

The majority of Canadians do not feel personally responsible for past or present injustices committed towards indigenous peoples; They blame the Catholic Church is mainly responsible of Indigenous peoples in Canada being the target of genocide; they are opposed to renaming selected institutions

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Introduction

Do Canadians feel personally responsible for past or present injustices committed towards indigenous peoples? This question has been the object of much discussion amongst academics in Canada. A related issue is where Canadians assign blame with respect to injustices committed towards indigenous peoples and in particular the targeting in Canada of indigenous peoples for genocide that was the object of an apology by the Pope during his Papal visit to Canada. That apology may have resulted in the majority of Canadians now identifying the Catholic Church as mainly responsible for Indigenous peoples in Canada being the target of genocide. That issue is analyzed in the June ACS-Leger survey which also looks at the degree to which Canadians feel that certain institutions in Canada should be renamed owing to their problematic history.

The national survey was conducted by Leger for the Association for Canadian Studies between June 9 and 21, 2023 with 1705 Canadians (that included 391 immigrants and 81 indigenous persons). A margin of error cannot be associated with a non-probability sample in a panel survey for comparative purposes a probability sample of 1705 respondents would have a margin of error of $\pm 2.5\%$, 19 times out of 20

Less than one in six Canadians believe that they are personally responsible for past injustices committed towards Indigenous peoples. -

	I feel personally responsible for past injustices committed towards Indigenous peoples. -						
	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Strongly agree	3.8%	5.1%	4.2%	4.6%	3.5%	3.3%	2.6%
Somewhat agree	10.7%	11.0%	7.9%	17.4%	10.2%	12.0%	7.0%
Somewhat disagree	23.0%	16.5%	16.4%	18.3%	22.3%	30.0%	32.5%
Strongly disagree	54.6%	59.7%	64.6%	49.5%	55.6%	47.3%	51.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	7.9%	7.6%	6.9%	10.1%	8.5%	7.4%	6.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Over one in five Canadians under the age of 35 feel personally responsible for past injustices committed towards indigenous peoples

	I feel personally responsible for past injustices committed towards Indigenous peoples. -						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>= 75
Strongly agree	7.6%	6.0%	3.9%	3.4%	.7%	3.5%	1.7%
Somewhat agree	17.5%	15.6%	12.1%	6.7%	7.0%	10.2%	5.9%
Somewhat disagree	26.9%	16.3%	19.9%	24.0%	25.8%	22.9%	33.1%
Strongly disagree	37.4%	48.9%	55.2%	57.7%	61.9%	58.5%	56.8%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	10.5%	13.1%	8.9%	8.2%	4.7%	4.9%	2.5%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Some one in six Canadians feel they are personally responsible for current injustices committed towards indigenous peoples

	I feel personally responsible for current injustices committed towards Indigenous peoples. -						
	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Strongly agree	4.6%	2.5%	4.2%	6.5%	5.6%	3.8%	4.3%
Somewhat agree	13.8%	14.3%	14.3%	15.7%	14.5%	11.7%	12.9%
Somewhat disagree	22.3%	20.3%	20.1%	14.8%	19.8%	31.0%	22.4%
Strongly disagree	51.3%	53.6%	55.0%	52.8%	51.8%	45.7%	54.3%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	8.0%	9.3%	6.3%	10.2%	8.2%	7.9%	6.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Some one in four Canadians under the age of 35 feel personally responsible for current injustices committed towards Indigenous peoples

	I feel personally responsible for current injustices committed towards Indigenous peoples. -						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>= 75
Strongly agree	4.1%	7.8%	5.0%	4.1%	3.0%	4.2%	3.3%
Somewhat agree	26.9%	16.4%	13.8%	10.1%	9.3%	15.1%	5.8%
Somewhat disagree	27.5%	18.1%	21.3%	20.9%	24.0%	20.1%	31.7%
Strongly disagree	32.7%	44.8%	51.4%	56.0%	58.0%	56.0%	53.3%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	8.8%	12.8%	8.5%	9.0%	5.7%	4.6%	5.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A majority of Canadians agree that indigenous peoples in Canada have historically been the target of genocide in Canada

	Indigenous peoples in Canada have historically been the target of genocide in Canada. - To what extent do you agree with the following statements						
	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Strongly agree	29.3%	29.4%	25.9%	21.1%	28.8%	32.7%	33.6%
Somewhat agree	30.6%	31.9%	28.0%	32.1%	30.6%	31.5%	26.7%
Somewhat disagree	13.1%	13.2%	12.7%	12.8%	13.9%	12.9%	9.5%
Strongly disagree	12.0%	13.6%	21.2%	19.3%	10.2%	7.6%	12.9%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	15.0%	11.9%	12.2%	14.7%	16.5%	15.2%	17.2%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Amongst those strongly agreeing that indigenous peoples in Canada have historically been the target of genocide some 55% think that the Catholic Church is mainly responsible

Which of the following do you think was mainly responsible of Indigenous peoples in Canada being the target of genocide?	Indigenous peoples in Canada have historically been the target of genocide in Canada. -	
	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree
Canada's First Prime Minister John A. Macdonald	10.0%	10.7%
The Monarchy	6.8%	11.5%
The Catholic Church	54.7%	41.4%
The people of Canada	7.0%	5.7%
All of the above	10.4%	4.8%
None of the above	.8%	2.7%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	10.2%	23.2%
	100.0%	100.0%

