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EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION FOUNDATIONS SERIES

Introduction to Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim Discrimination



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that UBC's campuses and learning sites are situated within the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh and in the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan Nation and their peoples.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

The mandate of the Equity & Inclusion Office is to foster learning and working environments where the human rights and dignity of all UBC community members are respected and where all students, faculty and staff have the opportunity to fully participate and thrive in the life and work of the university.

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ABOUT THE EDI FOUNDATIONS SERIES

The modules in the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Learning Foundations Series are introductory resources offered as part of the Equity & Inclusion Office's (EIO) mandate to provide educational opportunities on topics related to equity and inclusion to members of the UBC community.

The *Introduction to UBC's Human Rights Obligations and Discrimination Policy* module, which describes prerequisite information on UBC's policies and protocols for addressing human rights complaints, should be reviewed before engaging in this *Introduction to Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim Discrimination* module.

About the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination module

This module on anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination was developed by the EIO as an educational resource for UBC community members.

As an introductory module, information provided here cannot replace broader and deeper learning about the historical and contemporary realities of Arab and Muslim people, as well as anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination through additional evidence-based information (for example, scholarly publications, literary works, films and documentaries or academic courses).

Acknowledgments

This module was produced following a ten-month engagement and consultation between the Associate Vice-President, Equity and Inclusion and UBC faculty and staff who identify as Arab and/or Muslim.

Relationship to UBC's policies and statements

The module content is aligned with the university's Academic Freedom Policy, Discrimination Policy and Respectful Environment Statement, however, this content is a summary and does not take the place of those policies or the statement. Ultimately, the language of UBC's policies govern any dispute.

This module provides introductory information on a very complex area of law and policy and should not be considered to constitute advice or a statement of UBC policy. Examples given are illustrative only and not determinative of similar cases. Anyone seeking advice about a particular matter should consult the appropriate UBC units (which are listed in this module) or their own legal, union or employee association, or other advisor.

While discrimination is a legal concept and anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination must be determined according to human rights law and UBC's Discrimination Policy, this module recognizes that individuals may, nonetheless, feel harmed by anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias and bigotry (the latter commonly referred to as Islamophobia), whether or not the experiences amount to discrimination from a legal perspective.

The EIO does not conduct investigations under UBC's Discrimination Policy. Rather, investigations under the Discrimination Policy are performed by the UBC Investigations Office. The Investigations Office is completely separate from the EIO and the information contained in this module does not bind the Investigations Office.

Individuals who have concerns about academic freedom, discrimination, or harassment should [contact the EIO Human Rights Advising team](#).



Guiding principles

The module content is guided by the following core principles:

- Centering the Equity & Inclusion Office's purpose.
- Ensuring the content does not and is not perceived to promote the agenda of any advocacy group.
- Grounding in the Canadian human rights legal framework and the *B.C. Human Rights Code*.
- Promoting an ethic of justice by clarifying responsibilities to address discrimination and harassment:
 - » For examples, Canada's laws and UBC's policies require that the human rights of all UBC faculty, students and staff are safeguarded across legally protected characteristics such as ancestry, place of origin, political belief (in employment), race and/or religion.
- Promoting an ethic of care by cultivating a climate of inclusion whether legal thresholds are met or not:
 - » For examples, UBC aspires to foster a culture of inclusion, where the safety and dignity of others is valued.
- Striving to find a conciliatory tone and language without equivocating.
- Protecting academic freedom and encouraging brave and safe spaces for the contestation of ideas.
- Acknowledging the limited scope of what this resource can accomplish given complexity of issues.

Learning objectives

The purpose of this module is to raise awareness about anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination so that students, faculty, and staff are better equipped to cultivate learning and working environments that respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of all Arab and Muslim members of the UBC community and to create a climate whereby Arab and Muslim people, in all their diversity, feel a sense of inclusion, belonging, and safety. The module builds four foundational understandings, the denial of which may be considered harmful to Arab and Muslim people. These understandings are that:

1. Arab and Muslim people are an ethno-religiously and ethno-culturally diverse group, representing an array of intersectional social identities, social positionalities, political and religious perspectives.
2. Arab and Muslim people have a long history of systematic persecution, and they continue to experience anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bigotry and hatred in Canada (hence they are considered among other historically, persistently, and systemically marginalized groups).
3. Arab and Muslim people have a right to be free from all forms of discrimination and harassment, including forms of intergroup microaggressions and intragroup lateral hostilities which operate in different ways to delegitimize the personhood of Arab and Muslim people, regardless of how they express their Arab and Muslim identities.
4. While academic debate and critical dialogue are foundational to academic freedom and the mission of the university, discriminatory and hate speech targeting Arab and/or Muslim people as identifiable groups are unacceptable violations of UBC's policies and laws in Canada.

Introduction to Anti-Arab and Anti-Muslim Discrimination

1. UNDERSTANDING ARAB AND MUSLIM PEOPLE

The following section provides data and context to broaden one's understanding of the diversity of Arab and Muslim people.

