

IMMIGRATION, IDENTITIES AND INTEGRATION: BEYOND THE ECONOMIC CONCERNS OVER IMMIGRATION

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INTRODUCTION: IMMIGRATION, IDENTITIES AND INTEGRATION

Recent surveys conducted by Leger for ACS and the Environics Institute both confirmed that a majority of Canadians felt that there were too many immigrants coming to the country. Last week the government of Canada announced a twenty-five percent reduction in the annual immigration targets for the years from an initially projected 500 000 in 2025 to the revised number of 395 000 in 2025, 380 000 in 2026 and 365 000 in 2027.

Observers tend to attribute the growing concern about the annual number of immigrant to economic preoccupations (i.e. rising costs, housing affordability and availability). But surveys have also revealed additional concerns relative to newcomer integration. How are such concerns reflected in public opinion. That which follows asks Canadians about the transmission of customs and traditions, the public display of religious symbols and negative opinion of religious minorities. Three in four Canadians agree that it is important to transmit our customs and traditions to our children. But the support is somewhat qualified when it comes to the display of religious symbols in public. In effect, some in three Canadians believe that To avoid being the object of discrimination it is best for people to stop wearing religious symbols on the street (kippah, hijabs or crosses). Quebecers in particular feel that discrimination is avoided by not displaying such religious symbols in public with nearly 50% holding that view. Paradoxically, Quebecers are most likely to believe that it is important to transmit customs and traditions to children.

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

One in four Canadians believe that immigrants should give up their customs and traditions a view held by one in three persons over 55 and one in three quebecers

Immigrants should give up their customs and traditions%	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
Yes	26%	29%	23%	18%	25%	32%	25%	33%	24%	24%	25%	21%
No	57%	55%	58%	65%	57%	51%	52%	51%	58%	55%	54%	66%
I don't know / Does not apply	18%	16%	19%	18%	18%	18%	22%	16%	18%	21%	21%	13%

Three in four Canadians agree that it is important to transmit our customs and traditions to our children with younger cohort much less likely to agree

It is important to transmit our customs and traditions to our children	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
NET AGREE	76%	76%	75%	65%	75%	83%	77%	82%	74%	72%	75%	72%
NET DISAGREE	10%	12%	9%	13%	11%	8%	6%	6%	9%	12%	13%	18%
I prefer not to answer	14%	12%	16%	23%	14%	9%	17%	12%	17%	16%	12%	10%

One in three Canadians believe best way for religious groups to avoid discrimination is to stop wearing religious symbols on the street. Most disagree with this proposition

To avoid being the object of discrimination it is best for people to stop wearing religious symbols on the street (kippah, hijabs or crosses)	Total	Male	Female	18-34	35-54	55+
NET AGREE	32%	35%	29%	22%	30%	39%
NET DISAGREE	48%	47%	49%	51%	47%	47%
I prefer not to answer	20%	18%	23%	27%	24%	14%

Quebecers are by far the most likely to believe that best way for religious groups to avoid discrimination is to avoid wearing religious symbols on the street

To avoid being the object of discrimination it is best for people to stop wearing religious symbols on the street (kippah, hijabs or crosses)	Total	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
NET AGREE	32%	28%	47%	26%	31%	28%	28%
NET DISAGREE	48%	47%	37%	52%	40%	52%	56%
I prefer not to answer	20%	25%	17%	22%	29%	20%	15%

Those saying that they have a good understanding of world war ii are by far most likely to say that they have a good understanding of the issues underlying the war between russia and Ukraine

The issues underlying the war between Russia and Ukraine -	What happened during World War II - Do you have a very good understanding, somewhat good understanding, very little understanding or do not understand the following?			
	Very good understanding	Somewhat good understanding	Very little understanding	No understanding
Very good understanding	38.9%	9.4%	3.0%	2.8%
Somewhat good understanding	43.4%	49.7%	22.5%	8.5%
Very little understanding	12.5%	27.6%	47.7%	23.6%
No understanding	2.7%	8.8%	22.5%	60.4%
I prefer not to answer	2.5%	4.5%	4.4%	4.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

More on the non-economic considerations that underlie concerns over the levels of immigration



Amongst those Canadians holding negative views of Immigrants, a majority harbor negative views of muslims

Net Negative Sentiment of the following groups	View of Immigrants...			
	Very Positive	Somewhat Positive	Somewhat Negative	Very Negative
Muslims	14%	26%	64%	77%
Jews	7%	13%	26%	31%
Indigenous	5%	14%	30%	41%

Amongst those who feel that there are too many immigrants one in three believe that immigrants should give up their customs and traditions

	Do you feel that there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?		
	Too many	About the right number	Too few
Immigrants should give up their customs and traditions			
Yes	33.3%	13.5%	5.3%
No	48.4%	76.2%	86.8%
I don't know / Does not apply	18.2%	10.3%	7.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Amongst those Canadians who feel that there are too many immigrants, some 38% think it best to avoid being the object of discrimination by not wearing religious symbols on the streets

	Do you feel that there are too many, too few or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?		
	Too many	About the right number	Too few
To avoid being the object of discrimination it is best for people to stop wearing religious symbols on the street (kippah, hijabs or crosses) -			
Agree	38%	27%	16%
Disagree	42%	52%	63%
I prefer not to answer	20%	11%	21%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Amongst those who strongly agree that To avoid being the object of discrimination it is best for people to stop wearing religious symbols on the street, some three quarters hold negative views towards muslims and one third hold negative views of Jews

		To avoid being the object of discrimination it is best for people to stop wearing religious symbols on the street (kippah, hijabs or crosses)			
Net Negative Sentiment towards...		Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Muslims		75%	64%	33%	22.5%
Jews		32%	22%	14%	12%

Amongst those Canadians who feel that immigrants should give up their customs and traditions some 68% hold negative views towards Muslims

Muslims - Do you have a very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative reaction to the following?	Immigrants should give up their customs and traditions - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following statements.	
	Yes	No
Very positive	20%	59%
Somewhat negative	68%	29%
I prefer not to answer	12%	12%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Jews Do you have a very positive, somewhat positive, somewhat negative or very negative reaction to the following?	Immigrants should give up their customs and traditions - Please answer Yes, No or I don't know / Does not apply to the following statements.	
	Yes	No
Very positive	59%	74%
Somewhat negative	26%	14%
I prefer not to answer	15%	12%
Total	100.0%	100.0%