

The Afghan Canadian Community in Canada: An Analysis of the 2024 Afghan Canadian Community Survey

Report Version: September 20, 2024

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Land Acknowledgement

As an organization founded upon land that is known today as Vancouver, GLOCAL respectfully acknowledges that we are gathered on the unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the lands of the Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm), Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw), and Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətał) Nations.

Our members are located on the traditional territories of many Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island. These include the Algonquin people (Omàmiwinini) in Ontario and Québec; the unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people, Mi'kma'ki, in Atlantic Canada; Métis, Plains Cree (nehiyawak), Woodland Cree (sakâwiyiniwak) and Swampy Cree (maskêkowiiniwak) Nations across the prairie regions and eastern Canada; and the Blackfoot Confederacy (including the Kainai, Siksika, and Piikani First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, the îethka (Stoney) Nakoda Nations (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations), and the Métis Government in Alberta.

As we gather here today, we recognize the privilege we have to live, work, and learn on these lands. We express our deep gratitude to the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations, as well as every other nation on whose lands we are located, and we commit to building respectful relationships that honour their past, present, and future contributions to this land. GLOCAL also acknowledges the ongoing impacts of colonialism and the responsibility we have to support Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination.

Special Acknowledgments

We are deeply grateful for the invaluable support and contributions of our community partners, without whom we could not have carried out this project. We wish to recognize the following groups and organizations for their generosity in sharing their experience and their time:

- Afghan Canadian Women for Global
- Carleton Afghan Students Association
- Afghan Student Association at the University of Toronto
- Afghan Canadian Support Network
- Canadian Hazara Youth & Student Society
- University Women Helping Afghan Women
- Placement, Preservation and Perseverance: Afghan scholars, students and activists Conference
- Youth Senators Parliamentary Group
- Catholic Center of Immigration
- Regina Health Society of Saskatchewan
- Afghan Community of Fredericton, New Brunswick

We also express our gratitude to the following community leaders and other individuals for their outstanding efforts:

- Abdul Salam Hamdard
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Background

Since 2019, GLOCAL has been committed to strengthening and empowering civic communities by providing accessible information to the public as well as to the representatives that govern the public. The Afghan Canadian Community Survey (ACCS) was born out of this commitment. By describing the Afghan community in Canada and amplifying the voices of Afghans in Canada, who we also refer to as Afghan Canadians, the ACCS aims to provide accurate and insightful details regarding how Afghans experience life in Canada. In doing so, we aspire to enrich public knowledge about this growing community and to offer actionable insights as to how life in Canada might be improved for members of this community.

Methodology

The 2024 edition of the ACCS was first released to respondents on June 5 of the same year. The ACCS team gathered responses through a combination of online, phone, and in-person convenience sampling, and response collection is ongoing. All survey responses have been recorded using a survey instrument constructed in SurveyMonkey, procuring a sample of 516 complete responses as of August 1, 2024, when the drafting of this report began. Survey respondents needed to live in Canada, be of legal working age, and identify as Afghan. Respondents were also required to consent to the terms of participation before beginning the survey or, if under 18 years of age, were required to obtain the consent of a parent or legal guardian. To incentivize responses, eligible survey respondents were offered the opportunity to participate in a contest to win 1 of 10 gift cards valued at 100 Canadian dollars.

Given the possibility that the composition of the Afghan community in Canada has significantly changed since the most recent Canadian census, we report the aggregate results of our survey without applying survey weights, which might actually distort the current make-up of this community and – as a result – any opinions that are being expressed by members of this community. Instead, we make frequent comparisons throughout our report to census data that was collected and released in 2021, just months before many members of the Afghan community first arrived in Canada.¹ To reflect the uncertainty in the statistics our team has derived from the ACCS 2024, results are paired with 95% confidence intervals generated by 5000 iterations of nonparametric bootstrapping.

¹ To what degree the results from our convenience sample of Afghan Canadians reflect the actual composition of the Afghan community in Canada will not be entirely clear until the next census is conducted in 2026. We note that as a non-random sample, results should be interpreted with caution.

To supplement this report, which is the first of a series of reports on the Afghan community in Canada, at various points we include relevant findings from a series of focus groups that were conducted in tandem with the ACCS. Because we believe that part of amplifying the voices of Afghan Canadians means ensuring their perspectives are being accurately imparted, we also include several anonymized quotes from community members about their experiences as well as the experiences of their fellow Afghan Canadians. While the ACCS team acknowledges that we can never fully capture the lived experiences of Afghan community members in Canada, we hope that the combination of survey and focus group responses we present here is a good start to better understanding and better servicing members of this burgeoning community.

Data Quality

To ensure data quality in the ACCS, respondents were required to complete the survey and had to be able to refuse to answer any question (except for those that were used to disqualify individuals who were not eligible to participate in our survey). In order to comply with that requirement while still retaining high data quality, respondents could leave open-response questions blank or make use of the “Don’t know” and “Prefer not to answer” response options. If the respondent did not respond to a question or a component of a question (for example, did not click on or move a slider), then their response to that question was recorded as NA.

Limitations and Future Directions

This is the preliminary report in a multi-report series on the experiences and opinions of Afghan Canadians. Future reports will update key findings from this report with additional context and detail, such as by delving further into the correlates of education, employment, and healthcare. We note that due to our convenience sampling method, results should be interpreted with caution and may not accurately reflect the experiences and opinions of all Afghan Canadians. Future reports will serve as opportunities to validate and more thoroughly investigate the initial findings presented here.

Executive Summary

The Afghan Canadian Community Survey (ACCS) in 2024 found evidence indicating that the Afghan community has grown tremendously since the most recent Canadian census in 2021. Around 6 in 10 (62.8%) Afghan community members who responded to our survey told us that they had arrived in Canada in 2021 or thereafter, suggesting this community may have more than doubled in size over the past three years. Our data suggests that the Afghan community in Canada is relatively young, around 34 years old, and that Afghans in Canada tend to be either well-educated (42.3% have a Bachelor’s degree or higher) or to have neither a high school diploma nor equivalent (27.7%), although this is in part due to the percentage of Afghans in Canada who are not yet old enough to have completed their high school education (6.6% of our sample).

Approximately 6 in 10 of our respondents are permanent residents (63.6%), while another 2 in 10 shared that they are already Canadian citizens (22.7%). This suggests that in another few years, if not sooner, much of the Afghan community in Canada may be eligible for citizenship or

will have obtained it already. Paired with the knowledge that around 2 in 10 respondents already feel close to a federal political party (17.2%) and that younger respondents tend to be more interested in politics, according to our focus group participants, there is reason to believe that the Afghan community may emerge as an increasingly important voting bloc in the coming years. Relatedly, Afghans community members in our sample expressed a mostly favourable opinion of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.²

The vast majority of Afghan community members who responded to our survey told us that they practise Islam (98.1%), with most identifying specifically as Sunni (64%) or Shia (30%). Most respondents also shared that religion was at least somewhat important to them (92%), with about 6 in 10 indicating that religion was very important (64.3%). Even so, only around 2 in 10 Afghans in our survey said that they attend religious services once a week or more frequently (21.9%), and our data reflects that weekly attendance is much more common among Baby Boomers (34.5%) and Generation X (33.8%) than Millennials (19.7%) and Generation Z (17.6%). Because we see no large differences in how each generation thinks about the importance of religion, it appears that differences in religious attendance among Afghan Canadians are a product of differences in how each generation thinks about religion.

Though most of our survey respondents speak Dari (63.4%) or Farsi (31.8%) while at home, around 2 in 10 Afghans who completed our survey shared with us that they also speak English at home (22.1%). Relatedly, most of the Afghan community in Canada is at least somewhat proficient in English (82.1%), and proficiency tends to be higher among Afghan Canadians who speak English while at home, according to our sample: around 6 in 10 who speak English at home told us that they were very proficient in English (61.5%) compared with about 2 in 10 who do not speak English at home (22.8%). English proficiency also appears related to whether English was learned as a child and how long one has lived in Canada, suggesting that the proportion of the Afghan community that feels proficient in English is likely to increase over time. Our sample indicates that around half of Afghans born outside of Canada feel their English has already improved since arriving in Canada (48.5%).

Our sample indicates that most Afghans living in Canada rent their home (72.2%), and around half admitted that they have no assets to lean back on in the event of financial hardship (52.8%). Our results suggest these figures are partially the result of how long one has been living in Canada, with rates of reported homeownership highest among those who first arrived in Canada more than ten years ago (51.1%) or who were born in Canada (36.1%). Similarly, among our respondents, Afghans who first arrived in Canada over a decade ago or who were born in Canada were much less likely to say that they had no assets compared to those who have lived in Canada for ten years or fewer. The degree to which these discrepancies in asset

² For all findings related to government and politics, we remind readers that we are using a convenience sample of Afghan Canadians that may not accurately reflect the actual composition of the Afghan community in Canada, and that this may influence our results. We also remind readers that the statistics presented here do not necessarily correlate with factors like party affiliation, vote intention, or other political opinions.

ownership can be explained by changes in market conditions over time versus the amount of time one has had to accumulate assets in Canada remains unclear.

Most Afghan community members in our sample report have a primary healthcare provider (60.2%) and have visited a doctor in the past year (68.8%), indicating that most have access to medical care and that at least some individuals without a primary healthcare provider have still been able to see a doctor. Our results suggest that Afghans are more likely to have a primary healthcare provider if they were born in Canada or have lived in Canada for some time. Among respondents who did not have a primary healthcare provider, the most common reasons offered for not having a provider were a lack of available healthcare providers (28.5%), an inability to find a provider (20.5%), or having been waitlisted after locating a provider (23%). Together, these results suggest that access to a primary healthcare provider is partially dependent on how long one has lived in Canada, with many Afghan Canadians eventually finding an available provider or making it to the top of the waitlist. Despite some respondents not having a primary healthcare provider, there were no substantial differences in mental or physical health that were observed when comparing those with and without a provider, and most shared that they are in very good or excellent physical (66.1%) and mental (61.8%) health.

Our data suggests that a plurality of Afghan community members have a low annual income, with around 4 in 10 (42.2%) survey respondents having told us that they earned between \$30,000 or less in 2023. Another 2 in 10 (17.8%) told us they earned between \$30,001 and \$60,000 during the same time period, while just fewer than 1 in 10 (4.3%) said that they earned a six-figure income or higher. These results may partially be a reflection of the high percentage of respondents who told us they were students (19.2%), unemployed (10.7%), or not participating in the employment market due to retirement (0.8%) or the need to care for family (3.3%). By comparison, around 2 in 10 surveyed Afghan community members indicated that they were employed full-time (22.1%), while just over 1 in 10 reported part-time employment (13.6%). Very rarely, individuals also told us that they were self-employed (1.7%).

Around 9 in 10 employed Afghan community members who responded to our survey told us that they were at least somewhat satisfied with their current occupation (88.1%), and more than half said they were fairly satisfied (42.1%) or very satisfied (20.6%). Many were also able to identify ways that their respective job experiences might be improved, however. Most common among these potential improvements were higher pay (56%), more flexible working hours (35.7%), and better healthcare (31.7%). Looking at our entire sample, many were also able to identify challenges to finding employment in Canada, including limited English proficiency (38.4%), limited French proficiency (34.9%), unrecognized academic qualifications (28.1%) or professional qualifications (22.3%), and a lack of available transportation (22.5%). Around 1 in 10 (7.8%) told us that systemic discrimination posed its own challenge to employment, an obstacle most frequently identified by unemployed respondents (18.2%). Just 1 in 10 Afghan Canadian respondents said that they did not face employment challenges while living in Canada (10.3%).

The challenges that Afghans living in Canada face typically extend beyond their careers, according to our data. While finding a job appears to be the primary challenge faced by members of the Afghan community (57.6%), a related concern is insufficient income (45.7%). Afghan Canadian respondents also note unsatisfactory housing (40.9%) and language barriers (40.5%) as serious challenges to living in Canada. In addition, around 1 in 6 Afghans from our sample acknowledged having experienced at least one instance of prejudice while living in Canada (15.7%). Among those that said they had experienced such discrimination, the most common situations that could be recalled were at work or school (34.6%), in public spaces like parks (31.6%), in private spaces like a home or business (28.7%), and while finding a home (24.3%). Around 1 in 10 shared that they had faced discrimination while interacting with medical professionals (13.2%) or with the courts or police (8.1%).

Despite the numerous challenges to living in Canada that Afghans in our sample have identified, around 7 in 10 told us that they felt at least fairly welcome in Canada (71.7%), while very few reported feeling less than somewhat welcome (3.9%). Our data implies that self-perceptions of how welcome the Afghan community is in Canada depends on how welcome individuals from this community feel in their own neighbourhood, and that Afghans in Canada more commonly feel welcome in their neighbourhood when they feel their neighbourhood is culturally diverse or inhabited by people who share a similar background to themselves. A combination of survey data and focus group responses also indicates that people feel less welcome in Canada after being forced to deal with prejudice.

Respondents from the Afghan community in Canada frequently told us that they read, watched, or listened to the news for at least a minute or two each day (82.9%). In contrast, just 1 in 10 admitted that they do not pay attention to the news (9.7%). Respondents also report consuming the news through a broad variety of media, especially Facebook (40.1%), YouTube (39.7%), TV (34.5%), and Instagram (32%). Around 2 in 10 respondents told us that they use TikTok to consume the news (21.3%), approximately twice the proportion that reports using X (10.3%), LinkedIn (9.9%), AM/FM radio (9.9%), or print media (10.3%). Notably, members of the Afghan community with a Bachelor's degree or higher were more likely to tell us that they pay attention to the news each day, and younger individuals were less likely to watch TV as a source of news, instead turning to social media like TikTok.

Most Afghans in our sample reported feeling at least somewhat satisfied with the current state of Canadian democracy (77.2%), with around half saying that they were fairly satisfied (34%) or very satisfied (23.9%). Only about 1 in 10 respondents said they were less than somewhat satisfied, by comparison (8.1%). As a whole, the Afghan community also appears to have considerable confidence in Canada's civic institutions, with around 6 in 10 respondents sharing that they have quite a lot (29.4%) or a great deal (34.6%) of confidence in the federal government. Likewise, our sample suggests that most Afghans in Canada have quite a lot or a great deal of confidence in their provincial governments (58.8%) as well as in the courts (59.3%) and the police (69.2%). Still, many also expressed that they did not know how confident they should be in these institutions, implying that a sizable proportion of the Afghan community in Canada does not know enough about these institutions to form opinions about them.

Members of the Afghan community in Canada hold complex opinions about their own identity, according to our sample, with many feeling that their gender (55%), language (57.6%), ethnicity (48.4%), and being Canadian (51.4%) are very important to them. Sentiments appear to differ somewhat based on whether a community member was born inside or outside of Canada, with persons born outside Canada having less frequently told us that these concepts are very important than did persons born in Canada. Survey responses from Afghan community members reflect that for many, what makes one “truly Canadian” hinges more on how dutifully one adheres to the law and fulfills their legal obligations (i.e., paying taxes) than whether one can say that they or their ancestors were born in Canada. Even so, Afghans born in Canada shared around twice as frequently as those born outside Canada that being born in Canada is very important to being “truly Canadian” (29.9% compared to 53.7%). A similar difference in opinion was observed with respect to grandparents having been born in Canada, with 21.3% of respondents born outside Canada having said this is very important compared to 48.8% of those born in Canada.

Demographics of the Afghan Community in Canada

Generation

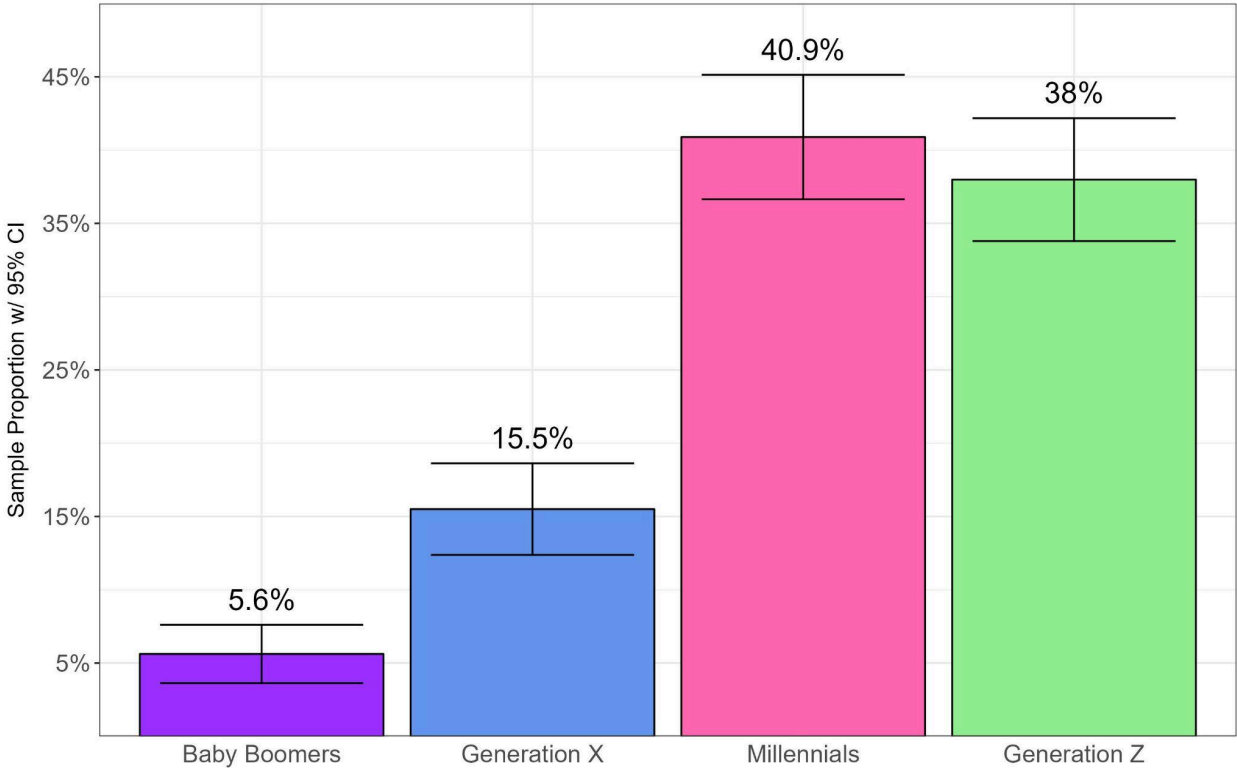


Figure 1. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Generation

Respondents in our survey range from 15 to 80 years old, with an average age of 34 years. Our data reflects that most Afghan Canadians are relatively young, with around 8 in 10 (78.9%) having told us they were either a Millennial or part of Generation Z. Generation X makes up less than one-fifth of the Afghan Canadian community (15.5%), while very few are part of the Baby Boomer generation (5.6%).

Our data also reflects that Afghan Canadians are younger than Canadians overall. The average age among Canadians was 41.4 years, according to the 2021 Canadian census, compared to 33.9 years among Afghan Canadians in our 2024 sample.³

³ The average age of Afghan Canadians in 2021 was 30.2 years, according to the 2021 Canadian census. This gives us reason to believe that our sample is a fair representation of the Afghan Canadian population with respect to age in years.

Gender Identity

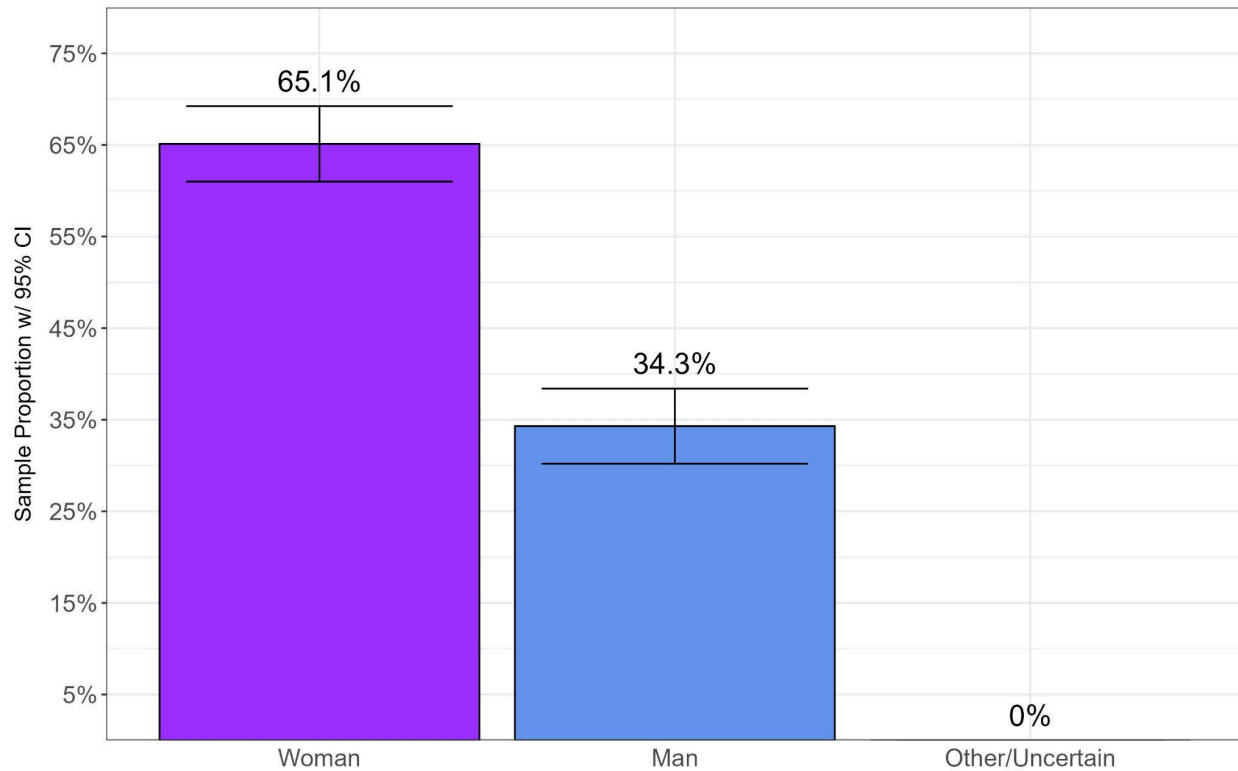


Figure 2. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Gender

In 2021, the Canadian census reported that 50.2% of Afghans identified as a woman, with the remainder identifying as a man. Individuals with other gender identities or who are uncertain about their gender identity may have been included in these figures. In our sample of Afghan Canadians, in contrast, women outnumber men by a ratio of almost 2:1 (65.1% men compared to 34.3% women).⁴ No survey respondents indicated a gender other than man or woman.

⁴ The ACCS acknowledges that these percentages may result in part due to gender-based differences in survey completion rates, but our research team also acknowledges that the composition of the Afghan Canadian community may have significantly changed since the 2021 Canadian census was conducted.

Educational Attainment

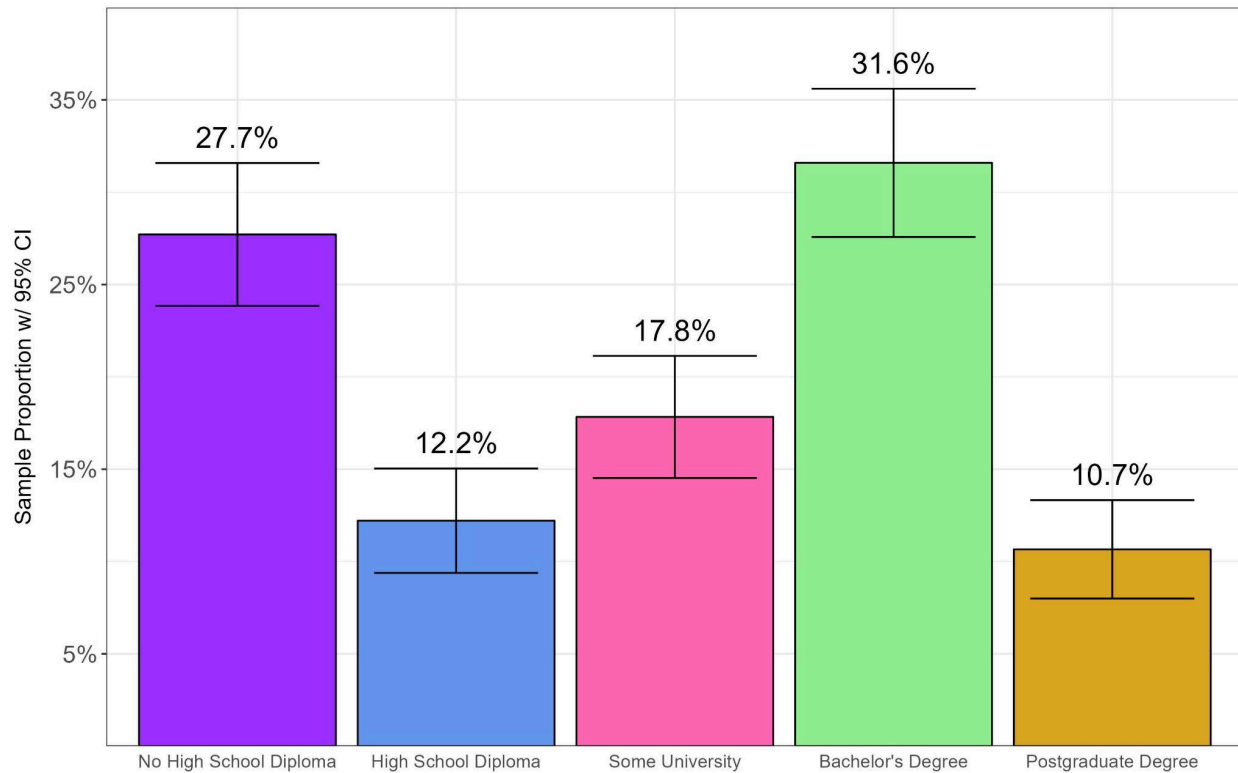


Figure 3. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Education

There is substantial variation in educational attainment among Afghan Canadians, according to our sample. While around 4 in 10 respondents had a Bachelor's degree or higher (42.3%), much higher than the rate reported for the general Canadian population in 2021 (26.7%), about 3 in 10 Afghan Canadians indicated that they do not have a high school diploma or equivalent (27.7%). The high rate of Afghan Canadians without a high school diploma reported here is partially the result of ACCS 2024 respondents who were 18 years of age or younger (6.6%), who may still be in the process of completing their secondary education.

Citizenship

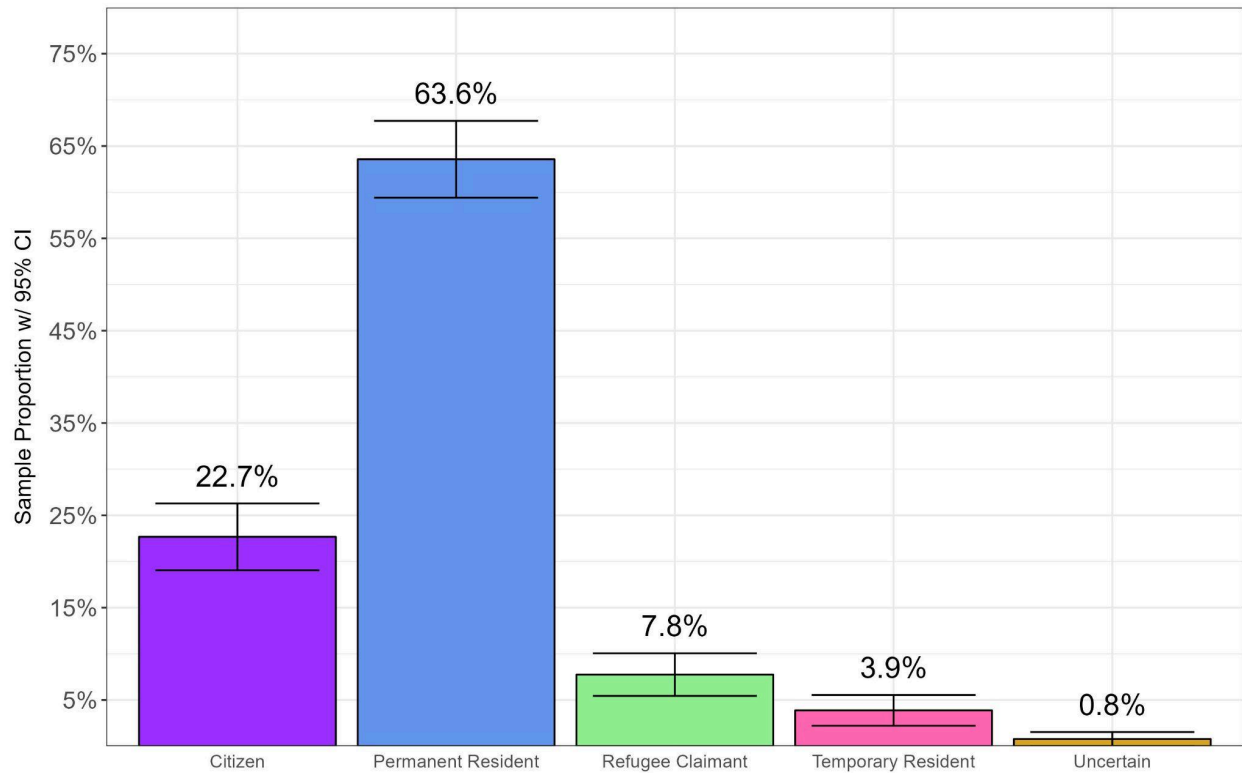


Figure 4. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Status in Canada

More than half of Afghans in Canada are permanent residents (63.6%).⁵ This suggests that many are on the path to Canadian citizenship. Around 1 in 5 members of the Afghan Canadian community are already Canadian citizens (22.7%). Approximately 1 in 10 (7.8%) indicated that they are formally recognized as refugees but do not have temporary or permanent residency, while very few said that they held temporary residency status (3.9%).

⁵ Despite a large increase in the number of Afghans who have arrived in Canada since the most recent census, this figure is comparable to that reported by the Canadian census in 2021 (65.9%).

Birthplace

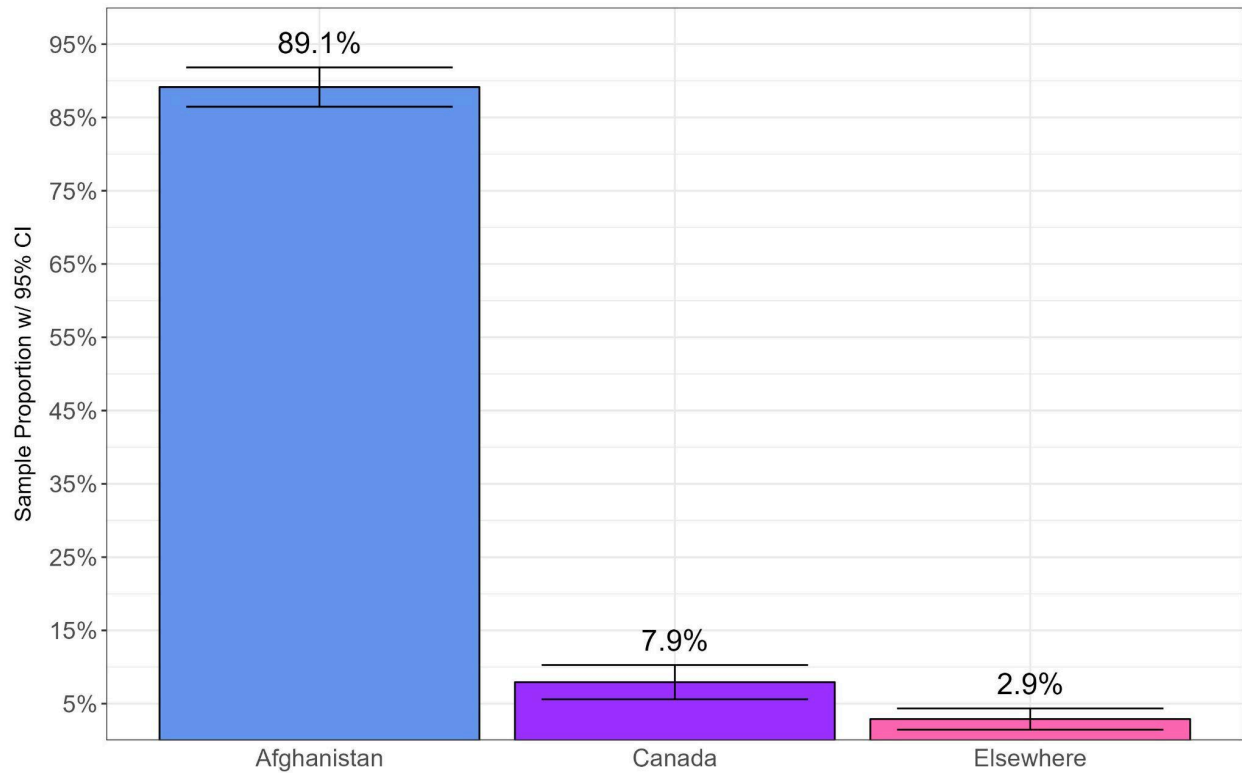


Figure 5. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Country of Birth

Only around 1 in 10 Afghans were born in Canada (7.9%). The remainder were born outside of Canada, primarily in Afghanistan (89.1%). This indicates that around 9 in 10 Afghan Canadians are first generation immigrants (92.1%).

