people with disabilities. These positive discrimination measures are controversial and their effectiveness is a subject of debate. A case in point is the gender-based pay gap. The lack of affordable childcare in Canada forces many women to drop out of the labor force or reduce their working hours during child-rearing years. This has a serious effect on women's earnings levels. Full-time employed women in Canada earn on average 19% less than men; for women between 25 and 44 with at least one child, the pay gap is 29%, significantly higher than the OECD average (2010 data).

As so often, the experiences of Canada's Indigenous population pose the greatest concern. Reports by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2014), the UN Human Rights Committee (2015) and Human Rights Watch (2018) found that the rights of Indigenous peoples were consistently violated, including unresolved treaty rights, violence against Indigenous women and girls, disproportionately high rates of incarceration, and inadequate access to clean and safe drinking water.

Heterogeneous provincial policies present another potential human-rights challenge in Canada. Conversion therapy, for instance, is banned only in Ontario and Manitoba, but continues to be legal elsewhere. Another case in point is the highly controversial Bill 21 passed in Quebec in 2019, which restricts government employees' right to wear religious symbols if they are in positions of authority (e.g., school teachers, police officers or judges). This bill been criticized by several UN rapporteurs for violating the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the Canadian government signed. Due in part to the bill's popularity with Quebec voters, however, the federal government has been reluctant to interfere. In any event, further action by the federal government would have to entail taking the issue to court, basing the argument either on the constitution generally or specifically on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Citation:

UN Human Rights Council, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, James Anaya (2014), posted at http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/IPeoples/SR/A.HRC.27.52.Add.2-MissionCanada_AUV.pdf

United Nations Human Rights Committee, Concluding Observations on Canada's sixth report in relation to Canada's compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, August 2015.

Equaldex. LGBTQ Rights in Canada, retrieved Nov 20 2019 from <https://www.equaldex.com/region/canada>
Human Rights Watch, World Report 2018, available at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/world_report_download/201801world_report_web.pdf

OECD (2012), Closing the Gap – Canada, posted at <http://www.oecd.org/canada/Closing%20The%20Gender%20Gap%20-%20Canada%20FINAL.pdf>

Rule of Law

Legal Certainty
Score: 8

Canada's government and administration rarely make unpredictable decisions. Legal regulations are generally consistent but do sometimes leave scope for discretion. Of course, the government can be expected to be challenged in court if its executive actions are not consistent with the law, which provides an incentive to comply.

Judicial Review
Score: 9

The scope of judicial review was greatly expanded with the enactment of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, which constitutionally entrenched individual rights and freedoms. Today, the courts in Canada pursue their reasoning free from the influence of governments, powerful groups or individuals.

Appointment of
Justices
Score: 6

It can be argued that the current process for judicial appointments in Canada, which is at the complete discretion of the prime minister, does not represent good governance, since the appointment needs no approval by any legislative body (either the House of Commons or the Senate). Indeed, potential candidates are not even required to appear before a parliamentary committee for questioning on their views. The prime minister has the final say in appointing chief justices at the provincial level, as well as for Supreme Court justices. The appointment process is covered by the media.

Despite their almost absolute power regarding judicial appointments, however, prime ministers have consulted widely on Supreme Court nominees, although officeholders have clearly sought to put a personal political stamp on the court through their choices. Historically, therefore, there was little reason to believe that the current judicial-appointment process, in actuality, compromised judicial independence. The current Liberal government has set up an independent, non-partisan advisory board to identify eligible candidates for Supreme Court Justices in an effort to provide a more transparent and inclusive appointment process. The first Supreme Court Judge nominated by Prime Minister Trudeau through this process was Justice Malcolm Rowe of Newfoundland and the second was Sheilah Martin from Alberta. Both appointments were widely praised.

Citation:

Nadia Verrelli, ed. (2013) *The Democratic Dilemma: Reforming Canada's Supreme Court* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press)

International Commission of Jurists (2014), Response to concerns about interference with integrity and independence of the judiciary in Canada, posted at <http://icj.wpengine.netdna-cdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Canada-JudicialIndependenceAndIntegrity-CIJL-OpenLetter-2014.pdf>

Corruption
Prevention
Score: 8

Canada has historically ranked very high for the extent to which public officeholders are prevented from abusing their position for private interests. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Canada among the top 10 least corrupt countries in the world. In recent years, however, the country saw a number of high-profile corruption scandals. Perhaps the most consequential scandal revolves around an investigation of wrongful travel and living allowance expense claims by members of the Canadian Senate. The Senate expense scandal renewed calls to reform the Senate or abolish the upper house entirely, and in early 2014, Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau expelled all 32 Liberal senators from the party, asking them instead to sit as independents, part of a proposed plan to overhaul Senate appointments to ensure it is a non-partisan body.

