

FOCUS
CANADA

2025 FALL
SERIES

Canadian public opinion about

Immigration & Refugees

**Environics
Institute**
For Survey Research

TED
ROGERS
SCHOOL
OF MANAGEMENT

DiVERSITY
INSTITUTE



Century
Initiative | Initiative
du Siècle

Environics Institute

For Survey Research

The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.

environicsinstitute.org

info@environicsinstitute.org

701-33 Bloor Street East
Toronto, ON M4W 3H1



The Diversity Institute conducts and coordinates multi-disciplinary, multi-stakeholder research to address the needs of diverse Canadians, the changing nature of skills and competencies, and the policies, processes and tools that advance economic inclusion and success. Our action-oriented, evidence-based approach is advancing knowledge of the complex barriers faced by under-represented groups, leading practices to effect change, and producing concrete results.

torontomu.ca/diversity

diversityinstitute@torontomu.ca



Century Initiative is a national, non-partisan charity shaping a bigger, bolder Canada. Through leading research and convening, we champion data-driven solutions for responsible population growth, advocate for long-term planning, and drive bold policies that secure Canada's future.

centuryinitiative.ca

info@centuryinitiative.ca



FOCUS CANADA

As part of its Focus Canada public opinion research program (launched in 1976), the Environics Institute updated its research on immigration and refugees. This survey was conducted in partnership with the Diversity Institute at Toronto Metropolitan University, and with the ongoing support of the Century Initiative.

The survey is based on telephone interviews conducted (via landline and cellphones) with 2,004 Canadians between September 8 and 21, 2025. A sample of this size drawn from the population produces results accurate to within plus or minus 2.2 percentage points in 19 out of 20 samples. All results are presented as percentages, unless otherwise noted.

For more information about this research, contact [Dr. Keith Neuman](#).

Contents

Executive Summary	1
General context	3
Overall level of immigration	6
Economic contribution of immigration	9
Refugee policy	10
Integration of immigrants into society.....	11
Local impacts of immigration	14
What makes Canada unique.....	17

Executive summary

2025 has been an especially challenging year for Canada, and for the global world order. The return of Donald Trump as US President up-ended the historically-close relationship between these two North American neighbours, placing unprecedented pressure on Canada's political sovereignty and economy. In response, Canadians reelected a Liberal government with a new Prime Minister who is now focused on managing the challenges emanating from Washington and strengthening ties with other allies.

The country has long relied on a robust stream of new immigrants to maintain population growth and support a growing economy. But in recent years the system has struggled to manage a larger inflow of newcomers, prompting increasing public concerns about the country's capacity to welcome large numbers of permanent residents, temporary residents and refugees. The federal government responded in fall 2024 by sharply reducing immigration levels and incorporating temporary residents into the plans, but the public-at-large has yet to regain its confidence in how the system is being managed, and the issue is increasingly becoming politicized.

A majority of Canadians continue to say there is too much immigration, but opinions have stabilized since 2024 following a sharp increase over the two previous years. Those who express this view increasingly point to poor government management as the problem.

In 2025, more than half of Canadians (56%) believe the country accepts too many immigrants, but this percentage has levelled off from a year ago (down 2 percentage points), following a dramatic increase over the two previous years (2022-2024). This sentiment continues to reflect the majority view across most parts of the country, with some shifts over the past year: In central Canada, belief in too much immigration has increased in Quebec, while declining in Ontario; in the Prairies, this sentiment is now much less evident than a year ago in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while rising in Alberta (where two-thirds now agree there is too much immigration). As in previous surveys, there is little difference in the perspectives of people who are first-generation and those born in Canada.

Canadians who say the country is accepting too many immigrants cite various reasons for expressing this view, but over the past year there is increasing emphasis placed on the system being poorly managed by government. Other concerns about immigration continue to focus on the negative impact on jobs and the economy, added pressure on housing prices and availability, over-population, and straining already-stretched public finances. As before, those who believe there is too much immigration are much less likely to point to it as a threat to Canada's (or Quebec's) culture and values, as a security or public health risk, or a problem with too many international students.

An increasing number of Canadians express concerns about the legitimacy of some refugees and how newcomers are integrating into society. A significant minority continue to agree that immigrants lead to more crime and that the country admits too many racial minorities.

While opinions about immigration levels have stabilized since 2024, there continues to be increasing concern among some about who is being admitted into the country. Increasing proportions of Canadians now agree that many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees (43%, up 3 points from 2024) and that too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values (60%, up 3); in both cases the uptick is relatively small but builds on a similar increase over the previous year.

As well, significant minorities of Canadians continue to express concerns about immigrants in other ways. More than one-third (36%) agree that immigrants increase the level of crime in Canada, and that the country accepts too many from racial minority groups (39%). In both cases these proportions are unchanged from 2024, but still reflect a stronger sentiment of xenophobia than has been recorded over the past decade (although still less evident than in the 1990s). Notably, opinions on these questions do not vary between racialized Canadians and those who identify as white.

Public concerns about newcomers notwithstanding, Canadians continue to recognize the positive contribution of immigration to the national economy and their local communities. Eight in ten believe people born abroad are as likely as native-born Canadians to be good citizens.

While many Canadians are either uncomfortable or outright opposed to the country's current immigration policies, there is also widespread recognition of how newcomers make important contributions to the country. Seven in ten (70%) agree that immigrants have a positive impact on the national economy, with this proportion reflecting a minor uptick reversing a two-year decline. At the local level, three quarters of Canadians say that immigrants make their own communities a better place (29%) or have no net effect good or bad (47%), compared with just 15 percent who believe newcomers make their communities worse.

Canadians continue to define their country's uniqueness first and foremost in terms of its multiculturalism, diversity and tolerance, ahead of such attributes as the land, democratic freedoms, natural resources or universal health care. As well, eight in ten say that someone born outside Canada is just as likely to be a good citizen of this country as someone born here.

The most significant change in public opinion over the past year is the widening partisan divide. Federal Conservative Party supporters are increasingly critical of immigration and its impacts on the country, and account for most if not all of the negative trend recorded over the past year.