Time in Canada

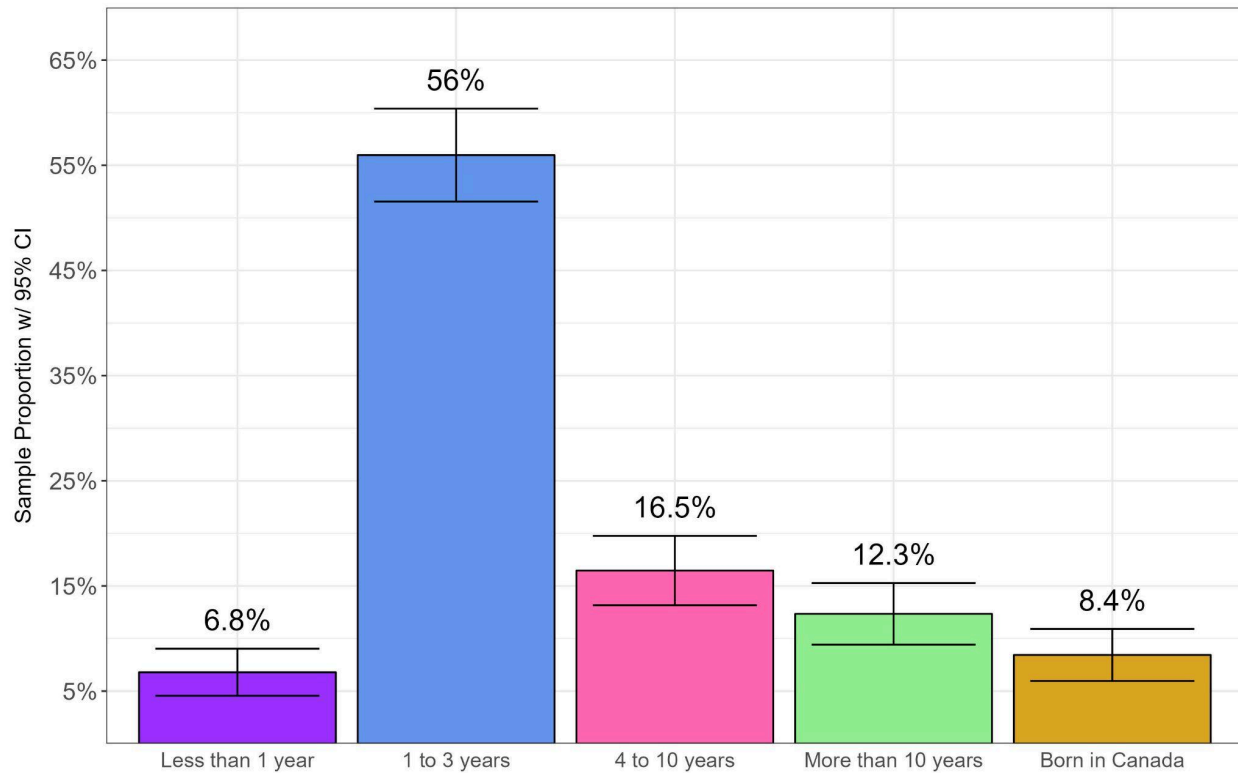


Figure 6. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Years in Canada

A few survey respondents seemed uncomfortable telling us how long they have lived in Canada or could not recall what year they arrived. Of the Afghan Canadians who were willing to tell us how long they had been in Canada, over half indicated that they arrived in 2021 or later (62.8%). Interestingly, nearly 3 in 10 individuals told us that they had been in Canada prior to 2021 (28.8%), reminding us that some Afghans who arrived here after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan may have had relationships with individuals already living in Canada.

Current Region

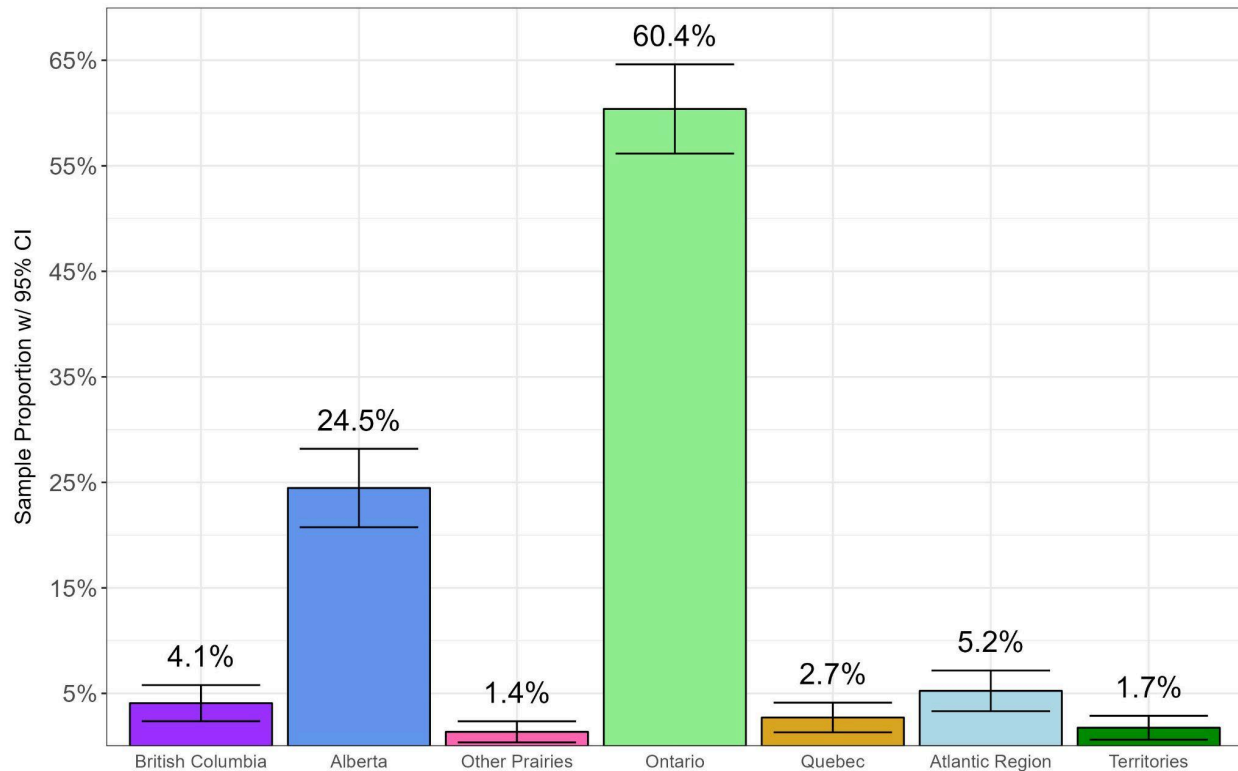


Figure 7. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Inhabited Region

Our sample of Afghan Canadians reflects that most of the community is currently settled in Ontario (60.4%), followed by a relatively large population in Alberta (24.5%). Fewer respondents report living in the remaining provinces (13.4%), while almost none told us that they live in one of Canada's territories (1.7%). The ACCS team acknowledges that these figures may be imperfect, given that our survey was not offered in French and that our surveyors were located primarily in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. While Canadian census data supports our finding that most Afghan Canadians live in Ontario (63.3% in 2021), for example, the exact same census also found that 13.5% of Afghan Canadians live in Quebec and that just 1 in 10 (10.7%) live in Alberta. Because a census of Canadians has not been conducted since before many Afghan Canadians arrived in Canada, it is impossible to discern to what degree we have oversampled or undersampled Afghans from certain provinces, and it is possible that our figures are mostly correct.

Marital Status

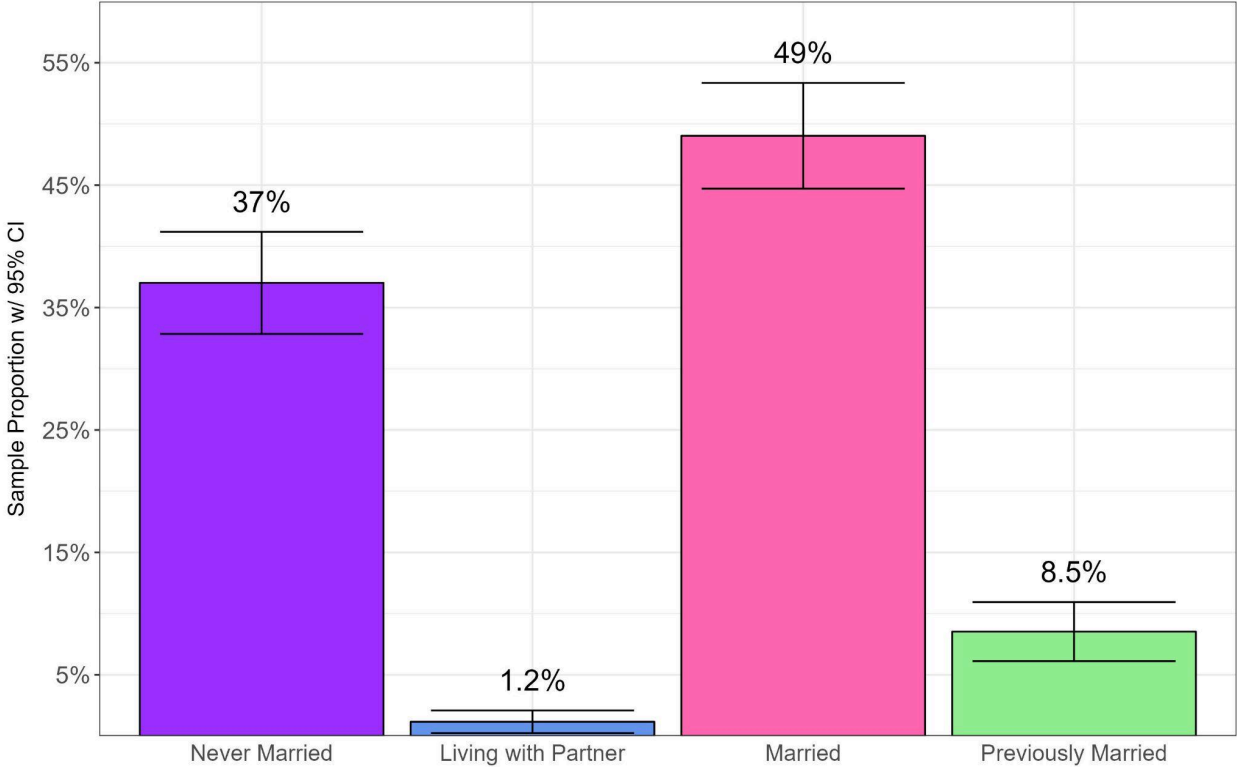


Figure 8. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Marital Status

As of 2024, most Afghan Canadians who responded to our survey are married, either formally or by common law (49%), compared to 40.8% as of 2021. Almost none report living with a partner while unmarried (1.2%), in contrast. This suggests that among Afghan Canadians, the social expectation is that one does not cohabit with a romantic partner prior to marriage, in line with a more traditional view of navigating one’s love life. In addition, very few individuals reported having previously been married only to be currently separated, divorced, or widowed (8.5%), a 4.8 percentage point drop since 2021. The remainder of our survey respondents, about 1 in 3, told us that they have never been married (37%), up slightly from 32.2% three years earlier.

Religion

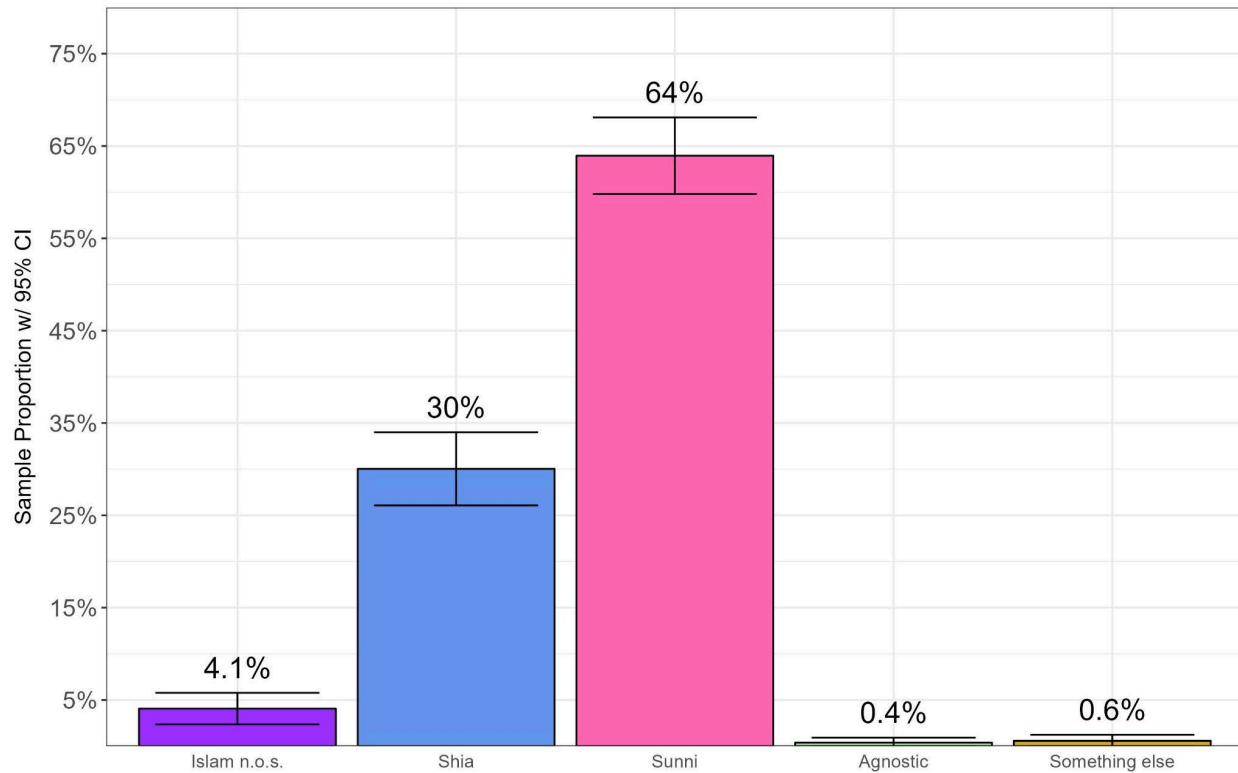


Figure 9. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Religion Affiliation

Most respondents in our sample identified with a religious affiliation, and the most prevalent religion by far was Islam (99.1%). Sample respondents were also very frequently able to give us a more specific indication of their faith, with approximately 1 in 3 (30%) having told us they were Shia and about 2 in 3 (64%) having denoted themselves as Sunni. Remarkably few individuals, about 1%, shared that they were affiliated with a religious denomination other than Islam. This religious composition does not closely resemble that of other Canadians, who are mostly Christian (53.3%) and agnostic or atheist (34.6%).

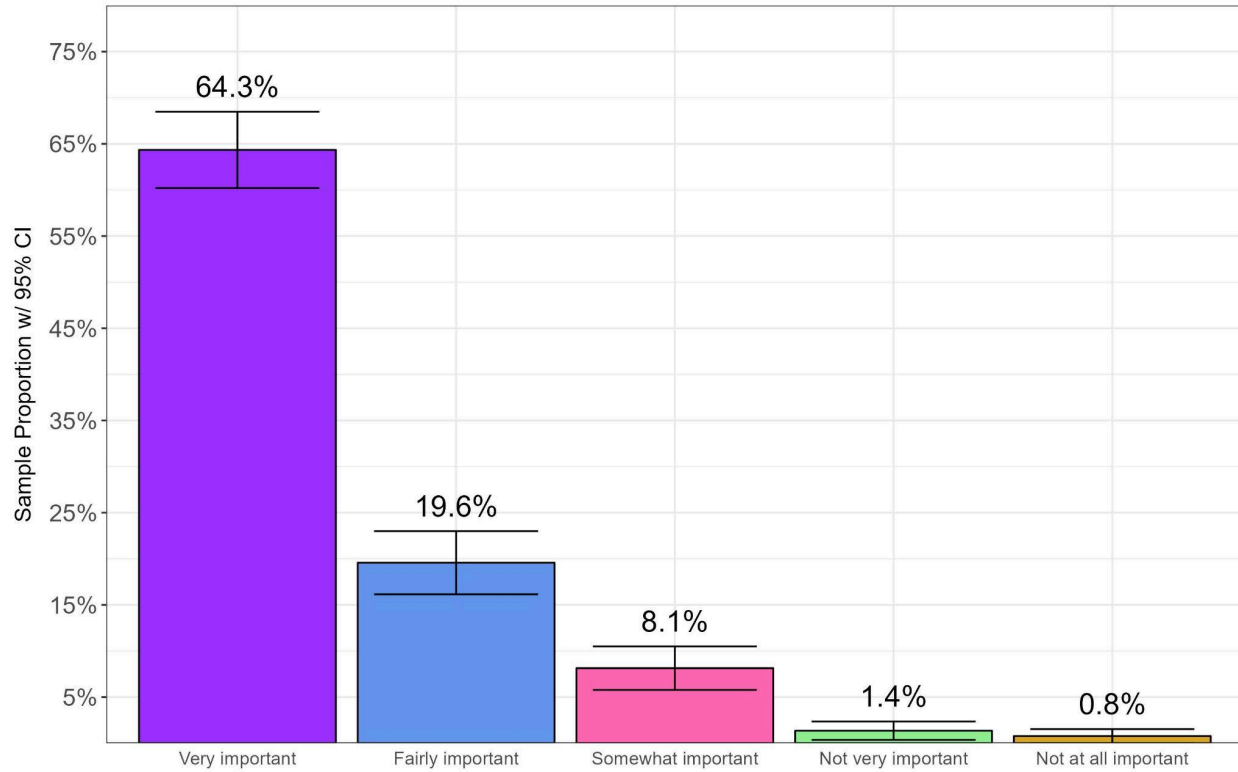


Figure 10. Sample Proportions of Religious Importance among Afghan Canadians

Most of our survey respondents told us that religion was very important (64.3%). This high percentage seems fitting, given that most Afghan Canadians are religious. Almost all respondents admitted that they thought religion was at least somewhat important (97.8%), with only a small minority of respondents saying the opposite was true (2.2%).

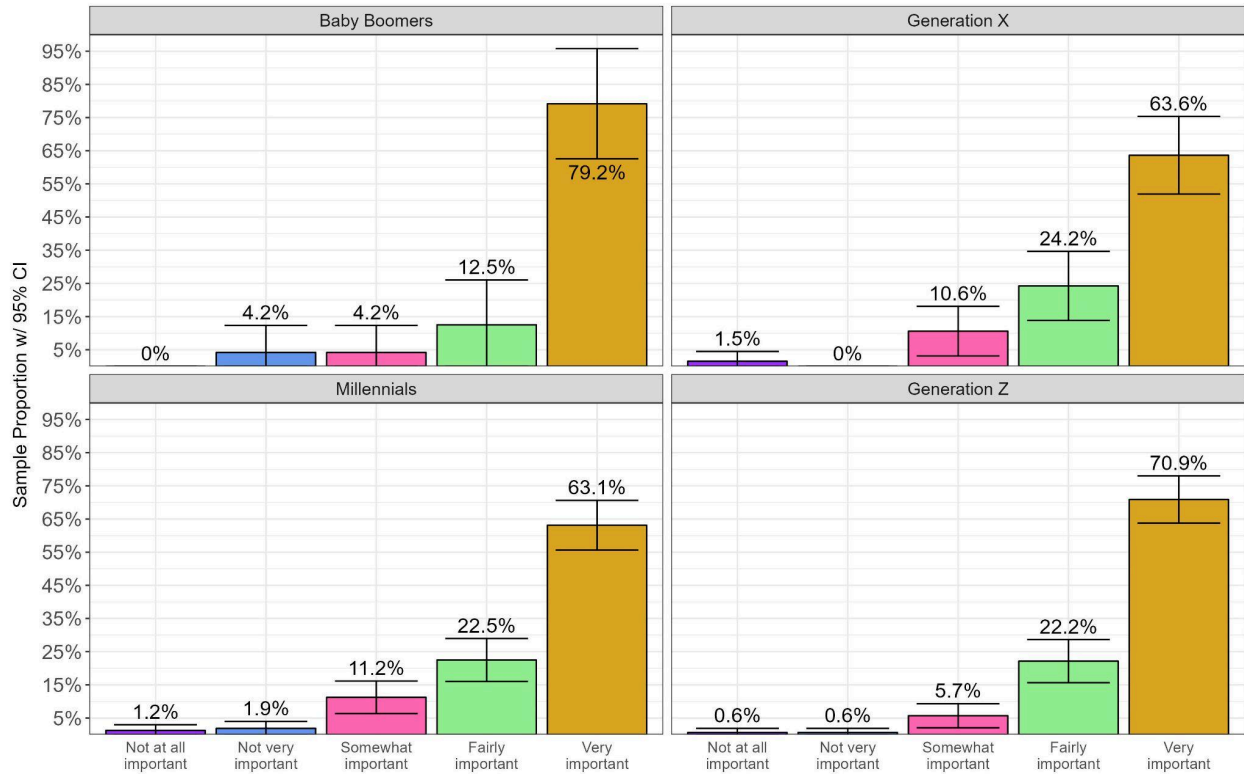


Figure 11. Sample Proportions of Religious Importance by Generation

Our data indicates that religion may be more or less important to members of the Afghan Canadian community depending on their generation. While Baby Boomers were most likely to tell us that religion was very important to them (75.9%), Generation X and Millennials were much less likely to share these sentiments (59.7% and 60.1%, respectively). Curiously, Generation Z currently seems to think of religion more like Baby Boomers do, with about 7 in 10 having told us that religion is very important. This suggests that young Afghan Canadians maintain a strong sense of faith that may not be shared with the majority of people living in Canada.

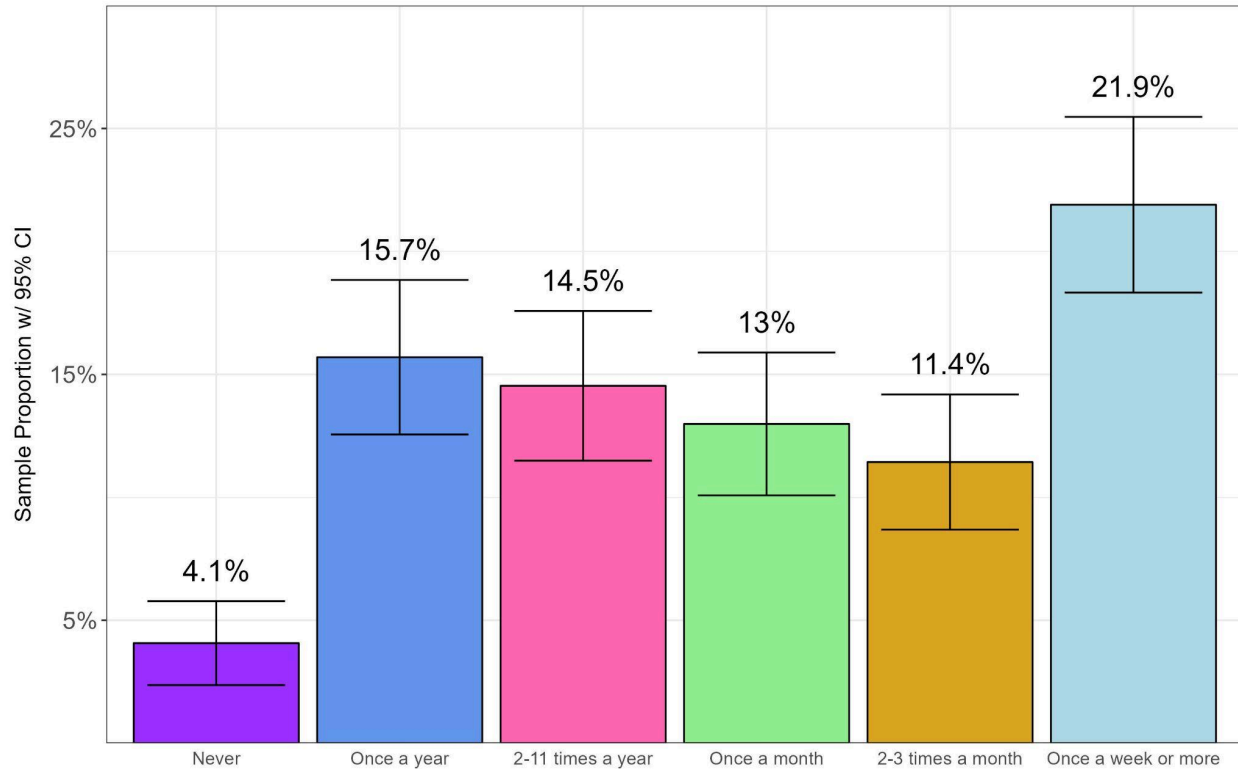


Figure 12. Sample Proportions of Afghan Canadians by Religious Attendance

Our survey shows that religious importance does not necessarily translate into religious attendance. While most of our survey respondents told us they thought religion was very important, only around 1 in 5 attend religious services once a week or more (21.9%), and fewer than half say that they attend at least once a month (46.3%). This suggests that for many Afghan Canadians, religion is much more meaningful and complex than can be encapsulated by how frequently one participates in religious gatherings. There is less evidence that organized religion is becoming unimportant altogether, however, with only 4.1% of our respondents reporting that they never attend religious services.



Figure 13. Sample Proportions of Religious Attendance by Generation

Our data reflects that there may be generational differences in religious attendance within the Afghan Canadian community. While around 1 in 3 Baby Boomers told us that they attend religious services at least once a week (34.5%), the proportion of frequent religious attendees declines with each generation. Among Generation Z, only around 1 in 5 Afghan Canadians reported attending on at least a weekly basis (17.6%). Though survey respondents from every generation most commonly told us that religion was very important, generational differences in religious attendance imply that younger Afghan Canadians think of religion differently than do older members of the community.

Languages

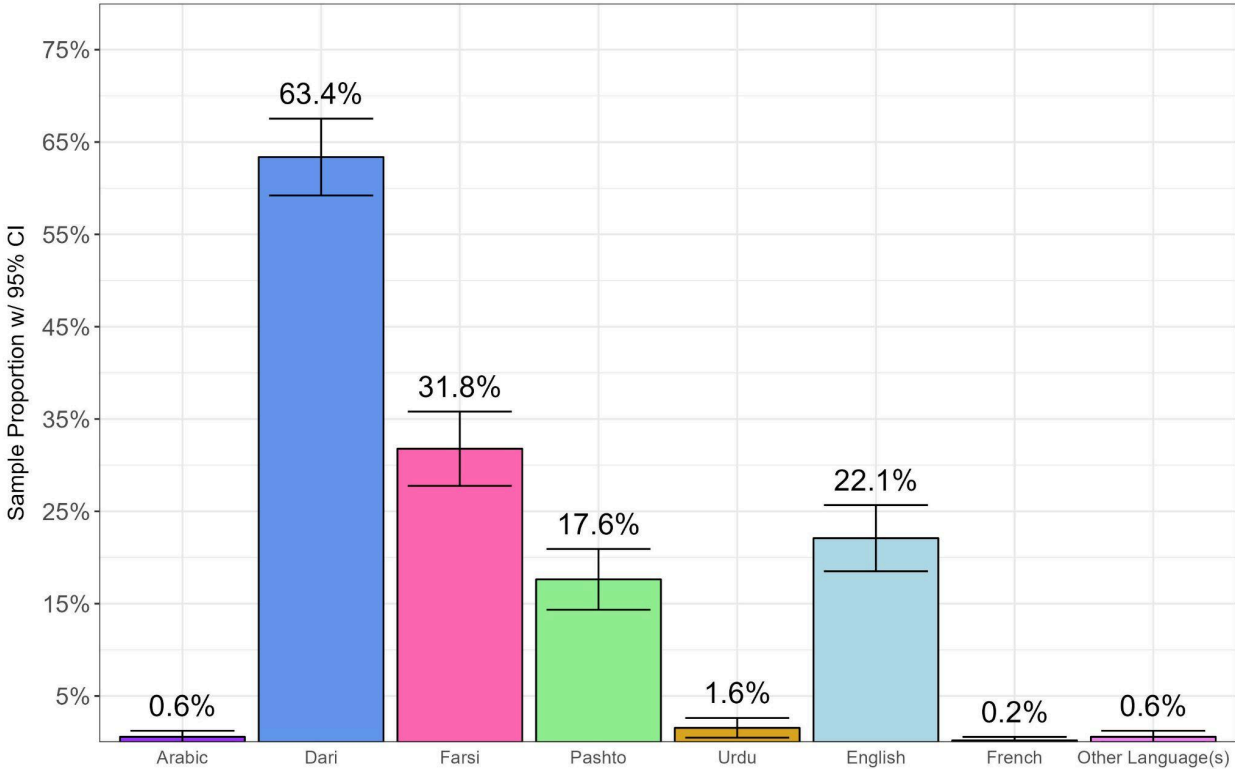


Figure 14. Sample Proportions of Languages Spoken at Home by Afghan Canadians

Though many Afghan Canadians in our sample know one of Canada’s official languages, the majority of the population speaks Dari while at home (63.4%). Farsi is also commonly spoken at home by Afghan Canadians (31.8%), as is Pashto (17.6%) and English (22.1%).

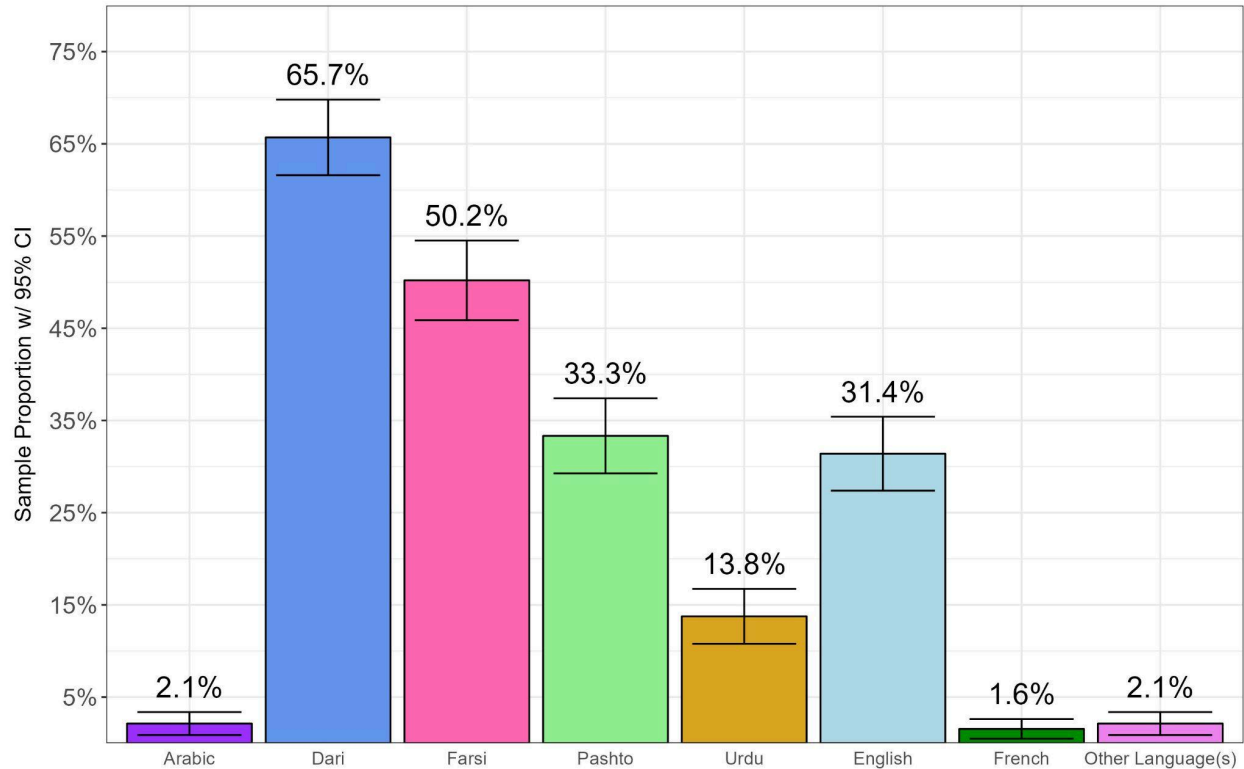


Figure 15. Sample Proportions of Languages Learned in Youth by Afghan Canadians

The languages that our survey respondents most commonly speak at home are also the languages that community members were most likely to have learned during childhood. Around 2 in 3 survey respondents told us that they learned Dari during their childhood (65.7%), with Farsi (50.2%), Pashto (33.3%), English (31.4%), and Urdu (13.8%) also commonly learned during childhood. This means that multilingualism is relatively common among Afghan Canadian youth.

