



GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA

Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States



CANADA

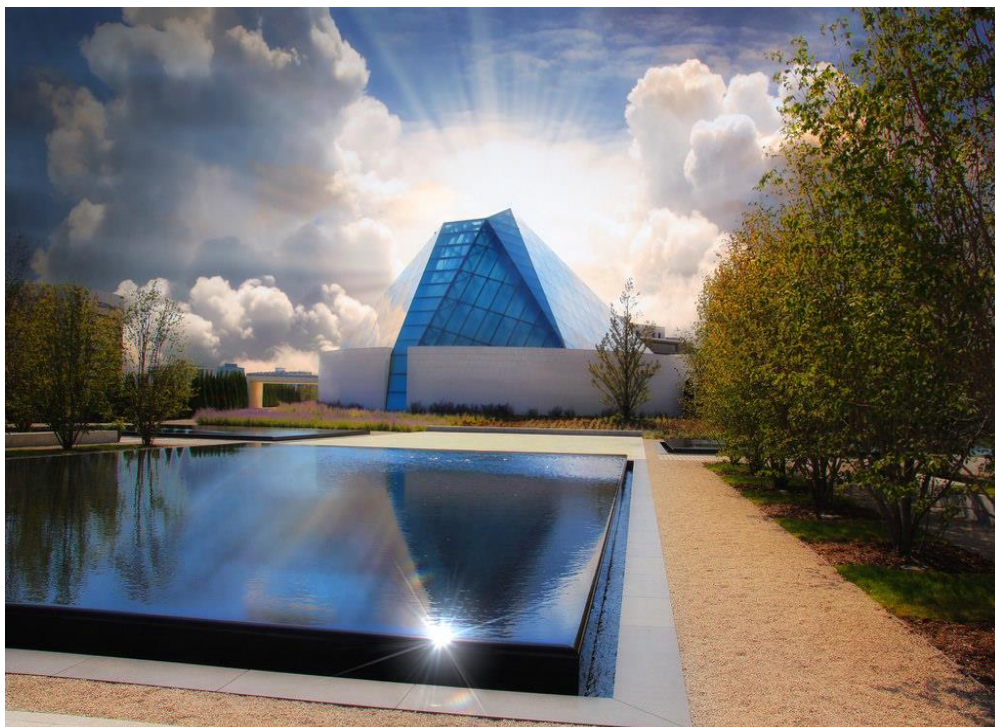
Country Report Series



ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES



GLOBAL MUSLIM DIASPORA:
MUSLIM COMMUNITIES AND MINORITIES IN NON-OIC MEMBER STATES



COUNTRY REPORT SERIES

CANADA



Organization of Islamic Cooperation

**The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and
Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)**



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List of Acronyms

CAF	Canadian Arab Foundation
CAIR-CAN	Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations
CBR	Canadian Bill of Rights
CCES	Canadian Community Engagement Study
CCMW	Canadian Council of Muslim Women
CCRF	Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
CEC	Canadian Ethnocultural Council
CIC	Canadian Islamic Congress
CISNA	Council of Islamic Schools in North America
CMA	Canadian Multiculturalism Act
CMCC	Council of Muslim Communities of Canada
CMU	Canadian Muslim Union
CMV	Canadian Muslim Vote
CMWI	Canadian Muslim Women’s Institute Inc.
EEA	Employment Equity Act
FIA	Federation of Islamic Associations
GNI	Gross National Income
GMD	Global Muslim Diaspora
HDI	Human Development Index
ICNA	Islamic Circle of North America
IFT	Islamic Foundation of Toronto
IIT	Islamic Institute of Toronto
ISCC	Islamic Supreme Council of Canada
ISNA	Islamic Society of North America
M103	Motion 103 in Action
MAC	Muslim Association of Canada
MCC	Muslim Canadian Congress
MSA	Muslim Student Association
MWL	Muslim World League
NCCM	National Council of Canadian Muslims
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NHS	Statistics Canada 2011 National Household Survey
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIC	Organization of Islamic Cooperation
Pew	The Pew Research Center
CA int.	Canada Interview, GMD Canada Field Study 2019

CA Sur.	Canada Survey, GMD Canada Field Study 2019
CA work.	Canada Workshop, GMD Canada Field Study 2019
SMC	2016 Final Report of the Survey of Muslims in Canada
SSUA	Social Sciences University of Ankara
TARIC	Toronto and Region Islamic Congregation
TCE	The Canadian Encyclopedia
TFGMP	The Future of Global Muslim Population
UN	United Nations
WPR	World Population Review

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Foreword

The SESRIC has launched the Global Muslim Diaspora (GMD) Project - a comprehensive research effort trying to analyse challenges, attitudes, experiences and perceptions on a range of issues related to Muslim communities and minorities living in the non-OIC Member States. The main objective of the project is to provide a range of useful comparative statistics and insights, which can help identify issues, initiate cooperation forums and shape future policy.

Islam is not only present in all continents as a religion but also as a cultural and civilizational value. Starting with the *Hijrah* of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Muslim migrants have laid the foundations for the spread of Islamic values, ideas and habits in the regions where they are settled, thus contributed to the cultural richness and economic development of these places.

Today, whenever we raise the point concerning Muslims communities and minorities living in non-OIC Member States, we have in mind a context in which Islam is present through more recent migrations. However, we should keep in mind that many of these countries have also been the homeland of its Muslims for centuries.

Despite the recent growth of literature on Muslims living in non-OIC Member States, our knowledge regarding this subject remains limited and fragmented. The GMD project intends to fill this gap through engaging more closely with the representatives of Muslim communities and minorities in different countries.

In context of GMD project, it is with great pleasure that I present to you the report on Canada, which affords the political elites, policy makers, analysts and general public the opportunity to understand how the Muslims in Canada view the most pressing issues they face today. The report on Canada is based on two basic pillars: desk research and fieldwork – conducted by travelling to Canada. Survey and workshop with representatives of Muslim communities and minorities and in-depth interviews with Muslim and non-Muslim public opinion leaders are the main components of this fieldwork study, whose results are integrated within the report.

I would like to encourage the readers of this report to have a look on the GMD general report titled “Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States: Diagnostics, Concepts, Scope and Methodology”, which inter alia provides description of methodology and research activities applied when preparing the report on Canada.

The development of this report has involved the dedication, skills and efforts of many individuals, to whom I would like to thank.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya
Director General
SESRIC

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Servet Erdem have prepared the Canada case report, with the contributions of Erdal Akdeve, Gürol Baba, Onur Unutulmaz. Prof. Dr. Mehmet Barca, Rector of SSUA, supervised and contributed to the preparation of this report.

Ambassador Musa Kulaklıkaya, Director General of the SESRIC, provided pivotal leadership during the preparation of the report. Several SESRIC members also contributed to the finalization of the report, including Dr. Kenan Bağcı, Acting Director of Economic and Social Research Department, and Dr. Erhan Türbedar, Researcher, who coordinated the report on behalf of SESRIC. Kaan Namli, Researcher, edited the report and Fatma Nur Zengin, Events and Communications Specialist, facilitated the fieldworks.

The SESRIC gratefully acknowledges local field workers and the institutions representing Muslim communities and minorities in Canada for their cooperation and extraordinary support, without which this report would not have been possible.

Executive Summary

This report aims to address a gap in the literature regarding the global Muslim diasporic community by providing a comprehensive outlook on the principal aspects of Canada's Muslim community. The data and information presented in this study were collected via a survey conducted in Toronto (in February 2019), a number of in-depth interviews, a workshop held in Guelph and Toronto (on February 13, 2019) and, a detailed investigation of secondary sources. The survey was conducted with the participation of 400 Muslim individuals and fourteen Muslim NGOs, social activists, academics, students, and community representatives attended the workshop. A total of ten Muslims and non-Muslims participated in the interviews and contributed to the project.

Although the historical presence of Muslims in Canada dates back to the middle of the 19th century, the majority of Muslims arrived in Canada through the large influxes in post-1960s. According to the 2016 Final Report of the *Survey of Muslims in Canada (SMC)*, the first records of the Muslim presence in Canada dates back to the early 1850s, when a Muslim family from Scotland arrived in the country. The data, from Statistics Canada *2011 National Household Survey (NHS)* demonstrates that Muslims accounted for only around 0.7 percent of all immigrants who had entered Canada before 1971. This modest share saw a dramatic rise between 2006 and 2011, jumping from 0.7% to 17.4% (*NHS* 2011). As of 2019, after 170 years, the number of Muslims has surpassed 1.5 million—constituting almost 4% of the total population in Canada. Pew Research Centre's report titled *The Future of Global Muslim Population* (2011), indicates that the number of Canadian Muslims is expected to triple by 2030, from about 940,000 in 2010 to nearly 2.7 million in 2030 which means that they will make up 6.6% of the total population in Canada in about a decade's time (*Pew* 2011: 142).

The Muslim community in Canada is diverse, in their ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and denominational backgrounds. It is difficult to determine the numeric share of all these sub-categories in the Muslim community. According to the findings of the *NHS*, in 2011, 88% of Muslims in Canada regarded themselves as a visible minority. The largest groups among them were South Asians (383,365 persons, 36% of all Muslims), the Muslims of Arab origin (268,165 persons, 25%), and the West Asian Muslims (139,615 persons, 13%). Constituting around 12% of the total population, the number of Muslims who did not identify themselves as a visible minority was 128,810 (*NHS* 2011). It is estimated that this composition still prevails with the larger ethnonational communities being Pakistani, Indian, Iranian, and Moroccan Muslims.

As indicated in many studies and surveys, the Muslim community in Canada is very young with more than half of the population in the working age and making up a significant part of the

prime labour force and services sector. In addition to being young, the Canadian Muslim population is overwhelmingly urban. *NHS 2011* reports that over 95% of the Muslim population lives in metropolitan areas. The Greater Toronto Area and Montreal have the highest Muslim density, comprising more than 50% of metropolitan Muslim population alone (*NHS 2011*).

Canada appears to have one of the most accommodating and egalitarian legal and political frameworks for minorities and religious communities, including the Muslim one. Almost all contributors to the Canada field study voiced their appreciation for and confidence in the legal, political, and civic frameworks. The Canadian context is largely a conflict-free social and political space, particularly in terms of intra- and inter-communal relations. It was observed during the field study and in the findings of the *GMD Canada Survey (CA Sur.)*, that the relations between the Muslim community and the society, as well as within different Muslim groups, are generally very positive. Sectarian, generational, racial or cultural tensions that were observed among the Muslim groups in many non-OIC countries where the *GMD* field studies were conducted are not present in Canada.

This does not mean that inter-communal and intra-communal interaction, cooperation, and dialogue take place at an ideal level. Indeed, as voiced by many participants during the interviews, the Muslim community has to work more to outreach to the society and other minority groups. For a truly harmonious coexistence and successful integration, it is important that Muslim individuals and organizations make further efforts to engage socially and politically. Although the sense of belonging towards Islamic and Canadian identity is both very strong, the level of social and political activism and engagement is not at a satisfactory level yet. With younger generation, this is observed to be changing for the positive. In the Federal Election in 2015, the Muslim turnout level was reported to be record high at 79%, which marked an increase by 32.5% from the estimates of the 2011 Federal Election. Equally heartening is the fact that, in not only electoral participation, in federal and provincial representation, too, the political visibility and participation of Muslims has been increasing lately.

It was observed in the field study, as well as in the findings of *CA Sur.*, that Canadian Muslims are exceptionally moderate in their opinions, which finds its resonance in their political and social behaviour. This could largely be attributed to the high level of education among them and the generally calm socio-political climate in the country. Despite their moderate outlook, success in integration, and significant contribution to economic development, Muslims in Canada, are more likely to suffer from unemployment and underemployment. It is important to note that, Muslims in Canada have one of the highest rates of individuals holding undergraduate or post-graduate degrees, among all visible minorities in Canada. This economic marginalization, together with the rise in Islamophobia and religious discrimination appear to be the gravest challenges for Canadian Muslims today. Nonetheless, it was observed that the sweeping majority of Canadian Muslims project a bright future for their community and country.

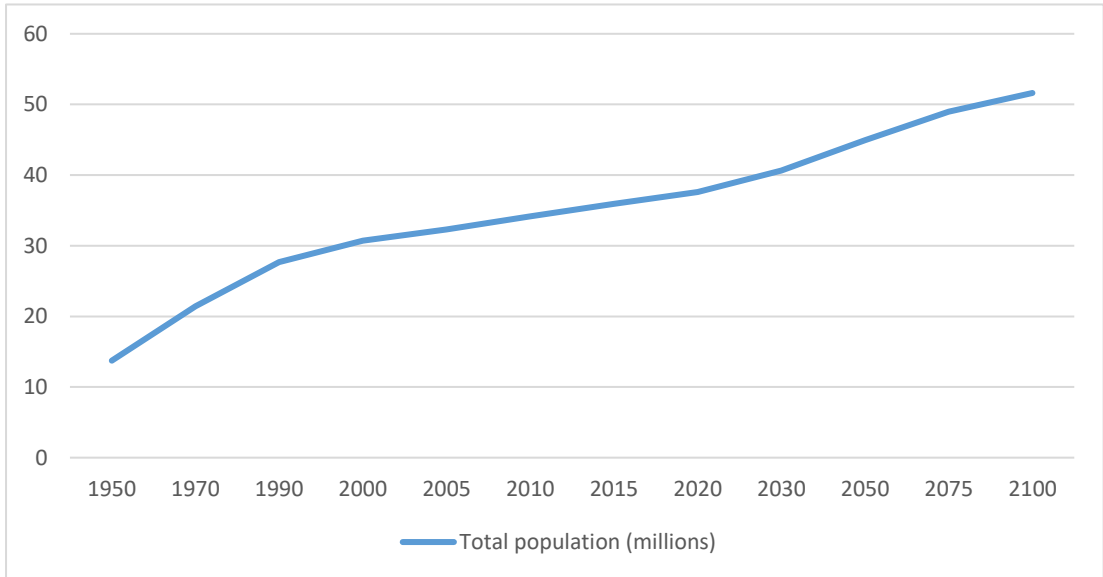
1 Introduction: Context and Background

As Hamdani felicitously explains, “Canada is described as a work in progress. It is constantly absorbing and evolving. The Aboriginal people and pioneer settlers laid the foundation and their descendants and newcomers continue to build on that legacy, enhance it and, in the process, leave their print on it” (2015: 1). This chapter discusses the print by one such community: Muslims. It outlines the Canadian context, both in general terms and specific to its Muslim communities. The first part gives a brief account of the major historical and political phases that shaped the country, and the history of multiculturalism while the second part focuses on the Muslim community in Canada. Towards this end, in the second part the history of Islam in Canada and its principal features are discussed through a review of literature on Canadian Muslims and data available concerning their main demographic profile such as the chronological increase in the Muslim population in Canada, the main areas and regions where this population is concentrated, and the like.

1.1 Canada: A Brief Overview

In the country’s most recent census that was conducted in 2016, Canada had a total population of 35,121,728, which indicated a 4.9% increase from the findings of 2011. As of 2019, *World Population Review (WPR)* estimates Canada’s population with 37,28 million, ranks 38th in the world. Canada, however, has the second largest land mass by total area (following Russia) and is one of the most scarcely populated countries in the world—although a majority of its lands is inhospitable (*WPR* Canada). According to *WPR*, Canada’s population density stands at four people per square kilometer, making it 228th in the world (*WPR* Canada).

Graph 1: Canada's Historical Population Growth and Prospects



Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects Data Booklet, 2017 Revision

Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver are the three largest and most populated metropolitan areas in Canada. Ottawa, the capital, is in Ontario province. Due to the climate, Canada’s population is highly concentrated in urban areas near the southern border. The country is a federation of ten provinces namely Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan, and three territories: Western Canada, Central Canada, and Eastern Canada (which refers to Atlantic Canada and Northern Canada together).

Figure 1: Provinces and Territories of Canada



In the 2017, *Human Development Index (HDI)* Canada ranked 12th in the world, with a value of 0.926, and 82.5 in life expectancy at birth, 16.4 in expected years of schooling, and 43,433 in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports a very high level of well-being in Canada and indicates two special features for the country: inclusiveness and immigration, which reflects a true picture of Canada. As of 2018, the Canadian “economy has regained momentum, supported by a rebound in exports and strengthening business investment” according to the *OECD Economic Survey*. The same survey points out that Canada has a well-functioning immigration system and immigrants are generally well integrated, although they make less money than the native-born counterparts do. As mentioned in the report of the survey and elsewhere the “selection of economic immigrants has been refined and integration programmes developed to close this gap” (*OECD* 2018).

Education at a Glance 2018 by OECD indicates that in 2017, following South Korea (70%), Canada had the second highest rate of people with a tertiary qualification (with 61% of 25-34 year-olds) among all OECD countries. In Canada, according to the same report, 26% of 25-34 year-olds have a bachelor’s degree, 4% higher than the OECD average, however, only 10% have completed a graduate degree, which was 4% lower than the OECD average. The findings of the report indicated a higher tertiary education completion level at 67% for foreign-born adults (25-64 year-olds) in 2017, which marked the highest share of tertiary-educated foreign-born adults across all OECD countries. Still, the same report points out that among tertiary-educated adults native-born Canadians are more likely to be employed (84%) than their foreign-born counterparts (80%) are (OECD 2018: 2).

Despite this gap, Canada is one of the top destinations for immigration. What makes Canada so popular among immigrants is its inclusive system, which is grounded in the concept of multiculturalism. According to Dewing, “the concept of Canada as a ‘multicultural society’ can be interpreted in different ways: descriptively (as a sociological fact), prescriptively (as ideology) or politically (as policy)” (2009: 1). When approached as a sociological fact, multiculturalism indicates the co-existence of diverse racial, ethnic, and religious communities while ideologically it refers to “a relatively coherent set of ideas and ideals pertaining to the celebration of Canada’s cultural diversity” (Dewing 2009: 1-2). Politically, at the policy level, the concept designates the management of this diversity at different levels of governing, *i.e.*, the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal domains (Dewing 2009: 1-2). Multicultural heritage of Canadians was constitutionally recognized with the adoption of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (CCRF) in 1982 (Dewing 2009: 4). Section 15(1) of the charter states: “Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability” (CCRF, 1982, Section 15).

There have been major steps forward in the establishment of multiculturalism and the realization of the multicultural society. Following the arrival of British explorers in the 18th century, the gold rushes and the settlement of the West throughout the 19th century, Canada became one of the most popular destinations for immigration. Immigrants, at that time, were expected to assimilate into the English majority or learn both English and French, which was the case for Francophone Canada. According to

The Canadian Encyclopedia (TCE) the cultural assimilative approach of the early 20th century was grounded in the notion of creating a “melting pot,”¹ i.e., a metaphor for the creation of a monoculture society in which the different elements melt together and the racial and ethnic heterogeneity is overcome (Burnet and Driedger, *TCE* 2014).

John Murray Gibbon manifested the first challenges to the melting pot approach in Canada following the publication of *Canadian Mosaic: The Making of a Northern Nation* (1938). Gibbon suggested a new metaphor of “cultural mosaic” and argued that Canada will benefit from its various ethnic groups and the cultural diversity that is gained from these groups. John Porter adopted Gibbon’s metaphor in his 1965 book *Vertical Mosaic: An Analysis of Social Class and Power in Canada*, in which a criticism of the class privilege enjoyed by Canadians of British descent and the marginalization of other ethnic groups was voiced. With the increasing number of non-white immigrants during the 1960s, the repeal of policies of racial discrimination in the immigration system brought about a new dynamic to the immigrant composition of Canada. In 1971, for the first time in its history, the number of non-European immigrants exceeds those of European background (Burnet and Driedger, *TCE* 2014)

The formalization of a policy to protect and promote diversity, recognize the rights of Aboriginal peoples, and support the use of Canada’s two official languages, English and French, came with the federal government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. The government’s formalization of Canada as a bilingual and multi-ethnic nation and declaration of its commitment to the principle of multiculturalism in 1971 led to the establishment of the Ministry of Multiculturalism and the Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism in 1973 (Burnet and Driedger, *TCE* 2014).

The concept of multiculturalism was acknowledged in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* of 1982, which stated that the Charter itself “shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians” (Burnet and Driedger, *TCE* 2014). The widely known report *Equality Now!*, which was produced by the Special Parliamentary Committee on Visible Minorities in 1984 and the creation of a House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism in 1985. On 21 July 1988, following the adoption by the Parliament of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act (CMA)* a new multiculturalism policy was implemented. With this step, Canada became the first country in the world to pass a national multiculturalism law (Dewing 2009: 4). With the *CMA*, the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada was acknowledged as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. The Act aimed at the preservation of cultures and languages and the enhancement of cultural awareness and understanding, the minimization of discrimination and the promotion of “culturally sensitive institutional change at the federal level” (Dewing 2009: 4).

¹ The term became popular in both the United States and Canada following the production of a play, *The Melting Pot* by Israel Zangwill in 1908. The play depicts the life of David Quixano, a Russian Jewish immigrant who survived the a pogrom in which his mother and sister were killed. Wishing to forget the horrifying traumatic past, Quixano composes an *American Symphony* for a bright future in which a society completely free of ethnic, racial, religious divisions and hatred is created.

In response to criticism leveled against the multiculturalism program by various segments and individuals, particularly from Francophone Canada, in 1995, the Department of Canadian Heritage launched a comprehensive review of its multiculturalism programming activities. Two years later, in 1997, the Minister of Multiculturalism announced a renewed program (Dewing 2009: 5). This new multiculturalism program focused on three core objectives: “social justice (building a fair and equitable society); civic participation (ensuring that Canadians of all origins participate in the shaping of our communities and country); and identity (fostering a society that recognizes, respects and reflects a diversity of cultures so that people of all backgrounds feel a sense of belonging to Canada)” (Dewing 2009: 5). In 2002, the federal government dedicated a day to the celebration of multiculturalism and announced June 27 as the Canadian Multiculturalism Day.

The policy of multiculturalism, nevertheless, was often challenged at the provincial legislative level. In one such incident, in September 2013, the then provincial government in Quebec introduced *Bill 60*, a charter (popularly called the Charter of Secularism) affirming “the values of State secularism and religious neutrality and the equality between women and men,” and proposed the prohibition of visible religious symbols in public services and the prevention of individuals covering their faces from access to public services (Selby and et al 2018: 6). Although the government’s proposal was blocked before it was passed when it lost the provincial election in 2014, in 2017 the current government passed *Bill 62*, “an act to foster adherence to State’ religious neutrality and, in particular, to provide a framework for religious accommodation requests in certain bodies, which similarly out rightly poses a specific framework” (Selby and et al 2018: 6). Notwithstanding the criticism leveled against multiculturalism, Canada continues to grow as a super-diverse and multi-cultural country. The 2011 Census reported that there were more than 200 different ethnic origins, including “Canadian,” in Canada and almost 21% of Canadians were born outside the country (NHS 2011).

A Chronology of Federal Policy on Multiculturalism	
1948	Canada adhered to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which applies to all human beings, regardless of sex, race, religion, culture or ideology.
1960	Parliament passed the Canadian Bill of Rights (CBR), which prohibits discrimination for reasons of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex.
1967	Racial discrimination provisions that had existed in Canadian immigration law since the early 20th century were abolished.
1969	The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism released Book Four of its report, on the contribution of other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada.
1970	Canada ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.
1971	Canada became the first country in the world to introduce a multiculturalism policy.
1972	First appointment of a (junior) minister for Multiculturalism.
1973	The Canadian Consultative Council on Multiculturalism (later renamed the Canadian Ethnocultural Council, CEC) was established as an advisory body to the minister.
1974	Saskatchewan became the first province to adopt legislation regarding multiculturalism.
1976	Canada ratified the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
1977	Parliament adopted the Canadian Human Rights Act, which established the Canadian Human Rights Commission to monitor and mediate disputes over human rights in Canada.

1982	The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (CCRF) enshrined equality rights in the Constitution and acknowledged Canada's multicultural heritage.
1984	The House of Commons Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society issued its Equality Now! report.
1985	Establishment of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism.
1986	Parliament passed the Employment Equity Act.
1988	Royal Assent was given on 21 July to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act after Parliament had adopted the legislation with all-party support. The federal government formally apologized for the wrongful incarceration and the disenfranchisement of Japanese Canadians and the seizure of their property during World War II and offered compensation.
1990	Multiculturalism Canada tabled its first annual report on the implementation of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act by the Government of Canada.
1991	Royal Assent was given to the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Act on 17 January. On 21 April, the new Department was officially established, with Gerry Weiner appointed as the first full-time minister.
1993	The federal government announced that Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada would be split along its two main components: the multiculturalism programs would be merged with the new Department of Canadian Heritage and the citizenship programs would be amalgamated with the new Department of Citizenship and Immigration.
1994	The federal government announced that it would not pay out any compensation to national ethnic groups to redress past indignities.
1996	The federal government established the Canadian Race Relations Foundation
1997	The minister of State for Multiculturalism announced a renewed multiculturalism program.
2002	The federal government announced that Canadian Multiculturalism Day would be held on 27 June each year.
2005	In the February Budget, the federal government announced commemorative and educational initiatives to highlight the contributions of groups that have troubling memories as a result of historical events during times of war or as a result of immigration policies of the day.
2005	In March, the federal government released A Canada for All: Canada's Action Plan Against Racism.
2005	Between August and November, the federal government announced agreements-in-principle with the Ukrainian-Canadian, Italian-Canadian, and Chinese-Canadian communities as part of the Acknowledgement, Commemoration, and Education Program announced in the February 2005 Budget.
2006	The federal government offered a full apology to Chinese-Canadians for the head tax that was imposed on Chinese immigrants until 1923 and the subsequent exclusion of Chinese immigrants until 1947. The federal government announced the Community Historical Recognition Program and the National Historical Recognition Program to commemorate the historical experiences and contributions of ethnocultural communities.
2008	Responsibility for multiculturalism transferred from the Department of Canadian Heritage to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration.
2009	Canada became a full member of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research.
2011	Canada became the first country to sign the Ottawa Protocol on Combating Antisemitism, which was developed by the Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism."

Source: Dewing (2009) "Canadian Multiculturalism"

1.2 Islam in Canada

According to the Final Report of the *SMC 2016*, the first record of the Muslim presence in Canada goes back to the early 1850s, when a Muslim family from Scotland arrived in Canada. From that time, in 160 years, according to the report, the number of Muslims passed the 1 million mark—constituting more than 3% of the total population in Canada (*SMC 2016*: 1). The data, from Statistics Canada, the *2011 NHS* demonstrate that Muslims accounted for only around 0.7 percent of all immigrants who had entered Canada before 1971. This figure has seen a dramatic rise, however, between 2006 and 2011, from 0.7% to 17.4% (*NHS 2011*).

In other words, despite the fact that the historical presence of Muslims in Canada dates back to the mid of 19th century, the majority of Muslims arrived in Canada through the large influxes in post-1960s. Muslim immigration to Canada, according to many scholars such as Hamdani and Birani, was mainly due to the country's economic prosperity and advantages, educational opportunities, "political alienation for origin countries, and the freedom of faith and expression granted under Canadian constitutional laws" (Birani 2017: 5).

Graph 2: Muslim Population Increase in Canada

Year	Number of Muslims	% of total in Canada 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%

Source: SMC 2016 (13)

According to *NHS 2011*, Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa are the top destinations for Muslims and there is a visible density of Moroccan Muslims in the Quebec area, of Pakistanis in Ontario, and of Iranians in the West. The *NHS 2011* also reported that the number of Muslims living in the Greater Toronto Area was 424,925, making up 7.7% of the total metro population. Having the second largest Muslim concentration, the Greater Montreal Area, according to the report, hosted a Muslim community of 221,040 people in 2011, comprising nearly 6% of the total metro population. With 65,880 Muslims, which made 5.5% of the total city population, Ottawa, Canada's national capital, hosted a relatively small Muslim population of mostly Lebanese, South Asian and Somali backgrounds (*NHS 2011*).

Apart from the first settler Muslim family, the visibility of Islam goes back to the late 19th century, when dozens of pioneering Muslims arrived in Canada from mainly the Levant region of the Ottoman Empire (present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine), mostly seeking to find a new home and life. In reports by Statistics Canada and elsewhere, the number of Muslims in Canada is reported to be over 600. According to Gaber, for decades the Muslim population had grown gradually and the need for a special space for religious and cultural convention and pray became imperative (2016: 1). This led

to the opening of Canada's first mosque, the Al Rashid Mosque in 1938. As Gaber maintains, the funds for the construction of the mosque were raised from local Muslims, Christians and Jews—the City donated the land. “This collaborative effort was indicative of the new world community of ideal shared spaces. Al Rashid was also used for Church group meetings, social and club events of the larger non-Muslim community and various mixed events, acting as a community center” (Gaber 2016: 1).

After this first mosque in 1938, over 140 mosques were established in Canada, both as purpose-built spaces and as reconfigured structures (Gaber 2016: 5). In fact, the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, 70 of them being in Toronto, lists around 200 or more mosques and religious and cultural centers.² Despite its geographical, historical and cultural proximity to the US and Europe, where anti-Muslim backlash and Islamophobic discourse found solid grounds and adopted by center-right populist political circles, the Canadian society and media did not give credence to such discourses. This is in great part due to Canadian society and the media's commitment to the ideals and values of multiculturalism. Will Kymlicka, for instance, who was commissioned by the Government of Canada in 2010 to write a report on the successes and failures of Canadian Multiculturalism stated that “compared to most other countries, (Europe in this case) the mainstream media in Canada have largely avoided engaging in minority or immigrant bashing” (cited in MacDonald 2015: 1).

Nevertheless, as pointed out by many such as Hamdani (2015) and Perry (2015), and as maintained by many participants in the workshop and interviews during the field study, one can divide the history of Islam and Muslims in Canada into two periods, before and after the 9/11. On September 21st, only 10 days after the 9/11, the *Globe and Mail* ran a story which read, “Overnight, Canada has changed from a country of easy tolerance to a place where people who look dark-skinned are the targets of insults, threats, and even physical attack” (Kilgour, Millar, and O'Neill 2002: 156). The *Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC)* “reported a 1600% increase in hate crimes (including verbal harassment, death threats, and physical attacks) against Muslims between September 2001 and September 2002 across Canadian cities (Media release, March 10, 2003)” (Birani 2017: 7-8).

² See <http://www.islamicsupremecouncil.com/masajid-mosques-and-islamic-centres-in-canada/>.

Figure 2: Canada's First Mosque Al Rashid. Built in 1938 in the Fort Edmonton Park, Edmonton, Alberta



Source: Photograph by Tammy Gaber, 2015.

John Asfour, then-President of the *Canadian Arab Foundation (CAF)*, stated that “There is the Canada before the 11th of September and now as I see it, there is the Canada after the 11th of September” (cited in Kilgour, Millar and O’Neill 2002: 156). In this new Canada, Islam and Muslims gained immense visibility in the media, policymaking, and the broader public debates, and they became the subjects of scrutiny and surveillance. Their presence in the country, which has gone unnoticed for decades, now gained new meanings (Perry 2015: 4).

The negative effects of the 9/11 and anti-Muslim sentiments in Canada, according to some studies, are observable in the employment and underemployment rates among Muslims. Beyer (2005), for instance, argued that the inconsistencies between the income level of the second generation Muslims and the school degrees they hold is one such after-effect. Despite the fact that the percentage of Canadian-born Muslim men and women with a university degree is significantly higher than the national average (at least 10% higher, according to Beyer), the unemployment and underemployment rates for second-generation Muslim professionals are higher than the national average. Furthermore, they earn less than other native-born Canadians (Birani 2017: 7-8).

Still, as demonstrated by many studies, in Canada, anti-Islamic discourse never gained the popular appeal it has reached in the US. This is partly because “nuanced and subtle differences between Canadians and Americans in their worldviews, their national identity and their approach to the potent issues of national security and their reactions to crises” (Canadian Journalism Project, 2015). Although

it is difficult to claim that Islamophobia does not exist in Canada, there are “differences in its prevalence and manifestations when it is compared to the American context.” (Macdonald 2015: 2). It was observed during the field study that Canadians, both Muslim and non-Muslims, find the idea of alignment with the US in foreign policy and the official American outlook to immigration and Islam, as well as the “Americanization” of Canadian politics, quite disturbing (MacDonald 2015: 2).

American media and politics, however, hold great sway in the Canadian context. A survey of nine Canadian newspapers by the *CIC* in 2005 noted a dramatic increase in anti-Muslim stereotypes in Canadian media post-9/11 (Perry 2015: 8). Similarly, the results of a more recent study by the Navigator Research in 2012 revealed that 59% of news articles that featured Muslims were negative in tone (Perry 2015: 8). As Perry points out, this rhetoric of hate and negative representation leaves its mark on the perception of Islam and Muslims among Canadians. A clear proof for this was revealed in 2006 Environics study in which Canadians who believed that a growing sense of Islamic identity in Canada was bad for the country were asked to specify reasons for their unfavorable opinion of Islam and Muslims. The most often cited reasons were revealed to be “the poor treatment of women and girls in Islam,” cited by 36%, and “the possibility of violence perpetrated by Muslims” (cited by 30%) (cited in Perry 2015: 9-10).

As a result, hate crimes against Muslim individuals, particularly Muslim women whose Islamic identity is more visible thanks to their *hijab*, have increased in post-9/11 dramatically. According to 2011 figures, about 15% of hate crimes motivated by religion were directed at Muslims and more than 25% of racially motivated hate crimes were perpetrated against members of visible minority groups who were mostly from Muslim-majority countries (Perry 2015: 10).

Nevertheless, the presence of Islam in Canada, at least at the organizational and political level, has a strong bond with the history of Islam in the USA, to which one could refer as the history of Islam in North America. Particularly organizational activism and works of the Muslim communities of Canada and the US have always followed a continental correlation (Haddad and Quadri, *TCE* 2018). The *Federation of Islamic Associations (FIA)* for example, as Haddad and Quadri point out, was formed in Canada and the US in the 1950s and the *Muslim Student Association (MSA)* “was formed to instill Islamic consciousness in Muslim students in North America,” in 1962 (*TCE* 2018).³

Today’s Canadian Muslim sector is much more diverse than it was in the 1970s. Many organizations have come to the fore since the disbandment of *CMCC*, including *Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)*, “an exemplary and unifying Islamic organization in North America that contributes to the betterment of the Muslim community and society at large” in their own words, which as Haddad and Quadri point out, could be compared to *CMCC* (*TCE* 2018). Other prominent organizations are *the National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM)*, an organization that focuses on civil liberties and advocacy which was formerly known as the *Canadian Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-*

³ A group of *MSA* alumni created an independent organization *Council of Muslim Communities of Canada (CMCC)* a decade later in 1972 in Toronto, aiming at linking Canadian Muslims and other national and international Muslim groups through youth camps, scholarship programs, and media outlets. Despite its inter-communal and national aspirations, however, the council disbanded within a decade (Haddad and Quadri, *TCE* 2018).

CAN), the *Canadian Islamic Congress (CIC)*, and the *Canadian Council of Muslim Women (CCMW)* (Haddad and Quadri, *TCE* 2018).

To these one could add the *Toronto and Region Islamic Congregation*, commonly referred to by its acronym as *TARIC Islamic Center* (one of the largest and oldest Islamic Centers in the city of Toronto), *the Canadian Muslim Women's Institute Inc. (CMWI)*, a non-profit organization that was founded in 2006 in Manitoba, *the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada (ISCC)*, an organization with eleven chapters throughout major Canadian cities, *the Muslim Association of Canada (MAC)*, a religious and educational non-profit association which holds a joint annual conference with the *Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA)* and operates in 11 Canadian cities and runs more than 20 schools, *the Canadian Muslim Union (CMU)*, a registered non-profit corporation established in 2006 with the aim of resolving deep divisions within *the Muslim Canadian Congress (MCC)*, *Islamic Foundation of Toronto (IFT)*, one of the largest and oldest Islamic community centers in the city of Toronto and in Canada, and *Council of Islamic Schools in North America (CISNA)*, an association of Islamic schools and educational organizations.

There are numerous institutions and schools offering Islamic education at various levels throughout Canada. In fact, the *Muslim World League's (MWL) Canadian office* (2006) asserted that there are more than 50 fulltime Islamic schools in Canada and every major Canadian city has more than one such school. According to Barazangi, conforming to the multicultural framework, these schools offer an education that not only introduces Islam and its heritage to Muslim students but also provides "an alternative which must relate to the epistemological, metaphysical, and conceptual elements of both Islamic and Western systems" (1991:172). Abdullahi Omar maintains that although these schools have different outlooks and approaches, the claim to preserve Islamic identity, ideals, and values within Canadian mosaic is common to all (2011: 9).

In conformity with the educational policy of multiculturalism, Islam is taught in public and private schools, although the majority of Muslims prefer to enroll their children to the latter. Two reasons for this, Ghazala E. Ahmed points out, that the post-9/11 discrimination and problems that Muslim students began to face in schools and the negative or incorrect representation of Islam and Muslims in school curriculums (2013: 9). According to a study by Ahmed, "[p]arents who had originally placed their children in a public school, but later decided to move them to an Islamic school, offered three reasons for doing so: 1) lack of religious accommodation and acceptance in the public school; 2) social behavior, communication patterns, and curriculum content; and 3) pedagogy." (2013: 9).

There are also many prominent Islamic education centers at university and colleges such as *Al-Huda Institute*, *Al-Rashid Islamic Institute*, the *Islamic Institute of Toronto (IIT)*, and *Jami'ah al-Ahmadiyyah*. Prominent Muslim schools and education centers at primary and secondary levels, on the other hand, are *Aishah Siddiqah Islamic Institute*, *Az-Zahraa Islamic Academy*, *Calgary Islamic School*, *ISNA Canada*, *Mariyah Islamic School*, *Iqra Islamic School*, *Al-Risala Academy*, *Olive Grove School*, *Safa and Marwa Islamic School*, and *Al-Nadwa Institute*, to name but a few. There are around 20 private elementary and high schools for Muslim students just in Toronto.

