

Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism: Four-in-ten say radicalized individuals live in their communities

Canadians express more concern about radical Islam than white supremacy as a motivation for attacks

July 12, 2018 – A new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute, conducted in partnership with the [Canadian Race Relations Foundation](#), finds Canadians feeling generally less concerned about homegrown terrorism today than they were shortly after the October 2014 shooting on Parliament Hill.

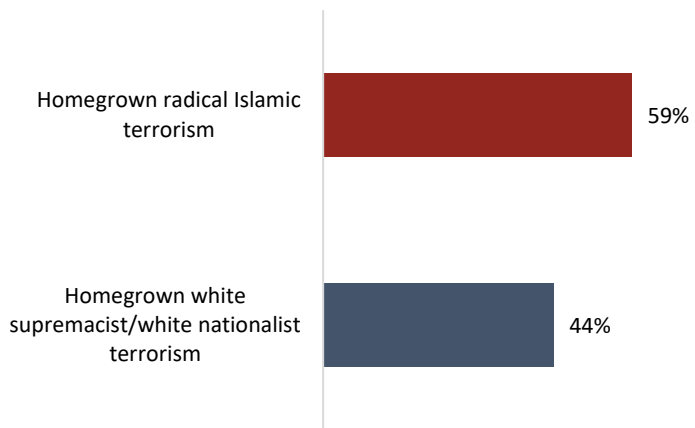
That said, most still see homegrown terrorism as a “serious threat” to this country, rather than something that has been “overblown” by politicians and the media. Specifically, the possibility of attacks motivated by radical Islamic beliefs is of greater concern to Canadians than the prospect of white supremacist or white nationalist homegrown terrorism – though many are worried about both.

To that end, most Canadians see this country's Muslim community as a partner in the fight against radicalization, rather than a part of the problem, but most say leaders in that community do not speak out enough about homegrown terrorism.

More Key Findings:

- Some four-in-ten Canadians (41%) say they believe there are radicalized individuals living in their communities today. One-quarter (24%) say no such individuals exist where they live, and the rest (35%) are unsure
- Slightly more than half of all Canadians (54%) say they have confidence in the ability of this country's security services – such as CSIS, the RCMP, and local police – to prevent acts of homegrown terrorism
- Canadians view radical Islamic attitudes and white supremacist attitudes as more concerning than other prejudices that exist in Canadian society today. A full majority (54%) say radical Islam is cause for “a great deal of concern,” while 44 per cent say the same of white supremacy

Percentage who say that each poses a "quite serious" or "very serious" threat to Canada today:



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from March 29 – April 2, 2018, among a representative randomized sample of 1,509 Canadian adults who are members of [Maru Voice Canada](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/- 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was conducted in partnership with the [Canadian Race Relations Foundation](#), and was paid for jointly by ARI and CRRF. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

- Overall perspectives on radicalization have stayed fairly consistent since the Angus Reid Institute [last asked about this issue](#) in 2014, but several underlying demographic trends have changed. Most notably:
 - Quebecers are more likely now than they were in 2014 to say there are radicals in their communities, but much less likely to say homegrown terrorism is a “serious threat” to Canada
 - Most past Conservative Party of Canada voters (61%) now see the Muslim community as “part of the problem,” when in 2014 this group was split on this question
 - Younger respondents are still the only age group more likely to say the threat of homegrown terrorism is “overblown” (54% do) than to say it is a serious threat (46%), but the gap between them and other age groups on this question has shrunk since 2014

INDEX:

- **Homegrown terrorism: Serious threat or overblown?**
- **Origins of radicalization**
- **Radical Islamic terrorism vs. white supremacist terrorism**
- **Security and prevention**
- **Canadian Muslims seen as partners in anti-radicalization fight**
- **Issues of tolerance**

Homegrown terrorism: Serious threat or overblown?

How much of a threat is the possibility of homegrown terrorism in Canada? Is it as credible and serious as politicians, media, and law enforcement sometimes portray it? Or have these entities overstated the cause for alarm?

The Angus Reid Institute first set out to answer these and other questions in a comprehensive and ground-breaking [study on homegrown terrorism](#) released in November 2014. Today, more than three years later, a second wave of the study finds a fairly consistent public opinion landscape on these issues, but one that has seen some intriguing changes at the demographic level, which will be highlighted in this report.

As it did in 2014, the institute asked Canadians to choose between two statements: that “there is a serious threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada” or that “politicians and the media have overblown the threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada.”

When ARI first asked this question, both the October [Parliament Hill shooting](#) and the [vehicular attack](#) that happened in Quebec two days before it still loomed large in the headlines.

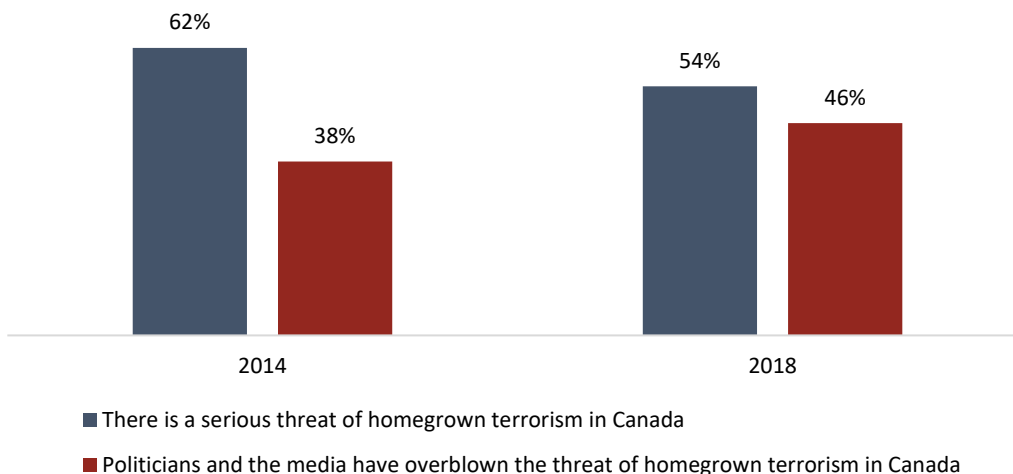
At that time, more than six-in-ten Canadians (62%) chose the “serious threat” statement.