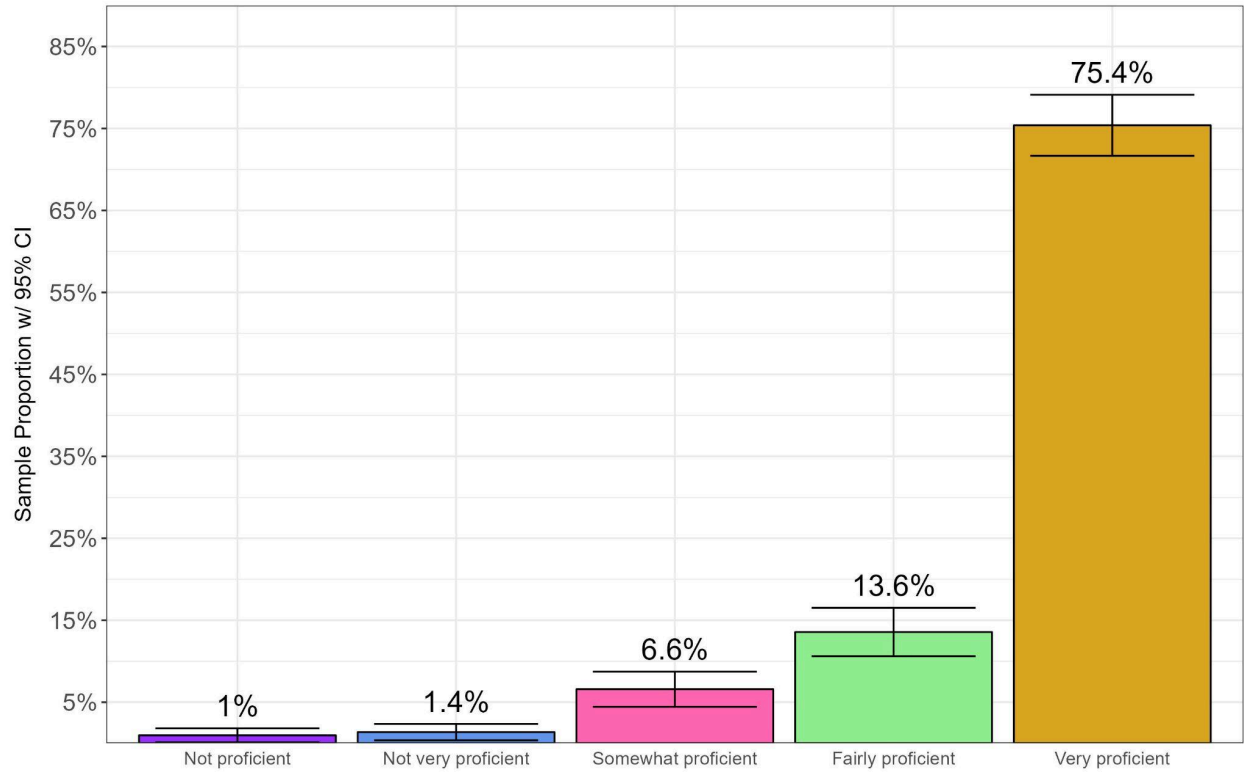


Figure 16. Sample Proportions of Native Language Proficiency among Afghan Canadians

Many Afghan Canadians in our sample continue to speak the languages they learned in childhood, so it is no surprise that about 3 in 4 told us they were very proficient in their native language (75.4%), while only almost nobody indicated that they were less than somewhat proficient (2.4%).

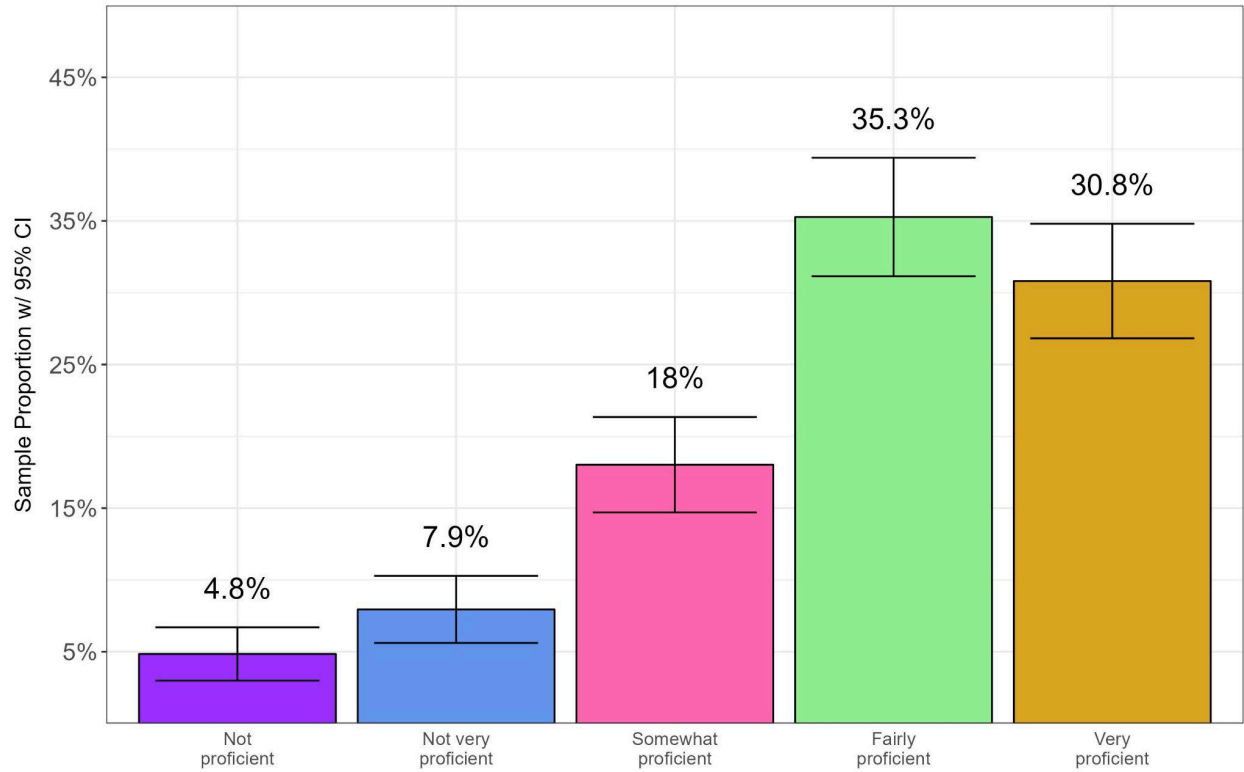


Figure 17. Sample Proportions of English Proficiency among Afghan Canadians

English proficiency is more varied among Afghan Canadians in our sample. While around 3 in 10 individuals told us that they were very proficient in English (30.8%), slightly more reported that their English proficiency was only fair (35.3%). For about 1 in 10 respondents, relatively low English comprehension may pose a challenge to living in Canada, with 12.7% saying that they are less than somewhat proficient in the English language.

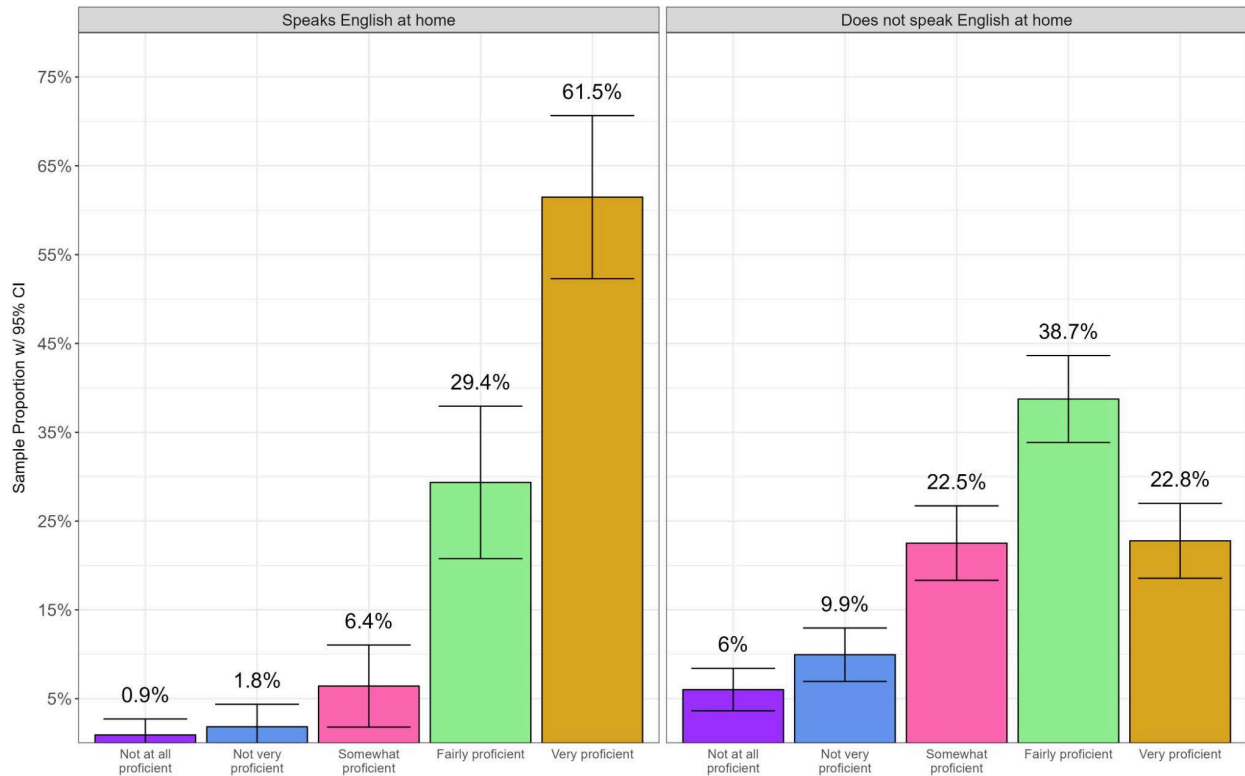


Figure 18. Sample Proportions of English Proficiency by Use of English at Home

There appears to be some relationship between speaking English at home and feeling proficient in English. Perhaps people who speak English at home are more comfortable with English in general, or perhaps some are choosing to speak English at home so that they can have more practice with the language. In any case, it seems that Afghan Canadians who speak English at home are nearly three times as likely to say they are very proficient in English (61.5%) than Afghan Canadians who do not speak English at home (22.8%). Afghan Canadians who do not speak English at home are also less likely to feel they are at least somewhat proficient in English, with 6% having told us that they are not at all proficient in English and another 9.9% indicating that they are not very proficient.

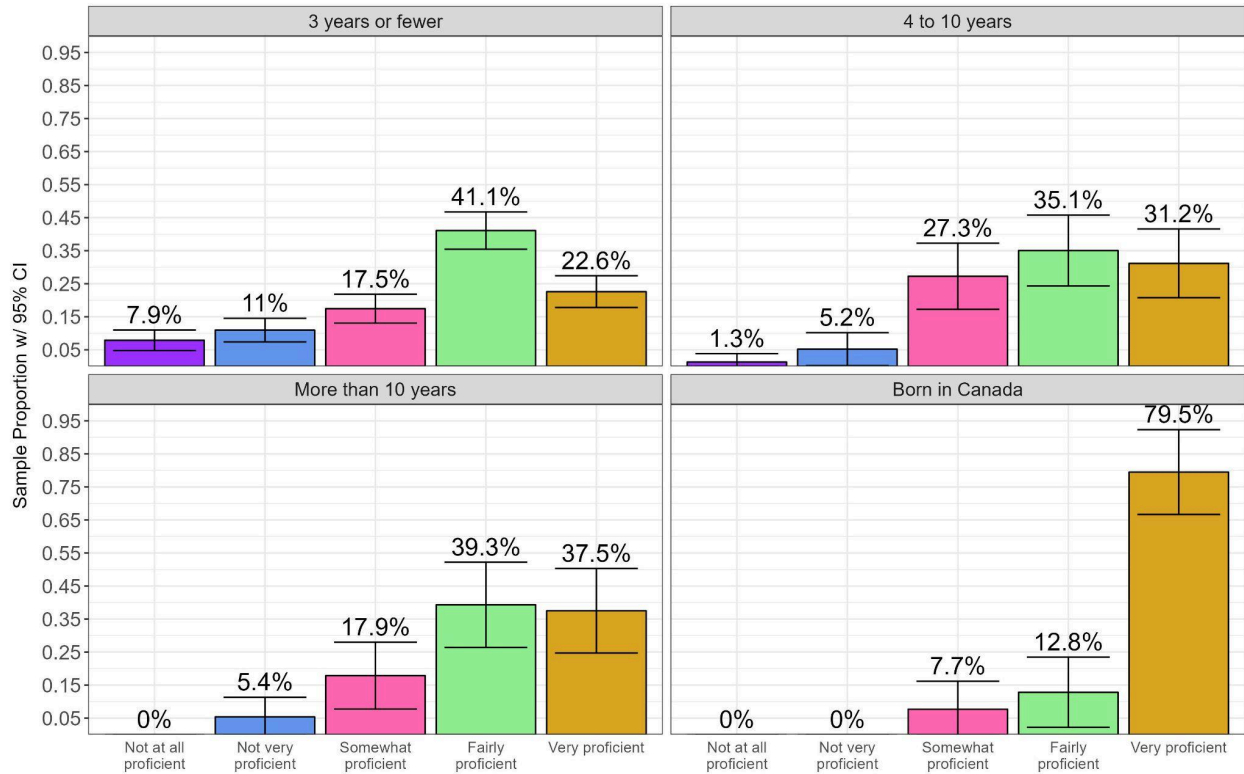


Figure 19. Sample Proportions of English Proficiency by Time in Canada

Our data suggests that English language proficiency among Afghan Canadians also varies based on how long one has lived in Canada. For those born in Canada, about 8 in 10 Afghans consider their English very proficient (79.5%). The remainder of those born in Canada told us they were somewhat proficient (7.7%) or fairly proficient (12.8%), indicating that English proficiency among this group of Afghan Canadians is moderate to high overall.

According to our sample, Afghan Canadians born outside of Canada tend to feel less confident in their English-speaking abilities, and it seems that the longer one lives in Canada, the more proficient one's English typically becomes. Among those who have lived in Canada for three years or fewer, approximately 1 in 5 told us that they their English was less than proficient (18.9%), compared with 6.5% of people who have lived in Canada for 4 to 10 years and 5.4% of people who have lived in Canada for over a decade. Likewise, the proportion of Afghan Canadians who report being very proficient in English increases from 22.6% among those who have lived in Canada for three years or fewer to 37.5% among those who have lived here for over ten years. This suggests that even for Afghans who do not speak English at home, proficiency with English is likely to improve over time.

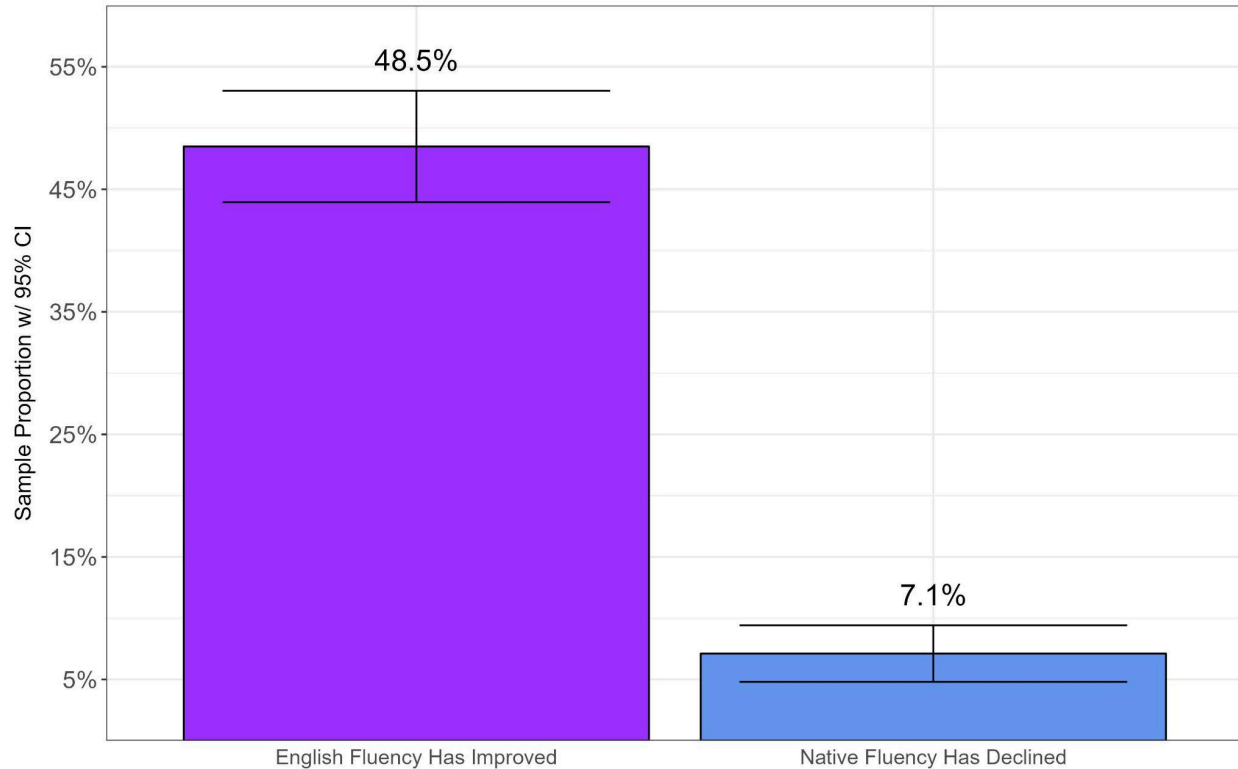


Figure 20. Sample Proportions of Proficiency Changes among Afghan Canadians

Our sample of Afghan Canadians confirms that time in Canada is a determinant of English-speaking ability, with about half (48.5%) having told us that they were more proficient with English now than they were when they arrived in Canada. Interestingly, we also found that a minority of Afghan Canadian respondents (7.1%) felt their ability to speak their own native language had declined since arriving in Canada.⁶

Quality of Life Indicators

⁶ It is possible that this percentage is an underestimate, as we suspect that some individuals may be reluctant to admit that they have become less proficient at speaking a language learned in their youths.

Internet Access

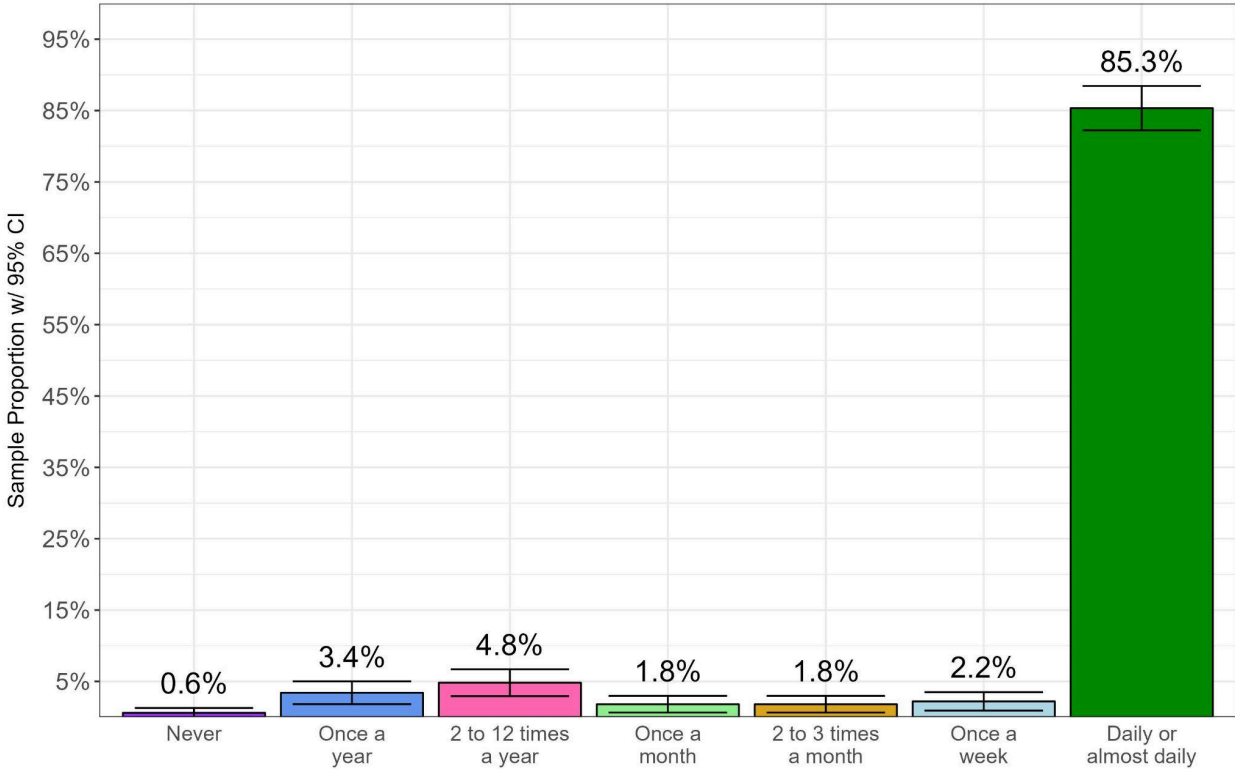


Figure 21. Sample Proportions of Internet Access Frequency among Afghan Canadians

Despite differences within the Afghan Canadian community that might impact access to the internet, like age, income, and the amount of time that an individual has been in Canada, the vast majority of our respondents told us that they use the internet on a daily or almost daily basis (85.3%). Using the internet once a year or less is exceedingly rare (4.0%). Altogether, this suggests that internet usage is an important part of daily life for this community.⁷

⁷ While it is possible that we are overestimating internet usage due to our survey being distributed online, our survey also received hundreds of telephone and in-person responses, limiting the potential for response bias induced by our survey methodology.

Healthcare

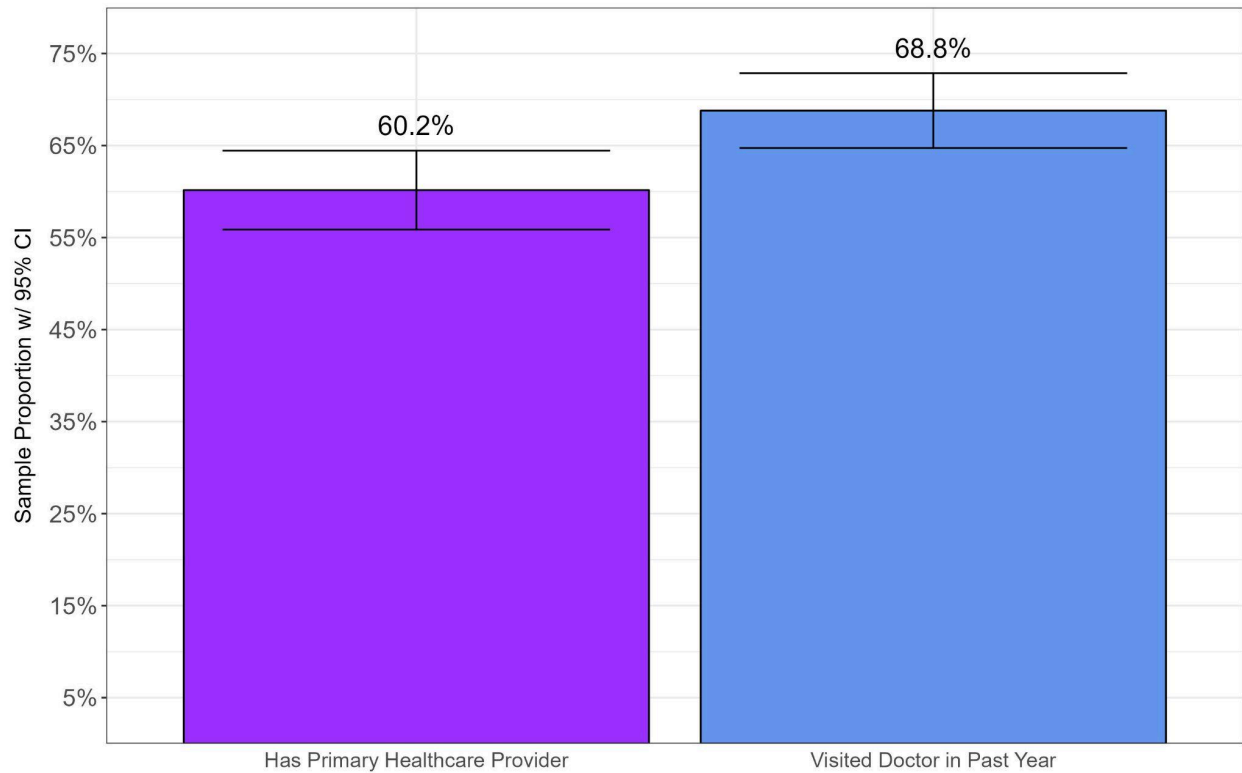


Figure 22. Sample Proportions of Healthcare Access among Afghan Canadians

Most Afghans in our sample told us they have access to a primary healthcare provider (60.2%), and slightly more indicated that they have visited a doctor in the past year (68.8%). These figures suggest that some Afghan community members have had difficulty finding a primary healthcare provider or have not searched for one, and that at least some Afghan Canadians without a primary healthcare provider have still been able to access healthcare when needed.

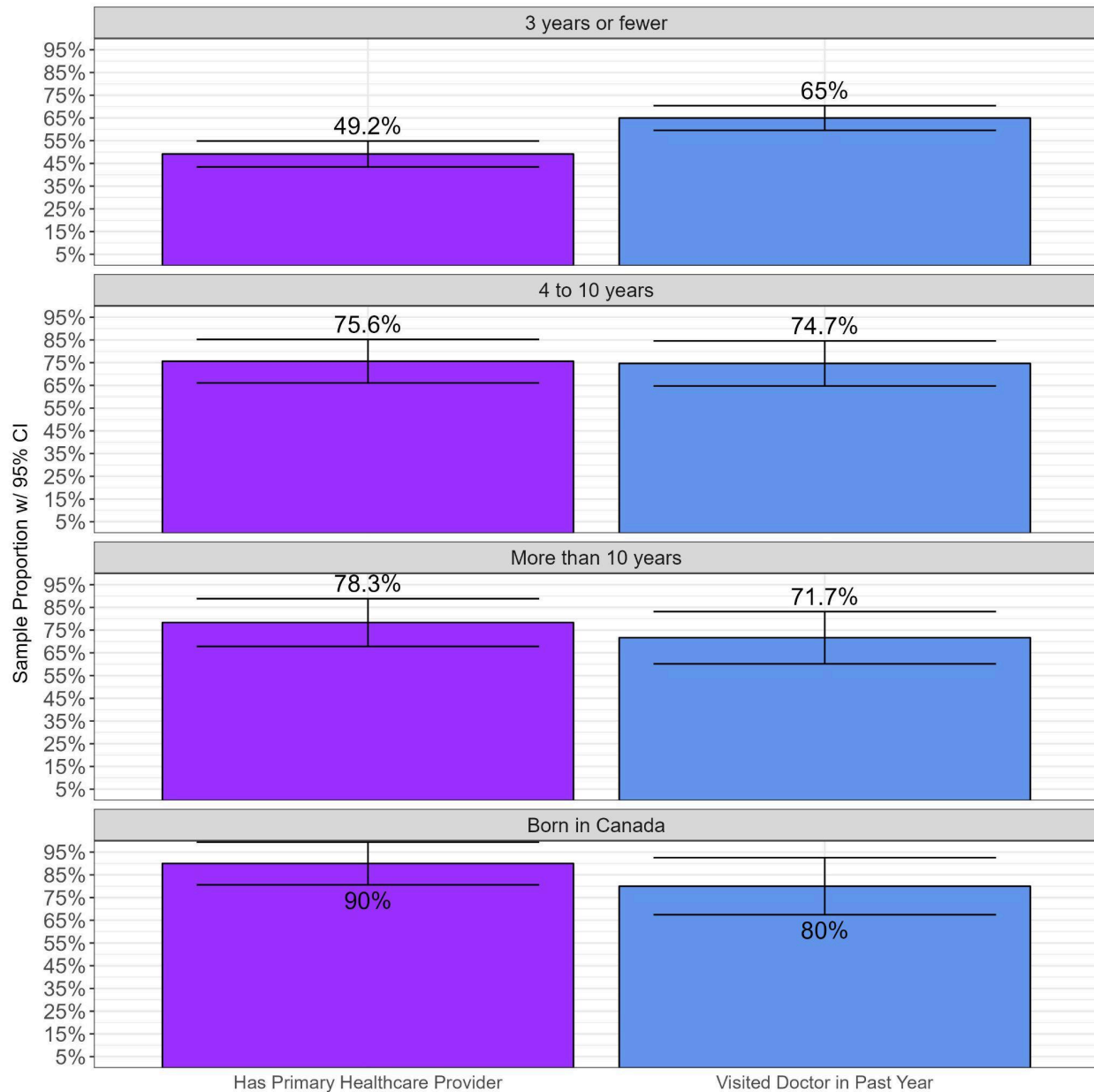


Figure 23. Sample Proportions of Healthcare Access by Time in Canada

The frequency with which Afghan Canadians told us that they had access to a primary healthcare provider differed significantly based on how long each survey respondent had been in Canada. While Afghan Canadians who first arrived in Canada in 2021 or later were about as likely to tell us that they had a primary healthcare provider as not (49.2%), those who have lived in Canada for 4 to 10 years were much more likely to say that they have a primary healthcare provider (75.6%) than the alternative, around the same proportion as respondents who have lived in Canada for more than a decade (78.3%). Among Afghan Canadians born in Canada, this proportion was even higher, with 9 in 10 (90%) sharing that they had a primary healthcare provider. While it appears that the time one has spent in Canada also influences the frequency

with which individuals had a doctor’s visit in the past year, the apparent effect is much less substantial, falling short of statistical significance due to our small sample size.

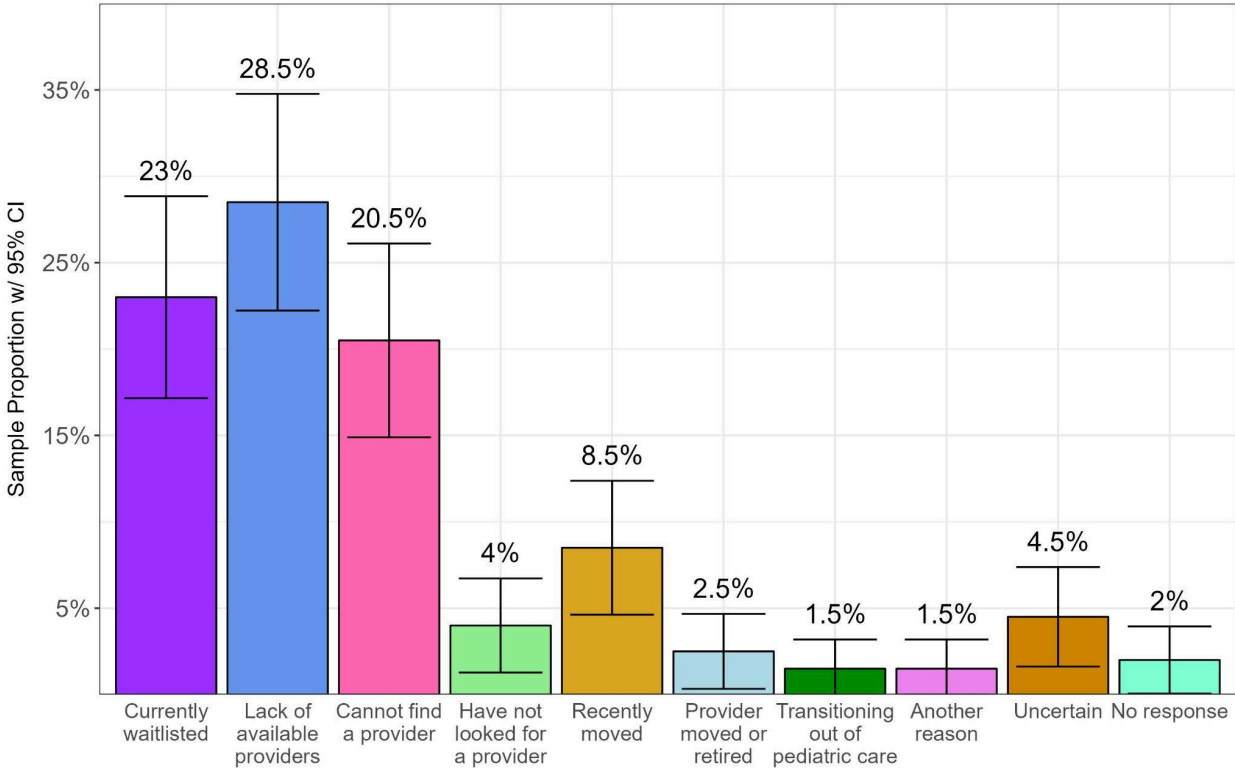


Figure 24. Sample Proportions of Reasons for Not Having a Primary Healthcare Provider

Among those Afghan Canadians who told us that they did not have a primary healthcare provider, the most common reasons offered for not having a provider are a lack of available healthcare providers (28.5%), an inability to find a provider (20.5%), or having been waitlisted after locating a provider (23%). Less common reasons for not having a primary healthcare provider include having recently moved (8.5%), not searching for a provider (4%), and one’s previous provider having moved or retired (2.5%). These results appear to validate our suspicion that the rate of Afghan Canadians with a primary healthcare provider would be higher if Afghan Canadians could more readily access these services, with provider availability posing the largest obstacle to this community.