Another significant scandal emerged in 2019, when it came to light that Trudeau had used his powers as prime minister to influence the actions of the attorney general to prevent the criminal prosecution of SNC-Lavalin for bribing the son of former Libyan Prime Minister Muammar Qadhafi. The scandal also illuminated what many regard as a flaw in the governance structure of Canada's justice system. The roles of the minister of justice and attorney general of Canada are held by the same person. When Attorney General Jody Wilson-Raybould resisted government pressures, the prime minister moved her to a different cabinet position, terminating her role as attorney general in the process. Wilson-Raybould later resigned, and was ousted from the Liberal caucus. A special adviser subsequently reviewed the roles of the attorney general and the minister of justice. In its report, the adviser concluded that the dual roles could compromise the ability to exercise independent judgment when making decisions about specific prosecutions, and that an attorney general serving as a member of the cabinet might be influenced to exercise his or her authority in specific prosecutions so as to promote the cabinet's policy agenda and/or improve the electoral prospects of the government. However, the adviser's report also stated that "no further structural change" would be required [...] to protect prosecutorial independence and promote public confidence in the criminal justice system."

:
Report of the Auditor General of Canada to the Senate of Canada—Senators' Expenses, June 4, 2015, posted at http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_otp_201506_e_40494.html

Report of the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner- Trudeau II Report, August 4, 2019, posted at <https://ciec-ccie.parl.gc.ca/en/investigations-enquetes/Pages/TrudeauIIReport-RapportTrudeauII.aspx>

Honourable A. Anne McLellan, P.C., O.C., A.O.E, Review of the Roles of the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, June 28, 2019, posted at <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2019/08/14/review-roles-minister-justice-and-attorney-general-canada>

Governance

I. Executive Capacity

Strategic Capacity

Strategic
Planning
Score: 8

Neither the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) nor the Privy Council Office (PCO) has an official planning unit. In 1997, Policy Horizons Canada was established under the PCO with a mandate to provide analysis and help the federal public service anticipate emerging policy challenges and opportunities, in order to support medium-term policy development. Its budget is small, however, and this unit has not reported through the PCO since 2007. Nevertheless, there are thousands of public servants employed by the PCO, the Department of Finance and the Treasury Board (close to 3,000 individuals in all) who have no specific program responsibility. Their purpose is to manage politically sensitive files and to plan. Therefore, some argue that the planning capacity of the government of Canada is as strong as that of other Western countries, and in some cases even stronger.

The Trudeau government has made ample use of special advisory groups to provide information and consultations on a number of policy areas (e.g., economic growth, cultural policy and issues relating to young people).

Expert Advice
Score: 8

Canadian government departments and agencies effectively tap into expertise of academics and other experts outside the government in multiple ways. Many government departments and agencies have advisory committees, which can have considerable influence but rarely dominant policymaking. Government departments and agencies often commission experts to organize research projects on high-profile issues. In addition, a number of government departments and agencies appoint academic experts to advisory or committee-chair positions for periods of one to two years. Finally, external academic experts are frequently asked to meet with senior government officials, either on a one-on-one basis or as speakers at departmental retreats.

In September 2017, Mona Nemer was named Canada's new chief science officer. Her mandate is to provide advice on issues related to science and government policies that support it. This includes the provision of advice on ways to ensure that science is considered in policy decisions and that government science is fully available to the public. According to the latest report, the office has been called upon to provide advice to decision-makers from across government on diverse topics ranging from climate-change research to oceans, from health to the roll-out of the science and research funding programs and strategies announced in the 2018 federal budget.

Citation:

Office of the Chief Science Adviser of Canada, Annual Report of the Chief Science Advisor of Canada, 2018. posted at https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/063.nsf/eng/h_97756.html#3

Interministerial Coordination

GO Expertise
Score: 9

Draft bills are vetted primarily by the Privy Council Office and to a lesser extent by Finance Canada and the Treasury Board. These central agencies are highly prestigious and central-agency experience is extremely important for advancement to senior levels within the federal public service. Consequently, central-agency staff members are highly skilled and possess the comprehensive sectoral-policy expertise needed for the regular and independent evaluation of draft bills based on the government's strategic and budgetary priorities.

Line Ministries
Score: 9

Line departments and central agencies have interrelated and complementary capacities for the coordination of policy proposals, with ultimate authority lying with central agencies. Thus, line ministries in Canada have a relatively high level of responsibility to involve the government office, the PCO, in the preparation of policy proposals. On the other hand, line departments are not always forthcoming with information that casts themselves in a bad light.

Cabinet
Committees
Score: 8

Cabinet committees have both the legal and de facto power to prepare cabinet meetings in such a way as to allow the cabinet to focus on vital issues. The de facto power to sort out issues before they go to cabinet belongs to senior officials in the PMO and PCO, not to cabinet committees. Still, this allows the cabinet to focus on strategic policy issues.

Ministerial
Bureaucracy
Score: 8

Many policy proposals are coordinated by line ministries with other line ministries. However, due to issues of departmental mandates and authorities, this process is generally not as effective as the central-agency coordination process. On certain issues, the line department may be unwilling to recognize the role or expertise of other line departments, or have fundamental differences of perspectives on the issue, and hence may fail to consult and/or coordinate a policy proposal with others. The paramount role of central agencies in policy

Informal
Coordination
Score: 7

development means that departments have in fact little ability to effectively coordinate policy proposals.

Some policy proposals are coordinated through informal mechanisms with government members or across levels of government.