Today, most Canadians still see homegrown acts of political violence as a “serious threat,” rather than a phenomenon that has been overblown:

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

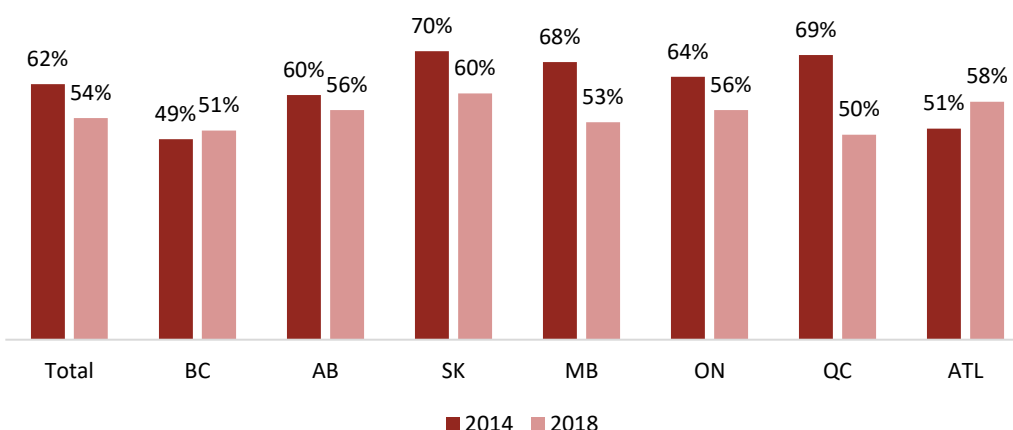
Which of these statements is closest to your own view?



The belief that homegrown terrorism is a serious threat is fairly consistent across regions, which represents a change from the [last time ARI asked this question](#). In 2014, the percentage of Canadians choosing this option in the face-off ranged from 49 per cent in British Columbia to 70 per cent in Saskatchewan – a difference of 21 percentage points. Today, Saskatchewan is still the region most likely to believe homegrown terrorism is a serious threat (60% do), but they’re only 10 points higher than the region least likely to say this (Quebec, at 50%).

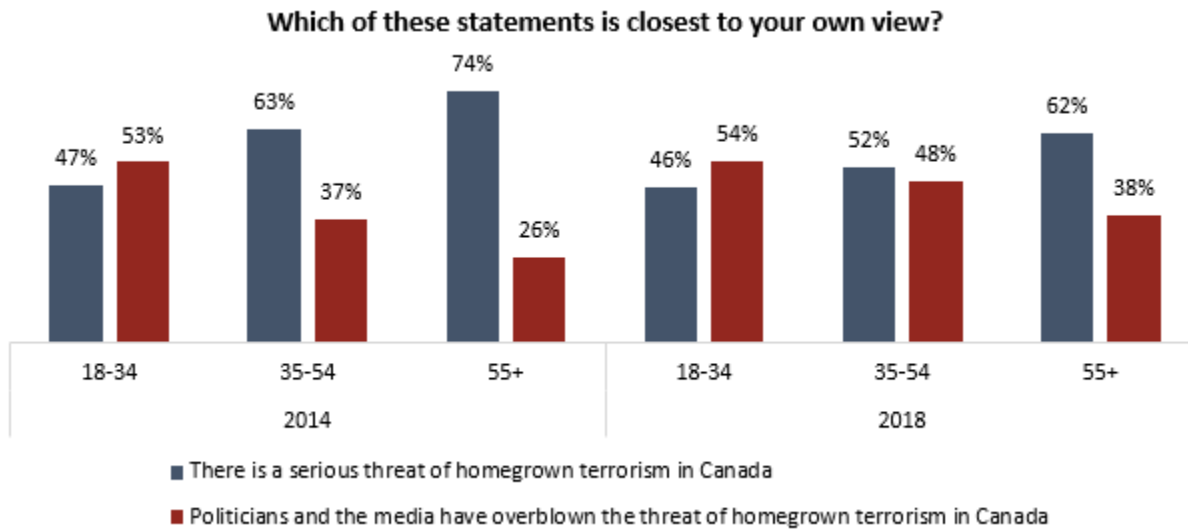
Belief that homegrown terrorism is a serious threat has fallen precipitously in Quebec, from 69 per cent in 2014 to 50 per cent today:

Percentage who say "there is a serious threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada"



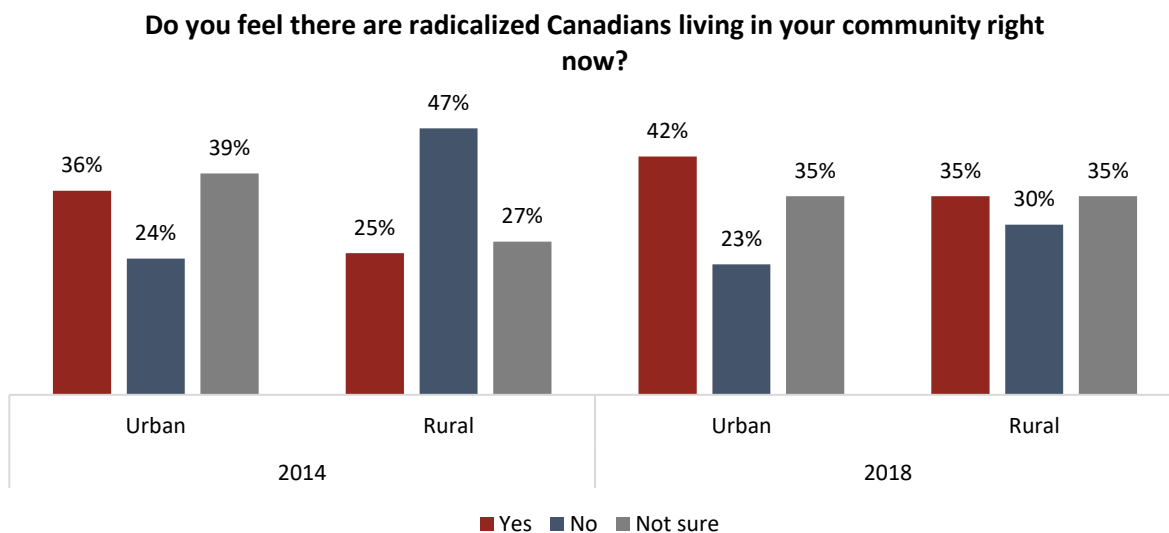
Responses to this question have also flattened out along generational lines since 2014. Older respondents (those ages 55-plus) are still more likely than other age groups to say there is a serious threat of homegrown terrorism, but the percentage who say this has dropped significantly in three-and-a-

half years. Indeed, only the youngest respondents (those ages 18-34) have remained consistent in their views on this question:



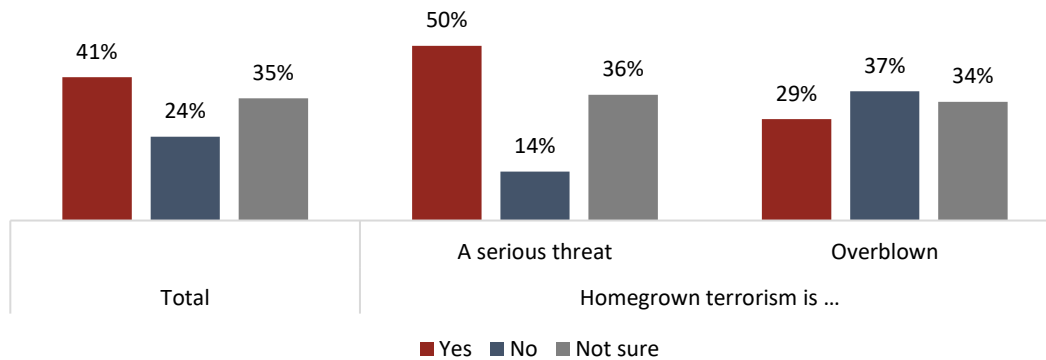
Origins of radicalization

Some four-in-ten Canadians (41%) say they believe there are radicalized individuals living in their communities right now. That represents a slight increase from 2014, when slightly more than one-in-three (35%) said this. As was the case back then, residents of urban areas are more likely to suspect there are radicals in their community than rural residents are. That said, the difference is considerably less dramatic now than it was in 2014, as seen in the following graph:



