

Canada

# *Ethnicity in Canada*

## *Group selection*

The following groups are politically relevant at the national level in Canada: **Indigenous peoples**, **English speakers** and **French speakers**. Group sizes are calculated based on various sources (<sup>888</sup>; <sup>889</sup>; <sup>890</sup>).

<sup>888</sup> [Fearon, 2003]

<sup>889</sup> [Statistics Canada, 2011]

<sup>890</sup> [CIA, 2014]

## *Power relations*

The EPR coding of Canada distinguishes three power periods: 1946 - 1960, when Indigenous peoples were discriminated, 1961 - 1984, when the discrimination of Indigenous ended, and 1985 - 2021, which reflects the smaller number of French speakers and increased share of Indigenous population and their regional autonomy arrangements.

## *Indigenous peoples*

Indigenous peoples in Canada consists of the First Nations, Métis and Inuits. The First Nations is a general term that refers to the original inhabitants of the land now Canada who were the first to encounter sustained European contact, settlement and trade (<sup>891</sup>). However, community members are more likely to define themselves as members of specific nations, or communities within those nations. For example, a Mohawk (Kanienkehaka) person from Akwesasne who is a member of the Bear clan may choose any number of identifiers (<sup>892</sup>). The Métis are people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry across Canada. The use of the term Métis is complex and contentious, and has different historical and contemporary meanings (<sup>893</sup>). At last, there is the Inuits, also known as Inuktitut, the majority of whom inhabit the northern regions of Canada (<sup>894</sup>).

<sup>891</sup> [Gadacz, 2019]

<sup>892</sup> [Gadacz, 2019]

<sup>893</sup> [Gaudry, 2019]

<sup>894</sup> [Freeman, 2020]

Until 1960, the “Indian Act” prohibited First Nations people to vote in federal elections. Only by formally and irreversibly giving up their “Indian status,” a process called “enfranchisement”, they were allowed to participate in national politics (<sup>895</sup>; <sup>896</sup>). Furthermore, First Nations people were prohibited to hire lawyers or make land claims against the government (<sup>897</sup>). On paper the Inuit gained permission to vote already in 1950. However, it was not until the federal elections of 1962, when balloting boxes were installed in their very remote communities of the eastern Arctic, that they were really able to exercise their right to vote. In contrast, the Métis had never been deprived of their voting right (<sup>898</sup>). Nevertheless, the denial

<sup>895</sup> [MRGI, 2008]

<sup>896</sup> [Elections Canada, 2016]

<sup>897</sup> [The Historica Canada, 2017]

<sup>898</sup> [Elections Canada, 2016]

of political participation to the majority of the Indigenous peoples justify a coding of discriminated until 1960.

Political mobilization of Indigenous peoples gathered speed in the 1970s with the actions of the Berger Inquiry that effectively blocked development of the Mackenzie Valley Pipeline and focused attention on the socioeconomic status of Indians in the northwest. Furthermore, in 1975, the Cree signed the James Bay Agreement, Canada's first comprehensive land claims agreement. However, formal recognition of Indigenous rights was non-existent until 1982, the year when the patriation of the Canadian constitution included the landmark recognition and affirmation of "existing Indigenous and treaty rights" for all Indian, Métis and Inuit. Indigenous self-government provisions were first introduced through the 'Cree-Naskapi (of Quebec) Act' in 1984 (see <sup>899</sup>: 175; <sup>900</sup>; <sup>901</sup>: 9), which is coded as "regional autonomy" from 1985 onwards, due to the January-1st rule.

In 1985, Bill C-31, "An Act to Amend the Indian Act" was passed by the Canadian Parliament and it took effect as of April 17, 1985. The Indian Act, which dated from 1876, indicates how Reserves and Bands can operate and defines who is recognized as an "Indian". Bill C-31 corrected more than 150 years of discrimination against First Nations women. With this amendment some 60,000 persons regained their lost Indian status (<sup>902</sup>; <sup>903</sup>). However, there was no change to access to national or regional power. Yet, the size of 'Indigenous Peoples' is corrected to be 0.043 (<sup>904</sup>; <sup>905</sup>).

