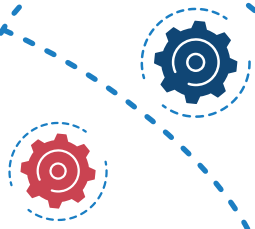




LABOR OBSERVATORY OF THE AMERICAS



Country Profile Canada

2021



Total Area:

9'879.750 km²



Population (2016 Census):

35'151.728 people¹



Population (2021):

38'246.108 people

19'238.276 women

19'007.832 men

Population composition

(2016 census):



6,2%

of the population) identified as having indigenous ancestry.

(2.1 million people)



Economically active population:

(diciembre 2021):

20,583,000 people



Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2020

1.64 trillion US dollars²



GDP in 2021:

The Bank of Canada estimated that the GDP grew by about 5.5% in 2021, placing the GDP at 1.5% below pre-pandemic levels (last quarter of 2019)³.

¹ Most of the information noted in this section was drawn from Canada's national statistical office (Statistics Canada).

² <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?locations=CA>

³ <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/2021/12/fad-press-release-2021-12-08/>

Analysis of socio-economic situation

Employment.

The 2021 employment rate in Canada was estimated at 61.5%, equivalent to 19,370,000 people. The employment rate was 57.6% for women (9,184,000 employed women), and 65.5% for men (10,186,000 employed men).

Economically Inactive population

October 2021

4,810,000 people⁴.

Poverty.

The 2021 Report of the National Advisory Council on Poverty estimates the 2019 poverty rate at 10.1%⁶, meaning that 3,730,000 people lived in poverty in 2019.

Unemployment.

The unemployment rate at the end of 2021 was 5.9% (1,212,000 people). The unemployment rate was 5.8% for women (567,000 unemployed women), and 6.0% for men (644,000 unemployed men).

Informal employment (2018).

According to the Canadian Survey of Consumer Expectations conducted by the Bank of Canada, about 30% of respondents reported engaging in some type of informal work in 2018.⁵

⁴ <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LFIN64TTCAQ647N>

⁵ <https://www.bankofcanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/san2019-6.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/esdc-edsc/documents/programs/poverty-reduction/national-advisory-council/reports/2021-annual/advisory-council-poverty-2021-annual.pdf>



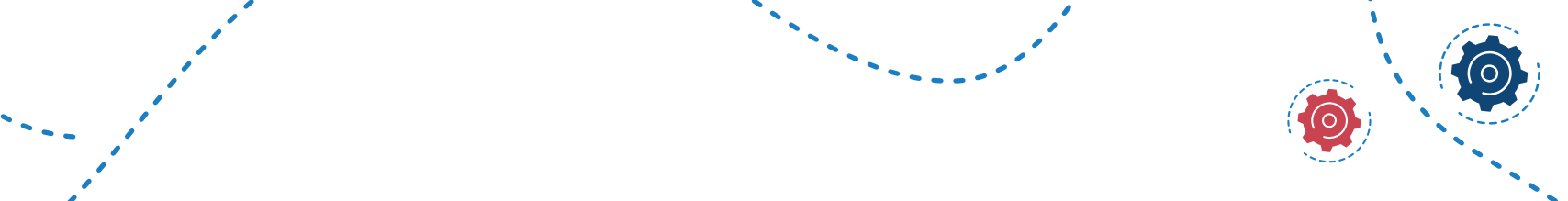
Context Highlights 2021

The re-election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on 21 October caused controversy and revealed a regional divide between the Eastern and Western provinces. The Liberal Party won 156 seats in the House of Commons. Although they did not reach the 170 seats needed for an absolute majority, the result was enough to grant the Prime Minister a second term, and he will have to negotiate with other parties to move forward with his initiatives.

The results were particularly striking for the geographic division in favor of and against the ruling party. Trudeau and the Liberal Party were widely rejected in the Western provinces; the discontent comes since Trudeau implemented a carbon tax, primarily affecting Alberta (an oil producing province). In an attempt to win the sympathy of voters in these regions, the president then dedicated millions of dollars in public spending to expand an oil pipeline from Alberta to the Pacific Coast. However, the tax move cost Trudeau the votes of Alberta and

Saskatchewan, and then he lost the support of British Columbia, the coastal province through which the pipeline passes and where it was not well received.

