

## Important Canadian symbols

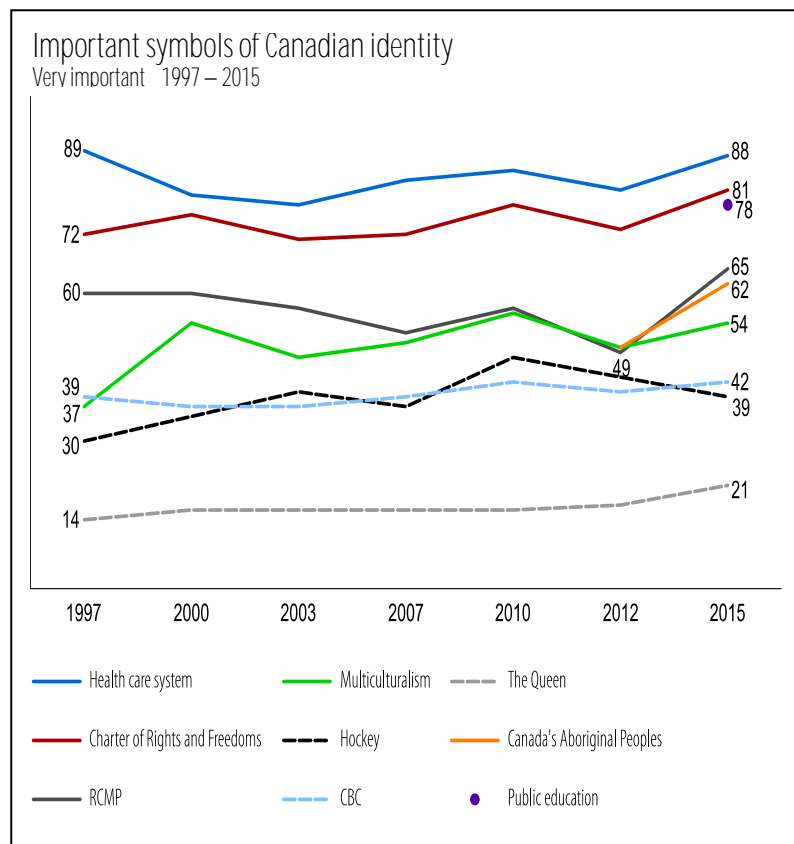
An increasing majority of Canadians identify multiculturalism as one of the most important symbols of the country's national identity. This view is most widespread in Ontario (recording the largest increase since 2012), and remains least so in Quebec, although opinions there have held steady or grown.

Every country has symbols that help shape the national identity, and for Canada this has included multiculturalism. The latest Focus Canada survey updates the importance that citizens place on a selected set of national symbols that have been tracked since 1997. In all cases but one, the strength of identification has increased since 2012, reversing a downward trend recorded between 2010 and 2012.

Of the nine symbols included on the latest survey, the ones most widely seen as very important to the Canadian identity continue to be the country's health care system (88%, up 7 points from 2012) and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (81%, up 8). Also considered very important by a strong majority of Canadians include the system of public education (78%, included for the first time), the RCMP (65%, up 18) and Aboriginal Peoples (62%, up 13).

More than half (54%) place this level of importance on **multiculturalism** (up 5 points from 2012), similar to what was recorded in 2010 and 2000). Fewer than half place strong importance on the CBC (42%, up 2), hockey (39%, down 4; likely due in part to the survey being conducted after the end of the NHL season for Canadian teams), and the Queen (21%, up 4).

Multiculturalism has strengthened as a national symbol since 2012 across most of the population, but especially among women, Canadians aged 18 to 29 (reversing a previous downward trend), residents of Toronto and those living in smaller sized communities. Multiculturalism is most widely seen as very important in Ontario (61%, especially in Toronto at 67%), among youth (63%), and least so among Quebecers (39%) although this level has held steady over the past three years. Those who would vote Conservative in an upcoming election are less apt to place strong importance on this symbol (49%), but this proportion has increased more noticeably since 2012 than in comparison with those supporting other parties.



An increasing proportion of Canadians also identify Aboriginal Peoples as a very important national symbol, with this trend most significant in Quebec and Ontario, but up in every province. This view is now most widespread in Ontario (71%; especially in Toronto at 76%), and remains least evident in Quebec (49%) despite the notable increase there. As with multiculturalism, Conservative voters are less likely than voters of other parties (excepting the Bloc Quebecois) to place strong importance on Aboriginal Peoples as a national symbol, but also show the most growth since 2012.