

Islam in the West
Perceptions and Reactions

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Framing, Branding, and Explaining

A Survey of Perceptions of Islam and Muslims in the Canadian Polls, Government, and Academia

Over the years, prominent commentators have praised Canadian multiculturalism as a model of successful integration and recommended its lessons for emulation to other Western countries. A number of them in fact pointed to Canada's record of positive interethnic and interfaith relations as exceptional within the Western world. In what follows, we will explore if Canada is as exceptional as portrayed and will review some of the key findings from public opinion polls, government discourse, and academic research on the perceived and conceived linkages between Islam/Muslims and terrorism/radicalization. This chapter is an attempt, possibly the first, to examine the securitization of Islam and Muslims in Canada at these three levels and offers a somewhat different perspective on the issue. In fact, the thrust of public polls, academic research, and government discourse does associate the presence of Muslims with security issues. Nevertheless, what

may make Canada somewhat exceptional is the fact that the current government's discourse categorically dissociates a correlation between Islam and security threats. Put simply, the ways in which Canada's new government articulates its statements on the securitization of Islam and Muslims clearly diverges from its predecessor as well as from the mainstream public polls and academia.

The presence of Muslims¹ in Canada came to be viewed through different lenses post 9/11 and is described as Muslim exceptionalism² and at times even in alarming terms as in the book *The Muslim Question in Canada*. Accordingly—and notwithstanding some impressive achievements—Canadian exceptionalism in immigration should be weighed against the *problematization* of this presence in Canada. Although compared to other Western countries, this presence is viewed as less *problematic* it has not escaped securitization discourses, processes and practices, especially in French Canada (Quebec).³ Like France, Germany, and the UK, the post 9/11 period in Canada has been marked by the tensions of terror incidents, wedge politics, and vehement controversies over public policy issues such as sharia court, *niqab*, funding of religious schools

¹ Faith-based statistics in Canada are long overdue. As Kazemipur (2014: 26–7) says, 2001 census in Canada was the last one in which demographic count on the basis of religious groups was conducted. From 579, 640 Muslims (forming 20 per cent of total immigrants arriving to Canada in 2000–01), the number is estimated to be 940,000 in 2011 and the rough forecasts for 2021 and 2031 respectively are 2 and 3 million.

² First, unlike Algerians in France, Canadian immigrants from a Muslim background lack resentments towards their host society based on memories of a charged colonial history. Second, unlike French Speaking North-Africans in Hexagon, or Pakistanis and Bengalis in UK, Canadian Muslims originate from very diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural, sectarian and regional backgrounds. And unlike Turkish migrant workers in Germany, immigrants are selected on the basis of merit points system under the Canadian Immigration Act (expertise, market employability, language ...)

³ The mosque shooting in Quebec City by a right-wing extremist on January 29, 2017 was a first of the kind in Canada. Comparing Quebec with the rest of Canada, Muslims in Quebec express higher levels of concern over racial, cultural and religious experiences and their future in terms of discrimination, unemployment and negative attitude towards Islam (Environics Institute 2006 quoted in Kazemipur 2014: 113).

and reasonable accommodation.⁴ In view of this, Muslim exceptionalism within the Canadian immigrant population gives pause for a deeper consideration of the securitization of the Muslim presence in Canada.

Two methodological notes are in order here. First, while associationist hypothesis refers to the perceived or conceptualized linkages between Islam, Muslims, and security concerns, the non-associationist (or dis-associationist) thesis refutes such linkages. The latter sees the linkage as superficial or accidental and calls for the consideration deeper causes of radicalization and terrorism. Second, given the vast scope of this topic and the implied complexities of human and social research, findings emanating from such work should be treated with care. Poll results are generally fraught with methodological challenges and pitfalls including sampling, scaling, and timeline setting. Meanwhile, government (Conservative or Liberal) discourses and practices are shrouded in secrecy and bound by political expediency. Academic writings, as will be explored later, bear their own limitations, especially when the subject pertains to the current security issues.⁵

⁴ Islam could be a multiplier factor in the Canadian general malaise with the process of immigration. Compared to 29 per cent before 9/11, Canadian support for reduced immigration rose to 45 per cent after the September 11 and more importantly, 80 per cent of surveyed Canadians called for stricter controls over immigration (Adelman 2002: 15). Again, according to Angus Reid public opinion poll on 14 September 2010, 46 per cent vs. 34 per cent of surveyed sample attribute negative effect to Immigration in Canada. Overall and generally comparable to levels in US, in Canada since 1997, there is an increased framing of immigration within the prism of Terrorism (Frederking 2012: 291).