The past 25 years has witnessed a growing political divide over the issue of immigration in Canada, and this gap has accelerated over the past year. Federal Conservative Party supporters are now, by far, the most critical and negative group of Canadians on this issue, and have become measurably more so on almost every measure on this year's survey. The gap between their perspective and that of supporters of the federal Liberals and NDP is now the largest recorded on Focus Canada surveys (since 1977), and points to immigration as one of the primary dividing lines in Canadian politics today.

General context

Canadians are more positive than a year ago about the direction of the country, but continue to focus on economic concerns, including the high cost of living and housing affordability. A growing majority believes Canada's economy is getting weaker.

General direction of the country. Public opinion on immigration can be understood in the context of broader trends taking place over the past year. A spring federal election gave the country a reelected Liberal government and a new Prime Minister who to date is governing in a much different way than his predecessor. Mark Carney's primary focus has been on managing the dramatic change in Canada-US relations instigated by President Donald Trump, along with building stronger connections with other allies abroad and tackling economic challenges at home.

Canadians' general feeling about the direction of their country remains more negative than positive, but this gap has narrowed over the past 12 months. Just over four (42%) now say they are satisfied with the way things are going in our country (but up 7 percentage points from September 2024), compared with half (50%) who express dissatisfaction (down 7). The remainder (8%) have no clear opinion either way.

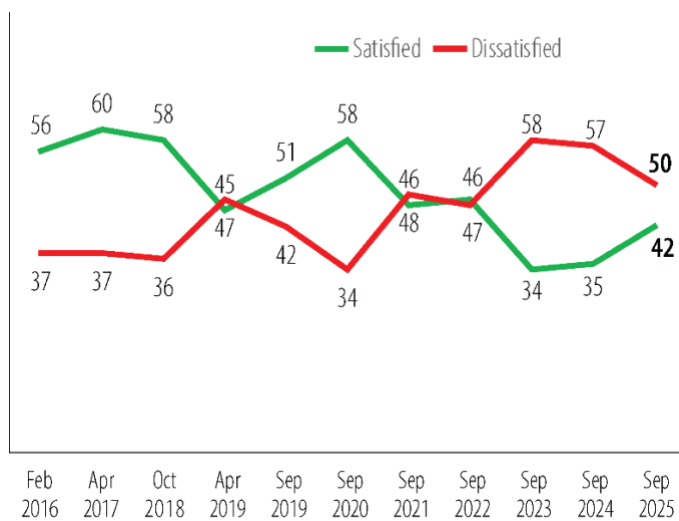
This improvement notwithstanding, Canadians' opinion about their country's direction remains more negative than it has been for most of the past decade.

The national uptick in satisfaction with the direction of the country is evident across the population, with the exception of Quebecers (46%, down 2 from 2024), who are still among the most positive. The most noticeable improvement is recorded in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (47%, up 25), reversing a previous decline over the prior year. Opinions on this question do not vary noticeably by age, education, household income, gender or generation living in Canada.

As might be expected, Canadians who support the governing Liberal Party express the strongest satisfaction with the direction of the country (63%, up 2 points since 2024), with this view being least apt to be shared by those who would vote for the federal Conservative Party (18%; but marks an improvement from a year ago (up 5)). In between these two extreme positions are those who support the federal NDP (48%, up 4) or Bloc Québécois (43%, down 8).

Overall are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in your country today?

% 2016 – 2025



Q.1 Overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?

Most important problem facing Canadians today. What do Canadians see “top of mind” as the most pressing problems facing the country today (asked unprompted, with only one response recorded)?¹ As is in the past, the public identifies a number of issues that concern them, and in 2025 the focus has remained largely the same as over the previous two years, with one notable addition.

Canadians are most likely to identify the top issue to be inflation or the cost of living (16%), followed by the economy and unemployment (16%) and affordable housing (11%); these have been the top three issues named since 2023. New in 2025 is the unprecedented threat to the country’s sovereignty and economy presented by Donald Trump and his aggressive foreign policy featuring significant tariffs on imported goods from Canada and elsewhere (mentioned by 10%).

Immigration is named as the most important national issue by only seven percent. But this percentage has been increasing since 2022, and is now the largest yet recorded on Focus Canada. Other important problems identified by fewer than one in ten include health care (8%), poor government leadership (8%), and the environment and climate change (3%).

Most important problem facing Canadians today?								
% 2018 – 2025 Top mentions – unprompted								
	Oct 2018	Oct 2019	Oct 2020	Sep 2021	Sep 2022	Sep 2023	Sep 2024	Sep 2025
Inflation / cost of living / gas prices	4	8	1	3	22	24	22	16
Economy / interest rates / unemployment	18	14	17	10	12	13	14	16
Affordable housing	–	–	1	5	6	14	12	11
Donald Trump / U.S. trade policy / tariffs	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	10
Health care	9	9	7	9	15	9	11	8
Poor government leadership	8	8	8	7	7	8	9	8
Immigration / refugees	5	2	1	1	1	2	4	7
Environment / climate change	10	24	5	13	10	8	5	3

Q.2 In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing Canadians today?

Public focus on most important issues is largely similar across the country with modest regional variation. Concerns about Donald Trump and US policy are most evident among Canadians 60 plus, and Liberal Party supporters. Immigration as a top national issue is most prominent among Conservative Party supporters (16%, up 9 points since 2024), and to a lesser extent among men (10%, up 5) and residents of the country’s largest cities (10%, up 5).