The Canadian Muslim sector has also numerous significant figures of Muslim background such as Tarek Fatah (b.1949), a Canadian writer and the founder of the *Muslim Canadian Congress* whose secularist and liberal activism and statements have attracted much criticism from certain Muslim groups; Ahmed Hussen (b. 1976), a Somali-Canadian lawyer and politician who is currently Canada's Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship; Lawrence 'Larry' Ralph Shaben (1935-2008), who was a Canadian politician of Lebanese descent and the first Muslim Cabinet Minister in Canada; Naheed Nanshi, the mayor of Calgary who has been known as the most popular politician in Canada (until the election of Justin Trudeau) and was elected 'World Mayor of the Year' in 2014, and "has made a huge impact on creating a positive image for Muslims in Canada" (The Muslim 500, 2017).

The Canadian Muslim space has many inspiring women activists, writers, politicians, and leaders. Among them, the most prominent are Wahida Valiante, a writer and founding member, and currently, the president of the *CIC* and also an outspoken advocate of the rights of Canadian Muslims; Alia Hogben, and activist, NGO spokesperson and the executive director of the *CCMW*, Maryam Monsef, PC MP (b. 1984), an Afghan Canadian politician, the current Minister of Status of Women in the 29th Canadian Ministry; Iqra Khalid (b. 1986) is a Liberal politician who was one of two Liberal Pakistani-Canadian women (the other being Salma Zahid) elected to the House of Commons in the 2015 election, Dr Ingrid Mattson, an *intellectual and academician*, the first chair of Islamic studies at Huron University College at the University of Western Ontario in Canada, the former Vice President and later President of *ISNA*, and the author of the highly acclaimed *The Story of the Qur'an* (The Muslim 500, 2017).

2 Demographic Profile

The Final Report of the SMC 2016 by Environics⁴ dates the Muslim presence in Canada back to the early 1850s, to the arrival of a Muslim family from Scotland in Upper Canada. The same report indicates that in 2011 the number of Muslims passed the 1 million mark—making up more than 3% of the total Canadian population and representing one of the fastest growing religious groups (SMC 2016: 1). The exact number of the Muslim community in Canada reported by the *National Household Survey* in 2011 (NHS hereafter) was 1,053,945, which marked an increase of 82% compared to 2001, and made them the second largest religious group following Christians. The same report indicated that the majority of Muslim immigrants arrived in the country in the two decades between 1991 and 2011 (SMC 2016: 13).

Graph 3: Canada's Religious Groups and their Population in 2011

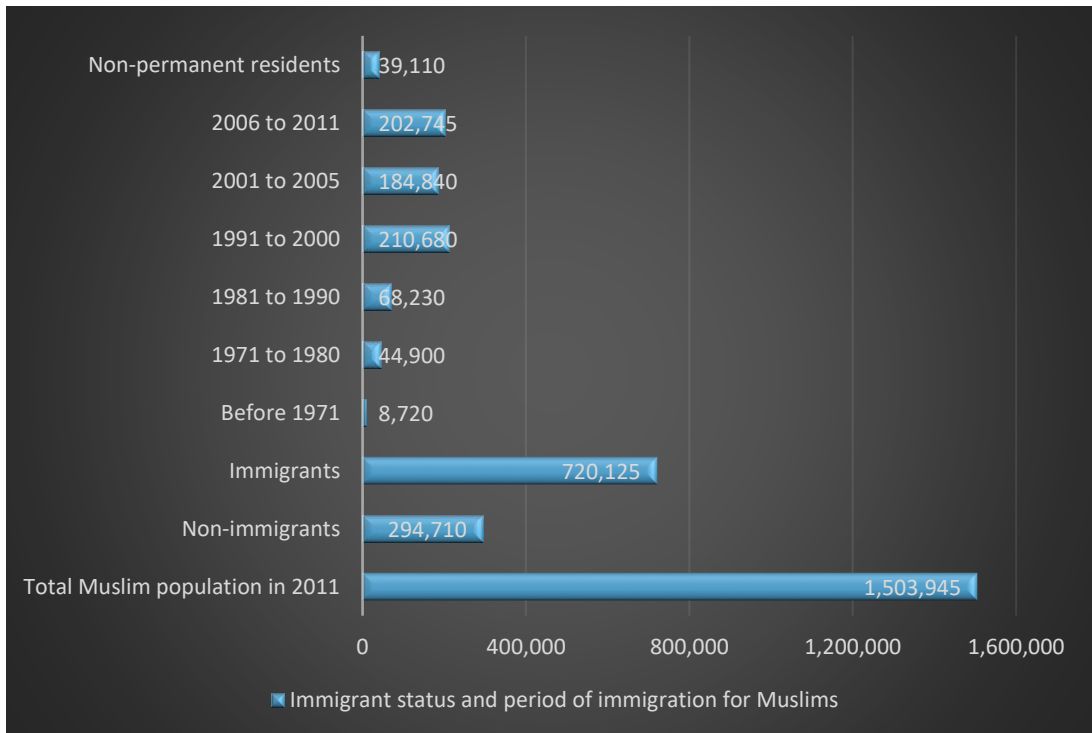
Religion	2011, the number
Total number of persons	32,746,505
Roman Catholic	12,699,430
No religious affiliation	7,817,420
Other Christian	3,664,395
United Church	2,004,845
Anglican	1,608,990
Muslim	1,053,585
Baptist	634,450
Hindu	497,695
Lutheran	477,405
Presbyterian	472,065
Sikh	454,840
Buddhist	366,340
Jewish	329,430
Greek Orthodox	220,140
Mennonite	175,780
Ukrainian Catholic	51,750
Ukrainian Orthodox	23,815
All other religions	194,130

Source: Statistics Canada⁵, NHS 2011

⁴ The research conducted via telephone interviews between November 19, 2015 and January 23, 2016, with a representative sample of 600 individuals aged 18 and older across Canada who self-identified as Muslim (2016: 2).

⁵ [Table 32-10-0198-01 Number of persons in the total population and the farm population, classified by religious affiliation](#)

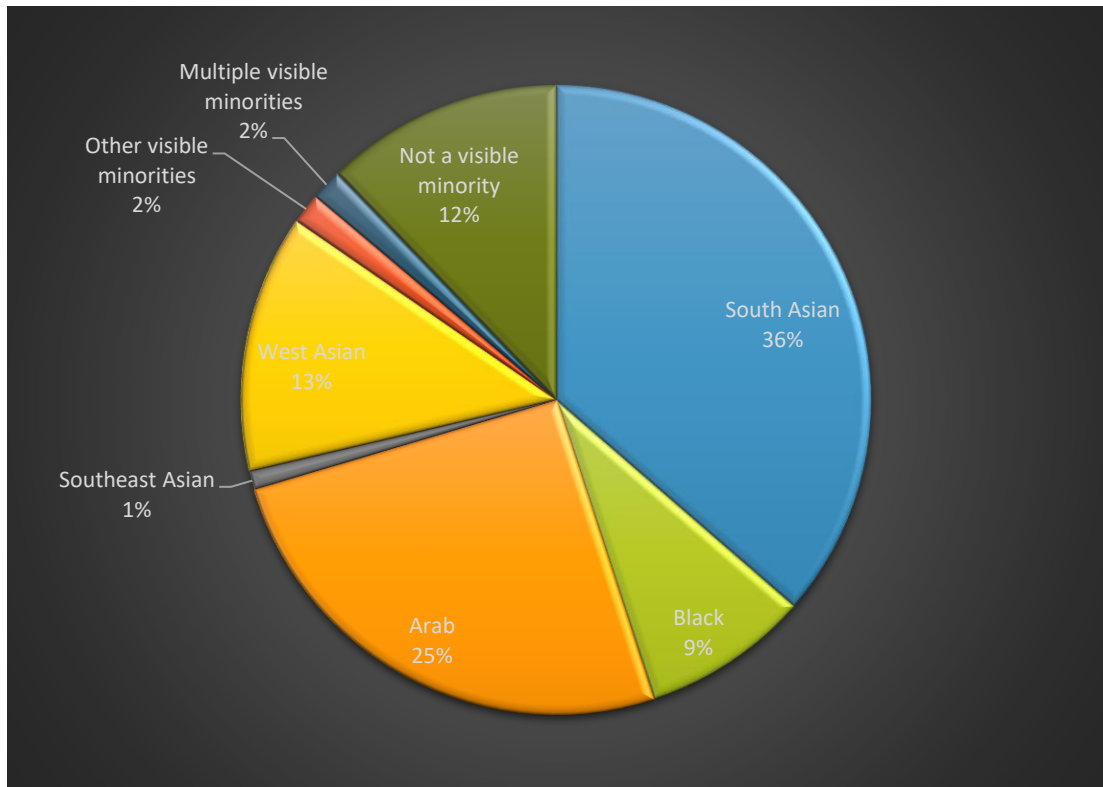
Graph 4: Muslims in Numbers: Immigrant Status and Period of Immigration



Source: Statistics Canada, NHS 2011, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 99-010-X2011032.

Another important study on Canadian Muslim population, the *SMC 2016* report, reveals that 68% of Muslims in Canada are foreign-born and half of foreign-born Muslims arrived in Canada after 2000. Among top countries of origin Pakistan (comprising around 13% of the total Muslim population in Canada) is listed first, followed by Iran, Algeria, Morocco, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and India (*SMC 2016*: 13). According to the *SMC 2016*, almost nine in 10 consider and define themselves as a visible minority (as defined by the Employment Equity Act, EEA). In terms of the ethnonational and racial break-up, the report reveals that 36% self-identify themselves as South Asians, mostly Pakistanis and Indians. While 25% self-identified as Arab, smaller percentages identify themselves as West Asian (e.g., Iranian, Afghan), Black, or Aboriginal (more than 1,000 Muslims) (*SMC 2016*: 13).

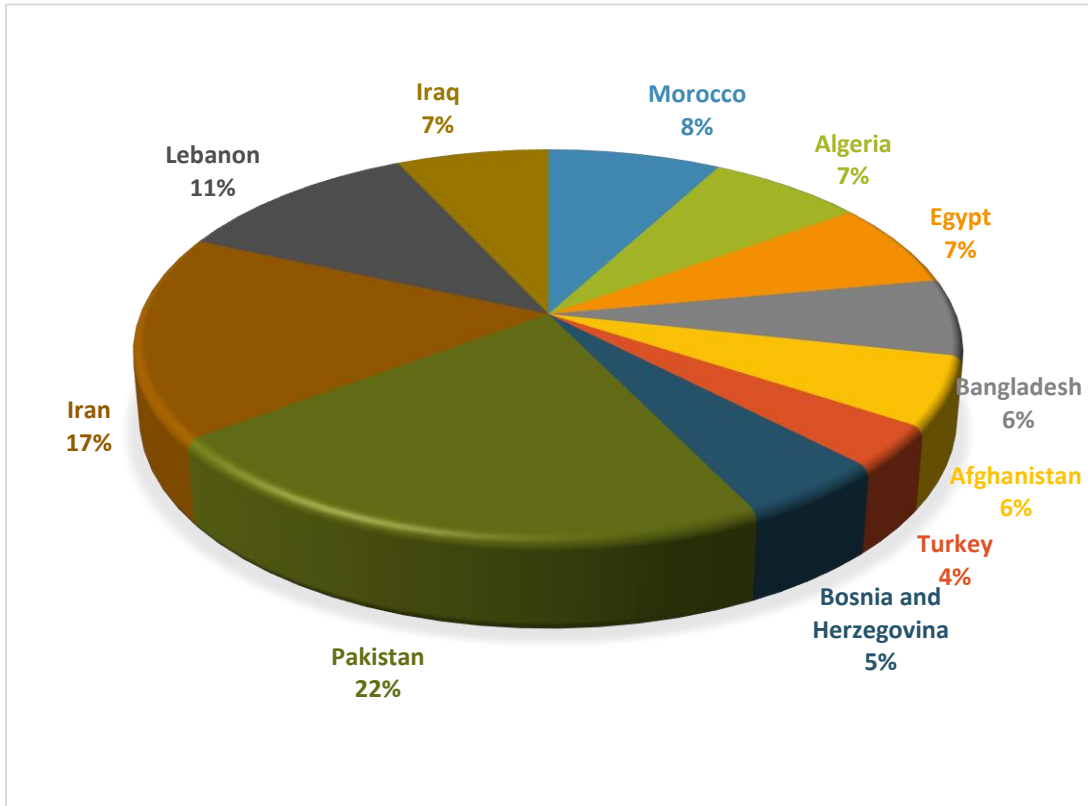
Graph 5: Canadian Muslims' Ethno-racial Distribution



Source: Statistics Canada, NHS 2011.

In Canada, visible minorities are defined by the *EEA* as “persons, other than Aboriginal persons, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” and are categorized in the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean and Japanese (Hamdani 2015: 10). In 2011, according to *NHS*, 88% of Muslims in Canada regarded themselves as a visible minority. Among them, the largest group was South Asians (383,365 persons, 36% of all Muslims). The second largest group were Muslims of Arab origin (268,165 persons, 25%), followed by the West Asian Muslims (139,615 persons, 13%). The number of Muslims who did not identify themselves as a visible minority stood at 128,810, making up 12% of the Muslim population (*NHS* 2011). A small number of Muslims, on the other hand, claimed to have a multiple/mixed ethno-racial identity (17,090 persons, 2%). Based on the data provided by the same survey, in 2011 the top Muslim countries that were listed among the ethnic origins of Canadians are shown in Graph 6 below. Note that not all people from these countries were Muslims and there were Muslims coming from non-Muslim majority countries listed by *NHS* 2011. In fact, some of the countries of origin, such as India (547,890 persons), China (545,535), and Philippines (454,340) had most probably significant Muslim communities.

Graph 6: Ethno-national Origins of Canadian Muslims in 2011

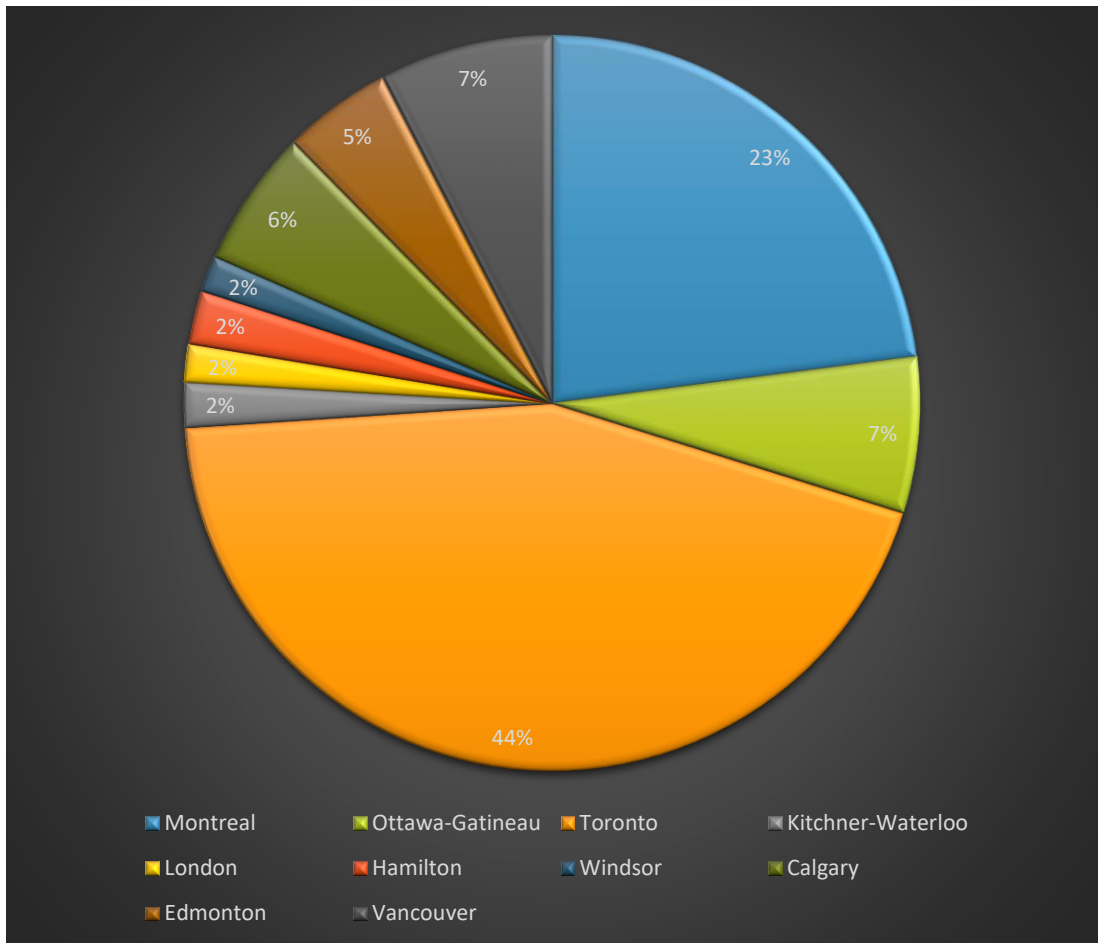


Source: Statistics Canada, NHS 2011.

According to *Environics* President Michael Adams in 2007, 91% of Canadian Muslims was foreign-born and from more than 30 countries. The top three countries of origin were, in Quebec: Morocco (22%), Algeria (16%), Other Africa (8%); in Ontario: Pakistan (21%), Canada (8%), Bangladesh and Somalia (6% each); in West: Iran (22%), Canada (12%), and Afghanistan (11%). Of these according to *Environics* figures, 65% was Sunni, 15% was Shia, 6% was other (Ismaili, Ahmadia, Alevi, etc.), and 4% no denomination (*Environics* 2007).

NHS 2011 reports that the Canadian Muslim community is overwhelmingly urban with over 95% of the Muslim population living in the metropolitan areas. Comprising more than 50% of metropolitan Muslim population, the Greater Toronto Area and Montreal have the highest Muslim density. The Muslim communities, however, is growing in a number of cities, especially in western cities such as Calgary and Edmonton, as well as in Montreal which attracts Muslim immigrants from French-speaking former colonies of the North African countries (*SMC* 2016: 13).

Graph 7: Muslim Population in Canadian Cities



Source: Statistics Canada, NHS 2011.

The Canadian Muslim population is growing every day, because of the newly arriving Muslims and the steady fertility rate in the Muslim community. Nonetheless, as Hamdani points out, although there is a steady growth in the Muslim population, both the number of Muslim immigrants and the Muslim fertility rate are actually exaggerated by certain circles. In fact, the stereotypical large Muslim family does not exist in Canada. According to findings of the 2001 Census and another study in 2003, Muslims have only a moderately higher fertility rate at 2.4% which was only 0.3% higher “than the 2.1% replacement level below which the population actually begins to decline unless steps are taken to rejuvenate it through immigration or encouraging people to have more babies” (Hamdani 2015: 6). Similarly, according to Hamdani in the growth of Muslim population the role of immigration in the last decades is undeniable, but the number of immigrants is declining and will continue to decline due to recent policy changes (Hamdani 2015: 6). As seen in Graph 8, the number of Canadian-born Muslim is increasing, from 23.8% in 2001 to 28.0% in 2011, but the majority of Muslims is still foreign-born, just below 70% in 2011.

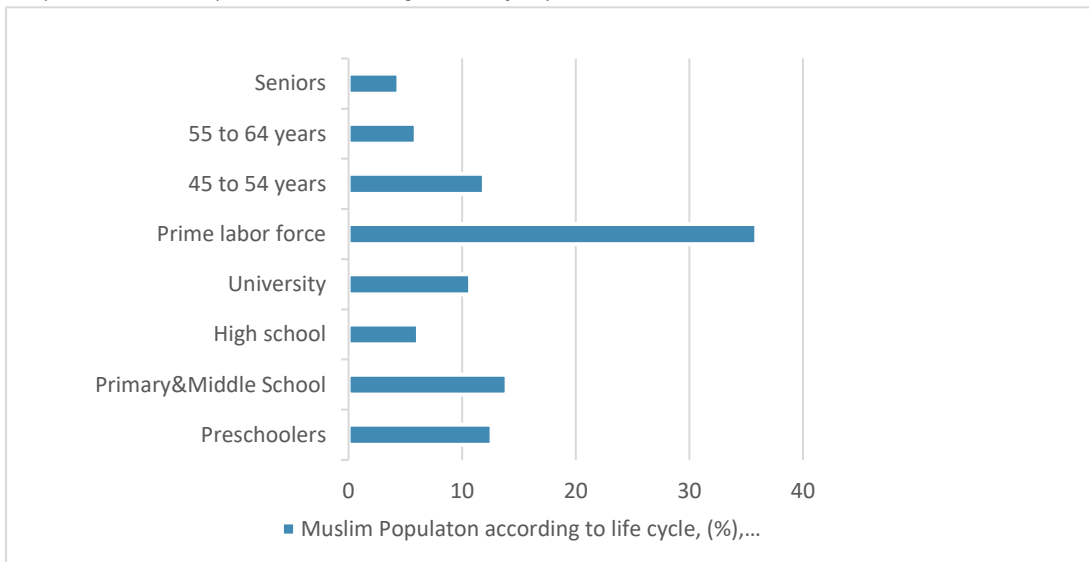
Graph 8: Canadian Muslims' Distribution According to the Place of Birth

Changing composition of Canadian Muslim population	2001	2011	% change	Percent distribution	
				2001	2011
Total Canadian Muslim population	579,640	1,053,945	81.8	100.0	100.0
Canadian-born	137,835	294,710	113.8	23.8	28.0
Foreign-born (immigrant)	415,840	720,125	73.2	71.7	68.3
Students, temporary workers & refugees	25,970	39,110	50.6	4.5	3.7

Source: Hamdani (2015) based on Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2001 and NHS 2011.

The Future of Global Muslim Population (TFGMP, 2011), a report by Pew, indicates that the Muslim population in Canada is expected to triple by 2030, from about 940,000 in 2010 to nearly 2.7 million in 2030 (TFGMP 2011: 142). This means, Muslims will make up 6.6 percent of the total population in Canada, a larger share of the general population than Muslims in the USA will make in 2030" (TFGMP 142). Mata's (2011) estimations also reflected similar projections concerning the Muslim population growth. Accordingly, it was predicted that the number of Canadian Muslims will reach approximately 3 million by the year 2031, making up 6.6% of the total population of Canada (Birani 2017: 6).

Graph 9: Muslim Population According to the Life cycle



Source: Statistics Canada, NHS 2011.

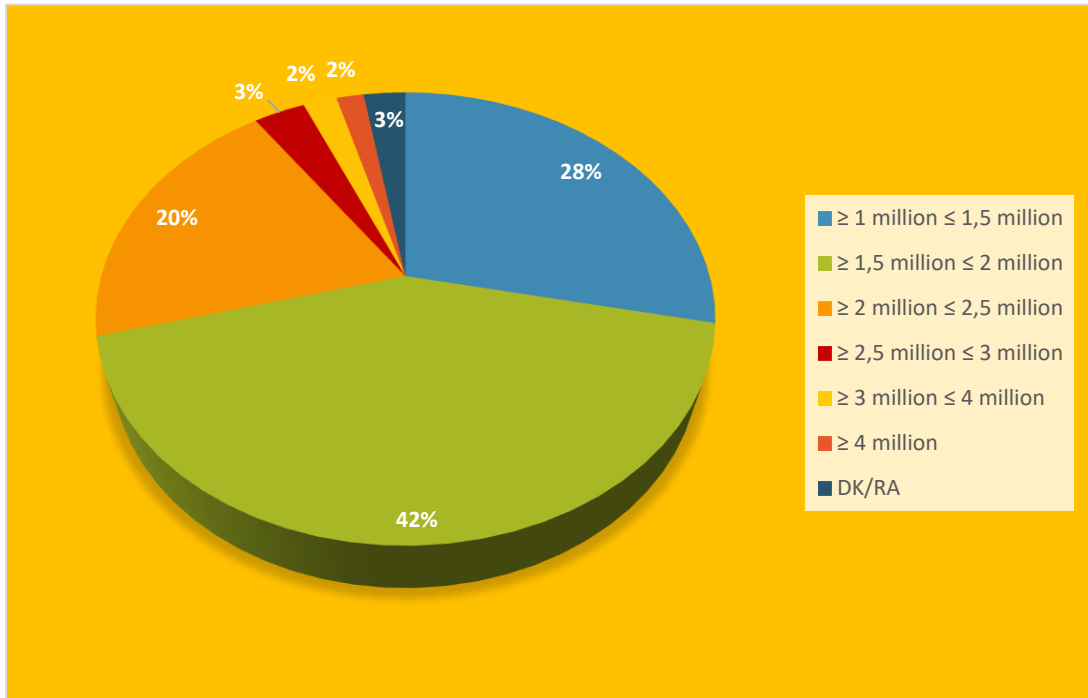
Daood Hamdani's estimates based on NHS 2011 by Statistics Canada clearly demonstrate that the Muslim population in Canada is very young with over 50% of Muslims being in the working age and senior Muslims comprising only 5.6% of the total Muslim population. 12.6% of Muslims are preschoolers (aged 6 and under) representing the third largest age group in the Canadian Muslim population. While children in elementary and middle school (aged between 6 and 13) constituted the

second largest group with 13.8%, the population of the Muslim university students stood at 10.7% in the same report. The largest age group that is the prime labor force, aged between 24 and 45, comprised 35.9% of the Canadian Muslims (Graph 9) (Hamdani 2015: 8).

Hamdani argues that the youngness of the Muslim population is a proof of “how Canada’s immigration policy is meeting one of its key objectives, *that is* to correct the imbalance between the young and the elderly in the aging population” (2015: 8). Accordingly, while among Muslims for every elderly there are nine in the working age to support social programs, for all Canadians, this ratio stands at five for every senior. Hamdani points out that “the fiscal benefit of correcting the demographic imbalance is reflected in the amount of money government pays out to people,” one of which concerns the age. “In 2010, disbursements under the Canada Pension Plan, Quebec Pension Plan, Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement made up 6.6 per cent of the income of all Canadians. For Canadian Muslims, this ratio was much less, at 2.6 per cent because they are much younger” (Hamdani 2015: 8-9). It is understood; despite their portrayal as the hunters of state benefits in the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant discourse, Canadian Muslims’ socio-economic, contribution to their country does not lag behind any other group.

During the field study, when asked about the numeric presence of Muslims, representatives, scholars, and NGO’s of the Canadian Muslim community provided a variety of answers, ranging from half a million to more than 5 million. This was also observed in the findings of the CA Sur. Accordingly, when asked “In your opinion, what is the estimated size of the Muslim population in Canada?” the majority of the respondents reported a number between 1 to 2,5 million with 28% saying it is more than 1 million but less than 1,5 million; 42% reporting a number between 1,5 and 2 million; and another 20% reporting a number smaller than 2,5 million but larger than 2 million. In the opinion of some other participants the number was more than 2,5 million. In this group, 3% stated the size of the Muslim community in Canada was between 2,5 and 3 million, while 2% stated a number between 3 and 4 million. Another 2% reported that it should be between 3 and 4 million (CA Sur.).

Graph 10: Estimated Size of the Muslim Population in Canada

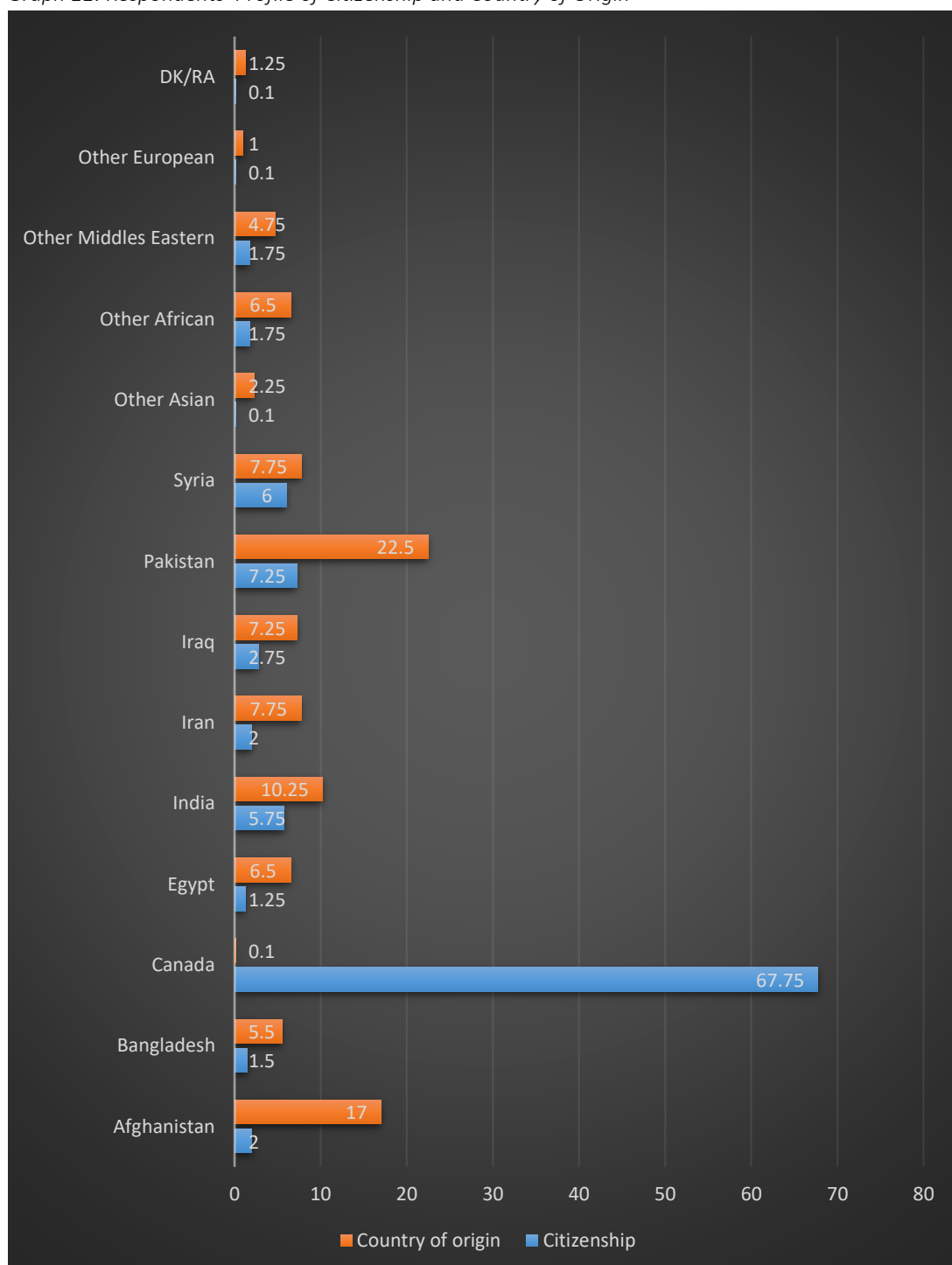


Source: *GMD CA Sur., 2019.*

Although the *GMD CA Sur* did not specifically investigate the opinion of Canadian Muslims concerning the ethnic breakdown of the Muslim community in the country, the ethnic background and citizenship status profile of the survey participants demonstrated similar compositions found in the *NHS 2011* and other studies. Accordingly, the largest Muslim groups in Canada were the South Asian and Pakistani Muslims constituting the largest sub-group with 22%. Among others, Iranian, Middle Eastern and North African Muslims had significant shares. It was also observed that the majority of respondents were holding Canadian citizenship at 67.75%, although only 0.1% of them stated nowhere other than Canada as the country of origin which could be attributed to the age profile of the participants (*CA Sur.*).⁶

⁶ Age composition of the *CA Sur* participants was as follows: 12% (aged 18-24), 24.3% (aged 25-34), 34.8% (aged 35-44), 22.3% (aged 45-54), 5.8% (aged 55-64), and 1% (aged 65+).

Graph 11: Respondents' Profile of Citizenship and Country of Origin



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The exact number of the mosques in Canada is unknown, yet as one of the participants in the workshop stated during the field study, it is over 100, and only in Toronto, there are 20 mosques and masjids. This organizational and institutional presence, however, was built from almost nothing. Many participants mentioned that when they came to Canada in the 1980s, they lacked premises to facilitate religious and cultural services. Many reported that their first masjids were basements and houses and, in time, and with the support, encouragement, and resources that were made available by the Muslim community and Canadian authorities, they have managed to build their own mosques and cultural centers. In some cases, they bought or rented old churches and transformed them into masjids. According to Hashem, an Afghani Muslim who came to Canada following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, all these improvements were possible thanks to the supporting and inclusive political and legal system in Canada and the growing Muslim population (CA work.).

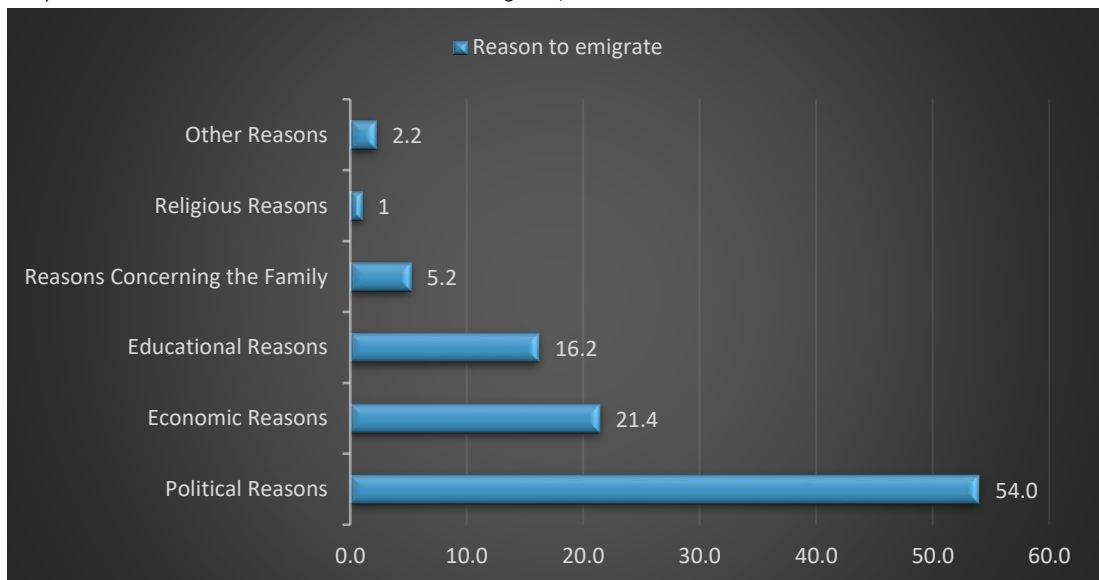
The main findings of the Canada field study relating to the demographic profile of the Muslim community, then, could be pinpointed in three headings: (i) the Canadian Muslim sector continues to grow, indeed, it is one of the fastest growing faith groups in Canada. The steady increase in Muslim numbers is mainly because of the continuing inflow of Muslim immigrants attracted by the economic and educational advantages and opportunities and the country's inclusive framework that is exceptionally egalitarian and accommodating towards minority groups. In addition, the relatively higher marriage and fertility rates are also effective. (ii) Given the varying accounts between official and unofficial numbers, the views of participants at the workshop and interviews, it could be deduced that an exact number and ethnic/national/racial breakdown of the Canadian Muslim community is difficult to determine. Nevertheless, as of 2019, it is estimated that the number of Muslims in Canada is no less than 1.5 million and the largest sub-groups in the Canadian Muslim community are South Asian, North African, and Middle Eastern Muslims. (iii) As the age composition of them reveals, the Canadian Muslim community is remarkably young, well educated, and economically involved, with an important part of them being in the prime labor force. In short, the Muslim community is still growing in Canada and they have succeeded to establish an Islamic life in this distant northern land.

3 Views on Migration and Integration

This chapter focuses on the topics of migration, integration, and the politico-legal context of Canada in relation to its Muslim community. In the scope of these issues, the chapter first discusses the Muslim perspective on the advantages and disadvantages that the political and legal framework harbors for Muslim communities and individuals. This being done, the chapter attends to the subject of Muslim immigration and integration in the country. Here, the relations between the Muslim community and the wider Canadian society along with other visible minority groups are also addressed. In the final part of the chapter, Canadian Muslims' perception of the concept of diaspora and the general attitude towards its employment for the Muslim community in Canada and in non-Muslim majority contexts is investigated.

According to the findings of the CA Sur., 2019, when asked to specify a motivation for their immigration to Canada, the majority of respondents listed political (54%), economic (21.4%), and educational reasons. While another 5.2% reported that familial reasons motivated their immigration, only 1% reported religious reasons (CA Sur.). This distribution means that the legal and political framework and economic development in Canada are the main sources of its appeal to Muslims. The high figure for those who thought Canada's educational advantages make the country as an ideal destination for immigration, on the other hand, reveals one of the most important characteristics of the Muslim community in Canada: being highly educated.

