

Personal Connection to Canada

Seven in ten Muslims living in Canada are immigrants, and as followers of a minority (i.e., non-Christian) religion, questions are sometimes raised about their attachment and even their loyalty to this country. As was documented in 2006, Muslims as a group are as connected to Canada, if not more so, than the non-Muslim population, and this bond has strengthened over the past decade.

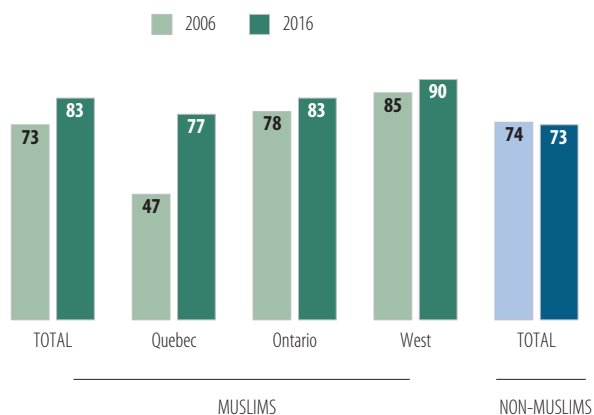
Pride and belonging

The vast majority of Muslims feel very proud to be Canadian, and this sentiment has strengthened since 2006, especially among Muslims in Quebec. The greatest sources of pride continue to be the country's freedom and democracy, as well as its multiculturalism and diversity.

PRIDE IN CANADA. Survey research evidence has long documented that immigrants to Canada are among the most loyal and proud citizens of their adopted country. This well applies to Muslims, with more than eight in ten (83%) saying they are very proud to be Canadian (with most of the remainder indicating they are “somewhat” proud), and this proportion has increased by 10 percentage points since 2006. This upward trend in strong pride is evident across most of the Muslim community, but is most significant in Quebec (where it has jumped 30 percentage points, to 77%),

Strong pride is the predominant sentiment across all groups, but increases east to west, young to old, low to high income, and (among immigrants) by length of time living in Canada. Canadian-born (that is, second generation) Muslims are among the most proud (91%), with this view less evident among those born in Africa (74%) and the Middle East/West Asia (75%). Strong pride is somewhat more widespread among those who identify primarily as Canadians (93%) compared with those who identify primarily as Muslim (84%), but it is the latter group that has shown the most growth since 2006 (up 17 points). This means that having a strong Muslim identity is increasingly associated with also having strong pride in being Canadian.

Very proud to be Canadian



Q.3/FC Q.3
Would you say you are very, somewhat, not very, or not at all proud to be a Canadian?

Across the general (non-Muslim) population, three-quarters (73%) say they are very proud to be Canadian, with another 19 percent indicating they are somewhat proud, and only four percent who are not very or not at all proud. These results are essentially unchanged from 2006, and the proportion that is very proud is now roughly equivalent across the country, with the notable exception of Quebec (where 47% are very proud, compared with 45% in 2006). Among non-Muslims, native born (74%) and immigrants (74%) are equally likely to express strong pride in their Canadian identity.

GREATEST SOURCE OF PRIDE IN CANADA. What gives Muslims the greatest source of pride in their country is largely the same characteristics identified by other Canadians (as recorded in previous Focus Canada surveys). At the top of the list are the country's freedom and democracy (24%) and its multiculturalism and diversity (22%), followed by being a peaceful, stable country, its humanitarian/friendly people, low crime rate, tolerance and respect for others, and its laws guaranteeing equality and human rights.

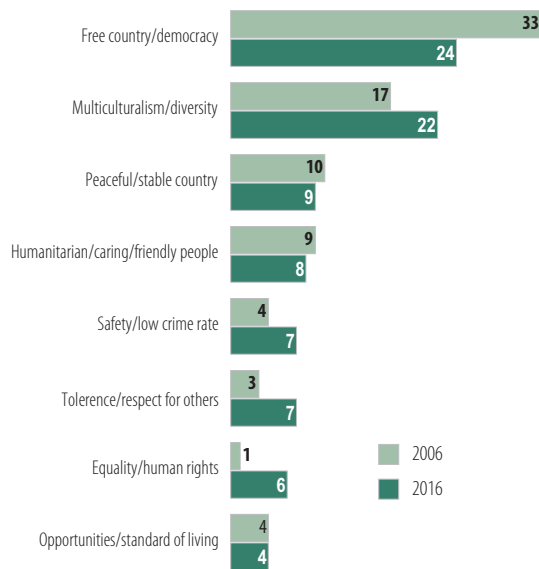
These results are similar to responses given in 2006, in that the order of reasons is essentially the same. Since 2006, mention of freedom and democracy has declined (down 9 points), with this trend evident across most of the country but especially in Quebec, among native-born citizens, younger Muslims and those who identify primarily as Muslim (see below). By comparison, the emphasis on both multiculturalism/diversity and laws guaranteeing equality and human rights has strengthened (up 5 points each, respectively). Multiculturalism and diversity is by far the number one source of pride for native-born Muslims (cited by 43%).

