

Mosaic Minds of Canada's Millennials

Canada's Millennials are the most diverse young generation in Canadian history. Never before have we seen such racial and lifestyle variations among Canadian youth. And a major new research project has found that their diversity is having a profound impact on how they see and live life.

In a newly-released book entitled, *The Millennial Mosaic*, three Alberta sociologists, Reginald Bibby of the University of Lethbridge and colleagues Joel Thiessen and Monetta Bailey of Calgary's Ambrose University draw on a massive number of national surveys, present and past, to examine young people today compared to older Canadians both today and yesterday.

Millennials – young adults born since 1985 – personify diversity. Close to 30% are members of what Statistics Canada refers to as “visible minorities,” double the figure just two decades ago and three times that of Pre-Boomers who are 70 and over. In cities like Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, the Millennial figure exceeds 50%.

Beyond demographics, what Bibby, Thiessen, and Bailey find is that Millennials have mosaic minds. In addition to being personally diverse, they have grown up with multiculturalism and the Charter, and an emphasis on pluralism and choice. As a result, to an extent never before seen in Canada, Millennials not only exude differences but energetically advocate them. These days, the monocultural known to many of their grandparents and parents is dead.

- So it is that they see ***interracial relationships and marriage*** as normative.
- ***Sexual orientation*** and ***gender*** are both viewed as variables.
- ***Sexual behaviour*** is largely a personal issue.
- ***Family arrangements*** are seen as a matter of choice – with the marriage, parenthood, and sexual orientation permutations pretty much unlimited.
- ***Entertainment options*** have exploded. The Internet and social media have made seemingly endless choices available when it comes to what can be seen and heard and enjoyed. Culturally-speaking, we have never been more *Americanized*. But we also have never been more *globalized*. In the process, entertainment has never been so *individualized*.
- Even an area like ***religion*** has become more diversified. People can choose between being pro-religious, low religious, or no religious. Should they opt for religion, they have an ever-expanding smorgasbord of choices, including a plateful of spirituality, without religion on the side.

And Millennials, say Bibby, Thiessen, and Bailey, are well aware of their endorsement of diversity. Some 44% say that their “appreciation for people different from me” has increased in recent years – considerably higher than the levels reported by older Canadians. Moreover, virtually the same proportion say their “concern for other people” has been on the increase, again well above the levels of Boomers, Xers, and Pre-Boomers.

Such a mosaic outlook seems to speak well not only for Millennials but for the future of life in Canada.

Illustrative Graphics

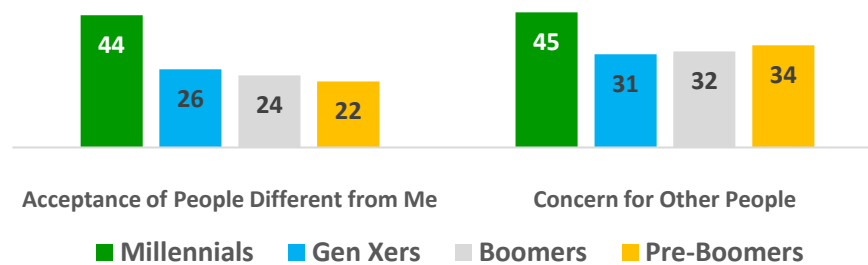
Mosaic Composition and Attitudes: Millennials and Other Adults

	ALL	Millennials 1986-plus (18-29)	Xers 1966-1985 (30-49)	Boomers 1946-65 (50-69)	Pre-Boomers 1945-earlier (70-plus)
Member of a Visible Minority: Statistics Canada 2016	22%	27	25	20	12
LGBTQ+	8	16	7	7	6
Know someone who is transgender	28	35	31	24	23
Increasing acceptance of trans people is positive	87	91	87	86	83
Everything's relative	74	74	76	73	68
What's right or wrong is a matter of personal opinion	51	54	52	49	51
Approve of whites and Asians marrying	95	98	95	96	89
Approve of same sex couples marrying	63	72	68	60	47
Engage in sex monthly or more	61	63	74	54	37
Never engage in sex	14	27	7	13	31
Legal abortion should be available for any reason	51	55	57	47	42
Has been important to marry in my lifetime	61	64	59	59	72
Currently cohabiting	13	11	19	10	3
Have lived together with a non-marital sexual partner	48	39	60	48	24
Approve of unmarried adults having children	70	72	76	70	45
High level of enjoyment from...					
the Internet	65	79	66	57	66
your cell phone	31	54	37	18	17
your house/apartment	76	63	74	81	90
being by yourself	68	73	70	64	66
Identify with a religion	79	72	76	83	88
I prefer to live life without God or congregation	33	47	40	25	16
Religion's overall impact on the world is positive	51	44	47	52	68

Source: Reginald W. Bibby, Joel Thiessen, and Monetta Bailey. *The Millennial Mosaic*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2019.

Acceptance of and Concern for Others

"Has increased in recent years" (%)



Media contacts

Joel Thiessen	Ambrose University	jathiessen@ambrose.edu
Monetta Bailey	Ambrose University	mbailey@ambrose.edu
Reginald Bibby	University of Lethbridge	bibby@uleth.ca
Elam Ali	Dundurn Press	eali@dundurn.com