The Liberal Party maintained its advantage in the Eastern provinces. Most of Trudeau's support comes from college-educated people living in urban areas, who are sympathetic to progressive ideas; his victory is due to his agenda on climate change and on the rights of women and minorities. Alberta and Saskatchewan have expressed outrage over the climate change positions, pointing to the Eastern provinces' dependence on oil industry profits while maintaining a discourse that seeks to stifle the oil industry's economic dynamics by supporting climate change policies and opposing the pipelines.



The outrage is such that, after the polls, Conservative Party voters called for a “Wexit” (a word play on Brexit), promoting the exit or separation of the West. The proposal was well received in social media, and was mostly based on a push for Alberta and the Western provinces’ administrative and legislative independence. This situation reveals a pronounced tension and polarization that creates significant challenges for implementing the Prime Minister’s initiatives.

In addition to the position on climate change, migration policies were also at the center of the debate. The Canadian population does not strongly embrace the anti-immigrant discourse circulating in other countries. In fact, the People’s Party, which is opposed to immigration, did not obtain enough votes for any of its candidates to win a seat.

In 2021, the Canadian government made progress developing policies aimed at putting an end to irregular immigration, which increased in 2016 after the election of Donald Trump. By December 2021, Trudeau had held talks with the governments of the United States and Mexico to find a joint solution to the continent’s migration issue.

The Roxham crossing located on the U.S.-Canada border was opened in November 2021, and at least 2,000 people are estimated to have crossed by the end of the year. The Prime Minister’s intention is to update immigration policies in order to simplify the legal procedures for granting foreigners asylum or even work permits, since Canada’s small population makes it dependent on immigration.

⁷ La curul es el puesto que ocupa un diputado en el parlamento.

Canada experienced its most extreme weather event in 2021, with a heat wave that reached temperatures of 49.6 degrees Celsius for three days in a row in Lytton, a town in British Columbia that was devastated by wildfires. More than 180 forest fires are estimated to have taken place, and more than 1,000 people lost their lives. Marine animals were also affected, many washing up dead on the coasts of Canada and the United States. This event contributed to the popularity of Jyoti Gondek's, who was elected mayor of the city of Calgary and whose main proposal is a policy based on energy transition as a solution to climate change.





Actions/Denunciations (national and international) by Trade Unions and other social sector

The Canadian trade union movement outright rejected the recommendations in the report by the Ontario Workforce Recovery Advisory Committee (OWRAC) that sought to enshrine second-class status for gig and platform workers. The condemnation and rejection of the OWRAC report was based on the unions' analysis that employers misclassify workers as independent contractors, thereby restricting their rights. The unions specifically denounced that the actions of digital platform companies such as Uber, Lyft, and Skip the Dishes threaten hard-won rights. The unions believe that OWRAC has given in to the demands of the digital platform companies, whose business model centers on the exploitation of labor – clearly showing the Advisory Committee's interest in protecting corporations rather than labor rights.

The Canadian trade union movement has also demanded structural adjustments and improvements since the introduction of Bill 59 to modernize the Act respecting Occupational Health and Safety (AOHS) and the Act respecting Industrial Accidents and

Occupational Diseases (the AIAOD). For workers, the proposed law hinders the recognition of occupational diseases, limits the real possibilities of accessing adequate rehabilitation, and makes prevention mechanisms ineffective, among other shortcomings. In addition, the proposed law is criticized for reducing the rights of priority groups and victims of occupational accidents. As far as gender justice is concerned, workers have explained that provisions in the proposed law leave women with greater exposure to risks in their workplaces, and their occupational injuries would go unnoticed. Therefore, a possible reform would continue to discriminate against women in the workplace. Due to these and other inconsistencies, the trade union movement has called for an official rejection of the bill and for a social dialogue that would enable a reform in accordance with workers' needs and rights.





Trade union proposals and initiatives

Several union affiliates have called on the provincial, territorial, and federal governments to provide the same protections to gig and platform workers as to other employees. They also urged governments to implement universal employment standards and to eliminate the classifying of workers as independent contractors, since this restricts their access to the Canada Pension Plan, employment insurance, and compensation, which are the foundations for decent work. The affiliates' appeal emphasizes that governments have the responsibility to ensure the permanent improvement of working conditions, with adequate safety and fair remuneration, and to guarantee the right to form unions.

The workers' movement in Canada is committed to a just transition, and demands the implementation of an ambitious plan to ensure that no worker is

left in a precarious situation. They have also asked the Canadian government to adopt clear targets for greenhouse gas reduction, commensurate with the emergency created by the climate crisis. The possibility of economic transformation towards a low-carbon model entails overhauling the industrial fabric of Quebec and of the country, limiting imports, and achieving energy and economic sovereignty.





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