⁵ Since 9/11, there have been five known foiled terrorist attacks by Islamist extremists in Canada. The Toronto 18 in 2006, sometimes referred to as the Canadian 9/11, Project Samossa in 2010, two plots in 2013 namely the planned attack on Via Rail and the planned bombing of the British Columbia Legislature on Canada Day (Gorski 2016: 98–99), and an attack in Strathroy Ontario in August 2016, when Aaron Driver, an ISIS inspired homegrown jihadist, was killed in a confrontation with police. Based on later Governmental releases, the Toronto 18 terrorist plans included truck bombs and the beheading of the federal prime minister. Sadly, two successful terrorist acts occurred in Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu and Ottawa on 20 and 22 October 2014. Two Canadian ISIS inspired homegrown jihadists, a Muslim, Michael Zehaf-Bibeau and a convert, Martin Couture Rouleau, killed a Canadian soldier and a reservist corporal

Canadian Public Opinion on Muslims, Islam, Security, and Counterterrorism

Why do public opinion polls matter? There is an increasing body of theory on radicalization in Canada that calls for *micro relational, situational* analysis in social research and argues that the study of the linkages between radicalization and religion should move beyond structural, institutional, legal, case studies or event-based perspectives and focus greater attention on daily micro social interactive levels. Amiraux and Araya-Moreno (2014: 93) thus describe this methodological shift as a move towards

[...] a much larger set of processes encompassing the daily interactions of individuals living in pluralistic societies. Radicalization from this perspective stems from the way people feel about sharing common space in a pluralist neighborhood (whether a courtyard, a sidewalk, a mall, a playground, or a line at the bank or post office) and the way they react to the constant exposure to otherness and differences. This broader framing brings us to the unspoken and silent social routine in which hate, love, rejection or isolation emerge, influence social life, and eventually degenerate into stronger hostility towards those who gradually come to embody difference.

These micro interactions operate at a social nucleus level—affecting citizens' sense of national connectivity, solidarity, and identity within societal groups (see Kazemipur 2014: 63). Such a focus can be significant—as gaps between public policy on Muslim immigration on one hand and the social interactivity and receptivity of such groups on the other could render the former less effective.

Any comprehensive account of public opinion in its attitudinal, longitudinal, and demographic complexity and diversity is beyond the focus of this chapter. Most available polls generally look at the immigrant population as a whole through the prism of social indicators such as employment and poverty and less at its Muslim component and at views of security and counterterrorism. Polls conducted on safety and

in separate attacks. Zehaf-Bibeau was later shot dead when he attempted an unsuccessful attack on the Parliament building in Ottawa.

security perceptions, few as they are, can nevertheless yield interesting insights.

An overview of available polls including the most recent trans-Canadian opinion poll (Jedwab 2015), sponsored by the Association of Canadian Studies (ACS) and supported by the *Kanishka* project of the Ministry of Public Safety Canada is revealing. Leger marketing, one of the leading polling agencies in North America was commissioned by ACS to conduct this multi-year opinion survey.

With regard to the definition of terrorism, surveyed Canadians across different age groups perceive terrorism as the use of violence to advance political and religious values and beliefs. On a second question concerning the two most important causes of terrorism, 40 per cent of respondents pointed to religious fundamentalism as one of the root causes. And a clear 75 per cent of respondents divided by religious and non-religious affiliation identified religious fundamentalism as one of the essential factors of terrorism. Notably those ranking religious fundamentalism highly as root cause were found to support tougher security and safety measures, stricter immigration laws and policies (Jedwab 2015: 70–1).⁶

Much like other Western countries, intra-Canadian debates on security often become intertwined with immigration and multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is a federal state law and policy introduced by the Liberal Prime Minister Pierre-Elliott Trudeau in 1971 to manage Canada's demographic diversity (aboriginal peoples, French Canadians, and the English Canadian majority) and to ultimately forge a Canadian identity based on shared civic democratic values. With the exception of Muslims and Jewish groups (who both support religious pluralism) polls reveal that most Canadians believe that religious diversity is less an asset than a risk to unity (Jedwab 2015: 35). This majority also holds a strong unfavourable perception of Muslims in Canada and a negative view of relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. Similarly, based on multiple surveys between 2012 and 2015, 55 per cent to 60 per cent of Canadians believe that there is an irreconcilable clash between the West and Muslims. Two-thirds of biblical religious denominations (that is, Jews, Catholics, and Protestants) express the same view (Jedwab

