

# Canadian Perspectives on Multiculturalism and Diversity

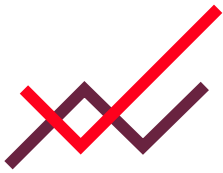
A Report from the Diversity  
in Canada Study 2026



**Environics  
Institute**  
For Survey Research



**Bridging  
Divides**



# Environics Institute

For Survey Research

The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 with a mandate to conduct in-depth public opinion and social research on the issues shaping Canada's future. It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society.

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# Bridging Divides

The Migrant Integration in the Mid-21st Century: Bridging Divides research program at the Global Migration Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University, is dedicated to building a new understanding of the challenges and opportunities that migrant integration poses for Canada, and all countries, locally and across borders. Bridging Divides is funded by the Government of Canada through the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF).

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## About the Survey

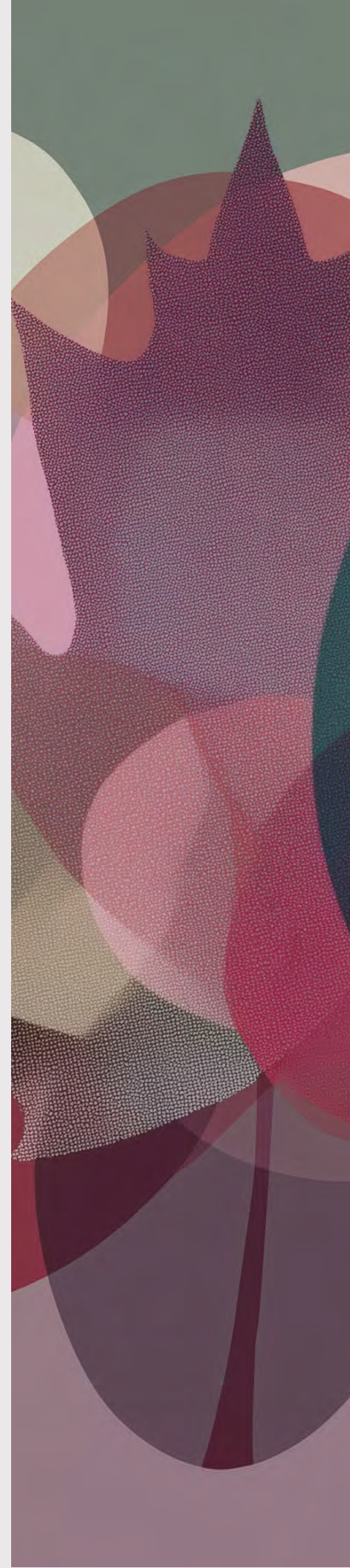
The Canadian Diversity Study 2026 is a partnership between the [Bridging Divides research program](#) at the [Global Migration Institute](#), Toronto Metropolitan University and the [Environics Institute for Survey Research](#).

The study consists of a survey of 6,818 adult Canadians, conducted online between March 4 and April 24, 2026. The survey sample includes oversamples of the main racial identity groups in Canada, of immigrants and of Indigenous Peoples, to allow for the meaningful disaggregation of results – enabling the topic of multiculturalism to be explored from a diversity of perspectives. Subsample sizes can be found in the detailed survey tables, which are [available online](#). Results are weighted by age, gender, region, education, immigration generation, and racial and Indigenous identity so as to be representative of the actual distribution of the adult population in Canada (based on the 2021 census).

The survey was managed by the Environics Institute for Survey Research and the fieldwork was conducted by the Environics Research Group, using the following panels: Leger, Dynata and Canadian Viewpoint.

## Acknowledgements

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# Overview



# Notes on terminology

## Identity

In this survey, respondents were asked the following question:

*“The Canadian census has been collecting information on the ancestral origins or cultural backgrounds of the population for over 100 years to capture the composition of Canada’s diverse population. Below are the diversity categories that the census uses. Please indicate which of the following categories best describes you.”*

The categories presented are the ones listed in a comparable question in the Canadian census, including white, racialized identities and an Indigenous identity. If respondents selected more than one category, they were asked to say which one they most strongly identify with. The identity categories used in the report are based either on single responses, or on the choice of which is identified with most strongly.

The term **“racialized”** refers to all groups excluding white and Indigenous. This includes the three largest racial identity groups in Canada – South Asian, Chinese and Black – as well as other groups such as Filipino, Latin American and Arab.

The terms **“white”** and **“non-racialized”** are used interchangeably. This group excludes both racialized respondents and those identifying as Indigenous.

## Immigration generation

Respondents are grouped into three categories:

- **First-generation immigrants** are those born in another country (other than Canada).
- **Second-generation immigrants** are those born in Canada, but with one or both of their parents born in another country.
- **Third-generation-plus Canadians** are those born in Canada, with both of their parents also being born in Canada. This generation can also be referred to as those born in Canada to Canadian-born parents. In this report, they are also referred to as **“non-immigrants.”**

This report also refers to **recent immigrants**. These are first-generation immigrants who have lived in Canada for 10 years or less. Recent immigrants are also included in the first-generation immigrant category, even when both categories are reported.

## Religion

Respondents were asked to indicate their present religion, if any. In this report, Christians include those selecting a Protestant, Catholic, Christian Orthodox or Christian non-denominational religion. Muslims are reported separately. Adherents to all religions other than Christianity or Islam are grouped together as “another religion.” The “no religion” group includes those who say they are atheist, agnostic or have no religion.

# Introduction

Canadian society is becoming increasingly diverse.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of the population that is racialized doubled between 2001 and 2021, from 13 to 27 percent. This proportion is projected to increase to 41 percent by 2041. Already, over 60 percent of youth in two of Canada's largest cities – Toronto and Vancouver – are racialized. In terms of religion, while the proportion of Canadians with a Christian faith has declined since 1991, the proportion who are Muslim, Hindu, Sikh or Buddhist has increased from just less than three percent to just over 10 percent. Among younger Canadians age 15 to 34, 14 percent now adhere to one of these four non-Christian religions. These changes have been driven by immigration. At the time of the most recent census, conducted in 2021, immigrants made up 23 percent of Canada's total population – the highest proportion in the country's history.

These demographic changes have been accompanied by changes to both public policy and national identity. Multiculturalism has been a policy of the Government of Canada for over five decades; it's been over four decades since it was enshrined as a principle in the country's Constitution. Previous studies have reported that Canadians increasingly see multiculturalism as being very important to the Canadian identity. And when asked in 2025 what makes their country unique, Canadians were most likely to mention multiculturalism and the diversity of its people, a theme encompassing acceptance of immigrants and refugees, and tolerance of differences.

These developments have helped Canada secure a reputation for being especially comfortable with ethnic and cultural diversity. In 2020, the headline from a Gallup global study of attitudes toward immigration reported that Canada was the "most-accepting country for migrants in the world."

For several reasons, however, it would be unwise to take it for granted that Canadians remain largely comfortable with the diversity of their society. One is events in other Western democracies, including those in both Europe and notably the United States, where political leaders and parties championing restrictions on



**Over 60%**  
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racialized.

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the figures in this paragraph are from the 2021 Census, as reported in: Andrew Parkin, *Canada's Changing Population: Key Trends Shaping our Future* (YMCA Canada, 2024), pp. 14-15; available at: <https://environicsinstitute.org/canadas-changing-population-key-trends-shaping-our-future/>.



immigration and minority rights have made electoral gains. It is natural to question whether it is only a matter of time before similar trends begin to shape politics in Canada. Another reason is the shift in opinions on immigration already seen in Canada. Between 2022 and 2024, the proportion of Canadians opposing the level of immigration to their country doubled, reaching a majority for the first time in 25 years. While this change appeared to be triggered more by concerns about the growing number of immigrants arriving in the midst of a housing and affordability crisis, the question of whether this has impacted broader attitudes toward diversity has yet to be explored in depth. There have also been incidents of hatred and violence directed against Canadians from certain backgrounds, including notorious attacks against Muslims in Quebec City in 2017 and London in 2021, and incidents of antisemitism, particularly in the wake of the most recent Israel–Palestine conflict.

Against the backdrop of these developments, the Canadian Diversity Study provides a fresh, comprehensive look at Canadian attitudes and experiences relating to immigration, multiculturalism and diversity. The survey covers these topics in-depth by exploring both how Canadians think about multiculturalism and diversity, and the experiences of living in a multicultural society and how these vary among people of different backgrounds. The survey is based on a sample large enough to allow for a comparison of the opinions of immigrants and non-immigrants, as well as Canadians from different racial and religious backgrounds.

The survey finds that, overall, Canadians are more likely than not to be supportive of multiculturalism, with majorities agreeing it has contributed positively to the Canadian identity, accepting that there are positive benefits of living in a diverse society, and feeling comfortable with living alongside people from different races or who speak different languages. And when asked to say in their own words what multiculturalism means to them, positive descriptions heavily outweigh negative ones.

Additionally, while racialized Canadians or immigrants often express more emphatic support for multiculturalism and diversity than their white or non-immigrant counterparts, in general, majorities of Canadians from all backgrounds tend to find themselves on the same side of these issues, rather than at odds with one another. At the same time, not all possible forms of multiculturalism attract the same extent of support. There is a clear gradient, with broad support for the principle of treating people from different backgrounds equally (by preventing discrimination), but much less support for proposals for different treatment (by, for instance, allowing separate institutions in areas such as education to accommodate ethnic or religious minorities).

The survey results also support the conclusion that ongoing concern about the current level of immigration does not in itself imply public opposition to the broader idea of Canada accepting immigrants, or to the changes in the racial and ethnic composition of Canadian society that recent immigration patterns have produced. Notably, by a four-to-one margin, Canadians are more likely to prefer that Canada select the best immigrants in terms of education and skills, regardless of which countries they come from, rather than selecting immigrants from only some countries and not others. Nonetheless, there are a range of views on immigration, from generally positive, to mixed, to generally negative – with more negative views being more common among non-immigrants.

This initial report covers many, but by no means all, of the questions included in the survey. Its focus is largely on the extent to which Canadians from different backgrounds do or do not share similar views on the meaning and benefits of multiculturalism, as well as on related topics such as Canada's approach to immigrant selection. Other topics, including experiences of discrimination and barriers to employment opportunities, and more detailed looks at the viewpoints of particular population groups, will be covered in subsequent reports.

The survey results also support the conclusion that ongoing concern about the current level of immigration does not in itself imply public opposition to the broader idea of Canada accepting immigrants, or to the changes in the racial and ethnic composition of Canadian society that recent immigration patterns have produced.