Health

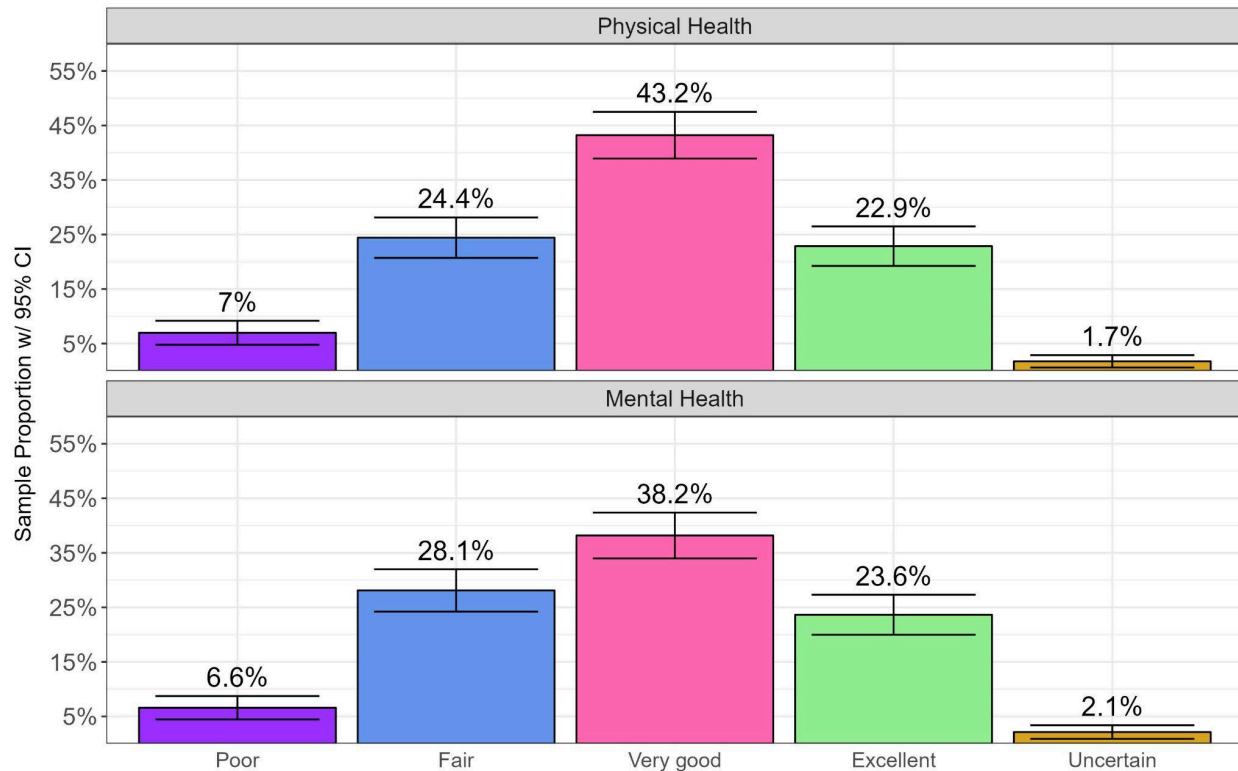


Figure 25. Sample Proportions of Health Self-Perceptions among Afghan Canadians

Upon asking Afghan Canadians about how they would rate their own physical and mental health, a plurality shared that their physical health was very good (43.2%), with around the same proportion having said the same with respect to their mental health (38.2%). Around a quarter of the Afghan community feels that their physical health is fair (24.4%), according to our sample, with a similar percentage indicating that their physical health is excellent (22.9%). Respondents reported similar figures when asked about their mental health, with around 3 in 10 having admitted that their mental health is fair (28.1%) and approximately 2 in 10 having told us that their mental health is excellent (23.6%). Overall, our results suggest that physical and mental health are closely related for members of the Afghan community, with our figures for mental health closely mirroring our figures for physical health.

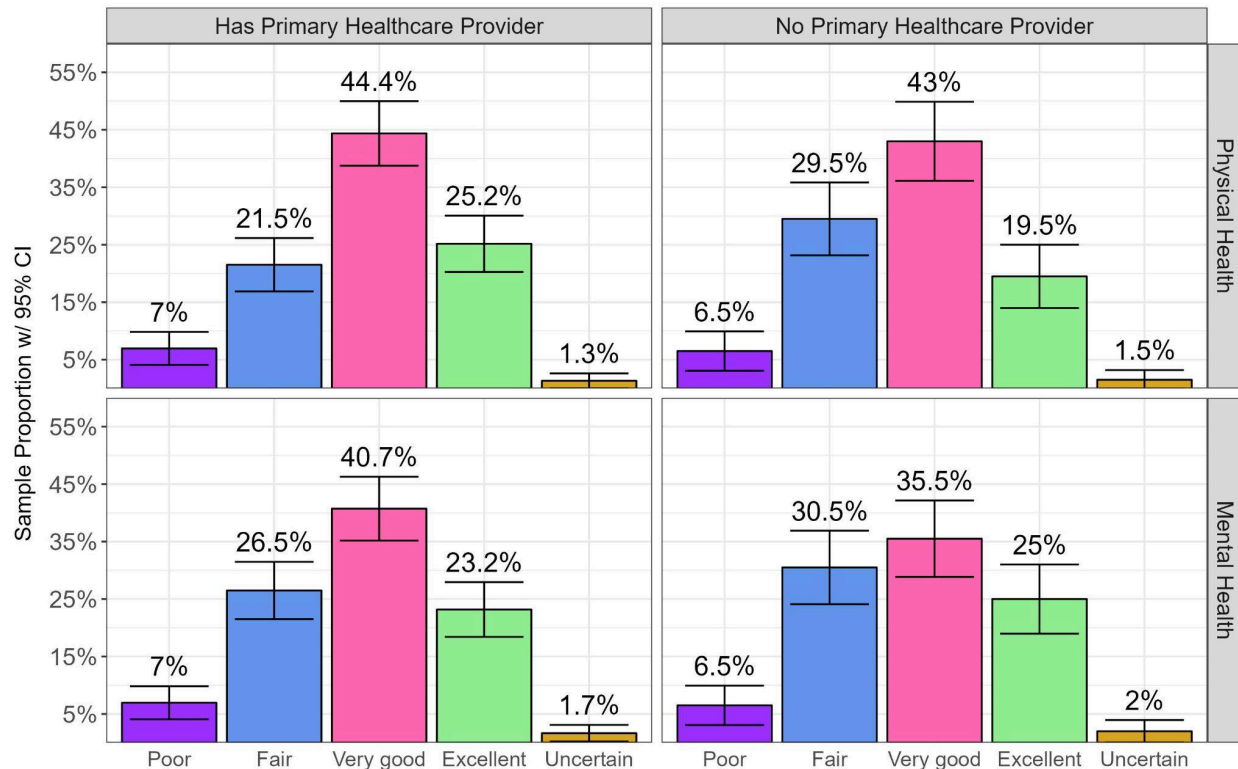


Figure 26. Sample Proportions of Health Self-Perceptions by Provider Access

Interestingly, we do not see substantial evidence that mental or physical health among Afghan Canadians is dependent on their access to a primary healthcare provider. Even so, it does appear that Afghans with access to a primary healthcare provider are slightly less likely to share that their physical health is fair (21.5%) and slightly more likely to share that their physical health is excellent (25.2%) than those who do not have a primary healthcare provider (29.5% and 19.5%, respectively). Similarly, Afghans with access to a primary healthcare provider indicated that their mental health is fair (26.5%) slightly less frequently than did those without a provider (30.5%), even as those with a primary healthcare provider shared that their mental health was very good (40.7%) just a bit more often than those individuals who do not a provider (35.5%).

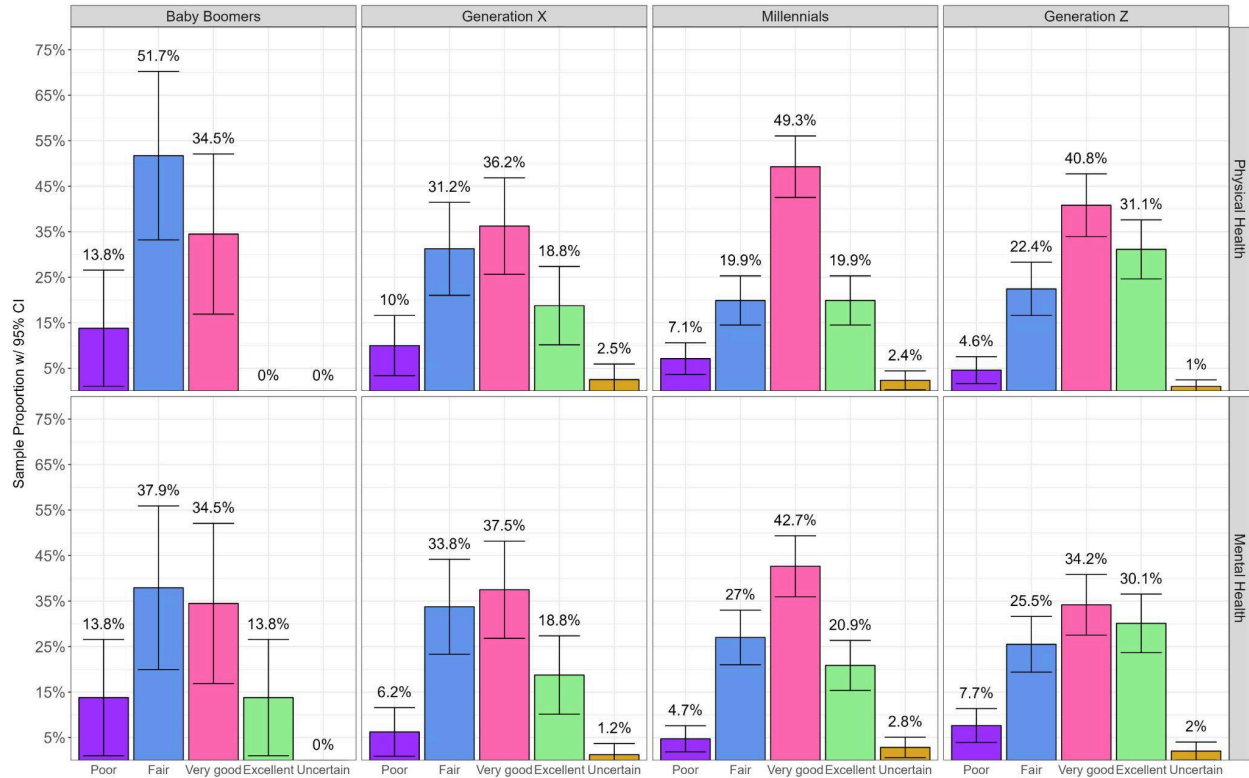


Figure 27. Sample Proportions of Health Self-Perceptions by Generation

With respect to health by generation, Generation Z appears to have better physical health than other generations, with about 3 in 10 Generation Z Afghans having indicated that their physical health is excellent (31.1%). Only around 2 in 10 (19.9%) Millennial Afghans said the same, similar to Generation X (18.8%) and much greater than Baby Boomers (0%). Baby Boomers appear to have the least favourable physical health of all generations, in contrast. While 65.5% of Baby Boomers in our sample felt that their physical health was not very good or excellent, just 41.2% of Generation X shared the same sentiments. It was even less common for Millennials (27%) or Generation Z (27%) to tell us that their physical health was less than very good. Thus, our results reflect – unsurprisingly – that physical health within the Afghan community is at least partially the result of its members’ ages.

Likewise, there is evidence that mental health among Afghan Canadians is dependent on age. While about 3 in 10 Generation Z Afghan Canadians told us that their mental health was excellent (30.1%), approximately 2 in 10 Millennials told us the same thing (20.9%). Generation X Afghans (18.8%) and Baby Boomers (13.8%) were even less likely to have said their mental health was excellent, though not significantly so. Baby Boomers also more frequently indicated that their mental health was not very good (51.7%) than other generations, but our small sample size makes drawing conclusions based upon this result difficult. Given the apparent connection between physical and mental health within our sample, it may be that the influence of age on mental health is moderated by one’s physical health.

Living Situation

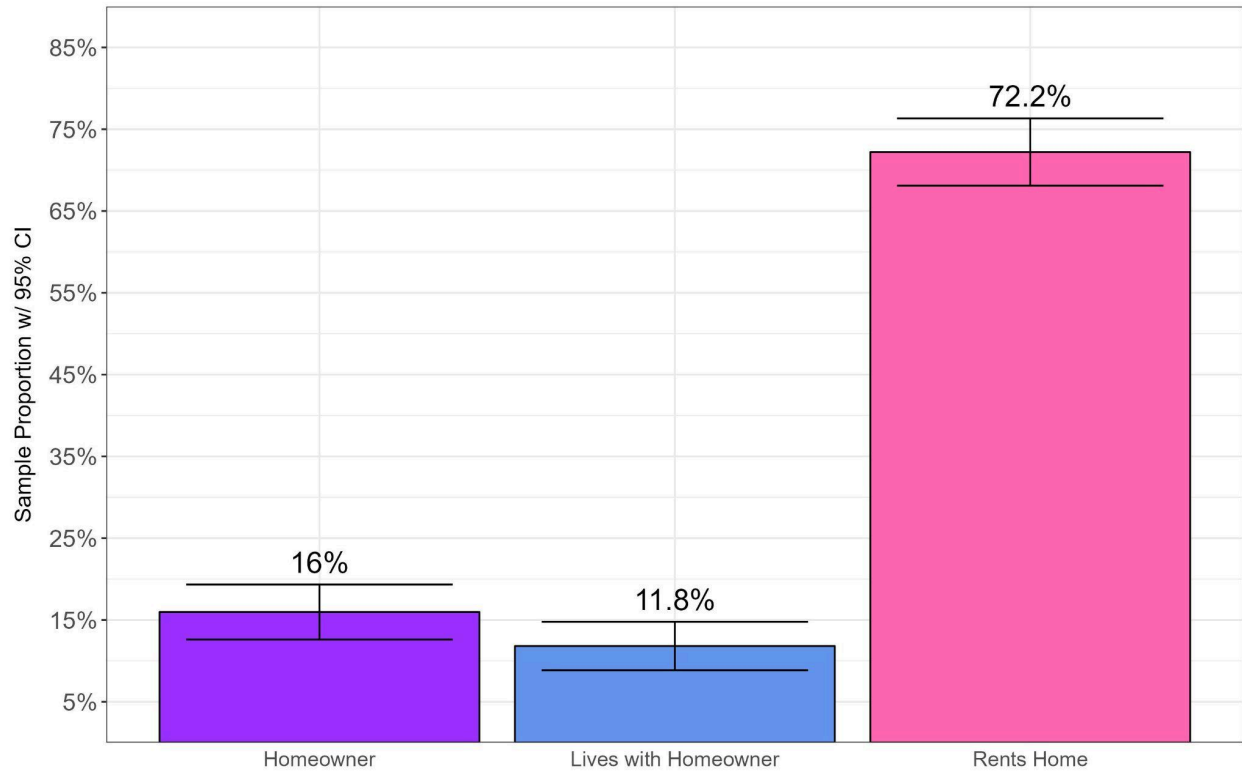


Figure 28. Sample Proportions of Living Situations among Afghan Canadians

Most Afghan Canadians who responded to our survey rent their homes (72.2%), implying that finding a home to own in Canada may be difficult for this population. Only around 1 in 6 told us that they were homeowners (16%), with the remainder having told us that they lived with the owner of their home (11.8%). That more individuals are living with a homeowner than are a homeowner themselves may be a result of how young Afghan Canadians tend to be, with younger people potentially finding it more sensible to live with their family as opposed to renting or purchasing a home.

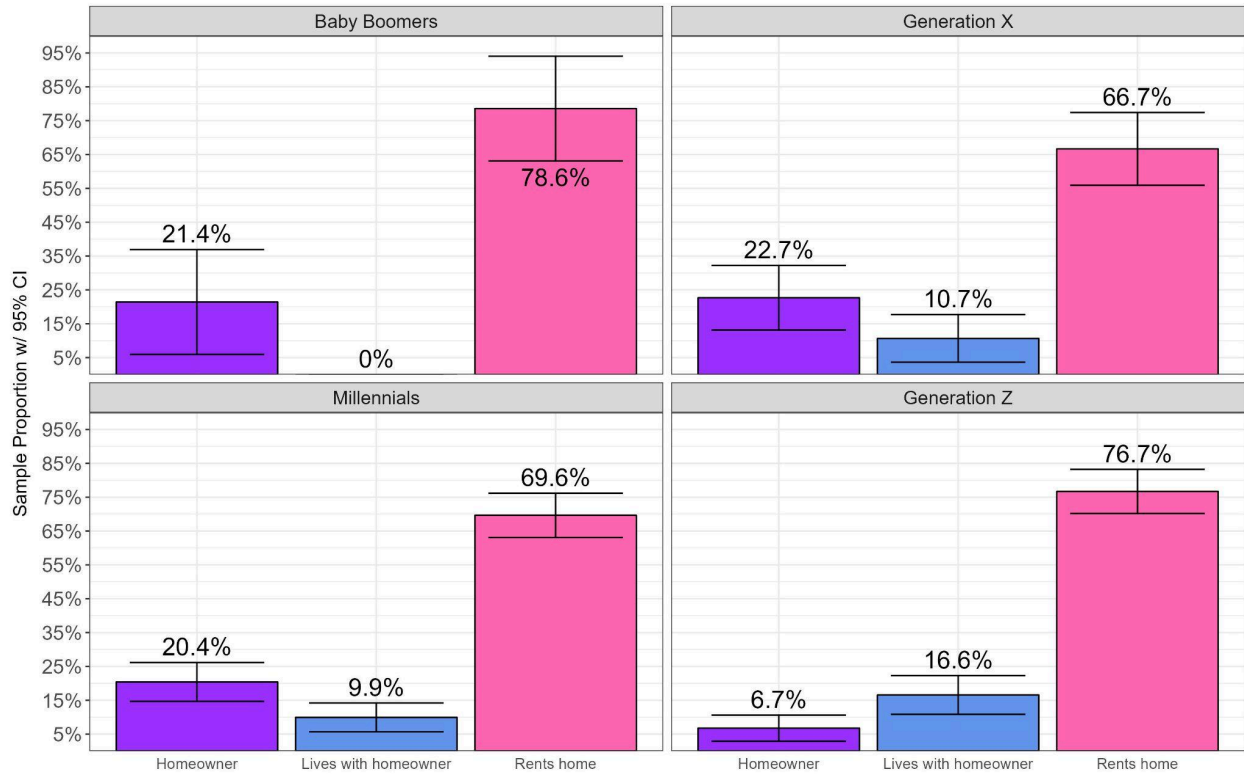


Figure 29. Sample Proportions of Living Situations by Generation

Indeed, the youngest generation in our survey is the generation most likely to live with the owner of their home (16.6%) and the least likely to be a homeowner themselves (6.7%). Around 2 in 10 Afghan Canadians of every other generation in our sample indicate homeownership, by comparison, suggesting the relatively low proportion of homeowners among Generation Z is at least partially a result of their young age. Surprisingly, our sample of Afghan Canadians did not reveal any Baby Boomers who lived with a homeowner. For those Baby Boomers who do not own homes themselves, the consensus is seemingly that renting a home is preferable – or at least more plausible – than living with somebody who owns their home (e.g., a family member).

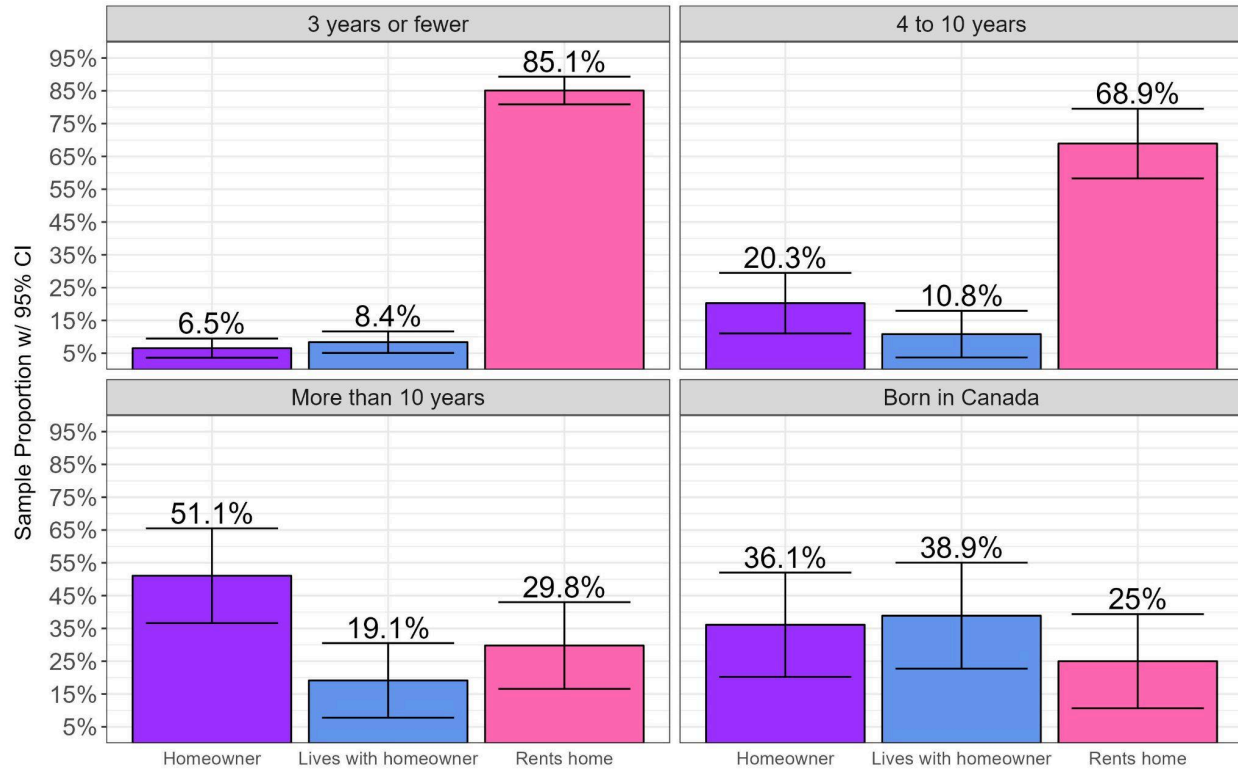


Figure 30. Sample Proportions of Living Situations by Time in Canada

For Afghan Canadians who were born in Canada, and who tend to be much younger than individuals who we surveyed that were not born in Canada, about 4 in 10 reported that they live with a homeowner (38.9%) rather than owning or renting their own home. Among those who were not born in Canada, renting or owning is more common, with the rate of homeownership seemingly depending on how long one has been in Canada. Though homeownership is rare (6.5%) among Afghan Canadians who have lived in this country for three years or fewer, Afghan Canadians who have been in Canada for a decade or longer are about as likely as not to own a home (51.1%).

Asset Ownership

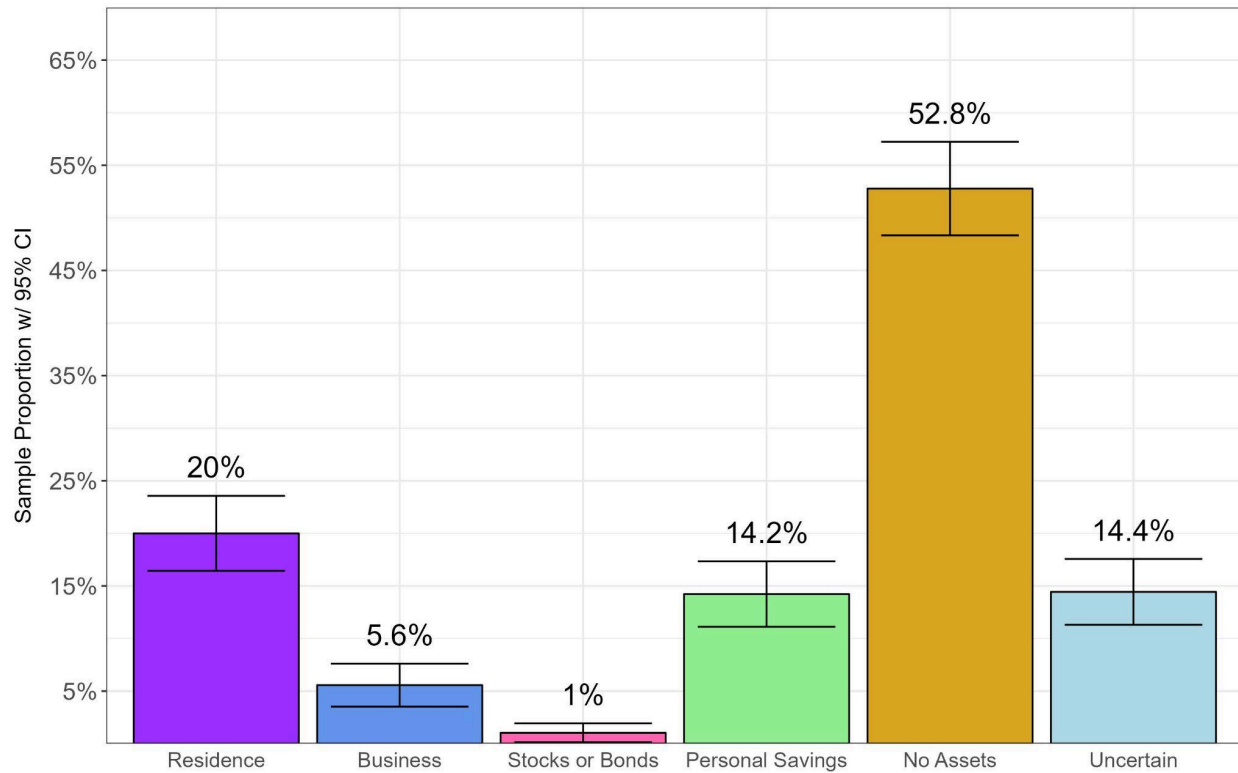


Figure 31. Sample Proportions of Claimed Assets among Afghan Canadians

Just as most Afghan Canadians in our sample do not own their own home, around half also reported that they do not own other assets (52.8%). Fewer than 1 in 5 indicated that they have personal savings (14.2%), and very few claimed a business (5.6%) or stocks/bonds (1%) as assets. Whether out of a desire to not answer or genuine uncertainty, a relatively large portion of our sample told us that they did not know what assets they owned (14.4%). Collectively, this suggests that income may be a challenge for some Afghan Canadians, who we suspect would report higher rates of financial asset ownership if more Afghan Canadians felt they could afford these assets.

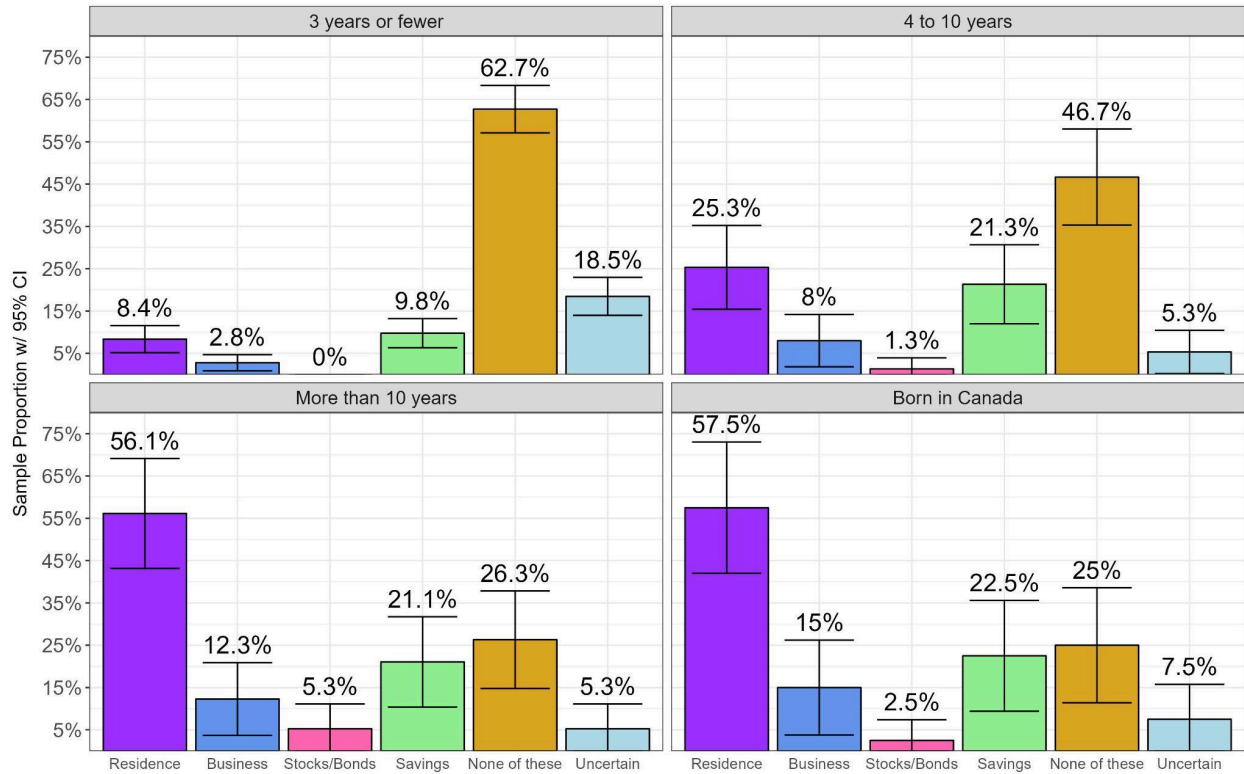


Figure 31. Sample Proportions of Claimed Assets by Time in Canada

Much like homeownership, asset ownership seems to strongly relate to how long one has lived in Canada. According to our survey, while Afghan Canadians who arrived in 2021 or later have high rates of uncertainty (18.5%) and low rates of actual assets (62.7% know they have no assets), rates of asset ownership among Afghan Canadians who have lived in Canada for more than ten years are similar to those who were born in Canada. For example, among Afghans who arrived in Canada over ten years ago, 25% told us that they did not own any assets, compared to 26.3% of Afghans who have lived in Canada for more than a decade. If this trend holds, we can expect that asset ownership among Afghan Canadians who have recently arrived will continue to increase in the coming years.

Income

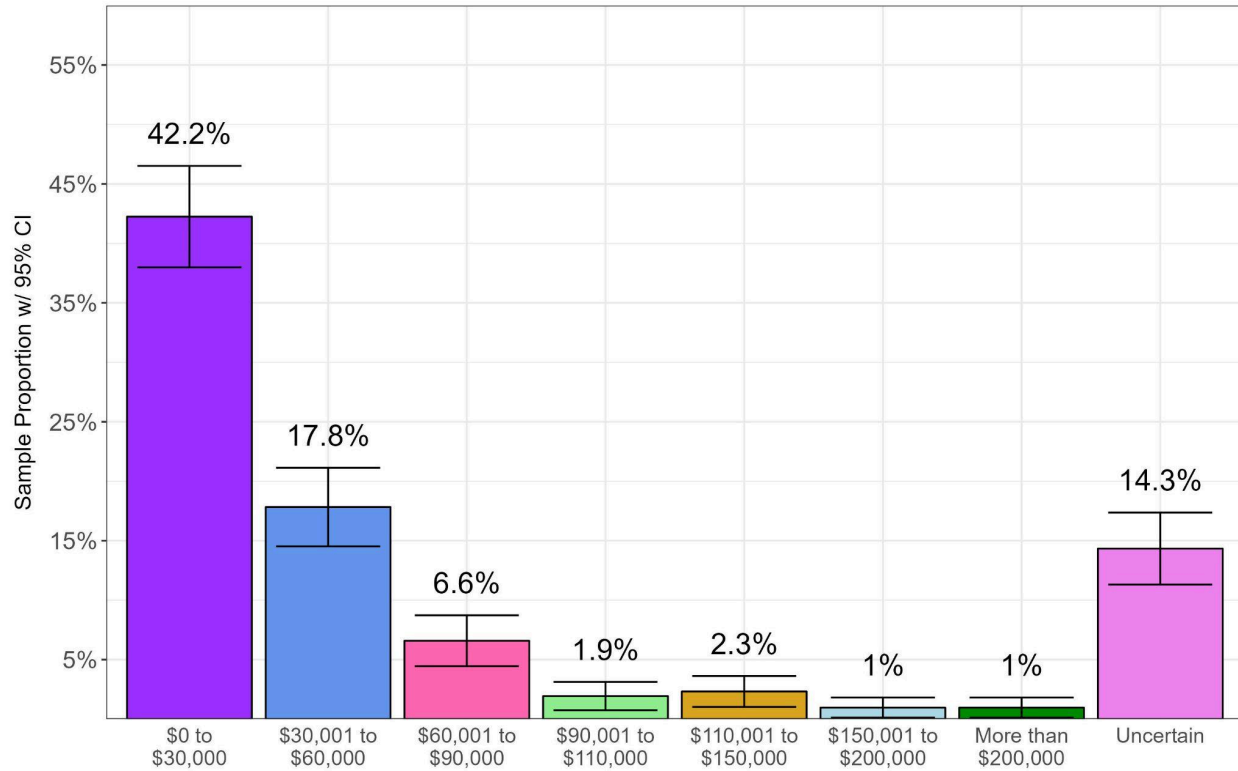


Figure 32. Sample Proportions of Income among Afghan Canadians

Many Afghan Canadian respondents reported low annual income, with about 4 in 10 (42.2%) saying that they made between \$0 and \$30,000 in 2023. Another 2 in 10 (17.8%) told us they earned between \$30,001 and \$60,000 during the same time period. Very few respondents (4.3%) reported earning over \$100,000 in 2023, suggesting high income inequality within this community. Our sample also indicates that around 1 in 6 respondents (14.3%) are uncertain how much income they earned in 2023, though this may be an overestimate produced by survey response bias.