Arab and Muslim populations

- In 2023, the global population of Arabs was 473 million people.¹
- In 2024, 25.8 per cent of the global population identified as Muslim (over 2.1 billion).²
- In 2021, according to Statistics Canada:
 - » Arab people accounted for 1.9 per cent of the Canadian population (694,015).
 - » While Arabs reside in every province and territory, 96.9 per cent are in five provinces: 41 per cent in Ontario, 40.4 per cent in Quebec, 10.0 per cent in Alberta, 4.0 per cent in British Columbia, and 1.5 per cent in Nova Scotia.
 - » Muslim people accounted for 4.9 per cent of the Canadian population (1.775 million).
 - » While Muslims reside in every province and territory, 95.9 per cent are in four provinces: 53.7 per cent in Ontario, 23.7 per cent in Quebec, 11.4 per cent in Alberta and 7.1 per cent in British Columbia.
- 73.6 per cent of Arabs reported being Muslim and 19.5 per cent Christian.

1 Statista (2022). Arab world: Total population from 2013 to 2023. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/806106/total-population-arab-league/>

2 Statista (2022). Share of global population affiliated with major religious groups in 2022, by religion. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/374704/share-of-global-population-by-religion/>

Diversity of Arab people

Below is information describing the diversity of Arab people³:

- Arab identity is varied and nuanced.
- Arabs are an ethno-linguistic category of people who speak Arabic as their mother tongue or first language, though they are diverse in their religious and cultural practices.
- Though often tied to some shared cultural, historical, colonial, and social contexts, Arabs are diverse in their racial, ethnic, religious, and political beliefs.
- The “Arab World” includes the regions of the world that together are home to Arabs but also a diversity of non-Arab ethnic populations that reside and have a long history in the region alongside often minoritized Indigenous groups who also may not necessarily identify as Arab.
- While there is no accepted definition of the Arab world, the following members of the Arab League are recognized as part of the regions that correspond with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), including:
 - » Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Conflation of Arab and Muslim people

It is important not to conflate Arab with Muslim people⁴:

- Not all Arabs are Muslim and not all Muslims are Arab.
- Arabs have existed since antiquity and they predate the spread of Islam.
- Muslims are people who observe the religion of Islam (or Islamic faith).
- Islam has several branches with two main denominations: Sunni and Shia.
- Muslims are the second largest religious population globally, after Christians.
- Muslims exist on every continent on the globe.

³ Canadian Arab Institute, accessed December 18, 2024, at <https://www.canadianarabinstitute.org>.

⁴ It is important not to conflate Arab with Muslim people.

2. UNDERSTANDING ANTI-ARAB AND ANTI-MUSLIM DISCRIMINATION AND HATE

The following section provides an overview, as well as examples, of various forms of discrimination and stereotypes experienced by Arab and Muslim people.

A NOTE ON PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- While anti-Muslim and anti-Arab bigotry, racism, and hatred as well as Islamophobia are terms that may be commonly used to describe bias-motivated acts targeting Arab or Muslim people, discrimination and hate are legal concepts.
- Determination of whether behaviours constitute anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination and/or hate-motivated crimes must follow a legal analysis in accordance with the *B.C. Human Rights Code* and the *Criminal Code of Canada*, respectively.
- The content in the following section recognizes that individuals can be harmed by bias-motivated acts whether or not the experiences amount to discrimination or hate from a legal perspective.
- While discrimination and hate are addressed through policy and legislative interventions, harms that do not amount to discrimination and hate can nonetheless be addressed through prevention education, informal resolution processes, and other supports to address psychological safety.

Anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination

- Arab and Muslim people often sit at the intersections of several human rights protected characteristics (for example, ancestry, colour, place of origin, political belief, race and religion).
- In accordance with human rights legislation, the definition of legal discrimination against Arab or Muslim people is intentional or unintentional conduct that imposes burdens, obligations, or disadvantages on or limits access to opportunities, benefits and advantages for Arab or Muslim people as an identifiable group and based on one or more protected characteristics.

RECALL

Recall from the *Introduction to UBC's human rights obligations and Discrimination Policy* resource that:

- It is the impact, not the intent, that defines treatment as discrimination, provided that the legal three-part test discrimination is demonstrated, providing evidence that protected characteristics were a factor in one or more adverse impacts experienced.
- The B.C. Office of Human Rights, as part of its mandate to address the root causes of inequality, discrimination and injustice, described and differentiated between hate speech⁵ and discriminatory speech, noting that hate speech is expression “that is likely to expose [the targeted group] to detestation and vilification.”

Police-reported hate crimes in Canada

- The 2006 Human Rights Tribunal decision in the *Warman v Kouba* case led to the establishment of 11 hallmarks of hate as examples of hate speech⁶. These examples may provide insight into present-day manifestations of hate towards identifiable groups, including Arab and Muslim people.

⁵ “Hate speech and the law in BC,” BC’s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner, accessed December 18, 2024 at <https://bchumanrights.ca/resources/hate-speech-qa/>.

⁶ *Warman v. Kouba*, 2006 CHRT 50 (CanLII). <https://canlii.ca/t/1q60v>.

- Muslim people are the targets of some of the highest numbers and rising trends of bias-motivated, police-reported hate crimes in Canada.⁷
- Despite the small proportion of Arab people in the Canadian population, they are among the targets of some of the highest numbers and rising trends of bias-motivated, police-reported hate crimes in Canada.

Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the number and trends of possible hate crimes by religion that were reported to police between 2019 and 2022 and rely on data published by Statistics Canada.⁸

IMPORTANT NOTES ON POLICE-REPORTED HATE CRIME DATA

While reviewing the following data keep in mind that the data:

- depict absolute numbers (the proportion of reported incidents per capita gives a sense of the scale of reported anti-Arab and anti-Muslim incidents relative to other reported forms of hate crimes)
- reflect incidents of hate reported to the police, and not necessarily incidents confirmed as hate crimes according to the *Criminal Code of Canada*
- will be influenced by the extent to which particular groups (whether targets or witnesses of different forms of criminal hate) feel comfortable reporting incidents
- do not account for systemic discrimination, imbedded in social institutions and policies

⁷ “Police-reported hate crimes, by detailed motivation, Canada, 2020 to 2023,” Statistics Canada, last accessed December 18, 2024 at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/240725/t006b-eng.htm>.

⁸ “Police-reported Information Hub: Hate crime in Canada”. Statistics Canada, last accessed December 18, 2024, at <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2024013-eng.htm>.

Figure 1: Police reported hate crimes, 2019 - 2023, by religion

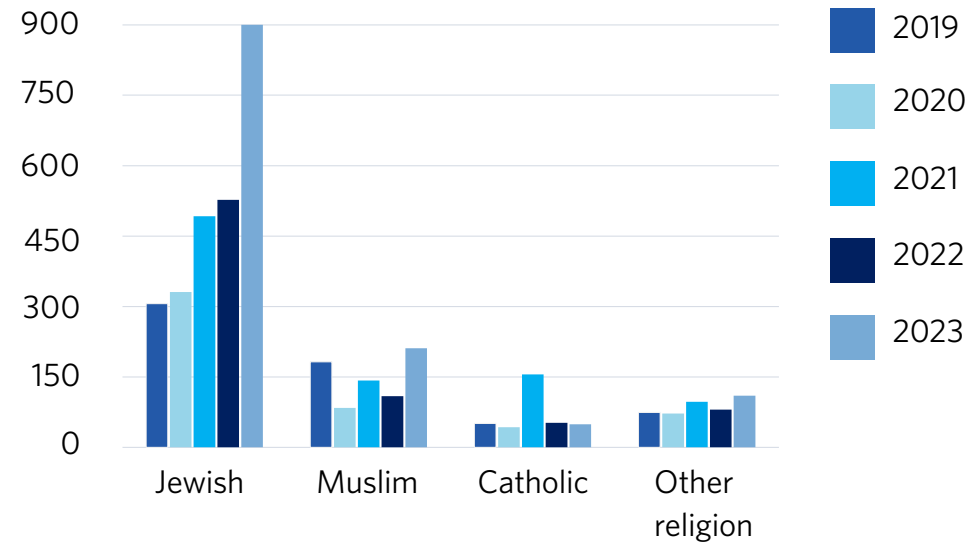
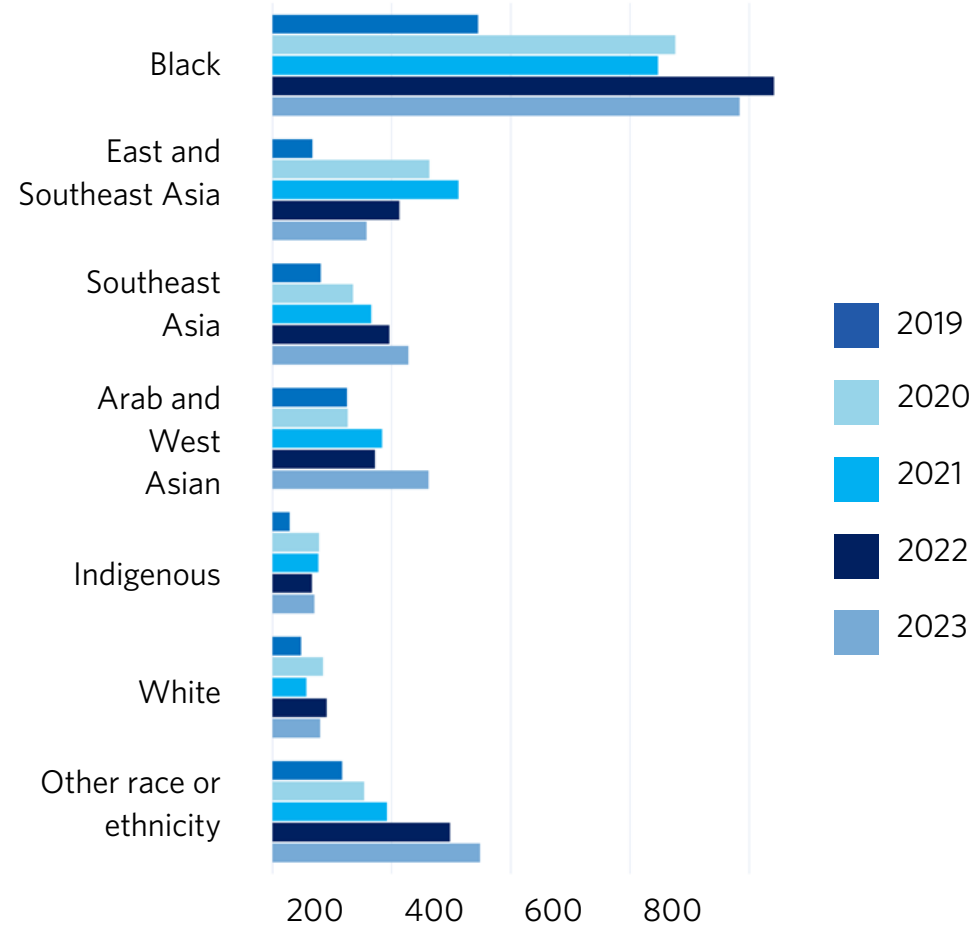