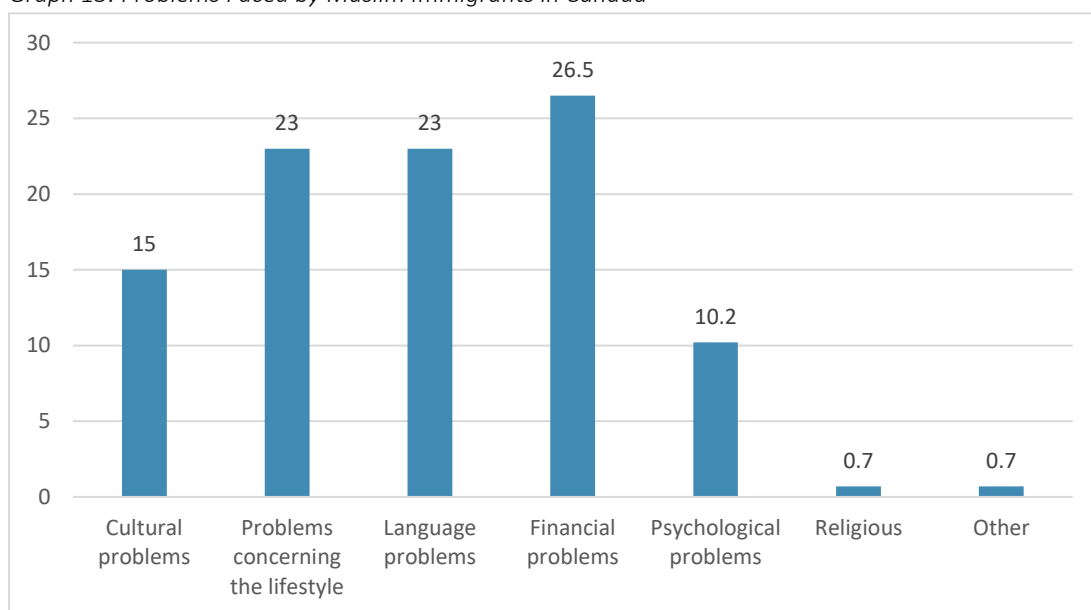
Graph 12: Canadian Muslims' Reasons to Immigrate, %



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

When asked if they faced any problems as migrants when they came to Canada, 16.1% of the respondents in the CA Sur responded in the affirmative, while the majority at 78% reported that they faced no such problems. Another 5% stated that they faced problems partly and 0.3% either refused to answer or said they did not know (CA Sur.). As a follow-up, when asked to specify the problems and challenges that they faced, those who responded “Yes, I faced problems as a migrant” to the previous question listed the following issues: financial problems (voiced by 26.5%), problems related to language and communication (23%) and lifestyle and the culture of the country (38% in total), along with psychological problems (10.2%). The proportion of those who experienced problems related to the religion they observed were significantly low at only 0.7% (CA Sur.). In the opinion of Muslims, financial difficulties and linguistic and cultural differences are the most challenging aspects of the country upon arrival as migrants.

Graph 13: Problems Faced by Muslim Immigrants in Canada



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

During the fieldwork, it was observed that Canada has one of the most accommodating political and legal context for Muslims. There are certain challenges such as the increasing incidents of Islamophobia, the slight economic marginalization of Muslims in the private sector, and the escalating rhetoric of Islamic radicalness thanks to the influence of US media in the post-9/11 in Canada. However, in general, unlike some European and American contexts where the legal and political rights and freedoms remain mostly on paper, in Canada, religious and cultural rights are enjoyed by all visible minority groups equally. As with other ethnic and religious minority groups, the Muslim community in Canada is very eager to integrate into the larger society and the socio-political and cultural framework. Here, the efforts of the Muslim community to reach out to other minority groups and the larger society was voiced and appreciated by many Muslim and non-Muslim participants during the interviews and the workshop.

Fahad, a retired nuclear engineer of Egyptian background who is now managing a masjid in Toronto, and has been living in Canada for almost 50 years, said that “there were two main issues that call for further and deeper consideration: improving the level of political participation and further social engagement with other groups for the benefits of the society and nation at large” (CA int.). He provided an example to such social engagement and activism in which their mosque and a church cafeteria collaborated to facilitate free food (hot soup and lunch) for those in need. In his opinion, involving and serving the community is a very efficient and practical way to demonstrate that Muslims are an intrinsic part of the country (CA int.).

Jana, a female non-Muslim Canadian who is the executive director of a church’s community center in Guelph, maintained that the Muslim community has been making great efforts to reach out to the non-Muslim community and to explain their faith because Canada does not have a long history and experience with individuals from Muslim backgrounds. She gave one example of such efforts with the Muslim Society of Guelph’s event that is called *Building Bridges*. The event is run annually and with the participation of around 500 people from different faith groups such as Christians, Jews, Bahia, and Sikhs. People are invited to have dinner together, engage, and converse, as well as to demonstrate true nature of their faiths including Islam (CA int.). Another interviewee, Zain, a retired ex-diplomat of Afghani background in Toronto, supported Jana’s point. When asked to characterize the relationship between the Muslims and non-Muslims in Canada, he maintained that the relations are as good as they could be and the contributions of Muslims play an important part in the positive nature of the interaction between the two. He gave an example of a recent incident when the mosques opened their doors for those who sought shelter from the storm and freezing temperatures (Zain, int.).

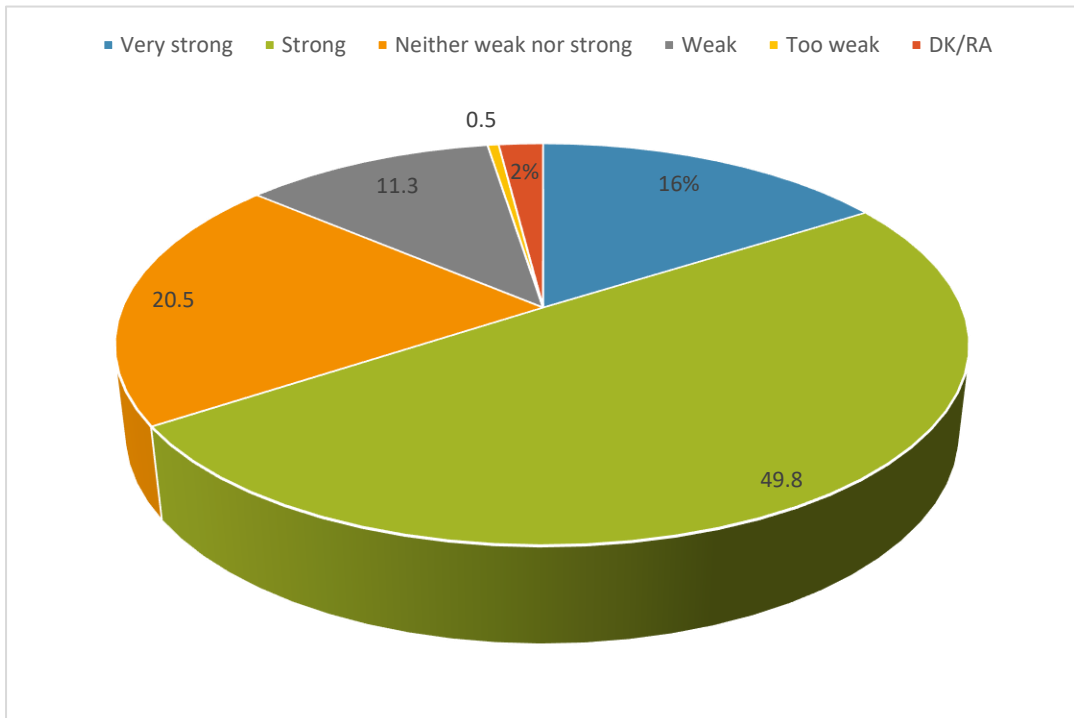
According to Jana, the efforts of the Muslim community to reach out to other faith groups have proved effective. This was revealed in the spirit of collaboration during the Syrian refugee crisis. She stated that during the crises, their community center helped about 55 families to settle in Guelph, which is double the normal capacity of the center. She also reported that hundreds of volunteers signed up and offered their help in the church and community center, and they were not concerned about the fact that the majority of those families that the center and church sponsored were Muslim, “it was all about the humanitarian point” (CA int.). Jana further maintained that the volunteers were from a wide range, from people that did not believe in God, to people that were Muslims themselves, to people that were Christians or Bahia or Unitarian. “What they had in common was the belief that every human deserves to live in safety and that every human deserves respect and dignity and this is the chance to live out the values by supporting someone else” (CA int.).

Layla, the executive director of a Muslim women organization and a social activist of Pakistani background, also supported Jana’s point, by arguing that one thing that is heartening is that Muslims in Canada are becoming more and more open to working with other people. They have an open house, their mosques, where people are welcome to visit across the country. There is a lot of outreach (activities and events, like *iftars*) that is going on for non-Muslims. This is another reason why Muslims have a good relationship with other Canadians (CA int.). Although, there are some Muslim organizations that are a little bit more insular, with Canada being the multicultural country that it is

and the multi-faith country that it is, those organizations cannot remain insular for very long, they will eventually get out of their shells (Layla, CA int.).

Jana, Layla and Zain's arguments were supported by the findings of the CA Sur., as well. When asked "In your opinion, how strong are relations between Muslim Community in general, and society of Canada?" the vast majority, just about 66% reported that the relations are strong (16% "very strong" and 50% "strong"). While 20.5% stated that the relations are neither strong nor weak, 11.3% argued they were weak. Only in the opinion of 0.5% the relations were too weak (CA Sur.).

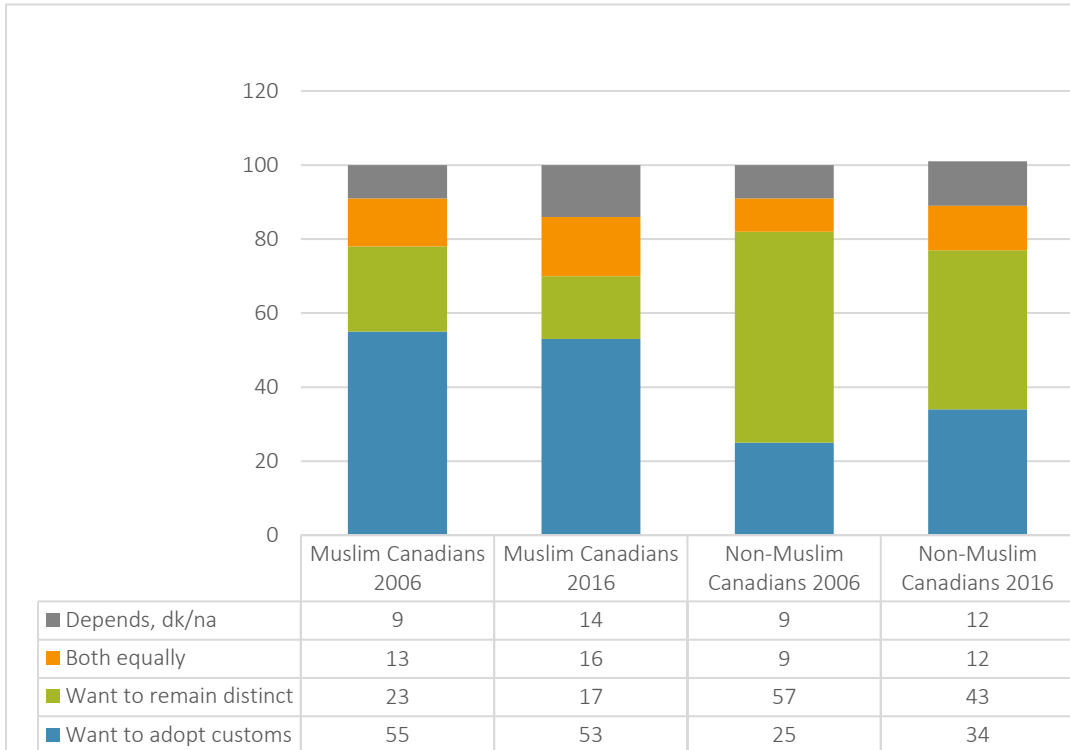
Graph 14: Relations between the Muslim Community and the Larger Society in Canada



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

This picture of integrational and interactional success and claim does not alter radically in the findings of the *Survey of Muslims in Canada (SMC) 2016* by *Environics*. Accordingly, with 53%, a majority of Canadian Muslims believed that Muslims wished to adopt Canadian customs in contrast to 17% who believed that members of Canadian Muslim community wish to remain distinct from the larger Canadian society. While 16% believed that both aspirations were equally present among the Canadian Muslims, another 14% had no opinion about the topic (*SMC 2016: 27*). Measuring also the non-Muslim approaches and attitudes towards the same issue, the survey revealed that the number of non-Muslim Canadians who believed Muslims wanted to adopt Canadian customs rather than remain distinct has increased, from 25% in 2006 to 34% in 2016 (Graph 15).

Graph 15: Do Muslims Want to Adopt Canadian Customs or Remain Distinct?



Source: SMC 2016.

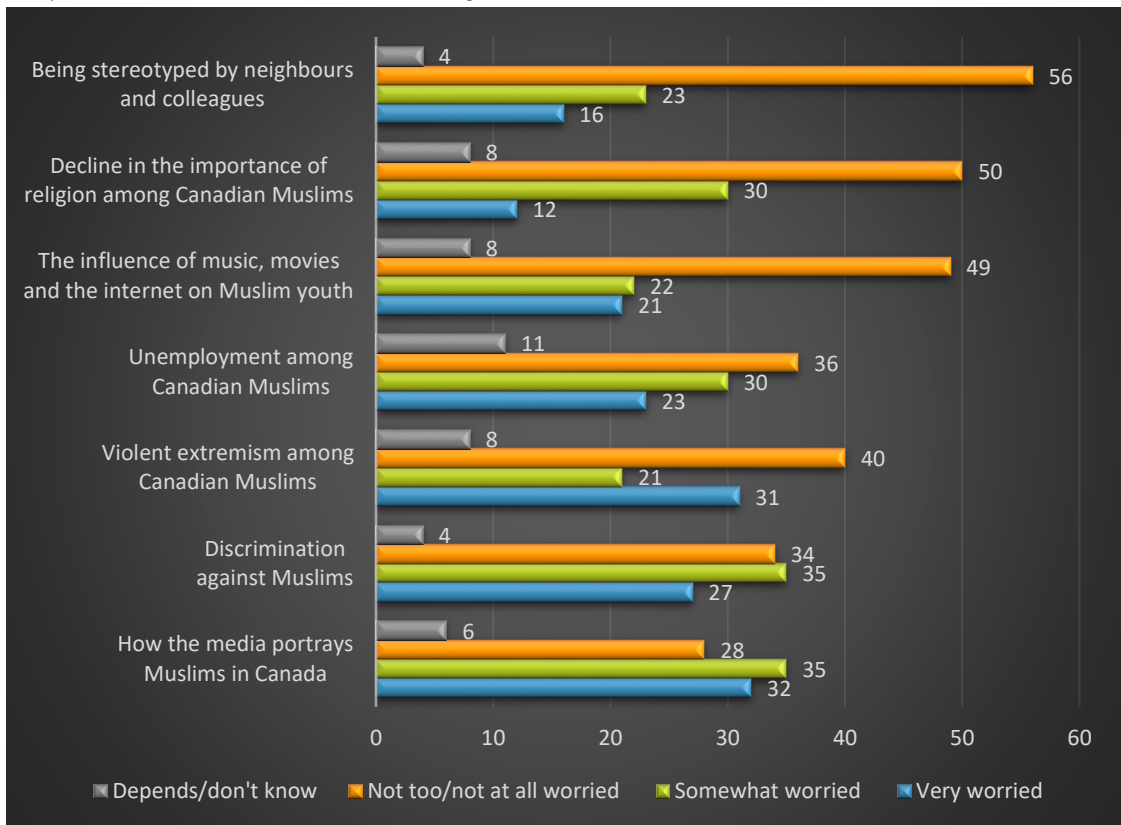
The same report indicated that when asked to name (unprompted) the values that they believe to be the most important for immigrants to adopt and learn in Canada, the most mentioned responses turned out to be “language fluency” in English or French (23%), “tolerance and respect for others” (19%), and “respect for Canadian history and culture” (17%) (SMC 2016: 28). It was also revealed in the findings of the survey that there is a very strong sense of attachment toward Canada among Muslims. Although a sweeping majority of respondents, 9 in 10, were foreign-born, when asked about the sense of attachment to Canada, 83% said they were “very proud” to be Canadian which was above the national average of 73% (SMC 2016: 7). When asked about the values and characteristics of Canada that made them proud, the most cited responses were “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” (SMC 2016: 8).

SMC 2016 further indicates that more than one-third, 35%, of respondents has experienced either discrimination or unfair treatment by their fellow Canadians in the last 5 years. Among the reasons for discrimination, the most cited were believed to be religion (22%), ethnic or cultural background (22%), and language (13%) or sex (6%) (SMC 2016: 38). According to the report, in the opinion of the Muslim Canadians, the top issues facing the Muslim community were the poor treatment and discrimination by the larger society (15%), Islamophobia (13%), stereotyping by the media (12%) or related issues like

feeling insecure in public because of the fear of being attacked on the street. An important part of the respondents, 31%, did not think there were any particular issues facing their community or stated they did not know (SMC 2016: 22).

The findings of the SMC 2016 revealed widespread concerns about various issues facing Muslims in Canada, most notably the negative representation in the media and discrimination and poor treatment by the larger society. On a more positive note, it was observed that the concern levels were down, albeit modestly, in comparison with 2016. Accordingly, when “asked participants about the extent to which they are worried about each of seven issues related to Muslims living in Canada,” 67% of them responded they were “very or somewhat worried” about how the media portrays Muslims in Canada (this was a new item in the survey, it was not included in the same survey conducted in 2006). Discrimination was again a major concern cited by 62% (although this marked a decrease by 4% from 2006). Two other concerns, violent extremism among Canadian Muslims and unemployment were pointed by small majorities, 52% and 53%, respectively, but a decrease by 10% was observed in both of these two categories from the findings of the 2006 figures (SMC 2016: 23).

Graph 16: Concerns About the Issues Facing Muslims in Canada, %



Source: SMC 2016.

Most recently, from March 13 to August 12, 2017, an online survey titled *Canadian Community Engagement Study (CCES)*, with the participation of 1048 individuals across Canada) was conducted by

Thinks for Actions in order to map the level of communication between Muslim Canadians and their fellow non-Muslim Canadians. According to the main findings of the study, a majority of Canadians (67%) believed that the general attitude toward Muslims in Canada was negative, and they were concerned (moderate to extremely significant) about the prevalence of Islamophobia (66%), general racism (60%), hate crimes (59%), religious discrimination (56%), homophobia (48%) and anti-Semitism (43%) (CCES 2017: 6-7).

The results for the Muslim community in Canada showed that the majority of Canadians (75%) wanted their government “to invest resources toward reducing or eliminating systemic racism and religious discrimination,” including Islamophobia. While 72% agreed that there was an “increasing climate of hatred and fear toward Muslims in Canada,” 78% approved that Muslims’ have the right to maintain their religious/cultural practices and adopt Canadian customs and values. The motion M103 found strong popular support with 71% of Canadians (CCES 2017: 7).

Figure 3: Library of a Mosque in Central Toronto



Source: *The photograph was taken during the GMD field study.*

CCES results demonstrated that a significant segment of non-Muslim Canadians had an unfavorable opinion of Islam and Muslims. While 53% stated that their impression of Muslims was generally positive, 40% reported having a negative impression. The percentage of those who believed that the impression of Muslims in Canada was improving was higher than those who believed it was getting worse, 28% versus 21%. The study also revealed that 67% of Canadians believed that the religion of Islam was misunderstood and in the opinion of 60% of them the average Canadian harbors a dichotomy of them” and “us concerning Muslims and the larger society. Furthermore, the stereotypical representations were also prevalent across the non-Muslim Canadian society, as 56% believed that Islam suppresses women and another 42% reported that Islam was not tolerant of other faiths (CCES 2017: 7).

In comparison, 35% of Canadian Muslims believed that non-Muslim Canadians had an unfavorable impression of Muslims, whilst a majority of them, 68%, thought that the average Canadian's understanding of Islam and Muslims, in general, was poor (CCES 2017: 8). The figure for Canadian Muslims who had experienced discrimination in the last 5 years due to their race/ethnicity was alarmingly high at 56% and 47% of the incidents were reported to be verbal abuse. Equally concerning was the finding that according to 82% of Canadian Muslims, discrimination against Muslims in Canada increased in the last 5 years (CCES 2017: 8).

The recommendations for next steps offered by the CCES included the need for (i) investment by the government of Canada to reduce or eliminate systemic racism and religious discrimination including Islamophobia; (ii) Canadian Media to stop representing ISIS, Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Taliban and other similar radical groups as Islamic since the association of Muslims with this kind of networks and negative reporting about Islam foster and provoke Islamophobia; (iii) Muslims to further their social interaction with the larger society and to educate their fellow Canadians on Islam; (iv) and promotion of "a clear message and communication to Canadians that Canadian Muslims while striving to maintain their religious/cultural practices, are adopting Canadian customs and values and are integrating" (CCES 2017: 9-10)

As also pointed out by MacDonal, in the context of another survey, the Canadian Muslims, despite the general commonality of experiencing discrimination and Islamophobia, abstain from making generalizations regarding Canadians being racist or Islamophobic and acknowledge that Canadians feature a broad range of awareness and tolerance towards Islam and Muslims (2015: 10).

Figure 4: An anti-Islamophobia protest urging the government to take action against rising Islamophobia in Canada.



According to Ahmed et al (2017), "scapegoat populism" and hatred toward religious and racial others, most currently through Islamophobia, and anti-migrant sentiments, have seen an increase across the globe, and Canada is no exception. "Such sentiments have resulted in numerous instances of hate speech, violence, persecution, and discriminatory actions that threaten to deepen existing divides and foment conflict" (Ahmed et al 2017: 8). According to the report *Motion 103 in Action (M103)* by the end of December 2017, in total 70 hate crimes targeting Muslims had been reported to the Canadian police. Ranging in nature, crimes included online harassment, verbal threats and abuse, a bomb threat against Muslims at Concordia University, and the mosque vandalism in Montreal (M103 2017: 8).

The most radical and gravest among these hate crimes was the shooting on January 29 at Québec City Mosque, in which six people were killed and 19 others injured. Although the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, did not officially acknowledge the Islamophobic nature of the attack, he highlighted its terrorist nature and stated in the Parliament that “[t]his was a group of innocents targeted for practicing their faith. Make no mistake it was a terrorist attack. It was an attack on our most intrinsic and cherished values as Canadians – values of openness, diversity, and freedom of religion” (*M103* 2017: 8). The Canadian Muslim community, however, as noted by many participants in the GMD Canada field study, welcomed even this reaction. Yusuf, a community leader and pioneer immigrant of Afghani-Turkish background who came to Canada in 1969, for instance, emphasized that the response of the Prime Minister, the cabin, and the society to the mosque shooting in Quebec strengthened Muslims’ sense of belonging towards Canada (CA int.)

What Mahmood Mamdani (2002, 2004) conceptualized as “culture talk,” *i.e.*, a discourse that is essentialist, reductionist and fixated which has heightened the post-9/11 Western political outlook, is at the heart of the matter, here. According to Mamdani “that pervasive and persuasive culture talk collapses identities—particularly Muslim ones—into a unitary religious experience” and defines religious identities and cultures in the political vocabulary of presumed “essential” characteristics (cited in Selby 2016: 73). Equally dangerous when responding to this discourse and in general the Islamophobic discourse, is the adoption of what Andrew Shryock (2010) terms “Islamophilia,” that is uncritical and resolute admiration for Islam and its values among journalists, politicians, and critics in the West. According to Shryock often employed to fight back Islamophobia, the discourse of Islamophilia is equally reductionist and essentializing, since it, too, represents Islam in “black and white terms, as peaceful, all loving, and always completely compatible with the so-called secular ‘West.’” (cited in Selby 2016: 73).

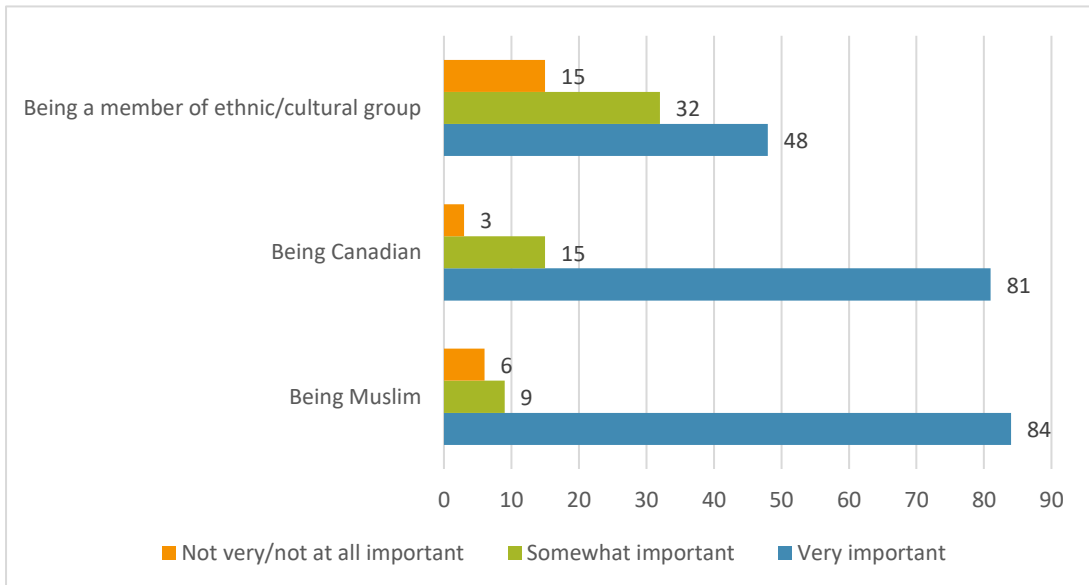
The damaging side of this kind of counter-discourse is that it always refers back to the original, which in this case is Islamophobic discourse, thus it reiterates and reproduces the negative discourse despite intending the contrary. So, whenever a generalization such as Islam is the religion of peace is uttered, the counter-discourse becomes conspicuous by its absence. Even more dangerous and harmful is that these discourses reduce the presence and subjectivity of Muslims to binaries fixated by political essentialism (good Muslims vs bad ones, peaceful Muslims vs terrorists). As Selby felicitously puts it, =“despite being well meaning, attempts in scholarship and policy documents to demonstrate that Muslims are peace-loving and benign are damaging. They reify a duality to the detriment of multiplicity and implicitly bolster the notion of Muslim peril” (Selby 2016: 82).

In response to the increase in hate crimes, Iqra Khalid, a Liberal MP, put a parliamentary non-binding motion, *M-103*, forward. Calling on the federal government to (i) recognize the need to “quell the rising public climate of hate and fear;” (ii) “condemn Islamophobia and all forms of systemic racism and religious discrimination;” and (iii) “request that the Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage to undertake a study,” the motion passed on March 23, 2017—not a law, though (*M103* 2017: 8-9). Shortly after Khalid’s tabling of *M-103*, the Ontario legislature unanimously passed an anti-Islamophobia motion, inviting the legislature to “stand against all forms of hatred, hostility, prejudice, racism and intolerance,” and to reprimand a “growing tide of anti-Muslim rhetoric and sentiments” (*M103* 2017:

8-9). President Trudeau supported the efforts. While delivering a message for the beginning of *Eid al-Adha* on August 31, 2017, in Saskatoon, urging Canadians to fight Islamophobia, he stated “Whether we are in a big city or a small town, we must continue to stand together, united against racism, hatred and Islamophobia” (*Toronto Sun*, September 1, 2017).

It should be noted that both the motion and the efforts, has met with opposition from certain segments of the society and political spectrum. Only weeks after Trudeau’s speech, on 18 October 2017, the passage of *Bill 62* by the National Assembly of Quebec, “banning the wearing of face coverings for people giving or receiving a service from the state,” was received by many Muslims and the supporter of *M-103* motion as a notable counteraction (*M103 2017*: 8-9).

Graph 17: Important Part of Personal Identity for Canadian Muslims

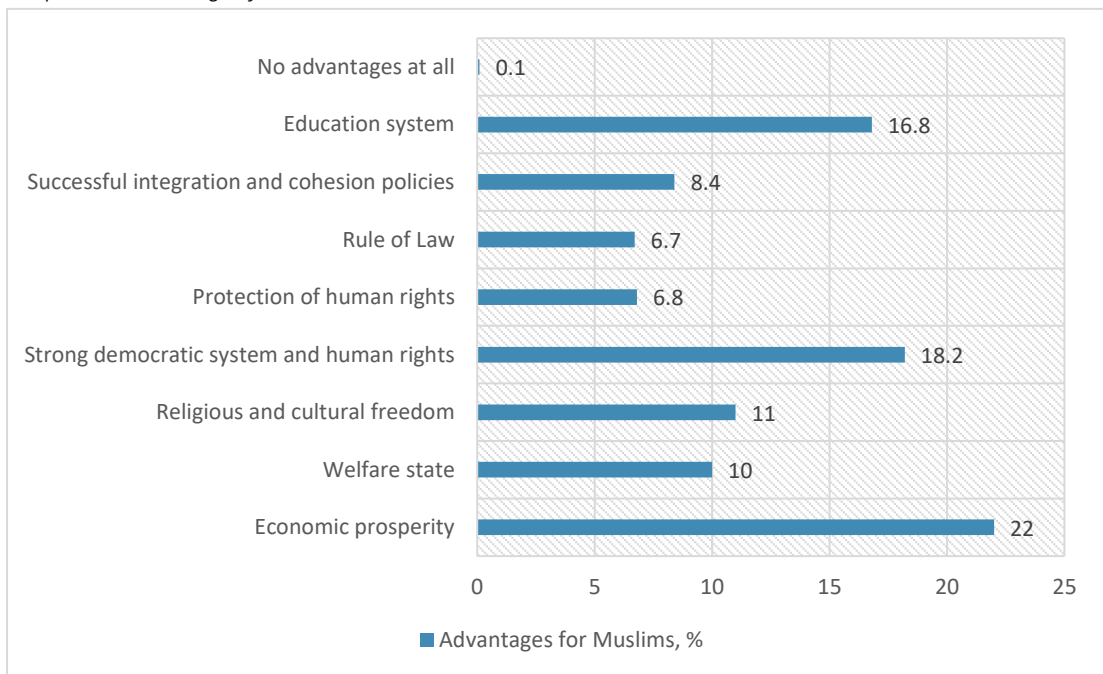


Source: SMC 2016.

SMC 2016 reveals that the sense of belonging to Canada is more prevalent among Muslims compared to non-Muslims. According to the survey, a vast majority of Muslims consider both their religion (84%) and their country (81%) to be a constitutive part of their identity—only 48% of Muslims attributed the same importance to their ethnic or cultural background. 27% of Muslims placed equal importance on their Canadian and religious identities. It was also highlighted that among Muslims, second/third generation younger individuals (particularly aged 45 and younger), women, and immigrants who arrived in the last decade tended to place more importance on their religious identity while the older and first generations who arrived more than two decades ago inclined to put more emphasis on being Canadian. By comparison, non-Muslims, in general identified more with the country (43%) than with their religious identity (28%). In parallel with this, 24% of non-Muslims stated that both the country and their religion are equally important to their personal identity (SMC 2016: 15).

The findings of both the *NHS* 2011 and the *SMC* 2016 found resonance in the *GMD CA Sur.*, 2019, conducted during the field study. As shown below, when asked to list the three main advantages that Canada offers for Muslims, over 60% of the respondents listed a feature that is related to the legal and political framework. Accordingly, 18.2% stated that the strong democratic system and human rights is the main advantage while 11% specified religious and cultural freedom. Respondents also listed the welfare state (10%), the successful integration and cohesion policies (8.4%), and the rule of law (6.7%) as the main advantages. The most pronounced single advantage was the economic prosperity of Canada. The education system was also frequently mentioned entering the list as the third most voiced advantage with 16.8%. An equally convincing indication that the Muslim community in Canada favors their country was that only 0.1% reported that there were no advantages at all (*CA Sur.*).

Graph 18: Advantages for Muslims in Canada

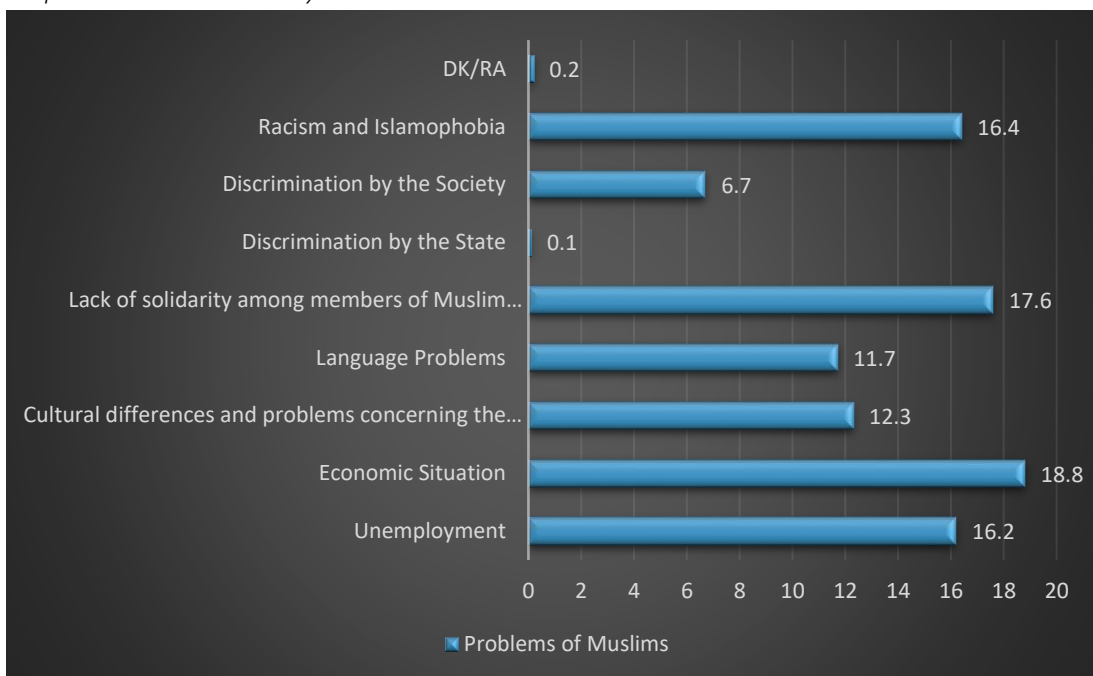


GMD CA Sur., 2019.

In comparison, when respondents in *CA Sur* were asked to list the main challenges and problems faced by Muslims in Canada, the first three most pronounced problems revealed to be economic (18.8%), lack of solidarity among Muslims (17.6%) and Islamophobia and racism (16.4%). Challenges related to the cultural differences and lifestyle of the country and the language also observed to be high at 12.3% and 11.7%, respectively. Discrimination by society was also listed by a small group of respondents, making up 6.7% of the total. It was significant in the context that with only 0.1%, a dramatically lower number reported discrimination by the state as a challenge (*CA Sur.*).

What is quite interesting is that the responses related to two overarching frames, the economy and social equality (the one that encircles the issues and aspects relevant to human rights and freedoms, and integration and acceptance) were listed by many both as advantages and disadvantages. Economic prosperity of the country was listed as the most pronounced advantage (by 22%) while the economic situation was listed as the most pronounced challenge (by 18.8%). The same paradox was observed for the frame of social equality, rights and freedoms. Whereas 60% of the respondents listed a feature that is related to this framework as the main advantage of Canada for the Muslim community, more than 24% pointed racism, discrimination, and Islamophobia, challenges that are not so easily reconcilable with such an appealing framework, as the main challenges. All considered, thanks to the influences of age, gender, ethno-cultural background, and socio-economic status, it could be argued that Canadian Muslims are also diverse in their opinions and there is not a single Canada experienced in the same way by all.

