

Integration into Canadian society

Integration versus separation

Muslims tend to believe their community wants to integrate into Canadian society rather than remain distinct. Non-Muslims hold the opposite view, although less so than a decade ago. Muslims and non-Muslims generally agree on the values immigrants should adopt when moving to Canada.

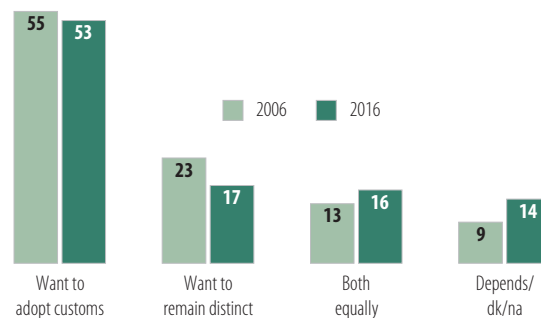
DO MUSLIMS WANT TO BE PART OF CANADIAN SOCIETY? Oftentimes minority groups are seen by the mainstream as making a concerted effort to remain separate from the larger society, which may be interpreted as a deliberate act of refusing to participate fully as citizens. In the case of Canada’s Muslims, the survey reveals that members of this community are much more likely to believe their co-religionists wish to adopt Canadian customs (53%) than to be distinct from the larger Canadian society (17%). The remainder believes both aspirations are equally present (16%), while another 14 percent cannot offer an opinion.

These results are largely similar to those recorded in 2006, although fewer now take the view that most Muslims want to remain distinct from larger the Canadian society and more believe both aspirations are at play or have no clear opinion. Views on this question are generally similar across the population, with Canadian-born Muslims now among the most likely to believe their community wants both integration and to remain distinct (26%).

How does the non-Muslim population view the motivation for integration by Muslims into broader society? As in 2006, the population-at-large is more likely to believe Muslims want to remain distinct (43%) than adopting Canadian customs and way of life (34%), but the gap between these two perspectives has narrowed significantly since 2006. This trend is evident across the population, with the proportion who believe Muslims want to integrate increasing noticeably across regions and demographic subgroups. Quebecers continue to be more likely than other Canadians to believe that Muslims want to remain distinct, although this view is now less prevalent than a decade ago (54%, down 13 percentage points).

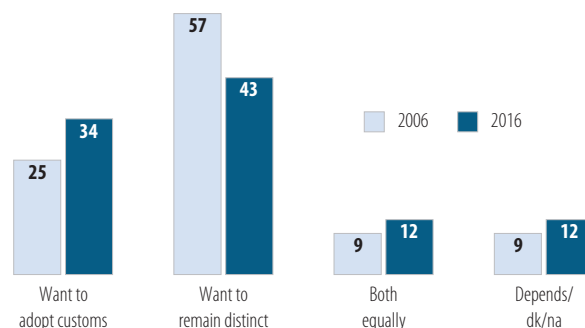
Do Muslims want to adopt Canadian customs or remain distinct?

Canadian Muslims



Do Muslims want to adopt Canadian customs or remain distinct?

Non-Muslim Canadians



Q.19/FC Q.11

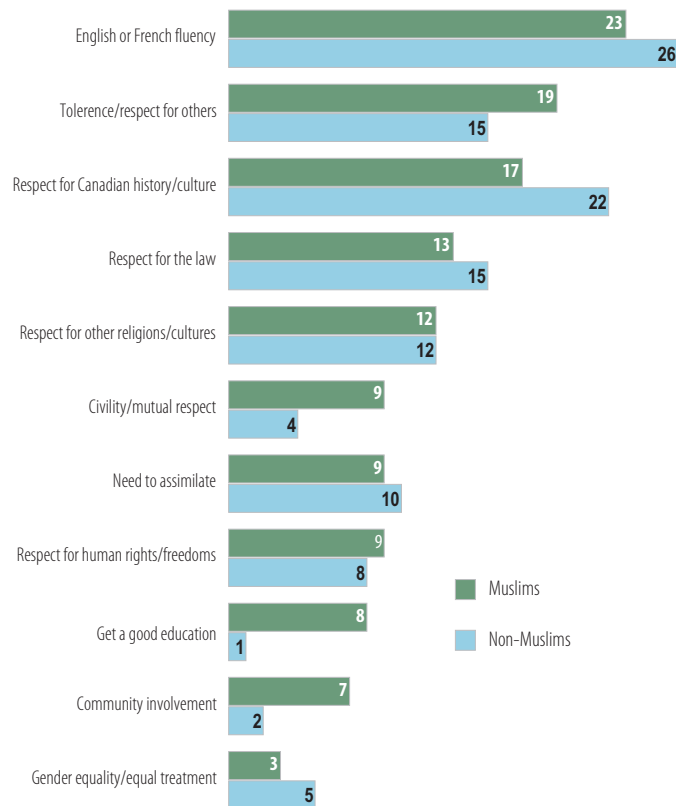
Do you think most Muslims coming to our country today want to adopt Canadian customs and way of life, or do you think that they want to be distinct from the larger Canadian society?

