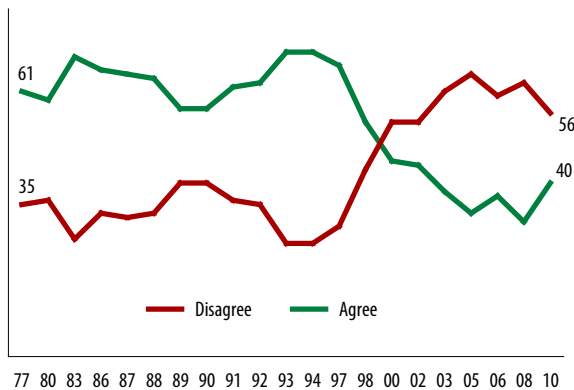


# Immigration and Multiculturalism

**ATTITUDES TOWARD IMMIGRATION.** Multiculturalism has in recent years been widely considered to be a success in Canada (in sharp contrast to many other western nations), and increasingly how Canadians define their country. But issues about immigration rise up from time to time, and public support has softened since 2008. The following “agree/disagree” statements serve as key indicators of this trend:

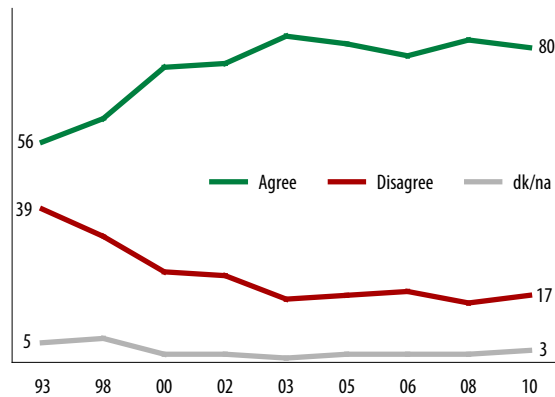
*“Overall, there is too much immigration in Canada.”* As before, a clear majority (56%) of Canadians disagree with this statement, but this is down seven points from 2008 and now at its lowest point since 2002. Four in ten (40%) now agree there is too much immigration in Canada. This trend is evident across the country, but most noticeably in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, as well as among women and older Canadians.

**Immigration trends are too high**  
1977 - 2010



*“Overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Canada.”* A strong majority (80%) agree with this statement, essentially unchanged over the past seven years, while one in five (17%) disagree. Opinions are similar across the country, but a positive view about the economic impact of immigrants is down noticeably in the Prairies since 2008.

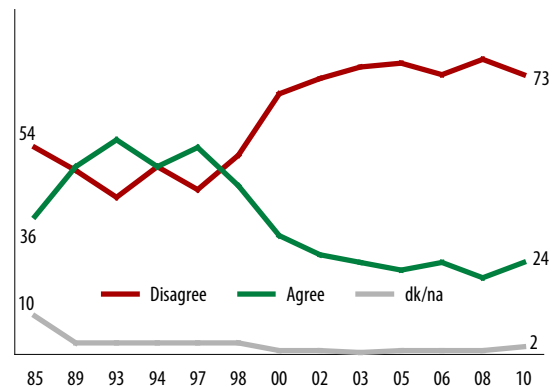
**Economic impact of immigration is positive**  
1993 - 2010



*“Immigrants take away jobs from other Canadians.”*

Consistent with the previous statement, most (73%) Canadians disagree that immigrants take jobs from other Canadians, with this proportion down slightly since 2008 (down 4 points) and returning to 2006 levels. One in four (24%) agree with this statement, increasing over the past two years, primarily in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta.

**Immigrants take away Canadian jobs**  
1985 - 2010



***“Non-whites should not be allowed to immigrate to Canada.”***

As has been the case for the past 25 years, almost all (92%) Canadians disagree with this statement, a perspective which is shared across the country. Those who express the opposite viewpoint are most likely to live in rural areas and have not completed high school.