It is worth noting that Canada’s federal system has no formal provisions that deal specifically with federal-provincial coordination. Pressing federal-provincial issues and other matters that require inter-governmental discussions are usually addressed in the First Ministers’ Conference, which includes the prime minister, provincial premiers and territorial leaders, along with their officials. These meetings are called by the prime minister and have typically been held annually, but there is no formal schedule. The lack of any requirement for the conference to be held regularly is cause for concern, as it is critical for first ministers and the prime minister to engage in face-to-face discussions or negotiations, given the many policy areas that demand federal-provincial coordination. The latest First Ministers’ Conference, held in 2018, revealed deep interprovincial and federal-provincial rifts, ranging from the quarrel between Alberta and British Columbia on the Trans-Mountain pipeline expansion, provincial resistance to the carbon tax and the debate over immigration to the persistence of interprovincial trade barriers.

To promote provincial-territorial cooperation and coordinate provincial-territorial relations with the federal government, provincial premiers and territorial leaders have met at the Council of the Federation twice a year since 2003.

Digitalization for
Interministerial
Coordination
Score: 6

The effective control exercised by cabinet over the ministries mostly obviates the need for elaborate technical means of coordination. That said, the government created Shared Services Canada (SSC) in 2011, which is mandated to provide a unified IT infrastructure for the federal government that is modern, secure and reliable. SSC delivers email, data center, network and workplace technology device services to all government departments and agencies in a consolidated and standardized manner. The common IT program and platform naturally enables improved and secure information, and data sharing across all government agencies.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the consolidation of IT infrastructure through SSC has not gone smoothly, and the department has been criticized for slow service delivery and for putting some federal agencies at risk. Statistics Canada’s chief statistician resigned in 2016, arguing that SSC compromised Statistics Canada’s ability to fulfill its mandate. In 2017, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson criticized SSC for outages that negatively impacted police operations. The federal government has been unsuccessful in the implementation of two major digital technologies, the Phoenix payroll system and the government-wide Canada.ca email reorganization. A recent PBO report stated that a

functional pay system would not be operational until 2023. These failures cast serious doubt on the ability of the federal government to make effective use of digital technologies.

On a positive note, Canada has charged the governmental unit leading digital government efforts with responsibility for coordinating and leading action in the area of open government.

Citation:

Shared Services Canada, Departmental Report 2017, available at <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/ssc-spc/documents/2016-17-Departmental-Results-Report-EN.pdf>

Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, Costs Associated with Replacing the Federal Pay System, May 16 2019, posted at https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2019/Federal-pay-system-phoenix/Costs_Associated_with_Replacing_the_Federal_Pay_System_EN.pdf

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 2018/19: Digital Operations Strategic Plan: 2018-2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/government/system/digital-government/digital-operations-strategic-plan-2018-2022.html#ToC8>

Evidence-based Instruments

RIA Application
Score: 7

On 28 August 2019, the Impact Assessment Act (IAA), which created the new Impact Assessment Agency of Canada and repealed the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act of 2012, came into force.

The IIA implements many recommendations of an expert panel established in 2016 to review the federal approach to project assessment. The IIA is not uncontroversial, however. Although environmental groups have acknowledged that the IAA represents an improvement over the much-criticized Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, they have expressed concerns that the scope of projects to which it applies is too limited. The new IIA has also been the source of intense frustration in Western Canada. Many worry it will devastate an oil industry already struggling with constrained pipeline capacity.

Citation:

Impact Assessment Act (S.C. 2019, c. 28, s. 1), full document available at <https://laws.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/I-2.75/index.html>

Quality of RIA
Process
Score: 7

The quality of regulatory impact assessment in Canada has arguably improved under the new Impact Assessment Act, passed in 2019.

The new legislation expands assessments beyond the environmental effects of a designated project to include impacts on social and health systems, on the economy, and on Indigenous peoples, in each case considering current and future generations. A determination of whether a designated project should go ahead requires a consideration of whether it is in the public interest, of how it impacts on sustainability, and whether it will facilitate or hamper the federal

government's climate-change commitments. The IAA established the new Impact Assessment Agency of Canada, which is now responsible for conducting RIAs. Additionally, it increases the scope of public participation in the conduct of RIAs, beginning with a new early-planning phase, and is aimed at significantly increasing participation by Indigenous groups and expanding consideration of the impact a project may have on Indigenous groups and peoples.

RIA results are accessible under Freedom of Information provisions. However, there is little evaluation of the quality of RIAs by independent bodies.

Sustainability
Check
Score: 7

Canada does not have a formally adopted sustainability strategy. In a sense, this is not surprising, as there are different types of sustainability (environmental, economic, social). There is also no consensus as to what sustainability means or to how it should be measured. To be sure, many RIAs address sustainability issues, but the methodologies used differ widely.

Citation:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/impact-assessment-agency/services/policy-guidance/practitioners-guide-impact-assessment-act.html>

Quality of Ex
Post Evaluation
Score: 7

As with other aspects of Canada's RIA regime, ex post evaluation differs between laws and regulations. While laws are not subject to systematic ex post evaluation, departments and agencies are expected to regularly review existing regulations to assess their impacts and develop refinements.

