



POR Registration Number: 091-17
Contract Number: B8815-180420/001/CY
Award Date: February 2, 2018
Delivery Date: March 29, 2018

Ipsos Public Affairs



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

2018 Qualitative and Quantitative Research about Newcomers and Immigrants

Executive Summary

March 22, 2018



For more information on this report, please contact: IRCC.COMMPOR-ROPCOMM.IRCC@cic.gc.ca

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français.



© 2018. Ipsos. All rights reserved. Contains Ipsos' Confidential and Proprietary information and may not be disclosed or reproduced without the prior written consent of Ipsos.



Political neutrality statement

I hereby certify as Senior Officer of Ipsos that the deliverables fully comply with the Government of Canada political neutrality requirements outlined in the Communications Policy of the Government of Canada and Procedures for Planning and Contracting Public Opinion Research. Specifically, the deliverables do not include information on electoral voting intentions, political party preferences, standings with the electorate, or ratings of the performance of a political party or its leaders.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Colledge", written in a cursive style.

Mike Colledge
President
Ipsos Public Affairs



Executive summary

Ipsos Public Affairs is pleased to present this report to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC).

Background

Since 1994, when it was established as a new department bringing together immigration services and citizenship registration, Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has played several key roles: admitting immigrants, foreign students, visitors and temporary workers; resettling refugees; helping immigrants adapt to Canadian society and become Canadian citizens; and managing access to Canada.

IRCC conducts an ongoing research program to help the Department develop a better understanding of Canadian attitudes toward the issues surrounding citizenship and immigration. By gauging and analyzing the opinions of newcomers and immigrants, the Department gains insights into important policy areas related to the mandate of the department and related services.

IRCC identified a need to conduct qualitative research (focus groups) among newcomers, settled immigrants and the public. Research instruments were designed with a view to gauging issues, perceptions, preferences and needs of newcomers and longer-term immigrants to Canada regarding the issues identified above as well as the views of members of the Canadian public as they relate to immigration more generally as well as immigrant contributions to Canada's cultural mosaic.

Research objectives

The qualitative and quantitative research was intended to explore the views of members of the Canadian general population and Canada's multicultural communities related to attitudes on issues such as immigration, integration, settlement and citizenship as well as IRCC services. Research was intended to support the Department in its ongoing efforts to ensure quality policy options, program design and advice to ministers as it relates to encouraging and effectively managing citizen-focused services; managing organizational and strategic risks proactively; and gathering and using relevant information on program results. The value of this contract, including HST, is **\$245,328.25**.

Methodology

The research project included two phases: a series of qualitative in-person focus groups and a quantitative survey conducted online and by telephone.

Qualitative

A series of 16 focus groups were among newcomers (those in Canada for less than five years) as well as established immigrants (those in Canada for a period of between five and twenty years) from the Chinese, Indo-Canadian, Middle Eastern, Caribbean, African communities as well as members of the Canadian



general public 18 years of age or older. Ipsos made use of special screening questions to ensure an appropriate mix of focus group participants based on age, income, education level and other relevant socio-demographic variables. All fieldwork was conducted between February 24th and March 7th, 2018.

The table below provides further detail on focus group locations as well as group composition including language of moderation, cultural community and tenure in Canada.

Community	Date	Group #1	Group #2
Surrey, BC	Saturday, February 24, 2018	Language: English Community: Public	Language: Punjabi Community: Indo-Canadian Years of residence: Mix of <5 years and 5-10 years
Vancouver, BC	Monday, February 26, 2018	Language: Mandarin Community: Chinese Years of residence: <5 years and 5-10 years	Language: English Community: Filipino Years of residence: Mix of <5 years and 5-10 years
Red Deer, AB	Tuesday, February 27, 2018	Language: English Community: Public	Language: English Community: Public
Montreal, QC	Wednesday, February 28, 2018	Language: French Community: Arabic Years of residence: <5 years and 5-10 years	Language: French Community: Public
Halifax, NS	Thursday, March 1, 2018	Language: English Community: Mix immigrants Years of residence: <5 years and 5-10 years	Language: English Community: Public
Toronto, ON	Monday, March 5, 2018	Language: English Community: Members of Top Source Caribbean Countries Years of residence: <5 years and 5-10 years	Language: English Community: Members of Top Source African Countries Years of residence: Mix of <5 years and 5-10 years
Mississauga, ON	Tuesday, March 6, 2018	Language: English Community: Members of Top Source Middle Eastern Countries Years of residence: <5 years and 5-10 years	Language: English Community: Indo-Canadian Years of residence: Mix of <5 years and 5-10 years
North York, ON	Wednesday, March 7, 2018	Language: Cantonese Community: Chinese Years of residence: <5 years and 5-10 years	Language: English Community: General Public