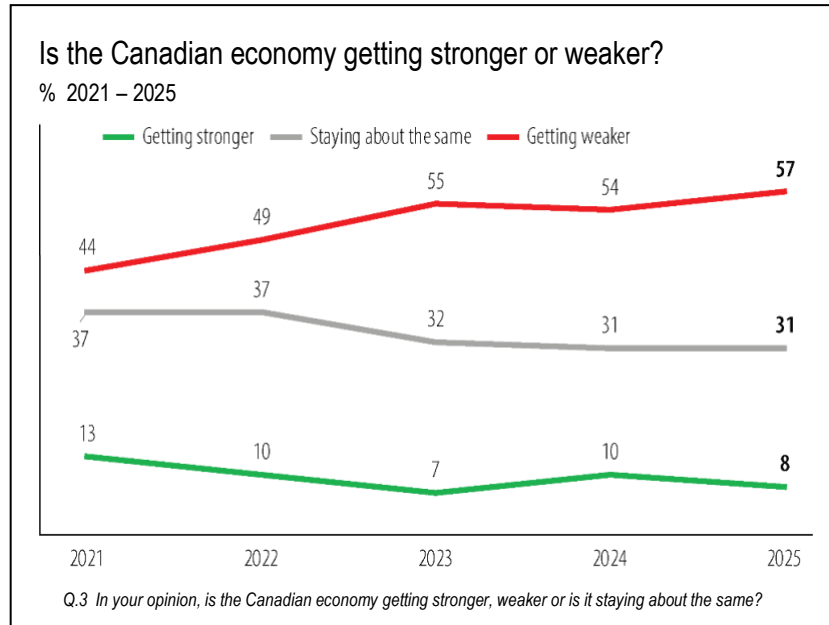
¹ This question asks for and only accepts one response (*the* most important issue), as a measure the relative salience of problems. A different question allowing for multiple responses would result in Canadians identifying more than one problem as important ones facing the country.

Direction of the Canadian economy. While Canadians are now somewhat more positive about the direction of their country overall, they express increasing concern about the country's economy. A rising majority (57%) believe the Canadian economy is growing weaker (up 3 points from 2024), compared with fewer than one in ten (8%, down 2) who say it is getting stronger. A steady one in three (31%) believe the economy is staying the same (31%) or offer no opinion (4%). This marks the most negative public assessment of the national economy since 2021 (when Focus Canada re-introduced this indicator).

This gloomy perspective is generally shared across the country. No more than one in six in any group believes the Canadian economy is improving, and in each case worsening conditions is the strong plurality or majority view.

Over the past year, public sentiments have improved somewhat in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, while declining in Quebec and Ontario.

A pessimistic outlook on the national economy is most pronounced among federal Conservative Party supporters (77% say it is getting weaker, up 4 from 2024), but this view is increasingly shared by those who would vote for the Liberal Party (41%, up 11).

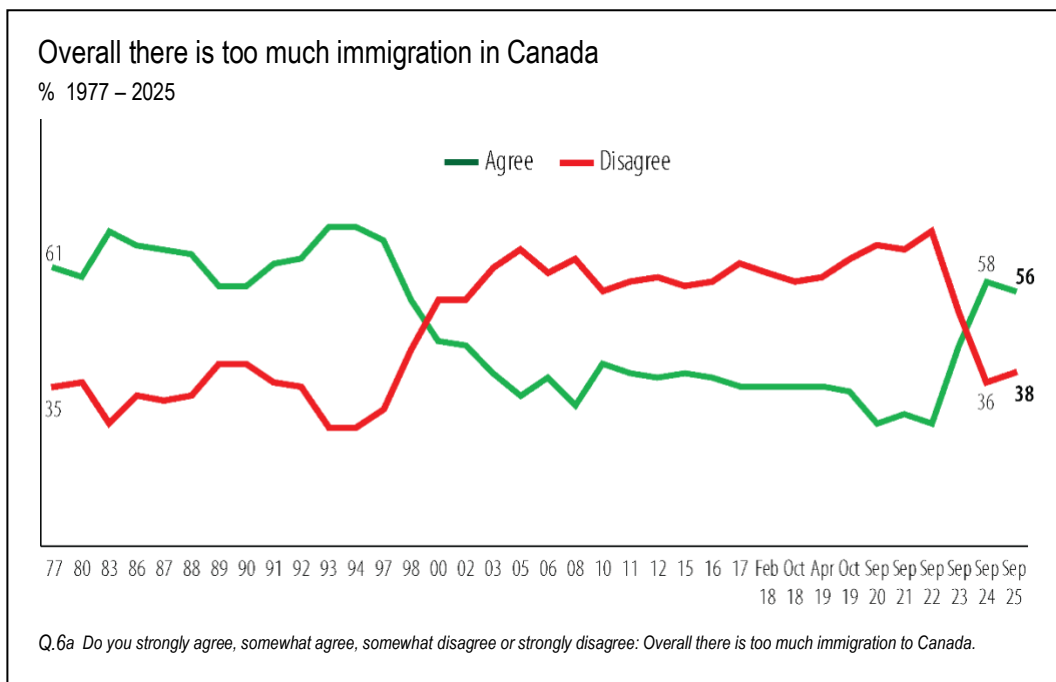


Overall level of immigration

A majority of Canadians continue to say there is too much immigration, but opinions have stabilized since 2024 following a sharp increase over the two previous years. Those who express this view increasingly point to poor government management of the immigration system.

Agree-Disagree: “Overall, there is too much immigration to Canada.” In 2024, almost six in ten Canadians agreed with this statement about the country accepting too many immigrants, marking a dramatic two year rise to a majority view not recorded since the early 1990s. This sharp upward trend has levelled off over the past year.

A marginally reduced majority continue to strongly (32%) or somewhat (24%) agree there is too much immigration to Canada (down 2 percentage points from 2024), interrupting the dramatic two-year growth in this opinion. Just under four in ten now somewhat (20%) or strongly (18%) disagree with this statement (up 2 points). The remainder neither agree nor disagree (3%) or offer no opinion (3%).



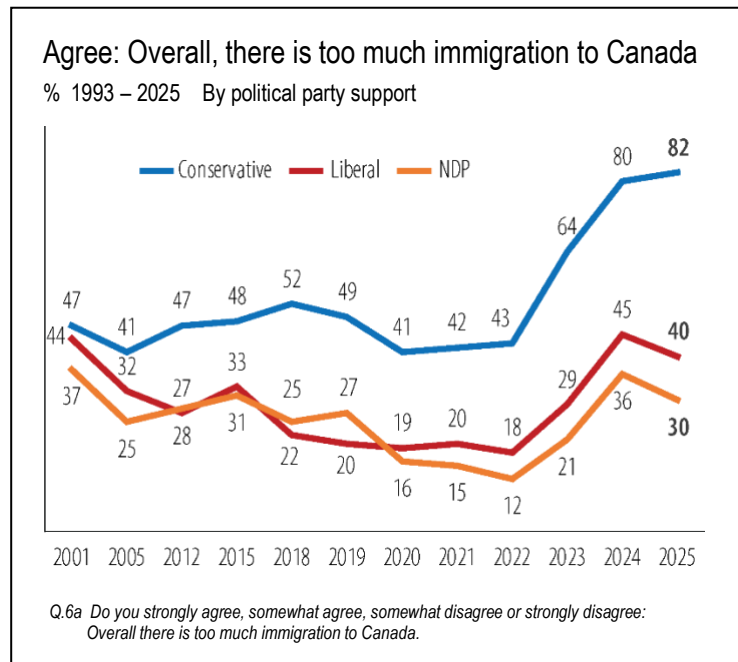
Public agreement that there is too much immigration to Canada continues to be the majority view across most of the country, with some shifts in degree over the past year. In eastern Canada, the view that there is too much immigration has increased in Quebec (51%, up 5) while declining in Ontario (58%, down 5) and Atlantic Canada (51%, down 5). Since 2024, there has been a significant divergence in the Prairie provinces, with a sharp decline in agreement with the statement in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (48%, down 20, reversing a previous upward trend), and an increase in Alberta (67%, up 4); these neighbouring provinces now reflect the most and least positive opinion about immigration levels.

