



Canadian Muslims, Islamophobia and national security[☆]

Wayne Hanniman^{*}

Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 1200 Vanier Parkway, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A0R2

Abstract

Demographic changes in Canada have resulted in an increase in the Muslim portion of the Canadian population. The anti-Muslim “Islamophobia” reaction to the 9/11 attacks led to an isolation and marginalization of Canada’s Muslim citizens and residents. As the isolation and marginalization of any community creates a National Security vulnerability, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has been working with Muslim-Canadians using the principles of community policing to create trust and work towards the mutual goals of the safety of all Canadians.

© 2008 Published by Elsevier Ltd.

Keywords: Muslim; National Security; Community policing; Islamophobia; post 9/11; Social justice

1. Introduction

This article examines the responses of Canada’s principal National Security law enforcement agency, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to the concerns of Canadian Muslims communities about: the impact of post 9/11 societal-wide suspicion and surveillance of Muslims, Islamophobia, Racial Profiling, the effects of National Security policing measures on

[☆] The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or the Government of Canada.

^{*} Tel.: +1 613 993 8963; fax: +1 613 993 9474.

E-mail address: wayne.hanniman@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Canadian Muslim communities, the findings of the Commission of Inquiry conducted by Justice O'Connor into the actions of Canadian Officials in the matter of Maher Arar,¹ and the Canadian Parliamentary examination of the Anti-terrorism Act of 2001.

2. Changing Canadian demographics and the seeds of injustice

Like many other countries, Canada has experienced a growth in the numbers of its minority population, in particular its Muslim population. Sustained immigration from non-European countries has significantly increased Canada's cultural diversity in recent decades. Statistics from the 2001 Canadian Census of Population show a pronounced increase in the number and proportion of citizens who are members of non-Caucasian minority groups, and whose religion is non-Christian. The non-Caucasian minority share of the Canadian population has risen from less than 5 percent in 1981 to 15.2 percent in 2005, and is projected to rise to 18.6 percent in 2015 (Dib, 2006). In other words, by 2017, almost one Canadian in five could be a member of a non-Caucasian minority group. A number of factors account for this increase. The most important is sustained immigration, because non-Caucasian persons make up a high percentage of newcomers to Canada. Other factors include a higher fertility and higher life expectancy for non-Caucasian groups, as well as a younger age demographic resulting in fewer deaths and more births than the rest of the population. Minority groups could account for about 85 percent of overall population growth in 2017. They would constitute most of the increase attributable to migratory growth (which will be the primary driver of Canadian population increases) as well as the largest share of natural growth (births to citizens) (ibid).

Canada, along with Australia, is different from most other Western countries in that immigrants comprise a much larger share of its population. In 2001, 18 percent of Canada's population was foreign-born, a far higher proportion than in the United States and most European countries (Canadian Social Trends, 2005). In 2001, a little more than two-thirds of the non-Caucasian minority population had been born outside Canada. In 2017, according to Statistics Canada projections, this proportion could remain about the same. However, the number of non-Caucasian persons born in Canada could almost double between 2001 and 2017 (ibid). At present, 91 percent of Canadian Muslims were foreign-born, from more than 30 countries.

Canadian Muslims are from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds: 37 percent are of South Asian heritage, 21 percent of Arab descent, 14 percent from the Caribbean and 28 percent from other ethnicities such as African, Chinese, Turkish, Bosnian, Afghan, Persian, Indonesian etc. (Environics, 2007).

Non-Caucasian minority population increases are largely an urban phenomenon. Canada's ethnic and cultural makeup is undergoing rapid change in major urban centres (Statistics Canada, 2001). The distribution of Canadian Muslim is consistent with the national figures.

Canadian Muslims are younger on average than other Canadians. The median age of Muslims in Canada is 28.1 years, compared to the overall Canadian population average age of 37 years (Janhevich and Ibrahim, 2004). Canadian Muslims are also better educated. Census figures indicate that among those fifteen years of age and older, 56 percent of Muslims had some level of post-secondary education, compared to 44 percent of the total population (Janhevich and Ibrahim, 2004).

¹ Maher Arar was a Canadian citizen, arrested by the United States and deported to Syria where he was subsequently tortured by Syrian authorities (Crocker et al., 2005).

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1098054>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1098054>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)