



# RESEARCH2REALITY

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## With Glowing Hearts, We See Thee Arrive

An Interview with Professor Jeffrey Reitz, Immigration Sociologist  
University of Toronto

### What can we learn from immigration policy?

Canada has made a huge investment in immigration. Immigration has had a huge impact in Toronto, right here in the University, but all across the city. The success of our immigration experiment, if you like, is really going to be the story of the future of the country. So for me, it's a fascinating subject.

### What makes Canada unique on immigration?

Internationally, immigration is a huge issue in virtually every industrial country and they are controversial almost everywhere. The Canadian case is interesting because Canada is the only country in which immigration is popular. The Immigration Program actually has the support of the majority of the population, and you know the world looks at this and sees what seems to be a success story. So I think it's an important question of whether the situation in Canada is what it is perceived to be, and if so, why is that? What is the reason?

### Why is this research important?

Another issue that I think is important, doing research on topics where public opinion is one thing, and the social reality is another. And one of them has to do with the Muslim population because the public opinion polls show that many Canadians are very concerned that Muslims do not want to integrate into the society and they're not doing that. So it's interesting to look at the evidence on this question, and what we find is that in short, they are assimilating. Far from the public perception of a group that is creating an enclave, insulated from the rest of the society, our approach – our multicultural approach – which, as opposed to a lot of people not to assimilate, actually works more effectively as an assimilation model. Policies which are directed at Muslims to try to bring them in line, may backfire, and we should understand that what's happening with the Muslim community in Canada today is actually not different from Hindus, other groups, you know, they are integrating into the mainstream and I think part of our success is due to the willingness of Canadians to provide services and support of immigration. I think it does have an effect.