

Toronto women are more progressive than men

IDEOLOGY from IN1

The data has exposed both divisions and commonalities along geographic, age, gender and other demographic lines. The conclusion: Torontonians have more in common than we may think.

“The most striking point we saw was . . . we are actually not as divided as we are told we are,” says Clifton van der Linden, founder of Toronto-based Vox Pop Labs. “There are extreme groups on both sides of the spectrum, but most of us fall somewhere in the middle, and most of the groups overlap each other in at least some aspect of their ideological perspective.

“I don’t want to paint this picture that we are a homogenous, like-minded group of people or that harmony is achieved by homogeneity. What I’m saying is that we can find points of common values and common interests at least as often as we can find points of difference.”

The data confirmed the existence of a political divide between downtown and the suburbs, with more left-leaning wards in the downtown core and more right-leaning wards in the suburbs (although each of the eight ideological types was represented in every ward). More surprising, however, were the contrasts in perspective between men and women.

“The gender differences in the city of Toronto are at times stark,” van der Linden says. Men and women were most polarized on issues of marriage, unions and gender, with men generally taking the more conservative positions.

In terms of age, 18- to 29-year-olds, a subset of the millennial generation, held views that set them apart from other age groups. They are more radical and substantially more supportive of multiculturalism than are older residents.

“It may be a generational effect, with young people being more open to change and less risk averse,” says van der Linden. “Or it may have something to do with coming of age in the 21st century.”

The political scientists at Vox Pop Labs were encouraged by the willingness of so many Torontonians to take the 15 minutes to respond to the Sentimeter’s challenging questions.

“I think 60,000 people engaging in this conversation is a very positive sign,” says van der Linden.

“There’s a political culture in Toronto by which we exaggerate our differences in a way that’s become increasingly polarizing, and it stifles honest dialogue. A better understanding of the perspectives of Torontonians helps us move beyond our bitter, divisive politics and start a conversation that engages meaningfully with people’s views on the issues that matter to them.”

Try the Political Sentimeter and find out where you fall among Toronto’s eight ideology groups. Visit sentimeter.thestar.com.

10 interesting things we learned

1. Younger citizens are more radical and less nationalistic than older citizens.
2. Both the oldest and the youngest citizens are more supportive of labour unions, wealth distribution policies and multicultural ideals than are middle-aged citizens.
3. On some social issues, there is a strong divide between downtown and suburban residents. The largest suburban-urban cleavage is on traditional family values and gender issues, with suburban citizens being much more conservative. For example, suburbanites are much more likely to agree that the traditional family unit is central to a well-functioning society, whereas opinion is mixed among urban Torontonians. A larger proportion of married couples with children in the suburbs might explain some of this variation.
4. Men are more likely than women to believe that marriage is not an outdated institution and much more likely to believe that traditional family structures are central to a well-functioning society.
5. Women are overwhelmingly more likely than men to believe that feminism is still relevant and that women who dress provocatively are not responsible for unwanted attention. The gender gap on these issues remains.
6. Women and men are polarized on issues of wealth distribution, the relevance of unions, the environment and multiculturalism. On all of these issues, women consistently take more progressive positions than men.
7. Christians and anglophones in Toronto are more individualistic than their non-Christian or non-anglophone counterparts.
8. The Danforth and Davenport neighbourhoods are the most left-leaning, while the most right-leaning wards are all in Etobicoke. Rob Ford’s ward is the eighth most conservative, while wards in Scarborough and North York are generally centrist.
9. While the ideological profile of Toronto’s wards is relatively consistent with voting behaviour in the recent mayoral election, there are notable exceptions. Mayor John Tory, who is generally seen as a right-leaning centrist, had the highest vote share in two of the most left-leaning wards: Toronto-Danforth and Beaches-East York. Doug Ford, a right-winger, received the highest vote share in two wards that are notably left-leaning, Scarborough East and Scarborough-Agincourt. Finally, of the three wards where Olivia Chow had the highest vote share, two are not especially left-leaning and one is further to the right than three of the wards Ford won.
10. Social Democratic Left is the most common ideological type in Toronto, with 25 per cent of residents falling into this category. This is a non-radical group characterized by a belief in the power of government to address inequality and injustice. They are concentrated in the downtown core. The second-most common type is Faith and Family Right, the most moderate of the right-leaning groups, which comprises 21 per cent of the city’s population. The highest concentrations of these Torontonians are in York and Scarborough. Laissez-faire Left, a socially progressive, fiscally conservative group that is spread across the city, follows with 18 per cent of Torontonians. The Heritage Right, a traditionally conservative, nationalistic group concentrated in Scarborough, is the next most common with 15 per cent.

