

Canadian Race Relations Foundation &  
the Association for Canadian Studies

# Perceptions on Immigration, Diversity and Religion

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# Introduction

- Public opinion on immigration in Canada is regularly monitored and the focus is generally about the perception on the part of Canadians over the number of immigrants that are admitted annually to the country.
- Less is known about the factors that affect opinion about immigrants. That which follows will focus on how perceptions about religion and religious minorities are driving opinion on immigrants.
- We will also look at how the acceptance of diversity is affected by views about religion. The findings are especially relevant for Canada as the Quebec government will soon be adopting legislation to prevent persons occupying positions of authority from wearing religious signs

# Methodology

- The results of the poll for the Association for Canadian Studies and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation were collected via a Web survey conducted by Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies between May 3 -May 7, 2019 among a representative sample of 2,215 Canadians, 18 years of age or older.
- Using data from Statistics Canada, the results were weighted according to gender, age, region, language spoken at home, education and whether or not children are present in the household to ensure a sample representative of the entire population under review. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of 2,215 respondents would have a margin of error of  $\pm 2.08\%$ , 19 times out of 20.

# Opinion on Immigrants in Canada



Canadians have a more positive view of immigrants than they do of refugees; immigrants and refugees viewed somewhat more negatively amongst persons aged 35-44

Views Towards Immigrants	Total	Age						
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
TOTAL Positive	67.1%	66.0%	63.5%	58.5%	67.2%	69.1%	76.7%	71.1%
Very positive	20.6%	26.1%	19.5%	22.4%	19.7%	17.5%	19.3%	24.0%
Somewhat positive	46.5%	39.8%	44.0%	36.1%	47.5%	51.5%	57.3%	47.1%
TOTAL Negative	23.2%	22.4%	23.6%	30.0%	22.7%	23.5%	18.4%	17.4%
Somewhat negative	17.5%	14.5%	18.1%	26.1%	15.9%	15.2%	15.3%	15.7%
Very negative	5.6%	7.9%	5.5%	3.9%	6.8%	8.2%	3.2%	1.7%
IDK / prefer not to answer	9.8%	11.6%	12.9%	11.5%	10.1%	7.5%	4.9%	11.6%

Views Towards Refugees	Total	Age						
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
TOTAL Positive	58.7%	65.0%	53.2%	51.5%	57.3%	58.2%	67.1%	66.7%
Very positive	17.1%	24.2%	16.3%	20.1%	14.1%	14.2%	16.4%	18.3%
Somewhat positive	41.6%	40.8%	36.9%	31.5%	43.2%	44.1%	50.7%	48.3%
TOTAL Negative	29.1%	21.3%	30.0%	37.6%	31.4%	29.1%	24.2%	22.5%
Somewhat negative	21.1%	17.9%	20.4%	27.0%	23.1%	19.8%	18.4%	17.5%
Very negative	7.9%	3.3%	9.6%	10.6%	8.3%	9.3%	5.8%	5.0%
IDK / prefer not to answer	12.2%	13.8%	16.8%	10.9%	11.3%	12.6%	8.6%	10.8%

# Refugees viewed somewhat more negatively in Quebec and Western Canada

Views Towards Immigrants	Total	Province / Region					
		ATL	QC	ON	MB-SK	AB	BC
TOTAL Positive	67.1%	67.1%	66.0%	70.9%	62.5%	62.8%	63.8%
Very positive	20.6%	24.3%	14.4%	25.6%	14.6%	18.6%	19.6%
Somewhat positive	46.5%	42.8%	51.5%	45.3%	47.9%	44.1%	44.2%
TOTAL Negative	23.2%	20.4%	25.4%	18.1%	27.1%	27.5%	29.2%
Somewhat negative	17.5%	15.8%	19.8%	13.9%	25.0%	19.8%	19.3%
Very negative	5.6%	4.6%	5.6%	4.2%	2.1%	7.7%	10.0%
IDK / prefer not to answer	9.8%	12.5%	8.7%	10.9%	10.4%	9.7%	7.0%