IMPORTANT VALUES FOR IMMIGRANTS TO ADOPT.

The survey also asked participants to identify (unprompted) those values they believe are most important for immigrants to learn and adopt when they move to Canada. Many responses were offered but the most commonly mentioned include language fluency (English or French) (23%), tolerance and respect for others (19%), and respect for Canadian history and culture (17%), followed by respect for the law, respect for other religions and cultures, general civility and mutual respect, the need to assimilate generally, and respect for human rights and freedoms. Few (7%) did not identify at least one such value that immigrants were expected to adopt. Responses to this question are largely similar across the Muslim population.

When asked the same question, non-Muslim Canadians offered a notably similar list of responses in roughly the same order of priority. The non-Muslim population also places the greatest emphasis on language fluency, tolerance of others, respect for Canadian history and culture, and respect for the law. Among non-Muslims, native-born and immigrants also show a remarkable degree of agreement on the important values that immigrants to Canada should be adopting. The notable exceptions are immigrants being more likely to emphasize the importance of respecting other religions and cultures, and on the need to assimilate.

What values are most important for immigrants to adapt?
Top mentions



Q.20/FC Q.12
What do you consider to be the values most important for immigrants to learn and adopt when they move to Canada?

Rights to religious practice

Three-quarters believe Muslims should have the right to pray in public schools, with smaller majorities supporting the right for women to wear the niqab at citizenship ceremonies and when receiving public services. Non-Muslims are somewhat less supportive, especially in Quebec.

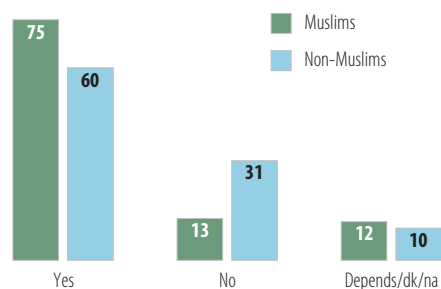
The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms includes protection of religious beliefs, but Muslims have encountered challenges in the observance of some practices, notably the wearing of hijabs and especially niqabs that cover most of the face (this became a political issue during the recent federal election).

PRAYING IN SCHOOLS. Islam differs from other religions practiced in Canada in requiring adherents to pray at five designated times throughout the day. This may or may not be accommodated at workplaces and schools, requiring Muslims to find spaces suitable for praying according to the prescribed schedule. Not surprisingly, most (75%) believe that Muslim students should have the right to pray in public schools, compared with 13 percent who do not agree, and a comparable proportion who say it depends (e.g., on circumstances) (8%) or cannot offer an opinion (4%).

Support for this right is the majority view across the population but is especially strong in Ontario (83%), among women (82%), Muslims under 45 years of age (80%), Canadian-born (91%), individuals identifying primarily as Muslim (87%), and those who visit mosques to pray at least once a week (81%). Support is least evident among those who identify primarily as Canadian (61%) and Muslims 45 and over (64%).

The right for Muslim students to pray in public schools is also supported by a smaller majority (60%) of non-Muslim Canadians, although another three in ten (31%) oppose it. Opposition to Muslims praying in schools is most evident in Quebec (47%) and increases with age (17% among those 18 to 34, rising to 38% among those 55 and older).

Should Muslims in Canada have the right to pray in public schools?



Q.31a /FC Q.13a

Do you believe Muslims in Canada should, or should not, have the right to practice each of the following ... Praying in public schools?