# Key findings

- When asked what multiculturalism means to them, 64 percent of Canadians provide a response that describes multiculturalism positively, saying, for instance, that it means having an accepting society that welcomes people from different cultures. Only six percent describe multiculturalism negatively. However, 30 percent opt not to provide a response.
- A majority of Canadians (66%) agree that “multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity.” One in four (25%) disagree. Even among white or non-immigrant Canadians, the proportions agreeing that multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity outweigh those disagreeing by a margin of roughly two to one.
- Even among Canadians who currently hold more negative opinions about immigration, a majority (about 3 in 5) has a positive opinion about the impact of multiculturalism.
- There is widespread agreement among Canadians that people should not be discriminated against based on their race, ethnicity or culture. There is also agreement among a majority of Canadians that there are benefits to living in a diverse society. But disagreement outweighs agreement when it comes to setting up separate institutions in areas such as education to accommodate ethnic or religious minorities. While there are differences in the extent of agreement with each of several statements about diversity among Canadians of different backgrounds, what is notable is that the gradient in opinions just described applies for all groups.
- One in five Canadians express wholly positive opinions about immigration: they are not concerned about the current number of immigrants coming to Canada, and they see welcoming immigrants as part of their vision of the type of country that Canada should be. A larger group (36%) has mixed views, expressing concern about the number of immigrants currently arriving, but nonetheless agreeing that Canada should be a country that fully welcomes immigrants from around the world. A similarly-sized group – about one in three – expresses wholly negative opinions: they believe immigration levels are too high and do not want Canada to be fully welcoming to immigrants from all over the world. Among non-immigrants, the proportion with wholly negative opinions reaches 41 percent.



**66% of  
Canadians**  
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identity.”

- By a four-to-one margin, Canadians are more likely to prefer that the country should select the best immigrants in terms of education and skills, regardless of which countries they come from, as opposed to selecting immigrants from only some countries and not others. Both white Canadians and non-immigrant Canadians prefer a system that prioritizes human capital rather than country of origin by this margin.
- For a majority of Canadians from all backgrounds, both Canada and their ethnicity or race is important to their own sense of identity.
- A majority of Canadians (82%) say they have either a very or somewhat strong sense of belonging to Canada. There is little significant variation in this sense of belonging to Canada across those from different immigration generations or with different identities. As is the case with identity, the sense of belonging to Canada and to one's ethnic or cultural group tend to overlap.
- Nine in ten immigrants who arrived in Canada 10 years ago or more recently say that they and their family have been made to feel either very (33%) or generally (58%) welcome by other people in their local community.
- Three in four Canadians agree that they feel their cultural identity is respected in Canada today. The level of agreement is broadly similar among Canadians who are racialized (81%) and those who are white (74%).
- These findings notwithstanding, one in four (25%) Canadians agree that they feel pressure to hide or downplay their cultural identity. Feeling pressured to downplay one's cultural identity is more common among younger Canadians.
- A majority (61%) of Canadians say relations are generally good in terms of how well people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds get along with each other in Canada – almost three times the proportion that says relations are generally bad (22%). However, this proportion is somewhat lower than it was when this question was last asked in 2024.

# Part 1: Multiculturalism

The survey explored views on multiculturalism in three different ways, by:



Asking Canadians an **open-ended question** about what multiculturalism means to them.



Asking directly whether multiculturalism has had a **positive or a negative impact on the Canadian identity**.



**Measuring the extent of agreement** with a series of statements relating to ethnic and cultural diversity in Canada.

# Part 1: Multiculturalism

## What does multiculturalism mean to you?

The first of these questions in the survey began with the following statement:

*“As you may know, Canada is often referred to as a multicultural country, given its diverse population of people with backgrounds from all over the world.”*

Survey participants were then asked:

*“From what you know, have heard, or experienced directly, what, if anything, does multiculturalism mean to you?”*

This was an open-ended question, meaning that people answered using their own words, rather than being presented with different meanings to choose from.

The most common answers to this question can be grouped together under a number of themes, such as welcoming, including or blending together many different cultures; living peacefully together; learning about or celebrating different cultures; having the freedom to express or practice different cultures, languages or religions; and having no discrimination or racism. Overall, the answers can be summarized more concisely as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- 64% write a response that describes multiculturalism positively, saying, for instance, that it means having an accepting society that welcomes people from different cultures;
- 30% opt not to provide a response or indicate that they cannot say what multiculturalism means;<sup>3</sup>
- 6% write a response that describes multiculturalism negatively, saying, for instance, that it means society is too divided or that the Canadian identity is being lost.

2 Some respondents provided more than one type of answer. The responses are grouped as follows. Any negative response is classified as negative, even if it includes other responses. A response is classified as positive if it includes any non-negative substantive answer. A response is classified as “no answer” only when there is neither a positive nor a negative response of any kind.

3 Most of these respondents opted to select “cannot say,” which was an available option, rather than to write any words in the space provided. A small number wrote in responses such as “nothing really,” “I’m not sure” or “I don’t know.”

**64%**  
of Canadians  
describe  
multiculturalism  
positively.





## What does multiculturalism mean to you?

### Survey question:

*As you may know, Canada is often referred to as a multicultural country, given its diverse population of people with backgrounds from all over the world. From what you know, have heard, or experienced directly, what, if anything, does multiculturalism mean to you?*

### Examples of positive comments<sup>4</sup>

Acceptance, tolerance and respect for different cultures.

Canada is a great place to celebrate your own culture however you want.

It means equal rights should exist for all different cultures and ethnicities, and people should be able to practice their religion freely.

A mix of many different cultures that live in harmony with each other.

Diverse population full of incredible people coming together from different facets of life.

It means everyone's religious beliefs are respected and nobody is denied the freedom of practicing their culture or religion.

All inclusive; accepting everyone and their culture.

It is the coexistence of diverse cultures, races and cultures within a single society.

Freedom to express and practice a person's culture.

Equal opportunities regardless of a person's culture.

<sup>4</sup> Selected verbatim responses. Comments have been edited for grammar and punctuation. These examples are selected from thousands of responses. They are meant to be illustrative of the types and range of comments offered by survey respondents, but do not necessarily represent the most common ones.



## What does multiculturalism mean to you?

### Examples of negative comments<sup>5</sup>

Flooding the country with immigrants.

It means the erasure of the Canadian identity to prioritize other identities.

Multiculturalism is dividing this country; it is very divisive.

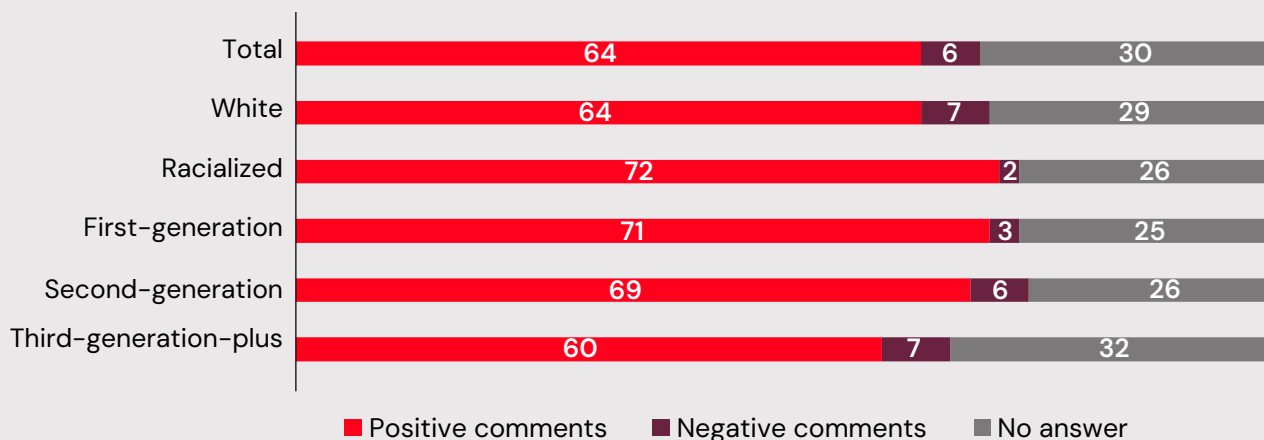
This can be a bad thing if you have people affiliated with religions who promote terrorism.

<sup>5</sup> Selected verbatim responses. See note 4. Some negative comments, not presented here, included more racist and Islamophobic language.

Positive comments about multiculturalism heavily predominate among Canadians of all backgrounds. Racialized Canadians (72%) are somewhat more likely to offer positive comments than those who are white (64%); and first-generation (71%) and second-generation (69%) immigrants are more likely to offer positive comments than non-immigrants (60%). But fewer than one in ten in any of these groups ascribe a negative meaning to multiculturalism.

### Figure 1

#### What does multiculturalism mean to you?



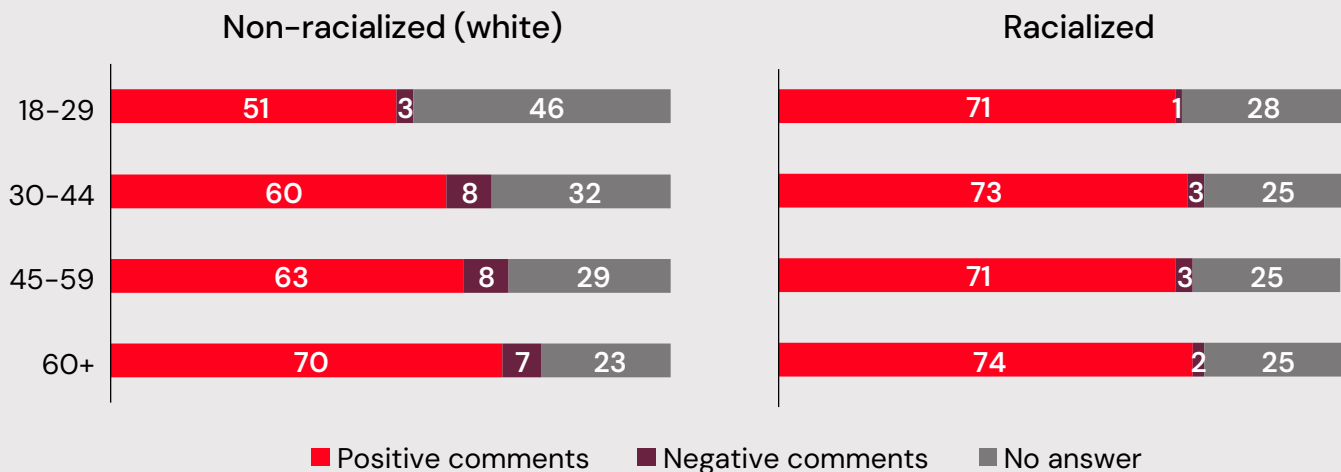
*As you may know, Canada is often referred to as a multicultural country, given its diverse population of people with backgrounds from all over the world. From what you know, have heard, or experienced directly, what, if anything, does multiculturalism mean to you?*

Positive descriptions of multiculturalism are more likely to be provided by older respondents compared to younger respondents; and by those with a university education compared to those with a college diploma, or with no post-secondary education. However, the proportion providing a negative description is not much higher among either younger Canadians or those without a university education. Rather, it is the proportion that provides no response that increases. For instance, among those with a university education, 76 percent describe multiculturalism in positive terms, and 20 percent do not provide any description. Among those without a post-secondary education, only 55 percent provide a positive description, but almost twice as many (39%) do not provide any description. The proportions providing a negative description in response to this open-ended question remain low in both cases (4% and 6%, respectively).

