Exploring the Role of Adaptive Capacity on Democratic Performance

A Summary of Key Findings

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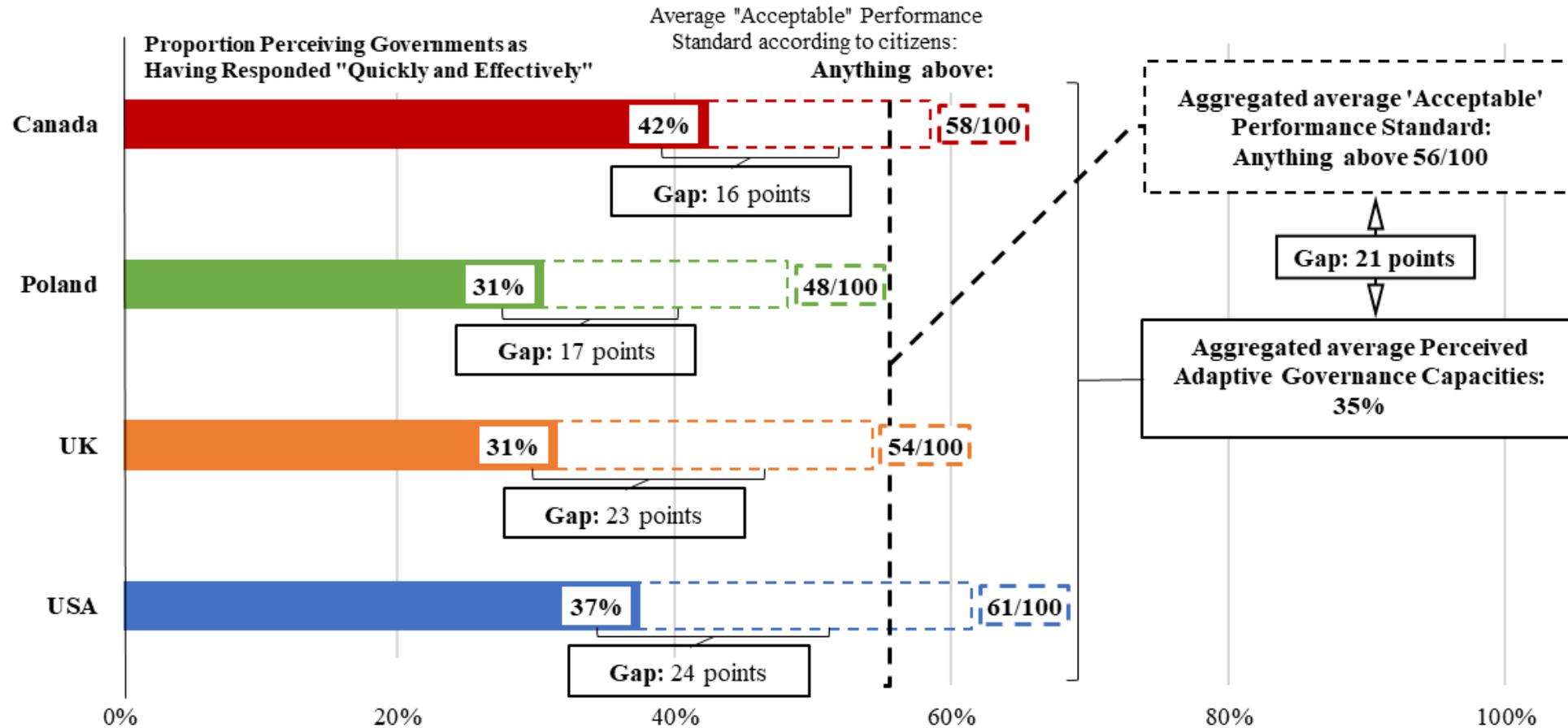
Comparing Perceptions of Governments' Adaptive Capacities Overall during the COVID Crisis to Citizens' Performance Standards

Data Sources (and samples): 2023-24 Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP): Adaptive Democracy - Canada (n=2,303-2,407) / Poland (n=2,364-2,438) / UK (n=2,307-2,391) / USA (n=2,355-2,433)

Question: "We are interested in your perceptions on the speed and effectiveness of governments' reactions to these EVENTS/PHENOMENA: On scales ranging from 0 to 10, please tell us how quickly and effectively you think governments responded? 0 = Responded very slowly/Not at all effectively; and 10 = Responded very quickly/Extremely effectively" Responses displayed represent that scored responses with 7/10 or above.

