



Environmental Attitudes

A comparison of Canada,
Europe and the United
States over time

Heather Pyman & Jon Pammett,
Carleton University Survey Centre

European countries

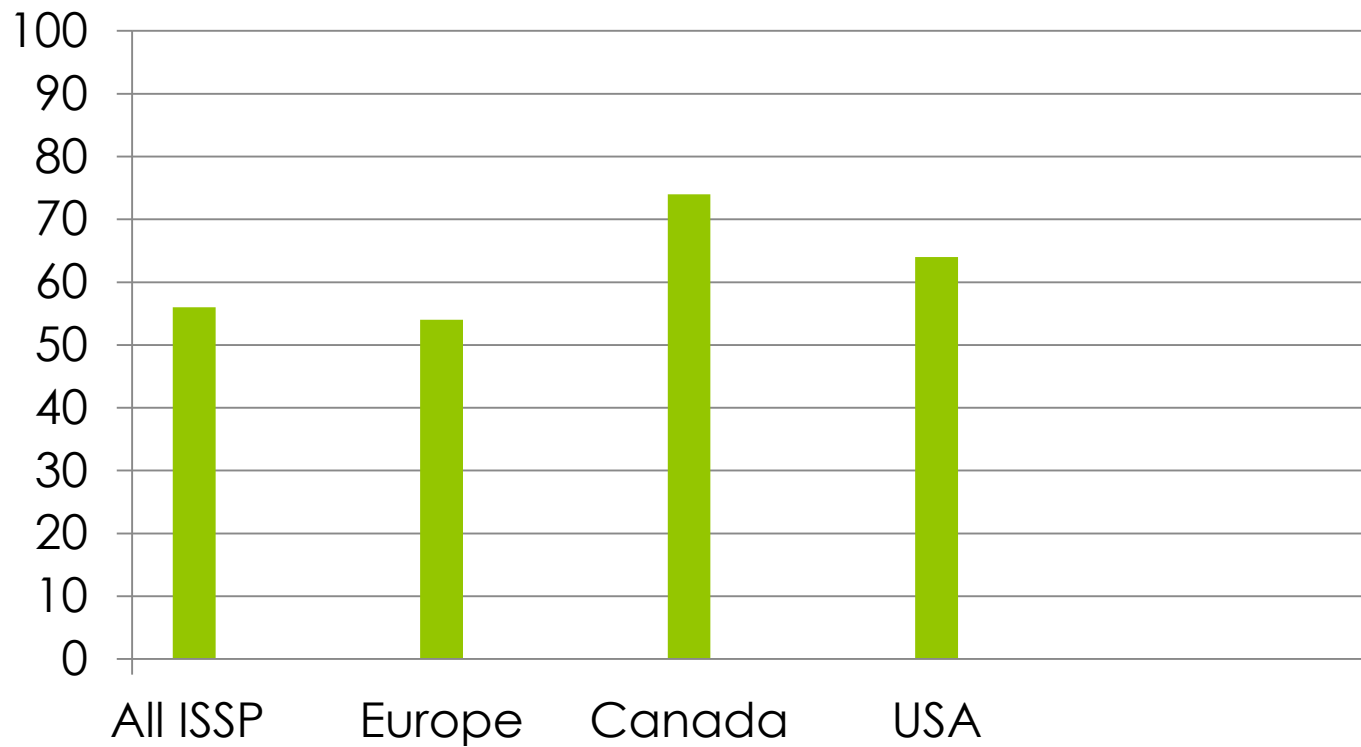
- 1993 ➡ Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Spain, Ireland, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden, Poland
- 2000 ➡ Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Spain, Czech Republic, Ireland, Hungary, Netherlands, Sweden, France, Portugal, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, Flanders, Latvia, Slovak Republic
- 2010 ➡ Germany, Great Britain, Norway, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Spain, Austria, Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovak Republic, Sweden, Switzerland

4 Attitudinal Environmental Dimensions

- Concern for the Environment
- What will make a difference?
- What do we know about the environment?
- What are we willing to do as individuals?

