



## *Canada as a beacon for migrant acceptance*

### *Is this reputation still deserved?*

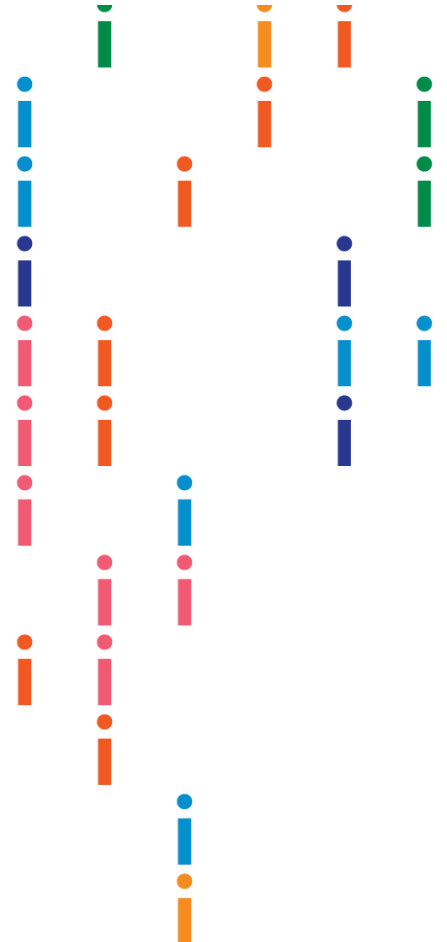
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Environics Institute for Survey Research

Pathways to Prosperity 2019 National Conference

Toronto ON

November 1, 2019



A photograph of a diverse crowd of people at an outdoor event, possibly a festival or rally. In the foreground, a man with grey hair and sunglasses is on the left, and a man with dark skin is on the right, both with their hands raised. Other people in the background are also visible, some with their hands raised. The scene is outdoors with trees and a red tent in the background.

**How accepting are Canadians of immigration and our growing diversity?**

**Has public opinion changed noticeably given recent events in Canada and elsewhere?**



UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA  
WILLIAM  
M. KENNEDY  
SECRETARY  
OF CANADA  
WELCOME TO CANADA

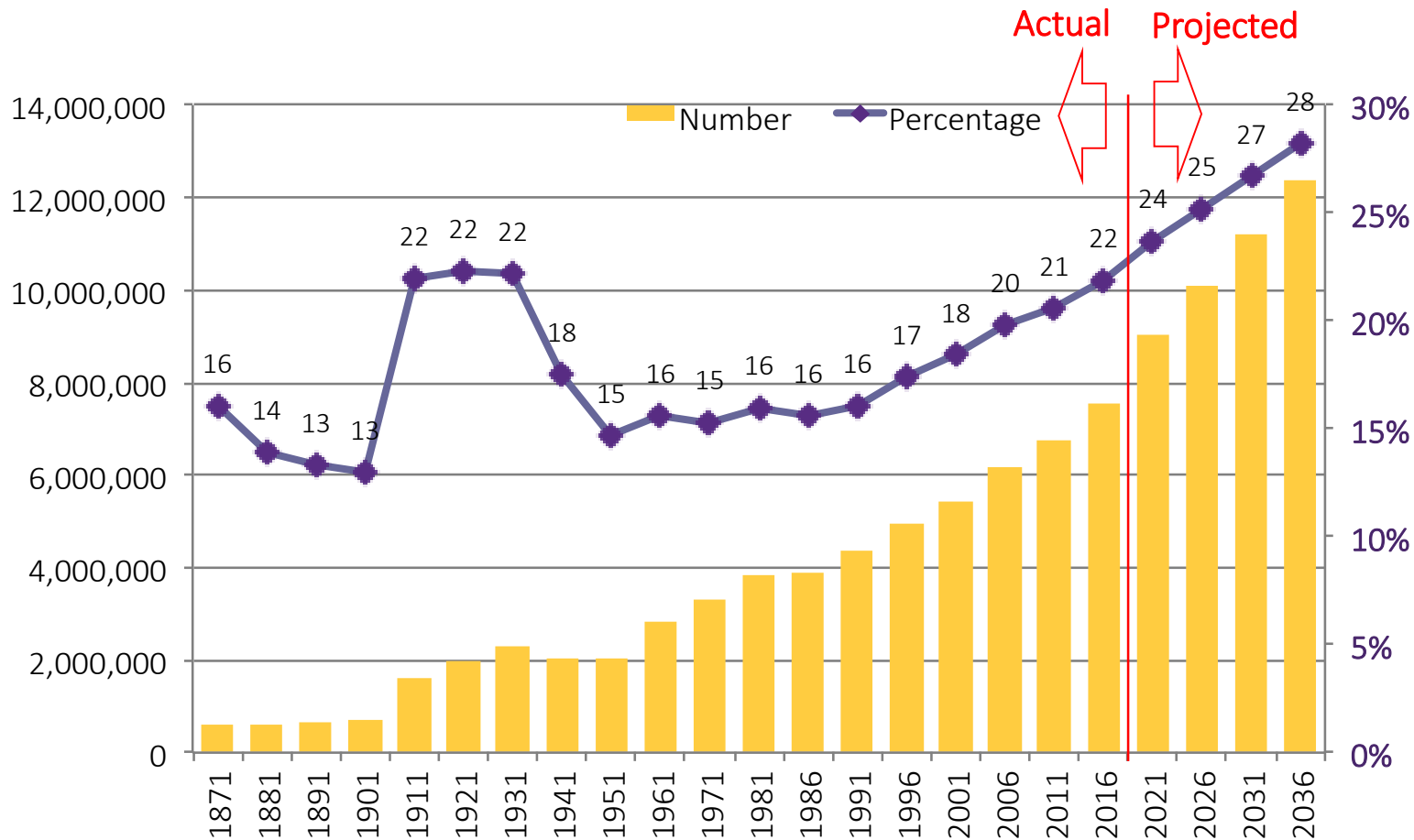


CANADIAN IMMIGRATION



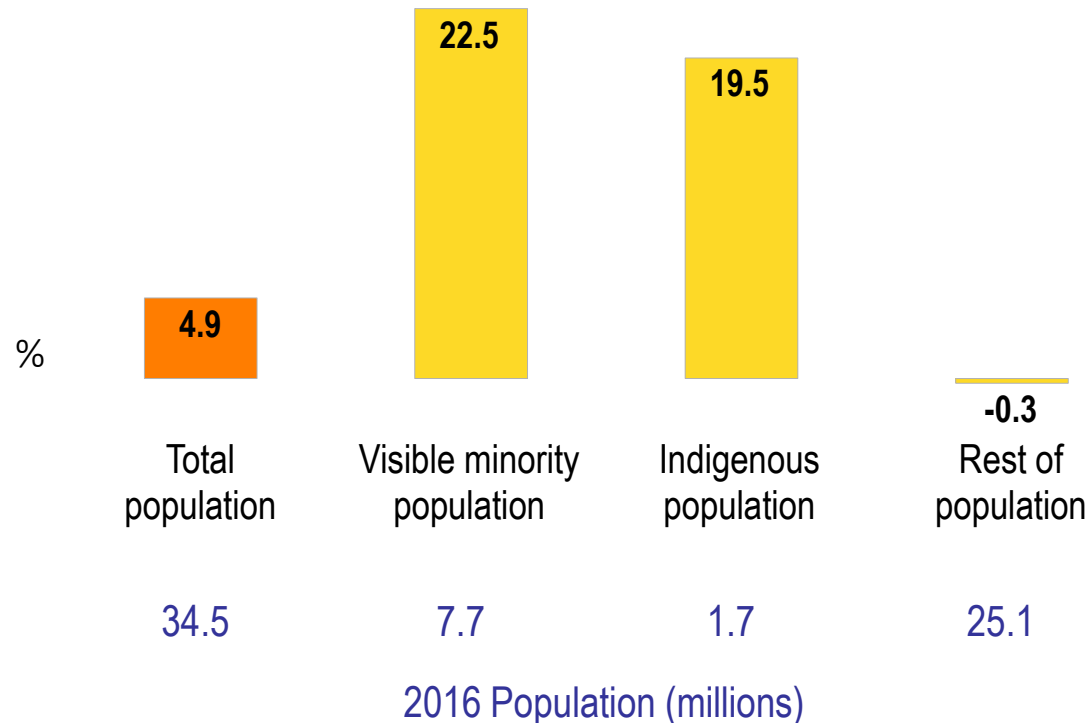
# More than one in five Canadians is now foreign-born, and this proportion will continue to rise