## Figure 2

### What does multiculturalism mean to you?

By racial identity and age



*As you may know, Canada is often referred to as a multicultural country, given its diverse population of people with backgrounds from all over the world. From what you know, have heard, or experienced directly, what, if anything, does multiculturalism mean to you?*

While very few of those surveyed offer a negative interpretation of the meaning of multiculturalism, a larger minority choose not to say what multiculturalism means to them. Among those who identify as white – though not among those who are racialized – the proportion that does not provide a substantive response is higher among those who are younger (perhaps because white youth have had less cause to reflect on their experiences living in a diverse society compared to their racialized counterparts). Almost one in two (46%) non-racialized persons between the ages of 18 and 29 opt not to say what multiculturalism means to them.

Since the open-ended format of the question meant that the onus was on the person surveyed to write in a response, it is not surprising that some chose not to bother – opting instead to move to the next question in the survey. These respondents may not have had strong opinions about the topic, or may simply have been less motivated to take the time to share their views. In this context, it is not surprising that those with less formal education were less likely to provide a definitive written response. The question arises, however, as to whether some, or even most, of those who do not answer this question harbour negative attitudes toward multiculturalism that they are simply reluctant to express. There is some evidence to suggest this is not always the case: those who opt to not provide an answer to this question are much more likely to express positive than negative opinions on other questions about multiculturalism and immigration included in the survey, in stark contrast to those who answer this question with a negative description of multiculturalism. But this does not exclude the possibility that some of those who do not answer the question might nonetheless have negative views.



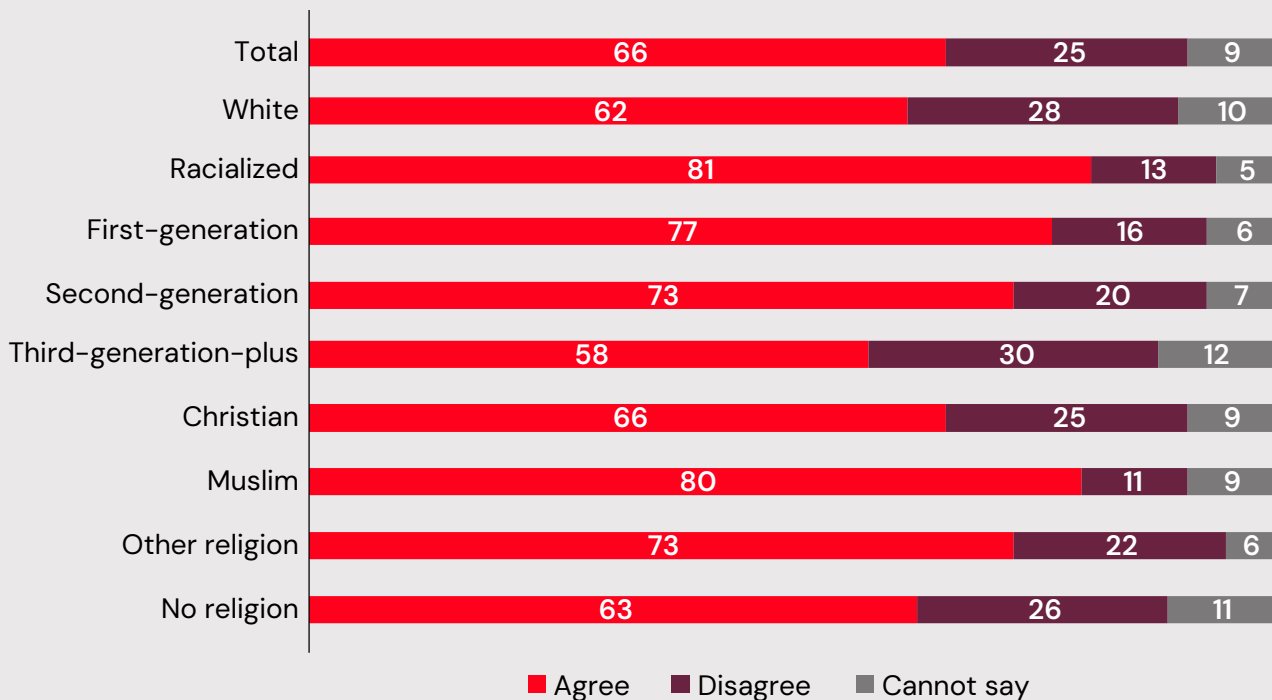
## Multiculturalism and the Canadian identity

A majority of Canadians (66%) agree that “multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity.” This includes 26 percent who strongly agree, and 40 percent who somewhat agree. One in four (25%) disagree, and nine percent do not take a position either way.

Agreement is higher among racialized Canadians (81%), compared to those who identify as white (62%) or as Indigenous (63%); among those who are first- (77%) or second-generation immigrants (73%), compared to those born in Canada to Canadian-born parents (58%); and among those who are Muslim (80%), compared to those who are Christian (66%) or not religious (63%). Those who are Black are almost twice as likely to *strongly agree* as those who are white (42%, compared to 23%), and recent immigrants are almost twice as likely to strongly agree as non-immigrants (38%, compared to 20%). But even among white, non-immigrant or non-religious Canadians, the proportion agreeing that multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity outweighs that disagreeing by a margin of roughly two to one.

**Figure 3**

Has multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity?



Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity?

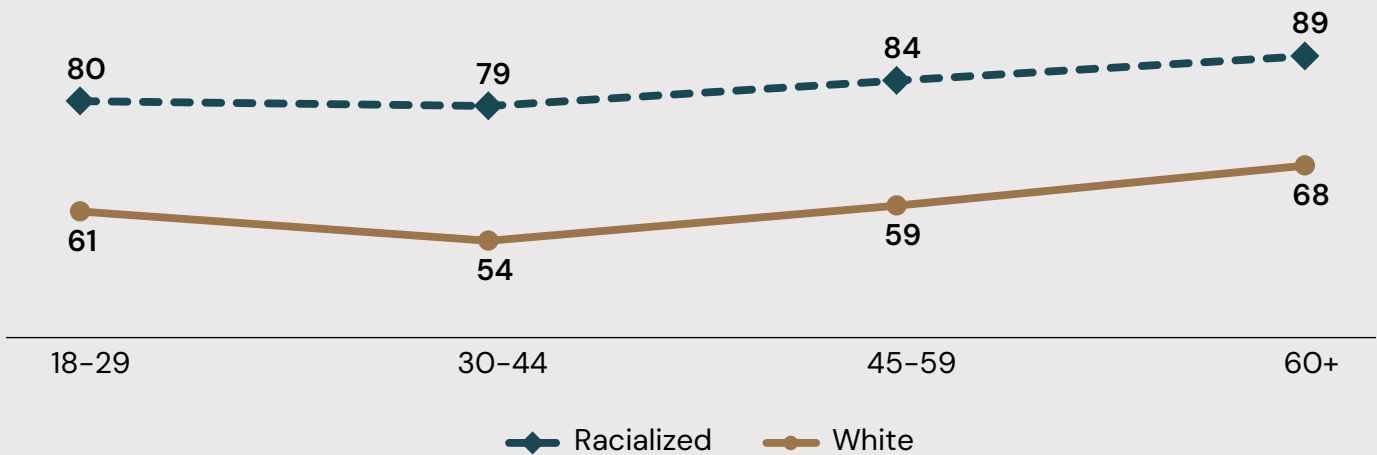
Regionally, agreement is highest in British Columbia (73%) and lowest in Quebec (56%). Agreement is also higher among those who are more income-secure and who have attained a university education.

Overall, agreement that multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity is just as high among younger Canadians (age 18 to 29) as it is among older Canadians (age 60 and older) – 69 percent in both cases. But this is partly because younger Canadians are more likely to be racialized. Among those who identify as white, agreement is a bit lower among those in youngest age group (61%) than it is among those in the oldest age group (68%).

### Figure 4

#### Agree: Multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity

By racial identity and age group



*Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: Multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity?*

Finally, opinions on the contribution of multiculturalism differ between those who have more and less positive opinions about immigration. For instance, compared to those who agree, those who disagree that “overall, there is too much immigration to Canada” are more likely to also agree that multiculturalism has contributed positively to the Canadian identity (86%, compared to 60%). There is a similar difference of opinion on multiculturalism between those who agree and disagree that “there are too many immigrants coming into this country who are not adopting Canadian values” (87%, compared to 61%).

It is not surprising that attitudes toward immigration and multiculturalism are related. What is notable, however, is that – even among Canadians who currently hold more negative opinions about immigration – a majority (about 3 in 5) has a positive opinion of multiculturalism.

## Attitudes toward diversity

The survey also included a series of questions about living in an ethnically and culturally diverse society. While these questions did not use the term “multiculturalism,” exploring the results nonetheless offers some insight into which aspects of the concept of multiculturalism attract the strongest and weakest public support:

- The strongest agreement relates to the principle of fairness or equal treatment. About nine in ten Canadians (87%) agree that “no one in Canada should experience discrimination because of who they are or where they are from,” including a majority (58%) that strongly agrees. Only seven percent disagree with this statement.
- Majorities also agree with statements that relate to the positive benefits of living in a diverse society. Eight in ten (81%) agree that “young Canadians today are fortunate to grow up surrounded by friends from all different races and religions.” And almost two in three (64%) agree that “I would be happy if someone in my family married someone of a different race” – although in this case, only 28 percent *strongly agree*.
- Consistent with these findings, only a minority express discomfort with living in a multilingual society. Only three in ten (31%) agree that “I am uncomfortable when I hear languages other than English or French being spoken on the streets in Canada.” Twice as many (63%) disagree.



**87% of Canadians** agree that “no one in Canada should experience discrimination because of who they are or where they are from.”



67% of Canadians agree that “the government should do much more to make sure racialized Canadians are treated fairly.”

