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### Authors

Wright, Matthew  
Johnston, Richard  
Citrin, Jack  
et al.

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# Multiculturalism and Muslim Accommodation: Policy and Predisposition Across Three Political Contexts

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**Matthew Wright<sup>1</sup>, Richard C. G. Johnston<sup>2</sup>,  
Jack Citrin<sup>3</sup>, and Stuart Soroka<sup>4</sup>**

## **Abstract**

This article assesses the apparent effect of political multiculturalism on tolerance of Muslim accommodation among native-born majority members. Our principle goal is in understanding how public opinion on religious accommodation varies as a function of both federal multicultural policy, on one hand, and more deeply rooted notions of political culture, on the other. We do so by examining responses to a pair of survey experiments embedded in surveys conducted in Canada and the United States. The experiments allow us to convincingly demonstrate “Muslim exceptionalism.” Contextual comparisons across multicultural policy regimes (Canada and the United States) and within them but across distinct political cultures (Quebec vs. English Canada) lend credence to a fairly subdued role for policy and a much larger one for political culture. These effects are, we argue and show, strongly moderated by support for multiculturalism at the individual-level.

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<sup>1</sup>American University, Washington, DC, USA

<sup>2</sup>University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada

<sup>3</sup>University of California, Berkeley, USA

<sup>4</sup>University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA

## **Corresponding Author:**

Matthew Wright, American University, 4400 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, DC 20016, USA.

Email: [mwright@american.edu](mailto:mwright@american.edu)

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Cartoons mocking Mohammed, bans on public wearing of the burka, and other restrictions on headgear, sharia law, and halal food at school lunches are issues no Western democracy confronted 50 years ago. Although these issues may seem more pointed in Europe than in North America, there are strong trans-Atlantic parallels. Some, such as the controversy over the “Ground-zero mosque,” are echoes of 9/11. But others are direct analogues to European experiences, as with the controversies over sharia law in Ontario, religious headgear in Quebec courtrooms and other public spaces, the prohibition of face covering in Canadian citizenship ceremonies, and, in the United States, court cases regarding the wearing of the hijab at work. They reflect diversity and its discontents, thanks mainly to recent immigration bringing many new ethnicities into a single polity.

Learning how to cope with burgeoning cultural heterogeneity has challenged regimes in North America and Europe, with the policy choices defined by assimilation at one pole and multiculturalism at the other. Viewed both as a theory of political identity and a derivative set of policies, multiculturalism proposes to assure the continued survival and vitality of minority cultures into the indefinite future (Taylor, 1994). Through official recognition and respect, financial support, special rights, and exemptions from general laws and customs, multiculturalism seeks to enable minority group members to live an “authentic” life within their “societal culture” (Kymlicka, 1995, 2001; Levy, 2000; Taylor, 1994). Proponents of these policies argue that they facilitate the integration of culturally diverse immigrants and help bind them to their new country. Critics argue that entrenching cultural differences undermines national unity and social cohesion and that group-differentiated rights are fundamentally incompatible with liberal principles of equal treatment of individuals (Barry, 2002). They take particular aim at illiberal practices regarding the treatment of women and freedom of speech (Gutmann, 2003; Okin, 1999).

We do not enter this heated normative philosophical fray. Instead, we probe the extent to which mass publics support the tolerance and possible preservation of minority religious and cultural practices, even if they conflict with liberal norms and values, and the individual as well as contextual bases for these attitudes. With regard to political context, Banting and Kymlicka’s

“Multiculturalism Policy Index” (MCP) has importantly delineated the multiculturalist policies that accord official recognition and provide tangible benefits to cultural minorities.<sup>1</sup> Comparative research has explored whether the adoption of these policies has an impact on outcomes ranging from support for welfare state programs (Banting & Kymlicka, 2006) to civic integration (Bloemraad, 2006), social cohesion (Bloemraad & Wright, 2014; Wright & Bloemraad, 2012), and political trust (Citrin, Levy, & Wright, 2014; McLaren, 2012). But research on public support for these policies is scarce, and the handful of existing studies (Citrin & Sears, 2014; Johnston, Wright, Soroka, & Citrin, 2014) does not systematically examine the interplay between policy, general attitudes, and preferences on specific issues. Moreover, research usually has focused on very broad questions asking respondents whether it is better for minorities to blend into the mainstream or retain their original countries (Citrin & Sears, 2014; Wright, 2011) or whether countries are better off if there was just one language and one religion (Citrin & Sides, 2008) rather than querying preferences on concrete multicultural policies.

Multiculturalism is an elite project, and existing data generally indicate a gulf between this elite embrace and mass suspicion (Citrin, Johnston, & Wright, 2012; Citrin & Sears, 2014; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Still, little is known about public reactions to religious claims for accommodation and respect, an increasingly salient problem engendered by immigration. The issue arises primarily because of the growing presence of—and corresponding public anxiety and hostility to—Muslim immigrants in Western democracies (Helbling, 2012; Triandafyllidou, Modood, & Meer, 2012), and it poses a potential conflict between the multiculturalist impulse to accommodate Muslim sensitivities and accept cultural practices embedded in religion and liberal values founded on individual freedom and equality (Harell & Stolle, 2010; Sniderman, Petersen, Slothuus, & Stubager, 2014; van der Noll & Saroglou, 2014).

Given the salience of the issue and the lacuna in prior research, we examine the level of public acceptance of customs and demands linked to respect for religion in general and Islam in particular. We consider three controversies, two very prominent and one less so. These issues vary in the nature of the costs and benefits for minority claimants and the majority, as well as in how they are treated in public policy. One policy concerns whether there should be limits on the right of Muslim women to wear religiously mandated headgear in public settings. This issue involves the free exercise of religion and so imposes a cost on the religious minority without any *tangible* gain to the non-Muslim population. Supporters of the ban argue that it promotes social integration, equal treatment of individuals, and gender equality. Opponents, including numerous human rights groups, argue that it tramples

on religious freedom. The second issue is the demand to shield the prophet Mohammed from public mockery. Negative portrayals prompted the fatwa against Salman Rushdie, threats against the Danish publisher of offensive cartoons, violence against things Danish in Islamic countries (Sniderman et al., 2014), and, most recently, the murderous assault on the staff of Charlie Hebdo. Accommodating the demands to shelter the prophet from public satire conflicts with the principles of freedom of speech and the press, which in liberal polities stand at the top of the hierarchy of individual rights (see, for example, Maussen & Grillo, 2014). Finally, we examine a less prominent issue, the demand for special hours and exclusively female lifeguards for Muslim women at public swimming pools. This issue imposes a tangible, although not heavy, cost on the mainstream public, inasmuch as access to recreational facilities is constrained by time. This accommodation to religion raises concerns similar to tolerating headgear, although perhaps with slightly less symbolic loading.

This set of topics has several advantages for developing an explanation of public opinion. First, they touch on religious accommodation in a strong sense, in contrast to “festival” multiculturalism (Joppke & Lukes, 1999) such as support for dance troupes or names for streets and public buildings. Real conflict over competing values is in play, amplified by the novelty for Western publics of the issues. Second, the debates over these issues have received widespread attention and media coverage, making it likely that the public has some level of awareness and genuine opinions. Third, the claims for religious accommodation in increasingly secular societies provide a concrete test for how policy contexts and individual differences in generalized support for multiculturalism affect the resolution of value conflict in specific situations.

