

RESEARCH NOTE/NOTE DE RECHERCHE

The 51st State? Exploring Canadian Attitudes Towards US Annexation and Their Determinants

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Abstract

This research provides the first systematic assessment of contemporary Canadian public opinion on the prospect of annexation by the United States and its correlates, a topic that has gained attention since Donald Trump's 2024 re-election. Leveraging original survey data collected just before and after the implementation of major US trade tariffs, we find that support for annexation was very low (less than 10%). While some sociodemographic factors are associated with supporting the merging, the main drivers were political. Feeling close to the Conservative Party or the People's Party of Canada was associated with a higher likelihood of favouring a merging. We provide a first test explaining these differences and show that more positive feelings towards Donald Trump (but not the US) explain most of these relationships and are the strongest predictors of support for annexation. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for Canadian politics.

Résumé

Cette recherche présente la première analyse de l'opinion publique canadienne moderne sur la possibilité d'une annexion du Canada par les États-Unis ainsi que de ses déterminants, un enjeu qui a fait l'objet d'une attention accrue depuis la réélection de Donald Trump en 2024. À partir de données originales d'enquête recueillies juste avant et juste après l'entrée en vigueur de tarifs douaniers américains importants, nous mesurons un appui très faible (environ 10%) au projet d'annexion. Certains facteurs sociodémographiques sont corrélés à cet appui, mais les principaux déterminants sont politiques, dont le fait d'être partisan du Parti conservateur du Canada ou du Parti populaire. Nous produisons le premier test tentant d'expliquer ces différences et montrons qu'une appréciation plus positive de Donald Trump (mais, étonnamment, pas des États-Unis en général) explique l'essentiel de l'appui à l'annexion. Nous concluons en discutant des implications pour la politique canadienne.

Keywords: public opinion; Canadian politics; Canada–US relationships; party politics

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Mots-clés: opinion publique; politique canadienne; relations canado-américaines; partis politiques

The idea of American annexation is not new to the Canadian political imagination. In the nineteenth century, especially in the wake of the American Revolution and later during periods of economic uncertainty, some Canadian thinkers and politicians entertained the idea that joining the United States might offer greater economic prosperity and/or security. While such sentiments were far from dominant, they reflected genuine strategic and ideological debates about North American integration. For example, the Montreal Annexation Manifesto published in 1849 called for Canada's annexation by the United States (Penny 1924), but the pro-annexation movement faded out after the Canadian-American Reciprocity Treaty of 1854 (Ankli 1971).

The Constitutional Act of 1867 was a major development in Canadian history and by the following decades, Canada became “more and more American” but was still loyal to the British crown (Siegfried 1906, 161–163). In some provinces like in British Columbia, which joined Canada in 1871, politicians used their strong connections and ties with the United States as leverage to threaten to pursue annexation by the US if more favourable terms were not secured with Britain and Canada (Siegfried 1906). In other words, the idea that some territories or Canada itself might join the United States has, historically, been regularly brought to the table.

As Siegfried (1906) mentioned more than a century ago, it would be unwise to dismiss the possibility that Canada would ever be tempted to join the United States of America, and indeed, more than 20 per cent of Canadians wanted to join the United States in the 1940s (Schwartz 1967). The issue became salient in December 2024 when Donald Trump (who was president-elect for a second term) mentioned during a dinner with Canadian politicians that Canada would be better off as the 51st State of the United States of America and that the two countries should merge. A senior cabinet member of the Canadian government initially said that “The president was telling jokes. The president was teasing us” (Taylor-Vaisey 2025). Several weeks later, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau admitted that it was not a joke and cabinet members made it very clear that Trump's threats to annex Canada should be treated with seriousness.

Political elites in Canada are not divided on the issue. Every political party made it clear that annexation was not an option. That was true before the election of 2025, during the campaign as well as after the election. Not a single major party tried to adopt an original take to wedge voters on that issue. However, we know very little about citizens' public opinion regarding the annexation of Canada by the United States. This is crucial for several reasons. First, if there is a substantial portion of the population that is sympathetic to annexation (even hypothetically), this could influence political discourse, which would be key for Canadian politics and political stability. Second, Canadians' public opinion on the issue of the merging might not only affect Canadian politics, but also shape to some extent how American politicians (and citizens) view and discuss the US president's wish to annex Canada. Third, analyses of public opinion on the issue can inform us on whether there are

important variations across social groups and regions (e.g., Western Canada vs. Quebec or Atlantic provinces) which, in turn, could shape discourse in Canadian politics.

In this research note, we provide an important update on the critical issue of annexation that seemed to belong in the past but needs to be seriously addressed. The first objective of this research note is to describe public opinion using a fine-grained indicator of Canadians' support for annexation. Moreover, we aim to do so by comparing public opinion before and after the implementation of major trade tariffs on Canadian goods.¹ Second, we leverage the large sample of an original survey to examine the determinants of citizens' public opinion on annexation. In other words, we aim to provide a thorough assessment of *who* opposes or supports annexation by the US based on key sociodemographic and socioeconomic factors including those that have been said to be linked to one's opinion on annexation (e.g., age, region). Third, we examine micro-level *political* determinants of citizens' public opinion on the issue. We analyze how party identification with Canadian political parties shapes one's attitude towards annexation. Finally, we provide what is, to the best of our knowledge, a first test explaining partisan effects. That is, we unpack citizens' feelings towards Donald Trump as well as the United States and their relationship to Canadians' willingness to merge with the US.

The main findings are threefold. First, we show that very few Canadians (about 8%) want to merge with the United States of America. This level of support is substantially lower than what most public opinion data signalled. Second, we surprisingly find relatively little variance across social groups or regions in Canada. While we find some differences in support for the annexation, they should not be overstated. Third, we find that there is, however, more variance in the support for the annexation based on Canadians' partisanship. For example, Canadians who feel close to the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) are substantially less likely to be very opposed to the annexation by almost 20 percentage points compared to people who do not feel close to any political party. Fourth, we also show that partisan effects are mostly explained by Canadians' feelings towards Donald Trump. These feelings are in fact the main predictor of citizens' support for the annexation, contrary to attitudes towards the United States which do not have any discernable effects. We conclude by discussing the implications of our findings for Canadian politics.

