



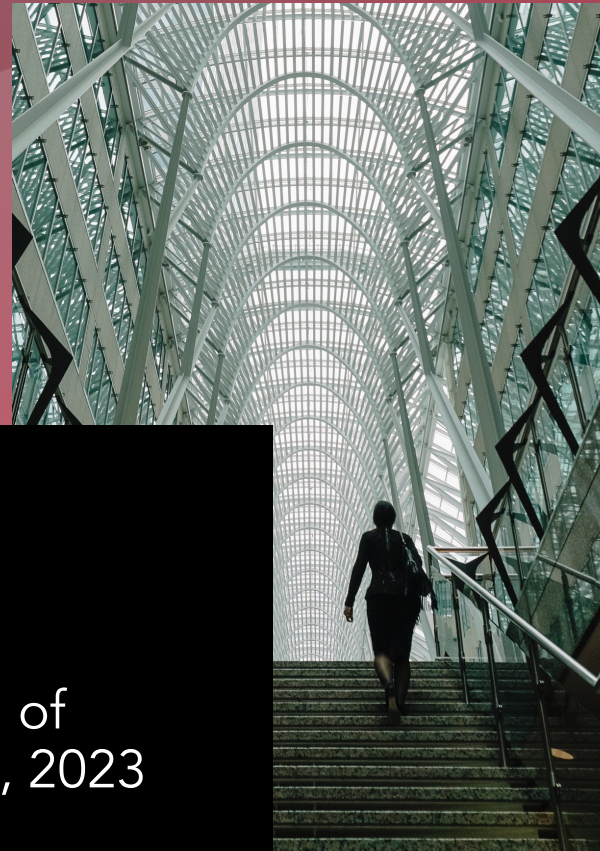
Confederation
of Tomorrow

**Environics
Institute**
For Survey Research

Views on Government

Results from the Confederation of
Tomorrow Survey of Canadians, 2023

JUNE 2023





The Confederation of Tomorrow surveys are annual studies conducted by an association of the country's leading public policy and socio-economic research organizations. The surveys give voice to Canadians about the major issues shaping the future of the federation and their political communities.

The 2023 study consists of:

- a survey of 5,365 adults
- conducted **online** in the provinces between January 26 and February 9
- conducted **by telephone** in the territories between January 24 and February 26*

* Respondents in the territories were not asked the question about equalization.



Survey partners

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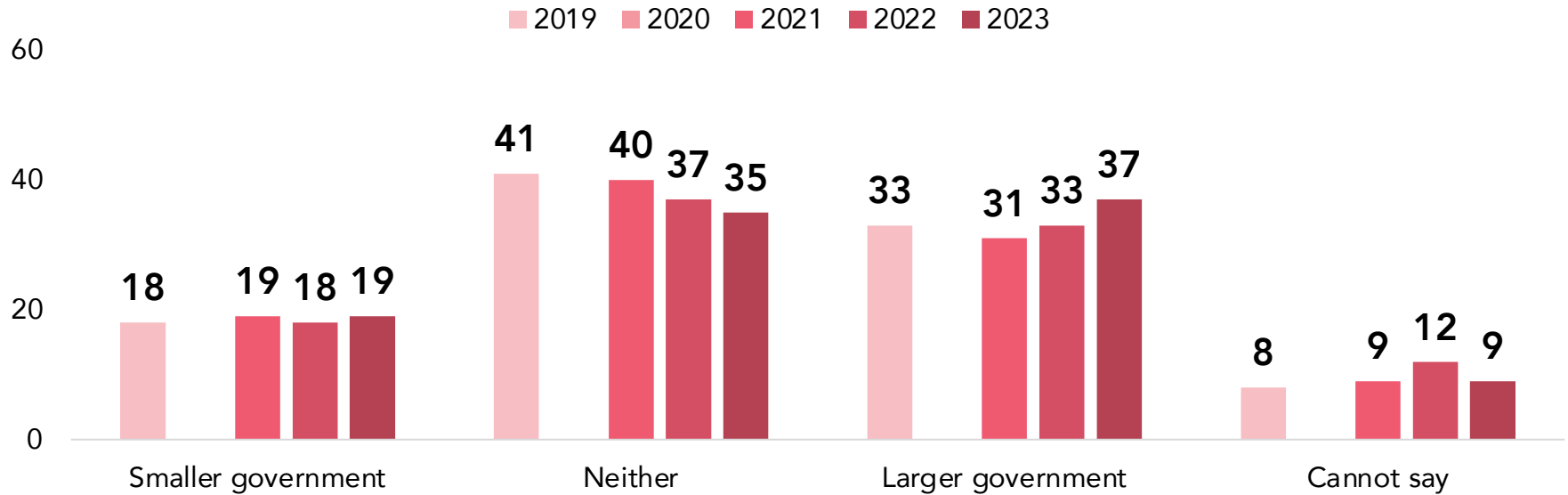
Three questions about government (2019 to 2023)

- This report presents the results to three questions about government:
 - *Generally speaking, would you say you favour: a smaller government with fewer services; a larger government with more services; or neither in particular? (Not asked in 2020)*
 - *These days, what kind of impact do you think governments have on most people's lives - a positive impact, a negative impact, or don't governments have much impact on most people's lives? (Not asked in 2020)*
 - *Which of the following statements is closest to your own view of how governments should work in Canada? The government of my province should take charge of many of the things the federal government does right now; The federal government should take charge of many of the things the government of my province; does right now things should be left pretty much as they are.*
- Answers are tracked from 2019 to 2023 to address the question of whether the pandemic shifted Canadian preferences about the role of government.
 - The questions about the size and impact of government were not asked in 2020.