How concerned are you about environmental issues?(2010)

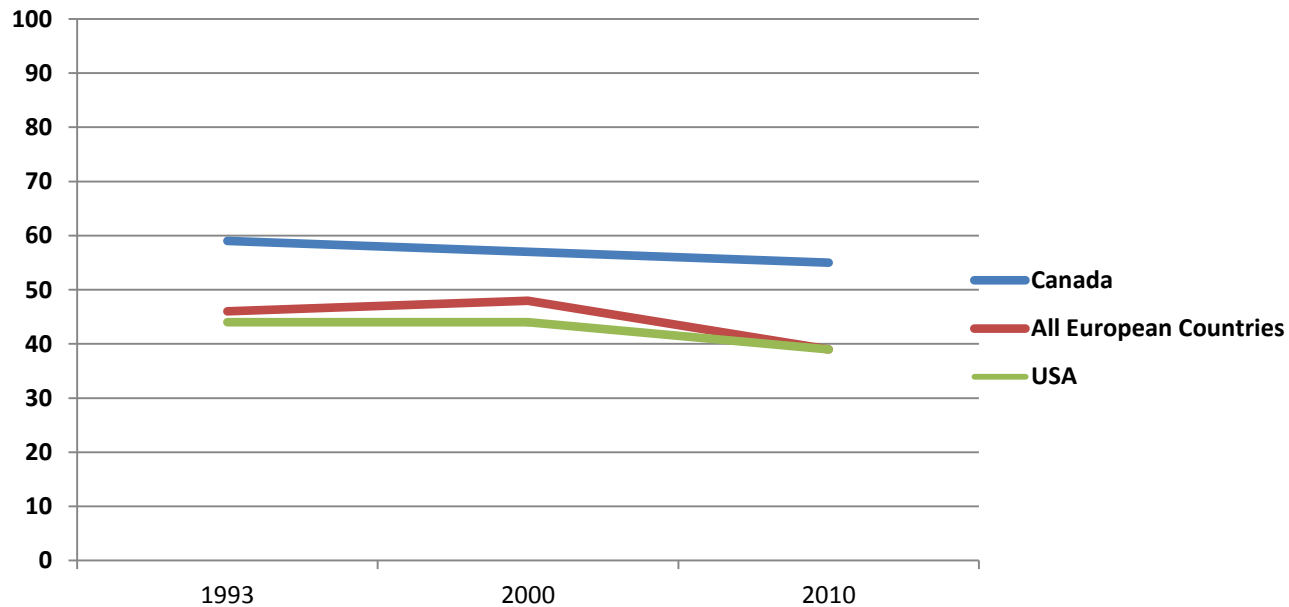
% 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale of concern



Concern vs. economy

We worry too much about the future of the environment and not enough about prices and jobs.