Graph 19: Problems Faced by Canadian Muslims



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

According to the majority of the participants to the workshop, the Muslim community has very good relations with the larger Canadian society, the government, and other non-Muslim visible minority groups. Almost every individual that participated in the workshop stated that relations between Muslims and the larger society are either “very good” or “acceptable”, at least. The only minor setback according to a few, is the limited knowledge about Islam which makes the members of the society open to the influences of the USA-prompted unfavorable media reports in which discussions about Muslims and their religion revolve around terrorism, security agendas, and radicalization. Many participants in the workshop and interviews reported that despite the fact that the legal and political framework is

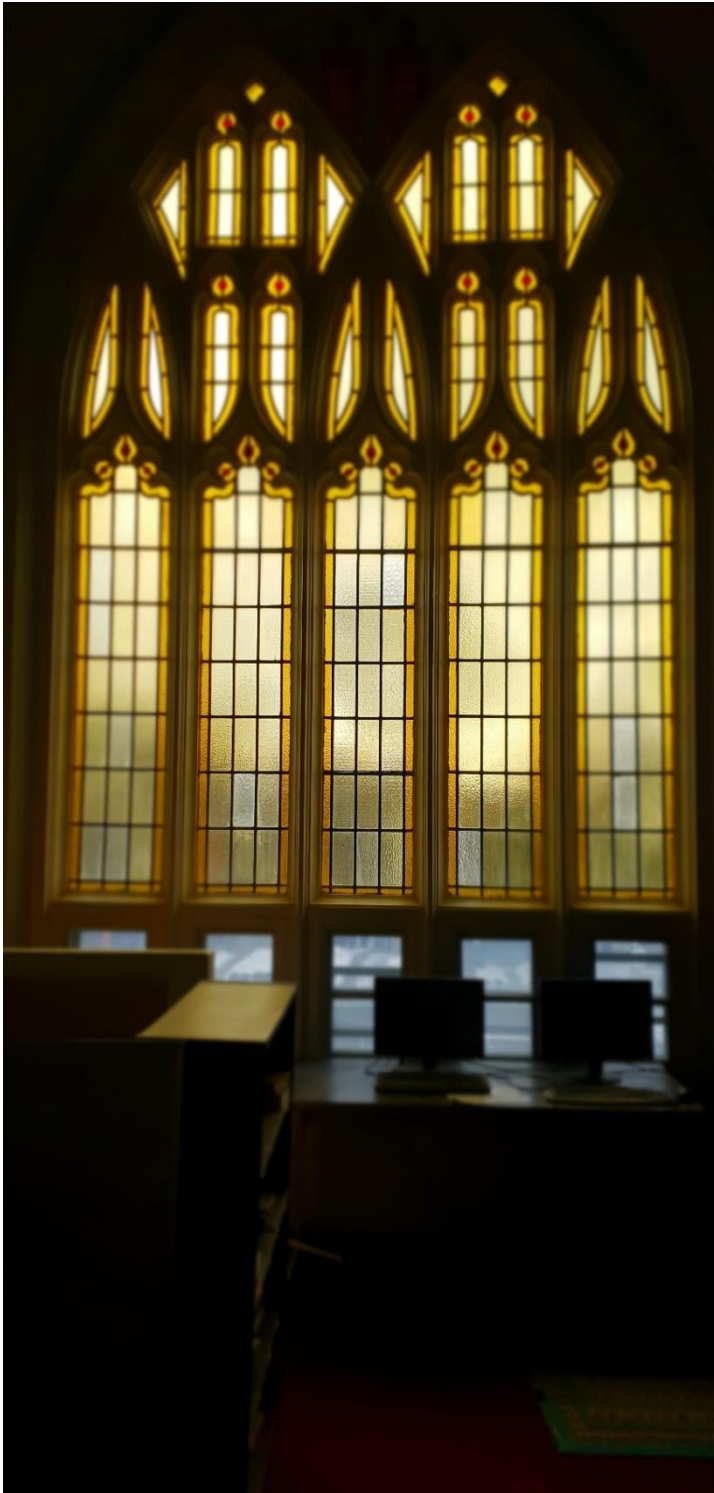
exceptionally accommodating, there is no systemic discrimination in Canada, the rise of Islamophobic incidents, and exclusivist policies proposed at the provincial level are mostly due to the influences coming from beyond, the USA and Europe, especially.

Fahad, a retired nuclear engineer of Egyptian background, when asked to evaluate the legal and political framework in Canada for Muslim individuals and the community, stated that in all three levels of the government and administration, *i.e.*, federal, provincial and municipal, relationships between official bodies and Muslims are very good and the legal and political framework is very accommodating for Muslims—in comparison with the post-9/11 United States, particularly (CA int.). He maintained that the framework is grounded in plurality, diversity, and equality; thus, providing that you follow the legal process and satisfy the legal requirements, the religious and cultural demands and values of all elements of society are accommodated (Fahad, int.).

In the opinion of Ehan, almost no aspects of Canada needs improvement *vis-à-vis* its Muslim community. Providing that one has a good record with the government and obtain her citizenship “the sky is the limit,” there is no barrier in front of one’s potential and capacity (CA int.). Similarly, Waleed, a family-business owner and manager of Afghani-Uzbek origin who had lived in more than 10 other countries including before finally settled down in Canada 8 years ago, maintained that of all countries he lived Canada has the best legal and political framework for immigrants, in general, and Muslims, in specific. Muslims enjoy many political, legal, cultural, and religious rights and liberties and they have a strong political and social representation and visibility in Canada (CA int.).

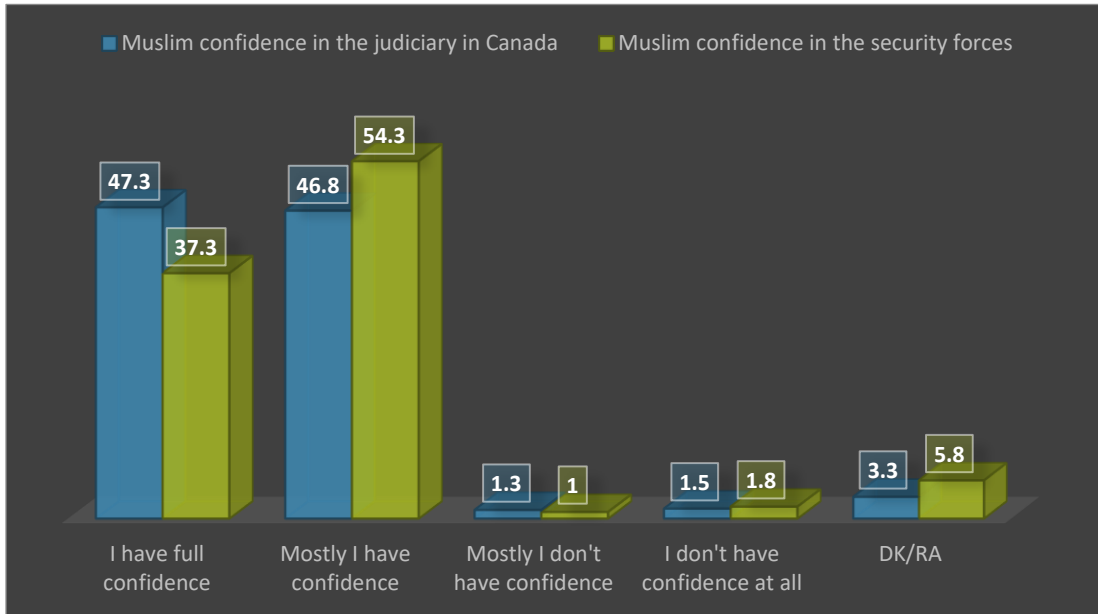
Fehim, one of the participants in the workshop, argued that one area that needed improvement is the Islamic education in Canada, and reported that she has been facing difficulties in providing Islamic education for her children because of the high fees in the private institutions of Islamic education. Another participant, Selim, pointed out that there exist many Islamic schools with quite modest tuition fees, affordable almost by anyone, and named two such schools in the concerning district of Toronto. At the end of this conversation, Fehim maintained that, as it has just happened, one of the benefits of this kind of platforms and workshops is that the members of the community can share their experiences and transfer their knowledge (CA work.).

Figure 5: Study and Computer Section in a Mosque in Toronto



The exceptionally high level of confidence in security forces and the judiciary among Canadian Muslims observed in the findings of the CA Sur supported the arguments of the participants during the interviews and the workshop. Accordingly, above 37% of Muslims in Canada expressed full confidence in the country's security forces while a relatively higher number of them stated that they had full confidence in the Canadian judiciary at 47.3%. Another 46.8% reported that they "mostly have confidence" in the judiciary and 54.3% stated the same for the security forces. In comparison, the number of Muslims who were skeptical towards the security forces and the judiciary remained remarkably low under 2% in each category. Those who responded with "I do not know" or refused to answer amounted to 5.8% for the confidence in the security forces and 3.3% for the judiciary (CA Sur.).

Graph 20: Muslim Confidence in the Judiciary and the Security Forces in Canada



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Mostly sharing very similar views, some interviewees pointed out that the favorable framework is challenged by certain recent developments. Here, three main factors were pronounced scores of times: (i) the imported influences, (ii) regional differences, and (iii) the unique outlook that differ Canada from the USA and other immigrant nations. Layla, the executive director of a Muslim women organization and a social activist of Pakistani background when asked how does she evaluates the context for Muslims, reported that Canada can be viewed as an ideal model of inclusive and accommodating legal and political framework. It has always been so. According to her, “things have only got worse recently because of international politics and issues related to international terrorism and the like.” She added, “in this era, Muslims are facing challenges and that is really because of global geopolitics” (CA int.). “But I should tell you,” further commented Layla, “the large influx of refugees in the past 10-15 years have not fared as well in the labor market” as the previous ones have done. “So the picture is not so as rosy for recent immigrants and refugees as it is for established ones” (Layla, CA int.). According to her, anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim tendencies were not absent in Canada before the current Liberal government was elected. She noted that the previous government, as many other respondents also reported, was quite anti-Muslim and adopted and disseminated a rhetoric that was very similar to that of Trump’s. “But the Trump effect has had an impact on us here in Canada,” she maintained:

As you know, we had a shooting in a mosque by a man who actually embraced Trump's anti-Muslim hate.⁷ We are not immune here; it can happen here, it is happening here. But I think, for the most part, I mean, in our day to day lives, we still way better off than Muslims in the United States or Muslims in Europe. And I think, in comparison with even Muslims who are minorities in Muslim-majority countries, we are better off than them. (Layla, CA int.).

Many participants during the interviews stated that despite all odds Canada is still faring much better than many European countries and its neighbor in the south. Some exceptional regions within Canada challenge this generally positive profile. According to Jana, a female non-Muslim Canadian who is the executive director of a church's community center, there are areas within Canada that are not as open and accommodating toward new groups as other areas, and Quebec is one of them. Due to socio-historical and politico-cultural structures, denominators, and differences which made Quebecois of French background more conservative and protective of their cultural identity, Quebec as a people is less open to newcomers and Muslims (CA int.). Although there has been a mosque shooting in Quebec, according to Jana, this does not mean that all of Quebec is against other religions. The same conservatism could be seen in some parts of Ontario as well but this is changing with more individuals that are Muslim and groups are moving into rural communities nowadays (Jana, CA int.).

In the opinion of Jana, although Canada is affected by the rise of center-right anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim politics in the USA and Europe and the current premier Doug Ford leans to that politics, the country enjoys the advantage of having a large land mass and this makes it immune to that political current. A country almost the size of Russia, Canada has a population of around 38 million people now. "We do not have a high density, we are not overcrowded, and we do not feel that pressure in resources, thus, the country and its people do not feel threatened by newcomers. Because of this land mass advantage, the anti-immigrant discourse does not hit Canada as aggressively as it does say the Netherlands or France." According to her, another reason for the country's immunity to such discourse is the fact that Canada is a nation of immigrants. "It's hard to be anti-immigrant when you still remember your family as an immigrant" (CA int.). Jana further noted, the fact that Canada is doing much better in comparison with the USA so far as migrant communities and Muslim groups are concerned, does not change the reality that Canada has its own challenges, "no system is perfect" (CA int.). In her opinion, Canada and its society do not demand the immigrants to turn into Canadians, as does the USA; immigrant communities are entitled and encouraged to preserve their cultural and religious identity and values (Jana, CA int.).

Yusuf, an IT professional and pioneer immigrant of Afghani-Turkish background who helped around 500 Afghani refugees to immigrate to Canada, stated that the country is affected by the turbulence in the Middle East and the Islamophobic discourses and negative representations that are mobilized by right-wing populist media outlets in the USA and Europe, but this rarely leads to discrimination. According to him, particularly in the big cities, though very rarely, Muslims might be subjected to slight

⁷ Pleaded guilty to killing six men at the Quebec Islamic Cultural Centre on January 29, 2017, Alexandre Bissonnette (29) sentenced to serve an automatic life sentence for shooting and killing Muslim civilians.

episodic discrimination but the system never tolerates even that. There is no visible discrimination against Muslims, or any other faith or race group (CA int.).

A point raised by participants who have engaged with the topic of immigration at an academic or professional level, was that the Canadian immigration and integration system is unique. Rustum, an employment coordinator at immigrant services, stated that in the Canadian context, there has not been too much implementation to pursue integration. “I think the concept of integration can be seen more in the European contexts where integration is considered a measurement of immigrants’ success. “I believe that Canada is still very much pursuing a policy of multiculturalism versus a policy of integration” (CA int.). According to him, Canada’s policy of multiculturalism is one of the strongest aspects of Canada and, in fact, it is an aspect that many countries are trying to emulate worldwide. He added that the policy of multiculturalism has served well, not only for Muslims but also for non-Muslims as a whole. But specifically, multiculturalism has allowed Muslims to openly practice their faith and to be more involved in civic life (CA int.).

Figure 6: Church Converted into a Mosque in Toronto



Source: The photograph was taken during the GMD field study.

In line with Rustum’s point, David, a non-Muslim doctor of economic geography and activist volunteering in many social welfare programs, reported that the idea of national and coherent identity in a country that welcomes so many immigrants and prides itself on multiculturalism is very challenging. “If I were to compare with the United States, for example, with their idea of a melting pot, when you are a melting pot, it becomes easier to crystalize around a national identity.” He added that in Canada, however, people are encouraged to practice their culture, especially in larger cities where street signs are in different languages and not even in English. This approach occasionally leads to discussions about “being a Canadian designates a hyphenized identity,” he stated. “But when we welcome so many newcomers, what does it mean to be a Canadian? So when you think about it, it is

very difficult to have homogenous kind of national identity” (David, CA int.). He further maintained that cultural identities will always remain open for new influences, especially in a country that welcomes immigrants and multiculturalism. “If identities are always influx” he emphasized, “at what point do you peg down that this is a national identity?” According to him, as the immigrant population in Canada grows and becomes more of a presence, more of a cultural presence, more of a political power, the idea of what is Canadian identity will also be fundamentally challenged (CA int.).

According to David, there are two sides to the Canadian context in relation to its Muslim communities. The first one concerns the formal, governmental structures and the overall trends. He gave Canada’s “fairly good immigrant programs,” with a criterion that focuses predominantly on people’s economic potential and integration as an example. In his opinion, “in comparison to other countries such as the USA or the UK, there is more of a welcoming environment in Canada.” The second side, according to David, is that, at the risk of making generalizations, this welcoming environment becomes less visible and welcoming the further one goes to the smaller communities (CA int.). David added that places like Toronto, Vancouver, and Montreal, too, have challenges and may harbor anti-immigrant and Islamophobic people but these places have more exposure to cultural diversity. Although some of the most devoted supports of diversity, multiculturalism, and integration come from small towns, generally speaking, there is less of an understanding and awareness of the importance of immigration and the benefits of cultural diversity among smaller communities. Especially where people don’t have exposure to immigrants and cultural diversity and are getting most of their information via the internet or television. He concluded noting that there is global rise of populist movements, and “with Donald Trump the president next door” some of that rhetoric easily enter to Canadian political horizon (David, CA int.).

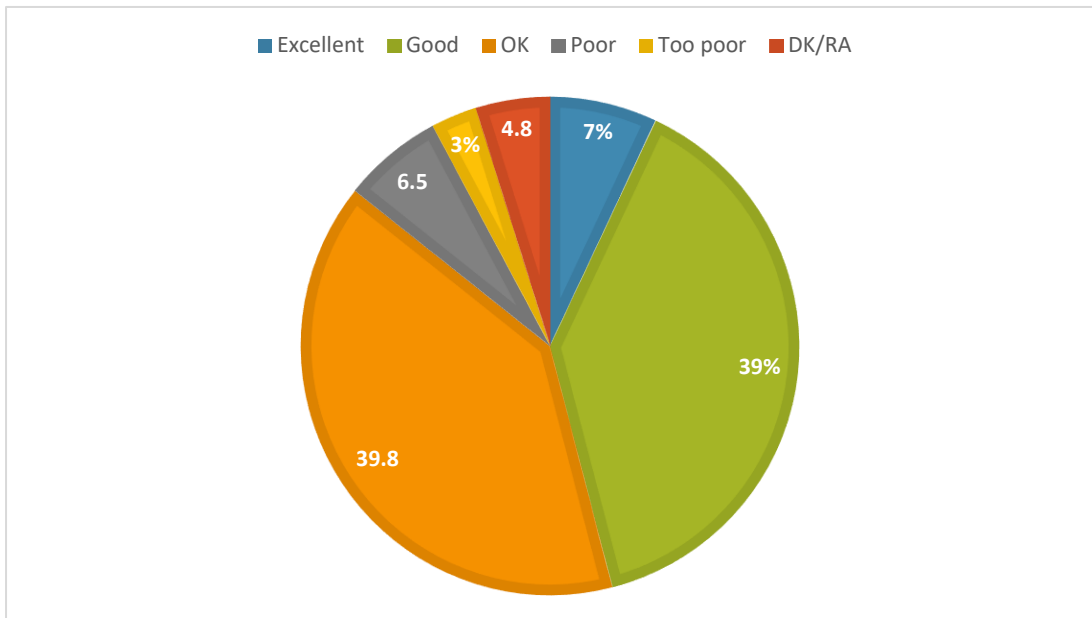
One of the most discussed topics in the workshop was the rise in the Islamophobic incidents in Canada. Here, there appear to be two camps of Muslims; one group is stressing the alarming rise in such incidents and urging the authorities and organizations to adopt measures to prevent and eliminate anti-Islamic discourse before it takes root in the country, and the other is emphasizing the episodic nature of the incidents and reminding that the politico-legal system remains loyal to its multicultural aspirations, therefore there is no call for extra measures. During the workshop, for example, two participants, a male professional of Pakistani background and a worker of Lebanese background, argued that certain people in certain regions are discriminating against the only negativity that Muslims face in Canada. The two emphasized that discrimination is never systemic and only episodic and local, but one cannot claim that the Canadian context is completely free of discrimination. What makes the discriminatory actions and discourses less visible and effective is that the official authorities and the society are quite responsive to such actions and discourses; and they are protective of religious and ethnic groups, including Muslims. According to them, personal cases mostly come about in the private sector and in secluded local societies where interaction with Muslims is very limited and knowledge about Islam and Muslims mostly comes from US-sourced biased media reports. A male participant of Palestinian origin further maintained that from such a perspective there are some roles and responsibilities of large Muslim organizations such as the OIC to prepare materials for the promotion

and introduction of Islam and Muslims to the people lacking proper and unbiased knowledge about our religion and culture (CA work.).

A female social activist of Afghani background, who had worked in a municipality for a very long time, objected to the point of the two gentlemen about the discrimination. She stressed that sporadic discrimination happens everywhere and it is not fair to mention the word discrimination and Canada together in one sentence. She emphasized that there is absolutely no discrimination against Muslims in Canada. “I feel more welcomed in Canada than in my own country,” she stated. Many others agreed with her maintaining that even in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11, many Canadians came to the mosques to show their solidarity with Muslims and protect them against potential attacks from agitated radicals (CA work.).

The overall positive outlook toward the legal and political context, the religious and cultural rights and freedoms offered by Canada was largely resonated in the CA Sur, as well. Here, when asked to grade treatment of members of the Muslim community in the public sector in Canada (police, health system, judiciary, etc.), 39% responded “good” while just about 40% stated that Muslims were treated “OK”. In the opinion of another 7%, Muslim treatment in the public sector was “excellent.” Overall, it could be claimed that 85% of Muslims in Canada found the treatment of the Muslim community in the public sector acceptable while only around 9.5% found the treatment poor (6.5%) or too poor (3%) (CA Sur.).

Graph 21: Treatment of Muslims in the Public Sector

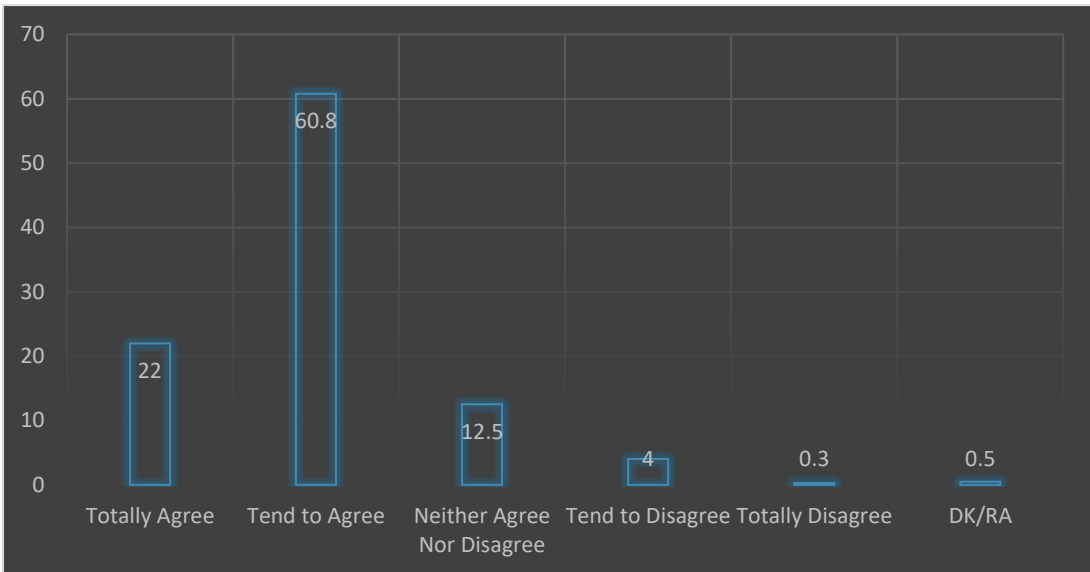


Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Similar responses were observed when asked, “Do you agree with the statement that the members of the Muslim Community are accepted and treated as equal citizens with their own values and norms in Canada?” Accordingly, the majority of respondents, just below 83%, stated that they either “totally agree” (22%) or “tend to agree” (60.8%). While 12.5% remained neutral, only a small total of 4.3% said

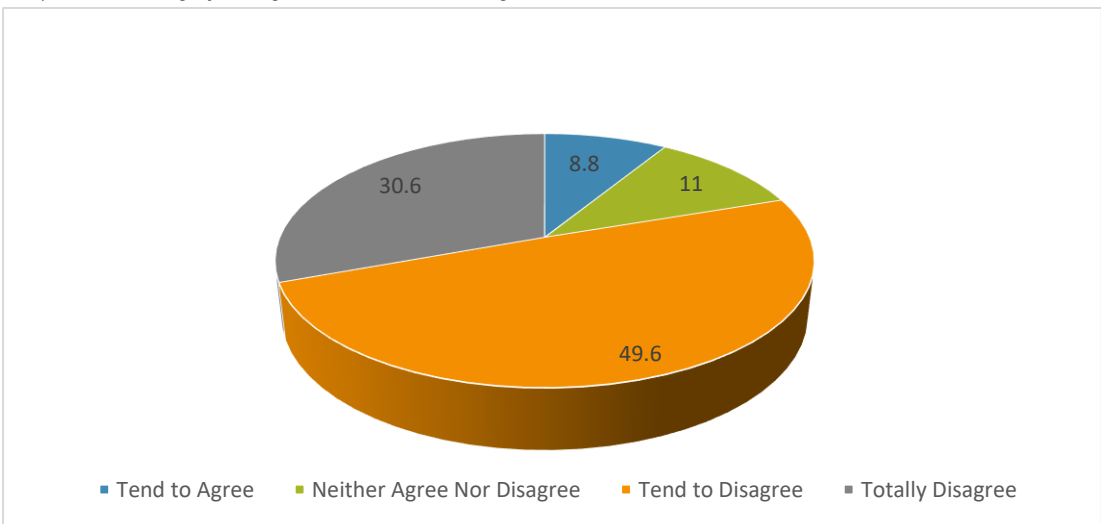
they “tend to disagree” (4%) or “totally disagree” (0.3%) (CA Sur.). Testing similar attitudes and views, when asked to indicate to what extent did they agree with the statement “Some people look down on you because of your religious identity?” Here, only 8.8% stated that they tend to agree with the statement. While 11% took a neutral position, the majority of the respondents, above 80%, reported they did not agree with it (30.6% stating they totally disagreed and 49.6% stating they tended to disagree) (CA Sur.).

Graph 22: Acceptance of Muslims as Equal Citizens in Canada



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Graph 23: Feeling of being Looked down among Canadian Muslims

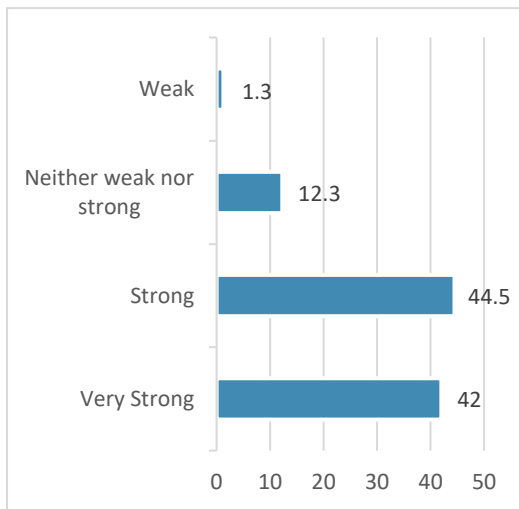


Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The findings of the question “Would you advise another Muslim to immigrate to and live in this country,” were very similar. An overwhelming majority of the respondents were quite satisfied with the standards of their lives in Canada, with 97.5% reporting, “Yes, I would,” while only 2.5% stated they “neither would, nor would not.” None of the respondents reported that they would discourage another Muslim from immigrating to Canada (CA Sur.).

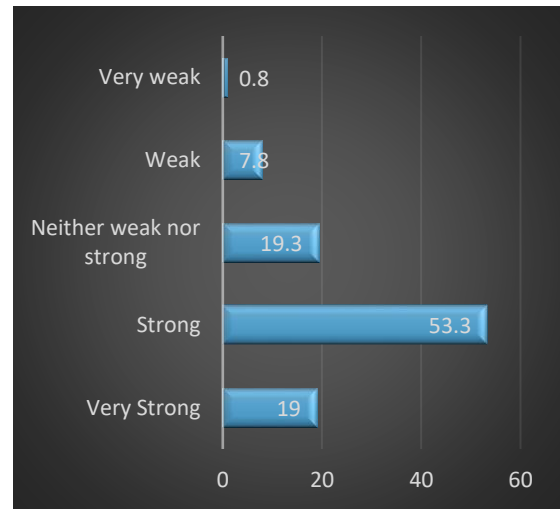
The findings of the questions that aimed to measure the Muslim community’s sense of belonging and the level of Muslim adaptation to the country confirmed the findings of other surveys and the previous questions of the *GMD CA Sur* that tested relevant behaviors and attitudes. Accordingly, when asked to describe their sense of belonging to the larger society, Canadian Muslims responded to having either a “very strong” or a “strong” sense of belonging, 42% and 44.5%, respectively. In comparison, the proportion of those who had a “weak” sense of belonging was significantly low at only 1.3%. Another 12.3% reported to foster a “neither weak nor strong” sense of belonging to Canadian society (CA Sur.). The sense of belonging to the country of origin revealed to be equally strong among Canadian Muslims. Here, only 8.6% reported a sense of belonging that was “weak” (7.8%) or “too weak” (0.8%). While a significantly high segment of the participants, at 19.3%, took a neutrally moderate position, stating that their sense of belonging to the origin country is “neither strong nor weak,” the majority stated they had a “strong” (53.3%) or “very strong” (19%) sense of belonging to their country of origin (CA Sur.).

Graph 24: Muslims' Sense of Belonging to Canada



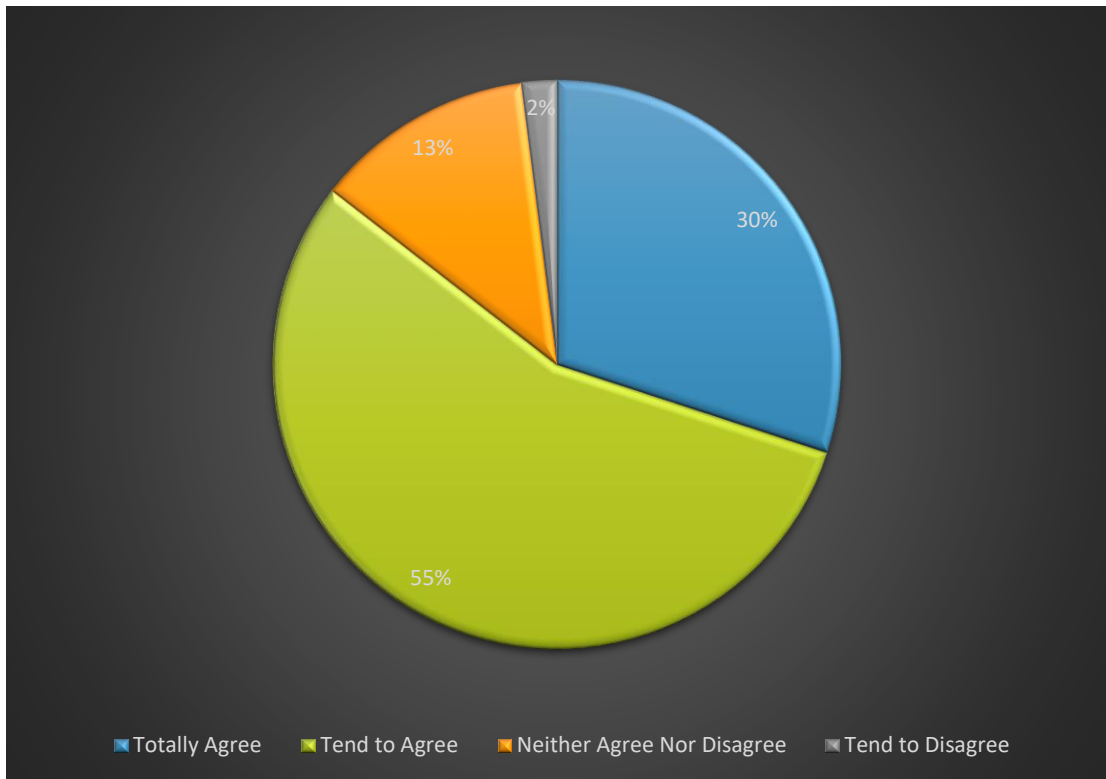
Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019

Graph 25: Muslims' Sense of Belonging to the Country of Origin



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019

Graph 25: Muslims' Success in Adaptation to Canada



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

A further question that looked to measure Muslims' level of social integration and cohesion in Canada revealed supporting attitudes. When asked, "Would you agree with the statement that most Muslims in this country have successfully adapted themselves to the customs and way of life here," 85% stated that they either "totally agree" (30%) or "tend to agree" (55%), with another 13% remaining neutral, saying that they would "neither agree nor disagree" with the statement. The number of individuals who responded negatively was at record low with only 2% (CA Sur.).

Overall, in terms of religious, political, cultural, educational, and organizational rights and freedoms, the Canadian context in relation to its Muslim community could be outlined with the following pivotal points: First, despite their relatively short history, the Muslim community in Canada is very well integrated into the society and the relations with the state and official bodies are exceptionally good. In the opinion of one interviewee, for the majority of Christian groups, one positive outcome of the Muslim immigrants entering the country is that the Christian groups felt the necessity to talk about their faith again, something they ignored for a long time. A conversation on faith and religion was ignited with the increase in the number and visibility of Muslims (Jana, CA int.). This positive picture becomes somewhat less rosy as far as the relations with the larger society in certain areas are concerned. Here, it should be emphasized as Jana, one of the interviewees suggested, the diversity in the Canadian society is reflected in the approach to the Muslim groups as well. Depending heavily on the characteristics of the region (rural or urban, French or British, etc.), three outlooks are prominent:

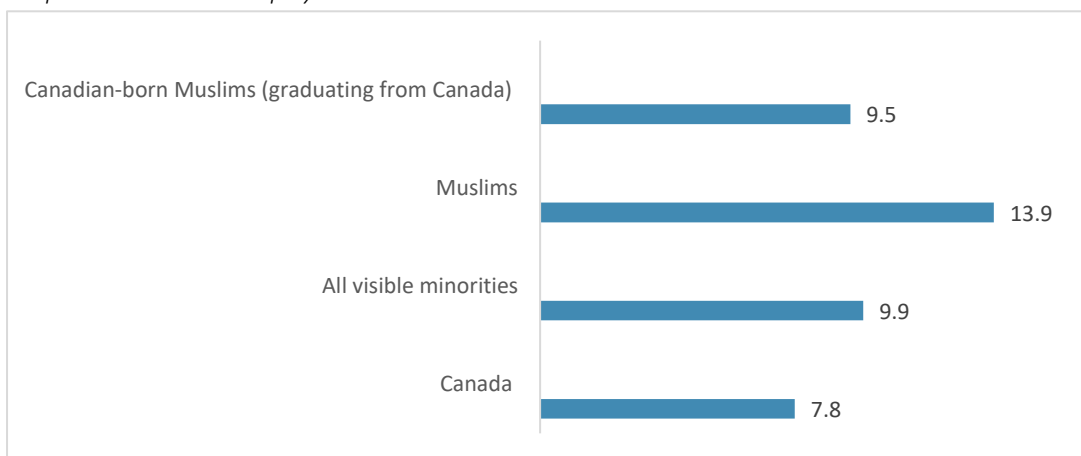
pro-Muslim, anti-Muslim, and neutral. Although the state and its institutions remain devoted to the multiculturalism and its aspirations, certain sectors of the Canadian society, particularly in Quebec, appears as the main challenge for the reciprocal positive outlooks and attitudes.

The rising Islamophobia, anti-immigrant sentiments, and discrimination against Muslims have become potential threats to the successful integration and cohesion portfolio of the country. In order to continue to enjoy those rights and freedoms, Muslims have to work more to reach out to the larger society. Note that the majority of anti-Muslim sentiments are imported and they are heavily grounded in unfavorable representations, stereotypes, and misconceptions brought into the country by foreign media. Thus, it is critical that the Muslim community establish strong media outlets and social communication infrastructures to introduce true Islam to the society and to challenge the anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant rhetoric. Also equally important is for the Muslim community and organizations to take a proactive role in the law propositions, legislation, and regulations that will invite the government to take extra measures to fight against the influences of the foreign media outlets and anti-Muslim circles. Finally, the Muslim individuals, leaders, and organizations should remain loyal to the values and ideals of multiculturalism and dedicatedly work to remind the society and other minority groups of Muslims' place and contributions in the construction of Canada.

4 Perceptions on Socio-Economic Status

As already mentioned above, voiced by many participants during the field study, and indicated in numerous studies and surveys, one of the most pressing issues for Muslims in Canada is increasing unemployment. 2016 *SCM* Final Report reveals that in the opinion of Muslims economic problems and unemployment are the most important challenges in Canada: “when asked to identify what they consider to be the most important problem facing Canadians today (unprompted), one-third (34%) of Muslims mentioned the economy, followed by unemployment (18%)” . According to the Statistics Canada *NHS* 2011 data, just under 14% (13.9% or 66,000) of the Muslims were unemployed in 2011, which was nearly 6% higher than the national average of 7.8% (*NHS* 2011). The same data indicated that the unemployment rate among Muslims was higher than the rate for the established faith communities, including Hindus and Sikhs who had an unemployment rate of 10.1% and 9.4% respectively. The only group with a higher unemployment rate from Muslims’ was the Aboriginal community (Hamdani 2015: 26-27).

Graph 26: Canada Unemployment Rates in 2011



Source: Statistics Canada, *NHS* 2011.

As Hamdani (2015) points out, the underemployment rate, *i.e.*, the under-use of the worker’s skills and experiences, in this case, is also very high among Muslims in Canada. Due to licensing requirements, professionals trained in other countries undergo a lengthy process and procedure of reaccreditation. In addition, disconnection between Canada’s immigration policy and licensing bodies are often observable and an issue. This was revealed in a study by Danielle Zietsma (2010), who used the 2006 census data and “analyzed 284,000 employed foreign-educated immigrants from a field study that would lead to one of 14 regulated occupations in Canada” (Hamdani 2015: 26-27). Zietsma found that only 24% of foreign-educated professionals were working in professions they had been trained for in their country of origin (2015: 27). Zietsma put forth that the match rate, the measure of congruity between the training of professionals and the area of employment, for people from Muslim countries

were dramatically low, ranging from the lowest 9% for Moroccans to the highest 33% for professionals trained in or graduated from Nigerian educational institutions. While the majority of Muslim countries scored around 20%, the same match rate stood highest for those from Ireland (59%), New Zealand, South Africa, and Australia (50% for each) (Hamdani 2015: 27). Given that all the topping countries are English-speaking ones, the role of language in underemployment becomes undeniable.

A study by Beyer (2005) revealed that despite the fact that the number of Muslim immigrants who hold a post-secondary degree has been steadily increasing over the past few decades the mismatch between the level of education and both income and employment level is greater for Muslim immigrants than any other religious group (Birani 2017: 6-7). Put simply, Muslim immigrants are more educated but earn markedly less, and are less likely to be employed. The comparatively lower employment rates and income levels among Muslims in Canada are by no means specific to foreign-born Muslims. Canadian-born Muslims, that is second and third-generation Muslims experience an economic marginalization as well, although not as starkly as the first generations do. Beyers (2005) reported that although second-generation Muslims are highly educated and have a higher post-secondary educational attainment rate than the national average, their income level is likely to be less. According to Beyer's findings, 85.5% of Canadian-born Muslim women and 83.5% of Canadian-born Muslim men hold a postsecondary degree but 81.5% of these women and 79% of these men earn less than \$30,000 per annum, which puts them below the poverty line [for a family of two adults and two children the official poverty line is above \$35,000 annually] (Birani 2017: 7).

Graph 27: Labor Market Participation of Canadian Muslims, May 2011.