We address these questions about public opinion with novel survey experiments conducted in the United States and Canada. We address several substantive points. First, we distinguish religious accommodation in general from accommodating Muslim claims in particular, isolating so-called “Muslim exceptionalism” (Sides & Gross, 2013). Second, we map context effect both *within* and *across* policy regimes. Most relevant literature discerns “policy effects” from cross-national comparisons, in this case, reflected in the contrast of “strongly” multicultural Canada and the somewhat more assimilationist United States (as distinguished by the Banting–Kymlicka MCP Index). We go a step further than most, however, by comparing two Canadian samples, Francophones in Quebec and Anglophones in the “Rest of Canada” (ROC), to see whether apparent policy effects on attitudes are simply a spurious outgrowth of political culture. While nominally sharing multiculturalist policy with the ROC, Quebec Francophones have a distinct cultural identity, are less likely to see themselves as a society of immigration, and live

under a provincial policy regime that is explicitly not multicultural. Moreover, Quebec has witnessed the emergence of a commitment to *laïcité à la française*, with intense controversy over many forms of religious dress and other accommodations. Third, and finally, our survey includes, for the first time, questions assessing support for the specific policies identified in the Banting and Kymlicka MCP Index. The resultant scale of MCP support enables comparisons across the three contexts not just for overall support but also—and more importantly—for how, if at all, MCP opinion moderates response to the specific demands for religious accommodation, demands that engage the culturally dominant values of free speech and gender equality.

From a descriptive perspective, this analysis helps draw the contours of public support for multiculturalism in one country that proclaims this doctrine as the core of its national identity and another that ostensibly rejects that self-definition, choosing instead “we the (undifferentiated) people” as the preamble to its Constitution. From a theoretical point of view, we can point to the extent to which policy and political culture compete to shape opinion and, finally, from a political perspective, we identify both the strength of commitment to free speech and the fragility of the tolerance of Muslims in societies where their number has been steadily growing.

## **Potential Value Conflicts: Western Liberalism and Religious Accommodation**

All modern societies are multicultural in the demographic or sociological sense, and this diversity makes it easy for people to categorize themselves into groups of “us” and “them.” The terms for admitting “them,” who often are ethnically distinct immigrants or religious minorities, into the community of “us” vary. In some cases, acceptance depends on wholesale assimilation requiring the sacrifice of fundamental features of one’s cultural identity. In this context, demands for exemptions or accommodations are likely to be seen as a threat to the majority’s core values. For minority groups, in contrast, the accommodations may be deemed essential so that members can retain authenticity and personal dignity. This collision creates a context for contentious politics.

In recent years, the potential for combustion has been particularly great in relation to Muslim immigrants (Triandafyllidou et al., 2012). For one thing, these immigrants tend to be visibly different in ethnicity or race from native-born populations, such that perceived social distance and associated cultural threat are present.<sup>2</sup> Second, Muslims tend to be disproportionately associated with security threats and terrorism. Finally, there are ideological concerns: Demands of cultural minorities are perceived to clash with the liberal values

preeminent among Western democracies—notably personal autonomy, egalitarian gender relations, and equality before the law. The issues are hardly peculiar to Muslim communities. Flashpoints include honor killings and marriage by abduction; female genital mutilation; corporal punishment, especially of children; denial of property rights to women; and culturally based exemptions from wearing helmets while riding a motorcycle (Barry, 2002; Gutmann, 2003; Levy, 2000). Even so, the most salient and recurring issues center on Islam.

Studies of anti-Muslim sentiment (see Helbling, 2012, for a review) point in several directions: perceptions of terrorist threat (Davis, 2007; Panagopoulos, 2006; Traugott et al., 2002), general ethnocentrism (Kalkan, Layman, & Uslaner, 2009; Kinder & Kam, 2009), authoritarianism (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, & Prior 2004), and negative stereotypes of Muslims as violent and untrustworthy (Sides & Gross, 2013). Our own emphasis diverges from both the customary focus on either general immigration policy or, more recently, on aspects of the “War on Terror.” Our relatively unique approach is, first, to examine issues relating to religious accommodation, the crux of the tension between multiculturalism and classical liberalism (see also van der Noll & Saroglou, 2014). Second, where studies to date typically probe general sentiment about Muslims with feeling thermometers or similar measures of affect administered as part of omnibus political and social surveys (e.g., Sides & Gross, 2013; van der Noll & Saroglou, 2014), our methodological contribution is to use responses to experimental stimuli.

## **Value Conflict in Context: Multiculturalism Policy and Political Culture**

All three issues we examine pit individualistic, value-neutral liberalism against religious accommodation. The right to wear the religiously sanctioned headgear in public settings and religiously motivated women-only time in public swimming pools relate to the treatment of women, thereby contrasting an emphasis on gender equality and individual rights with, depending on one’s point of view, group rights or male chauvinism. The third issue—a ban on mockery of the prophet Mohammed in the mass media—involves freedom of the press. Opposition to accommodation among the majority cultural or ethnic group might have many sources. One could be sheer prejudice—against Muslims in particular. Also potentially fruitful but less clear-cut would be political ideology, religiosity, and gender. The emphasis in this research, however, will be on two contextual factors: first, the extent to which states explicitly accommodate minorities via multicultural policy; second, the political culture that may cause (or allow) multiculturalism to exist in the first place as well as driving diversity-related attitudes in its own right.

## Multiculturalism Policy Across Countries

Most arguments in favor of multicultural policy emphasize its integrative potential. Proponents argue that cultural recognition is aimed explicitly at fostering and sanctioning norms that support respect, interaction, cooperation, and cultural equality. Failure to do so serves only to alienate minorities and provoke nativism and intolerance from the majority (e.g., Kymlicka, 1995; Parekh, 2006; Taylor, 1994). Ideally, the multiculturalists urge, a reconfigured sense of common identity could lead to increases in inter-group contact and the propagation of democratic norms (Kymlicka 1995; Weldon, 2006).

Against this it is argued that multicultural policies, by officially sanctioning the boundaries between ethnic groups in society and elevating their salience, exacerbate group distinctions and impede the formation of “superordinate” identities (e.g., Brewer, 1997; Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000; Transue, 2007). Furthermore, multiculturalism is potentially identity-threatening for the majority group, as it involves the de-emphasis of established “national values” broadly concordant with majority cultural norms (e.g., Verkuyten, 2005). If this is indeed the case, then policies promoting cultural recognition—as opposed to assimilation—encourage narrow, possibly ascriptive notions of who qualifies as a member of the national in-group and hostility toward the very groups seeking accommodation.

These opposing portrayals lead to varied predictions concerning differences across political contexts. Canada and the United States serve as an excellent pair for this purpose. Since the late 1960s, Canada has pronounced itself a mosaic: two official languages, asymmetrical federalism, and—most critically for this article—multicultural. Multiculturalism as an essential feature of the country was put on the record by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau on October 8, 1971. A decade later Section 27 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* embodied multiculturalism in an interpretive clause. And in 1985, under the aegis of a Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, Parliament passed the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act* (Revised Statutes of Canada, 1985, c. 24). The official line is that to be a Canadian is to be tolerant of diversity and to welcome and celebrate new minorities.

By contrast, the American response to immigration is to welcome diversity as such but to expect immigrants to assimilate to a common culture. Dual loyalties, the failure to learn English, and reluctance to embrace the dominant political values are disapproved. The ideal of assimilation is manifest both in the many official reports about what to do about the rising tide of immigration (Fuchs, 1990; Zolberg, 2008) and in mass public opinion (Citrin & Sears, 2014). In contrast with Canada, claims for government to give special accommodations for newcomers or for recognition of a linguistic minority and its



home ground as a “distinct society” are almost entirely absent from the public discourse in the United States.

In concrete terms, Banting and Kymlicka’s (2013) MCP index rates Canada at 7.5 of a possible 8.0 (second only to Australia), with the United States at 3.0. The United States covers five of the eight Banting–Kymlicka categories but only for affirmative action is its commitment complete. The three categories with no policy coverage are, however, central to the multicultural project: explicit affirmation of the country’s multicultural character (accompanied by bureaucratic investment), explicit exemptions from dress codes, and dedicated funding for ethnic organizations. Canada falls short of total policy commitment (in the Banting and Kymlicka index) only its partial commitment to bilingual education. Although we distinguish between Francophone Quebecers and other Canadians, in the realm of multicultural policy, the country is a single entity. For reasons we expand on below, this can be a source of tension between French and English Canada.