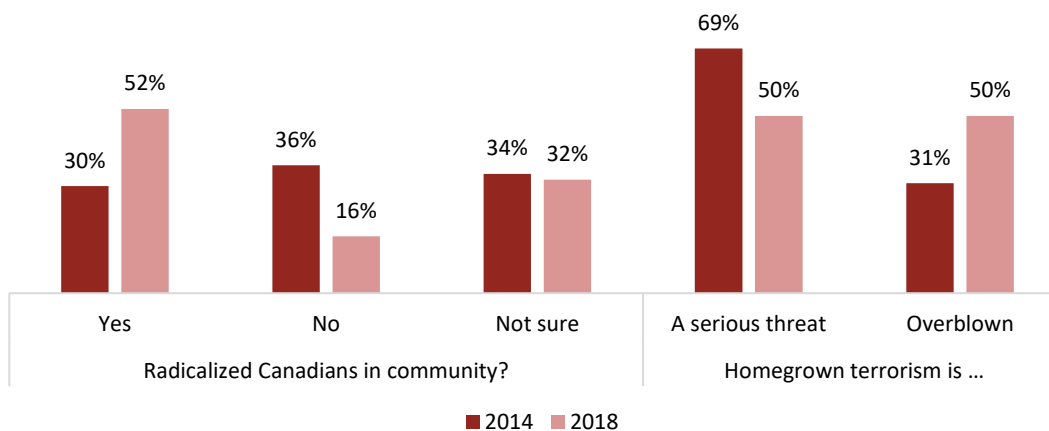
As might be expected, those who think homegrown terrorism is a serious threat are more likely than those who see it as overblown to believe there are radicals currently living in their communities:

Do you feel there are radicalized Canadians living in your community right now?



Notably, Quebecers – who are among the Canadians least likely to view homegrown terrorism as a serious threat – buck this overall trend. More than half of respondents in Quebec (52%) say they believe there are radicalized Canadians living among them. That’s up 22 percentage points from what Quebec respondents said in 2014, even as the number of Quebecers saying homegrown terrorism is a serious threat has dropped by 19 points:

In 2018, Quebec respondents are more likely to believe there are radicals among them, but less likely to see radicalization as a threat:



These significant changes in Quebec come over a time period that saw the provincial government – with the support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) – issue a [“call for action”](#) to prevent the radicalization of youth online. The province also [developed resources](#) for educators aiming to thwart radicalization in their classrooms.

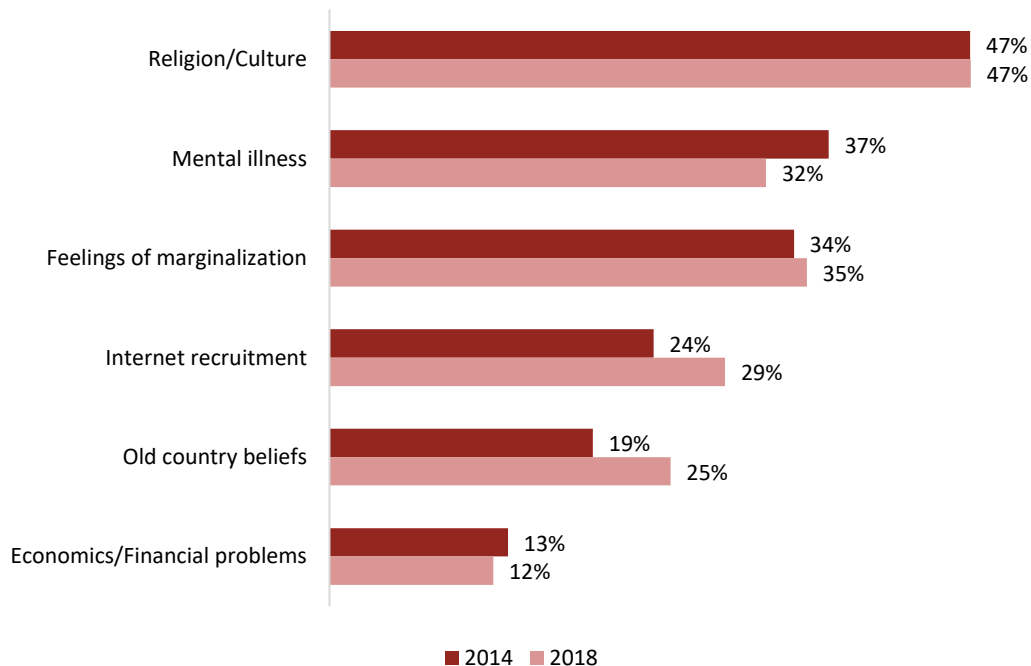
Just how much these efforts – or the January 2017 shooting at a mosque in Quebec City and the public conversations that followed it – are responsible for the significant changes in public opinion on radicalization in the province documented in this survey is difficult to determine.

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

Asked what causes people to become radicalized, Canadians largely point to the same factors they did in 2014, with nearly half (47%) saying religious or cultural factors are to blame, and roughly one-in-three blaming feelings of marginalization and mental illness, as seen in the following graph:

What do you think causes someone to become radicalized or turn into a homegrown terrorist?