GREATEST DISLIKE ABOUT CANADA. When Muslims are asked to name their least favourite thing about Canada, the top mention is once again the climate or cold weather (mentioned unprompted by 31%), and this response has increased over the past decade and especially among those who have emigrated from Africa (44%).

No other aspect of Canada is disliked by as many as one in ten Muslims, including a lack of economic opportunities, discrimination/treatment of others (including Muslims) (9%), taxes, poor government leadership, and Canada's foreign policy. In most cases now less mentioned than in 2006. Only a handful identify such dislikes as secular values, government legislation (e.g., Bill C-51), or Ontario's new sexual education curriculum. One in four (25%) Muslims did not identify anything about Canada he or she particularly dislikes.

Greatest source of pride in Canada

Top mentions

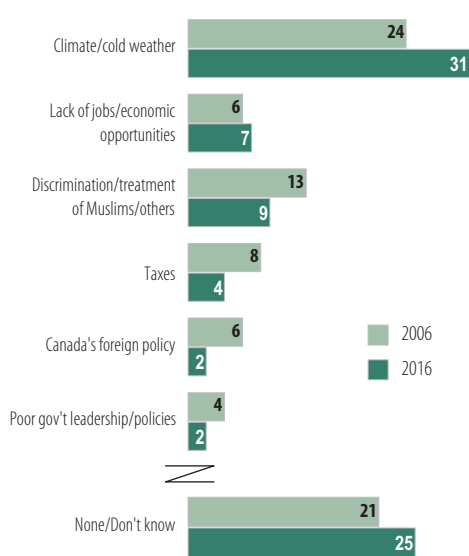


Q.4

What is it about Canada that gives you the greatest sense of pride?

Like least about Canada

Top mentions



Q.5

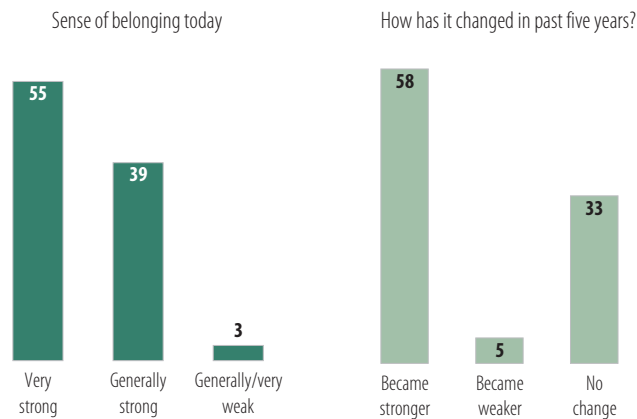
And what do you like least about Canada?

SENSE OF BELONGING. The 2016 survey asked a related question about people’s sense of belonging to the country, which reflects in part the extent to which one feels accepted by the broader society. Almost all Muslims participating in this survey feel a sense of belonging to Canada, with just over half (55%) saying they feel a very strong sense of belonging, and most of the remainder (39%) indicating it is generally strong.

A very strong sense of belonging is most widespread in western Canada, among men, Muslims 60 years and older, immigrants who have lived in the country for 20 or more years, and those who identify primarily as Canadian (versus identifying primarily as a Muslim). This view is least evident among women (45%) and Muslims 18 to 34 (41%). Most notably perhaps, Muslims born abroad are as likely as those born in Canada to feel a very strong sense of belonging to the country. In no group do as many as one in ten describes his or her sense of belonging as generally or very weak.

Not only do most Muslims feel a strong sense of belonging to Canada, but a majority (58%) says this feeling has grown stronger over the past five years. Very few (5%) report their sense of belonging has weakened over this time span, while one-third (33%) indicate no change either way. An increasing sense of belonging is the predominant view across the country, but most evident among recent immigrants, those coming from South Asia, men, and those with the least education. Canadian-born Muslims are evenly divided between those who say their belongingness has increased (45%) or not changed (50%) since five years ago. A weakening sense of belonging to Canada is most apt to be mentioned by Muslims who report negative experiences at border crossings (11%) and who have felt inhibited in expressing their political or social opinions (13%).

Sense of belonging to Canada



Q.6
Would you describe your sense of belonging to Canada today as very strong, generally strong, generally weak or very weak?