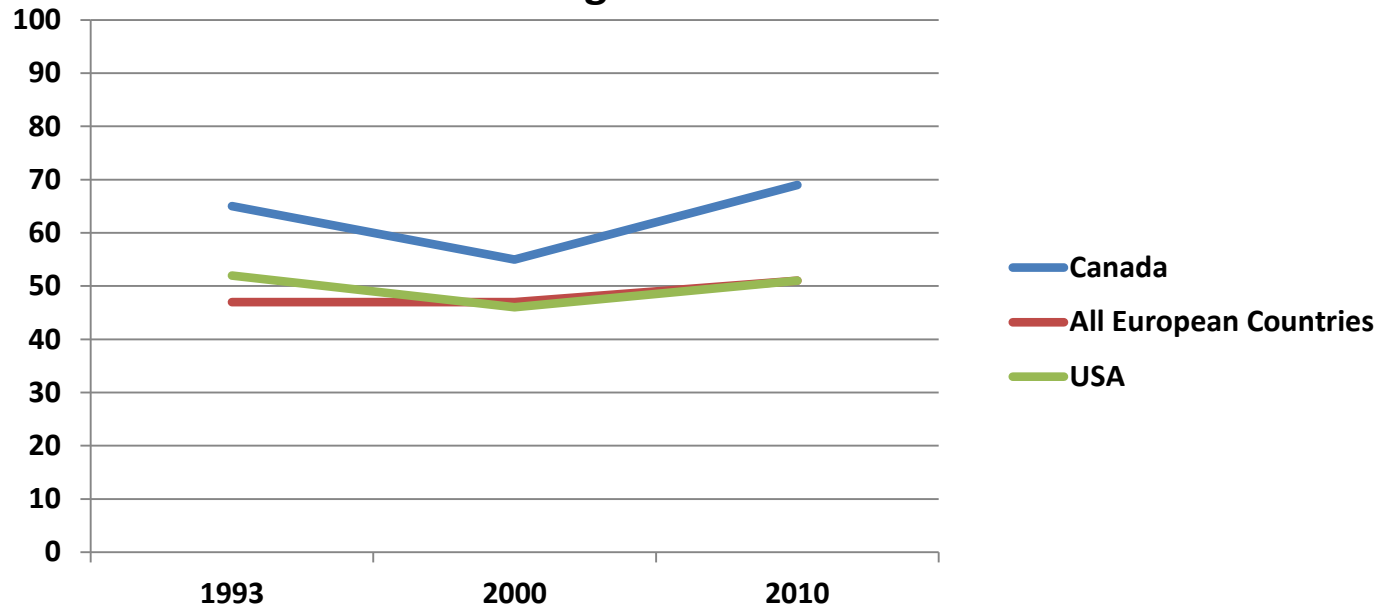
% Disagree



Harm to the environment

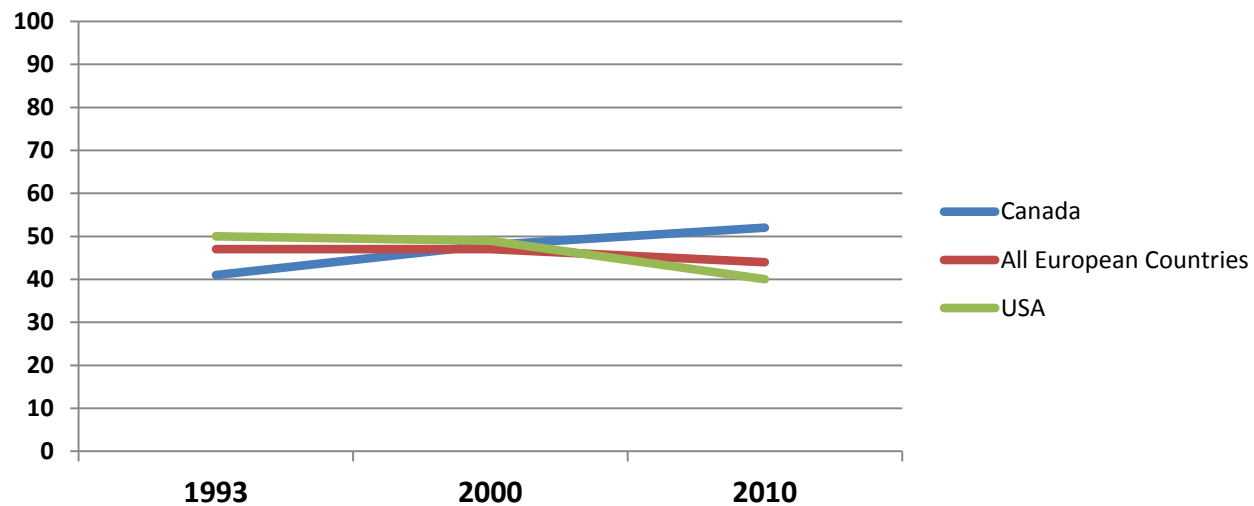
Almost everything we do in modern life harms the environment.

