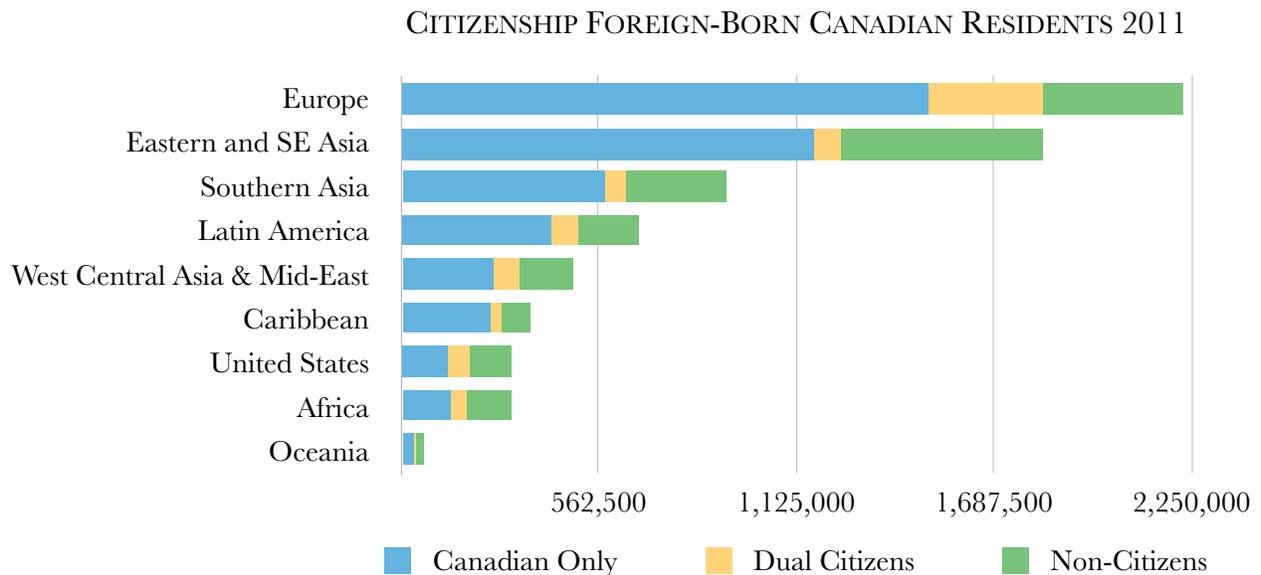


POLITICAL AND PUBLIC SERVICE UNDER-REPRESENTATION

Political integration starts with citizenship: having the fundamental right to vote, along with the responsibility to participate in political discussion and debate when exercising that right.

Declining Citizenship

The chart below shows the citizenship of foreign-born residents in Canada, breaking it down by those who have Canadian citizenship only, those with dual citizenship and those who are not Canadian citizens. The last group includes those who are not yet eligible for citizenship (having lived in Canada for less than four years) and those who have chosen not to take up Canadian citizenship.¹⁴⁰



Canada's oft-cited high rate of naturalization (85.6 percent in the 2011 NHS) largely reflects earlier waves of immigration and citizenship. The naturalization rate was over 90 percent up until 1991-2000, but fell to 77 percent in 2001-5 and 38 percent in 2006-7. It is unclear whether Canada's current naturalization rate remains the highest among immigration-based countries.¹⁴¹