Q.7
And would you say your sense of belonging to Canada has become stronger, become weaker, or hasn't really changed since five years ago?

Views about Canada

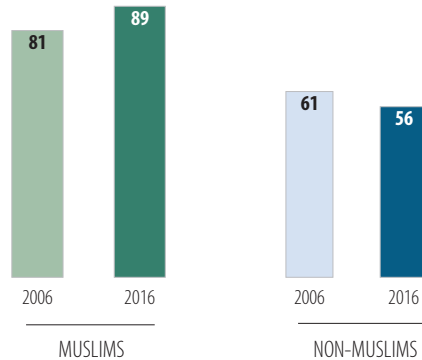
Muslims are almost universally satisfied with the general direction of the country today, and considerably more so than other Canadians.

Muslims and non-Muslims alike focus on the economy and unemployment as the country's most important issue.

SATISFIED WITH DIRECTION OF COUNTRY. Not only do Muslims stand out as being among the proudest of Canadians, but they almost universally express satisfaction with the general direction of the country. Nine in ten (89%) say they are satisfied with the way things are going in the country today, compared with just seven percent who are dissatisfied and another four percent who have no opinion either way. Satisfaction has increased noticeably since 2006 (up from 81%) and this trend is evident across the Muslim population. More than eight in ten from every identifiable group share this positive sentiment, including individuals supporting each of the main political parties in last fall's federal election.

By comparison, the rest of the population is not nearly as positive about the direction of the country today, with just over half (56%) feeling satisfied, compared with 37 percent who are dissatisfied. This general sentiment is somewhat lower than in 2006 when 61 percent expressed satisfaction. As before, positive views are most evident among younger Canadians, those with the most education, and those born outside the country (63%).

Satisfied with direction of country today



Q.1/FC Q.1

Thinking about Canada, overall, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way things are going in our country today?

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FACING THE COUNTRY

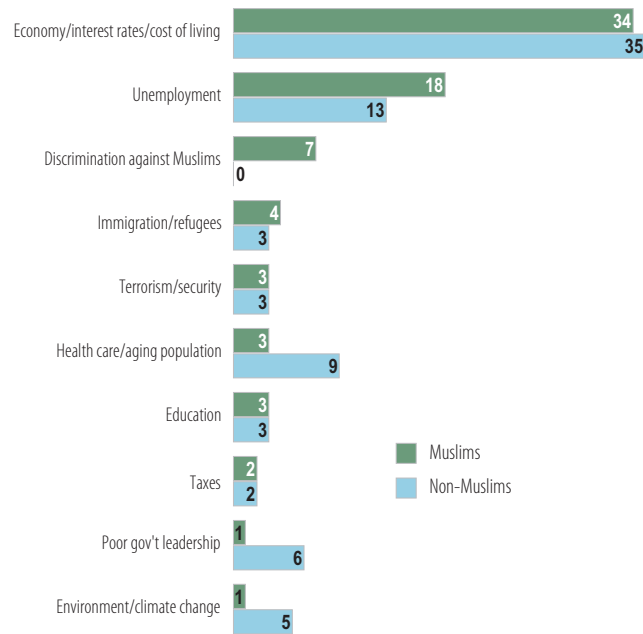
Muslims share with other Canadians similar concerns about the major challenges facing the country. When asked to identify what they consider to be the most important problem facing Canadians today (unprompted), one-third (34%) mention the economy, followed by unemployment (18%). The emphasis on current economic conditions is most pronounced in western Canada, as well as among men, older individuals and those with higher levels of education and income.

Economic concerns among Muslims are considerably more prominent than in 2006 (when the economic climate was more buoyant) when only one in six Muslims identified

the economy or unemployment to be the country's most important problem (a view shared by even fewer Canadians overall).

No other issue is seen by as many as one in ten Muslims to be the country's top problem. Seven percent identify discrimination against Muslims and Islamophobia as the country's most important problem (up from 4% in 2006), with this issue most apt to be mentioned by native-born Muslims and those born in Africa. Other issues (all mentioned by fewer than 5%) include immigration and refugees, health care, taxes, terrorism and security, education, and health care.

Most important issue facing Canada today
Top mentions



Q.2/FC Q.2

In your opinion, what is the most important problem facing CANADIANS today?