% Agree



Human impact on environment

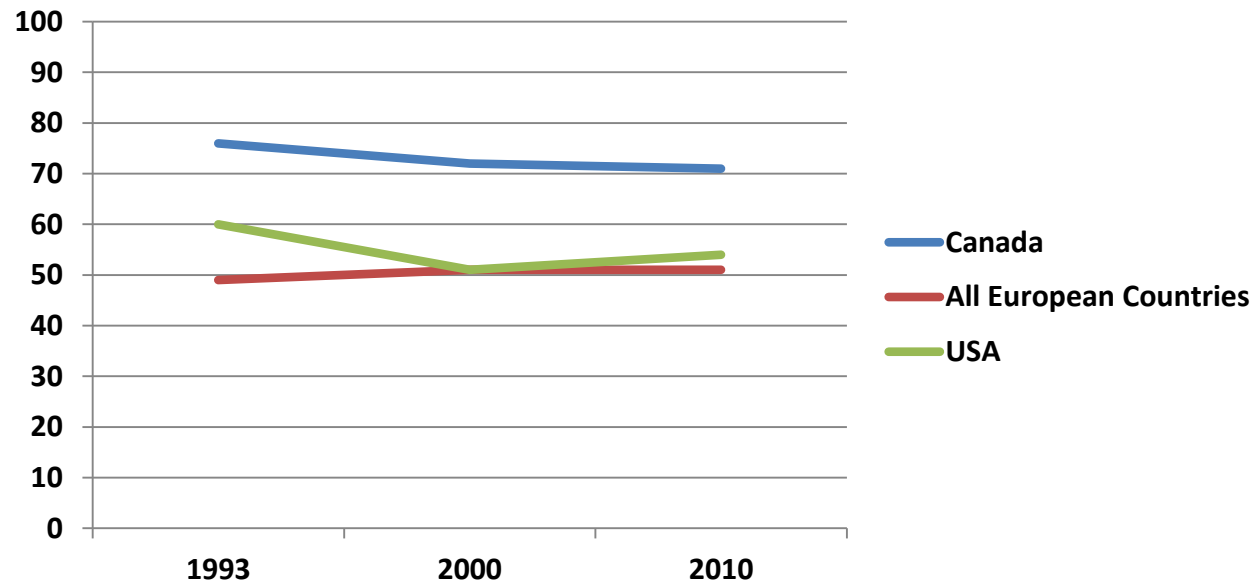
**People worry too much about human progress
harming the environment.
% Disagree**



