

# POLLS on ISLAM, MUSLIMS, and ISLAMOPHOBIA in CANADA

**IMPACT:** Polls and surveys from 2004 to 2017 measuring public opinions in Canada on issues related to anti-Islamophobia legislation, niqab bans, and the prevalence of Islamophobia in Canadian society, have found that most Canadians acknowledge that Islamophobia is a problem in Canada, yet most Canadians hold unfavorable views about Islam and Muslims, and most are open to policies that would single out Muslims for heightened regulation and monitoring in public spaces.

- A public opinion poll published in May 2019 by Ipsos, an independent market research company, for *Global News* found that **one in four Canadians (26%) responded that, over the past five years, it has become “more acceptable” to be prejudiced against “Muslims/Arabs.”** Twenty-three percent (23%) responded that that it has become “more acceptable” to be prejudiced against “immigrants,” and 21% responded that it has become “more acceptable” to be prejudiced against refugees.
- According to a 2018 survey by the Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), more than half (**57%**) of **Canadians responded that Islamophobia is “an increasingly disturbing problem in Canada,”** and **60% agreed that the government “must take action to combat Islamophobia” in Canada.**
- A public opinion poll published in July 2018 by the Angus Reid Institute, a Canadian “national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation,” in partnership with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, found that **59% of Canadians believe that “homegrown radical Islamic terrorism” is a “quite serious” or “very serious” threat to Canada, with 41% responding that “they believe there are radicalized individuals living in their communities today.”** Compared to polling conducted in 2014 by Angus Reid shortly after the October 2014 shooting on Parliament Hill, those who voted for the Liberal or New Democratic Party were more likely in the 2015 federal election than in the 2011 federal election to identify the Muslim community as a **“partner in the fight against radicalization in Canada” (Liberal 74% and NDP 69%),** while **61% of Conservative Party of Canada voters in the 2018 poll identified the Muslim community as “part of the problem of radicalization,” up from 51% in the 2014 poll.**
- A public opinion poll published in April 2017 by the Angus Reid Institute found that Canadians have a much less positive view of Muslims than adherents of other religions. Of those surveyed, only **32% of respondents from Quebec, and 34% from the rest of Canada, held a “generally favourable view of Islam.”** For Quebec in particular, this number doubled from a 2013 poll, which may be attributed to the Quebec City Mosque Shooting in January of 2017.
- An opinion poll published in March 2017 by the Angus Reid Institute measured public responses to M-103, a non-binding resolution in the Canadian Parliament that called on the government to “condemn Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination.” According to respondents, **31% believe M-103 should not be passed because it is “a threat to Canadians’ freedom of speech,” and 42% said they would vote against the motion.** Forty-five percent believe that Islamophobia and discrimination are a serious problem, while 55% believe that anti-Muslim attitudes and discrimination have been “overblown” by politicians and the media
- A November 2017 national study by the Angus Reid Institute, in partnership with Faith in Canada 150, about the role of religion in the public square found that almost half (48%) of those surveyed said religion makes “a mix of good and bad” contributions to Canadian society. **The most “benefiting” religions to “Canadian public life” were Catholicism (35%) and Protestantism (26%), while the most “damaging” religion was Islam (46%), by a large margin.**
- A survey published in October 2017 by the Angus Reid Institute measured public responses in Quebec to Bill 62, also referred to as Quebec’s “Religious Neutrality Bill,” which prohibits those with face-coverings from receiving government services. **Over 62% of those surveyed “strongly support” this bill, while only 4% “strongly oppose” it.**
- Another survey published in October 2017 by the Angus Reid Institute measured Canadian attitudes towards Muslim women who wear the niqab (face veil). In response to the prompt that “a woman visiting a government office in a ‘niqab’ should be...,” **70% of those polled inside Quebec responded “prohibited” compared to 40% in the rest of Canada,**

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while 8% of those in Quebec responded “welcome” compared to 28% in the rest of Canada. Twenty-three percent of people polled from Quebec responded “discouraged while tolerated,” compared to 31% in the rest of Canada.

- A [poll](#) published in December 2016 by [Forum Research](#) found that, among “identifiable racial groups” in Canada, **Canadian adults measured “unfavourable feelings” against Muslims at 28%, and “favourable feelings” at 54%**. The poll also found the most unfavorable feelings against Muslims were measured among Canadians from Quebec (28%) and conservatives (40%).
- A [survey](#) published in December 2016 by Ipsos found that respondents “immensely” overestimated the current Muslim population in Canada. According to the results, **the perception of the current Muslim population in Canada was 17%, compared to the actual data of 3.2%**. And while the projected future Muslim population of Canada in 2020 was perceived to be 24%, the actual projected data is 2.8%.
- A [survey](#) published in July 2016 by [Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants](#) (OCASI) found that **58% of Ontarians supported the government’s decision to accept Syrian refugees, yet 53% responded that Canada should only allow immigrants “from countries that have similar values to our own.”** Only 32% of Ontarians had a “positive impression” of Islam.
- A [survey](#) published in April 2016 by the [Environics Institute for Survey Research](#), in partnership with other organizations, measured the opinions of Canadian Muslims and their relationship to broader Canadian society. Just over half (55%) of Canadian Muslim respondents said they felt a very strong sense of belonging, and 39% indicated a generally strong sense of belonging. In terms of concerns about issues facing Muslims in Canada, **67% of Canadian Muslims were “very” or “somewhat” worried about media portrayals of Muslims in Canada, 62% for discrimination against Muslims; 52% for “violent extremism among Canadian Muslims”; and 53% regarding unemployment.**
- A [survey](#) published in March 2015 by Ipsos found that **68% of respondents disagreed with allowing Muslim women to wear niqab or burqa during citizenship ceremonies, and 72% “agreed” that the burqa or niqab are “symbols of oppression and rooted in a culture that is anti-women.”** A [survey](#) published in January 2014 by the Association of Canadian Studies (ACS) and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF) found that **French-speaking Canadians (48%) were more likely than English-speaking Canadians (27%)** to agree with the prompt that “banning the wearing of visible religious symbols in public institutions will help reduce religious fundamentalism.”
- A [nationwide survey](#) published in 2012 for the Association of Canadian Studies (Montreal) and Canada Race Relations Foundation (Toronto) on Canadian attitudes towards religion, multiculturalism, and sources of racism found that **52% of Canadians distrust Muslims, and 42% believe that discrimination against Muslims is “mainly their fault.”**
- A [report](#) published in 2004 by the [National Council of Canadian Muslims](#) (NCCM) (formerly known as Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations/CAIR-CAN) analyzed a survey conducted by NCCM in 2004 that looked at the interactions between security officials and Canadian Muslims. It found that the **locations of contact by security officials included home visits (45%) and in workplaces (23%), and 19% of those contacted reported that security officials contacted them multiple times.** According to the survey responses, security officials targeted mostly **men (56%), Arabs (54%), those between the ages of 18 and 35 (62%), and students (38%).**

*This factsheet is published in collaboration between the Bridge Initiative and researchers at [Wilfrid Laurier University](#). More information about this project can be found [here](#).*