The U.S.–Canada comparison gains leverage from the many dimensions of similarity in the two countries (Bloemraad, 2011; Citrin et al., 2012; Wright & Bloemraad, 2012). Both are former colonies, peopled by waves of immigrants from abroad; both are federal regimes with similar electoral rules; and both are influenced by British legal traditions. Both have similar, largely successful histories of immigration, and in both countries, the proportion of the migrant population is many times above the global average of 3%. Moreover, as both countries have combined the transition toward a more diverse society with significant economic development, there can be no plausible argument that immigration is a greater source of economic distress in one than the other.

That said, the contrast should not be overstated. The free exercise of religion has a hallowed place in American law, and there are numerous examples of constitutionally protected exemptions for Amish, Jews, and various Native American tribes. On the MCP index, the United States is far from the extreme case. As of 2010, Austria, Denmark, Italy, and Switzerland are all substantially closer to the “assimilationist” pole. It may also be critical that controversy, not to mention explicit demands for accommodation on the niqab, has been less prominent in the United States than in Canada. So a key divide may lie along the 49th parallel.

### *Political Culture as an Element of Context*

Lurking in the background of the growing “policy effects” literature on MCP and other domains lies the very real risk that what *appears to be* a difference based on policy is in fact based on something deeper: namely, political

cultural broadly defined. In short, it may be the case that it is a permissive political culture that, in addition to shaping a more positive view of immigrants and ethnocultural diversity, is what allows (or encourages) multiculturalism policy to arise in the first place. If so, research demonstrating differences in attitudes across policy contexts may simply be spurious with respect to a deeper culture of tolerance.

We address this concern by, for the first time, explicitly building a within-policy contrast between sharply different political cultures. In this respect, Canada is arguably not one case but two, pitting Quebec versus ROC. This division is qualitatively different from the racial divide in the United States. Where the latter is best characterized as a failure of inclusion (Theiss-Morse, 2009), the intra-Canadian contrast is a dynamic tension between power at the center and a concern to maintain and police a cultural boundary.

Although Quebec is formally covered by federal Canadian policy, the province also is a pole of resistance. Governments in Quebec do not see the province as a garden-variety New World settler society; rather, they see Quebec as the unique homeland for Francophones in North America. In this regard, Quebec is like a European society, with a sharply defined, historically given identity, to which newcomers should adapt. This is typically expressed as “interculturalism” and held up as a contrast to multiculturalism.<sup>3</sup> Reinforcing this outlook in Quebec is a growing public commitment to *laïcité*. Quebec has officially banned face covering in public and government buildings. *Laïcité* extends beyond Muslim dress: The provincial parliament denies access to its precincts to Sikhs carrying a kirpan, the ceremonial knife. As in France, the secularist position represents a breach with an older Catholic legacy, indeed one was both recent and remarkably encompassing. Beyond legal pronouncements, Quebec society has been roiled by conflict over accommodation for religious practices. In short, a major fault line between Quebec and the ROC (and the United States) lies precisely along the divide between cultural pluralism and cultural protection that is at the heart of political debates about accommodation. The real boundary, then, may not follow a North–South coordinate but rather may lie between the local instantiations of the Anglosphere, on one hand, and of the *francophonie*, on the other.

In terms of concrete expectations, a naïve “policy effect” with respect to MCP would manifest itself in one of two ways. First, as all Canadians (on average) being either more in favor of or opposed to accommodation than Americans, the direction of this difference depends on whether or not multiculturalism Pollyannas or Cassandras are correct. A second manifestation of an MCP “policy effect” would be through a more indirect channel: namely, opinion on multiculturalism, whatever its distribution, should be more strongly related to response to the experiments in Canada than in the United

States. That is, if this ideological outlook is a moderator of response, it should be a more effective one (in the negative as well as in the positive sense) where it is more routinely primed, in Canada. This is not tantamount to suggesting, somewhat self-evidently, that people more supportive of MCP should be more in favor of accommodation; indeed, we would be stunned if they were not. Rather, the point is to say whether contextual influences are moderated by attitudinal support for MCP's key provisions.

If, on the contrary, support for political accommodation is more about political culture than about policy per se, we would expect differences between Americans and English Canadians to be rather muted, and Quebecers to stand out as distinctly assimilationist especially relative to the latter group. Put differently, large Quebec–ROC differences cannot be easily attributed to policy alone, as that is shared between them by definition. They must, however, stem from either more deeply seated differences in political culture between the two “nations” or in how these disparate political cultures interact with policy.

## **Approach, Data, and Tests**

Our data are drawn from the Identity Diversity and Social Solidarity (IDSS) survey, an online survey fielded simultaneously in Canada and the United States in February 2014. The survey includes three separate samples: Roughly 1,000 French-language respondents in Quebec, 1,000 English-language respondents in the ROC, and 2,000 respondents in the United States. As these are online panels, respondents' preferred language is known in advance. All queries in Quebec were directed to Francophones. Outside Quebec and in the United States, all queries were sent in English. Samples are reasonably representative of the three populations.<sup>4</sup> Although none of our results change significantly whether foreign-born and ethnic minority respondents are included or excluded from analyses, we exclude them here because their number is relatively small and they are likely to apprehend these issues in qualitatively different ways as native-born majority members.

The survey is wide-ranging but most important for our purposes are a multicultural support index and two experiments (one with two contrasts nested in it) designed to assess response to different kinds of religion-based claims on majority populations. We begin by describing support for multicultural policies as it varies across the Quebec, ROC, and U.S. samples. We then move to the experiments. In each case, we start by comparing our samples for mean levels of response and then move to examine how multicultural opinion moderates that response.

It should be stated at the outset that our analysis is primarily geared, as the foregoing indicates, to the study of context. Beyond trying to ascertain

apparent policy effects on support for accommodation, we are as interested in two questions that have received far less attention: first, how do underlying national political cultures create cleavages even across contexts that nominally share policy? And, second, does the Banting and Kymlicka MCP Index, in terms of attitudinal support, moderate the effect of policy per se on support for accommodation? As a result, we allow free play in the analysis for two-policy and three-nation comparisons to play themselves out. The results are, as we will show, complex and often contingent, especially given that we ask about accommodation in different ways and explore attitudinal moderation. But an overarching story does emerge.

It is also worth pausing to note that the Muslim accommodation issue was particularly salient in Quebec during the period the study was fielded. Specifically, it had been touched off by the Parti Québécois's (PQ) promotion, since May of the previous year, of a "Quebec Charter of Values" that would (among other provisions) restrict public sector employees from wearing or displaying conspicuous religious symbols. We note, however, that heightened *salience* does not imply a change in the aggregate public opinion we study here; indeed, while the Charter had relatively strong public support initially, public opinion soon polarized and the issue ultimately contributed to the PQ's electoral defeat in April 2014. So it is hard to argue that Quebecers on the whole were any more or less supportive of accommodation than they would have appeared in its absence.

Finally, the strength of our evidence with respect to these questions, at least in terms of our ability to make causal claims, varies depending on the relationships in question. Our embedded experiments, described below, give us substantial leverage on the group-specific nature of hostility to religious accommodation—that is, the extent to which support or opposition in mass opinion turns on the specific ethnoreligious group in question. However, our attempt to gauge contextual "policy effects" is necessarily limited by the fact that we have only three cases of which two (ROC and Quebec) share official policy. A related issue is that with the evidence at hand, we cannot establish whether apparent "policy effects" flow from elites to masses in a top-down fashion as usually assumed in the literature, or as a bottom-up process (e.g., Citrin et al., 2014). As a result, any evident correlation between context and policy is subject to the usual issues regarding causal inference associated with observational research.