Focus groups were approximately 2 hours in duration. A total of 131 participants took part in the discussions, out of 160 recruited to participate. Participants from ethno-cultural communities were provided a \$125 incentive to encourage participation among these low incidence audiences. General public participants received a \$75 incentive for their participation.

Note to reader:

It should be noted that qualitative research findings are exploratory and directional in nature. Consequently, all qualitative findings cannot and should not be extrapolated to the Canadian population, rather, they should be considered directional in nature.

Quantitative

To meet the research objectives, Ipsos conducted a telephone survey and an online survey. The 13-minute telephone survey was conducted among a nationwide sample of n=1,000 Canadian adults between March 5th and March 19th, 2018. The telephone survey sample was a probability sample generated through random digit dialing obtaining an overall margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points (calculated at a 95% confidence interval). The 11-minute online survey was conducted among 1,004 respondents between March 5th and March 19th, 2018, drawn entirely from Ipsos' proprietary panel, iSay. As the online survey used non-probability sampling, a margin of error cannot be calculated. Respondents were offered the survey in the official language of their choice.

A full quantitative methodology report, including all information about the execution of the fieldwork that is needed to replicate the research initiative, may be found in Appendix 3. The quantitative survey research instruments in English and French may be found in Appendix 4. A set of tabulated results from the quantitative surveys are provided under a separate cover.

Key qualitative findings

Immigration as an important economic and cultural driver to Canadian society

Notwithstanding a range of concerns expressed most participants concede that immigration has a positive effect on Canada and Canadians, is beneficial for our collective economic prospects and is integral to shaping Canada's cultural mosaic. Despite this, general public participants often expressed concerns related the potential impacts of immigration on our social safety net, job market and security. Newcomers for their part often wondered aloud about the fairness of the immigration process as well as foreign credential recognition. These concerns coupled with much confusion related to the relative distinction between various immigration classes – economic, family, refugee, humanitarian class immigrants and asylum seekers serves only to perpetuate existing myths related to the impact of immigration on Canadians and Canadian society more broadly.

Given the obvious penchant by general public and immigrants who have come in through 'traditional channels' to single out refugees and asylum seekers for what is wrong with immigration, it is essential that a tailored approach to communicating the benefits be considered. Communications need to focus on the



obvious economic and cultural benefits of immigration to Canada as well as the steps that are taken to facilitate efficient economic and cultural integration into Canadian society. Doing so will help set aside concerns among both audiences (the public and newcomers) as to Canada's capacity to accommodate more immigrants going forward.

Although there is general agreement with the proposed immigration levels, with most understanding the benefits of economic and family class immigrants – more information related to refugee class immigrants, the processes they must follow, their contributions to Canadian society (economic or cultural) would be helpful in setting aside concern. It appears that efforts should be made to provide information that will assist in setting aside or alleviating concerns amongst the general public and immigrants related to the potential unique economic strains resulting from refugees as well as asylum seekers who are seen as more reliant on social services than other immigrants. Particular focus should be put on highlighting the measures in place to facilitate and expedite integration both economic and cultural for all immigrants. Furthermore, additional information should be provided on screening and application processes applicable to all categories of immigrants as well as measures in place to ensure the system is fair, and that public safety is a key consideration at all times. Moreover, participant stated that they would have appreciated additional information on the extent to which the current plan would ensure optimum outcomes both for the country as well as for those immigrating here. Findings suggest the provision of such information would likely lead to increased support for immigration levels as detailed in the three-year plan.