2015: 98–9). The result holds when Canadians of French, English, or other origin are asked about the trust towards Muslims in Canada. Here those who hold very negative views of Muslims rank highest (70 per cent) in their lack of trust and are equally concerned about the prospect of terrorist activity in Canada (Jedwab 2015: 111). The data is reinforced by the fact that a strong majority of Canadians are worried about the rise of anti-Muslim and to slightly lesser extent anti-Semite feelings in Canada.⁷ This finding is corroborated by 2011 Ipsos Reid survey which finds that the majority of the Canadian population (60 per cent) sees increased discrimination against Muslims compared to 10 years ago (Jamil 2014: 148). Earlier polls pointed to such feelings among Muslims themselves. A 2006 poll conducted by Environics finds that 55 per cent of Muslims said they were somewhat or very concerned about the future of Muslims in the country and 50 per cent of Muslim Canadians expressed anxieties about the occurrence of discrimination, unemployment, and extremism among Muslims (Kazempur 2014: 109).

Understandably, the terrorist incidents in Ottawa and Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu by homegrown jihadists in 2014 reinforced the perception of insecurity. In a 2014 poll (Jedwab 2015: 38), on threat perceptions, Islamic fundamentalism outranked other security concerns such as a nuclear Iran, Russia, China, or North Korea. This finding is in sync with the view expressed by most Canadians 80 per cent plus that imported conflicts create internal racial and intercommunity strains and tensions within Canada. A greater level of Canadian anxiety is linked to terrorist incidents internationally rather than domestically across all age and linguistic categories (Jedwab 2015: 48–9). This level of anxiety is commensurate with a perception among the majority of Canadians that terrorist abilities to deliver another major attack have not decreased (Jedwab 2015: 51). And a minority of Canadians agree that public safety measures nationally or internally have decreased the likelihood of terrorist attacks in the West or in Canada (Jedwab 2015: 61–2).

⁷ In a 2003 poll conducted by Statistics Canada, Muslims draw the second lowest trust (after Jehovah's Witnesses) from their fellow Canadian citizens. In a 2005 survey, Canadian Muslims rank low (this time fourth lowest out of 16 faith groups) in the question on Trust in neighbours. In a 2003 poll by Environics Institute, native-born Canadians have low level of contact with Muslims with 55 per cent having rarely or never contact with Muslims (Kazempur 2014: 103–5).

⁶ Kelly Leitch one of the Conservative candidates in the party leadership race has campaigned for introducing new citizenship (that is cultural) exam.

Another group of polls examined possible associations between anti-Muslim sentiments and anti-Islam feelings (Jedwab 2010). In other words, the polls were conducted to determine whether Canadians distinguished between anti-Islam (as faith) attitudes and their anti-Muslim feelings. The results are both comforting and worrisome! About 60 per cent of those polled expressed a negative view of Muslims while only 20 per cent registered a negative assessment of Islam. It could be interpreted that Islam as faith does not condone terrorism but, in reality, individual Muslims' behaviour matters the most. This interpretation is compatible with the fact that a great number of Canadians acknowledge knowing very little about non-Christian religions such as Islam,⁸ a condition possibly reinforced by the character of coverage provided by mass media (for example, relatively little conceptual and theoretical examination of terrorism).

Mass media is a key force in shaping public opinion.⁹ Mass media preys on public fears and anxieties and often spins Muslim-related news in a manner which feeds such emotions. The famous Bouchard-Taylor Report refers to the populist treatment of facts by mass media (Bouchard-Taylor Report 2008). For instance, the appetite of major Canadian news media (both French and English) for extensive coverage of the sharia court story in Ontario in 2005–6 and their previous total lack of interest in the Arbitration Act (enjoyed by Christians and Jews for 15 years) is telling. So, too, is the framing of Muslims and Islam in coverage of current affairs. In a recent study of the coverage which three major Canadian newspapers (English and French) devoted to terrorism from 2006 to 2013, these media-branded incidents as Islamic or Muslim in 87 per cent of international terror events and 95 per cent of terror events occurring domestically, using phrases such as: 'inspired by Al-Qaeda', 'Islamic fundamentalism', 'Islamist jihadists', or, for that

⁸ In a 2006 poll by Environics Institute, the native-born Canadians having negative view of Islam was 40 per cent v. 45 per cent for positive view (Kazempur 2014: 100).