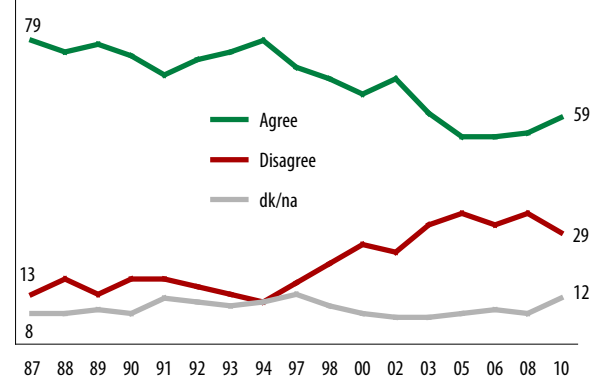
***“Many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees.”***

Six in ten (59%) Canadians agree with this statement, up from 55 percent in 2008, and reversing a downward trend dating back to 2002. Three in ten (29%) disagree (down 5 points). Rising concern about bogus refugee claimants is most evident in the west, and is now most pronounced in Alberta (69% agree). In contrast, this view has declined in Quebec (to 43%, down 7 points).

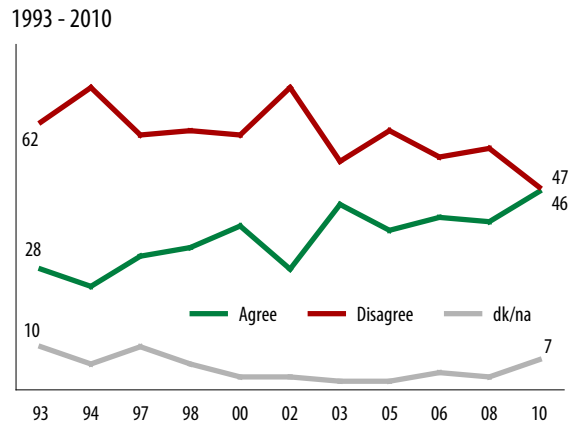
***“Canada is doing a good job of keeping criminals and suspected criminals out of the country.”*** The most notable shift in attitudes has been on this statement, possibly due to how the federal government handled the recent arrival of Tamils by boat in Vancouver (they claimed to be refugees but some were suspected of being criminals). Close to half (46%) of Canadians now agree that Canada is effective in keeping criminals out of the country, up seven points since 2008 and now at the highest level recorded since 1993. A comparable proportion (47%) disagree (down 9). The positive trend is most evident in Ontario and Quebec, as well as among Canadians aged 18 to 29 (68% in this group now agree with the statement, up 16 points since 2008). Agreement is lowest in B.C. (34%).

***“There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values.”*** Despite generally positive attitudes about immigration, Canadians remain ambivalent about the motivations and success with which newcomers integrate culturally into the country. As before, a majority (66%) agree with this statement, and this proportion has risen (up 6 points since 2008), returning to 2006 levels. This increase is evident in every part of the country except Quebec (64%, up 1), and is now highest in Alberta (71% agree), and lowest in Manitoba and Atlantic Canada (59% each).

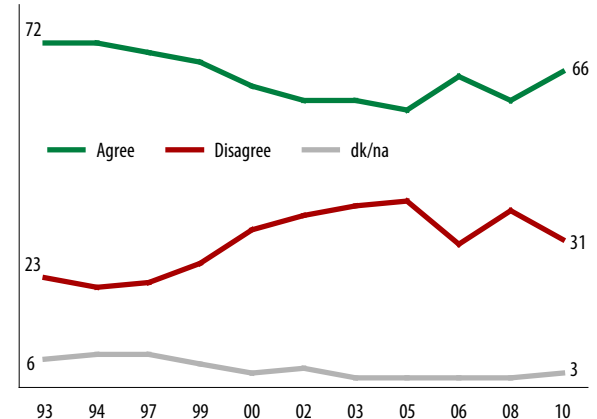
**Many refugee claimants are not legitimate**  
1987 - 2010



**Immigration controls are effective in keeping out criminals**  
1993 - 2010



**Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian values**  
1993 - 2010

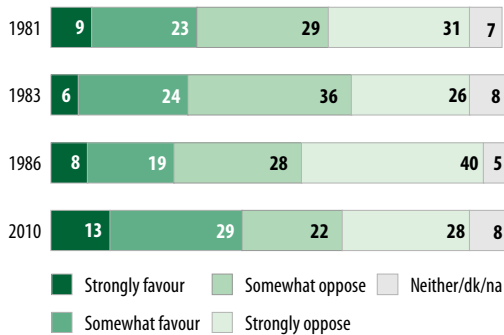


**REFUGEE POLICY.** The arrival of a ship full of Tamil refugees off Canada's west coast forced the government to decide how to handle a large number of refugees not following normal procedures for refugee status. Canadians are currently divided about what to do in such situations. Four in ten strongly (13%) or somewhat (29%) favour accepting political refugees who do not qualify for entry into Canada under normal channels, while a larger proportion somewhat (22%) or strongly (28%) oppose such a policy. While these results reflect a divided populace, support for accepting political refugees is notably higher than it was in the 1980s. In 1986, fewer than three in ten (27%) favoured such a policy, compared with 68 percent who opposed it (with 40% strongly opposed).

Support for accepting all refugees is greatest in Quebec (though still a minority at 48%) and lowest in B.C. (34%), as well as among allophones, low income Canadians and those without a high school diploma. There is also a generational divide on this issue: A liberal policy toward political refugees is favoured by 54 percent of Canadians under 30, compared with just 30 percent of those aged 60 plus.

### Should Canada accept political refugees who do not otherwise qualify for immigration?

1981 - 2010



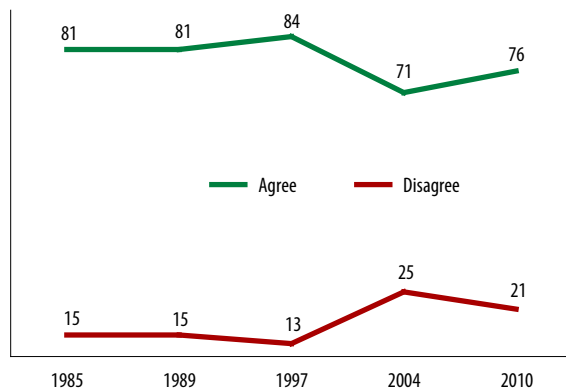
### ATTITUDES TOWARD MULTICULTURALISM.

Multiculturalism presents challenges to both new Canadians (who must fit in and succeed) and for the native population (to accept and become comfortable with increasing diversity). Multiculturalism remains a positive reality for the majority of Canadians but opinions have hardened a bit since 2004, reverting back to where they stood in the mid-1990s. This trend is reflected in the latest results of several "agree/disagree" statements:

***"Ethnic groups should try as much as possible to blend into Canadian society and not form a separate community."***

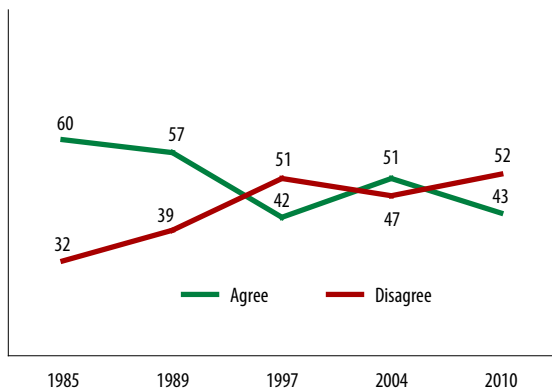
Three-quarters (76%) of Canadians agree with this statement, up from 71 percent in 2004, although below the levels recorded in the 1980s and 1990s. This upward trend is evident everywhere except Atlantic Canada, and most noticeably in Ontario, B.C. and Saskatchewan. Quebecers (88%) are most likely to endorse this viewpoint, along with Canadians aged 60 plus.

### Ethnic groups should blend into Canadian society 1985 - 2010



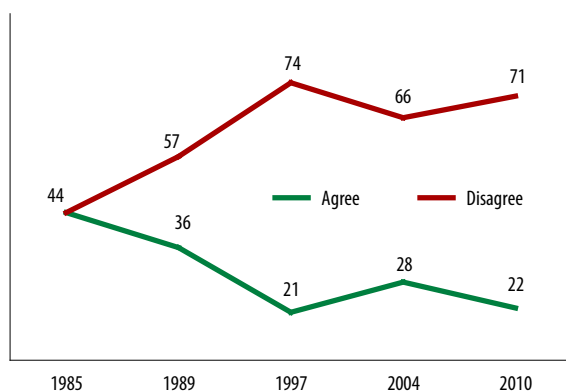
***“It is more difficult for non-whites to be successful in Canadian society than it is for other groups.”*** Belief in this kind of barrier for non-white individuals has declined over the past several years, and is now below the 50 percent mark (43%), compared with half (52%) who disagree. Agreement with this statement remains highest in Quebec (51%) and is now lowest in Alberta (33%). The opinions of allophones is close to the national average; immigrants from non-European countries are more likely than others to agree with this statement.

**It is more difficult for non-whites to succeed in Canada**  
1985 - 2010



***“Governments should require employers to advance non-whites to higher positions.”*** Sympathy for the barriers facing non-whites notwithstanding, there is little public support for government-mandated affirmative action. Only one in five (22%) Canadians agree with this statement, down from 28 percent in 2004. Support has diminished across the country, even among allophones, although this group remains more likely to favour such a policy than any other group (44%).

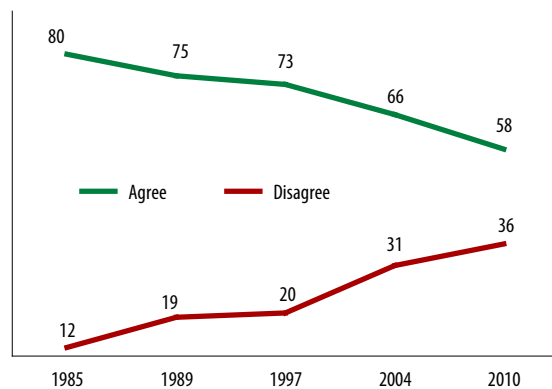
**Governments should require employers to advance non-whites**  
1985 - 2010



***“Ethnic and racial groups should take more responsibility for solving their own economic and social problems.”*** Belief in the importance of self-reliance has been the majority view among Canadians since the 1980s, but the strength of this perspective has been steadily diminishing. Today six in ten (58%) agree with this statement, down eight points from 2004, and now at its lowest point since 1985 (this most recent change reflects a shift from “strongly agree” to overall disagreement).

This trend has taken place in all regions except B.C., but most noticeably in Quebec, Saskatchewan and Alberta. Allophones are more likely than anglophone or francophone Canadians to endorse this statement. Older Canadians are most likely to feel ethnic groups should take responsibility, but noticeably less so than in past years.

**Ethnic/racial groups should take more responsibility for solving own problems**  
1985 - 2010

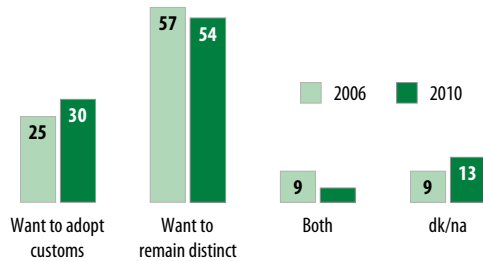


**MUSLIMS IN CANADA.** In 2006, Focus Canada revealed that a majority of Muslims in Canada believed co-religionists want to adopt the customs and lifestyles of this country, but most non-Muslim Canadians doubted this. In 2010, the non-Muslim public is only modestly more likely to believe this is the case (30%, up 5 points from 2006). A majority (54%) continue to believe that Muslims in Canada want to be distinct from the larger Canadian society (down 3).

This modest shift is evident across the country but most noticeably in Quebec (29%, up 10 points), and has taken place entirely among Canadians under 45 years of age (and mostly among those under 30).

### Do Muslims want to adopt Canadian customs or remain distinct?

2006 - 2010



One of the most visible signs of Muslim identity is the headscarf, which has now been banned for public display in France. A growing minority of Canadians believe this is a good idea (45%, up 9 points since 2006), and this continues to be especially popular in Quebec (64%, up 11), although the idea has also gained ground in the rest of Canada (particularly in Saskatchewan and B.C.), as well as among allophones and Canadians 30 to 44 years of age.

### Head scarf ban a good idea or bad idea?

By region 2006 - 2010

