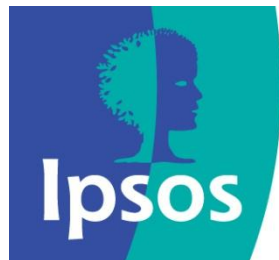


# **Most (88%) Canadians Support Requirement for People to Show Face during Canadian Citizenship Ceremonies**

*Seven in Ten (68%) Disagree that Allowing Muslim Women to wear Niqab or Burqa During Ceremony is Acceptable; Three Quarters (72%) Agree With PM that Burqa or Niqab are Symbols of Oppression and Anti-Women Culture*

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**Ipsos Reid**

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## **Most (88%) Canadians Support Requirement for People to Show Face during Canadian Citizenship Ceremonies**

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**Toronto, ON** – Most (88%) Canadians ‘support’ (65% strongly/23% somewhat) a ‘requirement that people show their face during Canadian citizenship ceremonies’, according to a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Global News. Just one in ten (12%) ‘oppose’ (4% strongly/8% somewhat) such a requirement.

The Government of Canada has issued a directive requiring people to show their face when they are being sworn in as Canadian citizens. This directive means that face coverings, such as niqabs or burqas worn by some observant Muslim women, are not permitted during Canadian citizenship ceremonies.

In balancing this requirement against religious freedom in Canada, while there is less consensus on the matter, still two in three (68%) ‘disagree’ (46% strongly/22% somewhat) that ‘allowing Muslim women to wear a niqab or burqa when they are being sworn in as Canadians is acceptable because we respect religious freedom in Canada’. One in three (32%) ‘agrees’ (11% strongly/21% somewhat) that it is in fact acceptable given religious freedom in Canada.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper has recently stated publically that the practice of wearing the burqa or niqab is “rooted in a culture that is anti-women”. On this point, it appears that a

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strong majority of Canadians agree with the Prime Minister's views. Seven in ten (72%) 'agree' (36% strongly/36% somewhat) that 'face coverings such as the burqa or niqab worn by some Muslim women are symbols of oppression and rooted in a culture that is anti-women'. On the other hand, three in ten (28%) 'disagree' (10% strongly/18% somewhat) with this assessment.

### *Government's Position Supported by a Majority of Voters for Each Party...*

The data reveal that a majority of voters for every party support the government's position:

- Conservative voters are most likely to support the requirement that people show their face in a citizenship ceremony (96%), but most Liberal (85%), NDP (83%) and Bloc (81%) voters also feel the same way.
- A majority of Conservative (78%), Bloc (76%), NDP (66%) and Liberal (60%) voters disagree that allowing Muslim women to wear a niqab or burqa when they are being sworn in as Canadian citizens is acceptable.
- Most Bloc (86%), Conservative (84%), NDP (70%) and Liberal (66%) party voters agree that face coverings such as the burqa or niqab are symbols of oppression and rooted in a culture that is anti-women.

### *Young Adults Least Supportive of Government's Position...*

While most appear to support the government's position on the issue, young adults aged 18 to 34 are less enthusiastic than older Canadians, and in some cases have significantly diverging views:

- Two in ten (20%) young adults oppose the requirement that people show their face during citizenship ceremonies, compared to only 12% of 35 to 54 year olds, and 6% of 55 year olds who oppose.
- A majority (57%) of 18 to 34 year olds think it is acceptable for Muslim women to wear a niqab or burqa when they are being sworn in as Canadian citizens because we respect religious freedom in Canada. This compares with just 27% of 35 to 54 year olds who agree that it is acceptable, and 17% of those aged 55 and older who agree.
- Young adults are least likely to agree (68%) that face coverings are signs of oppression and an anti-women culture compared to middle-aged (73%) and older Canadians (76%).

### *Regional Variation Shows Quebecers Most Likely to Agree...*

The data reveal some significant variation in attitudes across the country:

- Eight in ten (81%) Quebecers agree that the face coverings such as the niqab or burqa are symbols of oppression and rooted in a culture that is anti-women, followed by those living in British Columbia (76%), Alberta (75%), Atlantic Canada (72%), Ontario (69%) and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (48%).
- Just 19% of Quebecers believe it's acceptable to allow Muslim women to wear a niqab or burqa when they are being sworn in as Canadian citizens because we respect religious freedom in Canada, while those living in BC (27%), Alberta (34%), Atlantic Canada (34%), Ontario (39%), and Saskatchewan and Manitoba (43%) are more likely to believe it is acceptable.



- Quebecers (91%), Albertans (90%) and Atlantic Canadians (90%) are most likely to support a requirement that people show their face during citizenship ceremonies, followed by those in BC (87%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (87%) and Ontario (85%).

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between March 16 and March 19, 2015, on behalf of Global News. For this survey, a sample of 1,004 Canadians from Ipsos' online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics to ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. The precision of Ipsos online polls is measured using a credibility interval. In this case, the poll is accurate to within +/- 3.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, had all Canadian adults been polled. The credibility interval will be wider among subsets of the population. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.*

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