

MUSLIM IDENTITY AND INTEGRATION

Integration versus separation from Canadian society

Remain distinct or integrate?

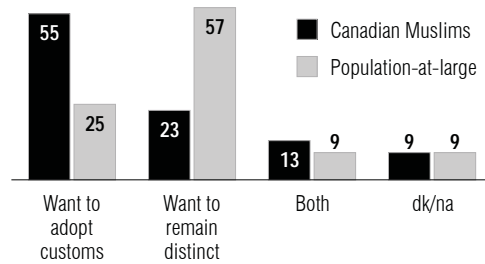
Most Canadians believe Muslims in Canada wish to remain distinct from the wider society, but most Muslims feel that most of their co-religionists in fact want to integrate into Canadian society.

When a minority group is seen as remaining separate from the larger society, explanations can run in two directions. Some may claim that the minority group is deliberately separating itself, enjoying the benefits of the larger society but refusing to participate fully. Others may claim that the larger society shuts the minority group out, using discrimination, both subtle and overt, to prevent minority group members from enjoying the economic, political and social benefits other citizens enjoy.

In the case of Canada's Muslim minority, Muslims themselves report a strong impression that their co-religionists wish to integrate into Canadian society, while most members of the general public believe the opposite – that Canadian Muslims wish to remain apart. Among Canadians at large, just a quarter (25%) believe that Muslims in Canada are more interested in adopting Canadian customs than in remaining distinct from the wider society. Among Canadian Muslims, meanwhile, a majority (55%) believe that most of their co-religionists in Canada are more interested in adopting a Canadian way of life than in remaining apart. About one in ten in both the general public (9%) and the Muslim minority (13%) believe that Canadian Muslims wish equally to integrate *and* remain distinct.

Do Muslims want to adopt Canadian customs or remain distinct?

December 2006



Q.M21/FC37

Do you think most Muslims coming to our country today want to adopt Canadian customs and way of life or do you think that they want to be distinct from the larger Canadian society?

Frequency of contact with Muslims has a notable bearing on Canadians' impressions of Muslims' desire to adopt Canadian customs. Among Canadians who have contact with Muslims often or occasionally, a third (32%) believe that Canadian Muslims are mainly interested in adopting Canadian customs, as compared to one in five (19%) among those who rarely or never encounter Muslims. Canadians who have personal contact with Muslims rarely or never are much more likely (65%) than those who have frequent personal contact with Muslims (44%) to believe that Muslims in Canada mainly wish to remain distinct from the wider society. Those who encounter Muslims frequently are twice as likely (13%) as those who do so rarely or never (7%) to believe that Canadian Muslims wish to both adopt Canadian customs *and* remain distinct as a community.

Quebecers are the most likely to believe that Muslims wish to remain distinct from the wider Canadian society; fully two-thirds of Quebecers (67%), as compared to just over half (54%) of those outside Quebec, believe that Canadian Muslims are more interested in remaining separate than in adopting Canadian customs. This difference may be explained in part by some Quebecers doubting that Quebec Muslims are adopting “Canadian” (as opposed to “Quebec”) customs. Still, in view of other findings of this research in Quebec, such as less positive impressions of Islam and greater anxiety about integration, it is unlikely that the distinction between Quebec customs and Canadian customs is the only reason for the regional differences here.

Among Muslim-Canadians, there are some notable group differences on views about the intentions of their co-religionists. Muslims with higher incomes are considerably more likely than those with lower incomes to believe that most Canadian Muslims wish to adopt a Canadian lifestyle. Those with lower incomes are more likely to say either they do not know how most Muslims approach this matter, or that most Muslims wish to both adopt Canadian customs and remain distinct in equal measure.

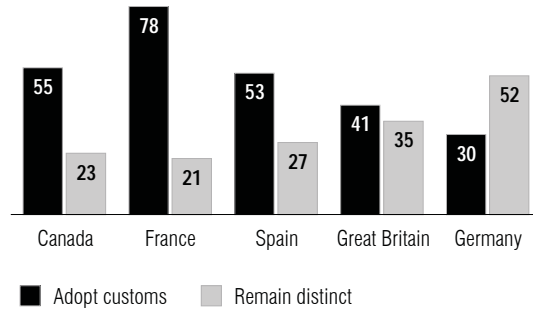
The belief that most Muslims wish to integrate increases somewhat with years spent in Canada. Those who have lived in Canada less than five years are moderately less likely than those who have been in the country longer to believe that most Muslims wish to adopt Canadian customs, and moderately more likely to say that Canadian Muslims wish to remain distinct, or that they wish to both integrate and remain separate.

Internationally, Canadian Muslims are among the most likely to believe that their co-religionists want to adopt the customs and lifestyle of their adoptive country, and among the least likely to say that they want to remain separate from the wider society. Of the Muslim minorities in the four European countries surveyed, only French Muslims are more likely (78%) than Canadian Muslims to say that their co-religionists wish to adopt the customs of the wider society rather than remain distinct. Muslims in Canada are as likely as those in Spain (53%), and more likely than those in Great Britain (41%) and Germany (30%) to see their fellow Muslims as wishing to adopt the lifestyle of the western society in which they live.⁶

As far as the general populations are concerned, Canadians are among the most likely to believe that Muslims in Canada are interested in adopting Canadian customs. Here again, France stands out, with nearly half (46%) of the French public believing most Muslims in France wish to adopt French customs rather than remaining distinct. But Canadians are more likely than British (22%), Spanish (21%) or German (17%) citizens to believe that the Muslim minority in their country is mainly interested in adopting the customs of the wider society.

Do Muslims want to adopt local country's customs or remain distinct?

Muslim residents Canada and Europe 2006

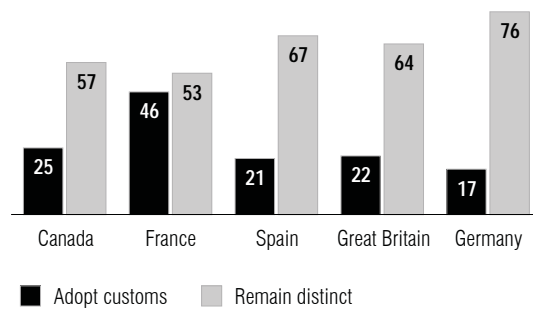


Q.M21/Pew

Do you think most Muslims coming to our country today want to adopt Canadian customs and way of life or do you think that they want to be distinct from the larger Canadian society?

Do Muslims want to adopt local country's customs or remain distinct?

Populations-at-large Canada and Europe 2006



Q.FC37/Pew

Do you think most Muslims coming to our country today want to adopt Canadian customs and way of life or do you think that they want to be distinct from the larger Canadian society?

⁶ International data from the Pew Research Center, 2006.

Blend in or retain culture?

Both Canadian Muslims and Canadians overall tend to believe that immigrants should be free to maintain their religious and cultural practices. But the general population is more likely to express a preference for immigrants to “blend in.”

