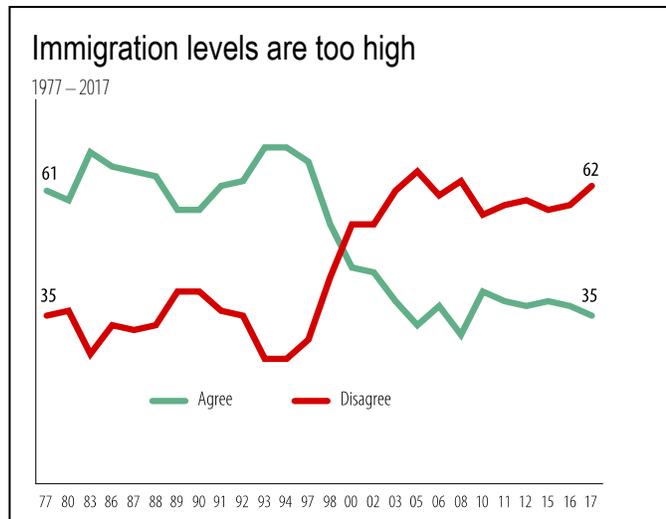


Immigration

Canadians' views about immigration are stable or more positive than last October, in terms of support for current immigration levels, confidence in the impact on the economy, and concerns about immigrants not adopting Canadian values. Public skepticism about the legitimacy of refugee claimants has declined.

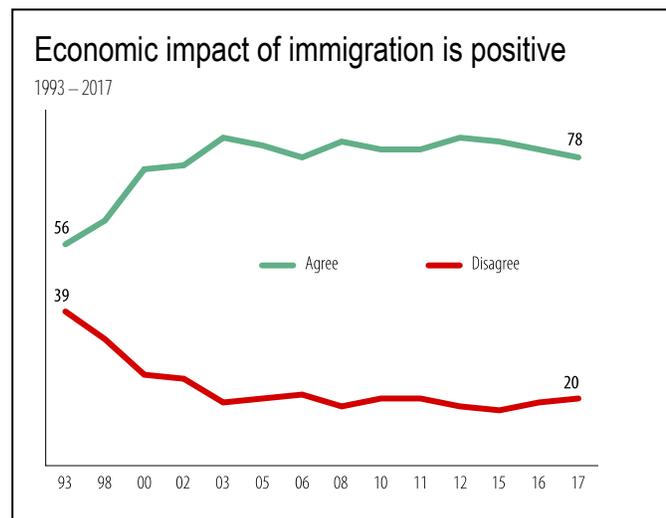
This current survey included questions that have been asked on a number of previous Focus Canada surveys, in some cases dating back more than 30 years. This provides an empirical basis by which to identify how public opinion is changing or not over time. In this section, the research updates questions last asked in October 2016 to identify how opinions have changed or not over the past six months following the election of Donald Trump in the USA and other events worldwide. The results are based on responses to a set of “agree-disagree” statements that serve as key benchmark indicators of public attitudes about immigration.

“Overall, there is too much immigration in Canada.” Despite growing controversy over immigration in the USA and Europe, Canadians are increasingly rejecting the idea that their country is taking in too many people from other countries. More than six in ten (62%) now disagree with this negative statement about the level of immigration in Canada, up four percentage points from six months ago, and now at the highest level since March-April 2008. Just over one in three (35%) Canadians now concurs with the statement (down 2 points).



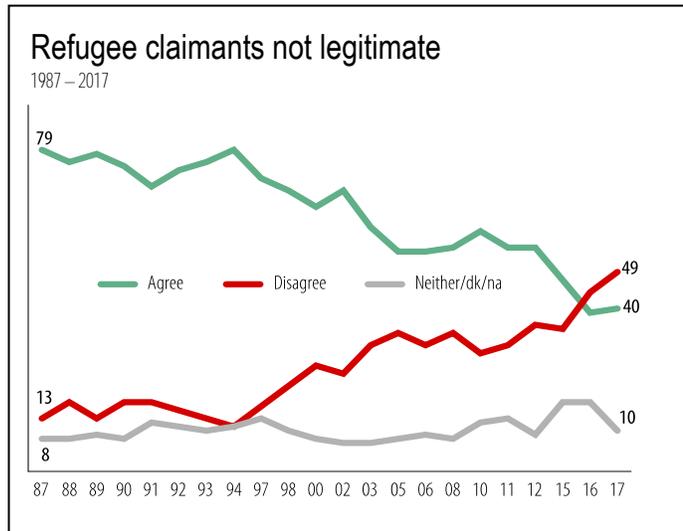
Consistent with previous surveys, disagreement with the idea of “too much immigration” is most widespread in British Columbia (66%), among Canadians 18 to 29 years of age, those with a university degree and those with higher household incomes. This view has strengthened most noticeably since last October in Ontario, the Prairies and B.C., as well as among younger Canadians. As before, concern about immigration levels is most evident in Alberta (45% agree), among Canadians 60 years and older, and those with the lowest levels of education and income; this view has strengthened since last October in Atlantic Canada. Opinions in Quebec mirror the national average and are unchanged from six months ago.

“Overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Canada.” Canadians' level of comfort with immigration is grounded in part on their belief that it is good for the country's economy. Close to eight in ten (78%) share this sentiment, down two percentage points from six months ago, but essentially unchanged over the past 15 years.



This is the majority view across the population, but most widespread among Canadians 18 to 29 (85%) and least so in Alberta (69%, down 6 points), which accounts for much of the decline since last October. As before *strong* agreement with the statement is most evident in Toronto, among Canadians born outside the country, and those with the most education and income.

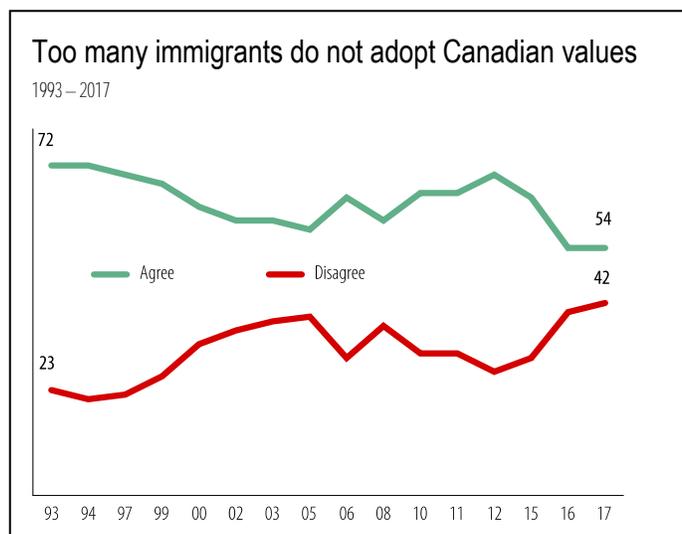
“Most people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees.” The past year has seen the country welcome an unprecedented number of refugees (mostly from Syria), and more recently there has been an estimated few thousand individuals crossing the border from the USA. While some commentators have suggested this is giving rise to growing public concern about the types of individuals seeking refuge, the opposite is the case. A growing proportion of Canadians now disagree with this statement about refugees not being legitimate (49%), up five percentage points from last October and continuing an upward trend dating back to 2015. Disagreement is now at its highest level since this was first measured in 1987. Four in ten agree with the statement (unchanged), while fewer (10%, down 7) are now unsure or have no opinion.



This trend away from questioning the legitimacy of refugees is evident across much of the country but most noticeable in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and B.C., among Canadians 18 to 29 and those with the highest incomes. The reverse trend since last October has taken place in Alberta and among those with the lowest incomes. Opinions on this issue are most divided in the Prairies and Toronto, among Canadians 60 and older, and among immigrants. Once again views among Quebecers are at the national average, but fewer in that province now have no opinion.

“There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values.” Research has shown that the most sensitive issue for many Canadians is how immigrants integrate or fit into the country once they arrive. This latest survey confirms this perspective, but at the same time reveals that such concerns have not grown over the past six months. Just over half (54%) of Canadians now agree with this statement about too many immigrants not adopting Canadian values, unchanged from October 2016 and remaining at the lowest level recorded in more than 20 years.

Across the country, concern about immigrants not adopting Canadian values is now most widespread in Alberta (65%, up 8 points since October 2016), followed by Quebec (59%, up 2). In contrast, this view is least apt to be shared in B.C. (47%, unchanged). As before, opinions are strongly related to age, education and income levels. Agreement with the statement is expressed by six in ten (61%) Canadians aged 60 and older, compared with only 44 percent among those 18 to 29 (with little change in either group since October 2016).



Views on this question are similar whether one is born in Canada or in another country.