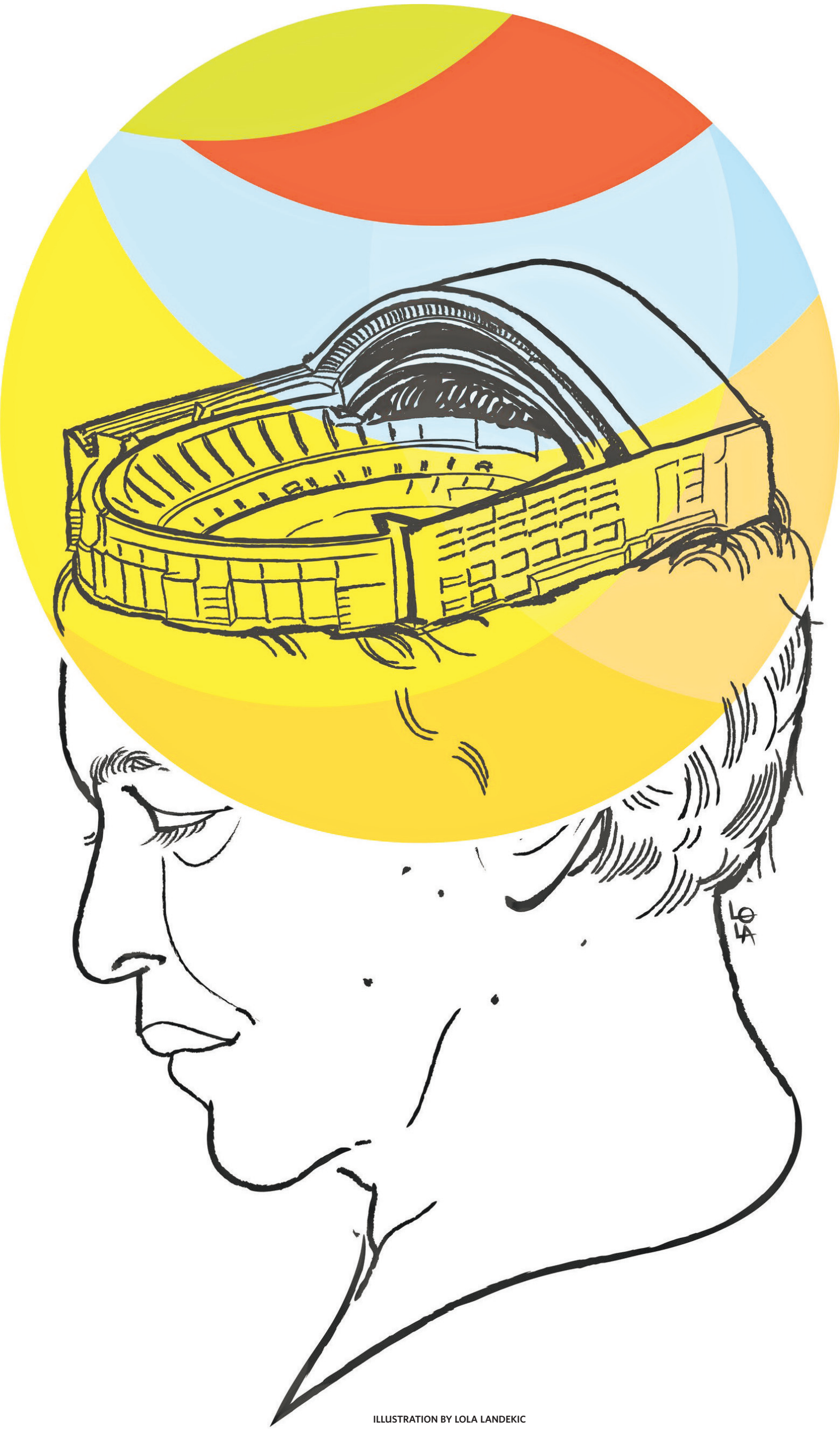


ILLUSTRATION BY LOLA LANDEKIC

Vito behaved like a man born into royalty

REVENGE from IN1

If permission were granted, Vito would have to travel with guards and he would most likely be handcuffed. Maybe he would be required to wear a bulletproof vest, too, like he had worn during his extradition to the United States. He would also have to pay his own travel costs, but that was no problem. Vito could afford to buy a fleet of jet craft and hire an army of guards.

In the days following the news, Vito phoned his wife, Giovanna, every chance he could. Many times, Vito had come home in the early hours of the morning smelling of wine and the perfume of a mistress, but there was never talk of their marriage ending. They had been man and wife for 43 years, and Nick Jr. had shared in that life together for 42 of them. Giovanna knew life was often hard, even for the powerful; she was the daughter of Leonardo Cammalleri, himself a Mafia killer who emigrated from the Sicilian province of Agrigento to Canada, in part to evade murder charges. But with Vito behind bars, Giovanna needed sedatives to sleep at night. And now things had got worse, as she undertook the worst task a mother can imagine: preparing the funeral of her child.

Vito also spoke with his mother, Liberta, who some thought was the true guiding

force in the family. In times of enormous stress and emotion, Zia (Aunt) Liberta betrayed the emotion of a sphinx. Vito’s father, Nicolo (Zio Cola, “Uncle Nick”) Rizzuto Sr., had moved up considerably in their world when he gained her hand in marriage over 60 years earlier. In fact, former Sicilian Mafia boss Tommaso Buscetta suspected that Nicolo was admitted to the Mafia out of respect for Liberta’s father, Antonino (Don Nino) Manno, one of those old Sicilian Mafia dons who managed to appear all-powerful and yet humble at the same time.

