

Information Letter

Political Views and Practices in Atlantic Canada

You are invited to participate in a survey on political views and practices in Atlantic Canada. We are interested in learning about how people living in this region are participating in political life and their opinions on a number of current issues in Canadian federal and provincial politics. This survey does not test or require any political knowledge, and it is open to residents of Atlantic Canada who are 18 years and older.

Please be assured that we are not seeking any personal or identifiable information, and all results for analysis and reporting will be presented in groups of at least 10.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to answer questions, should you choose. The survey is part of the Perceptions of Change project, and it is described in greater detail below.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact Rachel McLay, who is leading this part of the study (rachel.mclay@dal.ca); Howard Ramos, who is the Principal Investigator of the Perceptions of Change project (howard.ramos@dal.ca); or the Director of Research Ethics at Dalhousie, Catherine Connors (ethics@dal.ca). Full contact information is provided at the end of this letter.

Purpose of the Study

This study is being undertaken to offer new data and insight into Atlantic Canadians' political attitudes and practices, as well as their perceptions of political change in recent years. It takes place at a time of great social change in the Atlantic region and political change in Canada, the US, and around the world.

Change is occurring in how people view a number of social and political issues, as well as in how they express these views and participate in political processes. By studying attitudes and practices together, along with perceptions of change in both, we seek to obtain a much more comprehensive view of Atlantic Canadians' politics than is currently available and provide a rich understanding of this region and its inhabitants.

Study Design

The survey consists of questions about how you participate in electoral and non-electoral politics, open-ended questions to understand your views on political change, and questions about your views and beliefs on a number of political issues. We also request some demographic information in order to understand how responses may vary depending on characteristics such as age, sex, or income.

Who can participate in the study?

Anyone 18 years or older and living in Atlantic Canada (NB, NL, NS, and PE) is eligible to participate.

What will you be asked to do?

You will be asked to participate in a telephone survey interview, which will last about 15-20 minutes. The survey consists of 81 questions, which ask about your voting, other forms of political participation, and your political views and opinions on a number of issues.

Possible Risks

We don't anticipate any risk to you from participating in the survey; however, we do recognize that you may be concerned about the confidentiality of your responses. The survey is completely voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. You can also end the survey at any point. No identifying information about you will be collected.

Possible Benefits

The principle benefit of participating in this survey is indirect: you will contribute to academic knowledge and allow for evidence-based inquiry into the political views and practices of Atlantic Canadians. This could potentially contribute to better public policy at the provincial or even national level.

Compensation/Reimbursement

There is no compensation/reimbursement for participating in this study.

Confidentiality

Several steps will be taken to ensure your confidentiality, should you participate in this survey. First, we do not have any identifying information about you other than your telephone number. Second, no question directly asks you who you are, and telephone numbers will not be linked to the answers you provide us. Third, although we will ask you about your postal code, we will not ask for your civic address, and more than one address is listed under any given postal code. Fourth, all results will only be presented in grouped form. We will not report on any individual responses. Fifth, we will not disclose any grouped results that have fewer than 10 responses.

Questions or Concerns

Should you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the research study or your involvement in it, you are welcome to contact Howard Ramos, Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology (howard.ramos@dal.ca or 902-494-3130). You are encouraged to print out a copy of this information letter with his contact information for your records.

Final research findings will be published in a variety of academic venues and will also be posted on the project website, perceptionsofchange.ca.

If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this survey, you may contact Catherine Connors, Director, Research Ethics, Dalhousie University, at ethics@dal.ca or 902-494-1462).

Thank you,

Rachel McLay
Project Lead, Political Views and Practices in Atlantic Canada

Howard Ramos
Principal Investigator, Perceptions of Change in Atlantic Canadian Cities