⁹ A Canadian-based national survey in 2006, show the influence of mass media framing of terrorism on their interpretation of reality. The national phone interview survey of terrorism-related risk perceptions (based on a sample of 1,502 adult Canadians) reveal that Canadian mass media are the most often referred news source when seeking credible information about terrorism (Lemyre et al., [2006: 756] quoted in Malo, Ouellette, and Vucetic [2014]).

matter, 'moderate Muslims' in their coverage. Branding such events as Islamic or Muslim associates the threat with a faith, essentializes Islam and threat, and implicitly characterizes Muslims as a unified entity and a menace to public safety (Malo, Ouellette, and Vucetic 2014).¹⁰

In sum, regardless of the causes/reasons and for the purpose of this chapter, we can confidently establish that in view of available poll results, the *Muslim question* hypothesis is not far-fetched and the thrust of the Canadian public holds a associationist perception on the linkages between Muslim presence and security/safety concerns. Other expert observations on the public mood often echo such conclusion. The following observation from a known scholar of the field is striking.

Discussion of counterterrorism in conjunction with identities can be particularly toxic for persons identifying as Muslim. When the threat of terrorism is evoked in a conversation about religion, Islam often comes to mind. These days, the expression of concern about religious minorities, religious diversity or religious pluralism is almost always a euphemism for anxieties about Muslims. [...] the expression of concern about non-Christian immigrants also tend to be a cover for anxieties about Muslims. (Jedwab 2015: 96)

Ian Reader describes the *response mode* reaction in Canada as the '[...] immediate knee-jerk assumption when acts of horrific public violence occur, (that) they must somehow be connected with Islam [...] the focus on religious violence after September 11 reflects an ethnocentric perspective' (Reader 2014: 55–6).

Canadian Academia and Linkages between Muslim Presence and Safety/Security

Secular academic literature in Canada, in social science and mainly political science, has resisted the consideration of religion in their research (foci) methodologies. The concepts of Islam and Muslims have

¹⁰ The debate over Islamist extremism, terrorism and homegrown-jihadist occupied a central place in Canada's 2015 federal election. Throughout, candidates' views and positions on Islam, terrorism and national security were constantly and extensively broadcasted by a media, which played on the sensitivities of the electorate. Meanwhile, party candidates accused each other of unpatriotic views, fear mongering and divisive politics.

gradually made headway through current Canadian research on terrorism, radicalization, and counterterrorism. The available data is not as abundant as in other major Western countries and even less so with regard to Islam as an analytical factor. Most Canadian writings focus on religion and the public sphere and involve typical Canadian debates on multiculturalism (or *interculturalisme*), integration, *accommodement raisonnable* rather than security matters per se.

The debate on the clash of civilizations echoed in Canada in terms of the future of Islam in open societies, its *violent aspects* and its reconcilability with democracy. Others such as the political critics of Canadian multiculturalism and proponents of assimilationist theory have embraced variants of the 'clash' vision. Before getting into empirical research on radicalization in Canada, it would be useful to mention two Canadian associationist writings on Islam and Jihad. Irshad Manji, a Canadian Muslim scholar from lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community and author of the non-apologist book *The Trouble with Islam: A Muslim's Call for Reform in Her Faith* (2003), was one of the first to break the taboo. Manji argues that the orthodox understanding of Islam is in fact incompatible with modernity and democracy and proposes a re-interpretation of the Quran to liberate Islam from the preachers of violence. Similarly the book *Islam and War* (a pre-9/11 study by one of the authors of the present chapter), suggests that classical Islam including its largest component the sharia, is in paradigm crisis and that its epistemological and methodological characteristics impede its internal dynamism for reform and for inter-subjective, inter-horizon dialogue with broader aspects of human philosophy and science. The work focuses on the case of war (jihad) to demonstrate the a-empirical and ahistorical thinking of later generations of Muslims on jihad. Relying on the insights of the hermeneutic school, the book suggests paradigmatic changes in Muslim thinking in the modern age in terms of a methodological shift towards the historical and empirical interpretation of foundational texts and events.