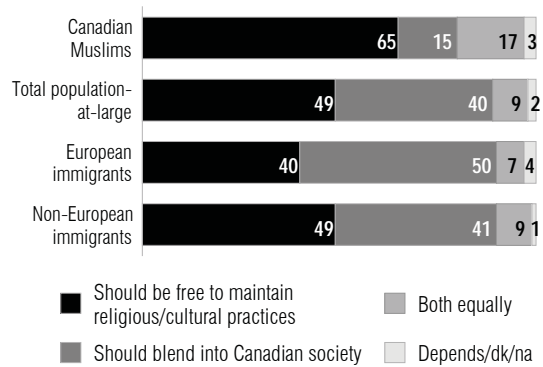
Presented with two different, but not mutually exclusive, claims about how immigrants and minority ethnic groups should relate to the wider society in which they live, there is general tendency to believe that members of such groups should be able to maintain their religious and cultural practices. But Muslim-Canadians are more likely than other Canadians to hold this view.

Two-thirds (65%) of Muslim-Canadians say that immigrants and minority ethnic groups should be free to maintain their religious and cultural traditions, compared with just one in six (15%) who agree more strongly with the idea that immigrants should try to blend into Canadian society. Notably, another 17 percent of Canadian Muslims decline to choose between these two options and volunteer that both options are equally possible and desirable. In contrast, Canadians at large are evenly divided on this question, with about half (49%) agreeing that immigrants and minority groups should be free to maintain their own traditions, while four in ten (40%) say immigrants should try to blend into Canadian society.⁷

Age has a strong influence on opinions about this issue, among both Muslim-Canadians and the population-at-large. Among Muslim-Canadians aged 18

Options for immigrants and minority ethnic groups

Canadian Muslims and population-at-large by immigration status 2006



Q.M6/PET68

Some people say that immigrants and minority ethnic groups should blend into Canadian society and not form a separate community. Other people say that immigrants and minority ethnic groups should be free to maintain their religious and cultural practices and traditions. Which one of these two points of view is closest to your own?

to 29, seven in ten (72%) believe that immigrants should be free to maintain their religious and cultural practices, which declines among Muslim-Canadians aged 45 and older (58%). Older Muslims are more likely to say minority groups should blend into Canadian society, and to say blending in and maintaining religious and cultural practices are equally important. A parallel trend according to age is evident among the Canadian population-at-large; Canadians aged 18 to 29 are nearly twice as likely (63%) as those aged 60 or over (33%) to believe that immigrants and minority groups should be free to maintain their religious and cultural practices.

7 General population data drawn from Focus Canada 2006-3 research conducted on behalf of the Pierre Trudeau Foundation.

Quebecers, both Muslims and the population-at-large, stand out starkly on this question. Just four in ten Quebec Muslims (41%) believe that immigrants and minority groups should be free to maintain their religious and cultural practices, compared to 72 percent of Ontario Muslims and 73 percent of Muslims in the West. While Quebec Muslims are in line with the Muslim average (15%) in believing that immigrants should try to blend into the wider society, they are considerably above average (42%, compared to 17% of all Canadian Muslims) in espousing the belief that immigrants should be free to maintain their cultural practices *and* blend into the wider society.

The Quebec population-at-large also stands out, primarily in its embrace of assimilation as an ideal for immigrants. Just a third of Quebecers (33%, compared to 53% in the rest of Canada) say that immigrants and minority groups should be free to maintain their religious and cultural practices, while fully half (48%, compared to 38% in the rest of Canada) say that immigrants should blend into Canadian society.

Quebecers overall, like the Muslim minority in that province, are more likely than others to agree equally with both statements (16%, compared to 6% in the rest of Canada).

Overall, Muslims who are devoutly religious tend to attach greater significance to the protection of Islamic identity than do more secular Muslims. It is noteworthy, then, that Muslims who attend religious services frequently are statistically as likely (14%) as those who attend rarely or never (19%) to believe that immigrants and minority groups should try to blend into the wider society. But those who attend services rarely or never are more likely to believe that minority groups should try to blend in *and* be free to maintain their own religious and cultural practices (22%, as compared to 13% of frequent worshipers). Muslim-Canadians who attend religious services frequently are more likely (70%) than those who attend rarely or never (56%) to believe first and foremost that immigrants should be free to maintain their religious and cultural practices.

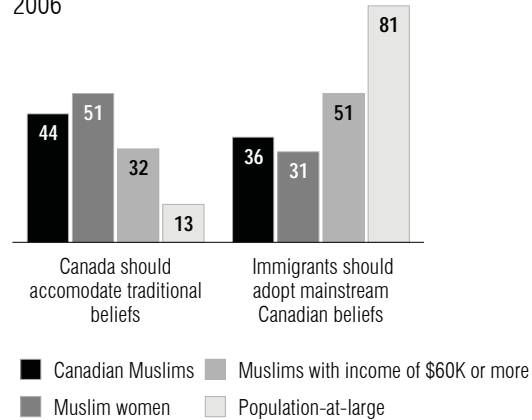
The rights and role of women

Canadians believe strongly that respect for newcomers’ traditions must not compromise gender equality in Canada. Canadian Muslims are more likely to believe that Canada should accommodate traditional gender roles.

Some Canadians believe there is a tension between the individual rights guaranteed in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the group rights accorded by Canada’s multicultural policies. Gender equality in particular emerges as a site of concern in this regard, with some analysts arguing that women’s Charter rights to equal treatment are sometimes at odds with religious or cultural practices that Canadian multiculturalism, in principle, would seek to protect. Others argue that there is no real tension between Charter rights and Canadian multiculturalism – that the Charter is paramount – and that rhetoric about such a tension is simply a manifestation of Canadian anxiety about the integration of newcomers.

A strong majority of Canadians (81%) believe that, whatever their traditional practices, newcomers should adapt to mainstream Canadian beliefs about the rights and role of women, while just 13 percent say Canada should accommodate traditional beliefs some newcomers may hold about women’s rights and roles. Canadian Muslims are notably more divided on this question: A plurality (44%) believe that Canada should accommodate newcomers’ more traditional beliefs, compared with just over one in three (36%) who agree with the overall Canadian majority that it is immigrants who must adapt to Canadian mores around gender.⁸

Role of women in immigrant/ ethnic communities
2006



Q.M7/PET69

Some immigrant and minority ethnic communities have very traditional practices and beliefs when it comes to the role and rights of women. Some people say Canada should accept and accommodate these traditional beliefs about the rights and role of women. Other people say that immigrants and ethnic minorities should adapt to mainstream Canadian beliefs about the rights and role of women. Which one of these two points of view is closest to your own?

Canadians tend to express similar views on this issue across demographic subgroups, although there is a modest variation by age: Younger Canadians are somewhat more likely to believe that Canada should accommodate traditional beliefs some newcomers may hold about the rights and role of women, while older Canadians are more apt to express the view that newcomers must adapt to majority Canadian opinion and practice in the area of gender equality.

8 General population data drawn from Focus Canada 2006-3 research conducted on behalf of the Pierre Trudeau Foundation.

Large and important differences emerge across Canadian Muslim subgroups on this issue. First, and perhaps surprisingly, Muslim women are considerably more likely than Muslim men to believe that Canada should accommodate traditional beliefs and practices some newcomers may have about the rights and role of women.

