

Charter of Values: Gap Between Support in Principle and in Practice

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Today hearings commence in the Quebec National Assembly on the Charter of Values of Secularism. To mark the opening of the deliberations, the Montreal Gazette and the Canadian Institute for Identities and Migration commissioned Leger Marketing to conduct a survey amongst 1000 Quebecers on the Charter of Values. The survey was conducted via web panel between January 7th and 8th 2014 with a probabilistic margin of error of 2.9% 19 times out of 20.

While support for the Charter of Values remains relatively steady there is a wide rift between younger and older Quebecers (except 65) and between Francophones and non-Francophones. More Montreal Region residents are against the Charter than for it. Opposition from non-francophones is especially vehement as expressed via the 56% of non-francophones that are very unfavourable versus the 24% of francophones that are very favorable.

Do you have a favourable or unfavourable view of the proposed Charter of Values?

	Total	Man	Woman	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	French	Other	Mtl RM R
Weighted Totals :	1000	486	514	109	161	160	200	172	198	781	208	477
Unweighted Totals :	1000	523	477	131	133	125	210	187	214	829	166	400
NET FAVOURABLE	48%	52%	45%	33%	36%	49%	52%	61%	50%	57%	16%	42%
Very favourable	20%	24%	17%	12%	10%	16%	23%	28%	26%	24%	6%	19%
Somewhat favourable	28%	28%	28%	21%	25%	33%	30%	33%	24%	33%	10%	23%
NET UNFAVOURABLE	38%	38%	39%	44%	45%	36%	36%	28%	42%	30%	72%	46%
Somewhat unfavourable	17%	16%	17%	23%	22%	14%	12%	11%	19%	17%	16%	14%
Very unfavourable	22%	23%	21%	21%	23%	22%	24%	17%	23%	13%	56%	32%
I don't know	10%	8%	12%	17%	16%	12%	7%	6%	5%	9%	9%	8%
I prefer not to answer	4%	2%	5%	6%	3%	3%	4%	5%	2%	3%	3%	4%

Despite public support for the Charter a majority of Quebecers don't agree with firing those employees of public institutions who refuse to remove a religious symbol in the workplace. That issue is the most central element of the debate around the Charter of Values.

If an employee of a public institution refuses to remove their visible religious symbol in the workplace they should lose their job												
BB1	Total	Man	Woman	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	French	Other	Mtl RMR
NET AGREE	35%	38%	31%	29%	25%	27%	38%	41%	42%	40%	16%	30%
Strongly agree	15%	18%	13%	14%	8%	16%	19%	19%	15%	17%	8%	14%
Somewhat agree	19%	20%	18%	15%	17%	11%	19%	23%	27%	23%	7%	17%
NET DISAGREE	55%	51%	58%	58%	62%	57%	51%	53%	49%	49%	79%	61%
Somewhat disagree	23%	21%	26%	26%	27%	21%	23%	26%	21%	26%	15%	21%
Strongly disagree	31%	30%	33%	32%	36%	37%	28%	28%	29%	23%	65%	40%
I don't know	8%	8%	8%	7%	8%	13%	8%	5%	7%	9%	2%	5%
I prefer not to answer	3%	3%	3%	6%	4%	3%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%

Given the rather vehement opposition of non-francophones, it is no surprise that a majority of Quebecers agree that “relations between communities have deteriorated since the debate over the Charter of Values”. Also 50% of respondents agree and 29% disagree that “there has been an increase in stereotyping against religious minorities since the debate over the Charter of Values” and 49% agree compared to 34% that disagree that “if adopted the Charter of Values will inevitably give rise to civil disobedience in public institutions”. A majority of Quebecers agree that “Quebec's Jews, Muslims and Sikhs should have a say equal to others in the current debate over the Charter of Values”. Still nearly one in three Quebecers do not think that the religious minorities should have an equal say in the debate.

	Relations between communities have deteriorated since the debate over the Charter of Values	There has been an increase in stereotyping against religious minorities since the debate over the Charter of Values.	If adopted the Charter of Values will inevitably give rise to civil disobedience in public institutions.	Quebec's Jews, Muslims and Sikhs should have a say equal to others in the current debate over the Charter of Values.
NET AGREE	53%	50%	49%	57%
Strongly agree	18%	20%	19%	25%
Somewhat agree	35%	30%	30%	32%
NET DISAGREE	30%	29%	34%	31%

Somewhat disagree	22%	20%	21%	17%
Strongly disagree	8%	9%	12%	13%
I don't know	15%	18%	14%	9%
I prefer not to answer	2%	3%	3%	4%

Quebecers are split around the question of federal government involvement on the issue of the Charter of Values. Some 60% of Quebecers think the Charter should be tested before the courts for an opinion on its constitutionality.

	The federal government should be involved in the issue of the Charter of Values	Before a Charter of Values is adopted in Quebec it should be submitted to the courts for an opinion on its constitutionality.
NET AGREE	44%	59%
Strongly agree	20%	29%
Somewhat agree	24%	31%
NET DISAGREE	43%	27%
Somewhat	15%	16%

disagree		
Strongly disagree	28%	11%
I don't know	10%	11%
I prefer not to answer	3%	3%

As to whether Quebec could learn from France in the way it deals with the place of religion in society, more people agree (40%) than disagree (32%) with this statement. There is a substantial gap in opinion on the issue with those under 45 far less in agreement compared to those over 45 that feel Quebec could learn from France. There is yet another gap between francophones more inclined to think Quebecers can learn from France compared with non-francophones.

In the way it deals with the place of religion in society, Quebec could learn from France											
	Total	Man	Woman	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65+	French	Other
NET AGREE	40%	45%	36%	29%	29%	30%	46%	48%	51%	45%	26%
Strongly agree	15%	17%	12%	9%	8%	10%	21%	19%	18%	16%	9%
Somewhat agree	25%	28%	23%	20%	21%	20%	25%	29%	33%	28%	17%
NET	32%	35%	29%	38%	33%	32%	27%	27%	36%	28%	49%

DISAGREE											
Somewhat disagree	14%	16%	12%	20%	15%	15%	14%	10%	13%	13%	19%
Strongly disagree	18%	19%	16%	18%	19%	17%	13%	17%	22%	14%	30%
I don't know	25%	17%	33%	26%	34%	36%	25%	23%	13%	26%	24%
I prefer not to answer	3%	2%	3%	7%	3%	3%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%