As mentioned earlier, the post 9/11 empirical research on Islam, terrorism, and radicalization in Canada is plagued by methodological limitations but most specifically in three areas: explanatory gaps, primary data, and heterogeneity problems (Dawson 2014). The explanation problem refers to establishing a specific type of explanatory correlation to account for why and how some, out of many *n*, walk the path of

violent radicalization. The second problem refers not only to the fact that occurrences of radicalization are limited but more importantly, given legal and security measures, to gaining access to sources. As Dawson says, interviews, provided they can be conducted, have dubious credibility. Finally, the heterogeneity issue refers to the variety and the diversity of types of discourses, actors, and processes of jihadism and radicalization. For example, determining how to distinguish between non-religious and religious motivations and reasons of violence or between processes of home-grown radicalization and foreign-originated terrorism are given visibly different experiences and paths.

Mindful of these limitations, the few available Canadian social science research works on Islam/Muslims and Canadian security and radicalization can be categorized as associationist and non-associationist. Empirical research on Islam and terrorism in Canada tends to focus on the weight of the Muslim faith in the process of radicalization. Peer-reviewed literature is cautious and nuanced in establishing a causal relation between Islam and home-grown jihadist incidents. The reason is either related to the three methodological pitfalls mentioned above or—as noted earlier—to general resistance of a paradigm on the part of social scientists.¹¹

A small amount of surveyed literature can be categorized as non-associationist, that is, rejecting a correlation between Islam and terrorism for lack of consistent proof. Here Islam is not viewed as a primary factor nor a secondary one of violence. The work of Peter Beyers is illustrative. Using different samples and methodology, Beyers (2014), *à la Cavanaugh*, does not find enough evidence to establish causality or a significant correlation between Islamic faith and practice on one hand and a potential for violent radicalization on the other. In fact, he even suggests that Islam could be an immunizing factor against radicalization.

Yet the vast majority of current researchers on Islam and terrorism in Canada are associationist in varying degrees. Ian Reader (2014), for example, acknowledges the significance of the correlation. Although admitting that violence is not the monopoly of a religion, ideology, or a state, Reader rejects Cavanaugh's thesis on *the Myth of Religious*

¹¹ This resistance brushes aside the faith as an ontologically independent variable or explanatory factor reducing it to its social effects and functions in a broader context and nexus of human and group motivations and interests.

Violence, and believes that removing the religious component from violence would be very misleading from both academic and practitioners' perspectives.

Those who seek either to separate religion from violence on the grounds that religion is peaceful and 'good' or to deny that there can be a category of religious violence are evading the reality of religion as part of the human world and as potential factor in and qualifying agent of violence. Certainly 'religion' is not some fixed identifiable entity with a timeless nature; rather it is a conceptual category created by humans as a means of explaining or analysing the world.

(Reader 2014: 57)

Reader's chapter is representative of that part of the academic tradition that views religion as a significant explanatory factor in understanding violent groups such as Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Aum Shriynko, Zen monks, Christian medievalists, bible-reading British racists, and so on (2014: 58).

This finding echoes in Dawson's research on the explanatory weight of Islam in inspiring or motivating the so called Toronto 18 terrorist plot—although he is more cautious in establishing any explanatory linkage between Islamic faith and the plot itself. Indeed, Dawson proposes that religion per se was less a factor of violence but that its linkages with other factors such as identity and age created a more explosive cocktail. On the Toronto 18 case, he concurs with the current research on religion and radicalization, 'Given the age-old functional linkages between religion and identity [...] and the role of the transcendent in sacralising causes, it should come as no surprise that religious ideologies no matter how unsavory-can continue to play a role in the contention over ultimate ends in our cultures and lives' (Dawson 2014: 86).

Unlike previous researchers who focused on actual terrorist events and actors, another set of quantitative and high-impact research (Skillicorn, Leuprecht, and Winn 2012) in Canada examines the radicalization process among *at-risk* communities. In general, radicalization is defined very broadly in such work and can range from sympathizing to actual support and engagement. Indeed, one such article notes that 'Radicalization per se ... is not necessarily problematic ...' and adopts as its focus '... a particular subset of radicals: people who sympathize with, justify or feel a personal obligation towards politically motivated violent extremism or associated illegal acts' (Skillicorn, Leuprecht, and Winn 2012: 929).