Canada-US relationships, public opinion and the issue of annexation

The relationship between the United States and Canada has been a recurring key for understanding Canadian politics. Far from being a marginal foreign-policy concern, the proximity, power and influence of the United States have repeatedly shaped political issues related to fundamental debates about trade, sovereignty and identity, especially during election campaigns.

Canada-US trade relations were the central issue in the 1891 and 1911 elections (Johnston et al. 1992, p. 7). In both elections, the party in favour of tightening the Canadian economy to the American market lost. For example, Wilfrid Laurier's Liberal government supported a policy of reciprocity with the United States in 1911, which would have created a form of free trade in natural products such as agricultural goods, timber and minerals. Yet the proposal triggered a powerful

nationalist backlash. Conservatives, led by Robert Borden, framed reciprocity as a threat to Canadian sovereignty and a potential stepping stone toward American annexation. This framing was fueled, among other things, by the US president (William H. Taft) who presented the reciprocity treaty to the Congress and Americans as “the first step toward subordination of Canada to American interests” (Rioux, 2019, p. 40).

The issue of free trade with the US resurfaced in the 1988 federal election. The Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney negotiated an agreement in 1987, and the liberals and the New Democratic Party opposed it. It was the main issue in the 1988 Canadian election: “just as free trade dominated the media discussions of issues, so did it dominate the consciousness of the voters” (Johnston et al. 1992, p. 141). As in 1911, the opposition featured stark imagery of Canada being subordinated by the US. At the end of the day, Mulroney won a majority government, and the agreement (NAFTA) was implemented.

However, the influence of the United States on Canadian politics has not been limited to trade. Throughout the Cold War, questions of military alignment, nuclear weapons and continental security became important issues. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Progressive Conservative Prime Minister John Diefenbaker clashed with Washington over whether Canada should accept American nuclear warheads on Canadian soil. The dispute split his cabinet, strained relations with the United States, and contributed to the defeat of his government in 1963 (Stevenson 2014). More recently, the Afghanistan mission after 2001, conducted alongside American forces, became a contentious domestic issue (Massie 2016).

Taken together, these episodes reveal a consistent pattern: American influence on Canada has long been a key factor in Canadian politics, with the issues of (in)dependence often salient. Public opinion exerts a powerful impact on how politicians respond to these issues, especially because they need to be at least somewhat responsive to the public given that they will be held accountable in the next election (Dassonneville et al. 2021).

On the issue of annexation, public opinion data retrieved from Schwartz’s (1967) major book *Public Opinion and Canadian Identity* showed that the issue of annexation was discussed throughout the twentieth century and that Canadians did have an opinion on it. Table 1 below shows the key findings of public opinion research over two decades (from the 1940s to the 1960s). In 1943, about one-fifth (21%) of Canadians wanted to join the United States of America. While not very substantial, this support is far from trivial. Moreover, this level of support was not fully explained by the WWII context of 1943. Indeed, four years later, there was still about one-fifth of the population (18%) who favoured joining the US. Public opinion shifted in the 1950s as only 9% responded that Canada should be annexed by the United States. The level of support stabilized around 10% for the rest of the decade and the 1960s as well.

Theoretical frameworks from social psychology and political science are helpful in making sense of Canadians’ public opinion on this issue. Social identity theory is particularly insightful, especially in a context of the so-called “Americanization of Canada” (Raney 2010) which posits that cultural, economic and technological influences of the US over Canada pose an important threat to the country’s identity. Canadians’ identity is partly individual but also collective and thus partly shaped by

Table 1. Public Opinion on Joining the United States of America

Date	Opinion	Percent (%)
15/06/1943	Join the United States of America	21
	Remain in Commonwealth after war	49
	Become independent	24
12/11/1947	Join the United States of America	18
	Continue as member of Commonwealth	44
	Become independent	32
18/10/1950	Join the United States of America	18
	Continue as member of Commonwealth	44
	Become independent	32
03/09/1952	Join U.S.	9
	Continue as member of Commonwealth	53
	Become separate country	31
14/07/1956	Join the United States of America	10
	Continue as member of Commonwealth	56
	Become independent	29
07/1960	Join the United States of America	10
	Continue as member of Commonwealth	62
	Become independent	28
03/1962	Join the United States of America	10
	Continue as member of Commonwealth	55
	Become independent	28

Note: Data are retrieved from Schwartz (1967, 74).

their “memberships” of social groups (e.g., Brewer and Gardner 1996). Regarding Canada–US relationships, the process of social categorization from the social identity theory, positing the world into groups (e.g., “us” versus “them”) (Brewer and Gardner 1996; Tajfel and Turner 2004), seems key as Canadians do not include Americans as part of their in-group. As put by Raney (2010, p. 108, our emphasis), “nationalisms are by definition relational, relying on an oppositional frame in order to differentiate the shared values, characteristics, and beliefs of one nation over another. In Canada outside Quebec, *this out-group has usually been the United States.*”

Following the social identity theory and this conception of who is the in-group and out-group, people who do not feel Canadian should be more open to a merging with another country. That said, there is quite a lot of heterogeneity within Canada regarding citizens’ identification with the country, and research points out that these differences are in line with the expectations of social identity theory. For example, it has been shown that Quebecers who do not feel Canadian are much more willing to secede from the rest of Canada (e.g., Mendelsohn 2002).

Moreover, differences in (political) culture across regions and provinces might also affect citizens’ identity and, in particular, the extent to which they feel close or similar to Americans. For example, Alberta’s culture has been defined, according to Wesley (2011), by individualism, populism, as well as a desire for greater provincial autonomy. Quebec is also much more collectivist than the rest of Canada

(e.g., Béland and Lecours 2008), it is the only province where English is not the official language (French is the sole official language) and most of the population identify as Catholic. These differences² might lead to different levels of support regarding the issue of annexation if, for example, Alberta's individualism is closer to what is found in the US than in most part of Canada.