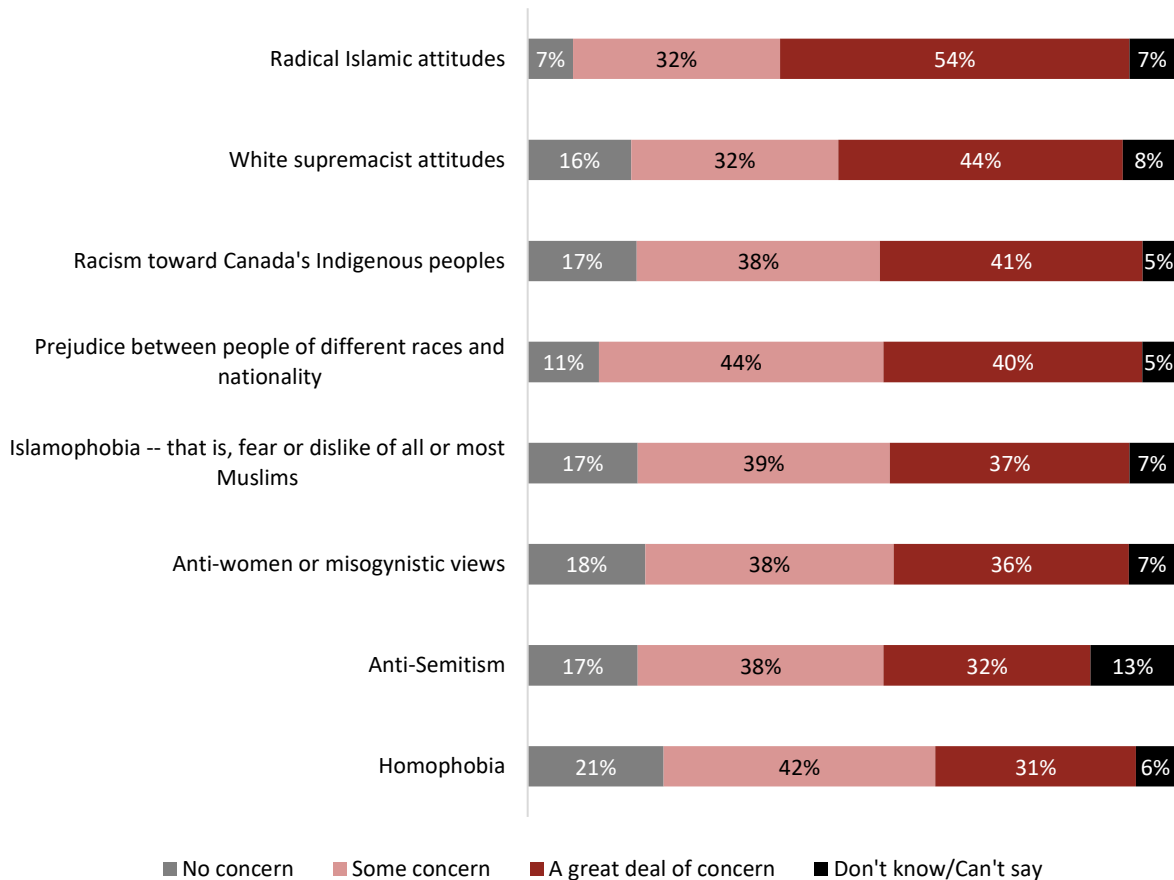
Radical Islamic terrorism vs. white supremacist terrorism

In the interest of placing these findings about radicalization in the proper context, Angus Reid Institute researchers asked Canadians about the extent to which the presence of various attitudes in Canadian society is cause for concern.

Topping the list, as seen in the graph that follows, are “radical Islamic attitudes,” which a majority of Canadians (54%) say are cause for “a great deal of concern.”

Concern about other attitudes that might drive someone toward violence tends to be lower:

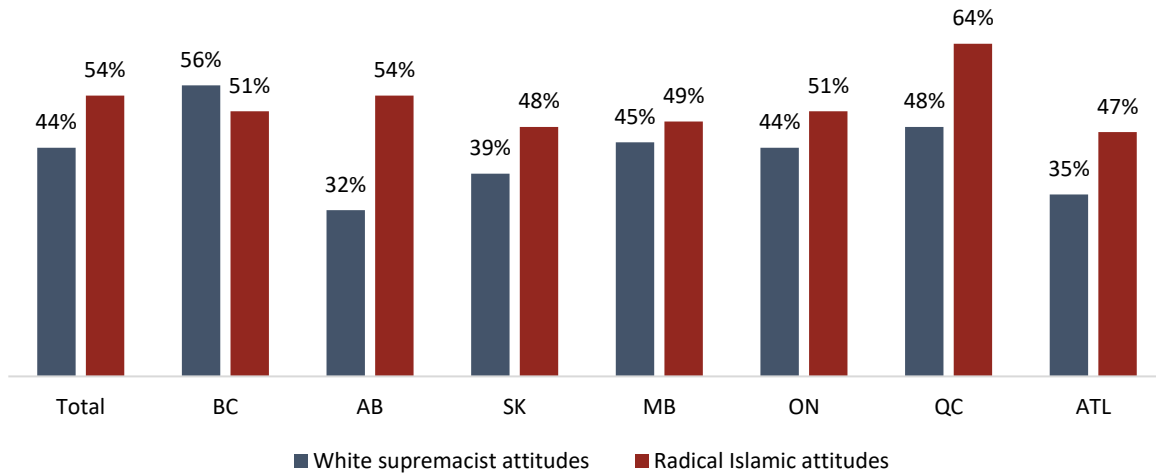
Please indicate whether you think each is a cause for no concern, some concern, or a great deal of concern:



Quebec residents are, by far, the regional group most likely to express “a great deal of concern” about radical Islam. Nearly two-thirds in the province (64%) say this, a total 10 percentage points higher than the next highest regional total (54% in Alberta).

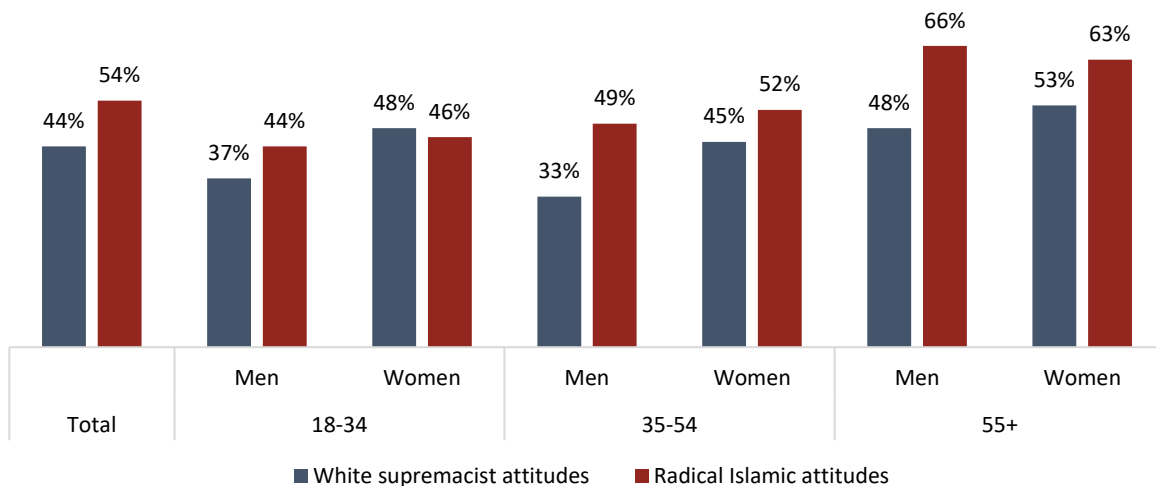
Indeed, in British Columbia, more people express concern about white supremacist attitudes than radical Islamic ones, as seen in the graph that follows.