1871 - 2036



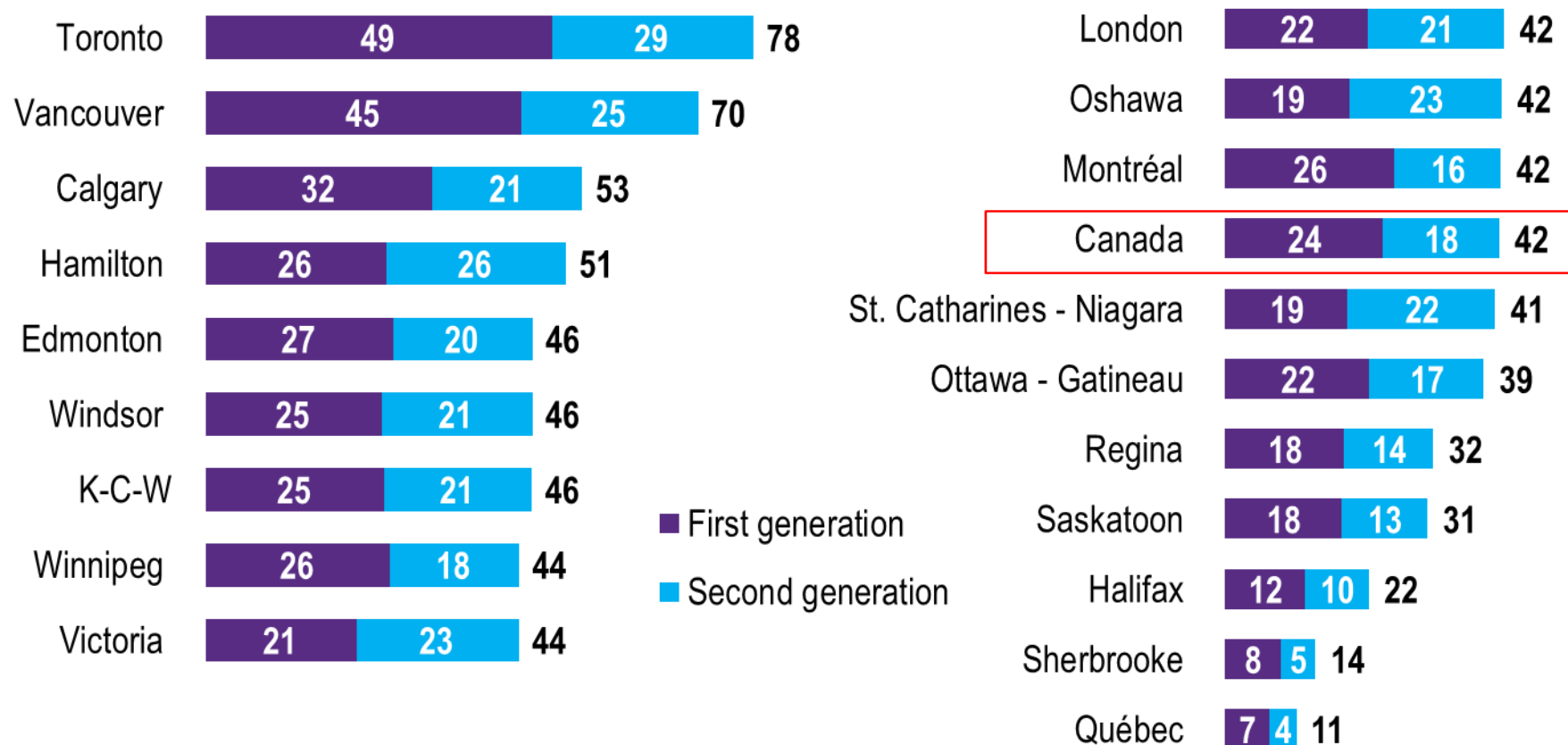
# Since 2011, visible minority and Indigenous populations account for **all** of Canada's total population growth

% Population Growth 2011-2016, Canada



# Four in ten Canadians are first or second generation -- and now the majority in Toronto, Vancouver and Calgary

Percent of population by generation, Canada, 2016





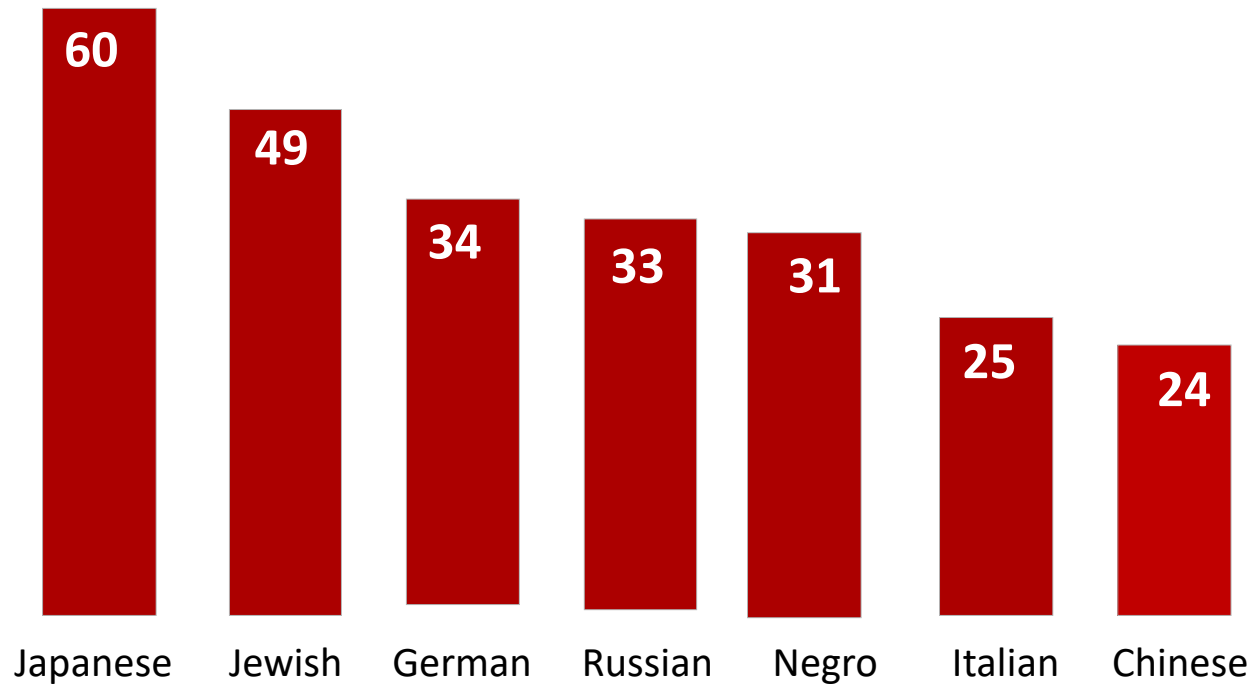
# Public opinion about immigration and refugees