	Muslim	All Canadians
Population 15 years and older	760,520	27,259,525
Labour force	471,660	17,990,080
Employed	406,015	16,595,035
Unemployed	65,650	1,395,050
Participation rate (%)	62.0	66.0
Unemployment rate (%)	13.9	7.8
Employed full time (%)*	75.2	77.9
Employed part time (%)*	24.8	22.1
Employee (%)*	88.2	89.0
Self-employed (%)*	11.8	11.0
% of population 15 years and older using both official languages at work	4.2	1.6
% of population 15 years and older with specialization in STEM**	21.8	15.9
% of population 25 to 64 years old with a university degree	43.7	25.8

Source: Statistics Canada: *National*⁸

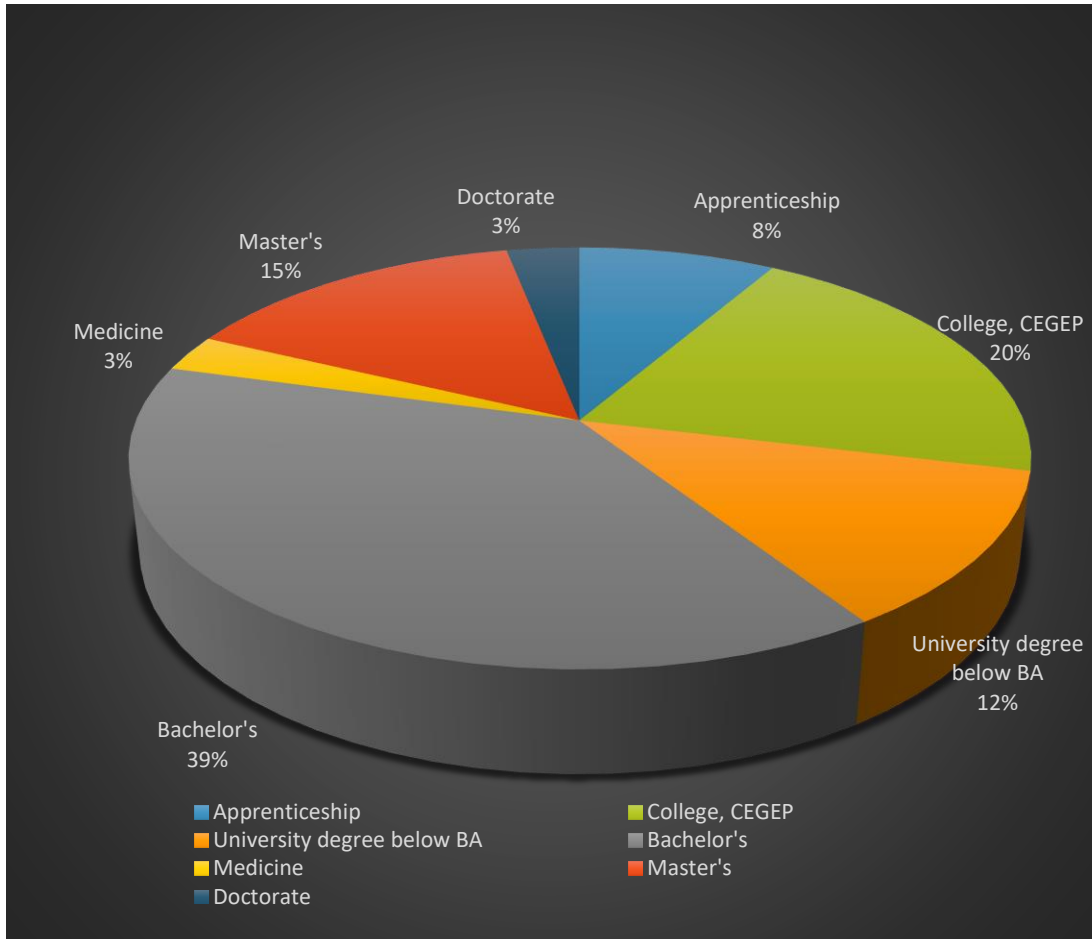
⁸ Household Survey 2011, *pertains to calendar year 2010, ** Hamdani's estimate, defined as the sum of three study fields: (1) physical and life sciences and technologies; (2) mathematics, computer

As demonstrated in the table above, although the percentage of bilingual Muslims, those who can speak both English and French, the two official languages in Canada, is remarkably higher than the national average, and again, Muslims are significantly more likely to have a specialization in sciences, engineering, and technology, the unemployment rate is more than 6% higher among them. The striking gap between the educational attainment level of Muslims and all Canadians, 43.7% and 25.8%, respectively, when considered together with the unemployment rates, signals an economic marginalization.

According to the *NHS* 2011, the number of Muslims aged 15 and older was 760,520 and around 60% of these Canadian Muslims held a postsecondary degree. Three career choices were popular among the Canadian Muslims with postsecondary education: apprenticeship and trade, community college, and university. Accordingly, of the 456,000 Canadian Muslims holding a postsecondary diploma, 8% continued their career in apprenticeship and trade while 20% opted for a community college degree. The most popular choice among Muslims remained university education, with nearly two in five (38%) having a university degree. Another 18% completed a postgraduate degree (15% master's degree and 3% doctorate). As Hamdani points out, because of immigration policy and the emphasis Muslim parents put on education, the Muslim community is topping the list of highly educated Canadians among all faith groups. While the national average for Canadians with a bachelor's degree stood at 25.8% in 2011, the same rate for Muslims was as high as 44%, for men and women in the working age, 25 to 64 years (2015: 21).

and information sciences; and (3) architectural, engineering and related technologies (Hamdani 2015: 26)

Graph 28: Distribution of Muslim Postsecondary Graduates in 2011

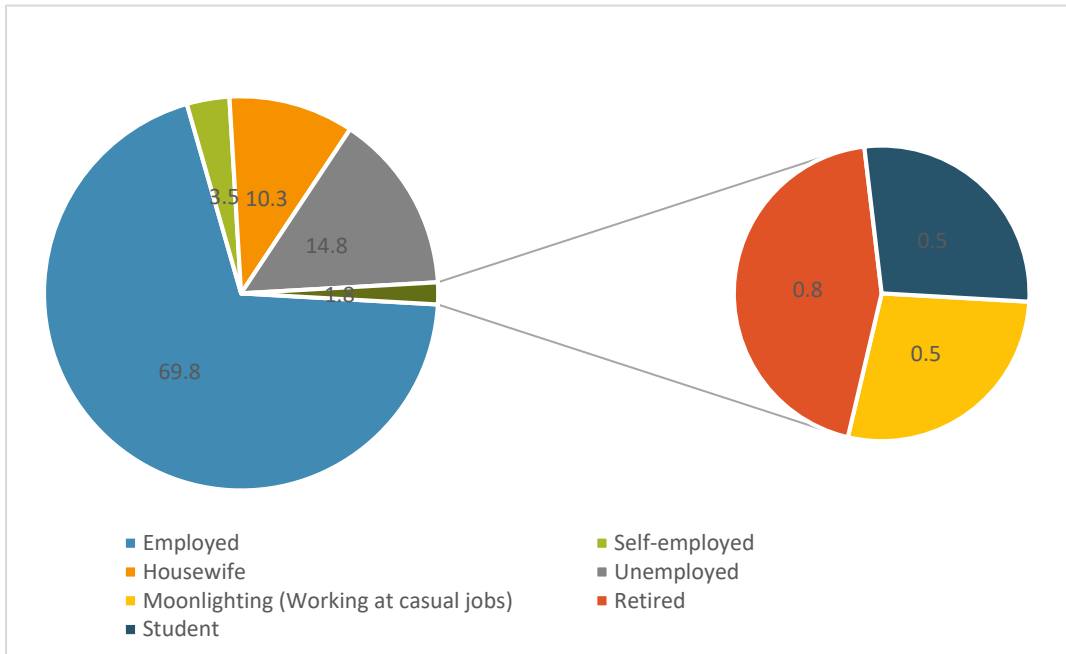


Source: NHS 2011.

The findings of the CA Sur demonstrated that both the problem and its accompanying effects and outcomes are already present in the lives of Muslims. When asked to list the main challenges and problems faced by Muslims in Canada, the disadvantages in other words, the first most pronounced problem revealed to be economic situation (18.8%). Here, three important points need to be registered: first, Muslims' contribution to the socio-economic well-being of the country as a large segment in the prime labor force and professional services, despite the higher unemployment rates, is significant. Second, the average level of education is higher among Muslims. In other words, Muslims are not unemployed because of the lack of required training, knowledge, or skills. Third, discrimination and anti-Muslim sentiments, as abovementioned, is increasing throughout Canada, and their influence and repercussions in the realm of economic life and justice have now taken a serious turn. Before attending these points in detail, it is necessary that the general socio-economic status and profile of Muslims in Canada be discussed.

As the findings of the CA Sur demonstrate, at 14.8%, the unemployment level among Muslims is considerably higher than the larger society. The majority of participants, when asked about their working status, responded as employed (69.8%). The number of self-employed (3.5%), retired (0.8%) and student at 0.5%, which was observed to be remarkably low. Here, one possible reason for the low rate of students could be the common practice of part-time employment among youth. Note that with 10.3%, the number of housewives was also significantly high and this was not included in the unemployment category (CA Sur.).

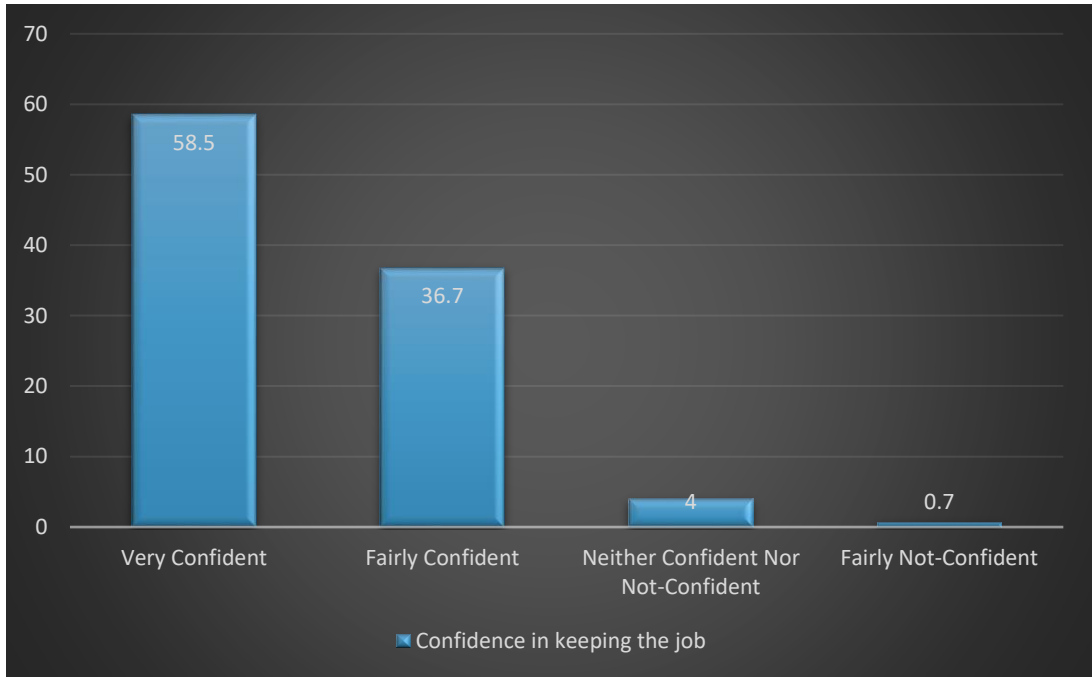
Graph 29: Muslims' Working Status in Canada



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Those who were employed or self-employed when asked, “How confident are you about keeping your job in the coming 12 months?” in general replied “very confident” (58.5%) or “fairly confident” (36.7%). Another 4% responded that they were “neither confident nor not-confident” whereas only 0.7% stated that they were either “fairly or not-confident” (CA Sur.). When further asked, “At your workplace, do you have an employment contract or not?” 83.7% responded in the affirmative while 16.3% stated they did not have a contract (CA Sur.). These figures prove that despite the challenges they face in finding employment, the Canadian Muslims, in general, trust themselves and the socio-economic justice and system in the country.

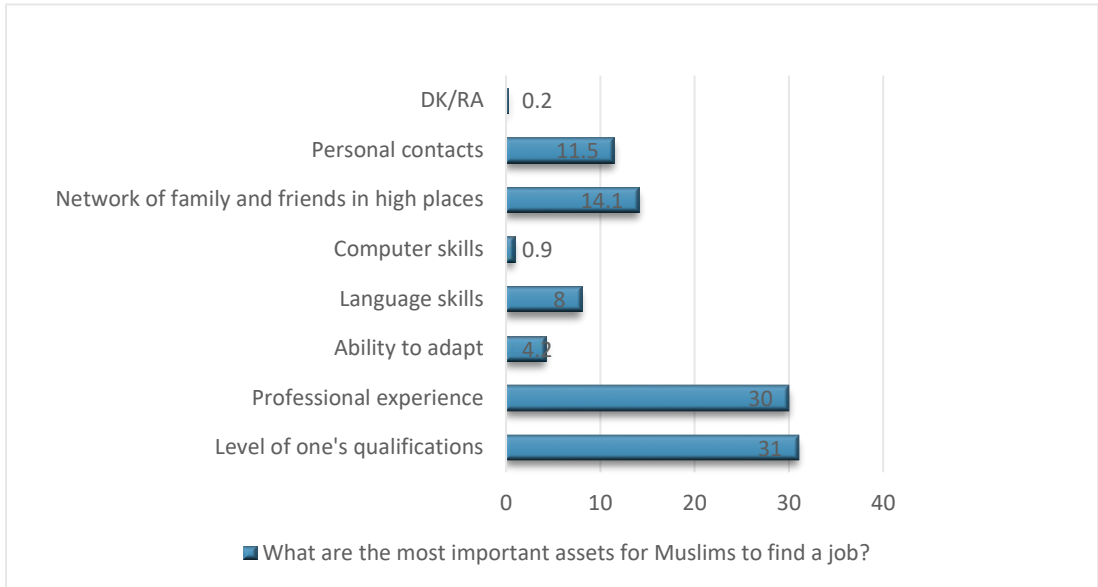
Graph 30: Muslims' Confidence in Keeping Their Job



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

It was also observed during the field study that in the opinion of Muslims the most valuable qualities for finding employment (as voiced by many during the workshop, and in the CA Sur) were personal skills, merits, and professional experience. According to the findings of the CA Sur, when asked “In your opinion, which two assets are very important for a person belonging to Muslim Community to find a job in Canada?” more than 60% of the respondents stated either the level of one’s qualifications (31%) or professional experience (30%). Just above 25% reported that networking either as “network of family and friends in high positions” (14.1%) or as “personal contacts” (10.5%) is also important. Another 8% argued that language skills are the most important asset for a Muslim to find a job (CA Sur.).

Graph 31: Important Assets for Muslims to Find Employment

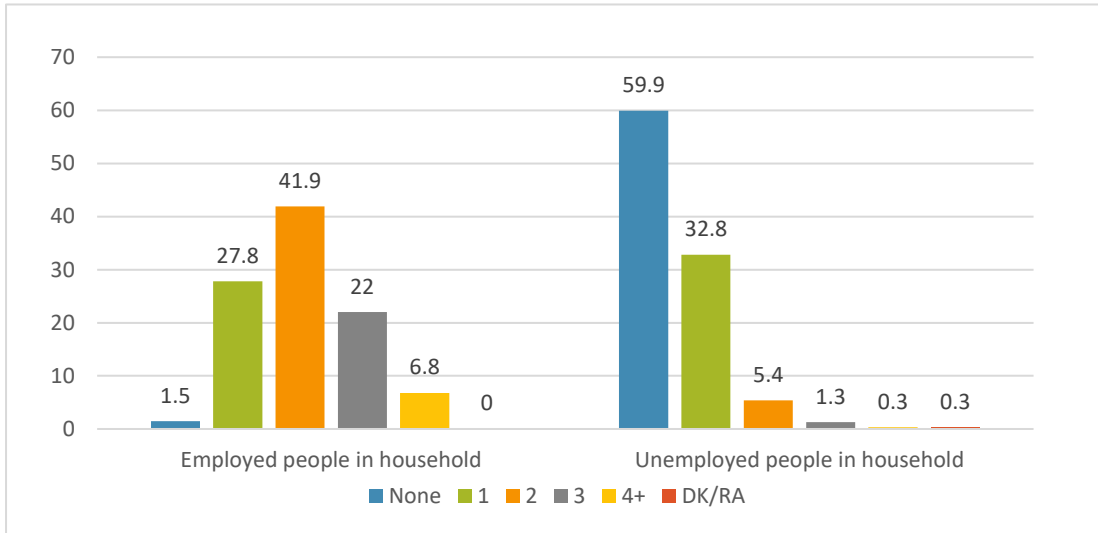


GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The question regarding the number of household members (including the respondent), revealed that Muslim households, in general, have either 2-3 persons (46%) or 4-6 persons (48.8%) which means that just below 95% of Muslim households have 2 to 7 members. While another 2.8% stated there were more than seven persons in the household, only 2% reported “just me” (CA Sur.). For those who indicated 2 or more persons in their household, when asked “How many persons in your family who are able to work are employed,” (*i.e.*, people who are able to work are those who are 15 and older who are not in regular education and do not have any other obstacle for working such as disability), the majority responded either two members (41.9%) or one member (28.8%). Another 22% stated that their households have three employed family members while another 6.8% reported four or more family members employed. The figure for those who had no family members who were employed was low at 1.5% (CA Sur.).

As a follow-up question to this, respondents were also asked about the number of unemployed persons (*i.e.*, people who are able to work are those who are 15 and older who are not in regular education and do not have any other obstacle for working such as disability) in their households. Accordingly, the majority stated there was no unemployed family member in their household (59.9%). The findings confirmed those of relevant questions with an overwhelming number of respondents reporting one unemployed family member at 32.8%. The percentage for Muslim households with two and more unemployed family members was also observed to be high at 7% (5.4% for 2 unemployed family members; 1.3% for 3 members; and 0.3% for 4+ members) (CA Sur.).

Graph 32: Number of Employed/Unemployed Persons in Muslim Households



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

When asked to those who have at least one unemployed person in their household “What are the two main obstacles to getting a good job in Canada?” the most pronounced reasons were revealed to be “insufficient previous work experience” (23.7%) and lack of language skills (22%). The members of the first generation Muslim immigrants mostly voiced the latter reason. Other commonly listed reasons were “inadequate or irrelevant education” (17.7%) and “lack of jobs” (16.5%). Interestingly, the number of respondents who reported all discrimination categories (ethnic, religious, general, age, etc.,) as a big challenge in finding a job remained relatively low at 5.5%, in total (CA Sur.).

Figure 7: Aid Collection Box with Specific Motivation Sections in a Mosque in Toronto



Source: the photograph was taken during the field study

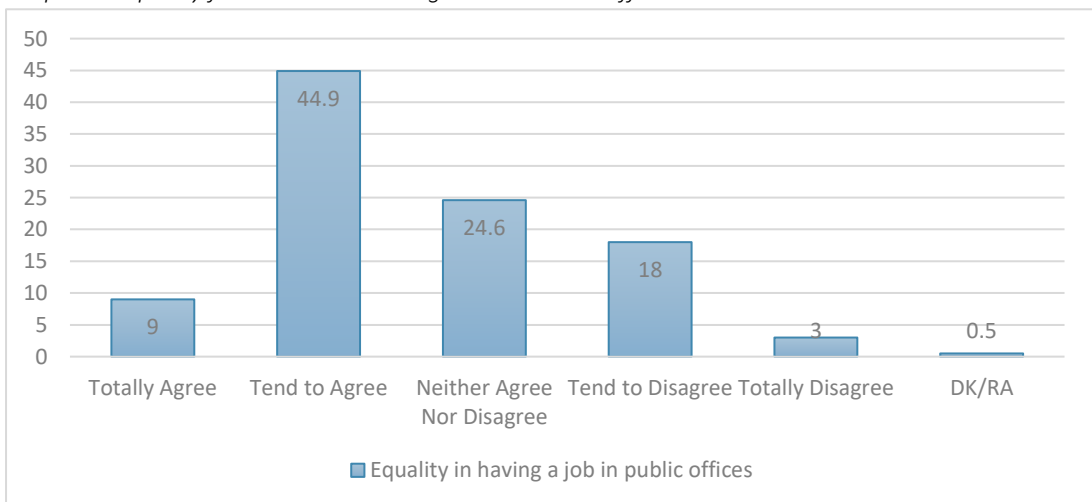
Graph 33: Challenges in Having a Job for Canadian Muslims



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The survey also revealed that the majority of Muslim individuals believe that there is no discrimination in the employment of Muslim individuals in public offices. Accordingly, to the question “Do you agree with the statement that Muslim individuals have equal opportunities and access in seeking or achieving employment in public offices?” about 55% of respondents reported that they either “totally agree” (9%) or “tend to agree” (44.9%). The percentage of those who took a neutral position, saying they neither agreed nor disagreed, was 15.1% whereas those who argued that Muslims are exposed to discrimination in employment for public offices stood around 21% with 13.8% saying they “tend to disagree” and 7.5% saying they “totally disagree” with the statement (CA Sur.). These figures, needless to underline, signal a growing discomfort among Canadian Muslims concerning discrimination.

Graph 34: Equality for Muslims in Having a Job in Public Offices



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

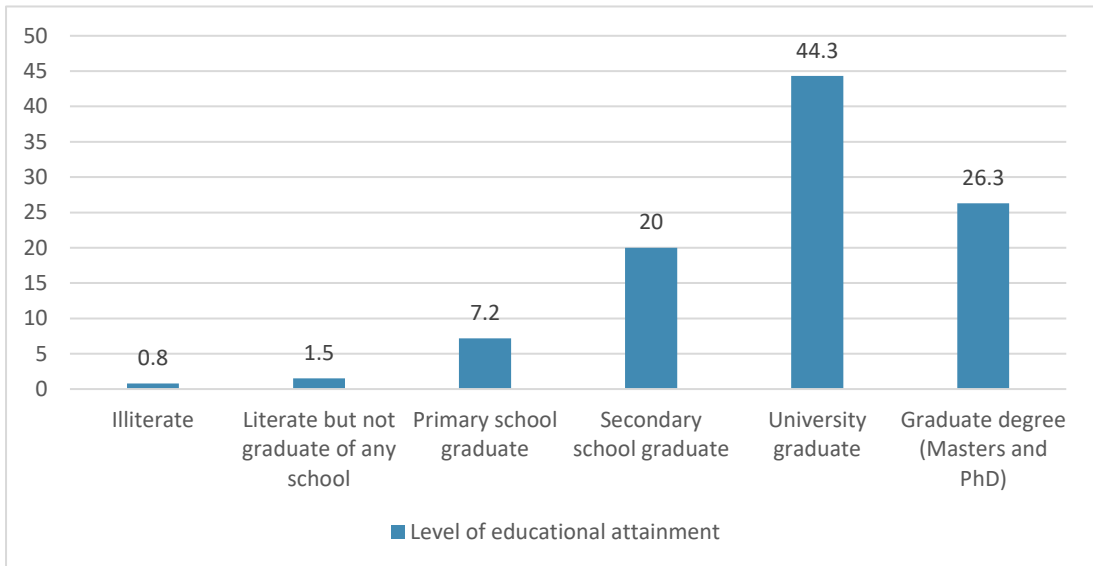
Regarding participants' overall satisfaction with their income, a vast majority reported that they were satisfied with the financial situation of their household with 63.5% of them saying they were "mostly satisfied" and another 17.3% stating they were "completely satisfied." The number of Muslim individuals who were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" was 9.3% whereas 10% reported that they were "mostly dissatisfied" with their household income (CA Sur.). These observations were supported by the responses to the question concerning the participants' socio-economic status. Accordingly, when asked to describe their current socio-economic status, the vast majority of respondents stated that it was average (70%). Only 5.8% reported a status "above the average" while in contrast, 22% believed that their socio-economic status was "below the average". Another 2.3% of the respondents either opted to not to respond or stated they did not know (CA Sur.). It was observed, however, financial difficulties and challenges did not hold great sway on the future expectations of the Muslim community. When asked, "What are your expectations for the next year?" the majority of respondents projected that their financial situation will be better (82.3%) while only 0.5% expected it to be worse. Another 17.3% stated that they expect no change.

Despite the general modesty in the household income level when asked if they sent any help in the form of money or goods to the relatives living in their country of origin or in other countries, at least once in the last 12 months, the majority of participants responded confirmatively at 64.3%. While 35% responded they did not send any such help, another 0.8% said they had no relatives abroad (CA Sur.). In contrast, only 3% stated that they received help from relatives abroad in the last 12 months while the sweeping majority at 97% reported no such help were received from relatives outside Canada (CA Sur.).

In order to achieve a comprehensive outlook of the socio-economic profile of the Muslim community in Canada, it is important to review their educational profile because education remains one of the key elements in the immigration policy of Canada. Furthermore, as mentioned above, given that the Muslim community is among one of the most highly educated groups in Canada, the financial difficulties and socio-economic challenges such as unemployment, underemployment, and economic discrimination faced by Muslims become more discomfoting. On a more generic note, the Canadian Muslims' educational profile could be summarized in three points: (i) a remarkably high educational attainment at almost all levels, (ii) the inspiringly high number of Muslims who pursue post-graduate degrees, and (iii) the equally heartening gender equality in schooling which result in the high educational attainment level among female Muslims.

This positive picture was observed in the findings of the CA Sur. as well. Accordingly, 44.3% of the respondents had an undergraduate degree and another 26.3% had completed a graduate degree, PhD or a Master's. While 20% reported that they were secondary school graduates, 7.2% stated that they received only primary school education. The number of illiterate respondents was very low at only 0.8% (CA Sur.).

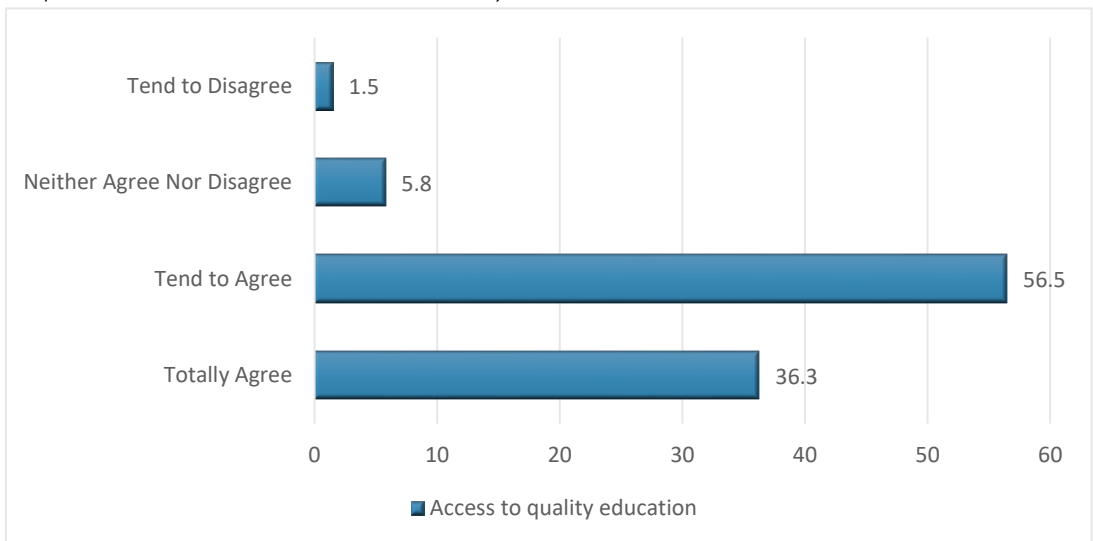
Graph 35: Canadian Muslims' Level of Educational Attainment



GMD Ca Sur., 2019.

In the opinion of the majority of participants, Canadian Muslims had the same opportunities and chance to access quality education. Over 90% stated that they either “tended to agree” (36.3%) or “totally agreed” (56.5%) with the statement “Muslim children have the same chances and opportunities for quality education in Canada.” In contrast, the percentage of those who “tended to disagree” with the statement was dramatically low at 1.5% and no one stated that they “totally disagreed.” Another 5.8%, on the other hand, neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement (CA Sur.).

Graph 36: Canadian Muslims' Access to Quality Education



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

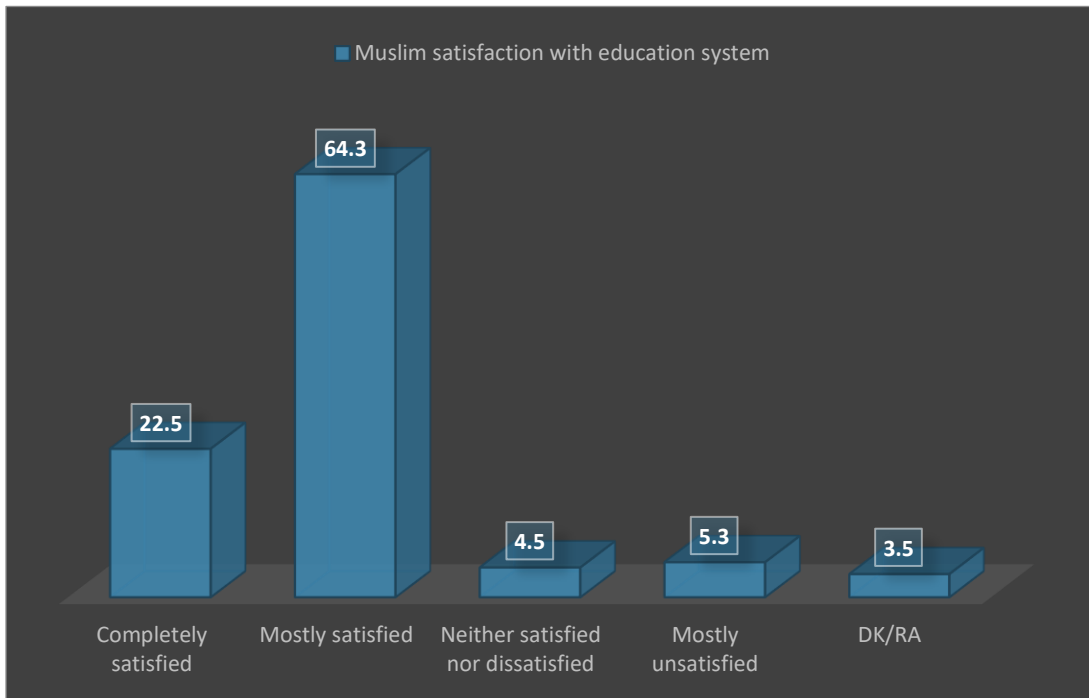
Among participants, only 26 individuals (1.5% that were mentioned above) reported that Muslims students do not have equal opportunities and access to a quality education. When these respondents were asked to name up to three reasons for this inequality, the most pronounced answers were language (by 13 respondents), cultural difference (by 12), and discrimination and prejudice against Muslims (by 2) (CA Sur.).

When asked how satisfied they were with the quality of schools/education system in Canada, just under 90% of participants expressed they were either completely (22.5%) or mostly (64.5%) satisfied. In comparison, the number of those who were not happy about the school and education system remained conspicuously low at 5.3%. While another 4.5% took a neutral position, 3.5% refused to answer their opinion or stated they did not know (CA Sur.).

Participants to the interviews highlighted the high level of educational attainment and certain attitudinal commonalities vis-à-vis socio-economic and educational perceptions. Rustum, an employment coordinator at immigrant services, maintained that, in general, Muslims are doing well on the socio-economic ladder, with many Muslims in almost all professions, from education to civil and private sector. According to him, it is not uncommon to find pockets of Muslim communities in the low-income stratum, although their number is much lesser than low-income Muslims in Europe are. In fact, the socio-economic status of Muslims, when compared to the past, has improved significantly. Therefore, they are not only doing better from their European Muslim sisters and brothers but also from their parents (CA int.).

Rustum further emphasized an interesting point in the general socio-economic and educational outlook of the Muslim community. Accordingly, although Muslim parents are very dedicated to the education of their children, they mostly encourage their children to either study medicine or engineering—something that was observed in the USA, the UK, Germany, and many other European countries. He added that, admittedly, there is a low representation of Muslims in the social sciences, political sciences, and humanities and liberal arts. “This, of course, is a problem, in my opinion, because these are the fields of critical thinking, politics, administration, policy development, and intellectual knowledge.” One outcome of this socio-cultural pattern of career planning, Rustum stated, is the low level of representation in the realm of politics. According to him, although there are many elected Muslims to office, and at the federal level there are many Muslim Members of Parliament, as well as ministers, this is less so the case in both the provincial and municipals arenas, and this is partly because of the common disinterest in a career in the political and social sciences and humanities among Muslims (CA int.).

Graph 37: Canadian Muslims' Satisfaction Level with the Education System



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Before concluding this chapter with a summary, one last note must be registered. Muslim contribution to Canada should not be reduced to economic activities. There exist various fields and areas in which Muslim contribution extends beyond mere numeric calculations. When asked about the Muslim contribution to Canada, Jana, a female non-Muslim Canadian, for instance, stated that it was “the emphasis on serving the community and I think that plays across all of those. Serving and caring for the community, I think, that is huge for us as a nation to have a reminder of the importance of community” (CA int.). According to her, the Western values that emphasize the individualistic ideals, concerns, and values have moved the society away from the community-based approach. Despite the fact that there are some positive to the individualistic one many people are left behind with that approach. “And I think the Muslim community has reminded and is reminding us of the importance of thinking and acting for the broader community”. In her opinion, besides reminding the Canadian society of the importance of the community and the individuals’ responsibilities towards their communities, Muslims also demonstrated that one can fully reconcile one’s faith and the requisites of modern life, that a believer can attire in accordance to her faith, pray five times a day, and still participate actively in every aspect of life—attend to her duties and responsibilities towards her family, community, and larger society (CA int.).

In summary, perceptions on the socio-economic profile of the Canadian Muslims could be pinpointed in five important headings: (i) Muslims constitute a significant part in the prime labor force and civil and public services, and contribute greatly to the socio-economic development through their professional skills and practices throughout Canada. (ii) Muslims are more prone to increasing

unemployment. Recent studies demonstrate that the unemployment rate is at a strikingly large extend higher (at least by 6 point) among Muslims than any other groups in Canada which become obscure giving to certain features of the Canadian immigration policies (being selective and prioritizing Canada's socio-economic needs) and the high level of education among Muslims. (iii) Equally high underemployment level is observed among Muslims. This, again, when considered together with the immigration policy and Muslims' high education level, signal a socio-economic marginalization. (iv) Despite the challenges and comparatively low-income level and financial status, Canadian Muslims are, in general, satisfied with their living standards and economic well-being, which could be attributed to a modesty coming from religious and cultural teachings, and the lower standards left behind in origin countries. (v) Muslims are confident in their economic outlook. They are generally very optimistic about the economic trajectory of their future in Canada and the economic betterment of the country.

5 Attitudes on Visibility and Representation of Muslims

In the last few decades, the Muslim community in Canada has made efforts to reach out to other faith groups and society. One such effort, which brought immense visibility to Muslims in Canada, was the CBC premiered sitcom *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, about a small Muslim community in rural Saskatchewan. Created by Zarqa Nawaz (the director of an earlier documentary *Me and the Mosque*), the series ran between 2007 and 2012. According to Nawaz, comedy is “one of the most valuable and powerful ways to break down barriers and to encourage dialogue and understanding between cultures,” and this was the main agenda of the series. *The Globe and Mail* reported, “more than two million Canadians tuned in for the first episodes of the *Little Mosque on the Prairie*, “the new CBC comedy about a Muslim community in a rural town that has been the subject of worldwide attention.” The number of viewers, 2.1 million, according to the report, was a huge one for a Canadian television show. “Corner Gas, CTV’s big sitcom hit and one of the country’s highest-rated shows, routinely pulls in just over a million a week” (January 10, 2007, Updated April 25, 2018). Nawaz’s conceit in *Little Mosque on the Prairie* was her emphasis on the importance of the comedy, irony, and parody to strike back at dichotomies and stereotypes about Muslims, simply through the capacity and confidence to laugh at oneself. This capacity mostly comes from knowing their world and themselves.

Muslims in Canada constitute perhaps one of the most educated and modest communities among all Muslim communities in non-OIC countries. Mostly adopting a quite moderate, calm, and reserved approach, they are less likely to express sharp views and generalize. In order to understand this unique moderateness in political behavior and outlook, this chapter focuses on Muslims’ profile of political and social involvement in Canada and the attitudes of Canadian Muslims on visibility and representation.

Civic engagement is a salient for visible minorities because it reflects community’s sense of belonging, the level of its social, cultural, and political involvement and integration (Hamdani 2015: v). The members of the Muslim community in Canada, although being very passionate, as Hamdani highlights, about Canadian citizenship, are less enthusiastic about participating in its main political exercise, voting (2015: v). Standing at around 46%, the Canadian Muslims’ electoral participation is comparatively lower than other faith groups. It is true that comprising a modest portion of the total population (though, more than 50% of them are eligible to vote), their electoral influence might not strike as important, however, since a sweeping majority of eligible Muslim voters are concentrated in a small number of cities, their potential political influence take a greater scale in certain areas. According to Hamdani, Muslims “can influence the outcome of 23 constituencies in 2015” (2015: v).

This trend is changing gradually. A post-election poll conducted by *Mainstreet Research* on 802 Canadian Muslims in 5 municipalities (London, Ottawa, Greater Toronto Area, Edmonton and Vancouver) and 9 ridings (Don Valley East, Mississauga Centre, Mississauga-Erin Mills, Scarborough Guildwood, Etobicoke North, Don Valley West, Mississauga Malton, Scarborough Southwest and Scarborough Centre) revealed that an estimated 79% of Canadian Muslims voted in the 2015 Federal

Election, marking a 32.5% increase from the estimates of the 2011 Federal Election. Accordingly, when asked, “Did you vote in the 2015 Federal Election between Justin Trudeau, Stephen Harper, Tom Mulcair, and Elizabeth May?” 79% of Muslim participants responded in the affirmative while 19% stated they did not. 2% of the respondents opted not to answer while 1% stated that they were not eligible (*Canadian Muslim Vote*, 2015).