What will make a difference: The Individual

**It is just too difficult for someone like me to do
much about the environment.**

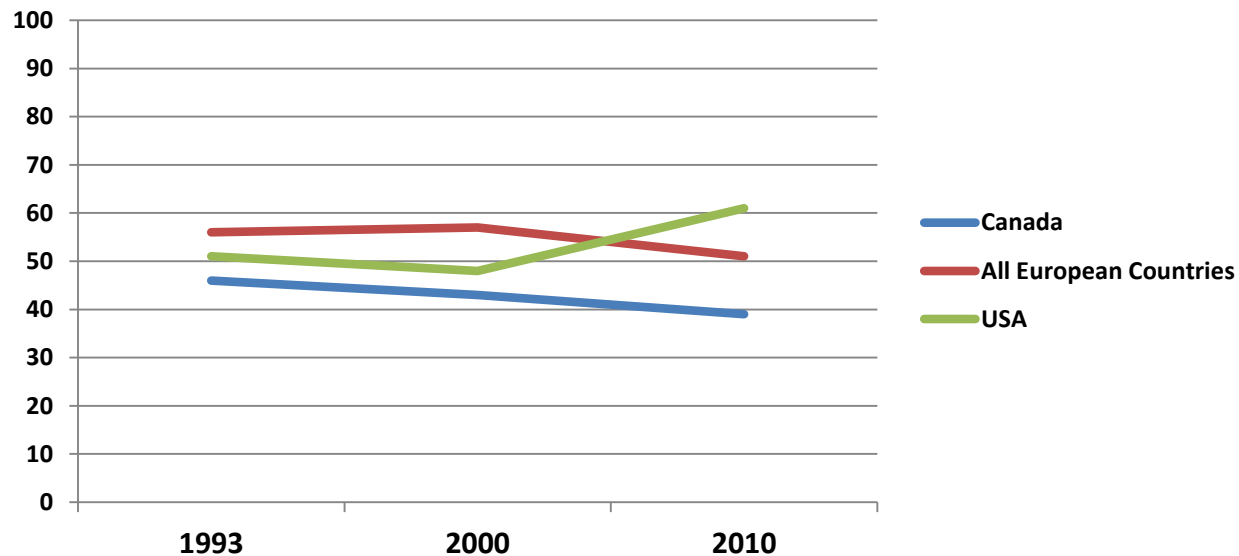
% Disagree



What will make a difference: Economic Growth

**In order to protect the environment (country)
needs economic growth.**

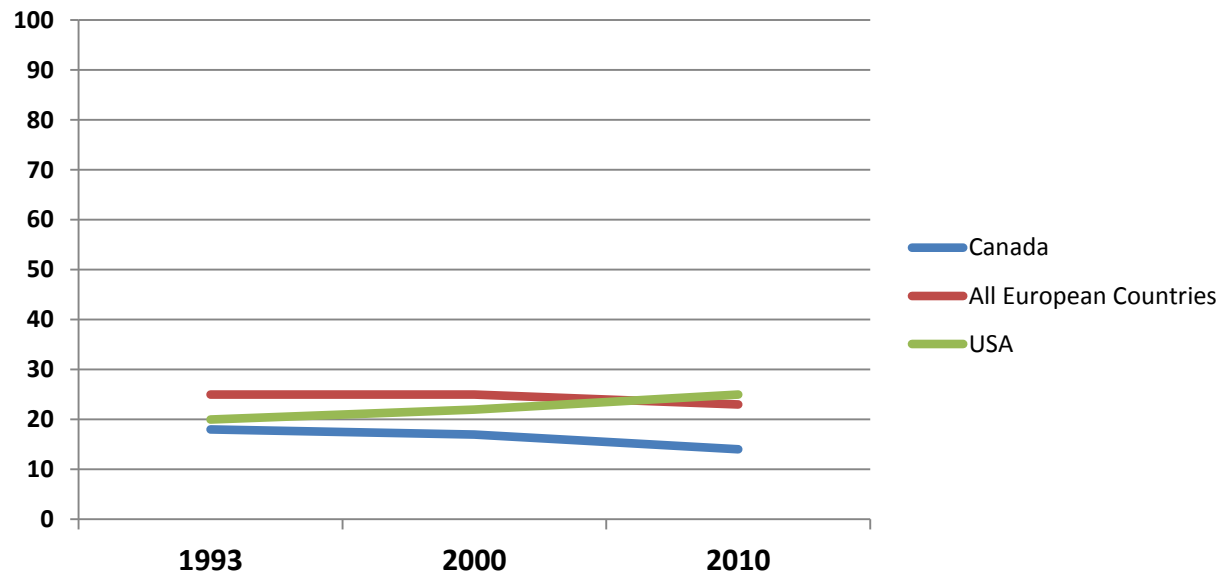
% Agree



What will make a difference: Modern Science

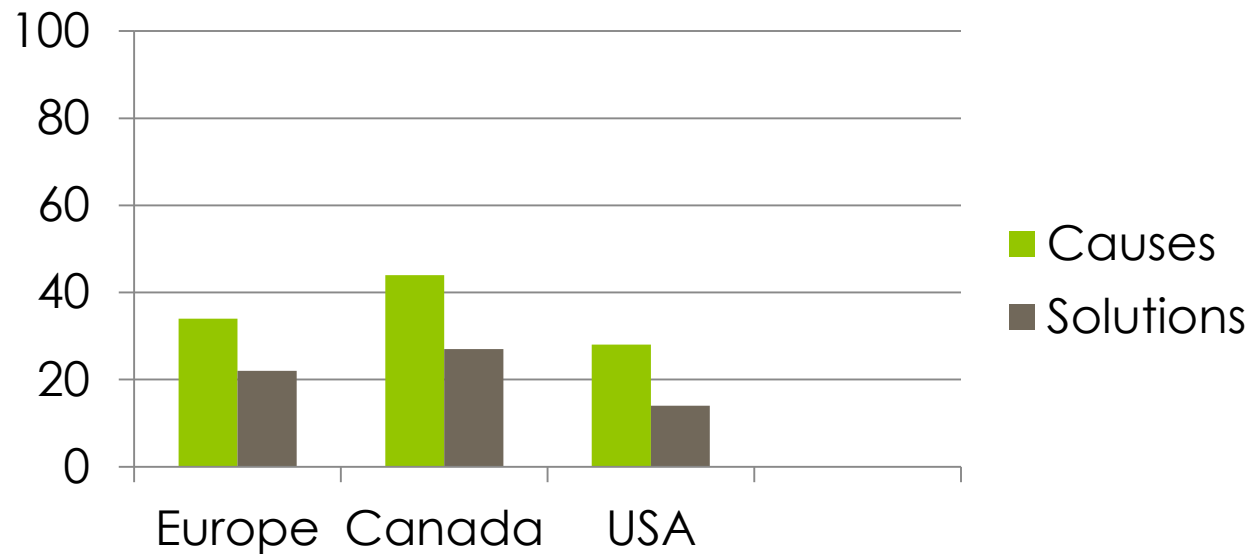
Modern Science will solve our environmental problems with little change to our way of life.