### *Support for Multicultural Policies*

To the best of our knowledge, there exists no accounting of support for the actual policies that populate the multicultural agenda. Our first innovation,

then, is a battery with just this in mind. We represent seven of the eight categories on the Banting–Kymlicka MCP index with the following questions, all cast as support versus opposition<sup>5</sup> to:

1. Passing a law declaring that ethnic and cultural diversity is a fundamental characteristic of [Canadian/Quebec/American] identity.
2. Ensuring that schools teach about the role of minorities and immigrants.
3. Requiring that the mass media represent minorities fairly.
4. Requiring employers to [make a special effort to hire/give special preference in hiring] members of minority groups, including immigrants.
5. Allowing persons in the police or armed forces to wear religious headgear (e.g., turban, headscarf, or skull cap) instead of the standard uniform while on duty.
6. Allowing immigrants to keep citizenship in the country they came from after they become Canadian/U.S. citizens
7. Requiring that, where many immigrant children do not speak [English/French], public schools offer classes in their native language.

The first three questions were administered at random, one per respondent. Our expectation was that these items would be especially susceptible to “satisfied” response (Krosnick, Narayan, & Smith, 1996), as all three are couched in highly general terms. We are not convinced that response to each is meaningfully distinguishable. To the extent that we are interested just in distributions of support, partitioning of the sample is of no consequence apart from statistical power; the only requirement is that each respondent has the same likelihood as each other respondent of seeing a given prompt. Difficulties arise where response is pooled across variants, of which more below. The affirmative-action item has two versions of differing strength. Again, the specific version was administered at random but all respondents answered an affirmative-action item. The one MCP index entry not represented refers to financial support for ethnic associations.<sup>6</sup> Evidence appears in Table 1.

In the United States, ROC, and Quebec samples alike, support for multicultural policies is far from universal. Support is strongest for the three issues that symbolically affirm diversity as a value and yet impose few real costs on the majority. Within this set, the most popular are policies involving education and the media, which enjoy outright majority support (cf. van der Noll & Saroglou, 2014). Formal affirmation of diversity as a fundamental characteristic is a tougher proposition. The table indicates that the balance is favorable but masks the fact that the plurality view is the middle: neither support nor

**Table 1.** Support for Multicultural Policies.

	Quebec	Rest of Canada	The United States
Diversity			
Fundamental characteristic	0.502	0.520	0.564
Taught in schools	0.585	0.669	0.677
Media requirement	0.588	0.675	0.668
Dual citizenship	0.428	0.458	0.431
Affirmative action			
Effort	0.495	0.453	0.479
Preference	0.295	0.313	0.337
Accommodations			
Headgear	0.140	0.357	0.312
Immigrant language	0.163	0.266	0.338
Scale	0.338	0.417	0.426

"Diversity" items are randomly assigned, one per respondent,  $n \sim 340$  for Canadian subsamples,  $n \sim 730$  for United States. All other items:  $n \sim 1,000$  for Canadian subsamples,  $\sim 2,000$  for United States.

opposition. Next in line is dual citizenship. The balance is not overwhelming but is clearly negative. Affirmative action depends on the stringency of the requirement: Special effort gets some support but here too the balance is negative; special preference gets very little support and opponents are in a solid majority. Least supported of all are the more concrete concessions on headgear and on the language of the classroom. Averaging across all the domains, the multicultural agenda evokes more opposition than support. The agenda is an elite one and, so far at least, has not won over the masses.

The sharpest divide, however, is not between multicultural Canada and an assimilationist United States. Rather, the divide is English versus French. It is not even consistently the case that Canadians outside Quebec lean more, if only slightly more, than their U.S. counterparts in the multicultural direction. More often than not, the opposite is true. The language divide is not uniform, however. U.S. respondents affirm diversity as a value the most and Quebec the least, but on balance, all groups affirm it. Dual citizenship has essentially the same balance in all groups, as does each version of affirmative action. Gaps are wide, however, for minority accommodation. Neither English-speaking sample is particularly favorable toward minority accommodation but each is far more so than Francophone Quebecers. In Quebec, three fifths to two thirds of the sample "strongly" oppose the policy; supporters, strong and weak together, number less than one in 10.



**Figure 1.** The niqab experiment.

### *The Religious Garb Experiment*

The first experiment is as follows. Each respondent gets the following question battery:

- when voting? [yes/no]
- as a teacher in the classroom? [yes/no]
- as a student in the classroom? [yes/no]
- while walking in the street? [yes/no]

Each treatment is accompanied by a morphed female image wearing the relevant religious symbol, as depicted in Figure 1.<sup>7</sup>

The images make very clear the garb to which the question applies. They make much more likely that respondents understand what a crucifix, hijab, and niqab are; they also greatly increase the likelihood that respondents focus on this part of the text as they respond to the subsequent questions. Our use

of a single morphed female also allows us to hold skin tone and physiognomy constant, while manipulating only religious symbols.

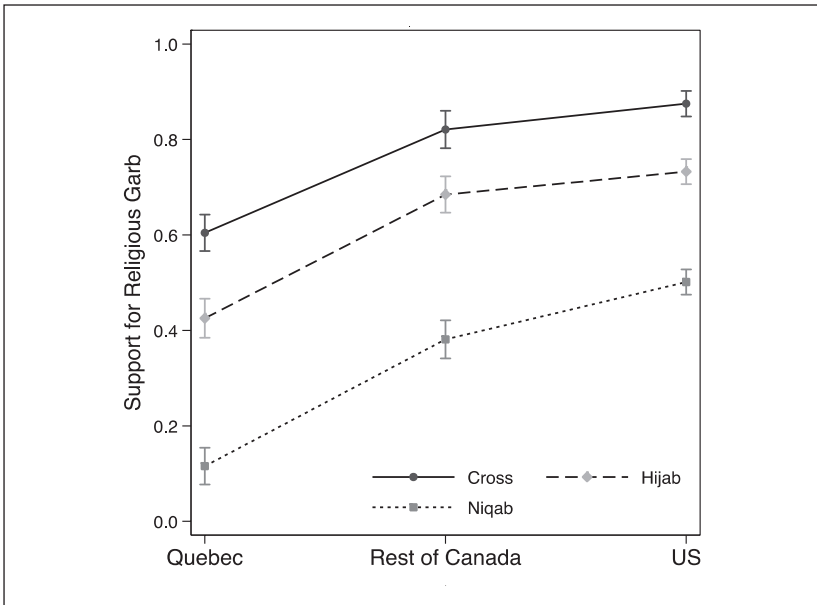
Another key advantage of this approach is that respondents' attention is fixed to a relatively narrow issue that arguably holds a consistent meaning across national contexts. This is a particularly thorny problem in work on multiculturalism, because responses to survey questions about "cultural diversity," "minorities," and the "mainstream" likely depend on factors idiosyncratic to context. Here, the claims being made are expressed in concrete terms that touch on issues that are on media, legislative, and judicial agendas, and we need not assume that respondents interpret vague referents consistently. Finally, the use of different religious groups (Christian and Muslim) is helpful because they help isolate the effect of Muslim affiliation from broader notions of religious conservatism and ethnocentrism.