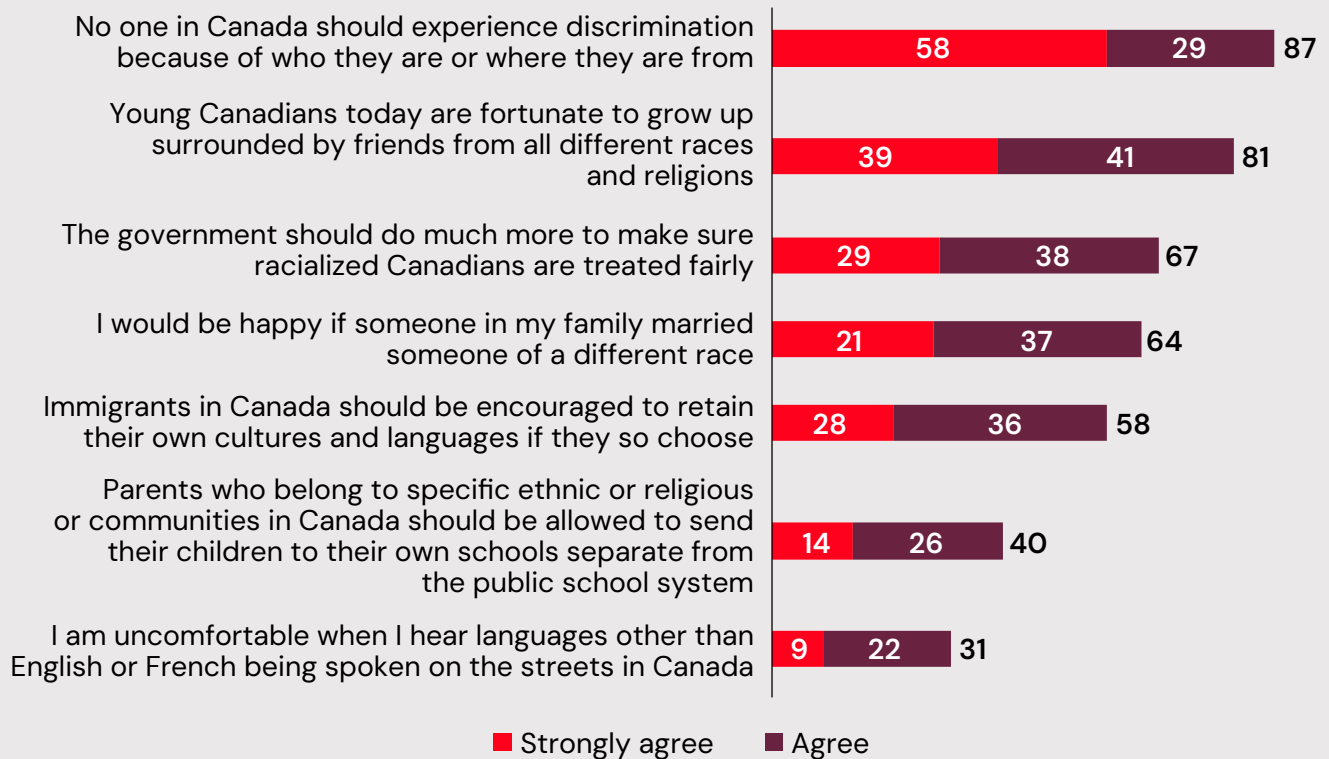
- There is also support for government action to prevent discrimination. Two in three (67%) agree that “the government should do much more to make sure racialized Canadians are treated fairly,” compared to 20 percent who disagree.
- It could be argued that a policy of multiculturalism should entail more than just the absence of discrimination or the acceptance of differences; it could also mean the preservation, or even the promotion, of differences. A majority of Canadians are supportive of such an approach as well, though to a lesser extent. In this case, 58 percent agree that “immigrants in Canada should be encouraged to retain their own cultures and languages if they so choose,” but one in three (32%) take the opposite view.
- Agreement declines further in the case, not just of the retention of distinct cultures and languages, but the development of separate institutions for different communities. Only a minority (40%) are in agreement with allowing parents from specific ethnic or religious or communities to send their children to their own schools separate from the public school system.<sup>6</sup> In this case, a greater proportion of the public (47%) disagrees (an additional 13% do not take a position either way).

6 This despite the fact that Canada has a long history of separate educational systems for Catholics and Protestants, and for official language minorities; however, it is likely that these more familiar arrangements are not what most survey participants had in mind when asked about separate schools for “specific ethnic or religious or communities.”

**Figure 5**

**Agreement with statements about diversity in Canada**

Strongly or somewhat agree



*To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?*

In sum, there is a clear gradient of support as the concept in question shifts from that of treating people of different backgrounds equally, to that of treating them differently. There is widespread agreement among Canadians that people should not be discriminated against based on their race, ethnicity or culture. There is also agreement among a majority of Canadians that there are benefits to living in a diverse society. Most would also accept that newcomers should not feel they have to leave their cultures and languages behind when they settle in Canada – though, in this case, a notable minority disagrees. But disagreement outweighs agreement when it comes to setting up separate institutions in areas such as education to accommodate ethnic or religious minorities.

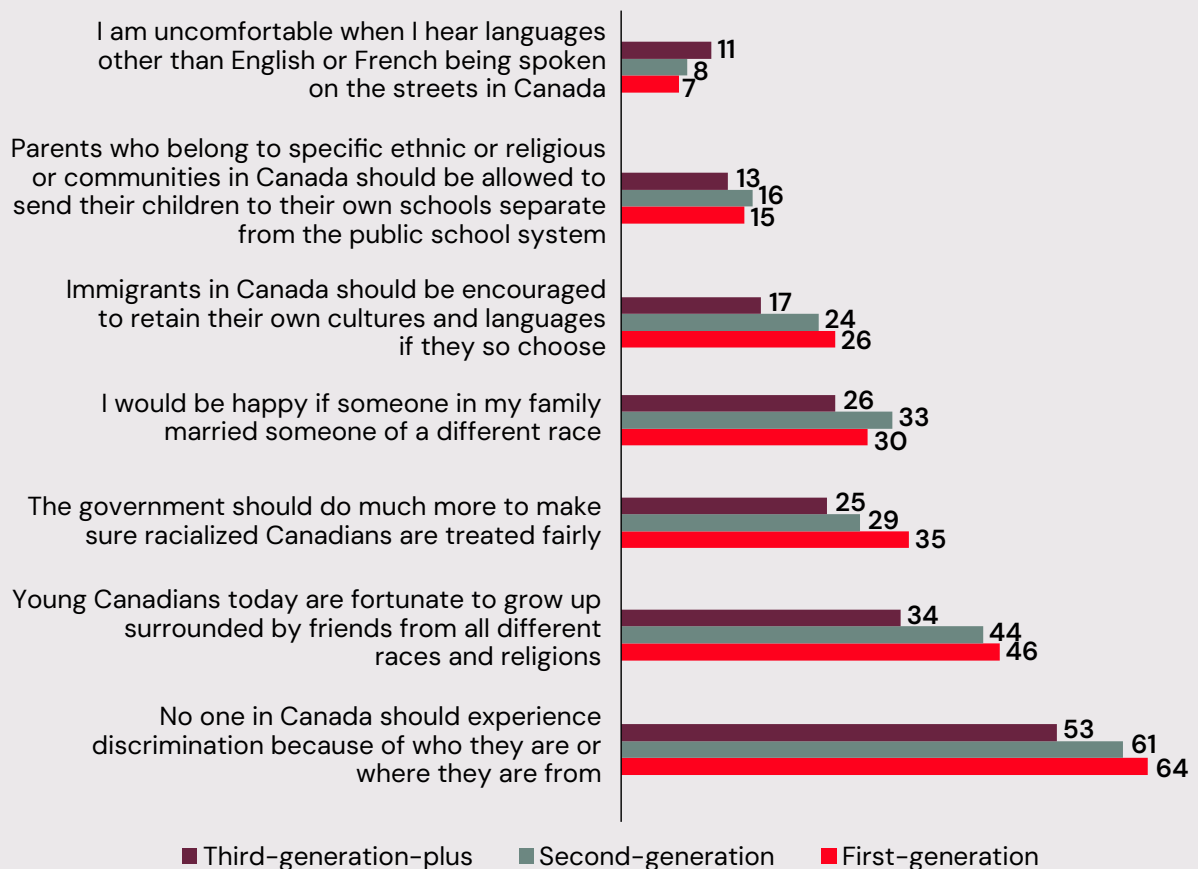
There are differences in the strength agreement with each of the statements about diversity among Canadians of different backgrounds. For instance, in the case of support for government action to make sure racialized Canadians are treated fairly, those who are Black (53%) or South Asian (47%) are about twice as likely to *strongly agree* as those who are white (24%).

What is notable, however, is that the gradient in agreement across all the statements just described applies for all groups. For instance, 64 percent of first-generation immigrants, compared to 53 percent of non-immigrants, strongly agree that no one in Canada should experience discrimination. And 26 percent of first-generation immigrants, compared to 17 percent of non-immigrants, strongly agree that immigrants in Canada should be encouraged to retain their own cultures and languages if they so choose. But what is more striking than these differences between immigrants and non-immigrants is the fact that, for both groups, strong agreement with the second statement is much lower than for the first.

## Figure 6

### Agreement with statements about diversity in Canada

Strongly agree, by immigration generation



Similarly, there are differences in the extent of support among Canadians of different backgrounds for the idea of allowing parents from specific ethnic or religious or communities to send their children to their own schools separate from the public school system. But at the same time, in this case, it is more notable that there are differences of opinion on this question within all groups.

**Table 1**

**Agreement with two statements about diversity in Canada**

Agreement with two statements about diversity in Canada				
	The government should do much more to make sure racialized Canadians are treated fairly		Parents who belong to specific ethnic or religious or communities in Canada should be allowed to send their children to their own schools separate from the public school system	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Total	67	20	40	47
White	63	23	36	51
Racialized	81	11	52	37
First-generation	75	14	44	44
Second-generation	66	20	45	43
Third-generation-plus	63	23	37	49
Christian	68	20	41	48
Muslim	83	10	55	34
Other religion	74	16	51	37
No religion	63	22	34	52

*To what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? ("Cannot say" responses not shown.)*

## Part 2:

# The immigration system

The Canadian Diversity Study was conducted against a background of increased public concern about the level of immigration to Canada. Between 2021 and 2023, the number of new immigrants arriving increased from 1.3 to 2.1 million annually – figures that include many admitted on a temporary basis to work or to study.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Figures courtesy of Andrew Griffith; available at <https://multiculturalmeanderings.com/2026/06/17/annual-summary-of-total-immigration-2019-25/>.



# The immigration system

In the wake of this, the proportion of Canadians agreeing that “overall, there is too much immigration to Canada” grew significantly. The federal government subsequently announced measures to reduce the number of both temporary and permanent residents arriving in Canada, leading in 2025 to the first ever annual drop in Canada’s total population. Despite these recent policy shifts, this current survey finds that 71 percent of Canadians agree that there is too much immigration – a finding that is consistent with those from other recent surveys conducted using similar method.<sup>8</sup>

The question is whether this concern about the current level of immigration signals opposition, not only to the number of newcomers that have arrived in recent years, but to the broader idea of Canada accepting immigrants, or to the changes in the racial and ethnic composition of Canadian society that recent immigration patterns have produced. On the whole, the evidence from this study suggests that this is not the case.