# Canadians' views about immigrants in 1940s reflected the racist culture and policies of the day . . .

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1946

*If Canada does allow more immigration, are there any of these nationalities which you would like to keep out?*



## . . . and continuing into the early 1960s

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1961

*As you know, Canada restricts the admission of non-whites to this country.  
Do you think this should continue, or do you think there should be fewer  
restrictions on non-whites?*

Restrictions should continue

53

Should be fewer restrictions

36

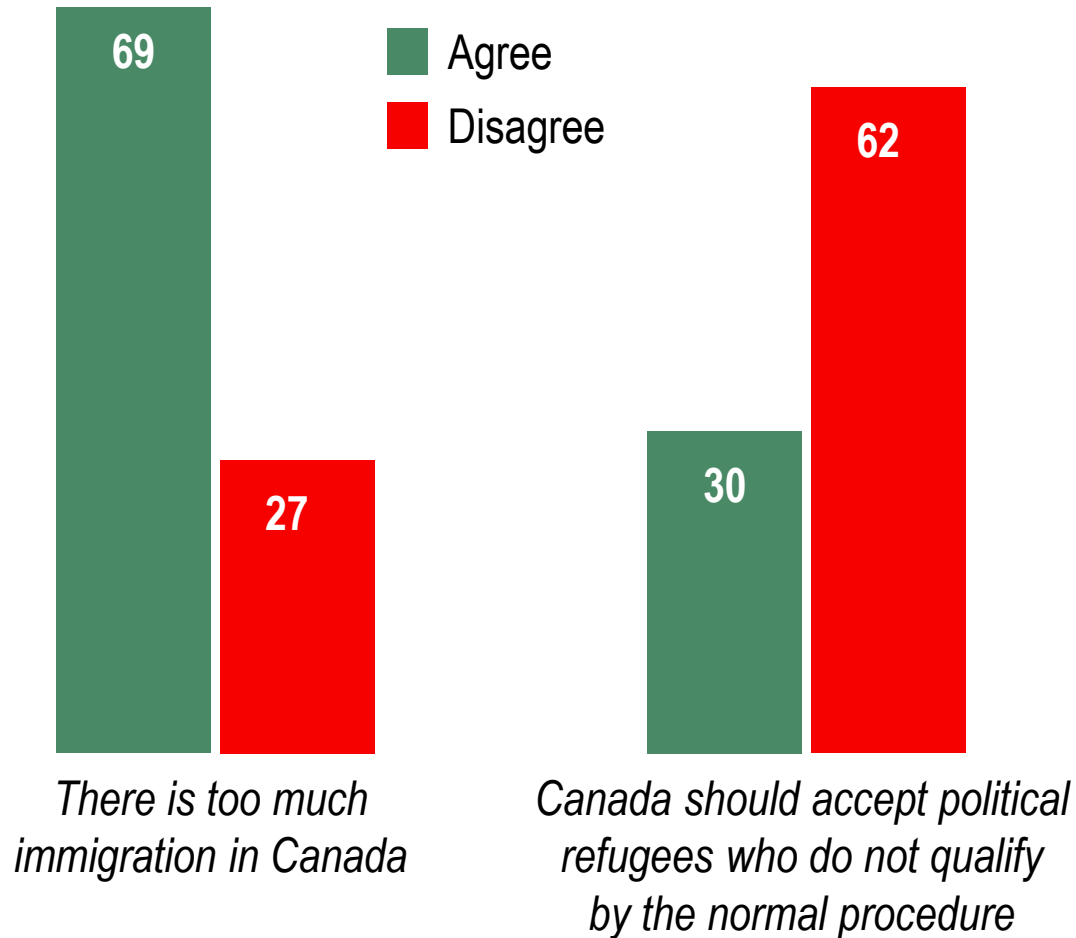
Qualified / No opinion

11

# In even into the 1980s, most Canadians opposed immigration levels and admitting political refugees

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1983



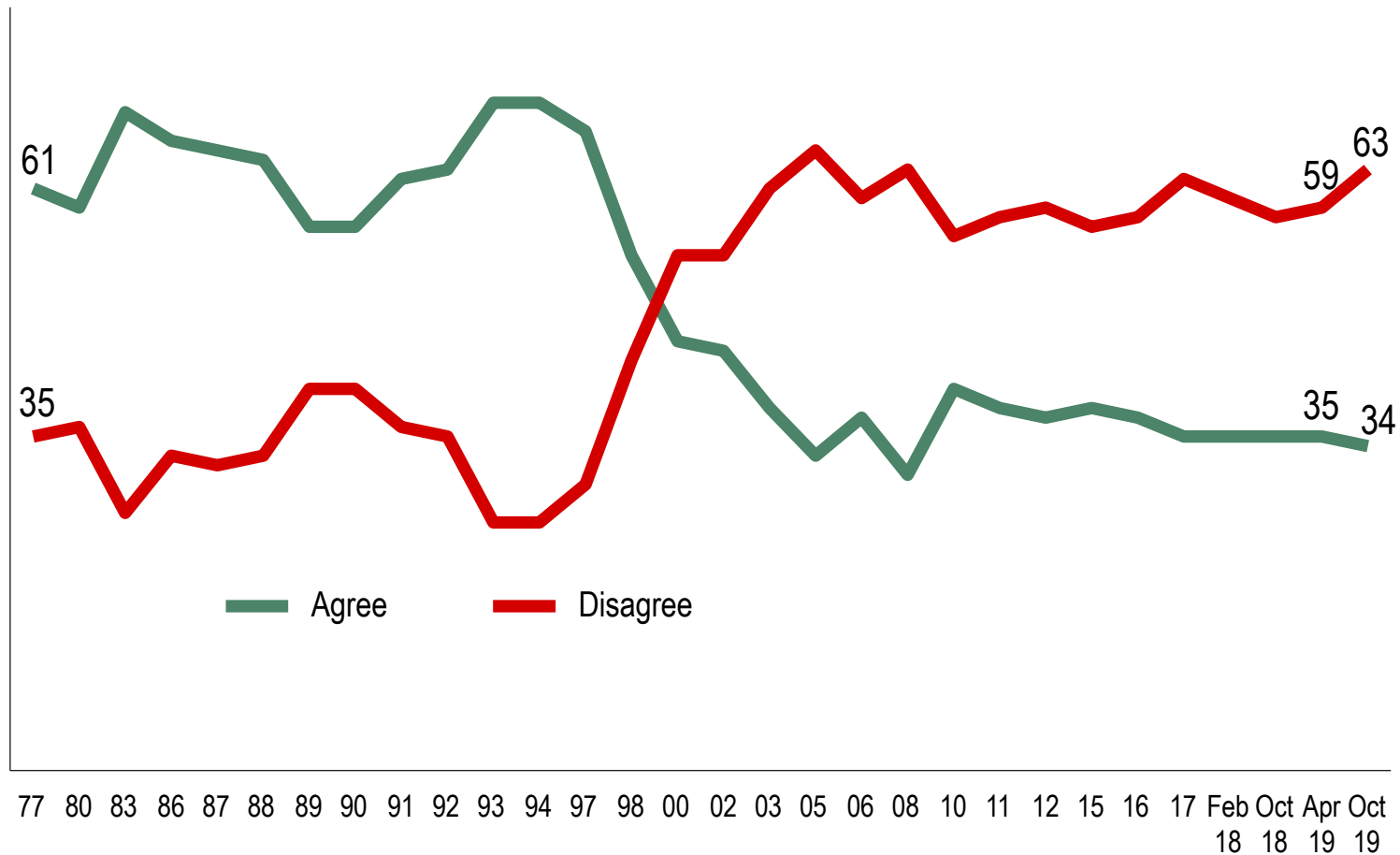
And then it changed . . .