In October 2015, Justin Trudeau of the Liberal party was elected as the new Prime Minister and based on his promises as well as the composition of the cabinet there was widespread belief that the voice of the Indigenous peoples will finally be heard in national politics. The newly appointed and first indigenous Minister of Justice, Jody Wilson-Raybould, has a long record of working for the rights of the First Nations people. After the first year of the Trudeau administration, however, there is only very little progress to be observed in respect to the rights of the Indigenous peoples (see <sup>906</sup>: 94-102; <sup>907</sup>) and the Indigenous cabinet position must still be regarded as rather token. Moreover, in the most recent cabinet reshuffle (29th Canadian Ministry as of January 12, 2021) there are no longer indigenous peoples represented in it as it was back in 2015 when Prime Minister Trudeau was first elected (<sup>908</sup>).

### *French Speakers*

Although already the constitution act of 1867 recognized French as one of the two official languages of Canada the political co-existence of English speakers as the majority and French speakers as the minority group has often been characterized by tension. While the former still dominates national politics, they have always needed the latter as an important base of support, given their control over Quebec as the second-largest province of Canada (<sup>909</sup>: 66; <sup>910</sup>: 184; <sup>911</sup>: 470). Thus, French speakers have always been included in the

<sup>899</sup> [Isaac, 2012]

<sup>900</sup> [MRGI, 2008]

<sup>901</sup> [Wherrett, 1999]

<sup>902</sup> [AANDC, 2011]

<sup>903</sup> [Henderson, 2020]

<sup>904</sup> [CIA, 2014]

<sup>905</sup> [Statistics Canada, 2011]

<sup>906</sup> [IWGIA, 2017]

<sup>907</sup> [The New Internationalist, 2016]

<sup>908</sup> [House of Commons, 2021]

<sup>909</sup> [Cairns, 1968]

<sup>910</sup> [Grove 1978]

<sup>911</sup> [Ryan, 1965]

cabinet to some extent. However, despite of constant representation in the federal government, there has been some important advocating for independence of Quebec among some Quebecers. At last, it is important to mention that other provinces, notably Ontario, New Brunswick and Manitoba have sizeable and long-established francophone minority populations (<sup>912</sup>).

<sup>912</sup> [Noakes, 2021]

On May 20, 1980, the (first) sovereignty referendum was called upon by the provincial political party, Parti Quebecois (PQ) to enable Quebec to acquire sovereignty, but to maintain an economic association with Canada including the same currency (<sup>913</sup>). The result was 40.44% voting 'yes' and 59.56% voting 'no', the referendum failed (<sup>914</sup>). On October 30, 1995, the (second) sovereignty referendum took place to ask Canadians in the province of Quebec whether the province should become an independent country. The result was 49.42% voting 'yes' and 50.58% voting 'no', thus the referendum failed (<sup>915</sup>). On April 7, 2014, Pauline Marois from PQ lost in the provincial election and with that also died the alternative to do a third referendum as proposed by Pierre Karl Peladeau (<sup>916</sup>). All in all, the two referenda did not affect the group's access to state power at national or state level as they continue to be represented by a political party at the federal level, whether that is the Liberal party, the conservatives, the NPD or the Bloc Quebecois.

<sup>913</sup> [Hudon, 2017]

<sup>914</sup> [Hudon, 2017]

<sup>915</sup> [Gall, 2015]

<sup>916</sup> [Thanh Ha, 2014]

Based on the above considerations French speakers are coded as junior partner with regional autonomy throughout all of the coding periods.

### *Others*

There are some signs of regional political mobilization in the Chinese community (largest irrelevant ethnic group). In approximately 2007 the National Alliance Party was founded. The purpose of the party is to encourage Canadian citizens of Chinese origins to participate in regional (British Columbia) politics. On the national level, however, they should still be considered politically irrelevant.