Zia Liberta’s name translated roughly to “Liberty,” and she certainly felt free to speak her mind. She and Nicolo raised Vito to be mindful that he was their only son and carried their expectations upon him, wherever he went and as long as he lived. Vito grew up in a culture where a dutiful son takes every action to save his mother’s pain, even if it means breaking the most serious laws in the Criminal Code. In Vito’s birthplace of Sicily, men might be the ones with their fingers on the triggers, but often it was the women who dictated the rhythms of a war, calling out for revenge for the deaths of their boys, husbands, fathers and brothers. There is no greater blow to a mob boss’s dignity than to sit at dinner and hear the family matriarch moan, “*No! man-*

giamo al tavolo e mio figlio mangia terra” (“We eat at the table and my son eats the earth”).

Vito also spoke repeatedly on the prison phone with his sister, Maria, and his two surviving children, both of whom worked as lawyers. Vito told each of them that he wanted to convince the warden to let him attend Nick Jr.’s funeral. They all came back strongly against this. It would be undignified, even dangerous. His presence would attract more media coverage. He would have to wear handcuffs. “There will be a guard with you.”

Helplessness was a fresh emotion for Vito. Although for decades he had been on the radar of more police projects than anyone could remember, this was his first prison stint. Vito was generally the one causing the tears and the funerals, and his underlings were the ones who got locked up. Just a few years before, the only thing in Montreal it seemed he didn’t control was the city’s nasty winters, and he routinely fled those for warm Caribbean climes, where he mingled business with pleasure on manicured golf courses with city bureaucrats, union and business bosses, Hells Angels and other Mafiosi. Vito was gliding through life at the top of a multi-million-dollar international empire of large-scale construction fraud, drug trafficking, extortion, brib-

ery, stock manipulation, loansharking and money laundering.

For all of Vito’s life, the ways of the underworld had been the natural order of things for him, with its cycles of murder and revenge. There had never been room for pacifists at the top level of the underworld, and no one doubted that Vito intended to please his mother and return to the upper echelon of what Montrealers called the milieu. Had he been free, an attack on Nick Jr. would have been unthinkable.