In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a defining majority of Canadians have come to accept, if not actively support, the number of immigrants joining them

1977 - 2019

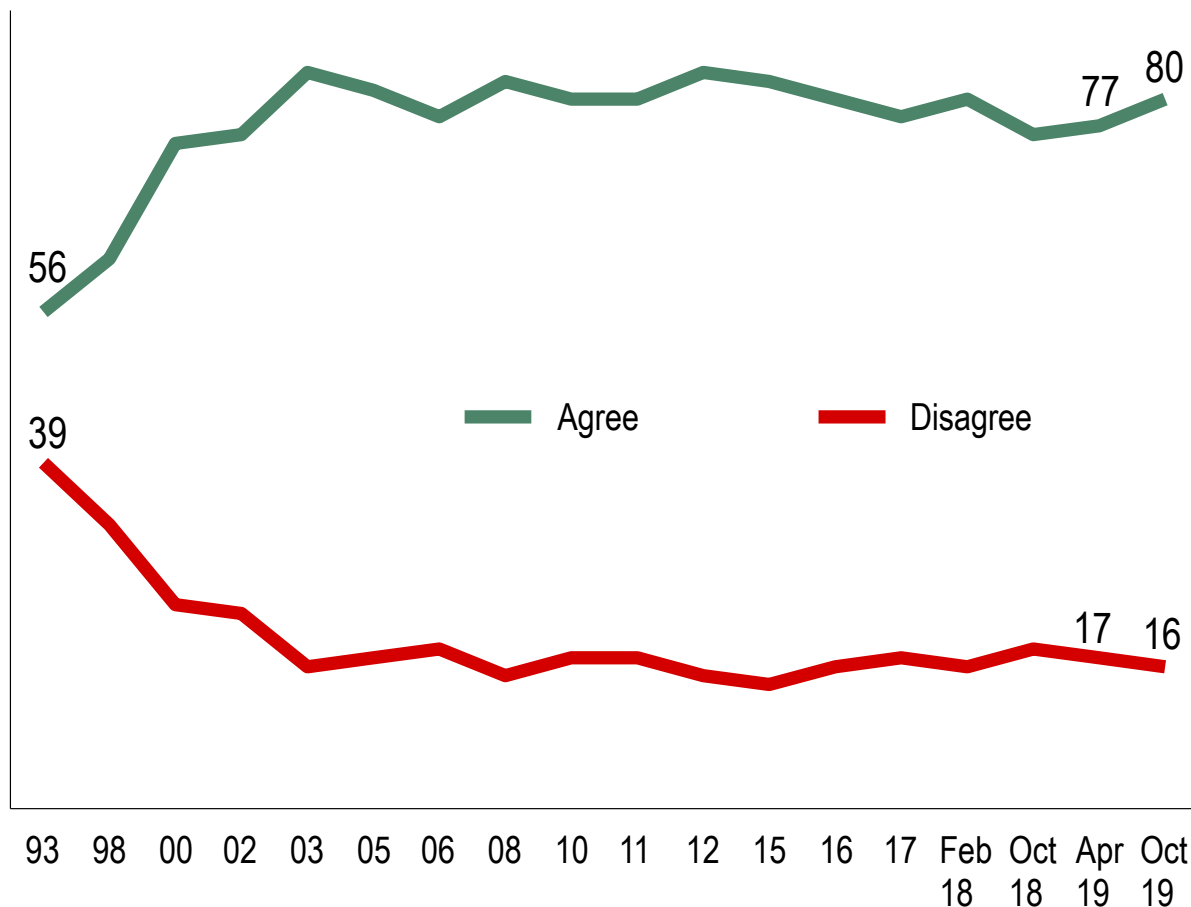
*Agree or disagree: "There is too much immigration in Canada"*



# Most Canadians consistently believe that immigrants help rather than hurt the economy and job creation

1977 - 2019

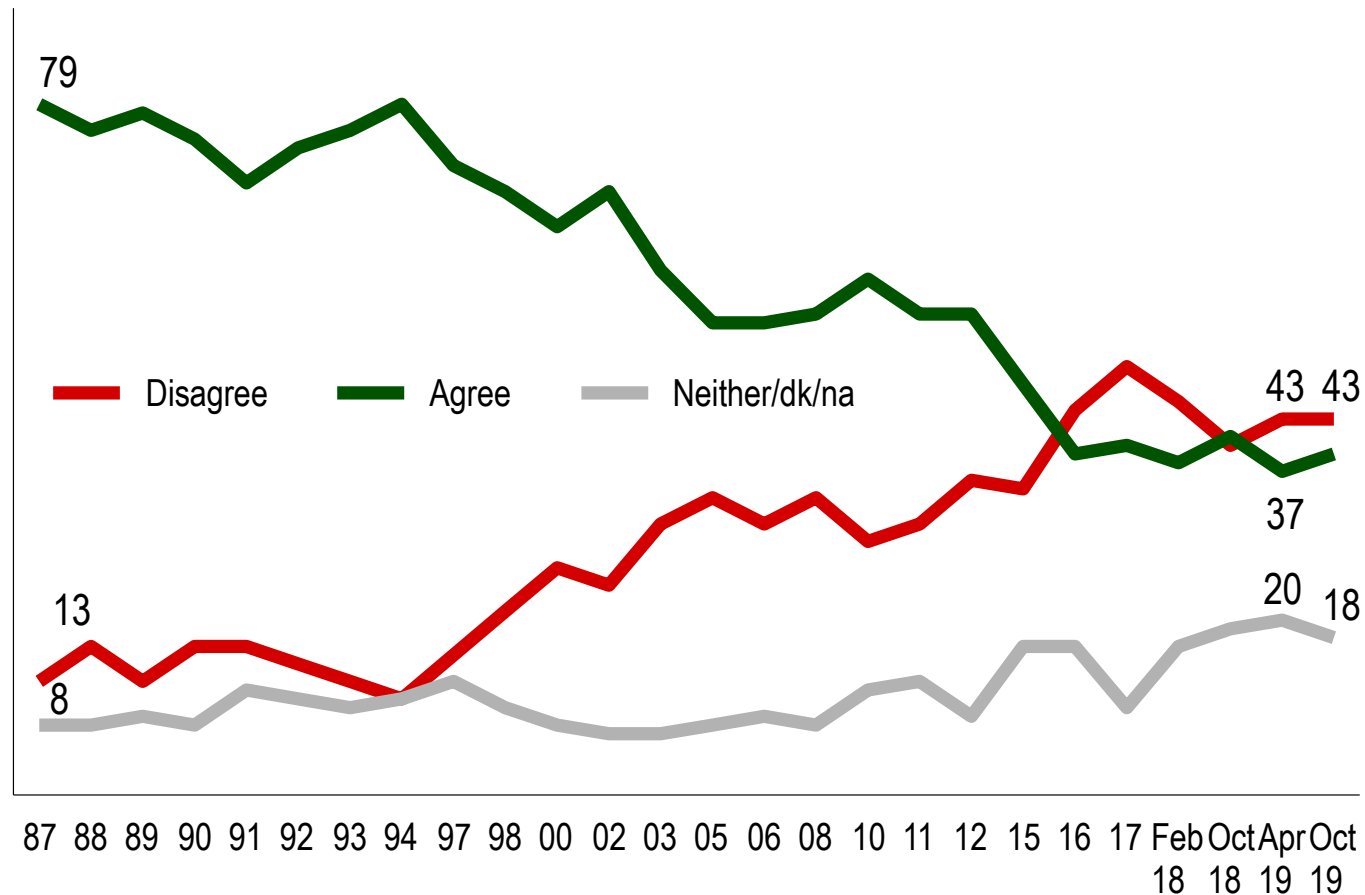
*Agree or disagree: "The economic impact of immigrants is positive"*