WEARING THE NIQAB. Wearing the niqab has generated controversy in Canada because many non-Muslims feel offended or uncomfortable with women covering their faces in public. The issue came to a head in the past year when a woman was denied the opportunity to participate in a citizenship ceremony unless she uncovered her face during the oath of allegiance. The woman took this issue to court and won the case, but the issue became political during the recent federal election.

While the court case appears to have settled the legal rights for niqab-wearing women to take the citizenship oath (they must establish their identity earlier in the ceremony), the right to do so is not supported by all Canadian Muslims. Six in ten (60%) believe Muslim women should have the right to participate in citizenship ceremonies while wearing a niqab, but one in four (24%) does not agree, while the remainder say it depends (9%) or have no opinion (7%).

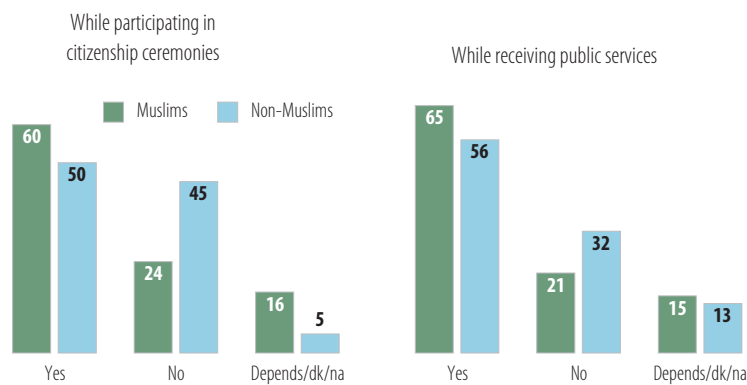
More broadly, two-thirds (65%) of Muslims believe women should have the right to receive other types of public

services while wearing the niqab, versus 21 percent who disagree and another 15 percent who have no clear view either way.

On both questions, support for wearing the niqab is strongest among Muslims 18 to 34, those born in Canada, and those who identify primarily as Muslim. Opinions are most divided in Quebec, among Muslims 45 years and older, those born in the Middle East or West Asia, and those who identify primarily as Canadian. Notably, there are no differences in the opinions of Muslim men and women.

The right for Muslim women to wear the niqab at citizenship ceremonies and to receive public services is also supported by a majority of non-Muslim Canadians, although to a somewhat lesser degree. More than four in ten (45%) oppose the niqab at citizenship ceremonies, while one-third oppose the right to wear the niqab while receiving public services. In both cases opposition is most prevalent among Quebecers, Catholics, older Canadians, and those with less education.

Should Muslims in Canada have the right to wear the niqab?



Q.31bc/FC Q.13bc
Do you believe Muslims in Canada should, or should not, have the right to practice each of the following ... Participating in citizenship ceremonies while wearing a niqab ... Receiving public services while wearing a niqab?

Broader social values

Muslims share with other Canadians a value on openness to connection between different cultures in the country's diverse society. But Muslims also hold a more patriarchal view of the family, and are much less accepting of homosexuality.

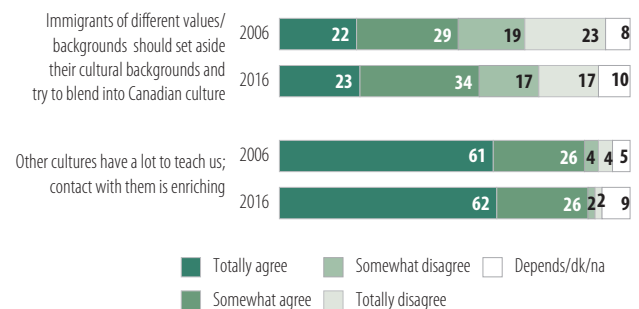
Different cultures have distinct social values, sometimes closely tied to religious traditions and practices. The survey included several measures to provide the basis for comparing the social values of Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada.⁴

CULTURAL FUSION. As a largely immigrant community from non-western countries, what are Muslims' values about the blending of different cultures into the Canadian mosaic? More than half totally agree (23%) or somewhat agree (34%) with the statement "Immigrants of different races and backgrounds should set aside their cultural backgrounds and try to blend into Canadian culture", compared with one in three who somewhat (17%) or totally (17%) disagrees (the remaining 10% did not provide a clear response to the question). These results reflect a modest shift in the positive direction since 2006, when 51 percent agreed with this statement.