Vito’s father was a product of west Sicily, but he was himself a Canadian hybrid. A large part of his skill was the ability to pull together disparate North American groups who otherwise might have ignored or plotted against each other, such as rival Haitian street gangs, Hispanic cocaine traffickers, Montreal’s Irish West End gang, rival bikers in the Hells Angels and Rock Machine, and factions from the Sicilian Mafia, Calabrian-based Ndrangheta and American La Cosa Nostra. What Vito created was something wholly modern and New World and businesslike: a consortium. Under his leadership these criminal factions could pursue shared business interests, with Vito convincing them that there was enough cake for everyone to eat.

Just a few weeks before his January 2004

arrest, Vito had described his role in this milieu of multicultural criminals to Michel Auger, Quebec’s best-known crime reporter: “I’m a mediator. People come to me to solve disputes because they believe in me. They have respect in me.” That description was wholly true, although deliberately lacking in details. Vito preferred to speak with his intense brown eyes, expressive face and loaded body language. His very few words, such as what he uttered to Auger, were as accurate as a bullet from one of his hit men. Preferring to see himself as a gentleman and a man of destiny, he didn’t need to raise his voice or lose his temper to make life-altering—or ending—decisions. His demeanor was that of someone born into royalty, playing out a role that had been determined long before his conception. It was as though he were from the House of Rizzuto, not the Rizzuto crime family. And if survival for himself and his house meant killing others, then that was his destiny too.

Vito’s conversation with Auger took place in a hallway of a Montreal courtroom, not long after a Canadian government lawyer described him as “the godfather of the Italian Mafia in Montreal” in a court document. Vito scoffed at such a pronouncement, telling Paul Cherry of the Montreal Gazette that he played a more folksy role:

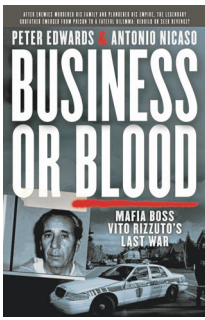


Vito Rizzuto, second from left, with the Mob hit team that rubbed out three New York Mob captains. The murders were featured in the movie *Donnie Brasco*.

“I’m the jack of all trades.”

Whatever his title, it had been an honour in the milieu to kill for Vito. The ultimate honour, however, was to share a round of golf with him at top country clubs in Montreal, Toronto and the Caribbean. Inside the prison doors at Florence, however, confined to a cell the size of one of his old walk-in closets, Vito was just U.S. Federal Inmate 04307-748, stripped of all his personal possessions save his wedding ring. Visits were restricted to office hours between Monday and Friday, but it didn’t matter much: so far from Montreal, no one was coming to see him.

The power Vito had wielded in Montreal meant virtually nothing to his fellow prisoners. Other inmates in Florence had in-



Business or Blood: Mafia Boss Vito Rizzuto's Last War by Peter Edwards and Antonio Nicaso examines the life of Vito Rizzuto, once Canada’s most powerful Mob boss.

cluded American domestic terrorist Timothy McVeigh, before his execution by lethal injection, and numerous 9/11 Al Qaeda terrorists, as well as a nasty grab bag of white supremacists and members of Mexican-American gangs, such as the Nuestra Fami-

lia street gang. McVeigh and some of the prisoners within the concrete and steel walls of the neighbouring super-max facility were guilty of attempts to change American history in a profoundly bad way. For all the blood on his hands, Vito had taken pains to confine his violence to the underworld. When one gangster pulled the trigger on another in Vito’s milieu, police routinely joked it was urban renewal or the street equivalent of a self-cleaning oven.

If some of Vito’s fellow prisoners knew anything about him, they had most likely heard that he was a triggerman back in 1981 in the Brooklyn murders of three upstart captains of the Bonanno crime family. That event was hard to ignore, since it had been re-enacted, with dramatic embellishments, in *Donnie Brasco*, the blockbuster 1997 movie starring Johnny Depp and Al Pacino.

Other inmates in Florence certainly would have paid more attention to Vito had they known of his linchpin role in the importation of narcotics into North America. Getting close to Vito meant the opportunity to quickly become a millionaire. The Port of Montreal is one of the two vital entry points for drugs bound for the United States, and Vito had more control over it than anyone else. Once the drugs reached Montreal, Vito’s people had to worry about little more than speed limits as they drove the narcotics through back roads and into New York City, the world’s top market for cocaine.

