



Opinion on Six Policy Items

Lethbridge Public Opinion Study – Winter 2015

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Lethbridge Opinion Structure on Six Policy Issues

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Methodology

-  **Population** The city of Lethbridge has a total population of 93,004 residents (2014 census) approximately 80.5% of which are 18 years of age or older (74,905). A total of 45,575 Lethbridge residents are male (49%) while 47,429 are female (51%). South Lethbridge is home to 31,176 residents (33.5%) while the rapidly expanding west side is now home to 35,377 residents (38.0%). There are 26,451 north Lethbridge residents (28.4%). Coaldale has a total population of 7,493 residents (2011 census).
-  **Sample Data** Collected by Lethbridge College students enrolled in a variety of social science courses in the winter of 2015. Students interviewed 848 randomly selected, adult Lethbridge and Coaldale residents by telephone on February 7–11, 2015 under the supervision of School of Liberal Arts faculty member Faron Ellis. We sincerely appreciate and thank all those who took time to respond to our survey. Full methodological notes for samples from previous Lethbridge and Alberta Public Opinion Studies can be obtained by visiting the CSRL web pages at: www.lethbridgecollege.ab.ca/go/csrl.
-  **Representativeness** Analysis of the demographic data indicates that, within acceptable limits, the sample accurately represents the demographic distribution of the adult population within the city of Lethbridge. The sample has been statistically weighted to even better reflect that of the population (sex, age, and area of the city of Lethbridge).
-  **Confidence** The weighted sample yields a margin of error of ± 3.35 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. The margin of error increases when analyzing sub-samples of the data. For example, margin of error for the Lethbridge subsample is ± 3.47 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, while the Coaldale subsample has a margin of error of ± 12.68 percentage points 19 times out of 20.
-  **IB Commons Call Centre** Students conducted interviews using the facilities of the Lethbridge College IB Commons Call Centre.
-  **Sponsorship** These data are part of a larger study of the opinions and attitudes of Lethbridge residents conducted by the Citizen Society Research Lab at Lethbridge College. This particular set of questions was derived from student and faculty interest in the topics.

Policy Issues - Summary



Same-sex Marriage

Clear majorities of Lethbridge (77.2%) and Coaldale residents (60.3%) continue to support same-sex marriages having equal legal status with traditional marriages. Support for same-sex marriages has increased significantly from only 33.5% in 2002 when we first asked Lethbridge residents about this issue. Women (79.0%), the non-religious (88.0%), and younger residents are among the most supportive. Gender, religiosity, age and income are the most important predictors of opinion on this issue. Opinion is also divided along partisan lines with Wildrose (58.4%) and PC (67.2%) voters somewhat less supportive than are other provincial partisans. Nevertheless, substantial majorities of all the parties' voters are supportive.



Abortion Choice

Clear majorities of Lethbridge (77.9%) and Coaldale residents (66.1%) support a woman's right to choose to have an abortion. Men (79.7%) are just as supportive as are women (74.4%). Furthermore, substantial majorities in most demographic categories demonstrate strong support. Religion is the most important determinant of opinion on this issue with a slight majority of the very religious (53.9%) opposed. Support climbs to 93.3% among the non-religious. Some partisan differences are measured on this issue with PC (74.1%) and Wildrose (67.0%) partisans somewhat less supportive than are Liberal (84.1%) and NDP (86.2%) voters, although strong majorities of all provincial partisans are supportive.



Capital Punishment

Majorities of both Lethbridge (59.5%) and Coaldale residents (69.5%) support Canada reintroducing capital punishment for people convicted of first degree murder. Religion, education, age, area of the city are the most important determinants of opinion on this issue. For example, the very religious (51.7%) are less supportive than are the moderately religious (67.8%) and the non-religious (64.0%). Older residents are generally more supportive than are younger residents while north Lethbridge residents (71.8%) are more supportive than are south (56.6%) and west (53.4%) Lethbridge residents. Majorities of university grads (56.7%) and provincial NDP voters (55.5%) are opposed, while substantial majorities of PC (66.1%) and Wildrose (73.0%) voters support reinstating capital punishment for first degree murder.



Legal Medical Marijuana

Substantial majorities of Lethbridge (82.8%) and Coaldale residents (78.3%) support marijuana being legal for medical purposes. Although strong majorities in all demographic categories are supportive, support is tempered somewhat amongst the most religious (68.2%) and seniors (75.5%), but substantial majorities of even these groups remain supportive.