Integration

Given the diversity of challenges, it appears that the keys to successful integration are language acquisition and employment. According to newcomer participants integration is also largely dependent on one's ability to forge meaningful relationships outside of their ethnic community. Integration necessarily also means an understanding of Canadian society including successful acquisition of social and cultural norms, both of which are key to successful integration into the work place and deepening ties to the broader community. Integration rarely happens quickly, in fact in many cases newcomers state that it can take anywhere from a few years to a generation (first generation Canadians) for this to fully occur. In addition, several newcomer participants (particularly those in the GTA) cite inconsistencies in the provision of key settlement information at time of arrival and beyond as well as settlement services in need of updating. The effective and consistent provision and dissemination of such information and services that are up to date and reflective of current circumstances is key to successful integration.

Irregular migration

There appears to be much confusion related to irregular migration (asylum seekers) among participants in both research audiences. In the absence of clear information on the process participants are often left to fill in the blanks with inaccurate or false information which in turn has the potential to also negatively impact views and perceptions of immigration more broadly and the benefits associated with a



coordinated immigration policy (addressing challenges associated with an aging population, low birth rates and the obvious benefits of a motivated workforce).

Few had heard of the Safe Third Country agreement. Fact sheets detailing the asylum process were generally well received, most saying the information was helpful in answering some basic questions and providing reassurance that there were indeed procedures in place to deal with asylum seekers crossing the Canada/U.S. land border. Having said this, many misconceptions related to irregular migration appear to persist despite information presented. Concerns tend to be fueled by three things: 1) the impression among other immigrants that asylum seekers have intentionally circumvented normal processes in order to expedite their migration to Canada – in this case it all boils down to a matter of fairness – specifically following the rules on immigrating to Canada and the legitimacy of refugee claims (selected refugees vs. asylum seekers); 2) concerns that standard security procedures may have somehow been set aside in the interest of an expedited process – these concerns are shared by immigrants and the general public alike, and 3) a need for more information (beyond either of the fact sheets presented) as to the actual process, for example how many are seeking asylum, process timelines and stages, the number of those declined entry, and the costs associated with this process.

Citizenship by descent

Most participants were unfamiliar with issues related to citizenship by descent. Most were of the view that Canadian citizenship should not be passed on indefinitely. There was agreement however that a child born to Canadian parents outside of Canada should automatically receive Canadian citizenship. Participants were generally comfortable in principle with a policy that set certain limits on first generation Canadian citizens born outside of Canada who wished to pass on citizenship to their offspring if they too were born outside of Canada. Participants' views on when it would be acceptable to pass on citizenship to the second generation tended to be mixed and shifted depending on whether the move from Canada was temporary or permanent and in the case of second generation born outside of Canada, if there was a demonstrated attachment to Canada. According to most, the inability to demonstrate attachment to Canada should necessarily preclude an individual who is second generation born outside of Canada from automatically receiving Canadian citizenship. Furthermore, in instances of children born to first generation Canadians who have grown up entirely outside of Canada most felt that Canadian citizenship should not automatically be available. Participants were generally willing to concede that the increased incidence of people pursuing international employment opportunities was worthy of consideration when deciding as to the eligibility of second generation citizenship. However, discussing situations where ties to Canada were not as clear, concerns arose, once again, focusing on the fairness of contributions to social services and Canada's social safety net. Like refugee immigrants, there was a view among some that there was a potential here for abuse of our social safety net. Participants were generally of the view that there was a need for a clear and consistent policy providing guidelines for second generation applicants to demonstrate their sense of attachment to Canada. Suggestions included demonstrated financial contributions to Canada via taxes or property ownership. Some also suggested that in the case of second generation child applicants, an assessment of their parents' attachment to the country would be more suitable.



There was a clear sense and expectation amongst all participants that the assessment of attachment to Canada should be unambiguous and expeditious so as to minimize any unnecessary inconvenience to those with a demonstrated strong attachment to Canada.

Family sponsorship and excessive demand

Themes of fairness of process and give and take also surfaced in discussions on family sponsorship, and excessive demand.

In the case of family sponsorship, newcomers particularly those in the Punjabi, Filipino and Middle Eastern groups held very strong views here. Often the discussion focused on the cultural importance of caring for family members and consequently their resistance to a process that they equated to a ‘lottery’ rather than one based on individual merit.