Comparing Perceptions of Governments' Adaptive Capacities Overall during the COVID Crisis to Citizens' Performance Standards
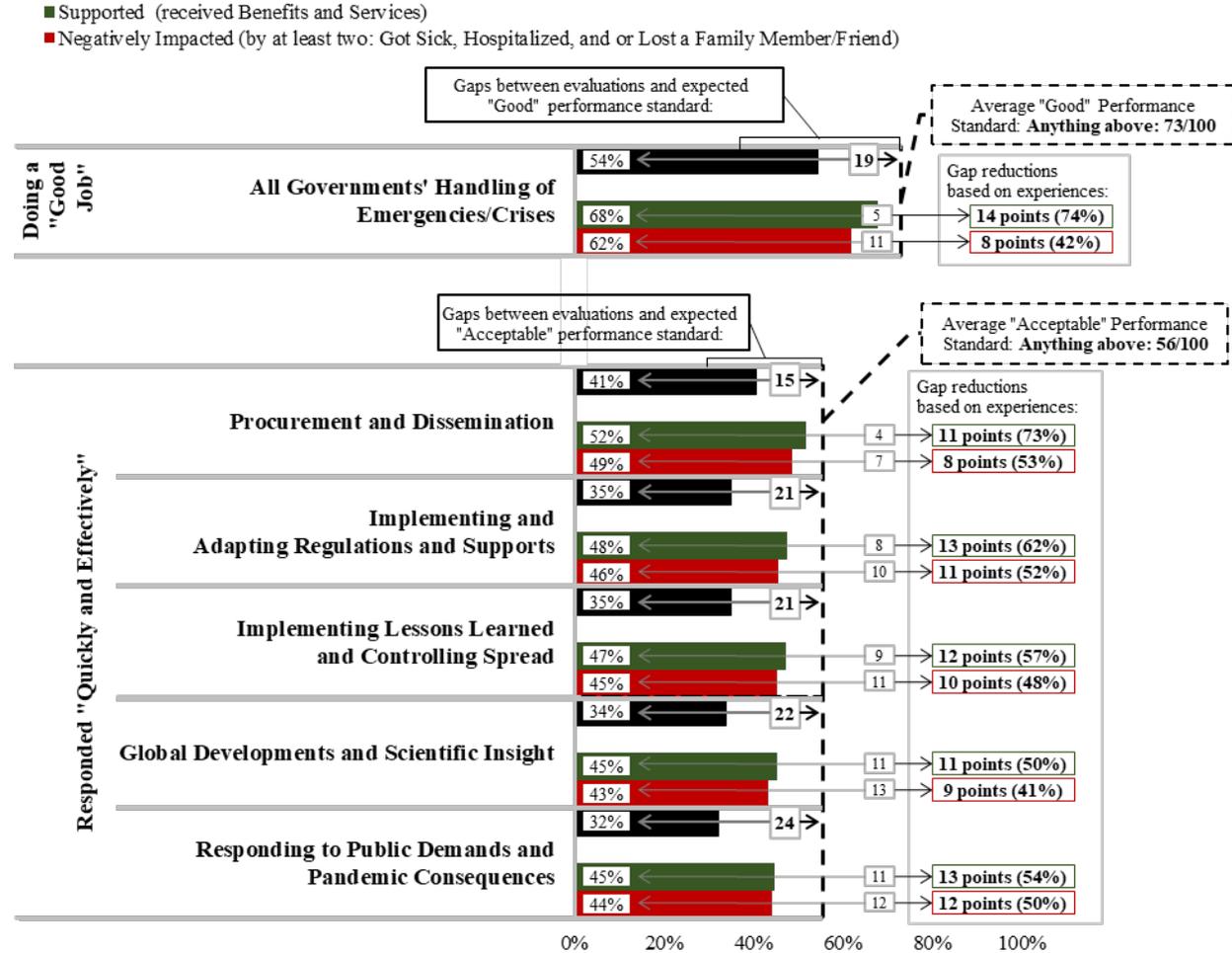
Data Sources (and samples): 2023-24 Political Communities Survey Project (PCSP): Adaptive Democracy - Canada (n=365-2,407) / Poland (n=326-2,438) / UK (n=355-2,391) / USA (n=477-2,433).