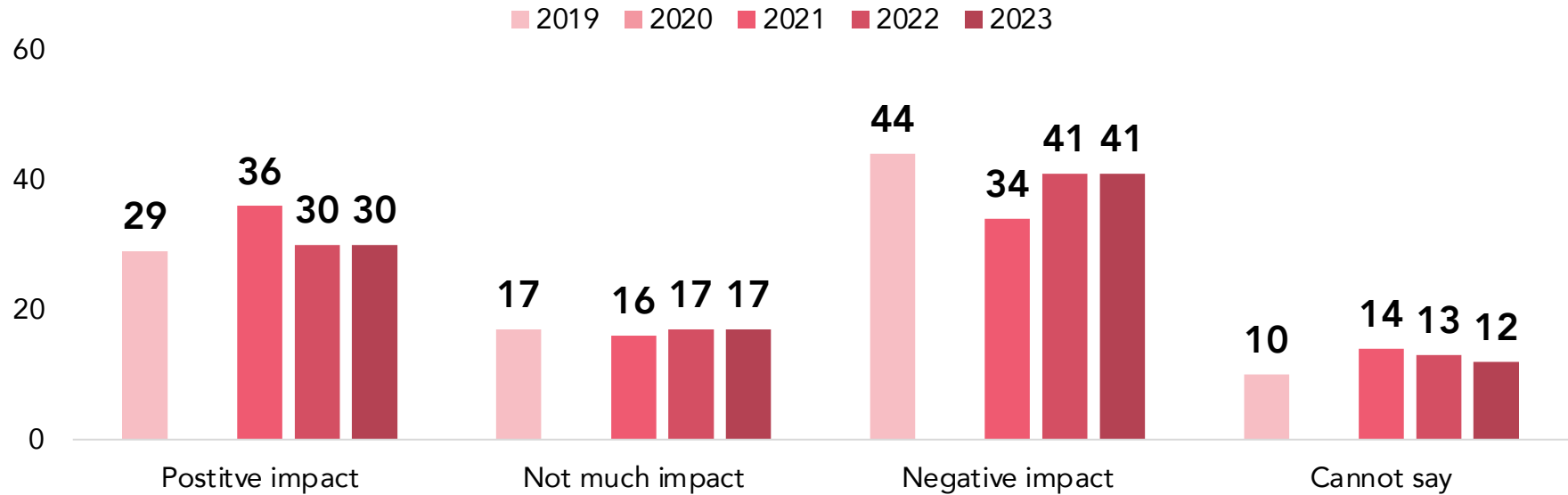
Summary: overall trends

1. The pandemic appears to have had no immediate effect on preferences for larger or smaller government. But more recently (since 2021), the proportion favouring a larger government with more services has increased slightly.
2. The pandemic initially prompted more Canadians to see governments as having a positive impact, but this shift was temporary. Opinions today are similar to what they were prior to the pandemic.
3. Overall, the pandemic had no clear impact on preferences for a more centralized or decentralized federation.

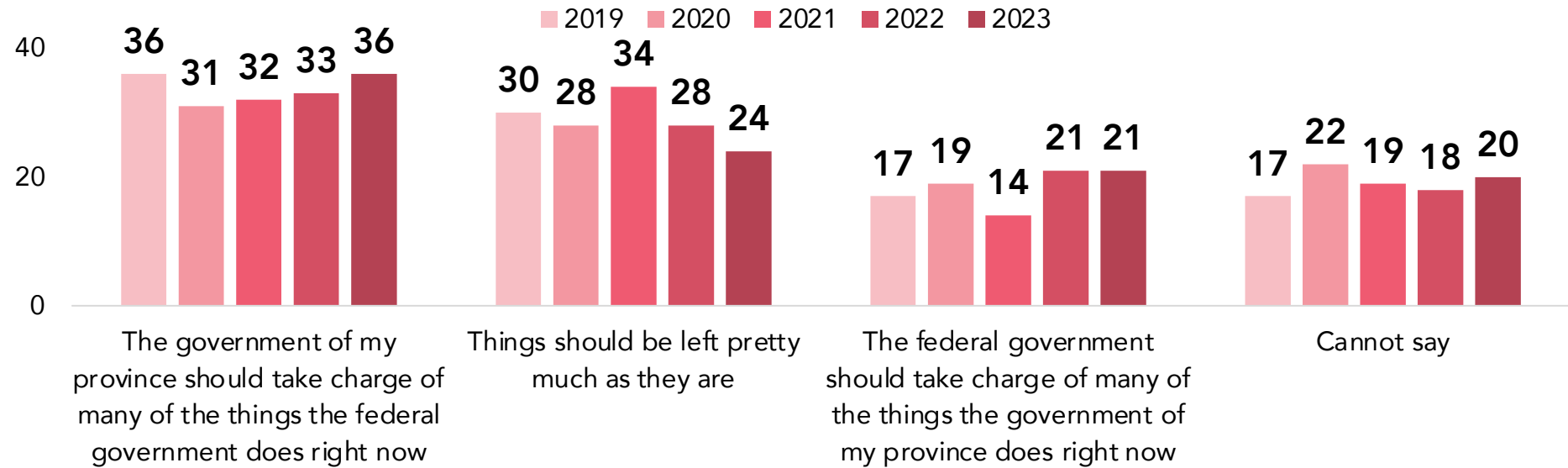
Government: larger or smaller?



Government: positive or negative impact?



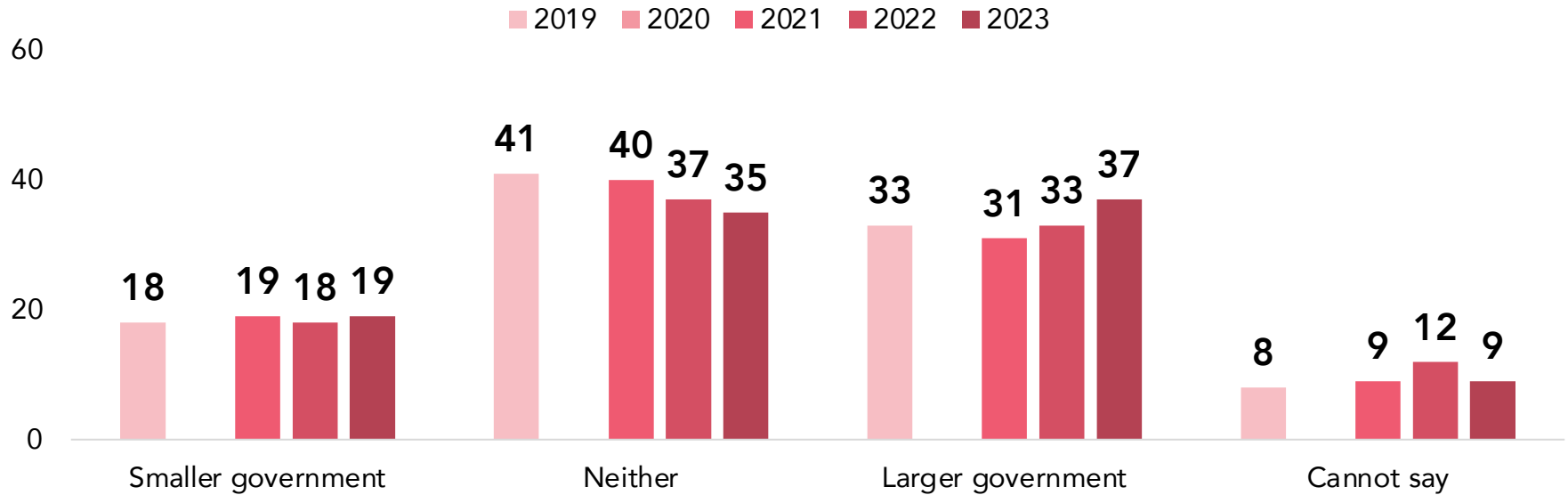
Government: shift powers to Ottawa or to province?



Summary: larger or smaller government

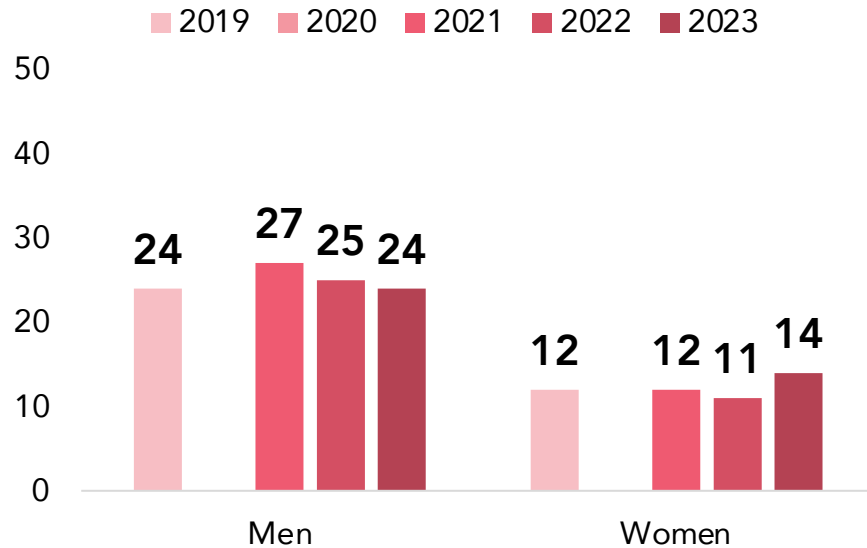
- The pandemic appears to have had no immediate effect on preferences for larger or smaller government. But more recently (since 2021), the proportion favouring a larger government with more services has increased slightly.
 - This recent shift in favour of larger government is more pronounced among:
 - those age 35 to 44, and also to a somewhat lesser extent among those age 45 to 54;
 - those living west of the Ottawa river;
 - those with lower household incomes.