Employment

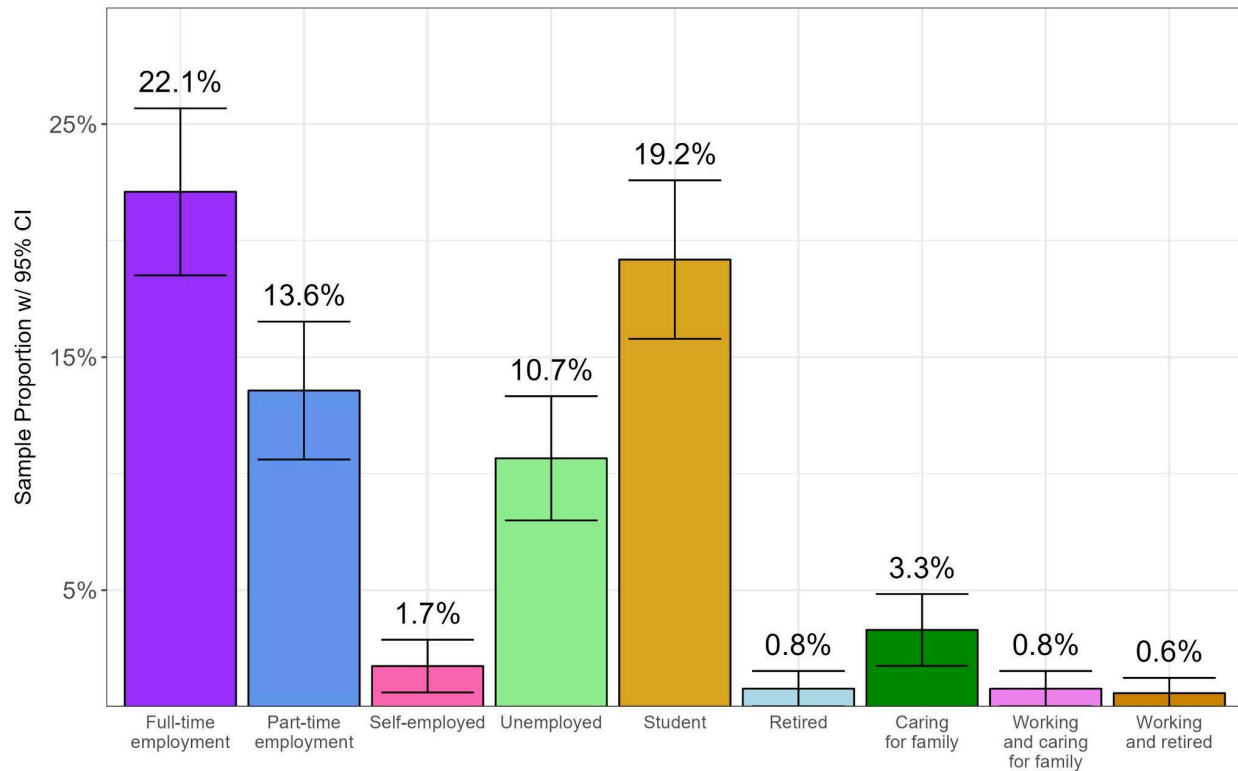


Figure 33. Sample Proportions of Employment Status among Afghan Canadians

Employment status varies widely among Afghan Canadians, according to our sample. Around 1 in 4 are full-time employees or self-employed (23.8%), while another 2 in 10 (19.2%) are students that may eventually find employment or become self-employed. For others, employment may feel a bit more precarious, with 13.6% having told us they are employed only part-time and 10.7% reporting that they are unemployed. Only around 1% of respondents told us that they are retired and do not need to work to supplement their retirement income.

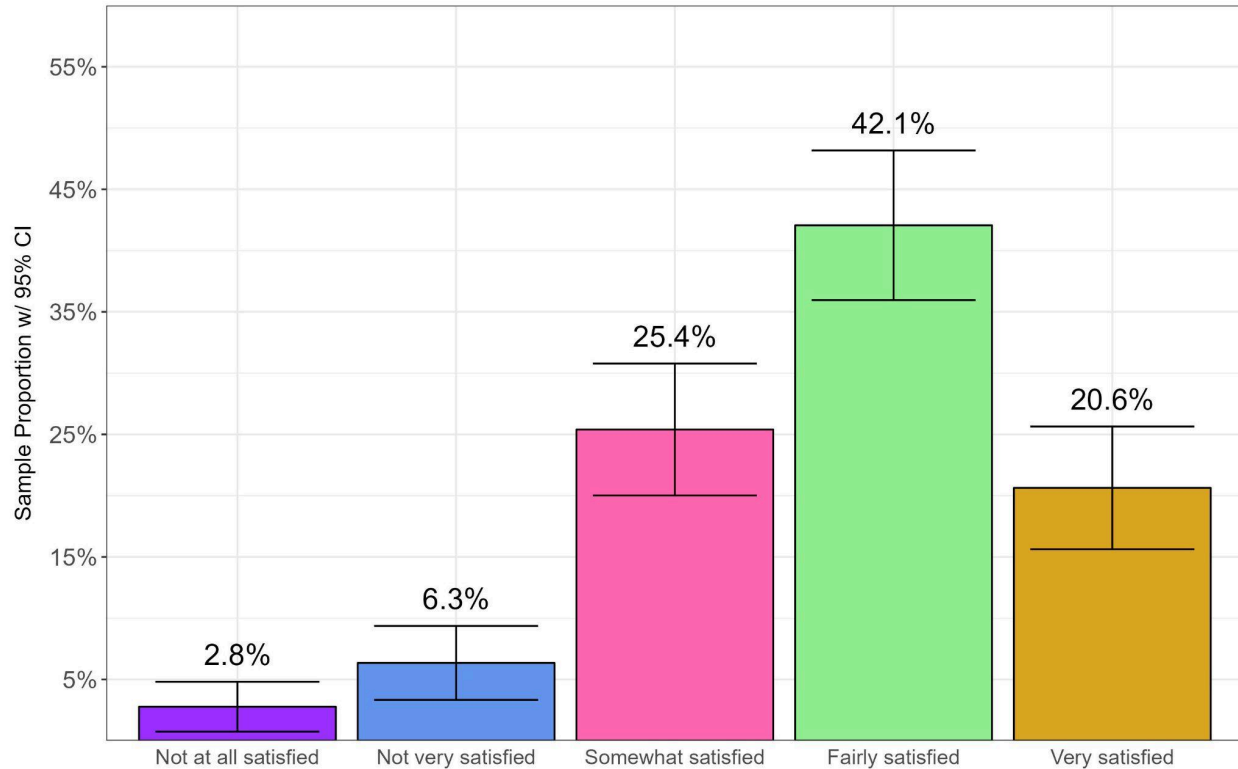


Figure 34. Sample Proportions of Job Satisfaction among Afghan Canadians

There is also considerable variation in how employed Afghan Canadians think about their job in our sample. While around 1 in 5 say they are very satisfied with their job (20.6%), significantly more say that they are only fairly satisfied (42.1%), and many others say they are just somewhat satisfied (25.4%). Still, only around 1 in 10 (9.1%) told us they are less than somewhat satisfied with their occupations, suggesting that job satisfaction among Afghan Canadians is relatively high overall.

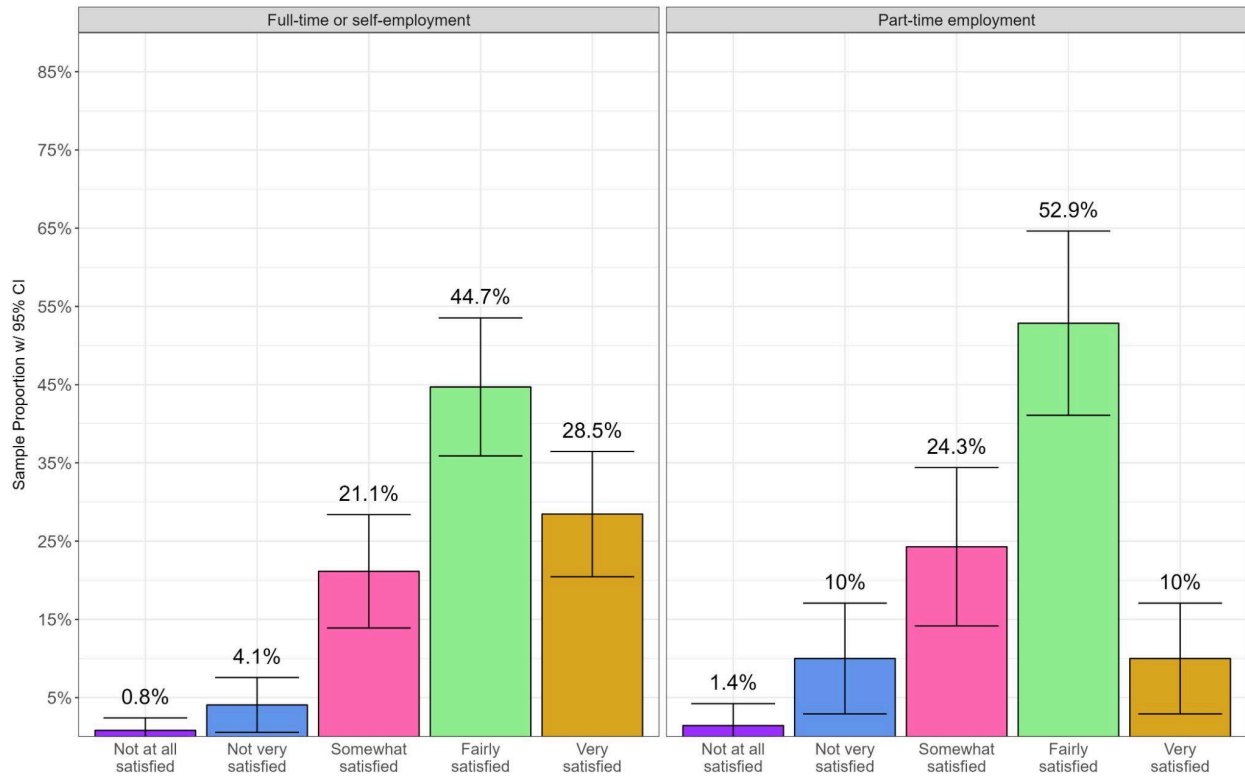


Figure 35. Sample Proportions of Job Satisfaction by Employment Status

There is some evidence of a relationship between employment type and job satisfaction. While approximately 3 in 10 of our survey respondents who are full-time employees or self-employed are also very satisfied with their job (28.5%), only around 1 in 10 who are employed part-time say the same (10%). Similarly, respondents who are employed part-time told us that they are less than somewhat satisfied with their occupation about twice as often as did those who are employed full-time or self-employed (11.4% compared to 4.9%).

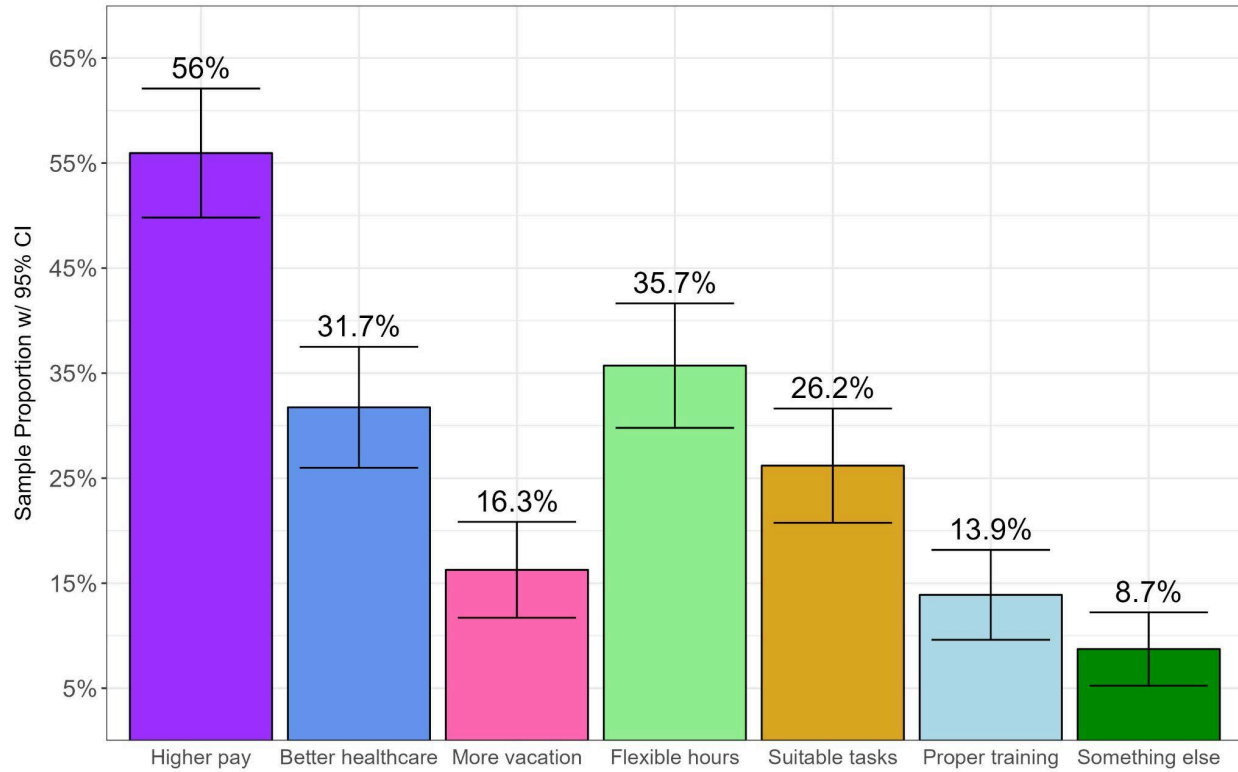


Figure 36. Sample Proportions of Employment Needs among Afghan Canadians

Despite relatively high occupational satisfaction overall, employed respondents were also able to identify several ways in which their job could be made more satisfying. These include higher pay (56%), flexible hours (35.7%), better healthcare (31.7%), more appropriate tasks (26.2%), more vacation time (16.3%), and proper job training (13.9%), among other needs noted by Afghan community members.

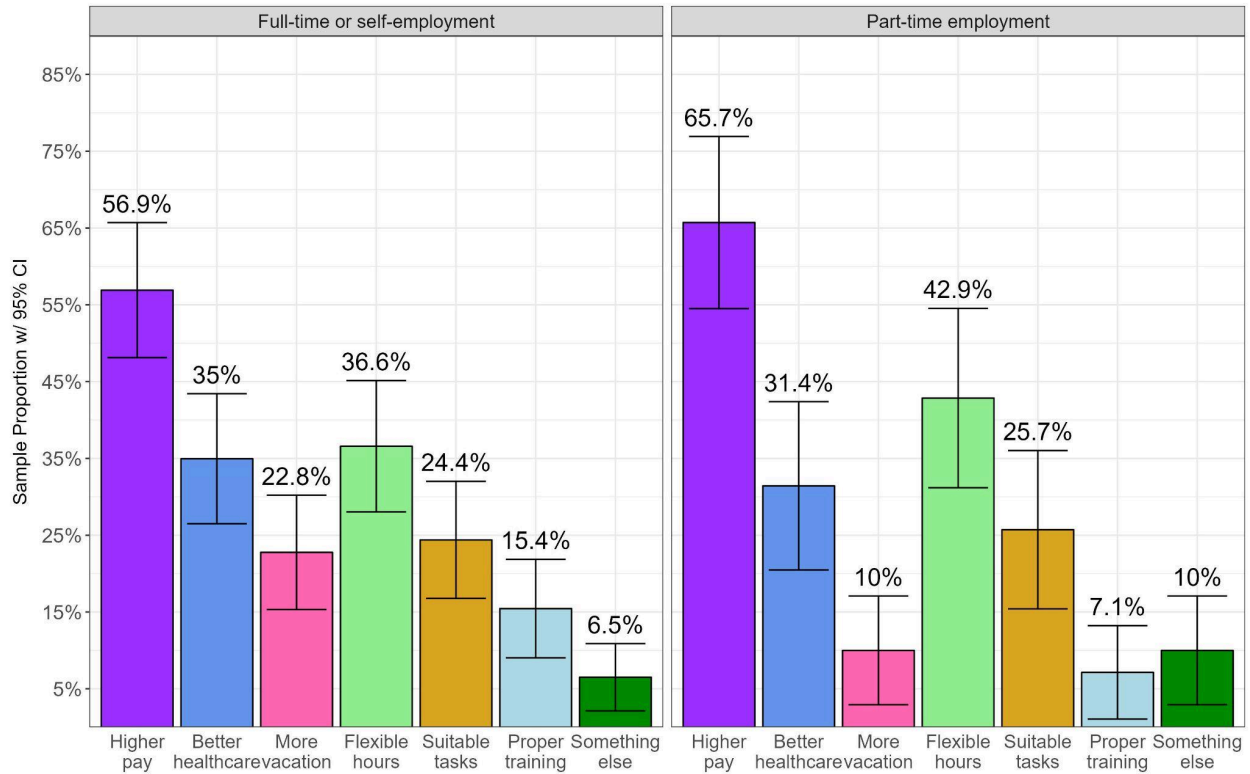


Figure 37. Sample Proportions of Employment Needs by Employment Status

While there were signs of differences in job satisfaction resulting from differences in employment type, large confidence intervals mean that it is not clear whether these differences extend to the needs listed by employed Afghan Canadians. While 65.7% of part-time employees list higher pay as an occupational need, for example, this is not significantly different from the 56.9% of full-time employees or self-employed individuals who responded to our survey and told us they also needed higher pay. Even so, it is noteworthy that part-time employees were about half as likely to say they need more vacation than full-time or self-employed individuals (10% compared to 22.8%) or that they are still in need of proper training (7.1% compared to 15.4%).

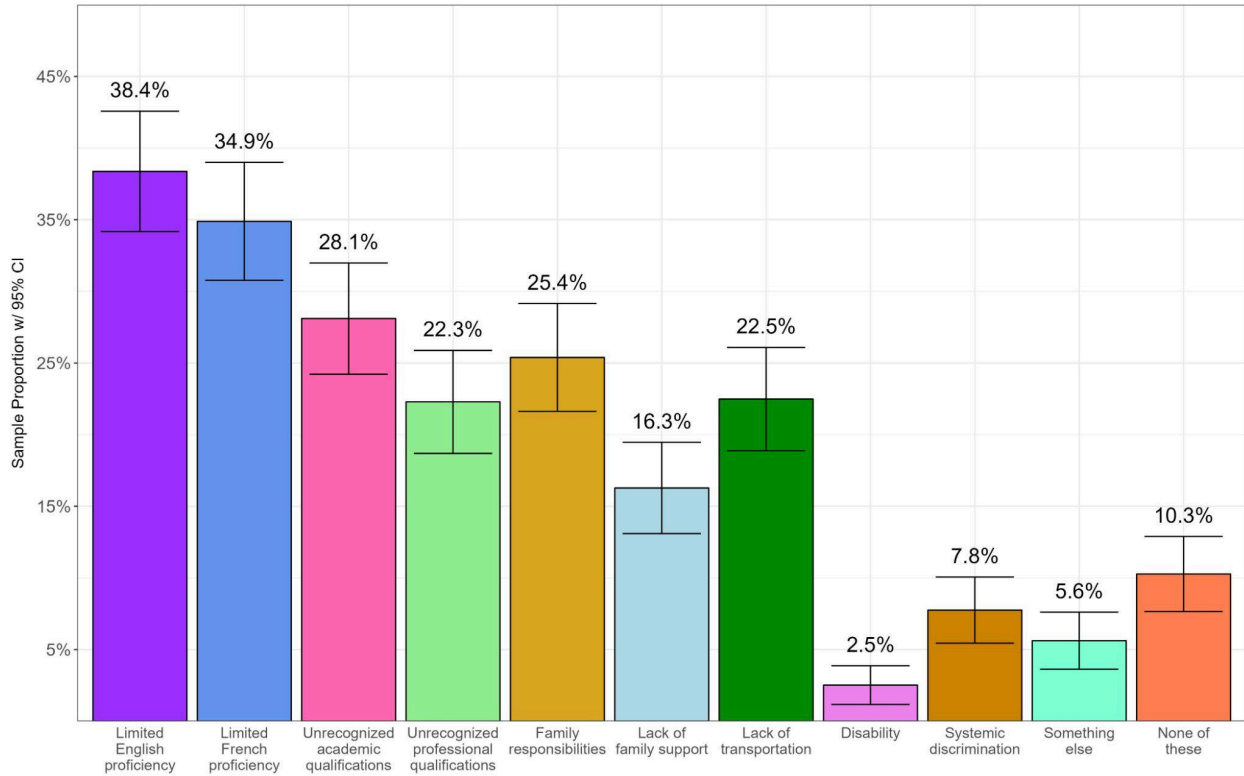


Figure 38. Sample Proportions of Employment Challenges among Afghan Canadians

Employed or otherwise, almost all Afghan Canadians in our sample were able to list challenges they have faced or are currently facing while searching for employment. The greatest of these challenges seems to be limited English proficiency (38.4%), followed closely by limited French proficiency (34.9%). Unrecognized qualifications also pose a major challenge to employment for Afghan Canadians, with around 3 in 10 of our respondents having told us that they have unrecognized academic qualifications (28.1%) and around 2 in 10 have unrecognized professional qualifications (22.3%).

Interestingly, 25.4% of Afghan Canadians said that family responsibilities have made finding employment a challenge, while another 16.3% reported that they had insufficient family support. A surprisingly high proportion of Afghan Canadians, around 1 in 5 (22.5%), indicated that they lacked transportation that could help with finding an appropriate job. Fewer than 1 in 10 identified systemic discrimination as a challenge when finding employment (7.8%), while another 1 in 10 indicated that they could not think of any challenges faced in the process of finding an occupation in Canada (10.3%).

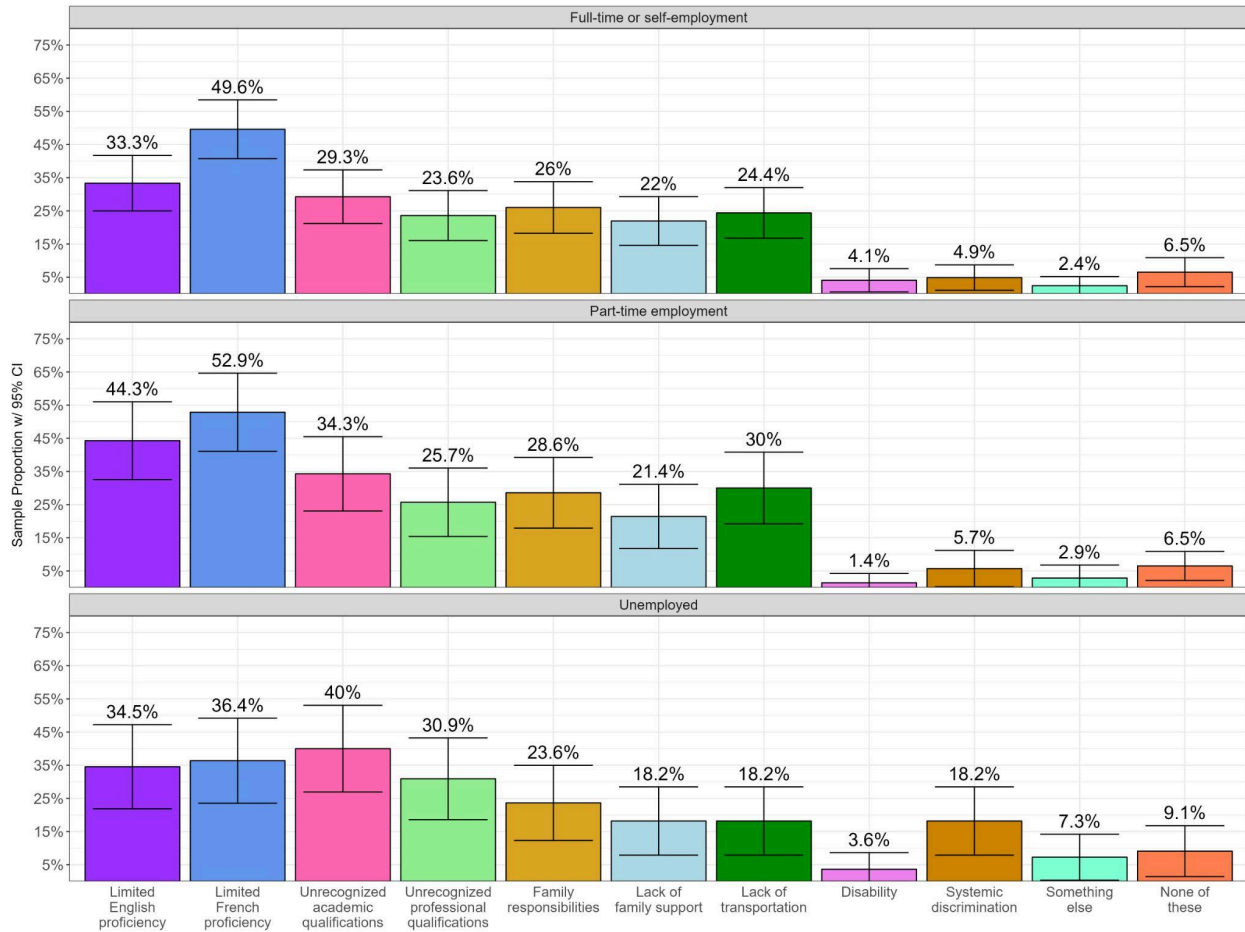


Figure 39. Sample Proportions of Employment Challenges by Employment Status

Looking at Afghan Canadians by their employment status, there are no clear indications of significant differences in employment challenges, in part due to large confidence intervals produced by a small sample size. Still, it is striking that unemployed Afghan Canadians appear far more likely to identify systemic discrimination as an employment challenge (18.2%) than Afghan Canadians with part-time employment (5.7%) or full-time/self-employment (4.9%). Unemployed Afghan Canadians are also slightly more likely to say that they have unrecognized academic or professional qualifications than employed Afghan Canadians, implying a connection between unrecognized credentials and perceptions of discrimination as systemic.

Challenges

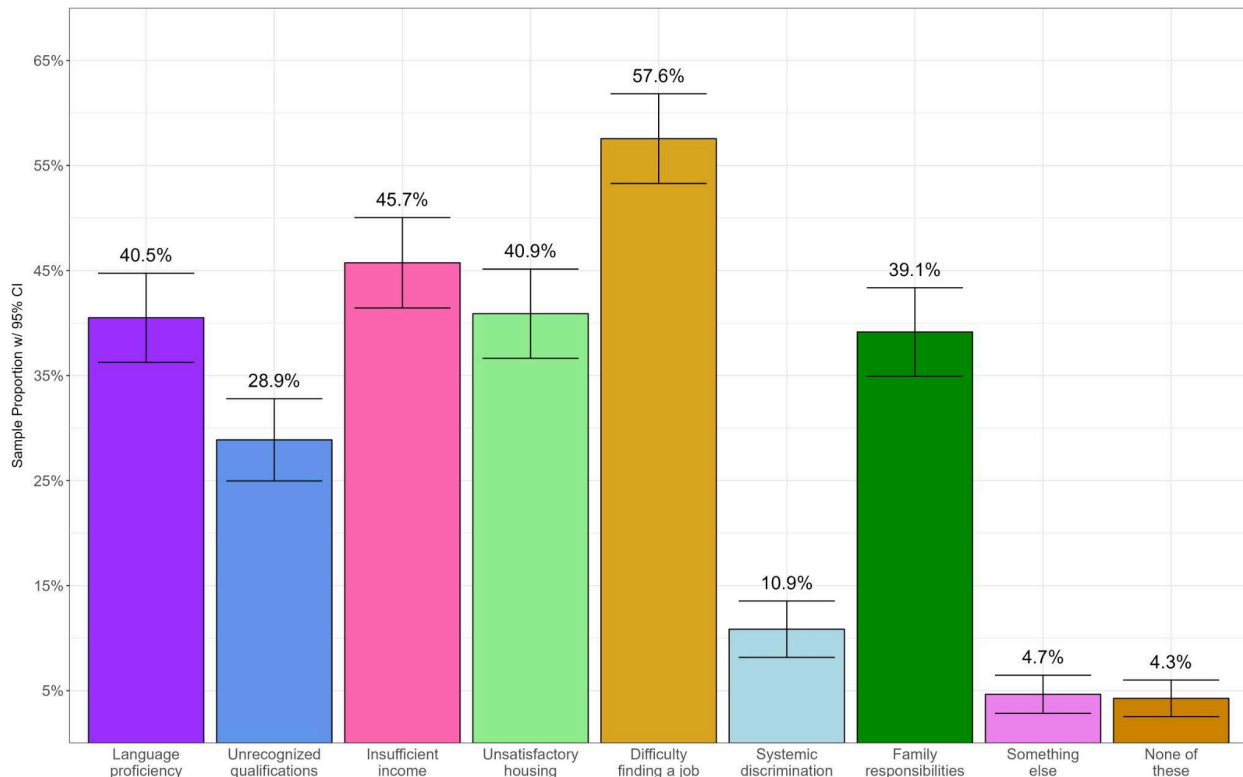


Figure 40. Sample Proportions of Life Challenges Faced by Afghan Canadians

Afghan Canadians responding to our survey identify several challenges to comfortably living in Canada. The most significant challenge is undoubtedly finding a job (57.6%), which comes with its own set of obstacles, as we have addressed above. Our sample also indicates that Afghan Canadians must commonly contend with insufficient income (45.7%), locating satisfactory housing (40.9%), becoming proficient in English or French (40.5%), and family responsibilities (39.1%), among other issues. Around 1 in 10 of our respondents (10.9%) identified systemic discrimination as a challenge to a comfortable life in Canada, while only 4.3% told us that they did not face any challenges.

When we asked focus group participants how they felt day-to-day life had changed for them since arriving in Canada, most participants began by listing a new challenge that they faced in their daily life. Speaking to a group of Afghan Canadians who arrived in 2021 or thereafter, many were still searching for employment. One young man from Winnipeg volunteered that “job hunting is exhausting due to unfamiliarity with the job market and credential recognition issues”, while one 67-year-old man told us that “everyday activities that were simple back home, like communicating with neighbours or understanding local customs, are now complex and intimidating”. A woman from the same focus group echoed these frustrations, noting that “basic tasks require more effort because of language barriers”. An elderly man from Quebec also shared his frustration with language barriers, saying that “life has become more challenging since arriving here ... the language barrier and the need to understand the job market here make [finding a job] quite difficult”. One mother of six children said that “emotionally, [adapting to

life in Canada] has been a roller coaster, but we are trying to stay positive”. With respect to housing, a 35-year-old woman posited that “improving access to affordable housing should be a priority for [her] provincial government, as many refugee families struggle to find suitable and affordable homes”.

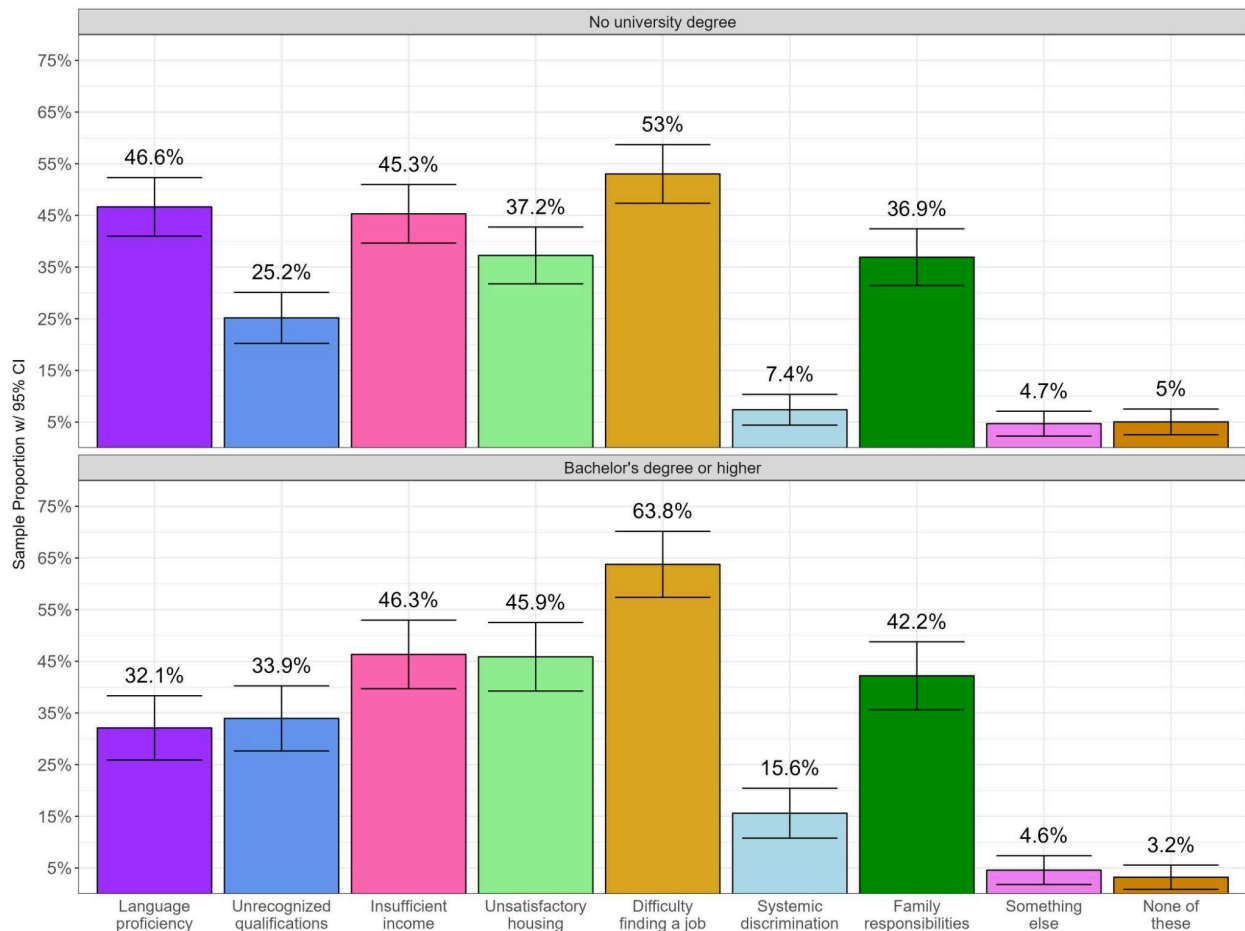


Figure 41. Sample Proportions of Life Challenges by Education

The challenges that Afghan Canadians identify to comfortably living in Canada differ by education, though not substantially. About half of individuals without a university degree said that finding a job was a challenge for them (53%), compared to around 6 in 10 individuals with a Bachelor’s degree or higher (63.8%). Individuals without a university degree are also marginally less likely to say that unsatisfactory housing is a challenge (37.2% compared to 45.9%), even as they are a bit more likely to say that they are challenged by a lack of language proficiency (46.6% compared to 32.1%).