Figure 2: Police-reported hate crimes, 2019 - 2023, by race or ethnicity



Acts that may constitute discrimination and/or hate

Whether something constitutes legal discrimination⁹ or hate¹⁰ depends on legal tests and all contextual circumstances, but examples of discrimination and hate could potentially include:

- threats of or actual physical violence targeting Arabs or Muslims as individuals or as a people
- calling for death to individual Arabs and Muslims or the eradication of Arabs and Muslims as an entire people
- denying or minimizing harms to Arabs or Muslims
- denying or minimizing the impacts of Western orientalism and colonialism on the Arab and Muslim world
- suggesting that Arabs or Muslims in the Diaspora should “go back to Asia or Africa”
- racial profiling by security, police information-gathering, questioning and documenting people not suspected of a crime
- profiling by airport officials including being stopped, placed on no-fly lists, having names flagged, being selected for “random” screening, being subjected to intrusive searches, and being questioned about religious beliefs
- speech, propaganda or graffiti that would constitute hate according to the *Criminal Code of Canada*
- vandalism of property and desecration of sacred spaces (for example, Muslim cemeteries)
- attacks or threats of attacks on Mosques, Islamic schools, and community centres
- physical and/or verbal assault for wearing visible religious attire
- demanding the removal of and/or targeting the symbols and markers of being Muslim or Arab, including religious and cultural attire (for example, hijab or niqab/ burka - women’s head and face coverings, abaya - woman’s loose over-garment, kufi - men’s skull cap, thawb - men’s long robe)
- harassing¹¹ or intimidating an Arab or Muslim person based on their identity, their religious attire or affiliation, their language or accent, or affiliation with identity-related association

⁹ According to UBC’s Discrimination Policy.

¹⁰ According to UBC’s Discrimination Policy.

¹¹ According to UBC’s Respectful Environment Statement.

Systemic anti-Arab discrimination in Canada

The following statistics describe the impacts of systemic discrimination on Arabs in Canada¹²:

Employment

- Arabs have the highest unemployment rate of all demographics in Canada, despite them being the fourth highest population with postsecondary degrees.
 - » Arab men have the second highest unemployment rate after Black men.
 - » Arab women have the highest unemployment rate, more than twice that of White women.

Income and poverty

- Arabs are among the groups with the lowest income and highest poverty rates.
 - » 75 per cent of Arabs are in the bottom half of the family income deciles.
 - » 26 per cent of Arabs are in the bottom decile (higher than any other demographic).
 - » 76 per cent of first-generation Arabs are in the bottom half of family income distribution (more than any other group).
 - » Arab women have the lowest income of any demographic.
 - » 36.2 per cent of the Arab population in Canada live in poverty - the highest of any demographic, and nearly three times higher than the poverty rates of White people.

Home ownership

- Arabs have the second-lowest home ownership rates in Canada (same as Latin Americans — 43.4 per cent).

¹² Canadian Arab Institute (as cited by Stats Canada, 2016)

3. PERCEPTIONS OF MUSLIMS AND ISLAM

A NOTE ABOUT THE TERM “ISLAMOPHOBIA”

- The term Islamophobia first appeared as *Islamophobie* in works published in the early 20th century in the context of criticism of the attitudes and behaviours of French colonial administrators towards Muslims in African countries.¹³
- Edward Said (1985) first used the English term *Islamophobia*.¹⁴
- Despite contemporary critiques of the term, Islamophobia is commonly used to refer to anti-Muslim bias and discrimination and/or hatred of Muslim people or Islam.
- The term Islamophobia is critiqued for some of the following reasons:
 - » Phobia implies a mental illness affecting a small number of people — anti-Muslim prejudice and bigotry is not a mental illness and it is widespread.
 - » Characterization as a phobia interferes with the ability to appropriately engage and address individual attitudes and behaviours as bigoted, as it minimizes the hostility underpinning anti-Muslim bias and discrimination as well as the systemic power structures and relations that enable it.
- The term Islamophobia should not be used to refer to anti-Arab hostility, as ethnocultural/linguistic identity as an Arab person is separate from religious identity and not all Arab people are Muslim.

¹³ Robin Richardson, “Islamophobia or anti-Muslim racism - or what? - concepts and terms revisited,” last accessed December 18, 2024, <http://www.insted.co.uk/anti-muslim-racism.pdf>.

¹⁴ Edward Said, “Orientalism reconsidered,” *Cultural Critique*, no. 1 (1985): 89 - 107, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1354282>.