Government: larger or smaller?

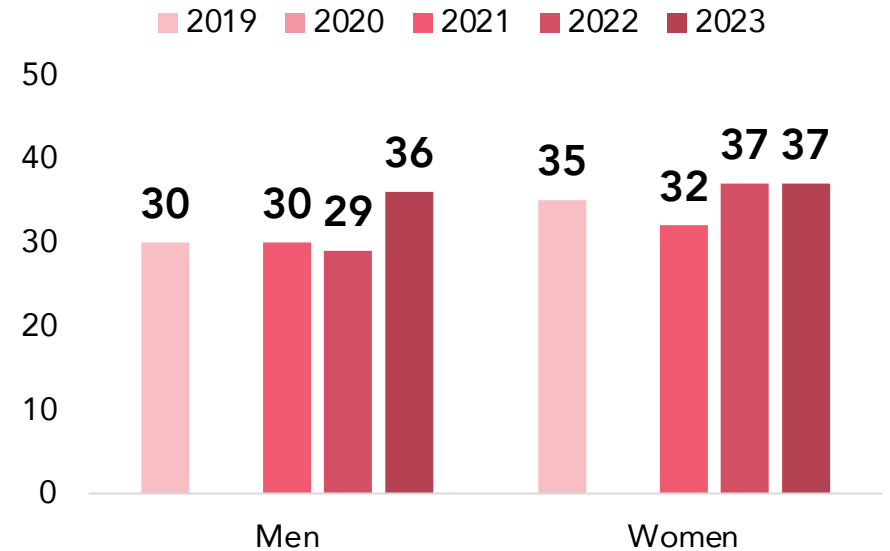


Government: larger or smaller?

Smaller government

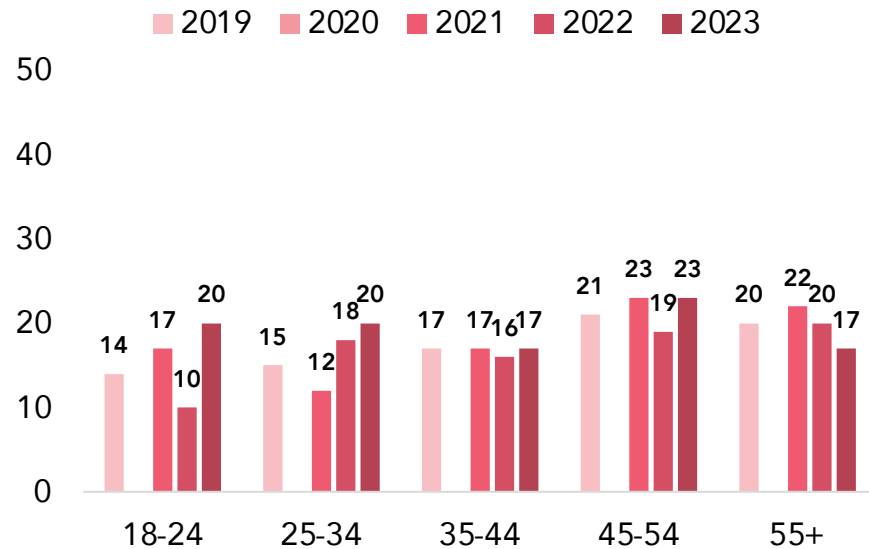


Larger government

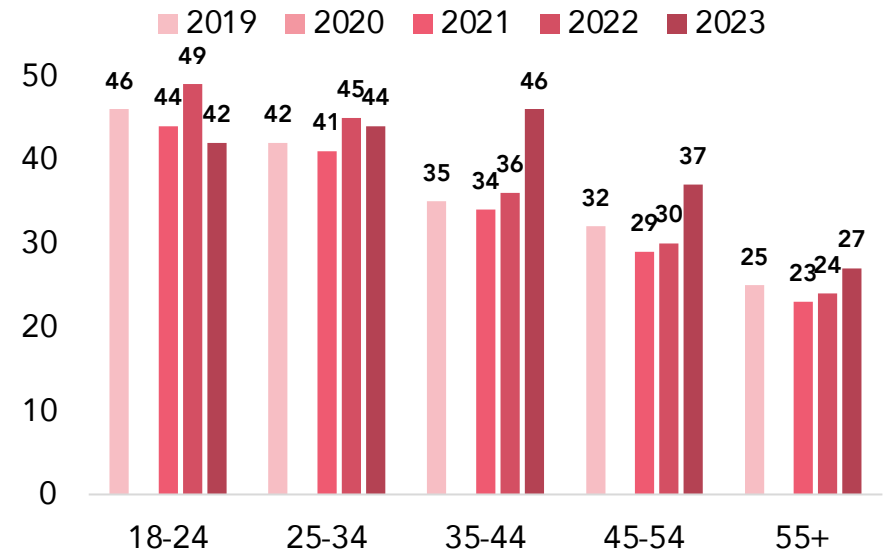


Government: larger or smaller?