Questions: Additive indices based on responses to the following question: "How good a job has the [FEDERAL] [PROVINCIAL (or TERRITORIAL)] [MUNICIPAL] / [REPUBLIC OF POLAND] [REGIONAL/VOIVODESHIP)] [CITY or TOWN] / [UK] [HOME NATION/CONSTITUENT COUNTRY's)] [LOCAL] / [FEDERAL] [STATE)] [CITY or TOWN] government done of ...'Responding to emergencies and crises'" Response categories include: "Very good (1)", "Good (.66)", "Not good (.33)", "Not good at all (0)". Responses displayed represent those with scores .60 and above when responses on question at three levels of government in each country are added together. Additive indices based on responses to the following question: "We are interested in your perceptions on the speed and effectiveness of governments' reactions to these EVENTS/PHENOMENA: On scales ranging from 0 to 10, please tell us how quickly and effectively you think governments responded? 0 = Responded very slowly/Not at all effectively; and 10 = Responded very quickly/Extremely effectively" Responses displayed represent proportions that scored a 7/10 or above. All category proportions are based on aggregated average results across the four countries.

Intra-Organization Recommendations to Boost Adaptive Capacity

Recommendation	Capacity Components	Possible Trade-Offs
Develop a virtual client platform *Cost:* $$ *Effort:* 🏋️🏋️	🅒Innovation 🆂Flexibility	Reduced ability to understand the whole person's needs Digital poverty/ exclusion
Implement hybrid work models for employees that balance organizational, employee, and client need, which can enable seamless transition to fully in-person or fully virtual as needed *Cost:* $$ *Effort:* 🏋️🏋️	🅒Motivation 🆂Flexibility	Diminished whole team dynamics
Hybrid or virtual volunteer opportunities *Cost:* $ *Effort:* 🏋️🏋️	🅒Innovation 🆂Flexibility	Volunteers may lack strong connective commitment
Recognise 'unofficial' leaders *Cost:* $ *Effort:* 🏋️🏋️	🅒Learning 🆂Multiplexity	Boost morale at the risk of not recognizing everyone
Mental health support services for NPO organizations, volunteers and staff. *Cost:* $$$ *Effort:* 🏋️🏋️	🅒Learning 🅒Responsiveness	High cost of care and breaking mental health stigma
Consider making space for creativity/innovation *Cost:* $ *Effort:* 🏋️	🅒Innovation	Time intensive if left unstructured; restrictive if over-structured
Crosstrain staff across functions and/or divisions *Cost:* $$ *Effort:* 🏋️	🆂Redundancy	High cost of duplication with uncertain return on investment

Inter-Organizational Recommendations to Boost Adaptive Capacity

Recommendation	Capacity Components	Possible Trade-Offs
Establish a virtual community of practice *Cost:* $ *Effort:*	ⓒInnovation ⓢMultiplexity	Time removed from core organizational functions
Invest in sustainable cooperative and collaborative relationships *Cost:* $$$ *Effort:*	ⓒLearning ⓢ Multiplexity ⓡ Resources	High costs can take funds aware from immediate needs
Virtual training platform shared across the sector *Cost:* $$$ *Effort:*	ⓒInnovation ⓢFlexibility ⓒLearning	High cost associated with development of a training platform that includes accountability for competency development
Create a volunteer sharing platform *Cost:* $$$ *Effort:*	ⓒInnovation ⓢMultiplexity	Enhance volunteer awareness of the broader social service sector at the risk of diluting individual commitment to any single organization.
Campaign for longer term funding and reduced bureaucracy in funding applications *Cost:* $$ *Effort:*	ⓡ Resources ⓢFlexibility	Requires utilization of significant political capital due achieve governance objectives
Implement leadership training for organization leaders across the sector *Cost:* $$ *Effort:*	ⓛLeadership ⓒLearning	Enables a community of practice for top organizational leaders but risks creation of leadership cliques
Assign tasks to Social Welfare Centers in case of emergency/crisis *Cost:* $ *Effort:*	ⓢStructural	Multi-sector conflicts can destabilize resident support systems