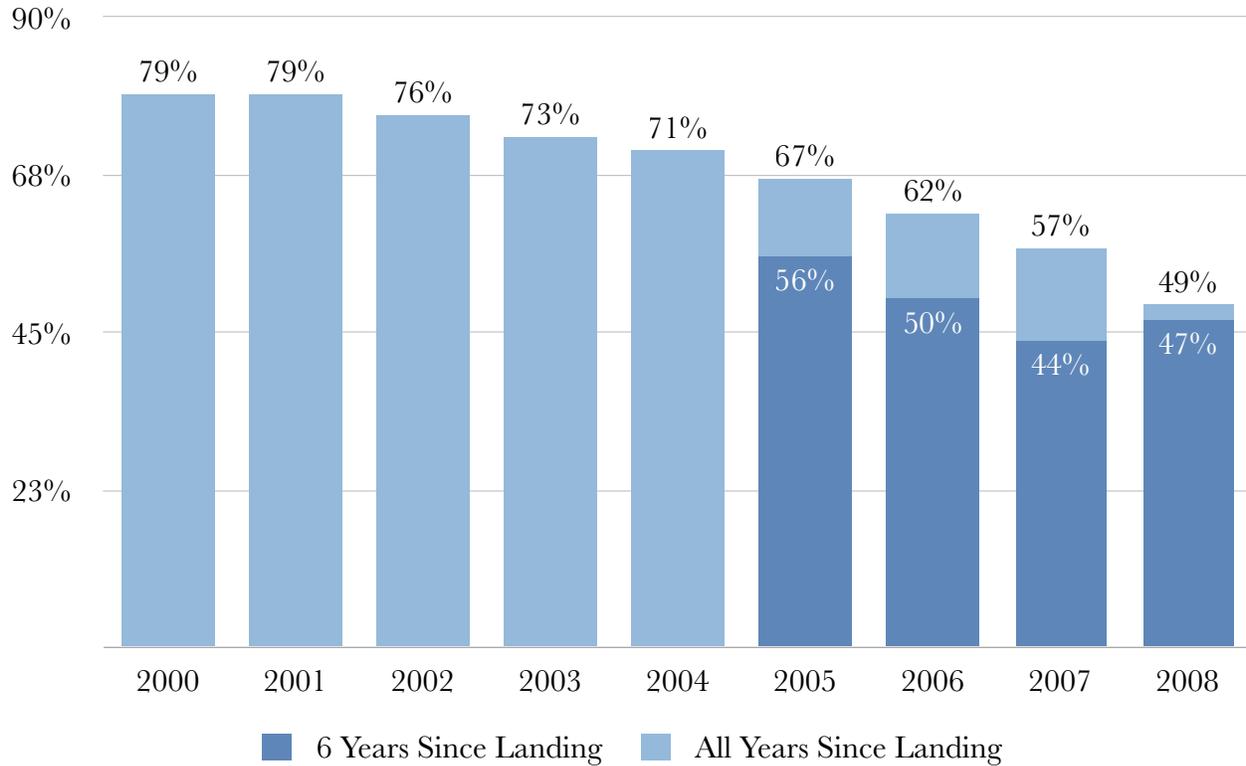
Citizenship and Immigration Canada operational statistics confirm this downward trend. For the years 1989-2008, accounting for some two-thirds of foreign-born Canadians, CIC operational statistics show a cumulative citizenship uptake of 71 percent (some 3.2 million new citizens). This reflects a shift from a high naturalization rate of between 75-80 percent until 2003, to a significantly lower one in subsequent years, as depicted in the chart below. This drop holds

¹⁴⁰ Out of the 6,775,800 foreign-born (20.6% of the population), 6,042,200 million were eligible for citizenship (89% of the foreign born). 5,175,100 have taken up citizenship (85.6% naturalization rate), and 867,100 chose not to take up citizenship.

¹⁴¹ Australia: 74.0% of the country's foreign-born population were naturalized in 2011. United States naturalization rate among foreign-born population was 43.7% in 2010 according to their respective censuses. "[Obtaining Canadian citizenship](#)," *Statistics Canada*.

true whether we consider the six years after an immigrant's arrival ("since landing") or the entire period of their residency in Canada.¹⁴²

CITIZENSHIP TAKE-UP RATES BY PERMANENT RESIDENCY ARRIVAL YEAR 2000-2008 - 2014 DATA



Some of this decrease dates back to previous governments, but the Conservative government has made a number of policy and program changes to correct what it perceived as an imbalance towards facilitation and a lack of program integrity, changes that "[make] citizenship harder to get and easier to lose."¹⁴³

