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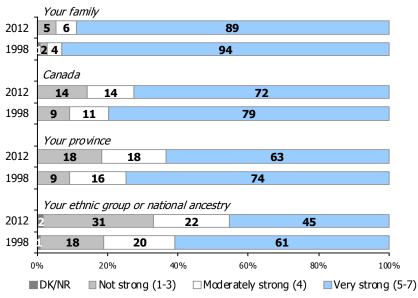
# ATTITUDES TO IMMIGRATION AND VISIBLE MINORITIES

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

[Ottawa – February 26, 2013] The topic of immigration is extremely controversial in Europe and America but typically has been a more muted concern in Canada.

## Figure 1: Personal sense of belonging

Q. How strong is your own personal sense of belonging to...



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**BASE:** Canadians; November 20-28, 2012 (n=1,091)

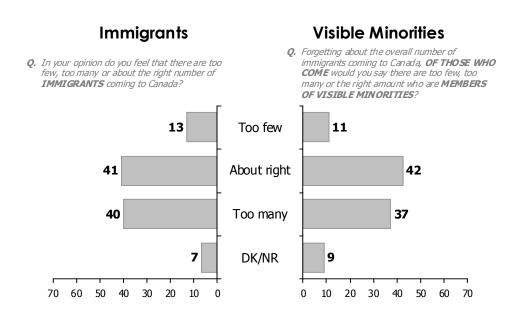
In our previous release, we showed that over the past 15 years, that just as immigration and pluralism had burgeoned to make Canada more ethnically diverse than at any point in its history, attachment to ethnic group had dropped sharply and attachment to country had remained robust and much higher. In other words, as we became more diverse, ethnic identities diminished and national identity remained very strong.

There were broad based fears and cultural insecurities evident in public opinion and intellectual thought in the eighties and nineties. Many thought immigration and multiculturalism would weaken national identity and strengthen compartmentalization and ghettoization of ethnic enclaves. These fears have proven to be ill-founded. Whatever the concerns about the somewhat apocryphal view of the multicultural policies of that era, there is no evidence that they had a deleterious impact on national identity. More importantly, the sociological concept of multiculturalism, that celebrated diversity rather than avoiding or homogenizing it, has produced one of the unique Canadian advantages. The so-called clash of civilizations which is causing huge strife in Europe and American is conspicuously missing in Canadian society.

This is not to suggest that we still need the official portions of multiculturalism that focused on traditional dress, folkways, and festivals; clearly we have moved on to multiculturalism 2.0 where it operates as more of an engrained value in the Canadian mosaic. The idea that the sociological notion of multiculturalism has become an offensive anachronism and a source of tension with other values such as equality is a canard. Clearly, Canadians see both diversity and equality as the salient achievements of the past twenty years and the same constituencies support both values. The idea that the progressive values of equality and multiculturalism are in a state of contradiction is based on a misunderstanding of the anthropological concept of cultural relativism and the parallel notion of the psychic unity of humanity. Cultural relativism argues that individual cultures must be understood immanently within the logic of that culture and not reduced to European ethnocentric concepts of morality. It did not mean that all cultures were morally equivalent nor did it mean that equality of individuals and respect for diversity stood in a state of mutual contradiction.

Figure 2 shows current public attitudes to the simple proposition that immigration levels are too high, about right, or too low. It extends this question to look at the question of whether the distribution of immigrants coming to Canada is tilted too far towards visible minorities.

Figure 2: Attitudes towards immigration and visible minorities



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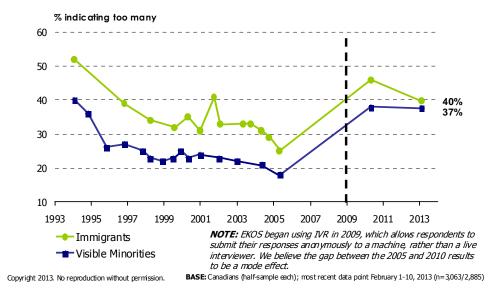
**BASE:** Canadians (half-sample each); February 1-10, 2013 (n=3,063/2,885)

As shown in the chart above, whatever relative success multiculturalism may have achieved in creating a more open and tolerant Canadian society, fears of foreign cultures are by no means extinct in this country. Fully 40% of Canadians think there are too many immigrants coming to Canada.