## Vision for Canada

To explore in more depth Canadians’ attitudes toward immigration, people were asked whether, in terms of their own vision for Canada, they agree or disagree with a number of statements about the kind of country Canada should be. There is extensive agreement with several of the descriptions offered. For instance, 93 percent agree that “Canada should be a country in which men and women are treated equally in all walks of life,” and 92 percent agree that “Canada should be a country where no child has to grow up in poverty.” There is less widespread agreement that “Canada should be a country that fully welcomes immigrants from all over the world” – although a majority of Canadians (60%) nonetheless agree.

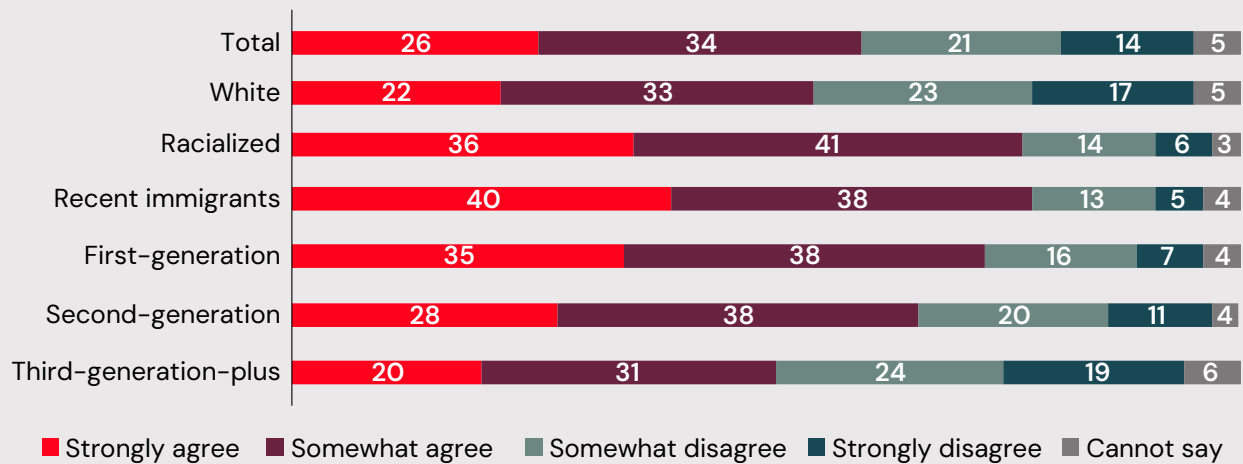
On this question, there is a significant difference of opinion between first-generation immigrants and non-immigrants. More than seven in ten (73%) first-generation immigrants agree that “Canada should be a country that fully welcomes immigrants from all over the world,” compared to 65 percent of second-generation immigrants, and 51 percent of non-immigrants (43 percent of non-immigrants disagree).

8 This result is similar to that obtained in other Environics Institute surveys conducted online in 2025 and 2026, but higher than that obtained in the recent Environics Institute’s Focus Canada surveys conducted by telephone. Survey results can vary depending on the way in which the survey is conducted, especially when the survey questions ask for opinions about groups such as ethnic and religious minorities or immigrants (for more on this issue, see the analysis of “Telephone versus Online Survey Modes for Election Studies” by Charles Breton and colleagues). When comparing changes in opinion over time, it is important to draw from surveys conducted in the same manner, and to be cautious comparing results from different types of survey.

There is also a difference between the extent of agreement among racialized Canadians (76%) and those who are white (55%). The proportion that *strongly agrees* is about twice as high among those identifying as Black (47%) and South Asian (44%), compared to those identifying as Chinese (24%) or white (22%).

## Figure 7

Your own vision for Canada: Should Canada should be a country that fully welcomes immigrants from all over the world?



*We would like to ask you about your own vision for Canada. For each of the following six statements, please let us know whether you agree or disagree that it describes the kind of country you believe Canada should be.*

Naturally, those who say that Canada accepts too many immigrants are also more likely to disagree that it should be a country that fully welcomes immigrants from all over the world. Among the adult population as a whole, 32 percent hold both of these views (agreeing there is too much immigration and disagreeing that Canada should fully welcome immigrants). A similar proportion (36%) agrees that there is too much immigration and also agrees that it should be a country that fully welcomes immigrants from all over the world. Pro-immigration views on both questions (i.e., rejecting the notion that there is too much immigration, but accepting the vision of Canada as a country that fully welcomes immigration) are held by 19 percent.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> An additional 11% do not take a position either way on one or both questions. The total of all these numbers adds to 100% once rounding is taken into account.

These findings can be summarized as follows.

- One in five Canadians express wholly positive opinions about immigration: they are not concerned about the current number of immigrants coming to Canada, and they see welcoming immigrants as part of their vision of the type of country that Canada should be.
- A larger group – about one in three – expresses wholly negative opinions: they believe immigration levels are too high and do not want Canada to be fully welcoming to immigrants from all over the world.
- But a similar-sized group (36%) has mixed views, expressing concern about the number of immigrants currently arriving, but nonetheless agreeing that Canada should be a country that fully welcomes immigrants from around the world.

On the one hand, these results support the conclusion that not all Canadians who have grown concerned about the level of immigration are currently opposed to the principle that Canada should be a country that is open to immigration. On the other hand, one in three Canadians express opposition, with negative views on both questions; this proportion is even higher (41%) among third-generation-plus Canadians.

## The selection of immigrants

In the 1960s, Canada famously shifted its approach to immigration selection away from one that favoured immigrants from specific countries of origin to one that favoured human capital. This shift to the so-called points system – which, among other things, prioritizes immigrants with higher levels of education, in-demand skills and official language proficiency – led to the progressive diversification of the ethnic and racial backgrounds of new permanent residents in Canada.<sup>10</sup> Among immigrants who arrived in Canada in the 1980s, for instance, 45 percent were born in Europe or the Americas; among more recent immigrants (those arriving between 2011 and 2021), this proportion is only 25 percent. Over the same period, the proportion born in Africa has increased from six to 15 percent, and the proportion both in Southern Asia has increased from nine to 22 percent.<sup>11</sup>

10 See Ninette Kelley, Jeffrey G. Reitz and Michael J. Trebilcock, *Reshaping the Mosaic: Canadian Immigration Policy in the Twenty-first Century* (University of Toronto Press, 2025), p. 66.

11 Based on data from Statistics Canada, Table 98-10-0307-01 (Immigrant status and period of immigration by place of birth), as reported in: Andrew Parkin, *Canada's Changing Population: Key Trends Shaping our Future* (YMCA Canada, 2024), pp. 14–15; available at: <https://environicsinstitute.org/canadas-changing-population-key-trends-shaping-our-future/>.

This approach to immigration selection, favouring human capital rather than countries or regions of origin, is supported by the majority of Canadians. In fact, by a four-to-one margin, Canadians are more likely to agree that the country should take the best immigrants in terms of education and skills, regardless of which countries they come from (65%) than they are to agree that Canada should favour immigrants from some countries and not from others (15%). One in five (20%) cannot say which of the two options they agree with more.

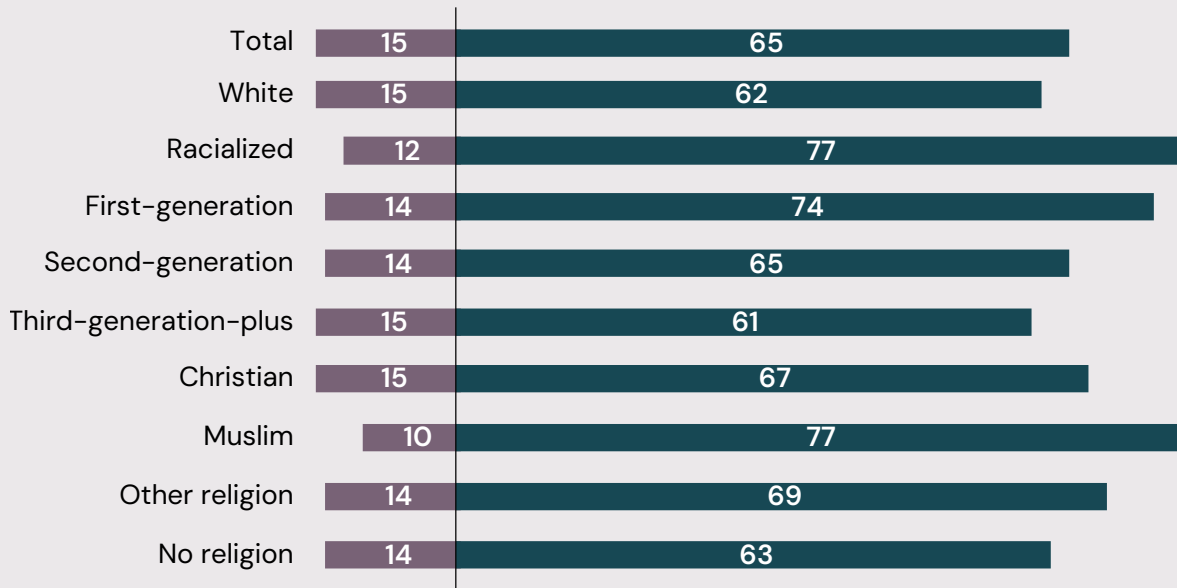
First-generation immigrants (74%) are more likely than second-generation immigrants (65%) or non-immigrants (61%) to favour taking the best immigrants in terms of education and skills, regardless of which countries they come from. Non-immigrants, however, are not more likely to prefer selecting immigrants from some countries and not from others; rather, they are more likely to be uncertain. The same patterns hold when looking at the difference in opinion between racialized and white Canadians. Racialized Canadians (77%) are more likely than white Canadians (62%) to favour the approach that prioritizes human capital; however, white Canadians are no more likely to favour selecting immigrants from only some countries and not others (however, those who are white are twice as likely as those who are racialized to not express an opinion either way (22% compared to 11%)). Both white Canadians and non-immigrant Canadians prefer a system that prioritizes human capital rather than country of origin by a four-to-one margin.



Both white Canadians and non-immigrant Canadians prefer a system that prioritizes human capital rather than country of origin by a four-to-one margin.

**Figure 8**

**Priority for immigration selection**



- Canada should favour immigrants from some countries and not from others
- Canada should take the best immigrants in terms of education and skills, regardless of which countries they come from

Expressing concerns about immigration levels in Canada today, however, is clearly not the same as preferring an approach to immigration selection that would decrease the ethnic or racial diversity of new Canadians. Even those who express concerns about immigration to Canada favour the human capital approach. The proportion preferring the other approach, namely that Canada select immigrants from some countries and not from others, is higher among those who agree that there is too much immigration to Canada, and that there are too many immigrants coming to Canada who are not adopting Canadian values. But, even among those who *strongly agree* with these statements about immigration, only about one in five would prefer that the country select immigrants on the basis of where they are from (the figures are 22% and 21%, respectively). A majority in both cases (60% and 59%, respectively) prefer that Canada take the best immigrants in terms of education and skills, regardless of which countries they come from.