Most Canadians blame the Catholic Church for indigenous peoples being the target of genocide in Canada

	Which of the following do you think was mainly responsible of Indigenous peoples in Canada being the target of genocide?						
	Canada	British Columbia	Alberta	Prairies	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic Canada
Canada's First Prime Minister John A. Macdonald	10.4%	10.4%	13.7%	12.3%	8.9%	10.3%	12.9%
The Monarchy	9.2%	8.3%	12.7%	8.8%	9.4%	9.1%	5.7%
The Catholic Church	47.9%	48.6%	42.2%	31.6%	47.2%	54.4%	50.0%
The people of Canada	6.3%	9.0%	8.8%	3.5%	5.4%	6.7%	2.9%
All of the above	7.7%	9.7%	6.9%	14.0%	7.1%	5.6%	10.0%
None of the above	1.7%	1.4%	1.0%	5.3%	1.5%	2.0%	
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	16.8%	12.5%	14.7%	24.6%	20.4%	11.9%	18.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Canadians under 25 are least likely to blame the people of Canada as most responsible for indigenous peoples being the target of genocide in Canada

	Which of the following do you think was mainly responsible of Indigenous peoples in Canada being the target of genocide?						
	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	>= 75
Canada's First Prime Minister John A. Macdonald	12.3%	8.7%	11.4%	5.7%	9.8%	11.8%	20.4%
The Monarchy	14.9%	6.6%	11.4%	10.1%	6.1%	9.4%	5.6%
The Catholic Church	49.1%	47.0%	42.6%	49.7%	55.2%	49.4%	33.3%
The people of Canada	1.8%	6.0%	5.1%	11.3%	4.3%	5.9%	11.1%
All of the above	3.5%	8.2%	8.0%	5.7%	11.0%	7.6%	7.4%
None of the above	3.5%	1.1%	1.1%	1.3%	2.5%	1.2%	5.6%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	14.9%	22.4%	20.5%	16.4%	11.0%	14.7%	16.7%

Canada's francophones are most inclined to blame the Catholic Church for indigenous peoples being the target of genocide in Canada

	Which of the following do you think was mainly responsible of Indigenous peoples in Canada being the target of genocide?				
	French	English	Other	Not Indigenous	Indigenous
Canada's First Prime Minister John A. Macdonald	8.6%	12.1%	3.6%	9.6%	21.4%
The Monarchy	8.6%	8.6%	8.9%	9.2%	8.6%
The Catholic Church	57.7%	46.3%	41.1%	47.8%	48.6%
The people of Canada	3.6%	6.6%	10.7%	6.3%	5.7%
All of the above	6.3%	8.3%	7.1%	7.6%	7.1%
None of the above	1.8%	.8%	3.6%	1.9%	1.4%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	13.5%	17.3%	25.0%	17.6%	7.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Amongst those Canadians who have done a land acknowledgement, the majority do not feel personally responsible for past injustices committed towards indigenous peoples

I feel personally responsible for past injustices committed towards Indigenous peoples. (non-indigenous sample) To what extent do you agree with the following statements?	Have you ever done an Indigenous land acknowledgement? - Land acknowledgments are statements before an event recognizing that people are assembling on Indigenous lands. Such acknowledgements have become increasingly common in Canada.	
	Yes	No
Strongly agree	9.7%	2.6%
Somewhat agree	18.5%	9.8%
Somewhat disagree	27.3%	22.7%
Strongly disagree	33.8%	58.3%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	10.6%	6.6%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Whether one has done a land acknowledgement or not there is rough agreement in the extent to which the Catholic Church is blamed for indigenous peoples being targeted for genocide in Canada

Which of the following do you think was mainly responsible for Indigenous peoples in Canada being the target of genocide?	Have you ever done an Indigenous land acknowledgement? - Land acknowledgments are statements before an event recognizing that people are assembling on Indigenous lands. Such acknowledgements have become increasingly common in Canada.	
	Yes	No
Canada's First Prime Minister John A. Macdonald	10.3%	9.2%
The Monarchy	12.3%	8.7%
The Catholic Church	45.2%	48.5%
The people of Canada	8.9%	6.1%
All of the above	13.7%	6.5%
None of the above	.7%	1.9%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	8.9%	19.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

A majority of Canadians are against the renaming of various institutions or structures that have been the object of recent debates

	Given the prejudiced views of certain historic leaders and the colonial legacy attached to certain institutions and monuments in Canada and the United States, do you think any of the following names...should be changed				
	Wilfrid Laurier University (named after Prime Minister Sir Wilfried Laurier)	McGill University (named after James McGill)	The Confederation Bridge in PEI	The Colonial Building in St. John's Nfld	Columbus Day (celebrated in the United States on the second Monday of October)
Yes	15.9%	14.6%	15.4%	16.6%	21.9%
No	52.4%	54.2%	57.2%	51.8%	47.3%
I don't know / I prefer not to answer	31.7%	31.2%	27.3%	31.7%	30.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%