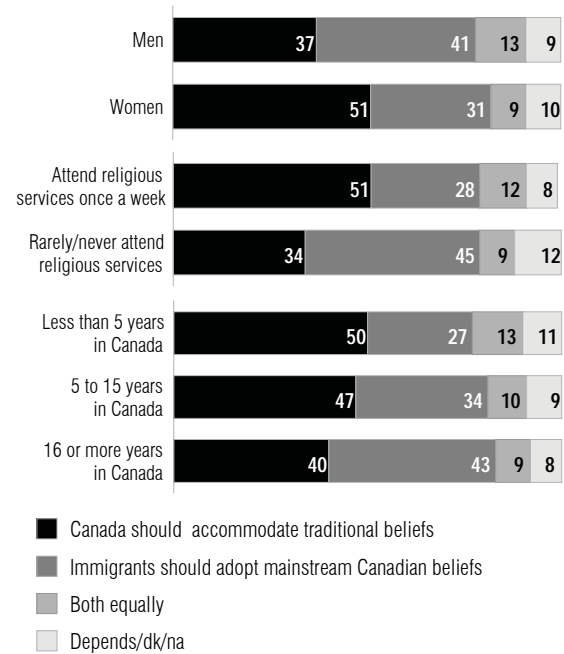
Major differences also emerge among Muslim-Canadians according to income and education. More affluent and more educated Muslims more likely to believe that newcomers should adapt to Canadian gender mores, compared with less affluent and less educated Muslims, who are more apt to believe that Canada should accommodate traditional beliefs among newcomers.

Religious attendance also seems to have a strong influence over Canadian Muslim opinion on this issue: fully half of those who frequently attend religious services believe that Canada should accommodate those with traditional beliefs about the rights and role of women, as compared to just a third of those who attend religious services rarely or never.

Among Canadian Muslims born outside Canada, those who have lived in Canada longer are more likely to believe that it is up to immigrants and minority groups to conform to mainstream Canadian beliefs and practices about the rights and role of women. Even among those who have been in Canada 16 years or longer, however, opinion is split almost evenly between those who think that immigrants must conform to Canadian mores, and those who think that Canada must accommodate the diverse traditions and practices of immigrants. In other words, even Muslims who have been in Canada for over 16 years look markedly different from the population-at-large on this issue.

Role of women in immigrant/ethnic communities

Canadian Muslims By gender, religious attendance and years in Canada 2006



Q.M7

Some immigrant and minority ethnic communities have very traditional practices and beliefs when it comes to the role and rights of women. Some people say Canada should accept and accommodate these traditional beliefs about the rights and role of women. Other people say that immigrants and ethnic minorities should adapt to mainstream Canadian beliefs about the rights and role of women. Which one of these two points of view is closest to your own?

Muslims who self-identify as primarily Canadian are, perhaps not surprisingly, much more likely (61%) than other Canadian Muslims to believe that the onus is primarily on newcomers and minority groups to adapt to the Canadian mainstream on matters of gender equality. Those who identify primarily as Muslim, meanwhile, are more likely (50%) than the Canadian Muslim average to believe that Canada should accommodate newcomers' sometimes more traditional beliefs.

Perceptions of cross-cultural learning

Muslim-Canadians are more likely than Canadians overall to believe that contact with other cultures is enriching.

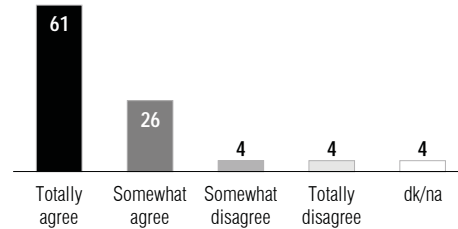
One underlying idea of multiculturalism is that respect for minority groups’ traditions and practices benefits not only the minority groups who adhere to them, but also the wider society which learns from them and becomes richer, more flexible and more interesting. Whereas aggressive assimilationism assumes that the host culture is paramount and immigrants must adopt its ways completely, multiculturalism positions the integration of newcomers as, at least ideally, a two-way process in which newcomers both adapt to and shape the mainstream.

Three-quarters of Canadians agree either strongly (25%) or somewhat (48%) that “Other cultures have a lot to teach us; contact with them is enriching for us.”⁹ Muslim-Canadians express even greater enthusiasm for this idea of cross-cultural learning, with six in ten agreeing strongly (61%) that they are enriched by interacting with other cultures and an additional quarter agreeing somewhat with this idea.

Although the belief that contact with other cultures is enriching is embraced across subgroups of Muslim-Canadians, the belief is especially strong among those with the highest incomes and those who have lived in Canada the longest. Among those who have been in Canada 16 years or more, fully three-quarters (75%) agree strongly that contact with other cultures is enriching. The proportion among Muslim-Canadians earning more than \$60,000 annually is 73 percent. Disagreement is highest among the least affluent (13%) and least educated (17%); these are the only two groups in which disagreement with the idea of cross-cultural learning exceeds 10 percent.

Other cultures have a lot to teach us; contact with them is enriching

Canadian Muslims December 2006



Q.M41c

Now I'd like to read you a list of opinions that we often hear expressed. For each one, please tell me whether you totally agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or totally disagree ... Other cultures have a lot to teach us; contact with them is enriching.

9 General population data drawn from the 2005 Environics Social Values study.

PRIDE IN CANADA

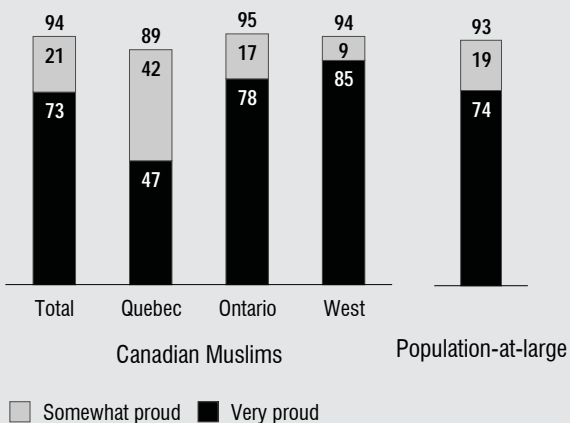
Muslim-Canadians are as likely as others in the population to express pride in being Canadian. (Pride in Canada among Canadians overall is discussed more fully in the Trends and Issues section of this report.) Ninety-four percent of Canadian Muslims say they are very (73%) or somewhat (21%) proud to be Canadian, figures that roughly mirror pride in the population-at-large. Quebec Muslims, like Quebecers overall, are less likely to express strong pride in being Canadian – but even in Quebec nine in ten Muslims (89%) say they are at least somewhat proud to be Canadian.

Muslims most likely to report being very proud to be Canadian include older individuals (84% among those aged 45 and older), the most affluent (81%), the least educated (81%) and (among the foreign-born) those who have lived in Canada the longest (88%). No more than a handful in any subgroup say they are not proud, although among those who have lived in Canada less than five years, 12 percent are either not Canadian citizens or do not consider themselves Canadian.

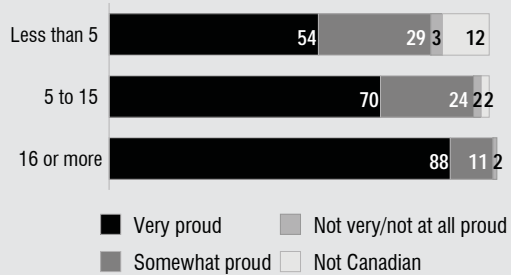
Like the population-at-large, when asked to name the things that make them proud to be Canadian, Muslim-Canadians cite freedom and democracy (33%), Canadian multiculturalism (17%), the fact that Canada is a peaceful country (10%), and the sense that Canada is a humane and caring country (9%). Muslims are somewhat more likely to emphasize multiculturalism in describing Canada's virtues (six points higher than the 11% of all Canadians who cite this), but by and large, sources of pride in Canada among Canadian Muslims match those cited by Canadians overall.