## More and less favoured source countries

Those who prefer that immigration selection favours immigrants from some countries, and not from others, were asked to say which countries should be more or less favoured.

Among those who wish Canada to select immigrants on the basis of where they are from, the top choices for countries that should be given priority are the United Kingdom, Ireland and France (31% select one of these countries). Other countries in Europe (combined) are favoured by 37 percent, and either the United States or Australia are mentioned by 20 percent. Fifteen percent mention either China, India or Japan.

It is important to keep in mind that only 15 percent of Canadians wish to select immigrants in this way. Three in ten among this group favour immigrants from the UK, Ireland or France, but this represents only five percent of the total population.

The countries from which Canadians in this group would like to discourage immigration largely fall into three categories:

- Asian countries, including India and China (mentioned by 38%)
- Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim countries, including Iran, Iraq and Afghanistan (mentioned by 37%)
- Thirteen percent would like to discourage immigration from African countries

Again, while roughly two in five of those who favour selecting immigrants based on their country of origin wish to restrict immigration to Canada from Asian or Middle Eastern countries, this represents only about five percent of the total population in each case.

Among those who wish Canada to select immigrants on the basis of where they are from, the top choices for countries that should be given priority are the United Kingdom, Ireland and France.

**Table 2**

Follow up: Selecting immigrants from some countries and not others

<b>More and less favoured source countries for immigration to Canada</b>		
<b>Which countries do you think Canada should give priority to, in terms of attracting new immigrants?</b>		
<b>Country / region</b>	<b>% of those who say that Canada should favour immigrants from some countries and not from others</b>	<b>% of total population</b>
United Kingdom, Ireland or France	31%	5%
Other European countries	37%	5%
United States or Australia	20%	3%
China, India or Japan	15%	2%
<b>And from which countries, if any, should Canada take steps to discourage new immigrants?</b>		
<b>Country / region</b>	<b>% of those who say that Canada should favour immigrants from some countries and not from others</b>	<b>% of total population</b>
Asian countries (e.g., India, Pakistan, or China)	38%	6%
Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim countries (e.g., Iran, Iraq or Afghanistan)	37%	5%
African countries (e.g., Nigeria, Somalia)	13%	2%
Russia	8%	1%

## Part 3: Identity & belonging

A multicultural society is one that achieves an appropriate balance between unity and difference. On the one hand, it speaks to the willingness of people of different origins to come together to live harmoniously in a shared political community. On the other hand, it signals that being a part of this shared community need not require people to leave behind the attributes that make them different from others – such as their ethnicity, culture, language or religion.

# Part 3: Identity and belonging

The integration of newcomers into a shared society need not mean the imposition of cultural uniformity, while the preservation of cultural differences need not mean that society becomes hopelessly fragmented.

The Canadian Diversity Study addressed the issue of balance between unity and difference through a series of questions about belonging and identity. The purpose of these questions is to explore the extent to which Canadians with different backgrounds feel part of the larger community, and the ways in which different identities – including national and ethnic identities – intersect.

## Identity

As a starting point, a large majority of Canadians from all backgrounds say that the country (Canada) is either very (55%) or somewhat (32%) important to their own sense of identity. Overall, 87 percent of Canadians express this view, and this varies very little, if at all, by immigration generation, racial identity or religion. The proportion saying that Canada is very or somewhat important to their own sense of identity is as high among first-generation immigrants (88%) and even recent immigrants (86%) as it is among non-immigrants (86%); and as high among racialized Canadians (89%) as it is among those who are white (88%).

Other identities, however, remain almost as important. Overall, 84 percent of Canadians say that gender is either very or somewhat important to their own sense of identity, and 83 percent say the same of language. Ethnicity or race is very or somewhat important for 72 percent of Canadians.

Naturally, different types of identity resonate more with different population groups (see Table 3). For instance, language is more important than average to Quebec francophones, religion is more important to Muslims, and ethnicity or race is more important to those who identify as Black.

84% of Canadians say that gender is either very or somewhat important to their own sense of identity, and 83% say the same of language.

**Table 3****Components of personal identity**

Type of identity: very important (%)					
Population group	Your country (Canada)	Your ethnicity or race	Your religion	Your language	Your Indigenous nation or community
Total	55	38	27	50	–
Racialized (total)	51	51	43	51	–
South Asian	60	47	54	52	–
Chinese	43	41	19	37	–
Black	52	69	56	57	–
White	57	34	21	50	–
Recent immigrants	48	49	49	54	–
Indigenous Peoples	55	–	35	49	52
Muslims	55	53	68	56	–
Christians	63	45	34	57	–
Quebec franco-phones	46	38	16	60	–

*Personal feelings of identity can come from a number of sources. For each, please say whether each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not very important, or not at all important to your own sense of identity.*

What is most notable, however, is that, generally speaking, these different identities co-exist, rather than being mutually exclusive. This is best illustrated by looking at the overlap of national and ethnic or racial identities (see Table 4). For a majority of Canadians from all backgrounds, both Canada and their ethnicity or race is important to their own sense of identity. White Canadians (24%) are more likely than their racialized counterparts (10%) to say that Canada is important to them, but their ethnicity or race is not. But very few racialized Canadians hold their ethnicity or race to be important, but not Canada. Rather, racialized Canadians (along with recent immigrants) are more likely to say that both identities are important. These two identities, therefore, are much more likely to go together than to substitute one for the other.

**Table 4**

**The importance of national and ethnic or racial identities**

The importance of national and ethnic or racial identities					
Population group	Both Canada and ethnicity / race are important	Canada is important but ethnicity / race is not important	Canada is not important but ethnicity / race is important	Neither Canada nor ethnicity / race is important	Cannot say to one or both
Total	67	20	5	6	2
Racialized (total)	79	10	7	4	1
South Asian	80	11	5	4	1
Chinese	75	11	7	6	1
Black	83	5	7	2	2
White	64	24	5	6	1
Recent immigrants	76	10	7	5	3

Rows add to 100%

## Belonging

The concept of belonging is related to, but somewhat broader than, identity. It goes beyond what attributes may be personally important to individuals and touches on whether individuals with those attributes feel included or accepted in a larger group. An immigrant to Canada may personally identify with the country they have chosen to move to, but that does not guarantee that they will have the types of experiences that will lead them to feel that they really belong.

In fact, a majority of Canadians (82%) – whether immigrants or not – say they have either a very or somewhat strong sense of belonging to Canada. This includes 45 percent whose sense of belonging to Canada is very strong. Fifteen percent say their sense of belonging to Canada is either somewhat or very weak.

There is little significant variation in this sense of belonging to Canada across those from different immigration generations or with different identities:

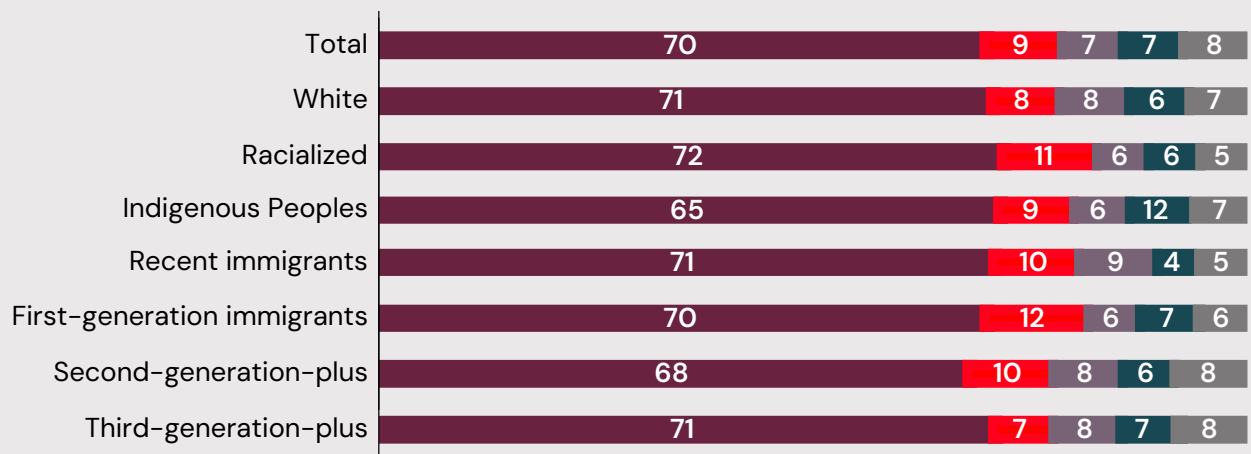
- The strength of belonging to Canada is similar for first-generation immigrants (85%), second-generation immigrants (82%) and non-immigrants (81%).
- Among recent immigrants, fewer say they have a very strong sense of belonging to Canada (33%), but more say their sense of belonging is somewhat strong (49%). As a result, the proportion of recent immigrants with a very or somewhat strong sense of belonging to Canada (83%) is similar to the national average.
- Almost nine in ten of those from every major racial identity group express a very or somewhat strong sense of belonging to Canada. Those who are racialized are less likely than those who are white to say their sense of belonging to Canada is very strong (38%, compared to 48%), but more likely to say it is somewhat strong (48%, compared to 34%).
- Similar proportions of those who identify as Christian (85%) or Muslim (84%) say they have a very or somewhat strong sense of belonging to Canada.

Patterns are very similar when it comes to the sense of belonging to people with similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds. Overall, just over three in four (77%) Canadians say they have either a very or somewhat strong sense of belonging to people with the same ethnic or cultural background as them. This includes 33 percent whose sense of belonging is very strong. Sixteen percent say their sense of belonging to people with similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds is either somewhat or very weak.

The sense of belonging to people with similar ethnic or cultural backgrounds varies very little across different populations. Notably, it is similar for first-generation immigrants (76%), second-generation immigrants (76%) and non-immigrants (79%). It is also virtually the same for recent immigrants (81%). There is little difference between those who identify as white (79%), racialized (79%) or Indigenous (72%).

## Figure 9

### Belonging to Canada and to ethnic group, combined



- Sense of belonging to both Canada and to ethnic group
- Sense of belonging to Canada, but not to ethnic group
- Sense of belonging to ethnic group, but not to Canada
- Sense of belonging to neither Canada nor to ethnic group
- Cannot say to either or both questions

*How would you describe your sense of belonging to Canada? How would you describe your sense of belonging to people with the same ethnic or cultural background as you?*

As is the case with identity, the sense of belonging to Canada and to one's ethnic or cultural group tend to overlap. Most Canadians (70%) feel a sense of belonging to both Canada and to people with the same ethnic or cultural background as them. Far fewer feel a sense of belonging to Canada but not to people of the same background (9%), to people of the same background but not to Canada (7%) or to neither (7%). Importantly, there is very little variation across the population in this pattern. About seven in ten of those who are white (71%) or who are racialized (72%) feel a sense of belonging to both Canada and to people with the same ethnic or cultural background as them. The same is true of first- (70%), second- (68%) and third-generation-plus Canadians (71%) – as well as of recent immigrants (71%).