Graph 38: Number of Muslims Voted in the 2015 Federal Election

Voted in the 2015 Federal Election	Overall	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+	Female	Male
Yes	79%	76%	88%	74%	87%	75%	89%
No	19%	23%	11%	2%	11%	23%	9%
Not Sure	2%	1%	1%	20%	1%	1%	2%
Not Eligible	1%	1%	1%	4%	1%	1%	1%

Source: Mainstreet Research, *The Canadian Muslim Vote 2015*⁹

The findings of the 2016 Final Report of SMC were similar. Accordingly, the 2015 Federal Election saw a dramatic increase in Muslim electoral turnout with almost 8 in 10 (79%) survey participants confirming their participation. While 16% stated that they did not vote, another 5%, which was mainly comprised of those who had not obtained their citizenship and thus did not have the right to vote, stated they were not eligible. Among those who voted the most popular choice was the Liberal Party, with 65%, followed by the New Democratic Party which was supported by 10%. 21% declined to reveal how they voted while 2% stated that they voted for the Conservative Party and another 2% for other parties (SMC 2016: 12).

Many participants in the interviews and the workshop reported similar trends in Muslim electoral participation and official political involvement. In the workshop, a male professional of Egyptian background, maintained that apart from the fact that Muslims are enjoying a high level of political freedom, with religious institutions, and freedom of rights, what makes Canada one of the best countries for the Muslim community is the level of visibility and representation not only in the public space, both official and private, but also in Parliament, in local councils, and in other levels and realms of political representation (CA work.). When asked, if the level of political representation reflected Muslims’ proportional vote share and numbers, this participant stated that the level of Muslim political representation might not reflect their proportional share but the Muslim communities have political representation in both high and low governments. “Canada is a secular society, however,” the participant added. “A person is neither offered nor denied a position because of his/her religious or ethnic identity. The society and the system are open. If Muslims have not attained sufficient representation yet, it is because of certain contextual, historical, and social shortcomings such as the recentness of the Muslim presence in Canada and the lack of political involvement among Muslims” (CA work.).

⁹ <https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/canadianmuslimvote/pages/54/attachments/original/1495299664/post-election-report.pdf?1495299664>

It was observed during the field study that particularly in the younger generation the level of political involvement has shown a considerable improvement. This was partly due to the social and political activism of certain Muslim organizations and groups and partly due to the influences of negative rhetoric about Islam and Muslims. Layla, a female Muslim of Pakistani background and a social activist, for instance, stated that since the last elections the representation and visibility of Muslims in Canadian politics have improved significantly. Accordingly, in the current parliament of Canada, there are a good number of Muslim members (at the federal level). At the provincial level and municipal levels, Layla maintained, Muslims have not achieved equal success and representation. She stated that the success at the federal level was mostly due to the previous Conservative government and their treatment and view of Muslims. Thanks to their anti-Muslim rhetoric and discourse, Muslim population of Canada became politically active and a group of, especially younger Muslims, formed an initiative called the *Canadian Muslim Vote (CMV)*, which is a non-partisan activist group. CMV educates Muslims about the operation and function of the parliamentary system and the importance of political engagement and participation. According to Layla, because of the work of the *CMV*, the electoral participation and political involvement of the Canadian Muslim increased significantly. Before the initiative, the voting records of Muslims were remarkably poor (CA int.).

Fahad, a retired nuclear engineer who is now managing a masjid in central Toronto, supported the arguments of Layla, stating that the level of political and social participation is improving with the second generation Muslims. Nevertheless, in his opinion, the Muslim communities still have to work more to attain a satisfactory level of political visibility and representation and social involvement (CA int.).

Farhan, a director in a provincial non-profit governmental organization offering settlement and employment services for newcomers, reported that another element that brought about the recent elevation in Muslim political representation and involvement was the governmental change. That is to say, the political visibility and representation of the Muslim communities has increased with the liberal government of Trudeau. He emphasized that the current Minister of Immigration is a Muslim, Ahmed Hussain, and the Minister of Status of Women is an Afghani Muslim, Maryam Monsef. In his opinion, what makes the Muslim communities proud is that even that they are a minority they are involved and contributing to the country through politics as all other groups (CA int.).

Figure 8: Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, and Minister Maryam Monsef during the announcement of Vancouver becoming the official location for the Women Deliver 2019 Conference.

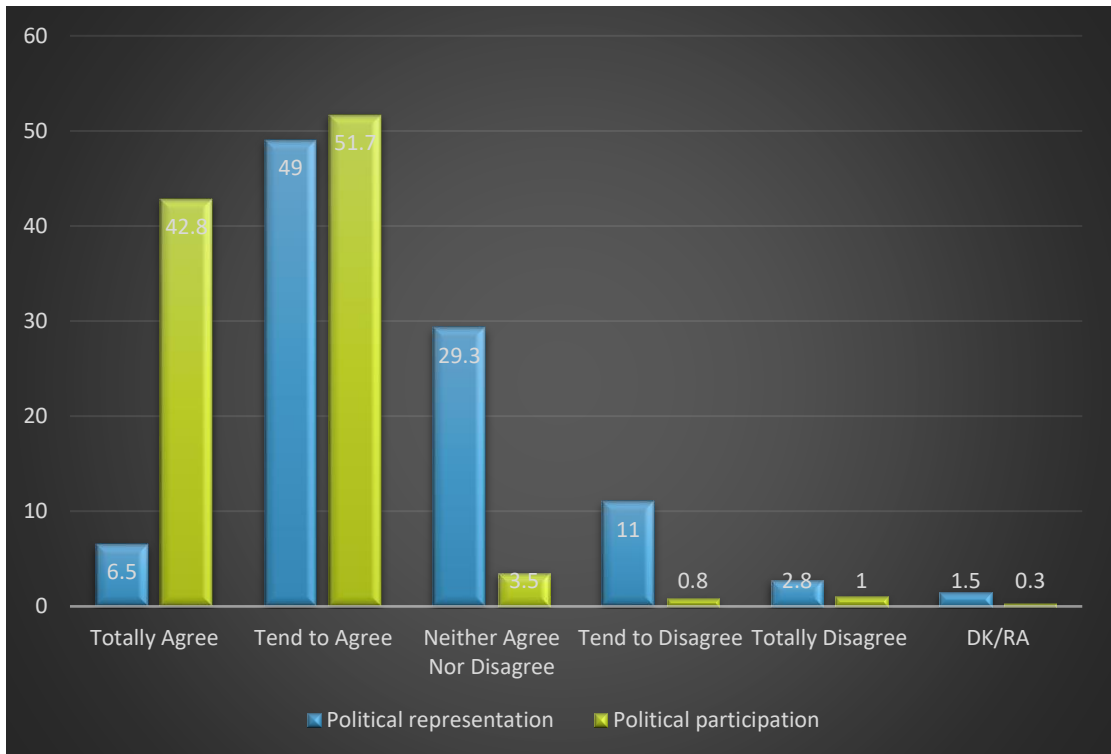


Source: Photograph by Women Deliver, distributed under a [CC-BY 2.0 license](#).

The findings of the *GMD CA Sur* confirmed the arguments of the participants of the workshop and the interviews, as well as the findings of previous surveys. When asked, “Do you agree with the statement that the Muslim community is well represented in the politics of Canada?” the majority of the participants expressed that they tended to agree at 49%. The percentage of those who said that they “totally agree” with the statement remained low at 6.5% while another 29.3% reported that they “neither agree nor disagree”. Of the remaining, 11% reported that they “tend to disagree,” while only 2.8% expressed strong disagreement. 1.5% chose not to respond or stated that they did not know (*CA Sur.*).

To another related question “Do you think Muslims’ active political engagement and participation at the local and national level will benefit Muslim communities in the country,” almost 95% said that they “totally agree” (42.8%) or “tend to agree” (51.7%). In comparison, the figures for those who did not think active political engagement would bring any benefits remained disproportionately low at 4.3%. Here, even the number of those who opted to disclose no answer or stated that they did not know observed to be very low at 0.3% (*CA Sur.*).

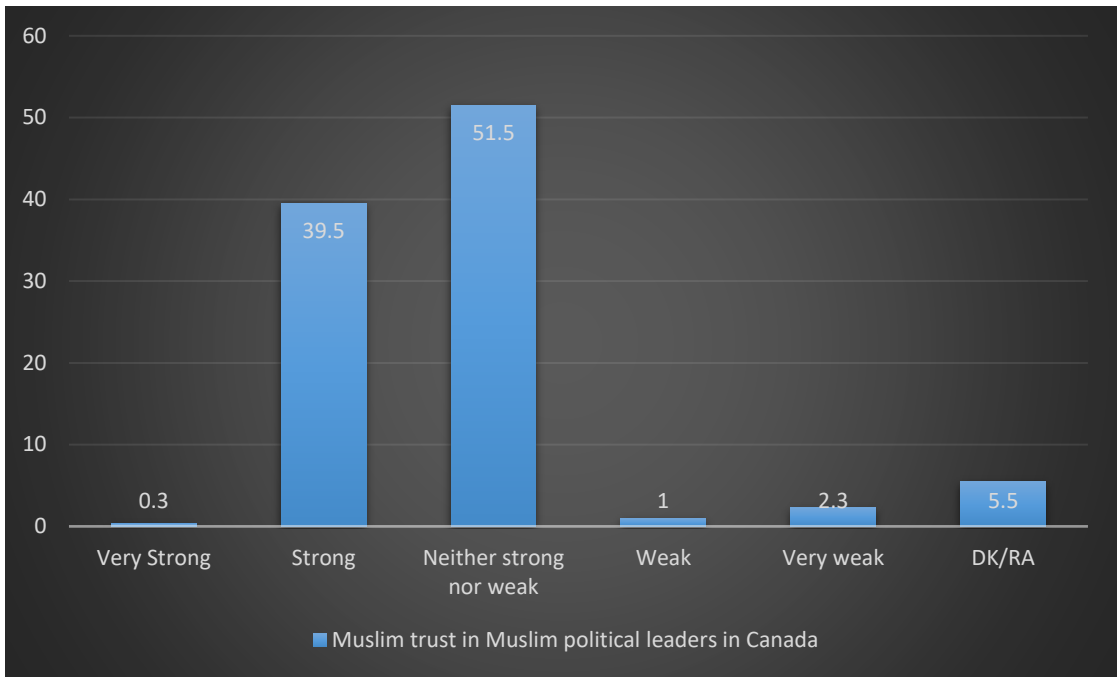
Graph 39: Canadian Muslims' Perception of Political Representation and Participation



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

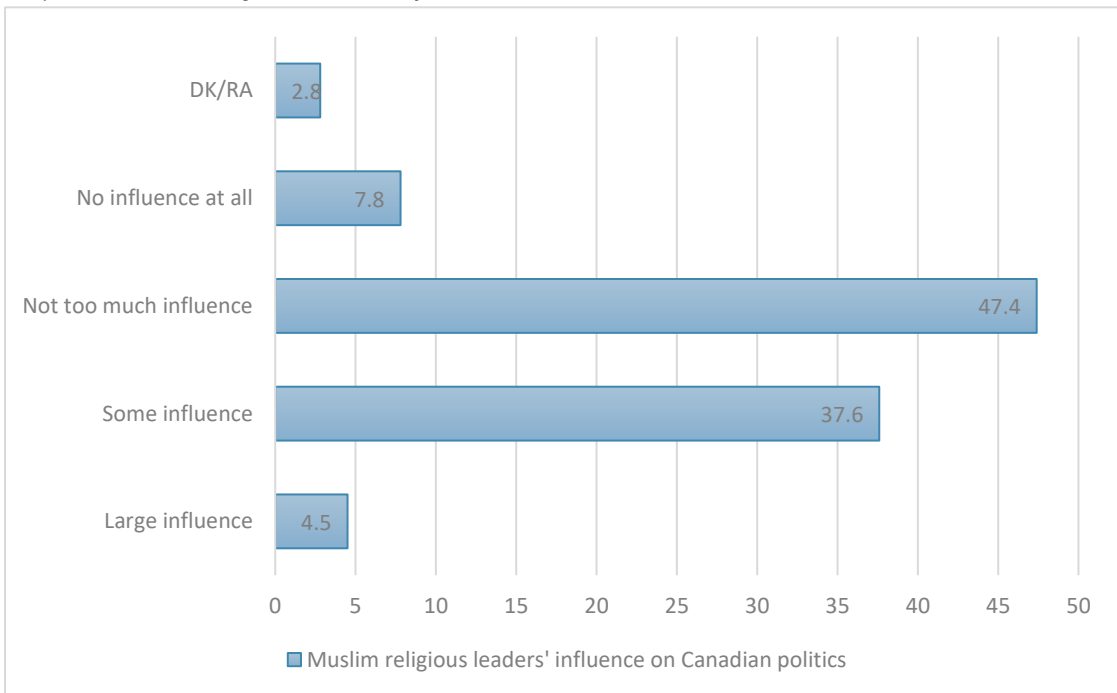
The responses that were given to the question “How would you describe your level of trust to political leaders of the Muslim Community in Canada?” revealed a reserved yet strong confidence and trust in Muslim leaders and politicians. Accordingly, 39.5% of participants claimed they have a “very strong” trust while a majority with 51.5% said their level of confidence was neither weak nor strong”. In contrast, only 3.3% said their trust was either “weak” (1%) or “very weak” (2.3%) (CA Sur.). In comparison, it was observed that the confidence in Muslim religious leaders’ capacity to influence Canadian politics was limited. When asked “In Canada, in your opinion, how much influence do official religious leaders of the Muslim Community have in political matters?” 47.4% of respondents stated, “not too much influence” and another 7.8% reported “no influence at all.” While only 4.5% maintained that Muslim leaders have a “large influence” on political matters in Canada, a considerably large group of 37.6% said they have “some influence” (Ca Sur.). In fact, the participants’ responses to these two questions, and other questions in the survey, reflected a generally moderate, steady, and balanced outlook among Canadian Muslims. As could be observed in many questions in the course of this report, the sharper views in the spectrum (such as too much, not at all, completely or totally agree/disagree, and the like) were customarily less pronounced.

Graph 40: Muslim Trust in Muslim Political Leaders in Canada



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

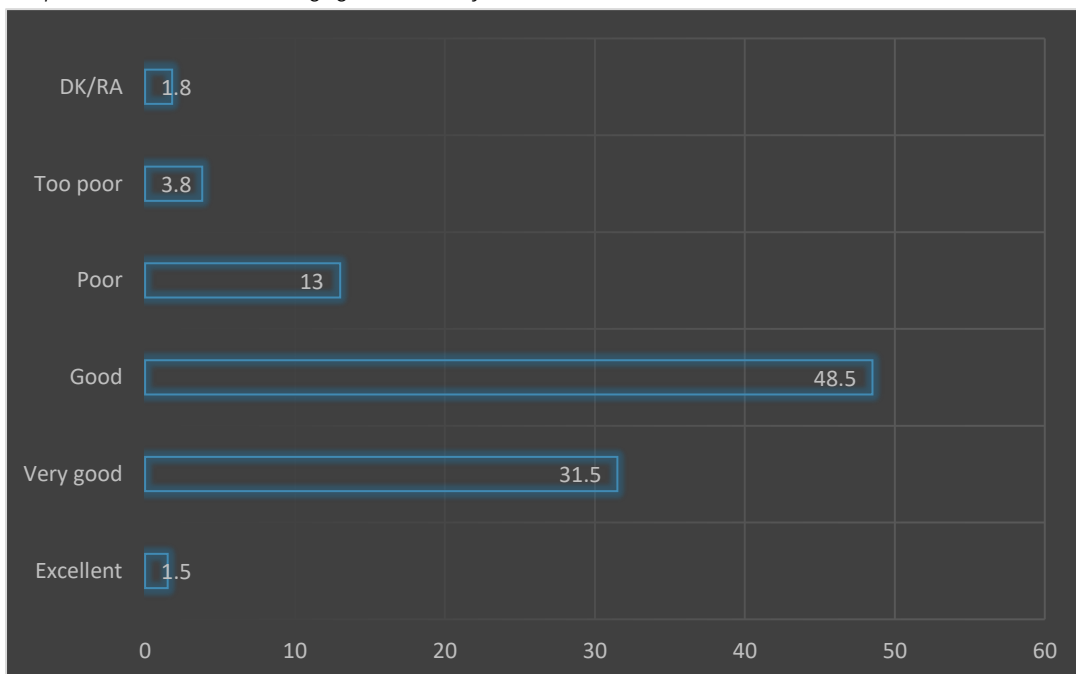
Graph 41: Muslim Religious Leaders' Influence on Canadian Politics



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

When asked “How would you describe the level of Muslim engagement in public life in Canada, as local mayors, state officials, lawyers, members of university, teaching staff, etc.?” the majority of respondents expressed their satisfaction with over 80% stating that the level of Muslim engagement in public life was “good,” (48.5%), “very good” /31.5%) or “excellent” (1.5%). The number of participants who thought the engagement was “poor” (13%) or “too poor” (3.8%) remained considerably low at only 16.8%(CA Sur.).

Graph 42: Muslims Public Engagement Satisfaction Level



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

When asked, “How often do you attend political events with members of the Muslim Community in Canada?” the respondents’ answers revealed a considerably low attendance rate. Only 7% said they “often” participated and another 16% reported occasional attendance. In contrast, 43.8% reported that they “very rarely” join their Muslim brothers and sisters in such events, 33% stated that they “never” do. A small number of the respondents, 0.3%, did not share any opinion or said they did not know (CA Sur.).

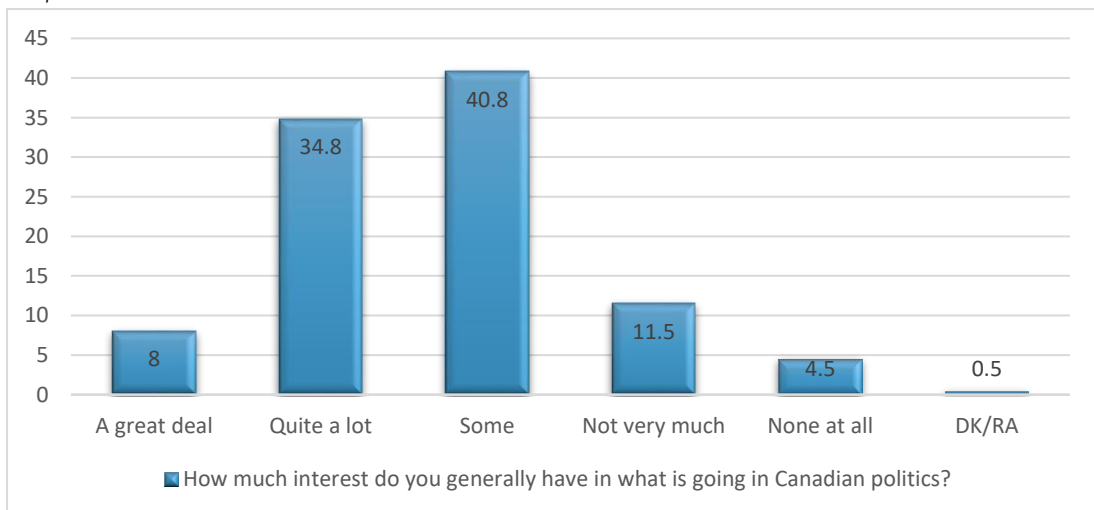
The responses to a question about proactive political engagement supported the general disinterest findings related to active political engagement. When asked “Have you ever done something that could affect any of the government decisions related to the needs of the Muslim Community?” the number of affirmative responses remained disproportionately low at only 0.3% for “Yes, I did, I took part in public debates” and 3.5% for “Yes, I did, I gave my comments on social networks or elsewhere on the Internet.” The figures for those who opted to remain silent and invisible were overwhelmingly high. While 53.1% stated, “I only discussed it with friends, acquaintances, I have not publicly declared myself” another 12.3% said “I do not even discuss it”. The same reserved and diffident attitude was

reflected in the number of those who chose not to express any opinion. While in general, the participants were quite vocal in their opinions, 27.8%, refused to answer or said they did not know. Another 3.5%, expressed that they took action in some other ways (CA Sur.).

A follow-up question, “What is the main reason, why you are not actively involved in government decision-making?” was asked to those who responded as “I only discussed it with friends, acquaintances, I have not publicly declared myself” and “I do not even discuss it.” Here, the responses revealed that the majority of Canadian Muslims underestimate their individual and communal power in politics. 71.9% stated, “I, as an individual, cannot influence government decisions”. Also, the number of those who were afraid of public reaction was considerably high, as 15% of the respondents stated that they “don’t want to be publicly exposed.” While another 5.5% said, “I do not care about it at all,” 6.7% refused to answer or said, “I do not know” (CA Sur.).

This overall low level of self-expression and confidence in the realm of politics does not mean that the Muslim community harbors an apathy toward the politics of the country. The findings of the question “How much interest do you generally have in what is going on in Canadian politics?” revealed that Muslims are very interested in the politics of the country. Almost 45% of the respondents stated that they were either “a great deal” or “quite a lot” interested in Canadian politics while another 40.8% reported that they had some interest in it. In contrast, the number of those who were not interested was considerably low at 16% (11.5 for “not very much” and 4.5% for “not at all”). Here, only 0.5% refused to answer or said they did not know (CA Sur.). This overall high level of interest in the politics of Canada suggests that the recent increase in anti-Muslim rhetoric and the stigmatization of Islamic politics hold great sway on the increasing psychological and socio-political inhibition among Muslims. Put differently, the low level of engagement and expression contradicts the high level of interest, which arguably suggests socio-psychological self-restraint under pressure due to marginalization and provocation.

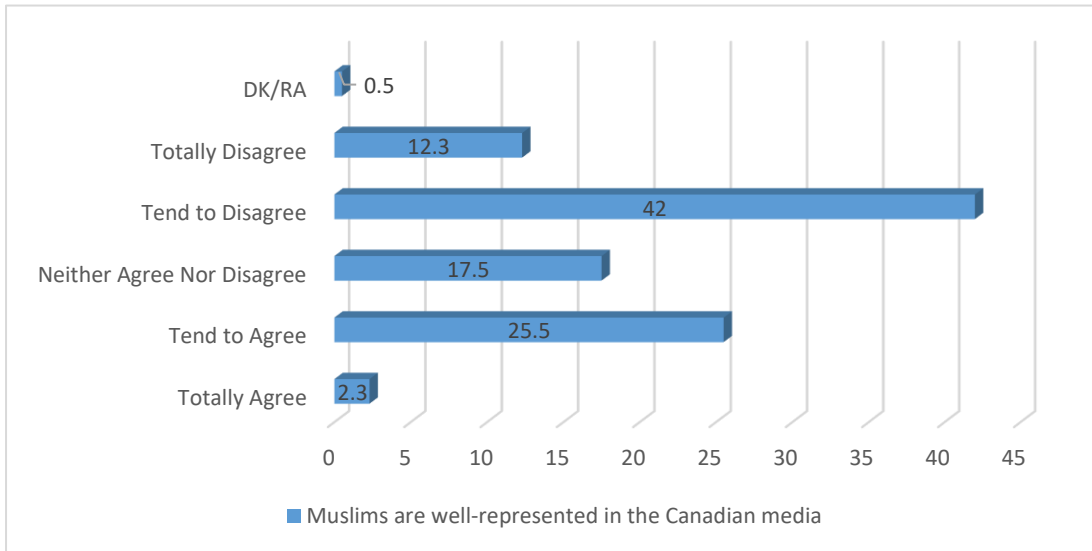
Graph 43: Muslim Interest in Canadian Politics



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The findings of the question aiming at measuring participants' satisfaction with the representation of their community in the Canadian media reflected a diverse yet dissatisfied outlook. To the statement "Do you agree that the Muslim Community is well-represented in the media in Canada?", about 55% stated that they either "totally disagree" (12.3%) or "tend to disagree" (42%) while 17.5% stated that they "neither agree nor disagree." Those who thought media represents Muslim well remained relatively low at 27.8% (with 25.5% saying that they "tend to agree" and only 2.3% saying that they "totally agree") (CA Sur.).

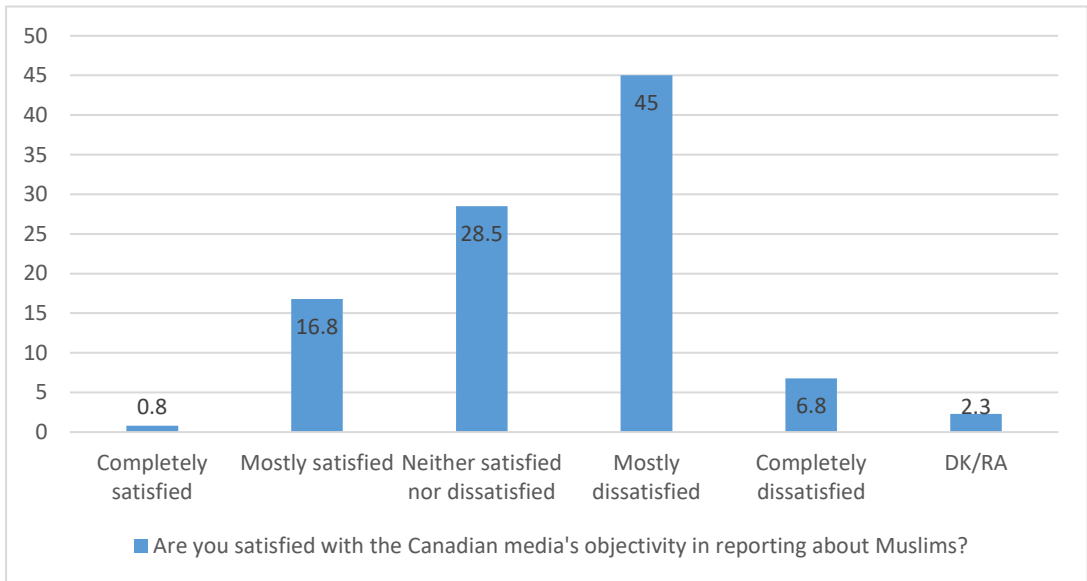
Graph 44: Muslims Satisfaction Level with Muslim Representation in the Canadian Media



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

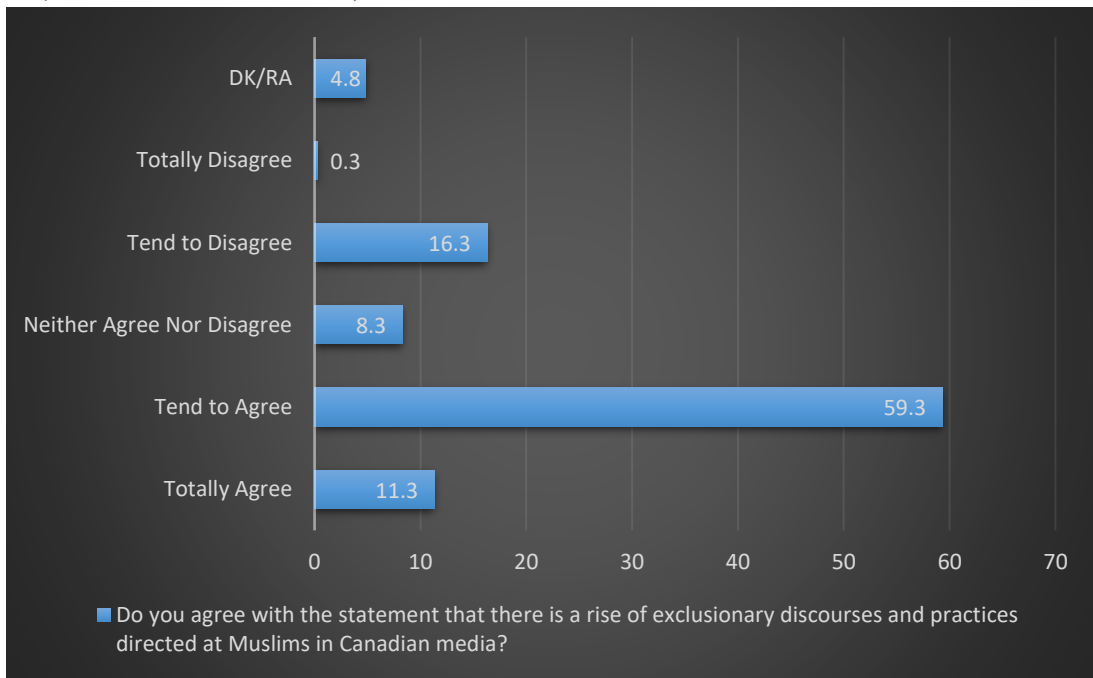
In line with this, when asked if they were satisfied with the objectivity of reporting on Muslims in the Canadian media, only 0.8% of respondents said they were "completely" satisfied. While another 16.8% said they were "mostly" satisfied, 28.5% stated that they were "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied." The figures for those who were "mostly" (45%) or "completely" (6.8%) dissatisfied observed to be significantly high at 51.8%, in total (CA Sur.). When asked, "Do you agree with the statement that there is a rise of exclusionary discourses and practices directed at Muslims in Canadian media?" more than 70% of the participants confirmed, stating that they "tend to agree" (59.3%) or "totally agree" (11.3%) with the statement. 16.3% reported that they "tend to disagree" but the number of those who "totally disagreed" with the statement observed to be overwhelmingly low at only 0.3% (CA Sur.).

Graph 45: Canadian Media's Objectivity in Reporting About Muslims



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

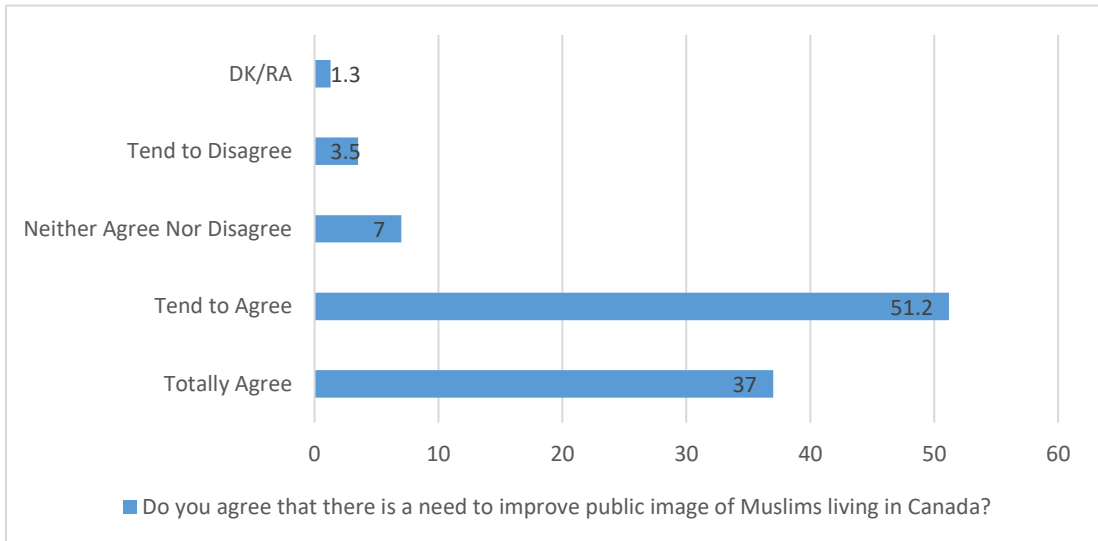
Graph 46: Rise in the Exclusionary Discourses in Canadian Media



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The findings of the CA Sur revealed a common conviction among Muslims concerning the media bias about the Muslim community and Islam in Canada. Possibly, because of this bias and the conviction, to the question “Do you agree that there is a need to improve the public image of Muslims in Canada?” a vast majority answered in the affirmative. Here, 51.2% responded they “tend to agree” and another 37% responded they “totally agree” with the statement. The figures for those who tended to disagree with the statement observed to be disproportionately low at 3.5% while 7% adopted a neutral stance and 1.3% refused to answer (CA Sur.).

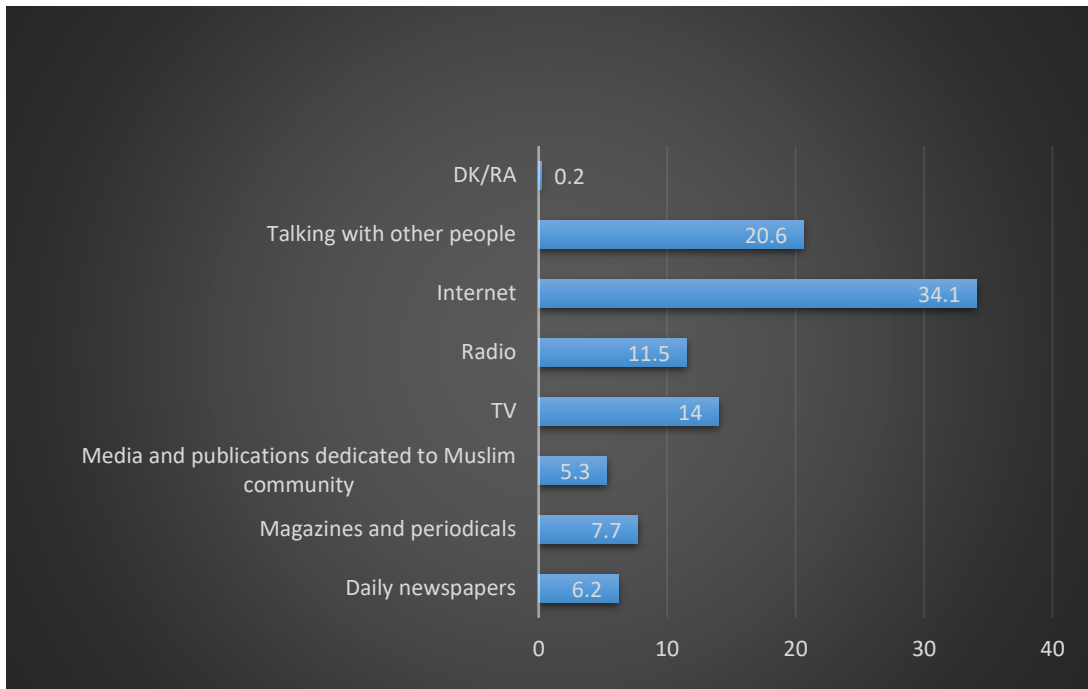
Graph 47: Need to Improve the Public Image of Muslims in Canada



GMD CA Sur., 2019.

It was also observed in the findings of the CA Sur., that respondents’ distrust towards the media content and reporting results in Muslims resorting to a wide range of information sources. When asked “What are the main information sources that feed you about the Muslim communities in the country?” the figures for daily newspapers (6.2%), magazines and periodicals (7.7%), media and publications dedicated to the Muslim community (5.3%) remained surprisingly low—particularly, given the fact that the Muslim community is a highly educated one. Those who maintained their main information sources were TV (14%) and radio (11.5%) made up to about a quarter of the participants. Internet appeared to be the most favored channel for information among Muslims at 34.1%, although the number of those who reported that social conversation was the main source of information about Muslims was also significantly high at 20.6% (CA Sur.).

Graph 48: Main Sources of Information about Muslims



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Overall, Muslim attitudes on visibility and representation in Canada could be outlined in six points: (i) The level of electoral participation among Canadian Muslims has been quite low until recently but this is changing with the younger generations, as was observed in the record high Muslim voting rates in 2015 Federal Election. (ii) In general, the political representation and visibility of Muslims are satisfactory with many Muslim individuals occupying key positions at different levels and realms of the political arena. (iii) A prevalent psychological inhibition towards the public expression of political views and taking proactive roles in formal politics was observed among Canadian Muslims. This is arguably caused partly by the stigmatization of Muslim political identity and Islam in the post-9/11 Western media. (iv) In connection with this, as revealed in related survey questions, Muslim confidence in the Canadian media and its objectivity in reporting on Islam and Muslims were moderately low but not as dramatically low as it was observed to be in the USA. (v) In their political outlook, the Canadian Muslims, in general, observed to adopt quite a moderate, calm, reserved, and steady approach, often abstaining from the expression of sharp views and binaries. (vi) A strong belief in the need and importance of political engagement and the potential role of such engagement in the betterment of Muslim lives in Canada was shared community-wide which promise further improvement in the level of political activism, involvement, visibility, and representation for Muslims in the future.

6 Confidence in Relations among Muslim Communities

Farhan, an employment counselor and mentoring coach, summarized the confidence of relations amongst Muslim groups in Canada in three words “conflict-free yet not so engaged.” According to him, despite their cultural and denominational differences, Muslim communities are on good terms with one another, although it is difficult to talk about a hectic and effective interaction. There is no inter-ethnic or sectarian tension, but due to residential segregation and ethno cultural differences, interaction is limited. At this stage, different ethnonational and sectarian Muslim groups have established a peaceful coexistence. In time, with younger generations of Muslims who will not only maintain their religious identity but also will adopt and celebrate Canadian values of diversity, multiculturalism, and acceptance, the level of interaction between different Muslim communities will increase (Farhan, CA int.).

This chapter explores the intra and inter-communal Muslim relations in Canada. It starts with an outline of the principal patterns of Muslim interaction, the main problems and contestations that affect relations among Muslim groups and provides a framework to the ways and strategies toward addressing these problems and contestations. The issues that divide the Canadian Muslim sector and those that unite different Muslim groups are also discussed in this section.

