

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION AND ETHNICITY – WHERE DO VOTERS STAND?



Ipsos Reid

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CANADIAN IMMIGRATION AND ETHNICITY – WHERE DO VOTERS STAND?

Toronto, ON – A new Ipsos Reid survey of Canadian voters, conducted for CanWest News Service/Global News, reports half (51%) believe immigrants are having a “good influence” on the way things are going in Canada– while 40% feel that immigrants are having a “bad influence”.

But despite these positive perceptions, more (44%) are of the opinion that the approximately 225,000 immigrants Canada accepts each year is “too high” than feel it is “too low” (10%). Thirty-four percent feel the number of new immigrants Canada accepts annually is “about right”.

The impact of immigration on jobs is a frequent issue of discussion but the fact is that half (46%) feel that immigrants coming to Canada today mostly “take jobs that Canadians don’t want” and a further 19% feel they “create new jobs for themselves”. Only one in five (22%) think immigrants “take away jobs from Canadians”.

It would appear that most appreciate Canada’s cultural mosaic. When it comes to questions about ethnicity, a majority agree that:

- “It is better for Canada to have a variety of people with different religions” (75% agree); and
- “Canada’s multicultural make-up is one of the best things about this country” (74% agree);

And a majority disagree that:

- “It is better for Canada if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions” (64% disagree).



However, this falls against a back-drop of more (56%) saying they think priority should be placed on encouraging minority groups “to try to be more like most Canadians”, rather than encouraging “Canadians as a whole to try and accept minority groups and their customs and languages” (44%).

When asked which federal political party and leader best understands the issues facing Canada’s immigrants and minority groups, 35% choose Jack Layton and the NDP, 29% choose Stephen Harper and the Conservatives, and 27% choose Paul Martin and the Liberals.

The survey also reveals a vote-intention dynamic as it relates to those who have immigrated to Canada and among those who would describe themselves as being a member of a visible minority.

Those who have immigrated to Canada most strongly support the Conservatives (38%) over the Liberals (35%) and the NDP (19%), while visible minorities most strongly support the Liberals (35%) over the Conservatives (31%) and NDP (20%).

These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted for CanWest News Service/Global News from January 6th to January 8th, 2006. A total of 7307 Canadian voters were surveyed via the internet, yielding results which are accurate to within $\pm 1.2\%$ (19 times out of 20). The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. The data were statistically weighted to ensure that the sample’s age, sex, regional and party support composition reflects that of the actual Canadian voter population. The sample was drawn from a pre-recruited panel of over 12,000 voters drawn from Ipsos Reid’s internet panel.

	Total	Toronto CMA	Rest of Canada	Toronto CMA	Vancouver CMA	Calgary CMA	Edmonton CMA	Ottawa CMA	Montreal CMA	Big 6 Cities	Rest of Canada
Sample Size	7307	1200	6107	1200	584	273	251	360	907	3575	3732
Margin of Error +/-	1.2%	2.8%	1.3%	2.8%	4.1%	5.9%	6.2%	5.2%	3.3%	1.6%	1.6%

Half (51%) Feel Immigrants Are Having A “Good Influence” On The Way Things Are Going In Canada...

Half (51%) believe that overall, immigrants are having a “good influence on the way things are going in Canada” (42% “somewhat good influence”/10% “very good influence”). But a substantial minority of 40% feel that immigrants are having a “bad influence” (33% “somewhat bad influence”/7% “very bad influence”). Nine percent say they “don’t know” when posed this question.

Overall, would you say that immigrants are having a good or bad influence on the way things are going in Canada?