Men continue to be more critical of current immigration levels, compared with women. There is now little difference in the opinions by age cohorts, and between Canadians who are first-generation and those born in Canada.

The most notable change over the past year is how immigration continues to grow as a polarized issue dividing Canadians across political party lines. A quarter century ago Canadians across the political spectrum generally agreed about immigration levels; today this division is the largest yet recorded, and immigration appears to be one of the defining issues of party affiliation.

More than eight in ten (82%) supporters of the federal Conservative Party now agree there is too much immigration to Canada (up 2 points from 2024). In contrast, this view is shared by declining minorities of those who support the Liberal Party (40%, down 5) or NDP (30%, down 6).

The magnitude of this gap is most clearly reflected in the difference in proportions who feel *strongly* about there being too much immigration: 59% among Conservatives supporters, compared with 16% among Liberal voters and 12% among those who would vote for the NDP.



As with Quebec generally, Bloc Québécois supporters are more likely than in 2024 to agree there is too much immigration to Canada (57%, up 7), but the proportion who *strongly agree* is now lower (16%, down 4).

Reasons for too much immigration. Those who agree with the statement that Canada accepts too many immigrants were asked why they believe this (in an open-ended question, without offering prompting response options). Since 2022 several reasons have been offered for this opinion, and in most cases the emphasis given to each is largely the same as before.

But one of these reasons is continuing to build in the public's mind. Those who agree there is too much immigration to Canada are now most likely to say this is because it being poorly managed by government (33%, up 12 points since 2024, following a 10 point increase over the previous year). This sentiment has increased across the country, but most noticeably in Ontario (36%, up 15 points) and B.C. (32%, up 16).

Other common reasons given for concerns about immigration levels are because it is bad for the economy (31%, up 2), because newcomers are placing additional pressure on the availability and affordability of housing (27%, down 6), because of over-population (22%, down 3) or because immigrants place a drain on public finances (20%, unchanged).

In comparison, fewer Canadians now express concerns about immigration levels because it threaten Canadian or Quebec culture (13%, up 2, but down 7 points in Quebec and reversing a previous upward trend), because immigrants pose a risk to public health (5%, up 1) or security (5%, up 2), or because there are too many foreign students coming to study at Canadian universities and colleges (4%, up 1).

While opinions about immigration are sharply polarized, there is notable agreement across party lines among those who agree that Canada is admitting too many immigrants. Concerns about poor government management are equally likely to be mentioned by supporters of the federal Liberal (34%) and Conservative (32%) parties, and it is among the former where this view has increased the most over the past year.

Why there is too much immigration to Canada

2022 - 2025 Those who agree there is too much immigration - Unprompted responses

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Immigration is poorly managed by government / lack of screening	13	10	21	33
Bad for the economy / take jobs from other Canadians	21	25	29	31
Immigrants place pressure on housing prices / supply	15	38	33	27
Over-population / already too many people in Canada	19	19	25	22
Immigrants are a drain on public finances / cost too much	23	25	20	20
Threat to Canadian / Quebec culture (identity / language / values)	24	8	10	13
Immigrants are a public health risk / COVID-19 threat	1	1	4	5
Immigrants are a security risk / risk of terrorism / extremism	3	4	3	5
Too many foreign students	*	4	3	4
Other reasons	5	3	5	5

Q.7 Why do you say there is too much immigration to Canada?

Economic contribution of immigration

Seven in ten Canadians continue believe that immigration contributes to the country's economy, with this view having stabilized following a two year decline.

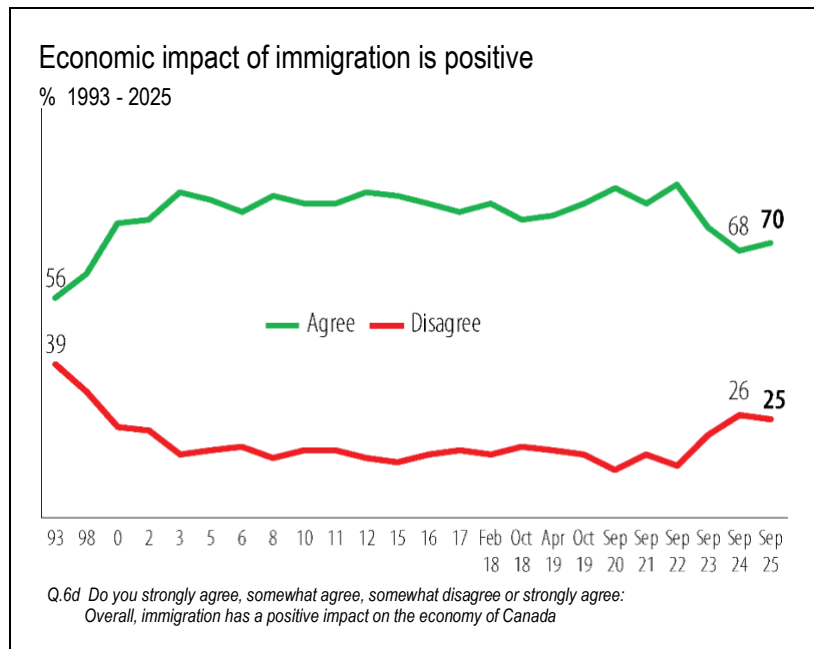
Agree-Disagree: *"Overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Canada."* Canadian public support for immigration has relied in large part on the belief that it is important if not essential to the country's economy, in terms of supporting population growth, importing needed skills and filling jobs that others might not take. Confidence in the economic contribution of immigration has eroded over the past couple of years along with rising concern about immigration levels, but this trend has now stabilized.