Percentage saying each is cause for "a great deal of concern" in Canada today:



Older respondents tend to be more likely to say each of these two attitudes is cause for "a great deal of concern" in Canada today, but there is a notable gender divide on the question of white supremacist views, with women under age 55 considerably more likely to be concerned than men their age:

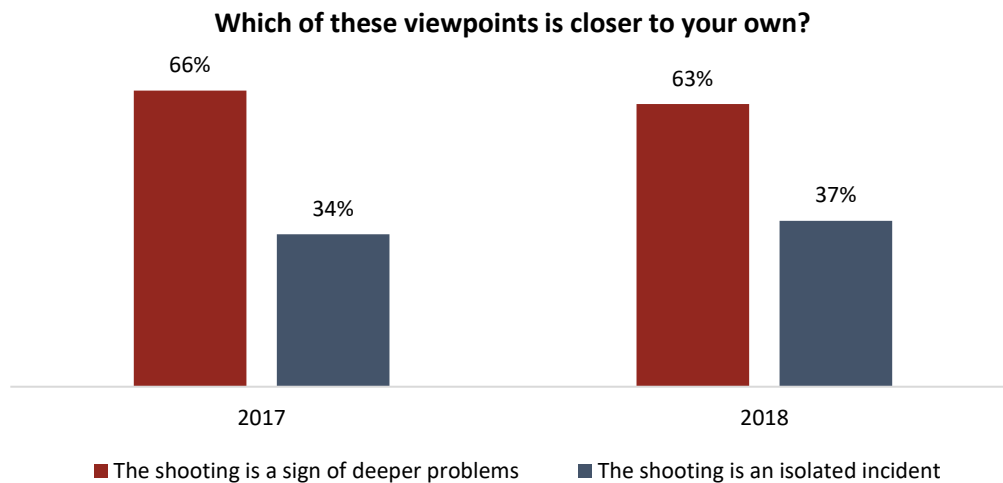
Percentage saying each is cause for "a great deal of concern" in Canada today:



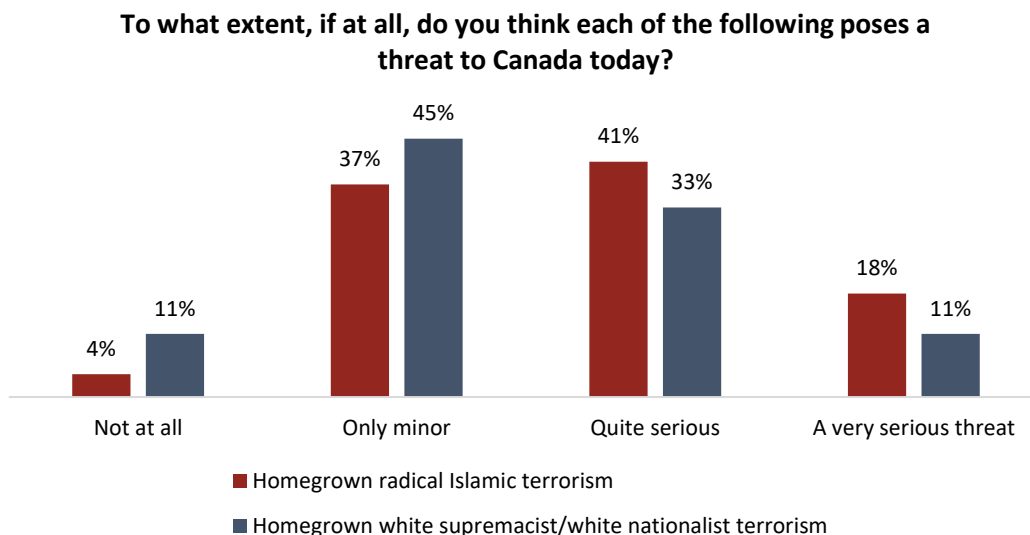
These two forms of extremism have each resulted in terrorist acts committed in Canada. The previously mentioned October 2014 incidents were committed by Canadian-born admirers of ISIS and other Islamic terrorist groups.

The man charged with committing the 2017 shooting at a mosque in Quebec City was known for making anti-Muslim, anti-refugee, and anti-women posts on social media, as well as for enthusiastically supporting French far-right politician Marine Le Pen.

In the wake of the mosque shooting, the Angus Reid Institute asked Canadians whether the attack was an isolated incident or a sign of deeper problems with anti-Muslim sentiments in Canada. At the time, two-thirds (66%) expressed the view that it was a sign of deeper problems. This new poll finds that number largely unchanged in the 15 months since the shooting:



While Canadians remain largely in agreement that the Sainte-Foy shooting was a sign of deeper problems, they tend to view the possibility of future white nationalist terrorism as a less serious threat than the possibility of future terrorism by radicalized Muslims:

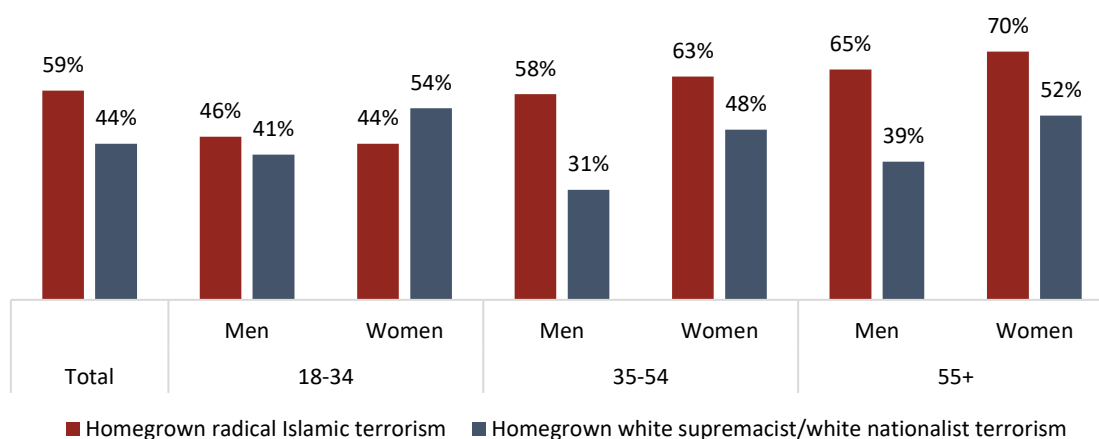


Here again, there are significant age differences in Canadians' assessments of these potential threats, and gender differences when it comes to white supremacist attitudes and their potential to instigate violence.

Younger respondents – both men and women – tend to be less inclined to see homegrown terrorism perpetrated by radical Muslims as either a “quite serious” or “very serious” threat a threat than older generations, but they diverge in their views on homegrown terrorism perpetrated by white nationalists.