The introduction, in 2010, of a more comprehensive citizenship guide (*Discover Canada*, which is also written in more sophisticated language) and a harder citizenship test, coupled with an increase in the percentage required to pass (up to 75 percent from the previous 60) had resulted in the pass rate declining from an average of 96.3 percent between 2005-9 to 82.7 percent between 2010-13 (within the target range of 80-85 percent set by the Minister), as shown in the chart above. Visible minority communities were disproportionately affected, which likely reflects

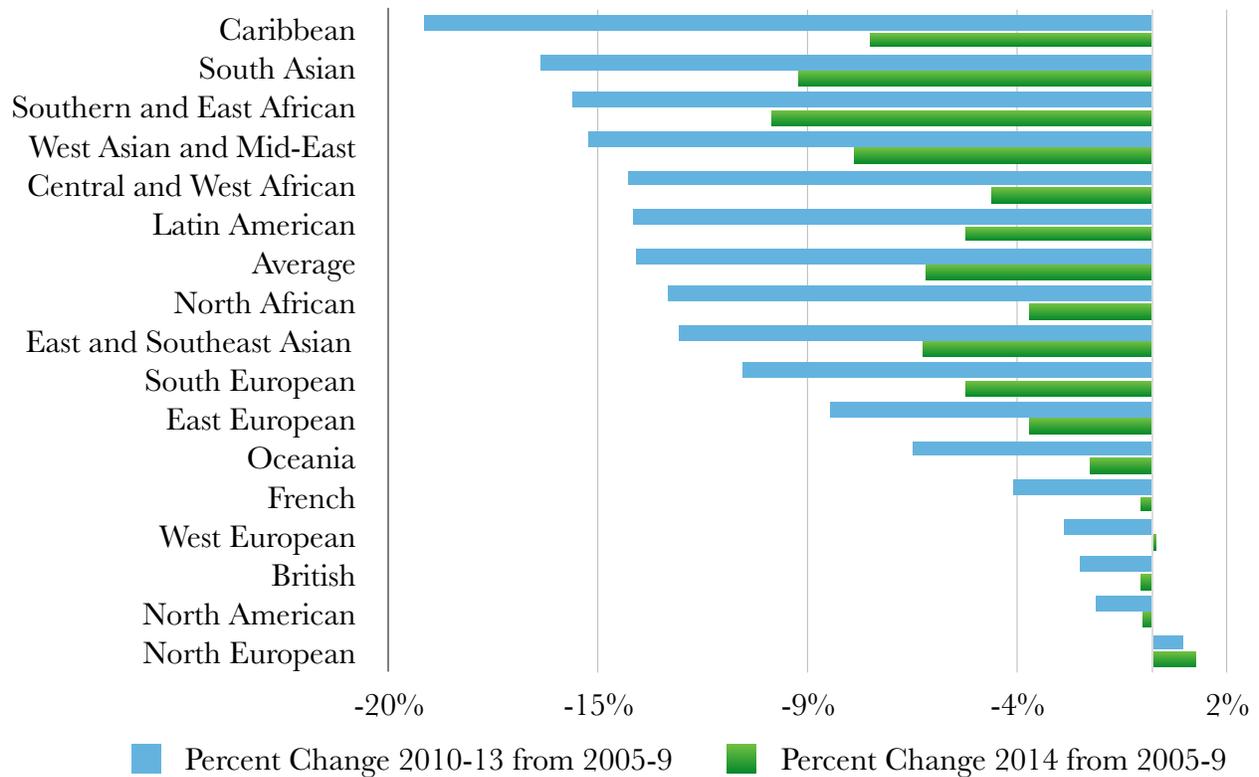
¹⁴² The more time spent in Canada, the greater the percentage of those taking up citizenship (e.g., a permanent resident of 2008 has six years of residency, one of 2007 has seven years and one of 2006 has eight years and so on. Hence looking at citizenship take-up six years after landing provides a more consistent basis for assessing trends (between 75-80 percent of those who take up citizenship do so within 6 years of permanent residency, with modest further increases in subsequent years).