Seven in ten Canadians now strongly (34%) or somewhat (36%) agree with the statement about immigration having a positive impact on the country's economy, up 2 percentage points from 2024, following a steady decline dating back to 2022. One quarter now somewhat (12%) or strongly (13%) disagree with the statement, down 2 points, but still at its highest level since the late 1990s.

Opinions on this question are generally similar across the country, with a clear majority in most identifiable groups expressing agreement about the economic contribution of immigration. Since a year ago, this view has strengthened most noticeably in B.C. (74%, up 8).

Strong agreement with this statement remains most widespread among Canadians with a university education (43%), first generation Canadians (47%) and supporters of the federal Liberal Party (49%) and NDP (53%); in all cases these percentages are up by several points over the past year.

Strong agreement with this positive contribution of immigration is least likely to be shared by those who would vote for the federal Conservative Party (16%, down 5), compared with close to half (45%) of this group who somewhat or strongly disagree that immigration is good for the Canadian economy (up 6).

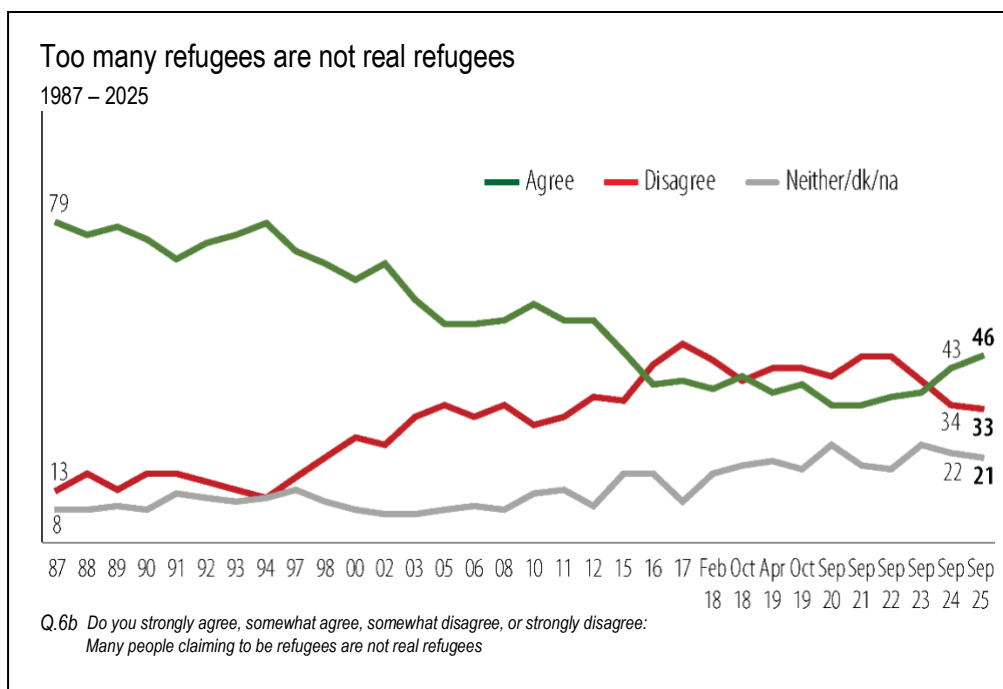


Refugee policy

An increasing plurality of Canadians believe that some people claiming to be refugees are not legitimate. This view has strengthened over the past year in Atlantic Canada, Quebec and B.C., but it is federal Conservative Party supporters who are most in agreement with this sentiment.

Agree-Disagree: *“Many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees.”* Refugees make up a very small proportion of newcomers arriving in Canada each year, but public concerns about immigration levels generally are contributing to heightened scrutiny about who is arriving, including refugees.

A rising plurality of Canadians now strongly (23%) or somewhat (23%) agree with the statement that *“many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees”*, up three points from 2024 and continuing an upward trajectory dating back to 2021 (when only 34% shared this view). One in three somewhat (17%) or strongly (16%) disagree (down 1), with another one in five (21%) who do not have a clear opinion on this question (down 1).



Across the country, agreement about some refugees not being legitimate has increased noticeably over the past year in Atlantic Canada (40%, up 9), Quebec (43%, up 5) and B.C. (45%, up 9), as well as among men and Canadians with the most education and income. As well, there is now a growing age gap on this issue, with concerns about refugees increasing among Canadians 60 plus (51%, up 5) and declining among those 18 to 29 (34%, down 4).

As on immigration levels, opinions about the legitimacy of refugees increasingly divides along partisan political lines. Seven in ten (71%) Conservative Party supporters now agree with the statement (up 12 since 2024; with strong agreement up 10 points to 43%). This view is shared by much smaller proportions of Canadians who would vote for the federal Liberals (33%, up 1) or NDP (21%, down 6). In Quebec, more than four in ten (44%) of BQ supporters agree with the statement questioning the legitimacy of some refugees (up 10 points from a year ago), but few in this group strongly agree (13%).