Surveying an at-risk Muslim community in the nation's capital (Ottawa), the research focuses on attitude variation towards issues (such US politics in Middle East, views on states such as Israel and Iran, and/or groups such Hamas and Hezbollah) relevant to three following radicalization factors:

[First,] general social, financial and political satisfaction or dissatisfaction; a second related to moral and religious satisfaction or dissatisfaction, including dissatisfaction associated with political support for groups such as al Qaeda, Hamas and Hezbollah; and a third [dependent variable] (among Muslims only) related to high levels of religious activity, small religious group participation and support for groups that break the law.

(Skillicorn, Leuprecht, and Winn 2012: 930)

The article concludes that these dissatisfactions will create likely conditions for radicalization in at-risk communities:

As dissatisfaction with life increases across the social, financial and political dimensions, respondents become more active and involved with political groups. As dissatisfaction with the religious and moral world increase, respondents become more overtly religious and more positive towards terrorist groups. As dissatisfaction with both life and the religious and moral world increases, respondents become more overtly religious in ways that involve high-frequency and small-group religious activity, and they show a willingness to admit to supporting organizations that fight oppression even if they break the law."

(Skillicorn, Leuprecht, and Winn 2012: 951)

Simply put, a coexistence of frustrations with life and with the religious world significantly increases the possibility of at-risk Muslim individuals engaging in violent radicalization.

Another more qualitative example of the associationist thesis can be found in recent research focusing on new ways of conceiving home-grown terrorists in Canada. Typical is the work of Zekulin (2015) who suggests using the 'Islamist inspired' epithet for home-grown jihadism. By doing this, he argues, the current literature gains in clarity and the response to home-grown terrorism would be more focused and mindful of its transformations. Thinking on *Islamist inspired home-grown terrorism* will shift our focus from the 'endgame' to its original inceptions and drivers, that is, from prevention of actual violent acts to the detection of radicalization symptoms. It will also help to distinguish between

home-grown extremists based on domestic issues (such as right wing violence) from domestic terrorism that is directly inspired by an age-old international Islamist ideology. This ideology survives and transcends lone wolves, cells, and groups and inspires Islamists in different shapes and forms. Here, Zekulin calls for recognizing, '[...] that the primary driver behind this type of terrorism is the global jihadist narrative [...] those traveling from Western countries to Syria and Iraq are predominantly doing so of their own volition. They are not necessarily in contact with leadership or recruiters from specific groups who assist them or facilitate their travel and assimilation' (Zekulin: 2015). The latest peer-reviewed research in Canada on Canadian Jihadi Fighters goes in the same direction establishing a stronger correlation between faith and the decision to join the jihadism in Syria (Dawson and Amarasingam 2017)

In sum, the securitization of Islam is not exclusive to the general public opinion. The data from the academic research, too, nuanced as it is, show that associationist thesis seems to dominate the surveyed research in French or English Canada establishing varying linkages between Islam, terrorism, and radicalization.¹² The securitization of Muslims as perception becomes now a conception.

Government and the Break Away (Rupture) from the Dominant Associationist Views and Theses

The previous Conservative government (2006–15) persistently and increasingly branded, portrayed, and presented terrorism as linked to Islam. Indeed, Prime Minister Stephen Harper labelled *Islamic terrorism* the biggest threat to Canada on many occasions, a stance interpreted by many as populist but also one seemingly ideologically inspired and in line with the Conservative platform and value system. Titles and contents of reports by CSIS provide telling explicit and implicit examples: From *Radicalization to Jihadization: The radicalizers: the Islamist extremism threat to Canada from within* (2006); *Radicalization in Canada: Current State of Knowledge Counter Radicalization in the West* (2007); *Radicalization: State of Knowledge, Scope of the Problem, and Effectiveness of Counter Measures* (2008); *A Study of*

¹² Limitations on chapter length preclude a discussion of literature on Muslim integration in Canada.

Radicalization: The Making of Islamic Extremists in Canada Today (2011). As Monaghan (2014) says,

... CSIS integrated an Islamic-component with their definition of radicalization. Indeed, they define radicalization as 'the process of moving from moderate beliefs to extremist belief—whereby Muslim radicalization is the process of moving from moderate, mainstream Islamic beliefs to a belief that violence can legitimately be used to defend Islam against its enemies, support and promote a fundamental view of Islam and an intolerance of both non-believers and those deemed to be impure Muslims.

