



# POLICY AT A GLANCE

## Super Diversity in Canada

### **My name is Sophie and I am Canadian**

And what does that mean? According to Canadian census, it means: I am third generation Canadian on my mother's side and second generation Canadian on my father's side. My maternal grandparents are Canadian and British. My paternal grandparents are Senegalese. My aunts and uncles come from Canada, Thailand, Senegal and the Ivory Coast. I am Muslim by birth, my father is Muslim and my mother is Roman Catholic. Our family celebrates Aid El-Fitr and Eid Al-Adha, as well as, Christmas and Easter. I have multiple citizenships; British, Canadian and Senegalese. I attended French primary and secondary schools and then went on to university in both English and French. At home I spoke English with my mother and French with my father. I don't remember which language I learned first....they both came at the same time, I guess. When I was younger I spent my summers between British Columbia, Ontario and Senegal. At the moment, 2026, I divide my time living between Abbotsford and Dubai, while working for three separate companies headquartered in Hong Kong, South Africa and Guatemala. My taxes are paid based on the amount of time I spend in each of my residences. Sometimes I pay 4 months of taxes to Canada and 8 months of taxes to the United Arab Emirates, and other years I may pay more tax to Canada if I have spent longer length of time in my Abbotsford residence.



While Sophie's super diversity may not yet be representative of the majority of Canadians, diversity in Canada is growing as a result of immigration trends over the decades and the increase in intercultural unions. Mixed unions in Canada increased by 33% between 2001 and 2006 compared to 6% growth for all couples. According to Statistics Canada projections, by 2031, between 29% and 32% of Canadians could belong to a visible minority group, 14% will have a non-Christian religion, and nearly 30% would have a mother tongue that is neither English nor French. This recent diversity is superimposed on Canada's historic charter populations of Aboriginal, English and French peoples.

Canada's diversity is most highly concentrated in its major metropolitan cities. In 2006, Toronto and Vancouver had higher percentages of foreign born populations than the major cities in Australia and the United States. In 2006, 45.7% of Toronto's population, 39.6% of Vancouver's and 20.6% of Montréal's were foreign born compared to 31.7% in Sydney, Australia and 36.5% in Miami, Florida.

It is projected that by 2031 visible minorities will represent 60% of Toronto and Vancouver's populations and 31% in Montréal. Even if all immigration to Canada ceased today we would still be a diverse (multicultural) country. Not only do immigrants call Canada home, Canadians are also setting up their home away from home - overseas. At present, the Asia Pacific Foundation estimates that 2.8 million Canadian passport holders are living abroad, nearly half of them in the United States while over 300,000 live in Hong Kong.

As people's international mobility increases, becoming global nomads, how can society and its institutions continue to engage Canadians? What opportunities can the Canadian diasporas offer?

With increasing Canadian diversity will our traditional structures and values still reflect our evolving citizenry? What will it mean to be "Canadian"?

Will Canada become a leader in formalizing the global citizen?

## References

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