Views Towards Refugees	Total	Province / Region					
		ATL	QC	ON	MB-SK	AB	BC
TOTAL Positive	58.7%	64.2%	57.8%	60.4%	59.3%	54.8%	55.7%
Very positive	17.1%	19.9%	12.5%	20.8%	10.3%	17.7%	15.7%
Somewhat positive	41.6%	44.4%	45.3%	39.5%	49.0%	37.1%	40.0%
TOTAL Negative	29.1%	20.5%	32.0%	26.4%	29.7%	33.9%	32.3%
Somewhat negative	21.1%	16.6%	24.5%	18.8%	24.8%	23.0%	21.0%
Very negative	7.9%	4.0%	7.5%	7.5%	4.8%	10.9%	11.3%
IDK / prefer not to answer	12.2%	15.2%	10.2%	13.3%	11.0%	11.3%	12.0%

Similarity in the patterns of positive and negative views in regards to their respective appreciation or non-appreciation of immigrants and refugees

Views Towards Refugees	Views Towards Immigrants			
	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative
TOTAL Positive	92.5%	76.3%	17.8%	7.2%
Very positive	68.1%	5.5%	1.8%	3.2%
Somewhat positive	24.4%	70.7%	16.0%	4.0%
TOTAL Negative	5.7%	17.5%	77.0%	88.8%
Somewhat negative	4.6%	15.1%	62.3%	24.0%
Very negative	1.1%	2.4%	14.7%	64.8%
No response	1.8%	6.2%	5.2%	4.0%

# Opinion on Religious Groups





# Ontarians hold most positive view of Muslims; >1 in 3 Canadians hold negative views of Muslims

Views Towards Religious Groups		Total	Province / Region					
			ATL	QC	ON	MB-SK	AB	BC
Muslims	Net (+)	47.2%	46.4%	37.3%	52.9%	48.3%	52.6%	44.0%
	Net (-)	36.9%	29.1%	50.6%	30.4%	33.1%	34.9%	39.1%
Jews	Net (+)	65.9%	55.0%	70.7%	75.7%	75.4%	59.1%	44.0%
	Net (-)	17.3%	27.3%	12.2%	16.0%	10.1%	22.6%	19.6%
Catholics	Net (+)	62.2%	43.7%	66.3%	65.9%	60.7%	67.7%	50.3%
	Net (-)	24.4%	33.8%	22.4%	19.7%	31.0%	19.0%	37.7%
Protestants	Net (+)	60.0%	56.7%	54.5%	65.9%	60.7%	68.1%	47.2%
	Net (-)	19.7%	20.0%	26.0%	12.8%	13.8%	19.0%	31.9%

# Youngest Canadians hold most positive views of Muslims while oldest cohort hold most positive views of Christians

Views Towards Religious Groups		Age							
		Total	18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
Muslims	Net (+)	47.3%	63.5%	43.5%	38.5%	49.2%	46.9%	47.6%	46.7%
	Net (-)	36.9%	24.1%	37.2%	44.7%	36.2%	35.8%	39.3%	38.3%
Jews	Net (+)	66.0%	64.3%	52.9%	57.3%	67.5%	69.6%	79.8%	78.3%
	Net (-)	17.3%	17.8%	25.1%	20.7%	15.1%	13.1%	13.0%	15.8%
Catholics	Net (+)	62.3%	60.0%	50.0%	56.7%	61.7%	66.5%	74.4%	73.6%
	Net (-)	24.4%	26.3%	30.8%	26.5%	26.7%	17.8%	20.7%	19.0%
Protestants	Net (+)	60.0%	61.7%	41.5%	48.6%	58.4%	66.5%	77.3%	81.0%
	Net (-)	19.7%	17.1%	29.7%	24.3%	20.6%	13.9%	14.1%	14.0%

Those most likely to hold negative views of immigrants are by far least likely to hold favorable views of Muslims

Positive Views Towards Religious and Ethnic Groups	Views Towards Immigrants			
	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative
Muslims	80.5%	56.4%	17.6%	11.3%
Jews	83.7%	74.8%	58.8%	31.2%
Catholics	75.9%	66.8%	56.7%	54.4%
Protestants	75.8%	67.4%	49.4%	40.0%
Black Persons	94.7%	89.6%	73.8%	58.9%
Indigenous Peoples	88.8%	78.3%	56.3%	57.6%

## Albertans and Canadians 55-64 most likely to think that immigrant and non-immigrant relations have declined

Relations between Immigrants and non-Immigrants	Total	Age						
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
Improved	11.4%	20.8%	14.8%	7.6%	10.6%	8.0%	9.2%	14.0%
Stayed the Same	31.1%	32.1%	27.7%	34.5%	31.7%	26.1%	31.7%	41.3%
Declined	41.8%	30.4%	37.4%	37.0%	42.3%	53.0%	49.0%	33.9%
IDK / prefer not to answer	15.7%	16.7%	20.1%	21.0%	15.4%	12.9%	10.1%	10.7%

Relations between Immigrants and non-Immigrants	Total	Province / Region					
		ATL	QC	ON	MB-SK	AB	BC
Improved	11.4%	13.8%	12.9%	10.4%	10.3%	10.0%	12.3%
Stayed the Same	31.1%	25.0%	31.5%	32.2%	33.1%	24.9%	34.7%
Declined	41.7%	35.5%	40.3%	39.4%	40.0%	55.0%	43.7%
IDK / prefer not to answer	15.7%	25.7%	15.4%	18.0%	16.6%	10.0%	9.3%

The more negative one's view of immigrants the more likely they believe religious minorities threaten our way of life and should give up their customs and traditions

Net Agree	Views Towards Immigrants			
	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative
Our way of life is threatened by the presence of immigrants from religious minorities	17.1%	30.3%	67.0%	78.2%
Our society is tolerant and accepting of religious minority customs and traditions	68.2%	71.6%	62.4%	48.8%
Religious minorities should be encouraged to give up their customs and traditions	15.4%	17.6%	27.1%	40.8%

Those with positive view of immigrants most likely to think immigrant-non-immigrant relations have improved or stayed the same while those with negative views of immigrants most likely to think relations have declined

Relations between Immigrants and non-Immigrants	View of Immigrants			
	Very positive	Somewhat positive	Somewhat negative	Very negative
Improved	22.9%	10.6%	3.1%	4.8%
Stayed the Same	29.7%	36.5%	24.7%	21.8%
Declined	34.9%	40.4%	60.7%	67.7%
IDK / prefer not to answer	12.5%	12.4%	11.6%	5.6%

# Living With Diversity



# Three in four Canadians say they enjoy living a diverse society

<b>I enjoy living in a society with a diversity of cultural and religious groups</b>		
Total Agree	1,651	74.5%
Strongly agree	747	33.7%
Somewhat agree	904	40.8%
Total Disagree	372	16.8%
Somewhat disagree	262	11.8%
Strongly disagree	110	5.0%
IDK / prefer not to answer	192	8.7%



# Over one in three Canadians agree that our way of life is threatened by the presence of immigrants from religious minorities

Our way of life is threatened by the presence of immigrants from religious minorities	Total	Age						
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
TOTAL Agree	36.2%	27.8%	30.4%	39.8%	34.8%	40.6%	38.3%	44.6%
Strongly agree	12.2%	8.3%	9.3%	13.1%	11.8%	15.2%	13.3%	14.0%
Somewhat agree	24.0%	19.5%	21.1%	26.7%	22.9%	25.3%	25.1%	30.6%
Total Disagree	52.9%	61.8%	55.9%	46.5%	52.1%	50.6%	55.9%	46.3%
Somewhat disagree	21.2%	22.8%	18.4%	18.1%	24.7%	19.9%	24.8%	17.4%
Strongly disagree	31.8%	39.0%	37.5%	28.4%	27.5%	30.7%	31.1%	28.9%
IDK / prefer not to answer	10.9%	10.4%	13.7%	13.6%	13.1%	8.8%	5.8%	9.1%

Two in three Canadians agree that our society is tolerant and accepting of religious minority customs, yet a majority agree there is a rise of hatred directed at religious minorities

<b>Our society is tolerant and accepting of religious minority customs and traditions</b>		
Total Agree	1,453	65.7%
Strongly agree	318	14.4%
Somewhat agree	1,135	51.3%
Total Disagree	576	25.9%
Somewhat disagree	453	20.4%
Strongly disagree	123	5.5%
IDK / prefer not to answer	186	8.4%

<b>There is a rise of hatred directed at religious minorities in my province</b>		
Total Agree	1,228	55.4%
Strongly agree	351	15.8%
Somewhat agree	877	39.6%
Total Disagree	608	27.5%
Somewhat disagree	429	19.4%
Strongly disagree	179	8.1%
IDK / prefer not to answer	379	17.1%



Those least likely to enjoy living in a diverse society are especially unlikely to express positive views of Muslims

Positive Views Towards Religious and Ethnic Groups	I enjoy living in a society with a diversity of cultural and religious groups			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Muslims	74.7%	43.0%	16.5%	11.7%
Jews	81.1%	68.1%	47.5%	45.5%
Catholics	70.3%	63.2%	56.5%	55.0%
Protestants	73.9%	58.6%	50.2%	42.7%
Immigrants	89.8%	70.4%	31.0%	20.7%
Refugees	82.2%	58.2%	27.0%	28.4%

Those less likely to enjoy living in a diverse society hold particularly negative views of hijabs

Positive Views Towards Religious Symbols	I enjoy living in a society with a diversity of cultural and religious groups			
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Cross	70.1%	59.3%	52.5%	55.0%
Crucifix	64.7%	59.0%	54.2%	50.9%
Hijab	64.3%	35.8%	12.2%	8.2%
Kippa	72.5%	48.2%	30.8%	30.6%

# Concerns over the state of Muslim and non-Muslim relations increase with age

Relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (over past 5 years)	Total	Age						
		18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
Improved	7.4%	18.8%	10.4%	6.4%	6.0%	3.6%	3.2%	6.6%
Stayed the Same	25.6%	27.5%	24.5%	31.8%	27.2%	20.9%	23.3%	23.1%
Declined	45.9%	31.3%	37.4%	39.0%	49.1%	54.5%	56.8%	52.1%
IDK / prefer not to answer	21.1%	22.5%	27.7%	22.8%	17.6%	20.9%	16.7%	18.2%

Relations between Muslims and non-Muslims (over past 5 years)	Total	Province / Region					
		ATL	QC	ON	MB-SK	AB	BC
Improved	7.4%	7.3%	6.7%	7.8%	5.5%	6.8%	8.7%
Stayed the Same	25.6%	22.5%	20.8%	27.8%	22.8%	27.3%	29.0%
Declined	45.9%	38.4%	52.7%	41.4%	49.7%	50.2%	45.3%
IDK / prefer not to answer	21.2%	31.8%	19.8%	23.1%	22.1%	15.7%	17.0%

# Hijabs object of most negative sentiment amongst religious signs on the part of Canadians and in particular in Quebec

Positive Views Towards Religious Symbols		Total	Age						
			18 to 24	25 to 34	35 to 44	45 to 54	55 to 64	65 to 74	75+
Cross	Net (+)	59.9%	62.1%	45.9%	56.0%	60.7%	64.1%	71.0%	61.7%
	Net (-)	21.4%	20.4%	29.4%	23.4%	19.4%	17.1%	17.2%	25.0%
Crucifix	Net (+)	58.0%	57.4%	43.4%	52.2%	58.7%	66.4%	69.3%	58.8%
	Net (-)	24.8%	23.6%	37.1%	26.5%	22.9%	17.1%	20.7%	27.7%
Hijab	Net (+)	40.2%	57.1%	38.2%	35.8%	39.4%	37.5%	42.2%	30.3%
	Net (-)	43.5%	28.3%	39.8%	44.1%	44.0%	46.0%	48.6%	58.8%
Kippa	Net (+)	51.6%	56.0%	42.0%	43.3%	58.7%	49.1%	60.2%	55.8%
	Net (-)	23.8%	19.5%	25.5%	24.3%	20.9%	25.1%	23.9%	31.7%

Positive Views Towards Religious Symbols		Total	Province / Region					
			ATL	QC	ON	MB-SK	AB	BC
Cross	Net (+)	59.9%	53.0%	54.8%	63.5%	62.5%	71.4%	51.2%
	Net (-)	21.4%	22.5%	28.8%	15.8%	13.9%	17.3%	30.6%
Crucifix	Net (+)	58.1%	50.0%	59.1%	60.5%	58.6%	66.0%	46.7%
	Net (-)	24.7%	27.6%	26.9%	21.2%	20.7%	21.9%	34.0%
Hijab	Net (+)	40.1%	45.3%	27.9%	45.2%	43.1%	43.0%	40.3%
	Net (-)	43.5%	30.0%	62.3%	37.3%	35.4%	41.4%	41.0%
Kippa	Net (+)	51.6%	49.7%	37.3%	59.2%	56.6%	61.0%	45.5%
	Net (-)	23.9%	11.3%	45.0%	15.4%	20.0%	16.9%	25.2%