¹⁴³ Meaningfulness is defined in this context as having greater knowledge about Canadian history, society and legal and constitutional framework than in previous knowledge tests, demonstrated basic competence in one of Canada's official languages, and physical presence during the residency qualification period.

a mix of lower education levels, less testing experience from school and weaker language ability.¹⁴⁴

However, CIC documents show that the average pass rate declined to 70-75 percent in 2012, below the target range, prompting considerable activity to change test questions and administration to ensure more applicants passed the test. These changes implemented in 2014 resulted in an increase in the overall pass rate to 90.3 percent, with smaller differences between visible and non-visible minorities. Some visible minority groups showed greater relative improvements than others.

PERCENTAGE DECLINE IN CITIZENSHIP TEST PASS RATES BY COUNTRY OF BIRTH - 2010-13 AND 2014 COMPARED TO 2005-9



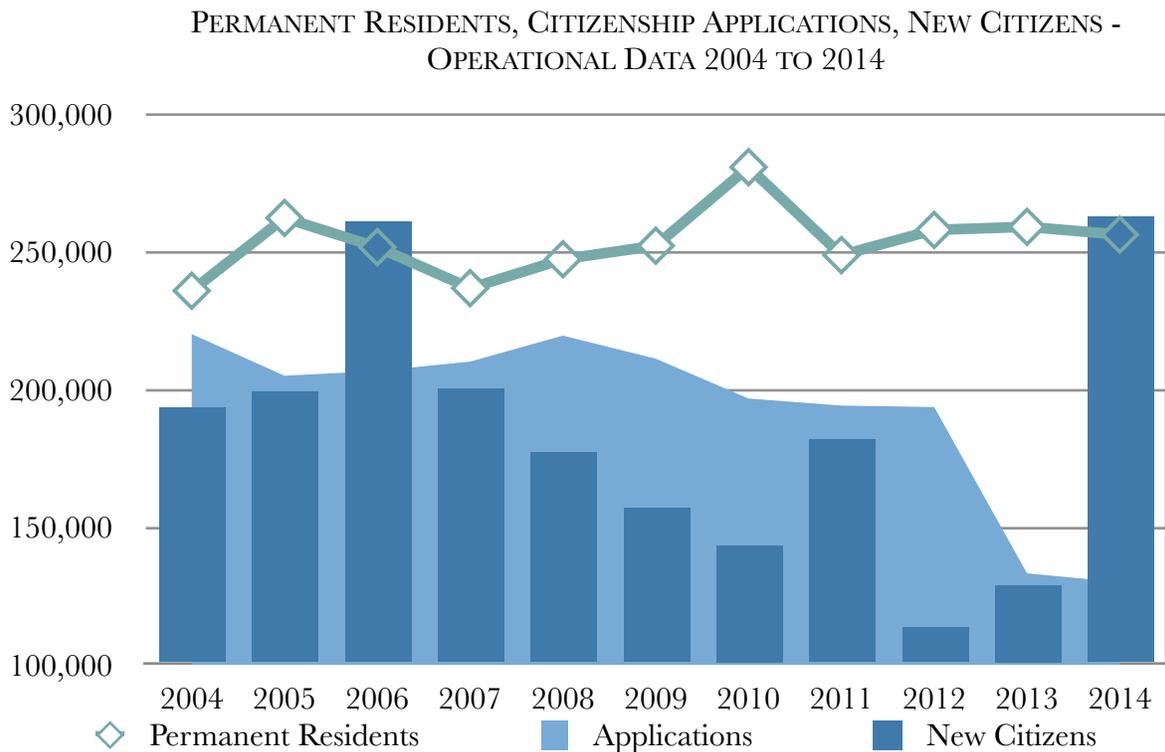
Language assessment was made more rigorous in 2011, and measures to reduce fraud (largely related to residency) were also introduced.

¹⁴⁴ During the roll-out of the test changes, Statistics Canada analyzed the results and found that education was the main variable. A further more detailed internal CIC study, [Citizenship Test Results - Multivariate Regression Analysis](#), confirmed that education level was largely determinant. This data is from CIC operational statistics, 2004-2013.

Moreover, citizenship judges applied a more rigorous approach to their language and knowledge assessment. Judge refusals increased by almost 200 percent between the 2004-9 and 2010-13 periods.¹⁴⁵

In addition, increased emphasis on reducing fraud and misrepresentation, the introduction of a residency questionnaire and other measures meant longer processing times and delays in obtaining citizenship.