Political engagement

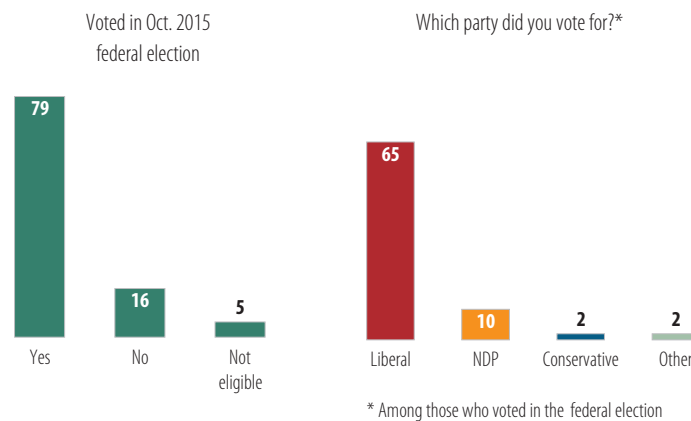
A large majority of Muslims report to have voted in the recent federal election, at levels comparable to or higher than the non-Muslim population. Two-thirds of this support went to the Federal Liberal Party.

One concrete manifestation of connection to country and citizenship is exercising one's franchise to vote in national elections. The recent federal election (October 19, 2015) saw a significant increase in voter turnout across the country, and the Muslim community was part of this trend. Eight in ten (79%) survey participants reported that they voted in this election, with 16 percent saying they did not vote, and another five percent indicating they were not eligible (this group is composed mostly of recent immigrants who are not yet citizens).² Participation in this election is reported

by strong majorities in every identifiable group, but most widely among older Muslims, those living in western Canada, and those who are Canadian-born.

Results from the survey reveal that the Federal Liberal Party was the primary beneficiary of Muslim voters. Almost two-thirds (65%) report to have voted for the winning party, compared with 10 percent supporting the New Democratic Party, and only two percent voting for the outgoing Conservative Party. One in five (21%) declined to state how he or she voted in the recent federal election. Support for the Liberal Party was strongest in Quebec, among Muslims 60 years and older, and among those born in Canada.

Participation in federal election



Q.37
Did you vote in the recent federal election, held on October 19th?

Q.38
(IF YES TO Q.37) Which party did you vote for in this election?

² There is evidence demonstrating that voter turnout tends to be overstated in surveys, in part because some people will respond as they felt they should have acted rather than how they did. For this reasons, surveys do not provide a definitive measure of actual turnout but these results suggest that turnout among Muslims was likely similar to the population-at-large. The 79% turnout figure in this survey exactly matches the figure reported in a post-election survey of Muslims conducted by Mainstreet Research on behalf of The Canadian Muslim Vote. Elections Canada determined the official voter turnout rate in this election to be 68.5%.

Muslims in Canada – Demographic Profile

According to the most current national statistics (the 2011 National Household Survey), in 2011 there were 1,053,945 Muslims living in Canada, comprising 3.2 percent of the national population. This represents the second largest religious group (after Christianity), and is one of the fastest growing segments of the Canadian population.

Almost seven in ten (68%) Muslims in Canada are foreign-born, and they come from many countries, principally in Asia and Africa. The most significant immigration has been from Pakistan (making up 13% of the total), followed by Iran, Algeria, Morocco, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and India. Canadian Muslims are also comprised of a large number of distinct ethnic groups, with origins spanning five continents. More than half of foreign-born Muslims have arrived in Canada since 2000, so that a significant proportion of the population is still in the process of adjustment and integration.

Year	Number of Muslims in Canada	% of total population
1871	13	--
1931	645	--
1971	33,430	0.1%
1981	98,165	0.3%
1991	253,265	0.9%
2001	579,600	1.8%
2011	1,054,945	3.2%

Almost nine in ten regard themselves as a visible minority (as defined by the Employment Equity Act), with the majority self-identifying as South Asians (36%) (e.g., Pakistanis, Indians), one-quarter self-identifying as Arab, and smaller percentages as West Asia (Iranian, Afghan), Black, and East Asia (Chinese, Japanese, Korean). In 2011, there were also more than 1,000 Muslims who identified as Aboriginal (First Nation or Métis).

The Muslim population in Canada is overwhelmingly urban – over 95 percent live in metropolitan areas, especially in the Greater Toronto Area and Montreal (which together make up more than half of the total). There are significant Muslim communities in a number of Canadian cities, with notable recent growth in western cities (e.g., Calgary and Edmonton), as well as in Montreal which attracts immigrants from former French colonies in the Middle East and North Africa.

As with other immigrant populations in Canada, Muslims are on average younger and better educated than Canadian-born citizens. They also experience higher rates of unemployment and underemployment, even in comparison with other visible minority groups (e.g., Hindus, Sikhs).

A large majority of Muslims in Canada follow Sunni Islam, with significant minorities adhering to Shia (including Ismaili) and Ahmadiyya sects.

Much of the information included in this profile comes from Canadian Muslims: A Statistical Review (prepared by Daood Hamdani), commissioned by The Canadian Dawn Foundation.