Canadian views of Muslims and Islam

- Bias-motivated reports of hate crimes do not capture widespread bias-motivated prejudicial attitudes.
- In 2023, a study by the Canadian not-for-profit Angus Reid Institute found “unfavourable views of Islam prevalent across the country at varying levels.”¹⁵
 - » Canadians hold more unfavourable views of Islam than other religions.
 - » Canadians say they are less supportive of a co-worker wearing a hijab (Muslim woman’s head scarf) than of a co-worker wearing attire or symbols affiliated with other religions.
 - » Canadians say they are less comfortable with a co-worker wearing a hijab (Muslim woman’s head scarf), than when co-workers wear attire or symbols of other religions.
 - » Canadians are less comfortable with a mosque built in their neighbourhood than other places of worship.
- The findings demonstrate that the negative views towards Islam are particularly intense in Quebec.
- In order to reflect this substantive trend in the data, the following slides report the results for Quebec separately from aggregated results for elsewhere in Canada.

¹⁵ “Islamophobia in Canada: Four mindsets indicate negativity is nationwide, most intense in Quebec”, Angus Reid Institute, March 13, 2023, <https://angusreid.org>.

More unfavourable views of Islam

Canadians hold more unfavourable views of Islam than other religions.

Percentage of population who hold unfavourable views of specific religion, by region¹⁶

| Religion | Quebec | Rest of Canada |
|--------------|--------|----------------|
| Islam | 52% | 39% |
| Christianity | 31% | 37% |
| Sikhism | 37% | 22% |
| Hinduism | 32% | 18% |
| Judaism | 19% | 13% |

Less supportive of co-worker wearing hijab

Canadians say they are less supportive of a co-worker wearing a hijab (Muslim woman’s head scarf) than they are of a co-worker wearing an attire or symbols affiliated with religions other than Islam.

Percentage of population who say they are supportive of various religious attires/symbols, by region¹⁷

| Religious Attire/Symbols | Quebec | Rest of Canada |
|--------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Muslim hijab | 55% | 72% |
| Sikh turban | 60% | 79% |
| Christian crucifix | 70% | 79% |
| Jewish kippa | 65% | 88% |
| Jewish Star of David | 69% | 87% |

¹⁶ Angus Reid Institute, “Islamophobia in Canada: Four mindsets indicate negativity is nationwide, most intense in Quebec.”

¹⁷ Angus Reid Institute, “Islamophobia in Canada: Four mindsets indicate negativity is nationwide, most intense in Quebec.”

Less comfortable with a co-worker wearing hijab

Canadians say they are less comfortable with a co-worker wearing a hijab (Muslim woman’s head scarf) than with co-workers wearing an attire or symbols affiliated with religions other than Islam.

Percentage of population who say they are comfortable with various religious attires/symbols, by region¹⁸

| Religious Attire/Symbols | Quebec | Rest of Canada |
|--------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Muslim hijab | 65% | 84% |
| Sikh turban | 68% | 87% |
| Christian crucifix | 82% | 88% |
| Jewish kippa | 75% | 92% |
| Jewish Star of David | 81% | 93% |

Less comfortable with mosque in neighbourhood

Canadians say they are less comfortable with a mosque in their neighbourhood than other places of worship.

Percentage of population who say they are comfortable, by region¹⁹

| Places of Worship | Quebec | Rest of Canada |
|------------------------|--------|----------------|
| Muslim mosque | 53% | 67% |
| Sikh temple (gurdwara) | 54% | 74% |
| Hindu mandir | 62% | 75% |
| Buddhist temple | 70% | 82% |
| Jewish synagogue | 62% | 86% |
| Christian church | 79% | 86% |

¹⁸ Angus Reid Institute, “Islamophobia in Canada: Four mindsets indicate negativity is nationwide, most intense in Quebec.”

¹⁹ Angus Reid Institute, “Islamophobia in Canada: Four mindsets indicate negativity is nationwide, most intense in Quebec.”

4. ANTI-ARAB AND ANTI-MUSLIM MYTHS AND STEREOTYPES

Trauma-informed content warning

Please note that the content in following pages includes discussion of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim tropes, and examples of behaviour that may constitute discrimination and/or hate.²⁰

Although this content is provided for educational purposes, it can, nonetheless, trigger psychological impact particularly, but not exclusively, for Arab and Muslim people.

Anti-Arab myths and stereotypes

Anti-Arab bias and discrimination often intersects with anti-Muslim bias and discrimination due to conflation of Arabs and Muslims. Thus, Arabs and Muslims — and those perceived to be Arabs or Muslims — often endure the same myths and stereotypes that underpin and perpetuate harmful and hateful prejudicial attitudes, false narratives, and discriminatory actions, including that:

- Arabs are hostile and dangerous
- Arabs are “uncivilized” and “barbaric”
- Arabs are “foreigners” unable/unwilling to adapt to Western society
- Arabs in the Arab world predominantly live in the desert or in rural locations
- the relationship between Arab men and Arab women is inevitably abusive
- Arab men must be disciplined while Arab women must be rescued/liberated by the West
- Arabs are extremely wealthy and prone to extravagant spending
- Arabs are hypersexual and have unnatural sexual norms
- Arabs inevitably hold discriminatory views towards Jews

²⁰ Canadian Arab Institute, <https://www.canadianarabinstitute.org/> and National Council of Muslims, <https://www.nccm.ca/>.