# There is no agreement on whether too many refugee claimants are not legitimate, but views are much more positive than in the past

1987 - 2019

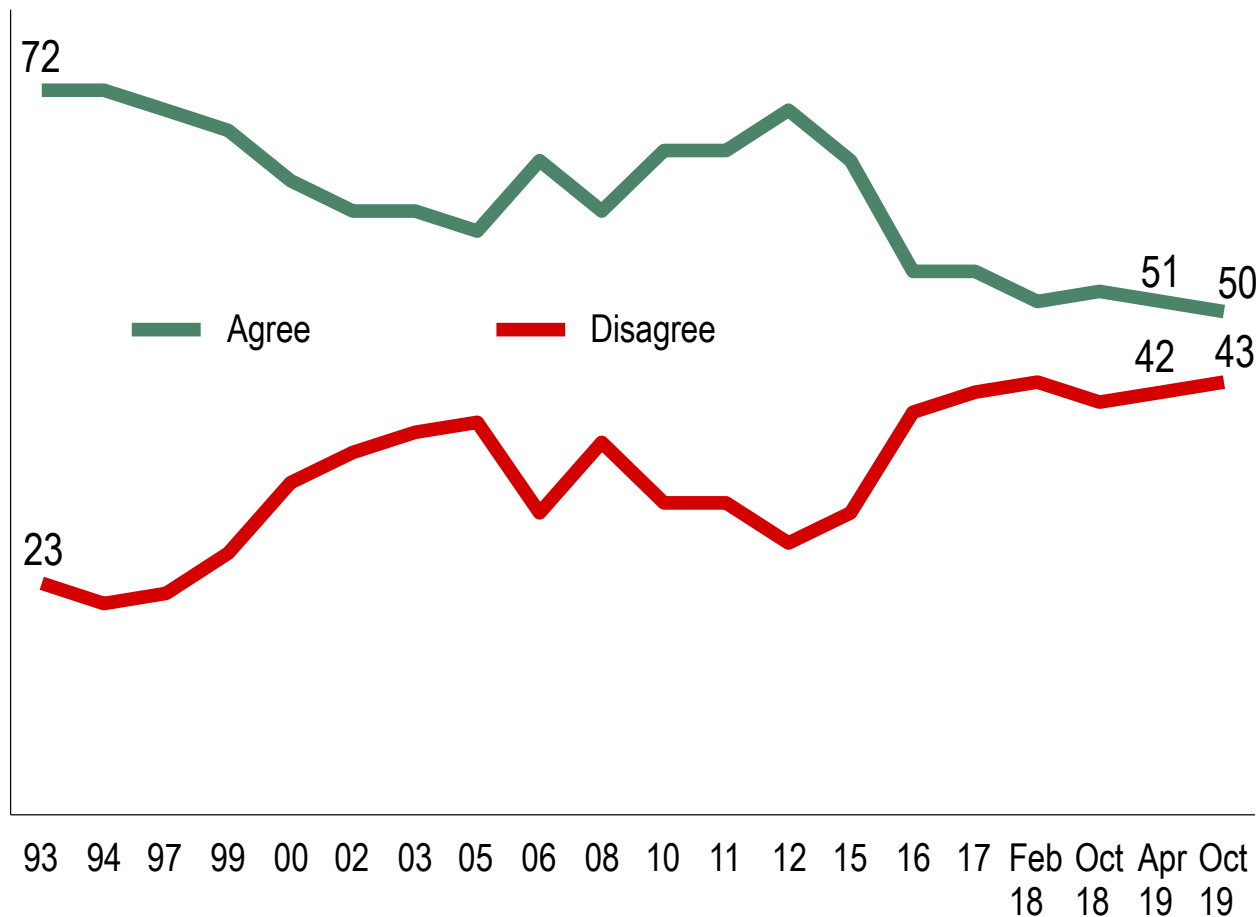
*Agree or disagree: "Too many refugee claimants are not legitimate"*



# The greatest public concern is that some newcomers are not sufficiently integrating into Canadian society

1993 - 2019

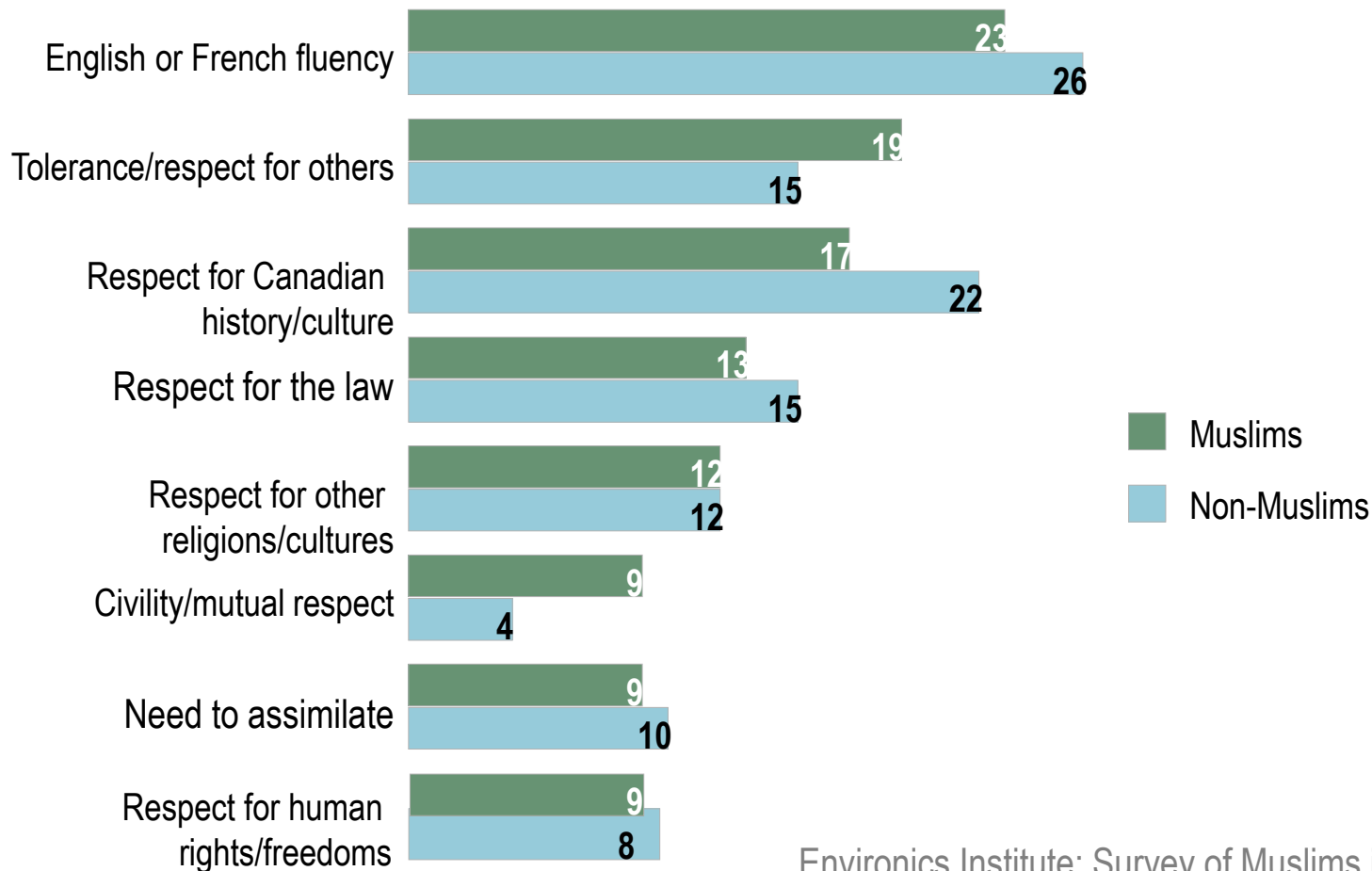
*Agree or disagree: "Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian Values"*



