

The Majority of Canadians do not identify as settler colonists

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Introduction: Are non-Indigenous Canadians all settler colonists?

Across much of the academy and for some policy-makers it has become increasingly common to hear the term settler or settler colonist used to describe the “the non-Indigenous peoples living in Canada”. The term tends to be associated with persons identified as belonging to the European-descended sociopolitical majority (though a large share of Canadians are not European descendants).

For most Canadians, whether born here or elsewhere, the Indigenous-Settler Colonist binary/dichotomy doesn't appear to reflect the way in which Canadians define themselves. This conclusion is reflected in a survey conducted by Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies which reveals that some 47% of Canadians disagree when asked whether they were settler colonists in Canada while some 30% didn't know and 23% agreed. It's reasonably safe to conclude that the 30% that didn't respond simply don't understand the notion of settler colonialism. Ironically the only group that to a significant extent see themselves as 'settlers' are Canada's francophones who often learned about that they colonized parts of the province a term which in French they equate with settling it. But in this case the question formulation in French gave rise to an interpretation that served to reaffirm a view amongst francophones that they were Canada's first settlers.

The survey was conducted by the firm Leger Marketing for the Association for Canadian Studies over the period September 20-22, 2024 with a sample of 1612 Canadians. A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparison purposes. A probability sample of 1612 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20.

Most Canadians do not see themselves as settler colonists in Canada; less than one in four identify as such

| I am a settler colonist in Canada - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following statements. | Total | Male | Female |
|---|-------|------|--------|
| Yes | 23% | 24% | 22% |
| No | 47% | 51% | 43% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 30% | 24% | 35% |

Canadians between the ages of 18 and 34 least likely to identify as settler colonists but some four in ten don't know

| I am a settler colonist in Canada - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following statements. | 18-34 | 35-54 | 55+ |
|---|-------|-------|-----|
| Yes | 20% | 25% | 23% |
| No | 41% | 47% | 52% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 39% | 29% | 25% |

Ironically Canada's francophones seem most likely to identify as settler colonists owing to the question formulation in French (1) while the majority of English Canadians and persons identifying as ethnic minorities do not identify as such

| I am a settler colonist in Canada - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following statements. | French (1) | English | Other |
|---|--|----------------|--------------|
| Yes | 48% | 17% | 11% |
| No | 25% | 53% | 55% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 27% | 30% | 34% |
| (1) | It is important to note that the French translation of the question as follows potentially gave rise to confusion and the outcome likely reveals that francophones do not see themselves as settlers « Je descends des premiers colons du Canada » | | |

Those defining as on the left ideologically are far more likely to see themselves as settler colonists

| | In thinking about where you would situate yourself on the ideological spectrum would you say that you are...? | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------------|--------|-----------------|--------|
| I am a settler colonist in Canada - | Left | Left of center | Center | Right of center | Right |
| Yes | 47.2% | 32.0% | 21.4% | 21.4% | 17.1% |
| No | 30.9% | 46.8% | 50.7% | 59.2% | 59.0% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 22.0% | 21.2% | 27.9% | 19.3% | 23.8% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Pride in Canada



Eight in ten say they are proud to be Canadian but the 18-24 cohort are less likely to say so

| I am proud to be Canadian - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following | Total | Male | Female | 18 to 24 | 25 to 34 | 35 to 44 | 45 to 54 | 55 to 64 | 65+ |
|---|-------|------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----|
| Yes | 80% | 77% | 82% | 58% | 73% | 79% | 76% | 85% | 92% |
| No | 10% | 13% | 7% | 17% | 14% | 10% | 12% | 8% | 5% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 10% | 9% | 11% | 24% | 13% | 11% | 12% | 6% | 3% |

Quebecers more proud to be Canadian than Ontarians . Prairie residents and British Columbians

| I am proud to be Canadian - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following | Total | Atl. | QC | ON | MB/S K | AB | BC |
|---|-------|------|-----|-----|-----------|-----|-----|
| Yes | 80% | 91% | 81% | 80% | 77% | 84% | 70% |
| No | 10% | 3% | 11% | 11% | 13% | 6% | 13% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 10% | 6% | 9% | 9% | 11% | 10% | 17% |

Francophones somewhat more proud than others to be Canadian

| I am proud to be Canadian - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following | French | English | Other |
|---|--------|---------|-------|
| Yes | 82% | 80% | 74% |
| No | 11% | 10% | 11% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 7% | 10% | 15% |

Pride in being Canadian drops significantly since May amongst those age 18-24

| I am proud to be Canadian | Total | 18 to 24 | 25 to 34 | 35 to 44 | 45 to 54 | 55 to 64 | 65+ |
|---------------------------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----|
| September 20-22, 2024 | 80% | 58% | 73% | 79% | 76% | 85% | 92% |
| May 17-20, 2024 | 80% | 74% | 72% | 74% | 77% | 88% | 91% |

Settler colonists as proud to be Canadian as those not defining as such

| I am proud to be Canadian - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following statements. | I am a settler colonist in Canada - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following statements. | |
|---|---|--------|
| | Yes | No |
| Yes | 80.2% | 82.4% |
| No | 13.3% | 10.4% |
| I don't know / Does not apply | 6.5% | 7.2% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% |