Anti-Muslim myths and stereotypes

Anti-Arab bias and discrimination often intersects with anti-Muslim bias and discrimination due to conflation of Arabs and Muslims. Thus, Arabs and Muslims — and those perceived to be Arabs or Muslims — often endure the same myths and stereotypes that underpin and perpetuate harmful and hateful prejudicial attitudes, false narratives, and discriminatory actions, including that:

- Islam is a religion that encourages violence and terrorism
- Islam is oppressive, particularly to women, forcing women into subservient roles
- Islamic beliefs and practices are “backwards” and incompatible with Western values
- Islam is not a religion but rather only a political and totalitarian ideology
- Muslim women stay at home, do not work, and/or are oppressed or abused
- Muslims everywhere are secretly plotting “jihad” (incorrectly perceived to mean holy war) for the goal of promoting Sharia (Islamic moral and ethical teachings) in the West
- Muslims inevitably hold discriminatory views towards Jews

5. INTERGROUP AND INTRAGROUP DYNAMICS

Intergroup microaggressions

- Microaggressions are expressions by members of a dominant or privileged sociocultural group about or affecting members of a non-dominant or marginalized sociocultural group, thereby perpetuating the marginalization of the non-dominant group and contributing to intergroup distrust.²¹
- Microaggressions, as acts of bias, are everyday “verbal and behavioural indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults” to the target person or group.²²
- Microaggressions are interactions that occur at a micro-level, between individuals. They are nonetheless impactful, often experienced as invalidations, insults, and/or assaults on one’s identity and personhood.²³

NOTE

- Given their ethno-cultural, religious and political diversity, what defines Arab and Muslim identity and personhood can differ across groups and individuals.

- The identity and intention of the person who expresses the microaggressive comment or conduct is irrelevant to whether the comment or conduct may be deemed impactful.
- Microaggressions may or may not violate UBC’s Discrimination Policy depending on the nature and context of the comment and conduct.

²¹ John F. Dovidio, Samuel L. Gaertner, Kerry Kawakami and Gordon Hodson, “Why can’t we just get along? Interpersonal biases and interracial distrust,” *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 8(2), 2002, 88 - 102. DOI: 10.1037//1099-9809.8.2.88.

²² Sue D. Wing, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha M. B. Holder, Kevin L. Nadal, and Marta Esquilin, Racial microaggressions in everyday life: Implications for clinical practice, *American Psychologist*, 62(4), 2007, 271 - 286. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.62.4.271.

²³ Kevin L. Nadal, *Microaggressions and traumatic stress: Theory, research, and clinical treatment*, (American Psychological Association, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000073-000>.

Examples of anti-Muslim and anti-Arab microaggressions

- Assuming a Muslim professor would be biased against Jewish or Christian students
- Introducing someone as your “Muslim” friend
- Assuming all Muslim people observe their faith or spirituality in the same way
- Maligning or excluding any Muslim persons who are observant
- Assuming all Muslim people are Middle Eastern or Arabs
- Assuming all Arabs are Muslim
- Characterizing Muslim men as aggressive
- Characterizing Muslim women as passive
- Asking a woman what her hair looks like under her hijab
- Saying “I’m not Islamophobic. I have Muslim friends.”
- Judging that someone is not “Muslim enough” — judging level of piety
- Persistently scheduling work or academic engagements on important Muslim holidays
- Referring to someone as a “bad Muslim”

RECALL

- While they are impactful, microaggressions may or may not violate UBC’s Discrimination Policy depending on their nature and context.

Intragroup or horizontal hostilities

- Within-group or intragroup manifestations of marginalization can be, in part, explained through the concept of horizontal hostility — a form of bullying and harassment.^{24, 25}
- Lateral hostilities are derogatory indignities expressed by members of a social group about other members of the same social group. These indignities are impactful and often experienced as invalidations, insults, and/or assaults on one’s identity and personhood.
- While describing the complexities of intragroup dynamics is beyond the scope of this module, it is important to acknowledge that these dynamics exist and that they have serious impacts as a consequence of community shunning.
- The following scenario provides an example of one manifestation of intergroup hostility within the Muslim community:
 - » An Ismaili Muslim person is called a “kafir/a”²⁶ or “not a real Muslim or real believer” by a Sunni Muslim person.
 - » Horizontal hostilities — whether consciously or unconsciously deployed — can operate to situate certain groups closer in proximity to power (social, economic and/or political capital) and push other groups to the margins of communities or society.

²⁴ Kennedy, Florynce Kennedy, “Institutionalized oppression vs. the female,” in *Sisterhood is powerful*, ed. Robin Morgan (Vintage Books, 1970).

²⁵ JB White and EJ Langer, E.J, “Horizontal hostility: Relations between similar minority groups,” *Journal of Social Issues*, 55, no. 3 (1999): 537 – 559, <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00132>.

²⁶ The pejorative term “kafir/a” is used as a slur to refer to non-Muslims and is deployed in this example to diminish the validity of Isma’ilism as a branch of Islam.

Upholding UBC's Respectful Environment Statement

- “A respectful environment is a climate in which the human dignity of each individual is valued, and the diverse perspectives, ideas and experiences of all members of the community are able to flourish.”²⁷
- Some behaviour that may not qualify as discrimination under the *B.C. Human Rights Code* may still be considered bullying or harassment, violating UBC's Respectful Environment Statement.
- Bullying or harassment include unwanted, abusive, vexatious, or hostile behaviour that creates an intimidating environment.
- Some examples of bullying/harassment include:

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » demeaning or intimidating comments or gestures » verbal aggression or yelling » persistent exclusion or ostracism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » abuse of power or authority » spreading malicious rumours » threats to employment or property |
|---|---|
- If linked to protected characteristics (for example, race, religion or political belief), this behaviour may also violate UBC's Discrimination Policy.