# And yet - Muslims & non-Muslims generally agree on the important values which immigrants to Canada need to adopt

2016 Surveys of Muslims and non-Muslims

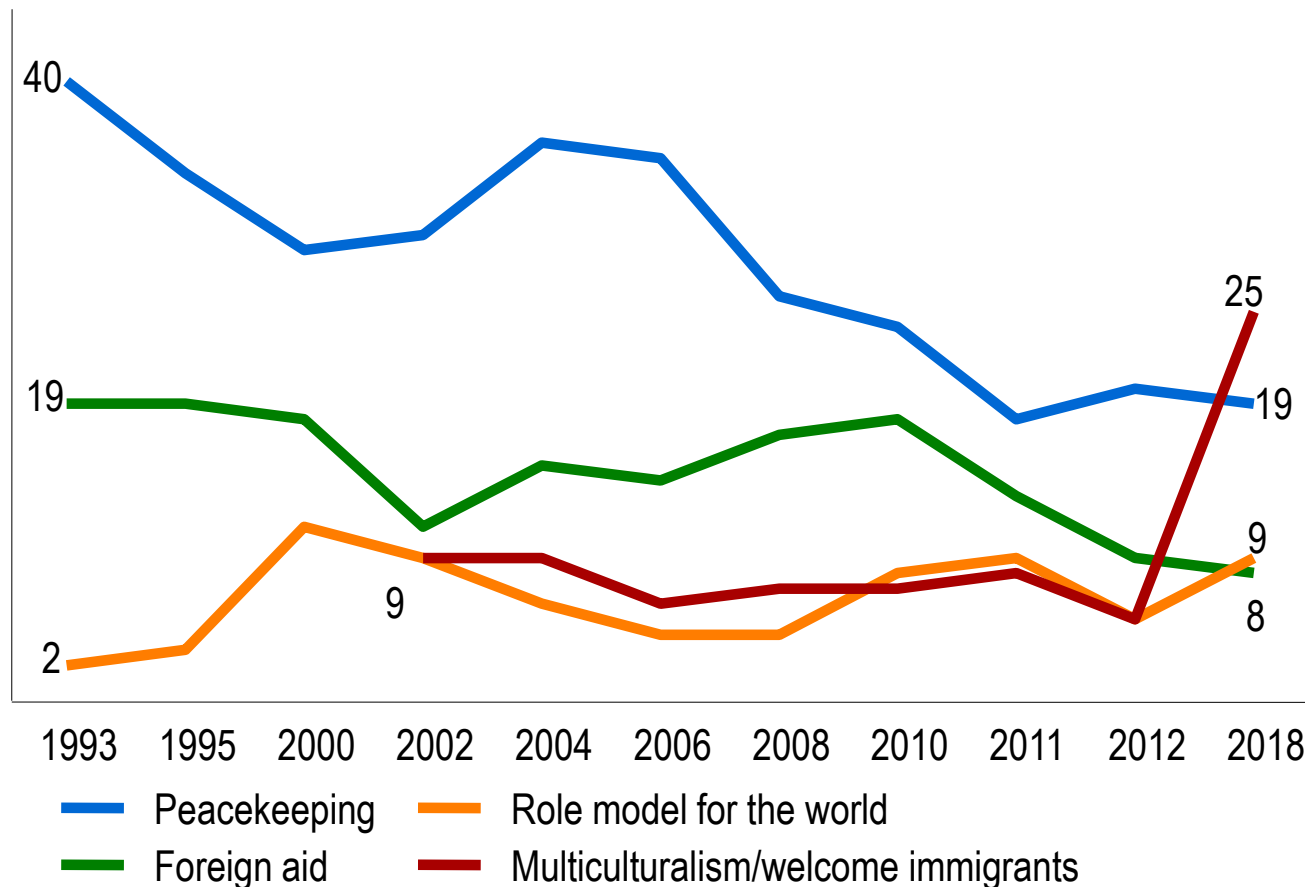
*What values are most important for immigrants to adopt? (unprompted mentions)*



# Canadians now see their country's global image is more about multiculturalism & welcoming migrants than peacekeeping & foreign aid

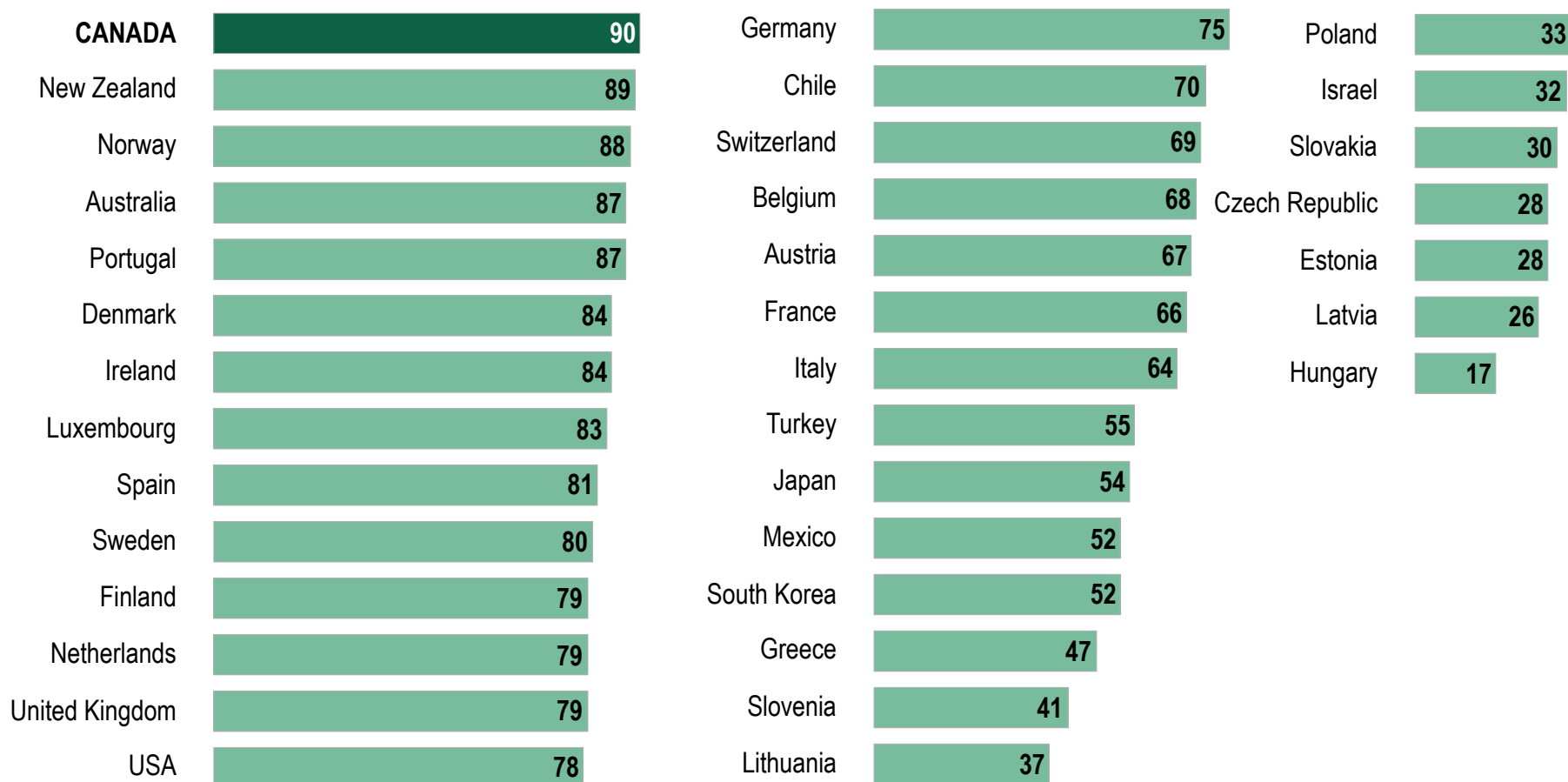
1993 – 2018 Top mentions (unprompted)