When Canadian Muslims are asked to name their least favourite thing about Canada, the top mention is the weather (24%); by contrast, the weather is the second most frequent mention among Canadians overall (8%) – after the government (10%). Other aspects of Canada Muslims dislike include, in order of frequency of mention, discrimination and treatment of immigrants (12%), taxes (8%), Canadian foreign policy (6%), lack of economic opportunity (6%) and the government (4%).

Pride in being Canadian
December 2006



Pride in being Canadian
Canadian Muslims By years in Canada 2006



Q.M3/FC7
Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be a Canadian?

Strength of Muslim identity

How strong is Muslim identity in Canada?

A strong majority of both Muslim-Canadians and the population-at-large feel that Muslims in Canada identify strongly with their Islamic identity.

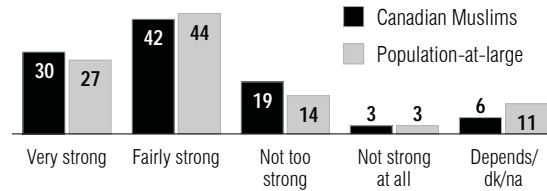
Muslim-Canadians and Canadians overall tend to share the view that Muslims in Canada have a strong sense of Islamic identity. Seventy-two percent of Muslim-Canadians and 71 percent of all Canadians believe that Muslims' sense of Islamic identity is at least fairly strong.

Foreign-born Muslims with roots in Asia are most likely to see Muslim identity in Canada as very strong (37%), while those who immigrated from Africa (31%) and the Middle East (23%) are somewhat less likely to share this perception.¹⁰

Muslims who identify primarily as Canadian are less likely to say that Islamic identity in Canada is strong (63%), while those who identify themselves as primarily Muslim (79%) are more likely to sense that their co-religionists' sense of shared identity is powerful.

Regionally, Quebec Muslims are slightly more likely than others to feel that Islamic identity in Canada is strong. Three-quarters (75%) of Muslims in Quebec feel Islamic identity is strong in Canada, and one-third (33%) see it as very strong. Muslims in Ontario (72%) and the west (62%) are less likely to see Islamic identity as at least fairly strong in Canada.

Strength of Islamic identity among Muslims in Canada December 2006



Q.M22/FC38

In your opinion, how strong a sense of Islamic identity do Muslims in Canada have: very strong, fairly strong, not too strong or not strong at all?

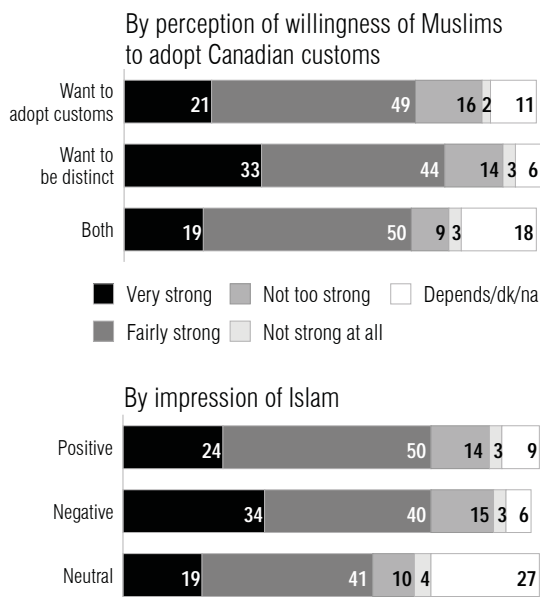
Just as Quebec Muslims stand out on this issue, the general population in Quebec also holds opinions that differ from the rest of Canada. One-third (34%) of Quebecers believe that Muslims in Canada have a very strong sense of Islamic identity, as compared to 27 percent in the Atlantic provinces, 24 percent in Ontario and 20 percent in British Columbia.

¹⁰ Sample sizes for Muslims born in Canada or elsewhere in the world are too small to interpret meaningfully.

The sense in Quebec that Muslims have a *very* strong sense of Islamic identity may be related to Quebecers' higher levels of anxiety about the integration of Muslims. In general, Canadians who have a negative impression of Islam and who see Muslims as wishing to remain distinct from the wider Canadian society are more likely to say that Muslims in Canada have a very strong sense of Islamic identity. Canadians who have a positive impression of Islam and see Muslims as willing to integrate into the Canadian mainstream tend to say that Muslims in Canada have a *fairly* strong sense of Islamic identity.

Strength of Islamic identity among Muslims in Canada

Population-at-large December 2006



Q.FC38

In your opinion, how strong a sense of Islamic identity do Muslims in Canada have: very strong, fairly strong, not too strong or not strong at all?

Is there a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada?

Majorities of both Canadian Muslims and the population-at-large believe the sense of Islamic identity in Canada is growing.

Majorities of both the Canadian Muslim population and the general public believe that there is a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada. Muslim-Canadians (69%) are somewhat more likely than Canadians overall (62%) to believe that Islamic identity in Canada is growing.

Notably, while both Quebec Muslims and Quebecers overall are more likely than the national average to believe that there is a very strong sense of Islamic identity in Canada, Quebec Muslims (57%) and Quebecers overall (58%) are *less* likely than average to believe that this sense of Islamic identity is growing.

Just as foreign-born Muslims with roots in Asia are more likely than average to believe that there is a strong sense of Islamic identity in Canada, they are also more likely (76%) than those from Africa (71%) or the Middle East (57%) to believe that the sense of Islamic identity in Canada is growing.

Foreign-born Muslims who have immigrated to Canada more recently are less likely than those who have been in Canada longer to believe that Islamic identity in Canada is growing, but this difference rests primarily on the fact that more recent arrivals are more likely to say they do not know whether Islamic identity in Canada is growing.

Similarly, the least affluent Muslim-Canadians are less likely to see Islamic identity in Canada as on the rise but are no more likely to sense that it is *not* growing; they are simply more likely to be uncertain (11%).

Among Canadians overall, the most significant group difference on this impression of whether Islamic identity in Canada is growing emerges by community size. Those in cities of a million or more (68%) are more likely than those in the smallest communities (56%) to see Canadian Islamic identity as on the rise.

Growing Islamic identity: good or bad thing?

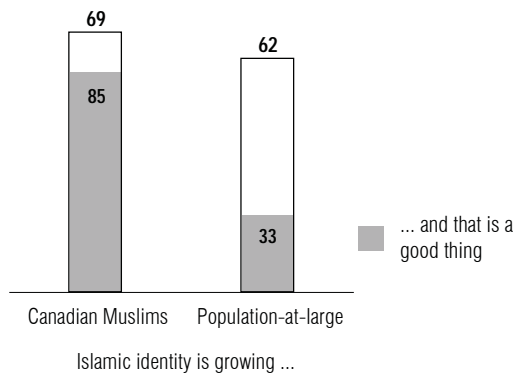
While majorities of Muslim-Canadians and the population overall agree that there is a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada, they disagree on whether this is a positive development.

Those who study diverse societies describe two kinds of social relations: bridging and bonding. Bonding social relations are those that exist within homogeneous religious and ethnocultural communities; organizations such as religious groups or clubs rooted in shared ethnocultural heritage foster bonding relations. Bridging social relations are those that reach across religious and ethnocultural boundaries, and unite individuals along axes of civic engagement or other shared interests. Organizations that foster bridging relations might include community centres, school committees, or groups devoted to neighbourhood issues such as land use or traffic control. Both Muslim-Canadians and Canadians overall have a sense that bonding relations within the Muslim-Canadian community are increasing – but the two groups disagree on whether this development will militate against bridging relations: Muslim participation in the wider society.