Smaller government

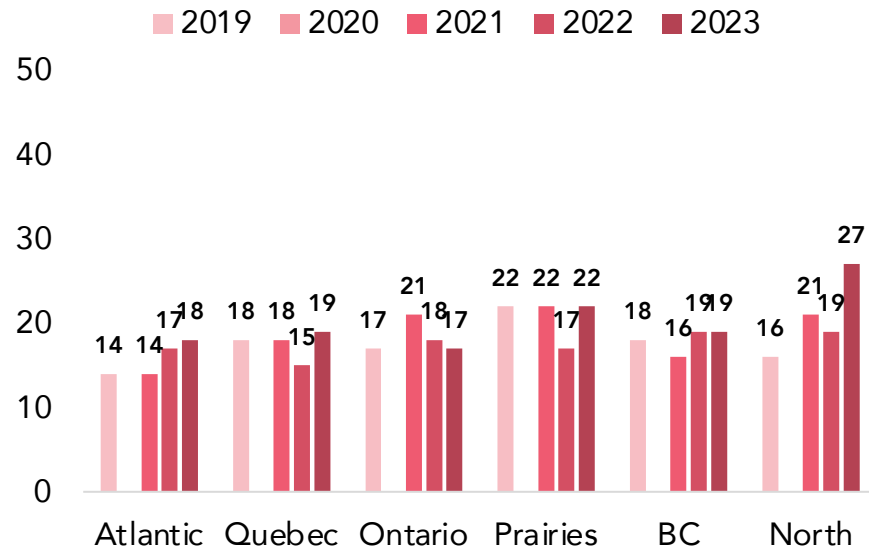


Larger government

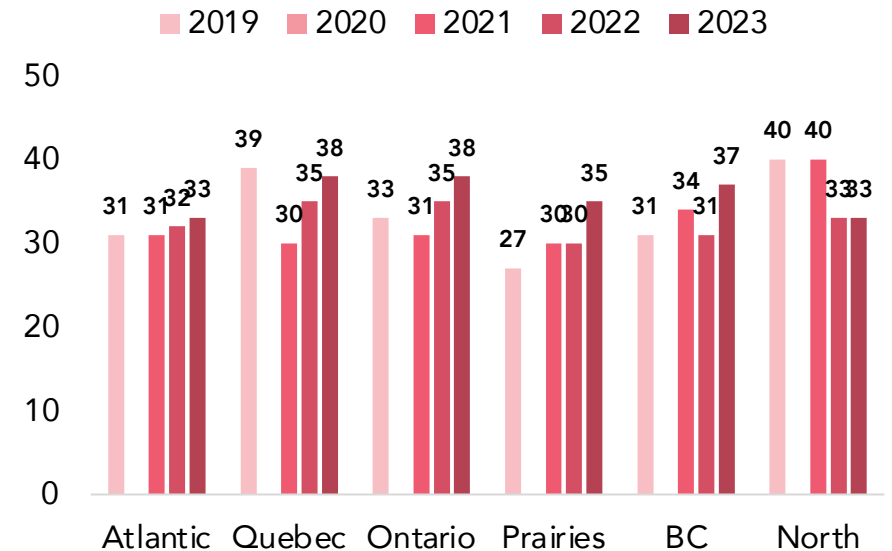


Government: larger or smaller?

Smaller government

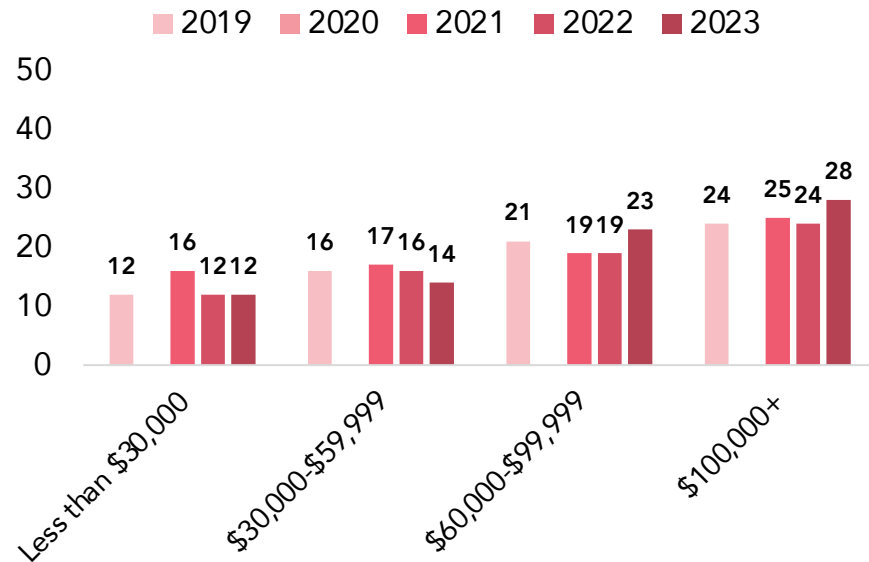


Larger government

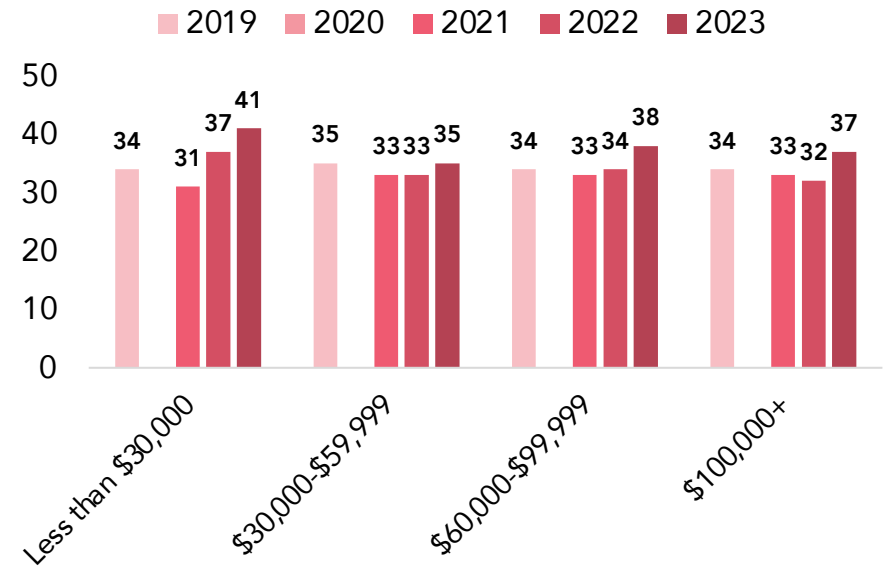


Government: larger or smaller?