An important methodological note is in order. While we need to do more extensive tests, we believe that the anonymity of the IVR method, compared to previous tracking using live interviewer, may inflate the apparent opposition to immigration by 10 points by virtue of the reduction of social desirability bias. Apparently, respondents are less abashed sharing notions that they do not like immigration and, more particularly, immigration from outside the more familiar regions of the United States and Europe, with the impersonal robot. The chart below shows our longer term tracking of this indicator with the caveat regarding the comparability of the last two iterations.

#### Figure 3: Tracking attitudes towards immigration and minorities

- Q. In your opinion do you feel that there are too few, too many or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?
- Q. Forgetting about the overall number of immigrants coming to Canada, OF THOSE WHO COME would you say there are too few, too many or the right amount who are MEMBERS OF VISIBLE MINORITIES?



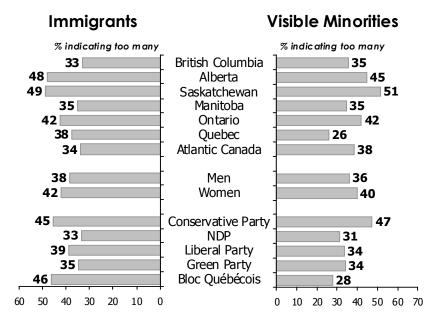
In short, we do not believe that opposition to immigration is actually up when we discount the mode effect of eliminating a live interviewer. Which measure is more valid is open to debate but, we would tend to the view that the impersonal interview is more accurate of true feelings.

To be fair, there are many genuine reasons to be opposed to immigration which can have nothing to do with intolerance (e.g. economic fears of impacts). However, when we ask people to forget about the number of immigrants and just focus on the question of whether or not too many of them are visible minorities, it is hard to defend the answer of "too many" as anything other than some form of apprehension around unfamiliar cultures or, even worse, an expression of racial prejudice. So it is disconcerting to note that nearly two-fifths of Canadians harbour these attitudes when it relates to who should come to Canada. It is notable that in our testing of attitudes to these same questions in the United States, we find the opposition levels are about twice as high (despite less than half as much immigration relative to size). The evidence from

Europe also shows higher intolerance. Before too much backslapping about tolerant and diverse Canada we might note there is clearly still room for improvement here.

With some trepidation, we now consider the question of how these attitudes vary within Canadian society. Recognizing that people can get downright ornery when told that the group that they belong to is less open to new cultures, we will plunge on.

Figure 4: Immigration and visible minorities by key demographics



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BASE: Canadians (half-sample each); February 1-10, 2013 (n=3,063/2,885)

First of all, while attitudes to immigration levels mirror those towards visible minorities, they are not identical. Opposition to immigration in general is higher among seniors, the economically vulnerable, and women (this is a consistent finding over the years). It is also significantly higher among Bloc Québécois and Conservative supporters, as well those who live in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The link to those who think there are too many immigrants coming from outside the more familiar western cultures of the United States and Europe is less ambiguous and, in some cases, these linkages are considerably stronger. In particular, the link to party support is very significant. Nearly half of Conservative supporters think that too many immigrants are members of visible minorities, compared to roughly one-third of supporters of other parties. Regionally, these attitudes are also more prevalent among residents of Saskatchewan, Alberta (which is surprising considering the recent election of Naheed Nenshi as mayor of Calgary), and, to a lesser extent, Ontario. Women, the economically vulnerable, and those born here in Canada are also more likely to harbour these sentiments.



## **Detailed Tables:**

## **Attitudes towards Immigration**

Q. In your opinion do you feel that there are too few, too many or about the right number of immigrants coming to Canada?

	Too few	Too many	About right	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	13.0%	39.7%	40.6%	6.7%	3063	1.8
REGION						
British Columbia	15.4%	32.9%	42.6%	9.1%	354	5.2
Alberta	12.6%	47.7%	32.2%	7.5%	309	5.6
Saskatchewan	5.4%	48.6%	35.1%	10.9%	99	9.9
Manitoba	14.8%	34.9%	43.0%	7.3%	95	10.1
Ontario	13.9%	42.3%	38.7%	5.1%	915	3.2
Quebec	9.5%	37.5%	46.6%	6.4%	914	3.2
Atlantic Canada	16.7%	34.0%	41.3%	8.0%	366	5.1
GENDER						
Male	15.4%	38.2%	41.2%	5.1%	1442	2.6
Female	11.0%	42.3%	41.5%	5.3%	1539	2.5
AGE						
<25	14.1%	27.9%	48.9%	9.2%	165	7.6
25-44	15.7%	39.0%	41.1%	4.3%	752	3.6
45-64	11.7%	47.1%	37.5%	3.8%	1206	2.8
65+	11.1%	37.6%	44.4%	6.9%	856	3.4
EDUCATION						
High school or less	9.7%	48.1%	36.1%	6.1%	1015	3.1
College or CEGEP	8.9%	47.2%	38.4%	5.5%	950	3.2
University or higher	20.4%	26.7%	48.9%	4.0%	1019	3.1
COUNTRY OF BIRTH						
Canada	11.8%	43.2%	40.6%	4.4%	2505	2.0
Other	19.2%	27.4%	44.2%	9.2%	494	4.4
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION						
Conservative Party	11.4%	45.4%	39.4%	3.8%	713	3.7
NDP	16.4%	33.3%	46.6%	3.8%	628	3.9
Liberal Party	15.4%	38.7%	42.4%	3.5%	614	4.0
Green Party	14.2%	34.9%	43.5%	7.5%	206	6.8
Bloc Quebecois	6.9%	46.3%	45.0%	1.8%	210	6.8
Other	0.9%	56.1%	35.8%	7.2%	55	13.2