Although the current government, like the previous one, continues to abide by the toughest antiterror laws ever devised in Canada and voted for them while in opposition, its tone and discourse changed significantly. The *letter of Mandate* for the current Minister of Public Safety issued by the PMO (Prime Minister Office) does not question C51, but requires the minister to work towards proposing amendments in order to strengthen its accountability and the judiciary oversight clauses. Furthermore, the brand awareness and implicit references matter when it comes to discourses and official declaratory framing of antiterrorism. Under the Liberal Government (elected since October 2015), official framing of Muslims and Islam in securitization discourses¹³ has undergone significant shifts. In a recent internal administrative order by the government, all public institutions were directed to refrain from making reference to ISIS as the *Islamic State* and instead to use its Arabic abbreviation DAESH in all communications (Public Safety 2016). In his foreword to the Annual Report, Canada's Minister of Public Safety Ralph Goodale explained the decision to dissociate Islam and Terrorism by noting,

It is a serious and unfortunate reality that terrorist groups, most notably the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), use violent extremist propaganda to encourage individuals to support their cause. This group is neither Islamic nor a state, and so will be referred to as Daesh (its Arabic acronym) in this Report.

The government in fact branded its public safety programme as *Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)* a title which by definition covers

¹³ Another important indication for this shift was that unlike most other Western countries, the new government, as promised, admitted 6,064 Syrian refugees by January First 2016 only few months after its election.

violent extremism across the political and religious spectrum (that is, from left to right, from secular to religious), a significant shift from Conservatives' framing of terrorism. This religion-neutral discourse unfolds in greater detail in statements of the Ministry of Public Safety outlining new CVE thinking (Public Safety 2015),

Building Resilience against Terrorism is the Government of Canada's Counter-terrorism Strategy. It provides a framework for addressing domestic and international terrorist threats. The Strategy has four elements: Prevent, Detect, Deny and Respond. Prevention is a major aspect of countering violent extremism. The Prevent element of the Counter-terrorism Strategy aims to get at the root causes and factors that contribute to terrorism by actively engaging with individuals, communities and international partners. Research is also critical to better understanding these factors and how to counter them. Success in this work requires the support and participation of all levels of government, civil society and, most of all, local communities and individual Canadians. Raising awareness among youth and adults within our local communities is an important step in preventing and countering violent extremism. That is why the Government reaches out to active and interested community representatives in order to build trust and partnerships. Families and community groups are the foundation of a safe and resilient Canada. Everyone plays a part in keeping our communities safe.

This new CVE vision bears two important contrasts with previous Conservative government narrative. The first involves the general approach taken to addressing the terrorist challenge. The second concerns the controversial issue of root cause of terrorism.

As to general approaches, the present government stresses more vigorously and actively an inclusive collaboration with communities, creating a federal office of Community Outreach and Counter-Radicalization Coordinator. This comprehensive approach is highlighted in the PSE report. As Minister Goodale (Public Safety 2016) states in his foreword,

[W]e are launching a new national office for community outreach and engagement to pursue research, mobilize resources, and help coordinate work at all levels to detect and prevent tragedies before they occur. In addition, for the first time ever, we are beginning focused consultations with Canadians about our country's national security framework—all in pursuit of two essential goals which must be achieved simultaneously.

In contrast, the Tory government relied on co-optation of supportive electoral bases, marginalizing less significant voting blocks and emphasized a stricter—and decidedly more limited—version of a comprehensive approach focusing on the whole-of-government, (that is, intragovernmental streamlining in antiterrorism) at the expense of inclusive community outreach.

The Conservatives also categorically rejected the concept of the *root cause* (that is poverty, regional conflicts, foreign intervention, and weak states) approach in counterterrorism, arguing that this offered legitimacy or justification to the terrorism and hid the real evil that is, radical Islamism and its fanatic will to destroy the free world. This Conservative rhetoric, much like its American counterpart, recurrently pointed to cultural barbarian practices—a narrative which played well with a large number of Canadians—especially in Quebec.¹⁴ On the contrary, the liberal narrative re-engineers its political discourse by shifting the threat from its most common visible association to a general concept, that is, extremism broadly defined and caused by real or perceived factors (Public Safety 2015),

Violent extremism, broadly speaking, refers to the process of taking radical views and putting them into violent action. While radical thinking is by no means a problem in itself, it becomes a threat to national security when Canadian citizens, residents or groups promote or engage in violence as a means of furthering their radical political, ideological or religious views. The motivations and drivers that inspire them towards violent action may be due to real or perceived grievances, for example,