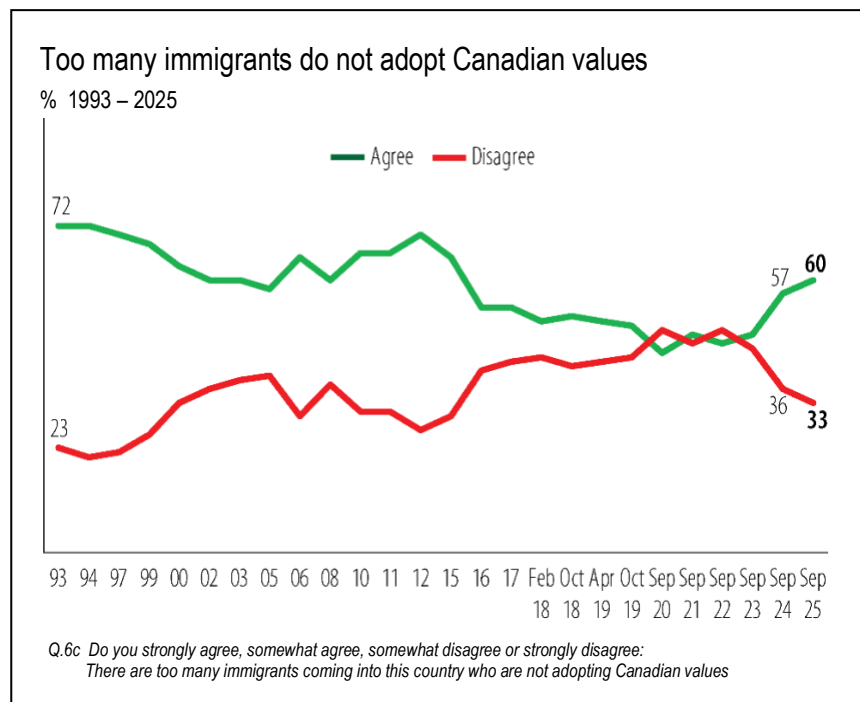
Integration of immigrants into society

Public resistance to immigration continues to be in part about integration, in terms of newcomers not adopting the right values, contributing to crime, and too many being from racial minorities. Since 2024, such concerns have grown mostly among federal Conservative Party supporters.

Agree-Disagree: “There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values.” In historical terms, societal tension around immigration has centred on who is arriving (i.e., based on race, ethnicity and religion), and how they may be fitting in (or not) into Canadian society. This has continued to be a source of ambivalence even in recent years when there was broad public support for immigration writ large. Along with continued public concerns about immigration levels, Canadians are increasingly questioning the way in which newcomers are integrating once they arrive and settle in the country.

Six in ten Canadians now agree strongly (35%) or somewhat (25%) that “there are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values.” This is up three percentage over the past year and continuing an upward trajectory dating back to 2022.

One-third now somewhat (17%) or strongly (16%) disagree with this statement (down 3 points from 2024). For the first time in more than a decade, Canadians are twice as likely to *strongly agree* as *strongly disagree* with this sentiment.



Since last year, concerns about immigrant integration have risen most noticeably in Quebec (58, up 7 points), and B.C. (61%, up 9), but remains most widespread in Alberta (67%, up 1) and Ontario (63%, up 4). Agreement with the statement has also grown among Canadians 18 to 29 years of age (58%, up 12) and those who are first generation in the country (65%, up 10).

Once again attitudes about immigrant integration are deeply split along partisan political lines. More than eight in ten (85%) Conservative party supporters now agree with this statement, reflecting a 10 percentage point increase among those who *strongly agree* (now at 63%). In comparison, overall agreement with the statement is expressed by fewer than half of Canadians who would vote for the federal Liberals (47%, up 3) or NDP (30%, down 4), along with two-thirds (64%, down 1) among those in Quebec would support the Bloc Québécois.

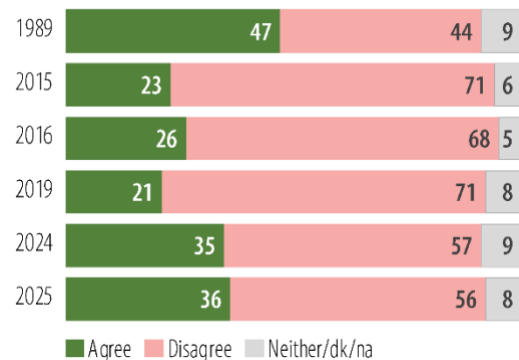
Agree-Disagree: “Immigration increases the level of crime in Canada.” Crime and security do not emerge as salient reasons why Canadians believe there is too much immigration to Canada, but this issue surfaces more noticeably when specifically prompted. Over one in three Canadians strongly (17%) or somewhat (19%) agree that “immigration increases the level of crime in Canada” (up 1 point since 2024). This proportion is unchanged from a year ago but larger than what was recorded in the period 2015 to 2019. A majority of Canadians continue to somewhat (25%) or strongly (31%) disagree (down 1) with this statement.

Belief in a link between immigration and crime has strengthened over the past year in Quebec (31%, up 7) but has declined in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (32%, down 9) and Alberta (38%, down 10). This view is now most prominent in Ontario (42%, up 2).

Among partisan supporters, those who would vote for the federal Conservatives increasingly link immigration and crime (61% agree with the statement, up 6 points from 2024). Only a third as many supporters of the federal Liberals (20%, down 3) or NDP (18%, unchanged) share this sentiment, as do one-third (32%, up 10) of Bloc Québécois voters.

Immigration increases the level of crime in Canada

% 1989 – 2025



Q.6f Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree: Immigration increases the level of crime in Canada.

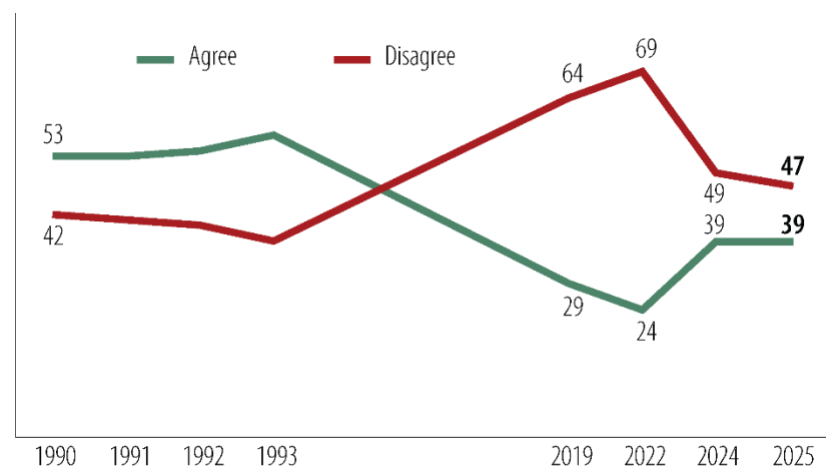
Agree-Disagree: “Canada accepts too many immigrants from racial minority groups.” Public resistance to immigration based on prejudice against newcomers with specific racial and ethnic backgrounds has a long history in Canada, and was prevalent through the 1990s before subsiding in recent years. Concerns about newcomers from racial minority groups spiked between 2022 and 2024, and have since held steady.

