

# Canadian political culture

[Politics](#)



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Political culture refers to the attitudes and opinions people have internalized towards how their country should be run or how citizens perceive the political legitimacy and the political practices traditions. It entails how the government operates which could be dictatorship, democracy or absolute monarchial leadership. Political culture in Canada has been divergent and this can be demonstrated by the way the two deal with political issues as discussed below. Canada has a history of liberalism to socialism to conservatism. People's affiliation to a certain party is as result of their socialization.

Political parties offer a vessel through which the citizen's voices are aired. The liberal party of Canada was initially 'reform party' and the main aim of libels was to improve the economy the economy, social standard and to improve the Canadian identity. Libels favored improved relations with the U. S increased employment, improved living standards and the equal distribution of wealth in the nation. The Great Depression of 1930's affected Canada economically, socially and politically. Libels continued to advocate for the policies they advocated before.

Socialist movements started rising and creating conflicts. Socialists were guided by the idea that though Canada had many regions with variant traditions they were all part of the whole. The Progressive Conservative party had close affiliation with Great Britain. In the United States students are taught from an early age about their independent, construction and bills of rights. The government has the obligation of meeting its citizen's demands or needs, should be practice justice without favour or privilege and should

control its porters regarding freedom of religion and expression to prevent its abuse.

Individuals and organization or political parties can discuss on how the government is operating to criticize it or commend it. The people have the power to vote out a government they perceive in competent through elections. The US practices democratic capitalism where by production and distribution of goods is regulated by the forces of the market. Demand and supply take control. The democrats and republican parties do not oppose this economic political system. Canada and other Western Europe practice social democratic which is against the capitalist ideology.

They aim to outweigh the " injustice" of capitalism through state regulation and programs Classical liberalism is central in American political culture and feudalism is opposed. It believes that political equality should be followed so that there are no marginalized groups in the country. Women and ex-slaves have a say too. Equality of opportunity is also a shared value where differences in income could be from differences in education, effort, luck or investment. Equality of opportunity is at times compromised by differences in race, gender religion and ethnicity. To counter this affirmative actions are taken.

Arguments are raised that the government should take control of some issues especially income inequality control. There has been high upward movement along the social classes . () Dominant ideologies in the US include; modern conservatism which support capitalism and decreased government intervention. Those practicing it are pessimistic of human

nature, value the importance of strong legal systems and advocate for strengthening of institution like families and religion. (Jowitt Kenneth. 1974)

Modern liberalism supports strong government intervention in solving economic problems e. g. in education, health, environmental issues and also in income inequality. Other ideologies include Neo-conservatives who support the goals of liberals but not their means and Neo-literals who support govern intervention but oppose the goals selected. Religion and politics has been a long debated subject there has been anti-catholism in the past. Catholism was viewed as a representative of foreign domination which should be abolished. Minority groups formed organizations to air their grievances for instance; MAYO was able to complain of non-culture based education system which was not discriminatory.

Women in US and Canada have steadily increased their rates of voting though they have not be fast in assuming positions that entails policy making in the state and federal levels. Few women hold cabinet position; however women with higher education level have equal political behaviour with men an indication that there are factors like education traditions and culture could cause the disparities. There are 16. 3% women in the US congress. This is a mixture of different color and race. In 2004, Canada women represented 21. 1% members of parliament. This has been increasing since 1993 when it was 18%.

Canadian government emphasizes adherence to the rule of law, freedom of worship or religion, decentralization of power and the personal will to do what one pleases. Canadian federation was formed to ensure that peace, order and good governance prevailed. Canadian politics have been slow, not

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radical and involves a lot of compromising from interest group, regional consultations and government of the day. () The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom in 1985 brought changes as people were to practice that which they believed in. The government was compelled to legalize same sex marriage.

This was to the advantage of homosexuals who retained their dignity safely and equality but critics argue it was at the expense of other important changes. () US also campaigns for hate crimes which could be against the gay people in society. Both countries support women and the homo-sexual rights. Women rights advocated for include ability to vote, hold public office, work, equal pay, own property, serve in male -dominated careers and religious rights. Areas of contrast between Canada and US include the Canadian parliamentism and the US congressional system of government.