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Political status of ethnic groups in Canada

From 1946 until 1960

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
English speakers	0.59	SENIOR PARTNER
French speakers	0.28	JUNIOR PARTNER
Indigenous peoples	0.02	DISCRIMINATED

From 1961 until 1984

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
English speakers	0.59	SENIOR PARTNER
French speakers	0.28	JUNIOR PARTNER
Indigenous peoples	0.02	POWERLESS

From 1985 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
English speakers	0.59	SENIOR PARTNER
French speakers	0.23	JUNIOR PARTNER
Indigenous peoples	0.049	POWERLESS



Figure 148: Political status of ethnic groups in Canada during 1946-1960.



Figure 149: Political status of ethnic groups in Canada during 1961-1984.



Figure 150: Political status of ethnic groups in Canada during 1985-2021.



# Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Canada

From 1946 until 1947

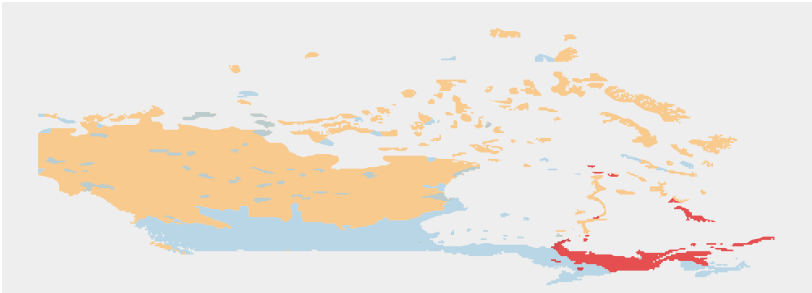


Figure 151: Map of ethnic groups in Canada during 1946-1947.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Indigenous peoples	3 411 337	Regionally based
English speakers	2 240 050	Regional & urban
French speakers	453 593	Regional & urban

Table 52: List of ethnic groups in Canada during 1946-1947.

From 1948 until 1948

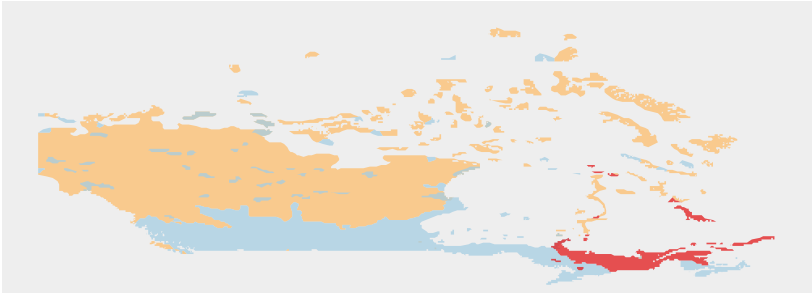


Figure 152: Map of ethnic groups in Canada during 1948-1948.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Indigenous peoples	3 411 337	Regionally based
English speakers	2 240 050	Regional & urban
French speakers	453 593	Regional & urban

Table 53: List of ethnic groups in Canada during 1948-1948.

From 1949 until 2021

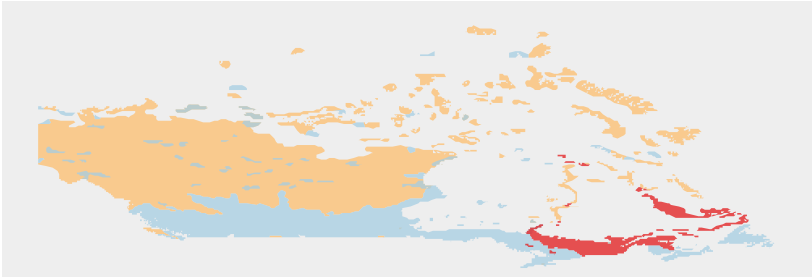


Figure 153: Map of ethnic groups in Canada during 1949-2021.

Group name	Area in km <sup>2</sup>	Type
Indigenous peoples	3 430 072	Regionally based
English speakers	2 351 546	Regional & urban
French speakers	542 939	Regional & urban

Table 54: List of ethnic groups in Canada during 1949-2021.