*Comparisons of means.* The first step is, in effect, a comparison of means for an index summed across the four contexts listed above, with the index rescaled to the 0-1 interval with higher scores meaning more support.<sup>8</sup> Execution of the comparison is by regression with a fully dummied interactive setup, which yields efficiency gains in computation of confidence intervals for comparison of means (Kam & Franzese, 2007, pp. 103-111). Results are presented graphically in Figure 2.<sup>9</sup>

The biggest effect on the landscape is sartorial: In no sample does a majority support public wearing of the niqab.<sup>10</sup> The hijab is contested but in both Anglophone samples, majorities support it, if less unanimously than the Christian cross.<sup>11</sup> The next biggest effect is the contrast between the Quebec sample and the others. The United States and ROC are effectively indistinguishable for the cross and the hijab (although both more tolerant of the cross), where Quebec is less supportive across the board. Evidently, Quebecers' particular antipathy toward Muslim headgear is at least partly a function of their lack of support for religious symbols in general—even one from the majority religion. Evidently, Quebecers pay more than lip service to an ethos of republicanism. The final significant feature on the figure is the special position of the United States. Although American respondents, like the others, tolerate the niqab least among the options and do so only in the minority, of all the samples, the United States one is the most tolerant. It is not just that they are more supportive of the garment than Quebec respondents, they are also significantly more tolerant than English-speaking Canadians.<sup>12</sup>

*Moderation by support for multicultural policy.* Does support for multicultural policy in general increase tolerance for the public wearing of religious garb?



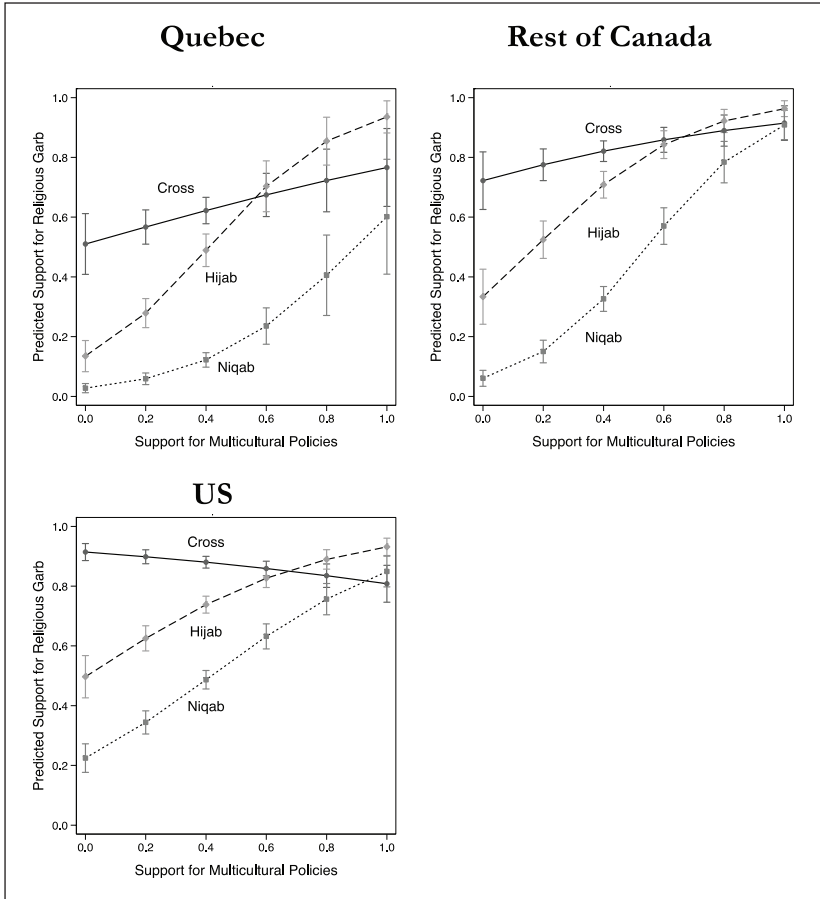


**Figure 2.** The religious garb experiment.

Based on an underlying factorial design with sample and specific religious symbols as factors, interaction permitted. Entries are means and associated 95% confidence intervals.

Does the answer vary by kind of garb and by policy context? This section addresses these questions by investigating impact of multicultural policy support, as indicated by the five-item scale described above, on the index of support for religious garb, with the impact of MCP attitudes allowed to vary across the type of garb. Results are depicted graphically in Figure 3, which presents estimations for conditional means extracted from fractional regressions with a logit link (Wooldridge, 2010).

In all samples, the Christian cross is the least dependent on MCP attitudes. In the United States and English Canada, the relationship is effectively null and, in Quebec, it is positive but slight. In contrast, MCP support *is* implicated in acceptability of Muslim garb. The typical effect is impressive, and the strongest effects extend practically the full possible range. Strictly speaking, respondents who are maximally pro-multicultural are *less* supportive of the cross than of the hijab, but the wide confidence intervals remind us how few such respondents there are; basically, support levels for the various alternatives converge somewhere toward the high end of MCP support.



**Figure 3.** Multicultural policy and support for religious garb.

Based on an underlying factorial design with specific religious symbols as factors and support for multicultural policy as a covariate, interactions permitted. Estimations conducted within single samples. Entries are predicted values and associated 95% confidence intervals.

The two Muslim alternatives vary in how they engage with the general MCP indicator. In Quebec, the alternative most affected by MCP opinion is the more “acceptable” one, the hijab. This is, in fact, the strongest relationship in the entire figure. Maximally pro-MCP respondents in Quebec evidently mean it, just as is true in the other samples. There are not many such respondents, however, fewer even than in the other samples. Maximally anti-MCP respondents, meanwhile, are sharply more opposed to the hijab than

their counterparts in ROC or the United States. The niqab is so unacceptable in Quebec that no amount of general pro-MCP sentiment can generate more support than opposition.

In the United States and ROC, the moderating pattern is the opposite: MCP opinion matters more for the niqab than the hijab. At the highest level of MCP support, tolerance of the two Muslim alternatives is effectively indistinguishable (as each is from the crucifix). At the anti-MCP pole, the general pattern is repeated: The disadvantage of the niqab relative to the hijab is at or close to its greatest.

The final distinction in the figure is between English Canada and the United States. For both forms of Muslim garb, the relationship with MCP opinion is much stronger in Canada than the United States. In each case, the U.S. slope over the middle of the range is shallower by about 0.30 units.<sup>13</sup> We interpret this as evidence of influence deriving from the policy divergence mentioned above, that is, the fact that Canada has adopted so many more elements than the United States from the Banting–Kymlicka inventory. This does not lead Canadians to support more policies from the inventory than Americans do, as Table 1 reminds us. But they may be more likely to know that the policy questions were drawn from such an inventory in the first place. They then cash their opinion out more consistently. Certainly, Canadian respondents at the high end of MCP support convert this support into willingness to see both forms of Muslim headgear in public. But Canadians at the low end are *less* willing than similarly situated Americans to show such tolerance.

### *The Accommodation Experiments*

A second brace of experiments, designed to capture a different dimension of religious accommodation, takes the form of the following questions:

Please tell us whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

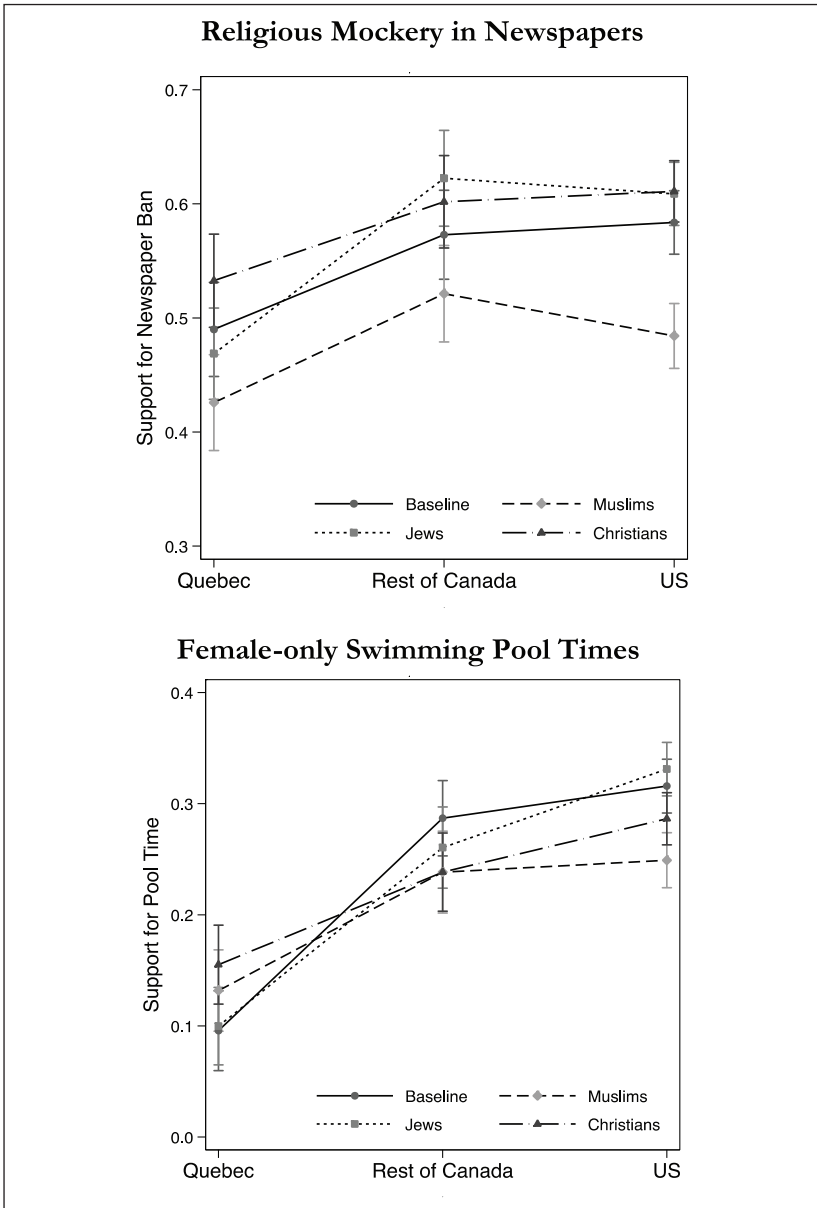
- Newspaper stories or cartoons that mock or denigrate [Mohammed/the Star of David/Jesus/religious symbols] should be banned.
- Public swimming pools should be required to set aside times for female-only swimming with female lifeguards as [Muslims/Orthodox Jews/Conservative Christians/some religious groups] demand.

Responses for each question was recorded on a 5-point scale from *agree strongly* to *disagree strongly*. Respondents received one of four treatments—for Muslims, Jews, Christians, and an unspecified religion, with the same treatment covering each question. In contrast to our reporting of the “religious garb” experiment, this time we distinguish the forms of accommodation.<sup>14</sup>

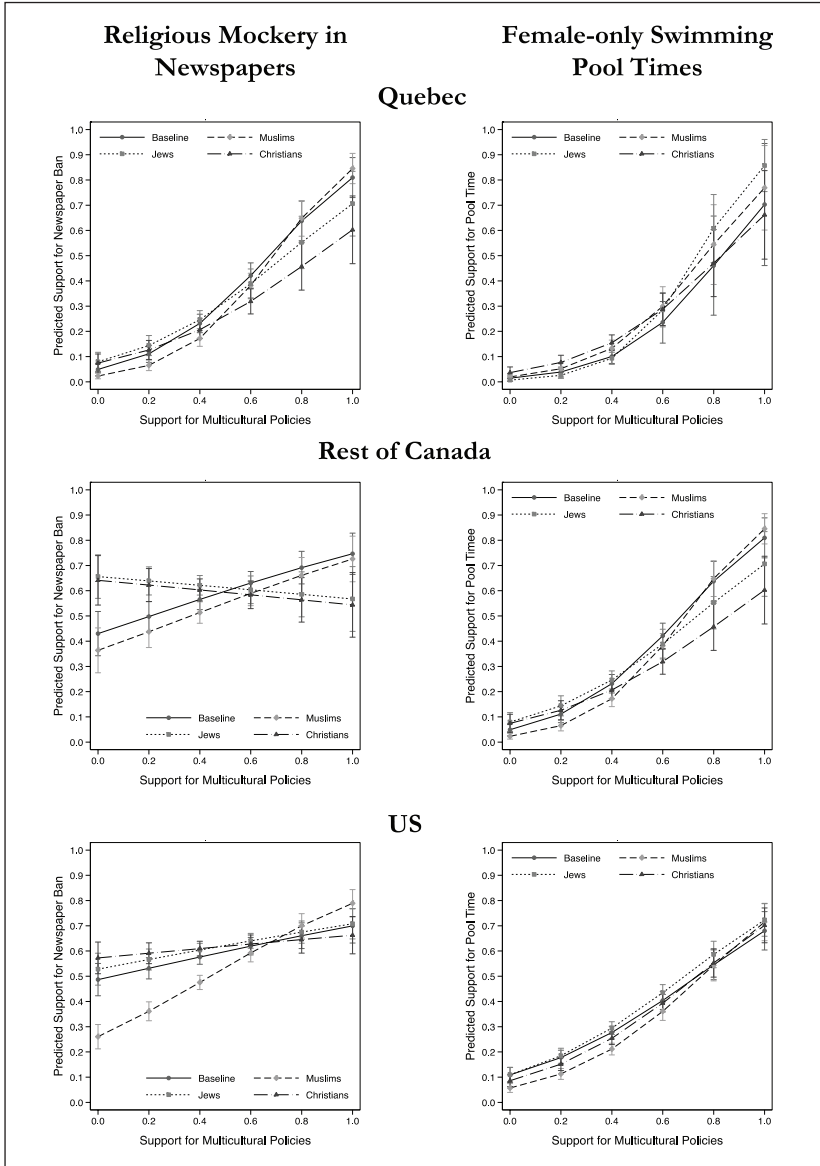
*Comparisons of means.* One reason for distinguishing them is immediately obvious from Figure 4: Respondents in all three jurisdictions are more willing to control the press than to enable female-only access to public swimming pools. Indeed, respondents' willingness to suppress mocking of religious symbols and figures is startling. To see this, start with response we style as "baseline," from the non-specific "religious symbol" treatment. Without naming any group by name, respondents in the United States and ROC are more likely to accept censorship than reject it. Notwithstanding official U.S. rhetoric about freedom of the press, a political value that is highly supported in the abstract, respondents from that country are not a bit less likely than English Canadians to countenance bans. The most libertarian group is the Quebec sample. Label the symbol as either "Jesus" or "the Star of David" and the balance shifts even further in the censorship direction (except for the Jewish symbol in Quebec, although the departure from baseline is minuscule and statistically insignificant). Label the symbol as "Mohammed" and the opposite happens, and response to the Prophet is always further in the negative from the baseline than response to either Jesus or the Star of David is in the positive. Even so, opinion in ROC and the United States is basically balanced. Even in Quebec, a substantial minority is prepared to countenance a ban.

Not so for reserving pool time for women on religious grounds. As with the newspaper ban, the two Anglophone groups are more accommodating than Francophones in Quebec. But even in the United States and ROC, the balance is clearly negative, and in Quebec, the level of support for this accommodation is derisory. Mentioning groups by name moderates most differences among the samples: In Quebec, Christians and Muslims are more acceptable than an unspecified "religious" group, but outside Quebec, the opposite is true. Jews are a special case: In Quebec, they are indistinguishable in their negative treatment from the baseline; in ROC, Jews do less well than the baseline but better than Muslims and Christians; uniquely in the United States, Jews beat the baseline.