Smaller government



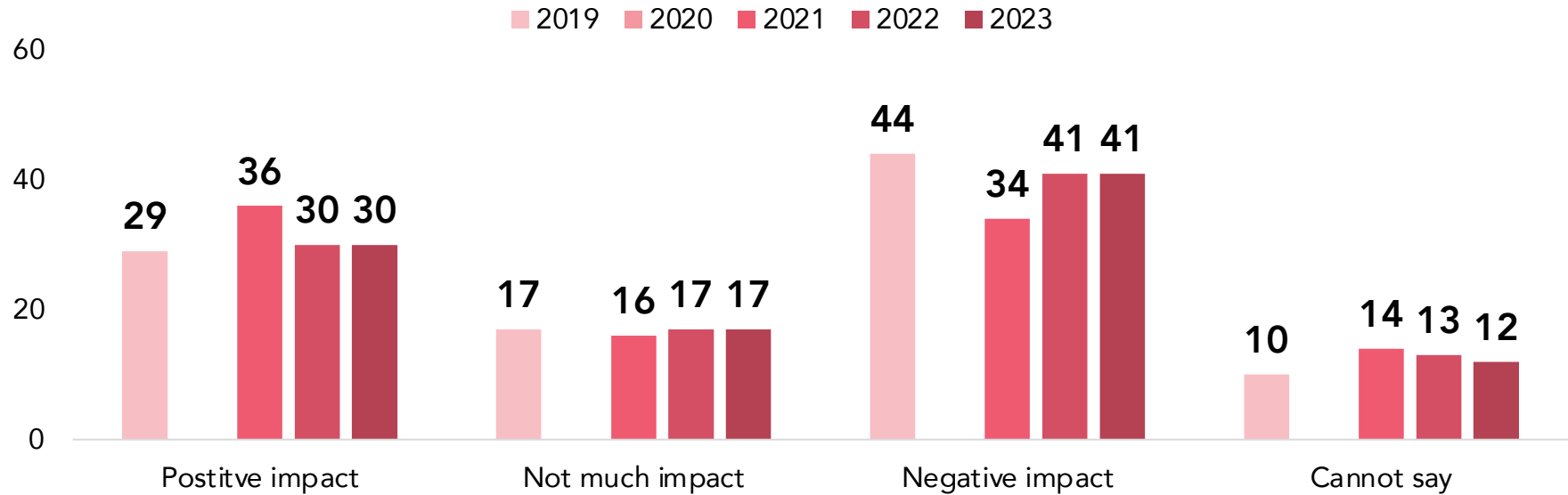
Larger government



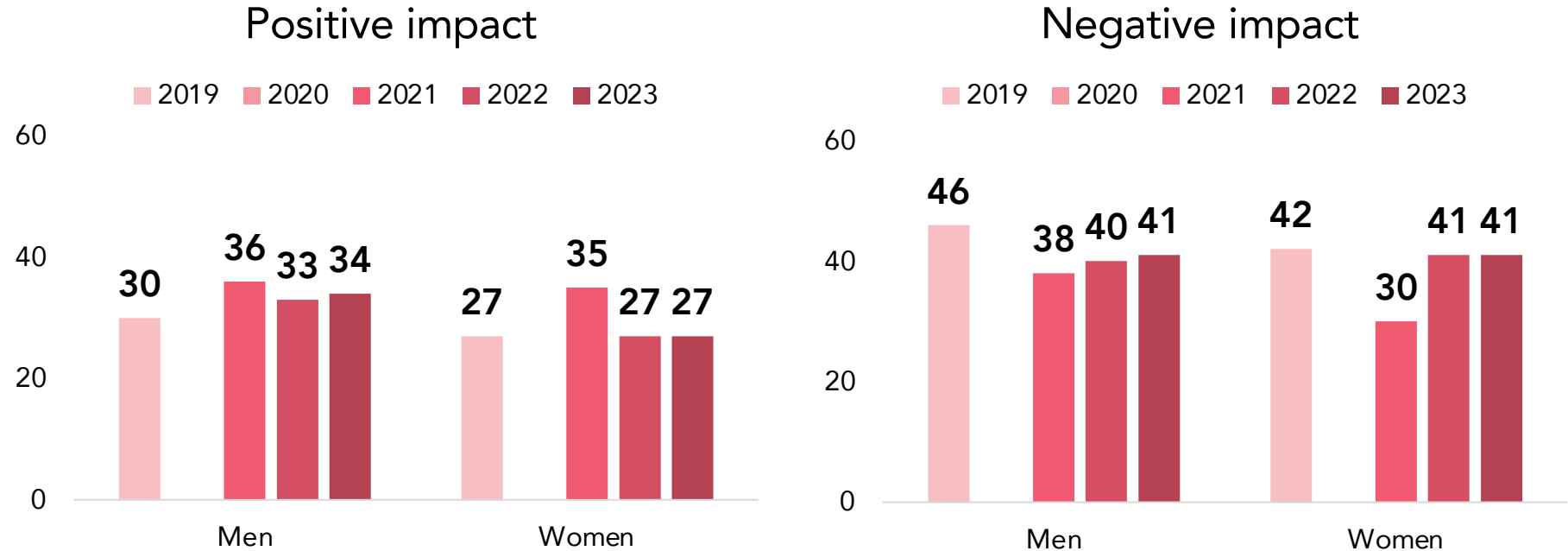
Summary: positive or negative impact

- The pandemic initially prompted more Canadians to see governments as having a positive impact, but this shift was temporary. Opinions today are similar to what they were prior to the pandemic.
 - The initial drop (from 2019 to 2021) in the proportion seeing governments' impact as negative was more pronounced among women and those with lower household incomes.
 - The change among women did not last beyond 2021.
 - However lower income Canadians remain slightly less likely today than prior to the pandemic to see governments' impact as negative.

Government: positive or negative impact?

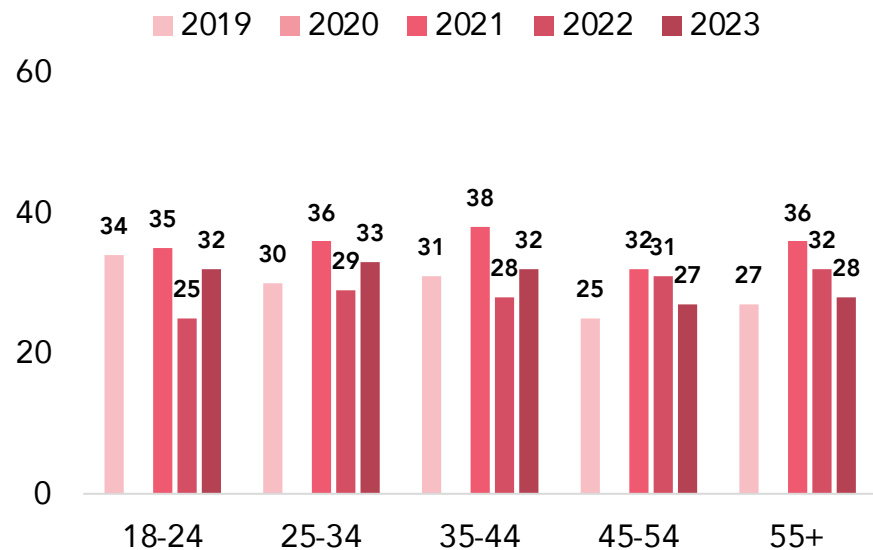


Government: positive or negative impact?

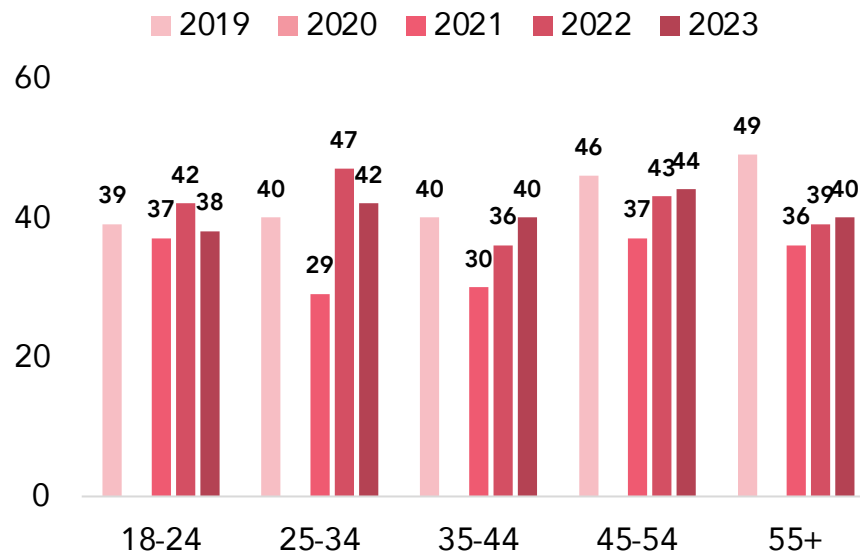


Government: positive or negative impact?

