

Canada: Nation of Minorities?

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Introduction

Over the week of June 24th through July 1 Quebecers mark the fete nationale and the following week is Canada day which for several decades has been the object of much less uptake in what was once described as la belle province. Neither the fete nationale nor Canada day give rise to meaningful reflection about our identities but rather serve as a widely appreciated break before summer. Identity debates nonetheless persist in Canada and without oversimplifying things, in Quebec, the existential question continues to pit those influencers who believe that we needn't choose between our Quebec and Canadian identities and those who feel that a choice must be made between these two inevitably conflicting identities.

Canada has been described as a nation of minorities and with its rapidly changing demographics and the growing ethnic and racial diversity to which it gives rise we are likely to see greater numbers of Canadians identifying themselves as members of minority groups. That's partly because however important language identities are in Quebec they appear to be less so in the rest of Canada as regards to principal lens via which people define themselves

Francophone Quebecers have often described themselves as a tiny minority in a North American sea of English-speakers. A similar demographic logic would suggest Quebec francophones are a minority within Canada's sea of English-speakers, But many francophones also view themselves as one of the two language majorities or two nations in Canada those undercutting the idea that they constitute a minority. Yet others might contend that francophone Quebecers see themselves as a majority in Quebec and a minority within Canada. How do francophone Quebecers and other Canadians instinctively respond when asked unprompted whether they regard themselves as a majority, a minority or both.

That which follows will examine how Canadians identify with majority, minority or both when unprompted, In other words what is their immediate reaction to the question without being asked to situate within a geo-political context. The results may be seen as counterintuitive as the group in the country that is most likely to view itself as a majority are francophone Quebecers. English Canadians are less The youngest cohort of Canadians surveyed aged 18-24 are more likely to see themselves as either a minority or both a minority and a majority.

The survey was conducted for the Metropolis Institute and the Association for Canadian Studies by the firm Leger Marketing over the period February 23-26, 2024 with a sample of 1590 Canadians. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparison purposes. A probability sample of 1590 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

On the basis on language identification, francophones are most likely in Canada to define as a majority while anglophone and allophone are more likely to see themselves as minorities

	Would you describe yourself as part of a majority, a minority or both?				Total
	Majority	Minority	Both	I don't know / I prefer not to answer	
Canada					
French	58.9%	11.1%	17.5%	12.4%	100.0%
English	44.3%	19.8%	17.8%	18.1%	100.0%
Other	25.6%	44.9%	15.4%	14.1%	100.0%
Indigenous	17.4%	23.9%	32.6%	26.1%	100.0%

Quebec francophones far more likely than anglophones to see themselves as a majority

Would you describe yourself as part of a majority, a minority or both?	Quebec		Total
	French	English	
Majority	60.7%	37.8%	57%
Minority	9.8%	27.0%	14%
Both	17.8%	27.0%	18%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	11.6%	8.1%	11%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A plurality of Canadians identify as a majority but more Ontarians see themselves as part of a minority than they do part of the majority

	Would you describe yourself as part of a majority, a minority or both?				Total
	Majority	Minority	Both Majority and Minority	I don't know / I prefer not to answer	
Canada	44.9%	21.5%	17.2%	16.4%	100.0%
British Columbia	49.8%	19.0%	17.2%	14.0%	100.0%
Alberta	34.5%	26.0%	19.2%	20.3%	100.0%
Saskatchewan	44.4%	13.3%	17.8%	24.4%	100.0%
Manitoba	48.1%	20.4%	11.1%	20.4%	100.0%
Ontario	39.0%	26.5%	17.2%	17.4%	100.0%
Quebec	57.1%	13.9%	17.9%	11.1%	100.0%
New Brunswick	51.4%	20.0%	17.1%	11.4%	100.0%
Nova Scotia	45.2%	16.7%	14.3%	23.8%	100.0%
Prince Edward Island	37.5%	25.0%	25.0%	12.5%	100.0%
Newfoundland and Labrador	30.4%	26.1%	4.3%	39.1%	100.0%

Canadians over the age of 65 are more likely to identify as part of a majority while the youngest cohort are more likely than others to identify with a minority

	Would you describe yourself as part of a majority, a minority or both?				Total
	Majority	Minority	Both	I don't know / I prefer not to answer	
Canada	44.9%	21.3%	17.3%	16.5%	100.0%
18-24	37.7%	31.2%	14.3%	16.9%	100.0%
25-34	42.8%	26.8%	16.4%	14.1%	100.0%
35-44	42.0%	22.1%	12.6%	23.3%	100.0%
45-54	43.2%	20.8%	17.6%	18.4%	100.0%
55-64	43.2%	18.0%	21.6%	17.3%	100.0%
65-69	54.3%	20.0%	15.4%	10.3%	100.0%
>= 70	53.5%	11.9%	22.3%	12.4%	100.0%

Most identifying as white see themselves as part of a majority while less than one in ten that are not white see themselves as part of a majority

	Would you describe yourself as part of a majority, a minority or both?				Total
	Majority	Minority	Both	I don't know / I prefer not to answer	
White	53.3%	11.4%	18.6%	16.7%	100.0%
Not white	8.9%	64.2%	11.6%	15.2%	100.0%
Total	44.9%	21.4%	17.2%	16.4%	100.0%