Agreement with this statement has increased most significantly since 2006 in Quebec, among Muslims 45 years and older, among those who frequently pray at mosques, and immigrants who have been in the country either less than 10 years or more than 20. Agreement is now most widespread in western Canada, among men, those 60 and older and those who identify primarily as Canadian (71%, versus those who identify primarily as Muslim (53%), although this latter percentage is up 7 points since 2006).

By comparison, other Canadians are somewhat more likely than Muslims to agree with this statement about cultures blending in (29% totally agree and 39% somewhat agree), with one in three (33%) expressing disagreement) [note: this survey of the general population was conducted online and did not offer respondents the option of not answering the question]. As with Muslims, this value is most strongly held among older Canadians.

Social values on cultural fusion



Q.40b-c

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 ... Immigrants of different races and backgrounds should set aside their cultural backgrounds and try to blend into Canadian culture?

A much larger majority of Muslims totally (62%) or somewhat (26%) agree with the statement that "other cultures have a lot to teach us; contact is enriching", with only four percent disagreeing and another 10 percent offering no clear response. These results are essentially unchanged from 2006. This view is shared by most Muslims across the country, with agreement most evident among those 18 to 34 (93% totally agree), those with a university education (92%), and those born in Canada (95%). This value is only marginally stronger among those identifying primarily as Muslim (89%), versus those identify primarily as Canadian (85%) [Note: there is no current general population data for this question].

⁴ Unless other indicated, these social values measures are drawn from the Environics Research Group's Social Values Research Program, which is based on research conducted on an ongoing basis in Canada since 1983.

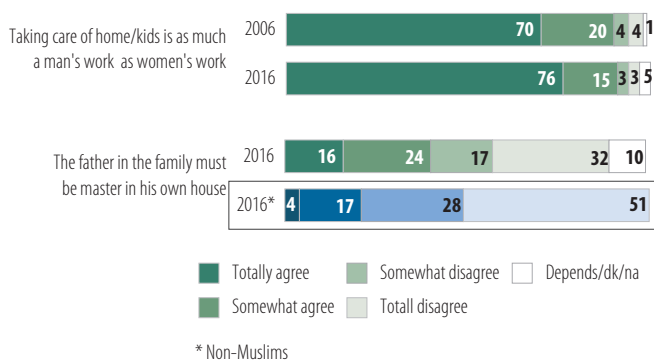
FAMILY AND GENDER ROLES. Many of the countries from which Muslims come share values related to family and gender roles that are more traditional than in secular western countries such as Canada. The survey results reflect this difference, although less so than may be commonly assumed. Nine in ten Muslims surveyed totally (76%) or somewhat (15%) agree with the statement that **“taking care of home and kids is as much a man’s work as woman’s work”**, with only six percent in disagreement. This viewpoint is largely unchanged since 2006, although the proportion who totally agree has strengthened. Agreement with the statement about men and women sharing home and childcare is at the 90 percent mark across the Muslim population, and does not differ between men and women. Total agreement is especially widespread among those born in Canada (86%) and those 18 to 34 (80%). In no group does more than one in ten disagree with the statement [Note: there is no current general population data for this question].

Values about sharing of housework and childcare notwithstanding, Muslims are more divided about who should hold the power in the home. Four in ten totally (16%) or somewhat (24%) agree that **“The father in the family must be the master in his own house”**, compared with half who somewhat (17%) or totally (32%) disagree (the remaining 10% are equivocal or do not offer a response).⁵

Views on this statement vary noticeably across the population. Not surprisingly agreement is more prevalent among men (46%) than among women (33%), as well as among older Muslims, and those with the least education and income. In no group, however, do more than half say they agree that father should be master in his own house. The one group that stands out most clearly on patriarchy consists of Muslims born in Canada: more than eight in ten (83%) reject the statement, and 55 percent say they totally disagree with it.

Patriarchy is less widely valued by the non-Muslim population. Less than one in four Canadians overall totally (4%) or somewhat (17%) agrees with the statement about father being master, compared with more than seven in ten who somewhat (28%) or totally (51%) disagree. Patriarchy is less likely to be valued by native-born Canadians (19%) than by those born in other countries (34%).