*What is the most important contribution that Canada makes to the world today?*



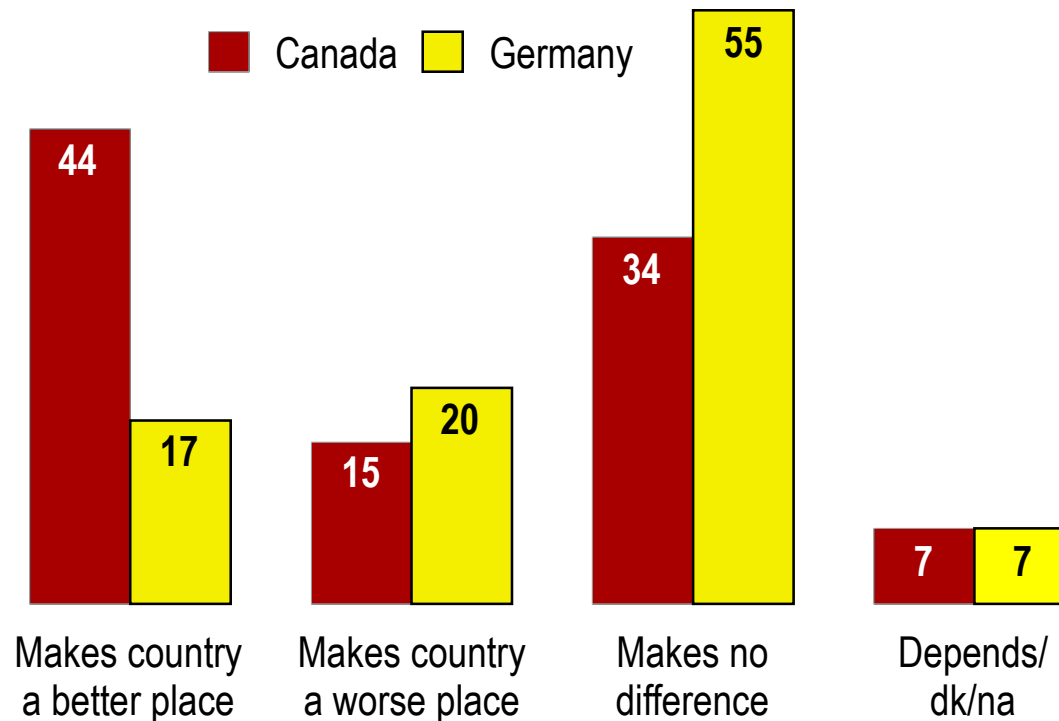
# In 2018, Canada ranks first among OECD countries in terms of public sentiment about one's city being a good place for immigrants

Gallup World Poll 2018   OECD   City/area is a good place for immigrants to live



# Canadians are much more likely than Germans to see immigration as benefitting their country

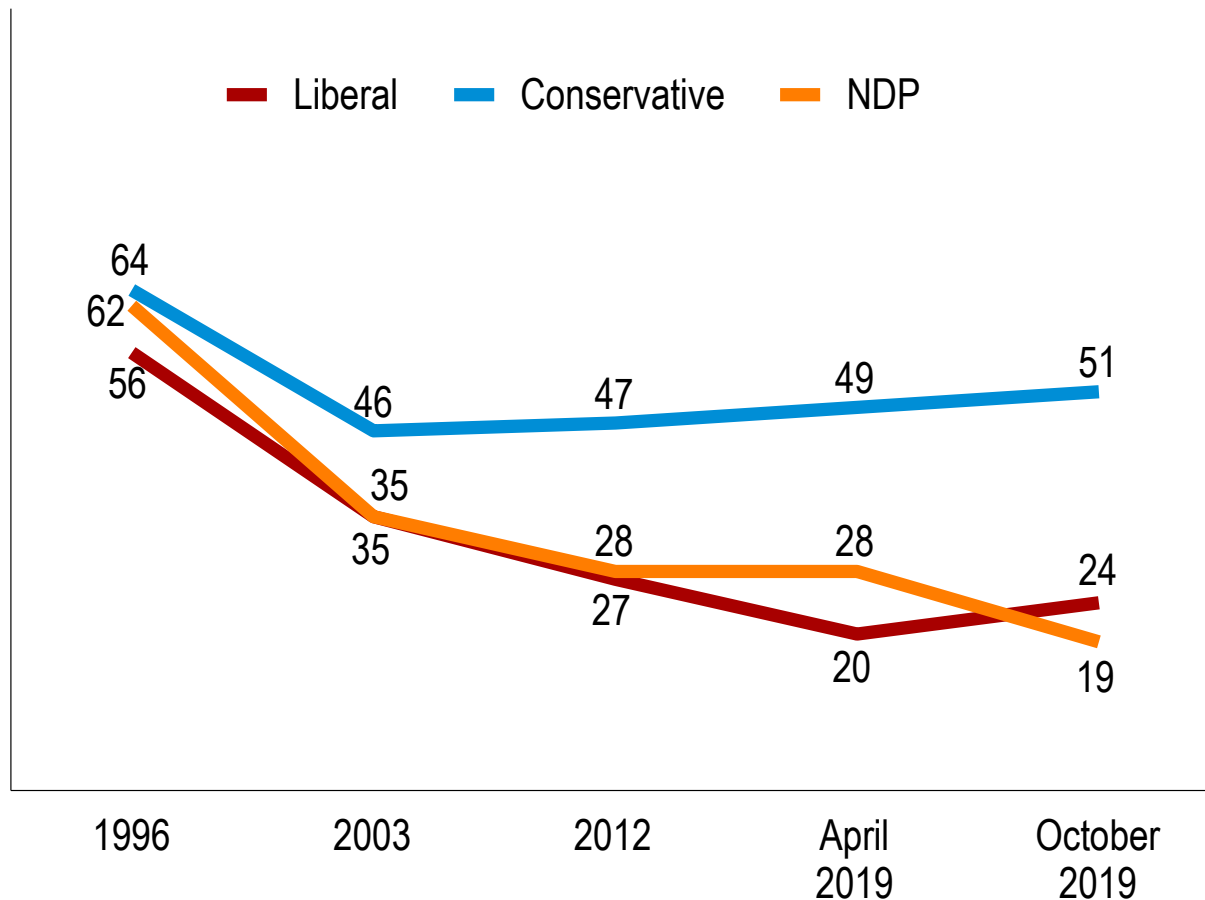
April 2019 Canada & Germany



# Over time there has been a growing political polarization in Canada around the number of immigrants being accepted each year