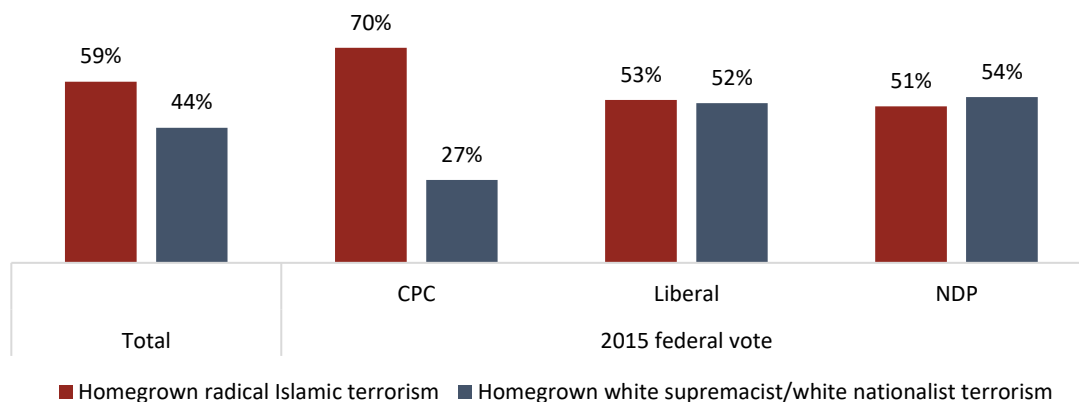
Most young men (59% of those under age 35) see white nationalist terrorism as either a minor threat or not a threat at all, while most women this age (54%) offer the opposite belief. This gender divide extends across all age groups, with women more worried about white nationalism than men, as seen in the following graph:

Percentage who say each one poses a "quite serious" or "very serious" threat to Canada today:



Political partisanship also informs perspectives on these questions. Those who voted for the Liberal or New Democratic parties in the 2015 federal election are roughly equally likely to view radical Islamic terrorism and white supremacist terrorism as a serious threat, but past Conservative voters express much more trepidation about the former than the latter:

Percentage who say each one poses a "quite serious" or "very serious" threat to Canada today:



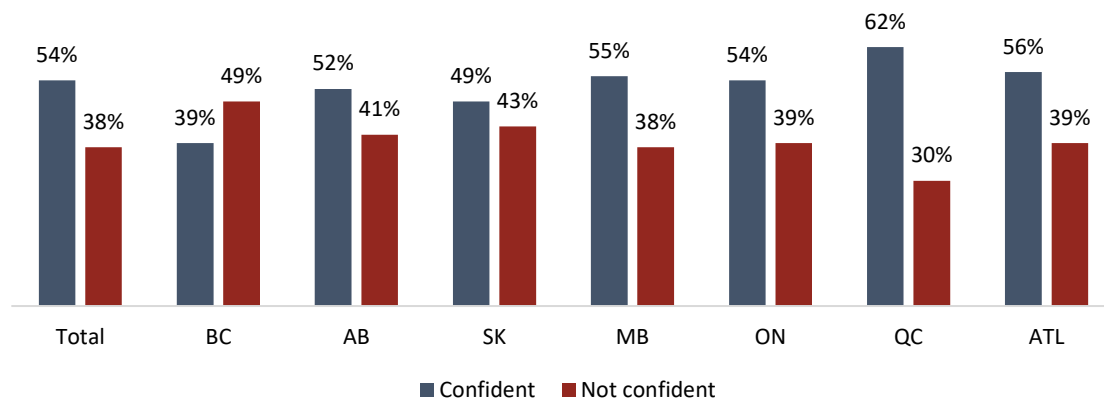
Security and prevention

After the high-profile incidents of domestic terrorism that occurred in October 2014, roughly half of Canadians said they were either “confident” or “very confident” in the ability of Canada’s security services to prevent homegrown radicals from carrying out terrorist attacks here.

This confidence was fairly consistent across regional and other demographic lines.

In 2018, the overall degree of confidence in organizations like CSIS, the RCMP, and local police to prevent homegrown terrorism has risen slightly, to 54 per cent. That said, this slight increase has not been evenly distributed. While confidence has risen to 62 per cent in Quebec, it has declined to 39 per cent in British Columbia:

How confident are you in Canada's security services (CSIS, RCMP, and local police) to prevent homegrown radicals from carrying out terrorist attacks in Canada?



British Columbia’s confidence deficit comes as Crown prosecutors [appeal a B.C. Supreme Court decision](#) to overturn convictions in a high-profile terrorism case.

John Nuttall and Amanda Korody were convicted on terrorism-related charges in 2015 for planting what they thought were pressure cooker bombs at the B.C. Legislature building in Victoria in 2013. The B.C. Supreme Court overturned those convictions, ruling that the RCMP had manipulated the couple into attempting to carry out an attack they wouldn’t have been capable of committing on their own. The Crown’s appeal is ongoing.

RCMP documents show that police [spent more than \\$1 million](#) on their investigation into the pair, which involved officers posing as jihadists and giving Nuttall and Korody money and equipment to use in their planning. Some have complained that the tactics police used in the case [amounted to entrapment](#).

Asked to think beyond law enforcement and consider the best place to confront radicalization in Canada, some four-in-ten (39%) say schools fit the bill. Schools were the top choice in 2014, as well, but by a much narrower margin, as seen in the graph that follows.

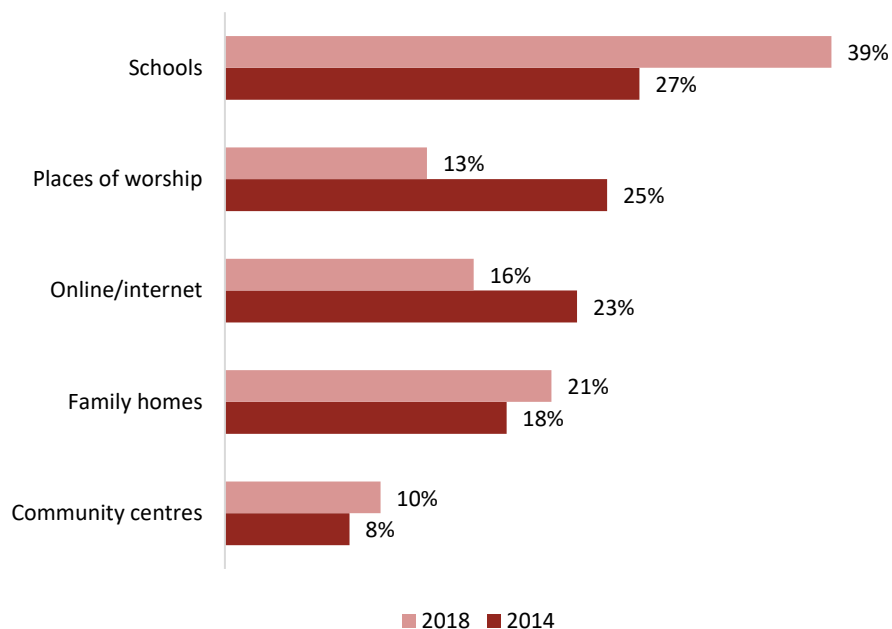
Canadians are also now less likely than they were in 2014 to say places of worship are a key place to address radicalization. This finding is notable in light of the fact that the last two instances of domestic