In 2025, four in ten Canadians agree strongly (20%) or somewhat (19%) agree that “Canada accepts too many immigrants from racial minority groups” (unchanged from 2024).

This compares with just under half who somewhat (20%) or strongly (27%) disagree (down 1). The remainder (13%, up 1) have no clear opinion either way.

Canada accepts too many immigrants from racial minority groups

% 1990 - 2025



Q.6i Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree: Canada accepts too many immigrants from racial minority groups.

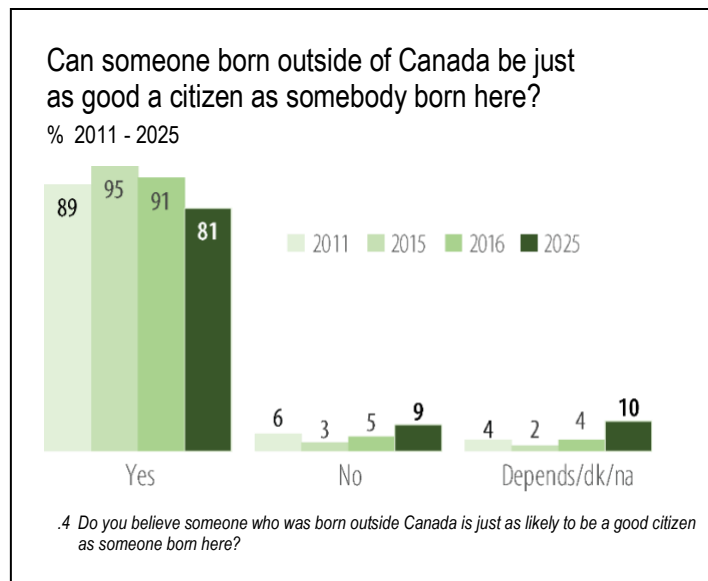
Opinions on this question do not vary significantly across the country, but agreement with the statement has increased since 2011 in B.C. (40%, up 7), while declining in Atlantic Canada (33%, down 8) and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (33%, down 6). This view continues to be most evident in Alberta (47%, down 4). There is little difference in sentiments between white and racialized Canadians, as well as by generation living in the country.

As with other questions on this survey, opinions are increasingly polarized along political lines. More than six in ten (63%) supporters of the federal Conservative Party now agree that Canada accepts too many minority groups, with four in ten who *strongly agree* (up 9 since last year). Opposition to minority group immigration is much less likely to come from those would vote for the federal Liberals (26%, down 2), NDP (17%, down 7) or Bloc Québécois (31%, down 7)

Can immigrants make good citizens? Aside from the legal definition of citizenship (which is based on federal government legislation), what does it mean to be a “good citizen” in Canada today? This is a relevant question in the context of expectations for immigrants who come to Canada from a diverse range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. More specifically, do Canadians believe that newcomers make good citizens regardless of where they come from? This question reveals Canadians’ openness to welcoming newcomers writ large to be fully part of the society as they envision it to be.²

On this question most Canadians agree. Eight in ten (81%) say someone born outside of Canada is just as likely to be a good citizen as someone born here. The balance either disagree (9%) or say it depends (e.g., on where immigrants come from).

This strong majority sentiment notwithstanding, it is somewhat smaller than in past years, dating back to 2011. The percentage of Canadians responding yes to this question has been diminishing since a high of 95 percent in 2015.



A clear majority of Canadians across the country provide an affirmative response to this question, but it is now a smaller majority in most identifiable groups. Belief in immigrants being as likely to be good citizens has weakened most noticeably in Alberta (72%, down 15 points from 2016) and among men (77%, down 13).

But the declining belief in immigrants becoming good citizens can be tied most directly to the changing view of Canadians who support the federal Conservative Party: only 66 percent in this group now respond yes to this question (down 28 points from 2015). By comparison, this view is shared by nine in ten who would vote for the federal Liberals (91%, down 5), NDP (90%, down 7) or Bloc Québécois (93%, down 1).³

² This question was first addressed in a public opinion survey ([Canadians on Citizenship](#)) conducted by the Environics Institute in 2011, in partnership with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, Maytree, RBC & the CBC. It was included on Focus Canada surveys in 2015 and 2016.

³ 2015 is used as the reference year, because the political support question was not included in the 2016 survey.

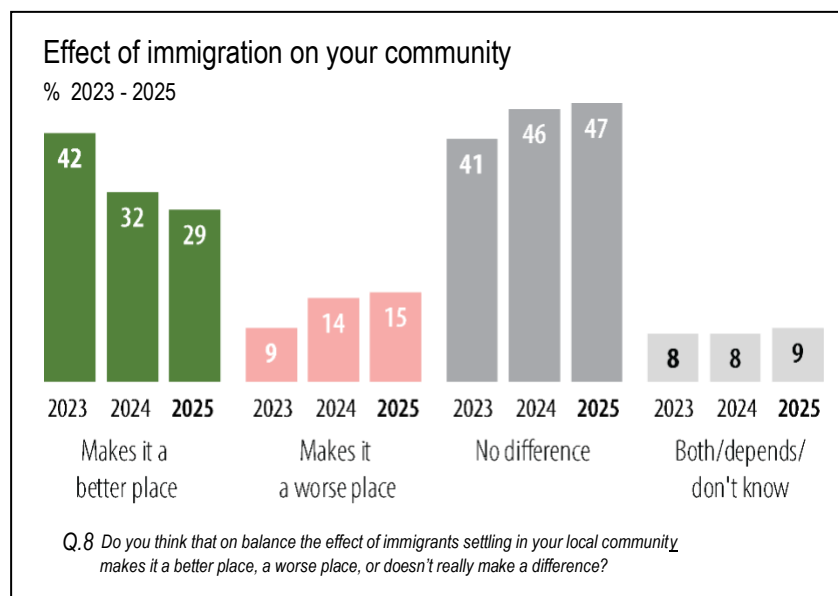
Local impacts of immigration

Canadians continue to say immigrants make their local communities better rather than worse, with most saying it makes no difference. Newcomers are most valued for the diversity they contribute, while those with concerns emphasize threats to local culture or identity, along with pressure on the economy, public finances and housing.