EXCLUSIONS

- “Appropriate managerial or supervisory direction, constructive criticism, respectful differences of opinion, instructional techniques such as irony, conjecture, and refutation, or assigning readings or other instructional materials that advocate controversial positions, and single incidents of thoughtless, petty or foolish words or acts that cause fleeting harm do not constitute bullying or harassment.”²⁸

²⁷ “Respectful Environment Statement,” The University of British Columbia, last accessed December 14, 2024 at <https://hr.ubc.ca/working-ubc/workplace-experience/respectful-environment>.

²⁸ The University of British Columbia,

6. HISTORY OF OPPRESSION OF ARAB AND MUSLIM PEOPLE

While providing a comprehensive history of the oppression of Arab and Muslim people is well beyond the scope of this introductory module, the following are key takeaway points:

- Muslim and Arab people have a long history of experiencing racism, infantilization, dehumanization, and colonization by external powers, with many instances of historical and modern-day expulsion of Arabs and Muslims from different regions of the world, dating back to the 1600s in Spain.
- Palestinian people have a unique history of and present-day experience of oppression.
 - » Modern-day Palestinians come from the region that overlaps with the present-day territory of the State of Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories — a region which has been under the rule of several empires since antiquity (for example, Egyptian, Babylonian, Roman, Ottoman and British).
 - » In 1947, the UN Partition Plan for Mandate Palestine proposed to divide the British-ruled area into an Arab State and a Jewish State. Arab leaders and governments opposed the plan for many complex reasons and an Arab-Israeli war ensued during which 700,000 Palestinians were expelled, displaced or fled from their homeland. This event is referred to as the “Nakba” or “Catastrophe.”^{29,30}
 - » During this time, many Palestinians fled to neighbouring Arab countries where their descendants remain to this day. Others remained in areas within the boundaries of the UN Partition Plan (for example, the West Bank and Gaza Strip — referred to as the “Occupied Palestinian Territories”). A third group stayed within the boundaries and became citizens of present-day Israel.

²⁹ “The Question of Palestine: About the Nakba,” United Nations, last accessed December 14, 2024 at <https://www.un.org/unispal/about-the-nakba/>.

³⁰ “UN marks 75 years since displacement of 700,000 Palestinians,” *United Nations*, May 15, 2023, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/05/1136662>.

- The “global war on terrorism” has, in North America, resulted in disproportionately more surveillance and profiling of people who are or are perceived to be Muslims and/or Arabs.
- The explicit marginalization of Arab and Muslim people in Canada persisted through the 20th century, as they were among religious and/or racial groups impacted by restrictive covenants (for example, in the 1950s, they were banned by Ontario homeowners from purchasing property and cemetery plots).³¹
- The legacy of historical marginalization persists in present-day anti-Muslim and anti-Arab tropes and forms of systemic discrimination.

³¹ “Restrictive Covenants,” Canada’s Human Rights History, last accessed on December 18, 2024 at <https://historyofrights.ca/encyclopaedia/main-events/restrictive-covenants/>.

7. ANTI-PALESTINIAN DISCRIMINATION

Characteristics of anti-Palestinian racism

Anti-Palestinian discrimination — or Anti-Palestinian Racism (APR) — is distinct from, yet intertwined with, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination, emerging from unique socio-historic and socio-political mythologies and misrepresentations of Palestinian people.

Examples of tropes that contribute to anti-Palestinian discrimination include:

- the denial or minimization of the Nakba

“Nakba denialism”, the denial or minimization of the mass expulsion of Palestinians by Zionists from Palestine in 1948, precipitating waves of displacement since that time, is underpinned by three anti-Palestinian tropes:

» “The first trope presents Palestinian Arabs as lacking religious attachment to Palestine, the second trope claims they lack modern feelings of national identity, and the third trope claims they are easily induced to commit acts of violence by their ruthless leaders”.³²

- dehumanizing and justifying violence against Palestinians
- suggesting Palestinians or their allies are violent
- excluding or pressuring others to exclude participation and/or perspectives of Palestinians
- defaming Palestinians or allies with slanderous assertions that they are terrorist threats or sympathizers
- suggesting that Palestinian-Arabs are inevitably antisemitic
- suggesting that wearing a keffiyeh or flying a Palestinian flag are acts of hate

³² Maha Nasser, “Exodus, Nakba Denialism, and the Mobilization of Anti-Arab Racism,” *Association for Critical Sociology*, 49, no 6 (2022): 1037-1051, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08969205221132878>.