Another strand of research is insightful to better understand US–Canada relationships and the issue of annexation, that is, the subfield of constitutional preferences. Among other things, we know that gender and language are key in citizens' preference for the status quo versus constitutional changes. The link between gender and favouring the status quo of a given constitutional order is well established: women tend to be more favourable than men to the status quo. The main mechanism has been said to be risk aversion (e.g., Verge et al. 2015), women being more likely to perceive risks and the weight of that factor would play a greater role in their opinion compared to men. On language and in the specific case of Canada, Quebec French speakers who are quite worried about the precarity of French in Quebec and citizens who believe that French is in danger in the province are more likely to favour secession (e.g., Daoust and Gareau-Paquette 2026). Hence, support for a merging with the US might be less high in Quebec as the proportion of French-speaking citizens in the country would sharply decline if Canada were to become the 51st state (they would move from about one-fifth to less than 2 per cent of the country's population).

In sum, Canada–US relationships have been key in Canadian politics and the issue of annexation has often been brought up. While it has received a decent amount of support at some point (e.g., in the 1940s, as shown in Table 1), the overall enthusiasm seems very low in modern Canadian politics. That said, there are reasonable theories and reasons to expect interesting variance across the population. In the next section, we detail the data and indicators used to improve our understanding of this issue in the twenty-first century.

Data and indicators

Data

We conducted an original survey using Leger's LEO web panel from February 27, 2025 to March 14, 2025. Respondents received points for their participation in the survey. A total of 3,507 valid responses were received from adult Canadian citizens. Figure A1 of the appendix shows the number of people surveyed each day. On average, we surveyed about 219 respondents per day, with a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 679. The province of Quebec is over-represented in the sample ($n = 1,871$) compared to the rest of Canada ($n = 1,636$). In Quebec, the data match our established quotas for age, gender and first language, according to Statistics Canada's 2021 census. Outside of Quebec, quotas were also established to ensure that the proportion of observations in the rest of Canada reflected the demographic weight of the nine other provinces, and that the characteristics of the sample matched the census on age and gender. Unfortunately, we excluded observations from the three territories as they were too few to be included in a regional unit in our further analyses.

Some respondents (not counted in the above-mentioned number of respondents) were excluded from the data for one of the following reasons: having failed the

attention-testing questions, having a fraud score greater than 30 or a duplicate score greater than 70 based on calculations provided by Qualtrics to prevent duplicate or bot responses.

We believe that this survey is particularly insightful for several reasons. First, the timing of our survey is interesting: 1,528 respondents were surveyed just before the implementation of historical tariffs by the United States on Canadian products while 1,743 were surveyed right after. We believe that it is insightful to provide a pre/post-tariffs comparison to get a better sense of whether Trump's March 4 announcement (confirming that he was not bluffing about imposing tariffs on Canada) moved Canadians' public opinion in any way. Second, compared to mediatized public opinion polls aiming at measuring citizens' level of support for Trump's proposal of annexation, we include a more fine-grained indicator of that support moving beyond a dichotomous answer choice. Most importantly, we also measure other political variables allowing us to better understand citizens' public opinion on the issue. Third, our very large number of observations, combined with our measures of key political variables, allows us to unpack how attitudes on the annexation vary (or not) across social and political groups. For example, we can examine how feeling close to minor political parties, like the People's Party of Canada, correlates with citizens' view on the annexation, which is not possible with typical survey data of 1,000 respondents.

Indicators

To measure Canadians' attitude on annexation, we use a straightforward question which reads as follows: "Would you be in favour of Canada becoming the 51st state of the United States?" The answer choices were "very opposed," "somewhat opposed," "somewhat favourable," "very favourable," "don't know/prefer not to answer." The last category represents only 3 per cent of the respondents and were excluded from our analyses.

The first group of variables that we examine are sociodemographic and socioeconomic factors that might drive Canadians' support for the annexation of their country by the US. They have all been identified as crucial to better understand public opinion in Canada (e.g., Cutler 2002; Dassonneville et al. 2022; Ornstein et al. 1980). These variables are age, gender, education, material well-being (combining income and assets), language and regions. Appendix A describes the coding of these variables. We should note, however, that despite our large sample size, we had to merge some regions (e.g., Prairies combine Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba).

The second category of variable captures citizens' party identification, which refers to a "feeling of closeness or psychological attachment to a political party" (Gidengil et al. 2012, 6) and has been shown to be key in Canadian politics (Jenson 1975; Merkley 2022).³ To capture citizens' partisanship, we focus on a classic question asking respondents what they "think" of themselves in partisan terms, with the parties explicitly named as well as a "none of these" option. The question reads as follows: "In FEDERAL politics, do you usually think of yourself as a..." It captures partisanship in line with Campbell et al.'s (1986) theory that "partisans are partisan because they think they are partisan" (p. 102).

While partisanship captures predispositions (i.e., relatively deeply rooted orientations), the third group of variables is more contextual and relates to Canadians' feelings towards Donald Trump and the United States. It is reasonable to expect citizens who hold more positive views of Donald Trump and the United States to be more favourable to the annexation. However, feelings towards the president and the country must be unpacked, given that they could vary quite a lot within the same individuals. Hence, we included a feeling thermometer question in the survey that asked respondents to "set a slider to any number from 0 to 100, where 0 means you really dislike the group and 100 means you really like the group" to measure their opinion of "Donald Trump" and "The United States."⁴ It is worth noting that Canadians affect towards Trump and the US are not strongly correlated. About 85 per cent of the sample did not attribute the same score to Trump as they did for the US and the Pearson's r (0.44) indicates a moderate correlation. Finally, we include a variable capturing whether citizens' priority is Canada's sovereignty vis-à-vis the US. Respondents were asked "What is the most important issue to **you personally** right now?" Answer choices were "the economy," "health care," "education," "the environment," "poverty," "immigration," "Quebec independence" (for the Quebec sample only), "Canadian sovereignty vis-à-vis the United States" and "another issue." People whose priority is Canada's sovereignty are coded 1 while those who provided a different answer are coded 0. While not directly capturing citizens' attachment to Canada, which would have been ideal, we believe that it is fair to assume that people who selected this option as the most important issue for them are more attached to Canada than those who selected another issue.

The detailed distributions of feelings towards Trump and the US can be found in Table B1 of the appendix. Moreover, Table B2 of the appendix displays the descriptive statistics for all variables used in our research note.