% Agree



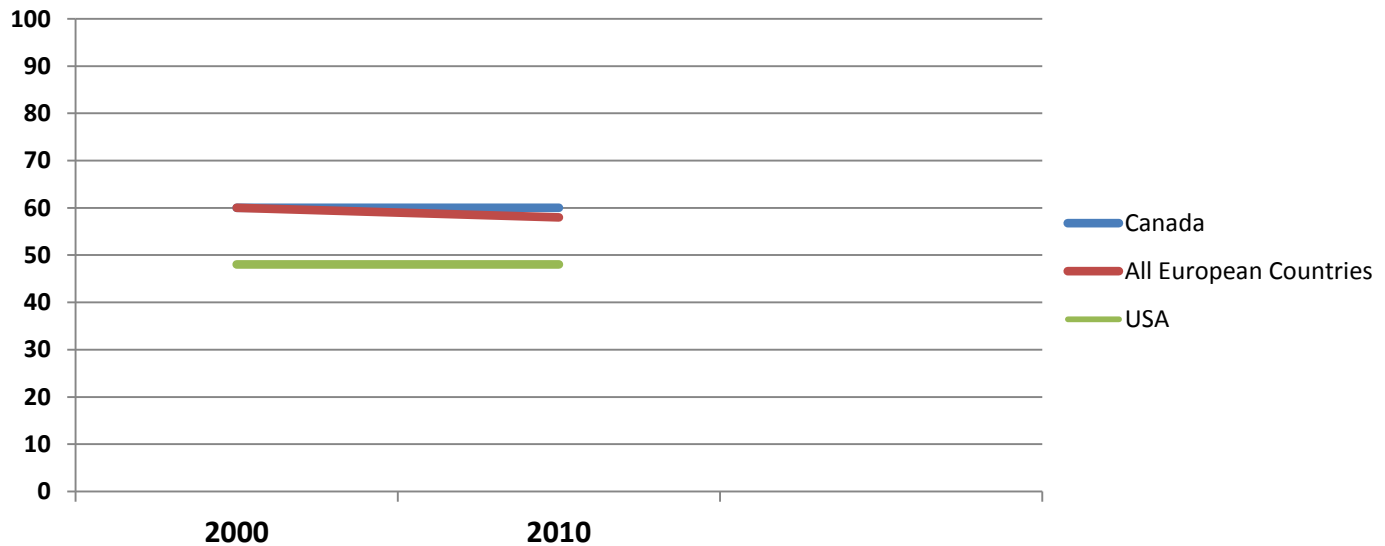
How much do you feel you know about the causes and solutions of environmental problems?

% 4 or 5 on 5 point knowledge scale



Effects

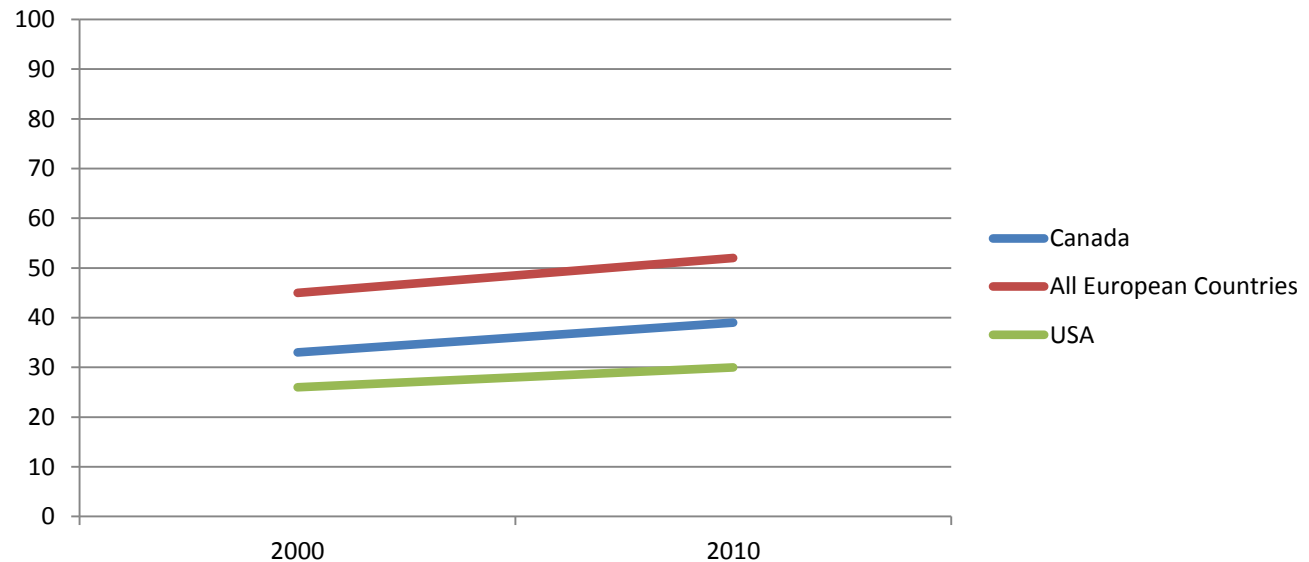
**In general, do you think that a rise in the world's temperature caused by climate change is ...
% Dangerous?**