Decriminalize Recreational Marijuana

Support for decriminalizing recreational marijuana continues to rise in Lethbridge (51.6%) and Coaldale (45.0%). Support is strongest among men (60.0%), the non-religious (67.2%), and the youth (69.1%) Opposition is strongest among seniors (64.4%), provincial PC (61.7%) and Wildrose voters (60.7%), and the very religious (71.4%).



Legalize Doctor-Assisted Suicide

Substantial majorities of Lethbridge (81.0%) and Coaldale residents (73.8%) support making doctor-assisted suicide legal in Canada. Religion is the most important predictor of opinion. A slim majority of the non-religious are supportive (56.4%), with support climbing to more than 9 out of every 10 residents with less religion.

Opinion on Six Policy Items 2002–2015 (%)

Same-sex Marriage	Feb. '02	Feb. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11	Feb. '12	Feb. '13	Feb. '14	Feb. '15
Agree	33.5	40.5	39.4	51.7	52.2	54.1	58.7	62.3	64.2	67.7	71.0	74.3	76.0
Disagree	66.5	59.5	60.6	48.3	47.8	45.9	41.3	37.7	35.8	32.3	29.0	25.7	24.0

Abortion Choice	Feb. '03	Feb. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11	Feb. '12	Feb. '13	Feb. '14	Feb. '15
Agree	69.9	75.3	70.3	73.0	77.9	75.0	76.2	79.2	74.1	76.6	80.2	77.7	77.0
Disagree	30.1	24.7	29.7	27.0	22.1	25.0	23.8	20.8	25.9	23.4	19.8	22.3	23.0

Capital Punishment	Feb. '03	Feb. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11	Feb. '12	Feb. '13	Feb. '14	Feb. '15
Agree	60.8	60.6	56.4	62.9	60.9	57.6	58.1	62.1	54.8	57.8	66.8	60.8	60.3
Disagree	39.2	39.4	43.6	37.1	39.1	42.4	41.9	37.9	45.2	42.2	33.2	39.2	39.7

Marijuana-medical	Feb. '03	Feb. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11	Feb. '12	Feb. '13	Feb. '14	Feb. '15
Agree	73.1	72.0	70.4	73.7	75.8	74.8	74.7	80.1	73.0	74.4	78.6	82.4	82.5
Disagree	26.9	28.0	29.6	26.3	24.2	25.2	25.3	19.9	27.0	25.6	21.4	17.6	17.5

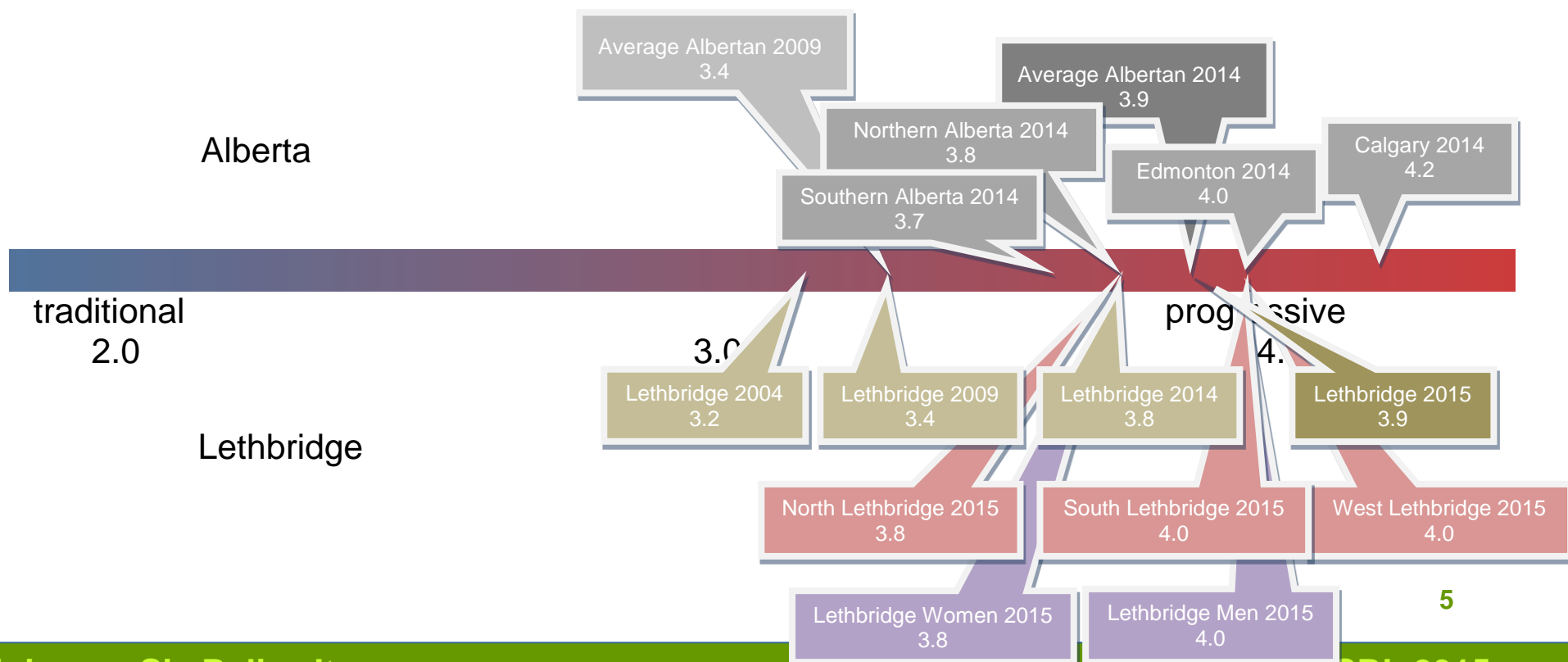
Marijuana-recreation	Feb. '03	Feb. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11	Feb. '12	Feb. '13	Feb. '14	Feb. '15
Agree	36.1	35.2	31.5	37.9	33.4	35.4	35.8	39.0	38.9	38.6	42.0	47.3	51.1
Disagree	63.9	64.8	68.5	62.1	66.6	64.6	64.2	61.0	61.1	61.4	58.0	52.7	48.9