Results

We present all our findings without isolating Quebec from the rest of Canada because doing so does not alter any of our conclusions but improves the simplicity of the presentation of our results. The over-representation of Quebec would be problematic if public opinion on the annexation is different in Quebec or if the examined relationships are different in Quebec versus the rest of Canada, which happens relatively often.⁵ However, Appendix C shows that the support for the annexation is remarkably similar (Figure C1) and that the relationships that we show replicates very similarly when separating Quebec from the rest of Canada (Tables C1–C2).

Figure 1 below shows the distributions of Canadians' opinion on the annexation. Overall, about 92 per cent of respondents are opposed to being annexed by the US, among which almost 87 per cent are "very opposed." Of the sample 3.8 per cent is somewhat favourable and about 4.1 per cent is very favourable to the merging, for a total of 7.9 per cent. The first key finding is thus that the vast majority of Canadians are very opposed to the annexation. However, it is worth noting that this magnitude of opposition is quite stronger than what several public opinion polls suggested. For example, Abacus Data (2025) found that "only" 71 per cent of Canadians were absolutely against a merging with the US and IPSOS' (2025) results showed that

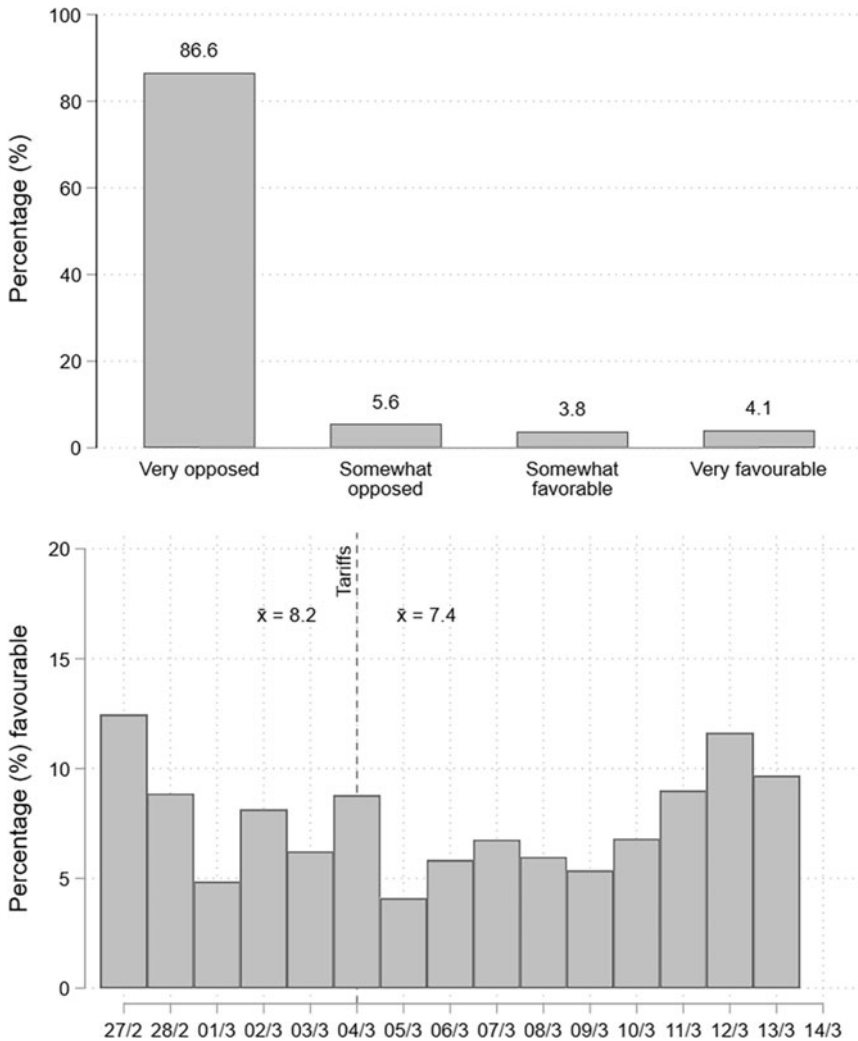


Figure 1. Public Opinion on Canada's Annexation by the United States.

Note: For the upper panel, $N = 3,369$. For the lower panel, $N = 1,473$ pre-March 4 and $N = 1,668$ post-March 4.

80 per cent of Canadians would never favour a merging. These levels of opposition are much less high than what we show in Figure 1, suggesting that the opposition might have been, if anything, underestimated.

We are also interested in examining how a major event like the implementation of substantial trade tariffs on March 4 might have shifted Canadians' public opinion. Despite the back and forth (see note 1), March 4 represents an interesting moment as it became quite clear that Trump was not bluffing. Our inquiry is exploratory as we do not have any clear expectations. Some might realize that the threat can actually be implemented and become even more worried that the Canadian economy and their quality of life will substantially decrease. Joining the US might thus become more

tempting. Other people might react by expressing more solidarity with their fellow Canadians and become more radically opposed to the merging.

Was there a shift in Canadian public opinion after March 4? The lower panel of Figure 1 provides the answer. Overall, the average level of support (either somewhat favourable or very favourable to the annexation) just before the implementation of the tariffs is of 8.2 per cent compared to 7.4 per cent after. The difference in citizens' level of support is of 0.8 percentage point, which is trivial and not meaningful. One possibility is that more Canadians were open to the merging before the threat of imposing trade tariffs and the threat itself (made in 2024) lowered the support so that the implementation of the tariffs per se did not alter public opinion. Another possibility is that Canadians were always massively opposed to the annexation and that the implementation of the tariffs did not change a thing. While we cannot provide such a comparison, we believe that it is still interesting to note that the implementation on March 4 did not move Canadians' public opinion on the issue of annexation. We can confidently claim that support for the annexation was very low just before the tariffs and remained very low just after the implementation of the tariffs.

We should note, however, that there are some differences, albeit small, when comparing trends in Canadians' public opinion before and after the implementation of the tariffs (March 4) in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada. As shown in Appendix C, which replicates all our findings unpacking Quebec versus the rest of Canada, Canadians outside of Quebec became less supportive of the merging after March 4 while Quebecers became more supportive (see Figure C1). Substantially speaking, 9.3 per cent of Canadians outside of Quebec supported the annexation before the tariffs and this proportion decreased to 6.2 per cent after March 4, for a difference of about 3 percentage points. In Quebec, the pre-tariffs level of support was of 7.3 per cent compared to 8.5 per cent after March 4, for a tiny increase of 1.2 percentage points. We do not believe that these differences should be overstated, but we mention that one possible explanation is that the patriotism argument might have exerted a more powerful impact on Canadians outside of Quebec who feel more attached to Canada compared to Quebecers (e.g., Mendelsohn 2002).