In 2016, the Treasury Board of Canada introduced a new "Policy on Results." Evaluations of programs, policies and priorities under the policy is to be a "systematic and neutral analysis of evidence related to relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of policies and programs," and should "generally employ social science research methods." Those evaluations can be done through the Treasury Boards' resource alignment reviews and internally by departments themselves.

In practice, it is frequently the Office of the Auditor General of Canada (OAG) that evaluates government programs and initiatives ex post. The OAG is formally charged with so-called performance audits, which aim to provide an independent, objective and systematic assessment of whether government programs are being run with due regard for the economy, efficiency and environmental impact. The OAG has considerable discretion regarding which programs it will examine, and takes requests from parliamentary committees, members of parliament, citizens, civic groups and other parties to conduct audits in specific areas. It conducts between 25 and 30 performance audits each year and publishes the results.

Citation:

Treasury Board of Canada, Cabinet Directive on Regulation, available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/treasury-board-secretariat/services/federal-regulatory-management/guidelines-tools/cabinet-directive-regulation.html>

Treasury Board of Canada, Policy on Results, available at <https://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=31300>

Societal Consultation

Public
Consultation
Score: 8

The Canadian government holds consultations with economic and social actors on many issues. These consultations are motivated more by the desire to obtain meaningful input from Canadians than by a desire to sell a particular policy to the population, as this is typically done through other means. The most important consultations relate to the preparation of the annual budget. While the importance of trade unions in the consultation process has fallen significantly in recent years, this is not necessarily the case for other groups.

The duty to consult and accommodate Canada's Indigenous peoples as laid down in the Royal Proclamation of 1763 has always been part of the legal and constitutional relationship between Canada and its Indigenous population, and was reaffirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada in 2010. However, many First Nations leaders allege that there is a general and persistent lack of meaningful consultation at both the federal and the provincial level.

Since coming to power in 2015, the Liberal government has organized public consultations and engaged with a large number of stakeholders across many policy areas including innovation, electoral reform, childcare and the renegotiation of NAFTA. However, consultation with First Nations groups and stakeholders has remained uneven. A recent example is the Kinder Morgan pipeline in British Columbia, where the Federal Court of Appeals decided that the government had failed in its constitutional duty to consult First Nations in relation to the proposal.

Citation:

Tsleil-Waututh Nation v. Canada (Attorney General), 2018 FCA 153, available at http://www.fca-cf.gc.ca/fca-caf_eng.html

Policy Communication

Coherent
Communication
Score: 9

The Liberal government's communication policies are more open than those of its Conservative predecessors. Ministers are now responsible for coordinating communications between their departments, the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office. However, the Prime Minister's Office has not fully relinquished its control over ministers and departments. The PMO's objective

is still to deliver coherent messages to the public. A recent paper on the communications strategy of both the current and previous governments concluded that considerable efforts are made to spin and frame government information. The prime minister now conducts a series of town hall meetings, which are open to Canadians across the country. These meetings are a sign of his willingness to engage and obtain feedback.

Citation:
Marland, Alex. (2017). Strategic Management of Media Relations: Communications Centralization and Spin in the Government of Canada. *Canadian Public Policy*. 43(1).

Implementation

Government
Effectiveness
Score: 8

As a result of a parliamentary system in which members of parliament are elected in single-member constituencies through first-past-the-post voting, the Canadian federal government frequently holds an absolute majority in the House of Commons and thus has considerable freedom to pursue its policy objectives unilaterally.

At the end of its final term in 2019, the Liberal majority government had implemented many of the policies that the party campaigned on in the October 2015 election (e.g., a gender-balanced cabinet, reinstatement of the long-form census, a new child benefit system, a progressive tax reform, a pension-system reform, the approval of major infrastructure projects and an increase in the independence of Statistics Canada). Most recently, the government has legalized cannabis consumption, made further changes to the tax code, and implemented a carbon tax in provinces that lacked an equivalent program.

Nevertheless, many social problems targeted by public policy (e.g., persistent education and healthcare disparities between Canada’s Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations) are complex social phenomena that are only partly amenable to public policy action. In addition, many of the programs funded by Canada’s federal government – including healthcare, post-secondary education, social services and the integration of immigrants – are implemented by provincial governments and requires provincial cooperation to achieve federal policy objectives.

Reports from the Office of the Auditor General provide numerous examples of the government’s failure to implement its own policy programs. In its most recent set of reports (spring 2019), the Auditor General pointed at the government’s failure to process asylum claims in the two-month period to which it had committed, with waits in fact being closer to five years.

Citation:

Office of the Auditor General of Canada, "Message from the Auditor General of Canada on the 2018 Spring Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada," available at http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201805_00_e_43032.html

Ministerial
Compliance
Score: 10

In the Canadian system, the prime minister, in consultation with political staff, forms the cabinet and appoints his or her ministers, who serve on a discretionary basis. At the beginning of every mandate, ministers are sent a mandate letter by the PMO. They then work to implement the agenda outlined in this mandate letter, and are evaluated accordingly.

