

NON-BINARY PEOPLE AND IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

A report prepared for the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission



Purpose of Report

The aim of this report is to provide requested information regarding non-binary people in Canada and their identity documents. While identity documents such as birth certificates, driver’s licenses, and passports (and also those not considered legal ID such as health cards) have historically included “F” and “M” gender markers, recent changes to some forms of ID have included options for an “X”, or for no marker. Both options and processes for changing markers vary across document types and across provinces and territories. As options have changed primarily over the last decade, there has been little research data available regarding the experiences and preferences of non-binary people in Canada.

Data and Analysis Methods

Data used in this report come from Trans PULSE Canada, a large community-based study of the health of trans and non-binary people in Canada, funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Over a 10-week period in 2019, the Trans PULSE Canada research team collected survey data from 2,873 transgender and non-binary people age 14 years or older and living in Canada. Participants were able to complete the full survey, or a 10-minute short form containing key items, in English or French online, on paper, via telephone (with or without a language interpreter), or on a tablet with a Peer Research Associate in major cities.

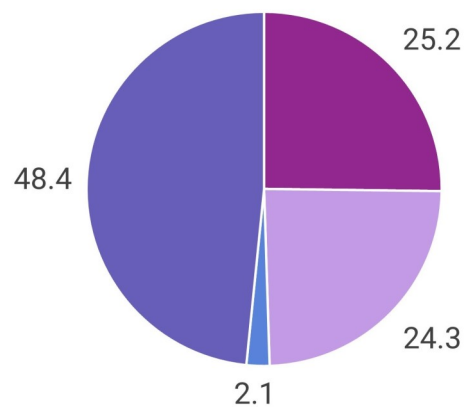
The Trans PULSE Canada survey included questions from the earlier Ontario Trans PULSE project, questions from Statistics Canada surveys to allow for comparisons to the general population, and questions developed by trans and non-binary people based on community priorities.

Data from respondents who completed the full survey has been weighted to more accurately represent the full sample, including those who completed the short-form version of the survey.

Gender Identity

While many survey participants indicated they used multiple terms to describe their own gender, when asked to choose which of four gender identity categories best described their current gender identity, 48.4% chose “non-binary, genderqueer, agender, or a similar identity” (hereafter “non-binary”).

Figure 1. Gender identity categories, trans and non-binary participants in Trans PULSE Canada, 2019



- Man or boy
- Woman or girl
- Indigenous or other cultural gender
- Non-binary, agender, or similar

Sociodemographics

Table 1 displays sociodemographics for the 1,327 participants who indicated their primary gender identity group was non-binary.

Among non-binary participants, 85.0% were between the ages of 20 and 49, 6.6% identified as Indigenous, and 14.3% were racialized. Racialization was defined as reporting being perceived or treated as a person of colour or identifying as a person of colour. 12.9% had immigrated to Canada, including 3.9% who had arrived in the past five years and were newcomers to Canada.

As many youth and younger adults were students, education, employment, and income data were reported only for those aged 25 and older. Non-binary people were well-educated, with 70.7% having a post-secondary degree, including 22.7% with a graduate or professional degree; another 19.7% had some college or university education. Employment and income were not commensurate with these high levels of education. Only 41.7% of those over age 25 were employed in permanent full-time positions. About 1 in 4 had a personal income of less than \$15,000 per year, and another 1 in 4 had an income between \$15,000 and \$29,999. 42.1% lived in a household that fell below the threshold for Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure.

Gender Markers on ID

The Trans PULSE Canada survey asked participants about the following types of identity documents: driver's license, birth certificate (including from outside Canada), health card, passport (Canadian and non-Canadian), Indian status card, Canadian citizenship card/certificate, permanent resident card, Canadian armed forces card, and provincial photo ID card. For each ID type, participants answered question on whether they were listed as "male", "female", "X" or had no gender marker, and on how they would prefer to be listed. If these matched, participants were coded as having that ID type match their preference. Based on how many of a participant's ID types had matches, they were coded as having all, none, or some of their ID matching their preferred gender marker. Preferences could differ between ID types, for example if a participant preferred that for safety reasons a different gender be listed on their passport for international travel than that which they preferred for the ID they use within Canada.