Interestingly, individuals with a Bachelor’s degree or higher reported that systemic discrimination was a challenge to life in Canada about twice as frequently as those without a university degree (15.6% compared to 7.4%). University-educated Afghan Canadians were also somewhat more likely to identify unrecognized qualifications as a challenge to living in Canada (33.9% compared to 25.2%). Students from our focus groups commonly told us that adapting to the education system in Canada has been a challenge itself, with one undergraduate telling us frankly that

“the educational system does not provide adequate support for newcomer students”. Nevertheless, Afghan Canadian students express a commitment to overcoming these challenges, with one young woman saying this: “Despite the barriers I face ... I remain determined. My past experiences and qualifications are the foundation, but it’s my perseverance that will build my future”.

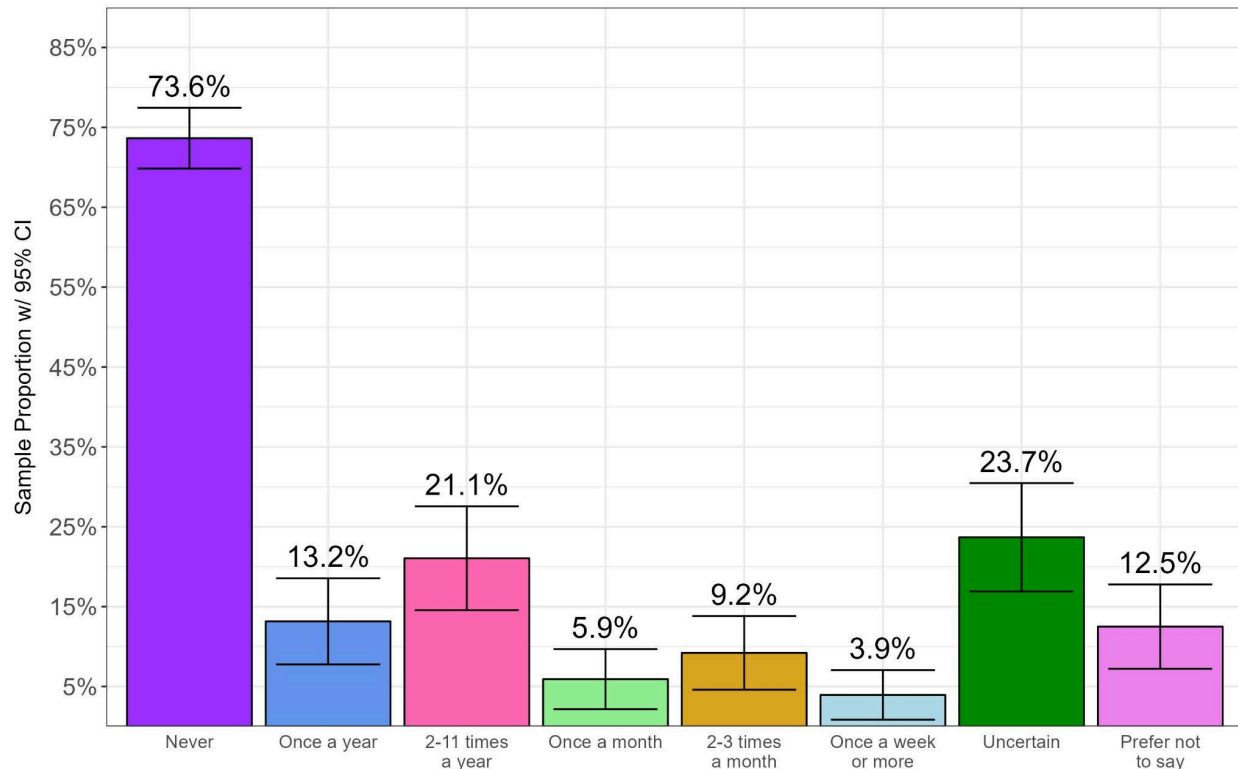


Figure 42. Sample Proportions of Experiences with Prejudice among Afghan Canadians

Delving deeper into experiences with prejudice, it seems that most Afghan Canadian respondents cannot recall a time that they have been the subject of prejudicial treatment (73.6%), while around 1 in 10 cannot recall how often they have faced prejudice or would prefer not to say (10.7%). The remainder of Afghan Canadians in our sample admitted that they have faced prejudice while living in Canada at least once a year (15.7%), with around 1 in 20 saying that they must deal with prejudice on a monthly basis or more frequently (5.6%).

Despite these figures, when we asked Afghan Canadians about how they thought discrimination was impacting members of their community, most were readily able to offer relevant examples. One Manitoban man, a 34-year-old who was searching for a home at the time, told us that “discrimination in the housing market has made it difficult to find decent housing”. Another man, 59 years old, said that “we often face prejudice in public spaces, which affects our confidence and willingness to participate in community activities”. Another man, aged 67, noted that “subtle forms of racism and microaggressions have a cumulative negative effect on mental health and well being”. A 27-year-old woman echoed this statement, sharing that “the psychological impact of discrimination makes it hard to feel welcome and secure in the community”. Collectively,

these results suggest that Afghan Canadians may be underreporting their experiences with prejudice while taking our survey.

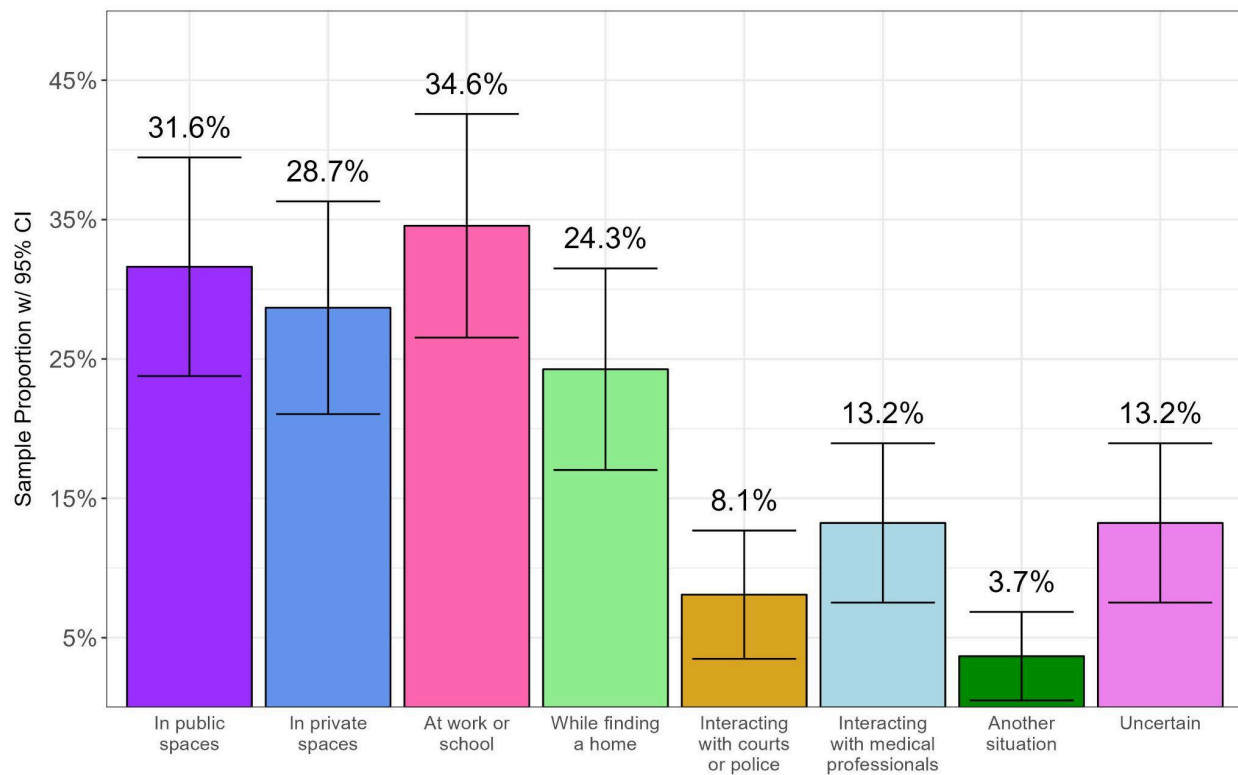


Figure 43. Sample Proportions of Where Afghan Canadians Experienced Prejudice

Among Afghans who could identify times where they had faced prejudice while living in Canada, responses are congruent with the comments we received from our focus groups. The most common situation where prejudice occurred was at work or school (34.6%), according to our sample. Focus group responses seem to corroborate this result, as participants who were asked about discrimination commonly told us about an experience at school or in their workplace. One man, a 29-year-old living in Prince Edward Island, noted subtle biases in his workplace, commenting that “colleagues sometimes assume that I’m not as competent until I prove myself, which can be frustrating and demoralizing ... it’s tough when people judge me before knowing me”. A participant in the same focus group agreed with this statement, saying that while “growing up in Canada, I faced several instances of discrimination ... one of the most memorable was during my university years”.

Prejudice toward Afghan Canadians is also relatively frequent in public spaces (31.6%) like parks or shopping malls, in private spaces (28.7%) like somebody’s place of business or home, while finding a home (24.3%), while interacting with medical professionals (13.2%), and while interacting with courts or police (8.1%). One woman living in Newfoundland and Labrador admitted that she had experienced “a few uncomfortable interactions with the police”, including an instance where “a police officer approached [her] and started asking questions about where [she] was going and why”. Since this incident, the woman has started to “avoid certain areas

where [she] feels [she] might be questioned again”. Around 1 in 8 Afghan Canadians said that they had experienced prejudice while living in Canada but could not recall the situations in which the experience(s) had occurred (13.2%).

Welcomeness

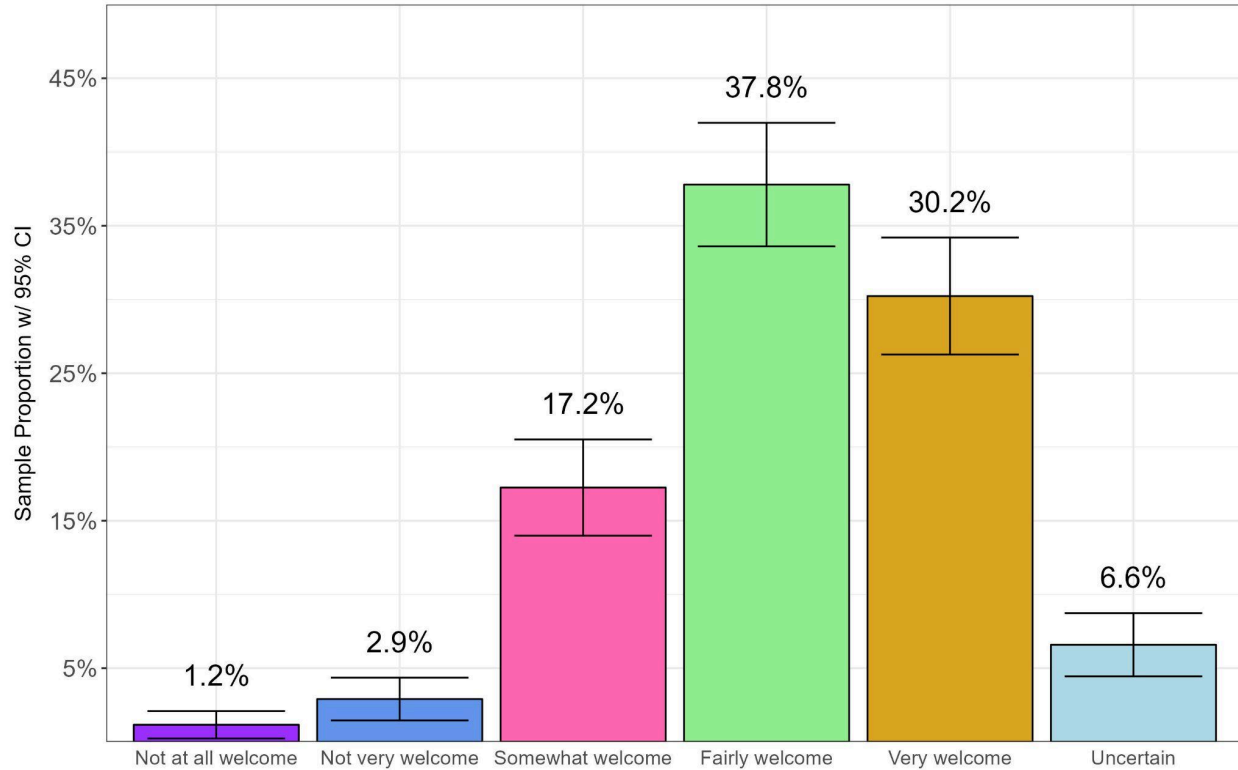


Figure 44. Sample Proportions of Neighbourhood Welcomeness among Afghan Canadians

Though many Afghan Canadians in our sample have faced considerable obstacles while living in Canada, including some who recall having faced prejudice, most respondents also report feeling fairly welcome (37.8%) or very welcome (30.2%) in their neighbourhood. Only around 1 in 20 said that they felt less than somewhat welcome in their neighbourhood (4.1%), with around the same proportion indicating that they were still uncertain about how welcome they should feel in their neighbourhood (6.6%).

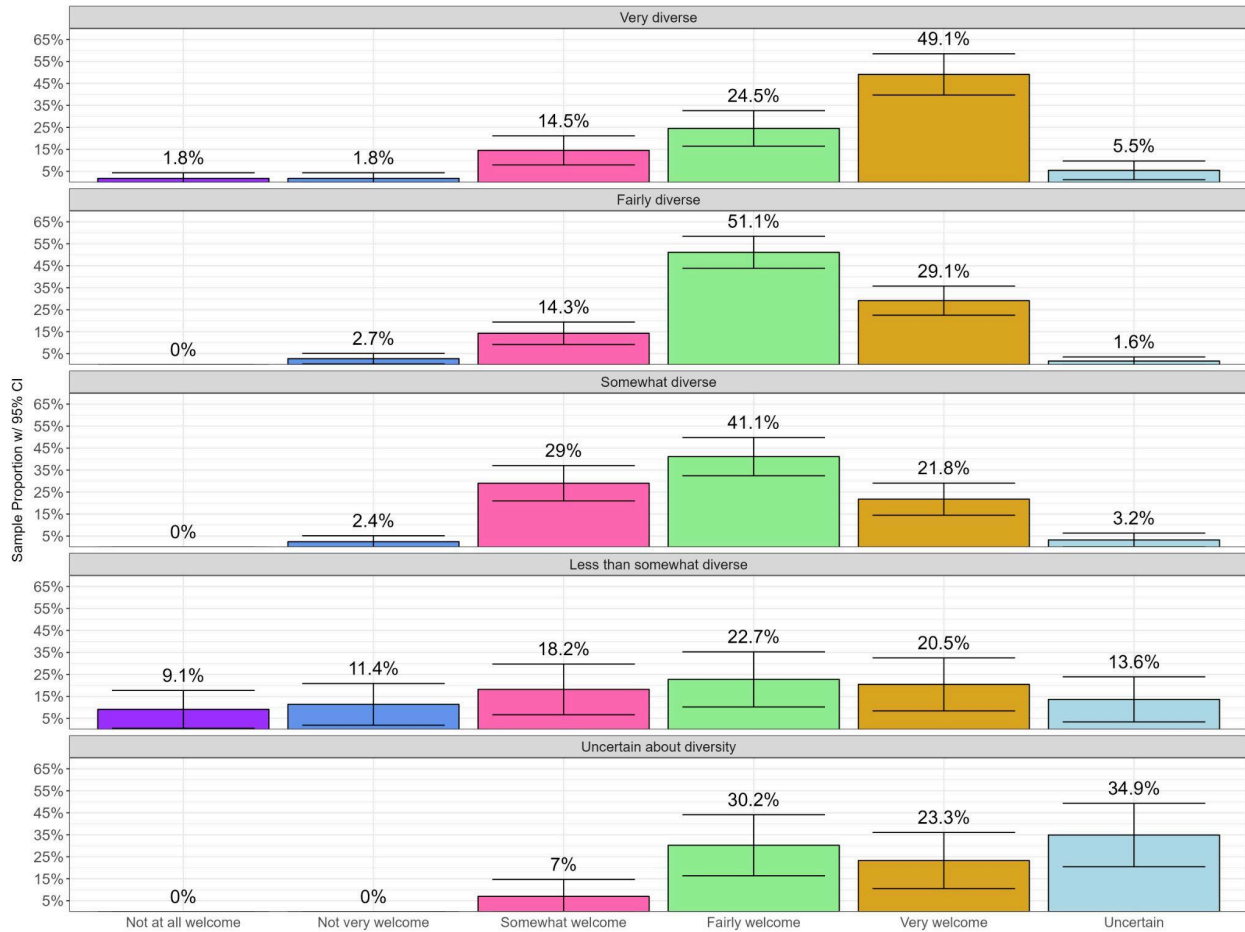


Figure 45. Sample Proportions of Neighbourhood Welcomeness by Diversity

Our survey respondents' perceptions of how welcome they are in their own neighbourhoods appear at least partly dependent on the opinions about their perception of the diversity of their neighbourhoods. Overall, it seems that more diverse neighbourhoods equate to a stronger feeling of welcomeness. For example, while around 2 in 10 Afghan Canadian respondents from neighbourhoods deemed as less than somewhat diverse said they felt very welcome in their neighbourhood (20.5%), around half of Afghan Canadian respondents from very diverse neighbourhoods said the same (49.1%).

According to our sample, Afghans from less than somewhat diverse neighbourhoods also stated that they felt not very welcome (11.4%) or not at all welcome (9.1%) much more frequently than Afghans living in neighbourhoods that were viewed as at least somewhat diverse. Notably, members of the Afghan community who were still uncertain about the diversity of their neighbourhood also tended to be uncertain about how welcome they are in their neighbourhood (34.9%), though many also said that they feel fairly or very welcome (53.5%).

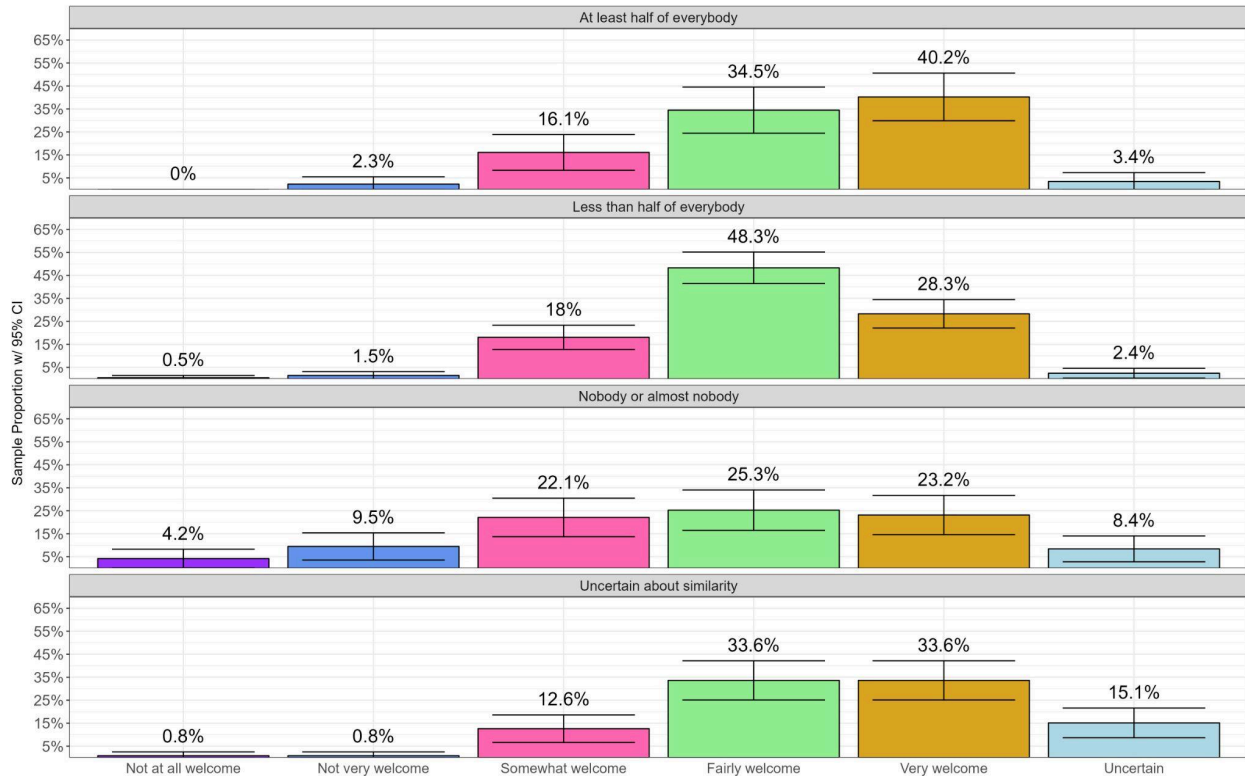


Figure 46. Sample Proportions of Neighbourhood Welcomeness by Cultural Similarity

How welcome members of the Afghan Canadian community feel in their neighbourhoods also seems dependent on how many people are perceived as culturally similar to themselves. Approximately 2 in 10 Afghan Canadian respondents who told us that nobody or almost nobody in their neighbourhood shares a similar cultural background also indicated that they felt very welcome in their neighbourhood (23.2%), compared to around 4 in 10 among those who said that at least half of everybody in their neighbourhood shared a similar cultural background to themselves (40.2%). Similarly, just 2.3% of Afghan Canadian respondents living in neighbourhoods where at least half of everybody is perceived as coming from a similar cultural background said that they felt less than somewhat welcome in their neighbourhood. Afghan Canadian respondents living in neighbourhoods where nobody or almost nobody shares a similar cultural identity were around five times more likely to say the same thing (13.7%).

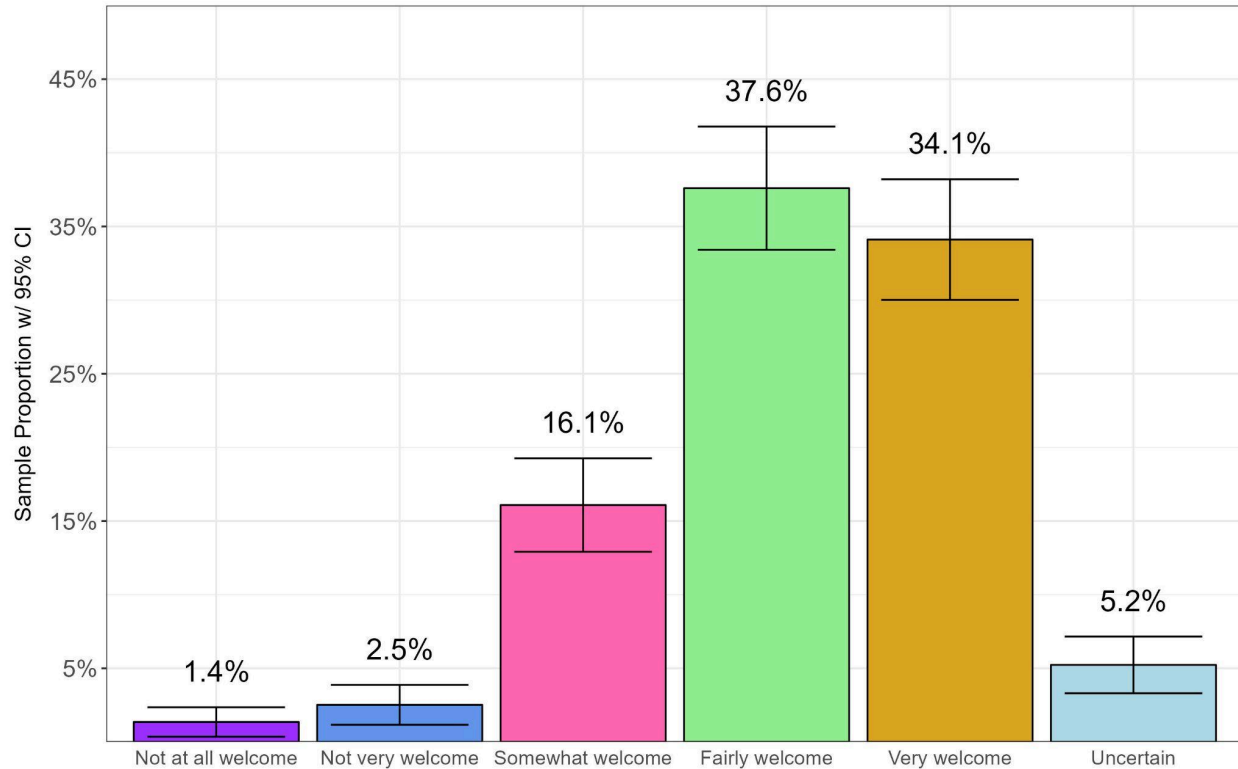


Figure 47. Sample Proportions of Welcomeness in Canada among Afghan Canadians

Just as most Afghan Canadians in our sample indicated feeling fairly or very welcome in their neighbourhood, the majority of Afghan Candians told us that they felt very welcome (37.6%) or very welcome (34.1%) in Canada. Very few individuals said that they felt unwelcome, in contrast (3.7%), with another 1 in 6 individuals sharing that they felt somewhat welcome (16.1%). When we asked focus group participants about their experiences in Canada, many individuals shared at least one thing they felt was positive or more positive than they had expected, and these positives may contribute to a feeling of welcomeness in Canada. One British Columbian man, a 24-year-old, told us that “I’ve found Canada’s education system more supportive and flexible than expected. The resources and diverse community have truly enriched my learning journey”, while an older woman aged 60 commented that “many aspects of life in Canada have been better than expected”, implying that how welcome Afghan Canadians feel in Canada is partially dependent on their own expectations about how simple or complicated life will be upon their arrival.

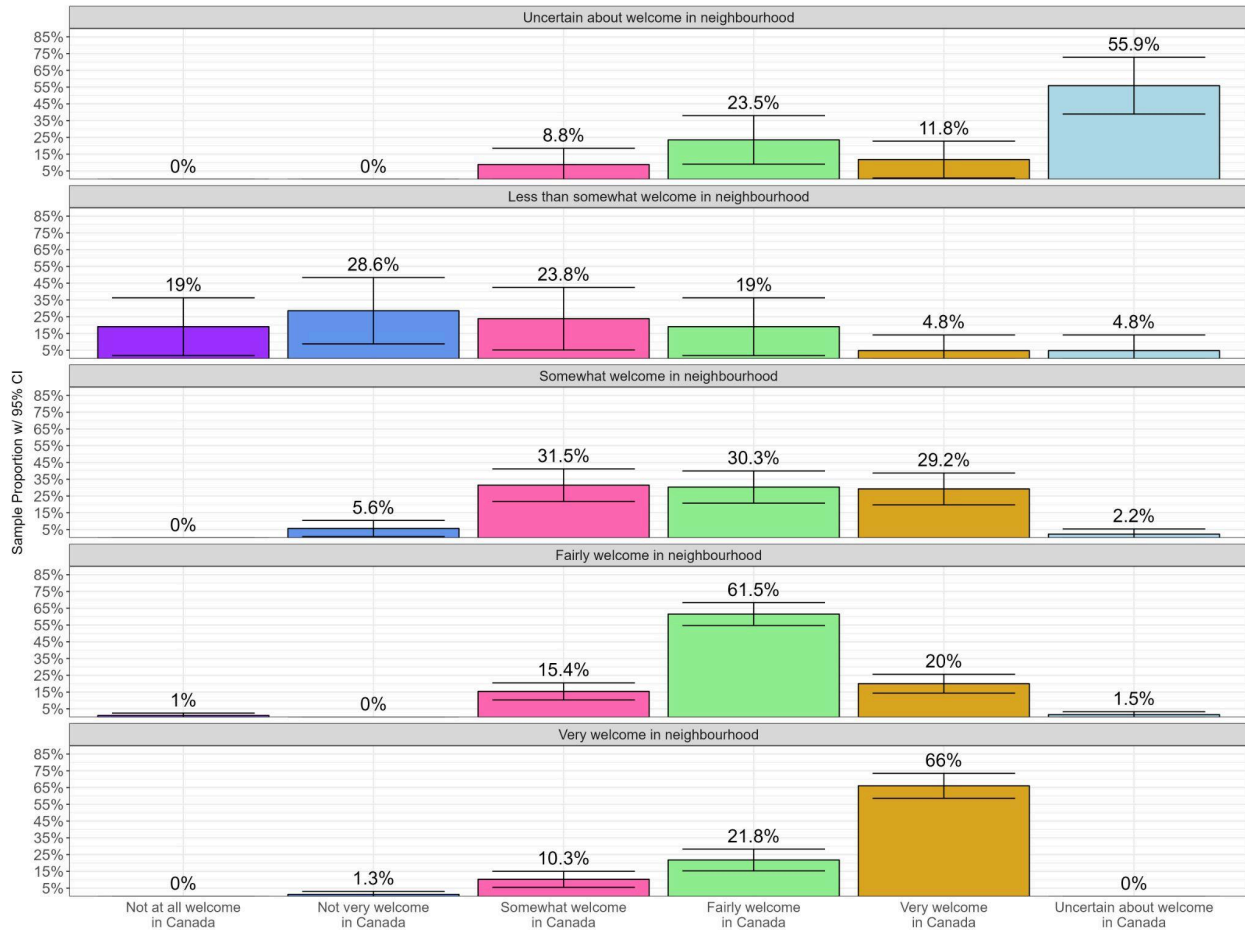


Figure 48. Sample Proportions of Welcomeness in Canada by Neighbourhood Welcomeness

Given the similarities between how welcome Afghan Canadians feel in their neighbourhood and how welcome they feel in Canada, it is not surprising to see evidence that feeling welcome in Canada depends on how welcome one feels in their local area. Compared to Afghan Canadians who admit they feel less than somewhat welcome in their own neighbourhood, the proportion of Afghan Canadians who say they are very welcome in their neighbourhood and who indicated feeling very welcome in Canada is around thirteen times greater (66% compared to 4.8%).

Afghan Canadians who feel less than somewhat welcome in their neighbourhood are also far more likely to indicate feeling less than welcome in Canada (47.6%) than other community members. Among those who reported feeling uncertain about how welcome they are in their neighbourhood, about half (55.9%) shared that they were also uncertain about their welcome in Canada. Our focus group interviews corroborate the idea that one's welcomeness in Canada is impacted by how welcome one feels in their neighbourhood: according to one 64-year-old man, the community's willingness to help newcomers has been a positive aspect of his experience in Canada.