The major cause of this decline, however, is probably the chronic issue of under-management and under-funding of the citizenship program, which resulted in periodic backlogs under both Liberal and Conservative governments.



The more recent backlog generated between 2008 and 2013 resulted from a combination of the policy changes mentioned above, and was exacerbated by program review cutbacks. The chart above compares Canada's number of permanent residents (relatively stable but a more complex program to manage), citizenship applications (which measure demand for citizenship

¹⁴⁵ CIC Operational Statistics. Refusals based on a lack of knowledge almost tripled from a 2004-9 annual average of 1,869 to an average of 5,442 during 2010-13. Refusals based on language showed a similar increase from an annual average of 690 during 2004-9 to 2,061 during 2010-13. Refusals based on residency showed a slight decline (861 to 845 annual average).

and which show a steady decline and then a major one in 2013 and 2014), and the number of new citizens (which fell dramatically after 2008).¹⁴⁶

To address this decline and backlog, the government (belatedly) injected an additional \$44 million over two years in Budget 2013, which resulted in over 260,000 people becoming citizens in 2014. It also made a number of changes to the *Citizenship Act* to streamline processing in the future.

No explanation has been provided by CIC at the time of writing (July 2015) to explain the dramatic drop in the number of citizenship applications in 2013 and 2014.¹⁴⁷ Possible explanations include: methodological changes (e.g., only counting completed applications, given the authority in the new *Citizenship Act* to return incomplete applications), operational reasons (giving priority to addressing the backlog rather than entering applications into the computer system), or a more fundamental change in the behaviour of permanent residents in terms of the desirability of citizenship, their ability to pay the 2014 increase in fees, or in their perception of their chances to become citizens.

Other longer-term factors that may account for part of this decrease in citizenship applications and acquisition include a more instrumental view of citizenship given transnational identities and greater mobility, emigration to seek better opportunities, and a decreased perception of the value of Canadian citizenship compared to permanent residency. Ironically, the shift towards more highly-skilled and educated immigrants means that there is greater mobility for new arrivals than there was for the less-skilled immigrants of the past.

Canada's formerly-high naturalization rate reflected, on the one hand, the desire of immigrants to become citizens (for reasons of belonging as well as instrumental ones) and, on the other, what was arguably an overly-easy naturalization process that incorporated limited measures against fraud and misrepresentation.

More recent changes include increases to application fees for citizenship (quintupling to \$530) and the associated changes to the *Citizenship Act* (2014). These will likely further reduce naturalization rates given the combination of lengthened residency requirements and expansion of knowledge and language testing to older applicants (extension to younger applicants will likely have minimal impact given that they will have spent a minimum of four years in Canadian schools).

¹⁴⁶ CIC operational statistics *Clients by Current Citizenship and by PR Landing Year (in Persons) 1989-2008* comparing citizenship, permanent residency records and take-up of citizenship. Yet during this period of declines in naturalization (2003-8), there was only a gradual decline in the number of applications, from 220,000 in 2008 to 194,000 in 2012 (11.8 percent), before the dramatic decline to approximately 130,000 applications in both 2013 and 2014 (over 30 percent). For the backlog, see CIC Press Release "[Archived - Citizenship and Immigration Minister Joe Volpe Announces New Measures to Improve the Citizenship Application Process](#)," 18 April 2005.