US declaration of independence is “ life liberty and pursuit of happiness” while Canada’s is “ peace order and good government” Historically, Canada’s population was more conservative compared to US. There was an authoritarian leadership by the Catholic Church the two had different trade patterns. US traded to the North-South as Canada traded to East-West. Religion wise, US had a history of radical protestant while the Anglican Church and Roman Catholic were dominant in Canada. The Anglican and Roman church are hierarchical and this could have attributed to Canadian’s reaction to authority.

However the Catholic Church has weakened drastically with rise Methodists in the region in the early 19th century who brought Republican and Democratic ideals. For many Americans, religion influences the political

agenda or a particular stands that will be adapted on policy position. Religion could affect the candidate that will be preferred due to group identity. The Canadian government is more decentralized, its provinces cater for the country's welfare e. g. healthcare and education while in US the federal government is centralized with power retained by the state.

Their legislation systems also vary. In Canada each province or state has a police force which cannot exert its powers beyond its area of jurisdiction. Unlike in the US where agencies like the FBI can exert their powers across the state. The political culture in US has been overtaken by terrorism which has taken place of international communism that previously reigned. There have been occasions of violence both at home and abroad. Canada and U. S differ in the way they handle public issues like universal Medicare, gun control, alcohol regulation, and death penalty welfare and public utilities.

Canada has a national health care system which is criticized of having long queues, government interferences, inferior quality and increased taxes for the citizens . U. S on the contrary does not practice a socialized approach in medicine. Canada has succeeded in offering its citizens comprehensive health care and at a lower cost while the US has approximately 37 million people without health insurance and 53 million under insured. The Canadian approach to health matters has managed to reduce the ' inequality' problem in accessing health facilities faced in U. S due to ' free market' approach in offering in Canada could be lower, the long term indicators like life expectancy and infant mortality show that the quality is up to standards.

Bill Clinton supports unity of Canada into a " strong united and democratic country" his statement was however not welcomed by the Quebec's ruling

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provincial party who are for “ national liberation” approach. Decentralization of power has been increasing as the federal government has allocated many powers to the provinces. Quebec still retains control over important policies like education and language.

There is no clear distinction of how far the religion and the state should interact. U. S has a history of separating the two but it mixes the two. Polling data shows that there is a correlation between how often one goes to religious services that other factors like gender age and income. Most Americans are contented with the presidents’ disclosure of his faith. Canadians have raised concern over the Prime Minister’s religious orientation. People are becoming uncomfortable with the extent to which politics and religion are interacting.

Canadians and Americas are more likely to vote in a Muslim or atheist than they would have in the last decade. This is probably due to ‘ Bush’ factor of war in Iraq while still exercising Christianity. Canadian would opt for a non Christian because of the ‘ Harper’ factor of supporting Bush who invaded Iraq an idea refuted by Canadians. In the U. S political parties are loosely organized. There are no formal organizations at the national level to control membership or activities. People could register for certain parties and vote for different parties’ altogether. They are joined together by consensus.

One could change the party that voted him/her by simply declaring so. The major parties are Democratic national committee and Republican national committee Throughout the world women have generally had fewer legal rights than men. They have faced discrimination in careers and in the political arena. They form a higher percentage of illiteracy levels. This is

attributed to cultural practices and beliefs where a woman is seen as the 'weaker sex'. The first woman elected to the U. S senate was in 1917. Since then women have been actively involved in politics. The media has a big role in democracy in U. S.

Quality of journalism can be reduced by bias with age of hyper-commercialism the media can comprise offering the true issues to favor a minority. It could be used by conservatives to capitalize on their views about socialism. Most Canadians rely on the media for information about the political arena. The media expose government policies, mobilizes people for necessary political action, it also focuses on controversial issues in society. The media in Canada was empowered by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. Canadian parliamentary process is more secretive compared to U. S congressial government. On drugs issues, Canada has been on the forefront in fighting against drugs. Concerns have however been rose that following the UN drug conventions human rights have been violated. Those who suffer are poor peasants who try to earn a living by planting drugs for sale. The point is lost when punishing the drug user instead of fighting crime related drug. Alcohol and tobacco are the most psychoactive drugs used in Canada. The direct harms and costs of illicit drugs like marijuana is more than the direct impact and are completely disproportionately to their level of use.