The other key entry point for American-bound drugs is the border at Ciudad Jua-

rez, Mexico, which sits across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Tex. Vito’s rivals in the Calabrian Ndrangheta worked with Mexican cartels to control Juarez, considered one of the world’s most dangerous cities. El Paso sits on Highway 10, which connects the desert city directly to the continent’s major drug markets. Most enticing are the profits awaiting in New York City, just 3,315 kilometres (2,060 miles) of open road ahead. Despite the southern competition for Vito, leaders at both ends of the continent were still growing rich.

But none of the old competition mattered after Vito got the news about his son. Aside from trying to arrange his trip to the funeral, there was little Vito could do. How could he soothe his family from so far away? And how could his family comfort him? He lust-ed for revenge, but he didn’t even know whom to blame. Was his family under attack from outlaw bikers, the Irish or Italian Mafias, Haitian street gangs, francophone criminals or some combination of the above?

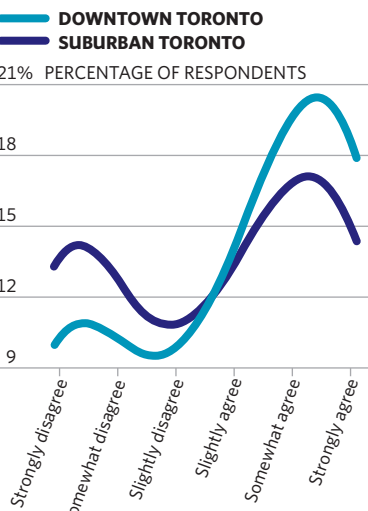
For the time being, all Vito could do was grieve alone in his cell, rising before six a.m. for breakfast, building wooden office chairs for \$10 per hour and plotting against an invisible enemy.

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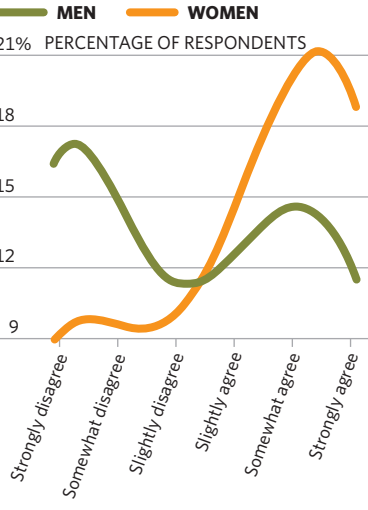
In perspective

The following charts show how Torontonians responded to a series of statements on social issues from the Political Sentimeter.

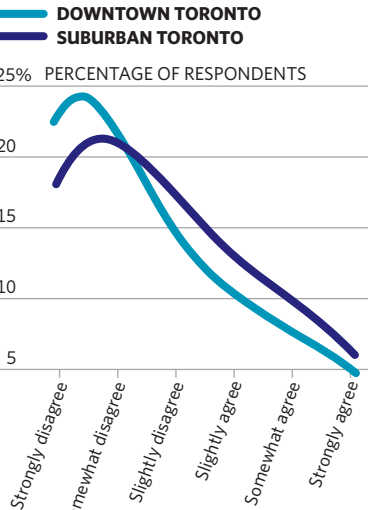
STATEMENT: There are more than two genders.



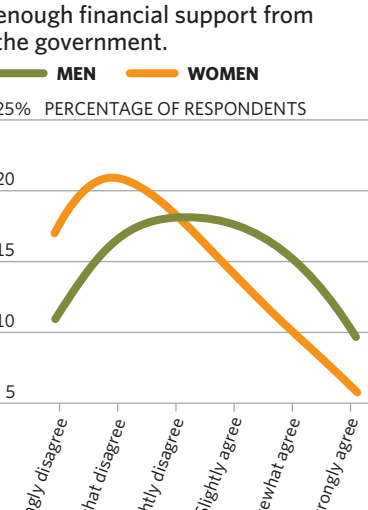
STATEMENT: There are more than two genders.



STATEMENT: Today’s society doesn’t need feminism.



STATEMENT: People living on low incomes in Toronto receive enough financial support from the government.



SOURCE: Vox Pop Labs
TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC