

Canadian Identity and Symbols

Pride in being Canadian

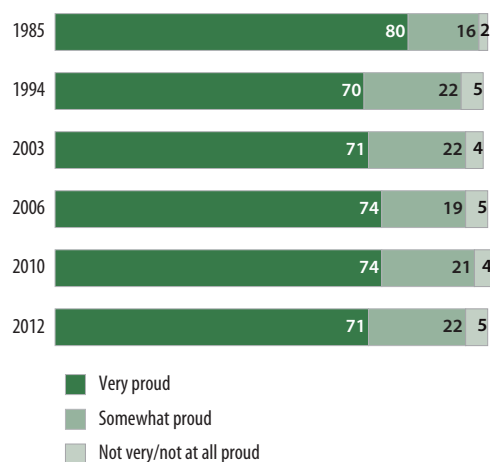
Canadians have long expressed pride in their country. A strong majority (71%) now say they are very proud to be Canadian, although this proportion is down marginally since 2010, reflecting the first decline since 1994. Among the minority that do not share this feeling, most (22%) say they are “somewhat proud,” while very few (5%) continue to be not very or not at all proud of their national identity.

The decline since 2010 has taken place in a number of provinces, including Quebec, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and B.C., while increasing marginally in Ontario and Alberta. Feelings of strong pride are now most widespread in Alberta (87%), followed by Ontario (85%) and Atlantic Canada (82%), as well as among Canadians aged 60 plus, and supporters of the federal Liberal and Conservative parties. In the past two years, strong pride has also declined among younger Canadians, and the gap between the youngest (58%) and oldest (84%) Canadians is now at an historic high.

Of most significance is the divergence between Quebec and the rest of the country. For close to 30 years, roughly eight in ten Canadians living outside of Quebec have expressed strong pride in their country, with a minor dip in the 1990s during a protracted period of constitutional squabbling. Quebecers have always been less likely to share the same feelings about Canada, but the proportion expressing strong pride has been dropping steadily and the gap with other Canadians is now the largest yet recorded.

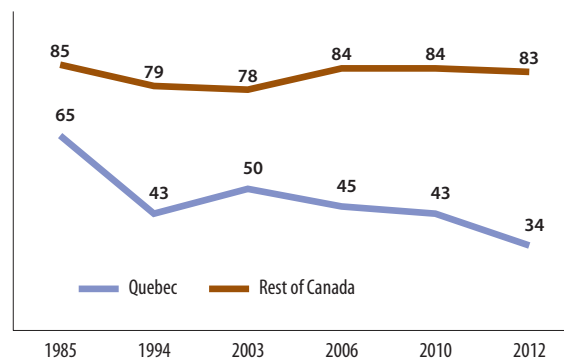
How proud are you to be a Canadian?

1985 – 2012



Very proud to be a Canadian

1985 – 2012



Q.14

Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very or not at all proud to be a Canadian?

What is it about Canada that gives people the greatest sense of pride? First and foremost, Canadians identify their country as being free and democratic (26%), essentially unchanged since 2010 and consistent with what they have identified since 1994. Other reasons have also remained largely stable over the past two years and include Canadians being a humanitarian and caring people (9%), multiculturalism (7%), the beauty of the country/land (6%) and the health care system (4%). The most notable change since 2010 is a decline in mention of the country's quality of life/standard of living (5%, down 5 points).

Reasons for pride in the country are largely similar across the population. Focus on freedom and democracy is most apparent among Atlantic Canadians and Albertans, rural residents and those aged 60 plus, while the beauty of the land is emphasized by Quebecers.

Attachment to Canada

Canada is one of the world's most decentralized nations, and citizens belong to both the country and a province. To which do they more closely identify?

On balance, Canadians are more likely to consider themselves a citizen of their country (57%) than their home province (39%). Nationally, these numbers are unchanged since 2010, but there have been notable shifts at the provincial level: Residents in Alberta and Saskatchewan are increasingly likely to identify more closely with the country, while those living in B.C. (especially Vancouver) and Manitoba have shifted towards identification with their province.

Atlantic Canadians more likely than others to insist their attachment is equally to both (or neither) jurisdiction. National attachment continues to be most widespread in Ontario (71%), while provincial attachment is strongest in Quebec (58%), both unchanged from 2010. Quebecers have consistently identified more with their province than with Canada – but unlike with pride in the country, this gap has not been steadily widening over time.

Basis of pride in being Canadian

Top mentions 1994 – 2012

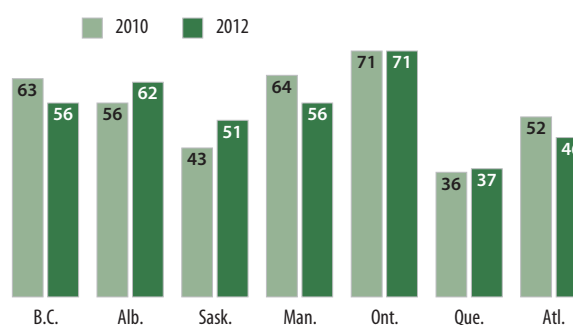
	1994	2003	2006	2010	2012
Free country/freedom/democracy	31	28	27	27	26
Humanitarian/caring people	9	13	9	9	9
Multiculturalism	3	6	11	6	7
Beauty of the land	7	4	4	4	6
Quality of life	5	6	3	10	5
Health care system	–	3	2	6	4
Respected by other countries	4	3	4	2	4
Peaceful country	7	5	6	4	3
Social programs	3	2	1	3	2

Q.15

What is it about Canada that gives you the greatest sense of pride?

Identify more with country than with province

By Province 2010 – 2012

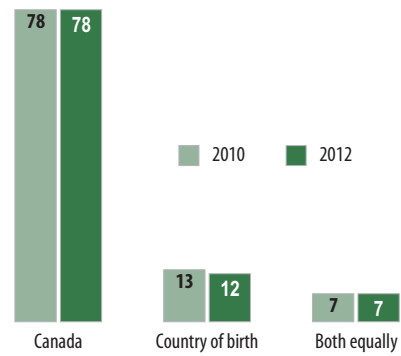


Q.11

Do you feel that you are more a citizen of Canada or more a citizen of [province]?

What about the attachment of the one in five immigrant Canadians – would they identify at some level with their country of birth? Among Canadians who were born in another country, eight in ten (78%) continue to say they feel a stronger attachment to Canada (unchanged from 2010), compared with 12 percent who identify more closely with their country of birth. Another seven percent insist they feel equally attached to both.

Immigrant identification with Canada vs. country of birth 2010 – 2012



Q.13

Do you feel a stronger attachment to...?

Subsample: Those who were born outside Canada

Canadian symbols

Every country has symbols that are key to national identity. The latest Focus Canada survey reveals that Canadians continue to place strong importance on a number of established symbols, but the strength of this identification has declined in almost all cases since 2010, after having previously been on the rise. In most cases, opinions have reverted back to 2003-2007 levels.

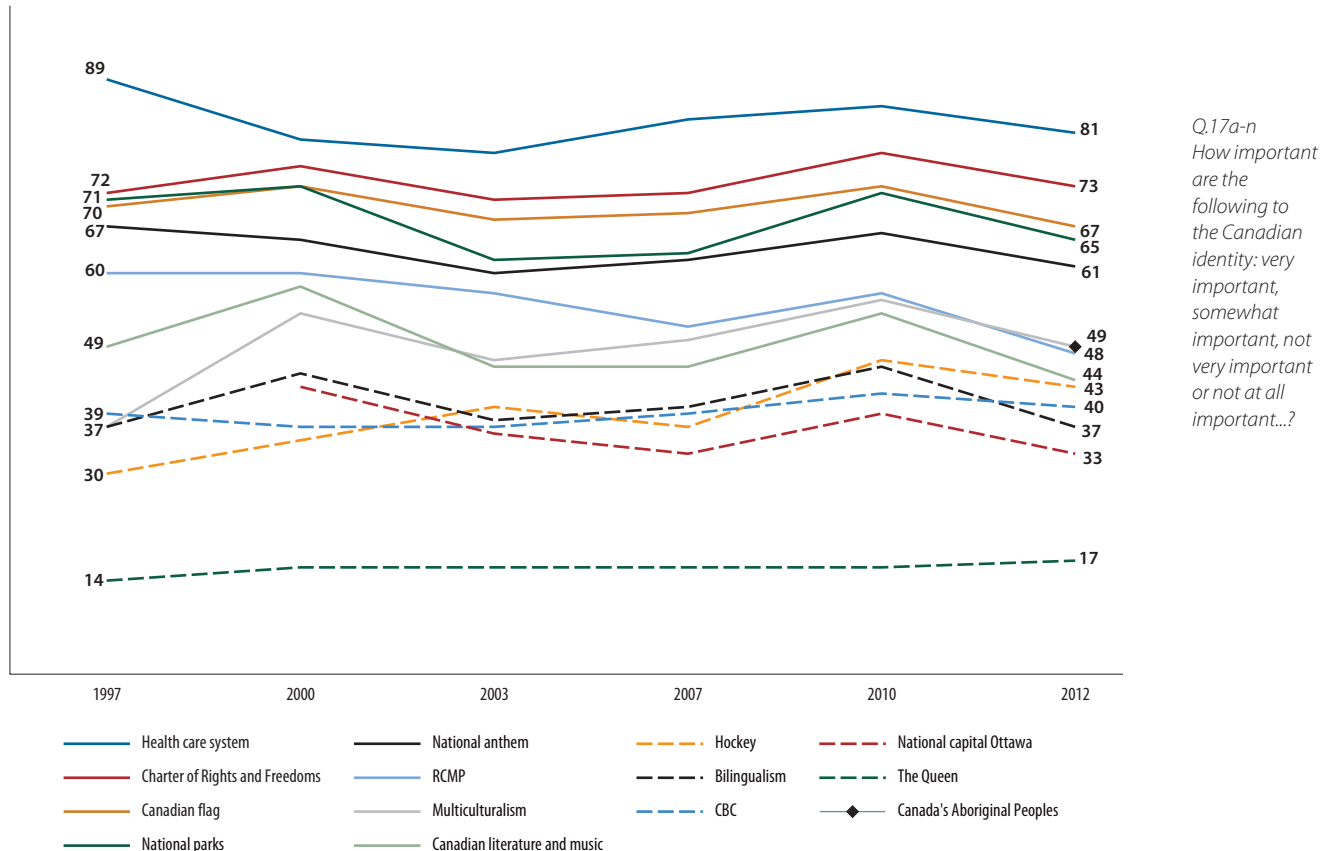
At the top of the list continue to be the country's health care system (81% say very important), followed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (73%), the Canadian flag (67%), National Parks (65%) and the national anthem (61%). Fewer than half place such importance on multiculturalism (49%), Canada's Aboriginal Peoples (49%, new this year), the RCMP (48%), Canadian literature and music (44%), hockey (44%), the CBC (40%), bilingualism (37%) and the national capital in Ottawa (33%). As before, Canadians are least likely to place great importance on the Queen (17%) as a symbol of Canadian identity.

The general decline in the importance of national symbols since 2010 is evident across the country, but in many cases is most significant in Quebec (notably for multiculturalism, the flag, the Charter, health care and the national anthem). Quebecers have consistently been less likely than other Canadians to place strong importance on all of the symbols rated, with the exception of bilingualism.

The other noteworthy shift over the past two years is a widening generational gap in the importance placed on what might be considered the traditional symbols of Canadian identity. Canadians aged 60 plus are increasingly more likely than those under 45 to identify strongly with such symbols as the flag, the national anthem, the RCMP, health care, the CBC and the Queen. Canadians under 30 are the most likely to place strong importance on bilingualism, multiculturalism and the Charter, but these ratings have declined since 2010 (in some cases more significantly than for older cohorts).

Importance of symbols to Canadian identity

Very important 1997 – 2012



The importance placed on the country's Aboriginal Peoples as a national symbol varies noticeably across the population. Aboriginal Peoples are most widely seen as a very important symbol in B.C. (58%) and Toronto (65%), among immigrants, Canadians with lower incomes, those aged 60 plus, Green Party supporters (78%) and those who feel strongly connected to their local community (61%). By contrast, this view is least apt to be shared by Quebecers and Manitobans (35% each), Canadians in the top income bracket (39%) and those who support the federal Conservative Party (33%).

Canadian values

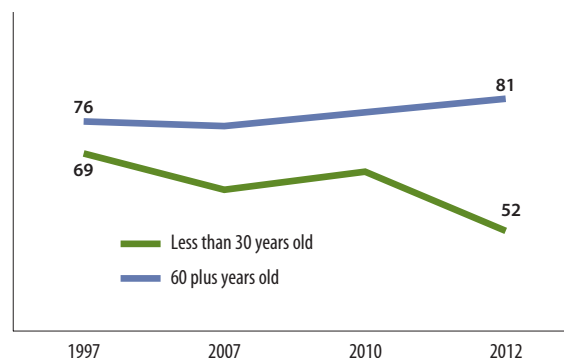
Unlike many countries, Canada lacks a dominant national identity and mythos that everyone can buy into. Despite this, Canadians are more likely than not to feel there is a shared sense of common values that unite them. Two-thirds (67%) agree with the statement *"The values driving Canadian society today are similar to my own,"* up from 61 percent in 2007, reversing a previous decline.

This upward trend is evident everywhere except in Quebec and Manitoba, and is now at the highest level since 2000 in Ontario, Saskatchewan, B.C. and Alberta (where agreement is now the strongest in the country at 72%). The declining level among Quebecers continues a steady trend back to 2000, when they were actually more likely than residents in most other provinces to believe they shared values with Canadian society.

Canadians, however, are less likely to see commonly shared values across specific jurisdictional divisions. Only four in ten (41%) agree that *"Canadians basically have the same values regardless of which province they live in"* (down from 46% in 2007), compared with 56 percent who disagree. This decline is most significant in Manitoba and Quebec, and to a lesser extent in Ontario (while the opposite trend is most evident in Alberta and Atlantic Canada). In 2012, only in Atlantic Canada do a majority feel there are common values across provinces, while this view is now held by only one in four (25%) Quebecers. Canadians aged 60 plus are most likely to agree with this statement, and the gap between young and old has widened since 2007.

Canadian flag is very important to Canadian identity

By age 1997 – 2012

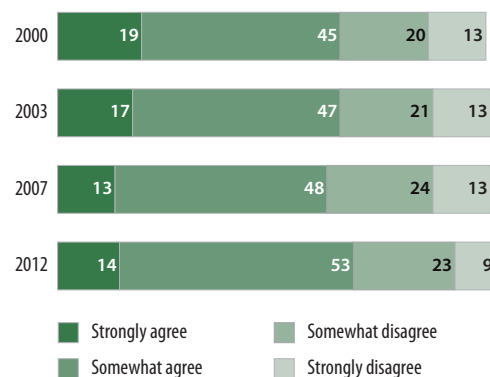


Q.17a

How important are the following to the Canadian identity: very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important...?

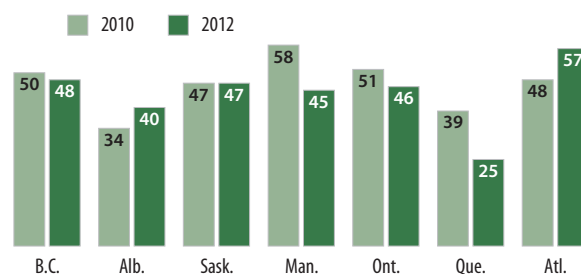
The values driving Canadian society today are similar to my own

2000 – 2012



Canadians have the same values, regardless of which province they live in

Agree by province 2010 – 2012



Q.16ac

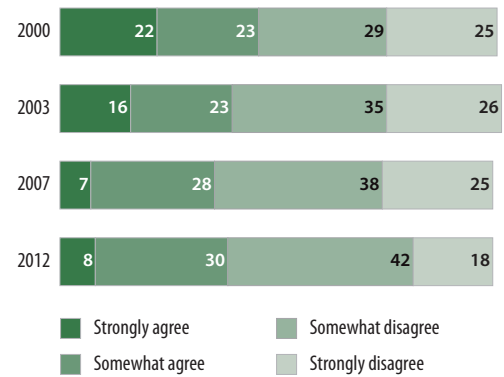
Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements...

Canadians are even less likely to see commonality in the values shared between urban and rural communities. Fewer than four in ten (38%) agree that ***“Canadians basically have the same values regardless of whether they live in urban or rural areas,”*** up from 35 percent in 2007 and reversing a noticeable decline dating back to 2000.

This latest increase is most evident in major urban centres, and views are now roughly the same across large and small communities. As with the other values statements, belief in common values between urban and rural Canadians is most widely held among the oldest generation, and the gap with younger cohorts has widened over the past decade.

Canadians have the same values, whether they live in urban or rural areas

2000 – 2012



Q.16b

Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements...