

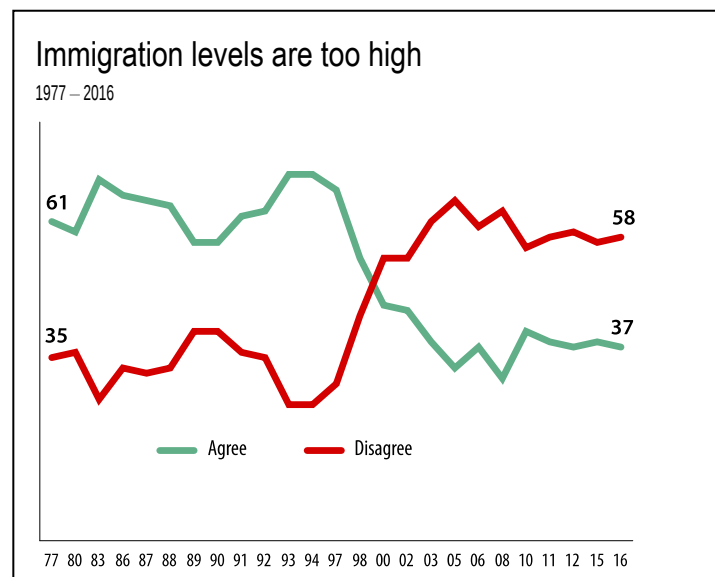
Immigration

Canadians continue to be more positive than negative about immigration. Opinions in some cases have improved measurably over the past year, especially in terms increased public confidence that the system is keeping out criminals, and diminishing concerns about newcomers not adopting Canadian values.

This current survey included questions that have been asked on a number of previous Focus Canada surveys, in some cases dating back more than 30 years. This provides a basis by which to identify how public opinion is changing or not over time. In most cases these questions were most recently asked in June 2015. The results are based on responses to a set of “agree-disagree” statements that serve as key benchmark indicators of public attitudes about immigration.

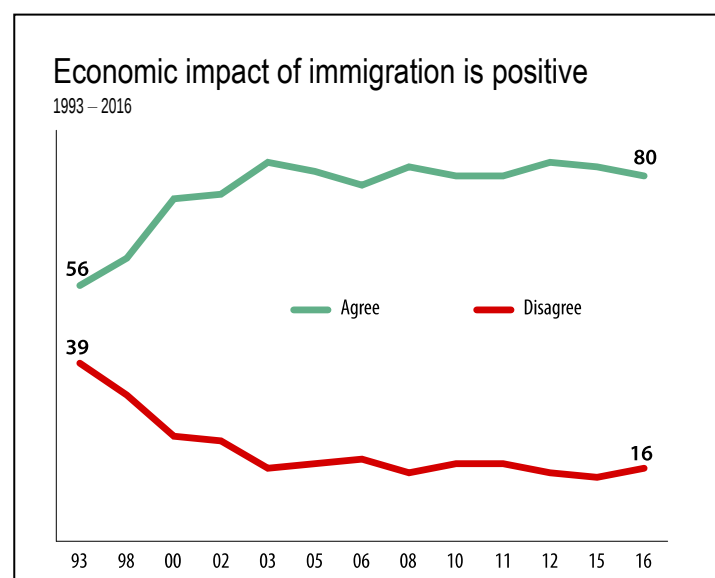
“Overall, there is too much immigration in Canada.” A clear majority (58%) of Canadians disagree with this negative statement about the level of immigration in Canada, unchanged from June 2015 (when it was 57%), and consistent with opinions expressed over the past decade. Fewer than four in ten (37%) agree that immigration levels are too high; as in past surveys, this opinion is somewhat more likely to be expressed by Canadians 45 plus, and those with lower levels of education and income.

Belief that there is too much immigration to Canada is a minority opinion across the population, but is most evident in the Prairie Provinces (46% in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, 44% in Alberta), having increased since 2015. By comparison, the view that we are taking too many immigrants is now lowest in British Columbia (26%) and Atlantic Canada (29%), reflecting declines over the past year. Views on this issue in Quebec reflect the national average.

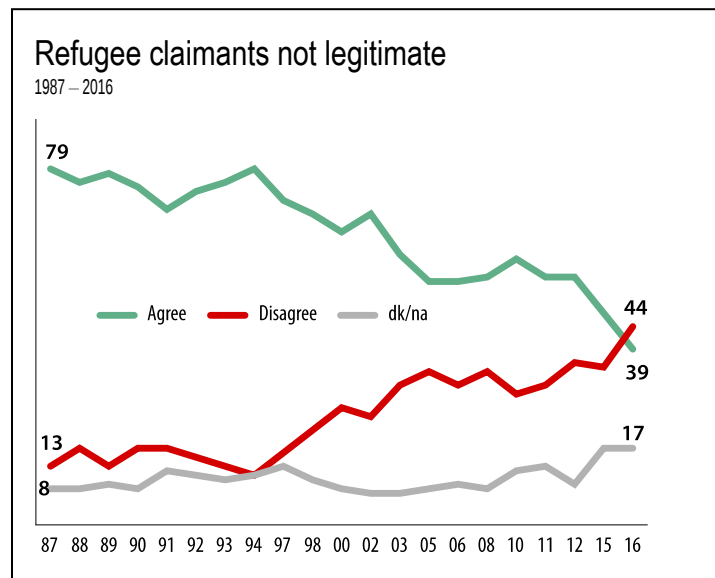


“Overall, immigration has a positive impact on the economy of Canada.” Eight in ten (80%) Canadians continue to believe that immigration is good for the country’s economy, essentially unchanged from 2015 (82%), and consistent with findings dating back more than a decade and a half.

As before, this view is shared by at least three-quarters in every identified group across the country. Opinions have been largely stable since 2015, except for a decline in Manitoba and Saskatchewan (77%, down 12 percentage points) which reverses a comparable rise between 2012 and 2015. Strong agreement about the positive impact of immigration is most widespread in Toronto, among foreign-born Canadians, and those with a university degree.

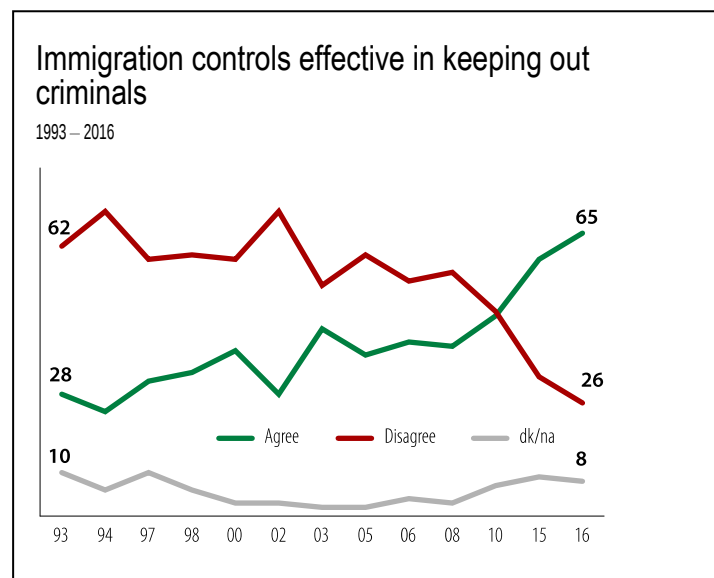


“Most people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees.” For much of the past three decades it has been the majority view that many refugees coming to Canada are not legitimate, but the breadth of these concerns has been steadily declining over time. Only four in ten (39%) now agree with this negative statement about most refugees not being legitimate, the lowest proportion to express this view since Focus Canada started asking this question in 1987. More than four in ten (44%) now disagree with the statement, while another 17 percent are uncertain or have no opinion.



This shift in public opinion has taken place across almost every identified subgroup of the population, but most noticeably among Canadians aged 45 and older. Concerns about refugees not being legitimate is most evident in Ontario (46%), among foreign-born Canadians (49%) and men (45%), with this view least apt to be shared in Quebec (32%) and Atlantic Canada (33%), among Canadians younger than 45 (31%) and those with a university degree (33%).

“Canada is doing a good job of keeping criminals and suspected criminals out of the country.” Canadians are also expressing increased confidence in the capacity of the immigration system to keep criminals out of the country. Two-thirds (65%) now agree with the statement (up 6 percentage points), which is the highest level recorded since the statement was first asked in 1993. This continues an upward trend dating back to 2008 (when only 39% expressed confidence in the immigration system).

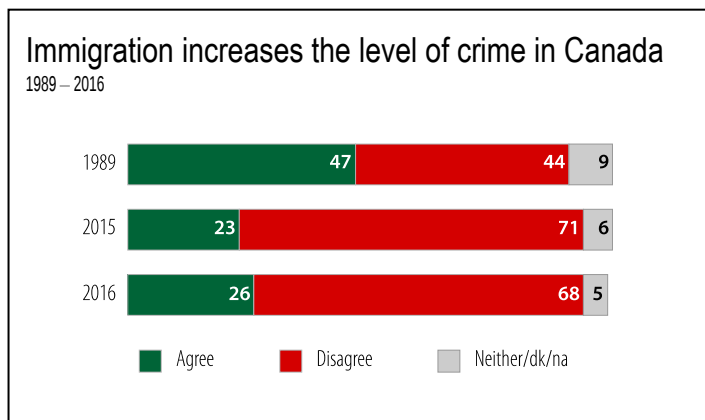


This positive trend has taken place across all regions except Manitoba and Saskatchewan (64%, unchanged), but especially in BC (63%, up 14 points). Opinions are most strongly influenced by age: A positive view of immigration controls is most widespread among Canadians 18 to 29 (81%) and lowest among those 60 plus (although still a majority view at 58%).

“Immigration increases the level of crime in Canada.” One in four (26%) Canadians agrees with this statement, with more than twice as many (68%) expressing disagreement. Agreement levels are marginally higher than in 2015 (up 3 points), but well below the proportion who agreed with this statement almost 30 years ago (47% in 1989).

Belief in a link between immigration and higher crime rates is most evident in Alberta (37%) and among those without any post-secondary education (35%), and lowest among Canadians under 45 years of age (20%) and those with a university degree (17%).

Across the country, this view has increased since 2015 in Ontario (31%, up 8), Alberta (37%, up 7) and Manitoba/Saskatchewan (26%, up 5), while declining in B.C. (23%, down 5).



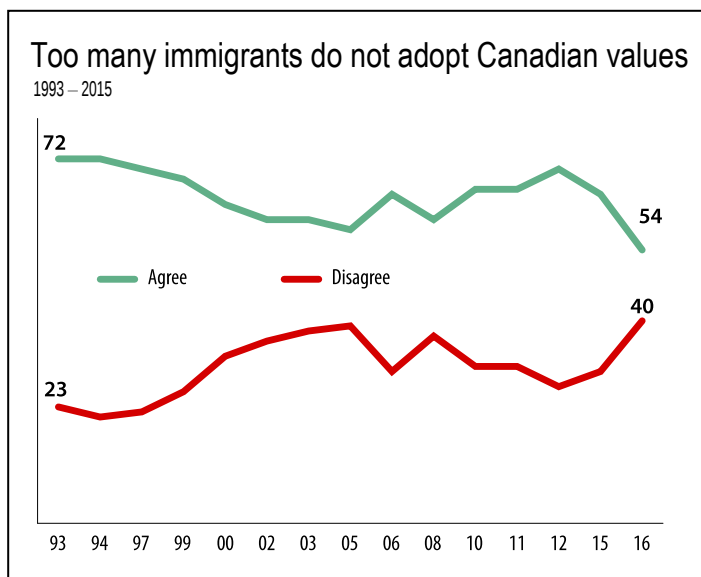
“There are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values.”

While most Canadians express pride in the country’s ethnic diversity and see immigration as strengthening the economy, many are also ambivalent about quickly newcomers are fitting in. But the latest survey indicates this concern is diminishing.

Just over half (54%) of Canadians now agree with this statement about how too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values, down 11 points from 2015 and continuing a downward trend starting in 2012. Agreement with this statement is now at its lowest level since this question was first asked 23 years ago.

Diminishing concerns about immigrants and Canadian values has taken place across all identified groups in the population, but most noticeably among British Columbians (47% agree, down 17 points since 2015) and women (52%, down 14). Those most likely to agree with the statement continue to be Canadians 45 years of age and older (60%), and those with no post-secondary education (66%), although these proportions are down from 2015.

Across the country, agreement is highest in Quebec (57%) and the Prairies (57%), and lowest in B.C. (47%) and Atlantic Canada (48%) (all are lower proportions than in 2015). Native born Canadians (55%) are marginally more likely than immigrants (51%) to agree with the statement.



“Immigrants tend to work harder than people born in Canada.” One concern sometimes voiced about immigrants is that they rely on generous government support programs and are less likely to embrace the work ethic of native-born citizens. Canadians are more likely than not to believe the exact opposite.

Just over half (53%) agree with the statement that immigrants tend to work *harder* than people born in Canada, compared with four in ten (39%) who disagree. This question was last asked in 1989, when the level of agreement was somewhat higher (59%).

Opinions do not vary significantly across the population, except that agreement is noticeably greater among foreign-born (67%) than among native-born Canadians (48%).

