



A C S • A E C

Association for Canadian Studies

Association d'études canadiennes

Polling Research

Is Canada a Country, Nation and/or Nation of Nations?

Jack Jedwab

October 29, 2025



How many nations are there in Canada?

Although they're often used interchangeably there is a difference between the terms nation, state, and country. Country and State are often symmetrical as they tend to apply to self-governing political entities while nation is generally considered a group of people who share the same culture but do not have sovereignty, A multinational state is a sovereign entity that comprises two or more nations or states. This contrasts with a nation state, where a single nation accounts for the bulk of the population. The terms risk generating confusion as many citizens still equate nation with country.

While Quebec politicians often refer to Quebec as a single nation it is clear that Quebecers like other Canadians believe that there are many nations within Canada. In July 2022, some 38% of Canadians said there was one nation in Canada when asked the following: "Quebec increasingly refers to itself as a nation as do several indigenous groups. How many nations do you think that there are in the country?"

Without the prompt, a September 2025 ACS-Leger found that 52% agreed that there was one nation in Canada when asked "How many nations do you believe there are in Canada?" Underlying these differences is the continued divergence in how the term nation is understood accompanied by a fair degree of confusion as to its meaning. The September ACS-Leger survey emerges in a different context from the July 2022 poll with a unprecedented push for independence by some Albertans. Hence the survey more deeply probes the nation/national identity question by asking which provinces consider themselves nations, desire special status, support separation and think that while Canada is a country it is not a nation.

The survey also provides correlations between from the results to examine the impact of nation self-perception in province/region influences views on Canada's federalist governance

Methodology

The findings are based on surveys conducted via web panel by the firm Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies between August 29 and 31, 2025 with 1627 Canadians. While no margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample of 1627 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.52\%$, 19 times out of 20

A previous survey on the issue of how many nations there are in Canada was conducted by Leger survey for the ACS between July 8 to July 10, 2022 via web panel with 1764 Canadians. No margin of error can be associated with a non-probability sample (Web panel in this case). However for comparative purposes, a probability sample of 1764 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

The way questions are formulated around the number of nations in Canada has a bearing on how many nations Canadians think they are but the September 2025 survey reveals that a majority of Canadians think there is only one

Quebec increasingly refers to itself as a nation as do several indigenous groups. How many nations do you think that there are in the country? July 2022		How many nations do you believe there are in Canada? August 2025	
One	38%	One (Canada)	52%
Two	8%	Three (Quebec, English Canada and Indigenous peoples)	17%
Three	11%	Fifty or more (Quebec, English Canada, and multiple Indigenous and Métis nations)	15%
Ten	16%	Other, please specify:	2%
Fifty Plus	28%	I don't know	14%

A majority of Quebecers believe that their province can be considered a nation within Canada (though one-third say No and the some 15% don't know). At the same time some one in three Albertans think there province might be considered a nation and one in four in the rest of Canada see their respective provinces as nations

I believe my province or region can be considered a nation within Canada? August 2025	Total	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
Yes	33%	28%	53%	25%	22%	33%	27%
No	53%	64%	33%	62%	57%	50%	59%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	14%	8%	14%	13%	21%	17%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Some one in five Canadians say they would support their province separating from Canada with unsurprisingly Quebecers and Albertans most likely to favor separation though majorities in both provinces remain unfavorable

I support my province or region separating from Canada to become an independent country? August 2025	Total	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
Yes	19%	12%	28%	13%	17%	24%	18%
No	72%	81%	61%	79%	69%	66%	73%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	9%	7%	11%	8%	14%	10%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

With the exception of Quebecers most other Canadians see Canada as both country and nation.

Canada is a country but not a nation? August 2025	Total	Atl.	QC	ON	MB/SK	AB	BC
Yes	36%	39%	51%	30%	36%	34%	28%
No	46%	49%	33%	50%	42%	44%	58%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	18%	12%	16%	20%	22%	22%	14%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Amongst those who regard their province as a nation believe they should have special status

I believe my province or region should have special political status within Canada nations do you believe there are in Canada? August 2025	I believe my province or region can be considered a nation within Canada. -	
	Yes	No
Yes	51%	10%
No	36%	82%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	13%	8%
Total	100%	100%

The more one sees their province/region as a nation the less they're likely to see Canada is a nation

Canada is a country but not a nation. August 2025	I believe my province or region can be considered a nation within Canada	
	Yes	No
Yes	50.1%	30.1%
No	37.3%	55.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	12.6%	14.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Those Canadians who believe that their province or region is a nation are far more likely to support separation (though not the majority)

I support my province or region separating from Canada to become an independent country nations do you believe there are in Canada? August 2025	I believe my province or region can be considered a nation within Canada. - :	
	Yes	No
Yes	37.0%	7.5%
No	54.1%	89.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	8.8%	2.7%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Across the country, the more one believes that their province is a nation within Canada, the more they favor separation for their province from Canada

I support my province or region separating from Canada to become an independent country. nations do you believe there are in Canada? August 2025	I believe my province or region can be considered a nation within Canada. - :	
	Yes	No
British Columbia	42.6%	8.3%
Alberta	46.6%	7.8%
Prairies	31.8%	13.6%
Ontario	33.5%	4.6%
Quebec	38.0%	13.1%
Maritimes	23.3%	8.6%
Total	37.1%	7.6%

Quebec francophones and anglophones hold very different views on how many nations there are in the country. In September 2025 a majority of Quebec anglophones stated that there is only one nation in the country compared with one in three francophones

July 2022	Quebec increasingly refers to itself as a nation as do several indigenous groups. How many nations do you think that there are in the country?		
	Quebec	French	English
One	16%	11%	36%
Two	9%	9%	5%
Three	15%	17%	14%
Ten	23%	26%	14%
Fifty Plus	36%	37%	31%

August 2025	How many nations do you believe there are in Canada?		
	Quebec	French	English
One (Canada)	33%	26%	56%
Three (Quebec, English Canada, and Indigenous peoples)	28%	30%	18%
Fifty or more (Quebec, English Canada, and multiple Indigenous and Métis nations)	23%	24%	21%
Other, please specify:	1%	1%	3%
I don't know	15%	19%	2%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Indigenous and non-Indigenous share similar response when asked whether Canada is a country but not a nation

	Canada is a country but not a nation.	
	Not Indigenous	Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuk / Inuit) r=40
Yes	36%	35%
No	46%	47%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	18%	18%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Ironically the majority of Indigenous respondents say there is only one nation in Canada

	How many nations do you believe there are in Canada?	
	Not Indigenous	Indigenous (First Nations, Métis, Inuk / Inuit)
One (Canada)	52%	55%
Three (Quebec, English Canada, and Indigenous peoples)	17%	7%
Fifty or more (Quebec, English Canada, and multiple Indigenous and Métis nations)	14%	25%
Other, please specify:	2%	7%
I don't know	15%	6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Contact

acs-metropolis.ca/acs

general@acs-aec.ca

850-1980 Sherbrook Street West, Montreal,

QC, H3H 1E8