As for the Excessive Demand Policy, awareness and unaided understanding of the policy was for all intents and purposes non-existent among both research audiences. Upon further prompting general public participants generally agreed with the essence of the policy and were reassured that such measures were in place. It should be noted however that there were those who questioned the extent to which such a policy was in keeping with Canadian values – Canada’s tradition of humanitarian assistance was often raised in this case. Newcomers were somewhat more divided on this –some, particularly those in the Punjabi, Middle Eastern and to a somewhat lesser extent Filipino groups, caring for family members is part of their culture. It should therefore come as no surprise that these audiences had a hard time disassociating their emotions when discussing the practical merits of such a policy. Despite continued prompting, these participants struggled to acknowledge the impact of excessive demand upon Canadians or the Canadian health care system. There was much confusion among both research audiences as to whether excessive demand applied to those currently living in Canada and their family members in their country of origin and those yet to immigrate to Canada who might be affected by the Excessive Demand Policy.

When questioned as to their views on mitigating strategies intended to offset costs to the Canadian taxpayer most felt this was a good idea. In fact, more often than not this additional information was sufficient to set aside participants concerns related to the potential for increased burden on Canada’s health and social services systems.

Client services

Newcomers tend to rely on CIC.GC.CA, social media channels as well as cultural community based information channels (TV, Radio, in-person) for immigration related information. When questioned as to the usefulness of CIC.GC.CA, there was a sense among most that although information provided was extensive, the sheer volume presented, how intuitively it was presented and language in which it was presented (English or French only) could at times prove challenging, particularly for those recently arrived, older immigrants, those less technologically inclined or for those in their country of origin who are in the process of applying to immigrate to Canada. Suggested improvements included, in language options, a



live chat feature, short videos and simplified language. There was much consternation among newcomers as to the inability to access assistance via the 1-800 number. This was a source of frustration amongst many and leading some to wonder if this was done intentionally in order to compel clients to use CIC.GC.CA

Message testing

Message #1 was considered by most as a statement of fact, several participants simply saying this could not be disputed.

Message #1: Canada was built on immigration. Unless of Indigenous descent, our ancestors are immigrants. Our strength as a multicultural society is a result of newcomers, governments, communities and businesses working together.

Supporting facts:

- According to the 2016 Census, immigrants account for approximately 22% of Canada's population.
- Overall, immigrants fare better (or integrate more successfully) in Canada than in most Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries and at a 2017 OECD conference, Canada was one of the four countries cited for its efforts to improve coordination between different levels of government, service providers and civil society associations.

Message #2 was most often seen as the more rational and practical message. Participants felt this message was more likely to underscore the benefits for both immigrants (Canadian Citizenship) as well as for Canadians welcoming them short it was more likely to underscore a win/win scenario.

Message #2: Immigration helps offset the impacts of an aging population. A larger job pool and tax base will help support retirees and help fund social programs like Old Age Security, transit and housing subsidies, and coordination of health care.

Supporting Facts:

- More than 5 million Canadians are set to retire by 2035. Immigration will help us fill the worker-to-retiree gap to keep Canada working.
- In 1971, there were 6.6 people of working age for each senior. By 2012, the worker-to-retiree ratio had dropped to 4.2 to 1, and projections put the ratio at 2 to 1 by 2036, at which time five million Canadians are set to retire.
- 75% of Canada's population growth comes from immigration, mostly the economic category.

Message #3 was least likely to resonate with participants except for some in the North York and Halifax general public groups. For most this message was neither compelling nor relatable.



Message #3: Immigration helps support the economy at the local community level as immigrants are more likely to start a business than those born in Canada. This helps create jobs.

Supporting Facts:

- Immigrants have a higher rate of entrepreneurship than their Canadian-born counterparts. (Among immigrants who entered in the 2000 cohort, by 2010 5.3% of immigrant taxfilers owned a private company, compared with 4.8% of the comparison group composed mainly of persons born in Canada). Beyond job creation, these activities can also attract investment and trade opportunities.

In light of these findings it would appear that if the intent is to underscore why immigration is important to our collective and sustained economic and social wellbeing, message #2 is likely to have the most impact as it resonates most strongly with participants from a practical and rational perspective. It answers two key questions 1) what's in it for me as a Canadian citizen – ensuring a sustained quality of living and collective economic prosperity, and 2) what's in it for immigrants - all the benefits that come with Canadian citizenship.

Should you have any questions or comments, please contact:

Marc Beaudoin
Vice President Qualitative, Ipsos Public Affairs
1 Nicholas, Ottawa Ontario
Telephone: (613) 688-8973
Email: marc.beaudion@ipsos.com