*Moderation by support for multicultural policy.* Just as newspapers and swimming pools differ in the overall willingness of respondents to support religious accommodation so do they also differ in the extent to which this willingness is moderated by multicultural opinion. The evidence is in Figure 5. The more popular choice, censorship, is only weakly moderated. The effect, unsurprisingly, is strongest for the least favored group, Muslims. The contrast between Muslims and others is sharpest in the United States. This is, of course, a double-edged sword: Just as pro-MCP attitudes facilitate support for the ban, so do anti-MCP attitudes suppress it, and the latter are more common than the former. In the two English-speaking samples, shielding Jesus and the Star of David are neither helped nor hurt by MCP orientation.



**Figure 4.** Religious accommodation. Based on an underlying factorial design with sample and specific religious symbols as factors, interaction permitted. Entries are means and associated 95% confidence intervals.



**Figure 5.** Multicultural policy and support for religious accommodation. Based on an underlying factorial design with specific religious symbols as factors and support for multicultural policy as a covariate, interactions permitted. Estimations conducted within single samples. Entries are predicted values and associated 95% confidence intervals.

Pool time, contrariwise, is strongly moderated by MCP orientation in all three samples. The average effect is very similar across samples, although slightly stronger in ROC than in either Quebec or the United States. In the United States and Quebec, moderation is unaffected by the religious prime. Only in English Canada is there a difference, a difference that weakly mirrors the pattern for the news: Support, such as it is, for Jewish or Christian pool time is less strongly affected by MCP orientation than support for Muslims or the non-specific religious group.

## Robustness

Is any of the moderation of impact from the experiments by MCP support an artifact? This concern arises from the convergence of two facts. First, our MCP index includes a question about religious headgear. The item is not specific to Muslim dress but nonetheless includes mention of a “headscarf.” Second, in the religious garb experiment, the strongest effects are for the two headgear primes, both with a Muslim referent.

Two robustness checks commend themselves immediately. One option is to rescale MCP support without the headgear item. Another is to use a more traditional indicator of general multicultural opinion, a single item that contrasts maintenance of minority traditions with adaptation to majority norms.<sup>15</sup> To the extent that differences among primes in Figure 3 reflect the headgear component of the MCP index, we should see those differences weaken as the MCP indicator loses sartorial content. This interpretation should be strengthened if shifting MCP content has *no* effect on the two experiments that have no sartorial content. As the basic moderation results were quite similar from sample to sample, we present comparisons that focus on differences among primes. The evidence is in Table 2. For ease of interpretation, all coefficients in the table are from a linear regression setup.

There are hints that mention of headgear is in play, but the hints are weak and susceptible to rival interpretations. For the religious garb experiment, tested in the top panel of Table 2, dropping the headgear item from the MCP scale flattens things slightly: The Christian slope drops toward zero and the Muslim interactions weaken. But they weaken only slightly and with no change in substantive interpretation. This weakening of effect may actually be the result of lower reliability: where Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  for the five-item index is 0.76 and for the four-item index it is 0.71. Switching to the single-item maintain-adapt indicator strengthens the impact on the crucifix and weakens the two Muslim interactions. But the actual Muslim slopes (the sum of the interaction coefficient and the crucifix one) are close to those implicit in the MCP scale estimations.

**Table 2.** Robustness Tests.

	Multiculturalism opinion indicator		
	MCP5	MCP4	Maintain/adapt
<b>Religious garb</b>			
Crucifix ("main effect")	0.12 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	0.24 (0.04)
Hijab (interaction)	0.56 (0.06)	0.52 (0.06)	0.25 (0.05)
Naqib (interaction)	0.69 (0.06)	0.63 (0.06)	0.34 (0.05)
$\bar{R}^2$	.27	.24	.25
RMSE	0.36	0.37	0.37
<b>Newspaper ban</b>			
Baseline ("main effect")	0.28 (0.04)	0.28 (0.04)	0.07 (0.04)
Mohammed (interaction)	0.26 (0.07)	0.24 (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)
Star of David (interaction)	-0.08 (0.06)	-0.09 (0.06)	-0.03 (0.05)
Jesus (interaction)	-0.21 (0.06)	-0.19 (0.06)	-0.18 (0.06)
$\bar{R}^2$	.06	.06	.02
RMSE	0.33	0.33	0.33
<b>Swimming pool</b>			
Baseline ("main effect")	0.68 (0.03)	0.60 (0.04)	0.30 (0.04)
Muslims (interaction)	0.04 (0.05)	0.06 (0.05)	-0.05 (0.05)
Jews (interaction)	-0.00 (0.05)	0.01 (0.05)	-0.03 (0.05)
Christians (interaction)	-0.08 (0.05)	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.20 (0.05)
$\bar{R}^2$	.25	.21	.05
RMSE	0.25	0.27	0.29

Extracted from fully dummy-interactive estimations. See text for description of the indicators. MCP = Multiculturalism Policy Index; RMSE = root mean square error.

Evidence from the other experiments reinforces our confidence in the MCP indicator. First of all, the maintain/adapt item loses its power dramatically. For the newspaper ban, its impact is weak to null both for baseline and interactions. For the swimming pool experiment, here is a positive effect in the baseline but no discernible interaction. The difference between the experiments reflects a general pattern, not something specific to the indicator: Regardless of indicator, the newspaper ban is the least susceptible to moderation. For both experiments, the maintain/adapt variant is just weak: compare its explanatory power with that from either rendering of the MCP scale. Finally, compare MCP estimations in the swimming pool experiment. The four-item scale has slightly less purchase overall, and the simplest interpretation is in terms of measurement error.

The evidence seems clear, the overall strength and the relative of effects seem quite robust to measurement choices. Moreover, the five-item index is



more reliable and more adaptable to the various situations to which it might be relevant.

## Conclusion

Tolerance is clearly in shorter supply for Muslims than for other religious groups. To be sure, some of what is in play is simple secularism. This is especially true for Francophone Quebecers, who are genuinely more secularist than English Canadians or Americans. But evidence for stereotyping is equally strong. Treatment gaps within each sample rival the Quebec versus others gap within treatments. That these effects do not extend to orthodox Jews (see in particular Figure 4) supports an interpretation of stereotyping of Muslims (Sides & Gross, 2013) rather than of generalized ethnocentrism (Kalkan et al., 2009; Kinder & Kam, 2009). The scope for stereotyping is greatest for accommodations that attract middling support: compare wide treatment gaps for newspaper bans versus narrow to null ones for pool times.

Taking all the comparisons together, the most impressive boundary is not between Canada and the United States, but within Canada. In general, Americans and English Canadians are more in favor of—strictly speaking, less opposed to—multicultural policies than Francophone Quebecers are. Both English-speaking samples are more willing to support religious concessions, including to Muslims. But including Christian or non-specific religious primes in the experiments indicate that the stronger antipathy to accommodating Muslims is not peculiar to Quebec. Quebecers' greater resistance reflects their greater resistance to all forms of religious relief. What all of this suggests is that the direct impact of multiculturalism policy on support for religious accommodation, at least defined as average differences in support (all else equal) across federal policy contexts, is small. From the standpoint of the growing literature on this topic, the significance is that we may be ascribing more to national “policy effects” than is warranted, especially within bi or multinational polities.

This does not mean that normative debates about multiculturalism are moot, or that we should simply close the book on trying to figure out how and why such policies matter to public opinion. Indeed, MCP may have a more indirect role to play. This is indicated by the fact that *support* for multiculturalism policy is a generally strong moderator for response to the experiments. Our findings here strike us as generally sensible and interpretable. Moderation by general outlook is most visible for unpopular actions or groups. In the United States and in English Canada, feelings about the highly unpopular niqab are affected more than those toward wearing the hijab. In Quebec, the opposite is true, but this may reflect the niqab's extreme

unpopularity in the province. It is relevant to this argument that, in every sample, response to both Muslim garbs is more influenced by general support for multicultural policies than the more “mainstream” symbol of the Christian crucifix. Among accommodations, the most moderated is for pool times and the least moderated is for newspaper bans. Averaged across treatments, MCP opinion has more than twice the effect on head garb and pool time than on censorship. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, there is flex within the newspaper criterion, however, and opinion is less moderated for ridicule of Jesus and the Star of David than of Mohammed and of unspecified religious groups.