	Toronto CMA vs. Rest of Canada			Big 6 vs. Rest of Canada							
	Total	Toronto CMA	Rest of Canada	Toronto CMA	Vancouver CMA	Calgary CMA	Edmonton CMA	Ottawa CMA	Montreal CMA	Big 6 Cities	Rest of Canada
Top 2: Good Influence	51%	58%	50%	58%	52%	50%	50%	55%	44%	52%	50%
Bottom 2: Bad Influence	40%	38%	40%	38%	41%	44%	43%	37%	43%	40%	39%
Very good influence	10%	15%	8%	15%	10%	10%	8%	10%	5%	10%	9%
Somewhat good influence	42%	42%	41%	42%	42%	40%	42%	45%	39%	42%	41%
Somewhat bad influence	33%	31%	33%	31%	34%	36%	38%	32%	35%	33%	32%
Very bad influence	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%	6%	6%	8%	7%	7%
Don't know	9%	5%	10%	5%	8%	7%	6%	8%	13%	8%	11%

- Opinions are relatively consistent across the six major cities in Canada, with residents of the GTA (58%) being slightly more likely to believe immigrants are having a “good influence”.

But Forty-four Percent Believe Canada Accepts Too Many Immigrants...

But despite these positive perceptions, more (44%) are of the opinion that the approximately 225,000 immigrants Canada accepts each year is “too high” a number than feel it is “too low” (10%). Thirty-four percent feel the number of new immigrants Canada accepts annually is “about right”.

By looking at the *Gap Score* between the percentage who feel immigration numbers are “too high” and the percentage who feel it is “too low”, it is clear that the strong balance of public opinion (+34 points) is on the side of lowering current immigration numbers.

Currently, Canada accepts about 225,000 immigrants each year. In your view, is this number...?

	Total	Toronto CMA vs. Rest of Canada		Big 6 vs. Rest of Canada							
		Toronto CMA	Rest of Canada	Toronto CMA	Vancouver CMA	Calgary CMA	Edmonton CMA	Ottawa CMA	Montreal CMA	Big 6 Cities	Rest of Canada
Too high	44%	45%	44%	45%	42%	47%	39%	42%	47%	44%	44%
Too low	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	9%	13%	8%	7%	9%	11%
About right	34%	34%	34%	34%	34%	31%	36%	41%	35%	35%	34%
Don't know	12%	11%	12%	11%	15%	13%	13%	8%	10%	12%	12%
Gap Score	34%	35%	34%	35%	32%	38%	26%	34%	40%	35%	33%

- Residents of Calgary and Montreal are the most likely to believe immigration numbers are too high, with nearly half (47%) in each of these major cities feeling this way.
- Residents of Edmonton (39%) are the least likely to believe immigration numbers are too high.

And Half (46%) Feel Immigrants Take Jobs That Canadians Don't Want - A Further 19% Feel They Create Jobs For Themselves...

While many concerns about immigration centre on its impact on the job-market, most Canadians feel that immigrants coming to Canada today either “take jobs that Canadians don’t want” (46%) and a further 19% feel that they “create new jobs for themselves”.

Only one in five (22%) think immigrants “take away jobs from Canadians”.

Do you think immigrants coming to Canada today mostly...

	Total	Toronto CMA vs. Rest of Canada		Big 6 vs. Rest of Canada							
		Toronto CMA	Rest of Canada	Toronto CMA	Vancouver CMA	Calgary CMA	Edmonton CMA	Ottawa CMA	Montreal CMA	Big 6 Cities	Rest of Canada
Take away jobs from Canadians	22%	21%	22%	21%	21%	17%	26%	14%	18%	20%	25%
Take jobs that Canadians don't want	46%	47%	45%	47%	46%	50%	48%	50%	54%	49%	42%
Create new jobs for themselves	19%	20%	19%	20%	19%	20%	15%	20%	16%	18%	20%
Don't know	13%	12%	13%	12%	14%	13%	11%	16%	13%	13%	13%

- Those living in one of Canada's largest six cities are more likely than the rest of Canadians to believe that immigrants "take jobs that Canadians don't want" (49% vs. 42%), and they are less likely to believe immigrants "take away jobs from Canadians" (20% vs. 25%).

Strong Majorities Positively View Canada's Ethnic Mosaic...

It would appear that most appreciate Canada's cultural mosaic. When it comes to questions about ethnicity, a majority agree that:

- "It is better for Canada to have a variety of people with different religions" (75% agree); and
- "Canada's multicultural make-up is one of the best things about this country" (74% agree);

And a majority disagree that:

- "It is better for Canada if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions" (64% disagree).

Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with each of the following statements...

	Members of certain ethnic minorities in Canada tend to vote as a block for specific parties or candidates	It is better for Canada to have a variety of people with different religions	Canada's multicultural make-up is one of the best things about this country	Racism is a major problem in Canada today	Members of certain ethnic groups are being unfairly stereotyped and blamed for gun crime and violence in our cities	It is better for Canada if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions	I'd be more likely to vote for a political candidate who shares my ethnic or religious background
Top 2: Agree	76%	75%	74%	57%	49%	36%	35%
Bottom 2: Disagree	24%	25%	26%	43%	51%	64%	65%
Strongly agree	25%	27%	30%	14%	11%	12%	9%
Somewhat agree	51%	48%	44%	44%	38%	24%	25%
Somewhat disagree	21%	19%	19%	35%	34%	38%	35%
Strongly disagree	3%	6%	7%	7%	17%	26%	31%

But Most (56%) Believe Canada Should Try To Encourage Minority Groups To Be More Like Canadians...

Despite pervasive beliefs in the positive aspects of Canadian multi-culture, most (56%) believe encouraging minority groups “to try to be more like most Canadians” should be the higher priority, as opposed to encouraging “Canadians as a whole to try and accept minority groups and their customs and languages” (44%).

	Toronto CMA vs. Rest of Canada				Big 6 vs. Rest of Canada						
	Total	Toronto CMA	Rest of Canada	Toronto CMA	Vancouver CMA	Calgary CMA	Edmonton CMA	Ottawa CMA	Montreal CMA	Big 6 Cities	Rest of Canada
To encourage minority groups to try to change to be more like most Canadians.	56%	56%	56%	56%	56%	55%	57%	57%	64%	58%	54%
To encourage Canadians as a whole to try and accept minority groups and their customs and languages.	44%	44%	44%	44%	44%	45%	44%	43%	36%	42%	46%

Overall, what do you think should be the higher priority for Canada?

- Opinions are relatively consistent across all the major cities in Canada, with the exception of Montreal (64%) where they are noticeable more likely to believe the priority should be to encourage minority groups to be more like most Canadians.

Jack Layton And NDP (35%) Win When It Comes To Which Party And Leader Best Understand Immigrant And Minority Issues – But Harper And Conservatives (29%) Beat Out Martin And Liberals (27%) On This Issue...

Although conventional wisdom has suggested that the Liberals are the parties for immigrants, when asked which federal political party and leader best understands the issues facing Canada's immigrants and minority groups, 35% choose Jack Layton and the NDP, 29% choose Stephen Harper and the Conservatives, and 27% choose Paul Martin and the Liberals.

- Residents of Toronto (41%) and Ottawa (42%) are the most likely to point to Jack Layton and the NDP.
- Stephen Harper and the Conservatives score highest in Calgary (55%) and Edmonton (52%).
- Paul Martin and the Liberals score highest in Toronto (33%) and Vancouver (29%).

Vote Intentions Among Recent Immigrants And Visible Minorities...

The survey also reveals a vote-intention dynamic as it relates to those who have immigrated to Canada and among those who would describe themselves as being a member of a visible minority.

Those who have immigrated to Canada most strongly support the Conservatives (38%) over the Liberals (35%) and the NDP (19%), while visible minorities most strongly support the Liberals (35%) over the Conservatives (31%) and NDP (20%).



Vote Intention – Decided Voters		
	Immigrated to Canada	Visible minority
The Conservative Party	38%	31%
The Liberals	35%	35%
The New Democratic Party (NDP)	19%	20%
The Green Party	5%	4%
The Bloc Quebecois (BQ)	3%	10%
Or some other party	0%	1%

It should be noted that those who “immigrated to Canada” and those who describe themselves as a “visible minority” are not exclusive groups, and therefore panellists can be both categorized as an immigrant and as a visible minority.

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For more information on this news release, please contact:

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