Social values on family and gender roles



Q.40a-d
 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. Taking care of home and kids is as much man's work as woman's work ... The father in the family must be the master in his own house?

⁵ This statement was developed by the Environics Research Group as a measure of the social value defined as “patriarchy.”

HOMOSEXUALITY. One of the sharpest points of difference between religious and secular values is around sexuality. The most recent example in Canada is the controversy over changes to the sex-ed curriculum in Ontario schools, which prompted boycotts by families in several faith communities, including Muslims.

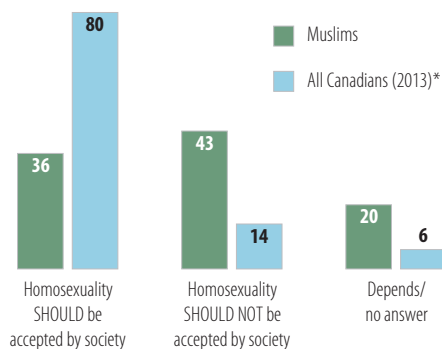
This divide is clearly revealed in the survey findings on the general acceptability of homosexuality. Muslims in Canada are divided between those who believe homosexuality should be generally accepted by society (36%) and a larger group who disagrees (43%) (the remainder are equivocal or have no clear opinion). The balance of opinion is much different in the general population, based on a Pew Research Center survey conducted in 2013 which showed that only 14 percent of Canadians overall considered homosexuality to be morally unacceptable.⁶ In an international context, Canadians are among the most accepting of homosexuality, along with Spaniards, Germans and Czechs. Opinions are dramatically different in such predominantly-Muslim countries as Indonesia, Pakistan, Egypt, Tunisia and the Palestinian Territories, where no more than three percent of the surveyed populations said homosexuality was acceptable.

Opinions on this issue vary somewhat across the Muslim community in Canada. Acceptability of homosexuality is most prevalent among Muslims 18 to 34 (47%) and those born in Canada (52%), but in no group does more than a small majority share this view (in contrast to the values of non-Muslim Canadians). Homosexuality is most widely considered to be unacceptable by Muslims 45 to 59 (55%), those with the lowest incomes (56%), those born in Pakistan (52%), regular prayer goers (51%) and those who strongly value patriarchy (58%).

Traditional values of Muslims are further reflected in views about the compatibility of same-sex relationships and one's Muslim faith. Only one in four (26%) says it should be possible to be both an observant Muslim and live openly in a lesbian or gay same-sex relationship. A clear majority (57%) rejects this idea, while the remainder say it depends (3%) or do not offer an opinion (15%).

An affirmative response is somewhat more evident among Muslims under 35 (32%) and those 60 plus (36%), as well as

Opinions of homosexuality

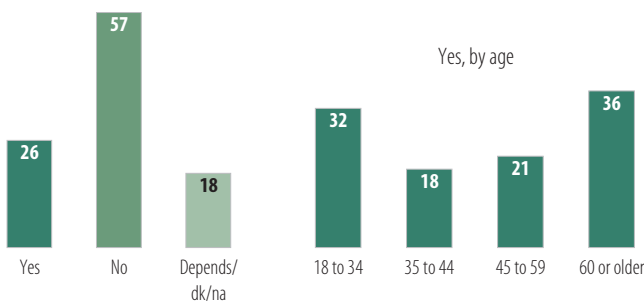


* Pew Research, 2013

Q.41

Which of the following comes closer to your own opinion: Homosexuality should be accepted by society ... Homosexuality should not be accepted by society?

Should it be possible to be both an observant Muslim and live openly in a lesbian or gay same-sex relationship?



Q.42

Do you think it should be possible to be both an observant Muslim and to live openly in a lesbian or gay same-sex relationship?

among Canadian-born (32%) and those living in western Canada (33%), but this view is not shared by as many as four in ten in any part of the population. Even among Muslims who believe that homosexuality should be accepted by society, just over half (55%) believe there should be no conflict between being observant and also being in an open same-sex relationship. Rejection of the compatibility between Muslim observance and a same-sex relationships is the majority view among Muslims 35 to 59 years of age, those with the lowest incomes, those who identify primarily as Muslim, those born in Pakistan, the Middle East or West Asia, regular prayer goers, and those with patriarchal values.

⁶ Source: Pew Research Center Survey, June 2013