Table 1: Sociodemographics of non-binary Trans PULSE Canada participants (n=1,327)

	%
Age	
14 - 19	10.7
20 - 24	26.2
25 - 34	41.4
35 - 49	17.4
50 - 64	3.7
65 +	0.5
Indigenous	
	6.6
Racialized	
	14.3
Immigration history	
Newcomer (past 5 years)	3.9
Established immigrant	9.0
Non-immigrant	87.1
Education (age ≥ 25) ^a	
< High school	2.2
High school diploma	7.4
Some college or university	19.7
College or university degree	48.0
Grad/professional degree	22.7
Employment situation (age ≥ 25)	
Permanent full-time	41.7
Employed, not permanent full-time	39.3
Not employed, or on leave	13.0
Not employed and student or retired	6.0
Personal annual income (age ≥ 25) ^a	
None	1.7
< \$15,000	24.6
\$15,000 - \$29,999	26.8
\$30,000 - \$49,999	22.6
\$50,000 - \$79,999	16.0
\$80,000 +	8.3
Low-income household (age ≥ 25) ^a	
Low income household	42.1
Non-low-income household	57.9

a. These variables had >10% missing.

Figure 2. Weighted proportions of gender identity groups that report all identity documents as having their preferred gender marker.

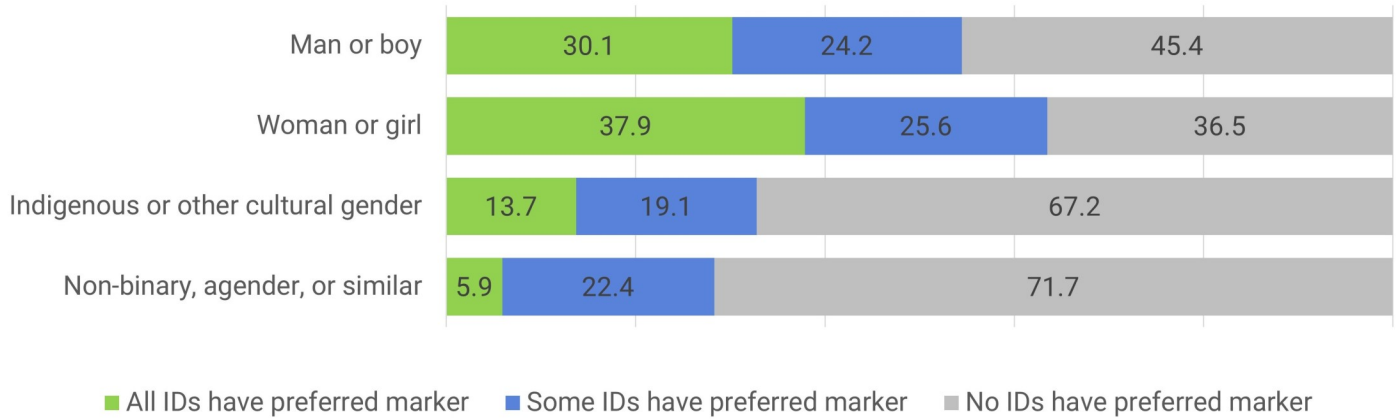


Figure 2 presents weighted proportions with all, some, or none of their identity documents having their preferred gender marker for each of the four gender identity categories. Non-binary people were the group least likely to have all of their IDs with their preferred gender; only 5.9% fell in this category. The majority, 71.7% had no ID with their preferred gender, and 22.4% had some but not all.

Table 2: Weighted proportion of non-binary participants for whom ID matched their preferred marker, among those who have that type of ID

Identity document type	N ^a	%
Canadian Armed Forces card	13	45.6
Indian status card	20	34.7
Provincial photo ID card	298	17.0
Driver's license	823	16.1
Health card	1074	15.6
Permanent resident card	58	13.8
Canadian birth certificate	964	12.9
International passport	160	12.6
Canadian passport	865	10.9
International birth certificate	198	10.0
Canadian citizenship card	136	8.1

a. N= the number of participants who had this type of ID and provided information on both their marker and their preference.

Gender Markers for ID Types

For each of the different types of ID, we present the weighted proportion of those for whom their marker matched their preference (Table 2). Not all participants had all types of ID.

There was no type of ID for which the majority of non-binary participants had gender markers matching their preference; proportions generally fell in the 10-20% range. The two ID types with the highest proportion matching with participants' preferred markers were Canadian Armed Forces cards (45.6%) and Indian status cards (34.7). These proportions were based on small numbers of users, and may not be precise estimates for the broader population.

Among the remaining ID types, provincial IDs appear to have slightly higher proportions matching than do federal or international documents. Documents generally held only by immigrants (international birth certificate, Canadian citizenship card) were the least likely to have matching gender markers.

For each type of identity document, Table 3 presents data on current gender markers, among those who have each type of ID. Participants could choose between "male", "female", "X", or "no gender marker", though not all options may have been available for their ID. As numbers were small for some types of ID (see Table 2), some of the weighted proportions may be based on only a few participants and should be interpreted with caution.