Positive impact

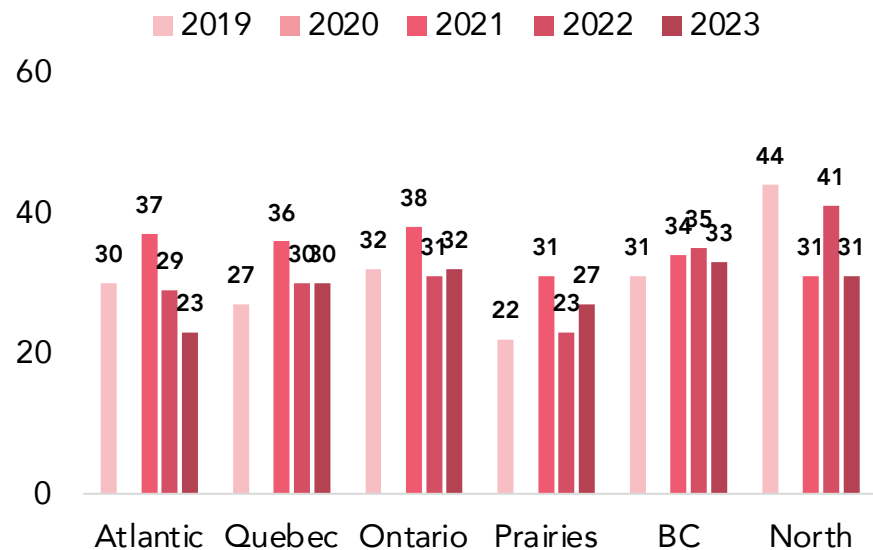


Negative impact

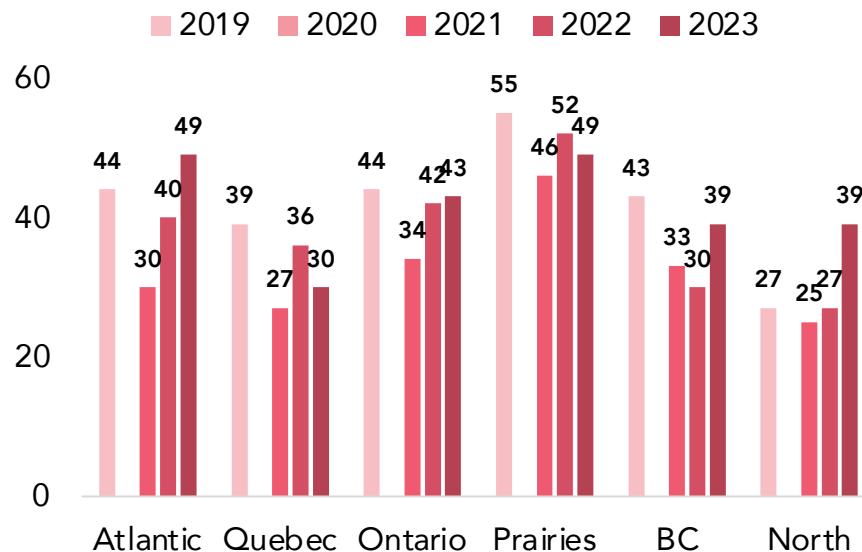


Government: positive or negative impact?

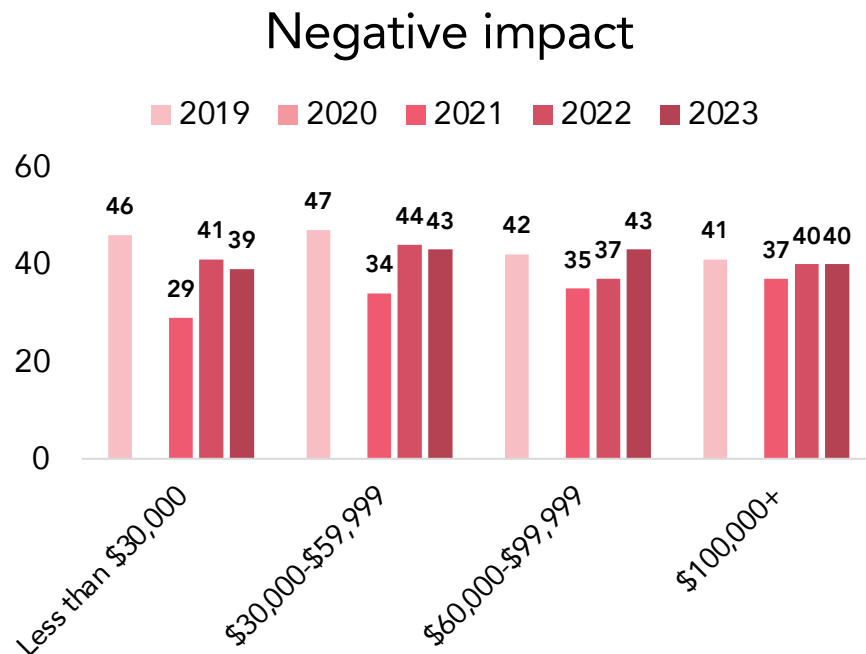
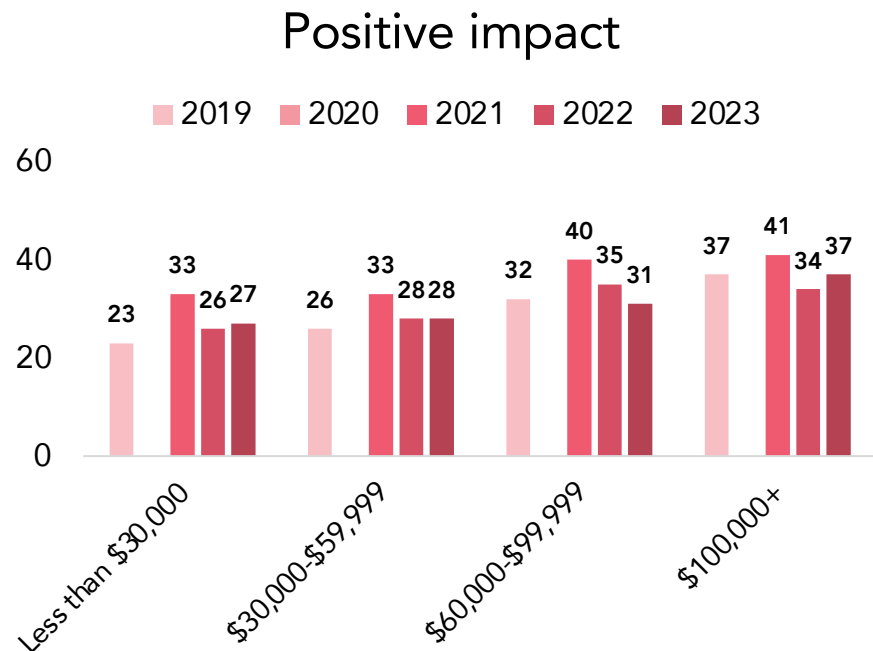
Positive impact



Negative impact



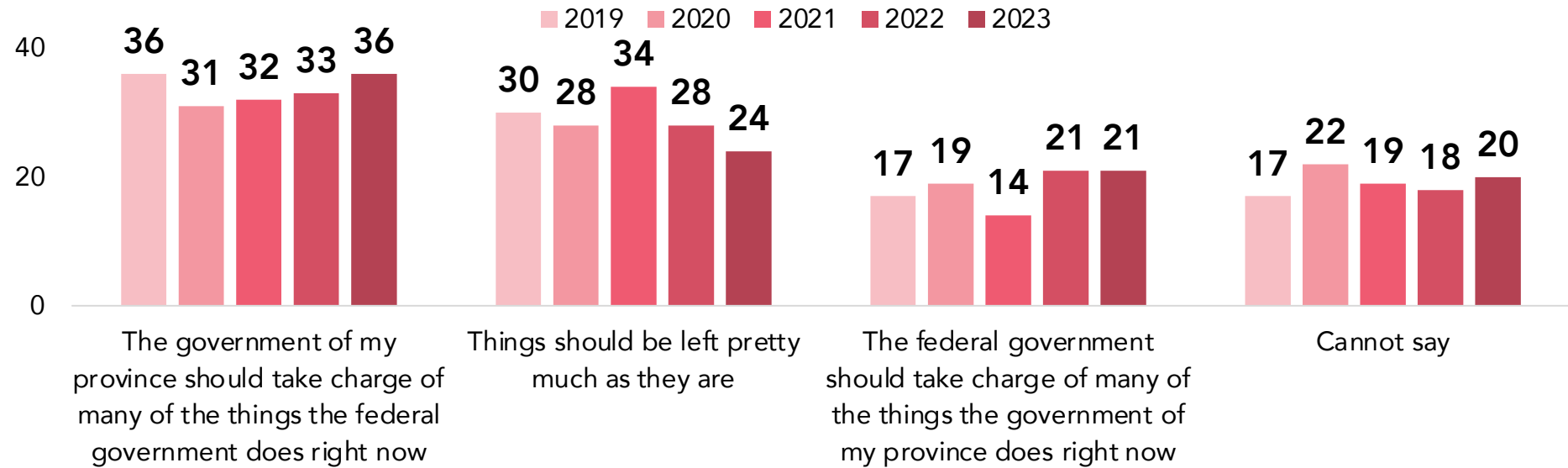
Government: positive or negative impact?