The preceding questions focused on the benefits and concerns about immigration at the national level, but what is equally (if not more) relevant is what Canadians believe is happening in their own communities. Focus Canada asked survey participants if, on balance, they believe the effect of immigrants settling in their local community makes it a better place, a worse place, or makes no difference in the end.

The results reveal that immigrants are more likely to be valued for what they contribute than what they may be seen to take away from local communities, but the balance has been become less positive over time.

In 2025, three in ten (29%) of Canadians say that immigrants make their community a better place, down three percentage points from 2024, following a steeper decline over the previous year. This remains twice the size of the proportion who believe immigrants make things worse (15%, up 1), while a plurality continue to maintain it makes no net difference (47%, up 1). One in ten volunteer a more nuanced response (e.g., both better and worse – 2%, or depends on other factors – 4%) or do not offer an opinion (3%).



Positive views about local immigration have weakened across most of the country for the second consecutive year, with the notable exception of Manitoba and Saskatchewan where this opinion has rebounded (to 37% saying it makes their community a better place, up 7 points from 2024). This perspective also continues to be most likely to be shared in British Columbia (38%), as well as among Canadians with a university education (38%) and those who would vote for the federal Liberals (39%) or NDP (45%).

It is supporters of the federal Conservative Party who are most likely to believe that immigration makes their community a worse place (29%, up 5), Half as many in this group (14%, down 3) express the opposite view, with a plurality who say it makes no difference either way (46%, down 3).

How immigrants make local communities better. Canadians who say that immigrants make their country either better or worse were asked why they think so (unprompted, without offering response options), and the reasons given are largely the same those given in 2023 and 2024.. Among those who believe that immigrants make their communities a better place (29% of the population), most (72%) say they value what immigrants bring in terms of multiculturalism and diversity (up 2 points from 2024).

Others emphasize the practical benefits of helping the local economy (e.g., adding new businesses, new customers and contributing to the labour force) (35%, up 8 points from 2024) and helping the local population grow (9%, down 5). Others focus on more intangible benefits of newcomers in terms of immigrants appreciating being in Canada (14%, unchanged), showing that people in their community are caring (6%, down 3) or otherwise enhancing its reputation (4%, down 2).

Why do you say immigrants make your community a [better/worse] place?

% 2023 – 2025 Unprompted responses

BETTER PLACE (29%)				WORSE PLACE (15%)			
	2023	2024	2025		2023	2024	2025
Adds to diversity / multiculturalism	75	70	72	Immigrants weaken local culture / identity	41	46	50
Helps economy grow	33	27	35	Hurt the economy / cause unemployment	21	22	25
Immigrants appreciate Canada	4	14	14	Immigrants not screened well enough	8	15	20
Helps local population grow	12	14	9	Drain on public finances	17	14	20
Shows people in my community care	11	9	6	Drive up housing prices	15	14	17
Enhances community reputation	7	6	4	Over-population / too many people here already	13	11	11
Other reasons	4	2	2	Immigrants are a security risk	6	11	10
				Other reasons	13	11	4

Q.8 Why do you say that new immigrants make your local community a [better / worse] place?

How immigrants make local communities worse. Among those who say that immigrants make their communities a worse place (15% of the population), the most prominent reasons – as before – pertain to concerns about weakening local culture or identity (50%, up 4 points from 2024, building on a previous increase). Increasing percentages also mention a range of other concerns, including how

immigrants hurt the local economy (25%, up 3), place a drain on public finances (20%, unchanged), are not properly screened (20%, up 6) and drive up housing prices (17%, up 3). One in ten continue in this group continue to point to concerns about local over-population (11%) or security risks (10%).

As was the case in previous years, while many who say there is too much immigration to Canada overall attribute this to the impact on housing affordability and availability, few identify this issue on the ground in their own communities (representing 3% of all Canadians).

What makes Canada unique?

Canadians are most likely to say their country is unique because it is multicultural, inclusive and accepting of immigrants and others, although this theme is less widely mentioned than in 2021. Less emphasis is given to such attributes as freedom, democracy, the land and natural resources.

Apart from specific attitudes and concerns about immigrants and refugees, how does this aspect of Canadian society influence Canadians' views about their country in terms of its strengths and challenges? This was addressed by asking survey participants what they think makes Canada unique (asked unprompted), updating a question first asked on Focus Canada in 2021.

As before, Canadians are most likely to define their country's uniqueness in terms of multiculturalism and the diversity of its people (36%), a theme that encompasses acceptance of immigrants and refugees, tolerance of differences, and specific mention of Indigenous People's and culture.

This perspective is given less emphasis than in 2021 (down 10 percentage points), while there is increased mention of Canada being unique because of the general characteristics of its people (e.g., humble, nice) (22%, up 7), the land or geography (15%, up 3) and natural resources (10%, up 5).

Fewer now define the country's unique qualities in terms of political culture of freedom and democracy (11%, down 6). Just over one in ten (13%, down 1) did not provide any response to this question.

What makes Canada unique?

2021-2025 Top mentions – unprompted

	2021 %	2025 %
Multiculturalism / identity / inclusive (net)	46	36
Multiculturalism / diversity	31	23
Accepts immigrants / refugees / everyone	9	8
Indigenous Peoples / culture	3	2
Tolerance	3	3
The people (humble, nice)	15	22
Land / geography	12	15
Freedom / democracy / political systems	17	11
Natural resources	5	10
Universal health care	7	5
Peace / peacefulness	4	5
Bilingualism / English and French	3	2
Values	3	4
Good quality of life / standard of living	2	3

Q.4 What do you think makes Canada unique?

The theme of multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion remains the most prominent one identified across the population, but also now somewhat less so in every identifiable group to a similar degree. It continues to be most widely mentioned by Canadians with a racialized identity (49%), those with a university education (46%), first generation Canadians (44%) and those who support the federal NDP (44%).

This definition of Canada's uniqueness is least apt to be shared by Quebecers (28%), Canadians age 60 plus (28%) and those who would vote for the federal Conservative Party (28%); even in these groups remains the single most prominent theme.