While the overall level of support for the annexation is very low, it might be substantially larger for some people. As mentioned previously, it would be expected from research on constitutional preferences that women should be less likely to support constitutional changes like merging with the US as they are more likely than men to favour status quo; regional differences could emerge, etc. Our regression models allow us to examine how (1) sociodemographic and socioeconomic factors, (2) partisanship, and (3) feelings towards Donald Trump, the United States and prioritizing the issue of Canadian sovereignty shape Canadians' support for the annexation. It also allows us to verify whether these factors explain partisan differences that might have emerged from the second model.

Table 2 shows the findings of an ordered logistic regression predicting whether respondents are very opposed, somewhat opposed, somewhat favourable or very favourable to the annexation. More precisely, there are three regression models. First, we only include sociodemographic and socioeconomic variables, as they are causally prior to citizens' partisanship and affects towards Trump and the US. Second, we add partisanship, which is, as mentioned previously, quite deeply rooted and causally prior to citizens' feelings towards Trump and the US. Indeed, it seems

Table 2. Ordered Logistic Regressions Predicting Support for Annexation

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	b	(SE)	b	(SE)	b	(SE)
35-54 years old [ref = 18-34]	-0.03	(0.13)	-0.11	(0.14)	-0.11	(0.16)
55+ years old [ref = 18-34]	-0.89	(0.14)	-0.95	(0.15)	-0.63	(0.17)
Women [ref = Men]	-0.62	(0.11)	-0.49	(0.12)	-0.25	(0.13)
Post-secondary diploma	-0.06	(0.14)	0.07	(0.14)	0.20	(0.15)
Material well-being	0.09	(0.25)	-0.07	(0.26)	0.10	(0.29)
English [ref = French]	-0.38	(0.20)	-0.48	(0.21)	-0.83	(0.23)
Other [ref = French]	-0.18	(0.18)	-0.35	(0.19)	-0.80	(0.21)
Region or province: [ref=Ontario]						
Quebec	-0.09	(0.20)	0.15	(0.21)	-0.06	(0.23)
British Columbia	0.13	(0.22)	0.19	(0.23)	-0.03	(0.25)
Prairies	0.43	(0.19)	0.18	(0.20)	0.21	(0.22)
Atlantic	-1.09	(0.48)	-1.01	(0.50)	-0.95	(0.54)
Party identification: [ref = None]						
LPC			-0.52	(0.21)	-0.29	(0.23)
CPC			1.13	(0.18)	0.31	(0.21)
Bloc Québécois			-0.35	(0.23)	-0.25	(0.26)
NDP			-0.89	(0.29)	-0.47	(0.31)
Green			0.32	(0.36)	0.25	(0.42)
PPC			2.42	(0.36)	0.98	(0.38)
Feelings towards Trump: [ref = 0]						
Feelings towards Trump: 1-19					0.90	(0.21)
Feelings towards Trump: 20-39					1.37	(0.25)
Feelings towards Trump: 40-59					2.02	(0.24)
Feelings towards Trump: 60-79					2.69	(0.24)
Feelings towards Trump: 80-100					3.08	(0.25)
Feelings towards USA: [ref = 0]						
Feelings towards USA: 1-19					-0.54	(0.40)
Feelings towards USA: 20-39					-0.45	(0.37)
Feelings towards USA: 40-59					-0.20	(0.35)
Feelings towards USA: 60-79					-0.20	(0.35)
Feelings towards USA: 80-100					0.47	(0.35)
Most important issue						
Canada's sovereignty					-0.97	(0.27)
Cut 1	0.97	(0.26)	1.23	(0.31)	1.95	(0.45)
Cut 2	1.56	(0.27)	1.87	(0.31)	2.76	(0.45)
Cut 3	2.25	(0.27)	2.61	(0.32)	3.63	(0.46)
Observations	2745		2719		2687	

Note: Ordered logistic regressions' coefficients are displayed with standard errors in parentheses. Reference categories are: 18–34 years old for age, men for gender identity, none or some post-secondary education for education, French-speaking for language, Ontario for province or region, none for party identification, 0 for feelings towards Trump and 0 for feelings towards the United States.

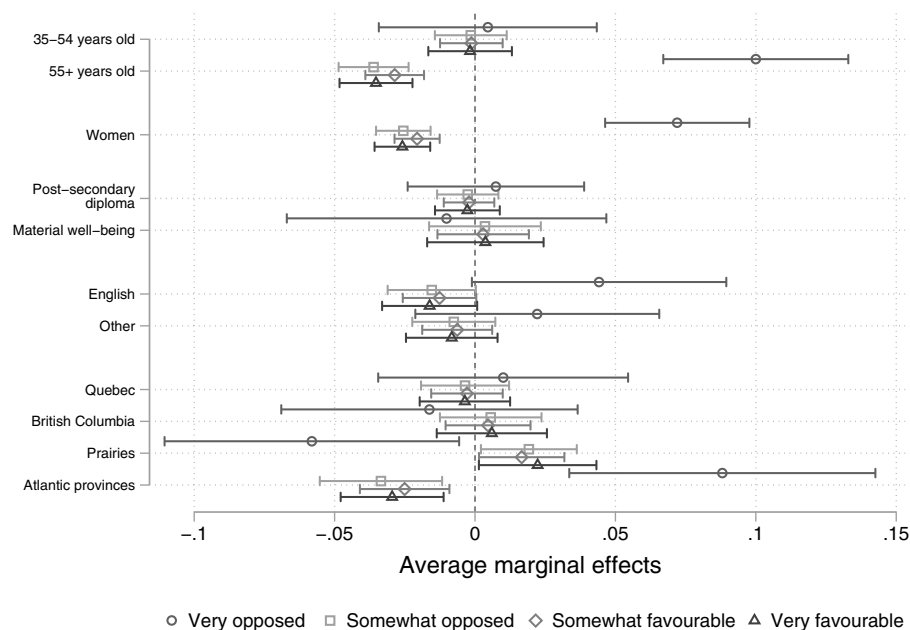


Figure 2. Average Marginal Effects of Sociodemographic Variables.