The indirect damage and cost are due to drug policies and legislation. The war against drugs was made to be war against drug users. This has led to more increased drug related crimes. The American government on the other hand became concerned when Canada planned to abolish criminal penalties



that were attached to marijuana. They had to intervene with the election of the conservative party in 2006 Stopped the liberalization of marijuana laws The relationship between U. S and Canada has been a strenuous one. Harper the prime minister criticized the US ambassador to Canada for criticizing the conservatives plan.

The New Conservative Party supports free trade and it is supported by Libertarian conservatives, and environment conservatives. Harper being a strong fiscal conservative advocate for some mutual relationship with US. He has had to accept some social conservative positions like opposing same sex marriages despite the fight for freedom of rights. The conservative ideologies have historically been changing before it was against integration with US and free trade. Some people are concerned that this will lead to adoption of American capitalism.

However this is an overstatement, the conservatives still supports low taxes decentralization of power to the provinces. It still favors law and order issues. The US is very strict on immigrants and has passed laws and policies which have made most of them return to their home countries. Canada on the other hand has been very accommodative. It has the highest per capital rates admission rates. However with the 9/11 attack there has been concern that this would create problems. Considering most of the immigrants were from Asia and the number of Muslim immigrants has been increasing.

As Canada accommodates immigrants by providing them with health care and social welfare facilities the US makes policies to discourage more immigrants flocking in. However security has been tightened and Canada has signed the “ smart boarder declaration”. There has been a concern that

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with the increased number of Muslims and the emergence of radical Muslim leaders could lead to insecurity. The Muslim community on the other hand has raised grievances that they are harassed and discriminated on religion both by the law enforcers and the public.

Aliens who are illegally in America are removed through formal process involving imprisonment fines and future entry prohibition. Death penalty in US is condoned and there has been 1, 028 since 1976 as at July 2006. 1999 had the most executions . 99% of those executed were men with most of them being white about 57%. This has faced much opposition by activists fighting for human rights claiming that capital punishment is denial of the same. Canada on the contrary does not support death sentence. It abolished it in 1976 and crime rate has declined . Most political parties in Canada did not support it.

In US abortion is legal though it may be restricted by different states. The judicial position is that there is no law or legal barrier to hinder abortion at any stage of pregnancies. Political parties have varying opinions of whether it should be legalized. The Republican are against it as they advocate for the unborn children's rights while the Democrats considers it a women's right. With legalization of abortion in US it become a self induced centers have been stated to limit the increased abortion rates other measures taken include preventing abortion by preventing conception. Canada has no criminal law restriction on abortion.

Federal parties in Canada are for abortion while the Liberal party and the Conservative party are neutral about it. Generally abortion is still carried out in Canada although people are not willing to positively discuss it especially

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politicians. Women in Canada support affirmative action to favor women and prevent the unfair bias against them in education and career opportunity. Affirmative actions are measures that promote equality of people regardless of their race, gender, culture, language or ethnicity by ensuring that disadvantaged groups acquire education and medical care as well as basic social services.

Affirmative action has reduced discriminatory practices. Wages of blacks and their numbers in certain professions like lawyers has also risen; educational bias has also been on the decline. In Canada aboriginal people, women and the disabled are the 'minority' in the country. The three formed the employment equity which helped them acquire equal employment opportunities. Canada strongly respects human rights and the law. Muslim in America are not a marginalized group they participated in the democracy of U. S. they have been successful professionally and education wise.

They however face suspicion especially with the rise of Muslim radicals and the 9/11 attack. They have however formed organizations that have cleared their name and changed the impression people have of them. Muslims in Canada are less aggressive. Few are engaged in politics. They are however gradually becoming active in politics. They too face suspicion since 9/11 attack. They raised concerns that they are humiliated and discriminated in Canada despite their qualifications.