Any cabinet minister who is perceived by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) to be a political liability will have a short career. The prime minister and the PMO have an important role in appointing deputy ministers and chiefs of staff. Deputy ministers are appointed by the prime minister on the advice of the clerk of the Privy Council Office. Deputy ministers are promoted (or less often demoted) for a variety of reasons, including the attempt to match their talents to the requirements of the department, efforts to establish a gender and linguistic balance, and so on.

Monitoring
Ministries
Score: 10

When appointed to a portfolio, a minister receives a mandate letter from the prime minister, while a deputy minister receives one from the clerk of the Privy Council. The importance of mandate letters depends on the department, and more importantly on changing political and economic circumstances. In the case of the current government, ministers' mandate letters detail priorities for their departments as seen from the center. The minister is subsequently evaluated on his or her success in achieving the objectives set out in the mandate letter. This procedure results in the PCO continually monitoring line-department activities to ensure they are in line with the mandate letter.

The current Liberal government has, for the first time, made public the mandate letters. The media and the general public are now in a position to better monitor the activities of ministers to assess the degree to which they achieve the tasks set out in the mandate letters.

Monitoring
Agencies,
Bureaucracies
Score: 8

Ministry procedures for monitoring operating agencies are less formal than the parallel monitoring of line departments by the PCO, in part because operating agencies are generally not responsible for policy formulation. In addition, these agencies may have a degree of autonomy. Nevertheless, ministries do monitor the activities of most operating agencies. Recently, federal governments have attempted to play a greater role in the administration of certain agencies such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), especially in the area of labor relations.

Task Funding
Score: 9

Canadian subnational governments deliver key public services, notably healthcare and education. Their share of government spending has risen dramatically over recent decades and now accounts for roughly 78%, compared to an OECD average of 32% (2016 data).

Canada's federal government typically ensures that tasks delegated to subnational governments are adequately funded. The federal government transfers funds earmarked for both healthcare and education through the Canada Health Transfer (CHT) and the Canada Social Transfer (CST). In addition, Canada has a system of Equalization and Territorial Formula Finance (ETFF) payments in place, which are unconditional transfers to the provinces and territories designed to equalize the level of public service provision nationally. The block-funding structure is intended to give provinces and territories greater flexibility in designing and administering programs.

Starting in 2017 – 2018, total CHT funds have grown in line with nominal GDP, though several provinces have negotiated their own deals with the federal government to secure higher levels of funding. Both the CHT and the CST programs will be reviewed in 2024; however, this may be too late, as a recent Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) projection forecasts that provincial debt levels will start to increase in the mid-2020s and climb rapidly thereafter. On the current trajectory, therefore, fiscal policy at the subnational level is unsustainable, and federal transfer programs will prove to be insufficient to fund the large-scale increases in healthcare spending that will result from an aging population.

Citation:

Department of Finance, Canada, Canada Health Transfer, retrieved Nov 25 2019 from <https://www.fin.gc.ca/fedprov/cht-eng.asp>

Parliamentary Budget Officer of Canada, Fiscal Sustainability Report 2018, posted at https://www.pbo-dpb.gc.ca/web/default/files/Documents/Reports/2018/FSR%20Sept%202018/FSR_2018_25SEP2018_EN_2.pdf

Constitutional
Discretion
Score: 9

Canada's federal government works to ensure subnational governments are able to use their constitutional scope of discretion. Canadian provinces, especially large ones such as Quebec and Alberta, guard their constitutional powers closely and allow the federal government little scope to increase its power. Indeed, certain responsibilities that have traditionally been under joint federal-provincial jurisdiction, such as labor market training, have in recent years been decentralized and delegated completely to the provinces. However, this process can be ambiguous.

Even when the federal government has tried to assert its authority in economic areas it believes to be under exclusive federal jurisdiction, such as the

National Standards Score: 6

regulation of securities markets, certain provinces have vociferously objected and taken the federal government to the Supreme Court, and won.

In many areas of provincial jurisdiction, most notably education, the federal government does not have the formal authority to ensure that provinces meet national standards. Contrary to most other advanced countries, Canada has no minimum funding levels, national educational goals or overarching curriculum. Yet despite the complete control exercised by the provinces, Canada’s educational system is arguably quite successful, and remains similar across the various provinces, which invest in mandatory education at comparable levels and achieve comparable results for their students. Graduation rates are similar, as are the results on pan-Canadian and international tests, such as the Program for International Student Achievement (PISA), operated by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

In other areas where the federal government transfers funds to the provinces, it has the practical leverage to insist on certain standards. Healthcare is the main area in which this occurs. The Canada Health Act of 1986 requires provinces to meet five principles for healthcare. Care must be available to all eligible residents of Canada, comprehensive in coverage, accessible without financial or other barriers, portable within the country and during travel abroad, and publicly administered. The federal government has threatened to withhold funds from provinces that fail to meet these standards. However, no funds have been withheld since 1993. Some feel that the federal government should be more aggressive in ensuring that national standards are met in the health area.

Effective Regulatory Enforcement Score: 7

The quality of regulatory enforcement in Canada is generally high. While regulatory agencies occasionally face resource constraints, these are not usually the result of interest group lobbying. Interest groups in Canada tend to focus on obtaining leniencies during the creation of regulations rather than after regulations are promulgated.