Summary: shift powers to Ottawa or to province

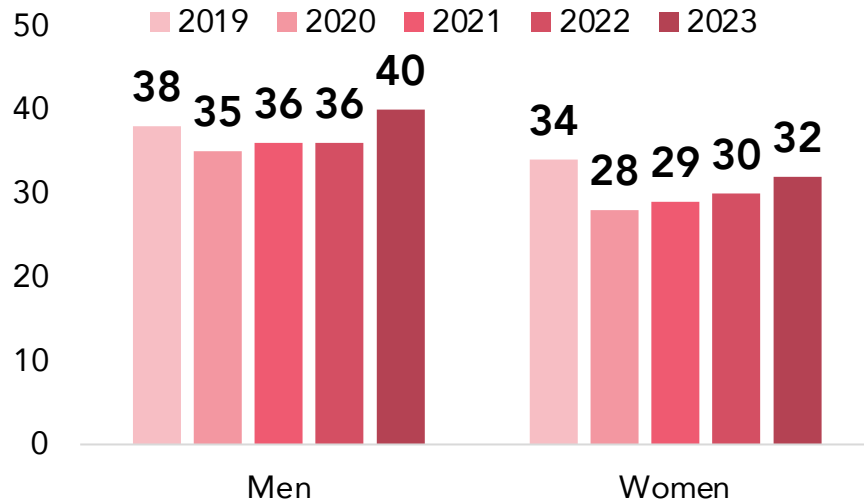
- Overall, the pandemic had no clear impact on preferences for a more centralized or decentralized federation.
 - No major demographic groups seem to be coming out of the pandemic with significantly different preferences regarding the division of powers within the federation.

Government: shift powers to Ottawa or to province?

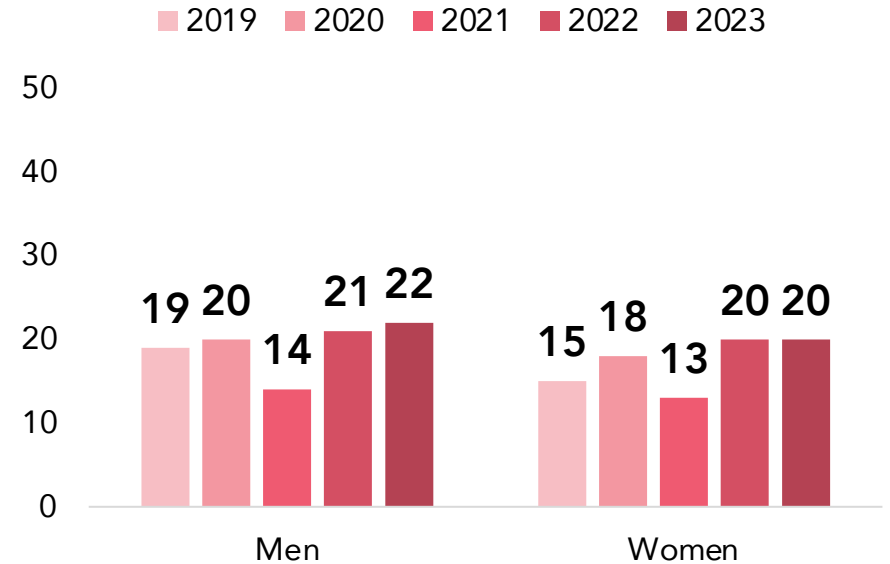


Government: shift powers to Ottawa or to province?

Province take charge of more things

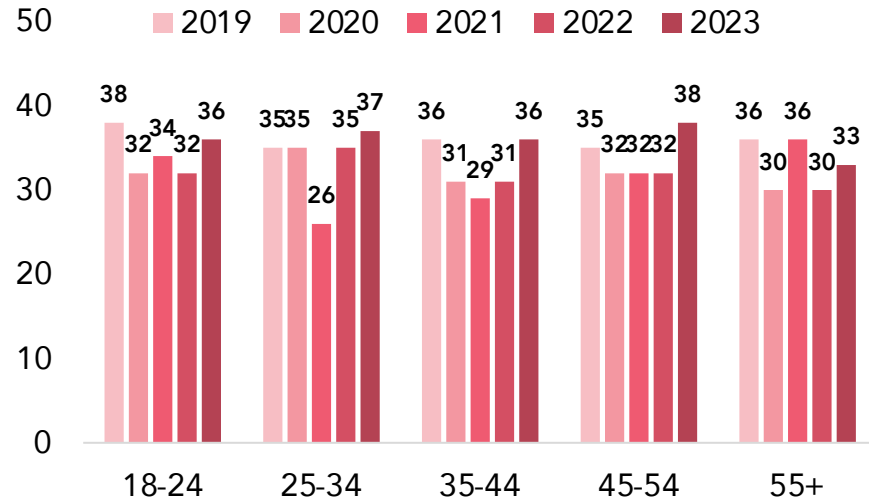


Ottawa take charge of more things

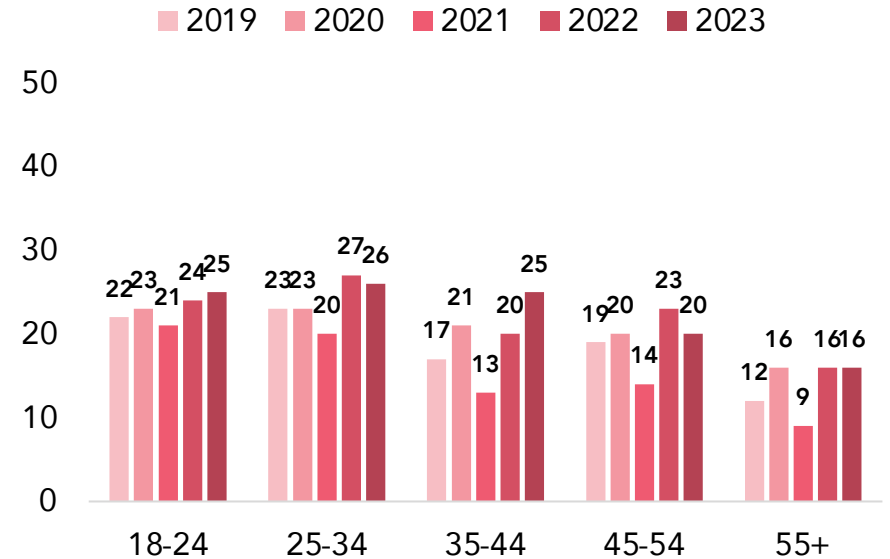


Government: shift powers to Ottawa or to province?