Note: Average marginal effects are computed from model 1 of Table 2. 95% confidence intervals are included. See Table 2 for the reference categories.

very reasonable to believe that citizens' (lack of) partisan attachment is causally prior and more stable than their feelings towards specific items like Donald Trump and the US, which are much more contextual, even in Canada where partisanship is weaker than in the US (Jenson 1975). Hence, our third model adds our two feeling thermometers as well as perceived issue importance, which is also more contextual than party identification (Fournier et al. 2013; Daoust and Gareau-Paquette 2024).

To interpret the substantial effects of our independent variables on Canadians' support for annexation, we estimated their average marginal effects (AMEs) on each category of the outcome variable. AMEs translate the estimated effects of predictors into average changes in the expected value of the outcome across all observations (Arel-Bundock et al. 2024). Figure 2 below shows the findings for the sociodemographic and socioeconomic variables. Most effects (28 out of 44 estimates) are not statistically significant (at $p < .05$), but some relationships are worth noting.

Some age effects are noteworthy. While the 35–54 years old are identical to the youngest group (18–34), the 55+ years old are substantially more likely to be “very opposed” to the annexation. The effect reaches 10 percentage points (comparing 55+ years old to 18–34 years old). Moreover, the oldest group are less likely to be “somewhat opposed,” “somewhat favourable” and “very favourable” compared to the 18–34 years old. It is interesting to note that, contrary to some surveys (e.g., Abacus Data 2025; Leger 2025) the pattern is not linear given that the level of support from the 35–54 years old group does not fall in-between the youngest and the oldest citizens.

On the gender gap, women (compared to men) are more likely to be “very opposed” by about 7 percentage points. They are also less likely to answer any of the three remaining answer choices (somewhat opposed, somewhat favourable and very favourable). This finding aligns with the robust assumption that women are more likely than men to favour status quo. Moreover, we should mention that contrary to what some polling data suggested,⁶ there is no significant interaction between age and gender (see Table D1 of the Appendix).

In sharp contrast to age and gender, there seems to be no “class cleavage” in Canada regarding citizens’ support for the annexation by the US. Indeed, both education as well as material well-being (which combines income and assets) do not seem to be correlated with support for annexation. Moreover, Figure 2 indicates no strong language cleavage, although the average marginal effect for English-speaking respondents (compared to French-speaking respondents) shows that English-speaking Canadians are more likely to be very opposed to the annexation by about 4.4 percentage points. However, this effect fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance ($p = 0.056$).

Finally, some regional effects emerge from Figure 2. The reference category is Ontario. While British Columbia and Quebec do not differ from Ontario, the Prairies and Atlantic provinces are statistically different. That is, respondents from the Prairies are less likely to be very opposed to the annexation. In contrary, respondents from the Atlantic provinces are about 9 percentage points more likely to be very opposed. The magnitude of the regional effects displayed in Figure 2 are quite aligned with what has been signalled by mediatized public opinion data. While not trivial, these effects should not be overstated. For example, at the end of the day, 90.3 per cent of respondents from the Prairies are either very opposed or somewhat opposed to the annexation, which is very similar to the full sample average (92.2%).

We now turn to the role of partisanship, which is added in model 2 of Table 2. The left panel of Figure 3 below shows the relationships between party identification in Canadian politics and citizens’ attitudes towards the annexation. Feeling close to the Liberal Party of Canada and the New Democratic Party is associated with an increase in respondents’ likelihood of being very opposed to the annexation (of 4 and 7 percentage points, respectively). Feeling close to the Conservative Party of Canada is associated with a decrease of 17 percentage points in one’s likelihood of being very opposed to the annexation. This effect reaches 45 percentage points for citizens feeling close to the People’s Party of Canada (PPC). Moreover, partisans of the PPC are 24 percentage points more likely to be very favourable to the annexation. These effects are quite systematic (16 out of 24 estimates are statistically significant at $p < .05$) and some of them are substantially large.

In an exploratory fashion, we examine who, among CPC partisans ($n = 612$), are more likely to favour the merging and compare the correlates to non-CPC partisans ($n = 2,107$). We do not provide this kind of test of the PPC because the sample size is not large enough ($n = 34$). Table D3 of the appendix shows the regression output and Figure D1 displays the average marginal effects. There are three noteworthy differences. First, among CPC partisans, age effects are more important compared to other Canadians. That is, 55+ years old conservatives are much more likely to be very opposed to the merging (AME of 18 percentage points) compared to non-conservatives (AME of 8 percentage points). In other words, the support for

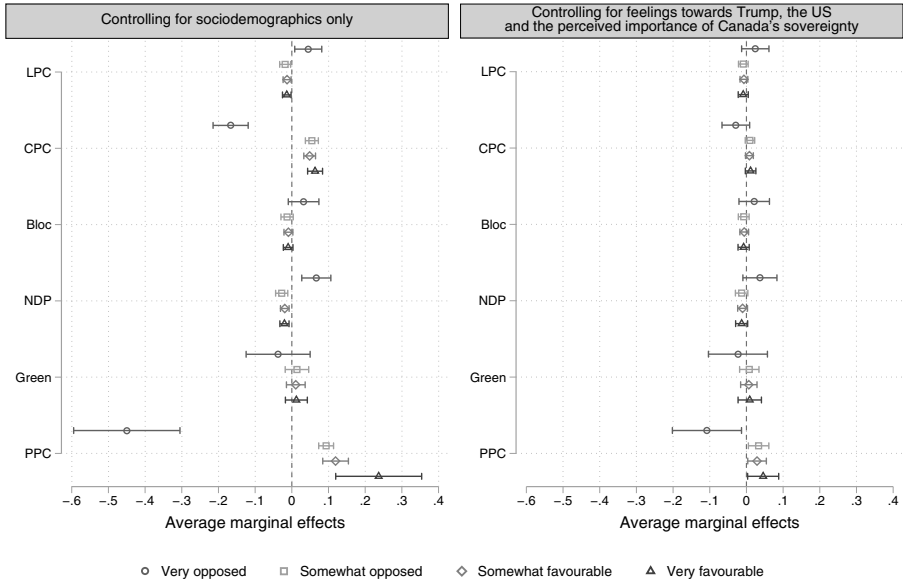


Figure 3. Average Marginal Effects of Party Identification.
Note: Average marginal effects are computed using model 2 (left panel) and model 3 (right panel) of Table 2. 95% confidence intervals are included. Reference category is not feeling close to any political party.