Only nine percent of recent immigrants feel a sense of belonging to people of the same ethnic or cultural background but not to Canada, which is not significantly different from the proportion for third-generation-plus Canadians (8%).

## **Do newcomers feel welcome in Canada?**

Is Canada a welcoming place for newcomers?

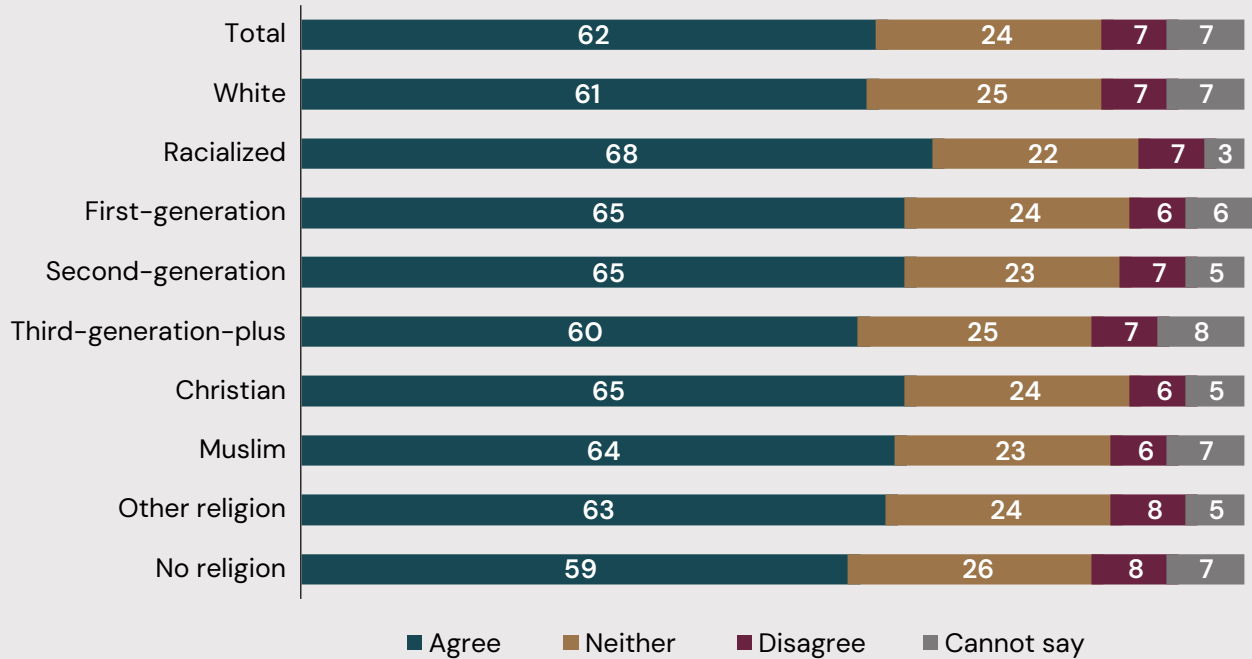
In addition to asking about a sense of belonging to Canada, the survey also asked recent immigrants more directly about the extent to which they feel that they and their family have been made to feel welcomed by other people in their local community. The overwhelming majority of recent immigrants say that they have felt welcomed, although this is not to say they have not also encountered barriers and unfair treatment. Nine in ten (91%) immigrants who arrived in Canada 10 years ago or more recently say that they and their family have been made to feel welcome by other people in their local community, at least to a general extent. But this includes only 33 percent who felt very welcome, while 58 percent felt generally welcome.

The extent to which newcomers feel welcome is shaped in part by economic circumstances. For instance, 48 percent of recent immigrants who describe their household income as “good enough,” compared to only 22 percent who say their income is “not enough,” feel that they and their family have been made to feel very *welcome* by other people in their local community. Similarly, 44 percent of those who say their current job fully makes use of their education, skills and experience say they feel very welcome, compared to 21 percent of those whose education, skills and experience are not being put to their full use.

The generally positive results – in terms of the proportions of recent immigrants who feel welcomed by their local community – are mirrored by those to a slightly different question: a majority of Canadians, including both immigrants and those born in Canada, agree that their own neighbourhood is welcoming to people from all backgrounds. Overall, 62 percent of Canadians agree with this description of their neighbourhood (though only 19% strongly agree). An additional 31 percent neither agree nor disagree or do not offer a response either way. Only seven percent disagree with the proposition that they live in a welcoming neighbourhood. Disagreement is lower than one in ten among recent immigrants (6%) and racialized immigrants (6%), and among Muslim Canadians (6%). It does, however, rise above that threshold among those who identify as First Nations (13%).

**Figure 10**

Is your neighbourhood welcoming to people from all backgrounds?



*Please tell me how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about the people who live in your neighbourhood: This neighbourhood is welcoming to people from all backgrounds*

## The expression of cultural identity

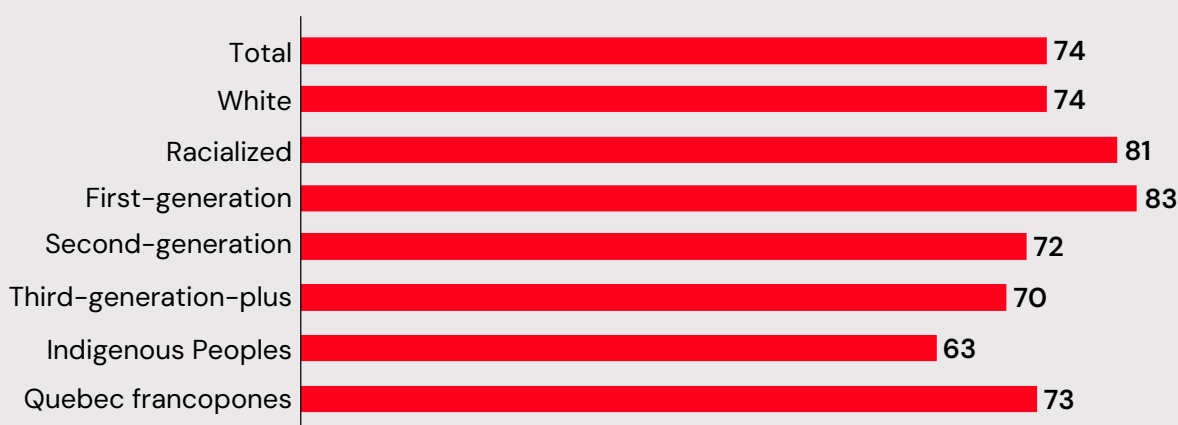
The expression of cultural identity is important to Canadians from all backgrounds:

- For instance, seven in ten (70%) agree that “expressing my cultural identity is important to my overall well-being and happiness.” This figure is higher than average for recent immigrants (85%) and racialized Canadians (81%), but majorities of non-immigrants (66%) and those who are white (67%) also agree. (Strong agreement is higher among some groups, such as those who identify as First Nations (43%) or Black (40%), than among those identifying as white (22%) or Chinese (16%).)
- Most Canadians (75%) also agree that “I have enough opportunities to get together with people who share my cultural identity to celebrate the things we have in common.” Agreement varies very little among different immigration generations, among those with different racial identities, or among those with different religions.

- Perhaps most reassuringly, three in four Canadians (74%) agree that they feel their cultural identity is respected in Canada today (33% strongly agree, and 41% somewhat agree). The level of agreement is broadly similar between Canadians who are racialized (81%) and those who are white (74%), and between those who are Christian (79%) and those who as Muslim (78%). Agreement is higher among first-generation immigrants (83%) than among second-generation immigrants (72%) or non-immigrants (70%). However, it is lower than average among those who identify as Indigenous, about six in ten (63%) of whom feel their cultural identity is respected; one in three (34%) say it is not respected.

## Figure 11

### Agree: My cultural identity is respected in Canada today



*The following questions are about your own cultural identity. This might relate to your ancestry, nationality, ethnicity, language, region, or any other type of cultural identity that is important to you. Thinking about your own cultural identity, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: I feel my cultural identity is respected in Canada today.*

These findings notwithstanding, a significant minority of Canadians feel constrained in the expression of their cultural identity.<sup>12</sup> Overall, one in four (25%) agree that they “feel pressure to hide or downplay my cultural identity.” But this proportion is higher among racialized Canadians (35%), especially those who identify as South Asian (44%). It is also higher than average among recent immigrants (39%), those who are Muslim (39%) or who adhere to another non-Christian religion (38%), and those who identify as Indigenous (46%).

<sup>12</sup> These findings are not contradictory, as those who do not feel their identity is respected are also more likely to say they feel pressure to downplay their identity.

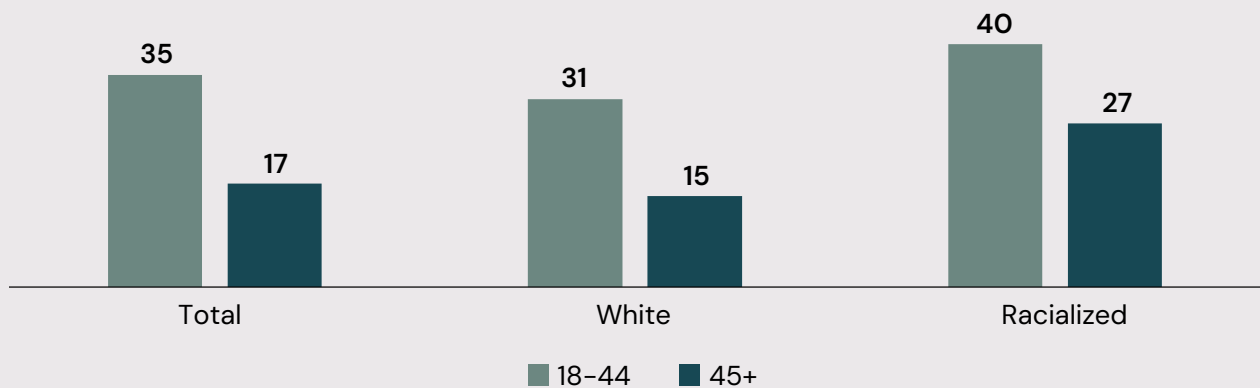
Feeling pressured to downplay one's cultural identity is more common among younger Canadians and decreases with age. Overall, 35 percent of Canadian adults under the age of 45 agree that they feel this kind of pressure, compared to 17 percent of those age 45 and older. This feeling is even more common among racialized Canadians under the age of 45 (40%).

These findings notwithstanding, a significant minority of Canadians feel constrained in the expression of their cultural identity.