Effects

**And do you think that modifying the genes of
certain crops is dangerous.**

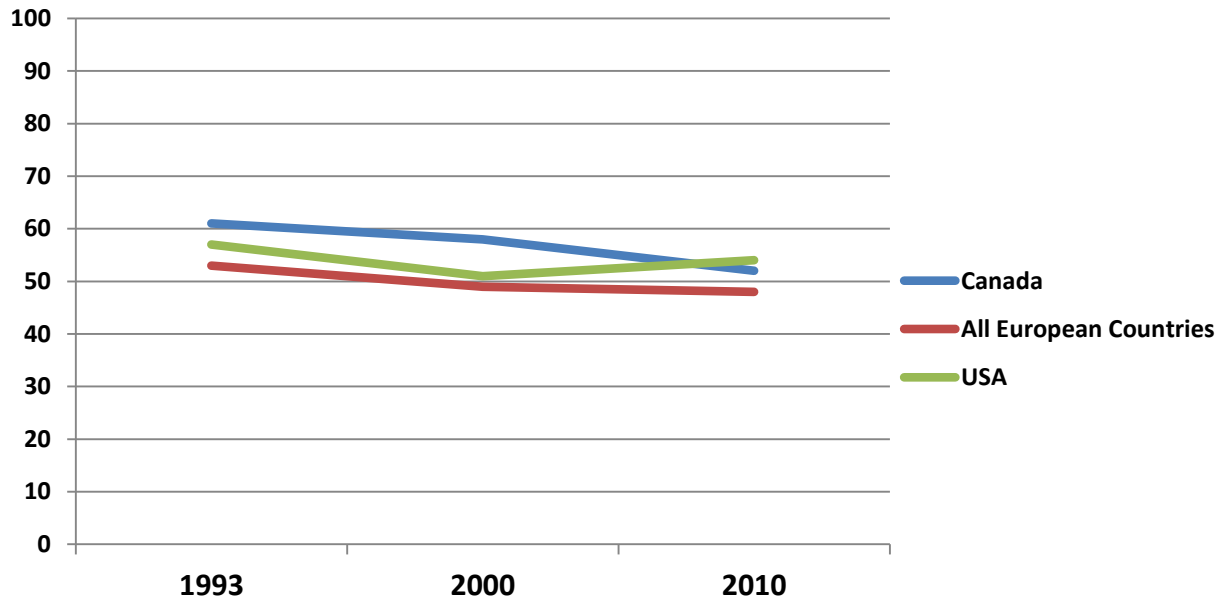
% Dangerous



Sacrifice Time and Money

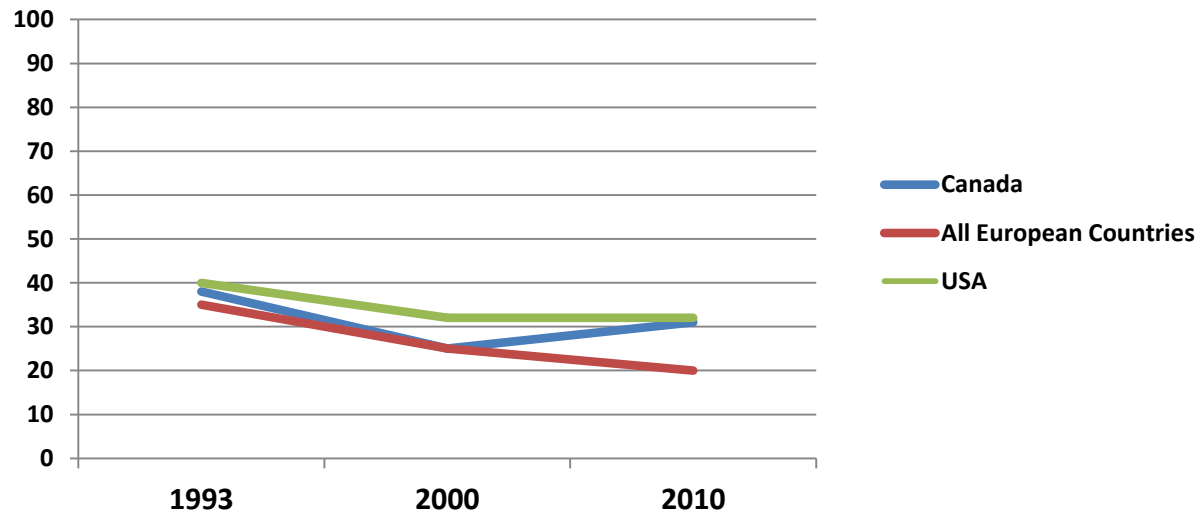
**I do what is right for the environment even when
it costs more money or takes more time.**