Of those Canadians who believe there is a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada, most (56%) believe this is a bad thing for the country, while one-third (33%) believe this is a positive development, and the remaining one in ten (11%) have no clear opinion either way. In contrast, among Canadian Muslims who see the sense of Islamic identity in Canada as on the rise, the vast majority (85%) see this as a positive development. Just nine percent see it as a bad thing, while six percent do not know.

Muslim Islamic identity

December 2006



Q.M23/FC39

In your opinion, these days do you think there is a growing sense of Islamic identity among Muslims in Canada?

Q.M24/FC40

Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for Canada?

Subsample: Those who think there is a growing sense of Islamic identity among Muslims in Canada

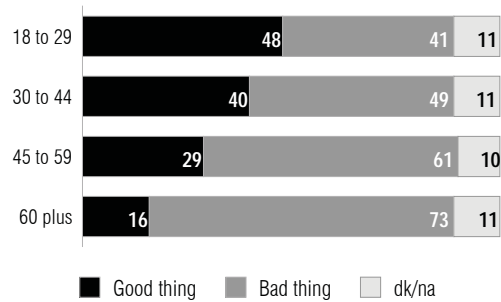
Across the country, Quebecers (24%) are the least likely of all Canadians to see the growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada as a good thing. Atlantic Canadians are most positive (46%) about this development. Notably, although Ontarians and Torontonians tend to have the highest levels of contact with Muslims and be most positive about Islam overall, it is in Ontario (15%) and Toronto (17%) where the highest proportions say they do not know whether a growing sense of Islamic identity is a good thing or a bad thing for Canada.

Among the Canadian population-at-large, those most likely to believe that a growing sense of Islamic identity is good for Canada are young Canadians (48%), men (36%), non-Christians and those who adhere to no religion (38%), and Canadians of non-European origin (41%).

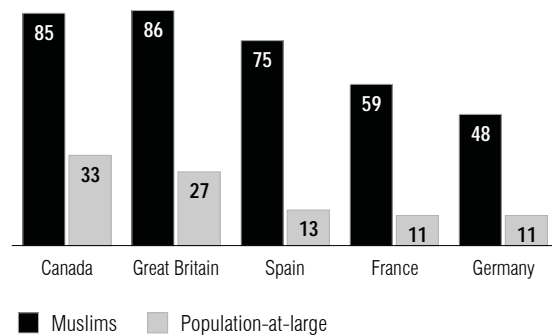
The view that a growing Islamic identity is good for Canada is shared by a large majority across all identifiable subgroups of Canadian Muslims.

In comparison with the Canadian Muslim population, Canadians overall are relatively skeptical about the effects of a growing sense of Islamic identity on the country. Still, Canadians are more optimistic about this phenomenon than those in any of the four European countries surveyed.

Perception of growing Islamic identity
Population-at-large By age December 2006



Growing Islamic identity a good thing
2006



Q.M24/FC40/Pew

Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for Canada?

Subsample: Those who think there is a growing sense of Islamic identity among Muslims in Canada

How is a growing sense of Islamic identity a good thing?

Canadians who see the growing sense of Islamic identity as positive cite cross-cultural understanding and the strengthening of the Muslim community as reasons. Muslim-Canadians also emphasize the quality of Muslim values.

Muslim-Canadians and members of the population-at-large who see an increased sense of Islamic identity in Canada as positive tend to agree broadly on the reasons for this assessment. Both groups emphasize the idea that increased Islamic identity will help Canadians to understand Islam better. Both groups also indicate that a growing sense of Islamic identity suggests that Canadian multiculturalism is working well.

Canadians overall are somewhat more likely than Canadian Muslims to say that a strong sense of Islamic identity in Canada is a positive sign of tolerance and religious freedom in this country. Canadian Muslims are more likely to say increased Islamic identity is positive because Islamic values themselves are positive. Muslim-Canadians are also more likely than the population-at-large to emphasize the idea that a strong sense of Muslim identity will promote peace, and that a proud Muslim community will be better able to fight extremism.

Among Muslim-Canadians, the most affluent, those who have lived in Canada the longest, and those in the youngest age category are more likely than others to emphasize that a strong sense of Islamic identity in Canada will benefit the country in helping the general public to better understand Muslims and their faith.

Muslim-Canadians who attend religious services most frequently are the most likely to say that the main benefit to Canada of an increased sense of Islamic

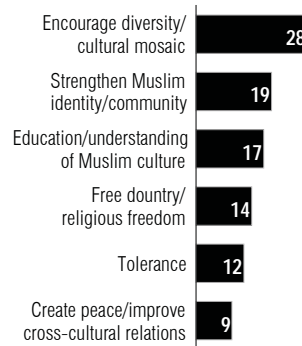
How growing sense of Islamic identity is good for Canada

Top mentions Canadian Muslims
December 2006



How growing sense of Islamic identity is good for Canada

Top mentions Population-at-large
December 2006



Q.M25a/FC41

In what way do you think this is a good thing for our country today?
Subsample: Those who think there is a growing sense of Islamic identity among Muslims in Canada – and think this is a good thing

identity is the increased presence of Islamic values, which are positive.

Concerns about growing Islamic identity

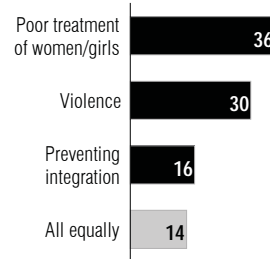
Among Canadians who see a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada as a negative development for the country, gender inequality is the top concern, followed by violence.

Canadians who believe that a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada is bad for the country most often cite perceived poor treatment of women and girls (36%) in Islam as their main worry. An additional three in ten (30%) say that the possibility of violence perpetrated by Muslims is their main worry, while 16 percent feel that an increased sense of Islamic identity will prevent Muslims from integrating into the wider society. Fourteen percent of Canadians who are pessimistic about the effect of an increased Islamic identity in Canada say that all of these issues worry them equally.¹¹

Although most violence purportedly carried out under the banner of Islam has been directed at urban targets (the London subway system, Madrid commuter trains, the World Trade Center), those in Canada’s largest cities are the least likely to cite violence as their top concern about an increased sense of Islamic identity in the country. Just a quarter (25%) of those living in cities of one million or more residents say that violence is what concerns them most about what they see as a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada. The proportion among those in communities of less than 5,000 is 34 percent. Those in urban areas are instead most concerned about poor treatment of women and girls as a possible consequence of increased Islamic identity in Canada: 42 percent of those who live in Canada’s largest cities cite this as their top concern, as compared to 31 percent of those in communities of less than 5,000.

Main worry about Islamic identity in Canada

Population-at-large December 2006



Q.FC42

Which one of the following worries you most about Islamic identity in our country today? It can lead to ...