Passports (Canadian and international), citizenship cards/certificates and international birth certificates were the ID types most likely to reflect sex assigned at birth. For each, more than 90% displayed sex assigned at birth as their gender marker.

Indian status cards and Canadian Armed Forces cards were the ID types most likely to have no marker. We note that some IDs for which no marker is displayed may retain markers in the underlying databases and display them when accessed (e.g., health cards in health care settings).

Reflecting the timing of policy changes, provincial driver's licenses and non-license photo IDs were the ID types most likely to carry an "X" marker. With 14.3% of licenses and 9.5% of photo IDs having an "X", this still represents a minority of ID documents among non-binary participants.

Table 4 presents non-binary participants' preferences for their gender markers. Participants could choose between "male", "female", "X", "no gender marker", or "something else". "Male" and "female" were re-coded to reflect whether a participant wanted their gender marker to match their sex assigned at birth, or the other sex option.

Most participants preferred to have either an "X" marker or no marker at all, with a nearly even split between these two preferences. A minority preferred to have either their sex assigned at birth, or the other sex option listed as the gender marker on their ID.

Table 3. Current gender markers on different identity document types, reported by non-binary participants

Identity document type ^a	Sex assigned at birth	Other sex option	X	No marker
	%	%	%	%
Health card	80.0	8.2	3.5	8.4
Canadian birth certificate	87.9	7.8	3.6	0.6
Canadian passport	90.6	5.9	3.4	0.0
Driver's license	75.9	9.3	14.3	0.6
Provincial photo ID card	77.1	11.7	9.5	1.7
International birth certificate	95.5	1.9	1.0	1.5
International passport	91.2	4.3	2.6	1.9
Canadian citizenship	94.8	1.5	1.5	2.2
Permanent resident card ^b	78.5	6.8	5.5	9.1
Indian status card ^b	64.2	0.0	5.2	30.6
Canadian Armed Forces card ^b	45.4	0.0	7.9	46.7

a. Only those who had each type of identity document were asked their preferences for that type. Listed from most to least common.

b. Interpret with caution, as fewer than 100 participants had this type of ID.

Table 4. Preferences of non-binary participants regarding gender markers on different identity document types.

Identity document type ^a	Sex assigned at birth	Other sex option	X	No marker	Something else
	%	%	%	%	%
Health card	6.4	5.1	47.6	39.3	1.7
Canadian birth certificate	7.4	5.2	46.1	40.2	1.0
Canadian passport	6.6	6.1	41.6	44.2	1.4
Driver's license	2.7	4.7	47.8	43.4	1.4
Provincial photo ID card	4.6	7.4	47.5	39.4	1.0
International birth certificate	7.5	3.7	47.2	39.0	2.5
International passport	7.7	6.5	40.9	42.4	2.5
Canadian citizenship	4.4	2.5	46.6	44.3	2.2
Permanent resident card ^b	5.3	7.7	35.9	47.7	3.4
Indian status card ^b	10.0	0.0	42.2	42.3	5.5
Canadian Armed Forces card ^b	7.5	0.0	16.3	67.6	8.5

a. Only those who had each type of identity document were asked their preferences for that type. Listed from most to least common.

b. Interpret with caution, as fewer than 100 participants had this type of ID.

*"[I would prefer] X if in Canada,
Male if international.."*

*"I would prefer X but that feels unsafe.
Constantly coming out is exhausting."*

*"I would like no one to have a
gender marker, rather than being
singled out for it because of my
relationship to gender/ing. "*

Participants who checked "something else" for at least one ID type were given an option to write-in comments about their preferences. These fell into several categories. Some stated a preference for a non-binary designation other than "X" (e.g., "Non-binary" or "maybe GD for gender diverse or MG for multigender or NB for non-binary"), and others would like a marker that combines a non-binary indicator with a sex assigned at birth designation (e.g., "X AFAB", where AFAB=assigned female at birth). Another category consisted of those who would remove gender markers (e.g., "Enlever la mention de genre"). Finally, some participants wrote in that they would in actuality prefer an "X", but had concerns about that (e.g., "X, mais j'ai peur").

Overall, there was a high level of discordance between current and preferred gender markers. For example, of non-binary participants who had a Canadian passport, 41.6% would prefer an "X" and 44.2% no marker. However, only 3.4% and 0.0% had these markers, the latter not being an option. Instead, 90.6% had their sex assigned at birth as their passport gender marker.

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