It was observed during the field study that Canada is a unique context for the Muslim community. The Muslim community in Canada is limited in their inter-communal contestations and conflicts. Inter-generational, inter-racial, inter-ethnic, inter-generational or sectarian conflict and tensions that were prevalent in the Islamic space in many non-OIC countries are not visible in the Canadian Muslim sector. Although these types of conflict and tension might not be completely missing in Canada, it could be argued that Canadian Muslims are dedicated to the ideals of multiculturalism and the society that they have created accommodate claims, values, and differences of all general, ethnic, racial, sectarian, and generational sub-groups. This was also revealed in the findings of a question aiming to test the respondents’ outlook on intra-communal diversity. The respondents were asked to state whether the first statement or the second one is most similar to their point of view (even if it did not precisely match their opinion). 92.2% of the respondents reported that the statement “It is better for me if the Muslim Community in Canada consist of people from different nationalities, *jamaats*, and cultures” was closer to their point of view. In contrast, only 5.3% stated the statement “It is better for me if the Muslim Community in Canada consist of people from the same nationality, and who belongs to same *jamaats*, and cultures” was reflecting their views more precisely. 2.5% of the respondents said either they did know or refused to answer these questions (CA Sur.).

As many participants in the workshop and the interviews emphasized the lack of tension and conflict does not mean that the intra-communal relations are at an ideal level. The level of interaction between Muslim groups, in the opinion of many, could be improved. Fahad, for instance, maintained that although there is not any serious conflict or contestation (even a sectarian one) and there is an active body of imams, the Canadian Council of Imams, to create a platform for intercommunal interaction

and healthy dialogue, the relations between different Muslim groups certainly needed improvement (Fahad, int.).

Waleed, a family-business owner, and a manager of Afghani-Uzbek background stated that only in Scarborough, a district of Toronto, there are around 20 mosques to his knowledge and even this alone speaks volumes about the social and political standing of the Muslim communities in Canada. According to him, although these mosques belong to different ethnonational and sectarian groups, and although Muslim communities are segregated residentially (the Afghans in the east side of Toronto and the Iranians in the north whereas the Indians and Pakistanis in the west north) inter-communal relations are very good and mosques are open to all regardless of ethnic background or denomination. He gave his Afghani father as an example, who prefers to attend a Bengali mosque for Friday pray just because of its proximity rather than attending one of the three Afghani mosques in the region. In this ethnic and denominational indiscriminability according to Waleed, the language plays an important role since apart from the obligatory Friday prayers, which are in Arabic, the sermon, or *khutba*, is delivered in English, which unifies different Muslim groups (CA int.).

According to Waleed, inter-generational conflict, which was prevalent in many countries where Muslims are a minority, was absent in the Canadian Muslim space. Despite the fact that the first generations are still dominating the space and the younger generations tend to put more emphasis on global and national attachments (the *ummah* and the Canadian identity) rather than maintaining their ethno cultural identity, there is no intergenerational tension in the Muslim community. This was, according to Waleed, mainly thanks to the diversity, openness, and inclusiveness of the Canadian society. In such an open context neither older generations feel under the threat of losing cultural and religious values and identity nor do younger generations feel pressure to become fully integrated (CA int.).

Rustum, an employment coordinator at immigrant services, also reported that the inter-communal dialogue and interaction is limited and the Muslim communities often tend to cluster around ethnic, national, and denominational lines (CA int.). Although this cultural and behavioral tendency seems to be fading with the younger generations who have truly internalized and embraced the policy of multiculturalism and its values, the Muslim sector is still dominated by the ethno-national, racial, and sectarian lines and sectional loyalties. In fact, these lines and loyalties foster strong transnational attachments (towards the country of origin), too (Rustum, CA int.).

According to the participants in the workshop, the Muslim groups come together and demonstrate solidarity, particularly, around shared cultural values, “in happiness and in sadness,” when there is a wedding or Eid to celebrate and when there is a death. The spirit of charity and sharing is also a very strong unifying cause. A male Syrian refugee who came to the country two years ago stated that there is absolutely a very heartening unity and solidarity among Muslims in Canada, and based on his own experiences, all ethnic, sectarian, national sections of the Muslim sector offered their assistance to the Syrian refugees when they arrived in the country (CA work.).

Another common ground, as many participants in the workshop mentioned, is the political issues that relate to all Muslims such as the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land, Syrian crisis, the Kashmir issue,

and the suffering of Uyghur people in China (CA work.). One participant reported that in order to settle these disputes in favor of Muslims all Islamic countries with economic and political power should collaborate; it is not in the means and power of diasporic communities to resolve these issues. Canadian Muslims can help Muslims who are suffering from these crises and issues through charity and relief activities and prayers, as for the resolution of political issues is beyond their power and influence (CA work.).

As in many other non-Muslim majority contexts, the denominational disagreement over the day of Eid was a shadow of disunity in Canada. Almost all participants in the workshop maintained that one thing that spoils the harmonious coexistence is that different Muslim communities celebrate Eid on different days (CA work.). One participant underlined that the issues that divide Muslims are not Canadian but Islamic. Although there exists no denominational dispute among Canadian Muslims, new communities often bring divisive problems and issues from their countries of origin. According to him, younger generations of Muslims are more promising to overcome such challenges (CA work.).

According to the data provided by the SMC 2016, the mosque attendance level, as an indication of the importance of religious identity, among the Canadian Muslims has increased over the last decade. Almost half of the respondents, 48%, in the survey reported that they visit a mosque for prayer at least once a week, marking a 7% increase from 2006. The figure for those who said they go to the mosque only when there is a special occasion was 24%. Another 17% reported visiting a mosque several times in a month or a year, which was 3% higher than 2006 figures. The number of Muslims who did not attend to religious conventions in mosques saw a decrease, as well, with only 9% stating they never or almost never visit a mosque, 6% drop from 2006 (SMC 2016: 17).

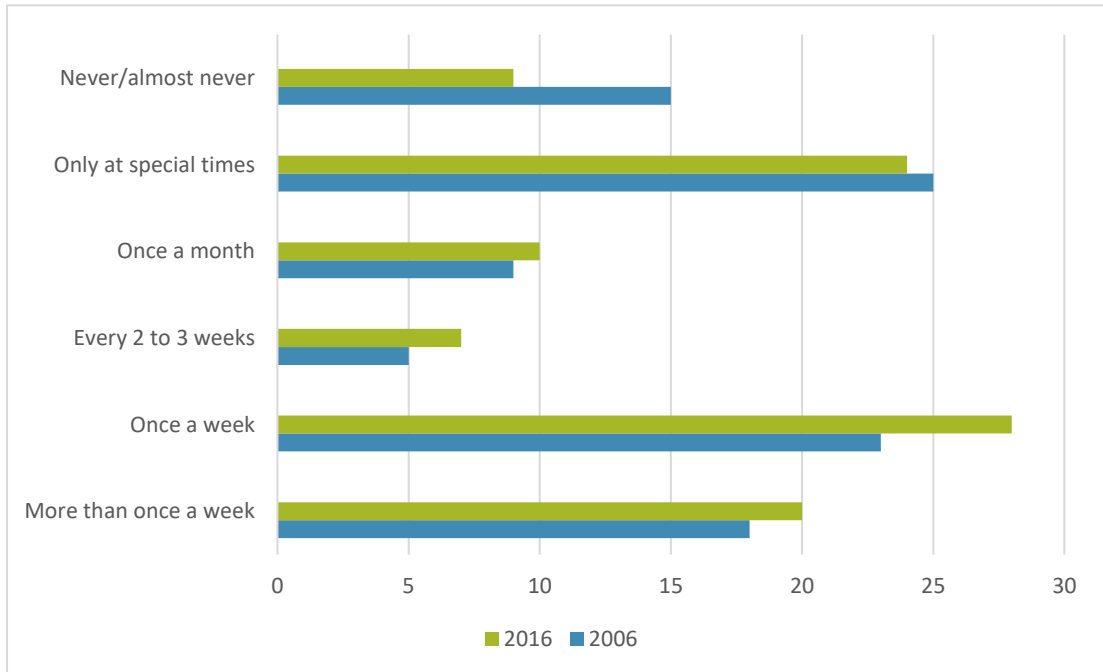
The same report also revealed that mosque attendance for non-religious purposes, for education and social events, although less frequently, was most common among Muslims of western Canada, those of Pakistani background, and those aged 45 and under. 22% stated that they visit a mosque for non-religious purposes at least once a week, while another 24% stated they visit only when there is a special event. The largest group, 36%, at this category reported that they never or hardly ever visit a mosque for non-religious reasons (SMC 2016: 17). Another indication of increasing religiosity among the Canadian Muslims was the rise in the percentage of women wearing head coverings (*hijab*, *niqab* or *chador*). Marking an increase by 11% compared to 2006, 53% of women surveyed in the SMC 2016 reported that they wear headscarf in public (48% *hijab*, 3% *chador* and 3% *niqab*) (SMC 2016: 18).

Figure 9: Interior Section of a Church Converted to a Mosque in Toronto



Source: The photograph was taken during the GMD field study.

Graph 49: Mosque Attendance Frequency among Canadian Muslims

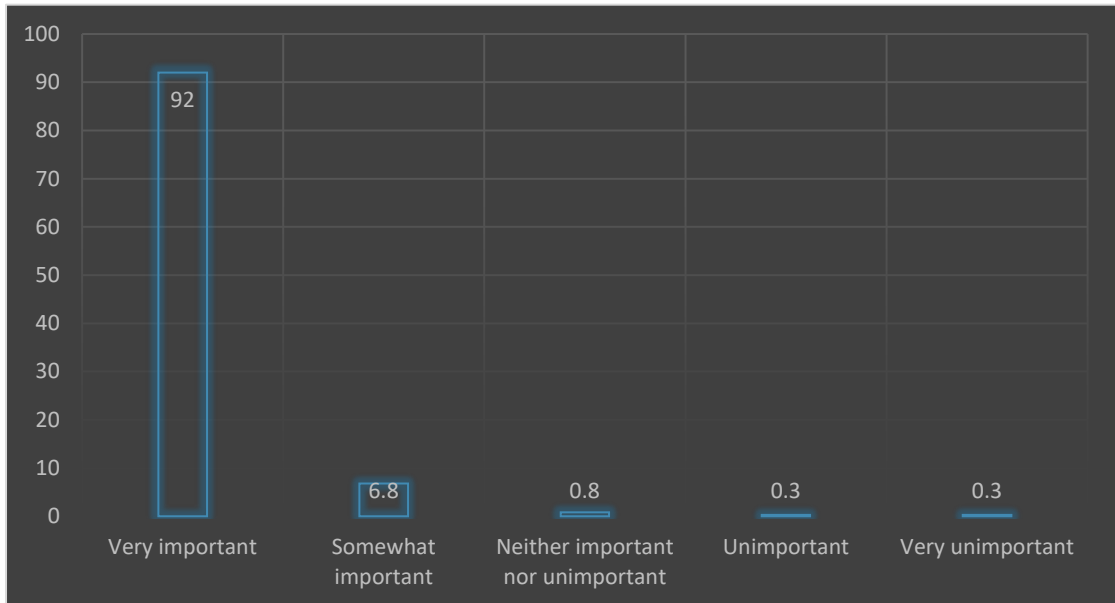


Source: SMC 2016 Final Report

The findings of the *GMD* Canada field study indicated that a significant majority of respondents put great importance on Islam in their lives. When asked, “How important is religion in your life?” a vast

majority of them, 92%, reported that it is “very important.” While another 6.8% stated that it is “somewhat important,” only 0.3% reported that they attribute no importance to religion in their lives (CA Sur.).

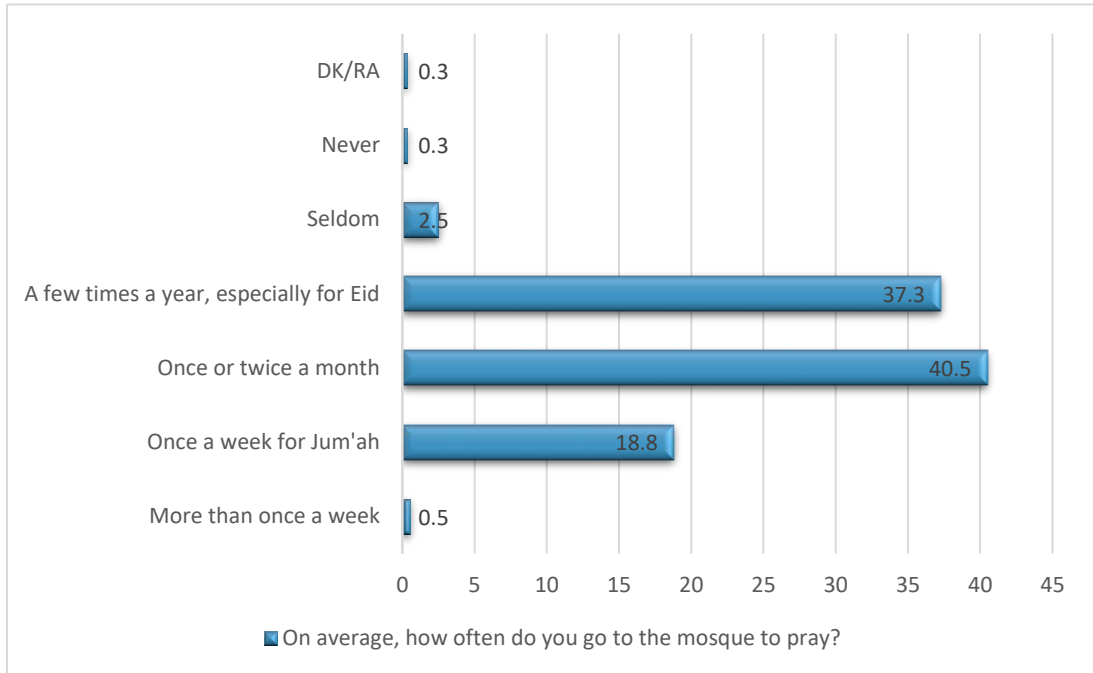
Graph 50: Importance of Religion for Canadian Muslims



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The findings of the question concerning the mosque attendance frequency revealed a very moderate level of religiosity, in comparison with other Muslim communities in non-OIC countries. The *GMD CA Sur* findings demonstrate a modest and conscious religious community rather than an escalating religiosity. When asked, “On average, how often do you go to the mosque to pray?” only 0.5% stated “more than once a week” and 18.8% reported they went to the mosque “once a week” for Friday prayer. While the majority of the participants responded either “once or twice a month” (40.5%) or “a few times a year” (37.3%), the percentage of those who answered “seldom” or “never” was notably low, at 2.5% and 0.3% respectively (CA Sur.). Another question in the survey that aimed to measure the individuals’ critical evaluation of their religious belief practices and performance paralleled this modest outlook. When asked “To what extent do you believe you fulfill religious requirements of being a Muslim?” only 0.3% reported “very high” (0.3%) or “above average” (8%). An overwhelming majority stated that they believed that their fulfillment of the religious requirements is just about “average” (74.3%). While another 16.8% stated they perform “below average,” 0.8% said “very low” (CA Sur.).

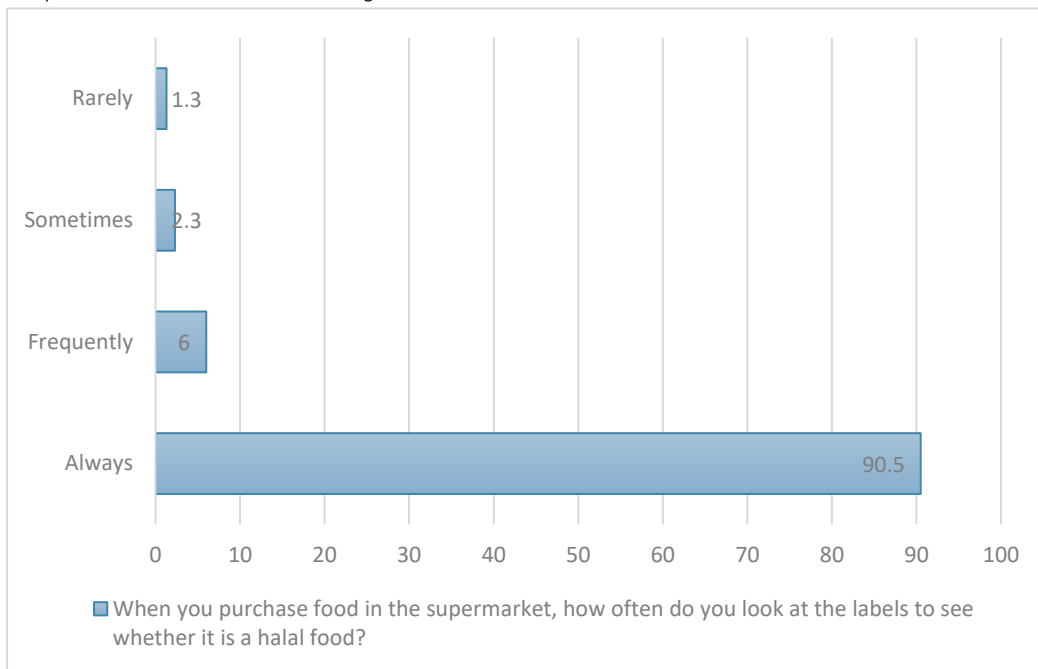
Graph 51: Canadian Muslims' Mosque Attendance Frequency



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

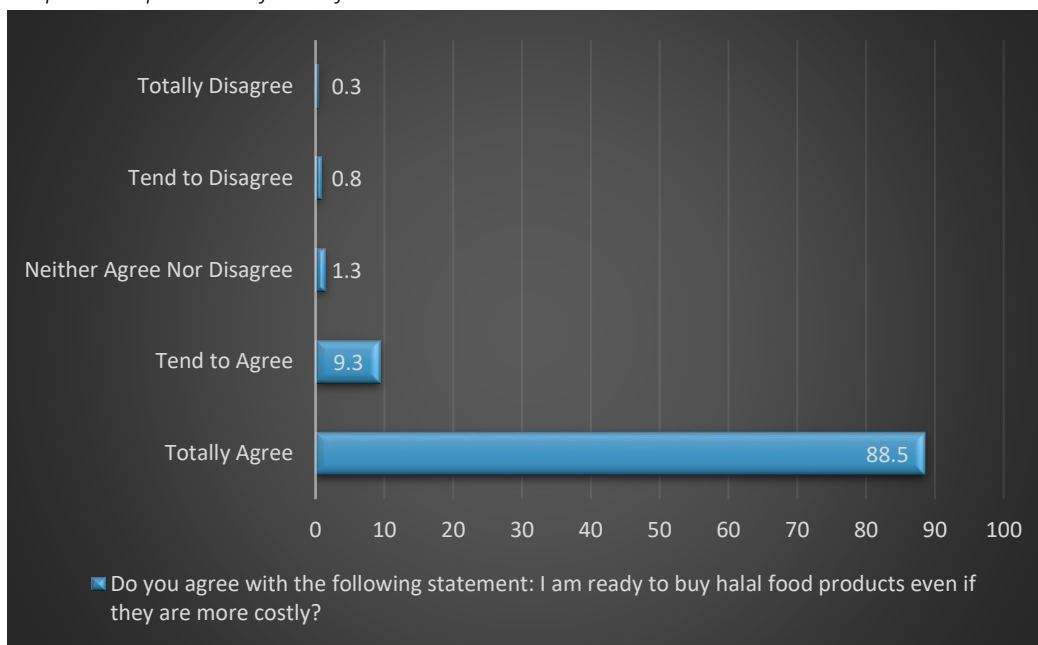
The findings of the CA Sur also demonstrated a very high halal consciousness among Canadian Muslims. With 90.5%, the sweeping majority of respondents reported that they “always” check that the food they purchase has a halal certificate. While a further 6% said they “frequently” check for halal certification, only 2.3% responded with “sometimes” and 1.3% stated that they check “rarely” (CA Sur.). When asked if they would continue to buy halal products even if they were to pay more, 88.5% agreed with the statement “I am ready to buy halal food products even if they cost more.” The percentage of those who would not buy overly priced halal food was notably low at 1.1% with 0.3% stating that they totally disagreed and 0.8% saying they tended to disagree (CA Sur.).

Graph 52: Halal Awareness among Canadian Muslims



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

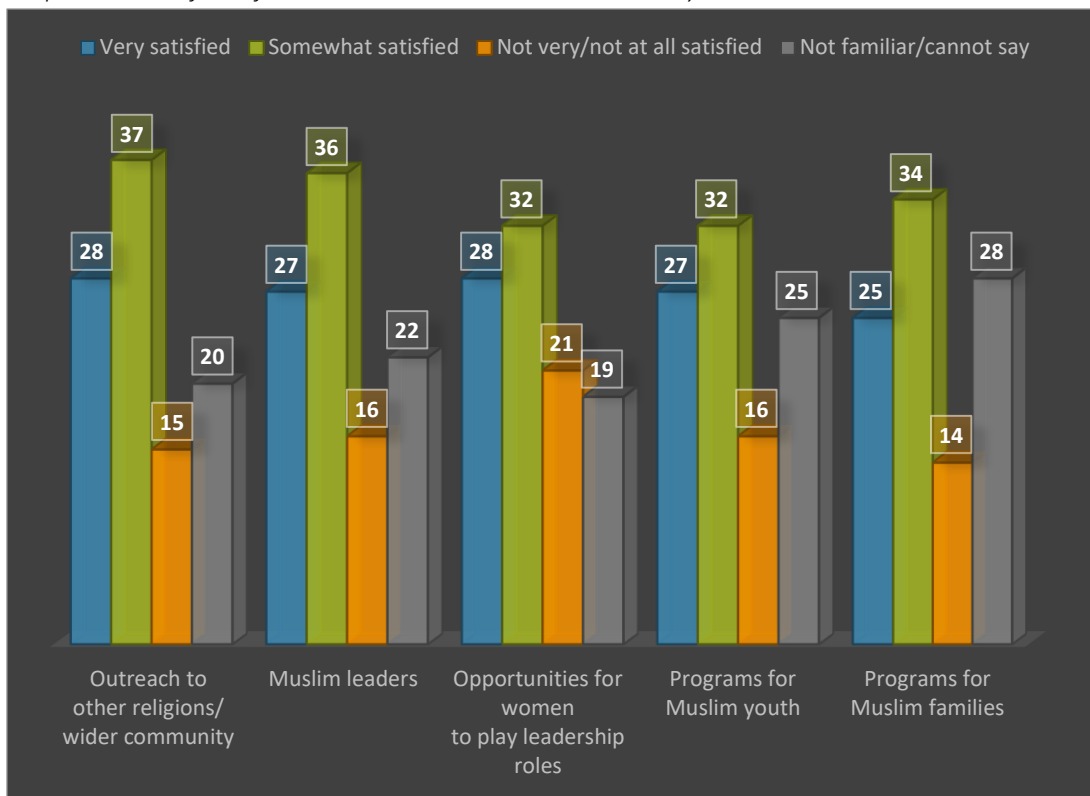
Graph 53: Importance of Halal for Canadian Muslims



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

The findings of the SMC 2016 revealed that Muslims in Canada were in general satisfied with their community and its activities. In order to measure this, the participants in the survey were asked if they were satisfied with the following aspects of their local Muslim community: Muslim leaders, including Imams and clergy Programs for Muslim youth; programs for Muslim families; outreach to other religions and the wider community; and opportunities for women to play leadership roles in Muslim organizations. Accordingly, 65% of the respondents were very or somewhat satisfied with their community's efforts to outreach to other faith groups or the larger society. With a slight drop, 63% was very or somewhat satisfied with their Muslim community leaders (including imams and clergy). The percentage of those who were satisfied (very or somewhat) with opportunities for leadership offered to women in local Muslim organizations stood at 60%. At 59% for each, the majority of respondents were also satisfied with programs for families or for youth offered by their local community. Dissatisfaction, according to the report, was voiced most frequently by individuals 60 years and older (28%) and in the top income earners (24%), whereas dissatisfaction with the community's outreach to other religious and the wider community was most frequently pronounced by highly educated and high-earning individuals (though under 20% in either group) (SMC 2016: 21).

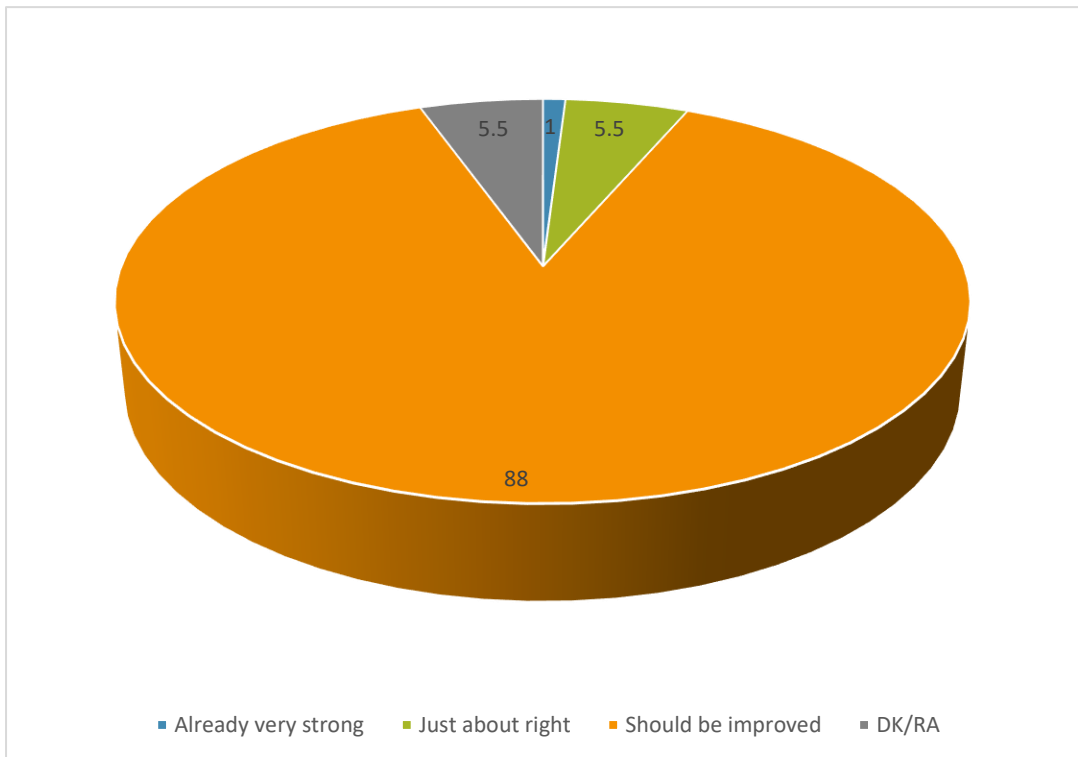
Graph 54: Level of Satisfaction with the Local Muslim Community



Source: SMC 2016.

The balanced and moderate findings of the SMC 2016 largely resonated with the findings of the CA Sur. When participants were asked to describe the level of cooperation between different *jamaats* of the Muslim Community in Canada, a sweeping majority stated it “should be improved” (88%). The number of those who thought the cooperation between different Muslim groups was “already very strong” stood at dramatic low at 1% while some responded that it was “just about right” at 5.5%. Another 5.5% either refused to answer or said they did not know (CA Sur.).

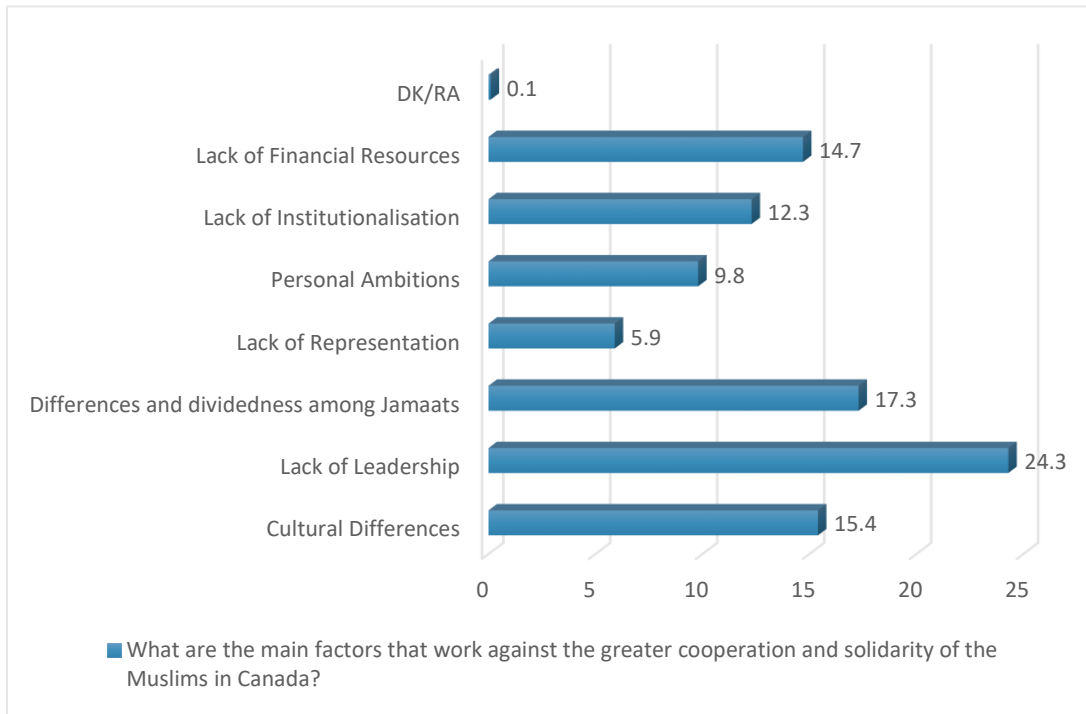
Graph 55: Cooperation between Different Jamaats of the Muslim Community in Canada



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

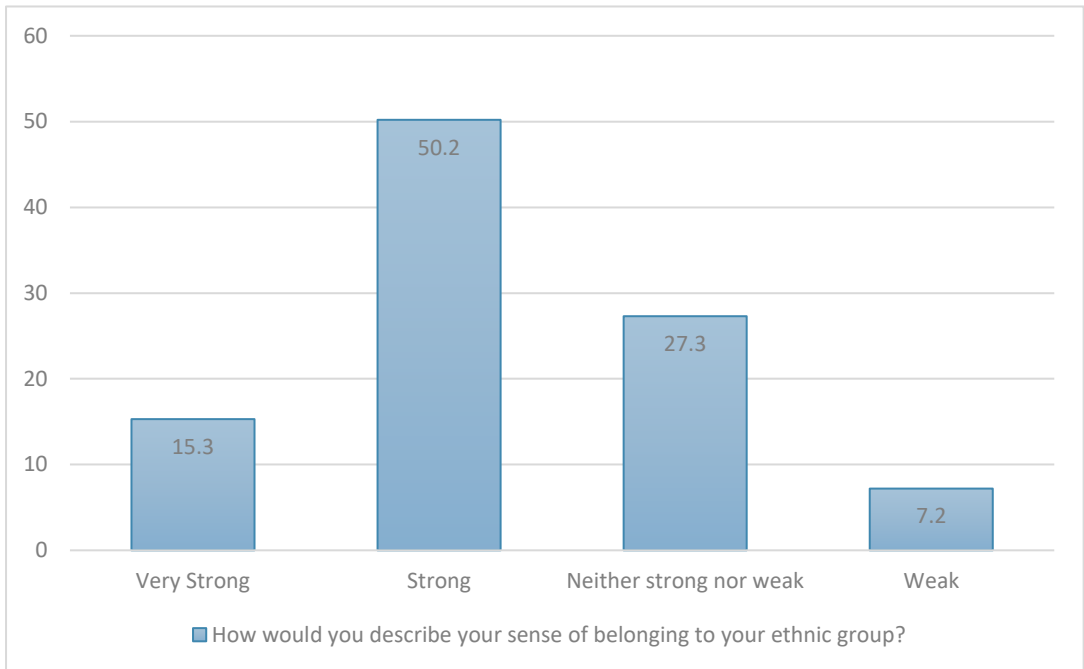
As a further question, participants were asked to name the main challenges and obstacles to greater inter-communal Muslim cooperation and solidarity in Canada. Accordingly, “lack of leadership” (24.3%), “differences and dividedness among Muslim *jamaats*” (17.3%), “cultural differences” (15.4%), and “lack of financial resources” (14.7%) were the most frequent responses. Although reported by relatively lower numbers, “lack of institutionalization” (12.3%) and “personal ambitions” (9.8%) were other popular obstacles voiced by respondents (CA Sur.).

Graph 56: Main Obstacles to Greater Muslim Cooperation



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

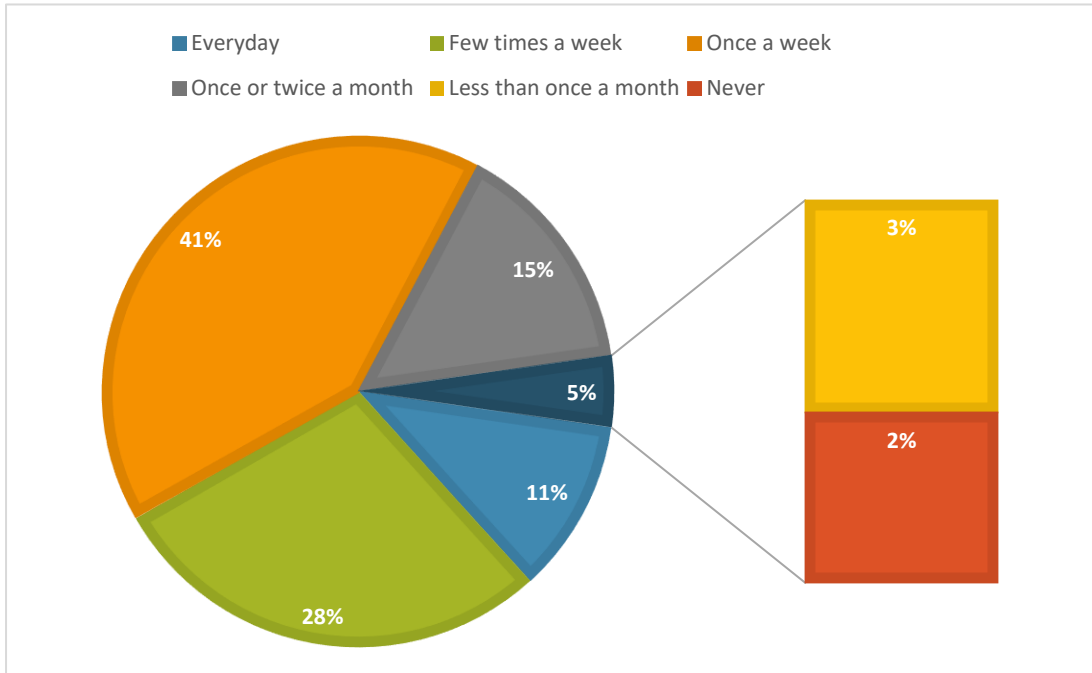
The question measuring the ethnic sense of belonging among Canadian Muslims revealed similar balanced and serene certainty. When asked, “How would you describe your sense of belonging to your ethnic group?” 50.2% of participants responded with “strong” while another 15.3% reported that they had a “very strong” sense of ethnic belonging. The percentage of those who said they had a “neither strong nor weak” sense of ethnic belonging observed to be high at 27.3% while those who had a “weak” sense of belonging remained relatively low at 7%. When considered together with the findings of the related questions aiming at testing the sense of belonging towards Canadian society, it could be argued that Canadian Muslims have developed an equally and composedly strong dual sense of belonging towards their ethnic and civic identities. A remaining 1.8% either refused to answer or said they did not know.

Graph 57: Sense of Belonging to Ethnic Group among Canadian Muslims

Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

In order to measure the inter-communal and intra-communal interaction, the participants were asked a number of questions. The first question was “How frequently do you interact with members of the Muslim community in Canada (excluding your family/relatives and co-workers)?” The responses were observed to be balanced with 11% reporting that they interacted with members of the community “every day” and 28.5% stating they did it “few times a week.” The highest responses were recorded for “once a week” at 41%, while another 15% stated they interacted with Muslim individuals outside their family and friends “once or twice a month” (CA Sur.).

Graph 58: Frequency of Interaction with the Members of the Muslim Community



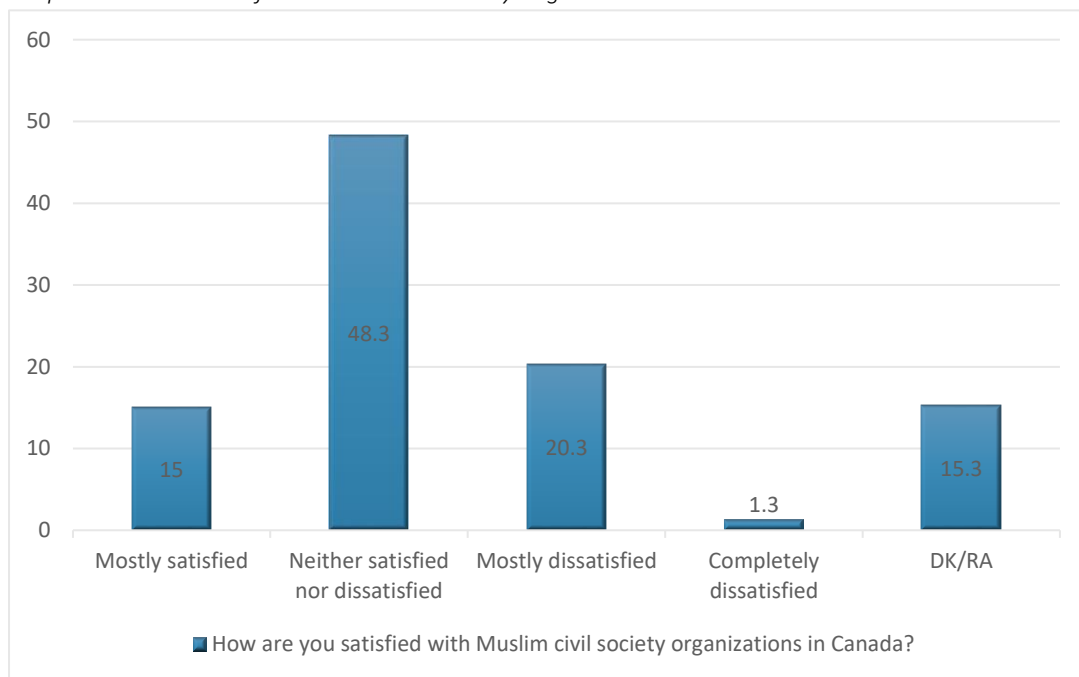
Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

It was observed that despite the general high level of education, Muslim individuals were less likely to engage in social and communal activism. When asked “How engaged and active would you say you are in the voluntary organizations of the Muslim Community registered in Canada, such as associations and charities?” the figures for active respondents did not even reach 7%, with only 1% stating they were “very active” and 5.8% stating they were “somewhat active.” In contrast, the number of respondents who reported they were “somewhat inactive” (40.5%) or “very inactive” (34.3%) was observed to be overwhelmingly high at just below 75%, in total. Another 18% reported that they were “neither active nor inactive” while 0.5% refused to answer or said they did not know (CA Sur.). In line with this, when asked “How often do you attend social gatherings with members of the Muslim Community in Canada, such as language activities, educational events, lectures and debates, sports, theatre, and other cultural activities?” 43.8% stated “sometimes,” 33% responded “often,” and another 17.5% said “very rarely.” While only 0.5% reported they attend to such events “all the times” a larger group of 5.3% stated they “never” participated in them (CA Sur.).