## **Attitudes towards Visible Minorities**

Q. Forgetting about the overall number of immigrants coming to Canada, of those who come would you say there are too few, too many or the right amount who are members of visible minorities?

	Too few	Too many	About right	DK/NR	Sample Size	Margin of Error (+/-)
NATIONALLY	11.1%	37.5%	42.3%	9.1%	2885	1.8
REGION						
British Columbia	13.1%	35.4%	41.4%	10.1%	333	5.4
Alberta	5.7%	44.7%	42.2%	7.4%	298	5.7
Saskatchewan	7.3%	51.5%	33.4%	7.8%	120	9.0
Manitoba	10.3%	34.6%	41.2%	13.9%	91	10.3
Ontario	11.8%	42.1%	40.1%	6.0%	883	3.3
Quebec	11.7%	25.8%	50.0%	12.5%	809	3.5
Atlantic Canada	11.3%	38.4%	37.2%	13.1%	343	5.3
GENDER						
Male	14.2%	36.0%	43.2%	6.6%	1327	2.7
Female	8.8%	40.0%	43.0%	8.2%	1483	2.5
AGE						
<25	15.8%	25.9%	49.2%	9.1%	136	8.4
25-44	12.4%	36.8%	43.3%	7.6%	721	3.7
45-64	10.7%	42.7%	40.6%	6.0%	1154	2.9
65+	8.4%	38.4%	44.2%	9.0%	797	3.5
EDUCATION						
High school or less	9.6%	46.4%	35.8%	8.1%	904	3.3
College or CEGEP	8.3%	42.5%	41.7%	7.5%	883	3.3
University or higher	15.6%	27.2%	50.6%	6.6%	1012	3.1
COUNTRY OF BIRTH						
Canada	9.5%	40.7%	42.6%	7.2%	2307	2.0
Other	18.3%	27.8%	45.1%	8.8%	519	4.3
CURRENT VOTE INTENTION						
Conservative Party	7.8%	47.4%	41.4%	3.4%	654	3.8
NDP	16.9%	31.2%	46.4%	5.6%	598	4.0
Liberal Party	12.7%	33.7%	47.7%	6.0%	591	4.0
Green Party	16.6%	34.3%	37.0%	12.1%	160	7.8
Bloc Quebecois	10.2%	27.7%	48.2%	13.9%	187	7.2
Other	5.4%	40.1%	46.6%	7.9%	75	11.3



## Methodology:

This study was conducted using Interactive Voice Response (IVR) technology, which allows respondents to enter their preferences by punching the keypad on their phone, rather than telling them to an operator.

In an effort to reduce the coverage bias of landline only RDD, we created a dual landline/cell phone RDD sampling frame for this research. As a result, we are able to reach those with a landline and cell phone, as well as cell phone only households and landline only households. This dual frame yields a near perfect unweighted distribution on age group and gender, something almost never seen with traditional landline RDD sample or interviewer-administered surveys. This methodology is not to be confused with the increasing proliferation of non-probability opt-in online panels which have recently been incorrectly reported in major national media with inappropriate margin of error estimates.

The field dates for this survey are February 1-10, 2013. In total, a random sample of 5,947 Canadian adults aged 18 and over responded to the survey. The margin of error associated with the total sample is  $\pm 1.3$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Please note that the margin of error increases when the results are sub-divided (i.e., error margins for sub-groups such as region, sex, age, education). All the data have been statistically weighted to ensure the samples composition reflects that of the actual population of Canada according to Census data.