

**Name of organizer:** Jack Jedwab  
 Email:  
 Organisation: Association For Canadian Studies

Title of workshop: The Reasonable Accommodation Debate: Understanding Differences in Public Opinion

Format of Workshop: Roundtable

Theme: Citoyenneté et intégration

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Name of first presenter: Jack Jedwab  
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 Organization: Association for Canadian Studies  
 Title/Theme of presentation: Reasonable Accommodation Debate: Understanding Differences in Public Opinion

Name of second presenter: Stuart Soroka, Professor  
 E-mail address:  
 Organization: Department of Political Science Organization: McGill University  
 Title/Theme of presentation: Reasonable Accommodation Debate: Understanding Differences in Public Opinion

Name of third presenter: Christian Bourque, Vice-President  
 E-mail address:  
 Organization: Leger Marketing  
 Title/Theme of presentation: Reasonable Accommodation Debate: Understanding Differences in Public Opinion

Name of fourth presenter: David Birnbaum, Executive Director  
 E-mail address:  
 Organization: Quebec English School Board Association  
 Title/Theme of presentation: Reasonable Accommodation Debate: Understanding Differences in Public Opinion

Name of fifth presenter: Victor Armony  
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 Organization: UQAM  
 Title/Theme of presentation: Reasonable Accommodation Debate: Understanding Differences in Public Opinion

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### Abstract

Public opinion around the reasonable accommodation of religious and cultural groups in Quebec revealed sharp differences between francophones and non-francophones in how best to address diversity. Looking at several public opinion surveys on reasonable accommodation we will identify the factors that account for the differences.

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### Summary

Although Quebec's francophone population and French language institutions are responsible for the reception and integration of newcomers, an important percentage of immigrants are English-speakers and it is therefore inevitable that English-language institutions will be involved in the process of managing diversity. It is imperative to acknowledge this reality and doing so contributes towards establishing a strong societal consensus around best practices in the management of diversity and the accommodation of religious and cultural difference. Public opinion around reasonable accommodation in Quebec revealed sharp differences between francophones and non-francophones. This was reflected during the often heated public debate that took place in 2007 and 2008. We propose to hold to a round table with leading experts on public opinion in Quebec, to review demographic surveys conducted during the course of the hearings and identify the factors that account for differences in public opinion between the linguistic groups. The round table participants will also examine how Quebec's linguistic groups see their role in debates around diversity. Is the fact that English-speakers Quebecers do not identify strongly with a single ethnic or cultural group an important factor contributing to a more "accommodationist" approach to addressing religious and cultural difference? How do non-francophones (anglophones and allophones), understand the differences between Quebec's intercultural and Canada's multicultural discourse? What do differences across language communities in views on how diversity is managed imply for the implementation of public policy in this area? Our speakers will consider these issues and look at what role public opinion in debates about the accommodation of difference.