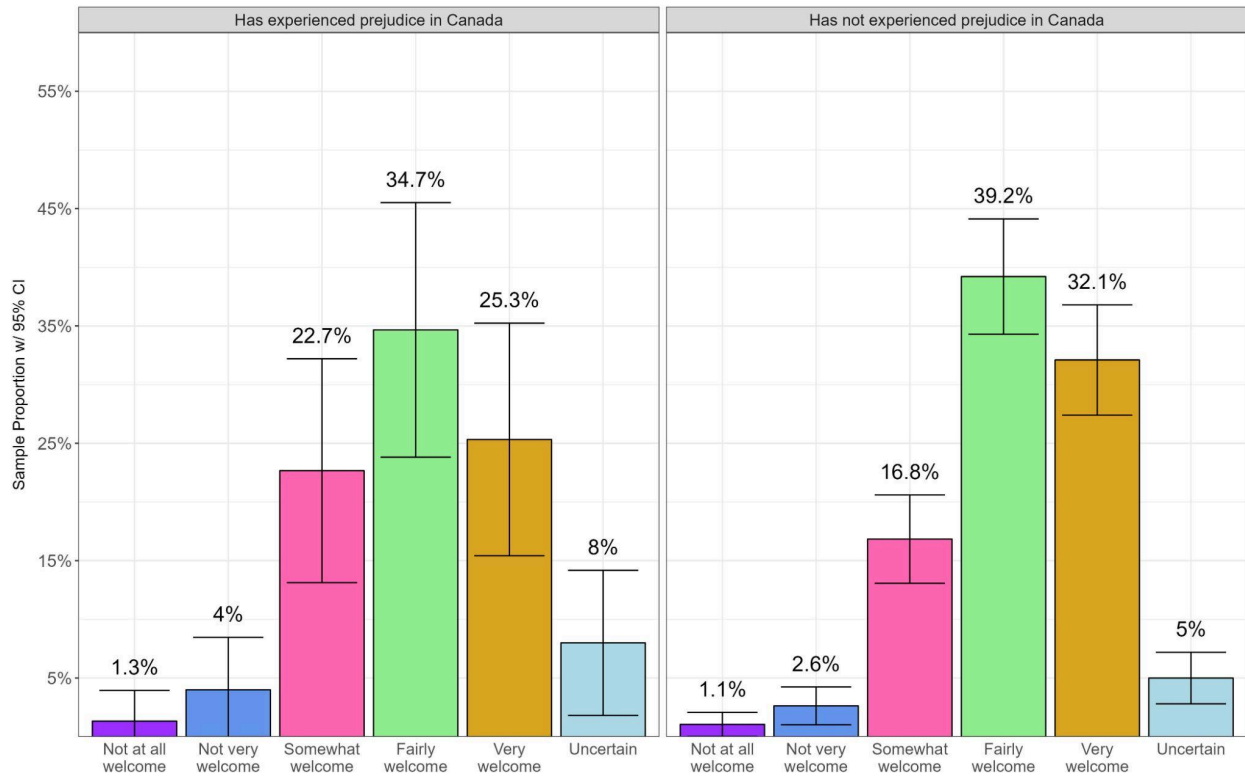


Figure 49. Sample Proportions of Welcomeness in Canada by Experiences with Prejudice

Though there is good reason to believe that experiencing prejudice might make Afghan Canadians feel less welcome in Canada, our data reflects that being the subject of prejudice does not significantly temper how welcome one feels here, on average. Still, it may be worth noting that individuals who have not experienced prejudice while living in Canada told us they felt fairly or very welcome in Canada more frequently than those who have faced prejudice (71.3% compared to 60%). Moreover, there is likely a difference between experiencing prejudice intermittently compared to experiencing it on a weekly or daily basis, and it may be that more frequent experiences with prejudice will exert a more substantially negative influence on one's perceived welcomeness in Canada.

News Consumption

Habits

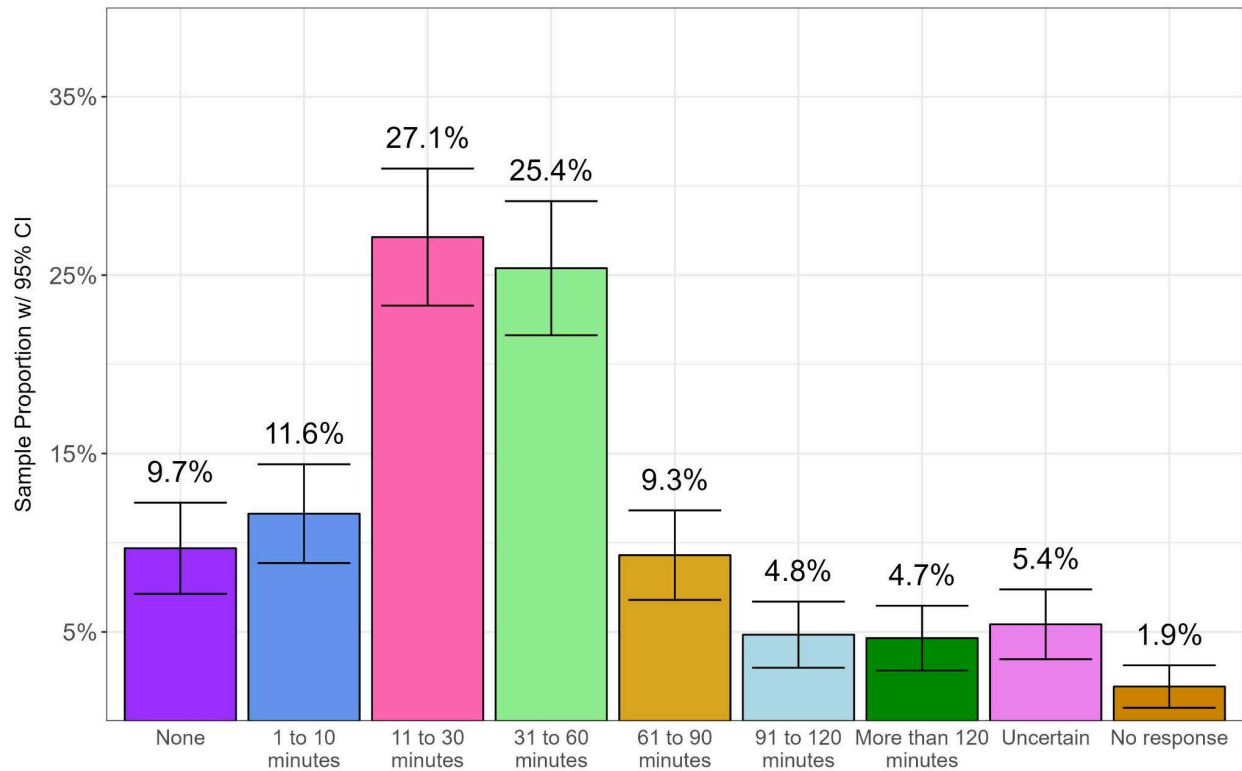


Figure 50. Sample Proportions of Daily News Consumption among Afghan Canadians

Afghan Canadians appear to be avid news consumers. While around 1 in 10 survey respondents told us that they do not watch, read, or listen to the news (9.7%), around 8 in 10 (82.9%) do consume the news. Around half of Afghan Canadians consume 11 to 60 minutes of news each day (52.5%).

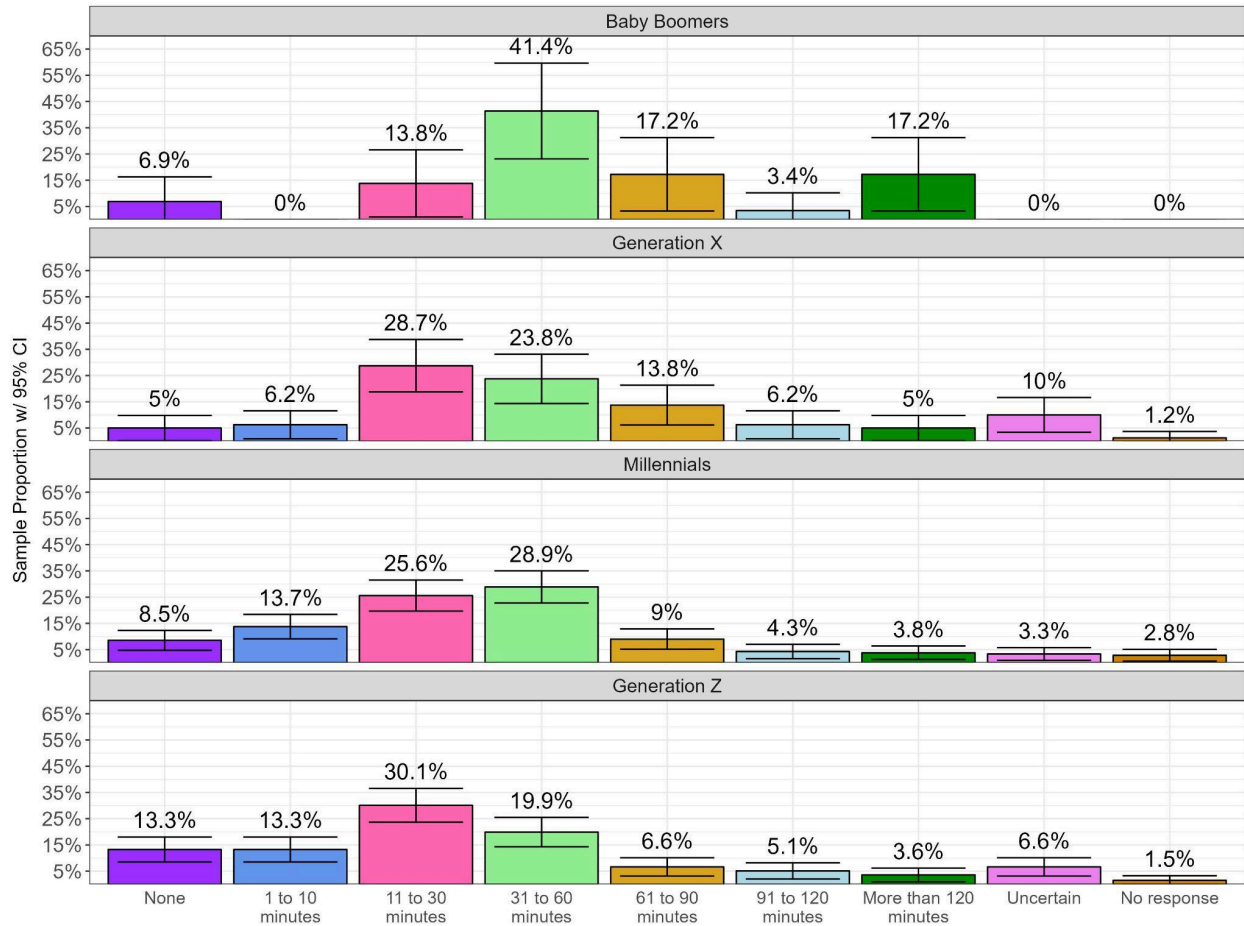


Figure 51. Sample Proportions of Daily News Consumption by Generation

Our data suggests that news consumption varies by generation, even though small sample sizes slightly inhibit our ability to make confident conclusions. Generation Z appears slightly less likely than other generations to consume the news on a daily basis, with 13.3% of Generation Z Afghans indicating that they are not news consumers, compared to 8.5% among Millennials and even lower among Generation X and Baby Boomers. The same proportion of Generation Z Afghans (13.3%) told us they consume news for no more than ten minutes a day, on par with Millennials (13.7%) but well above the proportions of Generation X (6.2%) and Baby Boomers (0%) who said the same thing. The modal Generation Z Afghan told us that they consume news for around 11 to 30 minutes a day (30.1%).

In stark contrast to Generation Z, the oldest generation in our survey – Baby Boomers – seems to be the generation that spends the most time consuming news content. Relatively few indicated that they spend less than half an hour consuming the news each day (20.7%), while double that proportion told us that they enjoy the news each day for somewhere between 31 to 60 minutes (41.4%). Notably, around 1 in 5 Baby Boomer Afghan Canadians said that they read, watch, or listened to the news for more than two hours each day (17.2%), much higher than the proportions observed of other generations. Why generation seems to correlate with the amount of time spent consuming news is unclear, but age itself is likely a large factor: younger people

may be less likely to understand the importance of staying up-to-date on current events, while seniors may have more time available for keeping up with the news.

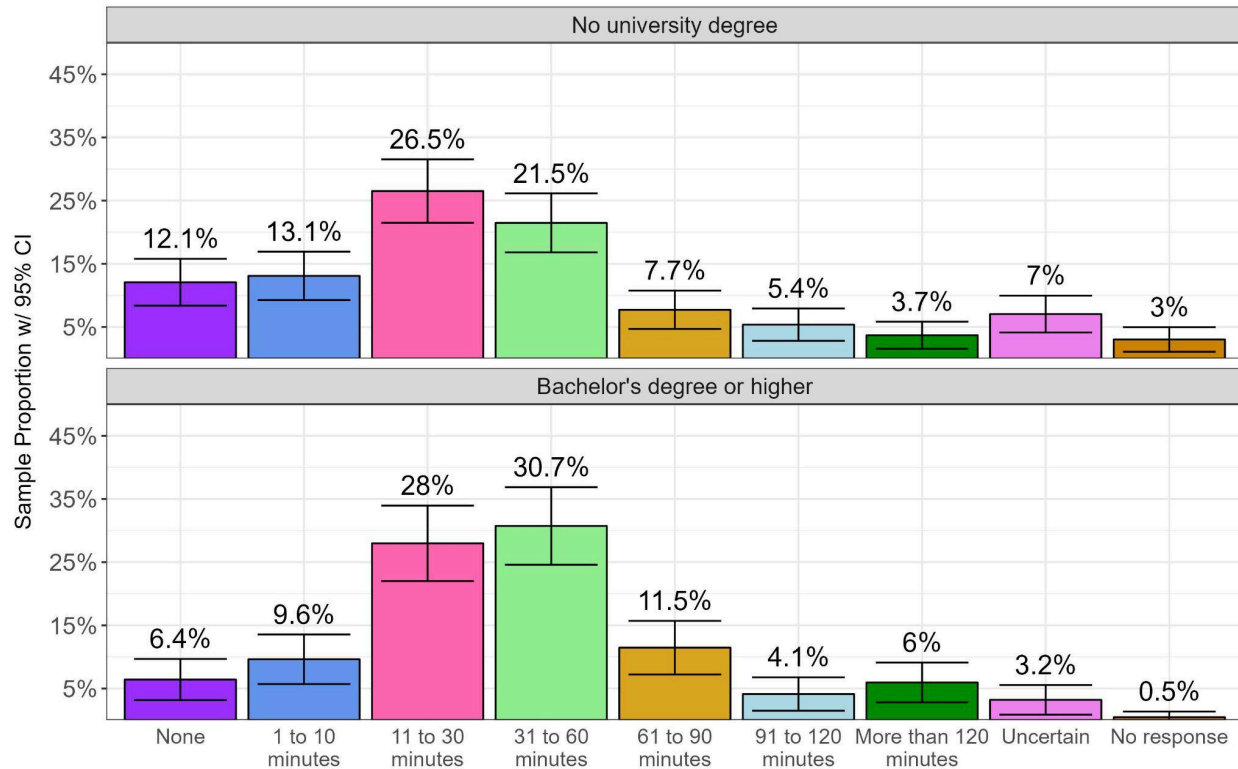


Figure 52. Sample Proportions of Daily News Consumption by Education

Differences in news consumption within the Afghan community can also be observed by way of educational attainment. In effect, it appears that Afghan Canadians without a university degree are more likely to say that they do not pay attention to the news (12.1%) than those with a Bachelor’s degree or higher (6.4%), and that Afghan Canadians with a Bachelor’s degree or higher are more likely to consume the news for somewhere between 31 and 90 minutes each day (42.2% compared to 29.2%). This suggests that the low news consumption among Generation Z Afghans in our sample is partially due to some being too young to have received a university degree, but additional research is needed to demonstrate this hypothesis.

Methods

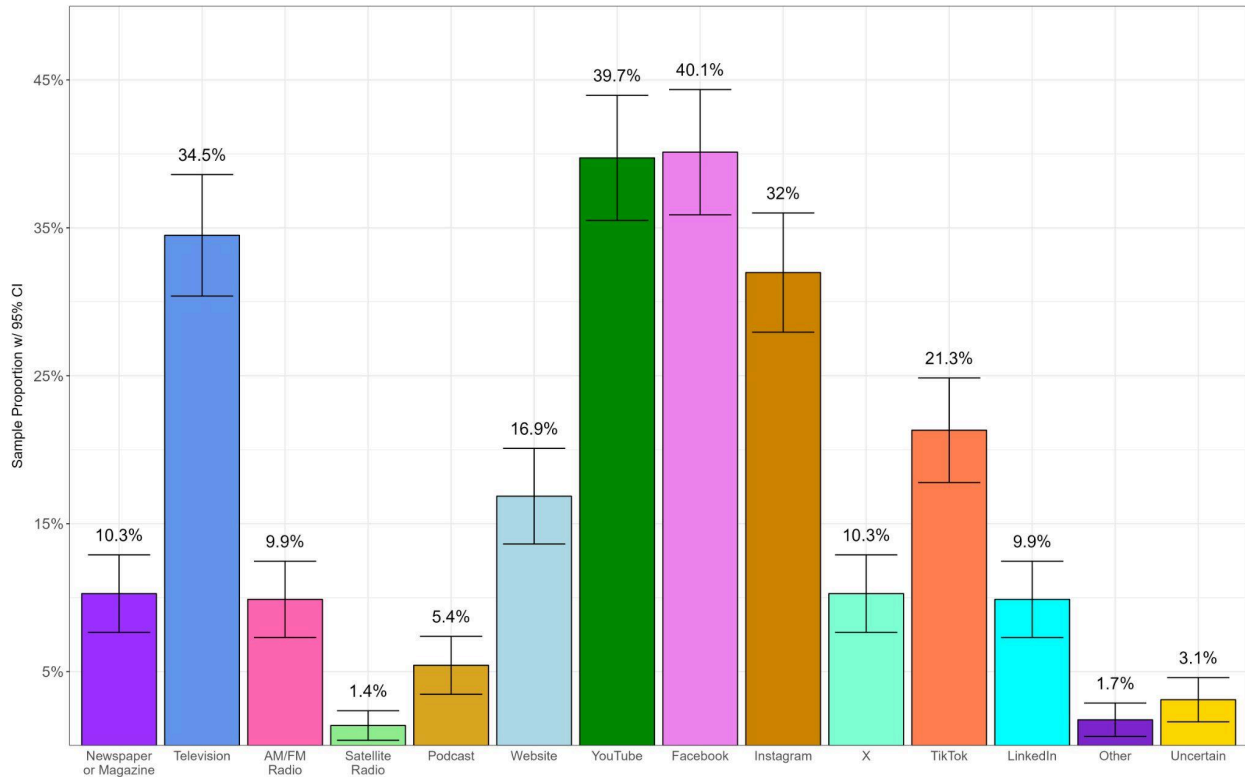


Figure 53. Sample Proportions of News Consumption Methods among Afghan Canadians

Afghan Canadians who responded to our survey told us that they use many methods to access the news, with many relying on the internet. Around 4 in 10 use Facebook to access the news (40.1%), for example, with about the same proportion using YouTube (39.7%) and slightly fewer – approximately 3 in 10 (32%) – using Instagram. Less popular online news consumption methods include TikTok (21.3%), X (10.3%), LinkedIn (16.9%), and various websites (16.9%). Podcasts (5.4%), along with more traditional forms of news consumption like print media (10.3%), are less common in comparison, with television (34.5%) marking a notable exception.

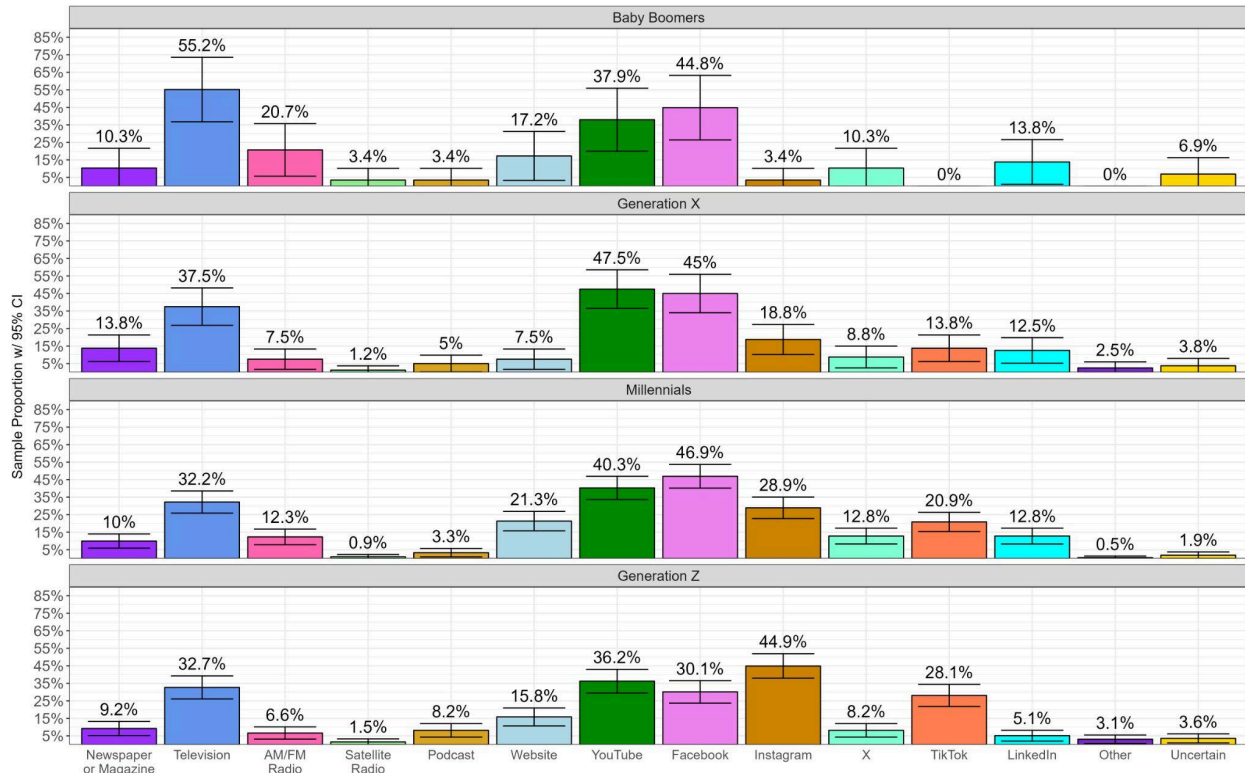


Figure 54. Sample Proportions of News Consumption Methods by Generation

Methods of accessing the news differ by generation, according to our sample of Afghan Canadians. Whereas Baby Boomers appear to most frequently access the news through television (55.2%), Generation X seems to most commonly use YouTube (47.5%) or Facebook (45%), much like Millennials (with 40.3% and 46.9%, respectively). Generation Z, in contrast to older generations, seems to rely primarily on Instagram (44.9%). Generation Z respondents also more frequently rely on TikTok (28.1%) as a source of news than other generations, while no Baby Boomers (0%) said the same thing.

Political Opinions⁸

Democratic Satisfaction

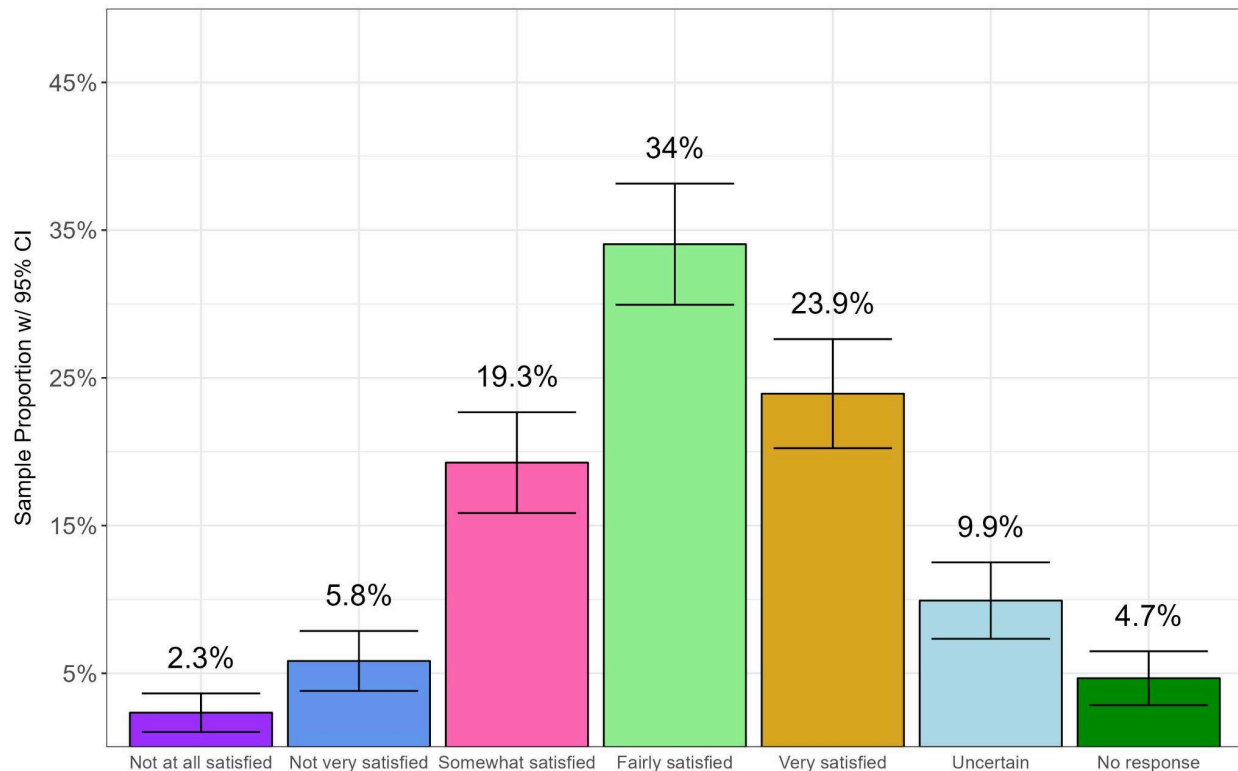


Figure 55. Sample Proportions of Democratic Satisfaction among Afghan Canadians

Most Afghan Canadians in our sample have a positive view of Canadian democracy, with around 6 in 10 having told us that they are fairly or very satisfied with the current state of democracy in Canada (57.9%). Only 1 in 10 told us they were less than somewhat satisfied with democracy in Canada (8.3%), in comparison. Our results also indicate that about 1 in 10 Afghan Canadians remain uncertain about their feelings regarding Canadian democracy (9.9%).

⁸ We would like to repeat our reminder to readers that we are using a convenience sample of Afghan Canadians that may not accurately reflect the actual composition of the Afghan community in Canada, and that this may influence our results. We also remind readers that the statistics presented here do not necessarily correlate with factors like party affiliation, vote intention, or other political opinions.

Institutional Confidence

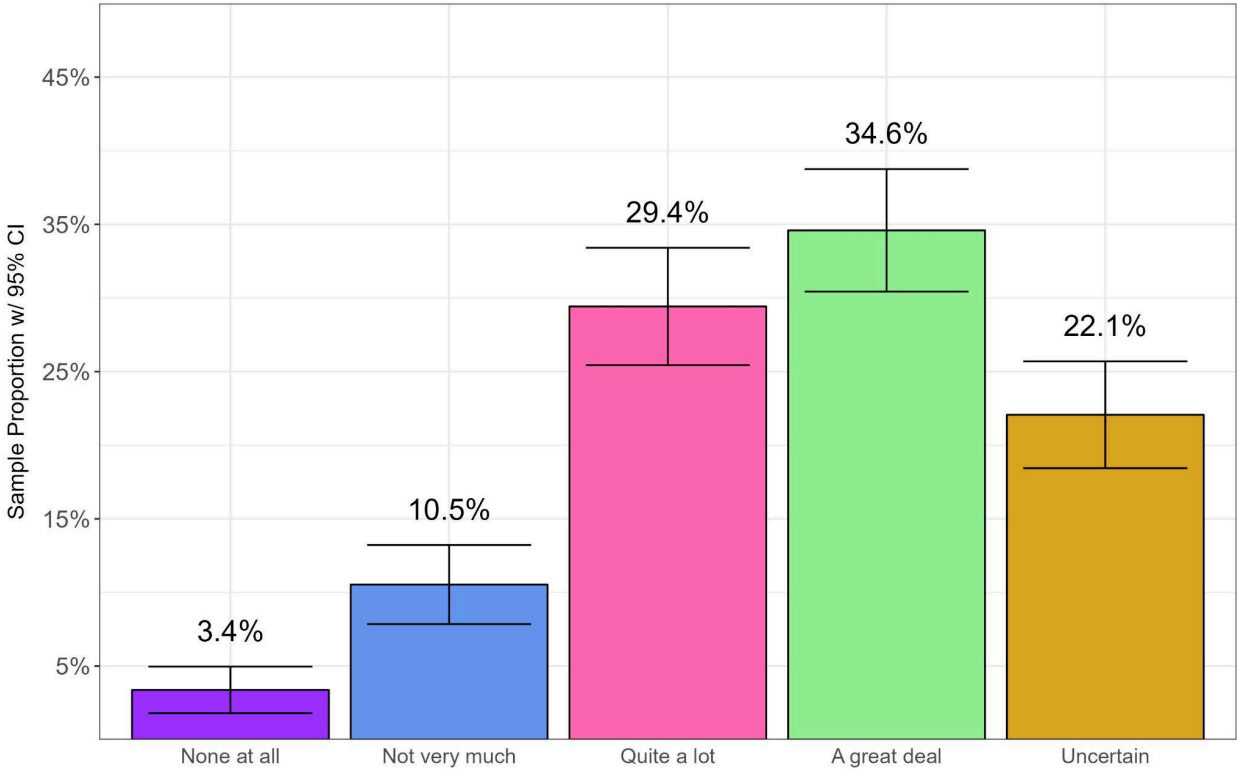


Figure 56. Sample Proportions of Federal Government Confidence among Afghan Canadians

Confidence in the federal government is high among Afghan Canadian respondents, with more than half of our sample having told us that they have quite a lot (29.4%) or a great deal (34.6%) of confidence. Only 13.9% of our respondents told us they did not have much or any confidence in the federal government, by comparison. Interestingly, Afghan Canadians told us they were uncertain about their confidence in the federal government more than twice as often as they said the same about their satisfaction with democracy, suggesting that respondents were more likely to feel they had sufficient information to form an opinion about Canadian democracy than they were to feel they knew enough about how a specific institution like the federal government has performed.

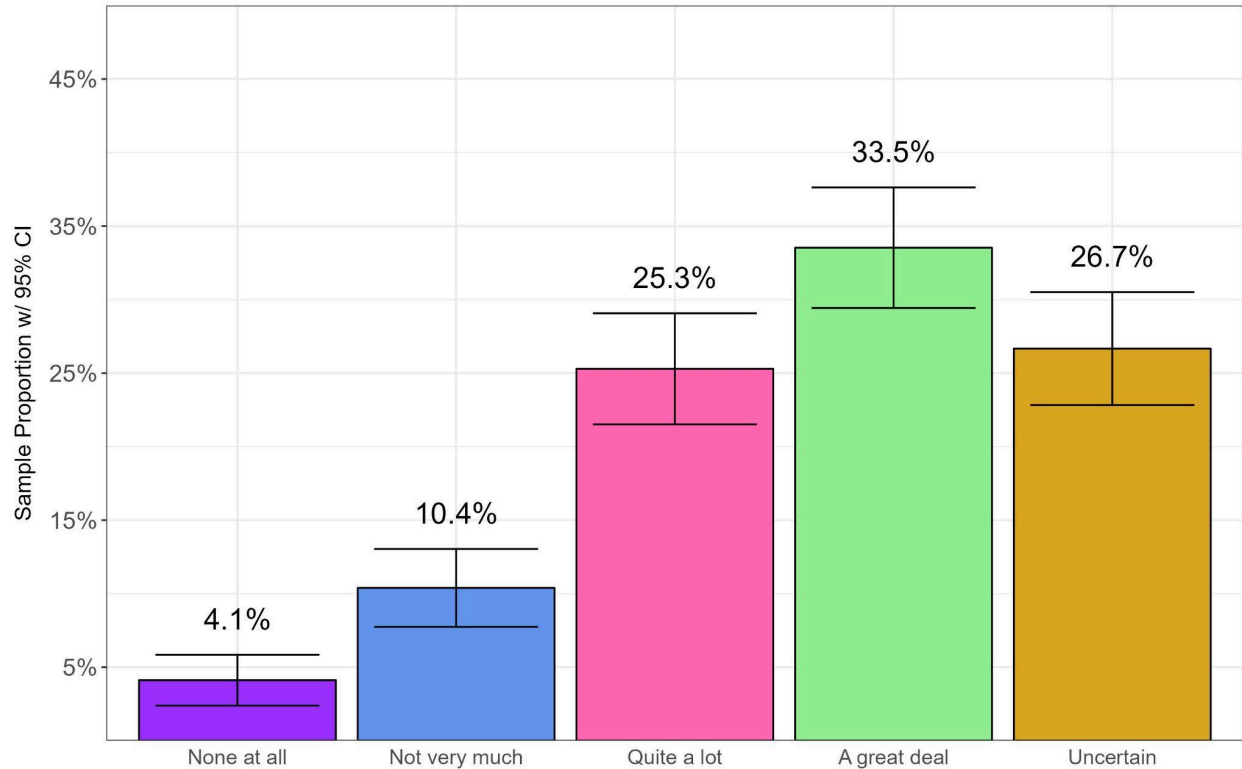


Figure 57. Sample Proportions of Provincial Government Confidence among Afghan Canadians

Afghan Canadians in our sample also tend to have confidence in their provincial governments, with about 6 in 10 having told us that they had quite a lot (25.3%) or a great deal (33.5%) of confidence. Far fewer expressed a little or no confidence (14.5%) in their provincial governments, in contrast. A substantial proportion of Afghan Canadian respondents admitted they are uncertain (26.7%) about how much confidence they should have in their provincial governments, implying that many do not feel they have enough information to form an opinion toward these institutions.