Subsample: Those who think there is a growing sense of Islamic identity among Muslims in Canada – and think this is a bad thing

These differences by residential density hinge mainly on Canadians’ varying degrees of contact with Muslims. City-dwellers, though more likely to be affected by terrorism should it be carried out on a Canadian target, have more frequent contact with Muslims and are therefore less likely to express concern about violence as an outcome of increased Islamic identity. Of those who have frequent contact with Muslims and are concerned about a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada, just 22 percent cite violence as their main worry, as compared to 36 percent of those who never have personal contact with Muslims. Canadians who encounter Muslims often are more likely to cite the prevention of integration (21%) as a concern. Concern about poor treatment of women and girls, the top worry across groups, does not vary according to degree of personal contact with Muslims.

¹¹ The number of Muslim-Canadians who see an increased sense of Islamic identity as a negative thing for Canada is too small to allow meaningful interpretation of the reasons for this opinion.

Source of religious guidance among Muslims

When seeking guidance as Muslims, Canadian Muslims are most likely to trust a local imam or sheikh. But many Canadian Muslims reject the guidance of religious authorities.

The influence of religion over believers’ thinking and decisions related to family, politics and lifestyle is frequently discussed. With 94 percent of Canadian Muslims stating that their religious beliefs are very important to them, it seems likely that religion will have a powerful influence over at least some aspects of these Canadians’ lives. But when it comes to seeking guidance from religious authorities, which voices do Canadian Muslims trust?

When asked who they would most trust to offer them guidance as Muslims, Canadian Muslims are most likely to trust in a local imam or sheikh (30%), while others cite an imam or institution outside Canada (such as al-Azhar or the Saudi imams of Mecca) (21%), national religious leaders in Canada (12%) or religious leaders on television (4%). Significantly, however, fully a quarter (26%) of Canadian Muslims say they would trust none of these bodies or individu-

als to offer them guidance – and this proportion is substantially higher among some subgroups of the Canadian Muslim population.

Canadian Muslim subgroups most likely to say they would rely on a local imam or sheikh for guidance include young Muslims (37%), and those who attend religious services frequently (36%).

Older Muslims are considerably more likely than younger ones to say that they would trust none of the sources listed to offer them guidance as Muslims. Other groups more likely than average to say they would rely on none of the individuals or bodies named for guidance include the most affluent and the most educated, those who attend religious services rarely or never, and foreign-born Muslims who have lived in Canada for 16 years or longer.

Foreign-born Muslims more recently arrived in Canada are more likely to say they would rely on guidance from imams or institutions outside Canada. Similarly, those who identify themselves as primarily Muslim (as opposed to primarily Canadian) are more likely to say they would trust imams or institutions outside Canada for guidance.

Trust most to offer guidance as a Muslim

Canadian Muslims By age and years in Canada December 2006

	Total	18 TO 29 YEARS OF AGE	30 TO 44 YEARS OF AGE	45 PLUS YEARS OF AGE	LESS THAN 5 YEARS IN CANADA	5 TO 15 YEARS IN CANADA	16 PLUS YEARS IN CANADA
Local Imam or sheikh	30	37	31	18	29	29	26
Imams/institutions outside Canada	21	28	20	13	27	20	19
National religious leaders in Canada	12	10	11	14	7	13	12
Religious leaders on television	4	5	3	5	9	3	2
None	26	13	27	45	20	25	37
dk/na	7	7	8	4	7	9	4

Q.M19

Now I'm going to read you a list of individuals and organizations. Please tell me which one of these you trust the most to offer you guidance as a Muslim ... Local Imam or sheik ... National religious leaders in Canada ... Religious leaders on television ... Imams and institutions outside Canada, such as al-Azhar or the Saudi Imams of Mecca and Medina.

Legal issues related to religious pluralism

Sharia law

Just over half of Canadian Muslims believe Sharia law should be recognized in Canada, including a clear majority of Muslim women. Only one in ten Canadians overall share this view.

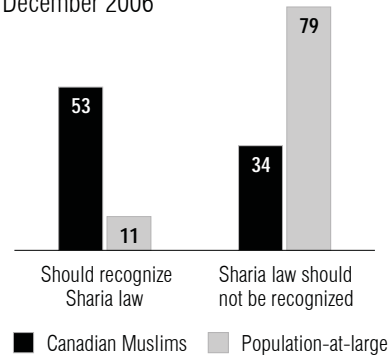
Sharia law, a traditional Islamic legal code, has been at the heart of charged debates in both Quebec and Ontario. Some Muslim groups have sought to have Sharia law recognized as a legal basis for Muslims to settle family disputes. This proposal has met with opposition from both Muslims and non-Muslims. Some have objected that it muddies the division between Canada’s secular legal system and religion. Others have argued that the recognition of Sharia law might compromise the equality rights Canadian Muslim women are guaranteed by the Charter.

Some Muslim groups have expressed the sense that discourse around Sharia was more alarmist than, for example, discussion of the legal recognition of traditional Jewish law. The greater concern about the possible recognition of Sharia law, some claim, is evidence of Islamophobia. In view of its refusal to recognize Sharia law, the Ontario government was forced to end all religion-based arbitration, revoking earlier provincial government decisions that had extended government recognition to Jewish and Catholic arbitration bodies.

Just over half of all Canadian Muslims (53%) believe Sharia law should be recognized by Canadian governments as a legal basis for settling Muslim family disputes. Among the population at large, just one in ten (11%) support such recognition for Sharia law, making this among the most notable areas of divergence between the opinions of Canadian Muslims and the population-at-large. While a third of

Should Canada recognize Sharia law for settling family disputes?

December 2006



Q.M18/FC36

Do you believe that Sharia law – that is, traditional Islamic law – should, or should not, be recognized by Canadian governments as a legal basis for Muslims to settle family disputes, such as those involving divorce, custody and inheritance?

Canadian Muslims (34%) believe that Sharia law should not be recognized by Canadian governments, the proportion among Canadians at large is eight in ten (79%).

Given that much debate on this issue hinges on arguments about gender equality, it is especially notable that Muslim women (55%) are statistically as likely as Muslim men (51%) to believe that Sharia law should be recognized by Canadian governments.

Among Canadian Muslims, other groups expressing disproportionately strong support for the recognition of Sharia law by Canadian governments include the least educated (63%) and least affluent (62%), those in the 18 to 29 age cohort (59%) and those living in Ontario (59%). Foreign-born Muslim-Canadians who have been in the country for a shorter period also tend to be more likely than average to support the recognition of Sharia law; those who have lived

in Canada for 16 years or more, by contrast, are notably below average in their support for Sharia recognition (45%).

Among subgroups of the overall Canadian population, there is relatively little variation on this issue, except by income and education. Trends by income and education among Canadian Muslims on this issue parallel trends among the Canadian population at large: those with higher levels of education and higher incomes are more likely than others to oppose the recognition of Sharia law by Canadian governments. Canadians with less than a high school education are three times as likely (21%) as those with university degrees (7%) to say that Sharia law should be recognized. Those earning less than \$30,000 annually are twice as likely (18%) as those earning \$80,000 or more (8%) to favour recognition of the religious code.

There is some variation among immigrants, with European immigrants less likely (7%) than non-European immigrants (16%) to believe that Canadian governments should acknowledge Sharia law as a legal basis for settling family disputes.

Headscarf ban

A strong majority of Canadian Muslims oppose a ban on Muslim headscarves in public places such as schools. A modest majority of Canadians overall agree.

The French government's 2004 ban on the wearing of any religious apparel, including jewellery depicting crucifixes or stars of David and, most famously, Muslim headscarves, sparked considerable international debate about religious freedom in the public square. Within France, however, the headscarf ban enjoyed broad popular support, with 78 percent calling the ban a good idea.¹²

Although France is the only European country to have actually instituted a ban on Muslim headscarves in schools, the measure enjoys some support elsewhere in Europe. A majority of Germans (54%) believe the ban is a good idea and just over four in ten (43%) in Spain agree. Support for such a ban is weakest in Great Britain, where just three in ten (29%) believe it is a good idea.

No Canadian political party has proposed – or is likely to propose – a ban on religious apparel in schools. Indeed, in a prominent and unanimous 2006 Supreme Court ruling, a Sikh student at a public school in Quebec was granted the right to carry a kirpan (a small ceremonial dagger) in contravention of the school's zero-tolerance policy on weapons. The court cited the Charter's religious freedom provisions in its ruling. Still, it is worthwhile to consider Canadian attitudes about the prospect of a headscarf ban in comparison to attitudes in other western countries with significant Muslim minorities.

¹² Pew Global Attitudes Survey. "Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics." 14 July, 2005.

Most Canadians (55%) believe that banning Muslim headscarves in public places such as schools is a bad idea. About a third (36%) see the ban as a good idea. Among Canadian Muslims, opposition to a ban on Muslim headscarves is vastly stronger, with nearly nine in ten (86%) opposing such a ban and nine percent supporting it.

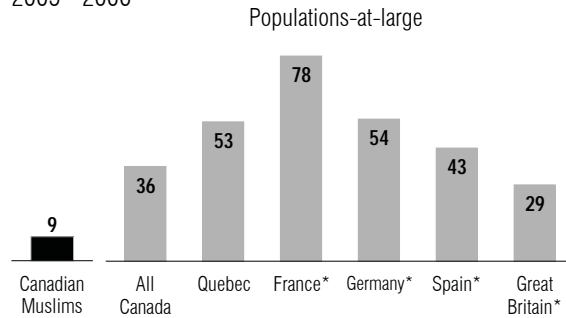
Some differences exist across Muslim subgroups, but substantial majorities across all groups oppose a ban. Those Muslim-Canadians who are above the Muslim average in their support for a headscarf ban are older (12% among those aged 45 or older), have lived in Canada longer (12% among those living in Canada 16 years or more), and those who self-identify primarily as Canadian (19%). Still, even with these variations, overwhelming opposition to a headscarf ban in the Canadian Muslim community is evident.

Among the Canadian general public, the most pronounced differences are regional, with a majority of Quebecers (53%) supporting a headscarf ban and just three in ten (31%) outside Quebec agreeing. Quebec is a strong outlier on this issue; opinion among the other provinces varies relatively little, ranging from 26 percent in support for a ban in Atlantic Canada and British Columbia to 31 percent in the Prairies and 33 percent in Ontario. The regional variation holds even in urban areas: 54 percent of Montrealers support a headscarf ban, as compared to just 28 percent (each) of those living in Toronto and Vancouver.

Canadians with lower levels of educational attainment are more likely than more highly educated Canadians to support a headscarf ban, but even among those with less than a high school diploma (42%), support for a ban remains a minority position. Among those with a university degree, three in ten (32%) believe a headscarf ban in public places such as schools is a good idea.

Headscarf ban good idea

2005 - 2006



Q.M17/FC35/Pew (2005)

Some countries have decided to ban the wearing of headscarves by Muslim women in public places, including schools. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

Older Canadians are markedly more likely than younger Canadians to believe a headscarf ban is a good idea; 48 percent of those aged 60 or over support a ban, 12 points above the national average.

Among religious groups, Canadian Catholics are most supportive of the idea of a headscarf ban, while Canadians who practice a religion other than Christianity are least likely to support such a ban. Forty-four percent of Catholics believe a headscarf ban would be a good idea, as compared to a third of Protestants (33%) and those with no religious affiliation (33%), and a quarter (24%) of religious adherents who are neither Catholic nor Protestant.

Some marked differences emerge on this question according to ethnic background, with half (52%) of Canadians citing French or Quebec roots supporting a headscarf ban, and just a quarter (26%) of Canadians of non-European origin believing a headscarf ban would be a good idea. Canadians of British (31%) and other European (34%) origin are slightly under the national average in their support for a headscarf ban, while those who cite their ethnicity as simply Canadian are slightly above average (41%).

Future of Muslims in Canada

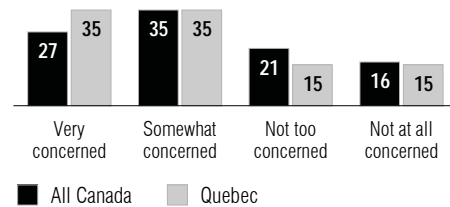
Six in ten Muslim-Canadians express concern about the future of Muslims in Canada, with the greatest worries about unemployment and discrimination.

In addition to being a religious minority in Canada, the Canadian Muslim community is roughly 90 per cent foreign-born. These two statuses alone would present Canadian Muslims with some social and economic challenges, but those challenges have surely been intensified by the international climate that has emerged in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the United States. Over the past several years, Islam has frequently been broached in discussions of terrorism, fundamentalism and the unsuccessful integration of newcomers into Western societies. As a largely foreign-born minority group that has been the subject of such scrutiny, and in some cases hostility (the Canadian public sees Muslims as the minority group in Canada that is most frequently discriminated against), Canadian Muslims express concern about a number of issues related to migration, integration and discrimination.

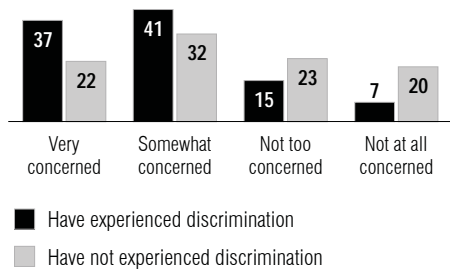
Despite great pride in Canada and optimism about the direction of the country, six in ten Muslim-Canadians are at least somewhat concerned about the future of their co-religionists in Canada and a quarter (27%) say they are very concerned. Fewer than one in five (16%) say they are not at all concerned about the future.

Concerns about the future of Muslims in Canada are most evident among young Muslims, seven in ten (71%) of whom express concern about Islam's future in Canada. Concern is also especially high

Concern about future of Muslims in Canada
Canadian Muslims December 2006



Concern about future of Muslims in Canada
Canadian Muslims By discrimination experienced
December 2006



Q.M13

How concerned, if at all, are you about the future of Muslims in this country – very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned?

among Muslims living in Quebec (70%, with 35% very concerned) and Canadian Muslims who have experienced discrimination in the last two years (78%, with 37% very concerned).

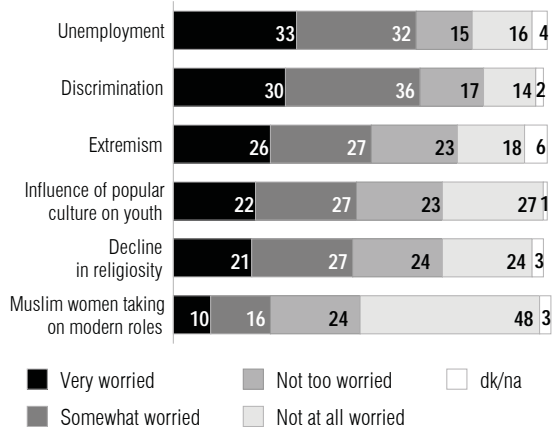
Canadian Muslims are more concerned about achieving success in Canadian society – finding employment and overcoming discrimination – than about influences such as popular culture, secularization and gender equality.

Discrimination. When Canadian Muslims consider life in Canada, two concerns emerge as most pressing: unemployment and discrimination. Three in ten Canadian Muslims (30%) say they are very worried about discrimination. Within the Muslim community, the groups most likely to say they are very worried about discrimination are Quebecers (44%), foreign-born Muslims with roots in Africa (41%) and young people (39%).

Women (73%) are more likely than men (61%) to be at least somewhat concerned about discrimination. This difference is consistent with the finding that Muslim women are slightly more likely than Muslim men to report having had an experience of discrimination in the last two years. These findings may be explained in part by the fact that the minority of Muslim women who wear headscarves are more easily identifiable as Muslim and therefore may be subject to more discrimination.

Concern about issues related to Muslims living in Canada

Canadian Muslims December 2006



Q.M20

Please tell me how worried you are about each of the following issues related to Muslims living in Canada. Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried about ... A decline in the importance of religion among Canada's Muslims ... Muslim women in Canada taking on modern roles in society ... The influence of music, movies, and television on Muslim youth in Canada ... Unemployment among Canadian Muslims ... Extremism among Canadian Muslims ... Discrimination against Muslims?

Unemployment. Roughly on par with discrimination as an issue facing Canadian Muslims is unemployment. Although Muslims in Canada are more highly educated than the population-at-large (45% hold university degrees, as compared to 33% of all Canadians), their earnings lag behind the national average.

Two-thirds of Canadian Muslims are at least somewhat worried about unemployment among Canadian Muslims, and a third (33%) are very worried. Within the Muslim community, the groups most likely to be very concerned about unemployment are Quebecers (46%), those who immigrated to Canada from Africa (44%), those earning less than \$30,000 annually (43%), and foreign-born Muslims who have been in the country for 15 years or less (40%).

Extremism. Although the vast majority of Canadian Muslims say they see little or no support for extremist groups such as al-Qaeda in their communities, and very few feel a terrorist attack perpetrated by Muslim-Canadians is likely, nevertheless a slight majority of Muslims in Canada say they are very (26%) or somewhat (27%) worried about extremism among Canadian Muslims.

There is relatively little variation in the Muslim subgroups saying they are very concerned about extremism (this figure tends to be in the high 20% range across groups). There are some notable differences, however, in the proportions of Muslim subgroups claiming to be at least somewhat concerned about extremism: women (60%) are more likely than men (46%) to express moderate worry about extremism in the Islamic community. Among Muslims born outside Canada who have lived in this country for 16 years or more, nearly six in ten (57%) are at least somewhat worried about extremism among Canadian Muslims. Among those who have lived in Canada less than five years, only half (49%) express such worry.

Education and income profile – Canadian Muslims versus population-at-large
December 2006

	CANADIAN MUSLIMS	POPULATION-AT-LARGE
Education		
Some elementary	1	*
Completed elementary	1	1
Some high school	4	9
Completed high school	13	19
Community college	23	27
Some university	11	10
Completed university	23	21
Post-graduate/professional	22	12
Income		
Under \$30,000	36	18
\$30,000 to \$60,000	26	26
\$60,000 to \$80,000	10	16
\$80,000 to \$100,000	6	9
\$100,000 and over	7	15
dk/na	15	15

* Less than one percent

Education and income demographics (FC 2006-4)

Popular culture. Although concern about the influence of popular culture on youth is certainly not limited to the Muslim community, about half of Canadian Muslims are either very (22%) or somewhat (27%) concerned about the influence of music, movies and television on Muslim youth. Remarkably, younger Muslims themselves express the highest levels of concern about the influence of popular culture on Muslim youth in Canada; a quarter of Muslims aged 18 to 29 are very (25%) worried about the influence of popular culture on Muslim youth. Other groups that are especially likely to be very worried about the effects of popular culture on young Muslims are the least affluent (32%) and least educated (32%), foreign-born Muslims who have lived in Canada less than five years (31%), Quebecers (28%) and those who attend religious services frequently (28%).

Secularization. Although most Canadian Muslims believe there is a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada, half say they are either very (21%) or somewhat (27%) worried about a decline in the importance of religion among their fellow Muslims. Young Muslims are the most worried of all groups about a perceived decline in the importance of religion among Canadian Muslims: fully six in ten young Muslims say they are very (28%) or somewhat (31%) concerned about diminished religiosity among their fellow Muslims. Other groups who are very worried about the secularization of Muslims in Canada include the least educated (28%), those who attend religious services at least weekly (27%), Quebecers (27%), and foreign-born Muslims who have been in Canada for 15 years or less (25%).

Modern roles for women. Canadians who feel apprehensive about a growing sense of Islamic identity among Canadian Muslims cite gender inequality as their main reason. When Canadian Muslims are offered a slate of concerns about life in Canada,

however, the idea of Muslim women taking on modern roles in society is the matter of least concern. Just a quarter of Canadian Muslims are very (10%) or somewhat (16%) worried about Muslim women in Canada taking on modern roles in society. Fully half of Canadian Muslims (48%) say they are not at all worried about this phenomenon.

Notably, Muslim women in Canada are statistically as likely (28%) as their male co-religionists (23%) to express at least moderate concern about women taking on modern roles. Still, nearly half of both women (47%) and men (49%) say they are not at all concerned about this issue. Few subgroups are especially likely to say they are very worried about Muslim women taking on modern roles in society; Quebecers (22%), those with a high school education or less (19%), and those aged 18 to 29 (13%) are more likely than average to express strong concern, but this remains firmly a minority position across groups.

Constitutional options for Quebec

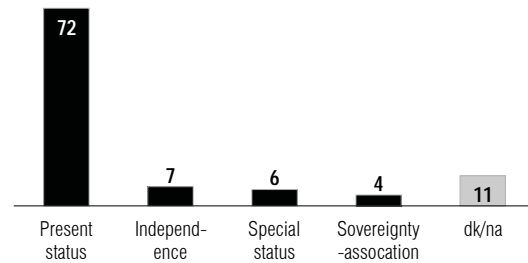
Seven in ten Quebec Muslims believe Quebec’s present status in Canada is the best constitutional option for the province, much higher than the level of support expressed by other Quebecers.

There has been considerable debate in Quebec over the influence of newcomers and minority groups on Quebec’s separatist movement. Perhaps the most infamous remark on this matter was Jacques Parizeau’s complaint after the 1995 referendum that “money and the ethnic vote” had defeated his party’s efforts toward a pro-sovereignty vote. FOCUS CANADA data show that, at least among Quebec Muslims, there is minimal support for Quebec independence, or any arrangement other than Quebec’s current status in Canada.

Seven in ten Quebec Muslims (72%) believe that Quebec’s present status in Canada is the best constitutional option for Quebec, while proportions of less than 10 percent support independence (7%), special status (6%) and sovereignty-association (4%). One in ten Quebec Muslims do not know what the best constitutional option is for the country. This is in sharp contrast to the views of the Quebec population overall, as described at the end of the Trends and Issues section.

Constitutional options for Quebec

Quebec Muslims December 2006



Q.M40

Here are some constitutional options that have been proposed for Quebec. Which one do you think would be best ...?

Subsample: Muslim residents of Quebec