



The War and Concerns Over Tolerance in Canada Is it a Problem?

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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 tolerance in Canada. 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.

Over the past few weeks, with the war in Iraq, there have been concerns that levels of intolerance might rise. Assessing the level of prejudice amongst the population is no simple task. It is fully expected that many respondents will modify their answers to conceal feelings of prejudice largely viewed as unacceptable in Canadian society. Our attention is thus directed at the extent to which intolerance towards groups is viewed as a problem and the degree to which certain communities are currently regarded as projecting either a positive or negative image.

As observed below, for each of the groups identified a majority of Canadians are concerned with prejudicial attitudes. The concern over anti-immigrant sentiment is highest followed by anti-Arab and anti-Native sentiment. There are important regional variations in the extent to which such concerns are expressed. Ontario and Quebec express higher levels concern with anti-Arab sentiment than is the case elsewhere in the country. In Western Canada concerns are highest in regard to anti-immigrant and anti-Native sentiment. Indeed the majority of respondents in the region do not regard either anti-Black or anti-Jewish sentiment as a serious problem. Concerns over anti-Black sentiment are highest in Quebec.

Do you think the following represent a serious problem in Canadian society? (Combined very and *somewhat* serious problem)

By region

	Canada	Atlantic Prov	Quebec	Ontario	Western Canada
Anti-Native	66	64	61	63	75
Anti-Immigrant	70	71	69	72	71
Anti-Arab	68	65	70	69	65
Anti-Gay	63	63	59	64	63
Anti-Black	55	56	67	59	40
Anti-Semitic	54	49	60	58	44

On the basis of age the younger segment of the population expresses the highest rate of concern with anti-Arab sentiment followed by anti-Native and anti-immigrant feeling. In the older age categories there is a lesser majority concern with negative sentiment, with the exception of anti-gay sentiment which is seen as a problem with relative consistency across all age cohorts.

Do you think the following represent a serious problem in Canadian society? (Combined very and somewhat serious problem)

By age

	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Anti-Native	72	68	67	56
Anti-Immigrant	76	72	70	64
Anti-Arab	77	68	66	61
Anti-Gay	72	63	59	56
Anti-Black	63	54	52	50
Anti-Semitic	57	54	51	51

Positive or Negative Image of Certain Groups

The ACS-Environics Survey asked whether certain communities projected a positive or negative image in society. Each of the four groups identified in the table were seen as projecting a positive image by the majority of Canadians. However in order to draw out the significant variations in opinion on this issue the focus below is first on the degree to which certain groups offer a negative image. As observed below it is the aboriginal population followed by the Arab groups that are viewed as projecting a negative image. In the case of the Aboriginal population the view that it presents a negative image is most strongly felt in Western Canada. In the case of the Arab population it is in Western Canada followed by Ontario that there it is most felt that this group presents a negative image. In the case of the Black population it is in Ontario that they are seen as projecting a negative image more so than anywhere else in the country. In the case of the Jewish population it is in Quebec that nearly one out six believe that they project a negative image which is higher than is the case elsewhere in Canada.

Can you tell me whether you think positively or negatively about the image projected by the following groups in Canadian society? Would that be very or somewhat? (Combined somewhat negative and very negative)

By region

	Canada	Atlantic Prov	Quebec	Ontario	Western Canada
Aboriginal	33	34	23	31	42
Arab	30	26	29	30	31
Black	13	9	10	21	8
Jewish	11	11	15	10	9

On the basis of age the youngest cohort (18-29) is inclined to think that Aboriginals present more of a negative image than any of the other groups. Amongst those over the age of 45 it is the Aboriginal and the Arab population that are viewed as most often projecting a negative image. Those over the age of 60 are more inclined than the younger segments of the population to think that the Black population offers a negative image. In the case of the Jewish population it is the youngest segment of the population that is most apt to declare that a negative image is projected.

Can you tell me whether you think positively or negatively about the image projected by the following groups in Canadian society? Would that be very or somewhat? (Combined Somewhat negative and very negative)

Age

	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Aboriginal	33	37	33	26
Arab	29	31	29	28
Black	10	11	14	19
Jewish	13	11	10	11

When asked which communities project a very positive image it is the Black and Jewish populations which are attributed the highest percentages in this regard. Aboriginal and Arab groups get the highest share of very positive responses from Quebecers, so that the gap between the groups is not as significant in that province as it is elsewhere in the country.

Can you tell me whether you think positively or negatively about the image projected by the following groups in Canadian society? Would that be very or somewhat? (Very Positive Only)

Very positive-Region

	Canada	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Western Canada
Aboriginal	19	20	22	19	15
Arab	14	14	19	13	13
Black	28	33	27	25	31
Jewish	28	28	24	30	30

On the basis of age those between 18 and 44 accord the highest percentage of very positive responses to the Black population while those over 45 give the most very positive responses to the Jewish population. Those between the ages of 30-44 offer the lowest percentage of very positive responses to Arabs and Aboriginals.

Can you tell me whether you think positively or negatively about the image projected by the following groups in Canadian society? Would that be very or somewhat? (Very Positive Only)

Very Positive- Age

	18-29	30-44	45-59	60+
Aboriginal	21	14	21	21
Arab	16	12	17	13
Black	32	26	26	27
Jewish	28	27	29	30