### Figure 12

Agree: I feel pressure to hide or downplay my cultural identity

By age group



*The following questions are about your own cultural identity. This might relate to your ancestry, nationality, ethnicity, language, region, or any other type of cultural identity that is important to you. Thinking about your own cultural identity, to what extent do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements: I feel pressure to hide or downplay my cultural identity.*

## Part 4:

# Perceptions of race relations in Canada

How well do Canadians think the country is doing in terms of ensuring that people from different ethnic or racial groups are able to live together harmoniously?



# Part 4: Perceptions of race relations in Canada

This is an issue that the Environics Institute has previously explored in several national studies.<sup>13</sup> Recent events, however, raise the question of whether opinions have changed. Such events include extensive public criticism of the numbers of immigrants (particularly temporary residents) that the federal government admitted into Canada between 2022 and 2024; and incidents of both antisemitic and Islamophobic violence, and tense confrontations between groups of protestors in the aftermath of the October 7, 2024 attacks on Israel and the subsequent conflict in Gaza.

The survey included two questions drawn from the earlier studies to gauge the public's sense of the state of race relations in the country:

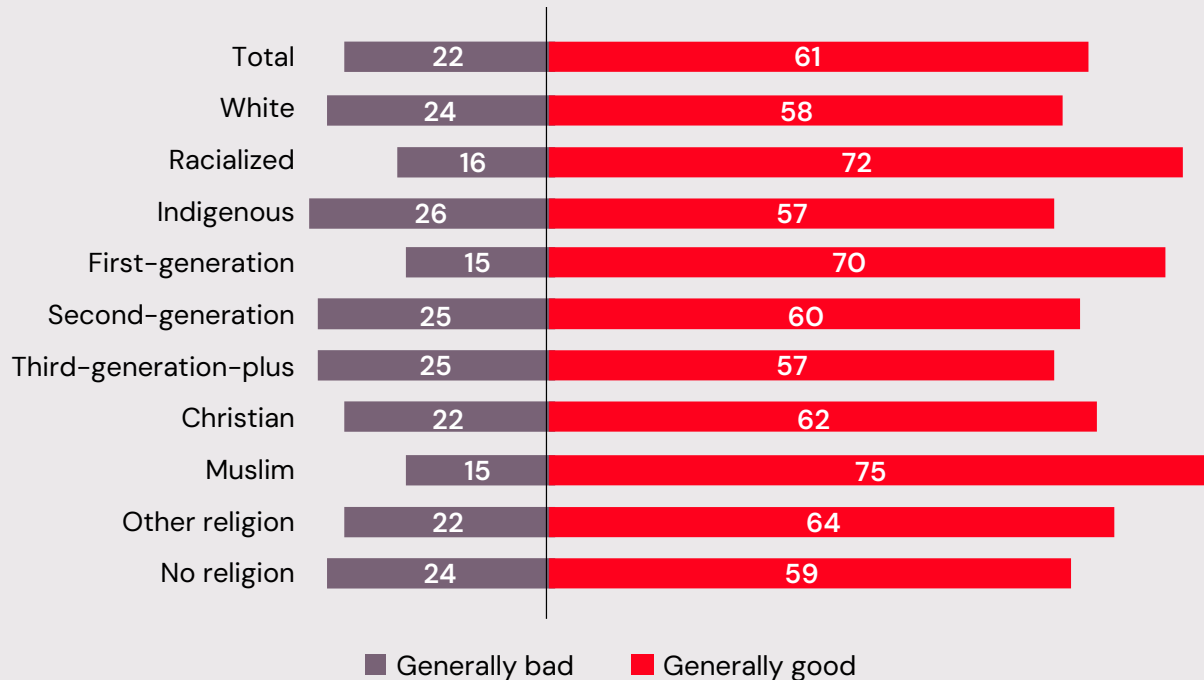
- First, Canadians were asked whether they think relations are generally good or generally bad in terms of how well people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds get along with each other in Canada. A majority (61%) says relations are generally good – almost three times as many as the proportion that says relations are generally bad (22%). An additional 17 percent do not express an opinion either way.
- Second, Canadians were asked whether they think relations are generally good or generally bad in terms of how well people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds have an equal chance to succeed in life. The results are similar, with 58 percent saying relations in this sense are generally good, 21 percent saying they are generally bad and 21 percent not expressing either of these opinions.

The minority saying that relations are generally bad is lower than average among racialized and new Canadians. Only 16 percent of racialized Canadians say that relations are generally bad in terms of how well people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds get along with each other in Canada, compared to 24 percent of those who are white. Among first-generation immigrants, the figure is 15 percent, and among recent immigrants, it is 13 percent – compared to 25 percent among those who are born in Canada to Canadian-born parents.

13 The [Race Relations in Canada](#) surveys are conducted in partnership with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

**Figure 13**

**Perception of race relations in Canada**



*Do you think relations are generally good or generally bad in terms of how well people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds get along with each other in Canada?*

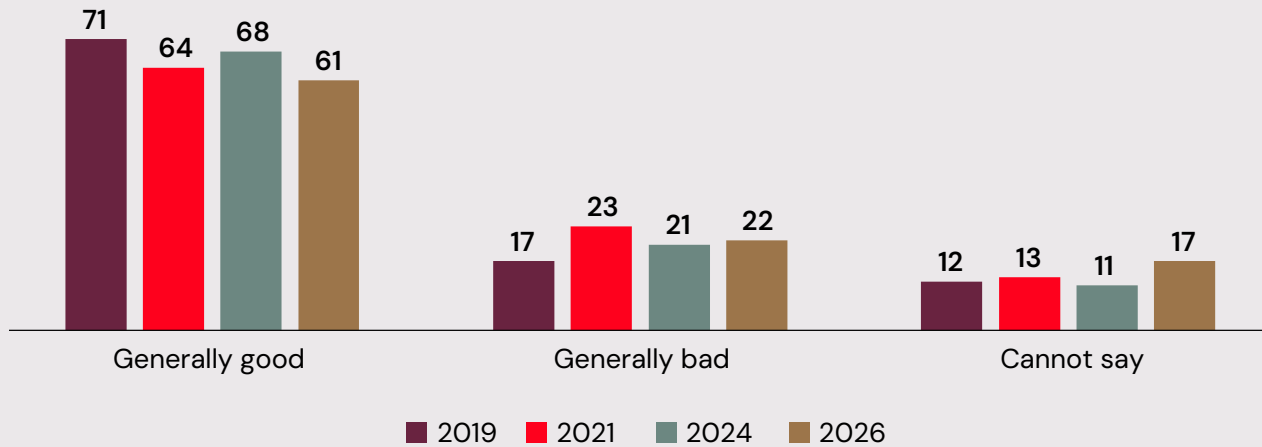
The perception that relations are bad is also lower among those who have more personal contact with people from different ethnic or racial backgrounds. Among those who have friends who are from ethnic or racial groups different from their own, 20 percent perceive race relations to be bad. This figure rises to 29 percent among those who have personal contact but no friends who are of a different race, and 30 percent among those who have no such personal contacts.

Finally, while a majority of Canadians say that race relations in the country are generally good, the proportion holding this view is 10 points lower than in 2019. The proportion saying that relations are generally good (in terms of how well people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds get along with each other in Canada) was 71 percent in 2019, but declined to 64 percent in 2021 – at a time when Canadians, along with many around the world, were focused on the issue of racial injustice in the wake of the murder of George Floyd, a Black American, by police officers in Minneapolis. The proportion of Canadians seeing relations in a positive light then increased to 68 percent in 2024, but has since declined to 61 percent.

**Figure 14**

**Perception of race relations in Canada**

2019 – 2026



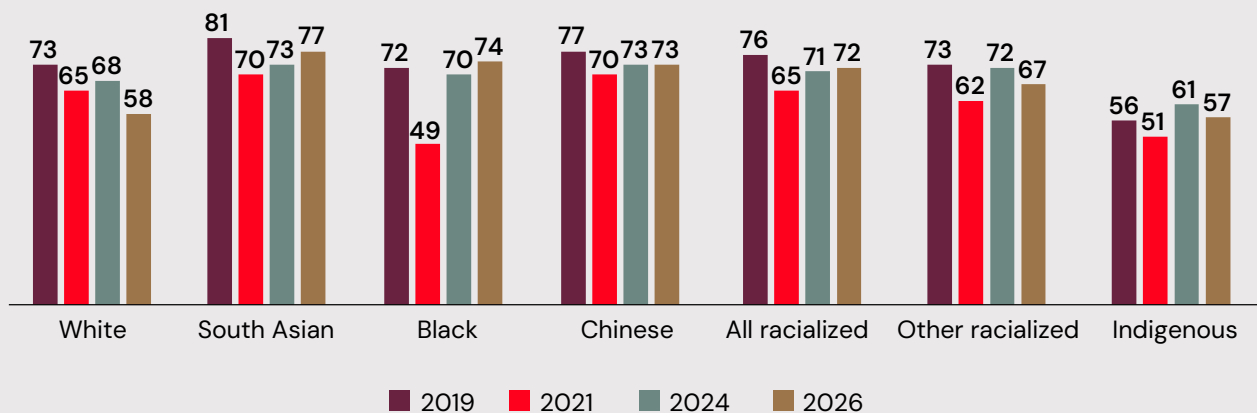
Source for 2019 to 2024: Race Relations in Canada Studies

Notably, however, the decline since 2024 is more pronounced among those who are white (down 10 points) than among those who are racialized (no meaningful change). Among those who are Black, the perception that relations are generally good reached its highest point in 2026; among those who are white, it reached its lowest point. Exploring the possible reasons for these different patterns will be the focus of a subsequent report.

**Figure 15**

**Race relations in Canada are generally good**

2019 – 2026, By identity



Source for 2019 to 2024: Race Relations in Canada Studies

## A final word

This report presents initial findings from many of the key questions included in the Diversity in Canada Study 2026. These results cover a broad range of issues relating to multiculturalism, diversity and immigration from a range of perspectives, including those of first-, second- and third-generation-plus immigrants, and of Canadians with different racial identities. Other topics, not included here, will be addressed in subsequent reports, including those relating to experiences of discrimination. Further analysis will also seek to explore in more detail some of the factors shaping the trends explored here, such as the changes in perceptions of the state of race relations, as well as the experiences of specific identity groups.

Canadian society has been beset by a series of successive strains over the past years, including the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic; the threats to the country's economy and sovereignty emanating from its superpower neighbour and erstwhile friend and ally; an affordability crisis, particularly relating to housing; spillover effects of conflicts in other countries; resurgent political movements questioning national unity; rapid technological change; and, until very recently, rapid population growth. These and other events form the backdrop against which this research was conducted and can be drawn upon in efforts to interpret the findings. But as events unfold, the views and experiences of Canadians may shift as well. Ongoing social research such as this study can help keep citizens and politicians alike informed about the country's ability to hold together in the face of such challenges.

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