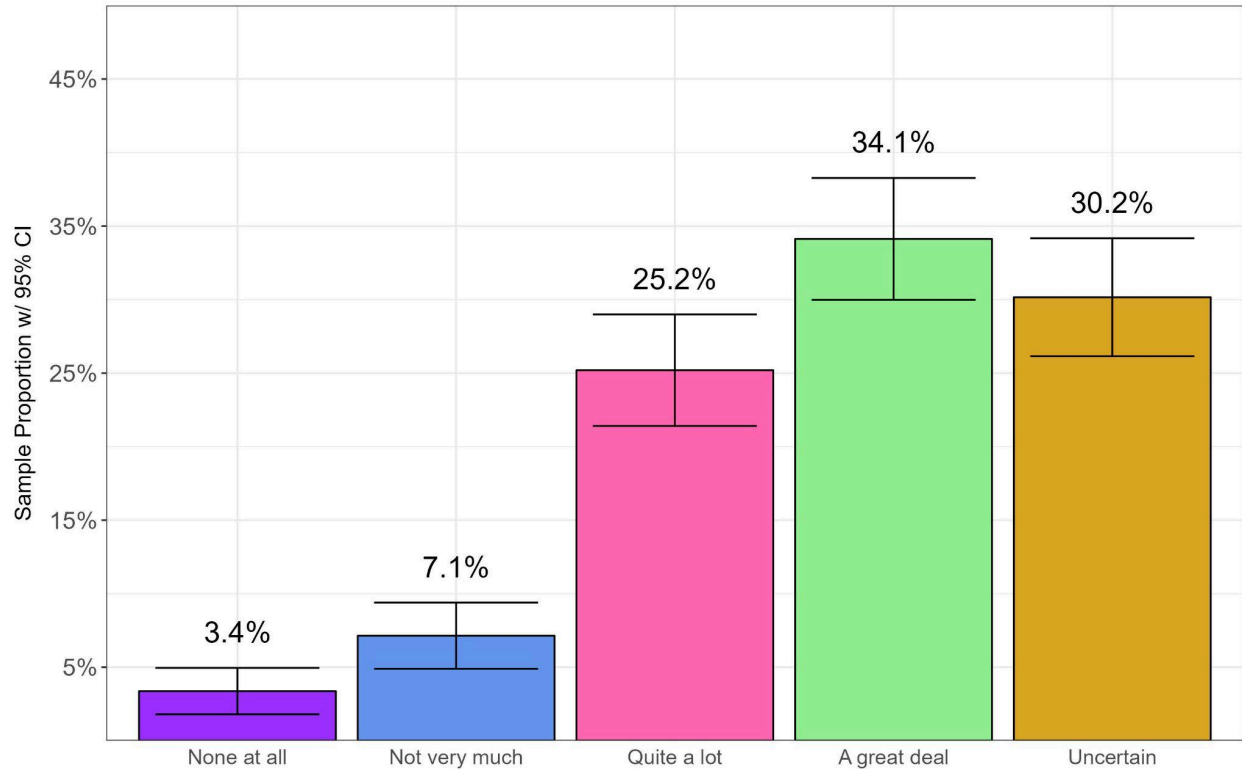


Figure 58. Sample Proportions of Confidence in Courts among Afghan Canadians

According to our sample, the Afghan community also has high confidence in Canada’s justice system, with around 6 in 10 saying that they had quite a lot (25.2%) or a great deal (34.1%) of confidence in the courts. Far fewer Afghan Canadians, around 1 in 10 (10.5%), expressed little or no confidence when asked about their opinion toward Canada’s courts, while around three times as many individuals (30.2%) indicated they did not know how much confidence they should have when thinking of these institutions.

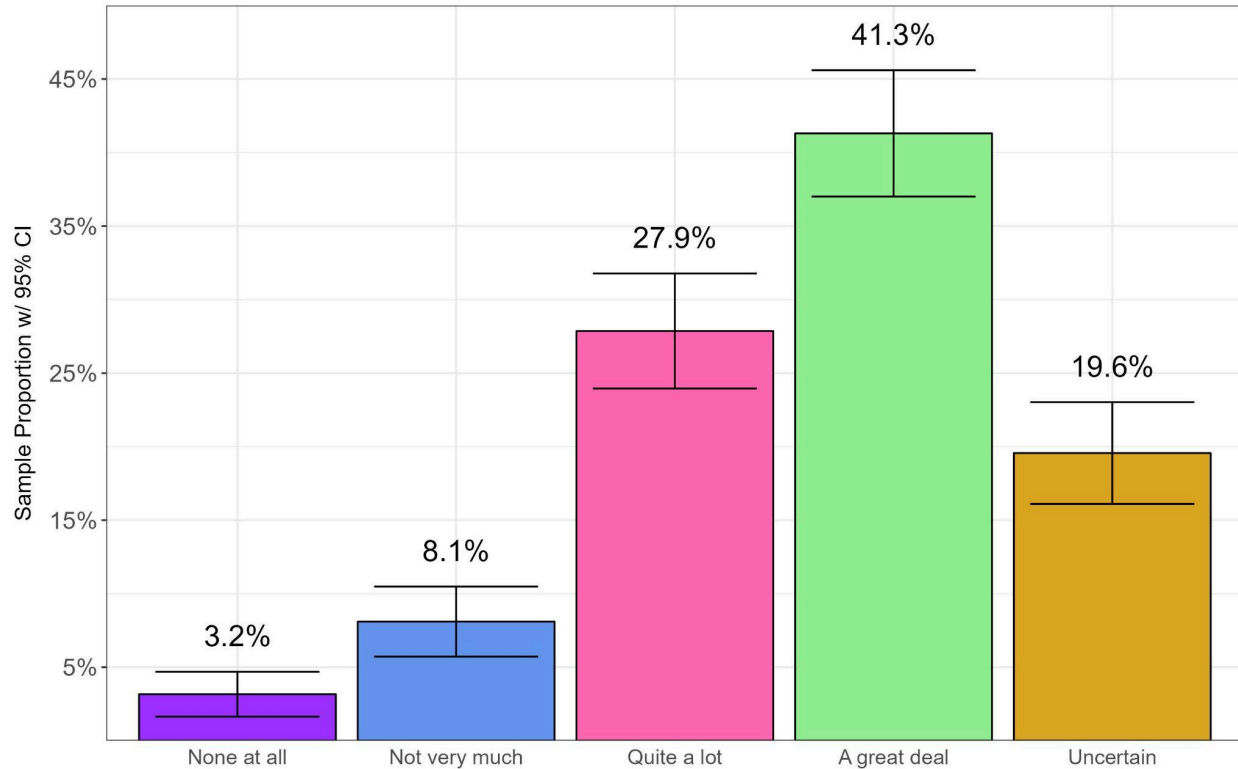


Figure 59. Sample Proportions of Confidence in Police among Afghan Canadians

Afghan Canadians have especially high confidence in Canada’s police, according to our sample. Around 4 in 10 (41.3%) expressed a great deal of confidence in police, while another 3 in 10 (27.9%) told us that they felt quite a lot of confidence when they thought of police in Canada. Afghan Canadians seldom stated that they did not have very much confidence in the police (8.1%), with very few having told us they had even less confidence than that (3.2%). Still, a 34-year-old man living in Maritime Canada shared an experience where they were stopped by police while driving. According to the man, “they asked me a lot of questions and seemed suspicious of me for no apparent reason ... I now feel anxious whenever I see a police car”.

Compared with the confidence that Afghan Canadians in our sample expressed toward other institutions in Canada, Afghan Canadians were significantly less likely to tell us that they were uncertain about how confident they should be in the police (19.6%). If conversations held during focus groups are any indication, this may be because Afghan Canadians can more readily recall firsthand or secondhand interactions with police than they can other Canadian institutions.

Trudeau Thermometer

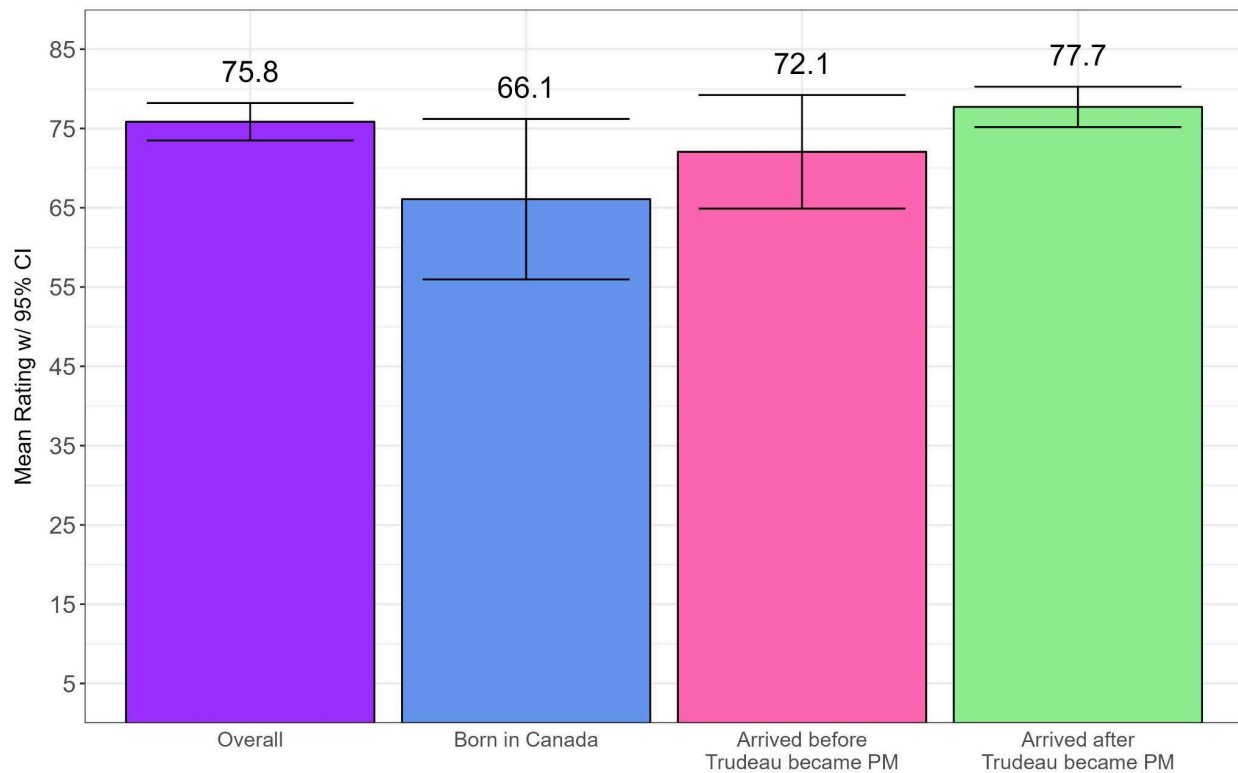


Figure 60. Sample Mean Rating of Prime Minister Trudeau among Afghan Canadians

Our respondents were asked to give us their opinion of Prime Minister (PM) Justin Trudeau using a “feeling thermometer” ranging from 0 (lowest) to 100 (highest). Of those who responded to our question ($n = 478$), most rated PM Trudeau highly (mean rating = 75.8 out of 100). Responses from our sample suggest that opinions toward the prime minister vary based on whether the respondent was born in Canada and whether they arrived in Canada before or after the beginning of Justin Trudeau’s tenure as PM. While Afghan Canadians who arrived after Trudeau became PM tended to rate him most favourably (mean rating = 77.7 out of 100), those born in Canada tended to rate PM Trudeau somewhat less favourably (mean rating = 66.1 out of 100), with respondents who arrived before Trudeau became PM generally giving him a rating in between these other groups (mean rating = 72.1 out of 100). This suggests that Afghan Canadians who have migrated to Canada typically rate PM Trudeau higher than do those who were born in Canada because these individuals have more directly benefited from immigration-related policies during Justin Trudeau’s tenure as PM than Afghan Canadians who were born in Canada, though more research is needed to support this hypothesis.

Partisanship

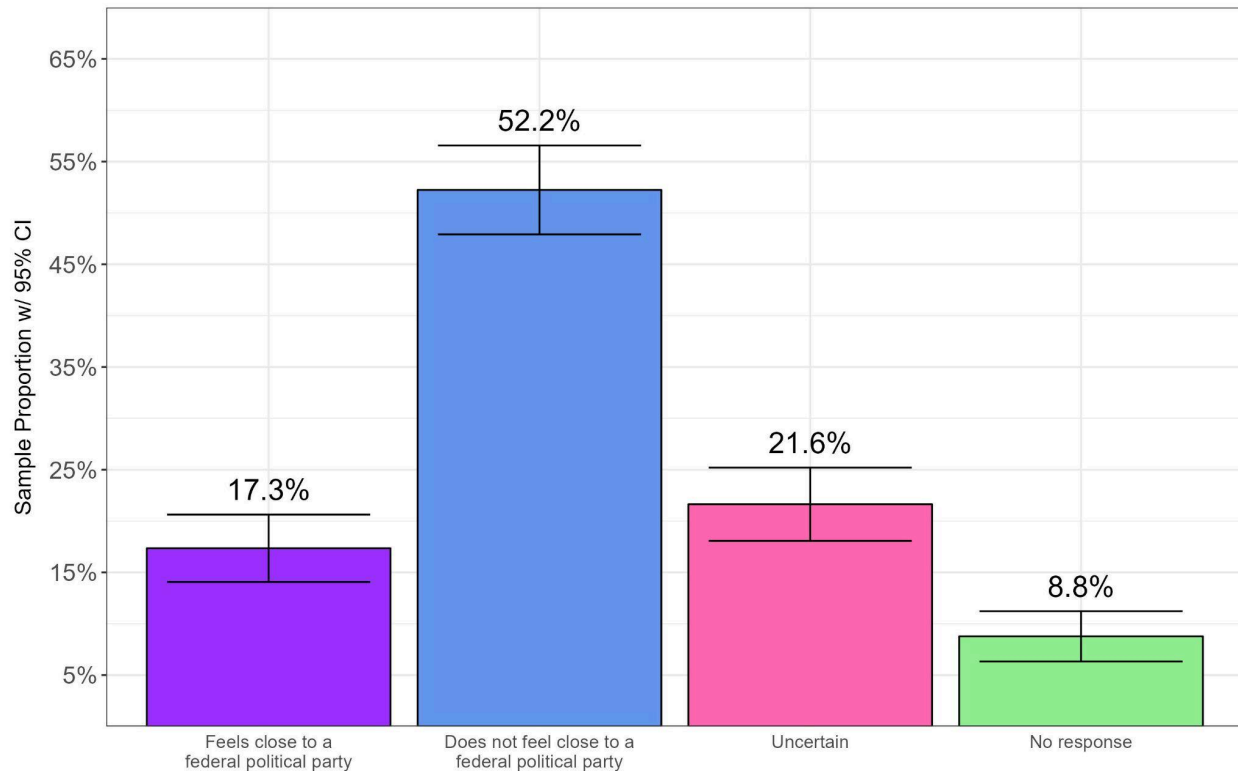


Figure 61. Sample Proportions of Political Partisanship among Afghan Canadians

We also asked Afghan Canadians whether they felt close to a federal political party, regardless of whether they would be eligible to vote in the next federal election. The most common response, by far, was that they did not feel close to any of Canada’s federal political parties (52.2%). Another 2 in 10 respondents were uncertain as to whether they felt close to a specific political party (21.6%). This is not particularly surprising, given that many Afghan Canadians have only lived in Canada for a few years and may not have taken the time to become familiar with each party’s current political platforms, while others may simply be uninterested in federal politics.

Still, around 2 in 10 respondents told us that they did feel close to a federal political party (17.3%), and it may be that more Afghan Canadians will form an attachment to a federal political party as they continue to become familiar with each party. According to one community member, a 50-year-old man from New Brunswick, “interest in Canadian politics exists, particularly among the younger generation and those in leadership roles, but overall, political participation is low due to language barriers and unfamiliarity with the political system”. In another focus group, a 22-year-old man attending university in southern Ontario said there is “a growing interest in politics among my peers, especially on issues affecting youth and immigrants”. Other focus group respondents agreed with this perspective, with some expressing interest in government policies that would increase opportunities and improve quality of life. In yet another focus group, one woman of 59 years shared that “When I lived in my home country, I didn’t think much about politics. Here in Canada, ... I’ve become more aware of issues like healthcare and education

because they directly affect me and my family ... The openness and importance of civic engagement here make politics seem more relevant to everyday life”.

Civic Identity

Being Yourself

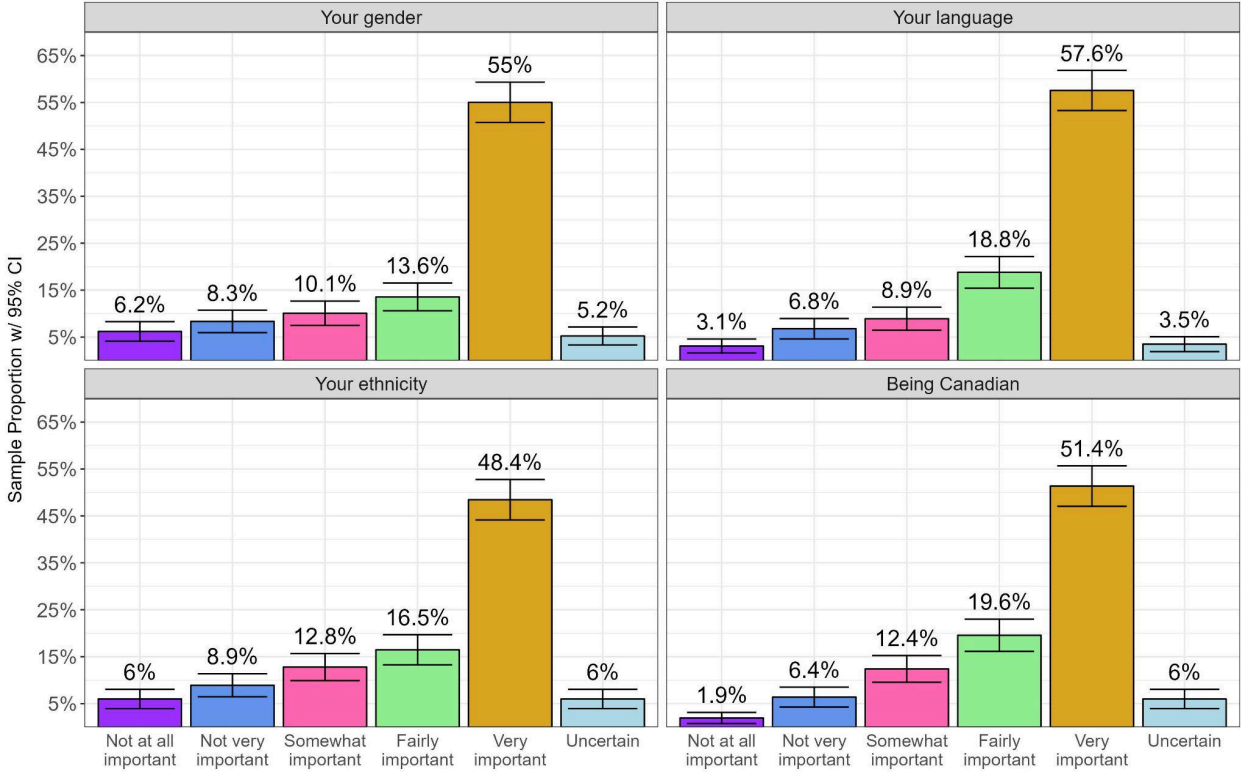


Figure 62. Sample Proportions of Identity Importance among Afghan Canadians

When asked about how important various aspects of their identity were to their overall identity, more than 5 in 10 Afghan Canadians in our sample shared that their gender (55%) and language (57.6%) were very important, while around half said the same with respect to their ethnicity (48.4%) and being Canadian (51.4%). Interestingly, there are very few significant differences with respect to how important each aspect of identity is to Afghan Canadians as a whole, according to our sample, but survey respondents did tell us that being Canadian is not at all important (1.9%) significantly less frequently than they said the same about their ethnicity (6%) and gender (6.2%). This suggests that while a few of our respondents do not feel their gender or ethnicity is a salient part of their self-identification at all, it was exceedingly rare for Afghans in Canada to say the same about being Canadian.

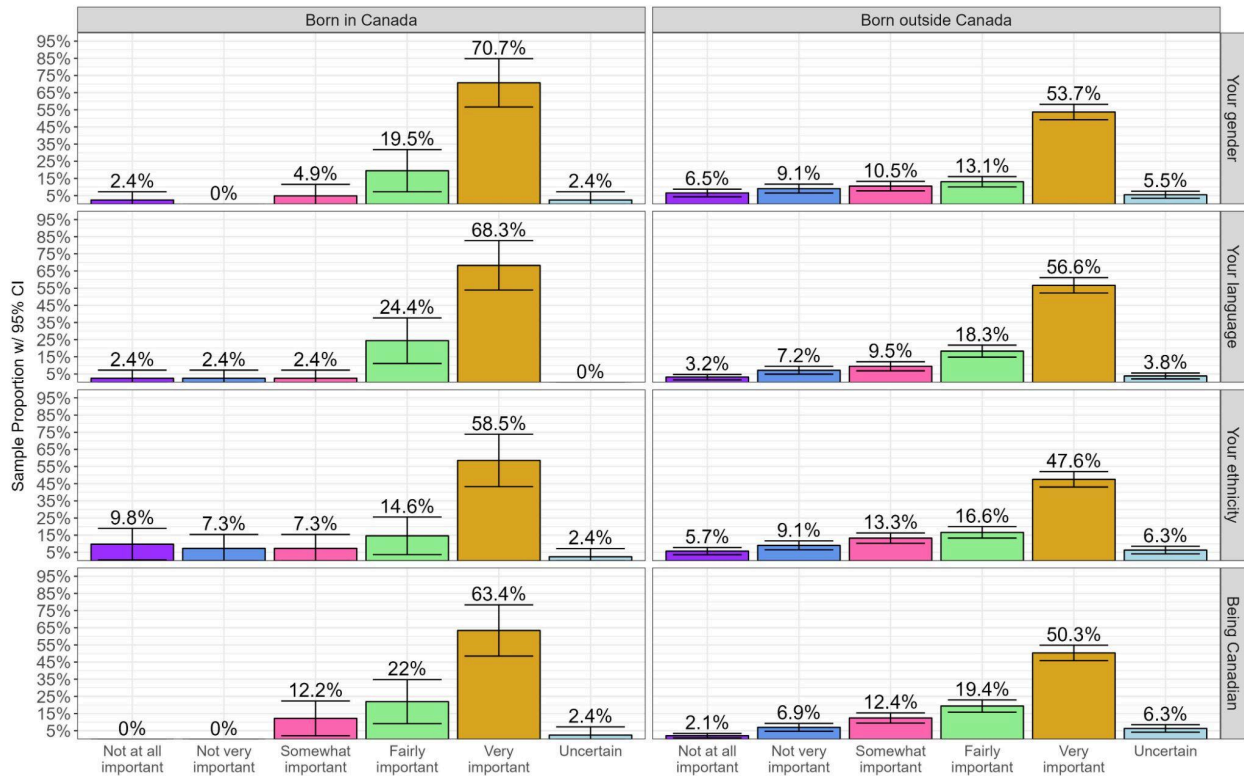


Figure 63. Sample Proportions of Identity Importance by Birthplace

Our data suggests that there are differences in how members of the Afghan community in Canada think about identity, and that these differences can be explained in part by whether one was born inside or outside of Canada. For individuals born in Canada, each aspect of identity asked about in our survey appears very important to around half or more of Afghan Canadians, with approximately 7 in 10 respondents having told us that their gender is very important (70.7%), followed by 68.3% who said the same about their language, 63.4% who said the same about being Canadian, and 58.5% who said the same about their ethnicity. Except for ethnicity, where around 1 in 6 of those born in Canada said this aspect of identity was less than somewhat important to them (17.1%), respondents born in Canada seldom claimed any aspect of their identity was unimportant.

Members of the Afghan community who were born outside Canada responded much differently to our questions about identity, in comparison. The most notable difference is that Afghans born outside Canada less frequently told us that their gender, language, ethnicity, or being Canadian were very important to them than did those born in Canada. While not many of our survey respondents were born in Canada, making confident comparison between these groups difficult, our results reflect that Afghans born outside Canada feel the aspects listed above are very important anywhere from 10.9 to 17 percentage points less frequently than Canadian-born Afghan community members. Consequently, compared to Afghan Canadians who were born in Canada, Afghan community members who were born outside Canada more frequently shared that an aspect of their identity was only somewhat important or less. About a quarter (26.1%) of Afghan Canadian respondents born outside Canada said this about gender, compared to

around 2 in 10 (19.9%) who felt this way about their language, around 3 in 10 (28.1%) who felt this way about their ethnicity, and around 2 in 10 (21.4%) who felt this way about being Canadian.

Being Canadian

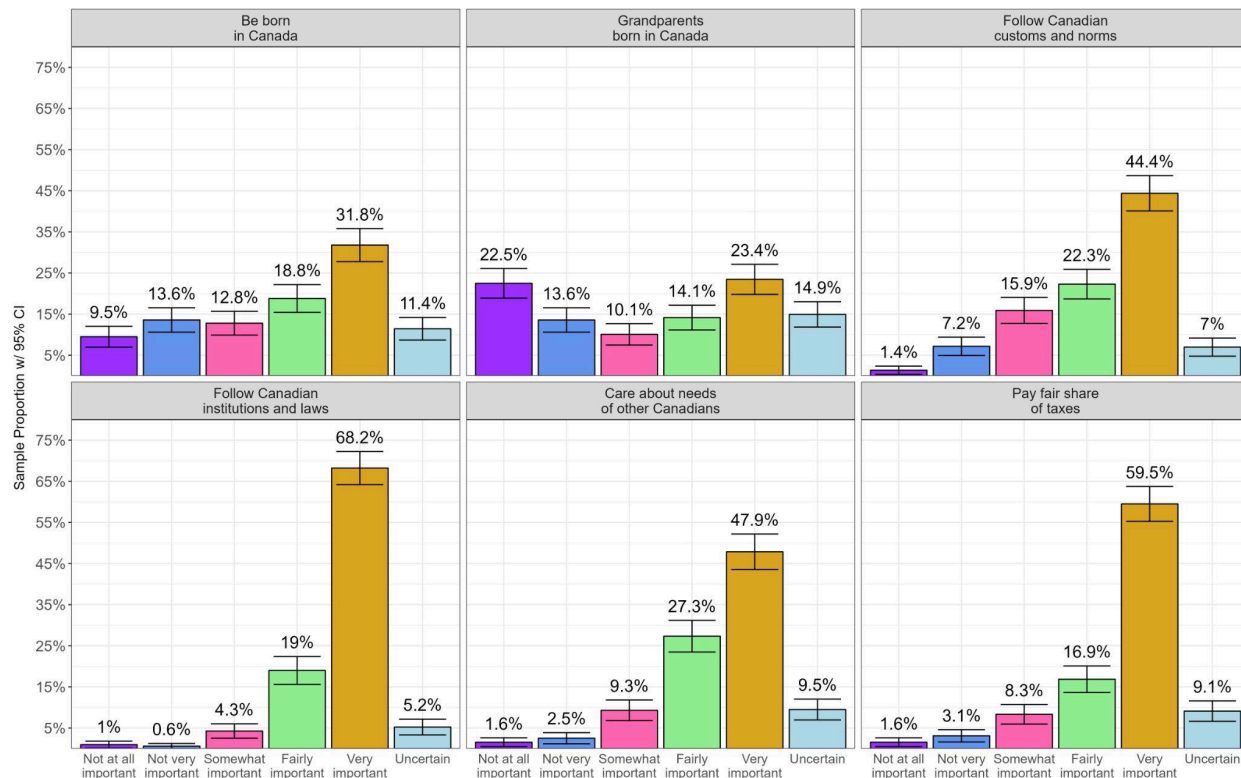


Figure 64. Sample Proportions of Canadian Identity Importance among Afghan Canadians

We asked our sample of Afghan Canadians what they thought was important to being “truly Canadian”. Responses suggest that for the Afghan Canadian community as a whole, following Canada’s institutions and laws is most important to being truly Canadian, with approximately 7 in 10 respondents (68.2%) having told us that this is very important and another 2 in 10 (19%) having shared that this is fairly important. Many respondents also seem to feel that paying one’s fair share of taxes is a central component of being truly Canadian, with about 6 in 10 (59.5%) indicating that they feel this is very important and around 2 in 10 (16.9%) perceiving this as fairly important. Less important to our survey respondents were that one was born in Canada or that one’s grandparents were born in Canada, with only around 3 in 10 respondents (31.8%) having told us that the former is very important and an even smaller proportion having said the same about the latter (23.4%). In fact, Afghan Canadians were about as likely to have told us that it is very important for one’s grandparents to have been born in Canada (23.4%) as they were to say that it was not at all important (22.5%). Overall, these results suggest that Afghan Canadians tend to have an idea of what makes one “truly Canadian” that is based more on following the law and fulfilling legal obligations than on ancestry.

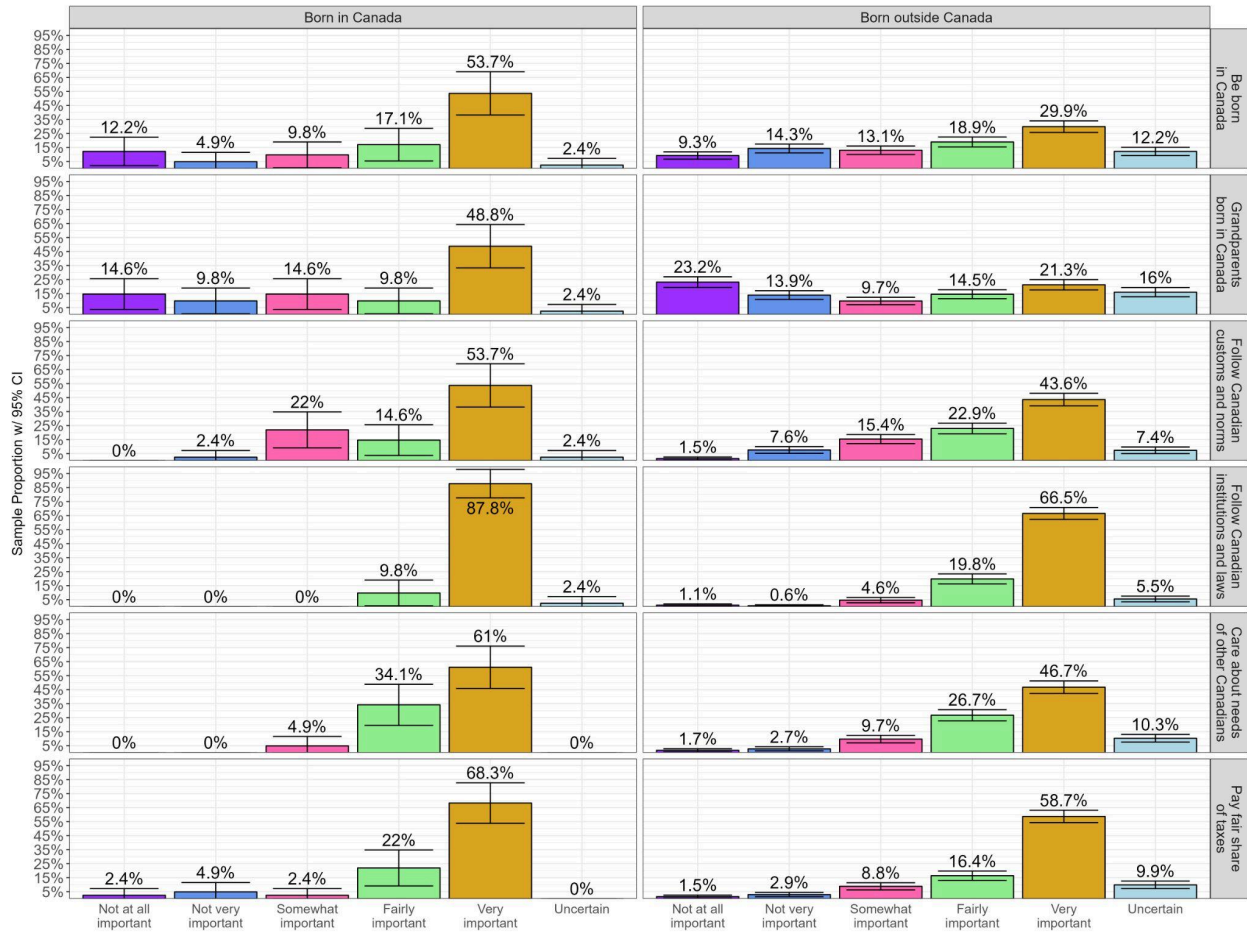


Figure 65. Sample Proportions of Canadian Identity Importance by Birthplace

Opinions within the Afghan community of what makes one “truly Canadian” appear partially dependent on whether one was born inside or outside of Canada. Only a small proportion of our sample was born in Canada, making comparison between these groups somewhat difficult. Even so, it appears that Afghan Canadians born outside Canada are only about half as likely to think that being born in Canada is important to being “truly Canadian” (29.9%) as those born in Canada (53.7%). Similar results were observed with respect to one’s grandparents being born in Canada, with around 2 in 10 Afghans born outside Canada having told us that this is very important (21.3%) and approximately 5 in 10 Afghans born in Canada having shared the same sentiments (48.8%). Among those Afghan Canadians who feel that being born in Canada or that having grandparents who were born in Canada is very important, but that cannot claim such a history for themselves, it stands to reason that some may never feel like they are “truly Canadian” and that others may take much longer to feel this way than those who do not feel ancestry is so important.

Interestingly, a relatively high proportion of Afghan Canadians born outside Canada admitted they were uncertain how important each of these concepts were to being “truly Canadian”. Respondents born outside Canada most frequently felt uncertain about the importance of grandparents being born in Canada (16%), followed by oneself being born in Canada (12.2%),

caring about the needs of other Canadians (10.3%), paying one's fair share of taxes (9.9%), following Canadians customs and norms (7.4%), and following Canadian institutions and laws (5.5%). These figures collectively suggest that at least some Afghan Canadians who were born outside Canada are still questioning what it means to be "truly Canadian", or have not asked themselves such questions until taking our survey.

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