Doctor-ass't suicide	Feb. '03	Oct. '04	Feb. '05	Oct. '06	Oct. '07	Feb. '08	Feb. '09	Feb. '10	Feb. '11	Feb. '12	Feb. '13	Feb. '14	Feb. '15
Agree	–	60.7	59.2	63.4	63.9	61.5	61.7	67.0	61.9	66.4	74.4	77.5	80.5
Disagree	–	39.3	40.8	36.6	36.1	38.5	38.3	33.0	38.1	33.6	25.6	22.5	19.5

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Policy Issues Index (means)

- An index of opinion structure was created by summing the responses to the six questions thereby allowing for easier regional and demographic comparisons. The index scores range from a possible “0.0” for the most traditional respondents, to “6.0” for the most progressive. A score of 3.0 represented the midpoint of the range. The graph is organized with Alberta-wide data featured above the bar and Lethbridge data below the bar.
- As the data demonstrate, over time, Lethbridge public opinion is becoming more progressive on this basket of issues, as is public opinion in the province as a whole. In fact, from 2009 through 2015, Lethbridge opinion mirrors that of the province as a whole (3.4 in 2009 and 3.9 in 2015). Over the course of a decade, Lethbridge public opinion has moved considerably towards the progressive end of the spectrum (3.2 in 2004, to 3.4 in 2009, to 3.9 in 2015).
- Lethbridge men (4.0) are somewhat more progressive than are Lethbridge women (3.8), while west and south Lethbridge (4.0) are somewhat more progressive than north Lethbridge (3.8).



Same-sex marriage by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

Gender*/Region*	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	72.9	79.0	77.2	60.3
Disagree	27.1	21.0	22.8	39.7

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	77.8	76.6	80.3
Disagree	22.2	23.4	19.7

Household Income*	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	72.4	78.0	84.2
Disagree	27.6	22.0	15.8

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	50.2	89.0	88.0
Disagree	49.8	11.0	12.0

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	71.3	82.0	73.5	78.6
Disagree	28.7	18.0	26.5	21.4

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	83.6	81.1	74.0	65.8
Disagree	16.4	18.9	26.0	34.2

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	67.2	58.4	89.0	91.7	76.2
Disagree	32.8	41.6	11.0	8.3	23.8

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Abortion choice by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

Gender/Region	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	79.7	74.4	77.9	66.1
Disagree	20.3	25.6	22.1	33.9

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	78.2	79.2	77.7
Disagree	21.8	20.8	22.3

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	73.5	79.7	80.1
Disagree	26.5	20.3	19.9

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	46.1	86.7	93.3
Disagree	53.9	13.3	6.7

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	82.5	77.3	74.4	75.8
Disagree	17.5	22.7	25.6	24.2

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	77.9	72.2	80.5	75.9
Disagree	22.1	27.8	19.5	24.1

Provincial Vote	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	74.1	67.0	84.1	86.2	76.4
Disagree	25.9	33.0	15.9	13.8	23.6

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Capital punishment by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

Gender*/Region	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	65.3	55.2	59.5	69.5
Disagree	34.7	44.8	40.5	30.5