Perspectives of Palestinian rights

While discussing the perspectives on Palestinian rights is beyond the scope of this module, a few points can be made:

- Though tied to shared socio-cultural, historical, and political contexts, Palestinian people in Palestine and in the diaspora are diverse in their racial, ethnic, religious, and political beliefs.
- Criticizing a state or government regime is not deemed to be de facto discrimination provided that criticisms do not constitute hate and discriminatory speech (on the basis of one or more human rights protected grounds such as ancestry, place of origin, political belief, race or religion) in accordance with the *Criminal Code of Canada*, the *B.C. Human Rights Code*, and UBC's Discrimination Policy.
- A common discriminatory tactic is to assign collective guilt and blame to all members of an identifiable group (for example, based on ancestry, place of origin, political belief, race or religion) when individuals or sub-groups (including state or non-state actors) commit objectionable or heinous acts³³.
- Allegations of any form of discrimination against a class of persons require careful analysis as there is a difference between, on the one hand, the legitimate criticism of states or governments or their actors, and, on the other hand, comments and conduct that promote hate and discriminatory speech and acts that target identifiable groups on the basis of protected human rights grounds.
- As has been stated throughout this module, UBC promotes (1) an ethic of justice and (2) an ethic of care, meaning:
 - » (1) Canada's laws and UBC's policies require that the human rights and personal safety of all Arab, Muslim and Palestinian faculty, students, and staff — in all of their diversity — are safeguarded across legally protected characteristics.
 - » (2) UBC aspires to foster a culture of inclusion, where the safety and dignity of Muslims and Arabs, including Palestinian people are valued.
- Under the principle of academic freedom, academic debate about appropriate political arrangements in the region of present-day Israel-Palestine or about the meaning and implications of movements for Palestinian rights is legitimate and protected, subject to the context.

³³ "Policy on preventing discrimination based on creed," Ontario Human Rights Commission, September 17, 2015, https://www.ohrc.on.ca/sites/default/files/Policy%20on%20preventing%20discrimination%20based%20on%20creed_accessible_0.pdf.

8. ACADEMIC FREEDOM AS A CORE VALUE

In a university, academic freedom is a core value, ensuring scholars the right to explore ideas freely within the academic community.

Distinction from freedom of expression

- **Freedom of expression** is a constitutional right that protects individuals from government interference when expressing their views. This right is crucial in a free and open society and should be protected. Respect for the value of freedom of expression and promotion of free inquiry are central to the university's mission.
- **Academic freedom**, distinct from freedom of expression, is also a fundamental right unique to the academy, permitting members of the university to teach, learn and consider any opinion without non-academic constraints from the university administration.

Neither freedom of expression nor academic freedom are without limits. For example:

- » Expression can be limited if found to rise to the level of hate, obscenity or discrimination, as set out by the *Criminal Code of Canada* and human rights laws, if it defames or if it violates copyright law.
- » Universities have legitimate academic expectations for its professors and students.

Academic freedom at UBC

- Academic freedom policies vary between universities. The policy of each of UBC’s campus Senates^{34,35} with respect to Academic Freedom is as follows:
 - » The members of the University enjoy certain rights and privileges essential to the fulfilment of its primary functions: instruction and the pursuit of knowledge. Central among these rights is the freedom, within the law, to pursue what seems to them as fruitful avenues of inquiry, to teach and to learn unhindered by external or non-academic constraints, and to engage in full and unrestricted consideration of any opinion.
 - » This freedom extends not only to the regular members of the University, but to all who are invited to participate in its forum. Suppression of this freedom, whether by institutions of the state, the officers of the University, or the actions of private individuals, would prevent the University from carrying out its primary functions.
 - » All members of the University must recognize this fundamental principle and must share responsibility for supporting, safeguarding and preserving this central freedom. Behaviour that obstructs free and full discussion, not only of ideas that are safe and accepted, but of those which may be unpopular or even abhorrent, vitally threatens the integrity of the University’s forum. Such behaviour cannot be tolerated.
- Impassioned expression does not necessarily equate to disrespect or discrimination — it may simply be strong disagreement regarding an issue of public interest.

³⁴ “Academic Freedom: Introduction,” UBC Vancouver Senate, accessed December 14, 2024, <https://vancouver.calendar.ubc.ca/campus-wide-policies-and-regulations/academic-freedom/introduction>.

³⁵ “Academic Freedom,” UBC Okanagan Senate, accessed December 14, 2024, <https://okanagan.calendar.ubc.ca/campus-wide-policies-and-regulations/student-rights-and-responsibilities/academic-freedom>.

Reflection on academic freedom

- Consideration: academic freedom is about the pursuit of knowledge, not ideology.
- When faculty members draw on their authority to speak, and especially when they claim “expertise,” they have a special responsibility to tailor their claims to the evidence and to knowledge that comes from their training and scholarship.
- Some Jewish, Israeli, Arab, Palestinian and Muslim faculty have reported experiencing a chilling/silencing effect on their teaching and scholarship, and have felt that their academic freedom has been under threat whether or not they are speaking to issues related to the Israel-Palestine conflict.
- Targeting faculty members based on their identity or field of study and course enrollment (for example, vandalizing office doors of or harassing faculty members based on their involvement in Jewish, Islamic and/or Middle East Studies or their teaching and scholarship related to Palestine or Israel may be a violation of UBC’s Respectful Environment Statement or Discrimination Policy).
- Consider how to avoid a double standard in calls to respect the academic freedom of a diversity of scholars to ensure the same privileges and protections are afforded Jewish, Israeli, Arab, Palestinian and Muslim faculty who speak to the conflict.
- The university unduly interfering with a faculty member’s participation in teaching and research activities may violate their academic freedom, which can undermine student access to learning and scholarship, and erode the integrity of the academic environment.

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