A number of questions in CA Sur., aimed at testing the level of confidence among Muslims towards Muslim organizations and leaders both inside and outside Canada. Starting with the organizational level, the respondents were asked “How are you satisfied with Muslim civil society organizations in Canada?”. Accordingly, while 15% stated they were “mostly satisfied” the number of those who were mostly dissatisfied recorded to be higher at 20.3%. Here, the largest figure with 48.3% was reported for the category “neither satisfied nor dissatisfied”. While a small number of participants stated they

were “completely dissatisfied” (1.3%), a relatively higher frequency was recorded for those who either refused to answer or stated that they do not know, at 15.3% (CA Sur.).

Graph 59: Muslim Satisfaction with Civil Society Organizations in Canada



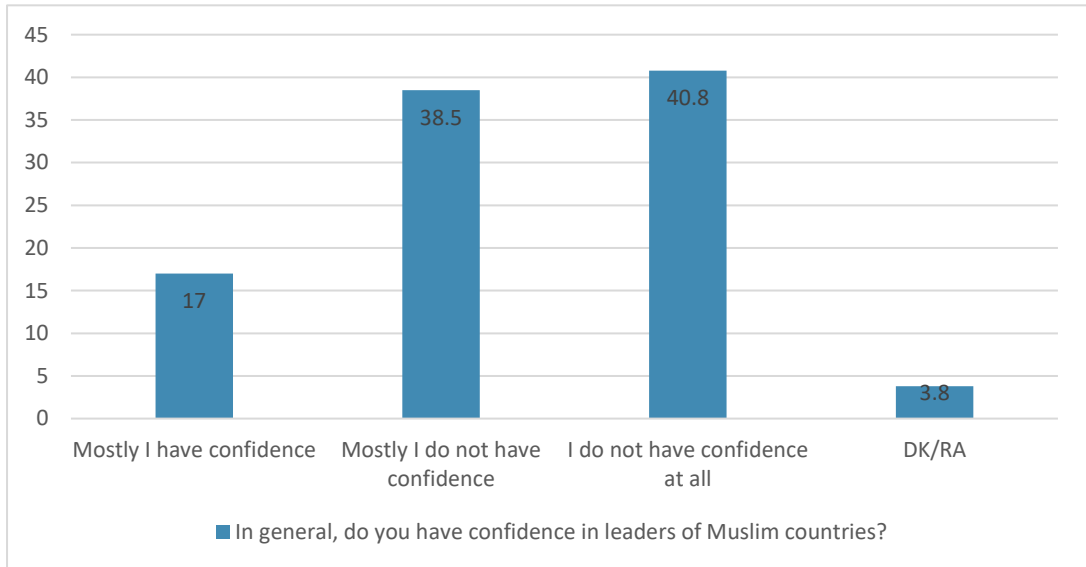
Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

On a more positive note, it was observed that the interaction and cooperation between the Muslim and Canadian organizations, as well as between the Muslim community and the society, was considered important towards addressing the issues that are related to both. When asked “Do you agree that improved cooperation and dialogue between Muslim Community and Canadian civil society organizations can contribute to addressing and solving political, economic or security concerns relating to Muslims in Canada?” the overwhelming majority (86%) responded in the affirmative, stating that they either “totally agree” (30%) or “tend to agree” (56%). While another sizeable group remained neutral, stating they neither agreed nor disagreed (7.8%). Lastly, 6% stated they either did not know or did not want to answer (CA Sur.). In line with this, when asked, “How would you describe the level of cooperation between organizations representing Muslim Community and state institutions of Canada?” with 86%, the vast majority stated that it “should be improved” while only 5.8% said it was “just about right”. Another 8% stated they did not know or simply refused to answer. No respondents thought the level of cooperation was “already too strong,” (CA Sur.).

When asked to report the level of confidence they have in the Muslim leaders of the Muslim-majority countries, the respondents voiced a very low level of confidence. The vast majority, over 80%, either stated “mostly I do not have confidence” (38.5%) or “I do not have confidence at all” (40.8%). The number of respondents who were “mostly confident” in Muslim leaders and politicians of Muslim

countries stood at 17%, while a sizeable number did not accumulate for the category “full confidence.” Another 3.8%, on the other hand, refused to answer the question or said they did not know (CA Sur.).

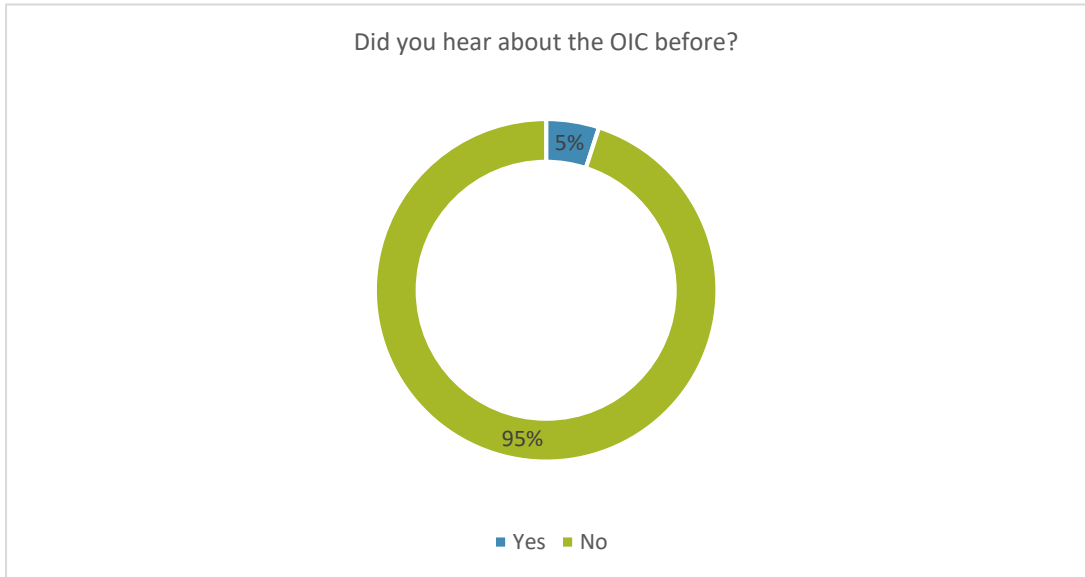
Graph 60: Canadian Muslims' Confidence in Leaders of Muslim Countries



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

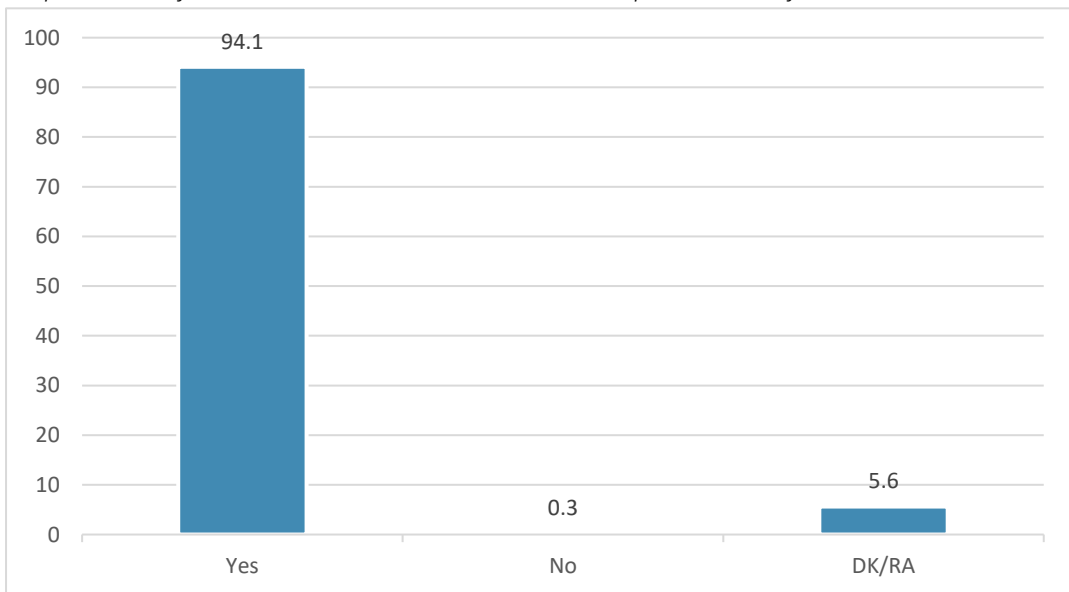
The findings of the survey revealed an overwhelmingly low level of OIC familiarity, with only 5% of the participants responding in the affirmative when asked if they had heard about the Organization of Islamic Cooperation before. In sharp contrast, 95% of the respondents reported that they had not heard of it (CA Sur.). Of those who had heard about the OIC, when asked “Do you think that there is a need for the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to play a greater role in globally representing the rights of Muslims and promote cooperation and security among them?” just below 95% responded that a greater role was necessary while only 0.1% believed it was unnecessary (CA Sur.).

Graph 61: OIC Familiarity among Canadian Muslims



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Graph 62: Need for the OIC to take a Greater Role in the Representation of Muslims Worldwide

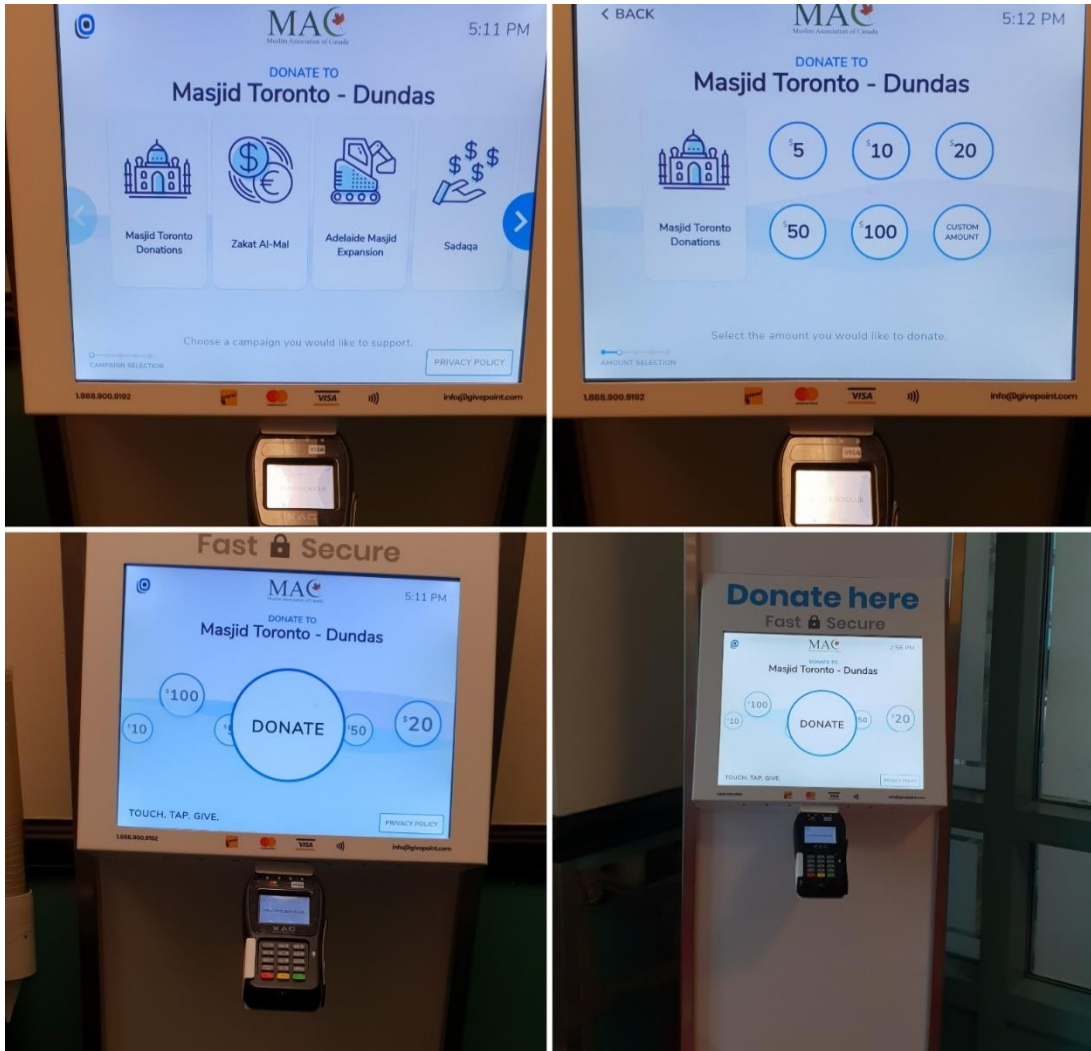


Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Another topic that was discussed in the workshop and the interviews was the concept of diaspora and Canadian Muslims’ self-perception in the center of the concept. Is it possible to discuss the Muslim community in Canada and other Muslim communities living in non-OIC countries within the framework of diaspora? Theoretically and conceptually, is it possible to speak about a Muslim diaspora? What does it mean to be a member of a Global Muslim Diaspora? Alternatively, does it not exist, even if it

conceptually can? Furthermore, what are the social, psychological, cultural, and political factors that prevent different migrant and diasporic Muslim communities from forming a global Muslim diaspora as a part of the global *ummah*? Interviewees and workshop and survey participants were asked whether they had ever heard of such a concept; what they thought about it; whether they consider themselves as a diasporic community.

Figure 10: Innovative Approach to Aid Collection in a Mosque in Central Toronto



Source: The photographs were taken during the GMD field study.

Accordingly, the majority of the participants during the interviews and the workshop favored the employment of the concept. In the opinion of one group, Muslims in non-OIC countries are facing similar challenges and are bounded by Islamic ideals and values they share, so despite all the differences they have many similarities. Further, the Muslim communities in non-OIC countries are under strict surveillance and political marginalization, the security agendas and the anti-Islamic

rhetoric force Muslims to embrace diasporic consciousness. This outlook, in fact, resonated with the argument of Moghissi et al that roots the concept of Muslim diaspora, especially after the 9/11, “in a collective consciousness of exclusion” (2009: 33).

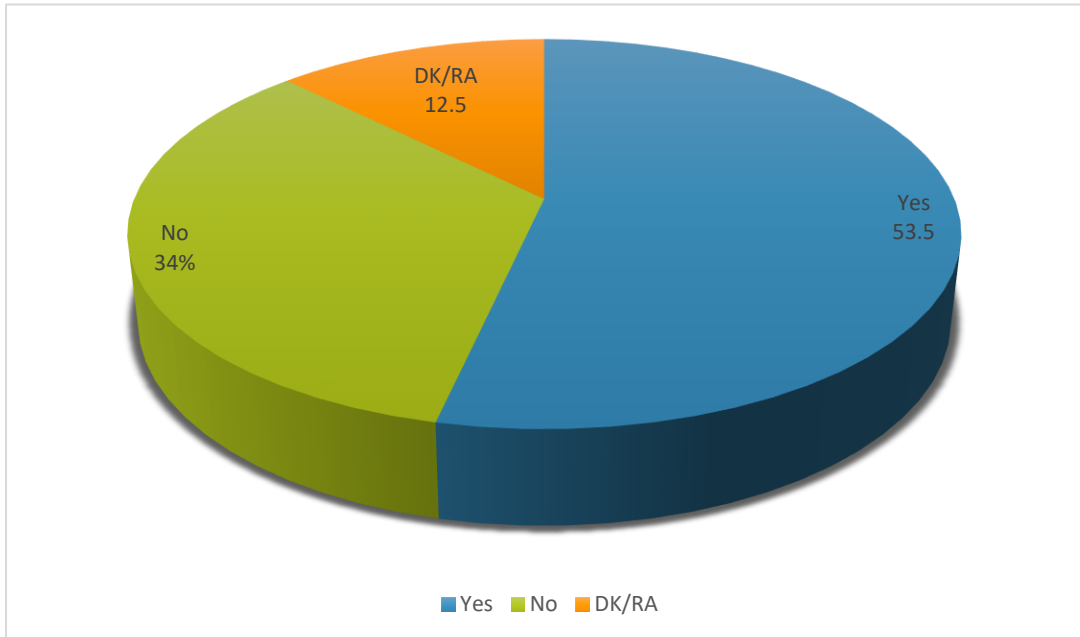
In the opinion of another group, who objected the use of the concept, Canadian Muslims were not being hosted as diasporic communities were and Canada is their home. Further, the fact that tensions and conflicts are missing among Muslim groups in Canada does not change the reality of super-diversity in the Muslim community. The concept of diaspora, in this sense, oversimplifies and overgeneralizes the complexity of reality. For many, Muslims were successfully integrated into the Canadian society, and they were an integral, not a diasporic, part of it (CA work.).

David, a non-Muslim doctor of economic geography who works as a director in a provincial immigration office in the economic development department, argued that there is a general degree of homogeneity coming from similarities, shared ideals and values, and attachments in a cultural and ethnic diversity, and in that sense the use of diaspora is not problematic. It, however, does not capture or do justice to the actual depth and complexity of the group and this makes its usage quite problematic (CA int.).

A participant of Pakistani origin in the workshop stated that she was in favor of the use of the concept of diaspora to describe and discuss the situation of the Muslim communities in Canada, since both their numeric presence and the social, political, and organizational influence has increased significantly in the last two decades. According to her, although Canada is a welcoming and inclusive country and Muslims are becoming more and more established and integrated, this kind of projects (the *GMD*) and concepts like diaspora allow us to start a dialogue and engage with one another in order to further improve the Muslim community, help one another, and strengthen the bonds and the feeling of solidarity (CA work.).

This marginally balanced and composed outlook dominated the views of the respondents in the CA Sur. When asked, “Do you believe there is a Muslim diaspora in Canada?” the majority, 53.5%, responded “yes” while 12.5% stated they did not know. The number of those who thought the concept was not appropriate to use for the Muslim community in Canada was observed to be also high at 34% (CA Sur.). In parallel with this, at 66.3%, a majority of the respondents stated that they feel a strong bond and a global consciousness toward all other Muslims around the world, *i.e.*, the *ummah*. Another 31% opted for a more selective attachment, stating that they only felt that way about Muslims in some countries. The number of respondents who stated that they felt no such bond remained very low at only 2.8% (CA Sur.). As a follow-up question, when asked, “Do you feel a strong bond with other Muslims around the world?” 49.8% responded in the affirmative while another 44.5% reported feeling such responsibility only towards people from certain Muslim countries. The number of respondents who reported that they do not “feel a strong responsibility to support other Muslims around the world” observed to be disproportionately low at 2.3%. Another 3.5% either refused to respond or stated they did not know (CA Sur.).

Graph 63: Canadian Muslims' Self-perception as a Diasporic Community



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

In summary, the Canadian context in terms of relations between different Muslim groups is a tension-free one. Inter-racial, inter-generational, inter-genderal, and inter-denominational contestations and conflicts that are observed to be common in the Muslim communities of many non-OIC countries have relatively a lesser degree of influence on the Canadian Muslim space. This does not necessarily imply a healthy and effective intra-communal dialogue, interaction, and cooperation. As the findings of the CA Sur indicate, the majority of Canadian Muslims think that the relations and cooperation between Muslim groups need improvement. On a more positive note, many interviewees and participants in the workshop believe with younger generations the level of intra-communal dialogue and collaboration is increasing. Thus, in the opinion of many Muslims, the future promises closer relations and cooperation that is more effective and dialogue for the Muslim community in Canada.

The Canadian context *vis-à-vis* the intra-communal interaction and cooperation in the Muslim sector can be outlined in four important points: (i) The general moderation and calmness observed in the views of the Canadian Muslims, are prevalent in their approach to social activism and communal interaction patterns. Put differently, they are outreaching and responsive towards both the society at large and other Muslim and non-Muslim groups but within reasonable limits. This is best expressed in their reserved yet strong sense of belonging towards both the Canadian identity/society and the ethnic identity/community (which indicates that the Canadian Muslims favor a balanced dual attachment). (ii) The overall confidence in both Muslim NGO's and leaders is observed to be low among the Canadian Muslims. The Muslim society in Canada, as mentioned repeatedly, is quite reserved and serene in their opinion, however, reasons behind this low level of trust need further detailed investigation. (iii) An overwhelmingly low level of OIC familiarity noticed among the Canadian Muslims. Since the lack of

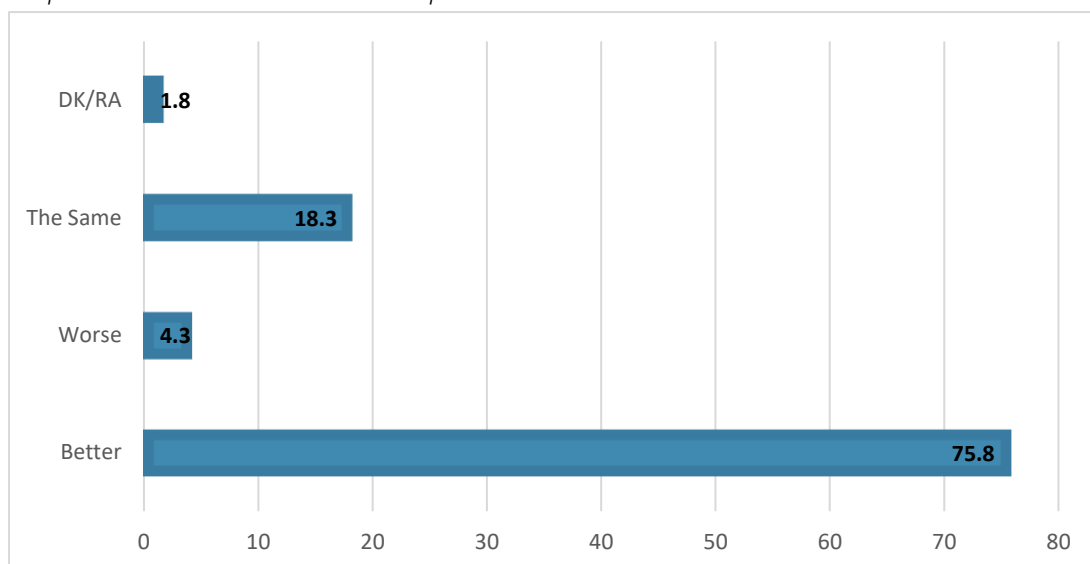
leadership and cultural differences among Muslims were voiced as the main challenges to greater Muslim interaction and cooperation, and since the OIC signifies the elimination of such challenges further OIC visibility and engagement are encouraged. (iv) The Canadian Muslims are observed to be very conscious about their religious identity and its requirements, however, in general, it could be argued that they put more emphasis on the spiritual, moral, intellectual, and cultural aspects of this identity rather than its practical and performable sides. This is argued to be one of the reasons behind the lower level of social activism and engagement among them, which contradicts the high level of sense of belonging and attachment towards their religion and coreligionists.

7 Future Projections

As indicated in the Final Report of *SMC 2016*, the Canadian Muslims, in addition to being the proudest Canadians, are also the most satisfied Canadians with the general direction of the country. Accordingly, 89% of Muslims interviewed in the *SMC 2016* reported that they were satisfied with the way things are going in Canada—marking an 8% increase from 2006. In contrast, only 7% said they were dissatisfied and 4% stated they had no opinion. This high level of satisfaction among the Canadian Muslims was not prevalent in the Canadian society. Only 56% reported feeling satisfied (a 5% drop from 2006) with the general direction of the country, compared to 37% that felt the other way (2016: 10).

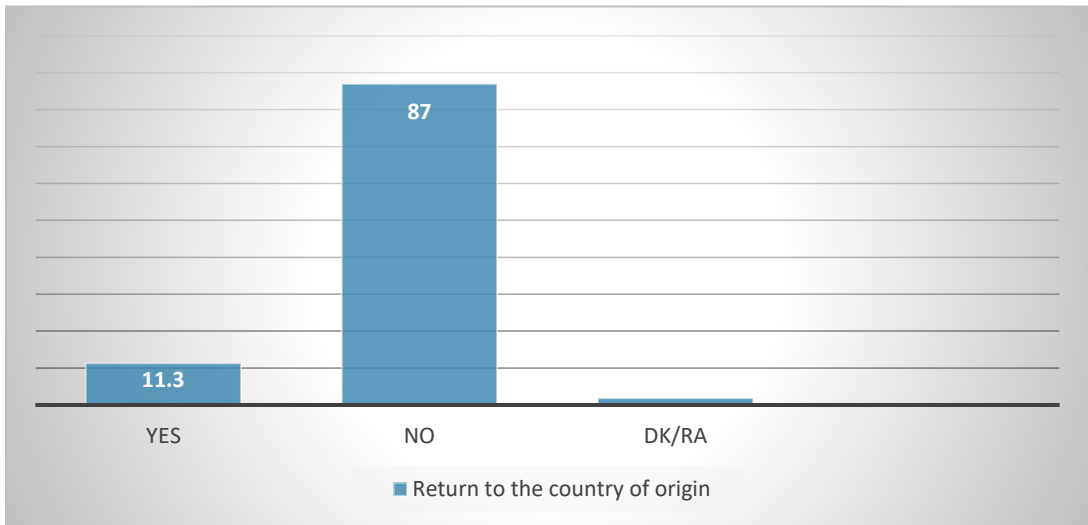
This generally optimistic outlook resonated among the respondents of the GMD CA Sur. When asked, “What are your expectations for the future? How do you think the situation of Muslims in Canada will be?” 75.8% projected a better future for Muslims in Canada while only 4.3% stated that they expected the future to be “worse” than the current situation. The percentage of those who expected no significant change stood at 18.3%, while 1.8% either refused to answer or said they did not know what the future holds for Canadian Muslims (CA Sur.). Thus, it was also not surprising that the majority of respondents (87%) stated that they would not consider leaving Canada and returning to their country of origin to live and work. The number of those who stated “yes” they would consider returning remained low at 11% whereas 1.8% refused to answer or said they did not know (CA Sur.).

Graph 64: Canadian Muslims' Future Expectations



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Graph 65: Desire to Return to the Country of Origin among Canadian Muslims



Source: GMD CA Sur., 2019.

Almost every single participant in the workshop stated that they project a very bright future for Muslims in Canada. One potential threat to such a future, as pointed by one person, is another crisis in the Middle East and its potential repercussions in Canada. Providing that Muslims continue with their hard work and maintain the good model they have been displaying to the society at large, the future is very promising (CA work.). Layla, a social activist and the executive director of a Muslim women’s association stated that the main issues on the Canadian Muslim agenda revolve around Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate. Muslims are very worried about their children and what kind of country Canada will become if Islamophobia is not addressed (CA int.). According to Layla, too, the future will be bright providing that Muslims keep up with the work they do. Layla argued that the most important way to create a positive experience for Muslims in Canada is to embrace Canadian diversity, and be a part of it “so that the general population will get to know Muslims, find out who they are, interact with them, and realize that Muslims are like everybody else—yes, they have their faith but they are contributing members of Canadian society both economically and socially” (CA int.).

David, a non-Muslim doctor of economic geography, when asked about the future, stated that he projected two scenarios—although he is optimistic in general. In the brighter one, with growing presence, socio-cultural influence, economic and political representation, and power, the Muslim communities will thrive and contribute further to Canada. In a gloomier scenario, with the rise and prevalence of right-wing populism and xenophobia, at the current state of affairs, Muslims remain an easy scapegoat. “But I am hoping for the previous scenario and not the second one” (David, CA int.).

Jana, the director of the church-based community center, stated that she projects a positive future in Canada for all. “I think,” she maintained, “Canada is going to change a lot in the next 15 years. We are not going to be as white as we have been.” According to Jana, people do not like change and get aggressive in the face of a need and imperative to change, and there will be some bumps along the way because of the transition and until the new solidifies a bit, people will be a little uneasy and have

to adapt to that new, but they will accept it eventually (CA int.). The Muslim communities will be affected from that overall transformation and imperative to change, and they, too, will have their own challenges and bumps along the way because of the increase in their numbers and diversity (Jana, CA int.).

Although projecting a bright future for Muslims in Canada, Rustum stated that with the borderless world that we live in, Muslims are not immune to the growing populism and xenophobia occurring in the different parts of the world. “I think we are seeing a rise in racist and divisive language, rhetoric and policy which is being brought in and copied from other places around the world. This, of course, is not a good sign and Canadians have to remain vigilant and united” (CA int.). Fahad, a retired doctor of nuclear engineering who is now managing a masjid in Toronto, was more optimistic and confident about their future in Canada, providing that Muslim individuals and organizations become more involved politically and socially and enhance inter-communal dialogue and cooperation (CA int.).

The future projections of the participants in the workshop and the interviews revealed, in general, two main outlooks: In the opinion of one group, a brighter and promising future awaits the Muslim community in Canada. The confidence in the Muslim youth, the high level of education, and Muslims’ potential and dedication to excel themselves were primal reasons for this strong optimism. Another group also projected a positive future for Muslims in Canada, yet, they were concerned about certain developments. For this group, the future matrix depended on the Muslim capacity to overcome the challenges that will stand in their way. According to them, the majority of challenges is and will be external. The internal challenges, in their opinion, is not going to hold great sway on the future, the Muslim community is capable of overcoming those challenges, but, the external ones (*i.e.*, the rise in Islamophobia and anti-Muslim and center-right populism in the USA and Europe, the influences of crises in the Middle East, and the like) are far more alarming. How Canadian Muslims are going to address these external influences will greatly affect their future.

In Canada as in many other contexts, the vast majority of Muslims expect a very bright and prosperous future for their country and society. A more cautious and reserved prognosis of the future course of Muslim development in Canada and outside was also prevalent among a group of Canadian Muslims. Even for them, the future was going to be a positive one but because of imported influences of anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant populist rhetoric and politics, the Muslim community needs to work harder and engage further to have that bright and prosperous future.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

A future advantage for the development of Canada: One of the main findings of the Canada field study was that the Canadian Muslim sector is a fast growing one. The economic and educational advantages and opportunities and egalitarian, multicultural, and accommodating political, legal, and civic framework continue to attract Muslims around the globe. Despite the short history of a sizeable Muslim presence in Canada, the Muslim community portrays a successfully integrated, engaged, and well-established profile. The estimated Muslim population in Canada is over 1.5 million and is promising to grow not only numerically but in political, social, cultural, and economic significance as well. The composition of Canadian Muslims signifies a remarkably young, well educated, and economically involved community. From such perspective, the Muslim community appears as a strong advantage for the future development of Canada.

Harmonious coexistence with a need for stronger social interaction and engagement: Canada, in terms of intra and inter-communal relations, is a conflict-free social and political space. Neither sectarian nor generational or cultural tensions that were observed among the Muslim communities in many non-OIC countries are visibly present in Canada. The Muslim community's effort to outreach to the society, other minority groups, different Muslim groups, and the diasporic Muslim communities outside Canada need to be improved. The lack of interaction between isolated and disengaged clusters might create the illusion of harmonious coexistence. Thus, social activism and engagement are as much important as a political one, and the Muslim community should take a proactive role and put more efforts to attain a truly harmonious and involved coexistence.

Reserved and composed outlook prevails: Canadian Muslims are exceptionally reserved and moderate in their opinion, and this is reflected in almost all aspects of their political and social behavior and outlook. It could be argued that the high level of education and the generally calm political climate generate such outlook. The Canadian Muslims were observed to be quite conscious about their Islamic identity and its values and requirements. In general, they tend to put more emphasis on the spiritual and cultural aspects of this identity rather than its political and performable aspects. One of the results of such outlook might be the relatively lower level of social and political activism and engagement despite the high level of sense of belonging towards co-religionists and co-citizens. This, however, is promising to change for the positive, with younger generations who are more engaged and proactive.

Concerning rise in Islamophobia and anti-immigrant rhetoric: One of the primary concerns of the Canadian Muslims was observed to be the effects of radical politics and rhetoric on Islam and Muslim communities that was imported from the USA and Europe. The most visible effect of such imported politics and discourse is the increase in the number of Islamophobic and discrimination incidents. The political, cultural, and geographical proximity of the USA is a major reason behind this. Canadian Muslims refer to the 9/11 as a turning point in their political and social existence. Two major outcomes are the development of a diasporic consciousness and a growing skepticism toward politics, in general. The interaction between these two related outcomes is limited for now. A prevalent psychological

inhibition towards the public expression of political views and being involved is already noticeable among Canadian Muslims. Although it was observed that the younger generations are becoming freer of the maladies of the post-9/11 social and political climate, the psychological and socio-political damages of anti-Muslim rhetoric, center-right populism, Islamophobia and discrimination remain serious challenges in the future for Canada and its Muslims.

Increasing political representation and visibility: Muslims in Canada are generally satisfied with the level of representation and visibility. Some issues appear in relation to the representation. The most satisfaction comes from Muslim political figures occupying key positions at different levels and realms of the political arena, but this does not mean that the Muslim community has managed to obtain a level of political participation that is in proportion with their capacity and size. In fact, in terms of civic political engagement, influence, and representation, the Muslim community has a long way to go. Notwithstanding this, it is a new and young community in the Canadian political stage and the recent improvement in the electoral participation and official representation is promising. Now, Muslims' political capacity is not fully reflected in their civic, social, political, and official participation records. Yet, it is equally important that the success in political participation and representation is the outcome of proactive socio-political engagement rather than being reactive and defensive ramifications of exclusivist and conservative politics and discourses directed at Muslims.

An essential element of the labor force and services sector yet more prone to unemployment and underemployment: Muslims' contribution to the socio-economic development in Canada through their professional skills and practices is significantly growing. Despite this Muslims suffer more from increasing unemployment and underemployment than any other visible minority groups. Recent studies have shown that the unemployment rate is considerably higher (at least 6 point) among Muslims than any other groups in Canada. Given the fact that the Canadian immigration policies have been selective and prioritized Canada's socio-economic needs, only highly trained Muslim immigrants were accepted by the country. The fact that Muslims are more educated than any other groups, the higher unemployment and underemployment rates reveal certain difficulties and challenges, if not systemic discrimination or marginalization, structured in the job market for Canadian Muslims. Although the rates tend to decrease for the Canadian-born and educated Muslims, still, the same discriminatory-gap is present, and even Muslims born and educated in Canada are less likely to be employed and more likely to be underemployed, particularly in the private sector. From this perspective, it could be argued that the ideally emancipatory, equalitarian, and accommodating legal and political framework does not eliminate economic discrimination and marginalization. Further cooperation and conversation between the Muslim civil society and representatives and official bodies and authorities are required to address this issue. Since, as suggested above, the influence of anti-Muslim rhetoric is largely responsible for discrimination against Muslims, recent developments, such as the motion M-103 is an important step. A comforting note to this rather gloomy picture is that the Canadian Muslims are generally content with their economic lives and are confident in their economic outlook. Their future prospects for the economic trajectory of Canada and their community is reassuring.

A reserved yet very optimistic prognosis of the future course: The vast majority of Muslims project a bright and prosperous future for themselves and the country. Even those who adopted a more cautious approach and voiced their concerns were optimistic about the future course of Muslim development in Canada and outside. For many, the future for Muslims will be shaped by their capacity, dedication, and diligence to overcome internal (increasing Islamophobia and economic discrimination) and external (international crises, the rise in conservative and populist politics, *etc.*) challenges. Nevertheless, the self-confidence in their capacity and power to overcome such challenges and build a better future for themselves and Canada is very clear.

Annexes

I. List of Interviewees in Toronto

Pseudonym	Who	Gender
Fahad	A retired doctor of nuclear engineering who is now managing a masjid in central Toronto	Male
Zain	A retired ex-diplomat of Afghani background, living in Toronto	Male
Jana	The executive director of a community center in a church in Guelph, Wellington-Ontario	Female
Waleed	A family business owner and manager, living and working in Toronto	Male
Farhan	An employment counselor and mentoring coach, and a director in provincial non-profit governmental organization offering settlement and employment services for newcomers	Male
Layla	The Executive Director of the Canadian Council of Muslim Women and a social activist	Female
Rustum	An employment coordinator at immigrant services Guelph-Wellington	Male
David	A doctor of economic geography working as a director in a provincial immigration office in the economic development department, also an activist and volunteer in many social welfare programs	Male
Ehan	Western Union Officer with a major in economics and finance	Male
Yusuf	A retired IT professional, a community leader and pioneer immigrant of Afghani background who came in Canada in 1969	Male

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