1996 - 2019 By political party support

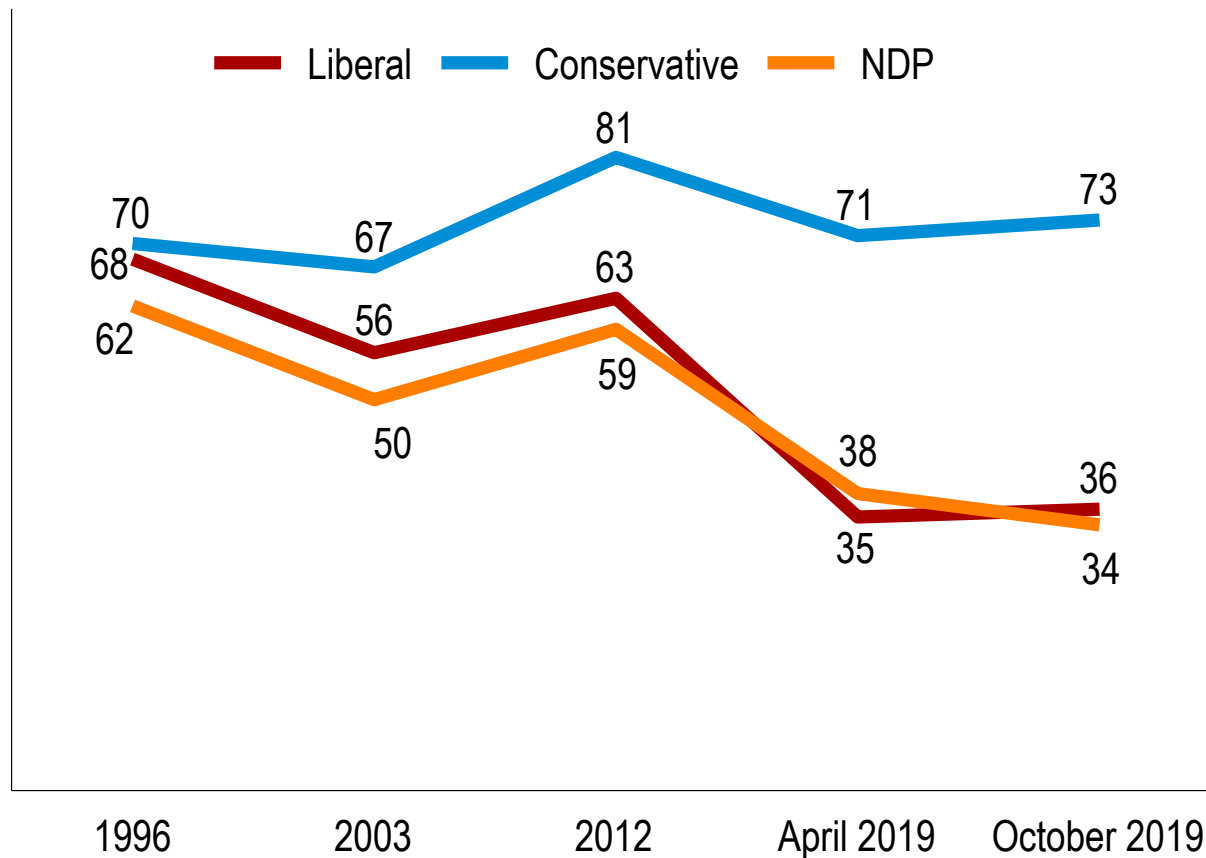
*Agree or disagree: "There is too much immigration in Canada"*



# And a similar trend for concerns about the lack of integration by some newcomers

1996 - 2019 By political party support

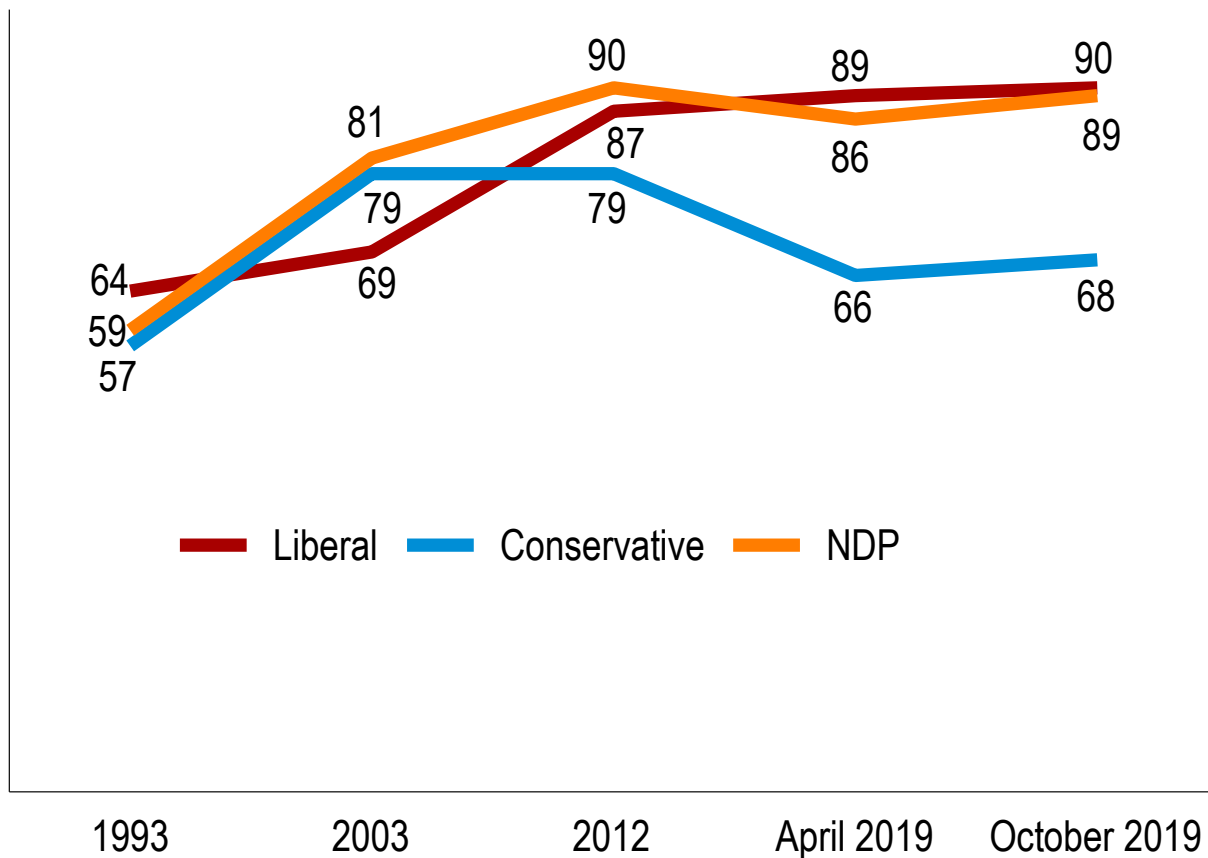
*Agree or disagree: "Too many immigrants do not adopt Canadian values."*



# And the growing political divide extends to views about the impact of immigration on the Canadian economy

1993 - 2019 By political party support

*Agree or disagree: "The economic impact of immigrants is positive"*



# Concluding insights



# Canada today – from the research

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- Newcomers have always been a contentious issue in this land and country
- There is no public consensus on immigration and refugee issues, but we have passed a critical threshold of acceptance, reflected in our social norms, political discourse and public policy
- The 2019 Federal Election provides a revealing litmus test
- Canada stands out among western nations in providing little space for anti-immigrant political movements

# What we can take away

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- The research does not provide the basis for complacency; problems and challenges on the ground are very real and persistent
- But the bigger picture is essential to keep in mind – to balance against the prevalence of negativity pervading the media and public discourse that threatens to distort our thinking and understanding
- We have a great foundation on which to build – and a well-deserved international reputation for acceptance in a world beset by growing intolerance



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