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

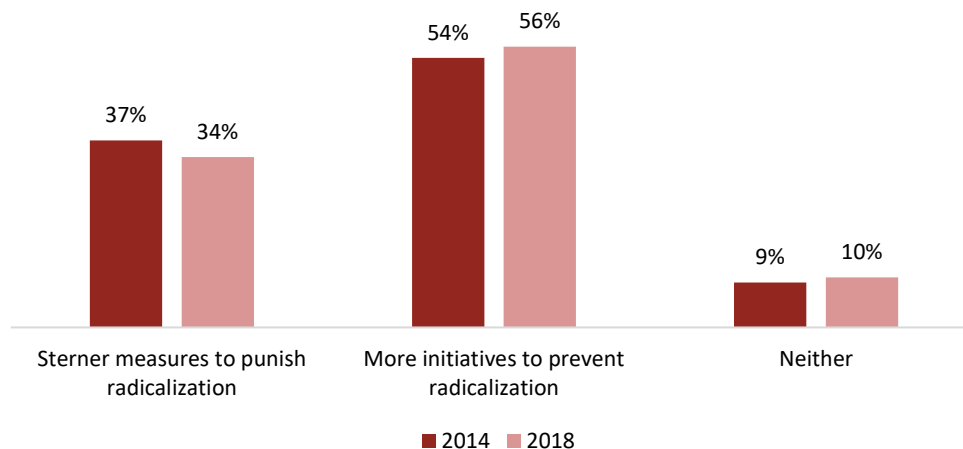
terrorism in Canada – the 2017 shooting at a mosque in Quebec City’s Sainte-Foy neighbourhood and the April van attack in Toronto – were motivated by prejudice rather than religious extremism.

Thinking about prevention, where is the best place to address the radicalization of Canadians?



Broadly speaking, Canadians favour their federal government focusing its resources on prevention of radicalization, rather than punishment of radicalized individuals. This preference has remained quite consistent since 2014:

Where should the federal government be putting more priority to address the radicalization of Canadians with violent ideologies?



Canadian Muslims seen as partners in anti-radicalization fight

When it comes to terrorist acts committed by radicals in the name of Islam, most Canadians say this country's Muslim community is part of the solution, not the problem.

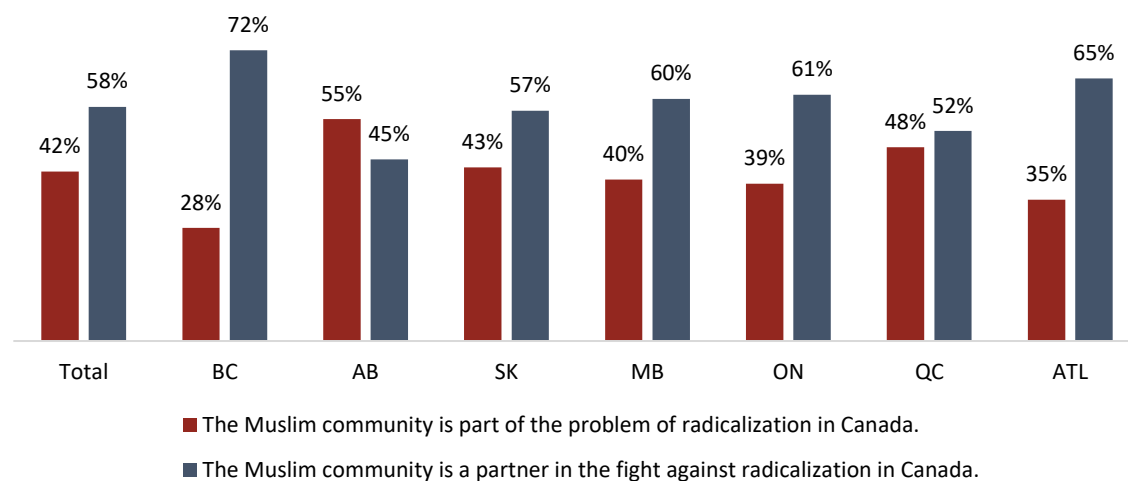
Some 58 per cent of respondents choose the statement "the Muslim community is a partner in the fight against radicalization in Canada" over the statement "the Muslim community is part of the problem of radicalization in Canada," when presented with a choice between the two.

That overall number is unchanged from 2014, but views on this question have shifted significantly along demographic lines since then.

For example, in 2014, the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta were largely in agreement on the role of Canadian Muslims in addressing radicalization. Slightly fewer than two-thirds in each province (64% in B.C. and 63% in Alberta) said the Muslim community was a partner in the anti-radicalization fight.

Today, B.C. residents still say this, but at a rate of more than seven-in-ten (72%). Albertans, meanwhile, have changed. A majority (55%) now say the Muslim community is part of the problem rather than a partner in the fight against radicalization. Alberta is the only region in which this is the majority view:

Which statement best reflects your opinion?

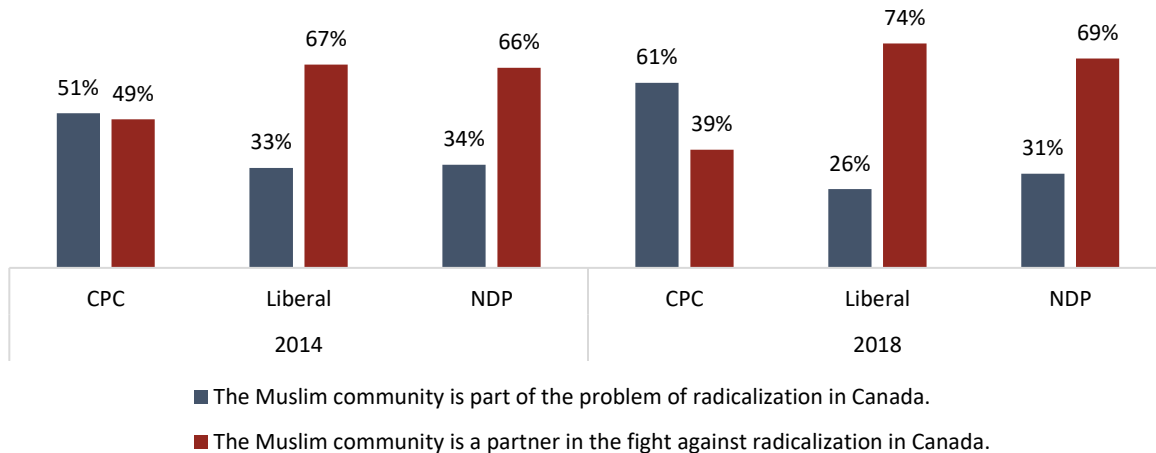


Underlying this shift in Alberta may be another shift: in the opinions of the Conservative voters who dominate that province's political landscape. In 2014, those who had backed the Harper Conservatives in the 2011 federal election were divided on this question (51% said the Muslim community was part of the problem, compared to 49% who said it was a partner). Today, those who voted CPC in the 2015 election choose the "problem" side of this face-off at a rate of six-in-ten:

CONTACT:

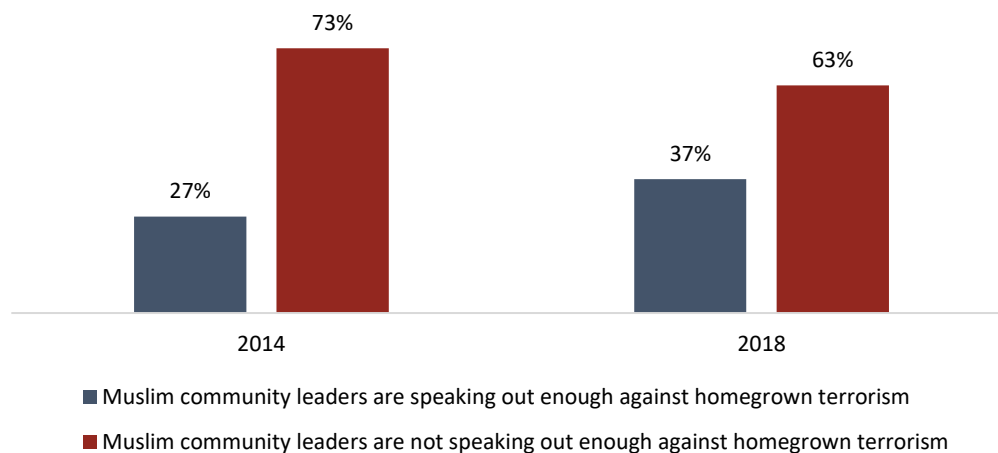
Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

Which statement best reflects your opinion? (Responses by last federal vote; i.e. 2011 vote for 2014 results, 2015 vote for 2018 results)



While most Canadians see the Muslim community as a partner in the fight against radicalization, an even larger majority (63%) holds the opinion that the leaders of that community do not speak out enough against homegrown terrorism. This is down from 73 per cent in 2014, but still a sizeable majority, and one that cuts across demographic lines, with majorities in all regions, age groups, and political preferences holding this view ([see comprehensive tables for greater detail](#)).

Thinking about the reaction of Muslim community leaders to acts of homegrown terrorism, what best describes your opinion?



Issues of tolerance

In addition to numerous tracking questions on homegrown terrorism, radicalization, and the Canadian Muslim community, this survey looked at support for wearing various religious symbols in public.

The Angus Reid Institute also asked a version of this question in [2014](#) and in [2017](#). As seen in the following table, support for each item on the list has remained quite consistent over time:

Do you support or oppose people wearing each of the following religious symbols or clothing in public? (those saying “support” shown)			
	2014	2017	2018
Crucifix	89%	90%	89%
Nun's habit	88%	88%	86%
Star of David	86%	87%	87%
Kippa	80%	85%	85%
Turban	N/A	77%	78%
Hijab	73%	75%	78%
Kirpan	29%	33%	28%
Niqab	27%	32%	32%
Burka	N/A	29%	27%

As has been the case in previous years, support for each of the items on the list is lowest in Quebec, where successive provincial governments have sought to limit the wearing of religious symbols and garments among public employees and those receiving public services.

Most recently, Premier Philippe Couillard’s government passed Bill 62, which prohibits people from receiving or administering government services while wearing a garment that covers the face. While the bill was widely condemned outside of Quebec, ARI polling suggested that many in English Canada would support such a prohibition in their regions as well.

*The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research foundation established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.*

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

*Regional sample sizes are unweighted numbers – everything else is weighted sample sizes

Which of these statements is closer to your own view?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)	2018 (1509)
There is a serious threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada	62%	54%
Politicians and the media have over blown the threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada	38%	46%

Percentage who say “there is a serious threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada”		
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)	2018 (1509)
Total	62%	54%
BC	49%	51%
AB	60%	56%
SK	70%	60%
MB	68%	53%
ON	64%	56%
QB	69%	50%
ATL	51%	58%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org

Which of these three perspectives is closest to your own?						
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)			2018 (1509)		
	18-34 (460)	35-54 (602)	55+ (546)	18-34 (437)	35-54 (526)	55+ (546)
There is a serious threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada	47%	63%	74%	46%	52%	62%
Politicians and the media have overblown the threat of homegrown terrorism	53%	37%	26%	54%	48%	38%

Do you feel there are radicalized Canadians living in your community right now?				
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)		2018 (1509)	
	Urban (1340)	Rural (267)	Urban (1240)	Rural (269)
Yes	36%	25%	42%	35%
No	24%	47%	23%	30%
Not sure	39%	27%	35%	35%

Do you feel there are radicalized Canadians living in your community right now?			
(weighted sample sizes)	Total	Homegrown terrorism is...	
		A serious threat (816)	Overblown (693)
Yes	41%	50%	29%
No	24%	14%	37%
Not sure	35%	36%	34%

Quebec responses to, “do you feel there are radicalized Canadians living in your community right now?”		
	2014 (353)	2018 (352)
Yes	30%	52%
No	36%	16%
Not sure	34%	32%

Quebec responses to, “which of these views is closest to your own?”		
	2014 (353)	2018 (352)
There is a serious threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada	69%	50%
Politicians and the media have overblown the threat of homegrown terrorism in Canada	31%	50%

What do you think causes someone to become radicalized or turn into a homegrown terrorist?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)	2018 (1509)
Religion/Culture	47%	47%
Mental illness	37%	32%
Feelings of marginalization	34%	35%
Internet recruitment	24%	29%
Old country beliefs	19%	25%
Economic/Financial problems	13%	12%

Which of these viewpoints is closer to your own?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2017 (1511)	2018 (1509)
The shooting is a sign of deeper problems	66%	63%
The shooting is an isolated incident	34%	37%

Thinking about prevention, where is the best place to address the radicalization of Canadians?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)	2018 (1509)
Schools	27%	39%
Places of worship	25%	21%
Online/internet	8%	16%
Family homes	18%	13%
Community centres	23%	10%

Where should the government be putting more priority to address the radicalization of Canadians with violent ideologies?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)	2018 (1509)
Stern measures to punish radicalization	37%	34%
More initiatives to prevent radicalization	54%	56%
Neither	9%	10%

Which statement best reflects your opinion? (Responses by last federal vote; i.e. 2011 vote for 2014 results, 2015 vote for 2018 results)						
(weighted sample sizes)	Last federal vote					
	2014 (1607)			2018 (1509)		
	CPC (482)	Liberal (260)	NDP (365)	CPC (387)	Liberal (441)	NDP (226)
The Muslim community is part of the problem of radicalization in Canada.	51%	33%	34%	61%	26%	31%
The Muslim community is a partner in the fight against radicalization in Canada.	49%	67%	66%	39%	74%	69%

Thinking about the reaction of Muslim community leaders to acts of homegrown terrorism, what best describes your opinion?		
(weighted sample sizes)	2014 (1607)	2018 (1509)
Muslim community leaders are speaking out enough against homegrown terrorism	27%	73%
Muslim community leaders are not speaking out enough against homegrown terrorism	37%	63%
Neither	9%	10%

CONTACT:

Shachi Kurl, Executive Director: 604.908.1693 shachi.kurl@angusreid.org @shachikurl
 Ian Holliday, Research Associate: 604.442.3312 ian.holliday@angusreid.org