Area*	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	56.6	71.8	53.4
Disagree	43.4	28.2	46.6

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$80,000	Over \$80,000
Agree	63.6	60.8	58.0
Disagree	36.4	39.2	42.0

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	51.2	67.6	64.0
Disagree	48.8	32.4	36.0

Education*	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	76.7	54.8	70.1	43.3
Disagree	23.3	45.2	29.9	56.7

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	56.2	56.9	65.0	64.2
Disagree	43.8	43.1	35.0	35.8

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	66.1	73.0	52.7	44.5	59.9
Disagree	33.9	27.0	47.3	55.5	40.1

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Medical marijuana by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

Gender*/Region	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	86.5	78.6	82.8	78.3
Disagree	13.5	21.4	17.2	21.7

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	87.0	81.8	81.9
Disagree	13.0	18.2	18.1

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	80.7	85.8	87.4
Disagree	19.3	14.2	12.6

Religious Attendance	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	68.2	89.2	91.4
Disagree	31.8	10.8	8.6

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	85.6	84.3	79.9	82.2
Disagree	14.4	15.7	20.1	17.8

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	85.2	85.2	82.2	75.5
Disagree	14.8	14.8	17.8	24.5

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	72.6	77.6	90.7	93.1	85.9
Disagree	27.4	22.4	9.3	6.9	14.1

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Recreational marijuana by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

Gender*/Region	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	60.0	42.5	51.6	45.0
Disagree	40.0	57.5	48.4	55.0

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	55.3	50.0	51.6
Disagree	44.7	50.0	48.4

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	52.0	54.9	54.9
Disagree	48.0	45.1	45.1

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	28.6	54.9	67.2
Disagree	71.4	45.1	32.8

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	52.4	59.4	46.3	47.4
Disagree	47.6	40.6	53.7	52.6

Age*	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	69.1	50.0	47.3	35.6
Disagree	30.9	50.0	52.7	64.4

Provincial Vote*	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	38.3	39.3	61.0	64.5	56.0
Disagree	61.7	60.7	39.0	35.5	44.0

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Legalize doctor-assisted suicide by demographic group (February 2015) (%)

Gender/Region	Male	Female	Lethbridge	Coaldale
Agree	80.6	80.5	81.0	73.8
Disagree	19.4	19.5	19.0	26.2

Area	South Lethbridge	North Lethbridge	West Lethbridge
Agree	76.6	84.1	83.0
Disagree	23.4	15.9	17.0

Household Income	Under \$40,000	\$40,001 to \$100,000	Over \$100,000
Agree	77.4	82.3	84.9
Disagree	22.6	17.7	15.1

Religious Attendance*	2-3 times/month-more	Several times/year	Rarely-never
Agree	56.4	90.4	92.4
Disagree	43.6	9.6	7.6

Education	High School or less	Some Post-secondary	College-Tech-Trade	University Grad
Agree	79.8	85.9	81.2	75.9
Disagree	20.2	14.1	18.8	24.1

Age	18-29	30-44	45-64	65 and older
Agree	82.9	80.6	83.2	74.4
Disagree	17.1	19.4	16.8	25.6

Provincial Vote	PC	Wildrose	Liberal	NDP	Undecided
Agree	75.2	75.9	87.4	90.3	77.6
Disagree	24.8	24.1	12.6	9.7	22.4

Notes: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%; * sig < 0.05

Demographics

Gender (%)		Area of City (%)		Income (%)		Education (%)		Age (%)	
Male	49.2	South	34.3	Under \$40,000	30.5	H-School/less	21.1	18-29	27.1
Female	50.8	North	27.9	\$40-100,000	43.6	Some P-Sec.	26.6	30-44	22.7
		West	37.8	Over \$100,000	25.9	Col-Tech-Grad	25.9	45-64	30.2
						University Grad	26.3	65 or older	20.0

Church Attendance (%)	
2-3/month +	33.6
Several/year	20.5
Rarely/never	45.9

Note: Due to rounding, proportions may not total exactly 100%

Questions

The federal government should continue to recognize same sex marriages giving them equal legal standing with traditional marriages.

Abortion is a matter of choice that should be decided between a woman and her doctor.

Canada should re-introduce capital punishment for people convicted of first-degree murder.

Marijuana should be legal for medical purposes.

Marijuana should be decriminalized for recreational purposes.

People with terminal illnesses should be allowed to legally access doctor assisted suicides.

- Strongly support
- Somewhat support
- Somewhat oppose
- Strongly oppose
- Don't know (unprompted)
- Refused (unprompted)