One notable exception is the regulatory oversight and environmental-assessment review of major industrial projects, where final decisions are in the hands of the ministry or cabinet. In many instances, stakeholders have complained that government approval did not follow the rules and regulations set out by law. Two recent high-profile cases highlight the issue: both the Enbridge west coast oil-port proposal (under former prime minister Harper) and the Trans-Mountain pipeline expansion (under current prime minister Trudeau) obtained positive recommendations from the National Energy Board, all required federal and provincial environmental-assessment certificates, and final ministerial approval. Yet, federal courts ultimately struck down both approvals.

The government recently reformed its impact assessment legislation, creating a new Impact Assessment Agency to centralize federal evaluations of major projects. It additionally created a new Canadian Energy Regulator to oversee Canada’s interprovincial and international pipelines and powerlines. These bodies have respectively replaced the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency and the National Energy Board.

Adaptability

Domestic
Adaptability
Score: 8

Organizational change is constantly taking place within the federal government and some of this change reflects international developments. However, unlike countries in the European Union, Canada is not a member of a supranational organization that might necessitate adjustments in organizational structures and reporting relationships. One area that has seen changes over time is international affairs, which includes the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT).

International
Coordination
Score: 7

Canada’s government has the capacity to provide global public goods in coordination with other actors. Indeed, it has done so throughout its history. Prime Minister Trudeau has repeatedly sought to carve out an active role for Canada in international bodies such as the United Nations. The government has reaffirmed its commitment to be a strong voice on the international stage, and has submitted Canada’s candidacy to serve on the UN Security Council in 2021 – 2022, a seat not held since 2000.

Canada has deployed a 250-person Air Task Force as peacekeepers with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. Climate change is also among Prime Minister Trudeau’s declared priorities, as demonstrated in the development of recent climate policies designed to meet the country’s Paris targets. In 2018, Canada resettled more Syrian refugees than any other country, according to government statistics gathered by UNHCR.

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<https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/operations/military-operations/current-operations/op-presence.html>
UNHCR, Global Trends: Forced Displacement in 2018, available at <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/unhcrstats/5d08d7ee7/unhcr-global-trends-2018.html>

Organizational Reform

Self-monitoring
Score: 8

Government structures are constantly changing in Canada, but there are few procedural structures in place to (self-) monitor whether current arrangements

are appropriate or whether change has resulted in improvement. Instead, changes are initiated at the will of the government in power, with little ex post evaluation. In the case of the recent merger of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade with the Canadian International Development Agency, for example, the government offered no details about the nature of the amalgamation, nor about the cost savings it was intended to realize.

The current government, which won its previous mandate in part based on the promise of transparency and fairness, has since established a number of independent committees tasked with monitoring certain government processes. For example, in an effort to reduce partisanship in lawmaking, it created an independent advisory board that will aid in the selection of senators, and created the Independent Advisory Board to oversee appointments to the Supreme Court. It remains too early to gauge the long-term impact of these committees.

Citation:

David Zussmann (2013), Mergers and successful transitions, Canadian Government Executive, Volume 19 Issue 5

Institutional
Reform
Score: 6

There is little public evidence that changes in institutional arrangements have significantly improved the strategic-governance capacity of Canada's federal government. For example, there has been no comprehensive evaluation of Service Canada, a delivery platform for government services established in the 2000s.

In certain cases, there may actually be too much organizational change given the cost and disruption entailed. For example, in 2004 Human Resources Development Canada was split into two departments. In 2008, the two departments were merged again. In 2013, Human Resources Development Canada again changed its name, this time to the Employment and Social Development Canada, with little if any rationale provided for this change. It is unclear what benefits, if any, arose from this departmental reshuffling.

The frequency of departmental reorganizations has diminished in recent years. However, in 2017, the Liberal government announced that Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada would be split into two departments, the Department of Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs, and the Department of Indigenous Services. The two departments will respectively focus on renewing a nation-to-nation relationship and improving the quality of services available.

Citation:

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. Highlights from the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, posted at <http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100014597/1100100014637>

II. Executive Accountability

Citizens' Participatory Competence

Political
Knowledge
Score: 6

Most citizens have only a rudimentary knowledge of key public-policy issues. In the latest Canadian Elections Study (2015), less than 20% of respondents could correctly identify the name of the governor general or the finance minister. A 2013 study of 10 countries found that Canada is ahead of the United States but lags behind European countries in terms of political knowledge. The same study also found that Canadian women scored 30% lower on average than Canadian men when tested on their knowledge of hard-news items. Like other established democracies, Canada has issues with regard to young voters' political literacy. A 2017 study by Stockemer and Rocher found that younger people are less politically literate than older people by a margin of 20 to 30 percentage points. The authors concluded that this generational political knowledge gap accounts for approximately half of the difference in turnout between voters in their early 20s and voters in their 50s.

Citation:

Curran, James et al. (2013) *Gender Matters Globally: An Examination of Gaps in Political Knowledge in a 10-Nation Comparative Study*.

Canadian Elections Study, 2015 edition, accessible at <https://ces-ec.arts.ubc.ca/english-section/home/>

Stockemer, Daniel and Francois Rocher. Age, political knowledge and electoral turnout: a case study of Canada
Commonwealth & Comparative Politics Vol. 55 (1), 2017.