¹⁴ In reaction to *Reasonable Accommodations*, viewed as threat to French Quebec Identity (Language, laïcité and gender equality, six municipalities 2010 issue a *code de vie* (norms of life). The following passage explicitly addresses immigrants: 'We would especially like to inform the new arrivals that the lifestyle that they left behind in their birth country cannot be brought here with them and they would have to adapt to their new social identity.' Article 6 of the Act 94 in Quebec to establish guidelines governing accommodations denies accommodation for wearing Niqab on the basis of security reasons. In 2013, Parti Québécois proposed Bill 60 called *Charte affirmant les valeurs de laïcité et de neutralité religieuse de l'État ainsi que d'égalité entre les femmes et les hommes et encadrant les demandes d'accommodement*. The political objective was to mobilize the support of Quebec electors and to address the issues related to *accommodements raisonnables*.

animal rights, white supremacy, Al Qaida-inspired, environmentalism and anti-capitalism. Homegrown and imported violent extremism has been on the Canadian scene for many decades. It is not limited to any specific race, ethnicity, religion or culture. There is no single profile or pathway for individuals who come to embrace violent extremism. It is important to note that the threat of violent extremism in Canada evolves constantly. Today's threat is not necessarily the threat of tomorrow.

In sum, under the current government, the CVE discourse has dropped references such as the Islamic State or caliphate, Islamist terrorism, and Jihadi ideology. The primary objective is to disentangle the war on terror from a war against Islam (a new Crusade), and to avoid antagonizing Muslim communities in order to strengthen Canadian resilience to prevent, detect, and disrupt radicalization processes and cases. Rather than engaging in populist and wedge politics, it appears that the new government's strategy is to stay at the centre left of the continuum—closing the gap between the extremes. One may add that in its anti-radicalization approach, the liberal government prefers a return to Canadian multiculturalism as opposed to the policy of assimilation. This recognizes Islamic identity as part of the Canadian mosaic—dissociating Islam as faith from violent extremism and acknowledges the latter as a more complex political phenomenon.¹⁵

The Muslim Question: Securitization in Canada

The question of how host societies and Muslim communities in the West perceive each other is multifaceted and can be addressed from a range of angles and approaches. *Grosso modo* in toto, Islam and Muslims are heavily securitized in Canada. If we take a cursory look at the definitions of securitization, it is possible to draw at least one key conclusion from this chapter. Canada's exceptional success in immigration is mitigated by the fact that Muslims and Islam are perceived and conceived as objects of securitization by the public and in academic research. On the bright side, the current government discourse in Ottawa breaks away from these positions and rejects *essentialist* or sweeping statements towards securitizing Islam and Muslims.

¹⁵ Again the Bouchard-Taylor Report (2008) stressed that that multiculturalism must first be reflected at the public policy and discourse levels (see for example the Bouchard-Taylor 2008).

Securitization represents a major component of the debate on Muslim communities. In general, the term 'securitization' refers 'to the ways specific ethnic and religious groups become the targets of broad social stigmas and suspicion, surveillance and often harassment [...] the ways state and society frame the individuals and groups to radical religious subcultures' (Bramadat 2014: 3,8). This definition is broadened by another researcher (Jamil 2014: 146) by giving it a deeper and more encompassing social content, '[...] securitization affects more than the individuals and groups drawn to radicalization. Securitization is part of the contemporary sociopolitical context which shapes the way Muslim communities are perceived in society, particularly the way in which they are collectively identified as "guilty by association" and viewed as potential threats, terrorists, fifth columnists, or a danger to national security'.

In both cases, it is clear that there is a *Muslim question* (or a Muslim exceptionalism) when it comes to issues of security and terrorism in Canada. Repeatedly, it has been emphasized that 'placing Islam at the forefront of the current security environment profoundly affects Muslims in their day-to-day lives' (Keeble 2014: 279). Clearly, 9/11 changed the world and the lives of Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Perceptions of securitization are not only confirmed by accounts of Muslims themselves but also by their fellow Canadian citizens as well as in the academic literature in general.¹

The Liberal government's commitment to multiculturalism, its Islam-neutral public declarations on terrorism, radicalization and public safety and its declared support for national outreach to communities to counter violent extremism should be welcomed. This policy is both a reflection of Canada's cautious attitudes towards unconditional acceptance of the religious drivers of political violence and more importantly, a re-direction of the society towards peace, order and good governance.

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