Province take charge of more things

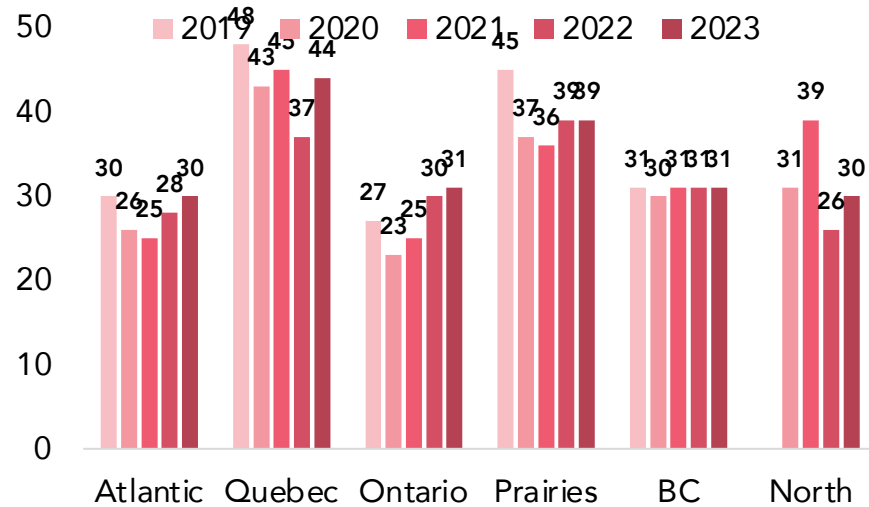


Ottawa take charge of more things

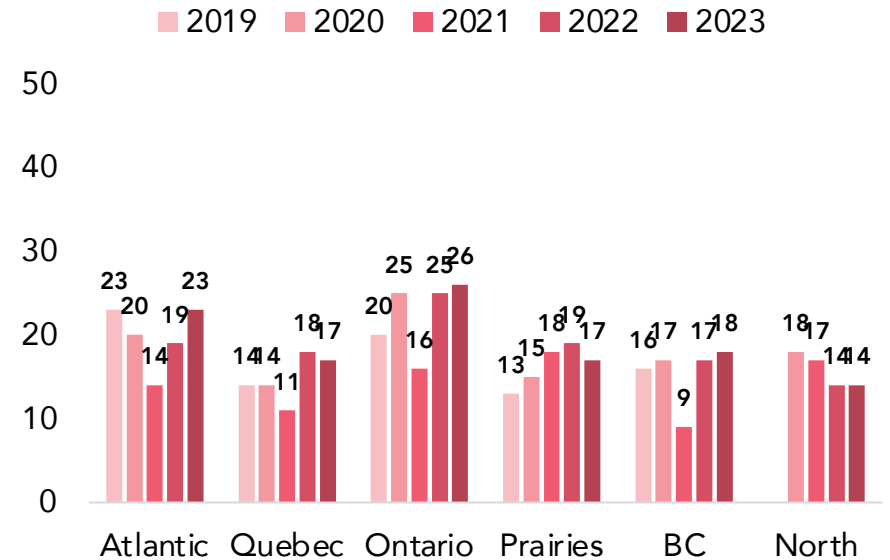


Government: shift powers to Ottawa or to province?

Province take charge of more things

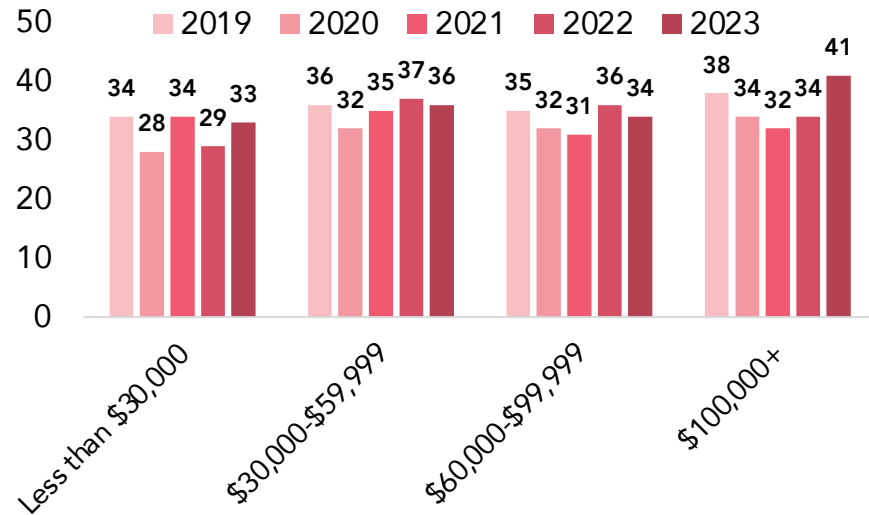


Ottawa take charge of more things

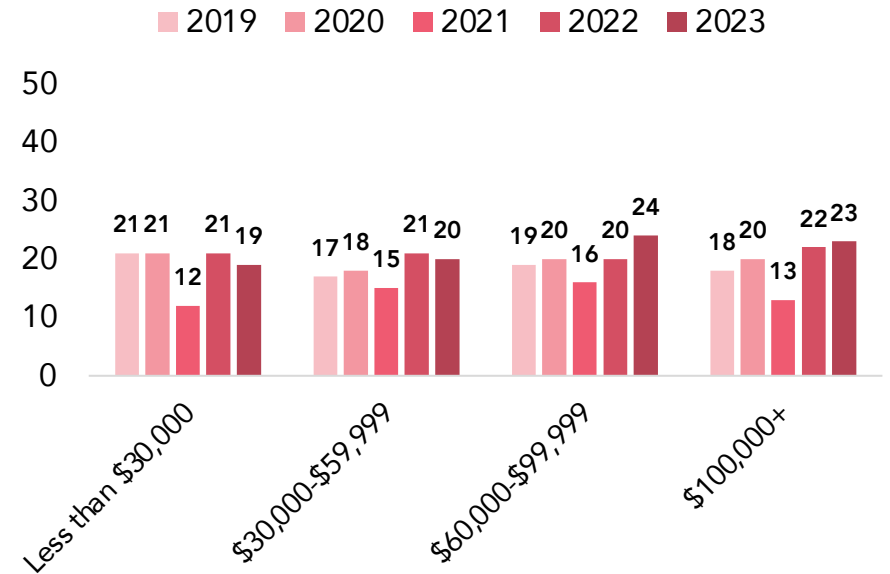


Government: shift powers to Ottawa or to province?

Province take charge of more things



Ottawa take charge of more things



Conclusion

- The onset of the pandemic prompted a significant increase in government spending to support the health care system and vaccination campaign, and to offset the loss of income prompted by the disruption of the economy.
- In the Canadian context, this also meant the mobilization of the federal government's spending power.
- It would be reasonable to assume that this scale of activity might have shifted, in a lasting way, citizen preferences about the role of governments in general, and the role of the federal government in the federation in particular.
- But this does not appear to have been the case (some minor changes notwithstanding).



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