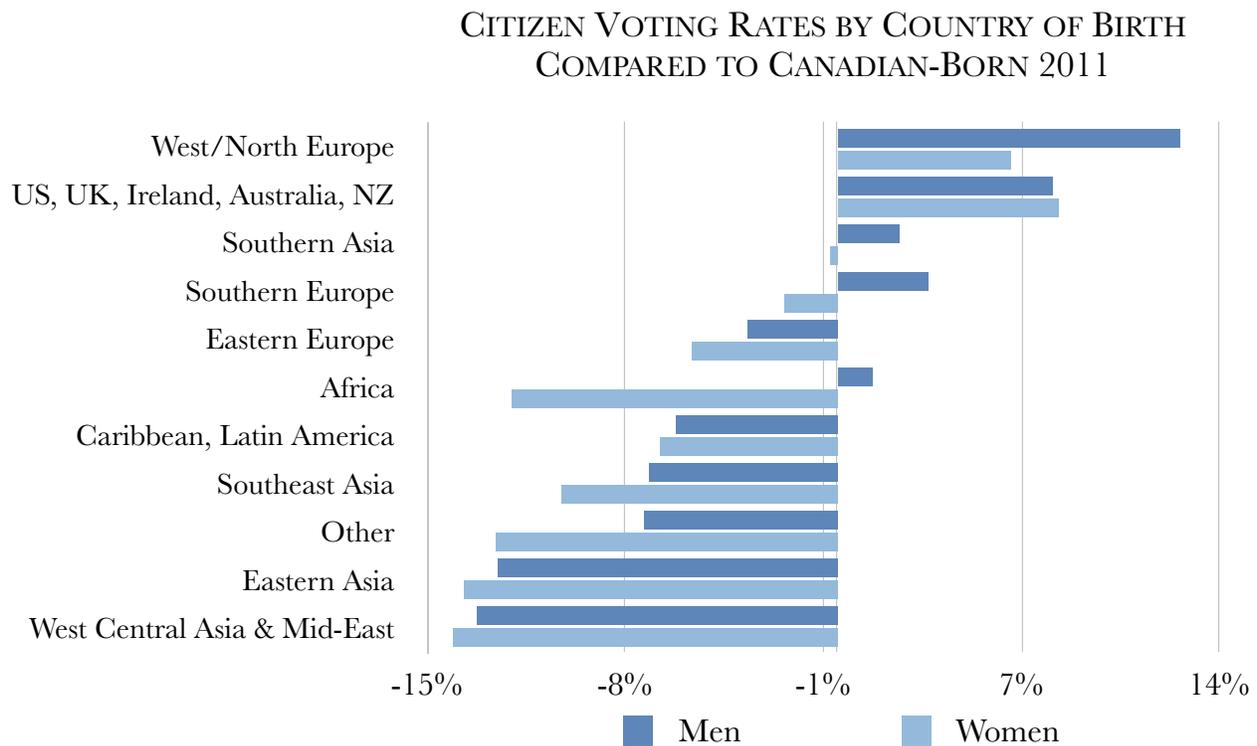
¹⁴⁷ In response to an ATIP request, CIC indicated (10 July 2015) that it had no records pertaining to the reasons for this drop.

From Citizenship to Voting

Becoming a citizen provides the right to vote, but how many exercise this right? And how significant a role do visible minorities play in the electoral and governmental processes?

The data suggests that there is not much difference between Canadian-born and established immigrants (defined as those who immigrated to Canada before 2001) in this regard, with voting rates in the 2011 federal election of 67.1 and 66.3 percent respectively. However, for more recent immigrants, the voting rate falls to 51.1 percent. There are no major differences in voting participation between men and women in all three categories.¹⁴⁸

A more detailed view of voting by country of birth shows minor variations. Those of European birth vote slightly more than the Canadian-born (with the exception of Eastern Europeans), as do those born in Southern Asia. Voting participation is lower in communities from developing countries, and the largest gender difference exists among those born in Africa, followed by those born in Southeast Asia.



Similarly, the greatest differences in voting between established and more recent immigrants occurs with respect to those from countries with weaker democratic traditions, particularly Africa (27.2 percent), Eastern Europe (21.1 percent), and West Central Asia and the Mid-East (17.4 percent).

¹⁴⁸ "Factors Associated with Voting," *Statistics Canada*, February 2012. This study uses the May 2011 Labour Force Survey which added a question on voting. This self-declaration results in slightly higher voting numbers compared to actual election day results.

A number of factors may explain this, “including the lack of democratic traditions in some regions of the world, the lack of trust in institutions or differences in political culture (Bevelander and Pendakur 2007 and 2009).”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. As established immigrants tend to be older, the normal pattern of older citizens voting may also be a factor.