annexation is mostly driven by youth, but this is even more the case among conservatives.⁷ Second, the gender gap is slightly larger among conservative partisans: women are almost 10 percentage points more likely to be very opposed to the merging among conservatives versus about 5 percentage points among others. Third, conservatives from the Atlantic are not more opposed than conservatives in Ontario while Canadians from the Atlantic that do not identify the CPC are 8 percentage points more likely to be very opposed to the annexation compared to non-conservative Ontarians.

The next model (model 3 from Table 2) allows us to compare the partisanship effects while taking into account feelings toward Trump, the US as well as respondents' importance attributed to the issue of Canada's sovereignty vis-à-vis the US. As made clear by comparing model 2 to model 3, most of the effects found from model 2 are drastically reduced and most relationships are not statistically significant (at $p < .05$) once we take these additional factors into account. In other words, most of the effects found in the left panel of Figure 2 are due to these three variables. But do these three variables hold a similar weight in the reduction of these effects? Table D2 of the appendix includes several models including one variable at the time and shows that the feeling thermometer towards Trump is *the* driver explaining the differences in partisanship effects.

For example, partisans of the CPC are 17 points less likely to be very opposed to annexation compared to respondents who do not feel close to any political party when we only control for sociodemographic variables (left panel of Figure 3). However, once affects toward Trump are considered, levels of support for the annexation from respondents who feel close to the Conservative Party of Canada are

undistinguishable from respondents who do not feel close to any party (i.e., the reference category). In other words, CPC partisans' more positive view on the potential annexation is almost fully explained by their affect towards Trump. The median score given to the feeling thermometer is telling: among CPC partisans who favour the merging, the median feeling towards Trump is of about 80/100 on the original scale compared to 10/100 among CPC partisans who are opposed to the annexation.

The only average marginal effect that still stands out in the right panel of Figure 3 is the one from the People's Party of Canada regarding the odds of being very opposed to the annexation. It is substantially reduced from about 45 points to about 11 percentage points. While reduced, this effect is still noteworthy: even controlling for feelings towards Trump, feeling close to the PPC is associated with a large decrease in one's likelihood to be very opposed to the annexation.

We now examine how these feeling thermometers as well as citizens' perceptions of the importance of the issue shape Canadians' public opinion on the annexation. Model 3 of Table 2 shows the findings from the regression model. We merged different ranges on the feeling thermometers to allow for potential non-linear patterns. The reference category is a score of 0, that is, really disliking Trump or the US. The issue importance variable is a dichotomous variable comparing respondents who believe that Canada's sovereignty vis-à-vis the US is the most important issue.

Findings can be found in Figure 4 below. The effects of feelings towards Donald Trump are crystal clear: the more one dislikes Trump, the less likely they are to be very favourable to the annexation. The pattern of the effects is mostly linear, and the average marginal effect reaches 42 percentage points when comparing respondents who really like Trump to citizens who really dislike the president. However, even just moving from one category to the next one still leads to large effects, as shown by the left panel of Figure 4. Canadians' feelings towards the United States are very different (that is, much more positive see Table B1 of the appendix) and so is the relationship between these feelings and their opinion on annexation. In a nutshell, there is no statistically significant relationship between Canadians' feelings towards the US and their opinion on the annexation, which is quite surprising as one might expect that the more positive one's view of the US, the more likely they would favour a merging with the US.

Finally, the effect of considering Canada's sovereignty to be the most important issue is also statistically significant (see model 3 of Table 2), but is nowhere near the size of the effects of feelings towards Trump. Perceiving Canadian sovereignty as the issue of the moment increases the chances of being very opposed to the annexation by 8 percentage points. It decreases the likelihood of being somewhat opposed or (somewhat or very) favourable by 2 to 3 points.

Discussion and implications

In this research note, we investigated contemporary Canadian public opinion on the annexation of Canada by the United States—an idea rooted in historical debates (e.g., Schwartz 1967) but recently revived by the American president Donald Trump. Using original survey data ($N = 3,507$) collected in March 2025, we assessed the level of Canadians' support for the merging, the correlates of that support, and provided an explanation for partisan effects that we find.

