

C4 survey and documentary reveals What British Muslims Really Think

News Release

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Channel 4 has commissioned an extensive and rigorous survey to get a better understanding of British Muslims' attitudes to living in Britain and British institutions, social issues including gender equality, homosexuality and issues relating to freedom of expression and the degree of sympathy for the use of violence and terrorist acts. The results are explored in a special current affairs documentary, presented by Trevor Phillips: What British Muslims Really Think – 10pm, Wednesday 13th April.

Europe is on heightened terror alert following the attacks in Paris and Brussels and the security services raising the threat posed by hundreds of home-grown jihadists. Politicians and Muslim leaders claim that the values of these extremists are shared only by a tiny minority in the UK. Channel 4 commissioned the survey to get the views from British Muslims themselves rather than those who claim to speak on their behalf; and, in particular to try to understand why some young Muslims are being drawn to violence.

Unlike many other surveys of Muslim opinion, which have predominantly been done by phone or online, ICM used face-to-face, in-home research to question a representative sample of 1,000 Muslims across Great Britain. ICM also used a "control sample" to compare what British Muslims thought with the rest of the British population.

At the top-line level, the survey suggests that a mainstream British Muslim majority have similar values and attitudes to the wider British public on issues such as support for British institutions and a feeling of belonging to Britain.

But looking deeper into the results, a chasm develops between those Muslims surveyed and the wider population on attitudes to liberal values on issues such as gender equality, homosexuality and issues relating to freedom of expression. And it also reveals significant differences on attitudes to violence and terrorism.

The survey's findings include:

34% would inform the police if they thought somebody they knew was getting involved with people who support terrorism in Syria

Q: If you thought that someone who is close to you was getting involved with people who support terrorism in Syria, would you report it to the police?

4% sympathise with people who take part in suicide bombings

Q: Please tell me whether you sympathise or condemn people who take part in suicide bombing to fight injustice

Net sympathise: 4% (completely sympathise: 1%, sympathise to some extent: 3%)

4% sympathise with people who commit terrorist actions as a form of political protest.

Q: To what extent do you sympathise or condemn with people who commit terrorist acts as a form of political protest?

Net sympathise: 4% (completely sympathise: 0.5% sympathise to some extent: 3.5%)

52% do not believe that homosexuality should be legal in Britain

Q: To what extent you agree or disagree with each one: homosexuality should be legal in Britain?

Net agree 18% (strongly agree 8%, tend to agree 10%)

Net disagree: 52% (strongly disagree: 38%, tend to disagree: 14%)

47% do not believe that it is acceptable for a school teacher to be homosexual

Q: To what extent do you agree or disagree that it is acceptable for a homosexual person to be a teacher in a school?

Net disagree: 47% (strongly disagree: 35%, tend to disagree: 12%)

23% support the introduction of Sharia Law.

Q: To what extent, if at all, would you support or oppose there being areas of Britain in which Sharia law is introduced instead of British law?

Net support: 23% (strongly support: 7%, tend to support: 17%)

32% refuse to condemn those who take part in violence against those who mock the Prophet

Q: Please tell me whether you sympathise or condemn people who take part in violence against those who mock the Prophet

Net sympathise: 18% (completely sympathise: 9%, sympathise to some extent: 9%, neither sympathise or condemn: 14%)

39% agree that "wives should always obey their husbands".

Q: To what extent you agree or disagree that wives should always obey their husbands?

Net agree: 39% (strongly agree: 15%, tend to agree: 24%)

66% completely condemn those people who take part in stoning those who commit adultery.

Q: Please tell me whether you sympathise or condemn people who take part in stoning those who commit adultery.

Net condemn: 79%. (completely condemn: 66%, condemn to some extent: 13%)

Net sympathise: 5% (completely sympathise: 2%, tend to sympathise: 3%)

31% think it's acceptable for a man to have more than one wife

Q: To what extent you agree or disagree [that] it is acceptable for a British Muslim to keep more than one wife?

Net agree: 31% (strongly agree: 14%, tend to agree: 16%)

More positive findings include:

- A large majority of British Muslims feel a strong sense of belonging to their local area (91%). This is higher than the national average (76%)
- A large majority of British Muslims feel a strong sense of belonging to Britain (86%). This is higher than the national average (83%)
- A large majority of British Muslims feel that they are able to practice their religion freely in Britain (94%)
- British Muslims are more likely than the rest of the population to feel that they can influence decisions affecting Britain (33% vs 21%)
- British Muslims are more likely than the rest of the population to feel that their local MP reflects their views (44% vs 41%)
- 88% of British Muslims think that Britain is a good place for Muslims to live
- 78% of British Muslims would like to integrate into British life on most things apart from Islamic schooling and some laws

Channel 4 invited writer and former Chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission Trevor Phillips to analyse and interpret the survey for the documentary. Phillips argues its findings pose profound questions for our society and the implications for future relations between Britain's Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

Trevor Phillips says: "Hearing what British Muslims themselves think, rather than listening to those purporting to speak on their behalf, is critical if we are to prevent the establishment of a nation within our nation. Many of the results will be troubling to Muslims and non-Muslims alike – and the analysis of the age profile shows us that the social attitudes revealed are unlikely to change quickly.

"The integration of Britain's Muslims will probably be the hardest task we've ever faced. It will require the abandonment of the milk-and-water multiculturalism still so beloved of many, and the adoption of a far more muscular approach to integration."

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Notes to editors:

ICM Unlimited interviewed a random sample of 1,081 adults aged 18+ who self-identified themselves as belonging to the Muslim faith. Interviews were carried out face-to-face, in-home, in geographical areas in which minimum Muslims incidence was confirmed by Census to be a minimum of 20%. Interviews took place between 25th April and 31st May 2015 and the data has been weighted to representative of all Muslims by age, gender, work status and region.

A nationally representative control sample of 1,008 adults aged 18+ was also conducted, by telephone, between 5th-7th June 2015. Interviews were conducted across the country and the results have been weighted to the profile of all adults.

For a copy of the full survey, please visit: www.icmunlimited.com

Contacts

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