Open
Government
Score: 8

The government of Canada has two offices, the Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO) and the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), whose mandate is to provide independent analysis on government finances and policies. The PBO is charged with providing impartial information on the state of government finances and its estimates of trends in the Canadian economy. On request, the PBO estimates the cost of any proposal under parliamentary consideration. During the 2019 federal election, the PBO carried out a requested evaluation of the cost of programs contained in the political parties' campaign platforms. The OAG provides independent information and expert advice on government programs and activities, and the management of its Crown corporations. Both offices serve parliament, but – since reports usually become public information – they provide ample and objective evidence on the finances and performance of government policies and institutions. The reports are made available online, including historic reports, and are generally easy to

understand for laypeople. The quality of information contained in the reports, however, depends heavily on the data obtained by the offices. In 2013, the PBO took the previous government to court over its refusal to comply fully with almost half of all information and access to information requests.

Government departments and agencies release information in the form of studies and data on their websites, which allows citizens to hold them accountable. Most of this information is available in both official languages in user friendly formats, including for blind people.

In addition, Canada has a large number of non-governmental think tanks, and policy and research institutes that provide additional information on a range of policy areas, including social policy, political strategy, economics, technology, industry, business and national defense.

Legislative Actors' Resources

Parliamentary
Resources
Score: 7

Members of the House of Commons and the Senate have access to the research staff of the Library of Parliament, and these staffers are responsible for drafting parliamentary committee reports. Parliamentary committees or individual members of parliament can also request audits from the Auditor General of Canada, an officer of parliament that is independent of the government and is mandated to provide parliament with objective, fact-based information and expert advice on government programs and activities. Another important source of information for parliamentarians is the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO), which was given additional independence and resources in 2017.

The Liberal government has indicated its intention to provide more influence, resources and autonomy to parliamentary committees. A House of Commons committee put forward a number of legislative suggestions that would give more monitoring resources to members of parliament.

Obtaining
Documents
Score: 8

Parliamentary committees have the right to receive government documents in the course of their deliberations. However, these documents often arrive incomplete and redacted because of confidentiality considerations, or too late for the committee to make effective use of them.

Summoning
Ministers
Score: 8

Ministers are normally expected to appear before parliamentary committees, but are not legally required to do so, and sometimes decline for various reasons. In recent years, ministers have begun to send their deputy ministers to appear before parliamentary committees.

<p>Summoning Experts Score: 10</p>	<p>Ministers are of course questioned and held accountable in the House of Commons.</p> <p>Parliamentary committees have the right to summon any expert they choose to provide testimony. However, committees cannot compel experts to appear or testify. Parliamentary committees now allow witnesses to appear via Skype, which has increased the pool of experts available.</p>
<p>Task Area Congruence Score: 8</p>	<p>There are currently 23 standing or permanent committees of the House of Commons and 18 standing committees of the Senate. Committees in the house and Senate frequently have overlapping mandates.</p>

The new (2019) Liberal cabinet around Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has 36 ministers, two more than the previously dissolved Liberal cabinet. As such, there are more ministries than committees with considerable variation in the number of ministries over time. However, since some cabinet positions (e.g., the leaders in the House of Commons and the Senate as well as the president of The Queen's Privy Council for Canada) have no corresponding department and some ministers (e.g., the Minister for International Cooperation) are heads of agencies under the umbrella of a department run by another minister, the number of government departments is currently 19. Therefore, parliamentary committees are largely capable of monitoring departments.

Media

<p>Media Reporting Score: 8</p>	<p>Canada's main TV and radio stations produce a mix of infotainment and high-quality information programs. Public broadcasters, including the CBC and provincial TV channels such as TV Ontario (TVO), provide extensive and often high-quality coverage of politics and news, with a minimum of five to seven hours per week of in-depth information on government decisions. Examples of such programs include TVO's <i>The Agenda</i> and CBC's <i>The House</i>. A 2013 study comparing news coverage in 11 countries found that the share of news content as a percentage of total broadcast time was highest in Canada, both for domestic and international news coverage. Canadian media coverage is further enhanced by international news channels such as CNN, BBC World News and Al Jazeera, which are readily available. One caveat is that there is little competition among public broadcasters. Conversely, private broadcasters, with the exception of the Canadian Parliamentary Access Channel, are generally focused primarily on infotainment, but also provide some analysis of government decisions. Certain print media, such as the <i>Globe and Mail</i>, provide comparatively high-quality and comprehensive analysis of public policy. Others, such as <i>La Presse</i>, the <i>National Post</i> and other Postmedia publications, provide good coverage of public-policy issues.</p>
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The Liberal government revamped the Access to Information Act in 2019. The current version enables the Information Commissioner to order government institutions to disclose requested records.

Citation:

Aalberg et al (2013). International TV News, Foreign Affairs Interest, and Public Knowledge, *Journalism Studies*, 14:3, 387-406.

Parties and Interest Associations

Intra-party
Decision-Making
Score: 7

There are currently four major political parties at the federal level in Canada: the Liberals, the Conservatives, the Bloc Québécois and the New Democrats.