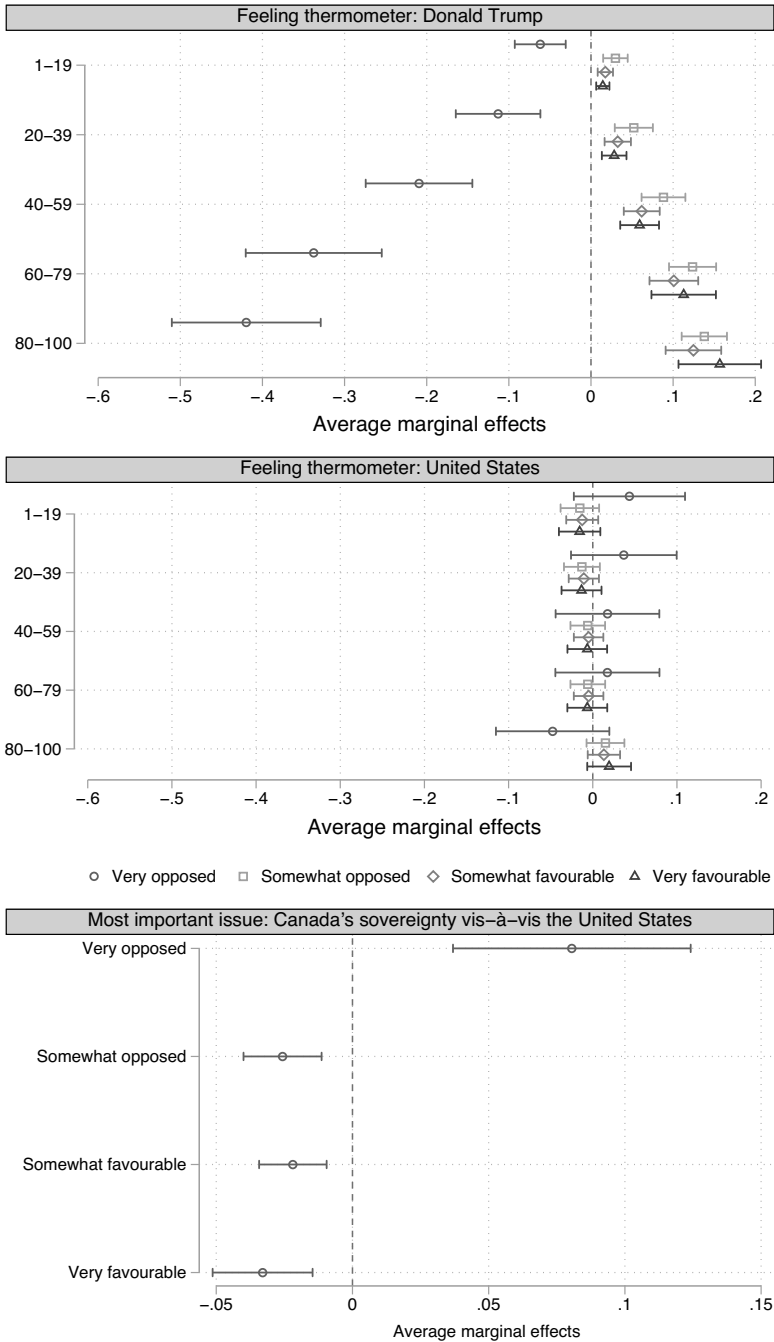


Figure 4. Average Marginal Effects of Feelings Towards Trump, the United States and perceiving Canada's sovereignty vis-à-vis the US as the most important issue.

Note: Average marginal effects are computed using model 3 of Table 2. 95% confidence intervals are included. Reference category is a score of 0 for the thermometer feelings (top panels) and any other issues regarding the issue importance variable (bottom panel).

Our first main finding shows that support for annexation is very low. That is, only about 8 per cent of Canadians seem to be somewhat or very favourable to the merging. This level of support is quite a bit lower than what has been suggested by public opinion polls.

Second, we show that there is some heterogeneity across sociodemographic and socioeconomic variables, although they should not be overstated. For example, people in the Prairies are indeed more likely to favour the annexation, but they are only few percentage points more likely to be somewhat or very favourable to this idea. This seems particularly insightful in the context of a potential referendum on Alberta's independence from Canada (Zhao 2025). Indeed, Albertans who want to leave Canada might be less enthusiastic if the alternative becomes (or is framed as) staying in Canada versus being merged with the US. Age effects were much larger than regional differences. That is, younger Canadians are much more likely to be open to the merging with the US than 55+ years old citizens. Moreover, in line with the literature on constitutional preferences, women are less likely to favour constitutional changes and their likelihood to reject the merging is greater than men. Contrary to many issues in Canadian politics, language does not seem to be a source of divide in the case of the merging with the US.

Third, we find key political divides in Canadians' public opinion on the issue of the annexation. Most importantly, Canadians identifying with the Conservative Party of Canada and the People's Party of Canada are less likely to be strongly opposed to the annexation. We also put forward what is, to the best of our knowledge, the first test aiming to explain these findings. We find that people who feel close to the CPC and the PPC are more favourable to the annexation because they hold more positive views of the president of the United States, Donald Trump. In fact, the gap for the CPC partisans completely disappears once we take into account feelings towards Trump. To the contrary, affects towards the United States do not explain these differences. The implications of these findings are twofold. First, we might expect some movements in Canadians' public opinion on the issue of annexation if views on Donald Trump change. For example, the level of support for the merging might reach a new low if CPC partisans, who are numerous, become more negative towards Trump (e.g., Canada might face an economic recession due to the US' trade policies). Second, our findings suggest that more positive views about the US would not move Canadians' public opinion on the issue of annexation because it is not a strong predictor.

The study underscores that while annexation talk is politically marginal, the implications seem important. Understanding who supports it and why remains crucial for gauging public reactions to US–Canada tensions and for anticipating shifts (or lack of) in political discourse.

Supplementary material. To view supplementary material for this article, please visit <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008423926101280>

Notes

1 Shortly after his election in November 2024, Donald Trump threatened to apply 25 per cent trade tariffs on Canadian goods, which was more than the 10 per cent mentioned during the electoral campaign. On his inauguration day (January 20, 2025), the president signed an executive order establishing the imposition of trade tariffs on Canada starting February 1. However, on February 3, the implementation of the tariffs was

- postponed for one month. On March 4, 25 per cent tariffs were applied to all goods from Canada, while Canadian energy exports were subject to a 10 per cent tariff. The following day, vehicles were exempted and, on March 6, tariffs on goods covered by the Canada–United States–Mexico Agreement were also suspended.
- 2 For theoretical arguments on why regions would differ, see Simeon and Elkins (1974) and Elkins and Simeon (1980). However, evidence is mixed. For a recent and critical update on the topic, see Blanchard (2023).
- 3 Bélanger and Stephenson (2014, 117) concluded that “holding a party identification in Canada has the same implications (...) as it does in the United States.”
- 4 The correlation is indeed only moderate (Pearson’s $r = 0.44$).
- 5 For an example of when public opinion differs in Quebec compared to the rest of Canada, see Nadeau and Bélanger (2012); for an example of how relationships sometimes differ in Quebec versus the rest of Canada, see Turgeon et al. (2019).
- 6 For example, Angus Reid’s (2025) survey data suggested that the gender gap is explained by 55+ years old Canadians, for which the level of support for the merging was 4 per cent among women and 12 per cent among men.
- 7 Table D4 of the appendix shows the predicted probability of respondents’ opinion on the issue of annexation based on their age and whether they feel close to the CPC or not. For example, 18–34 years old identifying with the CPC have a predicted probability of 0.24 of being somewhat or very favourable compared to 0.08 for non-CPC partisans that are the same age.

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