

Accommodating minorities has its limits, poll finds

Only 18% in survey say cultural and religious groups should be totally accommodated

Chris Cobb

CanWest News Service

Tuesday, September 25, 2007

OTTAWA -- Most Canadians want limits on accommodating the cultural demands of new immigrants and religious minorities, suggests a poll to be released today.

According to the poll, conducted last week by Ottawa-based SES research, only 18 per cent of Canadians say cultural and religious minorities should be totally accommodated in Canada, with 53 per cent saying immigrants should fully adapt to the Canadian way of life. The remaining respondents fell somewhere in between.

Two out of three Canadians said they have heard of the term "reasonable accommodation" which is at the centre of a debate that has raged in Quebec since the town of Herouville adopted a set of societal rules for immigrants who might want to settle there. More than 90 per cent of Quebecers are aware of the term, suggests the poll, and are overwhelmingly opposed to accommodating minority cultures and religions.

Only 5.4 per cent of respondents said "reasonable accommodation" reflected their views and 77 per cent said immigrants should adapt to Quebec and Canadian society.

Older Canadians tend to be less tolerant of "reasonable accommodation" of minorities but while they want limits, a significant numbers of Canadians of all ages hold more moderate views.

"A sizeable portion of Canadian have a relatively fixed view of Canada and what it is," said SES president Nik Nanos Monday.

"Part of that fixed view is a willingness to accommodate new Canadians but not at the price of compromising what Canada really is. In Quebec, the message is loud and clear. They see Canada through the lens of two founding peoples, two founding language communities and anyone who comes to Canada should fit into that framework. They see this vision of two founding peoples being eroded."

'Reasonable accommodation' was a major issue in the Quebec election earlier this year and the Bouchard-Taylor Commission, created by Premier Jean

Charest to examine the issue, is receiving extensive media coverage in the province.

© The Vancouver Sun 2007

CLOSE WINDOW

Copyright © 2007 CanWest Interactive, a division of [CanWest MediaWorks Publications, Inc.](#) All rights reserved.