In April 2013, the Liberal Party of Canada elected Justin Trudeau as their new leader, through an open-voting process that included non-party members. The policy formation process is also relatively open, new ideas are gathered from Liberal members and supporters through local groups, then written up as policy resolutions that are voted on and prioritized first within provincial and territorial associations and then at the Liberal Party's biannual conventions. All resolutions passed at the convention become official party policy. Following the 2019 federal election, the Liberal Party formed a minority government.

Until his resignation in the aftermath of the October 2015 election, the Conservative Party was tightly controlled by erstwhile party leader and Prime Minister Stephen Harper. Decisions in the Conservative Party are mostly made by the elite, and while grassroots views and resolutions passed at party conventions constitute input, they are not binding. For example, many Conservative Party members support restrictions on abortion, but this was not adopted as party policy for fear of alienating the general public. In May 2017, the Conservative Party of Canada chose Andrew Scheer, former speaker of the House of Commons, as the new party leader in a highly contested vote. Shortly after the fall 2019 election, in which he underperformed expectations, Scheer resigned as leader.

Unlike the Conservatives or the Liberals, the New Democratic Party is integrated with its provincial and territorial counterparts, except in Nunavut, the Northwest Territories and Quebec, making it difficult for members to support different parties at the federal and provincial levels. At the October 2017 convention, Jagmeet Singh was elected leader of the New Democrats. Singh is the first person of an ethnic minority background to be elected leader of a federal party. A wide range of views are expressed at New Democratic Party policy conferences, but all policy resolutions passed are non-binding on the party leadership.

The Bloc Québécois differs from all other parties in that it runs candidates only in Quebec. While it has strong informal ties with the provincial Parti Québécois, the provincial party that also advocates for a sovereign Quebec, there are no organizational links. Yves-François Blanchet was elected as the party's leader in January 2019, as the only candidate vying for the position.

Given their short time in office, it is too soon to evaluate the leadership styles followed by Blanchet, Scheer or Singh.

Association
Competence
(Employers &
Unions)
Score: 8

Many business associations, employers' groups and trade unions develop policy proposals that identify the causes of problems, make use of scholarly research to support their analysis, propose technically feasible measures to attain policy objectives, take account of long-term interests, and anticipate policy effects. Among the most competent associations in this respect are the Business Council of Canada, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Association, the Canadian Labor Congress and the Canadian Auto Workers. Many of these associations have realized that they must identify their policy proposals with the overall societal interest rather than solely with the narrower interests of their members if they are to gain traction with the public and policymakers. The most successful associations are those that have mastered this art.

Association
Competence
(Others)
Score: 8

Many social-interest groups, environmental groups and religious communities develop policy proposals that identify the causes of problems, make use of scholarly research to support their analysis, propose technically feasible measures to attain policy objectives, take account of long-term interests, and anticipate policy effects. However, as these groups have fewer resources than economic-interest groups, they generally do a somewhat less competent job in proposing reasonable policies. A 2011 report prepared for the Canadian Council for International Cooperation found that for many civil society organizations, broad policy ideas are not always translated into concrete proposals due to a lack of expertise. While some coalitions, such as the Americas Policy Group, the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network, the Climate Action Network, the Policy Working Group on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, and the Global Call Against Poverty/Making Poverty History, among others, have a strong record with respect to governmental relations, both political and legislative, they represent a minority in this regard.

Citation:

A Map of Canadian Civil Society Organization Coalitions' Governance, Capacity and Agendas: Common Challenges, Shortfalls and their Implications, report prepared for The Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC), 2011.

Independent Supervisory Bodies

Audit Office
Score: 10

The auditor general is appointed by parliament on the advice of the prime minister for a 10-year term. Once in place, however, auditor generals have virtually a free hand in deciding who to audit and when. The Office of the Auditor General is accountable to parliament, and the removal of an auditor general requires the approval of both the House of Commons and Senate. Instances when either parliament or its Public Accounts Committee were able to direct the work of the Office of the Auditor General are rare.

Ombuds Office
Score: 6

The federal government, unlike some provinces, does not have an organization called an ombuds office, but it does have certain organizations that are functional equivalents. These include the Access to Information Office and the office responsible for the protection of whistleblowers. However, the advocacy role of these organizations is limited. There are two ombuds offices with special mandates, the Office of the Ombudsperson for the Department of National Defense and the Canadian Forces, and the Federal Ombudsperson for Victims of Crime. Other mechanisms that more informally fulfill an ombuds role include departmental units responsible for investigating appeals of decisions related to social programs such as employment insurance and pensions, and the offices of members of parliament, which frequently act as champions for the interests of individual constituents. In 2019, the Trudeau administration announced the creation of a third ombuds office, the Ombudsperson for Responsible Enterprise. The office will be responsible for Canadian businesses both domestically and abroad.

Data Protection
Authority
Score: 9

Canada's data protection authority is the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada. The legislation governing federal government use of private data is the Privacy Act. As an officer of parliament, the commissioner can audit suspected government breaches of the Privacy Act and act as an ombudsmen in relation to individual violations. Analogous structures exist at the provincial and territorial level.

Citation:
<https://www.priv.gc.ca/en>

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