

**Canadian Identity:  
Bilingualism, Multiculturalism and the Charter of Rights**

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The Association for Canadian Studies commissioned this poll from Environics Research Group/Focus Canada. The survey of 2,002 Canadians 18 years of age and over looks at elements of Canadian identity. The ACS-Environics survey was carried out by telephone from March 15-23, 2003. Results are accurate to within plus or minus 3,5%, 19 times out of 20.

English Canadians are more inclined to agree that multiculturalism is very important to Canadian identity than bilingualism, while the country's francophones believe that bilingualism is more important than multiculturalism. However between 2000 and 2003 the gap narrowed as multiculturalism gained amongst francophones with some 44% regarding it as very important as opposed to 47% of English Canadians. There was less divergence of opinion on the importance of the Charter of Rights to Canadian identity with some 7 out of 10 seeing it as very important to Canadian identity. Only the country's health care system was seen as a more important to Canada's identity amongst the population.

How important are each of the following to the Canadian identity...?  
(by topic and language spoken at home)

	Bilingualism		Multiculturalism		Charter of Rights and Freedoms	
	2003	2000	2003	2003	2003	2000
Very important	38	45	47	71	76	54
Somewhat important	36	34	38	23	18	32
Not very important	15	12	8	3	3	7
Not at all important	11	9	6	3	2	5

When considered on the basis of the language spoken at home, a near majority of anglophones believe that multiculturalism is very important to Canadian identity (a drop of 11 points since 2000) while 31% (a drop of 8 points since 2000) regard bilingualism as very important to Canadian identity. For francophones, 58% felt that bilingualism was very important (a drop of 4 points since 2000) whereas multiculturalism rose from 41% to 44% in the last 3 years.

How important are each of the following to the Canadian identity...?  
(by topic and language spoken at home)

	Bilingualism		Multiculturalism		Charter of Rights and Freedoms	
	English	French	English	English	French	French
Very important	31	58	47	44	72	66
Somewhat important	37	30	39	40	22	26
Not very important	18	8	8	11	3	3
Not at all important	13	3	6	5	4	4

On the basis of age, those between 18 and 29 consider the Charter of Rights the most important marker of Canadian identity, exceeding the health care system while multiculturalism slightly surpassed bilingualism, whereas the gap was wider amongst persons over the age of 60.

How important are each of the following to the Canadian identity...?  
(by topic and age)

	Bilingualism		Multiculturalism		Charter of Rights and Freedoms	
	18-29	60 or more	18-29	60 or more	18-29	60 or more
Very important	45	37	49	46	79	65
Somewhat important	37	31	38	38	18	26
Not very important	14	16	11	10	2	4
Not at all important	4	16	2	7	1	5

As to immigrants, the non-Europeans or more recent arrivals were far more likely to describe bilingualism, multiculturalism and the Charter of Rights as very important to Canadian identity than the European group. In fact the non-European group ranked multiculturalism nearly as high as the Charter in regards to Canadian identity. Bilingualism fell a reasonably distant third in this regard.

How important are each of the following to the Canadian identity...?  
(non-British Immigrant and non-European Immigrant)

	Bilingualism		Multiculturalism		Charter of Rights and Freedoms	
	European Immigrant	Non-European	European Immigrant	Non-European	European Immigrant	Non-European
Very important	37	52	56	79	67	83
Somewhat important	37	31	35	17	25	15
Not very important	14	4	5	2	4	1
Not at all important	10	6	2	2	3	-

Some 28% of Canadian Alliance supporters and 33% of Bloc Québécois supporters believe that multiculturalism is very important to the Canadian identity while 54% of Bloquistes believe that bilingualism is very important to Canadian identity in contrast to 14% of Canadian Alliance supporters holding that view.

How important are each of the following to the Canadian identity...?  
(Party Preference)

	<b>Bilingualism</b>		<b>Multiculturalism</b>		<b>Charter of Rights and Freedoms</b>	
	Very important	Somewhat important	Very important	Somewhat important	Very important	Somewhat important
Liberal	47	35	54	39	77	19
Conservative	31	38	43	42	70	22
NDP	39	39	58	35	76	21
Canadian Alliance	14	36	28	38	55	31
Bloc Québécois	54	29	33	48	68	23