The fact that the indicator of general attitudes never actually uses the words “multicultural” or “multiculturalism” strengthens our case. This is especially so for comparisons across contexts. The absence of the multicultural marker ensures that any priming about the general salience of multicultural policy by that name is not by us. If we are not the source of the MCP prime, we aver, the source must be the context itself. This article’s pattern for differential moderation by context is consistent with our reading of actual differences among policy regimes, with Canada at one pole and the United States and Quebec at the other. Although respondents in all three of our samples connect experimental stimuli in the domain of religious accommodation to the ensemble of choices that relate to multicultural policy, English-speaking Canadians do so with special efficiency. The finding is not isolated. It is consistent with the logic outlined in relation to national pride in Citrin et al. (2012). But moderation by multicultural opinion is a two-way street. It involves both poles of the MCP distribution, opposition as well as support, and those in opposition outnumber those in support.

This article is only a start. In keeping with our focus on MCP, we emphasize a scale tailored to support for multicultural policy as a predispositional moderator. But in the realm of religious accommodation, other individual-level forces—ideology, religiosity, and gender are obviously implicated—beg for closer study. Expectations for each factor are equivocal, however, and beyond the reach of this or any one article. We also note that our evidence of mechanisms is circumstantial and possibly confounded by other factors, not least because our policy contexts are few and non-random. Finally, while the Banting/Kymlicka MCP measure applies (in theory) outside of North America, questions remain about the relationship of the present study to the body of work emerging on these topics in Europe. Is the contrast between Quebec and the rest of North America specific to this continent, or does it represent a more general divide, on both sides of the Atlantic and in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres?

## Appendix

	Treatment group: Niqab experiment				Treatment group: Accommodation experiment			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Canada, ROC								
Gender (% female)	47	48	57	NA <sup>a</sup>	56	43	52	51 <sup>a</sup>
Age (% > 49 years)	50	44	48		47	51	50	41
Education (% college or more)	54	53	54		54	59	50	52
Income % (Can\$50,000+)	60	56	55		57	60	54	56
Canada, Quebec								
Gender (% female)	45	48	50		47	49	45	50
Age (% > 49 years)	47	52	53		51	49	47	56
Education (% college or more)	48	54	50		49	53	49	51
Income % (Can\$50,000+)	45	49	48		47	46	47	50
United States								
Gender (% female)	52	52	50		51	54	52	48
Age (% > 49 years)	42	44	43		45	42	45	40
Education (% college or more)	42	43	49	<sup>a</sup>	44	43	48	44
Income % (US\$50,000+)	49	44	46		41	46	51	47 <sup>a</sup>

a. Differences across treatments are significant at  $p < .05$ , based on a one-way ANOVA. Note that in these few cases, including demographics makes no difference to the findings reported above. ROC = Rest of Canada.

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## Notes

1. The latest version of the index is available at <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/>.
2. The level of economic threat depends on context. In Europe, Muslim immigrants are disproportionately less affluent, and relatively poorly endowed with human capital. This is less likely to be true in the United States and Canada (e.g., Koopmans, 2014).
3. Although the distinction seems forced and the term not widely cited outside government circles (Labelle, 2008; Modood & Meer, 2012), the 1981 statement signals that for authorities in the province recognition of difference yield to the prior claim of the founding culture.
4. The percentage foreign-born corresponds to the census for the Quebec (8%) and Rest of Canada (20%) samples but is on the low side for the United States (8%). All three samples are close to the census for Whites (in the U.S. case, non-Hispanic Whites) and the U.S. sample. The U.S. sample has roughly equal numbers of African Americans and Hispanics. As is typical of all surveys, each sample exhibits higher than average educational attainment.
5. In every case, the stem is "Please indicate how much you support or oppose [Canada's/America's] government doing the following:" Response alternatives were always "support strongly," "support somewhat," "neither support nor oppose," "oppose somewhat," and "oppose strongly."
6. For reasons of space, we decided not to ask about this. Evidence from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP; specifically the item "Ethnic minorities should be given government assistance to preserve their customs and traditions") suggests this item elicits very little variance in response, so one-sided is opposition to the proposition.
7. The morphed image is drawn from an inventory developed by Allison Harell, Stuart Soroka, and Shanto Iyengar, although the application of the religious garb was done specifically for this study. Ensuring that the crucifix appears as more than merely a fashion choice is difficult, we admit. To make our point, we have used a Syriac Orthodox cross, emblematic of the oldest continuing form of Christian worship.
8. Notwithstanding the concrete and distinct contexts in which the religious garb question is asked, the four contexts always scale cleanly. Cronbach's alpha ranges from .86 to .90 across all combinations of symbol and sample with a significant exception: for the niqab in the Quebec sample. Here the index is driven by willingness to impose the ban on a student in the classroom, with the other contexts less individually vital for the overall variance. Even in this case, however, the alpha is a robust .70.
9. Details on differences in demographics across treatment groups are provided in the appendix.
10. The hostility toward the niqab versus the hijab is certainly worthy of more thoughtful consideration than we have the space for here. In our view, the relative invariance of this difference across contexts suggests that it is driven by individual predispositions about "ethnocentrism" and "otherness," which we leave to

the side at present.

11. If the baseline is wearing the cross in Quebec, the main-effect contrast between the cross and the niqab generates a  $t$  statistic almost twice as great as that for the strongest main-effect sample contrast, between Quebec and the United States.
12. Little information is lost by combining the public contexts into a single index. There is a rough hierarchy of acceptability, with some subtlety at the margins. All forms of religious garb are least acceptable when worn by teachers. Wearing such garb on the street is always the most acceptable. The relative position of being a student and being a voter depends on the garb: The cross is more acceptable for a voter than for a student; for both the hijab and the niqab, the opposite is true. Knowing the identity of the individual may be more at issue for the vote. These hierarchies do not vary interestingly across the samples.
13. This is also true for the crucifix, although in this case, the signs on the slopes also differ across the border.
14. Details on differences in demographics across treatment groups are provided in the appendix.
15. The wording of the item is  
Below the text was a slider with an 8-point range.

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### Author Biographies

**Matthew Wright** is an assistant professor in the Department of Government at American University (Washington, D.C.). In his research, he has explored numerous topics in American and European political behavior. These include the causes and implications of political identity; immigration, assimilation, and citizenship policies; the politics of ethnic diversity; national identity and patriotism; religion and politics; political culture; social capital, civic engagement, and trust; and U.S. voting behavior. His work has appeared in *Comparative Political Studies*, *American Politics Research*, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Political Research Quarterly*, *Election Law Journal*, *Journal of European Public Policy*, *Psychological Science*, *Political Studies*, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *Political Psychology*, and *Perspectives on Politics*.

**Richard C. G. Johnston** is professor of political science and the Canada Research Chair in public opinion, elections, and representation at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. He publishes on immigration, multiculturalism, diversity, and the welfare state as well as on parties and elections.

**Jack Citrin** is Heller professor of political science and director of the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He has published widely on the politics of multiculturalism, immigration, and national identity in North America and Europe, including *American Identity and the Politics of Multiculturalism* (2014, Cambridge University Press).

**Stuart Soroka** is the Michael W. Traugott collegiate professor of communication studies and political science, and faculty associate in the Center for Political Studies at the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan. His research focuses on political communication, the sources and/or structure of public preferences for policy, and the relationships between public policy, public opinion, and mass media. His most recent book is *Negativity in Democratic Politics* (Cambridge University Press).