% Agree



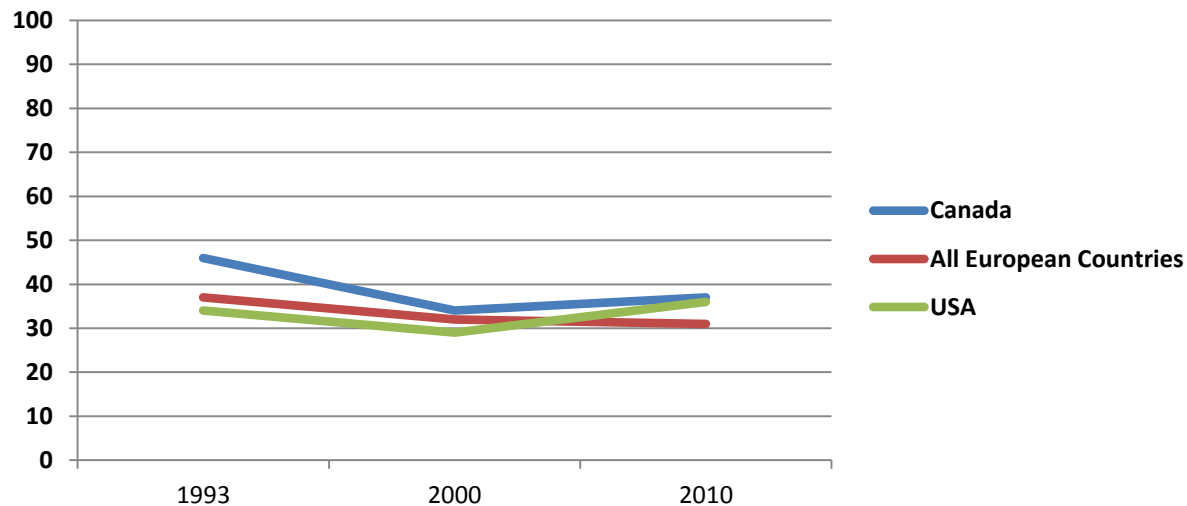
Sacrifice Money

How willing would you be to pay much higher taxes in order to protect the environment
% Willing



Sacrifice standard of living

**How willing would you be to accept cuts to your
standard of living?
% Willing**



Which Canadians are more concerned?

- Multiple Regression Analysis ($R^2 = 9\%$)
- Dependent Variable – How concerned are you about environmental issues?
- Demographics which are significantly correlated at the .05 level
 - Age (older people are more concerned)
 - Gender (females are more concerned)
 - Education (higher educated are more concerned)
 - Political Party – Left to Right spectrum (people who identify with parties on the left are more concerned)

What else explains exceptionalism in Canada?

- ◉ Subjective reaction to government inaction and poor environmental reputation??
- ◉ Vulnerability of a resource based economy?
- ◉ Canadian consciousness of weather, swings in temperature, storms?
- ◉ Extensive geographical variation leads to variety of environmental issues or problems?
- ◉ Something else???

Summary

- Concern for the environment has stayed the same over three decades.
- Canadians are more concerned than Europeans and Americans about the environment.
- Perceptions of the harm human impact is having on the environment decreased from the 90's to 2000 and increased from 2000 to 2010.
- Canadians have a more heightened sense of the harm to the environment than Europeans or Americans.
- Individual efficacy towards the environment is stable over time. Canadians are more likely to feel they can make a difference.
- Americans increasingly feel economic growth is required to protect the environment.

Summary cont'd

- The belief that modern science will solve environmental problems without change to our way of life is consistently low. Canadians are the least likely to agree with this statement.
- Perceptions of the danger of climate change and genetically modified food is consistent over time.
- Canadians are more concerned about climate change and less concerned about genetically modified crops.
- Willingness to sacrifice for the environment generally declined over time.
- Canada and United States more willing to sacrifice than Europe.